



I O U News

Iowa Ornithologists' Union Newsletter

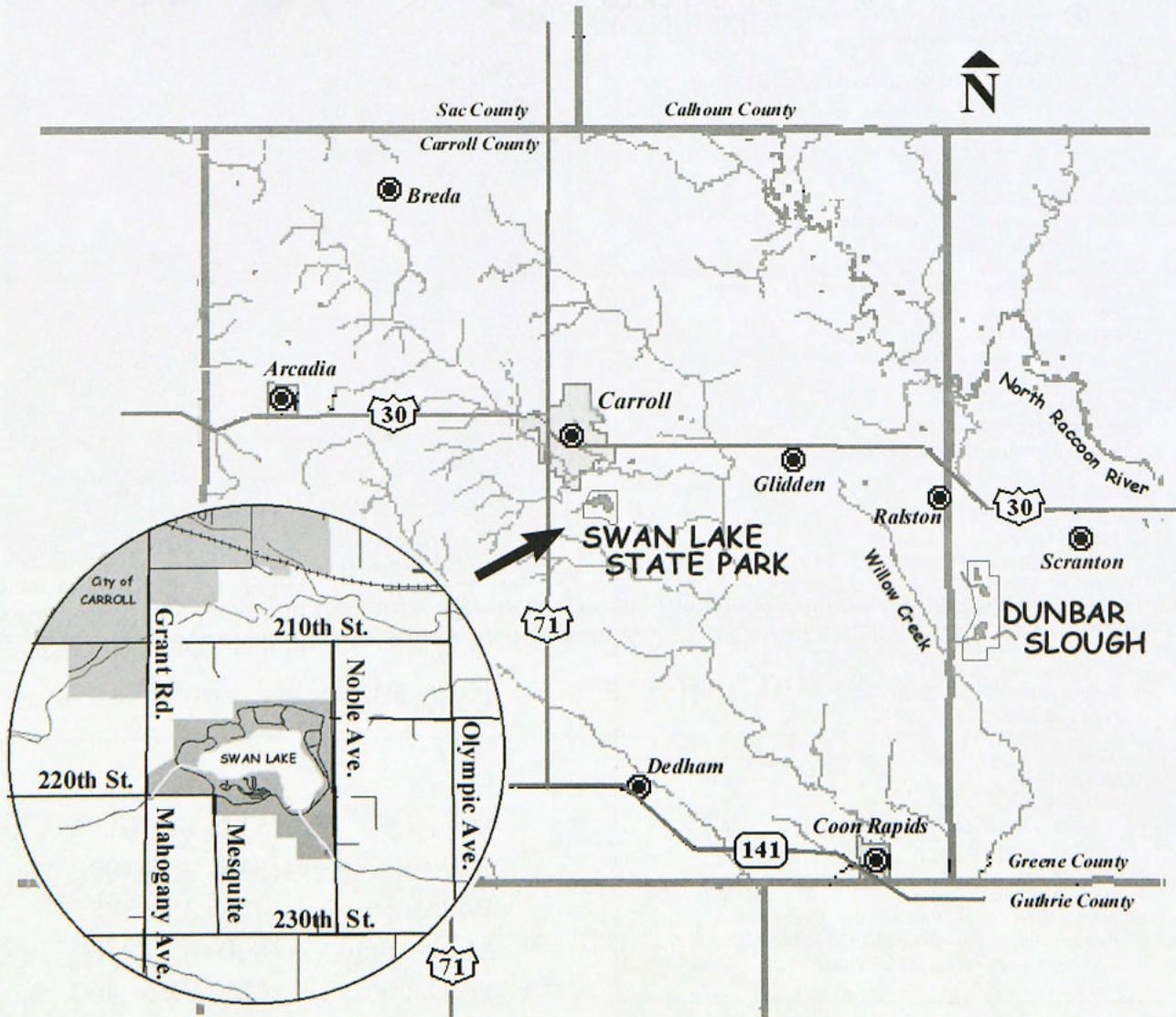
Fall 2001



Volume 17 - Number 3

2001 I.O.U. FALL MEETING Sept 7 - 9 • Carroll County

The 2001 I.O.U. Fall Meeting will be held September 7-9 in Carroll County, with activities planned at Swan Lake State Park, and field trips at Dunbar Slough, Tomahawk Marsh and the Raccoon River. The meeting itself will be held at Tony's Restaurant in Carroll.



