

IOU News

Summer 2003 ❁ Volume 19 – Number 2



Sandhill Crane attending nest with eggs. Photo by Don Poggensee, 2003.

Another Great IOU Spring Meeting

The 2003 IOU Spring Meeting was held at the Hartman Reserve Nature Center in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Francis Moore and the Prairie Rapids Audubon Society hosted the meeting, coordinating a diverse set of morning field trips to a three-county area, five interesting Saturday afternoon talks, a grill-your-own-steak banquet and evening program on Iowa's Rivers by Larry Stone.

See IOU Meeting on page 4

Spring Meeting Attendees Enjoy Nesting Sandhill Cranes

For many IOU members, Sandhill Cranes were the highlight of the IOU Spring Meeting. A pair built a nest at Sweet Marsh, in Bremer County, within sight of the dike at the center of the marsh. At left, Don Poggensee captured on film one of the adults attending two eggs on the nest near the water's edge.

See Sandhill Cranes Return to Iowa on page 4

The Sandhill Crane nest was constructed at the water's edge in Sweet Marsh, Bremer County. P. Hertz, 2003.





IOU News

is a quarterly publication of the Publications Committee of the **Iowa Ornithologists' Union**

Editor: Paul Hertzel
240 12th Street SE
Mason City, IA 50401
phertzel@rconnect.com

IOU Publications Committee:
James J. Dinsmore
Paul Hertzel
Ann Johnson
Thomas H. Kent, Chair
Kayleen A. Niyo

IOU News deadlines for submission of materials:

Issue	Coverage	Deadline
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

IOU News Advertising Coordinator:
Linda Zaletel
1928 6th Street
Nevada, IA 50201
madowl@midiaowa.net

IOU Membership / Subscriptions:
David Edwards
2308 State Avenue
Ames, IA 50014
dcejce@qwest.net

Documenting / Reporting Birds:
Records Committee-
Ann Johnson
532 120th Avenue
Norwalk IA 50211
aj@hologrambirds.com
Website: <http://www.iowabirds.org/>

Winter Field Reports-
Robert Cecil
wewarb@aol.com

Spring Field Reports-
Matthew Kenne
meekeckk@rconnect.com

Summer Field Reports-
James J. Dinsmore
oldcoot@iastate.edu

Fall Field Reports-
Paul Hertzel
phertzel@rconnect.com

IOU New Members in 2003

David Edwards, Registrar

The IOU welcomes fifty-seven new members for 2003, from forty-one cities and six states!

Dorothea Allans, Cedar Rapids, IA
 Ertle Anderson, Fort Dodge, IA
 Mary Ann Binder, Des Moines, IA
 John Bissell, Grimes, IA
 Joe Boyles, Des Moines, IA
 Julie Brazell, Elkader, IA
 Barbara Buckley, Iowa City, IA
 Suzanne Burns, Des Moines, IA
 Daniel Calvert, Dubuque, IA
 Charles Comfort, Mt Pleasant, IA
 Joan & Larry Dau, Nevada, IA
 Rita Efta, Auburn, IA
 Jan McDonald & Steve Elliott, Iowa City, IA
 Dian Engle, Marshalltown, IA
 Gary Erbes, Ames, IA
 Terese Evans, Waterloo, IA
 Virginia Gibbs, Decorah, IA
 John Gochenouer, Ruthven, IA
 Joyce & Joel Hanes, Mason City, IA
 Tracie & Den Henrickson, Marion, IA
 Nancy Hertzel, Maple Valley, WA
 Brendan Finan & Laura Hollinrake, Knoxville, IA
 Lois Inskeep, Underwood, IA
 Janet Jepeway, Ames, IA
 Ella Johnson, Aurelia, IA
 Lorne Johnson, Charles City, IA
 Breck & Jenny Johnson, Fort Dodge, IA
 Anthony Jones, Chillicothe, IL
 Joel Kamp, Fort Madison, IA
 Chaiyan Kasorndorkbua, Ames, IA
 Mr. & Mrs. Ernie Little, Menlo, IA
 Tom & Jan Lovell, Clear Lake, IA
 Lydia Lowery, Ames, IA
 Shirley & Donald Maas, Omaha, NE
 George McDowell, Eldridge, IA
 Ron McDowell, Davenport, IA
 Sandy & Frank Meng, Valley Springs, AR
 J E Mickunas, Des Moines, IA
 Michael Myszewski, Des Moines, IA
 Marlene & Lyle Neher, Grundy Center, IA
 Jacob Newton, Ottosen, IA
 Jason O'Brien, Boone, IA
 Vernon Ohlendorf, Muscatine, IA
 William & Elizabeth Owens, Urbandale, IA
 Katy & Shane Patterson, Ames, IA
 Larry & Susan Reeve, Cedar Rapids, IA
 Don Robinson, Bettendorf, IA
 Leo Schlunz, Chariton, IA
 Carolyn Sonderman, Omaha, NE
 Carol Strohmeier, Des Moines, IA
 Diane Sweet, Des Moines, IA
 Doug & Vicky Van Dyke, Boone, IA
 Mary Kay Wade, Columbia, MO
 Irene Wagner, Ida Grove, IA
 Jo Ann Westphal, Storm Lake, IA
 Vicki Wilson, Jesup, IA
 Gary Zenitsky, Urbandale, IA

IOU Membership and Publications

Ann Johnson
IOU Website Editor

As most of you are aware, the past few years have been a financial strain on the IOU as the cost of producing our fine publications has increased while our membership has declined. Our financial health is directly related to the number of members and subscribers we have. At left you see 57 new members for 2003— about the same number of members as we lost in the last year!

