



Conservation News



A Quarterly Publication of the Muscatine County Conservation Board

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Birds of a Feather

Most of our bird friends have begun (and some completed) their southward migrations for another year. However, there is still a hardy group of birds who will spend most of the coming months searching for food and night-time shelter from the cold and wind, and some even nesting! With most leaves on the ground and trees looking barren many people wonder just how these birds find a way to get by!

Wet and wind are enemies of birds in winter. Proper shelter is critical to bird survival in the winter. Anything that blocks the wind is attractive to birds. Hollow trees, loose bark on dead trees, steep hills, brush piles, buildings, even old dilapidated buildings (broken windows or missing doors provide easy access), and of course any evergreen trees. Even during the day birds tend to avoid open windy areas, and during rain or sleet storms all animals seek shelter.

Food is the other necessary element for daily survival. Small birds like chickadees, kinglets, and brown creepers search tree branches and cracks in the bark for tiny spiders and insect larva that themselves are finding shelter from winter. Larger birds will search for seeds amongst grasses, weeds, flowers, and shrubbery. Berries are also available from



viburnums, serviceberry, ninebark, even poison ivy plants and vines.



Birds tend to move about during the day from one sheltered spot to another searching for food and then moving on. These travels are routine for many of the smaller birds and often include feeding stations that we maintain. These

feeders are not the only food source for birds, but in severe winter weather it may be easier for them to find food at your feeders. If you choose to feed birds remember to keep your feeders clean and well-stocked with a variety of seeds.

Some of our winter birds are predators. Hawks, owls, eagles, kestrels, and harriers hunt for live prey including rodents, other birds, fish, rabbits, squirrels, and dead animals, sometimes called carrion. Other larger birds, such as turkeys and pheasants are ground nesters and scour the woodlands and grasslands for seeds and winter hibernating insect larva. These birds also rely on adequate shelter to survive the winter. Hollow trees, woodlots, evergreen groves, and steep sided valleys are all sought out.



continued on page 2

continued from page 1

For many of these birds night is the hardest time. They must endure dropping temperatures and an end to feeding for the day. Birds are helped by a layer of



downy soft feathers that can be fluffed out to ward off the cold. These birds also spend time and energy shivering to generate body heat. For many

birds the fat reserves created the day before will be mostly used up getting them through the night. With morning begins the daily task of finding enough food to get them through the coming night.



Thanks to Will Eichelberger and Linda Stoddard for helping out with programs and other projects at the Environmental Learning Center.

Honorariums

A picnic table was installed in Discovery Park *In Honor of Sue Johannsen*, longtime president of the Muscatine County League of Women Voters.



Holiday Closings

The Environmental Learning Center and

Conservation Board offices will be closed on December 24-25 and December 31-January 1.



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.

PEO Chapter MN - environmental education supplies

Georgia Snyder - milkweed seeds

Gina Holladay - bird seed

Roger Midthun - mounted red fox & elk antler

Dave Roozing - hand-made bow and arrow



Memorials

A monetary donation to the environmental education program was made *In Memory of Leigh Goff*.

A Shagbark Hickory tree was adopted in Discovery Park *In Memory of Penny Polina*.

A Red Maple tree was adopted in Discovery Park *In Memory of Humberto Vargas*.

An Ivory Silk Tree Lilac was adopted in Discovery Park *In Memory of Maria Guerra Diaz*.

A picnic table was installed in Discovery Park *In Memory of Lee Hanson*.

A picnic table was installed in Discovery Park *In Memory of Tom Schliesman*.

A Bur Oak tree was adopted in Discovery Park *In Memory of Tom Schliesman*.

A Northern Catalpa tree was adopted in Discovery Park *In Memory of Lee Hanson*.

Halloween Drive-Thru

This year was our second year of holding a Halloween Drive-Thru at Saulsbury instead of the Halloween Hike. We partnered with the Muscatine Community Y this year and put together 500 treat bags for the kids. Around 277 cars brought an estimated 1,000 people through the decorated campground.

