

IOU News

Summer/Fall 2006  Volume 22 – Number 2



Participants in Saturday morning's field trip to Pilot Knob State Park in Hancock County peer into a canopy occupied by warblers. Except Ty Smedes – it's very difficult to get a candid shot of another photographer. Photo by P Hertzell 2006.

Spring Meeting 2006 – Great Programs, Great Birds

The Iowa Ornithologists' Union held its Spring Meeting at the Deer Valley Lodge in Ventura Heights, Cerro Gordo County, May 19-21, 2006. Highlights of the weekend included three outstanding programs, the IOU's first "pelagic" trip, a Friday night field trip to Hanlontown Marsh, recognition of three IOU members for field ornithological and birding excellence in 2005, and more birds than ever before recorded at an IOU annual meeting.

Saturday afternoon programs were provided by Joe McGovern, who spoke on behalf of the Iowa Natural Heri-

tage Foundation, and Harsha Jayawardena who gave a presentation on the birds of his home country, Sri Lanka.

The evening banquet speaker was Dr. Jerry Jackson of Florida Gulf Coast University, a native Iowan and life IOU member. Jackson, perhaps the leading authority on the Ivory-billed woodpecker, discussed the known history of the Ivory-bill and recent efforts to document its continued existence. Additionally, he made the case for protecting Ivory-billed

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IOU News

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Editor: Paul Hertzell
1432 East State Street
Mason City, IA 50401
phertzell@rconnect.com

All event photos this issue: Paul Hertzell,
Don Poggensee, Kayleen Niyo

IOU Publications Committee:
James J. Dinsmore
Paul Hertzell
Ann Johnson, Chair
Kayleen A. Niyo
Bill Scheible

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IOU Membership / Subscriptions:
<http://www.iowabirds.org/>
or : Doug Hunt
1201 High Avenue W
Oskaloosa, IA 52577
birders@mahaska.org

IOU Journal: **Iowa Bird Life**
Kayleen Niyo, Editor

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
mkenne@netamumail.com
Summer Field Reports-
James J. Dinsmore
oldcoot@iastate.edu
Fall Field Reports-
Paul Hertzell
phertzell@rconnect.com

this newsletter was mailed to 422 members

From the President



First, my thanks to Jay Gilliam and Mike Dooley who recently finished their terms on the Board of Directors. Jay has also finished his term on IOU's newest standing committee, the Projects Committee.

Our Board of Directors do much of their work behind the scenes so I thought it would be good to take this opportunity to introduce them to our membership. New to the Board are John Bissell and Tim Humpal.

John says he started watching birds at his grandma's feeders when he was a youngster. As a teen he set up his own feeders. After college he says he decided to learn more about birds beyond his own backyard. He credits Jay Gilliam and Dennis Thompson with his current interest in birding as well as photography. He has been a member of IOU for 5 years,



but has been an active birder for 20 years. John's first binoculars were a birthday gift from his wife Anna. Anna enjoys backyard birding with John and their son, Drew. John and 2 year old Drew fill their backyard feeders together. John is a St. Joseph, Missouri native, but grew up in Iowa Falls. His favorite birding location is Warren County in spring migration, but Pilot Knob State Park, Myre Slough and Hanlontown Marsh, in northern Iowa all vie for second place.

Tim, is a Des Moines native and lived there until 1989 when he moved to Le Mars in Plymouth County. He lived there for 10 years and was a member of the Loess Hills Audubon Society. He says this was his first real contact with other birders or an organized bird club. Tim dabbled



with IOU membership over the years, but has been a member continuously for the past six or seven years. He moved back to the Des Moines area in 2000 and settled into a house in

Waukee. He is sometimes joined by his wife on birding excursions. They have chased winter owls and cruised for Atlantic Puffins. Tim says they always enjoy a trip to De Soto Bend to see migrating geese. Tim looks forward to participating in the Christmas bird counts. He regularly does the Red Rock, Saylorville and Des Moines counts. This past year he added the Union County count. Tim's interest in birding grew gradually over several years. He remembers buying a field guide and subscribing to several birding magazines. His first binoculars were a pair of 7x50s that he won in junior high school. These battered bins served him until the early 1990's when he purchased a new pair of 8x42s which he describes as a vast improvement in optic quality.

Carolyn Fischer just completed a one year term vacated by John Rutenbeck when he became Vice President. I am pleased she agreed to continue serving on the Board for a full 2-year term. Carolyn was recently one of our hosts at the spring IOU meeting in Ventura. She was also one of the willing locals who helped folks locate the Northern Hawk-owl last winter. My first memory of Carolyn was as field trip leader on my first IOU field trip. Carolyn says she has always had a love of nature and started pursuing birding in 1985 after back surgery kept her from other activities. Jan and Jim Walter as well as Jim Fuller were instrumental in getting Carolyn involved in IOU. She has been an IOU member for 16 years. Her favorite birding area is Elk Creek in Worth County. She is from Blue Earth, Minnesota. She moved to Mason City in 1984 from Milbank, South Dakota. Three of Carolyn's four children enjoy nature and birds. Her seven grandchildren enjoy birds and wildlife too.



