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# Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

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Volume 36 Number 2

September 2016

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## Schedule

**Field trips** depart from **Kohl's, 2795 Commerce Drive, Coralville**, unless otherwise noted; meet in the SE corner of the parking lot. Please contact the leader in advance if you plan to meet the group at the trip destination. Many of our trips are accessible to people with disabilities; for more information contact the 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.

**\*\*\* PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW FIELD TRIP MEETING LOCATION ABOVE \*\*\***

**September 7, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk.** Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 319-665-3141.

**September 11, Sunday, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Pelican Festival at Hawkeye Wildlife Area,** 2564 Amana Road NW, Swisher. **The Hwy. 965 bridge over Coralville Reservoir is closed** – take I-380 to the Swisher exit, then Hwy. 965 south to Amana Road. See page 9 for more information. We need volunteer assistance with setup, parking, and staffing DNR-supplied spotting scopes – call Karen Disbrow at 319-430-0315 if you are available.

**September 15, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting.** Joan Schnabel of the RARE Group (Raptor Advocacy, Rehabilitation, and Education) will introduce Gonzo the Turkey Vulture and will discuss raptor migration.

**September 18, Sunday, Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge.** Get a team together and signup for this fun event by noon on September 17. See page 3 for more information.

**September 21, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk.** Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 319-665-3141,

**September 24, Saturday. 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Hawk Watch at Stainbrook Preserve,** located along Mehaffey Bridge Road just north of Sugar Bottom Recreation Area. Bring a lawn chair and join us on the hill to watch for migrating raptors. There will also be hawk watching with the Iowa Raptor Center staff at Bluestem Shelter and live raptor presentations at 10:30 and 1:00 at the Raptor Center, at nearby Macbride Nature-Recreation Area. Chris Edwards, 319-430-4732.

**October 5, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk.** Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 319-665-3141.

**Continued on next page →**

## Schedule (continued)

**October 15, Saturday, 7 a.m. Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge** in Jasper County. This is an all-day trip with driving and hiking at various points in the refuge. Trip will be co-led by Stuart Sparkman and Karen Viste-Sparkman, Wildlife Biologist with this 5600-acre tallgrass prairie and oak savanna. Target birds are Smith's Longspur, LeConte's Sparrow, and other migrant sparrows. Pack a lunch to eat at the Prairie Learning and Visitor Center, then take a 5-mile auto tour through the bison/elk enclosure. Meet at Kohl's parking lot in Coralville. Sharon Somers, 319-400-3959.

**October 19, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk.** Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 319-665-3141,

**October 20, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting.** Linda and Robert Scarth, photographers, authors and naturalists, will present "**Leks: Arenas for Mate Selection.**" Learn how birds such as grouse, mammals, reptiles, and insects all use leks for mate selection.

**October 23, Sunday, 7:45 a.m. Turkey Creek Preserve,** a Bur Oak Land Trust property in NE Johnson County. This is a half-day trip with hiking. Target birds are sparrows and other fall migrants. **Meet at the North Dodge Hy-Vee parking lot.** Jason Paulios, [jasonpaulios@gmail.com](mailto:jasonpaulios@gmail.com).

**November 2, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk.** Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 319-665-3141.

**November 5, Saturday, 7:00 a.m. Lake Red Rock or Saylorville Reservoir,** depending on recent reports, for gulls, loons, and migrating waterfowl. This is an all-day trip with driving and light walking at various points around the reservoir. Pack a lunch, or fast food options are available. Bring a scope if you have one, as most birds are distant. Meet at Kohl's parking lot in Coralville. Diana Pesek, 319-560-8393 or [keesiemom@yahoo.com](mailto:keesiemom@yahoo.com).

**November 13, Sunday, 8:00 a.m. Amana Lily Lake** for Trumpeter Swans, Eurasian Tree Sparrows, and migrating waterfowl, plus a short stop at Amana Nature Trail. This half-day trip will have some short walks on gravel paths. Meet at Kohl's parking lot in Coralville. Sharon Somers, 319-400-3959.

**November 16, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk.** Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 319-665-3141.

**November 17, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting.** Doug Harr, photographer, naturalist, and President of Iowa Audubon, will talk about the projects Iowa Audubon currently has in the works.

**December 18, Sunday. Iowa City Christmas Bird Count.** To signup, contact Diana Pesek at 319-560-8393 or [keesiemom@yahoo.com](mailto:keesiemom@yahoo.com). More information will be provided in the December newsletter.

## Other Dates of Note

**September 15, Thursday, 6 p.m. A Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act at Macbride Auditorium,** featuring a lecture by Stan Temple, a round-table discussion, and an open house in the Hall of Birds.

**November 12, Saturday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Iowa Young Birders Waterfowl Migration and Conservation Day at Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge** near Wapello. To register, visit [www.iowayoungbirders.org](http://www.iowayoungbirders.org).

## From the President's Desk

Karen Disbrow

Fall migration is underway, and it's always an exciting time to be out birding. Warblers and shorebirds are on the move, and already some rarities have shown up including a spectacular Swallow-tailed Kite at Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area, which was seen on one of our recent field trips. We hope you will join us for one or more of the fall field trips and other events we've got planned.

