
Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

Volume 33 Number 1

April 2013

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**, unless otherwise noted, 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.

April 13, Saturday, 8 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Area for migrant water birds. Wear boots for walking in wet areas, and bring a spotting scope if you have one. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.* Karen Disbrow, 430-0315.

April 16, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Beginning Birder Course at Kent Park CEC: “Backyard Feeder Birds” by Jim Scheib. Free to members. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register. See page 12 for more information.

April 17, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk. Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.

April 18, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting. Robert and Linda Scarth will present “Safari for Two: A Journey to Northern Botswana”. **Meeting location is at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park.**

April 19, Friday, 6 p.m. Night Sounds Field Trip. Local areas for American Woodcock, Wilson’s Snipe, frogs, owls, and anything else that calls at night. Bruce Gardner and Karen Disbrow, 430-0315.

April 21, Sunday, 8 a.m. Macbride Nature-Recreation Area. Visit the Raptor Center and bird blind, and hike the nearby trails. **Meet at the Macbride Raptor Center parking lot.** *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.*

April 23, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Beginning Birder Course at Kent Park CEC: “Birds of Hickory Hill Park and Waterworks Park in Iowa City” by Jim Scheib. Free to members. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register.

April 27, Saturday, 8 a.m. Hickory Hill Park and Waterworks Park. Visit these two Iowa City parks with great trails for woodland, prairie, and wetland species. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.*

April 28, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. Otter Creek Marsh in Tama County for marsh birds including cranes, rails, and bitterns. Visit the new viewing platform built in 2012. Diane Pesek, 319-560-8393.

April 29-May 24, Weekdays, 6:30 a.m. Hickory Hill Park Warbler Walks. Meet at the north parking lot at the end of Conklin Lane, off Dodge Street. Daily sightings will be posted on our web site. Co-sponsored by the Johnson County Heritage Trust.

April 30, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Beginning Birder Course at Kent Park CEC: “Warbler Identification” by Karen Disbrow. Free to members. Call Brad Freidhof at 645-1011 to register.

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Schedule (continued)

- May 1, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk.** Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.
- May 11, Saturday. Spring Migration Count.** We will work in teams to count as many birds as possible in Johnson County. To participate, call Chris Caster at 339-8343.
- May 12, Sunday, 8 a.m. Hickory Hill Park.** This park is a hot-spot for warblers and other spring migrants. *BEGINNING BIRDER TRIP.* Karen Disbrow, 430-0315.
- May 15, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk.** Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.
- May 16, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting.** “Birding Iceland” with Jim and Sharon Scheib.
- May 18, Saturday, 8 a.m. Draco Hill** in Cedar County for warblers and other migrants. Visit www.dracohill.org for information. Coffee and rolls will be provided after the walk. Betty Kirchner and Karen Disbrow, 430-0315.
- May 19, Sunday, 7 a.m. Rowold Family Farm** on the Wapsipinicon River and neighboring wetlands near Wheatland in Clinton County, for spring migrants. Ben Rowold, 330-9655.
- May 25, Saturday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Take A Kid Outdoors (TAKO) Event** at Iowa River Landing Wetland Park in Coralville. For more information visit www.takeakidoutdoors.org. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.
- June 1, Saturday, 7 a.m. Brinton Timber** in Washington County for deep-woods nesting species such as Cerulean Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Northern Parula, and Acadian Flycatcher. Chris Caster, 339-8343.
- June 5, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk.** Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.
- June 9, Sunday, 7 a.m. Ciha Fen.** This recent Johnson County Conservation Board acquisition near the Cedar River features a fen, sand prairie, and oak savanna. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.
- June 15 Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Indiangrass Hills** in Iowa County for grassland birds such as Henslow’s Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Sedge Wren, and Bobolink. Mark Brown, 358-8765.
- June 19, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk.** Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.
- June 22, Saturday, 8 a.m. - Noon. Turkey Vulture Festival** at the Coralville Dam East Overlook, sponsored by the Army Corps of Engineers, featuring exhibitors, games, food, and fun. Karen Disbrow, 430-0315.
- July 17, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk.** Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.
- July 20, Saturday, 9 a.m. Butterfly Count** sponsored by the North American Butterfly Association. We will visit Kent Park, Lake Macbride, and other areas. To participate, contact Chris Edwards at 430-4732.
- July 27, Saturday, 8 p.m. Moth Night-lighting Program and Demonstration,** Sugar Bottom Campground. Karen Disbrow, 430-0315.
- August 7, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk.** Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.
- August 21, Wednesday, 8 a.m. Kent Park Bird Walk.** Meet at the Kent Park CEC. Rick Hollis, 665-3141.
- August 25, Sunday, 8 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Area** or other local areas for shorebirds and other early fall migrants. Bring boots and a spotting scope if you have them. Chris Caster, 339-8343.

Other Dates of Note

April 20, Saturday. Iowa Young Birders field trip to Otter Creek Marsh in Tama County. For details and a full schedule of Iowa Young Birders field trips, visit www.iowayoungbirders.org.

May 3-5, Friday-Sunday. Iowa Ornithologists' Union Spring Meeting in Cedar Falls. Visit www.iowabirds.org for more information. Local contact Karen Disbrow, 430-0315.

May 25, Saturday, Iowa Young Birders field trip to Squaw Creek Park in Linn County. For details and a full schedule of Iowa Young Birders field trips, visit www.iowayoungbirders.org.

July 8-12, Monday-Friday. Johnson County Historical Society summer day camp for children in grades 2-5, "Flowers, Fossils, Birds, and Beyond". Visit www.jchsiowa.org for more information.

From the President's Desk Karen Disbrow

Hello All! Spring weather has finally arrived. Red-winged Blackbirds, Turkey Vultures, and Common Grackles are all back, so it is officially spring!

After our club's busy schedule in 2012, I thought this would be a slower year – but you can see from our spring and summer schedule that it isn't! So much is going on, and the birding is in high gear. The Introduction to Birding Course has already started and continues through early May. The Hickory Hill Park Warbler Walks will start in late April and run for four weeks. The Iowa Ornithologists' Union Spring Meeting in Cedar Falls is less than a month away.

