

---

# Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

---

Volume 29 Number 2

September 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.

**September 17, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Meeting.** Dennis Schlicht, co-author of *Butterflies of Iowa*, will speak on "Managing for Butterflies". Dennis will sign copies of his book following the presentation.

**September 20, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. River Valley Wetland** in Cedar County for warblers and sparrows. Dress for wet walking. Chris Edwards, 430-4732.

**September 26, Saturday, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. 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, 339-1017 or Chris Edwards, 430-4732.

**October 10, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. Cedar Valley Park** and other southern Cedar County woodlands and prairies for fall migrants. Bruce Gardner, 331-3547.

**October 15, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Meeting.** Linda and Robert Scarth will present images from their new book, *Deep Nature: Photographs from Iowa*. A book signing will follow the presentation.

**October 25, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area** near Palo for loons, grebes, ducks, and other water birds. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. Chris Caster, 339-8343.

**November 1, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. Redbird Farms Wildlife Area** for sparrows and other migrants. Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot on S. Riverside Drive. *Note: Daylight Savings Time ends Sunday morning.* Linda Donelson, 351-7542.

**November 14, Saturday, 8:00 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Area** for waterfowl and other late fall migrants. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

**November 19, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Meeting.** Barbara Boyle of the Johnson County Songbird Project will talk about the Sherman Tower restoration and other ongoing projects of the JCSP.

## Other Dates of Note

**October 16-18, Friday–Sunday. Iowa Ornithologists' Union Fall Meeting at Centerville/Lake Rathbun.** For more information or to register visit [www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org).

**October 17, Saturday, 10 a.m. – Noon. Robert and Linda Scarth Book Signing at Bird's Eye View,** Clocktower Plaza, 1801 2nd St., Coralville.

### From the President Karen Disbrow

I cannot believe that summer is over and we are into fall. What a busy spring and summer it has been. Thanks to all of you who worked on the Breeding Bird Atlas blocks. We have gathered important data on the birds breeding in Iowa, particularly in Johnson County. This was the second year and we will continue for another three seasons. [See page 8 for a report on this year's ICBC breeding bird surveys.]

Bernie Knight is retiring as Treasurer of the Iowa City Bird Club. The next newsletter will have an article on this 91-year-young outstanding birder and member of our club.

This fall we have authors speaking at our first two meetings. They will each have books available for purchase and signing following their talks.

First, Dennis Schlicht, a renowned biologist teaching in Cedar Rapids, who has been studying butterflies for more than 40 years, will speak at our September meeting. One reviewer had this to say about *Butterflies of Iowa* by Dennis W. Schlicht, John C. Downey, and Jeffrey C. Nekola: "A book on Iowa's butterflies is long overdue and the significance of this work simply cannot be overstated. The chapters on natural communities and the history of Iowa butterfly study alone make it indispensable. Highly recommended." (Ron Royer, author, *Butterflies of North Dakota*.)

Then at our October meeting, Linda and Robert Scarth will present images from their new book from the University of Iowa Press, *Deep Nature: Photographs from Iowa*. There are flowers, birds, insects, fungi and more small residents of the Midwest. Piotr Naskrecki, author of *The Smaller Majority*, had this to say: "Vibrant, full of life, and beautifully composed, Linda and Robert Scarth's photography shows the side of Iowa I never knew existed. Accompanied by deeply personal, evocative text by the ecologist John Pearson, this book celebrates a rarely seen facet of the American Midwest."

Our third speaker this fall, Barbara Boyle, will share what is happening on projects of the Johnson County Songbird Project, including the Sherman chimney swift tower. [See page 4 for recent news on this project.]

I want to thank our members who have given talks on birding to other organizations for the ICBC: Jim Scheib and Jim Walters. We are often asked to provide speakers who can share information on their love of birding. In fact, I had more requests than speakers available. If any of you would like to be on my list of presenters, please do not be shy, let me know.

I am looking forward to a great fall of birding. Be sure to check out all the activities listed on our calendar.

Good Birding,  
Karen

## Membership Spotlight on: **Jim Scheib**

**What is your occupation?** Retired educator. Worked at ACT on national certification exams in head and neck surgery and ophthalmology and then as a research consultant and staff development coordinator at Grant Wood AEA until 2004.

**Tell us about your family.** Wife Sharon and two grown sons, both married, with two grandchildren. Older son Chris, wife Jennifer, and grandsons Matt and Jake live in the Pittsburgh area. Younger son Eric and wife Sara live in North Liberty.

**Where did you grow up?** In NE Pennsylvania long the Appalachian trail near the Lehigh Gap in the small town of Palmerton, home of the New Jersey Zinc Company of Pennsylvania. With smelting works at either end of town it did not matter which way the wind blew, we still had zinc smoke in the air.

**When and how did your interest in birds develop?** After moving to Iowa in 1982 and especially after becoming a research consultant for Grant Wood AEA covering 36 school districts. I would see all the hawks in my travels of seven counties and wanted to know more about them. Then Jim Fuller got us down to Cone Marsh and that was it. Sharon had been interested much before then.

**Did you have any birding mentors?** Jim Fuller taught me everything I know and there could not be a better birding mentor.

**When did you join the Iowa City Bird Club?** Around 1986. I maintain the club web site, and have also served as Treasurer and Board Member of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union.

**Do you remember the first bird club event you attended?** Probably a field trip to Cone Marsh.

**Do you have a favorite bird or family of birds?** That has changed over the years. Now it is probably the Yellow-throated Warbler as we have had them nesting in our yard the last two years. It was fun to see them wintering in the Yucatan in January too.

**What particular aspects of birding interest you the most?** We enjoy the tremendous variety we have come to know and all the interesting places we have birded from New Zealand to Sweden.

**What is your favorite field guide and why?** I like the National Geographic because it covers the whole country, has maps on the same page as the birds, and is updated regularly.

**Do you keep a life list?** I have a life list for the US and Iowa.

**What was the most recent bird you added to your life list?** Last new US and Iowa bird was the Black-tailed Gull on November 23, 2007 at Saylorville Lake with Dick Tetrault.

**What interesting birds have you seen in your yard?** Interesting yard birds have included Varied Thrush, Common Redpoll, Yellow-throated Warbler, Pileated Woodpecker, Swallow-tailed Kite, Red-shouldered Hawk, Scarlet Tanager, and baby Wild Turkeys.

