

# Eastern Iowa Birdwatch

The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 22 Number 1

April 2002

## Schedule

**Field trips**, unless otherwise noted, leave from the Dodge Street Hy-Vee; meet in the SW corner of the parking lot near the recycling bins. 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 Robert Lucas Elementary School, 830 Southlawn Drive, near Towncrest in eastern Iowa City.

**April 14, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area** and nearby areas in Linn County for migrating ducks, loons, grebes, and other water birds. Leader Chris Caster, 339-8343.

**April 18, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Meeting.** A birding tour of Southern California with Jim and Karole Fuller.

**April 19, Friday, 6:30 p.m. Night Sounds Foray** to Hawkeye Wildlife Area and Williams Prairie. Bring your flashlight on this evening trip to hear the sounds of amphibians, marsh birds and owls. Leader Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

**May 4, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Beam Woods** in Jones County for warblers and woodland wildflowers, with a stop at Muskrat Slough for marsh birds. Bring a sack lunch or snack. Leader Chris Edwards, 626-6362.

**May 6 – May 24, Weekdays and Saturdays, 6:00 a.m. – 7:30 a.m. Warbler Walks in Hickory Hill Park** with James Huntington, 338-1837. Meet at the north shelter near the parking lot at the Dodge St. entrance.

**May 11, Saturday. Johnson County Spring Migration Count.** Contact Chris Caster at 339-8343 to participate. See page 11 for more information.

**May 16, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Meeting.** Tim Thompson from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will discuss his work with Canada Geese.

**May 19, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Fullers' Woods** in Cedar County for warblers and other migrants. Leader Ed Allgood, 338-8090.

**June 1, Saturday, 7:00 a.m. Lake Macbride Birding and Boating Trip.** Canoes and other boats are available for rent, or bring your own. Meet at the Dodge St. Hy-Vee at 7:00 a.m. or at the beach parking lot at Lake Macbride State Park at 7:30 a.m. For more information call leader Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

**June 9, Sunday, 6:00 a.m. Indiangrass Hills** in Iowa County for Henslow's Sparrows and other grassland nesting species. Leader Mike Dooley, 363-3904.

**June 23, Sunday, 6:30 a.m. Sockum Ridge Park** in Washington County for woodland nesting birds. Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot on Hwy. 1 in Iowa City. Leaders Bob and Joan Stearns, 846-3286.

**July 14, Sunday, 6:30 a.m. Lake Macbride Birding and Biking Trip.** Meet at the Dodge St. Hy-Vee at 6:30 a.m. and ride to Solon (12 miles with some gravel) or meet at the trailhead at the SW edge of Solon at 8:15 a.m. for the 10-mile round trip trail ride. Leader James Huntington, 338-1837.

**July 20, Saturday, 8:30 a.m. Butterfly Count** sponsored by the North American Butterfly Association. Contact Chris Edwards at 626-6362 to participate. See page 12 for more information.

**August 4, Sunday, 7:00 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Area** for migrant shorebirds. Leader James Huntington, 338-1837.

**August 15, Thursday, 6:00 p.m. Picnic** in Lower City Park. Pavilion 5, across from the large parking lot. Bring something to grill, a dish to share, table service, and a drink. For more information call Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

**September 21, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Annual Hawk Watch** at Stainbrook Preserve.

## Other Dates of Note

**April 26–28, Friday–Sunday. Iowa Ornithologists' Union Spring Meeting** at Forest Lake Camp near Ottumwa. The weekend will feature morning field trips to various locations as well as Saturday afternoon and evening programs. For more information call Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

**May 4, Saturday, 9 – 11 a.m. Bird banding program** by Rod Stark at Johnson County Conservation Education Center, Kent Park. For more information call 645-2315.

**May 11, Saturday, 8:30 a.m. – Noon. International Migratory Bird Day Celebration** at Macbride Raptor Project Nature Center. See page 11 for more information.

**May 12, Sunday, 1 – 4 p.m. Bluebird Day** at Johnson County Conservation Education Center, Kent Park. For more information call 645-2315.

**September 14, Saturday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. NatureMapping Workshop** at Johnson County Conservation Education Center, Kent Park. See page 13 for more information.



## From Our President

Bird Club Friends,

I have enjoyed serving as president, for however long it has been. For personal reasons, I must resign at the end of our May meeting. Maybe I will even start showing up on a few more field trips.

For those of you who want to know what the president does, there are two main jobs – scheduling speakers and running the meetings. Also, if we are going to host another IOU meeting, the president has responsibilities to make sure that things are organized. (This does not necessarily mean do things. At the last IOU meeting we sponsored, I did precious little as we had a super committee that took charge. Mostly I tried to think of the things that needed to be done, found people to do them and deflected accolades from meeting attendants to the correct places.) Sometimes the president is called upon to help make decisions. Two years ago when we postponed the Christmas Count, due to weather, Chris and I talked several times. If anyone wants to talk about what the president does or does not do, give me a call 665-3141 or email me at <richard-hollis@uiowa.edu>.

