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# Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 38 Number 2

September 2018

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## 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](mailto:info@icbirds.org).

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

**September 15, Saturday, 7 a.m. Grammer Grove Hawk Watch.** Target birds are Broad-winged Hawk, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Sharp-Shinned Hawk, and other migrant raptors. Grammer Grove Wildlife Area is a lovely wooded area on the Iowa River near Marshalltown, 1 hr. 50 min. away. Mark Proescholdt is the local hawk expert who will host our group again this year. We'll start by birding the park's woodland trails, then take a seat and enjoy the hawk watch. Bring a chair and bag lunch. Return time mid- to late afternoon, based on participant wishes. Meet leader Elizabeth Aubrey at Kohl's parking lot, 2795 Commerce Dr., Coralville.

**September 16, Sunday, Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge.** It's Hawkeyes vs. Cyclones, Iowa City vs. Ames! Gather a team and register for this fun birding event by 6 p.m. September 15. Contact Karen Disbrow at [k\\_disbrow@yahoo.com](mailto:k_disbrow@yahoo.com) or 319-430-0315 to register. See page 3 for more information.

**September 19, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk.** Meet at the Conservation Education Center.

**September 20, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting.** Gerald White, esteemed IOU Birder, will present "A Photo Diary of Gambell, Alaska Birding."

**September 23, Sunday, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Hawk Watch at Stainbrook Preserve,** located along Mehaffey Bridge Road just north of Sugar Bottom Recreation Area. Join us on the hill to watch for migrating raptors including Broad-winged Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, and Red-tailed Hawk. Bring a lawn chair and a spotting scope if you have one.

**October 3, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk.** Meet at the Conservation Education Center.

**October 6, Saturday, 7 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area** for sparrows and other fall migrants. Meet leader Brandon Caswell at the parking lot on Swan Lake Road between 6:45 and 7:00 a.m., across from Swan Lake (GPS coordinates, 41.776081, -91.675009). We will carpool our way around the area with moderate hiking at some viewing areas. Dress for wet/muddy trails and bring a spotting scope if you have one. We'll finish up around noon.

Continued on next page →

## Schedule (continued)

**October 17, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk.** Meet at the Conservation Education Center.

**October 18, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting.** Doug Harr, birder, photographer, and President of Iowa Audubon, will present “Birding the Rio Grande Valley & Texas Coast.”

**October 21, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Belgum Grove and Riverside Trail** for sparrows and other fall migrants. Meet leader Fawn Bowden at the Fin & Feather parking lot at 125 Highway 1 W in Iowa City for a morning of birding at two hotspots new to the club. We’ll carpool to both locations and hike the mowed paths at Belgum Grove and a gravel trail at Riverside.

**November Field Trip – To Be Announced.** Check our website in October for details.

**November 15, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting.** Jim Scheib will present “Birding SE Arizona.”

**December 16, Sunday. Iowa City Christmas Bird Count.** Details will be included in the next issue.

## Other Dates of Note

**September 13, Thursday, 6-8 p.m. Tallgrass Prairie Center Roadside Conference Banquet and Keynote Talk.** Doug Tallamy will present “Making Insects: The Little Things that Run the World.” Register at <https://tallgrassprairiecenter.org/roadside-banquet>.

**September 14, Friday, 8 a.m. – 7 p.m. Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge** auto tour road is open to vehicles. Refuge visitors can drive the 5.5-mile, self-guided road through wetland and grassland areas. The tour road begins at the inlet water control structure at the Louisa Division of Port Louisa NWR, located six miles north of Wapello.

**September 15, Saturday, 7 a.m. – 4 p.m. Lucas County Birds, Bikes & Hikes** event at Pin Oak Lodge in Chariton, plus an Owl Prowl at 8 p.m. Friday evening. For a schedule and additional details visit [charitonareachambermainstreet.com](http://charitonareachambermainstreet.com).

**September 28-30, Friday-Sunday. Iowa Ornithologists’ Union Fall Meeting at Ventura in Cerro Gordo County.** For more information and to register visit [www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org). The keynote speaker is world birder Noah Stryker.

<h3>Help Wanted: Iowa City Bird Club Webmaster</h3>
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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](mailto:credwards@aol.com). Jim will assist the new person to make the transition as easy as possible.

## New Meeting Place for Iowa City Bird Club

We've got a new home for our monthly meetings. Homey is one description. Historical beauty is another. You may know this 110-year-old building as the *Big White House*. Since 2010 it has been home for Genesis Church, "as well as a place of peace for our community to enjoy". Pastor Dave Conrads hopes we enjoy it and is excited to share it with our club.

Connections to birds go deep at the Big White House. Dave is a birder both personally and professionally. He oversaw the Macbride Raptor Center in the early 1990s and later founded the University of Iowa Wildlife Camps and School of the Wild. Currently, Dave oversees the Outdoor Recreation and Education programs of Recreational Services, as well as the Macbride Nature Recreation Area. Bird connections thrive in the building itself. The Big White House has a bird library with both bird art and bird books to peruse. And the house has Chimney Swifts chattering in the chimney! Dave says they nest here annually.

Location is the reason for the choice of our new home. At 1246 12th Ave. in Coralville we are centrally located for members coming from Coralville, Iowa City, and North Liberty. Parking is in the church lot, with overflow next door at Hillside Christian School. We meet in the main gathering space, the Fireside Room, which provides spacious and comfortable seating with a big screen. We've got another room in which to spread out at break time, and storage space for club equipment. So we think it's going to be a great place for us.

The September meeting will be our first in the new space. Come early and bird the five acres of building grounds that includes woodlands. If you're lucky, you'll see Chimney Swifts coming home to roost before they migrate in October.

– Linda Quinn

## Cy-Hawk Big Day Sept. 16

The fourth annual Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge is Sunday, September 16. Join us for this friendly, spirited competition as teams from the Iowa City Bird Club (and Hawkeye friends across the state) compete against teams from Big Bluestem Audubon Society of Ames (and Cyclone friends across the state) to find the most bird species in one day.

