



CONSERVATION NEWS

A Publication of the Muscatine County Conservation Board

Volume 32 No. 1 Spring 2019

Is It Spring Yet?

Everyone seems to be very tired of winter. Even weather forecasters seem nervous about another report of cold, snow, ice, blasting winds, or even all four at the same time! But we are luckier than we realize. Most of us have warm homes, schools, or businesses. We can dress up in extra clothing to venture outside, or eat a little extra when planning outdoor activities. But what about wildlife?

Wildlife species that spend the winter in Iowa have a variety of ways to cope with winter weather. Hibernation or being a “winter sleeper” allows animals without protection from cold, or the ability to find food, to survive until spring time.

Hibernation is a condition where an animal slows down its metabolism so that less energy is needed for survival over a long period. The heart rate, breathing, and body temp are reduced to the point that these animals may appear to be dead! Not so. With warming spring temps and increasing daylight these animals slowly begin to reawaken over the course of days or weeks depending on the kind of animal. Hibernators in Iowa include; snakes, turtles, frogs, salamanders, bats, some insects, and a few mammals such as groundhogs.

“Winter sleepers” are animals who enter a not-quite-hibernation state called torpor. They slow their metabolism a little to reduce energy needs, but will periodically wake up and venture out to look for food during warm spells, and then return to their den. Examples include; raccoons, opossums, and skunks.

Mammals, with their fur coats and birds, with their feathers can generally endure most winter weather. The mammalian predators often venture out every day or night looking for prey. Dense double layered fur with guard hair and underfur keep them warm, while large paws help them travel through the snow and ice. Herbivores also venture out on most winter days. Everyone needs to eat, so they are searching for seeds hidden months earlier, or digging into snow looking for grasses or green stems. If nothing else is available, bark from small trees and shrubs can help them to survive the last few weeks of winter.

Bird feathers are amazing insulation for cold weather. Feathers, plus sufficient food and shelter, make winter much more tolerable for birds. The tricky part is food and shelter. Food can be hard to find when covered by snow and ice. And food only goes so far if shelter from bitter cold winds isn't available. Animals have the physical tools to survive winter... if food water and shelter are available.

Winter can be an incredibly harsh time for animals. Late winter with bitter cold snaps, snow and ice cover, and dwindling food supplies are the worst. Sound familiar? Our wild friends are more tired of winter than we are, and a number of them will not survive until warmer weather. At this time of year carnivores may eat plant materials with little nutritional value, more birds may come to available feeders, and nature being nature, some animals will feed on the bodies of those who did not survive.

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Volunteer Spotlight

Julie Herold is a retired teacher from the Muscatine Community School District. She worked with the district for 25 years teaching kindergarten and first grade. Since 2006, she has been leading the Polliwog Playtime nature classes for the Muscatine County Conservation Board. This is a year-round volunteer opportunity that happens monthly from September through April and twice monthly from June through August.

The Polliwog Playtime nature class is for 18 months through 3 years old with an adult. Julie has educated 1,818 kids and 1,735 parents in 206 programs over the years and that's just in our Polliwog Playtime classes. She has helped grow the youngest age group of nature campers tremendously! Over the summer months, we have had to add second sessions to many classes in this age group because word travels how much fun she makes these classes for the young nature lovers.

Julie comes up with the lesson and accompanying craft and activities that could include songs, dance, puppets, or matching games, and most of the time purchases the supplies she needs with her own money. The parents always learn something too! Julie gears her programs with fun activities for the kids but also throws in a little bit of knowledge about the subject directed towards the parents so that they can go home and expand on the topic. These nature classes get kids excited about coming every year and moving up to the older age groups, so in a sense these young naturalists start with her classes.

Not only has she led these classes for us for the last 12 years, she also volunteers at our annual events such as the Kid's Fishing Seminar and the Halloween Hike. Additionally, she is only a phone call away if we need an extra hand with a fieldtrip or other school program.

Julie covers the reception desk from time to time. If the naturalists are doing a program on the weekend, Julie has come in to answer questions

from visitors and answer phone calls. She is kind of a jack-of-all-trades around here!

As if she does not do enough with us, she is actively involved with the Muscatine Lions Club, coordinating and performing vision screening for kids, birth to five years of age, in the community. She teaches religious education at St. Mary's/Mathias School on Wednesdays and she just recently stepped down from the Foster Care Review Board after eight years. All the while being the best "Nana" to her grandchildren by attending events and keeping up with their busy schedules.

