
Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

December 2024 • Volume 44 Number 3

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 iowacitybirdclub@gmail.com.

December 15, Sunday, Iowa City Christmas Bird Count. Join us for a holiday tradition – the world’s longest-running citizen science project! You can participate by joining a group at a local park or preserve, or by counting the birds in your own backyard. To sign up, contact Chris Edwards at credwards@aol.com or (319) 430-4732 as soon as possible, and no later than December 11. See page 2 for more information.

January 19, Sunday, 9–11 a.m. Bird Feeder Watch and Social with the Shuttleworth and Trachsel families at 10 Ridgewood Lane (Jane Shuttleworth) and 6 Ridgewood Lane (Amy and Ben Trachsel) in Iowa City. The sisters’ side-by-side properties overlook Shimek Ravine (a Bur Oak Land Trust property) which draws five species of woodpeckers and other winter birds. Drop in at both houses to chat with our hosts and fellow birders. It’s a roving party! Coffee and juice will be provided; please bring a party snack to share. At 11 a.m. join an optional hike in [Shimek Ravine](#), including a tour of how the neighborhood is removing invasive species. Note the trail is steep. Parking: in their driveways or on the cul-de-sac of Ridgewood Lane.

February 9, Sunday, 8 a.m. Quad Cities and 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 at the Highlander Hotel parking lot, 2525 Highlander Place, Iowa City.

February 20, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting – Zoom Only. We will show the film *Fluddles*, a follow-up to *The Magic Stump* that chronicles the wildlife of agricultural wetlands of Illinois. Sometimes simply described as “big puddles,” fluddles appear in the spring and fall and provide habitat and forage for a diversity of waterfowl and shorebird species.

March 8, 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. Fifty-five species were seen in 2024! This is an all-day trip led by Burlington local expert birder Chuck Fuller. Walking is usually short distance from frequent stops at locks and dams, riverside parks, and other hotspots. We will stop for lunch at a nearby restaurant. Dress for cold and wind, and bring a scope if you have one. To carpool, meet Karen Disbrow at 6:30 a.m. at the front parking lot of the Johnson County Fairgrounds, 3109 Old Highway 218 South, Iowa City. Alternately, you can meet us at 8 a.m. at the Port of Burlington, 400 Front Street, Burlington.

March 15, Saturday, 7:30 a.m. Cone Marsh in Louisa County for Snow Geese, Sandhill Cranes, and migrating waterfowl with leader Fawn Bowden. We'll stop at several points around the marsh and take a walk on the dike. Dress for cold, wind, and wet or muddy trails. Bring a scope if you have one. Return time is around noon. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the parking lot of Fareway Grocery, 2765 Commerce Dr, Iowa City. Carpooling is encouraged. Or meet at 8 a.m. in Lone Tree, at Casey's, 302 N Devoe Street.

March 20, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting – In-Person and Zoom at the Environmental Education Center, 2401 Scott Blvd. SE, Iowa City. Club member Linda Rudolph will present "Amazing Birds of East Africa." Linda has enjoyed travelling all her life, and visited Africa for the third time in spring of 2024. She will cover the birds and mammals seen on her trip.

March 23, Sunday, 8 a.m. Wiese Slough Wildlife Area in Muscatine County. Target species include ducks, geese, Trumpeter Swan, and returning songbirds. We will drive to several viewing locations within the wildlife area and take short hikes to find passerines. Meet leader Linda Quinn at 8 a.m. to carpool from south side of Iowa City at the parking lot of Fareway Grocery, 2765 Commerce Dr, Iowa City. Or meet on site at 8:30 at the north boat ramp of Wiese Slough, 1398 Mohawk Ave., Atalissa. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. We'll finish by noon.

Other Dates of Interest

January 10–12, Friday-Sunday. Quad Cities Bald Eagle Days at the QCCA Expo Center, 2621 Fourth Avenue, Rock Island. More information at <https://www.qccaexpocenter.com/baldeagledays>.

January 18, Saturday. Bald Eagle Days at the Muscatine Riverfront. More information at <https://muscatinecountyconservation.com/>.

