

Cass Co. Cons. Bd
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Cass County Conservation on Facebook!

Search Cass County IA Conservation and "like" us on Facebook! Easy way to keep up on events and wildlife sightings around Cass County!

People Making a Difference...

Thank you to everyone that took part in our **Bird House programs!**

Thank you to everyone that took part in our **Halloween Hike!**

Especially to our volunteers and donations to the event by **3 Bee Farms, McCurdy Pumpkins, and Hy-vee!**

Mark your Calendars

Cass County's Pheasant's Forever Chapter Banquet
Saturday, February 29th Cass County Community Center, Atlantic
Doors open at 5pm Contact Erik Rhoderick at (712)249-6720 for more information.

Wildflower Walk
Saturday, April 25th- 9AM
Pellett Memorial Woods

Stay tuned for more on the April programs and Summer Camp Listings in the Spring Newsletter.

Cass County Conservation Board Members

Phil Przychodzin- Massena
Rich Govig- Lewis
Judy Kennedy- Atlantic
Luanne Steffens- Griswold
Jerry Hudson- Lewis

Great Backyard Bird Count

The National Audubon Society & Cornell Lab of Ornithology needs every bird enthusiast in North America to count birds February 14th-17th. All you need is a basic knowledge of bird identification! This activity is extremely easy...you watch the birds in your yard, local park, or other natural area for 15 minutes or more and use a tally sheet to record the highest number of individual birds that you see in view at one time. There are two ways to participate in the bird count, 1. Call the Conservation Board at 712-769-2372 and we will send you everything you need or (you may pick it up in our office) 2. You can visit the Great Backyard Bird Count website at <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/> and submit your results from there. This is a great family event and the data collected will be used by scientists to analyze bird populations. If you are new to the count please see the Upcoming Programs on the next page. Since 2002 the Cass County Conservation Board has advertised this bird count throughout the county encouraging citizens to participate. Last year Cass County Birders lagged behind in the State...but all county numbers were low last year. We had a great showing of 62 checklists. We ended up holding on to the 2nd place, in terms of checklists. Tied with Story County had 2nd place this year and Johnson county at the top spot with 71 checklists! I think we can keep our top 5 showing in 2020! With the new eBird system the record keeping is by county so I can not really tell you anymore the species reported for each town, but Cass county as a whole. Iowa as a whole had 95 species reported and 753 checklists which is lower than 2019 overall for Iowa. United States reported 674 species and 121,459 checklists. Typically participants submit their checklists on the internet, however, for those that are not comfortable using computers, the Conservation Board collects the data and enters the checklists for them. The Conservation Board also visits the Atlantic High School each year to encourage students to participate in the count. Let's get out there this year keep #1!!

More results: American Robins, Ring necked pheasants, and a sharpshinned hawk in Cass County! NO Trumpeter Swans or Duck species due to ice conditions. 3 Bald Eagle individuals were counted at one time in Cass County, near Atlantic.

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Bumper Crop of Trumpeter Swans in Cass County!

At the time of this printing, we had an average of 100-130 Trumpeter Swans are over-wintering at Schildberg Recreation Area- Lake 4. We've have had our highest EVER recorded number of Trumpeter Swans in 2019 of 164 swans. The swan's official date of arrival was November 8th. On that day 15 Trumpeter Swans were here and they stayed more than twenty-four hours. The winner that picked the closest date was Todd Rocker!

Sandhill Crane Bus Trip

The Cass, Crawford, and Shelby County Conservation Boards are offering a guided tour out to Kearney, Nebraska March 30th-31st. We will be taking a Windstar bus. We will make stops at the Great Platte River Road Archway Monument, Rowe Sanctuary (to view the cranes), Nebraska Nature and Visitor Center and lots of other opportunities for bird viewing. The cost for the trip is \$220 which includes: transportation, lodging, one meal, entrance fee for Archway, Nature Center, and Crane blind fee at Rowe Sanctuary. If you have any questions about the trip or would like more information please call Lora at (712) 769-2372 or email lkanning@casscoia.us. Informational program will be held: February 1st 1:00PM at the Atlantic Chamber Meeting Room.

Winter Park Update!