**Where is your favorite place in Iowa to bird, and why?** I like to bird below the Coralville Dam because the trail provides good photographic opportunities during migrations and eagles in winter.

**Tell us about one of your most exciting Iowa birding moments.** Discovering a Swallow-tailed Kite drifting over the trees from Dubuque Street onto Longview Knoll and having it in the neighborhood the rest of that day and all of the next.

**What is your “most wanted” Iowa bird or your “nemesis” bird?** I missed the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Hawkeye Wildlife Area because I left ten minutes before it was relocated, but now I am working on finding a Black Vulture.

**Tell us about a favorite birding experience or place outside of Iowa.** The endemics of New Zealand are great, but we also thoroughly enjoyed the September 2007 fall migration in southern Sweden and St. Paul of the Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea.

**If you could visit any place on earth, where would it be?** A good birding trip to Australia.

**Do you have any hobbies or interests besides birding?** I enjoy digital photography, web design, and tennis.

**Do you have any favorite movies or TV shows?** Mystery on Iowa Public Television.

**Have you read any good books lately?** *Lake Wobegon Summer 1956* by Garrison Keillor.

**What is your favorite restaurant?** Linn Street Café, Iowa City

**New Home for  
Althea Sherman’s  
Chimney Swift Tower  
Barbara Boyle**

The Johnson County Songbird Project is pleased to announce that it has formed a partnership with the Cedar County Historical Society for the siting and restoration of Althea Sherman’s Chimney Swifts’ Tower and, additionally, for a museum dedicated to her artistic and scientific legacy.

The Bickett-Rate Memorial Preserve, located on the edge of the small Cedar County town of Buchanan (six miles west of Tipton), includes the historic Edgewood Hall house and a large barn. This preserve has already been placed on the National Register of Historic Places and a complete restoration of the site has begun. The whole farm comprises 580 acres, 350+ acres of which is oak-hickory timber, and 1.5 miles of Cedar River frontage.

Beyond the remarkable similarities of Edgewood Hall and the original Sherman home, the Bickett-Rate Memorial Preserve offers significant opportunities for a continuation of

Miss Sherman’s bird study and for those interested in archeology, ecology, history, natural history, and art and photography, as well.

Our core goal has always been an appropriate site and, hopefully, the creation of the sanctuary that Althea Sherman had envisioned, for the preservation of the Chimney Swifts’ Tower and a center to focus on and promote and perhaps even further her scientific and artistic legacy. Also, we sought a place from which other educational programs could be launched. The Bickett-Rate Memorial Preserve offers all of this. It has been a long, long time coming and we are thrilled and grateful to have found the right home!

Both organizations are very excited about this partnership and moving forward with development of the site. There will be much more to come in the near future, with the creation of a web-site, more detailed press releases and a full announcement. There will be many opportunities for people to become involved, as we will be setting up committees for several aspects of this project, seeking grants, and renewing our fundraising efforts.

## 2009 Johnson County Spring Count

### Chris Caster

The Spring Count was held on May 9th. The morning low was 48 degrees and the temperature reached 60 in late afternoon. It was overcast most of the day and winds were intermittent.

The species total was 140, well below our count average of 150. Only six waterfowl species could be found. Shorebird habitat was scarce and only eight species could be found. Twenty-one warbler species were pretty good considering the cool and sometimes windy weather.

I'm going to give the day's best bird to Chris Edwards for finally getting the Spring Count's first ever Eurasian Collared-Dove. They have been seen in Solon for the last three years and Chris has taken some ribbing for not being able to pick those up for us previously. Next best bird goes to Bob Dick for the Pine Siskins at his feeder in Iowa City. Bob wasn't just feeder watching though, as he got our only Eastern Screech-Owl in the wee hours of the morning.

As usual we had a whole bunch of additional "good" birds. Yellow-headed Blackbird and American Bittern were at Sycamore Bottoms, two Broad-winged Hawks were at Hanging Rock Woods, and Black Terns were at Lake Macbride. Two Hooded Warblers were at the usual location at Sugar Bottom Recreation Area. A Cerulean Warbler was singing at Squire Point. A White-eyed Vireo was at Hickory Hill Park. Eurasian Tree Sparrows were at a farmstead near Williams Prairie. Other good birds included Peregrine Falcon, Loggerhead Shrike, Bell's Vireo, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Bobolink.

This year's birds-that-got-away included: Northern Bobwhite, many, many shorebirds, Whip-poor-will and Common Nighthawk. We had one of our best crews so it wasn't for lack of trying. Thanks everyone.

Participants: Mark Brown, Chris Caster, Bob Dick, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Brian and Judy Ellyson, Linda Fisher, Jim Fuller, Troy Kelsay, Ken Lowder, Mary Noble, Jason Paulios, Diana Pesek, Jim Scheib, Bill Scheible.

#### BIRD SPECIES

Canada Goose	188	Cooper's Hawk	2	Black Tern	4
Wood Duck	29	Broad-winged Hawk	2	Rock Pigeon	16
Mallard	48	Red-tailed Hawk	16	Eurasian Collared-Dove	1
Blue-winged Teal	22	American Kestrel	3	Mourning Dove	51
Northern Shoveler	4	Peregrine Falcon	1	Eastern Screech-Owl	1
Lesser Scaup	2	Sora	12	Great Horned Owl	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	13	American Coot	107	Barred Owl	2
Wild Turkey	5	Killdeer	17	Chimney Swift	8
Pied-billed Grebe	6	Lesser Yellowlegs	43	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	4
American White Pelican	75	Solitary Sandpiper	9	Belted Kingfisher	4
Double-crested Cormorant	24	Spotted Sandpiper	9	Red-headed Woodpecker	15
American Bittern	1	Least Sandpiper	3	Red-bellied Woodpecker	23
Great Blue Heron	7	Dowitcher sp.	1	Downy Woodpecker	18
Great Egret	23	Wilson's Snipe	1	Hairy Woodpecker	7
Green Heron	3	American Woodcock	1	Northern Flicker	7
Turkey Vulture	37	Ring-billed Gull	10	Pileated Woodpecker	2
Osprey	3	Caspian Tern	6	Least Flycatcher	8
Bald Eagle	1	Forster's Tern	9	Eastern Phoebe	8

