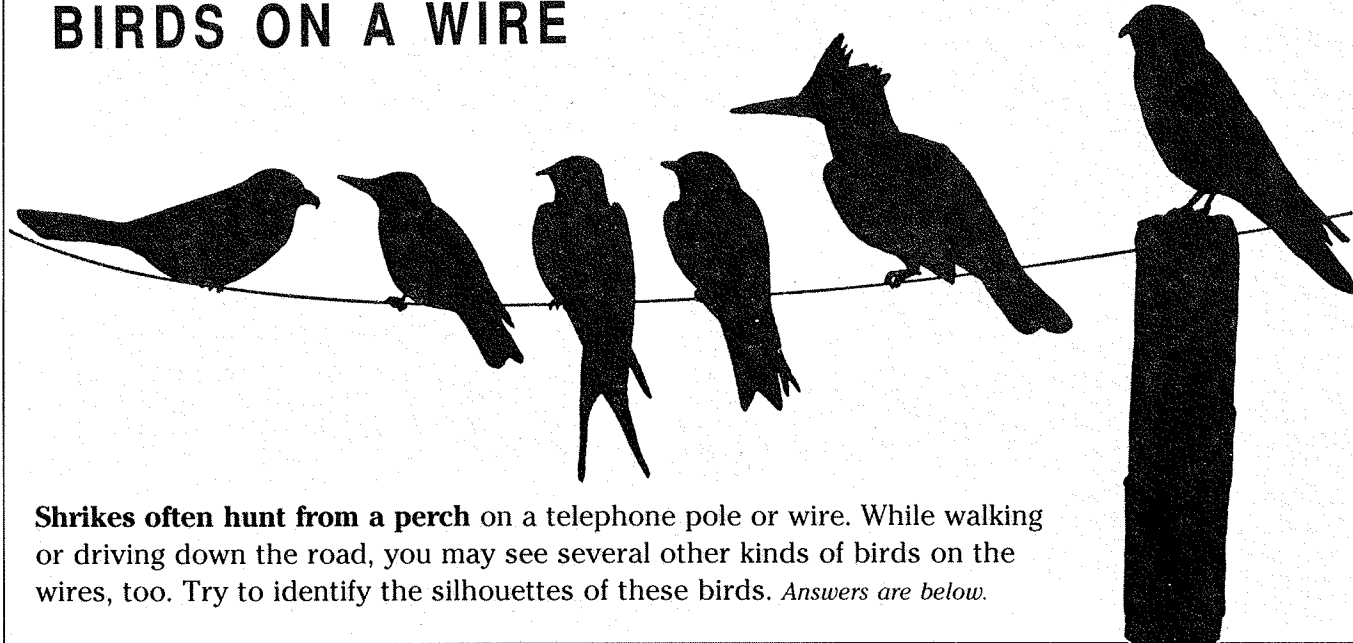


## BIRDS ON A WIRE



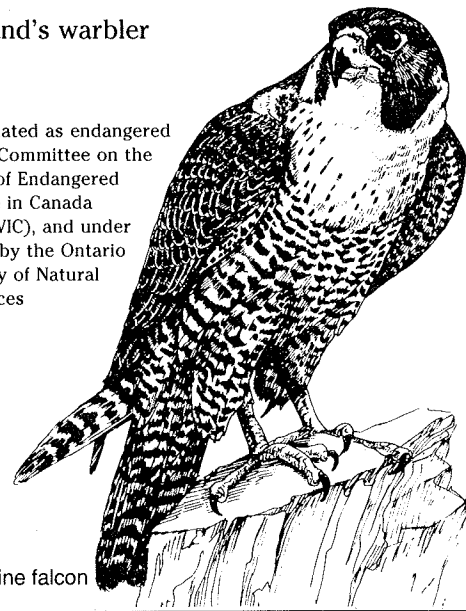
Shrikes often hunt from a perch on a telephone pole or wire. While walking or driving down the road, you may see several other kinds of birds on the wires, too. Try to identify the silhouettes of these birds. *Answers are below.*

### Ontario's Endangered Birds

In addition to the Loggerhead Shrike, there are nine other birds designated as endangered in Ontario.

