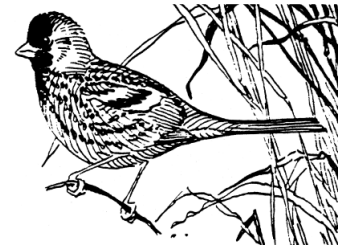

Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 32 Number 2

September 2012

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.

September 9, Sunday, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Pelican Festival at Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area, near the DNR Headquarters, 2564 Amana Rd. NW (west of Highway 965 on the north side of HWMA). Karen Disbrow, 430-0315.

September 15, Saturday, 8 a.m. Hickory Hill Park for fall migrants including Broad-winged Hawks and possibly the elusive Black-throated Blue Warbler. Chris Caster, 339-8343.

September 19, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Conservation Education Center. Rick Hollis, 665-3141. See page 17 for more information.

September 20, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. "Explore Cihra Fen, the Newest Johnson County Conservation Board Property," by Harry Graves, Johnson County Conservation Director.

October 3, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Conservation Education Center. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

October 6, Saturday, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Hawk Watch at Stainbrook Preserve, located along Mehaffey Bridge Road just north of Sugar Bottom Recreation Area, about three miles north of North Liberty. Bring a lawn chair and join us on the hill to watch for migrating raptors. Rick Hollis, 665-3141 or Chris Edwards, 430-4732.

October 14, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Cedar County locations for sparrows, late warblers, and other migrants. Jason Paulios, 331-6115.

October 17, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Conservation Education Center. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

October 18, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting at the Coralville Library. Jim Durbin of Cedar Rapids Audubon Society will present "The Moths of Iowa".

November 7, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Conservation Education Center. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

November 11, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area and other Linn County sites for waterfowl, loons, grebes, and other migrants. Sharon Somers, 626-4079.

November 15, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. Mark Brown of the Iowa City Bird Club will present "Birding Kauai, The Garden Isle of the Hawaiian Islands."

Continued on next page →

November 21, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Conservation Education Center. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

December 5, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Conservation Education Center. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

December 16, Sunday, Iowa City Christmas Bird Count. Watch for details in the next newsletter.

Other Dates of Note

September 22, Saturday, 8:30 a.m.–Noon. Ciha Fen Dedication, 5656 145th Street NE, including presentations and guided tours. Please contact Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register. For more information visit http://www.johnson-county.com/dept_conservation.aspx?id=11579.

September 22, Saturday. Iowa Young Birders Field Trip to Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge near Prairie City. For more information and to register for this and other Iowa Young Birders trips listed below, visit <http://www.iowayoungbirders.org/>.

October 20, Saturday. Iowa Young Birders Field Trip to Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area.

November 10, Saturday. Iowa Young Birders Field Trip to Southwest Iowa.

From Our President Karen Disbrow

What a summer we have had, with the worst heat and drought in many years! After an extremely busy spring and summer for the Iowa City Bird Club, with hosting the Iowa Ornithologists' Union Spring Meeting and participating in the final year of Iowa's Breeding Bird Atlas project, the fall may seem very slow. I have not scheduled as many outings, particularly late in the season. In September we again have the Pelican Festival (with a silent auction as a new addition this year), and the Ciha Fen Dedication. Rick Hollis is starting mid-week bird walks at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park, typically on the first and third Wednesdays of each month.

Regarding the Spring IOU Meeting – what can I say except “You guys and gals rock!” I am so proud of the awesome job we did hosting the meeting. I especially want to thank the organizing committee: Bruce Gardner, Chris Edwards, Chris Caster, Rick Hollis, Jim Fuller, Ed Allgood, and Nancy Lynch. The field trip

leaders, Carl Bendorf, Chris Caster, Chris Edwards, Rick Hollis, James Huntington, Mark Madsen, Jason Paulios, and Diana Pesek, did a fantastic job. And a big “Thank you!” to everyone else who came to help setup, cleanup, and teardown (I did not write down names, so I will not try to list everyone).

I also want to thank our sponsors for the meeting: Cedar Rapids Audubon Society, UI Museum of Natural History, and the Johnson County Conservation Board. The staff at the Johnson County Fairgrounds were great to work with on this event. Door prizes were generously donated by Old Bird of Ithaca, NY; UI Press; UI Museum of Natural History; Office Depot; University Camera; Prairie Lights Bookstore; Christopher Brochu; and authors Tom Kent, Ty Smedes, and Robert and Linda Scarth. I believe this was the most door prizes I have ever seen at an IOU; thank you for all your generous support which highlighted what great communities Iowa City and Coralville are to live in and visit.

Now let's all relax and enjoy the fall season.

Good Birding,
Karen

2012 Johnson County Spring Count

Chris Caster

The Spring Count was held on the 12th of May and it was a great day to be out. The early morning temperature was 58 and the afternoon high was 73. Skies were mostly clear and a mild north wind helped keep us cool. We had a tough time fielding a crew this year and only four of us made it to lunch at the Coralville Hy-Vee. However, late returns from Jim Scheib, who managed to get out despite his birthday party, and Daryl Ropp and his Amish birders helped. The species total was 151. Water birds in general were difficult to find as most migrants had already moved through. Nine species of waterfowl and fourteen species of shorebirds were found. Twenty-four warbler species was really good, despite missing on five that have bred here recently – Cerulean, Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky, Hooded, and Yellow-breasted Chat. Go figure.

Thanks to the early migration we managed a couple of species not seen before on the Spring Count. Chris Edwards found an Alder Flycatcher in the willows at Twin View Heights while looking for shorebirds. Jason Paulios and McCurdy found an Olive-sided Flycatcher at Squire Point and there was another at the Gun Club Ponds. Acadian Flycatchers had only been reported once previously and they were in two locations on this count, also at Squire Point and at Alpine Ave. near Grabin Rd. Also new to the count were five juvenile Trumpeter Swans I discovered along Swan Lake Rd. in the very western portion of Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area (HWMA). Another good bird was the Sandhill Crane reported from Sycamore Bottoms by Daryl Ropp. And most interesting to me personally was the adult Black-crowned Night Heron that flew over my truck outside Coral Ridge Mall at 4 a.m. while I searched for nighthawks.