In June we are again having the Turkey Vulture Festival near the Coralville Dam. Vultures are remarkable birds that deserve more credit for the job of keeping the earth clean and stopping many microbes from spreading disease. It is always fun to show these birds to the kids.

We have been asked to participate in the Johnson County Historical Society Nature Week program the week of July 8-12. We will do one afternoon 1-5 p.m. If you would like to participate, please contact me.

I am collecting books for the IOU silent auction in May. I am also collecting sculptures,

drawings, and collectables of any kind for the Pelican Festival silent auction and the October 26 Iowa Audubon fundraiser silent auction.

Many great trips to some new areas are on the schedule this spring and summer. I am already working on the fall schedule so let me know if you have a speaker or place you would like to go birding.

Enjoy the spring migration!
Karen

Iowa Audubon Corner

The Iowa Audubon Board met on March 17, 2013. The budget for the year was approved with many reductions. No grants will be awarded this year. Doug Harr reported on the group's support of many conservation issues. The new updated website is working well (www.iowaaudubon.org). The Pelican Festival will again be held at the Coralville Reservoir in September; the date will be announced after the dates for the early duck hunting season are determined. A new event is planned for October 26 in Johnston. This will be a membership drive with walks, talks and a silent auction. Look for more information on this in the September newsletter. Anyone who wishes to donate items for the silent auction for either the Pelican Festival or the October event should contact Karen Disbrow.

– Karen Disbrow

2012 Iowa City Christmas Bird Count

Chris Edwards and Diana Pesek

The 62nd annual Iowa City Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, December 16, 2012. The total of 81 species is a new count record, surpassing the previous high of 79 set in 1998. The count's ten-year average is 66 species. Weather conditions were favorable, with steady temperatures of 37-39° F, overcast skies, and light variable NW winds. All area rivers and streams were ice-free, the Coralville Reservoir and other bodies of water were mostly open, and there was no snow cover. The timing of the count was fortuitous, as winter weather arrived several days later with significant snowfall and blizzard conditions, pushing most of the lingering water birds to the south.

Rare finds this year included Blue-winged Teal and Common Loon (first count records); Trumpeter Swan (second count record); Greater White-fronted Goose, Redhead, and American White Pelican (third count records), Merlin (fifth count record); and Red-shouldered Hawk (first record since 1966). Other unusual species included Gadwall, American Wigeon, American Black Duck, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, American Coot, Killdeer, Short-eared Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, and Harris's Sparrow. New high counts were established for a diverse group including Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Northern Harrier, Rock Pigeon, White-crowned Sparrow, House Finch, and Pine Siskin. Expected species not found this year included Ring-necked Pheasant, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Common Grackle.

Waterfowl

Waterfowl diversity, at 19 species, was the highest ever. The best find was a first count record male Blue-winged Teal at Goose Lake in North Liberty. Mid-December records of Blue-winged Teal in Iowa are quite rare, as it is our least-hardy duck species and most individuals migrate by mid-October. Goose Lake, located north of Penn Street and east of I-380, held a surprising variety of waterfowl. Greater White-fronted Geese, found in two locations, were a third count record. A record number of Canada Geese were found. A record-high seven Trumpeter Swans were found; due to successful statewide reintroduction efforts, we can expect to find them in increasing numbers in the future. Mallards, Green-winged Teal, and Hooded Mergansers were at ten-year highs.

Pheasants to Raptors

Much attention has been given to the recent statewide decline of the Ring-necked Pheasant population, thought to be caused by loss of habitat and several years of unfavorable weather. For the first time since 1957, we did not record any pheasants on our count – we know there are still small numbers in our count area, but the lack of snow cover may have made them more difficult to find. Wild Turkey numbers were below average, and no Northern Bobwhites were found, which has become typical. A lingering Common Loon photographed at Lake Macbride was a first record for the count. Two American White Pelicans above the Coralville Dam provided only the third count record, all within the last seven years. A Great Blue Heron was found along the Iowa River in Iowa City. Among raptors, the seventeen Northern Harriers were a new count record. A Red-shouldered Hawk, photographed at Lake Macbride State Park, was the first count record since 1966. This species was seen nearly annually in the early years of our count, with a high count of six individuals on two occasions. An adult male Merlin of the 'prairie' race was at Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Other raptors were seen in about average numbers.

Coots to Crows

American Coots were found for just the second time in ten years, with 25 birds. Seven Killdeer, another species found infrequently, were at Swan Lake. Ring-billed Gull numbers were about double the ten-

year average, but only a single Herring Gull was found. For unexplained reasons, a record number of Rock Pigeons was tallied. Mourning Doves were also found in above-average numbers. Owls were well-represented this year. Three Eastern Screech-owls were found, one in North Liberty and a cooperative pair at a farmstead west of North Liberty. Short-eared Owls were seen foraging at dusk on both the north and south sides of Hawkeye Wildlife Area, and a Northern Saw-whet Owl roosting in Hickory Hill Park provided our first record of that species since 2003. Curiously, all the common woodpeckers were found in below-average numbers. A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in Hickory Hill Park was a nice find. Northern Shrike, formerly seen very sporadically on the count, was recorded for the sixth straight year. Blue Jays and American Crows were both found in significantly below-average numbers.

Chickadees to Old World Sparrows

Chickadees, titmice, both nuthatches, creepers, and Carolina Wrens were all found in average numbers. Fruit-eating birds, including Eastern Bluebirds, American Robins, and Cedar Waxwings, were found in high numbers this year. Two Yellow-rumped Warblers were at Kent Park. This species, found only three times in the first fifty years of our count, has now been seen in six of the last eight years. Fox Sparrow has also become nearly annual, with two found this year. Five Harris's Sparrows, seen in two locations, were the first since 2001, and the 61 White-crowned Sparrows were a new count record. The only members of the Icteridae family found were a large flock of Red-winged Blackbirds at Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Iowa experienced a significant invasion of northern finches this winter. We did not find any of the rarer species on our count, but Pine Siskins were found in record numbers, including a flock of 80 at Kent Park. The non-migratory House Finch was also found in record numbers. A new record count of 21 Eurasian Tree Sparrows was also tallied. This species is becoming more widespread in our area and was recorded by three different groups.

