
Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 38 Number 1

April 2018

Schedule

Field Trips are free and open to the public. Meeting place varies and is noted in the schedule. Carpooling is encouraged and is arranged at the designated meeting place. Some trips are accessible to people with disabilities. For more information or questions, email 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.

April 4, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk with leader Rick Hollis. Meet at the CEC in Kent Park.

April 7, Saturday, 8 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area for ducks, geese, pelicans, and other early spring migrants. Wear boots for walking in wet areas and bring a spotting scope if you have one. Meet at the CEC in Kent Park. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.*

April 8, Sunday, 8 a.m. Ryerson's Woods for birding and blooms. We'll look for early spring migrants like Hermit Thrush, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Winter Wren, as well as early spring wildflowers like hepatica, spring beauty, and Dutchman's breeches. We'll walk on wooded trails with hills and will finish by 11 a.m. Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot at 125 Hwy. 1 W in Iowa City at 8:00, or at Ryerson's Woods at 8:10. Leaders: Sharon Somers and Therese Guedon.

April 10, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Introduction to Birding Course: Backyard and Feeder Birds. 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. See page 7 for more information including a complete course schedule.

April 14, Saturday, 8 a.m. Lake Macbride or other local areas. Meet at the Kohl's parking lot across from McDonald's at 2795 Commerce Dr. in Coralville. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.*

April 18, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk with leader Rick Hollis. Meet at the CEC.

April 19, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting at the Kent Park Conservation Education Center. *Please note the change of venue!* Linda Rudolph will present "Birding Australia."

April 21, Saturday, 8 a.m. Waterworks Prairie Park. The trails in this Iowa City park should produce a variety of woodland, grassland, and wetland birds. Meet at Waterworks Park, 2875 N Dubuque St., Iowa City. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.*

April 21, Saturday, 8 a.m. Song Sleuth Workshop at the Conservation Headquarters Building at Kent Park. Rick Hollis will lead a hands-on workshop on using Song Sleuth, an app designed to identify birds by their songs. The iPhone version is available now and the Android version will be released in May. Participants will learn about the app and use it in the field. Only those who currently have the iPhone app or intend to get the Android app should attend.

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Schedule (continued)

April 29, Sunday, 6:30 a.m. Shimek State Forest. This joint trip with the Iowa Ornithologists' Union will target SE Iowa specialties and early migrants including Yellow-throated Warbler, Pine Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Bewick's Wren, Yellow-breasted Chat, and White-eyed Vireo. Advanced registration is required (coming soon at <http://iowabirds.org/Connections/SpecialEvents.aspx>). Pack water, snacks/lunch, and insect repellent. Expect hiking on wooded trails at several stopping spots. We will return to Iowa City by mid-afternoon. Meet leader Dan Rose at the Fin & Feather parking lot at 6:30 a.m.

April 29, Sunday, 8 a.m. Hickory Hill Park. This urban park is an eastern Iowa hotspot for warblers and other migrant songbirds. Meet at Hickory Hill Park, at the parking lot at the end of Conklin Lane, off N Dodge St. Leader: Mark Madsen. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.*

April 30 – May 25, Weekdays, 6:30 a.m. Hickory Hill Park Warbler Walks. Co-sponsored by Bur Oak Land Trust with leaders Mark Madsen, Jason Paulios, Dan Rose, Chris Edwards, and Elliot Stalter. Meet at the parking lot at the end of Conklin Lane. Daily sightings will be posted on our web site.

May 2, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk with leader Rick Hollis. Meet at the CEC.

May 12, Saturday. Spring Migration Count. Bird in teams to count as many birds as possible in Johnson County. Species and individual birds are tallied – last year 156 species were recorded. Gather for a noon sack lunch at the North Liberty Community Center. Afternoon birding is encouraged but optional. To participate on a team, email Chris Caster at cjcaster@q.com in advance of count day.

May 16, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk with leader Rick Hollis. Meet at the CEC.

May 17, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. Jim Scheib will present “Birding Mexico, the Yucatan Peninsula.”

May 20, Sunday, 7 a.m. Wildcat Den State Park near Muscatine. Special guest leader and Muscatine local Susan Nixon will guide us as we search for warblers, flycatchers, and other late migrants. Be prepared for extensive walking on wooded trails. Pack water, snacks, and insect repellent. We will return to Iowa City by early afternoon. Meet leader Sharon Somers at the Hy-Vee parking lot, 1125 N Dodge St. in Iowa City at 7 a.m., or meet at the parking lot near the old mill in Wildcat Den at 8 a.m.

June 6, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk with leader Rick Hollis. Meet at the CEC.

June 9, Saturday, 7:30 a.m. Bur Oak Land Trust Properties in Johnson County. Check out some of the new Bur Oak properties that are open to us for birding. This half-day trip will have both on-trail and off-trail hiking over uneven terrain. Hiking boots, long pants, water, and insect repellent are advised. Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot. Leader: Mark Madsen.

June 20, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk with leader Rick Hollis. Meet at the CEC.

June 23, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Indiangrass Hills in Iowa County for breeding grassland birds. Expect to see Henslow's Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Sedge Wren, and Bobolink. Extensive walking on mowed grass paths through this 600-acre restored prairie. Return time is early afternoon. Meet leader Mark Brown at Kohl's parking lot in Coralville.

July 4, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk with leader Rick Hollis. Meet at the CEC.

July 7, Saturday, 8 a.m. – Noon. Turkey Vulture Festival at the Coralville Dam East Overlook. Featuring face painting and Gonzo the Turkey Vulture, who will arrive by mid-morning.

