



STATE BIRD OF IOWA: THE GOLDFINCH

# I. O. U. NEWS

Fall 1987

Newsletter of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Volume 3 Number 3

## A BIRD WATCHER'S GLOSSARY - Jim Dinsmore, Ames

Because you are reading this newsletter, you probably have some interest in birds. Like most other hobbies, bird study has its own set of terms and phrases. Some are well-known while others are less familiar. The list below is adapted from "Bill Oddie's Little Black Bird Book" (Methuen, 1980), a hilarious British book that is worth reading if you can find a copy. How many of the terms do you know?

Ornithologist--a person with scientific training in some aspect of bird study

Bird-fancier--usually someone who keeps caged birds

Bird-watcher--self-explanatory but an "out" term now, being replaced by ...

Birder--the "in" term for someone who studies and identifies birds. Thus, now one doesn't go bird-watching but rather goes birding.

Twitcher--a really serious birder; one who is obsessed with birding

Dude--a fancy birder, usually meaning they wear fancy (or clean) clothes and have all of the finest equipment but may not know much about birds. Dudes are usually easy to identify. Their field guides haven't been opened and their binoculars are unscratched.

Tick--being able to check off or "tick" another bird on your list; as a noun, this is what birders and twitchers collect.

Lifer--a new tick added to your list. Although this usually refers to a bird that you have just identified for the first time ever, it could also be a new addition to your country, state, county, backyard, or whatever list.

Megatick--a really good tick. Thus, if Clay-colored Sparrows have eluded you in Iowa for some years and you finally see one, that is just an average tick; but finding a Bean Goose or Roseate Spoonbill in Iowa is definitely a megatick. You don't get too many of these so enjoy them.

To have a bird--Real birders or twitchers don't "see" a bird or "hear" a bird, they "have" it, as in "Yesterday I had a Whimbrel and five Red Knots."

Dip out--to miss finding a bird that you really wanted to have. Thus, if you drove to Saylorville last fall to find the Pacific Loon and couldn't locate it, you dipped out on the Pacific Loon.

Being gripped off--you have been dipped out but someone else hasn't. Translation: You and a friend drove across the state to see the Bean Goose at DeSoto. You walked along the lake shore while she/he stayed near the car. The goose chose that time to fly over the parking lot where your friend saw it. The bird continued on to Missouri or who-knows-where and was not seen in Iowa again. You have been gripped off.

## A BIRD WATCHER'S GLOSSARY (cont'd)

Duff gen--false information that has been given about a bird. Usually this means that the rare bird you came to see is really something that is common. For instance, the Greater Prairie-Chicken you drove 200 miles to see turns out to be a hen pheasant. Most birders who have been around very long have been given to some duff gen. The trick is to learn how to recognize it and save yourself unnecessary trips.

Jizz--the general look or shape of a bird. This is a step beyond the usual description of field marks for a particular bird. The jizz might include such things as flight pattern, posture, typical behavior, or other characteristics that could help identify a bird. This can be very helpful in trying to convince the Records Committee that you really did see a Long-tailed Jaeger. However, if you saw a sparrow and are trying to convince them that it was a Wood Sandpiper, it would probably be best not to mention the jizz.

Happy birding (or twitching)!



## BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROGRESS REPORT -

Carol Thompson, Iowa City

The third year of the Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas is coming to a close. The steering committee will be meeting sometime this winter to review the atlas cards and assess our progress. We hope to get some feedback to all of you who are involved. My own feeling is that we are making progress, but there is still much work to be done. There are some areas of the state which are not receiving much coverage and yet are very good birding areas; northeast, southeast, and the Iowa lakes area all are undercovered. If you travel around Iowa much, you should

consider obtaining a map of all the breeding blocks. Then you could make notes as you drive through these blocks on birds observed. Although far from complete, this type of activity is at least a start.

Dean Roosa, one of the original steering committee members, has expressed an interest in again working with the committee. We're glad to have him back aboard; it's nice to have some continuity to the origins of this project.

We would appreciate it if all our participants would turn in their atlas cards to their county coordinators. Please turn your cards in even if you are only partially done with your block. We will return the cards to you for next year. This will allow us to better assess our progress both with regard to coverage and bird species. County coordinators (and any info for blocks without coordinators) should send in all of their cards by the end of October to Doug Reeves, Wildlife Research Station, Boone, IA 50036.

## BLUEBIRD CONFERENCE - Rita Efta, Auburn

The 1987 annual Iowa Bluebird Conference was held at the beautiful Fisher Community Center in Marshalltown on Saturday, Aug. 29, 1987.

