



STATE BIRD OF IOWA: THE GOLDFINCH

# I. O. U. NEWS

Winter 1987

Newsletter of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Volume 3 Number 4

1987 FALL MEETING  
Ann Barker, Secretary



The Fall meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union was held November 13-15 at the Iowa 4H Camping Center near Luther, hosted by the Big Bluestem Audubon Society. Approximately 65 people were in attendance.

Friday evening's informal social gathering at the camping center included registration, refreshments, information on local birding areas, and a bird quiz. In addition, those present tackled a delightful "get acquainted" game which required finding individuals with qualifications such as:

- is retired
- has seen all three Scoters in Iowa
- is attending his/her first IOU meeting
- has a yard list of 50 or more species



The exercise indeed served its purpose well.

Saturday, following a hearty breakfast, field trips departed for the Saylorville area. One group headed first for the Big Creek owl roost area, where they were treated to a spectacular look at several Long-eared, Short-eared and Barred Owls. A Saw-whet Owl was also found nearby.

Back at the camping center, the following workshops were offered:

- Winter bird feeder surveys with Rick Hollis
- Raptor care and rehabilitation with ISU veterinarian Andy Fix
- Gull identification with Tom Kent
- Birding the Saylorville area with Hank Zaletel and Jim Dinsmore

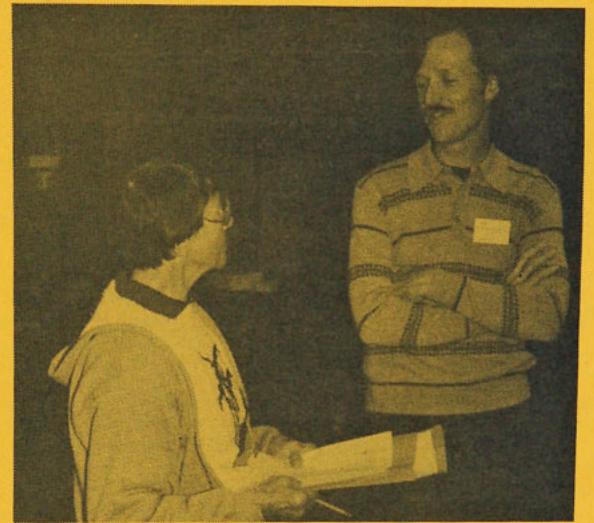


The business meeting followed the workshops. Minutes will be published in Iowa Bird Life.

Members re-convened at 6:00 for the banquet, followed by a film on "The Birds of Maynard Reece", featuring the Iowa artist at work in the wetlands and fields of the state. The results of the bird quiz were announced; the winner, identifying 19 out of 21 skins correctly, was Barb Wilson. In a tie for second place



Bill Cunningham and Ron Harms



Beth Proescholdt and Bery Engebretsen

were Darwin Koenig and Tom Kent, who each correctly identified 18 out of 21. From the Big Bluestem Audubon Society, Dave Edwards issued an official welcome to the IOU, with special thanks to Jim Dinsmore and Hank Zaletel.

On Sunday morning the Saylorville Lake area was again the focus of most birders, while a few covered the Camp Hantesa and Bays Branch Wildlife areas. During the morning, the lovely Indian summer deteriorated into rain showers which by noon were steady.

After a hot chili lunch, Bob Myers led the compilation of the bird list for Sunday and for the weekend. Seventy five species were seen on Sunday, with an additional 16 seen on Saturday only, for a grand total of 91. Highlights were: Common loons, Horned Grebe, White Pelican, Snow Goose, Black Scoter, Osprey, Northern Goshawk, Wild Turkey, Water Pipit, Northern and Loggerhead Shrikes, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Snow Bunting. The "get acquainted" champion was Eloise Armstrong; tied for second were Carol Thompson and Beth Brown.

