

Iowa Ornithologist's Union 2016 Projects Grant Report

Grantee:

Johnson County Conservation
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Oxford, IA 52322

1. Project Title: Binoculars for Bird Related Programming, Monitoring, and Events

2. Project Description:

Johnson County Conservation (JCC) received \$355 to purchase new binoculars for school field trips, public programs, and bird surveys. With the completion of a new bird blind in the fall of 2014 and bird banding programs at Kent Park, the binoculars are used frequently by people of all ages.

3. Project Goals:

The Johnson County Conservation Board requested funding to purchase 15 pairs of Eagle Optics Kingbird 6.5x32 binoculars. The use of these binoculars helps to achieve three goals described below.

1. The first goal in the project is to educate program participants about birding basics and the avian diversity we have in Iowa. With access to a bird blind and bird banding programs, many visitors have the opportunity to learn about and observe numerous species of birds up-close. Using the binoculars allows participants to observe distinct features of each species aiding in their identification skills and showing the incredible diversity of birds and their features (such as beaks, eye color, and head shape).

2. A second goal of purchasing and using the guidebooks is to engage and encourage an interest in birds. While viewing birds at the bird blind or during a hike, participants will now be able to observe and study the birds more clearly. The binoculars are the “hook” that pulls people’s interest towards birds and encourage them to look further.

3. The final goal for purchasing the binoculars is to foster an awareness of bird conservation. This goal is especially useful at Kent Park as we are beginning to host many bird related events and programs, such as an Owl Prowl and the Great Backyard Bird Count. The JCC the binoculars are also used by our staff and volunteers during bird monitoring or inventory surveys. This may include conducting an inventory count on a new property along the Iowa River or through our current Eastern Bluebird and Wood Duck monitoring programs at Kent Park.

4. Project Impact:

Simply using the binoculars during programs has increased participants understanding of Iowa birds. Since purchasing the binoculars in the summer of 2016, an estimated number of 1,000 participants/volunteers have used them. The binoculars are also used in partnership with bird banding events, studies, and trainings at Kent Park.



Above: A group of students use the binoculars during a birding hike. **Below:** Students learn how to use the binoculars before heading outside to search for birds. **Right:** While visiting the bird blind, students utilize the binoculars to see birds up close.

