



Eastern Iowa Birdwatch

The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 21 Number 1

April 2001

Calendar

Field trips, unless otherwise noted, leave from the **Dodge Street Hy-Vee**; meet in the southeast corner of the parking lot near the recycling bins. Destinations may be changed at the discretion of the leader; please contact the leader in advance if you plan to meet the group at the trip destination.

Meetings are generally held at 7:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month at Lucas Elementary School, 830 Southlawn Drive, near Towncrest in eastern Iowa City.

April 19, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Meeting. Jim Scheib will speak on Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge, Colorado.

April 20, Friday, 6:30 p.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Area and Williams Prairie. Bring your flashlight and join us for an evening foray to listen to night sounds of amphibians, marsh birds and owls. Meet at Upper City Park. Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

April 28, Saturday, 5:00 a.m. Otter Creek Marsh for possible rails, bitterns, and Sandhill Cranes. On the return trip we will stop at the Amanas for breakfast. Jim Scheib, 337-5206.

May 4 – 6, Friday – Sunday. Iowa Ornithologists' Union Spring Meeting at Keosauqua. For more information call Karen Disbrow at 339-1017 or Rick Hollis at 665-3141.

May 5, Saturday, 1–4 p.m. Grand Reopening of Bird Hall, Museum of Natural History.

May 12, Saturday. Spring Migration Count. Contact Chris Caster at 339-8343 to participate. See page two for more details.

May 17, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Meeting. Harlo Hadow from Coe College will talk about the Blue-spotted Salamander.

May 20, Sunday, 6:30 a.m. Local areas for warblers and other migrants. Chris Edwards, 626-6362.

June 2, Saturday. Mississippi River boating trip near McGregor with Jon Stravers. Participants will view heron rookeries and Bald Eagle nests. A fee will be required. To register, call Karen Disbrow at 339-1017 by May 29.

June 23, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Sockum Ridge Park in Washington County. Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot near the corner of Riverside Dr. and Highway 1. Chris Caster, 339-8343.

Continued on next page

Calendar (cont.)

July 8, Sunday, 6:30 a.m. Solon-Lake Macbride birding & biking trip. Meet at the Dodge St. Hy-Vee at 6:30 for the ride to Solon (12 miles, some gravel) or at the trailhead at the southwest edge of Solon at 8:00. The trail is 10 miles; wide tires are recommended. Bring water and a lunch or snacks. James Huntington, 338-1837.

July 21, Saturday. Butterfly Count sponsored by the North American Butterfly Association. Contact Chris Edwards at 626-6362 to participate. See page two for more details.

August 16, Thursday, 6:00 p.m. Picnic in Lower City Park, Pavilion 5, across the road from the large parking lot. Bring something to grill, a dish to share, table service, and a drink. Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

August 19, Sunday, 7:00 a.m. Local areas for shorebirds. James Huntington, 338-1837.

September 7-9, Friday – Sunday, IOU Fall Meeting.

September 15, Saturday, Annual Hawkwatch at Stainbrook Preserve.

Spring Migration Count

The Johnson County Spring Migration Count will be held on Saturday, May 12. Like the Christmas Bird Count, the purpose of this count is to find as many species of birds as possible and record their numbers. This count is conducted nationwide on the same day so that the information gathered may be used to study national migration patterns. Participants may spend as many hours as they wish birding during the day on Saturday. Some like to get out

there before sunup and bird until after sundown, but if you only have a few hours that would be equally appreciated. Feeder watchers and backyard birders can also help. We will meet at noon for lunch at the Hy-Vee Deli in Coralville. Anyone interested in participating should call Chris Caster at 339-8343 for more information.

membership dues for 2001, please do so now to remain on our mailing list. If "00" is printed next to your name on your mailing label, you need to renew. Please make your check payable to "Eastern Iowa Birdwatch" and send it to Bernie Knight, 425 Lee Street, Iowa City, IA, 52246. Thank you!

