

Successional Stage	Common Name	VOR (Structure)	Litter Depth	Key Habitat Requirements	Habitat Management Approach
Stage 1: Early (0–1 yr post-fire)	Upland Sandpiper	Very Low (< 10 cm)	Minimal	Needs large, open, treeless tracts with high bare ground for foraging.	Recent Fire/Heavy Grazing: Blackened or bare soil; removes all residual cover.
	Killdeer	Trace (< 5 cm)	None	Nests on bare ground, gravel, or very short-cropped vegetation.	High Disturbance: Very short-cropped areas, cattle overgrazed areas, or fresh burns.
	Horned Lark	Trace (< 5 cm)	None	High percentage of bare ground; avoids areas with any significant litter.	Extreme Shortgrass: High bare ground percentage; often found in heavily grazed patches.
Stage 2: Mid-Early (1–2 yrs post-fire)	Grasshopper Sparrow	Low-Mod (10–25 cm)	Low (< 1 cm)	Prefers patchy vegetation; needs some bare ground for travel between clumps.	Recovery Phase: One growing season post-fire. Mix of new green growth and some bare ground.
	Vesper Sparrow	Low (10–20 cm)	Low	Often found in shorter, sparser grass; likes scattered perches.	Moderate Grazing: Keeps vegetation height down but allows some clumpiness.
	Western Meadowlark	Moderate (15–30 cm)	Low-Mod	Nests in a small depression; prefers high grass/forb	Typical Rotation: Areas burned 1–2 years ago;

				ratios but avoids "rank" grass.	balanced grass/forb structure.
Stage 3: Mid-Late (2–3 yrs post-fire)	Bobolink	Mod-High (20–40 cm)	Moderate	Requires large blocks of grass; sensitive to woody encroachment and edges.	Deferred Grazing: Grass has had 2 full seasons to accumulate height and density.
	Dickcissel	Mod-High (20–40 cm)	Variable	Prefers areas with stiff-stemmed forbs to support nest cups and singing perches.	Forb Promotion: Management that encourages wildflower growth (perches).
	Savannah Sparrow	Moderate (15–30 cm)	Moderate	Adaptable, but prefers dense, medium-height grass; often follows grazing.	Light Grazing: Dense enough for cover, but not "rank" or lodged.
	Eastern Meadowlark	Moderate (20–35 cm)	Moderate	Similar to Western Meadowlark, but often prefers slightly taller, denser cover and wetter sites.	Moist Sites: Often found in lower-lying, unburned drainage areas.
Stage 4: Late (3–5 yrs post-fire)	Henslow's Sparrow	High (> 30 cm)	Deep (> 2 cm)	Litter specialist. Requires standing dead vegetation and a thick thatch layer.	Fire Suppression: 3+ years without fire. Required for the "thatch" layer to build up.
	Sedge Wren	High (> 35 cm)	Deep	Needs high structural volume; usually found in tall, damp, or "rank" vegetation.	Idle/Wetland Edge: Tall, dense, unburned vegetation; high structural volume.

	Northern Harrier	Very High (> 50 cm)	Deep	Nests on the ground in the thickest available cover, often in idle wetlands/prairie.	Long-term Idle: Large blocks of undisturbed "rank" grass (usually 4+ years post-fire).
	LeConte's Sparrow	Very High (> 40 cm)	Very Deep	Very secretive; requires extremely dense, undisturbed residual cover.	Minimal Disturbance: Accumulation of several years of dead grass (residual).
Stage 5: Shrub-Grass (Transition)	Clay-colored Sparrow	Moderate (20–35 cm)	High	Shrub obligate. Requires a woody component (e.g., snowberry) or very tall forbs.	Woody Encroachment: 5–10 years post-fire or localized soil disturbance allowing shrubs.