
Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 31 Number 1

April 2011

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**, unless otherwise noted, 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 9, Saturday, 8 a.m. Kent Park near Tiffin for migrant songbirds and resident woodland birds. **Meet at the Kent Park Conservation Education Center (CEC).** *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.* Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

April 12, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Beginning Birder Course at Kent Park CEC: “Where to Bird in Johnson County” by Rick Hollis. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register. Free to members. See page 10 for more information.

April 16, Saturday, 8 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Area for ducks, geese, pelicans, and other migrants. Wear boots for walking in wet areas, and bring a spotting scope if you have one. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.* Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

April 19, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Beginning Birder Course at Kent Park CEC: “Backyard and Feeder Birds” by James Scheib. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register. Free to members.

April 20, Wednesday, 7 p.m. Fledgling Birding Class at Kent Park CEC by Rick Hollis. Specifically for kids aged 7–12, accompanied by an adult. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register.

April 21, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. Special location: Kent Park Conservation Education Center. “Ryerson’s Woods Park: A Fragile Ravine, An Exceptional Flora” by Diana Horton.

April 23, Saturday, 8 a.m. Fledgling Field Trip for kids aged 7–12, to be accompanied by an adult. Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

April 24, 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.* Jim Scheib, 337-5206.

April 26, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Beginning Birder Course at Kent Park CEC: “Warbler Identification and Shorebird Review” by Karen Disbrow. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register. Free to members.

April 27-29, May 2-6, 9-13, 16-20, Mondays-Fridays, 6:30 a.m. Hickory Hill Park Warbler Walks with leaders Mark Madsen, Jason Paulios, Ken Lowder, and Chris Edwards. Meet at the north parking lot at the end of Conklin Lane, off Dodge Street. Daily sightings will be posted on our web site.

Continued on next page →

Schedule (continued)

April 30, Saturday, 1-3 p.m. Grant Wood Neighborhood Family, Fun, and Fitness Day. The ICBC will lead bird walks along the Sycamore Bottoms neighborhood trail. Bruce Gardner, 331-3547 and Ken Hunt, 354-1079.

May 1, Sunday, 5 p.m. *Ghost Bird* Film at Macbride Hall Auditorium. We are showing this film, about the rediscovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, as a special fundraiser for the UI Museum of Natural History's Laysan Island Cyclorama. Individual tickets are \$7.50 in advance or \$10 at the door; family tickets (children 16 and under) are \$15 in advance or \$20 at the door. See page 4 for more information.

May 7, 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.

May 8, Sunday, 8 a.m. Hickory Hill Park for warblers and other migrating songbirds. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.* Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

May 14, Saturday, 8 a.m. Johnson County Heritage Trust Properties. Mark Madsen, 351-6927.

May 15, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Bruce Gardner's Woods north of Iowa City for birds and wildflowers. Dress for rough trails. Bruce Gardner, 351-3547.

May 19, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. "The History of the Butterfly" by Harlan Ratcliff. You can read some of Harlan's blog posts on this subject at <http://therousedbear.wordpress.com/>.

May 21, Saturday, 7:30 a.m. Ryerson's Woods for warblers and other late migrants. Jason Paulios, 331-6115.

June 4, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Johnson County Breeding Bird Atlas Trip. We'll visit one or more of the 11 unfinished Breeding Bird Atlas blocks in Johnson County. Be prepared for insects and off-trail walking. Chris Edwards, 430-4732.

June 11, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Johnson County Breeding Bird Atlas Trip. Chris Edwards, 430-4732.

June 18, Saturday, 8 a.m. - Noon. Turkey Vulture Festival. East Overlook of Coralville Dam. Karen Disbrow. 339-1017. See page 4 for more information.

June 25, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Breeding Bird Atlas Trip. Mark Brown, 358-8765.

June 26, Sunday, 6:30 a.m. Indiangrass Hills in Iowa County for grassland birds such as Henslow's Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Sedge Wren, and Bobolink. Chris Caster, 339-8343.

July 3, Sunday, 6:30 a.m. Southern Johnson County River Bottomlands. *Breeding Bird Atlas Trip.* Chris Caster, 339-8343 and Bruce Gardner, 351-3547.

July 23, 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.

August 21, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Area or other local areas for shorebirds and other early fall migrants. Diana Pesek, 560-8393.

August 25, 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.

Other Dates of Note

April 23, Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Prairie Reconstruction Volunteer Day at Herbert Hoover National Historic Site in West Branch. To participate, contact Adam Prato at (319) 643-7855.

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

June 24-26, Friday-Sunday. Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) Blockbusting Weekend at Rathbun Lake – Appanoose, Lucas, Monroe, and Wayne counties. For more information on this and other Blockbusting Weekends, visit bba.iowabirds.org or contact Billy Reiter-Marolf at bbacoordinator@iowabirds.org or (515) 298-3072.

July 8-10, Friday-Sunday. Iowa BBA Blockbusting Weekend in Northeastern Iowa – Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, and Winneshiek counties.

July 22-24, Friday-Sunday. Iowa BBA Blockbusting Weekend in Northwestern Iowa – Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Lyon, Osceola, and Palo Alto counties.

July 29-31, Friday-Sunday. Iowa BBA Blockbusting Weekend in Southwestern Iowa – Fremont, Mills, Montgomery, Page, and Pottawattamie counties.

From Our President Karen Disbrow

Spring, glorious spring! It certainly could not come quickly enough for me and obviously for some of the birds. It seems there were early arrivals of many migrants, such as Hermit Thrushes arriving in February. In fact, we are starting the Warbler Walks earlier than ever before in the last week of April. If the warblers are early we will certainly spot them.

Many exciting events, several of them firsts for Iowa, are on our spring and summer schedule. We are co-hosting the film *Ghost Bird* with the Cedar Rapids Audubon Society and the UI Museum of Natural History, on May 1 at 5 p.m. This event is a fundraiser for the Museum's Laysan Island Cyclorama.

The First Annual Turkey Vulture Festival will be held at the East Overlook of the Coralville Dam is June 18. The date was chosen to fit the schedule, and hopefully comfortable temperatures and kids out of school will make the event successful. There will be many fun activities for everyone of all ages to participate

in, and for all of us to appreciate this migratory bird so important to the ecology of the prairies.

