

IOU News

Summer 2002 ❁ Volume 18 – Number 2



The Year List.

405 species of birds have been recorded in the state of Iowa. The most recently published official state list (1998) contains 403 species, to which two species, Arctic Tern and Lesser Goldfinch, may be added, having been found visiting the state since then.

Three of the species on the list are now extinct, one is extirpated, and several others, the true "accidentals", were not made to live in Iowa, and may never return. Many others have only been seen a few times. So nobody I know sets out to try to see all 405 species in the state in any one year. In fact, only about 320 species, or slightly less than 80% of the list, are reported in the state annually. For example, in 1999, 322 species were reported, and in 2000, 321 species were reported (source: IBL Seasonal Reports).

This annual total is very consistent from year to year. Most of it is made up of regularly occurring species, of which there are 303 on the state list. Several of these, say three, are missed each year. So about 300 regular species are found in the state each year, and around 20 casual and accidental species turn up.

A birder who is active statewide would have a hard time matching this total in a single year. All 300 regular species would have to be stalked, from the handful of Least Terns in the far southwest, to the invisible Ruffed Grouse in the northeast, to the ephemeral Smith's Longspurs in the unknown fields in the county you didn't bird this year. Then, all 20 rarities would have to be chased, and found. In 2000, this included Lyon County Burrowing Owls in the extreme north-

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

Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Founded 1923

Officers:

President- Tom Johnson, 125 N 13th St., Centerville, IA 52544
VicePresident- Hank Zaletel
Secretary- Sue Spieker
Treasurer- Rita Goranson
Board- Judy Garton, Sharon Stilwell, Linda Zaletel,
Dick Tetrault, John Rutenbeck,
Registrar-David Edwards

Journal: Iowa Bird Life, quarterly;

Editor- Kayleen Niyo, kay@KayNiyo.com

Documenting / Reporting Birds:

Records Committee-

Ann Johnson; 432 120th Avenue, Norwalk IA 50211
hologrambirds@worldnet.att.net

Winter Field Reports-

Robert Cecil; 1315 41st Street, Des Moines, IA 50311
wewarb@aol.com

Spring Field Reports-

Matthew Kenne; 709 N. Phillips, Algona, IA 50511
meekeckk@rconnect.com

Summer Field Reports-

James Dinsmore; 4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames IA 50014
oldcoot@iastate.edu

Fall Field Reports-

Paul Hertzal; 240 12th St. SE, Mason City, IA 50401
phertzal@rconnect.com

Iowa Birdline: (712) 364-2863;

Pete Ernzen; pkernzen@pionet.net

Bird Censuses:

Spring Bird Count- Ann Barker
Christmas Bird Count- Aaron Brees

Resources:

Field Checklist of Iowa Birds:

Maridel Jackson
410 S.W. Westview Drive, Ankeny, IA 50021

Website: <http://www.iowabirds.org/>

Listserv: IA-BIRD < hologrambirds@worldnet.att.net >

Membership / Subscriptions:

David Edwards
2308 State Avenue, Ames, IA 50014
dcejce@qwest.net

IOU News:

Send materials to:

Paul Hertzal
240 12th St SE, Mason City, IA 50401
phertzal@rconnect.com

Send thanks to:

Eugene Armstrong, Darleen Ayres, James Dinsmore, Stephen Dinsmore, Chris Edwards, David Edwards, Carolyn Fischer, Rita Goranson, Ann Johnson, Tom Johnson, Matt Kenne, Phil Walsh, Ric Zarwell

FROM THE PRESIDENT

With well over 400 members in the I.O.U., we have a diversity of ages, experiences, vocations; but we all have this interest in birds that keeps us involved. Some are avid listers, some enjoy the backyard birds, some of us are on a list serve, some travel to see rarities, some enjoy the photographs on the list and test their I.D. skills.

We know that meetings are important for a certain percentage of our group. We know that the Iowa Bird Life and our Newsletter are both excellent publications that are important to most of us. We know the web site and now the nature store are important components. Please support the nature store for your books and tapes and now optics.

It is a privilege to be the President of this organization. Please help out with it. I look forward to seeing many of you in the future. If you have any information that would be useful to the organization, e-mail me personally. You are always welcome to come to our board meetings. My e-mail is tjbjohn@iowasocean.com.

-Tom Johnson



At the IOU Spring Meeting in Ottumwa.

Fall IOU Conference - Something New and Different

Ric Zarwell

The IOU Fall Meeting will be held in central Iowa, September 13-15th. The location, program details, and registration materials will be in the fall *IOU News*. We do know that Kenn Kaufman, renowned birder, author, and bird artist, and Paul Baicich, past editor of *Birding* magazine, and new Director of Conservation and Public Policy for the American Birding Association, will be with us to lead enjoyable and informative activities. Hilary Chapman, National Coordinator of the Shorebird Sister School Program for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Rebecca Hinkle, regional coordinator of the same program for the F&WS, will also make presentations. The Iowa Important Bird Area (IBA) Program is hosting this fall conference, with assistance from IOU members and other partners in central Iowa.

