
Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 27 Number 2

September 2007

Schedule

Field trips depart from the Dodge Street Hy-Vee in Iowa City unless otherwise noted. Meet in the southwest corner of the parking lot. Please contact the leader in advance if you plan to meet the group at the trip destination. Many of our trips are accessible to people with disabilities; for more information please contact the trip leader. **Meetings** are held at the Grant Wood AEA Southern Facility, 200 Holiday Road in Coralville, generally at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month.

September 8, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Cairo Woods in Louisa County for woodland migrants. Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot on Highway 1 in Iowa City. Linda Donelson, 351-7452.

September 13, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Meeting. The ICBC travelogue continues as Jim and Sharon Scheib share their experiences finding birds of Australia and New Zealand during a three-week trip last November.

September 15, Saturday, 9 a.m. – Noon. Annual Hawk Watch at Stainbrook Preserve, located along Mehaffey Bridge Rd. just north of Sugar Bottom Recreation Area. Songbird banding and hourly programs will be held at nearby Macbride Nature-Recreation Area. For more information call Karen Disbrow at 339-1017.

September 15, Saturday, 1 p.m. Knight Prairie Pavilion Grand Opening at Kent Park. See page 2 for more information about this exciting event.

October 6, Saturday, 7:30 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Area for sparrows and other fall migrants. Ken Lowder, 351-1207.

October 14, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Local areas wherever the best birds are occurring. Mark Brown, 358-6709.

October 18, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Meeting. Jason Paulios will present on his participation in the Mindo Birdathon in northwest Ecuador this summer. This was the second in a series of annual birdathons sponsored by the Wisconsin Birding Conservation Initiative to benefit the Mindo Cloudforest Foundation.

November 11, Sunday, 2:00 p.m. Redbird Farms Wildlife Area for sparrows and other late migrants. Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot on Highway 1 in Iowa City. Wear bright clothing as hunting season will be open. Linda Donelson, 351-7452.

November 15, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Meeting. Mark Brown will present on birds and butterflies photographed during an 18-day trip he made last November to Taiwan with his family

November 18, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area near Palo for loons, grebes, ducks, and other water birds. Chris Edwards, 887-6957.

Continued on next page →

Other Dates of Note

September 9, Sunday, 1–6 p.m. Saylorville Pelican Festival at Jester Park north of Des Moines.

September 13-16, Thursday-Sunday. Midwest Birding Symposium in Moline, Illinois, featuring many well-known speakers including Kenn Kaufman, Paul Baicich, and Eldon Grij, as well as daily field trips, vendor displays, and much more. For more information visit www.visitquadcities.com/for_mbs/midwest_birding.html.

October 26-28, Friday-Sunday. Iowa Ornithologists' Union Fall Meeting at Ankeny. Field trips to central Iowa birding hot spots will take place Saturday and Sunday morning. Saturday events include a variety of afternoon presentations and an evening banquet. For more information visit www.iowabirds.org.

November 9-11, Friday-Sunday. Rivers and Bluffs Fall Birding Festival in Lansing. Features field trips, boat excursions, programs, live music, and more. For more information contact Ric Zarwell at Ric.Zarwell@mchsi.com or (563) 538-4991.

December 16, Sunday. Iowa City Christmas Bird Count. Mark your calendars now!

Knight Prairie Pavilion Grand Opening Sept. 15

A grand opening ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony for the Knight Prairie Pavilion in Kent Park will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, September 15. The pavilion, which is located just north and west of the Evergreen Landing area, honors our friends and members Bernie and the late Cal Knight. It sits on a ridge overlooking an 80-acre reconstructed prairie and three wetlands on the west side of the park. The pavilion will house a series of interpretive panels about the area's original prairie vegetation. A large binocular scope will be permanently mounted to provide visitors a close-up view of the birds and other wildlife. Nearby will be a prairie breaking plow exhibit. Construction of the pavilion was made possible by a gift from Bernie Knight and her children, Crystal Kelly and Calvin Knight. The ceremony will include comments by Johnson County Conservation Director Harry Graves, author and photographer Larry Stone, and members of the Knight family. There will be an interpreter-guided tour of the prairie, followed by refreshments at the Conservation Education Center provided by the Knight family.

Bud Gode Interpretive Nature Trail

Another former club member and past president has been honored with a permanent outdoor education exhibit. As you may know, Bud and his wife retired to Green Valley, Arizona, near Madera Canyon, a beautiful natural area and world-renowned birding hot spot. When Bud died, his family and friends contributed to the Friends of Madera Canyon. This money was set aside for the Bud Gode Interpretive Nature Trail. Plans have been made and construction is well underway. Plans call for three open shelters, each with benches and interpretive panels. The shelters are located at the transition from desert grassland to mesquite grassland, the transition from mesquite grassland to juniper-oak woodlands, and the riparian habitat at the Madera Picnic Area. There will also be a canopy-level observation platform here along Madera Creek. A fourth ramada is at the Mt Wrightson Picnic Area, and there will even be interpretive panels on the restrooms at this site. In total there will be 29 interpretive panels at the shelters and 50 plant identification signs along the Bud Gode Interpretive Nature Trail.

2007 Johnson County Spring Count

Chris Caster

The Spring Count was held on the 12th of May and the day was beautiful. The early morning temperature was 57 and the afternoon high was 79. Skies were mostly clear and the winds were out of the E-NE at 5-10 mph. We managed to field a pretty good crew, despite missing a number of stalwarts from past counts. The species total was 160.

The day's best bird was without a doubt a Glossy Ibis discovered by Tom Kent and Ken Lowder in the flooded field south of Sand Point in the Hawkeye Wildlife Area. These birds have rarely been seen in Iowa and never before in Johnson County. You should have seen the dust clouds rising on the Swan Lake Road as we all rendezvoused for that one. Hardly a year goes by when Tom isn't a party to our best bird of count. Thanks again Tom and Ken! The next best bird was a tie between the Great-tailed Grackles found by Mark Brown at South Sycamore Bottoms and the Hooded Warbler that Chris Edwards tracked down for us at Sugar Bottom Recreation Area.

We had a whole bunch of additional 'good' birds. A group of Cattle Egrets and a Hudsonian Godwit accompanied the Glossy Ibis. Lesser Scaup and Hooded Mergansers were the best waterfowl. American Bitterns, Sora, and Sedge and Marsh Wrens were at the South Sycamore Bottoms. Upland Sandpipers and Northern Mockingbirds were along 500th Ave. SE near the county line. A Bonaparte's Gull was at Lake Macbride. Acadian Flycatchers were at Hanging Rock Woods and Squire Point. A White-eyed Vireo was at Lake Macbride and Bell's Vireos were at four locations. American Pipits were along the Babcock Access Road. We had twenty-five species of warblers including a Cape May Warbler at the Cina Oak Savannah near Sutcliffe and the count's very first Lawrence's Warbler.

This year's birds-that-got-away included: American Woodcock, Black Tern, Barred Owl, Whip-poor-will, Loggerhead Shrike, Cedar Waxwing, Kentucky Warbler, and Eurasian Tree Sparrow. A couple of those were unbelievable misses, but it wasn't for a lack of effort. What a fun day!