Great Crested Flycatcher	15	Swainson's Thrush	8	Eastern Towhee	3
Eastern Kingbird	20	Wood Thrush	5	Chipping Sparrow	76
Loggerhead Shrike	1	American Robin	188	Field Sparrow	16
White-eyed Vireo	1	Gray Catbird	78	Lark Sparrow	4
Bell's Vireo	1	Brown Thrasher	16	Savannah Sparrow	1
Yellow-throated Vireo	10	European Starling	75	Grasshopper Sparrow	3
Blue-headed Vireo	5	Cedar Waxwing	5	Song Sparrow	46
Warbling Vireo	20	Tennessee Warbler	26	Lincoln's Sparrow	1
Red-eyed Vireo	4	Orange-crowned Warbler	2	Swamp Sparrow	3
Blue Jay	40	Nashville Warbler	33	White-throated Sparrow	73
American Crow	43	Northern Parula	6	White-crowned Sparrow	15
Horned Lark	11	Yellow Warbler	16	Northern Cardinal	146
Purple Martin	10	Chestnut-sided Warbler	1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	40
Tree Swallow	1171	Magnolia Warbler	2	Indigo Bunting	31
N. Rough-winged Swallow	25	Yellow-rumped Warbler	102	Dickcissel	5
Bank Swallow	319	Black-throated Green Warbler	8	Bobolink	3
Cliff Swallow	108	Blackburnian Warbler	1	Red-winged Blackbird	448
Barn Swallow	156	Yellow-throated Warbler	1	Eastern Meadowlark	37
Black-capped Chickadee	39	Palm Warbler	26	Yellow-headed Blackbird	2
Tufted Titmouse	11	Blackpoll Warbler	1	Common Grackle	119
White-breasted Nuthatch	20	Cerulean Warbler	1	Brown-headed Cowbird	67
Carolina Wren	2	Black-and-white Warbler	10	Orchard Oriole	1
House Wren	107	American Redstart	32	Baltimore Oriole	50
Sedge Wren	2	Ovenbird	32	House Finch	8
Marsh Wren	5	Northern Waterthrush	9	Pine Siskin	2
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	3	Common Yellowthroat	48	American Goldfinch	97
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	31	Hooded Warbler	2	House Sparrow	110
Eastern Bluebird	19	Wilson's Warbler	2	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	6
Gray-cheeked Thrush	2	Scarlet Tanager	7		

## 25 Years Ago in *Eastern Iowa Birdwatch*

The Fall 1984 issue featured a lengthy article on "Winter Birding in Duluth" by editor Carl Bendorf. Carl reported on a February 1984 trip to Duluth with Tom Kent and Tom Staudt, and offered tips for birders contemplating a trip of their own to northern Minnesota. The group engaged the services of local guide and author Kim Eckert, which greatly contributed to the trip's success. Highlights were Great Gray Owl, Pine Grosbeak, Boreal Chickadee, Gyrfalcon, Boreal Owl, Spruce Grouse, and Bohemian Waxwing.

Rick Hollis, Bud Gode, Marcia Schaffer, Carl Bendorf, and several other participants enjoyed a June outing to Amana Woods, specifically the area along the dirt road east of Highway 149. According to Carl, the area offered some of the best deep-woods birding in Iowa. Birds found included Worm-eating Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler, Acadian Flycatcher, Scarlet Tanager, and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. To the best of my knowledge, this area has not received much attention from local birders in recent years, and all of those birds with the possible exception of Worm-eating Warbler can still be found in the Amana area.

The fall calendar featured upcoming trips to Hickory Hill Park, Coralville Reservoir, Matsell Bridge Recreation Area, and the IOU Fall Meeting near Muscatine, with trips to Big Sand Mound, Wildcat Den State Park, Weise Slough, Cone Marsh, and Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge.

– Chris Edwards

## 2009 Hickory Hill Park Warbler Walk Results

Day of week	M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	M	T	W	Th	F	Days
Species / Date	4t h	5t h	6t h	7t h	8t h	11t h	12t h	13t h	14t h	18t h	19t h	20t h	21s t	22n d	Seen
Blue-winged Warbler			X		X			X							3
Golden-winged Warbler			X	X				X	X		X				5
Tennessee Warbler			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	11
Orange-crowned Warbler	X	X	X		X	X									5
Nashville Warbler	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	13
Northern Parula	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		12
Yellow Warbler										X	X				2
Chestnut-sided Warbler			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	12
Magnolia Warbler		X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	10
Cape May Warbler			X												1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X						8
Black-throated Gr. Warbler			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	10
Blackburnian Warbler					X	X	X	X	X	X				X	7
Palm Warbler	X	X	X		X		X				X				6
Bay-breasted Warbler															0
Blackpoll Warbler								X	X	X					3
Cerulean Warbler															0
Black-and-white Warbler	X			X	X	X		X	X	X					7
American Redstart				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	10
Ovenbird	X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X				9
Northern Waterthrush					X				X				X		3
Kentucky Warbler								X							1
Connecticut Warbler														X	1
Mourning Warbler								X		X	X				3
Common Yellowthroat					X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	8
Hooded Warbler										X					1
Wilson's Warbler				X				X	X	X	X			X	6
Canada Warbler									X					X	2

## Breeding Bird Atlas Survey Results

This was the second year of the five-year Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas Project. If you aren't yet familiar with the project, this is the second time such a project has been done. The original Breeding Bird Atlas Project was conducted from 1985-1990. Like before, the goal of the current project is to produce a comprehensive catalog of Iowa's breeding birds. The survey sample includes 791 3x3 mile plots—395 of these have been laid out in a systematic grid work, not designed to capture any particular piece of habitat. The remaining 396 blocks were split evenly between the northern and southern halves of the state and were selected to represent aquatic, forested, and grassland habitats according to their proportion statewide using the latest GIS land cover data. The goal of the 5-year project is to spend a total of 20 survey hours in each of the 791 blocks statewide. Even spread over five years it will require an incredible number of volunteer hours.

Not everyone was happy with the resulting sample, as some favorite birding locations were omitted. But the BBA committee purposely favored randomization of the sample set and therefore avoided specifically including any particular site. As it is, the sample set includes 13 blocks in Johnson County. Four are grid blocks—one of which fortunately includes Kent Park and another the area below the Coralville Dam. Three others include nearly all of the Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Five others include nearly all of the Coralville Reservoir and Lake Macbride. The final block straddles the Linn County line near the Cedar River. Notable locations not included within a block were Hickory Hill and Waterworks parks, South Sycamore Bottoms, and portions of Lake Macbride Nature-Recreation Area and the Squire Point area.

