

# Caroline Martin

Master's

Department of Renewable Resources,  
Faculty of Agricultural, Life &  
Environmental Sciences

Image created at University of  
Alberta's Mattheis Ranch, near  
Brooks, Alberta

# Struck

*Semi-finalist*

Urban-industrial sprawl has been increasing in Canada and is associated with infrastructure development, such as highways and transmission lines. In particular, transmission line developments have been increasing globally at a rate of 5% per year, with over 230 000 km of lines existing in Canada. Less than half of the original area of mixed-grass prairie remains in the country today, resulting in steep declines of grassland bird abundance due to the loss of habitat, degradation of land due to overgrazing, and fragmentation from the construction of roads and transmission lines.

My Masters work focuses on the displacement of grassland birds by high voltage (>500 kV) transmission line construction that occurred in late 2013-2015, by comparing data collected before and after construction. Through this image, I intended to capture a less well-documented effect of transmission lines – bird strikes. While surveying migrating bird species in the spring of 2017, I happened upon a western meadowlark with a broken wing underneath a transmission line, representing yet another threat to grassland birds.