
Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 35 Number 3

December 2015

Schedule

Field trips depart from the Dodge St. Hy-Vee in Iowa City unless otherwise noted; meet at the west end 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 contact the trip leader.

Meetings are held at the Robert A. Lee Recreation Center, Room A, 220 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City, generally at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month.

**** NOTE: MEETINGS ARE NOW HELD AT THE ROBERT A. LEE REC. CENTER, ROOM A, IOWA CITY ****

December 20, Sunday. Iowa City Christmas Bird Count. To participate in the field or as a feeder watcher, Contact Diana Pesek at (319) 560-8393 or pesekle@imonmail.com by December 16.

January 10, 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 juice provided by the Fullers, bring rolls or goodies to share, and watch the winter birds visiting the feeders. Check our web site for directions.

January 21, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. Tom Hazelton, President of the Iowa Counties Conservation Board, will present "The History of County Conservation Boards in Iowa; When & How County Parks Were Started."

January 24, Sunday, 1-4 p.m. Annual Coralville WinterFest, Marriott Hotel, Iowa River Landing. The club will have a viewing area with scopes and information about feeders for winter birdwatching. There will be many other fun activities for families. Call Karen Disbrow at 430-0315 if you are able to help.

February 6, Saturday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Bald Eagle Watch and Expo. Exhibits and speakers, including Bob & Linda Scarth and Mike Havlik, will be at North Central Jr. High School. Bald Eagle watching will take place at the Coralville Dam Tailwater West Picnic Shelter. Watch our web site for a flyer.

February 14, 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, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. "Birding Bhutan" with Ken Lowder and James Huntington.

February 20, Saturday, 1-3 p.m. Freeze Fest at the Terry Trueblood Recreation Area lodge. Lots of activities for kids of all ages. Watch our web site for a flyer.

Continued on next page →

Schedule (continued)

March 2, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Wednesday Morning Bird Walk. Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141. Our Wednesday Walks are held the first and third Wednesday of each month. The group size is typically small but sometimes ranges up to ten. We walk one or two miles at a gentle rate and generally spend our time near the CEC and stop at the lake during migration. Most participants are older but we welcome anyone.

March 12, 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 in Iowa City,** or you can meet us at the Port of Burlington in Burlington by 8 a.m. Karen Disbrow, 430-0315.

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

March 19, Saturday, 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.** Linda Rudolph, 325-8393.

March 24, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. “A Bird in the Hand: Observations of Intimate Beauty & Unexpected Bird Behaviors When Banding” by Mark Bowman, Grinnell Audubon Society.

March 29, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Beginning Birdwatcher Course: Basics of Birding I at the Conservation Education Center at Kent Park. Advance registration is requested, and is free for club members. Call Sydney Algreen at 645-1011 to register. For more information see page 8.

April 2, Saturday, 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. *Beginning Birder Trip.*

Other Dates of Note

January 8, Friday, 8-9:30 p.m. Owl Prowl, Conservation Education Center at Kent Park. Join Johnson County Conservation Naturalist Sydney Algreen and the Iowa City Bird Club to learn about these nocturnal creatures! The evening will feature a short indoor, kid-friendly program about owls followed by a guided hike to search for these nocturnal creatures and wrap up with hot chocolate. Participants should dress for the weather. This is a free program, but registration is required by 4 p.m. on Monday, January 4 at 645-1011 or salgreen@co.johnson.ia.us.

January 16, Saturday, Iowa Young Birders Bird Sketching Workshop. The Hall of Birds at the University of Iowa Pentacrest Museums is a great place to see birds on display from all over the world! Iowa City artist Kathryn Kostenbader will lead a workshop on sketching birds, a fun and important skill for birders of all ages. Young birders will have the opportunity to practice their sketching skills with birds on display. There is a cost associated with this trip and registration is limited to the first 15 young birders. Register today for this unique opportunity at www.iowayoungbirders.org.

February 5-8, Friday-Monday, Minnesota Avian Adventure. The Carroll and Sac County Conservation Boards are offering another bus trip to northern Minnesota to see boreal birds and more. Target birds include Great Gray Owl, Northern Hawk Owl, Snowy Owl, Pine Grosbeak, Evening Grosbeak, Boreal Chickadee, Gray Jay, and many more. All skill and interest levels are welcome, and great photography opportunities await, as well. For more information contact Matt Wetrich at go_tweeting@hotmail.com or (712) 210-4614.

March 10, Thursday, 6:30-9 p.m., Prairie Preview at Celebration Farm, Hwy. 1 N, sponsored by Bur Oak Land Trust. Connie Mutel from the University of Iowa will be this year’s speaker beginning at 7:30 p.m. Her talk is titled “A Sugar Creek Chronicle: Writing Climate Change.” Approximately 30 exhibitors will be set up to showcase their organizations and provide information.