Linda Quinn has taken on the job of Field Trip Coordinator for the club, and has enlisted Sharon Somers and Donna Warner on a committee to help her. They have been soliciting feedback and have scheduled many interesting trips for this fall, including statewide birding hotspots as well as local areas. We have chosen a new location as our default field trip meeting location for carpooling: Kohl's, 2795 Commerce Drive in Coralville. We will meet in the SE corner of the parking lot, directly across the street from McDonald's. There is plenty of parking and it is close to I-80 and I-380.

If you have not yet signed up for the Iowa City Bird Club Facebook group, consider doing so to get lots of good information including photographs, directions to the latest sightings, etc.

There are several special events in September, including the Pelican Festival at Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area, the third annual Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge, and our annual Hawk Watch which is moving back to Stainbrook Preserve on Mehaffey Bridge Road. I hope to see you in the field this fall!

Good Birding,  
Karen

## Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge

### September 18

The third annual Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge is Sunday, September 18. Join us for this friendly, spirited competition as teams from the Iowa City Bird Club (and Hawkeye friends throughout the state) compete against teams from Big Bluestem Audubon Society of Ames (and Cyclone friends throughout the state) to find the most bird species in one day. Each club will work in teams to compile one bird list to compete against the other club.

To participate, form a team of two or more birders (teams that can fit into one vehicle usually work best), devise your birding strategy and logistical plan, and email your team name, captain's name and phone number, and team members' names to Karen Disbrow at [k\\_disbrow@yahoo.com](mailto:k_disbrow@yahoo.com) by noon at Saturday, September 17.

On Sunday, September 18, from midnight to midnight, your team may bird for as much or as little as you like, anywhere within the State of Iowa, keeping a list of all species found. For a species to count, at least two members of the team must positively identify each bird, whether seen or heard. Most importantly, have fun!

After the competition, email your bird list to Chris Edwards at [credwards@aol.com](mailto:credwards@aol.com) by 5 p.m. Wednesday, September 21. The results from all teams will be compiled into one list for the Iowa City Bird Club. The club with the most species wins bragging rights and the coveted Tom Kent-Jim Dinsmore traveling trophy. Special recognition will also be given to the individual team with the most species. Since the Iowa City Bird Club won the first two annual competitions, the trophy currently resides in Iowa City – let's try to keep it that way!

## Iowa Bird of Mouth

Supported by the Iowa Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts, Iowa Bird of Mouth (IBOM) is an online crowd-sourced poetry project honoring Iowa birds at [www.iowabirdofmouth.com](http://www.iowabirdofmouth.com). The project will run from September 1, 2016, through August 31, 2017.

IBOM seeks the words and stories of bird lovers, bird watchers, writers, artists, musicians, teachers, students, scientists, non-profits, federal and state organizations, environmental stewards, and nature lovers from around the world—regardless of age, education, publication history, location or writing style.

IBOM is an inclusive space for urban, suburban and rural dwellers. IBOM is more than a writing prompt; contributors can use the online space to connect personally to the environment and the people within it. IBOM is not about A bird; it's about OUR birds—in OUR trees, on OUR streets, outside OUR windows, in OUR memories.

Starting September 1, 2016, go to [www.iowabirdofmouth.com](http://www.iowabirdofmouth.com) and type up to 300 words per day into the submission window. Your submission can be written in any style—from rhyming, metered verse, to free-flowing prose, to an actual memory—or even just a one-word thought.

You can type in your own words or a collective piece of writing from a group, such as a class or club. Your words will then be added to the crowd-sourced poem for that month. You will have the option of submitting your name/group's name to the contributor's list. You can submit words to the poem every 24 hours.

Every month, the spotlight bird will change. September, American Goldfinch; October, Ring-necked Pheasant; November, American Crow; December, Eastern Screech-Owl; January, Bald Eagle; February, Northern

Cardinal; March, Red-winged Blackbird; April, Trumpeter Swan; May, American Robin; June, Eastern Bluebird.

The goal of IBOM is to increase our sense of collective connection to the environment. Crowd-sourcing offers a great opportunity to expand our definitions of community and engagement.

– Jennifer Knox, Curator, Iowa Bird of Mouth

## Iowa City Bird Club Now Has a Google Group!

**Q:** How do I join?

**A:** An invitation to join will be coming to your email inbox later this month. It's a private membership, open only to dues-paying members.

**Q:** What communication will I receive?

**A:** Reminders for field trips, meetings and events. Field trip reminders will contain in-depth details. Only one reminder per event will be sent, about one week in advance.

**Q:** Why the change?

**A:** For ease of communication with our large group of 125 members. Club officers are the managers of the group and the only ones to send communications.

**Q:** Can I opt out?

**A:** Yes! Simply do not accept the invitation. However, if you don't answer the initial invitation, we'll send a second in case you missed the first. To join later, or to opt out later, simply contact one of the club officers.

