



I.O.U. News

Iowa Ornithologists' Union Newsletter

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HEARD ON THE BIRDLINE Fall 1997

September 15-November 15
by Jim Fuller, Iowa City

All sightings reported to the Iowa Birdline are considered tentative until submitted and approved by the Records Committee of the Iowa Ornithologist's Union.

The state's first EURASIAN COLLARED DOVES discovered at Grinnell on August 30 were still present at the country club golf course there throughout the fall. Up to four birds had been seen at one time, but their number decreased by one when a dead dove was found on October 15.

The fall highlight happened at a time in the latter half of September which was otherwise devoid of news. A large flock of LARK BUNTINGS, presumably migrants, was found by Jerry Probst at Bacon Creek Park in Sioux City the morning of September 19. This represents the first occurrence in the state in several years.

Northern visitors were evident throughout the fall. Single EVENING GROSBEAKS were at Iowa City in mid-September, and at Sioux Center on November 3. Up to four RED CROSSBILLS were at Aspen Grove Cemetery in Burlington the first three weeks of October, and WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL sightings included a female at a Marion feeder on October 28, six at the Yellow River State Forest on November 7-8, and 35 at the Lake Park Cemetery on November 11. A PINE GROSBEAK was seen at Holstein November 5-6, and a BOHEMIAN WAXWING was

spotted in Allamakee County on November 8. COMMON REDPOLL reports began with three sightings on November 11-12 in Polk, Clayton, and Dickinson Counties.

Unusual gull reports in October came from the Coralville Reservoir with a second year LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL October 8-27, and a juvenile SABINE'S GULL on the 9th. In November, Big Spirit Lake produced a first year GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL on the 8th, and a first year THAYER'S GULL on the 9th.

Waterfowl rarities were highlighted by a PACIFIC LOON at Lock & Dam #18 on the Mississippi River on October 31. Two RED-NECKED GREBES were at Lake Anita State Park on November 1, and the only WESTERN GREBE was at Big Spirit Lake on November 8. Early November also saw WHITE-WINGED SCOTERS at Rice Lake in Worth County, Blackhawk Lake in Sac County, and at Lock & Dam #18 in Des Moines County. SURF SCOTERS also appeared in early November at Lock & Dam #18 and at Pleasant Creek Recreation Area in Linn County. The only OLDSQUAW was observed at Big Spirit Lake on November 11. Pleasant Creek hosted eight TRUMPETER SWANS on November 10, and pool #9 on the Mississippi in extreme northeast Iowa, saw a thousand TUNDRA SWANS present from the end of October.

A WHITE FACED IBIS was seen at a Plymouth County farm pond on October 8. The only SAW-WHET OWL report came from George Wyth State Park on November 1. A SPOTTED TOWHEE appeared at Cone Marsh in Louisa County on November 6. Unusual raptor sightings included GOLDEN EAGLES and RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS at the Grammer Grove Park hawk watch in Marshall



County in late October, while another RED-SHOULDERED HAWK was at Lake MacBride State Park on November 13. Unusual because of its lateness was a RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD at a Burlington feeder on November 10.

Meet An Iowa Birder - Maridel Jackson

Reprinted with permission from the Big Bluestem Flyer

Maridel Jackson would like to see Christmas come more than once a year. Not for gifts under the tree, or the visits from Jolly Saint Nick, but because of the Audubon Christmas bird counts. There are just not enough days in the Christmas season to be able to make it to all of them.

After moving to Iowa from Ohio in 1979, Maridel met some remarkably knowledgeable birders and naturalists, including Gary Nelson who teaches at DMACC, Bob Myers of the Dallas County Conservation Board, Steve Dinsmore of Ames, and later Eugene and Eloise Armstrong of the Des Moines Audubon Society. "I was fascinated by just how much they knew," she marvels, and she began joining field trips with them. It was while tagging along on a Christmas bird count in 1989 that Maridel got hooked on birding. Since that time, she has never failed to make at least three Christmas counts every year.