(details on page 4)

**IOU News is a quarterly publication of
The Iowa Ornithologists' Union**

Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Founded 1923

Officers:

President- **Phil Walsh**; 137 51st St. Des Moines IA50312
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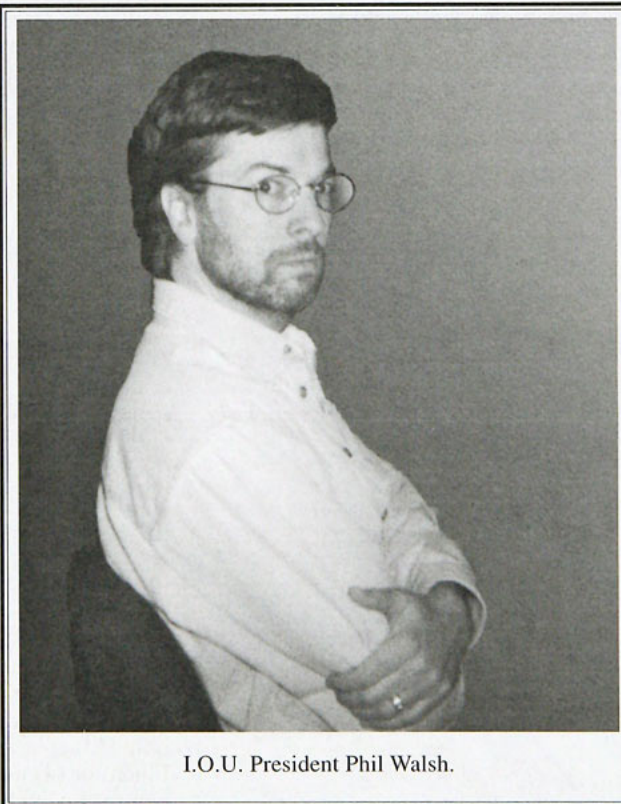
Send thanks to:

Linda Zaletel, Hank Zaletel,
 Bob Cecil, Jane Clark, Jim Dinsmore, Dave Edwards,
 Tom Johnson, Karl Jungbluth, Tom Kent, Bob Manwell,
 Sue Mattix, Mark Orsag, Mark Proescholdt, Rob Thelen

Deadlines for Submission of Materials

IOU News is published four times per year, coincidental with the four birding seasons which are spelled the same as the four natural seasons- spring, summer, fall and winter. In order to accommodate the timely assembling of the newsletter, please have submissions to the editor or an acquaintance by the deadlines listed below.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Coverage</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
Spring	March 1 - May 31	February 15
Summer	June 1 - July 31	May 15
Fall	August 1 - Nov 30	July 15
Winter	Dec 1 - Feb 28	November 15



I.O.U. President Phil Walsh.

Regional Rare Bird Alerts

Iowa	(712) 364-2863
Missouri	(573) 445-9115
NW Illinois	(815) 965-3095
Wisconsin	(414) 352-3857
Minnesota	(800) 657-3700
So Dakota	(605) 773-6460

Support the I.O.U.

Mark Proescholdt,
past IOU President

Our costs of publishing *Iowa Bird Life* have increased dramatically as we have gone to electronic printing (as most of the journals and magazines have done). As a result, the IOU Board has cut out "Outside Projects" monies in our budget for 2001 to come close to balancing the budget. There are projects which are worthy of IOU's support. One is Audubon's Important Bird Areas which is a national program and will really start to be worked on in Iowa in the upcoming months and years.

Would IOU members consider an extra contribution to IOU for "Outside Projects", *Iowa Bird Life* support, the Birdline, or other areas to help IOU maintain strong, vigorous programs in the years ahead? Also, please consider recruiting a new member to IOU. A larger membership can help IOU do more things. Consider a gift IOU membership for birthdays, graduations, anniversaries, or other occasions. Thanks for your consideration! Checks to the Iowa Ornithologists' Union can be sent to the treasurer, Rita Goranson, 115 Lakeview Drive, Mason City, IA 50401.



IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS PROGRAM

From its 1985 European start by Bird Life International, the Important Bird Areas program (IBA) has led to the recognition and protection of some 3,500 habitat sites across the globe. Through the years it has become a world-wide effort, with the first U.S. program beginning in 1995. Currently, it is active also throughout Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

Habitat degradation and loss is the most serious threat facing populations of birds and other wildlife, at home and abroad. The Important Bird Areas Program is a worldwide response to this challenge. The aim of the IBA Program is to identify and conserve key sites for birds. An Important Bird Area is a place that provides essential habitat for one or more species of bird, whether in breeding season, inter, or during migration.

More than 500 Important Bird Areas have been identified in the United States through the partnership efforts of the National Audubon Society and American Bird Conservancy. Using objective scientific information and relying on the recommendations of experts throughout the U.S., a list and set of descriptions for these sites has been developed. For a site to be included, it must, during at least some part of the year, contain critical habitat that supports (1) significant numbers of an endangered or threatened species such as Piping Plover, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, or Kirtland's Warbler; (2) a Watch List species such as Black Rail, Cerulean Warbler, or Henslow's Sparrow; (3) a species with a limited range, such as Tricolored Blackbird, Yellow-billed Magpie, or Brown-capped Rosy-Finch; or (4) a significantly large concentration of breeding, migrating or wintering birds, including waterfowl,

seabirds, wading birds, raptors or landbirds.

