



This first issue of The Eastern Iowa Bird Life is an outgrowth of the Iowa City Bird Club field trip schedules. Although the idea of a newsletter for bird enthusiasts of eastern Iowa is still in the formative stages, regular features of future issues will include summaries of past field trips, news of Iowa Ornithological Union activities, and a variety of notes about area bird life and bird watchers. We hope that this newsletter will serve to develop and promote communication among people of all ages who share an interest in the many facets of bird life.

Your ideas and suggestions are warmly solicited.

Sincerely,  
Carl Bendorf, Editor  
825 7th Ave.  
Iowa City, IA. 52240

\*\*\*\*\*

SPRING MEETING OF THE IOU: The 1981 Spring Meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, to be held jointly with the Iowa Nature Conservancy, will be held in Iowa City on the weekend of May 1-3, under the sponsorship of the Iowa City Bird Club. All members and their friends are invited to attend.

The Iowa Ornithologists' Union is a statewide organization devoted to the study and enjoyment of birds. The Iowa Nature Conservancy is a private non-profit group, committed to the acquisition and preservation of biologically important areas of land.

Planned events include an informal gathering on Friday night, field trips on Saturday and Sunday mornings, programs and business meeting on Saturday with a banquet and slide show "Birding in Alaska" on Saturday night. The weekend will conclude on Sunday with a luncheon. Further details will be printed in the next issue of Bird Watch.

To register for the field trips and meeting, send \$1.50 to Mrs. B. M. Knight, 425 Lee St., Iowa City, IA. 52240 by April 15. For meal reservations, add \$7.00 (banquet) and \$6.50 (luncheon). Make checks payable to Mrs. Knight.

We will need volunteers to help with many aspects of the meeting: running registration, making coffee, showing slides, etc. Please contact Mike Newlon, Tom Shires, Carl Bendorf, or Bernie Knight if you are interested. We are in particular need of large coffeemakers and thermoses; please call Mike Newlon if you are willing to loan yours.

\*\*\*\*\*

Special thanks to Mike Newlon and Tom Shires for their contributions to this issue.

\*\*\*\*\*

CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS: The Iowa City Bird Club held its' annual Christmas Bird Census on Saturday, December 20, 1980. Forty-one birders took part, an all time high number of participants. The final species total was 60, tying our previous record. The weather was very cold (zero to ten degrees), but the day was clear and windless.

The count started at 5:30 AM in the pre-dawn darkness, with several parties attempting to attract owls with tape-recorded calls. The still weather proved to be ideal with several great horned and screech owls responding. The most unusual bird seen was a curve-billed thrasher which is normally a resident of the southwestern U.S. The bird had been present at the C. Berridge feeder near Solon since November. Other notable sightings included greater scaup and gray catbird, both new to the count, and ring-billed gull, American coot, winter wren, golden-crowned kinglet and eastern bluebird. Several species of winter finches were present: evening grosbeak, purple finch, and pine siskin. The small amount of remaining open water concentrated the ducks; most were gone when even this water froze the next day.

Notable misses this year were pileated woodpecker and bobwhite; pheasants were low in number. The last two species are still suffering the effects of the severe winters of 1976 and 1978. The pair of pileated woodpeckers are still present, however, and they were seen below the Coralville Dam on January 1. Numbers of resident owls were up, perhaps due to an increased "owling" effort, but long-eared and short-eared owls which winter here were represented by only a single individual each. The lack of snow cover made open field birds such as horned larks and meadowlarks difficult to find. A total of 6,444 individual birds was recorded, but it is sobering to note that nearly 40% of these were starlings, house sparrows, and rock doves.

Participants on the count were: Carl Bendorf, Ruby Berridge, Brian, Corey, and Lewis Blevins, Mona and Noel Brown, Dorothy and Sheraton Burr, Linnea Carlson, Ed and Mary Folk, Edwin Gentzler, Marlyn Glasson, Lanny Haldy, Rick Hollis, Marion and Jane Huit, Jack Kaplan, Tom and William Kent, Tim Kemmis, Mrs. B.M. Knight, Carmen and Ramona McGurk, Kelly McKay, Dawson Mohler, Carol and Mike Newlon, Evelyn Oaks, Pete Petersen, Dan Ray, Barb Rohrbach, Jim and Johanna Sandroek, Clark Scott, Tom Shires, Tom Staudt, Barb Wieser, and Ruth Williams.

\*\*\*\*\*

WINTER FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE 1981: All field trips start at the parking lot north of the Iowa Memorial Union on the University of Iowa campus. Most trips are over by early afternoon. Be sure to dress appropriate to the weather.

Sat. 31 Jan. Amana Woods with possibility of wild turkeys. Leader: Carl Bendorf, 351-4958. Meet at 7 AM.

Sat. 7 Feb. Davenport area for bald eagles. May last into the afternoon. Dress warmly. Leaders: Mike and Carol Newlon, 338-2091. Meet at 7 AM.

Sun. 22 Feb. Alburnett and Central City area. For owls and longspurs. Leaders: Cal and Bernie Knight, 337-9140. Meet at 7 AM.

Sat. 14 March. Cone Marsh for waterfowl and early migrants. Leader: Ruth Williams, 338-1359. Meet at 7:30 AM.

\*\*\*\*\*

Anyone interested in the birds of Iowa should consider joining the Iowa Ornithologists' Union which publishes Iowa Bird Life. This journal, issued four times yearly, contains articles on field identification, field reports from around the state, book reviews, and other items relating to Iowa birds. Regular membership including a subscription to Iowa Bird Life is \$8.00 per year. A family membership is \$15.00 and junior (under 16) is only \$4.00 per year. Contact Ruth Buckles, IOU Treasurer, 5612 Urbandale Ave., Des Moines, IA. 50310

\*\*\*\*\*

FIELD TRIP SUMMARIES: November 8, 1980 0630-1230 hrs. To Coralville Reservoir, Lake McBride, and Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Leader, Tom Shires.

Five carloads set out on a grey, windy morning with temperatures in the 40's-50's. Sugar Bottom campground was walked in beat-er formation to flush birds lying close in the short grass with little result. A striking light phase rough-legged hawk was compelled to observe this small army marching across his meadow. After taking shelter in the cars out of the wind, the caravan came

across two common loons north of the Mahaffey Bridge hard at work making a living. The large pine grove on the northeast shore of north Lake McBride was invaded from all sides and a long-eared owl was found by a lucky few who happened near his roosting spot. The marsh at the east end of north Lake McBride harbored a few gadwall and green-wing teal, but the deeper waters attracted 100+ ring-billed gulls and one early date second year herring gull and four immature bonaparte's gulls were present. At the Hawkeye Wildlife Area, the number of ducks seemed smaller than past years. Pintails were nearly equal to mallards in quantity.

December 6, 1980 0700-1545 hrs. To Wiese Slough near Atalissa, Fairmount Cemetery and Credit Island in Davenport, and Lock and Dam #14 near Bettendorf. Leader, Tom Shires.

Four well filled autos started out in the fog and 50 degree temperatures. A side trip was made to the south side of Wiese Slough. Two separate groups penetrated the dense conifers and shrub understory. One sharp-eyed observer, Ruth Williams, spied a tiny saw-whet owl in a tree which had already been examined by several others. Everyone was able to study the bird as it permitted a very close approach. Also encountered were 6 long-eared owls and an adult bald eagle as it lumbered across the foggy treetops. Next, Fairmount Cemetery on the south side of Davenport was checked and in the tall conifers in the lower older part of the cemetery two red-breasted nuthatches, a cluster of pine siskins, and a glorious band of white-winged crossbills were discovered. Mike Newlon spotted a flock of evening grosbeaks in the upper part of the cemetery.

At Credit Island in the Mississippi, the group studied a flock of ring-billed gulls and picked out several herring gulls. A pileated woodpecker was seen in the willows not far from busy highway #61. A visit to Lock and Dam #14 yielded several brown creepers and a drive along the cottages along the river just north of the Interstate 80 bridge produced a golden-crowned kinglet and a red-winged blackbird at a feeder.

\*\*\*\*\*

---

Carl Bendorf, Editor  
825 7th ave  
Iowa City, IA 52240





IOU SPRING MEETING

The 1981 Spring Meeting of the Iowa Ornithologist's Union (IOU) will be held in Iowa City on the weekend of May 1-3. This meeting, to be held jointly with the Iowa Nature Conservancy, will be an excellent opportunity for anyone in the Iowa City-Cedar Rapids area to meet with bird enthusiasts from around the state.

Even if you are not an IOU member, you will be most welcome to take part in any of the activities of the weekend. Let's all help the Iowa City Bird Club to exhibit a strong turnout for this weekend of birding fun. Please join us!

TENTATIVE PROGRAM

Friday, May 1.

6:00-8:30 PM. Informal get-together at the home of Tom and Ann Kent, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City.

Saturday, May 2.

5:30 AM. Field trips for early birders to Hickory Hill Park and Coralville Reservoir. Trips will leave from the parking lot on the north side of the Iowa Memorial Union on the University of Iowa campus. Trips will return to Iowa City by 9:30 AM.

10:00 AM. Registration, coffee, and rolls. Room 203 Zoology Building at the corner of Jefferson and DuBuque Streets, Iowa City.

11:15 AM. Keynote Address by a member of the Nature Conservancy national office.

12:15 PM. Lunch Break. Make your own arrangements.

1:30 PM. Panel Discussion, with audience participation, on difficult problems of bird identification.

2:15 PM. Paper, "Breeding Biology of House Wrens in Iowa", by Lenny Freed.

2:45 PM. Coffee Break.

3:15 PM. Brief presentations on: the IOU records committee, documentation of unusual species, the Iowa Breeding Bird Survey, and the forthcoming book, Birds of Iowa.

4:00 PM. Preview of Sunday field trips.

4:15 PM. IOU Business Meeting and sign-up for field trips.

6:30 PM. Dinner at the Iowa Memorial Union, Triangle Ballroom.

7:30 PM. Presentation by IOU members, "Birding in Alaska". Excellent photography and expert commentary.

Sunday, May 3.

5:30 AM. Field trips to favorite Iowa City areas.

12:00 Noon. Luncheon, Iowa Memorial Union, Triangle Ballroom.

12:45 PM. Compilation of bird list, report of IOU nominating committee, election of IOU officers, further business, and adjournment.

TO REGISTER, PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN THE FORM ON THE LAST PAGE BY APRIL 15. Keep this schedule for reference.

SPRING FIELD TRIPS

All field trips start at the parking lot north of the Iowa Memorial Union on the University of Iowa campus unless otherwise noted. Most trips are over by early afternoon. Be sure to dress appropriate to the weather.

Sat. 14 March. Cone Marsh for waterfowl and early migrants. Leader, Ruth Williams, 338-1359. Meet at 7:30 AM.

Sat. 11 April. Cone Marsh. Bring rubber boots or other waterproof footwear if you have them. Leader, Ruth Williams, 338-1359. Meet at 6:30 AM.

Sat. 25 April. Muskrat Slough. Bring rubber boots or other waterproof footwear if you have them. Trip will be over after noon so you may want to bring a snack. Leader, T. Shires, 338-7149. Meet at 6 AM.

Fri.-Sun 1-3 May. IOU Meeting, Iowa City.

Sat. 9 May. Trip to Jim Fuller's farm near Cedar Bluff for warblers and wildflowers. Leader, Jim Fuller, 338-3561. Meet at 7 AM.

Sat. 23 May. Lacey-Keosauqua State Park. Meet at the main entrance to the park just south of the town of Keosauqua on highway #1, at 6:30 AM. After birding, the group will meet for a picnic at Jim Sandrock's cabin. Please call Jim Sandrock in advance if you plan to attend; he will try to match those wishing rides with those with empty seats. Leader, Jim Sandrock, 338-5774.

ARIZONA NATIVE WINTERS  
IN IOWA

In early November of 1980, Carl and Ruby Jean Berridge of rural Solon noticed an unusual bird at their well stocked feeder. They were accustomed to seeing a wide assortment of common feeder birds, but they knew this bird was something different. They did not know how special it was until they checked their field guides and correctly identified the bird as a curve-billed thrasher. Since this was hard to believe, they sought expert confirmation which soon arrived in the persons of Mike Newlon and Tom Kent of Iowa City.

Since then it is difficult to decide which visitors have provided more entertainment for the Berridges; their rare avian guest or the birdwatchers. Equipped with cameras, binoculars, notebooks, and field guides, over one-hundred birders have descended on the Berridge home to pet their dog, drink their coffee, and wait for the thrasher. Few, if any, of the visitors were disappointed as the bird was a regular daily visitor. The number of visiting birders recently tapered off, though the thrasher's visits continue as of late February.

The curve-billed thrasher is mainly found in the dry open country of southern Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. There is a smaller population in southwestern Colorado and the panhandles of Texas and Oklahoma. Curve-billed thrashers are frequent winter vagrants, moving from their normal breeding grounds north to the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles. Occasionally, they have wandered as far north as South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Manitoba. The only previous report in Iowa is an uncorroborated sighting from Spirit Lake in 1975.

Eastern Iowa birders are very appreciative of the hospitality and friendliness of the Berridges and their cooperative desert guest.

-Rick Hollis



CURVE-BILLED THRASHER  
BY T. SHIRES

OH, WHAT A DAY!

The possibility of a particularly unusual day of birding arose on January 1 of 1981. A report was received in Iowa City of a snowy owl sighting in southern Linn County. Since the Berridge's curve-billed thrasher in Solon continued to regularly frequent their feeder, a day's bird list that would include this vagrant from the desert Southwest and also an owl of the arctic tundra would be a rare attainment. Where else in the U.S. could such a feat be performed? As it turned out, not in eastern Iowa on the first day of 1981. While the thrasher obligingly put in an appearance, no white owls were found.

Who would have hoped that this chance might come again, but in February 1981 a report came from Appanoose County of a strange thrasher in the Honey Creek area on the northern shore of Lake Red Rock. It was natural that the desire to make the 100+ mile journey from Iowa City was heightened by an additional report of a snowy owl in the southeast corner of the same lake. Yes, the trip was made, and, yes, an immature snowy owl was found perched on a picnic table beside the frozen lake. And, yes, the thrasher at Honey Creek was the second confirmed state record of a curve-billed thrasher--- in the same winter!

-T. Shires

\*\*\*\*\*  
1981 SUPPORT CERTIFICATE

Iowans who wish to show their support for wildlife may do so by purchasing the Iowa State Nongame support certificate. The 1981 certificate is a high quality limited edition art print depicting a northern junco (*Junco hyemalis*).

Proceeds from the sale of the certificate are used to conduct breeding bird surveys of farm, forest, wetland, and urban habitats throughout Iowa. Raptor research, expanded banding of migrant songbirds, and study of shrubs and trees beneficial to wildlife are possible future uses of these funds.

At present, most nongame research in Iowa is funded by hunting license and firearms excise tax funds. This certificate is an opportunity for people who don't hunt to sustain the research and management of Iowa's nongame birds.

The cost of the certificate, which is suitable for framing, is \$5. Mail your check to the Iowa Conservation Commission, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, IA. 50319.

## FIELD TRIP SUMMARIES

January 31, 1981 7 AM to 12 PM. To Amana Woods, High Amana Cemetery, and back roads from Homestead through the Swan Lake area. Leader, Carl Bendorf.

Three cars of hardy birders greeted the dawn as they journeyed west on Highway #6 towards Homestead. Just east of Kent Park, a cooper's hawk flew over the road and everyone leaped out of the cars to watch it fly over the horizon.

Continuing to Homestead, we then turned north on Highway #149. Just across the Iowa River, we met four birders from Amana. After splitting into two groups we ventured into the river bottom woodland which is reputed to be a good spot to find wild turkeys. In past years flocks of up to thirty birds have been seen here, but this day produced only countless old tracks in the dry and hard ground. If the turkeys were present, the lack of any snow cover probably negated any chance of seeing this elusive species. It was a thrill to find two noisy pileated woodpeckers. In fact, all of the common woodpecker species were observed including over thirty red-headed woodpeckers. As a red-tailed hawk screamed overhead, the group crossed the highway to the west side, but again no turkeys were found. Maybe next year!

Participants: Carl Bendorf, John Cordell, Jim & Carole Fuller, Ed Gentzler, Randy Graesser, Lanny Haldy, Rick Hollis, Cal & Bernie Knight, Ramona McGurk, Evelyn Oaks, Dan Ray, Marcia Schutterle, Tom Staudt, and Ruth Williams.

February 22, 1981 7 AM to 12PM . To Coralville Reservoir. Leader, Bernie Knight.

The field trip to the Alburnett area originally scheduled for this date was cancelled. A total lack of snow cover made the chances of seeing longspurs very poor, so the group decided to explore an area of the Coralville Reservoir to the west of highway #218.

The temperature was 42° at 7:00 AM and dropped to 37° at trip's end. The winds gusted to 25 mph as a drizzle dampened the eight birders while they walked through the Big Willow Thicket. This area is north of Williams Prairie near Oxford. The weather and the footing reminded Mike Newlon and Bernie Knight of many hours spent tramping the Alaskan tundra. Don Pfeiffer of the Iowa Conservation Commission had reported up to eight great horned owls in this vicinity, but on this dreary day only a short-eared owl was seen as it displayed a lovely flight pattern.

After leaving the Big Willow Thicket, the party slowly drove the back roads east past Swan Lake back to highway #218. Highlights were northern harrier, rough-legged hawk and kestrel. Robins were seen in larger numbers presaging the spring influx and the birders achieved several good views of a northern shrike. Mike Newlon spotted approximately fifty rusty blackbirds. The field trip concluded just in time as it began to snow shortly after noon.

Participants: John Cordell, James Huntington, Bernie Knight, Ramona McGurk, Mike Newlon, Mary Noble, Tom Staudt, and Ruth Williams.

## SPRING WATERFOWL

February 7, 1981 To Fairmount Cemetery in Davenport and Dams #14 and #15 in the Mississippi River. Leader, Mike Newlon.

The weather for this excursion to the Quad Cities was partly cloudy and becoming very windy later with temperatures in the 30's. In Fairmount Cemetery, the group got several good views of white-winged crossbills, pine siskins, purple finches, cedar waxwings, and robins. Credit Island was almost birdless, but Dam #15 yielded a flock of herring gulls and several bald eagles soaring overhead.

At Dam #14 there were more eagles, several hundred common goldeneye, and a pair of greater scaup. We could easily see the characteristic rounded profile of the heads of the scaup, but were not able to see the diagnostic long wing stripe until a cooperative immature bald eagle swooped by and flushed the birds.

Participants: John Cordell, John Daniel, Ed Gentzler, James Huntington, Ken Lowder, Ramona McGurk, Mike Newlon, Jim Sandrock, Joey Sandrock, Tom Staudt, and Ruth & Norm Williams.

My impressions of the migration to date are strongly influenced by the small amount of precipitation in 1981. Nearly all lakes, reservoirs, and sloughs in the area are well below seasonal levels. The Hawkeye Wildlife Refuge is one large mudflat bisected by the Iowa River in its old channel. Swan Lake and Cone Marsh, on the other hand, are at expected levels, perhaps because their water source is not just the skies. These areas are the best local spots to observe waterfowl at the present time.

Geese put in an early appearance this year. In late February, Tom Kent and Mike Newlon saw all three species of geese at Cone Marsh, and good numbers of canadas and snow geese can still be seen here. What appears to have been unusually large numbers of spring mallards lingered through March, often mixed with good numbers of pintail. Both species seem now past their peak. Large numbers of ring-necked ducks also put in an early appearance at Cone Marsh and can still be seen there with smaller numbers of canvasback, mergansers, goldeneye, and redhead. Dabbling ducks are as yet only a promise with only a few gadwall, wigeon, teal, and shovelers to be found at Cone Marsh or Swan Lake. Lake McBride has not yet been well birded this season. Observers should keep a lookout at that and adjacent areas for diving ducks which have seemed slow in their northward movement through this area.

-T. Shires

The BIRDWATCH is published six times a year. You can subscribe by returning the attached form. To insure receiving the next issue, please respond by May 1.

---

THE EASTERN IOWA BIRDWATCH  
CARL BENDORF, EDITOR  
825 7TH AVENUE  
IOWA CITY, IA. 52240





PASSENGER PIGEON  
SEEN IN IOWA CITY

What University of Iowa building -- other than the sports complexes, the hospitals, and Hancher Auditorium--attracts more visitors annually than any other campus edifice? Old Capitol? Wrong! The Art Museum? Wrong again! The correct answer is Macbride Hall whose drawing power can be attributed to the Museum of Natural History which is housed there. Each year over 42,000 people view the exhibits in this stately old building which was originally designed as a museum and built ca. 1905. Situated on the east campus at the corner of Clinton and Jefferson Streets, Macbride Hall contains an amazing amount of museum exhibits and activities.

The Museum of Natural History came about by an act of the Iowa General Assembly in 1858, at which time the University was charged with housing specimens from the State Natural History and Geological Surveys. The first exhibits were located in Old Capitol and consisted of several glass cases of mounted birds. Since these modest beginnings the collection has grown to over 1,000,000 curated and indexed specimens (a number which is growing annually) and is housed in Macbride Hall which has four main display areas: invertebrates and special displays on the ground floor; ethnological artifacts and primitive societies on the first floor corridor; Mammal Hall on the third floor south; and Bird Hall, third floor north.

Of special interest to birders is Bird Hall in which is displayed a collection of 1,100 North American birds mounted for exhibition in systematic series and habitat groups. This is by far the largest collection of its type in the State.

Significant ornithological collecting was conducted by the University Museum staff from 1890-1895, but most of the collection has developed over the years by the donations of large private collections, by various gifts from individuals, and by additions provided by Museum faculty. Although some of the specimens were mounted over 100 years ago, they are still--for the most part--in readily identifiable plumage and posture.

While the collection includes North American birds in general, the exhibit concentrates on birds of the Midwest and Iowa. Virtually every species of Iowa resident and seasonal migrant is on display. Especially complete collections with well-prepared specimens are the waterfowl, warblers, and sparrows seen in Iowa--thanks to the dedication and skillful artistry of such

men as Walter C. Thietje, John R. Rohner, George D. Schrimper, and their predecessors. In addition, extinct and endangered species, such as the Passenger Pigeon, the Carolina Parakeet, and the Whooping Crane--all once found in Iowa--are on exhibit.

Professor George D. Schrimper, Curator, points out that what is seen in the exhibits is only "the tip of the iceberg," since the Museum functions as a repository for all natural history phenomena, most of which are not on display. For example, there are approximately 10,000 study skins catalogued and preserved by the Museum for use by scientists, scholars, artists, and others doing ornithological research. "The Museum has a lengthy and proud tradition," says Professor Schrimper. "It is the oldest university museum west of the Mississippi River and offers the oldest continuing museum instructional program in the United States--since 1910." Overseen by an Advisory Committee of 16 members, the Museum is an integral part of many educational programs throughout the University.

That the Museum holds an important place in the hearts and minds of the Iowa citizenry was demonstrated in the Fall of 1965 when president of the University, Howard R. Bowen, recommended that the Museum be eliminated and its space used for offices and classrooms. Mr. Bowen had underestimated the desires of the people of Iowa. Literally hundreds of letters and messages from faculty, scientists, school children, and the enlightened citizens of Iowa flooded in, protesting such a drastic move. Mr. Bowen succumbed to such pressure and dropped the "project"--not without some bitterness.

Over the years the Museum has maintained its popularity despite the lack of funds for publicity and public relations. During this time the problems and the goals of the Museum have changed. The specters of financial need and limited space loom large for the Museum as well as for other societal units. In view of the great service the Museum provides for this community and State--in view of the Museum's role in the advancement of knowledge and in scientific endeavor--in view of the educational and aesthetic pleasures derived from a visit to Bird Hall, the Museum deserves the applause and the moral and financial support of the citizens of Iowa.

HOURS: Mon. through Sat., 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM  
Sunday, 12:30 PM to 4:30 PM  
Closed on University and National Holidays.  
There is no admission charge.

--J. Sandrock



## FIELD TRIP SUMMARIES

**CORRECTION:** In the last issue of the Birdwatch it was reported in the April 23 field trip summary that the nest of the Bewick's Wren had been destroyed. We are happy to correctly report that the apparent destruction of the nest was the result of the successful fledging of the young wrens.

June 13, 1981 To Wildcat Den State Park near Muscatine. Leader, T. Shires.

An eager group of birders weathered intermittent showers to check the park for its usual nesting specialties: Eastern Phoebe; Rough-winged Swallow; Kentucky Warbler; Acadian Flycatcher; Worm-eating Warbler; Cerulean Warbler; and Louisiana Waterthrush. Our attempts to view the 6 to 8 singing Cerulean Warblers were exasperating, but fostered careful study of their songs. The rendition of one particular Cerulean closely resembled the song pattern of the Yellow-throated Warbler, even having an atypical downward terminal slurred note. Unlike the Yellow-throated Warbler, the timbre of this song was thin and shrill. It is not uncommon for many species of warblers on their breeding grounds to have several different songs. Neither the Yellow-throated Warbler, a resident at the Den the past two years, nor the waterthrush, a putative breeder there, was found on this trip.

After leaving the park, we drove north and east through Montpelier Township. The rain stopped long enough for us to first hear and then see a pair of Northern Mockingbirds. Returning to Iowa City via Wiese Slough, a third Mockingbird was found on the road into the lily pond. The pond was significantly lower than usual for early June. A congregation of nine Great Blue Herons was fishing on the far side but we alarmed them to flight with our approach. The possibility of a heron rookery in the area of the Slough might be considered. The total number of species for the day was 69.

Participants: Bernie and Cal Knight; Ramona McGurk; Evelyn Oaks; and T. Shires.

June 6, 1981 7:15 AM to 11 AM to Cone Marsh. Leader, Ruth Williams.

The marsh was relatively quiet on this warm and sunny day with refreshing light breezes. The first area covered was along the ponds on the west side of the marsh. We saw or heard most of the usual residents, including numerous Common Yellowthroats and good numbers of Yellow Warblers.

The next area of concentration was in the fields across the dike. In the hedgerow along this field, everyone clearly viewed several Yellow-billed Cuckoos. The usual Bell's Vireo was in his usual haunt and we spent some time trying to establish an Empidonax Flycatcher as either a Willow or an Alder. This habitat is right for a Willow but the song was not clearly belonging to one or the other, as is usually the case with the Alder/Willow complex.

One other notable occurrence was the lack of Yellow-headed Blackbirds. Only one was observed as it flew overhead. Usually the marsh is filled with their distinctive call.

Participants: Carl Bendorf; Jim Girsch; Tim Kemmis; Jeff Kern; Ramona McGurk; Bobbie and Dawson Mohler; Mary Noble; Gladys Wanek; and Ruth Williams.

The Birdwatch is published six times a year. You can subscribe by sending \$3.00 to The Eastern Iowa Birdwatch, 825 7th Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240. If we can mail to your University office, please include that address.

