



I.O.U. News

Iowa Ornithologists' Union Newsletter

Summer 1997 • Volume 13 Number 2

DNR Program Fills Roadsides with Falcons

By Marty Helle

Reprinted with the permission of the Ames Daily Tribune

A little known Department of Natural Resources program has been quietly increasing the number of American kestrels in Mid-Iowa for years, and this has been a particularly good year for the small falcons.

Mike Meetz, an animal virologist by day and DNR volunteer at night, (also an IOU member), tends 42 of the DNR's kestrel boxes that are hung on the backs of road signs along Interstate 35 from the Polk-Story County line to Woolstock.

This year, more than half of his 42 boxes had young kestrels in them, which is pretty good, he said. The American kestrel used to be commonly known as a sparrowhawk, but they are neither sparrows nor hawks, Meetz said.

The program was started in the 1980s and is run by the small non-game division of the DNR.

American kestrels are the smallest members of the falcon family in Iowa and about the same size as blue jays. They eat insects, mice and sometimes small birds, and they migrate south for the winter.

Meetz bands the birds for tracking and makes sure their nests are in good repair and free of nuisance birds like European starlings, which sometimes move in.

Right now, the young birds that hatched about a month ago are leaving the wooden boxes where they have lived their entire lives

and are venturing out into the world. Meetz said it's not uncommon for him to see one of the birds take its first flight and make its first, often clumsy, landing.

Adult kestrels lay four or five eggs every year over the course of a few days, incubate them for about a month and then feed the young birds another month.

Like most raptors, kestrels can't chew, and they have a hard time digesting hair and bones, so every once in a while they have to cough up tightly wound masses of hair and bones from their stomachs.

The families that hatch together will stay together as they learn to hunt and to take their first migration.

The kestrels hunt by hanging on wind currents and then swooping down upon their prey, grabbing it with their talons. If the prey is dangerous, like a mouse, the kestrel reaches down and kills that animal by snapping its neck with the curve in its beak, Meetz said.

The kestrel program is a good cooperative effort by the DNR and the Iowa Department of Transportation which allows its signs and roadsides to be used, Meetz said. The signs are a good place for the boxes, because the smooth metal signposts can't be climbed by predators.

The grassy roadsides also are a great place for the birds to hunt, Meetz said.

In the past five years, Meetz has tagged more than 200 of the birds, which used to be classified as a threatened species due to habitat loss and the chemical DDT.



1997 Spring Meeting

by Mary Kuhlman, Ft. Dodge

Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota joined together for the 1997 Spring Tri-State Ornithologists' Meeting held on May 16-18 in Sioux City. Bill Huser was in charge of local arrangements. All meetings and meals were held at the Hilton Inn. The weekend began with a social gathering Friday evening. Birders from the three states enjoyed snacks, beverages, and conversation. Displays, merchandise, and bird related materials were available from all three of the groups. The weather for Sioux City was especially memorial for that day tying the record low temperature in the morning and the record high of 91 in the afternoon. The cooling system in the hotel never quite got caught up.

Field trips departed to areas in all three states both Saturday and Sunday mornings. These included Thomas Ashford Scout Reserve and Ponca State Park in Nebraska, and Maude Adams Preserve and Union County State Park in South Dakota. Iowa sites included Stone State Park, Blue Lake, New Lake, Port Neal, and several prairies in Plymouth county, which included the nest and sighting of several Black-billed Magpies.

Thanks go to field trip leaders Teri Dolezal, Pete Erzen, Bill Huser, Bob Livermore, Steve Munzinger, Bob Nickolson, Shawn Pfautch, Jerry Probst, Jan Johnson, Rex Runquist, and Randy Williams.

Afternoon sessions began with the organizational meeting of an Iowa state working group for Partners in Flight. Lisa Hemesath presided and gave an overview on the purpose of PIF. Three committees were formed: Research and Monitoring, Information

and Education, and Land Acquisition and Management. Hemesath also told about Kellerton birding area proposal for southern Iowa. This 10,000 acre "landmark project" is the first bird conservation area proposed in the nation.

