



**WATERMAN PRAIRIE BIRD CONSERVATION AREA**

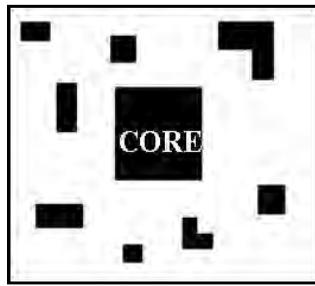
The Waterman Prairie Bird Conservation Area (BCA) is nestled into Iowa's Glacial Hills region in the northwest corner of the state. Long ago, the area was carved into deep valleys by the receding glacier. Today, it contains a unique mixture of sprawling native prairies and Bur Oak savanna. The BCA contains nearly 69,000 acres in Clay, Cherokee, O'Brien, and Buena Vista Counties, over 4,000 acres of which are protected.

Many birds on Iowa's list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need either nest in the BCA or use the prairies, savannas, and wetlands contained within for important wintering grounds or migratory stopovers. These include Red-headed Woodpecker, Black Tern, Wood Thrush, Upland Sandpiper, Yellow-breasted Chat,



**Western Meadowlark**  
Doug Harr

Field and Grasshopper sparrows, Bobolink, and Rusty Blackbird. The BCA's unique location within the Little Sioux River watershed in northwestern Iowa makes it a fine place to see western bird species that are rarely observed in Iowa. Rare state birds such as the Mountain Bluebird and Townsend's Solitaire have been documented in the BCA.



The BCA Model: shaded areas depict special habitat

In recent years, 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 (NABCI)** to "conserve all birds in all habitats." As part of this initiative and in an effort to protect dwindling populations of many Iowa birds, Iowa's **Bird Conservation Area (BCA)** program was established by the DNR Wildlife Bureau in 2001.



**Grasshopper Sparrow**  
Jim Durbin

The present model BCA encompasses at least 10,000 acres of public and/or private lands with at least 25% of the area as key bird habitat. Research suggests that 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. Around this core is both private land and additional public tracts, managed for good bird habitat or at least maintained to be neutral in how they affect bird life.

**IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS**

The Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program is a global effort initiated by the National Audubon Society to identify and conserve areas that are vital to birds and other biodiversity. Designated IBAs include sites for breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds. By

**BIRD CONSERVATION AREAS**

working to identify and implement conservation strategies, the IBA Program hopes to minimize the effects of habitat degradation and loss on birds and other wildlife. All Iowa BCAs are also considered IBAs.

**WATERMAN PRAIRIE DIVERSITY**

**PLANTS**

Waterman Prairie contains an abundance of unique native prairie habitat.



**Great Spangled Fritillary**  
Ryan Rasmussen

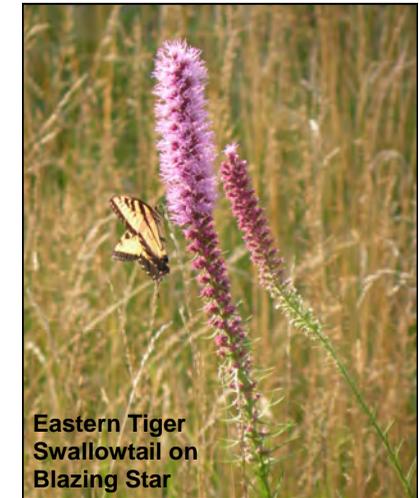
Little Bluestem prairies are dotted with several colorful milkweed species, Pasqueflower, Prairie Moonwort, Purple Prairie Clover, Ground Plum, Prairie Blazing Star, Silky Aster, White Lady's Slipper, and many native sedges. Oak savanna, one of Iowa's most unique and threatened ecosystems, is characterized by prairie plants such as Side-oats Grama, Wild Indigo, and Prairie Phlox, interspersed with sprawling Bur Oaks.