Here are the current coverages for the thirteen Johnson County blocks, according to the data entered on the BBA web site:

- #522 Coralville Reservoir Northeast  
0 hours
- #523 Cedar River  
1.0 hour, 20 species, 3 confirmed
- #524 Hawkeye WMA/Hanging Rock Ridge  
9.2 hours, 68 species, 13 confirmed
- #525 Hawkeye WMA  
6.0 hours, 50 species, 6 confirmed
- #526 Hawkeye WMA East  
6.2 hours, 76 species, 9 confirmed
- #527 Coralville Lake  
3.1 hours, 51 species, 7 confirmed
- #528 Lake Macbride State Park  
8.0 hours, 67 species, 16 confirmed
- #529 Coralville Reservoir-North Liberty  
4.8 hours, 31 species, 11 confirmed
- #530 Coralville Reservoir-Sugar Bottom  
5.2 hours, 51 species, 9 confirmed
- #531 Kent Park  
20.8 hours, 80 species, 26 confirmed
- #532 Rapid Creek  
20.1 hours, 79 species, 19 confirmed
- #533 Washington Southeast  
0 hours
- #534 Buck Creek/Hills Southeast  
0.2 hours, 1 species, 1 confirmed

Maps for any atlas block can be obtained from <http://bba.iowabirds.org>

– *Chris Caster*

**May 30, Block 528-Lake Macbride State Park.** It was a beautiful sunny morning, so I was surprised when no one else showed up for our first Breeding Bird Atlas trip of the year. Nevertheless I spent an enjoyable morning birding the Lake Macbride area. First I hiked the trail from the south-side boat ramp to the UI sailboat club, finding a Cerulean Warbler along the way. Next, along Osprey (or "Frigatebird") Trail I found three singing White-eyed Vireos, along with the expected Bell's Vireo and Yellow-throated Warbler. After hiking part of White Pine Trail, I found two more White-eyed



Vireos along the unauthorized ATV trail near 200th Street. I then checked roadsides for open country birds. I finished up by riding my bike on the Solon-Lake Macbride bike trail, where I heard a Sedge Wren and another Yellow-throated Warbler. Near the trailhead in Solon, Purple Martins were nesting in the houses there. For the day I recorded 6 confirmed and 14 probable breeding species in the block.

Participants: Chris Edwards (leader).

Birds (59 species): Canada Goose, Wild Turkey, Double-crested Cormorant, Green Heron, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Alder Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, White-eyed Vireo, Bell's Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Purple Martin, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Sedge Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Scarlet Tanager, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– *Chris Edwards*

**June 7, Block 525-Hawkeye WMA.** This block is cut into north and south areas by the Iowa River. Greencastle Road borders on the east. The south border just clips the northern end of the Greencastle Airport. The north border doesn't quite make it to the Amana Rd./Greencastle intersection. The northwest corner is at the Amana Rd./Derby Ave.

intersection and the southwest corner is on F-28 just east of the Cemetery Rd. Of course this or any block has substantially more terrain than anyone would hope to cover in a morning, so we decided to focus on just the southeastern portion of the block—specifically the area known as the Mallard Ponds. This area is not visible from either Greencastle Ave. or the Swan Lake Rd. It is accessed from Swan Lake Rd. near where the power lines cross the road. If you take the farm access road south it will pass between the eastern most of five ponds and eventually end at a sand hill prairie. There we happened to run into Bob Black from Cornell College with one of his students. They were working on a study of Ornate Box Turtle nest predation and they showed us one of the females in her burrow. This was an excellent place to begin our survey and we were excited to find chats singing in two locations. Also in the area were a few Bell's Vireos singing. We found nine of these on the morning and one was carrying nest material. Also nearby we heard briefly what sounded like a screech-owl. We could not locate the caller and so did not put it on our checklist. It seemed very odd to hear this during the daytime, but we don't know what else it could have been. A flock of ten Cedar Waxwings was seen—no evidence of breeding though.

One of the tough things about doing BBA surveys is that often you have to make your own trail. We found ourselves doing just that when we decided to make a loop through the surrounding country. In the woods just east of the sand hill we encountered Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, but not much else. Eventually we came into a more open area where we found Willow Flycatchers and Baltimore Orioles. We then headed north to where I believed there was a field that would be easier walking, but found the creek impassable. Now we were forced to bushwhack our way through a narrow strip of brush with the creek on one side and dense woods on the other. When things got too tight we opted to go through a cattail marsh. We kept our footing on the denser vegetation to avoid

getting wet and finally completed the big circle back to the access road. It was good exercise, but not too productive birding-wise.

Better birding was to be had from the access road and pond edges. On the large pond to the west, we found a pair of Hooded Mergansers. At the most northeasterly pond we found a female Hooded Merganser with 7 ducklings. There we also found two female Wood Ducks with nearly 15 ducklings. Other birds in abundance were American Robins, Northern Cardinals, Field Sparrows, Common Yellowthroats, Dickcissels, Red-winged Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds, and American Goldfinch. No surprises there I suppose. What did surprise us though on the way out, were two Grasshopper Sparrows singing very close to Swan Lake Road. I had never found them along there previously.

Bruce and I certainly had fun, but it would have been nice to have some other folks along to cover more ground.

Participants: Chris Caster (leader), Bruce Gardner.

Birds (44 species): Wood Duck, Mallard, Hooded Merganser, Ring-necked Pheasant, Killdeer, Chimney Swift, Mourning Dove, Willow Flycatcher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Great-crested Flycatcher, House Wren, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Blue Jay, American Crow, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Bell's Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow Warbler, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– *Chris Caster*

### **June 13, Block 526-Hawkeye WMA East.**

The morning began with overcast skies and light rain, so I donned my rain gear and headed out to Block 526, which encompasses the eastern portion of Hawkeye Wildlife Area and part of Swan Lake. The rain stopped within an hour and I had a fantastic morning. I first walked part of the trail from the Sand Point parking lot east towards James Avenue, where the highlights were a Yellow-breasted Chat and a Bell's Vireo. A group of six female Hooded Mergansers were on Swan Lake. At the end of the Babcock Access road I enjoyed a long look at a Black-billed Cuckoo, and observed active Bank Swallow and Double-crested Cormorant colonies. I then drove to the north side, and hiked into a really beautiful woods north of the DNR headquarters, where I found Veery and Scarlet Tanager. I finished up along Blain Cemetery Road where White-eyed Vireo and Blue-winged Warbler were the highlights. During the morning I recorded 7 confirmed and 12 probable breeding species.

