

BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER Volume 60 | Number 3 | April/May/June 2025
<http://bigbluestemaudubon.org/>

The Big Bluestem Audubon Society hosted 3 outstanding speakers in the last 3 months. In January, noted photographer Carl Kurtz wowed the audience with his remarkable pictures of wildlife, in February, Ty Hamiel of the Story County Conservation Commission gave an update on the kestrel nesting box project, of which Big Bluestem has been a significant financial supporter, and in March, Rich Leopold gave audience members an overview and update on the efforts to preserve Brenton Slough, which is an important habitat for all types of wildlife in Polk county.

2024 Big Bluestem Audubon Society Programs

All programs are held at the
Ames Public Library (515 Douglas Ave.)
Business Meetings: 6:30pm • Programs: 7:00pm

2025 Programs

- Apr. 17th:** LoraKim Joyner
*Topic: Transformative Parrot Conservation:
Parrot Conservation in the Americas*
- May 15th:** Hank Zalatel
Topic: Birding in Belize
- Jun. 19th:** Summer birding outing
Location TBA
- Sept. 18th:** Laura Beskow and Lorna Carroll
*Topic: Lights Out Ames!
The Impact of Light Pollution on Birds and Pollinators*
- Oct. 16th:** Lindsey Page, Polk County
Conservation Commission
Topic: Grassland Birds
- Nov. 20th:** Teresa Testroet
*Topic: The Big Year: Hummingbird Nests
at McFarland Park*
- Dec. 18th:** BBAS Christmas Party, Ames Public Library Auditorium

2026 Programs

- Jan. 15th:** Carl Kurtz
Topic: Bird Habitat
- Feb. 19th:** Adam Janke, Iowa State University professor
Topic: Forest Management for Birds
- Mar. 19th:** Lindsey Page, Polk County Conservation Commission
Topic: Birds of Early Spring
- Apr. 16th:** Doug Harr, BBAS Vice President
Topic: The Wildlife of Sax Zim Bog
- May 21st:** TBA

Going forward, BBAS will have its December meetings at the same time (6:30 p.m. business meeting, 7:00 p.m. for the program) as we do for the other meetings. We are also switching our venue of the December meeting to the Ames Public Library. We will no longer have our December meeting at McFarland Park, beginning in December of 2024. December meetings will now be the 3rd Thursday of the month, the same as the other monthly meetings are scheduled. The change allows for consistency and avoids any confusion that may arise from having a December meeting that occurs at a different time, date, and location from the other BBAS meetings.

Sax-Zim Bog in Minnesota



Pine Martens
Photo by Doug Harr



Great Gray Owl
Photo by Doug Harr



Notice to New Members of Big Bluestem Audubon Society Only:
We are sending you this printed version of our BBAS newsletter for the first two issues after you have joined the National Audubon Society or become a local member. We have now converted to a mostly electronically-delivered newsletter to save costs and be more green. If you want to receive a printed version, please notify me. Otherwise, you will receive the online version. If you supplied your email address upon joining, we will send you a notice and link for the newsletter each time a new version is available.

Thanks,
Tim Garner
timgarner@mediacombb.net



Support conservation
in Iowa.

OFFICERS

President | Tim Garner
timgarner@mediacombb.net
515-451-0960

Vice President | Doug Harr
dnharr@gmail.com
515-275-4818

Secretary | Charli Hanway

Treasurer | Heather Sanders
hsanders0519@aol.com
515-371-9156

BOARD MEMBERS

Eli Kenyon
elikenyon18@gmail.com
641-891-3857

Janet Gebler

Kristi Harkins

Ex-Officio
Archivist | Hank Zalatel
madowl@midiaowa.net
515-382-5427

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS

Conservation | Bruce Ehresman
behresman5@gmail.com
515-296-2995

Communicator | Doug Harr
dnharr@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor | Tim Garner
timgarner@mediacombb.net
515-451-0960

Membership | Heather Sanders
hsanders0519@aol.com
515-371-9156

Newsletter Designer | Jamie Riesselman
jamie@vividimages.design

Webmaster | Karl Jungbluth
weatherbird58@gmail.com

Website designer | Ann Johnson

Attention all birders:

The Big Bluestem Audubon Society's annual bird-a-thon will take place on May 10th. It is our annual fundraiser, and enables BBAS to promote education and conservation initiatives throughout the year. Please consider being a donor!