Four major bird-related events, together being billed as "Iowa's Big Birding Weekend-2002" will be kicked-off by the IOU Fall Conference. The intent is to introduce more Iowans to IOU and to increase memberships, to expand interest in birds throughout the public, and to build a broad constituency for bird conservation. The conference will overlap with the second event - workshops and training sessions that will deal with hot birding topics, the various social and economic opportunities for the rapidly increasing number of birders, and how birders can benefit bird populations. The third event is the popular Pelican Watch Festival at Saylorville Lake on Sunday. And the fourth event will be the Audubon Iowa Gala at the Jester Park Lodge on Monday evening. Each event is designed to support and compliment each of the others.

Kenn Kaufman is creating a new White Pelican art print especially for the weekend. T-shirts with the signed art will be sold, and the framed original will be auctioned off. Eagle Optics will be on-hand to provide a short-course on the increasingly popular hobby of digiscoping, and will also have scopes and binoculars to loan to people who do not have their own. Kenn Kaufman and Paul Baicich are coming to Iowa at their own expense because they believe that members of IOU, Audubon and other non-profit organizations, plus teachers and staff of local, state and federal agencies, and birders at every level, can become a powerful new team that perpetuates birds for future generations to enjoy.

Regional Rare Bird Alerts

Iowa	(712) 364-2863
Missouri	(573) 445-9115
NW Illinois	(815) 965-3095
Wisconsin	(414) 352-3857
Minnesota	(763) 780-8890
So Dakota	(605) 773-6460

New at Iowa Birds Website

What year was it that we first had the Iowa RBA on the Internet? It must have been a lifetime ago. The technology changes rapidly and nearly everyone now has an e-mail address. Great-grandmothers have become as web-savvy as punk kids. As the world has grown, so has the IOU web site.

How much is the web site used? In mid-March, there were over 1300 distinct sessions on the web site on one week. While this does not mean 1300 different people visited, it is indicative of the activity we receive. Most users head for one page, primarily the RBA, but occasionally someone is perusing our site for over an hour. The statistics are fascinating and hopefully new Iowa birders are finding the IOU as a result.

But on to what's new in the past few months...

- The entire web site was redesigned to improve navigation and content
- More birding area articles have been added –
< <http://www.iowabirds.org/birdingiowa/birdingiowa.asp> >
- On-line membership was improved –
< <http://www.iowabirds.org/iou/membership.asp> >
- A calendar of events was added –
< <http://www.iowabirds.org/calendar/calendar.asp> >
- A member photo gallery was added –
< <http://www.iowabirds.org/iou/slides.asp> >
- Birds in Art is a new feature –
< <http://www.iowabirds.org/birdingiowa/artists.asp> >
- The RBAs for Iowa and Nebraska are updated by the compilers –
< <http://www.iowabirds.org/rarebirds/iarba.asp> >
- IA-BIRD listserve is available through the web –
< <http://www.iowabirds.org/main/listserve.asp> >
- Chat function was updated –
< <http://www.iowabirds.org/main/chat.asp> >
- Search function improved –
< http://www.iowabirds.org/site_search.asp >
- The IBL editor has an area to conduct review by authors
- Records Committee business went totally on-line
- Records Committee activity can be monitored by anyone –
< <http://www.iowabirds.org/iou/records.asp> >
- Ability to submit rare bird documentations on-line –
< <http://www.iowabirds.org/iou/docform.asp> >
- Member creation of CBC Counts –
< <http://www.iowabirds.org/birdingiowa/cbc.asp> >
- Participatory creation of county checklists –
< <http://www.iowabirds.org/birdingiowa/countyLists.asp> >
- Addition of the Important Bird Areas of Iowa (IBA) –
< <http://www.iowabirds.org/IBA/> >
- Addition of the IOU Nature Store (see article p.x) –
< <http://www.iowabirds.org/main/store.asp> >

We should all take some pride in the IOU site being on the edge of using the web efficiently and purposefully. The usefulness, however, depends on you the members contributing such things as county checklists, CBC count information, photos, and bird finding guides. All the technology in the world cannot surpass good content. New ideas are always welcome. Send them to iowabirds@iowabirds.org.

Thanks! - Ann Johnson

IOU SPRING MEETING 2002 – April Airs with Ayres

Tom Johnson

The 2002 Spring IOU meeting was held April 26th through 28th in Ottumwa, IA, at Forest Lake Baptist Camp. Darleen Ayres and the Ottumwa Bird Club were the hosts and although they did not pick the weather, the location and meetings were enjoyed by all. I take that back, the tent campers were unhappy! Friday night and Saturday was cool and rainy and Sunday, although clear, was very windy.

Field trips were taken to the Lacy Keosauqua State Park area, the Sedan Wildlife Area south of Moulton, and Grey Eagle Marsh in Ottumwa. The Baptist camp and adjacent Pioneer Ridge Park were also birded. Nelson Hoskins was able to set up some nets and banded on Sunday morning.

Afternoon programs consisted of Rick Zarwell giving an excellent presentation on the I.B.A. (Important Bird Areas). This is a project of the Audubon Society throughout the nation and Rick is the coordinator for Iowa. Click onto the web site and go through the few steps that it takes to register your favorite areas as I.B.A.'s.