### 1981 SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

All field trips start at the parking lot north of the Iowa Memorial Union on The University of Iowa campus. Most trips are over by early afternoon.

Saturday, July 25th. Coralville Reservoir for shorebirds. Leader, Mike Newlon (338-2091). Meet at 7 AM.

Saturday, August 15th. Shorebirds-----Exact destination will depend on water conditions. Leader, Tom Kent (337-5231). Meet at 7 AM.

THE EASTERN IOWA BIRDWATCH  
CARL BENDORF, EDITOR  
825 7TH AVENUE  
IOWA CITY, IA. 52240





BIRDWATCHING IN THE  
REPUBLIC OF SUDAN

Eastern Iowa birdwatchers may want to share with me a recent opportunity to observe a few Sudanese birds and influences upon them. I was invited to a symposium on "The Effect of Climate on Domestic Animals" sponsored by the Sudan government at the University of Gezira, which is 150 miles south of Khartoum. I realized that this region has experienced extreme overgrazing and desertification, so I did not anticipate that the birding would be very satisfactory. There were five scientists in our group from the United States, and we hoped to visit the only national park in the Republic of Sudan at Dinder. However, that park had been closed because the game wardens had gone on strike. Despite our confinement at the conference most of the time, an abundance of bird life could be observed. There is no available book on the birds of the Sudan but Louis Agassiz Fuertes' paintings of the birds of Ethiopia was very helpful. I was also able to visit a museum where birds were mounted and identified with English and scientific names, as well as Arabic.

The first conspicuous birds were the kites over the city of Khartoum. I saw some of them at very close range. I believe they are called the Black Kite, although they look fairly gray and they have a conspicuous notch in the tail. It was possible to see thirty or forty of them circling over the city at one time. One expects a vulture bill on such birds, but of course the face is that of a hawk or eagle. During the long bus trip from Khartoum to the University, I did see Crown Plovers which are identifiable because they run with an exaggerated strutting.

It was a splendid experience to go out on a high porch at our lodgings beside the Blue Nile. In this region there are many trees and bushes. The most conspicuous birds are the brilliantly colored parakeets which have exceptionally long tails. Most northerners expect a parakeet to be like the small caged birds with which we are familiar, but the parakeets on the Blue Nile are the size of a parrot with a very long tail. Another startling sight was to see a bird, which seemed to be trailing a long piece of paper, fly by the porch. It turned out to be the tail of the bird. The tail is three times as long as the bird itself. These are identified as the Sudan Paradise Mhydah. There were several types of doves visible from the porch, a brilliant long-tailed starling, many flycatchers, and several bee-eaters which I could not identify as to species.

The best experience of my visit to the Sudan was a trip to a large irrigated area called the Gezira Scheme which encompasses 2.5 million acres. Just as has happened in the irrigated area near Tempe, Arizona, this modification of the environment has attracted very large numbers of birds. The predator birds are making use of the piles of dirt which were taken out of the irrigation ditches. They perch and hunt from these piles and it was easy to census many White-rumped Kites, White-bellied Ravens, and a conspicuous Tufted Vulture, which is well displayed in Fuertes' prints. Most importantly, I counted as many as 34 eagles which appear to be what Fuertes painted as the Abyssinian Eagle. In the fields there were large numbers of Black Ibis, some Sacred Ibis, bustards, and numerous storks which appear to be the migratory stork from Europe.

The greatest thrill was to see a species from the group of birds called the Rollers. One that I studied in particular was called the Abyssinian Roller; it is the most beautiful bird that I have ever seen in the field. It is Blue Jay size, and its beauty is emphasized because it is so iridescent. Greens and blues predominate on its remarkable plumage. The only similar experience was when my first Hoopoe landed near my feet in Israel. Later, the Hoopoe turned out to be common in Israel. Another bird that is common in the irrigated area of the Sudan is the Bulbul which fills the niche of the American Robin and behaves somewhat like it. They are gray and black with a conspicuous white eye ring. The telephone wires were crowded with birds which I could not identify, mostly flycatchers and finches. There were numerous lizards living in holes in the irrigated garden areas. Probably they, like the birds, would be missing from this vast area if it were not for the extensive irrigation plan.

--G. Edgar Folk, Jr.

(Editor's Note: Ed Folk is a professor in the Department of Physiology at The University of Iowa. The Sudan is located on the east end of the Sahara Desert region in northern Africa.)

I would like to thank all of you who have responded by subscribing to the Birdwatch. I hope to continue improving the quality and variety of information contained in the Birdwatch. I would sincerely like to hear your ideas on what kinds of articles you would enjoy reading and any writing or artwork from area bird enthusiasts would be welcomed.

--Carl Bendorf, Editor

## BIRDING IN THE AMANA WOODS

## 1981 SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

The Amana Woods is a large tract of deciduous woodland on a bluff above the Iowa River, approximately 18 miles west of Iowa City. This area is an excellent example of deep woods habitat combined with areas of woodland margins.

I will describe a typical routine for birding the Amana Woods with some notes on what birds can be expected.

Drive west from Iowa City on U.S. Highway 6; then, 2.8 miles west of the Oxford interchange (Highway 109) turn north on the gravel road at the sign designating the Iowa County line. Go north 1.5 miles and turn west (left) at the T intersection. You will wind westerly for 1.2 miles. Here the woods will begin on both sides of the road. The next 1.1 miles is the Amana Woods. This road is referred to by the locals as the Dutch Lake Road. This area is all private land and is owned by the Amana Society. It is suggested that you stay on or near the road. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** This road is hilly and is a dirt road. Do not attempt to enter if you have any suspicion the surface is wet or muddy.

The best time to visit this area is probably April, May, and June. For the best lighting conditions, you can enter as described above in the morning and travel from east to west.

The route described above will intersect with U.S. Highway 149 at a point 1.5 miles north of the intersection of 6 and 149. This is just south of the Iowa River bridge. You can enter here and drive from west to east in the afternoon to have the sun at your back.

This is an excellent area for migrating warblers. Check the treetops anywhere along the road. The road crosses four small stream beds which can harbor Louisiana Waterthrush and be sure to check the understory of the forest in the latter half of May for Mourning or Connecticut Warbler. Migrating vireos and thrushes have been found all along the road. My favorite points at which to stop and listen for birds are around the four side road entrances which depart from the main road, and the four stream beds.

One of the best spots is the small valley with a stream and clearing which is .9 miles from the start of the woods on both sides of the road at the east end. This is just .2 miles west of where this dirt road joins Highway 149. Possible residents in the summer in this area include Acadian Flycatcher, Veery, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Blue-winged Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, and American Redstart.

Other probable summer residents of the Amana Woods include Turkey Vulture, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Wood Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo, Ovenbird, Kentucky Warbler, Northern Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, Rufous-sided Towhee, and other common species. Year-round residents include Wild Turkey (hard to find) and Pileated Woodpecker.

--Carl J. Bendorf

All field trips start at the parking lot north of the Iowa Memorial Union on The University of Iowa campus. Most trips are over by early afternoon.

Saturday, June 6th. Cone Marsh. Leader, Ruth Williams (338-1359). Meet at 6:30 AM.

Saturday, June 13th. Wildcat Den State Park near Muscatine. Leader, T. Shires (338-7149). Meet at 5 AM.

Saturday, July 25th. Coralville Reservoir for shorebirds. Leader, Mike Newlon (338-2091). Meet at 7 AM.

Saturday, August 15th. Shorebirds-----Exact destination will depend on water conditions. Leader, Tom Kent (337-5231). Meet at 7 AM.

The Birdwatch is published six times a year. You can subscribe by sending \$3.00 to The Eastern Iowa Birdwatch, 825 7th Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240. If we can mail to your University office, please include that address.

## FIELD TRIP SUMMARIES

March 14, 1981 8 AM to 12 Noon to Cone Marsh. Leader, Ruth Williams.

A large and enthusiastic group of birders met at the Union parking lot on one of the most pleasant early spring days to date. It was sunny with a light breeze and a temperature of 40° at the marsh. The first stop was a Great Horned Owl's nest spotted several days earlier by Bernie and Cal Knight. One nestling was visible in the nest and one adult owl circled through the area and landed close to the nest several times. Elsewhere in the marsh were Canada, Snow, and White-fronted geese. Large numbers of ducks were still lingering on the marsh, including American Wigeon, Green-winged Teal, Mallard, Common Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Canvasback, Redhead, and a pair of Common Mergansers. The Hooded Mergansers that were present the previous weekend apparently were gone.

Participants: Bertha Armstrong; Peggy Bouska; Dominique Brand; Linnea Carlson; John Cordell; Greta Crawford; Simone Delaty; Debbie and Ted Evans; Karole and Jim Fuller; Jane Fuller; Jill Feldkamp; Marlyn Glasson; Edwin Gentzler; Barb Haring; Rick Hollis; James Huntington; Kathy Holderness; Brewster Hunt; Sally and George Johnson; Bernie and Cal Knight; Mary Noble; Bobbie and Dawson Mohler; Carol and Mike Newlon; Margee Miller; Ramona McGurk; Evelyn Oaks; Jim Sandrock; Jody Sandrock; Jane Shuttleworth; Tom Staudt; Cathy Wilson; and Sandra Wilson.

## SUMMARIES (cont.)

April 11, 1981 7 AM to 12 Noon at Cone Marsh.  
Leader, Ruth Williams.

It was warm (about 60°) and overcast when the group left Iowa City for the drive to Cone Marsh. First we checked the Great Horned Owl's nest. The single nestling has begun to get its feathers and it looks much more formidable than several weeks ago. Next, the band of birders walked through the woods along the marsh edge, pausing at a Red-bellied Woodpecker's nest found the previous week by Rick Hollis. Both adults were seen in the vicinity. We then searched the two small ponds on the west side of the marsh for a Yellow-crowned Night Heron seen there earlier by Rick Hollis, but it was not to be found. Large numbers of Tree Swallows were seen near the dike which crosses the marsh, and an Osprey circled overhead. We stopped to observe several American Crows as they badgered a Great Horned Owl. Pectoral Sandpipers, a Yellowlegs species, and a Common Snipe were found, and we heard a Sora calling.

On our way back to the cars the group walked through the field above the dike in search of LeConte's Sparrow and several were seen. Also in the area were Savannah, White-crowned, and White-throated Sparrows. A Cattle Egret and several Lesser Golden Plover were on the east side of the marsh in the company of a large number of American Coots. Several members of the party returned to Iowa City by the back roads around Swank Church to search for the Pipits seen earlier in the morning by the Knights, but they were not found. We did see a Yellow-rumped Warbler, a pair of Eastern Phoebes, and Tom Staudt spotted a Vesper Sparrow on a fence post.

Participants: Linnea Carlson; Barb Fisher; Marilyn Glasson; Sandra DeKock; Rick Hollis; Edwin Gentzler; Bernie and Cal Knight; Steve Lensink; Mike Newlon; Evelyn Oaks; Tom Staudt; and Jeanie Spencer.

April 23, 1981 6 AM to 1:30 PM. To Muskrat Slough in Jones County; Hoosier Creek on Lake Macbride; and North Summit Street in Iowa City.  
Leader, T. Shires.

Muskrat Slough was relatively full of water and had no mud flats. The southeast wind was brisk and the temperature was 45° with a partly cloudy sky. In such circumstances what is found above the marsh can be as interesting as what is found in the marsh. In the water were ten predictable species of ducks (including Ruddy, Ring-necked, and Redhead) and nearly a dozen Double-crested Cormorants. The usual chorus of Soras rang out and three American Bitterns engaged in their nuptial "stake-driving" calling. At regular intervals tight flocks of Lesser Golden Plover circled adjacent fields without finding any suitable feeding grounds; mixed flocks of sandpipers, mostly Pectoral, made the same discovery. Higher overhead a kettle of 40-50 hawks (probably Broad-wings) boiled up a thermal and then dispersed into a spread formation. Lower in the air was the best bird of the day -- a Swainson's Hawk.

The trip returned to Iowa City via the Hoosier Creek mud flats near Twin View Heights on Lake Macbride. Scattered shorebirds, groups of gulls (Ring-billed and Bonaparte's) and Forster's Terns were studied from a considerable distance. Most notable among the shorebirds was a group of nine Stilt Sandpipers. On the way into Iowa City, the group stopped at the recently located North Summit Street residence of a pair of Bewick's Wrens. This species, absent from the Iowa City area for 14 years, was difficult to locate in the underbrush, but eventually the birds were cajoled into making an appearance. (Editor's Note: In late May, Mike Newlon reported that the nest of this pair of wrens had been destroyed by some unknown predator.) Total number of species for the day was 73.

Participants: Cal and Bernie Knight; Ramona McGurk, Mary Noble; Evelyn Oaks; T. Shires; and Tom Staudt.

May 9, 1981 7 AM to 11 AM. To Fullers' farm near Cedar Bluff. Leaders, Jim and Karole Fuller.

The air was cool and the sky was clear when fifteen birders set out for Fullers' farm northeast of Iowa City. This is not the type of place that one usually associates with the word "farm." Rather, it is a beautiful tract of woodland with several grassy fields and a small marshy area. The most interesting birds on this day were a pair of Sedge Wrens, four Blackburnian and four Bay-breasted Warblers, a pair of Lark Sparrows, and many wildflowers including Showy Orchis. In all, twelve species of warblers and a total of 54 bird species were spotted.

Participants: Peggy Bouska; Linnea Carlson; John Cordell; Jim and Karole Fuller; Edwin Gentzler; Rick Hollis; Cal Knight; Ramona McGurk; Mike Newlon; Mary Noble; Jim Sandrock; Jody Sandrock; Anne Scupham; and Ruth Williams.

May 23, 1981 6:30 AM to 11:30 AM to Lacey-Keosauqua State Park, Van Buren County.  
Leader, Jim Sandrock.

A small but hardy group, undaunted by distance and holiday traffic, made the journey to southeast Iowa for a morning of what turned out to be good birding. The skies were overcast with temperature around 65° and intermittent rain. Nevertheless, this area of eastern Iowa which has not been birded to any extent proved to be a pleasant surprise. A total of 68 species were seen including a Cooper's Hawk, Summer Tanager, a Yellow-throated Warbler, a Cape May Warbler, several Northern Parula Warblers, and many Cerulean Warblers. A variety of flycatchers and vireos was observed and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were abundant. Those participating felt that this trip would be more productive earlier in May when the foliage is not so dense. The variety of birds and accessibility to them make this location a worthwhile birding area despite the distance from Iowa City. After the morning's birding, the group had a picnic lunch at Sandrock's cottage on the Des Moines River.

Participants: Evelyn Oaks; Anne Scupham; Cal and Bernie Knight; Karole and Jim Fuller--all of the Iowa City Bird Club--and Chuck, Ellen, David, and Chris Fuller, and Mrs. Jane Fuller--all of Burlington.

---

THE EASTERN IOWA BIRDWATCH  
CARL BENDORF, EDITOR  
825 7TH AVENUE  
IOWA CITY, IA. 52240





## THE HAWKS OF HICKORY HILL

The following information is a brief guide to fall hawk watching in Hickory Hill Park in Iowa City. There are two main entrances to Hickory Hill Park. You can enter the south end of the park by going east on Bloomington Street until it ends at the park's south parking lot. Or you can go north on Dodge Street and then turn right (east) on Conklin Lane which will be just past St. Joseph Cemetery. Follow Conklin Lane and it will end at the park's north parking lot. From either parking lot there are several trails which traverse the park.

Common species: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and Broad-winged Hawk.

Other species: Red-shouldered Hawk (rare), Cooper's Hawk (uncommon), Goshawk (seen once), Rough-legged Hawk (in late fall), American Kestrel, Osprey, and Turkey Vulture.

Best Dates: Sept. 10-Sept 25 (peak Sept. 18-20).

Best Weather: Clear, with a NW wind, and warming in the late morning.

Sharp-shins often hunt in the early morning. Their presence may be indicated by the unusual silence and furtive behavior of small birds and by the excitement of the Robins, Blue Jays, and Flickers. The sharp-shins will frequently be seen sitting up in trees or flying from perch to perch as they call loudly. Blue Jays and Flickers will follow and mob sharp-shins with the hawk repeatedly screaming and flying at its pursuers, unable to drive them off. Hunting sharp-shins perch anywhere from the tallest snags to vegetation a few feet off the ground. They may fly rapidly just above the treetops and through clearings.

Broad-winged Hawks will perch in dense foliage until the air becomes warmer at about 10 AM. Then they rise out of the trees, often in groups, and soar in circles to gain altitude before gliding away to the south. Red-tails and the rare Red-shouldered Hawk also behave in this same manner, but usually as single birds or pairs rather than in groups. Non-buteo hawks also will begin to move in mid-morning but usually will not soar; instead they will fly at treetop level early and increase in altitude later in the day.

Though not blessed with the large numbers of hawks found at Hawk Ridge in Duluth, or Hawk Mountain in Pennsylvania, Hickory Hill Park is a very good place to find hawks in fall migration. At least a few sharp-shins and broad-wings can be found on most days in mid-September, and red-tails are regular from October through December.

(continued)

On a few occasions I have seen large numbers of hawks in Hickory Hill Park: On September 18, 1976--192 broad-wings and 2 sharp-shins; on September 18, 1977--305 hawks, including 258 broad-wings, 27 sharp-shins, 4 red-tails, and single individuals of Cooper's Hawk, Goshawk, and Osprey. Such large flights are, of course, not confined to Hickory Hill but this seems to be one of the better places in the Iowa City region. All of the major flights I have seen in this area have been between September 18th and 20th.

--Mike Newlon

## FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

All field trips start at the parking lot north of the Iowa Memorial Union on The University of Iowa campus unless otherwise noted. Most trips are over by early afternoon.

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <u>Saturday</u><br><u>Sept. 19th</u> | Cone Marsh. Leader, Ruth Williams (338-1359). Meet at 6:30 AM.   |
| <u>Saturday</u><br><u>Oct. 3rd</u>   | Hickory Hill Park. Leader, Rick Hollis (338-4834). Meet at 7:30 AM.  |
| <u>Saturday</u><br><u>Oct. 10th</u>  | Bicycle Birding. Leader, Marlyn Glasson (351-8711). Meet at Macbride Hall at 7:30 AM. See separate note for details. |
| <u>Saturday</u><br><u>Oct. 18th</u>  | Matsell Bridge, with focus on sparrows. Leaders, Cal & Bernie Knight (337-9140). Meet at 7 AM.                       |
| <u>Saturday</u><br><u>Nov. 21st</u>  | Kent Park. Leader, Mike Newlon. (338-2091). Meet at 7:30 AM.   |
| <u>Saturday</u><br><u>Dec. 19th</u>  | Iowa City Christmas Bird Count. Mark your calendars. More details next issue.  |

Ready for a new kind of field trip? How about birding by bicycle? We will meet at Macbride Hall, at the top of the Jefferson Street hill at 7:30 AM on October 10th.

Riding out on Dubuque Street, we will pedal to the Coralville Dam and bird that area on foot. Then we will cross the Dam and ride back on Prairie du Chien Road. Depending on the time and our mood, we can bird in Hickory Hill Park or go our separate ways.

Walking up hills is definitely permitted. You may even see more birds that way. Wear layers of clothing. You will alternate wanting them and not wanting them. You may also wish to bring something to munch on.

It should be a fun time. Borrow a bike if you don't have one and the more pedaling you do before the trip, the easier the ride will be. The number of species seen will not break any records, but it's a great way to practice on bird calls and enjoy the outdoors.

Hope you can make it! Give me a call if interested or have questions. Marlyn Glasson (351-8711).

The Birdwatch is published six times a year. You can subscribe by sending \$3.00 to The Eastern Iowa Birdwatch, 825 7th Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240. If we can mail to your University office, please include that address.

The Iowa Nature Conservancy has started a campaign to raise \$670,000 to purchase two large tracts of unspoiled land (950 total acres) in the loess hills of western Iowa. Contributions are earnestly solicited. Write to: The Nature Conservancy -- Iowa Chapter, Suite 311, 424 Tenth Street, Des Moines, IA 50309.

## BASIC BIRD FEEDING

Many of us enjoy feeding birds because we like to watch them close by through our window instead of at a distance through our binoculars. In this series of articles I will discuss some of the basics of feeding the birds.

There are several factors about your bird feeder which will determine how busy it will be: geographic location of your home; placement of the feeder in your yard; and the design of the feeder. Since you cannot easily change the location of your home, some people will obviously have more luck in attracting birds than will others. Older neighborhoods with lots of trees and shrubs or houses near Hickory Hill Park, for example, will be more likely to attract a larger number and variety of birds than homes in newer developments.

The physical location you choose for your feeder is very important. Most birds like to be able to land on a perch before they actually land on the feeder. This gives them a chance to look around. A feeder in the midst of dense shrubbery is likely to be underused because the birds will be unable to watch for approaching predators. A bird feeder in the middle of a large open area may be unpopular because of the lack of nearby perches. A balance of foliage and clearing around the feeder will be more attractive to birds.

Feeder construction and the method of mounting are very important. The feeder should be well-built to withstand winter blizzards. For your convenience the feeder should be easy to see and easy to fill. I prefer feeders with plastic or glass covering the seed. This will enable you to see the food level and most of the food will be protected.

Some species of birds, such as the finches, will eat only at hanging feeders. Other species, such as Mourning Doves and Juncos, will only eat on the ground or on an open flat feeder. It is a good idea to have a flat platform under your feeder. This will catch seed which might otherwise be spilled and many birds will feed on this platform. Enough seed will still end up on the ground for the Juncos and Tree Sparrows. To prevent too much seed from blowing away, you can install a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -1" lip around the edge of the platform. The lip should have several openings to allow rain water to drain.

Feeding suet or peanut butter requires specialized feeders to discourage squirrels and Starlings from throwing the food all over your yard. These foods can be dispensed from bins or wire baskets which allow the food to be taken only in small mouthfuls. There should be some sort of coating on the wire to protect the eyes of the birds. Starlings can be discouraged by hanging these feeders from a hook or wire so the birds cannot perch. Large fruit such as apple and orange halves can be placed on wooden spikes.

(continued)

Thus far I have made little mention of a creature which can be the bane of many feeders --the Greedy Squirrel. Squirrels can destroy your feeder and eat most of your bird seed. You probably can never totally defeat squirrels, but placing your feeder where they cannot jump to it may help. Some type of baffle on the pole below the feeder may also work. The best baffle I have ever seen was made from one end of a fifty gallon barrel. The barrel end was mounted on the pole in such a way that squirrels climbing the pole can only climb into the barrel and cannot reach the feeder. I made an effective baffle from an old garbage can lid. An application of Tanglefoot (a commercial pest repellent) on the pole may also help.

The feed you put in your feeder is just as important as all the factors mentioned so far. I'll discuss types of bird feed in the next issue.

--Rick Hollis

There will be two classes in birdwatching offered in Iowa City this fall. Rick Hollis will be teaching a general course designed for the beginning birdwatcher. It will cover basic techniques, equipment, and local birds and birding areas. This class will meet on Thursday evenings at City High beginning Nov. 12. It is offered through Kirkwood Adult Education. Call 338-3658 for registration information.

Mike Newlon will be instructing a course in Bird Identification for The University of Iowa's "Learning Adventures for Adults" program. The class is designed for those with some birding experience who wish to increase their field identification skills. It will meet for five Tuesday evenings beginning Oct. 20; there will be several optional field trips. For registration information write: Center for Conferences and Institutes, 211 IMU, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242, or call 353-5508. Fee for this class is \$25.

## FIELD TRIP SUMMARY

July 26, 1981 To Coralville Reservoir.  
Leader, Mike Newlon.

Highlights of this trip included the following: Great Blue Heron, Wood Duck, Lesser Yellow-legs, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher (1), Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper (1), Forster's Tern (6), Black Tern (3), Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Sedge Wren, and Dickcissel.

Participants: Steve Beaumont, John Cordell, Mr. and Mrs. Orville Crow, Ann Feddersen, Karole, Jim, & Laura Fuller, M. L. and Jane Huit, Cal and Bernie Knight, Ramona McGurk, Carol and Mike Newlon, Mary Noble, Tom and Marty O'Gorman, Barbara Rohrbough, Jim Sandrock, and Tom Staudt.

THE EASTERN IOWA BIRDWATCH  
CARL BENDORF, EDITOR  
825 7TH AVENUE  
IOWA CITY, IA. 52240



### THE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

What is your image of the ideal birdwatching day? Is it a pleasant color-filled Indian summer day in October with its waterfowl and late migrants?--or perhaps a fresh day in May at the peak of spring migration?

Chances are that your fantasy does not take place in December when it seems that the only thing lower than the number of species of birds in Iowa is the temperature. But in the last two weeks of December approximately 33,000 people across the United States and Canada will spend a day searching for birds--they will travel on foot and in every vehicle imaginable--when they participate in the 82nd annual Christmas Bird Count.

The Christmas Bird Count is an annual census of birds, sponsored by the National Wildlife Service. About 1300 individual counts will be made during the two-week census period centered on Christmas Day. Each count covers a designated circular area 15 miles in diameter. The results of the count, including the number of species seen, the number of individuals of each species, the hours of coverage, and the names of the participants are published each year by the Audubon Society in a special issue of its American Birds. In recent years over 600 species of birds and over 100,000,000 individual birds have been recorded.

These impressive figures are a tribute to the vision of Frank M. Chapman, Curator of Ornithology at the American Museum of Natural History, originator of the Christmas Count. The first count was taken on Christmas Day, 1900, by Dr. Chapman and a number of his colleagues at 25 count areas across the United States. Dr. Chapman promoted the Christmas bird count as an alternative activity to the traditional holiday hunt which he characterized as "...the cheerful mission of killing practically everything in fur or feathers that crosses their path..." He encouraged people to engage in sports which aided the conservation rather than the slaughter of wildlife. In addition, Chapman thought that an annual census of birds measured against the number of hours of effort would be valuable in establishing winter bird populations and trends, much as the U. S. Census Bureau attempts to do with people.

Along with its growth in popularity and increased coverage, and partly as a consequence of these, the Christmas Bird Count has evolved in other ways. In its first decades, emphasis

was placed solely on the number of species seen, and a healthy competition arose among count groups to compile long species lists. Gradually, beginning in the 1950s, more importance was attached to the number of individuals of a species. Another development has been the imposition of stricter rules to insure some uniformity as more and more areas began reporting counts. At present, all counts must be registered with the Audubon Society. Every count must be made during the announced time period, and only birds within a strictly defined 15-mile diameter circle can be included in the results. Counts must last at least 8 hours, but no longer than one day. All unusual sightings must be checked by experienced leaders and properly documented.

