

Eastern Iowa Birdwatch

The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 19 Number 1

April 1999

Calendar

Field trips, unless otherwise noted, leave from Terrill Mill Park, located across N. Dubuque Street from the Mayflower. **Meetings** are generally held at 7:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month at Lucas Elementary School, 830 Southlawn Drive, near Towncrest in eastern Iowa City.

April 15, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Meeting. Jim Fuller will present a talk about winter birding in the Duluth, Minnesota area. This will be our last meeting until fall.

April 17 – 18, Saturday – Sunday. Southern Iowa for Prairie-Chickens. An overnight trip to Mount Ayr in Ringgold County to view displaying Greater Prairie-Chickens on their lek at dawn. Call Karen Disbrow at 339-1017 to participate. Karen plans to leave Saturday afternoon and return Sunday afternoon.

April 24, Saturday, 6:30 p.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Bring your flashlight and join us on an evening foray to listen for marsh birds and amphibians. We may also search for American Woodcock. Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

April 29, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. Johnson County Spring Migration Count organizational meeting at Chris Caster's house, 4 South Ridge Court, Coralville. If you cannot attend the meeting but would like to participate in the count, call Chris at 339-8343. See page 2 for more information.

May 8, Saturday. Johnson County Spring Migration Count.

May 16, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Ryerson's Woods for spring migrants and wildflowers. Meet at the Ryerson's Woods parking lot, located south of the Johnson County Fairgrounds along S. Riverside Drive. There is a short paved handicapped-accessible trail. Margriette Delle, 338-2925.

May 23, Sunday, 6:00 a.m. Dudgeon Lake near Vinton for warblers and other late migrants. Possibilities include Prothonotary, Mourning, and Connecticut warblers. Chris Caster, 338-8343.

June 12, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Redbird Farms Wildlife Area and other areas for nesting woodland and grassland birds. Mike Dooley, 358-7624.

August 22, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Area for shorebirds and perhaps a few early warblers. Leader to be drafted at a later date. Rubber boots and insect repellent recommended.

Other Dates of Note

April 17 – 18, Migratory Bird Watch Weekend at Kent Park Education Center and Frytown Conservation Area, sponsored by the Johnson County Conservation Board. For more information call Chris Fowler at 645-2315.

April 30 – May 2, Iowa Ornithologists' Union Spring Meeting in the Lake Rathbun/Centerville area. For more information call Rick Hollis at 338-4834.

News

SPRING MIGRATION COUNT. On Saturday, May 8th, the Johnson County Spring Migration Count will be held. Like the Christmas Bird Count, the purpose of this count is to find as many species of birds as possible and record their numbers. This count is conducted nationwide on the same day so that the information gathered may be used to study national migration patterns. Participants may spend as many hours as they wish birding during the day on Saturday. Some like to get out there before sun-up and bird until after sun-down, but if you only have a few hours that would be equally appreciated. Feeder watchers and backyard birders would also help.

Anyone interested in participating should call Chris Caster at 339-8343 for more information. An organizational meeting will be held on Thursday, April 29 at 7:00 p.m. at 4 South Ridge Court in Coralville. A checklist will be provided at this meeting for all participants which will need to be returned for compilation.

IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB ON THE WEB. Our current schedule and information about our

club can be found on Iowa Birding, the web site of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union (storm.simpson.edu/~birding/), managed by Ann Johnson. There is also a link to our page on the Johnson County Community Network site (www.jccn.iowa-city.ia.us) under Community Links and then Clubs.

LOCAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR WOOD THRUSH SURVEY. Margriette Delle is seeking volunteers to assist in surveying local sites in May and June for nesting Wood Thrushes. The surveys are for the Birds in Forested Landscapes (BFL) project sponsored by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Birders of all skill levels are welcome. Margriette received recognition in *WildBird* magazine for her participation in Project Tanager, a precursor to the BFL project. Please call Margriette at 338-2925 to help.

