
Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 24 Number 2

September 2004

Schedule

Field trips depart from the Dodge Street Hy-Vee in Iowa City unless otherwise noted. Meet in the southwest corner of the parking lot. Please contact the leader in advance if you plan to meet the group at the trip destination. Many of our trips are accessible to people with disabilities; for more information please contact the trip leader. **Meetings** are held at the Grant Wood AEA Southern Facility, 200 Holiday Road in Coralville, generally at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month.

September 12, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Local Areas for warblers, shorebirds, and other migrants. Chris Caster, 339-8343.

September 16, Thursday, 7:00 pm. Meeting. Mike Dooley, back from a yearlong fellowship at the Smithsonian, will present on his research into American bird art and photography during the early years of the Audubon Societies movement.

September 18, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Annual Hawk Watch at Stainbrook Preserve, with programs and activities at the Macbride Raptor Center. See page 3 for details.

September 25-27, Friday-Sunday. Iowa Ornithologists' Union Fall Meeting at Wickiup Hill Natural Area near Cedar Rapids, hosted by the Iowa City Bird Club. This fun-filled weekend will include morning field trips, fascinating programs, a Saturday evening banquet, and much more. See page 6 for registration details and additional information.

October 3, Sunday, 6:30 a.m. Snake Creek Marsh in Greene County. This central Iowa marsh is a 2½-hour drive from Iowa City, and is one of the best places in the state to search for Yellow Rail, Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, and LeConte's Sparrow during fall migration. We may stop at Saylorville Lake on the way back, so this will be an all-day outing. Bring your FRS radios for the drive. Chris Caster, 339-8343.

October 4, Monday, 7:00 p.m. Introduction to Birding Course at the Iowa City Senior Center, presented by Jim Scheib. The course continues on Mondays throughout October. See page 3 for details.

October 9, Saturday, 7:30 a.m. Lake Macbride State Park for fall migrants. Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

Continued on next page →

Schedule – continued

October 21, Thursday, 7:00 pm. Meeting. Harry Graves, Executive Director of the Johnson County Conservation Board will present on the Long Range Plan. Jim Scheib has also offered to show us some slides of his trip to the Baltic Sea region.

October 24, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Cone Marsh for waterfowl and other fall migrants. Karen Disbrow, 339-1017.

November 7, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area near Palo for migrating waterfowl, loons, and grebes. Bob Dick, 337-4945.

November 18, Thursday, 7:00 pm. Meeting. Jim and Sharon Scheib will share some highlights from birding SE Texas including: Aransas NWR, King Ranch, El Canelo Ranch, Bentsen-Rio Grande and Santa Ana NWR. Species include: Whooping Crane, Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, White-throated Robin, Clay-colored Robin, and other Texas specialties.

Other Events

September 12, Sunday, 10 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Saylorville Lake Pelican Festival near Des Moines.

November 12-14, Friday – Sunday. Rivers & Bluffs Fall Birding Festival at Lansing in NE Iowa. See page 3 for more information.

From Our President Chris Caster

Very shortly the Iowa City Bird Club will be hosting the Fall Meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists Union. If you aren't familiar with the IOU, it is the statewide birding organization and it holds a Spring and Fall Meeting each year. Local groups around the state take turns at hosting these events for the IOU. The ICBC last hosted the IOU in the Fall of '97.

The hosting committee has been meeting at Bernie Knight's home almost monthly since March in preparation of this event. Finding a location to host over a hundred guests for a weekend of birding, catered meals, and presentations, at an affordable price was quite the challenge. A number of locations were considered, but the new lodge at Wickiup Hill Natural Area northwest of Cedar Rapids was the best. Even so, an alternative location had to be found on the weekend chosen to hold the

Sunday noon meal and weekend species compilation. This will be held at the Kent Park Conservation Education Center.

Much thanks goes to the people on the hosting committee who have and will continue to work very hard to put together a fine meeting. Karen Disbrow has led the organization of the event and has done much of the legwork herself. Jim Scheib put together as fine a group of presenters as an IOU meeting has ever had and a schedule that runs speakers concurrently so that attendees will have a choice between topics. Jim Fuller has taken on the job of coordinating Saturday and Sunday morning field trips to numerous locations. A supporting cast that includes Bernie Knight, Jean and Ed Allgood and myself helped. And a number of others from Cedar Rapids and Iowa City have volunteered to lead the various field trips. Hopefully the migrating birds will hold up their end as well.

If you have not yet participated in an IOU meeting this is a wonderful opportunity to do so. You don't need to be a member. And new

birders are very welcome. Early registration will really help us with the catering. Come out and help make this a weekend to remember. See you there!

Annual Hawk Watch September 18

Bring the family and friends for a migration celebration! Saturday, September 18th, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Bring binoculars, blankets, lawn chairs and picnic lunches for hawk watching on the ridge at Stainbrook State Preserve, located along Mehaffey Bridge Road just north of the entrance to Sugar Bottom Recreation Area. Programs to be held at the Raptor Center at nearby Macbride Nature-Recreation Area include hawk identification at 9 a.m. and raptor programs at 10 and 11 a.m. Bird banding will be conducted at the nearby bird blind. For more information call 398-5495 or 335-9293.

Intro to Birding Course To Be Held in October

Jim Scheib will teach on Introduction to Birding course this fall at the Iowa City Senior Center. The classes will be held on Monday evenings in October and will be open to the public. The course is sponsored by the Iowa City Bird Club and will consist mostly of computer presentations using digital slides, movies, and internet sites. Jim is an active birder from Iowa City who has seen over 650 species in the United States and over 350 in Iowa. He is also the webmaster for the club website at www.icbirds.org. The option of free weekend field trips with experienced birders will be available to course participants. Session topics are: I - Birding Basics; II - Feeders, Feed, and Feeder Birds; III - Lesser Known Birds of Iowa; IV - Birding Johnson County. All fees (minus expenses) will go to the Iowa City Bird Club.

Intro to Birding Fee: \$25.00
7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Mondays Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25
Iowa City Senior Center, Room 202

For more information, contact Jim at 337-5206 or jim@tenlongview.net.

Rivers & Bluffs Fall Birding Festival

The third annual Rivers & Bluffs Fall Birding Festival will be held November 12-14 at Lansing in Northeast Iowa. This is the peak season for viewing thousands of migrating Tundra Swans and an even larger number of ducks and geese on Pool 9 of the Mississippi River. Field trips will also target Golden Eagle, Ruffed Grouse, and many other species.

The festival will feature three different half-day field trips on Saturday and Sunday mornings, live bird programs and speakers from the tri-state area, Mississippi River cruises, live music, and more.

For more information, contact Ric Zarwell at Ric.Zarwell@mchsi.com.

In Memory of Ann Kent

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Ann Kent, wife of Tom Kent. Following a lengthy battle with breast cancer, Ann died June 14, 2004 at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. It was for the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics Volunteer Services that Ann donated 7000 hours of her time over the past 31 years. Although not an active birder, many of us got to know Ann through visits to the Kent home and at Christmas Bird Count compilation dinners. Our thoughts are with Tom and his family.