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Schedule (continued)

July 18, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk with leader Rick Hollis. Meet at the CEC.

July 21, Saturday. Annual Butterfly Count sponsored by the North American Butterfly Association. We'll visit Kent Park, Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area, Lake Macbride, and other areas. To participate, contact Chris Edwards at 319-430-4732 or credwards@aol.com.

August 1, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk with leader Rick Hollis. Meet at the CEC.

August 15, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk with leader Rick Hollis. Meet at the CEC.

August 19, Sunday, 8-11:30 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area for shorebirds and other early fall migrants. Meet leader Chris Caster at the parking lot on Swan Lake Road, across from Swan Lake. We will carpool our way around the area with moderate hiking at some viewing areas. Dress for wet and muddy trails and bring a spotting scope if you have one.

August 19, Sunday, Noon. Club Potluck Picnic at Kent Park's Red Haw Shelter. Come after the morning field trip or just come for the picnic and social fun. Bring a dish to share and your own drink and table service. The shelter is handicapped-accessible and has nearby restrooms.

September 5, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk with leader Rick Hollis. Meet at the CEC.

September 9, Sunday. Annual Pelican Festival at Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area, 2564 Amana Rd. NW, Swisher.

Other Dates of Note

April and May, Thursdays, 8 a.m. Warblers and Wildflowers hikes at Port Louisa NWR in Louisa County. Meet at the refuge headquarters. For more information visit www.fws.gov/refuge/port_louisa/.

April 7, Saturday. Annual Prairie Chicken Day at Kellerton Wildlife Management Area in Ringgold County. At 9 a.m. the Kellerton Bird Conservation Area will be dedicated as a Globally Important Bird Area.

May 6, Sunday, 1:30 p.m. and May 12, Saturday, 1:30 p.m. Wildflower Walks at Geller Preserve, Cedar County Historical Society.

May 12, Saturday, 7 a.m. – Noon. Spring Bird Festival at Port Louisa NWR, with bird banding demonstrations, guided bird hikes, and kids' activities. For more information visit www.fws.gov/refuge/port_louisa/.

May 18-20, Friday-Sunday. Iowa Ornithologists' Union Spring Meeting in Sioux City. For more information visit www.iowabirds.org.

May 19, Saturday 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Spring Bird Banding at Kent Park CEC. Join federally-certified bird banders to see songbirds up close and learn about bird banding. Participants can come and go as their schedules allow. For more information call (319) 645-1011.

May 19, Saturday. Iowa Young Birders Field Trip to Dudgeon Lake near Vinton. For more information and to register visit www.iowayoungbirders.org.

June 9, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. Cedar River Crossing and Ciha Fen Preserve field trip sponsored by the Iowa Native Plant Society, Friends of Johnson County Conservation, and Johnson County Conservation Board. Rick Hollis is a co-leader. For more information call (319) 645-1011.

Join the ICBC's Google Group

Do you know the Iowa City Bird Club has a group email? Are you on our list? This is how you can receive reminders about club meetings, field trips, and other events. It's a perk for all dues-paying members. Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Is this group like IA-BIRD?

A: No, it is not chat-discussion format. Our setting is email notification only, so you cannot reply all.

Q: Can I reply with a question?

A: Yes, on the message click *Reply*. Your reply goes only to the message author, not the entire group.

Q: Do I have to create a Google account?

A: No, you can receive and read posts without a Google account.

Q: I'm not receiving ICBC emails. How can I subscribe?

A: Give a shout to Linda at quinnhenry@msn.com or info@icbirds.org. Don't forget to let us know when you change email addresses.

Starting in September, electronic newsletter subscribers will receive the newsletter via the Google Group. If you haven't signed up yet, please do so soon!

– Linda Quinn

New Meeting Location Announced for Fall 2018

We will have a new meeting location for our monthly meetings starting in September. We will meet at the Big White House, a beautifully-renovated historic structure at 1246 12th Avenue in Coralville, and the home of Genesis Church. We are grateful to the church membership for offering us this meeting space at no charge.

Please note that our April meeting will be held at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park, and our May meeting will be at the Iowa City Robert A. Lee Recreation Center where meetings have been held for the past three years.

Iowa Audubon Corner

Great news! The Kellerton Grasslands Important Bird Area has been recognized as a Globally Important Bird Area by BirdLife International, based on its critical importance to nesting Henslow's Sparrows. Henslow's Sparrow is a threatened species in Iowa. This is Iowa's second Globally Important Bird Area; Effigy Mounds/Yellow River State Forest received the designation in 2013 based on its nesting concentration of Cerulean Warblers. A formal dedication for Kellerton will take place on April 7 at this year's Prairie Chicken Festival.

Jon Stravers has worked tirelessly to research the nesting status of Red-shouldered Hawks and Cerulean Warblers in NE Iowa. He also offers birding by boat trips on the Mississippi River near McGregor and Lansing. Watch our website for upcoming tour opportunities this May and June.

The Iowa Audubon Board awarded two grants at its March meeting. Iowa Audubon offers several \$500 – \$1000 grants for bird conservation efforts every year. Paperwork is available every December for March awards.

Iowa Audubon is always looking for fundraising ideas – if you have one, please contact me.

To become a member of Iowa Audubon, send dues (\$10 individual; \$15 family) to Treasurer-Iowa Audubon, PO Box 682, Waterloo, IA 50704-0682. Members receive a newsletter. Be sure to visit their web site at www.iowaaudubon.org.

As always, good birding!

