

I.O.U. NEWS

Fall 1992 Iowa Ornithologists' Union Newsletter Volume 8 Number 3

1992 Fall Meeting

Ann Barker, Princeton —————

The fall meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union was held September 11-13, 1992 at the Village Creek Bible Camp near Lansing hosted by the Upper Iowa Audubon Society. Tucked into a hollow of northeast Iowa's forested hills, the camp provided a beautiful and comfortable setting for the weekend. Campers could take advantage of hiking trails, horseback riding, and spectacular scenery, as well as a lodge which provided ample space for socializing, snacks and beverages, and a large game room. John Cecil took on many challengers in a game of Ping Pong.

Field trips on Saturday and Sunday mornings took members to Yellow River Forest, Effigy Mounds National Monument, Wexford Creek, Heytsman Station, New Albin Slough, Fish Mounds Farm State Preserve, and Mt. Hosmer Park. Field trip leaders were: Francis Moore, Fred Leshner, Mary Jo Hartogh, and Dennis Carter. Hawks were on the move high above the Mississippi's bluffs, but warblers were difficult to find in great numbers, especially with the windy and somewhat warm weather. Birders at Yellow River Forest did manage to find the most wanted Black-throated Blue Warbler on both days.

Following lunch on Saturday, an excellent program was presented, including the following workshops:

- * Birding Allamakee County and other northeast Iowa areas, with Francis Moore and Dennis Carter.
- * Shorebird biology, with Jim Dinsmore.
- * Identifying difficult fall warblers, with Mark Proescholdt.

The business meeting was held after the workshops. Several intriguing door prizes were awarded at the end of the meeting.

At 6:30 p.m. members reconvened for the highlight of the weekend, the banquet. After a delicious meal, Eugene Armstrong and Ray Cummins presented the annual awards for the Big Day Competition. Results will appear in the next issue of the newsletter. The evening speaker was former Minnesota Ornithologists' Union and Wisconsin Society for Ornithology president Fred Leshner, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse. His topic was the role of the raven in the myth and culture of the Haida Gwaii, Queen Charlotte Islands near British Columbia.

I.O.U. birders found 104 species on Sunday, with an additional 28 on Saturday, for a weekend total of 132.

Our thanks to the Upper Iowa Audubon Society, especially Mary Jo Hartogh and Dennis Carter, for arranging and hosting a top notch meeting. Mark your calendars for the spring meeting which will be held in Keosauqua, 14-16 May, 1993. Southeast Iowa in spring is warbler heaven!

Attendance:

Adel: Janet Eppard.

Ames: Jim Dinsmore.

Ankeny: Maridel Jackson, Wendy Van DeWalle.

Booneville: Eloise & Eugene Armstrong.

Cedar Rapids: Dale & Helen Fye.

Centerville: Ray Cummins, Tom Johnson.

Clear Lake: Joan & Vergil Eness.

Clinton: Jacqueline Wacker.

Colo: Hank Zaletel.

Cresco: Marlene Michel.

Davenport: Dan Dorrance, Mary Lou & Pete Petersen.

Decorah: Dennis Carter, Lee Z. & Lindsay Lee, Arnie & Delores Rohm.

Des Moines: Doria Baldock, Bob & John Cecil, John & Mary Mitchell, Allison Wilkes.

Elgin: Bill & Diane Brownell.

Elma: Mary Jo Hartogh.

Estherville: Harold White.

Fairfield: Diane & Michael Porter, Jean-Pauline Sullivan.

Fort Dodge: Mary Kuhlman, Dorothy Zehr.

Iowa City: Margrieta Delle, Drew & Judith Dillman, Bud Gode, Rick Hollis.

Lake Mills: Sibyl Sand.

Lansing: Bruce Luebke.

Liscomb: Beth & Mark Proescholdt.

Marquette: Pam & Pat

Heidenreich.

Marshalltown: Russell Widner.

Mason City: Carolyn Fischer, Rita Goranson, Beth McBride, Jan & Jim Walter.