Here's how it works: You can either create a team of your own or make a donation to a team. Pledges can either be a set amount or you can choose to donate a certain amount for each species spotted, number of total birds spotted, or any other metric that you choose. (Checks are made payable to Big Bluestem Audubon Society, and can be given either to a member of the team you're supporting, or mailed to Big Bluestem Audubon Society, P.O. Box 543, Ames, IA. 50010.)

If you're on a team, you can choose where to bird and then you submit a report with the number of birds that were spotted and the species as well. These results can be sent to Wolf Oesterreich at wolfoest@gmail.com. The rules and data sheets can be found at the Big Bluestem Audubon Society website, www.bigbluestemaudubon.org.

Data for Big Bluestem Audubon Society Birdathons											
										6/9/2024	
										v. 4	
Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006		
Club total number of species	134	178	158	165	161		172	164	177		
Club total number of warblers		22	22	28	30				21	18	
Most species by one team		110			126	137			139	134	
Most warblers by one team				20	25					15	
Number of teams	11	10	5	7	9			7	7		
Number of observers	23	33	28	22	19			17	19		
Funds Raised	\$1,766	\$4,440	\$4,808	\$5,712	\$4,200	\$4,400	\$4,979	\$3,339	\$3,629		
Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		
Club total number of species	169	176	169	180	172	177	175	176	175		
Club total number of warblers	25	26	23	27	21	24	20	26	25		
Most species by one team	135	139	137	135	136	146	142	149	150		
Most warblers by one team		21	19	24	16	17	18	23	19		
Number of teams	7	5	4	7	6	5	4	5	5		
Number of observers	20			21	19	23	18		16		
Funds Raised	\$3,000	\$3,250		\$2,709	\$3,049	\$2,689	\$2,600	\$3,400	\$3,900		
Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024		
Club total number of species	178	156	183	183	Cancelled	178	167	176	181		
Club total number of warblers	27	21	33	27	due to	22	21	29	22		
Most species by one team	157	137	142	146	Covid	135	138	140	138		
Most warblers by one team	27	16	21	21		18	17	25	19		
Number of teams	4	4	5	5		5	3	5	5		
Number of observers	15	15	14	16			10		15		
Funds Raised	\$4,000	\$3,215	\$3,717	\$3,031		\$5,196	\$2,708	\$5,926			
Total Funds Raised	\$89,663										
Highest club total of species	183	2019		Highest total of species by one team:						157	2016
Highest club total of warblers	30	2002		Highest number of warblers by one team:						27	2016
The record setting team of 2016 was the Baffled Birders: Bruce Erhman, Marlene Erhman, Kelly Poole, and Gina McAndrews											

Membership Application Form

New member of the National Audubon Society. You will receive the *Audubon* magazine, the *Big Bluestem Flyer*, membership card. - \$20

Please make your check payable to *National Audubon Society* and include "Chapter Code H-57" on the check

Subscribe to the *Big Bluestem Flyer* for one year and participate in some Big Bluestem Society Activities - \$10
Restrictions are that you will not be a National Audubon Society Member or have voting privileges, and you cannot be an officer or committee chair.

Please make your check payable to *Big Bluestem Audubon Society*.

Send your check and this coupon to:

Big Bluestem Audubon Society
P.O. Box 543, Ames IA 50010

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ E-mail _____

Please do not use this form for renewals to the National Audubon Society.

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Big Bluestem Audubon Society Column *April, 2025*

As this newsletter goes to press, spring has arrived and migration is underway. For me, it is a favorite time of year, with song-birds reminding us of the beauty of the changing of the seasons, a harbinger of nature's eternal rhythms.

