
Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 29 Number 1

April 2009

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.

April 4, Saturday, 8 a.m. Kent Park near Tiffin. We will explore the trails looking for migrating songbirds and resident woodland birds. Meet at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.*

April 7, Tuesday, 7 p.m. *Beginning Birder Class: Where to Bird in Johnson County* by Rick Hollis. Well-known, lesser-known and secret places to watch birds and study nature in and around Johnson County. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register. See page 11 for more information. *Free to members.*

April 11, Saturday, 8 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Area near North Liberty. We expect to see ducks, geese, American White Pelicans, and other early spring migrants. Wear boots for walking in wet areas, and bring a spotting scope if you have one. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.*

April 14, Tuesday, 7 p.m. *Beginning Birder Course: Backyard and Feeder Birds* by Jim Scheib. This session will cover the common birds found in area backyards throughout the year, and what types of feeders and food to use to attract them. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register. *Free to members.*

April 16, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park. Linda and Robert Scarth will present *Walking with Penguins: The Falkland Islands.*

April 18, Saturday, 8 a.m. – Noon. Spring Cleanup Day at Hawkeye Wildlife Area. We'll pick up litter along roadsides and parking lots. Meet at the blue shed at the corner of Swan Lake Road and James Avenue. Wear gloves and old clothes and expect to get dirty! Chris Edwards, 430-4732.

April 19, Sunday, 8 a.m. Macbride Nature-Recreation Area. Visit the Raptor Center, observe birds up close from the bird blind, and hike the nearby trails. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.*

April 21, Tuesday, 7 p.m. *Beginning Birder Course: Warbler Identification and Shorebird Review* by Karen Disbrow. Warblers are coming! Warblers are among our most colorful birds – compare and contrast similar species. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register. *Free to members.*

April 23, Thursday, 7 p.m. Fledgling Birding Class by Rick Hollis. Specifically for kids aged 7–12, accompanied by an adult. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register. See page 4 for more information.

Continued on next page →

Schedule – continued

April 25, Saturday, 8 a.m. Fledgling Field Trip for kids aged 7–12, to be accompanied by an adult. Meet at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

April 26, Sunday, 8 a.m. Hickory Hill Park. This park is a great place to view warblers and other migrating songbirds. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.*

May 4-8, 11-15, 18-22, Mondays–Fridays, 6:30 a.m. Warbler Walks in Hickory Hill Park. Meet at the north parking lot at the end of Conklin Lane, off Dodge Street. Come prepared for wet walking. Daily sightings will be posted on our web site.

May 9, Saturday. Spring Migration Count. We will work in teams to count as many birds as possible in Johnson County. To participate, call Chris Caster at 339-8343. See page 4 for more information.

May 16, Saturday, 7 a.m. Lake Macbride for Cerulean Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, and other elusive warblers. Jason Paulios, 331-6115.

May 17, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Bruce Gardner's Woods. A great trip for migrants and spring flora in a local woods. Bruce Gardner, 331-3547.

May 21, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. Karole Fuller will present *Travels in Africa.*

May 30, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Breeding Bird Atlas Survey of Block 528, which includes portions of Lake Macbride State Park. Chris Edwards, 430-4732.

May 31, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Indian Creek Nature Center. Meet at the parking lot in front of the nature center, 6665 Otis Road SE, Cedar Rapids. Diana Pesek, (319) 560-8393.

June 6, Saturday, 7:30 a.m. Sycamore Bottoms and Sand Lake for wetland birds. Ken Hunt, 354-1079.

June 7, Sunday, 6:30 a.m. Breeding Bird Atlas Survey of Block 525, which includes Round Pond and other portions of Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Chris Caster, 339-8343.

June 13, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Breeding Bird Atlas Survey of Block 526, which includes portions of Swan Lake and Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Chris Edwards, 430-4732.

June 14, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Indiangrass Hills in Iowa County for grassland birds such as Henslow's Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Sedge Wren, and Bobolink. Ed and Jean Allgood, 338-8090.

June 20, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Breeding Bird Atlas Survey of Blocks 527 & 529, which includes the Jolly Roger area. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

June 27, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Breeding Bird Atlas Survey of Block 524, which includes Hanging Rock Woods and the western portion of Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Mark Brown, 358-8765.

July 5, Sunday, 6:30 a.m. Breeding Bird Atlas Survey of Blocks 533 & 534, which are primarily agricultural and river bottomland in southern Johnson County. Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

July 18, Saturday, 9 a.m. Annual Butterfly Count sponsored by the North American Butterfly Association. We will visit Kent Park, Lake Macbride, and other areas. To participate, contact Chris Edwards at 430-4732.

Schedule – continued

August 23, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Area or other local areas for shorebirds. Diana Pesek, (319) 560-8393.

August 27, Thursday, 6 p.m. Annual Picnic at Hickory Hill Park North Shelter. Bring a dish to share, something to grill (grills will be ready), your own table service and drink. Karen Disbrow, 339-1017

Other Dates of Note

April 18, Saturday, 8:30 a.m. – Noon. Volunteer Prairie Restoration Project at Herbert Hoover National Historic Site in West Branch. Volunteers should contact Adam Prato by April 17 at (319) 643-7855.

May 1-3, Friday–Sunday. Iowa Ornithologists' Union Spring Meeting at Swan Lake State Park near Carroll. For more information or to register visit www.iowabirds.org.

June 6-7, Saturday–Sunday. IOU Breeding Bird Atlas Blockbusting Weekend at Viking Lake State Park near Red Oak. For more information about this and other Blockbusting Weekends, visit <http://bba.iowabirds.org> or contact Nicki Nagl at bbacoordinator@iowabirds.org or (515) 432-2823.

June 27-28, Saturday–Sunday. IOU Breeding Bird Atlas Blockbusting Weekend at Okoboji/Spirit Lake.

July 18-19, Saturday–Sunday. IOU Breeding Bird Atlas Blockbusting Weekend at Backbone State Park.

From the President Karen Disbrow

Spring is finally here. The Red-winged Blackbirds, Turkey Vultures and numerous others are returning every day now. Our first session of the Beginning Birder Course in March attracted 23 participants – a great start to an exciting season.

This summer we are participating in the statewide Breeding Bird Atlas. We have six field trips scheduled to survey some of the atlas blocks in Johnson County. These trips will be much like our regular field trips, except that evidence of nesting will be recorded. For example, if a pair is observed in suitable nesting habitat, that constitutes probable breeding. If an adult is seen carrying a fecal sac or food, we will know that a nest is nearby, which constitutes confirmed breeding. You do not need to be experienced in atlasing or an expert on bird identification to participate – the more eyes and ears we have on these surveys, the

more we will discover. Likewise, you do not need to be an expert on bird songs – significant contributions can be made just by observing bird behavior. Some other breeding bird surveys require the participants to stop at designated points along a route and record all the birds heard within a certain amount of time – the Breeding Bird Atlas is not that kind of survey. And if you find a rare bird or are unsure about an identification, the ICBC is lucky to have many excellent birders to call upon for a positive ID. These trips are excellent opportunities to learn more about bird behavior. And who knows what we will find nesting in Johnson County.

