2026 Iowa Envirothon State Wildlife Exam **Team Name**_____
Each Question is worth three points – 75 points possible

1. Listen to the bird call provided by the station leader. Which bird species are you listening to?
_____

A. American Robin
B. Black-capped Chickadee
C. Blue Jay
D. Blue-gray gnatcatcher
E. Brown Thrashers
F. Canadian Goose
G. Chipping sparrow
H. Eastern Meadowlark
I. Red-winged blackbird
J. Song Sparrow

2. The common five-lined skink and prairie skink are both classified as _____.
A. birds
B. lizards
C. turtles
D. salamanders
E. snakes

3. Which statement regarding wild turkeys is "False"?
A. Turkeys breed only in the spring.
B. Turkey hens join harems attached to a dominant gobbler, but may breed with any available male
C. Turkeys roost at night in trees year around, except for hens sitting on a nest.
D. Turkey nests are located on the ground and contain 2-6 eggs, averaging 4 per clutch.

4. _____ females typically are bred during the fall and give birth to 1-2 young during the late spring or **early summer** after a 200 day gestation period.
A. White-footed Mouse *(Peromyscus leucopus)*
B. White-tailed Deer *(Odocoileus virginianus)*
C. White-tailed Jackrabbit *(Lepus townsendii)*
D. Virginia Opossum *(Didelphis virginiana)*

5. Places of refuge in which animals hibernate are called a _____.
A. cache
B. hibernacula
C. latrine
D. subnivean

6. A Cornell University study reveals that the population of North American Breeding Adult birds has dropped by almost three billion birds or by nearly 30% since 1970. What is the primary cause for this decline?
A. habitat loss and climate change
B. an increase in cat populations
C. an increase in birds being killed by vehicles, trains, planes and wind turbines
D. unregulated hunting
E. use of DDT

7. Which statement about Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is FALSE?
A. Chronic wasting disease is spread through direct contact between deer, as well as through urine, blood, feces, and saliva left on the landscape where it remains infectious for years.
B. Under Iowa law, hunters cannot transport into the state the whole carcass of any cervid (i.e., deer, elk, moose) taken from a CWD-infected area.
C. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that if you harvest from an area with CWD cases, testing for CWD should be done before you eat the meat.
D. A viable CWD vaccine and treatment options for animals with CWD are currently being tested in Northeast Iowa.

8. This is the smallest bat found in Iowa, and is at its heaviest in the fall, just before hibernation, weighing in at only one-quarter of an ounce. During the winter months, this bat retreats into caves in eastern and southern Iowa. What bat is this?
A. Little brown bat
B. Eastern red bat
C. Indiana bat
D. Tricolor bat



9. Based on your knowledge of food webs, an Eastern Cottontail Rabbit (herbivore) would be considered which trophic level?
A. producer
B. primary consumer
C. secondary consumer
D. tertiary consumer

10. Many animal species are “generalists”, which means they are very adaptable and can call many different places home. Which one of the following is NOT considered a generalist?
A. Brook trout
B. Canada geese
C. Little brown bat
D. Painted turtle

11. At more than eight feet tall, this plant is one of the most conspicuous plants on the tallgrass prairie. The vertical orientation of the leaves helps reduce exposure to the most intense daily solar radiation that occurs during mid-day, when the sun is mostly directly overhead. In order to maximize light reception when the sun is low in the sky, it uses compass orientation so that the surfaces of vertically orientated leaves face mostly east and west. What is the common name for this native Iowa prairie plant (see picture)?
A. compass plant
B. goldilocks sunflower
C. yellow prairie clover
D. showy tick-trefoil
E. sunrise sunset plant



12. The Spring Spotlight Survey is conducted each year, usually after snow-melt and before spring green-up occurs, between mid-March and mid-May with the date of surveys dependent on local weather conditions and the latitudinal timing of vegetation leaf-out across the state. In 1978, the Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources (Iowa DNR; formerly the Iowa Conservation Commission) initiated the Spring Spotlight Survey because of concerns that _____.
A. the wild turkey population was in serious decline because of over hunting
B. all-time high raccoon pelt prices threatened an over-harvest and would negatively impact the sustainability of the population
C. Iowa beef cow-calf producers were losing baby calves each spring because of the increasing wolf populations
D. All of these are true

13. Using data from the Spring Spotlight Survey summary (2006-2025), which of the following statements is **true**? **See Table 1 (below)**

A. The majority of species in this survey have consistently move up and down together following the same population trend changes from year to year.

B. The mink population has consistently had the lowest count compared to the other species included in this survey over the twenty years.

