

Conservation Connection

Johnson County Conservation Newsletter

Three Billion Birds Gone

Frances Owen - Naturalist

It may be difficult to comprehend, but in less than a person's lifetime, 2.9 billion birds have disappeared from the North American landscape. A new study released in September of this year was the first of its kind to assess population changes in the U.S. and Canada over the past fifty years. The original publication, cited at the end of this article, paints a devastating picture of biodiversity loss. More than 90% of the population losses have occurred in only 12 families of birds, specifically hitting grassland and shorebird species the hardest. Most disturbingly, even common birds like Dark-eyed Juncos (down by 168 million) and Red-winged Blackbirds (down by 92 million birds) have been affected. Birds are excellent ecological indicators, and their decline is a warning sign to all of us that something is very wrong in these ecosystems.

Birds face many threats. Habitat loss and habitat degradation decrease the amount of preferred and necessary space for many species to find food and shelter, and ultimately reproduce. In the last 100 years, North America has lost 53% of our prairie habitats (Iowa has lost 99.9% of its prairie) and 60% of our wetlands (Iowa has lost 99% of its wetlands). In the lower 48 states, 2.4 billion birds are estimated to be killed annually by domestic cats. Billions more birds are killed by flying into human structures such as windows, wind turbines, cell towers, and power lines. As if all of those threats weren't enough, birds worldwide (and all other life on this planet) face looming problems from climate change which will affect migration and breeding cycles, as well as cause shifts in weather patterns, affecting where ideal habitat can be found. Even with all of these obstacles facing our birds, I remain hopeful.

Iowa has lost:

99%
WETLAND
HABITAT

99.9%
PRAIRIE
HABITAT



Over the past 100 years, Iowa's landscape has changed dramatically. Now we must work to find a balance between our native habitats, agriculture, and urbanization.

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A Note from the Director



One of the best ways to volunteer for Johnson County Conservation (JCC) is to participate in the efforts to hand-harvest prairie seed each fall. With constant new acreage being restored to prairie by JCC annually, the need for seed is endless.

The volunteer effort to harvest seeds this year was immense, and we want to extend a big thank you to the hundreds of volunteers and school groups that contributed to the effort. Volunteer Lois Albrecht led several weekly events, drawing out 28 volunteers, who put in 103 hours altogether to harvest 141 pounds of seed in total. The public seed harvest event was also very successful. Over 55 people joined in the morning's work, a record in recent years, and together, we harvested 33 pounds of mixed seed, a value estimated at \$5,000! Volunteers focused on collecting seed from original Iowa prairie plants in areas that are difficult to access with mechanical harvesters. The estimated value of all hand-collected seed this fall was over \$22,000!

In addition to the hand harvest, JCC staff utilized a combine loaned by Linn County Conservation and purchased by Pheasants Forever. In a few days of combining the diverse prairies at Kent Park, we harvested 1,092 pounds of mixed prairie seed! Most of the prairies at Kent Park are very diverse and restored with seed that came from native prairie relicts in the area. In the early spring, we burn these areas to increase seed viability, making our collection of seed even more valuable. All of the seed collected, including the hand-collected and combined seed, will allow us to establish another 35 to 40 acres of prairie.

One of the most valuable contributions that all of us can do to address climate change is to help protect and restore our native plant communities. Wetlands, prairies, and forests sequester carbon, storing it in their biomass and in the soil, which reduces the impact of burning fossil fuels and the negative impacts of climate change. Protecting and restoring these native plant communities is one solution amid a myriad of societal changes necessary to address the climate crisis.

A big thank you again to all the volunteers and staff who helped with the fall seed harvest. Many hands in the prairie make a big difference, and together, we can take climate action and rebuild our natural heritage.



Top Left: Hand-harvesting seeds is easy for all ages and provides a great way to get little ones involved in conservation! **Top Right:** We had great turnout for the Thursday morning harvests led by Lois Albrecht. **Above:** Over 55 people helped during the last big harvest on November 3.