The job is far easier than it could be, thanks to the hard work of so many other people, and I would be at fault if I did not recognize them: Bud Gode, Carol Thompson, and Ed Allgood for showing me how to be a president; Barb Beaumont and more recently Karen Disbrow for scheduling field trips; Bernie Knight for her work as our treasurer, an especially thankless job; Bernie and Margrieta Delle for their self-appointed job as Refreshment Committee; Chris Edwards for the wonderful job he has done on the newsletter; Chris Caster has been running our Spring Count for a number of years; and

lastly for Ed Allgood who has been our contact with Lucas School, making sure that we have the room when we need it, along with any special presentation equipment. The Christmas Bird Count leaders over the years have been super, recently Chris Edwards. I could not have done this without you guys.

I will continue to serve the club, by sending EIB material to Chris, continuing to bring in material of interest to meetings, and continuing to serve as a contact person on our pamphlets. I even have a number of speaker ideas in the bank for our next president. I will continue to come to meetings, although I may miss one now and again.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you, and good birding.

Rick Hollis

## Field Trip and Meeting Reports

**November 15, Meeting.** Andrew McCollum and senior Jason Kuehner, Cornell College, presented an interesting talk on salamanders, other herps and Trumpeter Swans.

Attendees: Margrieta Delle, Sarah George, Rick Hollis, James Huntington, Bernie Knight, Cal Knight, Dave Kyllingstad, Ramona McGurk, Gail McLure, John McLure, Mary Noble, Anne Perkins, Edward Perkins, Sue Sarlette.

– Rick Hollis

**November 18, Allamakee County.** Eleven eager birders enjoyed the beautiful Indian Summer weather that favored a trip to northeast Iowa. We were able to view (and hear) about 300 Tundra Swans on the Mississippi River along Red Oak Road north of Harper's Ferry,

and a smaller group along Heytman's Landing Road. The weather was undoubtedly responsible for the relatively small number of swans, as birds numbering in the thousands are often present at this time of year, but the bulk of the birds had not yet arrived from the north. After a lunch stop in Lansing we headed for the Upper Iowa River valley southeast of New Albin. There we had leisurely telescope looks at least three Golden Eagles, at times being harassed by crows, soaring over the bluffs. Pileated Woodpeckers put in an appearance at both locations. Tromping Yellow River State Forest in the sawmill and fire tower areas in search of Ruffed Grouse was appropriate for working off lunch calories, but fruitless as far as grouse were concerned.

Participants: Ed Allgood, Jean Allgood, Jim Fuller (leader), Therese Guedon, Alyssa Guedon, James Huntington, Bernie Knight, Cal Knight, Ramona McGurk, Bill Scheible, Bob Stearns.

Birds (45 species): Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Tundra Swan, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, American Black Duck, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Canvasback, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tufted Titmouse, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– *Jim Fuller*

**January 13, Feeder Watch Social.** Eighteen birders gathered at 10 Longview Knoll in River Heights for the first annual Feeder Watch Social. Chris Caster was the first to arrive and he set up watch at the window for early birds as Jim and Sharon Scheib greeted birders as they arrived. The very warm weather made pleasant driving but did not do much to drive birds to the feeders, but three deer showed up early. Fifteen species were seen and a Carolina Wren was heard. Though the birding was less than spectacular despite many feeders, suet, and heated water, the socializing was casual, comfortable, and warm. Thanks to Karen Disbrow for initiating this event and to the participants who helped out with the treats.

Participants: Chris Caster, Bob Dick, Dara Dick, Karen Disbrow, Julie Englander, Linda Fisher, Therese Guedon, James Huntington, Nancy Lynch, Richard Lynch, Ramona McGurk, Mary Noble, Jim and Sharon Scheib (hosts), Betty Priestersbach, Duane Priestersbach, Bob Stearns, Joan Stearns, Louise Wickham, Pete Wickham.

Birds (16 species): Bald Eagle, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, Dark-eyed Junco, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– *Jim Scheib*

**February 9, Amana Turkey Walk.** The threatened winter storm held off and we had not a drop of precipitation on this trip. The weather was almost optimal for mid-February with pleasant sunny temperatures in the thirties and almost no wind. After meeting at the Coralville Hy-Vee at 6:30 a.m. we drove up Highway 6 looking for Wild Turkeys along the way. The week before we had seen one on our way to

Amana to do the dry run for the trip. This time we were leaving a couple of hours earlier and did not see one. Helen Yoder's group met us at the Oxford intersection and the Stearns joined us at the Amana Woods parking lot.

