



# I.O.U. News

Iowa Ornithologists' Union Newsletter

Summer 1999 • Volume 15 Number 2

## Iowa Hails Amazing Recovery Of Its Bald Eagle Population

Reprinted from the Philadelphia Inquirer

Marquette, Iowa - Over the chilly gray waters of the Mississippi River, a bald eagle rides the brisk currents of rising air in huge, lazy circles. As it turns against the dark trees, the broad white tail and snowy head of America's symbol are clearly visible.

This eagle, seemingly soaring for sport on an increasing nasty late autumn day, is part of a glowing ecological success story in Iowa. Bald eagles remain an endangered species here, but that is changing. In recent years, the birds have returned to nest at a rate far greater than wildlife biologists once thought possible.

"The growth has been exponential," said Bruce Ehresman of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the biologist responsible for counting the state's eagle nests. "We had hoped to have 10 nesting pairs by the turn of the century - and we may have 100 already."

That is all the more stunning because between 1907 and 1976, no nesting bald eagles were found in Iowa at all.

"We just hammered the heck out of them," Ehresman said, noting that at one point in the early 1960s there were only about 450

nesting pairs in the lower 48 states, and "none in Iowa. We were real close to losing them."

Primarily, two things killed off the eagles: loss of habitat and the post World War II introduction of vast amounts of chemicals, particularly DDT, into the ecosystem. DDT, which caused the thinning of eagle egg shells, and other organo-chlorine pesticides were banned in 1972. Five years later, the first nesting pair of bald eagles returned to Iowa.

By 1987, four nests were counted. By 1991, there were 11. Then the numbers started to explode: 50 in 1996, 60 in 1997. In January, when Iowa conducted its annual midwinter survey, 83 nests and 1,737 eagles, both state records were found.

"In 1973 there were two eagle nests in the whole (Upper Mississippi) district. They were a rarity, watched and guarded," said Clyde Male, a ranger with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Male oversees the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife Refuge, a 103-mile long corridor thick with bald eagles that stretches along the river through parts of Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota. "Now we have become so saturated with bald eagle nests that you can stand at one tree and see another nest and another and another."

Ehresman predicts that at the present rate, linked always to a continued improvement of the ecosystem, all of Iowa's 99 counties will have nesting eagles by 2010.

"We are seeing eagles nesting along the



Missouri River and on river systems across the state," Ehresman said. "Soon they will start filling in the gaps. The recovery of this magnificent species is nothing short of incredible - so far. Eagles are good environmental indicators. They have to have good water quality. They have to see the fish and they have to have fish to eat which are not contaminated."

In heavily wooded and largely undeveloped Allamakee County - the extreme northeastern corner of Iowa, bounded by the Mississippi on the east and Minnesota on the north - 29 pairs of nesting eagles were located last winter (1998), the most in any Iowa county.

Iowa is in the process of changing the species' designation from endangered to threatened; the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service altered the designation in 1995 for the entire lower 48, while allowing individual states and recovery areas to proceed at their own pace.

Bald eagles begin arriving here with the onset of cold weather, migrating from their summering grounds in the great north woods of Michigan, Minnesota and Ontario.

"They are not true migrators; they only go far enough to survive," Male said. And they are "visual migrators," moving during daylight by spotting landmarks such as mountains and rivers. That is one reason they work the Mississippi River flyway, the continent's great aerial highway.



## 1999 Spring Meeting by Becky Johnson, Centerville

The weekend of April 30-May 2 brought sunny skies and warm temperatures for the spring meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union (IOU) hosted by the Rathbun Lake Bird Club in Centerville.

Friday evening, April 30, the club held an open house at the Motel 60. Mary Montgomery was the host. Information packets were distributed by Virginia and Mary Padovan and Deb Egeland at the registration table. Joyce Bieber of the chamber of commerce greeted the birders. Displays were set up by the Appanoose County Conservation Board, the IOU's educational committee and a number of bird feeders by Jody Anderson were available for purchase.

