
Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 36 Number 3

December 2016

Schedule

Field Trips are free and open to the public. Meeting place varies and is noted in the schedule. Carpooling is encouraged and figured out at the designated meeting place and time. Some trips are accessible to people with disabilities. For more information or questions, contact info@icbirds.org.

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.

December 18, Sunday. Iowa City Christmas Bird Count. Join us for this holiday tradition! To participate in the field or as a feeder watcher, contact Diana Pesek at (319) 560-8393 or pesekle@imonmail.com. See page 5 for more information.

January 8, Sunday, 8-10:30 a.m. Bird Feeder Watch Social hosted by Jim and Karole Fuller at their home at 6 Longview Knoll, 1.5 miles north of I-80/N Dubuque St. exit; directions at www.icbirds.org. Watch winter birds visiting a variety of feeding stations, and view eagles from the Fullers' fabulous high view of the Iowa River. Coffee and juice are provided, and treats to share are much appreciated.

January 19, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. Prof. John L. Hanson will present "Birding Norway while on Sabbatical."

January 21, Saturday, 8 a.m. Bald Eagle Watch in Dubuque. Carpool with ICBC to the Grand River Center for a full day of activities including programs with live birds, exhibits and vendors, and shuttle rides to Lock & Dam 11 for eagle viewing. Complete details: <http://audubondubuque.org/>. Meet at the Hy-Vee parking lot, 1125 N Dodge St., Iowa City. Linda Quinn, 330-3328.

January 22, 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.

January 28, Saturday, 1 p.m. - Dusk. Owl Prowl. We will visit a variety of locations to look for roosting owls. Meet at Kohl's parking lot, 2795 Commerce Dr., Coralville. Bruce Gardner and Karen Disbrow, 319-430-0315.

February 4, Saturday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Bald Eagle Watch and Expo. Exhibits and speakers, including Bob and Linda Scarth, 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. Volunteers are needed to assist with spotting scopes and at our display table – please contact Karen at 430-0315 if you can help for either the a.m. or p.m. shift.

February 16, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. Prof. Ed Wasserman will discuss "Exceptional Bird Behavior."

Continued on next page →

Schedule (continued)

February 18, 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.

February 19, Sunday, 8 a.m. Quad Cities Area for gulls, waterfowl, and other birds on the Mississippi River. Chris Caster is our trip leader for this all-day trip with stops at locks and dams, riverside parks, and other hotspots like Fairmount Cemetery for winter finches. Walking is usually short-distance from frequent stops, and we'll stop for lunch at a nearby restaurant. Dress for cold and wind, and bring a spotting scope if you have one. Meet at the Hy-Vee parking lot, 1125 N Dodge St., Iowa City. Chris Caster, 936-0120.

March 1, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Wednesday Morning Bird Walk. Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

March 11, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Burlington Area for spring waterfowl migration along the Mississippi River. Target birds include ducks, geese, pelicans, and more. This is an all-day trip led by Burlington local expert birder Chuck Fuller. Stops include locks and dams, riverside parks, and other hotspots. Walking is usually short-distance from frequent stops, and we'll stop for lunch at a nearby restaurant. Dress for cold and wind, and bring a scope if possible. Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot, 125 Hwy. 1 W, Iowa City; or at the Port of Burlington, 400 Front St., Burlington at 8 a.m. Karen Disbrow, 430-0315.

March 15, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Wednesday Morning Bird Walk. Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

March 16, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. Liz Christiansen will discuss the Bird Friendly Iowa program, which is kicking off for cities and towns in Iowa.

March 21, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Beginning Birder 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. See page 8 for more information including the full course schedule.

March 25, Saturday, 8 a.m. Cone Marsh for Sandhill Cranes, migrating ducks, geese, and other water birds. This half-day trip is a Beginning Birder class trip, but all are welcome. Learn the stops around the marsh and take a short walk on the dike. Bring a scope if available. Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot, 125 Hwy. 1 W, Iowa City. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

April 15, Saturday, 6:45 a.m. Otter Creek Marsh. This is a joint field trip with Big Bluestem Audubon led by Eric Ollie. Targets are marsh birds including rails, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Sandhill Cranes, sparrows, shorebirds, and lingering waterfowl. Estimated return time about 1 p.m. Trip involves hiking around the marsh from several stopping points. Plan for walking through shallow wet areas. Bring a scope if available. Meet at Kohl's parking lot, 2795 Commerce Dr., Coralville; or at 8:00 at the Otter Creek Marsh observation deck on Hwy. E66. ICBC assistant leader is Cheryl Miller, 651-653-8133.

Other Dates of Note

February 18, Saturday, 9 a.m. – Noon. Iowa Young Birders field trip for eagles and gulls on the Mississippi River near Davenport. For more information, and to register, visit www.iowayoungbirders.org.

March 9, Thursday, 6 p.m. Prairie Preview at the Clarion Hotel in Iowa City. Watch our website for updates.

From the President's Desk

Karen Disbrow

Greetings everyone!

