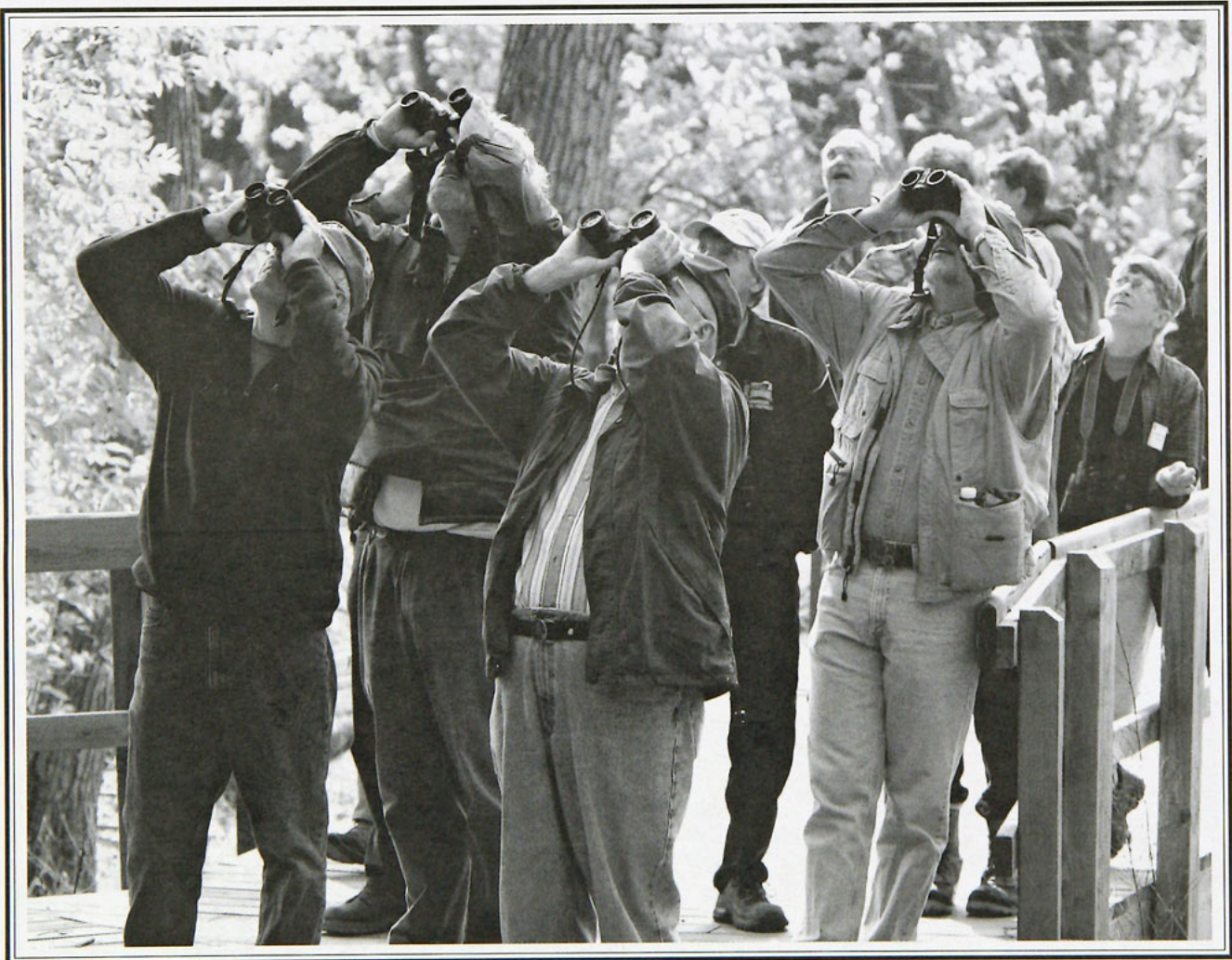


IOU News

Summer 2004  Volume 20 – Number 2



Dennis Carter leads a group of IOU members along the boardwalk at Effigy Mounds National Monument, Sunday morning. Photo by Kay Niyo.

Spring Meeting 2004 - Allamakee and Clayton Counties

Sharon Stilwell

The Spring 2004 Meeting was held at Village Creek Bible Camp near Lansing, in Allamakee County. The camp is located in a scenic valley along Village Creek. This year's meeting was attended by 100 people.

Birding officially started on the drive down to the camp when participants heard Golden-winged Warblers, and then

detected Ruffed Grouse booming near the camp buildings. Despite a cold and foggy start on Saturday morning, the group tallied 148 bird species for the weekend. Warblers were not encountered in great numbers, but the variety made up for it. Field trips found a total of 28 warbler species, including nesting Prothonotary, Cerulean and Yellow Warblers.

Continued on page 4



IOU News

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

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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 31
Winter	Dec 1 - Feb 28	November 15

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From the President

Richard Tetrault

The Spring IOU meeting in Lansing, Iowa, was wonderful in all aspects. The food was superb, the weather was perfectly marvelous, the birding outstanding and the scenery spectacular. Our warm thanks to Sharon Stilwell and Danny Akers for making it all happen. Everyone who attended enjoyed a splendid weekend. .

Paul Hertzel has taken over custody of the various state and county bird lists of IOU members. We are all grateful to him for the professional, first class job he has done, right out of the starting gate. He gave two awards at the spring meeting in Lansing. They were:

1. The highest percentage of birds seen relative to one's own Iowa list. The 2003 award went to Jay Gilliam.
2. The most birds seen in Iowa on a regulated year's list. The 2003 award went to Eugene and Eloise Armstrong.