In an era when interest in natural history in general and birding in particular continues to grow, it seems strange that our membership gets smaller and smaller. While there are many actions that can be taken by both the Publications and Membership Committees to grow and be fiscally responsible, there are also a number of things that we as individual members can do to strengthen our organization. Take a look at the list below and see how you can help.

1. Give a gift subscription to someone you know
2. Provide your local library with a gift subscription
3. Enhance relationships with County Conservation Boards: offer gift subscription for a year, brochures at nature centers
4. Get local media coverage of CBCs, etc. and mention the IOU to the press
5. Hand out brochures at CBCs and local bird club meetings
6. Educate other birders on what the IOU is and who it is for
7. Do a local Spring Bird Count as a membership/fund drive
8. Set up a regional field trip aimed at new birders with a little sales pitch offered on the benefits of the IOU
9. Publicize the IOU through your local Chamber of Commerce
10. Tout the IOU on local radio programs
11. Include membership in adult ed class registration or at the very least provide participants with brochures

In an effort to minimize expenditures when changes are made and material becomes outdated, our membership brochure is not being printed in mass. Instead, it is available on-line and can be accessed by everyone for printing as needed. Go to

<http://www.iowabirds.org/iou/ioubrochure.pdf>

and print a copy with your home computer. Take these two pages to your local copy store, have a few copied two-sided (on colored paper if you wish), and for a few bucks you can have some nice tri-fold brochures to use.

Let's all make 2003 the year our membership began growing again.

Ann Johnson
Norwalk, IA
41°26.89N 93°34.71W
aj@hologrambirds.com
<http://www.hologrambirds.com>

Announcements

There is an individual that would like to donate several thousand dollars toward a project that would be of mutual interest to him/her and the IOU. We need project ideas and suggestions.

Please describe and forward your suggestions to any IOU Officer. All suggestions will be reviewed by the Conservation Committee.

Richard Tetrault
President, IOU

2003 Fall Meeting in Loess Hills

The fall IOU meeting will be held October 10-12 at Hitchcock Nature Area in the Loess Hills near Council Bluffs. There will be field trips to local birding hotspots as well as an opportunity to participate in the Hitchcock Nature Area Hawkwatch begun by Loren and Babs Paddleford in 1992. Our banquet speaker will be Ty Smedes who will be sharing his photos of the birds and mammals of Africa. More information will be available in the Fall issue of *IOU News*.

Sharon Stilwell
Vice President, IOU

Ad Hoc Finance Committee Created

IOU Board members Linda Zalatel and Judy Garton, and Treasurer Rita Goranson have agreed to serve on an ad hoc Finance Committee. The function of the committee will be to see what past budgets have been and to recommend further budgeting to the board. The committee will take direction from new president, Richard Tetrault.

Partners in Flight Award

Dr. Allen Farris received a Special Achievement Award from the Partners in Flight (PIF, an international landbird conservation program) program for 2001. Al was recognized for his efforts to get the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies involved with the PIF program. Although there has been strong grassroots support for PIF, Al's efforts helped the program gain recognition at the international level. Al, who recently retired from his position as Chief of Fish and Wildlife with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, helped with efforts to acquire land that now forms the Kellerton Bird Conservation Area near Mt. Ayr in southern Iowa, the first grassland bird conservation area in the Midwest. He also led efforts to develop workshops to make DNR biologists and other staff aware of the PIF program and to get them involved with those efforts. Al was a banquet speaker at an IOU meeting in Indianola some years ago. This is the second year in a row that an Iowan has received recognition from Partners in Flight. Doug Harr received an award in 2000. Congratulations to Al.

IOU Meeting

continued from page 1

Field trips to locations in Black Hawk, Bremer and Benton counties were led by Moore. Tom Stone, Tom Schilke, and Al Brown, and included spectacular views of an active Sandhill Crane nest at Sweet Marsh. This is the second year in a row cranes have spent the summer at Sweet Marsh. Also found Saturday morning south of the dike where the cranes nested was an 18-species warbler wave that included at least 16 Cape May Warblers. Six were counted in one tree alone. Sunday's compilation, coordinated by Ann Johnson, showed a total of 146 species for the weekend.

