



IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION - Birding Sites in Humboldt County

Printed on 4/19/2024

Banwart Prairie

GPS Coordinates: 42.8932533806726,-94.3907724326709

Ownership: County

Description: Very small grassland area with small manmade 'duck pond' viewable from road. Purely a drive by site, or a park and look with binoculars site. Note Only the half that is west of the 'access road' is public property, east of access point is private property! It does sometimes host upland game hunters. Notable catches are Short-eared Owl and Western Kingbird. In the spring, the wide, shallow ditches (on both sides of C20) readily flood and if timed right have given great views of migrating shorebirds like Wilson's Phalaropes and Wilson's Snipe. Potential for some migrating rails. Occasionally will find an interesting puddle duck (Red Head or Canvasback). Northern Harriers regularly migrate through.

Habitat: Wet Grassland

Directions: Traveling on 169 turn west on C26. Continue on C26 for 8 miles, and turn North at Delaware Ave. Continue on Delaware Ave for 6 miles and then turn West onto C20 at the stop sign. Proceed west for a quarter mile. There will be a sign and you will see the pond. You can pull into a little culvert but should not proceed beyond fence (road is mostly mud...and you will get stuck especially in Spring). Otherwise you can drive by slowly and check out the fenceline, the pond or the back fencerow/hedge for any interesting movement.

Public Hunting Area

Amenities:

Bicknell Park

GPS Coordinates: 42.721160281613,-94.2209323869611

Ownership: City

Description: Small city park with an overlook of the Des Moines River. Fast running water and warmed water from the treatment plant provides open water year round most years sometimes yielding impressive winter waterfowl.

Habitat: City Park

Directions: Coming on Interstate 169 turn East at the stop light onto Wildcat Rd. One block east on Wildcat road you will come to a stop sign where you will turn North onto Sumner Ave. Follow Sumner Ave over the bridge and when you get to the intersection immediately East of the bridge turn north onto N 9th Street. Parking lot is immediately after the turn.

Amenities: Parking |

Bradgate Management Area

GPS Coordinates: 42.7835059027959,-94.3935367476661

Ownership: None listed

Description: Riparian deciduous woodland with river bottom with adjoining manmade pond. There is a ground water spring in the bottom lands near the river (which provides open water access to many

terrestrial bird species). Access potentially limited in winter due to snow drifts on access road. Bottom land and also potentially dangerous during winter due to river ice and in the spring due to flash flooding (be cautious). One of the Spring passerine migration hotspot in the county. Scarlet Tanagers, multiple warbler species. Other resident species are also readily observed there. Winter (when accessible) has potential of finding Northern Shrike, Blackbird flocks, Winter Wren, Belted Kingfisher, as well as winter sparrows, access road sometimes provides longspurs, larks and snow buntings in winter, and flycatchers and other fence-row species in summer.

Habitat: Riparian forest with river bottom

Directions: Traveling from 169 turn west onto C29 follow this through the town of Rutland continue on road after blacktop becomes gravel (converts from C29 to 200th street). Continue on 200th St until you reach intersection/merge with Florida Street. Take the south spur winding around and going over the bridge across the W. Des Moines River. Continue on this gravel road until you reach Elm Ave, at stop sign you turn north and follow the road (it merges into 190th St) for 1.5 miles. You will see a long driveway that goes north from the road, take it until you come to a small parking area.

Public Hunting Area

Amenities: Parking |

Frank A. Gotch S.P. (eBird Hotspot)

GPS Coordinates: 42.6765090162415,-94.2068372672657

Ownership: State

Description: Camping (with electric hook-up, drinking water, flush toilets, showers, and playground). Native prairie patch on the south sand-pit forested area to the north. River access (park is at the confluence of the West and East Des Moines river). No vehicle access in winter months. There is also a biking/walking trail on the north side of the Park that takes you over the East Des Moines River. Spring Migration place with many species of warbler. As well as Wood Ducks and other species of puddle ducks. Bald Eagles nest nearby and are regularly seen. Sand pit area on the north side has many cedars and potentially good owling can be had there. There is a loop of road that allows you to circumnavigate the prairie postage stamp. Good spot to look for Rusty Blackbirds as well.