May 16–18, Friday-Sunday. Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Ornithologists' Unions Joint Meeting in South Sioux City, NE. Birders from Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota are joining together for a great weekend of birding, learning, and socializing. More details to come at <https://iowabirds.org/IOU/Meetings/NextMeeting.aspx>.

Christmas Bird Count Sunday, December 15

This year's Iowa City Christmas Bird Count will be held Sunday, December 15. We need field participants to cover local parks, wildlife areas, etc., as well as feeder watchers to count birds in their own yards. The count circle includes most of the Coralville Reservoir, Lake Macbride, Solon, North Liberty, Tiffin, Coralville, and the northwest portion of Iowa City.

If you wish to be a field participant, you will be assigned to a small group with an experienced leader in an assigned territory. Some groups look

for owls before dawn. You can participate for part or all of the day. We will have a mid-day compilation at noon in Room N1/N2 at the North Liberty Community Center, 520 W Cherry Street, North Liberty. Bring your own lunch.

To participate, contact Chris Edwards by email at credwards@aol.com or phone at (319) 430-4732 as soon as possible, and no later than Wednesday, December 11. If you wish to be a feeder watcher, please send your address so we can verify that your home is in the count circle. If you know others who may want to participate as feeder watchers, please share this information with them.

Exciting Changes to Beginner Birding Course

Changes are in store for next year's Introduction to Birding Course! But first let us say goodbye and thank you to Karen Disbrow, after 20+ years of teaching the course! Karen gives much credit to Rick Hollis and Jim Scheib for helping with instruction for the bulk of those years. It was truly a group effort inspired by the goal of building ICBC membership and establishing a presence within our community. Karen, explaining why she kept up this endeavor so many years, said "I enjoyed sharing my enthusiasm for birding, especially with newcomers. Turning them on to where and how to bird is a whole lot of fun."

What's new? ICBC is pleased to announce our new instructor, Linda Rudolph! She is an active birder and bird photographer in places both near and far, who enjoys sharing knowledge about birds. Linda will use visual instruction to cover the basic skills of birding: identification of local species, where to find birds, and how to use technology to boost your birding. Check out Linda's profile on eBird for photos and places she has birded: <https://ebird.org/profile/Mjg3NzQz/world>.

When? March 4 – April 5, 2025. The Introduction to Birding course consists of five evening classes and five weekend field trips to local birding hot spots. Classes are on Tuesdays from 7:00-8:00 p.m. in Iowa City at the Environmental Education Center, 2401 Scott Boulevard SE. Field trips are on Saturday mornings to area birding hotspots. No registration is required.

What's different about field trips? Our new focus is to personalize field trips for beginner needs and to provide loaner binoculars. Linda will lead each of the five field trips which will be only for beginning birders – both current and past participants in the birding course. Instruction in the field is possible with a smaller group size, where individual attention can be given on how to use binoculars and how to spot and identify

birds. The smaller group size will also help build relationships and springboard these new birders into our club of so many members (122 dues-paying members, 261 on Google Groups, 1.4K on Facebook!) But not to worry, we will have a full slate of spring field trips for everyone! See the full course schedule on page 6 for details on class topics and trip locations.

– Linda Quinn

BirdingHotspots.org

The website [BirdingHotspots.org](https://birdinghotspots.org) collects tips for birding from birders, plus descriptions and maps of eBird hotspots and other websites. Click on the state list to find top hotspots or search the map. The list for Iowa has expanded to 1,708 hotspots, thanks to efforts by Ann Johnson of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union and many other birders throughout the state. What a great resource when traveling to another state! My go-to travel resource has been hotspots through eBird, but that can be a bit overwhelming. How to know where to go within a given hotspot? Well, Birding Hotspots gives all sorts of practical tips.

Take Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area for example. Our favorite local hotspot is 10 miles long with 14,000 acres. Just how does a birder access this place? Here you'll find features like a list of birds of interest and suggestions for viewing locations. You'll find habitat descriptions, photos, maps. and links to the eBird species list:

<https://birdinghotspots.org/hotspot/L250656>

Statewide, this helpful resource has been a group effort. Some of the birders helping with nearby hotspots include Linda Rudolph, Tony Moline, Sarah Bissell, and Karl Fliris. But it's not a done deal and your help is welcome! Things change and some hotspots are incomplete. An easy click of a button allows for uploading photos and/or suggesting edits, at whatever hotspot you're visiting. Be part of a good thing! And look for hotspot links in your next field trip email from ICBC.

