

# I.O.U. NEWS

Fall 1989

Newsletter of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union Volume 5 Number 3

## Tri-State Convention, May 18-20, 1990



Plans by the host organization, the LaCrosse Audubon Society, are under way for the first convention involving the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, Minnesota Ornithologists' Union, and Wisconsin Society for Ornithology. Representatives from all three groups have met to make preliminary plans and assure sharing of intentions. The intentions are to encourage birding the tri-state Upper Mississippi River area and exchange information and friendships across state lines. Birds, bird people and birding will benefit. The time is critical and the resource strained.

Representatives of all three groups have pledged paper presenters and panelist participants. The convention chairperson is open to alternative papers and panels, but the lists of each should include some data from at least 2 of the 3 states. Only four paper presentations are scheduled, all on Saturday morning, May 19.

There will be 6 panels, requiring at least 3 panelists each, on Saturday afternoon, May 19, plus an initial panel on Friday evening, May 18.

Contact Fred Leshner, English Department, UW-La Crosse, 1725 State St., La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601 if you wish to present or participate. Home phone: 608/783-1149; work phone: 608/785-8298.

The paper topics may be selected from the recommended list:

1. Hawk migration in the upper midwest, especially near the Mississippi River.
2. Endangered, threatened and changing status of selected species in the three states.
3. Wintering and nesting Bald Eagles on the Upper Mississippi River—a census.
4. Patterns of "southern" heron dispersal in the three states.
5. Status of the King Rail in the three states. Status of (fill blank) in the three states.
6. Locations of breeding Wilson's Phalaropes, Red-necked Grebes, or (fill blank) in the three states.
7. Your own dream—or nightmare—project.

Please select a panel or panels you would like to be on:

1. Problems and solutions for records committees in documentation, and problems and solutions for reporters.

2. An exchange of bizarre birding experiences, or heart warming, or discouraging, or philosophic.

3. Questions and answer about identifying accipiters in flight, in light of recent publications.

4. Distinctions among white-winged gulls, fact or fiction?

5. Wintering gulls, Keokuk to St. Paul.

6. Should birders be students of bird behavior?

7. Should birders and state birding groups become politically involved in environmental issues? Cases.

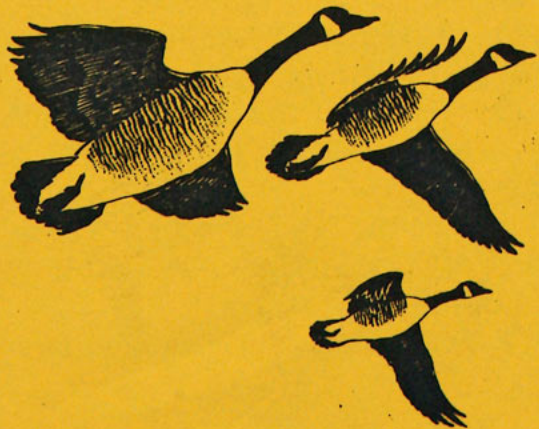
8. Ethics and etiquette of birding, especially if rare or unusual species are involved.

9. Beginning birding: a panel open to questions from novice birders.

10. Forecasts for species from state representatives.

11. Nest box projects and innovations.

Remember, this is your convention. The intention is to keep the convention lively, informative, and informal.



## Contributing Members

The following members have contributed monies above the normal membership fee to the IOU. We salute:

Bill S. Barker, Fred D. Brink, Dwight E. Brooke, William J. Brown, Antoinette Camarata, Dorothy M. Cornett, George E. Crossley, James J. Dinsmore, Stephen B. Dunbar, Gene Eash, Jeanette H. Eyerly, Charles R. Fuller, James L. Fuller, Jane C. Fuller, Lucille M. Gaffney, Chuck R. Gee, O.J. Gode, Jr., Elizabeth A. Goodwin, Edward C. Greer, Richard M. Hanft, Phyllis J. Harris, Ralph J. Heuer, Marlys J. Huff, Henry Kail, Dixie Kanago, Richard D. Kelley, Harvey A. Kirchgatter, Pearl R. Knoop, Darwin Koenig, Richard J. Kraemer, Sr., Sharon R. Laub, Roger Leslie, Clarence E. Lohff, Peter E. Lowther, James D. Mairs, Kathryn Maschmann, Mary M. Montgomery, Glenn L. Myers, Mary E. Noble, Marjorie J. Olson, B. June Parks, Peter C. Petersen, Francis A. Potter, Beth Proescholdt, Loretta M. Pursel, Harry Rector, Ed Savage, Margaret C. Seeck, Ruth A. Swaner, Carol A. Thompson, Mary Beth Vaughn, Gladys Wanek, Gertrude S. Weaver, Evelyn Jean White, Russell R. Widner, Beth H. Wilson.