Over 120 registrants went on the field trips Saturday and Sunday mornings to the Rathbun Lake area, Goodwater Marsh, Brown Slough, Woodpecker Church area, Sedan Bottoms and Sharon Bluffs State Park. Trips were led by Bill Heusinkveld, Tom Johnson, Dan Tiemeier, Charlotte Scott, Marsha Thomas, Ray Cummins and Mike Stephens.

Saturday afternoon included the following programs: "Iowa Winter Feeder Survey" by Dave Horn and Rick Hollis; "Iowa's Bald Eagle Recovery" by Bruce Ehresman; and "Land of the Inuit" by Dennis Thompson.

A display table was set up by photographer Larry Stone showing his current book "Listen to the Land" as well as some of his prints. The lunch and afternoon programs were held at the Fish Hatchery below Rathbun Dam.

The Saturday evening banquet was held at the Green Circle restaurant. The evening program was presented by Eugene and Eloise Armstrong on "Birding the Four Corners of Iowa." A silent auction included items donated by Rubbermaid Commercial Products, a Larry Zach framed print donated by Elegant Edges, and a goldfinch photo donated by Larry Stone. Part of the proceeds will go towards the Center 2000, the Wildlife Center to be built at Sharon Bluffs State Park.



A box lunch was served on Sunday noon. IOU vice president, Ann Johnson thanked the Rathbun Lake Bird Club for hosting the spring meeting. A total of 164 species of birds were seen during the meeting.

## Attendance:

**Adel:** Janet Eppard.  
**Algona:** Matt Kenne.  
**Ames:** Barb Bettis, Jim Dinsmore, Bruce & Marlene Ehresman, Mike & Paul Freiberg, David Horn, Dixie & Mike Overton.  
**Ankeny:** Carol & Galin Berrier, Maridel Jackson.  
**Bellevue, NE:** Babs & Loren Padelford.  
**Cedar Falls:** Alan Brown.  
**Centerville:** Jean Clark-Ayres, Ray Cummins, Bill & Doris Cummings, Deb Egeland, Bill & Marg Heusinkveld, Becky, Bryan & Tom Johnson, Avis & Bill Kimberlin, Bob & Kay Malmberg, Jill Manning, Mary Montgomery, Mary & Virginia Padovan, Charlotte & Dick Scott, Mike & Vicki Stephens, Marsha Thomas, Dan & Kathy Tiemeier.  
**Clarinda:** Mary Beth Vaughn.  
**Clear Lake:** Virgil Eness.  
**Clive:** Charlene & Jackson VerSteege  
**Davenport:** Mary Lou Petersen.  
**Des Moines:** Bob Cecil, Dian Dentlinger John & Mary Mitchell.  
**Elkader:** Larry Stone.  
**Fairfield:** Gloria & Murray Foster, Dave Killman, John Maguire.  
**Ft. Dodge:** Judy Garton, Mary Kuhlman, Sibyl Sand.  
**Ida Grove:** Don & Pam Poggensee.  
**Indianola:** Leonard Miller, James Sinclair, Doyle Woods.  
**Iowa City:** Ed & Jean Allgood, Drew & Judy Dillman, Karen Disbrow, Rick Hollis, Tom Kent.

**Johnston:** Cecile & Dennis Thompson.  
**Liscomb:** Beth & Mark Proescholdt.  
**Marshalltown:** Joan Buwalda, Charles & Martha Gazaway, Laura Glasgow, Edna Kirse, Linda Tasler.  
**Mason City:** Rita Goranson, Jan Walter.  
**Monmouth, IL:** David Hultgren.  
**Nevada:** Hank & Linda Zaletel.  
**Nora Springs:** Reva Pedelty.  
**Norwalk:** Ann Johnson.  
**Oskaloosa:** Douglas & Mary Beth Hunt.  
**Ottumwa:** Darlene Ayres, Nelson Hoskins.  
**Princeton:** Ann & Bill Barker.  
**Rock Island, IL:** Ava & Dan Dorrance.  
**Shenandoah:** Jean Braley, Barbara Cunningham, Marie Tiemann.  
**Story City:** Marilyn Lekwa, Martha Stebelton, Dorothy Wilcox.  
**Van Meter:** Eloise & Eugene Armstrong.  
**Waterloo:** Francis Moore.  
**West Des Moines:** Pam & Reid Allen.