– Linda Quinn

New Johnson County Big Day Record – May 11, 2024

Brandon Caswell

On May 10, 2024, a group of three intrepid birders, Jayden Bowen, Mark Brown, and Brandon Caswell, were planning how they would conduct their route on the annual Johnson County Spring Migration Count on the following day. This count also coincided with the eBird Global Big Day, an annual celebration of birding. Jayden must have developed an “itch” about the possibilities for the following day. He suggested to Mark and Brandon that the group should take a shot at the Johnson County Big Day record. This record of 143 species had been previously set on May 10, 2018 by birders Diana Pesek, James Huntington, Mark Brown, and Brandon Caswell.

Typically on the Spring Migration Count, in the morning Mark has birded a territory including Terry Trueblood Recreation Area and Sycamore Bottoms, followed by an afternoon of filling in holes for the count list, which has often consisted of birding the far southeastern reaches of the county where birds like Western Meadowlark and Upland Sandpiper can sometimes be found. The group eventually decided that they would attempt the Big Day, while remaining loyal to Mark’s historic route. Luckily, Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, with its diverse habitat, particularly shorebird habitat, proved to be a great catalyst into what would be a very fun and fruitful day of birding.

On the morning of the count, predawn birding got off to a great start, with a tick of Eastern Screech-Owl at a traditional location south of Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area. This was followed by a solid run into early dawn at Hawkeye, picking up multiple displaying American Woodcocks and a calling male Northern Bobwhite. Next, a short stop was made at Squire Point to pick up passerines during the dawn chorus. Then it was on to Trueblood.

While the most logical strategy may have been to be at the best traditional warbler spots at sunrise, Trueblood’s ample shorebird habitat proved to be too great a lure. A solid dozen shorebird species were picked up there. And over two hours and fifteen minutes, 80 species were recorded at Trueblood, making it the most productive spot of the day.

After leaving there, a short stop was made at Ryerson’s Woods State Preserve for more passerines. The productive morning made it seem like the possibility of a record was not yet off the table. But a trip over to the Johnson-Muscatine Avenue/500th Street SE pastures was not as productive as hoped. There were no signs of Northern Mockingbird nor Loggerhead Shrike. The year previous, Mark and Jayden had found an active shrike nest right off the road!

After another brief late-morning check of Trueblood, it was on to Sycamore Bottoms. Waterfowl were hard to come by on the count, as most of the *Aythya* species had cleared out of the county in previous weeks. But a very surprising Ring-necked Duck at Sycamore Bottoms was one of the highlight ducks discovered. Brandon had cut downhill through a fortress of thistles, eventually seeing the bird, then ran back through the thistles to the group, where everyone was able to get better looks from a more comfortable vantage point. A non-bird highlight at Sycamore was a patch of very large morels, picked up by Jayden and later shared with the group. Jayden made a delicious pasta sauce with his portion.

A mid-afternoon stop at Hickory Hill Park was followed by a trip to Cedar River Crossing. On the way there, the group finally found its first Dickcissel along Wapsi Avenue NE. At CRC, a Greater Yellowlegs was tallied, and a great spot by Mark produced an American Pipit for the list. Blue Grosbeak was a hopeful tick there, but checking too late in the day may have played a factor in missing it.

After 5 p.m. it was on to Lake Macbride State Park and Macbride Nature Recreation Area. It is important to have a robust list of warblers by the end of a big day. The group had picked up a Louisiana Waterthrush at Squire Point, but only seven warbler species were found at Trueblood, not as many as have been seen in previous years. But the stop at Macbride Nature Recreation Area landed the group warbler additions of Ovenbird, Northern Parula, and Yellow-throated Warbler, along with another important pickup, Gray-cheeked Thrush. Anglers Point Road NE brought another key addition of White-eyed Vireo, a bird that has likely nested at the location the past few years. Alas, the trio fell short of the “vireo slam”, missing Philadelphia.

