(continued)

___Ring-necked Duck
___Lesser Scaup
___Hooded Merganser
___Ruddy Duck

___**Northern Bobwhite***
___Gray Partridge
___Ring-necked Pheasant*
___**Greater Prairie Chicken**
___Wild Turkey*
___**Sharp-tailed Grouse**

___Pied-billed Grebe*

___**American Bittern**
___**Least Bittern**
___Great Blue Heron*
___Great Egret
___Cattle Egret
___Green Heron*
___**Black-crowned Night-Heron**

___Turkey Vulture*

___**Bald Eagle***
___**Northern Harrier***
___Sharp-shinned Hawk
___Cooper's Hawk
___Red-tailed Hawk*
___**Broad-winged Hawk**
___**Swainson's Hawk**
___Rough-legged Hawk
___Golden Eagle

___Virginia Rail*
___Sora*
___American Coot*

___**Piping Plover**
___Killdeer*

___Spotted Sandpiper*
___**Greater Yellowlegs**
___**Lesser Yellowlegs**
___**Upland Sandpiper***
___Semipalmated Sandpiper
___Least Sandpiper
___White-rumped Sandpiper
___Baird's Sandpiper
___Pectoral Sandpiper
___Wilson's Snipe
___**American Woodcock***

___Franklin's Gull
___Ring-billed Gull
___**Least Tern**
___**Black Tern**
___**Forster's Tern**

___Rock Pigeon*
___Mourning Dove*

___**Yellow-billed Cuckoo***
___**Black-billed Cuckoo***

___Eastern Screech-Owl*
___Great Horned Owl*
___**Burrowing Owl**
___Barred Owl*
___**Long-eared Owl**

___**Short-eared Owl**

___**Common Nighthawk***
___Chuck-will's-widow
___**Eastern Whip-poor-will***

___**Chimney Swift***

___Ruby-throated Hummingbird*

___Belted Kingfisher*

___**Red-headed Woodpecker***
___Red-bellied Woodpecker*
___Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
___Downy Woodpecker*
___Hairy Woodpecker*
___Northern Flicker*

___American Kestrel*

___Eastern Wood-Pewee*
___**Acadian Flycatcher**
___**Willow Flycatcher***
___**Least Flycatcher**
___Eastern Phoebe*
___Say's Phoebe
___Great Crested Flycatcher*
___Western Kingbird*
___Eastern Kingbird*

___**Loggerhead Shrike***
___Northern Shrike

___**Bell's Vireo***
___Yellow-throated Vireo*
___Blue-headed Vireo
___Warbling Vireo*
___Philadelphia Vireo
___Red-eyed Vireo*

___Blue Jay*
___Black-billed Magpie*
___American Crow*

___Horned Lark*

___Purple Martin*
___Tree Swallow*
___Northern Rough-winged Swallow*
___Bank Swallow*
___Cliff Swallow*
___Barn Swallow*

___Black-capped Chickadee*

___White-breasted Nuthatch*

___**Brown Creeper**

___House Wren*
___**Sedge Wren***
___Marsh Wren*

___Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
___Ruby-crowned Kinglet

___Eastern Bluebird*
___Swainson's Thrush
___**Wood Thrush***
___American Robin*

___Gray Catbird*
___Brown Thrasher*

___European Starling*

___Cedar Waxwing*

___Ovenbird*
___**Louisiana Waterthrush**
___Northern Waterthrush
___**Black-and-White Warbler**
___Tennessee Warbler
___Orange-crowned Warbler
___Nashville Warbler
___**Kentucky Warbler***
___Common Yellowthroat*
___American Redstart*
___**Cerulean Warbler**
___Yellow Warbler*
___Blackpoll Warbler
___Yellow-rumped Warbler
___Wilson's Warbler
___**Yellow-breasted Chat***

___Spotted Towhee
___Eastern Towhee*
___American Tree Sparrow
___Chipping Sparrow*
___Clay-colored Sparrow*
___**Field Sparrow***
___Vesper Sparrow*
___Lark Sparrow*
___Savannah Sparrow*
___**Grasshopper Sparrow***
___Song Sparrow*

___Lincoln's Sparrow
___Swamp Sparrow*
___White-throated Sparrow
___Harris's Sparrow
___White-crowned Sparrow
___Dark-eyed Junco

___Summer Tanager*
___Scarlet Tanager*
___Northern Cardinal*
___Rose-breasted Grosbeak*
___Blue Grosbeak*
___Indigo Bunting*
___**Dickcissel***

___**Bobolink***
___Red-winged Blackbird*
___**Eastern Meadowlark***
___Western Meadowlark*
___Yellow-headed Blackbird*
___**Rusty Blackbird**
___Common Grackle*
___Great-tailed Grackle*
___Brown-headed Cowbird*
___Orchard Oriole*
___Baltimore Oriole*