4TH OF JULY BUTTERFLY COUNT. Chris Edwards is planning to conduct an Iowa City 4th of July Butterfly Count this summer. Last year there were almost 350 counts held in North America, sponsored by the North American Butterfly Association (NABA). Rules are similar to Christmas Bird Counts: counters record all butterflies observed within a 15-mile diameter circle, on a single day during a period from several weeks before to several weeks after July 4th. The count will be held in mid- to late July in the same count circle as the Iowa City Christmas Bird Count. Butterfly watching is a fun activity that can be enjoyed during birding's summer doldrums. If you are interested, please call Chris at 626-6362.

Field Trip and Meeting Reports

January 14, Iowa City – Cedar Rapids Area. This trip was scheduled for the Quad Cities

riverfront to look for wintering gulls and waterfowl; however the reports I had received from birders there were not encouraging and better opportunities seemed closer at hand. My apologies to those not attending because they thought that they would freeze on a riverbank all morning. Temperatures were just below freezing and the air was calm. Our first effort was to locate the Mandarin Duck near the student union. We failed to locate this bird and headed south making a couple of stops along the river to locate the Oldsquaw which were also unsuccessful. But everything looked up from there.

South of Iowa City we found Eurasian Tree Sparrows at the end of the private road that runs around the S&G Quarry. Also spied along the road was a Great Horned Owl which sat out in the open for everyone to get a good look. On the way back into town we made another stop along the Iowa River and found the Oldsquaw. We then headed up to Jim Fuller's place north of town, but he told us that the swans which had been on the river below weren't around and we might try the waters below the dam. We did so, but a large number of fisherman had beaten us to it. No swans. Our next stop was along the Amana Road north of the Hawkeye Wildlife Area. There in cedars we located a Saw-whet Owl which sat most patiently as we gawked.

The group then decided to head for Cedar Lake. There we saw a number of American Black Ducks, a Horned Grebe, Hooded and Common Mergansers, a Kingfisher, and another female Oldsquaw. As luck would have it we also met with Jim and Joyce Durbin. They were just returning from a hike around the lake and invited us to their home in Marion. The Durbins had been seeing a Red-Shouldered Hawk in their backyard. Four of us made the trip. We did not see the Red-Shouldered Hawk, but we were treated to looks at a Cooper's Hawk which

bombed through the yard on one occasion. But visiting the Durbins' home was a treat in itself. I have never seen a home or yard more dedicated to birds anywhere. Some of you might recall Jim's slide show presentation given at our bird club meeting last fall. We got to see the landscaping that made all those beautiful pictures possible. The waterfall and pool are its centerpiece, but the Durbins have also planted a very large variety of species for attracting birds. It was truly inspirational. We thank the Durbins for their hospitality.

Participants (7): Chris Caster (leader), Mike Dooley, Chris Edwards, Julie Englander, Eric Haley, Ute Muh, David Weiss.

Birds (36 species): Horned Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, Canada Goose, Mallard, American Black Duck, Oldsquaw, Common Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Bald Eagle, American Kestrel, Wild Turkey, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Belted Kingfisher, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, Dark-eyed Junco, American Tree Sparrow, White-Crowned Sparrow, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.
– *Chris Caster*

February 13, Annual Amana Turkey Trot.

The temperatures were cold but the pancakes were warm, and the bird numbers were low but the cholesterol numbers were high at the annual Amana Turkey Trot and breakfast. The group of ten warmed up for the main event, breakfast, by hiking the railroad tracks into the bottomland woods north of Highway 6.

Participants (10): Birdie Amberson, Christine

Amberson, Jonni Ellsworth, Julie Englander, Jim Fuller (leader), Therese Guedon, Roger Heidt, Kay James, Rosemary Petzold, Jean Prior.

Birds (16 species): Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, Mallard, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal.
– *Jim Fuller*

Continued on page 11

Birder's Guide to Coralville Reservoir

Chris Edwards

Coralville Reservoir is a 5,430-acre reservoir located along the Iowa River in northern Johnson County. Along with nearby Lake Macbride State Park (and Hawkeye Wildlife Area, which was featured in a previous article), Coralville Reservoir is one of Eastern Iowa's top birding locations.