Thanks Julie from all of us here at Muscatine County Conservation Board!



Thanks Friends

Thank you to all our “Friends” whose donations to the Muscatine County Conservation Foundation support the development and enhancement of environmental education and conservation projects in Muscatine County.

Mike & Phyllis Avesing

Roger & Sarah Lande

Tom & Dena Schliesman

Margaret Tripp

All Seasons Glass & Mirror-Mike Schulte

Jim Scott

Quad Cities Outdoor Women’s Club

The names of all donors go into our donor book and those who donate \$250 or more receive a plaque on our donor wall. Please include the form on the right with your donation and become a “Friend” today.

Thank You

Thank you to all those who generously gave time, talent, funding and/or materials to help make our programs, projects, and areas better than ever.



Julie Herold - instructing the Polliwog Playtime classes.

All Seasons Glass & Mirror/Mike Schulte - sponsoring the RARE Group Raptor Program at the Muscatine Eagle Watch.

ISU Extension 4H - archery equipment.

A Gift For the Conservation Foundation

I would like to become a Friend,
please accept my donation.

- Sponsor \$10—\$49
- Partner \$50—\$99
- Patron \$100—\$249
- Guardian \$250—\$499
- Steward \$500—\$999
- Benefactor \$1000 +
- I would like to donate my time.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Thank you for your support!

Please make checks payable to:
Muscatine County Conservation Foundation
PO Box 109, Muscatine, IA 52761



Our condolences to the Family of Della Brunson who passed away in December. Della served on the Conservation Board from 1984-1993.

Holiday Closings

The Environmental Learning Center will be closed on Sunday, April 21, Monday, May 27, and Thursday, July 4.



Programs & Special Events



NATURE CRAFTS

We're cleaning out the craft closet. Come join Naturalist Michelle Berns and make some crafts from natural and recycled materials.

Saturday, March 16 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

Environmental Learning Center

Free for all ages, children must be accompanied by an adult

TROUT RELEASE

The Iowa DNR will release trout in Discovery Pond. Trout stamps are required (see Iowa Fishing Regulation booklet). All Iowa fishing rules and regulations apply and will be enforced.

Friday, March 22 10:00 a.m.

Discovery Pond in Discovery Park



GROWING UP WILD

This workshop is for early childhood professionals working with children ages 3-7 and will focus on reconnecting children with nature. To register, go to the Iowa Child Care Providers Training Registry—<http://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/trainingregistry/> Click on Search Trainings, then search Muscatine County.



Saturday, April 6 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Environmental Learning Center

Free for providers/educators serving Muscatine County

\$30 for all other participants

CANOE/KAYAK TRY-IT

Come to Deep Lakes Park to try out canoeing and kayaking. Canoes and kayaks will be available to paddle around Lake Chester. Life jackets provided for anyone 30 pounds and over.

Sunday, May 19 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Deep Lakes Park-meet at Lake Chester Boat Ramp

Free for all ages, children must be accompanied by an adult



Programs & Special Events

39TH ANNUAL KIDS FISHING SEMINAR

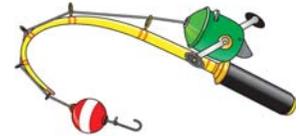
Come learn the basics of fishing. This annual event is geared toward elementary-aged kids, but all ages are welcome. All participants receive a tackle packet and are eligible for door prizes!

Saturday, June 8 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Discovery Pond in Discovery Park

Free, children must be accompanied by an adult

Preregistration requested-registration form available at Environmental Learning Center or www.MuscatineCountyConservation.com



KIDS' FISHING DERBY

12TH ANNUAL KIDS FISHING DERBY

Come to the Kids Fishing Seminar then put your newfound fishing knowledge to use and participate in the Kids Fishing Derby. Prizes awarded in several fish categories and age groups.

Saturday, June 8 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Discovery Pond in Discovery Park

Free, children must be accompanied by an adult

Preregistration requested-registration form available at Environmental Learning Center or www.MuscatineCountyConservation.com

ORIENTEERING 101

Come join Lana Artz-McComb from the Louisa County Conservation Board for a program on orienteering. Learn how to use a compass and map to navigate. We'll learn the basics then complete a few navigation challenges before attempting a Discovery Park orienteering challenge.

Tuesday, June 18 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Environmental Learning Center & Discovery Park

Free for all ages, children must be accompanied by an adult

Preregistration requested at (563) 264-5922 or conservation@co.muscatine.ia.us



REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Join Conservation Board staff to learn about the reptiles and amphibians of Iowa, and meet some live ones!