**Q:** Is this group like IA-BIRD?

**A:** No, it is not a chat-discussion format. Our setting is email notification only, so you cannot reply to the message.

**Q:** Do I have to create a Google account?

**A:** No. Once you accept the invitation to join, you can receive and read posts without a Google account.

## 2016 Johnson County Spring Migration Count

### Chris Caster

The Johnson County Spring Count was held on Saturday, May 7. Due to our tradition of holding it on the day before Mother's Day, this was the earliest date in May that it could be held—fitting for what seemed to be an early spring. It was a beautiful day with temperatures between 50 and 73 degrees and clear skies. Winds weren't too bad out of the NW at 10-15 mph. Although we were missing a number of our stalwarts, 31 individuals participated in some manner. And about a dozen of us got together for lunch at the North Liberty Community Center.

It was a pretty good day to find birds and our species count of 163 matched our number from last year. New to the count were a Merlin pair nesting in Iowa City and an injured Dark-eyed Junco in Elizabeth Aubrey's backyard. We managed ten species of waterfowl including Snow Goose and Canvasback. Sixteen shorebirds were pretty good, and 26 warblers were quite good. Squire Point hosted Kentucky and Cerulean Warblers and Louisiana Waterthrush, and Barbara Beaumont reported a Hooded Warbler from her wooded property in Coralville.

A Common Gallinule remained at Swan Lake for the count. A Black-billed Cuckoo was also at Swan Lake. Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows were in the field south of the Gun Club Ponds. Bonaparte's Gulls and a Common Loon were at Terry Trueblood Recreation Area. American Woodcock and Wilson's Snipes were at Williams Prairie. Sandhill Cranes could be heard calling from Williams Prairie also. An Acadian Flycatcher was at Lake Macbride. Northern Mockingbird was at campground at Sugar Bottom Recreation Area. Harris's Sparrows were in two locations, and a Clay-colored Sparrow was south of the Johnson County Administration Building.

The most notable miss may have been Eastern Screech-Owl. But Great Egret, American Bittern, Prothonotary Warbler, Marsh Wren, and Western Meadowlark were also missed.

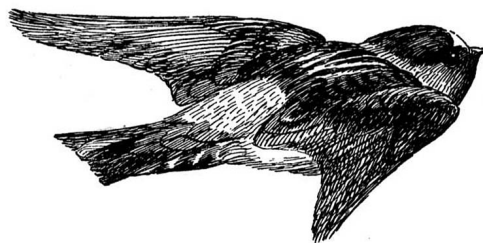
Thanks to everyone for helping.

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Barbara Beaumont, Kyle and Dena Belcher, Mark Brown, Chris Caster, Chad and Colleen Davis, Jerry Denning, Drew Dillman, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Linda Fisher, Therese Guedon, Rick Hollis, Trenton Lampe, Andy and Katie Long, Mark Madsen, Jason McCurdy, Dan McRoberts, Jason Paulios, Diana Pesek, Mark and Deb Rolfes, Dan and Jim Rose, Sharon Somers, Chris and Jody Troyer, and Donna Warner.

#### SPECIES LIST

Snow Goose	1	Ring-necked Pheasant	28	Cooper's Hawk	6
Canada Goose	139	Wild Turkey	16	Broad-winged Hawk	1
Wood Duck	44	Common Loon	1	Red-tailed Hawk	9
Mallard	61	Pied-billed Grebe	3	Sora	4
Blue-winged Teal	41	Double-crested Cormorant	17	Common Gallinule	1
Northern Shoveler	1	American White Pelican	100	American Coot	60
Green-winged Teal	1	Great Blue Heron	3	Sandhill Crane	2
Canvasback	1	Green Heron	1	Semipalmated Plover	14
Lesser Scaup	2	Turkey Vulture	38	Killdeer	50
Hooded Merganser	13	Osprey	2	Spotted Sandpiper	10
Northern Bobwhite	1	Bald Eagle	5	Solitary Sandpiper	4

