
Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 38 Number 3

December 2018

Schedule

Field Trips are free and open to the public. Meeting place varies and is noted in the schedule. Carpooling is encouraged. Cancellations due to inclement weather or flooding are possible and are announced on the club's Facebook page and by email notification to club members. Some trips are accessible to people with disabilities. For more information or questions email iowacitybc@gmail.com.

Meetings are held at the Big White House, 1246 12th Ave., Coralville, at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month.

December 16, Sunday. Iowa City Christmas Bird Count. Join us for this holiday tradition! To participate in the field or as a feeder watcher, contact Diana Pesek at (319) 560-8393 or keesiemom@yahoo.com. See page 3 for more information.

January 6, Sunday, 8:30-10:30 a.m. Bird Feeder Watch Social. Join new hosts Ken and Mary Lowder at their home three miles north of Iowa City, off Newport Road at 4364 Treefarm Lane NE. Get together with other birders in a lovely woodland setting, watch winter birds at the feeding stations...and eat! Bring a light snack to share; coffee is provided. Some parking is available, but carpooling is encouraged – to carpool, meet Linda Quinn at 8:15 at the Hy-Vee parking lot, 1125 N Dodge St., Iowa City.

January 13, Sunday, 1-4 p.m. Coralville WinterFest, Marriott Hotel, Iowa River Landing. The club will have a viewing area with scopes and information about feeders for winter birdwatching.

February 10, Sunday, 8 a.m. Quad Cities & Mississippi River for gulls, waterfowl, and other winter birds with leader Chris Caster. We'll stop at locks and dams, riverside parks, and other hotspots like Fairmount Cemetery for winter finches. Walking is usually short-distance from frequent stops. We'll stop for lunch at a nearby restaurant. Return time is late afternoon. Dress for cold and wind, and bring a spotting scope if you have one. Meet at the Hy-Vee parking lot, 1125 N Dodge St., Iowa City.

February 10, Sunday, 1-3 p.m. Freeze Fest at the Terry Trueblood Recreation Area lodge. The club will have a viewing area with scopes and information about feeders for winter birdwatching.

February 21, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. Jason Taylor, Property Stewardship Specialist with Bur Oak Land Trust, will present "Improving Midwestern Bird, Mammal, and Insect Pollinator Habitat through Active Land Management."

February 23, Saturday, 8 a.m. Macbride Nature Recreation Area. Cure your cabin fever with a hike in the winter woods! Start with feeder birds at the bird blind, then continue on (if desired) to hike surrounding trails. Target species are Purple Finch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pine Siskin, Brown Creeper, woodpeckers, and more. Meet leaders Deb and Mark Rolfes at the MNRA main parking area where heated restrooms are available.

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Schedule (continued)

March 3, Sunday, 8 a.m. Cone Marsh in Louisa County for migrating geese, ducks, Sandhill Cranes, and other water birds with leader Linda Rudolph. A local favorite not to be missed at this time of year! Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot, 125 Hwy. 1 W in Iowa City. We'll stop at several points around the marsh and take a walk on the dike, returning by noon. Dress for cold, wind, and wet or muddy trails, and bring a scope if possible.

March 6, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk with leader Rick Hollis. Meet at the Conservation Education Center.

March 9, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Burlington Area and Mississippi River for spring waterfowl migration. Target birds include ducks, geese, pelicans, Winter Wren and many more. 64 species were seen in 2018! This is an all-day trip led by Burlington local expert birder Chuck Fuller, with stops at locks and dams, riverside parks, and other hotspots. Walking is usually short distance from frequent stops. We'll stop for lunch at a nearby restaurant. Dress for cold and wind, and bring a scope if possible. Meet Karen Disbrow at 6:30 a.m. at the Fin & Feather parking lot, 125 Hwy. 1 W, Iowa City; or at 8:00 a.m. at the Port of Burlington, 400 Front St., Burlington.

March 16, Saturday 7:45 a.m. Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge. Wildlife Biologist Jessica Bolser will lead us on a spring waterfowl tour on refuge roads that are normally closed to vehicles. Our driving route includes a 5.5-mile loop in the Louisa Division which is managed primarily for migratory birds and other wildlife. Meet Linda Quinn at 7:45 a.m. at the Hy-Vee parking lot, 1125 N Dodge St., Iowa City, or at 9:00 a.m. at the refuge headquarters, 10728 County Road X61, Wapello. Bring snacks, water, and a scope if possible. We'll return to Iowa City around 1:00. In case of flooding on the refuge road, the event may be canceled – contact Linda at (319) 330-3328 for updates.

March 19, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Beginning Birder Course: Basics of Birding I at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park. Advance registration is requested, and is free for club members. Call Sydney Algreen at 645-1011 to register. See page 6 for a complete course schedule.

March 20, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk with leader Rick Hollis. Meet at the Conservation Education Center.

March 21, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. Karen Disbrow will talk about Sandhill Cranes in Iowa and Nebraska.

