
Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

September 2023 • Volume 43 Number 2

Schedule

Field Trips are free and open to the public. Trips may be changed or cancelled due to inclement weather or other circumstances. Please check our website calendar for updates: <https://iowacitybirdclub.org/events/>. Updates will also be emailed to club members and posted on our Facebook page. **Meetings** are held on Zoom and/or in-person. A Zoom link will be posted on our website calendar for each meeting. For more information or questions email iowacitybc@gmail.com.

September 17, Sunday, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Hawk Watch at Stainbrook Preserve, located along Mehaffey Bridge Road just north of Sugar Bottom Recreation Area. Join us on the hill to watch for migrating raptors including Broad-winged Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper’s Hawk, and Red-tailed Hawk. Bring a lawn chair, and a spotting scope if you have one. Directions: park on the north shoulder pull-off just east of Mehaffey Bridge. Look for the Stainbrook Preserve sign and follow the short path up the hill. For a map, go here and scroll down to Hawk Watch:

<https://iowacitybirdclub.org/miscellaneous-maps/>.

September 21, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting – Zoom and In-Person at the Kent Park Conservation Education Center. Bird bander Mark Bowman will present “Passerine Molt and Birding by Feather.”

September 22-23, Friday-Saturday. Building Better Birders Workshop. This is the second workshop in this series, 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 avian research and education. Members from the Iowa City Bird Club will provide expertise on the bird hikes. Friday’s schedule includes a presentation on nocturnal raptors of Iowa and an evening owl prowl. Saturday’s schedule includes a morning bird hike, a presentation on diurnal raptors, and a live raptor program. For a complete schedule visit <https://buildingbetterbirders.com/>. Registration is required online or by phone at (319) 645-2315. To register online visit:

<https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Johnson/Park/JOHNSON-COUNTY-EDUCATION-PROGRAMS/Events/21789/Building-Better-Birders-Workshop-Series-September-2023-Workshop-Friday-Saturday.aspx>.

September 30, Saturday, 7:30 a.m. Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area for late warblers, sparrows, and other fall migrants. Meet leader Jason McCurdy at the HWMA parking lot on Swan Lake Road, across from Swan Lake (GPS coordinates 41.776081, -91.675009). We will carpool our way around the area. Expect moderate hiking at some viewing areas. Dress for the weather and potential wet and muddy trails. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. Ending time around noon.

October 8, Sunday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Iowa City: Get Outside! An Outdoor Recreation Festival at City Park. This family-friendly event is sponsored by Iowa City Parks and Recreation and will feature a range of activities from canoeing, bird walks, and archery to LARPing, plein-air painting, and yoga. Attendees will also be able to grab food from local food trucks and other prepared food vendors. ICBC will provide guided bird walks at 10:15, 11:15 and 1:00, and will host a table with information and a bird activity for kids. No admission fee or registration required. Drop in anytime from 10:00 – 2:00.

Schedule (continued)

October 19, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting – Zoom and In-Person at the Kent Park Conservation Education Center. Diane Crookham-Johnson, Oskaloosa birder and photographer, will present “Birding Port Aransas, Texas in February.” Learn about winter trips to the Texas Gulf Coast to watch Whooping Cranes in their natural habitat. Then discover so many other birds in this easy to navigate, friendly, and affordable birding area.

October 22, Sunday, 7:30 a.m. River Valley Wetland, and 10:30 a.m. Althea Sherman Swift Tower Tour. We’ll visit River Valley Wetland in Cedar County for a guided bird walk with Mark Brown. Target birds are late fall migrants such as Orange-crowned Warbler, Hermit Thrush, Fox Sparrow, Purple Finch, and Rusty Blackbird. Then we’ll head to Bickett-Rate Preserve for a 10:30 guided tour of Althea Sherman’s Chimney Swift Tower with Barbara and Mike Boyle. Return time is around 12:30 p.m. Options for meet-up: 7:30 near the gas pumps at the N. Dodge Hy-Vee parking lot (1125 N Dodge St., Iowa City) to carpool to the bird hike. For tour only, meet at 10:30 at Bickett-Rate Preserve (600 225th St., Tipton). Map to Bickett-Rate Preserve and property information here: [Bickett-Rate Preserve](#). Also check out this 7-minute *Iowa Outdoors* video featuring the swift tower: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moPnEidmFR4>.

November Field Trip for Waterfowl – To be announced via our email list and on our website at www.iowacitybirdclub.org.

November 16, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting – Zoom Only. Iowa City Bird Club member Maria Story will present “Antarctica Birding Trip, October 2022.”

December 17, Iowa City Christmas Bird Count. More details will be provided in our next newsletter.

Other Dates of Note

September 12, Tuesday, 8:30-10:30 a.m. Fall Bird Walk with Wendy at Wickiup Hill Learning Center. Take a hike with an avian biologist to look for fall migrants. Registration is required at <https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Linn/Events.aspx>.