Even more than that, I myself have experienced a feeling that birds are messengers, from places far away, or from people who are no longer with us. So it was for me, many-years ago, shortly after my father died. A few weeks after his death, one morning, as I left my house on my way to school, I heard the lonesome and melancholy cooing of a mourning dove. The sadness of its call spoke to me, and yet at the same time it was a balm for my grief. I am sure that the episode that I describe is not unique; I suspect many people, especially birders, have experienced something similar in their lives.

Indeed birds are often messengers, not only in life but in literature or cinema. The raven in the eponymous Edgar Allen Poe poem repeatedly utters the word "Nevermore", to a series of questions the narrator poses to the bird, causing the narrator to lament that his grief shall never cease. In the timeless song Somewhere, Over the Rainbow, Judy Garland sings that "some-where over the rainbow bluebirds fly", a wistful wish to be in a better place, a place that she longs to be.

But the messages that birds send us need not always be one of yearning or foreboding of course. Birds can be missives of hope and inspiration as well, that tell us there are examples of progress in protecting endangered species. I am reminded of this fact after reading an article in the winter edition of Audubon magazine, which recounted an amazing story of a California condor. Avian influenza had killed a number of these critically endangered birds in 2023. A nesting female condor died from the disease, so conservationists rescued the egg.

The egg was transferred to the Peregrine Fund's breeding facility in Boise, Idaho, where it hatched and, to prevent human imprinting, was housed with other condors, to be socialized in all things vulture, including, interestingly enough, condor etiquette, which includes taking turns while dining on a carcass. The condor was given a Spanish name, Milagra, and was eventually returned to its nesting site in Arizona, to the delight of hundreds of birders who witnessed the release. Shortly after being turned loose, the condor encountered another condor as they both fed on a carcass. That condor was Milagra's father.

Milagra means miracle in Spanish. And so I wish that each of you may experience the miraculous spectacle that is migration this spring. I know it will inspire you and fill you with awe and wonder.

Tim Garner
President and Newsletter Editor
Big Bluestem Audubon Society



The **Snowy Owl** was found on the roadside shoulder. Photos were taken, and the owl was studied. Though alert, able to hop and extend both wings, the bird did not seem capable of flight. A raptor rehabilitator was summoned, then met us at the site. After a short chase, the bird was collected for forwarding to a veterinarian and S.O.A.R.



With the bird in hand, and in evidence in the 3rd photo, we could see ruffled feathers around the bird's left eye and some cloudiness on the cornea. Hopefully, a full recovery is ahead.

Jerry Probst, South Sioux City, NE
Bill Huser, South Sioux City, NE

Forty Years Ago in BBAS by Hank Zaletel

The program for April, 1985, featured Bill Horine speaking on "The Wings of Spring in Nebraska." Lawrence Ladin of Des Moines spoke on "Hiking in Nepal" in May. The presentations were held in the Jury Room at the College of Design.

Field trips headed to Henrickson Marsh in April, McFarland Park in May and the potluck dinner in June ventured to the Iowa Arboretum.

BBAS members Tom Davis, Mary Owings and Dave Edwards set out the remaining Audubon Trail marker posts at Brookside Park in Ames on April 13th. All 24 posts were in place, painted, and numbered. Work on the accompanying trail guide was to resume in May.

Officers for the upcoming year 1985/1986 were announced: President, Jim Murdock; Vice President, Dave Edwards; Secretary, Sherry Dragula; Treasurer, Judy Shearer; Board members included: Cindy Hildebrand, Judy van der Linden, Tim Grotheer, Tom Davis and Mary Owings.

BBAS Bird Group photo 10-12-24



Eli Kenyon, Big Bluestem Audubon Society executive board member, led a birding trip last October at Emma McCarthy Lee park in Ames, that was well attended.

Big Bluestem Audubon Society co-sponsored a Raising Readers Playful Pages Family Workshop on March 20 at North Grand Mall. BBAS purchased copies of *Feathers for Lunch* by Lois Ehlert and *Nature Baby Birds* board books to be given to children and their families. The hour-long program was attended by 3-5 year olds and their families. Children participated in hands-on activities such as: a read aloud of a book about birds, listening to bird calls, using child size binoculars to locate photos of birds, a sensory table with bird seed and rubber worms, looking at feathers with a microscope, and making cardboard bird feeders.



