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# Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



## The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

December 2022 • Volume 42 Number 3

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### Schedule

**Field Trips** are free and open to the public. Trips may be cancelled due to inclement weather or flooding and will be announced on our Facebook page and by email notification to club members. Carpooling is allowed for those vaccinated for COVID. **Meetings** are currently being held via Zoom due to the pandemic. For more information or questions email [iowacitybc@gmail.com](mailto:iowacitybc@gmail.com).

**December 18, Sunday. Iowa City Christmas Bird Count.** Join us for this holiday tradition—the world’s longest running citizen science project! There are two ways to participate – as part of a small group with an experienced leader in an assigned territory, or if you live within the count circle, by watching the bird feeders in your own yard. We’ll have a mid-day lunch and compilation at noon in Room N3 at the North Liberty Community Center. There will be no evening meal this year. To participate, contact Chris Edwards at [credwards@aol.com](mailto:credwards@aol.com) or (319) 430-4732 no later than Sunday, December 11.

**January 15, Sunday, 9 - 11 a.m. Bird Feeder Watch & Social** at 845 Normandy Drive, Iowa City. Join hosts Judith and Drew Dillman at their beautiful home along the Iowa River. Drop in anytime to chat with fellow birders and watch winter birds at the feeding stations and river’s edge. Coffee and juice are provided, and breakfast eats to share are much appreciated. Optional bird walk at 11:00 along shoveled sidewalk to look for birds in City Park. Day-of-event contact for Drew is 319-321-0590.

**February 4, Saturday, 7:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. Building Better Birders Workshop.** Drop in for as many or few sessions as desired, starting with an early morning bird hike at Kent Park, followed by indoor presentations, a bird-banding demonstration, and late afternoon viewing of Bald Eagles at Hills Access. Registration is required. See pages 2 and 5 for more information.

**February 16, Thursday, 7 p.m. Zoom Meeting.** Dean Hester will present “Owls of the ABA Area.” Dean is a talented local artist, photographer, and birder with an M.S. in Paleontology from the University of Iowa. He has photographed most of the owls found in the United States.

**February 19, Sunday, 8 a.m. Quad Cities & Mississippi River** for gulls, waterfowl, and other winter birds with leader Chris Caster. We’ll stop at locks and dams, riverside parks, and other hotspots like Fairmount Cemetery for winter finches. Walking is usually short-distance from frequent stops. We’ll stop for lunch at a nearby restaurant. Return time is late afternoon. Dress for cold and wind, and bring a spotting scope if you have one. Meet Chris (phone 319-936-0120) at the Hy-Vee parking lot, 1125 N Dodge St., Iowa City.

**March 11, Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Burlington Area and Mississippi River** for spring waterfowl migration. Target birds include ducks, geese, pelicans, Winter Wren and many more. Sixty-five species were seen in 2022! This is an all-day trip led by Burlington local expert birder Chuck Fuller, with stops at locks and dams, riverside parks, and other hotspots. Walking is usually short distance from frequent stops. We will stop for lunch at a nearby restaurant. Dress for cold and wind, and bring a scope if possible. Meet Karen Disbrow (phone 319-430-0315) at 6:30 a.m. at the Fin & Feather parking lot, 125 Hwy. 1 W, Iowa City; or at 8:00 a.m. at the Port of Burlington, 400 Front St., Burlington. Carpooling is encouraged.

## Schedule (continued)

**March 14, Tuesday, 7 p.m. Introduction to Birding Course: Basics of Birding I** at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park. This is the first session of a six-week course. Advanced registration is requested, and is free to club members. Call (319) 645-1011 to register. See page 6 for the full schedule.

**March 16, Thursday, 7 p.m. Zoom Meeting.** Bob Dolgan will host a showing of his nature film “The Magic Stump,” the story of an Illinois tree stump that’s attracted a phenomenal variety of wintering raptors over the years, including two rare Prairie Falcons. The goal of “The Magic Stump” is to draw attention to the story of raptors that winter in our highly altered agricultural landscape. Bob will introduce the film and answer questions afterwards.