These rules were introduced in order to give the count a more solid statistical basis, so that the jumble of raw data would have greater scientific value. The count, ideally, should reflect only the variations in bird populations. The results should be independent of variations in procedure from one count to the next. But on the national level the statistical significance of the count data is questionable. There are just too many external variables--the number of participants in a count, quality and thoroughness of coverage, and local variation in weather to name a few--to allow many generalizations about bird population trends. Christmas Count data do, however, illustrate the spread of the Starling and other species across the United States and fairly accurately show the relative distribution of some species. On the other hand, many of the increases in bird populations indicated by the count data can be explained away by the increase in reporting localities and more thorough coverage of given areas.

On the local level the Christmas Bird Count can provide valuable information on bird population trends when effort and environment variables are taken into account. For example, the absence of Bobwhite and low numbers of Ring-necked Pheasant in the last two Iowa City counts suggests that their populations were severely affected by the harsh winters of 1976-78. And the long-term decline of certain species might also be a significant indication --and warning--of habitat destruction, a growing problem in many count areas.

Last year in Iowa, 39 count areas reported a record total of 127 species. The Iowa City count reported 60 species last year, also a record total. Thirty-seven people participated in the Iowa City count which encompasses an area centered near North Liberty and includes the Coralville Reservoir, the Lake Macbride areas, and Kent Park.

The Iowa City count was started by F. W. Kent in 1951. Many of the early counts consisted of one carload of dedicated birders covering the entire area as best they could.

You can subscribe to BIRDWATCH by sending \$3.00 to The Eastern Iowa Birdwatch, 825 7th Avenue, Iowa City, Iowa 52240. If we can mail to your University office, please include that address.

Although at first thought this might not seem like the most appealing way to spend a December day (cold with possible wind, rain, and snow; a long day beginning before dawn to "call up" some owls, and lasting until evening darkness; each participant is charged a \$1.50 fee to defray the costs of compilation)--why not consider helping count the birds? Although intangible, the rewards are many.

--Lanny Haldy

(Editor's Note: The 1981 Iowa City Christmas Count will be held on Saturday, December 19. Anyone is welcome to participate. Let's all try to make this year's count a record one for observers and birds! See separate note for details.)

## BASIC BIRD FEEDING

In the last article I discussed the construction of bird feeders. This time I will cover the various types of food that you can serve in your feeders. A very important factor in attracting the bird species that you prefer is choosing the right kind of food. I prefer watching almost any kind of bird besides Starlings and House Sparrows and my discussion will be biased in that direction.

Suet and peanut butter are attractive to many birds, including Blue Jays, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, and especially woodpeckers. To discourage Starlings these foods should be placed in hanging feeders.

Many people will occasionally put out bread crumbs, fruit, and table scraps. This will attract many birds--primarily Starlings and House Sparrows--as both of these species prefer soft food.

Thistle or Niger seeds are the most attractive food for Goldfinches, Purple Finches, and Common Redpolls. These are small black seeds which are needle-shaped and just less than 1/4" long. They are quite expensive and are almost never found in commercial bird seed mixes. There are tubular feeders available for dispensing thistle seeds, and this will be very popular with finches. Other species will eat what spills onto the ground.

Sunflower seeds are what most people think of as wild bird seed, and rightly so, as almost all of our birds will eat sunflower seeds. There are several kinds of these seeds and the wise buyer looks for the smaller seeds which are solid black in color (the best kind) or black and white. Birds such as titmice, chickadees, and the finches will take this seed. They cannot handle the large gray-striped seeds as jays and Cardinals can. One can purchase hulled sunflower seeds or seed pieces which will leave your yard cleaner. Also, these are attractive to all of the above species, including the House Sparrow.

If you limit your bird feeding to suet, thistle seed, and sunflower seeds, and if you position your feeder appropriately, you will probably have good results in attracting the birds I have already mentioned; however, these foods are not eaten by birds which generally prefer to feed on small seeds on the ground. These include Mourning Doves, Song Sparrows, Tree Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, and Northern Juncos. Any food eaten by these birds will also attract Starlings and House Sparrows.

Commercial mixtures of these small seed types can be found in grocery stores and lawn and garden stores. These mixes can vary greatly in the type and proportion of seeds and I will describe the various seeds so you can choose the best mix for your feeder. Most mixes will have the seed proportions listed on the package.

Millet: These are small (1/8" diameter) round seeds and are either white or pink. These are the best small seed and the birds will eat these first. Also eaten by chickadees and finches.

Milo: Almost all species will eat this round, reddish seed (larger than millet). Especially attractive to Starlings.

Rape Seed: Do not use mixes with rape seed. Very few birds will eat this very small (1/16") round black seed.

Hulled Oats: Very alluring to Starlings. These seeds are straw-colored, football-shaped and about 1/2" long.

Peanuts: Whole shelled peanuts will be eaten by Blue Jays. Smaller peanut pieces, such as halves or hearts, will be consumed by a variety of species, especially Starlings. There are special squirrel- and Starling-resistant feeders for dispensing peanuts.

Cracked Corn: Will be inviting to Cardinals and the small seed-eaters. You should buy the most finely ground corn available (often called chick corn).

In addition to the above precautions, wheat and rice should be avoided in bird seed mixtures. If you want to make your own seed mixes, feed stores will usually sell many of the seeds separately.

Besides food, birds require water in all seasons of the year. During a normal winter they can get most of their water from snow. If you wish to provide water, there are devices available to keep the water from freezing.

One last word of caution: once you begin feeding birds in the fall, you must continue to feed regularly until their natural foods are again available in the spring. Once the birds learn to depend on your generosity, they will have great difficulty if this supply is suddenly ended. So have fun, and good luck!