- |                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| bald eagle         | peregrine falcon  |
| Eskimo curlew      | piping plover     |
| golden eagle       | white pelican     |
| harlequin duck*    | Henslow's sparrow |
| Kirtland's warbler |                   |

\*designated as endangered by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC), and under review by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources



peregrine falcon

### Where to learn more about shrikes and other Ontario birds

*A Field Guide to Birds East of the Rockies* by R.T. Peterson. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1980.

*Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario* by M.D. Cadman, P.F.J. Eagles and F.M. Helleiner. Federation of Ontario Naturalists and the Long Point Bird Observatory. University of Waterloo Press, Waterloo, 1987.

*Ontario Birds at Risk* by M.J.W. Austen, M.D. Cadman and R.D. James. Federation of Ontario Naturalists and Long Point Bird Observatory, Toronto, 1994.

*Birdwise* by Pamela Hickman. Federation of Ontario Naturalists. Kids Can Press, Toronto, 1988.

*Introducing Birds* by Pamela Hickman. Federation of Ontario Naturalists. Pembroke Publishers Ltd., Toronto, 1992.

#### Beak Answers:

1. eagle/hawk ..... c.
2. cardinal or grosbeak ..... d.
3. warbler ..... e.
4. merganser ..... a.
5. mallard ..... f.
6. crossbill ..... b.

#### Feet Answers:

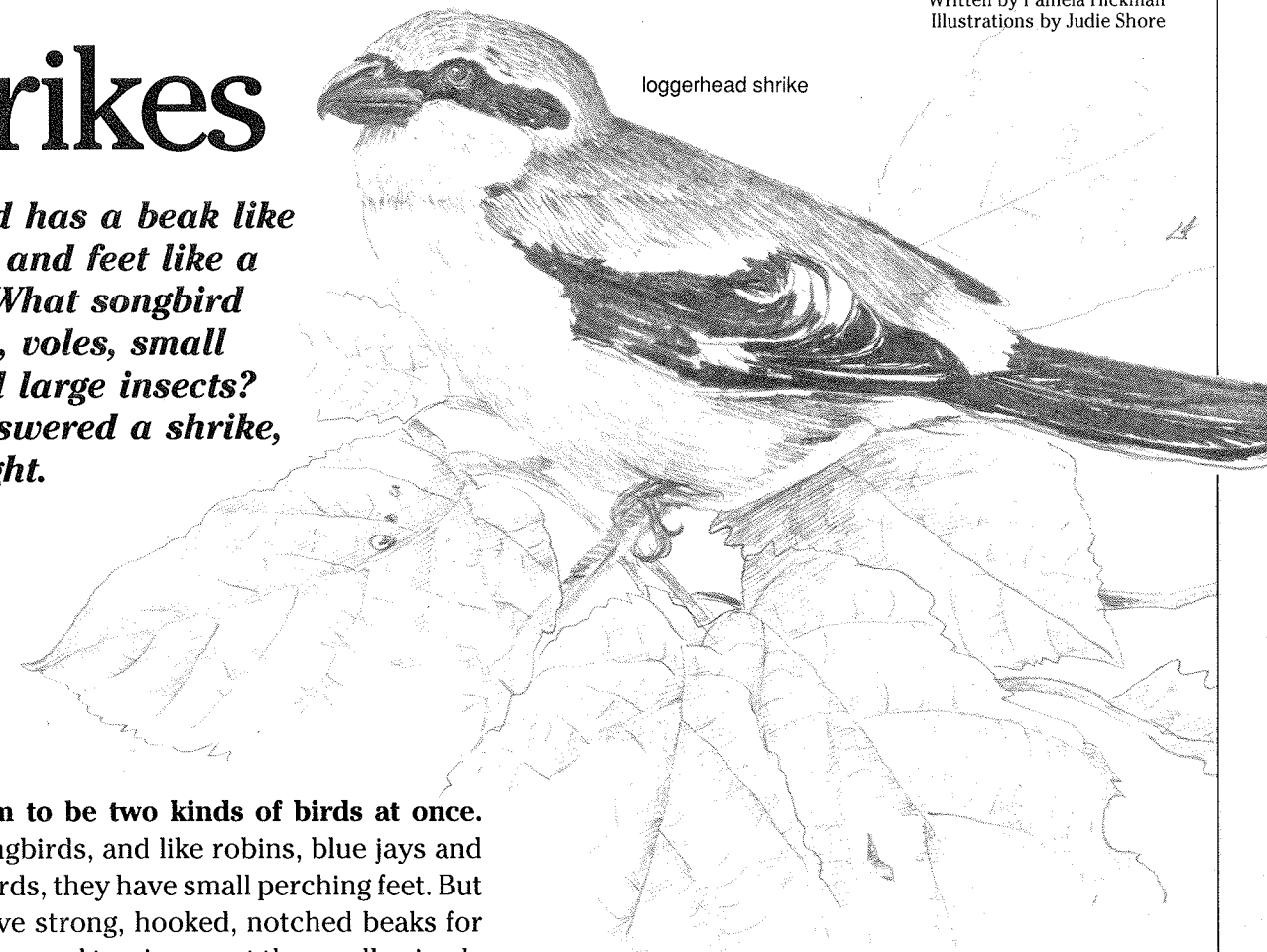
1. eagle/hawk ..... c.
2. duck ..... d.
3. heron/rail ..... e.
4. woodpecker ..... a.
5. pheasant/grouse ..... b.