We also had an excellent afternoon program by Don and Babs Padelford on Nebraska and Iowa butterflies and how to attract them. This was a long overdue program for the IOU as many of us



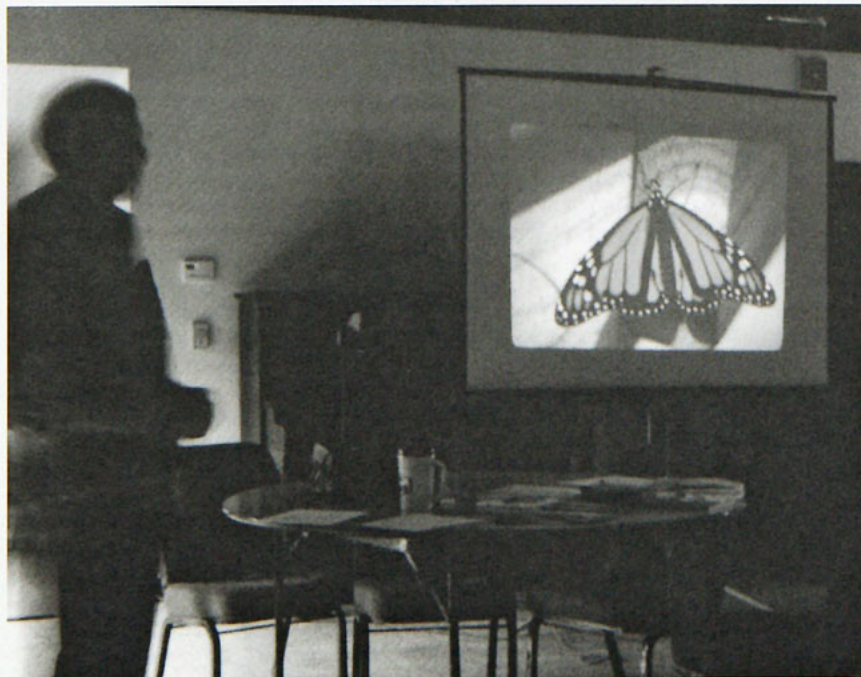
IOU past-President Darleen Ayres chatted with IOU past-President Mark Proescholdt.

have been observing butterflies and participating in counts. There were many questions and answers were provided.

The evening program was provided by Gene and Eloise Armstrong on their trip to Utah. It was called, *Deseret-Utah's Finest*. I had to go back to Centerville for my daughter's Prom that night to take some pictures, but I was informed by Ray, Mike, and Dan about the program and they enjoyed Gene's easy story telling, narrative, and the birds. I am sure many of us are envious of a five grouse day.

Paul Hertzell did the compilation on Sunday after a cool morning of birding, but we didn't have any rain. The weekend total was a surprising 133 species.

Our youngest member, Dan Akers had 10 new life birds at this meeting, which was a success for him. We also had an Oregon birder who wanted to see a Henslow's Sparrow and Mark Proescholdt and others trekked through the field and finally found one she could get a scope on- in a 30 mile an hour wind. Thanks again to the Ottumwa Bird Club for hosting the meeting!



Loren Padelford covered the basics of butterfly identification.



Nelson Hoskins caught six birds in the nets on a wet Sunday morning. Photo by Carolyn Fischer.

Forty Years of Banding Birds

Darleen Ayres

Forty years of banding birds for the government program involves quite a few memorable moments, some good, and some not so good.

Charles and I received our permit in the summer of 1960, and since we were visiting my parents in Kansas at least four times a year, our permit included Kansas banding. The very first time we opened a net, in the backyard in Council Grove, Kansas, in 1960, we caught a Prothonotary Warbler. Wow! Were we ever excited! A year later, my brother wrote that a small, yellow bird with a leg band had flown through a broken pane of glass at the local florist's greenhouse, which was about three blocks from my parents home. The bird was drenched, but alive. Our records showed that it was, indeed, the one we had banded the year before. We also recaptured a Slate-colored Junco at the same home a year after banding it.

Occasionally, we have been able to band birds without even using the nets. One day we decided to go looking for crayfish in a small creek, to get bait for larger fish in the river. We also thought we'd put up a net on the roadside to see if we could get a bird or two at the same

time. We arrived at the creek and found we had forgotten to put the net poles in our car. We had everything else, but could not put up the nets. Oh well, we started dangling bait from the bridge, and were happily pulling up crayfish, when we heard a "thump" against the car. Checking it out, we found a live, but very groggy Eastern Kingbird laying on the ground. Needless, to say, we banded it, since we had the bands in the car. One of our favorite pictures is of a very very upset Kingbird with a very large red patch on his head, indicating a great deal of displeasure at the whole experience.

An interesting Iowa experience involved a Turkey Vulture. In early June, in 1970, a mushroom hunter informed us that he had found a tree in a remote wooded area in Wapello County that had a nesting vulture. We walked in with him one day and saw two eggs in the base of a broken-off hollow stump. We took pictures of the eggs, and planned to return after a period of time. Meanwhile, Charles had to be hospitalized with an infection, and could not go back with me to check on the eggs. Dr. Glen Blome, a member of the Ottumwa Bird Club, and I went back

to the tree. On the way, I read aloud to Glen about characteristics of buzzards. One story was that they would sometimes play dead on the nest. Glen and I trudged into the area, peered into the stump, and saw the female vulture doing that very thing. I'm game for anything, and Glen had his camera. I belied over the side of the stump, reached in with both hands, and lifted her out. She appeared quite dead, not a single sign of movement, but her eye, though not moving, seemed to be contemplating me seriously. She was limp, with head and feet relaxed and drooping. We had bands with us, thinking the young birds might have hatched, so while I held mama, Glen placed a band on her leg. After more photos, I lowered her body so the feet rested on a log. As her body weight came down, she stood, shook herself, and flew off. Needless to say, one of the things, I had been most apprehensive about, was the prospect of having her regurgitate on me. Later on, we banded her two young ones, and returned for more pictures as they matured. Banding of vultures has been prohibited since the late 1970s because of corrosion of bands on their legs caused by high acid content of the feces.