Count Effort

This year there were 30 field observers in 11 parties. Field observers were Jess Alexander, Kyle Belcher, Carl Bendorf, Mark Brown, Barry Buschelman, Chris Caster, Zach Cramer, Gerald Denning, Bob Dick, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Linda Fisher, Jim Fuller, Rick Hollis, James Huntington, Ed Lins, Ken Lowder, Terry Mangold, Jason McCurdy, Mary Noble, Jason Paulios, Diana Pesek, John Prineas, Maud Prineas, Theo Prineas, Ben Rowold, Linda Rudolph, Jim Scheib, Sharon Scheib, and Sharon Somers. There were 11 feeder watchers in 10 locations. Feeder watchers were Barbara Beaumont, Linda Fisher, Carolyn Gardner, Jan Hollis, Jenny Hollis, Nancy Johns, Barbara Kalm, Nancy Lynch, Sharon Scheib, Richard Sjolund, and Veronica Wieland.

This year's count was organized by Diana Pesek, and the results were compiled by Chris Edwards. On the day of the count we met for lunch at the North Liberty Community Center. We met for an evening meal and compilation at The Brown Bottle Café in North Liberty.

Nationally, this year marked the 113th consecutive Christmas Bird Count. 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. Beginning this year Christmas Bird Count results will no longer be published in a special issue of *American Birds*. The results of all counts from 1900 to the present are available online at www.audubon.org/bird/cbc, a cooperative project of the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

Thanks to everyone who participated for making this year's count a success.

SPECIES LIST

Greater White-fronted Goose	24	Rough-legged Hawk	2	White-breasted Nuthatch	80
Cackling Goose	24	American Kestrel	18	Brown Creeper	3
Canada Goose	5,375	Merlin	1	Carolina Wren	4
Trumpeter Swan	7	American Coot	25	Eastern Bluebird	36
Gadwall	39	Killdeer	7	American Robin	154
American Wigeon	15	Ring-billed Gull	765	European Starling	871
American Black Duck	1	Herring Gull	1	Cedar Waxwing	595
Mallard	1018	Rock Pigeon	726	Yellow-rumped Warbler	2
Blue-winged Teal	1	Mourning Dove	328	American Tree Sparrow	396
Northern Shoveler	47	Eastern Screech-Owl	3	Fox Sparrow	2
Northern Pintail	3	Great Horned Owl	7	Song Sparrow	11
Green-winged Teal	40	Barred Owl	5	Swamp Sparrow	3
Redhead	1	Short-eared Owl	3	White-throated Sparrow	27
Ring-necked Duck	8	Northern Saw-whet Owl	1	Harris's Sparrow	5
Lesser Scaup	102	Belted Kingfisher	1	White-crowned Sparrow	61
Bufflehead	2	Red-headed Woodpecker	12	Dark-eyed Junco	582
Common Goldeneye	3	Red-bellied Woodpecker	65	Northern Cardinal	299
Hooded Merganser	6	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	Red-winged Blackbird	100
Common Merganser	4	Downy Woodpecker	102	Purple Finch	11
Wild Turkey	31	Hairy Woodpecker	12	House Finch	257
Common Loon	1	Northern Flicker	24	Pine Siskin	197
American White Pelican	2	Pileated Woodpecker	4	American Goldfinch	227
Great Blue Heron	1	Northern Shrike	2	House Sparrow	954
Bald Eagle	84	Blue Jay	96	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	21
Northern Harrier	17	American Crow	392		
Cooper's Hawk	5	Horned Lark	14	TOTAL SPECIES	81
<i>Accipiter</i> sp.	4	Black-capped Chickadee	227	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	14,713
Red-shouldered Hawk	1	Tufted Titmouse	42		
Red-tailed Hawk	57	Red-breasted Nuthatch	6		

University of Iowa Bird Club

Katie Pletcher recently launched the University of Iowa Bird Club, a new student birding organization. Membership is open to all UI students and faculty. Katie is currently looking for founding members. If interested, please contact her at:

E-mail: katelyn-pletcher@uiowa.edu

Phone: (641) 521-6101

Club e-mail: uibirdclub@gmail.com

Club Facebook Page:

<http://www.facebook.com/UniversityOfIowaBirdClub>

Renewal Reminder

There's still time to renew your membership for 2013. Our annual dues remain \$15 per household or \$10 for students. Your mailing label shows the most recent year for which you have paid. Please complete the membership renewal form on the inside back cover and send it with your check payable to "Eastern Iowa Birdwatch" to Bruce Gardner, 3055 Wapsi Ave. NE, Iowa City, IA 52240. If you have any questions about your membership status, please contact Bruce at 643-2575 or woodsidefarms@juno.com.

Membership Spotlight on: **Diana Pesek**

What is your occupation? Archive Curator, The Gazette in Cedar Rapids.

Tell us about your family. Husband, Larry. Our 30th anniversary is this August. Larry's family lives in the Cedar Rapids area, and my family lives in Virginia.

Where did you grow up? Waynesboro, in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia

When and how did your interest in birds develop? I started seeing raptors and smaller birds while I was trail riding with my horse. Living in town, these were birds I wasn't paying attention to or wasn't aware of, and they caught my attention while I was riding Charlie at local parks like Squaw Creek and Pleasant Creek. Before long, I bought a bird ID guide to try to figure out what that pretty little blue bird flying across the trail was... and well, you know what happens then!

Did you have any birding mentors? All of the members of the Iowa City Bird Club were extremely helpful when I started birding and were very patient with my questions. Chris Caster, Chris Edwards, and James Huntington were trip leaders somewhat often when I started birding and they set excellent examples of how to be a careful birder. They really know their birds! We are lucky to have so many excellent birders in our area who can really help new birders develop their skills. James is the one who I bird with most often and I think of as my "mentor".

When did you join the Iowa City Bird Club? Sometime around the year 2000.

Do you remember the first bird club event you attended? It was an Iowa City Bird Club outing to Cone Marsh in August and James Huntington quizzed me on shorebirds, of which I knew nothing at the time! I quickly figured out that Pectoral Sandpiper was the most common shorebird there so mostly I just answered "pectoral" to all of his "What bird is this?" questions and figured the odds were in my favor. That outing really piqued my interest in shorebirds, though, and to this day that is my favorite group of birds.

