

IPN 30TH
ANNIVERSARY

Iowa Prairie Network Newsletter

Fall 2020

Monarch Migration - Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge
Photo by Tenlea Turner

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Finding Solace in Troubled Times

Submitted by Tenlea Turner

Whew! What a year it has been. We have seen a global pandemic, nationwide demonstrations against inequality, murder hornets, and even a dust cloud dubbed Godzilla. While we are all in this together, the experience for each of us is vastly different. At the end of 2019, we lightheartedly referred to the year 2020 as the year of perfect vision. We got clarity all right. The events we have experienced have shone a glaring spotlight on our social, economic, and racial disparities and inequities. At the same time, we have seen people come together to assist and support those who are most deeply affected.

Many of the activities and events we look forward to have been cancelled, postponed, or dramatically altered. We have had to re-think how we work, play, shop, travel, worship, and celebrate life's milestones. It appears everything we once knew has gone totally topsy-turvy. These are uncertain and challenging times, no doubt. We all long for some semblance of "normalcy." We are constantly bombarded with conflicting messages that make it difficult to know where to turn for truth, guidance, or comfort.

The one thing we can all rely on is nature. Whether it's a lawn chair on your balcony, gardening in your backyard, a walk around the block, or a leisurely stroll through your favorite park or prairie - you can always find solace in nature. Allow the sun to warm your face and soothe your soul. Take a moment to listen to the birds, smell the flowers, watch the bees and butterflies, and bask in the rejuvenating powers that surround you.

This moment in history is unprecedented. We have the opportunity to shape the future based on what we have learned during this trying time. It seems difficult now, but we will get through this and be stronger, and (hopefully) more united on the other side. Breathe deep. Trust in science. Reach out to others. Take care of yourself. And remember - this too shall pass. We will soon be together again on the prairies we love.

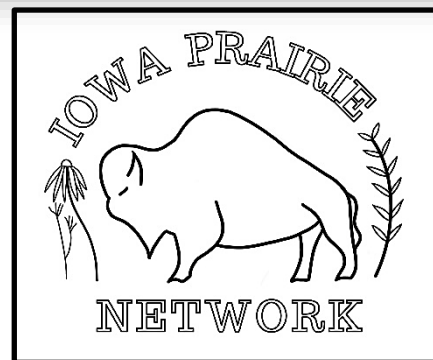
Save the Date: August 22, 2020 - IPN Annual Meeting

All members are invited to join us at 10:00 a.m. for virtual meeting through Zoom. RSVP to Michelle Biodrowski (biodrowski13@gmail.com) for connection information.



Getting to Know You

Meet Sarah Nizzi – IPN Board member since July 2019. Sarah is originally from central Iowa and holds a B.S. in Environmental Science from Drake University. Currently, Sarah is a Farm Bill Pollinator Conservation Planner & NRCS Partner Biologist with the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. In her free time, she enjoys spending time in prairies, recreating outdoors and volunteering for various NGO conservation groups.



IPN Officers

Michelle Biodrowski, President
Jacob Pitzenberger, Vice President
Ed Sibley, Treasurer
Corinne Bulat, Secretary

Committees

Communications

Chair: Ben Maas
Webmaster: Cory Pritchard
Newsletter Editor: Tenlea Turner

Finance

Chair: Joyce Hornstein

Membership

Chair: Leesa McNeil

Marketing

Chair: Jacob Pitzenberger



Little brown bat
Sioux City Prairie Preserve
Photo by Tenlea Turner

Prairie Highlight



Henslow's sparrow - Photo by Paul O. Roisen

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Henslow's Sparrow (Centronyx henslowii)

Submitted by Karen Viste-Sparkman

Henslow's Sparrow is the bird that most epitomizes the tallgrass prairie avian community. Its breeding range coincides closely with that of the historic tallgrass prairie. Henslow's Sparrows prefer to inhabit tall, dense grassland with scattered forbs that provide perches. One key indicator of suitability for Henslow's Sparrows is the presence of a deep litter layer, largely dependent on the length of time since the grassland has burned. In tallgrass prairie, one year without fire is enough to provide sufficient litter to support Henslow's Sparrows. When not singing, the birds spend most of their time on the ground, preferring to walk rather than fly whenever possible, and foraging for insects among the duff.

Although drab, Henslow's Sparrow has a subtle beauty, with a golden-green wash to the face and brown and reddish streaks on the back. It can be overlooked due to its secretive nature and insect-like song, a high-pitched two-note hiccup. The song is typically sung from a prominent location, so the bird can often be picked out by scanning likely perches. Unfortunately, people who have experienced high-frequency hearing loss may not be able to hear the Henslow's Sparrow song, making the birds tough to find.