The IOU is now able to start offering birding trips. The insurance problems have been resolved and our inaugural trip will be to see the Kirtland's Warbler in central Michigan. Contact Ric Zarwell for trip details. These IOU sponsored birding trips provide introductions to unique birding locations, the opportunity to meet new birding friends, obtain new life birds and enjoy good times. Upcoming trips will be announced on the List Serve and IOU publications. Be sure to sign up; we look forward to seeing you! To register, contact either Ric Zarwell, Chairman, at Ric.Zarwell@mchsi.com, or Robert Cecil at wewarb@aol.com or Ross Silcock at silcock@sidney.heartland.net.

IOU membership is once again increasing. Thanks to all of you for contacting and signing up new members. Membership currently stands at 471, very near our goal of 500. As we work toward this target, we would appreciate your continued help in recruiting new members!

The First IOU Birding Trip

See Kirtland's Warbler and Other Species in Michigan

Ric Zarwell

The Iowa Ornithologists' Union Board of Directors has established a Bird Trip Program. Some trips will explore special habitats and birds within Iowa; while others will seek the inviting species found beyond our borders. Several trips will be offered each year. The idea is to open up new opportunities for IOU members – to explore new habitats, to gain new knowledge, to add new birds to life lists, and most especially, to have lots of fun.

Our first outing will be to Grayling, Michigan over the weekend of June 11-13, 2004. This is the peak time for seeing the rare Kirtland's Warbler. To see this highly sought after species within the U.S., birders must eventually make the trek to Michigan, since it is almost never seen in migration (or in it's winter home in the Bahamas, for that matter).

Kirtland's Warbler nests only in young Jack Pine and only in a relatively small area. Access to the relatively small breeding grounds is restricted. Reservations have been made for IOU members to go on a free tour led by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff. Our tour will begin at 7 A.M. sharp, Saturday, June 12th at the Holiday Inn, Grayling, MI.

Seven people have signed up for this trip as of May 17th. IOU member Jenny Vickers is flying over from England to participate! She'll no doubt win the prize for coming the greatest distance, there's still plenty of time and plenty of room for you to join the fun. Plans are being made to bird several other sites in Michigan and along the route of travel.

You're invited to contact the IOU Birding Trip Coordinator to join the trip, to receive a list of phone numbers for motel options in Grayling, and to receive carpool information. To make travel easy, we need to know who would like a ride and who is willing to drive.

There is no fee for this trip. Your cost would include meals, gas and motel. It is strongly suggested that passengers share the cost of gas for the person doing the driving. The joy of finding new birds in new habitats, the camaraderie, and the fun, are free. To sign up, or to receive more information, contact: Ric Zarwell, IOU Birding Trip Coordinator, at Ric.Zarwell@mehsi.com, or at (563) 538-4991.

Silent Auction Nets \$488

Bob Cecil

Once again, the IOU spring meeting silent action was a great success, with \$488 raised. The silent auction has become a great opportunity for us to share with others those items we no longer use, while raising funds to maintain the highest possible quality of our publications. I regret not keeping track of all those who contributed items for the auction, but want to thank all of you who contributed things or who made purchases.



IOU members at the spring meeting relax in the afternoon sun, probably reading neat stuff picked up at the silent auction.

New IOU Officers

At the May 14 spring meeting in Allamakee County, five people were elected to IOU offices. First-time officer Tammy Hertzell of Mason City was elected Treasurer, replacing Rita Goranson, also of Mason City, who served faithfully for two and a half terms. Member Bob Cecil of Des Moines was elected Secretary, replacing Sue Spieker of Norwalk, who, in turn, was elected to the Board of Directors. Also elected to the Board of Directors was Jay Gilliam of Norwalk, replacing the irreplaceable Judy Garton of Fort Dodge. John Rutenbeck of Burlington was elected to a second term on the Board.

2004 Fall Meeting: Wickiup Hill

The Fall 2004 IOU Meeting will be held at Wickiup Hill Natural Area September 24 to 26. The meeting is being hosted by the Iowa City Bird Club. Wickiup Hill Natural Area is located along the Cedar River northwest of Cedar Rapids and is part of the Cedar River Greenbelt. Wickiup Hill features both upland and bottomland timber and is excellent wildlife habitat. Meetings will be in the Outdoor Learning Center. Wickiup Hill Natural Area was recently designated an IBA. To learn more about Wickiup Hill Natural Area visit

www.linncountyparks.com/Attraction.asp?AttractionID=37

Continued from page 1

SPRING MEETING NOTES

Saturday afternoon activities included *IOU News* Top Birder awards, a bird identification workshop with Ann Johnson and members of the Records Committee, a program on monitoring birds at Iowa's new IBA sites presented by Ric Zarwell and Jim Dinsmore, and a wildlife photography program presented by Bob and Linda Scarth. The Scarths illustrated their program with photos they have taken of Australian birds.

Once again, Bob Cecil coordinated a silent auction, and netted \$488 for the IOU. Also, the first IOU Photo Contest

was held as part of the 2004 Spring Meeting. First place in the photo contest went to Reid Allen, of West Des Moines. See page 6 for more details.

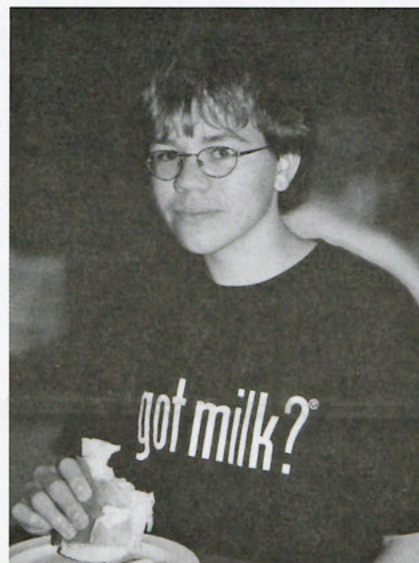
The evening program was given by Roger Hill on *The New Prairie Grouse of Iowa*. Roger is a nationally known wildlife photographer and is very knowledgeable about behavior and the influence of habitat on these birds. The meeting finale for some participants was a Sunday cruise on the Mississippi River with Captain Jack Libby and Ric Zarwell.
-Sharon Stilwell



Pam Akers.