– Karen Disbrow

2017 Iowa City Christmas Bird Count

Chris Edwards and Diana Pesek

The 67th annual Iowa City Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, December 17, 2017. The count area is a 15-mile diameter circle centered on Hwy. 965 and Penn Street in North Liberty. Temperatures on count day were above average and ranged from 31-41° F with light E winds. Partly cloudy skies in the morning turned to cloudy conditions and some light rain in the early afternoon. Area rivers and streams were mostly ice-free, the Coralville Reservoir and other bodies of water were partly open, and there was no snow cover.

Highlights

The total of 71 species was above the ten-year average of 66. The all-time high count of 81 species was set in 2012. The fifteen waterfowl species seen this year were the most since 2012 and were responsible for the above-average species count. Several rare species were found this year: Ross's Goose (third count record), Greater White-fronted Goose (fifth count record), American White Pelican (fourth count record), Red-shouldered Hawk (third record in last 50 years), and Snowy Owl (third count record). Several other uncommon species which are not seen in most years were found: Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, and Merlin.

Species seen in numbers significantly *above* the ten-year average were Canada Goose, Northern Shoveler (all-time high), Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Cooper's Hawk (all-time high), Barred Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker (all-time high), American Kestrel (ten-year high), Blue Jay, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren (ten-year high), European Starling, Pine Siskin, White-crowned Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird (ten-year high), and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

Species seen in numbers significantly *below* the ten-year average were Wild Turkey, Rock Pigeon, Ring-billed Gull, Northern Flicker, American Crow (lowest count since 1977), American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, and Dark-eyed Junco. Common species seen in most years that were missed entirely were Common Goldeneye, Herring Gull, Eastern Screech-Owl, and Horned Lark (fourth straight year).

Species seen during the count week but not on the count were Snow Goose and Northern Pintail.

Some Interesting Trends

This year eight Cooper's Hawks were found, the most ever. In recent years there has been a significant increase in this species on our count. From 1951-2002, Cooper's Hawks were recorded only 20 times, and no more than two birds were seen in a single year. Since 2003 they have been recorded annually, with an average of four birds per year. It may be that Cooper's Hawks are becoming more adapted to living in suburban and urban areas, with a steady supply of prey such as Rock Pigeons and Mourning Doves, instead of in forested areas. Merlin is another species that appears to be wintering in eastern Iowa in increased numbers. They have been recorded on the count in six of the last eleven years, and this year at least two birds were seen. This species nested in Iowa City and Cedar Falls in 2016 for perhaps the first time in Iowa since 1908.

Iowa experienced several bird irruptions this fall and winter. One of the most noticeable was an invasion of Snowy Owls which peaked in November and December. On the count there were four separate observations of at least two distinct Snowy Owls at or near Hawkeye Wildlife Area. The last Snowy Owl sighting on our count was an individual at Hawkeye Wildlife Area in 2004. There was also a historic irruption of Red Crossbills across Iowa in October and November, with a few reports continuing through the winter. No crossbills were definitively identified on the count, but suspected Red Crossbills were

heard vocalizing by two parties. Red Crossbills have been recorded on the count only in 1969, 1973, and 1981. This was also an irruption year for Pine Siskins, and the 92 birds reported was the second-highest in the last twenty years.

Count Effort

This year there were 30 field observers, including 6 first-time participants, in 10 parties: Elizabeth Aubrey, Kyle and Dena Belcher, Fawn Bowden, Mark Brown, Barry Buschelman, Theresa Carbrey, Chris Caster, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Linda Fisher, Jim and Karole Fuller, Peter Hansen, Rick Hollis, Andy and KT Long, Terri Macey, Ramona McGurk, Mary Noble, Jason Paulios, Nicole Pearson, Diana Pesek, Linda Quinn, Carole Rocco, Ben Rowold, Jim Scheib, Joan Schnabel, and Sharon Somers.

There were 12 feeder watchers in 11 locations, a slight increase from recent years. Feeder watchers were Barbara Beaumont, Anne Edwards, Linda Fisher, Jim and Karole Fuller, Janet Hollis, Kate Kostenbater, Nancy Lynch, Aurelia Moreton-Gotwals, Jim Scheib, Lydia Somers, and Ronny Wieland.

This year's count was organized by Diana Pesek, and the results were compiled by Chris Edwards. On the day of the count we met for lunch at the North Liberty Community Center at which time we had 67 species. We met for an evening meal and compilation at Gus' Food & Spirits in Coralville. We collected \$92 in donations for the National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count program. Thanks to everyone who donated.

Nationally, this year marked the 118th consecutive Christmas Bird Count. More than 70,000 observers from all 50 states, every Canadian province, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and many Pacific Islands participate in this annual bird census. The results of all counts from 1900 to the present are available online at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc, through a cooperative project of the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