The IBA effort in the state of Iowa is being coordinated through Audubon Iowa with the help of volunteers from the IOU. The state program is in the developmental stage, and there are not yet any Important Bird Areas identified in Iowa. A Scientific Advisory Panel has been established to finalize site selection criteria for IBAs in the state. With firm criteria for site definition, birders and naturalists across the state can properly nominate areas to be designated IBAs.

In other states in the upper midwest many important IBAs have already been designated. Most bordering states have at least one IBA. A partial list of these is:

- Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge, *Minnesota*,
- Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, *Illinois*,
- Fort Pierre National Grassland, *South Dakota*,
- Horicon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge, *Wisconsin*,
- Lake Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge, *Illinois*
- Lower Cache River Complex, *Illinois*,
- Nicolet National Forest, *Wisconsin*,
- Platte River and Rainwater Basin, *Nebraska*,
- Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge, *South Dakota*
- Superior National Forest, *Minnesota*

This article uses information and language from publications by both the National Audubon Society and the American Bird Conservancy. Ric Zarwell and Karl Jungbluth also contributed information.

Renew Your I.O.U. Membership On-Line at

<http://www.iowabirds.org>

Or email David Edwards at *dcejce@qwest.net*

2001 I.O.U. FALL MEETING

Sept 7 - 9 • Carroll County

Organizers: Rob Thelen, Tom Johnson

Schedule:

Friday 9/07/01

- 6pm to 10pm meet at Swan Lake State Park east side shelter house. Snacks, refreshments; plan for Saturday.

Saturday 9/08/01

- 7am meet at Swan Lake east side shelter house. Continental breakfast, \$3.00, or on your own. Organize field trips : Dunbar Slough, Raccoon River, Lake View / Tomahawk Marsh areas.
- 1pm meet at Swan Lake east side shelter house for lunch: BBQ pork sandwiches, beans, potato salad, spring salad, chips and drink, \$6.00.
- After lunch meet at Swan Lake east side shelter house.

Programs:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| • Marsh Birds of Iowa | <i>Reid and Pam Allen</i> |
| • Raptor Rehabilitation | <i>Kay Newman</i> |
| • Bird & Wildlife Photography | <i>Don Poggensee</i> |

- 7pm at Tony's Restaurant, Carroll. Banquet, 3-meat buffet, \$12.50. Fall Meeting, and

Evening presentation:

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| • North to Alaska – Birding in the 49th State | <i>Jim Dinsmore</i> |
|--|---------------------|

Sunday 9/09/01

- 7am meet at Swan Lake north side shelter house. Continental breakfast \$3.00, or on your own. Organize field trips.
- 1pm meet at Swan Lake north side shelter house. Lunch: soup, sandwiches and drink \$6.00. Final wrap-up and thanks and good-byes.

Registration:			
Saturday breakfast	\$ 3.00	x _____	= _____
Saturday lunch	\$ 6.00	x _____	= _____
Saturday evening	\$12.50	x _____	= _____
Sunday breakfast	\$ 3.00	x _____	= _____
Sunday lunch	\$ 6.00	x _____	= _____
Total			= _____
Send to: Rob Thelen 1744 Salinger Avenue Carroll, IA 51401			

Carroll Hotels

Super 8 East. \$57.70 - \$66.00, indoor pool, continental breakfast, whirlpool room, suites, restaurant and sports bar next door. (712) 792-6666.

Burke Inn. \$41.95 - \$60.00, continental breakfast, sauna, whirlpool room, suites, restaurant and sports bar next door. (712) 792-5156.

Super 8 North. \$54.42 - \$66.00, next door to McDonalds. 1/2 block north of Our House to Yours Consignment and gift store (Our store we just bought). (712) 792-4753.

Motel 71-30. \$30 - \$40, outdoor pool, mini golf. (712) 792-1100.

Carrollton Inn. \$61.95 - 2 people, indoor pool, sauna, whirlpool room, suites and lounge. Across from McDonalds. (712) 792-5600.

Garst Farm Resort Bed and Breakfast/Cabins, Coon Rapids about 20 miles southeast of Carroll. (712) 684-5240 or *FarmResort.com*

Camping at Swan Lake State Park, 2 miles so. of Carroll. Primitive \$9.00, Electric and Water \$10.00, + sewer \$11.00.

Carroll Restaurants

Burger King, jct.Hwy.s 71 & 30

Denny's Restaurant, Carroll Street

Family Table Restaurant, Hwy. 30 W.

Godfather's Pizza, Hwy. 30 & Quint

Hunan Chinese Restaurant, Hwy. 30 W.

Jade Garden, Hwy. 30 E.

Josie's Mexican and American Restaurant, Main Street

Kentucky Fried Chicken, E. 6th St.

MC Cafe, Hwy. 30 E.

McDonalds, Hwy. 71 N.

Taco John's, Hwy. 30 E.

