

I.O.U. NEWS

Summer 1992 Iowa Ornithologists' Union Newsletter Volume 8 Number 2

The Mower Bird

by Gordon Brand, Newton

I know that you are probably thinking "Barn Swallow" as this is the bird one commonly encounters snatching insects stirred up by the mower sickle in hay fields. But, for the third summer in a row now, I and my neighbors have been startled by being nearly struck with a flashy red object and then being nearly as startled to see that it is an all red bird! The first time that this happened, I was nearly incredulous. Usually birds keep their distance from people let alone one operating a noisy power mower.

I had seen the Summer Tanager in Lamb's Grove several times but was not prepared for this. After the initial surprise, I was able to see that he was snatching moths that were stirred up by the mower. My neighbors have also been telling me about this "crazy" all red bird that nearly divebombs them while mowing. One neighbor had the bird land between the mower and his feet to snatch up a moth. For several weeks, whenever I heard a lawn mower, I would walk over and observe a "mowerbird". Apparently, instead of being frightened by the sound of a power mower, this bird hears it as the dinner bell. I have never observed the female display this behavior therefore I suspect that this is a learned behavior of this individual bird. I would be interested in knowing if others have had a similar experience with the "mowerbird".

Spring Meeting 1992

by Hilda Sickels, Des Moines

May 15 saw a convergence of people on eastern Iowa! People from all parts of our state came to Camp IO-DIS-E-CA for the spring I.O.U. meeting which was held May 15-17. Camp IO-DIS-E-CA is a beautiful area south of Cedar Rapids. It's hilly with many trees, beaches and water. The weekend started with a social Friday evening at Jim Fuller's house with plenty of food and drink. Saturday started with breakfast at 6:30 a.m. and trips departing at 7:00 a.m. The trips left for Cone Marsh, Coralville Lake, Dudgeon Lake and Wakpica. A group left at 5:30 a.m. for Waterloo to look for the Swallow-tailed Kite that had been sighted the day before (they came back empty handed!!) Lunch at noon was turkey/ham sandwiches, soup, bownie and vegetable.

The afternoon program:

- Coralville Reservoir area breeding bird survey was presented by Tom Kent who gave the history of the survey and its association with the Army Corps of Engineers.

- Warbler identification by song was presented by Pete Wickham.

- Birding Johnson and Linn Counties was discussed by Rick Hollis and Keith Carris.

The business meeting started at 4:10 p.m. and adjourned at 5:15 p.m. Many topics were discussed and committee reports presented.

The evening meal consisted of pork chops, potato, broccoli and ice cream. Our banquet speaker was Jim Messina, a wildlife photographer and instructor in photography at the local community college. He showed many lovely, wildlife photographs and gave some helpful hints on how to take good nature shots.

Sunday morning breakfast began at 6:30 a.m. with field trips leaving by 7:00 a.m. to Dudgeon Lake, Matsell Bridge, Coralville Reservoir and Palisades Kepler State Park.

The weekend ended with a lunch of fried chicken and trimmings with the compilation led by Pete Petersen. A total of 170 species were sighted including 31 warbler species, the best being a Black-throated Blue. Of the five listed wrens, Carolina, House, Sedge and Marsh were seen. One good bird seen Friday evening was a Mockingbird!

As all things come to an end, so did this week end as people said their good byes and headed home to various parts of Iowa. A special "Thank You" to Jim Durbin, Dale and Helen Fye, Jim Fuller and all members of the Cedar Rapids Audubon who took part in organizing and executing this weekend. Until September, so long....

Attendance:



Adel: Janet Eppard.
 Algona: Matt Kenne.
 Ames: Jim Dinsmore.
 Ankeny: Maridel Jackson.
 Booneville: Eloise & Eugene
 Armstrong.
 Cedar Rapids: Neal Berstein,
 Diane Bradbury, Duane Carr, Keith
 Carris, Dale & Helen Fye, Irene Haerther,
 Roberta & Ruth Oppendahl, Jean & Robert
 Vane, Pete Wickham.
 Centerville: Ray Cummins,
 Willis Heusinkveld.
 Collins: Linda Schulz.

