

Eastern Iowa Birdwatch

The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 22 Number 2

August 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.

September 3–6, Tuesday–Friday, 6:30 a.m.–7:30 a.m. Warbler Walks in Hickory Hill Park with James Huntington. Be prepared for wet grass (boots recommended). If conditions and schedules permit, these trips may continue into the following week. James Huntington, 338-1837.

September 19, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Meeting. Ric Zarwell, the IBA Coordinator for Audubon Iowa, will discuss the latest developments concerning the Iowa IBA Program and how we might get involved.

September 21, Saturday, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Hawk Watch at Stainbrook Preserve, located on Mehaffey Bridge Road just north of the entrance to Sugar Bottom Recreation Area. Related activities will be held at the nearby Macbride Raptor Project Nature Center, including bird banding and presentations on hawk

identification, Osprey introductions, and more. Call Chris Edwards at 626-6362 for more information.

September 29, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. Birding and Boating Lake Macbride. Meet at Richard and Nancy Lynch's home at 3782 Cottage Reserve Rd. NE, Solon. We will bird the lake's hard-to-reach areas by canoe and kayak, then return to their home for refreshments. Watercraft will be provided, or bring your own. Please call Richard and Nancy at 624-3014 by September 26 if you would like to attend.

October 13, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Redbird Farms Wildlife Area and S & G Sandpit. Redbird features a variety of habitats including brushy fields, ponds, and woods. The sandpit attracts migrating waterfowl, grebes, and other waterbirds. Mike Dooley, 363-3904 or mcdooly@blue.weeg.uiowa.edu.

October 17, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Meeting. Tom Kent will conduct a workshop on how to age and identify common and rare gulls.

October 26, Saturday, 7:30 a.m. Wickiup Hill Natural Area in Linn County. Meet at the Dodge Street Hy-Vee at 7:30, or at the Handimart at the corner of Edgewood Rd. and Blairs Ferry Rd. in Cedar Rapids at 8:00. Tour this diverse area with a marsh boardwalk, uplands, oak savanna, and the Cedar River. Bob and Joann Stearns, 846-3286.

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November 10, Sunday, 7:00 a.m. Lake Red Rock near Pella. Check out this premier gull-watching hotspot for gulls, loons, and waterfowl. This is an all-day trip. Jim Fuller, 338-3561.

November 17, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. Coralville Reservoir and Lake Macbride for diving ducks, gulls, and sparrows. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

November 21, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Meeting. Jim Scheib will give a slide show/movie presentation on he and Sharon's May birding trip to Homer and Anchorage, Alaska, the Kenai Peninsula, and particularly St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs. **PLEASE NOTE THE ALTERNATE LOCATION FOR THIS MEETING:** Grant Wood AEA Southern Facility at 200 Holiday Road in Coralville (next to Lensing Oak Hill Funeral Parlor). We will meet in Conference Room A/B just inside the door on the left.

Other Dates of Note

September 7–8, Saturday–Sunday, Iowa Energy Expo 2002 at Prairiewoods Franciscan Spiritual Center in Hiawatha. Forty workshops on a variety of topics ranging from energy efficient remodeling to the latest in wind, solar, and biomass technologies. Vendors from across the region will be showing the latest renewable energy and energy efficiency products. Sponsored by Iowa Renewable Energy Association. For more go to www.irenew.org.

September 13–15 Iowa Ornithologists' Union Fall Conference at the YMCA Camp near Boone. See pages 14–15 for more information.

October 5, Saturday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. NatureMapping Workshop at Johnson County Conservation Education Center, Kent Park. See pages 16–17 for more information.

November 9–10, Saturday–Sunday. IOU field trip to northeast Iowa with Eugene and Eloise Armstrong. Target birds will be Tundra Swan, Golden Eagle, Ruffed Grouse, and others. Check www.iowabirds.org or call Chris Edwards at 626-6362 for more details.

News

HELP WANTED

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT COMPILER

After six years on the job, I'm ready to hand over this fun-filled position to another willing volunteer. No experience or special skills necessary. The pay isn't great and there's no room for advancement, but it looks great on a resume! (And as a special added sign-on bonus, I'll buy you a beer or another beverage of your choice!) If you are interested or would like more information, please call me – Chris Edwards, 626-6362.

Rhonda Wilson, the manager of the Wildlife Habitat store in Coralville's Clock Tower Shopping Center, has graciously extended a 10% discount to Iowa City Bird Club members on all bird food items, including seed, seed cakes, suet, and nectar. Just let them know of your current member status at checkout.

Construction is currently under way at Cone Marsh in order to rebuild the main dike. This will have a temporary impact on the area's accessibility for birders until construction is completed later this fall.

We regret to inform the Iowa City Bird Club membership of the passing of Lou Pailliotet on April 28 at the age of 73. Lou was a resident of Washington, Iowa and before retirement, owned

the Pailliotet Farm Implement Repair in Riverside. He attended a number of club field trips in recent years and helped on at least one of our spring counts. Though his health was not the best, Lou made an effort to get out. He enjoyed the outdoors, really liked learning about the birds and was a pleasure to have along.

On another sad note, Ann Barker of Davenport passed away on August 8 from breast cancer. Ann was a former president of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union and the Quad City Audubon Society. Many of us will remember her from IOU meetings as well as the talk she gave to the bird club in March 1998 about her trip to South Georgia Island and the Falklands. A nice article about Ann appeared in the Winter 2002 issue of *Iowa Bird Life*. Her family has set up a memorial fund for charities that Ann favored. Donations may be sent to the Ann Barker Memorial Fund, 3204 Crestline Dr., Davenport, IA 52803.

From the Wisconsin birding listserv:
"This afternoon a rather elderly couple came to the DNR office at Horicon Marsh and, getting their information a bit confused, asked where they might be able to see the PENGUINS. When they were told we had pelicans, they seemed to be just about as enthusiastic to see those."

• Bill Volkert, DNR - Horicon Marsh

From Our New President

Well I find it somewhat amazing that a person unknown to perhaps half a club's members would be handed the job as its president. But that is what has happened. So I suppose I should briefly introduce myself.

My name is Chris Caster. I grew up in Burlington, Iowa, but I've lived in the Iowa City area for most of the past twenty years. I have carried a binoculars and a field guide with me since I was in grade school, but I have never considered myself a serious birder. I still don't. I got to know Jim Fuller while attending dental school, which rekindled my interest, but I was always too busy to bird much. My four years with the Public Health Service afforded me some opportunity to get back into birding though and after returning to Iowa in '94, I joined the Iowa City Bird Club. Currently I work for a private dental office near downtown Cedar Rapids and my wife Terry Lindquist is an associate professor at the College of Dentistry. We have a one-year-old son, Benjamin and we're expecting another child in November.