Hand-Harvested Seeds, 2019

Over 141 lbs of prairie seed was harvested this fall by volunteers, school groups, and JCC staff, an estimated value of nearly \$22,000! Below is a selection of the seeds and their values:

Species:	Amount:	Value:
Rattlesnake Master	7 lbs.	\$1,330.00
Rose Mallow	21 lbs.	\$2,520.00
Culver's Root	775 lbs.	\$6,200.00
Indian Grass	19 lbs.	\$342.00
Michigan Lily	7 oz.	\$1,260.00
Stiff Goldenrod	7 lbs	\$840.00
Buttonbush	15 oz.	\$180.00
Foxglove Beardtongue	27 oz.	\$270.00

Kevin Halemeyer Joins the JCC Team!

Kevin Halemeyer - Natural Resource Management Specialist

I grew up in southwest Illinois on a 40-acre farm near the Mississippi River, and had a passion for fishing channel catfish, hunting waterfowl, and being out in the woods. This is where my love for the outdoors and understanding of the importance of conservation started.

I later went on to college and graduated from Hawkeye Community College with an Associates Degree, majoring in Natural Resources Management. I then went on to earn my Bachelor of Science Degree from Upper Iowa University, majoring in Conservation Management.

I have worked in the conservation field for the last five years. I worked in Hardin County as a natural resource seasonal employee for two summers, in Linn County as a park attendant, and in Johnson County as a seasonal natural resource team member. I have also worked part-time for other agencies helping with timber stand improvement and prairie reconstruction for private landowners, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, and

the Army Corps of Engineers.

I have been married for nine years to my wife Kelsey who has been nothing but supportive in this journey. We have three children, Cole (5), Cater (2), and Josie (3 months).

I am excited and looking forward to growing in this position with JCC and making positive changes in the world of conservation. I understand the benefits and lasting impacts that it will have, not only for my children, but for generations to come.



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When citizens and scientists come together, great things happen. While Osprey were essentially gone from most of North America by the 1970's, they have experienced an incredible comeback due to changes in legislation, the banning of DDT use in North America, providing artificial nest structures, and targeted reintroductions to areas from which they had disappeared. There is a long history of conservation success stories to be inspired by, but the key to our success rests in all of our hands. With that in mind, here is a list of 7 Simple Actions everyone can take to help birds, adapted from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website.

1. Keep Cats Inside. An estimated 1.3 to 4 billion birds are killed by domestic cats every year just in the United States. It is safer for cats to be indoors, and it is definitely safer for birds, not to mention the additional mammals and reptiles also killed by cats.

2. Make Windows Safer. Up to 1 billion birds in the U.S. and Canada die from window collisions every year. There are a variety of products and techniques to reduce collisions. Screened windows, special films and decals can be added to windows without hindering your view. For more information, visit abcbirds.org/get-involved/bird-smart-glass/

3. Provide and Protect Habitat. Plant native prairie plants in your landscaping! These plants are vital for native caterpillars, which nearly all bird species rely on to feed their young. Also, plant native berry-producing shrubs to provide shelter and food for residents and migrants.

4. Avoid Pesticides. Many of these pesticides, like neonicotinoids, are lethal to birds and the insects they consume. Reduce or remove the use of these chemicals in your backyard habitat and support organic farmers and those avoiding these chemicals by being mindful with your food choices.

5. Drink Bird-Friendly Coffee. Traditional coffee farms are grown over land that was previously important forest habitat for birds. Shade-grown coffee doesn't require the total destruction of these

forests. Look for bird-friendly coffee – a full list of certified farms can be found on the Smithsonian's National Zoo & Conservation Biology Institute's website.

6. Reduce Plastic. Worldwide plastic is an enormous problem. It can take more than 400 years to degrade and is easily mistaken as food or nesting material by birds. Most plastic is not recycled, so much of it ends up in our landfills, or worse, our rivers and oceans. Reduce your plastic use, especially single use bottles, plastic bags and wraps, and disposable utensils.

7. Participate in Citizen Science Programs. There are a ton of easy ways to help bird research just by watching birds! Set up a free eBird account to start documenting the birds you see. Participate in a Christmas Bird Count by finding a count near you at <http://bit.ly/BirdCountChristmas>. If you feed birds in your yard, join Project Feeder Watch, a program through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology that documents birds visiting feeders. To learn more, visit feederwatch.org or come to the Kent Park Bird Blind on Friday mornings between 8:30 and 9:30 to participate in a bird count. See the Project Feeder Watch listing on page 9 for more information.