To participate, form a team of two or more birders and register your team with Karen Disbrow by 6 p.m. on Saturday, September 15 – by email at [k\\_disbrow@yahoo.com](mailto:k_disbrow@yahoo.com) or by text or phone at 319-430-0315. On September 16, your team may bird for as much or as little as you like between midnight and midnight, anywhere in the state. At least two members of the team must positively identify each bird, whether seen or heard. The complete rules are posted on our website.

This year we are asking each participant for a minimum \$5 donation for Iowa Audubon. Please send your donation to Karen Disbrow, 1917 I Street, Iowa City, IA 52240.

After the competition, email your bird list to Chris Edwards at [credwards@aol.com](mailto:credwards@aol.com) by Wednesday, September 19. The results from all our teams will be compiled into one list for the club. The club with the most species wins bragging rights and the coveted Kent-Dinsmore traveling trophy. The Iowa City Bird Club has held the trophy for the first four years, including after last year's tie, so let's go for five!

## Iowa Audubon Corner

Renew your Iowa Audubon dues this fall before dues increase January 1, 2019. Current dues are \$10 Individual and \$15 Family. New dues are \$15 Individual and \$20 Family. You can choose to receive the newsletter via e-mail or US Mail. Check out the Iowa Audubon website at [www.iowaaudubon.org](http://www.iowaaudubon.org).

## 2018 Johnson County Spring Count

### Chris Caster

The Spring Count was held on May 12, 2018. Heading into the weekend we were somewhat nervous that our count would be a soggy one. A front passed through Friday night bringing cool temps. The day began at 47 degrees and only warmed to 58. It was breezy at times, but we dodged the rain. And the birds were everywhere.

We managed a species count of 175, which tied the record count in 2003. Eleven waterfowl species was tremendous, as were eighteen shorebirds and 28 warblers. But it wasn't just the species count, it was the numbers found: 11 Veerys, 167 Swainson's Thrushes, 10 Bay-breasted Warblers, 30 Bobolinks. After a cold April it seemed like all the conditions were right, as we picked up early spring holdovers and a fallout of everything else itching to get north. We also had an early Alder Flycatcher.

As expected with a large count, we had many great birds. Perhaps the best bird was a Black-necked Stilt at Round Pond. A Common Gallinule was heard along Greencastle Ave. near the Half Moon Lake boat access. A Pine Siskin was coming to Linda Fisher's feeder. A Northern Mockingbird was at the corner of 500th and the Muscatine County line. Hudsonian Godwits and a Willet were seen from Amana Road. Ten American Avocets were at Terry Trueblood. Common Nighthawks can be a tough get, but two were at Goose Lake at dusk. A Black-crowned Night Heron was at Sycamore Bottoms. And a Red-breasted Merganser was at the water treatment ponds north of Kalona. Snow Geese, a Red-shouldered Hawk, Cape May Warblers, and Louisiana Waterthrushes were also great finds.

Despite the high count we had a number of tough misses: both bitterns, Northern Bobwhite, American Woodcock, Great Horned Owl, White-eyed Vireo, Loggerhead Shrike, Prothonotary Warbler and Henslow's Sparrow were missed this year. And one of these years we're going to find a Blue Grosbeak. Thanks to everyone for making it a great day.

Participants: Kyle, Lauren, and Marcia Belcher, Mark Brown, Chris Caster, Brandon Caswell, Chad and Colleen Davis, Jerry Denning, Drew Dillman, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Linda Fisher, Jim Fuller, James Huntington, Andy and KT Long, Terri Macey, Mark Madsen, Jason McCurdy, Ramona McGurk, Jason Paulios, Diana Pesek, Linda Quinn, Mark and Deb Rolfes, Daryl Ropp, Linda Rudolph, Jim Scheib, Sharon Somers, Donna Warner.

#### SPECIES LIST

Snow Goose	3	Rock Pigeon	16	Stilt Sandpiper	1
Canada Goose	355	Eurasian Collared-Dove	4	Dunlin	5
Wood Duck	35	Mourning Dove	66	Least Sandpiper	154
Blue-winged Teal	86	Common Nighthawk	2	White-rumped Sandpiper	11
Northern Shoveler	71	Chimney Swift	5	Pectoral Sandpiper	6
Gadwall	1	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	12	Semipalmated Sandpiper	2
Mallard	63	Sora	15	Short-billed Dowitcher	8
Green-winged Teal	2	Common Gallinule	1	Spotted Sandpiper	23
Ring-necked Duck	2	American Coot	14	Solitary Sandpiper	2
Lesser Scaup	5	Sandhill Crane	4	Lesser Yellowlegs	41
Hooded Merganser	10	Black-necked Stilt	1	Willet	1
Red-breasted Merganser	1	American Avocet	10	Greater Yellowlegs	1
Ruddy Duck	1	Black-bellied Plover	4	Franklin's Gull	22
Ring-necked Pheasant	16	Semipalmated Plover	4	Ring-billed Gull	33
Wild Turkey	8	Killdeer	19	Herring Gull	1
Pied-billed Grebe	6	Hudsonian Godwit	2	Caspian Tern	20