I think the ICBC is a great group of people and an organization with a lot to offer. I have greatly admired the dedication and leadership that so many of you have displayed. When Rick Hollis approached me regarding the possibility that I take over his duties as president, I really felt that somebody else would be better for the job. In fact there are probably lots of good reasons why someone else should be doing this (hopefully you won't all end up agreeing with this)—but none of them seem good enough, as nobody else currently wants the position. Well Rick deserves a break, so I guess it will be my turn. Thanks Rick for all that you've done for the ICBC and Iowa birding for so many years. Fortunately, Rick assures me

that he will continue to stay active with the club and contribute to the newsletter.

I am a little nervous about the position, but I'm enthused about it as well. I think that we can continue to maintain the same quality of presentations at our meetings that we have previously enjoyed. Karen Disbrow continues to put together a great schedule of events and Chris Edwards produces the best newsletter on the planet. Hopefully we can continue to increase public awareness of the ICBC and build our membership even further. If anyone has any helpful ideas or suggestions please feel free to call me at home: 339-8343 or use e-mail: chriscaster@msn.com. I hope to serve the club well and I will appreciate your support. Thanks.

Chris Caster

Field Trip and Meeting Reports

April 14, Pleasant Creek and Palo Marsh.

Boy, it was a hot and windy day. A couple of days before we thought the day might see rain, but this proved to be the first day of a record heat wave which would break records over 100 years old. It was good that we went straight away to view the water at Pleasant Creek, because it was also an excellent day for boaters and fisherman and they had really dispersed the birds by the time we had left.

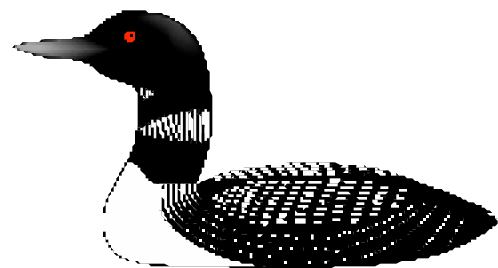
There weren't a lot of waterfowl when we arrived. The most numerous of the waterfowl were the Buffleheads. The best birds were two Eared Grebes and a Horned Grebe, as well as a Common Loon. Hoping to discover some early migrating passerines the group took a long walk down some trails and bridle paths north of the campgrounds. Near the trail entrance we heard Brown Thrashers and a singing Field Sparrow. The trail produced Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. The walk was more exercise than we had bargained. Fortunately, we were able to use the paved road coming back. On the way we birded the grassy hillside along the lake's north arm. There were many looks at Eastern Meadowlarks and we witnessed a Red-tailed Hawk fly off with a snake. One last look at the lake produced a single Bonaparte's Gull.

We made another stop at Palo Marsh for a leisurely walk. It was nearly 11:00 and the winds had really picked up by this time. We got looks at some Swamp Sparrows, a Northern Harrier, and an accipiter that defied consensus. Just before leaving for home, an Eastern Towhee was also spotted. It was a great day to be out birding.

Participants: Kay Burke, Chris Caster (leader), Bob Dick, Dara Dick, Mike Dooley, Roger Heidt, Ken Lowder, Jo Richardson, Bob Stearns, Joan Stearns.

Birds (49 species): Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Eared Grebe, Turkey Vulture, Canada Goose, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, *accipiter* sp., American Kestrel, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, wren sp., Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, American Robin, Brown Thrasher, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Eastern Towhee, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, American Goldfinch.

– Chris Caster



April 18, Meeting. Jim and Karole Fuller spoke about their winter home in Anza-Borrego State Park in southwest California. As always, Jim and Karole produced an entertaining talk and lovely pictures, and all of us want to go there. Jim may sometime lead a field trip to this area.

Attendees: Ed Allgood, Jean Allgood, Ann Bagford, Glorine Berry, Chris Caster, Margrieta Delle, Karen Disbrow, Linda Fisher, Jane Fuller, Jim Fuller, Karole Fuller, Rick Hollis, James Huntington, James Miller, Bernie Knight, Cal Knight, Dave Kyllingstad, Anne Perkins, Edward Perkins, Joe Richardson, Sue Sarlette, Jim Scheib, Sharon Scheib, Gerry Tetrault, Richard Tetrault.

– *Rick Hollis*

April 19, Night Sounds Foray. This trip was well-attended, but the weather was a disappointment as the temperature dipped to 56F with at least 15 mph wind. We first went to Hawkeye Wildlife Area, at the gun club ponds on either side of Greencastle Road. These shallow ponds had been very raucous with Spring Peepers, Chorus Frogs and Leopard Frogs earlier in the week. Since we arrived well before sundown, only a few were calling. I expected to return after dark to a really noisy area, but not that night. We journeyed on to Williams Prairie where both American Woodcock and Common Snipe had been calling earlier. That night as the sun went down, the temperature did too and the wind picked up. Several people heard the woodcock and a Leopard Frog could be heard. A return to the gun club ponds in the hopes of hearing the Barred Owl was fruitless. Both of these locations are great places to go in the spring. Take a winter coat, come before sundown, and hope for no wind; the resulting sounds are fun and fascinating to hear.

Participants: Ed Allgood, Jean Allgood, Alyssa Cohen, Michael Cohen, Margrieta Delle, Karen Disbrow (leader), Linda Fischer, Barbara Heikens, Dianne Kaufman, Vree Kanthaswamy, Ramona McGurk, Gerald Pearson, Sue Sarlette, Cindi Stimfosveethinan (my apologies, I

couldn't read the handwriting).

– *Karen Disbrow*

May 4, Red Bird Farms. We had a perfect spring morning for a leisurely walk through Red Bird Farms west of Iowa City, starting out along the central meadow area. Yellow Warblers were abundant and gave us some striking close-up views, musically accompanied by three continuously singing Brown Thrashers. With the sun behind us an Indigo Bunting showed a brilliant blue and was immediately joined by an American Redstart. Something of a surprise along a very small frog pond was a Solitary Sandpiper just peeking out from behind a clump of grass, a laudatory sighting by Ed Allgood.

Eventually we entered the woods, which were relatively quiet as far as birds went, but a lovely stand of Virginia Bluebells was growing along the trail, as well as Blue Phlox, Rue Anemone, Prairie Trillium, Trout Lily, May-Apple, and Perfoliate Bellwort. Jack Bagford educated us—or me, at least—on the subtle art of discerning the precisely-aged dead elm trees under which might grow morel mushrooms, and sure enough came up with a healthy specimen.

We did manage three vireo species in the woods: Blue-headed, Warbling, and Red-eyed. Unfortunately except for Yellow-rumped and Black-and-white the warbler family succeeded quite effectively in avoiding detection.

