

2022 BIRD SPECIES OF CONCERN SURVEY AT WHITEWATER CANYON

by members of the Dubuque Audubon Society

In 2022, 6 sites in the grassland areas of Whitewater Canyon were surveyed from May 14th through June 27th. Each site was monitored for approximately 10 minutes with special emphasis on identifying nesting grassland species of birds. Special attention was given to locating Henslow's Sparrows, Grasshopper Sparrows, Bobolinks, and Sedge Wrens. The 6 survey sites are described as follows:

Site 1: Gate Post Parking Lot—site is bordered on the east by the main parking lot and contains a thick stand of restored prairie which extends to the north and west.

Site 2: CRJB Family Bench—site is located approximately ¼ mile straight west of Site 1 and is at the intersection of hiking trails. The vegetation is predominately restored prairie grass with forbes and has a medium number of invasive trees and shrubby plants.

Site 3: 2nd Bluebird house on Stream Bottom Trail—site is located north of the other sites and has a narrow band of restored prairie adjacent to woodlands on both sides of the trail.

Site 4: Astronomical Post off trail—site is directly south of the trail and has a food plot on its west side and the prairie on the east side was burned this spring.

Site 5: Where terrace meets path—site is approximately ¼ mile south on the same trail as Site 4 and is where an old terrace meets the trail. Vegetation includes restored prairie grass with some sumac and tree invasion. There is a pollinator mix of prairie forbes planted here.

Site 6: Bluebird House #9—this site is located approximately ¼ mile west of Site 2 on the Overlook Trail. It is surrounded by a mature stand of restored prairie with some invasion of sumac and trees.

TOTAL SPECIES OF CONCERN DOCUMENTED:

(see attached Site Map for locations)

| DATE SURVEYED | SURVEYOR/S | Henslow's Sparrow | Grasshopper Sparrow | Sedge Wren |
|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------|
| May 14 | Bob Walton | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| May 21 | Ken Kiss & Bob Walton | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| May 28 | Jim Oleson | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| June 4 | Bob Walton | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| June 11 | Tony Moline | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| June 16 | Jim Oleson & CeCe Brown | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| June 27 | Ken Kiss | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| | TOTALS: | 10 | 2 | 1 |

CONCLUSIONS:

Only 3 species of concern were observed at the 6 sites and totaled 10 Henslow's Sparrows, 2 Grasshopper Sparrows and 1 Sedge Wren. Although no Bobolinks were observed on the Whitewater property, Tony Moline did observe 1 Bobolink on private property adjacent to the Canyon.

The Henslow's Sparrow's preferred habitat appeared to be older stands of prairie grass that was scattered with small shrubby sumac. The large number located in early May at Site 6 probably

represents an early migration, although they can often be found nesting close together in good habitat. Unfortunately, the area north of Site 6 and west of Site 2 was completely mowed in early June which destroyed the nesting habitat of all grassland bird species of concern in the area.

The Grasshopper Sparrows were only found at Site 1 which consisted of restored prairie and mowed grassland around the parking lot.

The only Sedge Wren was found in a moist area near an old field terrace, approximately 100 yards southeast of Site 2.

Additional grassland birds found in good numbers at all sites included Dickcissels, Common Yellow Throats, American Goldfinches, Field Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlarks, Eastern Kingbirds, and Red-winged Blackbirds.