

2014 Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge

Karen Disbrow and Chris Edwards

The inaugural Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge was held on Saturday, September 25. Eric Ollie of Big Bluestem Audubon Society in Ames challenged the Iowa City Bird Club to this event. Teams of 2 - 4 birders set out to find as many birds as possible during a 24-hour period, and the combined lists for each club were tallied to determine the winner.

The Hawkeyes fielded four teams. Karen Disbrow, Linda Fisher, Ramona McGurk, and Mary Noble birded Cedar and Louisa counties, including Cone Marsh, and found 34 species. Chris Edwards and visiting birder Anurag Chandak birded Johnson County, including Clear Creek Trail, and found 75 species. Diana Pesek, James Huntington, and Brandon Caswell birded Johnson County, including Hawkeye Wildlife Area, and found 78 species. Bob and Joann Stearns (Team BoJo) birded Linn County, including Cedar Lake, and found 31 species.

Good finds for the Hawkeyes included American Bittern, Peregrine Falcon, Sandhill Crane, American Avocet, Clay-colored Sparrow, and Summer Tanager. We tallied 8 raptor species, 13 shorebird species, 13 warbler species, and 7 sparrow species.

Eric provided this report for the Cyclones: "Big Bluestem Audubon Society's team (yes, just one team) started birding on Saturday morning around 5:00 a.m. at Jester Park and ended the day around 8:00 p.m. at Ledges State Park, spending most of the day birding around Saylorville Reservoir. Our goal was to hopefully tally at least 100 species, but we unfortunately ended up only finding 82 species, which we were a bit disappointed with. We all had a truly great time doing it, though, and we all hope we can do it again next year. Our total was hindered by three factors: 1) only having one team out in the field, 2) slow-moving thunderstorms from 4:30-8:30 a.m. which wiped out most of the dawn prime birding time (we didn't find our first bird until 6:45 a.m.!), and 3) water levels at Saylorville, and pretty much everywhere else, were very high, which took away nearly all shorebird habitat. We ended the day with only three shorebird species and four warbler species, which really killed our total. Even so, it was still a blast. We did get the Woodpecker Slam! I hope your teams enjoyed it as much as we did!"

Good birds found by Eric's group included Peregrine Falcon, Sanderling, Pileated Woodpecker, and Philadelphia Vireo.

Back in Eastern Iowa, Dick Sayles and his wife from Buffalo birded Scott County and found 55 species, but their loyalties lie with the Cyclones. Their species, including Eurasian Tree Sparrow, were added to Big Bluestem's total.

Final tally: Hawkeyes 102, Cyclones 87. Score a victory for the black and gold! The cardinal and gold had the highest total for a single group at 82.

This year's event was great fun and we hope to make it an annual tradition. Potential changes suggested for next year include scheduling the Big Day for the Sunday after the Iowa-Iowa State football game, and requiring all birds to be counted in Johnson or Story counties (or perhaps Johnson and Linn vs. Story and Polk).

**IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB
SPECIES LIST (102):**

Canada Goose	Stilt Sandpiper	Gray Catbird
Wood Duck	Wilson's Snipe	European Starling
Mallard	Franklin's Gull	Cedar Waxwing
Blue-winged Teal	Ring-billed Gull	Tennessee Warbler
Northern Pintail	Rock Pigeon	Orange-crowned Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Nashville Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Mourning Dove	Northern Parula
American White Pelican	Barred Owl	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Common Nighthawk	Magnolia Warbler
American Bittern	Chimney Swift	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Great Blue Heron	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Black-throated Green Warbler
Great Egret	Red-headed Woodpecker	Palm Warbler
Green Heron	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	American Redstart
Osprey	Downy Woodpecker	Common Yellowthroat
Bald Eagle	Hairy Woodpecker	Wilson's Warbler
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Northern Flicker	Chipping Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Clay-colored Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Eastern Phoebe	Savannah Sparrow
American Kestrel	Yellow-throated Vireo	Song Sparrow
Peregrine Falcon	Red-eyed Vireo	Lincoln's Sparrow
American Coot	Blue Jay	Swamp Sparrow
Sandhill Crane	American Crow	White-throated Sparrow
Black-bellied Plover	Horned Lark	Summer Tanager
American Golden-Plover	Tree Swallow	Scarlet Tanager
Killdeer	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Northern Cardinal
American Avocet	Barn Swallow	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Spotted Sandpiper	Black-capped Chickadee	Indigo Bunting
Solitary Sandpiper	Tufted Titmouse	Red-winged Blackbird
Greater Yellowlegs	White-breasted Nuthatch	Eastern Meadowlark
Lesser Yellowlegs	Carolina Wren	Common Grackle
Least Sandpiper	House Wren	House Finch
	Marsh Wren	American Goldfinch
	Eastern Bluebird	House Sparrow
	American Robin	Eurasian Tree Sparrow