Our special thanks go to the Big Bluestem Audubon Society and its members Jim Dinsmore, Hank Zaletel, Dave and Jeanne Edwards, and Mike Meetz, who did an excellent job of planning and conducting a fine meeting. Mark your calendars for the Spring meeting which will be held May 20-22, 1988 in Mason City. Anyone wishing a copy of the official species list for the Fall meeting may contact Ann Barker, 25368 - 250th St., Princeton, Iowa 52768.

#### Attendance:

Ames: Linda Brown, Jim & Steve Dinsmore, Dave & Jeanne Edwards

Boone: Bruce Ehresman, Doug Reeves

Booneville: Eugene & Eloise Armstrong

Cedar Falls: Dave Conrads

Cedar Rapids: Keith Carris, Dale & Helen Fye, Pete Wickham

Centerville: Dot Cornett, Tom Johnson

Colo: Hank & Linda Zaletel

Des Moines: Cecille Abala, Evelyn Anderson, Esther Dungan, Bery Engebretsen,

John & Mary Fleckenstein, Jeanette Frost, Shirley Hamilton,

John Hoogerheide, Marian Katzman, Dennis Thompson, Hilda Sickels

Estherville: Harold White



Fort Dodge: Rod Campbell, Bill Cunningham  
 Hastings: Barb Wilson  
 Indianola: Jim Sinclair  
 Iowa City: Carl Bendorf, Jim & Karole Fuller, Rick Hollis, Tom Kent, Cal & Bernie Knight  
 Keokuk: Bob & John Cecil  
 Laurens: Judy Carlson, Ron Harms  
 Liscomb: Beth & Mark Proescholdt  
 Marshalltown: Jean Eige, James & Pauline Mairs  
 Mason City: Curt Nelson, Marty Pauley  
 Montezuma: Darwin Koenig  
 Norwalk: Ann Johnson  
 Osceola: Beth Brown  
 Perry: Bob Myers  
 Pocahontas: Rita & Ross DeWall  
 Princeton: Ann Barker  
 St. Anthony: Carl Kurtz  
 Sioux City: Jerry Probst, Wayne Livermore  
 Tabor: Ross Silcock  
 Tama: Nick Kubik  
 Union: Ramona Sommerlot, Phyllis Harris  
 Waterloo: Dick Kraemer, Sr., Francis Moore



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To the editors:

I would like to call your attention to a development which may be of interest. In recent years in the regions of the state in which cattle raising is a major factor many farmers now bale their hay into large round bales. It is difficult to put these bales in a barn or shed and in most cases the bales are hauled out of the field and placed in rows in a handy location. This is frequently along a highway from which they can be hauled out and fed even in a time of mud or snow.

In this part of the state I frequently see a Kestrel or Loggerhead Shrike in the vicinity on the lookout for the mice that are attracted to such a place that provides both food and cover for the rodents. If there is a utility wire or nearby tree on which the birds can perch that is all the better.

A trench silo provides a similar attraction to the rodents and to the birds that feed on them. Sometimes there is not even a trench, just a flat concrete apron

with a row of big bales along each side with silage in the space between.

J. Donald Gillaspey  
Lamoni



IOWA BIRDLINE

319-524-3569(FLOX) is your information source for rare bird sightings from across Iowa. Each Monday morning (usually) the birdline is updated, providing you a new report of sightings from the past week. While the birdline was developed to serve you, the birder, there are ways you can help the birdline:

- Call the birdline. Even if you can't chase the rarities, you will receive valuable information about vagrants, migration, and bird populations.
- Report your sightings. Even if you have no rarities to report, your input will be useful.
- Support the birdline. The birdline needs your donation now. Send your

tax deductible contribution to Francis Moore, 336 Fairfield St., Waterloo, Iowa 50703. Thanks

Bob Cecil  
Keokuk



### BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

Results from the 1987 field season are still coming in, but at the present time, 250 blocks have been worked in and 46 can be considered complete.