What are your past and present positions with the ICBC and/or the IOU? Currently I am the coordinator of volunteers for the Iowa City Bird Club's Christmas Bird Count.

Do you have a favorite bird or family of birds? Shorebirds are my favorites, but I also love raptors, warblers, sparrows, tanagers – all of them!

What particular aspects of birding interest you the most? I love my Iowa year list – it keeps me in touch with the seasons and motivates me to go out and bird whenever I have time.

What is your favorite field guide and why? *National Geographic* because it has all of the rarities in it. But I am now addicted to my Sibley and National Geo on my iPhone because I can so easily listen to bird calls and try to improve my skills in that area, in which I have a long way to go. I am not great with bird calls at all.

Do you keep a life list? Sure, my life list is at 614, and my Iowa list is at 358.

What was the most recent bird you added to your life list? I just went to the Duluth area in February and added King Eider, Boreal Owl, and Spruce Grouse as lifers.

What interesting birds have you seen in your yard? Hooded Warbler is my best yard bird by far!

Where is your favorite place in Iowa to bird, and why? Hawkeye Wildlife Area and Cone Marsh. HWA because of the shorebirds and Cone Marsh because it's where I go in the spring when winter is ending and the birds start returning.

Tell us about one of your most exciting Iowa birding moments. Seeing the Fork-tailed Flycatcher in Tama County. I first saw it as part of a larger group, which was fun and exciting. But then the bird flew off and the group departed. Chris Edwards and I stayed around because Mark Brown was on his way and wanted to see the flycatcher and we wanted to try to help him relocate it. Just around the time he arrived, Jay Gilliam called us to say he had re-found the Fork-tailed Flycatcher at a small cemetery off of a nearby highway. The four of us had the bird all to ourselves for a bit, standing in the cemetery and watching it fly around and land on the gravestones, perch in the evergreens, showing off its beauty. What a great birding moment! But there are so many exciting moments, and equally as exciting was seeing the Black Rail found by Chris Edwards in Johnson County. That was a bird I never ever thought I would actually see!

What is your "most wanted" Iowa bird or your "nemesis" bird? I want to see the goatsuckers. I've heard Chuck-will's-widow and Whip-poor-will and have had shadowy looks at them but I want to actually *see* them.

Tell us about a favorite birding experience or place outside of Iowa. I love going to the Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas with all of its birding sites. Even the resident birds, like Green Jays, are exotic birds to an Iowan.

If you could visit any place on earth, where would it be? Every place, I love to travel. The Alaskan tundra with all of the breeding shorebirds would be spectacular!

Do you have any hobbies or interests besides birding? Don't get me started talking about my pups and dog agility! My other hobby ("dogging", as one of my birding friends refers to it) is really cutting into my birding time now that my 7-year-old keeshond Jessie is well trained, and we go to agility trials about ten weekends each year.

Do you have any favorite movies or TV shows? *All Creatures Great and Small* is my all-time favorite TV show. For Christmas I received a DVD of *Opposable Chums: World Series of Birding* (in New Jersey) which was great fun to watch and made me want to go out and do a birding big day right then and there!

Have you read any good books lately? I read a lot of mysteries.

What is your favorite restaurant? Any Mexican food restaurant. El Rancho in Cedar Rapids is one Larry and I go to somewhat often.

Birding Site Guide to *Brinton Timber*

Chris Edwards

Description: Brinton Timber is a 320-acre preserve managed by the Washington County Conservation Board. It borders the Skunk River and the predominant habitats are mature upland and bottomland woodlands, with some areas of second-growth woodland bordering pastures. Deep ravines and several creeks transect the area. During the nesting season, Brinton Timber provides some of the best deep-woods birding in southeast Iowa.

Birding Highlights: Interesting birds to be found here during the nesting season include Wild Turkey, Broad-winged Hawk, Black-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Red-headed Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher (abundant), Veery (rare), Wood Thrush, Northern Parula, Yellow-throated Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler (rare), Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, and Summer Tanager (rare). Brinton Timber may contain one of the largest breeding populations of Cerulean Warblers in southeast Iowa. It also contains one of the highest-density populations of Acadian Flycatchers that I have found in Iowa. The best way (really the only way) to bird the area is to get out and hike the trails.

Location and Directions: Brinton Timber is located near Brighton in SW Washington County. From Iowa City, drive south on Highway 1 through Kalona, Washington, and Brighton. About 1.5 miles west of Brighton, turn right on Fir Avenue and drive north 3 miles to where the road ends at the parking lot for Brinton Timber. Total distance from Iowa City is 52 miles; driving time is about 1 hour and 5 minutes.

Amenities: Pit toilets, picnic tables, and a small primitive camping area are located near the parking lot. An excellent trail system featuring six miles of interconnected loop trails provides excellent access to the entire property. Trails are generally well-marked, but it is advisable to carry a trail map, which can be printed from the web site below. A convenience store with fuel and food is located in nearby Brighton.

When to Visit: Birding is best from late April through June, as passerine migrants are passing through and summer residents are breeding. Fall and winter can be excellent times for a quiet hike through the woods, but the birding is not exceptional.

Special Considerations: The trails are open to horseback riding, and during wet weather some sections can be muddy and rutted, so boots are recommended. The trails are also steep in some places. Depending on conditions, mosquitoes can be abundant in spring and summer, so repellent is a must. Hunting is not allowed at Brinton Timber, so that is not a concern.

Resources: Washington County Conservation Board site including an excellent trail map: http://co.washington.ia.us/departments/conservation/brinton_timber.htm. Iowa Audubon Important Bird Area site with bird sightings information: <http://www.iowaaudubon.org/IBA/SiteDetail.aspx?l=1&siteID=78>.

Nearby Areas: **Schmitter Heritage Area** is located just to the west and can be reached from the Brinton Timber trail system, or from a parking lot on 310th St. The habitat is primarily mixed grassland and prairie restoration with shrubby areas and two small ponds, producing a different mix of birds than Brinton Timber. **Lake Darling State Park**, at 1,387 acres the largest public area in Washington County, is located three miles west of Brighton on the north side of Highway 1. It features a 300-acre manmade lake, campground, picnic areas, and trails. Other interesting nearby areas in Washington County include Clemmons Creek Wildlife Area, Sockum Ridge Park, and Fern Cliff Area.