**ANIMALS**

In addition to providing habitat for birds, this BCA is home for a diverse group of other species. These include butterflies, such as the Juniper Hairstreak, Two-spotted Skipper, and Little Glassywing. Dragonflies and damselflies, like Violet Dancer and Plains Clubtail, can be found taking advantage of ephemeral wetlands. Long-horn Bees and Bumblebees are important prairie flower pollinators. Visitors may encounter some unique reptiles that exist in this BCA, such as the Northern Prairie Skink and Lined Snake. Elusive mammals, like the Ermine and Least Weasel, use the prairie habitat contained within the BCA, and River Otters frequent the rivers and streams.



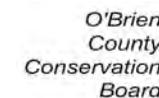
**Northern Prairie Skink**  
Ryan Rasmussen



**Eastern Tiger Swallowtail on Blazing Star**

**PARTNERSHIPS**

The Waterman Prairie Bird Conservation Area is made possible by partnerships among O'Brien, Clay, Buena Vista, and Cherokee County Conservation Boards, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Iowa Audubon, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Prairie Lakes Audubon Bird Club, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources.



**Prairie Lakes Audubon Bird Club**

## Bird Checklist for Waterman Prairie 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      | ___ American Coot*                 |
| ___ Snow Goose                       | ___ <b>Sandhill Crane</b>          |
| ___ Ross's Goose                     | ___ Black-bellied Plover           |
| ___ Cackling Goose                   | ___ <b>American Golden-Plover</b>  |
| ___ Canada Goose*                    | ___ Semipalmated Plover            |
| ___ <b>Trumpeter Swan</b>            | ___ Killdeer*                      |
| ___ Tundra Swan                      | ___ Spotted Sandpiper*             |
| ___ Wood Duck*                       | ___ <b>Solitary Sandpiper</b>      |
| ___ Gadwall                          | ___ <b>Greater Yellowlegs</b>      |
| ___ American Wigeon                  | ___ <b>Lesser Yellowlegs</b>       |
| ___ Mallard*                         | ___ <b>Upland Sandpiper*</b>       |
| ___ Blue-winged Teal*                | ___ <b>Hudsonian Godwit</b>        |
| ___ Northern Shoveler                | ___ <b>Marbled Godwit</b>          |
| ___ Green-winged Teal                | ___ Baird's Sandpiper              |
| ___ <b>Redhead</b>                   | ___ Least Sandpiper                |
| ___ Ring-necked Duck                 | ___ White-rumped Sandpiper         |
| ___ Lesser Scaup                     | ___ Pectoral Sandpiper             |
| ___ Bufflehead                       | ___ Semipalmated Sandpiper         |
| ___ Common Goldeneye                 | ___ Western Sandpiper              |
| ___ Hooded Merganser*                | ___ <b>Short-billed Dowitcher</b>  |
| ___ Common Merganser                 | ___ Wilson's Snipe                 |
| ___ Ruddy Duck                       | ___ <b>American Woodcock*</b>      |
| ___ Gray Partridge*                  | ___ <b>Wilson's Phalarope</b>      |
| ___ Ring-necked Pheasant*            | ___ Red-necked Phalarope           |
| ___ Wild Turkey*                     | ___ Franklin's Gull                |
| ___ <b>Northern Bobwhite*</b>        | ___ Ring-billed Gull               |
| ___ Pied-billed Grebe*               | ___ Herring Gull                   |
| ___ <b>American White Pelican</b>    | ___ Caspian Tern                   |
| ___ Double-crested Cormorant         | ___ <b>Black Tern</b>              |
| ___ <b>American Bittern</b>          | ___ <b>Forster's Tern</b>          |
| ___ Great Blue Heron*                | ___ Rock Pigeon*                   |
| ___ Great Egret                      | ___ Eurasian Collared-Dove*        |
| ___ Little Blue Heron                | ___ Mourning Dove*                 |
| ___ Cattle Egret                     | ___ <b>Yellow-billed Cuckoo*</b>   |
| ___ Green Heron*                     | ___ <b>Black-billed Cuckoo*</b>    |
| ___ <b>Black-crowned Night-heron</b> | ___ <b>Barn Owl*</b>               |
| ___ Turkey Vulture*                  | ___ Eastern Screech Owl*           |
| ___ <b>Osprey</b>                    | ___ Great Horned Owl*              |
| ___ <b>Bald Eagle*</b>               | ___ Snowy Owl                      |
| ___ <b>Northern Harrier*</b>         | ___ <b>Burrowing Owl</b>           |
| ___ Sharp-shinned Hawk               | ___ Barred Owl*                    |
| ___ Cooper's Hawk*                   | ___ <b>Long-eared Owl</b>          |
| ___ Northern Goshawk                 | ___ <b>Short-eared Owl</b>         |
| ___ <b>Red-shouldered Hawk</b>       | ___ Northern Saw-Whet Owl          |
| ___ <b>Broad-winged Hawk</b>         | ___ <b>Common Nighthawk*</b>       |
| ___ <b>Swainson's Hawk*</b>          | ___ <b>Eastern Whip-poor-will*</b> |
| ___ Red-tailed Hawk*                 | ___ <b>Chimney Swift*</b>          |
| ___ Rough-legged Hawk                | ___ Ruby-throated Hummingbird*     |
| ___ Golden Eagle                     | ___ Belted Kingfisher*             |
| ___ Virginia Rail                    |                                    |
| ___ Sora                             |                                    |