## Heard on the Birdline

Spring 1999

March 1 - June 1

by Jim Fuller, Iowa City

All sightings reported to the Iowa Birdline are considered tentative until submitted and approved by the Records Committee of the Iowa Ornithologist's Union.

With five percent of the world's population of WHOOPING CRANES and the state's second record for GARGANEY, southwest Iowa in early April was the milieu for rarities during the spring season. Three



pairs of WHOOPING CRANES in Harrison County, and a family group of three near Essex in Page County, discovered on the 9th, were evidently displaced east of their normal migration route by an intense low pressure system. Both groups departed on south winds before noon on the 12th, but not before numerous eager birders had witnessed their presence in the state. The male GARGANEY was discovered by Rick Schmid on the 2nd and continued to cavort with a pair of BLUE-WINGED TEAL along the south shore of Forney Lake in Fremont County until the 14th. A YELLOW-BILLED LOON found at Clear Lake by Curt Nelson on April 18-19 is a potential first state record. It was replaced at that location on the 21st by a RED-THROATED LOON in basic plumage.

The early spring season saw reports of holdover OLDSQUAW on the Iowa River at Iowa City, and THAYER'S GULLS at Red Rock Reservoir, both through March 17. GOLDEN EAGLES were still present in Allamakee and O'Brien Counties in early March, while March reports of LONG-EARED, SHORT-EARED and SAW-WHET OWLS were widespread, and the first SANDHILL CRANES appeared at Sweet Marsh in Bremer County on the 15th. A PRAIRIE FALCON was reported north of Fairfield on the 16th. The sighting of an adult COMMON BLACK-HEADED GULL at the north end of Spirit Lake on March 29 was a surprise, while in the opposite corner of the state, a FISH CROW was reported along the Mississippi River in Louisa County on March 26.

April opened with a record early BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER in Johnson County on the 1st. Normally, only small numbers of WHITE-FACED IBIS appear in the state each spring, but a sighting of this species from Fremont County on April 4 initiated a remarkable 13 additional reports, most of which came in April, including flocks of up to 15 birds in Fremont and Harrison Counties. In contrast, CINNAMON TEAL were reported only twice, south of Sergeant Bluff in Woodbury County on April 8-9, and at the Saylorville Reservoir April 18-20. SMITH'S LONGSPURS were seen at four locations in early to mid-April; north of Lone Tree in Johnson County, at Maynard Reece WMA in Kossuth County, Dewey's Pasture in Palo Alto County, and Welsh Lake in Dickinson County. RED-

NECKED GREBE sightings were also confined to mid-April with two at Blue Lake in Monona County, and singles at the Amana Lily Lake in Iowa County, and at Black Hawk Lake and Tomahawk Marsh in Sac County. Two unusual gulls also highlighted mid-April, with a LAUGHING GULL below the dam at Saylorville on the 16th, and a CALIFORNIA GULL at Carter Lake on the 18th.

Very unusual was the SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER which hung around a yard in Lansing on April 23 just long enough to be videotaped. At Fairfield, Diane Porter noticed BEWICK'S WRENS in her yard the second week of April, and eventually saw fledgling wrens there. Other BEWICK'S WRENS were found at the junkyard northwest of Argyle in Lee County, first reported on April 25. The only MARBLED GODWIT report of the season came from Errington Marsh in Polk County on April 8, while AMERICAN AVOCETS occurred at Barringer Slough in Clay County on April 25 and in Fremont County on May 13. YELLOW RAILS were reported twice during April, on the 16th at Calsow Prairie in Pochahontas County, and on the 19th at Zirbel Slough in Cerro Gordo County.