Many of the statistics used in this article as well as the original study documenting 2.9 billion birds gone, can be found on the website www.3billionbirds.org

Below: Male American Goldfinch, photo taken by Aaron Basten



"If you take care of the birds, you take care of most of the big problems in the world."

**Thomas Lovejoy,
Conservationist**

No One Likes to Ask for Help

Charlie Bray - Ranger II

Very seldom does a day go by that I don't get asked, "Why did you become a park ranger?" It's an easy answer for me, I like to help others. Others might be people, animals, or plants; it really doesn't matter if someone or something needs help, I help. Let's be honest here, this is not a park ranger thing, it's human nature - as people, we like to help.

Late afternoon, September 22nd of this year, I got a phone call from a young couple that had found a bird tangled in fishing line near the Kent Park swim beach. The couple described to me how they were able to free the bird from the fishing line, but the bird was too weak and wet and it sat motionless in the sand. The couple carefully brought the bird up to our office building where I was waiting.

As soon as I laid eyes on the bird I recognized it as a male Belted Kingfisher, a truly amazing and fascinating bird. The couple and I examined the bird; we could find no visible injuries from the fishing line. My initial thought was the bird was going to be ok, it was just fatigued from the struggle of trying to free itself from the fishing line. I placed him in a small dry cardboard box, and thought, "what can I do to get this bird to freedom?" Give it water? Give it food? I didn't know what to do so I called JCC Naturalist Frances Owen, a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. With nightfall approaching, she advised to keep the bird in the box until morning to let it dry out and rest, then try to release it in the morning. Shortly after sunrise the next day, my 10-year-old son Bo and I went to check on the bird. BINGO! Frances was spot-on; we barely cracked open the box, and like being shot out of a cannon, the Kingfisher took flight. He got to altitude, flew a couple circles to orient himself, and then disappeared over the horizon.

I never did get the names of the couple that found the Kingfisher that day; if not for them, the outcome may not have been the same. A big thanks to those two for stepping in to help!



About Belted Kingfishers: These spectacular birds are a common sight along rivers, streams, and lakes. They are often seen perching above the water as they scope out the prospects for lunch just below the water's surface. A lucky viewer might even spot one diving into the water to grab small fish, crayfish, or other crustaceans. Breeding pairs will excavate 3-6 ft. burrows into dirt banks where they will raise their young for the season.

Though still common, populations of Belted Kingfishers have fallen by 53% since 1966. Protecting the riparian habitat they depend on is key.

Photo: iNaturalist.org (2019). iNaturalist Research-grade Observations. Occurrence dataset <https://doi.org/10.15468/ab3s5x> accessed via GBIF.org on 2019-11-08. <https://www.gbif.org/occurrence/2423213431>

Fishing line ends up in many places it shouldn't, and that has serious consequences. Fishing line, when not disposed of properly, can cause numerous problems to the surrounding environment and wildlife. The most known impact is its effect on birds, turtles, and fish. Commonly, birds will get tangled into the line, become immobile, and eventually starve to death.

It's in our nature, we love to help, but we don't always like to ask for help. Many people, without reservation helped that day, but then with hesitation asked for help. So against our nature, I'm asking for everyone's help. Please, make sure you dispose of your fishing line properly! If you see fishing line in the environment and can safely pick it up, please do. If you have fishing line you need to dispose of, JCC has a fishing line recycling bin at the Education Center in Kent Park. If you're not in our area, I recommend you contact your local sporting goods store to find out where you can properly dispose of it.

A Closer Look at Iowa's Butterflies



Name: Painted Lady
Host Plant: Native
and Non-native
Thistles +

Kristen Morrow - Naturalist

The past two years have been fruitful ones for the eastern Monarch butterfly. Populations have continued to rise in that time, and this past winter, the population of Monarchs at the overwintering sites in Mexico were higher than they have been in over a decade, with 6.05 hectares of land covered! Frequently, I chat with park visitors about their excitement at being involved with Monarch conservation. I see more stalks of milkweed left standing in an otherwise mowed expanse. I even heard from numerous children this year about their Monarch-themed Halloween costumes.

