

I.O.U. NEWS

Spring 1993 Iowa Ornithologists' Union Newsletter Volume 9 Number 1

Eagle & Barn Owl Nest News

Bruce Ehresman, Boone

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Information received so far indicates there are at least 14 active Bald Eagle nests this year (1992), which is 3 more than last year. One of the new nests is along the Wapsipinicon River in Jones County. Another new nest is along the Yellow River in Allamakee County. It was first discovered by Terry Little during his northeast Iowa pilgrimage this past May. What is of special interest is the nest is in a white pine tree, one of three old timers still standing on a ridge. There are historical records of Bald Eagles nesting in white pines in Iowa. In fact, eagles seem to prefer to nest in pines in states where pines are plentiful. But to my knowledge, this is the first eagle nest in an Iowa pine in over a century.



Another Iowa endangered species, the Barn Owl, still doesn't seem to be making the recovery the Bald Eagle is. The Taylor County nest site has proven successful for the fourth year in a row. Seven young Barn Owls were produced this year in a nest structure put up by the landowner. The only other nest attempt known in Iowa this year was in a nest box in the Ehresman barn in Boone County. A wild, unbanded female mated with a free flying released male (rehabbed bird which came from the wild originally). The nest was unsuccessful because the male suddenly disappeared about 2 days before the 7 eggs would have begun hatching. The female abandoned the nest since she was dependent upon the male for food during incubation and early brooding. Shortly after the wild female left, a wild, unbanded male barn owl made his entrance to the barn and is now mated with a permanently

crippled female (once free-flying and wild) which had been used for propagation. It appears the female is now incubating eggs. The wild male was captured and banded and is now supplying meadow voles to his newly found mate.

I find it interesting that wild barn owls are turning up even in almost grassless, voleless Boone County. No doubt the presence of other Barn Owls is drawing them in. But still, if Barn Owls can exist in habitat-poor Boone County, there should be many more nesting pairs in the grassland rich areas of southern Iowa. The lack of documented nesting remains a dilemma.

Iowa Spring Bird Count

Pete Petersen, Davenport

In 1993 you can get in "on the ground floor" of a new Iowa bird count, the spring bird count. On Sunday, May 9, the first one will be conducted. This type of effort has been done in other states for many years and produces a wealth of data on spring migration. The plan is to hold the count on the Sunday which varies from May 6-12, each year. On many years this will be Mother's Day, but since it falls at the species peak for Iowa migration it is hard to avoid. Using a Saturday creates two problems: more people work on Saturday than Sunday, and it would conflict with the long-standing Illinois count.

The count will be organized by county. What is needed now are county coordinators to organize the effort in their or adjoining counties. A form for reporting will be sent to each coordinator prior to the count. There is no limit on participation, and counters can be in the field for any part of the 24 hours. The form will indicate species that need documentation and will be similar to reporting field sightings for Iowa Bird Life. The county coordinator will be responsible for avoiding overlapping coverage. To date four counties have coordinators: Clinton, Louisa, Muscatine and Scott. Please advise Pete Petersen, 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, IA 52803 by April 30 if you wish to join the effort.

Nominations for 1993/94 Year

The nominating committee consisting of Jim Dinsmore, chair, Beth Brown and Beth Proescholdt have proposed the following slate of officers to be voted on at the spring meeting: President - Ann Barker; Vice President - Jim Fuller; Board of Directors (three openings) - O.J. (Bud) Gode, Matthew Kenne, and Harold White (second term). All of these positions are for two year terms. Additional nominations may be made at the meeting, and the election for these positions will be held at that time.



Big Day County 1993

The IOU Big Day Count's primary objectives are to have fun and to promote friendly competition. They also help to raise funds for the IOU endowment fund and special projects.

The counts are divided into categories of statewide and county counts. Traveling plaques will be presented at the fall IOU meeting for highest species count for the state and county.

A minimum contribution of \$10.00 per team is required. The Big Day rules remain the same as last year. The counts can be taken any time up to May 31. Those wishing to participate need to request an entry form from Ray Cummins, 609 S. Main St., Centerville, IA 52544.

Release of Mailing List

At the suggestion of the general membership, the Board of Directors has established a policy that the sale of our mailing list will be considered on a case by case basis when requests are received, and that any decision to release the list will be made only when it is especially relevant to Iowa birders. For instance, an occasional request might be received from another birding organization to send information to our members.