Saturday's afternoon programs were *A Bird's Eye View*, by Marlene Ehresman, *Sylvan T. Runkel: Citizen of the Natural World*, by Larry Stone, *Hawaiiowa- Eco Tourism on Kauai, Hawaii*, by Linda and



On the dike at Sweet Marsh. Photo by P. Hertzell

Sandhill Cranes Return to Iowa

by Doug Harr,
Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity
Program Coordinator

In little more than a decade Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis*) have gone from occasionally being seen on migration through Iowa to becoming a regular nesting species. In 2002 birds were observed (in migration or nesting) in about 25 Iowa counties. Nesting occurred in nine of those counties, mostly in northeastern Iowa. Observations and net reports are still filtering in for 2003, but it's likely we'll see reproduction in some additional areas this year.

Of all the world's crane species, Sandhill Cranes are probably doing the best, with increases in numbers seen in all three migratory races. Three non-migratory races in the southern U.S. and Cuba are relatively small in number and face more threats to survival. Lesser Sandhill Cranes, the race seen most frequently in Iowa, have realized good population increases in the Great Lakes state, especially Wisconsin. With that population growth, Iowa has become a beneficiary as pairs are forced to finding new nesting areas to pioneer. Shallow wetlands in eastern Iowa, particularly lowland areas along the Mississippi, Wapsipinicon, and Iowa rivers, all have proved especially attractive to housing Wisconsin's crane overflow. The birds seem to find Iowa to their liking, and Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program staff believes we will continue to see expansion of the Iowa flock.

For more information on Sandhill Cranes in Iowa, contact DNR Wildlife Diversity Technician Pat Schlarbaum, at email address pat.schlarbaum@dnr.state.ia.us. Pat also looks for volunteer crane counters to do some survey work each spring, and he'd welcome all the assistance IOU members and friends might provide.



Don Poggensee photographed IOU field trip participants.

Hank Zaletel, *Sandhill Cranes in Iowa*, by Doug Harr, and *Counting Birds- The Who, What and Where*, by Jim Dinsmore.

For the evening banquet, Moore had a giant grill trucked to Hartman and set up outside the headquarters. In the early evening, IOU members selected their own steaks and gathered around the grill, talking about the day's activities while dinner cooked to their specifications. Afterwards, Larry Stone gave a great evening talk-*Floating Through History: Using Rivers to Get in Touch with Wildlife and Nature*.

The Hartman Reserve Nature Center is located on a lush piece of woodland habitat tucked up against the Cedar River directly across the water from George Wyth

State Park. Multiple hiking paths lure visitors in all directions. In fact, visible from the path leading from the parking area to the headquarters was a rare patch of wild orchid *lady slippers*. It's been many years since I have seen these growing in the wild. After the evening program, Matt Kenne and I walked north from the headquarters at dusk, in search of Whip-poor-wills. We encountered two vocal and active Barred Owls who perched within easy spotting distance of our flashlight. Then, after reaching a semi-open area suitable for Whip-poor-wills, we had to look hard to distinguish diving Common Nighthawks and an array of bats buzzing low over our heads in the twilight. No Whip-poor-wills appeared that night, but we were not disappointed.

-P. Hertzell

Check List to Checklist 1968-1999

Jim Sinclair

The four lists below and their attending comments document some of the changes in Iowa birds, birders and birding as reflected in the changes from the 1968 Iowa Field Check List to the 1999 Iowa Field Checklist. To emphasize the extent of the differences notice that a check list became a checklist. When the term itself has evolved you can be assured that the checklist's contents will also have changed substantially. The differences are not only extensive but interesting and instructive.

The years 1968 to 1999 encompass the first epoch of modern birding in North America. Comparing checklists, even an informal survey such as the following, gives us benchmarks with which to measure the many changes that have taken place in birds, birding and birders during this period. Although the main thrust of this article will be to compare the 1968 list to the 1999 list in fact the checklist was revised four times between these two dates. The dates (1982, 1987, 1991, 1996) of these revisions will be highlighted in parentheses when specifically referred to.

The size of the checklist changed significantly from 1968 to 1999. To allow for not only twenty-nine additional species but added information on documenting unusual observations, the Iowa Birdline and the I.O.U. itself, the checklist format expanded from a four page one fold to a six page two fold (1991). A further refinement to the list was segregation of Casual Species into their own sublist(1982).

LIST A-Standardizations and modernizations

Common Egret to Great Egret
Black Duck to American Black Duck
Pintail to Northern Pintail
Shoveler to Northern Shoveler
Marsh Hawk to Northern Harrier
Goshawk to Northern Goshawk
Pigeon Hawk to Merlin
Sparrow Hawk to American Kestrel
Bobwhite to Northern Bobwhite
Common Gallinule to Common Moorhen
Upland Plover to Upland Sandpiper
Northern Phalarope to Red-necked Phalarope
Common Crow to American Crow
Rough-winged Swallow to Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Long-billed Marsh Wren to Marsh Wren
Short-billed Marsh Wren to Sedge Wren
Robin to American Robin
Mockingbird to Northern Mockingbird
Catbird to Gray Catbird
Water Pipit to American Pipit
Starling to European Starling
Parula to Northern Parula
Yellowthroat to Common Yellowthroat
Cardinal to Northern Cardinal
Turkey to Wild Turkey