2004 Johnson County Spring Migration Count

Chris Caster

The Spring Count was held on the 8th of May. It was a very pleasant day to bird with no rain and light winds. Temperatures ranged from the low 50s in the morning to the low 80s in late afternoon. Although the warm weather seemed to push much of the waterfowl northward, it brought a large number of passerine migrants to our area. Viewing was sometimes difficult due to the early leafing of the trees. But the habitat was excellent for shorebirds, marsh birds, and warblers alike. I didn't think that last year's total of 175 different species could ever be topped, but the group came amazingly close with 172.

Shorebirds were the stars of this Spring Count. An abundance of muddy shoreline and shallow waters at the Hawkeye Wildlife Area produced 19 species, many in abundance. The best bird of the day was undoubtedly the Snowy Plover found at Greencastle Ave. by Tom Kent and Jim Fuller. This bird is seldom seen in Iowa and caused a great deal of excitement. Thanks to the cell phones it was a nice mid-morning diversion as a number of us left our areas to have a look.

Honors for second-best bird resulted in a four-way tie between the Little Blue Heron discovered by Bob Dick at the S&G Materials pit south of Iowa City, the White-eyed Vireo discovered by Kent and Fuller near the west county line, the Cape May Warbler discovered by Chris Edwards at the Macbride Nature-Recreation Area, and the Greater White-fronted Goose photographed by Cathy Mandarino at Greencastle Ave.

Waterfowl weren't seen in large numbers but two Northern Pintails and single Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, and Red-breasted Merganser filled out the group at 11 species. Raptor numbers were a little better than usual with 9 species, including Northern Harrier and Broad-winged Hawk. Warblers couldn't match last year in sheer abundance, but we still had 25 species, which is very good. Sparrows made a similar showing to last year with 14 species.

Additional good birds included: Common Loon, Peregrine Falcon, Upland, Baird's and White-rumped Sandpipers, Wilson's Phalarope, Pileated Woodpecker, Loggerhead Shrike, Veery, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Northern Mockingbird, American Pipit, Orange-crowned, Yellow-throated, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Cerulean, and Mourning Warblers, Clay-colored, Vesper, and Harris's Sparrows, Yellow-headed Blackbird, and Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

There weren't many birds missed that I would consider notable—possibly Gadwall, Herring Gull, Black Tern, or Carolina Wren. Truly everything expected to be seen was found and then some—but only because we had such fantastic participation. Everyone managed to contribute something unique to the effort. What a great day!

Participants: Brady Belcher, Chris Caster, Bob and Dara Dick, Chris Edwards, Stan Fellows, Linda Fisher, Jim Fuller, Rick Hollis, James Huntington, Tom Kent, Richard Leuellen, Cathy Mandarino, Diana Pesek, Jim Scheib, Linda Swift.

SPECIES LIST

Common Loon	3	Great Blue Heron	34	Gr. White-fronted Goose	1
Pied-billed Grebe	1	Great Egret	11	Canada Goose	229
American White Pelican	280	Little Blue Heron	1	Wood Duck	27
Double-crested Cormorant	115	Green Heron	5	Mallard	30
American Bittern	1	Turkey Vulture	74		

Blue-winged Teal	80	Chimney Swift	5	Northern Parula	5
Northern Shoveler	24	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	3	Yellow Warbler	19
Northern Pintail	2	Belted Kingfisher	1	Chestnut-sided Warbler	14
Green-winged Teal	15	Red-headed Woodpecker	14	Magnolia Warbler	6
Ring-necked Duck	1	Red-bellied Woodpecker	17	Cape May Warbler	1
Lesser Scaup	1	Downy Woodpecker	18	Yellow-rumped Warbler	26
Red-breasted Merganser	1	Hairy Woodpecker	7	Black-throated Green Warbler	4
Osprey	2	Northern Flicker	16	Blackburnian Warbler	5
Bald Eagle	3	Pileated Woodpecker	1	Yellow-throated Warbler	3
Northern Harrier	2	Eastern Wood-Pewee	3	Palm Warbler	15
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Least Flycatcher	9	Bay-breasted Warbler	1
Cooper's Hawk	2	Eastern Phoebe	2	Blackpoll Warbler	2
Broad-winged Hawk	4	Great Crested Flycatcher	12	Cerulean Warbler	5
Red-tailed Hawk	9	Eastern Kingbird	25	Black-and-white Warbler	12
American Kestrel	4	Loggerhead Shrike	4	American Redstart	23
Peregrine Falcon	3	White-eyed Vireo	1	Ovenbird	11
Ring-necked Pheasant	27	Blue-headed Vireo	7	Northern Waterthrush	6
Wild Turkey	8	Yellow-throated Vireo	6	Mourning Warbler	3
Northern Bobwhite	4	Warbling Vireo	16	Common Yellowthroat	38
Sora	11	Red-eyed Vireo	8	Wilson's Warbler	5
American Coot	12	Blue Jay	69	Scarlet Tanager	3
American Golden Plover	6	American Crow	28	Eastern Towhee	8
Semipalmated Plover	46	Horned Lark	4	Chipping Sparrow	50
Snowy Plover	1	Purple Martin	8	Clay-colored Sparrow	4
Killdeer	31	Tree Swallow	94	Field Sparrow	9
Greater Yellowlegs	4	N. Rough-winged Swallow	14	Vesper Sparrow	2
Lesser Yellowlegs	235	Bank Swallow	2	Lark Sparrow	4
Solitary Sandpiper	9	Cliff Swallow	40	Savannah Sparrow	6
Spotted Sandpiper	11	Barn Swallow	36	Grasshopper Sparrow	7
Upland Sandpiper	2	Black-capped Chickadee	33	Song Sparrow	25
Semipalmated Sandpiper	11	Tufted Titmouse	6	Lincoln's Sparrow	6
Least Sandpiper	825	White-breasted Nuthatch	10	Swamp Sparrow	4
White-rumped Sandpiper	4	House Wren	47	White-throated Sparrow	30
Baird's Sandpiper	75	Marsh Wren	10	Harris's Sparrow	2
Pectoral Sandpiper	2300	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	8	White-crowned Sparrow	20
Dunlin	8	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	18	Northern Cardinal	108
Long-billed Dowitcher	5	Eastern Bluebird	10	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	24
Wilson's Snipe	1	Veery	1	Indigo Bunting	38
American Woodcock	2	Gray-cheeked Thrush	1	Dickcissel	9
Wilson's Phalarope	3	Swainson's Thrush	5	Bobolink	6
Franklin's Gull	4	Wood Thrush	4	Red-winged Blackbird	331
Bonaparte's Gull	4	American Robin	81	Eastern Meadowlark	14
Ring-billed Gull	90	Gray Catbird	55	Western Meadowlark	3
Caspian Tern	5	Northern Mockingbird	1	Yellow-headed Blackbird	1
Forster's Tern	4	Brown Thrasher	17	Common Grackle	58
Rock Pigeon	14	European Starling	87	Brown-headed Cowbird	63
Mourning Dove	86	American Pipit	4	Orchard Oriole	4
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1	Cedar Waxwing	25	Baltimore Oriole	73
Eastern Screech Owl	1	Blue-winged Warbler	3	House Finch	5
Great Horned Owl	1	Golden-winged Warbler	4	American Goldfinch	60
Barred Owl	4	Tennessee Warbler	21	House Sparrow	46
Common Nighthawk	1	Orange-crowned Warbler	2	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	6
Whip-poor-will	4	Nashville Warbler	22		