Christmas is almost upon us. We are gearing up for the Christmas Bird Count and we hope you can join us. If you have friends or neighbors who live in the count circle who have bird feeders, please ask them to participate as feeder watchers. This is an easy task – we provide a checklist of possible birds, they look once or twice during the day, and record the highest number seen at one time. If they see an unusual bird they cannot identify, they can call for help with the identification. If you know someone who is interested, please have them contact Diana Pesek at (319) 560-8393 or pesekle@imonmail.com.

There are many changes happening this year. Our new Field Trip Coordinator Committee, Linda Quinn and Sharon Somers, are doing a great job. So far this fall we have scheduled trips both near and far to see some great birds. We are also in the process of recruiting a new President and a new Treasurer. A nominating committee was formed to identify potential candidates, and a vote will occur at the May meeting. The term for both offices will be three years. The President acts as the community contact for the club and finds speakers for our meetings. The Treasurer handles the club's finances and maintains our mailing list.

For speakers I have relied on other clubs such as Big Bluestem Audubon, Quad City Audubon, and Cedar Rapids Audubon for ideas. I often find local authors, photographers, professors, or friends of friends who may have an interesting topic to present. And of course, many of our own members travel and come back with interesting photos and stories. This has been the best job I have ever had, but 7.5 years is enough, and it is time for new people with new ideas.

Terry Escher of the Army Corps of Engineers retired at the end of September. Terry was my partner in starting the Bald Eagle Watch and Expo, the Turkey Vulture Festival, and taking over the Pelican Festival. The good news is that we are continuing these events and the Corps is hiring a replacement for Terry who will hopefully be on board before the Bald Eagle Watch & Expo.

One more thing on my list to accomplish is to offer clothing and other merchandise with our club logo. As part of this we will be voting online in January to choose a new logo bird, either the Tufted Titmouse or the Yellow-throated Warbler. Once a species is chosen our resident artists Chris Caster and Sharon Somers will work up the artwork. This will then be sent to Corporate Casuals, and members will be able to order any hat, sweatshirt, t-shirt, tote, etc. from their web site, customized with our logo.

Three local festivals are coming your way this winter – Coralville WinterFest, the Bald Eagle Watch and Expo, and Iowa City's Freeze Fest. All are great events for both kids and adults. As the flyers become available we will post them on our website.

In the spring, for the 16th 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.

Remember that members receive a 10% discount on regularly priced birdseed and suet at Lench & Cilek Ace Hardware on N Dodge Street in Iowa City, and at Forever Green Garden Center on Forevergreen Rd. in Coralville.

We have a great year of birding ahead of us, so get out and about, remembering that "IOWA is where birds and birders meet!"

Good Birding,
Karen

2016 Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge

Chris Edwards

The third annual Cy-Hawk Big Day competition was held on Sunday, September 18. It was a beautiful sunny day with temperatures in the 70s. The Iowa City Bird Club fielded five teams this year. Mark Brown and Jamie McCoy ranged the farthest, visiting Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, Lake Darling State Park, Lacey-Keosauqua State Park, Lake Sugema, Fox River Wildlife Management Area, and Shimek State Forest. Chris Caster, Linda Rudolph, and Chris Edwards visited Twinview Heights, Lake Macbride State Park, Macbride Nature-Recreation Area, and Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Rick Hollis, Sharon Somers, and Barry Buschelman birded Scales Point, Goose Lake, Pechman Creek Delta, River Junction, and Cone Marsh. Karen Disbrow, Ramona McGurk, Linda Fisher, and Mary Noble birded Iowa City, Coralville, West Branch, Weise Slough, Lake Macbride, and Sugar Bottom Recreation Area. Bob and Joan Stearns covered the Walford and Cedar Rapids areas.

Our club total was 113 species, down from 123 last year. It was a true team effort – every group added at least one species to the overall list. Mark and Jamie had the top list for the club with an outstanding 85 species. Overall, we found six waterfowl species, nine raptor species, and ten shorebird species. Seventeen warbler species were found, but only four sparrow species.

Some of the highlights included an immature Black-crowned Night-Heron near Mt. Sterling, Red-shouldered Hawks at Fox River WMA, Soras at Cone Marsh, Sandhill Cranes near Solon, American Golden-Plover and Stilt Sandpiper at the upper end of Lake Macbride, Olive-sided Flycatcher and White-eyed Vireos at Shimek State Forest, Philadelphia Vireo and a female Hooded Warbler at Macbride Nature-Recreation Area, Yellow-throated Warbler at Lake Macbride State Park, and two early White-throated Sparrows at Sugar Bottom Recreation Area.

Big Bluestem Audubon Society of Ames fielded 13 birders in four teams, and finished the day with 88 species. They were hampered by high water conditions and found only one shorebird species. Their highlights included Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Warbler, Canada Warbler, and Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

This means the Kent-Dinsmore trophy stays with the Iowa City Bird Club for another year, and will be presented to the club at the spring Iowa Ornithologists' Union meeting. It was a fun day for all involved, and we look forward to another Cy-Hawk challenge next fall!