September 22-24, Friday-Sunday. Iowa Ornithologists’ Union Fall Meeting at Hartman Reserve, Waterloo. Field trips will be held Saturday and Sunday mornings, with presentations Saturday afternoon and a banquet and keynote Saturday evening. The keynote speaker is author Jon Dunn, who will give an expert talk on shorebird identification. For more information and to register visit www.iowabirds.org.

Announcements

Iowa City Bird Club Merchandise is available online from Corporate Casuals. You can purchase shirts, hats, bags, and much more with our club’s name and logo. Link on our website here <https://iowacitybirdclub.org/merchandise/>.

Videos of Meeting Presentations are available on our website under the Videos tab here: <https://iowacitybirdclub.org/video/>. There are eighteen videos so far, sorted by topic, date, and

title. Topics range from birds (Owls, Trumpeter Swans) to travelogues (like Brazil) to science (MOTUS) and conservation. If you miss a meeting presentation, catch it here!

Spotting Scope Checkout: The club has two spotting scopes available for two-week checkout by members. Birders new to scope use can practice a new level of birding—scopes are especially helpful for viewing waterfowl and shorebirds. To request a loaner scope, contact us at icbc-help@googlegroups.com.

2023 Johnson County Spring Migration Count

Chris Caster

This year's Spring Migration Count was held on Saturday, May 13. It was a fantastic day to be out birding. Morning temperatures were in the low 60s, but it reached 77 in mid-afternoon. Light winds blew occasionally throughout the day, but there was no rain.

Winds had been from the south earlier in the week and given the paucity of migrants, it appeared that conditions were favorable for them to move north out of our area. Despite this, we managed a species total of 160, which is a bit over our average. We had 10 species of waterfowl, which was good given the late count date. Shorebirds were in short supply with only 12 species and low numbers. Twenty-four warbler species seemed surprisingly good.

As always, there were some great birds. Most notable were five Summer Tanagers. These were reported from Hanging Rock Woods, Kent Park, Hickory Hill Park, and Ryerson Woods. A Yellow-breasted Chat was vocal and easy to see at the intersection of Swan Lake Road and Babcock Access at Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area. A pair of Loggerhead Shrikes were tending nestlings at the pasture at 500th Road SE and Johnson-Muscatine Avenue. A Northern Mockingbird was at Sycamore Bottoms. A White-eyed Vireo was found behind Kate Wickham Elementary in Coralville. Many Bell's Vireos were found.

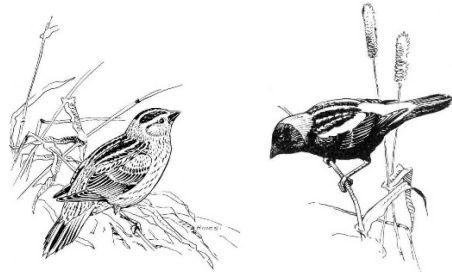
Cape May Warblers were found at Cedar River Crossing and at St. Joseph's Cemetery. Prothonotary Warblers can be difficult to find, but one was relocated at the end of Croy Road NW near the Highway 965 Iowa River crossing. Mourning Warbler and Olive-sided Flycatcher were along the Sugar Bottom Bike Trail. A Mute Swan and a Canvasback were on Swan Lake. Both Yellow-billed and Black-billed Cuckoos were at Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area. An Eastern Screech-Owl was roosting at Daryl Ropp's home north of Kalona.

There weren't many notable misses. Once again, we were unable to find a Great Horned Owl. And although Cerulean Warblers were known to be back, none were reported on the count. We couldn't manage to find a Pectoral Sandpiper or Sedge Wren either.

We enjoyed tremendous participation this year. Thanks to everyone for making it a great day.

Participants (40): Elizabeth Aubrey, Kyle and Lauren Belcher, Becky Benson, Nick Benson, Tom Bootsmiller, Paul, Ruth and Sarah Bortrager, Jayden Bowen, Mark Brown, Chris Caster, Brandon Caswell, Gerald Denning, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards, Linda Fisher, Peter Hansen, James Huntington, Ken Lowder, Terri Macey, Mark Madsen, Jamie McCoy, Jason McCurdy, Andrew Meiborg, Hank Miguel, Abner Miller, Mary Noble, Jason Paulios, Diana Pesek, Linda Quinn, Deb and Mark Rolfes, Daryl and Emily Ropp, Linda Rudolph, Jane Shuttleworth, Jean and Jim Wiese, Eliza Willis.

