

**IOWA BIRD LIFE**  
**IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**





## IOWA BIRD LIFE

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*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life and IOU News are quarterly publications of the Union.*

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# Letter from the Editor

*Stephen J. Dinsmore*

The editor of *Nebraska Bird Review*, Janis Paseka, once asked me if the editorship of *Iowa Bird Life* came with a “life” sentence. I assured her that would not be the case when I assumed the role in 2010. Now, after seven years as editor I have decided that a host of personal and work commitments have left me with too little time to invest in the journal. It is time for some new ideas and fresh faces. The publication of this issue marks my last as editor. I am honored to have followed in the steps of previous editors Fred Pierce (1931–1960), Peter C. Petersen (1961–1985), Thomas H. Kent (1986–1989), James J. Dinsmore (1990–1999), and Kayleen A. Niyo (2000–2009). I am likewise pleased introduce the new editor of *Iowa Bird Life*, Karen Viste-Sparkman. Karen will take the helm beginning with Volume 87 and I’m sure she will provide more information about her background and new ideas for the journal in her first issue. Welcome, Karen!

A journal like *Iowa Bird Life* requires a lot of work from many volunteers. This begins with the Iowa Ornithologists’ Union (IOU) Publications Committee. Ann M. Johnson, chair of the committee during my tenure as editor, deserves special thanks for coordinating the committee’s activities, which included the annual budget and other procedural activities. A big thank you to everyone who contributed regular material for the journal. This includes the field reports editors (Aaron Brees, James J. Dinsmore, Tyler M. Harms, Paul



Figure 1. Stephen J. Dinsmore and Lena E. Dinsmore, Runnells WA, Marion, 6 August 2017. Photograph by Kevin T. Murphy, Ames, IA.

Hertzell, Matt Kenne, and Francis L. Moore), who are tasked with vetting and summarizing hundreds of submissions to produce the thorough and insightful reports that appear in the journal. They also write or contribute to seasonal bird summaries that also appear in *North American Birds* in the Iowa-Missouri Region. Many thanks to Chris Caster for his thorough summary of the annual Christmas Bird Counts, complete with meticulous tables documenting the species, count effort, and weather data. Many others contributed articles or short notes about rarities, and I thank those individuals for their contributions. I am also grateful to officers of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union (IOU), especially the secretary, for summarizing bi-annual business and board meetings to be published in *Iowa Bird Life* as required by IOU by-laws. And I owe a big thank you to the regular photo contributors. By my count >50 individuals submitted one or more photos for consideration, although a smaller group of individuals contributed multiple images for almost every issue. This core group included Mark Brown, Larry Dau, Paul Roisen, James Scheib, and Richard S. Wacha. Their colorful images of Iowa's birds certainly brightened up the pages of *Iowa Bird Life*. Thank you! Lastly, I am indebted to James J. Dinsmore for his tireless work to compile the annual index for each issue, and for his critical review of each issue before it went to press. Having a second set of eyes check everything definitely helps to reduce the number of printed errors.

I also thank the core of technical experts who helped me publish each issue of *Iowa Bird Life*. Special thanks to Debbie Marshall of Marshall Desktop Publishing, Inc. in Evergreen, Colorado, for her design and layout services. She deserves credit for giving the journal an attractive and professional appearance, and I am truly grateful for her punctuality, attention to detail, and willingness to work with my busy and sometimes tight publication schedule. Judy Robinson and later Andy Gontar of Centennial Printing in Louisville, Colorado, printed every issue on or ahead of schedule. Connie and Bruce Chiddister at MailGraphics in Boulder, Colorado, then mailed the journal to IOU members and shipped extra copies to the IOU membership coordinator. Finally, I appreciate the help from Rich Beachler, a retired graphics specialist from Iowa State University, who provided the many excellent maps that were used in the journal. It was a pleasure to work with such a great team!

I am pleased to leave *Iowa Bird Life* in the capable hands of Karen Viste-Sparkman and a core of regular article contributors and photographers. I look forward to continuing to explore Iowa's varied habitats in search of birds, now that I have a little more free time! I'd also like to help mentor the next generation of Iowa birders (Figure 1), recognizing their future roles (I hope!) with the IOU and other bird-related activities in Iowa and beyond. Ciao.

1906 Leopold Drive, Ames, IA 50010 (cootjr@iastate.edu)

# Merlins nesting in eastern Iowa

*Brandon Caswell, Tom Schilke, and Stephen J. Dinsmore*

In this article we describe two separate nesting attempts by Merlins in Iowa in 2016. The nesting attempts were in Iowa City and Waterloo and both were successful. Below, we provide documentation for each nesting attempt, discuss previous nesting evidence for this species in Iowa, and suggest that the Merlin may soon become a regular breeder in ornamental conifers.

In early April 2016 Don McRoberts, a local Iowa City schoolteacher, notified birders that a pair of Merlin was nesting at the top of a large Norway spruce near his yard in Iowa City, Johnson County. Caswell followed up on this report on 12 April. When he arrived a male Merlin gave an alarm call, flew overhead, and perched nearby. Caswell quickly spotted the nesting tree and noticed a large stick nest about the size of a small circular laundry basket located ten feet below the apex of the tree. He could barely see what looked like down feathering at the edge of the nest. Eventually the female Merlin appeared and flew to the nest. During his brief observation the Merlins spent about 10 minutes chasing off a pair of American Crows. The Merlins had apparently commandeered the nest from the crows several days prior, but the crows had not yet relinquished rights to their nest. Shortly



*Figure 1. Merlin, Waterloo, Black Hawk, July 2016. Photograph by Bill Scheurman, Waterloo, IA.*

after the crow confrontation, the male Merlin chased off a Broad-winged Hawk, which was circling the area. The nest and territorial behavior strongly suggested that the Merlins were nesting at this site. On 18 June Caswell observed five large chicks in the nest and on 8 July found one lingering fledgling with both adults still present. Many local birders visited the nest site and confirmed that all five young apparently fledged successfully.

Amazingly, a second nesting attempt by Merlins in Iowa in 2016 was documented in Waterloo, Black Hawk County. After hearing a media report of the nesting Iowa City Merlins, a Prairie Rapids Audubon Society member, Linda Johnson, reported the possibility of Merlins nesting in her residential neighborhood in Waterloo. Merlins had been seen hunting from perches atop tall spruce and locust trees for several weeks in April and early May. During a follow-up visit in mid-May, Schilke observed a pair of Merlins near an old American Crow nest in a tall white pine. The location was the backyard of a residence just two houses away from busy Ridgeway Avenue. A visit with the home's owner confirmed the probability of a nesting attempt. He had been seeing the birds for weeks, watched them mate, and regularly saw them visit the nest in his back yard. He graciously granted permission, as did other neighbors, to observe the nest from their yards. Over the span of the next two months Schilke and other local birders followed the progress of the nest. The adults were undisturbed by their presence, but were quick to harass Turkey Vultures or any other raptor that invaded their air space. Oddly enough, a pair of Blue Jays successfully



Figure 2. Merlin, Iowa City, Johnson, 18 June 2016. Photograph by Brandon Caswell, Marion, IA.

fledged young from a tree almost directly below the Merlin nest! In mid-June, food was being brought to the nest by the adults. In early July the first downy heads of the chicks were visible. Three young successfully fledged and left the tree completely just a few days before the limb supporting the nest blew down in a storm on 16 July.

These nesting attempts represent the first confirmed nesting by Merlin in Iowa since 1908, and only the second and third nesting attempts overall. The previous nesting record was documented by George Berry east of Marion, Linn County, in 1908 (Kent and Dinsmore 1996). The timing of both of the 2016 nesting attempts was similar, with the Iowa City nest perhaps a week earlier. Incubation lasts about 30 days in the Merlin and young fledge about 29 days after hatching (Warkentin et al.



Figure 3. Merlin pair bringing food to nest, Waterloo, Black Hawk, 6 July 2016. Photograph by Tom Schilke, Waterloo, IA.

2005). However, the young remain near the nest and are fed by the adults for another 1-4 weeks after fledging (Warkentin et al. 2005). On the basis of this information nesting activity was probably underway by late March at both sites and eggs were probably laid by mid-April. That puts the hatch date sometime in mid-May and the fledging date in about mid-June. Observations of large young in and near each nest through early to mid-July reflect young birds lingering at the nest after fledging. A typical clutch size is 4 eggs (range 1-8) with generally high (>80%) overall nest success (Warkentin et al. 2005). Merlins also prefer to usurp old crow nests as a favored nesting site (Warkentin et al. 2005). Thus, the 2016 Iowa nesting attempts were typical of what can be expected in other regions where Merlins nest. We speculate that the Merlin may eventually become a regular nesting bird in Iowa on the basis of these nesting attempts and known southward breeding range expansions in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Birders should carefully watch any Merlin seen in Iowa after early April, especially those in urban areas near ornamental conifers, for evidence of nesting activity.

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640 Magnolia Ln, Unit 5, Marion, IA 52302-1258  
1432 Liberty Ave., Waterloo, IA, 50702-3434  
1906 Leopold Drive, Ames, IA 50010

# Field Reports—Summer 2016

*James J. Dinsmore*



*James J. Dinsmore*

Summer 2016 featured a fairly hot June and a wet July, but otherwise nothing that would make it stand out as unusual in the weather department. No new species or nesting species for Iowa were added this summer. Probably the biggest news was two Merlin nests, Iowa's first since 1908. This species has been expanding its range, and nesting in Iowa was long expected. Iowa's first nesting records of Ring-necked Duck since 1985 and Winter Wren since 1988 were also good finds.

## WEATHER

June was hot and relatively dry. Temperatures averaged 73.2 degrees, 3.5 degrees above normal, the 14th warmest June in 144 years of records, and the warmest June since 1991. This was especially evident during mid-June when above-average temperatures were recorded throughout Iowa every day from 9–20 June. The highest temperature was 100 degrees on 11 June at Little Sioux, the first three-digit temperature recorded in Iowa since September 2013. The run of 1,004 days without a triple-digit temperature was the second longest in Iowa history, the longest being 1,438 days from August 1991 to July 1995. The lowest temperature was 43 degrees in Belle Plaine, Elkader, and Grinnell on 8 June.

Rainfall in June averaged 3.69 inches, 1.33 inches below average and the 45th driest June on record. In general, northeastern Iowa was the wettest area of the state with rainfall totals twice the normal for the month. Cedar Falls was the wettest station with 11.22 inches of rain. By the end of June, much of south-central and southeastern Iowa was described as having moderate drought conditions and much of west-central, central, and southwestern Iowa was considered to be abnormally dry. There was little in the way of severe weather events. High winds passed through central and northern Iowa on the 14th, and high winds and hail on the 17<sup>th</sup> caused considerable damage in northwestern Iowa.

July temperatures averaged 73.0 degrees, 0.6 degrees below normal and the 50th coolest July on record. The first few days of July were cool with lows of 47 degrees at Cresco, Elkader, and Estherville the lowest of the month. Hotter-than-normal temperatures prevailed from 17–27 July with highs of 97 at Sioux. City on the 20th and at Sioux City, Lamoni, and Des Moines on the 21st. High temperatures combined with high humidity led to heat indices in excess of 110 daily from 20–23 July.



July rainfall averaged 6.13 inches, 1.63 inches above normal. It was the 16th wettest July in 144 years of records and the wettest July since 2010. The dry spell in late June continued into early July but rainfall increased greatly from 6–20 July with an average of 4.86 inches of rain, about double the average for that period. Rainfall totals were greatest in the southwestern quarter of the state and along the Minnesota border from Estherville eastward. Rainfall in the far northwest was about half of normal. The total rainfall for July ranged from 1.64 inches in Orange City to 12.37 in Red Oak. The latter was the second highest July total in 105 years of records. Severe thunderstorms were reported on 11 dates with one on the morning of 17 July the most widespread. On that date, a strong derecho brought high winds on a path across the entire state from Lyon County to Scott County.

## BIRDS OF SUMMER

### **Habitat Conditions**

Little has changed in habitat conditions since last year. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land covers about 1.7 million acres, similar to 2015 but down considerably from its peak in the 1990s. After some years of increases in forest land in Iowa, a slight decline has been detected in the past few years. With so little good forest cover in the state, almost any decline of such habitat is a concern.

Since last summer, two new Bird Conservation Areas have been dedicated. The most recent was the Loess Hills BCA, dedicated in June. Located in Monona and Harrison counties, the area encompasses some of the best examples of the loess hills landform in Iowa. It includes the Loess Hills Wildlife Area, Loess Hills State Forest, and Preparation Canyon State Park and covers some 94,000 acres, 19,000 of which are permanently protected. Much of the area is covered by woodlands, grasslands, or oak savannas and provides good habitat for species such as Red-headed Woodpecker, Bobolink, Orchard Oriole, and Grasshopper Sparrow. The other new BCA is the Lake Sugema/Lacey-Keosauqua BCA, which was dedicated in October 2015. Located in southeastern Iowa, it covers about 51,500 acres and includes Lake Sugema, Lacey-Keosauqua State Park, and adjacent areas. Much of the BCA is covered by grasslands or woodlands and provides good habitat for Northern Bobwhite, Henslow's Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark and other grassland species.

### **Breeding Species**

Easily the most interesting were two reports of Merlin nests. Other interesting nesting species were Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Red-necked Grebe, Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, Wilson's Phalarope, and Winter Wren. Spotted Towhees were found in the park where they nested in 2015 but no evidence of nesting was mentioned. I received more reports of Black-billed Cuckoo and Veery than in recent years, a welcome change.

