
Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 34 Number 1

April 2014

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 1, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Beginning Birder Course at Kent Park CEC: “Rare and Unusual Birds Found in Iowa” by Jim Scheib. Free to members. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register. See page 9.

April 2, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

April 6, Sunday, 8 a.m. Macbride Nature-Recreation Area. Visit the Raptor Center and bird blind, and hike the nearby trails. **Meet at the Raptor Center parking lot.** *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.* Karen Disbrow, 430-0315.

April 8, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Beginning Birder Course at Kent Park CEC: “Basics of Birding I” by Rick Hollis. Free to members. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register.

April 12, Saturday, 8 a.m. Kent Park for early spring migrants. Meet at the Kent Park CEC parking lot. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.*

April 15, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Beginning Birder Course at Kent Park CEC: “Basics of Birding II” by Rick Hollis. Free to members. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register.

April 16, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

April 17, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. Robert and Linda Scarth will present “Inside Passage: Bears, Whales, Totems & More in the Tongass and Great Bear Rain Forests”. **Meeting location is Kent Park CEC.**

April 19, Saturday, 8 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Area for migrant water birds. Wear boots for walking in wet areas, and bring a spotting scope if you have one. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.* Chris Edwards, 430-4732.

April 22, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Beginning Birder Course at Kent Park CEC: “Where to Bird in Johnson County” by Rick Hollis. Free to members. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register.

April 26, Saturday, 8 a.m. Field Trip to Trueblood Recreation Area and Waterworks Park, two Iowa City parks with great trails for woodland, prairie, and wetland species. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.*

April 28-May 23, Weekdays, 6:30 a.m. Hickory Hill Park Warbler Walks. Meet at the north parking lot at the end of Conklin Lane, off Dodge Street. Daily sightings will be posted on our web site. Co-sponsored by the Johnson County Heritage Trust.

Continued on next page →

Schedule (continued)

April 29, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Beginning Birder Course at Kent Park CEC: “Warbler Identification” by Karen Disbrow. Free to members. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register.

May 4, Sunday, 8 a.m. Hickory Hill Park. This park is a hot-spot for warblers and other spring migrants. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.* Bruce Gardner, 331-3547.

May 7, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

May 10, 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 15, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. “E-Bird: What It Is & What It Can Do For You” by Rick Hollis and Brandon Caswell.

May 17, Saturday, 7 a.m. Rowold Family Farm on the Wapsipinicon River and neighboring wetlands near Wheatland in Clinton County for spring migrants. Ben Rowold, 330-9655.

May 21, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

May 25, Sunday, 6:30 a.m. Shimek State Forest for SE Iowa specialties including Hooded, Pine, Worm-eating and Kentucky Warblers. Bring a sack lunch, and rubber boots if you have them. Chris Edwards, 430-4372.

June 4, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

June 7, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Bickett-Rate Preserve in Cedar County. View the restored Althea Sherman Chimney Swift Tower and explore the extensive woodlands and fields. Chris Edwards, 430-4732.

June 14, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Indiangrass Hills in Iowa County for grassland birds such as Henslow’s Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Sedge Wren, and Bobolink. Mark Brown, 358-8765.

June 18, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

June 21, Saturday, 8 a.m. - Noon. Turkey Vulture Festival at the Coralville Dam East Overlook, sponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, featuring exhibits, games, food, and fun. Karen Disbrow, 430-0315.

July 2, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

July 16, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

July 19, Saturday, 9 a.m. Butterfly Count sponsored by the North American Butterfly Association. We will visit Kent Park, Lake Macbride, and other areas. To participate, contact Chris Edwards at 430-4732.

July 19, Saturday, 8 p.m. Turkey Vulture Program at Sugar Bottom Campground by Karen Disbrow.

August 6, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

August 17, Sunday, 8 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Area or other local areas for shorebirds and other early fall migrants. Bring boots and a spotting scope if you have them. Chris Caster, 339-8343.

August 20, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

Other Dates of Note

April 26, Saturday, Iowa Young Birders field trip to Starr's Cave near Burlington, for birders ages 8-18 and their parents. For more information and to register, visit www.iowayoungbirders.org.

May 16-18, Friday-Sunday. Iowa Ornithologists' Union Spring Meeting in Bellevue, NE. This is a joint meeting with the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union. Visit www.iowabirds.org for more information.

May 31-June 1, Saturday-Sunday. Dedication of the Effigy Mounds-Yellow River Forest Bird Conservation Area as a Globally Important Bird Area. For a complete schedule of events, visit www.iowaaudubon.org as the date approaches. See Iowa Audubon Corner on page 7 for more information.

June 14-15, Saturday-Sunday, Iowa/Illinois Young Birder Weekend on the Mississippi River. For more information and to register, visit www.iowayoungbirders.org.

August 22-24, Friday-Sunday. Iowa Ornithologists' Union Fall Meeting in Ankeny, hosted by the Des Moines Audubon Society. Visit www.iowabirds.org for more information.

From the President's Desk Karen Disbrow

Through this long winter I have been yearning to hear the songs of returning Red-winged Blackbirds. Jason McCurdy reported the first Red-winged Blackbirds at Hawkeye Wildlife Area on February 22, but it wasn't until weeks later that they arrived en masse to take up their positions on wires and fence rows. Turkey Vultures also returned late and the first one was spotted well into March. I can't say as I blame the birds – as I write this on March 24, the Coralville Reservoir is still frozen and only portions of Cone Marsh have thawed.

