



CONSERVATION NEWS

A Publication of the Muscatine County Conservation Board

Volume 32 No. 4 Winter 2019/20

Chickadee Check-off by Stephanie Shepherd, Iowa DNR

Tax Time....It's for the birds! And butterflies and frogs and turtles and....

Raise your hand if you know you can make a difference for Iowa's wildlife on the state tax form. There should be at least 7,300 of you with your hands in the air. That's how many folks donated a bit or all of their state tax refund to the Fish and Wildlife Fund – affectionately called the Chickadee Check-off -- on 2018 tax returns, translating to a little less than \$140,000 in support of wildlife conservation in Iowa.

Since the 1980s, thousands of Iowans have supported Iowa wildlife by making donations when they prepare their taxes. Today, 100 percent of those dollars go to the state's Wildlife Diversity Program, which protects nongame and vulnerable species through habitat development, data collection and research, education and much more.

Donating is easy. Simply enter your donation amount on the Fish and Wildlife Check-Off contribution line (line 57 on form 1040), and the sum is either automatically deducted from your refund or added to the amount owed. Don't forget to talk to your tax preparer if you have your taxes done professionally – many tax preparers forget to mention donation opportunities.

If every Iowa taxpayer donated just \$1 on the Fish and Wildlife Check-off, it would mean \$1.5 million for natural resource conservation! So, if you're able, take a moment this tax season to get

a little wild and consider making a donation. The 1000+ species of birds, butterflies, mammals, frogs, toads, turtles and dragonflies that call Iowa home will thank you.

Check it & Protect it!

Help keep an eye on Iowa wildlife when you donate to the Fish/Wildlife Trust Fund on your state tax form.

Learn more at www.iowadnr.gov

photo by: Doug Hair

Who Needs a Tree?

The 31st Annual Halloween Hike was held on October 12. Hikers met a tree for each season along with some critters who depend on those trees.

Everyone was treated to refreshments after the hike and the kids received a treat bag and a mini pumpkin to paint.



Thank you to all the donors and volunteers who helped make the Halloween Hike a successful event.

DONORS

Hy-Vee
Taylor's Market
Skip Hitchcock
Young Professionals Network
Stout's Market
Harrison's Produce

CHARACTERS

Betty Collins
Emma Steele
Kolton Hitchcock
Halley Berger
Richard Blair
Dave Bakke
Britt Vickstrom
Eva Kurriger
Diana Broderson
Mary Bulger
Amy Bakke

VOLUNTEERS

Linda Stoddard
Gage Freitag
Julia Baxter
Jenny Paetz
Mark & Kaia Petersen
Dave & Diane Moritz
Mylah & Gannon Meis
Kevin, Denise & Lauren Dirth
Marla, Andy, Drew & Eva Kurriger
Brian & Diana Steele
Muscatine High School Academy
Grace Lutheran Church Youth Group
Shepherd of the Cross Church Youth Group
Muscatine High School Key Club
Lilly Kallenberger
Samantha Rada
Blanca Madrigal
Janessa Nickols
Taylor Lewandowski
Yazmin Moran Rangel
Spangler Chapel Youth Group
Jacob Imhoff
Shawna, Eli & Caleb Trosen
Amie, Chuck & Caylie McConnaha
Julie, Jack & Justin Miller
Young Professionals Network
Paige Putnam
Patt Drake
Julie Herold
Bryanna Harner
Samantha Potter
Mike Schulte
Christie White
Elizabeth Mireles
Carla Miranda
Arianna Aguliar
Ayeina Guiller
Carter Costas
Jake Sobel

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.

Mike Dauber - food for our raptors

Muscatine Pollinator Project - magnifying lamp

Thanks Volunteers

Thanks to **Julie Herold** for instructing our Polliwog Playtime classes.

Thanks to **Christie White** for helping out at the front desk.



Memorials

Monetary donations were made
In Memory of Roberta Gabbard.