Participants: Brady Belcher, Mark Brown, Chris Caster (compiler), Bob Dick, Chris Edwards, Rick Hollis, Tom Kent, Garrison Kline, Ken Lowder, Mark Madsen, Diana Pesek, and Jim Scheib.

SPECIES LIST					
Canada Goose	90	Osprey	2	Wilson's Snipe	2
Wood Duck	13	Bald Eagle	3	Wilson's Phalarope	2
Gadwall	3	Northern Harrier	1	Bonaparte's Gull	1
Mallard	54	Cooper's Hawk	3	Ring-billed Gull	109
Blue-winged Teal	31	Red-tailed Hawk	13	Caspian Tern	2
Northern Shoveler	4	American Kestrel	3	Forster's Tern	5
Lesser Scaup	4	Sora	10	Rock Pigeon	48
Hooded Merganser	3	American Coot	46	Mourning Dove	160
Ring-necked Pheasant	27	Black-bellied Plover	2	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1
Wild Turkey	12	Semipalmated Plover	10	Eastern Screech-Owl	3
Northern Bobwhite	3	Killdeer	25	Red-headed Woodpecker	24
Pied-billed Grebe	2	Lesser Yellowlegs	25	Great Horned Owl	1
American White Pelican	4	Solitary Sandpiper	1	Common Nighthawk	7
Double-crested Cormorant	46	Spotted Sandpiper	5	Chimney Swift	13
American Bittern	3	Upland Sandpiper	2	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	14
Great Blue Heron	20	Hudsonian Godwit	1	Belted Kingfisher	5
Great Egret	1	Semipalmated Sandpiper	3	Red-bellied Woodpecker	33
Cattle Egret	8	Least Sandpiper	20	Downy Woodpecker	28
Green Heron	5	White-rumped Sandpiper	2	Hairy Woodpecker	7
Glossy Ibis	1	Pectoral Sandpiper	30	Northern Flicker	12
Turkey Vulture	42	Dunlin	8	Pileated Woodpecker	1
		Short-billed Dowitcher	15	Eastern Wood-Pewee	19

Acadian Flycatcher	4	Gray-cheeked Thrush	10	Wilson's Warbler	3
Willow Flycatcher	1	Swainson's Thrush	38	Scarlet Tanager	20
<i>Empidonax</i> sp.	2	Wood Thrush	7	Eastern Towhee	11
Least Flycatcher	9	American Robin	120	Chipping Sparrow	42
Eastern Phoebe	8	Gray Catbird	89	Field Sparrow	14
Great Crested Flycatcher	34	Northern Mockingbird	2	Vesper Sparrow	2
Eastern Kingbird	40	Brown Thrasher	23	Lark Sparrow	9
White-eyed Vireo	1	European Starling	92	Savannah Sparrow	3
Bell's Vireo	4	American Pipit	3	Grasshopper Sparrow	7
Yellow-throated Vireo	24	Blue-winged Warbler	3	Song Sparrow	41
Blue-headed Vireo	2	Tennessee Warbler	123	Lincoln's Sparrow	5
Warbling Vireo	26	Orange-crowned Warbler	1	Swamp Sparrow	7
Red-eyed Vireo	42	Nashville Warbler	21	White-throated Sparrow	10
Blue Jay	61	Northern Parula	5	White-crowned Sparrow	2
American Crow	29	Yellow Warbler	11	Northern Cardinal	115
Horned Lark	4	Golden-winged Warbler	3	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	36
Purple Martin	15	Chestnut-sided Warbler	9	Indigo Bunting	53
Tree Swallow	37	Magnolia Warbler	1	Dickcissel	6
N. Rough-winged Swallow	5	Cape May Warbler	1	Bobolink	7
Bank Swallow	1	Yellow-rumped Warbler	13	Red-winged Blackbird	459
Cliff Swallow	147	Black-throated Green Warbler	3	Eastern Meadowlark	10
Barn Swallow	60	Blackburnian Warbler	7	Western Meadowlark	3
Black-capped Chickadee	36	Yellow-throated Warbler	2	Meadowlark sp.	33
Tufted Titmouse	14	Palm Warbler	9	Common Grackle	161
White-breasted Nuthatch	17	Bay-breasted Warbler	1	Great-tailed Grackle	2
Carolina Wren	2	Blackpoll Warbler	8	Brown-headed Cowbird	49
House Wren	69	Cerulean Warbler	3	Orchard Oriole	9
Sedge Wren	1	Black-and-white Warbler	5	Baltimore Oriole	72
Marsh Wren	6	American Redstart	83	House Finch	10
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	Ovenbird	15	American Goldfinch	89
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	21	Northern Waterthrush	4	House Sparrow	52
Eastern Bluebird	10	Common Yellowthroat	65		
Veery	2	Hooded Warbler	1		

Book Review

Rick Hollis

Good Birders Don't Wear White: Fifty Tips from North America's Top Birders. Edited by Lisa White; foreword by Pete Dunne; illustrations by Robert A. Braunfield. Houghton Mifflin, 2007. 268 pages.

More birding hints – as if there are not enough things to think about when birding and enough ‘how to bird’ books on the market. I did not expect much from this book and was greatly surprised. Each chapter is written by a different birder, some whose names you will recognize

others you won't. The title comes from Sheri Williamson's essay which many of us read in a different form. Although not the introductory chapter, it really sets the tone. This chapter is followed by Kenn Kaufman's ‘Question Authority: Good Birders Sometimes Wear White’. There are fifty chapters of hints and ideas, many of which require a different kind of thinking than normal. Among my favorites were the chapter on bad weather birding and the two chapters on birding with children. Another wonderful chapter was John Alcorn's one on the Rule of Sandwiches, the Little Sit, and Still Walking, all of which suggests that we slow down while birding.

Membership Spotlight on: **Linda Donelson**

Name: Linda Donelson

What is your occupation? I'm a part-time writer and have a large website, karenblixen.com. In the 1990s I wrote and published a book called *Out of Isak Dinesen*, which is the true story behind *Out of Africa*. Our family lived on a research farm in Kenya on two occasions, where my husband John was studying parasites (trypanosomes) that cause African sleeping sickness. There I became interested in Karen Blixen, the Danish writer who also lived "at the foot of the Ngong Hills," outside Nairobi. She wrote several books under the pen name Isak Dinesen. Two of our four children were born while I was in medical school at the University of Iowa, and I was in Family Practice for five years, but I stopped doing medicine when our family expanded and we moved to Kenya. I started writing as a hobby. My medical background gave me the insight to write about Karen Blixen, who had a complicated medical history that had been poorly understood by previous biographers.

Tell us about your family. John is professor and head of the biochemistry department at the University of Iowa. He comes from Ogden, Iowa, but we met each other in the Peace Corps in West Africa. We were married in Ghana. We've lived in Iowa City since 1972. Our daughter, Chris, is a doctor in Iowa City in Internal Medicine. Her husband, Jeff Charis-Carlson, writes the editorial page at the *Iowa City Press-Citizen*. They have two little girls. One of our sons, Loren, works for Google in Santa Monica, and another son, Emory, is in real estate in Beverly Hills. Our son Lyn currently works as a guide for bike tours in France.