2004 Iowa Ornithologists' Union Fall Meeting Wickiup Hill Natural Area, Linn Co.

The Iowa Ornithologists' Union Fall Meeting will be held at Wickiup Hill Natural Area near Cedar Rapids, Sept. 24-26. Registration, programs and most meals will be at Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Center. The weekend is hosted by the Iowa City Bird Club in cooperation with the Linn County Conservation Department and the Johnson County Conservation Department. Wickiup Hill has prairie, savannah, woodlands and wetlands with miles of trails. A boardwalk over the wetland area adjacent to the Learning Center is a lovely area to walk and observe all manner of flora and fauna. Wickiup Hill was recently named an Iowa Important Bird Area.



Friday, September 24

6:00-9:00 p.m. Registration, field trip signup and social time. Scopes will be set up on the deck of the Learning Center to observe night migrations on Friday and Saturday evenings if the sky is clear.

Saturday, Sept. 25

6:15 a.m. Breakfast

7:00 a.m. Field trips depart from the Learning Center

12:00-1:00 p.m. Lunch

1:15-2:00 p.m. Programs

Room A Prairie Strand:

Grasslands, Grassland Birds, and Henslow's Sparrows—Scott Swengel, Baraboo, WI

Room B Raptor Strand:

Osprey Reintroduction Program—Jodeane Cancilla, Director, Macbride Raptor Project

2:10-2:55 p.m. Programs

Room A Prairie Strand:

Wings Over the Prairie—Carl Kurtz, 2004 Prairie Preview Presenter

Room B Raptor Strand:

Hawk Trapping and Banding Along the Upper Mississippi—Ty Smedes, Iowa Nature Photographer

6:30-7:30 p.m. Banquet

7:30 p.m. Evening Program

Birds as Dinosaurs—Christopher A. Brochu, Asst. Prof., UI Dept. of Geoscience

Sunday Sept. 26

6:15 a.m. Breakfast

7:00 a.m. Field trips depart from the Learning Center

12:00 p.m. Lunch and compilation at Kent Park

IOU Fall Meeting Registration and Meals

If possible, please register online at www.iowabirds.org/iou/currentmeeting.asp even if you plan to pay by check. This simplifies bookkeeping for the conference.

Name(s) _____

Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please include telephone _____ or email _____
so you can be contacted if there are questions about your registration or conference updates.

Registration

Meeting Fee \$12.00 X _____ people = \$ _____

Meals

Are meatless meals needed?

Sat. Breakfast \$5.50 X _____ people = \$ _____ Yes, _____ meatless meals are needed

Sat. Lunch \$6.50 X _____ people = \$ _____ Yes, _____ meatless meals are needed

Sat. Banquet \$9.50 X _____ people = \$ _____ Yes, _____ meatless meals are needed

Sun. Breakfast \$5.50 X _____ people = \$ _____ Yes, _____ meatless meals are needed

Sunday Lunch* \$6.50 X _____ people = \$ _____ Yes, _____ meatless meals are needed

Total Registration and Meals \$ _____

Please indicate preference: Chicken _____ Burger _____ Brat _____ Soy Burger _____

* Sunday lunch will be at the Johnson County Conservation Education Center in Kent Park. Kent Park is along Highway 6 several miles west of Tiffin.

If possible please register by Sept. 10. For availability of meals after that date, please check with Karen Disbrow at 339-1017. Make checks payable to Iowa City Bird Club and mail to Karen Disbrow, 621 ½ Brown St., Iowa City, IA 52245.

Accommodations

The following motels are located along Interstate 380 within a few miles of Wickiup Hill. Ask for the IOU rate when making reservations.

Cedar Rapids Marriott, 1200 Collins Rd. NE, (800) 541-1067 or (319) 393-6600

Comfort Inn, 5055 Rockwell Dr. NE, (800) 4CHOICE or (319) 393-8247

Guesthouse, 2215 Blairs Ferry Rd. NE, (800) 21-GUEST or (319) 378-3948

Hawthorne Suites, 4444 Czech Ln., (319) 294-8700

Holiday Inn Express, 1230 Collins Rd. NE, (800) HOLIDAY or (319) 294-0407

Ramada Suites, 2025 Werner Ave. NE, (319) 378-8888

Red Roof Inns, 1220 Park Place NE, (866) 378-8080 or (319) 378-8000

Iowa Valley Scenic Byway Chris Caster

On May 21st a ceremony was held near Belle Plaine to dedicate the Iowa River Corridor as a state and national Bird Conservation Area. This area is critical habitat for declining grassland nesting birds, such as Northern Harrier and Bobolink, declining savanna species like Barn Owl and Loggerhead Shrike, important wetland species like the Sandhill Crane, as well as many other bird species suffering nationwide declines. The Iowa River Corridor BCA extends from near Montour in Tama County to the Homestead area in Iowa County. It becomes Iowa's sixth official Bird Conservation Area and the first in the state to be exclusively associated with a river corridor.

Jim Fuller was available to represent the ICBC at the dedication. Also in attendance was Ruth Izer, the coordinator for the Iowa Valley Resource Conservation and Development, a non-profit regional agency. This agency works on a wide range of issues from economic development, trails, tourism, to natural resources and conservation efforts. The IVRC&D headed the project to get the Scenic Byway designated through the Iowa River corridor area. In June, Ruth met with Jim and I to discuss the agency's Iowa Valley Scenic Byway project in the context of the Iowa River Corridor BCA. Ruth wanted to know what might be done to open up the corridor to more birders.

We had a number of suggestions for Ruth. They included improving access areas by creating parking areas with restrooms, benches, and signs designating the area for wildlife viewing. Raised viewing platforms would provide viewing at greater distances in places like Otter Creek Marsh and at the Amana Lily Lake. Improvements to woodland trails would enable safer hiking. Lifting of the Amana Society access restrictions on selected areas would open up some nice areas to the general public. The creation of map brochures showing all the local

roads, wildlife viewing areas, and major habitat types would show birders where to go. A checklist of birds for the corridor with an idea of the relative abundance of each species during the four seasons would let birders know what to expect. Displaying brochures at public access points like the Amanas, area hotels, restaurants, interstate rest stops and the creation of a website would all help promote the birding potential of the corridor.

Recently I received a communication from Ruth stating that the IA DNR will develop an access map for the Iowa River Corridor with parking and access areas marked. Their GIS specialist will be meeting with Rick Trine, the local DNR wildlife biologist, to work on this and maybe brochure development. Ruth said that she had also been in contact with the FWS and they will put up some info kiosks, but it may be a few years. They may consider a liaison staff position to work on the BCA with the IVRC&D. Ruth has also been in contact with Ric Zarwell, the Iowa Audubon IBA Coordinator and she says that he will be helping as well.