Books for Birders

Jason Paulios and Rick Hollis

National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, Sixth Edition. Jon L. Dunn and Jonathan Alderfer. National Geographic, 2011. 576 pages. Paperback, \$27.95.

In this Era of the Field Guide, birders have no end of identification reference options. Most feature digitally enhanced paintings or photographs, some combine the two. Birds are now depicted from every conceivable angle, analyzed according to “feel,” or given paragraphs devoted specifics like “windows on P4.” This overabundance of options probably explains how the Sixth Edition of the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* had been published for over a year without me realizing it. It doesn’t alleviate the guilt; my 20-something-year-old self would be furious that I wasn’t first in line to pick one up. Otherwise, what was the point of all that whining about the Chipping/Clay-colored/Brewer’s Sparrow plates back in 2004?

I’ve always considered myself a National Geo field guide birder, specifically Third Edition. I remember leaving my precious Peterson’s guide for that Third Edition, amazed at the sophistication and comprehensiveness. Each subsequent Nat Geo edition has, generally, improved on earlier work. With this Sixth Edition we now have a guide covering 990 species, a number of new text revisions and updated art plates, as well as major reworking to the maps. As a result of all this new information the field guide does clock in at a hefty 576 pages which is about sixty pages longer than the previous version.

Probably the most important update in this guide are the changes to the maps. It may not sound like a very exciting sales pitch for a birder looking to upgrade their field guide but these changes will help both beginning and more experienced birders. In addition to the usual color-coded boundaries for breeding, year-round, and winter ranges they’ve included color boundaries for expected migration. This is great information for us in the middle of the country; for example, the map for Blackpoll Warbler shows a “primarily in spring” wash which helps to explain why so few are recorded in the fall. They’ve also included subspecies ranges where applicable; some are on the species account map (see California Gull) and other more complicated cases get a special section in the back of the book. Some of these may be too complex to attempt on such small maps (see the Dark-eyed Junco) but it is all part of the thoroughness that National Geographic strives for.

I can still remember faithfully transcribing all my notes from my National Geo Third Edition into my brand new Fourth, excited to see new species added and updated text. I spent hours adding helpful arrows pointing to field marks that the text highlighted or from information I’d gleaned from old copies of *Birding*. With the Sixth Edition the editors have now incorporated many of these same helpful pointer arrows, more in the spirit of the Peterson Guide series. I’m just happy they’ve saved me hours of transcription time, no more cramped hands!

For beginners, or those of us who no longer bother keeping up with taxonomic reorganization, they’ve included a new visual index in the front and back covers. These layouts show sample species from larger bird families and their corresponding page ranges. The idea is nice but I miss seeing the gorgeous bird topography illustrations from the previous edition; this was a useful guide for beginners to help with descriptions when writing field notes. These illustrations are still included but are given less importance by being included in the often-skipped introduction section.

Finally, the reason most of you will want the new edition...new species plates! This update includes some very important changes to the *Spizella* sparrow genus (Chipping/Clay-colored), better depicting the subtle differences between these “little brown jobs.” Spring travelers to Colorado will be pleased with the new look to the Rosy-Finches, especially the updated female paintings. My favorite new plates are the Hutton’s Vireo, Ruby-crowned Kinglet (a similar-looking bird), and Golden-crowned Kinglet. For those birders that come across both Hutton’s Vireo and Ruby-crowned Kinglets on their birding trips these changes will be a welcome relief; no longer do they need to seek out other guides for verification (Sibley had previously been my favorite for these two). Backyard feeder watchers will appreciate the clean, detailed *Carpodacus* paintings, clearly showing differences between the Purple, Cassin’s and House Finches. Finally, one of the most common feeder birds, the female House Finch, gets a proper depiction!

Overall, I highly recommend this update for its completeness, clear and detailed illustrations, and updated maps. There are more than enough changes for an upgrade if you own a previous edition. Now only three more years until the Seventh Edition updates those vireo paintings...

— Jason Paulios

The Forest Unseen: A Year’s Watch in Nature. David George Haskell. Viking Adult, 2012. 288 pages. Hardcover, \$25.95.

Haskell, a biology professor and poet, spent a year studying a single square meter in the Cumberland Plateau in Tennessee. He had simple rules for his study: visit often, be quiet, keep disturbance to a minimum, no killing, no removal of creatures, no digging, no crawling over the study area. He did not have set times to visit, but he visited the area several times a week. His chapters cover a huge variety of subjects: lenticels, ferns, slugs, storms, rotting leaves and bacteria, actinomycetes, springtails, nematodes, different samara shapes and their effects on seed dispersal, and much, much more.

He seems to be a well-rounded biologist and takes our thoughts through the varied aspects of biological study, all based around what he observed. This is not the smoothest read. Deer browse marks lead to a discussion of ruminant stomachs, co-evolution, Thomas Jefferson and giant sloths. This is how the author leads us – one observation leads to thoughts about this, which leads to that.

At one point during the winter the author strips his clothes off and sits still to better appreciate a chickadee’s insulation. This devotion to detail comes through on many pages. He allows a mosquito to bite him and describes the process. But, “Despite the nobility of the tick’s quest and my admiration for armor and weaponry,” he does not allow a tick to bite him.

Everything I read rang true except for one statement. “I hear a large branch crashing down every few hours, particularly in winter.” Surely this is an exaggeration. Except on very windy days, I rarely hear branches crashing down – and when it is *that* windy, I get out of the woods.

For myself personally, it annoyed the heck out of me that he refers to his study area as the Mandela, over and over again. Every time I read it, the 1967 Peter, Paul and Mary song *The Great Mandela* entered my conscious mind. I understand his point about the connectivity of all things: “The many-hued sands of this Mandela bleed into and out of the shifting rivers of color that wash all around.” That aside, it is absolutely fascinating reading, albeit a bit slow at times. If you read it, I guarantee you will learn things.

— Rick Hollis



Introduction to Birding Course March 26 – April 30, 2013 at Kent Park



The Iowa City Bird Club and the Johnson County Conservation Department are offering a 6-week Introduction to Birding Course at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park. There will be six Tuesday evening sessions along with six weekend field trips to area birding hot spots.