Kelly McKay and Pete Petersen presented an informative session about bird population trends based on forty years of Christmas Bird Count data. Interesting trends showing the increases and declines of 13 species of raptors, 9 species of icterids and 5 species associated with humans were charted. Loren Padelford followed with slides and information about his four year observation of hawk migration along Iowa's Loess Hills. The project was from 1992-1995 and a total of 18 species were observed.

A highlight of the weekend was the banquet speaker, Kenn Kaufman. His presentation titled, "Bird Study and Natural History in the 21st Century," began with a clever poem about the dilemmas we may face in the future when "Birding in Outer Space." His predictions for the next century included increased use of computer technology, "splitting" headaches, and increased use of trained nonprofessionals for field studies. He predicted that other areas of natural history will follow the model of birdwatching and become nonconsumptive. He believes we will see listing become popular in other areas, like butterfly study. He concluded by reminding us to teach children that there are things worth saving because this "all depends on us having birds left to watch."

The weekend concluded after the Sunday lunch and compilation. Special thanks to all who helped make the weekend so



Banquet speaker
Kenn Kaufman



successful. The fall meeting will be September 19-21 at Camp Io-Dis-Eca near Iowa City.

Attendance: Betty Allen, Omaha; Pam & Reid Allen, West Des Moines; Cherri Archer, Onawa; Eloise & Eugene Armstrong, Van Meter; Darlene Ayres, Ottumwa; Ann Barker, Princeton; Carol & Galen Berrier, Ankeny; Ellen & Mark Brogie, Creighton, NE; Beth Brown, Osceola; Joan Buwalda, Marshalltown; Ed Carbrey, Ames; Bob Cecil, Des Moines; Jane Clark, Clive; Ray Cummings, Centerville; Karen Disbrow, Iowa City; Joan & Vergil Eness, Clear Lake; Pete Ernzen, Ida Grove; Carol & Larry Farmer, Westfield; Carolyn Fischer, Mason City; Heather Gallagher, Crescent; Judy Garton, Ft. Dodge; Bud Gode, Iowa City; Rita Goranson, Mason City; Betty Grenon, Bellevue, NE; Doug Harr, Larchwood; Kevin Healy, Ames; Lisa Hemesath, Ames; Rick Hollis, Iowa City; Nelson Hoskins, Ottumwa; Art Huser, Sioux City; Bill & Jenny Huser, S. Sioux City, NE; Maridel Jackson, Ankeny; Ann Johnson, Norwalk; Chuck & Marion Johnson, Sioux City; Tom Johnson, Centerville; Mike Jones, Sioux City; Matt Kenne, Algona; Tom Kent, Iowa City; Jim & Sandy Kovanda, Omaha; Mary Kuhlman, Ft. Dodge; Cindy & Bob Livermore, Sioux City; Cathy & Kelly McKay, Moline, IL; Jill Medland, Omaha; John & Mary Mitchell, Des Moines; David Moody, Ft. Dodge; Francis Moore, Waterloo; Steve Munzinger, Sioux City; Curt Nelson, Mason City; Bob & Phyllis Nickolson, Sioux City; Dixie & Mike Overton, Ames; Babs & Loren Padelford, Bellevue, NE; Cliff & Sharon Perkins, Ft. Dodge; Mary Lou & Pete Petersen, Davenport; Pam & Shawn Pfautch, Sioux City; Jerry Probst, Sioux City; Beth & Mark Proescholdt, Liscomb; Izen & Neal Ratzlaff, Omaha; Rex Rundquist, Sioux City; Sibyl Sand, Lake Mills; Jim Scheib, Iowa City; Lee & Nancy Schoenewe, Spencer; Hilda & Janet Sickels, Des Moines; Ross Silcock, Tabor; Jim Sinclair, Indianola; Dorothy Stick, Des Moines; Carol Thompson, Iowa City; Lorraine Wallace, Spirit Lake; Phil Walsh, Des Moines; Jan Walter, Mason City; Russ Widner, Marshalltown; Chris Williams, Council Bluffs; Pat Williams, Sioux City; Randy Williams, Sioux City; Charlie Winterwood, Dubuque; Hank Zaletel, Nevada.