Where did you grow up? I was born in Waconia, Minnesota, west of Minneapolis, and moved to Clinton, Iowa, at the age of nine. Clinton was a lovely blue-collar town in the fifties. We used to ice-skate on the Mississippi River in winter and picnic on the sandbars in summer.

When and how did your interest in birds develop? My seventh-grade teacher, Mr. McCabe, once showed us pictures of a Scarlet Tanager and an Indigo Bunting. I longed to actually see these birds, but the concept of owning binoculars was unknown to my family. Over the years I met a few good birders who always left me in awe. One was Rick Hollis. My husband had some binoculars, but looking through them made me seasick. John was interested in birds, he bought a bird book, and he was the first person to take me birding—in Sapsucker Woods at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Two events were key to my learning to bird. The first was attending the spring warbler walks in Hickory Hill Park with James Huntington, in 2001. The second was buying a pair of excellent mid-priced binoculars from Eagle Optics in Madison, Wisconsin. Much of the joy of birding depends on a good, comfortable pair of binoculars.

Did you have any birding mentors? The members of the Iowa City Bird Club have been my mentors and I will be grateful to them always. At first birding was frustrating because I couldn't learn on my own. The first two years were key—getting used to the various families of birds. I couldn't have done it without the outings with the Iowa City Bird Club. I've also greatly appreciated the Iowa Birding Listserve (<http://birdingonthe.net/maillinglists/IOWA.html>), which has given me all kinds of hints about what birds can be found and where to see them. I could mention a couple score of good birders who have helped me tremendously, most of them members of this bird club. I'm grateful to belong to such a vibrant bird club and thank all who work to make it better and better.

When did you join the Iowa City Bird Club? Thérèse Guédon talked to me about the bird club for over a year. She never misses a meeting. I'm a little shy and didn't realize that everyone is welcome. I

joined the first warbler walk in 2001—by coincidence just after my youngest child left Iowa City for college. I read about the warbler walks in the *Iowa City Press-Citizen*. I owe immense thanks to Karen Disbrow and the others who set these up and brought me into birding. I always feel as if members of the Iowa City Bird Club are holding my hand and helping me to see birds.

Do you remember the first bird club event you attended? I attended a warbler walk in Hickory Hill Park with James Huntington. This was a life-changing event for me. I had always wanted to learn about birds, but never found someone to show the birds to me before. When I go to Heaven I will be walking the trails of Hickory Hill Park with James Huntington at dawn.

Do you have a favorite bird or family of birds? My favorite Iowa bird is the American Kestrel. I feel lucky to see this bird on a daily basis because it has become alarmingly scarce in eastern states.

What particular aspects of birding interest you the most? Birding is a wonderful excuse to be outside. If you're bored, you can always bird—when you're waiting for your family, when your transportation is late, when you need to kill time, when you need a break. Birding is a hobby that can fill the crannies of your schedule. I also love to meet birders. They aren't worried about their hair or their wardrobe, they get up early, they don't mind cold or mud, and they know when to be quiet.

Do you keep a life list? Yes, and, with trips to Panama and the Bahamas this year, I have 755 birds on my world list. But counting is not very important to me. For the most part I don't travel to see one species of bird. Visiting the Harlequin Ducks in Bettendorf this February was the first time I ever left Johnson County for the sole purpose of seeing a bird. I'm happy with whatever birds I see, just to be outside birding.

What recent Iowa birds have you added to your life list? Snowy Owl, Harlequin Duck and Painted Bunting. It took me awhile to finally identify a Vesper Sparrow (this spring). And, just over the border, on the far west side of Omaha, last fall I had great first looks at Le Conte's Sparrows.

What interesting birds have you seen in your yard? We live on a small acreage southwest of Iowa City. We have a half dozen walnut trees adjacent to our old farmhouse that seem to attract birds. Our most interesting bird was a Yellow-billed Cuckoo contentedly foraging in the driveway outside our kitchen window. Two young Great Horned Owls talked to each other one morning on the roof of our garage. We have Bobwhites in our pasture, around our wild plum trees. We also have Dickcissels, Lincoln's Sparrows, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Warbling Vireos, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Swainson's Thrushes and some warblers, and we have a resident winter Cooper's Hawk. A Peregrine Falcon occasionally stops in our pasture.

Where is your favorite place in Iowa to bird, and why? I particularly love sparrows because they are challenging to spot. In late spring and early fall I like the fields at Redbird Farm in southwest Johnson County. I always stop at Townsend Woods south of Lowden, because it lies on the route to Clinton to visit my family. Cairo Woods in Louisa County is a particular favorite, and I also love Indiagrass Hills.

Tell us about one of your most exciting Iowa birding moments. In December 2006 my husband and I followed directions, from the Iowa Bird Listserve, to an area northeast of Nevada. It was a foggy day, there was not a tree for miles and we had little hope of finding the Snowy Owl described. Suddenly the bird was before us, on a sign post looming out of the fog. (Photo at www.iowabirds.org/photo-gallery/.) We were alone in the fog with this gorgeous bird for a half hour—a religious experience. It is amazing how big a Snowy Owl is.

What is your "most wanted" Iowa bird? I would love to see a Woodcock. I've witnessed their spring displays and listened to their "peenting," but I've never seen one in daylight. Many birders tell me they have scared up a woodcock in the woods, and I would love to do this.

Tell us about a favorite birding experience or place outside of Iowa. One of the most interesting places in the United States is Death Valley National Park. It is especially exciting to visit in March, when the wildflowers bloom and the Black-throated Sparrows are singing. A half day's drive west brings you to the eastern Sierra Nevadas—where I saw my first Brewer's Sparrows and California Quail. And a half day's drive south takes you to Needles, California, and Turtle Mountain Reserve. Here I saw my first Wrentit and Sage Thrasher, and some very interesting Gnatcatchers.

If you could visit any place on earth, where would it be? I would like to be in the woods at daybreak, anywhere. I would say the place in the world I've loved the most is Cana, in the Darien jungle of eastern Panama, followed by Yellowstone in winter, the Grand Canyon in March, and the North Rim of the Grand Canyon in summer.

Do you have any hobbies or interests besides birding? Bicycling and RAGBRAI, cross-country skiing, photography, gardening, golf, learning Spanish and Danish, star-gazing—and keeping track of my many first cousins.

Do you have any favorite movies or TV shows? Movies I've watched many times: *Touching the Void*, *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, *The Natural*, *Blame it on Rio*, *Only You*, *Flower Drum Song*, *Love with the Proper Stranger*.

Favorite TV show: *E! News Live* (no kidding)—followed closely by the Golden Globes and the Oscars.

Have you read any good books lately? I like reading ancient history, like *The Journey of Man* by Spencer Wells—which traces human migration in prehistoric times via DNA changes—and *Guns, Germs and Steel* by Jared Diamond, but I also love books by Candace (*Sex and the City*) Bushnell.

What is your favorite restaurant? India Cafe in Iowa City, HuHot in Coralville, the Chinese Buffet in Coralville, and the Pizza Ranch in North Liberty.