I would like to extend a special “thank you” to Dottie Ray for donating the binoculars used for the Beginning Birder Course. They were very much appreciated and will be heavily used.

Would you like to become a member of the Iowa Ornithologists Union? The IOU is giving a membership to each bird club in the state for a new birder who has never belonged to the IOU.

To be eligible, get your name to Karen for the drawing to be held at the April meeting at the Conservation Education Center.

As always let's get out there, have fun and of course: GOOD BIRDING!

Fledgling Birding Class April 23 & 25

Bird watching is a fun, neat way to get out of doors. This course will introduce young people 7-12 years old with an accompanying adult to the joy of birding.

We will talk about field guides, binoculars, birdwatching tips and birds during one evening session and then practice what we learn on a birdwatching field trip in Kent Park. The evening session is Thursday, April 23 from 7:00–8:30 p.m. The field trip is Saturday, April 25 from 8:00 a.m. – Noon.

Both evening session and field trip will meet at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park. There is no charge for this course but class size is limited. Please Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to pre-register.

Spring Migration Count Saturday, May 9

Our annual Spring Migration Count is Saturday, May 9. This count is run just like our Christmas Bird Count, except that it is county-wide. Observers have a 24-hour period to count every bird they can. Both numbers of species and numbers of individual birds are recorded. The results of our previous counts can be found at our website.

There won't be an organizational meeting for the count this year, but we will meet on count day for lunch at the Coralville Hy-Vee Deli at noon. If you wish to participate please contact the count compiler, Chris Caster, in advance of

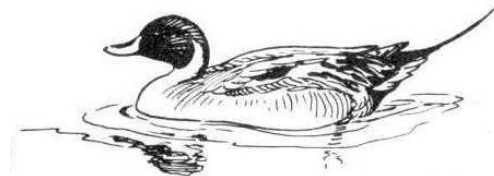
count day at cjcaster@earthlink.net or 339-8343. Participants can download a spring count checklist from the club website. These will also be available at the April club meeting.

Annual Butterfly Count Saturday, July 18

Our eleventh annual Iowa City Butterfly County will be held Saturday, July 18. (In case of rain it will be held July 19.) Last year while visiting Kent Park, Hawkeye Wildlife Area and Lake Macbride, we saw 30 species and a record 2,711 butterflies, including the threatened Byssus Skipper. Ours is one of about 400 counts sponsored by the North American Butterfly Association (NABA). Rules are similar to Christmas Bird Counts: counters record all butterflies observed within a 15-mile diameter circle, on a single day during a period from several weeks before to several weeks after July 4th. Our count is held in the same count circle used for the Christmas Bird Count. It's a great way to spend a summer day! If you would like to participate, please contact Chris Edwards at 430-4732 or credwards@aol.com.

Renewal Reminder

If you haven't already done so, please send in your membership dues for 2009. Our annual membership dues remain \$15 per household or \$10 for students. Your mailing label shows the most recent year you have paid for. Please complete the membership renewal form on the inside back cover and send it with your check payable to "Eastern Iowa Birdwatch" to Bernie Knight, 425 Lee St., Iowa City, IA 52246. Thank you!



Membership Spotlight on: **Mark Brown**

What is your occupation? I've been a cytotechnologist at U of I Hospitals since 1996. By definition, this is a laboratory professional that microscopically examines cell samples from various areas of the human body to screen for cancer and other diseases.

Tell us about your family. I've been married to Matsalyn since 2002. She has been employed with the College of Business as a Dean's Assistant at the U of I since 2003. We have one son, Russell, who is one and a half. Of course it's too early to determine what his interests will be, but for several months now, he's been noticing birds on the wing when we're riding in the car, and yelling "birds". That's a good start! My two younger brothers, Scott and Chris, live here in Iowa City and work at the hospital in central sterilizing. My parents live in Fort Dodge during the warmer months, but have been wintering in Mesa, Arizona for four years now.

Where did you grow up? I was born and raised in Fort Dodge.

When and how did your interest in birds develop? My grandparents lived in a wooded area in Fort Dodge and had a good variety of feeder birds that they helped me learn. Soon I was interested in identifying birds everywhere I went. There was even a time I was listing all the birds I was seeing on a daily basis, but that got to be too much work!

Did you have any birding mentors? The first birders I met in the Iowa City area were Sharon and Jim Scheib. They led an awesome birding trip to Crex Meadows in Wisconsin in May 2004 for Sharp-tailed Grouse. It was from about that point that I changed from a casual to a more serious birder where I actually became interested in seeking out every bird possible. Since then, I've attended many field trips locally and everyone I've met has been a great mentor to me.

When did you join the Iowa City Bird Club? Sometime in the fall of 2004.

Do you remember the first bird club event you attended? I believe it was the fall IOU meeting in September 2004 that was at Wickiup Hill. I'm pretty sure that was co-sponsored by the ICBC.

Do you have a favorite bird or family of birds? My favorite bird is probably the male Mountain Bluebird. It has simple but stunning plumage. I've been to Colorado many times and I never get tired of seeing them. My favorite family of birds is the warblers. They're brightly colored, most are present in Iowa for such a short time, and they're such a challenge to photograph. Getting a decent image of any warbler is very rewarding!

What particular aspects of birding interest you the most? I love that it's a lifelong hobby that can be done just about anywhere. You can spend your whole life looking for new birds and still never see all of them. I love the ID challenges that often come with birding, which has made me want to learn more about bird songs and calls.

Do you keep a life list? My life list is 671, which includes Taiwan, Puerto Rico, Bahamas, and Hawaii. My count for the ABA area is 546. I don't actively pursue state birds, but I did a tally and came up with 279.

What was the most recent bird you added to your life list? I took a vacation to Mesa at the end of February and did some rarity chasing in southeast Arizona. I added five lifers: Short-tailed Hawk, Tundra Swan, Ruddy Ground-dove, Blue Mockingbird, and Black-chinned Sparrow. My most recent addition locally was White-winged Crossbill at Squaw Creek Park back in January, on my third try!

What interesting birds have you seen in your yard? Since our backyard is a crop field and we have no trees, any bird we see is interesting. Out of about 30 species that have made appearances, the most interesting is probably a flyover Bald Eagle.

Where is your favorite place in Iowa to bird, and why? Sycamore Bottoms just southeast of Iowa City, because it is less than 5 minutes from my house and convenient if I only have an hour to bird. I've seen about 135 species there, some of which are hard to find in Johnson county. Notable birds in recent years have been: Least Bittern, American Bittern, Sandhill Crane, Virginia Rail, Short-eared Owl, Black-billed Cuckoo, Great-tailed Grackle, and Bell's Vireo.

Tell us about one of your most exciting Iowa birding moments. In February of 2005, I was searching cedar groves for roosting owls at Hawkeye Wildlife Area, and I came across my lifer Northern Saw-whet Owl. It was about three feet above my head. I loved that it seemed just as curious about me as I was towards the bird, and didn't even flinch at my presence. Also, I found this little owl completely on my own and that made it so rewarding!