State and County Lists 1996 by Pete Petersen, Davenport

For 1996, 20 people reported lifetime totals for Iowa. Three more people reported county totals. We have received at least one listing for 46 counties, up three from 1995.

Please send your lifetime totals for Iowa through 1997, and any counties you have recorded at least 125 species to Mary Lou Petersen by May 31, 1998. The address is 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, Iowa 52803. The total number is all that is needed, not a complete listing. Do not forget the new species split off in August of 1995 by the A.O.U. and on the new A.B.A. list.

Iowa Totals — 200 Minimum

Pete Petersen	377
Brian Blevins	364
Mark Proescholdt	346
Steve Dinsmore	345
Beth Proescholdt	342
Pam Allen	340
Reid Allen	340
Richard Tetrault	339
Mary Lou Petersen	325
Chris Edwards	309
Jan Walter	305
Maridel Jackson	301
Rita Goranson	300
Lee Schoenewe	296
Pete Ernzen	295
Corey Blevins	293
Mary Montgomery	292
Matt Kenne	279
Ed Thelen	277
Steve Ekblad	222

County Totals — 125 Minimum

Allamakee	
Mark Proescholdt	162
Appanoose	
Dwight Blumer	255
Mary Montgomery	228
Steve Dinsmore	178



Black Hawk		
	Pete Petersen	227
	Mary Lou Petersen	221
	Mark Proescholdt	151
Boone		
	Steve Dinsmore	249
	Mark Proescholdt	218
	Beth Proescholdt	208
	Pam Allen	167
	Reid Allen	167
Bremer		
	Mark Proescholdt	161
Butler		
	Mark Proescholdt	184
Cerro Gordo		
	Jan Walter	268
	Rita Goranson	254
	Steve Dinsmore	188
	Mark Proescholdt	151
Clay		
	Lee Schoenewe	265
Clinton		
	Pete Petersen	253
	Mary Lou Petersen	197
Dallas		
	Steve Dinsmore	189
	Pam Allen	169
	Reid Allen	169
Des Moines		
	Pete Petersen	219
Dickinson		
	Ed Thelen	251
	Lee Schoenewe	245
	Steve Dinsmore	198
Dubuque		
	Pete Ernzen	220
Franklin		
	Mark Proescholdt	165
Fremont		
	Steve Dinsmore	244
	Mark Proescholdt	192
	Pam Allen	157
	Reid Allen	157
Greene		
	Steve Dinsmore	217
	Mark Proescholdt	173
	Pam Allen	132
	Reid Allen	132
Grundy		
	Mark Proescholdt	180
Guthrie		
	Steve Dinsmore	233
	Mark Proescholdt	192
	Pam Allen	175
	Reid Allen	175
Hamilton		
	Dennis Carter	226
	Steve Dinsmore	205
	Mark Proescholdt	201
	Pam Allen	131
	Reid Allen	131
Hardin		
	Mark Proescholdt	241
	Beth Proescholdt	220
Jackson		
	Pete Petersen	240
Jasper		
	Mark Proescholdt	182
	Beth Proescholdt	157
Johnson		
	Chris Edwards	252
	Pete Petersen	250
	Steve Ekblad	201
	Mark Proescholdt	158
	Pam Allen	126
	Reid Allen	126
Jones		
	Chris Edwards	127
Kossuth		
	Matt Kenne	270
	Steve Dinsmore	180
Lee		
	Steve Dinsmore	203
	Pete Petersen	190
	Chris Edwards	174
	Pam Allen	134
	Reid Allen	134
Linn		
	Pete Petersen	209
	Chris Edwards	168
Louisa		
	Pete Petersen	262
	Chris Edwards	130
Madison		
	Pam Allen	141
	Reid Allen	141
Marion		
	Steve Dinsmore	216
	Mark Proescholdt	209
	Pam Allen	164
	Reid Allen	164