International Migratory Bird Day

May 12 is also International Migratory Bird Day. The Macbride Raptor Center has scheduled several activities to celebrate the event. At 8:30 a.m. there will be a presentation on bird conservation, followed by a bird hike at 9:30. Raptor presentations will be held hourly from 11:00 to 1:00. For more information, contact Gail Dawson at (319) 398-5495.

Butterfly Count

Our third annual Iowa City Fourth of July Butterfly County will be held Saturday, July 21. (In case of rain it will be held July 22.) Last year while visiting Kent Park, Hawkeye Wildlife Area and Lake Macbride, we saw 37 species and 510 butterflies. Ours is one of almost 400 counts sponsored by the North American Butterfly Association (NABA). Rules are similar to Christmas Bird Counts: counters record all butterflies observed within a 15-mile diameter circle, on a single day during a period from several weeks before to several weeks after July 4th. Our count is held in the same count circle used for the Christmas Bird Count. If you would like to participate, please contact Chris Edwards at 626-6362 or credwards@aol.com.

RENEWAL REMINDER

If you haven't paid your annual \$5.00

Field Trip and Meeting Reports

January 21, Johnson County Areas. This trip began with an auto procession down Johnson county roads in the hopes of spotting the flock of Gray Partridges seen during the CBC. But everyone knows about those best-laid plans and we felt fortunate to find a tree full of Robins after driving for over 45 minutes. The day was like that.

Our first get-out-of-the-car-and-walk stop was at the Greencastle Rd. pull-off just south of the Swan Lake Rd. intersection. It was pretty cold, but the winds were calm and we knew in just which tree to find the Long-eared Owl. It was very cooperative even if it was only viewable from one precise vantage point. Everyone got a decent look and for many it was a life-bird. When our toes were finally frozen solid we headed back to the cars and resumed our drive. We headed west to look for a Northern Goshawk reported weeks earlier. No luck again. But we did find a Northern Harrier and a Bald Eagle. We next got out to walk along the road W-38 at the top of the hill. A Harris's Sparrow and a Northern Mockingbird were spotted but both flew off before all could get a look.

Next we headed for what might be the largest feeder operation in the county. This house is located on Echo Ave, a quarter-mile south of Highway 6, near Kent Park. We had high hopes, but did I mention it was a slow day? Our best bird was a Rough-legged Hawk seen on the way. Last stop was at the youth camp parking lot in Kent Park. Purple Finches had been seen the day before, but not today. We walked around for about ten minutes and decided to pack it in. That evening Bob Stearns called to report a Barred Owl seen by he and Joan as they were leaving Kent Park. We'll count it. Did I

mention it was a slow day?

Participants: Chris Caster (leader), Bob Dick, Dara Dick, Karen Disbrow, Therese Guedon, James Huntington, Mary Noble, Bob Stearns, Joan Stearns.

Birds (28 species): Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Bald Eagle, American Kestrel, Northern Harrier, Mourning Dove, Barred Owl, Long-eared Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Horned Lark, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, Cedar Waxwing, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, American Tree Sparrow, Harris's Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– *Chris Caster*

February 3, Annual Amana Turkey Trot.

The big news from this annual event was that for the first time in many years, Wild Turkeys were actually seen. The frosty morning began for the eleven participants with an invigorating hike and successful search for a Saw-whet Owl at the old ice pond area west of Homestead, where a number of other woodland birds were spotted. But the half dozen turkeys emerging in flight from their roost tree answered the outing's purpose. Good looks at Horned Larks were obtained along the road to the Visitors Center.

Following a large caloric intake at the Colony Inn, the group road-tripped to Barbara Boyle's bird feeding paradise south of Williams Prairie, encountering another nice flock of twelve turkeys along the way. Sparrows were the highlight there, with Fox, Harris's, White-crowned, White-throated, and Eurasian Tree Sparrows in evidence. A final stop by a portion of the group at the Iowa River Power Company

yielded an untagged Trumpeter Swan below the dam, as well as a kingfisher. Eleven participants sighted 36 total species of birds.

