Field Checklist for Stephens Forest

* = 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
- Cassin’s Goose
- Canada Goose*
- Wood Duck
- Gadwall
- American Wigeon
- Mallard
- Blue-winged Teal
- Northern Shoveler
- Hooded Merganser
- Common Merganser
- Northern Bobwhite*
- Ring-necked Pheasant*
- Ruffed Grouse*
- Wild Turkey*
- Pied-billed Grebe
- Double-crested Cormorant
- Great Blue Heron*
- Great Egret
- Green Heron*
- Turkey Vulture*
- Osprey
- Bald Eagle*
- Northern Harrier
- Sharp-shinned Hawk
- Cooper’s Hawk
- Northern Goshawk
- Red-shouldered Hawk*
- Broad-winged Hawk*
- Swainson’s Hawk
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Rough-legged Hawk
- Golden Eagle
- Sora
- American Coot
- Killdeer*
- Spotted Sandpiper*
- Lesser Yellowlegs
- Upland Sandpiper*
- Semipalmated Sandpiper
- Least Sandpiper
- Pectoral Sandpiper
- Wilson’s Snipe
- American Woodcock

- 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*
- Tufted Titmouse
- Red-breasted Nuthatch
- White-breasted Nuthatch*
- Brown Creeper
- Carolina Wren*
- House Wren*
- Winter Wren
- Sedge Wren
- Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*
- Golden-crowned Kinglet
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- Eastern Bluebird*
- Veery*
- Gray-cheeked Thrush
- Swainson’s Thrush
- Hermit Thrush
- Wood Thrush*
- American Robin*
- Gray Catbird
- Northern Mockingbird*
- Brown Thrasher
- European Starling*
- Cedar Waxwing*
- Lapland Longspur
- Ovenbird
- Louisiana Waterthrush
- Northern Waterthrush
- Golden-winged Warbler
- Black-and-white Warbler*
- Prothonotary Warbler
- Tennessee Warbler
- Orange-crowned Warbler
- Nashville Warbler
- Mourning Warbler
- Kentucky Warbler*
- Common Yellowthroat*
- Hooded Warbler*
- American Redstart
- Cerulean Warbler*
- Northern Parula*
- Magnolia Warbler
- Bay-breasted Warbler
- Blackburnian Warbler
- Yellow Warbler*
- Chestnut-sided Warbler*
- Blackpoll Warbler
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Yellow-throated Warbler
- Black-throated Green Warbler
- Canada Warbler
- Wilson’s Warbler
- Yellow-breasted Chat*
- Eastern Towhee*
- American Tree Sparrow
- Chipping Sparrow
- Field Sparrow
- Lark Sparrow
- Savannah 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
- Summer Tanager*
- Scarlet Tanager
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Blue Grosbeak
- Indigo Bunting
- Dickcissel*
- Bobolink*
- Red-winged Blackbird*
- Eastern Meadowlark*
- Western Meadowlark
- Rusty Blackbird
- Common Grackle*
- Brown-headed Cowbird
- Orchard Oriole*
- Baltimore Oriole*
- Purple Finch
- House Finch*
- Pine Siskin
- American Goldfinch*
- House Sparrow*

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Written by Jenni Dyar, AmeriCorps, 2008
Updated by Natalie Randall, 2012 and Julie Datte, AmeriCorps, 2014

Lucas and Clarke Counties

Bird Conservation Area

Photo by Jeff Sosnita

American Redstart

USFWS
Located in south-central Iowa, Stephens Forest is the thirteenth designated Bird Conservation Area (BCA) in Iowa. The Stephens State Forest complex is named for Dr. T.C. Stephens, a prominent educator and native of Sioux City. Divided into 7 units totaling 14,112 acres, it holds some of the largest tracts of contiguous forest in Iowa and is home to bird species such as the Red-shouldered Hawk, Ruffed Grouse, Bobolink, Grasshopper Sparrow, Wood Thrush, Kentucky Warbler, Eastern Whip-poor-will, and American Woodcock. The Stephens Forest BCA contains the Woodburn, Whitebreast, and Lucas units and surrounding areas, encompassing 8,192 acres, with 6,751 acres in protected public ownership. In 2014, a second Bird Conservation area containing core habitat in Stephens State Forest was dedicated. The Stephens Forest–Thousand Acres BCA contains similar habitat to the original Stephens Forest BCA and is home to many of the same outstanding bird species. The presence of large enough tracts of quality habitat to allow for two Bird Conservation Areas is a testament to the importance of both the forest and grassland habitat of this unique area for breeding and migratory birds.

**IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS**

The 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 migratory birds. By working to identify and implement conservation strategies, the IBA Program hopes to minimize the effects of habitat degradation and loss of birds and other wildlife.

**STEPHENS FOREST DIVERSITY**

Glaciers left deposits of glacial till over the area and prevailing westerly winds carried soil in from the Missouri River Valley, covering the area with a rich, fine silt layer. On the sides of hills, erosion has exposed glacial deposits of materials and, in some instances, the underlying sedimentary material. The terrain is therefore characterized by narrow, flat ridges separated by deeply cut drainages.

**PLANTS**

The region is a mix of mostly oak-hickory and bottomland hardwood timber, with some tallgrass prairie. White and Red Oak and various hickory species are common. Other tree species such as Black and Bur Oak, Shingle Oak, White and Red Elm, Cottonwood, Hackberry, Green Ash, Silver Maple, Black Walnut, and various evergreen species can also be found.

**ANIMALS**

The forest is home to White-tailed Deer, Gray and Fox Squirrels, Raccoons, Cottontail Rabbits, Woodchuck, Muskrat, Skunks, Red and Gray Fox, Bobcats, Coyotes, Beavers, Opossums, and other small mammals.

Non-venomous snakes are common, like the Eastern Hognose Snake, Prairie Kingsnake, and Prairie Ringneck Snake. A lucky visitor may be able to catch a glimpse of Iowa’s only legless lizard, the elusive Slender Glass Lizard. Other amphibians and reptiles found in the area include the Smallmouth Salamander, Gray Tree Frog, Cricket Frog, and Spring Peeper.

**PARTNERSHIPS**

The Stephens Forest Bird Conservation Area was made possible due to a partnership between the Lucas and Clarke County Conservation Boards, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Iowa Audubon, the National Wild Turkey Federation, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

A list of Iowa’s Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) can be found at www.iowadnr.gov by entering “Wildlife Action Plan” in the search. If you encounter uncommon or rare species in this BCA, please contact the Wildlife Diversity Program to report your sightings.