Marshall		
	Beth Proescholdt	260
	Mark Proescholdt	259
Monona		
	Pete Ernzen	180
	Steve Dinsmore	174
Muscatine		
	Pete Petersen	258
	Mary Lou Petersen	222
Palo Alto		
	Lee Schoenewe	188
Polk		
	Steve Dinsmore	304
	Pam Allen	286
	Reid Allen	283
	Mark Proescholdt	257
	Beth Proescholdt	244
	Pete Petersen	243
	Maridel Jackson	227
Pottawattamie		
	Steve Dinsmore	207
Poweshiek		
	Mark Proescholdt	172
Sac		
	Pete Ernzen	211
Scott		
	Pete Petersen	310
	Brian Blevins	287
	Mary Lou Petersen	283
	Corey Blevins	273
Story		
	Steve Dinsmore	278
	Mark Proescholdt	239
	Beth Proescholdt	220
Tama		
	Mark Proescholdt	229
	Beth Proescholdt	187
Winneshiek		
	Dennis Carter	223
Woodbury		
	Gerald Von Ehwegen	162
Worth		
	Jan Walter	164
Wright		
	Steve Dinsmore	219
	Mark Proescholdt	159

IOU People

Pete Petersen, past editor of Iowa Bird Life and long-time friend of Iowa birding, died Saturday, July 12 in Davenport of renal cancer. A formal obituary will appear later in Iowa Bird Life. He will be truly missed.

Larry Stone no longer works for the Des Moines Register. Do IOU members want his replacement to be a hunting and fishing writer or one that writes about that topic occasionally and the environment specifically? Write Dennis Ryerson, the editor, at the Register and give him your preference. Des Moines Register, Box 957, Des Moines, IA 50304. By Internet: letters@news.dmreg.com.



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.

Hank & Linda Zaletel, Editors
1928 6th St.
Nevada, IA 50201-1126
515/382-5427

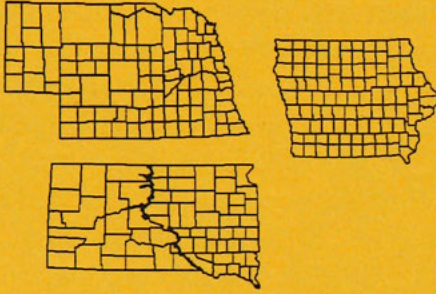
madowl@nevia.net



Iowa Birdline 319/338-9881



Scenes from the Spring 1997 Tri-State Meeting



Carol Thompson, Rick Hollis, Karen Disbrow



Eugene Armstrong, Jim Sinclair, Ann Johnson



Tom Johnson, Eloise Armstrong, Mark Proescholdt



Ray Cummings, Carol & Larry Farmer



1997 Fall Meeting Iowa Ornithologists' Union
 Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca
 Shueyville, Iowa

Sponsored by the Iowa City Bird Club
 University of Iowa Museum of Natural History
 September 19-21, 1997



Friday, Sept 19 7:00 P.M. Evening gathering at the University of Iowa Natural History Museum, Macbride Hall

After a chance to visit and enjoy refreshments (provided by the museum) inside the main entrance to the Museum's Iowa Hall exhibit gallery, George Schrimper, director of the museum, will host a special visit to Bird Hall. Repository to one of the largest public display collections of bird specimens in the country, Bird Hall is now undergoing an extensive renovation. The comprehensive redesign plan, including conceptual outline and perspective drawings will be available for viewing. Besides seeing both new and old exhibits, we'll view a selection of specimen storage drawers, electronic data file records, and have a chance to learn about the museum's long-standing role in Iowa ornithology. Even if you can't take part in the entire IOU Fall Meeting, we hope you'll join us for this special reception.

Saturday 6:00 A.M. Breakfast at Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca

Sept. 20 6:45 A.M. Field trips leave

12:00 noon Lunch at Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca

Concurrent afternoon activities

12:45-1:15 P.M. Committee meetings, free time

1:00 - 4:00 PM Multimedia room with games, computer quizzes, videos

1:15-1:45 P.M. *Kelly McKay* Assessment of Human Impacts on Bald Eagle Reproductive Success along the Upper Mississippi River.

