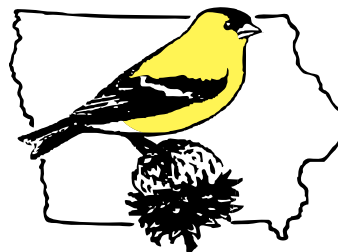


IOU News

Summer 2010



Volume 26 - Number 2



2010 IOU Spring Meeting

Aaron Brees

The 2010 IOU Spring Meeting was held April 30-May 2 in the Quad Cities area. Our co-host for the event was the Quad Cities Audubon and 80 people were in attendance. The base of operations for the meeting was the Bettendorf Ramada, where all meals were served and all meeting activities took place.

The meeting began with the Friday night social and check-in. Food and drink were served and everyone had a chance to browse the large selection of books up for silent auction and view the photo contest entries. Saturday morning began with breakfast and field trips. A Saturday only trip to Big Sand Mound preserve was a highlight for some, as this area is generally closed to public access. Other field trips visited a wide range of favorite local birding sites including Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, Scott County Park, Wildcat Den State Park, Credit Island, and Nahant Marsh.

Saturday afternoon started off with a meeting of the board, followed by our two afternoon presentations. First up was Larry Stone. Larry is a writer well known to most of us, and he, along with co-author Jon Stravers, has

a new book out entitled "Gladys Black: The Legacy of Iowa's Bird Lady." Larry showed pictures and told stories about the life of Gladys, and her impact on birds and conservation in Iowa. Following Larry was Kelly McKay. Kelly presented some results of a local research project on the wintering Bald Eagles at Milan Bottoms. Kelly and his field crew, which included

(Continued on page 3)



Larry Stone doing a presentation on his recently released biography on Dr. Gladys Black. Photo by Jay Gilliam



Kelly McKay doing his presentation on a study of roost sites for Bald Eagles along the Mississippi River. Photo by Jay Gilliam

IOU News

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this newsletter was mailed to 384 members.

Team Bissell Assumes the Watch

With this issue, John and Anna Bissell take over the helm of IOU NEWS. Both are well qualified to perform this role. John is well known to Iowa birders through his timely and accurate weekly updates of the Rare Bird Alert on the IOU listserv. John will be in charge of editorial content for the Newsletter. His co-editor Anna, who happens to live in the same house, brings considerable talent and expertise to her role as layout and production chief, as she oversees similar tasks in her day job at Pioneer Hi-bred.

Paul Hertzell, who has captained this ship for 8 ½ years, is stepping down. All of us owe Paul thanks and accolades for his wonderfully skillful maneuvering of the Newsletter, providing IOU members a quality publication, both informative and entertaining. Having assisted Paul the past two years, I can vouch for the considerable time and effort that is required to produce a successful edition four times a year.

John and Anna welcome the challenge that exists with creating a high quality newsletter, and they are looking forward to receiving insightful articles and input from you, the membership.

From the entire IOU membership, thank you Paul and welcome, John and Anna.

*Bill Scheible,
Interim co-editor, IOU News*

(Continued from page 1)

other IOU members, documented the importance of the area to hundreds of wintering eagles. Kelly discussed the different types of roost locations and the potential effects of human disturbance on the Milan Bottoms roost. The general business meeting was the final activity of the afternoon. Billy Reiter-Marolf, the Breeding Bird Atlas coordinator, gave a progress report and discussed atlassing opportunities coming up this summer. Following the introduction of first-time attendees, the meeting adjourned.

The Saturday evening banquet speaker was Dr. Brian Peer of Western Illinois University. Dr. Peer formerly taught at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, and is a previous IOU meeting speaker, and so was a familiar sight to many. He studies many aspects of avian biology, including the brood-parasitism behavior of Brown-headed Cowbirds. While many may have doubted that cowbirds were either particularly interesting or likeable prior to Brian's talk, some opinions were surely changed during the course of the evening. Dr. Peer's presentations are always entertaining as well as informative, and this one was no different.

Sunday morning brought another round of field trips, most returning to the locations of the previous day's successful outings. Highlights included Blue-winged, Golden-winged, Yellow-throated, Cerulean, Prothonotary, Worm-eating, Kentucky, and Hooded Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrush, Summer Tanager, and Henslow's Sparrow. Birders from central and western Iowa enjoyed the opportunity to see several species which are much more common in the east, such as Sandhill Crane, Red-shouldered Hawk, Pileated Woodpecker, and Eurasian Tree Sparrow. The meeting wrapped up with the noon compilation. This Sunday tradition is rapidly fading away as more and more people skip it in favor for getting on the road for home or squeezing in another hour or two of birding. For the weekend, 149 species were recorded, a very respectable total for such an early spring meeting.

Thank you to Dick Sayles and Quad Cities Audubon for all their hard work organizing and running the meeting, and to Paul Roisen, who keeps providing invaluable help even though he no longer has to.

