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# New INHF-DNR land in central Iowa--it's for the birds!

Nearly two years ago the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) was able to acquire Iowa's famous old 4-H Camp (renamed the Clover Woods Camp & Retreat Center in recent years) before it could be subdivided and sold for housing and other development.

In order to help save the camp's natural land, Iowa Audubon sent a letter to the group ready to sell subdivisions by auction. We advised them to sell the entire property to a conservation organization or agency, for protecting critical

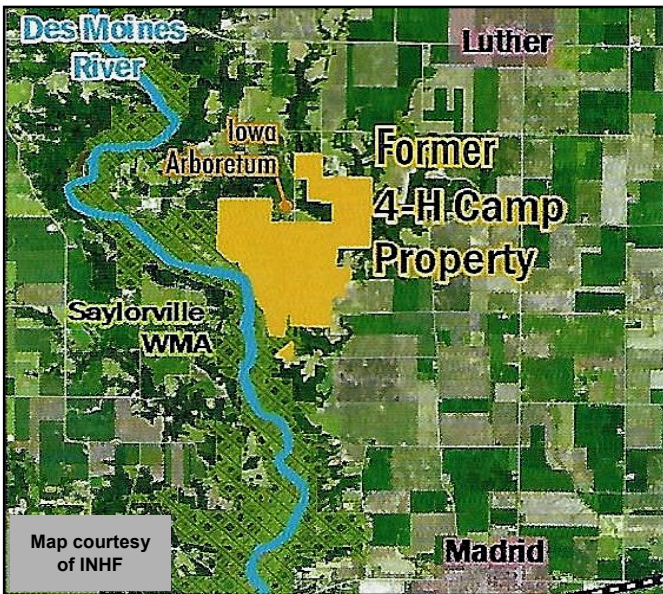
bird and all wildlife habitats. Other organizations and individuals with concern for conservation of the old camp landscape submitted similar advisements.

After successful acquisition, INHF began working with the Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR), an agency now in process of purchasing roughly 75% of this 1,011 acre property along the Des Moines River, between cities of Madrid and Luther. INHF will retain the remaining portion, most connecting with the Iowa Arboretum.

The old 4-H camp contains a great variety of wildlife habitat, from native prairie and old-growth forests, to artificial forest pond, Richardson Branch creek, and the Des Moines River basin. It also includes a group of historic Native American burial mounds. INHF and DNR management of this large landscape will assure more permanent protection of Iowa's birds and all wildlife here, in part because it adjoins and enlarges an upper portion of Saylorville Wildlife Management Area.

Audubon members Karl Jungbluth and Doug Harr received permission from INHF to conduct bird surveys on the newly-acquired land. Purpose was to attempt updating an older avian species list. Retired DNR Avian Ecologist Bruce Ehresman had once conducted bird counts at the 4-H camp and also gathered lists from other surveys from 1980 to 2016, totaling 183 species.

From late March 2020 to early November 2021, Karl and Doug viewed 126 kinds of birds, including four never reported here before, thereby enlarging the older list. Those new species were Black-crowned Night Heron, Sandhill Crane, Olive-sided Flycatcher, and White-eyed Vireo. The vireo was seen and heard twice during this past summer, indicating it was likely a local nester at the northwest edge of its summer breeding range in North America.



White-eyed Vireo

According to INHF Communications Director Joe Jayjack and DNR Wildlife Bureau Chief Todd Bishop, the area will be managed as a means for the public to visit and learn more about nature, with emphasis upon programming especially for young people. With an extensive old trail system, much of which still must be cleared of tree damage caused by the 2020 derecho, it should provide means for any visitors to have great interactions with this large natural landscape.

Beginning in March of 2020, Iowa

All of the 2020-21 sightings were submitted via eBird, creating records now accessible to almost anyone who might want to bird here in the future or use those records for bird research purposes. The overall list for this 1.57 sq. mi. landscape now stands at 187 species. As more people eventually bird here, avian varieties should almost certainly surpass 200.

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## *Recovering America's Wildlife Act updated & moving through Congress*

Federal H.R. bill 2772, *Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA)*, is continuing to gain more bi-partisan support, and it appears increasingly likely to be passed. An article about this bill was our featured story in the April 2020 edition of this newsletter, and Iowa Audubon has signed onto support of this bill with many other state conservation organizations and agencies across the nation. Iowa alone could actually receive up to about \$15 million per year, devoted to all wildlife conservation and especially to DNR's Wildlife Diversity Program. Several changes and improvements recently were made to the bill, some described here, making it more likely for eventual passage and sending it to the Oval Office for signature.

Funding source has been changed in the revised bill, moving from onshore and offshore revenue and fees to simply coming from the US Treasury fund. This would eliminate source of revenue restrictions but continues a need for dedicated funding.