C. The raccoon observations have been down consistently each year since 2020.

D. The white-tailed deer population has consistently had the highest count out of any of the species included in this survey.

E. All of these are true

Table 1. Survey year, number of miles surveyed, and total number of animals observed for select species during the Spring Spotlight Survey in Iowa, 2006-present.

Year	Miles	Deer	Badger	Bobcat	Coyote	Mink	Opossum	Raccoon	Red fox	Skunk	House cat
2006[a]	4,290	9,279	9	4	56	9	136	2,417	41	133	15
2007	4,795	11,284	23	2	49	6	164	2,817	32	144	383
2008	4,793	13,329	22	5	51	13	118	3,143	46	148	511
2009	4,784	12,935	15	4	66	11	136	3,219	32	174	405
2010	4,787	10,888	16	4	53	10	86	3,621	43	217	392
2011	4,780	11,054	9	4	64	6	85	4,197	55	211	490
2012	4,764	9,322	9	3	92	11	114	3,282	37	171	599
2013	4,738	13,053	15	2	94	6	172	3,347	42	140	479
2014	4,800	11,401	12	3	65	3	88	3,793	28	116	391
2015	4,752	12,354	12	2	66	1	162	3,537	29	155	337
2016	4,607	12,522	16	1	110	13	273	3,672	27	144	252
2017	4,793	13,017	16	4	108	5	297	3,695	38	138	200
2018	4,755	15,102	18	0	99	2	295	4,683	46	181	209
2019	4,772	16,164	28	4	88	11	149	5,314	58	193	230
2020	4,781	15,746	26	8	86	8	179	4,454	24	173	161
2021	4,781	13,765	27	6	103	8	142	5,284	47	169	118
2022	4,783	17,103	27	4	119	7	268	6,486	48	270	143
2023	4,752	15,550	19	3	104	3	249	5,526	54	246	122
2024	4,783	16,920	36	2	122	4	442	5,601	43	252	155
2025	4,783	15,445	14	2	109	2	322	5,464	41	200	117

[a]In 2006, species other than white-tailed deer and northern raccoon, particularly house cat, were not recorded in all counties and species counts may not be comparable to subsequent years.

14. The biggest percentage change from **2007 to 2025** has occurred with which one of the following species? (do not use 2006 data since some Iowa counties were not included)

A. Coyote ,

B. Opossum

C. Raccoon

D. White-tailed deer

15. The Iowa DNR uses the annual Spring Spotlight Survey to monitor white-tailed deer and furbearer population trends, and this directly influences hunting license quotas. **Figure 5 (below)** shows the average relative distribution of spring spotlight observations for white-tailed deer during the past 5 years in Iowa. What area of Iowa would the Iowa DNR most likely consider reducing or getting rid of the antlerless quotas for hunting the white-tailed deer?

A. Northeast Iowa and South Central Iowa
B. Western Iowa
C. the counties in the "pink" zone on the map below
D. the counties in the "orange" zone on the map below