Black Tern	15	Purple Martin	45	Bobolink	30
Forster's Tern	14	Tree Swallow	293	Eastern Meadowlark	28
Double-crested Cormorant	17	N. Rough-winged Swallow	11	Western Meadowlark	1
American White Pelican	300	Bank Swallow	70	Orchard Oriole	8
Great Blue Heron	10	Cliff Swallow	308	Baltimore Oriole	80
Great Egret	1	Barn Swallow	302	Red-winged Blackbird	315
Green Heron	6	Black-capped Chickadee	60	Brown-headed Cowbird	74
Black-crowned Night Heron	1	Tufted Titmouse	35	Common Grackle	64
Turkey Vulture	131	White-breasted Nuthatch	32	Ovenbird	21
Osprey	1	House Wren	108	Louisiana Waterthrush	2
Bald Eagle	19	Sedge Wren	1	Northern Waterthrush	15
Cooper's Hawk	2	Marsh Wren	2	Golden-winged Warbler	28
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	Carolina Wren	5	Blue-winged Warbler	6
Broad-winged Hawk	1	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	23	Black-and-white Warbler	26
Red-tailed Hawk	9	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	6	Tennessee Warbler	106
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	Eastern Bluebird	14	Orange-crowned Warbler	3
Barred Owl	4	Veery	11	Nashville Warbler	31
Belted Kingfisher	1	Gray-cheeked Thrush	8	Mourning Warbler	6
Red-headed Woodpecker	30	Swainson's Thrush	167	Kentucky Warbler	2
Red-bellied Woodpecker	44	Wood Thrush	6	Common Yellowthroat	90
Downy Woodpecker	23	American Robin	302	American Redstart	140
Hairy Woodpecker	5	Gray Catbird	151	Cape May Warbler	6
Northern Flicker	11	Brown Thrasher	18	Cerulean Warbler	3
Pileated Woodpecker	12	Northern Mockingbird	1	Northern Parula	12
American Kestrel	4	European Starling	57	Magnolia Warbler	41
Peregrine Falcon	1	Cedar Waxwing	93	Bay-breasted Warbler	10
Eastern Wood-Pewee	16	House Sparrow	81	Blackburnian Warbler	20
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	1	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	8	Yellow Warbler	45
Alder Flycatcher	1	House Finch	10	Chestnut-sided Warbler	81
Willow Flycatcher	2	Pine Siskin	1	Blackpoll Warbler	17
Least Flycatcher	16	American Goldfinch	194	Palm Warbler	26
Eastern Phoebe	14	Eastern Towhee	18	Yellow-rumped Warbler	52
Great Crested Flycatcher	31	Chipping Sparrow	78	Yellow-throated Warbler	2
Eastern Kingbird	26	Field Sparrow	12	Black-throated Green Warbler	18
Bell's Vireo	6	Vesper Sparrow	2	Canada Warbler	5
Yellow-throated Vireo	33	Lark Sparrow	10	Wilson's Warbler	17
Blue-headed Vireo	11	Savannah Sparrow	5	Scarlet Tanager	38
Philadelphia Vireo	4	Grasshopper Sparrow	3	Northern Cardinal	136
Warbling Vireo	14	Song Sparrow	49	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	63
Red-eyed Vireo	47	Lincoln's Sparrow	11	Indigo Bunting	54
Blue Jay	57	Swamp Sparrow	4	Dickcissel	8
American Crow	60	White-throated Sparrow	24		
Horned Lark	4	White-crowned Sparrow	32		

## Join Our Google Group

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. Frequently Asked Questions:

**Q:** How do I sign up?

**A:** Give a shout to Linda at [quinnhenry@msn.com](mailto:quinnhenry@msn.com) or [info@icbirds.org](mailto:info@icbirds.org).

Don't forget to let us know when you change email addresses.

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

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

– Linda Quinn

# Hickory Hill Park Warbler Walks – April 30-May 25, 2018

Day of week		M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F	M	T	W	Th	F
Species / Date	Days	30	1	2	3	4	7	8	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	21	22	23	24	25
Ovenbird	10				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X							
Worm-eating Warbler	0																				
Louisiana Waterthrush	0																				
Northern Waterthrush	7		X	X	X	X		X				X					A				
Golden-winged Warbler	11				X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Blue-winged Warbler	6			X	A	X	X		X												X
Black-and-white Warbler	12	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X							
Prothonotary Warbler	2		X								X										
Tennessee Warbler	14				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Orange-crowned Warbler	5			X	X	X	X	X													
Nashville Warbler	12	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X							
Connecticut Warbler	3																X	X	X		
Mourning Warbler	8								X		X	X	X		X	A	X	X			
Kentucky Warbler	1				A																
Common Yellowthroat	18		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Hooded Warbler	0																				
American Redstart	18			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cape May Warbler	2								X	X											
Cerulean Warbler	0																				
Northern Parula	9		X		X		X		X	X	X	X	X		X						
Magnolia Warbler	8				A				X	X	X	X	X	X			A				
Bay-breasted Warbler	4								X		X			X	X						
Blackburnian Warbler	10						X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			
Yellow Warbler	6					X	A			X	X		X	X							
Chestnut-sided Warbler	14			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	A	X			
Blackpoll Warbler	5							X			X	X	X					X			
Palm Warbler	7	X	X	X		X	X	X			X										
Yellow-rumped Warbler	12	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X								
Yellow-throated Warbler	0																				
Black-throated Green Warbler	11				X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X		X				X
Canada Warbler	9									X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Wilson's Warbler	8										X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X

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

Others: Black-billed Cuckoo 5/16; Acadian Flycatcher 5/25; Alder Flycatcher 5/23, 5/25; Yellow-bellied Flycatcher 5/15, 5/21-22; Olive-sided Flycatcher 5/14; Philadelphia Vireo 5/3-4, 5/14-16; White-eyed Vireo 5/2, 5/15; Summer Tanager 5/9, 5/15, 5/18, 5/25; Orchard Oriole 5/8-9, 5/14.

## Field Trip and Meeting Reports

**March 31, Kent Park.** Our group of eleven hiked a Kent Park trail starting at the Conservation Education Center. We watched for migrating Hermit Thrushes, but there was very little leaf-litter because of a controlled burn two weeks prior, and we neither saw nor heard a Hermit Thrush. Near the lower pond we came upon a sleeping Great Horned Owl, and saw a Canada Goose sitting on its nest on the big dead tree trunk. Up on the ridge was a large flock of Wild Turkeys. Other birds along the trail included Eastern Bluebirds, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbirds, Northern Cardinals, Blue Jay, Turkey Vultures, Red-tailed Hawk, and a smaller hawk which we couldn't identify. At the bird blind we watched American Goldfinches, Dark-eyed Juncos, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatches, Black-capped Chickadees, and House Finches.

