
Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 30 Number 1

April 2010

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 10, Saturday, 8 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Area for waterfowl, pelicans, and other migrants. Wear boots for walking in wet areas, and bring a scope if you have one. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.* Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

April 13, Tuesday, 7 p.m. *Beginning Birder Course: Backyard and Feeder Birds* by Jim Scheib. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register. *Free to members.* See page 9 for more information.

April 15, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. “Where Birds Came From” by Christopher A. Brochu, Associate Professor of Geoscience at the University of Iowa.

April 17, Saturday, 6:30 p.m. Night Sounds at Cone Marsh. Hear the frogs, owls, American Bittern and other denizens of the night. Karen Disbrow, 339-1017 and Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

April 18, 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.* Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

April 20, Tuesday, 7 p.m. *Beginning Birder Course: Warbler Identification and Shorebird Review* by Karen Disbrow. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register. *Free to members.* See page 9 for more information.

April 22, 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.

April 24, 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 25, Sunday, 8 a.m. Hickory Hill Park. This park is a great place to view warblers and other migrating songbirds. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.* Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

May 3-7, 10-14, 17-21, 24-28 Mondays–Fridays, 6:30 a.m. Hickory Hill Park Warbler Walks. Meet at the north parking lot at the end of Conklin Lane, off Dodge Street. Daily sightings will be posted on our web site. Leaders: Chris Edwards, Ken Lowder, Mark Madsen and Jason Paulios.

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May 8, 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 15, Saturday, 7:45 a.m. Beam Woods near Stone City. Enjoy the warblers and wildflowers at this preserve on a joint field trip with Cedar Rapids Audubon. Bring a sack lunch or snack. Chris Edwards, 430-4732.

May 16, Sunday, 8 a.m. Johnson County Heritage Trust Properties. Mark Madsen, 351-6927.

May 20, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. "Borneo vs. Papua New Guinea: the Great Divide" by John and Linda Donelson.

May 22, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Louisa County, in conjunction with the IOU's Breeding Bird Atlas Blockbusting Weekend. See page 4 for additional details. Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

May 23, Sunday, 6:30 a.m. Des Moines County, in conjunction with the IOU's Breeding Bird Atlas Blockbusting Weekend. See page 4 for additional details. Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

May 31, Monday, 6:30 a.m. Rock Creek Timber and River Valley Wetland in Cedar County. *BBA*. Chris Edwards, 430-4732.

June 5, Saturday, 7:30 a.m. Coralville Reservoir (Rick Hollis's backyard and environs). Meet at Rick's house at 3524 Cumberland Ridge Rd. NE. *BBA*. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

June 9, Wednesday, 8 a.m. South Sycamore Bottoms. This is the first of our Wednesday Bird Walks with leader Rick Hollis. See page 5 for more information and a complete schedule. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

June 12, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Hanging Rock Woods and Hawkeye Wildlife Area. *BBA*. Mark Brown, 358-8765.

June 13, Sunday, 6:30 a.m. Indiangrass Hills in Iowa County for grassland birds such as Henslow's Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Sedge Wren, and Bobolink. Mark Brown, 358-8765.

June 20, Sunday, 6:30 a.m. Cedar County natural areas. *BBA*. Bruce Gardner, 331-3547.

June 23, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

June 27, Sunday, 6:30 a.m. Southern Johnson County river bottomlands. *BBA*. Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

July 14, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Turkey Creek Preserve. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

July 18, Sunday, 1-3 p.m. Backyard Habitat Walk. View local bird-friendly yards. Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

July 24, Saturday, 9 a.m. 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.

July 28, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Waterworks Prairie Park. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

August 11, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Belgum Grove and Sand Lake Park. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

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August 19, 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 a drink. Karen Disbrow, 339-1017

August 22, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Area or other local areas for shorebirds and other early fall migrants. Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

August 25, Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. Frytown Preserve. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

Other Dates of Note

April 18, Sunday, 9:00 a.m. Garlic Mustard Pull at Bruce Gardner's Woods NE of Iowa City, sponsored by the Johnson County Heritage Trust. For directions contact Bruce at 331-3547.

April 24, Saturday, 1-3 p.m. Grant Wood Neighborhood Family, Fun & Fitness Day. The ICBC will lead bird walks along the Sycamore Bottoms neighborhood trail.

April 30-May 2, Friday-Sunday. Iowa Ornithologists' Union Spring Meeting in Bettendorf. Visit www.iowabirds.org for more information. Local contact: Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

May 8, Saturday. Birds Eye View Grand Opening at their new location, 410 First Ave. in Coralville's Riverfront Square. Watch for expanded hours.

May 16, Sunday, 2:00 p.m. Norton Wayside Dedication in Hickory Hill Park. Dedication for the new information kiosk near the Bloomington St. entrance. Several ICBC members provided input for the bird display.

June 18-19, Friday-Saturday. Citizen Science: An Introduction to Insects, a workshop at Grinnell College. For more information visit <http://www.grinnell.edu/academic/biology/cera/insects-workshop>.

From Our President Karen Disbrow

At last spring is here! Winter seemed to hang on a long time this year. I am very anxious to get out there and do some serious birding. We have many of our usual trips scheduled for this spring and summer, as well as visits to some new areas.

Jim Walters will have a web cam on a Purple Martin nest at the Finkbine Golf Course again this summer. Viewing cams on the web have really been interesting this spring. There is one on a Bald Eagle nest near Decorah and one on a Barn Owl nest in California that I have been observing. How very neat to be able to see the actual nesting behavior of these birds and how they interact with baby birds.

There is information in this newsletter about the upcoming opportunity to vote for a funding process that would protect funds from being used outside of conservation. We have put this in the newsletter to inform the bird club members. I will have information sheets at the meetings for people to take and study. I, personally, support this effort and urge everyone to become familiar with the issue. Many organizations are opting to publicly support this amendment. That is something the ICBC may want to consider in upcoming meetings.

As usual at this time of year we are being invited to make presentations and lead birding walks for other organizations. Anyone interested in participating in this way, please contact me.

Good birding everyone!

Fledgling Birding Class April 22 and 24

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, bird watching tips and birds during one evening session and then practice what we learn on a bird watching field trip in Kent Park. The evening session is Thursday, April 22 from 7:00–8:30 p.m. The field trip is Saturday, April 24 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 8

Our annual Spring Migration Count is Saturday, May 8. 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 web site.