What is your "most wanted" Iowa bird or your "nemesis" bird? Definitely the Snowy Owl. I have pursued about a dozen different Snowies and they have all successfully eluded me!

Tell us about a favorite birding experience or place outside of Iowa. It's very exciting anytime I visit a new place whether it's within the US or outside the country, but the experience that was most memorable was a trip to Taiwan in November of 2006. I purposely did very little research on the types of birds that could be found there. I only researched birding locations. This gave me a heightened sense of discovery when I ventured out into the wilderness. I tried to photograph everything I came across, took notes on behavior, vocalizations, and habitat, and finally identified everything afterwards.

If you could visit any place on earth, where would it be? Anywhere in Central America would be appealing. I know I would be overwhelmed with the diversity of birds, butterflies, and everything else!

Do you have any hobbies or interests besides birding? Traveling, hiking, snorkeling, nature photography and spending time with my family are my passions. I'm a die hard Cubs fan, still waiting for that elusive World Series title. I love all kinds of board games and card games, especially poker. I try to stay current on movies, especially independent flicks. And finally, I love social gatherings with lots of food!

Have you read any good books lately? The last book I read was nearly a year ago, but I really enjoyed it. It was *Desert Solitaire* by Edward Abbey, a story about his experiences as a park ranger in Moab, Utah.

2008 Iowa City Christmas Bird Count

Chris Edwards and Bob Dick

The 58th annual Iowa City Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, December 14. The total of 61 species was below the count's ten-year average of 66 species. The lack of waterfowl in our area largely accounted for the low species total. Most of the common winter resident birds were found in below average numbers this year, perhaps owing to the unusual weather conditions. During the morning the temperature rose to 57° with mostly cloudy skies and 15-20 mph winds from the south. Shortly after noon a strong cold front brought 20-30 mph NW winds and light intermittent rain, and by 5 p.m. the temperature was 16° with heavy sleet falling.

The best birds of the day were six Tree Swallows, a species never before seen on an Iowa Christmas Bird Count. This brings our Iowa City CBC all-time list to 134 species. Other rarities this year included Turkey Vulture and Merlin, both third count records, and a crossbill which was not identified to species. Loggerhead Shrike, Northern Shrike, and Yellow-rumped Warbler were also unusual. Expected species not found this year included Common Grackle. A potential first count record Greater Flamingo, seen in a yard by two Linn County birders who shall remain nameless, lacked supporting details and was tossed out by the compiler.

Waterfowl to Gulls

Despite open water on the Iowa River and Coralville Reservoir, waterfowl were completely absent this year except for the resident Canada Geese and Mallards. Wild Turkey numbers were near normal, but only four Ring-necked Pheasants were found, the lowest total in over twenty years. Northern Bobwhite was missed for the second straight year. A Great Blue Heron lingering on the Iowa River near Jim Fuller's house was a nice find. Julia Pappas observed a Turkey Vulture flying near the Coralville Dam, and Julie Englander found a Merlin in Lower City Park not far from the Peninsula neighborhood where one was seen last year. Other raptors were seen in average numbers this year. Ring-billed Gulls were present in below average numbers, and no Herring Gulls were found.

Doves to Crows

Eurasian Collared-Dove, a species which has rapidly expanded throughout the state in the last decade, has not yet been recorded on our count, but should be expected within the next several years. Following two banner years, Mourning Dove numbers were far below average this year. It was a poor year for owls, with one Great Horned Owl and two Barred Owls being the total count. Eastern Screech-Owl and Northern Saw-whet Owl are almost certainly present in our area every year, but have been missed in five of the last ten years. Next year we will have to redouble our owling efforts. Two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers and four Pileated Woodpeckers were nice finds, but other woodpeckers were found in below-average numbers. A Loggerhead Shrike in the southwest quadrant was a unusual sighting, as were three Northern Shrikes which matched a count record for the second year in a row. Blue Jay numbers were down this year, while American Crows were seen in average numbers.

Swallows to Warblers

The birds of the year were six Tree Swallows at Hawkeye Wildlife Area, first discovered by Ken Hunt and later photographed by Mark Brown and seen by several other birders. Most Tree Swallows typically depart Iowa by late October; perhaps these birds became disoriented and flew north on the strong southwest winds in the days preceding the count. Although Tree Swallows subsist partially on berries and other plant matter during winter, it seems unlikely that they survived the winter storm that arrived later that day. Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, and White-breasted Nuthatch

numbers were all down this year. A Winter Wren discovered on Ken Lowder's screened-in porch was a surprise addition to the count. Fruit-eating birds were very much in evidence this year: both robin and bluebird numbers were up, and the 879 Cedar Waxwings were almost double the previous record high count. Alas, no Bohemian Waxwings were found. Three lingering Hermit Thrushes provided a new high count, and for the fourth straight year a Yellow-rumped Warbler was found.

Sparrows to Old World Sparrows

Prior to this decade, Fox Sparrows were extremely rare on our count, but they have now been found in 8 of the last 10 years. Only one Swamp Sparrow was seen, and Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and Dark-eyed Junco numbers were all well below normal. Blackbirds were scarce, with a single Red-winged Blackbird being the only representative. A crossbill observed briefly at Hawkeye Wildlife Area, thought likely to be a White-winged, was the first since the White-winged Crossbill irruption in 1997. Pine Siskin numbers were the highest in over a decade. After five straight years, no Eurasian Tree Sparrows were found this year.

This year there were 39 field observers, slightly more than usual, in 13 parties. Field observers were Ed Allgood, Barbara Beaumont, Murray Bouschlicher, Mark Brown, Chris Caster, Dean Colton, Bob Dick, Dara Dick, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Jonni Ellsworth, Julie Englander, John Erickson, Mike Feiss, Linda Fisher, Jim Fuller, Rick Hollis, Ken Hunt, Bill Kent, Tom Kent, Dick Lynch, Nancy Lynch, Ramona McGurk, Duane Miller, Mary Noble, Julia Pappas, Liz Pappas, Diana Pesek, Horace Porter, Linda Rudolph, Jim Sandrock, Jean Sandrock, Jim Scheib, Bill Scheible, Tom Shires, David Weiss, Pete Wickham, Carol Winter, and Lori Ziegenhorn.

There were 14 feeder watchers in 13 locations this year, a significant decrease from last year. Feeder watchers were Jack and Ann Bagford, Linda Fisher, Carolyn Gardner, Gloria Henry, Anne Hesse, Janet Hollis, Nancy Johns, Barbara Kalm, Lorraine Kent, Jane Knoedel, Ken Lowder, Sharon Scheib, and Ronnye Wieland.

This year's count was organized by Bob Dick. The results were compiled by Chris Edwards. The pre-count planning meeting was held at Jim and Karole Fuller's home. On the day of the count we met for lunch at the North Liberty Community Center, at which time we had 59 species. Due to the expected late afternoon freezing rain and sleet, our compilation dinner at The Brown Bottle Café in North Liberty was cancelled.