Participants: Bob Dick, Dara Dick, Jonni Ellsworth, Jim Fuller (leader), Karole Fuller, Mark Jesse, Laura Jesse, Rosemarie Petzold, Bob Stearns, Joan Stearns, Amy Stockman.

Birds (36 species): Trumpeter Swan, Canada Goose, Mallard, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, American Kestrel, Wild Turkey, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Downy Woodpecker, Horned Lark, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Northern Cardinal, American Tree Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Harris's Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– *Jim Fuller*

February 15, Meeting. Bob Black came down the road from Cornell College, visited with us and gave a very informative talk. He shared the results of the Macbride Hawk Migration Center studies, putting them into a historical and ornithological context. Since started by Bob and Dave Conrads in 1992, 17,000 raptors have been counted. Raptors are counted only during the fall. Broad-winged Hawks were the most numerous raptor counted (38%), followed by Red-tailed Hawks (22%), then Sharp-shinned Hawks, Turkey Vultures, and unidentified raptors (10% each). This number seems small when compared to Hawk Mountain, but Macbride is not along a major lead line.

Dues, CARA and other issues were also

discussed. (See page 8 for a discussion of our finances.)

Attendees: Ed Allgood, Jean Allgood, Cynthia Broderick, Paul Broderick, Ray Davenport, Bob Dick, Rick Hollis, Dave Kyllingstad, Nancy Lynch, Richard Lynch, James Miller, Donna Stonecipher.

– *Rick Hollis*

February 17, Burlington. It was a seasonal winter day in Iowa – clear, cold (16 degrees) – as the three of us braved the elements and the early starting time (6:30 a.m.) for the annual trip to Burlington with Chuck Fuller as our local guide. We didn't see any travel birds (too early and dark for them) as we made our way south to meet Chuck in the parking lot of the Port of Burlington at 8:00. Chuck had already checked to see that the Saw-whet Owl was at home in a cedar tree of the Aspen Grove Cemetery so he took us right to it. (Now, that's the way to find owls!) Then, we made a short stop at Lock and Dam 18 where we found only some eagles and a couple of gulls (the usual suspects – Ring-billed and Herring).

Once again, we went up and down the concrete sewer walkway for the Carolina Wren, the Winter Wren, and the Brown Creeper. Along the Mississippi, we traveled to the Calusa elevator near Wever; however, where we had seen eleven species of ducks last year, we saw only six species this year. (It was too cold for them to be out.) Although we tried to get a closer look at Lapland Longspurs than we did last year, we weren't able to scare any up, but we were able to get several very good looks at Rough-legged Hawks. In addition to birds, we did manage to see a menagerie of other wildlife: a muskrat beside the Northern Pintail ducks, deer, gray squirrel, fox squirrel, dogs, cats, elk, and llamas.

Participants: Bob Dick, Bob Stearns (leader), Joan Stearns.

Birds (50 species): Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, American Kestrel, Wild Turkey, Common Snipe, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Purple Finch, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– *Joan Stearns, with the support of Bob Stearns*

March 11, Cone Marsh. On our trip to Cone Marsh, south of Lone Tree, two facts were quickly established: first, even though the cold north wind and the mostly-frozen marsh attested to the fact that it was still winter, the ducks and geese were back in large numbers; and second, they were clearly better adapted to handle the cold conditions than we were!

At our first stop, at the northeast corner of the marsh, a barren vista of frozen marshland stretched out before us. Chilly and discouraged, we moved on but soon discovered a large patch of open water at the south end of the marsh. We saw a nice variety of birds there including Hooded Merganser, Redhead, Canvasback, American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler and Common Goldeneye. We also enjoyed nice

views of Greater White-fronted Geese sitting on the ice.

Farther along, a short walk at the west end of the dike provided a male Northern Harrier and several Buffleheads. There were not many birds on the marsh here, but flocks were constantly passing overhead. Among the constant din of hundreds of Canada Geese and ducks, we were able to pick out the occasional flock of Greater White-fronted Geese by their higher-pitched calls.