Nora Springs: Reve Pedelty.
Norwalk: Ann Johnson, Sue Spieker.

Osceola: Beth Brown.

Otley: Tim Schantz.

Princeton: Ann Barker.

Ventura: Patricia Hansen.

Waterloo: Francis Moore.

West Des Moines: Pan & Reid Allen.

LaCrosse, WI: Fred Leshar.

1992 Bluebird Conference

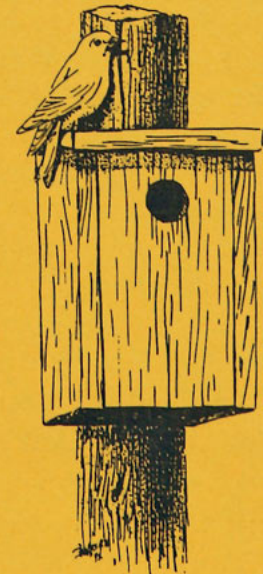
Carol Williams, Ames &

Maridel Jackson, Ankeny

Eighty people attended the annual, statewide Bluebird conference held at McFarland Park in Story County, August 22. Jaclyn Hill handled registration and offered the new state bluebird directory for sale. Pat Schlarbaum of the DNR gave the official welcome and then Rita Efta

presided over the regional reports. This was a delightful group of people who shared their knowledge, enthusiasm and concerns with the group. Some of the topics included the ant and blofly problem, and wren occupancy. Many of those attending monitor extensive

Bluebird trails, some with more than 300 boxes. Others in attendance have only one or two boxes near their homes and yards. One or two in the crowd monitored no boxes, but they had great interest in birds and the out-of-doors. Whatever the level of involvement, I'm sure everyone gained some insight into better ways to



manage a Bluebird trail.

It looks like most people had a very successful year raising Bluebirds, despite a difficult beginning. Nesting began quite late this year because of the cool spring weather which continued through August. There were several reports of birds which died in the extremely cold weather in April and May. Most of the problems occurred in Purple Martin houses where many martins tried to get into one cavity at a time and then could not escape and suffocated or starved to death. This phenomenon was also noticed in some Bluebird houses.

Some of the most interesting ideas came from the regional reports given by the bluebirders themselves. One of the newest ideas was a Bluebird box made of four-inch PVC pipe. The box has been in use for several years, and there is some indication of decreased sparrow use in these boxes. Also, there seems to be no problem with extreme heat or cold as one might suspect. One person mounts these PVC pipes on curved electrical conduit so that they can place them on wooden fenceposts and still keep them predator-free.

Debate still continues as to which box style is best. The research in Iowa on the slot box versus boxes with a round hole shows no significant difference with either Bluebird or sparrow use. The main advantage to the slot box appears to be the ease in making it, but beware. It is easy to make the slot wider than 11/16" and that may increase problems with Starling use.

To many of us, it seems any box with about the right dimensions will work if you can keep away predators like cats, raccoons, snakes, sparrows and wrens. Some of this can be accomplished by moving boxes to good habitat away from fencelines and outbuildings and by placing good predator guards under the houses. Used disc blades supported by a

nail or no. 9 wire seem to work well. Another alternative may be to buy aluminum vent pipe and install it under boxes. Make sure the pipe is loose enough to tip a little if a raccoon tries to get up on it.



Most importantly, try to begin working on the quality of the boxes, sites, and guards instead of the quantity. It is not so important that you put out a large number of boxes. It is important that you successfully raise and fledge Bluebirds from your boxes and that you do not raise House Sparrows.

IOU Field Trip November 7, 1992

The IOU will sponsor a field trip to Red Rock Reservoir on November 7, 1992. Although water level determines the quality of birding at Red Rock, target species will include all three scoters, Oldsquaw, Western Grebe, and any unusual gulls. The area is also prime habitat for an accidental jaeger, misdirected pelagic bird, or even a rare shorebird. Waterfowl migration should be at its peak and the lake always hosts a fair number of American White Pelicans.