Jim Fuller has been an IOU member since 1973 which is just about the same time he started birding. His mother, Jane Fuller of Burlington passed on her love of birding to Jim and his brother Chuck. She is also the one who encouraged him to join IOU. He says he remembers attending a fall IOU meeting around 1972 in New London and Geode State Park. He describes it as a real eye opener. Jim, an Iowa native, lives



in Iowa City with his wife Karole who Jim describes as a casual birder. His favorite places to bird in spring are Shimek State Forest and Lacey-Keosauqua State Park. Jim also enjoys birding from his own backyard just about anytime.

Ric Zarwell is serving a second term on the IOU Board. He has been birding for more than 40 years. Ric points to an article by Roger Tory Peterson entitled "The Listing Game" as the spark that inspired him to start birding. He also credits his father with sharing his own love of nature with Ric. His father also passed along his dilapidated, but, useable binoculars to Ric when he started birding. He and his wife Betty who is also an



avid birder live in Lansing, but enjoy birding together internationally. Ric and Betty are founders of the Rivers and Bluffs Festival held in Lansing in November each year. Ric is also Iowa's Important Bird Area Coordinator. Ric enjoys sharing his love of birding with his grandchildren. One of his grandchildren had a life list of 142 birds before he was 7!

Please take a moment to introduce yourself to these folks at the next meeting in Keosauqua and join me in thanking them for the time and effort they put forth to help IOU.

- Sharon Stillwell

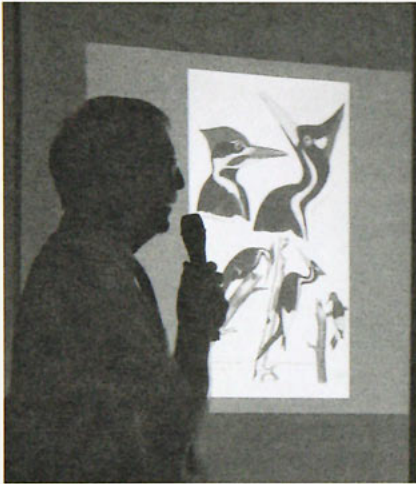


The IOU Board of Directors meets at the Deer Valley lodge in Ventura, Iowa, in May, 2006. From left, and clockwise, Doug Hunt, Jay Gilliam, John Rutenbeck, Kay Niyo, Carolyn Fischer, John Bissell, Tammy Hertzell, Jim Fuller, Tim Humpal, Sharon Stillwell, Ric Zarwell, Karen Disbrow.

IOU SPRING MEETING

Continued from page 1.

habitat for all the species that need it to survive.



Saturday evening, Dr. Jerry Jackson spoke to the membership about both historical and recent events pertaining to the search for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

Friday evening began with a triple book-signing event involving Nish Gunawardena, author of *Traces of Eden*, Jackson, and Ann Johnson. About 9 pm, a group lead by Gerald White, Rita Goranson and Paul Hertzal drove to Hanlontown Marsh to listen to night sounds. Despite three long-range parabolic microphones pointed in their directions, only a few species were vocal enough to be identified.

Saturday morning saw field trips led by Mark Proescholdt, to Parker's Woods, Rita Goranson, to Eagle Lake, Curt Nelson, to Worth County wetlands, Paul Hertzal, to Pilot Knob State Park, and Carolyn Fischer, to Clear Lake. The last of these included a "pelagic" which set sail on beautiful Clear Lake in a pontoon boat provided by Alan Duea and skippered by Brad Emerson.

The Spring Business Meeting began promptly at 1pm and had unusually high attendance, possibly because many members were still finishing up their lunches. It was followed by the afternoon programs, a look at the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation's work in conserving and restoring native habitat, es-

pecially in the Clear Lake area, and an excellent overview of the birds of Sri Lanka by native son and photographer Dr. Harsha Jayawardena.

Following the programs, Vice-president John Rutenbeck introduced the four new members in attendance, Nora Becker, Diane Bradbury, Anita Evans, and Greg Greiman. The membership welcomed them, and each received a complimentary copy of *Birds In Iowa*.

Three awards were announced, with the first going to Mark Orsag (not in attendance) for outstanding contribution to field ornithology in 2005, presented by Ann Johnson on behalf of the IOU Records Committee. The second and third awards went to Jay Gilliam and Danny Akers for their 'top birder' accomplishments during 2005, presented by Paul Hertzal on behalf of the IOU News and the Publications Committee.

Finally, before the gathering broke, answer sheets were distributed and about 50 members participated in a surprise 10-point quiz with prizes donated by



Harsha Jayawardena spoke to the membership about the birds of his native Sri Lanka.



Joe McGovern spoke on behalf of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.

Ellen Montgomery's Basic Birder wild bird store in Mason City. Holding the stub to the top score was Gerry Tetrault, who immediately confessed that the real



Alan Duea of Clear Lake made his boat available to IOU members, who, led by Carolyn Fischer, found the weekend's only Black-crowned Night Heron, plus intimate looks at Western Grebe and Common Tern. From left, Jerome Jackson, Donna Flanagan, Greg Greiner, Tammy Hertzal, Karole Fuller, Anita Evans. Not pictured, Don Poggensee and Carolyn Fischer. Photo by Don Poggensee.

owner of the many right answers was Bill Scheible of Cedar Rapids, who had written them on an answer sheet given him by Gerry and then returned to her. At least, that's the way the story was told to the *IOU News*.

On Sunday, field trip leaders fine-tuned their Saturday routes, and an additional trip was led by Carolyn Fischer to Zirbel Slough and the Union Hills



Bob Nickolson peers down from the top of the observation tower at Pilot Knob State Park.