--Rick Hollis

~~~~~  
A very useful reference source for anyone new to birdwatching or new to the Iowa City area is Birding in Eastern Iowa by F. W. Kent and T. H. Kent. This 150 page book is a chronicle of over 3,000 field trips taken by the authors in the Iowa City area from 1949 to 1973. The first section of the book includes descriptions of favorite birding spots, average migration dates for common species, a list of resident winter birds, and a summary of Iowa City Christmas Counts.

The main portion of the book is a listing and capsule summary of the status of the 270 bird species observed by the authors in eastern Iowa over a 25 year period. This large body of interesting data is interspersed with over 100 excellent photographs of area birds taken by the Kents.

Birding in Eastern Iowa is usually stocked by Iowa Book and Supply in Iowa City. If it is unavailable there, contact Dr. T. H. Kent, 211 Richards Street, Iowa City, IA 52240. The price is \$7.50.

## ARIZONA ADVENTURE

This past summer I joined Tom Kent of Iowa City and Ross Silcock of Malvern, Iowa on a two-week birding trip to the Southwest United States. Our primary target was the southeast corner of Arizona which many consider to be one of the best birding areas in the United States. Of the many interesting spots in Arizona, there was one that especially captured my fascination--Guadalupe Canyon.

We reached Guadalupe Canyon on July 21 by driving approximately 25 miles east of Douglas, Arizona on a rocky road through dry, desert scrubland. The most visible birds along this drive were large numbers of Turkey Vultures soaring overhead on the air thermals. Occasionally a Roadrunner, trailing its long tail, dashed across our path. As it wobbled from side to side, the tail seemed to act as a counterbalance to the motion of the bird's powerful legs.

The landscape was unchanging until we passed a small muddy waterhole. In the desert a water source will often attract birds, so we checked the shrubs around the small pool and spied a Varied Bunting, which is an extremely beautiful bird. In poor light it looks like an all-dark finch, but in bright sunlight this bird is a shimmering combination of purple, blue, and red. The song strongly resembles that of an Indigo Bunting.

After continuing easterly we stopped at the San Bernardino Ranch. The ranch and surrounding land is owned by the Nature Conservancy, and we were told by the caretaker (whose wife is from Kalona, Iowa) that the ranch once belonged to Texas John Slaughter, a famous sheriff of Cochise County many years ago. We walked around the grounds to the ranch pond, which was a lush oasis of green, and were surprised to see several Coots, Red-winged Blackbirds, and a Common Yellowthroat. These birds are much more common in Iowa than in Arizona, and we certainly did not expect to see them in the middle of the desert. Around the ranch we also saw a large group of Scaled Quail and a single Gambel's Quail whistling from the top of a small bush.

Several miles from the ranch we left the main rock road and turned off on a rougher road. After nine miles we came to the entrance to Guadalupe Canyon. The entrance was marked with a warning sign--"No Hunting--No Camping for Hunters--Enter at Your Own Risk--Guadalupe Canyon Ranch." The sign seemed to be very carefully worded to allow "trespassing and camping for birders" so we accepted this invitation and drove in.

Guadalupe Canyon is not very imposing or spectacular. It is a small and shallow valley with a usually dry stream bed which is lined with Sycamores, Cottonwoods, and small shrubs. The canyon actually begins in Mexico, and the upper end just barely extends into Arizona and New Mexico. The chief ornithological feature of Guadalupe Canyon is the birds found here whose normal range is mainly in Mexico. The birds apparently follow the natural corridor of the canyon into the United States. There are three species of birds that were first discovered in the United States here in Guadalupe Canyon: the Buff-collared Nightjar and Thick-billed Kingbird (both first found in 1958) and the Violet-crowned Hummingbird. This is still one of the best places in the United States to see these birds, and we had high hopes of doing so.

The only suitable spot for our campsite was a flat, grassy area which we had to share with a small herd of cattle. The Thick-billed Kingbirds were impossible to miss as they called and chattered from the treetops. Similar to other kingbirds in appearance, they are aptly named for their heavy bills are quite prominent. We spent our first 45 minutes in the canyon almost in a state of awe as we scrambled about photographing the kingbirds, while a pair of spectacular Vermilion Flycatchers kept getting in the way! We were almost too excited even to begin setting up our tent.

The best way to cover Guadalupe Canyon is to walk up and down the canyon along the stream bed. This we set out to do, and after walking perhaps one-quarter of a mile, a taped call of the Northern Beardless Flycatcher immediately evoked an answer from a nearby bush. We got a very good look at this small, nondescript, very rare bird. Several hundred yards further up the canyon an immaculate Violet-crowned Hummingbird perched on a small tree limb for us to enjoy. We saw and heard a number of other birds in the canyon, including Scaled Quail, White-winged Dove, Broad-billed Hummingbird, Gila and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Cassin's Kingbird, Brown Crested Flycatcher, Phainopepla, Bell's Vireo, Hooded Oriole, Blue Grosbeak, and Brown Towhee.

Our strategy for finding the Buff-collared Nightjar was to wait until dusk near the top of the canyon to play a recording of its call and listen for a distant answer. After a gourmet dinner of peanut butter sandwiches and Tang, we drove our rented car about three miles up the canyon, crossing into New Mexico about halfway up.

The nightjar looks very much like its close relative, the Whip-poor-will, but the call is very different. It could be described as a loud and clear "cuk-cuk-cuk-cuk-cuk-cukacheea" which increases in tempo and pitch. I had been driving Tom and Ross to distraction with my vocal renditions of this call during the long drive from Iowa, and we were excited at the prospect of hearing the real thing. Earlier in the evening our enthusiasm was dampened after we had spoken to a Forest Service researcher who had camped in the canyon three or four nights a week for the past three years. She said that she had not yet heard the nightjar, although some birders reported hearing it on one occasion earlier in the summer. As the sky darkened and the Poor-wills began to call, we parked the car in a likely spot and prepared to begin a long search and possible "wild goose chase." We were not very optimistic as we started the tape recorder at this first stop. Almost immediately a bird of Whip-poor-will size and shape came out of nowhere and flew about 20 feet directly over our heads. We heard it twice give a call which sounded exactly like the first portion of the call on the recording we had just played. The bird landed on a rock about 20 yards in front of us and we briefly observed it in the beam of a flashlight. Tom saw what appeared to be a lighter collar on the nape of the neck. Then, suddenly, the bird was gone. We almost couldn't believe what we had just seen and heard. All the details seemed to indicate that this was indeed the elusive Buff-collared Nightjar. We repeated the tape at frequent intervals all the way down the canyon but we never saw or heard the bird again. We decided that we had simply been in the right spot at exactly the right time.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

After leaving Guadalupe Canyon the next morning, we visited many other birding "hot spots" in Arizona, but I believe that Guadalupe Canyon will always remain one of my favorites.

--Carl J. Bendorf

### SPECIAL NOTICE!

The 1981 Iowa City Christmas Bird Count will be on Saturday, December 19. Anyone who is interested in participating is invited to attend an organizational meeting on Wednesday, December 9, at 7:30 PM. The meeting will be held at the home of Mike Newlon, 408 Wales Street, Iowa City. If you cannot attend but still wish to go on the count, please call Mike before December 9. Home: 338-2091 or Office: 353-6508.

### FIELD TRIP SUMMARIES

September 19, 1981 To Hickory Hill Park.  
Leader, Ruth Williams.

This trip was scheduled to visit Cone Marsh but, after seeing the large number of hunters there, we decided to bird Hickory Hill Park instead.

It was sunny and mild with a light breeze as we entered the park from the Bloomington Street parking lot and walked north. We saw four species of hawks in the park: Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, Red-tailed, and Broad-winged. We also identified a good mixture of warblers--Tennessee, Magnolia, Pine, Palm, Wilson's, and American Redstart. Other species seen included a Common Nighthawk perched on a tree limb over the trail, Catbird, Brown Thrasher, House Wren, Black-billed Cuckoo, Red-headed and Downy Woodpeckers, and large numbers of Common Flickers.

Participants: John Cordell, Marlyn Glasson, Ramona McGurk, Bob Webber, and Ruth Williams.

October 3, 1981 To Hickory Hill Park.  
Leader, Rick Hollis.

We arrived at the park as the warm sun was melting the heavy frost. This pleasant weather changed quickly into gray skies and a gusting wind, reminding us of the approach of winter.

The total number of bird species was 44 with the following highlights: two Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, a late Chimney Swift, a possible Winter Wren, a Wilson's Warbler, and a wonderful pair of Rufous-sided Towhees.

Other species seen included Red-tailed Hawk, Eastern Phoebe, Brown Creeper, Golden-and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Orange-crowned and Nashville Warblers, Purple Finch, and White-throated Sparrow.

Participants: John Cordell, Rick Hollis, Elma Honn, James Huntington, Gayle Lyman, Jim Sandrock, Bob Webber, and Ruth Williams.

October 12, 1981 To Matsell Bridge Access.  
Leaders, Cal and Bernie Knight.

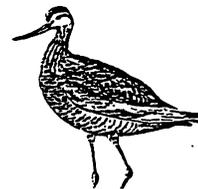
Matsell Bridge is a county park along the Wapsipinicon River in eastern Linn County. It is about three miles north of the town of Viola--about a one-hour drive from Iowa City. The park contains a good deal of fine habitat for sparrows.

Our hardy group decided to proceed with the trip despite the weather (temperature of 47°, wind of 14 mph gusting to 38 mph, and gray skies with light rain). However, with the rain on our lenses and the wind whisking small birds away as soon as they flushed, identification was very difficult. As we watched 3 V's of Canada Geese pass overhead everyone decided that fall had really arrived with winter soon to follow.

In addition to the geese, the following bird highlights were recorded in the park: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, Common Bobwhite, large flock of American Robins, Cedar Waxwing, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped Warblers, White-crowned and Fox Sparrows.

Participants: John Cordell, James Huntington, Cal and Bernie Knight, Mary Noble, Carol Thompson (new in Iowa City--"Welcome, Carol"), and Ruth Williams.

THE EASTERN IOWA BIRDWATCH  
CARL BENDORF, EDITOR  
825 7th. AVENUE  
IOWA CITY, IA. 52240



## IOWA BIRDLINE IS ON THE AIR!

The IOWA BIRDLINE is in operation: The BIRDLINE is a telephone answering machine located in Amana which will provide any caller with news of ornithological interest. There will be a new 2-3 minute announcement every Thursday. The number of the BIRDLINE is

AC 319/622-3353

The BIRDLINE has been funded by private contributions made through the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. Enough money has been raised to operate for at least two years.

When you call the BIRDLINE you will first hear the date on which the announcement was recorded and the date of the next scheduled tape change. Next the highlights of the announcement will be stated, and the message will follow. Announcements will include notice of rare or unusual birds present in Iowa, unusual concentrations of birds, comments on regular seasonal movements, and scheduled birding events such as special meetings and Christmas Count dates.

At the end of the announcement, you will be invited to leave a message about any interesting observations you have made. The machine will continue to record as long as you keep talking. These messages will be regularly checked and the next week's announcement will be formulated from this information.

The IOWA BIRDLINE is not only for reporting rare birds. Certainly that is one of the main functions, but there are many birders around the State who are interested in knowing about common birds that appear early in the season or linger longer than usual. Uncommon breeding birds and the presence of unusual numbers or even the absence of certain species are the types of information that can be announced on the BIRDLINE only if you call in and report. The BIRDLINE will be only as interesting as the reports made by you and other birders throughout the State. Why not make it a habit to call after your bird trips or to call and report about the birds you see on your way to work or in the back yard. Furthermore, if you have any suggestions for improving the BIRDLINE, please call and leave a message.

When you leave a message on the BIRDLINE, please be as specific as possible. Give your name, address, and phone number. Then mention the date the bird(s) are seen and directions to the exact location, if appropriate. Please indicate if you prefer not to be contacted by

others who may want help in looking for the bird(s).

The BIRDLINE began operation in mid-December and some of the birds already announced include Hawk Owl, Snowy Owl, Saw-whet Owl, Black-legged Kittiwake, Red and White-winged Crossbills, and more. Good Birding!

-- Rick Hollis  
--Carl Bendorf

## FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

All field trips start at the parking lot north of the Iowa Memorial Union on The University of Iowa campus. Most trips are over by early afternoon.

Sunday, Amana Woods. Leader, Carl Bendorf  
Jan.31 (351-4958). Meet at 7 AM.

Saturday, Trip to the Mississippi River for  
Feb.13 Bald Eagles. Leader, Mike Newlon (338-2091). Dress for very cold and windy weather. Bring a lunch. Trip will be over by early afternoon; some may wish to stay later. Meet at 7 AM.

Saturday, Cone Marsh. Leader, Ruth Williams  
Mar.13 (338-1359). May see migrant waterfowl. Meet at 7 AM.

## AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS

The Cedar Rapids Audubon Society is again hosting a series of excellent film lectures sponsored by the Audubon Wildlife Film Series. Everyone is welcome.

Wednesday, "Southern Sea Otter Country" by  
Jan. 27 Burdette White.

Monday, "Romance of the West" by Allen  
Feb. 22 King.

Monday, "Wilderness Trek Through New Zea-  
March 29 land" by Grant Foster.

All films are shown in the Sinclair Memorial Auditorium on the Coe College campus in Cedar Rapids. Films begin at 7:30 PM and admission is \$2.00.

# 1981 CHRISTMAS COUNT SUMMARY

Twenty-eight observers braved the cold on December 19th to participate in the 1981 Iowa City Christmas Bird Count. Three more volunteers watched feeders. The total number of species observed was 62, a new record for the count. Unusual sightings were a Double-crested Cormorant (new for the count) and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet (seen only once before). Other uncommon species seen were Northern Shoveler, Hooded Merganser, and Red Crossbill. Species seen in high numbers included Red-tailed Hawk, Common Screech Owl, Blue Jay, and House Sparrow. Perhaps due to the lack of snow cover, longspurs, Snow Buntings, and Horned Larks were missed. Icterids were present in low numbers. A patch of open water on the Coralville Reservoir held the Mallards and other dabbling ducks, and a lone Ring-billed Gull remained after the cold wave which occurred just before the count had driven the other gulls south.

For those who doubt whether their participation in the count is worthwhile, consider: Only 11 species were seen by all parties, and only one of the nine parties failed to record at least one species not seen by any of the others.

The list of species seen is as follows:

|                          |       |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Double-crested Cormorant | 1     |
| Mallard                  | 1,550 |
| Black Duck               | 16    |
| Gadwall                  | 2     |
| Pintail                  | 6     |
| Northern Shoveler        | 1     |
| Common Merganser         | 1     |
| Hooded Merganser         | 1     |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk       | 2     |
| Cooper's Hawk            | 1     |
| Red-tailed Hawk          | 40    |
| Rough-legged Hawk        | 1     |
| Northern Harrier         | 1     |
| Bald Eagle               | 1     |
| American Kestrel         | 3     |
| Hawk (species)           | 3     |
| Bobwhite                 | 3     |
| Ring-necked Pheasant     | 37    |
| Ring-billed Gull         | 1     |
| Rock Dove                | 228   |
| Mourning Dove            | 3     |
| Common Screech Owl       | 13    |
| Great Horned Owl         | 16    |
| Barred Owl               | 4     |
| Long-eared Owl           | 4     |
| Short-eared Owl          | 2     |
| Saw-whet Owl             | 1     |
| Large owl (species)      | 3     |
| Belted Kingfisher        | 4     |
| Common Flicker           | 15    |
| Pileated Woodpecker      | 1     |
| Red-bellied Woodpecker   | 33    |
| Red-headed Woodpecker    | 80    |
| Downy Woodpecker         | 87    |
| Hairy Woodpecker         | 13    |
| Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | 1     |
| Blue Jay                 | 320   |
| Common Crow              | 175   |
| Tufted Titmouse          | 14    |
| Black-capped Chickadee   | 274   |
| White-breasted Nuthatch  | 107   |
| Red-breasted Nuthatch    | 7     |
| Brown Creeper            | 14    |

CONTINUED

|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| American Robin         | 6     |
| Ruby-crowned Kinglet   | 1     |
| Golden-crowned Kinglet | 4     |
| Cedar Waxwing          | 16    |
| Shrike (species)       |       |
| European Starling      | 1,018 |
| House Sparrow          | 3,225 |
| Meadowlark (species)   | 1     |
| Red-winged Blackbird   | 1     |
| Brown-headed Cowbird   | 3     |
| Blackbird (species)    | 4     |
| Northern Cardinal      | 233   |
| Purple Finch           | 32    |
| Pine Siskin            | 44    |
| American Goldfinch     | 97    |
| Red Crossbill          | 16    |
| Northern Junco         | 891   |
| American Tree Sparrow  | 754   |
| White-throated Sparrow | 3     |
| Swamp Sparrow          | 2     |
| Song Sparrow           | 12    |

Observers: Carl Bendorf, Corey and Lewis Blevins, Michael and Ruth Bonfiglio, Mona Brown, Linda Caldwell, Lenea Carlson, Sandra de Kock, Edwin Gentzler, Lanny Haldy, Rick Hollis, Anne, Bill, and Tom Kent, Bernie and Cal Knight, Larry Lindler, Ramona McGurk, Dawson Mohler, Michael Mulier, Mike Newlon, Mary Noble, Joan Peck, Peter Petersen, Jim and Jody Sandrock, Tom Staudt, Carol Thompson, Bob Webber, and Ruth Williams.

The Birdwatch is published six times a year. You can subscribe by sending \$3.00 to The Eastern Iowa Birdwatch, 825 7th Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240. If we can mail to your University office, please include that address.

## A FLOCK BY ANY OTHER NAME--PLEASE

It seems that today most birdwatchers and authors routinely resort to the bland and mundane "flock" to point out any plurality of birds, with only an occasional use of more specific terms such as covey (of quail and partridge) or murder (of crows). But in his book, An Exaltation of Larks or, The Venereal Game (Penguin Books, 1977), James Lipton demonstrates that in late medieval England almost every beast and bird of the forest and farm had its own collective term, or term of ventry (from the Latin venari, to hunt game). In medieval England knowledge of the art of hunting was a requisite for social acceptability; an English nobleman was expected to be as familiar with the extensive vocabulary of the hunt as he was with the polite language of the court. A gentleman would recognize a bevy of roebucks, a trip of goats, or a sord of mallards when he saw one.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

\*\*\*\*\*

Lipton laments the loss of these fascinating terms of ventry from our modern vocabulary. He feels that with them has gone a bit of poetry and beauty. To be sure, Lipton is concerned with names for all sorts of things, and birds comprise only a small portion of his book. Nevertheless, all those who indulge in the modern hunt to watch birds might do well to listen to Lipton's protest and use the old group terms, thereby putting a little magic and wonder back into the scientific, sophisticated sport of bird-watching. As Lipton concludes, ". . . it isn't just that we will be able to turn to someone and coolly and correctly say 'Look--a charm of finches.' What is more important is that a charm of poetry will have quietly slipped into our lives."

Some additional collectives:

A dissimulation of birds.  
 A paddling of ducks (on water).  
 A skein of geese (in flight).  
 A rafter of turkeys.  
 A walk of snipe.  
 A fall of woodcocks.  
 A dule of doves.  
 A wedge of swans.  
 A party of jays.  
 A cover of coots.  
 A siege of herons.  
 A tidings of magpies.  
 A cast of hawks.  
 A deceit of lapwings.  
 An ostentation of peacocks.  
 A bouquet of pheasants.  
 A congregation of plovers.  
 An unkindness of ravens.  
 A building of rooks.  
 A host of sparrows.  
 A descent of woodpeckers.  
 A mustering of storks.  
 A flight of swallows.  
 A spring of teal.  
 A parliament of owls.  
 A watch of nightingales.  
 A murmuration of starlings.  
 An exaltation of larks.

--Lanny Haldy

### WILLIAMS PRAIRIE WORKDAY

The Iowa Chapter of The Nature Conservancy will conduct a Williams Prairie Workday on February 6th at 9:00 AM. Williams Prairie is a valuable natural prairie preserve in western Johnson County. Small trees are invading the prairie and volunteers will spend the day cutting and removing these trees. If you have a chainsaw or pruning shears, please bring them. Anyone interested in helping should contact Bob Van Ervelde, R. R. #1, Box 370A, Malcolm, IA 50157 (Phone 515/522-9698).

### THE SANDHILLS OF THE PLATTE

The spectacular spring migration of the Sandhill Crane can be witnessed along an 80-mile stretch of the Platte River in Central Nebraska--from Grand Island to Lexington. These Sandhills fly from their wintering grounds in Texas to the Platte where they start showing up in late February. The number of birds reaches the heaviest concentration (estimated at 200,000 to 250,000) about March 20th, then decreases slowly until early May when all have departed for nesting territory in the Arctic and Siberia.

To reach the Platte River area from Iowa City, just drive west on Interstate 80. It is a 7- to 7 1/2-hour drive to the Grand Island area where you should start to see flocks of Sandhills in the air. For the next 80 miles they should be continually visible, either overhead or feeding on the ground on both sides of I-80. We usually continue another 45 minutes west from Grand Island to stay overnight in Kearney.

At the Kearney I-80 exit and along the two miles north into Kearney there are many fine motels, a pancake house, and most of the common fast-food facilities. We prefer to stay at the Best Western Tel Star Motor Inn. It also has a fine restaurant (the Chef's Oven) and is located one mile north of I-80. Not being addicted to winter camping, we didn't check out the campgrounds, but camping facilities are available nearby at Fort Kearney State Historical Park, Kearney County Recreation Area, and near Grand Island at the Morman Island Recreation Area.

The most spectacular times to view the cranes are at sunrise and sunset. To reach one excellent viewing area, go nine miles east of the Kearney exit on I-80, and then go south at Exit 279 on Minden Road (Nebraska #10). Driving south on Minden Road about 1/4 mile you will cross the north channel of the Platte. Continue south, cross the south channel of the Platte, and park along the side of the road just south of the bridge. There is a band of trees along the south side of the river and on the east side of the road, and just south of these trees is an open field which seems to be one of the Sandhills' staging areas.

At about 5:30 PM the first flocks start dropping into this field. Until dark, large and small flocks of bugling Sandhill Cranes will be continually descending into this field. At 6:10 PM the birds fly up over the trees to the sandbar in the river. At 6:40 PM the bravest of the cranes start wading into the shallow water. By 7:15 PM it is too dark to see the birds, but you can hear the Sandhills still descending into the water; apparently their incessant bugling continues all night long.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



FROM THE EDITOR

To watch the Sandhills leave the river in the morning, you must be in position before daybreak. At 5:45 AM the first small flock lifts into the air but then settles back into the river. At 6:10 AM there is an explosion of rising Sandhills with thousands of birds milling around silhouetted against the dawn sky as flocks of all sizes leave for their feeding grounds. By 6:30 AM there is only one lone Sandhill left standing in the river.

For the best viewing during the day, just drive the secondary roads that parallel the river on the south. The Sandhills' feeding range is rarely more than two miles north and ten miles south of the Platte. You should see thousands of Sandhills feeding on the ground, displaying, taking off and landing, small groups and large flocks--and all continually bugling. However, the Sandhills are surprisingly wary, so to photograph them you will need to stay in the car (or a blind) and use a telephoto lens; if you should get too close they will darken the sky as they seem to flush from the ground in waves.

Remember that March is still wintertime along the Platte, so dress warmly and enjoy the spectacle of the greatest concentration of Sandhill Cranes anywhere in the world.

--Cal and Bernie Knight

To the right of your name and address on the mailing label is a number which indicates the expiration date of your subscription to the BIRDWATCH. For example, 5-82 means that your subscription will expire after May (5) 1982, and the May-June issue will be your last one. I hope that you will choose to renew in time to avoid missing any issues.

I very much enjoy working on the BIRDWATCH and I hope that you enjoy reading it. If you have any comments or suggestions for notes or articles, I would sincerely like to hear from you.

I wish to express my appreciation for the great amount of help I have received from many people with writing, editing, and typing of material. Thank you.

Carl Bendorf, Editor  
825 - Seventh Avenue  
Iowa City, IA 52240

Editor's Note: Below are two additional references on the Platte River area.

"Birddom's Biggest Jamboree" by Peter C. Zura in Home and Away (a magazine of the American Automobile Association), Jan.-Feb. 1982.

"The Platte-River of the Cranes" in Roger Tory Peterson's Dozen Birding Hot Spots by George Harrison.

If you are planning a trip to see the cranes, the Knights have graciously offered to answer any questions about their trip. (337-9140)

\*\*\*\*\*

THE EASTERN IOWA BIRDWATCH  
CARL BENDORF, EDITOR  
825 7TH AVENUE  
IOWA CITY, IA. 52240





## A CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT "CALIFORNIA STYLE"

On January 2, 1982, Carol and I took part in the Santa Barbara, California, Christmas Count. This count usually attracts over one-hundred participants and, because of the mild climate and the great variety of habitats in the count circle, Santa Barbara is annually among the nation's leaders in the total number of species recorded.

Our assigned portion of the count area was the University of California campus which occupies a small peninsula of land jutting out into the Pacific Ocean.

Dawn found us listening (in vain) for Great Horned Owls. As the sky grew light, we began searching the eucalyptus groves and struggling to comb the hundreds of Audubon's (Yellow-rumped) Warblers and the White-crowned Sparrows for more uncommon species. Other birds present included Anna's Hummingbirds, Scrub Jays, and a Lincoln's Sparrow. A float in a brackish lagoon near the Marine Biology Lab was covered with dozens of roosting Double-crested Cormorants and Brown Pelicans, and a single White Pelican. The beach at the tip of the peninsula held shorebirds--Willetts, a Whimbrel, Marbled Godwits, Sanderlings, Black-bellied Plovers--and gulls--Western, Mew, Ring-billed, Heermann's, and California. A rocky outcrop sheltered a small group of Black Turnstones, but not the Ruddy Turnstone that the area leader had assured us would be present.

The area around the athletic fields produced still more swarms of White-crowned Sparrows and Audubon's Warblers, as well as some better birds: both kinglets, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Oregon Juncos (including a vagrant Slate-colored), Orange-crowned and Townsend's Warblers, and a White-tailed Kite. Red-tailed Hawks soared in the gusty winds. To cover this larger area, we separated for an hour and while I was combing White-crowns to find one Golden-crowned Sparrow, Carol was turning up a Harris' Sparrow and a White-throated Sparrow. Both are rare in Southern California.

At lunchtime, we joined other birders from our area at a nearby state park; here we watched hundreds of gulls and terns on a sandbar.

After lunch we resumed our coverage of the campus. The brush and trees around the lagoon yielded Black and Say's Phoebes, House Finches, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and Bushtits. A return visit to the rocks at the point produced our long sought after Ruddy Turnstone, and

also an immature Thayer's Gull, Forster's and Royal Terns, Western Grebes, Arctic Loons, Brandt's Cormorants, and a Water Pipit.

At sunset, we sat in the car and scanned the skyline behind the campus, hoping to glimpse a Prairie Falcon, but were not successful. Our day's list was 79 species, plus another 7 seen during lunch.

That night, after a lasagna dinner in the bird hall of Santa Barbara Natural History Museum, the list for the entire count circle was compiled. The total was 216 species, certainly the largest count we had ever participated in.

--Mike Newlon

## FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

All field trips start at the parking lot north of the Iowa Memorial Union on The University of Iowa campus unless otherwise noted. Most trips are over by early afternoon.

- |                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>Saturday</u><br><u>April 10th</u>     | Muskrat Slough. Leaders, Cal and Bernie Knight (337-9140). Meet at 6 AM.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <u>Saturday</u><br><u>April 17th</u>     | Coralville Reservoir. Leader, Mike Newlon (338-2091). Meet at 6:30 AM.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <u>Saturday</u><br><u>May 1st</u>        | Cone Marsh. Leader, Ruth Williams (338-1359). Meet at 6:30 AM.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <u>Sat.-Sun.</u><br><u>May 8 &amp; 9</u> | Spring Meeting of Iowa Ornithologists' Union in Ames. See separate note for details.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <u>Sunday</u><br><u>May 9th</u>          | Fuller's Farm near West Branch. Leader, Jim Fuller (338-3561). Meet at 7 AM.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <u>Saturday</u><br><u>May 22nd</u>       | Lacey-Keosauqua State Park. Meet at the main entrance to the park just south of the town of Keosauqua on Highway #1, at 7 AM. Leader, Jim Sandrock (338-5774). There will be a picnic at the Sandrocks' cabin afterwards. Please contact Jim <u>in advance</u> if you plan to attend. |