If you wish to have your name deleted from any mailing list releases, or if you do not wish your telephone number published in the IOU's membership directory, please notify our treasurer: Pam Allen, 1601 Pleasant St., West Des Moines, IA 50265

State & County Bird Lists

Pete Petersen, Davenport

Members are encouraged to submit their state and county bird lists for the 1992 calendar year. Submission can be for one or all of the counties. The threshold for the state is 200 species and 150 for counties. This is a life long total and covers all species of wild birds positively recorded within the county or state. It is hoped that everyone will be able to submit a total of 150 species for their home county. One does not need to be a resident of Iowa, just an IOU member. Records through 1992 are due by May 23 and should be sent to Pete Petersen, 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, IA 52803.



Recent Literature on Iowa Birds

Dinsmore, S.J., J.J. Dinsmore, and D.L. Howell. 1993. Least Terns nesting on fly-ash deposits. Pp. 103-107 in Proc. The Missouri River and its tributaries: Piping Plover and Least Tern Symposium, South Dakota State Univ., Brookings.

Green Island Field Trip

An IOU field trip to the Green Island Wildlife Area in Jackson County will be held on Saturday, July 10th. This area has been a focus of DNR efforts in the past few years to upgrade wetland habitat.

We will look for rails, especially the King Rail, which was seen there last year in early July, and Least and American Bitterns. Other likely birds are Common Moorhen, other nesting waterfowl, Willow Flycatcher, Marsh Wren, nesting Bald Eagles, and early returning shorebirds.

At this time of year, an early start is impor-

tant, so we will meet at 5:30 AM in the large parking lot at the refuge. It is reached by leaving highway 52 and proceeding east into the now unincorporated village of Green Island. Continue east into the refuge, pass the Fish Lake Road, and the parking lot where we will meet is at the next intersection of refuge roads.

Motels:

Bellevue, Iowa

Anchor Inn 319/872-4655

Dubuque, Iowa

Days Inn 1-800-772-3297

Dubuque Inn 1-800-747-7760

Savanna, Illinois

Buck's Barn Resort 815/259-8278

Townsend's Motel 815/273-2041

Law's Motel 815/273-7728

Indianhead Motel 815/273-3423

There are additional motels in Dubuque and Clinton, and there are bed and breakfasts in Bellevue.

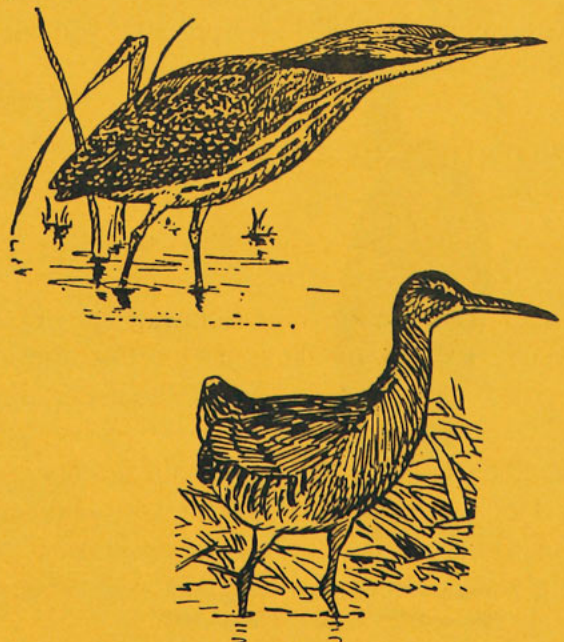
Camping:

Bellevue State Park, Bellevue, Iowa

Illinois Palisades State Park,

Savanna, Illinois

Pete Wickham of Cedar Rapids 319/363-6884 is the leader of the trip. Jim Fuller of Iowa City 319/338-3561 is the IOU contact and organizer.



IOU Spring Meeting

Hotel Manning - Keosauqua, Iowa

May 14-16, 1993

Friday, May 14 7:00 PM Evening social - registration
at Hotel Manning

Saturday, May 15 6:15-7:00 AM Breakfast
7:00-11:30 AM Field trips

Field trips:

Lacey-Keosauqua State Park

(one or more groups).