March 24, Sunday, 8 a.m. Cone Marsh in Louisa County for Sandhill Cranes, migrating ducks, geese, and other water birds. Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot, 125 Hwy. 1 W in Iowa City. *Beginning Birder Trip.*

March 26, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Beginning Birder Course: Basics of Birding II at the Kent Park CEC. Advance registration is requested, and is free for club members. Call Sydney Algreen, 645-1011.

March 30, Saturday, 8 a.m. Kent Park near Tiffin. We will explore the trails in this county park looking for migrating songbirds and resident woodland birds. Meet at the CEC in Kent Park. *Beginning Birder Trip.*

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Schedule (continued)

Tuesday, April 2, 7 p.m. Beginning Birder Course: Where to Bird in Johnson County by Bruce Gardner at the Kent Park CEC. Advance registration is requested, and is free for club members. Call Sydney Algreen, 645-1011.

April 3, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk with leader Rick Hollis. Meet at the Conservation Education Center.

Other Dates of Note

January 11-14, Friday–Monday. Minnesota Avian Adventure. Join Carroll and Sac County Conservation for their annual bus trip to the North Woods of Minnesota. Space is limited – for more information email naturalist Matt Wetrich at matt@carrollcountyiowa.org.

January 11-13, Friday–Sunday. Bald Eagle Days in Davenport. A regional environmental fair with a free shuttle bus to view eagles on the Mississippi River. <https://www.quadcityaudubon.org/index.php>.

January 19, Saturday, 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Bald Eagle Watch at Grand River Center in Dubuque. Programs with live birds, kids' activities, shuttles to eagle watching on the Mississippi River, and more.

March 5, Tuesday, 6–9 p.m. Bur Oak Land Trust's Prairie Preview at the Clarion Highlander Hotel Conference Center. This year's event will focus on connecting young people to nature with free exhibits and speakers. University of Iowa Outdoor Recreation & Education Associate Director, Dave Conrads, will present "UI Wild: Connecting Iowans with the Wild for a Generation." Before the presentation, local environmental groups and agencies will have exhibits open to share information about their organizations.

Christmas Bird Count Sunday, December 16

This year's Iowa City Christmas Bird Count will be held Sunday, December 16. Co-compilers are Diana Pesek and Chris Edwards. To participate, please contact Diana at keesiemom@yahoo.com or (319) 560-8393 by Wednesday, December 12.

The Christmas Bird Count program is administered by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and it is the longest-running citizen science project in existence. The Iowa City count area is a 15-mile diameter circle centered in North Liberty. It includes parts of Iowa City, all of Coralville, Lake Macbride, Kent Park, and most of the Coralville Reservoir. The goal is to identify and count all the birds found in the count circle on the day of the count. The circle is divided into ten

territories, and a group is assigned to cover each territory.

We need participants in the field and as feeder watchers. If you wish to be in the field counting, you will be assigned to a group and your group leader will contact you to coordinate a meeting time and place. If you wish to be a feeder watcher, email Diana your address and she will make sure you are in the count circle and will send you a form. If you know others who may want to participate as feeder watchers, please have them contact Diana.

On count day, we will meet at noon for a mid-day compilation (bring your own lunch) in Room N1 at the North Liberty Community Center, 520 W. Cherry St. A dinner and final compilation will be at 5:30 p.m. at Gus' Food & Spirits, 2421 Coral Ct., Coralville.

2018 Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge

Chris Edwards

The fifth annual Cy-Hawk Big Day competition was held on Sunday, September 16. This is an annual Big Day competition between the Iowa City Bird Club, birding for the Hawkeyes, and Big Bluestem Audubon Society of Ames, birding for the Cyclones. Birders from across Iowa are welcome to join either side of the rivalry. The club with the most species at the end of the day wins the coveted Kent-Dinsmore traveling trophy, a duck decoy painted black and gold on one side and cardinal and gold on the other side. And more importantly, the winning club gets bragging rights for the next year! With that said, it's a friendly competition and the day is really all about having fun.

There is also a fundraising component for Iowa Audubon as each participant is asked for a minimum \$5 donation. This year the participants raised \$75, and the Iowa City Bird Club made an additional \$100 donation to support Iowa Audubon's bird conservation and education programs.

September 16 was a sunny, unseasonably warm day with temperatures reaching the mid-80s. The Iowa City Bird Club had fourteen participants in five field parties and one feeder watching party. Chris Caster, Linda Rudolph, and Chris Edwards visited Twinview Heights, Lake Macbride State Park, and Hawkeye Wildlife Area, and they had the top list for the club with 83 species. Adam, Lisa, and Mia Ciha birded Cone Marsh, Hawkeye Wildlife Area, and Hills. Mark Brown and James Huntington spent the morning at Hickory Hill Park. Linda Fisher and Mary Noble birded Linda's yard and nearby areas. Bob and Joann Stearns watched the birds in their Walford yard. Karen Disbrow and Bob Cruden birded the Iowa Great Lakes area in northwest Iowa, and added some interesting species to our list which we otherwise would have missed.