Tuesday evening sessions are \$5 for adults and free for children accompanied by an adult. Iowa City Bird Club members receive free admission (a one-year membership is \$15 per household or \$10 for students). Participants may attend all sessions or pick one or more to attend. Classes can hold 30, and advanced registration is requested – please call Brad Freidhof at (319) 645-1011 by noon of the Tuesday session. Handouts and refreshments will be provided. Come to class early and bird the loop path near the Conservation Education Center.

Weekend field trips are free. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Bring binoculars to all field trips; if you don't have a pair let us know in advance and loaners can be arranged. If you have a spotting scope, you are welcome to bring it. Club members will have several spotting scopes available to share on those field trips requiring one. All field trips will depart from the N Dodge Street Hy-Vee in Iowa City unless otherwise noted; meet in the SW corner of the parking lot. For more information, call Karen Disbrow at (319) 430-0315.

Tuesday, March 26, 7 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING I by Rick Hollis. This will include field identification of birds, field guides, and equipment every birder needs, or might someday need.

Saturday, March 30, 8 a.m. Field Trip to CONE MARSH. Located about 25 miles SE of Iowa City, Cone Marsh is an excellent place to view migrating ducks, geese, and other water birds. Wear boots for walking in wet areas, and bring a spotting scope if you have one. **Meet at the Fin & Feather parking lot.**

Tuesday, April 2, 7 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING II by Rick Hollis. Continuation of first session topics.

Saturday, April 6, 8 a.m. Field Trip to KENT PARK near Tiffin. We will explore the trails in Kent Park looking for migrating songbirds and resident woodland birds. **Meet at the CEC in Kent Park.**

Tuesday, April 9, 7 p.m. WHERE TO BIRD IN JOHNSON COUNTY by Rick Hollis. Well known, lesser known and secret places to watch birds and study nature in and around Johnson County.

Saturday, April 13, 8 a.m. Field Trip to HAWKEYE WILDLIFE AREA near North Liberty. We expect to see ducks, geese, American White Pelicans, and other early spring migrants. Wear boots for walking in wet areas, and bring a spotting scope if you have one.

Tuesday, April 16, 7 p.m. BACKYARD AND FEEDER BIRDS by James Scheib. This session will cover the common birds found in our area's backyards during the year, and what types of feeders and food to use to attract them.

Sunday, April 21, 8 a.m. Field Trip to MACBRIDE NATURE-RECREATION AREA. Visit the Raptor Center, observe birds up close from the bird blind, and hike the nearby trails.

Tuesday, April 23, 7 p.m. BIRDS OF HICKORY HILL PARK AND WATERWORKS PARK IN IOWA CITY by Jim Scheib. Learn the variety of birds that are found throughout the year at these nearby parks.

Saturday, April 27, 8 a.m. Field Trip to HICKORY HILL PARK and WATERWORKS PARK. Visit these two Iowa City parks with great trails for woodland, prairie, and wetland species.

Tuesday, April 30, 7 p.m. WARBLER IDENTIFICATION AND SHOREBIRD REVIEW by Karen Disbrow. Warblers are among our most colorful birds. Compare and contrast similar species within these two interesting and challenging groups.

Sunday, May 12, 8 a.m. Field Trip to HICKORY HILL PARK. May is prime time for viewing warblers in Iowa, and this park is an eastern Iowa hot spot for viewing migrant warblers and other songbirds.

Field Trip and Meeting Reports

January 6, Bird Feeder Watch Social. A congenial group gathered at the home of Jim and Karole Fuller north of Iowa City for coffee, and as usual breakfast treats, conversation and feeder watching. The breakfast was certainly the highlight but there were almost as many bird species seen (24) as the number of participants (25). The avian highlight was the neighborhood juvenile Red-shouldered Hawk, which briefly broke up the party as birders quickly retreated up the hill to where the Scheibs reported it in their yard. Thirty minutes after the party was officially ended, that bird appeared back at the Fullers' right above the feeders. A Cooper's Hawk also terminated the presence of birds at the feeders for a period of time, and then showed off with a great telescope view. Other slightly unusual birds were Pine Siskin, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Carolina Wren.

Participants: Ed and Jean Allgood, Barbara Beaumont, Carl Bendorf, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Jim and Karole Fuller (hosts), Kurt Haman, Barbara Haring, James Huntington, Dan Hyduke, Ruth Ann Hyduke, Khristen Lawton, Ken Lowder, Nancy Lynch, Ramona McGurk, Mary Noble, Mark Oxley, Jason Paulios, Jim and Sharon Scheib, Bill Scheible, Blossom Shaw, Sharon Somers.

Birds (24 Species): Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, American Robin, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– Jim Fuller

January 13, Owl Prowl. We met on a cold, sunny afternoon with great hopes of spotting some owls. We first headed to Plum Grove,

where Great Horned Owls are often seen in the spring. Nothing. We then headed to an alley in the Northside neighborhood where one had been spotted. Nothing. Then off to Hickory Hill Park to call in the resident Barred Owls. Again, nothing. We headed to Hawkeye Wildlife Area and checked out a country cemetery for Northern Saw-whet Owls. The trees were too large and there were no owls there. Then on to the nearby farm where Screech-Owls were found on the Christmas Bird Count. No response to the tape. We drove around to the north side of Hawkeye to look for Short-eared Owls. I may have seen two, but they quickly disappeared. A Rough-legged Hawk was spotted. We headed to North Liberty and tried to call a resident Screech-Owl there. Again, no luck. At this point the wind chill was about -4° F and the sun was rapidly setting, so we called it a day. Maybe we'll have better luck next year!

Participants: Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow (leader), Ramona McGurk, Gerald Peterson, Ben Rowold, David Weiss and son.

– Karen Disbrow

January 17, Meeting. The film "First Flight: A Mother Hummingbird's Story" was shown. The photographer and his wife moved to a home in Arizona, where a hummingbird nested on a clothesline over their covered patio. He spent three years filming the nest in HD video, and produced this remarkable 45-minute documentary. The shots taken of the hummingbird laying eggs were phenomenal. At the end of the video the background on how the film was made was as informative and attention-riveting as the original film. A book, published before the video was released, makes a great companion piece.