Tony's Restaurant, jct. hwy.s 71 & 30

Bookmarks

Jim Dinsmore

This issue's featured site:

Maryland Mute Swan Task Force

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/wildlife/mstfpc.html#six>

Mute Swans are native to Europe and Asia. In the 1800s they were brought to North America and released on private estates, in parks, and in zoos. Eventually, some escaped from captivity and established wild populations along the East Coast. By the late 1900s, those populations has increased greatly and were established from New England south to Virginia. In addition, Mute Swans became established in Michigan about 1920 and then spread to Wisconsin. The first report of a wild Mute Swan in Iowa was in 1962. In 1973, they were reported nesting in Henry County. Since then there have been a number of reports of them in Iowa with an apparent increase in reports in recent years. Although Mute Swans are an attractive bird, they have some unpleasant characteristics. These include very aggressive behavior to-

ward other nesting waterfowl (and humans) and the tendency to uproot aquatic vegetation when they feed.

Because of these threats to native species, several states on the East Coast have tried to reduce Mute Swan numbers. This website that has been developed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources describes many of the issues related to Mute Swans and their interactions with other species. With House Sparrows, Rock Doves, European Starlings, and several other invasive species now established in Iowa, there is increasing concern about the advisability of allowing the Mute Swan to get established in the state. This website should help its readers better understand some of the issues related to invasive species and some of the possible solutions to those problems.



Fall Field Reports Due In Early December

The fall season extends from August 1 to November 30, making it the longest of the four bird reporting seasons. Not content with three months, the fall season annexed August at the expense of the summer season. Too many migrants in August, must be a fall month.

Every species classified *Regular* in Iowa has been recorded in the fall. In fact, 372 of the 403 species on the state list have been recorded in the fall. That's 92% of the list, and that means there's no reason you have to start your Year List on January 1. You could stay home the first seven months of the year, work on that novel, then go birding in the fall and still see as many birds as the Armstrongs.

Of the thirty-one species on the state list never recorded in the fall, nearly all are classified *Accidental*, which means "seen once to several ti-

mes, but less than 5 of last 10 years"†. Two of the species are *Casual*, which means "seen many years but not all, at least 3 and less than 9 of last 10 years"†. Can you determine which two casual species have never been recorded in the fall? Send your answer to *IOU News* for fun, fame, and a chance at a small prize not larger than a pumpkin.

Then, make careful notes of your sightings this fall, and send a summary of them to the fall Field Reports editor some time in the first few days of December. For each entry, include numbers of birds, dates, and brief comments. Birds classified *Casual* or *Accidental* or not yet included on the state list should be accompanied by more extensive documentation. Send to:

Paul Hertzell,
240 12th Street SE,
Mason City, IA, 50401
phertzell@rconnect.com.



†Official Checklist of Iowa Birds, 1998 Edition, T. H. Kent, in *Iowa Bird Life* 68:73-84.

Where There Are Birders, There Are Birds

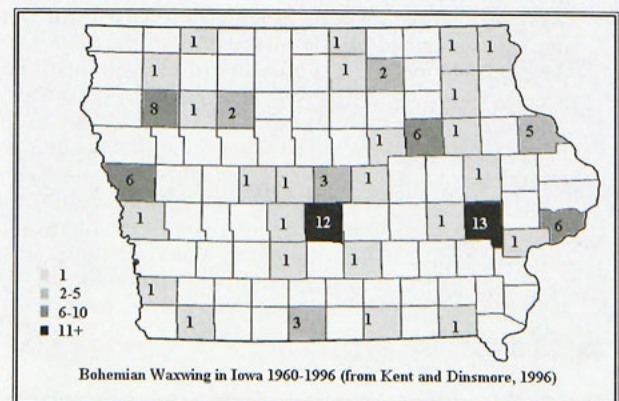
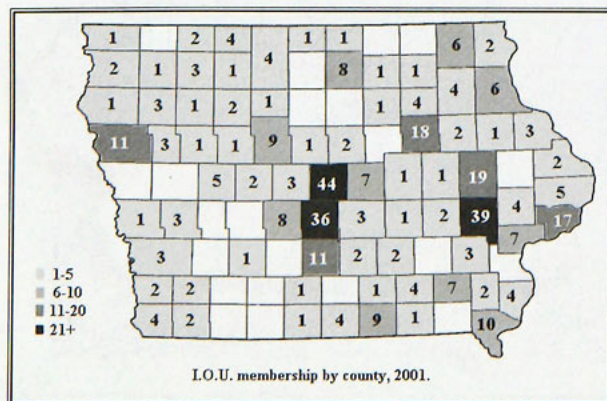
Everyone knows travelling to certain regions of the state changes one's chances at seeing certain birds. Worm-eating Warblers are best found in the southeast, Least Terns in the southwest. But for some hard-to-find species, the maps showing their occurrences in the state mirror the map showing the distribution of birders in the state, which, in turn, reflects the population as a whole. For example, the Bohemian Waxwing record appears spotty- until

it is compared with the map of IOU members by county. There is an obvious similarity; where there are birders, there are Bohemian Waxwings. This suggests that the birds are here, perhaps in low numbers, but detectable by those who can take the time to look. At the right time of year, probably there is one just down the street.