A few other early migrants were seen or heard on the loop around the marsh, and provided a welcome glimpse of spring: American Coot, Killdeer, Eastern Bluebird, Red-winged Blackbird, and Western Meadowlark. On our way back to Iowa City, we discovered a large flock of Eurasian Tree Sparrows at a farmstead southwest of Lone Tree, near the Iowa River. It seems this species is becoming well-established in our area.

Participants: Bob Dick, Dara Dick, Karen Disbrow, Mike Dooley, Chris Edwards (leader), Julie Englander, James Huntington, Bob Stearns, Joan Stearns.

Species (47): Greater White-fronted Goose, Canada Goose, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Crow, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow,

White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Western Meadowlark, Common Grackle, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– *Chris Edwards*

March 22, Meeting. Neil Bernstein visited us again, and as always gave a talk that was interesting, informative and thought-provoking. He described his studies, along with various students and last month's speaker, Bob Black, on an Ornate Box Turtle population, found at a place most of us had visited. Among the many things we learned were that the turtles tend to vary their habitat choice with the seasons, can move significant distances in a day (a quarter-mile, which is a significant distance if you are crawling on your belly through dense habitat), and that these habits vary widely among individuals.

Attendees: Ed Allgood, Jean Allgood, Margrieta Delle, Bob Dick, Dara Dick, Rick Hollis, Ramona McGurk, Dave Kyllingstad, Mary Noble, Rosemarie Petzold, Jim Scheib, Richard Tetrault.

– *Rick Hollis*

March 24, Coralville Reservoir. Our itinerary for this tour of the Coralville Reservoir area unfortunately assumed weather conditions resembling something recognizable as spring. Instead we were pummeled by 15-30 mile-per-hour winds in temperatures struggling to break the freezing mark. I personally thought I would need reconstructive surgery on my face after staring into this arctic wind on the Mehaffey Bridge.

We began by discovering that Macbride Nature Recreation Area does not open until 9:00 a.m. through the end of March. Wanting to do some morning scouting for possible early passerines,

we moved over for a walk near the boat storage area on Cottage Reserve Road. We gave up on this before half an hour was up, having had no luck but to hear a junco and a goldfinch. We unfortunately missed out on actual looks at these rarities.

The low water around the causeway was a little more fruitful, producing good looks at Bufflehead and Hooded Merganser. The Mehaffey Bridge challenge, surely the next venue for CBS's *Survivor* series, followed. Thanks mainly to Chris Edwards's stalwart tripod we did get a number of good divers here, along with American Wigeon and including Common and Red-breasted Mergansers. Meanwhile seventh-century monks on the rocky Irish coast experienced gentle spring zephyrs compared to our little party there on Mehaffey.

From here we headed straight for Greencastle Avenue, first stopping at the official refreshment center of Johnson County birding, the Amoco station on F-28. On our way up Greencastle a bright spot came when we flushed a Great Blue Heron out of the Gun Club ponds. The reservoir itself was well-stocked on either side of the road and we stuck it out to give everything a good look before the cold and wind finally did us in for the day. On Greencastle we added Ruddy Duck to our meager list.

After the official break-up of the group, I continued this less-than-stellar adventure with a solo mission to the S & G Materials sandpit just south of Iowa City. There, in the final irony of the day, I saw every one of our diver species plus Common Goldeneye (and cleaner looks at Red-Breasted Merganser) within fifteen relatively comfortable minutes; this while the pit was only about one-third open. We have got to find a rich dowager to buy this amazingly healthy, productive, convenient, compact, but unfortunately private body of water for us and

turn it into a preserve. And no dogs allowed!

Participants: Bob Dick, Dara Dick, Mike Dooley (leader), Chris Edwards, Ramona McGurk, Connie Mutel.

Birds (33 species): Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, American Coot, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, American Crow, American Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, meadowlark species, House Sparrow.

