



# I.O.U. News

Iowa Ornithologists' Union Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2000 • Volume 16 Number 3/4

## New Approaches to Watching Birds

by Phil Walsh

From the Warbler of Des Moines Audubon

Typically, when I want to "go birding" I jump in the car and drive somewhere. I may stop, get out and walk around for awhile, or I may drive from location to location, quickly scanning an area with binoculars, then moving on.

But I'm learning that there are other ways to see birds as well. At work, I currently sit at a desk on the 2nd floor of the building facing a window. There are trees within 3 feet of the window, and 50 yards beyond the trees is a pond. When I get a chance to look up from my computer screen and gaze out the window, I often get eye-level views of birds I normally develop a neckache looking at, or don't even see at all.

This fall I've had prolonged looks at multiple Golden-crowned Kinglets and Brown Creepers, two birds I rarely see when I'm out birding by car or foot. Also out my window in the past few months I've had: Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, and numerous species of warblers including Cape May, American Redstart, Nashville, Wilson's, Bay-breasted, and Chestnut-sided.

Last spring there was a beautiful Scarlet Tanager that was around for a couple days that I was able to point out to other people around the office as well.

I'm not giving up on driving to my favorite marsh or lake, but there is certainly something to be said for sitting still and letting the birds come to you.

[Editor's note - Phil forgot to mention sitting on a lawn chair in his front yard waiting for Mississippi Kites to fly over his house. Jane Clark]

## 17 Years!

by Linda & Hank Zaletel  
Co-editors

We can't believe that next year we'll have been co-editors of the newsletter for seventeen years. It just seemed like yesterday the idea of putting together a newsletter for the membership was mentioned. We've upgraded our computer many times now just to keep up with the standards of desktop publishing.

It's also time for us to say goodbye as editors. It's time for fresh blood and new ideas to take over publishing. We hope someone will step forward to assume the task of editorship soon. We will be glad to help with the transition of publishing.

We have enjoyed being editors and wish to thank all the membership for submitting articles and your support! Thanks!



You will notice in the masthead that this is a combined issue. In preparing for the last two newsletters, we had material for two four page issues or one combined eight page issue. In the interest of saving the IOU \$165.00 in postage, we elected to publish one eight page newsletter.





## 2000 Fall IOU Meeting by Lee Schoenewe, Spencer

The Fall IOU meeting was held September 23-24, 2000, at Iowa Lakeside Laboratory campus on the shores of Miller's Bay, West Lake Okoboji in Dickinson county. The first major cold front of the fall season arrived for the weekend, too, and tested everyone's resolve.

The registration and mixer held Friday evening at Mahan Hall provided attendees the chance to catch up with other birding buddies and plan field trip outings.

Saturday morning dawned cloudy, cold and windy. Field trips ventured forth anyway wearing hats and gloves and layers of outerwear. Two groups explored the many public areas in Dickinson county and one group headed for the Dewey's Pasture wetland complex near Ruthven. An immature Snowy Egret at Lost Island Marsh provided an opportunity for discussion on the subtle field marks that differentiated it from an immature Little Blue Heron.

The afternoon programs included information from Lee Schoenewe on a Western Iowa Tourism grant to print color birding brochures, including maps, of the prairie pothole region of northwest Iowa. The project was coordinated by the area's county conservation boards and naturalists along with the Prairie Lakes Audubon chapter and includes an updated area bird checklist as a companion piece. Doug Harr talked about Bird Conservation Areas in Iowa under a new direction being taken by the Dept. of Natural Resources. Three of the twelve BCA's identified are in northwest Iowa and were the focus for the field trips during the weekend. Tom Johnson filled in for Ray Cummins and reviewed the finer points of sparrow identification in a slide program. It was a timely presentation. The banquet was held in Spirit Lake and Tom Kent shared information about two early and talented Iowa ornithologists in an interesting presentation on William and David Savage.

Sunday morning brought clearing skies and reduced wind. The birds that were moving

with the weather front came out to entertain the intrepid field trip participants. One group walked away from a very obliging LeConte's Sparrow that sat up in a small tree at Trickle Slough longer than everyone needed for a great look. Black-throated Blue Warblers appeared three at a time, and one Peregrine Falcon was a fly-by harassing shorebirds at Hale Slough while another was a fly-over as people searched for warblers reported in the woods at Mini-Wakan State Park.