There are other regular, but rare species, like Yellow-crowned Night

Heron and Carolina Wren whose frequency of occurrences in Iowa have the same general pattern as the occurrence of IOU members across the state. Perhaps by looking harder, locally, we can find similar numbers of species as we do by travelling widely.

The Bohemian Waxwing map is from *Birds in Iowa*, by Tom Kent and Jim Dinsmore, 1996, and is used by permission.



Hawkwatch Starts 8th Season

Sue Mattix and Mark Orsag

The Hitchcock Nature Area Hawkwatch will kick off its 8th season on August 15th. For those of you who have never been there, Hitchcock Nature Area is located on hiway 183, about 5 miles north of Crescent and 10 miles north of Council Bluffs.

Our all-volunteer annual count is affiliated with HMANA (Hawk Migration Association of North America). Hitchcock Nature Area was picked as one of the top 30 sites in North America, by WILDBIRD magazine, to observe migrating raptors. Hitchcock has also been denoted, by the staff of Hawk Mountain Sanctuary (in Pennsylvania) as one of 250 sites of "worldwide significance" for the study and tabulation of migrating birds of prey. The Hitchcock hawk count was founded by Loren and Babs Padelford in 1992.

Last year, in 300+ hours of observation between August 15 and December 20, over 8,300 raptors and vultures of 19 different species migrated past the hawkwatch. Additionally, literally millions of other migrants, waterfowl, passerines, etc. were also recorded. While Hitchcock can produce some very slow days when conditions aren't "right", the show can be nothing short of spectacular when the weather cooperates.

We are looking to increase the size of our volunteer group this year in order to begin moving toward the 600+ hours that denote a "full-time" hawkwatch (like Hawk Ridge or Hawk Mountain). Thus, we are looking for interested people who can lend their time and effort. We are hoping to recruit new volunteers who are interested in pencilling in a regular appearance on their weekly schedules AND in those who might only be able to join us a few times during the season.



Worried about not being a raptor expert? Don't be... We can always use an extra pair of eyes, and our experienced counters are always ready to help newcomers learn. Even if you don't like hawks more than other birds (something we'll never be able to understand), there are great opportunities to survey passerine migration through the Missouri River Valley at Hitchcock by hiking the trails and driving the backroads adjacent to the nature area. We are very interested in recording everything (songbirds, butterflies, dragonflies) that passes through the Loess Hills and the Missouri River Valley (and believe us there is a lot going through).

For further information, contact:

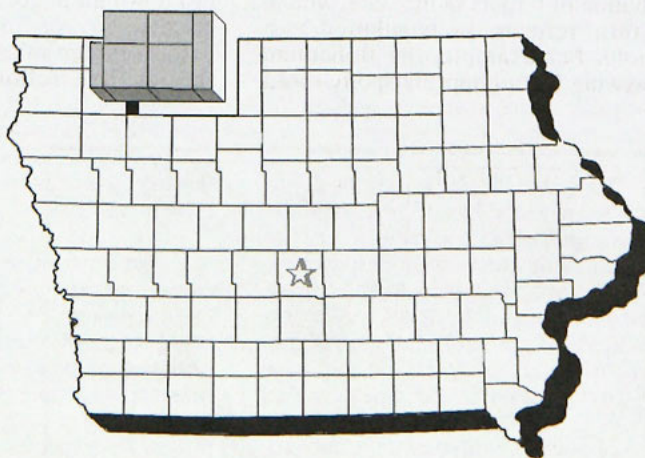
Sue Mattix, Hawkwatch President—Sister2sue@aol.com

Mark Orsag, Chief Hawk Counter and Compiler—morsag@doane.edu

Birding Map Available

A colorful birding area map entitled "Birding the Iowa Prairie Lakes Region" was recently published. The brochure features a detailed map of Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, and Palo Alto counties along with parts of adjacent counties. Numerous county, state, and federal areas are identified on these maps. Nine areas (e.g., Spring Run Wetland Complex, Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge) are described briefly on the back of the map. These descriptions include a discussion of the habitats found, access points, and birds typical of the area. A number of fine color photographs highlight some of the species that might be found at each area. This is the first birding area map that I am aware of for Iowa and is a great start to what I hope will be additional such efforts. A number of groups, agencies, and businesses contributed to publish this fine map. It is available at many locations in the Great Lakes Region, and also from Audubon Iowa, P.O. Box 71174, Des Moines, 50325 for \$2 to cover postage and handling.