Saturday, July 13 6:30 p.m.

Environmental Learning Center

Free for all ages, children must be accompanied by an adult



Summer Programs for Kids

POLLIWOG PLAYTIME

ages 18 months through 3 years \$5.00/session maximum 12/session

Join us at the Environmental Learning Center and Discovery Park for activities designed to help toddlers explore nature. Children must be accompanied by an adult.



June 3	Insect Helpers	9:00-10:00 a.m.
June 17	Bees & Pollinators	9:00-10:00 a.m.
July 1	Let's Plant a Summer Garden	9:00-10:00 a.m.
July 15	Who Helps Your Garden Grow?	9:00-10:00 a.m.
July 29	Water	9:00-10:00 a.m.

KNEE-HIGH NATURALISTS

4-5 year olds \$5.00/session maximum 12/session

Join us at the Environmental Learning Center and Discovery Park for nature activities such as games, crafts, stories, and outdoor exploration. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

June 10	Gardening	9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.-11:30 noon
June 24	Pond Life	9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.-11:30 noon
July 8	Pollinators	9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.-11:30 noon
July 22	Habitats	9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.-11:30 noon
August 5	Water	9:00-10:00 a.m. or 10:30 a.m.-11:30 noon



CHIPMUNK CAMP

kids who just completed kindergarten or 1st grade \$30.00/session
maximum 16/session

Activities may include outdoor exploration, hiking, fishing, paddling, creek stumping, games, crafts, and more.

Session 1 June 11, 12, 13 1:00-4:00 p.m.

We'll spend these three afternoons at Discovery Park learning about mammals and insects. We'll also fish and hike at Discovery Park.

Session 2 July 9, 10, 11 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

We'll learn about trees at Fuller Park, reptiles and amphibians at Discovery Park, and creek stomp at Wildcat Den.

Session 3 July 23, 24, 25 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

We'll learn about birds at Saulsbury, visit Mad Creek and the Mississippi Mist, and explore Discovery Park.

Summer Programs for Kids

KESTREL CAMP

kids who just completed 2nd or 3rd grade \$30.00/session maximum 16/session

Activities may include outdoor exploration, hiking, fishing, paddling, creek stomping, games, crafts, and more.

Session 1 June 18, 19, 20 1:00-4:00 p.m.

We'll learn about insects at Discovery Park, trees at Fuller Park, and birds at Saulsbury.



Session 2 July 16, 17, 18 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

We'll creek stomp at Wildcat Den, learn about mammals at Discovery Park, and fish and canoe at Saulsbury.

OTTER CAMP

kids who just completed 4th or 5th grade \$30.00/session maximum 16/session

Activities may include outdoor exploration, hiking, fishing, paddling, creek stomping, games, crafts, and more.



Session 1 June 25, 26, 27 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

We'll learn about insects at Discovery Park, birds at Saulsbury, and creek stomp at Wildcat Den.

Session 2 July 30, 31, August 1 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon

We'll explore areas in Muscatine County that belong to The Nature Conservancy.

OUTDOOR SKILLS

kids who just completed 5th-8th grades \$10.00/session maximum 16/session

Come experience a variety of outdoor skills and recreation opportunities. Sign up for one or more sessions. All sessions will meet at the Environmental Learning Center.

Session 1 June 14 12:30-3:30 p.m.

Water day at Deep Lakes Park
We'll paddle, fish & swim.

Session 2 July 2 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Survival at Saulsbury
We'll build shelters, fires & cook lunch.

Session 3 July 29 12:30-3:30 p.m.

Hike at Wildcat Den
We'll hike Pine Creek.



Camp registration forms available at the Environmental Learning Center
or on our website www.MuscatineCountyConservation.com

Shelter Rentals

The Conservation Board has picnic shelters at Discovery Park, Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area, and Jack Shuger Memorial Park that may be reserved. Call the Conservation Board office, (563) 264-5922, for a reservation form.

Discovery Park

small shelter \$15.00 (no electricity)
large shelter \$35.00

Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area

shelter #1 \$20.00
shelter #2 \$20.00

Jack Shuger Memorial Park

large shelter \$20.00

The Saulsbury Lodge is also available for rent if you prefer air conditioning or a weatherproof venue. Prices vary depending on the day of the week and type of event. Call the Conservation Board office, (563) 264-5922, for more information.

Free Fishing Days

The Iowa DNR's free fishing days this year are June 7, 8, 9. Iowa residents may fish on these days without a fishing license. All other fishing regulations must be obeyed.