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.

Wednesday Bird Walks with Rick Hollis

These will be low-key, local walks focusing on Iowa City parks and Johnson County Conservation Board and Johnson County Heritage Trust properties. If this is successful, this will be a year-round event. All trips will start at 8:00 a.m. and will depart from the North Dodge Hy-Vee, near the recycling bins. At present this is a one-man operation. I will try to get someone to cover for me when I am unable. I will post changes/cancellations at: <http://home.earthlink.net/~rjhollis/wednesdaybirdwalks/>.

June 9	South Sycamore Bottoms
June 23	Kent Park
July 14	Turkey Creek Preserve
July 28	Waterworks Prairie Park
August 11	Belgum Grove and Sand Lake Park
August 25	Frytown Preserve

Butterfly Count Saturday, July 24

Our eleventh annual Iowa City Butterfly County will be held Saturday, July 24. (In case of rain it will be held July 25.) Last year while visiting Kent Park, Hawkeye Wildlife Area and Lake Macbride, we saw 25 species and 379 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.

Breeding Bird Atlas Blockbusting Weekends

The Iowa Ornithologists' Union and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will be hosting three Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) Blockbusting Weekends around the state this spring and summer. The BBA is a five year project where volunteers search for evidence of birds nesting throughout the state to enhance our understanding of these species, their breeding range and their habitat selection. Everyone is invited to participate, regardless of previous birding experience.

Each weekend will begin with a presentation about the BBA on Friday evening. Volunteers will learn how to participate, how to determine breeding bird status, and how to turn in observations. During Saturday and Sunday, volunteers will be out in blocks (predetermined areas to inventory) searching for nesting birds. Atlas volunteers are encouraged to visit any blocks within a reasonable driving distance, and there will be a sign-up sheet to divide up the targeted blocks. Volunteers are responsible for making arrangements for their own accommodations and meals. If you plan on participating, please RSVP to the BBA Coordinator the Monday prior to the weekend of each event.

The Iowa City Bird Club will participate as a group in the first blockbusting weekend in Des Moines, Louisa, and Muscatine counties.

Friday, May 21, 7 p.m. – BBA Presentation and Training at Unitarian-Universalist Meeting House, 625 N. 6th Street, Burlington.

Saturday May 22 & Sunday May 23 – Birding in Des Moines, Louisa & Muscatine counties.

Friday, June 18, 7 p.m. – BBA Presentation and Training at Bickelhaupt Arboretum, 340 South 14th St., Clinton.

Saturday, June 19 & Sunday, June 20 – Birding in Clinton, Dubuque and Jackson counties.

Friday, July 9, 7 p.m. – BBA Presentation and Training at North Overlook Amphitheater, off County Hwy T-15 north of the dam, Lake Red Rock.

Saturday, July 10 & Sunday, July 11 – Birding in Marion and Warren counties.

For more specific information, please visit <http://bba.iowabirds.org> or contact Billy Reiter-Marolf, the BBA volunteer coordinator at bbacoordinator@iowabirds.org or 515-432-2823 ext. 117.

Birder's Guide Available

Iowa Valley Resource Conservation and Development recently published a *Birder's Guide to the Iowa and Cedar River Valleys*. The 62-page full color book features information on dozens of places to go birding in Tama, Benton, Iowa, Johnson, Linn, and Poweshiek counties. The guide is available for \$9.95 from the Iowa Valley RC&D offices at 920 48th Avenue, Amana, IA 52203, by calling 319-622-3264, or on-line with a credit card at www.ivrcd.org.

Renewal Reminder

If you haven't already done so, please send in your membership dues for 2010. 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 Bruce Gardner, 3055 Wapsi Ave. NE, Iowa City, IA 52240. If you have any questions about your membership status, please contact Bruce at 643-2575 or woodsidefarms@juno.com. Thank you!

2009 Iowa City Christmas Bird Count

Chris Edwards and Bob Dick

The 59th annual Iowa City Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, December 20. The total of 57 species was below the count's ten-year average of 64 species. The absence of waterfowl in our area largely accounted for the low species total. The day was overcast, and about an inch of snow fell during the middle part of the day, hampering visibility for birding and making roads slippery. Temperatures were steady in the mid-20s, with light southerly winds of 4-10 mph throughout the day. The Coralville Reservoir and other standing water was mostly frozen, and the Iowa River and smaller streams were mostly open.

No rare species were found on this year's count. Unusual birds included a Northern Shrike at Hawkeye Wildlife Area, a Winter Wren at Hickory Hill Park, and a Rusty Blackbird north of Lake Macbride. Species found most years but not this year included Northern Harrier, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Pine Siskin.

Waterfowl to Gulls

For the second straight year, no waterfowl were found except Canada Geese and Mallards, and their numbers were the lowest in more than a decade. Wild Turkey numbers were slightly above average, but only three Ring-necked Pheasants were found, the lowest total in almost twenty-five years. This contrasts sharply with the all-time high of 141 pheasants seen just four years ago. No Northern Bobwhites were found for the third straight year. The four Great Blue Herons were an all-time high for that species. Bald Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks were found in below-average numbers, while other raptors were at near-normal levels except for Northern Harrier which was missed entirely. Ring-billed Gull numbers were well below average, but the six Herring Gulls tied a ten-year high.

Doves to Wrens

Eurasian Collared-Doves have yet to be recorded on the count, although they have been found in the count circle during other times of the year. Mourning Dove numbers were well below average. A pair of Eastern Screech-Owls was found in the early morning at a traditional location west of North Liberty. Great Horned Owls set a ten-year high, and four Long-eared Owls at Hawkeye Wildlife Area were a nice find. The three Red-headed Woodpeckers were the fewest seen in a decade, and the six Northern Flickers were the fewest in more than twenty years. Other woodpeckers were seen at about normal levels. Northern Shrikes have been recorded for three straight years; this year a single bird was on the north side of Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Blue Jays and American Crows were seen in average numbers. Chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, and creepers were all found in normal numbers. A Winter Wren at Hickory Hill Park provided only the third record of this species in the last ten years.