As we slogged along the logging road toward the ice-pond area we saw many turkey tracks, both old and new, but no turkeys. A few white-tailed deer scattered in front of us from time to time. The Pileated Woodpecker seen the week before was not found, possibly due to the early hour but a tree with two holes suspected to be those of Pileated Woodpeckers was located. Almost all other expected common winter species were seen.

In lieu of Wild Turkeys, the Northern Saw-whet Owls near the ice pond became the target species. As we approached the ice pond area one was reported from a distance in a small cedar but apparently flushed along with a group of robins as the birders moved to observe it. Twenty birders spread out to search the cedar trees in the area for about a half hour with no luck. As we started back, I lagged behind to check the south side of the trees we passed one more time. Half way up in a cedar just west of the western road across the ice pond was a Saw-whet hugging the trunk. Everyone still in the area had good looks up close. Jennifer and Kris, who had moved on down the trail, went back with me after breakfast and photographed it. Five participants saw a Saw-whet Owl for the first time. In all we spent about two hours on the trail prior to breakfast at the Colony Inn.

Participants: Alyssa Cohen, Karen Disbrow, Jonni Ellsworth, Linda Fisher, Roger Fisher, Therese Guedon, Ed Heffron, Kris Lumb, Nancy Lynch, Richard Lynch, Ramona McGurk, John McLure, Louise Murry, Mary Noble, Jennifer Otis, Jim and Sharon Scheib (leaders), Bob Stearns, Joan Stearns, Helen

Yoder.

Birds (22 species): Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, House Finch, American Goldfinch.

– *Jim Scheib*

**February 21, Meeting.** Rick Trine of the Iowa DNR presented a fact-filled talk about the history and management of Otter Creek Marsh.

– *Rick Hollis*

**February 24, Cone Marsh.** Spurred on by the balmy, April-like temperatures and the 1:00 p.m. starting time, a large group of nineteen birdwatchers met at the Hy-Vee parking lot, ready to welcome spring and cast off their cabin fever. Our original plan for the day had been to walk conifer groves at Hawkeye Wildlife Area in search of wintering owls, but the early spring waterfowl migration and poor owl scouting report led to a change of plans, and we headed for Cone Marsh south of Lone Tree.

Our first stop was just south of Iowa City, where we scoped the waterfowl at the S & G Sandpits. Nine waterfowl species were present in small numbers, including Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, and Common Merganser.

Next our caravan headed for Cone Marsh, where we started our tour on the northwest side. From the boat ramp we were able to view Greater White-fronted Geese out amongst the cattails, and a small flock of Snow Geese called loudly as they flew overhead. Farther along, there were

no birds present along the dike, so we quickly moved on to the south side of the marsh, where a nice flock of ducks was present on the water north of the road. A strong, chilly wind kept many people in their cars, but we added American Wigeon, Gadwall, Pied-billed Grebe, Killdeer, and Red-winged Blackbird to our list. We saw a huge flock of Greater White-fronted Geese fly up and then settle back down in the marsh to the north.

Our next stop was near the caboose on the northeast side of the marsh. There were thousands of waterfowl visible, but we were looking almost directly into the sun which made viewing very difficult. By this time it was late afternoon, and most of our party decided to call it a day. A small number of us returned to the northwest corner of the marsh, where we parked along the road and watched and listened as dusk settled onto the marsh. The sunlight was perfect and we enjoyed excellent views of Greater White-fronted Geese, Northern Pintails, and Green-winged Teal among others. Mike Dooley spotted three Eurasian Tree Sparrows in a nearby tree which provided a nice capper for the day.

Interesting postscript: the best bird of the day was seen after the field trip, when Bob and Joan Stearns discovered an immature Snowy Owl at the North Liberty exit of Interstate 380 on their way home. On the following day the Patagonia Picnic Table Effect came into play, when Dale Fye, while searching for the owl, discovered a male Eurasian Wigeon at nearby Swan Lake. The wigeon stayed several days and was seen by birders from around the state.

Participants: Ed Allgood, Jean Allgood, Andra Dell, Bob Dick, Dara Dick, Karen Disbrow, Mike Dooley, Chris Edwards, Mary Edwards, Cal Knight, Bernie Knight, Dave Kyllingstad, Li-Hsien Lin, Mary Noble, Diana Pesek, Bill

Scheible, Bob Stearns, Joan Stearns, Richard Tetrault.

Birds (41 species): Pied-billed Grebe, Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Green-winged Teal, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Horned Lark, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow. – *Chris Edwards*

**March 14, Meeting.** Thomas Rosburg of Drake University showed his always-lovely nature photography and then stuck around to discuss technical issues. Anson Amberson discussed his plans for nature mapping a small area in central Johnson County.