—*Jim Dinsmore*



U. S. Endangered Species: Birds that occur or have occurred in Iowa

<u>Common Name (Scientific Name)</u>	<u>Iowa Status</u>
Whooping Crane (<i>Grus americana</i>)	Accidental
Eskimo Curlew (<i>Numenius borealis</i>)	Extirpated
Peregrine Falcon, <i>anatum</i> race (<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>)	Regular
Piping Plover (<i>Charadrius melodus</i>)	Regular
Wood Stork (<i>Mycteria americana</i>)	Accidental
Least Tern (<i>Sterna antillarum</i>)	Regular

[Source: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service]

HABITAT DESTRUCTION PUTS SONGBIRD AT RISK IN THE WEST

SACRAMENTO, Calif.-The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced that the Yellow-billed Cuckoo, a songbird found along rivers and streams, is in such severe decline in 10 western states as to warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act, but the agency's current workload precludes the proposal of the species for protection at this time.

The Yellow-billed Cuckoo is a secretive, robin-sized bird that in the western United States breeds in willow and cottonwood forests along rivers and streams. The bird's most notable features are a long, boldly-patterned black-and-white tail, and an elongated and down-curved bill, which is yellow on the bottom. Its plumage is grayish-brown above and white below. Adults have narrow, yellow eye rings. The bird primarily eats large insects including caterpillars and cicadas as well as the occasional small frog or lizard.

"Few breeding populations of the cuckoo are found in the West and those populations are in decline primarily as a result of destruction of their streamside habitat," said Steve Thompson, acting manager of the Service's California/Nevada Operations Office. "We believe that current scientific evidence supports Endangered Species Act (ESA) protection for these birds in the West; however, with the funds we have available, other higher priority listings that are already in the queue must come first."

Yellow-billed Cuckoos breed from southern Canada south to the Greater Antilles and Mexico. While the cuckoo is still relatively common east of the crest of the Rocky Mountains, biologists estimate that more than 90 percent of the bird's riparian (streamside) habitat in the West has been lost or degraded as a result of conversion to agriculture, dams and river flow management, bank protection, overgrazing, and competition from exotic plants such as tamarisk.

Today's action stems from a February 1998 petition, submitted by the Center for Biological Diversity (formerly the Southwest Center for Biological Diversity) on behalf of 22 groups in Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon and Utah to list the yellow-billed cuckoo as an endangered species. In February 2000, the Service determined that the petition presented substantial information and launched a comprehensive scientific review to determine whether the cuckoo required ESA protection in the West.

The Yellow-billed Cuckoo is listed as endangered under the California State Endangered Species Act. In Arizona, where the largest cuckoo population west of the Rocky Mountains continues to be found, the Arizona Department of Game and Fish considers the bird to be a species of concern, which does not confer statutory protection for the species. The cuckoo is designated as threatened in Utah. These State list-

ings do not confer the same regulatory protection as the Federal ESA.

For further information on the Yellow-billed Cuckoo, contact Jim Browning or Stephanie Brady at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office, 2800 Cottage Way, W-2605, Sacramento CA 95825 (telephone: 916-414-6600).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 94-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses more than 535 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

-From a July 2001 news release, by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Changes/Corrections to the IOU Membership List

Along with the Spring 2001 issue of *Iowa Bird Life*, members should have received the complete IOU membership list recently compiled and issued by David Edwards, IOU

Registrar. Listed below are changes and corrections to the published membership list, and new IOU members since the compilation.

Member	Change/Correction
Robert Nicholson	Member since 1949
Phyllis Nicholson	Member since 1959
Barbara Miller	Member since 1976
Paul Hertzell	Member since 1989
Edgar Folk	Life Member
Steve Clausen	Address: 1418 S. Harding Ave., Mason City, IA 50401-5519
William Ehmman	Address: PO Box 2610, Plattsburgh, NY 12901-0229
Michael Freiberg	Address: 15752 Hanover Dr, Spart, WI 54656
Larry & Margaret Stone	Phone/email: (563) 245-1517; lstone@alpinecom.net
Mrs Lee Struder	Address: PO Box 95, Elkhart, IA 50073-0095
Jenny Vickers	Address: 24 Portway FROME, Somerset, BA11 1QT, England; artsand.crafts@virgin.net
Michele Wise	Address: PO Box 434, Ellsworth, IA 50075-1434
Beverley Wuellner	Address: 3301 Sterling Dr, Apt 121 Burlington, IA 52601-8660

New Members

New Life Member (2001):	William Barker 25368 250th St, Princeton, IA 52768-9720 (563) 289-3175 lostcreek2@aol.com
New Member (2001):	Mary Ann & Ken Gregory PO Box 245, Dysart, IA 52224-0245 (Tama Cnty) (319) 476-4062 opal@netins.net
New Member (2001):	Diane Kussatz 25368 250th St, Princeton, IA 52768-9720 (563) 289-3175 lostcreek2@aol.com
New Member (2001):	Daniel Ray & Angela Bettini-Ray PO Box 38, Middle Amana, IA 52307-0038 (Iowa Cnty) (319) 622-3721 herays@netins.net

Experimental Sandhill Crane Flock Returns Unassisted to Wisconsin

Bob Manwell

A flock of Sandhill Cranes led by ultralight aircraft on a 1,250 mile migration training journey from central Wisconsin to Florida last fall, returned this spring on its own to their rearing and training grounds in the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin.

