

Cass Co. Cons. Bd
57744 Lewis Rd
Lewis, IA 51544



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Cass County Conservation on Facebook!

Search Cass County Conservation and "like" us on [Facebook](#)! Easy way to keep up on events and wildlife sightings around Cass County! We are on [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#) and [YouTube](#) as well! Check us out!

People Making a Difference...

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

Thank you to everyone that took part in our **Fall programs in 2024!**

For Sale

Cold Springs or Cass County Stickers \$5 each.
Camping Coupons 11 nights for the price of 10, \$150.00
Inquire for these inside our office at Cold Springs Park.

Cass County Conservation Board Members

Blaine Behnken- Massena
Rich Govig- Lewis
Judy Kennedy- Atlantic
Mark Smith- Atlantic
Sandra Sothman- Atlantic



Conservation Quarterly Cass County Conservation Board Winter 2024-2025

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://www.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 dropped out of the top 10...but all county checklist numbers were low last year. We were right behind Dallas county who only had 28 checklists this year. We had 24 checklists. We ended up holding on to the 13th place, in terms of checklists, and 20th place in terms of species reported. Polk county at the top spot with 114 checklists, followed by Scott, Story, Woodbury, Johnson, Linn, Dubuque, Black Hawk, Marion, Clinton, Decatur, and Dallas County! I think we can get back in the top 10 in 2025! With the new eBird system the record keeping is by county so I cannot really tell you anymore the species reported for each town, but Cass County as a whole. Iowa had 113 species reported and 1446 checklists which is lower by almost 1% for our checklists for Iowa compared to our 2023 checklists number. United States reported 666 species and 212,673 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 and get back in the top 5!!

More results: American Robins, Snow Geese, White-fronted geese, and lots of hawk species counted in Cass County! Trumpeter Swans were counted just not in their usual quarry spot. Also of note, wild turkeys and Ring necked pheasant individuals were back on the count.

Trumpeter Swans in Cass County!

At the time of this printing, we had an average of 30 Trumpeter Swans that are over-wintering at Schildberg Recreation Area- Lake 4. The swan's official date of arrival was December 1st. On that day 12 Trumpeter Swans were here and they stayed more than twenty-four hours. The winner that picked the closest date was Mary Brasfield!

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Year in Review!

As we begin a new year and look back on 2024 the Conservation Board had a busy yet fun year. Our biggest project for the year was the renovation of the Outdoor Classroom Pond. The project consisted of pumping the pond nearly dry and then removing sediment with heavy equipment such as bulldozers and excavators. All said and done, they removed several hundred loads of sediment from the pond. This increased the maximum depth from 12ft to 15ft and greatly improved the average depth of the pond. The west 1/3 of the pond was only around 2ft average depth with it now being closer to 6ft. We have a short video of the restoration up on our [YouTube Channel!](#) The project was paid for with Fish Habitat Grant money as well as some from the operating budget of the Cass County Conservation Board. Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, and Channel Catfish have been stocked in the pond and fishing should be great in the coming years.

As of writing this we are having a cold beginning to 2025, that means ice fishing time for a lot of folks that enjoy getting outside this time of year. A few things to remember before venturing out to enjoy some ice fishing. Remember no ice is 100% safe, always fish with a partner and let people know where you are going and when to expect you to be home. Bring safety gear with you in case something does happen such as a rope, ice picks, a throwable floatation device is never a bad idea. Check the ice as you go out, making sure it's thick enough and good quality ice. You can sign up for weekly fishing reports or look at certain fisheries report. <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Fishing/Fishing-Reports> Reminder, hunting and fishing licenses expired after 1/10/25, you must purchase a new one for 2025.

We partnered with Cass County Tourism Committee to develop a sticker for Cold Springs Park, Cass County, and Lake Anita State Park (not pictured) These are for sale for \$5 each, catch our staff to get one!

As we neared the end of 2024, the Iowa DNR AmeriCorps Trails Crew visited Cass County. We partner with Iowa DNR State Preserves board to manage Frank C. Pellett Memorial Woods north of Atlantic. We submitted a project to be on this crew's work list in 2022, approved in 2023, with the crew committing to 2024! The crew of 5, spent 3 full days inside the State Preserve, focusing on the invasive Honeysuckle inside. November was a perfect time as this plant is easily seen by still being green at that time, and those beautiful woodland wildflowers are sleeping. That intense 24 hours of work by the crew made an impact on the understory of the forest inside. We have a short video of the before and after Lora did is also up on our [YouTube Channel!](#) We are checking out our snowshoes again this year and new this year are cross country skis!! We require a copy of your driver's license, our signed rental agreement, and at least 4 inches of snow on the ground! The forms can be found [here](#), and if you have any questions or issues email Lora at lkanning@casscoia.us Be safe and enjoy the winter outdoors, Spring will be here before we know it!

Winter Day Camps

FREE. Register online: <https://go.iastate.edu/83B3IU> . Register early, space is limited. Please contact Cass County Extension at 243-1132 for questions. Our winter camp was held in Early January for youth in Kdg- 2nd grades.

Nature Detectives Winter Day Camp [For youth in 3rd-5th grades.](#)

March 27th 9AM-4PM - Atlantic Community Building

March 19th 9AM-4PM- Griswold Community Building

Deadline is one week before camp, and bring a sack lunch. Students will learn about animal tracking, bird nests and skulls.



Upcoming Events



Denotes an Oak Stroller(Family Friendly) approved event! All Cass County Programs are FREE unless otherwise stated! Donations for programs are accepted. Questions on our events you may email Lora lkanning@casscoia.us or calling 712-769-2372.



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- Birding Hikes will leave at 1pm and 3pm.



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

Wednesday February 5th 2:30pm Anita Public Library

Wednesday February 12th 3:00pm Lewis Public Library

All ages welcome!

Tuesday February 11th 10:30am Atlantic Public Library- VIP Connections group- Adult weekly social group of the Atlantic Public Library. Lora's program will start at 10:30, social time starts at 10am.

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.



Full Moon Snowshoe Night 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! If no snow we will still hike! Free, Family Friendly!

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.

Using Outdoor Apps

Tuesday February 25th 10:30am Atlantic Public Library- VIP Connections group- Adult weekly social group of the Atlantic Public Library. Lora's program will start at 10:30, social time starts at 10am.

Saturday, March 15th 11AM Atlantic Public Library Community Room

Bring your phones, or tablets to discover how to use outdoor apps you might be interested in, everything from plants, birding, to hunting!

Mark your Calendars



Wildflower Walk

Saturday, April 26th- 9AM

Pellett Memorial Woods

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