PHOTOS AND CONTENT FOR NEWSLETTER BY TIM GARNER

Please submit any photos of birds, wildlife, habitat, or events that you would like to be included in the flyer newsletter to Tim Garner (timgarner@mediacombb.net). We are also looking for short content items and announcements.

The Big Bluestem Audubon Society Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Big Bluestem Audubon Society promotes fostering an inclusive, equitable, and diverse climate and culture, where all members of our organization can thrive. We welcome people of all backgrounds and seek to create a membership that is inclusive of diverse cultures, backgrounds, and life experiences while enhancing a culture of respect and civil discourse. We aspire to attract and retain a diverse membership.

Kestrel program continues to grow



Fox Sparrow
Photo by Larry Dau



Red Winged Blackbird
Photo by Larry Dau



Fox Sparrow
Photo by Larry Dau



Sharp Shinned Hawk
Photo by Larry Dau



Harris' Sparrow
Photo by Larry Dau



Cooper's Hawk
Photo by Larry Dau



Rusty Blackbird
Photo by Larry Dau



As you may know, Story County Conservation restarted the kestrel nesting box program last year by putting up boxes along the Praeri Rail Trail. This year we are continuing our efforts by adding more boxes throughout the county. We have installed 15 out of 25 boxes that are to go up.

Kestrel boxes need to be at least a half mile away from one another. If boxes are too close together, a male may "claim" multiple boxes by not allowing another mating pair to utilize the box. Nesting will not begin until spring and the new boxes will be monitored closely over the next few years for successful nests. If a kestrel box appears unused or used by another bird species, the box may be relocated in hopes of a successful nesting of kestrels.

We would like to thank our donors who have helped make this possible. The Story County Pheasants Forever chapter and Big Bluestem Audubon Society generously donated \$1,000 each towards our program. This founding was crucial to our efforts and made it possible for us to purchase telespar posts that have been installed along prairie roadside restorations to hold the kestrel boxes.

TRIVIA NIGHT



Trivia night participants have fun discussing answers with their teammates



Tim Garner moderates the questions for the night



Heather Saunders draws names out for the prize giveaways



Members Janet Gebler & Kristi Harkins enjoy Trivia night with friend Judy Dahlke



Members Marlene Ehresman, Bruce Ehresman, Jim Pease, & Mike Meetz laugh at some of their answers with their team



Member Mary Doud is pleased to get a gift card from Sweet Caroline's restaurant



Member Mike Meetz was pleased to get a bird feeder donated by Wild Birds Unlimited



Trivia participants munched on snacks as they had a great time discussing answers



Eli Kenyon & Kelly Dehner were the judges for the night, working hard to grade all answers for 15 teams



A participant enjoyed getting a bird feeder given by member Todd Burras of Wild Birds Unlimited

On March 1st Big Bluestem Audubon Society sponsored a trivia night at Torrent Brewery Company in Ames. The event was attended by dozens of supporters, and the event raised a total of \$826.16. These funds were used to help the Story County Conservation Commission defray the costs of re-seeding a prairie in Story County with native plants, which will enhance habitat, not only for birds, but for other plant and animal life. Numerous individuals, non-profits, and companies contributed door prizes, which added to the festiveness of this event. We would like to acknowledge Andy McCormick for allowing us to use Torrent Brewery for the trivia night, along with Wild Birds Unlimited, Jim Pease, KHOI Community Radio, Sweet Caroline's, Little Woods:Herbs and Teas, Chocolaterie Stam, Culver's, and Dog-Eared Books for their generosity, in addition to the attendees of this event, whose contributions made such a positive difference in a local conservation initiative.



Member Anne-Marie Floro and her team think hard about their answers.