WMA in southern Cerro Gordo County. The weekend's list of birds already was impressive, thanks to a flood of passerines arriving on new south winds, and Sunday's field trips continued to find new birds. Two Least Bitterns were encountered at Zirbel Slough, a Little Blue Heron was found by Curt Nelson at Silver Lake in Worth County, and the Pilot Knob group got a brief look at a Blue Grosbeak. The noon compilation

showed a record three-day total of 185 species, later adjusted to 186.



The Clear Lake field trip walked Lone Tree Point, the last remaining pristine habitat area on the shore of Clear Lake. Photo by Don Poggensee.



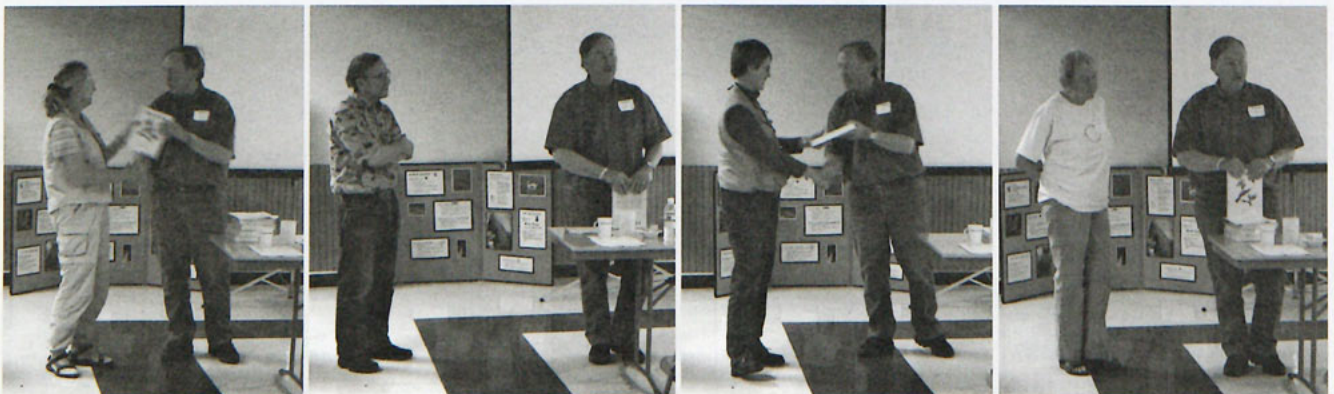
Two Missourians, Edge Wade and Jerry Wade confer with one Iowan, Aaron Brees.

IOU Awards

Last year, at the 2005 Spring Meeting in Warren County, the IOU Records Committee honored **Beth Proescholdt** with the first award given to a member for Outstanding Contribution to Field Ornithology in the previous calendar year. This year, the second year of this award, the committee unanimously chose to honor **Mark Orsag** of Gretna, NE. In 2005, Mark found in Iowa and documented a Lazuli Bunting, a Black-headed Grosbeak, a Western Tanager, and two Ferruginous Hawks. All five were reviewed and accepted by the committee. In addition, he documented three other difficult birds, contributed 140 field reports, and coordinated the fall hawkwatch season at the Hitchcock Hawk Watch in the Loess Hills of Pottawattamie County.

Also recognized at the Spring Meeting in 2006 was **Jay Gilliam**, recipient of the *IOU News* Top Birder Award for 2005. Gilliam may have been the most active birder of the year, encountering an incredible 307 species of birds in Iowa in a year in which 333 species were recorded by all birders combined. Gilliam is the first birder whose name is not **Armstrong**, to win this award. His total was one more than Eloise Armstrong's total of 306 reported for the year 2004.

A second Top Birder recognition awarded by the *IOU News* is given to the birder whose annual total makes the highest percentage with his/her Iowa life list. In 2005, both **Danny Akers** and **Jay Gilliam** found 94% of their respective life lists, which we think are remarkable ratios. The average percentage computed over all birders who report an annual total is 80%. [High percentages get more difficult to maintain as a member's life list grows.]



John Rutenbeck welcomes four new members with a copy of *Birds In Iowa*, by Kent and Dinsmore. From left, Nora Becker of Cedar Rapids, Greg Greiman of Garner, Anita Evans of Omaha, and Diane Bradbury of Cedar Rapids.

List of Attendees, Spring 2006

Akers, Danny	Garnaville	IA	Kuhlman, Mary	Fort Dodge	IA
Allen, Reid	W Des Moines	IA	Lovell, Tom	Clear Lake	IA
Allen, Pam	W Des Moines	IA	Lovell, Jan	Clear Lake	IA
Allgood, Ed	Iowa City	IA	Miller, Barbara	Des Moines	IA
Allgood, Jean	Iowa City	IA	Moore, Francis	Waterloo	IA
Becker, Nora	Cedar Rapids	IA	Nelson, Curt	Mason City	IA
Berrier, Carol	Ankeny	IA	Nickolson, Robert	Sioux City	IA
Bissell, John	Grimes	IA	Nickolson, Phyllis	Sioux City	IA
Bradbury, Diane	Cedar Rapids	IA	Niyo, Kayleen	Evergreen	CO
Brees, Aaron	Des Moines	IA	Patterson, Katy	Ames	IA
Brown, Suzanne	Evansdale	IA	Patterson, Shane	Ames	IA
Brown, Jerry	Evansdale	IA	Pauley, Marty	Mason City	IA
Brown, Don	W Des Moines	IA	Pedelty, Reva	Nora Springs	IA
Carbrey, Edward	Ames	IA	Pesek, Diana	Cedar Rapids	IA
Carbrey, Elizabeth	Ames	IA	Poggensee, Don	Ida Grove	IA
Caster, Christopher	Coralville	IA	Proescholdt, Mark	Liscomb	IA