One hundred forty-six species were seen for the weekend. The list included twelve raptor species, thirteen shorebird species, fifteen warbler species and fourteen sparrow species. Sixty-three IOU members were registered.

### Attendance:

Adel - Janet Eppard  
Algona - Matt Kenne  
Ames - Stu & Ginny Huntington;  
Edward & Elizabeth Carbrey; Kay Niyo;  
Donna Flanagan  
Ankeny - Maridel Jackson; Carol & Galin Berrier  
Bettendorf - Cathy Konrad  
Burlington - John Rutenbeck  
Clear Lake - Vergil & Joan Eness  
Clinton - Jacqueline Gardner  
Coralville - Richard Tetrault  
Corydon - Aaron Brees  
Des Moines - Phil & Jason Walsh;  
John & Mary Mitchell; Bob Cecil  
Dysart - Mary Ann Gregory  
Estherville - James Hart  
Fort Dodge - Judy Garton;  
Sharon & Cliff Perkins; Mary Kuhlman;  
Sibyl Sand  
Huxley - Paul & Linda Bystrak  
Ida Grove - Pete Erzen  
Indianola - Jim Sinclair  
Iowa City - Karen Disbrow; Tom Kent  
Iowa Falls - Nancy Slife  
Jewell - Dorothy Wilcox  
Larchwood - Doug Harr  
Liscomb - Beth Proescholdt; Mark Proescholdt  
Mason City - Jan Walter; Rita Goranson  
Mystic - Tom Johnson  
Nevada - Hank Zaletel  
Nora Springs - Reva Pedelty





Norwalk - Ann Johnson; Susan Spieker  
Oskaloosa - Doug & Mary Beth Hunt  
Sioux City - Jerry & Carolyn Von Ehwegen  
Spencer - Lee & Nancy Schoenewe; Gary Grange  
Spirit Lake - Ed Thelen  
Story City - Martha Stebelton  
Van Meter - Eugene & Eloise Armstrong  
Waterloo - Tom Schilke; Francis Moore  
West Des Moines - Reid & Pam Allen;  
Dick & Sharon Stilwell

## William Savage

The summer 2000 issue of Iowa Heritage Illustrated (published by the State Historical Society of Iowa) has a great article by Tom Kent about William Savage, a pioneer bird artist in Iowa. Savage, who farmed in Van Buren County near Salem from 1855 until 1908, was a talented but largely self-taught bird artist. Many of Savage's 245 paintings, now owned by the State Historical Society, are included in Kent's article. Kent also provides an interesting narrative on the life of Savage and his love for birds. Savage kept a diary for many years, and numerous entries from those provide an interesting account of daily life in rural Iowa in the late 1800s. If you don't get this magazine, try your local library to see if you can find it. It is a fascinating article. Jim Dinsmore

## Rare Bird Hosts

by Mark Proescholdt, Liscomb

Three rare bird hosts were given memberships in IOU for a year by the IOU Board as a thank you for sharing their special birds with IOU members and others.

Randy and Rhea Leete of Elk Horn shared their Bullock's Oriole with birders all winter long and were nominated by Ann Johnson.

David Spreadbury of Des Moines was gracious in allowing birders to see his Pine Warbler in his yard much of the winter and was nominated by Bob Cecil.

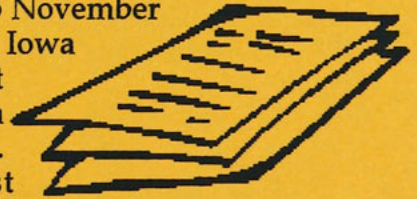
Joyce Miller and John Hlavacek of Cedar Rapids shared their Cape May Warbler all through the winter and were nominated by Rita Goranson.

We thank these Rare Bird Hosts for their great generosity in allowing other to see and enjoy their birds.

## Pearl Knoop's Bird Records

The papers and bird notes of long-time I.O.U. member Pearl Knoop of Marble Rock who died on 25 November 1998, are now in the Iowa Women's Archives at the University of Iowa Library in Iowa City.

The papers consist mainly of her bird records from 1933 to 1998, a remarkable 60 plus years of material. Besides lists of birds seen each year, the records include card catalogs of birds seen by year and birds in alphabetical order. Most of the records are from at or near her home in Marble Rock. Pearl Knoop was the librarian for Marble Rock for many years. She joined the I.O.U. in 1938 and contributed sightings to Field Reports for a number of years. A nice biography of her was written by Thomas Staudt and published in Iowa Bird Life in 1988 (volume 58, pages 1-2).