There were plenty of exciting birds to go around though. A Common Loon was on Lake Macbride. Shorebird habitat was at Round Pond and Twin View Heights and similar species were found both places. Round Pond had the Stilt and White-rumped Sandpipers, and over 200 Dunlins. A woodcock was displaying at dawn along Grabin Rd. near the Iowa County line. White-eyed Vireos were along Grabin Rd. and at Lake Macbride. Bell's Vireos were at three locations at HWMA.

Veeries were at Hanging Rock Woods, Hickory Hill Park, and Macbride Nature-Recreation Area. Prothonotary Warblers were at Hickory Hill Park, the Gun Club Ponds, and two locations in western HWMA. Cape May Warblers were at the Gun Club Ponds and Hickory Hill Park. Two Northern Mockingbirds were at the pasture along 500th Street and the Muscatine County line. Eurasian Collared-Doves were in Solon. Western Meadowlarks and a Vesper Sparrow were at the Ropp Farm north of Kalona. Eurasian Tree Sparrows were at Linda Fisher's residence in Coralville.

In addition to the warblers already mentioned, this year's birds-that-got-away included Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, American Bittern, Great Egret, Sora, Wilson's Phalarope, Forster's and Black Terns, Common Nighthawk, Whip-poor-will, and Orange-crowned Warbler.

Thanks to everyone who participated. Hope to have more of you next year.

Participants: Kyle Belcher, Chris Caster, Bob Dick, Chris Edwards, Linda Fisher, Mark Madsen, Jason McCurdy, Jason Paulios, Diana Pesek, Daryl Ropp, Jim Scheib.

SPECIES LIST

Canada Goose	167	Hairy Woodpecker	5	Yellow Warbler	21
Trumpeter Swan	5	Northern Flicker	6	Chestnut-sided Warbler	17
Wood Duck	16	Pileated Woodpecker	3	Magnolia Warbler	10
Mallard	122	Olive-sided Flycatcher	2	Cape May Warbler	3
Blue-winged Teal	25	Easter Wood-Pewee	20	Yellow-rumped Warbler	5
Northern Shoveler	12	Acadian Flycatcher	3	Black-throated Green Warbler	4
Redhead	2	Alder Flycatcher	1	Blackburnian Warbler	6
Lesser Scaup	4	Willow Flycatcher	2	Yellow-throated Warbler	2
Hooded Merganser	11	Least Flycatcher	4	Palm Warbler	5
Ring-necked Pheasant	23	<i>Empidonax</i> sp.	1	Bay-breasted Warbler	1
Wild Turkey	6	Eastern Phoebe	9	Blackpoll Warbler	6
Common Loon	1	Great Crested Flycatcher	25	Black-and-white Warbler	2
American White Pelican	70	Eastern Kingbird	30	American Redstart	82
Great Blue Heron	11	White-eyed Vireo	6	Prothonotary Warbler	5
Green Heron	6	Bell's Vireo	5	Ovenbird	22
Black-crowned Night Heron	1	Yellow-throated Vireo	26	Northern Waterthrush	11
Turkey Vulture	160	Blue-headed Vireo	1	Mourning Warbler	1
Osprey	1	Warbling Vireo	34	Common Yellowthroat	139
Bald Eagle	5	Red-eyed Vireo	32	Wilson's Warbler	4
Cooper's Hawk	1	Blue Jay	36	Scarlet Tanager	14
<i>Accipiter</i> sp.	1	American Crow	47	Eastern Towhee	9
Red-tailed Hawk	8	Horned Lark	13	Chipping Sparrow	38
American Kestrel	4	Purple Martin	78	Field Sparrow	18
American Coot	25	Tree Swallow	69	Vesper Sparrow	1
Sandhill Crane	1	N. Rough-winged Swallow	1	Lark Sparrow	10
American Golden Plover	7	Bank Swallow	1	Savannah Sparrow	2
Semipalmated Plover	153	Cliff Swallow	125	Grasshopper Sparrow	4
Killdeer	36	Barn Swallow	95	Song Sparrow	41
Greater Yellowlegs	1	Black-capped Chickadee	54	Swamp Sparrow	1
Lesser Yellowlegs	60	Tufted Titmouse	17	White-throated Sparrow	3
Spotted Sandpiper	10	White-breasted Nuthatch	20	White-crowned Sparrow	1
Semipalmated Sandpiper	70	Carolina Wren	2	Northern Cardinal	104
Least Sandpiper	350	House Wren	97	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	44
White-rumped Sandpiper	8	Sedge Wren	1	Indigo Bunting	79
Pectoral Sandpiper	21	Marsh Wren	1	Dickcissel	11
Dunlin	250	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1	Bobolink	3
Stilt Sandpiper	2	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	25	Red-winged Blackbird	402
Short-billed Dowitcher	55	Eastern Bluebird	19	Eastern Meadowlark	28
American Woodcock	1	Veery	3	Western Meadowlark	4
Ring-billed Gull	3	Gray-cheeked Thrush	2	Meadowlark sp.	9
Caspian Tern	3	Swainson's Thrush	5	Common Grackle	87
Rock Pigeon	59	Wood Thrush	10	Brown-headed Cowbird	47
Eurasian Collared-Dove	3	American Robin	300	Orchard Oriole	5
Mourning Dove	65	Gray Catbird	145	Baltimore Oriole	109
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	Northern Mockingbird	2	House Finch	13
Great Horned Owl	1	Brown Thrasher	22	American Goldfinch	128
Barred Owl	2	European Starling	90	House Sparrow	80
Chimney Swift	32	Cedar Waxwing	9	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	12
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	11	Blue-winged Warbler	4		
Belted Kingfisher	2	Golden-winged Warbler	3	TOTAL SPECIES	151
Red-headed Woodpecker	15	Tennessee Warbler	69	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	5,213
Red-bellied Woodpecker	29	Nashville Warbler	5		
Downy Woodpecker	27	Northern Parula	9		

Iowa Ornithologists' Union Spring Meeting

Tom Schilke, IOU Vice President

The Spring Meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union was hosted in Iowa City on May 18-20, 2012 by the Iowa City Bird Club. This article first appeared in the Summer 2012 issue of IOU News and is reprinted here with permission. For more information about the IOU, visit www.iowabirds.org.