Our efforts this year were hampered by flooding on the Coralville Reservoir – most of Hawkeye Wildlife Area was underwater and there was very little shorebird habitat. Our club total was 101 species, down from 107 last year and 113 in 2016. Overall, we found six waterfowl species, six raptor species, four shorebird species, fourteen warbler species, and two sparrow species. Highlights included Trumpeter Swan, Red-necked Grebe, Sandhill Crane, Stilt Sandpiper, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, Cape May Warbler, and Blackburnian Warbler.

Big Bluestem Audubon Society had seven participants in three teams. Two teams birded central Iowa, including Ledges State Park, Saylorville Reservoir, Jester Park, Marsh Farm Wetlands, Brenton Slough, Chichaqua Bottoms, Robison Wildlife Acres, and Hickory Grove Park. Those two teams were Eric Ollie and Wolf Oesterreich, who had the top overall list with 86 species, and Karl Jungbluth and Nick Osness. The third team, Dick and Kit Sayles and David Griffin, birded the Quad Cities area. Highlights for Big Bluestem included Sora, Red-necked Phalarope, Cattle Egret, Eastern Screech-Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Acadian Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Scarlet Tanager. Big Bluestem's total was 108 species, so they captured the trophy for the first time in the event's history. Congratulations to the victors!

It's interesting to compare the species lists from the two clubs – it provides a snapshot of the birds seen in different areas of the state on one day. Of the 130 total species found, 79 species or 61% were seen by both groups, which is remarkably similar to last year when 83 of 131 species were seen by both groups. This year ICBC found 22 unique species, compared to 29 for BBAS.

BIRDS FOUND ONLY BY IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB (22 SPECIES)

Trumpeter Swan	Black Tern	Least Flycatcher
Northern Shoveler	Forster's Tern	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Wild Turkey	Yellow-cr. Night-Heron	Meadowlark sp.
Red-necked Grebe	Osprey	Rusty Blackbird
Black-billed Cuckoo	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cape May Warbler
Sandhill Crane	Broad-winged Hawk	Blackburnian Warbler
Stilt Sandpiper	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	
Franklin's Gull	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	

BIRDS FOUND ONLY BY BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON (29 SPECIES):

Green-winged Teal	Caspian Tern	Sedge Wren
Merganser sp.	Cattle Egret	Marsh Wren
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Cooper's Hawk	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Chimney Swift	Eastern Screech-Owl	Eastern Towhee
Sora	Great Horned Owl	Baltimore Oriole
Least Sandpiper	Barred Owl	Orange-crowned Warbler
Pectoral Sandpiper	Pileated Woodpecker	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Wilson's Snipe	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Yellow-throated Warbler
Greater Yellowlegs	Acadian Flycatcher	Scarlet Tanager
Red-necked Phalarope	Bank Swallow	

BIRDS FOUND BY BOTH GROUPS (79 SPECIES):

Canada Goose	Downy Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing
Wood Duck	Hairy Woodpecker	House Sparrow
Blue-winged Teal	Northern Flicker	Eurasian Tree Sparrow
Mallard	American Kestrel	House Finch
Ring-necked Pheasant	Eastern Wood-Pewee	American Goldfinch
Pied-billed Grebe	Eastern Phoebe	Chipping Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Eastern Kingbird	Song Sparrow
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Yellow-throated Vireo	Red-winged Blackbird
Mourning Dove	Philadelphia Vireo	Brown-headed Cowbird
Common Nighthawk	Warbling Vireo	Common Grackle
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Red-eyed Vireo	Golden-winged Warbler
American Coot	Blue Jay	Black-and-white Warbler
Killdeer	American Crow	Tennessee Warbler
Solitary Sandpiper	Tree Swallow	Nashville Warbler
Lesser Yellowlegs	Cliff Swallow	Common Yellowthroat
Ring-billed Gull	Barn Swallow	American Redstart
Double-crested Cormorant	Black-capped Chickadee	Northern Parula
American White Pelican	Tufted Titmouse	Magnolia Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Bay-breasted Warbler
Great Egret	White-breasted Nuthatch	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Green Heron	House Wren	Black-thr. Green Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Carolina Wren	Wilson's Warbler
Bald Eagle	Eastern Bluebird	Northern Cardinal
Red-tailed Hawk	Swainson's Thrush	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Belted Kingfisher	American Robin	Indigo Bunting
Red-headed Woodpecker	Gray Catbird	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	European Starling	



Introduction to Birding Course March 19 – April 28, 2019 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 19, 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 24, 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 26, 7 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING II by Karen Disbrow. Continuation of first session topics.

Saturday, March 30, 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 2, 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 6, 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 9, 7 p.m. BACKYARD AND FEEDER BIRDS by James Scheib. This session will cover the common birds found in our backyards during the year, and what types of feeders and food to use to attract them.

Sunday, April 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 16, 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 20, 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 23, 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 28, 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.**

Support Wildlife Diversity in Iowa

The following is from our friend Stephanie Shepherd, Wildlife Diversity Biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources:

Dear Partners and Friends,

It's been a year, well really a couple of years, of big change at the Wildlife Diversity Program. Long-time outreach and species restoration specialist Pat Schlarbaum retired in 2017 and bird biologist Bruce Ehresman retired this past spring. Their knowledge and experience have been greatly missed. The three remaining diversity staff have done our best to continue conserving Iowa's wildlife, and we have been busy!

