



# I.O.U. News

Iowa Ornithologists' Union Newsletter

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## 65 Years of Following Those Feathered Friends



An avid bird-watcher, Pearl Knoop has been listing birds she observed since the spring of 1933. Today, her journals are part of the Iowa Women's Archives at the University of Iowa Libraries.

by Jan Horgen

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**Marble Rock** - From the Ides of March to the golden crackle of Indian Summer - a North Iowa woman has chronicled the past 65 years through the flash of feathers and the whisper of wings.

An avid bird-watcher, Marble Rock native Pearl Knoop, 92, began listing birds she observed in the spring of 1933. Today, Knoop's journals, ornithology card catalog and some of her first identification books are part of the Iowa Woman's Archives at the University of Iowa Libraries in Iowa City.

"When I hear the call of the killdeer from out in the field, I think of my father," Knoop said, smiling reflectively. "But it all really started with a gift to my mother, a little pocket identification guide. She used it, but I was the one who got hooked."

While wandering the plum groves and grain fields on her parent's farm or trudging along the banks of the nearby Shell Rock River, Knoop developed a passion for the winged creatures inhabiting the area. A country school teacher for several years, she shared her expertise and enthusiasm with students by taking them on nature hikes - binoculars and bird book in hand. Recognized as a living encyclopedia by locals, Knoop was repeatedly consulted through her 17 years as a public librarian when someone caught a glance of some unusual feathered traveler migrating through the area.

Knoop has built a life list of 222 different bird sightings, one or two unusual enough to gain her recognition in the state ornithologist publication, *Birds of Iowa*.

But it is the interest she has sparked in her nieces and nephews that seems to please Knoop the most. "I gave each family a bird identification book last Christmas," she said. "I told them to use it and they were to give me a list of birds they saw through the year. We'll compare lists this Christmas."

The gift has created some lively competition between family members said Knoop's niece, Pat Fluhrer of Charles City. "It reminds me of the time when my kids were small and Aunt Pearl organized an early morning bird walk then fed us all breakfast in the park," said Fluhrer. "Now





my husband and 5-year old grandson have picked it up. Not just making lists, building birdhouses, feeding birds - they are really going to town."

Fluhrer's words brought a gleam of satisfaction to Knoop's eyes. "In the end, I think the little one is going to be making his own list and journals," Knoop said.

Ryan Stewart seems to agree with his great aunt. "I get up early and look for birds every morning out my window. My mom writes down the ones I see," he said. "I saw an Oriole one time, it was black and orange. But Redwing blackbirds are my favorite, I've seen two of those and they sing really high."

Stewart has already learned one of the most important aspects of bird-watching, Knoop said. "You have to be an early riser to be a birder," Knoop said. "On a good morning I would always wish I had gotten up a little earlier."

These days, Knoop wakes early to see which birds have stopped for breakfast at the feeder outside her window in the Rockwell Nursing Home or in the trees lining the edge of the lawn.

Sitting in the garden, Knoop halted her conversation in mid-sentence, lifted her field glasses and searched the shrubbery. "Fall migration is starting," she said. "The birds are harder to identify. Some just haven't gotten colored -up yet, but it's a good time to add to your list."

## Bird-watching Journals Are in State Archives

**Iowa City** - The Iowa Women's Archives of the University of Iowa Libraries in Iowa City collects papers of and about Iowa women from all walks of life.

"These materials have enduring value for historical study," said curator Karen Mason. "We have over 400 collections from journals and diaries to scrapbooks to speeches and personal correspondence."

Contained in the archival collection are more than 30 journals written by Marble Rock native Pearl Knoop, 92, an avid birder who compiled a card catalog and life list of 222 birds, spanning six decades.

"Pearl Knoop's journals are more than a list of the birds she saw," Mason said. They are a documentary account of every day life with snippets of her daily activities over 65 years."

The Knoop collection includes a brief biography, a description of the collection and the materials which are stored in acid free folders and boxes for preservation purposes.

There are descriptive fragments of Knoop's daily activities interspersed with the annual listing of birds in her journals.

◆ March 7, 1939 - "Teaching in our rural school again. Walking to school in the morning I saw a little red bird sitting on the high-line and two more eating weed seed below. They were Redpolls, a winter bird."

◆ March 23, 1952 - "Snow flurries and rather cold today. There were about 20 horned larks feeding in the pig pen when I was doing chicken chores this morning."