| <u>Early June</u>                        | (Exact date to be announced next issue.) Midnight trip to Cone Marsh. Will listen for and use taped calls to "call out" breeding rails. Contact Rick Hollis (338-4834) for details.                                                                                                   |

CONTINUED

## FROM THE EDITOR

Listed elsewhere in this issue are the current subscribers to the BIRDWATCH. I have two reasons for printing this list. First, I hope that you will check the expiration date of your subscription which will be just to the right of your name. The date given will be the date of the last issue in your subscription. For example, 3-82 means your subscription will expire with the March (3)-April 1982 issue. If you have recently sent in your renewal it may not be indicated on the list. All addresses are in Iowa City unless otherwise indicated.

The second motive I have in printing this list is that I hope it will encourage area bird enthusiasts to get to know one another. You may have met someone on a recent field trip whose name has escaped you. Or, there may be someone who lives right around the corner who shares your interest in birds.

Furthermore, this list can be an indication of the nature and composition of the Iowa City "Bird Club." The Iowa City Bird Club is presently a very loosely organized group of people whose primary connection is a subscription to the BIRDWATCH and a common interest in birds. For a number of years, Mike Newlon has organized a field trip schedule and has served as compiler and field general of the Iowa City Christmas Bird Count. We all owe him many thanks. But in recent years there have not been any other scheduled meetings or events. The \$3.00 subscription fee is only to offset copying and postage costs and it is not really dues for a club membership in the usual sense. There are not any club activities which require financial support. By ordinary standards, the Iowa City Bird Club is not really a club.

Perhaps this system is the best one for Iowa City. However, I believe that there may be birders in the Iowa City area who would like to see a more organized group, complete with occasional meetings and organized activities. There really is a broad range of ideas which could be explored. But a more substantial club in Iowa City could come about only if there is interest in having such a club.

What is your opinion of the present Iowa City Bird Club? What are your ideas on possible alternative types of organization? I would be thrilled to print and/or respond to any thoughts you might have on this subject. As long as you are sending in a subscription renewal, why not drop me a note with your opinions. I would enjoy hearing from you.

You can renew and comment by clipping and returning the form on the reverse side of the address portion of this issue.

--Carl Bendorf

## FIELD TRIP SUMMARIES

January 31, 1982 To Amana. Leader, Carl Bendorf.

The temperature on this Sunday morning was quite cold as several carloads of birders drove west from Iowa City toward the Amana Colonies. Our plan was to carefully scan the open fields along Highway #220 between Middle Amana and South Amana for possible Wild Turkeys. The heavy snows of January had apparently pressured the local Wild Turkey population to feed more out in the open corn fields than is usual, and there had been many recent sightings. We searched all the "guaranteed" spots without seeing a single bird. I later discovered that we were in the right place but at the wrong time. If we had waited until early afternoon, our chances of seeing Wild Turkeys would have been much greater.

The entire group was compensated for its efforts with a very good look at an immaculate Red-shouldered Hawk in the Iowa River bottomland between West Amana and South Amana. Next, a search was made of the East Amana cemetery and the best bird here was a Brown Creeper.

Participants: Carl Bendorf; Tom Fennessey and friend; Lanny Haldy; Rick Hollis; Ramona McGurk; Mike Newlon; Jim and Jody Sandrock; Sheila Strang; Takeshi Takahara; and Kazunari Ueno.

February 13, 1982 To Mississippi River. Leader, Mike Newlon.

On a moist grey morning, a large flock of birders met at the Union to begin the trip to the Mississippi River to look for eagles.

Lock and Dam #14 near Bettendorf produced a dozen Bald Eagles, with six birds in one tree on an island in mid-river. We also found a large flock of Common Goldeneye and a few scaup and Mallards.

Lock and Dam #15 in downtown Davenport had a single Herring Gull and three more Bald Eagles.

Credit Island Park was nearly birdless, but ten more eagles perched in the trees on islands and along the Illinois shore.

Before leaving Davenport, we made a quick stop at Fairmont Cemetery and were rewarded with three White-winged Crossbills--a male and two females.

Participants: Noel and Mona Brown; Karole and Jim Fuller; Marlyn Glasson; Bob Lechner; Mike and Georganne Neubauer; Mike Newlon; Evelyn Oaks; Jim and Jody Sandrock; Carol Thompson; Ruth and Norm Williams. (Unfortunately, several people left the trip before their names were recorded.)



IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

BIRDWATCH SUBSCRIBERS  
(As of March 12, 1982)

Anyone who is interested in the bird life of our state should be aware of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. Founded in 1923, the IOU is dedicated to furthering the study and enjoyment of birds. Membership in the IOU is open to anyone with an interest in birds and the dues are a very reasonable \$8.00 per year for a regular membership.

To join the IOU, send a check to the IOU Treasurer, Hank Zaletel. His address is 715 West Street, Colo, IA 50056.

The IOU will hold its annual Spring Meeting in Ames on the weekend of May 8 & 9. Planned activities include guided field trips on both mornings, presentations on "Bird Photography" and "Natural History of Peru," and a Saturday evening banquet with an excellent show entitled "The Snow Goose and Other Birds of Churchill, Manitoba" by Dr. Erwin Klaas.

The entire weekend is open to anyone and membership in the IOU is not required. It should be both fun and informative and it's a great way to meet other birders from around the state.

If anyone would like more information on the IOU or the Spring Meeting, I would be glad to help.

--Carl Bendorf  
351-4958

- Akre, Janice M. 3-82
- Bagford, Jack & Ann 7-82
- Behl, Paul & Jan 3-83
- Brown, J.C. & Monica 3-82
- Campbell, Patrick & Shirley 3-82  
Davenport, IA.
- Carlson, Linnea 3-82
- Cordell, John 5-82
- Cornwall, Diane 7-82  
Swisher, IA.
- Crow, Orville 5-83
- DeCoster, Rich 7-82  
Chicago, IL.
- DeKock, Sandra 3-82
- Delaty, Simone 3-83
- Delle, Margrieta 3-83
- Feddersen, Ann 3-83  
North Liberty, IA.
- Fisher, Barbara 3-82  
Lone Tree, IA.
- Folk, G. E. Jr. 3-82
- Fuller, Jim 3-82

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

----- CUT HERE -----

BIRDWATCH SUBSCRIPTION FORM

If you wish to receive The Eastern Iowa Birdwatch for one year (six issues) please complete this form and return it with a check or money order for three dollars (\$3.00) to Carl Bendorf, 825 7th Ave. Iowa City, IA. 52240.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

If you have a University of Iowa office to which we can mail, indicate below.

UNIVERSITY OFFICE ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Gay, Dorothy W. 3-82  
 North Liberty, IA.  
 Gentzler, Edwin 3-82  
 Graesser, Randy 3-82  
 Amana, IA.  
 Haldy, Lanny 3-82  
 Amana, IA.  
 Haring, Barbara 3-83  
 Hollis, Rick 3-82  
 Huit, M.L. 3-82  
 Huntington, James 7-82  
 Jones, Darwin F. 9-82  
 Kalona, IA.  
 Kuhn, Agnes 9-82  
 Keetel, W.C. 3-82  
 Kemmis, Tim 3-82  
 Kent, Fred  
 Kent, T.H. 3-83  
 Kern, Jeff 3-82  
 Kirkman, Karen 3-82  
 Knight, Cal & Bernie 3-84  
 Lechner, R. 9-82  
 Coralville, IA.

Leistikow, Bruce 7-82  
 Lensink, Steve 3-82  
 Lyman, Gayle 3-82  
 McGurk, Ramona 3-82  
 Mohler, Dawson 3-82  
 Mulier, Micheal 3-82  
 Mutel, Connie 3-82  
 Solon, IA.  
 Nelson, Weir 1-83  
 Cedar Rapids, IA.  
 Newlon, Mike & Carol 3-82  
 Noble, Mary 3-82  
 Oaks, Evelyn 3-83  
 O'Gorman, Tom & Martha 7-82  
 Osmundson, Robert 3-82  
 Perkins, Anne 11-82  
 Rohrbough, Barbara 3-82  
 Saforek, Alice 1-83  
 Sandroock, James P. 3-83  
 Sandroock, Johanna K. 3-83  
 Serials Dept. 3-82  
 Iowa City Public Library  
 Shannon, Frieda M. 3-82

Shawhan, Sue 7-82  
 Shires, T.K. 3-82  
 Shoup, Mike 3-82  
 Amana, IA.  
 Staudt, Tom 5-82  
 Strang, Sheila 7-82  
 Swaner, Ruth A. 7-82  
 Tetrault, Richard 3-82  
 Thompson, Carol 9-82  
 Triplett, Mrs. Burdell 7-82  
 Spencer, IA.  
 Tucker, Betty Lou 3-82  
 Ueno, Kazunari 3-82  
 Voyce, Betty 3-82  
 Wachal, Robert S. 3-82  
 Walker, Jean M. 7-82  
 Wanek, Gladys 7-82  
 Webber, Bob 11-82  
 Williams, Ruth 3-82

\*\*\*\*\*

THE EASTERN IOWA BIRDWATCH  
 CARL BENDORF, EDITOR  
 825 7TH AVENUE  
 IOWA CITY, IA. 52240





SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

All field trips start at the parking lot north of the Iowa Memorial Union on The University of Iowa campus unless otherwise noted. Most trips are over by early afternoon.

Saturday May 22nd Lacey-Keosauqua State Park. Meet at the main entrance to the park just south of the town of Keosauqua on Highway #1, at 7 AM. Leader, Jim Sandrock (338-5774). There will be a picnic at the Sandrocks' cabin afterwards. Please contact Jim in advance if you plan to attend.

Friday June 11th This will be a special night trip to Cone Marsh. Objective will be to play tapes of rail and owl calls and listen for a response. Meet in the Union parking lot at 9 PM. Please call by June 9 if you plan to participate. Leader, Rick Hollis (338-4834).

FIELD TRIP SUMMARY

April 10, 1982 To Muskrat Slough. Leaders, Cal and Bernie Knight.

Last year's April trip to Muskrat Slough in Jones County was a great day for birding. This year's trip was set up with great expectations, but 1982 was not all that kind to the birders. The slough was still in the grip of winter with ice present around the edge of the water. There was some open water, and we saw every indication that spring migration was just around the corner.

On the way back from the slough, a side trip was taken to search for Long-eared Owls in a grove overlooking Lake Macbride. The hike was delightful, but it is hoped the luck will be better next year.

A total of 43 species was counted, including eight species of ducks, four raptors, and a good selection of the usual early April migrants and winter stragglers.

Participants: John Cordell; Diana Duckworth; Edwin Gentzler; Cal and Bernie Knight; Bob Lechner; Bruce Leistikow; Ramona McGurk; Mary Noble; Jim Sandrock; and Carol Thompson.

SYCAMORE STREET MARSH

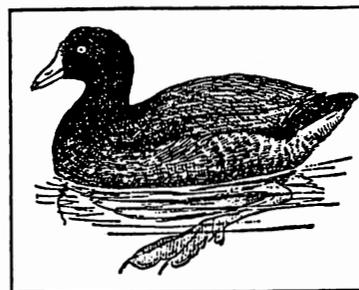
One of the favorite spots of local birders in spring is the Sycamore Street Marsh. In some years this small marsh can be somewhat dry, but this year it is holding a good amount of moisture. There have been a number of interesting birds seen here this spring including Blue-winged Teal, Virginia Rail, Sora (may nest here), both yellowlegs species, Solitary Sandpiper, Willet, Wilson's Phalarope, and Pectoral Sandpiper. During May the Sycamore Street Marsh may continue to be a good place for shorebirds as they feed and rest in the mud around the edge of the marsh. There should also be some of the usual marsh birds such as Red-winged Blackbird and Song Sparrow. Yellow-headed Blackbirds have been seen in some years.

Despite its small size, the Sycamore Street Marsh can sometimes harbor a surprise. In past years, some of the rarities seen here include Surf Scoter and Hudsonian and Marbled Godwits.

The Sycamore Street Marsh can be reached by going south from Highway 6 on Sycamore Street about 1.3 miles. Sycamore Street intersects with Highway 6 just southwest of the Sears store in Iowa City. When the blacktop turns west (right), turn east (left) instead. After a short distance you will see the marsh on the north side of the road. The marsh is on private land so you should remain on the road.

[The material for this note was developed by Rick Hollis.]

--Carl Bendorf



American Coot

The Birdwatch is published six times a year. You can subscribe by sending \$3.00 to The Eastern Iowa Birdwatch, 825 7th Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240. If we can mail to your University office, please include that address.



Yellow Warbler

### THE KIRTLAND'S WARBLER

"Do put the Kirtland's Warbler on your list of 'Birds to See'!" With this statement we were encouraged by Mike and Carol Newlon to travel to Michigan to see one of the rarest warblers in North America. And so, June 5th, 1981, found us finally following the Newlons' advice.

The Kirtland's Warbler is a bird that has attracted a great deal of attention, not only because it is an extremely endangered species, but also because of its attractive and engaging nature. What a joy it is to see and hear this bird in its breeding area. It nests only in a very small area of the northern Lower Peninsula of Michigan in the vicinity of Grayling. It is a very specialized bird that will breed only in stands of young jack pines from 6 to 18 feet tall. When the trees become too large the Kirtland's will seek more suitable trees. Modern forest firefighting techniques have decreased the incidence of natural fires which formerly burned mature pine forests and led to the young stands of pines. As a result the favored habitat has decreased, and the total number of Kirtland's Warbler has dwindled to less than 300 birds. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources supervises controlled cutting and burning in an effort to create more habitat.

Another problem that prevents the increase of the Kirtland's population is the parasitism of Cowbirds. These birds lay their eggs in the warbler nests, and the warblers raise the Cowbird young along with their own, thus inhibiting the reproduction of the warblers. Some 3500 Cowbirds are trapped each year, and this has greatly reduced their effect on the Kirtland's.

Three days of travel, including two 12-hour days of driving, afforded us plenty of time to observe this colorful sprite. We got into line at the Natural Resources Office in Grayling at 6 AM to register for the 7 AM tour. Tours are usually limited to 15 persons, and late arrivals had to wait until the next tour. A slide show and brief lecture are given before each tour.

The Kirtland's nests on the ground or under the branches of the young pines, and the male will ascend to a perch and sing to the world. The song is very loud and clear. We were able to see a Kirtland's six different times with two possible repeats. On our tour was a gentleman from Sweden who had come to see this rare warbler. His excitement at seeing this bird added an extra joy to our trip.

We did encounter some people who were hostile about the burning practices. Our hospitable ranger-guide's informational lecture provided much insight regarding the situation.

Here are some other highlights from our trip:

- A visit to Mio, Michigan, which has erected a statue to the Kirtland's Warbler.
- The charming town of Grayling which has numerous motels and is located on the scenic Ausable River, the launching point of a famous canoe race. Many canoe rental services are available here.
- A visit to Dead Stream Swamp to see nesting Ospreys as they fed their young.
- A stop at the McBain/Marion area to visit the 320-acre Prairie Chicken Management Area. Viewing blinds are available, and we had the good fortune to observe a Snowy Owl emerge from the morning fog and settle on a pole to look us over. Henslow's Sparrows abound in the area.
- And take time to smell the wildflowers!

If you desire any additional information, feel free to call us.

--Cal and Bernie Knight  
(337-9140)

Editor's Note: Kirtland's Warblers are best seen from mid-May to mid-July. At this time they are easily located by their song. By August they cease to sing and are difficult to find.

There are two guided tours to see these birds from mid-May to mid-July. One is sponsored by the District Office of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in Grayling, Michigan (Telephone: 417-348-6371). The second tour is conducted through the District Ranger Station, Huron National Forest, in Mio, Michigan (517-826-3717).

It is recommended that you contact these offices for complete details before your arrival.



American Goldfinch

## FINDING A CONNECTICUT WARBLER

This issue marks the beginning of a continuing series of notes designed to help the Iowa City area birder to find some of the more seldom seen birds that regularly pass through or breed in Eastern Iowa. Future articles will cover birds that can be difficult to find in our area because of one or more of the following reasons:

1. Breeds in specialized or restricted habitat.
2. Inconspicuous during migration or nesting.
3. Unusual or brief migration time through Iowa.

Much of the secret to finding unusual birds is in looking in the proper habitat at the most likely time of the year. A little information of when and where to look can greatly increase the chances of finding a particular species. If you have suggestions for birds you would like to see covered in the future, please drop me a note or give me a call.

The Connecticut Warbler is one of my favorite birds, but I really didn't know too much about this species before I did the research for the article that follows. It was very enjoyable to read some of the readily available literature on the Connecticut. Perhaps you have a favorite bird that you would like to learn and write about for a future issue.

--Carl Bendorf

The Connecticut Warbler is a bird that passes through Iowa in regular numbers, but there are several factors that make it a difficult-to-see species. First, this warbler is usually quite secretive in its habits, and often the only clue to its presence will be its song. Second, the peak time of the spring migration of the Connecticut Warbler through our area is noticeably later than that of most of the other warblers. Furthermore, most observations are made during a relatively brief period.

However, the diligent birder who searches the proper habitat at the right time of year has a fair chance at finding a Connecticut Warbler in Eastern Iowa.

The Connecticut Warbler (*Opornis agilis*) was first described to science by Alexander Wilson in 1812. Wilson named the bird after the state in which it was discovered, although it is only a fall visitor to that state. For many years little was known about the Connecticut Warbler. Seventy years after its discovery, a nest was found in Manitoba.

This warbler winters in Mexico and South America. In spring, it moves north through the West Indies and Florida, and then northwest across the broad Mississippi Valley. This bird breeds in much of southern Canada and parts of the extreme north central United States. The Connecticut Warbler takes a much different route in fall migration. At that

time it travels generally east to the Atlantic Coast and then turns south, bypassing much of the central U.S. Thus, the Connecticut Warbler is much more likely to be seen in Iowa during the spring than in the fall.

Best Time to Look: From 1977 through 1981, there were 26 spring observations of the Connecticut Warbler reported in Iowa Bird Life, the journal of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. The dates range from May 7 at Ames to May 26 at Waterloo. The bulk of the sightings, however, was between May 16 and May 21. On the average, the most likely date to find a Connecticut Warbler in Iowa would be from May 18 to May 20.

During this same four-year period, there were only six observations reported in fall migration, with the dates ranging from August 29 at Davenport to September 22 at Iowa City.

General Habitat: During migration the Connecticut Warbler generally favors thickets of low, wet woods or wet meadows. The dense bushes and thick undergrowth at the edges of deciduous woods or in somewhat open second-growth woodland are likely habitat conditions for this species. Some small stream or other moist areas are preferred.

Possible Local Areas: The best local area for finding the Connecticut Warbler is, probably, Hickory Hill Park in Iowa City. Of the 26 spring reports in Iowa since 1977, five have been from Hickory Hill Park on the following dates:

- 1981 - May 17 to 23.
- 1980 - No Reports.
- 1979 - May 14 to 16, 21.
- 1978 - May 18.
- 1977 - May 19.

These observations are partly the result of regular coverage of the park by local birders who are aware of the songs and habits of the Connecticut Warbler. However, Hickory Hill Park does contain much of the type of habitat preferred by this bird. Most of the sightings in the park were made in the area indicated on the map accompanying this article.

Other observations of the Connecticut Warbler in the Iowa City area since 1977 are as follows:

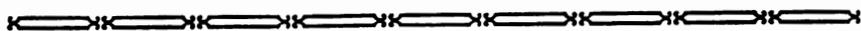
--May 16, 1979, and May 19, 1981, in the Amana Woods. Both sightings were along a gravel and dirt road which runs east from Highway 149 at a point immediately south of the Iowa River bridge between Amana and Homestead.

--May 19, 1979, in Palisades-Kepler State Park in Linn County. This bird was seen along the road just inside the entrance to the park.

--May 21, 1977, in the Macbride Field Campus on the Coralville Reservoir.

Finding Tips: The key to finding a Connecticut Warbler is in knowing its song. Because of its furtive behavior, you will usually first need to locate the Connecticut by its distinctive song. This species will spend much of its time quite close to the ground in the middle of dense thickets. It has a habit of singing from the middle of a bush.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



The song of the Connecticut Warbler is described in Bent's Life Histories of North American Wood Warblers as a "very distinctive 'whip-pity, whip-pity, whip', clear, ringing, deliberate, and resonant, with a definite accent on the first syllable." It is a very loud song for a warbler, and it is reminiscent of the song of the Common Yellowthroat or the Ovenbird. The Connecticut sings frequently during migration. It may also occasionally emit a distinctive sharp "chip" note. It is almost essential to have an idea of the song before searching for this bird. A recording of the song can be heard on the eastern edition of A Field Guide to Bird Songs, a two-record set in the Peterson Field Guide Series.

The best time of day to look is probably between 6 AM and 8 AM when the bird is most likely to be active and singing. If you hear a suspected Connecticut Warbler singing, do not immediately attempt to chase it through the bushes. If you do, it will surely sneak away before you have a chance to see it. The best approach is to listen patiently and to try to pinpoint the source of the song. The Connecticut will usually be within four feet of the ground. It may even be on the ground so it might help to crouch down to get a better angle. The bird may or may not be attracted by squeaking or "pishing." If you watch and listen long enough the bird may become less wary and you might get a glimpse of it. One local birder had a Connecticut sing directly in front of him for fifteen minutes before it could be spotted.

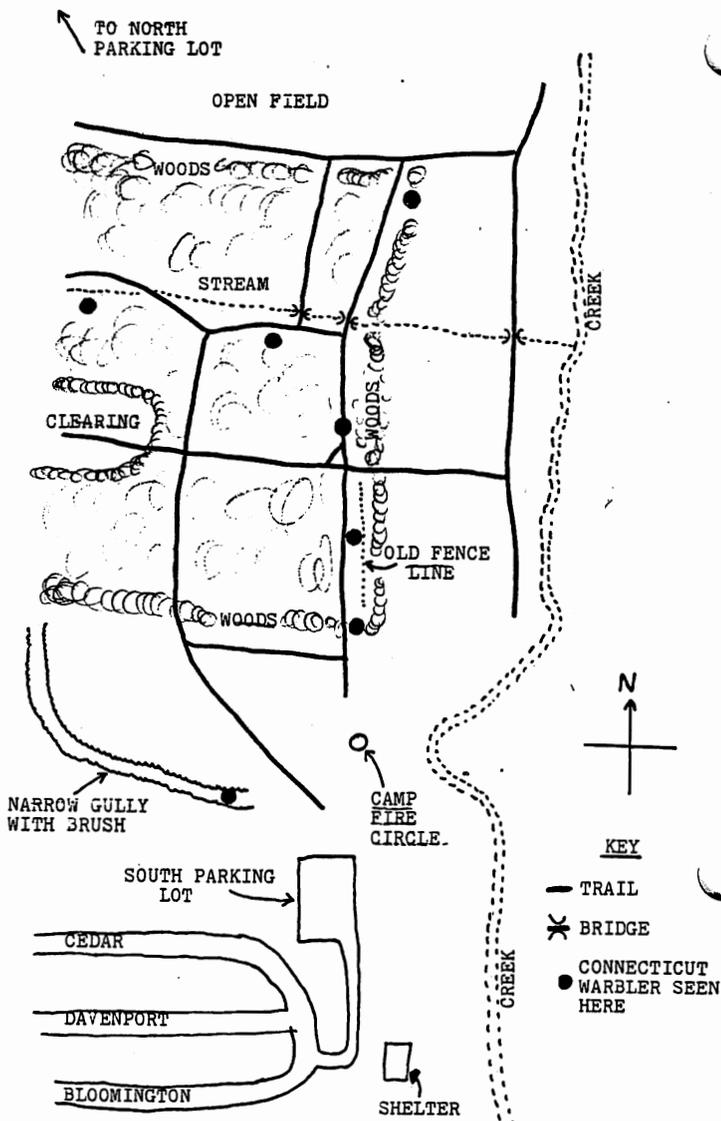
The Connecticut Warbler is not particularly difficult to identify once it is seen. The bird is very similar to the Mourning Warbler, also a bird of the thickets. The best mark of the Connecticut is the complete white eye ring which is present in all plumages.

If you do find a Connecticut Warbler in our area, you should take some notes on the song and appearance of the bird and then try to spread the word so that other local birders can have a chance to see this unique visitor to Eastern Iowa.

[I would like to thank Mike Newlon for his assistance in preparing this article.]

--Carl Bendorf

## Hickory Hill Park-South End



THE EASTERN IOWA BIRDWATCH  
 CARL BENDORF, EDITOR  
 825 7TH AVENUE  
 IOWA CITY, IA. 52240





## HICKORY HILL PARK--A CHECKLIST AND MAP

Editor's Note: This issue of the BIRDWATCH contains a checklist of the birds of Hickory Hill Park in Iowa City. On the reverse side of the checklist is a fine map of the park. This checklist and map have been compiled by Rick Hollis. This list and map should prove to be a valuable resource to anyone who looks for birds in Hickory Hill Park.

Many people believe that seeing a large number of bird species in Iowa requires traveling all over the state. This is not so, as the total number of birds recorded in Hickory Hill Park is 184 different species. This is a remarkable number for such a small area. There are perhaps several reasons for the size of the list. Hickory Hill Park does contain a variety of different habitats. Few places in eastern Iowa are birded as heavily as Hickory Hill Park. Many birds may also stop here because the park is on the path of a habitual flyway. Whatever the reasons, Hickory Hill Park is a delightful place to bird. It is clear that a diligent observer may find many different species of birds without ever leaving Iowa City.

Hickory Hill Park has three entrances and there are parking lots at two. The Rose Hill Entrance is at the extreme east end of Bloomington Street. The North Entrance can be reached by turning south from Highway 1 (Dodge Street) onto Conklin Street. This is just north and east of St. Joseph's Cemetery. There is another entrance located about 25 yards to the north of the intersection of Rochester Avenue and Seventh Avenue. This pedestrian entrance has no parking lot, but it is easily accessible by a city bus route.

For the purposes of this article and checklist, I am including in the "park" a certain amount of land which borders upon but is not actually within the boundaries of Hickory Hill Park. These additional areas are St. Joseph's and Oakland Cemeteries, some private property just north of the park, and a piece of property owned by Regina High School to the east of Hickory Hill Park. Some of the Regina High property may become city property for the construction of a north branch dam on Ralston Creek.

Hickory Hill Park offers very good warbler viewing during spring and fall migration. Many of Iowa's recent records of Connecticut Warbler have been in Hickory Hill Park (see BIRDWATCH, Vol. 2, No. 3). Some of the breeding birds in the park include White-eyed and Bell's Vireo. Hickory Hill Park also can have magnificent hawk flights (see BIRDWATCH, Vol. 1, No. 5).

In addition to birds, many wildflowers can be found in Hickory Hill Park including Prairie Trillium and large stands of Trout Lilies. Various mammals can be found in the park, including occasional deer and fox. In recent years there have been several beaver dams on the main creek.



Hickory Hill Park is undergoing several changes. An arboretum is being developed on the hillside around the pavilion at the North Entrance. Within recent years a subdivision of homes has sprung up on the eastern edge of the park. The most dramatic change in the composition of Hickory Hill Park will probably result from the construction of a planned dam across Ralston Creek within the boundaries of the park. The purpose of the dam will be to hold floodwaters back for gradual release over a 24-48 hour period. The holding dam's construction will cause a good deal of short-term disturbance and will displace some vegetation from the resulting pond area. In years when the dam backs up water during nesting season, it will certainly disrupt the breeding of those species within the encroachment of the high water. But this water area may create habitat for alternative species of birds and it is difficult to predict the long-term effects of this construction on bird distribution in Hickory Hill Park.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



In addition to these man-made changes, nature is gradually turning some areas from field into forest. The area just east of the mowed field near the north pavilion is changing very rapidly. Over the past ten years I have seen a shift in this area from open field to an area with trees and shrubs--some reaching twenty feet in height. This changing habitat will certainly change the bird species found in this area.

The bird species listed on the Checklist of Birds--Hickory Hill Park have each been assigned to one of four different categories. This categorization is an attempt to represent the current status of each species as it occurs in Hickory Hill Park. The categories are Permanent Resident (P), Winter Resident (W), Summer Resident and probable Breeding Species (S), and Species Sighted (X). Examples are Northern Cardinal (P), Northern Junco (W), and House Wren (S). The last category is a catch-all that includes regular migrants (Wilson's Warbler), as well as those species which are resident during certain years. An example would be Common Redpoll, which can be found regularly during irruption years. Also in the (X) category are those birds which have been observed flying over the park on a very few occasions, such as the Double-crested Cormorant.

Most future additions to the Checklist will probably come about through someone spending time looking up at the sky during spring and fall migration. In this manner various types of shorebirds and waterfowl may be seen flying over the park. It is possible that the flood control dam may create an area which will attract shorebirds. Two species of birds that have probably visited HHP are Loggerhead Shrike and Blue-winged Teal, but as yet no one has recorded their presence.

The map of HHP which accompanies the Checklist requires some explanation. The boundaries as shown are approximate. The area enclosed by dash lines to the north of the park was recently purchased by the City of Iowa City. Although it is legally a part of the park, this section may possibly be leased out as pasture land. The names of some of the landmarks shown on the map are unofficial. These names have risen out of years of frustrating attempts by local birders to pinpoint the locations of bird observations. It is probable that no one else uses these names. The reason they are included on the map is to make it easier to describe a location to someone else. The forest edges as shown are somewhat arbitrary in several places. For the most part, places that are open areas with scattered tall trees are not shown as forest. Also not shown as forest are some thick, almost impenetrable areas of brush and saplings. The map was based on the City of Iowa City Flood Plain Maps (1974).

The data on the Checklist of Birds--Hickory Hill Park is mainly the result of the cheerful cooperation of many local birders. Special thanks is offered to Mike Newlon, Tom Kent, Rich DeCoster, Tom Staudt, Tom Shires, James Huntington, Carl Bendorf, and John Cordell. Without their help the Checklist would be much less complete. Lee Tippy in the Iowa City Engineer's Office, and Karen Christner in the Iowa City Parks and Recreation Department were most helpful in providing information for the map.

CONTINUED

I hope that any reader who has any information concerning species not yet on the Checklist will phone me (338-4834) or write (3351 Lower West Branch Road, Iowa City, IA 52240), so that I can make the list as complete as possible. I hope to turn this information into an article for Iowa Bird Life, the journal of Iowa Ornithologist's Union, within the next year.

Additional copies of the Checklist and map are available from the author for \$0.50 each.

--Rick Hollis



Yellow-breasted Chat

