

## 2023 BIRD SPECIES OF CONCERN SURVEY AT WHITEWATER CANYON

by members of the Dubuque Audubon Society

In 2023, 6 sites in the grassland areas of Whitewater Canyon were surveyed from May 13<sup>th</sup> through June 24<sup>th</sup>. 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: 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 13	Bob Walton	3	1	0
May 20	Ken Kiss	0	0	0
May 28	Jim Oleson	4	0	1
June 3	Bob Walton & Sandy Walton	5	0	0
June 10	Jim Oleson	0	1	0
June 17	Ken Kiss	1	0	2
June 24	Bob Walton	5	0	2
	<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>

### CONCLUSIONS:

3 species of concern were observed at the 6 sites and totaled 18 Henslow's Sparrows, 2 Grasshopper Sparrows and 5 Sedge Wrens. No Bobolinks were observed on the Whitewater property; however, 1 Bobolink was observed on private, pasture property adjacent to Whitewater Canyon.

The Henslow's Sparrow's preferred habitat appeared to be the tall stands of prairie grass that was scattered with small, shrubby sumac, located around site 6.

The Sedge Wrens were 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. Song Sparrow and Pheasants were also observed in good numbers, along with a single sighting of a Vesper Sparrow.