Summer Field Reports

James J. Dinsmore

Field reports for the summer season (June and July) are due by 5 August to Jim Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, IA 50014 or by email at oldcoot@iastate.edu.

Rarities are seldom found during the summer season but birders can still find lots of interesting birds. Late spring migrants (shorebirds and warblers) often linger into June, and many shorebirds are well on their way south in July. Of particular interest are nesting records of many of Iowa's less-common species (e.g., Loggerhead Shrike, Upland Sandpiper) or species that have limited nesting ranges in Iowa (e.g., Hooded Warbler, Winter Wren, etc). With the Important Bird Areas program now underway, data collected to solidify the nomination of an area for IBA status may also be great information to submit for the summer field reports.



Least Bittern is a rare summer resident in Iowa. This one was photographed in Cerro Gordo County by Rita Goranson, May, 2002.

A Piping Plover Story

Paul Hertzell

Friday, May 10th, the day before Rita Goranson, Carolyn Fischer and I had planned to do a Cerro Gordo County Big Day, I was scouting the area for new arrivals. In mid-morning, I decided to check McIntosh State Park on the north side of Clear Lake. On the small, sandy peninsula that curves out into the western part of the lake, a collection of gulls and terns rested on the east edge. I recognized Ring-billed Gulls, Franklin's Gulls, one Herring Gull, and I counted the Caspian Terns, because Matt Kenne would want to know how many there were. Eight.

On the west edge of the sand point was a group of small shorebirds, walking and running at the water's edge. The ones that ran looked like Sanderlings; the others looked like Semipalmated Sandpipers. There was one bird, however, that moved, then stopped, then moved again, like a plover. I pointed my scope at it and drew into focus a Piping Plover, a bird which is on the USFWS Threatened Species list.

Clear Lake sits at the eastern rim of the Wisconsin's Des Moines Lobe glacial penetration into Iowa. The third-largest natural body of water in the state was once legendary for its clear waters, and this modest peninsula is a rare piece of habitat in northern Iowa. There are not many places up here where wind-driven waves break upon a natural sandbar, brewing foam and depositing driftwood and other organic debris. This beach is one of the areas I always think will have an interesting, diverse mix of birds, but more often than not, has instead a man walking his dog, or a family spread out in lawn chairs watching the water rise and fall while children dig holes in the sand. But today, at this moment, a cool, wet, Friday morning in early May, it was in use by birds, including a migrant Piping Plover.



I knew some of the county birders would want to see this bird, so I made some phone calls from my wife's office in the city of Clear Lake, then returned to the park to use some film. I don't see very many Piping Plovers away from the Missouri River. Maybe the bird would wander close enough for a good photo.

Rita arrived, and then Carolyn, and we speculated about where the bird may have spent the previous day, and about where it might be going. This sandbar is small, but apparently suitable for Piping Plovers; it's conceivable that in the distant past, they nested here. Today, no Piping Plover would tolerate the summer activity in store for this stretch of sand. In fact, tomorrow would be Saturday, and the sandbar probably would see typical, weekend recreational use.

Yet, it was cold, and it continued to rain intermittently. In these conditions, weekend picnics might be postponed or cancelled. Maybe the bird would stay a little longer to refuel if it was not disturbed. Carolyn stopped at the park office on her way out to see if the park stewards would be interested in knowing the bird was among the visitors that day. Indeed, they were interested.

At 2am the following morning, we started our Big Day. We listened for owls and rails during the night, and at sunup, between the rain showers, we found Whip-poor-wills and Woodcock. In late morning, after searching woodlands for woodpeckers and songbirds, we arrived at McIntosh State Park, and approached the sandbar in a steady rain. The park personnel had put up barricades at the base of the peninsula. Two red-and-white barrier fences prevented access to the little beach. Had there been any people, they would have had to stay off the peninsula that morning. A tiny, 2-ounce plover had been given temporary use of the beach. The gulls and terns still huddled halfway out the peninsula, and shorebirds still worked the west side in the drizzle. We found the Semipalmated Sandpipers and one Sanderling, but we looked in vain for the Piping Plover. Perhaps it was farther out the peninsula, around the bend where we could not go, or perhaps it had flown north. The closest known nesting area in that direction is in Lake of the Woods County, Minnesota, on the Canadian border, 400 miles away.

We thank the McIntosh State Park staff for temporarily setting aside a portion of the park as critical habitat.



McIntosh State Park staff restricted access to the beach.

A Twenty-seven-Warbler Day

Chris Edwards

Within the larger avocation of birding, one of my particular passions is warbler watching. I love the excitement of a big "fallout" and the challenge of identifying those tiny, flitting birds from just a flash of color or a song heard in the treetops. On Friday, May 17, I had been planning a warbler watching trip to Shimek State Forest, but a check of the weather radar at 6:00 a.m. showed rain showers moving through southern Iowa. I decided to head to nearby Hawkeye Wildlife Area to see if there was any action. Conditions were not optimal for birding: cloudy, unseasonably cold, and very windy.