Cecil, John	Des Moines	IA	Stephens, Mike	Centerville	IA
Clark, Jane	Clive	IA	Stephens, Vicky	Centerville	IA
Connell, Marcia	Clear Lake	IA	Stilwell, Sharon	W Des Moines	IA
Dinsmore, Jim	Ames	IA	Stilwell, Dick	W Des Moines	IA
Disbrow, Karen	Iowa City	IA	Stone, Larry	Elkader	IA
Edson, Clyde	Ames	IA	Stone, Margaret	Elkader	IA
Edson, Barbara	Ames	IA	Stone, Elda	Ventura	IA
Evans, Anita	Omaha	NE	Tetrault, Richard	Coralville	IA
Fischer, Carolyn	Mason City	IA	Tetrault, Gerry	Coralville	IA
Flanagan, Donna	Ames	IA	Van Dyke, Doug	Boone	IA
Fuller, Jim	Iowa City	IA	Van Dyke, Vicky	Boone	IA
Fuller, Karole	Iowa City	IA	Von Ehwegen, Todd	Forest City	IA
Fye, Dale	Cedar Rapids	IA	Von Ehwegen, Julia	Forest City	IA
Fye, Helen	Cedar Rapids	IA	Von Ehwegen, Gerald	Sioux City	IA
Garton, Judy	Fort Dodge	IA	Wade, Jerry	Columbia	MO
Gilliam, Jay	Norwalk	IA	Wade, Edge	Columbia	MO
Goranson, Rita	Mason City	IA	Weichers, Kelly	Roland	IA
Goranson, Anne	Clear Lake	IA	Widner, Russ	Cave Creek	AZ
Greiman, Greg	Garner	IA	Zarwell, Ric	Lansing	IA
Harr, Doug	Ogden	IA	Zarwell, Betty	Lansing	IA
Hertzel, Paul	Mason City	IA			
Hertzel, Tammy	Mason City	IA			
Humpal, Tim	Waukee	IA			
Hunt, Doug	Oskaloosa	IA			
Hunt, Mary Beth	Oskaloosa	IA			
Jackson, Jerome	Ft. Myers	FL			
Jayawardena, Harsha	Mason City	IA			
Johnson, Ann	Norwalk	IA			
Johnson, Tom	Mystic	IA			
Johnston, Sandy	Waterloo	IA			
Johnston, Mike	Waterloo	IA			
Kraemer, Richard	Waterloo	IA			
Kuhlman, Aaron	Fort Dodge	IA			



IOU Birder Quiz

Below are the questions to the birder quiz that took place at the Spring Meeting. About 50 people participated in the quiz, with prizes to the top two scores donated by the Basic Birder wild bird store in Mason City.

Top place with 8.5 points out of 10 went to Bill Scheible of Cedar Rapids. There were three second-place scores of 8 points, each of which was put into a bowl from which President Sharon Stilwell randomly selected a winner. She closed her eyes, reached in and pulled out her husband's scoresheet.

How well would you have done? Answers appear on page 11.

Part I: TRUE/FALSE

1. Our keynote speaker, Jerry Jackson lives in Ft. Myers, Florida, which is 8,447 miles away, if you drive a certain route to get there. Anyway, although he lives and works in Florida, he was not originally from there. True or false: Jackson is, in fact, from Iowa.

2. INHF stands for Iowa Native Habitat Foundation.

3. The Ivory-billed Woodpecker would be easy to find if it was just a little larger, and had a flaming red crest on top of its head.

Part II: MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Sri Lanka is about
(a) half the size of Iowa,
(b) the same size as Iowa,
(c) twice the size of Iowa.

2. 93 people registered for this meeting. This is about
(a) 10% of the IOU membership,
(b) 20% of our membership,
(c) 30% of our membership.

Part III: FILL IN THE BLANK

1. In spite of what some say, the geographic center of Iowa does not lie in Johnson County. In what county does the geographic center lie?

2. The Iowa State Bird is the American Goldfinch. What is its scientific name?

3. Speaking of scientific names, what is the common name for *Campephilus principalis*?

4. Speaking of birds in Iowa, what species was most recently added to the state list?

5. The Ivory-billed Woodpecker was never recorded in Iowa. How many species of woodpecker (family Picidae) have been recorded in the state of Iowa?

Species Compilation, Spring 2006

186 species were found by IOU Spring Meeting attendees in Cerro Gordo, Hancock and Worth counties during the three days of the 2006 Meeting.

Highlights were a Western Grebe on Clear Lake, a Little Blue Heron at Silver Lake in Worth County, 3 White-faced Ibis, a Merlin at Elk Creek, six of seven vireos (no White-eyed), sixteen species of shorebirds including Black-bellied Plover and Hudsonian Godwit, twenty-eight warbler species including Hooded, Kentucky, and Connecticut, a single tree bending under the weight of multiple Cape May Warblers, and a Blue Grosbeak.