Participants: Phyllis Black, Sandy Eads, Rachel Genova, Peggy Grimmer, Linda Hartford, Ian Kidder, Pat Kieffer (leader), Mary Larew, John and Carol McNamara, Stu Ordman.

*– Pat Kieffer*

**April 7, Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area.** It's always fun to spend the morning with an enthusiastic group of beginners who are seeing many of the birds for the first time. On this trip four members of this year's Introduction to Birding Course were joined by five more experienced club members. The near record-low temperatures made it feel more like January than April, but we were all dressed warmly and the sunshine helped warm our faces.

We birded the south side of Hawkeye from east to west, and our first stop was along James Avenue where we viewed a Bald Eagle nest through the spotting scopes. We continued to the overlook at the end of James Avenue, where we saw hundreds of Ring-billed Gulls, a dozen or more Bald Eagles, a few cold-looking pelicans, and some distant shorebirds. A male Northern

Harrier, the first of many harriers seen, sailed past along the shoreline.

We continued on to Swan Lake. The lake was entirely iced-over except for three small holes which were packed with ducks and coots. This was an excellent spot to learn waterfowl identification – most of the ducks were Gadwalls, but we also spotted some more colorful species including wigeon, shoveler, ring-necked, and Canvasback. We then walked to the small pond north of Swan Lake Woods. The pond was ice-free and covered with ducks, but we didn't see any new species. We briefly saw a Winter Wren at the stream but otherwise very few passerines were active.

We continued to Babcock Access. We didn't expect to see much there, but as we arrived a flock of several hundred Snow Geese flew over. This was followed by many more flocks of both Snow and Greater White-fronted Geese totaling several thousand birds, and we enjoyed this spectacle for a good fifteen minutes. We had a slight delay to jumpstart a dead car battery, then we were on our way again.

At the north end of Greencastle Avenue, we found more waterfowl to study, including Buffleheads and Ruddy Ducks, and the geese spectacle continued overhead. We spotted an Eastern Phoebe foraging at the edge of the ice, and a Yellow-rumped Warbler that looked like it wanted to be somewhere else.

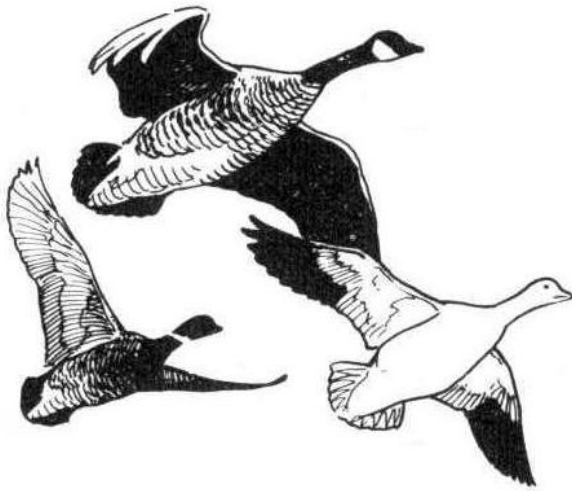
Our next stop was Round Pond, where we were excited to find a flock of fifteen Trumpeter Swans. We finished our tour at the Gun Club Ponds. The waterfowl there, including a few Green-winged Teal and Wood Ducks, departed shortly after we arrived. That concluded an enjoyable morning.

Participants: Phyllis Black, Sandy Eads, Chris Edwards (leader), Peggy Grimmer, Linda Hartford, Pat Kieffer, Mark and Deb Rolfes, Donna Warner.



Birds (46 species): Snow Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Ring-necked Pheasant, Pied-billed Grebe, Mourning Dove, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, American Crow, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, American Robin, American Tree Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Cardinal.

– Chris Edwards



**April 8, Ryerson's Woods.** The temperature at the start of our walk was 26° F. We had planned the trip for early spring wildflowers, but spring was three weeks late, and possible snow was forecast for the afternoon. As a result, the wildflowers were staying underground!

We had a nice selection of birds. As we started up the hill there was one sad, cold Eastern Phoebe. It was not a good year to go north early! Continuing up the hill we searched for any sign of early plants. Therese has done this walk so often that she gave us detailed descriptions of

where the flowers would be in a few weeks. Under some of the leaves we found tiny leaves of bluebells, spring beauty, dutchman's breeches, and bloodroot. A Cooper's hawk flew through. Then someone spotted activity in a tree cavity 35 feet up. A woodpecker? No, it was a raccoon nesting very high up in a tree. How do those babies get down? Continuing up the hill we finally found the birds I was looking for, seven Rusty Blackbirds. I had spotted 30 here the day before. As we watched they flew off to a new location. Coming around the loop we spooked a Barred Owl and got some distant looks.

We drove over to the old Isaac Walton League area and looked north to the Bald Eagle nest. One eagle was in the nest tree for a short time but soon took off. Finishing off the cold morning, we drove over to Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, where we found two Common Loons, an American White Pelican, a Ruddy Duck, and another Bald Eagle. It was a very cold but enjoyable trip.

Participants: Phyllis Black, Drew Dillman, Therese Guedon (co-leader), Wendelin Guenter, Linda Quinn, Sharon Somers (co-leader), Donna Warner.

Birds (26 species): Canada Goose, Ruddy Duck, Mourning Dove, American Coot, Killdeer, gull sp., Common Loon, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Barred Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Red-Winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, Northern Cardinal.

– Sharon Somers

**April 19, Meeting.** Our speaker for the evening was Linda Rudolph, who gave an exceptional presentation on two birdwatching trips she made to Australia. Australia is unique in many ways, being an island continent. This uniqueness is reflected in its birds, and 38% of the species are endemic to the continent. Linda showed photos



of birds ranging from the large flightless Emu and Southern Cassowary to the tiny jewel-like Fairywrens. She was surprised at the number and diversity of parrots she saw. Linda's photographs were amazing and her knowledge of the birds was wonderfully detailed and interesting. Bob and Linda Scarth had lived in Australia and Bob delighted everyone with tales of their encounters with birds there, especially the Superb Lyrebird.