Participants: Chris Edwards (leader).

Birds (68 species): Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Black-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Chimney Swift, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, White-eyed Vireo, Bell's Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, Tree Swallow, Bank Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Veery, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Blue-winged Warbler, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird,

Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-breasted Chat, Scarlet Tanager, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– *Chris Edwards*

**June 20, Blocks 527 & 529-Coralville Reservoir.** This was billed as a club trip, but the leader was the only participant, which has been a recurring problem on club atlas trips. The vegetation was very wet from 2.5” of rain in the preceding 18 hours. The foliage in the woods, and even from the road, was so thick that visibility was very short – it was almost like birding in the fog. Consequently the survey was cut very short due to the dampness. After returning home, I kept an eye on my feeders since my house is in block 529. All species found were potential breeding birds.

Participants: Rick Hollis (leader).

Birds (23 species): Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, American Redstart, Scarlet Tanager, Chipping Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, American Goldfinch.

– *Rick Hollis*

**June 27, Block 524-Hawkeye WMA/Hanging Rock Ridge.** John Erickson joined me for few hours of surveying this block which covers the western portion of Hawkeye Wildlife Area and Hanging Rock Woods in northern Johnson County. Only three species exhibited hard evidence of breeding: Barn Swallows, Eastern Phoebe, and Baltimore Orioles were all seen with youngsters. There were several notable

species seen, however, in suitable breeding habitat.

Two Henslow’s Sparrows were present in a field along Knapp Creek Way in the northeast portion of the block. Also in the northeast part, a male Kentucky Warbler was seen briefly in wood margin along a farm trail off of Chambers Ave. Further west at Hanging Rock Woods, singing Ovenbirds, Scarlet Tanagers, and a Yellow-throated Vireo were found. We ended the outing along Amana Road in the northwest portion of the block, where several Grasshopper Sparrows were singing in the field on the north side of the road. The southern portion of block 524 will have to wait for a future outing!

Participants: Mark Brown (leader), John Erickson.

Birds (51 species): Ring-necked Pheasant, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Sedge Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Scarlet Tanager, Eastern Towhee, Field Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow’s Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– *Mark Brown*

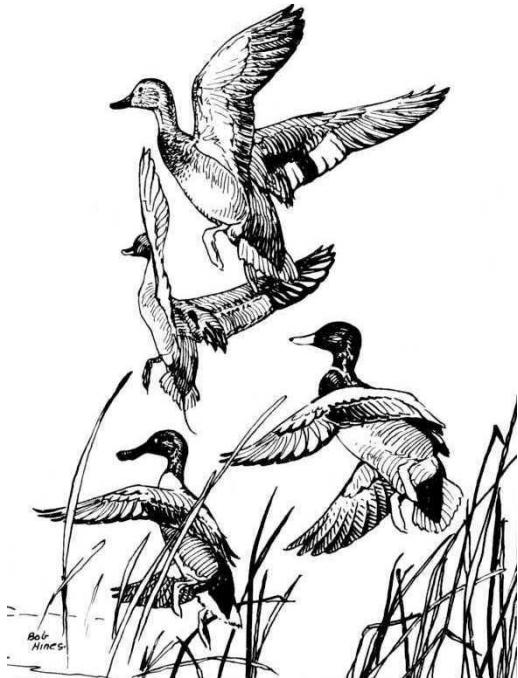
**July 5, Block 534-Buck Creek/Hills SE.** At 6:30 a.m. three intrepid birders met to gather data on this breeding bird atlas block in

southern Johnson County. It was a sunny day with a temperature starting at 69 F and reaching 75 F. Block 534 starts at the corner of the sod farm on Sand Road and the road into Hills and goes to the south. The area is primarily agricultural with some portions touching the Iowa River. However, it was too wet to drive the level B roads to the river. We drove around the fields until 10:45 a.m.

Participants: Karen Disbrow (leader), John Erickson, Ramona McGurk.

Birds (35 species): Wild Turkey, Northern Bobwhite, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Killdeer, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Kingbird, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, House Wren, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-throated warbler, Field Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– Karen Disbrow



## Field Trip and Meeting Reports

**April 4, Kent Park.** Another cold, gray morning. Again we were accompanied by a number of the club's "pros" on this beginning birder trip. All told we had around 30 species. Hearing the Winter Wren's magical song was a treat as always. We were followed for a while by a pair of Wood Ducks who were investigating cavities in trees. We also saw Kent Park's pair of tree-nesting Canada Geese.

Participants: Alannah Atley, John Broz, Karen Disbrow, Jim Fuller, Rick Hollis (leader), Ken Hunt, Lauren and Doina Johnson, Steve Jones, Miriam Meyer, Brenda Nations.

Birds (43 species): Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Gadwall, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ring-necked Pheasant, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, American Coot, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch.

– Rick Hollis

**April 11, Hawkeye Wildlife Area.** Finally a nice day! This year's previous beginning birder trips had been snake-bitten with respect to weather. Today however was glorious. Bird-wise we saw nothing unusual. Probably our most interesting observation was an antagonistic interaction between a male Northern Harrier and an immature Bald Eagle. I am not sure where the harrier was – in a tree or on the ground – but the eagle flew past, in level flight 60 feet or so

above the ground, which offended the harrier. Almost makes me wonder about a nest.

Participants: Karen Disbrow, Peter Hansen, Rick Hollis (leader), Ken Hunt, Lauren and Doina Johnson, Steve Jones, Bill and Sue Lottes, Miriam Meyer, Brenda Nations, Gary Snyder, Jean Wagoner, Jean Walker.

Birds (50 species): Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Ring-necked Pheasant, Pied-billed Grebe, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, American Coot, Killdeer, Pectoral Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, American Crow, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird.

– Rick Hollis

**April 16, Meeting.** Linda and Robert Scarth presented the program "Walking With Penguins – Falkland Islands Photography". They photographed in the Falkland Islands for two weeks in January 2009 and also spent several days in Santiago, Chile on the way to the Falklands. They did not want to miss the weekly Saturday morning flight from Santiago through Punta Arenas on to Mount Pleasant Air Base on East Falkland. This once a week flight is the only one from South America as is the Saturday afternoon flight back to Santiago. The other choice is flying to the UK and taking an Air Bridge flight from a British air base.