The cranes were part of an experiment to test rearing and training techniques and a migration route that would be used to establish a migrating Whooping Crane population between Wisconsin and Florida. The cranes left Florida on February 25 and their location was unknown until May.

"I couldn't be happier or more

pleased", said Steve Miller, administrator of the Department of Natural Resources Land Division. "We never lost faith in the sandhills but we were a little anxious when they left Florida because nothing in nature is a given. Now we're more excited than ever to start work with the whoopers once everything is in place."

Whooping Cranes are one of the world's most endangered birds. From a population low point estimated at 16 birds in the early 1940s, biologists and wildlife managers have slowly built the wild population up to around 180 birds which migrate between Canada's Northwest Territories and the Texas

Gulf coast. Establishing a second migrating flock would add to the species' survival chances. Captive whoopers and a nonmigrating flock living in Florida bring the world's total Whooping Crane population to about 380 birds.

*A longer version of this article first appeared in the June/July 2001 issue of **The Badger Birder**, newsletter for the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology. It is used here by permission.*

Excerpts

BIRDLOGY

Looking back over my family tree
I find no trace of insanity.
So I conclude that on that list
There never was a "birdologist".
Had I been informed some years ago
Of certain things which I now know,
I would have said, "It cannot be.
Such limbs grow not on my family tree."

Perhaps it's best we cannot see
What our future is to be.
My boy showed signs of intelligence
With a smattering of legal sense,
So I thought a lawyer he should be
And in my footsteps follow me.
Life passed as with an old sweet song
Till this "birdology" came along.

Since which time my hectic dreams
Prove life is not what it seems.
My basement is cluttered with owls and bats,
And also night herons, or heronettes,
Rooms filled with skins and mounted birds,
Many of which I have never heard.
My house is infested with "birdology" cranks
Who pilfer my larder and tender no thanks.

Davy Crockett and Boone, in their
palmiest days,
Could have not copied "birdologist" ways.
They travel the great wide open spaces
Regardless of danger, terrain, or places.
They sneak through the woods like a wraith,
without sound,
With the eye of a pointer, the scent of a hound.
No figure or form escapes, not one;
They find birds even where there are none.

Some mornings I get up at 4 a.m.
To help them start out birding again.
And now in the front yard at my home
They've erected a telescope to look at the moon.
And at all hours of every night
They are looking at birds through that
peep sight.
Oh Lord, I wonder why it should be
Such a limb should sprout from my family tree!

—Judge C. C. Ayres, Sr., 1948
Ottumwa, Iowa
from: *Iowa Bird Life*, 18:31

Warblers make their journeys at night, reassuring themselves with faint lips and zips as they pass overhead in the dark. When the tiny notes fill the sky, it usually means a wave in the morning. If we put a low-powered tele-

scope on the moon on such a night we can see the silhouettes of the small transients passing across the luminous disc.

Roger Tory Peterson, 1948
Birds Over America,
Dodd, Mead & Company, N.Y.

In the autumn of 1952, observers all over the United States will be training telescopes on the moon to obtain counts of migrating birds passing before its disk. These counts will be used to determine the volume and direction of night migration at different times and places. By the analysis of such data, it will be possible to map the flow of migration, to study the effects of weather, and to determine the hour-to-hour pattern of activity. The methods to be employed, and some of the surprising results already achieved by them have been described in a recent paper by George H. Lowery, Jr. ("A Quantitative Study of Nocturnal Bird Migration," University of Kansas Publications, Museum of Natural History, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 361-472).

In a previous cooperative investigation in the spring of 1948, participated in by over 200 bird students and astronomers at 30 widely separated stations, Iowa was represented by the excellent work of a group at Ottumwa under the direction of Charles C. Ayers, Jr. There, 44 hours of moon-watching, covering 10 nights in April and May, yielded the second highest estimated total of migrants per mile of front to be report that year – 134,000 birds.

Robert J. Newman, 1952
General Notes,
Iowa Bird Life, 22:28-30

This ability to witness nocturnal migration was the subject of a nationwide observation during five days in early October, 1952. This study involved 1391 observers in 45 of the 48 states.

Although the observers considered only two factors, the number of birds and the direction of their flight, final

analysis of the data took more than a decade due to the factoring in of local weather patterns and other complications. Overall, the study produced as many questions as answers, but suggested that Midwest migrations extended over vast areas, and may not necessarily follow river systems as once thought.

Robert Cecil, 1994
IOU News, Fall 1994, 10(3)

It was the twenty-third of September, and the moon was a night past full, casting a lovely, pearly light through rainclouds that thinned and fragmented with the passing cold front. I sat on the front steps of my old farmhouse, adjusting the legs of a tripod and focusing my spotting scope on the face of the moon. Checking my watch, I made a note on the clipboard by my side, squinted through the eyepiece, and began waiting.