About twenty people attended. The Coralville Library closes at 8:30 p.m., so this cut short the social part of the evening.

– Karen Disbrow

February 2, Amana Turkey Walk and Feast. We started out on a cold morning with a temperature of 23° F and a wind chill of -5° F. This weather was not conducive to a rambling

hike anywhere, so we decided to go to Kent Park and check the Conservation Education Center feeders. We then traveled a circular route through the Amanas before returning to the Ox Yoke Inn for breakfast. After breakfast several of us drove to Rapid Creek Road to search, unsuccessfully, for a Rough-legged Hawk which had been reported there.

Participants: Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow (leader), Peter Hansen, Ramona McGurk.

Birds (23 species): Wild Turkey, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Purple Finch, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

– Karen Disbrow

February 9, Bald Eagle Watch and Expo.

The eagle watch was located at the Coralville Dam West Overlook, with spotting scopes operated by members of the Iowa City Bird Club, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, and Army Corp of Engineers. Approximately 250 people attended to watch a few Bald Eagles floating overhead and an immature eagle fishing the outflow of the dam.

The expo was held at the Brown Deer Golf Club. Over 150 people attended this event between 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Nature photographer and author Ty Smedes kicked off the event with a great program on the return of the Bald Eagle. Luke Hart from the Macbride Raptor Project brought a live hawk for his program on “Hawks: Their Lives and Habitat”. Mike Havlik from the Des Moines Y Camp brought a live owl for his program. He taught everyone the calls of the Eastern Screech-Owl, Barred Owl, and Great Horned Owl. He stressed the importance of NOT throwing food or wrappers from your car, which attract rodents and in turn owls to the roadsides. This results in many owls being hit.

The Marriott staff that helped plan and execute this event were excellent to work with. A big “Thank you” to the sponsors: KCJJ, Army Corps of Engineers, Iowa Audubon, Iowa DNR, Cedar Rapids Audubon Society, Leno and Cilek North Dodge St. Ace Hardware, University Camera, Pauls, the Iowa City Bird Club, and several anonymous donors. Special thanks to Linda Fisher, Bruce Gardner, Ben Rowold, and Sandra Boehje for helping with the display, keeping attendance, and manning spotting scopes.

– Karen Disbrow

February 10, Coralville WinterFest. This event was postponed from January 26 due to an ice storm. We set up near the south entrance of the Marriott with a good view of the Iowa River. Several weeks earlier we had placed suet bells in the nearby trees to draw in small birds for viewing.

I would like to thank the following people for helping with this event: Ben Rowold, Bruce Gardner, Jerry Denning, Linda Fisher, and Ramona McGurk. Thanks also to Leno and Cilek North Ace Hardware at 600 N. Dodge St. for the display of bird feeders.

Birds (12 species): Canada Goose, Bald Eagle (5), Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal.

– Karen Disbrow

February 24, Quad Cities and Mississippi River. This year’s annual trip to the Quad Cities began on the south side at Fairmount Cemetery in Davenport. There had been reports of crossbills in the hemlocks for weeks, so that was a priority. Our first birds however were at the feeders near the back entrance at the top of the hill. Multiple Eurasian Tree Sparrows and many Pine Siskins were there. A Carolina Wren was singing from the ravine and an immature Red-shouldered Hawk was a real surprise. It took a while, but we finally spotted some Red Crossbills feeding in the hemlocks. The flock

held about a dozen birds and about four or five were males. We were amazed at how the coloration of the females blended so perfectly with the hemlock boughs. They were really active and it was hard to tear ourselves away.

Our next stop was the river access at the corner of Concord and Wapello. There were quite a few eagles as expected. Only a few ducks were hanging about, but we added Gadwall and Hooded Merganser to the list. Over on Credit Island we spotted a Pileated Woodpecker and we got out to observe a group of eagles soaring together. A couple of the sub-adult birds were nearly as light as Red-tailed Hawks underneath.

Lock and Dam 15 in downtown Davenport was a tremendous stop, because we spotted a near adult “Kumlien’s” Iceland Gull. We watched it fly about for many minutes nearer the Arsenal Island side, but then it came to roost much closer on one of the dam pillars. Then we noted a dark smudge on the tip of the bill, our only indication that it wasn’t a full adult. Interestingly this gull had a dark eye, which is more typical of Thayer’s Gull, but the sparse pale gray on the outer primaries were typical for the Kumlien’s race of Iceland Gull. Thrilled by the gull prospects elsewhere we actually forgot to scan the local buildings for any Peregrines—what an oversight and I take the blame. First time I think we had ever missed one on this trip.

Also atypical for this outing, we elected to head north on the Illinois side. We crossed over the I-74 bridge, and made stops along the Butterworth Parkway in Moline. Many diving ducks were seen, but only Ring-billed and “American” Herring Gulls. From the Beacon Harbor Parkway in East Moline though, we viewed three adult Lesser Black-backed Gulls among a large roost at the south end of Campbell’s Island. That was really neat and what a great vantage point.

After a brief rest-stop, we birded Lock and Dam 14 near Hampton, IL. There we happened to find Jim Forde who generously pointed out a number of unusual gulls he had seen. Best birds were first- and second-cycle “Kumlien’s”

Iceland Gulls, and wonderfully there were also present first-cycle Thayer’s and Glaucous Gulls for comparison. This was a first for most of us and a real confidence builder. Also present there was another adult Lesser Black-back, a third-cycle Thayer’s, and a good candidate for a second- or third-cycle “Nelson’s” Gull (Glaucous x Herring hybrid). After this lengthy stop, Sharon’s car chose to return to Iowa City.

The rest of us made one last stop in Rapids City, IL north of the I-80 bridge. We viewed the river looking north from Shuler’s Shady Grove Park. Common Goldeneyes dominated a large number of diving ducks and we finally found a Greater Scaup. Way to the north on the shore we spied a group of Trumpeter Swans—maybe six. There wasn’t much ice, so few gulls, but we did find another adult Lesser Black-backed Gull. This is a European species and it is amazing how numerous these birds have become away from the East Coast, especially since it is still not known if they breed in North America. And just before we headed home, a nice bonus bird was found, a female Long-tailed Duck.