Nationally, this year marked the 109th consecutive Christmas Bird Count. More than 45,000 people from all 50 states, every Canadian province, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and many Pacific Islands participate in this annual bird census. Christmas Bird Count results are published annually in a special issue of *American Birds*. The results of all counts from 1900 to the present are also available on the Internet at www.birdsource.org, a cooperative project of the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

Thanks to everyone who participated for making this year's count a success.

**2008 IOWA CITY CHRISTMAS
BIRD COUNT SPECIES LIST**

Canada Goose	1,394	Belted Kingfisher	3	European Starling	858
Mallard	196	Red-headed Woodpecker	6	Cedar Waxwing	879
Ring-necked Pheasant	4	Red-bellied Woodpecker	51	Yellow-rumped Warbler	1
Wild Turkey	72	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2	American Tree Sparrow	122
Great Blue Heron	1	Downy Woodpecker	83	Fox Sparrow	1
Turkey Vulture	1	Hairy Woodpecker	17	Song Sparrow	12
Bald Eagle	104	Northern Flicker	30	Swamp Sparrow	1
Northern Harrier	1	Pileated Woodpecker	4	White-throated Sparrow	28
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	Loggerhead Shrike	1	White-crowned Sparrow	7
Cooper's Hawk	3	Northern Shrike	3	Dark-eyed Junco	331
<i>Accipiter</i> sp.	1	Blue Jay	87	Northern Cardinal	240
Red-tailed Hawk	69	American Crow	762	Red-winged Blackbird	1
Rough-legged Hawk	5	Horned Lark	4	Purple Finch	17
<i>Buteo</i> sp.	1	Tree Swallow	6	House Finch	79
American Kestrel	22	Black-capped Chickadee	171	Crossbill sp.	1
Merlin	1	Tufted Titmouse	34	Pine Siskin	28
Ring-billed Gull	17	Red-breasted Nuthatch	8	American Goldfinch	213
Rock Pigeon	202	White-breasted Nuthatch	59	House Sparrow	580
Mourning Dove	146	Brown Creeper	4		
Great Horned Owl	1	Carolina Wren	3	TOTAL SPECIES	61
Barred Owl	2	Winter Wren	1	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	7,056
		Eastern Bluebird	20		
		Hermit Thrush	3		
		American Robin	50		

25 Years Ago in *Eastern Iowa Birdwatch*

The Winter 1984 issue announced the long-awaited publication of *Iowa Birds* by James Dinsmore, Tom Kent, Darwin Koenig, Pete Petersen, and Dean Roosa. It quickly became the standard reference on bird distribution and occurrence for Iowa birders.

Carl Bendorf interviewed Tom Kent about his use of a personal computer in relation to birding activities. Tom described his "IBM PC computer with 128K of memory, dual disk drives, a monochrome screen, and an Epson FX printer" which he used for typing notes and articles, keeping lists, and compiling bird records.

Compiler Mike Newlon reported on the 1983 Christmas Bird Count in which thirty observers set a new all-time high count of 63 species. Two new species were seen, Green-winged Teal and Wild Turkey, the latter not unexpected due to a large and expanding population in the Amana timber to the west. The highlight for many observers were the four Northern Goshawks; at Macbride Nature-Recreation Area, Carol Newlon "had one apparently mistake her fur hat for a prey item and pass within a few feet of her head!" Other count highlights included two Evening Grosbeaks and a Pied-billed Grebe.

Cal and Bernie Knight, Ramona McGurk, Bud Gode, and leader Mike Newlon were among participants on a February 4, 1984 field trip to the Mississippi River and Quad Cities, where the highlight was a Varied Thrush at a feeder near Fairmount Cemetery.

In the Spring 1984 issue, Tom Kent described "How to Find Some Summer Birds in the Iowa City Area", including Upland Sandpiper, Grasshopper Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Bobolink, and Eastern Bluebird. The latter was described as "hard to find" in summer.

Book Review

Chris Edwards

The Backyard Birdsong Guide, Eastern and Central North America: A Guide to Listening. Donald Kroodma. Illustrated by Larry McQueen and Jon Janosik. Chronicle Books, 2008. 192 pages. \$24.95.

This is the latest in a line of books by this publisher featuring a built-in audio player for listening to bird sounds as you read the text. I originally passed these off as “gimmick” books intended for a mass audience, with little appeal for the experienced birder. Happily, I was wrong, as this small volume has much to offer bird enthusiasts of all levels. What sets it apart is the outstanding text by renowned birdsong expert Donald Kroodma, author of *The Singing Life of Birds*. I can’t vouch for the previous books in the series, *Bird Songs: 250 North American Birds in Song* and *Bird Songs from Around the World*, which were written by different authors.

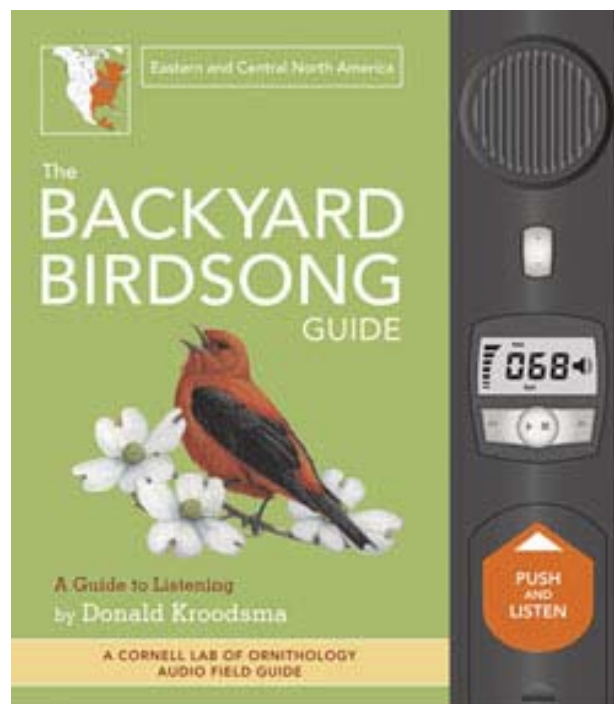
The sixteen-page introductory section provides an excellent primer to bird sounds, featuring sections on “Why Birds Sing”, “Where Each Bird Gets His Song”, “Songs and Calls”, and “The Practice of Deep Listening”. The main section of the book features 75 species accounts, each consisting of two facing pages. The left page of each account features a small range map, a brief description of the bird and its habitat, and an extensive description (or rather, analysis) of the bird’s songs, calls, and related behaviors. The right page features a color painting of the bird and a brief description of the accompanying audio tracks.

The text is interesting, informative, and a pleasure to read. Kroodma writes with the knowledge and insight provided by forty years of field research, and with an obvious enthusiasm for his subject which is contagious. After reading a few pages, I was itching for spring to arrive so I could get outside and listen for some of the singing behaviors he describes.

The illustrations are very well done and make it easy to visualize the birds singing in the wild as one listens to the songs on the audio player. The 132 audio tracks are drawn from the collection of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. In addition to the most common and well-known songs for each species, special emphasis is given to the less frequently-heard dawn songs of many species, which I found especially interesting. The sound quality of the audio player is adequate, but about what one would expect from a 1½” speaker. Powered by three standard AAA batteries, it has easy-to-use controls and a small LCD screen similar to a CD player.

