
Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 34 Number 3

December 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.

December 14, Sunday. Iowa City Christmas Bird Count. To participate in the field or as a feeder watcher, Contact Diana Pesek at (319) 560-8393 or keesiemom@yahoo.com by Wednesday, December 10.

January 4, Sunday, 8 - 10:30 a.m. Bird Feeder Watch Social hosted by Jim and Karole Fuller, 6 Longview Knoll north of Iowa City. Come for coffee and rolls (feel free to bring goodies) and watch the winter birds visiting the feeders. Check our web site for directions.

January 15, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. Rick Hollis will present on Birding Sax-Zim Bog, Minnesota. *Snow date January 22 – check our web site and Facebook page for weather postponement information.*

January 24, Saturday, 8 - 10 p.m. JCCB Owl Prowl at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park. A short indoor program will be followed by a guided hike to search for owls. Warm up after the hike with some hot chocolate back at the CEC. Program is free, but space is limited and registration is required by Thursday, January 15 at 4:00 p.m. Contact Naturalist Sydney Algreen at (319) 645-1011 or salgreen@co.johnson.ia.us.

January 25, Sunday, 1 - 4 p.m. Coralville WinterFest, Iowa River Landing. The club will have a viewing area with scopes and information about bird feeding. There will be many other fun activities.

February 7, Saturday, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Bald Eagle Watch and Expo. Exhibits and speakers will be at North Central Jr. High School. Bald Eagle watching will take place at the Coralville Dam Tailwater West Picnic Shelter.

February 15, Sunday, 8 a.m. Quad Cities for gulls, waterfowl, and other birds on the Mississippi River, and possibly winter finches in the cemetery. Chris Caster, 339-8343.

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

February 19, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. “The Scientific Nomenclature of Birds of the Upper Midwest” or The Who, What, Where and Why of that Bird’s Name by Jim Sandrock and Jean Prior.

February 21, Saturday, 7 a.m. Amana Turkey Walk and Feast. Join us for an early morning hike through the woods to search for Wild Turkeys, Saw-whet Owls, and other winter species, followed by breakfast at the Colony Inn in South Amana at approximately 9:30 a.m. Contact Karen Disbrow at 430-0315 if you plan to attend.

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Schedule (continued)

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

March 14, Saturday, 10 a.m. JCCB Birding Bonanza. Bring your family out to the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park for a guided program all about birds with the Iowa City Bird Club and Naturalist Sydney Algreen. This program will utilize the new bird blind for bird viewing and will include a build-your-own bird feeder activity. Hot chocolate, coffee, and all bird feeder supplies will be provided. The program is free but registration is required by 4 p.m. on March 4. Contact Sydney Algreen at (319) 645-1011 or salgreen@co.johnson.ia.us.

March 14, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Burlington Area for spring migration along the Mississippi River including ducks, geese, pelicans, and more. **Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot on S. Riverside Drive.** (Or you may meet us at the Port of Burlington at 8 a.m.) Karen Disbrow, 430-0315.

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

March 19, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. "Birding Peru" by Doug Harr, wildlife photographer, avian consultant, and President of Iowa Audubon.

March 24, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Beginning Birdwatcher Course: Backyard Birding at the Conservation Education Center at Kent Park. Advance registration is requested, and is free for club members. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register. See page 8 for more information.

March 29, Sunday, 8 a.m. Cone Marsh in Louisa County for Sandhill Cranes, migrating ducks, geese, and other water birds. **Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot on S. Riverside Drive.** Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

Other Dates of Note

December 14 – January 5, National Audubon Christmas Bird Count Period. Nearly fifty CBCs are held in Iowa every year, many of them here in Eastern Iowa. If you would like to participate in any of these, visit www.iowabirds.org/Events/CBC.aspx for dates and contact information.

January 9-11, Friday-Sunday. Quad Cities Bald Eagle Days. Eagle watching events are also being held this winter at many other locations along the Mississippi River and elsewhere in Iowa.

January 16-19, Friday-Monday. Northern Minnesota Birding Trip organized by the Carroll, Sac, and Cass County Conservation Boards. Bird the Sax-Zim Bog and Lake Superior coast for boreal specialties. For more information see the Iowa Birding Facebook page or contact Matt Wetrich at matt@naturebymatt.com.

January 17, Saturday. Iowa Young Birders field trip to the Quad Cities. For more information plus a calendar of other events, visit www.iowayoungbirders.org.

February 13-16, Friday-Monday. Great Backyard Bird Count, a joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. See www.birdsource.org/gbbc for more information.

March 12, Thursday. Prairie Preview at Celebration Barn on Highway 1 north of Iowa City. The featured speaker will be Jim Tessler of Grinnell College.

March 28-29, Saturday-Sunday. Iowa Young Birders field trip to central Nebraska for the Sandhill Crane migration. For more information plus a calendar of other events, visit www.iowayoungbirders.org.