I will pass on any additional project info, as it becomes known to me. Anyone with ideas for Ruth can contact her at the Williamsburg office, (319) 668-8110.

IBA Documentation Needed for Many Sites Chris Caster

This summer Ric Zarwell, the Iowa Audubon Important Bird Area (IBA) Coordinator, asked if the ICBC membership could adopt a number of nearby sites nominated for Iowa IBA status. A list of the 182 nominated IBA sites by region can be had at:
www.iowabirds.org/IBA/sites.asp.

The IBA Technical Committee has not received adequate documentation to grant all of these sites full IBA status and a number of them are in our area: Redbird Farms and S&G Materials Sandpit in Johnson County, Brinton Timber in

Washington County, Cone Marsh and Klum Lake in Louisa County, and Pleasant Creek and Squaw Creek Park in Linn County.

Acceptance of a site for full IBA status depends on documenting either probable breeding of species of conservation priority or large concentrations of birds on migration. A checklist of the 37 Iowa IBA birds can be found in pdf format at:

www.iowabirds.org/IBA/IBChecklist.pdf

This documentation needs to provide evidence of use by the species for at least two years in the last six. It is important to the IBA Program and bird conservation in Iowa that we get the necessary documentation. It is equally important that we weed out the lesser quality nominations. To this end we will be scheduling more ICBC field trips to area IBAs.

This will help, but more individual efforts are needed. Some of you may feel that you don't have the talent or experience to contribute, which I can understand. These are birds with which not all of us have had experience. But the nice thing about the IBA is that you don't have to be able to identify all the birds, just the IBA birds. So to encourage more participation, I can suggest two simple approaches: 1) Pick an IBA site that you wish to frequent during the breeding season and learn how to identify by sight and song those few IBA birds that occur there. 2) Pick a particular bird to identify and simply travel to different IBA sites in the hopes of locating it.

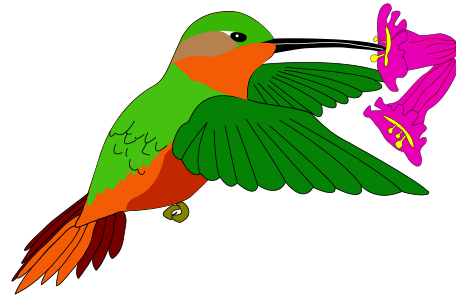
It may also be useful for some to join club members on one of our IBA site field trips to aid in learning to identify the birds. And then return to the site later, alone or with a companion. This is a really great way to build confidence in identifying birds and can also be a lot of fun. So get out there!

To learn more about the IBA Criteria Species and the IBAs from which they have been reported visit:

www.iowabirds.org/IBA/criteria_species.asp

Easy data entry for IBA Criteria Species by IBA site is also online at:

www.iowabirds.org/IBA/login.asp



A Recovered Summer Record for Western Kingbird in IC

Mike Dooley

During my first month of birding, in 1997, I kept a journal. I recently noted this entry in that journal:

“7 or 8 June – Saturday or Sunday early evening.

“Went along the trail in the thick woods between the [Finkbine] golf course and the tracks. Went up into the clearing just off the golf course, by the telephone poles. Caught sight of a new bird, robin-sized. Immediately saw it had a yellowish breast and a shape like the eastern kingbird I'd seen. But it was gray, black wings, and I thought I was seeing white edges to the outer tail. I only got one sustained look as it perched, and saw it one other time, but from the back. At home, the book [Peterson] showed me immediately – western kingbird. I was especially excited because the map showed it as west of Iowa [here I misread range map], but with a note that it was expanding east. So I felt like I'd seen something a little bit unusual.”

Field Trip and Meeting Reports

March 25, Meeting. Tom Kent gave a presentation on historical perspectives of Johnson County birding. Tom presented us with a large volume of information—many names and dates. I took hurried notes and at the risk of being inaccurate, I will attempt to give some of the items presented.

Most of the individuals Tom mentioned lived in Johnson County at some point in their lives. Many were associated with the University of Iowa, either as students or faculty. All seemed to have a wide variety of interests and proved to be leaders, while they were here and in their lives elsewhere.

Tom showed us many photos of the landscape in and around Johnson County. The building of the Coralville Dam changed the county enormously. Agriculture didn't use to be so intense with corn, oats and hay being rotated yearly. Tom showed us a photo of the Terrill Mill along the Iowa River in town, which is how the Terrill Mill Park got its name. We also got a shot of Sand Point when you were still able to drive a car out there.

Tom's father F.W., after whom Kent Park is named, had a strong interest in birds. He and his friends established the Christmas Bird Count circle that we use today. Tom let us in on some of his boyhood memories. His first life bird was a White-tailed Ptarmigan documented when he was eight by a photo of him with the bird in Colorado that appeared in National Geographic Magazine. We also got to see the photo that appeared in the *Press-Citizen* of Tom's photograph of Red-shouldered Hawk nestlings in a City Park tree. Local law enforcement put an end to Tom's photography session.

Tom shared through his father and the influential people his father knew, much of the history of birding in Johnson Co. And since the late 1940s Tom has himself been a large part of that history with his leadership and writings for the IOU and the Iowa City Bird Club. Tom

authored an article entitled, "Birds and Birding in Iowa, 1949-1999," that appeared in the Fall 1999 edition of *Iowa Bird Life*. What follows are some items from Tom's further research on the topic.

The county was named for Richard Mentor Johnson. He was a Senator from Kentucky and Vice President under Martin Van Buren from 1837-1841.

Rudolph Anderson wrote the first book on Iowa birds.

Frank Bond (1856-1940) collected over 500 bird specimens, which he gave to the University of Iowa. Thirty-eight of these are currently on display at the Iowa Museum of Natural History. Mr. Bond also painted birds. He was known for his hummingbirds on lanternslides. A 1920 painting, obviously painted from memory, depicted waves of Passenger Pigeons coming across the sky in NE Iowa.

Bohumil Shimek (1861-1937) was a man of many talents and interests. He was in the UI Class of 1883. He made many observations of birds as a young man and his notes from 1879-1880 are in the Smithsonian. Four of the specimens at the UI museum are his. He was a city engineer and later a botanist. He became a member of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union in 1932. A local elementary school is named for him. Birders best know him for the land in Lee County that he urged the state to purchase that is now known as Shimek State Forest.

Wells Cooke (1858-1916) was at the University of Iowa during 1876-77. From 1881-83 he performed bird surveys in the Midwest compiling migration data. In 1884-85, he compiled data for the entire nation. He spent the years from 1901-1916 writing up that data. Boy if anybody could have used an Excel spreadsheet it was Wells Cooke. He published a report entitled, "Bird Migration of the Mississippi Valley, the Years 1884 and 1885."

Henry Smith Williams (1863-1943) was raised in Charles City, received his BS from the University of Iowa and became an MD. He wrote 120 books. His article with C. R. Keyes

entitled, "Preliminary Annotated Catalogue of Birds of Iowa" can be found in the *Proceedings of the Davenport Academy of Science* 5:113-161, 1889.

