

Report for IOU News

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1) Project title

Nesting Camera and Bird Photo Booth

2) Project description

With grants received from the Iowa Ornithologist's Union grant, Mitchell County Conservation Board was able to purchase the Hawk Eye Nature Cam and Bird Photo Booth for the Milton R. Owen Nature Center.

Due to some shipping issues, the Hawk-eye Nature Cam was received after nesting activity had ceased for the year, but will be installed in the Spring of 2018.

The Bird Photo Booth was placed near the current bird feeding station and began to transmit photos within 45 minutes of installation. Photos were posted on our Facebook Page recognizing the Iowa Ornithologists Union.

3) Project goals

The goal of this project is to enhance the learning capacity of the Milton R. Owen Nature Center for a more complete environmental education experience through visual media.

These two cameras were added to previously granted projects of binoculars, bird ID books, and a speaker system. Visitors have been able to view different behaviors not usually seen, like close up seed manipulation while feeding (see photos attached).

These tools have helped increase the education value of the bird feeding station, as well as the nature center and trails by:

- Increasing appreciation for local avian diversity
- Encouraging interest in birds and bird watching
- Fostering awareness and participation in bird conservation efforts
- Inspiring youth involvement with bird-related educational activities

4) Project impact

With the installation of the Bird Photo Booth, we have received increasing inquiries into bird feeding, particularly winter bird feeding. A recent winter bird feeding program increased to over 30 participants, compared to previous attendance of five when offered in 2016. Several of the attendees were physically unable to join us on a bird watching hike during this same program, however, they were invited to stay at the nature center and enjoyed the photos coming from the photo booth, as well as the bird feeding station sounds and watching bird behavior. Mitchell County Conservation Board has also seen increased visitors to the nature center, and all stop and watch the bird feeding station longer than other exhibits. I can only assume that trend will continue once the Hawk Eye nest box camera is installed. This non-invasive observation will allow for nestling monitoring, predicting hatches, and seeing parental behavior of the birds. Mitchell County Conservation Board was lucky to partner with the local Iowa Farm Bureau and Mitchell County Soil and Water Conservation to receive a smart TV, which is housed at the Milton R. Owen Nature center. This TV will be perfect for transmitting the Hawk Eye Camera video feed.



White Breasted Nuthatch feeding on cracked corn from suet



Male Downy Woodpecker – First visitor to the camera and check out those zygodactyl feet!