The material in the Iowa Women's Archives is described on their website at:

<http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/iwa/>

Thanks to Mary Noble and Karen Mason of the University of Iowa Library for making us aware of this material and providing information on the archives.

Iowa Ornithologists' Union  
Web Page  
[WWW.IOWABIRDS.ORG](http://WWW.IOWABIRDS.ORG)





## Myrle Burk Awards by Jim Dinsmore, Ames

Dr. Myrle Burk, a long-time member and former officer of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, willed a sizeable contribution to the Iowa Academy of Science to fund scholarships for students with a demonstrated interest in ornithology. The Iowa Ornithologists' Union has given those students a one-year membership in our organization, both to recognize their achievements and to encourage their membership in the union. The awardees of the Myrle Burke Scholarships for 2000 are:

▶ Rachel Dault-Rachel is from Minnesota and is in a M.S. program in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Iowa State University. She is studying birds using restored wetlands in northern Iowa. She has made several interesting finds of rails and bitterns on her study plots.

▶ William Fields-Will is from Indiana and is a senior studying Animal Ecology at Iowa State University. Will spent the past summer studying nesting birds in the Appalachians in Maryland and also helped organize the Pelican Festival at Saylorville this fall.

▶ Robert Fletcher-Rob is from Tennessee and is in a Ph.D. program in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Iowa State University. He is studying birds found on restored grasslands and wetlands in northern Iowa. He has found several interesting birds on his plots including Henslow's Sparrows in several counties.

▶ Jeffrey Haverland-Jeffrey is from Bellevue, Iowa, and recently graduated from Loras College where he majored in biology. He currently is teaching 7th grade biology in Dubuque. The past two summers Jeffrey has been involved with a study of population dynamics of Black Terns at Horicon Marsh in Wisconsin.

▶ Les Murray-Les is from New York and is in a M.S. program in Animal Ecology at Iowa State University. His research involves a study of nesting birds found on switchgrass fields which are being used for bioenergy production. He has found several nesting Northern Harriers in southern Iowa and has reported these to Field Reports.



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## NEW BOOKS ON BIRDING

From Jim Williams

Editor, Minnesota Birding

In my opinion, these books are both special and grand ventures, different books for somewhat different audiences, well done, exciting, absolutely raising the bar when it comes to identification books for North American birds. There will be lots of conversation about these when they reach store shelves.

### The National Audubon Society

#### Sibley Guide to Birds

David Allen Sibley

Target audience, according to publisher – accessible for beginner because of structure, but aimed more broadly.

\$35 US, \$53 Canada

Chanticleer Press and  
Alfred A. Knopf/Random House

Contains: (as described in press material) All significant plumages for each species (e.g., six ages for each of the large gull species), shown at rest and most in flight. All plumages labeled and dated. All significant geographic variants shown. Most regularly occurring hybrids shown. Many color morphs and rare variants shown. All commonly seen and escaped exotic species are illustrated. Measurements for every species include length, wingspan, and weight.

Range maps include summer and winter range, migration routes, and records of rare appearances. The maps show North America from Arctic areas through northern portion of Mexico.

Sibley's illustrations have appeared in many publications, including newsletters, national birding magazines, and books. Previous

books by Sibley: Hawks in Flight, illustrations; Tales of a Low Rent Birder, illustrations; The Wind Masters, illustrations

### Birds of North America, Kaufman Focus Guides A New Focus on the Field

Kenn Kaufman

Over 2,000 computer-enhanced photos  
\$20 paperback US

What does computer-enhanced mean? In a telephone interview [with Jim Williams] Kaufman explained that he used PhotoShop computer software and a drawing tool to, in essence, retouch photos as needed. Color, shadows, light, shape, background all were reworked as necessary to produce images that are true to the birds. Multiple images of most species are used, sometimes as many as six or seven.

Kaufman hopes that the accessibility of the book will attract a whole new section of the population to birding. He said he believes that by going out and looking for birds we connect with the mystery and adventure of nature and the importance of preserving it.