Of course, this is all great news to a naturalist's ears. Our mission is to inspire awe for the natural world and foster a desire in others to help protect it. The interest and action all of us have shown the Monarch have directly led to its growing population. Lately, however, I've been thinking about all of the other winged creatures in need of our care and attention. The charismatic Monarch, with its fascinating migration, has awakened us to butterfly conservation. Now, the time has come to broaden our empathy and take a more holistic approach to boosting the populations of our winged friends.

To help shine a light on other corners of Iowa's Lepidopteran world, I turned to the fabulous photography of JCC Volunteer Aaron Basten. He has managed to capture stunning shots of many of Iowa's ~125 reported butterfly species, all taken at Ciha Fen Preserve, a JCC property in the northeast corner of the county. Pause to take a look; how many can you identify? If most were unknown, don't worry, you're not alone.

The species shown here, though still amid the flashiest in Iowa, have relatively unknown natural histories, but they are worthy of our fascination.

Take the Giant Swallowtail, for instance. This Iowa native is the largest butterfly in North America with a wing span stretching six inches across! It is equally as wondrous to find this species as a caterpillar, as it mimics bird poop remarkably well. Don't get too close though; as a last ditch attempt to ward off predators not tricked by their disguise, the caterpillar will stick out two bright red appendages, called osmeterium, from its head, which emit a foul odor.

There are lots of little orange butterflies and, at first, it can be hard to tell them apart. Many of these are a type of fritillary butterfly, the most common of which is the Great Spangled Fritillary. Violets are the main food source for most fritillary species. Females wait until August or September to lay eggs, and they can still find violets even when the leaves have shriveled away. They do this by detecting chemical cues that the plant emits. Thousands of eggs are laid by a single female on or near violets. The caterpillars will hatch out in early fall, eat their egg for a protein-rich snack, then hunker down for the winter in diapause, surviving under leaf litter and not emerging again until the first violets spring up in April and May.

Another little orange butterfly is the American Lady, not to be confused with the Painted Lady, which, with open wings, can be distinguished by the presence of two small white dots on the forewings. American Lady butterflies are more common than the latter and can be readily found as larva on their hairy host plants: Pussy Toes and Pearly Everlasting. The caterpillars are



Name: Northern Pearly Eye Host Plant: Woodland Grasses



Name: Meadow Fritillary Host Plant: Violets (Ex: Common Violet)



Name: Eastern Tiger Swallowtail Host Plant: Black Cherry & Willows +



Name: Black Swallowtail Host Plant: Carrot Family (Ex: Golden Alexander)



Name: Eastern Tailed-Blue Host Plant: Bush-clovers (Ex: Round-headed Bush Clover) +



Name: American Lady Host Plant: Pussytoes & Pearly Everlasting +



Name: Eastern Comma Host Plant: Elms, Nettles & Hops



Name: Giant Swallowtail Host Plant: Citrus Family (Ex: Pickly Ash)



Name: Pearl Crescent Host Plant: Asters (Ex: New England Aster)



Name: Red-Spotted Purple Host Plant: Black Cherry & Chokecherry +



Name: Goatweed Leafwing Host Plant: Prairie Tea & Woolly Croton



Name: Common Buckeye Host Plant: Blue Vervain & Common Plantain +

known to sew together a nest at the tips of their host plant using their secreted silk and the hairy chaff of their hosts. They take refuge inside these enclosures during the day, then come out at night to feed. When the temperature drops in the fall, the adults die. The butterflies we see the next summer are from individuals who overwintered or hatched in the south and made the amazing migration to northern lands.