A tree was planted in Discovery Park **In Memory of Roberta Gabbard.**

Four mounted ducks were donated **In Memory of Sean Jones.**

A tree was adopted in Discovery Park **In Memory of Eugene M. Anthony.**

A tree was adopted in Discovery Park **In Honor of Dick & Evie Marr.**

Trout Release

Around 80 people staked out a spot around Discovery Pond in anticipation of catching some of the 1,000 trout the Iowa DNR released into Discovery Pond on October 26.



Anyone catching one of the 100 tagged trout that day received a \$10 gift card from Blain's Farm & Fleet. A record fifty-one tagged trout were turned in and those people were then entered into a drawing for a \$100 Blain's Farm & Fleet gift card. Winner of the \$100 gift card was Rick McGill of Muscatine.

Thanks to the Muscatine County Conservation Foundation and Blain's Farm & Fleet for the gift cards.



Programs & Special Events

KNEE-HIGH NATURALISTS

4-6 year olds \$5.00/class maximum 12/class

must have at least 5 signed up to hold class

Join us at the Environmental Learning Center and Discovery Park for nature activities such as games, crafts, stories, and exploration. Children must be accompanied by an adult. All classes meet on the second Saturday of the month from 10:00-11:00 a.m.

January 11 “Animal Tracks”
February 8 “Amphibians”
March 14 “Fish”
April 11 “Plants”



BLOOD DRIVE

This a time of year when the Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center is trying to replenish their blood supplies after the holidays.

Registration to participate in our Blood Drive is easy! Simply call our office at 563 (264-5922) and we can help you select a time and with your name, phone number and email you will be registered. You can also go online to www.bloodcenter.org and click the link to sign up for a blood drive, add the Muscatine 52761 zip code and find us on the list of blood drives. Either way you sign up you will receive a confirmation email with details for your site. For questions call Dave Bakke at (563) 264-5922.

Monday, January 6
12:00 - 2:30 p.m.
Environmental Learning Center

STARLAB

Join us as we take a tour deep into space by looking at the constellations! We will set up the StarLab, an inflatable dome, in the Environmental Learning Center. The program is limited to 25 people, so preregistration is required.



Sunday, January 12
1:00 p.m.
Environmental Learning Center
All ages, children must be accompanied by an adult
Free, preregistration required at (563) 264-5922

Programs & Special Events

BALD EAGLE WATCH

The Muscatine Bald Eagle Watch will feature outdoor viewing of bald eagles at the Muscatine Riverfront, as well as booths hosted by conservation groups and agencies, coffee and hot chocolate, and LIVE raptor programs by the RARE Group at 9:30 am and 11:00 am at the Pearl City Station.



Saturday, January 25

9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Live Raptor Programs at 9:30 & 11:00 am

Pearl City Station

All ages

Free

HUNTER EDUCATION

Anyone born after January 1, 1972 who wants to purchase a hunting license in Iowa must have successfully completed a Hunter Education course. The minimum age for certification is twelve. The class is limited to 50 students.

The class is free but you must register on-line at www.iowadnr.gov. After registering, you must pick up a handbook at the Environmental Learning Center. The chapter review questions at the end of the handbook must be completed prior to coming to class. Students should bring a sack lunch to class, as well as their completed handbook.

Saturday, February 29

9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Environmental Learning Center

Ages 11 and older

Free, but preregistration is required



ATTENTION TEACHERS

It's not too early to set up your spring fieldtrip. Reservations are already coming in, so call us at (563) 264-5922 or email conservation@co.muscatine.ia.us to get your choice of dates.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

The Environmental Learning Center will be closed on December 24 & 25 and January 1.



Become a Friend

Thanks 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.



Mark & Julie Frye

John & Kathy Kuhl-In Memory of Tony Schooner

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

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 more information. Reservations may be made no earlier than one year in advance.

