

# Birds as cultural symbols case study sample

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## Introduction

Since ancient time, forests, grasslands, water bodies, hay fields, and other forms of vegetation covers have remained preferable habitats for millions of birds' species. Based on their biological, eating, and breeding habits, different birds' species occupy designated ecological zones, which are found in various parts of the world. Some bird species prefer habitats that are near water bodies, forests, and grasslands while others prefer living near residential places, in plains and mountainous regions, and in cold and hot conditions. In the same breath, some of the birds' species play an integral role in human life, and in maintaining a balance in the ecosystem. Different communities in the world use birds for many purposes namely; as a source of food, as pets with sentimental value, and used birds in religious rituals and other societal celebrations. However, not all birds' species play a crucial role in man's life because some of the birds are associated with bad omen. An excellent example is the owl that is associated with the death omen among the African communities.

Like other animals species, certain birds' species have gained a national, regional, and international recognition, and they have been named as state birds. The American Goldfinch bird commonly as Eastern Goldfinch is an example of the many birds, which have gained this recognition in various states. Currently, the Eastern Goldfinch is regarded as the official Iowa State bird. On 21 May 1933, the House of Representative and the Senate in Iowa State unitarily approved and declared Eastern Goldfinch(*Carduelis tristis*) bird as the official Iowa State bird; an idea that exists until today (Shearer 1). Eastern Goldfinch bird is also adapted, and named as a state bird of

Washington, and New Jersey States.

Eastern Goldfinch remains one of the small Northern American birds, which belongs in the finch family. It is regarded as a social bird because it migrates in flocks during the breeding seasons. Eastern Goldfinch bird prefers living near residential areas, near roadsides, in deforested regions, and in areas covered with short vegetation covers. The bird has sharp and agile feet, coupled with a short and conical beak that enables it to break seed heads, and hold itself on a plant when feeding. It is regarded as the only bird species in the finch family that undergoes complete molt cycle and predisposes sexual dimorphism during the breeding period. Females and males have the responsibility of taking care of the young ones. During the breeding seasons, the male provides security to the female and guards the territory from external threats.

Statistics affirm that the population of Eastern Goldfinch bird has increased steadily over the last few years, despite the world facing challenges associated with climate change and global warming (Peter 104). In other words, human activities such as deforestations, encroachment of water catchment areas, urbanizations, and industrialization, do not impose any threat to the bird, but instead, favor its survival and existences.

Climate change and global warming is a major challenge facing many countries in the world, and Iowa state is no exemption. The Iowa government has the responsibility of conserving its environment, and maintaining a balance in the ecosystem. The government has formulated policies and legislations, which aim at conserving the environment, but declaration of Eastern Goldfinch as the Iowa State bird, seems to jeopardize the intervention process. Based on this fact, the government should replace <https://assignbuster.com/birds-as-cultural-symbols-case-study-sample/>

Eastern Goldfinch bird, and declare bobolink bird as the Iowa State bird. Bobolink is a small and black world bird that prefers living in hay fields, and prairie grasslands. Scientists have established bobolink as the only remaining bird species that belongs in the genus *Dolichonyx*. Like Eastern Goldfinch bird, bobolinks are considered social birds because they migrate in flocks commonly known as chain. However, farmers consider them as pests and parasites because they feed on cultivated grains such as wheat, rice, and barley. They not only feed on cultivated grains, but also on seeds, and small insects. Unlike Eastern Goldfinch bird, bobolinks are considered Neotropical migrant birds because they can cover more than 1, 800 kilometers a day. Scientists have established that bobolink's birds prefer breeding on open grasslands, tall prairie vegetation cover, and in hay fields found on North America because these grasslands field provide favorable conditions, and adequate food for the bird. Like other bird species, bobolink's birds are facing serious threats that are caused by human activities. Studies illustrates that the number of bobolink birds has reduced by 78% in the last few decades thus leading to extinction (John, 104).

However, declaring bobolink as the Iowa State bird will play a crucial role in conserving the environment, maintaining balance in the ecological system, increase vegetation cover, and resolve wildlife-human conflicts in the region. Firstly, declaring bobolink bird as the Iowa State bird will ensure that the government formulates policies and legislations, which aim at resolving human-wildlife conflicts thus conserving the environment. This fact is based on the idea that many people especially farmers in Iowa State kill bobolinks birds because the bird feeds on cultivated grains. This move has influenced extinction of bobolinks' birds in other parts of the country. However,

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declaring it as a state bird would mean that the Iowa government would educate farmers on how they can use other effective methods in protecting their crops without killing the birds.

Secondly, Eastern Goldfinch bird and bobolink bird live in two different habitats. Eastern Goldfinch prefers residential and deforested areas because they provide good breeding habitats. Consequently, bobolink birds prefer prairie grasslands, open fields, and hay field as their habitats and breeding zones. The fact that Eastern Goldfinch is a state bird means that the Iowa government would not prevent deforestations, clearing of forests and vegetation cover for human settlements, and urbanization because it provides favorable habitats for the bird thus worsening and escalating environmental degradation. However, declaring bobolink bird as a Iowa state bird would encourage reforestations, conservation of water catchment zones, and use of environmental friendly energies thus conserving the environment.

Thirdly, declaring bobolink bird as a Iowa State bird would act as an eye-opener to the government in matters of conserving extinct birds' and animal species. There are many birds' species that are in the process of becoming extinct because of human encroachment and climate change. However, the Iowa government has not addressed this issue exhaustively because it believes that other birds' species are increasing in population; like in the case of Eastern Goldfinch bird. Based on this fact, the government would establish bodies, which would be mandated with the obligation of identifying and conserving birds' and animal species that are about to become extinct. Based on these assertions, it is clear that declaring bobolink as a Iowa state bird would help to resolve human-wildlife conflicts, encourage environment

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conservation programs, and prevent extinction of certain birds' and animals species. Therefore, the Iowa government should reconsider this issue and declare bobolink bird as Iowa State bird.

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