Computerization of the results has begun and information from about half of the field cards has been entered into the computer file. Once all of the information has been entered into the file, it will be much easier to report the results and provide updates. We will be looking at deficiencies in the covered blocks, in time of day birded, time of year birded, and expected birds. Where county coordinators exist, they are already doing this to assess their priorities.

In addition, we will be sponsoring four blockbusting weekends this year in the four corners of the state. Details of these expeditions will be published in the next newsletter, but plan on saving at least one weekend for blockbusting.

We will be sponsoring several contests to get everyone's competitive nature engaged. We will have several different categories for both individuals and clubs. Exciting prizes will be awarded.

We have started to discuss our publi-

cation format. We are also exploring several fundraising options to pay for the remaining data entry and for the publication of the book.

There are still many blocks (614) that have not been worked in as the project approaches its fourth year. Won't you consider helping on this important project?

Doug Reeves, Boone  
Carol Thompson, Iowa City



### BALD EAGLE DAYS

Bald Eagle Days will be held at Keokuk, Iowa January 22-24; followed by one at the Quad Cities February 6-7. The newest day will be in western Iowa at De-Soto National Wildlife Refuge, February 19-21.

Each of these sites is known for their winter concentrations of bald eagles. During cold winters, when all rivers and ponds to the north are frozen, Keokuk attracts 50 to several hundred eagles. They gather there to fish the open water created by the dam and to perch in the timber along the Mississippi River.

The Quad Cities also attracts from a dozen to a hundred eagles. They come to fish at the dam. From the parking lot of the Modern Woodmen, you can see eagles flying above the river, or perched at the island next to the dam.

(Cont. next page)





## COMING EVENTS IN IOWA



- Sat., Jan. 2 Mississippi Bend Bird and Nature Club field trip to Clinton Co. for owls. Meet at 5:30 am, place yet to be determined. Leader: Gil Sandvick 319-225-6191.
- Sat., Jan. 16 Quad City Audubon Society - guided tour of MacBride Museum and Iowa Hall, Iowa City. Meet at the parking lot on the north side of the Ramada Inn, N. Brady St., Davenport, at 9:00 am. For details, call Tim Murphy 319-764-9779.
- Tue., Jan. 19 Big Bluestem Audubon Society (Ames) program "On Birds" by Jim Dinsmore. 7:30 pm at 181 Design Center, ISU. For details, call Dave Edwards 515-292-3790
- Sat., Feb. 20 Big Blustem Audubon Society field trip to Ledges and Big Creek State Parks to look for owls. Carpool from Design Center parking lot at ISU at 7:30 am or meet at the south (Lost Lake) nature trail. For details, call Dave Edwards 515-292-3790.
- Tue., Mar. 8 Big Bluestem Audubon Society program on the Eagles of Alaska by Bob Livermore of Sioux City. 7:30 pm at 181 Design Center, ISU. For details, call Dave Edwards 515-292-3790.
- Sat., Mar. 26 Big Bluestem Audubon Society field trip to Bay's Branch and/or Saylorville Reservoir to look for waterfowl. Carpool from Design Center parking lot at ISU at 7:30 am. For details, call Dave Edwards 515-292-3790.
- Tue., Apr. 19 Big Bluestem Audubon Society program on "Birds Under Feather or What Holds Them Together" by Dr. Andy Fix, ISU Veterinary Pathologist. 7:30 pm at 181 Design Center, ISU. For details, call Dave Edwards 515-292-3790.
- Sat., Apr. 30 Big Bluestem Audubon field trip to Hendrickson's Marsh and other SE Story County sites for waterfowl. Carpool from Design Center parking lot at ISU at 7:45 am. For details, call Dave Edwards 515-292-3790.
- Sat., May 7 Big Bluestem Audubon Society field trip to McFarland Park. Meet at park parking lot at 8:30 am. For details, call Dave Edwards 515-292-3790.