From the President's Desk

Karen Disbrow

Brrr! "Oh the weather outside is frightful, but the fire is so delightful," as the song goes. I can't remember a colder November (we won't go into how many Novembers I remember, but suffice it to say it's more than a few). But despite the weather, Iowa is always great for winter birding, whether you're watching feeder birds through a window or scoping the rivers looking for rare gulls.

Our first big event is the annual Iowa City Christmas Bird Count on December 14 – see page 4 for more information. Early January brings our annual Bird Feeder Watch Social which is again at the home of Jim and Karole Fuller. Our third Bald Eagle Watch & Expo held jointly with the Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program and US Army Corps of Engineers is scheduled for February 7. We are excited by the line-up of speakers on hawks, owls, and eagles and the groups who will have booths with activities for kids and information for everyone on nature and birding. Also in February is our trip to the Quad Cities and Mississippi River for gulls and waterfowl, and our traditional Amana Turkey Walk and Feast. In March we welcome back spring with a trip to the Burlington area and Mississippi River.

March also marks the start of our weekly Introduction to Birding Course at Kent Park. The first three sessions are geared towards beginning birders. The fourth session on backyard birding has many ideas for feeders and bird seed to bring birds into your yard. The fifth session explores birds found at Terry Trueblood and Waterworks parks, and the last session covers warblers as the spring migration kicks into full gear. This winter we are also teaming up for two events at Kent Park with the new Johnson County Conservation Naturalist, Sydney Algreen: an Owl Prowl in January, and a Birding Bonanza in March. See the schedule for more details.

The new bird blind near the Conservation Education Center at Kent Park is open for business! For a list of birds seen there recently, visit <http://kentparkbirdblind.weebly.com>.

I want to thank Grant Wood AEA for the free use of our meeting room; Lenocho & Cilek North Ace Hardware and Forever Green Garden Center for the member discount on regularly priced suet and birdseed; and Johnson County Conservation for the continued use of the Conservation Education Center and support for the birding course. Thanks also to the many members of the Iowa City Bird Club who volunteer to lead trips, bring treats, help with festivals, and continue to welcome all new birders to our area. And of course, a big thanks to Jim Scheib, Chris Edwards, and Rick Hollis for the communications on club events and birding info.

As always, I am interested in scheduling trips to wherever you want to go to see the birds you want to see. If you have an idea, let me know.

Winter is here, so fill up those feeders and prepare for just about anything. This is Iowa, where birds and birders meet.

Membership Renewal Reminder

It's time to send in your membership dues for 2015. 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.

Christmas Bird Count Sunday, December 14

This year's Iowa City Christmas Bird Count will be held Sunday, December 14, unless extreme weather conditions require postponing the count to a later date. Co-compilers are Diana Pesek and Chris Edwards. If you wish to participate as a field observer or a feeder watcher, or if you have questions, please contact Diana at (319) 560-8393 or keesiemom@yahoo.com by Wednesday, December 10. This year we are not having a pre-count planning meeting.

On count day, we will meet at noon for a mid-day compilation and lunch in **Gerdin Conference Center Room #2 in the lower level of the North Liberty Community Center**, 520 W. Cherry St. in North Liberty. Bring your own lunch. A dinner and final compilation will be held at The Brown Bottle Café, 125 Zeller St., North Liberty. Our private room is available beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Please note that the count area is a 15-mile diameter circle with the center located at Highway 965 and County Road F-28 (Penn St.) in North Liberty. This includes all of North Liberty and Coralville, but not all of Iowa City. If you plan to participate as a feeder watcher and are not sure if you live in the count area, please contact Diana. Also, if you know others who may desire to participate as feeder watchers, please encourage them and have them call Diana. Please visit the ICBC web site at www.icbirds.org for more information.



Books for Birders Jason Paulios

Ugh, December. Birding trip-list species counts will be in the low double-digits for many months now. Some cheer themselves up by really honing in on finding winter specialties or doing close studies on feeder birds; but, if you're like me, these strategies will only last for so long before you need a neotropical bird fix. There's relief to be had via the vicarious sightings and adventure of birding travel books.

My go-to selection for the winter doldrums is Kenn Kaufman's Big Year adventure story, *Kingbird Highway*. This book usually soothes the cabin fever by following along on his hitchhiking trek across North America to set the record for the most birds seen in North America in a year. There are moments of philosophical reflection and discussion of bird conservation but the main focus is definitely on the birding stories of Kenn's manic search. Particularly inspiring is his chapter describing a record-breaking Texas Big Day, all the fun without actually having to get up before dawn.

For those looking for a more relaxed birding pace with rich descriptions of North American landscapes and birdlife I would recommend *Wild America: The Record of a 30,000 Mile Journey Around the Continent by a Distinguished Naturalist and His British Colleague*. Here American birding royalty, Roger Tory Peterson, guides British ornithologist James Fisher in 1953 on a grand tour of North America's natural areas. Each chapter includes Roger's introduction of the region followed by James' impressions taken from his trip journal. Fifty years on, naturalist Scott Weidensaul retraced this journey to see what ecological impacts had occurred. His account was published as *Return to Wild America: A Yearlong Search for the Continent's Natural Soul*.