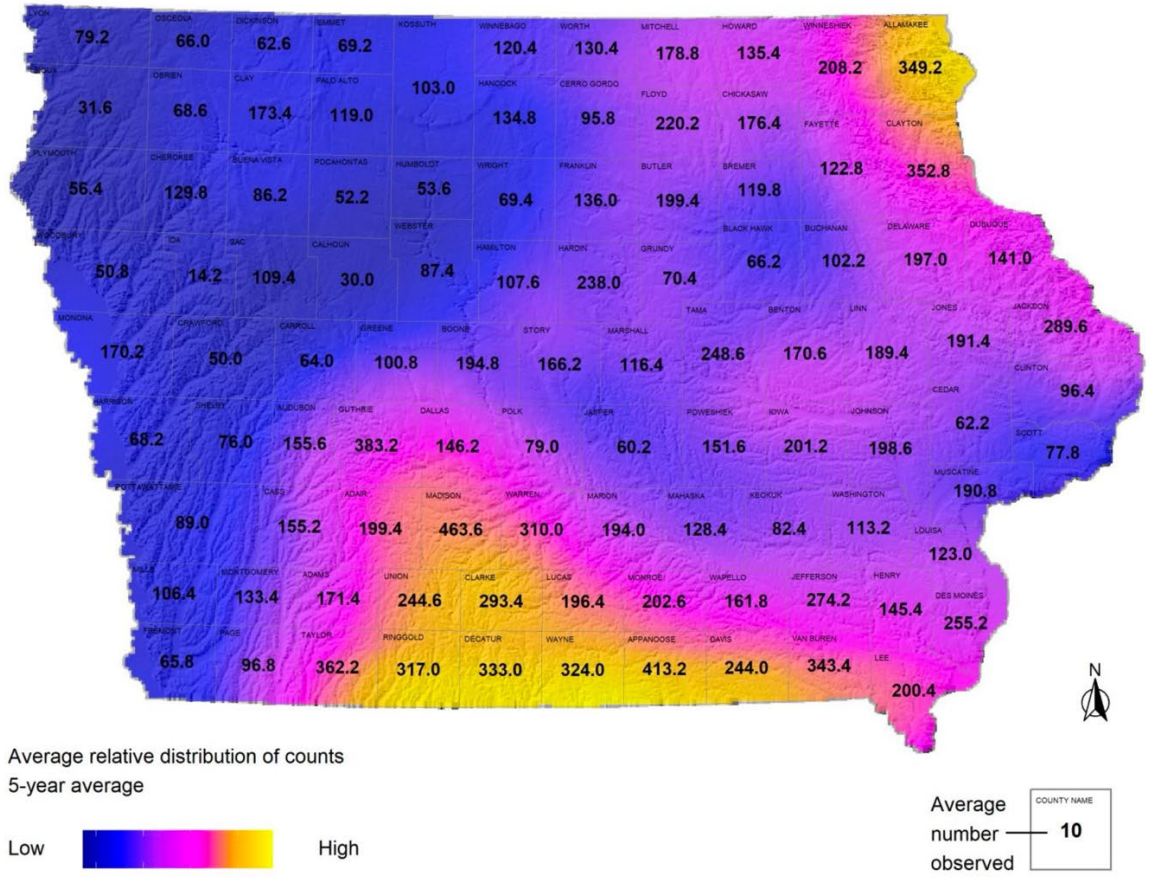


Figure 5. Average relative distribution of spring spotlight observations for white-tailed deer during the past 5 years in Iowa. The number of observations per county is relative to the highest and lowest number of observations across all counties during the survey and may not represent an over- or under-abundance of the species (i.e., high counts are considered high relative to those observed in all other counties).

16. Which statement regarding beavers is **True**?

A. Beavers have large front teeth that are always growing so they must keep them trimmed by gnawing on wood
B. Beavers are not good climbers.
C. Beavers form monogamous pairs and usually live in family groups of up to eight related individuals called colonies
D. To warn of danger, beavers slap their tails against the water, creating a powerful noise.
E. All of these are true.

Use the "Animal Skulls" book, the ruler to identify skull (Questions 17-18)

17. Use the "Animal Skulls – A Guide to North American Species" to identify the mammal skull provided. From pages 110-158, all skulls are pictured in order by size (from smallest to largest). Also include is the common name, scientific name, and typical "GL - Greatest Length of the skull".

Common name_____ (1 point)

Scientific name_____ (1 point)

Typical (GL - Greatest Length of the skull) _____ mm (1 point)

18. Based on the skull features and teeth found on this skull, which of the following best describes this animal?

A. Carnivore
B. Herbivore
C. Omnivore

MATCHING: Match the definition with the appropriate word (Questions 19-21).

A. American red ant
B. braconid wasp
C. carrion
D. diurnal
E. dung beetle
F. estrus
G. gestation
H. horse fly
I. monarch butterfly beetle
J. parturition
K. rainbow scarab dung beetle
L. solder fly
M. stag beetle
N. wean

_____ 19. Animal species that are the most active during daylight hours.

_____ 20. Occurring in mammals, this is the period of fetal development in the womb and is also called pregnancy.

_____ 21. Identify this small, beneficial parasitic insect common in Iowa, that acts as a natural pest control by laying eggs inside hosts like caterpillars (e.g., tomato hornworms) and aphids.



Animal Identification (3 points each):

Correctly identify each of the following native Iowa species (Question 22-25). Locate the numbers next to the animal tracks, mounts, shells or pelts at this station.

22. _____

23. _____

24. _____

25. _____

Possible Answers for questions 21-25 include:

American Badger
American Beaver
American goldfinch
American Mink
Black-capped Chickadee
Black Bear
Blue-gray gnatcatcher
Bobcat
Brown Thrashers
Common Musk Turtle
Coyote
Chipping sparrow
Eastern Meadowlark
Eastern Spotted Skunk
Gray Fox
Least Weasel
Long Tailed Weasel
Mourning Dove
Muskrat
Northern Bobwhite
Ornate Box Turtle
Racoon
River Otter
Short Tailed Weasel
Red-tailed hawk
Red-winged blackbird
Song Sparrow
Striped Skunk
White-tail deer
Wood Turtle
Yellow Mud Turtle