May is typically a month that provides a great number of unusual sightings, and this year was no exception. For the second year in a row, a BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING DUCK was seen in the state, this one was videotaped by the homeowner in a backyard backwater along the Iowa River north of Columbus Junction. A PACIFIC LOON graced the waters of Hallet's Quarry at Ames for a week, May 8-15. A LAZULI BUNTING visited a feeder near Honey Creek in Pottawattamie County May 9-10. A pair of BLACK-NECKED STILTS gave numerous central Iowa birders a thrill when they appeared at Harrier Marsh in Boone County May 4-6. A CLARK'S GREBE was seen



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**1928 6th St.**  
**Nevada, IA 50201**  
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with up to three WESTERN GREBES at South Blue Lake in Monona County for a week, May 21-26. SNOWY EGRETS and LITTLE BLUE HERONS were each reported three times during May, and MISSISSIPPI KITES were seen at Hickory Hill Park in Iowa City on May 8 and 10, and at Geode State Park in Henry County on May 21, the same date that they were first spotted over Greenwood Park in Des Moines. May reports of KING RAILS came from Mallard Marsh in Cerro Gordo County on the 8th, and at Otter Creek Marsh in Tama County on the 14th. RED-NECKED PHALAROPES were seen only in late May, with sightings at Errington Marsh on the 25th, and near Doon in Lyon County on the 28th.

There seemed to be a large number of southern passerine "overshoots" this year, with reports of WORM-EATING, HOODED, and PRAIRIE WARBLERS, and WHITE-EYED VIREOS from northern and northwestern parts of the state. The only BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLERS were seen at Parker's Woods in Mason City on the 12th, and Houston Park in Palo Alto County on the 16th. In addition to WHITE-EYED VIREO and WORM-EATING and HOODED WARBLERS, reports of SUMMER TANAGERS were more than normal.

## State and County Lists 1998

by Mary Lou Petersen, Davenport

For 1998, 14 people reported lifetime totals for Iowa. Six more people reported county totals for Iowa. I received at least one listing for 47 counties. Thank you to all who participated this year.

Please send your lifetime total for Iowa through 1999, and any counties in which you have recorded at least 125 species to the compiler by May 31, 2000. The address is 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport, IA 52803. The total number is all that is needed, not a complete listing.

### Iowa Totals — 200 minimum

Eugene Armstrong	371
Eloise Armstrong	370
Jim Fuller	364
Mark Proescholdt	353

Pam Allen	349
Reid Allen	349
Beth Proescholdt	347
Mary Lou Petersen	326
Chris Edwards	318
Janice Walter	311
Rita Goranson	306
Bill Huser	292
Matt Kenne	283
Doug Harr	262