SEE SPECIES LIST ON NEXT PAGE



SPECIES LIST

Canada Goose	259	Great Crested Flycatcher	91	Savannah Sparrow	17
Mute Swan	1	Eastern Kingbird	95	Song Sparrow	78
Wood Duck	118	Olive-sided Flycatcher	1	Lincoln's Sparrow	6
Blue-winged Teal	38	Eastern Wood-Pewee	37	Swamp Sparrow	3
Gadwall	2	Acadian Flycatcher	5	Eastern Towhee	41
Mallard	66	Willow Flycatcher	8	Yellow-breasted Chat	1
Green-winged Teal	1	Least Flycatcher	10	Bobolink	20
Canvasback	1	Eastern Phoebe	15	Eastern Meadowlark	36
Lesser Scaup	4	White-eyed Vireo	1	Western Meadowlark	2
Hooded Merganser	3	Bell's Vireo	22	Orchard Oriole	26
Northern Bobwhite	3	Yellow-throated Vireo	50	Baltimore Oriole	174
Wild Turkey	12	Blue-headed Vireo	2	Red-winged Blackbird	1727
Ring-necked Pheasant	34	Philadelphia Vireo	2	Brown-headed Cowbird	129
Pied-billed Grebe	4	Warbling Vireo	74	Common Grackle	11
Rock Pigeon	19	Red-eyed Vireo	50	Ovenbird	5
Eurasian Collared-Dove	3	Loggerhead Shrike	4	Northern Waterthrush	7
Mourning Dove	70	Blue Jay	87	Golden-winged Warbler	5
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	5	American Crow	72	Blue-winged Warbler	1
Black-billed Cuckoo	4	Black-capped Chickadee	78	Black-and-white Warbler	15
Common Nighthawk	3	Tufted Titmouse	39	Prothonotary Warbler	1
Chimney Swift	25	Horned Lark	16	Tennessee Warbler	161
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	12	Bank Swallow	32	Nashville Warbler	13
Sora	3	Tree Swallow	68	Mourning Warbler	1
American Coot	1	N. Rough-winged Swallow	6	Common Yellowthroat	58
Sandhill Crane	7	Purple Martin	73	American Redstart	188
Killdeer	45	Barn Swallow	104	Cape May Warbler	2
Semipalmated Plover	9	Cliff Swallow	133	Northern Parula	18
Dunlin	15	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	3	Magnolia Warbler	13
Least Sandpiper	44	Cedar Waxwing	51	Bay-breasted Warbler	4
White-rumped Sandpiper	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	Blackburnian Warbler	4
Semipalmated Sandpiper	6	White-breasted Nuthatch	45	Yellow Warbler	73
Short-billed Dowitcher	16	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	38	Chestnut-sided Warbler	20
American Woodcock	6	House Wren	188	Blackpoll Warbler	20
Spotted Sandpiper	20	Marsh Wren	1	Palm Warbler	21
Solitary Sandpiper	3	Carolina Wren	2	Yellow-rumped Warbler	9
Lesser Yellowlegs	5	Gray Catbird	190	Yellow-throated Warbler	1
Greater Yellowlegs	1	Brown Thrasher	17	Black-throated Green Warbler	4
Ring-billed Gull	18	Northern Mockingbird	1	Wilson's Warbler	11
Double-crested Cormorant	38	European Starling	184	Summer Tanager	5
American White Pelican	470	Eastern Bluebird	21	Scarlet Tanager	32
Great Blue Heron	12	Veery	3	Northern Cardinal	218
Great Egret	2	Gray-cheeked Thrush	1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	93
Green Heron	1	Swainson's Thrush	25	Indigo Bunting	165
Turkey Vulture	80	Wood Thrush	14	Dickcissel	46
Osprey	3	American Robin	244		
Cooper's Hawk	5	House Sparrow	163		
Bald Eagle	12	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	44		
Red-tailed Hawk	9	House Finch	16		
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	American Goldfinch	185		
Barred Owl	6	Grasshopper Sparrow	8		
Belted Kingfisher	4	Lark Sparrow	13		
Red-headed Woodpecker	73	Chipping Sparrow	45		
Red-bellied Woodpecker	62	Clay-colored Sparrow	2		
Downy Woodpecker	41	Field Sparrow	30		
Hairy Woodpecker	13	White-crowned Sparrow	34		
Northern Flicker	12	White-throated Sparrow	7		
Pileated Woodpecker	8	Vesper Sparrow	1		
American Kestrel	5	Henslow's Sparrow	9		

2023 Hickory Hill Park Warbler Walks

Chris Edwards

This year’s Hickory Hill Park Warbler Walks were a resounding success. The participation was tremendous, and some terrific birds were found. Rotating leaders this year included Chris Edwards, Dean Hester, Jim Kettelkamp, Mark Madsen, Jamie McCoy, Jason Paulios, and Elliot Stalter, and Dan Rose filled in when needed. Warbler highlights this year included an “Audubon’s” Yellow-rumped Warbler (or possible intergrade with “Myrtle” Yellow-rumped Warbler) seen and photographed on May 17; Pine Warblers on multiple days for the second straight year; Cape May Warblers on three days; and Connecticut Warblers and Bay-breasted Warblers on six days each. But the rarest bird of all was an astounding Mottled Duck on Ralston Creek, first discovered on May 23 and then recorded on the Warbler Walk the next day. It was not on anyone’s list of expected species to show up in the park!