During migration, the water areas attract loons, grebes, gulls, terns, and large numbers of diving ducks. Densely wooded areas bordering the lake provide excellent habitat for migrating and

Blue-winged, Yellow-throated, Prairie, Cerulean, and Prothonotary warblers, Ovenbird, Scarlet Tanager, and Orchard Oriole. Rarities seen in recent years include Oldsquaw, Yellow Rail, Whimbrel, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and Worm-eating Warbler.

Coralville Dam Area

Begin the tour at the intersection of Dubuque St. (County Road W66) and Interstate 80 in Iowa City (I-80 Exit 244). Follow Dubuque St. north for 2.6 miles, then turn right on West Overlook Road and proceed 0.6 miles to a parking lot on the left at Linder Point Recreation Area. From the trailhead here, several miles of trails wind along the forested bluffs overlooking the reservoir. Cerulean Warblers are sometimes found in this area during the breeding season. Continue east on West Overlook Road and follow the signs to the beach above the dam. This area is crowded with visitors in summer and closed to vehicles in winter, but during early spring and late fall gulls often congregate here, and diving ducks and grebes may be present. Return to West Overlook Road and follow the signs to Tailwater West below the dam, where in late fall and early spring gulls may be seen flying over the water. The open water below the dam in winter attracts small numbers of waterfowl and Bald Eagles, which may be viewed from the road or from the trail which leads south along the river. Pileated Woodpeckers have been seen occasionally along the trail. Drive across the dam to the East Overlook area. The short paved trail on the south side of the road leads to a bird blind where common woodland birds may be

nesting warblers and other passerines. Summer residents, most of which probably nest, include Cooper's Hawk, Wood Thrush, Bell's Vireo,

observed visiting feeders. At the Coralville Lake Visitor Center, located on the north side of the road, you may obtain a map of the area and view interpretive displays. When you have finished exploring the dam area, return to Dubuque Street and turn right. In 0.9 miles a turnoff on the right leads to the Squire Point trailhead, which connects to the Linder Point trails. Continue on to North Liberty and turn right on Front Street (2.4 miles), which becomes Mehaffey Bridge Road (County Road F28) outside the city limits.

Sugar Bottom Recreation Area

Just past Mehaffey Bridge (3.0 miles), pull over on the wide shoulder and scan the reservoir for gulls, terns, ducks, and other water birds. Cliff Swallows nest under the bridge. The hillside on the right just beyond the entrance to Sugar Bottom Recreation Area is a favored spot for watching the fall raptor migration. Broad-winged and Cooper's Hawks peak in mid- to late September, while Sharp-shinned Hawks are commonly seen from mid-September to mid-October. Ospreys are also regular migrants during September and early October, and an occasional Peregrine Falcon is spotted. The road into Sugar Bottom Recreation Area, which is closed to vehicles in winter, leads 1.6 miles to a beach, which offers a view of the reservoir. Snow Buntings and American Pipits have been found on the beach in late fall. Use caution in this area during hunting season.

Macbride Nature Recreation Area

Continue north on Mehaffey Bride Road 0.6 miles to Macbride Nature Recreation Area on the left. This 480-acre tract managed by the

University of Iowa is home to the Macbride Raptor Center. Hours are 6:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. April through October and 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. November through March. The nine miles of trails offer excellent opportunities for viewing warblers and other passerines during summer and migration. In general the areas north of the entrance road are heavily wooded, while the areas south of the road are a mosaic of woodlands, conifer plantings, open fields, and restored prairie. Stop at the information display near the entrance for a map of the area.

As you drive along the entrance road, a large brushy hillside is located on the right side of the road 0.5 miles from the entrance. Blue-winged Warblers may be heard here during the nesting season, and Prairie Warblers have been observed here on two occasions.