– *Mike Dooley*

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2000 Iowa City Christmas Bird Count

Chris Edwards

The 50th annual Iowa City Christmas Bird Count, originally scheduled for December 17, was postponed until Saturday, December 30 due to poor weather conditions. Fifty-nine species were recorded, well below the ten-year average of 65 species. The cold temperatures and high snowfall throughout the month of December contributed to the low species total, as there were very few water birds present this year. On count day temperatures were in the teens with a steady northwesterly wind. Skies were overcast and by mid-afternoon snow began to fall. An average snow cover of 14 inches made walking difficult, and most groups spent more time than usual birding from the car.

Despite the weather conditions there were several outstanding sightings this year. A flock of five Gray Partridges seen west of North Liberty was only the second sighting of this species in count history, and the first since 1977. A single Loggerhead Shrike at Hawkeye Wildlife Area and a dozen Harris's Sparrows seen at four different locations were the first sightings of those species in more than ten years. Other unusual species (seen in less than half of the last ten years, with the number of years in parenthesis) were Northern Pintail (4), Long-eared Owl (2), Common Snipe (2), Pileated Woodpecker (2), Brown Thrasher (3), Fox Sparrow (2), Lapland Longspur (4), and Snow Bunting (2).

All-time high counts were recorded for several species: Rock Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Horned Lark, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Cardinal, and Harris's Sparrow. Other species seen in larger than normal numbers (well above the ten-year average) were Rough-legged Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Blue Jay, White-breasted Nuthatch, Cedar Waxwing, Dark-eyed Junco, Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting, and House Finch. Several of these high counts may be due to additional feeder observation this year.

Prominent misses (birds seen in more than half of the last ten years, with the number of years in parenthesis) were Great Blue Heron (6), Gadwall (7), Lesser Scaup (6), Common Merganser (6), Northern Harrier (7), Ring-billed Gull (9), Herring Gull (9), Great Horned Owl (9), Swamp Sparrow (8), and Pine Siskin (8). Species found in lower than normal numbers (well below the ten-year average) were Common Goldeneye, Barred Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, American Robin, American Tree Sparrow, and Purple Finch.

There were 24 field observers in 10 parties, slightly below average for recent years. Field observers were Ed Allgood, Carl Bendorf, Chris Caster, Bob Dick, Karen Disbrow, Mike Dooley, Chris Edwards, Mary Edwards, Jonni Ellsworth, Julie Englander, Mike Feiss, Randy Graesser, Lanny Halby, Bill Kent, Tom Kent, Nancy Lynch, Richard Lynch, Ramona McGurk, Gail McLure, John McLure, Mary Noble, Jim Scheib, Doug Wallace, and David Weiss. James Huntington spent the day working, but still managed to find our only Brown Thrasher.

There were 20 feeder watchers at 17 locations this year, slightly more than usual: Jean Allgood, Susan Beekmann, Jinx Davison, Dara Dick, Bob and Jean Dunn, Ann Feddersen, Patricia Gause, Marilou Gay, Melanie Hauptert, Gloria Henry, Margaret Alton Herr, Sherle Kasik, Cal and Bernie Knight, Ken and

Sherri Pilarczyk, Jan Segreti, A. K. Traw, and Ronnye Wieland.

At our noon tally at the Coralville Recreation Center we had 51 species. At the end of the day many participants gathered at The Mill Restaurant in Iowa City for a well-deserved meal and compilation. Special thanks are due to Bernie Knight for coordinating the feeder watchers and to Jim Fuller for hosting the planning meeting.

Nationally, this year marked the 101th consecutive Christmas Bird Count. In 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman and many other conservationists were disturbed at the slaughter of birds at an annual holiday event called a "side hunt," in which the winner was the team that shot the most birds. As a protest, on Christmas Day of that year, Chapman organized 27 friends in 25 locations. Instead of shooting birds, they counted them. That simple protest turned into the National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count. Today, more than 45,000 people from all 50 states, every Canadian province, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and many Pacific Islands participate in this annual bird census.