From the President's Desk

Karen Disbrow

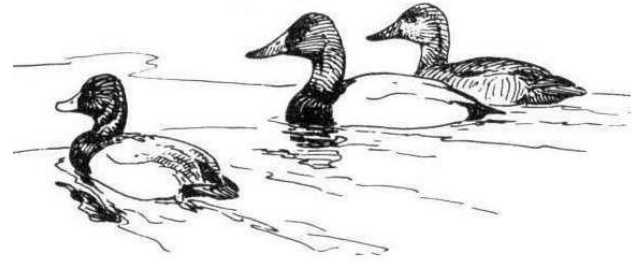
Greetings! On this lovely fall day with temperatures in the high 40s, I am contemplating the coming winter. Winter in Iowa: snow, gulls from far away, crossbills? Who knows what may drop in over the next few months. Many people start twitching this time of year. (Twitch: *verb*, to chase sightings of rare, unusual birds around the state or further to other states.)

For those of you who fill your feeders and watch birds in your own backyard, avian wonders such as Red-breasted Nuthatch, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, and others are possible. Our club will have our Bird Feeder Watch Social at the Fullers' again this year. If you have not attended this event, you really, really should; Jim and Karole have many feeders, a view of the Iowa River, and a pond just steps away. There are always great views of birds. Three winter festivals are coming your way, starting with the Coralville WinterFest, followed by the Bald Eagle Watch & Expo, and finally Freeze Fest. All are great events for both kids and adults. As the informational flyers become available we will post them on our web site.

For the fifteenth year we are holding our Introduction to Birding Course. Thanks to Rick Hollis, Jim Scheib, Bruce Gardner, and Johnson County Conservation for continuing this dream of mine I started so long ago. We are starting the course a week later this year due to Easter, and making two trips to Cone Marsh, one to catch the peak of waterfowl migration and one to include in the course schedule.

Remember that club members receive a 10% discount on regularly priced bird feed and suet at Leno & Cilek on N. Dodge St. and Forever Green Garden Center on Forevergreen Rd. As always, I want to set up field trips to where the birds are; if you have a location you want to go, let me know I will find a leader. After all, this

is Iowa, where birds and birders meet. Good Birding!



Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, December 20

This year's Iowa City Christmas Bird Count will be held Sunday, December 20, 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 pesekle@imonmail.com by Wednesday, December 16. 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 Room C at 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.

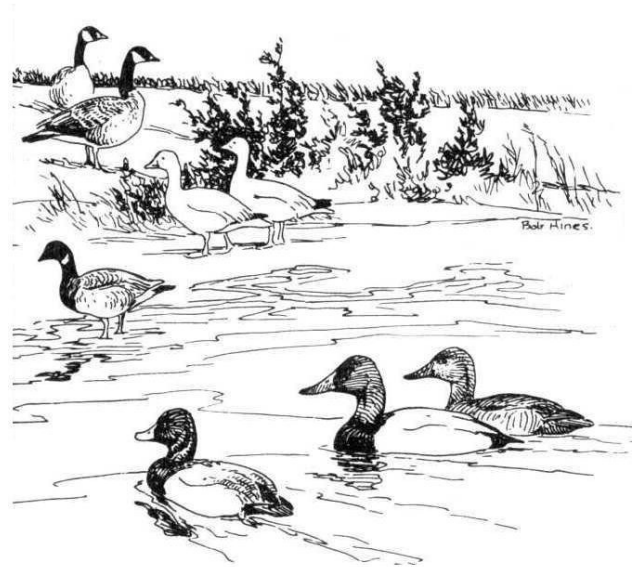
In Memoriam: Bernie Knight

Bernie Knight, 96, of Iowa City, passed away Saturday, September 19, 2015. Bernadine Mary Horras was born December 28, 1918, in Ollie, Iowa; daughter of Archie and Clara (Allar) Horras. She grew up at the family farm near Sigourney, Iowa, was active in the Sigourney community and worked as a legal secretary and court recorder. On January 20, 1940, she married Calvin A. Knight in Waterloo, Iowa. A few years later, during the war, they moved to Washington State where they both worked on development of the Hanford nuclear project in varying capacities. After the war, Bernie and Calvin moved to Cedar Falls, Iowa and later, in 1956 they moved to Iowa City, where they raised their family.