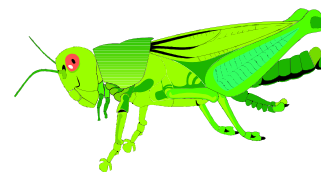
Book Review

Rick Hollis

The Songs of Insects. Lang Elliott and Wil Hershberger, with photos and sound recordings by the authors. Houghton Mifflin, 2006. 227 pages. Includes a 70-minute audio CD featuring high-quality recordings of the songs of all species, track-keyed to the information in the text.

Coneheads and crickets and trigs, oh my! When I teach about birds, one of my rules is that 'Not Everything that Sounds Like a Bird, Is a Bird'. And its inverse, 'Some Things that Don't Sound Like Birds, Are Birds'. This book, with gorgeous color photos and compact disc, give countless examples of the former and presents

insect songs which you might confuse with Grasshopper Sparrows. I knew there were some bugs out there that made noise, but I had no idea of their diversity. Lang Elliott (NatureSound Studio) and Wil Hershberger (a naturalist and photographer) have put together a wonderful product, covering 74 species, each with large photos, text, range map, sonogram, and recording, in addition to some introductory materials. This book is superb! I enjoyed borrowing it from the library and I want it on my bookshelf.



Periodical Cicadas Invade Eastern Iowa

Chris Caster

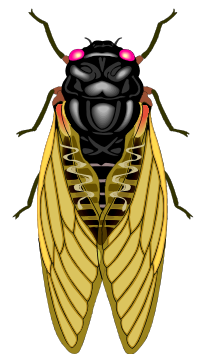
If you ventured into the woods this June you were likely greeted by hordes of these large-bodied, red-eyed bugs. They were so numerous in places that it was difficult to hear the birds singing over their noisy chorus. And at times it seemed as if the birds had just given up trying to be heard. The countless circular openings found on the forest floor and shell casts grasping every plant were also evidence of their numbers.

All but a few cicadas have multiple-year life cycles, most commonly 2-8 years. Adults of these cicada species are present every year and so they are known as “annual cicadas.” The phenomenon that we witnessed this summer was the emergence of the “periodical cicadas.” Periodical species are synchronized so that all the adults emerge in the same season, in this case every seventeen years. There are three species of 17-year cicadas and four species of 13-year cicadas, all belonging to the genus *Magicicada*. Iowa doesn't have any 13-year cicadas. Although true to their cycles, periodical cicadas don't emerge everywhere in the same year and there were no emergences in 2005 or 2006 and won't be any in 2009 or 2010. There are fourteen broods of 17-year cicadas and three broods of 13-year cicadas. This summer we witnessed the emergence of brood XIII, which also extended across southern Wisconsin, northern Illinois and into northeast Indiana. Two other broods emerge in Iowa: brood III next emerges in 2014 across southeast Iowa and west-central Illinois and brood IV next emerges in 2015 in a nearly continuous region stretching from southwest Iowa to northeast Texas.

Each of the Iowa broods contains all three of the 17-year cicada species. These can be separated visually or by the buzzy “song,” which males make using special structures on their abdomen hidden below their wings, called tymbals. Both sexes hear the sounds using membranous organs called tympana on the underside of their abdomens. After emergence the adults spend 4 to 6 days allowing their exoskeleton to harden. Then the males form aggregations or choruses in the trees to attract females for mating. Adults feed by sucking on plant fluids and large numbers can cause wilting. Females excavate a series of Y-shaped nests within living twigs and deposit as many as 600 eggs. In six to ten weeks the eggs hatch and the new nymphs drop and burrow underground to feed on rootlets for the duration of their 13 or 17 year development.

It is difficult to explain how such a life cycle would evolve, but it certainly works. Periodical cicadas have been found to contain densities as high as 1.5 million per acre. Occasionally cicadas will emerge off-schedule, a phenomenon called “straggling.” This is commonly marked by a one-year premature or delayed emergence by small numbers of cicadas. However sometimes large numbers of cicadas can emerge four years early; which gives insights into mechanisms of *Magicicada* speciation.

To view the source of this information and learn more about these fascinating creatures, visit the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology's Cicada Page: http://insects.ummz.lsa.umich.edu/fauna/michigan_cicadas/Periodical/Index.html.



First Bio-Blitz at Hickory Hill Park

Karen Disbrow

On June 24 the Iowa City Bird Club participated in the first-ever BioBlitz of Hickory Hill Park, along with the Friends of Hickory Hill Park, the Prairie State Mushroom Club, and the University of Iowa Natural History Museum. Overall approximately 70 people participated in one or more events.

Chris Caster led a 6 a.m. bird hike in which sixteen people participated. Birds seen (30 species): Wild Turkey, Cooper's Hawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Great Crested Flycatcher, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue Jay, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, American Redstart, Scarlet Tanager, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Brown-headed Cowbird, American Goldfinch.

At 9 a.m. a mushroom foray led by Damian Pieper and Dean Abel had 25+ participants. Some of the fungi found included: *Apiosporina morbosus* (Black Knot), *Auricularia auricula* (Brown Jelly Tree Ears), *Cantherellus cibarius* (Yellow Chanterelle), *Clavicornia pyxidata* (Crown Tip Coral), *Eocronartium musicola*, *Galliella rufa* (Rubber Cups), *Gymnosporangium juniperæ-virginiana* (Cedar/Apple Rust), *Marasmius* sp., *Pluteus cervinus*, *Polyporus elegans* (Little Black Foot Polypore), *Polyporus mori* (Little Hickory Stick Polypore), *Rhodotus palmatus*, *Sarcoscypha* sp. (Scarlet cups), *Schizophyllum commune* (Split Gill), *Trichaptum biformis* (Purple Tooth).

The dragonfly walk at 10 a.m. was cancelled due to the weather, and at 11 a.m. Chris Edwards managed to find four butterfly species despite the overcast and misty conditions: Eastern Tailed-Blue, Red Admiral, Hackberry Emperor, and Fiery Skipper.

A 2 p.m. tree walk with Jeff Schabillion had 32 participants. The group walked east from the Conklin Lane Pavilion down the hillside through the area where the former owners planted an arboretum 80 years ago. Wisteria, blue spruce, burr oak, balsam fir, Kentucky coffee tree, and other non-native though very interesting trees were found. At 5:30 p.m. Paul Rudolph led a group of five people to search the stream for snails and other invertebrates. They returned muddy and with one lone empty snail shell, *Triodopsis multilineata*. Paul said that particular creek was very sterile. At 6:30 p.m. Mike Fallon led a few people on a prairie reconstruction walk.

At 8 p.m. Karen Disbrow played owl and frog tapes to a group of eight kids and several parents. No bats were observed, no frogs were heard, and the only owl heard was a Barred Owl. At 9 p.m. Karen Disbrow set up and demonstrated moth night-lighting with a white sheet, black light and lanterns. As an added bonus we had a group of hundreds of inch-worm type caterpillars feeding on the adjacent tree. They were ravenous and had cleaned one branch of all leaves in less than an hour.