SPECIES LIST

Canada Goose	Great Egret	Sora
Wood Duck	Green Heron	American Coot
Mallard	Black-crowned Night-Heron	Sandhill Crane
Blue-winged Teal	Turkey Vulture	American Golden-Plover
Northern Shoveler	Osprey	Killdeer
Northern Pintail	Bald Eagle	Spotted Sandpiper
Ring-necked Pheasant	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Solitary Sandpiper
Pied-billed Grebe	Cooper's Hawk	Greater Yellowlegs
Double-crested Cormorant	Red-shouldered Hawk	Lesser Yellowlegs
American White Pelican	Broad-winged Hawk	Stilt Sandpiper
Great Blue Heron	Red-tailed Hawk	Least Sandpiper

Pectoral Sandpiper	Red-eyed Vireo	Magnolia Warbler
Wilson's Snipe	Blue Jay	Bay-breasted Warbler
Franklin's Gull	American Crow	Blackburnian Warbler
Ring-billed Gull	Horned Lark	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Rock Pigeon	Tree Swallow	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Eurasian Collared-Dove	N. Rough-winged Swallow	Yellow-throated Warbler
Mourning Dove	Bank Swallow	Black-thr. Green Warbler
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Cliff Swallow	Canada Warbler
Barred Owl	Barn Swallow	Wilson's Warbler
Common Nighthawk	Black-capped Chickadee	Eastern Towhee
Chimney Swift	Tufted Titmouse	Chipping Sparrow
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	White-breasted Nuthatch	Song Sparrow
Belted Kingfisher	House Wren	White-throated Sparrow
Red-headed Woodpecker	Marsh Wren	Scarlet Tanager
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Carolina Wren	Northern Cardinal
Downy Woodpecker	Eastern Bluebird	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Hairy Woodpecker	American Robin	Indigo Bunting
Northern Flicker	Gray Catbird	Red-winged Blackbird
Pileated Woodpecker	European Starling	Eastern Meadowlark
American Kestrel	Cedar Waxwing	Brown-headed Cowbird
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Ovenbird	House Finch
Eastern Wood-Pewee	Black-and-white Warbler	American Goldfinch
Least Flycatcher	Tennessee Warbler	House Sparrow
Eastern Phoebe	Orange-crowned Warbler	Eurasian Tree Sparrow
Great Crested Flycatcher	Nashville Warbler	
Eastern Kingbird	Common Yellowthroat	TOTAL SPECIES 113
White-eyed Vireo	Hooded Warbler	
Philadelphia Vireo	Northern Parula	

Christmas Bird Count Sunday, December 18

This year's Iowa City Christmas Bird Count will be held Sunday, December 18. Co-compilers are Diana Pesek and Chris Edwards. If you wish to participate in the field or as a feeder watcher, please contact Diana at pesekle@imonmail.com or (319) 560-8393 by Wednesday, December 14.

We need participants in the field and as feeder watchers. If you wish to be in the field counting, you will be assigned to a group and your group leader will contact you to coordinate a meeting time and place. If you wish to be a feeder watcher, email Diana your address and

she will make sure you are in the count circle and will send you a form. 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 know others who may want to participate as feeder watchers, please encourage them and have them contact Diana.

On count day, we will meet at noon for a mid-day compilation and lunch in Room N1 (formerly 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 Gus' Food & Spirits, 2421 Coral Ct., Coralville. Our private room is available beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Membership Spotlight On: **Sharon Somers**

What is your occupation? Graphic artist, Girl Scout leader, volunteer, theatrical costume builder.

Where did you grow up? I'm from Arvada, Colorado, a suburb of Denver. My parents have some property in the mountains, so for many summers my brother and I were often outdoors roaming wild. I love wild spaces and being outdoors.

When and how did your interest in birds develop? As a kid when we camped there was always a stack of assorted field guides: mushrooms, flowers and birds. I loved searching, observing, and identifying. Mostly, though, I looked at wildflowers. We did always have a hummingbird feeder. My brother and I would hide behind the tree, put our finger under the feeder and try to get the hummer to sit on our finger. If we held real still it sometimes worked.

After my kids left for college I searched for some new activities and found the beginning birder course at Kent Park. It made sense. I loved nature and wildlife. Rick Hollis passed out his pamphlets on the local birding locations and I was absolutely stunned. I had no idea most of these places existed. I didn't know about Hawkeye Wildlife Area. The very next day I was out there driving around Hawkeye, listing my finds. At the eastern Gun Club Pond in the trees were a dozen Great Egrets in full breeding plumage showing off all their fine feathers. Wow, beautiful. Now there was a smaller one crossing the road... with big yellow feet. I looked it up – Snowy Egret – wrote it down and then went back to watching the showstoppers! It wasn't until a few days later when I got on the listserve for the first time and discovered that the real showstopper was the one with the big yellow feet.

What are your past and present positions with the Iowa City Bird Club? Currently I am helping out Linda Quinn with field trips for the club. The field trips are my favorite part of the club. I learn so much from the leaders and the other birders on the trip. It's like a big group effort with everyone searching, helping in the identification and adding little tidbits of knowledge.