Smartphone Apps for Birding

Rick Hollis

When I first heard about smartphone apps, I thought to myself, “Why do I need them, I have my field guides?” Well, guess what – field guides are heavy, and how many do you want to carry in the field? During the spring and summer, bird and plant guides are the absolute minimum for me. So I started to look through smartphone apps, and the funny thing is that a bird app was not the first one I used.

So which apps to use? *Scientific American* said in June 2014 there were 161 birdwatching apps for the iPhone. I cannot review them all, partly because there are so many, but also because there are different platforms. The apps I have looked at are all based on my iPhone 5. For birds, I have looked at National Geographic Birds, iBird Pro, Audubon Birds Pro, the Sibley eGuide to Birds, Peterson Birds, Merlin Bird ID by Cornell, Birdsnap, and BirdsEye North America.

One good source of information about apps is the web site <http://www.birdingisfun.com>, which reviews apps and has a nice article about features.

I am now using Sibley and National Geographic on my iPhone, and I have the Audubon guide on my iPod. This gives me access to a variety of pictures and numerous calls. All the apps – well, most of them – have strengths and weakness. They vary on the number of bird species included. BirdsEye, National Geographic, and iBird Pro have the most species. The two free guides, Merlin and Birdsnap, have the fewest. iBird Pro and Audubon have the most songs and calls. None of the apps do a great job with videos.

A word about the free guides: Merlin is aimed at beginners. It asks the user five questions about the bird, and then provides an answer or several suggestion. It works reasonably well. Birdsnap analyzes your bird photo and offers an identification or suggestions. It is difficult to get a sufficiently good photograph with a cell phone camera to get identifications from Birdsnap. Using a digital camera and the web-based app, it works well. Using your phone and your scope, it also works well.

For years, birders have dreamed about an app that would analyze a recording of a bird song made with a smartphone and then provide an identification. This has proven difficult, partly because of the variety of sounds made by birds (young birds’ attempts, geographic variation, etc.). One such app, Bird Genie, is expected to be released in spring 2015. There will be Eastern and Western U.S. versions, each with 50 songs. There are other existing apps that will give you bird song quizzes with recordings to help you learn vocalizations.

Audubon has numerous other field guides besides birds – flowers, trees, herps, and more. I have several on my phone, but I have not found them as useful as the bird app, perhaps because I know more about birds.

Two other apps I use regularly are BirdLog North America and MapMyDogWalk. BirdLog lets you record the birds seen in the field (species and number) and send the information directly to eBird. You can view the results online or email them to yourself. MapMyDogWalk allows you to keep track of where you have walked, and using your phone’s GPS it records the distance and creates a map of where you have been. You can then go online and view it on Google Earth. The Google Earth app itself has very nice aerial photography, which can be used to find places to visit or to see where you have been.

2014 Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge

Karen Disbrow and Chris Edwards

The inaugural Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge was held on Saturday, September 25. Eric Ollie of Big Bluestem Audubon Society in Ames challenged the Iowa City Bird Club to this event. Teams of 2 - 4 birders set out to find as many birds as possible during a 24-hour period, and the combined lists for each club were tallied to determine the winner.

The Hawkeyes fielded four teams. Karen Disbrow, Linda Fisher, Ramona McGurk, and Mary Noble birded Cedar and Louisa counties, including Cone Marsh, and found 34 species. Chris Edwards and visiting birder Anurag Chandak birded Johnson County, including Clear Creek Trail, and found 75 species. Diana Pesek, James Huntington, and Brandon Caswell birded Johnson County, including Hawkeye Wildlife Area, and found 78 species. Bob and Joann Stearns (Team BoJo) birded Linn County, including Cedar Lake, and found 31 species.

Good finds for the Hawkeyes included American Bittern, Peregrine Falcon, Sandhill Crane, American Avocet, Clay-colored Sparrow, and Summer Tanager. We tallied 8 raptor species, 13 shorebird species, 13 warbler species, and 7 sparrow species.

Eric provided this report for the Cyclones: "Big Bluestem Audubon Society's team (yes, just one team) started birding on Saturday morning around 5:00 a.m. at Jester Park and ended the day around 8:00 p.m. at Ledges State Park, spending most of the day birding around Saylorville Reservoir. Our goal was to hopefully tally at least 100 species, but we unfortunately ended up only finding 82 species, which we were a bit disappointed with. We all had a truly great time doing it, though, and we all hope we can do it again next year. Our total was hindered by three factors: 1) only having one team out in the field, 2) slow-moving thunderstorms from 4:30-8:30 a.m. which wiped out most of the dawn prime birding time (we didn't find our first bird until 6:45 a.m.!), and 3) water levels at Saylorville, and pretty much everywhere else, were very high, which took away nearly all shorebird habitat. We ended the day with only three shorebird species and four warbler species, which really killed our total. Even so, it was still a blast. We did get the Woodpecker Slam! I hope your teams enjoyed it as much as we did!"