Greater Yellowlegs	2	Red-eyed Vireo	24	Bay-breasted Warbler	1
Lesser Yellowlegs	37	Blue Jay	75	Blackburnian Warbler	6
Stilt Sandpiper	1	American Crow	24	Yellow Warbler	48
Dunlin	81	Horned Lark	2	Chestnut-sided Warbler	11
Baird's Sandpiper	1	Purple Martin	39	Blackpoll Warbler	2
Least Sandpiper	130	Tree Swallow	93	Palm Warbler	9
White-rumped Sandpiper	1	N. Rough-winged Swallow	1	Yellow-rumped Warbler	86
Pectoral Sandpiper	69	Bank Swallow	6	Yellow-throated Warbler	3
Semipalmated Sandpiper	4	Cliff Swallow	8	Black-thr. Green Warbler	14
Short-billed Dowitcher	1	Barn Swallow	55	Wilson's Warbler	2
Wilson's Snipe	3	Black-capped Chickadee	59	Eastern Towhee	17
American Woodcock	1	Tufted Titmouse	16	Chipping Sparrow	34
Bonaparte's Gull	3	White-breasted Nuthatch	19	Clay-colored Sparrow	1
Ring-billed Gull	10	House Wren	77	Field Sparrow	22
Caspian Tern	8	Sedge Wren	7	Vesper Sparrow	1
Forster's Tern	2	Carolina Wren	2	Lark Sparrow	7
Rock Pigeon	18	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	23	Savannah Sparrow	3
Eurasian Collared-Dove	1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	22	Grasshopper Sparrow	5
Mourning Dove	63	Eastern Bluebird	21	Henslow's Sparrow	1
Black-billed Cuckoo	1	Gray-cheeked Thrush	2	Song Sparrow	38
Great Horned Owl	1	Swainson's Thrush	16	Lincoln's Sparrow	3
Barred Owl	17	Wood Thrush	4	Swamp Sparrow	5
Chimney Swift	9	American Robin	171	White-throated Sparrow	222
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	2	Gray Catbird	47	Harris's Sparrow	7
Belted Kingfisher	6	Brown Thrasher	11	White-crowned Sparrow	33
Red-headed Woodpecker	27	Northern Mockingbird	1	Dark-eyed Junco	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	35	European Starling	99	Scarlet Tanager	13
Downy Woodpecker	33	Cedar Waxwing	29	Northern Cardinal	109
Hairy Woodpecker	8	Ovenbird	12	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	49
Northern Flicker	7	Louisiana Waterthrush	3	Indigo Bunting	13
Pileated Woodpecker	5	Northern Waterthrush	19	Dickcissel	2
American Kestrel	6	Golden-winged Warbler	16	Bobolink	5
Merlin	2	Blue-winged Warbler	6	Red-winged Blackbird	476
Peregrine Falcon	2	Black-and-white Warbler	17	Eastern Meadowlark	37
Acadian Flycatcher	2	Tennessee Warbler	66	Common Grackle	67
Least Flycatcher	14	Orange-crowned Warbler	3	Brown-headed Cowbird	79
Eastern Phoebe	16	Nashville Warbler	49	Orchard Oriole	9
Great Crested Flycatcher	18	Kentucky Warbler	1	Baltimore Oriole	84
Eastern Kingbird	19	Common Yellowthroat	101	House Finch	12
White-eyed Vireo	1	Hooded Warbler	1	American Goldfinch	166
Bell's Vireo	1	American Redstart	65	House Sparrow	44
Yellow-throated Vireo	14	Cerulean Warbler	3	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	16
Blue-headed Vireo	8	Northern Parula	13		
Warbling Vireo	39	Magnolia Warbler	2	TOTAL SPECIES	163



## Membership Spotlight On: Linda Quinn

**What is your occupation?** Retired educator, Iowa City Schools and Grant Wood AEA.

**Tell us about your family.** Husband Gary, and 26-year-old son Ross.

**Where did you grow up?** In the Prairie Pothole region of north-central Iowa.

**When and how did your interest in birds develop?** My interest goes way back to childhood years on a farm, with Western Meadowlarks and Red-headed Woodpeckers, which were very common back then. I loved the Western Meadowlark's song. But it's only been the past five years that I've been a real "birder" that took off with the Iowa City Bird Club Beginning Birder class.

**Did you have any birding mentors?** Sharon Somers, Linda Rudolph, and all the wonderful ICBC trip leaders.

**Do you remember the first bird club event you attended?** An early memorable one was a full-day trip – not sure where, but it was cold and late winter. It seemed long and hard to a beginner like me, but this part was such a hoot! We used walkie-talkies to communicate with the other cars. I distinctly remember Karen radioing "Bird on the wire! Bird on the wire!" We'd stop and check, which went on for many miles.

**What are your past and present positions with the ICBC?** My new position with the bird club is Field Trip Coordinator. I've enjoyed club membership in so many ways, and figured it was time to give back. Two friends are on the field trip committee with me, Sharon Somers and Donna Warner. They make the job easier and more fun! We're doing a survey of past trip leaders and we'd also like to hear from club members. Please let us know: What are your trip ideas? Suggestions for improvement? Another birding position is at Kent Park with the MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) program. My job is extracting birds from the mist net and delivering them to the banders. It's awesome to see birds up close and in the hand! The second season under my belt made me more confident and of course faster, which is so important. Check out our new public Facebook site: Bird Banding at FW Kent Park for great photos and fun comments.

**Do you have a favorite bird or family of birds?** The elegant songster family – thrushes.

**What particular aspects of birding interest you the most?** Learning the songs and calls. The more I know the easier it gets to learn more. I'm a huge music fan and the birds are music to my ears.

**Tell us about one of your most exciting birding moments.** I see great birds on the ICBC field trips, thanks to the expertise of our talented leaders. No kidding, I wouldn't see half the birds by myself. Chris Caster said leaders have to be prepared for the unexpected, like what happened on the recent trip to Hawkeye WMA. No mud for shorebirds, but lo and behold there was a rare bird and lifer for me: Swallow-tailed Kite. This bird definitely earned its Sibley description: "Soars effortlessly, extremely graceful, most often seen soaring low over swampy woods." But it wasn't just the kite that was special that day, it was seeing the response of birders, who, thanks to Chris' calls and posting on IA-BIRD, came in a flash to see this rare bird. There is a camaraderie that is very special to be part of!