SPECIES	04/26/23	04/27/23	04/28/23	05/01/23	05/02/23	05/03/23	05/04/23	05/05/23	05/08/23	05/09/23	05/10/23	05/11/23	05/12/23	05/15/23	05/16/23	05/17/23	05/18/23	05/19/23	05/22/23	05/23/23	05/24/23	05/25/23	05/26/23	DAYS
Ovenbird									X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X		12
Worm-eating Warbler																								0
Louisiana Waterthrush																								0
Northern Waterthrush									X	X		X												3
Golden-winged Warbler								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X							10
Blue-winged Warbler							X	X	X	X	X					X								6
Black-and-white Warbler							X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	12
Prothonotary Warbler																								0
Tennessee Warbler									X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			13
Orange-crowned Warbler									X	X						X	X							4
Nashville Warbler							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X						11
Connecticut Warbler														X	X	X	X	X	X	X				6
Mourning Warbler																X	X	X	X		X			5
Kentucky Warbler																								0
Common Yellowthroat								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	16
Hooded Warbler																								0
American Redstart									X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	15
Cape May Warbler													X	X		X								3
Cerulean Warbler																								0
Northern Parula									X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X				10
Magnolia Warbler								X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						10
Bay-breasted Warbler													X	X	X	X	X	X						6
Blackburnian Warbler									X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X		X	11
Yellow Warbler									X					X	X	X								4
Chestnut-sided Warbler									X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	12
Blackpoll Warbler									X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X						8
Palm Warbler			X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X							12
Pine Warbler				X		X	X																	3
Yellow-rumped Warbler	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						18
Yellow-throated Warbler																								0
Black-throated Green Warbler									X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X						9
Canada Warbler																X	X	X	X		X	X		6
Wilson's Warbler												X	X	X	X	X	X	X						7
TOTAL WARBLER SPECIES	1	1	2	2	2	2	6	7	19	16	15	13	16	19	18	24	20	18	7	6	7	5	6	26

Field Trip and Meeting Reports

April 2, Lake Macbride Area. This Beginning Birder Trip to Lake Macbride was originally scheduled for Saturday, April 1, but the high winds and cold temperatures were no joke, so it was postponed to Sunday.

Fourteen birders met at the Solon Recreation and Nature Area on this brisk morning, including two first-time birders, Linda and Ron. Temperatures were cool with winds lighter than the previous day, making conditions better for both birders and the birds. The temperatures warmed throughout the morning, starting in the mid-30s and making their way up into the low 50s. Winds were in the teens, gusting at times into the 20-30 mph range.

At our meeting spot, our highlights (in addition to us birders) were Wild Turkeys displaying in a nearby field, while a Eurasian-collared Dove and a Cooper's Hawk were perched close by, allowing us good looks.

We spent the morning visiting many of the popular spots around Lake Macbride, pointing out additional areas that are good during other times of the year along the way. Three drivers (Sandy, Gerry, and Bryon) got us to and from each location safely and comfortably.

From Solon Recreation and Nature Area, we headed west out of Solon, making our first stop at the parking lot on Opie Avenue on the north shore of the north arm of the lake. We were treated to close views of 15 species of waterfowl, plus multiple Common Loons, a life bird for at least one birder!

The group then made a trek through the north unit of Lake Macbride State Park, with short stops at the Coralville Reservoir boat ramp and the Lake Macbride dam, which is home to one of Iowa's top waterfalls.

We then headed back through Solon and on to the sailboat shelter area, located on the south shore of the north arm. This spot gave us another good opportunity to set up the scopes and scan the water as well as stretch our legs in search of woodpeckers. We spotted Red-headed and Downy Woodpeckers and a Northern Flicker. Afterwards we went to the 200th Street hotspot which was fairly quiet, but always worth a quick look. The group finished up the morning at the boat ramp near the primitive campground on the south arm. Here, waterfowl continued to shine and a striking Northern Pintail provided a good closing to the trip.

The Common Loon was a life bird for Maria Story who commented, "How lucky that we got great looks at them!" Linda and Ron got a real treat seeing lots of new birds, especially the wide variety of waterfowl that cooperated by giving us up-close looks with the naked eye, through binoculars, and in the scopes.

Participants: Lakshmi Balasubramanian, Phyllis Black, Mary Bowler, Brian Broderick, Gerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Sandy Eads, Chris Edwards, Ron Flake, Linda Quinn, Deb and Mark Rolfes (leaders), Maria Story, Linda Williams.

Birds (54 species): Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Bufflehead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Wild Turkey, Pied-billed Grebe, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Common Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Tree Swallow, Golden-crowned Kinglet, White-

breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, House Sparrow, House Finch, Dark-eyed Junco, Song Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Northern Cardinal.