Thrushes to Old World Sparrows

Following a banner year in 2008, fruit-eating birds were scarce this year, and numbers of Eastern Bluebirds, American Robins, and Cedar Waxwings were all much lower than usual. A single Fox Sparrow was at a feeder near Kent Park, marking five straight years for this species on the count. A single Swamp Sparrow was at Hawkeye Wildlife Area. American Tree Sparrows and White-throated Sparrows were down this year, while Dark-eyed Juncos were at a ten-year high. A single Rusty Blackbird was only the third one found in twelve years. Other blackbirds were scarce, with only two Red-winged Blackbirds and two Common Grackles found. Purple Finch, House Finch, and American Goldfinch numbers were all down sharply this year, and no Pine Siskins were found following last

year's irruption year. The seven Eurasian Tree Sparrows found at Linda and Roger Fisher's feeders in Coralville were an all-time high count.

This year there were 29 field observers, fewer than normal, in 11 parties. Field observers were Mark Brown, Chris Caster, Bob Dick, Karen Disbrow, John Donelson, Linda Donelson, Chris Edwards, Jonni Ellsworth, Judy Ellyson, John Erickson, Mike Feiss, Linda Fisher, Jim Fuller, Bruce Gardner, Rick Hollis, Ken Hunt, Ken Lowder, Ramona McGurk, Alan Nagel, Mary Noble, Jason Paulios, Diana Pesek, Jim Scheib, Sharon Scheib, Bill Scheible, Don Swartzendruber, Dick Tetrault, David Weiss, and Carol Winter.

There were 15 feeder watchers in 12 locations this year, about the same as last year but a significant decrease from previous years. Feeder watchers were Jack and Ann Bagford, Barbara Beaumont, Jeanne Bonde, Al Carr, Carolyn Gardner, Marilou Gay, Gloria Henry, Nancy Johns, Barbara Kalm, Paul and Lorraine Kent, Duane and Jill Miller, 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 cancelled due to road conditions. On the day of the count we met for lunch at the North Liberty Community Center, at which time we had 51 species. We met for an evening meal and compilation at The Brown Bottle Café in North Liberty. An interesting aspect of this year's count was the increased media coverage, as two eastern Iowa TV crews accompanied two field parties for portions of the day. The report on KCRG TV-9 aired several times Sunday night and Monday morning.

Nationally, this year marked the 110th 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 available online at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc, 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.

SPECIES LIST					
		Owl sp.	1	Cedar Waxwing	81
		Belted Kingfisher	2	American Tree Sparrow	200
Canada Goose	87	Red-headed Woodpecker	3	Fox Sparrow	1
Mallard	88	Red-bellied Woodpecker	67	Song Sparrow	16
Ring-necked Pheasant	3	Downy Woodpecker	133	Swamp Sparrow	1
Wild Turkey	101	Hairy Woodpecker	27	White-throated Sparrow	19
Great Blue Heron	4	Northern Flicker	6	White-crowned Sparrow	2
Bald Eagle	50	Pileated Woodpecker	1	Dark-eyed Junco	1050
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	Northern Shrike	1	Northern Cardinal	496
Cooper's Hawk	4	Blue Jay	177	Red-winged Blackbird	2
Red-tailed Hawk	50	American Crow	649	Rusty Blackbird	1
Rough-legged Hawk	3	Horned Lark	42	Common Grackle	2
American Kestrel	19	Black-capped Chickadee	309	Purple Finch	2
Ring-billed Gull	7	Tufted Titmouse	69	House Finch	43
Herring Gull	6	Red-breasted Nuthatch	9	American Goldfinch	89
Rock Pigeon	171	White-breasted Nuthatch	102	House Sparrow	795
Mourning Dove	102	Brown Creeper	4	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	7
Eastern Screech-Owl	2	Carolina Wren	4		
Great Horned Owl	10	Winter Wren	1	TOTAL SPECIES	57
Barred Owl	5	Eastern Bluebird	7	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	5873
Long-eared Owl	4	American Robin	2		
		European Starling	732		

The Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund

Don Brown

In 2010 Iowans will have a chance to vote on an amendment to the Iowa Constitution which is of major importance for bird life in Iowa. Amendments to the Iowa Constitution are rare. If this Amendment receives more votes for than against its adoption, the next time the Iowa Legislature increases the Iowa Sales Tax, the first 3/8ths of one cent of the increase will be permanently dedicated to the preservation and improvement of our water quality, natural areas and soils. Every Iowan, rural or urban, who enjoys birds (or clean waterways, butterflies, native plants, mammals, fish, reptiles, etc.) should promote and vote for this Amendment.

Iowa ranks a dismal 48th out of the 50 states in the amount of land remaining in natural habitat. This Amendment has been approved for submission to Iowa voters by a large majority (over 90%) of both the Republicans and Democrats in the Iowa Legislature. It provides the best opportunity, and probably the last opportunity for a long time, to save or restore Iowa's habitat for birds and fish, wetlands and clean water.

Minnesota voters have just approved a similar amendment to the Minnesota Constitution. Missouri has had dedicated funding for natural resources for over 30 years, and the results for Missourians have been outstanding. If we in Iowa do not begin to take a long view and start to fund habitat conservation now, our quality of life for future generations will suffer seriously, and the very existence of many native Iowa plant and animal species will be in doubt.

The Amendment will provide the basis for the establishment of a permanent fund, to be called "The Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund." The Fund will provide permanent and dedicated funding for Iowa's natural resources. The revenue in the Fund will be protected and cannot be reallocated to any other purposes. Currently funding for conservation programs and outdoor recreational opportunities is subject to a fluctuating state budget, and in many cases these programs have been and continue to be under-funded or unfunded. It is estimated that 3/8ths of a one cent sales tax will provide \$150 million annually.

A number of Iowa organizations have come together to support the Amendment. They include the IOU, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Nature Conservancy, Pheasants Forever, Izaak Walton League, Ducks Unlimited, Iowa Audubon, Iowa Farmers Union and a substantial number of other organizations that support, in some way, quality outdoor life experiences and recreation in Iowa, or better quality water for all of us.

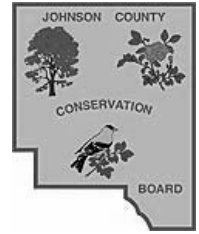
Every member of the IOU should help get out the vote for this important measure. You should also get your local birding groups to participate in some way in the effort to obtain voter approval next November. It is not too early to get started now. It will be a tough fight under current economic circumstances. But if Iowa voters understand what this Amendment can do to make Iowa a better place for us and for future generations they will enthusiastically support it. Now is the time to become better informed, to make your personal commitment to vote next November, and to fight for its approval. Now is also the time to begin to spread the message to everyone that you may be able to influence.