- We collected bird, herptile, odonate, mammal, butterfly, and fish data on 50 sites as part of our [Multiple Species Inventory and Monitoring Project](#).
- We helped lead Monarch butterfly conservation efforts in the state, region and nation with staff serving on writing committees for both the Midwest and Iowa Conservation Plans as well as serving on the National Science and Species Status Assessment teams.
- We gave at least \$65,000 in grants for wildlife diversity focused habitat management, environmental education, and small research projects.
- Working with Iowa State Extension, we produced a [Mammals of Iowa booklet](#) to foster knowledge and appreciation of Iowa's mammals.
- We performed surveys to help better define the status and distribution of the federally endangered Rusty-patched Bumblebee. Stephanie even found one buzzing around her prairie garden in Boone and it was recorded at our home base of Ledges State Park!!
- We collected data, often with the help of some amazing volunteers, on Bald Eagle, Osprey, and Peregrine nests, Greater Prairie-

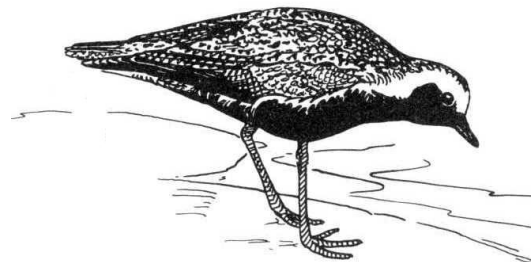
chickens, and frogs and toads at over 350 wetlands.

- We received a federal grant to investigate how to most effectively add and manage for earlier blooming plants in reconstructed prairie.
- We gave at least 20 programs, workshops and presentations across the state.

I'm probably forgetting a lot of things but I do know that we are thankfully not the only ones working for Iowa's wildlife - all of you are also busy and for that we are profoundly grateful. It is such a pleasure to work with all of you and we look forward to another busy year with you in 2019. Please reach out to Karen, Paul or myself anytime and thank you for all you do.

As the new year approaches, we also start thinking about one of our favorite times of year...tax season! Not always an event to inspire joyfulness, but we appreciate it because it gives folks an opportunity to donate money through the Fish and Wildlife Fund (or Chickadee Check-Off) on the state tax form. Donating is easy – simply enter the donation amount on the Fish and Wildlife Check-Off contribution line (usually between lines 55-59 on form 1040), and the sum is either automatically deducted from your refund or added to the amount owed. As with all charitable contributions, the dollars you donate are deductible from next year's taxes. All the money contributed helps support the Wildlife Diversity Program at the Iowa DNR, which is responsible for all the wildlife that can't be hunted, fished, or trapped.

Thank you again and we wish all of you a very happy holidays and new year and a winter filled with plenty of time in nature.



New Books Available at the Iowa City Public Library

Endangered and Disappearing Birds of the Midwest by Matt Williams. The author profiles forty of the most beautiful and interesting birds who winter, breed, or migrate through the Midwest and whose populations are most in danger of disappearing from the region. Each profile includes the current conservation status of the species, a description of the bird's vocal and nesting patterns, and tips to help readers identify them, along with stunning color images and detailed migration maps.

Birds of Prey: Hawks, Eagles, Falcons, and Vultures of North America by Pete Dunne with Kevin T. Karlson. Raptors symbolize freedom and fierceness, and in Pete Dunne's definitive guide, these traits are portrayed in hundreds of stunning color photographs showing raptors up close, in flight, and in action—fighting, hunting, and nesting. These gorgeous photographs enhance the comprehensive, authoritative text, which goes far beyond identification to cover raptor ecology, behavior, conservation, and much more.

North on the Wing: Travels with the Songbird Migration of Spring by Bruce M. Beehler, with illustrations by John T. Anderton. In 2015, ornithologist Bruce Beehler set off on a solo backroads journey to trace the spring migration of songbirds from the southern border of the United States through the U.S. heartland (including Iowa) and north into Canada. Traveling via car, canoe, bike, and on foot, Beehler followed migrant wood warblers and other songbirds from the Texas coast, up the Mississippi drainage to its headwaters in Minnesota and onward to the birds' nesting grounds in the north woods of Ontario. Engaging readers in the wonders of the spring migration, this book is a call to conserve, restore, and expand bird habitats to preserve them for the well-being of future generations of both birds and humans.

BirdNote: Chirps, Quirks, and Stories of 100 Birds from the Popular Public Radio Show edited by Ellen Blackstone. The best stories about our avian friends from the public radio show BirdNote, each brief essay illuminating the life, habits, or songs of a particular bird. Why do geese fly in a V-formation? Why are worms so good for you—if you're a robin? Which bird calls, "Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you—all?" From wrens that nest in cactuses to gulls that have a strange red dot on their bills—these digestible and fascinating bird stories are a delightful window to the winged world.

The Seabird's Cry: The Lives and Loves of the Planet's Great Ocean Voyagers by Adam Nicolson. The book describes the plight of seabirds, whose numbers are on the decline, and relays the importance of their voyages on sustaining life on Earth.