Kaufman has been editor of North American Birds (formerly Field Notes). He is a regular contributor to every major North American birding magazine. He is author of Kingbird Highway (just reissued in paper, \$13), Lives of North American Birds, and the Peterson Guide to Advanced Birding.

\*This information is used with permission from an e-mail network for editors of magazines, newsletters, and journals devoted to North American birds and birders. The network is called BirdWords and is moderated by Jim Williams. This article previously appeared in The Warbler, newsletter of Des Moines Audubon Society.







## 2000-2001 Christmas Bird Counts

Day	Date	Count	Name	Contact Phone
Thur	12/14/00	Rathbun	Mike Stephans	641-437-1736
Fri	12/15/00	Clinton	Kelly McKay	309-755-6731
Sat	12/16/00	Red Rock	Ann Johnson	515-961-2002
	12/16/00	Ames	David Edwards	515-292-3790
	12/16/00	Mason City (North Iowa Nature Club)		
			Rita Goranson	641-423-1699
	12/16/00	Shenandoah	Ross Silcock	712-629-5865
	12/16/00	Cedar Rapids	Jim Durbin	319-377-7194
	12/16/00	Omaha	Betty Grenon	402-731-2383
	12/16/00	Sioux City	Bob Livermore	712-239-3954
	12/16/00	Burlington	Chuck Fuller	319-753-0710
	12/16/00	Cherokee	Dick Bierman	712-225-5552
	12/16/00	Bremer	Francis Moore	319-232-0217
Sun	12/17/00	Saylorville	Steve Dinsmore	515-292-3152
	12/17/00	DeSoto NWR	Jerry Toll	712-642-4121
	12/17/00	Iowa City	Chris Edwards	319-626-6362
	12/17/00	Quad Cities	Kelly McKay	309-755-6731
Sun	12/17/00	Cedar Falls	Francis Moore	319-232-0217
	12/17/00	Waterloo Jefferson Co.	Dave Killman	641-472-3554





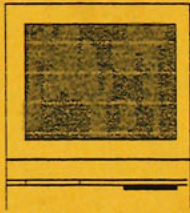
<b>Mon</b>	12/18/00	Keokuk	Bob Cecil	515-277-5709
<b>Tues</b>	12/19/00	Jamaica	Ray Cummins	641-856-3518
	12/19/00	Cordova	Kelly McKay	309-755-6731
<b>Wed</b>	12/20/00	Yellow River	Darwin Koenig	712-448-3837
	12/20/00	Eldora-Union	Mark Proescholdt	641-496-5219
<b>Fri</b>	12/22/00	New Boston	Kelly McKay	309-755-6731
	12/22/00	Decorah	Dennis Carter	319-382-3754
<b>Sat</b>	12/23/00	Des Moines	Dennis Thompson	515-254-0837
	12/23/00	Muscatine	Kelly McKay	309-755-6731
<b>Tues</b>	12/26/00	Andalusia	Kelly McKay	309-755-6731
<b>Mon</b>	12/27/00	North Linn	Jim Durbin	319-377-7194
<b>Sat</b>	12/30/00	Boone County	Mark Widrlechner	515-233-1532
	12/30/00	Dubuque	Charlie Winterwood	319-588-2783
	12/30/00	Ida Grove	Don Poggensee	712-364-3491
	12/30/00	Grinnell	Bob Van Ersvelde	515-236-6600

## Coming Events

- Thur** 01/04/01 Loess Hills Audubon program "A Naturalist View of Yucatan" by Bill Zales at 7:30 PM Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center, 4500 Sioux River Rd. (Hwy 12 North) Sioux City.
- Sat** 01/06/01 Big Bluestem Audubon field trip to State Forest Nursery in Ames. Meet at 8:00 AM in parking lot behind Wild Birds Unlimited, Lincolnway & Duff in Ames. Owls, crossbills, Red-breasted Nuthatch. Jeff Nichols 515/292-7521.
- Tue** 01/16/01 Des Moines Audubon program "Contributions of Private Agricultural Lands to Waterbird Conservation on the Gulf Coast" by Dr. Bill Hohman at 7:15 PM at Westminster Presbyterian Church corner of Beaver & Franklin, Des Moines.
- Tue** 02/20/01 Des Moines Audubon program "Monitoring Breeding Birds at Neal Smith N.W.R. by Dr. Erv Klaas at 7:15 PM at Westminster Presbyterian Church, corner of Beaver & Franklin, Des Moines







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