John Rutenbeck consults with the membership Sunday afternoon to complete the list of species found during the weekend.

The 186 species is likely a record total, surpassing the 179 found last year in Warren County, and 178 found in 1995 at the Ida Grove Spring Meeting.

Following Sunday's compilation, the total stood at 185. That afternoon, two of the trip leaders returned to the field in search of particular birds reported earlier, and added Great-tailed Grackle and Merlin to the list total. A Pilot Knob Worm-eating Warbler heard by birders experienced with this species was not confirmed when those birders returned to the site and played a tape. So, exercising caution with heard-only Worm-eating Warblers, the species was deleted from the list.

Snow Goose
Canada Goose
Mute Swan
Trumpeter Swan
Wood Duck
Gadwall
Mallard
Blue-winged Teal
Northern Shoveler
Canvasback
Redhead
Ring-necked Duck
Lesser Scaup
Hooded Merganser
Ruddy Duck
Ring-necked Pheasant
Wild Turkey
Common Loon
Pied-billed Grebe
Western Grebe
American White Pelican
Double-crested Cormorant
Least Bittern
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Little Blue Heron
Green Heron
Black-crowned Night Heron
White-faced Ibis
Turkey Vulture
Bald Eagle
Northern Harrier
Sharp-shinned Hawk
Cooper's Hawk
Broad-winged Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
American Kestrel
Merlin
Peregrine Falcon
Virginia Rail
Sora
American Coot
Black-bellied Plover
American Golden Plover
Semipalmated Plover
Killdeer
Spotted Sandpiper
Solitary Sandpiper
Lesser Yellowlegs
Hudsonian Godwit
Semipalmated Sandpiper
Least Sandpiper
White-rumped Sandpiper
Baird's Sandpiper
Pectoral Sandpiper
Dunlin
Short-billed Dowitcher
Wilson's Phalarope
Franklin's Gull
Bonaparte's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Caspian Tern
Black Tern
Common Tern
Forster's Tern
Rock Pigeon
Eurasian Collared-Dove
Mourning Dove
Black-billed Cuckoo
Eastern Screech Owl
Great Horned Owl
Barred Owl
Common Nighthawk
Whip-poor-will
Chimney Swift
Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Belted Kingfisher
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher
Alder Flycatcher
Willow Flycatcher
Least Flycatcher
Eastern Phoebe
Great Crested Flycatcher
Eastern Kingbird
Loggerhead Shrike
Bell's Vireo
Blue-headed Vireo
Warbling Vireo
Philadelphia Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Blue Jay
American Crow
Horned Lark
Purple Martin
Tree Swallow
No. Rough-winged Swallow
Bank Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Barn Swallow
Black-capped Chickadee
White-breasted Nuthatch
House Wren
Sedge Wren
Marsh Wren
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Eastern Bluebird
Veery
Gray-cheeked Thrush
Swainson's Thrush
Wood Thrush
American Robin
Gray Catbird
Brown Thrasher
European Starling
Cedar Waxwing
Golden-winged Warbler
Tennessee Warbler
Orange-crowned Warbler
Nashville Warbler
Northern Parula
Yellow Warbler

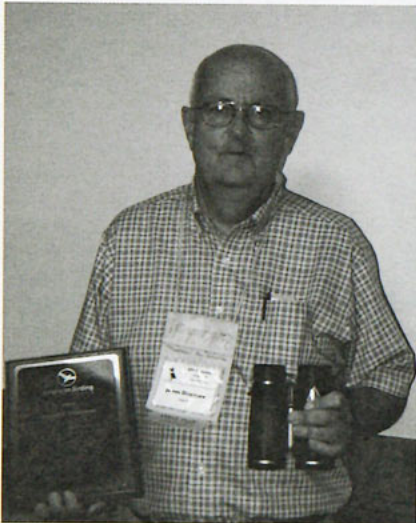
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Magnolia Warbler
Cape May Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler
Blackburnian Warbler
Palm Warbler
Bay-breasted Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler
Cerulean Warbler
Black-and-white Warbler
American Redstart
Ovenbird
Northern Waterthrush
Louisiana Waterthrush
Kentucky Warbler
Connecticut Warbler
Mourning Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Hooded Warbler
Wilson's Warbler
Canada Warbler
Scarlet Tanager
Eastern Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Clay-colored Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Grasshopper Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
Harris's Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Blue Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting
Dickcissel
Bobolink
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Western Meadowlark
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Common Grackle
Great-tailed Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
Orchard Oriole
Baltimore Oriole
House Finch
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow



Bonaparte's Gull, May 21, 2006, Silver Lake, Worth County.

Jim Dinsmore Receives ABA Award

On 23 June 2006, at the ABA Convention in Bangor, ME, Jim Dinsmore received the prestigious ABA Ludlow Griscom Award for Outstanding Contributions in Regional Ornithology.



Jim Dinsmore holds the ABA Ludlow Griscom Award. Photo by Kayleen Niyo.

ABA states the Ludlow Griscom Award is given to individuals who have dramatically advanced the state of ornithological knowledge for a particular region. The award is sponsored by Leupold Optics who presented Jim with a plaque and a pair of Leupold binoculars.