Many other species make similar migrations, including the gorgeous Common Buckeye, which also makes the long migration to the southern states and beyond in the fall. These beauties can be easily identified by the large and colorful eye spots on both the hind- and forewings. The markings aren't for looks, they serve as a defensive mechanism. When predators see the spots, they are often tricked into thinking they are the eyes of a larger animal. The spots don't always work, however, which leads to another fascinating adaptation. The location of the eye spots has evolved to be along the periphery of the wings. If a bird tries to eat the butterfly, it typically aims for the eye-spots, missing the

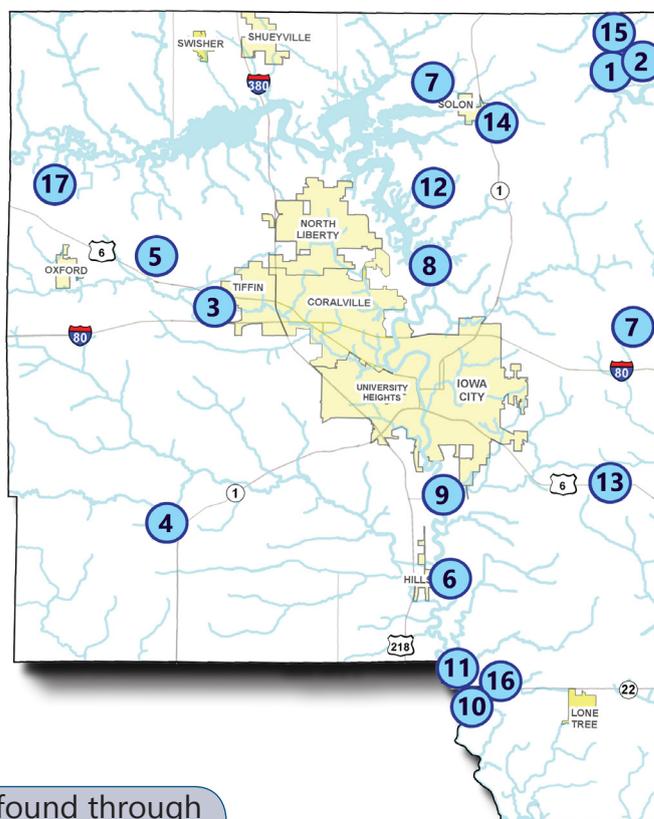
body altogether. They can still fly without perfect wings; in fact, the Common Buckeye is still functional with only one third of its original wing!

Just as Monarchs need milkweed plants for the caterpillars to eat and grow, the vast majority of other butterfly species are also dependent on a particular group of host plants. I think it's safe to say that all of us would like to see more butterflies around, and many of us plant native and non-native nectar plants for the adults to drink from. But, we often forget to look holistically at their needs. To have more butterfly diversity, we first need more host plant diversity. The easiest thing each of us can do to help boost populations of Iowa's butterflies is to choose native host plants for our yards and gardens.

To dive deeper into the topic of native plants, and to receive resources and native seed packets, attend Native Plants: The Building Blocks for a Healthy Planet on January 12. For more details, see page 9.

JCC Public Use Areas

1. Cedar River Crossing	514 acres
2. Ciha Fen	81 acres
3. Clear Creek Area & Trail	87 acres, 1.3 miles
4. Frytown Conservation Area	94 acres
5. F.W. Kent Park	1,052 acres
6. Hills Access	40 acres
7. Hoover Trail	6 miles
8. Iowa River Trail	3.5 miles
9. Iowa River Water Trail	22 miles
10. River Junction Access	12 acres
11. Pechman Creek Delta	380 acres
12. Schwab-Burford Property	132 acres
13. Scott Church Park	5 acres
14. Solon Prairie	3 acres
15. Sutliff Bridge & Access	1/2 acre
16. Walker Park	3 acres
17. Williams Prairie Preserve	21 acres



More information about JCC public use areas can be found through our website: www.johnson-county.com/conservation

Winter Program Guide

January

Project Feeder Watch

Every Friday through April 3, 8:30-9:30 a.m.
Conservation Education Center - Bird Blind, F.W. Kent Park

As a part of Project Feeder Watch through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, JCC will be performing regular counts of the avian species at the Bird Blind feeders in Kent Park. Depending on weather and staff availability, time spent viewing birds may be shortened or canceled. You are invited to join a JCC Naturalist or volunteer during this time to learn about feeder birds, and find out how you can get involved in Project Feeder Watch at Kent Park, or your own backyard! No registration is necessary, but you may email fowen@co.johnson.ia.us or call 319-645-1011 for more information.

Nature Buds: Squirrels

Wednesday, January 8, 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Nature Buds is a free monthly program for children 3 to 5 years of age featuring indoor stations and outdoor activities; one adult to every two children is required. Email fowen@co.johnson.ia.us to register.