Colo: Hank Zaletel.
 Davenport: Mary Lou & Pete
 Petersen.
 Decorah: Dennis Carter.
 Des Moines: Bob & John Cecil,
 Karen Disbrow, John Fleckenstein,
 Barbara Miller, Hilda Sickels, Carol
 Strolmeyer, Charlene & Jack Ver Steeg.
 Elma: Mary Jo Hartogh.
 Estherville: Harold White.
 Fairfield: Dee Stauffer, Dana
 Brekke.
 Ft. Dodge: Mary Kuhlman, Dorothy
 Zehr.
 Hastings: Barbara Wilson.
 Iowa City: Margrieta Delle, Julie
 Englander, Bud Gode, Jane & Jim Fuller,
 Rick Hollis, Tom Kent, Bernie & Cal Knight,
 Daniel & Randy Pinkston, Jim & Sharon
 Scheib, Richard Tetrault, Carol Thompson.
 Lake Mills: Sibyl Sand.
 Liscomb: Beth & Mark Proescholdt.
 Marion: Jim & Joyce Durbin.
 Marshalltown: Russ Widner.
 Mason City: Rita Goranson,
 Jan & Jim Walter.
 North Liberty: Chris Edwards,
 Barbara Beaumont.
 Norwalk: Ann Johnson,
 Sue Spieker.
 Osceola: Beth Brown.
 Princeton: Ann Barker.
 Walnut: Marietta Petersen.
 Waterloo: Richard Kraemer,
 Francis Moore.
 Waverly: Lois Eggleston.
 West Des Moines: Pam & Reid
 Allen.
 San Francisco, CA: Richard
 Lawton.
 Biddeford, ME: Dean & Pat
 Moynahan.
 Bellevue, NE: Babs & Loren
 Padelford.

Mt. Ayr Field Trip

By Ann Johnson, Norwalk

On April 11, 1992 nearly twenty-five hearty souls met at 4:30 a.m. to search for the elusive Greater Prairie Chicken. Mel Moe of the Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources was our gracious host. Mel has been actively involved in the reintroduction of prairie chickens to their native habitat in Ringgold County.



Many of the reintroduced birds have moved several miles from the release site and several seem to have joined a lek across the state line in northern Missouri. IOU members were treated to some fascinating looks of a male chicken displaying on the Missouri lek. Back in Iowa the bird was more difficult to find, although some members were lucky enough to catch a glimpse here and there. Laura Hansen, DNR non-game biologist, was tracking some recently released birds and demonstrated radiotelemetry techniques to the group. Several members joined Mel in a walk to a heron rookery in process before the day was through. As always, the day was filled with some interesting birds, new information, and most importantly good fellowship.

IOU People

Three IOU members were recently presented awards by the Iowa Chapter of The Wildlife Society. **Cindy Hildebrand** and **Erv Klaas**, both of Ames received the chapter Award of Merit, Erv for his work on the REAP legislation and Cindy for her work representing conservation interests

at the Iowa legislature. **Phil DuMont** of Chapel Hill, NC was named to the Iowa Conservation Hall of Fame in recognition of his work on Iowa's birds.

State & County Lists 1991

By Pete Petersen, Davenport

The lifetime reports through Dec. 31, 1991 increased from 20 people last year to 28 for this report. We still have many who report their totals to the American Birding Association but not their home state. On the county basis we have at least one total for 40 counties, up from 38 last year.

Please send your life list totals for Iowa and counties you regularly visit as of Dec. 31, 1992 to the author at 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, IA 52803. An actual species list of names is not needed, just the total number of species for the state and counties. Report only wild birds not suspected of being recently transported by man using your own best judgment. A few people report yearly totals and if you would like to see this section added advise the author.

Iowa Totals — 200 minimum

Pete Petersen - 355; Gene Armstrong - 344; Eloise Armstrong - 339; Jim Fuller - 331; Brian Blevins - 331; Mark Proescholdt - 328; Beth Proescholdt - 325; Ann Johnson - 316; Chuck Fuller - 314; Mary Lou Petersen - 313; Pamela Allen - 310; Reid Allen - 309; Ray Cummins - 302; Ann Barker - 294; Jean Braley - 287; Curt Nelson - 284; Corey Blevins - 279; Jan Walter - 275; Mary Jo Hartogh - 274; Mary Heusinkveld - 268; Jim Walter - 267; Bill Huser - 267; Bill Heusinkveld - 266; Matt Kenne - 265; Lee Schoenewe - 248; Doug Harr - 245; Maridel Jackson - 237; Rita Goranson - 231.

