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## MONTANA PRAIRIE POTHOLE JOINT VENTURE BREEDING SHOREBIRD PROJECT

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Populations of several shorebird species in the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) appear to be declining, largely because of loss of grasslands and wetlands. Marbled godwit (*Limosa fedoa*), long-billed curlew (*Numenius americanus*), willet (*Tringa semipalmata*), Wilson's phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*), upland sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*), American avocet (*Recurvirostra americana*) and Wilson's snipe (*Gallinago delicata*) are listed as priority species by Partners in Flight or the U.S. Shorebird Plan. In 2012, the USDI Fish and Wildlife Service's Habitat and Population Evaluation Team began conducting breeding shorebird surveys in the western portion of the Montana PPR to complement existing surveys for partners of the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture in North Dakota, South Dakota, and northeast Montana. The purpose of these surveys is to provide data for development of habitat models identifying priority conservation areas where habitat needs overlap for breeding shorebirds and breeding waterfowl. Results will allow land managers to integrate breeding shorebird conservation with ongoing waterfowl conservation actions in the Montana PPR. This is a long-term adaptive process that includes updating models with annually collected survey data to inform and improve model performance. We summarize the objectives and field design of the project and report results of preliminary modeling from our 2012/2013 efforts.