The fourth season of the Breeding Bird Atlas will be upon us soon. We have several BBA field trips on our schedule. If anyone wants to do a BBA trip or another birding trip on the spur of the moment I will gladly put the info on the website and send an e-mail notice. We have done some of this in the past. The opportunity to bird is almost endless in the summer with longer daylight hours, and who knows what birds may blow in or through this great state.

Good birding everyone!

Renewal Reminder

If you haven't renewed your membership for 2011, now is the time! 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.

***Ghost Bird* Fundraiser Sunday, May 1, 5 p.m. Macbride Hall**

The Iowa City Bird Club, Cedar Rapids Audubon Society, and University of Iowa Museum of Natural History are sponsoring a showing of the film *Ghost Bird* to raise funds for the conservation of the Laysan Island Cyclorama in Bird Hall. The cyclorama will be 100 years old in 2014 and is in need of cleaning and restoration.

Ghost Bird tells the fascinating story of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker's controversial rediscovery in 2005. Believed extinct for over half a century, the iconic bird's resurrection was heralded around the world as proof that conservation efforts on behalf of threatened species are making the critical difference between life and death. Informative, moving and beautifully filmed, this feature-length documentary raises important questions while featuring illuminating interviews with David Sibley, Nancy Tanner, Dr. Rick Prum, Dr. Jerome Jackson, and David Luneau. An official selection of film festivals in Toronto, San Francisco, New York City, London and Rome, *Ghost Bird* has been honored with the 2009 Golden Eagle and Southern Soul of Independent Film awards. View a trailer of the film at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fX3rL1XF9M0>.

Individual tickets are \$7.50 in advance or \$10 at the door. Family tickets (with children 16 and under) are \$15 in advance or \$20 at the door. Advance tickets are available from Bruce Gardner and Karen Disbrow of the ICBC; Jim Durbin and Leland Sales of Cedar Rapids Audubon; Leno & Cilek Ace Hardware (three locations in Iowa City and Coralville); Birds Eye View in Coralville; Wildlife Habitat in Cedar Rapids, and the Johnson County Conservation Education Center. Check our web site for additional locations.

There will be door prizes, and free popcorn and drinks will be provided. Bird Hall and the Laysan Island Cyclorama will be open 1-5 p.m. and following the movie.

– Karen Disbrow

Turkey Vulture Festival Saturday, June 18

If you are looking for something new and unusual to do, mark your calendars for Saturday, June 18 – the date of the First Annual Turkey Vulture Festival at Coralville Lake, and maybe even, the whole state of Iowa. The event will be held from 8:00 a.m. until noon at the East Overlook of the Coralville Dam. Free snacks and drinks will be provided.

This unique celebration promises to have something for every member of the family. There will be face painting for the kids (and maybe some of you adults), fun crafts, and other activities. A noted Iowa professor, Dr. Tex Sordahl of Luther College in Decorah, will be on hand to answer all the questions you've ever had about Turkey Vultures. The Iowa City Bird Club will be there with scopes for viewing the Turkey Vultures at rest on the rock side of the dam and in the air. A fun nature activity or two will be provided by the Johnson County Conservation Department.

A video about Turkey Vultures will be showing in the theatre at the Visitor Center. The Children's Museum will provide a fun game plus a craft activity so you can make your own souvenir of the day to take home. A coloring contest will also take place with a provided coloring page. The artwork will then be displayed in the Visitor Center for a week. The Veterans Trail has a bird blind where a person can observe many smaller birds at the feeders. Johnson County Songbird Project and other local nature clubs will also have displays.

– Terry Escher

Membership Spotlight on: **Bruce Gardner**

Name? John Brewster Gardner. Most Iowa City Bird Club members know me as Bruce, but that is because my grandmother decided John was too common and Brewster was not a normal first name. Everyone I grew up with in Iowa knows me as Bruce, but I'm John to all the people I knew during my 30-year retail career in California and Michigan. The Brewster part comes from my great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandfather, Elder William Brewster, spiritual leader of the Pilgrims on the Mayflower. (Way more information than anyone needed in a bird club bio.)

What is your occupation? Currently I'm a part-time rural mail carrier in West Branch, a great job for seeing many interesting birds. My real job was working in retail management for Mervyn's Department Stores.

Where did you grow up? I was born and raised on our family farm in rural Johnson County, where I now live.

When and how did your interest in birds develop? My grandmother lived upstairs when I was young and I can remember spending many enjoyable hours watching birds on the platform feeders attached to the window sills. We had a Golden Book of birds that helped identify birds we didn't know.

When did you join the Iowa City Bird Club? About seven years ago.

Do you remember the first bird club event you attended? The beginning birder course at Kent Park and all the excellent field trips that were a part of it.

Did you have any birding mentors? Rather than list every member of the ICBC that I have birded with, I will state that I am very grateful for all the knowledge I have gained from their patience and expertise.

What are your past and present positions with the Iowa City Bird Club? I am currently the Treasurer.

Do you have a favorite bird or family of birds? I enjoy all the raptors, but my favorite individual bird is the Pileated Woodpecker.

What particular aspects of birding interest you the most? I like the challenge of identifying birds that are new to me, and the fellowship of ICBC field trips.

What is your favorite field guide and why? *Sibley* and *National Geographic* in the field. The Thayer computer program, *Birds of My State*, is an excellent, easy to use program when I'm at home. It is available at Birds Eye View in Coralville.

What interesting birds have you seen in your yard? A Western Meadowlark calling loudly from the top of a walnut tree next to my house yesterday!

Where is your favorite place in Iowa to bird, and why? Cone Marsh because of the variety of interesting birds that are found there.

Tell us about one of your most exciting Iowa birding moments. The first time a Pileated Woodpecker flew over my head while I was walking through our timber.

What is your “most wanted” Iowa bird? Any bird that I have not seen before.

Tell us about a favorite birding experience or place outside of Iowa. Seeing a Jabiru stork and its nest on the New River Lagoon in central Belize.

Do you have any hobbies or interests besides birding? Anything automotive, especially F1 Grand Prix racing, participating in autocrosses and T&D rallies. Also geocaching and Tractorcade.

Do you have any favorite TV shows? *Top Gear* on BBC America.

Have you read any good books lately? *The Unfair Advantage*, a history of sports cars and road racing by Mark Donahue.

What is your favorite restaurant? Red Rock North in Napa, California.