Christmas Bird Count results are published annually in a special issue of *American Birds*. The results of all counts from 1900 to the present are also available on the Internet at <www.birdsource.org>, a cooperative project of the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

SPECIES LIST					
Canada Goose	569	Belted Kingfisher	1	American Tree Sparrow	263
American Black Duck	2	Red-headed Woodpecker	19	Fox Sparrow	2
Mallard	1,052	Red-bellied Woodpecker	81	Song Sparrow	34
Northern Pintail	1	Downy Woodpecker	127	White-throated Sparrow	25
Common Goldeneye	2	Hairy Woodpecker	25	Harris's Sparrow	12
Bald Eagle	34	Northern Flicker	31	White-crowned Sparrow	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Pileated Woodpecker	1	Dark-eyed Junco	848
Red-tailed Hawk	70	Loggerhead Shrike	1	Lapland Longspur	12
Rough-legged Hawk	13	Shrike sp.	1	Snow Bunting	26
<i>Buteo</i> sp.	2	Blue Jay	223	Northern Cardinal	460
American Kestrel	11	American Crow	875	Red-winged Blackbird	2
Gray Partridge	5	Horned Lark	470	Meadowlark sp.	6
Ring-necked Pheasant	113	Black-capped Chickadee	310	Common Grackle	1
Wild Turkey	101	Tufted Titmouse	102	Brown-headed Cowbird	2
Common Snipe	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	Purple Finch	5
Rock Dove	353	White-breasted Nuthatch	126	House Finch	160
Mourning Dove	166	Brown Creeper	2	American Goldfinch	254
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	Carolina Wren	6	House Sparrow	886
Barred Owl	3	American Robin	13		
Long-eared Owl	1	Brown Thrasher	1		
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1	European Starling	683		
		Cedar Waxwing	258		

Dues Discussion

At our last meeting, we discussed a number of financial issues. At the present time our

finances are tight. We have around 65 dues-paying members, and mail an additional 30 complimentary copies, mostly to libraries. With annual dues of \$5.00 and three issues of *Eastern Iowa Birdwatch* per year, we meet our costs thanks to frugal management by Chris. Bernie

and Cal have been able to get an essentially free banking account for us at Hills Bank, so that we do not get charged per transaction. As we do

not want to take advantage of them, checks are not deposited until several are accumulated. This means that checks sent to Bernie could be held for a month (or even two) before deposit. This does not mean that we are unaware of the check – your membership will show this credit. **We will discuss raising our annual dues at our next meeting.** We do not wish to run in the red, postal costs seem to rise every year, and we would like to produce new Iowa City Bird Club brochures to place in libraries and appropriate stores. A cost-saving measure discussed was possibly sending our newsletters electronically.

– *Rick Hollis*

Rick's Ramblings

Rick Hollis

CARA (Conservation and Reinvestment Act), after failing in the Senate last year, is being tried again. CARA provides funding that would allow a preventative approach to fish and wildlife conservation, before species become threatened or endangered. It will be based on state-level decision-making, not top-down (Washington) decision-making. You may remember a few years ago this proposal was entitled Teaming With Wildlife, and would have been funded by a user tax on all citizens who enjoy fish and wildlife (not just hunters and anglers), similar to the Pittman-Robertson and Wallop-Breaux programs. This idea failed and CARA came out of TWW's ashes. This new version of CARA has been modified to meet some of the specific objections from the Senate to last year's proposal. This year's House version is HR 701. Call or write your representatives and ask that they co-sponsor and support this legislation. When it makes it to the floors of the House and Senate, call or write and voice your support at that time.

I am considering stepping down as president. Throughout the next school year, we can talk about this as a group and see if we can find someone to continue on.

Various Recent Thumbs Up & Down

Down: It would appear that Iowa City will go ahead with paving a path system through Hickory Hill Park. While I support increasing access to the park for disabled persons, I fear that this path system will increase the damage done to the park by bikes. Further, use of these paths by bikes will inhibit disabled people from using the park. The paths are to be constructed with minimal impact and footprint. We will see if this occurs.