- |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ___ <b>Red-headed Woodpecker*</b>  | ___ Gray-cheeked Thrush            |
| ___ Red-bellied Woodpecker*        | ___ Swainson's Thrush              |
| ___ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker       | ___ Hermit Thrush                  |
| ___ Downy Woodpecker*              | ___ <b>Wood Thrush*</b>            |
| ___ Hairy Woodpecker*              | ___ American Robin*                |
| ___ Northern Flicker*              | ___ Varied Thrush                  |
| ___ Pileated Woodpecker            | ___ Gray Catbird*                  |
| ___ American Kestrel*              | ___ Brown Thrasher*                |
| ___ Merlin                         | ___ <b>Northern Mockingbird</b>    |
| ___ Gyrfalcon                      | ___ European Starling*             |
| ___ <b>Peregrine Falcon</b>        | ___ American Pipit                 |
| ___ Prairie Falcon                 | ___ Bohemian Waxwing               |
| ___ <b>Olive-sided Flycatcher</b>  | ___ Cedar Waxwing*                 |
| ___ Eastern Wood-Pewee*            | ___ Lapland Longspur               |
| ___ Yellow-bellied Flycatcher      | ___ Smith's Longspur               |
| ___ <b>Acadian Flycatcher*</b>     | ___ Snow Bunting                   |
| ___ Alder Flycatcher               | ___ Ovenbird*                      |
| ___ <b>Willow Flycatcher*</b>      | ___ Northern Waterthrush           |
| ___ <b>Least Flycatcher</b>        | ___ <b>Golden-winged Warbler</b>   |
| ___ Eastern Phoebe*                | ___ <b>Blue-winged Warbler</b>     |
| ___ Great Crested Flycatcher*      | ___ <b>Black-and-white Warbler</b> |
| ___ Western Kingbird*              | ___ <b>Prothonotary Warbler</b>    |
| ___ Eastern Kingbird*              | ___ Tennessee Warbler              |
| ___ <b>Loggerhead Shrike*</b>      | ___ Orange-crowned Warbler         |
| ___ Northern Shrike                | ___ Nashville Warbler              |
| ___ <b>White-eyed Vireo</b>        | ___ Connecticut Warbler            |
| ___ <b>Bell's Vireo*</b>           | ___ Mourning Warbler               |
| ___ Yellow-throated Vireo*         | ___ <b>Kentucky Warbler</b>        |
| ___ Blue-headed Vireo              | ___ Common Yellowthroat*           |
| ___ Warbling Vireo*                | ___ <b>Hooded Warbler</b>          |
| ___ Philadelphia Vireo             | ___ American Redstart*             |
| ___ Red-eyed Vireo*                | ___ Cape May Warbler               |
| ___ Blue Jay*                      | ___ <b>Cerulean Warbler</b>        |
| ___ American Crow*                 | ___ Northern Parula                |
| ___ Herring Lark*                  | ___ Magnolia Warbler               |
| ___ Purple Martin*                 | ___ Bay-breasted Warbler           |
| ___ Tree Swallow*                  | ___ Blackburnian Warbler           |
| ___ Northern Rough-winged Swallow* | ___ Yellow Warbler*                |
| ___ Bank Swallow*                  | ___ Chestnut-sided Warbler         |
| ___ Cliff Swallow*                 | ___ Blackpoll Warbler              |
| ___ Barn Swallow*                  | ___ Black-throated Blue Warbler    |
| ___ Black-capped Chickadee*        | ___ Palm Warbler                   |
| ___ Tufted Titmouse*               | ___ Yellow-rumped Warbler          |
| ___ Red-breasted Nuthatch          | ___ Yellow-throated Warbler        |
| ___ White-breasted Nuthatch*       | ___ Black-throated Green Warbler   |
| ___ <b>Brown Creeper*</b>          | ___ <b>Canada Warbler</b>          |
| ___ Carolina Wren                  | ___ Wilson's Warbler               |
| ___ House Wren*                    | ___ <b>Yellow-breasted Chat</b>    |
| ___ Winter Wren                    | ___ Spotted Towhee                 |
| ___ <b>Sedge Wren*</b>             | ___ Eastern Towhee*                |
| ___ Marsh Wren*                    | ___ American Tree Sparrow          |
| ___ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*         | ___ Chipping Sparrow*              |
| ___ Golden-crowned Kinglet         | ___ Clay-colored Sparrow*          |
| ___ Ruby-crowned Kinglet           | ___ <b>Field Sparrow*</b>          |
| ___ Eastern Bluebird*              | ___ Vesper Sparrow*                |
| ___ Mountain Bluebird              | ___ Lark Sparrow*                  |
| ___ Townsend's Solitaire           | ___ Savannah Sparrow*              |
| ___ <b>Veery</b>                   | ___ <b>Grasshopper Sparrow*</b>    |
|                                    | ___ <b>Henslow's Sparrow</b>       |
|                                    | ___ <b>Le Conte's Sparrow</b>      |
|                                    | ___ <b>Nelson's Sparrow</b>        |
|                                    | ___ Fox Sparrow                    |