Together Bernie and Cal shared many interests and traveled the world as a result of those interests. They were avid birders, gardeners and travelers. She was a long-time member of the Iowa City Bird Club, Iowa Ornithologists' Union, and the Cedar Rapids Audubon Society. She was a member of the Four Seasons Garden Club, a founding member of Project Green, was active in the Iowa Hosta Society, and served on the Iowa City Riverfront Commission. She also spent a significant amount of time and energy perfecting her floral design skills; even traveling to Japan to study the art of Japanese flower arranging, known as Ikebana. Bernie taught classes in flower arranging and made numerous presentations on the subjects of flower arranging, Ikebana, bird watching and conservation. She was well known for her special interest in owls, and shared this interest with grade school students through many presentations at local schools. In 2007, she dedicated the Knight Prairie Pavilion at F.W. Kent Park in Johnson County.

Bernie's family includes her daughter, Crystal Kelley of Auburn, AL; son, Calvin K. Knight and his wife, Maureen of Alamo, CA;

grandchildren, Monica and Emily Knight and Collin Kelley King and his wife, Katherine and great-grandchildren, Cole, Grayson, Peyton and Abby. Bernie was preceded in death by her husband, Calvin in 2002 and her parents. Bernie's beloved dog Angel will now be residing with family.



Transcribe Historic Egg Data Cards for the UIMNH

Would you like to help transcribe data for the University of Iowa Museum of Natural History's historic scientific collection of bird eggs? You can now do so from the comfort of your own home. The museum's egg data cards are available on the UI Libraries DIY History crowdsourcing transcription site. The egg card collection is a fascinating window into biodiversity a century (or more) ago, and transcribing the data will make it searchable, shareable, and accessible. Other transcription projects available on the site include letters and diaries from Iowa pioneers, the Civil War era, World War I, and World War II; the Nile Kinnick collection; and culinary manuscripts and cookbooks. To get started, visit <https://diyhistory.lib.uiowa.edu/>.

Songbird Project Update

Dear Songbird Project Members and Friends:

I hope you've already heard the great results from our fifteen Purple Martin colonies last summer: 1027 young martins fledged from 253 nests! Even better, that record includes the first-ever nesting at two new colonies: Waterworks Park (north of I-80) and the 4-H Fairgrounds (where we've been trying to attract martins since 2006).

This result was achieved through the efforts of a dedicated team of a dozen monitors who, in addition to putting up and taking down housing, make regular nest checks throughout the season – controlling House Sparrows, changing wet nests, applying gnat repellents, and keeping detailed records. Good management is the key to success with Purple Martins.

With your help, we'd like to make next year even better. We'd like to replace the last of our older wooden houses with more up-to-date gourd racks at Finkbine and Brown Deer golf courses, Casey's General Store in Hills, and at the Riverside Fire Station. These are some of our oldest, and most successful colonies. In addition, we'd like to put a bench on the fishing dock at Waterworks Park, so visitors can relax and enjoy watching the martins at this newest colony.

The total cost for doing all this will be \$5,145. But by selling the older housing we'll be replacing, we should be able to recoup about \$1,000. This leaves us with the goal of raising \$4,145.

The newer housing is not just better for the martins, it's also better for the volunteers who monitor the colonies. It's lighter and easier to put up in the spring and take down in the fall, and safer to raise and lower for nest checks. All this means a lot for volunteers – especially those who, like me, are getting a little older.

Can you help us with a contribution of \$10, \$25, \$50, or more? The Songbird Project is a 501(c)(3) organization, so your contribution is tax deductible as allowed by law. You can mail checks to: Songbird Project, 1033 E. Washington St., Iowa City, IA 52240. Please put your email address on your check, so I can send you a receipt by email (this saves us lots of time and money, and your email address will never be shared with anyone).

Thank you for any help you can give (and feel free to forward this appeal to others) and be sure to visit one of our martin colonies next year. If you'd like to be a martin monitor next year, contact me at jcmwalt@infionline.net or 466-1134. And if you're interested in one of those older martin houses, do the same.

– Jim Walters

Volunteer Needed for Herbert Hoover Breeding Bird Survey

Several years ago, I began doing annual breeding bird surveys at Herbert Hoover National Historic Site in West Branch. Throughout the years I've had great help from Jim Fuller, Bill Scheible, Dave Kyllingstad, and Bruce Gardner. However I'm no longer able to conduct these surveys, and this year was my last. The survey has provided meaningful breeding bird data to the park staff, and they would like to continue the surveys. I'm looking for a volunteer (or volunteers) to do the survey next year. The protocol used will require some training which I am happy to provide. Completion of the survey will take somewhere around three hours. A much more in-depth survey has been done in the past requiring three mornings to complete. However, in recent years, a much more abbreviated protocol has been used. If you have any questions, or would like to volunteer, please contact me at lowderman@aol.com. Thank you.