Vulture: The Private Life of an Unloved Bird by Katie Fallon. Turkey Vultures, the most widely distributed and abundant scavenging birds of prey on the planet, are found from central Canada to the southern tip of Argentina. This book follows a year in the life of a typical North American Turkey Vulture. By incorporating information from scientific papers and articles, as well as interviews with world-renowned raptor and vulture experts, the author examines all aspects of the bird's natural history: breeding, incubating eggs, raising chicks, migrating, and roosting.

The Meaning of Birds by Simon Barnes. The author offers a passionate and informative celebration of birds and their ability to help us understand the world we live in. As well as exploring how birds achieve the miracle of flight; why birds sing; what they tell us about the seasons of the year; and what their presence tells us about the places they inhabit, the book muses on the uses of feathers, the drama of raptors, the slaughter of pheasants, the infidelities of geese, and the strangeness of feeling sentimental about Blue Tits while enjoying a chicken sandwich.

Membership Renewal Reminder

It's time to send in your membership dues for 2019. Our annual membership dues per household are \$15 for a print subscription, \$10 for an email subscription, or \$10 for students for a print or email subscription. Your dues help support our publications, events, and volunteer activities. Members also receive a 10% discount on birdseed and suet at Dodge St. Ace Hardware and Forever Green Garden Center. Check your mailing label or contact Treasurer Larry Mahoney at ltjmahoney@aol.com for the year you have paid through. Please complete the membership renewal form on the inside back cover and send it with your check payable to "Eastern Iowa Birdwatch" to Larry Mahoney, 2223 Cae Drive, Iowa City, IA 52246. Or go to our website and use your PayPal account to pay.

ICBC Hosting the Spring IOU Meeting in Keosauqua

The Iowa City Bird Club is hosting the Spring Meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union in Keosauqua on May 3-5, 2019. The area offers great birding at nearby Lacey-Keosauqua State Park, Shimek State Forest, and other areas. The meeting will be held at the Roberts Memorial Center at the north edge of town. We will need volunteers to help setup tables on Friday afternoon and tear down tables on Sunday afternoon. We will also need people to clean up after each meal. Linda Quinn is heading up the decorating committee. Chris Edwards is organizing the field trips. If you are able to help with any of this, please contact either of the three of us. Thanks!

– Karen Disbrow

Help Wanted: Webmaster

Do you have the skills to maintain the Iowa City Bird Club's website? Or have you always wanted to learn? After eighteen years as club Webmaster, Jim Scheib is ready to pass the baton to someone else. If you are interested or want to know more about the job, please contact Chris Edwards at credwards@aol.com. Jim will assist the new person to make the transition as easy as possible.

Join Our Email List to Receive Important Updates

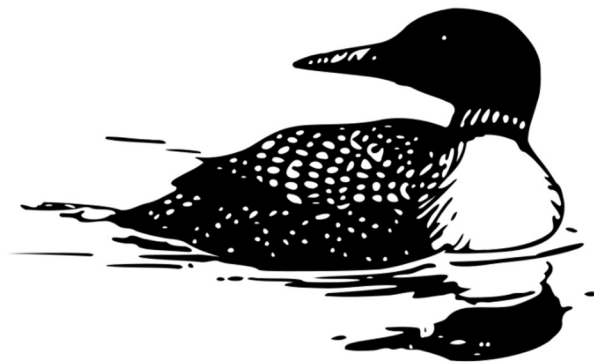
To receive the electronic version of the newsletter, as well as reminders about upcoming club meetings, field trips, and other events, sign up for the Iowa City Bird Club Google Group. It's a perk for all dues-paying members.

To sign up, give a shout to Linda at quinnhenry@msn.com. And don't forget to let her know when you change email addresses.

You do not have to create a Google account in order to receive and read our posts.

Our Google Group is not a chat-discussion format like IA-BIRD – it is set for notification only, so you cannot reply to the entire group.

– Linda Quinn



Field Trip and Meeting Reports

September 9, Annual Pelican Festival at Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area. This year's Pelican Festival was cancelled due to flooding at the Coralville Reservoir. Most of the area where the festival is held was under water at the time.

September 15, Grammer Grove Hawk Watch. A small but plucky contingent from the Iowa City Bird Club joined Mark Proescholdt and several other birders for a hawk watch at the Grammer Grove Wildlife Area in Marshall County. The day was sunny, warm, and humid, and we came prepared with sunscreen, long sleeves, and wide-brimmed hats. We arrived at Grammer Grove a little before 9:00 after the roughly 1¾-hour drive. We unloaded our gear and then set out with Mark to walk the trails toward the Iowa River. It was on that excursion that we encountered the most numerous of the day's airborne species — mosquitoes. Slathered with various repellent products that didn't seem to have much effect, we braved it for about 45 minutes. Overall it was very quiet in the woods and we finally surrendered, as it was too difficult to find and stay focused on any birds while we had to keep using hands and arms to wave at and slap the relentless swarming insects.