By 7 p.m. it was back to Hawkeye WMA. There they tallied six Black-necked Stilts, Caspian Tern, and Sora to bring them close to the Big Day record. Not long before sunset, the group was cheerful to all get on a Swamp Sparrow at Round Pond. At the time, they thought this was the bird that tied the Big Day record of 143, and that seeing or hearing a Great Horned Owl would be an easy task to break the record. The trio planned a hike to Mallard and Gadwall ponds with hopes of ticking off the owl. Right before the hike commenced, while Jayden and Mark were putting on bug spray, Brandon saw a Great Horned Owl, with a small mammal in its talons, fly across the road to the east. But because the group was following ABA Big Day rules, at least two participants needed to either see or hear the owl, so it could not be counted. The hike ended up being a great time, but no owls were heard or seen. Brandon, who had not put on bug spray, got plenty of mosquito bites! A few more desperate attempts at calling a Great Horned came up empty-handed.

Sitting at a McDonalds in North Liberty at 11 p.m., the trio may have felt a tad defeated about not breaking the record. Biggest misses of the day were the aforementioned Great Horned Owl, Northern Mockingbird, and Loggerhead Shrike. Neither Green Heron nor Great Egret were seen. Only one tern species was turned up over the entire day. A dozen species of native sparrows were spotted, but that bird group could have provided a few more ticks. But needless to say, it had been an excellent day of birding and fellowship. And at the end of the day, the thought of a record was not the true reason this group had assembled.

However... upon a recount the next morning, Mark informed the group they had neglected to include an early eBird list in the count total. The Swamp Sparrow, the final tick of the day, was actually #145! They had beaten the record by two species! Going for birding records is a fun thing and records are made to be broken. This record will undoubtedly be beaten someday, when the stars really align for another group of friends. Or just maybe, this group or some combination might take another crack at it later on down the road of life.

eBird report and checklists from the Big Day: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/238003?view=checklists>.

Time to Renew

It's time to renew your membership for 2025. Our annual membership dues per household are \$15 for a print subscription or \$10 for a digital subscription. 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 Gerry Denning at geraldlddenning50@gmail.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 “Iowa City Bird Club Inc.” to Gerry Denning, 1146 Oakes Dr., Iowa City, IA 52245. Or go to our website and pay with PayPal, Venmo, or debit/credit card.



Introduction to Birding Course March 4 – April 5, 2025 Environmental Education Center 2401 Scott Blvd. SE, Iowa City

The Iowa City Bird Club is offering an Introduction to Birding Course. There will be five Tuesday evening classes and five Saturday morning field trips to area birding hot spots. Tuesday classes are from 7 – 8 p.m. at the Environmental Education Center, 2401 Scott Blvd. SE, Iowa City. The cost is free for ICBC members or \$5 per class for non-members, or join our membership on the first night of class for \$10 (digital newsletter subscription) or \$15 (print/mailed newsletter subscription). Participants may attend all sessions or pick one or more to attend. No registration is required! Loaner binoculars will be provided for field trips.

Trips may be cancelled due to inclement weather. Please check our website at iowacitybirdclub.org/events/ for updates. Updates will also be emailed to club members and posted on our Facebook page. For more information, contact iowacitybirdclub@gmail.com.

Tuesday, March 4, 7–8 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING I CLASS. This will include field identification of birds, field guides, and equipment every birder needs.

Saturday, March 8, 8 a.m.–12 p.m. Field Trip to CONE MARSH. Beginning birder trip for current or past participants in the Introduction to Birding Course. 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 Fareway parking lot, 2765 Commerce Dr., Iowa City. From here we carpool to Cone Marsh, 3rd St., Conesville.

Tuesday, March 11, 7–8 p.m. BASICS OF BIRDING II CLASS, including e-Bird, apps, and birdsong ID.

Saturday, March 15, 8 a.m.–12 p.m. Field Trip to KENT PARK. Beginning birder trip for current or past participants in the Introduction to Birding Course. We will explore the trails in this park looking for migrating songbirds and resident woodland birds. Meet at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park, 2048 Hwy. 6 NW, Oxford.

Tuesday, March 18, 7–8 p.m. BIRDING IN JOHNSON COUNTY CLASS. Covering eBird alerts, hotspots, recent photos and sightings, and Iowa City Bird Club field trips.