Walter Thietje (1929-1971) collected mostly in the 1950s, a very large number of bird specimens on Rohner's Farm south of Iowa City. Hard to believe now, but 121 of these were of LeConte's Sparrow.

The Museum of Natural History was created in 1858 with Theodore Parvin as curator. Macbride Hall was built in 1904-07. The oldest bird specimens date from 1886 and there are many specimens dated prior to 1900. Other specimens were donated later in the 1930s-50s.

Organized birding in Iowa began with the Iowa Ornithologists Association, which existed from 1894-1898. The Iowa Ornithologists' Union didn't form until 1923.

Thanks Tom for sharing this with the group.

Attendees: Barbara Beaumont, Chris Caster, Chris Edwards, Linda and Roger Fisher, Kurt Hamann, Rick Hollis, James Huntington, Tom Kent, Bernie Knight, Dave Kyllingstad, Ramona McGurk, Gail and John McLure, Jim Miller, Mary Noble, Diana Pesek, Ron Price, Jim Scheib.

– *Chris Caster*

April 15, Meeting. Jodeane Cancilla, director of the Macbride Raptor Project, along with Kristin Lake, a vet tech who replaced Gail Dawson at the MRP, brought along a rehabilitated Red-tailed Hawk and Barred Owl for us to see. Jodeane, Kristin, and the two raptors are all veteran presenters. There isn't a week that goes by that the group isn't on the road somewhere helping to educate school kids and adults alike on the beauty, wonder, and importance of birds of prey in our natural world. So it was easy to get Jodeane to agree to present, but it was more difficult to find a night that she wasn't already booked somewhere else. Those in attendance will agree that we received one of the most interesting presentations ever.

The Macbride Raptor Project rehabilitation clinic is located on the campus of Kirkwood Community College south of Cedar Rapids. They have received injured or sick birds of prey from all over eastern Iowa and even some from surrounding states. Many of these have been found along roadsides after having been struck by a car while hunting. Some have been found in backyards in a sickly stupor having succumbed to a disease like West Nile Virus. Sometimes the birds can be helped, and after a stay at the clinic are transferred to the flight cage at the Macbride Raptor Center for rehabilitation and release to the wild. Sometimes the birds survive, but can't be released due to severe disability like partial blindness or an amputated wing; these birds may wind-up on permanent display at the Center. But some raptors are found in too weak a condition and must be euthanized. For the birds' sake it is important that they be given food, water and medical attention as soon as possible.

It usually isn't difficult to capture a sick or injured bird, but to do it safely requires some care. A large cardboard box works well for transporting the bird and a pair of heavy work gloves makes the capture safer for you. Staying quiet and moving slowly helps keep the bird calm as you put the box over it. Alternatively you could throw a towel over the bird first and then gently wrap it around its body, pinning the wings and staying clear of the talons. Heavy gloves will lessen the chance that the bird will get hold of you with one of its feet. A raptor's beak is menacing, but its power to do real damage is in its feet. If you don't feel that you have the means to capture the bird safely you should give Jodeane a call, (319) 398-5495, or your local DNR person.

The Macbride Raptor Project has a small staff and budget. A great many people provide volunteer help. Cages must be kept clean, food and fresh water must be distributed twice daily as hawks feed by day and owls by night. And this must be done rain or shine year round. Rehabbers are needed to exercise the birds in the flight cage. In addition volunteers maintain

the grounds, plant wildflowers, and keep the bird-blind stocked. Additionally, the MRP is heavily involved with the summer day camp, The School of the Wild, on the Macbride Nature Campus. It is an awesome responsibility that leaves little time off for Jodeane and staff, so they are very appreciative of all the volunteer support and monetary donations they receive.

The MRP is truly one of the things that make our area a unique and special place to live. Jodeane, her staff, and all the volunteers provide a wonderful community service by caring for our birds and educating our public. The next time you visit the Macbride Raptor Project I encourage you to reflect on what it all means to our community and consider a donation to the effort. If you would like to be involved as a volunteer, Jodeane can make it happen. Many hands make light work.

If you missed the April Meeting you can always catch up with Jodeane at the annual ICBC/MRP Fall Hawk Watch at Stainbrook Preserve. Check the fall schedule for date and time. Jodeane will also be presenting on the MRP's ongoing Osprey release program at the Fall Meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists Union in September at Wickiup Hill Lodge. Thanks so much to Jodeane and Kristin for everything. And thanks to everyone who attended.

Attendees: Jean and Ed Allgood, Chris Caster, Bob Dick, Karen Disbrow, Susan and John Drysdale, Chris Edwards, Linda and Roger Fisher, Karole and Jim Fuller, James Huntington, Bernie Knight, Dave Kyllingstad, Gary Leonard, Richard Leuellen, John McLure, Darlyne and John Neff, Diana Pesek, Viana Rockel, Sharon and Jim Scheib, Jerry Seydel, Marcia and Dick Shaffer, Rebecca Shultz, Linda Swift.

– *Chris Caster*

April 18, Otter Creek Marsh. The outing to Otter Creek Marsh in Tama County had a turnout of only four club members, but those four were rewarded with some excellent bird sightings!

Chris Caster gets the “Best-Birds-of-the-Day” prize. He joined up with the group about 1/2 hour late and while walking and birding to catch up with the others, “Lucky Chris” got to see both a Little Blue Heron (adult) and Snowy Egret in the same view of his spotting scope! You don’t get views like that too often! When the other three joined up with Chris, we were able to say that we had seen a Little Blue Heron flying but we had not seen the Snowy Egret. The four of us searched quite a bit afterwards but never did relocate the Snowy. However, eagle-eyed “Lucky Chris” had noted where the Little Blue had appeared to land when it flew off so the group high-tailed it back to the highway and down the road to the approximate area, where we were fortunate enough to see the Little Blue Heron rise up from a pond near the back of a farmer’s field. Wonderful!

Other birds of note for the day were the Yellow-Headed Blackbirds and Great-tailed Grackles. Shorebirds were surprisingly sparse. The usual lingering waterfowl were there. And the Sandhill Cranes put in numerous appearances, showing off all of their beauty and grace in flight. Another treat was a Bald Eagle hunkered down in her nest with her mate nearby, perched on a dead tree waiting for supper to swim by.

We had a total of 40 species for the day. The weather started off overcast and cooler than predicted, but warmed up fairly quickly to t-shirt weather. However, the wind was awful! Very difficult to hold binoculars and scopes steady in the constant high wind and strong gusts.

Participants: Chris Caster, Chris Edwards, James Huntington, Diana Pesek (leader).

Birds (40 species): Pied-billed Grebe, American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Gadwall, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral

Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Ring-billed Gull, Mourning Dove, Northern Flicker, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Bank Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, American Robin, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Great-tailed Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird.

– *Diana Pesek*

May 20th, Meeting. Ron Andrews of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources gave us a very informative and entertaining talk on the reintroduction of Trumpeter Swans in Iowa. Ron is one of the IA DNR veterans and on the cusp of a decision to take early retirement. He has been involved with many different projects over the years involving red foxes, raccoons, coyotes, nest predation, river otter reintroduction at Lake Red Rock, and was instrumental in establishing the kestrel box project along our highways. Currently Ron co-writes the annual publication, "Trumpeting the Cause for Wetlands" with David Hoffman, also with the IA DNR.