Such entries make the Knoop journals an "incredible" addition to the archives, according to Mason, who said the documentation of simple living is as historically important as preserving the daily activities of notable women.

"Knoop's collection is another way to show, for historical purposes, how a woman organized her daily life," Mason said. "And so many of the entries are just incredible. I believe her bird watching was a passion for Knoop, perhaps even more than her career as a teacher and librarian."

The Iowa Women's Archives is located on the third floor of the Main Library on the University of Iowa campus and is open to the public. Their website address is <http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/iwa/>





# Iowa Ornithologists' Union Fall Meeting September 11-13, 1998

Des Moines Audubon hosted the Fall 1998 meeting of Iowa Ornithologists' Union at Easter Seals' Camp Sunnyside, in celebration of the 75th anniversary of both organizations. Social time and registration were held at the camp on Friday evening, in addition to a book signing event at Barnes and Noble, with our guest, Pete Dunne. Field trips were held both Saturday and Sunday mornings, and slide programs were presented in the afternoon on Saturday, including a hawk workshop by Pete Dunne, "Cinderellas of the Avian World", by Eugene and Eloise Armstrong, and the "IOU Birding Trip to Mexico", by Rick Hollis. Pete Dunne also spoke for the evening program, and captivated the audience with history, "Small-headed Flycatcher. Seen Yesterday. He Didn't Leave His Name." Over 120 people registered for some part of the weekend.

## IOU Field Trip Report By Dennis Thompson

One of the main activities of an Iowa Ornithologists' Union meeting is, of course, birdwatching. Five field trips were offered each day:

• Dick and Sharon Stilwell led birders to the southwest area of the metro, including Brown's Woods, Walnut Woods, and Raccoon River Park. They also had the responsibility for showing everyone the famous *Amazilia* hummingbird. The Stilwell's reported good numbers of warblers both days, and a Trumpeter Swan at Raccoon River Park on Sunday was very unexpected.

• Maridel Jackson took a group to Voas and Brenton Slough in Dallas County. They also had good numbers of warblers, along with Soras, coots, and other marsh birds.

• Phil Walsh's tour visited Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt and Errington Marsh. American Bitterns and Northern Harriers were highlights of that trip.



Pete Dunne and Jim Durbin smile for the camera!

• The Runnells/Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge trip was led by Ann Johnson on Saturday, with Jim Sinclair leading it on Sunday. Shorebirds and sparrows were the highlights, including good numbers of American Golden Plovers, Buff-breasted Sandpipers, and Stilt Sandpipers. A Marbled Godwit was unusual for fall. Two Peregrine Falcons and a Bald Eagle were also nice finds.

• Dennis Thompson led a large contingent around Saylorville Lake both days. Both Oak Grove Beach and Polk City Wildlife Areas were productive, but the best birding was at the mudflats at Jester Park. Over 1,000 White Pelicans and numerous shorebirds, including Sanderlings and two Red-necked Phalaropes were seen by the group. A young Peregrine Falcon provided a nice show as it harassed the flocks before landing on a nearby mudflat!

There were 151 species recorded for both days, despite the unseasonably warm weather. Ten species of raptors, eighteen different shorebirds, and twenty species of warblers give an indication of the good mix of birds present and the variety of habitats explored.