**March 18, Saturday, 8 a.m. Cone Marsh in Louisa County** for Snow Geese, Sandhill Cranes, and migrating waterfowl with leader Linda Rudolph. A local favorite not to be missed at this time of year! We’ll stop at several points around the marsh and take a walk on the dike, returning by noon. Dress for cold, wind, and wet or muddy trails, and bring a scope if possible. Meet Linda at the Fin & Feather parking lot, 125 Hwy. 1 W in Iowa City. Carpooling is encouraged.

**March 25, Saturday, 8 a.m. Kent Park.** Beginning Birder Trip, but all are welcome. We will explore the trails in this county park looking for migrating songbirds and resident woodland birds. Meet at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park. Ending time is noon.

**Saturday, April 1, 8 a.m. Lake Macbride.** Beginning Birder Trip, but all are welcome. Meet leaders Mark and Deb Rolfes at Solon Recreation and Nature Area, W Sovers Street, at the far west end of the parking lot near the restrooms and splash pad. We’ll go to various stopping points around both the north and south arms of the lake. Ending time is noon.

### Building Better Birders Workshop Series

Join Johnson County Conservation on Saturday, February 4 for a full day of learning about birds and how we can help them. Come for as many or few sessions as you like, and walk away a better birder. Sessions include bird hikes, a Bald Eagle watch, indoor presentations, and a bird banding demonstration. A link to the schedule and registration can be found at <https://johnsoncountyiowa.gov/conservation/events>, or call 319-645-1011. *Building Better Birders* is a series of workshops offered in 25 counties across Iowa with funding provided by REAP-CEP (Resource Enhancement and

Protection, Conservation Education Program). The mastermind and instructor behind the program is Kelly McKay, who has forty years of experience in the field of avian research and education. “Building a community of lifelong learners and citizen scientists” is the mission stated on Kelly’s website at <https://buildingbetterbirders.com/>. Partnership with conservationists across the state, including Johnson County Conservation, brings education home to where people live. Members from the Iowa City Bird Club will lend a hand in providing expertise on the bird hikes. See the flyer on page 5 for more information including dates, topics, and registration information.

– Linda Quinn

## **2022 Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge**

### **Chris Edwards**

The ninth annual Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge was held over Labor Day weekend, September 3-5. The Big Day Challenge is an annual competition between the Iowa City Bird Club and Big Bluestem Audubon Society of Ames. The club that records the most bird species wins the coveted Kent-Dinsmore traveling trophy, a duck decoy painted black and gold on one side, and cardinal and gold on the other side. And more importantly, the winning club gets bragging rights for the next year. Prior to this year, the Hawkeyes led the all-time series with five wins, two losses, and one tie. But last year the Cyclones throttled us, 142-127, which provided some extra motivation this year.

To keep the event fresh, we've tweaked the rules over the years. This year we expanded the event from one day to all three days of Labor Day weekend, and individual birders were allowed to submit a species checklist from one of the three days. This format was very popular as it allowed people to participate whenever their schedules allowed. Expanding the event to multiple days also added another dynamic – I updated and distributed the master checklist each night, so participants going out Sunday and Monday knew which species to target.

Like last year, each team was limited to five adjacent counties around their home area. This year our counties were Johnson, Linn, Louisa, Des Moines, and Lee. The southern counties were included with the goal of finding some lingering SE Iowa breeding specialties, but surprisingly that didn't pan out. Big Bluestem's counties were Story, Boone, Polk, Greene, and Jasper.