– Ken Lowder

New Raptor Rehab Group

Two former staff members at the Macbride Raptor Project, Jodeane Cancilla and Luke Hart, have obtained state and federal permits for raptor rehabilitation and started a new nonprofit to fill the gap that was created when MRP ended its rehab program in August. Luke's and Jodeane's group is named RARE, which stands for Raptor Advocacy, Rehabilitation, and Education. Dr. Mary Ebert, owner of Gentle Heart Pet Clinic in Iowa City, is the organization's licensed veterinarian, and the group includes several volunteers with many years of experience in raptor rescue, rehab, and education.

As many of you know, Jodeane built the Macbride Raptor Project from the ground up and held many titles there over 28 years, but to her the most important titles were rehabilitator and educator. She had a lot of help along the way from volunteers, interns, and staff, including Luke who was her assistant for 8+ years and who succeeded her for a brief interim period after her retirement. Luke has assumed the leadership role of Executive Director of RARE.

The project is based in Iowa City and serves east central and southeastern Iowa, northwestern Illinois, and northeastern Missouri and is incorporated in Iowa as a nonprofit, with application to the IRS for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status pending. The group already has taken in and treated their first client, a starving juvenile Red-Tailed Hawk found near Anamosa that was released back to the wild on November 28.

Members of the Black Hawk Wildlife Rehabilitation Group have been knocking themselves out over the last several months as they have picked up the slack in rescuing and rehabbing raptors. Kudos to them!

Please spread the word so that injured, sick, or distressed raptors in the group's coverage area

can be rescued and treated as quickly as possible. To report raptors in need of help, call RARE's hotline, 319-248-9770, or email help@theraregroup.org. For questions or information, call the hotline or email contact@theraregroup.org. The group's web site is www.theraregroup.org.

– Elizabeth Aubrey

Vanderbilt University Seeks Birders of All Skill Levels

The Category Laboratory at Vanderbilt University is seeking birders of all levels of experience – from the true beginner to the expert with decades of study, and everyone in between – to participate in a project examining how perception and memory for birds differs between beginners and experts. The study is funded by the National Science Foundation. The experiments are on the web, and they measure a person's ability to remember and identify birds and sometimes other animals or objects. Many experiments are fairly short, and they can be done on any computer at any time. One of the current experiments is a bird identification test.

Birders can register and participate by visiting this site: <http://expertise.psy.vanderbilt.edu>. Users will create a login ID and password on the site, complete a short survey of their birding expertise, and will then be able to participate in any experiments that are available. New experiments will be added over time, and some future experiments may include modest compensation.

For more information on the Category Laboratory visit their web site at <http://catlab.psy.vanderbilt.edu>. For more information on this project, search for "This is Your Brain on Birds" on Facebook, or contact Professor Thomas Palmeri of Vanderbilt University at thomas.j.palmeri@vanderbilt.edu.

2015 Cy-Hawk Big Day Competition

Karen Disbrow

For the second year the Big Bluestem Audubon Society of Ames challenged the Iowa City Bird Club to a Cy-Hawk Big Day competition, to see if the Cyclones could out bird the Hawkeyes. In an effort to get more people involved, we accepted teams from any part of the state, as long as they were aligned with either the Hawkeyes or the Cyclones. This year's event was held on Sunday, September 6, and it was one of the hottest day of the year, with a high temperature of 98° and a heat index of 104°. This was hard on the observers and made the birds very difficult to find. At the end of the day, the Hawkeyes prevailed with 123 species, compared to 113 species for the Cyclones, and retained the coveted trophy. This was due in part to the number of teams we were able field, with seven teams compared to two for the Cyclones. Each club had one team that misunderstood the date, and birded on September 7 (Labor Day) instead of September 6. We decided to accept the results from both these teams.

I want to thank everyone who participated. Hopefully next year the weather will be better and we can both have more teams in the field. We are already looking at next year's calendar with an eye on a Saturday when more people can participate.

Participants for Iowa City Bird Club: Chris Caster, Chris Edwards, Linda Rudolph, and Bill Scheible (The Fighting Goshawks); Adam Ciha and Dave Conrads; Karen Disbrow, Linda Fisher, Ramona McGurk, and Mary Noble; Ryan Elliott and Tamra Lewis; Diana Pesek and Sharon Somers; Bob and Joan Stearns; and Ric and Betty Zarwell.

