
Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

September 2025 • Volume 45 Number 2

Schedule

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

September 6, Saturday, 9 – 11 a.m. Coralville Lake's Riverwalk Trail. We'll use the flat, paved, short (0.4 mile) trail in the woods along the Iowa River, downstream from the dam. We'll aim for a slower pace compared to other bird walks. Public restrooms are available nearby, close to the dam. Target birds include eagles, pelicans, other waterbirds, migrating songbirds, and resident birds such as woodpeckers. Meet leader Linda Rudolph at the parking lot near the Riverwalk Trail's start. eBird hotspot information for this location: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L22184093>.

September 18, Thursday, 6 p.m. Fall Potluck. Before our first fall meeting, enjoy a potluck with old and new birding friends. Bring a dish to share and table service. Lemonade and ice tea will be provided. Iowa City Environmental Education Center, 2401 Scott Boulevard, Iowa City.

September 18, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting – In-Person/Zoom. Terry VanDeWalle and Neil Bernstein, co-authors of the new book *The Natural History of the Turtles of Iowa*, will present information about the thirteen species of turtles that make their homes in Iowa. Iowa City Environmental Education Center, 2401 Scott Boulevard, Iowa City.

September 21, Sunday, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Hawk Watch at Stainbrook Preserve, located along Mehaffey Bridge Road just north of Sugar Bottom Recreation Area. Join us on the hill to watch for migrating raptors including Broad-winged Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, and Red-tailed Hawk. Bring a lawn chair and a spotting scope if you have one. Directions: park on the north/west shoulder pull-off just north/east of Mehaffey Bridge. Look for the Stainbrook Preserve sign in ditch opposite parking. Follow the short path up the hill. For a map, visit here and scroll down to Hawk Watch: <https://iowacitybirdclub.org/miscellaneous-maps/>.

October 4, Saturday, 8 a.m. – Noon. Amana Nature Trail and Lily Pond in Iowa County. We will aim to see migrating songbirds along the nature trail in the woods, then visit the lake to look for shorebirds, ducks, swans, herons, and other waterbirds. Protection for your legs from insects and ticks is recommended for the nature trail walk—the trail is unpaved and may be damp. The walk at the lily pond will be on a flat surface. Restrooms are not available at either site, but we can stop at the Casey's in Amana. Meet leader Mark Madsen at Lowe's parking lot, 2701 2nd St, Coralville. We will carpool to the Amana Nature trail and then the Lily Pond.

eBird information for Amana Nature Trail: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L733226>.

eBird information for Lily Pond: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L453172>.

Continued on next page

Schedule (continued)

October 5, Sunday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Wings & Wild Things Festival at F.W. Kent Park. ICBC is a partner organization for this event and we need volunteers! Please consider helping out with one of our education stations or guided bird walks. Last year's attendance was huge – 1800 people enjoyed learning about conservation and our natural world. Birding and food trucks are just two of many outdoor activities to enjoy at this year's festival. To help, contact Linda Quinn at 319-330-3328 or quinnhenry@msn.com.

October 16, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting – In-Person/Zoom. IOU member Wendy VanDeWalle will present “Wendy’s Big Year.” Iowa City Environmental Education Center, 2401 Scott Boulevard, Iowa City.

November 8, Saturday, 7:45 a.m. – Noon. Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area in Linn County. This lake northwest of Cedar Rapids can be good for loons, grebes, ducks, gulls, geese, and other birds in the fall. We’ll drive to different sites around the lake, but there will be some trail walking. A pit toilet is available near the boat ramp. Iowa City area carpool info: meet at 7:45 a.m. at Kohls parking lot, 2795 Commerce Dr., Coralville. Or meet leader Wendy VanDeWalle at Pleasant Creek at the main boat ramp parking area at 8:30 (turn left at the stop sign at the bottom of the hill and drive to the big parking area). eBird information for Pleasant Creek: <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L609239>.

November 20, Thursday, 7 p.m. Meeting – In-Person/Zoom. Iowa City Bird Club member Mark Bowman will present “The Great Crested Flycatcher and Its Many Exotic Cousins.” Iowa City Environmental Education Center, 2401 Scott Boulevard, Iowa City.

December 14, Sunday. Iowa City Christmas Bird Count. Watch for details in the next issue.

Other Dates of Interest

September 13, Saturday, 9:30 – 11 a.m. Birdability Outing at Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, Iowa City. Stationary birdwatching with other birders at the outdoor patio of the lodge. Accessible parking, restrooms, and loaner optics available. Stay for the entire event or drop in anytime.

September 13, Saturday, 7 a.m. – Sunset. Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge. The 5.5-mile Louisa Division Tour Loop will be open to vehicles, for viewing cranes, waterfowl, and more.

October 10 – 12, Friday – Sunday. Iowa Ornithologists’ Union Fall Meeting at Clear Lake, Iowa. Birding will focus on migrating waterbirds. Information about field trips, Saturday afternoon programs, and Saturday evening’s featured guest speaker are still to be fully announced. Details TBA: <https://iowabirds.org/IOU/Meetings/NextMeeting.aspx>.

October 19, Sunday, 9:30 – 11 a.m. Birdability Week Kick Off Outing at Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, Iowa City. Both stationary birding and a slow bird walk will be offered from the patio at the lodge. Accessible parking, restrooms, and loaner optics available. Potluck and Spark Bird Project presentation and workshop to follow at Sacred Collective, 213 N Linn St., Iowa City. For more information visit <https://www.birdability.org/birdability-week>.