Attention Teachers

It's never too early to set up your spring fieldtrip. Reservations are already coming in, so call us at (563) 264-5922 or e-mail conservation@co.muscatine.ia.us to get your choice of dates.



Camping at Saulsbury

The Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area campgrounds will open in mid April. Camping fees will be as follows.

- Main Campground \$20/night
- River Campground \$17/night
- Primitive Campground \$10/night
- Permanently Handicapped \$15/night

You can save on camping in the main campground with a coupon book for \$100-that's six nights for the price of five. Available at the Environmental Learning Center or from the park ranger and campground host.

We will also continue with the "Free Wednesdays" and the "Two-for-One" camping specials.

TWO-FOR-ONE

Camping Weekends

Camp the first night in any of the campgrounds at Saulsbury and stay for the next night FREE on the weekends listed below.

April 19-20
May 3-4 & May 17-18
June 7-8 & June 21-22
July 5-6 & July 19-20
August 2-3 & August 16-17
September 6-7 & September 20-21
October 4-5 & October 18-19

HAPPY CAMPERS



FREE Wednesdays

Camp in any of the campgrounds at Saulsbury on any Wednesday in April-October for free.

Creature Feature

Red-tailed Hawk

Red-tailed hawks are the most common hawk found in Iowa and one of the most common across North America. They live in many different habitats from deserts to rain forests and almost everywhere in between where the trees are not too dense. They are especially common around farms where they are an important part of the food chain consuming pesky rodents.

While Red-tailed hawks can come in several different morphs or colors ranging from very light to dark brown. They all have stocky bodies, broad wings and tails, short dark bills, yellow feet and the reddish-brown upper tail, which is found only in the adults. Young mature at two years of age.

Rodents make up the majority of Red-tailed hawk diets, but depending on where they live they may also eat bats, fish, snakes, lizards, insects, worms and crustaceans. Red-tails like to perch in high places so they can scour open areas for prey. They have excellent eyesight and can see a small rodent on the ground 100 feet below.

Red-tailed hawks breed in the northern parts of North America. During breeding the pair may fly very high in large circles then plunge into a deep dive before grabbing each other by the talons and fall spiraling close to the ground.

Nesting is high up usually in the crown of a large tree, but sometimes on a cliff or window ledge or a billboard platform, with a good view of the surrounding area. The nest may be a previously used nest or a new nest built by both the female and male. One-five eggs are laid and are incubated by the female for 30-35 days. Both the female and male feed the nestlings who fledge the nest after 42-46 days.

Red-tailed hawks do not have many predators, but they compete with Great horned owls for food and nests. Lifespan in the wild is around 12 years but in captivity they may live to be 30 years old.



Red-tail Fun Facts

- Females are larger than males.
- The intense loud piercing scream they make is used a lot in movie sound effects.
- They mate for life.
- Sometimes called chicken hawks.
- The red tail feathers were given to Native American warriors as a symbol of bravery.

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Nature offers amazing power as well as incredible beauty. People are fortunate to be able to appreciate the beauty and mostly protect themselves from the power. We share the world with all manner of animals big and small. We can't control their lives, but can offer a little assistance. Continue filling bird feeders as long as you can. In late winter you may see more than birds as squirrels, raccoons, even opossums will visit as they try to make it to warm weather.

Creating habitat in your yard makes a difference to animals. Unmowed areas and brush piles away from your home help the wild critters without becoming a problem for you. Bird houses are a nice addition to your yard, and feeders for hummingbirds and fresh fruit for orioles benefit the birds while drawing them in close enough for you to see them up close.

Though it's still cold and windy and many animals are hunkered down, they can sense that the tide is turning. They are ready for the warmth of spring and another season of growth!

Topper's Page



Birds of prey are carnivores, predators. They have sharp curved beaks, talons, & many times a soaring flight. Common types of birds of prey include hawks, eagles, falcons, owls, & vultures.

Help Topper solve the Birds of Prey puzzle below. Unscramble the words then use the numbered letters to figure out the saying at the bottom. The saying means "notices everything".