Among other species, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, and Great Egret all had good years at the Clinton spoil islands. Ospreys nested at three new sites in central Iowa, and Peregrine Falcons also had a good year. Sandhill Cranes continued to do well, and Barn Owls had a very productive nesting season. Although Least Terns had a good year at the MidAmerican Energy plant near Council Bluffs, changes there will eventually eliminate nesting habitat at Iowa's most reliable Piping Plover and Least Tern nesting site.

## Range Changes

Several species continued range expansions in Iowa. Blue Grosbeaks continued to be found east of their historic western Iowa range with numerous reports in central Iowa and several in north-central Iowa close to the Minnesota border. In eastern Iowa, Blue Grosbeaks continued to be found in the Iowa City area and also in several nearby counties. Sandhill Cranes continued to expand their range westward across Iowa. Three other species, Northern Bobwhite, Northern Mockingbird, and Summer Tanager, seemed to have moved somewhat north with more reports than usual north of their regular southern Iowa range.

## Migrants

As is usual, spring migration extended into June for a few species. These included several shorebirds, Black Tern, Olive-sided, Yellow-bellied, and Alder flycatchers, Swainson's Thrush, Northern Waterthrush, Bay-breasted and Magnolia warblers, and White-throated Sparrow. Southbound migration began in mid-June with the arrival of several species of shorebirds which were soon followed by Black and Forster's terns, Ring-billed Gulls, American White Pelicans, and Double-crested Cormorants. The only early passerines reported were a Black-and-white and two Nashville warblers. Two species that fall more into the nomadic category, Red Crossbill and Pine Siskin, lingered into June. With at least 16 reports of Caspian Tern from early June through late July, one wonders how those sort out as late spring migrants, early fall migrants, or non-breeders.

Shorebirds, most of which are migrants, made a good showing this summer with 31 species including two Casual species. This matched the total for 2012 and was above the yearly average of 28 species for the past five years. Notable misses this summer were Black-necked Stilt (found the previous three years) and Ruddy Turnstone (found five of the past 10 years). Southbound migration seemed to start early this year with seven species (Hudsonian Godwit, Ruff, Sanderling, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Willet, and Red-necked Phalarope) found on record-early or near-record-early dates this summer. Big influxes of shorebirds were noted at Saylorville Reservoir on 6 July, Hawkeye Wildlife Area on 10–11 July and 18–19 July, and in Worth and Winnebago counties on 30 July.

## Unusual Species

This was a fairly poor summer for unusual birds. No Accidental species were reported and only three Casual species (King Rail, Snowy Plover, and Ruff) were found. Other unusual species found this summer were Ross's Goose, Red-necked Grebe, Eared Grebe, Western Sandpiper, Bonaparte's Gull, Little Blue Heron, Swainson's Hawk, Short-eared Owl, Merlin, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Red Crossbill, Northern Waterthrush, Nashville Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, and Spotted Towhee.

## SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Casual species, \* = documented. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: **ad** = adult, **BBS**

= breeding bird survey, **Croton** = Croton Unit, Shimek State Forest (ditto Donnellson, Farmington, and Lick Creek units), **F** = forest, **juv** = juvenile, **L** = lake, **L&D** = lock and dam, **M** = marsh, **m.ob.** = many ob-

servers, **NM** = national monument, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **P** = park, **ph** = photo, **Pre** = preserve, **R** = river, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **Sl** = slough, **SF** = state forest, **SP** = state park, **S Pre** = state preserve, **Upper Miss NWR** = Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge, **WPA** = waterfowl production area, **WA** = wildlife area, **yg** = young.

Key to maps: shading = species reported in county. In most cases, the species was probably nesting in the county although evidence was presented only in a few cases. For Sandhill Crane, the N indicates that nesting occurred in 2016.

**Snow Goose:** All: 3 on 1 Jun at Rapp P Page (POR), 4 on 3 Jun at Cone M Louisa (JF), 3 on 16 Jun at Otter Creek M Tama (JF), 2 on 20 Jul at West Branch Cedar (SJD), one 21, 22 Jul at Red Rock Res Marion (eBird), and one 31 Jul at L Macbride Johnson (eBird).

**Ross's Goose:** One 23 Jun near Ventura M Cerro Gordo (RG) had been present since spring. This species has been found six of the last 10 summers.

**Mute Swan:** All: one 9 Jun at L&D 14 Scott (eBird) and one subadult 11, 17 Jun at Bob Pyle M Story (SJD).

**Gadwall:** All: 12 on 7 Jun at Trumbull L Clay (eBird), one 8 Jun at Pintail Wetlands Hardin (MP), one 13 Jun in Emmet (DAk), 10 on 26 Jun at Pool Sl Allamakee (eBird), 2 on 11 Jul at Black Hawk SP Black Hawk (eBird), and one 29 Jul in Sac (DAk).

**American Wigeon:** All: 2 on 1 Jun in Plymouth (SJD), 2 on 7 Jun at Trumbull L Clay (LAS), and one 18 Jul at Ventura M Cerro Gordo (RAV-ph).

**Blue-winged Teal:** A brood 8 Jul at Anderson L Hamilton (SJD) was at the south edge of its Iowa nesting range.

**Northern Shoveler:** Broods were 19

Jun at Eagle Flats WA Hancock (SJD), 8 Jul at Anderson L Hamilton (SJD), 13 Jul nw of Spencer Clay (LAS), 18 Jul at Trumbull L Clay (DAk), and 29 Jul at Kiowa M Sac (DAk); the Hamilton record was at the southern edge of its Iowa nesting range. Other records include one or 2 from 1 Jun–8 Jul at Terry Trueblood RA Johnson (MHB, BCC) and 3 on 4 Jun at Jensen M Madison (AB).

**Northern Pintail:** Broods were found 19 Jun at Mud L Clay (eBird) and 24 Jun at Eagle Flats WA Hancock (SJD), the first reports of nesting since 2013 and for the fourth year in the last ten years. Other reports were a pair 9, 10 Jun at Blue L Monona (SJD) and a male 2 Jul at Trumbull L Clay (LAS).

**Green-winged Teal:** All: 3 on 10 Jun at Deere Dike Dubuque (eBird), one 16 Jun at Otter Creek M Tama (JF), one 26 Jun, 9 Jul at Trumbull L Clay (JDJ), 2 on 7 Jul at Hawkeye WA Johnson (JF), and one 9 Jul at Tomahawk M Sac (eBird).

**Canvasback:** All: one female 7 Jun, 2 Jul at Trumbull L Clay (LAS), 2 females 10 Jun at Blue L Monona (SJD), and 6 on 19 Jul at Pool 19 Lee (SJD).

**Redhead:** All: 5–7 on 5 Jun at Hendrickson M Story (AB, MP), 39 on 7 Jun at Mud L Clay and a brood there 29 Jun (LAS, JDJ), 32 on 18 Jun on Trumbull L Clay and 2 broods there 26 Jun (LAS, JDJ), 10 on 22 Jun at Union Hills WA Cerro Gordo (CJF), one male 23 Jun at Ringneck WA Grundy (DGE), and 2 on 29 Jun at Waubonsie Access Fremont (MP).

**Ring-necked Duck:** All: 3 on 5 Jun at Grovers L Dickinson (LAS), 2 on 5 Jun at Hendrickson M Story (AB), 2 on 18 Jun at Trumbull L Clay (LAS) and a female with 7 yg there 2 Jul (LAS, JDJ), which seems to be the first report of nesting in Iowa since 1985. Other reports were 2 males 8 Jun at

Upper Miss NWR *Jackson* (LGR), one 2 Jul at Cone M *Louisa* (JF), and one 13, 24 Jul at Ringneck WA *Grundy* (DGE).

**Lesser Scaup:** One or 2 were found in *Cerro Gordo*, *Clay*, *Dickinson*, *Iowa*, *Jackson*, *Johnson*, *Linn*, *Story*, and *Tama* (m.ob.). The most was 9 on 19 Jul at Pool 19 *Lee* (SJD).

**Hooded Merganser:** Broods were noted in *Cerro Gordo*, *Jackson*, *Johnson*, *Linn*, *Palo Alto*, *Polk*, *Tama*, and *Winneshiek* (m.ob.) with five broods 3 Jul at Chichaqua Bottoms *Polk* (BE) the most.

**Ruddy Duck:** Trumbull L *Clay* was the center of Ruddy Duck activity with 246 there 7 Jun (LAS, JDJ) and a brood on 9 Jul (LAS). The next largest group was 27 including a brood on 30 Jul at Crystal Hills WA *Hancock* (PH). Elsewhere, up to 8 were in *Hamilton*, *Hardin*, *Johnson*, *Linn*, *Louisa*, *Pocahontas*, *Story*, *Warren*, and *Worth* (m.ob.).

**Northern Bobwhite:** Several observers noted that quail were more widespread and numerous than in recent years. Reports came from 31 counties, mostly in the southern half of Iowa but north to *Woodbury* (m.ob., eBird). Totals on several BBS routes in early June were the highest they have been in recent years: e.g., 40 in *Appanoose* and *Davis* (TNJ), 53 in *Page* and *Fremont* (KVS), 30 in *Monroe*, *Lucas*, and *Appanoose* (TNJ), and 3 in *Boone* (JB).

**Gray Partridge:** Reports from *Dickinson*, *Hamilton*, *Howard*, *Kossuth*, *Sioux*, *Winnebago*, and *Worth* (m.ob.) were all in its expected north-central Iowa range. Two on 1, 8 Jul in *Polk* (AB, RLC) were south of where it is usually found as was a brood 27 Jul at Big Creek SP *Polk* (SJD). Two on 26 Jun in *Clayton* (PDBS) were east of its normal range.

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** The 35 found 3 Jun on a BBS route in *Appanoose* and *Davis* (TNJ), was a good count for southern Iowa.

**Ruffed Grouse:** Four on 18 Jun in *Clayton* (eBird) and one 30 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (RG) were rare summer reports.

**Greater Prairie-Chicken:** Forty birds from Nebraska were released near Kellerton *Ringgold* earlier this year. Almost 2000 acres of good prairie-chicken habitat are now protected in the Kellerton WA, and prairie-chickens seem to be doing well (Stephanie Shepherd, IDNR).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** High counts at Trumbull L *Clay* were 15 broods 26 Jun (LAS) and 190 birds 9 Jul (eBird). Birds were found in 25 counties, mostly in the northern half of Iowa (m.ob., eBird). One 23 Jun at Ringneck WA *Grundy* (DGE) and 2 on 1 Jul at Jensen M *Madison* (SB) were away from traditional summer sites.

**Red-necked Grebe:** Nesting was noted at two sites: at Trumbull L *Clay*, 8 ads on 1 Jun, 3 ads with 2 yg 7 Jun, 11 ads and 5 yg on 26 Jun, and 7 ads and 3 yg on 2 Jul (LAS) and at Big Wall L *Wright*, a nest on 5 Jun and 2 yg seen there later (RAV). Two ads were at Silver L *Worth* on 4 Jun (DP) and one was there 20 Jun (CJF). This species has nested in Iowa five of the last 10 years.

**Eared Grebe:** Most reports were from Trumbull L *Clay* with 19 on 1 Jun (LAS), 11 there 7 Jun (LAS, JDJ), 9 ads including a pair at a nest with 3 eggs 26 Jun (LAS, JDJ), 5 nests and 17 ads on 2 Jul (LAS, JDJ), and 2 ads on nest platforms 5 Jul (BCC) but no active nest 9 Jul (LAS). Other reports were 2 pairs 5 Jun at Grovers L *Dickinson* (LAS) and ca 10 nests and later several yg at Pickerel L *Buena Vista* (RAV-ph). These were the first nesting records in more than 10 years.

**Western Grebe:** Most reports were from Trumbull L *Clay* with 2 on 1 Jun (LAS), 2 ads with 2 yg and 3 other ads on

18 Jun (LAS, JDJ), 6 ads and 6 yg (2 broods) on 26 Jun (LAS, JDJ), and 11 ads and 10 yg 13 Jul (LAS, JDJ). Other reports were 2 on 7 Jun at Elk L *Clay* (LAS, JDJ) and one 8 Jun at South Twin L *Calhoun* (RAV).

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Reports from far northeastern Iowa where the species seems to be least common were 4 on 12 Jun in *Allamakee* (PDBS) and 5 on 7 Jul in Ridgeway *Winneshiek* (AB).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** It was a good year with reports from 50 counties scattered throughout Iowa (m.ob., eBird). Nearly all reports were of one or 2 birds; the 24 on 1 Jun on Huron Island *Des Moines* (KJM) probably included migrants.

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** With reports from 24 counties from throughout Iowa it was reported more frequently than in recent years. All reports were of one or 2 individuals (m.ob., eBird).

**Chuck-will's-widow:** All: 3 on 4 Jun at Stephens SF, Lucas Unit *Lucas* (DTh), 5 on 7 Jun at Stephens SF, Whitebreast Unit *Lucas* (RIA, PHA), one 17 Jun at Ross P *Fremont* (KVS), and 2 on 19 Jul near Stephens SF *Lucas* (SJD).

**Eastern Whip-poor-will:** All: 8 on 4 Jun at Stephens SF, Whitebreast and Lucas units *Lucas* (DTh), 2 on 5 Jun at Stone SP *Woodbury* (GLV), one 17 Jun at Ross P *Fremont* (KVS), one 21 Jun near Sparks Cemetery *Boone* (LGD), 3 on 26 Jun in *Appanoose* (AB), and singles in *Johnson*, *Decatur*, and two sites in *Monona* (eBird). Most: 13 on 18 Jun at Stephens SF, Whitebreast Unit *Lucas* (eBird).