November 8, Saturday 9:30 or 11 a.m. Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge Migration Bus Tour. Ride a bus for a guided tour with refuge staff to see and learn about migrating waterfowl. Stop and scope at several points on the 5.5-mile Louisa Division loop. For reservations call (319) 523-6982.

2025 Johnson County Spring Migration Count

Chris Caster

This year's Johnson County Spring Migration Count was held on Saturday, May 10. At sunrise, when a few of us were owling, it was a cool 48 degrees. And the rest of the morning was really nice. But after our noon lunch the wind began to gust and it got stupid hot, topping out at a wholly unseasonable 85 degrees by mid-afternoon. I think the birds felt it too, because the avian activity had ceased by that time. To my surprise we managed 162 species. We had 9 species of waterfowl, 17 shorebirds, and 25 warblers.

Best bird goes to a Black-throated Blue Warbler at Lake Macbride State Park. This is an unusual bird for us in the spring. Only once did we have that before and it was in Jim Fuller's backyard of all places. Other nice warblers included a Prothonotary and a Louisiana Waterthrush at Turkey Creek Preserve. Another Louisiana and a Kentucky Warbler were at Squire Point, as was an Acadian Flycatcher. No longer considered a warbler, Yellow-bellied Chats were found at Terry Trueblood, along Amana Road, and near the Mallard Ponds on the south side of the Hawkeye Wildlife Area. White-eyed Vireos were in five locations and Bell's Vireos in four. Summer Tanagers were found along Clear Creek in Coralville and at Ryerson's Woods. A Willet, American Avocet, and Black-bellied Plovers were seen from Amana Road. American Golden Plovers and a Western Meadowlark were along Taft Ave in the southeastern part of the county. A Purple Finch was at Terry Trueblood. Lastly, this is only the second Spring Count in which Trumpeter Swans have been found.

The biggest miss was Blue Grosbeak. They had been reported from more than one location in the preceding week. Next biggest miss was Eastern Screech-Owl. One had been found on the Christmas Bird Count last year. No Black-necked Stilts were located after finding them breeding at HWA the last two years. Neither Northern Mockingbird nor Loggerhead Shrike could be found. Cerulean Warbler and Henslow's Sparrow were also missed.

Thanks to Deb Rolfes for creating a Spring Count Checklist Board. And Linda Quinn for helping to organize.

Participants (28): Kyle and Lauren Belcher, Tom Bootsmiller, Jayden Bowen, Mary Bowler, Brian Broderick, Mark Brown, Chris Caster, Gerald Denning, Karen Disbrow, Mark and Sandy Eads, Chris Edwards, Jacob Fidoten, Laura Harwood, Carson Kephart, Mark Madsen, Jamie McCoy, Jason McCurdy, Ramona McGurk, Mary Noble, Hai-Dang Phan, Jason Paulios, Robert Peck, Linda Quinn, Deb and Mark Rolfes, Janet Seiz, Jane Shuttleworth, Jean Wiese, Eliza Willis.

SPECIES LIST

Canada Goose	300	Ring-necked Pheasant	26	Black-bellied Plover	4
Trumpeter Swan	3	Pied-billed Grebe	1	American Golden Plover	2
Wood Duck	53	Rock Pigeon	21	Killdeer	30
Blue-winged Teal	20	Eurasian Collared-Dove	1	Semipalmated Plover	84
Northern Shoveler	6	Mourning Dove	74	Dunlin	63
Mallard	64	Common Nighthawk	2	Least Sandpiper	83
Northern Pintail	1	Chimney Swift	12	Pectoral Sandpiper	13
Green-winged Teal	4	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	1	Semipalmated Sandpiper	10
Lesser Scaup	1	Sora	3	Short-billed Dowitcher	8
Hooded Merganser	5	American Coot	12	American Woodcock	3
Northern Bobwhite	1	Sandhill Crane	9	Spotted Sandpiper	16
Wild Turkey	7	American Avocet	1	Solitary Sandpiper	5