Good birds found by Eric's group included Peregrine Falcon, Sanderling, Pileated Woodpecker, and Philadelphia Vireo.

Back in Eastern Iowa, Dick Sayles and his wife from Buffalo birded Scott County and found 55 species, but their loyalties lie with the Cyclones. Their species, including Eurasian Tree Sparrow, were added to Big Bluestem's total.

Final tally: Hawkeyes 102, Cyclones 87. Score a victory for the black and gold! The cardinal and gold had the highest total for a single group at 82.

This year's event was great fun and we hope to make it an annual tradition. Potential changes suggested for next year include scheduling the Big Day for the Sunday after the Iowa-Iowa State football game, and requiring all birds to be counted in Johnson or Story counties (or perhaps Johnson and Linn vs. Story and Polk).

**IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB
SPECIES LIST (102):**

Canada Goose	Wilson's Snipe	European Starling
Wood Duck	Franklin's Gull	Cedar Waxwing
Mallard	Ring-billed Gull	Tennessee Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Rock Pigeon	Orange-crowned Warbler
Northern Pintail	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Nashville Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Mourning Dove	Northern Parula
Pied-billed Grebe	Barred Owl	Chestnut-sided Warbler
American White Pelican	Common Nighthawk	Magnolia Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Chimney Swift	Yellow-rumped Warbler
American Bittern	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Black-throated Green Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Red-headed Woodpecker	Palm Warbler
Great Egret	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler
Green Heron	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	American Redstart
Turkey Vulture	Downy Woodpecker	Common Yellowthroat
Osprey	Hairy Woodpecker	Wilson's Warbler
Bald Eagle	Northern Flicker	Chipping Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Clay-colored Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Eastern Phoebe	Savannah Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Yellow-throated Vireo	Song Sparrow
American Kestrel	Red-eyed Vireo	Lincoln's Sparrow
Peregrine Falcon	Blue Jay	Swamp Sparrow
American Coot	American Crow	White-throated Sparrow
Sandhill Crane	Horned Lark	Summer Tanager
Black-bellied Plover	Tree Swallow	Scarlet Tanager
American Golden-Plover	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Northern Cardinal
Killdeer	Barn Swallow	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
American Avocet	Black-capped Chickadee	Indigo Bunting
Spotted Sandpiper	Tufted Titmouse	Red-winged Blackbird
Solitary Sandpiper	White-breasted Nuthatch	Eastern Meadowlark
Greater Yellowlegs	Carolina Wren	Common Grackle
Lesser Yellowlegs	House Wren	House Finch
Least Sandpiper	Marsh Wren	American Goldfinch
Stilt Sandpiper	Eastern Bluebird	House Sparrow
	American Robin	Eurasian Tree Sparrow
	Gray Catbird	

Iowa Audubon Corner

Karen Disbrow

Audubon Minnesota, a state office of the National Audubon Society, and Iowa Audubon, an independent Audubon state office, have agreed to join forces for better protecting our two neighboring states' birds, clean water, and other natural resources. Doug Harr, President of Iowa Audubon, was invited to become a trustee on Audubon Minnesota's Board of Directors. This will help forge a greater working relationship between the two organizations and better ways to determine best use of shared funds. Certain conservation funding, such as that provided by Aveda's Earth Month event, is

meant for use in both states. Audubon Minnesota also distributes Iowa's portion of National Audubon Society dues.

The Fall Into Birds family birding festival and fundraiser was not well attended. Only about 60% of the silent auction items sold. We will be exploring other events as fundraisers for next year – if you have an idea let me know.

National Audubon is launching a program to recognize "Bird Cities" and we are gathering the information for this program. Iowa has great birding in many of our towns and cities, so this should be a no-brainer to get recognition for these great places.



Introduction to Birding Course March 24 – April 28, 2015 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 Sydney Algreen 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 N 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 24, 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.

Sunday, March 29, 8 a.m. Field Trip to CONE MARSH. Located about 25 miles SE of Iowa City, Cone Marsh is an excellent place to view migrating ducks, geese, and other water birds. Wear boots for walking in wet areas, and bring a spotting scope if you have one. **Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot.**

Tuesday, March 31, 7 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING II by Rick Hollis. Continuation of first session topics.

Saturday, April 4, 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 7, 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 11, 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 14, 7 p.m. BACKYARD AND FEEDER BIRDS by James Scheib. This session will cover the common birds found in our backyards during the year, and what types of feeders and food to use to attract them.

Sunday, April 19, 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 21, 7 p.m. BIRDS OF TERRY TRUEBLOOD AND WATERWORKS PARKS IN IOWA CITY by Jim Scheib. Learn the variety of birds to be found throughout the year at these nearby parks.

