



I.O.U. News

Iowa Ornithologists' Union Newsletter

Spring 1997 • Volume 13 Number 1

Heard on the Birdline Winter (December 15-March 15) by Jim Fuller, Iowa City

All reports are considered hypothetical until documented and approved by the records committee.

The appearance of two western montane species within three weeks of each other highlighted the early winter reports, while **Great Gray Owls** and a **Ferruginous Hawk** created excitement in late winter.

An immature **Pinyon Jay** was first noticed visiting the feeder of Lloyd and Gaylan Crim in northeast Boone County on November 30. The Crims graciously hosted many birders, including a number from out-of-state, as the bird was still in residence through mid-March. And in Mills County, a **Clark's Nutcracker** was also viewed by many as it hung around the Pony Hollow area from December 19 through January 5.

There were many fewer than normal gull reports, as extremely cold weather in December chased them out of the state, but on the Mississippi River in Lee County, a **Mew Gull** was below Lock & Dam #19 at Keokuk on December 30, and a **Black-legged Kittiwake** was at Montrose on January 5.

Unusual waterfowl reports were likewise limited, with up to six **Oldsquaws** near Montrose in the little remaining open water there during January and February, and a **White-winged Scoter** at Lake Rathbun on January 22.

Christmas Bird Counts on December 22 produced sightings of a gray phase **Gyr Falcon** at Bettendorf, and a **Pine Grosbeak** at Big Creek State Park. Other December reports included a **Spotted Towhee** that visited a feeder in Rock Falls during the last ten days of 1996, and a **Varied Thrush** at Forest Park Museum at Perry from Christmas eve through January 11. Another feeder bird was a male **Evening Grosbeak** reported on the Marshalltown CBC on December 21, that remained through the end of January.

There was only one report of a single **Common Redpoll**, which along with two **Red Crossbills**, was visiting a feeder near Ames in December and January. Other **Red Crossbill** reports came from Ames, Oxford, and Van Meter.

Snowy Owls were rather widely sighted in northern parts of the state during January and February, with reports from Clay, Emmet, Palo Alto, Kossuth, Humboldt, Cerro Gordo, and Clayton Counties. Likewise, single **Prairie Falcons** were observed in Dallas, Hardin, Cerro Gordo, Clay and Sioux Counties. Not many **Northern Saw-whet Owls** were



found with reports during January and February from Johnson (Hawkeye Wildlife Area), Iowa (Amana Woods), Plymouth (Five Ridges Prairie), and Van Buren (Lake Sugema) Counties.

On February 22, a **Townsend's Solitaire** was spotted in a cedar grove in Cherokee County just west of Washta. However, the place to be in February was Cerro Gordo County, as **Great Gray Owls** and a **Ferruginous Hawk**, as well as the aforementioned **Prairie Falcon** and **Snowy Owl** were all being seen. For the second winter in a row, **Great Gray Owls** were in the state. The first report came on February 8 from Pam and Reid Allen at the Clay Banks Forest area, and two were subsequently seen there by many through March 7. Other unconfirmed reports of Great Gray Owls came from north of Mason City and Des Moines. The immature **Ferruginous Hawk**, originally discovered by Lowell Washburn, was regularly seen in an area northwest of Thornton for most of February.



Iowa Birdline 319/338-9881

North American Spring Bird Count

by Pete Petersen, Davenport

The 1997 North American Migration count and the Iowa spring count will be held Saturday, May 10. This will be the sixth national count. The count is organized by county. The target is to record all birds, species and individuals present in each county on May 10, midnight to midnight. As is the case with the Christmas Bird Count, this is an impossible task but birders are encouraged to

do their best while avoiding duplication.

Several counties started out on a small scale and have built to a representative survey. The day is always the second Saturday in May, so it is conducted without regard to weather.

"In 1996, Brian Blevins and I recorded 187 species in Louisa County. Can anyone surpass this total?"

Our county coverage was off slightly in 1996, so we hope it will be back up in 1997. It is an excellent club project. Any total is welcomed even if it only represents a portion of the day and one party. Feeder watching is also encouraged. For forms and additional information contact Pete Petersen, 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, IA 52803, or phone 319/355-7051, day or evening.