I stopped at a small wood lot just north of Swan Lake which has become a local migrant trap of some renown. It was very quiet as I walked the road along the edge of the woods, but I soon hit pocket of activity. American Redstarts and Yellow Warblers were active and numerous, and Tennessee Warblers sang loudly from the treetops. I saw several Chestnut-sided and Black-throated Green Warblers, and briefly glimpsed a male Cape May Warbler. Then a Connecticut Warbler sang loudly from the edge of the dense undergrowth in front of me. I tried in vain to catch a glimpse of the bird as it sang over and over, but then it moved farther away and stopped singing. I continued to work the area and found a male Mourning Warbler in a tangle. A female Prothonotary Warbler was at the edge of a nearby pond. I also saw Yellow-rumped, Nashville, Blackpoll, and Wilson's Warblers, Northern Waterthrush, and Common Yellowthroat. After two hours I had tallied 15 species of warblers.

After checking a few spots for shorebirds, I thought briefly about calling it a morning, but decided to stop at another nearby wood lot with a small pond. I encountered another flurry of activity, and added Golden-winged Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, and Ovenbird to my list. That's when the fever started to hit me. You know what I mean - I found myself thinking, "I've already seen 18 warblers this morning, with a little more effort I should be able to hit 20!"

My next stop was Hanging Rock

Woods, a large mature oak-hickory woodland. Almost immediately after getting out of the truck I heard a Kentucky Warbler singing, a good omen. That made 19. I started down the trail, but it was now 10 a.m., the sun was warming things up, and the woods were quiet. I hiked for many minutes before seeing a few yellow-rumps and redstarts flitting around. Soon more and more birds appeared, until the trees overhead were teeming with birds: dozens of warblers, vireos, flycatchers, tanagers, and grosbeaks. There was motion and sound everywhere, and I quickly focused my binoculars on one bird after another. Tennessee. Blackpoll. Magnolia! 20. Golden-winged. Blackburnian! 21. The flock started to slip away and I followed it into the woods. Yellow-rumped. Black-throated Green. Chestnut-sided. Bay-breasted! 22. The flock moved away and I continued down the trail, but it wasn't long before I hit the jackpot again. Among this flock were a female Canada Warbler in the undergrowth, 23; a Northern Parula singing in the treetops, 24; and a Blue-winged Warbler, 25!

By the time I returned to the parking lot it was almost 1 p.m. In more than ten years of birding, I'd only had a few 25-warbler days, and they had been in southeast Iowa where there are more resident species. There was no way I could stop now, but my possibilities for adding new species were limited. I grabbed a quick lunch and drove to Macbride Nature-Recreation Area, where Cerulean Warblers nest. Within minutes of arrival I heard one singing. 26! I ran into James Huntington, Mike Dooley, Ken Lowder, and Troy Kelsay, who had been out since 6 a.m. and were also having a great day. They mentioned that a resident Yellow-throated Warbler was singing at nearby Lake Macbride State Park, which was to be my next stop. I drove to the area and immediately located one in the sycamores. 27!

That was my last new warbler for the day. I joined forces with James, Mike, and Ken for awhile, but in the mid-afternoon doldrums we failed to locate anything new. Later I checked the roadside willows at Hawkeye Wildlife Area for Palm Warblers, and the

brushy tangles at Kent Park for a returning Yellow-breasted Chat, but with no success. It had been a remarkable day. Aside from 27 warbler species, I had also seen six vireo species (including Bell's, Philadelphia, and Blue-headed), four thrush species (including Veery, Gray-cheeked, and Swainson's), Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, and Orchard Oriole, all within Johnson County. It was the kind of day we all hope for when we step out the door in the morning. It will certainly give me something to dream about during the dog days of summer and the long winter nights. Who knows, maybe next spring I'll have an even better day!

Eagle Optics To Give Major Prizes

As the first corporate sponsor of Audubon Iowa's Important Bird Area (IBA) Program, Eagle Optics of Middleton, WI is offering two major prizes. The individual who nominates the highest number of sites that become officially recognized as IBAs, will receive a premium new scope and tripod (exact details are pending). The individual* who nominates the second highest number of sites that become officially recognized as IBAs will receive a premium new binocular. The competition will end at midnight December 31st.

To nominate a site, visit the Iowa IBA website at <www.iowabirds.org/IBA>. Review the IBA criteria, look at the list of sites that have already been nominated, and follow the simple directions. To learn about the large selection of birding equipment available at Eagle Optics, visit <www.eagleoptics.com> or, call (800) 289-1132.

*The first person to nominate a site will be the only individual who will gain credit for nominating that site.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Results of a May 10 Big Day

Phil Walsh

Participants: Eugene and Eloise Armstrong, Dennis Thompson, Phil Walsh. Duration: 4:45 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Distance traveled: 300 miles. Total Species recorded: 162. 23 warbler species, 19 shorebird species, 14 sparrow species, 14 waterfowl species. Species of special note: A Hooded Warbler was seen in Walnut Woods State Park. Lesser Yellowlegs and Yellow-rumped Warblers were seen in numbers too numerous to count.