After we called it a day at Red Bird I stopped by the S&G Materials sandpit and added to the day, among others, Common Loon, Lesser Scaup, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Spotted Sandpiper, and Marsh Wren.

Participants: Ed Allgood, Jean Allgood, Ann Bagford, Jack Bagford, Mike Dooley (leader),

Jonni Ellsworth, Ramona McGurk.

Birds (41 species): Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, Solitary Sandpiper, Mourning Dove, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Kingbird, Blue-headed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, American Robin, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Palm Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Eastern Towhee, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch.

– *Mike Dooley*

May 16, Meeting. A discussion of the club's future was held. No one stepped forth to offer to be president. Tim Thompson spoke to us about some work he did with Canada Geese near Hudson Bay some years ago: looking at birds and animals, carrying a shotgun to the john (the john was outside the fence, therefore near polar bears), and other adventures. Tim mentioned that there will likely be a tour of Hawkeye Wildlife Area sometime in late August. Contact Tim closer to the date for details.

Attendees: Ed Allgood, Jean Allgood, Chris Caster, Margrieta Delle, Drew Dillman, Judith Dillman, Linda Fisher, Rick Hollis, Bernie Knight, Cal Knight, James Miller, Darlyne Neff, John Neff.

– *Rick Hollis*

May 19, Fuller's Woods and Cedar Valley Park. Eleven of us went to Jim and Karole

Fuller's woods in Cedar County on a beautiful, cool morning. We enjoyed the woods, wildflowers, birds and each other. Six of us went on to Cedar Valley Park. James found a trail that turned out to be a "hot spot." Bob found, and James identified, a Gray-cheeked Thrush that was a life bird for five of us.

Participants: Ed and Jean Allgood (leaders), Drew Dillman, Judy Dillman, Jim Fuller, Karole Fuller, James Huntington, Judith Klink, Diana Pesek, Bob Sterns, Joan Stearns.

Birds (54 species): Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, Canada Goose, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Gray-cheeked Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Canada Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– *Ed and Jean Allgood*

June 9, Indiagrass Hills. We had a clear, warm summer morning for scouting this prairie habitat in southwestern Iowa County. One of the owners, Judy Feldman, accompanied us, and augmented our birding tour with informative

remarks on the flora and vegetation (both welcome and unwelcome species) as well as on the challenges and logistics of a prairie restoration project. As has been customary, we kept our walk to the eastern property.

Our target bird was the Henslow's Sparrow and we were not disappointed. We heard two before we'd hardly started on the main ridge trail, but these eluded any kind of good looks by our party. A third one as we headed north into the grasslands was much more cooperative. This bird parked itself atop the grasses and everyone had dazzling views through a spotting scope while it sang. All remarked on the rich olive coloring to the sparrow's head, and Kent Nickell came away with some excellent digital photo-studies.

Sedge Wrens were also about. We watched one move from perch to perch with a dried grass blade in its bill and then disappear down into the grass less than ten yards in front of us. After it emerged again, bill empty, a couple of us investigated the spot and found a nest in progress. A small cluster of green living grasses were bent over at their upper parts and woven into a loose canopy. Inside this tiny shelter was a sparse collection of dried blades.

Meanwhile throughout our walk in the open grassland we all marveled at the proliferation of Bobolinks, which were simply everywhere. Grasshopper Sparrows, Dickcissels, and Eastern Meadowlarks were also singing and easy to view.

We headed down into the more wooded vale hoping particularly for Orchard Oriole and once again we were rewarded. We watched a male oriole working the grass until it finally flew up into a dead tree and sang from an open perch and

the spotting scope afforded us leisurely close-ups of this lovely bird. Further along a flyover Belted Kingfisher was something of a surprise. We also spent time scrutinizing a silent *empid* flycatcher. This bird had no discernible eye ring, and based on habitat we put it down to the Alder/Willow complex.

Always gratifying on a bird club outing, two birders garnered life birds, including Henslow's Sparrow and Orchard Oriole for both.

Participants: Mike Dooley (leader), Judy Felder, Mary Beth Hunt, Ken Lowder, Kent Nickell, Diane Pesek, Bill Scheible, Bob Stearns, Joan Stearns.

Birds (45 species): Great Blue Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, Killdeer, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, *empidonax* sp., Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Barn Swallow, House Wren, Sedge Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow Warbler, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– Mike Dooley



June 23, Kent Park. Although we were scheduled to go to Sockum Ridge in Washington County, we decided, after making a dry run and recalling last year's rampant insect population, to go to Kent Park. The previous week's flash flooding in Sockum Ridge had also left the gravel road in the park washed out, and there were more than enough pesky bugs to hinder any satisfying birdwatching. However, in changing the location, we did miss two fellow birders – Mike Dooley and Ken Lowder – who had started extra early to check out Brinton Timber before going to Sockum Ridge. We didn't recall any previous field trips to Kent Park with its varied habitat and easy walking trails, and we had decided to make it a relatively short outing. So with the temperature already at 70 degrees at 6:30 a.m., we proceeded to Kent Park.

We started at the Conservation Education Center. While exploring the edges of the parking lot, Chris and Bob Dick heard a Prairie Warbler in the brush. They weren't able to actually see it, but Chris did return later in the day to confirm it. Proceeding along the trail, we were able to get good looks at Baltimore Orioles. We tried to find the Yellow-breasted Chat but without success. In the water, we found several Green Herons skulking along the edge, but one in particular put on quite a show from a tree branch in the open. On leaving the parking lot to go to the lake, a Barred Owl surprised us by flying right in front of the car, landing in an evergreen tree, and watching us for several

minutes. We wound up the trip by walking halfway around the lake, and deciding that since the birds weren't very active we wouldn't be either, and headed for the air-conditioned comfort of our vehicles.

Participants: Chris Caster, Bob Dick, Dara Dick, Therese Guedon, Diana Pesek, Bob Stearns, Joan Stearns (Mike Dooley and Ken Lowder, in absentia).

Birds (38 species): Green Heron, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Barred Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch.

– *Bob and Joan Stearns*

July 14, Lake Macbride Bicycle-Birding Trip. I could not have asked for a better morning. At 6 a.m., it was clear, 56°, and calm. While waiting at Hy-Vee, I recorded Mourning Dove, Chimney Swift, House Wren, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, and Northern Cardinal. I heard Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, and House Finch as I started north.

The week before, I had gone on a few rides to get ready and to see what I could see. I made a list of those birds and was planning to check them off on this trip. I had certain spots for

certain birds. It would be fun to see if they would cooperate.