Lesser Yellowlegs	28	Black-capped Chickadee	84	Yellow-breasted Chat	3
Willet	1	Tufted Titmouse	49	Bobolink	10
Greater Yellowlegs	5	Horned Lark	10	Eastern Meadowlark	25
Wilson's Phalarope	2	Bank Swallow	8	Western Meadowlark	1
Ring-billed Gull	126	Tree Swallow	237	Meadowlark sp.	3
Caspian Tern	2	N. Rough-winged Swallow	19	Orchard Oriole	19
Black Tern	1	Purple Martin	88	Baltimore Oriole	168
Forster's Tern	7	Barn Swallow	81	Red-winged Blackbird	729
Double-crested Cormorant	131	Cliff Swallow	324	Brown-headed Cowbird	97
American White Pelican	532	Cedar Waxwing	14	Common Grackle	38
Great Blue Heron	92	White-breasted Nuthatch	42	Ovenbird	3
Great Egret	14	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	29	Louisiana Waterthrush	2
Green Heron	2	Carolina Wren	9	Northern Waterthrush	4
Turkey Vulture	102	Northern House Wren	220	Golden-winged Warbler	9
Osprey	4	Sedge Wren	1	Blue-winged Warbler	2
Cooper's Hawk	1	Marsh Wren	2	Black-and-white Warbler	9
Bald Eagle	23	Gray Catbird	181	Prothonotary Warbler	1
Red-tailed Hawk	3	Brown Thrasher	8	Tennessee Warbler	115
Great Horned Owl	1	European Starling	160	Orange-crowned Warbler	2
Barred Owl	8	Eastern Bluebird	25	Nashville Warbler	27
Belted Kingfisher	5	Veery	1	Kentucky Warbler	1
Red-headed Woodpecker	44	Swainson's Thrush	17	Common Yellowthroat	154
Red-bellied Woodpecker	52	Wood Thrush	7	American Redstart	165
Downy Woodpecker	48	American Robin	250	Northern Parula	21
Hairy Woodpecker	20	House Sparrow	148	Magnolia Warbler	4
Northern Flicker	13	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	43	Bay-breasted Warbler	2
Pileated Woodpecker	7	American Pipit	1	Blackburnian Warbler	3
American Kestrel	5	House Finch	20	Yellow Warbler	50
Great Crested Flycatcher	63	Purple Finch	1	Chestnut-sided Warbler	15
Eastern Kingbird	42	American Goldfinch	173	Blackpoll Warbler	5
Eastern Wood-Pewee	14	Grasshopper Sparrow	12	Black-throated Blue Warbler	1
Acadian Flycatcher	2	Lark Sparrow	10	Palm Warbler	9
Willow Flycatcher	1	Chipping Sparrow	32	Yellow-rumped Warbler	12
Eastern Phoebe	22	Field Sparrow	52	Yellow-throated Warbler	7
White-eyed Vireo	5	White-crowned Sparrow	29	Black-throated Green Warbler	1
Bell's Vireo	5	White-throated Sparrow	13	Wilson's Warbler	1
Yellow-throated Vireo	38	Vesper Sparrow	1	Summer Tanager	2
Blue-headed Vireo	6	Savannah Sparrow	6	Scarlet Tanager	31
Warbling Vireo	74	Song Sparrow	56	Northern Cardinal	180
Red-eyed Vireo	37	Lincoln's Sparrow	4	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	106
Blue Jay	160	Swamp Sparrow	3	Indigo Bunting	125
American Crow	49	Eastern Towhee	35	Dickcissel	8



2025 Hickory Hill Park Warbler Walks

Chris Edwards

This year’s Warbler Walks were held weekdays at 6:30 a.m. from April 28–May 23. We had good participation, and it was great to see so many younger birders this year. Rotating leaders were Mark Brown, Chris Edwards, Jim Kettelkamp, Mark Madsen, Jamie McCoy, Jason Paulios, and Elliott Stalter. In what has become a trend in recent years, the warbler migration was rather lackluster, without any spectacular fallouts and a daily high count of 17 species on May 8. The highlights appeared in the last week, with a Kentucky Warbler on May 20, Connecticut Warblers on May 22-23, and a Hooded Warbler on May 23. A Pine Warbler appeared on May 6, and Cape May Warblers on May 8-9.

SPECIES	04/28/25	04/29/25	04/30/25	05/01/25	05/02/25	05/05/25	05/06/25	05/07/25	05/08/25	05/09/25	05/12/25	05/13/25	05/14/25	05/15/25	05/16/25	05/19/25	05/20/25	05/21/25	05/22/25	05/23/25	DAYS
Ovenbird						X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	12
Worm-eating Warbler																					0
Louisiana Waterthrush																					0
Northern Waterthrush			X																		1
Golden-winged Warbler			X		X		X	X	X	X							X	X	X		10
Blue-winged Warbler			X	X	X	X		X													5
Black-and-white Warbler			X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X			11
Prothonotary Warbler																					0
Tennessee Warbler					X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	14
Orange-crowned Warbler			X					X													2
Nashville Warbler	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X							14
Connecticut Warbler																			X	X	2
Mourning Warbler									X			X	X			X	X	X	X	X	8
Kentucky Warbler																	X				1
Common Yellowthroat	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	20
Hooded Warbler																				X	1
American Redstart			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	18
Cape May Warbler									X	X											2
Cerulean Warbler																					0
Northern Parula			X	X		X	X	X	X	X			X			X	X		X	X	12
Magnolia Warbler									X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	11
Bay-breasted Warbler													X	X		X	X				4
Blackburnian Warbler								X	X	X	X		X					X	X	X	8
Yellow Warbler			X			X	X	X	X		X	X					X	X			9
Chestnut-sided Warbler				X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	16
Blackpoll Warbler							X				X	X		X			X	X	X	X	8
Palm Warbler				X	X		X	X		X											5
Pine Warbler							X														1
Yellow-rumped Warbler	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X										10
Yellow-throated Warbler																					0
Black-throated Green Warbler	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X		14
Canada Warbler											X				X		X	X	X	X	6
Wilson's Warbler									X					X	X		X		X		5
TOTAL WARBLER SPECIES	4	4	11	9	11	6	15	16	17	15	15	12	13	11	8	6	15	14	15	13	28

Field Trip and Meeting Reports

March 22, Beginning Birder Trip to Cone Marsh. Twelve participants enjoyed a beautiful day with bright sunshine and no wind. At one point a Bald Eagle flew over roosting flocks of Snow and Greater White-fronted Geese, causing both flocks to lift into the air. We also saw a large flock of pelicans circling and gaining altitude in a thermal. It was a rewarding day to visit.

Participants: Art Bettis, Sally Bowen, Molly Cobb, Elizabeth Cummings, Sandy Eads, Paula Forrest, Laura Harwood, Brenda Nations, Linda Rudolph (leader), Cindy Spading, Charles and Claire Whiteman.