25 Years Ago in *Eastern Iowa Birdwatch*

The Spring 1986 issue of *Eastern Iowa Birdwatch* featured a report on the 1985 Iowa City Christmas Bird Count. Sixty-three species were seen, tying the record for most species at that time. (This total has since been surpassed 11 times, including a record 79 species in 1998.) Birds considered notable included Bohemian Waxwing (first count record), Brown Thrasher, Field Sparrow, Wood Duck, Wild Turkey (rare then, but now common), Northern Goshawk, Northern Shrike, and Snow Bunting. Not considered especially noteworthy then, but certainly so by today’s standards, were eight Evening Grosbeaks. Four Eastern Screech-Owls and 21 Red-headed Woodpeckers were found, numbers which would be considered high in recent years. The 1773 American Tree Sparrows, 1680 Dark-eyed Juncos, 8 Rusty Blackbirds, and 79 Purple Finches still stand as all-time count records.

The Iowa City Bird Club was officially born on February 16, 1986, when *Eastern Iowa Birdwatch* subscribers met to discuss the formation of a club. Bud Gode was elected President, Barb Beaumont continued as Field

Trip Organizer, and Carol Thompson continued as Editor. The group planned to hold three or four meetings per year at the Iowa City Recreation Center. The first meeting was a workshop and panel discussion on warblers on April 9, 1986.

This issue debuted a new feature called “EIB Birder News”, which listed the birding trips undertaken by club members, with the intent of promoting an exchange of information on travel and birding areas. Among the trips taken in 1986 were Cal and Bernie Knight to Colorado in April and Texas in May; Carol Thompson, James Huntington, and Jim Sandrock to Florida and the Dry Tortugas in late April and May; Tom Kent to Attu, Alaska in May; and Bud Gode to Seattle and Alaska in July.

Field trip reports included the February 8 Annual Amana Great Big Breakfast Trip (so-named because the chance of seeing Wild Turkeys was slim, but breakfast was guaranteed), and a January 25 trip to the Mississippi River at Keokuk to view Bald Eagles, waterfowl, and gulls with local host Bob Cecil.

The first Iowa Birdathon, a fund-raising competition in which teams competed to find the most species, was announced for May 1986.

2010 Iowa City Christmas Bird Count

Chris Edwards and Bob Dick

The 60th annual Iowa City Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, December 19. The total of 65 species was right at the count's ten-year average. The morning was very cold, with a low temperature of -2° , but sunny and calm. The afternoon high temperature was 20° , and conditions were mostly cloudy with very light easterly winds. The Coralville Reservoir and other standing water was frozen, and the Iowa River and smaller streams were mostly frozen.

The species list this year is somewhat unusual due to the fact that many expected species were *not* found, but many rare or unexpected species *were* found. Trumpeter Swan and Eurasian Collared-Dove were seen for the first time, although not unexpectedly since populations of both species have been expanding in Iowa. Redhead, Greater Scaup, and American White Pelican were seen for only the second time. Other unusual sightings included Cackling Goose, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Merlin, Wilson's Snipe, Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Lapland Longspur, and Snow Bunting. Expected species that were not found this year included Sharp-shinned Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Fox Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, and Pine Siskin.

Waterfowl

Due to very cold temperatures in early December and the scarcity of open water on count day, it was somewhat surprising that nine waterfowl species were found on the Iowa River, albeit in small numbers. Two Canvasbacks, a Redhead, a male Greater Scaup, a Lesser Scaup, and a Common Goldeneye were below the Coralville Reservoir Dam. A Cackling Goose was below the Iowa River Power Co. dam, and another Redhead was below the Burlington Street dam. Finally, two Trumpeter Swans were seen on the river at dusk near Crandic Park.

Pheasants to Shorebirds

Only three Ring-necked Pheasants were found, following three in 2009 and four in 2008, the worst three-year stretch since the late fifties. Wild Turkey numbers were slightly below average. No Northern Bobwhites were seen again this year; 2005 and 2006 mark the only sightings in the last fifteen years. An American White Pelican lingering below the Iowa River Power Co. dam in Coralville was only the second count sighting, and a Great Blue Heron was the fourth sighting in five years. Most raptors were seen in average numbers this year, with six Rough-legged Hawks being slightly higher than normal and zero Sharp-shinned Hawks being below normal. A Merlin of the Prairie race near the Iowa City Landfill was only the fourth record overall and the third in the past four years. A Wilson's Snipe at Hawkeye Wildlife Area was a nice find.

Gulls to Woodpeckers

The only gulls found were three Herring Gulls along the Iowa River. Rock Pigeons were recorded in record numbers this year. Eurasian Collared-Doves have been present in Solon for several years, but the 18 found there near the grain elevator are the first for the count and are the largest concentration found in Johnson County to date. For the second straight year, Mourning Dove numbers were at less than half their ten-year average. Owls were found in very low numbers this year, with only three Great Horned Owls and one Barred Owl. No Long-eared, Short-eared, Saw-whet, or Screech-Owls were found. Only a single Belted Kingfisher was found. One Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and four Pileated Woodpeckers were found; all other woodpecker species were seen in below average numbers.

Shrikes to Waxwings

Northern Shrike was recorded for the fourth straight year; this year's individual was at Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Blue Jay numbers were below average, while American Crow numbers were above average. Perhaps due to the snow cover, Horned Larks were detected in well above average numbers this year. Chickadees, titmice, and nuthatches were found at about normal levels. Only two Brown Creepers were found. A Winter Wren found near Scales Bend Road was the third record in as many years. Four Golden-crowned Kinglets at Kent Park were a ten-year high count. American Robins, which subsist primarily on berries in the winter, were found in record numbers. Curiously, Eastern Bluebirds and Cedar Waxwings, also fruit-eating species, were found in below average numbers.

Sparrows to Old World Sparrows

American Tree Sparrows were seen at their highest level in over twenty years. After five straight years, no Fox Sparrows were found. Song Sparrow and White-throated Sparrow numbers were below average, and no Swamp Sparrows were seen. Dark-eyed Junco numbers were above average. The 18 Lapland Longspurs were the first seen in ten years, and the 88 Snow Buntings were a record high count; most of these birds were along James Avenue south of Hawkeye Wildlife Area. No meadowlarks or blackbirds were found this year. It was not a good finch year; Purple Finch, House Finch, and American Goldfinch numbers were down, and for the second straight year no Pine Siskins were found (although Pine Siskin was recorded during count week). A single Eurasian Tree Sparrow was found at Hawkeye Wildlife Area, marking the seventh record in eight years.