Friday Evening Social

Registration opened at 5:00 p.m. Friday in the Hageboeck Hall of Birds in the University of Iowa Museum of Natural History. Over 1,000 recently restored mounted birds and bird exhibits provided the perfect venue for a large group of registrants as they munched on a fine assortment of snacks, visited, and wandered through the exhibits. Many thanks to John Logsdon Jr. and the museum staff for aiding the Iowa City Bird Club in making this event happen. An overflow crowd gathered to hear Tom Kent's historical talk, "The Annotated History of Birds Prior to 1900". Presented in a humorous multiple-choice quiz show format, Tom conned expert birders Jim Fuller and Carl Bendorf into being contestants. Everyone was a winner in this quiz show as we discovered much about early Iowa birding history in a fun way.

Saturday Morning Field Trips

After hearty morning breakfasts at Montgomery Hall on the Johnson County Fairgrounds, field trips dispensed in all directions to well known birding sites around Iowa City. Thanks to Chris Edwards for arranging the field trips. Birders reported that Hickory Hill Park lived up to its reputation as a hotspot for warblers. A Hooded Warbler was so cooperative one would believe it had been planted by the bird club. Hawkeye Wildlife Area always shows promise for a wide variety of birds. High water and windy conditions toughened the chances at finding good numbers of shorebirds. Nevertheless, a good mix of bird species was found in this large area. The Lake Macbride field trippers discovered a Connecticut Warbler right next to the parking lot.

A good number of birders followed Alvaro Jaramillo (our guest speaker for the weekend) and Carl Bendorf to the Amana Colonies for some upland birding. Being from California, Alvaro doesn't get to see some of our grassland species very often, so eyeballing Dickcissels and Bobolinks up close was even more of a pleasure for him than it was for us. This was his first trip to Iowa, but his expansive knowledge of birds and the natural world made it seem as though he had lived here and known us all his life. Birders pointed with extended arms at a Scarlet Tanager perched in full sun. Veeries were singing in the distance, and a Kentucky Warbler circled as it sang on territory. American Redstarts were commonplace. Alvaro pointed out that redstarts, with their wide mouths, stiff nasal bristles, and fly-catching feeding behavior, have evolved more into a flycatcher than a warbler.

No matter what group you bird with at an IOU meeting, tidbits of birding knowledge circulate amongst the birders. There is something for everyone on field trips. Lunch on Saturday was in the field. Very strong winds had us wishing we had more hands to eat with to keep our fine lunches (from Mickey's Catering) from blowing away.

Saturday Afternoon Sessions

A panel discussion, "Working With Beginners," got the afternoon off to a good start. Panelists Rick Hollis, Carl Bendorf, Lee Schoenewe and Alvaro Jaramillo first shared their diverse beginnings in becoming active birders. The memory of someone with a spark of passion for birds was a common

thread in the discussion of kindling (or rekindling) an interest in birding. It is important to pass along the enthusiasm we have for birds and to find ways to kindle that spark of passion in others, especially with the very young. After all, birds are a gateway to our natural resources. Thanks to Rick Hollis for organizing this discussion.

Behind Alvaro's pleasant personality is a real bird ID expert, with blackbirds and orioles being among his favorite birds. His presentation on the New World blackbird-oriole family was entertaining and fascinating. As he took us through the species in these families and their relationships, it was as though we were traveling the Americas and enjoying the birds right along with him. He showed comparisons of orioles with grackles, and blackbirds with meadowlarks. One couldn't help but come away with a better appreciation for the less spectacular birds of these families.

Ron Windingstad, from Minnesota Audubon, has taken his extensive knowledge about Chimney Swifts and put it into action. After listening to his presentation on this bird and its loss of nesting places, one cannot help but look at chimneys with a whole new perspective. Chimneys are roost and nesting sites for the swifts. A nesting pair will exclude other pairs from nesting in the same chimney, but they will allow other swifts to share the chimney for a roost site. With the reduction of chimneys usable by the swifts, Ron has been successful in preserving existing chimneys and in the building of towers suitable for nesting and roosting Chimney Swifts. If you didn't get plans for towers and other swift information at the meeting, they are available at mn.audubon.org.

Shane Patterson, the new BBA coordinator, gave a concise presentation comparing data received so far with results of the first BBA in 1985-1990. As we enter the fifth and final year of recording the data for the project, Shane thanked us for the excellent work done so far and reminded us that a lot of work remains to be completed. Data on nesting owls, for example, is lacking so far. Is it because there are fewer owls (screech-owls in particular), or is a better effort needed to locate them? At any rate, all time in the field doing BBA work is much appreciated and needed.

Carl Bendorf presented information on a new venture for getting kids involved in birding. "Iowa Young Birders" has a website (under the same name) and has begun work setting up field trips and informing kids and the general public about this birding organization for kids. The IOU has awarded Iowa Young Birders with a \$1500 grant for the purchase of optics for the group.

Good news during the IOU general business meeting! A record 32 first-time attendees to an IOU meeting were recognized. Tom Kent graciously arranged to autograph copies of the book *Birds In Iowa* awarded to our first-timers. Tom and Jim Dinsmore co-authored the book.

The popular Silent Auction was a success again. Several tables of books were sold to the highest bidders, raising over \$330 for the IOU. Thanks to John Cecil for organizing this. Clean off your bookshelves for the next silent auction. As the late George Carlin once quipped, "You need to get rid of your stuff so you can buy more stuff." During the weekend a splendid selection of over 30 door prizes, collected by the Iowa City Bird Club, were awarded to lucky winners. Somehow IOU President Paul Roisen's name was drawn repeatedly – what are the chances? Hmmm.

Prior to the banquet, special arrangements were made by Karen Disbrow to have a group photo professionally taken of the spring meeting attendees. The photo of 71 of our smiling attendees will be viewed as being historic in years to come. Thanks to the Iowa City Bird Club for sponsoring this and to the photographer Mark Tade. The photograph is posted on the IOU Flickr page.