Attendees: Ed Allgood, Jean Allgood, Anson Amberson, Bob Dick, Dara Dick, Karen Disbrow, Rick Hollis, Bernie Knight, Cal Knight, Nancy Lynch, Richard Lynch, Ramona McGurk, James Miller, Mary Noble, Sue Sarlette. – *Rick Hollis*

**March 16, Cone Marsh.** We began at the usual starting point on T Avenue, overlooking the marsh's east water. This part of the marsh is private property and the owner (presumably) was set up just below us with a blind and decoys to hunt Snow Geese. This pushed the waterfowl out into the farther reaches of the water, but numbers and variety of species were low anyway. We did see the tagged adult

Trumpeter Swans and a few juveniles as well, along with Greater White-Fronted and Snow Goose (both blue and white). After a shorter stay than usual we moved around to the south side of the marsh, to the viaduct on 220th Street. There we found mostly marsh ducks, again not in particularly high numbers. We picked up Blue-winged Teal on the south arm of this section. Present also was a small flock of American White Pelicans and a few Bald Eagles as well.

The next standard stop, a little further down 220th and which looks north the length of the marsh's south-central arm, produced a solid population of divers. Besides the usual bay ducks we saw Common and Hooded Mergansers along with a pair of Ruddy Ducks. I personally was particularly proud of identifying a heat-blurred apparition of a birder on the dike to our north as Jim Scheib, later confirmed in a face-to-face encounter once we arrived there ourselves. This incident proved the advantages to learning shape and general jizz for identifying far-off species. On our way around to the dike, which is off V Avenue on the west side of the marsh, we ran into Chuck Fuller, who told us he and his partner had spotted two Sandhill Cranes as flyovers. Later on the dike we thought we'd heard a Sandhill calling but couldn't be sure. The view to our north there revealed the usual bay ducks but we did add Bufflehead amidst this population.

We skipped the boat launch in the northwest corner of the marsh and set ourselves to finding Eurasian Tree Sparrows, which had been seen recently at a feeding station at a home along V Avenue there. We had little problem coming up with three of them in the nearby trees.

From Cone Marsh we went to the recently discovered eagle's nest just south of River Junction. We took a look at the nest but no one

was home while we were there.

Our final stop was the S&G Materials sandpit outside Iowa City. The sandpit had a hefty population of ducks but for some reason the atmospheric distortion was unusually strong, and viewing was mostly unsatisfying until we worked our way almost to the edge of the water near the "dune." Still, there was nothing especially eye-opening present, though we did pick up Common Goldeneye. Probably the most exciting event on this leg of the outing was when Gerald Pearson attached a filter to his scope which allowed us to see sunspots.

Participants: John Bollenbacher, Chris Caster, Bob Dick, Dara Dick, Mike Dooley (leader), Gerald Pearson, Sue Sarlette, Bob Stearns, Joan Stearns.

Birds (50 species): Pied-billed Grebe, American White Pelican, Trumpeter Swan (releases), Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Canada Goose, American Wigeon, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Horned Lark, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Crow, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– Mike Dooley



**March 30, Otter Creek Marsh** in Tama County. Those of us in the two cars that traveled together from Iowa City were treated to some fine on-the-road entertainment by the two birders with the walkie-talkies – this alone was worth getting up early for. Other entertainment was provided by the co-substitute leader in the first car, who sometimes did not know where he was going. Once, when leading people to the road along the western boundary of the park, a place he has always had trouble finding, he let the other co-substitute leader take the lead, only to have him drive past the road. (For the record, that is Q Ave.) Along the roads, we saw one of the most unusual buteos that I have ever seen: a lovely intermediate phase Red-tailed Hawk, along Highway 6 near the Amanas. This bird had a chestnut throat and upper chest, and below was dark brown. There were many American Kestrels. The Sandhill Cranes all told numbered 11, but few if any of us got great looks. We all heard them calling. Some of us heard American Tree Sparrows singing, something many of us do not hear very often. We also saw the first Garter Snake and heard the first calling Chorus Frogs of the year.

Participants: Ed Allgood, Jean Allgood, Chris Caster, Bob Dick (co-substitute leader), Dara Dick, Richard Hollis (co-substitute leader), Dianne Kaufman, Dave Kyllingstad, Jim Miller, Diana Pesek, Tom Sandersfeld, Luanne-Strother-Hazen, and briefly, Jim and Sharon Scheib.

**Continued on page 14.**

## **2001 Iowa City Christmas Bird Count**

### **Chris Edwards**

The 51st annual Iowa City Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, December 16. The total of 69 species was the fourth-highest total ever recorded and slightly above the ten-year average of 65 species. The above-average temperatures throughout November and December encouraged many birds to linger in the area later than normal. On count day temperatures were in the lower forties and there was very little wind. Skies were heavily overcast, and increasing light fog throughout the day caused poor visibility. There was no snow cover and all bodies of water were completely open.

