



Volume 35, Issue 2

Summer 2018

## Passions in Conservation

**By Dave Sedivec**

MCCB Director

This has been a challenging and stressful summer on many fronts, and I have been really struggling trying to come up with a topic for this article. I decided to sit back and “smell the roses” so to speak as I was pondering what we do and why do we do it. We at the Mahaska County Conservation Board are in the Quality of Life business, and I will delve into some of the things that we are trying to accomplish and what it takes to make it happen.

We provide the public with facilities to experience Camping, Cabins, Hunting, Fishing, Paddle Sports, Boating, Picnicking, Hiking and Birding. We offer a top notch Environmental Education program that includes displays, programs and various camps, and soon will include the new Environmental Learning Center at Caldwell Park.

We are blessed here at MCCB to have a committed staff that work hard to keep these programs and facilities going, so I thought that I would share some of the credentials and certifications that are held by employees:

Commercial Pesticide Applicator Certificate	First Aid/CPR
NWCG Wildland Fire Certification	Wilderness First Aid
Stihl Chainsaw Safety Training	NWS Weather Spotter
ILEA Certified Peace Officer	Iowa Canoe/Kayak
NRA Range Safety Officer	Safe Boating
Iowa Law Enforcement Emergency Care Provider	
Iowa Hunter Education Instructor	
Iowa Fur Harvester Education Instructor	
Iowa Bow Hunter Education Instructor	
Fish IOWA! Instructor/Trainer	
Explore Bowfishing Instructor/Trainer	
Project WILD Instructor/Trainer	
National Archery in the Schools Instructor	
Certified Iowa Teaching License	
Iowa Association of Naturalists Professional Development	

I've covered what we do, and some of what it takes to keep our program running, but now it's time to talk about WHY WE DO IT. We all share a passion for nature and the environment, and want to share that passion with others. I have been guilty of questioning my sanity on long days in all kinds of weather, and while sitting for hours in classrooms to obtain or maintain the various required certifications, but when we get to see the smile on a kid's face when they catch their first fish, or see a young family out camping or picnicking, or watch the expressions of someone overcoming their fear and touching a snake for the first time, I know that it's definitely worth it.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE



- 2 Nature Notes: “Barred Owls”
- 3 Explore Mahaska County Parks: *Peter's Wildlife Area*
- 4-6 Summer Programs and Events
- 7 Thank You's, Eveland Access Cabin Information, Calendar Notes
- 8 MCCB Board Members & Staff

# Nature Notes

## Barred Owls

*Strix varia*

by Laura DeCook, MCCB Naturalist



While sitting on the deck of my house this summer, I have had the pleasure of watching barred owls live and hunt in my neighborhood. These magnificent birds fly silently between the trees and houses. Occasionally, they make their vocalization which is a rhythmic series of loud *hoots* or *who* notes that sounds like, “who-cooks-for-you, who-cooks-for-you-all”. Three young owlets and an adult have been making their presence every evening just before dark. As of mid-July, the owls are still in the neighborhood, but as in years past, they will soon be mature and will fly away from our neighborhood to find their own nesting territories.

The barred owl is a large, gray-brown and white bird with a round head and no ear tufts. While most other owls have yellow eyes, the barred owl has brown eyes. These owls also have a small, dull yellow-colored beak that is sharp and they are named after the bars on their chest.

Barred owls mainly live in forested areas in which they find a wide variety of things to eat. Their diet consists of small mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates.

They build their nests in cavities found in deciduous trees or use open nests made by hawks, crows and even squirrels. Barred owls usually nest between the months of February and May. The female owl will lay a clutch of 2-5 white eggs. Both adults will incubate the eggs for about 28 days after the eggs are laid. The owlets grow quickly. They will spend time balancing and perching and flapping their wings on nearby tree branches. At approximately five weeks after hatching, they will become fledglings and fly from the nest for the first time.



This young Barred Owl was picked up by people believing it was injured. The owl was healthy, just awkwardly learning how to fly. MCCB staff returned it near its roost. Please remember - do not pick up wild animals. If you have questions, or concerns about an animal, call MCCB. We will be glad to help.

The young owls will spend several months near their parents' territory learning how to hunt and to identify and avoid predators such as Great Horned Owls and domestic cats. Once they are able to catch prey on their own, they will relocate from the area (though not far) to find their own territory and mates. They will then begin breeding and raising their own young.