For detailed and up-to-date information about the Amendment and the campaign for its approval, please contact Rosalyn Lehman, campaign coordinator, at rlhman@tnc.org or 515-202-7720, or visit <http://www.creatinggreatplaces.org/page12023744.aspx>.

This article originally appeared in the Winter 2009 issue of *IOU News* and is reprinted with permission.



Introduction to Birding Course March 23 – April 25, 2010 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 five Tuesday evening sessions along with five weekend field trips to area birding hot spots, plus a special Thursday evening session and weekend field trip for kids ages 7-12.

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 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 23, 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.

Sunday, 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 30, 7 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING II by Rick Hollis. Continuation of first session topics.

Saturday, April 3, 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 6, 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 10, 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 13, 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 18, 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 20, 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.

Thursday, April 22, 7 p.m. BEGINNING BIRDING FOR KIDS ages 7-12 by Rick Hollis. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Saturday, April 24, 8 a.m. - Noon. FIELD TRIP FOR KIDS ages 7-12. Meet at the CEC in Kent Park. Rick will lead young birders accompanied by an adult around the park. Bring binoculars if you have them; if not, let Rick know on Tuesday night so loaners can be made available.

Sunday, April 25, 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 14, Lake Macbride. Originally we planned to go to the Hawkeye Wildlife Area, but due to high water conditions we changed to the West Overlook and Lake Macbride. Greencastle Avenue was flooded to the Gun Club Ponds, and Swan Lake Road was impassable beyond the second curve to the west. Much of the area is a refuge at this time of year, and with the high water the ducks are so far from land that identification can be difficult even with a scope.

The day started out clear, sunny and 45°. At the West Overlook about 30 Ring-billed Gulls and a Mallard pair were found. The Lesser Black-backed Gull reported earlier was not there. Juncos, Blue Jays, starlings, cardinals, chickadees, crows, and a White-breasted Nuthatch were found.

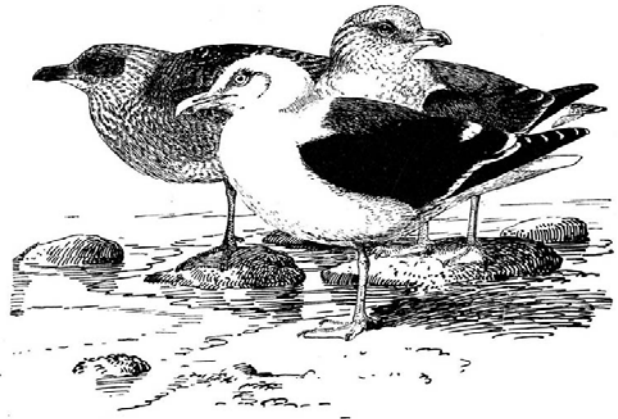
We traveled to Mehaffey Bridge in the hopes of finding the previously reported Red-throated Loon. But no loon, only a lonely Ring-billed Gull and duck hunters decked out with camouflage on their pontoon. So on to Sugar Bottom, where the beach area had water almost to the parking lot and no birds. The campground was closed and there were deer hunters in the area, and no birds except crows.

We went to the south arm of Lake Macbride and at the boat dock were nine sleeping pelicans, a single Canada Goose, and the Lesser Black-backed Gull. YEAH!!! A few Ring-billed Gulls were floating around and a Great Blue Heron was in the shallows. We toured the entire lake and found juncos, a Red-bellied Woodpecker. Blue Jays, cardinals and finally Red-tailed Hawks were in the air around 10:30 a.m. The day had become overcast by this time and though we stopped a few other places the birds were not out. Sparrows must have been somewhere, but we did not see many and not long enough to identify.

Participants: Karen Disbrow (leader), Ken Hunt.

Birds (15 species): Canada Goose, Mallard, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal.

– Karen Disbrow



January 10, Owl Prowl. The day was overcast and the temperature was cold but not frigid. Snow was on the ground, however the roads were clear. We headed to Morse where screech-owls are heard in the neighboring woods. We got lucky and a screech-owl responded to our tape. We thought we could get close enough to see the owl, but as usual the owl decided to remain hidden.

Greatly encouraged by this success, we headed to the Hawkeye Wildlife Area in the hopes of spotting a Long-eared Owl at the location where several were found on the Christmas Bird Count. These owls are very skittish and are hard to see before they flush. We flushed at least one, which everyone saw fly laterally away and behind the stand of trees. We went to the next entrance area and tried to have one person walk in front of the trees while the rest of us were to the back. The brush was thick in front of the trees and we were unsuccessful in getting the owls to cooperate. While waiting we played

a Barred Owl recording and actually had a Great Horned Owl call back in the distance.

Northern Saw-whet Owls were not reported from Johnson County this winter. This may be due to the thick snow cover. We did check at Kent Park where the saw-whet was found last year but did not see any signs. We moved on to Iowa City to check areas where Barred Owls were seen in previous years, but got no response to the tape. At dusk we went to Sycamore Bottoms hoping to find a Short-eared Owl flying over the marsh area, but had no luck there.

It was a good trip, but few owls were found. As the winter wore on it became clear that the heavy snow cover was hurting their ability to hunt, possibly forcing some to move farther south.

Participants: Karen Disbrow (leader), Tony Franken, Bruce Gardner, Ken Hunt, Patricio Otero, Damien Pieper.

Birds: Great Horned Owl, Eastern Screech-owl, Long-eared Owl.

– *Karen Disbrow*



January 21, Meeting. Jim Scheib started the program with some great photographs of owls he took at local areas, including a Barred Owl in his backyard. He then showed a wonderful video which he shot of Short-eared Owls flying at dusk.

Karen then showed a DVD of a program that Bernie Knight gave for the Friends of Hickory Hill Park in August, 2002. The Friends of Hickory Hill Park were just beginning their efforts to support the park, and Bernie and her husband Cal had birded the park for many years. Owls had long held Bernie's interest, and she developed this program which she titled "An Evening with Enchanted Owls".