Funding apportionment has been changed from 50% state proportions based upon land and 50% upon human populations, now going to 50% based upon land, 25% upon human population, and 25% upon federally threatened and endangered species in each state. That should help ensure that states with high numbers of T&E species will receive the funds needed to protect and restore those species. It now also requires states and territories to spend an average of at least 15% of all funds apportioned over a 5-year period for T&E species conservation. Just 10% was required in the this bill's previous version.

Plants have now been added to the definition of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) for each state which lists them in their State Wildlife Action Plans. States meeting this list requirement will receive an extra 5% of their apportioned amount for restoring native plants.

A total of 10% of total subaccount funding will be allocated through a competitive innovation grants program, planned to implement the most effective and innovation species restoration projects. These grants may be awarded to partnering fish and wildlife agencies or groups of states.

The bill's previous version required states and territories to report project and spending accountabilities every 5 years. But the revision has changed this to recipients making full reports every 3 years.

There are other changes to H.R. 2772 not included in this abbreviated article. However, anyone may go online and look up much more complete details about what all this bill includes. We should now all contact our own Iowa Representatives in the U.S. House and ask each of them to fully support RAWA.

## *Bird Friendly Iowa continues to grow and partner*

*Bird Friendly Iowa* (BFI) recently approved applications by more communities and counties in 2021. Clay County, Palo Alto County, Bremer County and the city of Marion now all are officially recognized as being *Bird Friendly*. Since 2017 a total of nine communities and seven counties have been formally recognized for efforts to increase their bird conservation and education efforts in Iowa.

In recent months National Audubon has increased promotion of *Bird Friendly Communities*, and the American Bird Conservancy started a new project called *Bird Friendly Americas*. BFI is now committing to partnership with other states and Canada that have Bird Friendly/Bird Community/Bird City projects. This could possibly provide Iowa's program with wider publicity and new cooperative efforts.

Iowa Audubon continues to be a member of this state's volunteer BFI steering committee, and that committee is attempting to raise funds to employ a staffer. A paid staff person could provide needed help for increasing BFI recognitions.

## **Iowa Audubon Officers, Board & Affiliations**

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(Iowa City Bird Club)

**Leland Freie**  
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**Joe Tollari**  
(Dubuque Audubon)

**Tom Reavely** (At-large)

**Keith Summerville** (At-large)

**Anna Buckardt Thomas** (At-large)

## **Contact Information**

Iowa Audubon's office has officially closed, but the organization continues operating through the following methods and contacts.

### Correspondence:

PO Box 117, Ogden, IA 50212

### Phone:

515-275-4818

### Newsletter Items:

PO Box 117, Ogden, IA 50212

### Remittances:

PO Box 682, Waterloo, IA  
50704-0682

### Email:

[iowaaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:iowaaudubon@gmail.com)

### Website:

[www.iowaaudubon.org](http://www.iowaaudubon.org)

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Nearby Ledges State Park is one of the most-visited and popular state parks in Iowa, great for hikers, bikers, picnickers and anyone enjoying the outdoors. But often very large numbers of visitors have made good bird observations there more difficult. Once the old 4-H camp is officially opened to the public, it should be a more primitive area, less likely used by huge numbers of the general public than Ledges. That promises to make it a new "hotspot" for birders. Watch for future announcements about when this land will be opened for public enjoyment.

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*Thanks to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation for information used in this feature article.*

### ***Five minutes per month for Climate Action*** *by James McCoy*

Friends of birds and the natural world,

The major bills nearing completion in Washington make some progress in combatting climate change. As currently projected, however, they are clearly not enough to reach our necessary carbon emission goals of 50% reductions by 2030 and net zero by 2050. Additional legislation will be needed. With the evenly divided Senate, bipartisan solutions provide the greatest hope for reaching our goals. There is a growing understanding among conservatives that bold legislation is necessary to protect the earth's and humanity's future. Our members of congress in Iowa need to join this group. A steady barrage of calls insisting on climate action will get their attention.

The [Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividends Act](#) was developed with bipartisan input. It is consistent with conservative principles, using the free market to guide us to a low carbon future. The dividend to the American people makes it a progressive bill that does not place the burden of the energy transition on the less advantaged. It is revenue neutral and won't add anything to the federal debt.

Are you willing to spend 5 minutes per month getting the US on track to do our part for climate change? One simple action you can take is to join Citizen's Climate Lobby's Monthly Calling Campaign. You do not have to join CCL. You will be assigned a day of the month to call your members of Congress. You will get a reminder on that day with a suggested request and your member of congress' phone number. It literally takes five minutes or less to make a call. Here is how to join:

[https://citizensclimatelobby.org/monthly-calling-campaign/?](https://citizensclimatelobby.org/monthly-calling-campaign/)

### ***More Iowa volunteers can join Audubon's Climate Watch bird surveys***

In 2015, National Audubon began a pilot project to survey certain species of North American birds in January-February's peak winter season. Purpose was to determine if climate change may cause birds to now stay further north in winter or move to other ranges. Bluebirds and nuthatches were the original target species. Iowa was one of just a few states asked to provide volunteers for the pilot project, and volunteers here submitted some of the most early data to National Audubon.