Birds (31 species): Snow Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, Pectoral Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, Tree Swallow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, Northern Cardinal.

– Linda Rudolph

March 29, Beginning Birder Trip to Lake Macbride. Twelve participants scoped the water on the north arm of Lake Macbride and then hiked the Osprey Trail. In addition to birds, we had close encounters with muskrats, a chipmunk, a gray squirrel, owl pellets, and deer. The weather was very cooperative, being overcast, calm and in the 60s. A main focus this morning was practicing entering our sightings into eBird.

Participants: Art Bettis, Sally Bowen, Molly Cobb, Elizabeth Cummings, Laura Harwood, Andy Knoedel, Brenda Nations, Linda Rudolph (leader), Cindy Spading, Jacob Starr, Chuck Whiteman, Claire Whiteman.

Birds (33 species): Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Northern Shoveler, Mallard, Redhead, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Wild Turkey, Pied-billed Grebe, Mourning Dove, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Common Loon, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tree Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Northern Cardinal.

– Linda Rudolph

March 30, Wiese Slough Wildlife Management Area in Muscatine County. This trip was postponed from March 23 because of rain. On March 30 it looked to be another bust, as rain greeted us upon our arrival at this DNR property. But a Wild Turkey at the water's edge proved to be a good omen, and the rain lasted only 15 minutes. We then set off to explore the North Unit of Wiese Slough, which was a new spot for most of our participants. We first checked three water viewing spots, and were delighted to find a pair of Trumpeter Swans, four duck species, plus Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers in a pine grove. From the northern-most parking circle we set off on a hike in the woods. The trail was narrow and likely created by mushroom foragers; the DNR website states that Wiese Slough is "one of our most heavily hunted areas for morels." It was too early for morels, but not for a Yellow-rumped Warbler pair, which bounced about singing their soft and slow trill.

Several from our group proved to be excellent spotters, including Robert, Jane, and Laura. Robert was our eBird compiler, which was a godsend for the leader.

Back on the access road, our drive was stopped by a small turtle crossing the road. After examination and e-communication, it was determined to be a Painted Turtle. With the turtle safely off the road, we set off to view the largest water body next to the dam. More duck species

were added, along with huge rafts of American Coots. A flock of Rusty Blackbirds was at the water's edge and we all got good looks at the pale iris field mark, and heard their soft gurgling song. Before our departure we hiked along a fence along the property boundary, on a wide service road passing a prairie, and into a wooded area. Mary found a small Brown Snake near the car just before we left.

Other signs of spring at the marsh were pussy willows in bloom and land snails. We reflected as a group on the beauty and wonder of this wetland in Muscatine County. It certainly warrants return visits, especially during waterfowl migration.

Participants: Phyllis Black, Gerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Laura Harwood, Ramona McGurk, Mary Noble, Robert Peck, Linda Quinn (leader), Jane Shuttleworth.

Birds (42 species): Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser, Wild Turkey, Ring-necked Pheasant, Pied-billed Grebe, Mourning Dove, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Killdeer, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, American Kestrel, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tree Swallow, American Robin, House Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Fox Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, Yellow-rumped Warbler.

– Linda Quinn

April 5, Beginning Birder Trip to Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Five participants with leader Linda Rudolph braved an overcast, windy, cool spring day to explore the Swan Lake and James Avenue areas. Swan Lake was still mostly vegetated. A Bald Eagle soared over and all the hiding ducks were flushed into the air. It was

interesting to see that the ducks didn't flush when several Turkey Vultures soared low over the area. Along James Avenue we had excellent looks at Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal. They were quite close, with the Green-winged Teal exploring mud and the Blue-winged Teal staying more in the water. With the wind, small passerines were hard to find, but we did have good looks at a Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a briefer look at a male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

Participants: Art Bettis, Laura Harwood, Brenda Nations, Linda Rudolph (leader), Jane Shuttleworth, Cindy Spading.

Birds (37 species): Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Ring-necked Pheasant, Pied-billed Grebe, American Coot, Killdeer, Lesser Yellowlegs, Ring-billed Gull, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, European Starling, American Robin, Field Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Northern Cardinal.

– Linda Rudolph

April 5, Two Horse Farm. On a chilly early April morning a group of nine birders visited Two Horse Farm in Johnson County and found 37 bird species, some of which were heard-only. The group found all seven woodpecker species, and had a nice view of a male Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Another highlight was a pair of Red-Tailed Hawks circling above us. Eastern Towhee and Field Sparrow sang for us, but we could not see them. An Eastern Meadowlark perched above us, a nice treat. For some in the group it was the first visit to Two Horse Farm, a place that offers open grassy areas (hence a quick look at a passing Northern Harrier), edge habitat, and forest. Thanks to Robert Peck for keeping the species list.

Participants: Phyllis Black, Mary Bowler (co-leader), Brian Broderick (co-leader), Gerry Denning, Drew Dillman, Karen Disbrow, Carson Kephart, Robert Peck, Linda Quinn.

Birds (37 species): Canada Goose, Mourning Dove, Ring-billed Gull, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Tree Swallow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Eastern Meadowlark, Brown-headed Cowbird, Northern Cardinal.

– *Brian Broderick*

April 12, Beginning Birder Trip to Waterworks Prairie Park. Fifteen beginning birders and leader Linda Rudolph, walked the paved trails of the park. We practiced using eBird and looking at unfamiliar birds in Merlin. An American Kestrel hovered fairly close in front of us in perfect light. Purple Martins, Eastern Bluebirds, and Tree Swallows all were sitting on nesting boxes and gave us excellent views. The Purple Martins were calling and the Tree Swallows were chittering, which was great to hear. Field Sparrows were the star of the morning. The whole group saw several perched up in good light giving their “dropped ping-pong ball” song. We also saw a Dekay’s Brown Snake on a paved path.