County Totals — 125 minimum

Allamakee: Mark Proescholdt - 137; **Appanoose:** Ray Cummins - 250, Mary & Bill Heusinkveld - 246, Tom Johnson - 205; **Black Hawk:** Pete Petersen - 234, Mary Lou Petersen - 228; **Boone:** Mark Proescholdt - 180, Beth Proescholdt - 176, Ann Johnson - 161, Gene & Eloise Armstrong - 150; **Cerro Gordo:** Jan & Jim Walter - 256, Curt Nelson - 252, Rita Goranson - 188; **Clay:** Lee Schoenewe - 235; **Clinton:** Pete Petersen - 247; **Dallas:** Ray Cummins - 147; **Des Moines:** Chuck Fuller - 264, Jan Fuller - 228, Pete Petersen - 217; **Dickinson:** Doug Harr - 227, Lee Schoenewe - 206; **Fremont:** Jean Braley - 251; Mark Proescholdt - 178, Ray Cummins - 151; **Grundy:** Mark Proescholdt - 152; **Guthrie:** Ray Cummins - 200, Mark Proescholdt - 170; **Hamilton:** Mark Proescholdt - 166; **Hardin:** Mark Proescholdt - 226, Beth Proescholdt - 212; **Howard:** Mary Jo Hartogh - 224; **Jackson:** Pete Petersen - 228; **Jasper:** Mark Proescholdt - 131; **Johnson:** Jim Fuller - 286, Pete Petersen - 248; **Kossuth:** Matt Kenne - 260; **Linn:** Pete Petersen - 202; **Louisa:** Pete Petersen - 246; **Lucas:** Ray Cummins - 127; **Lyon:** Doug Harr - 173; **Madison:** Gene Armstrong - 249, Eloise Armstrong - 244; **Marion:** Ann Johnson - 239, Mark Proescholdt - 182, Ray Cummins - 157; **Marshall:** Mark Proescholdt - 252, Beth Proescholdt - 250; **Mitchell:** Mary Jo Hartogh - 190; **Muscatine:** Pete Petersen - 254; **Page:** Jean Braley - 212; **Pocahontas:** Ray Cummins - 220; **Polk:** Gene Armstrong - 267, Eloise Armstrong - 266, Pamela Allen - 260, Reid Allen - 258, Ann Johnson - 253, Mark Proescholdt - 243, Pete Petersen - 243, Maridel Jackson - 174; **Scott:** Pete Petersen - 303; Brian Blevins - 277; Mary Lou Petersen - 272; Corey Blevins - 236; **Story:** Mark Proescholdt - 219, Beth Proescholdt - 194; **Tama:** Mark Proes-

choldt - 205, Beth Proescholdt - 163; **Van Buren:** Ray Cummins - 137; **Wapello:** Tom Johnson - 185; **Warren:** Ann Johnson - 242; **Winneshiek:** Dennis Carter - 180; **Woodbury:** Bill Huser - 242.

Correction: Last year's totals listed Hamilton Co. 195 with no name. It was Steve Dinsmore's total.

During the IOU spring convention's business meeting a plan to notify Iowa birders of the sightings of extremely rare or new state list birds was discussed. Jim Fuller expressed a willingness to notify a key person in each third of the state of such sightings as they are reported to the Iowa Bird Line. Just calling the line, even if done every day, can still result in missing the chance to record a rare bird which remains only briefly. Anyone interested in such a plan is encouraged to advise the author at the above address.

IOWA BIRDLINE



319-338-9881

Heard Over the Iowa Birdline Spring 1992

By Jim Fuller, Iowa City

It was a record setting spring for the number of calls and reports of rare birds to the Iowa Birdline. There were two potential first state records reported. Dan Peterson was observing a kettle of Turkey Vultures over the Mississippi River south of Dubuque on March 24, when he picked out a Black Vulture among them. And on May 14, Francis Moore was informed of an American Swallow-tailed Kite at the Hartman Reserve in Cedar Falls, and the next day watched it skimming the treetops along the Cedar River for a half hour. While searching for that bird, a contingent from the IOU spring meeting viewed

a Mississippi Kite at the same location.

Southwest Iowa birders had an extraordinary spring. At the Riverton Area in Fremont County, in the three day period of May 10-13, two accidentals, Snowy Plover and Black-necked Stilt, and two casuals, Whimbrel and Red Knot were sighted. At

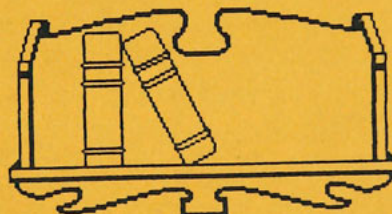
DeSoto NWR, a Brown Pelican was seen from April 29-May 10, and B.J. Rose and Babs Padelford found a Little Gull in Pottawattamie County. Chestnut-collared

Longspurs were conspicuous along roadsides in the Percival area on April 21-22 following the 14" snowfall as reported by Ross Silcock.