The spring meeting was hosted by Pam and Danny Akers, of Garnavillo, Iowa. Thanks to their planning and hard work, the weekend was a great success. Danny also led morning field trips to little-known places in Clayton County, and produced some great birds for members to see.

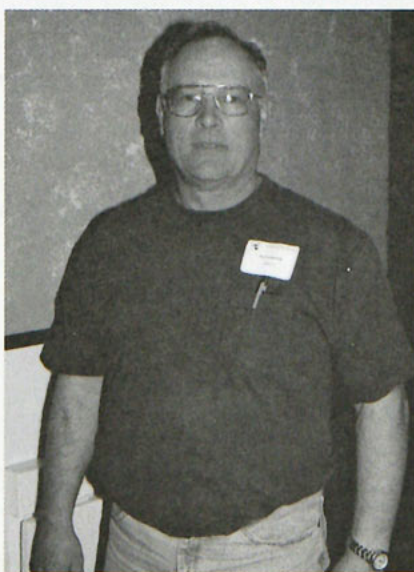
Three other longtime IOU members experienced in the northeastern part of the state led field trips Saturday and Sunday mornings. Dennis Carter took members to the boardwalk and trails of Efigy Mounds National Monument, Darwin Koenig led birders through remote parts of the Yellow River Forest, and Fred Leshar led explorers to Pool Slough, the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, and related wetlands.



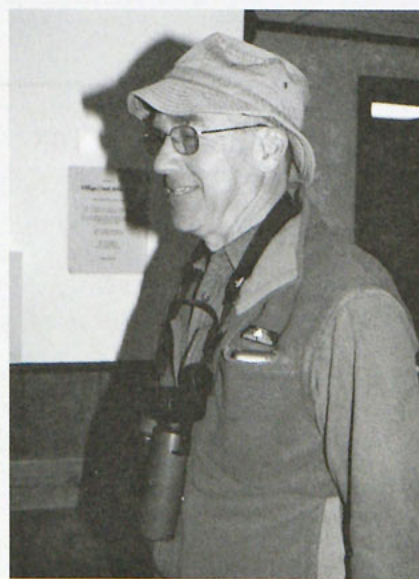
Danny Akers.



Dennis Carter.



Darwin Koenig.



Fred Leshar.

2004 Spring Meeting List of Attendees

Akers	Danny	Garnavillo	IA
Akers	Pam	Garnavillo	IA
Akers	Melanie	Garnavillo	IA
Allen	Reid	W Des Moines	IA
Allen	Pam	W Des Moines	IA
Armstrong	Eloise	Van Meter	IA
Armstrong	Eugene	Van Meter	IA
Barker	Bill	Princeton	IA
Barker	Dianne	Princeton	IA
Bettis	Barb	Ames	IA
Brees	Aaron	Urbandale	IA
Brown	Jerry	Evansdale	IA
Brown	Suzanne	Evansdale	IA
Brown	Bill	So. Sioux City	NE
Carbrey	Elizabeth	Ames	IA
Carbrey	Ed	Ames	IA
Carter	Dennis	Decorah	IA
Caster	Chris	Coralville	IA
Cecil	Bob	Des Moines	IA
Cecil	Mary	Des Moines	IA
Dentlinger	Diane	Des Moines	IA
Dick	Bob	Iowa City	IA
Dick	Dara	Iowa City	IA
Dinsmore	Jim	Ames	IA

Disbrow	Karen	Iowa City	IA
Donelson	Linda	Iowa City	IA
Donelson	John	Iowa City	IA
Edwards	Jeanne	Ames	IA
Edwards	David	Ames	IA
Ehresman	Marlene	Ames	IA
Ehresman	Bruce	Ames	IA
Eness	Joan	Clear Lake	IA
Eness	Vergil	Clear Lake	IA
Garton	Judy	Fort Dodge	IA
Garton	John	Fort Dodge	IA
Gilliam	Jay	Norwalk	IA
Goranson	Rita	Mason City	IA
Gregory	Mary Ann	Dysart	IA
Gregory	Ken	Dysart	IA
Harr	Doug	Ogden	IA
Hart	Rolly	Freemont	NE
Henrickson	Den	Marion	IA
Henrickson	Belva	Estherville	IA
Henrickson	Dennis	Estherville	IA
Henry	Patrick	Monona	IA
Henry	Cathy	Monona	IA
Hertzal	Paul	Mason City	IA
Hertzal	Tammy	Mason City	IA
Hunt	Mary Beth	Oskaloosa	IA
Hunt	Douglas	Oskaloosa	IA
Jackson	Maridel	Ankeny	IA
Johnson	Ann	Norwalk	IA
Johnson	Tom	Mystic	IA
Johnson	Becky	Mystic	IA
Johnson	Tiffany	Mystic	IA
Johnston	Sandra	Waterloo	IA
Johnston	Michael	Waterloo	IA
Kent	Tom	Iowa City	IA
Koenig	Darwin	Ankeny	IA
Konrad	Cathy	Bettendorf	IA
Konrad	Jim	Bettendorf	IA
Leshar	Fred	La Crosse	WI
Lynch	Richard	Solon	IA
Lynch	Nancy	Solon	IA
McCaw	Guy	Coralville	IA
McKay	Kelly	Hampton	IL
Michel	Marlene	Cresco	IA
Miller	Leonard	Indianola	IA
Nickolson	Bob	Sioux City	IA
Nickolson	Phyllis	Sioux City	IA
Niyo	Kay	Evergreen	CO
Ohlendorf	Vern	Muscataine	IA
Ohlendorf	Carolyn	Muscataine	IA
Patterson	Shane	Ames	IA
Patterson	Katy	Ames	IA
Pedelty	Reva	Nora Springs	IA
Pesek	Diana	Cedar Rapids	IA
Proescholdt	Mark	Liscomb	IA
Proescholdt	Beth	Liscomb	IA
Rutenbeck	John	Burlington	IA



Mark Proescholdt and Douglas Hunt.