Henslow's Sparrow was named by John James Audubon in honor of his friend John Stevens Henslow, a professor of botany at the University of Cambridge and a teacher of Charles Darwin.

Like most grassland birds, the Henslow's Sparrow has experienced population declines due to habitat loss. Happily, the species is one of the biggest wildlife successes of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Formerly rare in Iowa, Henslow's Sparrows began increasing in the state during the 1990s, when their spread seemed to follow that of CRP grasslands. Now they are fairly common in large prairies and other grasslands in much of the state, although these areas are still scarce. Protecting and restoring tallgrass prairie will continue to benefit this iconic species.



IPN Board of Directors

Region 1

Amy Andrews
Ben Maas

Region 2

Tim Youngquist

Vacant

Region 3

Justin Meissen

Vacant

Region 4

Lance Brisbois
Cait Caughey

Region 5

Luke Gran
Sarah Nizzi

Region 6

Tenlea Turner
Pam White

Region 7

Ray Hamilton

Vacant

At Large

Michelle Biodrowski
Jon Judson
Laura Leben
Derek Miner
Corinne Bulat
Jacob Pitzenberger



Join our Board or Become a Committee Member

We are looking for individuals who are passionate about our endangered prairie ecosystem and want to join us in our mission! We have openings on our Board of Directors and could always use additional talent for any of our committees (Communications, Finance, Marketing, and Membership). Interested persons can **contact Michelle Biodrowski (biodrowski13@gmail.com)**.

"The sound of birds stops the noise in my mind." ~ Carly Simon

Featured IPN Connection

IPN works with a multitude of agencies and organizations to support us in our mission. We thank them for their support.



The Nature Conservancy is a global environmental nonprofit working to create a world where people and nature can thrive.

Our Ambitious Mission

Our mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. Our vision is a world where the diversity of life thrives, and people act to conserve nature for its own sake and its ability to fulfill our needs and enrich our lives.



Broken Kettle Grasslands Preserve
Westfield, IA

Membership Corner

IPN has nearly 200 members that share an enthusiasm for prairies! Consider joining today!

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____ County: _____

Email: _____

Phone (optional): _____ Circle one: home - work - cell

Membership Levels & Dues (check one):

☐ Student **Free** - please provide a valid school email address or ID
☐ Intern \$ 10 ☐ Family \$ 30
☐ Individual \$ 20 ☐ Organizations.....\$100

Newsletter Options (check one):

☐ Prefer to receive newsletters via e-mail at the address listed above \$0
☐ Prefer to receive printed newsletters via mail add \$5

IPN is an IRS approved 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization

Please make checks payable to:

Iowa Prairie Network

c/o Edward M. Sibley, Treas. 4015 Sergeant Road, Sioux City, IA 51106

The membership form can also be downloaded from our website – click “Join Us”

You can join online with PayPal

Don't forget to **RENEW** your membership! www.iowaprairienetwork.org. **Thank you!**

The Iowa Prairie Network is a grass-roots, volunteer organization that is dedicated to the preservation of Iowa's prairie heritage. IPN was formed in 1990 by Iowans concerned that our prairie heritage was disappearing. People needed an organization that would bring those who know about prairie together with those who wanted to learn, to form a network of advocacy for Iowa's natural heritage.

Fall 2020 Events

Please be advised: Events may be postponed or cancelled due to Coronavirus. Check the IPN Calendar for continued updates. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Upcoming Events – check the IPN Calendar for details, updates and more events!
www.iowaprairienetwork.org

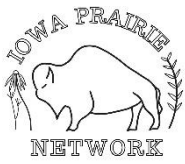
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|-----------|-----|--|
| September | TBD | Go to www.iowaprairienetwork.org for updates |
| October | TBD | Go to www.iowaprairienetwork.org for updates |
| November | TBD | Go to www.iowaprairienetwork.org for updates |



Downy gentian
(*Gentiana pubescens*)
Photo by Tenlea Turner

2020 marks IPN's 30th Anniversary

Join us on the prairie and help us celebrate!



Iowa Prairie Network, Inc.

4015 Sergeant Rd.

Sioux City, IA 51106-4013

iowaprairienetworkorg@gmail.com

www.iowaprairienetwork.org

IPN's Mission: To Learn About, Teach About, Enjoy, and Protect Iowa's Prairie Heritage

FALL 2020

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IPN Celebrating 30 Years