To reach one of the best trails in the area for nesting woodland birds, especially warblers, park at the large parking lot on the left side of the road 0.8 miles from the entrance. On foot, follow the sign to the sailing club north of the main road. Continue past the sailing club, and just before reaching the dock, take the trailhead on the left into the woods. This trail winds through mature oak – hickory forest and eventually returns to the main road. American Redstarts are abundant along the trail in summer, and Ovenbirds, Scarlet Tanagers and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers are common summer residents. This is the best place in the area to find nesting Cerulean Warblers, which are most easily located by listening for the buzzy songs of the males high in the treetops. Prothonotary Warblers have nested in snags near the water's edge on several occasions. Louisiana Waterthrushes have nested, and Acadian Flycatchers and a Worm-eating Warbler have also been found in summer, but should not be expected regularly.

Another area worth visiting here is the Macbride Raptor Center. Follow the entrance road to the main parking lot, 1.3 miles from the entrance. Turn right onto a gravel road (closed to vehicles in winter) and continue 0.3 miles to a parking area. From here it is a short walk to the center. A joint project of the University of Iowa and Kirkwood Community College, the Macbride Raptor Project provides rehabilitation for injured and orphaned birds of prey and presents educational programs to the public. Many permanently disabled eagles, hawks, falcons, and owls are on display year-round at the center. There is also a bird blind nearby, where common woodland birds may be observed at close range visiting the well-stocked feeders.

Lake Macbride State Park

After leaving Macbride Nature Recreation Area, continue north on Mehaffey Bride Road 0.5 miles to the south unit of Lake Macbride State Park. This 2,180-acre park features a large man-made lake and miles of hiking trails through mature forest, brushy fields, and restored prairie. There are many parking areas from which to view the lake. Diving ducks, gulls, and other water birds can be found on the lake in early spring and late fall. Common Loons, Horned Grebes, Bonaparte's Gulls, and Common, Red-breasted, and Hooded mergansers are regular migrants, and Eared Grebes are sometimes seen. Ospreys are often seen patrolling the lake in April through May and again in September and October.

Turn right at 200th Street and proceed over a small arm of the lake to a parking lot (0.3 miles). The shallow backwaters to the south sometimes attract dabbling ducks, shorebirds, and herons during spring and fall, and Wood Ducks are often seen. Return to Mehaffey Bridge Road and turn right. Continue 0.2 miles and turn left onto a dead-end road which parallels the south shore of the lake. This road offers views of the

lake, and a backwater where herons and Wood Ducks can be found is located on the south side of the road. Back on Mehaffey Bride Road, continue across the causeway over the lake to a "T" intersection. Turn left and proceed 0.3 miles on Cottage Reserve Road, then turn right and continue 0.5 miles to a parking lot. The boat ramp here provides a nice view of the north arm of the lake. A sailboat storage enclosure is located west of the parking lot. Prairie Warblers have been found on the brushy hillside south of this enclosure every summer since 1994. The hillside is very densely overgrown, and patience and determination are needed to view the birds. They are most easily located between mid-May and mid-July, when the male Prairie Warbler repeats his ascending, buzzy "zee-zee-zee" song. Occasionally the birds are observed farther south on the east side of the road where there is much less brushy growth. Nesting Blue-winged Warblers are often present south of the enclosure as well, and Long-eared and Northern Saw-whet owls are sometimes found during winter in the conifer grove along the west side of the road.

Return to Cottage Reserve Road and turn right. Proceed 0.4 miles, and before reaching the stone gates at the entrance to the residential area, veer right and continue a short distance to a parking lot. A small number of Yellow-throated Warblers nest in this area, and are sometimes found in the large sycamore trees near the entrance gates. More often, however, they are found near two white pine groves along the trail to the north. The trail leads 1.5 miles to the parking lot near the sailboat storage enclosure. Cerulean Warblers are sometimes heard along the trail, and Northern Parulas have been found infrequently in the sycamores. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and Purple Martins are often seen near the residential area.

