

Chichaqua-Neal Smith

Bird Conservation Area

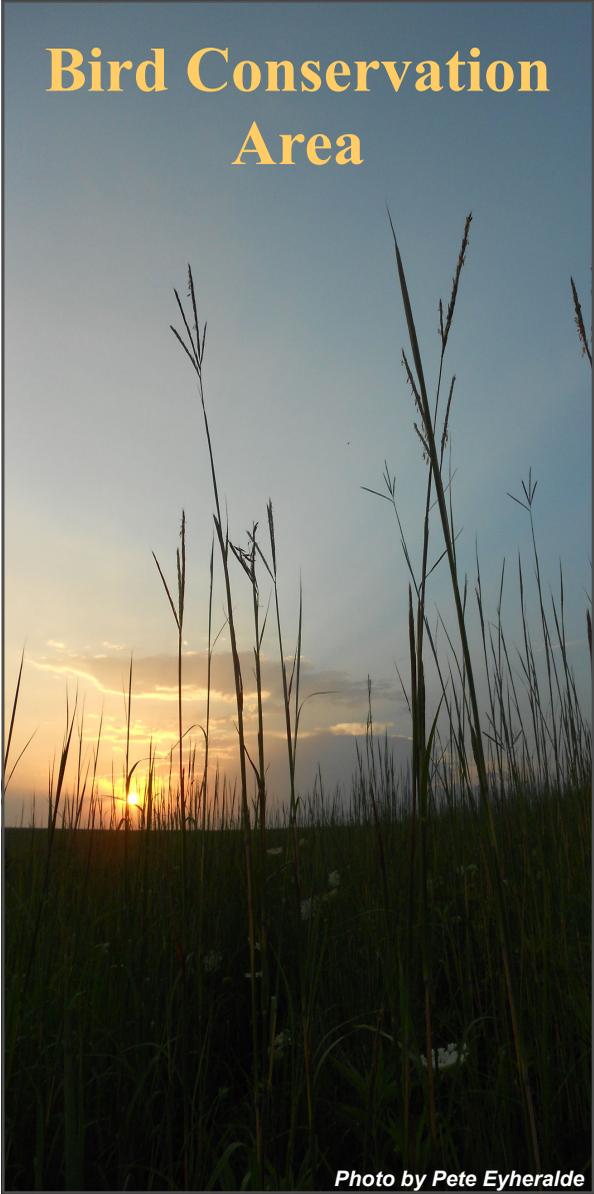


Photo by Pete Eyheralde

Polk and Jasper Counties

Field Checklist for Chichaqua-Neal Smith BCA

*=likely or confirmed area breeder
Ch=more likely to be seen at Chichaqua Bottoms
**Iowa Wildlife Action Plan Migratory Species of
Greatest Conservation Need**
**Iowa Wildlife Action Plan Nesting Species of
Greatest Conservation Need**