Count Effort

This year there were 33 field observers in 10 parties. Field observers were Jessica Alexander, Ed Allgood, Dena Belcher, Kyle Belcher, Barry Buschelman, Chris Caster, Jerry Denning, Bob Dick, Dara Dick, Karen Disbrow, John Donelson, Linda Donelson, Chris Edwards, Jonni Ellsworth, Jim Fuller, Karole Fuller, Rick Hollis, Ken Hunt, Orlan Love, Ken Lowder, Nancy Lynch, Jason McCurdy, Ramona McGurk, Alan Nagel, Mary Noble, Julia Pappas, Jason Paulios, Diana Pesek, Gerald Peterson, Linda Rudolph, Jim Scheib, Bill Scheible, and Carol Winter.

There were 11 feeder watchers in 10 locations, a decrease from last year. Feeder watchers were Jack and Ann Bagford, Barbara Beaumont, Anne Edwards, Carolyn Gardner, Marilou Gay, Gloria Henry, Janet Hollis, Nancy Johns, Ronnye Wieland, and Deanne Wortman.

This year's count was organized by Bob Dick. The results were compiled by Chris Edwards. A pre-count planning meeting was held at the home of Jim and Karole Fuller. On the day of the count we met for lunch at the North Liberty Community Center, at which time we had 60 species. We met for an evening meal and compilation at The Brown Bottle Café in North Liberty. Both *The Gazette* and *The Press-Citizen* published articles on the count results this year.

Nationally, this year marked the 111th 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

Cackling Goose	1	Eurasian Collared-Dove	18	Golden-crowned Kinglet	4
Canada Goose	605	Mourning Dove	105	Eastern Bluebird	10
Trumpeter Swan	2	Great Horned Owl	3	Hermit Thrush	1
Mallard	580	Barred Owl	1	American Robin	362
Canvasback	2	Belted Kingfisher	1	European Starling	887
Redhead	2	Red-headed Woodpecker	6	Cedar Waxwing	49
Greater Scaup	1	Red-bellied Woodpecker	73	American Tree Sparrow	844
Lesser Scaup	1	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	Song Sparrow	6
Common Goldeneye	1	Downy Woodpecker	99	White-throated Sparrow	29
Ring-necked Pheasant	3	Hairy Woodpecker	16	White-crowned Sparrow	1
Wild Turkey	55	Northern Flicker	18	Dark-eyed Junco	962
American White Pelican	1	Pileated Woodpecker	4	Lapland Longspur	18
Great Blue Heron	1	Northern Shrike	1	Snow Bunting	88
Bald Eagle	88	Blue Jay	132	Northern Cardinal	331
Northern Harrier	2	American Crow	912	Purple Finch	15
Cooper's Hawk	4	Horned Lark	91	House Finch	75
Red-tailed Hawk	88	Black-capped Chickadee	248	American Goldfinch	105
Rough-legged Hawk	6	Tufted Titmouse	68	House Sparrow	572
American Kestrel	15	Red-breasted Nuthatch	7	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	1
Merlin	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	73		
Wilson's Snipe	1	Brown Creeper	2	TOTAL SPECIES	65
Herring Gull	3	Carolina Wren	5	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	8,093
Rock Pigeon	385	Winter Wren	1		

Book Review**Rick Hollis**

Bird Feathers: A Guide to North American Species. S. David Scott and Casey McFarland. Stackpole Books, 2010. 358 pages. Paperback, \$34.95.

Much of the information in this book can also be found on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Forensics Laboratory's web site, The Feather Atlas:

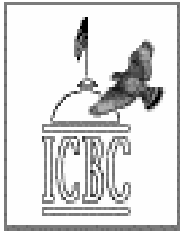
<http://www.lab.fws.gov/featheratlas/index.php>.

There are differences. The web site includes only flight feathers: remiges (the flight feathers of the wing, including the primaries, secondaries, and tertials) and rectrices (the flight feathers of the tail). The web site includes an on-line key.

Bird Feathers has, for most birds, not only flight feathers but a sampling of other feathers (breast, belly, etc.). The inclusion of these non-flight feathers makes it much more likely that

you will identify a group of feathers that you find. The book has much more information on the differences between feathers. And the book form means easy access anywhere, although with more and more smart phones web access is not so limited as it once was.





Introduction to Birding Course March 29 – April 26, 2011 at Kent Park



The Iowa City Bird Club and the Johnson County Conservation Department are offering a 5-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 class and 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 29, 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 April 3, 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, April 5, 7 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING II by Rick Hollis. Continuation of first session topics.

Saturday, April 9, 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 12, 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 16, 8 a.m. Field Trip to HAWKEYE WILDLIFE AREA near North Liberty. We expect to see ducks, geese, American White Pelicans, and other spring migrants. Wear boots for walking in wet areas, and bring a spotting scope if you have one.

Tuesday, April 19, 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.

Wednesday, April 20, 7 p.m. Beginning Birding for Kids ages 7-12 by Rick Hollis. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Saturday, April 23, 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 Wednesday night so a loaner can be made available.

Sunday, April 24, 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 26, 7 p.m. WARBLER IDENTIFICATION & SHOREBIRD REVIEW by Karen Disbrow. Warblers are coming! Warblers are among our most colorful birds. Compare and contrast similar warblers.

Sunday, May 8, 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 18, Meeting. Karen announced that the University of Iowa Museum of Natural History is seeking donations to help restore and preserve the Laysan Island Cyclorama, and that perhaps the club could consider a fundraiser next year to support the project. She spoke about several upcoming events including Coralville WinterFest in January, a potential Turkey Vulture festival in June, and the Pelican Festival in September. Jim Scheib talked about the Great Backyard Bird Count coming up in February, and encouraged members to get involved in this nationwide citizen science project.

Our evening's speaker was Jon Stravers of National Audubon's Mississippi River Initiative. Jon provided the following summary of his talk:

As part of National Audubon's specific effort to develop a better understanding of bird populations within the Effigy Mounds/Yellow River Forest Bird Conservation Area in northeast Iowa, we have been conducting bird surveys with special emphasis on Cerulean Warblers during the past four years. In 2010 we found Ceruleans at 32 of 78 points surveyed. In Effigy Mounds National Monument we found Ceruleans at 19 of 46 survey points. In Yellow River State Forest we found Ceruleans at 7 of 14 survey points, and in the Sny Magill complex along the Mississippi River we found Ceruleans at 6 of 8 survey points. We found no Ceruleans at eight points within the Catfish Slough complex, and none at two private property points adjacent to the Luster Heights unit of Yellow River State Forest.

