

Iowa Ornithologist's Union 2015 Projects Grant Report

Grantee:

Johnson County Conservation
Sydney Algreen, Naturalist
2048 HWY 6 NW
Oxford, IA 52322

1. Project Title: Bird Guidebooks for Programming

2. Project Description:

Johnson County Conservation received \$350 to purchase new bird guidebooks for school field trips and public programs. With the completion of a new bird blind in the fall of 2014, the guidebooks are used frequently by people of all ages.

3. Project Goals:

The Johnson County Conservation Board requested funding to purchase 28 copies of "The New Birders Guide to North American Birds" by Bill Thompson III for field trips and public programs. The use of these bird guides helps to achieve three goals described below.

1. The first goal in the project is to educate program participants about the avian diversity we have in Iowa. With access to a bird blind, many visitors have the opportunity to learn about and observe numerous species of birds up-close. Using the guidebooks enhances these opportunities by providing information at the bird watchers fingertips. Participants are now able to open their guidebook and answer their questions immediately.

2. A second goal of purchasing and using the guidebooks is to engage and encourage an interest in birds. While viewing birds, participants are able to reference their guidebook and quickly find information that interests them. The guidebook makes this process simple with highlighted portions of text, clear photos, and easy to understand maps.

3. The final goal for purchasing the books is to foster an awareness of bird conservation. The guidebooks provide information about the birds' migration patterns, nesting habits, and conservation status. This information is used to teach field trip/program participants about the efforts being done in Iowa to study, protect, and promote bird populations.

This goal is especially useful at F.W. Kent Park where volunteers with the Monitoring of Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) program band birds. In the fall of 2015 the MAPS volunteers led a program that introduced nearly 200 2nd grade students to bird banding and the MAPS program. The volunteers have also begun to train JCC Naturalist Sydney Algreen to band birds independently and further educate the public about the birds of Iowa.

4. Project Impact:

Simply using the bird guides during programs has increased participants understanding of

Iowa birds. Since purchasing the bird guides in the spring of 2015, an estimated number of 1,300 participants have used the books during field trips/public programs. The guidebooks provide these participants with the opportunity to increase their knowledge about birds.

The books are also used in partnership with bird banding events, studies, and trainings at Kent Park. The bird banding partnership helps to increase awareness about bird conservation in Iowa and gains valuable information to better understand Iowa birds.



Image 1: Program participants enjoyed using the bird guidebooks to learn about birds visiting the feeders during the fall of 2015.



Image 2: Two field trip participants look out of the bird blind during a program in 2015.