State & County Bird Lists by Pete Petersen, Davenport

Members are encouraged to submit their state and county lists for the 1996 calendar year. Submission can be for one or all of the counties. The threshold for the state is 200 species and 150 for counties. This is a life long total and covers all species of wild birds positively recorded within the county or state. It is hoped that everyone will be able to submit a total of 150 species for their home county. One does not need to be a resident of Iowa, just an IOU member. Lifetime records through 1996 are due by May 31 and should be sent to Pete Petersen, 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, IA 52803.



IOU People

Two long-time members of the IOU, **Ruth Buckles** and **Dick Mooney**, have recently past away. **Ruth Buckles**, 83, held nearly every position in the Des Moines Audubon except president. She also served as the Treasurer of the IOU from 1973 to 1981. See: *Meet an Iowa Birder: Ruth Buckles*, Iowa Bird Life, v. 61, no. 2, p. 39-40. She died June 14, 1996 in Des Moines.

Dick Mooney, 91, was also a long-time, honorary member of the Des Moines Audubon serving as treasurer for many years. He died January 1, 1997 in Des Moines.

From the President's Desk

by Carol Thompson, Iowa City

☛ IOU Traveling Display

A reminder that the IOU has a nice display perfect for setting up at your local event. It includes a number of potential display items including information about the IOU as well as several bird posters. A new addition is some material on the status of prairie birds including text, graphs, and pictures. The display measures about 2' x 3' folded and is very easy to set up on a table. For information on using the display, call Carol Thompson, 319/338-5361.

☛ Zip Code Extension

New post office regulations for bulk mail require that the 4-digit extension be included. If we don't have this, we have to send mail first class which costs a great deal more money. So please check your address on this newsletter. If it doesn't show the extension, that means we don't have it. Please send this information to Jim Scheib, 10 Longview Knoll, Iowa City, IA 52240 or drop me an email at jscheib@aea10.k12.ia.us.

☛ Breeding Bird Atlas

The project is actually finished. First announced at the Fall 1983 IOU meeting, we

gathered data from 1985 to 1990. The end product however is something that all of us that participated in can be very proud of. The Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas, published by the University of Iowa Press, is now available from many bookstores across the state. The IOU agreed to place a copy of the book in every middle and high school in the state as well as a copy for every County Conservation Board. Please help us out by sending in a donation for a book or two. This will help us rebuild our treasury so that we can do more projects like this in the future. UI Press offered us a very good deal on these books so we only have to pay \$12.50 each for a copy. Please send donations to Jim Scheib, 10 Longview Knoll, Iowa City, IA 52240.

☛ Rare Bird Hosts

At our last board meeting, we set up a mechanism whereby hosts of rare birds can be recognized and thanked by the IOU. Every year willing folks let us into their homes to see rare species. Now we will honor them with a certificate of thanks and a 1-year membership to the IOU. Please send your nominations to any board member or officer of the IOU and they will be acted on at the subsequent board meeting.

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)

The national Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) program recently gave recognition to some individuals who have contributed greatly to the program. They noted that 17 individuals in North America had completed at least 100 surveys. Since each survey takes about 5 hours to complete, starting at 30 minutes before sunrise, this is no small accomplishment. Among those 17 individuals were two IOU members. Ron Muilenburg with 111 surveys and Pete Petersen with 109. They also listed the top five individuals in each state. In Iowa, besides Ron, the next four were Hazel Diggs with 64, Pete Petersen with



60 (49 of his survey were in Illinois), Francis Moore with 26, and Darwin Mosman with 25. Hazel Diggs was a long-time IOU member and Francis and Darwin have been members for many years. In neighboring states, IOU member James Hampton with 42 and Pete Petersen with 49 were both on the top five list for Illinois.

Passenger Pigeon

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology will celebrate the fiftieth year commemoration of the dedication of the plaque and monument to the extinct Passenger Pigeon dedicated May 11, 1947, on June 1, 1997 at 11:00 AM at Wyalusing State Park in Wisconsin. Speakers include Nina Leopold Bradley, daughter of Aldo Leopold, Gaylord Nelson, former governor of Wisconsin, U.S. Senator, and founder of Earth Day and many others. Guided field trips will be held on May 31 & June 1st at 6:00 AM. For more information contact Fred Leshar: 608/783-1149.