It was a relief to return to the gravel road overlooking farmlands to the north for hawk watching. It was a very slow day. We counted about 16 Turkey Vultures, 3 Bald Eagles, 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1 Cooper's Hawk, 2 Red-tailed Hawks, and 1 American Kestrel. With the still, dry, hot weather of the previous several days, migration had not yet kicked in. Also in the open we saw a number of other species including a dozen Common Nighthawks, and perhaps the treat of the day, a Chimney Swift. We also saw a fair number of dragonflies and butterflies.

Even with a very feeble whisper of a breeze that began late morning, prospects for more numbers

seemed dim and we packed up to leave around 1:45.

Many thanks to Mark for his cheerful welcome and marvelous expertise. Mark has begun a project of entering the hawk count numbers that he and his mother have logged at Grammer Grove for the last 28 years into the database of the Hawk Migration Association of North America (<http://www.hawkcount.org/>). Mark's records are a treasure trove of information about hawk migration across central Iowa, filling a gap between Hitchcock Nature Center on the Missouri River and several hawk watch sites in and around Chicago. With his data, we may be able to track birds that move through this part of Iowa from Duluth and Mankato. Kudos to Mark!

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey and Linda Rudolph (ICBC group), Ken Gregory, Candace Havelly, Eric Ollie, Mark Proescholdt.

Birds (34 species): Common Nighthawk, Chimney Swift, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, *Empidonax* sp., Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Swainson's Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, House Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Tennessee Warbler, American Redstart, Northern Cardinal.

– Elizabeth Aubrey

September 20, Meeting. Our speaker for the evening was Gerald White, who presented a photo diary of his trip with Wilderness Birding Adventures to Gambel and Nome, Alaska in the spring of 2018. He presented full-frame photos of many of the area's birds. He talked about the culture of the Yup'ik people and provided information on transportation and lodging in such a remote area. You can view the photos on

his Flickr page by searching gwapuffin on Google.

After the talk and a break we completed the business portion of our meeting with the following reports:

1. Larry Mahoney gave the Treasurer's report. We are in good shape financially, with \$1,765 in our account and 117 active members.
2. Field Trips: the 2018 Hawk Watch was announced as well as a field trip to the Hawkeye Wildlife Management area.
3. Events: Karen Disbrow encouraged people to attend the IOU meeting in Clear Lake. She also announced that the Iowa City Bird Club will be sponsoring the May, 2019 IOU meeting to be held in Keosauqua. We will need volunteers in a number of capacities. Karen will provide more information as the date gets closer.
4. Help Needed: After 18 years of service, Jim Scheib is ready to step down from maintaining the bird club website. We welcome anyone who would like to take over for Jim, who either has the web skills or would like to acquire them. Contact Linda Quinn, Terri Macey, or Karen Disbrow if you could help with this.
5. Karen Disbrow requested donations for the 2019 Introduction to Birding class. There is a tradition of providing new birders with new or gently used bird-related items—books, feeders, birding tote bags, etc. If you have items you no longer use, please give them to Karen.

Spotlight Speaker: Dave Conrads, birder extraordinaire and our host at the Big White House, introduced himself to us and gave a short history of his commitment to birds, especially raptors. Dave has a background as a field biologist with a specialty in raptors and oversaw the Raptor Center at Lake Macbride for many years. In 1991 he started the University of Iowa Wildlife Camps to give kids a chance to discover wildlife in the field. That led to School of the Wild which now serves 1900 students a year and

is available to all sixth graders in Iowa City schools. In addition to School of the Wild, Dave focuses on research and education for the Raptor Center. We are grateful to Dave for allowing us to meet in our lovely new space.

Attendees: Barry Buschelman, Theresa Carbrey, Jackie Chace, Jerry Denning, Dennis Domsic, Mark and Sandy Eads, Chris Edwards, Vic and Nola Edwards, Linda Fisher, Peter Hansen, Judie Hermsen, Rick Hollis, Lois Hughes, James Huntington, Merle Ihne, Pat Kieffer, Larry Mahoney, Milana Mitchell, Tom and Carol Rosenberger, Ben Rowold, Linda Rudolph, Susan Sullivan, Richard Tetrault, Donna Warner.

– *Terri Macey, Secretary*

September 23, Hawk Watch at Stainbrook Preserve. A successful fall hawk watch is highly dependent upon weather conditions and timing. And when scheduling the event months in advance, organizers pick a date and then hope for the best. This year, fortune smiled on us and the conditions were nearly optimal for our annual bird club hawk watch. Following an extended period of rain, the weather broke two days before the count, and sunny skies and light winds prevailed through the count. This resulted in our best hawk watch in a decade. In 32 years of Iowa City Bird Club hawk watches, this was the third-best in terms of total numbers, the third-best for Broad-winged Hawks, and the best ever for Cooper's Hawks and Sharp-shinned Hawks (the latter a tie).

From our vantage point at Stainbrook State Preserve, which overlooks the Coralville Reservoir just east of Mehaffey Bridge, most migrating raptors pass by along two corridors: some birds appear above the wooded ridge to the north, and fly south over the wooded ridge behind us, with a few birds passing directly overhead – we generally have good looks at all these birds. Other raptors are seen across the water over Macbride Nature-Recreation Area, and head south far to the west of us – many of these birds can be a challenge to identify.