# EXPLORE MAHASKA COUNTY



Mahaska County has over 1,500 acres of forests, wetlands, prairies and parks to explore. The Mahaska County Conservation Board manages 21 separate parks, river accesses and wildlife areas with over six miles of maintained trails.

Check out this issue's featured area!

## Peter's Wildlife Area

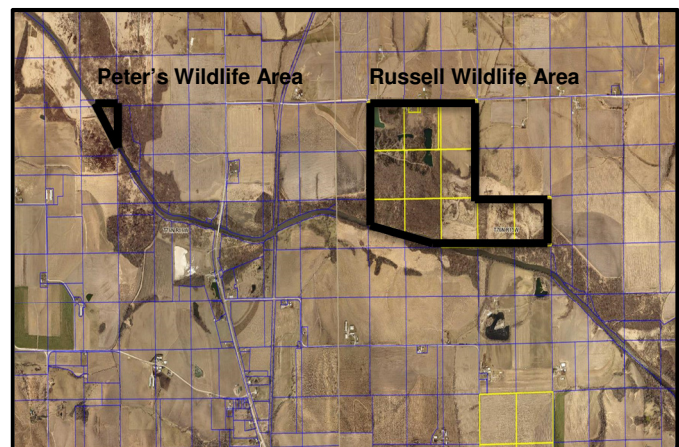
By Tommy Van Renterghem, Conservation Technician

Peter's Wildlife Area lies adjacent to the South Skunk River in the central part of Mahaska County, upstream from Russell Wildlife Area. The river is the southwest boundary of this triangular-shaped piece of land. The Peter's Wildlife Area is approximately 5 miles north and 2 miles west of Oskaloosa (see maps below). This Madison Township land has no road access to it and can only be accessed by river unless permission is given by neighboring landowners.

This 10 acre wildlife area is mostly low-lying floodplain of the South Skunk River. The tree species found here are common to floodplain areas; maple, sycamore, hickory, willow and cottonwoods, for example. Animals that can be found within the tract may include, but are not limited to whitetail deer, mink, coyotes, fox, along with birds of many species. The area was obtained by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation prior to Mahaska County's ownership. In 1986, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation leased this property to the Mahaska County Conservation Board for one dollar. On July 1, 2004 the property was officially purchased by the Mahaska County Conservation Board from the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation for one dollar.



Peter's Wildlife Area Maps





# Summer Programs



## I-Spy Nature Hike

Tuesday, August 7  
Russell Wildlife Area



Call (641)673-9327 to reserve a time:

10:00 – 10:30  
10:30 – 11:00  
11:00 – 11:30  
11:30 – 12:00

I-spy books are a lot of fun for all ages...how about taking it outdoors? Come out to the Russell Wildlife Area and take a hike down a trail to find hidden objects. Some won't be easy to find! Participants that find *every hidden object* on the trail will receive a prize! **Please pre-register and sign up for a trail hike by calling MCCB at (641)673-9327.**

## Dutch Oven & Campfire Picnic

Saturday, August 11  
Russell Wildlife Area  
10:00 am *Dutch Oven Mini-Lesson*  
12:00 pm *Lunch on the Table*



Celebrate summer with MCCB by joining us at a picnic with yard games and food made in Dutch ovens or over the campfire. If you would like to learn more about Dutch oven cooking, join the naturalist at 10:00 am for a mini-lesson as she prepares food for the meal.

MCCB will serve macaroni & cheese, a cobbler and campfire hotdogs. We ask that participants bring your own table service, drinks and a main dish or side dish to share at the picnic. Anyone is welcome to bring a Dutch oven to cook with on site, or cook over the campfire. **Please let us know you are coming by calling MCCB at (641)673-9327 by August 10<sup>th</sup>.**

## "Escape the Woods" A Nature Adventure

Tuesday, August 14  
Russell Wildlife Area



Call (641)673-9327 to reserve a time:

9:30 – 10:30 am  
11:00 - Noon  
1:00 – 2:00 pm  
2:30 – 3:30 pm

Bring a group of up to 8 people out to the Russell Wildlife Area and take part in a fun twist to the "escape room" craze. Each group will solve puzzles and complete activities at stations located within the park. The goal is to complete the course faster than other groups throughout the day. This event is geared toward anyone ages 10 and older, but younger kids are welcome to participate. Adults must supervise kids at all times during the event. **Please pre-register and sign up for a time by calling MCCB at (641)673-9327.**

## Hunter Education Class

Wednesday, August 15  
Thursday, August 16  
Russell Wildlife Area  
5:00 – 9:00 pm (*both days*)