Native Plants: The Building Blocks for a Healthy Planet

Sunday, January 12, 2:00-4:00 p.m.
Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room A

Pollinators in peril, insect apocalypse, birds on the decline ... there's a lot of tough environmental news these days, but there are so many empowering ways to take action. One of the best ways to make an impact is to plant native plants wherever you can. In this presentation, learn why native plants are vital, how to get started in native plant gardening, and where to get plants. This free program is hosted by Project GREEN; no registration is necessary.

The Art of Fire

Saturday, January 18, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Youth Group Camp, F.W. Kent Park

Come learn how to conjure fire with a spark and discover the process of making your own charcoal for artistic purposes. This program is hands-on and will mostly take place outdoors. Participants will leave with their very own drawing charcoal. All ages are welcome, but this program is specifically designed for adults. Registration is required; email fowen@co.johnson.ia.us.

A Thruhiker's Guide to the Colorado Trail

Thursday, January 23, 6:30-8:00 p.m.
Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room A

Part adventure tale, part how-to, Naturalist Kristen Morrow and first-time backpacker Hai Huynh will share about their 2019 thruhike of the 486-mile Colorado Trail (CT). The presentation will feature an overview of the CT, the planning process, gear rundowns, and things learned along the way. Anyone interested in planning a thruhike or getting into backpacking should join and bring questions! There is no fee and no registration is required.

Ice Fishing with Take A Kid Outdoors (TAKO)

Saturday, January 25, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Liberty Center Pond, 650 W Cherry St., North Liberty, IA

The winter season is upon us and that means that it's time to hit the ice in search of fish! JCC, TAKO, the Iowa DNR, Impact7G, and The City of North Liberty are partnering on this free event. You will learn about ice fishing, safety, equipment needs, techniques, and fish ID. A limited number of fishing poles will be available. A 2020 fishing license is required for anglers 16 years and older. Dress for the weather and pack layers! Lunch will be served at 12:00 PM. Please help us reduce waste by bringing a water bottle, plates and silverware. Registration is requested; to register, visit the event on TAKO's Facebook page. For questions, contact judy@takeakidoutdoors.org.

Winter Hike

Sunday, January 26, 1:00 p.m.
Ciha Fen Preserve (5656 145th St NE, Lisbon, IA 52253)

It's easy to get cabin fever this time of year; instead, bundle up and join JCC naturalists on exploratory hikes through JCC properties. Each hike will be casual off-trail adventures, spanning one to three miles. Along the way, we'll look for wildlife tracks and nests. All ages are welcome. Four sets of adult-sized snowshoes will be available for participants to try out for free. Registration is required; to register, email kmorrow@co.johnson.ia.us.

Hike It Baby: Naturalist Walk

Friday, January 31, 10:00 a.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Hike It Baby is a national group with the goal to raise a generation to love the outdoors. Bring your little one (all ages invited, not just babies!) on this free naturalist-led hike. Indoor exploration of the Conservation Education Center is available following any hikes at Kent Park. Please arrive 15 minutes early; no registration is necessary.

February

Winter Hike

Saturday February 8, 1:00 p.m.
Cedar River Crossing, North Entrance (5473 Sutliff Rd NE, Solon, IA 52333)

Check out the 560-acre river edge property and JCC's biggest restoration project currently. We'll hike through the riparian forest and discuss the restoration we see along the way. Four sets of adult-sized snowshoes will be available for participants to try out for free. To register, email kmorrow@co.johnson.ia.us.

Say YES to Foraging in Winter!

Sunday, February 9, 1:00-3:30 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Take a walk with a JCC naturalist and learn about some of the foods and medicines that can be foraged in winter! This program is mostly outdoors and features a walk over uneven terrain.

Some time will be spent on preparing foraged items. Registration is required, and space is limited; email fowen@co.johnson.ia.us to register.

Nature Buds: Animal Tracks

Wednesday, February 12, 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park
Email kmorrow@co.johnson.ia.us to register.

Owl Prowl

Friday, February 14, 7:00-9:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Join certified raptor educator Joan Schnabel to learn all about owls. Joan will bring her Great Horned Owl to discuss owl adaptations and natural history. Afterward, we'll head outside for a short hike in hopes of hearing owls. Space is limited, and this program fills fast. Register early by emailing fowen@co.johnson.ia.us.

