

Iowa Ornithologist's Union
Final Grant Report
2014

1) Title of Project:

Ringgold County Conservation Avian Education

2) Project Description

The Ringgold County Conservation Board works hard to provide environmental education programming to the communities of Ringgold County with only 1 full-time employee. The Conservation Board works with a limited staff and budget and with funding from the Iowa Ornithologist's Union, the Conservation Board has been able to continue to provide an excellent environmental program with increasing wildlife displays for the public to view.

The Conservation Board is working towards a natural resource center for Ringgold County. Ringgold County is a gateway to Iowa. There are many great things that the nature center would be able to promote and help add to the community. This would be a local resource for families to visit, creating a low-cost family outing and increasing learning opportunities, with ever changing environmental education programs and displays, as well as attracting visitors, creating tourism for the local businesses in the communities.

Funding from the Iowa Ornithologist's Union has provided for several bird mounts including: a Snowy Owl, a Barred Owl, 2 juvenile Great Horned Owls and a Kingfisher. These mounts will be used for bird and habitat displays in the nature center, as well as for regular programming with the public and community groups.

3) Project Goals:

- To Create Displays and Mounts for Environmental Education
- To Create a Nature Center for Environmental Education
- To Educate Iowans on all Wildlife and Natural Resources

The Ringgold County Conservation Board's goal is to create displays and programming to enhance public knowledge of the environment and our avian resources. Through displays and programs such as owl night hikes, identification classes, bird counts and mounts, the public will be exposed to the extraordinary avian world. Ringgold County Conservation has incredible bird habitat and numerous bird watching areas. Ponds, wetlands, prairie and wooded areas contribute to the diversity of bird species in Ringgold County Conservation areas.

Funding from the Iowa Ornithologists' Union was used to mount several bird species that were collected using an IDNR salvage permit. These educational items will improve the quality of programming in Ringgold County and provide the public with a place to view and learn about the natural world.

4) Project Impact

Through the Iowa Ornithologist's Union, the Ringgold County Conservation Board has been able to provide a more in-depth look at the avian world to the public. The environmental education program continues to grow and funding for the nature center increases each day. The Iowa Ornithologist's Union provided the 1st donation towards the Ringgold County Nature Center. Since their initial funding, the Conservation Board has been able to secure more donations and grants for this project.

The use of the bird mounts has been an incredible addition to our public programming. Being able to view these birds up close is an experience they will not soon forget. With or without the nature center, these mounts have made a vast impact on avian education and programming in Ringgold County.