**Do you have any hobbies or interests besides birding?** My love of birds led me to getting involved in climate change issues. When I learned from [Audubon.org](http://Audubon.org) that "The situation is indeed dire—more than half of bird species on the continent are at risk," I got active with Iowa City Climate Advocates and 100Grannies for a Livable Future. Alarming and very sad news from the latest *State of North America's Birds* report that one-third of North America birds are threatened with extinction.

## Warbler Walk Results – April 28-May 25, 2016

Day of Week		Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W
Species / Date	Days	28	29	2	3	4	5	6	9	10	11	12	13	16	17	18	19	20	23	24	25
Ovenbird	10			X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X				
Worm-eating Warbler	-																				
Louisiana Waterthrush	-																				
Northern Waterthrush	5					X				X	X	X	X								
Golden-winged Warbler	8					X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Blue-winged Warbler	4				X	X				X		X									
Black-and-white Warbler	13			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			
Tennessee Warbler	11							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Orange-crowned Warbler	3						X			A			X								
Nashville Warbler	15	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Connecticut Warbler	3								X		A										X
Mourning Warbler	5											X	X				X		X	X	
Kentucky Warbler	1										X										
Common Yellowthroat	13								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hooded Warbler	1				X																
American Redstart	16					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cape May Warbler	-																				
Cerulean Warbler	-																				
Northern Parula	10					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X				
Magnolia Warbler	10								X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		
Bay-breasted Warbler	2													X			X				
Blackburnian Warbler	8			X						X	X	X	X	X	X			X			
Yellow Warbler	5									X		X		X	X			X			
Chestnut-sided Warbler	13					X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Blackpoll Warbler	7									X				X	X		X		X	X	X
Palm Warbler	5					X	X	X			X		X								
Yellow-rumped Warbler	9	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X				X							
Yellow-throated Warbler	-																				
Black-throated Green Warbler	8			X		X	X	X		X				X	X	X					
Canada Warbler	4													X					X	X	X
Wilson's Warbler	6									A		X	X	X		X		X			

X = Found on Warbler Walk    A = Found but not on Warbler Walk

Others: Black-billed Cuckoo 5/10; Alder Flycatcher 5/24; Yellow-bellied Flycatcher 5/24;  
Olive-sided Flycatcher 5/9, 5/11; Philadelphia Vireo 5/16; White-eyed Vireo 5/19;  
Sedge Wren 5/20; Marsh Wren 5/11; Summer Tanager 5/9-5/19, 5/24-5/25.





**Iowa Audubon** *presents the*  
**FREE!** **6th Annual Pelican Festival**  
**September 11, 2016**

**PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

- 12:30 American White Pelican
- 1:00 Fish of Coralville Reservoir
- 1:30 Ornate Box Turtle
- 2:30 Osprey
- 3:00 American White Pelican

**Hawkeye Wildlife Area**

2564 Amana Rd NW  
 Swisher, IA 52338  
 11:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

**EXHIBITORS:**

- Bur Oak Land Trust
- Cedar County Conservation
- Eastern Iowa Beekeepers Assoc.
- Iowa County Conservation
- Iowa Native Plant Society
- IA Ornithologists' Union
- IA Wildlife Federation
- Iowa Raptor Project
- Prairie States Mushroom Club
- Swisher Fire Dept.
- Raptor Advocacy, Rehabilitation & Education (RARE Group)
- The Songbird Project



**Food Vendor  
 Scout Troop 211**

*Fun activities for the kids!*  
*Spotting scopes provided by IA DNR*

**Funny Face Designs  
 by Lori  
 Free Face Painting!**

**HOSTED BY:**

- > Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources
- > Iowa Audubon
- > Iowa City Bird Club
- > U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- > Cedar Rapids Audubon Society



For more information call  
 319-338-3543 x6300



## Field Trip and Meeting Reports

**April 21, Meeting.** Photographers Linda and Robert Scarth of Cedar Rapids presented “Into the Pantanal: The World’s Largest Seasonal Wetland.” In September 2015, the Scarths travelled to the Pantanal in Western Brazil in hopes of photographing jaguars, as well as many birds and other animals. The Pantanal is a 75,000-square mile savanna and wetland similar to the size of South Dakota. It is home to many rare species including the jaguars they saw. Among their slides were 73 bird species, 11 animal species, one dragonfly and various blooming trees and vines plus a Great Lotus.

One of the most interesting birds they saw was the Band-tailed Manakin. It is about 4.5 inches tall and has a lek on a branch, rather than on the ground like a grouse. They bounce along and display in similar positions to prairie chickens.