Tammy Hertzal and Rita Goranson.

Scarath	Linda	Cedar Rapids	IA
Scarath	Robert	Cedar Rapids	IA
Schmitz	Randy	Jesup	IA
Schmitz	Donna	Jesup	IA
Spieker	Sue	Norwalk	IA
Spieker	Jerry	Norwalk	IA
Stilwell	Sharon	W Des Moines	IA
Stilwell	Dick	W Des Moines	IA
Tetrault	Dick	Coralville	IA
Tetrault	Gerry	Coralville	IA
Von Ehwegen	Jerry	Sioux City	IA
Walter	Jan	Mason City	IA
White	Harold	Estherville	IA
White	Margie	Estherville	IA
Winterwood	Charles	Dubuque	IA
Moore	Francis	Cedar Falls	IA
Allgood	Jean	Iowa City	IA
Allgood	Ed	Iowa City	IA
Stephens	Mike	Centerville	IA
Stephens	Vicky	Centerville	IA
Winterwood	Gretel	Dubuque	IA
Woods	Doyle L.	Indianola	IA
Zarwell	Ric	Lansing	IA
Zarwell	Betty	Lansing	IA

Species Compilation - 148

Pied-billed Grebe	American Kestrel	Chimney Swift	Purple Martin	Tennessee Warbler	Scarlet Tanager
American White Pelican	Ring-necked Pheasant	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Tree Swallow	Nashville Warbler	Eastern Towhee
Double-crested Cormorant	Ruffed Grouse	Belted Kingfisher	No. Rough-winged Swallow	Northern Parula	Chipping Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Wild Turkey	Red-headed Woodpecker	Bank Swallow	Yellow Warbler	Field Sparrow
Great Egret	Virginia Rail	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Cliff Swallow	Chestnut-sided Warbler	Vesper Sparrow
Green Heron	Sora	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Barn Swallow	Magnolia Warbler	Lark Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	American Coot	Downy Woodpecker	Black-capped Chickadee	Cape May Warbler	Savannah Sparrow
Canada Goose	Sandhill Crane	Hairy Woodpecker	Tufted Titmouse	Yellow-rumped Warbler	Song Sparrow
Wood Duck	Killdeer	Northern Flicker	White-breasted Nuthatch	Black-throated Green Warbler	Swamp Sparrow
Mallard	Lesser Yellowlegs	Pileated Woodpecker	House Wren	Blackburnian Warbler	White-throated Sparrow
Blue-winged Teal	Solitary Sandpiper	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Sedge Wren	Yellow-throated Warbler	White-crowned Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	Spotted Sandpiper	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Marsh Wren	Palm Warbler	Northern Cardinal
Green-winged Teal	Ring-billed Gull	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Bay-breasted Warbler	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Canvasback	Caspian Tern	Acadian Flycatcher	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Blackpoll Warbler	Indigo Bunting
Hooded Merganser	Forster's Tern	Willow Flycatcher	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Cerulean Warbler	Dickcissel
Osprey	Rock Pigeon	Least Flycatcher	Eastern Bluebird	Black-and-white Warbler	Bobolink
Bald Eagle	Mourning Dove	Eastern Phoebe	Gray-cheeked Thrush	American Redstart	Red-winged Blackbird
Northern Harrier	Black-billed Cuckoo	Great Crested Flycatcher	Swainson's Thrush	Prothonotary Warbler	Eastern Meadowlark
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Eastern Kingbird	Wood Thrush	Ovenbird	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Cooper's Hawk	Barred Owl	Yellow-throated Vireo	American Robin	Northern Waterthrush	Common Grackle
Red-shouldered Hawk	Common Nighthawk	Blue-headed Vireo	Gray Catbird	Louisiana Waterthrush	Brown-headed Cowbird
Red-tailed Hawk	Whip-poor-will	Warbling Vireo	Brown Thrasher	Kentucky Warbler	Orchard Oriole
		Red-eyed Vireo	European Starling	Connecticut Warbler	Baltimore Oriole
		Blue Jay	Cedar Waxwing	Common Yellowthroat	House Finch
		American Crow	Blue-winged Warbler	Wilson's Warbler	American Goldfinch
		Horned Lark	Golden-winged warbler	Canada Warbler	House Sparrow

Iowa Birds Photo Contest Results

The first Iowa Birds Photo Contest occurred in conjunction with the 2004 Spring Meeting. Eight high-quality photos were submitted by IOU members, and three were selected as best.

First place was awarded to Reid Allen of West Des Moines, for his striking photo of a Dickcissel taken in Fremont County, Iowa. Second place went to David Calvert of Dubuque for his well-composed Yellow Warbler photo taken at Bankston Creek. Third place went to Gerald Rowles of Johnston for a dramatic shot of a juvenile Bald Eagle taken at Jester Park. Judges for the contest were Thomas H. Kent,

Rita Goranson, and Paul Hertzell.

Small cash awards were set aside for the winners, but all three photographers agreed to donate the funds to the IOU. They also agreed to contribute their work to the IOU for use in displays. The IOU is very fortunate to have so many talented and generous members.