## NOTES

Area birders should be aware that a permit is necessary to trespass on Amana Society property. There are many excellent birding spots in the Amanas which are in northeast Iowa County. Most of the land in and around the Amanas is owned by the Amana Society.

Trespassing permits are available to persons who are not residents of the Amanas and are not employees/stockholders. Applications for permits can be made at the Amana Society Main Office during regular business hours. The Main Office is located just west of the intersection of Highways 149 and 220 in Main Amana. Permits are also available at Otte's Gun Shop which is immediately northeast of the same intersection.

To avoid missing any issues of the BIRDWATCH please renew your subscription before it expires. The expiration date of your subscription is listed to the right of your name on the mailing label. For example, 7-82 means the last issue in your subscription will be the July (7) / August 1982 issue.

If you have friends who are interested in birds, encourage them to subscribe to the BIRDWATCH. Or give a subscription as a gift.



## FIELD TRIP SUMMARIES

17 April 1982 To Lake Macbride, Coralville Reservoir, Swan Lake, and the Greencastle Corner area. Leader, Mike Newlon.

The weather was clear but windy. At Lake Macbride we spotted an Eared Grebe in breeding plumage, several Common Loons, and a pair of Red-breasted Mergansers. The Jolly Roger area of the reservoir harbored many gulls, mostly Ring-billed, but also several Bonaparte's and an immature Herring.

Swan Lake contained several hundred ducks, mostly divers, and a few Tree Swallows. In a pool of water in a pasture we found several early shorebirds--both yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpipers, and Killdeer.

As you continue west past Swan Lake, the gravel road intersects with County Road W48. This intersection is the Greencastle area. Several hundred yards south and west of this intersection is a sizable area of scattered conifers. In these trees we found at least one, possibly two, Long-eared Owls. Also in the area were a Hermit Thrush, several Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Ruby-crowned Kinglets.

Participants: Carl Bendorf; Jim Fuller; M. L. and Jane Huit; Cal and Bernie Knight; Bob Lechner; and Carol and Mike Newlon.

1 May 1982 To Cone Marsh. Leader, Ruth Williams.

On our way to the marsh we passed by a reliable spot for Upland Sandpipers and were rewarded with a nice look at two birds. Also found here was a Grasshopper Sparrow.

After arriving at Cone Marsh we spent some time walking the woods on the west side of the marsh. We found several species of warblers--Palm, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Northern Waterthrush, and Common Yellowthroat. Several members of the group had a good long look at a Barred Owl.

After leaving this area we crossed over the dike. Several Common Terns were perched on a nearby log. A Henslow's Sparrow had been seen several days earlier in the field across the dike, but it could not be located. However, a Yellow-headed Blackbird in the vicinity was a pleasant surprise. A Double-crested Cormorant completed our observations at the marsh.

Participants: Dick & James Baker; Mona & Noel Brown; Bernie Knight; Jim Sandrock; Carol Thompson; and Ruth Williams.

The Birdwatch is published six times a year. You can subscribe by sending \$3.00 to The Eastern Iowa Birdwatch, 825 7th Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240. If we can mail to your University office, please include that address.



9 May 1982 To Sandwoods Farm near Cedar Bluff. Leaders, Jim and Karole Fuller.

The weather was warm and sunny with a south breeze. Our walk through the woods was rewarding, but the birding was less than spectacular.

The morning began auspiciously for the group of twenty when one sharp-eyed birder spotted a Common Nighthawk sitting lengthwise on a tree limb. The first warbler of the day was probably the best--a Blackburnian. Only thirteen species of warblers and vireos were seen, including Ovenbird, Northern Waterthrush, and a Yellow-throated Vireo.

Other birds observed included Swainson's and Gray-cheeked Thrush, Indigo Bunting, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Northern Oriole. The highlight of the trip for many in the group was a close-up view of a lovely red fox. A blue racer snake was also seen.

After many of the group had departed, we found several Scarlet Tanagers and a Whip-poor-will which sat like a bump on a log on the floor of the woods.

Participants: Noel & Mona Brown; John Cordell; Sherry Dolash; Jim & Karole Fuller; Mike Fuller; Bud Gode; Gloria Henry; Rick Hollis; Garry Houser; James Huntington; Bob Lechner; Roger & Marianne Milkman; Darlyne Neff; Mary Noble; Betty Norbeck; Jim Sandrock; and Ruth Williams.

13 May 1982 To Cone Marsh. Leader, Ruth Williams.

This was a sunny day with a stiff March wind. There were many species of waterfowl at the marsh despite the recent cold weather which kept much of the water frozen over. Most of the ducks were concentrated in a few open areas of water near the bridge on the south side of the marsh. Notable species included Common Loon, Snow and Canada Goose, Bufflehead, Hooded and Common Merganser.

Also at the marsh were Northern Harrier, Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawk, Kestrel, Lesser Golden Plover, and Loggerhead Shrike. A large flock of Ring-billed Gulls was observed on the east side of the marsh.

Participants: Noel & Mona Brown; Bernie & Cal Knight; Bob Lechner; Bruce Leistikow; Ramona McGurk; Mary Noble; Evelyn Oaks; Jim & Joey Sandrock; Marilyn Smith; and Tom Staudt.

11 June 1982 To Cone Marsh. Leader, Rick Hollis.



This first nocturnal bird trip of the Iowa City Bird Club departed from the Union on a rainy Friday night. The goal of the trip was to listen and to look for those birds of the marsh which are most active at night. Several species of rails and most owls are usually easiest to locate when they call and feed after dark.

Upon our arrival at Cone Marsh, we found two more birders and no more rain. We played tape recordings of owl and rail calls at three locations. The total result was one Barred Owl which swooped overhead in response to a Screech Owl tape. Later we heard an American Coot and another Barred Owl, but it is not clear that they were responding to us.

The greatest excitement of the evening was the numerous lightning bugs and the loud chorus of tree frogs.

Participants: Rick Hollis; Tom Kent; Francis Moore; Mary Noble; Marty & Tom O'Gorman; Terry & Anne Perkins; and Gladys Wanek.

22 May 1982 To Lacey-Keosauqua State Park, Van Buren County. Leader, Jim Sandrock.

For a second consecutive year a trip to southeast Iowa provided some good birding. Although (for the second year) the weather was less than favorable, the number of species seen was 74--up eight species from the previous spring. The local specialties--Northern Parula, Cerulean Warbler, and Yellow-throated Warbler--appeared on schedule. Other warblers were a Kentucky Warbler singing loudly on territory and a handsome male Mourning Warbler seen at close range. Seven species of flycatchers were identified, including a Willow Flycatcher. A fleet Summer Tanager, a Wild Turkey, an obliging Grasshopper Sparrow, Black Terns, and Eastern Bluebirds were other highlights.

A picnic lunch, served by Donna and Joey Sandrock, topped off an enjoyable day of birding. (This field trip was the subject of Oneita Fisher's nature column "Country Miles" in the Van Buren County Register, 3 June 1982.)

Participants: John Cordell; Jim, Karole, and Laurie Fuller; M. L. and Jane Huit; James Huntington; Cal and Bernie Knight; and Ramona McGurk (all of Iowa City). Jane Fuller; Chuck, Ellen, and Chris Fuller (of Burlington) and Oneita Fisher (Van Buren County).

### FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

All field trips start at the parking lot north of the Iowa Memorial Union on The University of Iowa campus unless otherwise noted. Most trips are over by early afternoon.

Saturday To Coralville Reservoir or Cone Marsh for shorebirds. Leader, Mike Newlon (338-2091). Meet at 7:30 AM.

Sunday To the Coralville Reservoir. Leaders, Cal and Bernie Knight (337-9140). Meet at 7 AM.

NOTE: Anyone who is interested in leading a future field trip to their favorite spot, please contact Mike Newlon (338-2091).

---

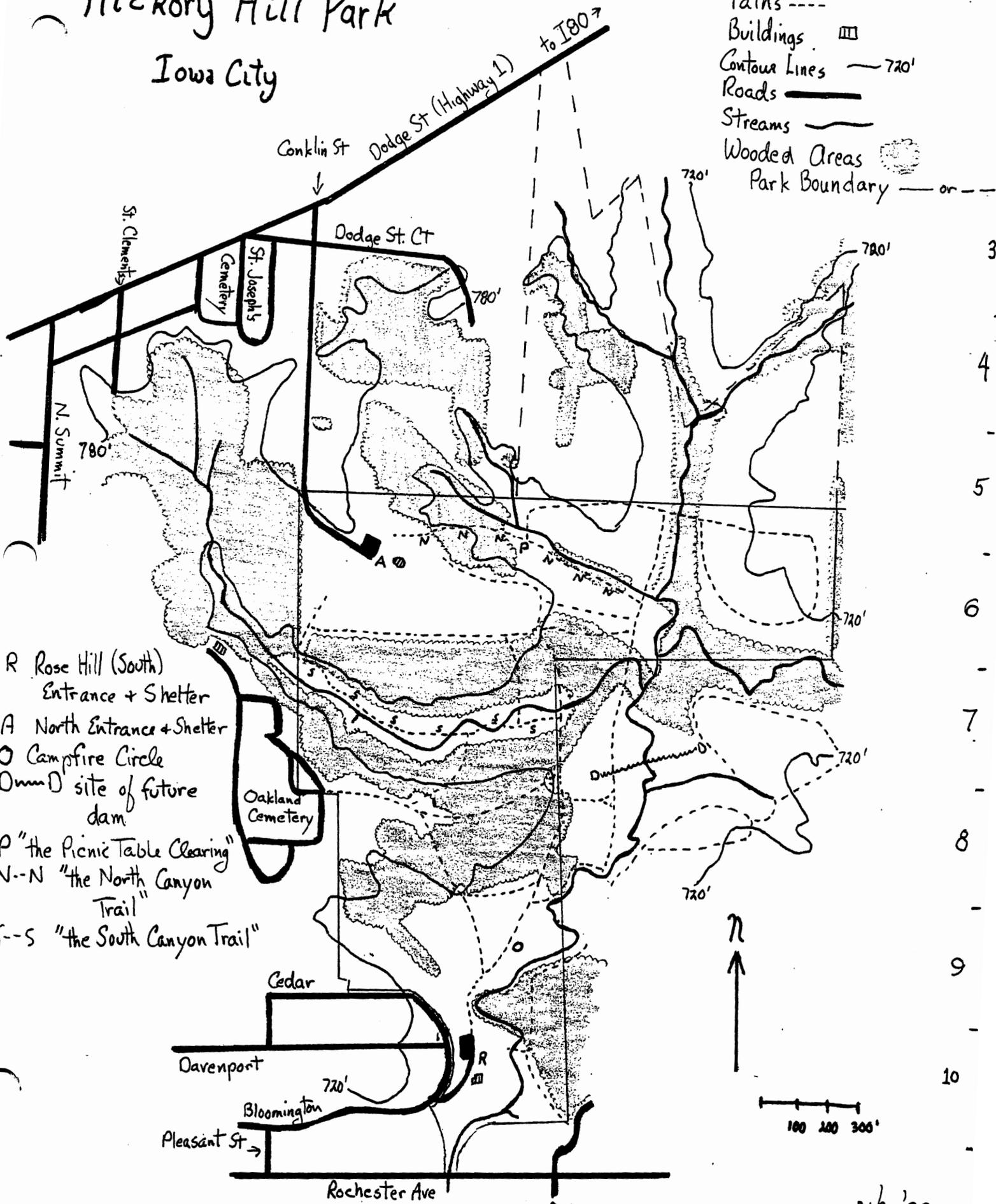
THE EASTERN IOWA BIRDWATCH  
CARL BENDORF, EDITOR  
825 7TH AVENUE  
IOWA CITY, IA. 52240



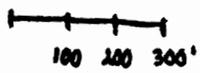
# Hickory Hill Park

Iowa City

- Paths ----
- Buildings III
- Contour Lines ~ 720'
- Roads ———
- Streams ~~~~~
- Wooded Areas [stippled area]
- Park Boundary — or - -



- R Rose Hill (South) Entrance + Shelter
- A North Entrance + Shelter
- O Campfire Circle
- D site of future dam
- P "the Picnic Table Clearing"
- N--N "the North Canyon Trail"
- S--S "the South Canyon Trail"



a . b . c . d . e . 7th Av . f . g . h . rjh '82

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS - HICKORY HILL PARK IOWA CITY, IOWA

X = Sighting  
 R = Permanent Resident  
 S = Summer Resident  
 W = Winter Resident

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Observers: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather: \_\_\_\_\_

- CORMORANTS, HERONS
  - \_\_\_ Double-crested Cormorant X
  - \_\_\_ Great Blue Heron X
  - \_\_\_ Green Heron X
  - \_\_\_ Great Egret X
  - \_\_\_ Black-crowned Night Heron X
- GEESE, DUCKS
  - \_\_\_ Snow Goose X
  - \_\_\_ Canada Goose X
  - \_\_\_ Wood Duck X
  - \_\_\_ Mallard X
  - \_\_\_ Lesser Scaup X
- VULTURES, HAWKS, FALCONS
  - \_\_\_ Turkey Vulture X
  - \_\_\_ Osprey X
  - \_\_\_ Bald Eagle X
  - \_\_\_ Northern Harrier X
  - \_\_\_ Northern Goshawk X
  - \_\_\_ Sharp-shinned Hawk X
  - \_\_\_ Cooper's Hawk X
  - \_\_\_ Red-tailed Hawk X
  - \_\_\_ Red-shouldered Hawk X
  - \_\_\_ Broad-winged Hawk X
  - \_\_\_ Rough-legged Hawk X
  - \_\_\_ American Kestrel X
- QUAILS, PHEASANTS, TURKEYS
  - \_\_\_ Common Bobwhite X
  - \_\_\_ Ring-necked Pheasant R
  - \_\_\_ Wild Turkey\* X
- RAILS
  - \_\_\_ Virginia Rail X
  - \_\_\_ Sora X
- PLOVERS, SANDPIPERS
  - \_\_\_ Killdeer X
  - \_\_\_ Lesser Golden Plover X
  - \_\_\_ Lesser Yellowlegs X
  - \_\_\_ Solitary Sandpiper X
  - \_\_\_ Spotted Sandpiper X
  - \_\_\_ American Woodcock X
  - \_\_\_ Common Snipe X
- GULLS, TERNS
  - \_\_\_ Ring-billed Gull X
  - \_\_\_ Forster's Tern X
  - \_\_\_ Caspian Tern X
  - \_\_\_ Black Tern X
- PIGEONS, DOVES
  - \_\_\_ Rock Dove R
  - \_\_\_ Mourning Dove R
- CUCKOOS
  - \_\_\_ Yellow-billed Cuckoo S
  - \_\_\_ Black-billed Cuckoo S
- OWLS
  - \_\_\_ Common Screech Owl X
  - \_\_\_ Great-horned Owl R
  - \_\_\_ Barred Owl R
  - \_\_\_ Long-eared Owl X
  - \_\_\_ Saw-whet Owl X
- GOATSUCKERS, SWIFTS
  - \_\_\_ Whip-poor-will X
  - \_\_\_ Common Nighthawk X
  - \_\_\_ Chimney Swift X
- HUMMINGBIRDS
  - \_\_\_ Ruby-throated Hummingbird X
- KINGFISHERS
  - \_\_\_ Belted Kingfisher X
- WOODPECKERS
  - \_\_\_ Common Flicker R
  - \_\_\_ Pileated Woodpecker X
  - \_\_\_ Red-bellied Woodpecker R
  - \_\_\_ Red-headed Woodpecker R
  - \_\_\_ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker X
  - \_\_\_ Hairy Woodpecker R
  - \_\_\_ Downy Woodpecker R
- TYRANT FLYCATCHERS
  - \_\_\_ Eastern Kingbird S
  - \_\_\_ Great-crested Flycatcher S
  - \_\_\_ Eastern Phoebe X
  - \_\_\_ Yellow-bellied Flycatcher X
  - \_\_\_ Acadian Flycatcher X
  - \_\_\_ Willow Flycatcher X
  - \_\_\_ Alder Flycatcher X
  - \_\_\_ Least Flycatcher X
  - \_\_\_ Eastern Pewee S
  - \_\_\_ Olive-sided Flycatcher X

- LARKS, SWALLOWS
  - \_\_\_ Horned Lark X
  - \_\_\_ Tree Swallow X
  - \_\_\_ Bank Swallow X
  - \_\_\_ Rough-winged Swallow X
  - \_\_\_ Barn Swallow S
  - \_\_\_ Cliff Swallow X
  - \_\_\_ Purple Martin X
- JAYS, CROWS
  - \_\_\_ Blue Jay R
  - \_\_\_ American Crow R
- CHICKADEES, TITMICE
  - \_\_\_ Black-capped Chickadee R
  - \_\_\_ Tufted Titmouse R
- NUTHATCHES, CREEPERS
  - \_\_\_ White-breasted Nuthatch R
  - \_\_\_ Red-breasted Nuthatch X
  - \_\_\_ Brown Creeper X
- WRENS
  - \_\_\_ House Wren S
  - \_\_\_ Winter Wren X
  - \_\_\_ Bewick's Wren X
  - \_\_\_ Carolina Wren X
  - \_\_\_ Marsh Wren X
  - \_\_\_ Sedge Wren X
- MIMICS
  - \_\_\_ Gray Catbird S
  - \_\_\_ Brown Thrasher S
- THRUSHES
  - \_\_\_ American Robin S
  - \_\_\_ Wood Thrush S
  - \_\_\_ Hermit Thrush X
  - \_\_\_ Swainson's Thrush X
  - \_\_\_ Gray-cheeked Thrush X
  - \_\_\_ Veery X
  - \_\_\_ Eastern Bluebird X
- GNATCATCHERS, KINGLETS
  - \_\_\_ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher X
  - \_\_\_ Golden-crowned Kinglet X
  - \_\_\_ Ruby-crowned Kinglet X
- WAXWINGS
  - \_\_\_ Bohemian Waxwing X
  - \_\_\_ Cedar Waxwing R
- SHRIKES
  - \_\_\_ Northern Shrike X
- STARLINGS
  - \_\_\_ European Starling R
- VIREOS
  - \_\_\_ White-eyed Vireo S
  - \_\_\_ Bell's Vireo S
  - \_\_\_ Yellow-throated Vireo X
  - \_\_\_ Solitary Vireo X
  - \_\_\_ Red-eyed Vireo X
  - \_\_\_ Philadelphia Vireo X
  - \_\_\_ Warbling Vireo X
- WOOD WARBLERS
  - \_\_\_ Black-and-white Warbler X
  - \_\_\_ Worm-eating Warbler X
  - \_\_\_ Golden-winged Warbler X
  - \_\_\_ Blue-winged Warbler X
  - \_\_\_ Tennessee Warbler X
  - \_\_\_ Orange-crowned Warbler X
  - \_\_\_ Nashville Warbler X
  - \_\_\_ Northern Parula Warbler X
  - \_\_\_ Yellow Warbler S
  - \_\_\_ Magnolia Warbler X
  - \_\_\_ Cape May Warbler X
  - \_\_\_ Black-throated Blue Warbler X
  - \_\_\_ Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler X

- \_\_\_ Black-throated Green Warbler X
- \_\_\_ Cerulean Warbler X
- \_\_\_ Blackburnian Warbler X
- \_\_\_ Chestnut-sided Warbler X
- \_\_\_ Bay-breasted Warbler X
- \_\_\_ Blackpoll Warbler X
- \_\_\_ Pine Warbler X
- \_\_\_ Prairie Warbler X
- \_\_\_ Palm Warbler X
- \_\_\_ Ovenbird X
- \_\_\_ Northern Waterthrush X
- \_\_\_ Kentucky Warbler X
- \_\_\_ Connecticut Warbler X
- \_\_\_ Mourning Warbler X
- \_\_\_ Common Yellowthroat S
- \_\_\_ Yellow-breasted Chat X
- \_\_\_ Wilson's Warbler X
- \_\_\_ Canada Warbler X
- \_\_\_ American Redstart S
- WEAVER FINCHES
  - \_\_\_ House Sparrow R
- MEADOWLARKS, BLACKBIRDS, ORIOLES
  - \_\_\_ Bobolink S
  - \_\_\_ Eastern Meadowlark S
  - \_\_\_ Red-winged Blackbird S
  - \_\_\_ Orchard Oriole S
  - \_\_\_ Northern (Baltimore) Oriole S
  - \_\_\_ Rusty Blackbird X
  - \_\_\_ Common Grackle S
  - \_\_\_ Brown-headed Cowbird S
- TANAGERS
  - \_\_\_ Scarlet Tanager X
- GROSBEAKS, FINCHES, SPARROWS
  - \_\_\_ Northern Cardinal R
  - \_\_\_ Rose-breasted Grosbeak S
  - \_\_\_ Indigo Bunting S
  - \_\_\_ Dickcissel X
  - \_\_\_ Evening Grosbeak X
  - \_\_\_ Purple Finch W
  - \_\_\_ Pine Grosbeak X
  - \_\_\_ Common Redpoll X
  - \_\_\_ Pine Siskin W
  - \_\_\_ American Goldfinch R
  - \_\_\_ Red Crossbill X
  - \_\_\_ White-winged Crossbill X
  - \_\_\_ Rufous-sided Towhee S
  - \_\_\_ Savannah Sparrow X
  - \_\_\_ Grasshopper Sparrow X
  - \_\_\_ Henslow's Sparrow X
  - \_\_\_ LeConte's Sparrow X
  - \_\_\_ Vesper Sparrow X
  - \_\_\_ Northern Junco W
  - \_\_\_ American Tree Sparrow W
  - \_\_\_ Chipping Sparrow S
  - \_\_\_ Clay-colored Sparrow X
  - \_\_\_ Field Sparrow S
  - \_\_\_ Harris' Sparrow X
  - \_\_\_ White-crowned Sparrow X
  - \_\_\_ White-throated Sparrow X
  - \_\_\_ Fox Sparrow X
  - \_\_\_ Lincoln's Sparrow X
  - \_\_\_ Swamp Sparrow X
  - \_\_\_ Song Sparrow S

NOTES In addition to the species listed above, the following birds have been recorded in the park:  
 -Snow Goose (both blue and white color morph)  
 -Yellow X Red-shafted Flicker  
 -Rufous-sided Towhee (spotted race)  
 -Northern Junco (Oregon race)  
 -Brewster's Warbler (Golden X Blue-winged Warbler)

\*May have been feral bird.

Please submit additions and corrections to the checklist to Rick Hollis at 3351 Lower West Branch Rd., Iowa City, IA. 52240. Additional copies of map and checklist available from same address for 50¢ each. This checklist was compiled in July 1982.

BIRDING THE CORALVILLE DAM

The Coralville Dam area offers many opportunities for observing a number of bird species. A variety of resident and transient birds can be found here and it is one of the best local spots for finding Pileated Woodpecker.

To reach the Coralville Dam, drive north from Iowa City on North Dubuque St. 2.6 miles past the I-80 interchange. Turn right (east) at the sign for Coralville Lake. After 0.6 miles, you will see a lunch stand and bait shop on the south side of the road. Just past here and on the left is a turnoff marked by a sign for the Woodpecker Nature Trail. The trailhead is marked by another large sign. The Woodpecker Trail runs through forest to the shore of the reservoir, then returns to the parking lot. The woods here are good for migrants in spring and fall. In summer, Scarlet Tanagers, Wood Thrushes, and (probably) Whip-poor-wills are resident. (From the Woodpecker Trail another trail continues on to the north and eventually reaches North Dubuque Street one mile north of the Coralville Lake turn-off. A trail map of this area is also available from the Corps of Engineers Headquarters.)

About 0.4 miles past the Woodpecker Trail parking lot, the Coralville Lake Road reaches an intersection marked by a stop sign. If you turn right and immediately turn left, you will go down a steep hill (can be icy in winter) to a parking area and a man-made beach. In the past few years this area has been an excellent place to observe gulls in the fall, especially October and November. Early morning is the best time to find the gulls loafing on the beach. They can be closely approached only if you stay in your car. Getting out of your car will cause the gulls to fly out to the middle of the reservoir. Species seen here include Ring-billed (the most common), Herring, Bonaparte's, and Franklin's Gulls. It is very possible that some more unusual species of gull may show up at this spot. In both spring and fall this area of water above the dam is good for diving ducks, loons, grebes, and hawks. During migration Bald Eagles and Ospreys are sometimes seen perched in the trees along the shore. In late March 1977, a White-winged Scoter lingered for several days in the deep water just above the dam.



Pileated Woodpecker

Returning to the intersection with the stop sign, instead of turning right and then left down to the beach, go right and then turn right again. This will take you down below the dam and across the spillway. (If you continue straight here, you can drive up and over the dam itself to the east side of the river. This will then continue out to Prairie du Chien Road.) A right turn at the spillway will take you down to the river below the dam. Just as you reach the river, there is a wide shoulder on the right where you can park your car. At this point you can walk south across a small stream and into the woods. Continue south along the river. It is in this area that the Pileated Woodpeckers reside. These magnificent birds are most easily seen from late fall through early spring when the trees are without leaves. They are most active in the early morning and this is the best time to look.

On any given winter morning, your chances of finding a Pileated Woodpecker in this area is at least 50%. Even if you don't spot one, you should at least find evidence of their presence: large oval or rectangular excavations in dead trees or fallen logs.

When you have walked far enough to see cottages along the river, turn back toward your car. If you haven't yet seen the woodpeckers, don't despair. They are seen just as often on the way back. It will be easier to find the birds if you know their calls. The most common call resembles Common Flicker's roll of "kick" notes, but it is louder, shorter, and lower pitched. The drumming cadence of the male Pileated Woodpecker is a distinctive short burst of taps, declining abruptly in intensity at the end.

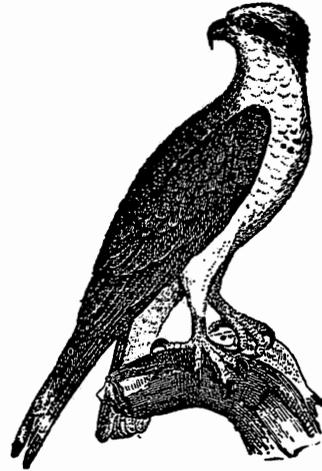
Before you leave this area be sure to check the tailwaters just below the dam. This spot usually remains unfrozen in winter and sometimes attracts a diving duck, loon, gull, Great Blue Heron, or Belted Kingfisher.

An excellent map of the entire Coralville Lake is available at the Corps of Engineers Headquarters building which is on a hill just east of the main dam.

The Birdwatch is published six times a year. You can subscribe by sending \$3.00 to The Eastern Iowa Birdwatch, 825 7th Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240. If we can mail to your University office, please include that address.

## FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

- Sunday  
24 Oct. To Matsell Bridge area for sparrows. Leaders, Cal and Bernie Knight (337-9140). Meet at 7 AM.
- Sunday  
31 Oct. To Coralville Reservoir. Leader, Mike Newlon (338-2091). Meet at 7 AM.
- Saturday  
27 Nov. To Coralville Reservoir. Leader, Rick Hollis (338-4834). Meet at 7:30 AM.
- Tuesday  
7 Dec. Christmas Count Organizational Meeting. Anyone planning to participate should attend. At Mike Newlon's home, 408 Wales St. I.C. If you cannot attend, call Mike before 7 Dec. at 338-2091.
- Saturday  
18 Dec. 1982 Iowa City Christmas Count. Let's try to make this a record year-- for birds and birders! Attend 7 Dec. meeting for details.



Osprey

## FIELD TRIP SUMMARY

31 July 1982

To Coralville Reservoir.  
Leader, Mike Newlon.

Mike Newlon has served Iowa City area birders for a number of years as a coordinator of our informally organized field trips. Mike has indicated a desire to relinquish this role to another volunteer. We all owe much gratitude to Mike for his valuable service.

Iowa City area bird enthusiasts would be grateful if someone would volunteer to be a coordinator of field trips. This job does not require birding expertise and is not very time-consuming. Several months' worth of field trips can be set up with an evening of phone calls. Many bird groups arrange their field trips for up to a year in advance. This could be a once a year duty!

If anyone is interested in arranging field trips, please contact me.

--Carl Bendorf  
351-4958

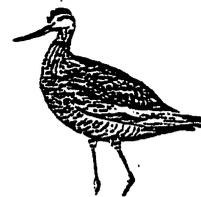
On this Saturday morning, eight birders explored the area south of the Coralville Reservoir, from Swan Lake west to Williams Prairie. Access to many areas was made difficult by the high water level of the reservoir. Many of the roads had been submerged by the flood waters.

Some of the highlights of the morning included the following: a cooperative Marsh Wren at Swan Lake, a flock of shorebirds amid the flooded corn at Tom's Pond (including Spotted, Solitary, and Least Sandpipers), a flock of 35 migrant Turkey Vultures, and two pairs of American Kestrels.

The trip concluded at Williams Prairie where we heard, but did not get to see, a Bell's Vireo and Sedge Wrens. We did enjoy identifying several species of prairie wildflowers, including Compass Plant, coneflowers, and sunflowers.

THE EASTERN IOWA BIRDWATCH  
CARL BENDORF, EDITOR  
825 7TH AVENUE  
IOWA CITY, IA. 52240





FROM THE EDITOR The first issue of the BIRDWATCH was published in January of 1981. At that time I had never before done anything like a newsletter. The BIRDWATCH has been a real learning experience for me and a great source of satisfaction. I could not have gone very far without the unselfish help of those who have contributed their writing and typing skills.

I did underestimate the amount of time it would take to put out a newsletter every other month. It seems like one issue is in the mail and it's already time to start work on the next one. The process of editing, typing, reduction, layout, folding, and mailing is a time consuming task.

After much deliberation, I am taking two steps to streamline the production of the BIRDWATCH. The first step should already be obvious to you. The format and layout is being modified to eliminate the step of reduction and layout. The point of this change is to spend more time on the content of the BIRDWATCH and less on the process. The new format may look a little less sophisticated, but I hope it will be pleasing to the eye and easy to read.

The second change will commence in January when the BIRDWATCH will start a quarterly publication schedule. The new schedule will be WINTER (January), SPRING (April), SUMMER (July), and FALL (October).

The basic goal of these changes is to provide a good quality newsletter of general interest to Iowa City area birders. Please let me hear your comments and questions.

Carl Bendorf, Editor

NOVEMBER 27 FIELD TRIP NOTE The Iowa City Bird Club field trip of 27 November 1982, inadvertently left the IMU parking lot at 7 AM instead of 7:30 AM as had been announced. Any inconvenience caused by this is sincerely regretted.

CHRISTMAS COUNT 1982 The Iowa City Bird Club will sponsor its annual Christmas Bird Count on 18 December 1982. This is an all day census of the birds within a 15 mile diameter circle centered at North Liberty.

Everyone is welcome to participate--you need not be an expert at bird identification. Every extra pair of eyes will help. If you plan to take part please come to an organizational meeting at Mike Newlon's at 408 Wales St, Iowa City, (one block east of intersection of Court St. and Muscatine Ave.). The meeting time is Tuesday 7 December at 7 PM. If you want to go on the count but cannot attend the meeting, call Mike at 338-2091, before the 7th.

Last year we set a local record of 62 different species. This year let's set a new record for number of observers!

WINTER FEEDER SURVEY I am attempting a survey this winter to determine the numbers and kinds of birds that visit feeders in Iowa. If you maintain any kind of bird feeder in your yard, I hope you will take part in this project. If this pilot study proves feasible, I will continue it over the next several years.

The more people who take part, the more useful the results will be. Keeping records can be tedious, but the final results should be fun to see; both for your own feeder and for the whole region.

Please record the activity at your bird feeder on the form enclosed with this newsletter. There are several questions about the location and description of your feeder as well as a table to record the numbers and kinds of birds. Please try to be as accurate as possible. Return the form to me by 30 April 1983. Call me if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Rick Hollis  
3351 Lower West Branch Rd.  
Iowa City, IA. 52240  
338-4834

BIRD CLUB MEETING The Iowa City Bird Club held an informal meeting on 7 November 1982, at the home of Cal and Bernie Knight. The feature of the evening was an excellent presentation on "Experiencing Panama" by Mike and Georganne Neubauer. The Neubauer's lived in Panama for several years and spent much of their free time photographing and recording the birds and animals of that Central American country. Approximately forty people thoroughly enjoyed the superb slides and expert commentary.

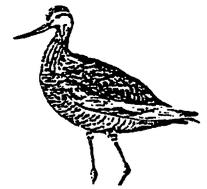
The evening was planned by the Knight's and Jim and Karole Fuller. Their efforts are greatly appreciated. Another meeting may be planned for later this winter. Don't miss it!

The BIRDWATCH is published four times a year. You can subscribe by sending \$3.00 to The Eastern Iowa Birdwatch, 825-7th Avenue, Iowa City, IA. 52240. If we can mail to your University office, please include that address.

IOWA CITY CHRISTMAS COUNT  
SATURDAY 18 DECEMBER 1982  
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING  
MIKE NEWLON'S HOUSE  
408 Wales St. Iowa City  
TUESDAY 7 DECEMBER at 7PM

THE EASTERN IOWA BIRDWATCH  
CARL BENDORF, EDITOR  
825 7TH AVENUE  
IOWA CITY, IA. 52240





BIRD CLUB MEETING The Iowa City Bird Club will hold an informal get-together on Sunday January 30th, at 7 PM, at the home of Mike and Carol Newlon, 408 Wales St. in Iowa City (one block east of intersection of Court St. and Muscatine Ave.). Our guest will be Bob Dolan, state wildlife biologist for the Coralville region. Bob's assigned territory includes Johnson, Linn, Benton, Washington, and Cedar counties, as well as Wiese Slough in Muscatine county.

Included in Bob's presentation will be a film on Iowa's living resources and a discussion of such issues as the "Chickadee Check-off" and Iowa wetlands area legislation.

Everyone is warmly invited to join us!

### 1983 WINTER FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

All field trips start at the parking lot just north of the Iowa Memorial Union on the University of Iowa campus. Most trips are over by early afternoon. Everyone is welcome.

- Sunday  
30 January  
7 PM IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB MEETING at Mike and Carol Newlon's, 408 Wales St., Iowa City. See separate note for details.
- Saturday  
5 February  
7 AM To Davenport/Credit Island for Bald Eagles. Dress warmly. Trip may last into the afternoon so you may want to bring a sack lunch. Leader, Mike Newlon (338-2091). Meet at 7 AM.
- Saturday  
19 February  
6:30 AM To Amana Woods for an early morning hike (may be snowy and cold) followed by an optional breakfast at the Colony Inn Restaurant in Amana. The cost of the breakfast will be \$4.64 and it is very generous in size. Leader, Carl Bendorf (351-4958). Meet at 6:30 AM.
- Sunday  
6 March  
7:30 AM To Coralville Reservoir. Leader, Rick Hollis (338-4834). Meet at 7:30 AM.
- Saturday  
26 March  
7:30 AM To Cone Marsh for migrant waterfowl. Leader, Ruth Williams (338-1359). Meet at 7:30 AM.

CEDAR RAPIDS AUDUBON MEETING The Cedar Rapids Audubon Society will hold its annual banquet at 6 PM on Monday, February 7th. The site will be St. Paul's Methodist Church at 3rd Ave. and 14th St. S.E., in Cedar Rapids. Dinner will be a buffet for \$8 per person. After dinner the noted wildlife artist James Landenberger will present East African Safari.

Reservations should be sent to Ms. Joan Sanders (377-4954) at 2740 24th Ave., Marion, IA. 52302 by 31 January.

FROM THE EDITOR Beginning with this issue of the BIRDWATCH, all current subscribers will have their subscriptions extended to the end of 1983. The reason for this is partly due to the change from six to four issues per year and also to simplify my records. Therefore subscriptions to the BIRDWATCH and a membership in the Iowa City Bird Club will be on an annual basis coinciding with the calendar year.

The BIRDWATCH invites its readers to submit for publication any notes, announcements, articles, etc., of interest to Iowa City area birders. The Spring issue will appear in April and I would like to have material by March 15.

NON-GAME SUPPORT CERTIFICATE The 1983 Non-game Wildlife Support Certificate is now available from the Iowa Conservation Commission. The certificate is in the form of an excellent 8½ by 11 inch numbered photograph of an American Goldfinch by Bob Formanek. Funds raised by the sale of the certificate are used to support research and management of Iowa's non-game wildlife. To purchase your certificate send \$5 to Iowa Conservation Commission, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, IA. 50319.

### IS IT A HOUSE FINCH?

With the sightings in 1982 of Iowa's first two House Finches, it may not be too long before one is seen in Iowa City. To help you when you first see them, I would like to review the identifying features which separate the House Finch from the familiar Purple Finch. This is not as difficult a task as you might at first think.

In both sexes the House Finch is a somewhat smaller and slimmer bird than the Purple Finch. It also has a smaller bill. The females can be separated as follows: the House Finch female has a plain unmarked head and the bird is grey brown, while the Purple Finch reminds me of a small female Rose-breasted Grosbeak. The head of a female Purple Finch is strongly marked with dark brown with a light eye stripe and another light patch positioned as a moustache. The stripes on the belly and flank of the female Purple Finch are far more distinct than the faint washed out stripes on the House Finch.