SPECIES LIST

Canada Goose	Stilt Sandpiper	Eastern Phoebe	Magnolia Warbler
Mute Swan	Least Sandpiper	Great Crested Flycatcher	Bay-breasted Warbler
Trumpeter Swan	White-rumped Sandpiper	Eastern Kingbird	Blackburnian Warbler
Wood Duck	Pectoral Sandpiper	Bell's Vireo	Yellow Warbler
Gadwall	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Blue-headed Vireo	Chestnut-sided Warbler
American Wigeon	Western Sandpiper	Warbling Vireo	Palm Warbler
Mallard	Long-billed Dowitcher	Red-eyed Vireo	Pine Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Wilson's Snipe	Blue Jay	Canada Warbler
Northern Shoveler	Ring-billed Gull	American Crow	Chipping Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Black Tern	Tree Swallow	Grasshopper Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Rock Pigeon	N. Rough-winged Swallow	Song Sparrow
Ring-necked Pheasant	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Bank Swallow	Northern Cardinal
Wild Turkey	Mourning Dove	Cliff Swallow	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Pied-billed Grebe	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Barn Swallow	Indigo Bunting
Double-crested Cormorant	Eastern Screech-Owl	Black-capped Chickadee	Dickcissel
American White Pelican	Great Horned Owl	Tufted Titmouse	Red-winged Blackbird
Great Blue Heron	Barred Owl	White-breasted Nuthatch	Eastern Meadowlark
Great Egret	Common Nighthawk	House Wren	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Green Heron	Chimney Swift	Carolina Wren	Common Grackle
Turkey Vulture	Ruby-thr. Hummingbird	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Brown-headed Cowbird
Osprey	Belted Kingfisher	Eastern Bluebird	House Finch
Bald Eagle	Red-headed Woodpecker	<i>Catharus</i> thrush sp.	American Goldfinch
Northern Harrier	Red-bellied Woodpecker	American Robin	House Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Downy Woodpecker	Gray Catbird	Eurasian Tree Sparrow
Sora	Hairy Woodpecker	Brown Thrasher	
American Coot	Northern Flicker	European Starling	TOTAL SPECIES 123
Sandhill Crane	Pileated Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing	
Semipalmated Plover	American Kestrel	Ovenbird	
Killdeer	Peregrine Falcon	Black-and-white Warbler	
Spotted Sandpiper	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Tennessee Warbler	
Solitary Sandpiper	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Nashville Warbler	
Greater Yellowlegs	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Common Yellowthroat	
Lesser Yellowlegs	Willow Flycatcher	American Redstart	



Introduction to Birding Course March 29 – May 8, 2016 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 at the west end of the parking lot. For more information, call Karen Disbrow at (319) 430-0315.

Tuesday, March 29, 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 2, 8 a.m. Field Trip to CONE MARSH. Located about 25 miles SE of Iowa City, Cone Marsh is an excellent place to view migrating ducks, geese, and other water birds. Wear boots for walking in wet areas, and bring a spotting scope if you have one. **Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot.**

Tuesday, April 5, 7 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING II by Rick Hollis. Continuation of first session topics.

Sunday, April 10, 8 a.m. Field Trip to KENT PARK near Tiffin. We will explore the trails in Kent Park looking for migrating songbirds and resident woodland birds. **Meet at the CEC in Kent Park.**

Tuesday, April 12, 7 p.m. WHERE TO BIRD IN JOHNSON COUNTY by Rick Hollis. Well known, lesser known and secret places to watch birds and study nature in and around Johnson County.

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

Tuesday, April 19, 7 p.m. BACKYARD AND FEEDER BIRDS by James Scheib. This session will cover the common birds found in our backyards during the year, and what types of feeders and food to use to attract them.

Sunday, April 24, 8 a.m. Field Trip to MACBRIDE NATURE-RECREATION AREA. Visit the Raptor Center, observe birds up close from the bird blind, and hike the nearby trails.

Tuesday, April 26, 7 p.m. BIRDS OF TERRY TRUEBLOOD AND WATERWORKS PARK IN IOWA CITY by Jim Scheib. Learn the variety of birds that are found throughout the year at these nearby parks.

Saturday, April 30, 8 a.m. Field Trip to TERRY TRUEBLOOD and WATERWORKS PARK. Visit these two Iowa City parks with great trails for woodland, prairie, and wetland species.

Tuesday, May 3, 7 p.m. WARBLER IDENTIFICATION & REVIEW by Karen Disbrow. Warblers are among our most colorful birds. Compare and contrast similar species within this interesting and challenging group.