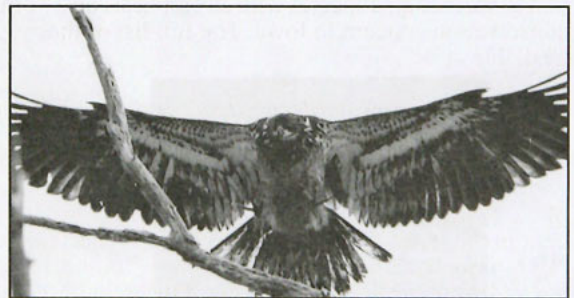
Organizers of the photo contest would like comment on the event, in particular, they would like to know if it should be continued, perhaps on an annual basis. If you have an opinion regarding this, you may send it to Sharon Stilwell at rsstilwell@att.net, or the *IOU News* at email address phertzell@rconnect.com, or postal address 1432 E State St., Mason City, IA 55401.



Dickcissel, Reid Allen.



Yellow Warbler, Daniel Calvert.



Bald Eagle, Gerald Rowles.

IOU News Top Birder Recognitions



Jay Gilliam and Paul Hertzell.

The *IOU News* publishes IOU members' species list totals for the previous year in the spring issue of the newsletter. For the first time, we recognize three IOU birders with top honors in two categories of birding for 2003. We do this because we wish to encourage those who keep lists of the birds they have seen. Maintaining these lists puts birders in the field, which generates records for field reports, the publication of which fulfills a primary function of the IOU.

Not all Iowa birders have large life lists or vast knowledge of Iowa's many secret places. In the opinion of the *IOU News*, a Top Birder can be anyone who is found in the field, looking for birds and finding birds, a significant amount of time. One way to measure this is to examine the percentage of a birder's state life list represented by a single calendar year's effort. In 2003, **Jay Gilliam** managed the highest such percentage by finding 253 birds, which was 91% of his state list of 279. Honorable mentions in this category go to Bill Scheible (.885), Danny Akers (.873), and Aaron Brees (.866).

A second recognition was given to **Eugene Armstrong** and **Eloise Armstrong**, who tallied the largest annual species list meeting strict guidelines for accountability. They found 292 species conforming to those guidelines. Honorable mentions go to Aaron Brees (277), Mike Overton (275) and Mark Proescholdt (273).



Eugene Armstrong and Eloise Armstrong.

SUMMER BIRDING and the IBA PROGRAM

James J Dinsmore

An added attraction to summer birding this year and in coming years is the need for nesting data for a number of species as part of the growing Important Bird Area (IBA) program in Iowa. To date, 57 areas in Iowa have been accepted as IBAs, listed here at right. Another 138 sites have been nominated for IBA status but have not been accepted as yet. A list of all of these sites can be found at:

<http://www.iowabirds.org/iba/sites.asp>

The sites are listed by county so it is easy to see which of your favorite birding areas have been nominated or accepted.

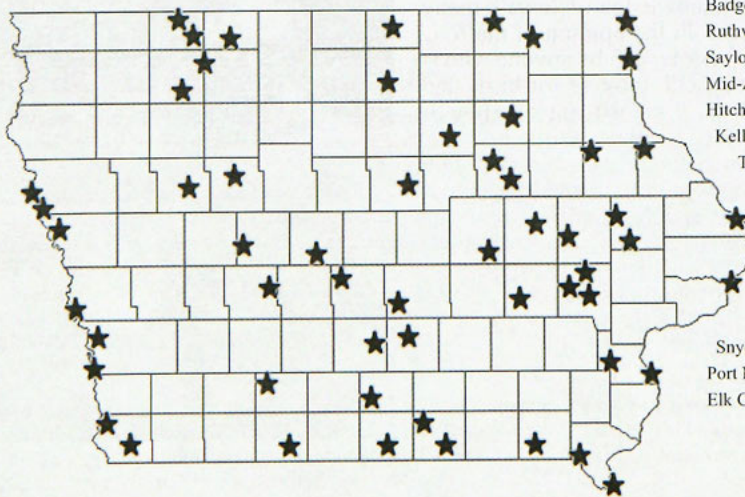
A goal of the IBA program is to identify areas that are important to various bird species with an emphasis on 37 bird species of conservation concern in Iowa. The full list of those 37 species is available at:

http://www.iowabirds.org/iba/criteria_species.asp

For all of the IBA sites, both the 57 accepted and the 138 nominated sites, we are seeking information on the nesting status of the 37 key bird species that are considered of conservation concern in the state. This summer, won't you consider becoming an "IBA Associate", visiting one or more of these IBA sites and trying to determine the nesting status of those 37 bird species on that site? We are using the same criteria that were used during the Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas, a project that involved many IOU and Audubon members. A website has been established where you can easily record your data. Check out:

<http://www.iowabirds.org/IBA/IBAChecklist.pdf>

The ultimate goal of the IBA program is to have conservation plans in place for all of our IBAs, thereby helping to ensure the long-term survival of these and other bird species in Iowa. It is always a thrill to find a nest or brood of some unusual bird in Iowa and now the IBA program adds a way where that information can be used to help provide conservation programs for our Important Bird Areas in Iowa. Give it a try. It is easy and can help the birds.



