



LEOPOLD CENTER  
FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

# Integrating hunting and grazing: Loess Hills and south central Iowa on-farm management experiences

## Background

The project intended to monitor bird use of rotationally grazed pastures over two summer growing seasons. Activities were to be carried out at the ISU McNay Research Farm near Chariton, with prescribed burns taking place in the spring. Livestock then were to be rotated through the pastures throughout the growing seasons.

The investigators intended to conduct three types of surveillance:

- Bird usage of cool- and warm-season grasses in rotationally grazed pastures and nearby control areas,
- Nesting and production of birds on grazed and ungrazed pastures and on nearby control areas, and
- Vegetation response on grazed and ungrazed pastures.

Four landowners in the Loess Hills region agreed to cooperate with the project, and 13 target species of birds were to be monitored.

## Results and discussion

The project plans were not able to be carried out for several reasons.

1. The original field sites were not available and the substitutes were not satisfactory.
2. Cold, wet weather discouraged birds from using the sites throughout the breeding season.

3. Vegetation monitoring was hampered by changes in site usage by the landowners, followed by inclement weather that deterred birds from nesting.

4. Health issues related to the cold, rainy weather and the high production of mold spores made it difficult for the co-PI to collect data.

## Conclusions

Due to the wide variety of problems encountered, the decision was made to cease the project operations and the unspent balance of the project budget was returned to the Leopold Center.

For more information, contact James Pease, NREM, 103 Science II, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011; (515) 294-7429, e-mail [jlpease@iastate.edu](mailto:jlpease@iastate.edu)

**Principal Investigator:**  
James Pease

**Co-investigator:**  
Annabel Major  
Natural Resource Ecology and Management  
Iowa State University

**Budget:**  
\$5,260 for year one