Do you have a “most wanted” Iowa bird or a “nemesis” bird? Definitely my nemesis bird is that bratty Yellow-breasted Chat at Shimek State Forest. A group of us heard it sing and sing, so we looked and looked. It would move to another bush and sing, and we looked again, nothing. We gave up and it followed us part way up the trail singing all the way. We looked again, nothing. We hiked off, came back and it was still singing and moving from bush to bush. We dived into the bush trying to flush it out but nothing. None of us ever saw it! So, on my life list it is marked heard and NOT seen.

Tell us about a favorite birding experience or place outside of Iowa. Gray Jays feature prominently in some of my best birding stories. They are friendly, fearless and funny. When my kids were tiny we went camping at Crater Lake National Park in Oregon. All of us were sitting at the picnic table snacking on graham crackers that I had broken up. Out of nowhere, bold as brass, the camp robber flew in, landed in our midst, grabbed a graham cracker and took off, leaving stunned silence followed by an eruption of giggles from the kids.

A few years before I was at my parents' cabin with my two-year-old son at the picnic table when a camp robber flew to the nearest tree and eyed us and our box of crackers hungrily. I debated, “Feed it? Don't feed it?” I reached into the box and held up the cracker, only to discover the bird had disappeared. I

looked in the trees. I looked up the hill. I looked down the hill. And, galumphing up the hill, straight towards us was a small black bear! Agggggh!! Rule number one: Don't feed the camp robbers. Rule number two: Don't sit at picnic tables!

Do you have any hobbies or interests besides birding? On the other extreme I am deeply involved in stock investing. A friend and I started an investment club two years ago with a group of friends. And really we have a great time. We debate and argue stocks, the good, the bad, and the ugly!

Do you have any favorite movies or TV shows? My husband and I are suckers for costume dramas, particularly Jane Austen adaptations. *Pride and Prejudice*, 1995 and 2005; *North & South*, 2004; the new *Sherlock* series is great. Then on the opposite extreme, we like science fiction and fantasy like *Inception* and *The Martian*. I just watched *Stranger Things*. It was awesome.

Have you read any good books lately? Keeping in the costume drama theme, I'm in the middle of an interesting book called *How to Be a Victorian* by Ruth Goodman. She describes every aspect of a Victorian's life, dawn to dusk, poor to rich, and all with her quirky sense of humor.

New Books at the Iowa City Public Library

Listening to a Continent Sing: Birdsong by Bicycle from the Atlantic to the Pacific by Donald Kroodsmma. A birdsong expert (and author of *The Singing Life of Birds*) takes a ten-week, ten-state bicycle journey as he travels with his son from the Atlantic to the Pacific, lingering and listening to bird song. Illustrated with drawings of birds and scenes, and featuring QR codes that link to audio birdsong.

Baby Birds: An Artist Looks into the Nest by Julie Zickefoose. Both an art book and a natural history, featuring more than 400 watercolor paintings that show the development of seventeen different species of wild birds. The author shares insights about bird breeding biology, growth, and cognition.

Booming from the Mists of Nowhere: The Story of the Greater Prairie-Chicken by Greg Hoch. The author interweaves lyrical accounts from early settlers, hunters, and pioneer naturalists with recent scientific research on the grouse and its favored grasslands.

Peterson Reference Guide to Woodpeckers of North America by Stephen A. Shunk. A complete guide to the natural history, ecology, and conservation of North America's 22 woodpecker species. It includes over 250 stunning photographs of woodpeckers in their natural habitats, plus easy-to-read figures and range maps.

One Wild Bird at a Time: Portraits of Individual Lives by Bernd Heinrich. The acclaimed scientist returns to his great love: close, day-to-day observations of individual wild birds, which lead to both fascinating questions and startling discoveries.

Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Northern Central America by Jesse Fagan. A field guide to the birds of Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, abundantly illustrated and with comprehensive coverage of both endemic and migrant birds.

Fastest Things on Wings: Rescuing Hummingbirds in Hollywood by Terry Masear. Stories from one of the busiest hummingbird rehabilitators in the country.



Introduction to Birding Course March 21 – April 30, 2017 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 five 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 per household is \$15 for a paper subscription, \$10 for an email subscription, and \$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 Algren 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 depart from Kohl's parking lot, 2795 Commerce Dr., Coralville, unless otherwise noted. For more information, call Karen Disbrow at (319) 430-0315.

Tuesday, March 21, 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, March 25, 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 28, 7 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING II by Rick Hollis. Continuation of first session topics.

Sunday, April 2, 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 4, 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 8, 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 11, 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.

Tuesday, April 18, 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 22, 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, April 25, 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, April 30, 8 a.m. Field Trip to HICKORY HILL PARK. Late April to May is prime time for viewing warblers in Iowa, and this park is an eastern Iowa hotspot for viewing migrant warblers and other songbirds.