We have plenty of spring and summer trips scheduled this year. The ever-popular Hickory Hill Park Warbler Walks will kick off April 28 to brighten everybody's spirits. We have an early June trip to Bickett-Rate Preserve in Cedar County where the Althea Sherman Chimney Swift Tower has been restored. Father's Day weekend is our annual trip to Indiangrass Hills in Iowa County, where the prairie birds will be in full song. And don't forget the Spring Migration County in May, our annual Butterfly Count in July, the return of shorebirds in

August, or our regular Wednesday bird walks at Kent Park. It should be a great season!

Please make sure I have your email address, or check our Facebook page, to be notified of spur-of-the-moment events or cancellations.

I would like to thank Grant Wood AEA, Leno and Cilek North, Forevergreen Garden Center, and the Johnson County Conservation Board for their continued support.

Good birding!

Membership Renewal Reminder

There's still time to renew your membership for 2014. Our annual membership dues remain \$15 per household or \$10 for students. Your mailing label shows the most recent year you have paid for. Please complete the membership renewal form on the inside back cover and send it with your check payable to "Eastern Iowa Birdwatch" to Bruce Gardner, 3055 Wapsi Ave. NE, Iowa City, IA 52240. If you have any questions about your membership status, please contact Bruce at 643-2575 or woodsidefarms@juno.com.

Tom Kent Receives Ludlow Griscom Award from American Birding Association Carl Bendorf

Iowa City Bird Club member, Tom Kent, has been recognized by the American Birding Association as a 2014 recipient of the ABA Ludlow Griscom Award for Outstanding Contributions in Regional Ornithology.

As stated on the ABA website, this award is “given to individuals who have dramatically advanced the state of ornithological knowledge for a particular region. This may be through their long-time contributions in monitoring avian status and distribution, facilitating the publication of state bird books, breeding bird atlases and significant papers on the regional natural history of birds. This may also be through the force of their personality, teaching and inspiration.”

Past recipients of this award include Roger Tory Peterson, Chandler Robbins, Kenn Kaufman, and Iowa’s own Jim Dinsmore (in 2006.) For more information on this award and the entire list of prior recipients, see <http://goo.gl/BPydCX>

Here are some highlights from Tom’s letter of nomination to the ABA (submitted by Carl Bendorf):

- During family trip to Colorado in 1942, Tom (age 8) went birding with family friends, A.M. Bailey and R.J. Niedrach (who later co-authored *Birds of Colorado*); the resulting photo of young Tom with a White-tailed Ptarmigan chick later appeared in the July 1946 issue of *National Geographic* magazine.
- In 1948 (age 14), Tom began keeping weekly bird lists (with father, renowned photographer F.W. Kent); 25 years of these records were published in 1975 by Tom and Fred as *Birding in Eastern Iowa*.
- In 1951 (age 17), Tom publishes a study of nesting Least Bitterns, the first of more than 100 articles and notes (plus countless photos) published in *Iowa Bird Life*, journal of the Iowa Ornithologists’ Union (IOU.)
- In 1979, appointed editor of the field reports section of *Iowa Bird Life*; authored/co-authored more than 30 seasonal reports over the next two decades
- 26 years of service on the Iowa Records Committee including 17 years as committee chair
- Active member of the IOU for 63 years (life member)
- Co-author of *Iowa Birds* which was the first comprehensive annotated list of Iowa birds in fifty years; published by Iowa State University Press 1984
- Editor of *Iowa Bird Life* 1986-1989
- Co-author of *Birds in Iowa* (with Jim Dinsmore), updated comprehensive annotated list of Iowa birds, published by the authors, 1996
- Author of *Annotated References to Iowa Birds Prior to 1900*, published by the author, 2012
- Compiler of the Iowa City Christmas Bird Count for many years
- In 1990, Tom completed a Big Year in Johnson County and tallied an amazing 255 species including Red-throated Loon, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, Mississippi Kite, California Gull, and Varied Thrush. Tom drove every single mile of every Johnson County road that year!

Finally, Tom has provided inspiration and encouragement to countless Iowa birders over the years via his own field birding, research, communications, and mentoring. This recognition from the ABA is well-deserved.

2013 Iowa City Christmas Bird Count

Chris Edwards and Diana Pesek

The 63rd annual Iowa City Christmas Bird Count was held Sunday, December 15. The total of 64 species was just below the ten-year average of 65, and was much lower than last year's record count of 81. Weather conditions were less favorable this year, with temperatures of 10-16° F, overcast skies, and light to moderate NW winds. Area rivers and streams were mostly frozen, the Coralville Reservoir and other bodies of water were frozen, and there was patchy snow cover.

No true rarities were found this year. Notable records included Trumpeter Swan and Eurasian Collared-Dove (third count records); Redhead (fourth count record); and Merlin (sixth count record). All of these species are being seen with increasing frequency on our count. Other unusual species included Northern Saw-whet Owl, Hermit Thrush, Snow Bunting, and meadowlark species. High counts were established or tied for Cooper's Hawk, Eurasian Collared-Dove, and Fox Sparrow. Expected species not found this year included Great Blue Heron, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, and Pine Siskin.