SPECIES LIST

Ross's Goose	1	Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Carolina Wren	9
Greater White-fronted Goose	3	Cooper's Hawk	8	Eastern Bluebird	23
Cackling Goose	10	Red-shouldered Hawk	1	Hermit Thrush	2
Canada Goose	4,082	Red-tailed Hawk	64	American Robin	4
Northern Shoveler	90	Rough-legged Hawk	5	European Starling	1,707
Gadwall	1	Great Horned Owl	3	Cedar Waxwing	182
American Wigeon	1	Snowy Owl	2	House Sparrow	698
Mallard	550	Barred Owl	8	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	26
American Black Duck	2	Belted Kingfisher	2	House Finch	132
Canvasback	7	Red-headed Woodpecker	16	Purple Finch	16
Lesser Scaup	30	Red-bellied Woodpecker	80	Pine Siskin	92
Bufflehead	2	Downy Woodpecker	94	American Goldfinch	176
Common Goldeneye	1	Hairy Woodpecker	19	American Tree Sparrow	229
Hooded Merganser	1	Northern Flicker	17	Fox Sparrow	1
Red-breasted Merganser	1	Pileated Woodpecker	8	Song Sparrow	8
Ring-necked Pheasant	3	American Kestrel	31	Swamp Sparrow	1
Wild Turkey	18	Merlin	2	White-throated Sparrow	37
Rock Pigeon	213	Shrike sp.	1	White-crowned Sparrow	36
Eurasian Collared-Dove	22	Blue Jay	173	Dark-eyed Junco	364
Mourning Dove	294	American Crow	134	Red-winged Blackbird	948
Ring-billed Gull	156	Black-capped Chickadee	198	Yellow-rumped Warbler	4
Gull sp.	22	Tufted Titmouse	49	Northern Cardinal	180
American White Pelican	2	Red-breasted Nuthatch	6	TOTAL SPECIES	71
Bald Eagle	61	White-breasted Nuthatch	81	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	11,46
Northern Harrier	3	Brown Creeper	6		



Introduction to Birding Course March 20 – April 29, 2018 at Kent Park



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

Tuesday evening sessions are \$5 for adults and free for children accompanied by an adult. Iowa City Bird Club members receive free admission – a one-year membership is \$15 per family (or \$10 for students) for a print subscription, or \$10 for an email subscription. Participants may attend all sessions or pick one or more to attend. Classes can hold 30, and advanced registration is requested – please call Kristen Morrow 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. For more information, call Karen Disbrow at (319) 430-0315.

Tuesday, March 20, 7 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING I by Karen Disbrow. This will include field identification of birds, field guides, and equipment every birder needs, or might someday need.

Sunday, 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 27, 7 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING II by Karen Disbrow. Continuation of first session topics.

Saturday, March 31, 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 3, 7 p.m. WHERE TO BIRD IN JOHNSON COUNTY by Bruce Gardner. Well known, lesser known and secret places to watch birds and study nature in and around Johnson County.

Saturday, April 7, 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. **Meet at the CEC in Kent Park.**

Tuesday, April 10, 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.

Saturday, April 14, 8 a.m. Field Trip to LAKE MACBRIDE or other local areas. **Meet at the Coralville Kohl's parking lot across from McDonald's.**

Tuesday, April 17, 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 21, 8 a.m. Field Trip to WATERWORKS PARK. Visit this Iowa City park with great trails for woodland, prairie, and wetland species. **Meet at Waterworks Park, off Dubuque St.**

Tuesday, April 24, 7 p.m. WARBLER IDENTIFICATION & REVIEW by Karen Disbrow. Warblers are among our most colorful birds, but identification can be a challenge. Compare and contrast similar species.

Sunday, April 29, 8 a.m. Field Trip to HICKORY HILL PARK. May is prime time for viewing warblers in Iowa, and this park is an eastern Iowa hot spot for viewing migrant warblers and other songbirds. **Meet at Hickory Hill Park, at the parking lot at the end of Conklin Lane, off N Dodge St.**

Cerulean Warblers Thriving in Northeast Iowa

Chris Edwards

In recent years the Iowa City Bird Club has provided funding to Jon Stravers and Dr. Paul Skrade and their team for their continuing research on Cerulean Warblers in the Effigy Mounds/Yellow River Forest Bird Conservation Area in northeast Iowa. Primary funding for this project is provided by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the National Audubon Society. This may be one of the most significant bird research projects occurring in Iowa at this time. The following summary is taken from their "Report on Cerulean Warbler surveys in Yellow River State Forest – year 2017."

Cerulean Warblers have historically been considered one of the rarest nesting warblers in Iowa. Reports of population declines have persisted in the last two decades throughout much of their North American range, and the species is now listed among the highest priority species for land bird conservation in the U.S.

The Effigy Mounds/Yellow River Forest Bird Conservation Area (BCA) represents one of the largest blocks of protected high-quality deciduous forest in the state of Iowa and the upper Midwest region. Surveys there by Stravers during the last eleven years have documented a surprisingly high density of Cerulean Warblers and a high rate of territory re-occupation. The research also suggests a stable population within the BCA, which is significant since long-term studies in other areas are reporting population declines. These results led to the area being designated a Globally Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society and BirdLife International in 2013.

The primary goal of the study is to develop an ongoing regional monitoring program for Cerulean Warblers in the BCA. Secondary goals during the 2017 season were to continue the effort to identify associations between Cerulean Warbler activity in terms of the physical environment,

forest structure, and forest composition; to continue efforts to decipher clues within the Cerulean Warbler language by measuring the duration and frequency of their singing; and to collect observations on other bird species on the list of Species of Greatest Conservation Concern including Acadian Flycatcher, Veery, Wood Thrush, and Red-shouldered Hawk.

In 2017 the team conducted a total of 491 survey visits at 271 survey points. Singing Cerulean Warblers were found at 125 of 271 survey points (46.1%). Seven of the 125 points were newly discovered in 2017. They have found that Cerulean Warbler territories are often "clustered" together with several active territories in close proximity to each other. These clusters are typically centered in riparian habitat where there are often mature trees and a distinct open topography in the upper branches. Significantly, all the active clusters identified in the BCA have been re-occupied in subsequent years. It is felt there may be a distinct correlation between the presence of multiple Cerulean Warblers and the presence of large diameter trees, especially mature black walnuts and oaks, and the proximity of water.

