(continued)

___**Black-crowned Night-Heron***
___**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**

___White-faced Ibis

___Turkey Vulture*

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

___**Yellow Rail**
___Virginia Rail*
___Sora*
___**Common Moorhen**
___American Coot*

___Black-bellied Plover
___**American Golden-Plover**
___Semipalmated Plover
___Killdeer*

___**American Avocet**

___Spotted Sandpiper*
___**Solitary Sandpiper**
___**Greater Yellowlegs**
___Willet
___**Lesser Yellowlegs**
___**Upland Sandpiper***
___**Hudsonian Godwit**
___**Marbled Godwit**
___Semipalmated Sandpiper
___Western Sandpiper
___Least Sandpiper
___White-rumped Sandpiper
___Baird's Sandpiper
___Pectoral Sandpiper
___**Stilt Sandpiper**
___**Buff-breasted Sandpiper**
___**Short-billed Dowitcher**
___Long-billed Dowitcher
___Wilson's Snipe
___**American Woodcock**
___**Wilson's Phalarope**

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

___Rock Pigeon*
___Eurasian Collared-Dove*
___Mourning Dove*

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

___Eastern Screech-Owl*

___Great Horned Owl*
___**Burrowing Owl**
___Snowy Owl
___Barred Owl*
___**Long-eared Owl**
___**Short-eared Owl**
___Northern Saw-whet Owl

___**Common Nighthawk***
___Eastern **Whip-poor-will**

___**Chimney Swift***

___Ruby-throated Hummingbird*

___Belted Kingfisher*

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

___American Kestrel*
___Merlin
___**Peregrine Falcon**

___**Olive-sided Flycatcher**
___Eastern Wood-Pewee*
___**Acadian Flycatcher**
___Alder Flycatcher
___**Willow Flycatcher***
___**Least Flycatcher**
___Eastern Phoebe*
___Say's Phoebe
___Great Crested Flycatcher*
___Western Kingbird
___Eastern Kingbird*
___Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

___**Loggerhead Shrike**
___Northern Shrike

___Yellow-throated Vireo
___Blue-headed Vireo
___Warbling Vireo*
___Red-eyed Vireo*

___Blue Jay*
___American Crow*

___Horned Lark*

___Purple Martin*
___Tree Swallow*
___N. Rough-winged Swallow*
___Bank Swallow*
___Cliff Swallow*
___Barn Swallow*

___Black-capped Chickadee*

___Red-breasted Nuthatch
___White-breasted Nuthatch*

___**Brown Creeper**

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

___Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*

___Golden-crowned Kinglet
___Ruby-crowned Kinglet

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

___Gray Catbird*
___Brown Thrasher*

___European Starling*

___Cedar Waxwing*

___Lapland Longspur
___Smith's Longspur
___Snow Bunting

___Ovenbird*
___Northern Waterthrush
___**Black-and-white Warbler**
___Tennessee Warbler
___Orange-crowned Warbler
___Nashville Warbler
___Common Yellowthroat*
___American Redstart*
___Magnolia Warbler
___Yellow Warbler*
___Chestnut-sided Warbler
___Palm Warbler
___Yellow-rumped Warbler
___Wilson's Warbler

___Eastern Towhee*
___American Tree Sparrow
___Chipping Sparrow*
___Clay-colored Sparrow*
___**Field Sparrow***

___Vesper Sparrow*
___Lark Sparrow*
___Savanna Sparrow*
___**Grasshopper Sparrow***
___**Henslow's Sparrow***
___Fox Sparrow
___Song Sparrow*
___Lincoln's Sparrow
___Swamp Sparrow*
___White-throated Sparrow
___Harris's Sparrow
___White-crowned Sparrow
___Dark-eyed Junco

___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**
___Brewer's Blackbird
___Common Grackle*
___Great-tailed Grackle*
___Brown-headed Cowbird*
___Orchard Oriole*
___Baltimore Oriole*

___Purple Finch
___House Finch*
___Pine Siskin
___American Goldfinch*

___House Sparrow*

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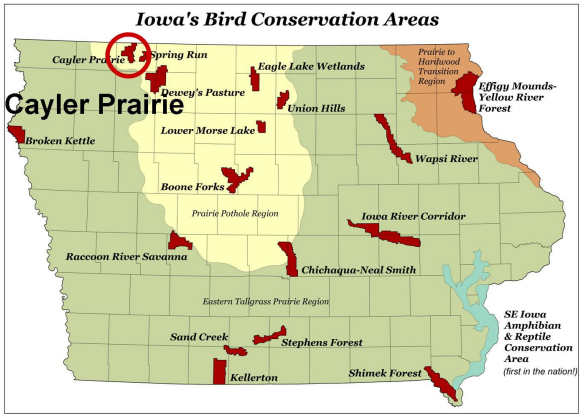
Written by Kristen Bredemeier, AmeriCorps, 2011
Updated by Natalie Randall, 2012