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### (BALD EAGLE DAYS cont.)

At DeSoto, the swift current of the Missouri River keeps many areas of the river open and fishable for eagles. They find shelter from the wind in the timbered areas which surround the river and ox-

bow areas. The eagles will also prey on waterfowl, particularly any crippled birds, which concentrate at DeSoto.




 IOWA CHRISTMAS COUNTS
 

Count Name	Date	Compiler	Phone
Oakville	Thurs., Dec. 17	Pete Petersen	319-355-7051
Lost Nation	Fri., Dec. 18	Pete Petersen	319-355-7051
Ames	Sat., Dec. 19	Steve Dinsmore	515-292-3152
Cedar Rapids	Sat., Dec. 19	Dale Fye	319-364-1638
Bremer County	Sat., Dec. 19	Francis Moore	319-232-0217
Iowa City	Sat., Dec. 19	Tom Staudt	319-337-5935
Spirit Lake	Sat., Dec. 19	Doug Harr	
Mason City	Sat., Dec. 19	Curt Nelson	515-696-5600
Rathbun	Sat., Dec. 19	Ray Cummins	515-856-3518
Burlington	Sat., Dec. 19	Chuck Fuller	319-753-0710
Lamoni	Sat., Dec. 19	J. Donald Gillaspey	515-784-3734
Cherokee	Sun., Dec. 20	Dick Bierman	712-225-5552
Quad Cities	Sun., Dec. 20	Pete Petersen	319-355-7051
Princeton, Camanche	Mon., Dec. 21	Pete Petersen	319-355-7051
Jamaica	Tue., Dec. 22	Ray Cummins	515-856-3518
Des Moines	Sat., Dec. 26	Gene Armstrong	515-996-2726
North Linn	Sat., Dec. 26	Weir Nelson	319-848-4846
Muscatine	Sat., Dec. 26	Pete Petersen	319-355-7051
Sioux City	Sat., Dec. 26	Jerry Probst	712-274-2545
Farragut (Shenandoah)	Tue., Dec. 29	Betty Walters	712-246-5086
Boone County	Fri., Jan. 1	Mark Widlechner	515-292-4014
Clinton	Sat., Jan. 1	Pete Petersen	319-355-7051
Keokuk	Sat., Jan. 2	Bob Cecil	319-524-6407
Lehigh	Sat., Jan. 2	Mina Landes	515-573-3482
Ft. Dodge	Sun., Jan. 3	Mina Landes	515-573-3482
DeSoto	Sun., Jan. 3	K.L. Drews	712-642-2772

FEEDER SURVEY JANUARY 28-31, 1988

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_
- 2A. Address \_\_\_\_\_
- 2B. County \_\_\_\_\_ 2C. City \_\_\_\_\_ 2D. Zip \_\_\_\_\_
3. The feeder survey period this year runs from Thursday, January 28th to Sunday, January 31st. Count birds on two consecutive days only. Please record which days you counted birds for us in the space below.  
Check one: \_\_\_Thursday (1/28) and Friday (1/29),  
          \_\_\_Friday (1/29) and Saturday (1/30), or  
          \_\_\_Saturday (1/30) and Sunday (1/31).
4. Is your feeder in Town (including suburbs) or in the Country? Circle T or C
5. Check the one description which best describes the area within a 2-block circle around your feeder:  
 \_\_\_suburban, houses with shrubs and small trees but few trees wider than 20 inches.  
 \_\_\_suburban bordered by: (circle 1) timber, grass, field or row crop.  
 \_\_\_town, neighborhood has many mature shade and street trees.  
 \_\_\_downtown with mostly buildings, sidewalks, roads, parking lots, high rises  
 \_\_\_pasture  
 \_\_\_row crop (corn, beans, etc.)  
 \_\_\_timber  
 \_\_\_farmstead with mature trees and shrubs around house.
6. Type and number of feeders: \_\_\_Thistle, \_\_\_Sunflower(only), \_\_\_Fruit, \_\_\_Safflower, \_\_\_Peanuts, \_\_\_Mixed seed, \_\_\_Peanut Butter, \_\_\_Suet, \_\_\_Cracked Sunflower, \_\_\_Corn, \_\_\_Millet(only), \_\_\_unfrozen water, \_\_\_other \_\_\_\_\_
7. On what date did you start feeding during 1987-88: About \_\_\_\_\_
8. Comments or additional description of your feeder or yard: \_\_\_\_\_