Freeze Fest Sunday

February 16, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
Terry Trueblood Park Lodge, Iowa City

In partnership with TAKO and JCC, Iowa City Parks and Recreation invites you to this free winter festival. Participants can enjoy both indoor and outdoor activities, including ice fishing, snow painting, winter hiking, birding, games, and much more! Hot chocolate will be provided.

Hike It Baby: Naturalist Walk

Friday, February 28, 10:00 a.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Woodworking for Wildlife: Solitary Bee Hotels

Saturday, February 29, 9:00-11:00 a.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park
Fee: \$15

Did you know there are around 400 different species of solitary bees in Iowa? Come learn all about them, AND learn how to build and maintain an observation bee hotel! We ask everyone who builds a house for themselves, to donate their time to build a second house that will be hung up in one of JCC's properties. To register, email fowen@co.johnson.ia.us. A big thanks to Lowes in Coralville for supplying a 50% discount on the hardware!

March

Prairie Preview XXXVII

Tuesday, March 3, 6:30 p.m.
Clarion Highlander, 2525 N. Dodge St., Iowa City

JCC will join other local conservation groups for a gathering of environmental displays at this free annual event hosted by Bur Oak Land Trust. This year's keynote speaker is Sarah Nizzi from the Xerces Society, the leading organization in invertebrate conservation. For more information or to become an event sponsor, contact: 319-338-7030 or info@buroaklandtrust.org.

Nature Buds: Hibernation

Wednesday, March 11, 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park
Email fowen@co.johnson.ia.us to register.

Winter Tree ID

Saturday, March 14, 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Leafless trees might seem impossible to ID, but there are still many ways to set them apart. Participants will learn advanced tree ID skills such as bud, twig, and bark ID, as well as natural history snippets about many of Iowa's trees. This program will primarily be outdoors, hiking both on and off trail. This class is designed for adults. To register, email kmorrow@co.johnson.ia.us.

Forts and Fires Family Event

Sunday, March 15, 1:00-3:30 p.m.
Youth Group Camp, F.W. Kent Park

For many, building forts in the woods was a childhood pastime. This program is meant to give today's youth that opportunity in a family-oriented way. Along with building forts, participants will build a fire from scratch using flint and steel. One adult is required for every three youth. To register, email fowen@co.johnson.ia.us.

Hike It Baby: Naturalist Walk

Friday, March 27, 10:00 a.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Idaho Trek Information Meeting

Thursday, March 26, 6:30 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park

Join trek leaders for an informational meeting about the Idaho Wilderness Trek, a 10-day trip for high school students to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness in northeast Idaho. The meeting will cover logistics, safety, and gear. After the presentation, attendees can ask questions to the trek leaders and past trek goers.

Healing Happens in the Garden

Saturday, March 28, 1:00 p.m.
Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park
Fee: \$25

Your garden and land can be a wonderful setting for becoming more whole, happy, and healthy. In this class we will share practical techniques for working with nature in our gardens and in our own bodies to improve wellness and vitality. This class will be taught by Mandy Dickerson, Herbalist at Plantchanters Garden. Registration is required no later than Saturday, March 21. Email fowen@co.johnson.ia.us to sign up early!

Spring Hike

Saturday, March 28, 1:00 p.m.
Pechman Creek Delta, 5875 Sand Rd SE, Lone Tree, IA 52755.

Explore bottomland forest along the Iowa River looking for signs of eagle, otter, beaver, and other frequent Pechman visitors along the way. To register, email kmorrow@co.johnson.ia.us.

2020 Seed Share

Details TBD; please stay tuned to JCC's Facebook page for updates.