Participants: Art Bettis, Sally Bowen, Molly Cobb, Elizabeth Cummings, Tallie Foster, Laura Harwood, Andy Knoedel, Brenda Nations, Lynne Nugent, Glen Schmitz, Jane Shuttleworth, Cindy Spading, Diana Stahle, Jordan Voge, Harriet Woodford.

Birds (29 species): Snow Goose, Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Mallard, Mourning Dove, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Eastern Phoebe, Carolina Wren, European Starling, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Field Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Song Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Northern Cardinal.

– *Linda Rudolph*

April 16, Cedar River Crossing. This was a popup trip on a Wednesday morning. It dawned chilly and sunny, with temps only in the 30s at our 8 a.m. start, but it warmed into the 50s by the end of our 2½-hour walk. And for once this gusty spring, the winds were fairly light! It was a delightful spring morning to be out exploring, weatherwise. Unfortunately, migrants and returning summer breeding birds were in short supply, and mudflats for shorebirds were mostly non-existent. We did have a nice overall assortment of birds even without the newer additions though!

One Checkered White butterfly and a few Cabbage White butterflies became active as it warmed near the end of the walk. We all enjoyed learning from Mark about how the Checkered White has moved north into this area over the last year or so. The one we saw was extremely cooperative, staying still in one place on the ground for quite a long time, allowing everyone to get excellent looks at its markings.

Birding highlights included four Pectoral Sandpipers, a Wilson’s Snipe, returning Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Barn Swallows, Barred Owl, Northern Harrier, a Belted Kingfisher doing a sharp dive into the small pool near the trailhead and coming up with a nice crayfish to eat, an active Bald Eagle nest, and a variety of sparrows.

The exploration of the area was new to some who participated in the field trip, and we all enjoyed the lovely spring morning!

Participants: Elizabeth Aubrey, Gerry Denning, Sandy Eads, Laura Harwood, Mark Madsen (co-leader), Beth Miner, Robert Peck, Diana Pesek (co-leader), Richard Randall, Deb Rolfes, Jane Shuttleworth.

Birds (47 species): Canada Goose, Blue-winged Teal, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Pheasant, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Killdeer, Pectoral Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, Barred Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, White-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, European Starling, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Field Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Northern Cardinal.

Butterflies: Checkered White, Cabbage White.

– *Diana Pesek*

April 17, Meeting. Linda Quinn gave a list of upcoming events, including field trips and Warbler Walks, the Spring Migration Count, IOU events, and a Kent Park bird banding event. She then introduced our speaker, Mark Bowman, PhD., who gave a fascinating talk about Purple Martins, a species in the swallow family. Don Lund joined Mark and shared stories of objects found in the nests of Purple Martins after they leave for their winter grounds. Check out the video on the ICBC site if you missed the information on these fascinating birds. There were 15 present in-person and 12 attending on Zoom.

– *Sandy Eads*

May 3, Sugar Bottom Recreation Area. We began at 7:30 and walked a total of three miles finishing up at 11:00. We ended up with 50 bird species. After considerable effort, we were able to locate a White-eyed Vireo, who was reluctant to show itself but sang loudly and continuously. Eastern Towhees and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were also singing most everywhere throughout the morning. In addition to birds there were a lot of spring ephemerals in bloom and a patch of yellow morels was found.

Participants: Gerry Denning, Drew Dillman, Julie Englander, Laura Harwood, Bruce Hochstetler, Carson Kephart, Mark Madsen (leader), Abner Miller, Robert Peck, Linda Quinn, Cindy Spading, Joel and Maria Story, Kim Uhl.

Species (50 species): Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Mourning Dove, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Barred Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Great Crested Flycatcher, White-eyed Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-breasted Nuthatch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Northern House Wren, Gray Catbird, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Blue-winged Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Blackpoll Warbler, Palm Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting.

– *Mark Madsen*

May 15, Meeting. Bird club members Neil and Renate Bernstein shared their birding tour of Iceland with us. We saw some phenomenal birds that you don't see in Iowa: Northern Gannet,

Rock Ptarmigan, Common and Thick-billed Murres to name just a few! If you missed it, go to our website and check out the meeting video. Karen Disbrow started the meeting with reminders of the weekday Warbler Walks at Hickory Hill Park, the upcoming field trip to Cedar River Crossing, and the upcoming bird banding event at Kent Park with Mark Bowman. Karen gave a recap of the Prairie Preview that occurred the day before. Karen also let us know she is working on future ICBC presentations and if there is something you are interested in hearing/learning about, just let her know. There were 14 in-person attendees and nine computers logged in.

– *Sandy Eads*

May 17, Cedar River Crossing. Five bird club members joined trip leader Jason Paulios for a surprisingly brisk and windy spring walk at Cedar River Crossing. This year's spring rains helped create good flooded shorebird habitat at this Johnson County Conservation flood plain property. We started the hike with nice views of perched singing Dickcissels while we tried to get some Pectoral Sandpipers to stand still in the scope among the long wetland grasses. Moving on, we realized the open water further ahead held more of this species and many others. Black Terns, a localized Johnson County species, were flying back and forth over the open water. The winds were keeping the shorebirds down and bunched together so we were able to approach quite close by. Our group was keen to study the differences in the shorebird flock and by the end of the visit we were much more confident in picking out the Semipalmated, Stilt, and White-rumped Sandpipers from the bigger flock of Pectorals. We had no trouble IDing some Wilson's Phalaropes and a lone Ruddy Turnstone! The big sparrow and blackbird flocks from the prior month had moved on but we still ended the day with a nice species list.