I headed out of town, past that little church on Newport Road and turned north on Quincy Road. I saw Eastern Bluebird, American Goldfinch, and Dickcissel sitting on the wires, and Brown Thrasher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, and Eastern Kingbird zipped across the road in front of me. A Killdeer yielded as I approached.

At the first little bridge on Quincy, I stopped to wait for a Cliff Swallow. It popped out, and I rode on. A few hundred yards ahead, the road went over a small culvert. I paused, and the Eastern Phoebe appeared right on schedule. About a mile ahead was a field where Bobolinks were sometimes seen. I could have given this bird ten minutes, but it showed up after five minutes. I spotted a small, greenish oriole and a larger, orange oriole. This was fun. There was no traffic, it was cool, and the birds were cooperating.

I rode along a stretch of road where the week before I had seen a Lark Sparrow sitting next to a Pine Siskin. I was quite surprised to have seen the Pine Siskin, and, of course, didn't see that again.

The road outside of Solon was under construction, but it was no problem on a mountain bike. I observed Sedge Wren and Grasshopper Sparrow and I arrived at the Solon High School exactly at 8:15 a.m.

I waited until 8:35, then pushed on alone. Along the bicycle trail to the state park, I observed Green Heron, Great Blue Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Bobwhite, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Bell's Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo,

Warbling Vireo, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, and American Redstart. I stopped at the state park and had a large lemonade and watched the Mallard family compete with bass for minnows.

Participants: James Huntington (leader).

Birds (63 species): Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, Mallard, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Bobwhite, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Chimney Swift, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Bell's Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Sedge Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Northern Parula, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– James Huntington

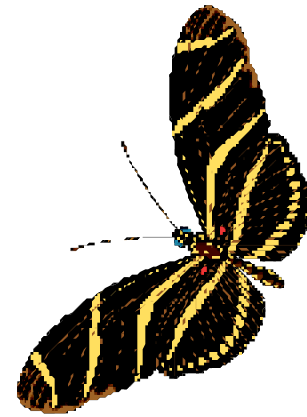
July 27, Butterfly Count. This was our fourth annual Iowa City 4th of July Butterfly Count, sponsored by the North American Butterfly Association. We visited several areas in northern Johnson County, including Kent Park,

Hawkeye Wildlife Area, and Lake Macbride. Based on the below-average number of butterflies I had been seeing all summer, and the heavy storms we experienced the night before, I was expecting a poor count. However, we made a good showing with 34 species (about average) and 1,526 individuals (well above average). Near the end of the day we discovered a fresh hatch of Clouded and Orange Sulphurs puddling on a roadside next to an alfalfa field. The hundreds of bright yellow butterflies swirling up like confetti as we drove slowly past was quite a memorable sight.

Participants: Chris Caster, Jim Durbin, Chris Edwards (leader).

Butterflies (34 species): Black Swallowtail (3), Giant Swallowtail (9), Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (11), Cabbage White (22), Clouded Sulphur (449), Orange Sulphur (689), Cloudless Sulphur (7), Little Yellow (3), Eastern Tailed-Blue (69), Spring Azure (46), American Snout (3), Great Spangled Fritillary (13), Meadow Fritillary (2), Pearl Crescent (1), Question Mark (9), Eastern Comma (1), Gray Comma (2), Mourning Cloak (1), Red Admiral (44), Common Buckeye (11), Red-spotted Admiral (6), Viceroy (26), Hackberry Emperor (6), Northern Pearly-eye (2), Common Wood-Nymph (21), Monarch (24), Silver-spotted Skipper (13), Common Sootywing (2), Least Skipper (21), Peck's Skipper (4), Tawny-edged Skipper (8), Sachem (1), Byssus Skipper (1), Dun Skipper (4).

– *Chris Edwards*



August 4, Shorebird Trip. We met at Hy-Vee on what was to be a very warm, humid day, but a nice overcast sky was to keep the temperature down for awhile. I had originally thought that Hawkeye Wildlife Area would be the best for shorebirds, but the water was so high, I decided to head south. We first checked the sod farm on Sand Road. There were Killdeer, Horned Lark, and one Upland Sandpiper. We then took the back way to Cone Marsh, seeing Mourning Dove, Tree Swallow, Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Kingbird, Scarlet Tanager (sitting on a corn stalk), Lark Sparrow, and Dickcissel. Just before reaching the marsh, we were treated to a calling male Northern Bobwhite sitting on a fence post next to the road.

Cone Marsh had just a little area left for shorebirds; most of it was covered in thick vegetation. We did see Pectoral Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope (a juvenile with bright yellow legs), Lesser Yellowlegs, and Killdeer, of course. There were many Wood Ducks and hundreds of swallows cruised over the marsh.

On the way home, we stopped at a field along Johnson Muscatine Road, where a shrike had been reported. Sharp-eyed Bob Dick spotted the shrike sitting on a distant shrub. We decided to check the sod farm one more time, and were

delighted to discover seven Buff-breasted Sandpipers.

Participants: Chris Caster, Bob Dick, Karen Disbrow, Mike Dooley, Jim Fuller, James Huntington (leader), Jim Scheib, Bob Stearns, Joan Stearns.

Birds (66 species): Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Northern Bobwhite, Killdeer, Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Upland Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Loggerhead Shrike, Bell's Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Sedge Wren, Marsh Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Common Yellowthroat, Scarlet Tanager, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– James Huntington

August 15, Picnic in City Park. The picnic was well attended and there was a lot of good food to eat. A sympathy card for Ann Barker's family was passed around. The fall schedule

was discussed. A new meeting place with larger chairs and the requisite audio-visual equipment was proposed; Jim Scheib is looking into potential locations. Jim Fuller reported that four Cooper's Hawks fledged from a nest behind Robert Lucas School this summer. Several members have planned trips for the fall that should result in many interesting birds – can't wait to hear the reports next year. Thanks to Margrieta Delle for helping me set up the tables.

Attendees: Chris Caster, Terry Lindquist and Benjamin; Margrieta Delle; Bob and Dara Dick; Chris, Anne, Mary and Dan Edwards; Jim and Karole Fuller; Sarah George; James Huntington; Dave and Darlene Kyllingstad; Jim and Sharon Scheib; Bob and Joan Stearns; Richard and Gerry Tetrault.

•

Karen Disbrow

AMAZING FACT

A Manx Shearwater first banded in 1957 as an adult was recaptured in April 2002. Since this bird was born several years earlier – experts guessed 1952 – this newest recapture puts the bird at around 50 years old. The bird was in good condition and preparing to breed. This age is particularly remarkable when one thinks about its annual migration from the UK to Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. One expert suggests that this bird's odometer may have tripped 5 million miles. The oldest known free-living bird was a Royal Albatross that was last seen near New Zealand at age 53. Older birds have been recorded in captivity.