The most outstanding sighting this year was a lingering Dunlin along the north shore of Lake Macbride. It was the first time this species had ever been recorded on a Christmas Bird Count in Iowa. Other unusual species (seen in less than half of the last ten years, with the number of years in parenthesis) were Green-winged Teal (2), American Wigeon (3), Canvasback (4), Hooded Merganser (3), American Coot (4), Killdeer (4), Common Snipe (3), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (4), Pileated Woodpecker (2), Brown Thrasher (4), Fox Sparrow (3), and Harris's Sparrow (2).

All-time high counts were recorded for several species: Northern Pintail, Gadwall, Ring-necked Duck, American Coot, Killdeer, Common Snipe, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Cedar Waxwing, and Northern Cardinal. Other species seen in larger than normal numbers (well above the ten-year average) were Mallard, Wild Turkey, Belted Kingfisher, and Eastern Bluebird.

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), Common Merganser (6), Sharp-shinned Hawk (8), Rough-legged Hawk (8), White-crowned Sparrow (9), meadowlark species (6), and Brown-headed Cowbird (6). Species found in lower than normal numbers (well below the ten-year average) were Red-tailed Hawk, Herring Gull, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Horned Lark, Carolina Wren, and Song Sparrow. American White Pelican, Bohemian Waxwing, and White-crowned Sparrow were seen during count week but not observed on count day.

There were 40 field observers in 10 parties, the highest turnout in the past decade. Field observers were Ed Allgood, Jean Allgood, Carl Bendorf, Chris Caster, Alyssa Cohen, John Cordell, Bob Dick, Dara Dick, Karen Disbrow, Mike Dooley, Christian Eberhardt, Chris Edwards, Mary Edwards, Jonni Ellsworth, Julie Englander, Mike Feiss, Jim Fuller, Karole Fuller, Randy Graesser, Lanny Haldy, Rick Hollis, James Huntington, Chris Kahle, Bill Kent, Tom Kent, Ken Lowder, Nancy Lynch, Richard Lynch, Ramona McGurk, Gail McLure, John McLure, Darlyne Neff, John Neff, Mary Noble, Jennifer Otis, Jim Scheib, Bill Scheible, Tom Shires, Dick Tetrault, and David Weiss.

There were 10 feeder watchers at 9 locations this year, about half our usual participation: Ann Feddersen, Carolyn Gardner, Anne and Chuck Hesse, Jan Hollis, Sherle Kesik, Bob Towner, Jim Walters, Ronnye Wieland, and Jo Wiley. Many feeder watchers commented on the lack of activity at their feeders on count day this year.

At our noon tally at the North Liberty Community Center we had 66 species. At the end of the day many participants gathered at McCright’s Neighborhood Cafe in North Liberty 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 102nd 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](http://www.birdsource.org)>, a cooperative project of the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

SPECIES LIST					
Canada Goose	1377	Dunlin	1	Brown Creeper	10
Wood Duck	1	Common Snipe	7	Carolina Wren	2
Green-winged Teal	90	Ring-billed Gull	579	Eastern Bluebird	15
American Black Duck	2	Herring Gull	1	American Robin	64
Mallard	7220	Rock Dove	217	Brown Thrasher	1
Northern Pintail	58	Mourning Dove	91	Cedar Waxwing	467
Northern Shoveler	17	Eastern Screech-Owl	1	European Starling	2414
Gadwall	614	Great Horned Owl	2	Northern Cardinal	464
American Wigeon	110	Barred Owl	3	American Tree Sparrow	266
Canvasback	2	Northern Saw-whet Owl	1	Fox Sparrow	1
Ring-necked Duck	185	Belted Kingfisher	8	Song Sparrow	9
Bufflehead	2	Red-headed Woodpecker	10	Swamp Sparrow	2
Hooded Merganser	2	Red-bellied Woodpecker	82	White-throated Sparrow	28
Bald Eagle	21	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2	Harris’s Sparrow	3
Northern Harrier	2	Downy Woodpecker	119	Dark-eyed Junco	406
Cooper’s Hawk	2	Hairy Woodpecker	15	Red-winged Blackbird	150
<i>Accipiter</i> sp.	1	Northern Flicker	33	Common Grackle	3
Red-tailed Hawk	25	Pileated Woodpecker	1	Purple Finch	16
<i>Buteo</i> sp.	5	Horned Lark	7	House Finch	99
American Kestrel	11	Blue Jay	114	Pine Siskin	10
Ring-necked Pheasant	18	American Crow	880	American Goldfinch	341
Wild Turkey	114	Black-capped Chickadee	407	House Sparrow	865
American Coot	60	Tufted Titmouse	95		
Killdeer	47	Red-breasted Nuthatch	9		
		White-breasted Nuthatch	100		