– *Deb and Mark Rolfes*

April 8, Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area.

We had a great morning for birding with clear skies and initially very little wind. Stops included Swan Lake, which had a wide variety of common waterfowl as well as yellowlegs and snipe. Round Pond had very little activity, and the Tundra Swan present a few days earlier was not seen. We also surveyed the Gadwall/Mallard Pond trail, Gun Club Ponds, Greencastle causeway, and sites along James Avenue.

Highlights included seeing the Osprey back on the nest on the cell tower near the intersection of James Avenue and Swan Lake Road; Tree Swallows harassing a kestrel; fairly close views of Sandhill Cranes; and a beautiful Eastern Bluebird pair in brilliant sunlight sitting on a Wood Duck house. Surprisingly lacking on this beautiful morning were significant numbers or variety of passerines, particularly sparrows. A total of 53 species were identified, with life birds for some including Wilson's Snipe, Rusty Blackbird and Ring-necked Pheasant.

Participants: Connie Aldridge, Phyllis Black, Matt Flyntz, Ray Hamilton, Emma Hodges, Mark Madsen, Jamie McCoy (leader), Jean and Jim Wiese, Harriet Woodford.

Birds (53 species): Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Ring-necked Pheasant, Pied-billed Grebe, Mourning Dove, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Kildeer, Wilson's Snipe, Lesser Yellowlegs, Greater Yellowlegs, Ring-billed Gull, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Barred Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied

Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Tree Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, Field Sparrow, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, Northern Cardinal.

– *Jamie McCoy*

April 20, Meeting. The April meeting was our first try at holding an in-person and Zoom meeting at the same time. Our speaker, Doug Harr, had not presented at a hybrid meeting before, but he did a superb job of it! His presentation, titled "Once Upon a Time... in Iowa," a history of wildlife and conservation in Iowa, was a very educational look at what has happened with our land and wildlife, and some people who have played an important role in caring for our resources. A recording of Doug's presentation can be viewed on the Iowa City Bird Club's website under videos.

Linda Quinn gave an update on upcoming events, including a special event at Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, the Spring Migration Count, and the Warbler Walks at Hickory Hill Park. There were 16 computers signed in and seven people in attendance at Kent Park Conservation Education Center.

– *Sandy Eads*

April 23, Hickory Hill Park. The group for this Beginning Birder Trip met at 8 a.m. at the Conklin Street parking area in Hickory Hill Park. It was a cold morning in the low 40s with a brisk breeze, and it didn't warm up much throughout the walk. We saw a total of thirty species. The best bird was a Blue-headed Vireo which we saw almost immediately at the parking lot. A few other migrants including Eastern Phoebe, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, and Yellow-rumped Warbler were seen. The walk was completed at 10:30 a.m.

Participants: Karen Disbrow, Charlotte Fairlie, Jonathan Lewallen, Mark Madsen (leader), Linda McHard, Richard Randell.

Birds (30 species): Canada Goose, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Barred Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue-headed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Cardinal.

– Mark Madsen

April 30, Special Event: Supporting Birds Near and Far. This event at Terry Trueblood Recreation Area was a partnership between the Iowa City Bird Club, Iowa City Parks and Recreation, and The Audubon Center at Riverlands, Missouri. The morning featured a bird walk followed by a presentation and social.

Due to high wind warnings and temps in the 40s, we began by scoping birds from inside the park lodge. Ten species including waterfowl and shorebirds were spotted from the huge windows overlooking the lake. Jason Paulios then led the bird walk for our group of 27 participants, with many new faces and beginning birders. The sidewalk along the west side of the lake was where we found most birds, catching some shelter from the wind. We puzzled over the vireo spotted high in a tree and settled on a first-of-year Warbling Vireo. Then we hiked into the wooded area west of the sidewalk, following narrow paths originally used by fat-tire bikes, but now embraced by birders for the varied habitat that includes woods, marsh, and riparian habitat. Downed trees and branch piles were evidence of forest maintenance work being done by the city. We saw a total of 32 species.

Part two of the event consisted of bird-friendly coffee and treats provided by Iowa City Parks and Recreation, which we enjoyed while listening to the presentation. Emily Connor showed slides and talked about the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, and the Audubon Center located there. The area includes 3,700 acres of public lands in partnership between Audubon and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. Their mission statement is “Connect + Protect = Education & Conservation.”

Emily explained how the Mississippi Flyway (in which Iowa is situated) is an area of critical need to support birds during migration. A recent Cornell Lab study showing a population decline of 3 billion birds in the past 50 years highlights this need. Examples include Yellow Warbler (25% decline), Common Yellowthroat (38% decline), Eastern Towhee (49% decline), and Eastern Meadowlark (89% decline). The migration path of various species can be examined at this link:

<https://explorer.audubon.org/en/home>.