– Rick Hollis

2002 Johnson County Spring Migration Count

Chris Caster

The countywide bird count was held on Saturday, May 11th. As most will remember it was a soggy one. At 4 a.m. it was a calm 58 degrees, but by the time it was light enough to see, the temperature had dropped a full ten degrees and it was raining. It rained nearly continuously until noon. The wind was driving the rain from the SE and identification in this general direction was impossible at times. But despite the weather we had a great count. The birder turnout was outstanding, with 15 in the field and 5 feeder watchers participating. If you are wondering how we did it – we dressed appropriately and got out walking. If we needed some dry-time, we returned to our vehicles and drove. And we also took our usual noon hour break at the Coralville Hy-Vee, where most of us met to record sightings, eat lunch, and take comfort that everyone else was also cold and wet, yet still smiling. When the conditions improved the birds were there. Those of us that birded through the afternoon got some fantastic looks at warblers. In the subdued light the birds just glowed. In fact a couple of Cape May Warblers near the Sand Point parking lot threatened to sabotage the count as a number of us stopped to gaze in wonder. Chris Edwards and I were personally under their spell for over an hour. They might have been the count's best birds.

Unbelievably we were able to find 145 different species. This is the exact same number we had found on the 1997 and 2000 Spring Counts. However in some ways it was disappointing. We knew that the birds were here and we were all very excited that we might easily break last year's record total of 155 birds – also the

highest count in the state of the twenty counties participating. So a number of us had put in a good bit of time scouting our areas in the days before the count. No less than 20 different birds seen in the previous two days we were unable to find. Obviously the weather was the reason.

Some of our better birds included: Black-bellied Plover, American Avocet, White-rumped Sandpiper, Dunlin, Wilson's Phalarope, Carolina and Sedge wrens, Veery, Northern Mockingbird, Cape May, Cerulean, Bay-breasted, Prothonotary and Pine warblers, Dickcissel, Clay-colored, Harris's and Eurasian Tree sparrows.

The most notable misses were: Pied-billed Grebe, American Kestrel, Sora, Great Horned Owl, and Belted Kingfisher.

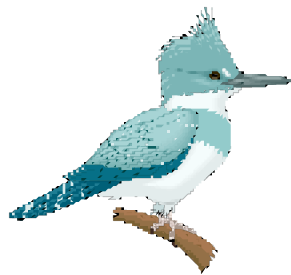
Just a footnote – if you count the birds listed below you will find that there are not 145 birds listed, but 146. A Northern Bobwhite was seen at Hawkeye Wildlife Area, but it may have been a bird released by someone training his or her dog to hunt. Therefore, the sighting won't be submitted to the state compiler as part of our official list.

My thanks goes to all those who helped. What an effort! With each count I think our team has gotten a little better at this. Once again I can't wait for next year.

Participants: Jack Bagford, Chris Caster, Bob Dick, Dara Dick, Mike Dooley, Chris Edwards, Julie Englander, Linda Fisher, Jim Fuller, Rick Hollis, James Huntington, Tom Kent, Bernie

Knight, Cal Knight, Kari Oeltjen, Thomas
 Staudt, Bob Stearns, Joan Stearns, Dick
 Tetrault, Gerry Tetrault, Doug Wallace.

Species list on next page.



American White Pelican	90	Rock Dove	4	Gray Catbird	66
Double-crested Cormorant	41	Mourning Dove	18	Northern Mockingbird	1
Great Blue Heron	11	Barred Owl	3	Brown Thrasher	11
Green Heron	1	Common Nighthawk	2	European Starling	48
Turkey Vulture	6	Whip-poor-will	1	Cedar Waxwing	13
Canada Goose	76	Chimney Swift	75	Blue-winged Warbler	4
Wood Duck	54	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	5	Golden-winged Warbler	12
Gadwall	9	Red-headed Woodpecker	10	Tennessee Warbler	16
Mallard	37	Red-bellied Woodpecker	12	Orange-crowned Warbler	4
Blue-winged Teal	81	Downy Woodpecker	29	Nashville Warbler	11
Northern Shoveler	5	Hairy Woodpecker	4	Northern Parula	2
Green-winged Teal	1	Northern Flicker	14	Yellow Warbler	17
Lesser Scaup	1	Eastern Wood-Pewee	3	Chestnut-sided Warbler	10
Hooded Merganser	2	Least Flycatcher	7	Magnolia Warbler	7
Ruddy Duck	7	Eastern Phoebe	2	Cape May Warbler	4
Bald Eagle	1	Great Crested Flycatcher	16	Yellow-rumped Warbler	172
Cooper's Hawk	1	Eastern Kingbird	7	Black-throated Green Warbler	2
Red-tailed Hawk	3	Loggerhead Shrike	2	Blackburnian Warbler	4
Ring-necked Pheasant	11	Blue-headed Vireo	2	Pine Warbler	1
Wild Turkey	9	Yellow-throated Vireo	7	Palm Warbler	12
Northern Bobwhite	1	Warbling Vireo	3	Bay-breasted Warbler	1
American Coot	22	Red-eyed Vireo	3	Blackpoll Warbler	4
Black-bellied Plover	1	Blue Jay	28	Cerulean Warbler	1
Semipalmated Plover	100	American Crow	47	Black-and-white Warbler	7
Killdeer	12	Horned Lark	1	American Redstart	50
American Avocet	2	Purple Martin	2	Prothonotary Warbler	2
Lesser Yellowlegs	367	Tree Swallow	211	Ovenbird	11
Solitary Sandpiper	1	N. Rough-winged Swallow	6	Northern Waterthrush	4
Spotted Sandpiper	7	Bank Swallow	1000	Common Yellowthroat	17
Ruddy Turnstone	1	Cliff Swallow	15	Wilson's Warbler	1
Semipalmated Sandpiper	20	Barn Swallow	1000	Scarlet Tanager	3
Least Sandpiper	210	Black-capped Chickadee	41	Eastern Towhee	9
White-rumped Sandpiper	2	Tufted Titmouse	14	Chipping Sparrow	50
Pectoral Sandpiper	178	White-breasted Nuthatch	10	Clay-colored Sparrow	1
Dunlin	30	Carolina Wren	2	Field Sparrow	10
Short-billed Dowitcher	12	House Wren	30	Vesper Sparrow	4
American Woodcock	6	Sedge Wren	1	Lark Sparrow	5
Wilson's Phalarope	2	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	2	Savannah Sparrow	10
Franklin's Gull	9	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	15	Grasshopper Sparrow	3
Ring-billed Gull	27	Eastern Bluebird	9	Song Sparrow	15
Herring Gull	2	Veery	2	White-throated Sparrow	36
Caspian Tern	1	Swainson's Thrush	2	Harris's Sparrow	2
Forster's Tern	30	Wood Thrush	4	White-crowned Sparrow	8
Black Tern	27	American Robin	77	Northern Cardinal	90

Rose-breasted Grosbeak	17	Western Meadowlark	4	House Sparrow	47
Indigo Bunting	19	Common Grackle	144	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	2
Dickcissel	1	Brown-headed Cowbird	31		
Bobolink	2	Baltimore Oriole	24		
Red-winged Blackbird	347	House Finch	13		
Eastern Meadowlark	1	American Goldfinch	77		



Book Reviews

Raptors of the World. James Ferguson-Lees and David A. Christie. Illustrated by Kim Franklin, David Mead, and Philip Burton. Houghton Mifflin, 2001. Available at the Iowa City Public Library.