**Chimney Swift:** A pair again nested in the historic Sherman swift tower in Bickett-Rate Pre *Cedar* (Linda and Robert Scarth).

**KING RAIL:** All: one 1, 2 Jun near Frazer's Bend *Fremont* (POR, eBird) (a carryover from late May, Harms 2016), one calling 2, 17, 18 Jul at Dewey's Pasture *Palo*

*Alto* (LAS, \*JN, DAK), one 24 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (\*DTh), and one 24 Jul at Big Wall L *Wright* (\*SJD).

**Virginia Rail:** All: one 2 Jun near Hamburg *Fremont* (eBird), up to 4 calling on 2, 5 Jul at Dewey's Pasture *Palo Alto* (LAS, BCC), 6 on 3 Jul at Silver L *Worth* (POR), one 18 Jul at Trumbull L *Palo Alto* (DAK), 3 on 23 Jul at Myre Sl *Winnebago* (BCC), and 8 on 25 Jul at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (eBird).

**Sora:** One observer heard Soras, mostly one or 2, at 11 sites in *Clay*, *Dickinson*, *Emmet*, *Palo Alto*, *Pocahontas*, and *Winnebago*; the most was 7 on 19 Jun at Jemmerston Sl *Dickinson* (RAV). Others were singles in *Emmet* (DAK), at Dewey's Pasture *Palo Alto* (LAS), near Ruthven *Palo Alto* (BCC), and at Pool Sl *Allamakee* (eBird).

**Common Gallinule:** Up to 6 were found 20 Jun–29 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS, RIA, PHA, BCC). Others were one 30 Jun at Sunken Grove WA *Pocahontas* (eBird), 2 on 16 Jul at Banner Flats WA *Warren* (AMJ), 8 on 16, 29 Jul at Green Island WA *Jackson* (KJM, SBH), one 22 Jul at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (DCH), and one or 2 in *Cerro Gordo*, *Clay*, *Dickinson*, *Pocahontas*, and *Winnebago* including a brood 27 Jul in *Winnebago* (RAV).

**American Coot:** As many as 370 coots were at Trumbull L *Clay* 7 Jun (eBird).

**Sandhill Crane:** Nesting was reported in 11 counties. Along the edges of its nesting range, 2 ads were seen with a colt 24 Jul at Dewey's Pasture *Palo Alto* (LAS), 2 ads with a colt 8 Jul at Anderson L *Hamilton* (SJD), a pair with 2 colts 17 May at Bob Pyle M *Story* (Nancy Johnson *vide* SJD), and an ad with a colt in early July at Riverton WA *Fremont* (Matt Dollison *vide* SJD). Elsewhere adults with one or 2 colts were found at Sweet M *Bremer* (DGE), near Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (CJF), near Dubuque (eBird), Iowa River Corridor *Iowa* (JF), Cone M

*Louisa* (JF), Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF), and near Northwood *Worth* (CJF). The record of nesting in Story County increases the number of counties with nesting records to 31. The largest post-breeding group was 11 on 23 Jul at Hendrickson M *Story* (HZ).

**American Avocet:** Most reports were from Hawkeye WA *Johnson* starting with one 19 Jun (JF), 2 from 6–13 Jul (JF, BCC), 17 on 18 Jul (JF), and 7 on 22 Jul (JF). Others were one 3 Jun at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (TNJ), 2 on 9, 10 Jun at Waubonsie Access WA *Fremont* (eBird), 3 on 16 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD), and 2 on 27 Jul in *Kossuth* (DAK).

**Black-bellied Plover:** All: 2 on 6, 9 Jun at Cone M *Louisa* (eBird) and one 8 Jun at Maskunkya M *Mahaska* (Bill Ohde).

**American Golden-Plover:** Last: 3 on 3 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF). First: 2 on 6 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and 4 on 9 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS, JDJ).

**SNOWY PLOVER:** One 1 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (JLF, JF) was first found in late May (Harms 2016) and is Iowa's second summer record.

**Semipalmated Plover:** Last: singles 1 Jun in *Clay* (LAS) and 7 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF). One 26 Jun nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS, JDJ) was either very early or summering. Next earliest was one 13 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC). Most: 6 on 18 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC).

**Piping Plover:** All: one 20 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF).

**Killdeer:** Post-breeding counts included 1926 on 6 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 230 on 13 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC), and 650 on 30 Jul in *Worth* (PH).

**Upland Sandpiper:** Numerous reports from 25 counties, mostly of one or 2 birds and from the northwestern half of Iowa. High counts were 17 on 22 Jul and 20 on 26 Jul at sod farms in *Dallas* and *Linn* (RIA,

*PHA*, JF), a favored habitat for pre-migratory groups.

**Hudsonian Godwit:** All: one 9, 10 Jun at Blue L *Monona* (SJD) ties the record latest date and 4 on 6 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF) were record early.

**Marbled Godwit:** All: one 26 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 2 on 18 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* and 15 there 19 Jul (JF).

**RUFF:** All: a Reeve on 6 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (\*SJD) was Iowa's fourth summer record and record earliest.

**Stilt Sandpiper:** One 1 Jun in *Plymouth* (SJD) and an injured bird 1 Jun at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (MHB) were the last spring birds. First: 7 nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS), 4 at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC), and 4 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC), all on 13 Jul. Most: 80 on 18 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC).

**Sanderling:** All: singles 1 Jun at Akron *Plymouth* (SJD), 4 Jun near Hawarden *Plymouth* (JDJ), 4 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB, record earliest), 14 Jul in *Clay* (DAK), 3 on 15 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), and 2 on 24 Jul at Hawk Valley WA *Clay* (LAS).

**Dunlin:** All: one 1 Jun nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS), 3 on 2 Jun at Cone M *Louisa* (eBird), one 3 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (eBird), 12 on 7 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF), and one 8 Jun at Maskunkya M *Mahaska* (Bill Ohde).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** First: one 13 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (eBird).

**Least Sandpiper:** Last: 70 on 1 Jun on sheetwater in *Clay* (LAS). First: 5 on 28 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC) and 10 on 29 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF). Most: 237 on 10 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB) and 650 on 21 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** Last: 2 on

22 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF). Most: 122 on 4 Jun w of Spencer *Clay* (LAS).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** All: one 14 Jul in *Clay* (DAk, ties second-earliest), 5 on 24 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS, JDJ), and 3 on 27 Jul in *Kossuth* (DAk).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** Last: one 6 Jun at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (BCC). One 16, 22 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (BSc, JF) may have been summering. First southbound: 6 on 2 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS) were the start of a strong migration including 121 on 18 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC), 400 on 21 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC), 2000 on 30 Jul in *Worth* (PH), and 250 on 30 Jul in *Winnebago* (PH).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** North-bound migrants dwindled from 81 on 1 Jun in *Clay* (LAS) and 32 on 5 Jun at Hendrickson M *Marshall* (MP) to 2 on 12 Jun at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (BCC). First: 3 on 4 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB) and one 5 Jul in *Clay* (BCC). Most: 70 on 24 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (eBird).

**Western Sandpiper:** All: 4 ads 12 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* and one or 2 there 13–17 Jul (JF, BCC-details), one 14 Jul in *Clay* (DAk-details), and one or 2 on 13, 24, 29 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS, JDJ-details). This migrant has been found in four of the last five summers.

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** First: one 28 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC, second earliest), one 30 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF), one 2 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS), and 2 on 2 Jul at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). Most: 12 on 6 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF).

**Wilson's Snipe:** All: one 25 Jun at Union Slough NWR *Kossuth* (eBird), 2 on 26 Jun nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS), one 21 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC), one 27 Jul in *Kossuth* (DAk), one 30 Jul in a flooded field in *Worth* (PH), and one 31 Jul at Aldo Leopold WA *Bremer* (eBird).

**American Woodcock:** More reports than most summers: 2 on 1 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Benton* (JF), one 28 Jun at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (JDJ), 2 on 30 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (PDBS), one 1 Jul in *Lucas* (BCC), and one 23 Jul at Gitchie Manitou S Pre *Lyon* (DAk).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** Nesting reports were an ad with 3 yg 27 Jun at Tingley *Ringgold* (fide Jeffrey Livingston) and 2 ads and 2 fledglings 31 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** First: 3 on 30 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF) and 3 on 2 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS, JDJ). Most: 7 on 7 Jul in *Black Hawk* (eBird) and 7 on 14 Jul in *Clay* (DAk).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** Last: one 1 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF). Singles 27 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JB, AB) and Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF) were the first southbound birds and 13 on 14 Jul in *Clay* (DAk) were the most.

**Willet:** Southbound birds were one 20 Jun at Virgin L *Palo Alto* (RAV, third earliest), 6 on 26 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 7 on 6 Jul, 5 on 12 Jul, and one 14 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), and one 13 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS, JDJ).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** Last: one 1 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF) and 2 on 9 Jun at Cone M *Louisa* (eBird). One 22 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF) was injured but one there 27 Jun (JF) and 5 on 26 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) were southbound. The 45 on 2 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS) was the first migrant flock reported. Numerous flocks were reported in July with 1200 on 30 Jul in *Worth* (PH) the most.

**Wilson's Phalarope:** More reports than usual: 9 on 1 Jun in *Plymouth* (SJD), 2 on 3 Jun near Ames *Story* (HZ), 6 on 9, 10 Jun near Blue L *Monona* (SJD) were courting, one female 18 Jun and 2 males and a

juv 9 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS, JJu), one ad and one juv 19 Jun at Dairy ponds *Woodbury* (eBird), 2 males 20 Jun at Plover WPA *Pocahontas* acted like they were near a nest or brood (Erich Gilbert *fide* SJD), and one 13–17 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC, JF).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** All: a female 9, 14 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS, DAK) was record earliest.

**Bonaparte's Gull:** All: a juv 21, 22 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC, JF) and an ad (basic) and a juv 27, 30 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JF, SJD) were Iowa's seventh and eighth summer records in the past 10 years, all but one in the last half of July.

**Franklin's Gull:** Late northbound flocks were 14 on 5 Jun near Percival *Fremont* (eBird) and 19 on 7 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (JDJ). One or 2 were found 10 Jun–1 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF), Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB, JB, RLC), and Hendrickson M *Story* (HZ). Early flocks were 240 on 5 Jul at Little Swan L *Dickinson* (eBird) and 85–89 on 5, 9 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (BCC, LAS).

**Ring-billed Gull:** As usual, a few were scattered across Iowa in June and early July. Numerous reports in the Great Lakes region such as 57 on 12 Jul in *Dickinson* (DAK) and 100 on 30 Jul at Upper Miss NWR *Jackson* (eBird) may have included birds from nearby colonies as well as migrants. The 65 on 13 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC) and 60 on 30 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (eBird) probably were southbound.

**Least Tern:** The nesting colony at MidAmerican Ponds *Pottawattamie* was active with 6 nests and 11 eggs 2 Jun (POR), 24 ads and 5 nests 10 Jun (SJD), 7 nests 28 Jun (JDJ), and 4 birds 11 Jul (BSc, LGR). Elsewhere singles were at Blue L *Monona* 10 Jun (SJD), Saylorville Res *Polk* 27 Jun, 6, 31 Jul (JB, AB, SJD), and 7 Jul at Co-

peland Bend WA *Fremont* (Ryan Ubias *fide* SJD).

**Caspian Tern:** More reports than usual: one 3 Jun, 3 on 17, 20 Jun, and 2 on 12 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF), one 11 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (JF), one 27 Jun, 4 Jul and 5 on 18 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB, RLC), 2 on 28 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (MP), 7 on 30 Jun at Red Rock Res *Marion* (JF) and one there 16 Jul (SJD), 2 on 4 Jul and one 28 Jul at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO, AB), one 19 Jul at Pool 19 *Lee* (SJD), 6 on 24 Jul at Rock Creek SP *Jasper* (AB), one 25 Jul at Sweet M *Bremer* (DGE), and 5 on 26 Jul at Harper Sl *Allamakee* (eBird).

**Black Tern:** Late northbound stragglers included singles 2 Jun at Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (MHB) and 7 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (BCC), likely the 17 on 1 Jun at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS), and numerous birds 7 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS). The 63 on 13 Jul nw of Spencer *Clay* (JDJ) and singles 10 Jul at Prairie Lakes P *Black Hawk* (DGE), 13 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC), and 3 on 19 Jul at Pool 19 *Lee* (SJD) were clearly southbound.

**Common Tern:** All: singles 5 Jun near Little Swan L *Dickinson* (LAS), 5 Jun at Hendrickson M *Story* (MP), 20 Jun nw of Spencer *Clay* (LAS), and 24 Jul at McIntosh Woods SP *Cerro Gordo* (BVL).

**Forster's Tern:** Birds were present throughout the period at Trumbull L *Clay* with a pair there 7 Jun (LAS) and 7 ads and 3 fledglings being fed by ads 9 Jul (LAS). A pair was seen building a nest platform 7 Jun at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS). Southbound birds included 9 on 14 Jul at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and 18 on 18 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (RLC).

**Common Loon:** All: 2 on 1, 3, 21 Jun at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (JF, eBird) and one there 7 Jun, 15 Jul (BCC), and 4 (basic) on 18 Jun on Spirit L *Dickinson* (LAS, JDJ).