During the day a chipmunk, raccoon, skunk, rabbit, mole, white-tailed deer and squirrel were seen, scented or left tracks for a mammal list.

This was a fun event and a great educational experience for many participants. We hope to repeat the event in future years, perhaps in different seasons or at other locations.

Field Trip and Meeting Reports

March 31, Hawkeye Wildlife Area.

Fortunately the recent rains abated for the morning and we were able to stay dry despite the muck. Our first stop was Swan Lake where we found a nice group of waterfowl. Bufflehead, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler and Pied-billed Grebes were the highlights. We left our vehicles lakeside and walked down the gravel to the Sand Point parking lot where we made a loop around the nearby woodlot. We found a number of interesting birds there including a flock of both kinglets, Eastern Phoebe, Brown Creepers, Fox Sparrows, a Swamp Sparrow, and four Purple Finches including one male. A Wood Duck pair, roosting high on a tree branch was also really nice to see.

Avoiding the mud on Swan Lake Rd. we went the long way around to Greencastle Ave. There we met with Diana. We had a spectacularly blue Eastern Bluebird pair feeding in the burnt field at the Swan Lake Rd. intersection. Returning Tree Swallows were seen along Greencastle Ave. A Horned Grebe in alternate plumage was seen on the extreme western edge of Half Moon Lake for a short while before it disappeared around a bend. A number of diving ducks were present there as well as a lone American White Pelican. Lastly we decided to pile into our 4x4 vehicles and negotiated the muddy Swan Lake Rd. down to the Babcock Access. We were rewarded with great looks at a Vesper Sparrow pair foraging along the roadside and Horned Larks. Many dabbling ducks were seen at the end of the Babcock Access with Northern Pintail and Green-winged Teal being the highlights there.

I added a blue phase Snow Goose on my drive home when I scanned a group of ducks foraging a flooded field along Forevergreen Rd. west of North Liberty.

Participants: Chris Caster (leader), Bob and Dara Dick, Ken Hunt, Diana Pesek, Lisa Spellman.

Birds (56 species): Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Widgeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Ring-necked Pheasant, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Meadowlark sp., Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Purple Finch, House Sparrow.

– Chris Caster

April 1, Cone Marsh, Beginning Birders Trip. It was not a very nice day. Between the cold, rain, and wind whipping in our faces as it always does at Cone, and the fact that 99.9% of the birds we saw were coots, I think we did good to find 43 species. Some like the Osprey were seen at the limits of identification. Despite this, everyone had a good time. A special thanks to the ICBC pros who came out to help with this beginners trip on a lousy morning.

Participants: Sarah Bissell, Mark Bowman, Cathy Cole, Karen Disbrow, Trish Ditsworth, Linda Donelson, Mike Feiss, Rick Hollis (leader), Barbara Hughes, Lauren and Doina Johnson, Lorraine and Paul Kent, Richard Lynch, Mary Noble, Bernard and Nancy Sorofman, Elliott Young, Grace Young, Rich Young.

Birds (43 species): Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Pheasant, Pied-billed Grebe, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, shorebird sp, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Vesper Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle.

– Rick Hollis

April 14, Redbird Farm Wildlife Area. We had an all-day snow just three days before this trip. Night-time lows had been in the twenties all the previous week and our tulips and daffodils froze. While preparing for this outing, I found abundant Fox Sparrows at Redbird Farm on Thursday morning. But Friday the sun came out, the skies cleared, and the wind died to a breeze. The weather was great for migrating, and migrate those Fox Sparrows did. Nary a one made an appearance for us on this fateful Saturday.

Happily, the temperature had come back to normal—39 degrees at dawn. The sun appeared mid-morning and it was 58 degrees as we came home. Thanks to a great group of birders, each one of which contributed wonderfully to the outing. We found all the target birds we were looking for except for those Fox Sparrows, but the numbers of birds were fewer than earlier in the week.

In southwest Johnson County along Black Diamond Road, just east of Redbird Farm, we explored the woods surrounding the North-South Fork of Old Man's Creek. A cooperative Winter Wren was there, along with Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and Brown Creepers.

Afterwards, at Redbird Farm we headed into the sorghum field on the east side of the parking lot and walked along the little creek where the vegetation is usually a sparrow alley. We were serenaded by several Song Sparrows and also found some straggling juncos, but this was not a great morning for sparrows.

We returned to the trail that goes northeast and ducked into the woods to the east, just after crossing the little creek. Two towhees were seen there on Thursday, and we thought we heard one but did not find it. We heard the long tinkling song of the Winter Wren and followed it along the North Fork of Old Man's Creek. We saw White-throated Sparrows, and Wood Ducks flew over several times, making their whiny call. Finally we climbed higher to a woody ridge with a beautiful view of the flatlands next to the creek. We had good views of sapsuckers and Hermit Thrushes, and also Brown Creeper and Ruby-Crowned Kinglet.

Then we looped down the big meadow to the ponds, where we found a variety of ducks and a flying Wild Turkey. Field Sparrows serenaded us as we followed the woodland path back to our cars. Most of the participants were eager to come back in a few weeks to see the wildflowers, which showed evidence of putting on a pretty good show.

Participants: Mark Bowman, John Broz, Barry Buschelman, Linda Donelson (leader), Thérèse Guédon, Ken Hunt, Rosemary Plapp.

Birds (35 species): Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Blue-winged Teal, Great Blue Heron, *buteo* sp., Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Black-capped Chickadee, Winter Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Brown-headed Cowbird, Ruby-

throated Kinglet, Golden-crowned Kinglet, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Field Sparrow.

–Linda Donelson

April 15, Kent Park, Beginning Birders Trip.

As always, I am extremely grateful for all the experienced birders that show up on these trips. Their help is gratefully acknowledged. Starting at the Conservation Education Center, we followed the gravel path to the second, larger pond. At the bottom of the hill, we followed a path along the north bank of a new pond and crossing the dike, we returned along a ridge between two drainages. This area of the park has some very old, spreading oaks and extremely large osage oranges scattered through much younger growth. The best birds for us were the Eastern Towhees. We heard numerous birds and finally got a super look at one. No flowers or herps were seen, and the only mammal was a muskrat.

Participants: Jean Allgood, Mark Bowman, Barry Buschelman, Cathy Cole, Dara Dick, Robert Dick, Karen Disbrow, Linda Donelson, Thérèse Guédon, Merrill Hamilton, Teresa Hamilton, Rick Hollis (leader), Doina Johnson, Lauren Johnson, Lorraine Kent, Blossom Shaw, Bernard Sorofman, Nancy Sorofman.

Birds (44 species): Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, American Coot, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, kinglet sp., Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Eastern Towhee, American Tree Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal,

Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird.

– Rick Hollis

April 19, Meeting. Linda and John Donelson presented on their trip to the Darien National Park wilderness in Panama. Panama has a rainy season from April to December; so late February/early March was a good time to go. This was a package trip with Victor Emmanuel Nature Tours led by one of their most experienced guides, David Wolf.