Target species: Northern Parula, Yellow-throated Warbler,
Cerulean Warbler, Summer Tanager,
Acadian Flycatcher, Carolina Wren, Henslow's Sparrow.

Croton Unit, Shimek State Forest

(one or more groups).

Target species: Worm-eating Warbler, Prairie Warbler,
Yellow-breasted Chat, Northern Parula, Cerulean Warbler,
Hooded Warbler, Blue Grosbeak, Carolina Wren,
Bewick's Wren.

Mississippi River Wetlands.

Target species: shorebirds, herons, waterfowl,
Prothonotary Warbler.

11:30-12:30 PM Lunch

1:00-3:15 PM Workshops

1:00 PM Distribution patterns of
Iowa Birds - Jim Dinsmore
1:45 PM Record keeping - Tom Kent
2:30 PM Johnson County Songbird
Project
3:30 PM IOU business meeting



7:00 PM IOU Banquet - Hotel Manning.
Banquet speakers: Eugene & Eloise Armstrong
Birding the Four Corners of Iowa.

Sunday, May 16

6:15-7:00 AM Breakfast

7:00-12:00 Field trips
Same as before except if there is sufficient interest,
we may organize a trip to Burlington to look for the
Eurasian Tree Sparrow.

Following this, the group will return to Lacey
Keosauqua or Shimek Forest.

12:00 noon Picnic lunch at Lacey Keosauqua State Park.

Lodging: All participants should make reservations with the Hotel Manning 319/293-3232. Reservations should be made immediately as space is limited. Hotel staff will assist late registrants in locating other lodging. Rates:

Motel (behind Hotel Manning) or Hotel Manning (shared bath).....\$30.
Hotel Manning (private bath).....\$40.
Hotel Manning (river view).....\$50.

Note: As a service to IOU, the Hotel Manning is allowing extra guests to stay in rooms at no extra cost. Please make room sharing arrangements yourself.

Camping is available at Lacey-Keosauqua State Park at Keosauqua.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Registration, \$5.00 per person.....\$ _____
Saturday breakfast, \$5.00.....\$ _____
Saturday lunch, \$6.00.....\$ _____
Saturday banquet, \$12.00.....\$ _____
Saturday breakfast, \$5.00.....\$ _____
Sunday lunch, \$5.00.....\$ _____
Total.....\$ _____

Send registration to: Bob Cecil, 1315 41st St., Des Moines, IA 50311
Registration deadline: April 30, 1993

I would like to participate in the canoe trip _____ number in party.

Heard on the Birdline (Mid-November to Mid-March)

Rare bird sightings reported to the Iowa Birdline are considered hypothetical until documented and accepted by the Records Committee.

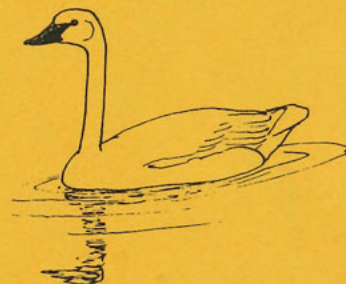
The bird creating the most excitement during the period was a Western Flycatcher (sp.) November 14-15, discovered by Ann Johnson and Beth Brown at Ahquabi State Park in Warren County. This bird represents a potential first state record, and only the third east of Kansas and Nebraska. Another November bird was a Red-necked Grebe above Lock & Dam #9 at Harper's Ferry on the 14th.

The number of unusual gull sightings was down, but there were Great Black-backed Gulls at Red Rock on December 9 and Bettendorf on February 28, Iceland Gulls of first and second winter and adult plumages, at Iowa City and Davenport in January-February, and a Black-legged Kittiwake at Red Rock on December 19.

A Townsend's Solitaire found on the Mason City CBC turned into a pair a week later. These birds in the Shell Rock River greenbelt southeast of Rock Falls were still present in mid-March. A female Mountain Bluebird was seen only on January 4 at Big Creek State Park, and an Oldsquaw spent the winter below the Red Rock Dam.

After several fall reports of Snowy Owls, none were reported after the first of the year. However, one discovered on the Bremer County CBC stayed in the same area for another week. Two neck-banded Trumpeter Swans were at Cedar Rapids most of the winter. Sightings of Northern Goshawks were numerous throughout the period.

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