Emily shared a quote from David Attenborough: “*Can a growing human population still leave space for wildlife?*” Ways for us to leave space for birds include this important one: planting native trees and forbs in our yards. To illustrate this, one study found 557 species of caterpillars using oak trees, compared to 5 species using non-native ginkgo trees. Additional ways to help include providing a water source in your yard, reducing pesticide and herbicide use, keeping cats indoors, becoming a community scientist (documenting nests, participating in bird counts, etc.), and buying bird-friendly products. Did you know late-night migrants become disoriented by lights? Easy fixes include turning off unneeded exterior lights and using low wattage/warm-colored bulbs. Window decals can prevent window strikes that usually result in head trauma or death to birds.

Supporting local birds was then covered by Linda Quinn, beginning with information about ICBC. Our dues are low, covering basic expenses, and

do not include conservation efforts. The club encourages members to support bird habitat with whatever means they choose. Linda listed many local organizations that build or restore bird habitat. Another big help is to advocate for an important bill in Congress, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (https://youtu.be/ppxCCfN_zSY). We can create the political will to pass this bill next session by contacting our U.S. Senators and Representatives.

Participants: Phyllis Black, Tom Charlton, Emily Connor (Missouri Audubon), Dawn Dillman, Drew Dillman, Judith Dillman, Karen Eldridge, Ann Gronstal, Emma Hodges, Brandon Johnson, Arda Lucas, Addison Massengill, Linda McHard, Martin Mueller, Rashmi Mueller, Jason Paulios (bird walk leader), Linda Quinn, Glen Schmitz, Nick Timmer, Jim Trepka, Judy Trepka, Carolyn Walling, Michelle Weigand (Iowa City Parks and Recreation), Linda Williams, Carol Winter-Tate, Jon Woodard.

Birds (32 species): Canada Goose, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Lesser Scaup, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Ring-billed Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Warbling Vireo, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, House Wren, European Starling, American Robin, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Cardinal.

– Linda Quinn

May 18, Meeting. Our speaker was Terry VanDeWalle, a Principal Biologist at Stantec Consulting Services Inc. He presented “Wind and Wildlife: An Overview of the Interactions of Wildlife with Wind Turbines.” We learned a lot about the measures taken to mitigate bat and bird fatalities around wind turbines, both before and after the turbines go up. I was surprised to learn

that Iowa is in the top three states in wind energy, and that 58% of all electricity produced in Iowa comes from renewables. We also learned that wind turbines are a much lower cause of mortality in birds than outdoor cats and building collisions, and they are a greater threat to bats than birds.

Karen Disbrow made some field trip date change announcements. Terri Macey announced she will be relocating to Colorado in the next few months, so this will be her last meeting as moderator. She will be greatly missed and will hopefully join us for meetings from her new location. Thanks for all your meeting help, Terri!

There were 12 people attending in-person, and 13 computers were signed in. Our next meeting will be in September – enjoy the summer break!

– Sandy Eads

May 27, Land of the Swamp White Oak. Our trip to this Nature Conservancy (TNC) property in Muscatine County was a great success. The weather was very cool and the wind stayed low the entire morning. Our group birded two access points of this nearly 4,500-acre preserve, with TNC Eastern Iowa Land Steward Dale Maxson explaining features of the property and the management plan for the land as we went.

Birds were plentiful with 51 species seen between the two sites. Most species were seen at the Maytag Access point (45), including the target bird of the trip, Prothonotary Warblers. We had three individual birds, with one singing on territory and giving great looks! Other nice birds included Brown Thrashers, over a dozen Red-headed Woodpeckers, Pileated Woodpecker, Green Heron, and a pair of Yellow-billed Cuckoos. A trip here in early May during peak migration would surely top 75 species. We also observed some of the interesting prairie plant species that have been found on the property.

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Barbra Beaumont, Gerry Denning, Sandy Eads, Dean Hester (leader), Thérèse Guédon, Leonard Hochstedler, Sarah Lawinger, Jonathan

Lewallen, Mark Madsen, Dale Maxson (host), Linda McHard, Abner Miller, Mark Miller, Linda Quinn, Ian Steller, Maria Story, Jean and Jim Wiese.

Birds (51 species): Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Great Blue Heron, Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Cliff Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, White-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, House Wren, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Eastern Meadowlark, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Prothonotary Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel.

– *Dean Hester*

June 11, Indiagrass Hills. A group of intrepid Iowa City birders braved pouring rain to gather for the club's annual outing to Indiagrass Hills in Iowa County. Fortunately, the rain stopped west of Iowa City and the rest of the morning was cool and comfortable, with lots of bird activity!

Immediately upon turning onto 250th Avenue, we were greeted by Bobolinks perched on the barbwire fence, ticking one of our top targets even before getting started. Only a few steps from the parking area we located Bobolinks, Henslow's Sparrows, and Grasshopper Sparrows. We were able to observe the interesting habitat preferences of these species, with Bobolinks and Grasshopper Sparrows preferring new growth brome while Henslow's Sparrows were observed in habitat containing last year's prairie grasses such as little bluestem.