Member Anne-Marie Floro picks a bird seed feeder as a prize, given by Wild Birds Unlimited

I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the Big Bluestem Audubon Society volunteers who checked in teams, collected and scored answer sheets, and helped to organize this event. A special thanks is owed to Heather Sanders, who first proposed this idea, who wrote the questions and secured the venue, and who obtained donations from local sponsors. Again, thanks to everyone who made this trivia night possible.

Remember the Chickadee Check-Off

Last year, a little more than 5,300 Iowa taxpayers helped boost wildlife conservation with donations to the Fish and Wildlife Fund on their state tax form. Unfortunately, in the last 20 years, the number of donors has declined by 50 percent and represents about 0.3 percent of total taxpayers in Iowa.

The amount donated decreased as well, with a little under \$134,000 contributed, a decrease of roughly \$14,000 from last year and \$22,000 from two years previous.

"We are extremely thankful for those who donate to wildlife conservation with their tax refunds," said Stephanie Shepherd, wildlife biologist with the Iowa DNR's Wildlife Diversity program. "The funds are vital to our work for non-game wildlife, which make up the vast majority of wildlife in Iowa."

The Fish and Wildlife Fund, commonly known as the "Chickadee Check-off," is a mechanism the Iowa Legislature created in the 1980s for Iowans to donate to wildlife conservation on the Iowa state income tax form.

According to Shepherd, while the Wildlife Fund is a great opportunity for charitable giving, not a lot of people know about it. The Iowa Wildlife Diversity program is primarily supported by tax form donations, along with the sales of natural resources license plates.

"Non-game" wildlife are the 1,000-plus species such as songbirds, bald eagles, salamanders, turtles, monarchs, bees and more that make up the majority of wildlife in Iowa. Funding helps improve wildlife habitat, research and restore native species, provide educational opportunities for citizens to learn about Iowa's natural resources, and much more.

An example of the program's work in 2024 was a project to radio-tag Wood Thrush, a bird species that has declined 50 percent since the 1960s, to learn about nesting patterns and migration. Another project, the Multiple Species Inventory and Monitoring program, discovered a fish that hasn't been seen in Iowa since the 1930s - the Starhead Topminnow.

"If you're interested in donating, the tax check-off line may be pretty inconspicuous and sometimes missed," said Shepherd. "Be sure to remind your tax preparer if you want to donate."

Once found on the form, donating is easy: simply write the donation amount next to Fish/Wildlife, which is line 21 on Form 1040, and the sum is either automatically deducted from the refund or added to the amount owed.

"If every Iowa taxpayer donated just \$1, it would mean \$1.6 million for wildlife diversity and conservation," Shepherd said.

Those who missed donating on their tax form they can still make a donation to the Wildlife Diversity program online at:
<https://programs.iowadnr.gov/donations>.

Donate \$5 of your next purchase* of \$25 or more at WBU to BBAS

Big Bluestem Audubon Society



Wild Birds Unlimited
Nature Shop



*Coupon must be presented at time of purchase.
One coupon per purchase.
May not be combined with any other offer.
Valid only at Wild Birds Unlimited of Ames.

Expires 12-31-2025

213 Duff Ave. Ames, IA 50010 (515) 956-3145
Monday-Friday 9:30-5:30 Saturday 9-5 Sunday 12-4
www.ames.wbu.com

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1 1/2 miles east of I-35 on new U.S. 30 and 1/4 mile north

Hours: 8-6 M-F, 8-4 Sat. (515) 232-7906

Purchase		Donation
Up to \$15	\$	1.50
\$15 and over	\$	3.00
\$35 and over	\$	5.00
Over \$70	\$	7.50

Brekke's offers Big Bluestem Audubon Society a donation when bird seed or other bird products are purchased.

Present this coupon with your purchase and a donation will be given to BBAS.

Expires 12-31-2025

BBAS Businesses

Please know that if you make a purchase at either Wild Birds Unlimited or Brekke's Town and Country Store, Inc. that these businesses will make a donation to Big Bluestem Audubon Society. Be sure to present the coupon when making the purchase.
We thank these fine businesses for their generous support.

NEW MEMBERS

OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

We are pleased to announce that the following people have joined the Big Bluestem Audubon Society.