## Research on Iowa Birds

One of the most characteristic birds of Iowa's grasslands is the Dickcissel. Although the Dickcissel is a fairly common bird, the number found in Iowa varies greatly from year to year. Some years they seem to be everywhere and other years they are harder to find. Dickcissels also may be declining in numbers, and some people think that they may disappear in the near future. Dickcissels have been studied intensively but much still remains to be learned about them. A current study by Larry Igl, a graduate student at Iowa State University, should provide information on how faithful Dickcissels are to their nest sites and how they can nest successfully in an agricultural ecosystem.

In Iowa, Dickcissels often nest in alfalfa fields. Alfalfa provides good nesting cover but their nests and territories commonly are destroyed when the alfalfa is cut. Larry wondered if those same individuals returned to nest in the same place after their first territory was destroyed or if different individuals occupied the area the second time. Because the Dickcissel is so nomadic, it would not be surprising if the birds moved to another field when their territory was destroyed but there are no data to support this.

Larry is studying Dickcissels on several farms near Greenfield in Adair County. In 1988 his research took an unexpected turn when the drought led to poorer hay crops than normal. He found that when the first hay crop was cut, most Dickcissels left the field although a few remained around the edges. One of the birds he marked on the field during the first nesting left the field when it was mowed and then returned there and re-nested after five weeks, much longer than the normal re-nesting interval. Thus the birds that were nesting there later in the season must have been different individuals but he doesn't know where they came from. Since 1988 was such an unusually dry year, Larry is not sure if it is typical for Dickcissels to disperse when their nests are destroyed or if they will usually return and try to re-nest. He is hoping for more normal weather in 1989 so he can test his ideas.

Larry is a native of Wisconsin and received a B.S. in wildlife biology from the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point. He hopes to get a job in wildlife biology when he finishes his M.S. His research has been supported by a number of groups including the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation, Association of Field Ornithologists, Wilson Ornithological Society, Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Sigma Xi, and the Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund.



**The Iowa Ornithologists' Union Fall Meeting**  
**Presbyterian Camp**  
**West Lake Okoboji, Iowa**  
**September 15-17, 1989**

Friday, September 15, 7-9 PM. Registration and social gathering at meeting headquarters, Presbyterian Camp, West Lake Okoboji. (See map for directions). Refreshments, information about the meeting, field trips, and birding the Iowa Great Lakes area.

Saturday, September 16, 6:30 AM.

Full breakfast, Presbyterian Camp.

Field trips depart 7:00 AM from camp parking lot.

1. Kattleson Hogback, Cayler Prairie, Rush Lake (Osceola County), and Jemerson Slough.
2. Spring Run, east side of Spirit Lake, Swan Lake (Dickinson County), Christopherson Slough, and Anderson Prairie (Emmet County).
3. Ruthven area, Dan Greene Slough, Dewey's Pasture, and Trumbull Lake (Clay and Palo Alto Counties).
4. Ingham Lake, High Lake, and West Swan Lake, Cheever Lake, and Four Mile Lake (Emmet County).

NOTE: Tour leaders will attend the Friday evening orientation meeting. Leaders may modify their tours depending upon the birding factors that day, but the areas visited will generally correspond as described.

11:00 AM.	Late registration, Presbyterian Camp.
11:45-12:30	Lunch, Presbyterian Camp.
12:30-1:15 PM.	Birding the Iowa Great Lakes (Jim & Steve Dinsmore Hank Zaletel).
1:15-2:00 PM.	Wood Duck Nest Box Program at Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge (John Guthrie, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service).
2:00-2:45 PM.	Wings - Adaption to Flight (Jim Dinsmore).
2:45-3:30 PM.	Waterfowl Identification Techniques (IOU Records Committee).
3:45 PM.	IOU Business Meeting.
6:00 PM	Lake West Okoboji "pelagic" cruise trip and catered picnic dinner aboard the Queen II. Park in Amusement Park parking lot, Arnolds Park, and depart from the dock at Amusement Park. Casual dress. Cruise time: 1 1/2 hours.
8:00 PM.	Evening speaker Larry Stone, Des Moines Register, Presbyterian Camp.

Sunday, September 17.

6:30 AM.	Full breakfast, Presbyterian Camp.
7:00 AM.	Field trips depart from Presbyterian Camp parking lot (same as Saturday).
11:00 AM.	IOU Board of Directors/Committee Meetings to be announced.
12:15 PM.	Outside picnic lunch and bird list compilation, Presbyterian Camp.