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Billy Reiter-Marolf providing meeting attendees with a Breeding Bird Atlas update. Photo by Jay Gilliam



Dr Brian Peer attempting to persuade meeting attendees to appreciate Cowbirds. Photo by Jay Gilliam

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Attendees

Danny Akers, Ankeny, IA
Pam Allen, West Des Moines, IA
Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA
Carol Berrier, Ankeny, IA
Galin Berrier, Ankeny, IA
John Bissell, Grimes, IA
Linda Boardsen, Clinton, IA
Aaron Brees, Des Moines, IA
Donald Brown, West Des Moines, IA
Jerry Brown, Evansdale, IA
Suzanne Brown, Evansdale, IA
Robert Cecil, Des Moines, IA
Stephen Dinsmore, Ames, IA
Karen Disbrow, Iowa City, IA
Ava Dorrance, Red Oak, IA
Dan Dorrance, Red Oak, IA
Cathy Duffy, Indianola, IA
Tom Duffy, Indianola, IA
Keith Dyché, Shenandoah, IA
Dave Eastman, Cedar Falls, IA
Rhonda Freed, Milan, IL
Steve Freed, Milan, IL
Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA
Rita Goranson, Mason City, IA
Tyler Harms, Ames, IA
Doug Harr, Ogden, IA
Torre Hovick, Ames, IA

Stu Huntington, Ames, IA
Ann Johnson, Norwalk, IA
Dorothy Kelley, Des Moines, IA
Mike Kelley, Des Moines, IA
Jeff Klahn, Riverside, IA
Cathy Konrad, Bettendorf, IA
Kathleen Kuenstling, Amana, IA
David Kyllingstad, Iowa City, IA
Lynn Marsh, Ankeny, IA
Evans McWilliam, Paton, IA
Winston McWilliam, Coal Valley, IL
Len Miller, Indianola, IA
Francis Moore, Waterloo, IA
Becky Morgan, Davenport, IA
Larry Moss, Bellingham, WA
Jim Murdock, Ames, IA
Robert Nicholson, Sioux City, IA
Phyllis Nicholson, Sioux City, IA
Mary Lou Petersen, Bettendorf, IA
Mark Proescholdt, Liscomb, IA
Billy Reiter-Marolf, Granger, IA
Carol Rogers, Davenport, IA
Paul Roisen, Sioux City, IA
John Rutenbeck, Burlington, IA
Dick Sayles, Blue Grass, IA
Bill Scheible, Cedar Rapids, IA
Tom Schilke, Waterloo, IA

Jim Sinclair, Indianola, IA
Bernice Smedes, Urbandale, IA
Ty Smedes, Urbandale, IA
Stuart Sparkman, Des Moines, IA
Walter Stephenson, Cedar Rapids, IA
Dick Stilwell, West Des Moines, IA
Sharon Stilwell, West Des Moines, IA
Larry Stone, Elkader, IA
Tom Stone, Waterloo, IA
Tommy Stone, Waterloo, IA
Carol Strohmeier, Des Moines, IA
Elisabeth Swain, Iowa City, IA
Gerry Tetrault, Coralville, IA
Richard Tetrault, Coralville, IA
Bill Tollefson, Cedar Rapids, IA
Fred Truck, West Des Moines, IA
Lorna Truck, West Des Moines, IA
Laura Vander Meer, Le Mars, IA
Pete Vander Meer, Le Mars, IA
Shirley VanMeter, Davenport, IA
Karen Viste-Sparkman, Des Moines, IA
Gerry White, Muscatine, IA
JoAnn Whitmore, Moline, IL
Doyle Woods, Indianola, IA
Hank Zaletel, Nevada, IA
Walt Zuurdeeg, Davenport, IA



Tom Schilke receiving a framed photograph of an Upland Sandpiper for having the most hours of BBA atlassing effort in 2009. Photo by Jay Gilliam



Checking out the historic sites at Wildcat Den State Park. Photo by John Bissell

Species list (149 sp.)