This may be the first of the books in the Helm series of identification guides that disappoints me. I have always enjoyed the ability to find out some things about a bird (appearance, distribution, etc.) after reading about it, without owning field guides of varying quality to every place on earth. I was especially looking forward to this guide, and it let me down. Despite fifteen illustrations of Red-tailed Hawks, the range of plumages that I have seen in Iowa is not nearly covered. I was also disappointed in that one of my best all-time raptor sightings, a dark-phase Ferruginous Hawk, is not shown from above, the way I saw it. (It is illustrated in *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. By the way, I would have never identified that one on my own – fortunately I was at a West Coast hawk watch with the pros.) Perhaps these limitations are due to the immense variation in *buteo* appearances.

Still, this is an impressive, massive book covering 312 species. It has 112 colored plates (two just to cover Peregrines in their worldwide glory) and 60 black-and-white drawings, some of which show comparisons. The first 60 pages cover how to use the book, raptor anatomy, and about a dozen short chapters on raptor adaptations, systematics, and other things. Then come the plates and the species descriptions, followed by 55 pages of references and an index. By the way, I like the index – none of this looking up “Prairie Falcon” and

finding “see Falcon, Prairie”; it leads straight to Prairie Falcon and page numbers. I especially liked the fact that prey species are named, for example, the Spear-nosed Bat being eaten by Bat Falcon and the Sun Parakeet being pursued by the Orange-breasted Falcon. A massive book commands a massive price: ABA Sales lists it at \$60.00, while Amazon lists the book at \$ 40.00.

– Rick Hollis

Shorebirds. Des Thompson and Ingvar Byrkjedal. Voyageur Press, 2001. 72 pages with illustrations, map, bibliographical references, and index. Available at the Iowa City Public Library.

This book describes the physical characteristics, behavior, and habitat of such shorebirds as plovers, sandpipers, lapwings, and oystercatchers. Although it is aimed at Grades 5-8, it is worth a look by all of us, if nothing else for the photos by some of the best in the business. I did not read all of the book, but what text I read seemed accurate and filled with interesting little facts, such as: Eskimo Curlews were often partially stained blue by the Crow Berries, which are an important part of many shorebirds’ diets from their arrival in the far north until late summer. Shorebirds that spend time on ocean coasts develop salt glands to help them get rid of excess salt, which atrophy and redevelop depending on where the birds are eating. Ruddy Turnstones in their breeding season and Bristle-thighed Curlews during the Austral Summer eat bird eggs. A Common Sandpiper was seen feeding on a dead sheep. The authors list a total of 202 species of shorebirds, only three of which are extinct (assuming the Eskimo Curlew is still hanging on).

– Rick Hollis

A Gap in Nature: Discovering the World’s Extinct Animals. Tim Flannery and Peter

Schouten. Atlantic Monthly Press, 2001. 184 pages, including color illustrations, map, bibliographical references, and index. Available at the Iowa City Public Library.

Just under a hundred species are covered in this “coffee table book”. The few paragraphs of text on each species are summaries of all we know about some of them. The gorgeous paintings by Peter Schouten give us a vision of that which we will no longer see.

– Rick Hollis

Iowa Ornithologists’ Union Fall Conference

On September 13–15 the Iowa Important Bird Area (IBA) Program will host the fall conference of the Iowa Ornithologists Union. The conference will be held at the Camp of the YMCA of Greater Des Moines, which is located 5 miles north of Boone. The theme for conference field trips, presentations and discussions is “Bringing People to Birding—Moving Birders to Conservation Action.”

Ric Zarwell, the IBA Coordinator for Audubon Iowa, explains the theme as such: “This theme was selected because birding is an ideal doorway to the natural world for the uninitiated. And because there is a serious need for birders to learn how to take positive action on behalf of

habitat issues, exotic species, and other threats to birds. I believe birders are fully capable of becoming as effective for non-game birds as waterfowl hunters have been for wetlands via Ducks Unlimited, or as upland game hunters have been for upland habitat via Pheasants Forever.”

Kenn Kaufman, legendary birder and author, and Paul Baicich, former editor of *Birding* magazine and Director of Conservation and Public Policy for the American Birding Association will be giving talks and participating in field trips. The staff of Eagle Optics will also be there to give presentations on binoculars, spotting scopes and digiscoping. And the conference will conclude with a visit to the 3rd Annual Pelican Festival at Saylorville Lake, where up to 10,000 White Pelicans have gathered during previous Septembers.

This year’s conference is a wonderful opportunity for Iowa birders that shouldn’t be missed. I know that a number of our bird club members are already planning to participate. I should emphasize that you don’t have to be a member of the IOU to attend the conference. But you do need to have your registration form and fees received by August 30. Hope to see everyone there!

Registration Form – Sept. 13-15 Conference for All Birders and All Persons Interested in Birds

Registration	\$ 5.00 X _____ people	=	\$ _____
Lodging	Friday night \$12.50 X _____ people	=	
	Saturday night \$12.50 X _____ people	=	\$ _____
Meals	Friday Dinner \$7.00 X _____ people	=	\$ _____
	Saturday Breakfast \$5.50 X _____ people	=	\$ _____
	Saturday Lunch \$6.50 X _____ people	=	\$ _____
	Saturday Dinner \$7.00 X _____ people	=	\$ _____
	Sunday Breakfast \$ 5.50 X _____ people	=	\$ _____

\$ _____

Sunday Lunch – On your own at Pelican Festival Food Stand

Total \$ _____

Print Your Name(s) _____ Address _____ Phone # _____

In order to guarantee a room and meals at the convenient conference headquarters setting on the Des Moines River, registration Form and Check MUST be received by mail no later than Friday, August 30, 2002. Cabins will be assigned according to the order in which registration forms are received, newest cabins first. Remember to bring your favorite pillow and bedding, and enjoy evening programs, snacks, and abundant camaraderie. Please make your check payable to, and mail with this form to: Ric Zarwell, P.O. Box 299, Lansing, Iowa 52151

Other Lodging – (all area code 515): Bluebird B & B (beside Ledges S.P.) 432-5057; American Inn 432-4322; Super 8 Motel 432-8890; AmeriHost Inn 432-8168; Barkley House B & B 433-1424; Hancock House B & B 432-4089.

