

Thank you for visiting JDCF's Valley of Eden Bird Sanctuary. JDCF is a non-profit land conservancy that works in and around Jo Daviess County, IL to help preserve this unique and beautiful part of the Midwest.

Because Jo Daviess County does not have a forest preserve district to protect and make available parks and recreation areas, JDCF provides this service to our community. We currently have over **1,000** acres open to the public to enjoy outdoor recreational activities **free of charge**.

JDCF is only able to do this work through the support of individuals such as you. Annual membership begins at just \$50.00 for you and your entire family! **There is a donation tube at the visitor kiosk or visit www.jdcf.org.**



JO DAVIESS
CONSERVATION FOUNDATION
Preserving Land - Now & Forever
PO Box 216
Elizabeth, IL 61028
815.858.9100
info@jdcf.org ~ www.jdcf.org

Henslow's Sparrow
(c) Rich Mattas

VALLEY OF EDEN BIRD SANCTUARY

An Important Bird Area as designated by Birdlife International/The National Audubon Society

Visitor's Guide

A NATURE PRESERVE OWNED & MANAGED
BY THE JO DAVIESS CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION



5559 E RUSH CREEK RD, STOCKTON, IL 61085

Welcome!

Welcome to the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation's (JDCF) Valley of Eden Bird Sanctuary. This 409-acre property is one of 7 public preserves that JDCF owns and stewards in Jo Daviess County, IL. There are over 6 miles of trails for you to explore at this unique place, which is managed and protected primarily for the many bird species that call it home. We therefore ask that you observe some simple rules that will help us safeguard what makes this place special.

*Due to nesting birds,
please stay on marked
trails.*

Rules:

Unless otherwise posted, Valley of Eden is open daily from dawn to dusk year round. The only permitted entrance is from the main drive off of East Rush Creek Road that leads to the parking lot. To ensure the preservation of the site, the following activities are **NEVER** allowed:

- littering
- fires
- camping
- hunting
- biking
- motorized vehicle use
- dogs/dog walking March 1 to September 30
- entering cow pastures
- opening of gates
- removal of vegetation
- picking of flowers
- crossing fence lines

What will I see?

To date, there have been documented sightings of over 100 different bird species at Valley of Eden with April through August being the prime viewing season. Notable Illinois species of conservation concern include the Henslow's sparrow, bobolink, red-headed woodpecker, and northern harrier. More common species such as a variety of owls, woodpeckers, and grassland birds can be seen too, making Valley of Eden a birding paradise for people of all ages and birding abilities.



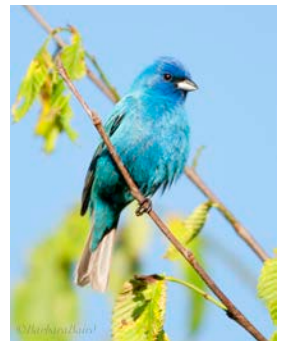
Baltimore oriole
(c) Rich Mattas



Bobolink
(c) Rich Mattas



Red-headed woodpecker
(c) Barbara Baird



Indigo bunting
(c) Barbara Baird

VALLEY OF EDEN BIRD SANCTUARY

Frequently Asked Questions

Valley of Eden: This 409-acre property, located near Stockton, IL, is a generous gift from Nancy Hamill Winter to the Illinois native birds that are in decline and to countless generations of people who will enjoy this preserve and walk away with a better understanding about bird conservation. The preserve is also a great place to visit in the winter as it is one of the few local sites with groomed cross country ski trails! We thank Nancy for her generous spirit and love for nature.



The Name: Valley of Eden is a tribute to the Eden families who settled in this valley and have farmed here for 4 generations. Steve Eden, who lives nearby and runs a successful grain and cattle business, leases this property and raises about 60 cattle here annually. His black angus cattle are found in one of the two pastures during most of the growing season. Per Nancy Winter and JDCF's intent, we will continue the agricultural activity of grazing on this land as part of the management of the property.

Why is this a bird sanctuary? Many native Illinois birds have been on the decline for the past 50 years due primarily to habitat loss and alteration of grasslands, forests, and oak savannas. The bird species that have suffered the steepest declines in population are the those that need grassland habitat to thrive. These include the Henslow's sparrow, dickcissel, sedge wren, bobolink, and many more. The grassland habitat here at Valley of Eden provides the right cover and food mix that allows these species to breed and successfully rear a family. So successfully, in fact, that Valley of Eden has been recognized as an Important Bird Area specifically for providing critical breeding habitat for grassland bird species in Greatest Need of Conservation by National Audubon.

How can I get more involved?

- Conduct bird surveys.
- Join the Valley of Eden Friends Group.
- Make a financial contribution to the ongoing stewardship of the preserve.

Please contact info@jdcf.org for more information about volunteering and/or contributing.

Trail Map

