

Stretching across Monterey and San Benito counties, the grasslands surrounding King City are part of a designated Important Bird Area. These largely intact working landscapes support rich biodiversity while also producing food through responsible ranching. Managed by generations of ranchers, they show how agriculture and conservation can thrive together.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- ▷ Support local land trusts and voluntary conservation agreements
- ▷ Recognize and support ranchers who steward habitat while producing food
- ▷ Use non-lead ammunition when hunting/shooting wildlife, including ground squirrels. Ask for non-lead products at local stores to promote availability.
- ▷ Avoid mowing during peak nesting season (typically spring to early summer) as some species nest on the ground
- ▷ Reduce or eliminate pesticide use in gardens and fields
- ▷ Participate in bird surveys and community science efforts
- ▷ Advocate for wildlife-friendly grazing and land management practices

WHY GRASSLANDS MATTER

These grasslands support diverse wildlife—nesting birds, pollinators, and mammals—while also playing a vital role in feeding people. As working lands, they produce grass-fed beef and other resources, showing how food and fiber production can go hand-in-hand with conservation. Well-managed grazing helps maintain a healthy habitat. Protecting these landscapes helps prevent development while preserving their agricultural and ecological value.

THREATS TO THE GRASSLANDS

- ▷ Habitat loss and fragmentation due to development or land conversion
- ▷ Incompatible land use that degrades habitat or soil health
- ▷ Shrub encroachment, invasive species, and loss of grassland structure
- ▷ Wildfire ignitions, especially in unmanaged or overgrown areas
- ▷ Lead poisoning from spent ammunition

CALIFORNIA CONDOR

Once nearly extinct, the California Condor is one of the greatest conservation comeback stories. These giant scavengers help clean the environment by feeding on carrion, but they still face threats from lead poisoning and habitat loss.

Hunters and ranchers are helping these birds by switching to non-lead ammunition.

Keep an eye on the skies—you might just glimpse one soaring overhead.



BURROWING OWL

Burrowing Owls are key indicator species for grasslands. Their presence indicates the overall health of the habitat. Burrowing owls also help with rodent and insect control; however, their population is declining and is now a Species of Special Concern.



GRASSHOPPER SPARROW

The small but mighty Grasshopper Sparrow is more often heard than seen, lifting its buzzy insect call over the grasslands.

A patient observer might spot one perched atop a shrub or post before it vanishes into the grasses again.



The King City Grasslands are more than just beautiful—they are a living example of how thoughtful land stewardship can benefit both people and wildlife. For over a century, these lands have supported successful ranching while also preserving vital habitat for birds and other species.

Well-managed grazing helps prevent development and maintains the open spaces these species depend on—feeding the world while protecting biodiversity.

Scan the QR code to learn more and get involved:



Learn more about Conservation Ranching here:
www.MontereyAudubon.org/king-city-grasslands

KING CITY GRASSLANDS

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Western Meadowlark