“Bringing New People to Birding Moving More Birders to Conservation Action”

A Workshop Organized and Hosted by Audubon Iowa's Important Bird Area (IBA) Program

Everyone interested in birds, birding and natural habitats is invited to this Fall Conference of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union - Sept. 13-15, '02 at the Des Moines Area YMCA Camp - 5 miles north of Boone, IA

Our Informative and Entertaining Agenda

Friday Evening – 13th

- 3 p.m. Check-in begins – Y Camp Headquarters (HQ)
- 4:00 Some of Iowa's best birders will lead bird hikes (Kenn K. and Paul B. will participate) – habitats at camp
- 5:30 Dinner – Y Camp Dining Hall
- 7:00 Social time. Meet Kenn Kaufman renowned birder, author and artist, and Paul Baicich, Director of Conservation and Public Policy for American Birding Association (ABA). Live entertainment, (HQ)
- 7:30 Optics Program – Bins, Scopes & Digiscoping, Ron Windingstad & Tom Hall, Eagle Optics (HQ)
(Bring your own digital cameras with you – receive training, practice with scopes)
- 8:30 Naturalist Mike Havlik will give program with live hawk and owl, and lead group in songs; Snacks, Refreshments, Explain Weekend Schedule (HQ)

Saturday – 14th

- 7 a.m. Breakfast at Y Camp
Field Trips will be according to conditions – will include Ledges S.P., very likely to include Saylorville Lake, Polk City Wildlife Refuge, may also include Harrier Marsh and other habitats
- Noon Lunch – Y Camp Dining Hall
- 1 p.m. Panel Summary of Iowa Birdlife and Opportunities for Birding with a Purpose: (HQ)
Iowa Birds and Habitats, an Overview of Fun and Opportunities, 20 minutes – Jim Dinsmore
Iowa DNR Bird Conservation Areas, 20 minutes – Doug Harr
Update – Iowa's Important Bird Area (IBA) Program, 20 minutes – Ric Zarwell
- 2:00 Break
- 2:15 What Research on Recreational Birders Tells Us About Ourselves – Paul Baicich
- 3:15 Break
- 3:30 Bringing People to Birds, Moving Birders to Positive Action–Insights & Examples – Kenn Kaufman
- 4:30 IOU Business Meeting (HQ)
- 5:30 Dinner – Y Camp Dining Hall

- 6:30 Digiscoping Workshop (Bring your own digital cameras – receive help, or just learn) (HQ)
7:00 Keynote Address: Where is Birding Going? New Directions and Opportunities – Paul Baicich (HQ)
Mike Havlik – live hawk and owl, and live music; Snack and Refreshments, Explain Sunday Schedule

Sunday – 15th

- 7 a.m. Breakfast at Y Camp
Field Trips will be according to what we experienced on Saturday – will include Ledges S.P., likely to include Saylorville Lake, Polk City Wildlife Refuge, may also include Harrier Marsh and other habitats
Receive Parking Stickers for Campsite # 3, at Jester Park, Saylorville Lake, to attend the variety of public activities at the highly popular Pelican Festival where pelican numbers have reached 10,000. Parking Sticker allows you to drive to Campsite # 3, reserved for IOU Conference participants only. Without Parking Sticker you will face delays and will need a tram at Jester Park to reach the Pelican Festival.
- Noon Meet at Campsite # 3, Jester Park, to compile the final bird checklist for the conference. Hike short distance to Campsite # 4 to enjoy organized activities and fun at the 3rd Annual Pelican Watch Festival
- Lunch On your own via concessions at 3rd Annual Pelican Festival.

Nature Mapping Workshop

Chris Caster

The date and contact person for the workshop at Kent Park have changed. The workshop will now be held on Saturday, October 5th, and anyone not registered and wishing to attend must register with Gene Mohling at the Johnson County Extension Office.

Bob Dick and myself have already attended both the Level I Nature Mapping and Level II Nature Mapping: Bird Training workshops elsewhere this year. Neither of us have yet had an opportunity to get out and perform Nature Mapping, but we are both familiar with the program and would be glad to answer any questions about it. This is what I can say about it right now.

First of all the price of admission is a bargain when you consider all the DNR and Iowa State Extension materials provided free for the taking. Secondly there is absolutely no pressure to perform; Nature Mappers are simply encouraged to do what they can to help. Lastly, all the data entry is done online, so you don't have any hand written forms.

The mapping simply involves determining where the wildlife is using Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) coordinates. They are more useful than Latitude and Longitude, because they give locations in meters rather than degrees, making distance calculations a snap. The workshop will show you how to use ordinary 7.5' USGS Quadrangle maps to identify the proper UTM coordinates. It isn't hard, but if you already have a GPS unit, getting the UTM coordinates is even easier.

The Level II workshops are being developed in partnership with the Iowa DNR. They have a need for volunteer contributions to some of their projects. The Bird Training workshop involves the monitoring of raptor nests (with a special emphasis on Peregrine Falcons) and colonial waterbird nests (herons). It is more involved than the Level I Nature Mapping. Once a nest or colony is located, repeated monitoring is required to document hatches and successful fledging of young. Currently there is another Level II program that involves frogs and the DNR hopes to develop programs for volunteer monitoring of aquatic invertebrates, terrestrial vertebrates, and plants.

I do have a couple of minor concerns for the program. Although the online data entry is extremely easy, it is potentially time consuming. For example, if you wish to enter 10 different bird species, you will have to submit 10 different sighting reports. It would be nice to be able to submit one report for all species seen on a single site. The Nature Mapping coordinators are aware of this problem and hope to develop a more efficient system. Also the program is currently funded through US EPA and REAP-CEP grants. What will happen to the program if these sources dry up?

On the positive side, I think the program is an incredibly easy way for persons interested in wildlife to get involved in conservation. It is ideal for someone who visits the same area often. It is ideal for someone who has a broad interest in wild creatures other than just birds. I think the partnership that exists between the Iowa State Extension and the DNR Wildlife Diversity Program is very encouraging. It means that our Nature Mapping efforts could have a real impact on conservation in the state.

Currently the Nature Mapping program is not tied to Iowa Audubon's IBA Program, but given the DNR's relationship to both it could happen. The IBA Program won't be into the monitoring phase for a while yet. Possibly Audubon will follow the development of Iowa Nature

Mapping and use it as a model for their program as well.