## **Dovetail Monitoring Project**

### **Anson Amberson**

Greetings! Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Anson Amberson, and I am attempting to develop an independent pilot project in the Dovetail Community in Coralville, Iowa, for mapping and monitoring wildlife in developing urban areas. The pilot project should run from April 22 through August 22, 2002, if enough funds are available for my full time commitment to the project. The pilot project's general goal is testing field methods and analysis of data at one study site while preparing for a more expanded project involving a total of four study sites paired to four control sites in Johnson County. The specific goals of the expanded project include the following:

- Measuring the total area of habitat features in the study sites.
- Measuring the species richness of avian and vegetative species.
- Adding casual and formal notes on additional species as more resources become available.
- Identifying aspects of the environment that are being used by each species.
- Passing wildlife population data to interested organizations (e.g. NatureMapping in Ames, Iowa).
- Attempting to establish correlations between changes in habitat and changes in species richness.
- Assessing the ecological health of the study sites.
- Suggesting management measures to maintain or improve the ecological health of the study sites.
- Continuing wildlife monitoring to measure the impact of management measures and general environmental changes.
- Increasing landowners' awareness of local species and active management of their property.

- Providing professional experience in wildlife identification and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to project volunteers, students or otherwise.
- Promoting use of project methods in other counties, states, and, ultimately, other nations.

In short, the mission statement of the expanded project is affecting global environmental enhancement through intensive monitoring and management of wildlife habitat at the grassroots level. I realize that this sounds ambitious, but, if Millard Fuller and Jimmy Carter can promote Habitat For Humanity internationally at a grassroots level to eliminate poverty housing, then I believe that it is possible to achieve these goals.

Anyone wishing to volunteer with this project may do so by assisting with a variety of tasks including completing the mapping which is already in progress, surveying plants and birds in the study site, entering data, forming a project web site, and soliciting funds and other resources for the project. I will be happy to meet with potential volunteers and coordinate their efforts. As eager as I am to devote full time efforts to this project, I will have to limit my involvement according to the funds raised to support it. At a bare minimum, I will need a total of \$8,000 to afford full time involvement in the project for four months. However, if I can raise \$2,000 by April 20, I will have enough money to start the project for one month, and I will proceed with the hope that the remaining \$6,000 can be raised in the course of the project. At this time I will be very grateful for any financial contributions or suggestions of potentially interested contributors.

People interested in this project may contact me at 2874 Triple Crown Lane, Unit #3, Iowa City, IA, 52240-7228, 354-1830, or [ambo@fbx.com](mailto:ambo@fbx.com). Thank you for considering involvement with

this important project.

## Spring Migration Count

The Johnson County Spring Migration Count will be held on Saturday, May 11. 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 for lunch at noon at the Hy-Vee Deli in Coralville. Anyone interested in participating should call Chris Caster at 339-8343 for more information.

## International Migratory Bird Day Celebration

May 11 is also International Migratory Bird Day. The Macbride Raptor Project Nature Center has scheduled several special activities to celebrate the event. For more information or directions, contact Gail Dawson at (319) 398-5495. Schedule of events:

**8:30 a.m. On a Wing and a Prayer**, a discussion of neotropical migrants, their plights and important bird areas in Iowa.

**9:30 a.m. Songbird Walk** with a member of the Iowa City Bird Club.

**10:30 a.m. Iowa Birds of Prey**, a presentation on raptors and their natural history including two resident Macbride Raptor Project birds.

**11:30 a.m. Osprey Introduction**, slide show and discussion about one of Macbride Raptor Project's exciting volunteer opportunities.

**8:30 a.m. – Noon, Songbird Banding** at the bird blind by John Kneut and Meredith Caskey,

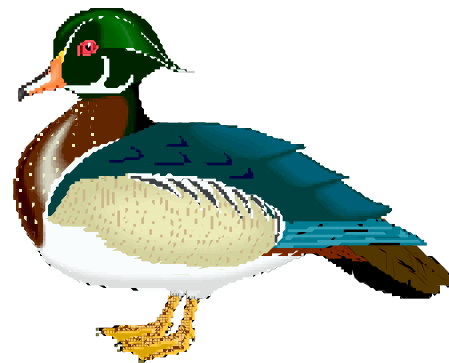
University of Iowa School of the Wild instructors.

**8:30 a.m. – Noon, Kids Activities.**

## Night Sounds Foray

A night sounds foray to Hawkeye Wildlife Area and Williams Prairie is scheduled for Friday evening, April 19. Every spring the evenings come alive with the mating calls of amphibians and marsh birds, and the calls of owls and other creatures on their nightly rounds. Around dusk, and far into the night when the moon is out, the mating calls of the American Woodcock and the Common Snipe can be heard as the birds plunge towards the earth, allowing air to flow over their wing feathers to create a "winnowing" sound. These sounds can be heard up to one-half to three miles away, if your ears are sharp and the wind is right. The "galumpf galumpf" of the American Bittern is sometimes heard from local marshes when this bird pauses for a few nights on its migration to the north to raise its brood. Geese and ducks are often heard calling as they settle into the marsh for the evening. Owls and nighthawks are heard as they begin their nightly hunting. Mammals are active primarily at night, and many are heard while out on their rounds. Many frogs and toads begin calling on warm spring evenings, and their calls may be heard from almost any standing body of water. To learn more and hear some of these sounds, join us on our night sounds foray.