Waterfowl

In terms of the overall species count, the difference between an average count and an exceptional count is the number of waterfowl species seen. Last year's record count included 19 waterfowl species; this year the early freeze pushed most waterfowl out of the area, and only five species were seen. Canada Goose numbers were high for the third straight year. A pair of Trumpeter Swans was spotted resting in a field west of North Liberty. A Redhead was below the Iowa River dam in Coralville, and several individuals subsequently spent the winter there. Two Common Goldeneyes were also found on the Iowa River.

Pheasants to Raptors

Ring-neck Pheasants continue to be scarce in this area, and this year only four were found. Wild Turkey numbers were also below average for the third straight year. No Northern Bobwhites were seen; they were found nearly annually from 1951-1983, but have been seen in only five years since then. Eight raptor species were found. Cooper's Hawks are being found more frequently on the count, and the six individuals ties the record high. Historically this species was seen infrequently, began trending upwards in 1991, and has been seen annually and in increasing numbers since 2001. A Merlin was photographed below the Coralville Reservoir dam. This species was seen only once prior to 2007, but has been found in five of the last seven years. Rough-legged Hawk numbers were above average, but Red-tailed Hawk numbers were below average.

Gulls to Crows

No gulls were found this year. An Eastern Screech-Owl responded to a recording in the afternoon at a farmstead west of North Liberty. Only one Great Horned Owl and two Barred Owls were found, which is due in part to decreased owling efforts this year, but it may also be evidence that the species have not fully recovered from West Nile Virus. A Northern Saw-whet Owl was found in Hickory Hill Park for the second straight year. Two Northern Shrikes were at Hawkeye Wildlife Area. This is another species being seen with increasing regularity, and it has been found in seven straight years. Blue Jay numbers rebounded from a poor showing last year, but American Crow numbers were the lowest since 1989; it should be noted that in recent years we have not made an effort to locate the large crow roosts that gather at dusk in Iowa City.

Chickadees to Old World Sparrows

Chickadees, titmice, both nuthatches, creepers, and Carolina Wrens were all found in about average numbers. Fruit-eating birds, including Eastern Bluebirds, American Robins, and Cedar Waxwings, were found in high numbers for the second straight year. Three Hermit Thrushes, another winter frugivore, were found at Hawkeye Wildlife Area and Hickory Hill Park. Six Yellow-rumped Warblers were seen in four locations, and single Fox Sparrows were seen in three different locations; both of these species are being seen more regularly. American Tree Sparrow and White-throated Sparrow numbers were both up this year. A flock of 45 Snow Buntings was seen on the north side of Hawkeye Wildlife Area, for the third record in ten years. Two Rusty Blackbirds and six Red-winged Blackbirds were among many birds attracted to millet seed scattered on Ireland Ave. by Chris Caster prior to the count. A lone meadowlark was found in the far southwest area of the count circle. Following last year's record count of Pine Siskins, none were found this year. House Finch numbers were less than a third of last year's record high. Eurasian Tree Sparrows seem to be fairly widespread as they were found in five scattered locations.

Count Effort

This year there were 31 field observers in 11 parties. Field observers were Carl Bendorf, Mark Brown, Barry Buschelman, John Campbell, Chris Caster, Brandon Caswell, Zach Cramer, Gerald Denning, Bob Dick, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Linda Fisher, Tony Franken, Jim and Karole Fuller, Therese Guedon, Peter Hansen, Rick Hollis, Andy and Katie Long, Lucy Luxenburg, Nancy Lynch, Jamie McCoy, Jason McCurdy, Ramona McGurk, Mary Noble, Diana Pesek, Tina Roling, Linda Rudolph, Jim Scheib, and Sharon Somers. There were 11 feeder watchers in 10 locations, the same as last year. Feeder watchers were Barbara Beaumont, Linda Fisher, Janet Hollis, Bob and Jo Hoover, Nancy Johns, Barbara Kalm, Lynn Kinney, Sharon Scheib, Richard Sjolund, and Ronnye Wieland.

This year's count was organized by Diana Pesek, and the results were compiled by Chris Edwards. On the day of the count we met for lunch at the North Liberty Community Center, at which time we had 57 species. We met for an evening meal and compilation at The Brown Bottle Café in North Liberty.

Nationally, this year marked the 114th 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. The results of all counts from 1900 to the present are available online at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc, through 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

Canada Goose	4,340	Rough-legged Hawk	12	Red-bellied Woodpecker	86
Trumpeter Swan	2	American Kestrel	21	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2
Mallard	631	Merlin	1	Downy Woodpecker	122
Redhead	1	Rock Pigeon	205	Hairy Woodpecker	27
Common Goldeneye	2	Eurasian Collared-Dove	21	Northern Flicker	32
Ring-necked Pheasant	4	Mourning Dove	229	Pileated Woodpecker	1
Wild Turkey	25	Eastern Screech-Owl	1	Northern Shrike	2
Bald Eagle	65	Great Horned Owl	1	Shrike sp.	1
Northern Harrier	2	Barred Owl	2	Blue Jay	147
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	Northern Saw-whet Owl	1	American Crow	280
Cooper's Hawk	6	Belted Kingfisher	7	Horned Lark	65
Red-tailed Hawk	44	Red-headed Woodpecker	11	Black-capped Chickadee	214