Field Trip and Meeting Reports

September 11, Pelican Festival at Hawkeye Wildlife Area. The weather was gorgeous, but attendance at our annual pelican festival on the north side of Hawkeye Wildlife Area was down this year due to the Hwy. 965 bridge closure. For those who attended, the pelicans were very cooperative, coming close to the shore and often flying just overhead.

I would like to thank the many club members – Barry Buschelman, Jerry Denning, Rick Hollis, Ramona McGurk, Mary Noble, Linda Quinn, Ben Rowold, and Linda Rudolph – who volunteered with setup and parking and helped visitors view the pelicans at the spotting scopes. Special thanks to Bruce Gardner, who always arrives early and stays late. I hope I have not forgotten anyone.

Several organizations provided fun activities for the kids, the most popular of which was face painting funded by the Corps of Engineers, Iowa Audubon, and the Iowa City Bird Club. A big “thank you” to Pat Schlarbaum of the IDNR Wildlife Diversity Group, who comes every year with spotting scopes and gives talks. Next year we hope there will be NO ROAD WORK which has hampered us the past two years.

– Karen Disbrow

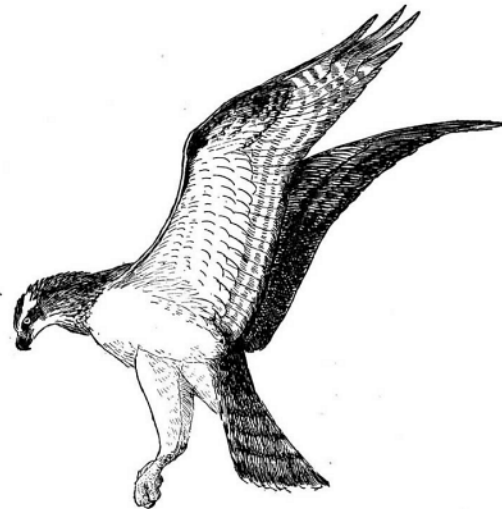
September 15, Meeting. Joan Schnabel brought Gonzo, a rescued Turkey Vulture who was hatched in 2015 in Minnesota. Joan takes Gonzo to events to teach awareness of this valuable species – and Gonzo loves audiences! Joan talked about his rescue and about the habits and migration of Turkey Vultures.

From the middle of March into April, large numbers of Turkey Vultures can be found on the rock face of the Coralville Dam. Then they disperse to mate and raise their young. They like barn lofts and abandoned buildings that

have a floor where very little nesting material is used. Females lay two eggs, and the parents raise the young together. After fledging, the family group scavenges together. Young Turkey Vultures have a black head which differs from the bare red head of the adults. Gonzo still had a lot of black on his head, proving him to be from a late hatch. Vultures do not drink water, instead getting their moisture from their food. Gonzo, however, will drink from a tippy cup! Vultures have an extremely acute sense of smell, and locate their food in this way. Turkey Vultures that nest in the northern U.S. migrate to Central and South America, whereas vultures that nest in the southern U.S. tend to be more sedentary.

Attendees: Karen Disbrow, Linda Fisher, Bruce Gardner, Wendelin Guentner, Peter Hansen, Jackie Koch, Nancy Lynch, Ramona McGurk, Dawn Pawlowski, Linda Quinn, Linda Rudolph, Sharon Somers, Donna Warner.

– Karen Disbrow



September 24, Annual Hawk Watch at Stainbrook Preserve. For the first time in three years, we were back at our traditional hawk watch location at Stainbrook Preserve near Mehaffey Bridge. Conditions weren't favorable for a good hawk migration, but it was a pleasant morning to be outside. Heavy low clouds lingered for several hours before giving way to sunny skies and a slight SE breeze.

Several Bald Eagles were flying around the reservoir, and after the cloud cover started to clear we saw several Broad-winged and Red-tailed Hawks. Turkey Vultures were visible for most of the day, and we saw several kettles of a dozen or more birds. The highlight of the day was a Merlin which powered over us from north to south. There was some discussion whether the bird may have been a small Peregrine Falcon, but we ultimately settled on Merlin due to the relatively small, compact structure and lack of a strong facial pattern.

Before the raptors started flying, we occupied ourselves with the small flocks of warblers, chickadees, and other passerines moving around the edge of the clearing. We also enjoyed watching flocks of American White Pelicans soaring effortlessly in the sky.

The Iowa Raptor Project team conducted a hawk watch at the same time at nearby Macbride Nature-Recreation Area. From their vantage point, they recorded: Turkey Vulture 97, Osprey 1, Bald Eagle 1, Sharp-shinned Hawk 2, Cooper's Hawk 6, Broad-winged Hawk 7, Red-tailed Hawk 2, unidentified raptor 1.

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Linda Fisher, Nikki Herbst, Pat Kieffer, Dorothy Lunning, Cheryl Miller, Linda Quinn, Mark and Deb Rolfes, Linda Rudolph, Bill Scheible, Joan Schnabel.

Raptors (6 species, 73 individuals): Turkey Vulture 59, Bald Eagle 5, *accipiter* species 1, Broad-winged Hawk 4, Red-tailed Hawk 3, Merlin 1.