Another Whimbrel was discovered by Beth Proescholdt near her home in Marshall County on April 24. Black Rails were reported on April 26 at Carney Marsh, Des Moines, by Barb Miller and Dick Kraemer, and near Iowa City by Gladys Black and Beth Brown. Eurasian Widgeons were found at two locations; in Cerro Gordo County by Randy Pinkston on March 18, and in Linn County by Jim and Joyce Durbin. The timing for that bird's discovery, a Friday evening, was great as numerous birders benefitted over the ensuing weekend. At the old Polk City cemetery, Paul Hertzell located a Townsend's Solitaire among the tombstones on May 17. Bewick's Wrens were first reported from Lee County at the junkyard west of Argyle on April 17, and in Van Buren County at the campgrounds of Lacey-Keosauqua State Park on May 9. Both are likely nesters.

News of both Great-tailed Grackles and Cinnamon Teal was surprisingly

widespread. Otter Creek Marsh in Tama County produced reports of Sandhill Crane (also found at Lilah's Marsh in Howard County), Yellow Rail, and Ibis (sp.). Other rarities called in were Snowy Owls in Cerro Gordo County, Prairie Warbler in Lee County, Henslow's Sparrows in Van Buren County, and Little Blue Herons in Lee, Des Moines, and Winneshiek counties.



Recent Literature on Iowa Birds

Baker, M.C. 1991. Response of male Indigo and Lazuli buntings and their hybrids to song playback in allopatric and sympatric populations. *Behavior* 119:225-242. Some of the work was done near Iowa City.

Brown, M., and J.J. Dinsmore. 1991. Area-dependent changes in bird densities in Iowa marshes. *J. Iowa Acad. Sci.* 98:124-126.

Bryan, G.G. and L.B. Best. 1991. Bird abundance and species richness in grassed waterways in Iowa rowcrop field. *American Midland Naturalist* 126:90-102.

Dinsmore, S.J. and W.R. Clark. 1991. Food habits of the northern Saw-whet owl in central Iowa: effects of roost location. *J. Iowa Acad. Sci.* 98:167-169.

Iowa Ornithologists' Union
Fall Meeting, September 11-13, 1992

Village Creek Bible Camp (formerly Central Baptist Camp)
RR1, Box 191A, Lansing, Iowa 52151

The meeting site is located in the Little Switzerland area of Iowa in a valley surrounded by hills covered with trees and rock outcroppings. There are two creeks, a man-made pond, and hiking trails, as well as, a Bald Eagle nest on the campground's 240 acres. See map for direction to the camp.

Field trips are planned to Effigy Mounds National Monument, Yellow River Forest, Wexford Creek area and Heytsman Station, New Albin Slough, Fish Mounds Farm State Preserve, Mt. Hosmer Park, and others.

The Main Lodge has bunk bed dormitories with a heater in each room. The showers and restrooms are located in the building in a separate area. The top floor will be reserved for married couples. **Bring your own bedroll, pillow, towels, etc.** The Lodge has a Game Room and Pop Machines. There are also 8 hookups for RV camping. Outgoing phone calls may be made collect or with a credit card number.

Motels

From Camp to Waukon: (11 mi. approx.)

Uptown Motel, 110 Rossville Rd., Waukon, IA 52172

319/568-3486 Rossville Road is 9 & 76 on the south side of Waukon

. Single: old section - \$25 New section - \$28

Double: old section - \$32 New section - \$35

Village Motel, 611 Rossville Rd., Waukon, IA 52172

319/568-3437

Single: 1 person Queen bed - \$25

Double: 2 person 2 Queen beds - \$33

Scenic Valley Motel, (approximately 6 miles) 1520 Main St. Lansing, IA 52151

319/538-4245

Single: \$21 Double: 1 bed - \$25 2 bed - \$32

Schedule of Events

Friday, Sept. 11	7:00-9:00 p.m.	Registration, Main Lodge Socializing and snacks
Saturday, Sept. 12	6:30 a.m.	Breakfast, Main Lodge
	7:00 a.m.	Field trips - parking lot
	12:00 noon	Lunch, Main Lodge
	1:00-1:45 p.m.	Birding Allamakee County and other NE Iowa areas.
	1:45-2:30 p.m.	Shorebird Biology - Jim Dinsmore.