## Attendance:

**Ames**, Roger Alexander, Barbara Bettis, Jim Dinsmore Sherry Dragula and Mark Widrlechner, Jeanne and David Edwards, Paul and Mike Freiberg, Kevin Healy, Lisa Hemesath, Marcia Minear, Kay Niyo, Wolf Oesterreich, Dixie Overton, Janis and Donald Paseka, Ellen and Paul Zeph  
**Adel**, Jan Eppard, Terry Shepherd  
**Ankeny**, Carol and Galin Berrier, Maridel Jackson  
**Algona**, Matthew Kenne  
**Boone**, Karl Jungbluth  
**Burlington**, John Rutenbeck  
**Carlisle**, Bonnie Callan  
**Cedar Rapids**, Bonnie and Arlen Breiholz, Helen and Dale Fye  
**Centerville**, Becky and Tom Johnson  
**Clive**, Charlene and Jack Ver Steeg  
**Corydon**, Aaron Brees  
**Des Moines**, Bob and John Cecil, Jane Clark, Diane Dentlinger, James Gritton, Jo Hudson, Barbara Miller, Mary and John Mitchell, Phil Walsh, Lorna Truck, Dorothy Stick  
**Estherville**, Harold White  
**Fairfield**, Diane Porter  
**Fort Dodge**, Judy and John Garton, Mary Kuhlman, Sibyl Sand  
**Hanlontown**, Roxanne and Jake Jackson  
**Huxley**, Paul and Linda Bystrak  
**Indianola**, Richard Trieff, Jim Sinclair  
**Iowa City**, Judy and Drew Dillman, Karen Disbrow, Mike Dooley, Bud Gode, Rick Hollis, Tom Kent  
**Johnston**, Cecille and Dennis Thompson  
**Liscomb**, Beth Proescholdt, Mark Proescholdt,  
**Marion**, Joyce and Jim Durbin  
**Marshalltown**, Joan Buwalda, George Crowther, Jean Eige, Dian Engle, Laura Glasgow, Edna Kirse, Linda and Robert Tasler, Alice Smith  
**Mason City**, Carolyn Fischer, Curt Nelson, Janice Walter, Rita Goranson, Martha Pauley  
**Muscatine**, Gerald White  
**Nevada**, Donna Flanagan, Jeff and Anita Westphall, Mike Meetz, Linda and Hank Zaletel  
**Norwalk**, Ann Johnson, Sue Spieker

**Oskaloosa**, Ron Muilenburg  
**Princeton**, Ann Barker  
**Spencer**, Lee Schoenewe  
**Urbandale**, Berniece and Ty Smedes  
**Van Meter**, Eloise and Eugene Armstrong  
**Waterloo**, Dick Kraemer, Francis Moore, Tom Schilke,  
**Waverly**, Jill Feldkamp  
**West Des Moines**, Jay and Ron Kozel, Pam and Reid Allen, Sharon and Dick Stilwell, Sandra Soth,  
**Batavia, IL**, Kate and Jim Frazier  
**Cape May, MA**, Peter Dunne  
**Bellevue, NE**, Babs and Loren Padelford

## Local Birding

Jim Dinsmore, Ames



In early September one of my students mentioned to me that he had seen what he was certain was an ibis at a flooded field south of Ames. Obviously the ibis raised my interest but I also was puzzled since I did not know anything about the wetland he described. I visited the site the next day and although the ibis was no longer there, I did find a flooded field of an acre or two that had a number of shorebirds.

The wetland was obviously formed by a plugged drainage tile since it was in the midst of a corn field. I told several others about the site and, since it was only a few miles from my house, began visiting it on a regular basis, recording what species and how many of each were present. These visits soon became addictive as I kept finding "new" species as migration progressed through the fall.

I also often found Hank Zaletel there, and we began comparing notes. The pond held water well and shrank slowly through the fall until late October when the landowner cleaned out the plugged up tile. After that, its level dropped rapidly and finally, on 29 November, it was dry.

In all, I visited the site 40 times, with my last sighting of any wetland birds on 18 November. I saw a total of 25 wetland species at





the site including 7 waterfowl species and 14 shorebird species. Besides the wetland species, I also saw a Prairie Falcon (killing a snipe on 8 Nov) and 20 Brewer's Blackbirds on 6 Nov as well as a number of other nonwetland species. I suspect that Hank may have seen a few species that I missed.

Other interesting finds were a record early (for Story County) fall Northern Shoveler and record late county records for American Golden-Plover, Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, and Franklin's Gull. On a personal level, I saw five species there (Prairie Falcon, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, American Pipit, Brewer's Blackbird) that I had never seen before in Story County where I have resided for 23+ years. The falcon was also a state first for me. The whole point of this little note is to point out how persistent watching at an interesting local area led to some interesting sightings that easily could have been missed.

For the record, here are the wetland species that I saw there. The first number is the number of visits (out of 40) on which that species was present. The second is the maximum number seen.