The variety of birds they saw and photographed ranged from the tiny to the very large Jabirus. Some of the species included Rufous-winged Antshrike, Chalk-browed Mockingbird, White-rumped Tanager, Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, Chestnut-eared Aracari, Amazon Kingfisher, Bare-faced Curassow, Wattled Jacana, Coci Heron, Sunbittern, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Greater Yellow-headed Vulture, Hyacinth Macaw, Peach-fronted Parakeet, Silver-beaked Tanager, Blue-crowned Trogon, and Green-barred Woodpecker.

They hoped to see jaguars and were able to photograph six individuals along the Cuiaba River and its channels. One big male was seen on two different days. Tourism to the Pantanal is economically important as is cattle ranching. There is a non-profit group working on restitution to ranchers who lose cattle to jaguars. Jaguars prefer capybara as prey but do sometimes take livestock. Other animals seen included caiman, capybara, agouti, great otter,

green iguana, crab-eating fox, and howler monkey.

– Linda and Robert Scarth

**April 22, Night Sounds Field Trip at Waterworks Prairie Park.** We heard an American Woodcock’s “peent” calls and watched its spiraling display flight, which was the highlight of the evening. We also saw a Great Horned Owl, but it didn’t call for us. We heard Western Chorus Frogs. Canada Geese, Eastern Meadowlarks, Red-winged Blackbirds, Tree Swallows, and American Robins were all heard settling down for the night.

Participants: Karen Disbrow (leader), Therese Guedon, Dorothy Lunning, Kathy MacKay, Ramona McGurk, Mark and Deb Rolfes.

– Karen Disbrow



**April 23, Otter Creek Marsh in Tama County.** Our target birds for this trip were Great-tailed Grackle, Yellow-headed Blackbird, and rails. The day was nice – overcast with temperatures of 60-80 degrees, and it slowly got windier as the day went on.

We started at 8:30 a.m. on the east side of the marsh off S Avenue. There were numerous waterfowl, Red-winged Blackbirds, and Canada Geese, some with fluffy yellow goslings. The Sandhill Cranes began calling back and forth and flying. Then we heard Soras whinnying, a very unusual sound. We didn’t spot them, but a Wilson’s Snipe flew up twice and give us a look. We peeked at the Bald Eagle nest and found mom and dad standing over the nest being good parents.

The marsh seemed pretty quiet so we sent Linda tromping through the weeds in the hopes of flushing something and not one bird appeared! Returning to the cars we almost stepped on a garter snake with colorful red sides. It put on quite a show of hissing and striking just to prove it was the most ferocious snake in the marsh!

On to the barn. Continuing south on S Avenue is the best place for Great-tailed Grackles, but we only spotted Common Grackles. The trees lining the road held Yellow-Rumped Warblers and woodpeckers, and then out of one tree flew a large flock of 75-100 Blue Jays. It was neat to see so many. The barn area was pretty quiet.

On to the viewing platform where we met Jim Forde, who let us know he wasn't having much luck either. "Too much wind," he said. He gave us a lot of tips on where to look for good birds. We walked the dike and followed a Savannah Sparrow who hopped along in front of us not too worried about our presence. We got more good looks at the Bald Eagle nest, and on the return a Sora appeared right next to the dike. Two of us had great looks as it searched for food. They are as unusual-looking as their song.

It was a lovely day to be out even if we didn't score many of our target birds.

Participants: Therese Guedon, Linda Quinn (co-leader), Sharon Somers (co-leader), Donna Warner.

Birds (51 species): Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Gadwall, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Lesser Scaup, Hooded Merganser, Ring-necked Pheasant, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Sora, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Wilson's Snipe, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Barred Owl, Red-headed

Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, American Kestrel, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, European Starling, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Field Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red Winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, American Goldfinch.

– Sharon Somers

**May 19, Meeting.** Dick Sayles of Bluegrass, Iowa, presented on his 2015 trip to Cuba. The purpose of his trip was to experience the culture as well as the birds of Cuba. By going on a tour group he was able to visit many private areas not open to the public. Many of these places did not have restaurants, and the group was served by hosts at the various locations. It was a great talk. If you are contemplating a trip to Cuba, talk to Dick before you go.

During the business portion, there was a discussion about providing snacks and drinks for members at our meetings. Due to various difficulties, including getting members to volunteer to bring treats and having enough time to put the meeting room back in order before the 9 p.m. closing time, we voted to discontinue the practice of having treats and drinks for a social time following the meeting.

Attendees: Karen Disbrow, Jim and Karole Fuller, Bruce Gardner, Therese Guedon, Lois Hughes, Merle Ihne, Judith Khink, Georgiane Perret, Tom and Carol Rosenberger, Jim Scheib, Donna Warner.

– Karen Disbrow

**June 12, Linn County.** We visited Indian Creek Nature Center, Chain-O-Lakes Wildlife Management Area, and Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area to look for breeding residents.

Participants: Karen Disbrow (leader), Merle Ihne, Linda Quinn.

Birds (30 species): Wood Duck, Northern Bobwhite, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Ruby-Throated Hummingbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, American Goldfinch.