The province of Darien contains the largest amount of protected forest in Panama and one of the largest in Central America. The Darien National Park contains nearly 6000 square kilometers of virgin forest and no roads. It is bordered to the east by Columbia, to the south by the Pacific Ocean, and by extensive protected buffer zones to the north and west that are nearly as large as the park itself. It is home to jaguar, tapir, and the Harpy Eagle. Red-throated Caracara is common there, which is an indicator of forest quality.

The Donelsons met up with the tour in Panama City. From there it was a 45-minute plane flight to a small grassy airstrip at Cana, an old gold mining camp. Cana is truly in the middle of nowhere. The entire population consists of less than a dozen persons who maintain the camp for ecotourism and conservation activities. Accommodations consisted of a wooden bunkhouse with shared facilities. Meals were provided at a nearby dining hall. A typical day began at 5:20 with a 5:45 breakfast and birding at 6:15. The Donelsons' reference guide was *A Guide to the Birds of Panama* by Robert Ridgely and John Gwynne. The book is quite heavy, so Linda had the illustrations cut out and rebound into something more field-worthy.

The birds were everywhere and of endless variety. The first trick in identification was to learn what family each bird belonged. Of course that is always a good approach, but it can be a considerable challenge in Panama, where there are many groups with which a birder from

temperate climates would be unfamiliar. Linda said that you could just imagine any sort of colored or patterned tanager and you could probably find it there. But the tanagers were just the beginning as the group encountered 281 different birds on the trip. Fortunately for Linda this was her second trip to the region, so things seemed to click. And fortunately for us, John managed to get a phenomenal number of quality photos and even a few video clips to show, and amazingly Linda was able to remember the names of all of them. The Donelsons did supplement these with a number of internet photos, many taken by Kent Nickell of Waterloo. They didn't see any snakes, but they did see three kinds of monkeys: Capuchin, Howler, and Spider.

The Cana Camp was at 1800 ft. elevation. One of the highlights of the trip was a hike up Cerro Pirre where they spent two nights in a tent camp within reach of the cloud forest and the summit at 5200 ft. Linda said the humidity was so high that the trees were just dripping wet. It was a steep hike to the tent camp, which probably could not have been made except during the dry season. A variety of habitats transition with elevation on Cerro Pirre and these each contain different sets of birdlife. One of the highlights was a pair of Spectacled Owls that caused such a racket at 2 a.m. as to bring everyone out of their tents. Another owl, a Central American Pygmy Owl, followed the group back down the mountain and John was able to capture some video of that bird.

Their guide, David Wolf, was extremely adept at finding birds. One of his tools was a tape recorder. He would record the singing bird and then play back the song to bring in the bird. He also used a special green laser pointer to help birders find the birds within the dense foliage. Finding an ant swarm was also a high priority as certain kinds of birds are always present with them. There seemed to be a great many birds that had the word "ant" as a part of their names.

Mosquitoes weren't a problem on this trip, but ticks and chiggers could be. Fortunately the

Donelsons had prepared by soaking their clothes in a solution of the insecticide Permethrin. After the clothes dry for a couple of days they can be worn and with the socks pulled up over the pant bottoms, they seemed to protect very well. Ants were something to watch out for as well. One kind of ant had a bite that would actually incapacitate a person for the day, so you never wanted to casually lean against a tree on the trail. Linda didn't find a hat necessary due to the forest shade, but she did find a red bandana useful in keeping the perspiration out of her eyes. It also proved useful for attracting hummingbirds.

When it was time to return to Panama City, Linda said that they had to drag her away kicking and screaming. Sounds like maybe the Donelsons might be back. Thanks Linda and John for sharing such an exciting adventure.

Attendees: Ed and Jean Allgood, Ann and Jack Bagford, John Bovey, Mark Bowman, Norlin Boyd, John Broz, Barry Buschelman, Chris Caster, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Linda Fisher, Ed Folk, Bruce Gardner, Thérèse Guédon, Rick Hollis, Ken Hunt, Doina and Lauren Johnson, Lorraine and Paul Kent, Tom Kent and Marcia Nagle, Karl Kahler, Bernie Knight, Jane Knoedel, Dave Kyllingstad, Kristen Lawton and Mark Oxley, Dick and Nancy Lynch, Ramona McGurk, Gail and John McLure, Jason Paulios, Diana Pesek, Jim Scheib, Marcia and Richard Shaffer, Donna and Doug Smith, Wetherill Winder.

– *Chris Caster*

April 22, Macbride Nature-Recreation Area, Beginning Birders Trip. It was a beautiful day – clear, breezy and warm. We started out at the bird blind, which although rather quiet was still fun. Then we returned to the big parking lot and walked east and south towards the entrance, passing through woods and fields. We had great looks at an Osprey and a Red-tailed Hawk, both of which drifted slowly overhead at a low altitude. The red-tail paused and fanned its tail when directly overhead. In with a kettle of pelicans was one lone Canada Goose, which had

to flap much harder than the pelicans to keep up, but keep up it did for the couple of minutes that we watched. We ended up with a rather short bird list, but it was still a wonderful day to be out.

Participants: Jean Allgood (co-leader), Mark Bowman, Linda Donelson (who led the group from Hy-Vee to Lake Macbride), Rick Hollis (co-leader), Ken Hunt, Doina and Lauren Johnson.

Birds (25 species): Canada Goose, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Barred Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Ovenbird, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Brown-headed Cowbird, American Goldfinch.

– Rick Hollis

April 29, Local Areas, Beginning Birders Trip. The day started at 63F and clear and continued to be clear and sunny all day. We started by going to Jolly Roger Road where we parked along the road and walked adjacent to the wooded area. Several Broad-winged Hawks were spotted as well as a turkey. We entered the wooded area and came to an open area with larger trees where several warblers, including a female Mourning Warbler, were found.

From there we went to the West Overlook. We had good views of Warbling Vireos in the trees north of the parking lot, and Brown Thrashers were seen. On to Waterworks Park, where we met up with Julie Englander and Viana Rockel. A Sandhill Crane flew over the park just before noon. A group of White-rumped Sandpipers was feeding at the edge of one of the ponds, and many Yellow-rumped Warblers were in the trees, so everyone got good looks at these birds.

Participants: Karen Disbrow (leader), Julie Englander, Bruce Gardner, Garrison Kline, Viana Rockel, Bernard and Nancy Sorofman, Fred Stair.

Birds: (38 species): Canada Goose, Wild Turkey, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Cooper's Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, White-rumped Sandpiper, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Red-headed Woodpecker, Warbling Vireo, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Robin, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Brown-headed Cowbird, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– Karen Disbrow

May 5, Hickory Hill Park, Beginning Birders Trip. The day started at 58F and overcast as a storm moved in, and ended with rain and 55F. We birded Hickory Hill Park and Oakland Cemetery before moving on to Macbride Nature-Recreation Area and ending in Solon.

Participants: Mark Bowman, Bob and Dara Dick, Karen Disbrow (leader), John Goedken, Barbara Haring, James Huntington, Garrison Kline, Ramona McGurk, Marianne Mason, Nancy Menning, Diana Pesek, Damien Pieper, Nancy Sorofman.