Pied-billed Grebe	11	8
Canada Goose	5	108
Northern Pintail	4	6
Mallard	15	51
Northern Shoveler	4	3
Green-winged Teal	1	3
American Wigeon	2	4
Blue-winged Teal	8	202
Killdeer	38	170
Semipalmated Plover	3	1
American Golden-Plover	11	12
Greater Yellowlegs	1	1
Lesser Yellowlegs	9	23
Spotted Sandpiper	3	2
Semipalmated Sandpiper	3	1
Least Sandpiper	12	19
Pectoral Sandpiper	16	10
Dunlin	9	3
Stilt Sandpiper	2	4
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	1	1
Long-billed Dowitcher	1	1
Common Snipe	10	18
Franklin's Gull	2	20
Ring-billed Gull	5	101
American Pipit	4	3

## Endangered and Threatened Species Proposal

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has proposed some changes in the species it lists as Threatened and Endangered in Iowa. The new list would replace the most recent list which was accepted in 1994. In terms of birds, the proposed list would list 7 species as endangered, 4 as threatened, and 9 as of special concern, compared to 9 endangered, 2 threatened, and 2 special concern species on the 1994 list. Specifically, the proposed list would include the following species:

Species	Current Status	Proposed Status
American Bittern	Not Listed	Special Concern
Least Bittern	Not Listed	Special Concern
Black-Crowned Night-Heron	Not Listed	Special Concern
Bald Eagle	Endangered	Threatened
Northern Harrier	Endangered	Endangered
Red-Shouldered Hawk	Endangered	Endangered
Broad-winged Hawk	Not Listed	Special Concern
Peregrine Falcon	Endangered	Endangered
King Rail	Endangered	Endangered
Piping Plover	Endangered	Endangered
Least Tern	Endangered	Endangered
Forster's Tern	Special Concern	Special Concern
Black Tern	Special Concern	Special Concern
Barn Owl	Endangered	Endangered
Long-eared Owl	Threatened	Threatened
Short-eared Owl	Endangered	Endangered
Least Flycatcher	Not Listed	Special Concern
Veery	Not Listed	Special Concern
Cerulean Warbler	Not Listed	Special Concern
Henslow's Sparrow	Threatened	Threatened





Thus, under the proposed list, 2 species would be listed at a lower category (Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk), 11 would remain at the same category, and 7 new species would be listed. The Iowa DNR is accepting written comments on the proposed list through 8 January 1999. Comments should be sent to the Division on Parks, Recreation, and Preserves, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0034.



**Iowa Birdline**  
**319/338-9881**

## Notes from the Editors

There will not be a Winter Bird Feeder Survey this year. Graduate students from Iowa State University are currently working on a paper that will evaluate the data from past surveys. This paper should be published in Iowa Bird Life in 1999.

For those of you who were not able to attend the Fall IOU meeting in Des Moines this past fall, Jim Dinsmore, current editor of Iowa Bird Life, submitted his resignation effective January 1, 2000. If you are interested in becoming editor, contact any member of the Publications Committee or President Mark Proescholdt.

Upcoming meetings - April 30-May 2, 1999 at Centerville sponsored by the Rathbun Bird Club - tentatively the Fall 1999 meeting will be held in Ottumwa.



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**Nevada, IA 50201**  
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## A Rare Afternoon

by Mary Lou Petersen, Davenport

Occasionally, never often, just frequently enough to give birders hope for each new day, you have a day such as I had on Wednesday, 16 September, 1998. I was at home washing windows from the inside of my house in the early afternoon. I noticed an Ovenbird, then an American Redstart, and then a Blue-headed Vireo. So began a most enjoyable and exciting afternoon during which I racked up forty species of birds seen in or from my yard, including eleven warbler species.

Immediately after spotting the Blue-headed Vireo, I went outside and turned up the water drip into my bird bath. The bath is made of limestone rocks and concrete and sits directly on the ground under a yew. The bath is visible from the living room picture window.

From about 3:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. sitting very comfortably in an easy chair with my binoculars (not needed to see the bird bath), I saw the following species use the bath: Black-capped Chickadee, Swainson's Thrush, American Robin, Blue-winged Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black and White Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Canada Warbler, and a Purple Finch. I also saw a Bay-breasted Warbler and a Bicknell's Thrush which did not bathe. All warblers except Blue-winged and Canada were seen in multiples of two to five at the bath.

Later in the early evening from my driveway, I saw a Scarlet Tanager eating cedar berries and a Least Flycatcher chasing insects from a dead branch on that same cedar tree. A number of migrating Common Nighthawks were seen high above the driveway. All in all it was a most satisfying day.