Birds (62 species): Canada Goose, Wood Duck, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Ring-necked Pheasant, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Chimney Swift, Killdeer, Semipalmated Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Stilt Sandpiper, Dunlin, Least

Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Wilson's Phalarope, Black Tern, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, American Kestrel, Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Warbling Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Bank Swallow, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Northern House Wren, European Starling, American Robin, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Song Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Yellow Warbler, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel.

– *Jason Paulios*

May 24, Redbird Farms Wildlife Area. The day started out really nice – mostly sunny and just a little but cool but warming up into the 60s. This field trip was not originally planned before the April newsletter came out, but still turned out quite good.

Some of the highlights were a Pileated Woodpecker and a Bell's Vireo that were heard from the parking lot before we started up the trail through the woods. Shortly after we were on the trail, we heard and saw an Alder Flycatcher which was a good find, also a lifer for me. We heard a lot of birds, and some of them we couldn't find due to all the leaves that were growing out.

We also had nine warbler species, a few more than I expected, with the best being Bay-breasted and Canada. We had good looks at a Gray-cheeked Thrush which I thought was pretty good. After everyone else left, I checked out the south side, where I heard a Sedge Wren.

Participants: Abner Miller (leader), Robert Peck, Linda Quinn.

Birds (58 species): Canada Goose, Ring-necked Pheasant, Mourning Dove, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, American Kestrel, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Bell's Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Purple Martin, Barn Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern House Wren, Gray Catbird, Veery, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin, American Goldfinch, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Black-and-white Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Magnolia Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Canada Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting.

– *Abner Miller*

June 7, Indiagrass Hills. An unusually small group of six birders joined me for the annual Iowa City Bird Club outing to Indiagrass Hills in Iowa County. The morning was slightly overcast, with just a light breeze and very comfortable temperatures in the upper 60s. It had been three years since leading this tour, so I was very curious to find out how many of the high-quality birds could still be found.

Along 240th Street just northeast of the property, I was pleased to hear and see a Western Meadowlark on the wires. This is the location that normally produces this species, but it was missed on the most recent outings. When we turned onto 250th Street along the north edge of the property, multiple Bobolinks and Grasshopper Sparrows were singing and showing. After arriving at the parking area along I Avenue at around 8 a.m., we were immediately

greeted by Cedar Waxwings, Red-headed Woodpeckers, and a first-year male Orchard Oriole. Also, a close flyover female Purple Martin was a nice surprise and it was the first time I'd seen one at Indiagrass Hills.

The group took the normal walk on the east side of I Ave. and encountered more Bobolinks and the first of several singing Henslow's Sparrows. Some of them eventually teed up on small shrubs to give us great looks. At the stream crossing we were hoping for Sedge Wren and Yellow-breasted Chat that were present three years ago, but neither were detected on this outing. We walked a little way to the south along the stream, picking up some common residents and admiring some of the butterflies that were starting to become active. European Skippers and Summer Azures were particularly numerous.

For the last several years, it has become customary to venture south on I Ave. after returning to our cars, as the area south of 265th St. has become reliable for both Loggerhead Shrike and Northern Mockingbird. Although we were unable to locate any shrikes this time, the group got great looks at least four mockingbirds. One bird was seen carrying food to a presumed nest in a dense shrub right along the road. What a great way to cap off the morning!

Participants: Mark Brown (leader), Bahadur Singh Lakra, Mark Madsen, Abner Miller, Robert Peck, Mark Reagan, Maria Story.

Birds (58 species): Canada Goose, Northern Bobwhite, Ring-necked Pheasant, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Chimney Swift, Killdeer, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Barred Owl, Red-headed Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Bell's Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Tree Swallow, Purple Martin, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Cedar Waxwing, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern House Wren, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Eastern Bluebird, American

Robin, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Grasshopper Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Common Yellowthroat, American Redstart, Yellow Warbler, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel.

Butterflies (9 species): Cabbage White, Orange Sulphur, Eastern Tailed-Blue, Summer Azure, Pearl Crescent, Mourning Cloak, American Lady, Little Wood-Satyr, European Skipper.

– *Mark Brown*

July 19, Iowa City Butterfly Count. This year's count didn't play out exactly as planned. The Saturday forecast called for storms in the morning and clouds in the afternoon, and Sunday's forecast was even worse, so I postponed the event. But by 10:30 it started to clear off, so Mark Brown, Mark Madsen, and I decided to head out and see what we could find. The clouds dissipated and by 1:30 it was completely sunny! Because of the shortened timeframe, instead of staying in one group, we all covered different areas. Mark Madsen spent the day at Kent Park. Mark Brown visited Hawkeye Wildlife Area and Atherton Wetlands. I covered Turkey Creek Preserve, Sugar Bottom Recreation Area, Macbride Nature Recreation Area, and Lake Macbride State Park. All three of us also found one or more alfalfa fields to scan for sulphurs and whites.