We were awarded an E.F & Sylvia Schildberg Foundation Grant for Technology upgrades at our Outdoor Educational Classroom. We are excited to show movies inside the lodge, presentations and make our lodge more useful as a meeting space in Southwest Iowa. See it in person at the upcoming events at the classroom lodge! We thank E.F & Sylvia Schildberg Foundation for their continuing support of our facilities. Cold Springs Park and other South West Iowa ice fishing spots have had unsafe ice lately this early winter. You can signup for weekly fishing reports or look at certain fisheries report. <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Fishing/Fishing-Reports> On our Facebook page this November we did a feature for #givingtuesday. We want to spotlight our Friends of the Outdoor Classroom; whose mission is to teach our youth to be stewards of the land through education and conservation. If you are interested in donating to this 501(c)3 please contact us and we can get you in touch with their board members. Reminder we still have surveys available for your input! We have one for our Cold Springs Campground experience, one for our Naturalist program experience and we will be asking our teachers and other facilities about their Field Trip experiences at our parks. Listed below you will find the campground and naturalist program survey links, feel free to fill the out we are always looking for suggestions! Cold Springs Camping: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z8MCHVH> Cass County Conservation Naturalist Programs: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZCHBJ5L> Our board has decided to be PAPERLESS for our quarterly newsletter! We will still print and send to our libraries, senior living centers, and businesses. So now is the time to save a tree, email Lora at lkanning@casscoia.us and let her know to add your email to get the email/PDF version of the Conservation Quarterly! Your next winter newsletter will be delivered to your inbox! Feel free to contact us with questions!

Winter Day Camps

FREE. Forms can be found at the quick links section at www.extension.iastate.edu/cass/. Register early, space is limited. Please contact Cass County Extension at 243-1132 for questions

Penguin Winter Day Camp

For youth in Kdg- 2nd grades.

February 20th 9AM-Noon or 1PM-4PM Atlantic Community Building- Atlantic School District

February 21st 9AM-Noon Atlantic Community Building- Griswold Districts

March 20th 1PM- 4PM- Anita Community Bldg CAM District

Please register by February 14th (Atlantic/Griswold) or March 13th (CAM). Students will learn about all about Penguins.

Snow Adventure Winter Day Camp

For youth in 3rd-5th grades.

March 13th 9AM-4PM Anita Community Building

March 23rd 9AM-4PM - Atlantic Community Building

Please register by March 6th. Students will learn about snow, winter animals, and winter recreation.

Upcoming Events



Denotes an Oak Stroller approved event! All Cass County Programs are FREE unless otherwise stated! Donations for programs are accepted.



Cabin Fever Escape

Saturday, January 18th 1-4PM

Outdoor Educational Classroom, Massena

Got Cabin Fever? Cure it by spending some time outside with family friendly FUN! Bring your mugs, sleds, dress for the weather, and snowshoes will be available! If you get cold, warm and tasty drinks and a movie will be playing inside our lodge! There will be no snow activities planned as well!

Sandhill Crane Bus Trip Information Night

February 1st 1:00PM

Atlantic Chamber Meeting Room

Come out to learn more about attending our bus trip to see the sandhill cranes! Full details on the opposite page.



Snowshoe Hike

Saturday February 8th 7PM

Outdoor Educational Classroom, Massena, IA

We will bring our snowshoes for you to try on! If the sky is clear, the moonlight will light our way! Will be cancelled if not enough snow.

Great Backyard Bird Count—See Page 1&2 for more details!! February 14-17th



Wednesday February 5th 3:00 PM

Massena Public Library

Tuesday February 11th 4 PM OR

Thursday February 13th 3:30pm School-aged children welcome!

Anita Public Library

Get ready to be involved in a great citizen science project! We will show and explain how to participate in the project. We will also include some tips on identifying birds.

Sweetheart Snowshoe Hike

Saturday February 15th 7PM

Pellett Memorial Woods, Atlantic, IA

We will bring our snowshoes for you to try on! If the sky is clear, the moonlight will light our way! Will be cancelled if not enough snow.



Full Moon Owl Prowl Hike

Monday March 9th 7:00 PM

Cold Springs Park, Lewis, IA

Drive the short drive and hike off that dinner! We will hike and try to call in various species of Owls that may be in the park that night!

Sandhill Crane Trip

March 30th-31st

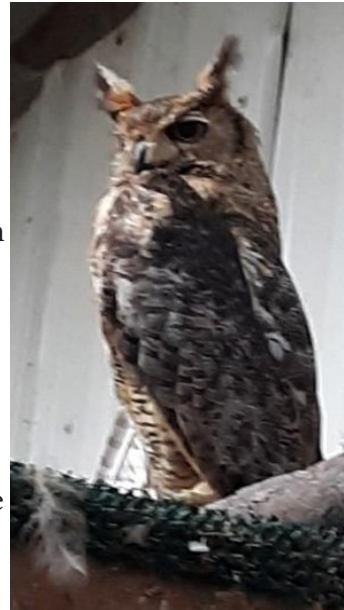
Kearney, NE

Checkout the information on the opposite page!