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Duluth Field Trip February 13-16, 1997 by Richard Tetrault



It started out like no other IOU trip; a Great Gray Owl in Iowa on the way to Minnesota and a Ferruginous Hawk in Iowa on the return. The Minnesota leg of the trip was just as exciting. The group had "great looks" at all the birds normally seen there (Barrow's Goldeneye, Great Gray Owl, Boreal Owl, Hawk Owl, Snowy Owl, Bohemian Waxwing, Pine Grosbeak, Spruce Grouse, Gray Jay).

One of the reasons for our great list was our leader, Jim Fuller. He knows this Minnesota territory extremely well and where to find these birds in this vast area. It doesn't hurt either that he is one of Iowa's real nice guys. In addition, his tremendous leadership and organizational skill were necessary to coordinate such a wonderful experience for 12 people. If another IOU field trip is on the list in the future to northern Minnesota, don't miss it!

Recent Literature

Best, L.B., K.E. Freemark, B. S. Steiner, and T. M. Bergin. 1996. Life history and status classifications of birds breeding in Iowa. *J. Iowa Acad. Sci.* 103:34-45.

Buck, J.A., L.W. Brewer, M.J. Hooper, G.P. Cobb, and R.J. Kendall. 1996. Monitoring Great Horned Owls for pesticide exposure in southcentral Iowa. *J. Wildl. Management* 60:321-331.

Howard, M.O., M.A. Nieves, and K.G. Niles. 1996. Synovial chondromatosis in a Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*). *J. Wildl. Diseases* 32:370-372.



Natural History Week at Iowa Lakeside Laboratory

by Arnold van der Valk, Director, Iowa Lakeside Laboratory

Since 1909, Iowa Lakeside Laboratory has been offering university courses on all aspects of the natural history of the Upper Midwest. In 1997, we are expanding our summer program by adding an additional term. This new term, Natural History Week — August 11-15, 1997 — is designed for everyone who is interested in learning more about Iowa's natural history and resources. Courses offered during this term should be of special interest and relevance to naturalists, teachers, conservationists, environmentalists, restorationists, etc. Seven courses will be offered by some of the leading ecologists and environmental educators in the Midwest:

Aquatic Plants (Dean Roosa),
Birds and Birding (Lee and Nancy Schoenewe),
Fish Biology (Mike Lannoo),
Natural History of the Iowa Great Lakes region (Gary Phillips),
Life in Lakes (John Schalles),
Nature Photography (Tom Rosburg), and
Prairies and Prairie Restoration (Paul Christiansen).

All Lakeside courses stress experiential learning. These new short courses are intensive, full immersion, introductory courses in which participants will spend all or most of each day in the field. Consequently, only one course can be taken. Enrollment in these courses is limited to 10 students. One credit can be obtained by registering either through one of the regents' universities or Iowa Lakes Community College. It is advisable to register early because Lakeside courses can fill very quickly. Room and board will be available at Lakeside during Natural History Week at normal student rates. It is also possible to take these courses on a non-credit basis.

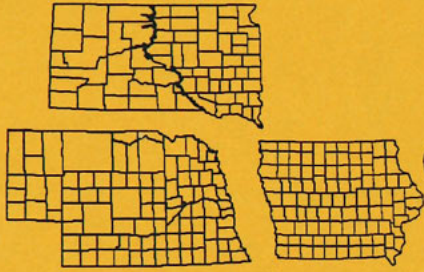
Two other courses are being taught at Lakeside this summer that should be of particular interest to members of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. The first is Birds and Birding with Dr. Jim Dinsmore (June 29 to July 3, 1997). This one-week course is comparable to the one being offered during Natural History Week. The second is a three-week long course in Ornithology (June 2 to 20, 1997). This course is being taught by Neil Bernstein from Mt. Mercy College.

Iowa Lakeside Laboratory has a 140 acre campus on the shores of West Okoboji Lake. It is run jointly by Iowa State University, The University of Iowa, and The University of Northern Iowa. Most of the campus is a nature preserve that is used as a living classroom in Lakeside courses. A large part of the campus has been, and more is continuing to be, restored to prairie. All of Lakeside's teaching laboratories are part of the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory Historic District and most were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. The Iowa Great Lakes region has some of the best natural areas remaining in the state, and this makes it an ideal location for studying prairies, lakes, rivers, wetlands, fens, and forests and their flora and fauna.