After the talk and a break, we completed the business portion of our meeting including these committee reports:

1. Larry Mahoney, Treasurer, reported that we remain financially solvent and he continues to encourage active members to pay their dues. We have had many members use our new PayPal feature to pay their dues online. We also had seventeen new members as a result of this year's Beginning Birder class.
2. Linda Quinn reported for the Field Trip Committee about a number of upcoming field trips. Kent Park Bird Walks led by Rick Hollis continue to be held on the first and third Wednesdays of the month.
3. Karen Disbrow reported for the Events Committee and provided an update of progress regarding the IOU meeting in May 2019, which we are hosting. The meeting will be held in Keosauqua. We will assist with organization, field trips, and speakers. Any and all help from members will be appreciated. Details will follow as 2019 approaches.
4. Terri Macey reported for the Spotlight Speakers committee and reminded members to please let us know if you have a topic you would like to share briefly at a meeting. As a reminder, these are short talks (10-15 minutes) given at the end of our meeting about a topic of special interest to you. Feel free to contact Donna Warner, Deb Rolfes, or Terri Macey if you would like to do a short presentation.

After the business portion, Spotlight Speaker Mark Madsen gave a short presentation about the upcoming Hickory Hill Park Warbler Walks, describing the paths where we can find the most birds and the many different warblers seen.

Attendees: Ed and Jean Allgood, Theresa Carbrey, Karen Disbrow, Dennis Domsic, Sandy Eads, Chris Edwards, Linda Fisher, Judie Hamsen, Peter and Katy Hansen, Rick Hollis, Terri Macey, Mark Madsen, Larry Mahoney, Linda Quinn, Mark and Deb Rolfes, Linda Rudolph, Bill Scheible, Robert Swem, Donna Warner, Diane Zumbach.

– *Terri Macey, Secretary*

**April 29, Shimek State Forest.** This was a joint field trip with the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. We had a good turnout with thirteen people in our group along with fourteen others in an IOU group. People came from Mason City, Buffalo, North Liberty, Coralville and Iowa City. A few others from Cedar Rapids and Riverside joined the IOU group due to the large size of our group. Thanks to Linda Quinn for help with organization and coordinating with Eric Ollie of the IOU for such a good turnout.

We started at the Donnellson Unit of Shimek State Forest where we found 34 species. The first bird I heard pulling into the unit was a Yellow-throated Warbler! It took some work to locate it in the top of the pines, but it eventually moved into some bare deciduous trees for better viewing and a great start to the day. There was some decent activity on the main road with mostly Ruby-crowned Kinglets, American Goldfinches, and Tufted Titmouse, which was a great way for the new birders in the group to work on locating and starting to ID common birds on their own. It was fun to see that excitement. The other highlight here was a Barred Owl nest with a very sleepy adult visible. There were no signs of owlets yet.

We stopped at the Argyle junkyard where Bewick's Wrens are sometimes found. This was a brief stop due to a pack of dogs running around the junkyard and some pretty heavy winds but we

still managed to add a few birds to the list. Eurasian-collared Dove was present and active the Friday before, but not for the trip.

Our next stop was the Croton Unit of Shimek State Forest where we found 32 species. We added a few migrant warblers to the list here including good looks at Orange-crowned Warbler and Black-and-white Warbler. Surprise visitors were a group of Purple Finches, including a beautiful male foraging low over the creek, providing excellent views for all. This was a favorite for a number of the new birders in the group and an excellent bird to find on their first birding experience. A number of White-eyed Vireos were heard in the unit, but were never seen unfortunately. No signs of a Yellow-breasted Chat or Worm-eating Warbler by either our group or the IOU group. Jim Fuller also showed up and said he hadn't seen either as well, so we felt good that we hadn't overlooked something. Red-headed Woodpeckers were seen in decent numbers as well.

A notable highlight on the drive from Croton to Farmington was a Bald Eagle nest on the Missouri side of the Des Moines River with eaglets present. We set up my dad's scope and everyone got views of an adult feeding the babies, which was also another favorite experience for the group.

We finished at the Farmington Unit where we found 20 species. A Northern Parula was heard right as we entered the unit and it was later spotted high in a cottonwood. In the area where the Pine Warbler is typically found, we heard a Red-breasted Nuthatch and saw another Yellow-throated Warbler, but the Pine Warbler was nowhere to be found. We ended the day with a group photo and returned safely to Iowa City.

Participants: Chelsey Bacon, Kyle Belcher, Phyllis Black, Jerry Denning, Patricia Nielsen, Janel Phetteplace, Rachel Pins, Dan Rose (leader), David Rose, Jim Rose, Linda Quinn, Dick Sayles, Zach Wilcox.

Birds (48 species): Mourning Dove, Chimney Swift, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Barred Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Kingbird, White-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Brown Thrasher, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Black-and-white Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Northern Parula, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Northern Cardinal.

– Dan Rose

**April 29, Hickory Hill Park.** On the same morning as the Shimek State Forest trip, we had a beginning birder walk at Hickory Hill Park. Seventeen birders attended. Although it started a little chilly, it was a beautiful sunny day. Everything was nearly ideal except that there weren't many migrants around.

Birds (26 species): Mourning Dove, Broad-winged Hawk, Barred Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Carolina Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, House Finch, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Cardinal.