The trip will leave from the Visitor Center on the south side of Red Rock Dam at 8:00 a.m. The group will meet for lunch at 12:00 noon at Cordova Park (formerly North Elk Rock State Park) on the north side of the lake approximately one mile east of highway 14 on G28. (Look for the silver water tower if you are lost.) IOU member Tim Schantz is the resident at Cordova Park and his feeder operation may produce a few surprises.

The IOU Board of Directors will meet after lunch at the park. Members are invited to attend. For additional information call Ann Johnson 515/961-2002.

Research on Iowa Birds

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a federal program which allows landowners to contract with the government to not plant crops on their land for 10 years. One of the main goals of the program is to cut down on soil erosion. Thus the landowner must plant some sort of cover crop on it, usually a mixture of grasses and forbs. To date about 2.2 million acres of Iowa is enrolled in CRP, resulting in a great increase in the amount of grassland in Iowa. Since this land isn't mowed, it has great potential to provide nesting habitat for a variety of grassland birds. As part of a multistate study of birds using CRP, Matthew Patterson, a graduate student at Iowa State University, has been studying nesting birds on CRP fields in Marshall County for the past two summers. Although CRP doesn't support a wide variety of birds, it does provide good nesting habitat for 13 species including meadowlarks, Dickcissels, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Bobolinks. One of the better finds this summer was nesting pairs of Upland Sandpipers on several of the study plots.

Matthew grew up in Ames and attended Earlham College in Indiana. After some time in the Boston area, he started graduate study at Iowa State in 1990. Matthew is an avid birder and participates in several Christmas Bird Counts each year. His most exciting recent find was a Mountain Bluebird mixed in with a flock of Eastern Bluebirds in Ames this past spring.

Matthew's work has been supported by a regional Agriculture Experiment Station grant, the Aldo Leopold Center for

Sustainable Agriculture, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Nongame Fund, and the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation.

IOU People

Several long time IOU members have passed away in recent months. **Lillian Serbousek** of Cedar Rapids, a member since 1932, **Fred Pierce** of Winthrop, first editor of *Iowa Bird Life*, and **Dr. Myrle Burk** of Waverly, a life member since 1949, will all have obituaries that will appear in *Iowa Bird Life*. **Helene Peasley**, 95, died in Des Moines 12 March, 1992. She joined the Des Moines Audubon Society in 1932 and the IOU in 1934 and served on the executive council during the 1948 term. She was active in both organizations. **Dwight Brooke**, 84, also of Des Moines, died 3 June, 1992.



Recent Literature on Iowa Birds

Fleskes, J.P. and E.E. Klaas. 1991. Dabbling duck recruitment in relation to habitat and predators at Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge. U.S. Fish & Wildl. Tech. Rep. 32, 19pp.

Samual, M.D. and others. 1991. Fall and winter distribution of Canada Geese in the Mississippi flyway. J. Wildlife Management 55:449-456. band recoveries including a number from Iowa.

Schaefer, J.M. and J.J. Dinsmore. 1992. Movement of a nestling between American Crow nests. Wilson Bulletin 104:185-187.

marshes, Ledges State Park, and Saylorville were well attended and produced most of the expected birds: Dickcissel, Bell's Vireo, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Norther Parula, Yellow-throated Warbler, etc. plus an unexpected Pileated Woodpecker.

A number of IOU members attended the meeting and helped put it on. In particular the efforts of IOU members Maridel Jackson, Bob Cecil, and Jane Clark in meeting people at the Des Moines airport, Sherry Dragula in arranging the commercial displays, Laura and DeWaine Jackson, and Dan Varland in running the softball game, 5-K run, and other events, Mike Meetz in lining up volunteers for numerous events, Jim Pease, Neil Bernstein, and Peter Lowther for judging the bird call contest, and Hank Zaletel, Steve Dinsmore, Maridel Jackson, Bob Myers, Ann Johnson, and Jack Dodd in leading field trips were instrumental in the success of the meeting.