There is also a companion volume to Western North America available. There is some overlap between the two books, but there are 45 species in the Western guide that are not in the Eastern guide, including 21 species found in Iowa.

In summary, this interesting book is recommended for anyone who wants to more fully explore the magic and wonder of birdsong.





Introduction to Birding Course Tuesdays March 24 – April 21 at Kent Park



The Iowa City Bird Club and the Johnson County Conservation Department are offering a 6-week **Introduction to Birding Course at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park**. There will be six Tuesday evening sessions along with six weekend field trips to area birding hot spots.

Tuesday evening sessions are \$5 for adults and free for children accompanied by an adult. Iowa City Bird Club members receive free admission (a one-year membership is \$15 per household or \$10 for students). Participants may attend all five sessions or pick one or more to attend. Classes can hold 30, and advanced registration is requested – please call Brad Freidhof at (319) 645-1011 by noon of the Tuesday session. Handouts and refreshments will be provided. Come to class early and bird the loop path near the CEC.

Weekend field trips are free. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Bring binoculars to all field trips; if you don't have a pair let us know in advance and loaners can be arranged. Spotting scopes are helpful for viewing shorebirds and waterfowl; if you have one bring it. Club members will have several scopes available on those field trips requiring one. All field trips will depart from the Dodge Street Hy-Vee in Iowa City unless otherwise noted; meet in the SW corner of the parking lot. For more information on field trips, call Karen Disbrow at 339-1017.

Tuesday, March 24, 7 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING I by Rick Hollis. This will include field identification of birds, field guides, and equipment that every birdwatcher needs, or might someday need.

Saturday, March 28, 8 a.m. Field Trip to CONE MARSH. Located about 25 miles SE of Iowa City, Cone Marsh is an excellent place to view migrating ducks, geese, and other water birds. Wear boots for walking in wet areas, and bring a spotting scope if you have one. **Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot.**

Tuesday, March 31, 7 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING II by Rick Hollis. Continuation of first session topics.

Saturday, April 4, 8 a.m. Field Trip to KENT PARK near Tiffin. We will explore the trails in Kent Park looking for migrating songbirds and resident woodland birds. **Meet at the CEC in Kent Park.**

Tuesday, April 7, 7 p.m. WHERE TO BIRD IN JOHNSON COUNTY by Rick Hollis. Well known, lesser known and secret places to watch birds and study nature in and around Johnson County.

Saturday, April 11, 8 a.m. Field Trip to HAWKEYE WILDLIFE AREA near North Liberty. We expect to see ducks, geese, American White Pelicans, and other early spring migrants. Wear boots for walking in wet areas, and bring a spotting scope if you have one.

Tuesday, April 14, 7 p.m. BACKYARD AND FEEDER BIRDS by James Scheib. This session will cover the common birds found in our area's backyards during the year, and what types of feeders and food to use to attract them.

Sunday, April 19, 8 a.m. Field Trip to MACBRIDE NATURE-RECREATION AREA. Visit the Raptor Center, observe birds up close from the bird blind, and hike the nearby trails.

Tuesday, April 21, 7 p.m. WARBLER IDENTIFICATION & SHOREBIRD REVIEW by Karen Disbrow. Warblers are coming! Warblers are among our most colorful birds. Compare and contrast similar warblers.

Sunday, April 26, 8 a.m. Field Trip to HICKORY HILL PARK. This park is a great place to view warblers and other migrating songbirds.

Field Trip and Meeting Reports

November 20, Meeting. Originally Jon Stravers was going to present, but he couldn't make it, and so his close friend Larry Stone filled in. Larry and Jon are currently collaborating on a biography of Gladys Black and she was the topic of Larry's presentation.

Gladys has been called an "Iowa Treasure". She was well known for her regular columns in the Des Moines Register and her fight against a hunting season for Mourning Doves in Iowa. She was for years the grand lady of Iowa birds and a tremendous influence to many currently involved in birds and bird conservation issues across the state, including Jon and Larry. In fact she introduced the two to one another and they have been lifelong friends.

Gladys Bowery Black was born in her family home just east of Pleasantville, IA in 1909. Her interests in birds started early. She made her own field guide from Arm and Hammer bird articles and could identify about 25 different birds by age 6 or 7. Birding in Iowa was certainly different then. Gladys recalled the wintering prairie chickens in the corn shocks near the house. And although some thought her to be anti-hunting, she was not. She greatly enjoyed squirrel and rabbit hunting as a girl. Gladys bucked convention from the start and forced her way into the biology course at her high school that historically was only for boys. She received a degree in nursing from Mercy Hospital in Des Moines and worked as a public health nurse. In 1941 she married her husband Wayne Black and moved to Georgia where she became well known as a bird bander.

In 1956 Wayne died. Then in the late 60s she returned to Iowa to care for her mother. She hadn't expected to stay, but in 1969 Red Rock Lake filled and she decided to stay. Evidently the change in the local habitat was of interest to Gladys and she found it to attract birds that hadn't been there previously. She became

interested in the roosting herons and egrets and found that they weren't reproducing. It was then learned that the eggs were high in pesticides. Gladys talked a lot about controlling "poisons". She began writing for the Des Moines Register in the early 70s, possibly '69, as a result of a letter she had written. Her column was a podium decrying environmental concerns. Her efforts to prevent a dove season in Iowa were the stuff of legend. The story was that she had once stormed into Governor Ray's office to tell him about doves. Her argument was that since doves nested into mid-September it was immoral to shoot them with babies in the nest. In spite of being surrounded by states with dove seasons, Iowa still does not have one. This is certainly testament to her powers of persuasion and force of personality.

For those that knew Gladys personally, she was quite a character. Jim Fuller referred to Gladys as "crusty". She smoked a lot. She kept a loaded gun by the door. She would say, "The only good cat is a dead cat." She was not a housekeeper and her home often contained raptors which she rehabbed right there. She was famous for rehabbing a Snowy Owl, "Nicki" in '82-'83, and getting a wealthy Chicagoan to fly it back to northern Canada on a fishing trip—Gladys made all the arrangements with the fish and wildlife people. She kept kestrels. Occasionally she would scrape the walls in her house to remove the excrement. She had her own language regarding birds—shrikes were "butcher birds" and Turkey Vultures were "buzzards", but she loved them all and she would get excited about almost any bird. She enjoyed taking boat rides on Red Rock Lake and made noise just to get the buzzards into the air. Although she loved to chat with people about their birds, she was frugal and you would need to spend the nickel for the phone call. But she was a great one to get people involved, like local science teachers. And she loved teaching kids about birds and nature. She was a self-taught ornithologist, but due to her extensive studies of the nesting birds and migration patterns at Red Rock she was awarded an

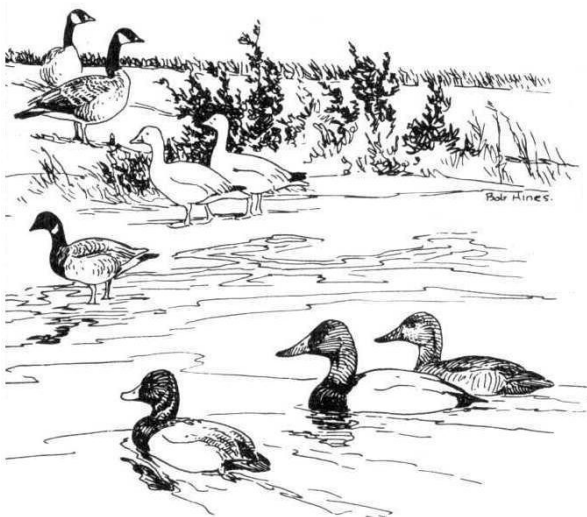
honorary doctorate by Simpson College in 1978. She was very proud of that.