Return to the "T" intersection with Mehaffey

Bridge Road and continue straight (east) 0.1 miles to a road on the right. This road parallels the shore and offers views of the lake. Return to Mehaffey Bride Road and continue east. At the outskirts of Solon (2.3 miles), turn left at Racine Avenue and continue 0.3 miles, where a parking lot marks the east end of a 5-mile recreational trail from Solon to the north unit of Lake Macbride State Park. For most of its length the trail follows the north shore of the lake and passes through brushy fields, small woodlots, conifer plantings, and mature woodland. Some of the interesting breeding birds which can be found along the trail include Bell's Vireos, Orchard Orioles, Yellow Warblers, American Redstarts, and Green Herons. In October, the brushy areas along the east end of the trail can be excellent for sparrows, including Harris's and Lincoln's.

Continue into Solon; turn left at Chabal Street, proceed two blocks to Highway 382, and turn left. Drive west 1.1 miles, where two ponds are located on the south side of the highway. Be sure to pull completely off the highway onto the shoulder. During spring, these ponds are a good place to observe marsh ducks. Continue west 1.8 miles and turn left (south) onto Opie Avenue. This dead-end road leads to a parking lot which offers a view of the lake and another access to the Solon – Lake Macbride recreational trail. Return to Highway 382 and drive west another 1.1 miles; turn right into the Twinview Heights subdivision and then immediately make another right turn onto Meadow Drive. Follow Meadow Drive as it turns into Lakeside Drive, and at Wildwood Drive (0.5 miles) turn right onto a gravel road. At the fork, turn left and follow the road a short distance to a boat ramp which provides an expansive view of the reservoir. In early spring and late fall this can be an excellent place for viewing Bald Eagles, diving ducks, grebes, loons, gulls, and other water birds.

Return to Highway 382, turn right (south) and proceed to the north unit of Lake Macbride State Park (0.4 miles). The west end of the Solon – Lake Macbride recreational trail is located just inside the entrance to the park. Stop at the information kiosk just ahead to pick up a map of the park. The north unit of the park is heavily wooded and features several hiking trails. Typical breeding birds of the mature oak-hickory woodland here include Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, and Ovenbird. Yellow-throated Warbler and Northern Parula have been found occasionally in the row of sycamores along the road to the beach.

Sandy Beach Recreation Area

After exploring the park, return to Highway 382 and backtrack towards Solon. Turn left at Ely Road (County Road W6E, 2.1 miles) and proceed north. Turn left at 140th Street (1.0 miles), and continue west and then south on Sandy Beach Road to Sandy Beach Recreation Area (3.3 miles). The wide shoulder of the road and the parking lot at the beach offer excellent vantage points for viewing the reservoir. In spring and fall during times of low water, there may be mudflats which attract shorebirds. In September, marshy vegetation may be checked for American Bitterns and Nelson's Sharp-tailed and LeConte's sparrows.

Continue northwest on Sandy Beach Road to Shueyville (4.3 miles). At the four-way stop, turn left onto 120th Street (County Road F12) and drive west to Highway 965 (1.5 miles). Turn left and drive south 2.9 miles, where the highway crosses the reservoir. You may want to pull off onto the wide shoulder here and scope the vast expanse of Hawkeye Wildlife Area to the west. Bald Eagles may be seen here from October to March, and during the fall thousands of American White Pelicans and Double-crested Cormorants may be present. (A

spring 1997 article featured Hawkeye Wildlife Area.) Continue south 1.8 miles to Curtis Bridge Road on the left. The boat ramp at the end of Curtis Bridge Road (0.8 miles) offers another view of the reservoir.