- | | |
|--|---------------|
| Yellow River Forest/Effigy Mounds NM | Allamakee |
| UMRFW, McGregor District | Allamakee |
| Lake Rathbun Reservoir | Appanoose |
| Sedan Wildlife Management Area | Appanoose |
| Dudgeon Lake Wildlife Area | Benton |
| George Wyth State Park/Hartman Reserve | Black Hawk |
| Cedar Valley Nature Trail | Black Hawk |
| Ledges State Park | Boone |
| Sweet Marsh | Bremer |
| Big Marsh | Butler |
| North and South Twin Lakes | Calhoun |
| Zirbel Slough | Cerro Gordo |
| Kindlespire Access/Burr Area | Clay |
| Princeton Wildlife Area | Clinton |
| Backbone State Park | Delaware |
| Spring Run Wildlife Area | Dickinson |
| Spirit Lake/Kettleon Wildlife Area | Dickinson |
| White Pine Hollow | Dubuque |
| Ingham, High, and Cunningham Lakes Complex | Emmet |
| Riverton Wildlife Area | Fremont |
| Forney Lake Wildlife Area | Fremont |
| Dunbar Slough | Greene |
| Bays Branch Wildlife Area | Guthrie |
| Hardin Co Greenbelt-Alden to Union/Pine Lake SP | Hardin |
| DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge | Harrison |
| Hayden Prairie State Preserve | Howard |
| Indiangrass Hills | Iowa |
| Green Island Wildlife Area | Jackson |
| Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge | Jasper |
| Coralville Res/Hawkeye WA/Lake McBride SP | Johnson |
| Hickory Hill Park | Johnson |
| F. W. Kent Park | Johnson |
| Muskrat Slough | Jones |
| Beam Woods | Jones |
| Shimek State Forest, Croton Unit | Lee |
| Pool 19 (Keokuk to Fort Madison) | Lee |
| Wickiup Hill-Cedar River Complex | Linn |
| Cairo Woods Wildlife Area | Louisa |
| Toolesboro Access/Odessa | Louisa |
| Stephens State Forest, Lucas & Whitebreast Units | Lucas |
| Red Rock Reservoir | Marion |
| Badger Lake Wildlife Area | Monona |
| Ruthven Wildlife Area/Dewey's Pasture | Palo Alto |
| Saylorville Reservoir | Polk |
| Mid-American Energy Plant, Council Bluffs | Pottawattamie |
| Hitchcock Nature Center (and adjoining properties) | Pottawattamie |
| Kellerton Bird Conservation Area | Ringgold |
| Tomahawk Marsh/Black Hawk Lake and SP | Sac |
| Otter Creek Marsh | Tama |
| Green Valley SP and Mitchell Marsh | Union |
| Lacey Keosauqua SP | Van Buren |
| Woodland Mounds Preserve | Warren |
| Medicine Creek W.A. / so. Wayne Co grasslands | Wayne |
| Cardinal Marsh | Winneshiek |
| Snyder and Winnebago Bends | Woodbury |
| Port Neal Fly Ash Ponds | Woodbury |
| Elk Creek Marsh | Worth |

New County Big Day Records Set

It was a good spring for Big Days. Five Iowa counties had new Big Day records established during the month of May, 2004. New high totals were set in the east in Clayton and Johnson Counties, in the north-central in Winnebago County, and in the west in Clay and Woodbury Counties.

Fourteen Iowa counties now have Big Day records. Listed are all current county Big Day records.

Allamakee	126	5/10/03	M Wolfe, M Paulson, B Zarwell, R Zarwell
Cerro Gordo	145	5/11/02	C Fischer, R Goranson, P Hertzell
Clay	148	5/09/04	L Schoenewe, G Grange, P Ernzen
Clayton	94	5/08/04	D Akers, J Brazell
Dickinson	91	10/5/02	L Schoenewe, G Grange
Fremont	171	5/11/91	S Dinsmore, R Silcock, BJ Rose, D Rose
Hancock	128	5/20/03	M Kenne, R Goranson
Johnson	136	5/08/04	T Kent, J Fuller
Kossuth	153	5/14/02	M Kenne, P Hertzell
Marshall	123	5/10/03	M Proescholdt, P Hertzell
Warren	154	5/09/03	A Brees, J Sinclair
Winnebago	127	5/09/04	R Goranson, P Hertzell
Woodbury	165	5/07/04	J Probst, D Stage, B Livermore
Worth	136	5/13/03	R Goranson, P Hertzell

A Woodbury County Big Day

Jerry Probst

Dave Stage, Bob Livermore and I have been running a Woodbury County Big Day for 15 years. We have had a great time doing it, and it is always exciting. This year's Big Day on May 7 was exceptional in the number of species that we located. Some common Iowa birds are difficult to find and some rarities for other Iowa areas are easier because of our extreme location in Iowa. We have decided from previous experiences to work the extreme western boundaries in Woodbury County as the county is large and time driving is lost time in most cases. Also this is also the area with the most public land and best habitat. The major areas birded are Stone Park, Sioux City Prairie, Bacon Creek Park, New Lake, Sand Hill Lake, Owego and Brown's Lake.

This narrative may sound more like what we missed than what we saw. We started the day at 4:30am and traveled to Stone Park to owl. We pulled into the parking lot and a Whip-poor-will flew right over us. We almost always start with Barred Owl. The most reliable location for a Barred Owl is about a mile hike down the road. We have to hike because the area is gated at night and has not been opened yet. The Barred Owl is the most difficult owl of the three we make specific attempts to see in this part of the county. Barred Owls are relatively rare in northwestern Iowa, and exceptional in South Dakota, which is just across the Big Sioux River from the Park. Great Horned Owls are usually easy and we often hear one sometime in the park along the Big Sioux River, but not this morning. We picked up more Whip-poor-wills and an Eastern Towhee and other early singers, but we struck out and wasted too much time and darkness to find Screech Owls that are also common in the park. We now had enough daylight to really get started and we began seeing passerines. We found a number of usuals and we knew we needed several birds that would be difficult to see at our other locations. Our Indigo Bunting was right where it should be; the Belted Kingfisher and the Green Heron were at the pond. We then saw a Ruby-crowned Kinglet that can be difficult to find and we have missed it most years. For some reason, we have trouble with Hairy Woodpeckers but they cooperated today.

We ran into several batches of warblers with the best one being a Bay-breasted that put on a great show for us. We had now found 15 warblers, which is good, but we missed all the *Oporornis* warblers. We usually find Kentucky and Mourning Warblers in the Park. We did find our Scarlet Tanager but the Summer Tanager eluded us and has not been found for the past several years. Our Louisiana Waterthrush that was discovered at the last IOU meeting in Sioux City was also missing today. Bob spotted a Veery whose singing drew his attention. We had 50 species by 7:30 and then 65 by 8:30. We then moved to Sioux City Prairie to pick up the Bell's Vireo, both Kingbirds, Grasshopper Sparrow, Dickcissel, LeConte's Sparrow, and some common species. We were up to 78 species by 10:00. We have a goal of seeing 100 species by noon however this year we fell short because we didn't go after any shore birds until later in the day.