Those who attended seemed unanimous in declaring it an event worth having in Iowa. A big "thank you" to all who contributed to its success.

Contributors to the IOU through August 31, 1992 ---

Ann & William Barker, Robert & Karen Bradley, Fred & Beverly Brink, Dwight & Margaret Brooke, Beth Brown, Delia & William Brown, Robert Carnes, Dennis Carter, Elizabeth Christiansen, Dorothy Cornett, David Dankert, James Dinsmore, Mary & Edward DuPree, William & Barbara Duval, Gene & Ruth Eash, Majorie Fee, Tharon & May Flaherty, G. Edgar, Jr. & Mary Folk, Charles Fuller, James Fuller, Chuck & Jeanne Gee, O.J. Gode, Jr., Richard Hanft, Barbara & Eury Henderson, Margaret Johnson, Henry Kail, Richard Kelly, Sharon Kieffert, Richard

Kraemer, Sr., Mina Landes, Sharon Laub, Kenneth Lowder, Richard & Nancy Lynch, Pauline & James Mairs, Kathryn Malmberg, Mary Montgomery, Joe Morrissey, Michael & Carol Newlon, Majorie Olson, Alexandra Ozolins, B. June Parks, Charles Peters, Randy Pinkston, Anna Marie Plunkett, Daniel & Angela Ray, Walter Rosene, Jr., Sylvan & Bernadine Runkel, Ed & Betty Savage, Margaret Seeck, Carol Thompson, Mr. & Mrs. A.W. Turner, Opal Uher, Russell & Joyce Widner, Eva Wiedemeyer, Eugene Wiemers, and Barbara Wilson.



New Members ---

Please welcome the following new members through August 31, 1992:

John Anderson, Midge Appleby, David Arbour, Jonathan Bear, Robert Beard, Senckenbergische Bibliothek (Germany) Keith Bridson, Francis Briggs, Central College, Gloria Coverdale, Tammy Coverdale, Ronald Cross, Wayne Cummins, Lindon Dau, Chuck & Nicki Davis, Elizabeth, Dennis & Bill Pavlich, Judith & Drew Dillman, Anne Downing, Robert Dunham, William & Barbara Duval, Cyrus & Delle Earhart, Bill Eimmermann, Helen Fedeler, Ruth Flinn, William French, Gary & Sharon Garton, Gilbertson Conservation Education Area, Darlene Hample, Dorothy Hardy, Lucille Hare, Dolores Helle, Gary Hobbs, Dale Hollman, Dennis Holmes, Mary Houston & Steve Barnes, Orville & Mary Howell, Sharon Kieffert,

Dan Kluza, Melinda Knutson, Vincent Kolb, Mary Lane, Richard Lawton, Richard & Nancy Lunch, Mary McGrane, Mary Meyer, Roger & Marianne Milkman, Cavlin & Shirley Miller, Liz Modrell, Arlene & Otto Mueller, Carl Nollen, Wendell Obermeier, Roberta Oppedahl, Jeannine Ouren, Twyla Parsley, Richard Peiser, George Perrin, Charles Peters, Gayle & Robert Petersen, Steve Ristau, Robert, Nancy & Jennifer Schulze, Doug & Anita Snook, Tex Sordahl, Robby Soukup, Emily & Eric Stakland, Jon Stravers, Ed Stursma, Benne & Bronwyn Sullivan, J.P. Sullivan, R.J. Thomas, Lucia Vesey, Eleanor Von Enwegen, Joan Wachtel, Judy Whetstine, Robert Wilson, Joseph Winckler, Mirian Woods, Rick Wright, and Dorothy Zehr.