Trumpeter Swans are Iowa's only native nesting swan and once nested throughout the state. The last Iowa nesting occurred in 1883 at Twin Lakes Wildlife Area in Hancock County. Habitat loss from agriculture and wetland drainage and market hunting for food, powder puffs, and quills brought the Trumpeter close to extinction. In 1933 only 69 birds remained in the lower 48 at Red Rocks NWR in Montana. Others held on in parts of Alaska.

Wetland restoration efforts are being undertaken in Iowa to restore some of the prairie pothole habitat left when the glaciers receded 12,000 years ago. Removal of drainage tiles brings the water to the surface. The creation of the Union Slough complex in Kossuth County is a good example. Wetlands are not only important as habitat, but also for flood control, groundwater recharge, filtering of contaminants, and recreation. They improve the quality of our wildlife and our quality of life as well.

The Iowa reintroduction effort began in 1995 with the goal of producing 15 free-flying nesting pairs by 2003. Trumpeters have been obtained from 25 different states and a dozen zoos. Fifty-five flightless pairs were placed at partnership sites with private individuals, organizations and businesses. Any young produced are allowed free-flight. Over 550 one- and two-year-old birds have been released at six dozen sites around the state to date. The swans must be 4-7 years old to nest. Even though Trumpeters form life-long pair bonds there seems to be a learning curve for the birds when it comes to reproduction. Often the eggs laid aren't fertile and it may take 3-4 years of attempts before any cygnets are produced. The Trumpeters nest on grassy hammocks and 5-7 eggs are laid. The incubation period is about 35 days.

Obstacles to reintroduction include habitat loss; Trumpeters require permanent shallow wetlands with healthy pondweeds and invertebrate populations. Utility and guy wire collisions can break wings. Six have died thus far in Iowa from this cause. Aspergillosis, a fungus from moldy bread, can cause lethal lung infections. And because the Trumpeters have the ability to feed in deeper water they are even more susceptible to the lead shot that still lay at the bottom of our wetland pools. Four swans have died from lead poisoning thus far. This problem was severe enough that it caused an end to the Minnesota reintroduction effort. Although Trumpeters are not legal to hunt they still get shot, mostly out of ignorance. Ten have been shot in Iowa, one in Wisconsin and five in Texas. The fine for shooting a Trumpeter is \$1,500 and many of the swan releases are made public to inform and encourage responsible waterfowl hunting.

The first successful wild Trumpeter nesting was in 1998 at the Jack Kennedy Farm Pond in Dubuque Co. The next was in 2000 at Thorpe Park in Forest City. In 2001 there were 5 more successful nestings. Released Trumpeters in Iowa have either red or green neckbands and the numbers can be read with a scope at a great distance. They have been reported from the

Dakotas south to Texas, west to Colorado and east to Tennessee. Missouri and Kansas seem to be the most popular wintering areas. Some winter in Iowa with Cass and Hamilton Counties and along the Mississippi in Clinton County hosting the largest numbers of birds. The Trumpeters are adapting well, becoming waste grain feeders much like Canada Geese.

Eighty percent of the funding for the program has come from sportsmen's contributions, license fees and excise taxes. Partnerships and soft-match contributions help. Two Webster City individuals, David and Robert Sampson, contributed \$160,000 dollars alone.

With the 2003 goal realized, the new goal is to have 25 wild nesting pairs by 2006. There is even talk of releasing a flightless pair at the new Waterworks Park in Iowa City, provided the proper pond enclosures could be set up to protect the birds.

Anyone spotting banded Trumpeters should contact the local DNR person, Ron Andrews, or Dave Hoffman at 641-357-3517. Thanks Ron for everything you do.

Attendees: Jean and Ed Allgood, Chris Caster, Bob Dick, Karen Disbrow, Linda and Roger Fisher, Tony Franken, Dave Kyllingstad, Gary Leonard, Nancy and Richard Lynch, Gail and John McLure, Kari Oeltjen, Diana Pesek, Rosemarie Petzold, Ron Price, Jim Scheib, Marcia and Dick Shaffer.

– *Chris Caster*

June 5, Brinton Timber. Five club members met on a beautiful Saturday morning for our trip to Brinton Timber. We welcomed new birder Vicki Eaton, and welcomed back Mike Dooley who had just returned from a year in Washington, DC. Later at our destination we were joined by Ed Lins of Washington and Karen Disbrow.

Brinton Timber is a 320-acre woodland adjacent to the Skunk River in southwest Washington County, owned by the Washington County Conservation Board. It features six miles of well-maintained trails through mature upland and lowland forest. Brinton Timber has not

been visited often by birders. It has been nominated as an Iowa Important Bird Area (IBA), but to date there have not been enough bird records submitted to gain this designation. One of the objectives of our trip was to survey part of the area and find as many species of special concern to the IBA program as possible.

Some of the highlights of our hike were: numerous Acadian Flycatchers, including one sitting on a nest; a brief encounter with a Worm-eating Warbler, which we heard three times but never saw; five singing male Cerulean Warblers; and a beautiful male Scarlet Tanager glowing like a ember in a patch of sunlight near the forest floor. Other species found included Kentucky Warbler, Northern Parula, and Wood Thrush.

During our morning hike we were able to cover perhaps one-fourth of the area's trails. We all agreed that we would like to spend more time birding at Brinton Timber in the future. For more information about Brinton Timber, including an aerial photo and trail map, visit <http://co.washington.ia.us/departments/conservation/index.htm>.

Participants: Chris Caster, Karen Disbrow, Mike Dooley, Chris Edwards (leader), Vicki Eaton, Ed Lins, Diana Pesek.

Birds (36 species): Great Blue Heron, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Parula, Cerulean Warbler, American Redstart, Worm-eating Warbler, Ovenbird, Kentucky Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Eastern Towhee, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole.

– *Chris Edwards*

June 13, Indiangrass Hills. It was a warm, sunny day for those attending this field trip to Indiangrass Hills and Lake Iowa county park in Iowa County.

Participants: Ed and Jean Allgood (co-leaders), Chris Caster, Karen Disbrow, Linda Donelson, Mike Dooley, Dave Kyllingstad, Ramona McGurk, Diana Pesek, Dick Randell, Linda Rudolph.

Birds (36 species): Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Bobwhite, Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Kingbird, Blue Jay, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, House Wren, Sedge Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Bobolink, Red-winged Blackbird, meadowlark sp., Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, American Goldfinch.