Saturday Evening Banquet

Following a tasty meal provided by Mickey's Catering, the always smiling, very pleasant, and happy-to-be-in-Iowa-birding-with-us Alvaro Jaramillo presented "Birding Outside the Box. How Our Brain Identifies Birds." Alvaro equated how our brain functions with how we identify birds. Recognizing birds and how we recognize faces use the same part of the brain, he said. Objects and places are recognized in different parts of the brain. Speed reading parallels with birding. Because of our experience, our brain is able to fill in the information needed. As an example, he flashed a picture of a bird in a micro-second across the screen. In that instant, most of us recognized the bird as a Rock Pigeon. To be good at birding (like facial recognition) takes experience. To bird like a pro, it takes 10,000 hours of birding, or 3 hours a day for 10 years.

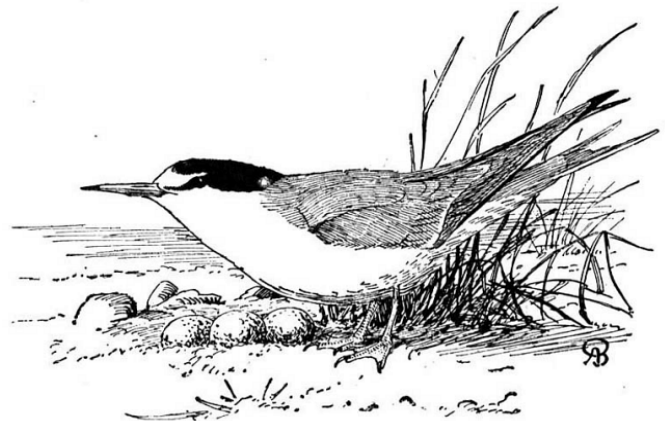
Alvaro reminds us to have a good time when birding and not to lose our appreciation for the common birds. "You can always learn something from even the most common birds," he pointed out. Find people you enjoy birding with and go with them. Know who you are as a birder. Are you adventurous, type A, competitive, or just love watching birds? Use context to help you with your identification. The landscape, smells, and other birds nearby will help with your memory. After getting to know Alvaro during his short visit to Iowa, I think he is one we would all like to have as a birding companion.

Sunday Morning Field Trips

On Sunday, the Lake Macbride group led by Alvaro and Carl enjoyed nice looks at White-eyed Vireos along "Frigatebird" Trail. A Common Loon was on the lake and onlookers had a good view of a Red-headed Woodpecker excavating a nest hole in a tree. Birds that are sometimes taken for granted sometimes give the viewer a whole new birding experience.

Kent Park has a great trail system for birding that winds through all sorts of habitats. Bell's Vireo, Bobolink, Cerulean Warbler and Orchard Oriole highlighted the morning trip led by Rick Hollis. A fine nature center in the park (with well-stocked bird feeders) was made comfortably available to us by director Harry Graves and naturalist Brad Friedhof of Johnson County Conservation as a place to have Sunday lunch and hold our final compilation. After the last bird was checked off (fittingly, a Eurasian Tree Sparrow) the grand total species count for the weekend was 148, of which 22 were warblers.

Because of the efforts of Karen Disbrow and the Iowa City Bird Club this meeting was much like a birding festival. This wrap-up only begins to touch on all the field trip sightings, educational happenings, and fun times the 126 attendees experienced during the weekend. Special thanks to Karen Disbrow and Bruce Gardner for their leadership and behind the scenes work in making this special and historic meeting one to remember.



SPECIES LIST

Snow Goose	Chimney Swift	Yellow Warbler
Canada Goose	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Trumpeter Swan	Belted Kingfisher	Magnolia Warbler
Wood Duck	Red-headed Woodpecker	Black-throated Green Warbler
Mallard	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Blackburnian Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Downy Woodpecker	Yellow-throated Warbler
Northern Shoveler	Hairy Woodpecker	Blackpoll Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Northern Flicker	Cerulean Warbler
Ring-necked Pheasant	Pileated Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler
Wild Turkey	Olive-sided Flycatcher	American Redstart
Common Loon	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Prothonotary Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Acadian Flycatcher	Ovenbird
American White Pelican	Alder Flycatcher	Louisiana Waterthrush
Double-crested Cormorant	Willow Flycatcher	Kentucky Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Least Flycatcher	Connecticut Warbler
Great Egret	Eastern Phoebe	Mourning Warbler
Green Heron	Great Crested Flycatcher	Common Yellowthroat
Turkey Vulture	Eastern Kingbird	Hooded Warbler
Osprey	White-eyed Vireo	Wilson's warbler
Bald Eagle	Bell's Vireo	Canada Warbler
Cooper's Hawk	Yellow-throated Vireo	Summer Tanager
Broad-winged Hawk	Warbling Vireo	Scarlet Tanager
Red-tailed Hawk	Red-eyed Vireo	Eastern Towhee
American Kestrel	Blue Jay	Chipping Sparrow
American Coot	American Crow	Field Sparrow
Black-bellied Plover	Horned Lark	Lark Sparrow
Semi-palmated Plover	Purple Martin	Savannah Sparrow
Killdeer	Tree Swallow	Grasshopper Sparrow
American Avocet	N. Rough-winged Swallow	Henslow's Sparrow
Yellowlegs species	Bank Swallow	Song Sparrow
Spotted Sandpiper	Cliff Swallow	Northern Cardinal
Godwit species	Barn Swallow	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Black-capped Chickadee	Blue Grosbeak
Least Sandpiper	Tufted Titmouse	Indigo Bunting
White-rumped Sandpiper	White-breasted Nuthatch	Dickcissel
Pectoral Sandpiper	Carolina Wren	Bobolink
Dunlin	House Wren	Red-winged blackbird
Short-billed Dowitcher	Sedge Wren	Eastern Meadowlark
Franklin's Gull	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Western Meadowlark
Caspian Tern	Eastern Bluebird	Brewer's Blackbird
Forster's Tern	Veery	Common Grackle
Rock Pigeon	Swainson's Thrush	Brown-headed Cowbird
Eurasian Collared Dove	Wood Thrush	Orchard Oriole
Mourning Dove	American Robin	Baltimore Oriole
Black-billed Cuckoo	Gray Catbird	House Finch
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Brown Thrasher	American Goldfinch
Eastern Screech-Owl	European Starling	House Sparrow
Great Horned Owl	Cedar Waxwing	Eurasian Tree Sparrow
Barred Owl	Tennessee Warbler	
Common Nighthawk	Northern Parula	TOTAL SPECIES 148