Jon and Larry were two of her “boys”. Jon works with raptors for the National Audubon Society on the Upper Mississippi River. Larry is a freelance writer of Iowa natural history. She was also an influence on Pat Schlarbaum and Bruce Ehresman of the Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program, Marlene Ehresman, now with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, and Kay Neumann, a well-known Iowa raptor rehabber to mention a few. So even though Gladys passed on ten years ago, her influence remains large. Her legacy includes the 38 acre Gladys Black Eagle Refuge on the Des Moines River south of Red Rock Lake. Larry mentioned that there are two compilations of Gladys’s Register columns—*Birds of Iowa* and *Iowa Birdlife*; the latter is still available from University of Iowa Press. Soon we hope to read Larry and Jon’s biography of Gladys as well.

Thanks Larry for a very inspiring presentation.

Attendees: Nancy Carl, Chris Caster, Karen Disbrow, Drew Dillman, Chris Edwards, Jim and Karole Fuller, Bruce Gardner, Therese Guedon, Rick Hollis, Ken Hunt, Dave Kyllingstad, Richard and Nancy Lynch, Gail McLure, Sally Moore, Linda Rudolph, Jim Walters.

– Chris Caster



January 4, Bird Feeder Watch Social at the home of Jim and Karole Fuller. A congenial group of 14 braved icy roads to gather for coffee and a very tasty breakfast, conversation, and some window and feeder watching. The highlight was undoubtedly breakfast, even though there was a total of eleven Bald Eagles at one time, five of which were wheeling over the river.

Participants: Murray Bouschlicher and Lori Ziegenhorn, Chris Caster, Karen Disbrow, Jim and Karole Fuller, James Huntington, Ken and Mary Lowder, Mary Noble, Jim and Sharon Scheib, Marty Surface and Debby Goldstein.

Birds (20 Species): Canada Goose, Bald Eagle, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– Jim Fuller

January 18, Owl Prowl. We had 17 people show up for the Owl Prowl. We proceeded directly to Kent Park. We parked at the Knight Prairie Pavilion as the road beyond was closed for the winter. We hiked down the road and up the hill through several inches of snow to the grove of pines. Near the top of a very sad-looking pine with very few limbs at the top, hidden from a really clear view was the Northern Saw-whet Owl. The younger members of the group got on the ground where a good view of the bird was possible. Several people left after getting back to the cars. It was by then almost 3 p.m. We stopped in Tiffin for something to drink, then drove to the Waterworks Park. A lovely hike but no sign of the Great Horned Owl...no big surprise as this is their mating/nesting season. We traveled on to the alley where a resident pair of Barred Owls had lived. Unfortunately, they had vacated that nesting tree this year. A small group went to

Sycamore Bottoms to learn the location. Occasionally at dusk Short-eared Owls can be seen flying low over the grassy swales.

– *Karen Disbrow*



February 7, Amana Turkey Walk and Feast.

We had a beautiful, sunny, warm (for February) 40° day. It was the second warm day in a row and we had mushy snow for our hike and a very icy parking lot. On the drive to the Amana Nature Trail we saw numerous eagles, Red-tailed Hawks, one kestrel, and turkeys. Since we didn't meet until 7:30 and planned to meet at the Colony Inn for breakfast at 9:30, we had only an hour for birding. That would have been fine for a normal February day, but the warm weather made us wish we had started earlier. We missed the trail that goes to the ice pond, so we saw only one cedar tree and no saw-whet owls. The first people on the hike did see turkeys, and the rest of us saw only the tracks. The hike was very pretty but we did not see a lot of birds. One carload of us stopped at Kent Park after breakfast and checked out the feeder behind the Conservation Education Center there.

Participants: Barbara Beaumont (leader, who takes credit for the weather and the blame for not scouting), Karen Disbrow, Jonni Ellsworth, Linda and Roger Fisher, Jim and Karole Fuller, Therese Guedon, Ken Hunt, Sue and Bill Lottes,

Mary Noble, Jim and Sharon Scheib, Marybeth Slonneger, Bob Stearns.

Birds (21 species): Canada Goose, Wild Turkey, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Rock Pigeon, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Purple Finch, House Finch, American Goldfinch.

– *Barbara Beaumont*

February 18, Meeting. The meeting's program – "The Birds of Costa Rica" – featured highlights from a birding trip that Dick and Nancy Lynch made to Costa Rica in February, 2008. After five days of birding on their own, Dick and Nancy joined thirteen other birders and a superb, native group leader in a ten day Elderhostel entitled "Birding the Hotspots of Costa Rica." The group traveled in a small bus to five of the major ecohabitats in this extraordinarily biodiverse country. Days were spent in Caribbean-slope tropical rain forests; hot, humid coastal wetlands; mangrove forests and semi-deciduous dry forests of the Pacific slope, and the montane cloud forests of the Talamanca Mountains.

Smaller than West Virginia in size, Costa Rica has 40 national parks and preserves. Ecotourism is the largest piece of the nation's economy. Costa Rica is a vibrant democracy. The country has a literacy rate of 95%, has more teachers than police, and in 1948 the government disbanded its armed forces and transferred all of the military budget to the Ministry of Education. Costa Rica is a dream stop for naturalists and photographers. The country has 857 species of birds, including 52 species of hummingbirds, ten species of trogons; more than 50 species of brilliantly colored tanagers, euphonias, and honeycreepers; 550 species of butterflies, and 200+ species of orchids. Dick and Nancy recorded 335 avian species, about two-thirds of them life birds.

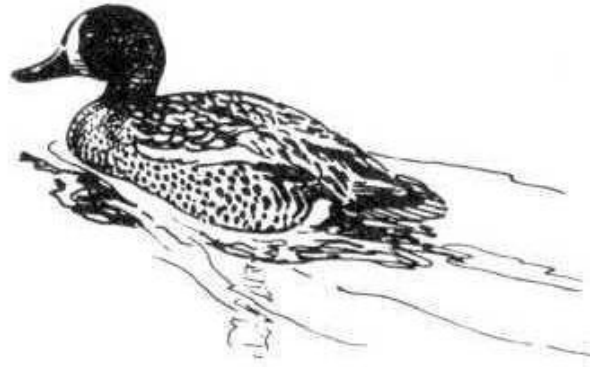
Photos taken of many of them were shown at the ICBC meeting.