Cayler Prairie

Bird Conservation Area

Photo by Doug Harr

Dickinson County



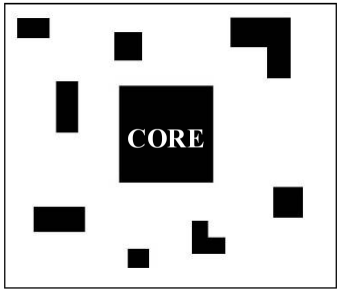
The Cayler Prairie Bird Conservation Area (BCA) is located west of Okoboji and Spirit lakes in Dickinson County and is focused on conservation for grassland birds. This BCA of over 37,000 acres is the 17th created in the state of Iowa. It is the first BCA centered on a State Preserve and is the second BCA (the first being Dewey's Pasture) to double as a National Natural Landmark. Containing both public and private land, this BCA provides a diversity of habitat for both nesting and migratory birds. One of the most significant features of the Cayler Prairie BCA is that its landcover is 37% grassland. Large blocks of grassland are essential for declining nesting grassland birds, such as meadowlarks, Bobolink, Dickcissel, Upland Sandpiper, Sedge Wren and the Iowa endangered Northern Harrier. Other declining grassland nesting birds that will benefit from improved habitat includes game species like the Ring-necked Pheasant and Northern Pintail.

Sedge Wren
Photo by Carl Kurtz

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.

Northern Pintail
Photo by Lee Gladfelter



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

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.

Upland Sandpiper Nest
Photo by Doug Harr

Dickcissel
Photo by Carl Kurtz

IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

Audubon's Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program is a global effort to identify and conserve areas that are vital to birds and other biodiversity. Designated IBAs include sites for breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds. All Iowa Bird Conservation Areas are also Important Bird Areas.

CAYLER PRAIRIE DIVERSITY

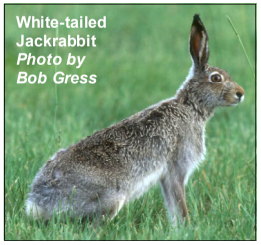
PLANTS

The gradient from upland to lowland prairie and the rocky, irregular landscape—resulting from this area's history as land that was once covered by glacial ice—yield a diverse mix of plant life throughout the Cayler Prairie BCA. Potholes and moist prairie exhibit species such as Arrowhead and Fringed Loosestrife, and common species in the upland prairies include Blazing Star, Prairie Rose, Lead Plant, and Yellow Cone-flower. This BCA is also an important location for the threatened Prairie Bush Clover.

ANIMALS

The grassland habitat throughout the Cayler Prairie BCA supports a diversity of wildlife in addition to the many bird species found here. The area is home to 43 species of butterflies, including two species of special concern—the Regal Fritillary and Powesheik Skipperling—and many species of dragonflies and damselflies. Reptiles and amphibians that may be found within the BCA's boundary include Blanding's Turtles, Northern Prairie Skinks, Tiger Salamanders, Gray Tree Frogs, and Northern Leopard Frogs. Small mammals such as Prairie Voles, shrews, and the Northern Grasshopper Mouse inhabit much of the grassland, along with American Badgers and White-tailed Jackrabbits.

Regal Fritillary
Photo by Mike Reece


White-tailed Jackrabbit
Photo by Bob Gress

Bird Checklist for Cayler Prairie

* = likely or confirmed 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
___Ross's Goose
___Cackling Goose
___Canada Goose*
___**Trumpeter Swan***
___Wood Duck*
___Gadwall*
___American Wigeon
___American Black Duck
___Mallard*
___Blue-winged Teal*
___Northern Shoveler*
___**Northern Pintail***
___Green-winged Teal*
___**Canvasback**
___**Redhead***
___Ring-necked Duck*
___Greater Scaup
___Lesser Scaup*
___Bufflehead
___Hooded Merganser*
___Common Merganser
___Ruddy Duck*

___Gray Partridge*
___Ring-necked Pheasant*
___Wild Turkey*

___Pied-billed Grebe*
___Horned Grebe
___Red-necked Grebe*
___Eared Grebe
___Western Grebe*

___**American White Pelican**

___Double-crested Cormorant

___**American Bittern***
___**Least Bittern***
___Great Blue Heron*
___Great Egret
___Cattle Egret
___Green Heron*

(continued on back)