2:30-2:45 p.m.	Break.
2:45-3:30 p.m.	Identifying Difficult Fall Warblers led by Mark Proescholdt.
3:30 p.m.	Business meeting.
5:00-6:00 p.m.	Trail ride by horseback-camp
6:30 p.m.	Banquet, Main Lodge Fred Leshner, U of WI, LaCrosse, Queen Charlotte Islands, or "Haida Gwaii" near British Columbia.

Sunday, Sept. 13	6:30 a.m.	Breakfast.
	7:00 a.m.	Field trips.
	12:00 noon	Lunch and compilation.

Registration

Completed registrations are due to **Mary Jo Hartogh, RR2, Box 115, Elma, IA 50628** by August 28, 1992. Make checks payable to the Upper Iowa Audubon Society. For questions call 515/982-4910 after 5 p.m. or call Dennis Carter 319/382-3754. If you have special dietary needs, please indicate on this form.

Horseback ride on camp trails 5:00-6:00 Yes_____ No_____

Registration	\$5.00.....	_____
Meals & lodging for the entire meeting	\$58.00.....	_____
Tent camping \$4.00 each night.....		_____
RV parking \$8.00/night, electric \$10/night, water & sewer \$12/night.....		_____
Bed in Main Lodge	\$15/night.....	Friday..... _____
		Saturday..... _____
Breakfast \$5.00.....		Saturday..... _____
		Sunday..... _____
Lunch \$5.00.....		Saturday..... _____
		Sunday..... _____
Banquet \$8.00.....		_____
Total.....		_____

Name(s)_____

Address_____

Phone_____

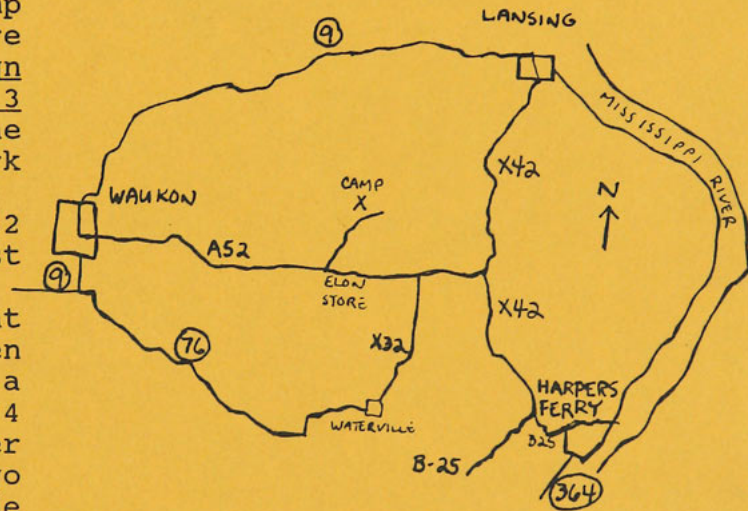
Special Needs_____

Camp phone number 319-535-7320 for emergency messages

Directions: Take highway 9 & 76 and go north for 2 miles into Waukon. At the stoplights turn right on East Main Street to take A-52 east out of Waukon. DO NOT TURN LEFT ON HIGHWAY 9! Follow A-52 east for about 8 miles. Turn left at the camp sign onto a gravel road just before reaching the Old Elon Store. Note: Sign may still say Central Baptist Camp 3 miles. Follow the IOU signs on the winding gravel road. Turn left and park by the Main Lodge which is barn shaped.

From Harpers Ferry take B-25 to X-42 to A-52 and go west to the camp sign just past the Old Elon Store.

Go south of Lansing and turn right on X-42 for approximately 3 miles. Then turn right at the camp sign onto a winding gravel road for about 2 and 3/4 miles. This road intersects with other gravel roads, so at the first fork go straight ahead or stay to the right, the second fork go straight ahead or stay to the left, the third fork keep to the right, and the fourth fork turn left and go over a bridge. Camp is just beyond the bridge. (In this area, there just aren't any 4-way intersections every mile!)



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Iowa Ornithologists' Union
4024 Arkansas Drive
Ames, IA 50010



Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
Paid
Permit No. 99
Ames, Iowa

Thomas H Kent
211 Richards St
Iowa City IA 52246