



Intro to the LandPKS Habitat Module

The LandPKS habitat module places local species habitat information in the palm of your hand. The module provides access to current data for your specific site. This can help determine if you are providing the habitat needed for key species. Habitat information and data collected in the app can be used to **develop goals, guide management actions**, and **develop monitoring plans**.

What is a Habitat?

The term “Habitat” refers to the natural home or environment of a plant, animal, or other organism. The existence of terrestrial plant and animal habitats depends on both the land’s potential and how it is managed. LandPKS provides information on potential habitats by integrating species distribution maps with soil information (based on the types of soil that have been mapped at your location). The app also allows you to then identify the soil. Links to “Ecological Site Descriptions” (ESDs) through EDIT provide information on the types of vegetation that *could* occur on that soil.

ESDs also provide information on the types of management and restoration actions that may result in transitions among different types of vegetation. A wide variety of management strategies can be used to promote these transitions.

A common misconception is that creating wildlife habitat just means grazing a pasture less than one otherwise would in order to leave more grass behind. Through planning and management to control grazing intensity across space and time, heterogeneity of vegetation can be created even within relatively homogenous landscapes. By creating a patchwork of habitat conditions, land can provide habitat for many different plant and animal species.

Who is the LandPKS Habitat Module for?

The LandPKS Habitat Module is for **ranchers, farmers, wildlife conservationists, homeowners, educators, and park and other land managers** who are interested in preserving and fostering wildlife habitats on their land. The Habitat Module can be used for both planning and educational purposes, on ranches and in schools, in suburban neighborhoods and on wildlife preserves.

What does the LandPKS Habitat Module do?

The LandPKS Habitat Module currently includes a selection of 22 plants, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects that occur in North America, with an emphasis on those that occur in the Great Plains and Great Basin. The Habitat Module contains line drawings of habitats, written descriptions, and a table of habitat characteristics for each species. The habitat drawings are not intended to show all variability within a landscape that a species needs. Rather, the

representations depict an “ideal” habitat or critical habitat type (e.g. nesting). See *the species factsheets for more information about habitat characteristics*. Following collection of soil or vegetation data at any location, the app will display a summary of data for the corresponding habitat characteristic needed by the species.

The information in the LandPKS Habitat Module is designed to be used, together with other information sources, to help define suitable habitat. It is not predictive and is not intended for regulatory purposes.

The LandPKS Habitat Module currently includes only a subset of species that occur in North America.



The habitat illustrations for each species in the app depict “ideal” habitats or limiting habitats (i.e. nesting), rather than depicting all the habitat needs. Above are some examples of illustrations within the app. Top image: Mid-grass prairie; Middle image: Sagebrush shrublands; Bottom image: Shortgrass prairie.

Factsheets

Our Factsheets provide information that can be used to help identify plant and animal species and manage land to improve habitat conditions. The LandPKS Habitat Factsheets are available for download from within the mobile app and from the Knowledge Hub on LandPotential.org (make sure this is the link to the

factsheets). Each species factsheet provides a photograph and description of the species, management information, and facts about habitat needs across the species range. The species description, habitat requirements, distribution and management information are written for land managers, and are of value to anyone in habitat conservation. The factsheets also provide ideas for how to contribute in meaningful ways to the quantity and quality of suitable habitat available for a species.

Further reading:

[Bird Conservancy of the Rockies - Sharing Your Land Guide](#)

[Bird Conservancy of the Rockies - Tools for Landowners](#)

[Chris Helzer, The Prairie Ecologist, "Creating Wildlife Habitat on Great Plains Ranches"](#)

[Sage Grouse Initiative - Landowner Resources](#)