– *Linda Quinn*

**June 24, Turkey Vulture Festival at the Coralville Dam East Overlook.** We started the morning with 23 Turkey Vultures on the north side of the dam. The first lift-off was at 8:10 a.m., and thereafter we had several TVs in the air throughout the morning. Joan Schnabel of RARE (Raptor Advocacy, Rehabilitation, and Education) came out about 9:45 with Gonzo, a young Turkey Vulture. Joan gave a talk and answered questions until noon. Gonzo loved the audience! A big thanks to Bruce Gardner, Terry Escher, and Dean Hilsman for keeping the event moving along.

Birds (9 species): Turkey Vulture, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Field Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Sparrow.

– *Karen Disbrow*

**June 25, Indiagrass Hills.** Nine birders joined me for the annual outing to Indiagrass Hills in Iowa County. High heat and humidity were forecast for the day, but after last year's rain-shortened outing, it was nice to have a clear day to really get out and explore the property. It turned out to be a fantastic morning, with all the targets species offering great looks and a record 56 total species seen!

We parked at the traditional area north of the shed along I Ave. Right away we picked up a new species for the site, a pair of Eurasian Tree Sparrows. We then started to hike along the trail on the east side of the road, where we heard and saw our first of three Sedge Wrens. This can be a difficult bird to pick up, so it was nice to get it early. Soon after we heard and saw good numbers of Bobolinks. A couple of the males were feeding juveniles and there were at least ten individuals. Both of the specialty grassland sparrows were also evident, with no fewer than a dozen Henslow's and about seven Grasshoppers. These were the highest totals I've ever had for all four of these species for this outing!

Other good birds seen as we continued our walk across the stream included a fledgling Eastern Meadowlark, two pairs of Orchard Orioles, at least five Red-headed Woodpeckers, a heard-only Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and a flyover immature Bald Eagle. Both the eagle and cuckoo are species I hadn't previously recorded at this location. The group ended up returning to the parking area at around 10:30.

Normally I would take any interested individuals to the west side for a short walk, but we all decided it was getting too hot and we decided to part ways. Still, a couple more great birds were picked up. David Weiss saw a Loggerhead Shrike along 250th St. on the north end of the property on the way out, which is a bird I hadn't seen here in a decade, so it's great to know they're still around. Also my group had good looks at a singing Bell's Vireo just north of the parking area along I Ave, which is another new bird for the site!

Having this outing later in the month seemed to produce higher individual numbers of birds as well as more evidence of nesting activity. Also the butterfly diversity was much higher, so I will probably want to do this outing at about the same time in future summers.

Participants: Mark Brown (leader), Chad and Colleen Davis, Gerry Denning, John Donelson, Tony Franken, Merle Ihne, Linda Quinn, David Weiss, Diane Zumbach.

Birds (56 species): Ring-necked Pheasant, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Chimney Swift, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Loggerhead Shrike, Bell's Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Blue Jay, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Sedge Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Dickcissel, Indigo Bunting, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

Butterflies (16 species): Black Swallowtail, Cabbage White, Clouded Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Coral Hairstreak, Eastern Tailed-Blue, Great Spangled Fritillary, Meadow Fritillary, Pearl Crescent, American Lady, Red Admiral, Viceroy, Common Wood-Nymph, Monarch, Least Skipper, European Skipper.

– *Mark Brown*

**July 16, Iowa City Butterfly Count.** Our 18th annual butterfly count was held on Saturday, July 16. The count was part of the North American Butterfly Association's Fourth of July Butterfly Count program. It was a beautiful, sunny day with temperatures ranging from 68° to 79°. Mark Brown and Linda Rudolph joined me for the day and we visited Kent Park, Hawkeye Wildlife Area, Macbride Nature-

Recreation Area, and Lake Macbride State Park. We also stopped at two alfalfa fields where about half our total butterflies were counted (mostly whites and sulphurs).

The count average is 33 species and 1,112 individuals. This year in 10.0 hours we found 33 species and 2,036 individuals. Many species were seen in significantly above average numbers, including Black Swallowtail, Cabbage White, Clouded Sulphur, Little Yellow, Eastern Tailed-Blue (record high count), Meadow Fritillary, Pearl Crescent, Red Admiral, Common Buckeye (record high count), Viceroy (record high count), Common Wood-Nymph, and Silver-spotted Skipper (record high count). The most unexpected find was a Southern Dogface.

A few expected species were seen in below-average numbers or were missed entirely. These included Question Mark (missed), American Lady (missed), Painted Lady (missed), Common Sootywing (missed), and Least Skipper.

Nectar sources were abundant and included wild bergamot, mountain mint, purple coneflower, rattlesnake master, swamp milkweed, vervain, and alfalfa.

Butterflies: Black Swallowtail 24, Giant Swallowtail 4, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 10, Cabbage White 387, Clouded Sulphur 699, Orange Sulphur 230, Southern Dogface 1, Cloudless Sulphur 5, Little Yellow 56, Bronze Copper 5, Banded Hairstreak 1, Eastern Tailed-Blue 123, Summer Azure 89, Great Spangled Fritillary 32, Meadow Fritillary 19, Pearl Crescent 29, Eastern Comma 4, Gray Comma 1, Red Admiral 51, Common Buckeye 77, Red-spotted Purple 4, Viceroy 37, Common Wood-Nymph 53, Monarch 23, Silver-spotted Skipper 52, Least Skipper 5, Peck's Skipper 3, Tawny-edged Skipper 5, Northern Broken-Dash 1, Little Glassywing 1, Dion Skipper 1, Black Dash 1, Dun Skipper 3.