It is a hot, humid evening at the pavilion in Hickory Hill Park as Bernie starts her program. She explains the myths and legends about owls around the world. The Barred Owls may say "Who cooks for you" in English, but in Chinese they say "Go dig your grave". The Chinese believe that owls snatch souls. In India the myth is that men become owls when they die. In Transylvania it was believed that owls brought evil spirits. In order to protect their farms from these evil spirits, farmers would run around the periphery of their farms at dawn in the nude. Cold winter mornings must have been very uncomfortable for these farmers! Shakespeare had owls giving "ominous callings". Interestingly enough, Native American tribes saw the owls as a spirit that communicated with their shamans.

Worldwide there are 133 owl species, and 19 of these occur in North America. Bernie concentrated her talk on owls found in Iowa, and especially the four species found at various times in Hickory Hill Park. An owl has round eyes that do not move, so instead the owl moves its head, which can rotate 270 degrees. Bernie had everyone try to see like an owl by keeping their eyes stationary and moving their heads.

Off we go with Bernie, "chasing owls". First Long-eared Owls, which are not found at Hickory Hill Park, but can be found in more remote locations such as Hawkeye Wildlife Area during the winter. They are a social owl which can sometimes be found in groups of 6 or more. Then the screech-owls, with pictures of the eastern and western species, as well as the red and gray phases. The Great Horned Owl,

whose call is “Who who whooo, whoo, whoo”. These owls have been found in Hickory Hill Park. Barred Owls are often seen and heard in the park. The barring on the feathers of the face and neck give this owl its name. It is the only owl in our area with dark eyes. It calls “Who cooks for you, who cooks for you all?”.

The Short-eared Owl is a bird of open prairies and pastures. In the winter they might be found at dusk hunting with Northern Harriers. Both fly in a “butterfly” manner, dipping up and gliding down. The Barn Owl has been essentially extirpated from Iowa. This owl with a heart-shaped face needs hay fields and pastures. A reintroduction effort by the DNR was not very successful.

Owls have 4 claws on each foot; two that face forward and are extremely sharp and two that face toward the rear. Owls are silent fliers due to the structure of their feathers. Owls leave a “white-wash” on the trees that they roost in and “pellets” at the base of the tree. The owl regurgitates the fur and bones of the small animals that it eats. Often groups of children in nature programs take these pellets and are able to reconstruct the small mammal’s skeleton

Bernie discussed several other owls which are occasionally seen in Iowa, including the Great Gray Owl, Snowy Owl, Boreal Owl, and Burrowing Owl. She also mentioned the Ferruginous Pygmy-owl, a rare resident of Arizona and Texas.

Why don’t we see owls more often? All owls have adaptive coloration that allows them to blend in with their habitat, and they fly silently. Their calls are the best way to know if they are in the neighborhood.

Thoreau said, “I rejoice that there are owls.” “And so do I,” said Bernie. I rejoice that the ICBC has Bernie Knight and owls. The Iowa City Public Library will burn a copy of this DVD, or any other of their long list of programs, at no cost if you supply a blank DVD.

Attendees: Karen Disbrow, Bruce Gardner, Peter Hansen, Rick Hollis, Ken Hunt, Steven Jones, Lorraine Kent, Khristen Lawton, Ed Lins, Terry Mangold, Alan and Kris Nagel, Jim and Sharon Scheib, Blossom Shaw.

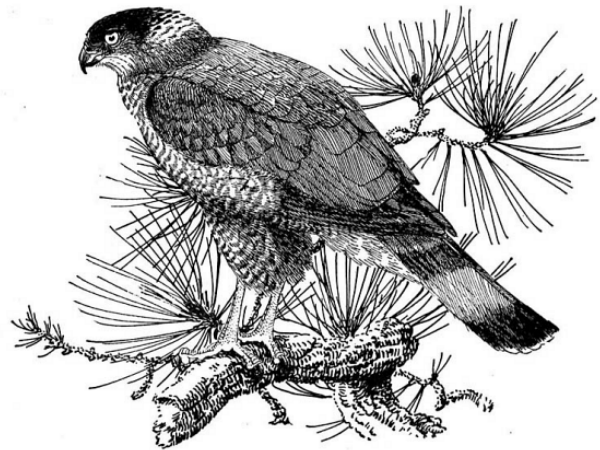
– *Karen Disbrow*

January 24, Feeder Watch Social at the home of Rick and Janet Hollis. Not so exciting birds, nice fellowship, smoked salmon to die for. Not a bad way to spend a winter’s morning.

Attendees: Barb Beaumont, Karen Disbrow, Joni Ellsworth, Kurt Hamann, Rick and Janet Hollis (hosts), Lorraine Kent, Blossom Shaw.

Birds (15 species): Bald Eagle, Cooper’s Hawk, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Cardinal, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– *Rick Hollis*



January 31, Coralville Winterfest. It was a lovely winter day for the third annual Coralville Winterfest at the Iowa River Landing area. We setup our display near the large windows in the Marriott overlooking the Iowa River. Several Bald Eagles were seen, including one that perched across the river for much of the afternoon, allowing Bruce to set up his scope and offer nice views to many visitors. A few other birds were seen including Ring-billed

Gulls and an American Kestrel. This was a fun activity and we plan to participate again next year.

Attendees: Chris Caster, Karen Disbrow, Chris and Anne Edwards, Bob and Dara Dick, Bruce Gardner, Ken Hunt, Paul and Lorraine Kent, Mary Noble, Jim and Sharon Scheib, and many others.

– *Karen Disbrow*

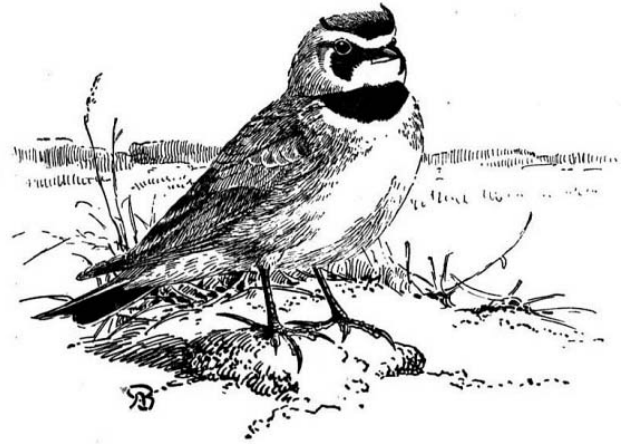
February 6, Amana Turkey Walk and Feast.