Bell's Vireos made their presence known with near-constant singing, but refused to emerge from their dense, shrubby haunts to offer binocular views. Following up on last year's Yellow-breasted Chat, we crossed the stream and were treated to great views of a male Orchard Oriole, Willow Flycatchers, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Unfortunately, we did not locate a chat this year, which joined Sedge Wren as disappointing misses for this year's trip.

After returning to the parking area, with even more views of grassland specialists along the way, we ventured south along the road to look for Northern Mockingbird and Loggerhead Shrike. We were able to locate the shrikes on a distant fence line and were treated to extensive scope views of two adults feeding a young bird with both fresh prey and food items that had been stashed on the barbwire. As the shrikes disappeared over a hill, our attention was abruptly interrupted by two Northern Mockingbirds singing and aggressively patrolling their territory on the other side of the road. My understanding is that this location was further south than they had been found in previous years, but they seemed right at home in their new pasture.

With this, our satisfied group bid farewell to our grassland friends and headed back to Iowa City. (Apologies for misplacing the participant list.)

Birds (46 species) Ring-necked Pheasant, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Killdeer, Turkey Vulture, Red-headed Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Bell's Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Loggerhead Shrike, Blue Jay, American Crow, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, House Wren, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, American Robin, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Grasshopper Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Bobolink,

Eastern Meadowlark, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel.

– *Jayden Bowen*

July 22, Iowa City Butterfly Count. This year I was joined by nine other butterfly enthusiasts for the 25th annual Iowa City Butterfly Count, as part of the North American Butterfly Association 4th of July Butterfly Count program. For more information about the North American Butterfly Association, and its monitoring programs, visit www.naba.org. In addition to the Iowa City count, I also conduct two other annual counts, at Shimek State Forest and Yellow River State Forest/Effigy Mounds National Monument. As insect populations are in decline worldwide, including here in Eastern Iowa, the data we collect on these counts is of critical importance. We've already witnessed the local extirpation of one species, Byssus Skipper, and at least six species have completely vanished from Iowa in the past several decades.

The temperature for this count was 70-86° F, the wind was 3-15 mph from the W/SW, and it was sunny or mostly sunny all day. Our group visited Kent Park, Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area, Macbride Nature Recreation Area, Lake Macbride State Park, Sugar Bottom Recreation Area, and Turkey Creek Preserve. The theme of the day was abundant nectar sources nearly everywhere we went (especially mountain mint, wild bergamot, and vervain) but relatively few butterflies. I believe that was influenced by the very dry conditions in our area for most of the summer.

We found a total of 33 species and 707 individual butterflies in 12.35 party-hours. The 25-year count average is 33 species and 1173 individuals in 9.6 party-hours. So while the number of species was right on the average, the number of individuals was significantly below average, and was the tenth-lowest out of 25 years. The all-time lowest count was 367 individuals in 2006, and the all-time highest was 2,711 in 2008.

Since the party-hours (total hours spent in the field by all parties) has varied over the years, especially in the last two years when we've fielded multiple parties, a better year-to-year comparison is the number of butterflies seen per party-hour. This year that number was 57 butterflies per party-hour, compared to the average of 122 butterflies per party-hour. It was the lowest since 2009 and tied for the sixth-lowest in 25 years. So there really were fewer butterflies around this year. But it wasn't the worst year – that was 37 butterflies per hour in 2007. And that was followed the very next year by the all-time high of 285 butterflies per hour in 2008. So a low count this year doesn't necessarily mean a low count next year.

As expected, a lot of individual species counts were below average this year: Black Swallowtail, Cabbage White, Clouded Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Little Yellow, Eastern Tailed-Blue, Summer Azure, Red Admiral, Viceroy, Common Wood-Nymph, Least Skipper, and Tawny-edged Skipper. Two relatively common species, Painted Lady and Hackberry Emperor, were missed entirely. Species significantly above average were Giant Swallowtail, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Great Spangled Fritillary, Eastern Comma, and Fiery Skipper. Monarch numbers were about average, but far below the rebound years of 2018-2021.

On the bright side, we did find three rarities for this count: a Harvester at Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area (first count record), a Striped Hairstreak at Kent Park (second count record), and a Horace's Duskywing at Macbride Nature Recreation Area (third count record). We also found three Dion Skippers, an Iowa species of special concern.

Thank you to everyone who has helped me on these counts, both this year and over the past 25 years!

Participants: Connie Aldridge, Jim Boles, Mark Brown, Brandon Caswell, Chris Edwards

leader), Elizabeth Hill, Mark Madsen, Frank Olsen, Deb and Mark Rolfes.