Jolly Roger Recreation Area

Continue south on Highway 965 and turn left at Scales Bend Road (3.1 miles). Proceed north 2.0 miles, where an unmarked drive and parking lot are located to the right. This privately-owned woodland, known as Sherwood Forest, adjoins public property along the lakeshore. The owners welcome hikers and maintain a network of trails. Pileated Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, Veery, and Cerulean Warbler have been found here during summer, but should not be expected on most visits. Back on Scales Bend Road, continue north 1.1 miles to where the road makes a sharp right-hand turn. The land to the west and north of the road here is public, and the brushy hedgerows can be productive for migrant sparrows and other land birds in spring and fall. Continue 0.4 miles to the Jolly Roger Recreation Area campground and marina. The boat ramp here provides another view of the reservoir. When you have finished scoping the lake, return to Highway 965 and continue south. Turn left at Zeller Street in North Liberty (1.0 miles), then right at Dubuque Street (0.8 miles), and return to the starting point (5.3 miles).

Rick's Ramblings

It was great to see the huge (by our standards) turnout for the meeting featuring Neil Bernstein. Let's hope we can continue this way. By the way, I am starting to put together next year's schedule. Suggestions or volunteers (especially volunteers) are welcome. So far I am working on getting talks on mushrooms and pigeon behavior. The Knights also have some talks we have not

heard, and will certainly be asked.

In *Red-tails in Love: A Wildlife Drama in Central Park* by Marie Winn (which is available at the Iowa City Public Library), the author discusses a Tufted Titmouse taking fur from a living raccoon. A few years back, I observed Black-capped Chickadees taking fur from a dead Muskrat.

Dove Hunting, Etc.: I have hunted and I am not against hunting, but it seems as if there have been a good many attempts in recent years to expand hunting into areas where it does not presently exist. Some examples: 1) Iowa adding a pistol season for deer; 2) the Mourning Dove hunting in Iowa which has surfaced twice in recent years; 3) a proposal to allow the hunting of Great Horned Owls and Red-tailed Hawks at several **public** marshes failed in Pennsylvania (I suppose somebody thought they were eating too many ducks – few groups, including most of the groups that support Mourning Dove hunting, supported this one); 4) a proposal in Maryland to allow hunting on Sundays (Maryland has not had Sunday hunting for years). What is going on? By the way, **thank your legislators**. All or most of our local representatives and senators were against Mourning Dove hunting. This issue will surely rise again, perhaps as an amendment to other bills or perhaps as a “sneak-through” bill right after the first of the year. Mourning Dove hunting was passed in Ohio five years ago, after years of Mourning Dove protection.

As Groucho said, “Those are my principles. If you don’t like them, I have others.”

– Rick Hollis

1998 Iowa City Christmas Bird Count

Chris Edwards

The 1998 Iowa City Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, December 20. The 79 species recorded were the most ever in the 48-year history of the count, breaking the previous record of 73 species seen in 1993. The total of 22,491 individual birds tallied was also a new record. The species total, which was significantly higher than the ten-year average of 64, was due in large part to the unseasonably warm weather earlier in December and the presence of open water on Coralville Reservoir and elsewhere. The day was overcast with temperatures in the upper twenties and a very slight north wind, and there was no snow cover. A strong cold front predicted to bring snow, cold temperatures and strong winds to the area on count day didn't arrive until the next day.

The most outstanding sighting was a Spotted Towhee seen in the woods north of Swan Lake. This is the first Spotted Towhee recorded on the Iowa City count since the species was split from Eastern Towhee, bringing the all-time list to 127 species. Other rare species (seen in less than half of the last ten years, with the number of years in parenthesis) were Pied-billed Grebe (2), Double-crested Cormorant (3), Snow Goose (3), Green-winged Teal (1), American Wigeon (1), Ruddy Duck (2), American Coot (2), Killdeer (2), Common Snipe (2), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (3), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (2), Hermit Thrush (1), Brown Thrasher (2), and Snow Bunting (1).

All-time high counts were recorded for many waterfowl and for several other species: Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Dove, Tufted Titmouse, and American Robin. Other species found in larger than normal numbers (well above the ten-year average) were Common Goldeneye, Red-tailed Hawk, and Mourning Dove.

Eighteen species of ducks and geese, the most ever, were recorded this year. The presence or absence of waterfowl influences our species total from year to year more than any other group of birds. The correlation between total species and waterfowl species recorded on the last ten counts is illustrated below.