The weekend weather was pleasant and didn't play a big factor. Iowa City had high temperatures in the low to mid-70s all three days, with mostly cloudy skies, no precipitation, and light north or easterly winds. We fielded a total of 19 participants, including four parties Saturday, four parties Sunday, and six parties Monday. We covered our core areas well, with multiple visits to Hawkeye Wildlife Area, Lake Macbride, Hickory Hill Park, Waterworks Prairie Park, Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, and Cedar River Crossing. One party spent an entire day scouring Linn County, another party visited Cone Marsh, and two parties visited SE Iowa including Shimek State Forest and Heron Bend Conservation Area.

On Saturday we got off to a strong start with 124 species. Highlights included Northern Bobwhite, Sandhill Crane, White-rumped Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Bank Swallow, Northern Mockingbird, and Lark Sparrow. The highest total was submitted by Diana Pesek, birding with Jerry Denning and James Huntington, with 101 species.

On Sunday 117 species were found, including 13 new species, for a two-day total of 137. Headliners were Pileated Woodpecker, Willow Flycatcher, White-eyed Vireo, Savannah Sparrow, Orange-crowned Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and Scarlet Tanager. Dean Hester submitted Sunday's top list with 79 species.

On Monday we expected it would be difficult to add new species to our list, with 137 already in the bank. But we had our best day of the weekend – we found 132 species, including 13 new species, giving us 150 for the weekend! Monday highlights included Trumpeter Swan, Forster's Tern, Merlin, Marsh Wren, Carolina Wren, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Blue-winged Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Northern Parula, Palm Warbler, and the first Common Grackles of the weekend. James Huntington was a one-man wrecking crew, adding seven species to the weekend tally and turning in the highest list with 102 species.

Big Bluestem Audubon Society, with 12 participants in nine teams, had another strong year. Eric Ollie had their strongest individual effort with 100 species. Their highlights included Gray Partridge, Common Gallinule, Red-necked Phalarope, Fish Crow, Kentucky Warbler, and Cape May Warbler. Their weekend total was 137 species – which means the trophy returns to Iowa City! Two bird families made up nearly the entire difference in our team totals – we had the edge in shorebirds species (16-8) and waterfowl (11-7). They had the edge in warblers (24-22). The combined species list of both teams was 166. Thanks (and congratulations) to everyone who participated. It was a fun weekend. Go Hawks!

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Tom Bootsmiller, Gerry Denning, Chris Edwards, Dean Hester, James Huntington, Terry Macey, Mark Madsen, Jamie McCoy, Logan Melvin, Diana Pesek, Hai-Dang Phan, Linda Quinn, Richard Randell, Deb Rolfes, Mark Rolfes, Linda Rudolph, Janet Seiz, Eliza Willis.

### **BIRDS FOUND ONLY BY IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB (29 SPECIES)**

Northern Shoveler	Baird's Sandpiper	Bell's Vireo
American Wigeon	White-rumped Sandpiper	Bank Swallow
Northern Pintail	Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Carolina Wren
Green-winged Teal	Pectoral Sandpiper	Veery
Lesser Scaup	Semipalmated Sandpiper	Northern Mockingbird
Northern Bobwhite	Short-billed Dowitcher	Eurasian Tree Sparrow
Sandhill Crane	Black Tern	Savannah Sparrow
Semipalmated Plover	Merlin	Blue-winged Warbler
Marbled Godwit	Willow Flycatcher	Palm Warbler
Stilt Sandpiper	White-eyed Vireo	

### **BIRDS FOUND ONLY BY BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY (16 SPECIES)**

Ruddy Duck	Eastern Screech-Owl	Kentucky Warbler
Gray Partridge	Acadian Flycatcher	Cape May Warbler
Common Gallinule	Fish Crow	Blackpoll Warbler
Red-necked Phalarope	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Northern Harrier	Vesper Sparrow	
Broad-winged Hawk	Orchard Oriole	