One of the most interesting birds photographed was the Common Poto, a nocturnal feeder also known as a “Stick Bird.” When perched upright on the stump of a small branch during daylight hours, a Poto can be in the open directly overhead and be almost invisible because its form and coloration blend in so perfectly. Some of the endangered species that were seen and photographed included the Scarlet Macaw, Great Curassow, and Resplendent Quetzal. Most of the 140 photos shown at the meeting were of birds, but a smattering of photos showed butterflies, flowering plants and some of the vertebrates encountered including three-toed sloths, spectacled caimans, crocodiles, and iguanas. Two active hummingbird nests, one a Violet-crowned Woodnymph’s, the other a Green Violet-ear’s, provided nice photo-ops.

Friendly, welcoming Costa Ricans, an abundance of marvelous flora and avian species, a fascinating geological history, and five active volcanoes make Costa Rica a destination worthy of many return visits. December through February, the dry season in most locales, are ideal months for birding in Costa Rica. *A Guide to the Birds of Costa Rica* by Stiles and Skutch provides abundant, detailed information about each species and contains a complete set of high quality colored plates. Some might find it a bit bulky to lug around all day, but it is an invaluable reference. An excellent, smaller volume, *The Birds of Costa Rica* by Garrigues and Dean makes a useful field guide while out on the trails.

Attendees: John Bovey, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Roger and Linda Fisher, Jim and Karole Fuller, Peter Hansen, Judie Hermsen, Rick Hollis, Pat Kieffer, Bernie Knight, Dave Kyllingstad, Kristen Lawton, Ramona McGurk, Alan Nagel, Daisy Owen, Rosemarie Petzold, Jim and Sharon Scheib, Wetherill Winder.

– Dick Lynch



February 22, Quad Cities. This was our annual late winter trip to the Mississippi for gulls and waterfowl. A beautiful dark/rufous intergrade Red-tailed Hawk was there to greet us as we exited I-80 south of LeClaire. A small number of Common Goldeneyes and Common Mergansers were seen along Canal Shore Dr. – also a Bufflehead (Diana’s favorite) and some Lesser Scaup. There was a kingfisher at Lock & Dam 15, but nothing else of real interest—however, I’m so glad the Army Corps keeps those restrooms heated and open.

Near the docks near the Davenport East Village we added Canvasback and Redhead to our list. Lock & Dam 14 provided our only interesting gull, an adult Thayer’s. Nearby we spied the pair of Peregrine Falcons roosting atop the Mid-American Energy Building.

At Fairmount Cemetery there were nearly 30 White-winged Crossbills feeding in the hemlocks near the lower entrance. They were both in the tree and on the ground. I think it was a religious experience for Chris, who nearly got within the close focus of his binoculars to those birds feeding on the fallen cones. We bestowed upon him the Ojibway name, One Who Walks With Crossbills. It was certainly the longest and most enjoyable looks any of us had ever had of these birds. Elsewhere in the cemetery, we struck out on Walt Zurdeeg’s Saw-whet Owl despite the long orange ribbon tied to the cedar. Nice try, but next time, tie the other end to the owl Walt! While searching for the owl we did see a Pileated Woodpecker fly over though.

The feeders at the top of the hill were attracting many Pine Siskins and at least two Eurasian Tree Sparrows. There was also a Carolina Wren singing from the ravine nearby. We made a stop on Concord St. near Nahant Marsh to look at some ducks, when a beautiful Red-shouldered Hawk began calling incessantly. It sat nicely for us and soon another was answering from further back in the trees.

Our last stop was at Credit Island where we found 11 Great Blue Herons huddling out of the wind. Talk about cold—I actually experienced a “brain freeze”. There were a number of Canadas and Mallards near the herons, and we also discovered an American Black Duck and a female Green-winged Teal. What a super day! Thanks to Diana for driving.

Participants: Chris Caster (leader), Chris Edwards, John Erickson, Diana Pesek.

Birds (46 species): Canada Goose, American Black Duck, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Common Merganser, Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, American Kestrel, American Coot, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Thayer’s Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, American Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, American Tree Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, House Finch, White-winged Crossbill, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– Chris Caster



March 7, Burlington. We started the day in Iowa City with a temperature of 42° and rain, but I was determined to go to Burlington regardless. I kept telling Ramona that the weather would surely be better there as we drove through hard, pouring rain. We could always sit in a café by the river for awhile. By the time we had gotten through Mt. Pleasant the rain had nearly stopped, and it remained stopped until 3 p.m. So I guess I was right, about the weather at least.

We met Chuck Fuller and John Rutenbeck at the Port of Burlington at 7:55 a.m., with a sighting of the resident Peregrines mating on the bridge. Since there were just four of us we all settled in John’s vehicle. We went to the tennis court parking lot where we spotted four Turkey Vultures in the trees, the first seen this spring for all of us. We proceeded to walk the concrete storm sewer where we saw the usual birds, except for the Winter Wren. We were about to give up when I saw some movement in the brush...the Winter Wren. We went next to the cemetery with high hopes of seeing the Eastern Screech-Owl, but no go. The sun actually came out for 15 minutes, which raised all our spirits. We did hear a redpoll, and spotted a Brown Creeper, but the Cedar Waxwings were gone.

We kept stopping to look over flocks of blackbirds, hoping for a Brewer’s or Rusty headed Blackbird. We were rewarded with one

Brewer's. The trip to Green Bay Bottoms rewarded us with large flocks (3000-5000) of Snow Geese and Greater White-fronted Geese. Looking in the flocks for a smaller individual we spotted a Ross's Goose. There were Cackling Geese in a flock of Gr. White-fronted Geese also. At Wever Elevator across the river were a group of American White Pelicans sleeping, obviously new arrivals.

Then we went to Fort Madison where a Thayer's Gull, spotted earlier in the week by John, was still present. We also had two male Red-breasted Mergansers and a pair of Common Mergansers. A flock of five Double-crested Cormorants flew up the Mississippi River. At the Dial Pond as many as ten Trumpeter Swans had been seen this spring. For us on this Saturday there were four, the resident clipped pair and a wild pair. On to Montrose to look for snipe...no snipe this day, but we did see some black bobbing birds through Chuck's scope that he said were three Ruddy Ducks. Lots of Buffleheads, Canvasbacks, Lesser Scaup, with fewer Gadwalls, Ring-necked Ducks and Common Goldeneye were spotted on the Mississippi River as we drove along.

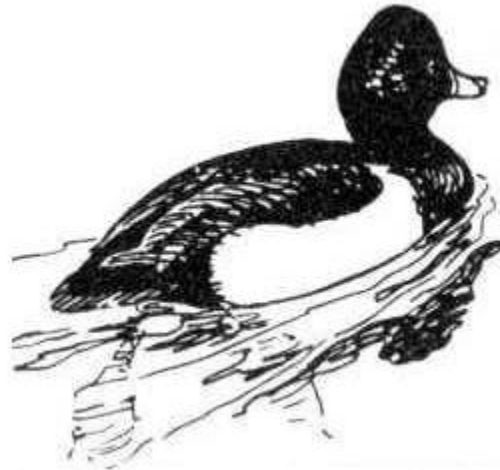
Denmark gave us two Eurasian Collared Doves on Main St. We decided to head down to Keokuk in the hopes of spotting an American Black Duck. No black duck but a really good, clear view of three Ruddy Ducks. It was a spectacular day, ending with 77 species, 13 short of the Big Day total of 90 for Burlington.

