

Cass Co. Cons. Bd
57744 Lewis Rd
Lewis, IA 51544



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People Making a Difference...

Thank you to everyone that took part in our **Bat House programs!**

Cass County Conservation on Social Media!

Search Cass County Conservation and "like" us on Facebook or follow on Instagram! Easy way to keep up on events and wildlife sightings around Cass County! Get creative with us on Pinterest as @casscountyiacon Or watch us on our YouTube Channel!

Mark your Calendars

Camping 101
Saturday April 18th, 6PM Cold Springs Park

Wildflower Walk
Saturday, April 25th- 9AM
Pellett Memorial Woods

Stay tuned for more on the April programs and Summer Camp Listings in the Spring Newsletter.



Conservation Quarterly Cass County Conservation Board Winter 2025-2026

How many birds can you find?

29th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count
February 13-16, 2026
birdcount.org

Northern Cardinal / *Cardinalis cardinalis*
Photo: Seth Konner / Macaulay Library



Great Backyard Bird Count

The National Audubon Society & Cornell Lab of Ornithology needs every bird enthusiast in North America to count birds February 13th-16th. All you need is a basic knowledge of bird identification! This activity is extremely easy...you watch the birds in your yard, local park, or other natural area for 15 minutes or more and use a tally sheet to record the highest number of individual birds that you see in view at one time. There are two ways to participate in the bird count, 1. Call the Conservation Board at 712-769-2372 and we will send you everything you need or (you may pick it up in our office) 2. You can visit the Great Backyard Bird Count website at <http://www.birdcount.org/> and submit your results from there. This is a great family event and the

data collected will be used by scientists to analyze bird populations. If you are new to the count please email or call our office for help in participating. Since 2002 the Cass County Conservation Board has advertised this bird count throughout the county encouraging citizens to participate. Last year Cass County Birders lagged behind in the State for species...but all county numbers were low last year. We had 57 checklists, and 26 species. We got beat out by the largest counties in the state: Polk, Story, Johnson, Woodbury, and Dubuque at our heels in 6th. We got 5th in checklists but we were at 25th in species count. With the new eBird system the record keeping is by county so I can not really tell you anymore the species reported for each town, but Cass county as a whole. Iowa as a whole had 103 species reported and 932 checklists! United States reported 671 species and 164,600 checklists.

Typically participants submit their checklists on the internet, however, for those that are not comfortable using computers, the Conservation Board collects the data and enters the

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2025 Recap

Cass County Conservation Board Members

Blaine Behnken- Massena
Rich Govig- Lewis
Judy Kennedy- Atlantic
Mark Smith- Atlantic
Sandra Sothman- Atlantic

checklists for them. The Conservation Board also visits the Atlantic High School each year to encourage students to participate in the count. Let's get out there this year keep #1!!

More results: A Northern Harrier, was reported but some usuals were missing our ring-necked pheasants and wild turkeys in Cass County!

Trumpeter Swans in Cass County!

At the time of this printing, we have been averaging 223 Trumpeter Swans since our Christmas Bird Count. With the varying temperatures they have been on Lake 2 at Schildberg Recreation Area. The swan's official date of arrival was December 2nd. On that day 10 Trumpeter Swans were here and they stayed more than twenty-four hours. The winner that picked the closest date was Alice Brown! With this bumper crop we saw 3 Tundra Swans at our Soiree with the Swans, the last visit of a Tundra was also the winter (2019) which holds our record at 245 swans. We got close at 241 swans on Dec. 21st!

2026 Year of the Camper!

It might be year of the Horse but we are declaring 2026 the year of the camper! Kicking off with some introductory classes here in 2026. We will be holding 2 sessions of "Camping 101" Our first one in March will focus on fire building and supplies, Leave No Trace principles, and trip planning. April's program will be all about supplies and gear! With an optional camping night at Cold Springs park. This is going to lead right into a Dutch Oven Cooking series starting in May. If you have any questions about the programs or would like more information please call Lora at (712) 769-2372 or email lkanning@casscoia.us .