Since 2017 the project has opened to volunteers in every state. In addition, the survey project was expanded to include goldfinches, towhees and a few other species. A second annual survey period was also added, for conduct in late May-early June. Iowa has added a few more volunteer bird observers in the past couple of years, but at least 90% of our state has no surveys conducted. It's time we find more people to assist with this important citizen-science project, helping everyone understand how climate change may affect our birds.

If you would like to be a volunteer for two surveys per year, you can first learn all about the project and how to select your own preferred survey location with habitat to support birds. Complete instructions and a sign-up site may be found at the following link:

<https://www.audubon.org/news/participant-resources-climate-watch>



### ***Small grant applications to open on January 1***

Iowa Audubon's small grants program began in 2010 and has had sufficient income to offer these grants in 9 of the past 12 years. Funding is again available for 2022, and anyone may apply for a grant this coming January 1 through March 1.

Maximum allowed per application may vary from year to year, due to Iowa Audubon's annual budget. Our small grants program is funded primarily from bequests, large gift donations and other sources available by the end of a calendar year. Amounts available in the coming year will be posted on our website's small grants page in late December.

Go online to the following web page in late December to see when 2022 grant budget amounts are updated:

<https://iowaaudubon.org/Pages/IowaAudubon.aspx?pg=9>

# The Voice for Iowa's Birds



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## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS:

Individual.....	\$15
Family.....	\$20
Organization.....	\$100
Corporate or other sponsor.....	\$500

## *Have you renewed your membership?*

All memberships begin January 1 each calendar year and end on December 31.

### Mail to:

Treasurer, Iowa Audubon  
PO Box 682, Waterloo, IA  
50704-0682

(or join/renew via [PayPal](#) on our website)

*We're on the web:* [www.iowaaudubon.org](http://www.iowaaudubon.org)

## Short notes, events & needed actions

### Pelican Festival Report

—by Karen Disbrow, Iowa City Bird Club

Sunday Sept 12, 2021 was a beautiful sunny and warm day. After two years of not having the Festival, about 101 attended, plus 21 people at booths or speaking, for a total of 122. It was short of our normal 300, but still a good showing. Around 250 American White Pelicans were seen flying overhead in flocks of 25-100. This year's drought made water levels low, with willows and tall weeds blocking good views of the water. Near the day's end a group of 7-10 Double-crested Cormorants were spotted flying over the site.

The speakers' programs were well attended, often with the chairs full and people standing to hear them. A big thanks to Joan Schnabel of Raptology with a live Peregrine Falcon and a Merlin; Andria Cossolotto of the Indian Creek Nature Center speaking on Monarchs; Neil Bernstein, Professor Emeritus, Mt. Mercy, for bringing an Ornate Box Turtle, describing rarity and habitat; Doug Harr, IA Audubon for speaking on the American White Pelican.

Thanks to these groups with their displays: Cedar County Conservation, Eastern IA Beekeepers Assoc., IA Ornithologist's Union, Prairie States Mushroom Club, Sierra Club, IA Audubon, and Iowa City Bird Club. These groups brought activities and information to the delight of public attendees. IA Native Plant Society & Iowa Master Naturalists sent us information to hand out about their activities.

Special thanks to Cedar Rapids Audubon for financial assistance; Steve Woodruff, DNR Wildlife Biologist, for setup and attendance counts; Lois Hughes and Merle Inhe for bringing water and ice coolers; Ben Rowold for putting out signs and helping with setup; and Funny Face Designs by Lori, for painting all those kids' faces! Audubon members helping were: Francis Moore, Prairie Rapids Audubon; Joe Tollari, Dubuque Audubon; and Leland Freie, Cedar Rapids Audubon. All members of the Iowa City Bird Club and IA Master Naturalists helped with set-up, take-down, and staffing the spotting scopes.

Next Pelican Festival on Sept. 11, 2022. See you then!

### Christmas Bird Count

The 122nd annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will be conducted between December 14 and January 5 again this year. CBC is the oldest citizen science project in history. If you haven't participated before but want to sign up for a bird count here in Iowa or anywhere, go to the website below:

Check out the link to a map of all CBC locations, click on a CBC site, and you'll find an email address to contact for participation. Red circles all need more volunteers, but even yellow circles that have enough help will still welcome you to join with a team.

<https://www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count>