Our next stop was Bacon Creek Park next to where I live. We picked up our Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, an early Eastern Wood-Pewee, Swainson's Thrush, and some usuals. We missed the Cedar Waxwings that have been hanging out there every day except today. I feel that not seeing the Waxwings was our biggest miss for the day. Finally, at 12:30 we had 100 species. We moved on to the New Lake and Mid American fly ash ponds. We did great there picking up 16 species of shore birds, 9 species of ducks and 8 other species including Bobolinks which we missed at Bacon Creek Park. We then made a decision to skip Brown's Lake and keep moving south to Sand Hill Lake. There we found more water birds and then moved to Owego. Owego is a new restored wetland area that has been rather productive and has held several species that are difficult for us to find. It played out well for us. We added the American Bittern, Marsh Wren, Swamp Sparrow, Swainson's Hawk, Sora, Palm Warbler, Parula, Goldeneye, and several good shorebirds.

We then moved to Brown's Lake. We have a place where we have an excellent view of the shallow feeders as they come in to roost for the night. We picked up several species right away including pelicans and Ring-billed Gulls. Waiting produced some early Least Terns and a small group of Black Terns. We then went back to Sioux City to look for Common Nighthawks. We failed at finding the Nighthawks even though they were in Omaha on Thursday. We then went back to Stone Park where two years in a row we had seen a grand display of Peregrine Falcons interacting and putting on a great aerial display, however this year all we found were black flies so we soon gave up. We then went back to owling and soon had the Barred Owl we missed that morning all wound up, and finding a Screech Owl was also easy. We were tired but excited about our new Woodbury County record of 165 species that we achieved that day. Probably the best bird, in my opinion, for our area was the Bay-breasted Warbler, and our worst miss was Cedar Waxwing. We should have covered Snyder's Bend and also should have gone after American Woodcocks but they are very iffy that late in the season. Maybe next year we can give Fremont County a run at their 171 species.

International Migratory Bird Day Spring Count Becomes A Big Day In Clay County

Lee Schoenewe

We started this May 8 count before sunrise at Wanata State Park near Peterson along the Little Sioux River and it quickly became a big day. By the time Gary Grange, Pete Ernzen and I could actually see well enough to use our binoculars, we had 23 species on the list. The resident Barred Owls didn't respond right away to my hoo-hoo-hooting, but as we walked along the road listening for the songbirds as they awoke, the owl pair started discussing where the newcomer they heard had gone to.

Driving north from Peterson we found flocks of sparrows everywhere and with a quick stop at Kirchner Prairie to kick up a LeConte's, we had all the sparrows we expected to get plus a couple more. The rest of the day we had to pretty much ignore the little

brown jobs we found just about everywhere we went.

A swing through the town of Everly to pick up the Eurasian Collared-Doves proved fruitless, but that and the lack of a response from the neighborhood Screech Owl were the only real misses in an otherwise lengthy and record-setting list.

As we came through Spencer, I commented that the Stolley Park pond was probably the best place in the county to pick up a Common Loon in migration. Not only was the loon out on the water at the north and deep end of the old gravel pit they like so well, but Franklin's Gulls and a Forster's Tern were lounging on the island.

We got to Dan Green Slough before nine o'clock and starting really adding the marsh and water birds to the list. All four goose species were there along with a number of waterfowl, pelicans, cormorants and coots. At nine o'clock we realized we had 99 species on the list.

Next stop was the road into Smith's Slough and Trumbull Lake which is always productive. A White-faced Ibis standing at the edge of the slough gave us a great look, but twenty minutes later when we came back out, the bird of the day was no longer there. We added a number of warblers and songbirds in the woods between the slough and the lake that traps these migrants, and when we got down on the point there was a Western Grebe out on the lake and a Common Tern fishing for minnows right off the point.

A stop to scan Mud Lake seemed disappointing with no new species until Gary spotted a flock of shorebirds landing out on the water. With the scope we could see they were Wilson's Phalaropes. On the dike overlooking Barringer Slough, we added a couple more species including Green-winged Teal and a lonely Semipalmated Plover. At every stop we picked up new species for the list and that luck stayed with us throughout the day.

At Elk Lake WPA an American Bittern flew in and landed in the marsh on the far side of the dike at the back of the pond we were surveying. Pete didn't see it, but a few minutes later, another bittern flew in to join the first bird and Pete picked that one up. Earlier, Pete had asked about shrike habitat and then as we left Elk Lake he spotted a Loggerhead Shrike working from a fence line on the Clay county side of the road. As we drove off the bird flew across the road into Palo Alto county and out of our count area, but we had the tick we needed and waved goodbye.

We were struggling to find good shorebird habitat and the list for that group was meager so we headed for the far southeast corner of the county and a private wetland pasture just north of Pickerel Lake. The stop gave us Dunlin, Wilson's Snipe, Semipalmated and Upland Sandpipers. Although not good, our shorebird list now included everything we should have and was at least respectable.

As we headed back toward the Little Sioux River valley, we found a Western Kingbird in the Dry Mud Lake area. We were happy to have that bird, but within half an hour later, we were looking at another Western Kingbird flycatching from a lone tree on a pasture hillside along the Little Sioux. Two good birds, one unexpected checkmark.

A short jaunt down the trail at Kindlespire Park produced the Hairy Woodpecker we were missing, and a stop at the nearby Burr Area along the river gave us a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Although we were headed back to Wanata State Park where Pete had left his car, the elusive Pileated Woodpecker that has been seen there did elude us this day.