Maps for Birders

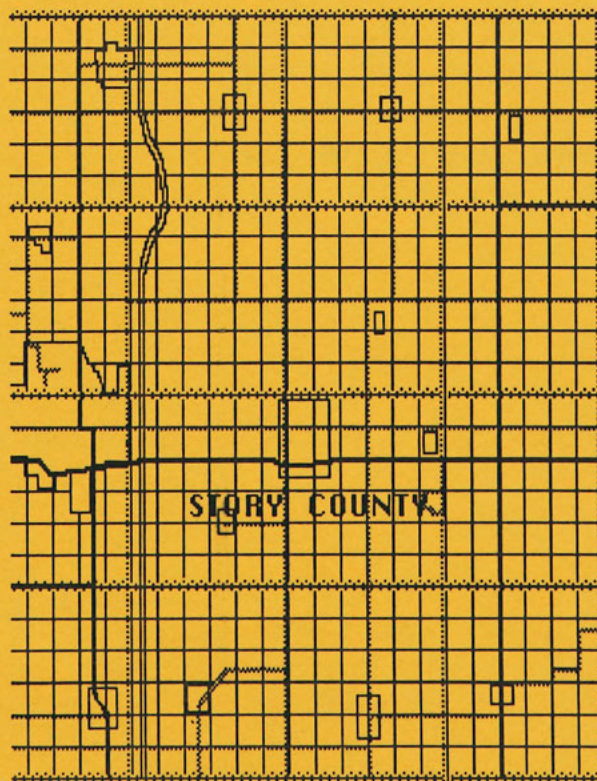
Jim Dinsmore, Ames

I.O.U. members often need maps that are more detailed than standard highway maps to find their way around Iowa. For years, many birders have used detailed county map available from the Iowa Department of Transportation in both 8 x 11 and a 16 x 22 inch format. Recently, a new choice, *Iowa Sportsman's Atlas* published by Sportman's Atlas of Lytton, Iowa became available.

This 10 x 13 inch atlas is spiral bound with the front and back covers plastic-covered to help protect it from the elements. The maps are arranged one county per page, starting in the northwest corner of Iowa (Lyon County) and moving east across the state, going row by row of counties. Next to each county road map is an alphabetical list of parks, wildlife areas, and similar areas in that county. For each area, its size, ownership, natural

features, and recreational activities are described. These areas are marked in red on the map. Names and phone numbers of the conservation officer and county conservation board director and a map showing the location of the county in Iowa are also on each page. Thus on one page, one can rapidly locate public areas and determine what types of habitats they contain. The book ends with an index to all of the areas covered, a valuable feature if you know the name of an area but don't know what county it is in.

There are a few problems. For the bifocal set, the maps are smaller than the 8 x 11 inch DOT maps and are hard to read. I noted several typos in the text, and at least a few of the areas were slightly mislocated on the maps although most I checked were accurate. The information will become dated very rapidly as new areas are acquired but that can't be avoided. All in all, I think that many birders will find this a useful atlas. Mine is already in my car.



Coming Dates

- Nov. 12 Quad City Audubon program "Birds of Texas" by Gil
Thur. Sandvick at 7:00 PM at Butterworth Center. Doris
 Sandvick: 319/225-6191.
- Nov. 14 Prairie Rapids Audubon (Waterloo) field trip to Yellow
Sat. River Forest. Meet at Logan Plaza at 7:00 AM. Francis Moore:
 319/232-0217.
- Nov. 17 Prairie Rapids Audubon program "Traveling and Birding"
Tues. by Barbara Jauch (birding tips for wildlife refuges) at
 7:00 PM at UNI Museum. Francis Moore: 319/232-0217.
- Nov. 19 Big Bluestem Audubon Society (Ames) program "Nature
Thurs. Photography" by Ty Smedes at 7:30 PM at the main bldg.
 Vet Med complex. Maridel Jackson: 515/964-0140.
- Nov. 21 Quad City Audubon field trip along the Mississippi for
Sat. waterfowl. Meet at Fisherman's Corner by Lock and Dam
 14, Hwy. 84, Hampton, Ill. at 7:30 AM. Pete Petersen:
 319/355-7051.

Christmas Count dates to the editors by November 20.

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