Tufted Titmouse	51	American Tree Sparrow	642	Rusty Blackbird	2
Red-breasted Nuthatch	2	Fox Sparrow	3	Common Grackle	6
White-breasted Nuthatch	78	Song Sparrow	6	Purple Finch	16
Brown Creeper	2	Swamp Sparrow	1	House Finch	73
Carolina Wren	5	White-throated Sparrow	91	American Goldfinch	150
Eastern Bluebird	35	White-crowned Sparrow	5	House Sparrow	658
Hermit Thrush	3	Dark-eyed Junco	835	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	16
American Robin	229	Snow Bunting	45		
European Starling	878	Northern Cardinal	295	TOTAL SPECIES	64
Cedar Waxwing	686	Red-winged Blackbird	6	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	11,441
Yellow-rumped Warbler	6	Meadowlark sp.	1		

Iowa Audubon Corner

Karen Disbrow

The Effigy Mounds-Yellow River Forest Bird Conservation Area has been named Iowa's first Globally Important Bird Area. The designation was made possible by the research of Jon Stravers, who for seven years has been documenting the presence of large numbers of nesting Cerulean Warblers there. A dedication for this designation will be held on Saturday, May 31. For more information about the dedication, check www.iowaaudubon.org as the date approaches. In conjunction with the dedication, there will be a Mississippi River birding boat trip on Sunday, June 1, for \$20 per person. Space is limited, so if you would like to join the boat trip, please contact Karen Disbrow at 430-0315.

The Annual Pelican Festival at the Coralville Reservoir has been tentatively scheduled for September 7, and plans for another fall event are in the planning stages.

Minnesota Audubon has invited Iowa Audubon to have a representative on their Board of Directors, and Doug Harr has agreed to fill that role. Minnesota Audubon distributes the National Audubon Society funding that is allotted to Iowa. We will also be receiving funds from the Aveda Corporation through Minnesota Audubon to be used for clean water projects.

Book Announcements

The University of Iowa Press has just published *The Scientific Nomenclature of Birds in the Upper Midwest* by James Sandroek and Jean Prior. This softcover Bur Oak Guide is 192 pages and retails for \$25.00. From the publisher: "The translation and explanation of genus and species names yield markers to help us identify birds in the field as well as remember distinctive traits. They reveal insight into a bird's color, behavior, habitat, or geography. In this portable reference book, James Sandroek and Jean Prior explain the science and history behind the names of some 450 birds of the Upper Midwest states. In addition to scientific names, each entry also includes the bird's common name as well as local or regional names. Beginning and experienced birders alike will find that the book opens unexpected connections into linguistic, historical, biological, artistic, biographical, or even aesthetic realms."

The Second Edition of *The Sibley Guide to Birds* by David Allen Sibley is now available from Alfred A. Knopf. It lists for \$40 in a flex-cover binding. From the publisher: "A completely revised edition of Sibley's landmark guide, with more than 600 new paintings and 111 rare species added, new information on habitat and behavior, and more tips on finding species in the field."

Books for Birders – *Rare Birds of North America*

Jason Paulios

Rare Birds of North America. Steve N.G. Howell, Ian Lewington, and Will Russell. Princeton University Press, 2014. 428 pages. Hardcover. \$35.00. On order at the Iowa City Public Library.

As you probably gleaned from its title, *Rare Birds of North America* is a guide primarily designed for the true bird nerd. This is one for the Attu dreamers, the birder that follows Big Year bloggers. Considering the current field guide publishing world tends to focus on portable paperbacks that cover all likely North American birds, or regional accounts, I'm surprised Princeton University Press decided to print this large-format hardcover with such a specific emphasis and (due to the rate of new finds) potential for obsolescence. Regardless of their rationale, I'm so glad they made this book.

For scope the authors have defined 'rare' as "species for which, on average, only five or fewer individuals have been found annually in North America since around 1950." As with any book that strives to cover this specific yet surprisingly nuanced topic the authors have chosen to leave out certain species accounts for a variety of reasons. Some are neglected due to personal choice (such as certain borderline rare species), others for inadequate data (rare subspecies). The authors include others for very similar reasons which basically means they picked what they liked within their intended scope. In the end, they've chosen a representative sample of 262 rare species.

The thorough introduction includes details regarding what resources the authors used and helpful scenarios for when, where, and how these birds end up as vagrants in North America. Individual species accounts follow without strict taxonomic layout, instead they used larger groupings (aerial landbirds, songbirds) and origination (Old World/New World). Splitting out the areas of origination is most helpful if you're using the guide as a birder focusing on seeing all likely vagrant species in your region.

The species accounts follow this layout:

Summary - Specific records for exceptionally rare or date/regions for others.

Taxonomy – Listing identifiable subspecies if likely/helpful.

Distribution and status - Species occurrence and author comments regarding potential vagrancy rationale or techniques for finding vagrants.

Field identification - Similar species details, molt patterns, habitat, flight style, general behavior and likely heard bird songs and calls.

I found the draw for this purchase to be the species artwork, 275 stunning color illustrations by Ian Lewington. Most of the plates take up a third to one half of the page with multiple depictions. They are impeccably painted with amazing detail work and natural poses. Those who enjoy Sibley's style or especially Mullarney and Zetterstrom's work in *Birds of Europe* will want this reference guide.