loggerhead shrike, starling, barn swallow, tree swallow, belted kingfisher, kestrel-on pole

Answers: Birds on a Wire

# Shrikes

*What bird has a beak like a hawk's and feet like a robin's? What songbird eats mice, voles, small birds and large insects? If you answered a shrike, you're right.*



loggerhead shrike

### Shrikes seem to be two kinds of birds at once.

They are songbirds, and like robins, blue jays and other songbirds, they have small perching feet. But they also have strong, hooked, notched beaks for killing, carrying and tearing apart the small animals on which they feed. Unlike other meat-eating birds such as hawks and owls, however, shrikes don't have strong talons, or claws, for holding or killing their prey. In order to keep a grip on their food while they eat, these birds carry it to a thorny shrub or tree and stick it on a thorn. They may also use barbed wire for the same purpose. Sometimes a shrike will stick food on a thorn or wedge it into a forked branch and leave it until later.

Ontario is home to two species of shrikes: the northern shrike and the loggerhead shrike. Both birds are grey, white and black, with a distinct black mask and white wing patches that are visible during flight. The northern shrike is robin-sized, and is slightly larger than the loggerhead. It breeds in extreme northern Ontario along Hudson and James bays, in open woods, thickets and boggy

areas. In winter, northern shrikes migrate to southern Canada. They can be seen hunting alone from high perches, such as treetops, telephone poles or wires.

Loggerhead shrikes breed in southern Ontario from Sault Ste. Marie and Ottawa southward. They have also been recorded in the Rainy River and Thunder Bay area. Loggerheads prefer open country with pasture, grasslands, hedgerows and shrubby areas, and often make their nests in hawthorns or other thorny shrubs. They hunt from fenceposts and telephone poles and wires, often along roadways. Many young are killed by cars while learning to hunt. Loggerhead shrikes spend winters from the north-central United States southward.

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# SAVING THE SHRIKES

Both the northern and loggerhead shrikes are listed as Ontario Birds at Risk by the Ontario Rare Breeding Bird Program. Studies on the populations of loggerhead shrikes show that their Ontario breeding range has declined since the early 1980s. In 1992, the loggerhead shrike was designated as an endangered species under Ontario's Endangered Species Act. The population decline in its main breeding areas in eastern and central Ontario is thought to be due to habitat loss through development, agricultural practices (such as the removal of hedgerows and cultivation of open grasslands) and succession. In some cases, however, continued grazing by cattle may actually benefit the shrike. Other factors that may affect the bird's breeding success are unknown since there appears to be sufficient suitable habitat available to support a much greater number of loggerheads. This species is also listed as threatened or endangered in most of the northeastern United States, and it is almost extirpated from Quebec.