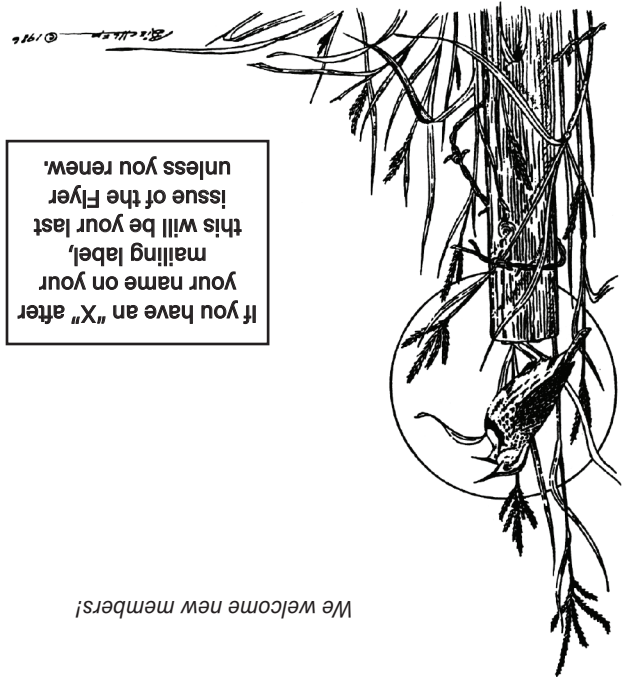
David Weieneth and **Tyler Morrison**

Welcome!

And thank you for joining our ranks.

The mission of the Big Bluestem Audubon Society is to enjoy the observation and study of birds and natural ecosystems, contribute to their conservation and restoration, engage in educational activities to benefit humanity, and gain a broader understanding and deeper appreciation of the world in which we live.

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<http://bigbluestemaudubon.org/>



If you have an "X" after your name on your mailing label, this will be your last issue of the Flyer unless you renew.

We welcome new members!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Big Bluestem Flyer
Tim Garner, president
Big Bluestem Audubon Society
PO Box 543
Ames, IA 50010-0543

Ring-necked pheasants' unlikely journey to becoming an Iowa icon

It was still an hour before the 2024 pheasant season would open but the birds were there and they were ready. Cackles and crowing were coming from all across the Kossuth County prairie as hunters whispered with anticipation – today would be one for the memories was the consensus.

Judging by the parking lots at the public hunting areas across north Iowa, that opinion was a popular one.

Pheasants are not native to the United States but seem to have found a home in the Plains and upper Midwest. Iowa's birds can be traced back to a wind storm in 1901 that damaged William Benton's private game farm in Cedar Falls, liberating around 2,000 pheasants. Rumor had it, Benton obtained his stock from a Tacoma, Wash. importer.

That unintentional release was followed by intentional stockings in 1908-09 by private landowners in Kossuth and O'Brien counties that helped the exotic birds get a foothold in northern Iowa. By 1910, the state Conservation Commission got involved, purchasing 6,200 eggs and distributed them to farmers in 82 counties. Farmers would often have hen houses where the pheasant eggs would be placed alongside chicken eggs.

At the time, Iowa's countryside consisted of too-wet-to-farm sloughs and small farms, with a patchwork of corn, oats, hay, pasture and beet fields, which was a perfect match for the ring-necked pheasant. Soon, it became clear that wild birds were better equipped to survive than captive birds and in 1915, farmers were encouraged to trap and move wild birds to new areas.

The expanding pheasant population began to cause localized crop damage to the point that 130 farmers in Hancock County petitioned the state to open a hunting season. In 1925, Iowa allowed pheasant hunting in 13 north central counties for three days in the fall, opening at noon each day. In these early seasons, hens were occasionally legal to shoot along with roosters. In 1943, the birds were so numerous that Iowa held a spring season in addition to the regular fall season.

"These early seasons were extremely conservative, lasting only three to five days," said Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

In 1936, the Conservation Commission conducted its first roadside population survey in September and October. The survey evolved in these early years before moving to early August and becoming standardized in 1962.