The event was hosted by the local Audubon Society and bird club with John King in charge. Our thanks go to them for a super job.

On the agenda were many interesting presentations. A 16 mm movie "Bluebirds: Bring Them Back" was shown. The Iowa Chickadee Checkoff was discussed. It seems this program needs more participation if our nongame programs are to continue.

## BLUEBIRD CONFERENCE (cont'd)

Ideas were presented on how to give a local bluebird workshop. Regional reports from four areas of the state were given with encouraging results.

The new slot box was introduced and a report given on its results on its limited use so far, and it seems these boxes are preferred over others.

A paper was presented on purple martins.

Don Poggensee of Ida Grove presented an unusual slide program on the nesting activities of a pair of turkey vultures. A slide presentation of the activities on a bluebird trail were shown. These slides were taken by Don Poggensee, who is a photographer of wildlife scenes.

A REMINDER: Please send in your bluebird box report forms. The results will be included in the directory which you will receive when it is completed. The address is on the report form.

## TOPICS FOR IOU MEETINGS

Since the Vice President is in charge of content for the IOU meetings, I would like to solicit suggestions from our membership on workshops, presentations, etc. I have already received several, but I would like to hear from more of our members. Making a suggestion does not mean that I expect you to give a talk on that particular topic, but just that you want to hear about it. Please write, call, or track me down at one of the meetings.

Carol Thompson, 1116 Muscatine Ave.,  
Iowa City, IA 52240 (319) 338-5361

## IOU SUMMER FIELD TRIP IN SOUTHWEST IOWA -

Steve Dinsmore, Ames

On Saturday, August 15, about 25 birders from throughout the state converged on southwest Iowa for the Second Annual IOU Summer Field Trip. Birders met at 7 AM at Forney Lake, where trip leaders Tanya Bray and Barb Wilson greeted the group. There the group was treated to several brief looks at a Black-crowned Night-Heron. Western Kingbird and Blue Grosbeak, two Iowa specialties, were seen on the way to the next stop at Riverton Area. At Riverton, 18 species of shorebirds were seen, including Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Western Sandpiper, and both species of dowitchers, in addition to 75 American White Pelicans and two young Least Terns. A few birders made a quick trip to Waubonsie State Park and saw a Summer Tanager late in the morning. The group convened for lunch at the Pizza Hut in Nebraska City, NE. After lunch, the group headed to the Nebraska City ponds to look especially for herons. Nothing unusual was found, and only a few more shorebirds were seen. About 90 species were seen for the day. Everyone enjoyed the birding, and a good time was had by all.

## REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

A number of Trumpeter Swans in Minnesota have been marked with orange wing markers. In the past, some of these birds have been seen in Iowa. If you see one, note which wing is marked and any markings on the tag. Please send that information along with the date the bird was seen, where seen, and information on other swans with it (if any) to Carol Henderson, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155.

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## REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION (cont'd)



During the summer of 1987, 102 adult and juvenile Loggerhead Shrikes were banded in Ringgold and Adair Counties. Each bird was fitted with plastic colored bands and aluminum Fish and Wildlife Service bands. If you see or capture any of these birds, please send information to David DeGeus, 124 Science II, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011.

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The Red-shouldered Hawk (Buteo lineatus) was formerly a common nesting bird of the flood-plain forests along the rivers in eastern Iowa. Records show they even nested in City Park in Iowa City. However, the number of Red-shoulders began to decline in the 60's, and currently this species is listed as a state endangered species.

Although several locations in north-eastern Iowa still support apparently stable breeding populations, we know of only a few Red-shoulder nesting areas outside this region.

I have been studying Red-shoulder breeding populations following research by Jim Bednarz in the late 70's, and I am interested in any Red-shoulder sightings and particularly any possible nesting locations along the Iowa, Cedar, or other rivers in eastern Iowa. Please send any information to: John Stravers, 213 Morningside Dr., Pella, IA 50219.



## HISTORICAL MATERIALS

The Department of Special Collections at Iowa State University Library is the repository for IOU materials.

A question often raised by our members runs like this: "What do you really

want?" A simple question but one with a rather complicated answer. Listed below are some general categories of materials which could have research potential. These are guidelines, and there may well be other categories of similar value which have not been listed. Fundamentally, any file or record which can help explain or document the work of the IOU should be considered for deposit here. One last bit of advice: if you have some hesitancy about a particular file--is it worth sending?, err on the conservative side and send it rather than discarding it. Any finally, if you have any questions or need more information, contact the Hank Zaletel, Colo, IA 50056 or the Department of Special Collections, Iowa State University Parks Library, Ames, IA 50011 (515) 294-6672.