## Christmas Bird Counts

Fri.	Dec. 18	Lost Nation	Mark Roberts	319 / 847-7202
Sat.	Dec. 19	Cedar Rapids	Pete Wickham	319 / 363-6884
Sat.	Dec. 19	Ames	Dave Edwards	515 / 292-3790
Sat.	Dec. 19	Mason City	Rita Goranson	515 / 423-1699
Sat.	Dec. 19	Red Rock	Ann Johnson	515 / 961-2002
Sat.	Dec. 19	Bremer	Francis Moore	319 / 232-0217
Sat.	Dec. 19	Spencer	Doug Harr	712 / 477-2798
Sat.	Dec. 19	Rathbun	Bill Heusinkveld	515 / 856-2342
Sat.	Dec. 19	Cherokee	Dick Bierman	712 / 225-5552
Sat.	Dec. 19	Burlington	Chuck Fuller	319 / 753-0710
Sun.	Dec. 20	Waterloo	Francis Moore	319 / 232-0217
Sun.	Dec. 20	Davenport	Kelly McKay	309 / 755-6731
Sun.	Dec. 20	Saylorville	Steve Dinsmore	515 / 292-3152
Sun.	Dec. 20	Iowa City	Chris Edwards	319 / 626-6362
Mon.	Dec. 21	Princeton	Kelly McKay	309 / 755-6731
Mon.	Dec. 21	Keokuk	Bob Cecil	515 / 277-5709
Tues.	Dec. 22	New Boston, IL	Kelly McKay	309 / 626-6362
Tues.	Dec. 22	Jamaica	Ray Cummins	515 / 856-3518
Wed.	Dec. 23	Andalusia	Kelly McKay	309 / 626-6362
Sat.	Dec. 26	Clinton	Kelly McKay	309 / 626-6362
Sat.	Dec. 26	Decorah	Dennis Carter	319 / 382-3754
Sat.	Dec. 26	Sioux City	Bob Livermore	712 / 239-3954
Sun.	Dec. 27	Muscatine	Kelly McKay	309 / 626-6362
Mon.	Dec. 28	Yellow River	Darwin Koenig	712 / 448-3837
Tues.	Dec. 29	Clinton	Kelly McKay	309 / 626-6362
Tues.	Dec. 29	Shenandoah	Ross Silcock	712 / 629-5865
Tues.	Dec. 29	Savannah	Kelly McKay	309 / 626-6362
Wed.	Dec. 30	No. Linn	Weir Nelson	319 / 848-4846
Fri.	Jan. 1	Boone	Mark Widrlechner	515 / 233-1532
Sat.	Jan. 2	Grinnell	Bob VanErsvelde	515 / 236-6600
Sat.	Jan. 2	DeSoto NWR	Mindy Sheetz	712 / 642-4121
Sat.	Jan. 2	Des Moines	Dennis Thompson	515 / 254-0837
Sat.	Jan. 2	Dubuque	Charlie Winterwood	319 / 588-2783
Sun.	Jan. 3	Westfield	Larry Farmer	712 / 568-2940

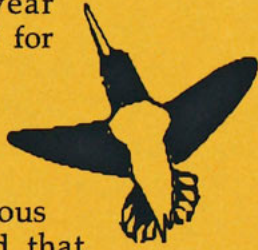




## Rare Bird Hosts

by Mark Proescholdt, Liscomb

The IOU Board approved a one year membership in the IOU for Don and Carol Stolz of Des Moines as a thank you for allowing many people into their backyard to view the gorgeous Amazilia Hummingbird that was coming to their hummingbird feeder.



## Recent Literature

These articles can be obtained from your local library. Ask them to order on interlibrary loan for you.

Patterson, M.P., and L.B. Best. 1996 Bird abundance and nesting success in Iowa CRP

Iowa Ornithologists' Union  
4024 Arkansas Drive  
Ames, IA 50014



fields: The importance of vegetation structure and composition. Amer. Midland Nat.: 135:153-167

Sabine, N. 1996. Bald eagles wintering along the Des Moines River, Iowa. J. Iowa Acad. Sci.: 103-29-33.

Stallman, H.R., and L.B. Best. 1996. Bird use of an experimental strip intercropping system in northeast Iowa. J. Wildl. Manage.: 60:321-331.

VanRees-Siewert, K.L., and J.J. Dinsmore. 1996. Influence of wetland age on bird use of restored wetlands in Iowa. Wetlands: 16:577-582.

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



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