Butterflies: Black Swallowtail 5, Giant Swallowtail 8, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 27, Cabbage White 137, Clouded Sulphur 33, Orange Sulphur 101, Little Yellow 22, Harvester 1, Bronze Copper 4, Striped Hairstreak 1, Eastern Tailed-Blue 38, Summer Azure 65, Great Spangled Fritillary 59, Meadow Fritillary 9, Pearl Crescent 19, Question Mark 1, Eastern Comma 11, American Lady 1, Red Admiral 12, Common Buckeye 17, Red-spotted Purple 4, Viceroy 7, Common Wood-Nymph 6, Monarch 45, Silver-spotted Skipper 23, Horace's Duskywing 1, Common Sootywing 4, Least Skipper 8, Fiery Skipper 24, Peck's Skipper 7, Tawny-edged Skipper 1, Sachem 3, Dion Skipper 3.

– Chris Edwards

July 30, Club Picnic at Lake Macbride State Park. Our club picnic was held in a beautiful setting overlooking the north arm of Lake Macbride. A park shelter provided shade and tables for gathering on this warm but not hot day. Thirteen people enjoyed trading stories about birding adventures and our favorite birds, and potluck food. The life of the party though was a Limpkin! This Florida species was sighted just the day before on the south arm of Lake Macbride near 200th Street. This was Johnson County's first ever Limpkin, and the seventh to appear in the state, all within the last two years. So of course, that hotspot was our destination for birding after dinner. The Limpkin was a lifer for half of the group! We were fascinated watching the bird foraging in the water for large mussels. It used its long bill to hammer and pry open the shell of a mussel and then devour the large hunk of meat inside. By the looks of the shoreline, littered with open mussel shells, this bird was getting its fill. All of us left supremely satisfied seeing Johnson County's first Limpkin.

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Phyllis Black, Karen Disbrow, Mark and Sandy Eads, Lois Hughes, Merle Ihne, Jonathan Lewallen, Connie

Peterson, Linda Quinn, Richard Randell, Linda Rudolph, Jane Shuttleworth.

Birds (16 species): Wood Duck, Mallard, Mourning Dove, Limpkin, Killdeer, Pectoral Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Turkey Vulture, Red-headed Woodpecker, Eastern Kingbird, Black-capped Chickadee, Gray Catbird, American Goldfinch, Song Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat, Indigo Bunting.

– Linda Quinn

Book Review Doug Harr

(Originally published in the Iowa Audubon Newsletter.)

Tending Iowa's Land: Pathways to a Sustainable Future, by Cornelia Mutel, Editor. University of Iowa Press, Iowa City, Iowa, 2022. 302pp.

Over the past three decades, Iowa City author Cornelia Mutel has written several excellent books about Iowa's natural resources, climate change and more. In her newest book reviewed here, she is the editor of chapters written by 27 Iowans, all with various backgrounds in farming and our environment. The book is divided into four sections, about Iowa's soil, water, air and life (biodiversity of flora and fauna).

Cornelia first opens with a general introduction and her own brief history of Iowa's life and land. Then she writes a prelude to begin each of the four sections, briefly explaining what the contributing section writers will discuss about soil, water, air and life. What is interesting was Cornelia's request for each contributor to write in their own storytelling fashion, which they do. Those writers alternate first with a chapter typically based upon careers as environmental engineers, wildlife biologists, university professors and more. They write in similar styles, easy to read for almost anyone, while still focusing upon the typically scientific practices of their individual jobs, what they learned about

how Iowa’s environment has been badly damaged especially due to intensified monotypic agriculture since WWII, and how Iowa farmers must now move into “regenerative agriculture” as quickly as possible.

Each of these somewhat more science-based chapters is followed by a personal story from another Iowan having a diversified old farm or natural habitat in their life’s background. This allows each to explain what they learned about Iowa’s land, water, air and wild creatures as they grew up in or worked outdoors. Every contributing writer in Cornelia’s entire book wants their word spread to Iowans. It is what we all now should know about work being done by concerned landowners, environmental organizations, government agricultural agencies, and even individual volunteers to help reclaim, restore, and regenerate our soil, water, air, and biodiversity. Contributor Pauline Drobney wrote, “It is easy to feel helpless when confronted by the staggering loss of Iowa’s native landscape, but we have tremendous power to help reverse that loss.”

The essential purpose of Cornelia Mutel’s new book is exactly that many Iowans now have this knowledge and power, so we understand what has to be done and how rapidly we must all join in restoring and properly managing our lands and environment. *Tending Iowa’s Land* is an absolutely inspiring work that is a must-read for all Iowans.



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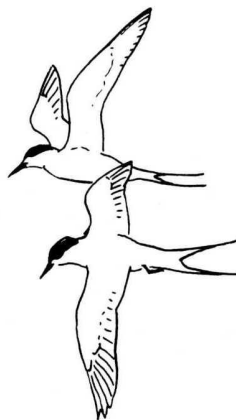
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To lead or suggest a field trip, contact Field Trip Coordinator Linda Quinn at 319-330-3328 or quinnhenry@msn.com.

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