“Henry’s Success Story”

By: Lora Kanning Cass County Conservation

August 16, 2008 was my (Lora Kanning’s) first Breakfast with the Birds as our Cass County Naturalist. I remember being excited to have Kay Neuman confirmed for the program with a Great Horned Owl to release in Sunnyside Park. I also remember being disappointed by only 13 people coming out that year to the program. Fast forward 11 years, To August 2019, I was contacted by a homeowner Brenda Nelson who lived south of Atlantic, about a Great Horned Owl who she’s named “Henry” always lived near her property for the past 4 years. At the time, Henry was just oddly hanging out closer to her house instead of the woods, we chatted about how he was acting, all seemed fine. Until 8 days later she contacted me again with a video of him, super close to her house, on the ground, and frankly looked a little roughed up! I loaded up my Conservation vehicle and headed out that morning. After a little bit of poop, and a little chase, I rescued “Henry” and he was safely inside a carrier. I then called Kay Neuman with SOAR- (Saving Our Avian Resources) out of Dedham. I have learned my lesson don’t call Kay until the bird is in the carrier, there has been many a rescue where it takes more people or time to rescue the injured wildlife. When I was catching him, and putting him in the carrier, besides the skunk smell, he had some “extra jewelry” a bird band! Kay was available to meet up and safely transfer him to SOAR’s care. This is an example of a bird band encounter. If you find a banded bird you should report the band number and location to reportband.gov. The band encounter was reported and this great horned owl was banded by Kay before being released on the southwest edge of Atlantic, Iowa... 11 years ago! This is dispersal information, dispersal from release location for this owl, was Sunnyside park to where he was found was about 10 miles. This is important for a raptor rehabilitator to know - great horned owls may not travel or disperse very far from where released. The great horned owl pictured here is that banded owl in a flight pen regaining flight skills.



(Photo credit: SOAR)

Why band birds?

The data collected from the bird bander and from people that have an “encounter” with an already banded bird provide useful information for scientific research and management activities. Bird banding data helps biologists understand dispersal, migration, longevity, behavior, productivity, and more.

This great horned owl’s band encounter adds to the collection of reports for longevity. Curious about how long has a certain species has lived? Visit the BBL longevity search page: https://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/longevity/Longevity_main.cfm Great Horned Owls like “Henry” can live up to 30 yrs old in the wild. He is estimated to be approximately 12 years old.

Differences between banding birds and using telemetry?

Both bands and telemetry must be put on the bird by someone with the banding permit. Data collected from band encounters is not (hopefully) quickly known by the bander. With raptors, band encounters may happen through research projects including hawk banding stations, through birds being admitted to a rehabilitator, or by birds being found dead in the field.

A telemetry unit permit is most often associated with a large-scale research project that has substantial funding and partner agencies. Tracking a bird with telemetry varies depending on the type of unit -- a UHF unit that can be monitored using a handheld antennae, a telemetry unit that utilizes satellite technology, or a GPS-GSM telemetry system where data points are downloaded when the unit has cellular signal.

But back to “Henry”... Cass County Conservation was given updates on Henry every couple weeks to know his progress. Most likely “Henry” lost a fight with a skunk, Great Horned Owls are the #1 predator of Skunks in Iowa. Recovery from the spray probably directly to the eyes and a head injury. November came around, it started to look like he was getting very close to coming “home” to Cass County. We discussed dates, of course, mother nature with her high wind events pushed off his release a little bit. December 5th, 2019 was a great day to come

home, of course with the help of SOAR, Cass County Conservation Board, and the homeowner Brenda, “Henry” was released right back where we found him. We would also like to thank Sandy McCurdy for volunteering to take the photos of the release. “Henry” of course was ready to go, he came right out of the carrier. He flew into the forest and sat in a tree for us for awhile. Checking out that he was back somewhere familiar! You can also checkout his release video on Cass County Conservation’s Facebook Page.

Many times wildlife rescue does not end with a happy story. Which is one of the reasons why we wanted to share “Henry’s” story with the residents of Cass County. Another reason is to raise awareness on how lucky we are in Cass County to have wildlife rehabbers regionally close to us like SOAR. SOAR runs on donations as a 501(c)(3) organization established in 1999 dedicated to saving our avian resources through raptor rehabilitation, education, and research. Your donation will help us, stock freezers with the high quality food needed for our patients and ambassadors, buy blood lead testing supplies, and medications. Consider making a donation to SOAR, or for more information at www.soarraptors.org. (Photo credit: Sandy McCurdy)