– Karen Disbrow



IOWA BIRDING WEB SITE  
[WWW.IOWABIRDS.ORG](http://WWW.IOWABIRDS.ORG)



## Butterfly Count

Our fourth annual Iowa City Fourth of July Butterfly County will be held Saturday, July 20. (In case of rain it will be held July 21.) Last year while visiting Kent Park, Hawkeye Wildlife Area and Lake Macbride, we saw 36 species and 799 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.

## Important Bird Areas

The Iowa Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program is a new citizen-led initiative dedicated to the conservation of wild birds and their habitats within Iowa's borders. Since 1995 Audubon has implemented state-controlled IBA Programs in 40 states, and action will be underway in all 50 states by 2003. The fundamental role of the Iowa IBA Program is to build partnerships between the growing number of citizens who are interested in observing wild birds and the conservation organizations, private landowners, scientists, businesses, and county, state and federal agencies who can best address key bird habitat priorities.

There will be three phases to the Iowa IBA Program:

- **Identify** the most essential areas for birds.
- **Monitor** those sites for changes to birds and habitat.
- **Conserve** these areas for long-term protection of birds and biodiversity.

Phase I of the multi-year IBA Program is a statewide, science-based inventory and prioritization process and is now underway. Iowans will nominate habitats that have high value to nesting, migrating or wintering birds. Birders can become directly involved in this process by nominating their favorite birding areas as IBAs. A technical committee chaired by Dr. James Dinsmore has established criteria to guide the nomination process. Nominations can be made online at the Iowa IBA web site, <[www.iowabirds.org/IBA](http://www.iowabirds.org/IBA)>, or via paper nomination forms distributed after late April. Nominated sites may be any size and may be either publicly or privately owned.

The IBA Program is a special new way for birders, hikers, photographers and other nature-oriented individuals across all of Iowa to become directly and effectively involved in future habitat conservation efforts as other resource users have done previously. It is Audubon's hope that the vital habitats that become officially recognized as Iowa's Important Bird Areas will be a source of pride and will receive a higher priority for future conservation programs in Iowa, as they have in other states around the nation.

For more information, visit the web site listed above, or contact Audubon Iowa's IBA Coordinator, Ric Zarwell, PO Box 299, Lansing IA 52151, (563) 538-4991, [zarxzar@salamander.com](mailto:zarxzar@salamander.com)

## Note

A reminder to area birders, the S & G Materials sandpit south of Iowa City on Sand Road is private property. This includes the road which borders the sandpit on its west side. The manager of the property patrols that west-side

road and on occasion has had to remind birders that they were trespassing. S&G's primary concern is their insurance liability should any accidents occur on their property. Viewing of the sandpit is available along the first part of Winter Eagle Road on the sandpit's south side.

## NatureMapping Workshop

The Iowa NatureMapping Program is a citizen-based wildlife monitoring program through the Iowa State University Extension Service. The Johnson County Conservation Board will be hosting a NatureMapping workshop at Kent Park on Saturday, September 14.

When: September 14, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
 Where: F. W. Kent Park, Conservation Education Center  
 Cost: \$10 for registration, please make checks payable to Iowa State University  
 Lunch: (Optional) \$5 to be paid on the day of the event  
 Contact: Kristin Goldsmith, Johnson County Conservation Board, (319) 645-2315

Pre-registration for this event is required (a registration form is provided on page 15). A minimum of fifteen participants must register in order for the workshop to be held, with a maximum of thirty participants. Participants will learn how to use a computer to record their wildlife sightings, and how to read US Geological Survey topographical maps in the field. Please dress appropriately for the weather, bring pen and paper to take notes, and binoculars if you have them.

According to the NatureMapping web site, "NatureMapping...trains people just like you how to monitor and report the wildlife they observe and the habitats they observe them in. This can include wildlife at a backyard feeder, on

a woodland or prairie hike, in a school yard, or at your place of employment... anywhere you observe wildlife. The data you collect is reported to us via this web site so that it can be used and viewed by you or anyone else that has an interest in Iowa's wildlife and habitats."