Saturday, April 25, 8 a.m. Field Trip to TERRY TRUEBLOOD and WATERWORKS PARKS. Visit these two Iowa City parks with great trails for grassland and wetland species.

Tuesday, April 28, 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 3, 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.

Literature Droppings

Rick Hollis

Three Recent, Fascinating Papers about Migration

In this study the authors used eBird data to look at the spatial-temporal distribution of 93 migratory species and found three flyways, one in the east, one in the west, and a central flyway. Both the eastern and western paths shifted eastward in the spring. The central flyway largely overlapped with the eastern in the spring but constricted in the fall. (Note, these are diurnal migrants and not waterfowl.) The authors also examined wind velocity and direction during the migration. For example, in North America in the spring there is a low-level jet stream that arises in the western Gulf of Mexico and extends north into the Great Plains. Overall the data points out the importance of winds in determining where birds migrate. [The role of atmospheric conditions in the seasonal dynamics of North American migration flyways. La Sorte et al. *Jo of Biogeography* 2014.]

In another study the same group of authors (mostly) looked at a different hypothesis to explain the looped migration of some species. In this paper, they examined the relation between ecological productivity in determining the timing of migration. They found that the western flyway's loop and timing can largely be explained by the birds following ecologic productivity. Migration is timed with production. Together these two papers point out how migration pathways are finely tuned to productivity on the ground and winds in the atmosphere. Climate change could easily interfere with migration's finely tuned mechanism, on many levels. [Spring phenology of ecological productivity contributes to the use of looped migration strategies by birds. La Sorte et al. *Proc. R. Soc. B* 2014.]

Bird migration has long been hypothesized to originate in the tropics. This paper turns that around and suggests that migration occurred in

temperate regions with evolutionary shifts of winter ranges, south out of North America. I cannot say that I totally understand the techniques used in every step of their modeling. But they combined present-day migration routes with known evolutionary history and looked at which groups of birds do or do not migrate. [Temperate origins of long-distance seasonal migration in New World songbirds. Winger, Barkeer and Ree. *Proc of Nat. Acad. Sci (US)* 2014.]

Impacts of Climate and Land-Use Change on Bird Distribution

Using data from eBird, and modeling both land use and cover changes and the effects of global warming, the author of this study looked at 50 bird species to see where they might live in the year 2075. Nineteen species are predicted to either gain or lose more than 20 percent of their conterminous U.S. ranges as compared to 2001. Six species, mostly Southern species such as Cactus Wren, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, and Painted Bunting, will gain breeding area. Thirteen species, mainly grassland specialists, show decreases.

My personal interpretations of some of the maps are that Black-capped Chickadees are predicted to disappear from a wide stretch of the U.S. at about the latitude of Missouri, but are likely to be stable in Iowa; Bobolinks are predicted to lose breeding habitat in northern Missouri and a large portion of Iowa; Painted Buntings may start breeding in southern Iowa; we may lose Hooded Warblers as a breeding species in Iowa. The actual maps of modeled distribution for all 50 species are at <http://landcover-modeling.cr.usgs.gov/sdm.php>. [The Relative Impacts of Climate and Land-Use Change on Conterminous United States Bird Species from 2001 to 2075. Terry L. Sohl. *PLOS ONE*. November 2014 9 (11): e11225.]

Chimney Swifts Return to Historic Sherman Tower

Everyone associated with the restoration of Althea R. Sherman's historic Chimney Swift Tower had given up hope that the swifts would nest this year – their first chance since the tower was re-erected last year at the Bickett-Rate Preserve in Cedar County. But when Sherman Project Director Barbara Boyle checked the structure in early August, she was delighted to find a new swift nest, with five white eggs – attached inside the chimney in exactly the spot where the swifts had nested year-after-year for Althea Sherman!

Typically, swifts nest only once a year, although second nests are not unusual. Given the lateness of this nesting, it could be either a second nesting or possibly the first by a pair who had failed in an earlier attempt.

Chimney Swifts build a nest from small twigs, glued to the inside of a chimney by a sticky saliva they produce. They usually have clutches of 4-5 eggs and incubate for about nineteen days. As the young swifts grow they can leave the nest and move around inside the chimney by using the specialized feet that allow them to tightly grip the wall. As their wings strengthen, they practice flying inside the chimney, before finally joining their parents in the breathtaking aerial flights that swifts are known for.