People go to the Falklands to see the four nesting penguin species – King, Gentoo, Magellanic, and Rockhopper. Macaroni Penguins also visit the Islands. The Scarths showed images of all five species along with a number of sea birds, shorebirds, and smaller species. January is midsummer so many baby and juvenile birds were available for photography. Most species were very tolerant of human presence. The probable exception is a Falkland Skua with young though the Scarths encountered a tolerant adult with chicks as well as a very irate one.

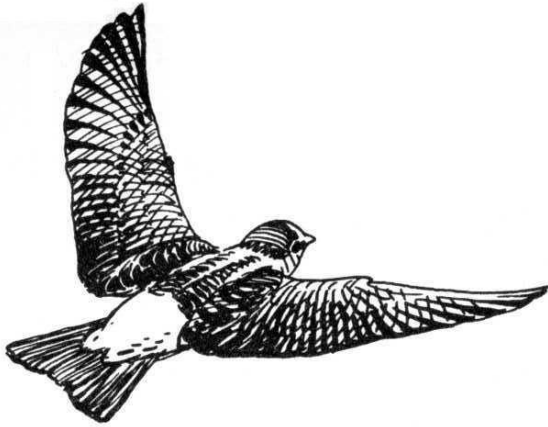
The teenage Gentoo Penguins would gather around people to study them. Young adult King Penguins would walk in groups, occasionally punching one another in the shoulder like teenage boys. The title of the presentation comes from the group of King Penguins that included Linda in a long walk on Volunteer Beach on the northeast coast of East Falkland. Bob was occupied with the baby penguins at the time. The Black-browed Albatross is poetry in flight and an affectionate mate and caring parent on the ground. They showed and discussed a variety of species including Sea Lions, Elephant Seals, and the only endemic butterfly – a fritillary called Queen of the Islands.

While visiting six outlying islands (Sea Lion, Bleaker, Carcass, West Point, Saunders and Pebble), they stayed at sheep farm guest cottages and two lodges. Air service with small planes is scheduled depending on the needs of islanders and visitors. While only a thousand or so travelers stay on the islands each year, well over 50,000 cruise ship tourists make short day trips from the ships to one or more islands during the six-month cruise season. Most visitors from the UK come on birding and history trips. The 1982 Falklands War is very important to Falkland Islanders' identity and for the men who were in the British forces. Early history included the use of the islands by Boston whalers.

The presentation included aerial and ground images of Stanley (the capitol – also called Town), Camp (the farms and all outlying areas), and a few islands. Of the over 700 hundred islands, only 15 are inhabited. Researchers from a number of countries are frequent visitors because of the animals, geology and access to South Georgia Island and Antarctica. Hospitality was excellent. Birders and photographers have much to see in this small country in the South Atlantic Ocean. And walking with penguins is better than dancing with wolves.

For more of Robert and Linda's photography, visit [www.scarthphoto.com](http://www.scarthphoto.com).

– Robert and Linda Scarth



**April 19, Macbride Raptor Center.** We arrived at the Raptor Center area at 8:35 a.m. The day was cool and overcast with no wind. This trip was primarily to introduce people to the bird blind located at the center and the trails in the area, as well as the live birds that are on display at the center.

Attendees: Karen Disbrow (co-leader), Tony Franken, Peter Hansen, Sandra Harnan, Lauren and Doina Johnson, Julia and Liz Pappas, Jim Scheib (co-leader), Gary and Jeanne Snyder.

Birds (29 species): Canada Goose, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Red-tailed Hawk, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy

Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird.

– Karen Disbrow

**April 26, Hickory Hill Park.** The temperature was a cool 56 F with a light wind of 5-7 mph. We birded the park from 8:10 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. when rain storms drove us out. We ran into Chris Brochu along the trail.

Participants: Karen Disbrow (leader), Ken Hunt, Lauren and Doina Johnson.

Birds (22 species): Canada Goose, Mallard, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Black-and-white Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Brown-headed Cowbird, American Goldfinch.

– Karen Disbrow

**May 4-22, Hickory Hill Park Warbler Walks.** The 2009 spring warbler walks at Hickory Hill Park in Iowa City took place the first three full weeks of May, with 14 successes and just one rainout on May 15. Bird club members who served as leaders were Chris Edwards, Ken Lowder, Mark Madsen, and Jim Fuller, while participant turnout ranged from 5 to 16 hardy birders. There were 28 species of warblers observed during the period. The best birds included Connecticut Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Summer Tanager, and an active Cooper's Hawk nest. [See page 7 for more information.]

– Jim Fuller

**May 16, Lake Macbride.** Eight of us walked parts of Squire Point and Lake Macbride State Park in an effort to find Cerulean, Hooded and Yellow-throated Warblers. Unfortunately we struck out on all three! We missed the Cerulean at Squire Point that was present the previous Saturday, didn't see the regular Yellow-throated at the entrance to Lake Macbride State Park, and didn't have time to search for the Hooded at Sugar Bottom Recreation Area. High winds may have been a factor as it was tough to hear many birds. We did get a chance to see and hear Veery, Golden-winged Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Canada Warbler, and Scarlet Tanagers though, so it ended up being a worthwhile venture out! We also heard an Acadian Flycatcher at Squire Point which was a bonus.

Birds (48 species): Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Veery, Swainson's Thrush, Gray Catbird, American Robin, European Starling, Golden-winged Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Canada Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Chipping Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch.

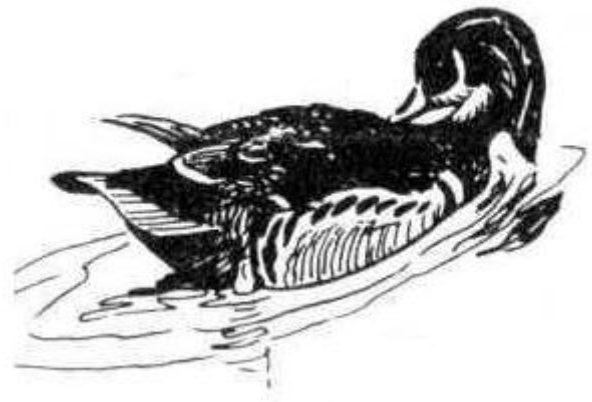
– *Jason Paulios*

**May 17, Gardner Woods.** Twelve participants, including one visiting from California who found us through our excellent web site, started the day at Hy-Vee with

beautiful May weather. We drove five miles northeast of Iowa City to an 80-acre native hardwood timber. This timber has been in Bruce Gardner's family since the 1840s and has had minimal cutting and no livestock in it. This has enabled it to maintain many interesting native plants, some quite rare. The wildflowers were past their peak but some species were still in bloom, and several varieties of ferns were found. The trees are tall and dense so birding can be a challenge. We were able to observe the tree where the Pileated Woodpeckers nest. Thanks to ICBC member, Mark Madsen, for his expertise on both the birds and the plants.