Other Birds (26 species): Canada Goose, Mallard, American White Pelican, Franklin's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Chimney Swift, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, House Wren, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, Tennessee Warbler, Northern

Parula, Bay-breasted Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch.

– Chris Edwards



October 13, Executive Board Meeting at the Coralville Public Library. In attendance were President, Karen Disbrow; Treasurer, Bruce Gardner; Field Trip Co-Coordinators, Linda Quinn and Sharon Somers; Newsletter Editor, Chris Edwards; Webmaster, Jim Scheib; and past Presidents Chris Caster and Rick Hollis. Past President Ed Allgood was unable to attend. There were four primary topics of discussion.

Item 1: Publication of personal phone numbers and email addresses. This issue was discussed due to concerns about having the personal phone numbers and email addresses of officers and field trip leaders on the club web site and on public flyers, which could lead to identity theft and email spam. We decided to continue publishing personal phone numbers and email addresses of officers and trip leaders in our newsletter (unless requested otherwise, of course). But we will remove them from our web site and from flyers which are distributed throughout the community, and instead provide a general club email address for contacts. Anyone wishing to still have their personal contact information on the flyer can do so by letting the committee know when setting up trips.

Item 2: New logo. There was discussion about replacing the club's current logo bird, the

Harris's Sparrow. For many years a black-and-white Harris's Sparrow has been featured on our newsletter masthead, even though the species is infrequently seen in our area. Two species were proposed for a new logo, which would be featured not only on our newsletter, but also in color on the web site and on club clothing items. The Yellow-throated Warbler was proposed because of its crisp black, yellow and white plumage which would look sharp in both color and B&W; it is a spring and summer resident in our area; and it's a member of the warbler family which our club is known for due to our spring Warbler Walks in Hickory Hill Park. The Tufted Titmouse was proposed because of its distinctive outline and the subtle beauty of its plumage; it is a year-round resident in our area; and it is well known to many people as a visitor to bird feeders. A membership vote by email will be held in early 2017 to select one of these two species, and then club members will develop the new artwork for the newsletter, web site, and clothing.

Item 3: Karen and Bruce would like to be replaced as officers. A Nominating Committee was established consisting of Linda Quinn, Bruce Gardner, Rick Hollis, Jim Scheib, and Chris Caster. Terms are for three years and a vote will take place at our May meeting.

Item 4: As a way to reduce our paper use and be more green, it was proposed to reduce the membership rate for digital subscriptions from \$15 to \$10, which may encourage more members to sign up for this option. The cost of printing and mailing the newsletter to a household is approximately \$5 per year, so the effect on our club finances will be minimal – we are reducing our revenues, but also reducing our costs. Our overall funding will decline about \$100 annually because of the 20 members already signed up for digital subscriptions. This new rate was subsequently approved by the membership at our October meeting.

– Karen Disbrow

October 15, Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge. Ten participants carpooled to this refuge near Prairie City, east of Des Moines. We were greeted at the refuge by Karen Viste-Sparkman, Wildlife Biologist for the refuge, and her husband Stuart Sparkman, who were very fine hosts and guides and are both experienced birders. It was a very nice day for walking the trails. The temperature got up to around 77 degrees. It was overcast and windy with occasional light mist. The prairie species were maybe a little suppressed by the clouds and wind, but we had excellent looks at LeConte's Sparrows, and as we left we saw a lot of migrating Franklin's Gulls. It was interesting to see the large expanses of prairie at this site, and the buffalo and elk.

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Chad and Colleen Davis, Jerry Denning (co-leader), Drew Dillman, Terri Macey, Ramona McGurk, Connie Petersen, Ben Rowold (co-leader), and Jim Trepka. Sharon Somers, who arranged the trip but took ill with bronchitis, was with us in spirit.

Birds (28 species): Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Franklin's Gull, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, Barn Swallow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, European Starling, Orange-crowned Warbler, LeConte's Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Harris's Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– Jerry Denning and Ben Rowold



October 20, Meeting. Birders, scientists and photographers alike are fascinated by birds and other animals which use leks for mate selection. Linda and Robert Scarth have photographed some of the birds, insects, mammals and reptiles that use leks or arenas where females choose males with which to mate. In their presentation “Leks: Arenas for Mate Selection” they discussed definitions, lek types, characteristics, courtship and theories along with images of some of the species which lek. They utilized some audio and video in their presentation while discussing their experiences observing lekking species which they have photographed in North America, South America and Africa.

There was also a short report on “Prevalence of Zoonotic Diseases” and how to prevent them by Angela Toepp, Dr. Christine Petersen, and Kelsey Willardson of the UI College of Public Health.

During the business portion of the meeting, a motion was passed to offer a membership rate for digital subscriptions of \$10 per year, starting in January 2017. We currently have about 20 members receiving digital subscriptions, and if you have paid ahead, Bruce will work with you to adjust your payments. Another motion was passed to replace the club’s Harris’s Sparrow logo with another species, either Yellow-throated Warbler or Tufted Titmouse. The president will conduct a membership survey by email in January to select the new species.