Iowa NatureMapping Level I Training Workshop

Sponsored by Johnson County Conservation Board and Johnson County Extension

October 5th, 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

Do you want Lunch?

Yes

No

Vegetarian?

If you want lunch, please bring \$5.00 with you to the workshop.

How did you find out about NatureMapping?

Workshop Registration Fee is \$10.00 payable to Iowa State University

Please send registration and fee to:

NatureMapping Workshop
Johnson County Extension
4265 Oak Crest Hill Rd. SE
4-H Fairgrounds
Iowa City IA 52246

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.

Evolution of U.S. Important Bird Area Programs

Chris Caster

The April 2002 issue of *Eastern Iowa Birdwatch* contained a concise introduction to the Iowa Important Bird Area (IBA) Program as coordinated by Audubon Iowa. Although the IBA Program is just now coming to our state, it is part of a much wider conservation effort that began over 20 years ago.

The U.K.-based BirdLife International in Europe and the Middle East initiated the first IBA program in 1981. This organization is now a global partnership of non-governmental conservation organizations operating in 103 countries and territories. Approximately 7,000 IBA sites have been identified worldwide that are particularly important for the conservation of threatened species or large concentrations of birds. Recently the organization published *Threatened Birds of the World*, which identifies 1,186 species worldwide that it believes could be threatened with extinction in the next 100 years. BirdLife International manages these birds and IBAs through its World Bird Database. The National Audubon Society is BirdLife International's Partner Designate in the United States. It manages a National Bird Database that is tied directly to the World Bird Database.

Audubon's involvement with IBAs began about 1997. How it got to be BirdLife's Partner Designate is a long story. Actually another organization, the American Bird Conservancy (ABC), used to be BirdLife's U.S. partner. Their relationship ended in 1998; however, the ABC continues to conduct its IBA program, independent of Audubon's and BirdLife's efforts. What follows is the development of the

IBA movement in this country.

In the late 1980s, data from 30 years worth of USFWS Breeding Bird Surveys indicated long-term, steady declines in the numbers of many neotropical migratory birds. In response the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation initiated in 1990 the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Program, now known more popularly as Partners in Flight.

Partners in Flight is also an international framework, but based in the Americas. It aims to coordinate efforts and pool resources of diverse conservation organizations, government agencies, corporations, and the public, for the conservation of neotropical migratory birds and their habitats. Developing practical ways to conserve habitat, on breeding grounds, migratory routes, and wintering grounds is what drives the PIF Program. Land acquisition is minimized, while cooperative partnerships with landowners are emphasized. The goal is to manage ecosystems as a whole, maintaining biological diversity, using birds as indicator species. PIF divides the landscape into larger Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) and smaller physiographic areas based on landscape and habitat features.

One of the first accomplishments of PIF was the creation of the Species Prioritization Process (SPS), which uses several criteria to rank species' vulnerability globally and within a particular BCR and physiographic area. The SPS dataset is maintained at the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory.

To draw attention to the conservation needs of species the WatchList was created. The PIF WatchList includes those birds of the continental U.S., not already listed under the Endangered Species Act, that most warrant conservation attention. The SPS and WatchList have provided agencies and organizations the "common ground" upon which to base their conservation efforts.

Additionally PIF attempts to set bird population and habitat targets. Because we still lack basic knowledge of population status and habitat needs of many species, this is a work in progress. One way to gain more knowledge is to tap the growing network of volunteer birders. BirdLife Intl. for years successfully employed non-governmental birders in its efforts. In 1995, the PIF Program adopted Birdlike International's IBA concept in this country.

Initially the National Audubon Society was not involved. For some time NAS had gotten away from birds to effect larger issues. The American Bird Conservancy arose to fill the bird conservation void left by Audubon. ABC worked with PIF and BirdLife International to identify IBAs for a couple of years, but ABC soon became impatient with BirdLife's methods and philosophy. The people at ABC found the use of citizen birders to be slow, and the data generated to be inconsistent. They preferred to rely on the expert opinion of the biologists already involved in wildlife management. They also preferred a more narrow approach to IBAs, only selecting the very best sites across the U.S. for inclusion. Recently, in conjunction with the National Geographic Society, ABC published a map illustrating their network of U.S. IBAs.

Shortly after the ABC got started, Audubon decided to focus more seriously on bird

conservation. It also began an IBA program. Like the ABC effort, it adopted the PIF Watchlist, BCRs and physiographic areas as its framework. For a while ABC and Audubon collaborated, and in 1999 co-authored a paper on U.S. IBAs. But it wasn't long before the ABC and the NAS terminated its agreement. It has been suggested that some bad politics were involved between ABC President George Fenwick and Audubon's Frank Gill; though, the overriding issue was likely the same basic difference in philosophical approach to bird conservation that existed between ABC and BirdLife. In the end, BirdLife International and the National Audubon Society forged their current relationship based on citizen birder involvement at all levels of the IBA process: identification, monitoring, educational programming, and stewardship.

At the core of Audubon's IBA Program is an effort to engage the public. Successful long-term bird conservation requires advocacy. Currently there are only a handful of persons employed, as part of Iowa's Wildlife Diversity Program and funding for bird conservation efforts is meager. Audubon and BirdLife International recognize that very large numbers of individuals in this country and worldwide have an interest in birds. They point to all that groups such as Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever have accomplished for habitat improvement. Though the number of serious birders in the U.S. is relatively low; the number of persons with a casual interest in birds is enormous. Audubon feels that those with a casual interest represent the greatest potential for bird conservation advocacy.

Audubon's IBA Program is being implemented state-by-state. This provides greater flexibility and promotes stronger ties between citizen

birders and governmental managers. The relationship being forged between the Iowa IBA Program and DNR has the potential to be particularly strong. This looks like a good time for birders in Iowa to unite for the future of birding in our state. We are very fortunate to have Ric Zarwell, the Iowa Audubon IBA Coordinator, presenting at our regular meeting on September 19. He will provide the latest on the progress of the IBA Program in our state, where it's going and how we can get involved.

Web sites:

Iowa IBA Program

www.iowabirds.org/IBA

National Audubon Society IBA Program

www.audubon.org/bird/iba/index.html

BirdLife International

www.birdlife.net

PIF—Species Assessment Database

www.rmbo.org/pif/pifdb.html

PIF—WatchList

www.abcbirds.org/pif/pif_watch_list.htm

American Bird Conservancy—Two IBA Programs

www.abcbirds.org/iba/two_IBAs.htm

Iowa City Bird Club

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For general bird club information, contact Iowa City Bird Club president Chris Caster at 339-8343. **To lead or suggest a field trip**, contact field trip coordinator Karen Disbrow at 339-1017.

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