Birds (16 species): Wild Turkey, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Cedar Waxwing, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Bobolink.

– *Bruce Gardner*



**May 21, Meeting.** Jim and Sharon Scheib presented highlights from their birding trip to the Yucatan Peninsula, January 10-19, 2009. The trip was organized and guided by David and Jennifer MacKay of Solipaso Excursions (<http://www.solipaso.com>) The trip garnered over 200 species, many endemics and included visits to three Mayan ruins and three historic haciendas.

After flying into Cancun we stayed overnight at the Hacienda Morelos in Puerto Morelos on the east coast of the Yucatan Peninsula. In the morning we birded the Jardín Botánico (Botanical Garden) where the birding was quite good. A highlight was a Laughing Falcon and fine looks at two important Vireos - Yucatan and Mangrove and a nice Hooded Warbler. Then we were off to the town of Tulum for lunch and our only looks at Eurasian Collared Doves in the restaurant garden. In the afternoon we visited the ruins at Tulum where we had dozens of Yucatan Jays, a Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Black-cowled Oriole and a Yellow-throated Warbler. Then a two hour drive to Felipe Carrillo Puerto and a great supper.

The second morning of birding took us to one of the best known birding roads in Mexico; the Vigia Chica road. The Barred Antshrike was extremely cooperative, giving a number of people excellent photo opportunities. Other crowd pleasers included the pop-up out of nowhere by a male Blue Bunting. We had five species of orioles including Altamira, Orange, Yellow-backed, Hooded and Black-cowled. This got us along way on to our trip total of eight species of orioles! We also managed to see all of the likely species of parrots for the area between the morning and afternoon outings on Vigia Chica: White-fronted, White-crowned, and Yucatan Parrots, as well as Aztec Parakeets. Although we ended up seeing one on nearly every day of the tour, our first Ferruginous Pygmy Owl was this morning, and stuck around forever. The afternoon outing got us quick looks at Plain Chachalacas which turned out to be a bit tough to find on this tour.

The last morning at Vigia Chica Road was very productive. We had much better looks at Yucatan Woodpecker and Yucatan Flycatcher, as well as a quick look at Gray-collared Becard. Later on, after hearing a Long-billed Gnatwren off in the forest, we were eventually able to coax it in and have it do circles around us, never giving us a great view, but certainly plenty to

laugh about! The drive to Valladolid was very interesting, as we were traveling through the heart of the Zona Maya with all of the small towns full of the traditional Yucateco homes, called nahs.

After a 5:30 a.m. departure we arrived at Rio Lagartos in time for a breakfast in the field. Ismael Navarro met us at 7 a.m. with a great, perfectly organized breakfast tucked away in the scrubby coastal thorn forest outside of Rio Lagartos. He then treated us to an equally great morning bird walk, showing us the Yucatan Wren and the Mexican Sheartail Hummingbird. Ismael is a real pro and his skills and enthusiasm are impressive. We had both Lesser Yellow-headed and King Vultures on our walk! Yellow-backed Oriole and Scrub Euphonia added good color to the morning.

A boat trip was very productive with Bare-throated Tiger Heron, Boat-billed Heron, Roseate Spoonbill, Common Black Hawk and distant American Flamingos plus shorebirds, Osprey and pelicans. Both Peregrine Falcon and Merlin were found on the boat trip as well. An excellent fish lunch was served nearly the moment we arrived at the docks in front of the restaurant. After a two-hour drive to Chitzen Itza we checked into the luxurious Hacienda Chichen.

Even if the Chichen Itza Ruins were overrun and with more vendors than visitors, it was neat to see the place and the orioles and Brown Jays in the tree at the entrance gate were worth the walk! Here we finally found our first Turquoise-browed Motmots inside the ruins. The Hacienda Chichen grounds had extensive trails that offered up some neat birds on both our afternoon and morning walks. Blue-crowned Motmots turned up on our first afternoon walk. Izamal was a tourist stop on the way to Uxmal. Izamal is home to the second largest open air atrium in the world. Even Pope John Paul came here to give mass.



The Hotel at Uxmal put on a pretty darn good buffet and the birding on the grounds of the hotel was far better than expected and offered us some great looks at Violaceous Trogons, Gray-crowned Yellowthroat, and a Prothonotary Warbler to name but a few. Uxmal was a welcome change from the crowds and the vendors at Chichen Itza. It helped that we were some of the very first people through the gate that morning. The ruins are at least as spectacular as Chitzen Itza and more ornately decorated. They have left a lot of native vegetation within the ruins, which makes the birding excellent: Squirrel Cuckoo, Yucatan Jays, trogons, motmots, Bat Falcon, woodcreepers and more.

We left Hacienda Uxmal going to Hacienda Tabi, the largest hacienda on the Yucatan Peninsula. It is really is an impressive structure. The birding was not bad either - a bunch of motmots, a Black-headed Trogon or two and a strange flycatcher that we had a hard time identifying. Fortunately leaving Hacienda Tabi is easier than getting there, and we made it in good time to lunch in Oxkutzcab, a small and "untouristy" town. Oxkutzcab is known as the orange capital of the Yucatan and the central market stands were piled high with fruit. Our meal under the tall Palapa roof was a memorable one...very regional cuisine and fast and courteous service, including a beautiful young girl in traditional dress.

Merida is a wonderful city. It is a beautiful mix of Spanish colonial architectural influence nicely blended with a heavy dose of indigenous culture and pride. And the Hotel Mision Fray de Diego was excellent. Merida is a serious upgrade from the atmosphere of Cancun because it's not on the beach and it is a city steeped in history and culture as evidenced by the Sunday festival in the historic square that afternoon. We flew out of Merida the next morning.

Thanks to Viana Rockel and Sharon Scheib for providing drinks and cookies.