– *Jean Allgood*

July 17, Annual Butterfly Count. This year seven enthusiastic participants enjoyed a pleasant day afield watching butterflies at Kent Park, Hawkeye Wildlife Area, Lake Macbride, and Solon Prairie. We finished the day with 30 species and 540 individuals, which is below average compared to previous years – a general trend which I noticed throughout the spring and summer this year. For comparison, during the previous five years we averaged 34 species and 771 individuals. However, there were still plenty of butterflies to keep us busy and we continued to find new species throughout the day. The fields and ponds around the Conservation Education Center at Kent Park provided a great place to observe many butterflies and enjoy the wildflowers. We saw six skipper species, including the state-

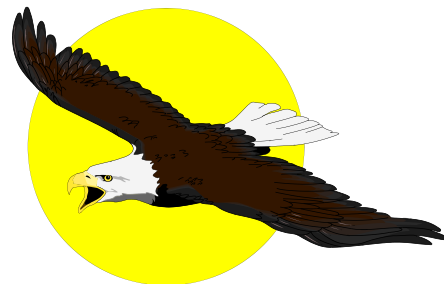
threatened Byssus Skipper, nectaring on mountain mint in a meadow at Macbride Nature-Recreation Area. It was a fun day and we all learned a thing or two. One of the highlights for this seasoned observer was finding a Spring Azure perched at a mud puddle next to one of the more numerous 'Summer' Spring Azures. These tiny blue gems were formerly considered two forms of the same species, but are now considered separate species by many experts.

Participants: Bob Dick, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards (leader), Lisa McDaniels, John McLure, Mary Noble, Diana Pesek.

Butterflies (30 species): Black Swallowtail 4, Giant Swallowtail 3, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 7, Cabbage White 79, Clouded Sulphur 143, Orange Sulphur 37, Cloudless Sulphur 5, Little Yellow 6, Bronze Copper 5, Eastern Tailed-Blue 29, Spring Azure 1, 'Summer' Spring Azure 101, Great Spangled Fritillary 20, Meadow Fritillary 2, Pearl Crescent 9, Question Mark 3, American Lady 1, Painted Lady 1, Red Admiral 2, Common Buckeye 3, Red-spotted Purple 1, Viceroy 12, Common Wood-Nymph 17, Monarch 12, Silver-spotted Skipper 12, Common Sootywing 2, Least Skipper 5, Peck's Skipper 3, Tawny-edged Skipper 5, Crossline Skipper 3, Byssus Skipper 7.

Species seen earlier in the week but not on count day were Dainty Sulphur, American Snout, Eastern Comma, Delaware Skipper, and Dun Skipper.

– *Chris Edwards*



Birding Highlights in Johnson County, Winter 2003 - Summer 2004

Mike Dooley

WINTER SEASON, DECEMBER -- FEBRUARY

[Note: the following report does not include birds from the Iowa City Christmas Bird Count, which were reported in the April issue.]

Amana Road west of the DNR headquarters, along the north shore of the upper Coralville Reservoir, was productive throughout the latter part of the winter season. The first report from the area was perhaps the best, a NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL on January 4th, in the cedars on the hillside. Also interesting was a lingering HERMIT THRUSH seen on February 11th and relocated a week later. Two CAROLINA WRENS and a PILEATED WOODPECKER were found on January 5th, the woodpecker being relocated a few times through mid-February. In the first week of February, a dark-morph ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK was near Blaine Cemetery Road.

James Avenue in Hawkeye Wildlife Area produced a number of reports as well. EURASIAN TREE SPARROWS, now seemingly well-established in Johnson County, were seen north of Swan Lake Rd. from at least December 23rd to February 14th. For the December sighting, two WHITE-CROWNED SPARROWS were in the same sparrow flock as the Eurasians. Just west of James along Swan Lake Rd., an immature RED-SHOULDERED HAWK was identified on January 5th. The row-crop fields along James Ave. south of Swan Lake Rd. produced flocks of LAPLAND LONGSPURS and SNOW BUNTINGS in mid-February, and a similar mixed flock was south of F-28 on February 6th. Also south of F-28, seven WESTERN MEADOWLARKS were reported February 14th along Half Moon Rd.

Moving to the east side of Hwy. 965, toward the end of December a NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD was perched in a downed juniper along Hwy. 1 north of Solon. At the beginning of February, a COMMON REDPOLL and a YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER made visits to a backyard in the Cottage Reserve neighborhood. Also in the Lake Macbride area, a Harlan's RED-TAILED HAWK was seen along the north side of the lake's south arm, while across the water from the Harlan's sighting a LONG-EARED OWL was flushed during a search of the cedar grove off 200th Ave. A PILEATED WOODPECKER was in the vicinity of the Raptor Center in Macbride Nature-Recreation Area on February 25th.

On January 4th, an immature YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD was a thoroughly unexpected guest at a feeder in the Jolly Roger area, and a dark-morph ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK was identified over the water off the Sugar Bottom campground on December 20th. Below the Coralville Reservoir Dam, yet another PILEATED WOODPECKER was spotted on February 29th.

Iowa City itself produced some good birds for the winter, starting with a VARIED THRUSH in a backyard on December 16th. A few days later, a winter adult THAYER'S GULL was working the Iowa River north of Benton St. Two more PILEATED WOODPECKERS were active in City Park on January 22nd, and the next day a RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH made an appearance at a feeder on Dubuque St. north of the interstate.

Finally, a pair of finch reports came from Kent Park west of Tiffin. On December 22nd, 48 HOUSE FINCHES made for a notable gathering in the west-side pines, while five PURPLE FINCHES were at

the Conservation Education Center's feeders on February 14th. On February 11th, a RED-SHOULDERED HAWK was keeping vigil atop a telephone pole along Echo Ave., which borders the park's west side.

SPRING SEASON, MARCH – MAY

March was fairly slow for notable sightings in Johnson County. Early in the month, a small flock of GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE was gathered around a pond along Hwy. 382, just west outside of Solon. The rest of the month was largely silent, but in the final week a few new arrivals made their appearances. A HORNED GREBE was spotted on the north arm of Lake Macbride, while COMMON LOON and BONAPARTE'S GULL were seen off Sandy Beach on the lower Coralville Reservoir. On the upper reservoir, eight GREATER YELLOWLEGS were found below Amana Rd., and across the way, five ROSS'S GEESE were sorted out from among 60 SNOW GEESE at Sand Point. As the month closed out, two early GREAT EGRETS were seen at Swan Lake, with a ROSS'S GOOSE there as April got under way.

Birds during the first week of April included a flock of 30 AMERICAN PIPITS around the corner from Swan Lake, in the row crop fields at James Ave. and F-28. A NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD was singing along Greencastle Ave. south of F-28, and was relocated toward the middle of the month. On the other side of Hwy. 965, four HORNED GREBES were in the water between Sandy Beach and Twin View Heights. A SANDHILL CRANE, possibly the same bird that made for Jim Fuller's 200th yard bird earlier in the day, was a flyover at the Macbride Nature-Recreation Area's Raptor Center, while an OSPREY was a flyover at the north arm of Lake Macbride.

West of Iowa City, an ongoing story in early April was the attempted nesting of BROWN CREEPERS along the Clear Creek trail area, and the state's first reported HOUSE WREN was seen there in mid-April. Further early arrivals for mid-April at Clear Creek included two BROWN THRASHERS and a record-early SWAINSON'S THRUSH.