- ___ Greater White-fronted Goose (Ch)
- ___ Snow Goose (Ch)
- ___ Cackling Goose (Ch)
- ___ Canada Goose*
- ___ **Trumpeter Swan* (Ch)**
- ___ Tundra Swan (Ch)
- ___ Wood Duck*
- ___ Gadwall* (Ch)
- ___ American Wigeon (Ch)
- ___ Mallard*
- ___ Blue-winged Teal*
- ___ Northern Shoveler* (Ch)
- ___ **Northern Pintail (Ch)**
- ___ Green-winged Teal (Ch)
- ___ **Canvasback (Ch)**
- ___ **Redhead (Ch)**
- ___ Ring-necked Duck (Ch)
- ___ Lesser Scaup (Ch)
- ___ Greater Scaup (Ch)
- ___ Bufflehead (Ch)
- ___ Common Goldeneye (Ch)
- ___ Hooded Merganser* (Ch)
- ___ Common Merganser (Ch)
- ___ Ruddy Duck* (Ch)
- ___ **Northern Bobwhite***
- ___ Gray Partridge*
- ___ Ring-necked Pheasant*
- ___ Wild Turkey*
- ___ Pied-billed Grebe*
- ___ Double-crested Cormorant (Ch)
- ___ **American White Pelican (Ch)**
- ___ **American Bittern* (Ch)**
- ___ **Least Bittern* (Ch)**
- ___ Great Blue Heron*
- ___ Great Egret* (Ch)
- ___ Little Blue Heron (Ch)
- ___ Cattle Egret (Ch)
- ___ Green Heron*
- ___ **Black-crowned Night-Heron* (Ch)**
- ___ **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (Ch*)**
- ___ White-faced Ibis (Ch)
- ___ Turkey Vulture*
- ___ **Osprey**
- ___ **Bald Eagle***
- ___ **Northern Harrier***
- ___ Sharp-shinned Hawk
- ___ Cooper's Hawk*
- ___ **Red-shouldered Hawk***
- ___ **Broad-winged Hawk***
- ___ **Swainson's Hawk**
- ___ Rough-legged Hawk
- ___ American Kestrel*
- ___ Merlin
- ___ Prairie Falcon
- ___ **Peregrine Falcon**
- ___ **King Rail (Ch*)**
- ___ Virginia Rail* (Ch)
- ___ Sora* (Ch)
- ___ **Common Gallinule (Ch*)**
- ___ American Coot* (Ch)
- ___ Sandhill Crane* (Ch)
- ___ Black-bellied Plover (Ch)
- ___ **American Golden Plover (Ch)**
- ___ Semipalmated Plover (Ch)
- ___ Killdeer*
- ___ Spotted Sandpiper* (Ch)
- ___ **Solitary Sandpiper (Ch)**
- ___ **Greater Yellowlegs (Ch)**
- ___ Willet (Ch)
- ___ **Lesser Yellowlegs (Ch)**
- ___ **Upland Sandpiper***
- ___ **Hudsonian Godwit (Ch)**
- ___ **Marbled Godwit (Ch)**
- ___ Semipalmated Sandpiper (Ch)
- ___ Least Sandpiper (Ch)
- ___ White-rumped Sandpiper (Ch)
- ___ Baird's Sandpiper (Ch)
- ___ Pectoral Sandpiper (Ch)
- ___ Dunlin (Ch)
- ___ **Short-billed Dowitcher (Ch)**
- ___ Long-billed Dowitcher (Ch)
- ___ Wilson's Snipe* (Ch)
- ___ **American Woodcock* (Ch)**
- ___ **Wilson's Phalarope (Ch)**

- ___ Bonaparte's Gull (Ch)
- ___ Franklin's Gull (Ch)
- ___ Ring-billed Gull
- ___ Herring Gull (Ch)
- ___ Caspian Tern (Ch)
- ___ **Black Tern (Ch)**
- ___ **Forster's Tern (Ch)**
- ___ Rock Pigeon*
- ___ Eurasian Collared-Dove*
- ___ Mourning Dove*
- ___ **Yellow-billed Cuckoo***
- ___ **Black-billed Cuckoo***
- ___ **Barn Owl**
- ___ Eastern Screech-Owl*
- ___ Great Horned Owl*
- ___ Snowy Owl
- ___ Barred Owl*
- ___ **Long-eared Owl (Ch)**
- ___ **Short-eared Owl***
- ___ Northern Saw-Whet Owl
- ___ **Common Nighthawk***
- ___ **Eastern Whip-poor-will (Ch)**
- ___ **Chimney Swift***
- ___ Ruby-throated Hummingbird*
- ___ Belted Kingfisher*
- ___ **Red-headed Woodpecker***
- ___ Red-bellied Woodpecker*
- ___ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- ___ Downy Woodpecker*
- ___ Hairy Woodpecker*
- ___ Northern Flicker*
- ___ Pileated Woodpecker* (Ch)
- ___ **Olive-sided Flycatcher**
- ___ Eastern Wood-Pewee*
- ___ Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
- ___ **Acadian Flycatcher**
- ___ Alder Flycatcher
- ___ **Willow Flycatcher***
- ___ **Least Flycatcher**
- ___ Eastern Phoebe*
- ___ Great Crested Flycatcher*
- ___ Western Kingbird
- ___ Eastern Kingbird
- ___ **Loggerhead Shrike***
- ___ Northern Shrike
- ___ **White-eyed Vireo**
- ___ **Bell's Vireo***
- ___ Yellow-throated Vireo*
- ___ Blue-headed Vireo
- ___ Warbling Vireo*
- ___ Philadelphia Vireo
- ___ Red-eyed Vireo*
- ___ Blue Jay*
- ___ American Crow*
- ___ Horned Lark*
- ___ Purple Martin*
- ___ Tree Swallow*
- ___ Northern Rough-winged Swallow*
- ___ Bank Swallow*
- ___ Cliff Swallow*
- ___ Barn Swallow*
- ___ Black-capped Chickadee*
- ___ Tufted Titmouse*
- ___ Red-breasted Nuthatch
- ___ White-breasted Nuthatch*
- ___ **Brown Creeper**
- ___ Carolina Wren
- ___ House Wren*
- ___ Winter Wren
- ___ **Sedge Wren***
- ___ Marsh Wren*
- ___ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher*
- ___ Golden-crowned Kinglet
- ___ Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- ___ Eastern Bluebird*
- ___ **Veery***
- ___ Gray-cheeked Thrush
- ___ Swainson's Thrush
- ___ Hermit Thrush
- ___ **Wood Thrush***
- ___ American Robin*
- ___ Gray Catbird*
- ___ **Northern Mockingbird***
- ___ Brown Thrasher*
- ___ European Starling*
- ___ American Pipit
- ___ Cedar Waxwing*
- ___ Lapland Longspur
- ___ Smith's Longspur
- ___ Snow Bunting
- ___ Ovenbird*
- ___ **Louisiana Waterthrush***
- ___ Northern Waterthrush
- ___ **Golden-winged Warbler**
- ___ **Blue-winged Warbler***
- ___ **Black-and-white Warbler**
- ___ **Prothonotary Warbler* (Ch)**
- ___ Tennessee Warbler
- ___ Orange-crowned Warbler
- ___ Nashville Warbler
- ___ Connecticut Warbler
- ___ Mourning Warbler
- ___ **Kentucky Warbler**