### **BIRDS FOUND BY BOTH CLUBS (121 SPECIES, BUT ONLY UNCOMMON SPECIES LISTED)**

Sora	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Mourning Warbler
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Sedge Wren	Northern Parula
Caspian Tern	Marsh Wren	Bay-breasted Warbler
Forster's Tern	Gray-cheeked Thrush	Blackburnian Warbler
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Lark Sparrow	Black-throated Blue Warbler
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Golden-winged Warbler	Canada Warbler
Philadelphia Vireo	Orange-crowned Warbler	Scarlet Tanager

## **Renewal Reminder**

It's time to renew your membership for 2023. Our annual membership dues per household are \$15 for a print subscription or \$10 for an email subscription. Students get print or email for \$10. Your dues help support our publications, events, and volunteer activities. Members receive a 10% discount on birdseed and suet at Dodge St. Ace

Hardware and Forever Green Garden Center. Check your mailing label or contact Treasurer Larry Mahoney at [ltjmahoney@aol.com](mailto:ltjmahoney@aol.com) for the year you have paid through. Please complete the membership renewal form on the inside back cover and send it with your check payable to "Eastern Iowa Birdwatch" to Larry Mahoney, 2223 Cae Drive, Iowa City, IA 52246. Or go to our website and use your PayPal account to pay.



# BUILDING BETTER BIRDERS WORKSHOP SERIES



**Sat Feb 4, 2023**

AM Bird Hike | Common Feeder Birds of Iowa | Woodpeckers, Doves, and Similar Species of Iowa | Bird Banding | Milan Bottoms Bald Eagle Night Roost Survey | PM Bird Hike and Eagle Viewing

**Fri/Sat Sep 22/23, 2023**

Fri: Nocturnal Raptors of Iowa | PM Owl Prowl  
 Sat: AM Bird Hike | Diurnal Raptors of Iowa | Live Raptor Program | Midwest Raptor Population Trends Using 40 Years of Christmas Bird Count Data



**Sat May 18, 2024**

AM Bird Hike and Bird Banding | Warblers of Iowa | Flycatchers, Vireos, Swallows, and Similar Species of Iowa | Shorebirds of Iowa | PM Bird Hike

To learn more and Register, scan QR code





## Introduction to Birding Course

### March 14 – April 18, 2023

### Conservation Education Center

### F. W. Kent Park, 2048 Hwy. 6 NW, Oxford



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 family or \$10 for students for a print subscription, or \$10 for an email subscription. Participants may attend all sessions or pick one or more to attend. Classes can hold 20, and advanced registration is requested – please call (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.

**For more information**, contact Karen Disbrow of the Iowa City Bird Club at (319) 430-0315.

**Tuesday, March 14, 7 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING I.** This will include field identification of birds, field guides, and equipment every birder needs, or might someday need.

**Saturday, March 18, 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, Sandhill Cranes, 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, March 21, 7 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING II**, including e-Bird, apps, and birdsong ID.

**Saturday, March 25, 8 a.m. Field Trip to KENT PARK.** We will explore the trails in this park looking for migrating songbirds and resident woodland birds. **Meet at the Kent Park Conservation Education Center.**

**Tuesday, March 28, 7 p.m. WHERE TO BIRD IN JOHNSON COUNTY.** Well-known, lesser-known, and secret places to watch birds and study nature in and around Johnson County.

**Saturday, April 1, 8 a.m. Field Trip to LAKE MACBRIDE** for water birds and other early spring migrants. We'll stop at various points around the lake. **Meet at Solon Recreation and Nature Area, at the far west end of the parking lot near the restrooms and splash pad.**

**Tuesday, April 4, 7 p.m. BACKYARD AND FEEDER BIRDS.** This session will cover the common birds found in our backyards during the year, and what types of feeders and food to use to attract them.

**Saturday, April 8, 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. **Meet at the Swan Lake parking lot.**

**Tuesday, April 11, 7 p.m. BIRDS OF TERRY TRUEBLOOD AND WATERWORKS PARK IN IOWA CITY.** Learn the variety of birds that are found throughout the year at these nearby parks.