### County Totals — 125 minimum

#### Allamakee

Mark Proescholdt 169

#### Benton

Mark Proescholdt 165

#### Black Hawk

Mary Lou Petersen 221

Mark Proescholdt 159

#### Boone

Steve Dinsmore 250

Mark Proescholdt 222

Beth Proescholdt 210

Eloise Armstrong 200

Eugene Armstrong 200

Pam Allen 190

Reid Allen 190

#### Bremer

Mark Proescholdt 166

#### Butler

Mark Proescholdt 206

#### Cerro Gordo

Janice Walter 274

Rita Goranson 258

Mark Proescholdt 161

Pam Allen 125

Reid Allen 125

#### Clinton

Mary Lou Petersen 199

#### Dallas

Eloise Armstrong 197

Eugene Armstrong 196

Pam Allen 185

Reid Allen 185

Mark Proescholdt 156

#### Des Moines

Jim Fuller 243

#### Dickinson

Doug Harr 244

Steve Dinsmore 200



<b>Franklin</b>			
	Mark Proescholdt	168	
<b>Fremont</b>			
	Steve Dinsmore	245	
	Mark Proescholdt	196	
	Pam Allen	173	
	Reid Allen	173	
<b>Greene</b>			
	Steve Dinsmore	217	
	Mark Proescholdt	177	
	Eloise Armstrong	154	
	Eugene Armstrong	154	
	Pam Allen	151	
	Reid Allen	151	
<b>Grundy</b>			
	Mark Proescholdt	180	
<b>Guthrie</b>			
	Steve Dinsmore	234	
	Eugene Armstrong	223	
	Eloise Armstrong	222	
	Mark Proescholdt	201	
	Pam Allen	183	
	Reid Allen	183	
<b>Hamilton</b>			
	Dennis Carter	226	
	Steve Dinsmore	206	
	Mark Proescholdt	203	
	Pam Allen	139	
	Reid Allen	139	
<b>Hardin</b>			
	Mark Proescholdt	247	
	Beth Proescholdt	225	
<b>Iowa</b>			
	Chris Edwards	149	
<b>Jasper</b>			
	Mark Proescholdt	205	
	Beth Proescholdt	170	
<b>Johnson</b>			
	Jim Fuller	302	
	Chris Edwards	261	
	Mike Dooley	189	
	Mark Proescholdt	173	
	Pam Allen	145	
	Reid Allen	145	
<b>Jones</b>			
	Chris Edwards	151	
<b>Kossuth</b>			
	Matt Kenne	274	
	Mark Proescholdt	160	
<b>Lee</b>			
	Steve Dinsmore	205	
	Chris Edwards	188	
	Pam Allen	142	
	Reid Allen	142	
<b>Linn</b>			
	Chris Edwards	184	
	Mark Proescholdt	155	
<b>Louisa</b>			
	Chris Edwards	144	
<b>Lyon</b>			
	Doug Harr	179	
<b>Madison</b>			
	Eugene Armstrong	267	
	Eloise Armstrong	264	
	Pam Allen	149	
	Reid Allen	149	
<b>Mahaska</b>			
	Mark Proescholdt	150	
<b>Marion</b>			
	Steve Dinsmore	225	
	Mark Proescholdt	217	
	Pam Allen	181	
	Reid Allen	181	
<b>Marshall</b>			
	Beth Proescholdt	262	
	Mark Proescholdt	262	
	Steve Dinsmore	204	
<b>Muscatine</b>			
	Mary Lou Petersen	222	
<b>Plymouth</b>			
	Bill Huser	157	
<b>Polk</b>			
	Steve Dinsmore	304	
	Eugene Armstrong	298	
	Eloise Armstrong	297	
	Pam Allen	288	
	Reid Allen	285	
	Mark Proescholdt	258	
	Beth Proescholdt	244	
<b>Pottawattamie</b>			
	Steve Dinsmore	208	
<b>Poweshiek</b>			
	Mark Proescholdt	184	
<b>Sac</b>			
	Pam Allen	134	
	Reid Allen	134	



<b>Scott</b>		
	Mary Lou Petersen	283
<b>Story</b>		
	Steve Dinsmore	278
	Mark Proescholdt	241
	Beth Proescholdt	222
	Pam Allen	146
	Reid Allen	146
<b>Tama</b>		
	Mark Proescholdt	232
	Beth Proescholdt	188
<b>Van Buren</b>		
	Mark Proescholdt	151
<b>Wapello</b>		
	Darlene Ayres	247
	Nelson Hoskins	247
<b>Warren</b>		
	Pam Allen	131
	Reid Allen	131
<b>Winneshiek</b>		
	Dennis Carter	230
<b>Worth</b>		
	Janice Walter	166
<b>Woodbury</b>		
	Bill Huser	264
	Gerald L. Von Ehwegen	186
	Pam Allen	125
	Reid Allen	125
<b>Wright</b>		
	Steve Dinsmore	219
	Mark Proescholdt	168

## Update of *Birds in Iowa*

by Thomas H. Kent and  
James J. Dinsmore

*Birds in Iowa* was published in late 1996 and includes some records from early in that year. From 1996 through November 1998 many new early and late dates of arrival and departure have been recorded and a number of accidental species have been sighted. In addition, changes have been made in the *Check-list of North American Birds* (1998) that have changed the order in which Iowa birds are listed and some bird names (*Iowa Bird Life* 68:73-84). The Records Committee of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union has also

changed the status of some species.

The authors of *Birds in Iowa* are offering the following updates for \$5, including postage.

1. A complete list of the three earliest and latest dates (spring and fall as appropriate) as well as a few unusual winter and summer records, seven pages.