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
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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



Saulsbury Lodge Rental

The Saulsbury Lodge is available for rent if you prefer air conditioning or a weatherproof venue. The building has the capacity to seat around 75 people. It's a great setting for a family reunion, small wedding reception, graduation party or birthday party. Prices vary depending on the day of the week and type of event. Call the Conservation Board office, (563) 264-5922, for more information. Reservations may be made no earlier than one year in advance.

Creature Feature

White-breasted Nuthatch

These entertaining little birds, often seen creeping down a tree trunk headfirst, are year round residents throughout the U.S. and into Mexico. They prefer mature woods with deciduous trees and woodland edges, but may also be found in coniferous forests, parks, and yards. They are a common bird at winter feeders.

White-breasted nuthatches are small birds with a round body, big head, not much of a neck, and a long narrow bill. They are bluish-gray on the back with a white face and belly with some rusty patches on the lower belly and under the short tail. Males and females look much alike except that the cap on the head is black in the males and more gray in the female.

White-breasted nuthatches eat almost entirely insects during the warm months, and seeds and nuts when the insects are gone. They wedge seeds, nuts, or large insects into cracks in the tree bark, then hack at them with their strong bills to break open the shells or tough outer skins.

At feeders nuthatches eat seeds, peanuts, and suet. They will fly back and forth from feeder to tree with seeds or nuts to stash under the bark for later.

White-breasted nuthatches mate for life and nest in natural tree cavities or old woodpecker holes. They may also use a nest box. The female builds the nest by herself lining the bottom with fur, bark, and lumps of dirt. The nest cup is made of fine grass, shredded bark, feathers, and other soft materials. They often reuse their nest cavities.

The female has one brood each season, typically laying 5-9 eggs. The eggs are incubated for 13-14 days and the hatchlings spend about 26 days in the nest before fledging. Both parents feed and protect the young. The young hangout with the parents for a few weeks before heading out on their own.

White-breasted nuthatches are territorial and stay with their mate year round. During the winter, to

help protect themselves from predators, they flock up with other birds such as chickadees and titmice to feed. They even learn the alarm calls of the other bird species in the flock.

The life span of a White-breasted nuthatch is around two years. Adults, young and eggs are preyed on by hawks and owls, larger woodpeckers, and climbing snakes.



Fun Facts

- White-breasted nuthatches exhibit a behavior called "bill sweeping." They pick up pieces of fur, plants or insects with their bills and sweep them around their nest entrances to remove their own scents hopefully preventing detection by predators.
- A group of nuthatches is called a jar.
- The name nuthatch comes from their habit of stuffing nuts and seeds into the tree bark then "hatching" the seed or nut from its shell using its strong bill.
- One toe on each foot faces backward allowing nuthatches to get a good grip while moving down a tree headfirst.



Topper's Page

Animal Adaptations

Physical adaptations are body features that help an animal survive. An important function of a bird bill is feeding, and it is shaped according to what a bird eats. Bill type is also one of the ways to help identify a bird.

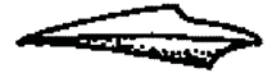
Here are six types of bird bills

- Spear bills are sharp & long
- Predator bills are curved & powerful
- Chisel bills pointed for cutting & boring holes
- Scoop bills scoop food out of the water
- Strainer bills hold food while water is strained
- Cracker bills break hard shell of seeds

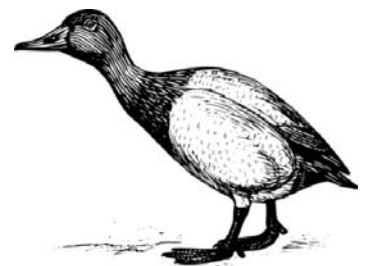
Fill in the type of bill below it's picture.



1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____



6. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____



Help Topper color Holly the holiday bird.



1. strainer
2. spear
3. predator
4. scoop
5. cracker
6. chisel

MUSCATINE COUNTY
CONSERVATION BOARD
3300 CEDAR STREET
PO BOX 109
MUSCATINE, IA 52761

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MUSCATINE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

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Jill Ziegenhorn	Office Manager
Dave Schuler	Learning Center Assistant

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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