List A includes name changes(24) from 1968 to 1999 unrelated to splits or lumps. A few are standardizations with old world nomenclature such as Common Gallinule to Common Moorhen or Northern Phalarope to Red-necked Phalarope. By far the most name changes are attempts to update names that were coined in a more parochial time. The word "northern" has been added to names nine times! E.G. Northern Goshawk or Northern Mockingbird. The word "American" has been added four times e.g. American Robin. One interesting change in this first list is Upland Plover to Upland Sandpiper. The interesting part is that although the editors of the 1968 list retained the name Upland Plover they had foreseen the change and listed the Upland Plover under sandpipers rather than plovers(1982). A change in location from 1968 to 1999 moved the Ruddy Turnstone from plover designation to sandpiper(1982). However the turnstone managed only a local migration when compared to the Turkey Vulture. Formerly the leadoff man for the raptors the Turkey Vulture migrated back over to the waterfowl to take a place between Anatidae and ibises(1999).

Quiz question for List A: Which of the above birds is Trent Lott's favorite species?

LIST B- Changes and additions associated with splits and lumps

Arctic Loon to Arctic Loon and Pacific Loon
Blue and Snow Goose to Snow Goose
Herring Gull to Herring Gull and Thayers' Gull
Red-shafted Flicker and Yellow-shafted Flicker to Northern Flicker
Traill's Flycatcher to Alder Flycatcher and Willow Flycatcher
Solitary Vireo to Blue-headed Vireo, and Cassin's Vireo and Plumbeous Vireo
Myrtle Warbler and Audubon's Warbler to Yellow-rumped Warbler
Rufous-sided Towhee to Eastern Towhee and Spotted Towhee
Slate-colored Junco to Dark-eyed Junco
Sharp-tailed Sparrow to Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow and Salt Marsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow
White-fronted Goose to Lesser White-fronted Goose and Greater White-fronted Goose
Whistling Swan to Tundra Swan and Bewick's Swan

List B- Are you as surprised as I am at the shortness of this list? As many curveballs as taxonomists have thrown towards birders in the last few decades I thought this list would be more extensive. What the list does display is serial inconsistency on the part of taxonomists. Names disappear, names are retained, names are simplified and names are



made more cumbersome. The Arctic Loon is split but stays part of the team whereas Traill's Flycatcher disappears into a willow-alder thicket - and aren't we glad we don't have to write out Salt Marsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow too often?

Quiz question for List B: What species, carrying the same name on both the 1968 and the 1999 lists, had different names on three of the intervening lists?

LIST C- New species added to the list since 1968

Red-throated Loon
Cattle Egret
Ross's Goose
Mute Swan
Trumpeter Swan
Greater Scaup
Black Scoter
Mississippi Kite
Long-billed Dowitcher
Short-billed Dowitcher
Black-necked Stilt
Red Knot
Red Phalarope
Laughing Gull
Little Gull
Black-headed Gull
Thayer's Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Greater Black-backed Gull
Sabine's Gull
Mew Gull
California Gull
Iceland Gull
Black-legged Kittiwake
Rock Dove
Chuck-wills Widow
Varied Thrush
Yellow-throated Warbler
Prairie Warbler
House Finch
Great-tailed Grackle
Smith's Longspur
Eurasian Tree Sparrow

List C- As short as list B is, list C is characterized by its length (32 species). Incorporated in this list are all the changes in birds, birders and birding that have occurred in Iowa in the last 30 years. Some of the species above expanded their ranges to encompass Iowa in the 31 years between these two lists-examples would be the Cattle Egret

continued on page 6

Checklist - continued from page 5

(1982) and the House Finch (1987). A number of other species made it on current checklist because of birder skills and equipment. The best example of this would be the addition of Long-billed and Short-billed Dowitcher to the list (1982) from their previous designation as dowitcher sp. on the 1968 checklist. A significant portion of this list is comprised of gulls, 11 species in fact! This reflects not only range expansions, but the construction of three major reservoirs and improved birder skills and awareness concerning gulls. One other factor, which I will call the S. Dinsmore effect, surely had, to a certain degree, a hand in the over 200% increase in gull species on the Iowa list from 1968 to 1999. Lariphopes and lariphiles will probably argue into eternity as to whether this was a "good thing."

Quiz question for List C: Which species was an addition to the 1999 list only because it was omitted from the 1968 list?

LIST D- Species Deleted from the 1968 List

Black Rail
Say's Phoebe
Black-billed Magpie
Lark Bunting
Common Raven
Sprague's Pipit

List D- Although the shortest of our four lists, List D also illustrates the dynamic nature of birds and birding in Iowa. Black Rail and Say's Phoebe continue to be very rare birds in Iowa and will not make it back onto the next Iowa checklist (because their status remains Accidental). Although the Lark Bunting also will not make the team, this species is common, if not abundant, as a breeding bird within one hundred miles of Iowa and even a slight tweak in its range could bring them into Iowa on a regular basis. Of the next three species the Black-billed Magpie is poised to leap onto the regular species list the next time the Iowa checklist is revised, the Sprague's Pipit is bedeviling the records committee as we speak and the Common Raven's range is expanding south through Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Quiz question for List D: Which species on the 1999 list will not make it onto the next I.O.U. revised checklist?