– *Chris Edwards*



**August 21, Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area.** I did some scouting the evening before and found almost all the shorebird habitat to have disappeared under the deluge of recent rains. I feared there would be nothing to see on what has been our annual shorebird outing. And club members must have sensed the same as it didn't look like anyone was going to turn out. I nearly was going to head home when Linda showed up, fortunately. It was a great morning, but a bit cool for August, more typical of late September, and we both wore long pants and jackets.

We made Swan Lake our first stop. A swimming Great Blue Heron looked weirdly like a giant grebe on the water. There were also Great Egrets and a Green Heron perched in the willows. Belted Kingfishers were active and vocal. Eclipse-plumage Wood Ducks were very numerous and there were a number of Pied-billed Grebes. A flock of Cedar Waxwings was busy in the treetops along the access to Sand Point. And we had Great-crested Flycatchers and a Red-eyed Vireo nearby.

The drive west down Swan Lake Road included a couple of stops. Near the lake we observed a fall Chestnut-sided Warbler and an Eastern Wood-Pewee. Closer to Greencastle Avenue an Olive-sided Flycatcher was typically perched at the top of a bare tree. A really beautiful adult Canada Warbler was foraging in the shrubs, while another pewee flitted about.

We made what was to be our final stop at Half Moon Lake along Greencastle, as that was the only easily accessible shorebird habitat I knew. There were a few shorebirds busy on the far bank – modest numbers, mostly Killdeer and Lesser Yellowlegs, although a number of Pectoral and Least Sandpipers could be spied. A group of Spotted Sandpipers scurried and bobbed about a driftwood log. A couple of Greater Yellowlegs were easy to discern alongside the Lessers. Lone Stilt and Semipalmated Sandpipers added interest.

We were fairly lazy surveying our surroundings, just enjoying being out. There was an Osprey soaring well overhead for a bit and then it moved on. A pair of adult Bald Eagles soared close together as they drifted east. We noticed some Turkey Vultures and crows flying on the horizon to the south when Linda noticed another raptor over the trees away to the southwest. It was immediately unusual, large and flying low over the trees with a very buoyant flight. It wasn't like a vulture tipping unsteadily in the breeze. It wasn't like a red-tail making broad circles higher in the sky. It flew with a much more active style, flapping, gliding, twisting, and swooping back-and-forth over the tops of the willow trees. I noticed the long dark wings and the light colored head and exclaimed "That's a Swallow-tailed Kite!"

This was not entirely unexpected as a pair had been seen soaring over the DNR sheds on Amana Road a few days previously, but repeated searching by birders in that area had not rediscovered those birds. And a front had passed the day before with strong winds from the north, so I assumed those kites to be long gone. This was a solitary bird though.

After pinching myself and again confirming what I was seeing I called Mark Brown, as I knew he had been looking for those birds a few days earlier. Fortunately he was in the county and was also able to make a listserv post regarding the sighting for me. Then Linda and I made it our responsibility to keep constant surveillance on the kite's whereabouts until Mark or someone else arrived to see it. Much of the time it hunted as described over the willows between Half Moon Lake and the power lines to the west. In two instances it crashed into the tree tops apparently in an effort to snatch something as it cruised by. It was really neat to watch, but the time began to drag and the watch was tiring. The kite gave us concern on a number of occasions when it soared high above until it was too small to spot easily without binoculars. I was sure it was going to catch a wind and disappear for good, but each time it

would eventually drop down to the same area to our southwest. Three times it did this before Mark Brown and then Ken Lowder arrived. Actually the kite put on its best show for them. For the first time it actually moved out midway across the lake towards us. I was very excited for them, as apparently both had missed the Swallow-tailed Kite that appeared over Longview Knoll in June of 2004. Wonderfully this particular bird made this area west of Greencastle part of its daily routine, appearing in late morning, for at least a week, and many others got to see it.

Participants: Chris Caster (leader), Linda Quinn.

Species (50): Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Swallow-tailed Kite, Bald Eagle, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Stilt Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy

Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Red-eyed Vireo, American Crow, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, Gray Catbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, American Redstart, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Canada Warbler, Chipping Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Red-winged Blackbird, American Goldfinch.

– Chris Caster

**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 fall, 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](mailto:k_disbrow@yahoo.com) or 319-430-0315.

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

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**To lead or suggest a field trip**, contact Field Trip Coordinator Linda Quinn at 319-330-3328 or [quinnhenry@msn.com](mailto:quinnhenry@msn.com).

**Visit our web site** at [www.icbirds.org](http://www.icbirds.org). You may contact Webmaster Jim Scheib at 319-337-5206 or [jim@tenlongview.net](mailto:jim@tenlongview.net). Also visit Iowa City Bird Club on Facebook.

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