

Lower Morse Lake Grassland

Bird Conservation Area

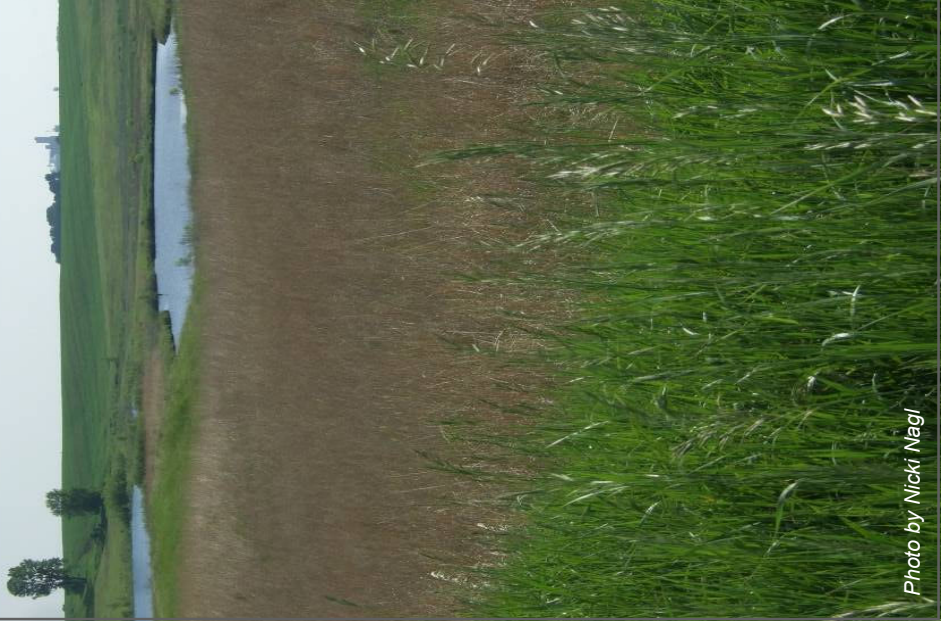


Photo by Nicki Nagl

- Brown Creeper**
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- House Wren*
- Canada Warbler**
- Black-throated Green Warbler
- Winter Wren
- Wilson's Warbler
- Marsh Wren*
- Eastern Towhee*
- American Tree Sparrow
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*
- Chipping Sparrow*
- Golden-crowned Kinglet
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Field Sparrow*
- Eastern Bluebird*
- Vesper Sparrow*
- Lark Sparrow*
- Savannah Sparrow*
- Grasshopper Sparrow*
- Swainson's Thrush
- Hermit Thrush
- Henslow's Sparrow*
- Wood Thrush*
- American Robin*
- American Pipit
- Gray Catbird*
- Brown Thrasher*
- European Starling*
- Cedar Waxwing*
- Lapland Longspur
- Smith's Longspur
- Snow Bunting
- Ovenbird*
- Louisiana Waterthrush
- Northern Waterthrush
- Black-and-white Warbler
- Prothonotary Warbler
- Tennessee Warbler
- Orange-crowned Warbler
- Nashville Warbler
- Connecticut Warbler
- Mourning Warbler
- Common Yellowthroat*
- American Redstart*
- Cape May Warbler
- Northern Parula
- Magnolia Warbler
- Bay-breasted Warbler
- Blackburnian Warbler
- Yellow Warbler*
- Chestnut-sided Warbler
- Blackpoll Warbler
- Palm Warbler
- Rose-breasted 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*

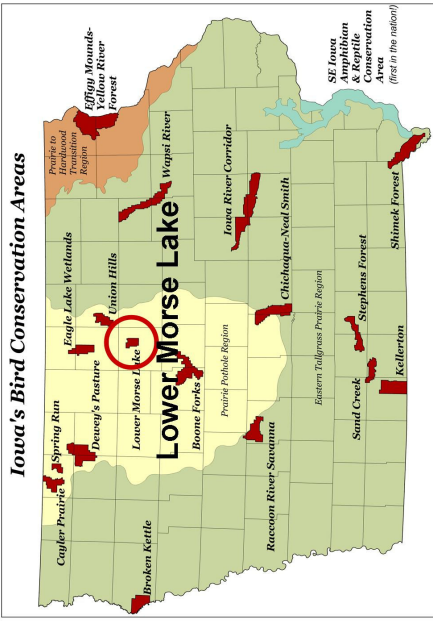
- Ring-billed Gull
- Herring Gull
- Caspian Tern
- Black Tern*
- Forster's Tern*
- Rock Pigeon*
- Eurasian Collared-Dove*
- Mourning Dove*
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo*
- Black-billed Cuckoo*
- Eastern Screech-Owl*
- Great Horned Owl*
- Snowy Owl
- Barred Owl*
- Short-eared Owl
- Common Nighthawk*
- Chimney Swift*
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird*
- Belted Kingfisher*
- Red-headed Woodpecker*
- Red-bellied Woodpecker*
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Downy Woodpecker*
- Hairy Woodpecker*
- Northern Flicker*
- American Kestrel*
- Merlin
- Peregrine Falcon
- Olive-sided Flycatcher
- Eastern Wood-Pewee*
- Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
- Acadian Flycatcher
- Alder Flycatcher
- Willow Flycatcher*
- Least Flycatcher
- Eastern Phoebe*
- Great Crested Flycatcher*
- Eastern Kingbird*
- Loggerhead Shrike*
- Northern Shrike
- Bell's Vireo*
- Yellow-throated Vireo*
- Blue-headed Vireo
- Warbling Vireo*
- Philadelphia Vireo*
- Red-eyed Vireo*
- Blue Jay*
- American Crow*
- Horned Lark*
- Purple Martin*
- Tree Swallow*
- Northern Rough-winged Swallow*
- Bank Swallow*
- Cliff Swallow*
- Barn Swallow*
- Black-capped Chickadee*
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- White-breasted Nuthatch*
- Gray Partridge*
- Ring-necked Pheasant*
- Wild Turkey*
- Common Loon
- Pied-billed Grebe*
- Horned Grebe
- Red-necked Grebe
- Eared Grebe
- Western Grebe
- Double-crested Cormorant
- American White Pelican
- American Bittern*
- Least Bittern*
- Great Blue Heron*
- Great Egret
- Cattle Egret
- Green Heron*
- Black-crowned Night-Heron
- White-faced Ibis
- Turkey Vulture*
- Osprey
- Bald Eagle*
- Northern Harrier*
- Sharp-shinned Hawk
- Cooper's Hawk*
- Broad-winged Hawk
- Swainson's Hawk
- Red-tailed Hawk*
- Rough-legged Hawk
- King Rail
- Virginia Rail*
- Sora*
- Common Gallinule*
- American Coot*
- Sandhill Crane
- Black-bellied Plover
- American Golden Plover
- Semipalmated Plover
- Killdeer*
- American Avocet
- Spotted Sandpiper*
- Solitary Sandpiper
- Greater Yellowlegs
- Willet
- Lesser Yellowlegs
- Upland Sandpiper*
- Hudsonian Godwit
- Semipalmated Sandpiper
- Least Sandpiper
- White-rumped Sandpiper
- Baird's Sandpiper
- Pectoral Sandpiper
- Dunlin
- Short-billed Dowitcher
- Long-billed Dowitcher
- Wilson's Snipe*
- American Woodcock*
- Wilson's Phalarope
- Bonaparte's Gull
- Franklin's Gull