Ludlow Griscom Award Recipients

1980 Roger Tory Peterson
1981 Olin Sewall Pettingill
1984 Chandler Robbins
1986 Jim Lane
1988 Susan Roney Drennan
1990 Guy McCaskie
1992 Kenn Kaufman
1994 Ted Parker
1996 Richard Pough
1998 Claudia Wilds
1999 Stuart Keith
2000 W. Earl Godfrey
2001 Peter Pyle
2002 Rich Stallcup
2003 Bob and Martha Sargent
2004 Bret Whitney
2005 Wayne R. Petersen
2006 James Dinsmore

Fall Meeting: September 8–10 Hotel Manning, Keosauqua

The IOU Fall Meeting will be held at the Hotel Manning in Keosauqua, Van Buren County, September 8-10, 2006.

Birding areas in Van Buren and Lee counties are famous for supporting a diversity of woodland species. With Shimek Forest, Lacey Keosauqua State Park, the nearby Mississippi River, and the Argyle Bewick's Wren Burned-out Traylor National Monument, there's great potential for an early September birding spectacular. Also within 40 minutes of the hotel is Rathbun Reservoir, which last fall hosted a first state record Royal Tern, and great shorebirds, including both Snowy and Piping Plovers.



The Hotel Manning sits along the Des Moines River in Keosauqua.

The Hotel Manning can be reached at 800-728-2718 or 319-293-3232. Ron Davenport is the manager. Room rates for Hotel Manning, the Riverview Inn and the Standard Motel are posted on their website, found at <http://showcase.netins.net/web/manning/>.



Lacey Keosauqua State Park in Van Buren County.



Shimek State Forest in Lee County.



The historic hotel has been an Iowa landmark since its completion in 1899.

Ron has indicated he will hold all rooms available for IOU member registration until the second week of August. After that date, they will be open to the general public.

If you're interested in camping for the weekend, Lacey-Keosauqua State Park is just across the Des Moines River and has excellent camping facilities.

Join us for the 2006 IOU Fall Meeting in beautiful southeastern Iowa.

2006 County Big Years – *the Continuing Stories*

Allamakee: 201

Through May, I had 201 species on my Allamakee Co. Big Year list. In general, the spring migration was the worst in my recent memory. One has to wonder if the numerous hurricanes in the Gulf between last July and October killed a lot of neotropical migrants. I only saw one, or two individuals for many passerine species, and missed seeing a number of migrants altogether. Unfortunately for my county list, Betty and I were enjoying the Spring IOU Meeting on what may have been the best weekend for warbler migration. Happily, Paul's challenge to do a County Big Year has caused me to add 6 new species to my county list, 7 if the White-tailed Kite we watched for 30 minutes is accepted by the records committee.

Ric Zarwell

Clay: 221

At the end of May, my total for the Clay county Big Year stood at 221. That is about where I'd hoped to be by summer, but my warbler list is seriously short at only 19 species even though I worked hard in good habitat in May. Especially compared to the county Big Year I did ten years ago when I had 26 warbler species. I'm not sure I can match that now in 2006.

In 1996, I ended the year with 236 species and I will easily surpass that this year. At the end of May I had found 19 species that were not on my list ten years ago, but I also have a dozen sightings from the prior list that I may not find this time around.

Besides the split of Cackling Goose, the reintroduction of Trumpeter Swan, and the range expansion addition of Eurasian Collared-Dove, I had a number of good birds added this spring season. Red-necked Grebe was the only sighting new to my Clay county list. Other good additions included Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Snowy Egret, Whip-poor-will, Pileated Woodpecker, Acadian and Alder Flycatchers, Blue Grosbeak and Lark Sparrow.

My target list is fairly short going into summer, but I know one thing: warblers will be on my mind clear through

fall!

Lee Schoenewe

Clayton: 143

My total as of 31 May for Clayton County is 143 species. My senior class trip to Florida took 9 days out of my spring migration birding in Iowa, thus resulting in a good lack of warblers and passerines from my county year list. Shorebirds are the hardest to come by in this county; my 3 (!) county shorebirds for the year are Killdeer, Lesser Yellowlegs, and Solitary Sandpiper. I spent as many available days as I could during the end of the month, trying to pick up lingering migrants and breeding birds. Highlights from the spring period included 22 species of waterfowl (including Cackling Goose, Trumpeter Swan, and Greater Scaup), Horned Grebe, Black-billed Cuckoo, 11 warblers (including Blue-winged, Yellow-throated, and Prothonotary), Lark Sparrow, Western Meadowlark, and Brewer's Blackbird.

Danny Akers

Dallas: 176

As of 5/31, we were at 176 total species for Dallas County. We added 126 in the spring period to our winter total of 50 (revised from 48 after audit).

Our best birds would include an Eared Grebe in a flooded farm field just north of Dallas Center. There also was a White-faced Ibis in the flooded backyard of the house next to that flooded field. Other goodies include a Red-shouldered Hawk along the Raccoon River, an unexpected American Woodcock on the top of a ridge at Glissman Nature Area, a second-earliest Eastern Phoebe at Beaver Lake, and 3 Brewer's Blackbirds in another flooded field.

The rains of the last weekend in April sure helped the numbers of shorebirds we found, but they also made for a very wet Drake Relays!