One of Maridel's most memorable birding experiences was a trip to New Mexico and Arizona in 1991 with Eugene and Eloise, and Carol Strohmeyer, another Des Moines Audubon member. She added approximately 50 birds to her life list then. "We would go to some place out in the middle of nowhere," she adds, and "suddenly there would be a Vermillion Flycatcher, just where they told me it would be." In 1993, she birded all of south Texas with Eugene and Eloise, and

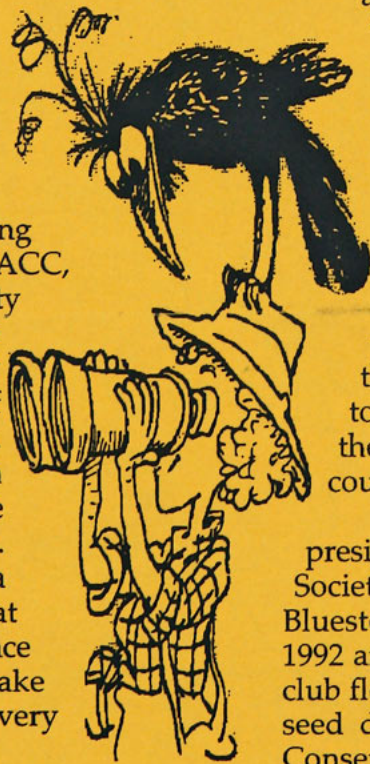
Bob Myers and, again, was struck by their ability to predict where a certain bird would be seen, whether in a dusty little town or in the wilderness of Santa Ana national wildlife refuge.

Although, clearly this was birding on a very high level, Maridel is passionate about birdwatching because, as she states, "you can be as uncomplicated or as deep as you want. You can learn as much as possible, or you can just enjoy the walk," she continues. "I have a friend who didn't even take binoculars on a Christmas count and enjoyed it as much as all of the rest of us."

Maridel has kept a birding list since 1990, and already has 435 North American birds on it. "Outside of my work and my family," she declares, "birding is my main interest." She works at the warehouse of C.T. Farm and Country, and even there manages to combine her love of nature with work. She never misses an opportunity to talk to the customers, many of them farmers, about prairies, wetlands, and forests, and about the programs that are available to them, such as putting a pond on their property, forest reserve and county help with prairies.

Last year, Maridel served as vice-president of the Des Moines Audubon Society. She was president of the Big Bluestem Audubon Society of Ames in 1992 and 1993, during which time the club flourished. She initiated the bird seed donations to the Story County Conservation Center, and "for better or worse," she states, she changed the room location of the monthly meetings from the Design Center to the current location in the Veterinary Medicine building. "It was just too difficult to keep the same room in the Design Center. We were always getting moved."

There may or there may not be a Santa, but as long as there are Christmas bird counts, Maridel will be there with her binoculars and her genuine interest.



Henslow's Sparrow in Iowa

For the past two summers, Dr. Rolf Koford and field assistant Pete Melde have been surveying Henslow's Sparrows in Iowa and several other midwestern states. This past summer they found Henslow's Sparrows at several counties in south-central Iowa. Koford has established a Henslow's Sparrow homepage on the Internet and has included on the homepage detailed county maps that provide information on the specific locations where they found the species. Thus up-to-date information on where to find this secretive species is now available to the birding community and other interested individuals. Check out this site at:

<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~hesp/homepage.html>



Mexican Trip

Bob Cecil reports that there has been a tremendous response to his planned Mexican, birding trip 14-22 February, 1998. There are only one or two places left. Details were published in the Fall, 1997 *I.O.U. News*. Contact Bob immediately if you are interested in going.

Bob Cecil
1315 41st St.
Des Moines, IA 50311
515/277-5709



Recent Literature

Bergin, T.M., L.B. Best, and K.E. Freemark. 1997. An experimental study of predation on artificial nests in roadsides adjacent to agricultural habitats in Iowa. *Wilson Bull.* 109:437-448.

Hawks, S., and R. Klann. 1997. Helminth ova recovered from raptors admitted for rehabilitation. *J. Iowa Acad. Sci.* 104:47-49.