We feel Ceruleans might be more common within some habitats within the Driftless Area of Northeast Iowa than we previously had estimated. We also feel there is a need to develop a specific and ongoing monitoring

program for Cerulean Warbler populations in the Driftless Area. We feel that ongoing surveys in coming years will help us to better understand Cerulean populations in this region.

We have some agency funding already in place for this project. With any additional funding we receive from Audubon Chapters we plan to include additional monitoring points in 2011 along the Mississippi River and additional points within Yellow River State Forest. Concurrent with the bird monitoring effort, I am also doing education programs in schools and for various civic groups about clean water and about bird monitoring. The Aveda Corporation is helping to sponsor these programs. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, at hawk@acegroup.cc or (563) 880-8046.

Jon finished by singing and playing a song on his guitar. Thanks Jon for a very enjoyable presentation.

Attendees: Chris Caster, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, John Donelson, Chris Edwards, John Erickson, Bruce Gardner, Therese Guedon, Lois Hughes, Ken Hunt, Merle Ihne, Lauren and Doina Johnson, Dave Kyllingstad, Kristen Lawton, Ruth Lindeen, Nancy Lynch, Gail McLure, Ed and Nancy Rolenc, Linda Rudolph, Jim Scheib, Blossom Shaw, Pat Vincent.

– Chris Edwards

January 20, Meeting. We showed the film *The Treasure of Madera Canyon, John Bax in Arizona*. Madera Canyon, south of Tucson, is one of North America's birding hot spots. John Bax spent many springs in the canyon shooting film of the birds and wildlife. He obviously knew the canyon well and had a very good eye. Included are some shots of birds seen on their nests, some of them very rare. There is great footage of many species, including hummingbirds that visited the feeders near John's trailer. Jim Scheib also shared some photographs which he recently took in Madera Canyon.

Former Iowa City Bird Club President Bud Gode retired to nearby Green Valley, Arizona, and spent much time in Madera Canyon as President of the Friends of Madera Canyon. If you have the opportunity, I highly recommend a visit Madera Canyon. Be sure to look for the memorial bench dedicated to Bud, which is not far from the Elegant Trogon nesting site which he spent hours studying.

Attendees: Karen Disbrow, Jonni Ellsworth, Bruce Gardner, Peter and Katy Hansen, Barbara Haring, Dave Kyllingstad, Ruth and Mike Lindeen, Jason McCurdy, Jason Paulios, Viana Rockel, Tom and Carol Rosenberger, Jim and Sharon Scheib, Dick and Marcia Shaffer.

– *Karen Disbrow*

January 23, Owl Prowl. It was a cold day with a temperature of 9° when we set out at 1 p.m. Right off the bat I lost everyone as we headed to Scott Boulevard to check a tree where Great Horned Owls nested for years. Along the way we spotted a hawk, and everyone ended up separated as cars missed the turn-off. Not all the cars had two-way radios, but eventually we all met up in Morse where a pair of screech-owls have traditionally been found. No screech-owls responded to our tape, perhaps due to the cold, so we moved on.

We decided to tour Bruce Gardner's woods. We tried for owls there, but none were found. Bruce demonstrated his Thayer's call tape by attempting to call a Pileated Woodpecker which nests in his woods. As we were leaving, the woodpecker appeared but only one out of two cars were able to spot it.

We took a break to warm up and drink something hot before heading to Nancy Lynch's home on Park Road. Nancy has a great view down the hill to City Park. We called Barred Owls, but again there was no response even though Nancy frequently sees owls in the area. Our last stop was the Conklin Lane entrance of Hickory Hill Park. The resident Barred Owls

there finally responded to our tape, and a Merlin was a surprise visitor.

Participants: Jess Alexander, Kyle and Dena Belcher, Karen Disbrow (leader), Linda Donelson, Bruce Gardner, Ken Hunt, Jason McCurdy.

Birds (9 species): Red-tailed Hawk, Merlin, Barred Owl, Downy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Cardinal.

– *Karen Disbrow*

January 30, Coralville WinterFest. The bird club again participated in the Coralville WinterFest activities. Chris Caster brought his spotting scope for eagle viewing, and Jim Scheib provided a DVD of backyard birds to show at our booth.

Participants: Chris Caster, Karen Disbrow, Linda Fisher, Bruce Gardner, Ken Hunt, Jim Scheib.

Birds (7 species): Canada Goose, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Downy Woodpecker, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Dark-eyed Junco.

– *Karen Disbrow*

February 5, Amana Turkey Walk. This was our annual search for the Legendary Great Amana Turkey, which we again failed to see. Looking at the bird list, it is hard to think that we also missed Blue Jay.

We started with breakfast at the Colony Inn, then drove through the colonies. We flushed some Horned Larks near the Old Creamery Theatre, so we dropped some cracked corn and drove off. A half-hour later, after we convinced ourselves that we could not walk where we had planned, we came back to the larks who were happily chowing down on the corn. We stopped and everyone had great scope looks.

We headed east on Amana Road, stopping in the vicinity of 1892 Amana Road. Although we missed our target species, Hermit Thrush and Northern Mockingbird, which had been seen there previously, we did see some very good birds and had a nice chat with the fellow that lives there.

Our final target species were Lesser Black-backed Gull and Snow Buntings. We missed the gull at Cedar Lake but picked up a Hooded Merganser there. At this time the mutual decision was to head back to Iowa City and skip the search for the Snow Buntings.

Participants: Jess Alexander, Linda Alexander, Gerald Denning, Karen Disbrow, Linda Donelson, Jonni Ellsworth, Linda Fisher, Therese Guedon, Peter Hansen, Rick Hollis (leader), Ramona McGurk, Mary Noble, Jim and Sharon Scheib.

