

## Publication of “Birding – The Iowa Prairie Lakes Region”

Five County Conservation Boards – Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, O’Brien and Palo Alto - and avid birders in Northwest Iowa have joined in an effort to produce a printed publication as well as an online piece describing birding locations and species of interest found within the region. A detailed map is included to assist birders with wayfinding. The region covered by this piece includes wetland complexes, high quality prairies, Important Bird Areas, Bird Conservation Areas and other birding hot spots.

Naturalists from these counties cooperated with the Iowa DNR and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to obtain current mapping details. A quality map of the areas was produced. Naturalists also worked with avid birders and photographers to describe the birding areas and depict target species. The brochure and map are to be printed for dispersal as well as posted online. The brochure is currently in revision status and should be ready to print and place online within the next month.

IOU funds were combined with an Iowa Audubon grant, matching funds from partners, and funds raised through a Bird-A-Thon event at the 2015 Wings and Wetlands Festival hosted by the same county conservation boards. The Bird-A-Thon involved the general public as well as active birders in pledging a general sum or per species amount for the number of birds counted during the festival weekend. With this incentive – as well as with cooperative weather and birds – a high number of species were tallied. These funds have been used to complete map work, purchase photo rights, hire a graphic designer and produce the brochure and online materials.

The birding information and map developed by this project will be useful to all birders regardless of their skill level. Experienced birders as well as novices and others who are just curious about the outdoor activity are seeking information about locations in which to bird. This project will fulfill that need in Northwest Iowa. Throughout the project, the desire to inform the public about Bird Conservation Areas and Important Bird Areas in Iowa developed. The document includes information about those to priority areas. In addition, four of the seven areas highlighted in the brochure fall into those designations. While the end product is not yet published, all of the partners involved are eager to distribute this quality product.