Attendees: Norlin Boyd, Nancy Carl, Karen Disbrow, Judy Ellyson, Bruce Gardner, Peter Hansen, David Hunt, Ken Hunt, Bernie Knight, Dave Kyllingstad, Richard and Nancy Lynch, Rosemarie Petzold, Jim and Sharon Scheib, Don Swartzendruber, Carol Winter.

– *Jim Scheib*

**May 31, Indian Creek Nature Center.** The weather was perfect for late May, with warm but not hot temperatures and little wind. Five of us explored the Indian Creek Nature Center and Sac & Fox Trail area in SE Cedar Rapids. We didn't find any migrants but found plenty of birds that had paired up for nesting season. The gnats were bothersome but otherwise it was a great morning to be out birding. A pair of very cooperative Prothonotary Warblers was the highlight. Since so many of the birds were singing on territory we all practiced identifying the birds by song as well as sight.

Participants: Nora Becker, Diane Bradbury, Jonni Ellsworth, Tony Franken, Diana Pesek (leader).

Birds (38 species): Mallard, Turkey Vulture, Chimney Swift, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Veery, American Robin, Gray Catbird, European Starling, Blue-winged Warbler, American Redstart, Prothonotary Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– *Diana Pesek*

**June 6, South Sycamore Bottoms.** The day was cloudy and rainy. Four of us birded the marsh, seeing sixteen species of birds and a beaver before being driven away by rain.

Participants: Bruce Gardner, Peter Hanson, Ken Hunt (leader), Damian Pieper.

Birds (16 species): Canada Goose, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Pheasant, Mourning Dove, American Crow, Barn Swallow, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Common Yellowthroat, Song Sparrow, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, American Goldfinch.

– *Ken Hunt*

**June 14, Indiangrass Hills.** What has been an annual outing to Iowa County was once again a great time. It was a gorgeous blue-sky day and the birds made themselves available everywhere we looked. Right away we were greeted by a singing Henslow's Sparrow, unobstructed, at the top of a stalk five feet off the ground and no more than fifty feet away. He didn't mind as we all took our time admiring him through the scope. We found seven Henslow's in all. Next up was a cooperative pair of Field Sparrows and a singing Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Most amazing to see were a pair of Grasshopper Sparrows. One had a moth in its beak, and would use it to tease the other into a game of chase. The bird doing the chasing didn't appear to be as strong a flier—possibly a young bird. This kept up for many minutes.

At the creek crossing were a few Northern Rough-winged Swallows. We turned to the left and followed the creek. A female Baltimore Oriole was hunting among the weeds on the opposite bank and a Song Sparrow gave good looks. Another Rose-breasted Grosbeak sang from a treetop, while an Eastern Wood-Pewee perched closer to the ground. I caught a glimpse of a first year male Orchard Oriole, but couldn't produce it for the others. Fortunately an adult male soon gave everyone nice looks.

We continued until the creek trail came to something of an end.

Only Lou and I continued from there. The others felt it was a good time to head back to the city. So we made our way through the underbrush avoiding the wild parsnip to the east fence and headed south up the hill. There we heard and scoped a Northern Mockingbird, perched to the north of course. Brown Thrashers, Field Sparrows and Indigo Buntings were seen there also. And more Henslow's Sparrows were flushed as we headed south to the white oak grove. The oaks produced a family of Downy Woodpeckers, and nearby was a singing Eastern Towhee. Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Red-headed Woodpeckers were also found.

As we made our way back across the fields to the car, Barn and Cliff Swallows flew all around and we found the Eastern Meadowlark that we had heard singing when we first arrived. Thankfully we continued to scan the area before getting into the car, because across the road in the distance we recognized the stiff-winged flight of a male Bobolink. We watched him fly to a distant field where he perched on a stalk to survey his kingdom—must be what the gold crown is for, right?

As always we are grateful to the Indiangrass Hills folks for all their hard work and we remember Sandy fondly each time we visit.

Participants: Chris Caster (leader), Lou DeMouy, Tony Franken, Therese Guedon, Marybeth Slonneger, Marye Wanlass.

Birds (44 species): Ring-necked Pheasant, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Great-crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Blue Jay, American Crow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, House Wren, Eastern Bluebird,

American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow’s Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– Chris Caster

**July 19, Annual Butterfly Count.** Our eleventh annual butterfly count was scheduled for Saturday, but due to rain was postponed until the next day. Sunday’s weather was better, but still partly cloudy and unseasonably cool, hardly ideal for butterflies. Nevertheless we had a great turnout of 13 butterfly counters, our largest group ever. We spent the morning at Kent Park, and after lunch visited Macbride Nature-Recreation Area and Lake Macbride State Park. Possibly our most enthusiastic counter was six-year-old Luke Urich, who ran around non-stop all day chasing and identifying butterflies. Luke found two species that our group might have otherwise missed! By the end of the day we recorded 25 species and 379

individuals, which owing to the cool weather was far below the count average of 33 species and 800 individuals. We found two species for the first time on the count, Banded Hairstreak and Little Glassywing, and established a new high count with 22 Pearl Crescents. All in all a great day.

Participants: Eli Curry, David Curry, Gib Curry, Liam Curry, Chris Edwards (leader), Ken Hunt, Dave Kyllingstad, Selina Lin, Dennis Miller, Mary Noble, Bill Scheible, Kristi Urich, Luke Urich.

Butterflies (25 species): Black Swallowtail 4, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 1, Cabbage White 51, Clouded Sulphur 19, Orange Sulphur 31, Bronze Copper 1, Banded Hairstreak 2, Eastern Tailed-Blue 3, ‘Summer’ Spring Azure 79, Great Spangled Fritillary 25, Pearl Crescent 22, Question Mark 1, Mourning Cloak 2, Painted Lady 2, Red Admiral 1, Common Buckeye 1, Viceroy 15, Common Wood-Nymph 38, Monarch 40, Silver-spotted Skipper 15, Least Skipper 3, Peck’s Skipper 1, Little Glassywing 1, Byssus Skipper 19, Black Dash 2.

– Chris Edwards

**IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM**

Please send this form with your annual membership dues to Eastern Iowa Birdwatch, Karen Disbrow, 1917 I Street, Iowa City, IA 52240. 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.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Check here for e-mail subscription only

## 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](mailto: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 Karen Disbrow, 1917 I Street, Iowa City, IA 52240.

**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](mailto:k_disbrow@yahoo.com).

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

### ***Eastern Iowa Birdwatch***

**Chris Edwards, Editor**  
4490 Daniels Cir. NE  
Solon, IA 52333