Appendices include brief updates for new species that occurred after the summer of 2011, species of hypothetical occurrence, and a clear timeline of record firsts (8 new species came out of Alaska in 1977!).

If you don't know what number you're at in your life list or if your travel plans don't regularly include sewage treatment visits, then I'd recommend giving this a pass and order the new Sibley Guide or National Geographic instead. But if you're someone who's looked at the national Rare Bird Alert and thought, "it can't hurt to just see how much a ticket to Tucson costs" then this is your book. Alternatively, if you collect world field guides just to marvel at what's out there then you're going to need this simply for Lewington's gorgeous color plates.



Introduction to Birding Course March 25 – April 29, 2014 at Kent Park



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

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

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. If you have a spotting scope, you are welcome to bring it. Club members will have several spotting scopes available to share on those field trips requiring one. All field trips will depart from the North Dodge Street Hy-Vee in Iowa City unless otherwise noted; meet in the SW corner of the parking lot. For more information, call Karen Disbrow at (319) 430-0315.

Tuesday, March 25, 7 p.m. BACKYARD AND FEEDER BIRDS by James Scheib. This session will cover the common birds found in our area's backyards during the year, and what types of feeders and food to use to attract them.

Sunday, March 30, 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 1, 7 p.m. RARE AND UNUSUAL BIRDS FOUND IN IOWA by James Scheib. Information about rare and unusual birds that have been observed in Iowa, including irruptions of northern species.

Sunday, April 6, 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 8, 7 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING I by Rick Hollis. This will include field identification of birds, field guides, and equipment every birder needs, or might someday need.

Saturday, April 12, 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 15, 7 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING II by Rick Hollis. Continuation of previous session topics.

Saturday, April 19, 8 a.m. Field Trip to HAWKEYE WILDLIFE AREA near North Liberty. We expect to see ducks, geese, American White Pelicans, and other early spring migrants. Wear boots for walking in wet areas, and bring a spotting scope if you have one.

Tuesday, April 22, 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 26, 8 a.m. Field Trip to TERRY TRUEBLOOD RECREATION AREA and WATERWORKS PARK. Visit these two Iowa City parks with great trails for woodland, prairie, and wetland species.

Tuesday, April 29, 7 p.m. WARBLER IDENTIFICATION by Karen Disbrow. Warblers are among our most colorful birds. Compare and contrast similar species within this interesting and challenging group.

Sunday, May 4, 8 a.m. Field Trip to HICKORY HILL PARK. May is prime time for viewing warblers in Iowa, and this park is an eastern Iowa hot spot for viewing migrant warblers and other songbirds.

Field Trip and Meeting Reports

January 5, Bird Feeder Watch Social. Bitter cold with a wind chill well below zero was not a factor of comfort as the scheduled field trip was the annual indoor feeder watch and social hosted by Jim and Karole Fuller. Highlights for the 22 participants were the breakfast goodies and birding conversation plus 22 species of birds seen out the window, which included Carolina Wren and Red-breasted Nuthatch. Thanks to all who participated in person and those who provided those tasty goodies.

Participants: Chris Caster, Adam Ciha, Jerry Denning, John Donelson, Linda Fisher, Jim and Karole Fuller, Therese Guedon, Dave Hamilton, Peter and Katie Hansen, James Huntington, Lauren and Doina Johnson, Ellen Marie Lauricella, Ken Lowder, Nancy Lynch, Ramona McGurk, Mary Noble, Linda Quinn, Tom and Carol Rosenberger.

Birds (22 Species): Canada Goose, Bald Eagle, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, American Robin, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– Jim and Karole Fuller



January 16, Meeting. Larry Gullett, the new Johnson County Conservation Director, shared information about upcoming projects at the County's ten properties. The new bird blind at Kent Park is being constructed indoors this winter, and the sections will be assembled this spring after the concrete foundation is poured.

The short film "Backyard Birds of Quinta Mazatlan" was shown. Quinta Mazatlan is an urban oasis in McAllen, Texas. The historic hacienda, built in the 1930s, is nestled among acres of native habitat and is home to dozens of species of subtropical birds including Green Jay, Altamira Oriole, Red-crowned Parrot, and Buff-bellied Hummingbird. The grounds feature many quiet trails which wind through flowering gardens and the wild Tamaulipan Thorn Forest. The property, previously under private ownership, was purchased by the City of McAllen in 1998 and was opened to the public in 2006. It serves as the McAllen Wing of the World Birding Center.

Attendees: Karen Disbrow, Jonni Ellsworth, Linda Fisher, Bruce Gardner, Larry Gullett, Barb Haring, Rick Hollis, Nancy Lynch, Viana Rockel, Marcia Shaffer, Donna Warner.

– Karen Disbrow

February 1, Amana Turkey Walk and Feast. Cancelled due to inclement weather.