– Mark Madsen

**May 17, Meeting.** There were twenty people in attendance. Our speaker for the evening was Jim Scheib, who gave a wonderful presentation on

birding Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. Jim's photography is legendary among the ICBC members and his talk was thoroughly enjoyed. After the talk and a break, we completed the business portion of our meeting, which included the following committee reports and announcements:

1. Larry Mahoney gave his Treasurer's report. We are in good shape financially.
2. ICBC encourages people to help out the club if they are able. Just speak up and let us know! We need and want help to keep active.
3. Deb Rolfes announced our new meeting space, the Big White House, which is home to Genesis Church, at 1246 12th Avenue, Coralville. The Genesis Pastor is our very own ICBC member, Dave Conrads. You may know Dave from his other role with UI Recreation Services and Macbride Nature-Recreation Area. Dave is really happy we will be using his church! There are a number of reasons for the move. The new location is more centrally located for all of our members, has better parking, and is a more comfortable space. There is storage space for our equipment and we can turn the lights on and off ourselves! We will use the space for a year and see how we like it.
4. Deb announced the upcoming activities, including Warbler Walks, a trip to Wildcat Den State Park near Muscatine, a tour of the Bur Oak Land Trust properties, a trip to Indiangrass Hills, and the August trip to Hawkeye Wildlife Area followed by our annual picnic, as well as the regularly scheduled Kent Park birding walks hosted by Rick Hollis. The annual Turkey Vulture Festival will be held in July, and the butterfly count will also be held in July.

Spotlight Speaker: Linda Rudolph gave a short presentation on the upcoming butterfly count. Linda is an ICBC member who's been an active eBirder since November 2011 and one of the winners of the 2017 eBird Checklist-a-day Challenge.

– *Deb Rolfes and Terri Macey*

**May 20, Wildcat Den State Park.** Six birders from ICBC met at the park with guest trip leader and Muscatine local, Susan Nixon. Susan birds the park weekly so knew just which trails to lead us down.

We hiked 2.4 miles on several park trails that took us past beautiful bluffs and rock outcroppings with spectacular views. Late season wildflowers were easy to spot because of the open forest floor, mostly free of invasive plants like honeysuckle, multiflora rose, and garlic mustard. If you haven't visited this park it's certainly a wondrous place to check out.

Susan is also talented with bird identification via songs which was especially important in this fully leafed-out wooded setting. Colleen listed 24 birds identified by sight only, compared to 49 heard and/or seen. Song and call ID are definitely helpful!

Warbler migration had already peaked by this date, but we still totaled six warbler species. We worked really hard to get good looks at the Kentucky Warbler, which has attempted to nest in the park in previous years. This Kentucky Warbler also allowed us to listen extensively to its song, which is similar to the repeated chanting song of Carolina Wren.

Participants: Chad and Colleen Davis, Therese Guedon, Adam and Stephanie Rauckhorst with their darling 8-month-old Gracie, Susan Nixon (co-leader), Linda Quinn (co-leader).

Birds: (49 species): Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Chimney Swift, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Turkey Vulture, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Carolina Wren,

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Swainson's Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, American Goldfinch, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Baltimore Oriole, Brown-headed Cowbird, Tennessee Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Northern Parula, Yellow-throated Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting.

– Linda Quinn



**June 9, Bur Oak Land Trust Properties.** We met at 7:30 at the Fin & Feather parking lot in a downpour (including hail) and waited until nearly 8:00 to head out. Our first stop was Muddy Creek Woods which is located off 12th Avenue at the edge of the Coralville city limits. This property was donated to the Bur Oak Land Trust last year by Barbara Beaumont and Kurt Hamann and is open to the public. The entrance is at the end of Muddy Creek Lane. Because of the rain, we didn't see many birds there but had a pleasant and wet walk through the woods populated with many large white oaks.

From there we headed off to Big Grove, but took a break at the North Liberty True Value where we encountered another major downpour that delayed us for at least 20 minutes. When the rain let up, we headed out on Mehaffey Bridge Road to Sugar Bottom Road and then onto 245th Street. Just before going into the Big Grove

parking area, we stopped just past the entrance to the Celebration Barn where there is a pond on the right side of the road and a thicket on the left. The birds were much more active and we finally got some interesting birds including Yellow Warbler (they are always there) and Blue-Winged Warbler. Moving on, we parked at Big Grove and hiked into the extension area that was purchased a few years ago. Among other woodland birds were an Acadian Flycatcher and a Louisiana Waterthrush. We also got great looks at a well-posed male Scarlet Tanager.

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Jerry Denning, Therese Guedon, Justin and Amy Howland, Mark Madsen (leader), Sharon Somers.

Birds (41 species): Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Turkey Vulture, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Blue-winged Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Yellow Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting.

– Mark Madsen

**June 23, Indiangrass Hills.** Five birders joined me for the annual outing to Indiangrass Hills in Iowa County. The weather was very pleasant, starting at about 65 degrees and warming to around 80 by midday with mostly overcast skies and light winds. Brandon Caswell substituted for me last year, when both Northern Mockingbird and Loggerhead Shrike were seen, so the pressure was on to produce both of those specialties. Since Dean Hester reported them

earlier in the week just southwest of the property, we were quite optimistic.

The outing started out by easily picking up Eurasian Collared Doves along 240th Street northeast of Indiangrass Hills, where they have become expected. A singing Lark Sparrow was also notable since I have not had this species on previous outings. A short time later at the property along I Ave., a singing Bell's Vireo was heard and briefly seen. We then broke protocol by driving past our normal parking spot and headed south just past 265th Street to see if we could pick up the previously reported shrikes and mockingbirds. Of course, no shrikes were observed (I have a reputation for missing them), but Northern Mockingbirds were easy. At least three were present and one was singing.

Later in the morning we parked at the traditional area north of the shed along I Ave. and then started to hike along the trail on the east side of the road. Only one male Bobolink was present, but it was vocal and everyone had a good look when it flew by a couple of times. Both of the specialty grassland sparrows were also evident early, with several Henslow's and a few Grasshoppers. A few of the Henslow's allowed especially good looks this year, teeing up unobscured and no more than 20 feet away!

Other good birds were seen as we continued our walk across the stream. There were good numbers of Red-headed Woodpeckers and Orchard Orioles. Especially notable was a pair of Willow Flycatchers. Although the habitat has always been favorable in parts of these grasslands, this was actually my first sighting here. The group returned to the parking area at around 11:00. Since we still needed Sedge Wren, we strolled down a short way along the trail on the west side, but came up empty. This is the first time this bird was missed in the several years that I've done this outing.