Habitat: Sand Pit deciduous forest North, small grassland to the south

Directions: From Interstate 169 turn E on 270th street/C49. Drive on 270th St/C49 for half a mile and turn north onto Gotch Park Road. Continue north for ~3/4ths of a mile, park entrance is immediately north of the river crossing on the East side of the road.

Amenities: Restrooms | Drinking Water | Parking | Trails | Camping |

Lizard Lake

GPS Coordinates: 42.6761254713347,-94.4919490814209

Ownership: None listed

Description:

Habitat:

Directions: From the town of Fort Dodge: Head north on US Highway 169 until you reach the

intersection of County Rd C49. Take a left on C49, and continue on until you reach 320th Ave, which is just past County Rd P19. Take a right on 320th Ave, and the lake will be on your left.

Amenities:

Ottosen Potholes

GPS Coordinates: 42.8193733206905,-94.3447797748377

Ownership: None listed

Description: Wetland/pothole with some upland grassland habitat and a small mostly dead grove of conifers on the south perimeter. Active hunting for both upland game birds and ducks/geese. Access limited/not existent during winter (and possibly early spring) due to blocked or impassible access road. Rails, herons, multiple species of ducks and all geese species have been observed at this location. Potential for Ammodramus sparrows as well as grassland raptors.

Habitat: Grassland/Pothole

Directions: From Interstate 169 Turn West at the intersection with C26. Continue west on C26 for five miles until you come to Georgia Ave. Turn north onto Georgia Ave and continue for a 1.5 miles turning west onto 155th st. Continue westward on 155th street for a mile, coming to the intersection of 155th street and Florida Ave (there will be a sign at this intersection, the thin road to the south is the access road to the property, go south on this road until you come to a large grassy parking area).

Public Hunting Area

Amenities: Parking |

Swan pond path in Humboldt

GPS Coordinates: ,

Ownership: None listed

Description: trail that goes from Bicknell Park to the East to Nokomis Dam in the west, around a small pond used to hold a pair of Trumpeter Swans. It also runs adjacent to some fishery ponds that often hold waterfowl.

Habitat:

Directions: Just adjacent to the large bridge spanning the Des Moines River as it intersects highway 169 in Humboldt.

Amenities: Parking | Trails |

Union Cemetery

GPS Coordinates: 42.7396641498824,-94.2380063996825

Ownership: None listed

Description: Cemetery where numerous overwintering finches, sparrows, waxwings have been found. On the east side of the cemetery there is an overlook of an old quarry pit that occasionally produces waterfowl.

Habitat: Evergreen planted cemetery with berry hedges to the west.

Directions: In Iowa Falls: Take Oak St. (Highway 65) north to the intersection with North St. Turn left on

North St all the way to the T-Intersection with River St. Turn right on River St, and go about 600 ft to the intersection with Siloam Ave. Turn left on Siloam Ave and travel about 500 ft. The cemetery is on the left side of the road.

Amenities: Parking |

Willows Access

GPS Coordinates: 42.8041656308673,-94.4239585849573

Ownership: None listed

Description: Flooded Forest habitat with a number of ponds and deciduous forest habitat, river access. Also provides point of access to western areas of Three Rivers Trail. Spring migration spot both for waterfowl and warblers. Noted observations in the access and around the adjacent territory have been Prothonotary Warbler, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, American White Pelicans.

Habitat: Flooder forest

Directions: From Interstate 169 turn west onto C26. Continue on C26 through Bradgate, access is on the western side of the town of Bradgate. Access road is on the south side of C26. Three Rivers Trail access directly at front end of access road (just off of C26).

Amenities: Parking |