Hickory Hill Park Warbler Walks, April 30-May 18

Jim Scheib

Day of Week	M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F	
Species / Date	30	1	2	3	4	7	8	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	Days
Blue-winged Warbler																0
Golden-winged Warbler			A	X		X	X		X							5
Tennessee Warbler				X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			9
Orange-crowned Warbler				X	X								X			3
Nashville Warbler	X	X	A	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X				11
Northern Parula				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	10
Yellow Warbler				X	X											2
Chestnut-sided Warbler				X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X				8
Magnolia Warbler				X		X	X	X	X	X					X	7
Cape May Warbler				X												1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	X	X		X												3
Black-throated Green Warbler				X				A					X			3
Blackburnian Warbler													X	X		2
Yellow-throated Warbler																0
Palm Warbler		X	A			X	X									4
Bay-breasted Warbler																0
Blackpoll Warbler				X									X	X		3
Cerulean Warbler														X		1
Black-and-white Warbler				X	X	X		X		X						5
American Redstart				X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	11
Ovenbird				X	X	X	X		X		X	X				7
Northern Waterthrush						X	X		X				X			4
Kentucky Warbler																0
Connecticut Warbler																0
Mourning Warbler									X							1
Common Yellowthroat				X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	11
Hooded Warbler											X	X	X	X	X	5
Wilson's Warbler						X	X	X			X	X		X		6
Canada Warbler															X	1

X = Found on Warbler Walk. A = Found but not on Warbler Walk.
 Other highlights: Alder Flycatcher 5/18; Olive-sided Flycatcher 5/3, 5/11;
 Philadelphia Vireo 5/8; Gray-cheeked Thrush 5/7-5/9.

Field Trip and Meeting Reports

April 19, Meeting. Linda and Robert Scarth presented “Costa Rica: Images from a Green Land,” featuring spectacular photographs from their June 2010 trip to this Central American country. To many photographers and bird watchers, Costa Rica is synonymous with hummingbirds. The Scarths, from Cedar Rapids, were among a small group of photographers who visited several locations with the aim of photographing flight behavior and portraits of wild hummingbirds. These birds enjoy the hospitality of bird feeders in gardens surrounded by wild forests. The group also visited a farm where wild, free-flying Great Green or Buffon’s Macaws (*Ara ambiguus*) and Scarlet Macaws (*Ara macao*) come to the farmer’s call. Other photo subjects included snakes, lizards and frogs. These and the other animals, plants and landscapes were included in their presentation.

Attendees: Ed and Jean Allgood, Karen Disbrow, Chris and Anne Edwards, Vic and Nola Edwards, Linda Fisher, Bruce Gardner, Peter and Katy Hansen, Rick Hollis, Don and Ruthanne Hyduke, Lauren and Doina Johnson, Dave Kyllingstad, Khristen Lawton, Mike and Ruth Lindeen, Nancy Lynch, Mark Oxley, Ben Rowold, Robert and Linda Scarth, Kai Weatherman, Mark Yuskis.

– *Karen Disbrow*

April 29, Otter Creek Marsh. Five birders were not in the least deterred by the poor weather conditions – overcast, windy, and highs only in the mid-40s with rain predicted – and ventured to Otter Creek Marsh in Tama County in hopes of finding rails, bitterns, and blackbirds. We found no bitterns but did well with the rails and blackbirds, despite the poor birding conditions.

We started on the SE side of the marsh (S Avenue) and walked the main dike to the first cross-dike, then turned south and made a loop

along the dikes back to our cars. Along the way, our sightings included Mute Swan, Snow Goose (blue), eight duck species, Peregrine Falcon, Sandhill Cranes, Virginia Rails (two heard, one seen), Soras (many heard, none seen), three shorebird species (Wilson’s Snipe, Lesser Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpiper), Yellow-headed Blackbird, and Great-tailed Grackle.

When we got back to our cars we spoke with a photographer who had been in the area all morning, and he mentioned that he had walked farther out the main dike and had come across a pocket of shorebirds near the eagles’ nest. We decided to go to the other side so we could see the new viewing platform that had been installed earlier this year, and try to walk to the shorebirds from that end. We were keeping an eye on the radar on our phones’ weather apps and watching the large area of rain headed our way, wondering if we could make it to the shorebird spot and back to the car without getting soaked.

We had not gone very far down the dike from the NW side when James Huntington called to report that he had found a pair of Black-necked Stilts at Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area. We quickly, and eagerly, changed plans and headed back to the cars and off to HWMA. James was waiting for us at the end of James Avenue, where he had the Black-necked Stilts in his scope, right near the shore. Everyone got great looks at these beautiful birds. While there James showed us two Hudsonian Godwits at a very long distance (too far for us to ID, but he had identified them earlier when they were much closer), some Dunlins at a far, but identifiable, distance, some Long-Billed Dowitchers, plus the usual Pectoral Sandpipers and yellowlegs.

We managed to get all of this in just before the rain came in for the afternoon. Fun trip with a couple of life birds for some of the participants!

Participants: Jerry Denning, John Erickson, Diana Pesek (leader), Ben Rowold, Sharon Somers.

Birds (41 species): Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Ring-necked Pheasant, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Virginia Rail, Sora, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, Black-necked Stilt, Spotted Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Hudsonian Godwit, Pectoral Sandpiper, Dunlin, Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, American Robin, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Great-tailed Grackle, American Goldfinch.

– Diana Pesek

May 6, Hickory Hill Park. The day started overcast with some sun, a temperature of 63°, and 90 % humidity. A storm front from the west moved in as the morning wore on. I sat out the actual walk and sat in the pavilion, where I was entertained by an Eastern Phoebe trying to sit on a nest and the Barn Swallows that did not want the phoebe as a near neighbor. Several excellent birders were there to take the leadership role for the beginning birders. We were there in the park from 8 a.m. until 11 a.m. when threatening weather made us call it a day.