During surveys in 2017, the team recorded 870 audio tracks of singing Cerulean Warblers. Although still in the process of analyzing these recordings, they noted differences in the intensity and frequency of Cerulean Warbler singing throughout the breeding season. Evening singing is perhaps just as reliable as morning singing, and the species sings in the afternoon more than most other songbird species. Cerulean singing is typically more intense during the early stages of the nesting period in early May, and less intense in late May and early June, possibly due to the onset of incubation. Singing typically comes to a close when the young fledge from the nest in mid- to late June, although singing on some territories continued into mid-July.

The research findings have implications for forest management. Results of the study show a strong association between Cerulean Warbler activity and the presence of large diameter trees

in forested riparian habitats. As such, the team recommends a cautious approach to timber harvests within the prominent clusters of nesting activity. The results also show an apparent positive response to uneven-age forest management and especially to savanna restoration management techniques in which some large trees are retained. However there appears to be a negative association between site occupation and nearby large scale clear cuts, which create an 'edge effect' and favor more common bird species that prefer edge habitats, including Brown-headed Cowbirds.

Based on this report, our donations to this important research project are well-spent. If you would like a PDF copy of the full 26-page report, please contact Chris Edwards at credwards@aol.com.

Field Trip and Meeting Reports

January 7, Feeder Watch Social at the home of Jim and Karole Fuller. The goodies brought by club members were outstanding as was the conversation. The bird numbers were not so outstanding. The Iowa River was completely frozen, so no water birds were present.

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Barry Buschelman, Chris Caster, Rebecca Clark, Jerry and Gerene Denning, Karen Disbrow, Seth Dudley, Chris Edwards, John and Randy Fieselmann, Jim and Karole Fuller (hosts), Therese Guedon, Peter and Katie Hansen, Barbara Haring, Doina Johnson, Ken Lowder, Nancy Lynch, Ramona McGurk, Gail McLure, Larry Mahoney, Linda Quinn, Jim Scheib, Sharon Somers, Donna Warner.

Birds (20 species): Mourning Dove, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, House Sparrow, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, American Tree

Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal.

– Jim Fuller

January 14, Coralville Winterfest at Iowa River Landing. It was a very cold day so we setup our spotting scopes inside the Marriott convention center. We trained one on the Bald Eagle nest while the other was focused on a hawk nest across the Iowa River. A flock of nine Canada Geese flew over, and one lone Bald Eagle appeared late in the afternoon, but otherwise there were very few birds. Even so, it was a nice event. Thanks to Barry Buschelman, Linda Fisher, and Ramona McGurk for helping.

– Karen Disbrow

January 20, Bald Eagle Watch and Expo. We had a great day with lots of sun and moderate temperatures. About 140 people attended the Expo at the new Liberty High School, and many of them attended the talks given by Doug Harr, Laura Semken, and Ron Lindblom. Barry Buschelman, Jerry Denning, Chris Edwards, Pat Kieffer, and Ben Rowold staffed the spotting scopes and handed out cups of hot cocoa below the dam. About ten Bald Eagles were seen during the morning, and a highlight for many was an American White Pelican wintering on the open water below the dam.

– Karen Disbrow

February 7, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art. Five club members attended the museum's Art Bites feature for February: "Framing the World: The Photography of Linda and Robert Scarth." Robert and his late wife Linda are long-time club members. Preparing the photographs for this exhibit was the last project Linda worked on before her death last July.

The event began with a video display from the Scarths' book *Deep Nature: Photographs from Iowa*. We learned background information from the museum curators, and then it was on to the real hit of the show, Bob. He walked us through each photograph on display with a wonderful narrative, describing the location and subject, and providing interesting stories we all enjoyed.

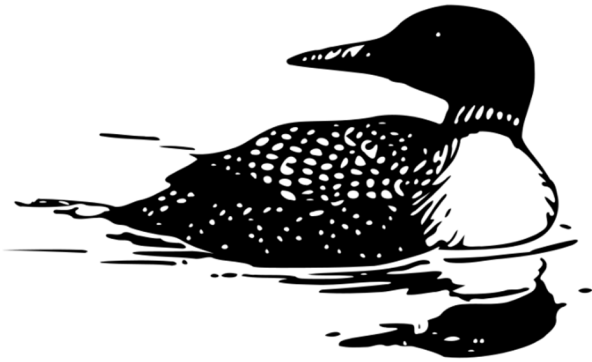
Birds, insects, flowers, and wild animals were framed beautifully, both visually and verbally with Bob's narrative. My personal favorite was the Violet-tailed Sylph with an amazing spray of water from its mouth. This photograph was shot in Ecuador, where there are 132 species of hummingbirds.

Attendees: Doina Johnson, Charmaine Kleiber, Terri Macey, Linda Quinn (leader), Connie Peterson.

– *Linda Quinn*

February 11, Iowa City Freeze Fest at Terry Trueblood Recreation Area. It was another very cold day and as expected the lake was frozen. One Bald Eagle was seen but otherwise there were very few birds in the air. We setup our displays and handed out eagle posters. Thanks to Jerry Denning, Linda Fisher, and Ben Rowold for helping.

– *Karen Disbrow*



February 15, Meeting. Local birder and photographer Mark Brown presented “Wildlife of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.” Mark provided the following summary of his talk.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) is the most visited national park in the U.S. Its 800 square miles straddle the North Carolina and Tennessee border in the southern Appalachians. Although it doesn't boast the scenic wonders of our western parks such as Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, and Yosemite, the

biodiversity is unmatched. There is a current project known as the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory taking place within the park, which is managed, along with the National Park Service, by a non-profit scientific organization called Discover Life In America. Volunteers and experts in multiple biologic specialties perform field work, fund-raising, and education and in the first 20 years of the project, 9,196 new species have been discovered in the park, with 986 species being new to science. The total number of species in the park now stands at 19,375, but it is estimated that 80,000-100,000 could be the actual number.