Birds (54 species): Canada Goose, Wild Turkey, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Broad-wing Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Kingbird, Blue-headed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Purple Martin, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet,

Eastern Bluebird, Swainson's Thrush, American Robin, Brown Thrasher, Golden-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Palm Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Scarlet Tanager, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– *Karen Disbrow*

May 17, Meeting. Tom Kent presented on the trip he and Marcia Nagle took to southern South America and Antarctica this winter. The trip was with Victor Emmanuel Nature Tours (VENT) aboard the ship *M/S Clipper Adventurer*.

The first three days were spent in Buenos Aires, Argentina at the Sheraton Hotel. During that time there were organized bird outings as well as sight-seeing tours. Tom thought to do a bit on his own in one of the local parks until someone suggested that it really might not be a safe thing to do with all the expensive gear—you're not in Iowa anymore Tom.

The group's first journey was a flight to Ushuaia, the southernmost town on the continent. That day the group made a short outing to nearby Tierra del Fuego National Park, a mountainous region along the border with Chile, before boarding the *M/S Clipper Adventurer*. The ship cruised the Beagle Channel and then spent the next three nights and two days crossing the infamous Drake Passage to Antarctica. Fortunately during the Austral Summer those seas are fairly calm. On the way Tom spotted a striking seabird and believing it something unusual brought it to the attention of the trip leaders. It was a Cape Petrel and as luck would have it, a fairly common bird on the voyage. Tom commented that the guides could

have done a better job of focusing attendees on common vs. rare species.

The destination across the Drake was the Antarctic Peninsula. This is the northernmost part of mainland Antarctica. The peninsula is highly mountainous and is a continuation of the Andes by a spine that runs across the ocean floor. The group spent three days exploring this region and made various landings using a fleet of twelve Zodiacs. One of the highlights was a visit to Deception Island, featuring a blown-out caldera in the middle of a still-active volcano. Some folks actually went bathing in the geothermally heated waters—I can't imagine who would actually have a bathing suit packed on a trip to Antarctica. The group also visited the old Norwegian whaling station at Whaler's Bay. And the group also got their first look at a penguin colony when they visited the massive Chinstrap Penguin rookery on Bailey Head. The scenery on this stretch of the voyage was magnificent with high mountains, glaciers, and icebergs. The older blocks of ice turn a beautiful blue color.

Next the group journeyed two days northeast across the ocean to visit the South Georgia Islands. These islands, like much of the territory in that part of the world, are disputed. An attack by Argentine troops on the British at South Georgia Island precipitated the Falklands War in 1982. The group visited the town of Grytviken, an abandoned whaling station, and the final resting place of the famed explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton. This was a good place to view King Penguins—over 500,000. Other birds in the area included Wandering Albatross, Giant Petrel, and the South Georgia Pipit—the only endemic songbird that far south. On the way to the Falklands a stop was made at the Shag Rocks, which rise out of the Atlantic about 150 miles west of South Georgia Island. This was a good spot to view South Georgia Shags and Antarctic Prions.

In the Falklands only rat-free islands have birds. The group visited George Island, Bleaker Island, and the capital city of Port Stanley where

they disembarked. From there a plane took everyone to Santiago, Chile. Tom did some additional birding in the Andes near Santiago, before flying back to the States.

In all, the trip went from December 15th to January 8th. Tom got photos of many of the birds he saw including seven species of penguin, five species of albatross, an Andean Condor, and a Black-crowned Night Heron—yup, same bird as here. What a spectacular adventure and an excellent presentation! Thanks Tom and Marcia. You looked very sporting in your red expedition parkas.

Attendees: Ann Bagford, Barry Buschelman, Chris Caster, Bob and Dara Dick, Karen Disbrow, John and Linda Donelson, Chris Edwards, Vic Edwards, Linda and Roger Fisher, Ed Folk, Jim and Karole Fuller, Thérèse Guédon, Rick Hollis, Ken Hunt, Doina and Lauren Johnson, Lorraine and Paul Kent, Tom Kent and Marcia Nagle, Karl Kahler, Bernie Knight, Jane Knoedel, Dave Kyllingstad, Khristen Lawton, Dick Lynch, Marianne Mason, Gail and John McLure, Linda Rudolph, Marcia and Richard Shaffer, Gerry Tetrault, Danielle Zimmerman.

– *Chris Caster*

May 19, Hanging Rock Woods and Hawkeye Wildlife Area. This field trip resembled a play with two acts. The first act was set at Hanging Rock Woods in NW Johnson County, and was a harrowing journey through a mosquito- and gnat-infested forest, during which the participants occasionally paused to look and listen at such interesting birds as Scarlet Tanager, Indigo Bunting, Swainson's Thrush, and Kentucky Warbler, before the blood-thirsty insects spurred them ever-onwards to the end of the trail and then back to the safety of their vehicles.

The second act took place at Sand Point and Babcock on the south side of Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Here the participants basked in the pleasant sunshine and leisurely enjoyed the sights and sounds of the many colorful birds

around them. The more open environs provided wonderful views of many common birds such as Lark Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Red-headed Woodpecker, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Baltimore Oriole, and Great Crested Flycatcher. A nice assortment of shorebirds, including a stunning Black-bellied Plover, several Dunlins, White-rumped Sandpipers, and Short-billed Dowitchers, gave the group a chance to improve their ID skills.

The closing scene was set at the Gun Club Ponds, where two Hooded Mergansers and a Green Heron were spotted. What began as a nightmare ordeal had a happy ending after all.

Participants: Mark Bowman, Chris Edwards (leader), Bruce Gardner, Ken Hunt, Dave Kyllingstad, Diana Pesek.

Birds (70 species): Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, American Coot, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Lesser Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, Ring-billed Gull, Mourning Dove, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Swainson's Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Tennessee Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Scarlet Tanager, Vesper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird,

Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch.

– *Chris Edwards*

May 26, South Sycamore Bottoms. Some great birds had been reported at this location for about a month prior to the outing. Even as recently as the previous evening such birds as Bell's Vireo, Sedge Wren, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Great-tailed Grackle, and Black-billed Cuckoo were present, so I was really looking forward to birding the marsh. Unfortunately, skies were threatening all morning, and the outing was cut considerably short when the rain started at around 9 a.m. We did, however, manage to get a few of these targets beforehand.

After parking at the gate just south of the apartment complex, ten of us trekked toward the marsh. At the top of the hill just before descending towards the water, a singing Sedge Wren gave most of us pretty decent looks. It wasn't too long after that we heard several Marsh Wrens singing. We managed to get just a few fleeting glimpses as they flew among the tall cattails at the west side.

The group then looped around the south portion of the marsh and headed back north on the trail that goes right through the middle. It wasn't long before we all heard the distinctive call of one Least Bittern from the east side. After failing to locate the bird, light rain began to fall and most of the group headed back to their cars. Diana, Blossom, and I decided to check out the trail on the far east side of the marsh, hoping to see the Least Bittern and possibly a Black-billed Cuckoo.

As we headed from north to south on the east side, we immediately heard a Bell's Vireo calling from the thick shrubs. The previous day I had seen and heard one in the southeast section of the marsh, so there's a decent chance there were more than one and that they nested there this year. After hearing and seeing several more Marsh Wrens, we got to the southeast section where we heard a second Least Bittern

responding to the first one. We failed again to locate them with the binoculars, but after wandering in the water a short distance, one of them did flush so we finally got a decent look before it landed about 100 feet to the north.