Birds (29 species): Canada Goose, Mallard, Hooded Merganser, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Herring Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– Rick Hollis

February 13, Quad Cities. We began our outing on the Illinois side. Just north of the I-80 bridge is the town of Rapids City. A week earlier, Jim Forde of Cedar Rapids had discovered a male Barrow's Goldeneye there, and we were hopeful it would still be around. We started scanning the Mississippi close to the bridge. Jim Scheib was there. Numerous divers were present including Greater and Lesser Scaup and Common Goldeneye. Common

Mergansers flew overhead and a Song Sparrow and Hairy Woodpecker were on shore.

After about twenty minutes we drove north along the river a short ways when we ran into James Huntington. He said he had the Barrow's in sight. It had been rediscovered by Jim Mountjoy, a birder from Galesburg. Of course we all piled out of our vehicles and spent the next half hour viewing the duck between its dives. Foremost in our minds was the location of the Barrow's—was it in Iowa or Illinois? The state boundary is said to be the middle of the main navigation channel. This is marked on the Illinois side by red buoys and on the Iowa side by green buoys. For the bird to be in Iowa it would need to be seen closer to the green buoys. Unfortunately the navigation channel passes so close to the Iowa side on this stretch of the river that no green buoys are even necessary. And despite the bird being more than halfway across the river, I never saw it pass the red buoys into the main channel. After consulting maps available on the US Army Corps of Engineers website I could not personally count the bird in Iowa, although others may have seen it cross over to the Iowa side at some time. Still it was tremendous to be able to see the bird, rare anywhere in the Midwest. Congratulations and many thanks to Jim Forde for the original discovery.

We made stops at Lock and Dams 14 and 15. Lots of Bald Eagles were seen at both, but very few gulls—all Herring. Since it was an unseasonably wonderful day, the eagle photographers were in full force at L&D 14, as were the fisherman below L&D 15. In downtown Davenport we spent some time watching the Peregrine pair cavort on a rooftop and occasionally fly a loop around a building or two.

Our next stop was along the river south of Credit Island. There we found a flock of American Tree Sparrows and some Ring-billed Gulls roosting with a small group of Herring Gulls. There were some Mallards present, but

otherwise it was very quiet. One of our more interesting finds was along the road by Nahant Marsh. We spied a strange blue object hanging from the end of a tree branch. It turned out to be an oriole nest, constructed almost entirely of some sort of blue plastic strand. Perhaps we have a new subspecies evolving locally. I'm proposing we call it DuPont's Oriole.

Our last stop was at the backyard feeders above Fairmount Cemetery. Many Pine Siskins were present and we were thrilled to see a Pileated Woodpecker that allowed lengthy looks. And we even managed a few Eurasian Tree Sparrows.

Participants: Jess Alexander, Chris Caster (leader), Jerry Denning, John Erickson, Ken Hunt, Linda Rudolph, Bill Scheible.

At large participants: James Huntington, Diana Pesek, Jim Scheib.

Birds (35 species): Canada Goose, Mallard, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Greater Scaup, Barrow's Goldeneye, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, American Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch, Pine Siskin, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– *Chris Caster*

February 17, Meeting. Our speaker was Doug Harr, Iowa Audubon President, who presented "Panama: International Birding on a Shoestring Budget". Doug provided the following summary of his talk:

In the spring of 2008, I set out on my first international birding trip – if you don't count a

couple of jaunts into Mexico for other reasons but managing some birding on the side. The original intent was to try Costa Rica, renowned for its parks, great birding and friendly culture. But my timing coincided with U.S. colleges' spring breaks, and airline ticket prices had skyrocketed. In searching for other easy and inexpensive options, I happened upon a website for a new young Panamanian company called BirdingPanama.com. It was aimed at small groups (2-8), included all costs except tips and airfare, and it was quite reasonably priced. So I ended up as part of a group of four, exploring Panama's bird-rich habitats for eight exciting days, much of the time with two guides.

With nearly 33% of its landscape protected as parks, indigenous lands, and restricted-development buffers, this Iowa-sized nation actually surpasses famed Costa Rica in percentage of land protected and boasts about 975 species of birds. Those varied lands, from sea-level jungle to 8,000 ft. cloud forest, yielded 304 species of birds for me in just 8 days of intensive (but not exhausting) birding. Of that total, 242 were "lifers". I observed an incredible 25 kinds of hummingbirds and 24 kinds of tanagers alone, none that I'd ever encountered in North America.

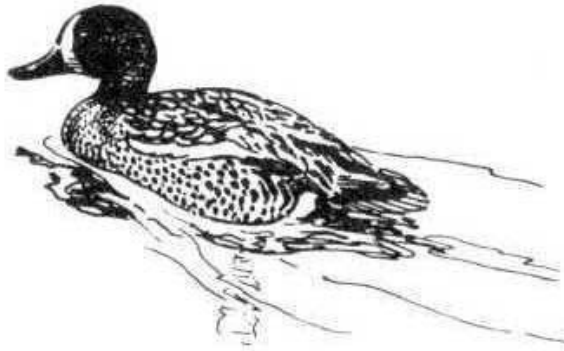
Some highlight birds included Blue-throated Toucanet, Rufous Motmot, Laughing Falcon, Bay-headed Tanager, Firey-billed Aracari, Violaceous Trogon, Blue Continga, Golden-collared Manakin, Flame-throated Warbler, and everyone's Central American favorite, the incredible Resplendent Quetzal. Equally fascinating, however, were tough-to-see-or-identify species, such as Dot-winged Antwren, Gray-necked Woodrail, Black-billed Nightingale Thrush and Olivaceous Woodcreeper.

In summary, I can't recommend Panama highly enough, for anyone considering a first-time Central American birding trip. Panama is American-friendly, offers clean and comfortable accommodations, water is usually safe to drink

in better establishments, and the food is good (provided you like rice with almost everything). Importantly, it is still a relatively safe place to visit, with caring guides who make sure your experience is memorable. Panama is now aiming to be “the next Costa Rica” for destination birding, and considering my trip, they are doing an excellent job.

Attendees: Ed and Jean Allgood, Barry Buschelman, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, John and Linda Donelson, Jonnie Ellsworth, John Erickson, Linda Fisher, Bruce Gardner, Therese Guedon, Peter Hansen, Rick Hollis, Nancy Lynch, Jason McCurdy, Gerry Peterson, Viana Rockel, Jim and Sharon Scheib, Steve Schomberg, Marcia and Dick Shaffer, Ben West.