Prominent misses (birds seen in more than half of the last ten years, with the number of years in parenthesis) were meadowlark species (6) and Common Grackle (6). Species found in lower than normal numbers (well below the ten-year average) were Rough-legged Hawk, Herring Gull, Red-headed Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Cedar Waxwing, American Tree Sparrow, and Pine Siskin.

There were 25 field observers in nine parties, about average for recent years. Field observers were Ed Allgood, Carl Bendorf, Chris Caster, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Mary Edwards, Jonni Ellsworth, Julie Englander, Jim Fuller, Karole Fuller, Vaibhan Garde, Randy Graesser, Lanny Haldy, Ellen Hartz, Bill Kent, Tom Kent, Jamie Lee, Dick Lynch, Nancy Lynch, Ramona McGurk, Gail McLure, John McLure, Mary Noble, Jim Scheib, and Richard Tetrault.

Our feeder watchers proved especially valuable this year, recording eight species not seen by field

observers. The 18 feeder watchers in 15 locations this year were Raymond Davenport, Jean Dunn, Anne Edwards, Dan Edwards, Jim Gardner, Lynn Gardner, Pat Gause, Charles Gay, Marilou Gay, Gloria Henry, Margaret Alton Herr, Sherle Kesik, Bernie Knight, Cal Knight, Laura Rovelstad, Bob Towner, Ronnye Wieland, and Jim Walters.

At our noon tally at the North Liberty Community Center we had 65 species. At the end of the day many participants gathered at The Mill Restaurant in Iowa City for a meal and compilation. Special thanks to Jim Fuller for helping organize the count, Bernie Knight for coordinating the feeder watchers, Karen Disbrow for arranging publicity, and all the field observers and feeder watchers who participated in this record-breaking effort.

Nationally, this year marked the 99th consecutive Christmas Bird Count. In 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman and many other conservationists were disturbed at the slaughter of birds at an annual holiday event called a "side hunt," in which the winner was the team that shot the most birds. As a protest, on Christmas Day of that year, Chapman organized 27 friends in 25 locations. Instead of shooting birds, they counted them. That simple protest turned into the National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count. Today, more than 45,000 people from all 50 states, every Canadian province, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and many Pacific Islands participate in this annual bird census.

SPECIES LIST					
		Wild Turkey	40	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1
Pied-billed Grebe	3	American Coot	12	Hermit Thrush	1
Double-crested Cormorant	5	Killdeer	22	American Robin	334
Great Blue Heron	1	Common Snipe	1	Brown Thrasher	1
Snow Goose	251	Ring-billed Gull	4,040	European Starling	1,616
Canada Goose	2,977	Herring Gull	32	Cedar Waxwing	5
Wood Duck	1	Rock Dove	282	Spotted Towhee	1
Gadwall	131	Mourning Dove	156	American Tree Sparrow	294
American Wigeon	125	Eastern Screech-Owl	3	Song Sparrow	24
American Black Duck	1	Great Horned Owl	4	Swamp Sparrow	1
Mallard	7,354	Barred Owl	6	White-throated Sparrow	13
Northern Pintail	8	Northern Saw-whet Owl	1	White-crowned Sparrow	5
Northern Shoveler	34	Belted Kingfisher	5	Dark-eyed Junco	466
Green-winged Teal	510	Red-headed Woodpecker	5	Snow Bunting	13
Canvasback	5	Red-bellied Woodpecker	57	Northern Cardinal	307
Ring-necked Duck	93	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2	Brown-headed Cowbird	1
Lesser Scaup	151	Downy Woodpecker	110	Purple Finch	14
Bufflehead	10	Hairy Woodpecker	11	House Finch	62
Common Goldeneye	41	Northern Flicker	18	Pine Siskin	6
Hooded Merganser	8	Northern Shrike	1	American Goldfinch	207
Common Merganser	65	Blue Jay	83	House Sparrow	796
Ruddy Duck	27	American Crow	961		
Bald Eagle	31	Horned Lark	20		
Northern Harrier	2	Black-capped Chickadee	259		
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Tufted Titmouse	79		
<i>Accipiter</i> sp.	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	8		
Red-tailed Hawk	129	White-breasted Nuthatch	78		
Rough-legged Hawk	3	Brown Creeper	7		
American Kestrel	18	Carolina Wren	4		
Ring-necked Pheasant	28	Golden-crowned Kinglet	2		

Field Trips (Cont.)