2. Records of accidental species (based on status changes) from 1996 (those not included in the book) to November 1998, one page.

3. A modified list of Iowa birds based on the Official Checklist (1988 edition) that omits scientific names and provides space to check off species seen and to record place and date of sightings, eight pages.

The authors are offering *Birds in Iowa* at a reduced price (from \$30 to \$20) to I.O.U. Members and members of any bird or nature club in Iowa. This offer includes a free copy of the updates described above and a few *errata* found in the book.

\$5.00 update only

\$24.50 *Birds of Iowa* and update  
(including \$1.00 sales tax and \$3.50  
for shipping and handling.)

Make checks payable to T.H. Kent and send to  
211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246



## Recent Literature

These articles can be obtained from your local library. Ask them to order on interlibrary loan for you.

Powell, L.A., W.R. Clark, and E.E. Klaas. 1998. Distribution and derivation of Mallard band recoveries from the Upper Mississippi River, 1961-1989. *North American Bird Bander* 23:2-12.

Alisaukas, R.T. 1998. Winter range expansion and relationships between landscape and morphometrics of midcontinent Lesser Snow Geese. *Auk* 115:851-862.



# Iowa Ornithologists' Union Meeting

September 10-12, 1999

Forest Lake Camp  
Ottumwa, Iowa



The annual meeting of the Association of Field Ornithologists (AFO) will be held in conjunction with meetings of the Inland Bird Banding Association (IBBA), North American Banding Council (NABC), and the Iowa Ornithologists' Union (IOU) at Forest Lake Camp near Ottumwa, Iowa from 9-12 September, 1999. It will be hosted by the Ottumwa Bird Club, assisted by members of the Lake Rathbun Bird Club.

Field trips are scheduled for 10, 11, and 12 September to Lake Rathbun, Lake Wapello, Shimek State Forest at Keosauqua, and Pioneer Ridge. These will be led by members of the Ottumwa Bird Club and Lake Rathbun Bird Club. Shorebird habitat is somewhat limited, but woodland birds will be in the area in abundance.

All meals except for the Saturday night banquet will be served at Forest Lake Baptist Camp. The camp is located approximately 3.5 miles south of Ottumwa on Highway 63, then left or east on county road H-47. The camp is approximately 1.5 miles from the turn-off. There are signs on the highway directing you to the camp.

<b>Friday, September 10</b>	6:00-9:00 PM	Registration at Days Inn.
<b>Saturday, September 11</b>	6:00-7:00 AM	Breakfast at Forest Lake Camp.
	7:00 AM	Field trips leave from the Days Inn parking lot.
	11:30-1:00 PM	Lunch at Forest Lake Camp
	1:00-4:00 PM	Programs to be announced at Forest Lake Camp.
	4:30 PM	IOU business meeting
	6:30 PM	Banquet at Parkview Plaza Ballroom, 107 E. 2nd St.
<b>Sunday, September 12</b>	6:00-7:00 AM	Breakfast at Forest Lake Camp.
	7:00 AM	Field trips leave from the Days Inn parking lot.
	11:30-1:00 PM	Lunch and compilation at Forest Lake Camp.

## Lodging:

Days Inn (the meeting headquarters hotel)  
206 Church St.  
1/515-682-8131; 1/800-329-7466  
1-4 persons/room \$46.20





Heartland Inn  
125 W. Joseph Ave. (off highway 63)  
1/515-682-8526  
single/\$50.59; double/\$61.59

Fairfield Inn  
2813 North Court Rd. (highway 63)  
1/515-682-0000  
single/\$53.85; double/\$56.85; continental breakfast

Super 8  
2823 North Court Rd. (highway 63)  
1/515-684-5505; 1/800-800-8000; continental breakfast  
single/\$46.22; double/\$55.00



**Dormitory:**

Forest Lake Camp  
Dormitory cabins \$12.00/ per person; space is limited  
You must furnish your own bedding and pillow

**Camping:**

Forest Lake Camp  
Six sites available with electricity at \$12 a night  
Tent camping for a small fee. Showers available.

