

LIVING LAB CASE STUDY

IOWA

WILDLIFE & HABITAT CONSERVATION LAW (HELI / UI WILD)

COURSE INFORMATION

- Fall intersession course at Macbride Nature Recreation Area (MNRA)
- Led by Hubbell Environmental Law Initiative faculty, staff, and UI WILD practitioners (LAW:8434)
- Interdisciplinary, field-based instruction in law and conservation

PEDAGOGICAL GOALS

- Apply species and habitat protection laws to real-world scenarios
- Understand how environmental laws support biodiversity conservation
- Analyze how agencies and practitioners implement legal frameworks

LIVING LAB USAGE & INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH



Students use MNRA as a living lab to study wildlife and habitat conservation law in practice.

During field instruction, students:

- Examine how the Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and Clean Water Act operate on the ground
- Observe field methods such as bird banding, species surveys, and habitat assessment
- Learn how state and federal agencies coordinate in implementing conservation laws
- Engage in class discussions and daily reflections connecting field experiences to legal doctrine and policy.



FREQUENCY OF OUTDOOR LESSONS

Each day Monday-Friday for the intersession week

STUDENTS ENROLLED IN COURSE

15

LIVING LAB(S) VISITED

Macbride Nature and Recreation Area



STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND OUTCOMES

- Fieldwork makes biodiversity law concrete and place-based
- Students observe how legal frameworks guide real-time conservation decisions
- Engagement with experts highlights regulatory challenges and tradeoffs
- Students gain understanding of species protection, habitat management, and biodiversity
- Hands-on experiences build skills in observation, analysis, and professional communication
- The course strengthens connections between legal doctrine, science, and environmental practice

INSTRUCTOR ADVICE FOR IMPLEMENTING OUTDOOR LEARNING

- Partner with agency staff and field experts to demonstrate law in practice
- Use a consistent site to support immersive, place-based learning
- Integrate field methods (e.g., banding, surveys) to connect law and science
- Structure the course to balance fieldwork, legal analysis, and reflection
- Incorporate diverse topics (species, wetlands, biodiversity) to show legal breadth
- Provide clear logistics, expectations, and preparation guidance for field conditions