Reid & Pam Allen

Decatur: 193

Here is my update on my Decatur County Big Year list: As of today at noon my total is 193. I have missed several that others have been seen so it could be

better. At this point I am missing only the Spotted Towhee and the Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow from Emberizidae (regular species). I only have 20 species of warblers, but by far the highlight of warblers was the Audubon's Yellow-rumped seen at Nine Eagles State Park (which I and others documented). Other than that it's mostly the same old species except for the Common Loon still hanging out in Lamoni.

Jeff Livingston

Delaware: 121

When I announced, in response to Paul Hertz's challenge, that I would embark on a Big Year in Delaware County, few people sat up and took notice. Why, just yesterday, absolutely no one came up to me and asked: "Hey, Bill. How's your Delaware County Big Year going?"

Here's how it's going. As of today, May 31, I have seen 121 species in this seldom visited region of our state. Of these, 32 are new records for Delaware County, at least as published on the IOU website. Perhaps the best find is Semipalmated Sandpiper. "What 'th'?", you ask, derisively. "Don't you know that this is one of Iowa's most common migrant shorebirds?" you point out, pointedly. "Yes, Dave", I reply, assuming that your name really is Dave, "but until this record, mud-challenged Delaware County had a shorebird list of TWO."

Other good birds have included Northern Shrike and Rusty Blackbird as visitors, and IBA criteria species Northern Harrier, American Woodcock, Veery, Wood Thrush, Cerulean Warbler, Pileated Woodpecker and Grasshopper Sparrow. Now I'm looking forward to the Summer reporting period, when you'll hear me say: "These damn ticks!"

Bill Scheible

Dickinson: 159

I have a grand total of 159 species. This May was so cold with that north wind for about 3 weeks, then suddenly hot, and a lot of the warblers zipped on through. The trees leafing out early with that warm spell in April made for some tough warblering. I don't even have a Nashville warbler yet!! Then when

it warmed up the fishing got hot so I ended up fishing when I had some free time.

I don't know what my best bird has been - probably an Eastern Towhee in my backyard. I also added a Wild Turkey and Dickcissel to my yard list this spring for a total of 181 yard birds. Just a note on those Dickcissels - they are becoming more common than ever in Dickinson county. A few years ago, it was rare to find them here, and I had to travel west, or down to Carroll County to get one.

It's really been a blah spring. I had a towhee on April 28th and also of note, 19 sanderlings at Crandalls Beach on Spirit Lake on May 22nd.

Take care and Good Birdin'
Ed Thelen

Hancock: 169

Okay, for Hancock County, my total through May 31 is 169.

The spring season was good in Hancock County. The lake at Eagle Lake is being drained, so more shorebirds than usual were seen there, but the down side was that the birds were quite a distance from the observation deck and only the larger birds could be identified for certain. My best birds were the Avocets and the Hudsonian and Marbled Godwits that were at the lake, and a Hooded Warbler found in the woods at the park. East Twin Lake has been good for shorebirds, also.

Rita Goranson

Kossuth: 199

Looks like I'm at 199 species for the year as of May 31st. Best birds of the spring were Smith's Longspurs. Finding them on April 23 at three locations, each separated from the next by 10 miles, hints that Smith's are more common during migration than generally supposed.

Matt Kenne

Linn: 150

My total through winter and spring was 150 species.

By far my most memorable bird for the spring season in Linn County was the Prairie Warbler at Pleasant Creek SRA, a life bird for me. However, GPS coordinates indicate this bird may have been in Benton County. So, I hereby give notice that I am now doing a Benton

County Big Year, and not a Linn County Big Year! My Benton Co. list total to date: 1 species.

But seriously, Cedar Lake and the lake at Pleasant Creek SRA both provided good waterfowl viewing in March. On March 1, Pleasant Creek had just a sliver of open water and made for a memorable early spring day of birding. There was a good concentration of waterfowl, with 13 species, including close comparisons of Cackling and Canada Geese allowing me to work on my Cackling Geese ID skills. Cedar Lake hosted a succession of Horned Grebes, some well along into their lovely breeding plumage.

In April, I spent some mornings walking at Squaw Creek Park, looking for the early migrants, and found most of those - both kinglets, Winter Wren, Hermit Thrush, and others. A Purple Finch showed up at my feeders, making that an easy "tick" for my Linn list.

A not-shy Sora at Squaw Creek Park in early May was a delight. I'm particularly fond of this bird and love it when I find one out in the open. Squaw Creek also provided a White-eyed Vireo encounter, actually two birds chasing each other around. White-eyed Vireos have been my nemesis bird so I finally got them on my County list.

I should have picked up warblers during May. But I only have a few for Linn County I managed to not be out on the few days that warblers came through, bad timing. Hopefully the Linn County warblers will be my fall highlight!

Diana Pesek

Monona: 129

I'm up to 129 species thru spring for my Monona County big year.

Best spring birds for me were Snowy Egret and Blue Grosbeak. The Badger Lake area was excellent for shorebirds, with 15 species seen there. Warblers were scarce with only 7 species total.

Jon Strong
Omaha, Nebraska

Polk: 210

My Polk County Big Year total through May 31 is 210.

Seeing 162 species on a Polk County Big Day with Steve Dinsmore and Jay Gilliam obviously helped out my total. My latest highlights are several birds that

I had not previously seen in the county, including Virginia Rail, Least Bittern, Red-shouldered Hawk, Pileated Woodpecker, Acadian Flycatcher, Northern Mockingbird, Summer Tanager, White-eyed Vireo, Cerulean Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Henslow's Sparrow.