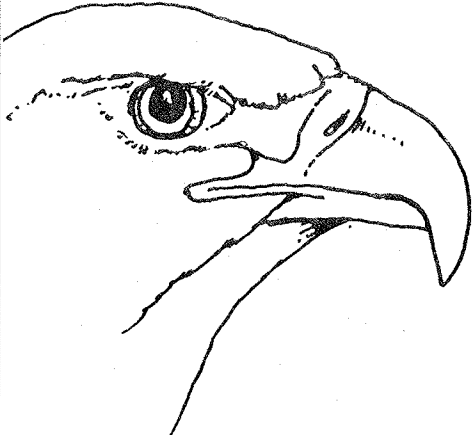
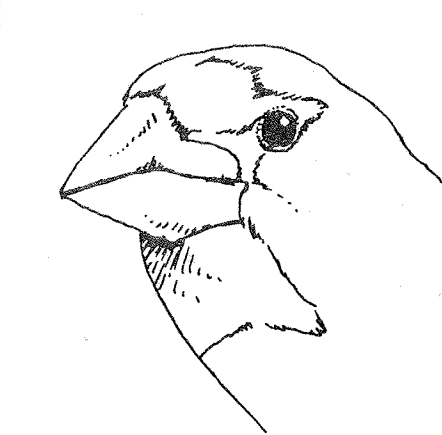
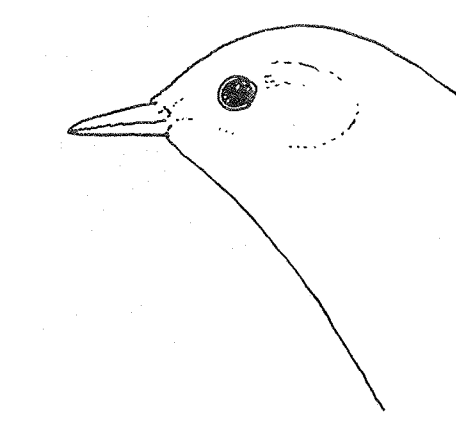
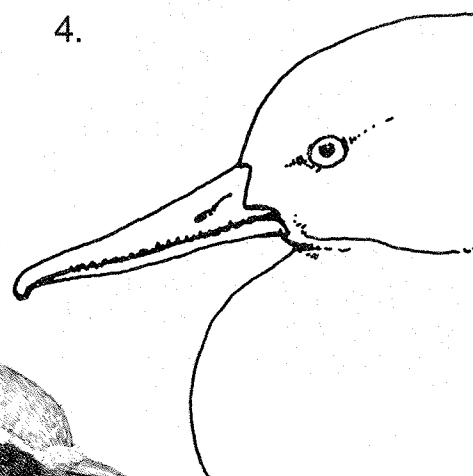
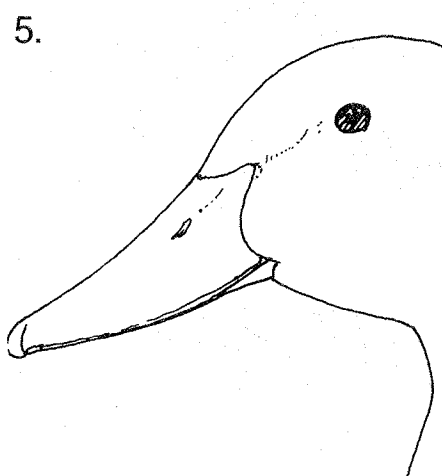
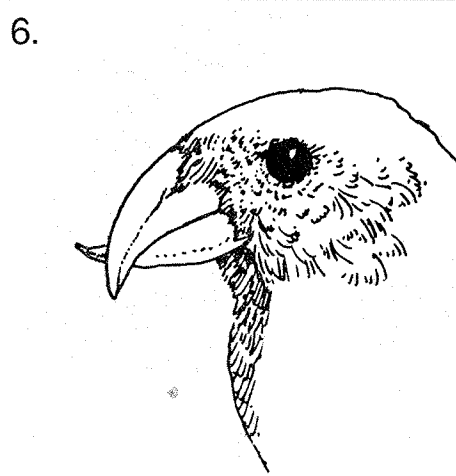
In 1993 a National Recovery Plan for loggerhead shrikes was drawn up. Ontario is leading the way with a study to monitor existing populations and establish why they have been declining. The goal of the project is to ensure that there are no further declines. In addition, a program is underway to contact private landowners who have shrikes nesting on their property. It is hoped that learning about the birds, why they are endangered and how they can be protected, will encourage individuals to help save them.