– *Karen Disbrow*



March 12, Burlington Area. Six Iowa City Bird Club members joined host Chuck Fuller for our annual spring migration trip to Burlington. The day was sunny and windy (20 mph with much higher gusts), with temperatures starting at 36° and reaching 50° by the end of the day. A total of 66 species were seen.

The Mississippi River was choppy, and high water in the bays, especially at Montrose, eliminated the habitat for some species. A few Lesser Scaup were seen on the river, but most of the ducks were found in marshes and open ponds. Gadwall, Mallards, Northern Shovelers, Redheads, Ring-necked ducks, Lesser Scaup, and Buffleheads were seen at several locations in decent numbers, but certainly not in the hundreds as on some previous trips. Heron Bend

South held five Ruddy Ducks, and a pair of Wood Ducks made a quick appearance at Trumpeter Marsh. Green-winged Teal were spotted at Heron Bend North. All three mergansers were found in single numbers.

Pied-billed Grebes and small flock of American White Pelicans were seen flying at the Ortho Access of the Mississippi River. No swan species were seen except a pair of resident Trumpeters at Trumpeter Marsh. A few Cackling Geese were heard in a flock of Canada Geese. One flock of Greater White-fronted Geese were seen overhead late in the afternoon. The best bird of the day was a single female Long-tailed Duck at the marina in Fort Madison.

Participants: Jess Alexander, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow (co-leader), Chuck Fuller (co-leader), Therese Guedon, Ken Hunt, Linda Rudolph.

Birds (66 species): Greater White-fronted Goose, Cackling Goose, Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan (clipped), Wood Duck, Gadwall, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged

Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– *Karen Disbrow*

March 19, Clinton Area. We left Iowa City in two cars for the drive to Clinton. At 8:45 a.m. we met five members of the Riverview Birding Group in Eagle Point Park, a large city park on a bluff overlooking Pool 13 of the Mississippi River. Linda Boardson, founder of the group, and Connie Zink, President of the Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge, were our tour guides for the day. We started by walking through the park. The sun was out but it was still rather cold, and those of us who had worn our winter coats were glad we had. One of the first birds we found was a Fox Sparrow, singing and foraging in the dead leaves under some shrubbery. Then near the lodge we discovered two Pink Siskins feeding on hemlock cones. After a short hike through the woods to a river overlook, we retrieved our scopes from the cars and viewed the ducks on the river pool far below. There were many Canvasbacks and smaller numbers of Lesser Scaup, Buffleheads, and other diving ducks. Several Bald Eagles and Turkey Vultures sailed past our vantage point.

Our next stop was the Wide River Winery, which sits on a high bluff overlooking the river just north of Clinton. We were greeted by a huge Great Pyrenees dog who turned out to be a gentle giant. Several participants enjoyed a free wine sample and purchased a bottle to enjoy later. Then we hiked a wooded trail on the property, which led to a striking river overlook. Along the trail we glimpsed a juvenile Red-headed Woodpecker.

We continued north to Bulger's Hollow Recreation Area. This is the only location on land from which a person can view the Mississippi River islands where a large nesting colony of American White Pelicans, Double-crested Cormorants, Great Egrets, and Ring-

billed Gulls is located. It was a distant view even through our spotting scopes, but it was still an interesting spectacle. We did not see any egrets, but there were hundreds of pelicans and cormorants present. There were also many ducks and gulls on the river and in the backwaters, and we added Gadwall, American Wigeon, and Redhead to our list.

It was now mid-day, so we headed north and crossed the Mississippi River to Savanna, Illinois, where we enjoyed a satisfying lunch at the Sweet Life Bakery. The banana crème pie was a highlight of my day.

After lunch we back-tracked across the river to Sabula, Iowa's only island city, and birded South Sabula Lakes Park. The lake was still partially iced over, and there were a dozen or more Bald Eagles, a couple hundred gulls, and an equal number of waterfowl to scope through. We had nice looks at one male and two female Greater Scaup, and saw the first Ruddy Ducks of the day. We also scoped a pair of Bald Eagles at a nest site.

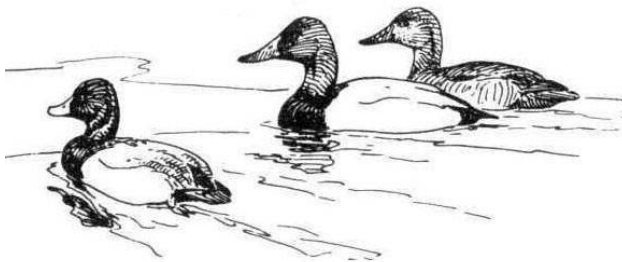
We crossed over to Illinois again and worked our way south along the river, stopping at several locations of the Upper Mississippi River NWR. We could have spent much more time birding these areas than we had available. At Spring Lake, we saw a pair of Trumpeter Swans, many pelicans, and several Blue-winged Teal and Northern Shovelers. At Lock and Dam 13 we observed another Bald Eagle nest (to view a webcam of this nest, visit <http://www.sumriver.org/>), along with more diving ducks and a group of Pied-billed Grebes. Our last stop was at a backwater north of Fulton, where we had nice looks at a Belted Kingfisher, several Wood Ducks, and a pair of Hooded Mergansers.

By the time we crossed back to Iowa it was past 5 p.m. and time for us to head home. Thanks to our hosts for their wonderful hospitality. We all had a great time and hope we can get together again in the future.

Participants: Charlene Berger (Clinton, IA), Linda Boardson (co-leader; Clinton, IA), Jerry Denning, Chris Edwards (co-leader), Jonni Ellsworth, Peter Hansen, Ken Hunt, Anne Straight (Forreston, IL), Dennis and Connie Zink (Savanna, IL).

Birds (59 species): Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Wood Duck, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Wild Turkey, Pied-billed Grebe, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, American Robin, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– Chris Edwards



Meeting, March 24. Karen announced that we are partnering with Cedar Rapids Audubon to show the movie *Ghost Bird*, about the rediscovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. This event is a fundraiser for the UI Museum of Natural History's Laysan Island Cyclorama, which is in need of restoration as it nears its one-

hundredth anniversary. Contact Karen if you would like a flyer to post or advance tickets to sell to friends and co-workers (or complete strangers). We hope to have a big turnout for this May 1st event.