The weather was sunny and in the 20s. Because the parking lots of the Amana Nature Trail were unplowed, we started by visiting the feeders at the Conservation Education Center at Kent Park. We found a Cooper's Hawk hanging out at the feeders, but it soon left and the songbirds returned. One of the highlights there was an overwintering Red-headed Woodpecker. We searched the evergreens in Kent Park without success for Northern Saw-whet Owls. After leaving Kent Park we drove to breakfast at the Colony Inn. On the way a Wild Turkey, several Bald Eagles, and a Rough Legged Hawk were seen, as well as a very early woodchuck. In the fields near the Old Creamery Theater, we saw several Horned Larks. On the way back from breakfast we drove north of the Hawkeye Wildlife Area, where we saw Bald Eagles and a dark-morph Rough Legged Hawk.

Participants: Karen Disbrow, Roger and Linda Fisher, Jim Fuller, Therese Guedon, Ken Hunt, Paul and Lorraine Kent, Ramona McGurk, Mary Noble, Patricio Otero, Jim and Sharon Scheib, Marybeth Slonneger.

Birds (18 Species): Wild Turkey, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, House Sparrow.

– *Ken Hunt*



February 18, Meeting. Iowa Audubon President Doug Harr spoke about that group's current activities and conservation projects. Doug provided this summary and follow-up to his presentation:

In February I was pleased to present a program to the Iowa City Bird Club, explaining just exactly what Iowa Audubon was all about. I wish to express my thanks to those patient members and guests who graciously forgave the "equipment malfunction" that forced me to talk rather than show some nice photos.

As a follow-up to that program I'd like to formally welcome the ICBC to its recent affiliation with Iowa Audubon and thank Karen Disbrow for offering to serve of as your club's representative on our board of directors. I can assure you that Karen is already taking an active role in helping shape the directions of Iowa Audubon.

Because of my February meeting presentation and Karen's explanation of Iowa Audubon in the ICBC December newsletter, I won't spend much time repeating what's already been said. But just as a brief refresher, Iowa Audubon is a newly independent state Audubon Society *not* directly affiliated with the National Audubon Society (NAS). We organized in 2004 in order to focus upon the conservation of, and education about, Iowa's birds and their habitat. However, we *do* continue to serve as a link between the 10

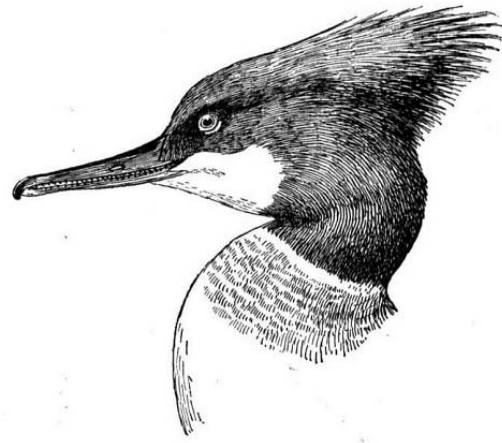
NAS chapters in Iowa as well as any other bird organizations that might share our goals for Iowa's birdlife, and we still partner with NAS on projects of mutual interest.

Iowa Audubon also compliments the work of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, which has its focus primarily upon birding and being Iowa's official bird record-keeping organization. As a result, Iowa Audubon and the IOU share many members in common. I am a member of both organizations, as well as the Prairie Lakes Audubon chapter (NAS), for which I serve as Iowa Audubon's board representative. Many of you know that I have also headed the DNR's Wildlife Diversity Program since 2002. I will be retiring from DNR at the end of May, after which I intend to spend more time trying to raise the image of Iowa Audubon and our statewide partnership role in promoting birds and bird conservation.

So I encourage you all to consider an individual (\$10) or family (\$15) membership in Iowa Audubon—we think it's one of the best (and least expensive) investments you can make to help Iowa's birds. The funds we raise through memberships, donations, and an annual fundraising event go *directly* into conservation of Iowa's birds and habitat, or into educating more Iowans in the beauty and wonder of birds. But whether or not you choose to personally become a member, we welcome ICBC's organizational partnership with us. In the future, I hope to keep you posted on some of our important projects. For further information about Iowa Audubon and how to join go to www.iowaaudubon.org.

Attendees: Lois Beasley, Barry Buschelman, Chris Caster, Karen Disbrow, Bruce Gardner, Peter Hansen, Rick Hollis, Ken Hunt, Paul and Lorraine Kent, Kristen Lawton, Nancy Lynch, Linda Rudolph, Bill Scheible, Richard and Marcia Shaffer, Blossom Shaw, Jim Walters.

– Doug Harr



February 21, Quad Cities. Our first stop off I-80 was Canal Shore Drive. Bruce did a fine job approaching the birds until he accidentally hit the car alarm, fortunately it is a big river and there were lots of birds. We saw more goldeneyes and mergansers than we cared to count and some other divers. Most interesting were a pair of juvenile swans feeding against the Illinois shore.

Lots of gulls were about at Lock and Dam 14 as well as a few eagles, but we didn't find anything out of the ordinary there. We had a nice conversation with one of the employees at the dam. He hates gulls. Evidently one had eaten its meal on his car hood one day and he had a tough time scrubbing off the remains. Needing a break from the cold, we stopped at the McDonalds in Bettendorf. Unbelievably the old guy behind the counter asked me if I was a senior—apparently I would've gotten a quarter off my coffee if I had said "yes"—Bruce did. There weren't any birds on the river behind the casino in Bettendorf and there wasn't any reason to stop at the Mound St. marina in Davenport.

We did stop at Lock and Dam 15. There were only a handful of gulls there, however the walleye fishermen were out in force. Above it all, a Peregrine Falcon sat with its back to the flotilla. Credit Island wasn't any more productive. Three herons and a small group of Mallards were the dominant avian life forms. We did enjoy a stop along Concord St. where we watched a group of motorcyclists race the

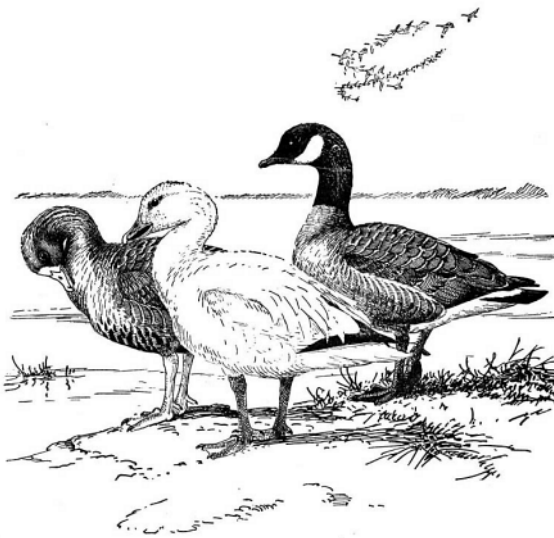
short-track they had created on the ice. They weren't real good, but they might be Iowa's best shot at a medal during the winter games.