Correspondence (particularly of officers)  
Minutes of meetings  
Reports of committees and record of their activities  
Position papers  
One copy of every publication, including ephemera  
Testimony before legislative or investigative bodies  
Financial records  
Membership records  
Photographs (identified by place, time and persons)  
Articles about the organization  
Addresses, speeches, talks by officers  
Funded research  
Charter, By-laws and Constitution  
Legal documents re: court cases

## BIRDLINE

After many years of dedicated service, Carl Bendorf has retired as the voice of the Iowa Birdline. Bob Cecil of Keokuk has kindly assumed Carl's duties. The new Birdline number is 319-524-3569



## COMPLETION OF BRIDGE AWAITED HAWK NESTING

Road construction delays caused by nature usually take the form of un-cooperative weather, but Mother Nature also has other ways to make us take heed. In northeast Iowa, the need to protect the nest of a pair of red-shouldered hawks during two consecutive construction seasons, combined with bad weather last year, slowed construction of a bridge which was just recently completed and opened to traffic.

The site is the Iowa 364 bridge over Paint Creek at the eastern edge of Allamakee County in extreme northeast Iowa. Paint Creek empties into the Mississippi River, and the bridge site is at the edge of Yellow River Forest State Park.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was consulted early in the planning of the project, according to Ron Ridnour, DOT natural resources and air quality analysis coordinator in the Office of Project Planning. "On every project in northeast Iowa, we check with DNR because we're aware of the sensitivity in that area," he said.

DNR checked to see whether any of the plants or animals listed in the Iowa Natural Areas Inventory were near the bridge. The inventory listed a red-shouldered hawk nest near the site, but it wasn't known whether hawks had used the nest recently. Because the red-shouldered hawk is on the Iowa endangered species list, Ridnour and DNR experts recognized the site would require special attention. In fact, a report written by Dean Roose, a DNR ecologist, and John Stravers, an Iowa expert on birds of prey, observed the Paint Creek area as one of only four areas they know of in Iowa where red-shouldered hawks have consistently been able to raise their young.



The red-shouldered hawk nest identified by DNR was about 40 feet up in a Silver Maple tree approximately 200 yards from the bridge. The tree was often surrounded by water. This was a typical red-shouldered hawk nesting site--a relatively undisturbed bottomland forest with considerable leaf cover.

Once the nest was identified, Roose and Stravers began monitoring the nest. They soon learned a pair of red-shouldered hawks apparently returns to the nest yearly. They checked the nest several times during an entire nesting cycle to learn about the time the birds need to raise their young.

Red-shouldered hawks are 16 to 22 inches long with a wing span of 39 to 46 inches. They build nests of sticks that are usually about three feet across. The nests generally are built 35 to 65 feet off the ground in mature trees. The hawks begin building nests or refurbishing old ones at the end of February or in early March, produce 3 to 5 eggs, and finish

## HAWK NESTING (cont'd)

caring for their young by the end of May, although the young birds may stay in the area near their parents for some time.

DOT and federal highway officials decided it would be best to not begin construction of the new bridge in the 1986 season until after June 1 to give the birds time to complete nesting. Roosa and Stravers said beginning construction before June might have caused the birds to leave the site or discouraged them from visiting the nest. This could have resulted in the death or slow development of the young hawks. Alan Samson, District 2 construction engineer, said the contractor, Brennen Construction of Lansing, was cooperative in waiting to begin construction.

The pair of hawks returned to their nest last year and successfully nested undisturbed, but construction of the new bridge wasn't completed in 1986 because of the weather. Heavy rains caused the Mississippi River to rise and back up into Paint Creek, making completion of the project impossible.

The hawks returned to the nest again this spring following their southern migration. So, District 2 followed the same plan again this year; construction was delayed until after June 1 and the birds once again successfully nested undisturbed. "We were really happy to see them come back the next year," said Ridnour, who's seen the majestic birds at the site.

On yes--the new Iowa 364 bridge was completed and opened July 10!

(Reprinted with permission from Inside, August, 1987. Iowa Dept. of Transportation.

## COMING EVENTS IN IOWA

Tues., Oct. 13 - Birding at Riverview Cemetery, Marshalltown, 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM. Marshall County Conservation Board (515) 752-3150.