Unknown Direction: Jim Fuller is stepping aside as the Voice of the Iowa Birdline. Under Jim, the Iowa Birdline has become one of the premier rare bird alerts in the country. We will miss Jim's dedication and smooth voice, but we congratulate Jim and wish him well for enjoying his retirement.

Down: Perhaps it was the weather or whatever, but many people missed a fine presentation by Bob Black at our first meeting of the new millennium.

Up: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in partnership with a variety of state wildlife agencies, conservation groups and other private organizations, is working on yet another plan to protect Whooping Cranes from catastrophic events (such as a hurricane) on their breeding grounds. This plan would attempt to establish a population that would migrate between Wisconsin and Florida. As you know there are about 200 birds in the only remaining natural wild flock, which breeds in Canada and winters on the Texas gulf coast. A second non-migratory flock of about fifty cranes lives year-round in central Florida. One attempt to cross-foster Whoopers and Sandhills ended in failure, as the Whoopers thought they were Sandhills and wanted to mate with Sandhills. This proposed reintroduction would provide Whoopers with a population that is geographically distinct and migratory in a part of its historic range. The reintroduced Whooping Cranes may therefore be trained to follow ultralight aircraft as their surrogate parents. More information is available at:

<http://midwest.fws.gov/whoopingcrane>

Down: The Bush Administration is starting to show its true colors: the Roadless Area Conservation Rule will not be implemented as planned. This rule protects our last 58 million acres of America's national forests from road building, most forms of logging and any new mining and drilling. In arriving at this rule, the U.S. Forest Service held more than 600 hearings

nationwide and received more than 1.6 million public comments.

Down: The Bush Administration's True Colors, Part II: in an abrupt about-face, and reversing a previous pledge to legislate limits on carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from U.S. power plants, Bush said such a rule would prove too costly. Bush said any plan proposed by his administration to regulate power plant emissions would not include CO₂. The President said this as the head of the EPA, Christine Todd Whitman, was telling foreign leaders that the U.S. would cut CO₂ emissions, and Rep. Boehlert (R-NY) and Sen. Jeffords (R-VT) were drafting CO₂ legislation.

Unknown Direction: After reading *Restoring North American Birds*, I am more aware than ever that fire is an important tool with which to manage our natural areas. Still, cutting funds aimed at preventing fires seems foolish. The Bush administration has proposed cutting funds for proactive fire management, e.g. preventing fires from becoming as devastating as the Yellowstone fires of 1989 by getting rid of some of the brush that has accumulated in a century of fire prevention.

Down: The acting administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration (a federal agency) will try to continue some salmon-protection measures, but it will be unable to do so if this year's unusually dry weather persists. It is clear that if we continue to allow the river to be viewed only for hydropower, there will eventually be no more salmon.

Down: Bush's Colors Part III: Our president said that more federal lands, even national monuments created to protect natural treasures, could be opened to oil and gas drilling without harming the environment. "There are parts of the monument lands where we can explore without affecting the overall monument."

Down: Bush's Colors Part IV: The

Environmental Protection Agency, responding to complaints from mining interests, on Tuesday suspended standards aimed at reducing the levels of cancer-causing arsenic in some 3,000 municipal water systems, primarily in the Rocky Mountains.

Unknown Direction: Federal and state authorities plan to begin trapping all remaining Red-cockaded Woodpeckers in Kentucky. The birds will be relocated to the Carolina Sandhills National Wildlife Refuge in South Carolina and the Ouachita National Forest in Arkansas. No remaining suitable habitat could be found for the species within Kentucky, where southern pine beetles have destroyed 85-90 percent of the habitat management area. The beetles' damage is aided by drought and above-average temperatures. The relocation areas already have good populations of Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, but this will increase the genetic make-up of those birds. It is hoped that one day the habitat can be reestablished in Kentucky, and someday the species can be restored. In every way I can think, this should be good, but it scares me, as the Condor program has yet to demonstrate long-term successful reintroduction and the Dusky Seaside Sparrow's capture was too late.