Iowa Department of Natural Resources



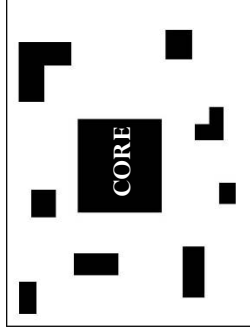
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Iowa birds, the **Bird Conservation Area (BCA)** program was established by the Iowa DNR Wildlife Bureau in 2001.

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 public habitat protected for birds; white is private land.

PRAIRIE POTHOLE JOINT VENTURE

The Prairie Pothole Joint Venture (PPJV) is one of the cooperative initiatives set up by the North American Waterfowl Management Plan to reverse declines in wetland habitats and associated wildlife. Established in 1987, the PPJV protects, restores, and enhances high priority wetland and grassland habitat to help sustain populations of numerous species of birds.

UNION SLOUGH NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Established in 1938, Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge was named for the “union” of two watersheds: the Blue Earth River of Minnesota and the East Fork of the Des Moines River. The slough itself is all that remains of a pre-glacial riverbed and provides a refuge and breeding ground for waterfowl and other migratory birds. Its objectives are to provide resting, nesting, and feeding habitat for birds; protect and enhance habitat for resident wildlife; and provide recreational and environmental education opportunities for the public. Lower Morse Lake is part of the Iowa Wetland Management District within Union Slough and is managed by the Iowa DNR as a waterfowl production area.



American Bittern
©2004 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

LOWER MORSE LAKE DIVERSITY

Tallgrass prairie historically covered 25 million acres across Iowa. Today, less than one-tenth of one percent of the original tallgrass prairie remains. A 1997 USGS report estimated that wetlands cover just 1.2 percent of Iowa’s surface area, compared to 11 percent 200 years before.

PLANTS

Public lands within Lower Morse Lake have been reseeded with native plants such as Azure Aster, Boneset, Green-headed Coneflower, Partridge Pea, Primrose, Black-eyed Susan, Cinquefoil, Golden Alexander, Purple Coneflower, Prairie Blazing Star, Wild Petunia, Indian Grass, Stiff Goldenrod, Canada Wild Rye, and Little Bluestem.

ANIMALS

The Lower Morse Lake Grassland BCA is also home to many interesting animals besides birds. Beaver and River Otter can be found, as well as Northern Prairie Skinks, Northern Leopard Frogs, Bullsnakes, and Variegated Fritillary butterflies.



Variegated Fritillary
Photo by Jack Keene

Notable dragonflies and damselflies include the Emerald Spreadwing and Western Meadowhawk.



Emerald Spreadwing
Photo by J.C. Lucier

Field Checklist for Lower Morse Lake BCA

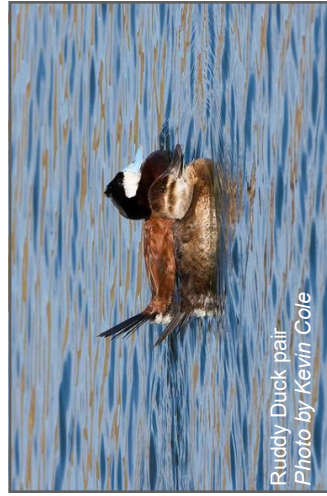
* = confirmed or likely area breeder

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
- ___ Ross's Goose
- ___ Cackling Goose
- ___ Canada Goose*
- ___ Trumpeter Swan*
- ___ Tundra 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
- ___ Common Goldeneye
- ___ Hooded Merganser*
- ___ Common Merganser
- ___ Ruddy Duck*

(continued on back)



Ruddy Duck pair
Photo by Kevin Cole