Dan Casidy, Omaha Zoo Curator, was also in the park and found Henslow's Sparrows in the prairie. Rick Hollis, who maintains the Hickory Hill Park bird checklist, believes this was the first sighting of this species in the park. Thanks to the Friends of Hickory Hill Park for their work in restoring portions of the park to prairie habitat.

Participants: Jess Alexander, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow (leader), Bruce Gardner, Wendelin Guenther, James Huntington, Pat Keiffer, Li-Hsien Lin, Mark Madsen, Linda

Quinn, Tom and Carol Rosenberger, Tim, Elliot and Kristine Stalter.

Birds (28 species): Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Barn Swallow, Tufted Titmouse, Eastern Bluebird, Gray Catbird, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, Black-throated Green Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Field Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Orchard Oriole, American Goldfinch.

– Karen Disbrow

June 9, BBA Trip to Clemmons Creek Wildlife Area. Clemmons Creek is a diverse 290-acre county-owned area just west of the City of Washington. We parked along Kiwi Avenue and started our survey in the western portion of the area, which is a patchwork of prairie, shrubland, and wildlife food plots. Almost immediately we heard a Henslow's Sparrow in the grassland, and a Willow Flycatcher and Bell's Vireo in the shrubs. Chris Caster disappeared into the brambles and thickets in search of the Bell's Vireo, and that's the last we saw of him on this trip. The rest of us continued along the trail, and enjoyed a singing Vesper Sparrow, an adult Indigo Bunting attending to a fledgling, pairs of flickers, kingbirds, robins, catbirds, thrashers, towhees, goldfinches, and others. Near the end of our hike we briefly saw a male Orchard Oriole.

Next we drove to the southeast part of the area, and hiked a loop through the woods and past a large pond. In the woods we were surprised to find a singing male Kentucky Warbler and a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers. At the wetland, we saw a Green Heron (a life bird for one participant), a nest box occupied by Tree Swallows, and fledgling Wood Ducks.

By the time we finished our second walk it was noon. In all, we confirmed nesting for 8 species, and had probable nesting for 16 other species. On our drive back to Iowa City, we stopped at an Amish roadside stand for some fresh strawberries and other goodies, which capped off a nice outing.

Participants: Kyle and Dena Belcher, Chris Caster, Jerry Denning, Chris Edwards (leader), Bruce Gardner, Peter Hansen.

Birds (57 species): Wood Duck, Ring-necked Pheasant, Northern Bobwhite, Green Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Bell's Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, American Redstart, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Scarlet Tanager, Eastern Towhee, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– *Chris Edwards*

June 16, Indiangrass Hills. A nice turnout of eleven birders participated in the annual ICBC outing to Indiangrass Hills in Iowa County, just hours after some rain moved through the area. It was pretty much clear by the time we arrived at the parking area at 7:30 and it was already in the low 70s with pretty high humidity. A pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers that were apparently nesting in the dead trees near the parking area

was a nice start. Then the group started walking in the usual area just east of I Avenue and almost immediately came across three of our target grassland species. Several Bobolinks and Grasshopper Sparrows gave us good looks along the mowed trail, but the numbers of Henslow's Sparrows was especially impressive this year. By the time we crossed the stream we had detected at least 10 singing birds, some of which perched up and sang for us just 20 feet away! Other highlights along this trail were a vocal and territorial pair of Red-tailed Hawks and a pair of Orchard Orioles that the Fullers enjoyed while resting near the stream crossing.

We made our way back to the parking area at around 10 a.m., when some of the group decided to head out for breakfast, and some took an additional walk on the trail in the west portion of Indiangrass Hills. On the way down this trail we finally got looks at a singing Sedge Wren. It would be the only one of the outing. By 11 a.m. it was getting pretty hot and we all decided to call it a day. No Northern Mockingbirds or Loggerhead Shrikes this year, but we had some good birds among 46 total species and also an impressive 16 species of butterflies.

Participants: Mark Brown (leader), Emory Donelson, John Donelson, Jim and Karole Fuller, Cecile Gouard, Therese Guedon, Don Kruse, Nancy Lynch, Jason McCurdy, Kelly Northey.

Birds (46 species): Ring-necked Pheasant, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Warbling Vireo, Blue Jay, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Sedge Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Field Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Grasshopper

Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Northern Cardinal, Dickcissel, Indigo Bunting, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

Butterflies (16 species): Black Swallowtail, Cabbage White, Clouded Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Little Yellow, Gray Copper, Gray Hairstreak, Great Spangled Fritillary, Meadow Fritillary, Pearl Crescent, Question Mark, Common Buckeye, Northern Pearly-eye, Common Wood-Nymph, Monarch, European Skipper.

– *Mark Brown*

June 23, BBA Trip to Saulsbury Bridge Recreation Area. It was a warm, somewhat overcast day. We arrived at around 9:00 a.m. at the Saulsbury area maintained by the Muscatine County Conservation Commission, located in BBA Block 537. This area is bordered by the Cedar River and has extensive walking trails stretching back from the river with both wooded and more open habitat.

Just outside the park area we approached a pull-out area where we could park the cars and start our observing, and as we neared that area we saw a Pileated Woodpecker—possibly a pair—in flight heading into wooded cover. Next we headed out along the sandbar left by the river below a restored remnant of the old highway bridge which gives the area its name. Near the bridge we spotted a Spotted Sandpiper on a sandbar in the river among many Killdeer. Mark Madsen provided much expert assistance in locating and identifying birds based upon their songs. We kept track of the BBA criteria for indications of nesting behaviors, noting for instance a Red-eyed Vireo carrying an insect and the presence of at least seven singing male Common Yellowthroats. We got the block up to “completed” status, meaning at least 20 hours of survey work.

After we completed our work at Saulsbury, we split up and Karen and Ramona headed for another Muscatine County block along the Mississippi River, while Ben, Sharon, Gerry and I drove to the nearby Shield Prairie, in Block 542. This is a well-established open prairie area also maintained by Muscatine County. We saw several bird species there that we had not seen earlier.