The trip ended on a very high note, however. We all decided to make another try for the Loggerhead Shrike. We travelled a little further south along I Ave. than we did earlier, about a

half-mile past the 265th Street intersection, and spotted a single adult perched on a dead snag in an open pasture. Also at this spot were a couple more mockingbirds, most likely different birds than earlier in the morning, and a heard-only Northern Bobwhite. This brought the total species for the outing to 58, which everyone agreed made for a hugely successful morning!

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Mark Brown (leader), Terri Macey, Mark Madsen, Linda Quinn, Sharon Somers.

Birds (58 species): Northern Bobwhite, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Killdeer, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Loggerhead Shrike, Bell's Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Blue Jay, Horned Lark, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel.

Butterflies (18 species): Black Swallowtail, Cabbage White, Clouded Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Little Yellow, Gray Copper, Coral Hairstreak, Eastern Tailed-Blue, Great Spangled Fritillary, Meadow Fritillary, Pearl Crescent, Question Mark, American Lady, Red Admiral, Common Wood-Nymph, Monarch, Silver-spotted Skipper, European Skipper.

– Mark Brown

**July 4, Kent Park Bird Walk.** I woke up very early on the Glorious Fourth, and I got up and hit the road. This got me to Kent Park an hour early, so I wandered the area by the Conservation Education Center. I took some photos and listened to some birds. One of the first birds I heard was a Rose-breasted Grosbeak singing from a tree just off the parking lot. Throughout the hour, I wondered if anyone would show, and was a bit surprised when three other folks showed up.

It was miserably hot and humid and I had the group take several short pauses. It was also apparently buggy as everyone else was spraying and swatting. We hiked 1.2 miles in 90 minutes, and saw 27 species. I considered Scarlet Tanager and Wood Thrush to be good birds for Kent Park, given the size of the wooded area.

For our Kent Park Bird Walks we meet at the Conservation Education Center at 8:00 a.m. on the first and third Wednesdays of the month, March through October. The trips are sponsored by the Iowa City Bird Club and the Friends of Johnson County Conservation. They are free and open to anyone. Join us!

Participants: Jerry Denning, Sandy Eads, Julie Englander, Rick Hollis (leader).

Birds (27 species): Green Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-pewee, Eastern Phoebe, American Crow, swallow sp., White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, European Starling, American Goldfinch, Eastern Towhee, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting.

– Rick Hollis

**July 7, Turkey Vulture Festival** at Coralville Dam East Overlook. There were 60 Turkey Vultures present on the south face of the dam at 8 a.m. They lifted off earlier than usual about

8:45, but several stayed on the rocks for later viewing. At 10:30 a.m. staff from Raptology gave a talk featuring Gonzo the Turkey Vulture.

We had about 65 visitors, including lots of kids, during the morning. Thanks to Linda Fisher and Mary Noble, who helped the kids use the spotting scope. Terry Escher and Dean Hillsman manned the Corps of Engineers activities as volunteers. Dave Irvin, Eastern Iowa Beekeepers Association, had a great live honey bee display with many activities for kids.

Birds (8 species): Turkey Vulture, American Crow, Tree Swallow, House Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Gray Catbird, Red-winged Blackbird, Indigo Bunting.

– Karen Disbrow

**July 23, Iowa City Butterfly Count.** The 20th annual Iowa City Butterfly Count was held Monday July 23, after being delayed two days by poor weather. The count is part of the North American Butterfly Association's 4th of July Butterfly Count Program. Six other counts are held annually in Iowa, including the Shimek State Forest and Yellow River State Forest counts which are also organized by me. On this count we visited Kent Park, Hawkeye Wildlife Area, Macbride Nature-Recreation Area, Lake Macbride State Park, and Turkey Creek Preserve. We also counted butterflies along roadsides and in several alfalfa fields.

The long-term average for the count is 33 species and 1153 individuals. This year in 10.5 hours in the field we found 33 species and 1952 individuals.

Butterfly species have different flight periods, and their numbers vary greatly from year to year and from week to week during the flight season. Species seen in significantly above-average numbers this year were Cabbage White, Clouded Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Little Yellow, Viceroy (record high), Monarch (record high), Silver-spotted Skipper (record high), Least Skipper (record high), Peck's Skipper, and Tawny-edged Skipper (record high).

Species seen in significantly below-average numbers were Eastern Tailed-Blue, Summer Azure, Pearl Crescent, Red-spotted Purple, Common Wood-Nymph, Black Dash (missed), and Dun Skipper (missed).

In addition to adult butterflies, we found four Monarch caterpillars on swamp milkweed.

Participants: Chris Edwards (leader), Frank Olsen.

Species List: Black Swallowtail 9, Giant Swallowtail 1, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 6, Cabbage White 258, Clouded Sulphur 866, Orange Sulphur 208, Little Yellow 124, Dainty Sulphur 1, Bronze Copper 1, Eastern Tailed-Blue 21, Summer Azure 37, American Snout 3, Variegated Fritillary 5, Great Spangled Fritillary 16, Meadow Fritillary 6, Pearl Crescent 9, Question Mark 6, Eastern Comma 4, Gray Comma 2, Painted Lady 1, Red Admiral 14, Common Buckeye 13, Red-spotted Purple 1, Viceroy 38, Hackberry Emperor 4, Common Wood-Nymph 3, Monarch 110, Silver-spotted Skipper 102, Common Sootywing 4, Least Skipper 53, Fiery Skipper 2, Peck's Skipper 8, Tawny-edged Skipper 16.

– *Chris Edwards*

**August 19, Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area** (a.k.a. “Jamie Shows Us Where He Secretly Photographed Rosy the Spoonbill.”)

We had a large crowd trickle into our meeting place, so it was good that there were some birds to scope around Swan Lake. Surprisingly there was nothing on the water, but against the far shore a rotund Trumpeter Swan demonstrated balancing over one foot. Impressive. Three Green Herons were spotted in other places and a couple of Belted Kingfishers kept us busy as stragglers arrived.