Male Purple Finches are a wine or raspberry color with the color being more or less evenly distributed over the body. The male House Finch can be extremely variable in both the hue and distribution of color on the body. The usual color of the House Finch is a reddish-orange and this shade is usually limited to the head, rump, and breast. Often there is color only on the head and rump. The male House Finch also has stripes on the flanks and belly.

The material in this note is based on my own experience with the help of both the Robbins and the Peterson field guides and an article by Pat Murphy in the January-February 1983 Birdwatcher's Digest.

--Rick Hollis

## EARLY WARBLERS IN SOUTHEAST IOWA

For those birders who can't wait to go "a-warblering" after a long, cold, dark winter, there is Good News! You no longer have to wait anxiously at home for the warblers to migrate to you. Now you can go to meet them in early to mid-April to feast your eyes on the bright colors and your ears on the songs which belie the diminutive dimensions of the singers. The drive to this warbler Arcadia is less than two hours from Iowa City; the results 99% guaranteed. The specific locations are the Ely Ford area in Lacey-Keosauqua State Park and the north end of Roberts Riverside Park (one mile north of Keosauqua), both in Van Buren County and both directly off Iowa Highway #1.

In the past two spring seasons, the Yellow-throated Warbler (*Dendroica dominica*) and the Northern Parula Warbler have arrived here in all their striking plumage and in full voice by mid-April. In 1981 the Yellow-throated was seen and heard on 11 April; in 1982 on 17 April. The Parulas appear almost simultaneously, while the Cerulean Warblers fly in 7-10 days later. These three species, I am convinced, commonly breed in the two parks. The first documentation of a nesting Yellow-throated in Iowa was received only two years ago (Iowa Bird Life 51:104). All three birds remain here through the summer.

Four years ago the Yellow-throated Warbler was described as "unquestionably rare" (IBL 48:75), but in my experience this is not a valid description of the status of this species in Iowa. On 17 April 1982, I saw and/or heard thirteen Yellow-throated Warblers in the parks. My experiences with this species lend credence to the observation of Jane Fuller of Burlington, who in 1979, considered the species "regular" (IBL 49:22). The Records Committee of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union has recently elevated the Yellow-throated Warbler to regular status on the Checklist of Iowa Birds.

Parulas and Ceruleans are more common in Iowa, but a cursory review of the records indicates that neither species regularly appears elsewhere in the state as early as indicated above.

When you arrive in Lacey-Keosauqua State Park for your warbler "pre-view", drive to the Ely Ford area in the southeast quadrant of the park. This area is transected by a creek which flows into the Des Moines River at the northeast corner of Ely Ford. Along this creek--from the river southeast to the stone bridge on the main road and then south along the dirt road parallel to the creek--there are many sycamore trees. It is in these trees that you will find both the Yellow-throated and the Parula--often several birds of both species in the same tree. The Yellow-throated Warbler was formerly called the Sycamore Warbler, an apt name indeed, for the species prefers to forage high in sycamore trees. (I have, however, seen both species very low in sycamores and other trees as well as on the ground in this area.) In Roberts Riverside Park, check the sycamore trees along the riverbank at the extreme north end of the park and in the woods beyond.

As is so frequently the case, you will first hear the songs of these two species. Both are loud, unique, and easily recognized. The Yellow-throated as a clear, ringing, melodious "whistle":  -- the last three notes sounding like a soprano Bobwhite. The Parula's song is a loud, buzzy trill that begins low and ascends the scale rapidly. The Parulas in this area seem to have their own dialect, for their

CONTINUED

## EARLY WARBLERS CONTINUED

song ends abruptly and does not "trip over at the top" as Roger Tory Peterson suggests. One more word about the singing patterns of these two species: both will sing loud and frequently for a long period of time, but will then stop singing for five to fifteen minutes before beginning again. If there is no song to be heard when you step out of your car, don't be dismayed--the concert will begin soon.

After determining the location of the song (allowing for the sometimes astonishing ventriloquistic effect of the Parula's voice), be patient in searching for the bird. Both species are secretive and become more so as the season progresses.

The Ceruleans can be found in the trees surrounding the meadow to the left of the dirt road by the stone bridge. One expects this species to be found high in the tree crowns, but don't be surprised to see them at lower levels here. The song as described in both the Peterson and the Golden (Robbins et al.) field guides does not apply here. In Lacey-Keosauqua State Park the Cerulean's song consists of three or four bright, clear notes--resembling those of a Yellow Warbler softly singing fast--followed by a short, monotonal, buzzy trill.

Both the Louisiana and Northern Waterthrush have appeared in the park by early April and are most readily found along the shores of the small lake located in the park. Other warblers occur in abundance in Southeast Iowa, but their appearance coincides more closely with the "normal" migration dates. Nevertheless, I have seen such species as Blue-winged Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, and Magnolia Warbler in both parks from one to two weeks before they have been sighted in the Iowa City-Cedar Rapids area.

If you are a warbler enthusiast, or if you want to get a good jump on your year's list, or if you want a nice drive to a beautiful part of Iowa to see some color and vibrant life after a white winter of discontent and semi-hibernation, you might consider making this short trip.

Will you find and see the birds? You can't miss!

--Jim Sandrock

NEW FIELD TRIP ORGANIZER Ruth Williams has volunteered to organize the field trips for the Iowa City Bird Club. Thanks again to Mike Newlon for doing this job for a number of years.

The field trips will be set up for at least three months in advance and the schedule will appear in each issue of the BIRDWATCH. We will try to print a summary of the field trips in later issues.

If you have any suggestions for field trip destinations, please call Ruth at 338-1359. Better yet, call and volunteer to lead a trip. You need not be an expert at identification to lead a trip. All that is required is a willingness to navigate a group to and from a good birding spot. If Ruth calls on you to lead a trip, please commit one morning to helping other bird enthusiasts.

---

The BIRDWATCH is published four times a year. You can subscribe for 1983 by sending \$3 to The Eastern Iowa BIRDWATCH, 825 Seventh Avenue, Iowa City, IA. 52240. If we can mail to your university office, please include that address.

---

IOWA CITY CHRISTMAS COUNT Our annual Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday 18 December 1982. Twenty-seven observers took part. A total of fifty-nine species were sighted, three fewer than the record of 62 set in 1981.

The presence of much open water allowed many waterfowl to linger, including the count's first ever Bufflehead, second Snow Goose, and third Canvasback. Bald Eagle was not recorded for the first time in the last five years. To make amends, however, observers found two Northern Goshawks (part of this year's invasion of this species).

Bobwhite and Ring-necked Pheasants were again in very low numbers. Bobwhite, in particular, have not recovered from the harsh winters of the late 1970's. Pheasant populations may have been reduced by the wet spring which hampered nesting efforts. The persistent high water levels at the Coralville Reservoir reduced food and cover available to the pheasants over much of the Hawkeye Wildlife Refuge Area.

Gulls were numerous on this year's count; the 55 Herring Gulls were only the second record of this species for the Iowa City count. Saw-whet Owl and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker were not found this year. Red-headed Woodpecker numbers were low, perhaps reflecting a poor acorn crop. Lack of any snow cover meant that open field birds such as longspurs, buntings, and meadowlarks were not concentrated at the roadsides and could not be found. The winter finches were also very scarce and were represented only by Purple Finch.

Participants were Carl and John Bendorf, Corey Blevins, John Cordell, Bud Gode, Lanny Haldy, Rick Hollis, Bernie Hoyer, Thomas Kent (compiler), Bernie and Cal Knight, Bob Lechner, Ramona McGurk, Dawson Mohler, Peter Petersen, Anne and Terry Perkins, Angela and Dan Ray, Jim Sandrock, Marlyn Smith, Tom Staudt, Kent Stiverson, Dick Tetrault, Carol Thompson, and Ruth Williams.

|                     |      |                     |     |                     |      |
|---------------------|------|---------------------|-----|---------------------|------|
| Great Blue Heron    | 2    | Ring-billed Gull    | 22  | White-br. Nuthatch  | 90   |
| Canada Goose        | 60   | Rock Dove           | 157 | Red-br. Nuthatch    | 4    |
| Snow Goose          | 1    | Mourning Dove       | 5   | Brown Creeper       | 5    |
| Mallard             | 1206 | E. Screech Owl      | 6   | American Robin      | 2    |
| Am. Black Duck      | 7    | Gr. Horned Owl      | 9   | Golden-cr. Kinglet  | 2    |
| N. Pintail          | 2    | Barred Owl          | 6   | Cedar Waxwing       | 84   |
| Am. Wigeon          | 2    | Long-eared Owl      | 2   | Eur. Starling       | 2021 |
| Canvasback          | 1    | Short-eared Owl     | 1   | House Sparrow       | 2624 |
| Lesser Scaup        | 1    | Belted Kingfisher   | 6   | Red-wing. Blackbird | 7    |
| Com. Goldeneye      | 71   | Common Flicker      | 24  | Com. Grackle        | 1    |
| Bufflehead          | 1    | Pileated Woodpecker | 2   | Brwn-head. Cowbird  | 22   |
| N. Goshawk          | 2    | Red-bell. Wdpk.     | 39  | N. Cardinal         | 271  |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk  | 2    | Red-head. Wdpk.     | 6   | Purple Finch        | 8    |
| Accipiter Species   | 2    | Hairy Woodpecker    | 9   | Am. Goldfinch       | 46   |
| Red-tailed Hawk     | 17   | Downy Woodpecker    | 64  | Dark-eyed Junco     | 851  |
| Rough-legged Hawk   | 3    | Horned Lark         | 4   | Am. Tree Sparrow    | 508  |
| Am. Kestrel         | 6    | Blue Jay            | 153 | White-cr. Sparrow   | 3    |
| Com. Bobwhite       | 1    | American Crow       | 305 | White-thr. Sparrow  | 1    |
| Ring-neck. Pheasant | 14   | Black-cap. Chick.   | 293 | Swamp Sparrow       | 3    |
| Herring Gull        | 55   | Tufted Titmouse     | 14  | Song Sparrow        | 15   |

Total 59 Species

---

THE EASTERN IOWA BIRDWATCH  
CARL BENDORF, EDITOR  
825 7TH AVENUE  
IOWA CITY, IA. 52240



1983 SPRING FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

All field trips start at the parking lot just north of the Iowa Memorial Union on the University of Iowa campus. Most trips are over by early afternoon. Everyone is welcome.

Saturday To CORALVILLE RESERVOIR. Leader, Mike Newlon (338-2091).  
9 April Meet at 7 AM.  
7 AM

Sunday To MUSKRAT SLOUGH. Be prepared for wet walking. Destination may change if weather is unfavorable. Leaders, Cal  
17 April and Bernie Knight (337-9140). Meet at 6:30 AM.  
6:30 AM

Friday through Sunday Spring Meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists'  
22-24 April Union in Shenandoah, IA. Anyone Welcome.  
Contact Carl Bendorf (351-4958) for details.

Saturday To FULLER'S FARM for spring warblers. Leaders, Karole and  
7 May Jim Fuller (338-3561). Meet at 7 AM.  
7 AM

Saturday To LACEY-KEOSAUQUA STATE PARK for birding followed by a  
21 May picnic. Leader, Jim Sandrock (338-5774). Please call  
7:30 AM Jim in advance if you wish to attend. Meet at 7:30 AM  
at the main entrance to the park.

Sunday To AMANA WOODS for nesting warblers. Leader, Carol  
12 June Thompson (338-5361). Meet at 7 AM.  
7 AM

BIRDING AREAS AROUND THE CORALVILLE RESERVOIR This issue of the BIRD-WATCH contains a map of birding areas and place names around the Coralville Reservoir. Many of these spots are the best birding areas in Johnson County. I hope this map will help Iowa City area birders to standardize our use of place names and clear up confusion about certain locations.

Not all of the places marked on the map are birding spots. They are included as landmarks. The place names do not necessarily conform to official nomenclature on topographical and county maps. These are the names used by most local birders.

On the reverse side of the enclosed map is a list of the place names as lettered on the map from A to Z and AA to II. Some places have more than one name and a list of synonyms is given.

--Rick Hollis

## FIELD TRIP SUMMARIES

5 February 1983 To Mississippi River. Leader, Mike Newlon.

On a raw grey day, two carloads of birders visited the Mississippi River. The best birds were at Lock and Dam 14, above Bettendorf: a Belted Kingfisher, Common Mergansers and Goldeneyes, 500 Herring Gulls, and 23 Bald Eagles. A long and careful search of the gulls failed to reveal a Glaucous Gull that had been previously reported.

Participants: Jim Fuller, Bud Gode, Rick Hollis, Cal & Bernie Knight, Ramona McGurk, Mike Newlon, and Mary Noble.

19 February 1983 To Amana. Leader, Carl Bendorf

This annual winter trip to Amana is traditionally ( and accidentally) conducted on one of the coldest days of the season. This year was a definite exception: clear and calm with a mid-day temperature of 45°.

Our group of 14 birders walked north along an abandoned railroad track from the point where the track goes under highway #6 west of Homestead across the Iowa River and back again. This track runs straight through an extensive plot of river bottom woodland. Four Pileated Woodpeckers put on a nice show for an appreciative audience. We marveled at these majestic birds as they called, drummed, and flew over our heads.

Other birds of interest included three Eastern Bluebirds, 25 Rusty Blackbirds, and a Fox Sparrow.

After this invigorating hike we all enjoyed a bountiful breakfast at the Colony Inn in Amana.

Participants: Jim & Karole Fuller, Bud Gode, Lanny Haldy, Dot Hinman, Rick Hollis, Lurita Kahler, Cal & Bernie Knight, Bob Lechner, Jerry & Bonnie Ludwig, Ramona McGurk, Mike Newlon, Mary Noble, and Carol Thompson.

6 March 1983 To Coralville Reservoir. Leader, Rick Hollis.

The greatest numbers of waterfowl on this day were at the Jolly Roger area of the reservoir and at the Crescent Moon Lake area. Among the waterfowl were Canada Geese, Mallards, Pintails, 1000+ Canvasbacks, Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked Ducks, Redheads, and Common Mergansers. These species were mainly the diving ducks as would be expected in early March.

Other birds included a Glaucous Gull over the south arm of Lake Macbride and a Bald Eagle.

Participants: Jim Fuller, Bud Gode, Cal & Bernie Knight, Bob Lechner, Mary Noble, Carol Thompson, John Thompson, Bob Towner, and Ruth Williams.

---

The BIRDWATCH is published four times a year. You can subscribe for 1983 by sending \$3 to The Eastern Iowa BIRDWATCH, 825 Seventh Avenue, Iowa City, IA. 52240. If we can mail to your university office, please include that address.

---

## BUZZERS, CHIPPERS, SQUEAKERS, AND WHISTLERS!

For many birdwatchers the warblers are among the most fascinating of the bird families. Yet, all too often, the warblers are also the most frustrating birds to learn to distinguish in the field. Several factors contribute to the difficulty most of us have in learning to identify warblers. First, of the more than thirty species that occur in Iowa, most can be readily found only during their migration in May and again in the fall. Thus we have only a limited period of exposure to many of the warblers species. A second aspect is that many of the species are difficult to find and to see clearly. These are relatively small birds which are usually either flitting in the very tops of the tallest trees or sneaking away through dense undergrowth in dark woods.

When a clear view of a warbler eludes us we are often left only with a fleeting and unfamiliar song. But it is these very songs which can give us a conclusive clue to the identity of the singer. To learn the warblers requires that we become familiar with their songs.

To help me to cope with the confusing collection of warbler songs, I have divided the sounds into four categories: Buzzers, Chippers, Squeakers, and Whistlers. These categories are very general descriptions of the basic types of sound that I hear in the songs of the warblers. I may not always remember exactly how every warbler song sounds, but I can usually place an unfamiliar song into one of my general categories. Once placed in a category I mentally compare the song in question with the birds in each category until, by process of elimination, the strange song can be identified. At worst, I can at least narrow a singer's identity down to two or three likely species. Instead of sorting through all 35 species of warblers every time I hear a song, I first try to place the sound onto one of four manageable categories.

Here then are the four categories with a list of the birds in each one:

Buzzers: The "buzzing" warblers are those whose songs are relatively unmusical, mechanical, and insectlike in quality. They have a harsh or rasping tone. I put seven birds in the Buzzer class.

Golden-winged  
Blu-winged  
Northern Parula  
Black-throated Blue  
Black-throated Green  
Cerulean  
American Redstart

Chippers: There are fast chippers and slow chippers. The faster song is a monotone trill of rapid chips. These trills are some of the hardest songs to distinguish as they differ mainly in the quality of the note with no recognizable pattern to the song. The slower chippers sing a series of chip notes, usually with some pattern of tempo which can be recognized. There are eight species of Chippers.

(FAST)  
Worm-eating  
Orange-crowned  
Yellow-rumped  
Pine  
Palm

(SLOW)  
Tennessee  
Nashville  
Wilson's

(CONTINUED)

Squeakers: The Squeakers are the songs that are very high pitched and thin monotone notes. These songs can be very hard to hear and they do not travel for any great distance. Learning the squeaks can be hard as they tend to all sound the same, but with practice they are quite distinctive. The five warblers that squeak are:

Black and White  
Cape May  
Blackburnian  
Bay-breasted  
Blackpoll

Whistlers: These songs are various arrangements of whistled musical notes. This class of songs has the most variety and the patterns of the sounds are relatively complex. These songs will carry for the greatest distance. This class of songs best fits the term "warble". I have placed 15 birds in the Whistler category.

|                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Prothonotary          | Connecticut          |
| Yellow                | Mourning             |
| Magnolia              | Common Yellowthroat  |
| Yellow-throated       | Yellow-breasted Chat |
| Chesnut-sided         | Hooded               |
| Ovenbird              | Canada               |
| Northern Waterthrush  |                      |
| Louisiana Waterthrush |                      |
| Kentucky              |                      |

Just seeing the names of the warblers in the various categories will not help much in remembering their songs. I suggest that you obtain a record of bird songs and listen to the warblers. As you listen, try to place each bird in one of the four categories. While listening you can employ a technique called syllabication which is the transformation of sounds into words or phrases that convey the pattern and quality of the sounds. This process and repetition of syllabication can aid us in remembering the songs. The best comments and syllabications of the warbler songs are in the 1947 edition of the Peterson Field Guide to the Birds. The 1980 edition comments are less complete. Use the Peterson phrases or make up your own. Listen to the songs and repeat the phrases. Learning bird songs is mostly a matter of memorization and whatever tricks or methods you can use will help.

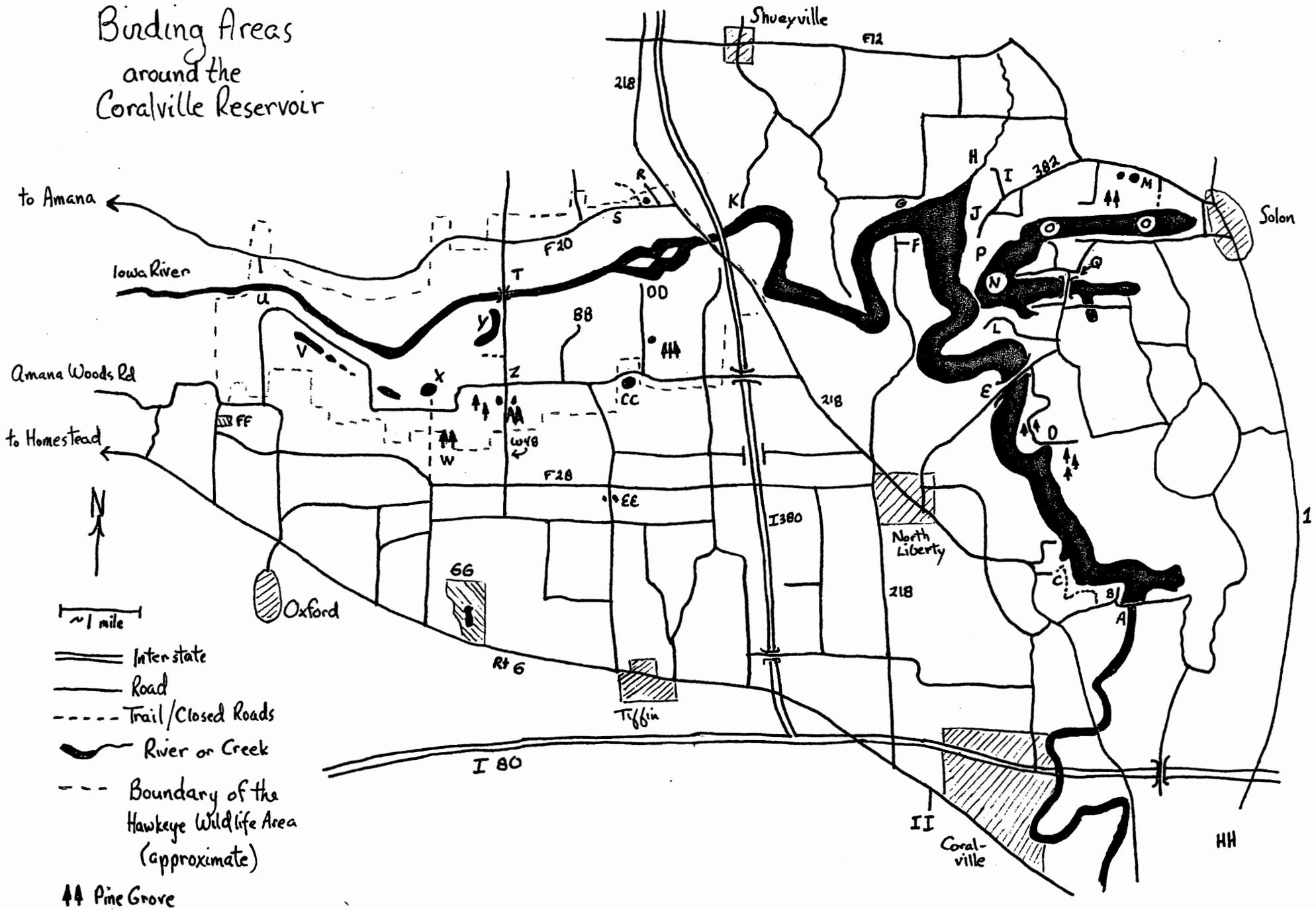
I have found that no amount of listening to records can prepare me for the avalanche of sound that can descend upon the ear on a morning in mid-May. The best learning device is still the time spent in tracking down a strange sound and identifying the source. These are the moments I will remember the longest.

Here are several useful sources for recorded songs:

A Field Guide to Bird Songs of Eastern and Central North America, two LP discs with songs and calls of about 300 species. Also available as two cassettes. Kellogg, P.P., and A.A. Allen, 1959. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2 Park St., Boston, MA. 02107.

Warblers, one LP disc with 38 species of warblers. Borrer, D.J., and W.W.H. Gunn, 1959. Federation of Ontario Naturalists, 1262 Don Mills Road, Don Mills, Ontario M3B 2W8, Canada.

# Birding Areas around the Coralville Reservoir



BIRDING AREAS AROUND THE CORALVILLE RESERVOIR

Coralville Reservoir Area

- A. Tailwater area
- B. West overlook & beach
- C. Squires Point
- D. Sugar Bottom
- E. Mehaffey Bridge
- F. Jolly Roger area
- G. Sandy Beach
- H. Hoosier Creek
- I. Golf Course Road
- J. Twin View Heights
- K. Curtis Bridge Road

Synonyms

Amana Woods Road=Dutch Lake Road  
Dupont Bridge=Greencastle Bridge  
F20=County Road E  
F28=County Road H  
W48=County Road O  
Matson Lake=Hanging Rock Bridge Area  
Crescent Lake=Wisniewski Lake

Lake Macbride Area

- L. Macbride Field Campus
- M. 382 Ponds
- N. Lake Macbride-Main Body
- O. North arm of Lake Macbride
- P. Lake Macbride State Park
- Q. Causeway across South Arm

Hawkeye Wildlife Refuge Area

- R. Ranch Club Road
- S. Refuge Headquarters
- T. Dupont Bridge
- U. Hanging Rock Bridge area
- V. Matson Lake
- W. Saw-whet Grove
- X. Round Lake
- Y. Crescent or Half Moon Lake
- Z. Greencastle Corner
- AA. Gun Club Ponds
- BB. Babcock Lake
- CC. Swan Lake
- DD. Sand Point

Additional copies available from  
Rick Hollis 3351 Lower West Branch  
Road, Iowa City, IA. 52240, for 20¢  
each plus self addressed stamped  
envelope.  
Compiled March 1983.

Additional Areas

- EE. Tom's Pond
- FF. Williams Prairie
- GG. Kent Park
- HH. Hickory Hill Park
- II. Camp Cardinal Road

**EDITOR WANTED!**

At the end of this year I would like to give up my role as the editor of the BIRDWATCH.

I have recently taken on increased responsibility with the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. Furthermore, I have a number of projects in the works that occupy a good deal of my free time. It is not so much that the BIRDWATCH is terribly time consuming, but it does take a fair amount of mental and creative energy. After three years of publication I would like to give someone else a chance to work on this fun and satisfying project.

The role of the future editor of this newsletter really is up to the person who elects to take the job. It can be as much or as little work as is desired. There are many people (myself included) who will be willing to lend a hand in writing, layout, duplicating, folding, addressing, and mailing. The organization of volunteers can really lighten the load. Furthermore, the format and style are certainly open to change.

If anyone is interested in taking over after the next issue as primary organizer of the BIRDWATCH, please call me.

Carl Bendorf  
351-4958

**IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION TO MEET IN IOWA CITY**

The 1983 Fall Convention of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union will be held in Iowa City on the weekend of 22-23 October. The meeting will be headquartered at the Ambassador Inn, at the intersection of highway 218 and Interstate 80.

This weekend will be a tremendous opportunity for any Iowa City area bird enthusiast to meet other birders, learn about birds, and take part in field trips. Everyone is most welcome.

A rough outline for the weekend is as follows:

Friday 21 October- Informal evening gathering.

Saturday morning (22 October) - field trips to local areas

Saturday afternoon-workshops, presentations, and business meeting.

Saturday night-buffet meal and slide quiz.

Sunday morning (23 October) - field trips to local areas followed by lunch.

CONTINUED

## FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

All field trips leave from the parking lot on the north side of the Iowa Memorial Union on the University of Iowa campus. Most trips are over by early afternoon.

Wednesday IOU Convention Planning Meeting  
24 August At Mike Newlon's, 408 Wales St., Iowa City.  
7:30 PM See longer note. Everyone Welcome!

Saturday To Cone Marsh.  
27 August Leader, Ruth Williams (338-1359).  
7 AM

Saturday To Coralville Reservoir for shorebirds.  
10 Sept Leader, Mike Newlon.  
7 AM

Sunday To Coralville Reservoir.  
25 Sept Leader, Bud Gode (351-5245).  
7:30 AM

Sunday To Hickory Hill Park.  
9 October Leader, Mary Noble (338-6097).  
7 AM

Fri-Sun IOU FALL CONVENTION  
21-23 Oct Iowa City. See longer note for details.

Saturday To Coralville Reservoir.  
12 Nov Leader, Rick Hollis (338-4834).  
7 AM



## FIELD TRIP SUMMARY

To Cone Marsh-26 March 1983. Leader, Ruth Williams.

A small group of hardy birders braved the early spring snow for this trip to Cone Marsh and its environs. The first stop was made along the Hills Road to watch a solitary Sandhill Crane which had been discovered about a week earlier by Jim Fuller.

There were large flocks of ducks at the marsh and among these was a Horned Grebe. Other marsh highlights included an immature Bald Eagle and some Water Pipits.

The trip back to Iowa City included a stop to watch large flocks of longspurs on the roadside and in the fields near Nichols.

Participants: Bud Gode, Cal Knight, Bob Lechner, Mary Noble, Carol Thompson, Gladys Wanek, and Ruth Williams.

The highlight of the Saturday afternoon program will be a presentation on the identification of gulls by Bruce Peterjohn, Regional Editor of AMERICAN BIRDS. Bruce is from Westerville, Ohio, and has extensive experience in identifying gulls. For most of us, the gull family is very confusing to understand and identity. This presentation should be very helpful.

---

This convention is being hosted by the Iowa City Bird Club. Since we do not have an extensively organized club, we will need to rely on volunteer help from our readers to organize this weekend. We will hold an organizational meeting at Mike Newlon's home on Wednesday, 24 August, at 7:30 PM. Mike lives at 408 Wales St., in Iowa City. If you would like to help out but cannot attend, call Mike Newlon (338-2091), or Carl Bendorf (351-4958).

---

In order to successfully plan and carry out the activities of the IOU weekend in Iowa City, we will need the volunteer help of as many local birders as we can muster. Helping with and participating in the weekend should be very fun and satisfying. Why not come to the organizational meeting and assist the Iowa City Bird Club in hosting the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. You need not be a member of the IOU to take part.

More details about the convention will be sent to all subscribers after the organizational meeting.

#### MACBRIDE PRAIRIE PROJECT

A natural prairie is coming alive through the efforts of rangers at Lake Macbride State Park and interested clubs and citizens.

Eighteen acres of land located within Iowa's largest state park have been set aside for development as a nature preserve. The terrain includes marshland and woods suitable for planting a variety of wildflowers, as well as prairie grass. Eventually a tree nursery, fish pond, and trails for hikers, birdwatchers, and flower lovers will be included.

Park Ranger Darrell Arntzen and Assistant Ranger Patty Vander Waal are responsible for the project. They sought the aid of private organizations and individuals when it was learned that the state could pay only for the prairie grass seed. According to the rangers, seed for prairie flowers runs \$150 a pound, and about 2-8 pounds of seed are needed for each acre.

To date, about \$900 has been donated to the project enabling work to begin with bulldozers clearing and leveling ground. Later the area was plowed several times to prepare it for planting.

The rangers estimate it will take about five years for prairie grass and flowers to become fully established. They plan on using the area as an educational setting, hopefully with a fulltime naturalist to give tours.

CONTINUED

The site under development is located about a quarter mile south of the Lake Macbride causeway on the west side of county road F29.

Persons and organizations interested in donating to the project should send their contributions to the Iowa Conservation Commission, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, designating the Lake Macbride Prairie Project as recipient.

-Betty Lou Tucker

### FALL SHOREBIRD MIGRATION

For most birders, the most exciting time of year is the variety and movement encountered during the spring bird migration. Yet the active birder is scarcely finished chasing the late migrants of early June when the first migrants of the fall season begin arriving in mid July. It seems incredible that a bird we see here in May can fly north to Canada, successfully breed, and be back here just over a month later. However, this is precisely what happens with many of the shorebirds. When summer weather is at its hottest there are a great many migrants passing through for us to find and identify. To learn more about this phenomenon, I recently interviewed Tom Kent, of Iowa City. Tom is a veteran area birder with a special interest in shorebirds. Most of the places mentioned can be found on the Coralville Reservoir map in the last issue of the BIRDWATCH (Spring 1983).

#### BIRDWATCH: HOW IS FALL SHOREBIRDING DIFFERENT FROM SPRING SHOREBIRDING?

KENT: The main thing is that fall shorebird migration is greatly spread out so if you have good habitat you will have a long time to look at the birds. In the spring the birds are on their way to breeding grounds so they may touch down briefly to feed, or they may become scared and then they're gone. In the spring the birds migrate during the day so they will arrive at a spot in the afternoon. They may still be there the next morning but by the next afternoon you will have a whole new set of birds. The movement in the fall seems to be much more spread out.

In terms of the habitat, the birds are simply opportunistic. As they fly over Iowa they will stop only if there is habitat.

#### BW: WHAT IS THE GENERAL TIMING AND SEQUENCE OF FALL SHOREBIRD MIGRATION?

KENT: The first shorebird to arrive back is the Solitary Sandpiper. These can be seen during the last few days of June, or more commonly during the first couple of weeks of July. They will remain in small numbers into August.

The next species to return are the Pectoral Sandpipers and the Lesser Yellowlegs. They start coming back at end of the first week of July. Their numbers will peak in late July and both species can linger as late as October.

CONTINUED

Special mention should be made of the Dowitcher species. The Short-billed Dowitcher returns first. The females leave the nesting grounds after the young are born but before they are raised. They will fly directly to their next stop. So a dowitcher may fly five to seven hundred miles and can arrive in Iowa before the young are out of the nest. Therefore, a dowitcher that shows up in mid-July will most likely be a female Short-billed Dowitcher still in somewhat worn breeding plumage. The males will arrive somewhat later. So in the second and third week of July one might see female dowitchers and in the first two weeks of August you will start to see male Short-billed Dowitchers. After mid August and up to mid-September you are likely to see juvenile plumaged Short-billed Dowitchers.