Attendees: Barry Buschelman, Drew Dillman, Karen Disbrow, John Fieselmann, Linda Fisher, Bruce Gardner, Peter Hansen, Rick Hollis, Doina Johnson, Tom and Carol Rosenberger, Ben Rowold, Robert and Linda Scarth, Jim Scheib.

– Karen Disbrow

October 23, Turkey Creek Nature Preserve.

We had good weather – sunny with little wind – for our trip to this Bur Oak Land Trust preserve along Sugar Bottom Road. The group got great looks at Purple Finches, Brown Creeper,

bluebirds, and a flyby Pileated Woodpecker to start the trip off well. Targets were sparrows and most of us saw Swamp Sparrow in the prairie grasses, a small group of late Field Sparrows in the prairie edge, and a lone Fox Sparrow up high in a bare tree. Chad found an Orange-crowned Warbler which many got to see briefly. There were lots of flyby Cedar Waxwings, goldfinches, and robins. We ended in the parking lot with a group of soaring American White Pelicans to send us off.

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Fawn Bowden, Chad and Colleen Davis, Jerry Denning, Jason Paulios (leader), Connie Peterson, Linda Quinn, Ben Rowold.

Birds (39 species): Canada Goose, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, 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, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Orange-crowned Warbler, Eastern Towhee, Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch.

– Jason Paulios



November 5, Saylorville Reservoir. Eleven adventuresome birders met up to explore territory outside the traditional Eastern Iowa area. A trip to the “big waters” of Iowa was promised as the field trip destination. After some discussion in the parking lot, Saylorville Lake was the vote winner, and so off to Saylorville we went. We were intrigued by the previous week’s reports of Pacific Loons, Western Grebes, and Black Scoters. Sadly, by the day of our trip, none of those birds had stuck around and our field trip did not produce any fall rarities. What it did produce was an absolutely perfect November day, with light winds, a glassy lake, great viewing conditions (considering the long-distance scoping we had to do), and mostly sunny skies with a high in Des Moines of 75 degrees. Yes, 75 degrees in November! And no gale-force winds blowing across the top of the dam, for once!

Part of the plan for going west to the “big waters” was to show our local birders around an area they weren’t familiar with, and that we did accomplish. We checked all of the viewing areas around Saylorville (with the exception of Oak Grove, which was closed for road work), and also visited Jester Park, where we stopped and had a leisurely lunch while scoping the area, which had a higher than average water level.

While the rare waterfowl had departed (although a couple of the loons we saw were quite intriguing, but we just couldn’t definitely pin them down to “Pacific”), a few raptors put on a nice show, including two Merlins. One was a flyover at the dam, and the other was spotted working the Sandpiper area, eventually landing in a treetop and posing for perfect scope views. Definitely a treat!

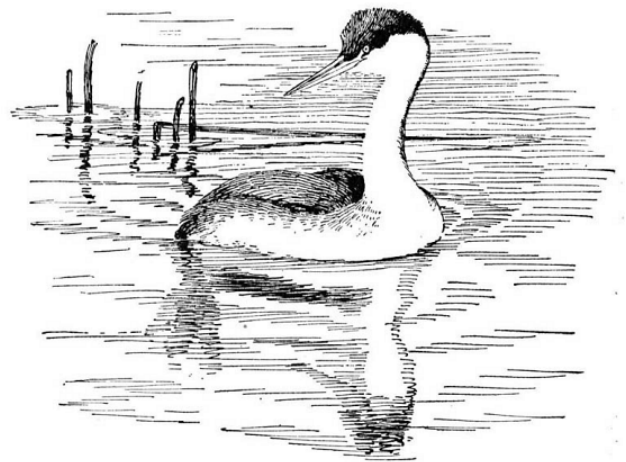
Total bird species seen were only 37, as we concentrated on waterfowl and didn’t do any trail walking.

Participants: Barry Buschelman, Chad, Colleen, and Sophia Davis, Jerry Denning, Therese

Guedon, Jamie McCoy, Diana Pesek (leader), Linda Quinn, Linda Rudolph, Sharon Somers.

Birds (37 species): Canada Goose, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Bald Eagle, Cooper’s Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Coot, Killdeer, Bonaparte’s Gull, Franklin’s Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Merlin, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, European Starling, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco.

– Diana Pesek



November 13, Amana Lily Lake and Nature Trail. The day started at 38°F, with barely a breeze and sunny. We were hoping for the start of the duck migration, Trumpeter Swans and Eurasian Tree Sparrows.

We started at the Lily Pond parking lot on the highway. Across the highway in a freshly plowed field was a flock of 200+ Ring-billed Gulls. On a power pole was a Red-tailed Hawk. As we watched, another Red-tail came in to harass the first, or was it courting? Scoping the pond we found shovelers, coots, and a Pied-billed Grebe. We drove around the west side to walk along the dike between the pond and the

millrace. There are two places to park. One is in the neighborhood west of the pond – drive all the way back, then turn right and park at the dead end. For the other access, pass the neighborhood and turn left into the factory truck entrance, pass the house, and park next to the building near the colorful metal footbridge. We parked there. Crossing the bridge is an area with trees and a creek. Here we heard cardinals, crows, goldfinches, and Cedar Waxwings. Continuing toward the pond is a nice shallow wetland area with trees and snags lining it. Looking towards the pond we found Gadwall, Mallards, Canada Geese, and Green-winged Teal. We got wonderful looks of the iridescent green heads of the male teal.