- |                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ___ Song Sparrow*           | ___ <b>Eastern Meadowlark*</b> |
| ___ Lincoln's Sparrow       | ___ Western Meadowlark*        |
| ___ Swamp Sparrow*          | ___ Yellow-headed Blackbird    |
| ___ White-throated Sparrow  | ___ <b>Rusty Blackbird</b>     |
| ___ Harris's Sparrow        | ___ Brewer's Blackbird         |
| ___ White-crowned Sparrow   | ___ Common Grackle*            |
| ___ Dark-eyed Junco         | ___ Great-tailed Grackle       |
| ___ Summer Tanager          | ___ Brown-headed Cowbird*      |
| ___ Scarlet Tanager*        | ___ Orchard Oriole*            |
| ___ Northern Cardinal*      | ___ Baltimore Oriole*          |
| ___ Rose-breasted Grosbeak* | ___ Purple Finch               |
| ___ Blue Grosbeak*          | ___ House Finch*               |
| ___ Indigo Bunting*         | ___ Red Crossbill              |
| ___ <b>Dickcissel*</b>      | ___ Common Redpoll             |
| ___ <b>Bobolink*</b>        | ___ Pine Siskin                |
| ___ Red-winged Blackbird*   | ___ American Goldfinch*        |
|                             | ___ House Sparrow*             |



Least Sandpiper  
Ryan Rasmussen

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Written by: Julia Dale, AmeriCorps, 2014

# Waterman Prairie

## Bird Conservation Area



Photo: Bruce Ehresman

## O'Brien, Clay, Cherokee, and Buena Vista Counties