northern shrike

# Beautiful Beaks

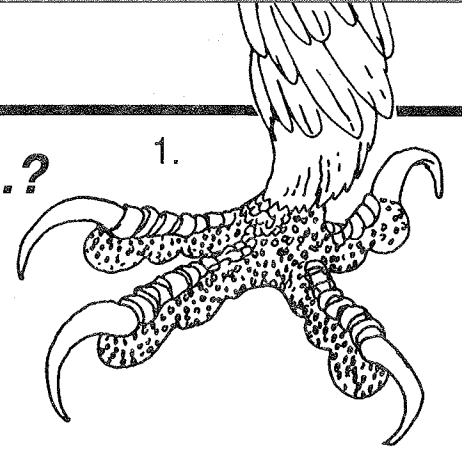
Shrikes have large, hooked beaks that are perfect for capturing small animals. Other birds have differently shaped beaks that help them eat their special food. Match the beaks below with the food they are suited for. Try to name one bird that might belong to each kind of beak. *Answers on page 4.*

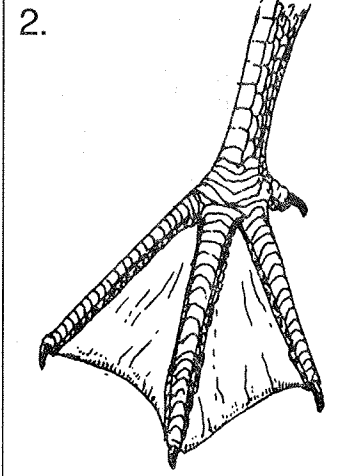
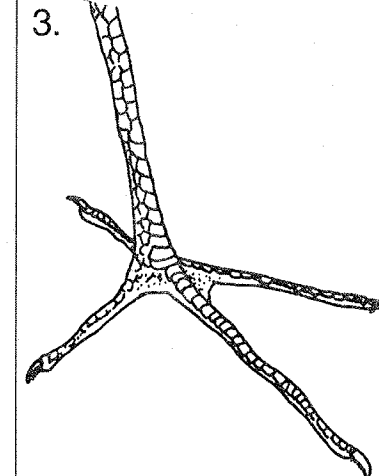
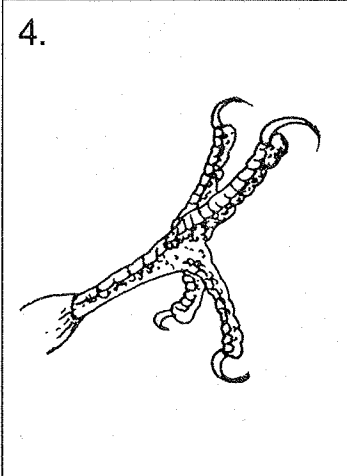
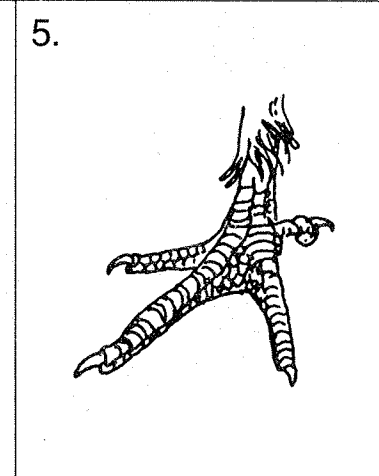
1. 	2. 	3. 
4. 	5. 	6. 

- | beak     | bird  | food                    |
|----------|-------|-------------------------|
| 1. _____ | _____ | a) fish                 |
| 2. _____ | _____ | b) pine cones           |
| 3. _____ | _____ | c) mouse                |
| 4. _____ | _____ | d) seeds and nuts       |
| 5. _____ | _____ | e) caterpillar          |
| 6. _____ | _____ | f) pond muck and plants |

# Feet fit for ...?

Like all songbirds, shrikes have small perching feet for grabbing on to branches. But bird feet come in all shapes and sizes, depending on the species, where it lives or what it eats. The feet below are all adapted to special tasks. Match them with their function and name one bird that has similar feet. *Answers on page 4.*



2. 	3. 
4. 	5. 

- | foot     | bird  | functions                          |
|----------|-------|------------------------------------|
| 1. _____ | _____ | a) clinging to tree trunks         |
| 2. _____ | _____ | b) scratching for food             |
| 3. _____ | _____ | c) catching small animals for food |
| 4. _____ | _____ | d) swimming                        |
| 5. _____ | _____ | e) wading                          |