Sunday, May 8, 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

September 13, Pelican Festival at Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Over 300 people attended the event this year on a beautiful, warm fall day. Approximately 1,000 American White Pelicans moved around the wildlife area and gave visitors great views. Thank you to Tim Thompson and the DNR for hosting the event, giving a presentation, and conducting traffic and parking; Pat Schlarbaum for his always great presentation and helping educate visitors at the scopes; Jennifer for coming from Des Moines to give the talk on mussels; Bruce Gardner, Chris Edwards, and Ben Rowold for helping just about everyone with setup and tear down; Rick Hollis, Chris Edwards, Sharon Somers, and Julie Englander for supervising public use of the scopes and interpreting the pelicans; Doug Harr and Joe Tollari for staffing the Audubon display; and David Giese and Scout Troop #211 for providing a food stand.

We had a great group of organizations with information and fun activities this year: Bur Oak Land Trust, Cedar County Conservation, Eastern Iowa Beekeepers Association, Iowa Native Plant Society, Iowa Ornithologists' Union, Iowa Wildlife Federation, The Songbird Project, Prairie States Mushroom Club, Swisher Fire Dept., and UI Museum of Natural History. The Indian Creek Nature Center Store had books, games, etc. for sale, and Lori's Face Painting was a big hit with the kids. Thanks to our sponsors Cedar Rapids Audubon Society, Iowa Audubon, and Iowa City Bird Club for funds to provide face painting for all the kids.

– Karen Disbrow

September 17, Meeting. Jim Durbin of Cedar Rapids Audubon presented "Moths of Iowa". Jim's talk was centered on his wonderful Insects of Iowa web site (www.insectsofiowa.com). The backbone of the web site is a database containing thousands of specimen and sight

records of Iowa moths, butterflies, and other insects, contributed by multiple people over many years, supplemented by Jim's excellent photographs. There are approximately 10,000 moth species and 1,000 butterfly species in North America. Jim's database currently contains 49,000 moth records of 2,100 species representing 59 of the 74 North American families. The database also contains 37,000 butterfly records of about 125 species. All this valuable data is accessible to everyone through the web site. New searching and graphing options have recently been added, and improvements continue to be made to make the site more useful. In addition to insects, the site contains photographs of many other animal classes including birds.

Jim showed the group photographs of many interesting moths found in Iowa. He described his techniques for attracting and photographing moths, and collecting and preserving specimens. His future goals include adding more moth records from prairie and fen habitats, seeking additional county records from western Iowa, and conducting more research on micro moths.

This was our first meeting held at the Robert A. Lee Recreation Center in Iowa City, and the space worked well. During the business portion of the meeting, Treasurer Bruce Gardner gave a brief financial report. The club currently has a cash balance of \$1,800, with one more newsletter to be published this year at a cost of \$200 - \$250. A motion was approved to donate \$100 to the Raptor Resource Project, as a memorial to its founder Bob Anderson who recently passed away. The club is considering purchasing a digital computer projector to be used for meeting presentations, since not all speakers have their own projector. Bruce presented his research including various capabilities and price options, and after discussion he agreed to do more research and report back at a future meeting.

Attendees: Edward Allgood, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Jim and Karole Fuller, Bruce

Gardner, Rick Hollis, Kristen Lawton, Nancy Lynch, Barb Mahaffa, Kristen Morrow, Mark Oxley, Rosemarie Petzold, Linda Quinn, Bob and Linda Scarth, Jim Scheib, Marcia Shaffer, Sharon Somers.

September 27, Pike Run Wildlife Area in Muscatine County. Nine birders joined me for an ICBC outing that was predetermined to take place in Cedar and/or Muscatine counties so new areas outside of our area could be introduced to our members. I chose Pike Run Wildlife Area in Muscatine County since it was a place that I had visited once and it was fairly close, being just over a half hour away. The goal was to catch some lingering warblers and perhaps the beginning of the sparrow migration. The weather in recent days had been above normal and this day would continue that trend, with clear skies, calm winds, and early morning temperatures in the mid 60s, warming to around 80 by mid-day.

Our first stop was along 170th St., just west of the northwest boundary of the wildlife area. This was a very active spot, with several species of sparrows, including White-crowned, Field, and Lincoln. The highlight was very close views of a couple Marsh Wrens, and a Sedge Wren that worked its way to within six feet of where the group was standing!

Eventually we ended up on a nice trail that entered the woods on the west side of Pike Run before following some waterways. It was mid-morning by this time and it was getting quiet, but we still enjoyed a few lingering migrants, including Black-and-White Warbler, Red-eyed Vireo, and Scarlet Tanager. Also several Red-headed Woodpeckers, both juvenile and adults, were nice to see.

Our last stop of the area later in the morning was at the north entrance, where bird activity picked up again. More Red-headed Woodpeckers were present, bringing the total number for the outing to eight. Other notable birds were several Eurasian Tree Sparrows, a

couple of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, and a Magnolia Warbler.