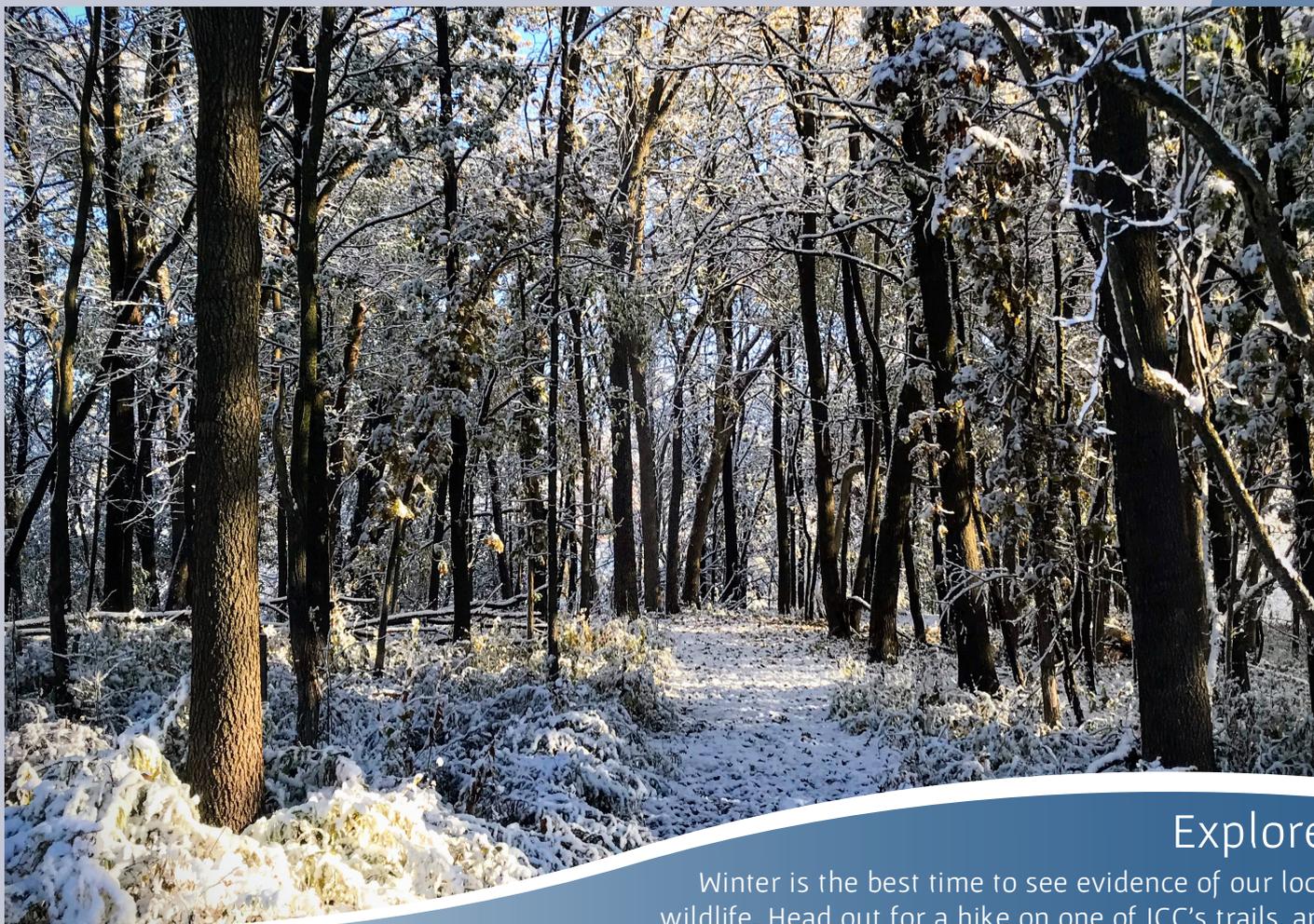
The Seed Share is a great opportunity to share your saved seeds or get free seeds to try growing something new, whether vegetable or native plant seeds that JCC will bring. Seeds will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Gardeners who wish to share their seeds with the public should place seeds in a bag or envelope, and label the package with seed ID and planting instructions. For more information, email fowen@co.johnson.ia.us or call 319-645-1011.



Johnson County Conservation
2048 HWY 6 NW
Oxford, IA 52332



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Explore:

Winter is the best time to see evidence of our local wildlife. Head out for a hike on one of JCC's trails, and keep an eye out for tracks in the snow!!

Sign up to receive our newsletter through email by visiting: <http://bit.ly/JCCNewsletter>