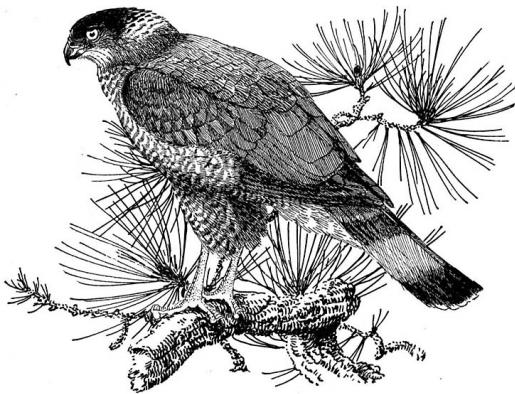
February 8, Bald Eagle Watch and Expo. Despite the very cold and snowy weather, about 100 people attended the Expo held at North Central Junior High in North Liberty. The speakers were great as usual. Ty Smedes gave a presentation about the second edition of his book *The Return of Iowa's Bald Eagles*, with more photographs and new information. Luke Hart of the Macbride Raptor Project gave an excellent program with live hawks. Mike Havlik from the Des Moines YMCA Camp brought a Barred Owl and his guitar...always a good time.

Both the Cedar County and Iowa County naturalists had tables with lots for kids to do, including snowshoes to try out. Crawdaddy Outdoors brought merchandise for kids and adults covering a wide spectrum of natural history. The Pella Wildlife Co. brought a live Little Brown Bat and shared information about the virus that is threatening our bat species across the country. Iowa Audubon, The Songbird Project, and Iowa Wildlife Federation, along with the IOU and ICBC, rounded out the displays. The Army Corps of Engineers and IDNR Nongame Wildlife Diversity both provided Bald Eagle information and posters.

We set up a viewing area for Bald Eagles at the Coralville Dam Tailwater area. Fifteen brave souls came out in the snow and cold, and eleven Bald Eagles were seen feeding and flying.

Thanks to Pat Kieffer and Lucy Luxenburg for helping at the school, and Ben Rowold and Barry Buschelman for helping at the viewing area.

– *Karen Disbrow*



February 9, Coralville WinterFest. The weather was cold but the sun was shining, so there was a good turnout for this event. This year the Army Corp's Bald Eagle and fossil displays were setup next to our booth, and our display was a stop on the passport to be stamped. I want to thank Leno & Cilek for again allowing us to setup a bird feeder display of their merchandise. Outdoors, the Iowa River was frozen and we had one Bald Eagle fly by

early in the afternoon. Even though we put out suet bells for more than a month prior to the event, we had no small birds as we usually do, probably due to the extreme cold and lack of cover. Thanks to Linda Fisher and Bruce Gardner for helping staff our display.

– *Karen Disbrow*

February 21, Meeting. During the business portion, Rick Hollis made a motion that the club pay the remaining cost, approximately \$400, of the new Fred Kent photographic display at the Conservation Education Center at Kent Park. A portion of the cost had already been funded by individual members of the club. The motion was seconded by Jerry Denning, and passed unanimously.

Ken Lowder presented a talk on his Fall 2012 trip to Madagascar. Ken was one of eight birders on a 22-day tour of the world's fourth largest island, located off the coast of southeast Africa. Madagascar split from the Indian subcontinent about 88 million years ago, allowing plants and animals to evolve in relative isolation. As a result, the island is a biodiversity hot spot. The country contains 276 bird species, and 99 of them are endemic, meaning they are found nowhere else in the world. Unfortunately the island's diverse ecosystems are threatened by its growing human population, and much of the remaining wildlife is found in preserves.

The trip began in the capital of Antananarivo or "Tana" as it is called locally. The first birding outing was to a private reserve called Anzozorobe, where the prize was a Madagascar Flufftail, a rarely seen bird which was photographed by a member of the group. One of Ken's favorite birds of the trip was seen here – the spectacular Cuckoo Roller. It is a monotypic species, meaning it is the only species within its family. Cuckoo Rollers were also encountered at the group's next stop, the Mantadia Reserve, the first of several well-preserved national parks visited. This location provided the group's introduction to the Ground Rollers, birds which are endemic to the country.

It was here that they sighted the Indri, Madagascar's largest lemur, and the Fossa, a unique cat-like predator.

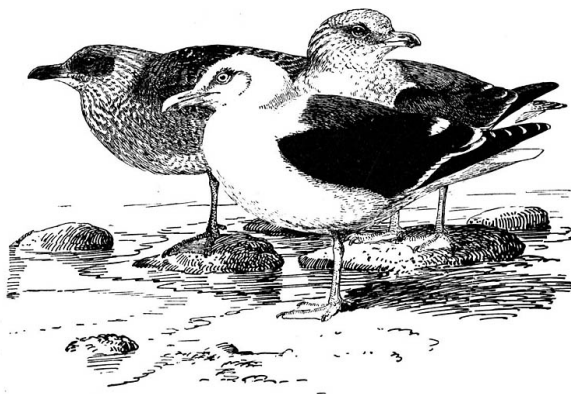
Then it was on to the private reserve of Berenty in the south of the country, where the highlights were Verraux's (or "Dancing") Sifaka, Giant Coua, Madagascar Green Pigeon, and Madagascar Paradise-Flycatcher, as well as Ring-tailed Lemurs. From there it was on to Tulear and Ifaty on the southwest coast of the island, where Red-shouldered Vanga and Sub-desert Mesites were the highlights. Vangas and Mesites are both members of bird families which are endemic to Madagascar. Then on to Ranomafana National Park, which is situated in higher-elevation rainforest habitat. Schlegel's Asity and Yellow-bellied Sunbird, both endemic species, were seen here.