As stated earlier, even this informal comparison of checklists gives us benchmarks with which to measure the many changes in Iowa birds and birding in the 31 years between 1968 and 1999. Species have been added, taxonomies and nomenclatures clarified (mostly) and format and information updated and modernized. Slightly over 23% of the species on the 1999 checklist have either been added or their status revised in one way or another from the 1968 list. All this serves to illustrate the dynamic nature of birds and birding in Iowa and should leave all of us interested in this process curious as to the changes to come.

Iowa's 37 Highest Priority Bird Species and 182 Habitats in 85 Counties

URGENTLY NEEDED: Bird Data

If you haven't visited some of these widely dispersed birding habitats, now is a great time to do so.

Iowa has 37 species of birds that are "IBA (or Important Bird Area) Criteria Species." One of these (the Piping Plover) is Globally Threatened, twenty are Continentally Threatened, and the remaining sixteen are species of High Priority within the Iowa landscape. The primary reasons that these species have had sharp population declines are: habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, and habitat degradation (via invasive species, soil erosion, over grazing, sediment deposition, etc). Iowa's birders now have a statewide, science-based, and citizen-led program by which we can halt and reverse this sad trend.

In 2002, 182 habitats were nominated to receive recognition as Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Iowa. Found in 85 counties, these nominated sites include most of our state's richest pockets of biodiversity and our most frequently birded habitats. If you enjoy birding and being enriched by the colorful movements and beautiful songs of Iowa's birds, you no doubt already spend time in some of these habitats. Several potential IBAs are probably located within easy driving distance of your home. The wide distribution of nominated habitats makes it easy for you to gather the basic data that is needed to perpetuate the "37 IBA Criteria Species" and all of the biodiversity within these habitats into the future.

To move any of the 182 nominated habitats through the process to become officially recognized as one of Iowa's Important Bird Areas (IBAs) requires that birders practice good participatory citizenship by collecting and submitting basic bird observation data that will substantiate and validate the nominations. And doing so provides great birding fun!

Simply put, the 20-member Iowa IBA Technical Committee NEEDS data on the 37 "IBA Criteria Species" from EACH of the 182 nominated habitats to allow them to complete their evaluations of the nominations, and cast their votes. Once a nominated habitat receives official IBA recognition and priority status from the Tech. Comm. we can then move immediately into Phases II and III of the IBA Program - detailed analysis of habitat components and bird populations; establishing on-site educational programs; and a wide variety of site-specific conservation actions. There is a good possibility that several of parts of the new Farm Bill and other public and private conservation programs can be applied to habitat protection and improvements at IBAs. But the IBA

Program cannot move forward until the site identification process is completed, and that's where Iowa's widely distributed birders come in.

Two forms of bird data are needed. The first form is historical data on criteria species that was gathered at any of the 182 nominated sites since January 1, 1998. Many Iowa birders have this kind of information in their personal records, and we are specifically asking for your help in substantiating the presence of high priority species via your personal data collected over the past 5 years - 1998 through 2002. The second form of data is fresh, on-site data that can be gathered during enjoyable birding trips beginning immediately!!! Visiting any of the 182 nominated habitats in 85 counties can be a lot of fun and at the same time serve a very critical citizen-science purpose.

The process of gathering and submitting the needed bird data online is **very simple**, and directions are available at the IBA website. Step one is to go to http://www.iowabirds.org/IBA/bird_inventory.asp. Here you can print 1) A copy of a special field checklist (showing just Iowa's 37 IBA Criteria Species and some concentrations we are interested in); and, 2) A list of the 182 nominated habitats that we are requesting data from. We suggest you keep the list of habitats in your vehicle, or with your binoculars and field guides, so you can refer to it when traveling or birding. The field check list matches the online form where you enter your field data before clicking the submit button. Try it once and you will see that this process (created and managed by Ann Johnson) is as easy as 1, 2, and 3.

Please submit data according to date and habitat, but you do NOT have to remember to submit your data daily. Just jot down your notes when in the field on the special printable checklists and then enter and submit data by date and by habitat when you get several field checklists completed. Each nominated site must qualify for IBA status independently, so we must receive data by date and by habitat - we don't want days combined and we don't want habitats combined. (For historical data - we hope for the same degree of accuracy; but if you do not have the exact date, please provide an estimate of the month and the year in which you made the observation.)