**Saturday, April 15, 8 a.m. Field Trip to WATERWORKS PRAIRIE PARK.** Visit this Iowa City park with great trails for woodland, prairie, and wetland species. **Meet at Waterworks Prairie Park.**

**Tuesday, April 18, 7 p.m. WARBLER IDENTIFICATION & REVIEW.** Warblers are among our most colorful birds, but identification can be a challenge. Compare and contrast similar species.

**Sunday, April 23, 8 a.m. Field Trip to HICKORY HILL PARK.** This park is an eastern Iowa hot spot for viewing migrant warblers and other songbirds. **Meet at Hickory Hill Park, at the parking lot at the end of Conklin Lane, off N Dodge St.**

## Field Trip and Meeting Reports

**September 11, Pelican Festival at Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area.** It was a beautiful sunny day, and although the temperature started on the cool side, by early afternoon it reached the low 70s. The American White Pelicans started to appear in the air at 10:30 a.m., after the Blue-winged Teal hunters had packed up and left. Throughout the day we saw 150-200 pelicans in the air. Unfortunately, the willows at the water's edge had grown to such a height that views of pelicans on the water were impossible this year. The ground was too soft for the DNR to take the willows down before the event, but they promised to remove them this winter when the ground is frozen and they can get out there with their equipment.

This year's event was attended by 148 people, including enough kids to keep the face-painter busy all afternoon! The speakers were great and all the talks were well-attended. The talk on mussels was nearly cancelled, until a citizen scientist, with the help of Cedar County Naturalist Sarah Subbert who had mussel shells, stepped in to give a great presentation.

We had great help from many volunteers from the bird club, including Linda Quinn, Ben Rowald, Sandy Eads, Peter Hansen, Gerry Denning, Phyllis Black, Tom Bootsmiller, Brian Broderick, Lois Hughes, and Merle Inhe, as well as Iowa Audubon Board Member Francis Moore of Waterloo Prairie Rapids Audubon. A big thank you to Master Naturalists Kathy and Van Martensen for sand-blasting, priming, and painting the six picnic tables, and Lench & Cilek Ace Hardware for donating the paint and supplies. The picnic tables looked great! Also, thanks to KCJJ for providing radio time to spread the word about the festival, as they have done every year it has been at Coralville Reservoir. And of course, a big thank you to all the groups who provided exhibits.

Postscript: Karen Disbrow, Doug Harr, and Steve Woodruff conferred and decided to move next year's Pelican Festival to Sunday, August 27, with the hope that a larger concentration of migrating pelicans will be present at that earlier date.

– *Karen Disbrow*

**September 15, Zoom Meeting.** Linda Rudolph graciously agreed to fill in when our planned speaker, Luke Hart, had a family emergency. We will reschedule Luke's presentation about migrant hawks and owls at a future date.

Linda gave a wonderful presentation about her three-week trip to northeast Brazil, home to Indigo Macaws, Araripe Manakins, White-collared Kites, and so much more. She showed us amazing photos of the wide variety of birds she saw in Brazil. She was very proud, and deservedly so, of having one of her photos used in the American Birding Association's August issue of *Birding* magazine. She talked about getting her new camera, which is a Canon R5 with a Canon 100-500 RF lens.

After the presentation, Karen Disbrow gave a recap of the Pelican Festival. It was mentioned that our club Treasurer Larry Mahoney has been ill, but is recovering nicely. Members discussed recent bird sightings of Limpkin, Black-bellied Whistling Duck, and Wood Thrush. Eighteen computers were signed in to the meeting.

– *Sandy Eads*

**September 18, Hawk Watch at Stainbrook Preserve.** It was a beautiful day for our annual hawk watch at Stainbrook Preserve, overlooking the Mehaffey Bridge area of the Coralville Reservoir. The temperature climbed steadily from 68° to 81° during the event. Light SW winds varied from 5-10 mph, and an early cloudy sky turned mostly sunny by noon.