This turned out to be a good strategy, and we ended up with 40 species and 1,917 individuals, the second-highest species total in 27 years! Our lists complemented each other well, as we all found multiple species that the others missed. We recorded one new species for the count – a fresh male Zabulon Skipper at Macbride Nature Recreation Area. We set new high counts for Eastern Tailed-Blue and Wild Indigo Duskywing. We found quite a few southern immigrants including Cloudless

Sulphur, Gray Hairstreak, American Snout, Common Checkered-Skipper, and Fiery Skipper. But even though we counted almost 2,000 butterflies, if you take out the top five species (Cabbage White, Clouded Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Eastern Tailed-Blue, Summer Azure), the numbers of all other species were pretty low, especially considering we spent almost 19 combined hours in the field. We only found one Common Wood-Nymph; numbers for this species have really dropped off since 2017.

In addition to the three of us, Jim Boles also spent an hour conducting his regular IBSN survey at Kent Park, and we included his totals in our results as well.

Butterflies (40 species, 1917 individuals): Black Swallowtail 9, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail 2, Cabbage White 553, Clouded Sulphur 443, Orange Sulphur 310, Cloudless Sulphur 1, Little Yellow 8, Dainty Sulphur 5, Gray Copper 2, Bronze Copper 11, Gray Hairstreak 1, Eastern Tailed-Blue 124, Summer Azure 223, American Snout 2, Great Spangled Fritillary 24, Meadow Fritillary 2, Pearl Crescent 25, Question Mark 3, Eastern Comma 12, Gray Comma 1, American Lady 1, Painted Lady 2, Red Admiral 25, Common Buckeye 15, Red-spotted Purple 8, Viceroy 20, Hackberry Emperor 6, Northern Pearly-eye 1, Common Wood-Nymph 1, Monarch 27, Silver-spotted Skipper 17, Wild Indigo Duskywing 3, Common Checkered-Skipper 2, Common Sootywing 2, Least Skipper 10, Fiery Skipper 2, Peck's Skipper 2, Tawny-edged Skipper 2, Zabulon Skipper 1, Dun Skipper 2.

– *Chris Edwards*

August 17, Hawkeye Wildlife Area. This outing was originally scheduled for the August 10, but the forecast had been for rain. Our rain date had no rain, but we found all of Hawkeye to be underwater. Both James Avenue and Swan Lake Road west of Greencastle had been closed. Unfortunately, the high water had done nothing for Swan Lake. The vegetation there appears to be wicking away all water accumulation. Our first stop was at the sod farm on James Avenue

just south of Swan Lake Road. There was a small wet area, but only Killdeer were present. But we lingered here a bit, enjoyed the Horned Larks nearby, and viewed the Osprey atop the communications tower to the north.

Our second stop was the sod farm at the bend in James Ave where the blacktop veers west towards Tiffin. There were more Killdeer and Horned Larks at this location, but the birds were closer, and a Western Meadowlark was singing. A young male cowbird was seen in molt and its dark scapular feathers contrasted strongly with its gray juvenile plumage. James spotted a male kestrel on a far-off fence post which amazed everyone.

We then headed to Greencastle Road where hundreds of swallows were gathering on the powerlines. Most were Tree, but there was one Cliff and a few Bank Swallows. A Purple Martin was also seen. The Gun Club Ponds were completely overgrown with vegetation to the west and completely underwater to the east. There was no shorebird habitat there. James saved the day again by spotting a beautiful Blue Grosbeak singing from a far tree west of the ponds. It cooperated for all to see.

Continuing north on Greencastle Road we crossed Swan Lake Road where we encountered a greater variety of birds. Eastern Bluebirds, American Goldfinch, Field Sparrow, Baltimore Oriole, and a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak were enjoyed. An Eastern Wood-Pewee quietly did its thing. A couple of Great Egrets greeted us at the first water we came to, and soon two Belted Kingfishers were also in view. Overhead, swirling flocks of American White Pelicans were present, and a few Double-crested Cormorants winged past. At the boat access a Yellow-billed Cuckoo flew from the willows. But unbeknownst to me, James was on his break at that point, so he didn't see it. So technically we couldn't count it. I spied a yellow bird in the willows across the road which was not cooperating. James affixed his Bluetooth speaker to a nearby tree and played his "Screech-Owl-being-mobbed" recording. Soon two vibrant Yellow Warblers were

investigating the ruckus and were joined by a Baltimore Oriole. A Lesser Yellowlegs was heard calling from somewhere nearby, but no one ever saw it.

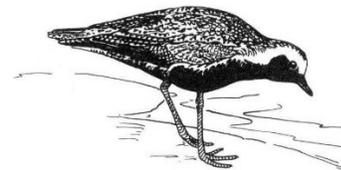
On a short walk further down the gravel we spotted a Spotted Sandpiper flying low across the water with its characteristic stiff-winged flight. It seemed frustrated in trying to find a place to land. Here a Green Heron also made an appearance when our activity flushed it nervously and it soon found a place to hide itself. A Great Blue Heron made a fly over. Far off to the east, on top of a snag a hawk was seen in silhouette, which we determined with confidence to be a Peregrine Falcon. Great bird to end on.

It wasn't much of a shorebird outing, but fun nonetheless. Thanks to all for joining in.

Participants: Chris Caster (leader), Amin Ebadollahi, Laura Harwood, James Huntington (co-leader), Andy McCollum, Elaine Musing, Mark Reagan, Dee Ann Rexroat.

Species (40): Mourning Dove, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Horned Lark, Bank Swallow, Tree Swallow, Purple Martin, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Gray Catbird, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, House Sparrow, American Goldfinch, Field Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Yellow Warbler, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting.