The tour ended with a trip to the north part of the island to the Ampijora Forest Station. This area was very dry and hot, but more wonderful birds were seen including the Madagascar Fish Eagle and the rare Madagascar Crested Ibis.

Remarkably, during the course of the trip the group found 189 bird species, including 93 of the 99 endemics.

Attendees: Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Linda Fisher, Bruce Gardner, Peter and Katy Hansen, Rick Hollis, Lauren and Doina Johnson, Dave Kyllingstad, Kristen Lawton, Lucy Luxenburg, Mark Oxley, Diane Zumbach.

– Ken Lowder / Chris Edwards



February 23, Quad Cities. Reports from the Mississippi River leading up to this year's trip were scant. We began our outing along the river at Rapids City, Ill. There were decent numbers of diving ducks, but previously reported White-winged Scoters and Long-tailed Ducks were not seen. Although the river was ice-free, it was very cold, and the heat shimmer coming off the water made scopes useless at long distances. Nearly all the birds seen were either Common Goldeneyes or Canvasbacks. And there weren't any gulls about.

We continued south on the Illinois side to Lock and Dam 14. There we found the best birds of the day: five adult Tundra Swans were close by below the dam. Their yellow lores could be readily discerned even with binoculars. As we were leaving we got a real treat when the flock took off and flew over us heading upriver – absolutely magnificent birds. Also at L&D 14 were the first of what would be hundreds of American White Pelicans seen at different points along the river.

At the Beacon Harbor south of Campbell's Island we found a kestrel and a lone Herring Gull. The only ducks were Mallards and a lone male Hooded Merganser. A large flock of pelicans could be seen near the Alcoa plant on the Iowa side. Elsewhere along the Butterworth Parkway we added Ring-billed Gull, Common Merganser, and Lesser Scaup—but overall numbers were extremely low. I think the Rock Pigeons outnumbered the gulls.

We took the I-74 bridge to Bettendorf and got something to eat at the McDonalds. Our stop at Lock and Dam 15 was interesting because of numerous pelicans sharing the air with the eagles. They are even more impressive seen soaring together. There was one Herring Gull at L&D 15, again greatly outnumbered by the pigeons. We scanned the surrounding building many times, but no Peregrine Falcon was to be found—usually a lock on this trip. Credit Island didn't produce anything new either. We did finally locate a small flock of gulls, but all were

ring-bills. Lots of Mallards were found, but no American Black Ducks. We missed on the Pileated Woodpecker and Great Blue Heron too.

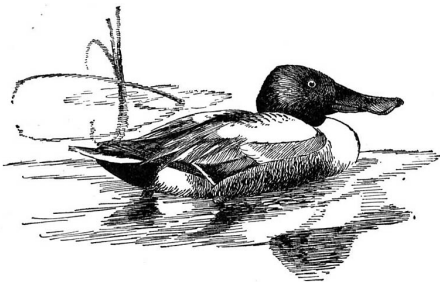
Our last stop was at Fairmount Cemetery. There were no birds but chickadees in the hemlocks this year. We did find Eurasian Tree Sparrows to be more numerous at the feeders above the cemetery. Some of our more interesting birds were seen outside the Quad Cities. We heard Carolina Wren singing at the North Dodge Hy-Vee, and shrike, Rough-legged Hawk, and pheasant were seen on the drive over.

Thanks greatly to Jerry and Linda for driving. See you next year.

Participants: Mark Brown, Chris Caster (leader), Jerry Denning, Ben Niedbalski, Linda Rudolph, Sharon Somers.

Birds (39 species): Canada Goose, Tundra Swan, Mallard, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck, American White Pelican, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, American Kestrel, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, shrike sp., Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, American Robin, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– Chris Caster



March 8, Burlington Area. The day started cold and overcast with occasional snow flurries. There was snow cover on the ground but the roads were clear. We met Chuck Fuller and John Rutenbeck at the Port of Burlington and took a quick look at the Peregrine Falcon on the Mississippi River Bridge. After a stop at Kum & Go we headed to the Cascade Ravine, where we had to walk through deep snow to get to the storm sewer. We heard a Carolina Wren, but there was no sign of a Winter Wren, and the usual songbirds were not found. For the first time in many years on this trip there were no Turkey Vultures roosting in the trees.

At Sacred Heart Cemetery we saw only Cedar Waxwings, and at Crapo Park a Barred Owl was spotted. Sullivan Slough had our FOY Great Blue Heron, American White Pelicans, and some ducks. Most of the Mississippi River was still frozen, but there was open water at the Wever Elevator and several duck species and a Herring Gull were seen. Green Bay Bottoms had a singing Song Sparrow and at least two Rough-legged Hawks, and Diana Pesek found a Sharp-shinned Hawk. At a nearby roadside marsh we found a flock of Greater White-fronted Geese and enjoyed close looks.

The Mississippi River at Riverview Park in Ft. Madison was frozen. At Montrose there was a little open water in the marsh, and two American Black Ducks were seen. There were no snipe there, and in fact no shorebirds were seen on our trip, which is very unusual. This winter's extreme cold weather has delayed the migration of many species. We continued south to Keokuk, but saw nothing new. We continued birding until almost dark. We all enjoyed the day, even with the cold and ice.