On the way back to Iowa City, the remaining members of the group stopped at the intersection of 500th St. and the Johnson/Muscatine county line. This is a known location for Loggerhead Shrike and Northern Mockingbird. Although the shrike eluded us, we did spot a distant mockingbird perched on a dead shrub that allowed for good scope views. This bonus bird brought the total for the day to 52 species, not bad for late September!

Participants: Mark Brown (leader), Chad and Colleen Davis, Gerald Denning, Andy and KT Long, Larry Mahoney, Linda Quinn, Sharon Somers, Gerald Teig.

Birds (52 species): Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Ring-necked Pheasant, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Killdeer, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Sedge Wren, Marsh Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Black-and-White Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Field Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Red-winged Blackbird, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– Mark Brown

October 3, Hawk Watch at Macbride Nature-Recreation Area. Due to lack of parking along Mehaffey Bridge Road, our former long-time

hawk watch site at Stainbrook Preserve is no longer suitable. In 2014 we held our hawk watch at Scales Pointe, with mixed reviews. Still searching for a new location, this year we held the event at the Bluestem Shelter at Macbride Nature-Recreation Area. Advantages of this location: ample parking, restrooms, a shelter with picnic tables, and a mowed grass lawn. Having it there also allowed us to partner with the Macbride Raptor Project which held several educational programs at the Raptor Center. Disadvantages: the location is surrounded by trees so visibility of the sky and horizon is limited.

Although some nice flights of raptors have been seen from this location previously, the weather on this day didn't cooperate. It was a pleasant day, with temperatures in the 50s and clear skies, but with a strong NE wind, which isn't favorable for raptor migration in eastern Iowa. We saw several dozen Turkey Vultures, but very few hawks and eagles. We did enjoy several hundred Franklin's Gulls kettling and migrating past.

If you have any suggestions for a suitable Johnson County location for next year's hawk watch, please let Karen Disbrow or Chris Edwards know.

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Zach Cicha, Dave Conrads, John Conrads, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Mary Edwards, Ryan Elliott, Julie Englander, Peter and Katy Hansen, Shawn Hawks, Merle Ihne, Jacob Lampe, Tamra Lewis, Bailey Kelsay, Ginny Naso, Linda Quinn, Mark and Deb Rolfes, Linda Rudolph, Bill Scheible, Mary Schell, Richard Tetrault.

Raptors (5 species, 48 individuals): Turkey Vulture 31, Bald Eagle 3, Sharp-shinned Hawk 3, Cooper's Hawk 1, *accipiter* species 1, Red-tailed Hawk 7, *buteo* species 2.

Other Birds (20 species): Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Franklin's

Gull, Chimney Swift, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, American Goldfinch.

– *Chris Edwards*

October 15, Meeting. Jessica Bolser, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Biologist at Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge in Louisa County, presented "Birding Port Louisa Refuge." Jessica's presentation included many photographs showing the development of the Port Louisa Refuge in the 1940s and 1950s. The refuge has a five-mile drive that is open only on Fridays in August and early September, sunrise to sunset. People can walk the area year-round except when the refuge is closed. There is also a free bus tour in November that takes people through the refuge to view migrating birds; check the refuge web site for information about times and reservations. The refuge also holds a birding event on International Migratory Bird Day each May.

Jim Fuller added to the birds Jessica mentioned with his own sightings over the years. Thanks to Jim Scheib for bringing his digital projector for the program.

– *Karen Disbrow*

October 24, Cone Marsh in Louisa County. Twelve birders braved cloudy, windy and misty conditions. The highlight of the trip were the Sandhill Cranes – we got to see cranes taking off, and landing, and trying to fly while buffeted by the wind. Their calls echoed through the air many times during the morning.

Participants: Barry Buschelman, Chad Davis, Therese Guedon, Pat Kieffer, Andy and KT Long, Linda Quinn, Mark and Deb Rolfes, Linda Rudolph (leader), Sharon Somers, Donna Warner.

Birds (26 species): swan species, Gadwall, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, Eurasian Collared-Dove (in Lone Tree), Blue Jay, Tree Swallow, American Robin, European Starling, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– *Linda Rudolph*

November 15, Lansing Area and Mississippi River. We set out for northeast Iowa at 7:15 a.m. on a beautiful morning. We arrived in Lansing in Allamakee County about 10:30. Following lunch we boarded *The Mississippi Explorer* for a three-hour tour of the Mississippi River. There were about 25 people aboard, on a boat that could accommodate 98. The enclosed boat with windows all around offered great views of bluffs on either side of the river, islands, and the rock-enclosed refuge for the birds.