Participants: Jerry Denning (leader), Karen Disbrow, Mark Madsen, Ramona McGurk, Gerry Peterson, Ben Rowold, Sharon Somers.

Birds (43 species): Wild Turkey, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Mourning Dove, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch.

– *Jerry Denning*

June 30, Rowold Farm. Five birders visited the Harry Rowold farm north of Wheatland in Clinton County, consisting of about 300 acres of restored prairie, food plots and forest on the Wapsipinicon River, situated in BBA Block 431 (Mockridge). It was hot, but we were smart and got into the timber by noon. Karen Disbrow scouted other roads in the block by car.

Highlights includes four young Ring-necked Pheasants, a Common Yellowthroat feeding a young Brown-headed Cowbird (confirming

breeding for both species), a pair of adult Red-headed Woodpeckers feeding a juvenile, an Eastern Wood-Pewee on a nest, and a White-breasted Nuthatch with a brood patch, preening and acting like a regular bird at the top of a tree, thus confusing the heck out of us.

Participants: Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Ramona McGurk, Ben Rowold (leader), Sharon Somers.

Birds (37 species): Ring-necked Pheasant, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Ruby-Throated Hummingbird, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-Capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, American Robin, Gray Catbird, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch.

– *Ben Rowold*

July 6-8, Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas Blockbusting Weekend. For the second segment of the summer Breeding Bird Atlas blockbusting series, eleven birders spread out from Kent Park to cover 28 BBA blocks in the river valleys and rolling hills of eastern Iowa. The contiguous counties encompassing the various sites visited over the weekend were Jefferson, Henry, Louisa, Muscatine, Cedar, Linn, Johnson, Washington, Iowa, Keokuk, and Mahaska.

We encountered a variety of interesting birds and nesting behavior during our travels. And although we did not venture down to the far southeast corner of the state, we still managed to find a good number of “southeastern” woodland

and shrubland songbirds, in addition to many other species.

As an illustration of the diversity over the weekend, we confirmed nesting of Great Blue Heron, Osprey, Barred Owl, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Acadian Flycatcher, Bell’s Vireo, Sedge Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Cedar Waxwing, Wood Thrush, Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler, Northern Parula, Yellow-throated Warbler, Eastern Towhee, Lark Sparrow, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, and Dickcissel. Some additional species of note (found as possible or probable nesters) were Northern Bobwhite, Red-shouldered Hawk, American Woodcock, Eastern Screech-Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue-winged Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Henslow’s Sparrow, and Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, and Chris Caster helped to organize the successful weekend of atlasing. I had high expectations for the event; the group exceeded those goals, much like Sioux City birders did for the previous blockbusting in June. Along with myself and the three local contacts, participants in this Iowa City-area activity were Jerry Denning, Rick Hollis, Linda Rudolph, John Rutenbeck, Dick Sayles, Bill Scheible, and Ben West.

The Iowa City Bird Club and Johnson County Conservation Department co-hosted the Friday evening orientation at the Conservation Education Center at Kent Park. I enjoyed interacting with the group on Friday and exploring BBA blocks in the days after. I again thank everyone who contributed.

– *Shane Patterson, Iowa BBA Coordinator*

July 15, Iowa City Butterfly Count. Our annual count, conducted as part of the North American Butterfly Association’s Fourth of July Butterfly Count program, was held on Sunday, July 15, with four participants. Areas visited included Kent Park, Hawkeye Wildlife Area, Macbride Nature-Recreation Area, and Lake

Macbride State Park. It was a very hot, sunny day, with temperatures ranging from 80-96F.

As usual, we started by walking the trails around the Kent Park Conservation Education Center. We were surprised by how few butterflies were nectaring on the prairie flowers in the area compared to other years. Next we hiked around the Valley View Prairie area at Kent Park. One of our more interesting sightings there was of a female Cloudless Sulphur, a very large lemon-yellow butterfly, flitting around a partridge pea plant. Close observation revealed that she was briefly touching her abdomen to the leaves and depositing tiny eggs. By the time we finished at Kent Park at mid-day, it was stiflingly hot. My cohorts sensibly called it a day, but I continued on through the afternoon at Hawkeye Wildlife Area and Lake Macbride.

By the end of the day, in 9 hours we had found 36 species and 837 individuals, which is comparable to the 14-year count average of 34 species and 1,013 individuals. Numbers for most species were extremely low, due to the severe drought and heat we had been experiencing. But we found record numbers of Little Yellows and Dainty Sulphurs, which combined for almost half the total butterflies, and Cloudless Sulphurs, Checkered Whites, and Common Checkered-Skippers. Excluding the whites and sulphurs, most of the butterflies we found were near ponds, either on the drying mud around the edges or on the nearby vegetation. Very few butterflies were found nectaring on flowers in the prairie areas we visited, which is unusual.

Participants: Chris Edwards (leader), Peter Hansen, Rick Hollis, Dave Kyllingstad.

Butterflies (36 species, 837 individuals): Black Swallowtail 1, Giant Swallowtail 1, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 5, Checkered White 11 (record high count), Cabbage White 33, Clouded Sulphur 93, Orange Sulphur 86, Cloudless Sulphur 16 (record high count), Little Yellow 306 (record high count), Dainty Sulphur

97 (record high count), Gray Hairstreak 1, Eastern Tailed-Blue 48, Summer Azure 6, American Snout 2, Variegated Fritillary 1, Great Spangled Fritillary 5, Meadow Fritillary 7, Pearl Crescent 11, Question Mark 1, American Lady 2, Painted Lady 3, Red Admiral 5, Common Buckeye 28, Viceroy 7, Common Wood-Nymph 2, Monarch 11, Silver-spotted Skipper 20, Common Checkered-Skipper 6 (record high count), Common Sootywing 2, Least Skipper 8, Fiery Skipper 17, Peck's Skipper 1, Northern Broken-Dash 1, Sachem 1, Delaware Skipper 1, Dun Skipper 1.