The star wildlife attraction of GSMNP is the Black Bear. An extensive effort began in 1991 to keep the Black Bear population as wild as possible. This included placing bear proof dumpsters in all picnic areas, prohibiting feeding, and maintaining a distance of at least 50 yards. All of this effort has helped greatly reduce the number of nuisance bears, decreased negative interactions between bears and visitors, and allowed them to live a longer life span of 15-20 years. The population in GSMNP is now around 1,600, which gives this park the densest population of Black Bears in the country.

Another wildlife specialty of the park is the salamanders. Thirty-one species representing five families have been documented within the park, including one species that is endemic, the Red-cheeked Salamander. The many miles of streams, thick forests, and abundant moisture are all contributing factors to salamander diversity within the park and throughout the Appalachian chain. Although the casual visitor can observe these amphibians around streams and mountain seeps, many more can be found by carefully turning over rocks and logs at all elevations of the park.

The bird species of the park have considerable overlap with the birds that we have in Iowa, but there are some notable differences. The Red Crossbill that is year-round in the park is known as Type 1 or ‘Appalachian’ Crossbill, which may one day become a separate species. Also,

because of the high number of neotropical migrants that breed in the smokies, the national park has been designated as an Audubon Important Bird Area, specifically the Southern Blue Ridge IBA. Of particular note are the 23 species of warblers that nest here. Some species that are rare in Iowa are actually quite common in GSMNP and include Hooded, Black-throated Blue, and Worm-eating Warblers. The one warbler that does not occur in Iowa is the southeastern specialty, Swainson's Warbler. It is a very loud but often inconspicuous species of thick rhododendron thickets within the park. One place that has a couple of reliable pairs is the Schoolhouse Gap Trail on the Tennessee side. With some persistence and luck, it is possible to get looks at this bird while they're on territory from April through August.

After the talk and a break, we completed the business portion of our meeting. Larry Mahoney, Treasurer, reported that we are financially solvent and encouraged active members to pay their dues. Linda Quinn reported for the Field Trip Committee and announced the upcoming field trips. We announced the Prairie Preview, sponsored by the Bur Oak Land Trust and held at the Clarion in Iowa City on March 1. Karen Disbrow will represent us at a table. We also encouraged people to join the Iowa Ornithologist Union and Iowa Audubon, which works to preserve species and habitats throughout Iowa. Attendees then had the opportunity to share their birding highlights since the last meeting.

Attendees: Mark and Russell Brown, Theresa Carbrey, Sandy and Mark Eads, Chris Edwards, Therese Guedon, Peter Hansen, Rick Hollis, Terri Macey, Larry Mahoney, Linda Quinn, Bill Scheible, Donna Warner.

– *Terri Macey and Mark Brown*

February 18, Quad Cities Area. Upon arriving in Davenport, we drove to the airport in the hopes of relocating a previously-reported Snowy Owl. A quick loop around the area discovered no owls, but we did spy a Horned Lark. Our first Mississippi River location was Canal Street on the Iowa side. Since the sun was still low the

birds were back lit and we only viewed those nearby with our binoculars. Many Common Goldeneyes were observed and one beautiful male Hooded Merganser. The viewing from Rapid City, IL was much more fruitful. Common Mergansers were south towards the bridge. There was good diversity from the boat ramp looking north. A number of Canvasbacks were present with a small number of other divers. The light was good and we were able to compare Greater and Lesser Scaup quite well, even to observe the green sheen on the male Greaters.

We visited Lock and Dam 14 from the Illinois side. The shallows above the earthen dike were frozen, but a flock of nearly twenty Trumpeter Swans flew over. Gulls and many pelicans were below the spillways and we suffered the cold wind to walk out to view them. We were rewarded with an adult Thayer's-type Iceland Gull flying about with the numerous Herring Gulls. There were also a few Bald Eagles scoped sitting on the ice above the dam and we were joined by some local family groups out to see them.

Peter was complaining about being cold and needing hot chocolate, so we made a stop at the McDonald's in Bettendorf for lunch. Soon after, at Lock and Dam 15 in Davenport, our chill returned. There were some gulls about but all appeared to be Herring, and Rock Pigeon was all we could add to our list. Credit Island wasn't much better to us, but we didn't have to get out of the car. All the backwater was frozen, but there was no gull roost to be found. A group of Ring-billed Gulls slumming with the Mallards along the north end of the island was as exciting as it got.

A visit to the hemlocks in Fairmount Cemetery was productive. We found a Red-breasted Nuthatch there and a few Eastern Bluebirds. The north winds were being enjoyed by the Bald Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks as they continued to parade overhead like planes at an airshow. The street above the cemetery was also enjoyable. Eurasian Tree Sparrows were numerous with their House Sparrow relations. A flock of

waxwings were high in a distant tree. A titmouse was singing. A Pine Siskin and a White-throated Sparrow were at the feeder. And all four of our woodpeckers were found there. It was a pretty good day all in all.

Thanks much to Jamie for driving and all for their warm companionship.

Participants: Chris Caster (leader), Jerry Denning, Peter Hansen, Jamie McCoy.

Birds (41 species): Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Mallard, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Iceland Gull, American White Pelican, Bald Eagle, *accipiter* sp., Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, American Crow, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, House Finch, Pine Siskin, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal.