Participants: Karen Disbrow (ICBC leader), Chuck Fuller (co-leader), Ramona McGurk, John Rutenbeck (co-leader).

Birds (77 species): Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Cackling Goose, Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Red-breasted

Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Wild Turkey, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Thayer's Gull, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Purple Finch, House Finch, Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– Karen Disbrow



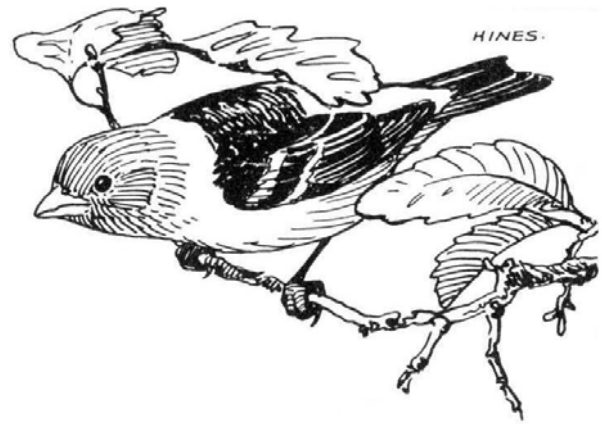
March 26, Meeting. CJ Voci, President of Friends of Hickory Hill Park, discussed the group's successful campaign to purchase 14 acres of environmentally sensitive land adjacent to the park as well as ongoing management and improvement to the park. FHHP will continue with its efforts to control invasive species, especially garlic mustard and honeysuckle, and

to establish firebreaks to allow controlled burns. The all-volunteer group is currently managing two prairie reconstruction sites and hopes to add a third in 2009-2010. FHHP is also working on a nature education shelter for the Bloomington Street entrance to the park. A generous donation from Dee and Carrie Norton will pay for the structure and informational signage, which will include information on the history and flora and fauna of the park, including migratory birds and owls.

Adam Prato, Park Ranger and Volunteer Coordinator, Sherry Middlemas-Brown, Regional Biologist, and Bill Schreier, Volunteer Coordinator of Inventory and Monitoring Program, discussed the breeding bird monitoring program currently underway at Herbert Hoover National Historic Site. Breeding birds are a “vital sign” for prairie conditions at Herbert Hoover NHS. The Inventory and Monitoring Program completes breeding bird surveys in the park only one out of every four years. These data gaps are not a problem in long-term monitoring, but they hamper short-term decision-making. To fill this gap in monitoring, Bill Schreier asked the Iowa City Bird Club for help. Jim Fuller and Ken Lowder volunteered to survey breeding birds at the park in 2008. The data were collected using the Inventory and Monitoring Program protocol and are now part of the resource geodatabase. Interpreters made the scientific reports accessible to the public through Web pages, a park-specific bird checklist, and slide presentations. See <http://www.nps.gov/heho/naturescience/inventory-and-monitoring.htm>.

Attendees: John Bovey, Barry Buschelman, Bob and Dara Dick, Karen Disbrow, Roger and Linda Fisher, Rick Hollis, Ken Hunt, Bernie Knight, Dave Kyllingstad, Dick and Nancy Lynch, Gail McLure, Alan Nagel, Ed and Marcy Rolenc, Sue Sarlette, Wetherill Winder.

– Karen Disbrow



March 28, Cone Marsh. Thanks to a very windy, very cold morning, we had a rather light turnout for our beginning birders trip to Cone Marsh. We made a series of brief stops around the marsh – their briefness being necessitated by the desire to crank up the car heaters and get warm. The conditions made it difficult to find many passerines, but we saw a nice diversity of water birds.

After a brief pit stop in Lone Tree, we checked on the local Great Horned Owl nest around the corner. On this day only the tiniest wisp of feathers sticking up from the broken-off snag indicated the presence of a bird on the nest. Usually the male is seen roosting elsewhere in the same tree, but he wasn't to be found.

Before arriving at the marsh proper, we stopped along a roadside where thirteen Greater White-fronted Geese were feeding close by in corn stubble. We then stopped near the caboose in the NE corner of the marsh, and while scoping the many ducks, a Sandhill Crane obligingly flew right overhead, bugling all the while. We continued to the south side of the marsh, where we added a few more ducks to our list, including a male Red-breasted Merganser, and enjoyed close looks at Blue-winged Teal. A little farther on, we found a flock of Snow Geese on the ground to the south and were able to pick out a few smaller Ross's Geese.

While driving slowly along the road, I noticed about a dozen snipe near the road. Apparently they didn't appreciate me sticking my head out

the window and yelling “Snipe!” to the other cars because they all took off. We took a short walk on the dike, where we added a male Redhead to our tally. Our final stop at the marsh was at the boat ramp, but the winds were fierce and we didn’t stay long.

After leaving the marsh, we drove through the flooded bottomlands to the west, where we saw several hundred American White Pelicans in the air and close to the road on the shallow water. They all sported the knobby protuberance on the top of their bills which they get during the breeding season. At this location we also spotted several American Wigeon, which gave us 17 waterfowl species for the morning.

Participants: Barry Buschelman, Geri Dull, Chris Edwards (leader), Rick Hollis, Ken Hunt, Marty, Kari, and Kristofer Jacobson, Brenda Nations.

Birds (49 species): Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Ross’s Goose, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe,

American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, Lesser Yellowlegs, Wilson’s Snipe, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, European Starling, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, meadowlark sp., Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, House Sparrow.

– Chris Edwards



IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Please send this form with your annual membership dues to Eastern Iowa Birdwatch, Bernie Knight, 425 Lee Street, Iowa City, IA 52246. Annual dues are \$15 per household or \$10 for students. Members receive a 10% discount on bird seed at Bird’s Eye View in Coralville.

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Iowa City Bird Club

Eastern Iowa Birdwatch is published three times per year, in April, September, and December. Members are encouraged to send submissions to the editor, Chris Edwards, 4490 Daniels Cir. NE, Solon, IA 52333, or credwards@aol.com. You may contact Chris at (319) 430-4732.

Annual membership dues are \$15 per household or \$10 for students, payable by January 1st for the coming year. Check your mailing label for the year you have paid through. Make checks payable to Eastern Iowa Birdwatch and mail to our treasurer, Bernie Knight, 425 Lee St., Iowa City, IA 52246.

For general bird club information, or to lead or suggest a field trip, contact our president and field trip coordinator, Karen Disbrow at (319) 339-1017 or k_disbrow@yahoo.com.

Our club web site is maintained by Jim Scheib and is located at www.icbirds.org. You may contact Jim at (319) 337-5206 or jim@tenlongview.net.

Eastern Iowa Birdwatch

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