Birders are asked to register the



Summer Field Reports – Jim Dinsmore

Field reports for the summer season (June and July) are due by 3 August to Jim Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, IA 50014 or by email to: oldcoot@iastate.edu

Summer is mainly the season of nesting birds in Iowa so that is typically the emphasis of the summer report. In particular, nesting records of some of Iowa's less common species such as Least Bittern, Loggerhead Shrike, Carolina Wren, etc., as well as species whose nesting range is limited in Iowa (Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Black Tern, Hooded Warbler) are always of interest. With the Important Bird Areas (IBA) program now underway, records of key nesting species at sites that have been designated as potential IBAs will be extremely valuable in documenting the importance of those areas. See the IBA website

http://www.iowabirds.org/IBA/bird_inventory.asp

for information on those species and sites, as well as a simple data sheet you can use to report your records to the IBA program

<http://www.iowabirds.org/IBA/login.asp>.

Late migrant shorebirds and warblers, early southbound shorebirds in July, and occasionally a real rarity are also parts of the summer season report.



American Redstart. Photo by P. Hertzell, 2003.

first time data is submitted so that we can follow up if any questions arise. Once you have registered, login at (<http://www.iowabirds.org/IBA/login.asp>) and enter your data. You'll love how easy this is, and you'll thank Ann Johnson for creating such a user-friendly system every time you submit data!!! **Please enter as much data as you can, for as many dates as possible, for as many habitats as possible.** If it helps you get away more, consider this an official request to do a lot of enjoyable birding - you now have a perfectly legitimate and valuable reason to do so!

Brief site descriptions are found on a county-by-county basis at <http://www.iowabirds.org/IBA/sites.asp>, and we suggest using the Iowa Sportsman's Atlas 2002 edition, or the DeLorme Iowa Atlas and Gazetteer.

Thanks to Eagle Optics (whose products can be viewed and ordered via www.iowabirds.org) and the importance that this corporation has placed on Iowa's IBA Program, valuable and expensive prizes will be given to the birders who submit valid bird data for the most, second most, and third most nominated habitats. First prize is a \$1,000 20X60 variable power spotting scope and pro tripod set; second prize is a high quality, waterproof \$400 binocular; and 3rd prize is a good quality, waterproof \$ 200 binocular. Members of the Iowa IBA Technical Committee are excluded from this contest, and only data submitted prior to mid-

night, December 31, 2003 will qualify.

The Iowa IBA Technical Committee members will NOT be able to evaluate habitats, make decisions, cast votes, and officially recognize Iowa's IBAs, until significant bird data is received for each of the 182 nominated sites.

Secondly, we are also seeking persons who are willing to be involved at a higher level, who will gather more specific data and who will "adopt" a particular habitat or are willing to become a member of a "stewardship team" for an IBA or a cluster of IBAs. If you are such a person, please contact me and I will provide more details. Also, if you know of one or more habitats that meet IBA Criteria, and have not yet been nominated into our system, please follow the tabs at the website to make those nominations.

The beauty of the IBA Program is that the data that YOU gather for each officially recognized IBA in Iowa, becomes a part of the World Bird Database. This accessible database is used to set conservation priorities worldwide - by bird species, by habitat type, and by hemisphere, nation, or state. In this way IBAs are critical links in a **network** of habitats across the earth that, for the first time, allow for wide-scale prioritization of funding and staffing for bird conservation along the entire pathway for migratory species. Canada is further along in its IBA efforts than we are, and Mexico has made the

IBA Program its primary national bird conservation initiative. The IBA Program is currently working in 132 nations and in 46 states in the U.S. We started about a decade behind the Europeans, but the U.S. is catching up quickly. With your help we can make the Iowa IBA Program as successfully as it can possibly be.

Thank you for each of your valuable contributions to the IBA Program; and especially, for your commitment to the future of the birds we all appreciate so dearly.

Ric Zarwell
IBA Coordinator - Iowa



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

Magpies of Broken Kettle

Eugene Armstrong

Broken Kettle is a Nature Conservancy-owned area in the Loess Hills located in western Plymouth County. To my knowledge, it is the only annual nesting place in Iowa where one can reasonably expect to see Black-billed Magpies.

This total area of hills, which lies east of Hiway 12, is bounded on the south and east by a road marked as Butcher Road and also called Ridge Road, on the north, by road C-43 which ends back at hiway 12 less than a mile south of Westfield, contains over ten square miles.

Two and one-half miles south from the intersection of C-43 and Hiway 12 is a dead-end road County #234. This area of six-hundred and forty acres was owned by Clint Lineberry and is called "Diamond Bar Ranch". The owner, formerly from a ranch in Wyoming, kept cattle and riding stock and baled enough hay for winter feed. He is a swell fellow, very conscious of the hills, and could not stand to see his ranch desecrated. We have had excellent visits, and he said that after some thought, he sold the ranch to the Nature Conservancy. He kept 40 acres and his house. He couldn't leave!

Approximately .2 miles from the east end of 234 is the best area for viewing the Black-billed Magpie nesting sites. This is where Eloise and I found the first active nest on 4 May, 1995.

This first nest site is located in a dense, plum thicket on the north side of 234. Stop near a wire gate on the south side. This wire gate we formerly called the yellow rope gate. North from the road about 250 yards and across a small creek are several wild plum thickets. The thicket that seems the closest contains the active nest of 2002 (and 2003?).