This was the 17th consecutive year that the Armstrongs and Thompson have completed a May Big Day. Sixty-eight species had been seen every year previous to this, and all 68 were found again this year. Two species were seen this year that had never been recorded on the trip before: Bald Eagle, and Henslow's Sparrow. A total of 237 species have now been recorded by the group during these May Big Days.

The 162 species seen this year ties the group's previous high count. Most looked for bird that wasn't seen: Great-tailed Grackle. We checked at least 4 different locations that have been reliable for Great-tailed Grackles in the past, but couldn't find any. Also notable in their absence: thrushes. We saw 2 Swainson's Thrushes, heard 1 Wood Thrush, and that was it.

Food consumed: 1 loaf of Amish friendship bread, 1 tenderloin, 1 chicken breast sandwich, 4 slices of Casey's pizza, a dozen oatmeal-raisin cookies, 3 thermoses of coffee, 2 bottles of pop, 1 bottle of water, and 5 ounces of Gummi bears.

There was much debate about whether we would have seen more birds, or fewer, had not someone in the group been wearying their "lucky" Cyclone socks.

A Central Iowa Big Day 11 May 2002

Stephen J Dinsmore

On 11 May 2002, Jim Dinsmore, Aaron Brees, and I did a Big Day in Central Iowa. Since it was Mother's Day weekend and I didn't return to Iowa until May 10th, we had little choice of

a date and were hampered by almost no scouting. But we figured we would at least have an enjoyable day of birding. The forecast was for scattered storms in the morning with some clearing later in the day. As it turned out, the weather was extremely uncooperative; it poured rain all morning and most of the remainder of the day, with occasional strong winds for an added bonus. Still, we managed to find 147 species for the day, despite these handicaps. We started at Ledges State Park then worked our way south to the Saylorville Reservoir area before finishing the day at several marshes in Boone, Greene, and Guthrie counties. Our list included 15 waterfowl, 17 shorebirds, 20 warblers, and 11 sparrows. Some of the highlights were a Western Grebe and a Piping Plover at Saylorville Reservoir and an American Woodcock brood (right at our feet!) and a Worm-eating Warbler at Ledges State Park. A secondary highlight was our frequent stops (5 by my count) at scattered Casey's stores to warm up. Misses were almost too numerous to mention, although some of the worst ones included Redhead, Wild Turkey, Virginia Rail, Eastern Screech and Great Horned owls, Red-eyed Vireo, Eastern Towhee, Field Sparrow, and Dickcissel.

First Kossuth County Big Day

Matt Kenne

Paul Hertzell and I lucked out with great weather for our Kossuth County Big Day on 14 May, 2002. We finished with 153 species, including 14 sparrow, 23 warbler, 16 waterfowl, and 17 shorebird species.

The weather forecast for morning on the radio mentioned freezing temps, but it was merely wet and cool. The day warmed nicely, the winds remained calm, and we were in shirtsleeves by noon.

Some highlights on the day were: a flock of 17 Wilson's and 3 Red-necked Phalaropes, and a flyby flock of 4 Hudsonian and 18 Marbled Godwits at Union Slough NWR; 2 Prothonotary Warblers, 2 Brown Creepers, and a late Slate-colored Junco along the Des Moines River at Algona; the continued presence of Eurasian Collared-Doves at Fenton; and a flock of 47 Snow and 3 Ross's Geese, and a Nelson's Sharp-

tailed Sparrow at an excellent new county area called Eagle Lake, just south of Burt Lake in the far NW corner of the county.

Some lowlights were: NO Golden Plovers, Great Blue Herons, Pelicans, Kingbirds, or Bluebirds (insert laughter here!). Also missing on the day, and apparently late arriving this year were Eastern Wood-Pewees, Dickcissels, Red-eyed Vireos, and biting mosquitoes!

145 Species on a Cerro Gordo County Big Day

Paul Hertzell

We improved our county record of 135 species by 10 birds with 18 hours of birding on 11 May, 2002. Rita Goranson, Carolyn Fischer and I found 145 species including American Golden Plover, Hudsonian Godwit, Merlin, Whip-poor-will, Great-tailed Grackle and Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

An Allamakee County Birdathon

Ric Zarwell

Despite Saturday being about 40% steady rain, an additional 25% hard, steady wind after the rain stopped, and 100% dark and dreary, a pretty good count was enjoyed in Allamakee County by 6 participants. We totaled 125 species despite seeing only 5 species of waterfowl.

Highlights included: 11 Sandhill Cranes (3 of which had rust-colored feathers associated with nesting), 1 Peregrine Falcon at the nest site 2 miles south of Lansing, and 18 Warbler species, including Bay-breasted, Blackburnian, Prothonotary, Blue-winged, and a Brewster's (a Golden-winged X Blue-winged backcross, according to Sibley, page 428). Like everyone else on a Big Day Count, we missed some birds we expected to see, and saw a few that we didn't expect.

The main party consisted of Matt Paulson, Helen Harvey, Danny Akers, Betty Zarwell and myself, all together in one vehicle. Dennis Carter led a bird hike for 2.5 hours at Effigy Mounds N.M. and his tally is added in with ours to make the total. A very enjoyable day was had by all.