– *Chris Caster*

March 4, Cone Marsh. A large group of birders enjoyed an early spring outing to Cone Marsh in Louisa County. It was a sunny morning with temperatures in the low 40s, and a 20-mph south wind which hampered scope viewing. Lone Tree has a new Casey's and the trip started with a pit stop there to check it out.

We drove by a nesting Great Horned Owl in Lone Tree. The owl was sitting low enough that she offered wonderful views from our cars and we were careful not to disturb her.

The goose scene from the northeast corner of Cone Marsh was fantastic. Snow Geese just kept coming in for a landing, almost in a steady stream. We had fun trying to guess just how

many there were. The final amount agreed upon by the group was 7,500, but that is just a very rough estimate.

The dike along 220th Street was almost as exciting. We had Trumpeter Swans flying in and calling as they did so, almost right over our heads. There were 50 swans in the small pond to the north, with at least one Tundra Swan mixed in with them. The wind did make scope viewing of the differences between the Tundra Swan and the Trumpeter Swans difficult.

Further along 220th Street, two Sandhill Cranes were foraging fairly close to the road giving us wonderful views.

We ended up on the dike that you access from V Avenue on the west side of the marsh. The ducks were quite distant here and hard to see. However, it's good to have raptor experts in the group. Joan Schnabel, Elizabeth Aubrey, and Karen Disbrow spotted a Peregrine Falcon. It flew right over our heads at a fairly low height.

Birds (30 species): Snow Goose, Ross's Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Tundra Swan, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Great Horned Owl, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, American Robin, European Starling, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, American Tree Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Northern Cardinal.

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Diane Bradbury, Barry Buschelman, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Charlotte Fairhe, Linda Fisher, Michelle Friessen, Therese Guedon, Pat Kieffer, the Loening family (5 members), Pat Nielson, Linda Quinn, Mark and Deb Rolfes, Linda Rudolph (leader), Joan Schnabel, Sharon Somers, Roger Stoakes, Donna Warner.

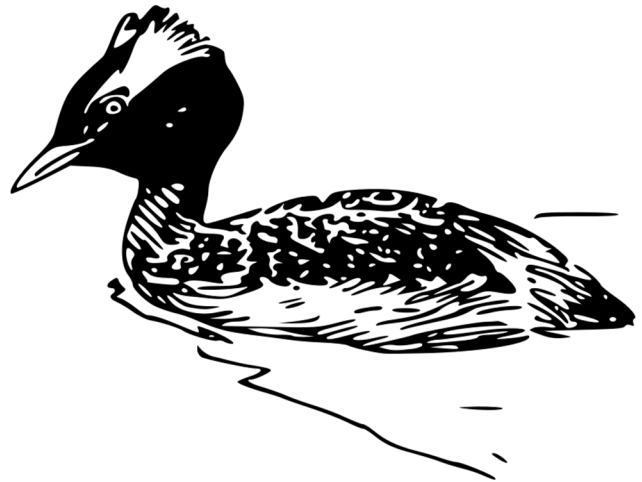
– *Linda Rudolph*

March 10, Burlington Area. Five of us met Chuck Fuller at the Port of Burlington for a great day of birding. The day was overcast and very chilly, starting with 29° F and a 10-mph wind. We started by viewing a Peregrine Falcon perched on the railroad level of the bridge over the Mississippi River. We then went to Aspen Grove Cemetery, where the Shamrock Shuffle was gearing up, and birded several spots looking in vain for a Red-breasted Nuthatch. We did see a Great Horned Owl in flight. We moved on to the tennis club, where we saw Turkey Vultures, and to the storm sewer where we found a Winter Wren. There was also a very vocal Carolina Wren there. We continued to Sullivan Slough, where the highlights were a Pileated Woodpecker and a pair of courting Barred Owls.

Participants: Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow (leader), Peter Hansen, Linda Quinn, Sharon Somers.

Birds (64 species): Snow Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, Cackling Goose, Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Northern Cardinal.

– Karen Disbrow



March 15, Meeting. Our speaker for the evening was Rick Hollis, ICBC member extraordinaire, who gave a presentation on identifying bird calls using sonograms and birding apps. Rick has compiled a list of useful bird song websites and a comparison of apps which he has posted at:

<https://xiboia.wixsite.com/birdsong-ref>.

After the talk and a break, we completed the business portion of our meeting. Treasurer Larry Mahoney reported that we remain financially solvent and he continues to encourage active members to pay their dues. Linda Quinn reported for the Field Trip Committee about a number of upcoming field trips. Birding walks at Kent Park led by Rick Hollis, held on the first and third Wednesdays each month, have resumed. Karen Disbrow reported for the Events Committee and spoke about our decision to host the Iowa Ornithologists' Union meeting in May of 2019. The meeting will be held in Keosauqua. We will assist with organization, field trips, and speakers. Any and all help will be appreciated. Details will follow as 2019 approaches.

Terri Macey reported for the Spotlight Speakers committee. This is a new addition to our meetings, where each month a speaker will have 10-15 minutes after our business meeting to report on a topic they find of interest and think will be of interest to the group. Terri described a trip to Burwell, Nebraska to view Greater Prairie-chickens and Sharp-tailed Grouse, sponsored by

Calamus Outfitters in Burwell. Please let us know if you have a topic you would like to share at a meeting.

Attendees: Ed and Jean Allgood, Karen Disbrow, John Fieselmann, Linda Fisher, Rachel Genova, Gwendoline Guentner, Barbara Haring, Rick Hollis, Doina Johnson, Ian Kidder, Pat Kieffer, Mary Larew, Terri Macey, Ramona McGurk, Larry Miller, Linda Quinn, Ben Rowold, Star Wojciak.

