

2020 Johnson County Spring Count

Chris Caster

This year's Spring Count was held on May 9, 2020. Due to the COVID crisis, we birded individually and did not meet for lunch. No one was assigned to any particular area, allowing participants to be spontaneous in their decisions of where to go. As a result, we did experience some overlaps in our coverage, but not so much to confound the compilation. Fortunately, we had lots of help this year and so our coverage was still good.

A cold front arrived the night before and we narrowly avoided a freeze. It warmed up nicely though and it was a great day to be out. We managed a species total of 156, which is just shy of the count average, but it took a big effort. We had eleven species of waterfowl. Twelve shorebird species was not good considering the hotspot the Coralville Reservoir had been for many weeks. Warblers were not abundant for anyone and we were fortunate to find twenty-one species.

I feel our best bird was a White-faced Ibis found on a private wetland across the road from Swan Lake. It was certainly a lucky find and unexpected, despite the many ibis that had appeared across Iowa this spring. Also rare on our Spring Count, an Eastern Whip-poor-will was very vocal at Evergreen Landing at Kent Park, and it was seen perched in the pines that evening. A Greater White-fronted Goose was spending time at Sycamore Bottoms nursing a bad leg. Mute Swan and Dunlin were at Cedar River Crossing. A Louisiana Waterthrush was at Squire Point, and a Cerulean Warbler was at Pechman Creek Delta. Upland Sandpipers were found at the pasture at the corner of 500th Street SE Johnson-Muscatine Avenue. An American Bittern, Sandhill Crane, and Prothonotary Warbler were found at Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area west of Round Pond, and a Henslow's Sparrow was in the field south of the Gun Club Ponds. Clay-colored and Harris's Sparrows were both found at a couple of locations. Ken Lowder had a Summer Tanager coming to his feeder. A Common Loon and Common Merganser were found at Terry Trueblood Recreation Area. Common Nighthawks were at Goose Lake in North Liberty.

There were a lot of misses this year, but they were different species than last year. Quite a few migrant warblers and shorebirds were not found, and breeding residents like Pied-billed Grebe, Green Heron, Northern Mockingbird, and Yellow-throated Warbler were missed.

Participants: Constance Aldridge, Barbara Beaumont, Kyle and Lauren Belcher, Phyllis Black, Mark Brown, Chris Caster, Jerry Denning, Drew Dillman, Karen Disbrow, Sandy Eads, Chris Edwards, Nola Edwards, Linda Fisher, James Huntington, Kate Kostenbader, Ted Lepic, Ken Lowder, Dorothy Lunning, Terri Macey, Mark Madsen, Jamie McCoy, Jason McCurdy, Ramona McGurk, Ty Morris, Mary Noble, Jason Paulios, Diana Pesek, Linda Quinn, Kevin Ripka, Deb and Mark Rolfes, Daryl Ropp, Linda Rudolph, Maria Story, Chris and Jody Troyer, Aika Walter, Donna Warner.

SPECIES LIST

Greater White-fronted Goose	1	Red-tailed Hawk	16	House Finch	44
Canada Goose	374	Eastern Screech-Owl	2	American Goldfinch	262
Mute Swan	3	Great Horned Owl	2	Grasshopper Sparrow	5
Wood Duck	66	Barred Owl	4	Lark Sparrow	9
Blue-winged Teal	53	Belted Kingfisher	5	Chipping Sparrow	88
Northern Shoveler	5	Red-headed Woodpecker	36	Clay-colored Sparrow	3
Gadwall	5	Red-bellied Woodpecker	65	Field Sparrow	44
Mallard	75	Downy Woodpecker	59	Vesper Sparrow	1
Hooded Merganser	4	Hairy Woodpecker	16	White-crowned Sparrow	39
Common Merganser	1	Northern Flicker	12	Harris's Sparrow	5
Ruddy Duck	3	Pileated Woodpecker	4	White-throated Sparrow	274
Ring-necked Pheasant	42	American Kestrel	7	Henslow's Sparrow	1
Wild Turkey	14	Great Crested Flycatcher	28	Savannah Sparrow	5
Rock Pigeon	19	Eastern Kingbird	29	Song Sparrow	140
Eurasian Collared-Dove	4	Least Flycatcher	13	Lincoln's Sparrow	20
Mourning Dove	112	Eastern Phoebe	17	Swamp Sparrow	14
Common Nighthawk	2	Bell's Vireo	5	Eastern Towhee	31
Eastern Whip-poor-will	1	Yellow-throated Vireo	16	Bobolink	2
Chimney Swift	11	Blue-headed Vireo	21	Eastern Meadowlark	58
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	9	Warbling Vireo	17	Western Meadowlark	4
Sora	2	Red-eyed Vireo	2	Orchard Oriole	15
American Coot	18	Blue Jay	131	Baltimore Oriole	100
Sandhill Crane	2	American Crow	63	Red-winged Blackbird	994
Killdeer	50	Horned Lark	2	Brown-headed Cowbird	164
Upland Sandpiper	3	Bank Swallow	46	Common Grackle	100
Dunlin	12	Tree Swallow	562	Ovenbird	35
Least Sandpiper	19	N. Rough-winged Swallow	5	Louisiana Waterthrush	1
Pectoral Sandpiper	5	Purple Martin	97	Northern Waterthrush	16
Semipalmated Sandpiper	4	Barn Swallow	177	Blue-winged Warbler	4
Long-billed Dowitcher	1	Cliff Swallow	103	Black-and-white Warbler	38
American Woodcock	3	Black-capped Chickadee	122	Tennessee Warbler	4
Spotted Sandpiper	12	Tufted Titmouse	37	Orange-crowned Warbler	5
Solitary Sandpiper	6	White-breasted Nuthatch	60	Nashville Warbler	36
Lesser Yellowlegs	99	House Wren	228	Mourning Warbler	1
Greater Yellowlegs	21	Sedge Wren	21	Common Yellowthroat	120
Bonaparte's Gull	17	Marsh Wren	8	American Redstart	57
Franklin's Gull	2	Carolina Wren	6	Cerulean Warbler	1
Ring-billed Gull	217	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	55	Northern Parula	16
Caspian Tern	5	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	63	Magnolia Warbler	4
Black Tern	5	Eastern Bluebird	43	Yellow Warbler	37
Forster's Tern	9	Veery	2	Chestnut-sided Warbler	2
Common Loon	1	Gray-cheeked Thrush	4	Palm Warbler	90
Double-crested Cormorant	17	Swainson's Thrush	18	Yellow-rumped Warbler	169
American White Pelican	188	Wood Thrush	9	Black-throated Green Warbler	18
American Bittern	1	American Robin	433	Canada Warbler	1
Great Blue Heron	4	Gray Catbird	173	Wilson's Warbler	5
White-faced Ibis	1	Brown Thrasher	27	Summer Tanager	1
Turkey Vulture	125	European Starling	117	Scarlet Tanager	13
Osprey	2	Cedar Waxwing	6	Northern Cardinal	262
Northern Harrier	3	House Sparrow	166	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	104
Cooper's Hawk	4	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	43	Indigo Bunting	30
Bald Eagle	11	American Pipit	6	Dickcissel	10