February 18, Meeting. After a rather typical business meeting, the floor was turned over to Neil Bernstein, from Mt. Mercy College in Cedar Rapids. Neil presented a very thought-provoking talk about preserves and whether we really can preserve them and their contents in light of the changes around them. Our attendance at this meeting was higher than recent meetings.

Participants (20): Ed Allgood, Jean Allgood, Neil Bernstein, Ray Davenport, Margriette Delle, Drew Dillman, Judith Dillman, Karen Disbrow, Mike Dooley, Jim Fuller, Karole Fuller, Mike Geither, Rick Hollis, James Huntington, Bernie Knight, Cal Knight, James Nelson, Mary Noble, Rosemarie Petzold, Jim Walters.
– Rick Hollis

Bird Notes

FROM HUDSON BAY TO CONE MARSH.

On the last weekend of February, Chris Edwards and I birded some area spots including a tour of Cone Marsh. On one of the private ponds along the south road we spotted a pair of Canada Geese wearing orange neck collars. Through a spotting scope at about 75 yards I could discern the codes on both collars as "3XR7." The characters were white against an orange background. I was interested to know where the geese might have been banded and I knew from an earlier experience to contact Jeff Peterson, the Mississippi Flyway Collar Coordinator in the Office of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (608 E. Cherry Street, Room 119, Columbia MO, 65201). The O.M.B.M. requests the following information when reporting what is termed an "incidental observation" of a collared

goose: the observer's name and address; the place of observation including direction and distance to the nearest town; the collar's code, base color, and color of the characters; date of observation; the birds' behavior, such as swimming, feeding, etc.; and size of flock.

Mr. Peterson's response time was remarkable – I had a printout of the geese's history six days after our sighting. It was actually a rather short history, since ours was the first reported observation of these two birds. But I did learn that the geese were banded twelve miles east of Ft. Severn, Ontario, an isolated Hudson Bay outpost near the border of the Northwest Territories. Ft. Severn lies roughly on a north/south axis with Louisa County. The geese, both adult males, were banded at the beginning of August, 1997.

More information pertaining to bird banding can be obtained at the web site of the Bird Banding Laboratory of the U. S. Geological Survey at www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl. Or you can write to USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Bird Banding Laboratory, 12100 Beech Forest Road, Laurel MD 20708-4037. (Thanks to Rick Hollis for posting these addresses on IA-BIRD recently.)
– Mike Dooley

Book Reviews

American Goldfinch [Wild Bird Guides].

Alex L. A. Middleton. Stackpole Books. 1998. 104 pages. Available at the Iowa City Public Library.

This book is part of a series which includes similar books about common species. Although there are wonderful photos, great photos have become so commonplace in bird books as to not be sufficient to justify the book. The book

contained many statements about which I wished to know more. Are there really two different field-identifiable subspecies of American Goldfinch in the U.S.? In winter, goldfinches may visit feeders over four miles apart. Although there are several pages of

references, it is not easy to tie the references to specific text statements. I found this book to be a disappointment. *– Rick Hollis*

Iowa City Bird Club

Eastern Iowa Birdwatch is published three times per year (usually April, August, and December). Members are encouraged to send articles, reviews, notes, and comments to editor Chris Edwards, 85 Whitman Ave., North Liberty, IA 52317, or e-mail at CREdwards@aol.com.

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For general bird club information, contact Iowa City Bird Club president Rick Hollis at 338-4834. **To lead a field trip**, contact field trip coordinator Karen Disbrow at 339-1017.

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