Here's how NatureMapping works:

- individuals receive the basic NatureMapping training during a one-day interactive workshop;
- these trained volunteers engage others (schools, businesses, community groups, family members, etc.) in planning a monitoring project;
- these projects can involve monitoring any terrestrial vertebrate species or group on any size area they choose (minimum one species on an area of at least football field size) for any length of time and frequency;
- following the protocols for that species or group of species, the individual and/or group decides how and how long to monitor the animals;
- on a regular basis, the trained individual submits data forms to NatureMapping headquarters at Iowa State University;
- individuals and groups can view and analyze their data along with that of others in a variety of formats on the NatureMapping web site.

Much more information is available at the NatureMapping web site:

<[www.extension.iastate.edu/naturemapping](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/naturemapping)>



## RENEWAL REMINDER

**If you haven't paid your annual \$10.00 membership dues for 2002, please do so now to remain on our mailing list. If "01" 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!**

## Shorebird Populations

The Canadian Wildlife Service has released its estimates of shorebird populations in North America. This 64-page report (Occasional Paper Number 104) was issued in 2001 and is available at the Canadian Wildlife Service web site at <[www.scf-cws.ec.gc.ca](http://www.scf-cws.ec.gc.ca)>. Listed below are the North American population estimates for those shorebird species which have been recorded in Iowa. Species marked with an asterisk are primarily Eurasian breeders which nest in North America in very low numbers.

Most of these species are regular visitors in migration to Hawkeye Wildlife Area and elsewhere in Iowa. I think it's fascinating to compare the relative continent-wide abundance of the various species that we see. I certainly wouldn't have predicted that the most numerous shorebirds are (in order), American

Woodcock, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Red-necked Phalarope, Common Snipe, Dunlin, Wilson's Phalarope, Red Phalarope, and Killdeer. The next time I see a Piping Plover or a Buff-breasted Sandpiper I'll pause to consider just how rare it is! – *Editor*

Black-bellied Plover	200,000
American Golden-Plover	50,000
Snowy Plover	16,000
Semipalmated Plover	150,000
Piping Plover	5,913
Killdeer	1,000,000
Black-necked Stilt	150,000
American Avocet	450,000
Greater Yellowlegs	100,000
Lesser Yellowlegs	500,000
Solitary Sandpiper	25,000
Willet	250,000
Spotted Sandpiper	150,000
Upland Sandpiper	350,000
Eskimo Curlew (possibly extinct)	< 50
Whimbrel	57,000
Long-billed Curlew	20,000
Hudsonian Godwit	50,000
Marbled Godwit	171,500
Ruddy Turnstone	235,000
Red Knot	400,000
Sanderling	300,000
Semipalmated Sandpiper	3,500,000
Western Sandpiper	3,500,000
Least Sandpiper	600,000
White-rumped Sandpiper	400,000
Baird's Sandpiper	300,000
Pectoral Sandpiper	400,000
Dunlin	1,525,000
Curlew Sandpiper *	< 50
Stilt Sandpiper	200,000
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	15,000
Ruff *	< 50
Short-billed Dowitcher	320,000
Long-billed Dowitcher	500,000
Common Snipe	2,000,000
American Woodcock	5,000,000

Wilson's Phalarope	1,500,000
Red-necked Phalarope	2,500,000
Red Phalarope	1,000,000

## **Field Trip and Meeting Reports (continued)**

Birds (47 species): Pied-billed Grebe, Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, American Wigeon, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Wild Turkey, Ring-necked Pheasant, Sandhill Crane, American Coot, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Northern Flicker, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Black-capped Chickadee, Blue Jay, American Crow, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, House Sparrow.

– *Rick Hollis*

# Iowa NatureMapping Workshop

**Hosted by Johnson County  
Conservation Board**

**September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2002**

**9:00am – 4:00pm**

**F.W. Kent Park – Conservation Education  
Center**

First and Last Name

Name of school, business, organization, self, etc.  
you represent

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone (work or home) / =

hm / wk

Email

How did you find out about NatureMapping?

out to Iowa State University)

**Please check the appropriate answer.**

Do you want lunch? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes

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NO, I will be bringing my own. \_\_\_\_\_

*If you want lunch, please bring \$5.00 with you to the workshop. **Do not** add this to your registration check. Checks for lunch should be made out to the Johnson County Conservation Board.*

*Please send registration to:*

**Kristin Goldsmith  
Johnson County Conservation Board  
2048 Highway 6 NW  
Oxford, IA 52322**

**Don't forget to dress for the weather, bring pen and paper to take notes, and binoculars (if you have them).**

Questions about NatureMapping?  
(<http://www.naturemapping.state.ia.us>) or call:  
Jason O'Brien at 515/294-6440.

**Registration Fee -- \$10 (Please make checks**

## Iowa City Bird Club

**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](mailto:credwards@aol.com).

**Chris Edwards, Editor**  
**85 Whitman Avenue**  
**North Liberty, IA 52317**

**Annual membership dues** are \$10.00, payable by January 1st for the coming year. Make checks payable to Eastern Iowa Birdwatch, and mail to Bernie Knight, 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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