

# Twitter for Iowa Rare Birds Resource Guide

**Rare Birds** are unrecorded, accidental, casual, or record early/late.

The *@iowarba* Twitter account is set up to provide near real-time notices by utilizing **mobile devices**. The tweets (messages) would relate bird activity from birders in the field to all subscribing IOU members. If a noteworthy bird is located or had a status change during a field trip, a single tweet to *@iowarba* would then be automatically retweeted by our retweeting service, RoundTeam, to all individuals following *@iowarba*. The intent is to supplement the Iowa IABird listserv with a medium whereby all followers can view brief updates of 140 characters or less. The tweets can also be viewable as a text (SMS) message on any cell phone or through the Twitter app on smart devices.

Fragmentation of birding information is a concern, so please continue to post information to the IABird listserv. If you find a rare bird and do not have access to the listserv, please include a request in your tweet to have it posted to the listserv. With proper utilization of the Twitter service we will get posts on the listserv faster and improve communication while in the field. If you are not an IOU member, please consider joining today at <http://iowabirds.org/IOU/PayDues.aspx> so you may enjoy this **member benefit**.

## Guide to enable Twitter and receive Iowa Rare Bird Alerts.

Step 1. Using the web, log into Twitter. If you do not have an existing Twitter account, instructions on how to create one are here:

<http://tinyurl.com/lxsuh2g> (Your account will have choices for notifications and privacy.)

Step 2. Go to the IOU Rare Bird Alert account on Twitter by using this link:

<https://twitter.com/iowarba>

Elect to “follow” *@iowarba*. **If you are an IOU member** you will be approved by the moderator and you will be followed by *@iowarba*. “Following” will establish the links enabling you to receive/send tweets with the Iowa Rare Bird Alert.

The advantage of setting up this alert through Twitter is that it works on multiple platforms, not just smart phones. The link below has instructions to set up Twitter on a variety of mobile devices with options for receiving tweets.

<http://tinyurl.com/k8jjdz9>

When you are ready to post a rare bird alert, send a **direct message** to *@iowarba*. Your tweet will be retweeted to all the members who are following *@iowarba*. Instructions for direct messaging:

<http://tinyurl.com/7667dmd>

## Steps to set up tweets as a text message

You can also receive/send tweets as a text message (SMS), using any phone that has text messaging capability. SMS is also useful on a smart device in remote parts of the state where 3G/4G/LTE signals are limited. You will need to be followed by *@iowarba*, so please complete the previous steps 1 & 2. Another option from a smart phone is to download the Twitter app and send the alert as a direct message to *@iowarba*.

Step 3. Activate your phone with Twitter:

<http://tinyurl.com/n55js9h>

Step 4. Turn on mobile notifications on the *@iowarba* page by clicking on the gear emblem near the “Follow/Following/Unfollow” button, then activate - turn on retweets and turn on mobile notifications. After enabling the SMS feed it can be turned off and back on at any time at the *@iowarba* page or with an SMS command. (Info link is below)

<http://tinyurl.com/cswvw2k>

After being approved you will receive an SMS message from 40404. (Some people save this number as Twitter in their phone Contacts.)

To send a SMS rare bird alert, enter **40404** in the To: box. Use the exact wording **D iowarba** at the start of your text. Once sent, your message will be a direct message to *@iowarba* and is retweeted by the RoundTeam service.

Example:

D iowarba Barrow's Goldeneye A/M below Miss.River.Lock&Dam18. 11/14/14@1310 From Burlington E Hwy 34,L-900E,L-1675N

This is 115 characters of the 140 limit because each space counts as one character. If the post had been 140 characters it would be split into two messages when it is retweeted by RoundTeam. Your Twitter account handle (*@johnsmith*) and an extra period will be added on the retweet, so allow for those if your message is close to the 140 character limit.

If you are having problems setting up or using the service please contact Gerald White at [gwapuffin@yahoo.com](mailto:gwapuffin@yahoo.com) or by phone at 563-263-3464

**Rare Birds** are unrecorded, accidental, casual, or record early/late.