



## **Field Guides for Young Birders**

A report submitted to the Iowa Ornithologists' Union Projects Committee

20 January 2016

### Project introduction and goals

Iowa Young Birders promotes engagement of our natural world and conservation issues by empowering young Iowans to study and enjoy birds and birding. We strive to build young peoples' birding knowledge and skills by offering interactive and educational birding programs in a fun and safe environment. We also hope to foster an interest in birds and birding among young people and provide them with the knowledge and tools to succeed.

Through the "Field Guides for Young Birders" project, our goal was to encourage the ongoing development of young birders by inspiring them with a birding resource of the highest quality and providing them with a tool to increase their birding skills. Our specific objective of this project was to provide two young birders with a copy of the "Sibley Guide to Birds - Eastern Region" on each of our field trips for the next calendar year (approximately 12 trips).

### Project impact

Once the funds were received from the Iowa Ornithologists' Union in May 2015, we immediately purchased 24 copies of the "Sibley Guide to Birds - Eastern Region" from Amazon using the Iowa Ornithologists' Union AmazonSmile account.

Since May 2015, we've hosted seven field trips. On each field trip, we selected two young birders to each receive a field guide for a total of 14 quality field guides provided to 14 different young birders to aid in the development of their birding skills. The excitement these young birders expressed upon receipt of these guides was inspiring, and each one was immediately looking through the book and reading about different species. At our bird sketching workshop in January, one new young birder was so excited to receive his field guide that he nearly started crying. Some young birders have even brought their field guides on subsequent trips and have shared the guides with other young birders when identifying a bird we saw on the field trip.

Having a high quality field guide is critical to the development of any birder, and learning to identify birds using such a guide is a satisfying aspect of birding. Giving field guides to young birders not only provided them with incentive to join us on our educational outings, but also allowed us to encourage young birders to learn more about birds outside our monthly field trips. In addition, young birders share the use of their field guides with others, thus increasing the potential impact of these guides by sharing the experience of birding with others.



Iowa Young Birders endeavors to build partnerships with other birding groups in Iowa to strengthen our web of support, and we appreciate the partnership with the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. We will continue to give two field guides on each of our future field trips until all 24 field guides have been dispersed.

Report respectfully submitted by:

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