Sun., Oct. 18 - Cedar Rapids Audubon Society & Iowa City Bird Club both are holding canoe trips down the Maquoketa River. Canoes can be rented. Reservations and information: in Iowa City, call Barb Beaumont (319) 626-6277; in Cedar Rapids, call Rob Bradley (319) 393-5754.

Tues., Oct. 20 - Big Bluestem Audubon (Ames) meeting at ISU, 181 Design Center at 7:30 PM. Ted LaGrange, DNR, "Prairie Wetlands: Birdlife and Waterfowl." Dave Edwards (515) 292-3790.

Sat., Oct. 24 - Bird feeder workshop at 10:00 AM. Saylorville visitor center.

Sat., Oct. 31 - Big Bluestem Audubon (Ames) waterfowl trip to western Iowa. Dave Edwards (515) 292-3790.

Sat., Oct. 31 - Quad City Audubon Society field trip to Lock 13 and Spring Lake for waterfowl. Meet at Luciani's, Rapids City, Illinois at 7:00 AM. Bring a lunch. Leader: Pete Petersen (319) 355-7051.

Sat., Nov. 7 - Loess Hills Audubon (Sioux City) waterfowl trip to DeSoto Wildlife Refuge. Wayne Buchholtz (712) 255-5751.

Thurs., Nov. 12 - Rathbun Bird Club meeting at Pleasantview Place. Ray Cummins (515) 856-3518.

Thurs., Dec. 3 - Build a bird feeder with the Warren County Conservation Board at 7:00 PM at the Conservation Center (515) 961-6169.

PLEASE send Christmas Bird Count dates to the editors by November 20.



BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON WELCOMES

THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION FALL MEETING  
 IOWA 4-H CAMPING CENTER - LUTHER, IOWA  
 NOVEMBER 13-15, 1987

Friday, Nov. 13	7:00-9:00 PM	Registration and social hour
Saturday, Nov. 14	6:30-7:30 AM	Breakfast
	7:30-10:00	Field trips from 4-H parking lot
		Big Creek State Park - owls, waterfowl
		Saylorville Reservoir - gulls, waterfowl
		Ledges State Park - owls, sparrows
	10:00-12:00	Registration
	11:00	Workshop - Birding the Saylorville Area
	12:00-1:00	Lunch
	1:00-1:45 PM	Workshop - Gull Identification
	1:45-2:30	Workshop - Bird Feeder Surveys
	3:30	Business Meeting