We had easily surpassed the old big day record for Clay county of 138 species and as we took one last walk down the road at Wanata, a Broad-winged Hawk flew across in front of us. The new record stood at 148 species!

It had been a Great Big Day and we all felt lucky to have experienced it. There was daylight left, but we were happy and tired and needed to go our different directions at that point. We would save 150 for some other great day.

A Johnson County Big Day

Thomas H. Kent

Jim Fuller and I did a Big Day in Johnson County on 8 May 2004. We started at 3:00 a.m. and finished at 9:15 p.m. We finished with 136 species.

We missed Common Nighthawk in downtown Iowa City, but got Eastern Screech-Owl in the southeast. We continued our recent tradition of missing Whip-poor-will and American Woodcock at locations that used to be reliable.

As the light came up, we heard and saw a White-eyed Vireo about 20 feet inside the west county line. Little pockets of warblers were everywhere. A Clay-colored Sparrow was a nice find. As we moved to the Coralville Reservoir, Jim spotted a Snowy Plover off of Greencastle Avenue—an accidental species for Iowa and the first county record. The reservoir harbored thousands of shore birds on extensive mud flats. Considering the habitat, 15 species of plovers and sandpipers and 6 species of waterfowl were disappointing.

Some of our better birds were Northern Bobwhite, Common Loon, Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, and Yellow-headed Blackbird. We decided to push on into the evening and were rewarded with Upland Sandpiper and Loggerhead Shrike in the southeast along with two Eurasian Tree Sparrows in a cattle lot. When it was almost dark, we heard a woodcock at Sugar Bottom and the Whip-poor-wills began to call.

We ended up with 20 warblers and 10 sparrows, which is good but not outstanding. The record of 136 species should be easy to beat if done a few days later to get the later migrants, but a good warbler fallout and optimal water levels for shorebirds would also be required. More scouting would also help.

A First Winnebago County Big Day

Paul Hertzell

Rita Goranson and I ran the first Winnebago County Big Day on Sunday, 9 May, 2004. Tiny Winnebago County ranks 98th in size of Iowa's 99 counties—it has 2.09 more square miles than Osceola County, which is the smallest. Most of the land is in agricultural use, but there are four or five sites that offer a bit of natural habitat, Myre Slough and the extreme western end of Rice Lake being the two most promising to birders. We also visited Harmon Lake, Thorpe Park, the north end of Pilot Knob State Park, and Hogsback Wildlife Area.

Our first bird was an Eastern Screech Owl found in the woods on the north side of Rice Lake. We had started at 3am, listening for owls and nightjars in the woods, and rails and bitterns in the slough, and we birded straight through until sundown. By mid-afternoon we had exhausted our list of sites to visit, and began making second rounds. Our last bird was a Grasshopper Sparrow singing from a fencepost alongside a grassland north of Forest City.

Some other highlights were a single Osprey circling over Thorpe Park, seven vocal Sandhill Cranes at Myre Slough, 18 Stilt Sandpipers at a rural farm pond, a Whip-poor-will flushed from the road leading into Pilot Knob State Park, and thirteen species of sparrows, including a late junco. We finished with 127 species on the day

SUMMER FIELD REPORTS

Jim Dinsmore

For some birders, summer is a time of reduced activity after the rush to try to see the many migrants that make the spring season such a favorite. However, summer, despite the reduced variety of bird species present, can be just as interesting. In early June there usually are a few late warblers, shorebirds, or other migrants still around and, by early July, the southbound shorebird migration is typically well underway. Sandwiched in between those migrations, some 150 bird species typically nest somewhere in Iowa each year. Some of these species are so common that they merit little attention but many species are either unusual as nesters in Iowa or their nesting range does not cover the entire state, leading to expansions or contractions of their nesting range. The summer field reports tend to emphasize those species.

For those of you who didn't submit field reports for the spring season, a new feature now available is electronic submission of your field reports material. It is quick and simple, and will allow you to submit material as you see the birds rather than waiting until the end of the season and then submitting all of your material at once. For first timers, start out by entering a short profile of who you are at:

<http://www.iowabirds.org/iou/profile.asp>

Once you have done that, click on the Field Reports button and you will be ready to start entering data. As usual, material for the season needs to be submitted by 3 August. Have a great summer of birding.

Visiting the Mid-America Fly Ash Ponds

Ric Zarwell

The Mid-American Energy plant south of Council Bluffs and the Port Neal Fly Ash Ponds owned by Mid-American in Woodbury Co. are open to birders. But special arrangements are needed to visit these sites. Background checks can take up to 5-days, and there are now new job responsibilities for guards at the two sites which slows the process further.

I've been asked to announce that a minimum of 2 weeks lead time is needed to gain clearance to enter the Mid-American Energy Plant sites. The person to contact at Mid-American to make the special arrangements is Joe Bannon at JBannon@midamerican.com, or (563) 333-8620.

Tighter restrictions are in place following 9/11, and I believe American citizens prefer that such facilities are secure and safe.

Mid-American is doing the best they can to be accommodating to recreational birders. If you wish to visit either of their two sites, please be sure to contact Joe Bannon at least 14 days in advance.



Some breeding birds reduce vocalizing once nesting begins, and become more difficult to find. Photo by P. Hertzfel, May 2004.

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can be made on the web site at
<http://www.iowabirds.org>
or by writing to the Registrar at

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Or contact any member for help.

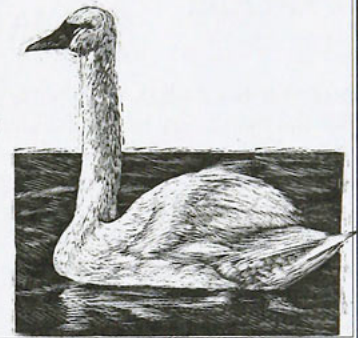




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IOU News

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