This course is free of charge, but space is limited and **pre-registration is required at [www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov).** Anyone born after January 1st, 1972 must attend a Hunter Education course before they are allowed to purchase an Iowa hunting license. Any person who is 11 years old or older is eligible to attend the class. **Participants must attend both days.**







# Summer Programs



## Canoe & Kayak River Float

Saturday, August 18

9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Eveland Access to  
Hardfish Access



Join MCCB on a canoe and kayak float down the Des Moines River. We will launch from Eveland Access at 9:00 am and arrive at Hardfish Access by 3:00 pm. There is no cost for this event and MCCB has a limited number of canoes and kayaks available. Participants may bring their own lunch and canoe or kayak. Participants will need to make arrangements to shuttle themselves between the put in and take out locations. **Pre-registration is required! Call MCCB at (641)673-9327 to register and receive complete details for the float. Please Note: Canoe Float will be dependent upon weather and river conditions.**

## Summer Day Camp Photos 2018



## Youth Mentored Dove Hunt

♦ Kids ages 12-17

- ♦ Must attend informational meeting
- ♦ Must have hunter education certification

Register with MCCB by calling (641)673-9327.  
Deadline is Friday, August 24

Restricted to 12 participants  
(first-come, first-served)

*All participants will be accompanied  
by an adult hunting mentor.*

### INFORMATIONAL MEETING:

Sunday, August 26

1:00 – 5:00 pm

Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area

- ♦ Classroom instruction
- ♦ Meet your mentor
- ♦ Trap shooting practice
- ♦ Must attend this meeting to participate in hunt!

### DOVE HUNT:

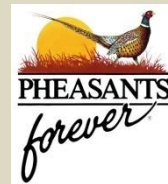
Saturday, September 1

5:15 am

Birch Cabin, Eveland Access

### HUNT FOLLOWED BY:

- ♦ Breakfast
- ♦ Dove Cleaning
- ♦ Dove Preparation & Cooking



# Summer Programs



## 2nd Annual Mammoth Day Celebration



5K & 1-Mile Walk

Sunday, September 15  
7:30 am Registration  
8:30 am 5K Begins  
8:35 am 1-mile Walk Begins  
Caldwell Park

The Friends of Mahaska County Conservation will be holding a 5K and 1-mile walk as a fundraiser for Mahaska County Conservation Board's Environmental Learning Center. Caldwell Park is located at 2342 Hwy. 92 East, Oskaloosa, Iowa. *Registration forms are available at [www.friendsmahaskacc.weebly.com](http://www.friendsmahaskacc.weebly.com).*

This year's run/walk will incorporate a variety of places of interest in Mahaska County. The event will be held at Caldwell Park along the Mahaska Country Recreation Trail. The opening ceremony will be held at the Mahaska County Freedom Rock. *New this year:* Discounted registrations will be given to Mahaska County Historical Society Members. All race participants will receive a reduced admission to the Nelson Pioneer Farm Festival that will be held on the same day.

## SAVE THE DATE!

### Halloween Bash at Eveland Access



Saturday, October 20  
1:00 pm – 10:00 pm  
Eveland Access Campground

Bring your family and the little ghouls and goblins to spend the afternoon and evening at Eveland Access to participate in fun Halloween activities! There is no cost for this event. If you are interested in camping at Eveland on this weekend, each site is \$15.00 per night on a first-come, first-served basis. A detailed event schedule will be advertised.

## 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Outdoor Field Day

*"Connecting Kids with the Outdoors"*

**NEW THIS YEAR – Family members can participate in all activities!**

Saturday, September 29  
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
Russell Wildlife Area  
2254 – 200<sup>th</sup> Street  
New Sharon, Iowa 50207

Fishing  
Bowfishing  
.22 Rifle Shooting  
Tree ID  
Fish Filleting & Cooking  
Camping Basics  
Retriever Dog Demos



BB Gun Shooting  
Honey Bees  
Mammal Research Station  
Oskaloosa K9 "Duke"  
And MORE ACTIVITIES!

**Join MCCB, local businesses and conservation groups for a day of hands-on outdoor activities for kids and their families!**

**Pre-register by Friday, September 14<sup>th</sup>!**

**New this year:**

**\$5.00 per person if registered by Sept. 14**

Early registration includes a t-shirt & lunch. You will receive a meal ticket at the event to present at the lunch line.