___House Finch*
___Purple Finch*
___American Goldfinch*

___House Sparrow*

Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program

The Nature Conservancy
Protecting nature. Preserving life.™
nature.org

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

1436 255th St.
Boone, IA 50036
Phone: (515) 432-2823
Fax: (515) 432-2835

IOWA DNR Natural Resources

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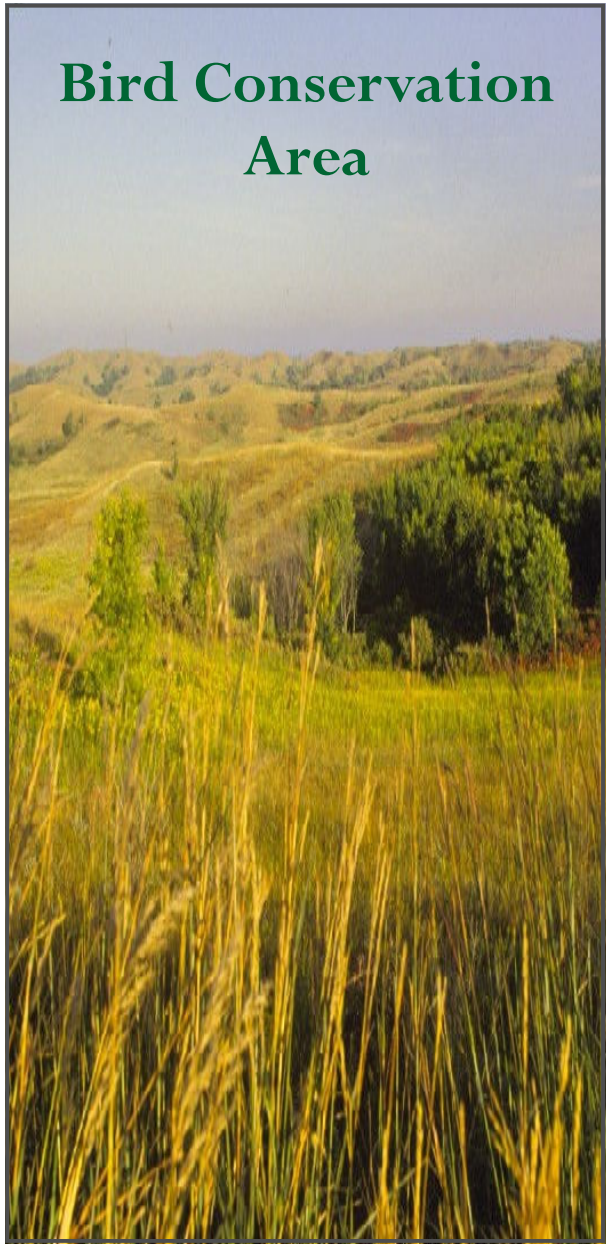
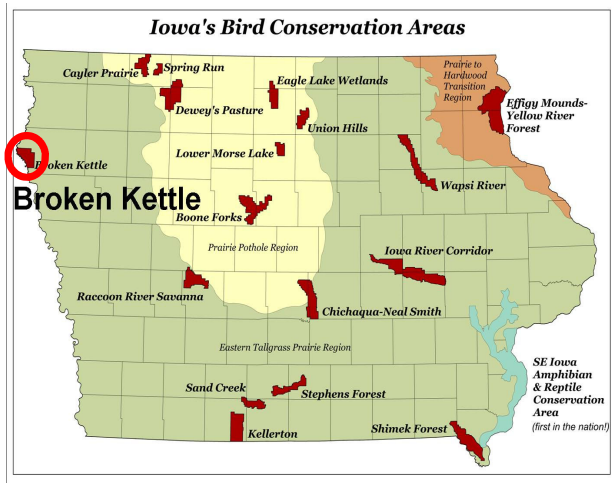
Written by Jenni Dyar, AmeriCorps, 2009
Updated by Natalie Randall, 2012

Broken Kettle Grasslands

Bird Conservation Area



Plymouth County



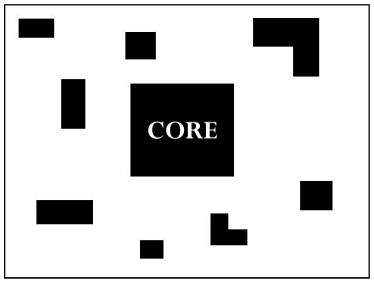
The Broken Kettle Grasslands Bird Conservation Area (BCA) is located in the northern portion of Loess Hills of western Iowa. Its 24,500 acres contain the largest remaining contiguous prairie tracts in Iowa. Much of the land is managed by The Nature Conservancy, and the BCA provides prime habitat for such grassland bird species as the Bobolink, Grasshopper Sparrow, Western Kingbird, Black-billed Magpie, and Upland Sandpiper.