Johnson, W., C.C. Adkinsson, T.R. Crow, and M.D. Dixon. 1997. Nut caching by Blue Jays (*Cyanocitta cristata* L.): implications for tree demography. *Amer. Midl. Nat.* 138:357-370

Knutson, M.G., and E.E. Klaas. 1997. Declines in abundance and species richness of birds following a major flood on the Upper Mississippi River. *Auk* 114:367-380.

Perkins, J.L., W.R. Clark, T.Z. Riley, and P.A. Vohs. 1997. Effects of landscape and weather on winter survival of Ring-necked Pheasant hens. *J. Wildl. Manage.* 61:634-644.

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JOB ANNOUNCEMENT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IOWA OFFICE

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

National Audubon Society seeks candidates for the position of Executive Director of its Iowa State Office. The Executive Director will be the chief executive officer for Audubon within Iowa responsible for the organization's overall performance in that state. The position will be based in or near Des Moines, Iowa and requires substantial travel throughout the state as well as occasional travel to other states to attend national meetings and events, and for fundraising.

This is a new position that follows the recommendations of the National Audubon Society Strategic Plan to strengthen our commitment to the conservation of birds, other wildlife and their habitats at the grassroots level. The Executive Director will be responsible for the growth, management, and integration of all Audubon programs within Iowa including: communications, media relations, government affairs, environmental education, campaigns, wildlife policy, habitat restoration, science, sanctuaries, Audubon centers, private landowner outreach, and fundraising.

The Executive Director should have extensive fundraising experience and the capacity to raise funds to sustain and grow the state program. The Executive Director must be able to work effectively with the Iowa Audubon Council, Audubon chapters, and volunteers to "create a culture of conservation at the community level". The Executive Director will develop opportunities for education, training and support for volunteers to enable chapters to promote membership and achieve their conservation goals.

The Executive Director will also contribute to the Audubon mission and national agenda as a member of a team of state office executive directors throughout the country.

Please send inquiries to:
Glenn Olson, Field Director
National Audubon Society
555 Audubon Place
Sacramento, CA 95825

Telephone (916) 481-5332
Fax (916) 481-6228

The Doves of Iowa Coalition

A small group of hunters, with the help and encouragement of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, intends to have legislation introduced in 1998 which will allow the implementation of a hunting season on Mourning Doves in Iowa. If you are interested in joining with other Iowans in opposition to the imposition of a Mourning Dove season, please contact:



Jim Sinclair
The Doves of Iowa Coalition
810 North B. St.
Indianola, IA 50125
515/961-4616
sinclear@aol.com



Iowa Birdline
319/338-9881



1997 Christmas Bird Counts



Friday	Dec. 19	Lost Nation	Mark Roberts	319/847-7202
Saturday	Dec. 20	Cedar Rapids	Gail Barels	319/373-9653
Saturday	Dec. 20	Shenandoah	Ross Silcock	712/629-5865
Saturday	Dec. 20	DeSoto NWR	Mindy Sheets	712/642-4121
Saturday	Dec. 20	Red Rock	Ann Johnson	515/961-2002
Saturday	Dec. 20	Marshalltown	Ed Savage	515/752-0105
Saturday	Dec. 20	Ames	Dave Edwards	515/292-3790
Saturday	Dec. 20	Mason City	Rita Goranson	515/423-1699
Saturday	Dec. 20	Cherokee	Dick Bierman	712/225-3390
Saturday	Dec. 20	Burlington	Chuck Fuller	319/753-0710
Saturday	Dec. 20	Spirit Lake	Doug Harr	712/477-2798
Saturday	Dec. 20	Centerville	Bill Heusinkveld	515/856-2342
Saturday	Dec. 20	Bremer	Francis Moore	319/232-0217
Sunday	Dec. 21	Quad Cities	Kelly McKay	309/797-5981
Sunday	Dec. 21	Saylorville	Steve Dinsmore	515/292-3152
Sunday	Dec. 21	Iowa City	Chris Edwards	319/626-6362
Sunday	Dec. 21	Waterloo	Francis Moore	319/232-0217
Monday	Dec. 22	Keokuk	Bob Cecil	515/277-5709
Monday	Dec. 22	Princeton	Kelly McKay	309/797-5981
Tuesday	Dec. 23	Jamaica	Ray Cummins	515/856-3518
Saturday	Dec. 27	Des Moines	Dennis Thompson	515/254-0837
Saturday	Dec. 27	Clinton	Kelly McKay	309/797-5981
Saturday	Dec. 27	Sioux City	Bob Livermore	712/239-3954
Saturday	Dec. 27	Grinnell	Bob VanErsvelde	515/236-6600
Saturday	Dec. 27	Decorah	Dennis Carter	319/382-3754
Sunday	Dec. 28	Muscatine	Kelly McKay	309/797-5981
Monday	Dec. 29	Andalusia, IL	Kelly McKay	309/797-5981
Monday	Dec. 29	Yellow River	Dennis Carter	319/382-3754
Monday	Dec. 29	Glenwood	Doug Rose	712/527-4092
Thursday	Jan. 1	Boone	Mark Widrlechner	515/233-1532
Saturday	Jan. 3	No. Linn	Gail Barels	319/373-9653
Saturday	Jan. 3	Omaha	Betty Grenon	402/731-2383
Sunday	Jan. 4	Westfield	Larry Farmer	712/568-2940