– Chris Edwards

July 28, Turkey Vulture Festival. This event, a joint venture of the Army Corp of Engineers at Coralville Dam and the Iowa City Bird Club, was designed for the kids and those young at heart. We had approximately 40 participants. Lori's Face Painting, a free event sponsored by the Corps, was extremely popular. Thanks to the Army Corps Park Rangers and volunteers for the Turkey Vulture tattoos, coloring contest, and games; the Johnson County Conservation Board for bringing the mammal skins, turtle shells and live snakes; the Johnson County Songbird Project for the informational display; and the Macbride Raptor Center for the use of the Turkey Vulture wing and feet to demonstrate the vast wing difference and weight differences in these birds. The Iowa Ornithologists' Union display and checklists were also used to show the diversity and numbers of bird species that can be seen in Iowa. The Iowa Young Birders group had two scopes manned by Carl Bendorf who showed the youngsters Turkey Vultures and songbirds. Thanks to Ramona McGurk, Sandra Boehlje, and Mary Noble for manning the club scope and helping with the displays.

– Karen Disbrow and Terry Escher

August 5, Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area. This trip actually got interesting before it had hardly begun. We had to call Sharon back to let her know that she should instead meet us at the Casey's in North Liberty, because Jerry was going to need to stop for gas. James and I

arrived at the Casey's first and were soon met by Sharon. But where was Jerry? Had he run out of gas on the way from the Hy-Vee? After a short while Sharon got a phone call from Linda to let us know that they had missed the North Liberty exit and were proceeding to Shueyville in order to turn around. When Jerry finally arrived he explained that he had been learning from Therese where he might vacation in France. So apparently talking, or even listening, while driving can be a problem for Jerry.

After gassing up, we proceeded to Swan Lake to meet with Diana, who was already birding. I decided to follow after Jerry this time. It was a good thing too. Surprise, surprise, Jerry spaced off the turn onto James Avenue. Oh, boy! Since I wasn't far behind I honked at him and he turned around at a driveway close-by. When we got to Swan Lake Jerry explained that the latest mistake had been the result of a "group decision." Nobody seemed too sure what that meant. There was some whispering going on though. Some thought that having four ladies crammed into the car with him might have been just too much of a distraction. But possibly his GPS maps need updating or he needed more vacation advice. Hard to say.

We did get to Swan Lake soon enough. There was still water in it, but it was very low and littered with dead carp everywhere. And the heads of hundreds of frogs could be seen poking up through the pond scum. There was an Osprey flying about, possibly tempted by all the obvious fish below, but unable to find anything living to dive upon. It might have gotten stuck in the mud if it did. A Turkey Vulture was also flying about, but apparently wasn't interested in the fish. There was also a large flock of pelicans soaring overhead, apparently enjoying the day, which was as nice as we've had this summer. Storms had gone through the day before and provided some badly needed rain. So this morning was cooler than what we'd recently experienced, prompting a few birders to wear jackets. And a north breeze continued to keep things cool even as the sun climbed higher.

Fortunately Swan Lake had some shorebirds, which is what we're always after on this early August outing. A Solitary Sandpiper was kept company by a number of Spotted, Least, and Pectoral Sandpipers. James gave a tutorial on these birds and would periodically quiz Jerry and Linda regarding what he had in the scope. Occasionally we would declare the presence of the various swallows flying about for Diana's benefit—apparently she was so intensely focused on shorebirds that she hadn't seen them. Lastly there was one Pied-billed Grebe that nearly went unseen as it sat motionless in the muck.

The group caravanned slowly down Swan Lake Road, keeping a close eye out for birds and Jerry, of course. We were headed for Matson Pond. I was familiar with this pond, but only this weekend discovered that it had a name. It is located on the south of the Swan Lake Road in the west of the Hawkeye WMA, just beyond where folks often camp on the riverbank, but before the creek ford. There is a small parking area that marks the location. It turns out that seldom visited Matson Pond was the best place for shorebirds in the area. Most of the other ponds had completely dried up, and the reservoir had been kept high enough to flood any mudflats along the Iowa River through Hawkeye WMA. Matson had water and 15 to 50 feet of muddy shoreline all around it—perfect for foraging shorebirds and birders needing room to walk. We found all our shorebird species there, except for Solitary. We were greeted by a group of Lesser Yellowlegs and Least Sandpipers. The Least were a mix of juveniles with their fresh reddish edged feathers and drab brownish-gray adults. Semipalmated Sandpipers were all adult birds, drab gray in their worn plumage. It was a great learning opportunity as the group had many wonderful looks for comparisons. Out in the water were many Pectoral Sandpipers. New for us was a group of nearly 30 Stilt Sandpipers with strongly barred flanks. A smattering of Semipalmated Plovers hung out with the peeps along the water's edge,

occasionally giving their ‘chu-weet’ call. Spotted Sandpipers, Killdeer and an Eastern Kingbird rounded out the experience.

It was an absolutely super day to be birding, a welcome break from what had been a decidedly oppressive summer. Thanks to James and Diana for bringing their scopes and expertise. Thanks to Jerry for driving and making our day uniquely interesting. We all expect a post-card when you visit France Jerry.

Participants: Chris Caster (leader), Jerry Denning, Cecile Gouard, Therese Guedon, James Huntington, Diana Pesek, Linda Quinn, Sharon Somers.

Birds (23 species): Canada Goose, Pied-billed Grebe, White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Tree

Swallow, Barn Swallow, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, European Starling, American Goldfinch, Indigo Bunting.

– Chris Caster

Kent Park Bird Walks

This fall, Rick Hollis and others from the Iowa City Bird Club will lead bird walks at 8 a.m. on the first and third Wednesdays of the month. We will meet at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park. We will mostly, but not always, walk around various areas of Kent Park. In bad weather we will watch the feeders from inside. If something really exciting is at Hawkeye WMA, we may go there. Birders of all skill levels are welcome, as they always are on all our field trips. Last minute cancellations will be posted to on the Johnson County Conservation Facebook page and hopefully to our web club web page.

– Rick Hollis

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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 birdseed and suet at the Ace Hardware store at 600 N. Dodge Street in Iowa City.

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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) 430-0315 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.

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