NOALT
10

NOLACF

RONEAVIRC
7 5

TORRAP
9

SAOR
3

LOW
11 6

NUTH
1

AEGEL
8

TEAPODRR
2

TULVERU
4



1 2 3

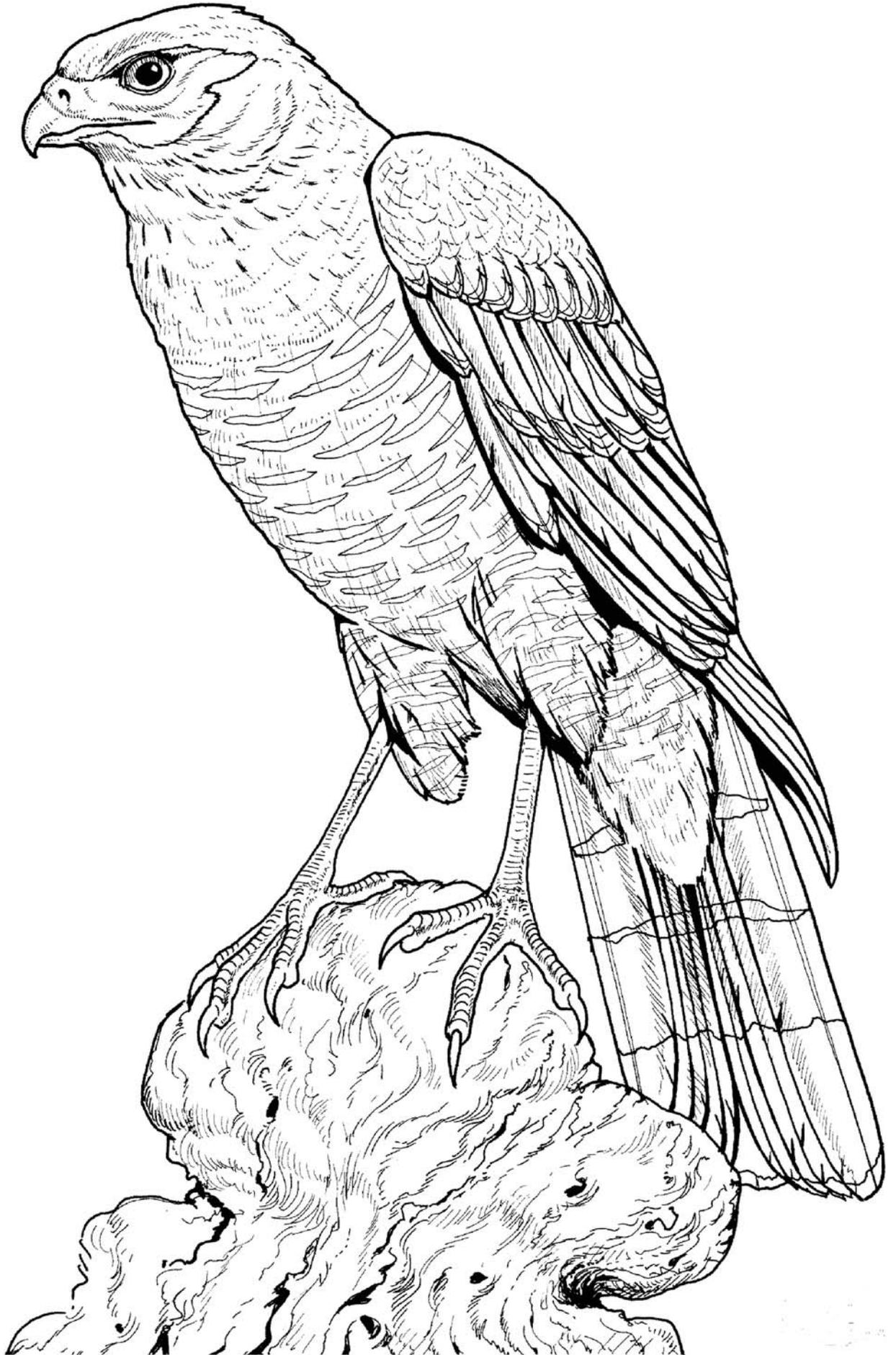
y
4 5 3

K
6 7 8

9

K
1 10 11

Help Topper color Harley the Hawk.



- Puzzle Answers
- Talon
- Falcon
- Carnivore
- Raptor
- Soar
- Owl
- Hunt
- Eagle
- Predator
- Vulture
- Has Eyes Like A Hawk

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3300 Cedar Street, PO Box 109

Muscatine, IA 52761

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conservation@co.muscatine.ia.us

www.MuscatineCountyConservation.com

The Muscatine County Conservation Board meets the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. Meetings are held at the Environmental Learning Center, 3300 Cedar Street in Muscatine. The public is welcome to attend.

If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or handicap, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Muscatine County Conservation Board or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240



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