**Double-crested Cormorant:** The *Clinton* spoil island colony had 704 ads, 644 nests, and 1218 yg on 8 Jun (Brian Stemper *fide* SJD) and the colony at High L *Emmet* had 100 birds 1 Jun (eBird). Many other reports with 50 on 4 Jun in *Scott* (eBird) and 34 on 9 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (eBird) the most.

**American White Pelican:** The *Clinton* spoil island colony had 941 ads, 503 nests, and 1170 yg on 8 Jun (Brian Stemper *fide* SJD). The usual midsummer flocks included 20 on 11 Jun at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC) and 60 on 13 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DTh). Flocks of 2000 on 16 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE) and 350 on 21 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (BCC) indicated fall migration was underway.

**American Bittern:** All: singles 4 Jun at Oak Grove P *Sioux* (JDJ), 20 Jun at Northern Prairie WA *Worth* (CJF), 21 Jun at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (RG), 30 Jul at Rice Lake SP *Worth* (PH), and one several times 20 Jun–24 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS).

**Least Bittern:** Birds were found throughout the summer at Trumbull L *Clay* with 11 on 9 Jul (JDJ) the most. One was at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* 18 Jul (BVL, RG).

**Great Egret:** The *Clinton* spoil island colony had 80 ads, 108 nests, and 236 yg on 8 Jun (Brian Stemper *fide* SJD), much lower totals than in 2015. High counts were 25 on 3 Jun at Waubonsie Access WA *Fremont* (POR), 75 on 16 Jul at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (eBird), 69 on 23 Jul at Upper Miss NWR *Jackson* (eBird), and 59 on 29 Jul at Green Island WA *Jackson* (KJM, SBH).

**Little Blue Heron:** All: 3 on 3 Jun at Waubonsie Access WA *Fremont* (POR).

**Cattle Egret:** All: one 2 Jun at Lake Darling SP *Washington* (eBird), 56 on 3 Jun at Waubonsie Access WA *Fremont* (POR), one 10 Jun at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (SJD), and one 11 Jun at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (eBird).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** All: one 2 Jun at Elk L *Clay* (RAV), one 9 Jun near L&D 14 *Scott* (eBird), one 6 Jul near Sheffield *Franklin* (BEh), 6 on 13 Jul at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (RAV), and one 21 Jul at Cedar L *Linn* (JF).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** All: 2 on 18 Jun at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (TNJ), 2 there on 23 Jun (RIA, PHA), 2 ads there 26 Jun (AB), and one ad 19 Jul (SJD). Elsewhere an ad was at the South Skunk River WA *Jasper* 18 Jun (SJD) and a juv was at Aldo Leopold WA *Bremer* 30 Jul (BCC).

**Plegadis** sp.: All: a dark ibis 1 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS) and 7 on 7 Jun at Frazier's Bend *Fremont* (eBird) were seen briefly and probably were White-faced Ibis.

**Osprey:** This year 22 of 24 active nests were successful and produced 41 young. New nests were two in *Polk* and one each in *Jasper* and *Dickinson*. *Polk* had seven active nests and *Dickinson* had three. Since 2003, 241 young Osprey have been produced in 135 successful nests (PSc). Five young Ospreys from Minnesota were released in late July at Clear Lake and in *Carroll*.

**Mississippi Kite:** Reports from West Des Moines *Polk* were 2 on 6 Jun (DTh, RIA, PHA), one 10 Jun (DAK), and 3 on 28 Jun (AB). Reports in Ottumwa *Wapello* were singles 7, 23 Jun, 1 Jul (BSc, LGR, MP, BCC) and 2 on 18 Jun (TNJ).

**Northern Harrier:** All: singles 13 Jun in *Emmet* (DAK), 2 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS), 24 Jul at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD), and 26 Jul north of Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (RG).

**Cooper's Hawk:** Evidence of nesting included a pair 21 Jun west of Carroll (DCH) and a nest with 2 yg 1 Jul in *Urbandale Polk* (BE).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** Reports included one 5 Jun at Kettleson Hogsback WA *Dickinson* (LAS), 2 on 18 Jun at Donnellson

Unit *Lee* (CRE), one 18 Jun–17 Jul at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (TNJ, RHA, PHA, AB, BCC) and 2 ads and one yg there 19 Jul (SJD), one 24 Jun Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (MP), one 24 Jun at Lick Creek Unit *Lee* (MP), 2 juv 19 Jul at Big Woods L *Black Hawk* (DGE), and 2 on 21 Jul at Hartman Reserve *Black Hawk* (eBird).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** Reports included singles 2 Jun at Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (JDJ), 3 Jun at Yellow Banks P *Polk* (AB), 4 Jun and 29 Jul (a juv) at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB, DTh), 5 Jun at Christopherson Sl *Dickinson* (LAS), 2 on 5 Jun over Sioux City *Woodbury* (POR), 18, 24 Jun at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (CRE, MP), 23 Jun at Ottumwa *Wapello* (MP), 24 Jul at Bacon Creek P *Woodbury* (GLV), and 24 Jul at Margo Frankel Woods *Polk* (AB).

**Swainson's Hawk:** All: singles 4 Jun near Spencer *Clay* (LAS), 12 Jun near Algona *Kossuth* (MCK), and 14 Jul in *Clay* (DAk). Although this species has been found in six of the last seven summers, there are no recent reports of nesting.

**Barn Owl:** Birds were found in 23 counties, the most ever. Nesting attempts were reported from 16 sites in 13 counties, mostly in southern Iowa but north to *Franklin* and *Sioux*. At least 29 young fledged, the most in recent years (BEh).

**Short-eared Owl:** One seen 8 Jun, in late June, and 20 Jul at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (fide KVS) was the first summer report since 2012 and the third summer report in the last 10 years.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker:** Many were reported from throughout Iowa but none from *Lyon*, *O'Brien*, or *Osceola* in the northwestern corner of the state (eBird).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** As usual most reports were from the northern third of Iowa: a pair at nest with 2 yg at Waterman Creek Valley *O'Brien* (LAS), singles in

*Cherokee* (DBi), Oak Grove P *Sioux* (MP), Trumbull L *Clay* (DAk), 2 in *Cerro Gordo* (BVL), 3 at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (RG), and 8 at Effigy Mounds NM *Allamakee* (DK). Further south along the Mississippi R, one or 2 were found at Green Island WA, Pleasant Creek, and as many as 10 including 3 juv in Upper Miss NWR, all in *Jackson* (KJM).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Up to 4 were found in 31 counties mainly in the eastern half of Iowa (m.ob.). Outliers were singles 1 Jun at Stone SP *Woodbury* (SJD), 2 Jun at Fort Defiance SP *Emmet* (eBird), and 29 Jul at Wanata SP *Clay* (LAS).

**Merlin:** A historic year with Iowa's first nests since 1908. Two downy yg were seen 18 Jun at a nest in Iowa City *Johnson* (BCC) and 5 yg were seen out of the nest 30 Jun (Jean Allgood-ph). At a nest found in late May in Waterloo *Black Hawk* (TSS), both ads were seen taking food to yg on 19 Jun (DGE) and 3 yg had fledged by 12 Jul (TSS). See article in this issue.

**Peregrine Falcon:** This year, 14 of 18 nests were successful and produced 36 yg. The totals for 2015 were 14 nests and 35 yg (PSc).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** Singles 2 Jun in Lake City *Calhoun* (eBird) and 16 Jun on Comet Trail *Grundy* (MP-details, ties record latest) were the only reports.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** Last: 2 on 4 Jun at Amana Woods *Iowa* (JF), one 5 Jun at Woodman Hollow S Pre *Webster* (MCK), and one 18 Jun at Oak Grove P *Sioux* (DAk-details, record latest).

**Acadian Flycatcher:** Up to 5 were found in 24 counties mainly in the eastern half of Iowa (m.ob., eBird) with an outlier 9 Jul at Auburn *Sac* (eBird). The most was 15 on 28 Jul at Palisade-Kepler SP *Linn* (BCC).

**Alder Flycatcher:** Last: one 8 Jun near Perry *Dallas* (JB), one singing 13 Jun at



*Eared Grebe nest, Pickerel L, Buena Vista, 21 June 2016. Photograph by Rachel A. Vanausdall, Ames, IA.*



*Great Crested Flycatcher, Port Louisa NWR, Louisa, 9 June 2016. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*



*Willets, Saylorville Res, Polk, 26 June 2016. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Stilt Sandpiper, Hawkeye WA, Johnson, 16 July 2016. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*



*White-eyed Vireo, Saylorville Res, Polk, 27 July 2016. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Tree Swallows*, Polk, 27 June 2016. Photograph by Richard S. Wacha, Des Moines, IA.



*Northern Mockingbird*, Jester P, Polk, 14 June 2016. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



*Sedge Wren*, Boone, 23 July 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.



*Leucistic American Robin*, North Liberty, Johnson, 4 July 2016. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.



*Nashville Warbler*, Big Creek SP, Polk, 27 July 2016. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



*Yellow Warbler, Boone, 19 June 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*American Redstart, Boone, 19 June 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Yellow-breasted Chat, Lake Sugema WA, Van Buren, 3 June 2016. Photograph by Bill Ohde, Columbus, IA.*



*Field Sparrow, Little Cedar WA, Floyd, 26 June 2016. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*



*Lark Sparrow, Saylorville Res, Polk, 15 July 2016. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Grasshopper Sparrow, Boone, 26 June 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Blue Grosbeak, Waterworks Prairie P, Johnson, 25 July 2016. Photograph by Brandon Caswell, Marion, IA.*



*Orchard Oriole, Boone, 19 June 2016. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

Rockford Fossil P *Floyd* (TSS), and one 18 Jun in Oak Grove P *Sioux* (DAK).

**Willow Flycatcher:** Reported in 38 counties, mainly in the northern two thirds of the state. There were few reports from the southern third of Iowa and only singles in *Fremont* and *Ringgold* from Missouri-border counties (m.ob., eBird).

**Least Flycatcher:** Late migrants were singles 5 Jun at Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* and Hawarden *Sioux* (eBird), and one 6 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). One 18 Jul at Trumbull L *Clay* (DAK) was likely an early fall migrant. Singles 7 Jun in *Winneshiek* and 17 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (PDBS) were probably nesting, and one 18 Jun at Kettleson Hogsback WA *Dickinson* (LAS) may have been nesting or a late migrant.

**Western Kingbird:** Western Iowa reports were from *Dickinson*, *Fremont*, *Harrison*, *Lyon Plymouth*, *Pottawattamie* and *Woodbury* (m.ob., eBird). East of there, reports were of one 21 Jun near Jefferson *Greene* (DCH), 2 on 27 Jul in *Story* (eBird), and several from their local stronghold in *Polk* (eBird).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** Besides a family group of 5 on 21 Jul in *Adair* (DAK) and 5 on 18 Jun on a BBS route in *Page* (KVS), 1–3 were found in *Adair*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Dickinson*, *Iowa*, *Keokuk*, *Louisa*, *Madison*, *Marion*, and *Ringgold* (m.ob., eBird).

**White-eyed Vireo:** Other than one 27 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD-ph), all were in southeastern Iowa: one 10 Jun and 2 on 18 Jun at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (DTh, CRE), 2 on 18 Jun at Croton Unit *Lee* and one there 24 Jun (CRE, SJD, MP), one 18 Jun and 2 on 23 Jun at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (TNJ, RIA, PHA), one 5 Jul at Port Louisa NWR *Louisa* (eBird), one 10, 23 Jul in *Scott* (eBird), and one 16 Jul at Kent P *Johnson* (MHB, CRE).

**Bell's Vireo:** Up to 5 in 25 counties scattered throughout Iowa (m.ob.).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** Found in more than 40 counties scattered throughout the state (m.ob., eBird).

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** Most: 87 on 29 Jul at Pleasant Creek *Jackson* (KJM, SBH).

**Bank Swallow:** Most: 200 on 8 Jun at a colony in *Woodbury* (GLV).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** All: one 24 Jun at Macbride Nat Rec A *Johnson* (eBird). Reported in seven of the last 10 summers, this was the first summer report since 2013.

**Brown Creeper:** Singles 8 Jul in *Mystic Appanoose* (TNJ) and 9 Jul at Goranson Access *Cerro Gordo* (BVL) were both in unexpected areas for midsummer. The 5 on 1 Jun on Huron Island *Des Moines* (KJM) and one 16 Jul at Upper Miss NWR *Jackson* (KJM) and singles in *Allamakee*, *Dubuque* and *Scott* (eBird) were in areas where it probably nests, and singles in *Woodbury* and *Pottawattamie* (eBird) suggest other places where nesting may occur. These were the first summer reports since 2013.

**Winter Wren:** An ad with 2 recently fledged yg 19 Jun in Beam Woods *Jones* (CRE) represents Iowa's first documented nesting since 1988.

**Sedge Wren:** Up to 8 were in 35 counties, mostly in the northern two-thirds of the state (m.ob. eBird). The only reports from Missouri-border counties were one 2 Jun in *Fremont* and several from 12–30 Jul in *Ringgold* (eBird). The most was 15 on 29 Jul in *Sac* (DAK).

**Marsh Wren:** Most reports were from northern Iowa, especially from the Prairie Pothole region and along the Mississippi R (m.ob., eBird). The southernmost reports were 2 on 2 Jun near Hamburg *Fremont* and 12 on 7 Jun at Frazier's Bend *Fremont* (eBird).