BIRDFEEDER SURVEY JANUARY 22-25, 1997

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

1. Name _____
- 2A. Address _____
- 2B. County _____ 2C. City _____ 2D. Zip _____
3. The survey period this year runs from Thursday, January 22nd to Sunday, January 25th. Count birds on two consecutive days only. Please record which days you counted birds for us in the space below.
 Check one: ___ Thursday (1/22) and Friday (1/23).
 ___ Friday (1/23) and Saturday (1/24).
 ___ Saturday (1/24) and Sunday (1/25).
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 1997-98? About _____
8. Comments or additional description of your feeder or yard: _____

HIGHEST NUMBER SEEN FOR EACH SPECIES DURING TWO CONSECUTIVE DAYS

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

___ I would like to receive the free *Wildlife Diversity News* (new subscribers only).

___ I would like information about the Iowa Ornithologists' Union which is a statewide bird organization. If you see a rare or unusual bird, please report it to the Iowa birdline at (319) 338-9881.

1998 WINTER BIRD FEEDER SURVEY

SPONSORED BY THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION AND
THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES NONGAME PROGRAM

On two consecutive days during January 22-25, 1998 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 woodpeckers, 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 “umpteens” or “too many to count”.

Mail the completed form to me by February 15, 1998

R. J. Hollis
3351 Lower West Branch Road
Iowa City, IA 52245

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 *Wildlife Diversity News* and the I.O.U. Newsletter.

Coming Events

- Tuesday Dec. 16 North American owls by Beth Brown. Des Moines Audubon, 7:15 PM, Westminster Church, Beaver & Franklin. Phil Walsh: 515/255-2552.
- Thursday Jan. 8 Visiting with Niabi Zoo's Wild Kingdom. Quad City Audubon, 7:00 PM, Butterworth Center. Kelly McKay: 309/792-5981.
- Saturday Jan. 18 Quad City Audubon field trip to Credit Island, Lock & Dam 14 & 15. Meet at army tank on Credit Island at 8:00 AM. Kelly McKay: 309/792-5981.
- Tuesday Jan. 20 Exploring Chichaqua Wildlife Area by Lorn Lawn. Des Moines Audubon, 7:15 PM, Westminster Church, Beaver & Franklin. Phil Walsh: 515/255-2552.
- Tuesday Feb. 17 Eagles in Flight by Ty Smedes. Des Moines Audubon, 7:15 PM, Westminster Church, Beaver & Franklin. Phil Walsh: 515/255-2552.
- Tuesday March 17 Tracking Migrating Birds with Weather Radar by Karl Jungbluth. Des Moines Audubon, 7:15 PM, Westminster Church, Beaver & Franklin. Phil Walsh: 515/255-2552.

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