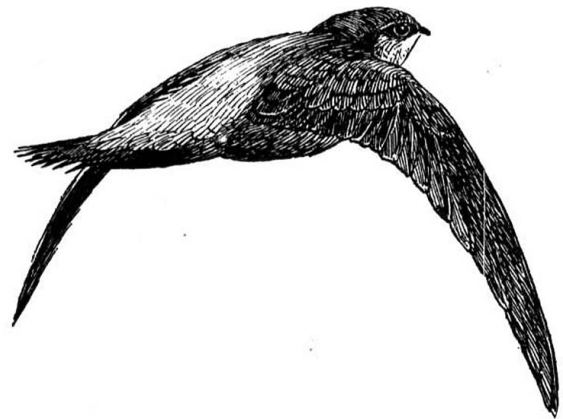
In 1915, Iowa ornithologist Althea R. Sherman designed the very first Chimney Swift tower and had it built in her backyard in the tiny town of National. She was the very first person – using this unique structure – to observe the complete nesting cycle of the swifts. She studied swifts in this tower for eighteen years and became the world's leading authority on the species.

When the Althea R. Sherman Project put the deteriorating tower into protective storage back in 1992, swifts were still regularly nesting in it. Project members are thrilled that the swifts have

returned the very first year the tower was again available to them.

By mid-August the five eggs hatched, and by early September all had successfully fledged. Linda and Robert Scarth photographed the birds and documented their development on their blog at <http://scarthphoto.com/wp/>. The Raptor Resource Project installed a webcam available at <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/swift-cam>.

For more information about the project, visit <http://www.altheasherman.org/>.



Songbird Project 2014 Nestbox Data

The Johnson County Songbird Project maintains seven Eastern Bluebird trails and thirteen Purple Martin colonies in the Iowa City/Coralville area. This year, these nest boxes fledged 164 Eastern Bluebirds, 149 Tree Swallows, 19 Black-capped Chickadees and 872 Purple Martins.

Trails and colonies are monitored once a week by volunteers who keep count of eggs, nestlings, and birds that fledge. Collected data is shared with national conservation organizations.

If you would like to be a bluebird trail or Purple Martin colony monitor next year, please contact the Songbird Project at (319) 466-1134.

Field Trip and Meeting Reports

September 7, Pelican Festival at Coralville Reservoir. We had great weather for this year's Pelican Festival, with mid-70s and sunshine. Several days before the event there were thousands of pelicans on the reservoir, but a cold front passed through and most of the birds headed south. On the day of the event there were several hundred pelicans, but the ones that remained put on quite a show. Two flocks came in close to the shore to feed for 20-30 minutes, and we had great views of pelicans in flight, sometimes just a few feet above the water as they moved a short distance to join with another group. The Iowa City Bird Club and DNR Wildlife Diversity Program provided spotting scopes for close up views.

The event's overall attendance was 300, but this year people seemed to stay for longer periods of time. We had great presentations, including two on American White Pelicans; the plight of the honey bee; updates on Peregrine Falcons and Ospreys; and Chimney Swifts. We had more exhibitors with activities for kids. Terry Escher from the Army Corps of Engineers and her volunteers expanded their activity table to include origami pelicans, pictures for coloring, nametag necklaces, and of course temporary tattoos which are always a big hit. Johnson County Conservation brought a live Fox Snake which patiently let little fingers touch it to learn that snakes are not slimy. Their excellent skin collection was also a great way to show the wildlife diversity of our county.

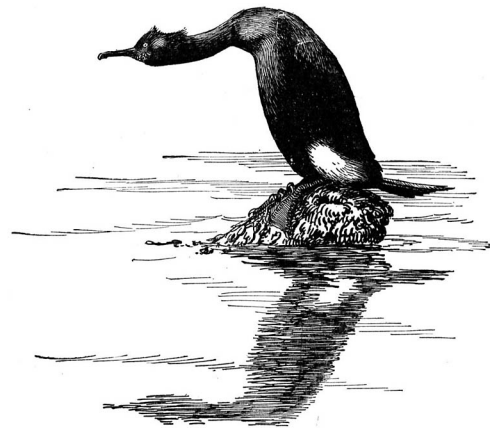
Cedar County Conservation came for the first time with wood nametags and key chains, and a sponge throwing game. Johnson County Soil and Water Conservation came for the first time with a marvelous plastic jug beak so kids could scoop up fish and see how hard it is to avoid floating garbage in the water. We again provided free face painting by Funny Face

Designs, which is always very popular with the little ones. The information display showing the life of the American White Pelican will be on display at the DNR building soon.

Boy Scout Troop 211 served food – the pulled-pork sandwiches were quite a hit. The Bur Oak Land Trust (formerly Johnson County Heritage Trust), The Songbird Project, Eastern Iowa Beekeepers, Prairie States Mushroom Club, Iowa Native Plant Society, Macbride Raptor Project, Iowa Audubon, Iowa Ornithologists' Union, and Swisher Fire Dept (which left with sirens blaring for an emergency) all added to the day's success.

I would like to thank Bruce Gardner, Jerry Denning, Rick Hollis and Jim and Karole Fuller of the bird club for helping with setup and/or scoping the pelicans for the crowd. Come join us for next year's Pelican Festival on September 6, 2015!

– Karen Disbrow



September 18, Meeting. Rick Hollis presented on birding apps for smart phones. See page 5 for an article by Rick on this topic.