HIGHEST NUMBER SEEN FOR EACH SPECIES DURING 2 CONSECUTIVE DAYS

- |                               |                                 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ___ Ring-necked Pheasant      | ___ White-throated Sparrow      |
| ___ Rock Dove (Common Pigeon) | ___ White-crowned Sparrow       |
| ___ Mourning Dove             | ___ Harris' Sparrow             |
| ___ Red-headed Woodpecker     | ___ Dark-eyed Junco (All races) |
| ___ Red-bellied Woodpecker    | ___ Red-winged Blackbird        |
| ___ Downy Woodpecker          | ___ Grackle (Common)            |
| ___ Hairy Woodpecker          | ___ Brown-headed Cowbird        |
| ___ Flicker (All races)       | ___ Purple Finch                |
| ___ Blue Jay                  | ___ Common Redpoll              |
| ___ Crow (American)           | ___ Pine Siskin                 |
| ___ Black-capped Chickadee    | ___ Goldfinch American          |
| ___ Tufted Titmouse           | ___ Evening Grosbeak            |
| ___ Red-breasted Nuthatch     | ___ House (English) Sparrow     |
| ___ White-breasted nuthatch   | ___ (other) _____               |
| ___ Brown Creeper             | ___ (other) _____               |
| ___ Robin (American)          | ___ (other) _____               |
| ___ Cedar Waxwing             | ___ (other) _____               |
| ___ Starling (European)       | ___ (other) _____               |
| ___ Cardinal (Northern)       | ___ (other) _____               |
| ___ Tree Sparrow (American)   | ___ (other) _____               |
| ___ Song Sparrow              | ___ TOTAL SPECIES SEEN          |

Please fill out carefully. Feel free to copy the form for friends and patrons. Thank you and enjoy yourselves!

I would like to receive the free quarterly Nongame News newsletter.

I would like information about the Iowa Ornithologists Union which is a statewide bird organization.

# 1 9 8 8 W I N T E R B I R D F E E D E R S U R V E Y

SPONSORED BY THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION

AND THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES NONGAME PROGRAM

On two consecutive days during January 29-31, 1988, observe your feeder and using this form, describe your feeder and record the birds that visited you. In the space provided, list the highest number of each species that you saw together at any one time. For example, if you saw 10 juncos at 9:00, 11 at 12:00 and 7 at 4:00, the number you should record is 11. If males and females can be distinguished (cardinals, downy woodpecker etc.) record the combined total. For example, if you saw 3 male cardinals at 11:00 then 1 male and 2 females at 2:00, record 5 cardinals--the highest count for the males and the highest count for the females combined. Count only on the two consecutive days and record only the birds that you see at your feeder, under your feeder or in the trees around your feeder. Do not count birds which just flew past your house and did not use your feeder area. We want information only about birds influenced by your feeders. If you cannot get an exact count, record your best estimate. An honest estimate is far more useful than 'umpteen' or 'too many to count.' Mail the completed form to me by February 12, 1988:

R. J. Hollis  
3351 Lower West Branch Road  
Iowa City, IA 52240

If you would like a personal reply, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope and be patient; it may take 12 months before I can get back to you. Look for results in the Iowa Nongame News and the I.O.U. newsletter.

## Iowa Ornithologists' Union



STATE BIRD OF IOWA: THE GOLDFINCH

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BLK RT.