Participants: Brandon Caswell, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow (co-leader), Barb Fisher-Krueger, Chuck Fuller (co-leader), Andy and Katie Long, Jason McCurdy, Diana Pesek, Katey Pletcher, John Rutenbeck (co-leader), Sharon Somers.

Birds (64 species): Greater White Fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Gadwall, American Black Duck, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Wild Turkey, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, American Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, American Coot, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Barred Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Northern Shrike, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– Karen Disbrow

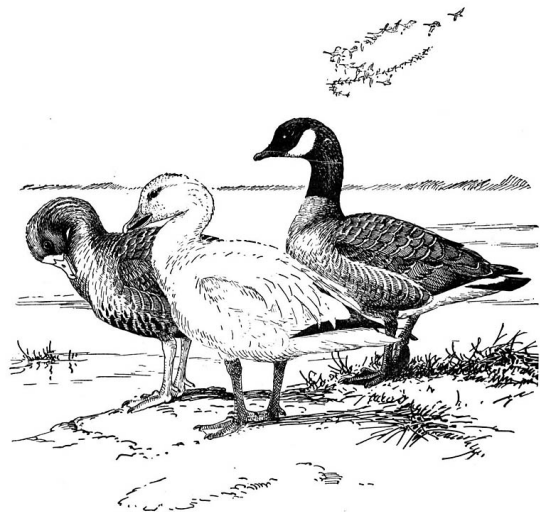
March 20, Meeting. Doug Harr spent 30 years as a Wildlife Biologist and eight years as Wildlife Diversity Program Coordinator for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Today, in retirement, he serves as President of Iowa Audubon, does avian and habitat consulting, coordinates the federal Breeding Bird Survey for Iowa, and conducts volunteer bird surveys for Iowa DNR.

Doug's presentation was titled "Swans, Swifts and Ceruleans: Why Citizen Conservation Counts". Birds are captivating creatures that hold human attention for many reasons, including serving as indicators of environmental health. But nearly of third of North America's birds are in decline, causing concern about their future and ours. Scientists and professional conservationists are doing as much as they

possibly can, but virtually any interested citizen can also add to the effort, by practicing good conservation methods of their own every day, and by assisting with various avian surveys. The future of everything from Trumpeter Swans to Chimney Swifts to Cerulean Warblers may be held in the hands of scientists and citizens alike. Doug discussed examples of what we can all do to help our birds.

Attendees: Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Linda Fisher, Bruce Gardner, Barbara Haring, Jane Knoedel, Lucy Luxenburg, Nancy Lynch, Cheryl Miller, Carol Rosenberger, Marcia Shaffer, Lisa Spellman, Janet Trimble, Donna Warner.

– Chris Edwards



March 30, Cone Marsh. We left Iowa City with 12 birders, picked up two more in Lone Tree, and met four more at the marsh. By the time we finished only five were left. Hopefully the others made it home. The birders ranged from pre-school age to nearly 70.

We started at the Great Horned Owl nest in Lone Tree. At the pit stop in Lone Tree, we found the first tick of the season.

Early on at the marsh, I commented on the warm weather and lack of wind. A few minutes later the wind kicked up. By the end of the morning, birds were blowing past us in the wind, weeds

were blowing past us in the wind, and heck, even birders were blowing in the wind. But it wouldn't be a March trip to Cone Marsh without your eyes watering as you look through your scope.

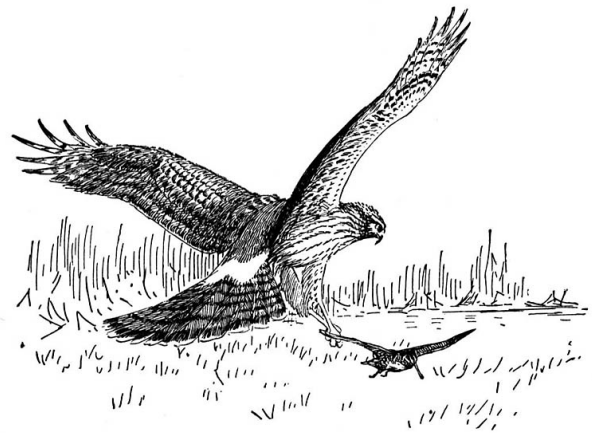
On the way back to Iowa City we stopped at Sand Lake a.k.a. Trueblood Recreation Area. We ended the day with 46 species, including a pair of Mute Swans, Sandhill Cranes, Rusty Blackbirds, and Brewer's Blackbirds.

Participants: Mark Brown, Chad, Colleen and Sophia Davis, Rick Hollis (leader), Michelle Friessen, Bruce Gardner, Andy and Katie Long, Jason McCurdy, Mike and Aiden O'Leary, Ramona McGurk, Diana Pesek, Marcia Schaffer, Donna Warner, Kathy Wegman.

Birds (46 species): Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe,

American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Great Horned Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, American Kestrel, Eastern Phoebe, American Crow, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Rusty Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, House Finch.

– Rick Hollis



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Our club web site is located at www.icbirds.org. You may contact webmaster Jim Scheib at (319) 337-5206 or jim@tenlongview.net. Also visit us on Facebook.

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