Walking the dike we got our first sighting of two Trumpeter Swans and two American White Pelicans. The swans were very close to the dike, but the trail is heavily used so they seem used to people. We moved closer and got amazing looks of the pair. Continuing down the dike there is a small spit into the pond with dead trees. This is where the Eurasian Tree Sparrows have been nesting. We got closer and Linda Rudolph spotted two in a bush, but we spooked them and they flew off.

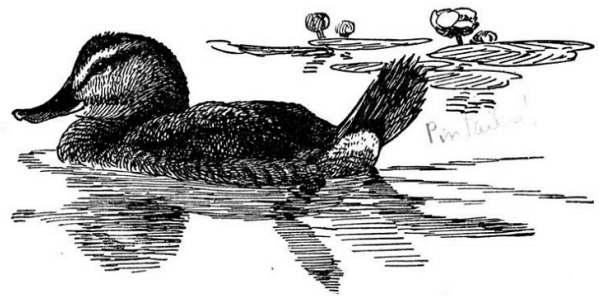
As we headed back and over the bridge, shadows moved across the ground. Looking up, we saw four Trumpeter Swans fly right over our heads. They were immediately followed by another pair of swans, one of which gave us a trumpeting sendoff!

We continued the morning at the Amana Nature Trail. The very beginning of the trail is a fairly open prairie-oak savanna, a nice area that is good for woodpeckers, bluebirds and sparrows – but not on this day. It was a gorgeous, sunny day to be out with good company.

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Chad Davis, Paul and Charmaine Kleiber, Ramona McGurk, Connie Peterson, Linda Quinn, Linda Rudolph, Sharon Somers (leader).

Birds (28 species): Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Gadwall, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Pied-billed Grebe, American White Pelican, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– Sharon Somers



November 17, Meeting. Doug Harr, President of Iowa Audubon, gave a talk about the organization and its goals. He covered the formation of Iowa Audubon as a separate entity from the National Audubon Society (NAS), discussed the monies that have been bequeathed to the organization, and talked about the many projects the group as been involved with over the years up to the present. Doug sits on the board of Minnesota Audubon. That group is still affiliated with the national organization, and funding from Iowa members of NAS are funneled to Iowa Audubon through Minnesota Audubon.

If you would like to help with habitat conservation in Iowa, become a member of Iowa Audubon for \$10 per year. Or consider the group in your will. For more information, visit www.iowaaudubon.org or contact Karen Disbrow, who is the Iowa City Bird Club's representative on the Iowa Audubon board. There has never been a more urgent time to act

to protect our natural areas and save our rare species.

Attendees: Drew and Judy Dillman, Karen Disbrow, Vic and Nola Edwards, Linda Fisher, Bruce Gardner, Mary Noble, Linda Quinn, Sharon Somers.

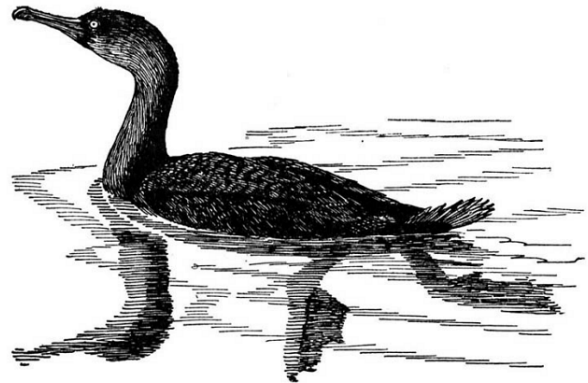
– Karen Disbrow

**Help Wanted:
Assistant Events Coordinator**

Duties include planning and coordination of four, well-established events. Each event is done in partnership with another community group(s). On-the-job training provided by helping ICBC President this coming winter and spring. Our events goal is to promote birding and our club through community events. If you are interested, please contact Karen Disbrow at k_disbrow@yahoo.com or 319-430-0315.

**Membership Renewal
Reminder**

It’s time to send in your membership dues for 2017. Our annual membership dues per household are \$15 for a paper subscription, \$10 for an email subscription, and \$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 per household are \$15 for a paper subscription, \$10 for an email subscription, and \$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 per household are \$15 for a paper subscription, \$10 for an email subscription, and \$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 club information, contact President Karen Disbrow at 319-430-0315 or k_disbrow@yahoo.com.

To lead or suggest a field trip, contact Field Trip Coordinator Linda Quinn at 319-330-3328 or quinnhenry@msn.com.

Visit our web site at www.icbirds.org. You may contact Webmaster Jim Scheib at 319-337-5206 or jim@tenlongview.net. Also visit Iowa City Bird Club on Facebook.

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