The only spring migrant I missed that I consider a miss for the year is Connecticut Warbler. My other migrant misses are ones that I should have a reasonable shot at finding in the fall. I still have a handful of breeders to track down such as Prothonotary Warbler, Black-billed Cuckoo, and Willow Flycatcher, but otherwise, things are falling into place pretty well.

Aaron Brees

Warren: 196

I'm at 196 species for the year in Warren Co. I missed a lot of migrants that I will need to get this fall! Did a Big Day with John Bissell and had 135 species on it, which helped fill in the list. Good birds on that were Eared Grebe, Pileated Woodpecker, White-eyed Vireo, Hooded & Kentucky Warblers, and Summer Tanager.

Jay Gilliam

Woodbury: 195

In Woodbury County, I have seen 195 species through May 31. Best birds for the current period were Cinnamon Teal, White-faced Ibis, American Avocet and Red-necked Phalarope. Warblers were very scarce in our part of the state.

Jerry Von Ehwegen

Worth: 185

The March trickle of migrants enabled me to add 19 species, mostly waterfowl, to my Worth County Big Year list. Then, in April, another 23 trickled in before the May floodgates opened and 95 new species poured through the county.

Curt Nelson helped me out with a Little Blue Heron found at Silver Lake during his Spring Meeting field trip. Other good birds were Common Tern at Rice Lake, a Spotted Towhee and a Bell's Vireo, both found at Land of Two Waters WMA east of Kensett, and Henslow's Sparrows singing from an apparently abandoned hayfield.

Summer and Fall Field Reports Due

By the time you get this newsletter, Jim Dinsmore will be busy sifting through the summer data submitted by IOU members for the months of June and July, 2006. Don't leave your sightings in the bottom pocket of your postal uniform, share them with the IOU! Even if they're late, Jim probably will take them, in spite of his public duty to say:

Field reports for the summer 2006 season are due 3 August. The season covers the months of June and July with an emphasis on nesting species, especially those of conservation concern such as those identified by the IBA program.

Ann Johnson has made easy the electronic entry of your field data, and coupled it with the entry of IBA data. One system accomplishes both (see the article to the right of this one). Visit the www.iowabirds.org website and click on the link for reporting birds. Or write your report on a postcard and give to James Huntington, who will make sure Dinsmore gets it at 646 Mallory Hill Drive, The Villages, FL 32162.

Fall reports are due the first week of December, 2006.

Be the next editor of *IOU News*

Unscramble the word below, and win an opportunity to be appointed the next editor of *IOU News*:

A O W I

Be the first to submit your answer to this newsletter, or to President Sharon Stilwell, or to new Publications Committee member Bill Scheible, and win two boxes of chocolate truffles.

Entering IBA Info Easier Than Ever

2006 breeding data is important to Iowa's Important Bird Areas (IBA) Program. As you're out and about birding please gather data on our state's 37 Important Bird Area (IBA) Criteria Species, and then submit that data according to the easy steps listed below.

Our online system is user-friendly, and the steps are much easier than they may appear – it's like riding a bike. Once you submit data you'll know how to do it from that point forward.

The following links can be used to simplify the process of submitting data.

Iowa's 37 IBA Criteria Species are shown here:

www.iowaadubon.org/IBA/criteria_species.asp

A checklist for IBA Criteria Species to use in the field can be found here:

www.iowabirds.org/IBA/bird_inventory.asp

Enter observation data online here:

www.iowaadubon.org/IBA/opportunities.asp

To nominate a site for IBA status that is not already listed, go here:

iowaadubon.org/IBA_entry/nominate.asp

If you have any questions about this process, please contact either myself or Ann Johnson, webmaster for IOU and the IBA websites.

Thank you very much for your efforts on behalf of Iowa's priority species of birds and the habitats that their lives depend upon.

Ric Zarwell, Coordinator
Important Bird Areas (IBA)
Iowa Audubon



Mexico Trip Planned by Cecil

Bob Cecil is tentatively planning to lead a trip to Northeast Mexico, probably during the period of Nov 6 or 7 through the 19th, 2006. The trip will be a repeat of the first IOU Mexico trip and will include visits to Gomez Farias, El Naranjo, Xilitla, and Tamazunchale. There are several remaining spaces to be filled, but he will give priority to persons who have not accompanied him on a Mexico trip in the past.

There will need to be three vehicle providers whose transportation costs will be covered by their riders. Assuming double occupancy at hotels, cost for food, lodging, etc. might average \$65 per day per person.

Participants should be in reasonably good shape, able to handle long drives, be prepared for irregular meals, and remember that Mexico has its imperfections. Do not expect a Wings tour, but our hotels/motels should be good generally. Special diets cannot be accommodated.

Note: This is not an IOU sponsored trip, but it is only open to IOU members.

Answers to IOU Birder Quiz:

(page 6)

Part I: True/False

1. True
2. False
3. will accept either True or False.

Part II: Multiple Choice

1. (a)
2. (b)

Part III: Fill in the blank

1. Story County
2. *Carduelis tristis*
3. Ivory-billed Woodpecker
4. will accept either Green Violetear (2005), or Brambling (2006)
5. Ten

Iowa Ornithologists' Union
1201 High Avenue West
Oskaloosa, IA 52577



[Address Service Requested]



Thomas H Kent
624 LARCH LN
IOWA CITY IA 52245-3435

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

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