When scheduling a one-day hawk watch months in advance, it takes a great deal of luck to get the timing right, since raptor migration is so dependent on weather conditions. Today's southwest winds prevented a hoped-for big

raptor flight, but we did have an above-average day in terms of diversity and abundance.

Turkey Vultures were up first and were numerous throughout the day. Most didn't appear to be heading south, so we stopped counting them by mid-morning, assuming we were seeing the same birds over and over. Aside from the vultures, the first hour was fairly quiet, but we saw an Osprey and a handful of Broad-winged Hawks. We stayed busy by ticking off the other species seen around the edges of our small clearing or flying over the reservoir. Some of the notables included Red-headed and Pileated Woodpeckers, Scarlet Tanager, Common Nighthawk, Great Egret, and, unusual for this location, Rock Pigeon!

As the air temperature warmed, the action picked up, and we saw the majority of our birds between 10:00 and noon. We saw singles and small groups of Broad-winged Hawks, several Red-tailed Hawks, both Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks, an immature Bald Eagle, and another Osprey. One of the day's highlights was a late-morning Peregrine Falcon that winged past, high above the ridge behind us.

Things slowed down after noon, but we did see a few more Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, and Broad-winged Hawks. I also recorded several butterfly species, including 1 Mourning Cloak, 5 Monarchs, and 5 Cloudless Sulphurs – the latter a large striking lemon-yellow immigrant to our area.

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Gerry Denning, Drew and Judy Dillman, Sandy Eads, Chris Edwards, Julie Englander, James Huntington, Mark Madsen, Linda Quinn, Richard Randell, Linda Rudolph, Sharon Somers.

Raptors (8 species, 79 individuals): Turkey Vulture 26, Osprey 2, Bald Eagle 2 imm., Sharp-shinned Hawk 4, Cooper's Hawk 4, Broad-winged Hawk 36, Red-tailed Hawk 4, Peregrine Falcon 1.

Other Birds (28 species): Canada Goose, Rock Pigeon, Common Nighthawk, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Ring-billed Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Great Egret, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Least Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Gray Catbird, American Robin, American Goldfinch, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal.

– *Chris Edwards*

**September 24, Pike Run Wildlife Area.** A group of twelve birders met at Fin & Feather for our trip to Pike Run Wildlife Area in Muscatine County. Pike Run is a good-sized preserve of 182 acres that includes woodlands, open fields, and wetlands. We arrived at our destination just before 9:00 a.m. The sky was gray and overcast with the temperature in the low 50s, and prospects for a good birding day seemed slim. The outlook improved about 10:00 when we began running into small flocks of sparrows and warblers. We ended up with 48 species, including the birds seen on the way to and from Pike Run. The highlight of the day was a Harris's Sparrow found by James Huntington that offered most of the group good views.

Participants: Sahaana Arumugam, Mary Bowler, Brian Broderick, Gerry Denning, Drew Dillman, James Huntington, Chris Jaczun, Mark Madsen (leader), Jamie McCoy, Linda Quinn, Richard Randell, Sharon Somers.

Birds (48 species): Canada Goose, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Sandhill Crane, Great Egret, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Barred Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Blue-headed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Ruby-crowned



Kinglet, Swainson's Thrush, American Robin, Gray Catbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, House Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Harris's Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Tennessee Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Magnolia Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Northern Cardinal.

– *Mark Madsen*

**October 9, The Big Sit.** The third annual Big Sit was again held at the Sugar Bottom Day Use Area at Coralville Lake, and was another enjoyable morning of birding and conversation. We had ten birders drop by throughout the morning, from youngsters new to birding to some of our most skilled birders. We couldn't have asked for a more beautiful day—it was comfortably cool without a cloud in sight.

From our viewpoint within the 17-foot-diameter circle, between 7 a.m. and noon, we saw 37 species, beating last year's tally of 32 species. Donuts and coffee kept us going throughout the morning, as did conversation and a chance to visit with new and experienced birders. We plan to keep this tradition going and look forward to seeing you all next year!