1:45-2:15 P.M. *Lisa Hemaseth* Partners in Flight update

2:15-2:45 P.M. *Jamie Edwards* Wildlife Diversity update

2:45-3:45 P.M. *Bud Gode* Odonates of Iowa

4:00 -5:00 P.M. Business meeting

6:30 P.M. Banquet featuring *Jeff Gordon*: Birds of the Cache River: Using Avian Ecology to Guide Restoration Efforts

Sunday, 6:00 A.M. Breakfast at Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca

Sept. 21 6:45 A.M. Field trips leave

12:30 P.M. Lunch and compilation at Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca



Camp Io-Dis-E-Ca is an 83 acre camp on Coralville Lake. It has a variety of lodging choices: Check-in will start at 3:00 P.M.

Options	Prices	#nights	Total Price
Tent camping (with showers)	\$5/night		
RV (with showers)	\$7/night		
Retreat Center bunk rooms (10 per room)	\$10/person/night		
Retreat Center rooms with private baths			
3-4 people per room	\$13/person/night		
2 people per room	\$16/person/night		

Rooms come with pillows, blankets, and sheets. Towels not included.
 All options may not be available depending on the number of reservation requests.
 If you have made sharing arrangements, please indicate roommates name below:

	Price
Registration:	\$6.00
Meals:	
Saturday breakfast	\$5.00
Saturday lunch	\$6.00
Saturday banquet	\$8.50
Sunday breakfast	\$5.00
Sunday lunch	\$6.00
Total (including lodging)	



Questions? Call Rick Hollis, 319-338-4834 or rhollis@blue.weeg.uiowa.edu

Make checks payable to **Iowa City Bird Club** and send to
 Bernie Knight
 425 Lee Street
 Iowa City, Iowa 52246