Registration.....	15.00.....	_____
Breakfast - Sat./Sun.....	4.00.....	_____
Lunch - Sat./Sun.....	5.00.....	_____
Banquet - Saturday.....	16.00.....	_____
	Total.....	_____

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Checks should be made payable to the Ottumwa Bird Club and should be sent to:

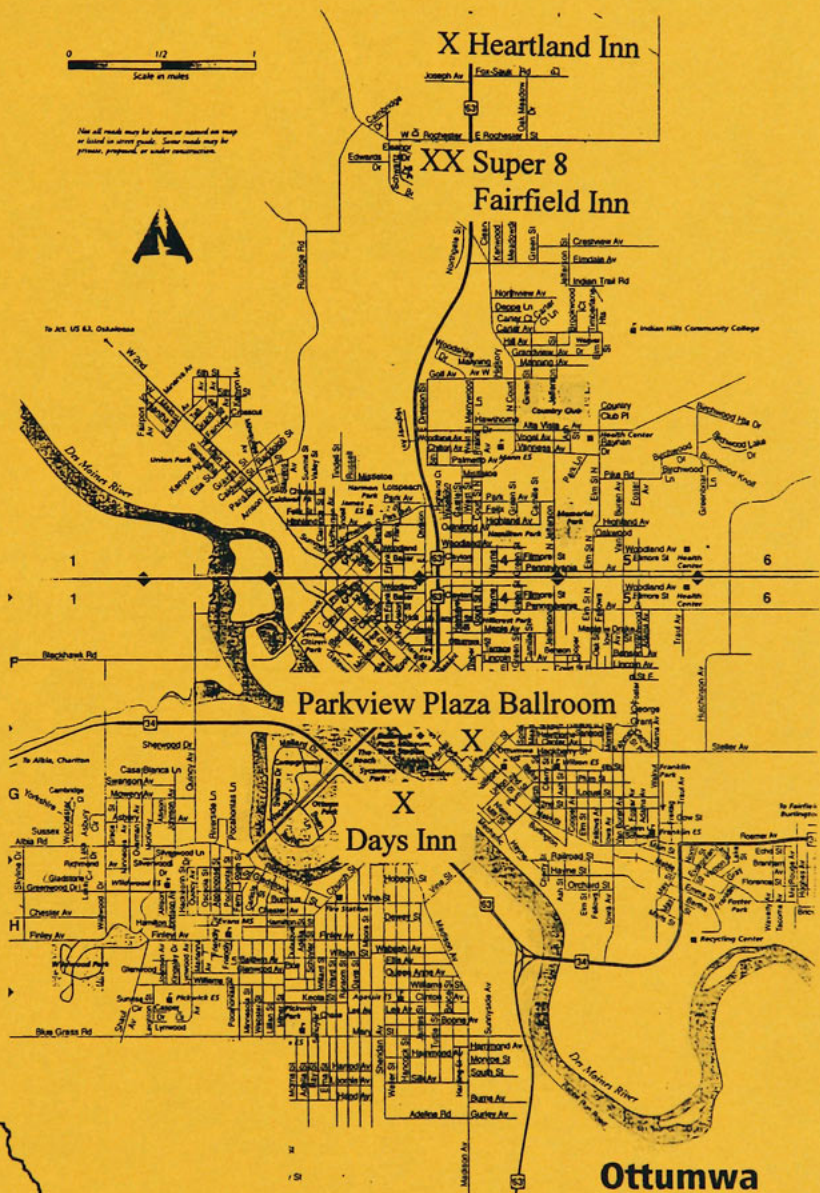
Darlene Ayres  
1 Pennsylvania Place, #007  
Ottumwa, IA 52501

Activities for the other organizations will be begin on Thursday, September 9.  
IOU members are encouraged to attend and participate in these activities. There will be field trips on Thursday and Friday morning, in addition to the planned IOU activities.

**Call Darlene Ayres at 515-682-1697 to obtain information about these activities**



# Maps



Iowa Ornithologists' Union  
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**Ottumwa**

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