Our last stop was at Fairmount Cemetery. We spent some time searching the most likely cedars for owls and were delighted to hear a Barred Owl calling in the distance. Our best birds were found at the feeders near the back entrance. There we found both nuthatches, both weaver finches, and a Fox Sparrow.

Participants: Chris Caster (leader), Bruce Gardner (driver), Ken Hunt (emotional support).

Birds (33 species): Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Mallard, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Pigeon, Barred Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, Fox Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– *Chris Caster*



March 13, Burlington Area. This was a full-day trip to Burlington to view the spring migration along the Mississippi Flyway. We left Iowa City at 6:45 a.m. and arrived at the Port of Burlington at 8:00 a.m. The weather was chilly at 45° with a light mist that continued throughout the day. John Rutenbeck and Chuck Fuller with fellow local birder Ted joined us to search out the spring migrants.

When we arrived a Peregrine Falcon was roosting on the Mississippi River bridge where a pair has nested for at least four years. We drove to the tennis club parking lot in order to walk the storm drainage walkway. Fourteen Turkey Vultures were roosting in a tree there, and for many of us they were the first vultures of the year. Even though there was a light mist many birds were singing. A Fox Sparrow was spotted amongst other birds flitting in the trees. The light was so bad that many birds were just silhouettes.

We traveled to Green Bay Bottoms where we found many ducks feeding in the area corn fields. Tree Swallows were flying over the Mississippi River. In a flooded bottomland forest we found a Barred Owl, and a nearby cavity appeared to be a good possibility for the owl and its partner to be nesting. We traveled to Fort Madison and Montrose, checking each water area. Many of the landlocked ponds were frozen or only partially melted. At the marina in Fort Madison the boat slips remained frozen and the gulls actively pecked the ice to feed on frozen fish. There was a Great Blue Heron on the dock, and a lone American White Pelican floating back and forth in the shallow open water. We spotted an immature Thayer's Gull among the Ring-billed Gulls.

All in all it was a great day, although the wind made the viewing very chilly. We left Burlington at 5 p.m. with a total of 75 species, having seen most of the ducks and geese except Snow Goose. A big thank you to John and Chuck for a great day.

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

Birds (75 species): Greater White-fronted Goose, Cackling Goose, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Mallard, 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, Pied-billed Grebe, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Thayer's Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Barred Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, American Tree Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– Karen Disbrow



March 25, Meeting. We had two speakers at this meeting. Billy Reiter-Marolf, Iowa's new Breeding Bird Atlas Coordinator, gave an update on the status of the BBA project in the state: 24 blocks have been completed, with 20 hours or more of effort; 73 blocks have had 10-20 hours; 570 blocks have had less than 10 hours; and 124 sites have had no recorded hours. Billy then went over Johnson County and the surrounding counties in more detail. There are many blocks in areas that we usually bird or close to areas that we have visited. Collection of data is primarily based on bird behavior: birds carrying food, pairs sitting together on limbs or electric lines, mating displays, males singing on territory, removal of fecal sacs, identifying existing nests, etc. Great Blue Herons, Red-tail Hawks, and owls are species that are pairing up or breeding now. There are great resources for identifying nests that are easily seen before the trees bud.

Billy pointed out that we have three species that are nesting in the state that were not present when the last BBA was done in the late 1980s: Sandhill Cranes are back after being extirpated from the state for over 100 years, and Eurasian Tree Sparrows and Eurasian Collared-Doves have colonized the state in the last twenty years.

There are three blockbusting weekends scheduled for the coming months (see page 4 for more information.) During these events, people can join other birders and explore new areas in specific areas of the state. These weekends will kick off with a Friday night training by Billy about what to look for to determine if birds are nesting in the block.

Mark Brown also provided a presentation on the Iowa Ornithologists' Union's trip to Monterey, California on October 3-13, 2009.

Jim Bangma and Ann Johnson of Hologram Birding Tours led 11 participants from around the state to such places as Muir Woods, Point Reyes National Seashore, Mines Road, Pinnacles National Monument, and Monterey

Bay. By the end of the trip, our wildlife totals included 12 butterflies, 23 mammals, and 176 birds! Mark took many pictures and presented the highlights in the presentation.

The first few days were spent on land. Among the targets that were successfully seen well by the group were Wrentit, Nuttall's Woodpecker, California Thrasher, and Yellow-billed Magpie. Tarantulas, Mormon Metalmark butterflies, and a Bobcat were also noteworthy. By the fourth day the group ventured toward the coast. Monterey would be the home base for the bulk of the remainder of the trip. Shorebirds that prefer rocky beaches were plentiful. Highlights were Black Turnstone, Black Oystercatcher, Whimbrel, Wandering Tattler, Surfbird, Marbled Godwit, and Snowy Plover. Also around Monterey Peninsula, the group was impressed by a battle between two White-tailed kites. Eventually the juvenile stole the rodent that was caught by the adult! The most unexpected sighting occurred at one of the beaches on the peninsula. A young Mountain Bluebird was found and would remain for 4 days. Not only was it just the third time this species was seen in the Monterey area, but it was also at the location where John Denver's plane went into the ocean 12 years ago. A local paper read, "Rockies bird pays tribute to John Denver."

The highlight of this vacation for most of the participants was two pelagic trips out into Monterey Bay. The bay is world famous for its deep canyon just a short distance from shore, which produces nutrient rich upwellings that reach the surface and attract mammals and seabirds from all over the world. Monterey Seabirds was the tour operator we used. They limited the tours to 25 people and that allowed us all to have enough rail space and get fantastic views of such birds as Buller's, Pink-footed, Black-vented, and Sooty Shearwaters, Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets, Parasitic and Pomarine Jaegers, Black-footed Albatrosses, and Northern Fulmars. The mammals were equally spectacular, which included Blue and Hump-

backed Whales, Risso's, Pacific White-sided, and Northern Right-whale Dolphins, and Northern Fur Seals.