Turnstone

The Long-billed Dowitchers arrive on a later schedule as they nest way up in Alaska rather than in central Canada for the Short-billed Dowitcher. I would expect to see Long-billed Dowitchers arriving around August 1st and these could still be in breeding plumage. Any Dowitcher seen in October is likely to be a juvenile plumaged Long-billed Dowitcher. This species can linger into October. Thus, from August through September one can find either species of dowitcher in Iowa. The only trouble is they are hard to tell apart.

In general July is usually characterized by Solitaries, Pectorals, and Yellowlegs. Sometimes you could get a few Least Sandpipers. With August, one will begin to see a good mixture of species. About the second week in August is a peak time for shorebirds in our area. But this season can extend all the way up into September if you have the right water conditions

**BW:** HOW DO LOCAL WATER CONDITIONS AFFECT THE MIGRATION?

**KENT:** What usually happens to the Coralville Reservoir is that it is kept at summer water levels until about the 15th of August when the level is raised for duck hunting habitat. This higher water level wipes out most of the shorebird habitat. What you really want is high water to kill areas of vegetation followed by receding water which will expose mudflats. With a rising water level you just get water up into the grass and this is not good habitat for the birds. Without good habitat the birds just fly over Iowa.

Before the Coralville Reservoir was built there was essentially no shorebird habitat in this area. With a summer like this year of very high water levels you will get receding water in late summer and good mudflats. There is no one single spot around Iowa City to find shorebirds. You just have to search around and this depends on the changing water levels.

CONTINUED

BW:WHAT IS YOUR GENERAL ROUTE FOR FALL SHOREBIRDING?

KENT: An outing is essentially limited to two places. During a very dry summer perhaps the best bet is to go to Cone Marsh in Louisa County when the marsh may partially dry up and create mudflats. But in some years there may be essentially no shorebird habitat at Cone Marsh. You go to Cone Marsh and if it's lousy, you don't go back. Next, you go to the Coralville Reservoir. For shorebirding around the Reservoir, I usually start from Swan Lake and go in and out of the various access roads to the reservoir. Some of these would include Sand Point, the Babcock Lake area, and to the west of the Greencastle Corner. During a very low water year one can find excellent habitat by driving north from the Greencastle Corner along the DuPont Bridge Road. During a low water year the Half Moon Lake along this road is probably the best shorebird place along the reservoir. Another good area can be reached by walking south into the Hawkeye Wildlife Refuge Area just below the new headquarters building county road F20. This can be entered until about September 15. If the water is way down the backwaters here will open up and expose mudflats. It can be a long walk but it can be very productive. Another good spot might be around the old Hanging Rock Bridge area which is one mile north and one mile east of Williams Prairie in northwest Johnson County.

BW:ARE THERE ANY SPECIES THAT ARE MORE LIKELY IN THE FALL THAN IN THE SPRING?

KENT: The most notable generalization is that Hudsonian Godwits, White-rumped Sandpipers, and Golden Plovers migrate east and down the Atlantic in the fall and are all practically non-existent in Iowa at this season. The Hudsonian Godwit and the White-rumped Sandpiper should be documented in the fall. On the other hand, the Stilt Sandpiper seems to congregate here in the fall while we may see only a few in the spring.

It is said that Western Sandpiper is more common in the fall. I don't know about this. It might be that there is simply more time to look and more birds to sort through.

BW: WHAT IS YOUR MOST SOUGHT AFTER SHOREBIRD IN IOWA AND HOW DO YOU PLAN TO FIND IT?

KENT: It could possibly be the Red Knot. They should come through Iowa. Probably more exciting though, and I think eminently findable in Iowa is the Red Phalarope. It should pass through Iowa in November. Most of the ones sighted in the Midwest are in late fall. It seems that there are some sighted in every state in the Midwest every year--except in Iowa. To find a definite Red Phalarope would add a new bird to the state list. I guess that would be an easy choice for most sought shorebird.





Field Trip and Meeting Schedule

All field trips leave from the parking lot just north of the Iowa Memorial Union on the University of Iowa campus. Most trips are over by early afternoon.

Wednesday, December 7  
7:30 pm

Christmas count organizational meeting.  
Mike Newlon's. 408 Wales Street, Iowa City.

Saturday, January 14  
6:30 am

To Amana woods for turkeys and breakfast. Leader, Mike Newlon, 338-2091. It may be snowy and cold. Dress warmly. The hike will be followed by an optional breakfast at the Colony Inn Restaurant in Amana. The cost of the breakfast will be approximately \$5.00 per person and is very generous in size.

Saturday, February 4  
7:00 am

To Mississippi River for eagles. Leader, Mike Newlon, 338-2091. Dress warmly. Trip may last into the afternoon so you may want to bring a sack lunch.

Monday, February 20  
7:00 pm

Slide show and social gathering. Tom Kent, Tom Staudt and Carl Bendorf will show slides from Florida trip. Come join in and help lighten the winter doldrums. The get-together will be held at Tom Kent's. 211 Richards, Iowa City. (337-5231)

Saturday, March 24  
7:30 am

To Cone Marsh. Leader Ruth Williams. (338-1359)

Field Trip to Coralville Res. area: West Overlook Beach, Refuge Headquarters, Sugar Bottom and Jolly Roger.

Date: 12 November 1983.

Participants: Bud Gode, Rick Hollis (leader), Ramona McGurk, Dick and Marcia Schaffer.

Weather: Cloudy, windy and the temperature was in the 40's.

Birds: C. Loon, Horned Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Snow, Blue and Canada Geese, Mallard, Teal sp., Ringnecked Duck, Bufflehead, Accipiter sp., Red-tailed Hawk, Bonapartes, Ring-billed and Herring Gulls, Rock and Mourning Doves, Red-headed, Red-bellied, Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers, Black-capped Chickadee, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Starling, Tree, Swamp, and Song Sparrow, Junco, Redwings, Goldfinch and House Sparrow.

Highlights: Observing the different flight style of Bonapartes and Ring-billed Gulls, and learning that it is possible to differentiate these species just on that basis. Observing a loon fly back and forth in front of us at a distance of 30-50 miles.

## Christmas Count 1983

The Iowa City Bird Club will sponsor its annual Christmas Bird Count on 17 December 1983. Everyone is welcome to participate - novices as well as experts and all levels in between. The more eyes we can put in the field, the greater our chances become of finding more birds. If you plan to participate, please come to an organizational meeting on Wednesday, 7 December at 7:30 pm. This meeting will be held at Mike Newlon's at 408 Wales Street, Iowa City (one block east of the intersection of Court St. and Muscatine Ave.). If you want to go on the count but cannot attend the meeting, call Mike at 338-2091 before the 7th. Let's see if we can beat the 1981 record of 62 species!

## Christmas Count Notes

The 1983 Christmas Count is fast approaching. With this in mind, I reviewed our records for the last five years as well as those from Cedar Rapids. My goal was to identify those species which we might reasonably expect to see but which we sometimes or often miss. I am grouping these birds into two categories.

Group A, the Why Don't We Get These Birds. These are birds which the Cedar Rapids Count has found on 50% or more of the counts, while the Iowa City Count has seen these on less than 50% of the counts. I realize that some of the differences are due to the fact that Cedar Rapids area always has open water, however, this will affect only the water birds on the list.

Group B, the Why Don't We See Them All The Time Birds. As the title indicates, these are birds which we haven't seen on all the counts of the previous five years and yet I feel that we should have.

In the next several weeks we should identify places within our count circle where these birds can be found. We should especially attempt to locate feeders where these birds are commonly seen. If we can find these birds on the 17th, we could significantly increase our species totals. The groups are listed below. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of times the Cedar Rapids Count has seen the bird over the last five years versus the number of times the Iowa City count has seen these birds.

Group A: Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye (5 vs 3), Common Merganser, Coopers Hawk, Common Bobwhite (5 vs 3) Killdeer, Common Snipe (3 vs 0), Brown Thrasher (4 vs 0), Rufous-sided Towhee (3 vs 0) and Fox Sparrow (3 vs 0).

Group B: Black Duck, Bald Eagle, Sharp-Skinned Hawk, Kestrel, Ring-billed Gull, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Horned Lark, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Pine Siskin and White-throated sparrow.

Rick Hollis



This is the last issue of the BIRDWATCH for which I will be serving as editor. I sincerely appreciate the support and contributions of all of you over the past three years. Working on the BIRDWATCH has been a very gratifying project and I have been thankful for the opportunity.

Beginning with the first issue of next year, Carol Thompson will take over as editor. In welcoming Carol to the Birdwatch, I know that she will receive the same support and encouragement offered to me. Carol will bring a fresh perspective to this newsletter and I am sure you will enjoy her version of the BIRDWATCH.

Thank you.  
Carl Bendorf

## Iowa Ornithologists' Union Meeting

The fall meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union was held at the Ambassador Inn in Coralville on the weekend of 21-23 October 1983. Approximately eighty birders from across Iowa attended the meeting.

The weekend was kicked off with an informal social gathering graciously hosted by Dick Tetrault of Iowa City. Bright and early on both Saturday and Sunday mornings the enthusiastic birders split up into groups and fanned out to local birding areas. Sparrows were generally easy to find, including Lincoln's and Harris'. Jim Fuller's feeder provided many birders with a good look at a Carolina Wren. On Sunday morning a White-Winged Scoter was discovered just above the Coralville Dam.

On Saturday afternoon the IOU presented an interesting program for the meeting participants. Tom Kent, Iowa City, and Jim Dinsmore, Ames, discussed the geographic distribution of Iowa birds. Their talk was an extension of their recent work as two of the co-authors of a forthcoming new book, The Birds of Iowa.

Next on the program was a talk "Weather and Bird Migration" presented by Mike Newlon, Iowa City. Mike explained some of the basics of weather patterns and how they affect the migratory movements of birds.

A vexing identification problem for many Iowa birders is that of separating the various species of gulls. This subject was well elucidated by Bruce Peterjohn of Westerville, Ohio. Bruce is the American Birds editor for the Middlewestern Prairie Region, of which Iowa is a part. One of Bruce's basic points is that one must first become intimately familiar with the plumage variations of the Ring-billed and Herring Gulls. Only then can we begin to understand the nuances which help to identify some of the less common species.

After a pleasant banquet meal on Saturday night, the groups took part in a very interesting slide identification quiz moderated by Tom Kent. An informal panel of experts took turns trying to analyze and identify some difficult slides. This process demonstrated the importance of small details in identifying a bird.

The entire weekend was planned and hosted by an informal committee of the Iowa City Bird Club. Special thanks goes to Dick Tetrault, Mike Newlon, Tom Kent, Bernie Knight, Rick Hollis, Tom Staudt, Carol Thompson, M.L. "Huey" Huit, Carl Bendorf, and many more.

The spring meeting of the IOU will be hosted by the Rolling Hills Audubon Society in Indianola on the first weekend in May 1984.

Carl Bendorf

---

### Winter Feeder Survey

Last year I enlisted the help of E.I.B. readers to conduct a winter-long feeder survey. I am sure that the people who filled out the forms found careful study of their feeder to be instructive. I certainly learned a good deal about conducting surveys. There were only five forms returned, far too few to make tallying of the results worthwhile.

This year, in hopes of increasing the sample number, the survey will only cover the last weekend in January and distribution of forms will be statewide. This year's survey is co-sponsored by the Iowa Ornithologists' Union and the Non-Game Division of the Iowa Conservation Commission. (Your Chickadee Checkoff dollars at work.) I hope that this year will mark the first of many years for the survey.

A copy of the feeder survey form is enclosed with this newsletter. The results will be tabulated and published sometime next spring.

Rick Hollis

## Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas Project

The Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas project has recently been announced under the joint sponsorship of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union and the Iowa Conservation Commission. This five year project aims at producing an atlas containing maps of the breeding range within Iowa for each species that nests in the state. The results of this study will help to answer such questions as: What species nest within the state? What are their principal nesting grounds? What areas or habitats are critical to them? It will also provide an invaluable baseline with which to assess future changes in the breeding distribution of Iowa's birdlife.

Similar projects are underway in a number of other states. The general procedure is to establish a method of surveying the state to discover what species breed and where they are breeding. To achieve a representative sample, nearly one thousand sampling blocks, each 3 square miles in size, will be set up throughout Iowa. Each block will need to be surveyed sometime during the five-year period to ascertain evidence of breeding birds, e.g., bird on nest, eggs in nest, feeding of young, etc.

If you would like to help survey the breeding birds on one or more blocks near your home, or if you would like to become involved with the atlas project in any other way, please let us know. Detailed instructions and reporting forms will be provided. Each sample block can probably be adequately covered in 4-5 mornings afield during the spring and summer, plus a morning or two during other seasons.

Participation in the atlas project will not only be an enjoyable field experience, but a valuable contribution to scientific knowledge.

For more information on the Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas project, please contact:

Mike Newlon  
408 Wales Street  
Iowa City, IA 52240  
(319) 338-2091

---

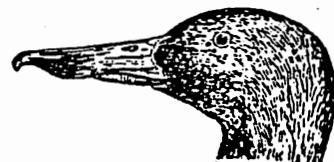
### Renewal Time

The Birdwatch will continue to be published four times a year. The price for a one year (four issues) subscription is \$3.00 payable to The Eastern Iowa BIRDWATCH, 617 S. Johnson Street, Iowa City, IA 52240. If we can mail to your university office, please include that address.

P.S. Renewals need to be done before March of 1984 in order to continue uninterrupted service.

THE EASTERN IOWA BIRDWATCH  
CARL BENDORF, EDITOR  
825 7TH AVENUE  
IOWA CITY, IA. 52240





## Field Trip Schedule

All field trips leave from the parking lot just north of the Iowa Memorial Union on the University of Iowa campus. Most trips are over by early afternoon.

- |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Saturday, March 24<br>7:30 AM      | To Cone Marsh. Leader, Ruth Williams<br>(338-1359)                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Saturday, April 28<br>7:00 AM      | To Coralville Reservoir. Leader, Bud Gode<br>(351-5245)                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Saturday and Sunday<br>May 5 and 6 | Spring meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists<br>Union in Indianola.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Sunday, May 13<br>7:00 AM          | To Fuller's farm for Warblers. Leaders,<br>Jim and Karole Fuller (338-3561)                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Saturday, May 19<br>6:30 AM        | To North Cedar Park. Leaders, Cal and<br>Bernie Knight (337-9140)                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Saturday, June 2<br>6:00 AM        | To Amana Woods to look for local breeding<br>specialties; Acadian Flycatcher, Veery,<br>White-eyed Vireo, and Warblers: Cerulean,<br>Worm-eating, Blue-winged, Louisiana<br>Waterthrush, Kentucky and Hooded. Be<br>prepared for mosquitoes. Leader, Carl<br>Bendorf (351-4958) |

Notice to Birdwatch readers: James Huntington is planning a trip to Michigan to see the Kirtland's Warbler. The trip will probably be in June. Anyone interested in this trip should call James at 338-1837 after 6:00 PM.

---

Rick Hollis will be teaching a birdwatching class on Wednesday nights starting March 28 through Kirkwood Community College (in Iowa City). Contact Kirkwood for registration information.

---

The book that all Iowa birders have awaited has been published and will be available soon. The book entitled "Iowa Birds", summarizes occurrence, distribution, habitat information, and nesting status for every known species of bird in Iowa. The authors; James Dinsmore, Tom Kent, Darwin Koenig, Pete Petersen, and Dean Roosa, are to be congratulated on producing a book that will be extensively used by all Iowa birders. The book is published by Iowa State University Press. An absolute price is not yet fixed, but has been suggested at \$27.00.

## COMPUTERS ARE FOR THE BIRDS

Carl Bendorf, who just purchased a computer, interviewed Tom Kent about his use of computers in relation to birding activities.

Carl: Describe your basic hardware setup.

Tom: I have an IBM PC computer with 128 K of memory, dual disk drives, a monochrome screen, and an Epson FX printer.

Carl: For what aspects of birding do you use the computer?

Tom: I have three main uses: typing notes and articles, keeping lists, and compiling bird records.

Carl: The computer is a device that allows you to manage large amounts of information. How does this advantage apply to birding?

Tom: First, the computer allows me to make typing errors and correct them. So I can produce a polished document or accurate data even with my terrible typing skills. I capture the good strokes and correct the bad ones. Second, the computer allows me to put material in and then rearrange it and use it for multiple purposes. A few years ago (before I had a computer) our whole ping-pong table was filled with bird records that I was trying to sort and type up for review.

Carl: How then do these basic advantages of a computer apply to the three areas you mentioned? Let's talk first about notes and articles.

Tom: When I write an article, I can edit it through multiple versions with minimal retyping. For documenting rare bird sightings, I keep a documentation form in a computer file so that I can type from my field notes onto the form and print as many copies as needed. In typing the Field Reports for Iowa Bird Life, I have a file with all of the species names into which I can insert the data for each species. I save typing the names, prevent spelling errors, and make sure I deal with all species in the correct order (unmentioned species are deleted with one key stroke).

Carl: How does the computer help you in keeping bird lists?

Tom: Just recently I made a master list of all North American species listed in the American Birding Association checklist and assigned a number to each species so I could sort the list in the order given in the new American Ornithologists' Union checklist. I can copy this list to new files for specific uses. For example, I entered the year, date, state, and location of all the birds that I have seen in North America. By copying those with year greater than " " (blank) to another file and sorting by year and date, I could print a numbered, chronological list of species I have seen in North America. To another file I copied the species with blank in the year column, producing my North American want list. I am researching this list and will enter data so that I can sort it by likely location and probability of finding each species. In a similar fashion I can easily create and maintain state, county, yard, and big day lists. For a trip it will be easy to make up a checklist which can be used for recording observations; upon return the observations can be entered into the computer and a trip record printed. The only danger from all this is going "bananas" from listing.

Carl: I understand you are using your computer to do a great deal of work in connection with the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. In your role as Field Reports Editor, how are you using the computer to help?

Tom: I first started using a computer to type the Field Reports because I could type and correct and make last minute changes. Later I learned how to produce camera-ready copy, thus eliminating the

expensive typesetting step. Even more important to me was the elimination of proof reading of galleys and dealing with the errors introduced by the typist. More recently, I started to enter the basic data for the Field Reports into the computer. Before, the raw data was translated by hand from the 40 to 60 quarterly reports into species log books (a very time consuming task) and the logs then used to write the report for each species. With the computer, the data can be entered in any order in abbreviated form (four letters); I have taught the computer to check the abbreviations for people, places, and species in a "dictionary" and to check for unusual dates of occurrence. When all of the data are in, they can be sorted and printed chronologically by species. In the printout, abbreviations are expanded to their full names, thus providing a consistency in name usage. I have written a separate program to abstract a list of observers for the reporting period and type it in alphabetic order. I hope to combine the data for each period into files that can be used for future research. I am already able to print out lists of unusual dates, accidental species, and documented sightings.

Carl: Could average birders use a computer to help them with their record keeping? Would there actually be an advantage other than the novelty of using a computer?

Tom: Well Carl, I don't know whether you are an average birder; perhaps you are above average! But, I understand you are getting a computer in the hopes it might aid your birding activities. Anyone who has access to a computer and has software (computer programs) for word processing and data base management could easily use them to keep bird records. Other than the capacity of the computer and the quality of the software packages, your own imagination is the only limiting factor. I use one word processor and one data base manager for most of my projects. I chose a sophisticated data base manager so I could program dictionary look-up and data checking functions. Any person going to school now will have sufficient familiarity with computers to use one for bird watching activities with relatively little instruction. For older people like you, Carl, the instruction will need to be more intensive.

Carl: Are there other birders you know who are using a computer to handle birding data?

Tom: Recently Rick Hollis organized a state-wide winter feeder survey and received over 1,500 reports. Since he was familiar with the IBM PC, it was not too difficult to help him figure out how to enter the data into the computer and to analyze and print the results. Ross Silcock is using his personal computer to compile the Christmas Bird Counts for the state.

Carl: What is the future of computers and bird watching?

Tom: The potential is really great. For example, one could produce an entire newsletter or journal at home, eliminating the expensive, time consuming, error prone step of typesetting. In a few years, electronic mail will be more widely available, so that when you get home at night you can check to see what rare birds were spotted anywhere in the country. Further, it will be possible to send files of information from one person's computer to another's by telephone or to leave messages for your friends in their computer. In the mean time I am burying myself in data that will take years to figure out how to use.

Editor's notes: EIB is currently being produced on an Apple IIe and an Epson FX printer. I too have been trying to develop a data management system for keeping personal bird lists. Anyone out there know of any good software for the Apple capable of handling large amounts of data? I have thought of writing the programs, but at least to my mind, the algorithms are fairly complex.

## The 1983 Iowa City Christmas Count

The count was held on Saturday, December 17th; the weather was cold (-1 to +5 F), but there was little wind; there was about eight inches of snow cover and snow fell in the afternoon. Thirty observers took part. This was the tenth year for the count in its present expanded form. This year we attempted to give increased coverage to the most productive areas, particularly the Hawkeye Wildlife Area, and also to increase coverage on foot. Perhaps because of this, the count total was 63 species, a new all-time high.

Two species new to the count were recorded: Wild Turkey and Green-winged Teal. The former was not unexpected since there is a large and expanding population in the Amana timber not far west of the count circle.

Highlight of the count for many were the four Northern Goshawks. This species shows periodic population increases on a roughly 11-year cycle. During population peaks the food supply in the boreal forest is not sufficient to support the population and they move south in search of food. The party in Kent Park watched a Goshawk attack a Great Horned Owl and Carol Newlon, covering the McBride Field Campus, had one apparently mistake her fur hat for a prey item and pass within a few feet of her head!

Other species of interest: Pied-billed Grebe, seen only once before in the history of the count; Black Duck, seen for the fifth consecutive year, although only once in the five years before that; Bald Eagle, seen 7/10 years but only once in the previous 23 years of the count; the increasing regularity of this bird may be due to the ice-free condition of the river below Coralville Dam. Bobwhite were seen but this species still has not recovered from the population crashes inflicted by the hard winters of the late 1970's. Starlings were at a ten year low. On the other hand, some seed-eaters, notably Mourning Doves, Northern Cardinals, Purple Finches, Juncos, and Swamp Sparrows were at ten year high numbers; others such as American Goldfinches, American Tree Sparrows, and Song Sparrows were seen in only average numbers. Two Evening Grosbeaks and two Pine Siskins were the only 'winter finches' seen.

Notable misses start with Rough-legged Hawk and continue through Ring-billed Gull, Western Meadowlark, Snow Bunting, and Lapland Longspur; absence of the last three is particularly puzzling because snow cover usually concentrates them at roadsides where they can be readily observed. Except for Carolina Wren none of the 'half-hardy' frugivores were seen.

Feeder-watchers contributed heavily to the species total this year: four feeders contributed a total of four species not seen elsewhere: Carolina Wren, the first for the count in some years, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Common Grackle, and Pine Siskin. Increased feeder coverage is one thing we should work on for next year.

In going over ten years of count data, I was impressed by the constancy in numbers of some species and the wide fluctuations of others. For example, Red-bellied Woodpecker counts have ranged only between 33 and 39, except for one year in which it rained all count

day and all species numbers were depressed; on the other hand, Red-headed Woodpecker numbers fluctuate from 0 to 94. Other relatively constant species include Downy Woodpecker (65-86), Hairy Woodpecker (8-16), Black-capped Chickadee (165-293), and White-breasted Nuthatch (48-100). These vary by less than a factor of two or so, despite variation in weather, time, and observer coverage.

I would like to thank all the participants in the count and hope that everyone enjoyed the count as much as I did. I would very much like to hear suggestions as to how coverage of our area could be improved: one of these days I'd like to see us top Davenport!

Mike Newlon, compiler

---

The 1984 Non-Game Support Certificate is now available. This years 8 1/2 by 11 certificate has on it a picture of a chipmunk. The certificate is available for \$5 from the Iowa Conservation Commission, Fourth Floor, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa, 50319. All proceeds go to support non-game wildlife programs.

---

The response to this years feeder survey was fantastic. Rick Hollis reports that he has received over 1700 completed forms. We will print a summary of the results in a future issue.

---

#### Field Trip Reports

Mississippi River Trip, Feb 4th, 1984, 7AM to 11:30 AM  
Leader: Mike Newlon  
Weather: Cloudy and Grey.

Credit Island Park along the Mississippi was visited first to search for Bald eagles. The river was unfrozen, so the eagles were not concentrated, but about a dozen were observed perched on the trees and on the ice or soaring over the river. The feeder at the south end of the island produced a number of passerines including an Oregon-type junco. The Pileated woodpecker which lives in the area was not seen.

Fairmont Cemetery contained few birds, but a feeder nearby made up for it: Fox and White-throated sparrows, Redwings, Grackles, and, best of all, the Varied Thrush that had been there since December!

Lock 15 produced only four Herring Gulls and heavier snow so the trip was ended there.

Participants: Ed and Karen Arensdorf, Kerry and Viv Bartlett, Sherry Dolash, Greg and Val Duffy, Gene and Ruth Eash, Bud Gode, Garry Haussen, Ten-Jen Hwang, Linda Johnson, Cal and Bernie Knight, Ramona McGurk, Jim and Joey Sandroock, Jean Schultz, Mary Thiesse, Gladys Wanek and Ruth Williams.

We have all grown up with the "knowledge" that the first robin is the sign of Spring:

Spring is near  
when robins appear

But there are other folk beliefs about robins which also attribute to this common bird the qualities of a weather prophet and an omen.

Robins coming while snow is on the ground fortell an early Spring.

Robins are forerunners of cold weather.

When robins sing on the ground you may expect rain.

If the robins fly low, the wind will blow.

If the first robin seen in the Spring is on the ground, bad luck is indicated. The higher he is the better the luck.

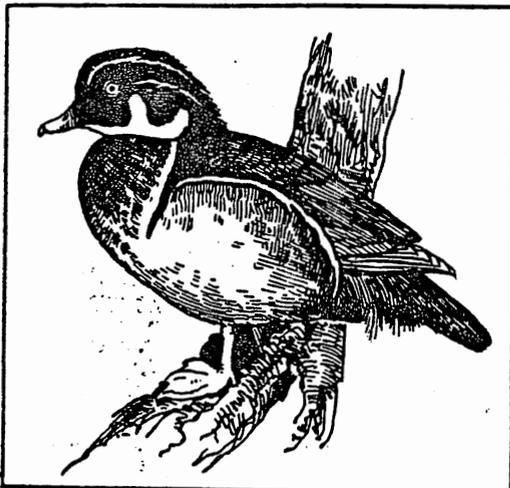
Make a wish before the first robin you have seen in Spring flies; it will come to pass.

To see a robin before breakfast is a sure sign of disappointment.

It is unlucky to kill a robin.

Jim Sandrock

THE EASTERN IOWA BIRDWATCH  
CAROL THOMPSON, EDITOR  
617 S. JOHNSON STREET.  
IOWA CITY, IOWA 52240



Carl Bendart  
825 7th Avenue  
Iowa City, Iowa  
52240