The day we were there, 13 April, was hot, wild and windy, with 90-degree temperatures. After 2 hours of nothing, I walked over to the thicket and found three nests—the original, a later one, and last year's. The original and second nests became so large that their weight broke the trees off at the ground. Last year's nest looked good. Since the first trip was a scouting trip for more information, I didn't expect much.

Grapevine reports suggested an occasional sighting. One was seen at the ranch two days before April 13. Eight were seen at a deer carcass in the winter of 2001 at the ranch. Three or four years ago seven were seen on Butcher Road. The Nature Conservancy Christmas Count held 4 January 2003 produced the Magpies at their storage site. This area is south of the Diamond-Bar Ranch, but adjacent to it. Being this was a scouting trip, we decided we needed more information. Why only one nesting site in 6000+ acres?

Granted, there are lots of acres to look over, but there are many wonderful viewing areas. Black-billed Magpies are not small birds and their plumage is easily spotted. Apparently, the nesting season should be the best time to see them with their increased activity.

We drove into Broken Kettle headquarters to see Scott Moats, his wife, and young daughter. After a short visit, I asked him about local magpies. His first statement was that the most reliable area was the 234 road and the Diamond-bar ranch. We agreed. My next question was, "Is the population declining locally?" This brought an unexpected answer—Scott and his wife spoke up sharply, "No!"



Scott explained that later in the year, during July and August, the magpies gather into groups (not unlike family reunions). Many times, they have been observed at the pond areas near the Nature Conservancy storage site, which is near the center of the area. In August 2001, sixteen were observed. In August 2003, twenty-four were present. Great!! By early September they seem to disperse. From then on, only singles or doubles are seen. Some small groups gather at food supplies later in the winter.

One last question for Scott—Can we drive on Nature Conservancy roads? If the gate is open, yes. If closed, then the area contains cattle. The gate must be kept closed.

Many thanks to Clint Lineberry, Scott Moats, and Bob Livermore for all their local input and hospitality. Some questions were answered, others were raised.

We shall return.



New Birding Guide

Siouxland Bird Guide. Price-\$3. Produced by the Loess Hills Audubon Society of Sioux City, this new birding area guide covers two counties each in southeastern South Dakota and north-eastern Nebraska as well as Plymouth, Woodbury, and Monona counties in Iowa. Printed on glossy paper and illustrated with 18 photographs of typical birds of the region, the guide folds out to a 21 1/2 by 33 inch map locating major birding areas in the region. On the back side are a discussion of the Loess Hills landform, brief descriptions of the three major habitats of the region (grassland, woodland, and wetland) and a list of 295 species found here with codes for abundance by season and habitats where each is typically found. The maps and discussion of birding areas will be the big attraction for most birders. About 79 areas are shown on the map including 63 in Iowa. For each, a table indicates where the area is located, who owns it, facilities available at the site, and habitats found there. The detail on the map generally is limited to major highways and county blacktop roads but for areas located off such roads, lower-level gravel roads leading to the area are also indicated. Thus, with this guide, you should be able to find most of these areas but you probably won't want to venture cross country without some other map. Some of the sites have been in public ownership only a year or two so the guide is up-to-date. If you are birding in the Sioux City Region, I highly recommend this guide. My copy is in my car.

—Jim Dinsmore



FALL 2003 GRAND MARAIS BIRDING FESTIVAL

OCTOBER 24 – 26, 2003

• Guided Field Trips • Special Presentations

Join us for guided field trips along Lake Superior and the Grand Marais harbor. Experience culture and comfort in our harbor-village setting.

For event information:

North House Folk School 1-888-387-9762

For area information:

1-888-922-2225 www.grandmarais.com

Grand Marais

MINNESOTA
A NORTH SHORE WORK OF ART

Hawk Owl illustration by Keith Morris

SYLVAN T. RUNKEL

CITIZEN OF THE NATURAL WORLD



by Larry A. Stone
Jon W. Stravers

SYLVAN T. RUNKEL: Citizen of the Natural World

A biography of Iowa's foremost naturalist

By Larry A. Stone & Jon W. Stravers

Conservationist, book author, teacher, musician, adventurer, WWII veteran, TV personality, Scout leader, pilot, humorist: Sylvan Runkel captivated 3 generations of Iowans

167 pages, 90 photos, color cover

\$17 - tax and postage included

Larry A. Stone
23312 295th St.
Elkader, IA 52043
888 807-1828

lstone@alpinecom.net

Iowa's Threatened and Endangered Birds

from the Iowa DNR

Iowa has changed greatly since becoming a state in 1846. The prairies that helped develop the highly productive soils have been reduced by more than 99 percent. About 95 percent of the state's prairie pothole wetlands have been drained. Over half of the original forest has been lost. These changes and other factors such as channelization of streams and rivers, soil erosion, development and urban expansion, and intensive row crop agriculture have contributed to the loss or degradation of suitable habitat for numerous plant and animal species.