Attendees: Raymond Anderson, Mark Bowman, Rona Bradshaw, Dave Conrads, Karen Disbrow, John Erickson, Bruce Gardner, Rick Hollis, Lois Hughes, Merle Ihne, Jane Knoedel, Gail Krupa, Jim Newman, Linda Quinn, Tom and Carol Rosenberger, Marcia Shaffer.

– Karen Disbrow

September 20, Hawk Watch at Scales Pointe.

Due to construction of Mehaffey Bridge near our traditional hawk watch site at Stainbrook Preserve, this year we held our hawk watch at Scales Pointe at the end of Scales Bend Road north of North Liberty. After the bridge construction is finished, it appears parking along Mehaffey Bridge Road may be more limited than previously, which may force us to find a new permanent home for our hawk watch.

The Scales Pointe site offered a number of advantages, including on-site parking, restaurant, and restrooms, and a 180° view of the reservoir and wooded ridges to the north. On the other hand, the Stainbrook site allows us to partner with the Macbride Raptor Project, which often holds raptor programs on the same day as the hawk watch. At Stainbrook we also sometimes have a few raptors pass right over the site, which most likely wouldn't occur at Scales Pointe.

And after this year's watch we still don't know if Scales Pointe will be a good location to watch raptors, because the weather precluded any migration while we were there. The morning was heavily overcast, relatively warm and humid, with a light south wind. We saw two small groups of Turkey Vultures, a pair of Cooper's Hawks tussling in flight, two Ospreys, and two Bald Eagles – none of which seemed to be migrating. On the reservoir we saw numerous Franklin's Gulls and Forster's Terns, and several hundred American White Pelicans.

By early afternoon a steady light rain began to fall, and we packed it in. Some of us retreated to Bobber's Restaurant to watch the rest of the Iowa football game. A rousing comeback victory against Pitt provided the best Hawk-watching of the day.

Attendees: Elizabeth Aubrey, Chris Caster, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Judy Ellyson, Bruce Gardner, Melody Hartz, Rick Hollis, Lauren and Doina Johnson, Diana Pesek.

Raptors (4 species, 16 individuals): Turkey Vulture 10, Osprey 2, Bald Eagle 2 (1 adult, 1 immature), Cooper's Hawk 2.

Other Birds (19 species): American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, American Coot, Killdeer, Franklin's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Forster's Tern, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, Tennessee Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, House Sparrow.

– Chris Edwards



October 12, Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Twenty people participated in this trip for sparrows and other fall migrants. The group assembled at the Casey's General Store off of I-380 in North Liberty. After everyone introduced himself or herself, the first stop of the day was to set up carpooling at the Sand Point parking lot in Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area. Dave Shealer, a biologist/ornithologist professor at Loras College, was mist netting in the area. Everyone got to meet him before heading to our first birding location. Although he had not netted anything that morning, he did happen to net four Hermit Thrushes simultaneously at dusk the night before.

The first stop of the morning was on Greencastle Avenue. The objective of the day was to bird the roads back to our last planned stop, James Avenue. Right off the start Mark Brown found a LeConte's Sparrow, which posed ever so nicely for the entire group to get good looks. With one of our two main targets checked off right away, the rest of the morning seemed as if it was full of bonus birds. In entirety, the group saw 58 species. Only one or two people saw a few of the species. An Iowa Young Birder was confident she saw a Merlin. Most of the group was unable to get a look at it as it whizzed by everyone before the word about it spread. Chris Edwards was the only person to see a Least Sandpiper, as he happened to talk to Jim Forde who was scoping Greencastle at the time the group was finishing up at that location.

The morning was capped off by a Harris's Sparrow, which was unfortunately only seen by a couple people in the group. Overall, the trip was really fun and the weather cooperated quite nicely up until the very end.

Participants: Mark Brown, Brandon Caswell (leader), Chad, Colleen and Sophia Davis, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Corey and Cherie Duggan, Chris Edwards, Charley Gerard, Jaeda Harmon, Andy and Katie Long, Jamie McCoy, Seth Petchers, Dave Shealer, Walt and Christine Wagner-Hecht, Donna Warner.

Birds (58 species): Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Ring-necked Pheasant, Pied-billed Grebe, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Merlin, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Coot, Killdeer, Lesser Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, Ring-billed Gull, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American

Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Orange-crowned Warbler, Palm Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Le Conte's Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Harris's Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Common Grackle, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– *Brandon Caswell*

October 16, Meeting. Stuart Sparkman and Karen Vista-Sparkman gave a great presentation about birding South Africa. Thanks to Marcia and Jane for providing delicious treats.

Attendees: Jerry Denning, Drew Dillman, Vic and Nola Edwards, John Erickson, Linda Fisher, Bruce Gardner, Lauren and Doina Johnson, Jane Knoedel, Dave Kyllingstad, Kristen Lawton, Jim Newman, Mark Oxley, Jason Paulios, Marcia Shaffer, Donna Warner, Diane Zumbach.