This part of the river is 661 miles from where the Ohio River enters the Mississippi River at Cairo, Illinois. Prior to settlement this part of the river had a depth of three feet at its deepest and was more of a slough. The bluffs were not forested but were covered by short-grass goat prairies on the steepest portions. Bison crossed the river between what is now Iowa and Wisconsin. And of course, there were always lots of birds during migration. After settlement the river was dredged to a depth of nine feet and artificial islands were created of rafts of rock with vegetation over the top. Today the islands are covered with trees and have beaches where gulls rest, and we would not have guessed they were artificial without being told.

During fall migration, thousands of Tundra Swans rest on this portion of the Mississippi during their migration to Chesapeake Bay. In Iowa they are best seen from roads such as Red

Oak Road south of Lansing. One of our parties stopped there on the way to Lansing and was treated to great views of swans and other waterfowl. From the boat we saw seven Tundra Swans in the air and 22 on the river.

Many thanks to Dennis Kirschbaum and Bruce Klang for the natural history and for making sure everyone saw the birds, and to Captain Ann Weymiller who kept the boat in place for minutes at a time in order to view the birds.

Participants: Fawn Bowden, Diane Bradbury, Karen Disbrow (leader), Therese Guedon, Gail Heater, Nancy Lynch, Ramona McGurk.

Birds (29 species): On the river: Canada Goose, Tundra Swan, Gadwall, American Widgeon, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, American Coot, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Pileated Woodpecker. While driving: Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, American Kestrel, Blue Jay, American Crow, European Starling, Red-winged Blackbird, American Goldfinch.

– *Karen Disbrow*

November 19, Meeting. Bill Scheible and Linda Rudolph presented “Birding the Areas of La Mancha, Coto Donana, and Extremadura in Spain.”

Bill provided the narration and Linda contributed her excellent photographs from their May 2015 trip to Spain with the tour group Field Guides. They traveled by bus from Madrid to the Atlantic Coast and to the Gredos Mountains, seeing a total of 199 bird species.

Interestingly, Spain is at the same latitude as Cedar Rapids, but has a Mediterranean climate. It is in a major migratory pathway between Africa and Europe, and is notable for its spectacular raptor migrations. Among the many

interesting species seen on the trip were Greater Flamingo, White-headed Duck (endangered due to hybridization with exotic Ruddy Ducks), Common Nightingale, Garganey, Black Kite, Eurasian Spoonbill, Whiskered Tern, Marbled Teal (critically endangered with only 200 remaining in Spain), White Stork, Eurasian Hoopoe, Cinereous Vulture, Eurasian Griffon, and Red-backed Shrike.

On May 9th the group participated in the eBird Global Big Day, recording 67 species and contributing one of 95 checklist from Spain. Bill and Linda thoroughly enjoyed the trip and highly recommended it to others.

During the business portion of the meeting, a motion passed to contribute \$100 towards speaker fees at the upcoming Bald Eagle Expo in North Liberty. Due to the difficulty of attendees being able to hear the speakers in our new meeting location, Karen tried out a new portable public address system which Bruce Gardner purchased on a trial basis for the club. The general consensus was that it worked well.

Attendees: Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, John Donelson, Chris Edwards, John Fieselmann, Linda Fisher, Jim and Karole Fuller, Bruce Gardner, Peter Hansen, Rick Hollis, Dave Kyllingstad, Khristen Lawton, Nancy Lynch, Mark Oxley, Linda Quinn, Bob and Linda Scarth, Jim Scheib, Angela Schneider, Sharon Somers, Forrest Strum, Donna Warner.

**Membership Renewal
Reminder**

It's time to send in your membership dues for 2016. 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.

IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Please send this form with your annual membership dues to Bruce Gardner, 3055 Wapsi Ave. NE, Iowa City, IA, 52240. Annual dues are \$15 per household or \$10 for students. Make checks payable to "Eastern Iowa Birdwatch". Members receive a 10% discount on birdseed and suet at Ace Hardware at 600 N. Dodge Street, Iowa City, and Forever Green Garden Center at 125 Forevergreen Rd., Coralville.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____ Amount Enclosed _____

Check here for e-mail subscription only



Iowa City Bird Club

www.icbirds.org

Annual membership dues are \$15 per household or \$10 for students, payable by January 1 for the coming year. Check your mailing label for the year you have paid through. Make checks payable to Eastern Iowa Birdwatch and mail to Bruce Gardner, 3055 Wapsi Ave. NE, Iowa City, IA 52240. You may contact Bruce at (319) 643-2575 or woodsidefarms@juno.com.

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.

Eastern Iowa Birdwatch is published three times per year, in April, September, and December. Send submissions and comments to editor Chris Edwards at credwards@aol.com. You may also contact Chris at (319) 430-4732.

Eastern Iowa Birdwatch

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