Saturday, March 22, 8 a.m.–12 p.m. Field Trip to LAKE MACBRIDE. Beginning birder trip for current or past participants in the Introduction to Birding Course. Targets are water birds and other early spring migrants. We'll stop at various points around the lake. Meet at the North Liberty Community Center, 520 W Cherry St., on the north side of the building, and carpool from there. If you are familiar with Lake Macbride and feel comfortable, you can meet up with us at the Sailboat Shelter 1 parking lot in Lake Macbride State Park around 8:20 a.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 7–8 p.m. BACKYARD AND FEEDER BIRDS CLASS. 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, March 29, 8 a.m.–12 p.m. Field Trip to HAWKEYE WILDLIFE AREA. Beginning birder trip for current or past participants in the Introduction to Birding Course. 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 (GPS coordinates 41.776081, 91.675009).

Tuesday, April 1, 7–8 p.m. BIRDS OF IOWA CLASS. Summer residents that nest here and birds that migrate through Iowa in spring and fall.

Saturday, April 5, 8 a.m.–12 p.m. Field Trip to WATERWORKS PRAIRIE PARK. Beginning birder trip for current or past participants in the Introduction to Birding Course. Visit this Iowa City park with great trails for woodland, prairie, and wetland species. Meet at Waterworks Prairie Park, 2875 Dubuque St. NE, Iowa City.

Field Trip and Meeting Reports

September 8, Wanatee Park. We visited this Linn County park with varied habitat, from open meadows to brushy creek bottoms to mature timber and a small pond. The morning was sunny and cool. We met at the main parking lot, and started by checking out the wetland. We enjoyed good views of a Sora, which was a life bird for several people. We then carpoled up to the top of the hill and walked down the west ravine trail. A small stream runs down through the ravine and the jewelweed was plentiful. We learned how to “pop” the jewelweed seed pods – when they are almost ripe, they swell and will pop with a little bit a pressure. The hummingbirds love this plant and we found several groups of them as we walked down the ravine. We even tripped the eBird filter, because we saw so many of them. We finally found some warblers about three-fourths of the way down the ravine. We also enjoyed finally finding and getting a look at a Yellow-throated Vireo. The Red-headed Woodpeckers were also plentiful along this trail. The trees in this area had a lot of damage from the 2020 derecho, which of course attracts the woodpeckers.

Participants: Phyllis Black, Sandy Eads, Therese Guedon, Jonathan Lewallen, Jane Nesmith, Robie Nesmith, Linda Quinn, Julie Reuter, Andy Scanlon, Mikayla Scanlon, John Tollefson, Wendy VanDeWalle (leader), Jean Wiese, Jim Wiese.

Birds (42 species): Canada Goose, Mallard, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Sora, Killdeer, Solitary Sandpiper, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Barn Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Sedge Wren, Gray Catbird, Eastern Bluebird, American

Robin, House Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Black-and-white Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Northern Cardinal.

– Wendy VanDeWalle

September 26, Meeting. We had a great speaker, Jim Durbin, who made valiant, multiple efforts to present to the bird club! On our regularly scheduled meeting date, September 19, the building was locked and Jim could not present. So we rescheduled the meeting, and one week later everything went well. Jim gave an informative presentation on “20+ Years of Documenting Insects in Iowa.” Jim retired from Rockwell Collins in 2006, and in 2007 he created the website that eventually became insectsofiowa.org, a repository of data and photographs of insects and other species submitted by hundreds of people. During Jim’s talk, I learned that some insects, like some birds, can have spring and fall variances in coloring! Check out the video from the September meeting to learn more!

Prior to Jim’s presentation, we spoke about Johnson County’s \$30 million Conservation Bond referendum that will be on the November ballot. In 2008 there was a similar referendum for \$20 million which has funded almost 12,000 acres of land acquisition. Since 2008, other counties have proposed similar referendums for conservation purposes. The value for conservation is vastly important, so consider voting “yes” for the referendum that will be found on the back of the ballot. [See the note on page 11.]

Twelve people attended the meeting in person, with nine computers tuned in.