**Carolina Wren:** Reported from 23 counties, more than usual. Most were in the southern half of Iowa but outliers were singles 29 Jun along the Upper Iowa R *Wineshick* (eBird) and 3 Jul at Five Ridge Prairie *Plymouth* (eBird).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Uncommon in the northwestern quarter of Iowa, reports from sites such as High L *Emmet*, Sunken Grove WA *Pocahontas*, Oak Grove P *Sioux*, and Five Ridge Prairie S Pre *Plymouth* (eBird) indicate scattered populations in that region.

**Veery:** More reports than most years. Besides 2 ads and 1 yg 27 Jun at Brush Creek Canyon S Pre *Fayette* (PDBS), up to 4 were at Amana Woods *Iowa* (JF), Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* and *Winnebago* (PH, RG), Beam Woods *Jones* (CRE), Sny Magill WA *Clayton* (PDBS), Backbone SP *Delaware* (DGE), Deere Dike *Dubuque* (eBird), Port Louisa NWR *Louisa* (eBird), and Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (eBird). One 2 Jun in Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (JDJ) was outside its usual Iowa range.

**Swainson's Thrush:** Late migrants were singles 1 Jun at Stone SP *Woodbury* (SJD), 2 Jun at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH), and 2 on 4 Jun at Grammar Grove P *Marshall* (MP).

**Wood Thrush:** Mostly one or 2 in more than 40 counties scattered throughout Iowa (m.ob., eBird). Most: 5 on 3 Jun at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH) and 5 on 23 Jun at Gitchie Manitou S Pre *Lyon* (DAK)

**Northern Mockingbird:** Up to 5 were found in 11 counties in the southern third of Iowa (DAK, TNJ, JLF, JF, KVS, eBird) where it is rare but regular in summer. Further north, where it is less expected, one or 2 were found in *Audubon*, *Dallas*, *Iowa*, *Johnson*, and *Scott* (DAK, JLF, JF, eBird), and several observers found it at Saylorville Res *Polk* (m.ob.) including 2 ads and a juv there

22 Jul (RIA, PHA). Most surprising was one 30 Jul at Hanlontown Sl *Worth* (PH) near the Minnesota border.

**Cedar Waxwing:** Found statewide: mostly one or 2 birds but occasionally flocks of 10–15 birds (e.g., 15 on 2 Jun at Fort Defiance SP *Emmet*) were found (m.ob., eBird). A flock of 105 birds 1 Jun in Polk City *Polk* (AB) was unusually large for this date.

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** Reported in 11 counties, all within its established range in eastern Iowa (eBird, m.ob.). One 16 Jun at Otter Creek M *Tama* (LGR, BSc) and one 26 Jul in rural *Monroe* (eBird) were near the edge of its range.

**Red Crossbill:** All: 3 on 3 Jun at Cherokee *Cherokee* (DBi) were the last of continuing birds seen in May (Harms 2016). This was the first summer report for this species since 2013.

**Pine Siskin:** All: 8 from 1–5 Jun in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (PH), 4 from 1–12 Jun in *Cerro Gordo* (BVL), 2 on 3 Jun at Cherokee *Cherokee* (DBi), one 8 Jun in *Sac* (EB), and 2 on 18 Jun in Davenport *Scott* (WZ). These was the first summer reports for siskins since 2013.

**Ovenbird:** Most reports were in the eastern half of Iowa (m.ob., eBird) with outliers at Dorothy Pecaut Nat Center *Woodbury* and Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (eBird). Most: 10 on 18 Jun at Yellow River F *Alламаке* (eBird).

**Worm-eating Warbler:** All: one 19 Jul at Croton Unit *Lee* (SJD).

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** All: One or 2 were found in *Appanoose*, *Clayton*, *Iowa*, *Jackson*, *Johnson*, *Jones*, *Lee*, *Linn*, *Monroe*, *Muscatine*, and *Van Buren* in eastern Iowa (m.ob., eBird). One 18 Jul in the Glenwood Archaeological S Pre *Mills* (eBird) was the only western Iowa report.

**Northern Waterthrush:** One 3 Jun at



Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (JF) was the third latest record.

**Blue-winged Warbler:** All: 4 on 18 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (MP), 3 on 20 Jun at Sny Magill WA *Clayton* (PDBS), and singles at Pleasant Creek RA *Linn* (BCC), Matsell Bridge Natural A *Linn* (MP), Pikes Peak SP *Clayton*, Croton Unit *Lee*, Stephens SF, Whitebreast Unit *Lucas*, and Terry Trueblood RA *Johnson* (eBird).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** All: one 16 Jul at Upper Miss NWR *Jackson* (KJM). This species has been found in Iowa in eight of the last 10 summers and has nested several times.

**Prothonotary Warbler:** Up to 4 were found in *Allamakee*, *Appanoose*, *Black Hawk*, *Clayton*, *Jackson*, *Johnson*, *Jones*, *Louisa*, *Polk*, and *Scott*, all along the Mississippi R or its major tributaries. Reports away from there were singles at Brenton SI *Dallas* (eBird), Pine Lake SP *Hardin* (MP), and an ad and 2 yg on 22 Jul at Iowa Lakeside Lab *Dickinson* (NB, eBird). Most: 35 on 1 Jun at Huron Island *Des Moines* and 15 on 2 Jun at Pleasant Creek *Jackson* (KJM).

**Nashville Warbler:** All: an ad and a juv on 27 Jul at Big Creek SP *Polk* (SJD-ph) tied the second earliest record.

**Kentucky Warbler:** Up to 4 were found in *Allamakee*, *Appanoose*, *Iowa*, *Jackson*, *Johnson*, *Jones*, *Lee*, *Muscatine*, *Scott*, and *Van Buren* (m.ob., eBird). Most: 7 on 9 Jun in Yellow River F *Allamakee* (DK). One in Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (eBird) was the only report from western Iowa.

**Hooded Warbler:** All: one 10 Jun at Farmington Unit *Van Buren* (DTh) and one 18 Jun at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (CRE).

**American Redstart:** This common woodland species was reported from more than 40 counties (m.ob., eBird). Most: 42 on 1 Jun at Pleasant Creek *Jackson* (KJM) and 16 on 16 Jun at Pikes Peak SP *Clayton* (eBird).

**Cerulean Warbler:** Up to 4 were found in *Allamakee*, *Clayton*, *Jackson*, *Johnson*, *Jones*, *Louisa*, and *Van Buren* (m.ob., eBird). Most: up to 10 on 18 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (MP, eBird).

**Northern Parula:** Besides 2 ads feeding a nestling 10 Jul at Pammel SP *Madison* (SB), up to 7 were found in *Appanoose*, *Boone*, *Clinton*, *Des Moines*, *Johnson*, *Jones*, *Lee*, *Linn*, *Louisa*, *Muscatine*, *Polk*, *Story*, and *Van Buren* (m.ob., eBird), all in roughly the southeastern quarter of Iowa. Outliers were singles at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH) and Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (JDJ).

**Magnolia Warbler:** One 2 Jun at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (PH) was Iowa's first summer report since 2012.

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** All: one 2 Jun at Pleasant Creek *Jackson* (KJM) was Iowa's third summer record and the second latest.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** All: late migrants were singles 2 Jun at Pleasant Creek *Jackson* (KJM), 2 Jun in Marion *Linn* (Jim Durbin-ph), and 8 Jun at Lake Iowa P *Iowa* (Billy Reiter-Marolf). Two singing males 8 Jun at Yellow River F *Allamakee* (DK) were suggestive of nesting birds. Similar observations were made at that location yearly from 2007-2011.

**Pine Warbler:** All: a late migrant 2 Jun in Lake City *Calhoun* (Frederick Ruckersfeldt-ph), and singles 18, 24 Jun at Donnellson Unit *Lee* (CRE, MP), 4 Jul at Cihra Fen Pre *Johnson* (eBird), and 19 Jul at Farmington Unit *Van Buren* (SJD).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** From 1-3 in *Allamakee*, *Black Hawk*, *Boone*, *Clayton*, *Johnson*, *Lee*, *Linn*, *Muscatine*, *Polk*, or *Van Buren* (m.ob., eBird), all along or near the Mississippi R or its major tributaries.

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Mostly one or 2 in *Appanoose*, *Benton*, *Black Hawk*, *Dubuque*, *Jasper*, *Johnson*, *Lee*, *Tama*, and *Van Buren* (m.ob., eBird), all in the south-

eastern quarter of Iowa. Most: 5 on 26, 30 Jun at Sedan Bottoms *Van Buren* (AB, eBird).

**Spotted Towhee:** All: 3 males and a female 11 Jun (JDJ), 3 on 18 Jun (DAK), and one or 2 on 28 Jun at Oak Grove P *Sioux* (RIA, PHA, MP) where the species nested in 2015. Other reports were one heard 18 Jun along Butcher Rd *Plymouth* (DAK) and 2 heard and one seen 23 Jul at Gitchie-Manitou S Pre *Lyon* (DAK).

**Eastern Towhee:** With reports from more than 40 counties, this species was found statewide (m.ob., eBird). Reports included 6 on 11 Jun and one 18 Jun at Oak Grove P *Sioux* (JDJ, DAK), 2 on 18 Jun in *Plymouth* (DAK), and 4 on 23 Jul at Gitchie Manitou S Pre *Lyon* (DAK), all at sites where Spotted Towhees were reported. It would be interesting to have detailed information on towhees from these sites to see if interbreeding is occurring.

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** All reports were from the northern two rows of counties with several reports from *Clay*, *Dickinson*, and *Palo Alto* (LAS, JN, POR, eBird) where it seems to be established. Reports west of there were singles 8 Jul near Peterson *O'Brien* (eBird) and 23 Jul at Gitchie Manitou S Pre *Lyon* (DAK). To the east, reports were of up to 4 on 2 Jun at Union Hills WA *Cerro Gordo* (RG, BVL), 3 on 26 Jun at Little Cedar WA *Floyd* (MHB), and 2 on 7 Jul at Hayden Prairie S Pre *Howard* (AB). Most: 8 on 5 Jul at Little Swan L *Dickinson* (eBird) and 23 Jul at Diamond Lake WA *Dickinson* (JN).

**Lark Sparrow:** Birds were found in 27 counties scattered across Iowa (m.ob., eBird). Most: 8 on 17 Jun at Sauk Rail Trail *Carroll* (eBird) and 24 Jul at Freda Haffner Kettlehole S Pre *Dickinson* (eBird).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** Many reports, mostly of 1–3 birds, from more than 40 counties throughout Iowa (m.ob., eBird).

Most: 20 on 8 Jun at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS).

**Henslow's Sparrow:** Found statewide in 30 counties (m.ob., eBird). Most: 15 on 8 Jun at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS) and 12 on 25 Jun at Indiangrass Hills *Iowa* (MHB).

**Swamp Sparrow:** Most reports were in the northern third of Iowa with one 13 Jun at Harrier M *Boone* (eBird) the furthest south. Most: 22 on 25 Jul at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (eBird).

**White-throated Sparrow:** All: singles on 5 Jun at Schaefer Nat A *Black Hawk* (Connor Langan-details) and 18 Jun at Bever P *Linn* (Billy Reiter-Marolf-details) were late. This is the third straight summer the species has been found in Iowa.

**Summer Tanager:** Most reports were from the southern third of Iowa where it is rare but expected. North of there were reports from *Cedar*, *Clinton*, *Jackson*, *Johnson*, and *Polk* (eBird, KJM, SBH, JLF, RLC, JB) in the central third of the state and further north on 18 Jun at Butcher Rd *Plymouth* (DAK), 18 Jun at Oak Grove P *Sioux* (DAK), and 29 Jun at Upper Iowa R *Winneshiek* (eBird) in northern Iowa. This species seems to be extending its range northward.

**Blue Grosbeak:** With reports from 26 counties, 2016 was a record summer for this species. Besides the usual reports from the western border counties (m.ob., eBird), and other western Iowa counties (*Carroll*, *Cherokee*, *Dickinson*, *Guthrie*, *Ringgold*), most of which have had a few for some years (DCH, AB, LAS, eBird), other reports came from central Iowa including Saylorville Res (*Polk*) which had at least 5 males (SJD, KVS), *Warren*, and *Jasper* (eBird). Reports from southeastern Iowa came from *Louisa*, *Washington*, and *Van Buren* (eBird, MP) and north to *Johnson* (BCC, MHB, JF) where they have occurred for several years. Re-

ports from Big Woods L *Black Hawk* (DGE, TSS) and *Tama* (eBird) extend its range further north and west. Most surprising were reports from north-central Iowa with birds at three sites in *Cerro Gordo* and single sites in *Floyd*, *Worth*, and *Winnebago* (BVL, RG, PH, CJF, BCC). Several observers noted that the presence of a pond or gravel pit with scattered trees or shrubs were common features at these sites.

**Dickcissel:** With a count of 138 on an 18 Jun BBS route in *Page* and *Fremont* (KVS) and many other double-digit counts, this remains one of Iowa's most abundant summer species. It is widely distributed except in the northeastern corner of the state (m.ob., eBird).

**Bobolink:** Numerous reports, in general decreasing as one moves south, but Bobolinks were found at Grand River Grasslands *Ringgold* and near Cincinnati *Appanoose* (eBird), both near the Missouri border.

**Eastern Meadowlark:** Reports from

far western Iowa included one 30 Jun at Broken Kettle Grasslands *Plymouth* (eBird) in northwestern Iowa.