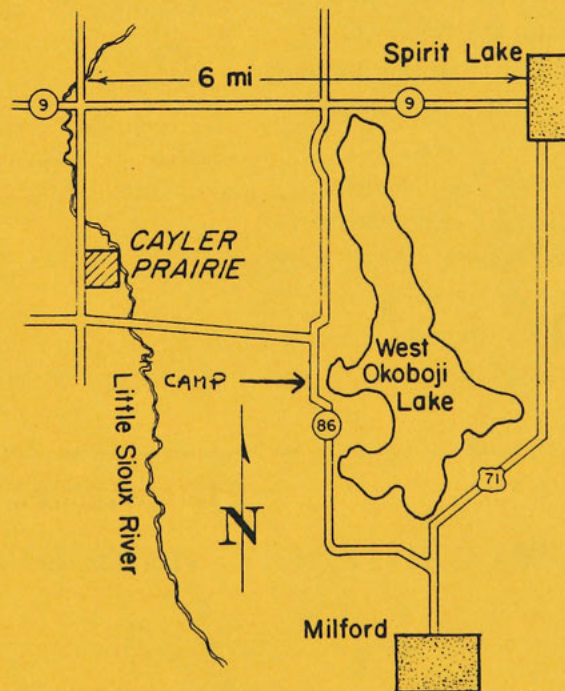
Lodging at Presbyterian Camp. \$6.00 per person per night (bring bedding and towels). 100 places available with sexes separated. Each cabin or lodge has indoor bathroom and shower. If requests for Camp lodging exceed availability, priority given in order of advance registration.

Rules at the Presbyterian Camp provide for no smoking inside of buildings or use of alcoholic beverages.

Please register by September 6, 1989. Send registrations (and make payable) to Harold White, Box 382, Estherville, Iowa 51334. For information call Harold White from 6-9 PM, weekdays and Saturday and Sunday afternoons and evenings 712/362-7010. If no answer 712/867-4759.

Motels: (all area codes are 712)

- Cottage Junction Motel, Spirit Lake,  
336-1450, \$30/50.
- Crescent Beach Resort, Crescent Beach, Milford,  
337-3351, \$20/42.
- Four Seasons, Arnolds Park,  
332-2103, \$55/75.
- Palace Motel, Milford,  
338-4701, \$33.28/44.60.
- Okoboji Motel, Arnolds Park,  
332-2149, \$36.50/56.50.
- Triggs Lakeshore Motel, Arnolds Park,  
332-2215, \$39/47.



Campsites:

- Gull Point State Park,  
337-3870, \$6.00/8.00.
- Emerson Bay Campgrounds,  
337-3805, \$6.00/8.00.
- City of Arnolds Park Campgrounds,  
332-2341, \$6.00/8.00.
- Orrs Camp Winakawin,  
332-5132, \$8.00/12.00.

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Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Registration fee: \$5.00 per person.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Lodging: \$6.00 per night; Friday \_\_\_\_\_ males \_\_\_\_\_ female..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday \_\_\_\_\_ males \_\_\_\_\_ female..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Meals: Saturday—breakfast—\$3.00..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday—lunch—\$4.00..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday—dinner w/cruise \$10.00..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday—breakfast—\$3.00..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday—lunch—\$4.00..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Name That Bird

Assembled by members of the Quad City Audubon Society (who wish to remain anonymous) for the Spring 1989 meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union. Still undergoing revision and amendment, ad nauseum.

Clue:

1. A splendid warship\_\_\_\_\_
2. Decoy\_\_\_\_\_
3. What kids do to the donkey\_\_\_\_\_
4. Snow remover\_\_\_\_\_
5. Said to be quick to temper\_\_\_\_\_
6. Over-the-hill wife\_\_\_\_\_
7. O-shower\_\_\_\_\_
8. Gone with the wind\_\_\_\_\_
9. Golfer's dream\_\_\_\_\_
10. Fuzzier\_\_\_\_\_
11. Arthur's wizard\_\_\_\_\_
12. Sad complainer\_\_\_\_\_
13. Wise complainer\_\_\_\_\_
14. Robert Pale\_\_\_\_\_
15. Split by Lincoln\_\_\_\_\_
16. Who's "\_\_\_\_\_" now? (Connie Francis)

17. Used for big time lifting\_\_\_\_\_
18. Bequeath it\_\_\_\_\_
19. Itinerant squealer\_\_\_\_\_
20. Heavenly humor\_\_\_\_\_

## Answers to Bird Quiz

1. Magnificent Frigatebird 2. Wood Duck  
3. Pintail 4. Shoveler 5. Redhead 6.  
Oldsquaw 7. Osprey 8. Kite 9. Eagle 10.  
Harrier 11. Merlin 12. Blue Grouse 13.  
Sage Grouse 14. Bobwhite 15. Rail 16.  
Sora 17. Whooping Crane 18. Willet 19.  
Wandering Tattler 20. Godwit

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## IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION



STATE BIRD OF IOWA: THE GOLDFINCH

HANK & LINDA ZALETEL  
715 WEST  
COLO, IOWA 50056



Thomas H Kent  
211 Richards St  
Iowa City, IA 52246

**IOWA BIRDLINE**



**319-338-9881**