Potential Field Trip Locations

Hawkeye Wildlife Area

Amana area

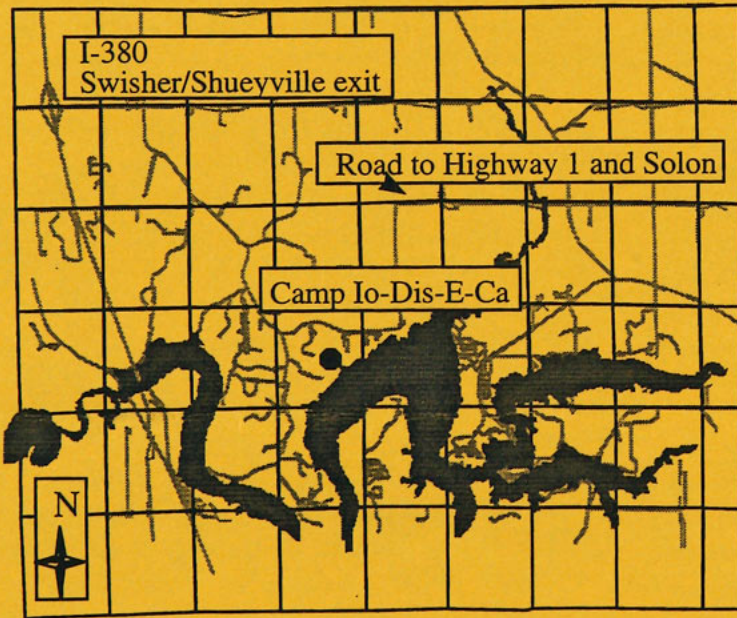
Hickory Hill Park

Palisades State Park

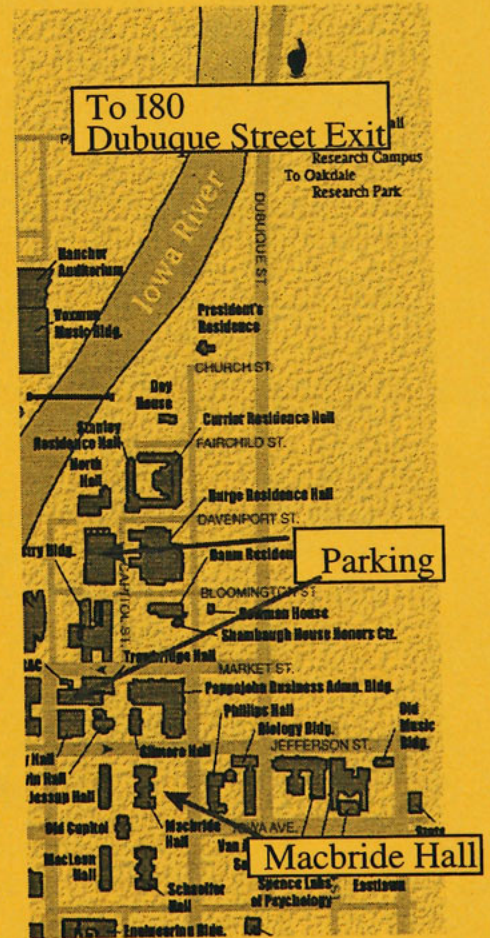
Coralville Reservoir, MacBride State Park

Cone Marsh

Friday night's reception will be at Macbride Hall on the University of Iowa campus located at Jefferson and Clinton Streets. Parking ramps are available at two locations. On-street parking may be available, but is always at a premium near downtown. See enclosed map for directions.



1 mile east from I380 to first turn south. The road is well marked with signs to the camp. It is 3.2 miles from F12 (the first turn) to the camp.



Heard on the Birdline

Spring 1997

March 15 - June 15

by Jim Fuller, Iowa City

All sightings reported to the Iowa Birdline will be considered hypothetical until submitted and approved by the Records Committee of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union.

The spring of 1997 was a banner season for rarities in Iowa. The appearance of potential first state record WHITE-WINGED DOVES may have been the result of a strong airflow from the southwest in early April. Three sightings were noted: at Nelson Hoskins' feeder in Ottumwa April 8-15, in a northwest Des Moines yard April 8-11, and the bird discovered on April 28 by Mark Proescholdt in a LeGrand neighborhood, and enjoyed by many for nearly a month. Astounding was the only way to describe a report of five COMMON BLACK HAWKS watched by experienced observers drifting north over DeSoto NWR on April 30. Other eye-openers were a SPRAGUE'S PIPIT near Blue Lake in Monona County on April 19, a BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER reported by James Huntington in Cedar County on May 10, a NEOTROPIC CORMORANT at the Riverton Area in Fremont County, first reported on the Nebraska Hotline on May 10, three ANHINGAS at Lake Rathbun on May 19, and a male VERMILION FLYCATCHER which

surprised Curt Rector in his yard in Holstein on May 24.

The PINYONJAY, which first appeared on November 30 at Gaylan and Lloyd Crim's feeder in Boone County, remained all winter, and finally departed on March 22. Other March reports were few, but did include an ICELAND GULL below the Red Rock dam on March 19, and a SNOWY OWL in Bremer County on the 21st. The first of seven CINNAMON TEAL reports came from Runnells Wildlife Area on March 31, with additional sightings through May 4 in Des Moines, Dickinson, Greene, Kossuth, and Polk Counties. A SMITH'S LONGSPUR was found in Sac County on March 28, and the only other report was a group of thirty near Cone Marsh in Louisa County on April 3.

May is usually the highlight month of the year and 1997 was no disappointment. At the IOU meeting in Sioux City, a LAZULI BUNTING was sighted at Stone State Park on the 17th, and BLACK-BILLED MAGPIES, the first known nesting in the state in 25 years, were seen by many in Plymouth County near Westfield, with Bill Huser subsequently finding three fledglings there in late June. Another LAZULI BUNTING visited a feeder near Glenwood for four days in late May.

In June, Pam and Reid Allen discovered a SNOWY PLOVER at the dredge spoil pond near Black Hawk Lake in Sac County on the 14th, and it was replaced at that location on the 16th by a LAUGHING GULL.

Iowa Ornithologists' Union

4024 Arkansas Drive

Ames, IA 50014



FIRST-CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE PAID

Ames, IA

PERMIT No. 200

ANN KENT
211 RICHARDS ST
IOWA CITY IA 52246-3519