– Sandy Eads

September 29, Hawk Watch. Our annual hawk watch at Stainbrook Preserve near the Coralville Reservoir was originally scheduled for September 22, but postponed one week due to rain. It was a pleasant day to be outside, with

sunny skies, a moderate NE breeze, and temperatures ranging from 72°-82° F during the event.

But as is often the case, our timing for the raptor migration wasn't great. During the first half-hour we saw large kettles of Turkey Vultures rising up over the Macbride Nature Recreation Area peninsula, but for the rest of the count only a relative trickle of raptors passed by. Since they were so few and far between, each sighting was a cause for excitement.

We often see some migrating Franklin's Gulls on the hawk watch, but this year we saw huge numbers. Linda Rudolph's final tally for eBird was 1,740! It was fun to observe their kettling behavior, and we discussed the differences in their shape, size, color, and flight style compared to the Ring-billed Gulls. We saw a relatively modest number of American White Pelicans this year, but it's always fun to observe them in flight. As usual there were also other birds that perched around the clearing, or were heard in the woods, that kept us occupied.

We had a really good turnout of birders this year, and it was fun catching up with everyone after the summer. And we owe special thanks to Gerry Denning, Ben Rowold, and Barry Buschelman, who did extensive trimming on the path and on the hilltop so the rest of us didn't have to fight through brambles and tall grass to get there.

Linda Rudolph's eBird checklists with photos:

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S196901771>

<https://ebird.org/checklist/S196923873>

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Gerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Chris Edwards (leader), Julie Englander, Tony Gentile, Rick Hollis, Pat Kieffer, Jeanette Love, Jenny Hollis Miller, Julius Miller, Linda Quinn, Richard Randall, Linda Rudolph, Jim Walters, Jean and Jim Wiese.

Raptors (6 species, 90 individuals): Turkey Vulture 66, Osprey 1, Bald Eagle 4, Sharp-

shinned Hawk 7, *Accipiter* sp. 2, Broad-winged Hawk 6, Red-tailed Hawk 4.

Other Birds (29 species): Canada Goose, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Franklin's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-billed Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Tree Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Gray Catbird, European Starling, American Robin, House Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Eastern Towhee, Tennessee Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Cardinal.

– Chris Edwards

October 6, Wings and Wild Things Festival at F. W. Kent Park. This new event was a celebration of Iowa's natural world, full of hands-on fun and wonder including all of this and so much more: live raptor meet-and-greet, native plant sale, educational speakers, fishing, reptile demonstrations, and food trucks. Attendance was greater than anticipated with 1,800 people! Parking lots were overflowing and people were shuttled by tractor/hayrack to and from the hub of activities in and around the Conservation Education Center. How did all this happen? Organizer Michelle Weigand, Johnson County Conservation Naturalist, masterminded this event with a little help from 18 local organizations.

The Iowa City Bird Club helped with many birding activities, naturally! We took small groups on bird hikes, complete with loaner binoculars and checklists. We conducted a hawk watch on the hilltop at nearby Twin Fawns Pavilion. We staffed interactive stations that included a bird skull matching game, make-and-take window-strike decals, and a foraging techniques game. Of course, we saw birds, talked birds, and had an all-around busy time introducing kids and adults to the wonder of birds.

Volunteers: Elizabeth Aubrey, Neil Bernstein, Karen Disbrow, Constance Korol, Ramona McGurk, Chris Olney, Linda Quinn, Mark and Deb Rolfes, Linda Rudolph, Jean and Jim Weise.

Birds (24 species): Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Rock Pigeon, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Broad-winged Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, American Goldfinch, White-throated Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Yellow-rumped Warbler.

– *Linda Quinn*

October 17, Meeting. Linda Rudolph was scheduled to present “Amazing Birds of East Africa,” but a family emergency necessitated a last-minute change. Mark Bowman’s name came to mind immediately, and fortunately he was available. He gave us an update on his American Kestrel conservation work. He had previously presented to the club by Zoom on this topic in 2020, but we were not recording our meetings at that time so many people may have missed his talk. Mark is a licensed bird bander and has many stories to tell of working with kestrels. Mark’s partner in these efforts is Don Lund, and additionally Mark worked with Dallas County Naturalist Mike Havlik banding kestrels from 2016-2018. This is a fascinating program that will entertain as well as enlighten you on the current conservation status of this diminutive raptor. If you missed it, I encourage you to check out the video on our website.