Bookmarks

James J Dinsmore

Reporting color markers

Researchers often use color markers as a way to identify individual birds that they are studying. The most obvious of these markers are neck collars or wing tags. In recent years, such markers have been reported on geese, pelicans, and other species in Iowa. Accurately recording the information on those markers and then reporting it to the appropriate individual can add another satisfying challenge to birding. Often, birders see a bird with a marker, but not knowing how to report it, will ignore the bird and the opportunity to provide some potentially valuable information. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service now has a web-based system for easily reporting such sightings. The address is:

<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/homepage/recwobnd.htm>

The basic information you need to obtain to provide a useful report include the bird species that is marked, where and when you saw it, the type and color of the marker, the combination of letters or numbers that are on the marker, the color of those letters or numbers, and their arrangement on the marker (one above the other or whatever). It takes only a few minutes to report such a sighting and, in most cases, you should get some response on where the bird was marked or information about the study itself. Birders can provide a valuable service by carefully providing such information when the opportunity arises.



The Year List – continued from page 1

west, and a Lee County jaeger in the extreme southeast.

The cumulative annual total, as it unfolds by season, follows a similar pattern each year. About 130 birds occur in the state from Jan 1 to the end of winter. Then, the floodgates open, and by the end of spring, birders have found about 300. The last 20 are scattered over the remaining seven months of the year. The table below shows this progression for 1999 and 2000.

	<u>1 Jan - 28 Feb</u>	<u>- 31 May</u>	<u>- 31 Jul</u>	<u>- 30 Nov</u>	<u>- 31 Dec</u>
1999	131	302	308	321	322
2000	130	297	304	318	321

Cumulative total of species reported in Iowa, by season, 1999 & 2000.

Last year, there were two IOU members who reported seeing over 80% of this rough, 320 limit. Mark Proescholdt found 262 species (82%), and Rita Goranson found 260 species (81%). We think these Year List totals really are remarkable.

The First Five Months of 2002

Eugene Armstrong

Iowa is a great place to bird. The following is proof. Here are highlights of five months of Iowa Birding! Some unusual and interesting species and their locations.

- 08 Jan. White-winged Crossbill, Nevada Cemetery.
- 20 Jan. Townsend's Solitaire, SE O'Brien County.
- 20 Jan. Common Redpoll, SE O'Brien County.
- 27 Jan. Eurasian Collared Dove, Allerton, Wayne City.
- 03 Feb. Iceland Gull, Davenport.
- 03 Feb. Eurasian Tree Sparrow, Muscatine Frog Farm.
- 22 Feb. Black-billed Magpie, 234th Street SW, Plymouth County.
- 22 Feb. Barrow's Goldeneye, IPL Ponds, Sioux City.
- 26 Feb. Eurasian Wigeon, Swan Lake, Johnson County.
- 05 Mar. Sandhill Crane, E Anderson Lake, Hamilton County.
- 26 Mar. Long-tailed Duck, Green Valley-Creston, Union County.
- 31 Mar. Horned Grebe, Badger Creek Lake, Madison County.
- 15 Apr. Smith's Longspurs, Union Hills, Cerro Gordo County.
- 16 Apr. Cinnamon Teal, Sedan Bottoms, Appanoose County.
- 19 Apr. Little Blue Heron, Diehl Ponds, Warren County.
- 21 Apr. Pacific Loon, Cherry Glen Rec Area, Saylorville Res.
- 28 Apr. Clark/Western Grebe, Diehl Ponds, Warren County.
- 28 Apr. Ruddy Turnstone, Diehl Ponds, Warren County.
- 30 Apr. Piping Plover, Sandpiper Rec Area, Saylorville Res.
- 30 Apr. Black-crowned Night Heron, Long Pond, Guthrie County
- 02 May Marbled Godwit, Diehl Ponds, Warren County
- 02 May White-faced Ibis, Banner Pits, Warren County.
- 04 May Carolina Wren, Stephen's Forest, Lucas County.
- 06 May Curlew Sandpiper, Red Rock Dam, Marion County (thanks Aaron)
- 08 May Worm-eating Warbler, Croton Unit, Lucas County.
- 10 May Cattle Egret, Dunbar Slough, Greene County.
- 18 May White-eyed Vireo, Grammar Grove, Marshall County.
- 22 May Connecticut Warbler, Grammar Grove, Marshall County.
- 24 May Least Tern, IPL Pond, Bellevue, NW Mills County.
- 26 May Mississippi Kite, Wakonda Golf Course, Polk County.
- 28 May Bewick's Wren, Croton junkyard, Lee County.

What will the next seven months bring?

Two Upcoming Field Trips

Tom Johnson

Eugene and Eloise Armstrong will lead two Iowa field trips that members and others are welcome to join. The first will be on August 31 and Sept. 1 in the Iowa City area for shorebirds. People can attend the first day and if the birding is good it may last another day. The second trip will be to northeast Iowa for Nov. 9 and 10th. This will be for specialties like Ruffed Grouse, Golden Eagle, Tundra Swans, and others. Feedback is desired on this type of trip. Contact Tom Johnson tbjjohn@iowasocean.com or the Armstrongs at (515) 996-2726. Times and exact locations will be on the list and birdline.

The IOU Nature Store

Is open for business!

Buy that copy of Sibley's Guide to Bird Life & Behavior or that new finch feeder from our store and help support the activities of the IOU. Prices are competitive and each purchase provides the IOU with a little bit of revenue. Shopping is done on a secure web server so your credit card information is safe. Store entrance is from the IOU web site –

< <http://www.iowabirds.org> >

or you can go directly to

< <http://www.withoutbricks.com/IowaBirdsNatureStore> >.