Black-billed Magpie
Photo by Dan Dzurisin

BIRD CONSERVATION AREAS

Within the last two decades, alarming declines in a large number of species of North American birds have led to the emergence of national and international programs dedicated to the conservation of game and non-game birds. Since 1999, bird conservation organizations and enthusiasts have worked together under an umbrella called the North American Bird Conservation Initiative to "conserve all birds in all habitats." As part of this initiative and in an effort to protect dwindling populations of many Iowa birds, the **Bird Conservation Area** (BCA) program was established by the Iowa DNR Wildlife Bureau in 2001.

The present model BCA encompasses at least 10,000 acres of public and/or private lands with approximately 25 percent of the area established as key bird habitat. This concept is backed by research that suggests viable bird populations require conservation efforts at a landscape-oriented level. Each BCA should also include a large "core" area of protected high-quality habitat. Surrounding this core are private lands, plus additional public tracts, managed for good bird habitat or at least maintained to be neutral in how they affect bird life.



A BCA Model: Shaded areas depict habitat protected for birds; white is private land.

IOWA'S LOESS HILLS

Loess (pronounced "luss") is a German word meaning "loose," and it is used to describe a type of soil. Loess deposits are made up of fine, yellowish-gray, clay-like sediment and are often found at the edges of large river basins. Loess deposits are common in the Midwest; it's what helps make our land so rich for farming. The Loess Hills of Iowa are unique in their depth of loess; only deposits near the Yellow River in China are greater than the 100-200 foot depths found in Iowa's Loess Hills.

BROKEN KETTLE DIVERSITY

Tallgrass prairie historically covered 25 million acres across parts of Iowa and Minnesota. Today, less than one percent of the original tallgrass prairie remains. At Broken Kettle Grasslands, extensive prairie ridgetops support a variety of plants and animals typically found further west in the Great Plains, such as the Yucca Plant and Prairie Rattlesnake. In fact, you will not find the Prairie Rattlesnake any further east in North America than Iowa's Loess Hills.

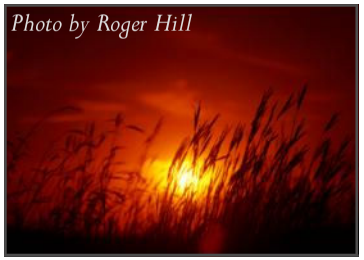


Photo by Roger Hill

PLANTS

Plant life at Broken Kettle includes Big Bluestem, Silky Aster, Ground Plum, Downy Painted Cup, Purple Coneflower, Snow-on-the-mountain, Dotted Blazing Star, Ten-petaled Mentzelia, Purple Locoweed, Pasque Flower, Bur Oak, Tumblegrass, Lead Plant, Little Bluestem, Buffalo Berry, and Scarlet Globe Mallow.

ANIMALS

In addition to birds, there are many interesting animals living in Broken Kettle. Badgers and Coyote can be found here, and a herd of Bison have also been reintroduced. Herpetiles in the area include the Great Plains Toad, Spadefoot, and Prairie Rattlesnake. Several prairie butterfly species of special concern are here, too, such as the Dusted Skipper, Regal Fritillary, and Ottoe and Pawnee Skippers.

Prairie Rattlesnake

Regal Fritillary

Plains Spadefoot
Photo by Jeff LeClere

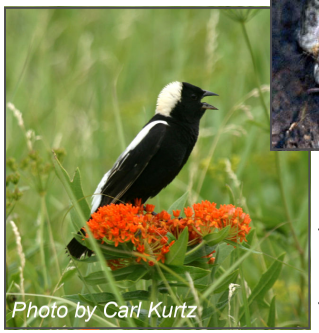


Photo by Carl Kurtz

The protected prairie at Broken Kettle is critical to the survival of grassland Species of Greatest Conservation Need, like the Bobollink (left).

Field Checklist for Broken Kettle BCA

* = confirmed or likely area breeder

Iowa Wildlife Action Plan Migratory Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Iowa Wildlife Action Plan Nesting Species of Greatest Conservation Need

___Greater White-fronted Goose
___Snow Goose
___Cackling Goose
___Canada Goose*
___Wood Duck*
___Gadwall
___American Wigeon
___Mallard*
___Blue-winged Teal*
___Northern Shoveler*
___**Northern Pintail**
___Green-winged Teal
___**Redhead**

(continued on back)