- ___ Common Yellowthroat*
- ___ **Hooded Warbler**
- ___ American Redstart*
- ___ Cape May Warbler
- ___ **Cerulean Warbler**
- ___ Northern Parula*
- ___ Magnolia Warbler
- ___ Bay-breasted Warbler
- ___ Blackburnian Warbler
- ___ Yellow Warbler*
- ___ Chestnut-sided Warbler
- ___ Blackpoll Warbler
- ___ Palm Warbler
- ___ Yellow-rumped Warbler
- ___ Yellow-throated Warbler (Ch)
- ___ Black-throated Green Warbler
- ___ **Canada Warbler**
- ___ Wilson's Warbler
- ___ **Yellow-breasted Chat***
- ___ Spotted Towhee
- ___ Eastern Towhee*
- ___ American Tree Sparrow
- ___ Chipping Sparrow*
- ___ Clay-colored Sparrow*
- ___ **Field Sparrow***
- ___ Vesper Sparrow*
- ___ Lark Sparrow*
- ___ Savannah Sparrow*
- ___ **Grasshopper Sparrow***
- ___ **Henslow's Sparrow***
- ___ **Le Conte's Sparrow**
- ___ **Nelson's Sparrow**
- ___ Fox Sparrow
- ___ Song Sparrow*
- ___ Lincoln's Sparrow
- ___ Swamp Sparrow*
- ___ White-throated Sparrow
- ___ Harris's Sparrow
- ___ White-crowned Sparrow
- ___ Dark-eyed Junco
- ___ Summer Tanager*
- ___ Scarlet Tanager*
- ___ Northern Cardinal*
- ___ Rose-breasted Grosbeak*
- ___ Indigo Bunting*
- ___ **Dickcissel***
- ___ **Bobolink***
- ___ Red-winged Blackbird*
- ___ **Eastern Meadowlark***
- ___ Western Meadowlark*
- ___ Yellow-headed Blackbird*
- ___ **Rusty Blackbird**
- ___ Brewer's Blackbird
- ___ Common Grackle*
- ___ Great-tailed Grackle*
- ___ Brown-headed Cowbird*
- ___ Orchard Oriole*
- ___ Baltimore Oriole*
- ___ Purple Finch
- ___ House Finch*
- ___ Red Crossbill
- ___ Pine Siskin
- ___ American Goldfinch*
- ___ House Sparrow*

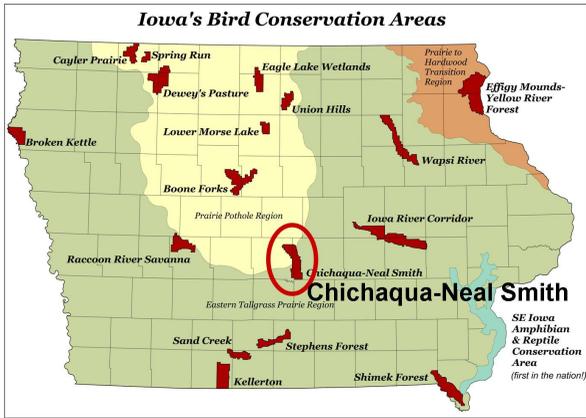
Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Wildlife Diversity Program
1436 255th St.
Boone, IA 50036
Phone: (515) 432-2823
Fax: (515) 432-2835



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Produced by: Natalie Randall, Bruce Ehresman, and Shane Patterson, 2012