Linda Rudolph’s talk on East Africa as been rescheduled for March 20, 2025.

– *Karen Disbrow*

October 19, Cedar River Crossing North Access. We started at 8:00 with a short presentation by Linda Quinn on the Upcoming “Our Water, Our Land, Our Future” bond referendum. Cedar River Crossing was acquired

through the previous same-named bond referendum.

We had twenty-three participants with quite an age spread from the eighth decade to young Joel Story at three months. It was a perfect day, starting around 45 degrees and warming to 75 by noon. Due to several weeks without rain, the ponds on the site were virtually all dried up. The only shorebirds were Killdeer and two Wilson’s Snipe. There were abundant sparrows, however, to keep the binoculars up. Highlights were a very cooperative LeConte’s Sparrow that gave everyone good looks. There was also a Harris’s Sparrow, that although partially obscured, stayed put long enough for most to get diagnostic looks. We hiked three miles, covering the north half of the property with a bit of bushwhacking to follow the drainage from north to south.

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Becky Benson, Phyllis Black, Mary Bowler, Laura Brouwer, Besa Bwalya, Barry Buschelman, Gerry Denning, Jonathan Lewallen, Mark Madsen, Jamie McCoy (leader), Abner Miller, Caroline Pappalando, Linda Quinn, Katie Roemerman, William Roemerman, Richard Randall, Tony Gentile, Jane Shuttleworth, Sharon Somers, Maria and Joel Story, Jim Wiese.

Birds (39 Species) Canada Goose, Ring-necked Pheasant, Killdeer, Wilson’s Snipe, Ring-billed Gull, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Fox Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-crowned Sparrow, Harris’s Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, LeConte’s Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Cardinal.

– *Jamie McCoy*

November 17, Local Waterfowl Hotspots. The annual fall waterfowl field trip was held on Sunday, November 17, with excellent weather conditions – overcast, light winds, and temperatures in the upper 40s. Scoping of the ponds and lakes was ideal, with no shaking scopes and no ducks bobbing in and out of whitecaps! The mild autumn season so far in Iowa and to our north and west, however, did affect the number and species of ducks that have moved south – not many yet. Still, with checking out multiple spots in Johnson County, we were able to come up with a nice variety of waterfowl.

Our stops included Terry Trueblood Recreation Area in Iowa City, the Coralville Dam tail waters, Goose Lake and the South Slope pond in North Liberty, 200th Street pond just south of Lake Macbride, and the north arm of Lake Macbride. Amazingly, even with a decent-sized caravan of cars, we didn't lose anyone along the way! We were happy to welcome to the outing a visitor from Colorado, and a beginning birder and first-time ICBC outing participant.

Highlights included a Common Loon at Lake Macbride, the large group of American White Pelicans lingering below the Coralville Dam, Bald Eagle watching at the dam, lingering Great Blue Herons, a heard-only Pileated Woodpecker at 200th St., and, always a crowd favorite, the Bufflehead pair at Goose Lake. Ring-billed and Bonaparte's Gulls were very cooperative for showcasing how to separate the often-confusing gull species to some of our newer birders.

One of the most interesting birds seen was the domestic Muscovy Duck that has been hanging out at the 200th Street pond. While not an ABA-countable bird, this hybrid looks very close to the wild Muscovy Ducks seen in south Texas. The duck hanging out at the pond was the size of a goose, with black plumage and a green sheen, and a small white wing patch. The obvious differences between a wild Muscovy and this one were the smaller white wing patch and the larger area of red “warting” on the face of this domestic duck. Otherwise, it closely resembled a wild Muscovy.

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Mary Bowler, Brian Broderick, Gerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Julie Englander, James Huntington, Kathy Krug, Robert Peck, Diana Pesek (leader), Richard Randall, John Tollefson, Jim Trepka, Judy Trepka, Skip Uebelhart, Eliza Willis.

Birds (38 species): Canada Goose, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Mallard, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Rock Pigeon, Ring-billed Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Common Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Cedar Waxwing, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, Eastern Bluebird, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, American Goldfinch, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-crowned Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal.

