

2018 Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge

Chris Edwards

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Trumpeter Swan	Black Tern
Northern Shoveler	Forster's Tern
Wild Turkey	Yellow-cr. Night-Heron
Red-necked Grebe	Osprey
Black-billed Cuckoo	Sharp-shinned Hawk
Sandhill Crane	Broad-winged Hawk
Stilt Sandpiper	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Franklin's Gull	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher

Least Flycatcher
 Yellow-headed Blackbird
 Meadowlark sp.
 Rusty Blackbird
 Cape May Warbler
 Blackburnian Warbler

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

Green-winged Teal	Caspian Tern
Merganser sp.	Cattle Egret
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Cooper's Hawk
Chimney Swift	Eastern Screech-Owl
Sora	Great Horned Owl
Least Sandpiper	Barred Owl
Pectoral Sandpiper	Pileated Woodpecker
Wilson's Snipe	Olive-sided Flycatcher
Greater Yellowlegs	Acadian Flycatcher
Red-necked Phalarope	Bank Swallow

Sedge Wren
 Marsh Wren
 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
 Eastern Towhee
 Baltimore Oriole
 Orange-crowned Warbler
 Yellow-rumped Warbler
 Yellow-throated Warbler
 Scarlet Tanager

BIRDS FOUND BY BOTH GROUPS (79 SPECIES):

Canada Goose	Hairy Woodpecker
Wood Duck	Northern Flicker
Blue-winged Teal	American Kestrel
Mallard	Eastern Wood-Pewee
Ring-necked Pheasant	Eastern Phoebe
Pied-billed Grebe	Eastern Kingbird
Rock Pigeon	Yellow-throated Vireo
Eurasian Collared-Dove	Philadelphia Vireo
Mourning Dove	Warbling Vireo
Common Nighthawk	Red-eyed Vireo
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Blue Jay
American Coot	American Crow
Killdeer	Tree Swallow
Solitary Sandpiper	Cliff Swallow
Lesser Yellowlegs	Barn Swallow
Ring-billed Gull	Black-capped Chickadee
Double-crested Cormorant	Tufted Titmouse
American White Pelican	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Great Blue Heron	White-breasted Nuthatch
Great Egret	House Wren
Green Heron	Carolina Wren
Turkey Vulture	Eastern Bluebird
Bald Eagle	Swainson's Thrush
Red-tailed Hawk	American Robin
Belted Kingfisher	Gray Catbird
Red-headed Woodpecker	European Starling
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Cedar Waxwing
Downy Woodpecker	House Sparrow

Eurasian Tree Sparrow
 House Finch
 American Goldfinch
 Chipping Sparrow
 Song Sparrow
 Red-winged Blackbird
 Brown-headed Cowbird
 Common Grackle
 Golden-winged Warbler
 Black-and-white Warbler
 Tennessee Warbler
 Nashville Warbler
 Common Yellowthroat
 American Redstart
 Northern Parula
 Magnolia Warbler
 Bay-breasted Warbler
 Chestnut-sided Warbler
 Black-thr. Green Warbler
 Wilson's Warbler
 Northern Cardinal
 Rose-breasted Grosbeak
 Indigo Bunting