On this morning, the Broad-winged Hawks started flying early, and the highest number were seen between 9 – 10 a.m. with 87 birds tallied in that time. They continued to migrate in good numbers though the rest of the morning, but none were seen after noon. The main flight of Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks occurred between 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. We got great looks at individuals of both species as they passed directly overhead, but even some of these close birds stimulated a healthy debate among the observers about their identities. Many others were scoped far to the west and were recorded as *accipiter* species.

We tallied 44 Turkey Vultures during the count, but it was difficult to determine if they were all migrating south, or just flying around looking for food. Small numbers of Ospreys, Bald Eagles, and Red-tailed Hawks rounded out our raptor list. We heard or saw many non-raptor species, with Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pileated Woodpecker, and several Red-headed Woodpeckers being notable. We lost count of the many Monarch butterflies migrating past.

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Phyllis Black, Katya Boltanova, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Sandy Eads, Chris Edwards, Julie Englander, Ed Heffron, Rick Hollis, James Huntington, Paul and Charmaine Kleiber, Jamie McCoy, Milana Mitchell, Louise Murray, Linda Rudolph, Bill Scheible.

Raptors (7 species, 262 individuals): Turkey Vulture 44, Osprey 2, Bald Eagle 3, Sharp-shinned Hawk 8, Cooper's Hawk 14, *Accipiter* sp. 25, Broad-winged Hawk 158, Red-tailed Hawk 8.

Other Birds (27 species): Canada Goose, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Ring-billed Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American

Crow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Gray Catbird, American Goldfinch, Song Sparrow, Nashville Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Northern Cardinal.

– *Chris Edwards*

October 3, Kent Park. After many gloomy Wednesday bird walks, today was just glorious. There were a lot more birds about, but our inability to see through the leaves prevented us from seeing many of them. There were also a lot of butterflies – Cabbage White, Orange Sulphur, Pearl Crescent, Monarch, Silver-spotted Skipper, and probably more.

Participants: Rick Hollis (leader), Eric Miller, Linda Quinn, Donna Warner.

Birds (21 species): Ring-billed Gull, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, Gray Catbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, American Goldfinch, White-throated Sparrow, American Redstart, Yellow-rumped Warbler.

– *Rick Hollis*

October 13, Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area. Our fall sparrow trip was delayed one week due to heavy rain and flooding on the scheduled date. Water was still rising at Hawkeye, which was both bad and good for the group. Bad that we didn't get to bird one of the very few good trails available, but good that it produced some puddle duck and shorebird habitat out in western Hawkeye that quickly padded our waterfowl list. The habitat was on the north side of Cemetery Road between its intersection with Grabin Road and Swan Lake Road.

We finished with 72 species, but none of our target sparrows (e.g. Harris's, LeConte's, Nelson's) were found. None of the marsh sparrow habitat was subaerial. We did, however,

find around 11 species of sparrows along Greencastle Ave., just south of Gun Club Ponds and north of the farm just outside the wildlife management area.

Participants: Kyle Belcher, Brandon Caswell (leader), Jerry Denning, Chris Edwards, Pat Kieffer, Jamie McCoy, Linda Quinn, Donna Warner, Torin Waters.

Birds (72 species): Canada Goose, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Ring-necked Pheasant, Pied-billed Grebe, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, American Coot, Killdeer, Pectoral Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Franklin's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Meadowlark sp., Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Tennessee Warbler, Palm Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Cardinal.

– *Brandon Caswell*

October 18, Meeting. Our speaker for the evening was Doug Harr, an exceptional birder and photographer who is also President of Iowa Audubon. Doug's presentation was on a birding trip to the Lower Rio Grande Valley and the Texas Gulf Coast, and included remarkable photos of the birds that were seen in those areas.

Big Bluestem Audubon Society of Ames hosted a November 2017 birding trip for 20 participants, some from the Iowa City Bird Club, guided by four Iowans having past experience with birding some of the best areas in South Texas. More than 180 species were observed during the six-day event, yielding from 7 to 50 lifers for everyone on the tour.

After the talk and a break we completed the business portion of our meeting:

1. Larry Mahoney gave the Treasurer's report. We remain in good financial shape.
2. Field Trips: Linda Quinn described upcoming field trips including a trip to Belgum Grove and Riverside Trail led by Fawn Bowden and a trip to Port Louisa Wildlife Refuge.
3. Events: Karen Disbrow gave an update on the May, 2019 IOU meeting to be held in Keosauqua. She will reserve a block of rooms at the AmericInn in Fairfield, a 25-minute drive from Keosauqua. We will need volunteers in a number of capacities. Karen will provide more information as the date gets closer.
4. Help Needed: We still need someone to maintain our website, since after 18 years of service Jim Scheib would like to retire from those duties. We welcome anyone who would like to take over for Jim, who either has the web skills or would like to acquire them. Contact Linda Quinn, Terri Macey, or Karen Disbrow if you could help with this.
5. Linda Fisher took orders for the 2019 Phenology Calendar and Ben Rowold reported that volunteers are needed to monitor the bluebird boxes at Waterworks Park. Contact Linda or Ben for more information.