Pheasants continued to expand across the state and additional counties were opened to hunting. The state was divided into zones based on estimated bird population – the Long Zone in northern Iowa had a 2- to-3-week season; the Short Zone in southern Iowa had a 5-12-day season.

In 1955, hunters bagged an estimated 1.5 million birds. Around 1959, shooting hours were standardized and pheasant hunting moved into the modern era with one season statewide and was open in more than 80 counties, with only far southeast Iowa still closed.

While pheasants were expanding their reach, Iowa's agriculture community began to change, going from more than 6.8 million acres planted to small grains in 1950, to 1.29 million acres in 1972. Soybeans that had been planted on 1.9 million acres in 1950, increased to 6 million acres in 1972.

Changes to Iowa's countryside accelerated during the farm crisis in the 1980s.

The 1985 Farm Bill created the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to reduce crop production to allow grain prices to recover, and Iowa producers enrolled 76,000 acres in the program by the end of the year. The second round of enrollments increased to 1.2 million acres. By 1993, 2.2 million acres of crop fields were enrolled and converted to grasslands.

When added to existing hay and small grains, Iowa had an estimated 4.5 million acres of pheasant friendly habitat, up from 2.9 million acres in 1983.

"CRP wasn't a new idea. Its premise was similar to the soil bank in the 1950s and 60s," Bogenschutz said. "Grain prices recovered quickly and pheasants responded to the expanded habitat."

With the goal of improving grain prices achieved, the focus of CRP shifted to prioritize native seed plantings, seed mix diversity and specific landscapes. The federal Farm Bill had become the most important habitat program for the state.

Rise and Fall of bird numbers

Iowa's pheasant population is heavily influenced by winter and spring weather – mild winters with little snow followed by warm dry spring is good for survival and reproduction; conversely, cold, snowy winters with cool, wet springs isn't good for pheasants.

The consecutive bad winters and wet springs from 2008-12 saw Iowa's bird numbers plummet to an all-time low harvest of 109,000 roosters in 2011, and hunter participation bottomed out at 41,000, two years later.

However, droughts benefit ground nesting birds – including pheasants – and the recent string of droughts followed by mild winters has returned bird populations to pre-crash levels.

Iowa is a national pheasant hunting destination, second only to South Dakota in bird harvest, with hunters harvesting nearly 600,000 roosters in 2023.

Much of the harvest estimate is dependent upon hunters in the field. The last time Iowa's pheasant harvest topped one million birds was in 2003, when there were an estimated 142,000 resident and nonresident hunters. In 2023, that estimate was 83,000.

"Our pheasant population is similar to 2007 when the harvest was around 700,000 birds," he said. "The only difference from today is we don't have the number of pheasant hunters as we did in 2007. Harvest is driven by bird numbers, but also how many people are pulling the trigger."

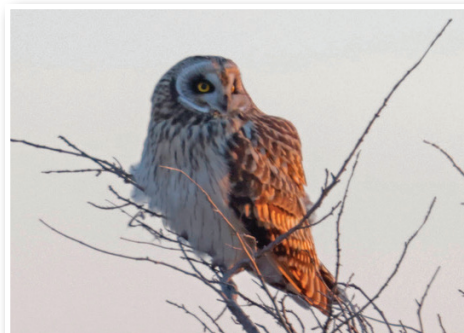
A century of pheasant hunting

The Iowa DNR and Pheasants Forever are celebrating 100 years of pheasant hunting in the Hawkeye State. The first season was held Oct. 20-22, 1925, when 13 counties in north central Iowa were opened to pheasant hunting. Hunters were allowed a three-rooster limit, for a half-day of hunting. An estimated 75,000 hunters participated.

Hunters can commemorate the 100th anniversary by purchasing a hard card featuring Iowa Pheasants Forever Print of the Year when they purchase their 2025 hunting and fishing licenses.



Saw-whet owl, trying to sleep on a snow cover pine branch. Photo by Don Poggensee



*Short-eared Owl at Owego Wetland
Photo by Don Poggensee*