For the previous nine days a Roseate Spoonbill, a species normally found in the southern U.S., had been seen at Hawkeye WMA. Hoping to locate “Rosy the Spoonbill” we hopped back to

our vehicles and caravanned to the “terminus” of James Ave. From there we had a wide view of Hawkeye and could with some certainty say that Rosy had taken a holiday. Most of the other birds were pretty far away, but a large number of pelicans were conspicuously gathering for their upcoming festival. A Caspian Tern was among them, likely sitting in for Rosy. A large number of Ring-billed Gulls lounged with some Franklin's Gulls on the near grassy mudflat. A modest number of shorebirds were actively feeding, but only Pectoral Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, and a molting Black-bellied Plover could be identified with confidence. Great Egrets, Great Blue Herons, cormorants, and a Bald Eagle were scattered about to complete the stage, as we all waited hopefully for our star to arrive. Back at the parking lot a Bell's Vireo mocked our naiveté. We began to think we were wasting our time when we made phone contact with the Brown, Caswell, and Rose party at the base of Sand Point. They excited us with news of Red-necked Phalaropes and we found renewed purpose in our quest.

The walk out to Sand Point was fruitful. Warbling and Yellow-throated Vireos were heard from the Swan Lake Woods. Blue Grosbeaks were chipping from the weeds along the lane, and a male was seen singing at the top of a distant tree. Upon reaching the base of Sand Point we walked the shoreline east until we could view the birds there without being backlit by the sun. Most were Pectorals, but quickly we spotted some Baird's Sandpipers and then the challenge was to keep one in the middle of the scope long enough that someone else could see it. Baird's seems to be one of our more enigmatic shorebirds and there were many discussions regarding their details. One birder likened them to a hamburger patty when they are facing you. A vegan might have a different take. Another unique quality of shorebirds is that new ones have the ability to spontaneously appear within the flock. This led to the discovery of some Least Sandpipers and even a lone Semipalmated to keep our interest. Soon the promised Red-necked Phalaropes materialized. These two kept us quite entertained



as they spun about in their characteristic buffet-in-the-round feeding style.

By this time the heat was a reminder that it was getting later in the morning and most of the group departed. A few of us walked over to the pond on the west side of Sand Point where Jamie described how he stealthily obtained the wondrous photos of Rosy just the day before. We gazed longingly across the now empty pond and listened in rapture, each imagining how splendid it would have been to have been there too. Heavy sigh. But being highly distractible we turned our attention to the swallows flying about.

Thanks to everyone for turning out and Jerry for allowing me to drive.

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Phyllis Black, Mark Brown, Chris Caster (leader), Brandon Caswell, Chad and Colleen Davis, Jerry Denning, Sandy Eads, Chris Edwards, Michelle Friessen, Terri Macey, Jamie McCoy, Cheryl Miller, Jason Paulios, Linda Quinn, Dan Rose, Linda Rudolph, Donna Warner.

Species (63): Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Mallard, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Sandhill Crane, Black-bellied Plover, Killdeer, Stilt Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, dowitcher sp., Spotted Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Franklin's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Caspian Tern, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Great-crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Bell's Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Bank Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, American Goldfinch, Song Sparrow,

Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting.

– Chris Caster



**August 19, Potluck Picnic.** We've got a good thing going two years in a row! This event followed the annual shorebird field trip to Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area. Folks came from the trip, and others just for the picnic. We gathered at Red Haw shelter in Kent Park, and enjoyed good food and conversation, with birds being our hottest topic. Bird song serenade was courtesy of Eastern Towhee, Indigo Bunting, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Northern Cardinal, and a small flock of chickadees.

Attendees: Elizabeth Aubrey, Barry Buschelman, Jerry Denning, Mark and Sandy Eads, Pat Kieffer, Terri Macey, Tom and Carol Rosenberger, Linda Quinn.

– Linda Quinn

## Bird Notes Rick Hollis

### *Barnacle Geese mating impacted by climate change.*

Environmental signals seem to be causing Barnacle Geese to race northward far faster than normal, skipping regular resting and refueling stops. Some arrive before the grasses are at their prime. Some arrive so exhausted that they are no longer interested in mating. Populations are as

yet stable, and so far the decline in the number of birds mating seems to be offset by higher survivorship by the young.

***The more we think we know about animal behavior, the more we learn.***

Prior to 2015, the story was that whenever crows encounter a dead crow in the presence of an enemy, they swarm in large numbers, cawing raucously. They were never observed actually touching the dead crow. John Marzluff and doctoral student Kaeli Swift described these as crow funerals. In 2015 Ms. Swift demonstrated some of her experiments for a film crew. She used a dead, taxonomically stuffed crow and left it on the ground. A nearby crow flew in, landed near the dead crow, spread its wings and attempted intercourse. For the next three years she further studied the behavior of crows around dead crows. Instead of the funeral responses, she observed crows touching, attacking, scavenging and attempting to have sex with the crow corpse. These studies were performed in the absence of predators. The majority of times crows cawed and dove at the corpse, and 24% of the time they

pecked, pulled or dismembered the corpse. In 4% of the studies copulation was attempted. The studies determined that the posture of the stuffed bird (lifelike or dead) had no effect on the actions of the live crows. Studies were conducted during the mating and post-mating seasons. Crows interacted with the corpses during mating season but the frequency decreased as the season went on. The authors hypothesize that hormonal fluctuations may be involved.

***Russian cuckoo invasion spells trouble for Alaskan birds.***

Common Cuckoos and Oriental Cuckoos in eastern Russia appear to be expanding their range into western Alaska. Although there is not yet any evidence of breeding, it is likely happening somewhere. In Eastern Siberia songbirds have strong anti-parasite behaviors, and in a study 14 of 22 nesting pairs rejected a dummy cuckoo egg. But in Alaska only 1 of 96 nesting pairs tested rejected the cuckoo egg. It appears Alaska’s native songbirds are naive to the cuckoos’ nest parasitism which could spell problems for reproduction.

**IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM**

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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## Iowa City Bird Club

[www.icbirds.org](http://www.icbirds.org)

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

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

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