Spotlight Speaker: Karen Disbrow gave a short presentation on how to help our feathered friends during the cold winter months. In addition to information on the best seeds (black oil sunflower—without hulls makes less of a mess—and safflower), Karen also told us about the need

for pigeon-sized grit, which helps the birds digest their food and is harder for them to come by during the winter. She also suggested a heated bird bath for water and cleaning feeders every 3-4 weeks to keep them free from bacteria to keep the birds healthy.

Attendees: Paul and Janet Abbas, Phyllis Black, Theresa Carbrey, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Vic and Nola Edwards, Peter Hansen, Roger, Christine and Rachel Kripes, Kristen Lawton, Terri Macey, Larry Mahoney, Milana Mitchell, Linda Quinn, Mark and Deb Rolfes, Tom and Carol Rosenberger, Richard Tetrault, Donna Warner.

– *Terri Macey, Secretary*

October 21, Belgum Grove and Riverside Trail. We had a beautiful and sunny, albeit cool, fall day for the field trip to Belgum Grove and Riverside Trail. Twelve birders started the morning off at Belgum Grove, a Bur Oak Land Trust property. There were a lot of Canada Geese on the pond, along with a small flock of Cackling Geese and a Belted Kingfisher. Many Ring-necked Pheasants flushed, along with numerous sparrows, many of which only popped up briefly. We did see Savannah, Song, White-throated, Swamp, and Fox, as well as Eurasian Tree Sparrows fairly well. A lone Yellow-rumped Warbler was seen on our way out.

Birding along Naples Ave NW into Riverside, we saw a very interesting Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk scanning the harvested fields.

At Riverside Trail, a similar mix of sparrows and a lot of Cedar Waxwings were found. Two Carolina Wrens were spotted, a new bird species for the trail list!

Participants: Fawn Bowden (leader), Jerry Denning, Sandy Eads, Peter Hansen, Gail Heater, Rick Hollis, Jamie McCoy, Linda Quinn, Linda Rudolph, Donna Warner, Torin and Danelle Waters.

Birds (41 species): Cackling Goose, Canada Goose, Ring-necked Pheasant, American Coot,

Killdeer, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Blue Jay, American Crow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Cardinal.

– *Fawn Bowden*

November 7, Kent Park. It was downright brisk this morning – maybe beyond brisk. It was gray and gloomy too, but at least nothing was coming down. We did a quick walk and then settled into the blind. The only thing that surprised us was the number of Red-headed Woodpeckers – we tallied six but it could have been twice that number. One of them was pretty vocal, flying in and around a certain place in a tree. As near as we could tell it was upset at a squirrel. At the blind, we were pleased to see a Red-breasted Nuthatch.

Birds (16 species): Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, House Finch, American Goldfinch, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal.

– *Rick Hollis*

November 10, Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge. Six members signed up for the bus tour to view migrating waterfowl, but refuge staff cancelled the tour because of flooding. Wildlife Biologist Jessica Bolser reported six feet of water covering the roads due to unusually high rainfall this fall. Flooding impacted the birds as well, resulting in far fewer ducks than normal on the

refuge because of a lack of food. Jessica explained that foliage normally just under the water’s surface was now six feet underwater. She believes the birds either didn’t stop at the refuge or were scattered throughout the area.

– Linda Quinn

Bird Notes
Chris Edwards

Three-way Hybrid

Scientists have shown that a bird found in Pennsylvania is the offspring of a hybrid warbler mother and a warbler father from an entirely different genus—a combination never recorded before now and which resulted in a three-species hybrid bird. This finding was published in the journal [Biology Letters](#). “It’s extremely rare,” explains lead author and Cornell Lab of Ornithology postdoctoral associate David Toews. “The female is a Golden-winged/Blue-winged Warbler hybrid—also called a Brewster’s Warbler. She then mated with a Chestnut-sided Warbler and successfully reproduced.” A dedicated bird watcher and contributor to eBird in Roaring Spring, Pennsylvania, first

noted the oddity in May 2018. He then got in touch with researchers in the Cornell Lab’s Fuller Evolutionary Biology Lab. The key to identifying the triple-hybrid’s parents came from genetic analyses. “We looked at the genes that code for different warbler colors,” Toews explains. “This way we could recreate what the hybrid’s mother would have looked like—the avian equivalent of a detective’s facial composite, but generated from genes. We confirmed that the mother would have looked like a Brewster’s Warbler and the father was a Chestnut-sided Warbler.”

Hybridization is common among Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warblers, and this has been of particular concern for Golden-winged Warblers which have declined dramatically in some populations. But hybridization has never been recorded between these species and Chestnut-sided Warblers. This kind of rare hybridization event may also occur more often in the declining warbler populations of Appalachia, because there is a smaller pool of mates from which to choose. Scientists plan to keep an eye on this location to see what the future may hold for this very rare bird.

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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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