– Chris Caster



In Memoriam: Ken Hunt

Ken Hunt came to Iowa City in 2006 to get his doctorate in electrical and computer engineering. He joined the Iowa City Bird Club shortly thereafter. He participated in many outings, sharing his dry wit and quiet enthusiasm with us.

I remember an outing at Cone Marsh when Ken spotted a tiny turtle on the gravel road, about the size of a half dollar. He identified it as a Blanding's Turtle, a threatened species. I was amazed and did not expect to find a Blanding's Turtle at Cone Marsh. On the 2008 Iowa City Christmas Bird Count, Ken spotted the first Tree Swallows in the Iowa City CBC's history at Hawkeye Wildlife Area.

Ken left Iowa City in the spring of 2012 to take a job at the U. S. Patent and Trade Office near Washington, DC. The last time I saw him, he graciously gifted his spotting scope to me, saying he was going to get better optics after he arrived in Virginia. Over the years, I continued to follow him on Facebook. He joined a hiking club and continued to bird all over the country.

It is with great sadness that I report Ken's passing on December 5, 2024 at age 63.

– Karen Disbrow

Bird Notes Rick Hollis

Bird Beaks and Evolution, with Special Attention to Anna's Hummingbirds

Birds' beaks are a truly amazing thing when you think of all the things birds can do with their bills. We use birds' beaks to identify species or families. Studies of numerous species have demonstrated that beaks can change over time. It is well known that hummingbird bills are shaped to match important nectar sources.

Anna's Hummingbirds have within the last century expanded their range. On the Pacific slope from northern Baja California to north of

San Francisco, from coastal southern California into the interior of California and all the way north into Canada, they now breed north to Vancouver Island, eastward through southern Arizona, and have an increasing presence in west Texas. Huge environmental changes have occurred during this time. The authors do not mention climate change, but we are all aware it is happening. Mass plantings of eucalyptus trees in the late 1800s may have served as the first stepping-stone for expansion. But the biggest change has been the availability of hummingbird feeders. Instructions for making a homemade hummingbird feeder appeared in *National Geographic* magazine in 1928, and their use took off in the post-WWII years when commercial feeders became available.

Researchers studied these environmental changes, analyzed Christmas Bird Count data, and measured museum specimens. They determined that over this time, Anna's Hummingbirds expanded northward and started to appear regularly at inland sites. Their bills lengthened in both sexes, and males' bills became sharper. Longer bills enable the hummers to take in larger volumes of liquid, and sharper bills enable males to better defend areas around food. Changes in bills were not the same everywhere – northern Anna's tend to have shorter bills than southern birds. Bills are used by birds to regulate their internal temperatures.

The original study was published in *Global Change Biology*. A summary article, "Bird Feeders Have Caused a Dramatic Evolution of California Hummingbirds," appeared in *Science* in May 2025 and is available here:

<https://www.science.org/content/article/bird-feeders-have-caused-dramatic-evolution-california-hummingbirds>.

Hidden Feathers Enhance the Coloration of Feathers Above Them

Birds are colorful creatures. That is one of the reasons we love to watch them. A recent article demonstrates that plumage that is not seen can intensify the colors of the feathers which lie above them. Researchers examined the colors of

birds in the genus *Tangara*, a group of tanagers found in the New World tropics. They found that hidden layers of black or white feathers in these tanagers can substantially affect the appearance of the diverse and colorful feathers above them.

Using various methods, they demonstrated that the hidden black or white patches were distributed in a way that enhanced both the brightness and saturation of both carotenoid (pigment) or structurally-colored plumage layers above them. The hidden layers act by increasing or decreasing the amount of back-scattered light that affects what we see. In some species this results in sexual differences between male and female birds – males have white patches while females have black patches in their underfeathers. This also affects what the birds see when they look at the other birds. The authors note that many other colorful passerines have hidden black or white patches. The effects of these patches are likely playing roles in plumage evolution. The article “Hidden black and white feather layers enhance plumage coloration in tanagers and other songbirds” appeared in *Science Advances*, July 2025. <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.adw5857>.

A Unified Checklist of the World’s Birds is Now Available

Until recently, there were three established worldwide lists of birds. There was the IOC World Bird List, the Clements Checklist of Birds of the World (followed by eBird), and the Birdlife International/Handbook of Birds of the World checklist. These lists were not coordinated and contained many differences. AviList put together a team, the Working Group on Avian Checklists, to harmonize these global checklists. The group included representatives from BirdLife International, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, American Ornithological Society, International Ornithologists’ Union, and Avibase. The group worked for four years to create a unified checklist. The new list now contains 11,131 species, 19,879 subspecies, 2,376 genera, 252 families, and 46 orders. An article about this can be found at <https://birdsoftheworld.org/bow/news/avilist-a-unified-global-checklist-of-the-worlds-birds-is-now-available>. And the checklist, A Unified Global Checklist of the World’s Birds, can be found at www.avilist.org.

IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

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

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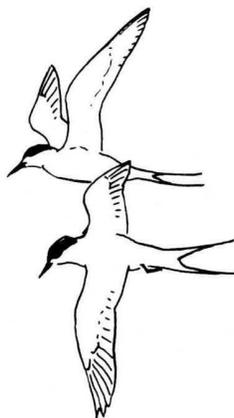
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Eastern Iowa Birdwatch

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To lead or suggest a field trip, contact Field Trip Coordinator Brian Broderick at brian.j.broderick@gmail.com.

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