Book Reviews

Restoring North American Birds: Lessons from Landscape Ecology. Robert A. Askins. Illustrated by Julie Zickefoose. Yale University Press, 2000. 320 pages. Available at the Iowa City Public Library.

Nine of the ten chapters are aimed at specific biomes: grasslands of the East Coast, the Great Plains, eastern thickets, etc. The last chapter is a summary. Each chapter starts with an illustration by Julie Zickefoose. These lovely line drawings portraying a characteristic bird in

the chapter's biome give the reader a feel for the habitat.

This is an academic book and is not easy to read. Growing up in the East and receiving my ecological education based on Odum's 1959 *Fundamentals of Ecology*, I was aware that fire was important in maintaining prairies and some other biomes. I was unaware of the degree to which America, prior to European contact, was characterized by mosaics. *Restoring North American Birds* tells us that vegetational mosaics were important in many kinds of biomes. In fact, most pre-European vegetation in North America was characterized by a mosaic of vegetation of mixed ages. The mosaics were caused by fire, wind, beavers, and many other factors. This mosaic was probably very important in maintaining a region's characteristic birds. Askins goes on to discuss the difficulty of managing for mosaics in the face of habitats broken up by roads, farms, etc. and in the light of multiple land owners and modern day financial concerns.

It is too bad academicians have not come up with some way of distinguishing between the two very different kinds of footnotes. Some footnotes cite references, while others provide information supplemental to the text. In Chapter 4 there are seventy-eight footnotes. Seventy-six cite references, while only two are informational. This is not a specific criticism of this text, but many general readers would only want to read the footnotes with supplemental information and skip the referential citations.

Those readers who can handle the heavier sections will have the opportunity to learn much. Even those readers who choose to skip or skim parts will still learn something.

– Rick Hollis

Bird Notes

CITIZEN SCIENCE. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology offers a variety of Citizen Science research projects in which birdwatchers can participate. Current projects include Project Feeder Watch, House Finch Disease Survey, Classroom Feeder Watch, Project Pigeon Watch, The Birdhouse Network, Birds in Forested Landscapes, and the Golden-winged Warbler Atlas Project. Past projects have included Project Tanager and the Cerulean Warbler Atlas Project. There is a nominal charge for materials for some of these projects, but others are free. Participants receive the Lab's quarterly newsletter, *Birdscope*. It's a chance for birdwatchers to "make a difference" and contribute to these important projects. For more information, check out the Lab's web site at <<http://birds.cornell.edu>> or write to Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, NY 14850-1999.

KENT AND THE SAVAGES. Tom Kent recently had two nice articles published on the Savages: Iowa bird painter William Savage and his second cousin, pioneering ornithologist David Savage. "William Savage: Pioneer Bird Artist," appeared in the Summer 2000 issue of *Iowa Heritage Illustrated*, published by the State Historical Society of Iowa. The article includes several photographs, diary excerpts, and color reproductions of many of Savage's paintings. Single copies are still available for \$6 at the Society's office at 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, 52240. "David L. Savage and the Iowa Ornithological Association" was published in the Fall 2000 issue of *Iowa Bird Life*, the journal of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. The article chronicles Savage's early involvement in Iowa ornithology as the editor of the journal of the Iowa Ornithological Association, Iowa's first birding organization.



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Iowa City Bird Club

**85 Whitman Avenue
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Eastern Iowa Birdwatch is published three times per year (usually April, September, and December). Members are encouraged to send articles, reviews, notes, and comments to editor Chris Edwards, 85 Whitman Ave., North Liberty, IA 52317, or e-mail at credwards@aol.com.

Annual membership dues are \$5.00, payable by January 1st for the coming year to treasurer Bernie Knight, Eastern Iowa Birdwatch, 425 Lee St., Iowa City, IA 52246. Check your mailing label for the year you have paid through.

For general bird club information, contact Iowa City Bird Club president Rick Hollis at 665-3141.

To lead a field trip, contact field trip coordinator Karen Disbrow at 339-1017.

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