October 25, Lake Macbride. There was an early morning fog and a temperature of 50 degrees when we started. Since Mehaffey Bridge was closed we took Hwy. 1 to Solon. Our first stop was at the east end of Lake Macbride. Due to a new subdivision there is now a road off the blacktop which we used to view the marshy area at the east end of the lake. We saw gulls, ducks, grebes and American White Pelicans there. We then went on to the north side of Lake Macbride but saw no new birds. We checked out the campground, and again saw no new birds. We then headed towards North Liberty to 200th Street where we could view the south arm of the lake. We saw several interesting birds there including Belted Kingfisher and Great Egret.

Participants: Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow (leader), Peter Hansen, James Huntington, Ramona McGurk, Diana Pesek, Linda Quinn.

Birds (51 species): Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Bonaparte's Gull, Franklin's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Barred Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged blackbird, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– *Karen Disbrow*

November 9, Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area. The day started out overcast, 39 degrees with a slight wind. We picked up Rick at the North Liberty exit of I-380 on our way north. Several more people met us at the pavilion overlooking the lake at Pleasant Creek. We were disappointed to find duck hunters on the lake shooting. There was a group of Ruddy Ducks that was not targeted. We kept scanning the area and found Eastern Bluebirds and a Downy Woodpecker before heading to Palo Marsh, where we found a Brown-headed Cowbird and Black-capped Chickadees. We then headed to Cedar Lake in Cedar Rapids, where we found our best birds of the day including Common Goldeneye, Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Bufflehead, Ring-billed Gull, and American White Pelican. On the way back we stopped at Goose Lake in North Liberty but were not able to add to our list there. A final stop at Scales Pointe overlooking the Coralville Reservoir produced Common Loon and Lesser Scaup.

Participants: Chad, Colleen, and Sophia Davis, Karen Disbrow (leader), Corey and Cherie Duggan, Charley Gerard, Peter Hansen, Andy and Katie Long, Beth Orth, Seth Petchers, Linda Quinn, Walt Wagner-Hecht, Donna Warner.

Birds (29 species): Canada Goose, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Ruddy Duck, Common Loon, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Coot, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– *Karen Disbrow*

November 20, Meeting. Nancy Lynch and Marcia Shaffer gave a terrific presentation about their trip to Guyana. Marcia provided the following account of their experience:

When I had the opportunity to take a Road Scholar (formerly Elderhostel) birding trip to Guyana on the northern coast of South America I didn't think twice. It would be a new adventure with new friends, a new country and, of course, new birds. It would mean a lot of airplanes, strange food, and unheated showers but how exciting that would be. I went with Nancy Lynch who I had met on an Iowa City Bird Club outing at Kent Park. She had been on Road Scholar trips before and assured me they were fun.

In preparation Nancy and I walked at Coral Ridge Mall to get into shape as they said some days we would be walking up to five miles. We flew from Cedar Rapids to Dallas/Fort Worth to Miami to Port of Spain and then to Georgetown. Georgetown is in Guyana on the northern coast on the Atlantic.

We had packed very carefully as we were limited to 20 lbs. An additional plane into the interior was very small and we would all be weighed with our baggage. As it turned out many in our group hadn't heeded the 20-lb. warnings and had to leave baggage at the first hotel in Georgetown.

In Georgetown the first night, we met our guide, a native from Guyana who was very knowledgeable. It was a long day but nevertheless we were up at the crack of dawn to start our birding lists. Over the 10-day period we saw 190 species and went to four different habitats. Usually we were up at dawn and were out on the trail before we were quite awake. Then we would come back and have breakfast. We had free time for the hottest part of the day and then would go out again in the late afternoon. On other days we were in boats on streams looking for wetland birds. We gathered before dinner for wine/beer and to go over the sightings for the day and then had a relaxing dinner with time to visit. There were fifteen of

us in all, four from Canada, several from Chicago and several from the east coast.

There were several bird watchers who were also photographers and they were generous in sharing their pictures. I would recommend the Road Scholar programs. Our transportation was arranged for us, tipping was not allowed and we were given a lot of help in deciding what was appropriate to bring. The thing I noticed was how similar Guyanans were to us, both in style of dress and attitude. We visited a grade school which had a curriculum similar to what we have here. It was a good experience and I look forward to my next trip.

Attendees: Karen Disbrow, Nola Edwards, Linda Fisher, Alex Flesher, Jim and Karole Fuller, Bruce Gardner, Therese Guedon, Peter Hansen, Rick Hollis, Jane Knoedel, Khristen Lawton, Nancy Lynch, Mark Oxley, Bob and Linda Scarth, Jim Scheib, Marcia Shaffer, Donna Warner.

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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 Ace Hardware at 600 N. Dodge Street, Iowa City, and Forever Green Garden Center at 125 Forevergreen Rd., Coralville.

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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.

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