We decided to call it a morning and headed back. Although the cuckoo would have to wait for another day, we did manage to see the male and female Great-tailed Grackles, first reported by Ken Lowder on April 29. This a rare bird for Johnson county and it will be interesting to see if they nest here successfully.

Participants: Mark Brown (leader), Chris Caster, Tony Franken, Ken Hunt, Ken Lowder, Diana Pesek, Linda Rudolph, Blossom Shaw, Bernard and Nancy Sorofman.

Birds (39 species): Great Blue Heron, Least Bittern, Canada Goose, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Pheasant, Sora, American Coot, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Northern Flicker, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, Sedge Wren, Marsh Wren, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, American Robin, Blue Jay, European Starling, Bell's Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's Warbler, Song Sparrow, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Great-tailed Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

–*Mark Brown*

June 3, Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area. It must have been a busy day for everyone as I went it alone. Saulsbury Bridge is a good-sized area on the east bank of the Cedar River in Muscatine County. It has many miles of wide mowed trails, suitable for horseback riding, which loop and cross through a variety of habitats. I walked perhaps 80% of them. I scheduled the outing because I was interested in the area as a potential IBA site, but I may need to reconsider that idea given the dearth of birdlife. The only birds of interest I found in

nearly three hours of wandering were four Yellow-billed Cuckoos, a Scarlet Tanager and a singing Wood Thrush. That doesn't mean to say that the place was boring though. After walking the wooded trail by the river I came to an open area and I noticed a couple of periodical cicadas in the grass at my feet. Soon I noticed some buzzing coming from the sunlit dogwoods nearby. I then realized that I was surrounded, very likely by thousands upon thousands of the bulbous, red-eyed bugs. I also became acutely aware that I was alone, probably a mile from my vehicle or any other person, and I had left my cell phone in the North Dodge Hy-Vee restroom. Now we've all seen enough Hitchcock movies to know what happens next. Fortunately it was still early, and in real life bugs need to warm-up before they take flight; so the majority were content to merely watch as I passed. Also interesting to find was a Snapping Turtle basking on the dark soil of a burnt field.

Fairly disgusted that I hadn't seen more birds, I decided to visit some additional sites nearby. My next stop was Cedar Bluffs in Muscatine County northeast of Columbus Junction. The wooded trail leads up and down a steep ravine and the hilltop trail leads around some ponds and dogwood thickets. The area has been good for Kentucky Warblers and Bell's Vireos in past years and I was very surprised not to find either. I did find a single Acadian Flycatcher near the ravine bottom. I also found two pairs of Wood Thrushes. One thrush was quite agitated by my presence, as it hopped around in the tree with its bill full of insect larvae, so I didn't stay long. I did walk all the trails at Cedar Bluffs and once again I mostly found cicadas, which were by now eager to take flight. I really thought I would find more birds, but I was starting to wonder if the cicadas were impeding my efforts. Perhaps the birds were as weirded-out as I was by their presence. I was pleasantly surprised to hear a Henslow's Sparrow from the field nearby just as I was getting ready to leave.

I also decided to visit the Swamp White Oak Preserve since it was on the way home. This is a Nature Conservancy site that is on G-28 just

west of the Cedar River and northeast of Conesville. It is easy to miss if you don't know just where it is. It contains some flood-plain woodlands and oak savannah with large plots of poison ivy. It is a good location for Prothonotary Warbler, but I didn't find any this day. However I was lucky to hear a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks soaring high above the woods, as it wasn't long before they sailed out of sight. A group of Eastern Bluebirds was foraging in the oak savannah. Also fun to find was a group of Eurasian Tree Sparrows on the old bridge at the nearby Gedney Lake and of course my cell phone at the Hy-Vee customer service desk.

– *Chris Caster*

June 9, Indiangrass Hills. After rain cut our Sycamore Marsh outing short a couple of weeks ago, I was hoping to have a little better luck for the annual walk through Indiangrass Hills in Iowa County. What we got was a completely perfect cloudless day, starting around 65 degrees at 7:45 a.m. and warming to the mid 70s by the time we all left around noon. Among the seven participants was visiting birder Dan Byrne from southern California. He needed a few of the grassland specialties of the Midwest for life birds, so that added a little more motivation to succeed.

I was a little nervous about the status of one of the premiere attractions of this area, the Henslow's Sparrow. For some reason they were absent last year and so far this year, I hadn't heard any reports, positive or negative. However, we were quickly relieved to find several singing birds right across from the parking area. A few allowed very close prolonged looks. In fact, by the end of the walk, we detected no fewer than a dozen birds.

As far as other grassland favorites, the Bobolink was another very prevalent bird. In all, at least 10 singing males were seen, and a few were even joined by females. Grasshopper Sparrows were well represented, with about 8-10 birds seen and heard. They were often mixed right in with the Henslow's. We did have to work a

little for the Sedge Wrens. We heard a couple of birds early in the walk that were never located, but a third bird eventually gave all of us very good looks, as it uncharacteristically perched high up on a bare branch about eight feet off the ground for several minutes.

About the same time we were making our way towards the wren, a cuckoo started to sing in a nearby shrub. Since I haven't yet mastered the vocal differences between the two cuckoos, I was determined to get a look. Without much time and effort, this bird, like every other bird so far for the outing, came out on an exposed perch about 30 feet away from us, revealing a bright red eye ring and shiny black bill! I did see one other Black-billed Cuckoo at Indiangrass Hills two years ago, so it wasn't totally unexpected, but we all know this isn't a bird you can ever count on seeing at any location.

With all of the desired species encountered within the first hour or so, the rest of the morning was spent enjoying the weather, habitat, and other types of wildlife. One raccoon was entertaining as it climbed a tree and into a large cavity. A good variety of butterflies became active about mid-morning. Some of these included Black Swallowtails, Great Spangled Fritillaries, Meadow Fritillaries, Northern Pearly-eyes, and lots of American Ladies. John Broz was very good at pointing out all types of vegetation and some specialty prairie plants for the group. We were all especially amazed at the amount of blackberries growing in certain areas, although it would be 3-4 weeks before they would be ready to harvest.

Some other birds of note encountered throughout the morning were a couple of Willow Flycatchers, three Orchard Orioles, and a heard-only Northern Mockingbird. What a hugely successful outing this turned out to be. We got nearly all our targets and some of these were lifers for Dan. We are very lucky to have this Important Birding Area less than an hour away from Iowa City!

Participants: Mark Brown (leader), John Broz, Dan Byrne, John and Linda Donelson, Tony Franken, Linda Rudolph.

Birds (46 species): Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-necked Pheasant, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Black-billed Cuckoo, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Great-crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, House Wren, Sedge Wren, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, American Robin, Blue Jay, European Starling, Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, Orchard Oriole, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

—Mark Brown

Editor's Note: The remaining summer field trip reports will appear in our December issue.

Iowa City Bird Club

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The club web site is maintained by Jim Scheib and is located at icbirds.org.

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