Participants: Connie Aldridge, Sarah Coleman, Trillian Connorridge, Gerry Denning, Rick Hollis, Doina Johnson, Terri Macey, Jenny Miller, J.J. Miller, Richard Randell.

Birds (37 species, in order of appearance): Common Grackle, Red-winged Blackbird, American Crow, Blue Jay, Canada Goose, Bald Eagle, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Killdeer, American Robin, Black-capped Chickadee, Wood Duck, Tree Swallow, Eastern Bluebird, Northern Cardinal, White-breasted Nuthatch, Great Blue Heron, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Ring-billed Gull, Turkey Vulture, White-throated Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, House Sparrow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Chipping Sparrow, Tufted Titmouse, Great Egret, American White Pelican,

Double-crested Cormorant, Cedar Waxwing, European Starling, Osprey, Barn Swallow, Red-tailed Hawk, Eastern Phoebe, American Goldfinch.

– *Terri Macy*

**October 15, Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area.** The temperature was hovering around freezing when the group first gathered, but plenty of sunshine and light winds made for a pleasant morning of autumn birding. We found a lone Horned Grebe while scoping waterfowl on Swan Lake, then had a very cooperative Sharp-shinned Hawk land in a tree right in front of us in Swan Lake Woods. I think the group would agree the highlight of the morning had to be finding Nelson's and LeConte's Sparrows along the farm road heading east from Greencastle Avenue. Both posted up for nice long looks, easily the best and closest looks I've ever had of these species. At one point a Nelson's Sparrow was less than ten feet away – we barely needed binoculars! Lots of birds, fine weather, and a group of enthusiastic birders combined to make a great outing. We ended the day with 54 species, including eleven species of sparrows.

Participants: Kyle Belcher, Nick Benson, Gerry Denning, Sandy Eads, Jason McCurdy (leader), Linda Quinn, Alex Sarkis, Jane Shuttleworth.

Birds (54 species): Canada Goose, Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Horned Grebe, Mourning Dove, American Coot, Killdeer, Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, Lesser Yellowlegs, Greater Yellowlegs, Bonaparte's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Field Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, LeConte's

Sparrow, Nelson's Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Palm Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Cardinal.

– *Jason McCurdy*

**October 20, Zoom Meeting.** We had a very interesting presentation by Brandon Caswell on "Birding in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, South Texas." He gave us an overview of the areas he visited, which included some amazing birding spots. South Texas specialty birds were discussed with some great photos. Some recent mega-rare birds were highlighted along with implications on their possible range expansion into the United States.

After the presentation, Karen Disbrow informed us that next year's Pelican Festival will be moved to the end of August with the hope of seeing more pelicans. Then Linda Quinn announced upcoming November and December birding events, including the Christmas Bird Count on December 18. Several people discussed recent birding highlights. Seventeen computers were logged in for the meeting.

– *Sandy Eads*

**November 12, Amana Lily Lake and Nature Trail.** The day was shockingly cold, with a 15° windchill. Lily Lake was partially frozen after just two days of below-freezing temperatures – perhaps because it was so shallow from the drought? Normally this body of water covers 170 acres, but today vegetation and mud extended a long way out. The bird scene had changed dramatically along with the weather, flipping from 70 degrees just two days ago to the wintery conditions found today. The group of ten hardy birders scoped from the north side parking lot along Hwy. 220. We found just five species of ducks in the small patch of open water. Trumpeter Swan, the most iconic bird associated with this lake, was sorely absent today.

Birding is tough in weather this cold! So, we moved on to a sheltered spot on the southwest side of Lily Lake. Just off Hwy. 220, at the

entrance to the Whirlpool factory, is a small parking lot and an antique blue footbridge which leads to a pedestrian trail along Mill Race canal. The trail edges a residential area, and it provided good shelter from the wind and a nice showing of resident birds along with a few migrants. Swamp and White-crowned Sparrows gave good looks and even sang. Becky spotted a Cooper's Hawk that perched long enough for satisfying looks all around. Six species of sparrows was our trade-off for the lack of birds normally found in this wetland habitat, in a non-drought year that is!