**Western Meadowlark:** The eastern-most reports were singles at Cone M *Louisa* and Port Louisa NWR *Louisa* (eBird).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Still common in its stronghold in Iowa's prairie pot-hole region (m.ob.), the most southerly birds were singles near the Missouri R in *Mills* and *Fremont* in southwestern Iowa (eBird).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** Other than 5 on 26 Jun near Cincinnati *Appanoose* (eBird), all reports were of one or 2 at Dan Greene Sl *Clay*, Lizard L *Pocahontas*, Harrier M *Boone*, Red Rock Res *Marion*, South Twin L *Calhoun*, and in *Pottawattamie* (LAS, RAV, eBird).

**Orchard Oriole:** This low density but widely distributed species was reported from almost half of Iowa's counties (m.ob., eBird). Most: 11 on 2 Jun at De Soto NWR *Harrison* (eBird).

## COMMENT

I received a total of 1533 reports on the IOU website, about 950 more sent to me directly, and about 22,300 eBird reports, the most material I have ever had. These reports provide the raw data that are the basis for this article. Besides the 51 individuals listed below and others named individually in the article, hundreds of others provided eBird reports. I extend my sincerest thanks to all of you. Thanks also to Ann Johnson, who made the eBird reports available to me.

A total of 164 species are covered in this report and another 61 species were either reported to the IOU website, to me personally, or to eBird, making a total of 225 species found in Iowa this summer. This is more than the 211 found last summer and the average of 220 over the past five years. The 164 species included in the report is considerably more than the 150 included last year. The average for summers 2012-2016 is 161 species. A number of species that usually are found somewhere in Iowa during summer were not reported this year including Ruddy Turnstone, White-winged Dove, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Black-billed Magpie, and Bewick's Wren.

Most readers of this report will notice that the order in which various species groups appear in the report has changed drastically. Doves and pigeons right after the grouse? House sparrows and finches not at the end of the list? The ornithological experts who study such things have decided that the relationships among many of the orders of birds

and the families within some of the orders are different from what has been long accepted. Hence they have made drastic changes in the sequence in which those groups appear in this list. More changes have been made to the arrangement of the orders of birds than at any time previously in my 50 plus years of noting such things. Despite these changes, the relationships among the species within those groups has had little change except among the shorebirds.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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Danny Akers	DAk	Ankeny	Thomas Johnson	TNJ	Centerville
Pam Allen	PHA	West Des Moines	Joe D. Junger	JDJ	Hospers
Reid Allen	RIA	West Des Moines	Matthew C. Kenne	MCK	Algona
Sharon Bauer	SB	Winterset	Darwin Koenig	DK	Ankeny
Neil Bernstein	NB	Cedar Rapids	Betty V. Lucas	BVL	Mason City
Dick Bierman	DBi	Cherokee	Kelly J. McKay	KJM	Hampton, IL
John Bissell	JB	Grimes	Jacob Newton	JN	Ottosen
Elizabeth Blessington	EB	Breda	Wolf Oesterreich	WO	Ames
Aaron Brees	AB	Polk City	Diana Pesek	DP	Cedar Rapids
Mark Brown	MHB	North Liberty	Diane Porter	DCP	Fairfield
Brandon Caswell	BCC	Marion	Mark Proescholdt	MP	Liscomb
Raymond L. Cummins	RLC	Ankeny	Linda Quinn	LQ	Iowa City
Larry G. Dau	LGD	Boone	Paul Roisen	POR	Sioux City
Stephen J. Dinsmore	SJD	Ames	Linda Rudolph	LGR	Coralville
David G. Eastman	DGE	Cedar Falls	Bill Scheible	BSc	Cedar Rapids
Chris R. Edwards	CRE	Solon	Tom Schilke	TSS	Waterloo
Bruce Ehresman	BEh	Ames	Pat Schlarbaum	PSc	Nevada
Bery Engebretsen	BE	Urbandale	Lee A. Schoenewe	LAS	Spencer
Carolyn Fischer	CJF	Mason City	Paul Skrade	PDBS	Decorah
Jim Forde	JF	Cedar Rapids	Dennis Thompson	DTh	Johnston
James L. Fuller	JLF	Iowa City	Rachel Vanausdall	RAV	Ames
Rita Goranson	RG	Mason City	Karen Vista-Sparkman	KVS	Des Moines
Stephen B. Hager	SBH	Rock Island, IL	Gerald Von Ehwegen	GLV	Sioux City
Doug C. Harr	DCH	Ogden	Hank Zaletel	HZ	Nevada
Paul Hertzell	PH	Mason City	Walt Zuurdeeg	WZ	Davenport
Ann M. Johnson	AMJ	Norwalk			

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646 Mallory Hill Drive, The Villages, FL 32162 (oldcoot@iastate.edu)

# Reassessment of a Scarlet Tanager from Spillville, Iowa: Was it really a tanager?

Ted Floyd

The great Czech composer Antonín Dvorak (1841–1904) resided in Spillville, Winnebago County, Iowa, during the summer of 1893. Dvorak and his family arrived in June, and the composer immediately got down to business. By the end of the month, he had composed and premiered his “American” Quartet (the string quartet in F major, Op. 96), one of the most popular and critically acclaimed works of chamber music of all time.

The American Quartet is of particular interest to birders and ornithologists because of its quotation of a Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) in measures 21–24 of the third movement (Figure 1). To my eyes and ears, this does not seem to be the song of a Scarlet Tanager. The musical quotation, played by the first violin, is high and sweet, a rapid series of irregular phrases interrupted by short rests.

Felicitously, Dvorak's amanuensis, Josef Kovalík, transcribed the song of the actual bird quoted in the American Quartet (Hefling 2003), and Kovalík's transcription (Figure 2) looks and sounds even less like the song of a Scarlet Tanager: a fast two-note phrase, followed by a pause; then a fast three-note phrase, followed by a pause; then the two-note phrase again and a pause; and then a new three-note phrase and a pause. The musical phrases, whether they are two notes or three notes, are one beat to the measure; the rests are two beats to the measure. In other words, the pauses are twice as long as the phrases.

The transcription suggests to me the song of the Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*). And listening to measures 21–24 of the American Quartet's third movement recalls the experience of hearing the vireo. The song of the Red-eyed Vireo is high, sweet, and herky-jerky. It is also exceedingly varied, but a recurring pattern involves alternating two-note and three-note phrases. Cimprich et al. (2000), in their account in *Birds of North America*, render it *cherr-o-wit, cheree, sissy-a-wit, tee-oo*; Dunne (2006), in his *Essential Field Guide Companion*, transcribes the song as *Here I am. See me? I'm up here. In the tree. And the transcription in my field guide (Floyd 2008) is chuwee? chuawee! cheerily? churro!*



Figure 1. String Quartet in F major (“American”) by Antonín Dvorak: third movement (molto vivace), measures 21–24, first violin. From Wikimedia Commons ([tinyurl.com/Dvorak-21-24](https://tinyurl.com/Dvorak-21-24)).

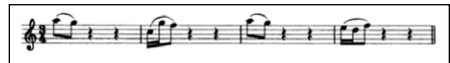


Figure 2. Transcription of the song of a bird the composer believed to be a Scarlet Tanager. Note the alternating, rising and falling, two-note and three-note phrases, interrupted by rests twice the duration of the phrases. From Wikimedia Commons ([tinyurl.com/Dvorak-21-24](https://tinyurl.com/Dvorak-21-24)).

A Red-eyed Vireo recorded in Boulder County, Colorado (DeFonso 2016), is illustrative. The bird's run-on song is characteristically varied, but two-note and three-note phrases are dominant, and there are at least five runs of the two–three–two–three sequence, the first at 0:38 (Figure 3), and others at 0:48, 1:02, 1:38, and 1:45. Compare these with an online recording of the third movement of the American Quartet ([tinyurl.com/Dvorak-96-iii](https://tinyurl.com/Dvorak-96-iii)), starting at the 0:14 mark.

A more objective approach is to compare a sound spectrogram of the bird (Figure 3) with the Kovalík transcription of the bird from Spillville (Figure 1). In both, note the up-and-down phrasing, the duration of the pauses, and the sonority or “timbre” (compare the smooth traces of the vireo's song with pure-tone higher registers of the violin).

The song of the Scarlet Tanager is different. It is commonly described as hoarse or harsh, and the phrasing is faster, with the “rests” as short as or shorter than the song elements. The overall effect is of a less herky-jerky, more continuous delivery. The sound spectrogram of a bird recorded in Franklin County, Tennessee (Parrish 2016) is typical. Note especially the strong modulation (the waviness, which causes a rough burry sound unlike a violin's), the relatively short pauses (“rests”), and the relatively small pitch changes within each phrase (Figure 4). This tanager's song neither looks (spectrographically) nor sounds (aurally) like the bird in Dvorak's American Quartet.

Why might Dvorak have mistaken the song of the Red-eyed Vireo for that of the distantly related Scarlet Tanager? They sound dissimilar. And the birds look utterly different:

the midsize, refulgent tanager looks nothing like the smaller, drab vireo.

Dvorak wasn't a birder, at least not in the modern sense. He lacked the modern optical equipment and other resources of the 21st Century birder. He had just arrived in Iowa, and unquestionably would have been distracted by tending to his large family and composing one of the most famous string quartets of all time. He heard an “annoying” and “incessant” bird song (see Hefling 2003), asked a local about it, and that, presumably, was that.

There's something else. The tanager and the vireo occur together in dense foliage in the treetops, and can be impressively hard to see. Skilled birders frequently comment on how difficult it can be to spot a male tanager (let alone the dull vireo), even when the bird is singing loudly. Moreover, the abundant vireo is notorious for singing all day long and all summer long. Dvorak or any other listener probably would have heard far more vireo song than tanager song

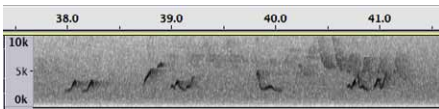


Figure 3. Sound spectrogram (frequency in kilohertz, vertical axis; time in seconds, horizontal axis) of a singing Red-eyed Vireo, Boulder County, Colorado, June 9, 2015. Compare with sequences beginning at 0:48, 1:02, 1:38, and 1:45. Reproduced with permission ([xeno-canto.org/253544](https://xeno-canto.org/253544)).

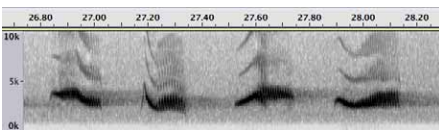


Figure 4. Sound spectrogram (frequency in kilohertz, vertical axis; time in seconds, horizontal axis) of a singing Scarlet Tanager, Franklin County, Tennessee, May 5, 2008. Reproduced with permission ([xeno-canto.org/20432](https://xeno-canto.org/20432)).

in Spillville. Spillville is located in a section of Iowa known for its extensive deciduous forests. At the time of the composer's visit, both Red-eyed Vireo and Scarlet Tanager were considered common summer residents in such habitat throughout Iowa (Anderson 1907). It is entirely plausible that Dvorak's informant simply got the two species mixed up. And it is frankly *implausible* that Dvorak would have been able to learn the birds of Iowa in a matter of just a few days, especially in light of everything that was going on in the life of the homesick composer.

The bird quoted in measures 21–24 of the third movement of the American Quartet sounds like a Red-eyed Vireo. The composer's transcription eerily matches the sound spectrogram of the species. And even though Dvorak couldn't have had more than a few days' experience with the Red-eyed Vireo, he evidently latched onto the *je ne sais quois* of the species: its "annoying" and "incessant" song.

Dvorak's American Quartet is inarguably great. But it's perhaps not as "American" as one might think. Scholars have been unable to find any real evidence for the African American and Native American musical idioms commonly thought to pervade the work. "American folk tunes," whatever those might be, are likewise difficult to pin down in this quartet. And a reference in the last movement to a steam locomotive (Dvorak loved trains) is probably more in the mind of the hearer than in the actual score. At least there's an American bird in the American Quartet!

It's just not the species the composer thought it was.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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2009 South Fork Drive, Lafayette, CO 80026 ([tfloyd@aba.org](mailto:tfloyd@aba.org))

# **Fifty Years Ago in Iowa Bird Life**

*James J. Dinsmore*

Editor Petersen apparently didn't receive much material for the journal, leading to a rather slim, 16-page December 1966 issue of *Iowa Bird Life*. The lead article was a memorial to long-time member and one-time I.O.U. President Myrle Jones. Jones grew up in rural Keokuk County and became a teacher, serving in several Iowa schools. In 1938 he was hired as a Park Naturalist for the Iowa Conservation Commission, first at Ledges State Park and later at Waubonsie, Fort Defiance, finally Bellevue state parks before retiring in 1965 and moving to Arkansas where he died in 1966. He was well-known to I.O.U. members, being a regular at their meetings and often serving the organizations in a variety of ways. He had numerous natural history collections and banded birds for many years.

The field reports for fall 1966 generally had little of any special interest. The fall migration seems to have been fairly decent for various groups of birds but none seemed to have been either exceptionally good or poor. Likewise, there were few reports of unusual species. A Double-crested Cormorant on a nest with young birds in mid-August, apparently at Coralville Reservoir, seemed late. Other interesting finds included two Little Blue Herons in southern Iowa, a Bewick's Wren in Johnson County, and a Red Crossbill in August and several in September.

The most interesting short note described a Parasitic Jaeger that Barton Sutter found in early September 1966 at Rice Lake in Winnebago County. A short note by the editor described the beginnings of the federal Breeding Bird Survey, noting that more than 600 routes were run east of the Mississippi River in the summer of 1966 and that the program would be expanded to include routes west of the Mississippi River in 1967. The program has grown so that now about 2900 routes are run yearly including about 30 in Iowa. Although the methodology is not the best, it has provided some of the most useful and often cited data documenting changes in North American bird populations for the past 50 years.