As usual, there will be 15 university courses offered during the 1997 summer session. First Term (June 2 to 20): Archaeology, Ecology, Environmental Geology, Freshwater Algae, Ornithology. Second Term (June 23 to July 18): Aquatic Biology, Diatoms, Evolution, Plant Taxonomy, and Prairie Ecology. Third Term: (July 21 to August 8, 1997): Aquatic Plants, Insect Ecology, Plant Ecology, Restoration Ecology, and Environmental Analysis of Watersheds. These are all three or four credit courses which run 3 or 4 weeks and for which credit can be obtained through all three regents' universities.

To find out more about Lakeside's Natural History Week courses and/or any of our other courses and programs, please contact the Lakeside Administrative Office (131 Bessey Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011-1020; phone 515-294-2488; email lakeside@iastate.edu) or log onto our World Wide Web site (<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~Lakeside>). The WWW site has the complete 1997 *Iowa Lakeside Laboratory Bulletin* including an on-line Registration/Housing Form.





1997 Spring Tri-state Ornithologists' Meeting

May 16-18, 1997

All meetings, meals & events at the Sioux City, IA

Hilton Inn



Friday, May 16 7:00 PM Hospitality Room - beverages & snacks at the Hilton

Registration

Saturday, May 17 6:00 PM Breakfast at the Hilton

6:30 PM Field trip rendezvous; departures ASAP

12:00 PM Lunch on your own

1:00 PM Iowa Partners in Flight State Meeting

2:30 PM Paper #1 (TBA)

3:00 PM Paper #2 "Migrating Hawks Along Iowa's Loess Hills" - Loren & Babs Padelford

3:30 PM Concurrent IOU, NOU, and SDOU meetings

5:00 PM Free time

6:00 PM Social hour

7:00 PM Banquet featuring renowned birder, tour leader and author Kenn Kaufman, "Bird Study and Natural History in the 21st Century."

Sunday, May 18 6:00 PM Breakfast at the Hilton

6:30 PM Field trip rendezvous; departures ASAP

12:00 PM Lunch & compilations



Facilities:

Camping: Iowa - Stone State Park, Bigelow Park (Brown's Lake), Snyder's Bend
 Nebraska - Scenic Park (RV's), Ponca State Park
 South Dakota - KOA McCook Lake

Motels: **Hilton Inn** - 4th and Jackson, Sioux City - site of all events -
 712/277-4101 - \$59.95 mention IOU
Riverboat Inn - 701 Gordon Drive, Sioux City - 712/277-9400 - \$56 dbl.
Best Western City Centre, 130 Nebraska St., Sioux City -
 1-800-/528-1234 - \$58 dbl.
Marina Inn - 4th & B Streets, S. Sioux City, NE - 1-800/798-7980
Travelodge - 400 Dakota, S. Sioux City, NE - 1-800/578-7878
 (All within 1 mile; numerous others in metro area)

Directions: Hilton Inn - **northbound I-29** - I-29 exit 147B, turn left (west) on Gordon Dr., after 1 block, turn right (north) on Nebraska St., turn right (east) on 3rd St., after 1 block turn left (north) on Jackson St., continue one block to Hilton. **Southbound I-29** - exit 147B, continue straight (north) onto Nebraska St. and follow previous directions at Nebraska St.

Name(s) _____
 Address: _____
 Phone: _____

Registration		@ \$5.50	\$
Saturday Breakfast		@ \$6.75	\$
Saturday Banquet		@ \$12.95	\$
Sunday Breakfast		@ \$5.50	\$
Sunday Lunch		@ \$7.95	\$
Total		@ \$38.65	\$

Make check payable to Loess Hills Audubon and send to: Bill Huser
 401 E. 14th St.
 South Sioux City, NE
 68776



Adopt-A-Book

Please help the I.O.U. purchase 781 copies of the Breeding Bird Atlas. They will be distributed to Iowa middle/high schools and county conservation boards. To make your donation, send your check for \$12.50 per book (payable to IOU) to Jim Scheib, 10 Longview Knoll, Iowa City, IA 52240.



Nomination of Officers 1997

The nominating committee, composed of Ann Barker, chair, Mark Proescholdt, and Jim Sinclair has presented the following slate of candidates for consideration at the election to be held at the spring meeting.

President: Mark Proescholdt
Vice President: Ann Johnson
Directors: Carol Thompson,
Kurt Nelson, and Maridel Jackson.



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