Our final stop was Amana Nature Trail at the intersection of Hwy. 6 and Hwy 151. Informational signs tell the story of the Native American fishing weir in the Iowa River and Indian mounds. We did not take time to hike the 3-mile loop trail, but took a short walk, garnering a few interesting species including a flock of Cedar Waxwings, Snow Geese flying south, and a soaring Red-tailed Hawk. We all agreed these woods would be a good spot to return to in any season, for a cross-country ski, a warbler walk, or a fall hike to the Iowa River overlook. (The fishing weir, formerly seen from that bluff, is now covered by an estimated five feet of silt in the river channel.)

Participants: Becky Benson, Barry Buschelman, Drew Dillman, Karen Disbrow (co-leader), Sandy Eads, Therese Guedon, Ramona McGurk, Linda Quinn (co-leader), Jane Shuttleworth, Nick Timmer.

Birds (30 species): Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, American Kestrel, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, House Sparrow, American Goldfinch, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Northern Cardinal.

– *Linda Quinn*

**November 17, Meeting.** Our presenter this month was Anna Buckardt Thomas, an Avian Ecologist for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. She gave an interesting and educational talk, “Understanding Migration in Iowa: Expanding the Motus Network.” The Motus Wildlife Tracking System is an international collaborative network of researchers that use automated radio telemetry to simultaneously track hundreds of individuals of numerous species of birds, bats, and insects. The first Motus tracking station in Iowa was installed in August 2021, and there are now about a dozen stations in the state. Iowa is an important flyway for migrating birds. One of the goals of the system is to find barriers that birds face in their life cycles and find solutions to those barriers. Anyone is able to look at the information gathered by going to the [motus.org](http://motus.org) website.

After the presentation, Linda Quinn mentioned upcoming events, including the Christmas Bird Count, to be held on Sunday, December 18. Linda cited our historical average number of species counted as 69, and that last year we saw 76 different species. You can see more information on the Iowa City Bird Club website under the special events tab at the top.

There will be a January feeder watch and social, thanks to Drew Dillman offering his home and feeders. There was a reminder that the next Bird Club meeting will be February 16, 2023. Karen Disbrow announced that there will be an Introduction to Birding course this spring.

Special bird sightings mentioned were Horned Larks and Snow Buntings. A good place to see these birds is along gravel roads, especially after a snowfall.

Twenty-five computers attended the meeting.  
 – Sandy Eads



**IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM**

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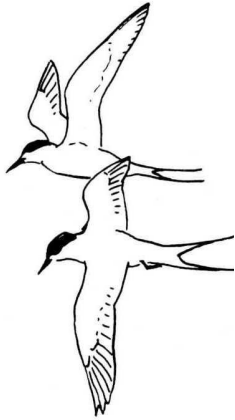
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## ***Eastern Iowa Birdwatch***

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## Iowa City Bird Club

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**Visit our web site** at [www.iowacitybirdclub.org](http://www.iowacitybirdclub.org). You may contact Webmaster Mark Graber at [markagraber@gmail.com](mailto:markagraber@gmail.com). Also visit Iowa City Bird Club on Facebook.

**Join our Google Group** to receive email announcements of upcoming meetings, field trips, and other events, and the email version of our newsletter. Email Linda Quinn at [quinnhenry@msn.com](mailto:quinnhenry@msn.com) to sign up.

**For general club information**, contact Rick Hollis at 319-665-3141 or [xiboia@earthlink.net](mailto:xiboia@earthlink.net).

**To lead or suggest a field trip**, contact Field Trip Coordinator Linda Quinn at 319-330-3328 or [quinnhenry@msn.com](mailto:quinnhenry@msn.com).

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