646 Mallory Hill Drive, The Villages, FL 32162 (oldcoot@iastate.edu)



# Index—2016

Compiled by James J. Dinsmore

## A

Amana, 66, 69, 71-82  
Amendment to I.O.U. Constitution, 131  
Ames, 71-82  
Andalusia, Illinois, 67, 68, 70, 72-82, 83  
Avocet, American, 4, 11, 101-102, 110, 144

## B

Bakken, Marit A., and Stephen J. Dinsmore, Food habits of three owl species in Iowa, 89-93  
Bittern  
    American, 8-9, 99, 151  
    Least, 4, 9, 99, 151  
Blackbird  
    Brewer's, 30, 60, 69, 82, 120  
    Red-winged, 30, 59, 68, 80  
    Rusty, 30, 60, 69, 80, 120  
    Yellow-headed, 30, 60, 69, 82, 119, 120, 157  
Black Hawk County, 90-92, 135-137  
Bluebird, Eastern, 23, 25, 57, 65, 68, 78, 113  
Board of Directors meeting, *See* Iowa Ornithologists' Union  
Bobolink, 30, 119, 120, 139, 157  
Bobwhite, Northern, 7, 47, 50, 67, 74, 98, 139, 140, 142  
Booby, Brown, 1-2, 5, 8, 124, 125  
Book review, 128-129  
Boone County, 69, 71-82, 83, 90-92  
Bremer County, 70, 72-82  
Buchanan County, 66  
Bufflehead, 7, 50, 67, 73, 98  
Bunting  
    Indigo, 29, 119  
    Lark, 95, 118  
    Lazuli, 124, 126  
    Painted, 126  
    Snow, 4, 25, 47, 58, 65, 68, 79, 114  
Burlington, 66, 70, 72-82

## C

Canton, 70, 72-82  
Canvasback, 4, 6, 49, 67, 73, 97, 141  
Cardinal, Northern, 28, 65, 68, 80  
Carroll County, 66, 69, 71-82, 83  
Caster, Chris, Iowa Christmas Bird Count, 2015-2016, 66-82  
Caswell, Brandon, Tom Schilke, and Stephen J. Dinsmore, Merlins nesting in eastern Iowa, 135-137  
Catbird, Gray, 24, 58, 69, 114

Cecil, Bob, Meet two Iowa birders—Stuart Sparkman and Karen Viste-Sparkman, 41-44  
Cedar Falls-Waterloo, 67, 71-82, 83  
Cedar Rapids, 69, 71-82, 83  
Chat, Yellow-breasted, 27, 117, 132, 149, 155-156  
Cherokee, 70, 72-82  
Chickadee, Black-capped, 67, 77, 113  
Christmas Bird Count, 66-82  
Chuck-wills-widow, 106, 143  
Clinton, 66, 67, 70, 72-82, 83  
Collared-Dove, Eurasian, 15, 53, 67, 76, 105, 143  
Coot, American, 52, 67, 75, 101, 131, 143  
Cormorant  
    Double-crested, 8, 50-51, 67, 74, 99, 139, 140, 151  
    Neotropic, 99  
Cowbird, Brown-headed, 60, 69, 80, 120, 124  
Crane, Sandhill, 11, 52, 67, 75, 101, 139, 140, 143-144  
Creeper, Brown, 23, 56-57, 68, 78, 113, 140, 153  
Crossbill  
    Red, 30, 31, 60, 69, 82, 88, 120-121, 140, 154  
    White-winged, 31, 60, 69, 82, 112, 121  
Crow  
    American, 56, 67, 77, 135-137  
    Fish, 95, 108  
Cuckoo  
    Black-billed, 15, 105, 139, 143  
    Yellow-billed, 15, 105, 143

## D

Dallas County, 66, 71-82  
Davenport, 66, 68, 69, 70, 72-82, 83  
Decorah, 69, 70, 72-82  
Des Moines, 66, 69, 71-82, 83  
De Soto National Wildlife Refuge, 69, 70, 72-82, 83  
Dickcissel, 30, 59, 120, 157  
Dinsmore, James J.,  
    Field reports—summer 2016, 138-158  
    Fifty years ago in *Iowa Bird Life*, 40, 87, 130, 162  
Dinsmore, Stephen J.,  
    Brown Booby at Red Rock Reservoir, 1-2  
    Letter from the editor, 133-134  
    *See* Bakken, Marit A., and \_\_\_\_\_  
    \_\_\_\_\_, *See* Caswell, Brandon, et al.  
Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center, 34  
Dove (*See also* Collared-Dove)  
    Mourning, 53, 67, 76  
    White-winged, 105, 157

Dowitcher  
  Long-billed, 13, 104  
  Short-billed, 13, 95, 102, 104, 140, 145  
Dubuque, 70, 72-82  
Duck  
  American Black, 6, 49, 66, 72, 97  
  Harlequin, 47, 49, 69, 82, 95, 98, 109  
  Long-tailed, 7, 47, 49-50, 67, 82, 98  
  Mottled, 124, 125  
  Ring-necked, 6, 49, 67, 73, 97, 138, 139, 141-142  
  Ruddy, 7, 50, 67, 73, 98, 142  
  Wood, 6, 48-49, 67, 72, 96, 109  
Dunlin, 4, 12, 103, 144  
Dvorak, Antonin, 159-161

## E

Eagle  
  Bald, 9, 47, 51, 67, 74, 100-101  
  Golden, 10, 52, 67, 75, 101  
Editor's letter, 133-134  
Egret  
  Cattle, 9, 100, 151  
  Great, 9, 100, 139, 151  
  Snowy, 9, 100  
Eldora-Union, 71-82  
*Epidonax* species, 4, 17

## F

Falcon  
  Peregrine, 16, 33, 47, 56, 67, 77, 107, 139, 152  
  Prairie, 17, 47, 55, 69, 82, 107  
Fall meeting, *See* Iowa Ornithologists' Union  
Field reports  
  fall, 3-32  
  spring, 94-123  
  summer, 138-158  
  winter, 45-65  
Fifty years ago in *Iowa Bird Life*, 40, 87, 130, 162  
Finch  
  House, 60, 69, 80, 88  
  Purple, 31, 60, 69, 80, 120  
First state record, 1-2  
Flicker  
  Northern, 16, 56, 67, 77, 106-107  
  Northern (red-shafted), 16  
Floyd, Ted, Reassessment of a Scarlet Tanager  
  from Spillville, Iowa: Was it really a tanager?  
  159-161

## Flycatcher

  Acadian, 17, 107, 152  
  Alder, 17, 95, 107-108, 140, 152-153  
  Great crested, 17, 108, 147  
  Least, 17, 108, 153  
  Olive-sided, 17, 107, 140, 152  
  Scissor-tailed, 17, 157  
  Vermilion, 4, 5, 17, 20, 126

  Willow, 17, 108, 153  
  Yellow-bellied, 17, 95, 107, 140, 152  
Fremont County, 34

## G

Gadwall, 6, 49, 72, 96, 141  
Gallinule, Common, 11, 95, 101, 143  
Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray, 23, 24, 113, 154  
Godwit  
  Hudsonian, 12, 100, 103, 140, 144  
  Marbled, 12, 103, 144  
Goldeneye, Common, 7, 50, 67, 73, 98  
Golden-Plover, American, 11, 102, 144  
Goldfinch  
  American, 31, 61, 69, 81, 121  
  European, 126  
Goose  
  Cackling, 6, 48, 66, 72, 96  
  Canada, 48, 66, 72, 96  
  Canada x Snow, 83  
  Greater White-fronted, 5, 48, 66, 72, 96  
  Ross's, 5, 48, 66, 82, 96, 140, 141  
  Snow, 4, 5, 48, 66, 72, 96, 97, 141  
Goshawk, Northern, 9, 52, 69, 101, 110  
Grackle  
  Common, 60, 69, 80  
  Great-tailed, 30, 60, 120, 157  
Grebe  
  Clark's, 126  
  Eared, 8, 50, 69, 82, 99, 139, 140, 142, 147  
  Horned, 8, 50, 69, 82, 99  
  Pied-billed, 8, 50, 67, 74, 98-99, 109, 142  
  Red-necked, 8, 50, 99, 139, 140, 142  
  Western, 8, 50, 99, 139, 142-143  
Green Island, 66, 69, 70, 72-82, 83  
Grinnell, 67, 71-82, 83  
Grosbeak  
  Black-headed, 95, 119  
  Blue, 29, 112, 119, 140, 150, 156-157  
  Pine, 5, 22, 31, 47, 60, 126  
  Rose-breasted, 29, 112, 119  
Grouse, Ruffed, 4, 8, 50, 69, 98, 142  
Gull  
  Black-headed, 5, 13-14, 126  
  Bonaparte's, 13, 53, 67, 75, 104, 140, 141  
  California, 5, 14, 126  
  Franklin's, 14, 53, 104, 146  
  Glaucous, 14, 53, 67, 82, 104-105  
  Great Black-backed, 47, 52, 53, 69, 82, 126  
  Herring, 14, 53, 67, 75, 104  
  Iceland, 53, 69, 82, 104  
  Laughing, 14  
  Lesser Black-backed, 4, 14, 53, 67, 82, 104  
  Ring-billed, 53, 67, 75, 104, 140, 146  
  Sabine's, 13  
  Thayer's, 4, 14, 53, 67, 82, 104

Gyr Falcon, 124

## H

Harms, Tyler M., Field reports—spring 2016, 94-123

Harrier, Northern, 9, 51, 67, 74, 101, 151

Hawk banding, 33

Hawk

Broad-winged, 10, 33, 101, 136, 152

Cooper's, 4, 9, 19, 33, 47, 51-52, 67, 75, 100, 101, 151

Red-shouldered, 4, 10, 52, 67, 75, 101, 151-152

Red-tailed, 4, 10, 33, 52, 64, 67, 75, 101

Rough-legged, 10, 52, 67, 75, 101

Sharp-shinned, 9, 33, 47, 51, 74, 101

Swainson's, 4, 10, 101, 140, 152

Heron

Great Blue, 51, 67, 74, 99-100

Green, 9, 100, 109

Little Blue, 4, 9, 100, 140, 151

Hertzel, Paul,

Field report—fall 2015, 3-32

Report of the Records Committee for 2015, 124-127

Hitchcock Nature Center, 33

Humboldt County, 66, 70, 72-82

Hummingbird

Anna's, 5, 15-16, 126

Ruby-throated, 15, 20, 106

## I

Ibis

Glossy, 95, 100, 125

White-faced, 9, 19, 95, 100

Ida County, 34, 71-82

Iowa City, 72-82, 83, 135-137

Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Board of Directors meeting, 37-40, 86

Fall meeting, 84-85

*Iowa Bird Life* editor, 133-134

Proposed constitutional amendment, 131

Records Committee, annual report of, 124-127

Spring meeting, 35-37

## J

Jaeger, Parasitic, 5, 13, 125

Jamaica, 71-82

Jay, Blue, 18, 23, 67, 77, 136

Johnson County, 135-137

Junco

Dark-eyed, 29, 59, 68, 80, 119

Oregon, 59

## K

Keokuk, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72-82, 83

Kestrel, American, 4, 16, 55, 64, 67, 77, 107

Killdeer, 10, 11, 52, 67, 75, 95, 102, 144

Kingbird

Eastern, 16, 17, 108

Western, 17, 108, 153

Kingfisher, Belted, 14, 53, 67, 76, 106

Kinglet,

Golden-crowned, 21, 23, 57, 68, 78, 113

Ruby-crowned, 23, 57, 68, 78, 113

Kite, Mississippi, 9, 100, 151

Kittiwake, Black-legged, 13, 53, 69, 82

Knot, Red, 4, 5, 12, 19, 125

## L

Lamoni, 66, 68, 69, 71-82, 83

Lark, Horned, 47, 56, 64, 67, 77, 108

Longspur

Lapland, 4, 24, 47, 58, 63, 68, 79, 114

Smith's, 24, 47, 58, 114, 132

Loon

Common, 8, 50, 69, 82, 98, 146-147

Pacific, 8, 98

Red-throated, 8, 50, 98,

Lost Nation, 67, 71-82

## M

Magpie, Black-billed, 4, 5, 18, 56, 69, 82, 157

Mallard, 49, 66, 72, 97

Marion County, 1-2

Marshalltown, 66

Martin, Purple, 18, 95, 108

Mason City, 66, 70, 72-82

Meadowlark

Eastern, 30, 59-60, 68, 80, 120, 139, 157

species, 68, 80

Western, 30, 60, 61, 80, 120, 157

Merganser

Common, 7, 50, 67, 73, 98

Hooded, 7, 50, 73, 98, 142

Red-breasted, 7, 50, 73, 98

Merlin, 16, 33, 47, 56, 67, 77, 107, 135-137, 139,

140, 152

Mockingbird, Northern, 24, 58, 68, 82, 114, 140,

148, 154

Moore, Francis L., Field reports—winter 2015-2016, 45-65

Moorhead Park, 34

Murphy, Kevin, Review of: Reeber, Sebastien,

Waterfowl of North America, Europe, & Asia:

An identification guide, 128-129

Moorhen, *See* Gallinule

Muscatine, 67, 70, 72-82, 83

## N

Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, 71-82, 83

Nighthawk, Common, 15, 105, 106

Night-Heron  
  Black-crowned, 9, 51, 99, 100, 151  
  Yellow-crowned, 4, 9, 100, 151  
North Linn, 71-82  
Northwest Clayton County, 66  
Nutcracker, Clark's, 5, 18, 122  
Nuthatch  
  Red-breasted, 18, 23, 56, 57, 68, 78, 113, 153  
  White-breasted, 67-68, 78, 113

## O

Oldsquaw, *See* Duck, Long-tailed  
Omaha, 66, 69, 70, 72-82, 83  
Oriole  
  Baltimore, 22, 31, 112, 120  
  Bullock's, 95, 120  
  Orchard, 30-31, 120, 139, 150, 157  
Osprey, 4, 9, 69, 82, 100, 139, 151  
Ovenbird, 25, 95, 114, 154  
Owl banding, 33-34  
Owl food habits, 89-93  
Owl, *See also* Screech-owl  
  Barn, 15, 89-93, 95, 96, 105-106, 139, 152  
  Barred, 20, 54, 67, 76, 106  
  Boreal, 124, 126  
  Burrowing, 95, 105, 106, 125, 126  
  Great Gray, 126-127  
  Great Horned, 20, 54, 67, 76, 106  
  Long-eared, 15, 47, 54-55, 67, 76, 89-93, 106  
  Northern Saw-whet, 15, 33-34, 47, 55, 67, 76, 89-93, 106  
  Short-eared, 15, 47, 55, 67, 76, 106, 140, 152  
  Snowy, 15, 47, 54, 69, 82, 106

## P

Partridge, Gray, 8, 50, 67, 74, 98, 142  
Parula, Northern, 22, 26, 116-155  
Pelican, American White, 8, 47, 51, 67, 74, 99, 139, 140, 151  
Pewee, *See* Wood-Pewee  
Phalarope  
  Red-necked, 13, 104, 140, 146  
  Wilson's, 4, 13, 104, 139, 145-146  
Pheasant, Ring-necked, 50, 67, 74, 98, 142  
Phoebe  
  Eastern, 17, 108  
  Say's, 47, 69, 82, 95, 108, 111, 126  
Pigeon, Rock, 67, 76  
Pintail, Northern, 6, 49, 73, 97, 139, 141  
Pipit, American, 4, 24, 69, 82, 114  
*Plegadis* species, 9, 151  
Plover, *See also* Golden-Plover  
  Black-bellied, 11, 95, 102, 144  
  Piping, 11, 102, 139, 144  
  Semipalmated, 11, 95, 102, 144  
  Snowy, 95, 102, 140, 144

Polk County, 90-92  
Pottawattamie County, 33  
Prairie-Chicken, Greater, 50, 98  
Princeton, 66, 70, 72, 82

## R

Rail  
  Black, 95, 101  
  King, 101, 140, 143  
  Virginia, 11, 19, 52, 101, 143  
  Yellow, 10-11  
Rathbun Reservoir, 71-82  
Records Committee, *See* Iowa Ornithologists' Union  
Redhead, 6, 49, 67, 73, 97, 139, 141  
Redpoll  
  Common, 31, 47, 60-61, 69, 81, 121  
  Hoary, 95, 121  
Red Rock Reservoir, 1-2, 69, 71-82  
Redstart, American, 26, 95, 115-116, 149, 155  
Reeber, Sebastien, Waterfowl of North America, Europe, & Asia: An identification guide (review of), 128-129  
Robin, American, 24, 58, 59, 68, 78, 114  
Ruff, 95, 103, 125, 140, 144  
Rundquist, Rex  
Iowa Ornithologists' Union board of directors meeting, 86  
Iowa Ornithologists' Union, business meeting, 84-85

## S

Sac County, 71-82  
Sanderling, 12, 103, 140, 144  
Sandpiper  
  Baird's, 12, 103, 144  
  Buff-breasted, 13, 140, 145  
  Least, 4, 12, 103, 144  
  Pectoral, 13, 103, 145  
  Semipalmated, 4, 13, 95, 103-104, 145  
  Solitary, 11, 102, 145  
  Spotted, 11, 102, 110, 145  
  Stilt, 12, 103, 144, 147  
  Upland, 12, 103, 144  
  Western, 13, 104, 140, 145  
  White-rumped, 12-13, 102, 103, 144-145  
Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied, 11, 54, 55, 67, 77, 106, 110, 152  
Saylorville Reservoir, 66, 67, 69, 71-82, 83  
Scaup  
  Greater, 6, 49, 67, 73, 98  
  Lesser, 6, 49, 67, 73, 98, 142  
Schilke, Tom, *see* Caswell, Brandon, et al.  
Scoter  
  Black, 7, 49, 67, 82  
  Surf, 6-7, 49, 69  
  White-winged, 7, 49, 67, 82

- Screech-Owl, Eastern, 53-54, 67, 76, 106  
 Shenandoah, 66, 69, 71-82, 83  
 Shoveler, Northern, 6, 49, 73, 97, 139, 141  
 Shrike  
   Loggerhead, 17, 56, 69, 108, 153  
   Northern, 17, 47, 56, 67, 77, 108  
 species, 82  
 Sioux City, 69, 70, 72-82, 83  
 Siskin, Pine, 31, 47, 61, 69, 81, 121, 140, 154  
 Snipe, Wilson's, 13, 52, 75, 104, 145  
 Solitaire, Townsends, 21, 23-24, 57, 69, 113  
 Song of  
   Red-eyed Vireo, 159-161  
   Scarlet Tanager, 159-161  
 Sora, 10, 11, 111, 143  
 Southeast Clayton County, 66  
 Southeast Webster County, 71-82  
 Sparkman, Stuart, biography of, 41-44  
 Iowa Ornithologists' Union board of directors  
   meeting, 37-40  
 Iowa Ornithologists' Union business meeting,  
   35-37  
 Sparrow  
   American Tree, 28, 58, 63, 68, 79  
   Chipping, 28, 58-59, 117  
   Clay-colored, 28, 117, 156  
   Eurasian Tree, 30, 31, 47, 61, 69, 81, 121, 154  
   Field, 28, 59, 82, 117, 149  
   Fox, 28, 29, 59, 68, 79, 118  
   Grasshopper, 28, 118, 139, 150, 156  
   Harris's, 4, 29, 59, 68, 79, 119  
   Henslow's, 28, 118, 139, 156  
   House, 69, 81  
   Lark, 28, 118, 150, 156  
   Le Conte's, 22, 28, 59, 69, 82, 118  
   Lincoln's, 4, 29, 59, 68, 79, 118-119  
   Nelson's, 28-29, 118  
   Savannah, 28, 59, 79, 118  
   Song, 29, 59, 68, 79, 118  
   Swamp, 59, 68, 79, 118, 119, 156  
   Vesper, 28, 59, 118  
   White-crowned, 29, 59, 68, 79, 119  
   White-throated, 29, 59, 68, 79, 119, 140, 156  
 Spillville, 159-161  
 Spirit Lake, 66, 67, 69, 70, 72-82, 83  
 Spring meeting. *See* Iowa Ornithologists' Union  
 Starling, European, 68, 79  
 Stilt, Black-necked, 11, 95, 102, 140  
 Story County, 90-92  
 Swallow  
   Bank, 18, 95, 113, 153  
   Barn, 18, 113  
   Cliff, 18, 113  
   Northern Rough-winged, 18, 95, 108, 113, 153  
   Tree, 18, 56, 95, 108, 148  
 Swan  
   Mute, 66, 82, 96, 141  
   Trumpeter, 6, 48, 66, 72, 96  
   Tundra, 6, 43, 48, 66, 72, 96  
 Swift, Chimney, 15, 106, 143
- T**
- Tanager  
 Scarlet, 29, 119, 159-161  
 Summer, 29, 59, 69, 82, 119, 121, 140, 156  
 Western, 95, 112, 119, 126  
 Taylor County, 71-82, 83  
 Teal  
   Blue-winged, 6, 49, 69, 82, 97, 109, 141  
   Blue-winged x Cinnamon, 97  
   Cinnamon, 97  
   Green-winged, 6, 49, 73, 97, 141  
 Tern  
   Black, 15, 105, 140, 146  
   Caspian, 15, 105, 140, 146  
   Common, 15, 105, 146  
   Forster's, 15, 95, 105, 140, 146  
   Least, 14, 105, 139, 146  
 Thrasher, Brown, 24, 58, 69, 114  
 Thrush  
   Gray-cheeked, 24, 113  
   Hermit, 24, 57-58, 68, 78, 114  
   Swainson's, 24, 114, 140, 154  
   Varied, 24, 58  
   Wood, 24, 114, 154  
 Titmouse, Tufted, 56, 67, 78, 113  
 Toll, Jerry, Raptor banding at Hitchcock hawk  
   watch, fall 2015, 33-34  
 Towhee  
   Eastern, 27-28, 58, 68, 82, 117, 156  
   Spotted, 5, 27, 58, 65, 68, 82, 117, 124, 139,  
   140, 156  
 Turkey, Wild, 47, 50, 67, 74, 98  
 Turnstone, Ruddy, 12, 103, 140, 157
- U**
- Union County, 69, 71-82, 83  
 Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, 67, 70,  
 72-82
- V**
- Veery, 24, 113, 154  
 Vireo  
   Bells, 17, 108, 153  
   Blue-headed, 18, 108  
   Philadelphia, 18, 108  
   Red-eyed, 18, 108, 159-161  
   Warbling, 18, 108  
   White-eyed, 17, 108, 147, 153  
   Yellow-throated, 4, 17-18, 108, 153  
 Viste-Sparkman, Karen, biography of, 41-44

- Vulture  
 Black, 125  
 Turkey, 9, 47, 51, 69, 82, 100, 136
- W**
- Wapello County, 69, 71-82, 83
- Warbler  
 Bay-breasted, 26, 116, 140, 155  
 Black-and-white, 25, 114-115, 140, 155  
 Blackburnian, 26-27, 95, 116  
 Blackpoll, 27, 95, 116  
 Black-throated Blue, 27, 95, 116  
 Black-throated Green, 26, 27, 111, 116-117  
 Blue-winged, 4, 25, 114, 126, 155  
 Canada, 27, 117  
 Cape May, 26, 116  
 Cerulean, 116, 155  
 Chestnut-sided, 27, 115, 116, 155  
 Connecticut, 95, 115  
 Golden-winged, 21, 25, 95, 114  
 Hooded, 26, 115, 155  
 Kentucky, 26, 115, 155  
 Magnolia, 26, 116, 140, 155  
 Mourning, 26, 95, 115  
 Nashville, 26, 115, 140, 148, 155  
 Orange-crowned, 25-26, 58, 115  
 Palm, 27, 95, 116, 117  
 Pine, 27, 95, 116, 155  
 Prothonotary, 25, 115, 155  
 Tennessee, 25, 95, 115  
 Townsends, 5, 27, 126  
 Wilson's, 4, 27, 117  
 Worm-eating, 111, 114, 154  
 Yellow, 27, 95, 116, 149  
 Yellow-rumped, 27, 47, 58, 68, 79, 116  
 Yellow-throated, 27, 116, 155
- Waterloo, *See also* Cedar Falls, 135-137
- Waterthrush  
 Louisiana, 114, 154  
 Northern, 4, 25, 114, 140, 154-155
- Waubonsie State Park, 34
- Waxwing  
 Bohemian, 58  
 Cedar, 21, 58, 68, 79, 114, 154
- Westfield, 66, 69, 70, 72-82, 83
- West Mercer County (Illinois) 66, 69, 70, 72-82, 83
- Whimbrel, 103, 125
- Whip-poor-will, Eastern, 106, 143
- Whistling-Duck, Black-bellied, 5, 125
- Wigeon, American, 6, 49, 72, 96-97, 141
- Willet, 11-12, 95, 103, 140, 145, 147
- Winneshiek County, 159-161
- Woodbury County, 34
- Woodcock, American, 13, 52-53, 104, 145
- Woodpecker  
 Downy, 67, 77,  
 Hairy, 54, 55, 67, 77, 106  
 Lewis's, 5, 16, 126  
 Pileated, 16, 56, 67, 77, 107, 152  
 Red-bellied, 16, 55, 67, 77, 152  
 Red-headed, 16, 55, 67, 76, 106, 139
- Wood-Pewee, Eastern, 17, 107
- Worth County, 70, 72-82
- Wren  
 Bewick's, 111, 113, 157  
 Carolina, 23, 57, 68, 78, 83, 113, 154  
 House, 23, 113  
 Marsh, 23, 57, 58, 69, 82, 113, 153  
 Sedge, 23, 24, 113, 148, 153  
 Winter, 23, 57, 64, 68, 78, 113, 138, 139, 140, 153
- Y**
- Yellowlegs  
 Greater, 11, 102, 145  
 Lesser, 12, 95, 103, 145
- Yellow River Forest, 70, 72-82
- Yellowthroat, Common, 26, 115

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## CONTENTS

Letter from the editor <i>by Stephen J. Dinsmore</i>	133
Merlins nesting in eastern Iowa <i>by Brandon Caswell, Tom Schilke, and Stephen J. Dinsmore</i>	135
Field Reports—Summer 2016 <i>by James J. Dinsmore</i>	138
Reassessment of a Scarlet Tanager from Spillville, Iowa: Was it really a tanager? <i>by Ted Floyd</i>	159
Fifty Years Ago in <i>Iowa Bird Life</i> <i>by James J. Dinsmore</i>	162
Index <i>by James J. Dinsmore</i>	163