2025 Recap!

As we start out a new year, I'd like to take a look back at some past projects and give an update. A major project this year was the renovation of the fish population here at Cold Springs, the lake was drawn down and was treated with a chemical called Rotenone to kill the existing fish population so the lake can be restocked. This was determined by the Iowa DNR as the best way to get the fishery at Cold Springs back to an acceptable level. The fish population had become stunted and was having poor reproduction of some species and was stuck in a cycle that would probably never right itself. We had seen a decrease in usage and heard complaints about the quality of fishing available here and this was the route decided to fix this problem. During the time the lake water level was lowered we removed a large amount of material along the north shore of the beach area, this area was then covered in pea gravel to provide more suitable spawning areas for fish. The lake has been stocked and is currently filling again. The DNR will monitor the fish populations as we move forward, and we should hopefully have some quality fishing again here in the next few years. We did a similar project at the Outdoor Classroom pond in 2024, so we should hopefully be seeing the benefits of that project this coming spring with some catchable size bluegill and bass. We are still currently waiting on our new restroom for the beach area at Cold Springs, the company we ordered from has had some production issues, but we hope to have it delivered and installed sometime this spring. We were the recipient this last spring for a new dock at the Outdoor Educational Classroom with immense thanks to our local Cass County Community Foundation. With our new skid steer, we have started doing a fair amount of brush and invasive species removal at several locations. This will be an ongoing project as many areas are overrun with cedar trees and honeysuckle. On a similar note we were fortunate to have the Iowa DNR/AmeriCorps Conservation Crew come to Pellett Memorial woods to do a few days of invasive species removal which was a wonderful help to the CCCB in maintaining that area. Ending with staying open for winter camping at Cold Springs. We are looking forward to a great 2026 and

hope to see you out enjoying our areas this year!

Winter Day Camp

FREE. Register early, space is limited. Please contact Cass County Extension at 243-1132 for questions. Online Registration: <https://go.iastate.edu/3B9HRO>

Penguins in the Snow Winter Day Camp For youth in Kdg-3rd grades.

February 27th 9AM-Noon - Griswold Community Building

Deadline February 20th, Students will learn about penguins and fun in the Snow.



Denotes an Oak Stroller (Family Friendly) approved event! All Cass County Programs are FREE unless otherwise stated! Donations for programs are accepted.



Cabin Fever Escape

Saturday, January 24th 1-4PM

Outdoor Educational Classroom, Massena

Got Cabin Fever? Cure it by spending some time outside with family friendly FUN! Bring your mugs, sleds, dress for the weather, and snowshoes will be available! If you get cold, warm and tasty drinks and a movie will be playing inside our lodge! There will be no snow activities planned as well!



Snowshoe Full Moon Night Hike

Saturday January 31st 7PM Outdoor Educational Classroom, Massena, IA

We will bring our snowshoes for you to try on! If the sky is clear, the moonlight will light our way! Will be cancelled if not enough snow. Free, Family Friendly!

Great Backyard Bird Count—See Page 1&2 for more details!! February 13-16th

Get ready to be involved in a great citizen science project! We will show and explain how to participate in the project. We will also include some tips on identifying birds.

Sweetheart Snowshoe Hike

Saturday February 14th 7PM

Pellett Memorial Woods, Atlantic, IA

We will bring our snowshoes for you to try on! If the sky is clear, the moonlight will light our way! Drive the short drive and hike off that dinner! Will be cancelled if not enough snow.



Winter Recreation Afternoon

Wednesday February 18th 2-4pm

Sunnyside Park, Atlantic Near Kiddie Korral

Cass County Conservation will have their snowshoes and Cross country skis available for check out near Kiddie Korral shelter. The Atlantic Parks and Recreation offers an assortment of winter recreation opportunities for all ages and skill levels. Come on out any time and try something new!

Intro to Turkey Hunting

Saturday March 28th 10:00 AM

Outdoor Educational Classroom Massena, IA

This program will focus on "Becoming a Turkey Hunter". CCCB employees will talk about scouting, calling, and equipment needed as well as different techniques and equipment used by successful turkey hunters. This program will be great for someone who wants to start turkey hunting or those with more experience. The CCCB will have examples of calls, decoys, blinds and other tools used in the turkey woods.



Camping 101

Saturday March 28th 2PM

Outdoor Educational Classroom Massena, IA

Checkout the information on the opposite page

and join us!