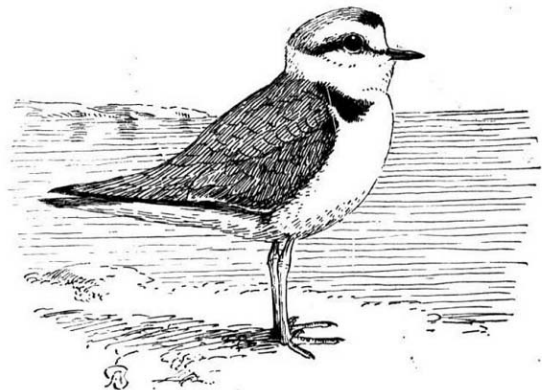
Towards the end of the trip we took a pontoon ride in a backwater estuary known as Elkhorn Slough, giving us all killer looks at Sea Otters, Elegant Terns, Western and Clark's Grebes, and Brant. At the nearby agricultural area called Moonglow Dairy, flocks of Tri-colored Blackbirds were a nice treat.

By the end of our tour, a huge storm was looming offshore that would dump 6 inches of rain on many parts of California and bring winds in excess of 50 miles per hour. This made us appreciate the calm and dry weather we enjoyed for the entire trip. It turned out to be quite a memorable outing for everyone involved, as even the most well-travelled participants got to see a few life birds!

Trip participants were Jim Bangma (leader), Mark Brown, Linda Donelson, Judy Garton, Ann Johnson (leader), Mike Johnston, Sandy Johnston, Jerry Probst, Lee Schoenewe, Carolyn Sonderman, Richard Tetrault, Karen Viste-Sparkman, and Pamela Wingert.

Attendees: Mark, Matsalyn and Russell Brown, Karen Disbrow, Linda Donelson, Bruce Gardner, Peter Hansen, Rick Hollis, Ken Hunt, Lorraine Kent, Dave Kyllingstad, Khristen Lawton, Ramona McGurk, Rosemarie Petzold, Jim and Sharon Scheib, Carol Winter.

– Karen Disbrow/Mark Brown



March 28, Cone Marsh. This trip was held in conjunction with our beginning birder course, and we had a nice mix of enthusiastic beginners and veteran birders. A strong NW wind made it seem much colder than the actual temperature of 45°. On the way to the marsh we spotted a Eurasian Collared-Dove along Hwy. 6 outside of Iowa City, and another one at the south edge of Lone Tree. This species continues to increase its presence in our area and throughout Iowa.

We started our loop around the marsh in the NE corner near the caboose. The water level was very high. The highlights were two Horned Grebes in breeding plumage and a group of six Sandhill Cranes which flew past and briefly landed in a field behind us. We obtained good scope views of many ducks including Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, and Blue-winged Teal, as well as a flock of American White Pelicans out in the marsh.

We moved on to the south side of the marsh. There were not many ducks there, but we added Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, and Redhead to our list. Our next stop was on the west side at the dike. We didn't venture too far onto the dike because of the wind. Everyone enjoyed viewing a nearby Rusty Blackbird through the spotting scopes. As we were leaving the area a Northern Harrier flew past.

The NW corner of the marsh, being somewhat sheltered from the wind, held many ducks and geese. Several hundred Greater White-fronted Geese flew up out of the marsh and then settled back into the cattails, and a single Snow Goose was spotted in the vegetation. Canvasbacks and many other ducks were present, and we heard (but didn't see) our only Wood Duck of the day.

After leaving the marsh we made a stop nearby along Atwood Avenue, and in a field there we found several American Pipits, an early American Golden-Plover, and a distant flock of longspurs.

Participants: Art Bettis, Kay Burke, Chris Caster, Jerry Denning, Bob Dick, Drew Dillman, Karen Disbrow (leader), Chris Edwards, Bruce Gardner, Therese Guedon, Peter Hansen, Ken Hunt, Amelia Lobo, Brenda Nations, Mary Noble, Patricio Otero, Mary Beth Stevenson.

Birds (53 species): Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Ring-necked Pheasant, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, American Golden-Plover, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, American Crow, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, American Pipit, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Lapland Longspur, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, House Sparrow.

– Chris Edwards



**25 Years Ago in
*Eastern Iowa Birdwatch***

The Spring 1985 issue of *Eastern Iowa Birdwatch* featured an article about making field observation notes by Carol Thompson, in which she described her use of field checklists, notebooks, and portable cassette recorders for taking notes in the field.

Tom Staudt reported on the 1984 Christmas Bird Count. The species total was only 49, the lowest total since the count took its present form in 1974. "Good birds" were Wild Turkey (seen for the second straight year), Eastern Bluebird, and Lapland Longspur.

Carl Bendorf led the annual mid-winter field trip to Amana to look for Wild Turkeys, which were much less common than they are today. Due to the large number of participants, the group split into two, and both parties were successful at finding several turkeys in the bottomland timber. Even more remarkable was the sighting of a male and female Evening Grosbeak eating small buds at the top of a sunlit tree. The outing was followed by breakfast at the Colony Inn.

The Summer 1985 *Eastern Iowa Birdwatch* featured a note about the start of Iowa's first five-year Breeding Bird Atlas project, which ran through 1990.

The issue also included reports from spring field trips to the Coralville Reservoir, Lacey-Keosauqua State Park, and the annual Mother's Day trip to Fuller's Farm in Cedar County. The upcoming summer schedule included only one outing, to the Coralville Reservoir in August. This is a stark contrast to our current busy summer schedule.

- Chris Edwards



IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Please send this form with your annual membership dues to Bruce Gardner, 3055 Wapsi Ave. NE, Iowa City, IA, 52240. Annual dues are \$15 per household or \$10 for students. Members receive a 10% discount on bird seed at Birds Eye View, 410 First Ave. in Coralville's Riverview Square.

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Iowa City Bird Club

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.

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 Bruce Gardner, 3055 Wapsi Ave. NE, Iowa City, IA 52240. You may contact Bruce at (319) 643-2575 or woodsidefarms@juno.com.

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

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

Eastern Iowa Birdwatch

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