

2017 Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge

Chris Edwards

The fourth annual Cy-Hawk Big Day competition was held on Sunday, September 17. This is an annual Big Day competition between the Iowa City Bird Club birding for the Hawkeyes, and Big Bluestem Audubon Society of Ames birding for the Cyclones. Birders from other areas of the state are also welcome to join either side. The club with the most species at the end of the day wins the coveted Kent-Dinsmore traveling trophy, a plastic duck decoy which is beautifully painted black and gold on one side, cardinal and gold on the other side, and affixed to a wooden base. More importantly, the winning club gets bragging rights for the next year.

This year a fundraising component was added to the event, and all participants were asked for a minimum \$5 donation. The 17 birders who participated raised \$85 for Iowa Audubon, to support the group's bird conservation and education programs.

September 17 was a beautiful sunny day with temperatures in the 70s. The Iowa City Bird Club fielded four teams this year. Chris Edwards, Linda Rudolph, and Elliott Stalter visited Twinview Heights, Lake Macbride State Park, Macbride Nature-Recreation Area, and Hawkeye Wildlife Area. They had the top list for our club with 89 species. Mark Brown and James Huntington visited Hickory Hill Park, Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, Waterworks Prairie Park, and Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Barry Buschelman, Rick Hollis, and Sharon Somers birded Swan Lake, Hawkeye Wildlife Area, and Scales Bend. Karen Disbrow, Linda Fisher, and Ramona McGurk birded Hawkeye Wildlife Area, Swan Lake, West Branch Sewage Ponds, and rural Cedar County.

Our club total was 107 species, down from 113 last year. Overall, we found eight waterfowl species, five raptor species, eight shorebird species, and seventeen warbler species, but only three sparrow species. Highlights included Black-billed Cuckoo, Sandhill Crane, Short-billed Dowitcher, Merlin, Philadelphia Vireo, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler, Canada Warbler, and Blue Grosbeak. It was a team effort – every group added at least one species to the overall list.

Big Bluestem Audubon Society fielded two teams this year. Eric Ollie, Wolf Oesterreich, and Doug Harr birded Saylorville Reservoir, Big Creek State Park, and Jester Park and found 93 species, the top overall effort. Karl Jungbluth, Jeff Nichols, and Mary Doud birded Ledges State Park, Hickory Grove Park, and Hendrickson Wildlife Management Area. Highlights for Big Bluestem included Greater White-fronted Goose, Western Grebe, American Avocet, American Golden-Plover, Merlin, Olive-sided Flycatcher, and Red-breasted Nuthatch. Big Bluestem's total was also 107 species, so this year's competition results in a tie. Per the rules, the trophy will stay with the Iowa City Bird Club for the next year.

It is interesting to compare the species lists from the two clubs – it provides an unscientific snapshot of the species seen in two different areas of the state on the same day. Of the 131 total species found, 83 species or 63% were seen by both groups. Each group found 24 species or 18% that were not found by the other group.

BIRDS FOUND ONLY BY IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB (24 SPECIES)

American Wigeon	Pileated Woodpecker	Tennessee Warbler
Wild Turkey	Least Flycatcher	Northern Parula
Black-billed Cuckoo	Philadelphia Vireo	Magnolia Warbler
Sandhill Crane	N. Rough-winged Swallow	Bay-breasted Warbler
Short-billed Dowitcher	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Solitary Sandpiper	Ovenbird	Yellow-throated Warbler
Greater Yellowlegs	Golden-winged Warbler	Canada Warbler
<i>Accipiter</i> sp.	Blue-winged Warbler	Blue Grosbeak

BIRDS FOUND ONLY BY BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON (24 SPECIES):

Greater White-fronted Goose	Forster's Tern	Eastern Towhee
Common Merganser	Northern Harrier	Savannah Sparrow
Western Grebe	Barred Owl	Lincoln's Sparrow
American Coot	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Eastern Meadowlark
American Avocet	Warbling Vireo	Brown-headed Cowbird
American Golden-Plover	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Northern Waterthrush
Least Sandpiper	Sedge Wren	Palm Warbler
Caspian Tern	Marsh Wren	Yellow-rumped Warbler

BIRDS FOUND BY BOTH GROUPS (83 SPECIES):

Canada Goose	Osprey	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Wood Duck	Bald Eagle	Eastern Bluebird
Blue-winged Teal	Red-tailed Hawk	Swainson's Thrush
Northern Shoveler	Belted Kingfisher	American Robin
Mallard	Red-headed Woodpecker	Gray Catbird
Northern Pintail	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Brown Thrasher
Green-winged Teal	Downy Woodpecker	European Starling
Pied-billed Grebe	Hairy Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing
Rock Pigeon	Northern Flicker	House Sparrow
Eurasian Collared-Dove	American Kestrel	House Finch
Mourning Dove	Merlin	American Goldfinch
Common Nighthawk	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Chipping Sparrow
Chimney Swift	Eastern Phoebe	Vesper Sparrow
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Great Crested Flycatcher	Song Sparrow
Sora	Eastern Kingbird	Red-winged Blackbird
Killdeer	Yellow-throated Vireo	Common Grackle
Pectoral Sandpiper	Blue-headed Vireo	Black-and-white Warbler
Wilson's Snipe	Red-eyed Vireo	Nashville Warbler
Spotted Sandpiper	Blue Jay	Common Yellowthroat
Lesser Yellowlegs	American Crow	American Redstart
Franklin's Gull	Tree Swallow	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Ring-billed Gull	Cliff Swallow	Black-thr. Green Warbler
Double-crested Cormorant	Barn Swallow	Wilson's Warbler
American White Pelican	Black-capped Chickadee	Scarlet Tanager
Great Blue Heron	Tufted Titmouse	Northern Cardinal
Great Egret	White-breasted Nuthatch	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Green Heron	House Wren	Indigo Bunting
Turkey Vulture	Carolina Wren	