Iowa's first list of endangered and threatened plants and animals became effective in 1977. Since 1977, there have been four revisions of the list, with the most recent being completed in 1994 (Iowa Administrative Code [571] Chapter 77). The state list includes all federally listed endangered and threatened species that occur in Iowa. The federal status as well as the state status of each species is included in the List of Iowa's Threatened & Endangered Species.

Endangered Species (E) means any species of fish, plant life, or wildlife which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant part of its range.

Threatened Species (T) means any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

The list of endangered or threatened birds:

Species	Status
Bald Eagle	E
Barn Owl	E
Henslow's Sparrow	T
King Rail	E
Least Tern	E
Long-eared Owl	T
Northern Harrier	E
Peregrine Falcon	E
Piping Plover	E
Red-shouldered Hawk	E
Short-eared Owl	E

In Memorial

Terry M. Shepard

IOU member Terry M. Shepard, 57, of Dallas Center, died March 18, 2003 at Iowa Lutheran Hospital. Terry was born in Creston, Iowa, and lived in Dallas Center for 33 years. He was a U.S. Airforce veteran of the Vietnam War.

Margrietta Delle

Margrietta Delle, long-time member of the IOU, the Iowa City Bird Club, and the Johnson County Songbird Project, died May 14, 2003. She will be missed by many.

Dates, Things To Do

July 19

Iowa City Fourth of July Butterfly Count. Contact Chris Edwards 626-6362.

August 1

Summer Field Reports due. See information on page 7.

August 1-3

4th annual MOU Shorebird Workshop to western Minnesota and eastern South Dakota. Contact: Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge at (320) 273-2191.

August 10

Shorebird outing with Iowa City Bird Club. Leader: James Huntington 338-1837.

September 11-14

W.S.O. Midwest Birding Symposium, Green Bay, WI.

September 27-28

Hawk Watch at Effigy Mounds, with Upper Iowa Audubon. Contact Pam Kester (563) 873-1236

October 10-12

IOU Fall Meeting, Hitchcock Nature Center, Loess Hills. Details in Fall issue of *IOU News*.

October 24-26

Fall 2003 Grand Marais Birding Festival, Grand Marais, MN. See details on page 9.

IOU News to Accept Advertising

The IOU Board agreed to endorse the offering of advertising in the newsletter, and appointed Linda Zaletel to assist editor Paul Hertzell and the publications committee in coordinating the associated activities. Thus, *IOU News* is currently accepting advertising, and the first two appear in this issue.

It is hoped readers of the newsletter also will endorse this new feature, and will make efforts to patronize those companies or organizations purchasing space in the newsletter. And why not ask your favorite birding store to advertise in the *IOU News*! Birdwatching, bird photography, and bird feeding, are part of a million dollar industry right here in Iowa. Birders buy binoculars, field guides, photo equipment, spotting scopes, bird feeders and lots of birdseed. Birders hire landscapers and local nurseries to create birding habitats in their yards, using native vegetation. Birders travel to attend workshops and birding festivals. They stay in local motels, buy gas, and eat in restaurants!

For more information on advertising in the newsletter, call Linda Zaletel at (515) 382-5427 or you can send an email to madowl@midiaowa.net. If you know of a potential client, you can contact Linda with a company name, address, and phone number and she will take it from there.

IOU New Membership or Renewal Request Form

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

New Member Membership Renewal

Please correct your address from the other side if needed.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

IA County _____

Phone Number _____
(for IOU Directory)

E-mail: _____

[] \$12 Fledgling (Student and/or New member)
\$ _____

[] \$20 Goldfinch (Regular)
\$ _____

[] \$35 Bluebird
\$ _____

[] \$50 Baltimore Oriole (includes IOU patch)
\$ _____

[] \$75 Great Egret (includes IOU patch)
\$ _____

[] \$100 Osprey (includes IOU patch)
\$ _____

[] \$250 Bald Eagle (includes T-shirt)
\$ _____

[] \$500 Peregrine Falcon
\$ _____ (includes IOU patch & T-shirt)

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> >

Thanks for your help!

Thanks to the many IOU members who have made contributions to the organization in response to our requests for help. Your generous support is greatly appreciated.

Here are three suggestions on how members can continue to help:



- Purchase a gift membership for a friend, each year.
- Make a general donation, or specify a publication or project you'd like to support directly.
- Make a donation later – create a memorial trust or include the IOU in your will

Iowa Ornithologists' Union
2308 State Avenue
Ames, IA 50014

[Address Service Requested]

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MASON CITY, IOWA
Permit No. 251

Ann Kent
211 RICHARDS ST
IOWA CITY IA 52246-3519

I o w a O r n i t h o l o g i s t s ' U n i o n

IOU News

CONTENTS	
Spring Meeting 2003 Wrap-up . . . 1	Highest Priority Species <i>Ric Zarwell</i> 6
New Members. 2	Summer Field Reports <i>Jim Dinsmore</i> 7
Announcements 3	Magpies of Broken Kettle <i>Eugene & Eloise Armstrong</i> . . 8
Checklist to Checklist 1968-1999 <i>Jim Sinclair</i> 5	Things To Do 10