What a tremendous trip. It was an all-day affair and we didn’t get back until 5 p.m. So, thanks to everyone for being such good sports, especially my 11-year-old Ben, who had never been away from his electronics for so long. And thanks again to Sharon and Jerry for driving, and to James for all his help.

Participants: Ben Caster, Chris Caster (leader), Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Rick Hollis, James Huntington, Katie Pletcher, Linda Quinn, Sharon Somers.

Birds (49 species): Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Mallard, Gadwall, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Greater Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Wild Turkey, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Thayer’s Gull, Iceland Gull, Glaucous Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied

Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, American Robin, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch, Pine Siskin, Red Crossbill, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– *Chris Caster*

February 28, Meeting. Liz Christiansen, Director of the UI Office of Sustainability, and Sara Scheib, Sciences Librarian, presented “My Friend Rachel Carson: Shirley Briggs and the Iowa Connection to *Silent Spring*”. This was a marvelous program on Shirley Briggs, a talented artist who was a close friend of Rachel Carson. It included many pictures of Briggs and Carson at various birding events, scripted with Briggs’ words from her diaries and letters. I am continually amazed at the reach of Iowans – for a small state with a population of 3 million, the affect of Iowans on history is tremendous. Shirley Briggs was a remarkable person and we are lucky to have her papers at the UI Library.

Attendees: Barry Buschelman, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Linda Fisher, Bruce Gardner, Dave and Mary Gilchrist, Therese Guedon, Rick Hollis, Khristen Lawton, Nancy Lynch, Mark Oxley, Viana Rockel, Jim and Sharon Scheib, Steve and Ann Valenta.

– *Karen Disbrow*

March 9, Burlington Area. The day started at zero-dark-thirty in cold, rainy conditions, and we headed south in two cars. There was so much water on the roadway that it kept our speed to 60 mph. When we arrived in Burlington, there were four cars of birders waiting. We rearranged ourselves into four vehicles, and after a pit stop we were off to the first of two cemeteries.

At Aspen Grove Cemetery the highlight was a small group of White-winged Crossbills. Chuck tried to locate the resident Great Horned Owl, but it was hiding out of the rain. We then went to Sacred Heart Cemetery with hopes of Cedar

Waxwings and Yellow-rumped Warblers, but neither were found. We went to the tennis club to walk the concrete storm sewer, and saw many small birds including Carolina Wren and Winter Wren. Young Kerra delighted in the burbling water stream.

We headed to Green Bay Bottoms and the Wever Elevator, where we saw large flocks of geese in the air. Many birds were on the Mississippi River and a flock of pelicans was on an island in the river. The biggest surprise of the day was the pinkish Ring-billed Gulls at Riverview Park in Ft. Madison, a very memorable sight. (The authors of one study hypothesized that the ingestion of unusually high levels of astaxanthin at the time of feather growth is responsible for the pink coloration.) A Glaucous Gull was also seen there.

The rain let up in the early afternoon, and we continued birding until almost dark. It was a great day to experience the early spring migration. I highly recommend trips to the Mississippi River at any time of the year, but early spring trips can be awe-inspiring.

Participants: Sarah Bissell, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow (leader), Trish Ditsworth, Chuck Fuller, Jamie McCoy, Jerry Petersen, Katie Pletcher, John Rutenbeck, Steve and Joy Wilson with grandchildren Kerra and Wiggs.

Birds (69 species): Greater White Fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Ross’s Goose, Cackling Goose, Canada Goose, Gadwall, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Ring-necked Pheasant, Wild Turkey, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, American Coot, Killdeer, Wilson’s Snipe, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Glaucous Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Eastern Screech-Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay,

American Crow, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, American Robin, European Starling, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Purple Finch, House Finch, White-winged Crossbill, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

– *Karen Disbrow*

March 21, Meeting. Doug Harr, wildlife photographer, avian consultant and President of Iowa Audubon, gave a marvelous program on his 2012 trip to Ecuador: “From Hummingbirds to Tanagers and Much More – Birding NW Ecuador.” Doug’s bird photographs were fantastic. He went through rigorous efforts to get some of the shots, at one point standing motionless for 45 minutes to photograph an elusive species that appeared for mere seconds.

It was rainy throughout his trip. The accommodations were more than adequate and in some cases quite luxurious. Ecotourism has really taken off in that part of the world. Doug spoke of two brothers who are now doing birding tours exclusively and it has become a lucrative business for them. Wouldn’t we all like to have our hobby become a fun job that could support us?

Attendees: Bob and Claire Ashman, Karen Disbrow, Jonni Ellsworth, John Erickson, Linda Fisher, Bruce Gardner, Dave and Mary Gilchrist, Therese Guedon, David Hamilton, Peter Hansen, Rick Hollis, Lauren and Doina Johnson, Pat Keiffer, Dave Kyllingstad, Kristen Lawton, Nancy Lynch, Mike and Ruth Lundeen, Mark Oxley, Gerald Petersen, Viana Rockel, Tom and Carol Rosenberger, Bob and Linda Scarth, Jim and Sharon Scheib, Forrest Strum, Jr., Steve and Ann Valenta, Diane Zumbuh.

– *Karen Disbrow*

IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Please send this form with your annual membership dues to Bruce Gardner, 3055 Wapsi Ave. NE, Iowa City, IA, 52240. Annual dues are \$15 per household or \$10 for students. Make checks payable to “Eastern Iowa Birdwatch”. Members receive a 10% discount on birdseed and suet at the Ace Hardware store at 600 N. Dodge Street in Iowa City.

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Iowa City Bird Club

For general bird club information, or to lead or suggest a field trip, contact our president and field trip coordinator, Karen Disbrow at (319) 430-0315 or k_disbrow@yahoo.com.

Annual membership dues are \$15 per household or \$10 for students, payable by January 1st for the coming year. Check your mailing label for the year you have paid through. Make checks payable to Eastern Iowa Birdwatch and mail to Bruce Gardner, 3055 Wapsi Ave. NE, Iowa City, IA 52240. You may contact Bruce at (319) 643-2575 or woodsidefarms@juno.com.

Our club web site is located at www.icbirds.org and is maintained by Jim Scheib. You may contact Jim at (319) 337-5206 or jim@tenlongview.net. Also visit us on Facebook.

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Eastern Iowa Birdwatch

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