Also in mid-April, to the north in Hawkeye W.A., another record bird was found along the road to Babcock Access, a tying third-earliest LARK SPARROW. Just west of there, two SNOWY EGRETS were seen from Greencastle Ave. north of Swan Lake Rd. On the lower reservoir, ten DUNLINS and a FORSTER'S TERN were early arrivals off the Twin View Heights area, while at the reservoir's downriver end, the county's first BROAD-WINGED HAWK for the season was soaring below the dam. A traditionally early-arriving warbler species, YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER, was singing along the trail west of the sailboat storage area in Lake Macbride S.P.

Shorebird reports grew during the latter third of April. As many as 27 WILLETS were seen below Hwy. 965 on the upper reservoir, as well as HUDSONIAN and MARBLED GODWITS, and WILSON'S PHALAROPE. Another 15 WILLETS appeared east of Greencastle Rd. In viewing from Twin View Heights, AMERICAN AVOCET numbers grew from an initial bird to five specimens by the end of the month.

Aside from shorebirds, other good birds were found in late April, including a number of first arrivals. EARED GREBES were found off Twin View Heights and on the north arm of Lake Macbride. An AMERICAN BITTERN was in full view at Swan Lake, and many birders were afforded excellent looks at a surprising adult YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON at Kent Park, west of Tiffin. A PEREGRINE FALCON was observed off Sand Point on the upper reservoir, probably drawn to the increasing shorebird populations. A WARBLING VIREO made for yet another early bird at the Clear

Creek trail area. MARSH WRENS were noted in the wetlands along Greencastle Ave., and a LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH was discovered in a wet ravine along the bike trail in Lake Macbride S.P. Likely the state's first ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS for the year were a pair visiting a feeder in Iowa City.

May opened with a report of PIPING PLOVER off James Ave. on the upper reservoir. Soon after, the first CERULEAN WARBLER was detected at this species' traditional area amidst the campgrounds near the Raptor Center; by the end of the month, the number would grow to four. The Clear Creek area chimed in with an early INDIGO BUNTING, and a bit later hosted GOLDEN-WINGED and MOURNING WARBLERS. In the only notable report from the southern half of the county this season, an early CLAY-COLORED SPARROW was found at Red Bird Farms W.A., southwest of Iowa City. Meanwhile, another shorebird report from James Ave. included thirteen HUDSONIAN GODWITS and a WILSON'S PHALAROPE, with a PEREGRINE FALCON harassing the general population.

Johnson County enjoyed another banner Spring Count in early May, with the star bird an accidental SNOWY PLOVER found off Greencastle Ave. Others of the 170 species located around the county included GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE, AMERICAN BITTERN, LITTLE BLUE HERON, and PEREGRINE FALCON; WHITE-RUMPED and BAIRD'S SANDPIPERS; WILSON'S PHALAROPE, PILEATED WOODPECKER, WHITE-EYED VIREO, VEERY, NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD, and AMERICAN PIPIT; GOLDEN-WINGED, CAPE MAY, YELLOW-THROATED, CERULEAN and MOURNING WARBLERS; CLAY-COLORED, HARRIS'S, and EURASIAN TREE SPARROWS; and YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD.

Soon after the Spring Count, a remarkable pair of sightings occurred at Greencastle Ave. in Hawkeye W.A., when both a KING RAIL and two BLACK-NECKED STILTS were found. Before long, two more BLACK-NECKED STILTS were discovered by birders at Round Pond even as the Greencastle stilts were being scoped by another party. Yet another outing produced not only the pair at Round Pond, but four more birds below Hwy. 965 off James Ave., an apparent total of six Black-necked Stilts in the area. Meanwhile the King Rail remained along Greencastle Ave. for nearly a week, and the four stilts off James Ave. for a couple of days beyond that, well into mid-May.

Other shorebirds on the upper reservoir in mid-May included AMERICAN AVOCET off James Ave., and up to eight HUDSONIAN GODWITS, three RUDDY TURNSTONES, and a SANDERLING scoped below Amana Rd. YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD, not common for Johnson County, was relocated in the eastern marshy section of Lake Macbride's north arm; by the end of the month as many as twelve pairs would be counted. The always reliable Hickory Hill Park produced as many as four CONNECTICUT WARBLERS during the mid-May migrations. ALDER FLYCATCHER, BELL'S VIREO, GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER, and CERULEAN WARBLER were among the other reported highlights. In the northwestern part of the county, a YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT was singing along Grabin Rd., at the western tip of Hawkeye W.A., and a BELL'S VIREO was heard nearby toward the end of the month.

Birds ending the spring season included a WHITE-EYED VIREO along Cottage Reserve Rd. in Lake Macbride S.P., and a LEAST BITTERN seen flying over Lake Macbride's marsh section. The bike trail along the lake's north arm produced a BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO and a BELL'S VIREO.

SUMMER SEASON, JUNE – JULY

Easily the most stunning rarity in Iowa this summer, if not for the year, opened the summer season and made the front page of the Cedar Rapids *Gazette* sports section. A SWALLOW-TAILED KITE, only the fourth record for Iowa since 1917, visited a residential neighborhood off Dubuque Street north of the interstate for two days during the first week of June. Generally easy to find and view, at times the bird made convenient passes while birders luxuriated in Jim Scheib's lawn chairs on Longview Knoll.

In mid-June, a LEAST BITTERN was relocated in the marshy area at the east end of Lake Macbride's north arm. Also found were three GREAT-TAILED GRACKLES, an uncommon treat for east-central Iowa. Along the south shore of the north arm, on the loop trail north of Cottage Reserve Rd. and east of the boat ramp, BELL'S VIREOS were present in the trailside shrubbery and a YELLOW-THROATED WARBLER was singing from the white pine grove.

In the southwest section of the county, a KENTUCKY WARBLER was heard at Frytown Conservation Area the first week in July. In the northwest, Grabin Rd. continued its noteworthy productivity, offering a singing HENSLOW'S SPARROW in mid-July as well as a relocated BELL'S VIREO. GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS were perched along the roadside fence wires. Near the end of the month, four very early BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPERS were discerned in the grass and mudflat along the road to Babcock Access. The summer season in Johnson County closed out on a high note when a PIPING PLOVER was found in the extensive mudflats east of the access itself, and along with the Buff-breasted Sandpipers, was still present on the last day in July.

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Please send this form with your annual membership dues to Eastern Iowa Birdwatch, Bernie Knight, 425 Lee Street, Iowa City IA 52246. Annual dues are \$10 per household. Members receive a membership card which entitles them to a 10% discount on bird seed at Bird's Eye View in Coralville.

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Iowa City Bird Club

Eastern Iowa Birdwatch is published three times per year (usually April, September, 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.

Annual membership dues are \$10.00, payable by January 1st for the coming year. Make checks payable to Eastern Iowa Birdwatch, and mail to Bernie Knight, 425 Lee St., Iowa City, IA 52246. Check your mailing label for the year you have paid through.

For general bird club information, contact Iowa City Bird Club president Chris Caster at 339-8343. **To lead or suggest a field trip**, contact field trip coordinator Karen Disbrow at 339-1017. **The club web site** is maintained by Jim Scheib and is located at icbirds.org.

Eastern Iowa Birdwatch

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