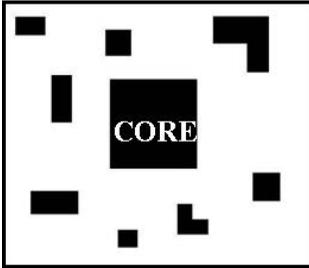
The Chichaqua-Neal Smith Grassland BCA is primarily composed of the Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt in northeast Polk County and the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in southwest Jasper County. Dedicated in the spring of 2005, this BCA boundary encompasses about 76,500 acres, 15,000 acres of which are protected for wildlife. Chichaqua Bottoms stretches along the Skunk River, and includes old oxbow river



channels, marshes, wetlands, sandy upland hills, and native and restored prairie tracts. Neal Smith NWR was created in 1990 to restore 8,000 acres of tallgrass prairie and oak savannah, as well as the animal communities associated with these landscapes. Because of the diversity of habitats within the Chichaqua-Neal Smith BCA, a variety of migratory and nesting birds species can be found here. This area is especially important for rare or declining grassland birds like Short-eared Owl, Northern Harrier, Upland Sandpiper, Sedge Wren, Henslow's Sparrow, Bobolink, and both meadowlark species. During spring and fall migration, Clay-colored, LeConte's, and Savanna Sparrows and Smith's and Lapland Longspurs can be found in various parts of this BCA.

BIRD CONSERVATION AREAS

Within the last two decades, alarming declines in a large number of species of North American birds have led to the emergence of national and international programs dedicated to the conservation of game and non-game birds. Since 1999, bird conservation organizations and enthusiasts have worked together under an umbrella called the North American Bird Conservation Initiative to “conserve all birds in all habitats.” As part of this initiative and in an effort to protect dwindling populations of many Iowa

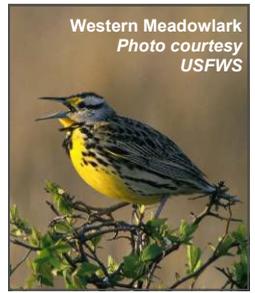


A BCA Model: shaded areas depict public habitat protected for birds; white is private land

birds, the **Bird Conservation Area** (BCA) program was established by the Iowa DNR Wildlife Bureau in 2001. The present model BCA encompasses at least 10,000 acres of public and/or private lands with at least 25 percent of the area established as key bird habitat. This concept is backed by research that suggests viable bird populations require conservation efforts at a landscape-oriented level. Each BCA should also include a large “core” area of protected high-quality habitat. Surrounding this core are private lands, plus additional public tracts, managed for good bird habitat or at least maintained to be neutral in how they affect bird life.



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IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

Audubon's Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program is a global effort to identify and conserve areas that are vital to birds and other biodiversity. Designated IBAs include sites for breeding, wintering, and/or migrating birds. All Iowa Bird Conservation Areas are also Important Bird Areas.

CHICHAQUA-NEAL SMITH DIVERSITY PLANTS

Because of the broad gradient of habitat types found across this BCA—from river bottoms and woodlands to savannahs and prairies—there is a great diversity of vegetation. Grasslands host Prairie Violet, Smooth Ox-eye, Lead Plant, White Prairie Clover, Indian Grass, Switch Grass, and Big and Little Bluestem. Wet prairies in the



Chichaqua-Neal Smith BCA support Blue Flag, Swamp Milkweed, Bottle Gentian, Tussock Sedge, and Michigan Lily. In addition to understory plants like Pitcher's Leather Flower, Downy Gentian, and Penn Sedge, savannahs in this area include trees like Bur, Black, and Red Oak, as well as Shagbark and Bitternut Hickory.

ANIMALS

Wildlife species found in the Chichaqua-Neal Smith BCA are as varied as the habitat. Unique herpetofauna, such as Graham's Crayfish Snake, Six-lined Racerunner Lizards, and the threatened Ornate Box Turtle, occur within this BCA, primarily in the Chichaqua Bottoms area. The endangered Indiana Bat has been reported using savannah habitats within the Neal Smith NWR. Additionally, the refuge



includes a herd of Bison and Elk as part of its goal of restoring the native prairie ecosystem. Invertebrates are also plentiful in this BCA. Look for butterflies like the Silvery Checkerspot in disturbed and open areas. Dragonflies like the Cherry-faced Meadowhawk and Black Saddlebags can be found along wetland and pond edges. You may also cross paths with the iridescent green Six-spotted Tiger Beetle or a species of Velvet Ant along foot trails throughout the Chichaqua-Neal Smith BCA.



A list of Iowa's Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) can be found at www.iowadnr.gov by entering “Wildlife Action Plan” in the search. If you encounter uncommon or rare species in this BCA, please contact the Wildlife Diversity Program to report your sightings.

PARTNERSHIPS

Partners in the creation of the Chichaqua-Neal Smith BCA include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Polk County Conservation Board, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Pheasants Forever, Des Moines Audubon Society, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