Motels - Boone

Imperial Inn 1215 S. Story Boone, IA 50036 515-432-4322	Capri Motel 326 Boone Boone, IA 50036 515-432-7885	Motel Shangri La 416 Story Boone, IA 50036 515-432-6220	Topper Motel 2115 Mamie Eisenhower Boone, IA 50036 515-432-2500
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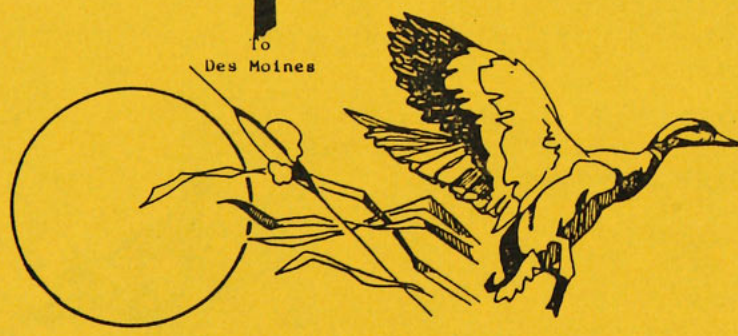
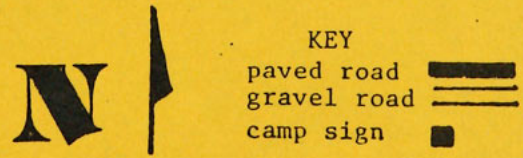
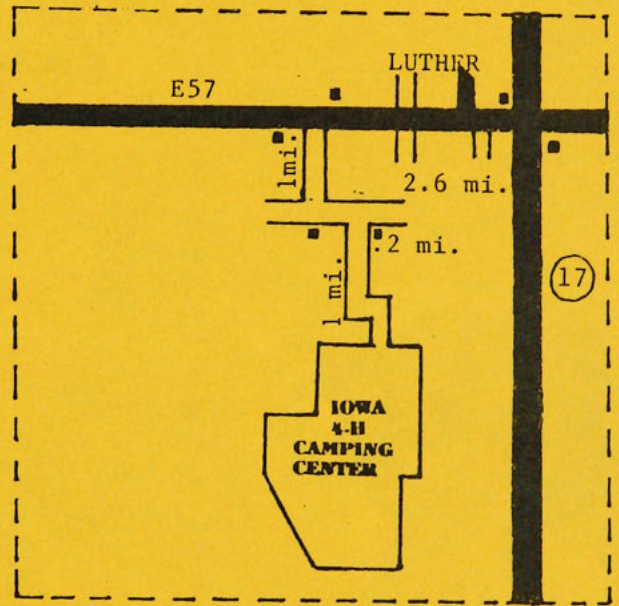
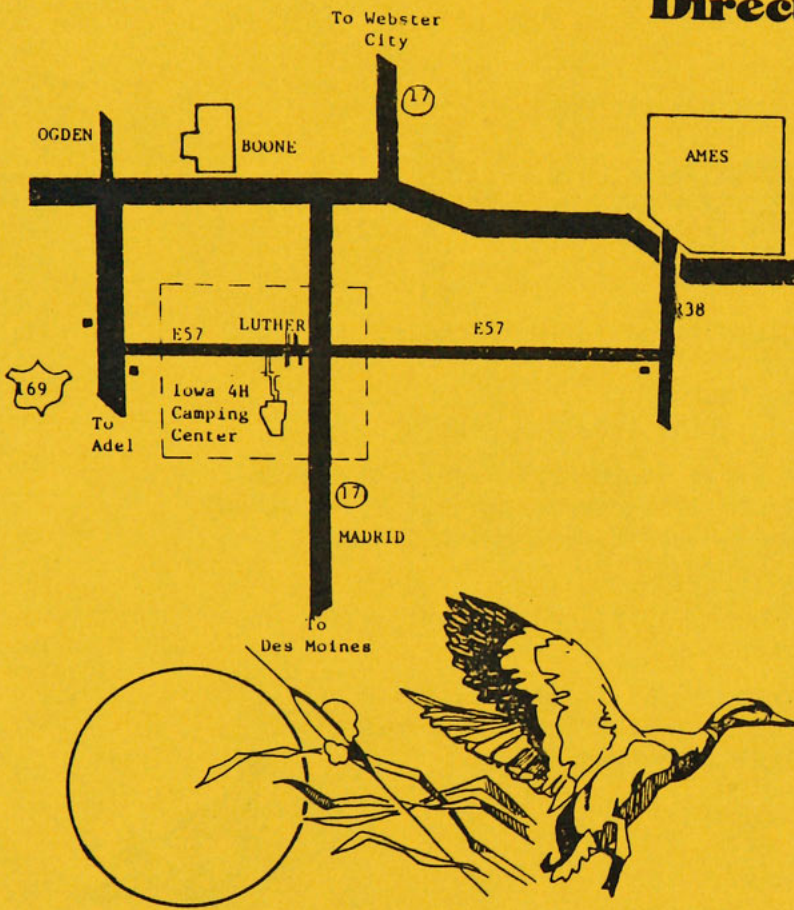
Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

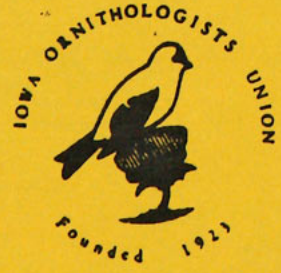
Registration . . . . .	\$2.00 = _____
Saturday Breakfast . . . . .	\$4.00 = _____
--Scrambled eggs, sausage links, hash browns, cinn. roll, juice	
Saturday Lunch . . . . .	\$5.00 = _____
--Homemade soup, crackers, two maidrites, warm apple pie	
Saturday Banquet . . . . .	\$8.25 = _____
--Windsor pork loin, potato, veg., salad, roll&butter, pie/cake	
Sunday Breakfast . . . . .	\$3.50 = _____
--Cheese omelet, bacon, cinn. roll, juice	
Sunday Lunch . . . . .	\$4.75 = _____
--Chili, crackers, egg salad or cheese sandwich, fresh fruit	
Dormitory style cabins sleeping 10-14 persons (per night fee)	\$9.00 = _____
	TOTAL = _____

\*\*\*Closing date for meal & lodging registration is Nov. 9\*\*\*  
 Make checks payable to Big Bluestem Audubon Society. Send registration to:  
 Jim Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas, Ames, IA 50010.

# Directions to Iowa 4-H Camp



## Iowa Ornithologists' Union



STATE BIRD OF IOWA: THE GOLDFINCH

Hank & Linda Zaletel  
715 West  
Colo, Iowa 50056

Ann L. Kent  
211 Richards St  
Iowa City IA 52240