The campers did an excellent job of decorating their campsites, as did the businesses and organizations who decorated spots between the campsites. The road was lined with pumpkins donated by Taylor's Market and Hy-Vee, and carved by students from Muscatine High School and youth groups from Shepherd of the Cross and Grace Lutheran Churches. A suggested donation of \$10 per car brought in over \$2,600 that was split between the MCSA Food Pantry and the Muscatine Humane Society.

Thank you to all of the campers, businesses, organizations, donors, and volunteers who made this event a success.

Donations

First National Bank

Taylor's Market

Muscatine Hy-Vee

Family Eye Center

UnityPoint Health Trinity Muscatine

Early Childhood Iowa Muscatine County

Muscatine Art Center

Dena Bates

Skip Hitchcock

Everyone who donated candy for the treat bags

Volunteers

Charlie, Ayden and Ethan Berns

Brian and Jayden Peters

Katrina, Ben and Alex Harkness

Kayla Bentz

Mike and Cathy Bermel & Grandkids

Amy Bakke

Cabin Rentals

The Muscatine County Conservation Board is very pleased with the first summer season of offering rental cabins at Deep Lakes Park. Visitors enjoyed numerous fishing options near the cabins, the ability to launch their kayaks right behind the cabins, a swimming beach, an easily accessible bike trail connecting to the Muscatine bike trail system, and beautiful sunsets!

Though summer has passed these cabins are available all year long. They would be a fun and interesting option if you have family visiting over the holidays, or just wanted a winter get-away. There are two one-bedroom cabins and two two-bedroom cabins. These cabins can sleep four and eight people respectively. Reservations can be made up to one year in advance. All information regarding renting one of the cabins can be found on our website www.muscatinecountyconservation.com.



Programs and Special Events



Bald Eagle Watch & Raptor Programs

Activities include live raptor programs with our friends from RARE (Raptor Advocacy Rehabilitation and Education), eagle crafts for the kids, eagle viewing from the deck overlooking the river (binoculars and spotting scopes will be available), and area Conservation/Environmental group booths sharing information about their activities.



Pearl City Station

Saturday, January 29

9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Free, family-friendly event

The music portion of the Eagles and Ivory weekend will offer events on January 27, 28, 29, & 30. Schedules and other information can be found at www.muscatineartscouncil.org.

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. Each class is limited to 50 students.

Classes are free but, you must register on-line at www.gooutdoorsiowa.com after January 5. After registering you must pick up a workbook at the Environmental Learning Center. The chapter review questions at the end of the workbook should be completed prior to coming to class.

Students will need to bring their completed workbook and a sack lunch.

Saturday, March 5 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Environmental Learning Center

Shelter Rentals

The Conservation Board has picnic shelters at Discovery Park, Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area, and Jack Shuger Memorial Park that may be reserved. Contact the Conservation Board office at conservation@muscatinecountyiowa.gov or (563) 264-5922 for more information. Reservations may be made no earlier than one year in advance.

Discovery Park

Discovery Pond Shelter (#1) \$15 (no electricity)

Learning Center Shelter (#2) \$35

Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area

Chicken Creek Shelter (#1) \$20

Boat Ramp Shelter (#2) \$20

Jack Shuger Memorial Park

Shelter \$20

Become a Friend

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.

Carol A. Reynolds

Mary & Gary Whitacre

Jean Scott

David & Dyann Roby

Henry & Sharon Marquard

Lee Hanson Memorial

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



Saulsbury Lodge Rental

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

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

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MUSCATINE COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD

BOARD MEMBERS

Mike Schulte	Chairperson
Deb Elliott	Vice-chairperson
Mark Petersen	Member
Sue O'Donnell	Member
Karen Hartman	Member

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, gender, 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

STAFF

Curt Weiss	Director
Dave Bakke	Naturalist/Park Officer
Michelle Berns	Naturalist
Bob Kenyon	Operations Supervisor
Kent Kaufman	Park Attendant
Ryne Brimeyer	Park Officer
Jill Ziegenhorn	Office Manager
Dave Schuler	Learning Center Assistant

Contact us at:

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