– Terri Macey

March 25, Cone Marsh. Three brave souls joined me on this Beginning Birder Trip to Cone Marsh, following a late winter snowstorm the previous day. We stopped first in Lone Tree to view the Great Horned Owl nest, where we saw the mother and two fuzzy babies. When we arrived at the marsh we discovered that the roads around the marsh had not been plowed and were still covered with five inches of heavy, wet snow. We ventured as far as the caboose, but there was no good stopping place. That ended the trip.

Participants: Phyllis Black, Karen Disbrow (leader), Sandy Eads, Ed Heffron.

Birds (12 species): Snow Goose, Mourning Dove, Killdeer, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Great Horned Owl, Horned Lark, American Robin, European Starling, meadowlark sp., Red-winged Blackbird, Northern Cardinal.

– Karen Disbrow

Bird Notes Rick Hollis

Kirtland's Warbler Migration:

New Technique, New Facts

We know a good bit about Kirtland's Warbler breeding habits. We know much less about their migration and not much about where they spend their Bahamas vacation each winter. We do know that an estimated 40% of the birds die in migration each year.

In a recent study, biologists used light-level geolocators on Kirtland's Warblers. These are remarkable little devices that record light every two minutes and can weigh as little as 0.5 grams (for comparison, 4.5 geolocators weigh as much as one dime). From these recordings, sunrise and sunset can be ascertained and noon can be calculated as half-way between. From this, latitude and longitude can be determined. A link in the article tells more about geolocators. The catch is that the geolocators must be recovered to get the data they have stored, so you have to put a lot of these geolocators on birds to recover enough of them to yield meaningful results. The limited breeding range of Kirtland's Warblers increases the recovery rate. A team of scientists put geolocators on 60 adult male Kirtland's Warblers in Michigan. After waiting a year, they put their nets up and managed to recapture an amazing 27 geolocators. They took them off and downloaded the information. They have summarized their results in a video which can be found by following the link below.

In summary, Kirtland's Warblers migrate in a classic loop route, in the spring going up the Caribbean islands, over to Florida and resting for a time, then up the interior to Michigan. In the fall they make one or more stops along the way in southern Ontario or the mid-Atlantic states, then cut across the ocean from South Carolina to the Bahamas. One bird spent the winter in Cuba. Next up for the scientists is using Nanotags, tiny data storage and transmitting devices. These will be something like what has been used in Project SNOW, but instead of dumping their data to cell phone towers, they will use automated telemetry towers in Florida, along the north shore of Lake Erie in Ontario, and in Michigan. Whenever a bird passes by one of these towers, the data from the Nanotag will be downloaded.

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/scientists-track-first-time-one-rarest-songbirds-its-yearlong-migration-180962390/>

How to Chase a Rarity

Seagull Steve wrote a nice blogpost at *Bourbon, Bastards, and Birds* about how to chase a rarity.

According to Steve approximately 95% of birders chase rarities at least occasionally, and 87% of birders will chase one at least once this year. I suspect the number of folks in our club that chase rarities is lower, but still, a number of us do this. I will admit to chasing, and sometimes even driving across state lines to do so.

1. Get directions to get to the right place.
2. Don't be ageist – just because someone is an older or younger birder, doesn't mean they don't know what they're talking about.
3. Study the species first.
4. If possible view photos of the actual individual bird you are searching for prior to looking for it.
5. Utilize all available resources – check multiple listservs, eBird, forums, and rare bird alerts. The more information the better!
6. When at a stakeout, don't be afraid to talk to people to get details.
7. Though I encourage birders to communicate, that comes with the caveat that most birders are not experts.
8. Sometimes, you just have to go.
9. Don't be afraid to look for the bird somewhere else besides where it was last seen if it's not showing up.
10. Time and tide are not to be ignored.

11. Be patient and don't be afraid to try again.
12. If you have the time, don't forget to peruse other birds in the immediate area.
13. Most importantly: don't string. (Stringing is defined as deliberately providing false information.)

<http://seagullsteve.blogspot.com/2017/08/the-human-birdwatcher-project-presents.html>

Eastern North American Forest Birds Are Most Threatened on Wintering Grounds

An article in *Global Change Biology* entitled "Global change and the distributional dynamics of migratory bird populations wintering in Central America," suggests three major threats to North American forest birds: greater warming on the northern breeding grounds; more rain on the breeding grounds; and less rain on the nonbreeding grounds. Their modeling suggests that the lack of rain on the nonbreeding grounds will reduce available food by 20%, and this is the largest threat.

[http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gcb.13794/full?utm_source=Cornell+Lab+Staff+eNews&utm_campaign=9b54aa0f6e-GlobalChange-LaSorte_24July2017&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1c649f110c-9b54aa0f6e-305977649,](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/gcb.13794/full?utm_source=Cornell+Lab+Staff+eNews&utm_campaign=9b54aa0f6e-GlobalChange-LaSorte_24July2017&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1c649f110c-9b54aa0f6e-305977649)

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Please send this form with your annual membership dues to Larry Mahoney, 2223 Cae Drive, Iowa City, IA 52246. Annual membership dues per household are \$15 for a print subscription, \$10 for an email subscription, or \$10 for students for a print subscription. Make checks payable to "Eastern Iowa Birdwatch". Members receive a 10% discount on birdseed and suet at Ace Hardware at 600 N. Dodge Street, Iowa City, and Forever Green Garden Center at 125 Forevergreen Rd., Coralville.

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For general club information, contact Rick Hollis at 319-665-3141 or xiboia@earthlink.net.

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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