**\$10.00 per person after Sept. 14 and on day of event**

Late registration **does not** include a t-shirt and lunch

*Families will be able to visit and spend time at activities at their own leisure. So come on out and help your kids find an outdoor activity to experience!*

- Bring a re-fillable water bottle to use at the event.
- Please dress appropriately for the weather – the event is held rain or shine.
- All children must be accompanied by a parent or adult.
- A printable registration form will soon be found at [www.mahaskaconservation.com](http://www.mahaskaconservation.com) or call MCCB at (641)673-9327 to sign up.



## Statement

The primary mission of this organization shall be to create an awareness of our natural environment, encourage a state of harmony between people and their natural communities, develop and implement public conservation policy, maintain the public's investment in our natural resources, and strive diligently within the budget restraints to provide adequate services for the environmental education and enjoyment of the citizens of Mahaska County.

## The Prairie Star

The Prairie Star is the quarterly newsletter of the Mahaska County Conservation Board and is mailed to those persons on our mailing list. There is no charge for the newsletter, although contributions to help defray printing and mailing costs are greatly appreciated. Please help us keep our costs down by keeping us informed of any change of address or if you wish to receive the newsletter by email.

*"A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing and the lawnmower is broken."*

~ Unknown

# A Big Thank You!

The Mahaska County Conservation Board wishes to extend our appreciation to the following people and businesses for their donations and volunteer time.

*Are you interested in volunteering? Contact MCCB at (641)673-9327.*

**Bob & Marlis DeBoef – donations/volunteer**

**MaryJane Sullivan – program volunteer**

**Linda Fox – program volunteer**

**Mahaska Masters 4H – Maple Syrup Festival**

## Eveland Access Cabins



The Apple and Birch Cabins at the Eveland Access are available for rent year-round. To view pictures of the cabins and to find more information on renting:

[www.mahaskaconservation.com](http://www.mahaskaconservation.com)

**Cabin Rental Prices:**

**Sunday-Thursday \$60/night**

**Friday-Saturday \$75/night**

**Week stay \$420**

*For reservations call MCCB at (641)673-9327.*

## MCCB CALENDAR NOTES:

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| August 2     | <b>Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting</b><br>6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area |
| August 20    | <b>Friends of Mahaska County Conservation</b><br>6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area    |
| September 6  | <b>Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting</b><br>7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area |
| September 17 | <b>Friends of Mahaska County Conservation</b><br>6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area    |
| October 4    | <b>Mahaska County Conservation Board Meeting</b><br>7:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area |
| October 15   | <b>Friends of Mahaska County Conservation</b><br>6:30 p.m. @ Conservation Center, Russell Wildlife Area    |

*Dates and times are subject to change. Call MCCB at (641)673-9327 for more information.*





## COUNTY CONSERVATION CENTER HOURS

12:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Monday through Friday or by appointment.

The Mahaska County Conservation Board meetings are open to the public. Visitors are always welcome and encouraged to attend. The board meets the first Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m. at the Conservation Center. Please note: these dates are subject to change.

**A large-type version of this  
newsletter is available on request.**

Mahaska County's programs and facilities are consistent with pertinent federal and state laws and regulations on non-discrimination regarding race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, and handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subjected to discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Mahaska County Conservation Board or the office for Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington D.C. 29240.

## Mahaska County Conservation Board



**Peggy Wright**, New Sharon

Chairperson

**Steve Dixon**, Oskaloosa

Vice Chairperson

**Linda Fox**, Rose Hill

Secretary

**Curt Jager**, Eddyville

Member

**Ross Nilson**, Oskaloosa

Member

## STAFF

Dave Sedivec

Director

Laura DeCook

Naturalist

Tommy VanRenterghem

Conservation Technician

Jason Ryan

Conservation Technician

Dorothy Wedgewood

Administrative Assistant

Cole Rozendaal

Summer Park Technician

Lake Heaton

Musco Seasonal

Summer 2018



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Website: [www.mahaskacaconservation.com](http://www.mahaskacaconservation.com)

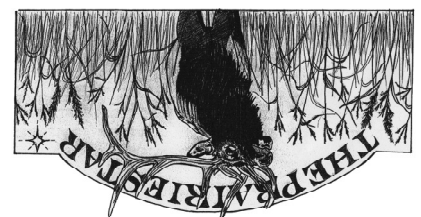
Email: [mcbb@mahaskacounty.org](mailto:mcbb@mahaskacounty.org)

Phone: (641) 673-9327

New Sharon, IA 50207

2254 – 200<sup>th</sup> Street

Mahaska County Conservation Board



NON-PROFIT  
ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
DES MOINES, IA  
PERMIT NO. 491