Karen discussed our preliminary planning efforts to host the 2012 Iowa Ornithologists' Union Spring Meeting. She discussed the difficulties of hosting a meeting and finding quality speakers with a very limited budget. Our efforts in this regard will be greatly helped by a generous \$1,000 donation from Jim Durbin and Cedar Rapids Audubon. Our thanks to the members of Cedar Rapids Audubon for partnering with us on this project and providing a contribution far in excess of what our club could raise on its own. This will help us host a terrific meeting.

After the announcements, Billy Reiter-Marolf, Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas Coordinator, gave an update on the BBA project. This will be the fourth year of the planned five-year project. In the first three years, 5,140 volunteer hours were logged and all 791 blocks were visited, but only 41 blocks (5%) are considered complete, with at least 20 hours of observation and visits to all nine square miles in the blocks. In the first BBA project 25 years ago, 70% of all blocks were completed, so obviously there is still much more work to be done in the next two years. There are currently no plans to extend the project beyond five years.

A primary focus this year is working on the many blocks which have under 5 hours of coverage, which are marked with red pins on the map on the BBA web site (bba.iowabirds.org). Clicking on a pin will show how many hours have been completed in that block. There are many opportunities to work on blocks in Johnson and adjacent counties. In Johnson County, only 2 of 13 blocks are complete; in Linn County, 0 of 13 are complete; in Cedar County, 0 of 7 are complete, in Muscatine County, 1 of 10 are complete; in Washington County, 0 of 7 are complete; and in Iowa

County, 0 of 9 are complete. Even in completed blocks, coverage can be improved by upgrading species nesting status from “possible” or “probable” to “confirmed”.

We are planning several BBA field trips this summer. Billy is also coordinating four BBA Blockbusting weekends in June and July, one in each quadrant of the state. Check the schedule for these events. In addition, individuals can work on blocks on their own at any time during the breeding season. So let’s get out there and see how many of those pins we can change from red to green.

Our second speaker was Mike Coffey of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, from the Illinois and Iowa Ecological Services Field Office in Moline. Mike was part of a wildlife recovery team along the Gulf Coast in Louisiana following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010. His team worked to locate and capture oiled birds so they could be brought in to be cleaned. When a bird gets oil on its feathers, it loses the ability to regulate its body temperature. Oiled birds preen excessively, ingest the oil, and die within days. However, birds that are captured, cleaned, and released have a very high probability of survival.

In all, over 8000 birds were captured, cleaned, and released. The majority were Brown Pelicans, but many other species were captured as well. Some species were easier to capture than others – Brown Pelicans are fairly docile, but American White Pelicans are more aggressive. The birds along beaches were the easiest to locate and capture, whereas the birds in coastal marshes and in the open ocean were much more difficult to locate and capture, so many thousands of them undoubtedly perished without being detected.

The cleaning process is fairly straightforward – small teams use Dawn dishwashing soap and toothbrushes to remove the oil. After cleaning, all the birds were transported by plane and

released on the east coast of Florida, to prevent them from getting back into the oil.

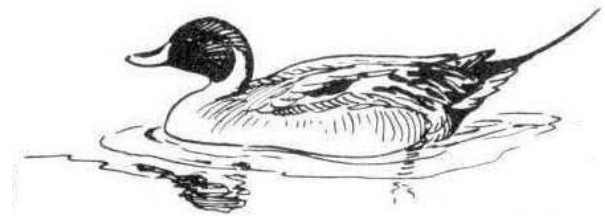
The long-term effects of the oil spill are still largely unknown, especially on marine life. Efforts are still underway to clean contaminated coastal marshes, and the extent of the remaining oil on the sea floor and its effects are still being studied.

During his time in Louisiana, Mike was impressed not only by the beauty of the natural landscape and the wildlife, but also by the resiliency and hospitality of the local residents.

Thanks Mike for a very interesting, informative, and at times sobering, talk.

Attendees: Mark Brown, Chris Caster, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Jonni Ellsworth, John Erickson, Linda Fisher, Jim and Karole Fuller, Bruce Gardner, Therese Guedon, Rick Hollis, Diana Horton, Ken Hunt, Dave Jamieson, Dave Kyllingstad, Khristen Lawton, Jason McCurdy, Viana Rockel, Linda Rudolph, Jim and Sharon Scheib, Bill Scheible.

– Chris Edwards



April 3, Cone Marsh. This may have been the windiest day I have ever seen at Cone Marsh, and the wind interfered with the birding. I had grit in my eyes a number times, and well before returning home, realized that my hands felt gritty. The day was also rather dark at times. Together the wind and darkness made for pretty poor viewing. Many ducks had clearly moved through. We saw two active Great-horned Owls nests, one in Lone Tree, and one at Cone Marsh in what was possibly an old Red-tailed Hawk nest. We also saw a Mourning Dove sitting on a nest. Although this was billed as a beginner’s

trip, a good number of regulars showed up and deserve a great deal of thanks.

Birds (53 species): Snow Goose, Ross’s Goose, Canada Goose, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Coot, American Golden-Plover, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Wilson’s Snipe, Bonaparte’s Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Loggerhead Shrike, American Crow, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, American Robin, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, meadowlark sp., Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

Participants: Jess Alexander, Jerry Denning, Bob and Dara Dick, Drew and Judy Dillman, Karen Disbrow, Lynne Doxie, Chris and Anne Edwards, Jonni Ellsworth, Linda Fisher, Bruce Gardner, Therese Guedon, Peter Hansen, Rick Hollis (leader), Ken Hunt, James Huntington, Diana Pesek, Gerry Peterson, Ben Rowald, Jean Walker, Tom Wells, Ben West.

– Rick Hollis

Bluebird and Purple Martin Monitors Needed

The Johnson County Songbird Project is seeking people who would like to help monitor bluebird trails and Purple Martin colonies in the Iowa City/Coralville area. Monitoring involves making regular visits to the trail or colony, observing and recording nesting behavior and results. Some trails can be done by bicycle. Regular weekly visits usually continue from mid-April through mid-August (and subs can do it when you’re on vacation). It’s a fun way to get outside, get some exercise and help these beautiful and valuable birds. For more information call Jim Walters at (319) 466-1134 or email jcmwalt@infionline.net.

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. Make checks payable to “Eastern Iowa Birdwatch”. Members receive a 10% discount on bird seed at Birds Eye View, 410 First Ave. in Coralville’s Riverview Square.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____ Amount Enclosed _____

Check here for e-mail subscription only

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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