Scott Weidensaul, 1999
Living on the Wind,
North Point Press, N.Y.

MOON WATCHING. A technique for studying certain aspects of nocturnal bird migration, made popular by Lowery and Newman (Newman, 1952). The procedure for collecting the raw data is quite simple. In a typical instance an observer trains an ordinary 20x spotting telescope on the face of the moon, usually from two days before to two days after the full moon, when the maximum lunar surface is illuminated. Birds seen flying across the moon are recorded in terms of their numbers, the size of their image, the time of their passing, and their direction in relation to the moon face, e.g., "9 o'clock to 3 o'clock". If to this information the observer adds the elevation of the moon—he can then calculate the *real* direction and number of birds passing on a mile front using a formula and table devised by Nisbet (1959).

Christopher Leahy, 1982
The Birdwatcher's Companion,
Hill and Wang, N.Y.

Festival to Highlight 10,000 Pelicans

Sunday, September 16 is the day of the second annual Pelican Festival held at Jester Park on the northwest side of Saylorville Lake. View the pelicans through spotting scopes and listen to a variety of educational programs throughout the day.

As many as 10,000 pelicans can be found on the lake from mid-August through September as they gather en route to their southern wintering grounds. Jester Park's Camp Area #4 is one of the best viewing areas to see these magnificent birds.

Bring your younger family members to the "kids" tent for games and other fun projects. Numerous free opportunities will await people of all ages from around the state. The event will take place from 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. at Camp Area #4.

Can't attend the Pelican Festival or want a sneak peak of the pelicans? Viewing opportunities and educational programs will be provided on Saturday, August 25 and Sunday, September 9, from 2 - 4 p.m. at Jester Park, Camp Area #4. Educational programs will focus on migrating waterfowl at Saylorville Lake.

Fall is an exciting time on the lake. Be a part of the excitement and bring your binoculars! Polk County Conservation Board, Audubon Iowa and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Saylorville Lake are co-sponsors of the event.

This announcement was provided to IOU members by Jane Clark.

Adjectives overheard describing the field trips at the Spring Meeting: *fabulous, spectacular, bodacious, cecilicious, birdy, fun, worm-eating.*

Things To Do

August 15 - December 20

8th season of Hitchcock Nature Area Hawkwatch. Hitchcock Nature Area is located on highway 183, about 5 miles north of Crescent and 10 miles north of Council Bluffs.

August 25

Field Trip to Rochester Cemetery with the Quad City Audubon Society. Half-day walk through a late summer prairie. Contact: Carol Rogers (319) 324-8897

September 3

Cardinal Marsh Field Trip with the Upper Iowa Audubon Society. Meet at parking lot east of the Decorah municipal building at 8am or at the SE corner of the marsh at 8:30. Shorebirds, warblers and other migrants, late summer wildflowers. Contact: Dennis Carter (563) 547-3187.

September 7-9

IOU Fall Meeting in Carroll County. Speakers: Jim Dinsmore, Don Poggensee, Kay Newman, Reid and Pam Allen. Field trips to Dunbar Slough, Tomahawk Marsh, Raccoon River. See details on pages 1, 4, 5.

September 15

Annual Hawkwatch at Stainbrook Preserve, with the Iowa City Bird Club. Contact: Karen Disbrow 339-1017.

September 16

Pelican Watch Festival. Jester Park on Saylorville Lake, Polk County.

September 22, 23

Hawkwatch at Effigy Mounds, Marquette, with the Big Bluestem Audubon Society.

September 28-29

Audubon Iowa Annual Conference, Sioux City, IA. Theme: The Missouri River and western Iowa landscape as it looked to Lewis & Clark and John James Audubon during their explorations. Western Iowa Tech campus plus field trips.

November 30

Fall Field Reports due. Send to Paul Hertzelt, 240 12th St. SE, Mason City, IA., phertzelt@rconnect.com

In the Region

August 30 - Sept 3

Midwest Birding Symposium, Green Bay, WI; theme: wetlands; field trips and workshops; speakers include John Acorn, George Archibald, Kenn Kaufman, Arthur Morris, Father Tom Pincelli, Peter Stangel, Eldon Greij. Contact Bill Hubert (800) 558-1544.

September 14 - 16

MOU Hawk Weekend at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, and UMD in Duluth, MN. Programs, field trips, hawks, hawks and hawks.

September 14 - 17

National Watchable Wildlife Conference, St. Paul, MN. Lectures, workshops, MOU-led field trips. Learn the latest and most successful means for developing wildlife-viewing programs. Contact Minnesota Office of Tourism (800) 657-3637.

September 28 - 30

Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Fall Field Days, at Halsey, Nebraska. Contact: Janis Paseka, paseka@tvsonline.com

Iowa Ornithologists' Union
2308 State Avenue
Ames, IA 50014

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