– *Diana Pesek*

Meeting, November 21. Karen Disbrow started the meeting by discussing three topics:

- The Conservation Bond issue needed 60% to pass, and it received 78%! Good news for Johnson County conservation!
- The Christmas Bird count is coming up on Sunday, December 15. E-mail Chris Edwards at credwards@aol.com to join in the fun!
- The Macbride Nature Recreation Area is currently leased by the University of Iowa. If they don't continue the lease, it will fall back to the Army Corps of Engineers. If you appreciate this area and want it to remain as is, please take a moment to write to the University of Iowa President, Barbara J. Wilson at 101 Jessup Hall, Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1316.

Next up was our presenter, Maria Story, who spoke of and showed us highlights from her trip to the Canadian Arctic. If you missed it, check

out the video on the website. I learned there are bumblebees in the arctic! Many of us greatly enjoy presentations by club members, as we are traveling there vicariously with them as they share their presentations with us! There were 15 in-person attendees and 12 Zoom attendees. This is the last meeting for 2024. The next meeting will be a Zoom-only meeting in February 2025.

**Johnson County
Conservation Bond Passes**

On November 5, Johnson County voters approved a \$30 million conservation bond that will be used to protect water quality, preserve natural areas, and improve access to parks and trails over the next 20 years. Over 77% of voters approved the measure, far surpassing the 60% needed for approval.

The Our Land, Our Water, Our Future committee, which led bond support efforts, focused largely on the projects that were funded by a similar \$20 million bond passed by Johnson County voters in 2008. That was a first-of-its-kind bond vote in Iowa.

The Iowa City Bird Club acknowledges the tremendous advancements in bird habitat preservation made possible by the 2008 bond. Over the past 15 years, it resulted not only in new preserves and trails but also cleaner water. Critical bird habitat including prairies, wetlands, savannas, and woodlands is found in five new properties enjoyed by birders: Cedar River Crossing, Cangleska Wakan, Two Horse Farm, Pechman Creek Delta, and Ciha Fen. Connectivity to existing habitat is critical for sustainability of ecosystems and for wildlife. This is a terrific way to support both breeding and migrating birds.

– Karen Disbrow

IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Please send this form with your annual membership dues to Gerry Denning, 1146 Oakes Dr., Iowa City, IA 52245. Annual membership dues per household are \$15 for a print subscription or \$10 for a digital subscription. Make checks payable to “Iowa City Bird Club Inc.” You may also visit our website and pay by PayPal, Venmo, or credit/debit card. Members receive a 10% discount on birdseed and suet at Ace Hardware at 600 N. Dodge Street, Iowa City, and Forever Green Garden Center at 125 Forevergreen Rd., Coralville.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

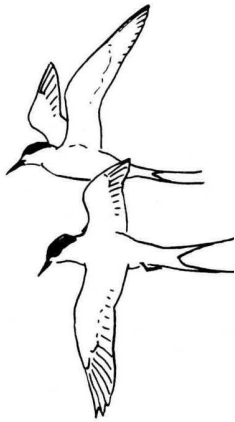
Email _____

Phone _____ Amount Enclosed _____

Check here for digital subscription only (will be emailed via ICBC Google Group).

Eastern Iowa Birdwatch

Chris Edwards, Editor
4490 Daniels Cir. NE
Solon, IA 52333



Iowa City Bird Club

www.iowacitybirdclub.org

Annual membership dues per household are \$15 for a print subscription or \$10 for a digital subscription, payable by January 1 for the coming year. To check the status of your membership, check your mailing label or contact Treasurer Gerry Denning at geralddenning50@gmail.com. Make checks payable to Iowa City Bird Club Inc. and mail to Gerry Denning, 1146 Oakes Dr., Iowa City, IA 52245, or pay with PayPal, Venmo, or debit/credit card on our website.

Visit our web site at www.iowacitybirdclub.org. You may contact Webmaster Mark Graber at 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 iowacitybirdclub@gmail.com to sign up.

For general club information, contact us at iowacitybirdclub@gmail.com.

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

Eastern Iowa Birdwatch is published three times per year, in April, September, and December. Send submissions and comments to Editor Chris Edwards at credwards@aol.com. You may also contact Chris at 319-430-4732.