We all know that it takes money to pull off the projects that IOU members hold near and dear. In the past few years we have sponsored varied opportunities such as purchasing a telescope for use at the Greater Prairie Chicken lek at Kellerton and reaching new birders with the Iowa Birding web site and more recently the IA-BIRD listserve. Some members rely on the Iowa Birdline for up-to-date telephone reports of rare birds around the state. Donations help finance these projects but do not cover the entire cost.

The Board of Directors recently approved the IOU jumping into the internet on-line shopping revolution to help raise some needed money. Many of you probably have shopped at *Amazon.com* or a similar enterprise. Our store is similar to this. You have the advantage of over 6000 natural history items for sale in a store that is open 24 hours a day, every day.

The Iowa Birds Nature Store features not only books but audio tapes and CDs, feeders, shade-grown coffee, jewelry, and yard ornaments. There are items for everyone, from novice to expert. The next time you have that nature-related item you just can't live without, consider checking our Nature Store. It is a painless way to help support the projects we as an organization have embraced.

IOU News Deadlines for Submission of Materials

<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

Birding Trip Proposal and Survey

Richard Tetrault

While attending various birding functions throughout the state, I have talked with many people wanting to take birding trips. This is not surprising to anyone who already has taken such trips outside the state. The experience is always a grand time: a chance to see new places and new birds, breathe the air, meet interesting people, and make new friends. To help facilitate the burgeoning interest out there, I'd like to propose a program that would match birders wanting to take birding trips with people experienced in planning trips. The goal is to get more people involved in birding excursions.

Below are the areas to which people are willing to lead trips, along with a little information about the types of birds you can expect to see. 1. Minnesota-Duluth Area: *Great Gray Owl, Northern Hawk Owl, Gyrfalcon, Spruce Grouse*, etc. 2. Texas-Rio Grand Valley: *Altamira Oriole, Audubon's Oriole, Brown Jay, Clay-colored Robin*, etc. 3. Florida-Keys: *Red-whiskered Bulbul, Mangrove Cuckoo, Antillean Nighthawk, White-crowned Pigeo*, etc. 4. California-Southern: *California Gnatcatcher, Yellow-billed Magpie, Elegant Tern, Island Scrub-Jay*, etc. 5. Arizona-Southern: *Arizona (Slrickland's) Woodpecker, Elegant Trogon, Violet-crowned Hummingbird, Mexican Chickadee*, etc. 6. Alaska: *Red-legged Kittiwake*, nesting colonies of *Auklets, Bristle-thighed Curlew*. 7. British Isles (they speak English, so reading signs and speaking to the people is no problem): 8. Mexico—the East coast, the West Coast, the Central area, or down south where one can find a numerous birds of the desert, tropical and cloud forests. Mexico has amazingly colorful birds, many with wild names. 9. New Zealand for birds not found anywhere else. It is home to the almost extinct and now expanding population of Black Robins and to the native Kiwi bird (one of the few non-flying birds).

The seasoned birders here in the state who have generously offered their time and expertise to help organize and lead trips are: Ann Barker, Robert Cecil, James Fuller, James Huntington, Ann Johnson, Mike Overton, Ross Silcock.

If you are interested in traveling to one of the above destinations, please send a note indicating which trips interest you. If several locations interest you, please list them in order of preference, with the first being the most preferable. Also include your name and contact information. Kindly send your reply to the address below by July 1.

Richard Tetrault
1045 Mulberry Circle
Coralville, IA 52241
(319) 337-3288 artetrault@msn.com

Iowa Ornithologists' Union Membership Request Form

Thank you for enclosing this form with your check made payable to Iowa Ornithologists' Union.

\$20 Regular + family (\$20 + amounts below)
\$ _____

Please correct your address from the other side if needed.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

\$4 Spouse/child _____ (name)

\$2 Child _____ (name)

\$2 Child _____ (name)

Birdline Contributor (\$10 suggested gift)

\$ _____

IA County _____

Phone Number _____ for IOU Directory

\$12 Student

\$ _____

Please add your electronic-mail address

E-mail: _____

\$20+ Contributing (\$20 plus donation)

\$ _____

\$20 Regular
\$ _____

\$500 Life (or four annual payments of \$125)

\$ _____

Make check payable to IOU _____

Send to David C. Edwards, Registrar
2308 State Ave., Ames, IA 50014-8344

Or, pay online on our web
<http://www.iowabirds.org>

Members Intending to Move

Please try to get your address changes to us, including e-mail and telephone, as soon as you know the new information. Because we use the postal system's Address Service to tell us of misguided mail, it costs us a good deal for each such item if mail must be redirected. Send or e-mail requests to David C. Edwards, IOU Registrar. Thank you.

Three ways to help the IOU financially

The IOU membership has remained steady over the last decade, and as a result, has had consistent annual revenues. However, publication costs have risen to the point the organization has begun to use reserves in order to meet expenses. We look to our members to help. Here are three suggestions on how members can help:



- Purchase a gift membership for a friend, each year.
(increase annual revenue and potential membership)
- Make a donation now.
(increase reserves and potential interest)
- Make a donation later – remember the IOU in your will.
(increase future reserves and potential interest)

Iowa Ornithologists' Union
2308 State Avenue
Ames, IA 50014

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