Canada Goose	American Kestrel	Hairy Woodpecker	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Trumpeter Swan	Peregrine Falcon	Northern Flicker	Black-throated Green Warbler
Wood Duck	Virginia Rail	Pileated Woodpecker	Yellow-throated Warbler
Gadwall	Sora	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Palm Warbler
Mallard	American Coot	Eastern Phoebe	Cerulean Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Sandhill Crane	Great Crested Flycatcher	Black-and-white Warbler
Northern Shoveler	American Golden-Plover	Eastern Kingbird	American Redstart
Lesser Scaup	Killdeer	Yellow-throated Vireo	Prothonotary Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Spotted Sandpiper	Blue-headed Vireo	Worm-eating Warbler
Red-breasted Merganser	Solitary Sandpiper	Warbling Vireo	Ovenbird
Ring-necked Pheasant	Greater Yellowlegs	Red-eyed Vireo	Northern Waterthrush
Wild Turkey	Willet	Blue Jay	Louisiana Waterthrush
Pied-billed Grebe	Lesser Yellowlegs	American Crow	Kentucky Warbler
American White Pelican	Pectoral Sandpiper	Horned Lark	Common Yellowthroat
Double-crested Cormorant	Ring-billed Gull	Purple Martin	Hooded Warbler
American Bittern	Forster's Tern	Tree Swallow	Summer Tanager
Great Blue Heron	Rock Pigeon	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Scarlet Tanager
Great Egret	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Bank Swallow	Eastern Towhee
Cattle Egret	Mourning Dove	Cliff Swallow	Chipping Sparrow
Green Heron	Great Horned Owl	Barn Swallow	Clay-colored Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Barred Owl	Black-capped Chickadee	Field Sparrow
Osprey	Whip-poor-will	Tufted Titmouse	Vesper Sparrow
Bald Eagle	Chimney Swift	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Lark Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	White-breasted Nuthatch	Savannah Sparrow
Cooper's Hawk	Belted Kingfisher	Carolina Wren	Grasshopper Sparrow
Red-shouldered Hawk	Red-headed Woodpecker	House Wren	Henslow's Sparrow
Broad-winged Hawk	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Sedge Wren	Song Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Downy Woodpecker	Marsh Wren	Lincoln's Sparrow
		Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Swamp Sparrow
		Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	White-throated Sparrow
		Eastern Bluebird	White-crowned Sparrow
		Swainson's Thrush	Northern Cardinal
		Wood Thrush	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
		American Robin	Indigo Bunting
		Gray Catbird	Dickcissel
		Northern Mockingbird	Bobolink
		Brown Thrasher	Red-winged Blackbird
		European Starling	Eastern Meadowlark
		Cedar Waxwing	Western Meadowlark
		Blue-winged Warbler	Common Grackle
		Golden-winged Warbler	Brown-headed Cowbird
		Tennessee Warbler	Baltimore Oriole
		Orange-crowned Warbler	House Finch
		Nashville Warbler	American Goldfinch
		Northern Parula	House Sparrow
		Yellow Warbler	Eurasian Tree Sparrow



Field trip participants checking out a cooperative Blue-winged Warbler at Credit Island. Photo by John Bissell

Iowa Barn Owl Update

Bruce Ehresman

The Barn Owl has never been considered a common Iowa species, partly because Iowa is on the northern edge of its breeding range. In the early 1900s, this species was found widespread in Iowa - but, according to Bert Bailey (B.H. Bailey, *The Raptorial Birds of Iowa: 1918*), “this peculiar owl is counted rare in Iowa because of its strictly nocturnal habits.” For many decades the Barn Owl probably fared well until major agricultural land use changes occurred in the early 1970s, and it has been listed as an Iowa Endangered Species since 1977.

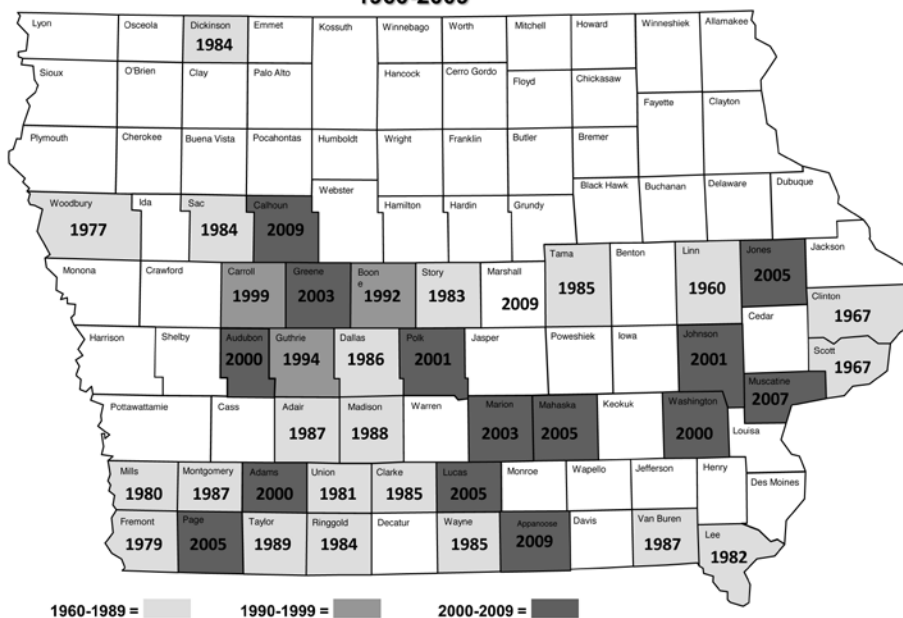
Today, this beautiful animal is one of Iowa’s rarest birds of prey, and only a privileged few Iowans are able to view this monkey-faced owl each year. The Barn Owl’s preferred habitat is open country with an interspersed of grasslands, savannas, wetlands, pastures, and hayfields. It is often associated with humans because of its propensity to roost and nest in buildings, particularly on farmsteads. Grassland habitat loss (as more land is converted to row crops) has no doubt been the largest factor in its demise, since Iowa

has lost over 99% of its native prairie and ~98% of its original wetlands.

With only eight nest records noted for the Iowa Barn Owl from 1950 to 1982, the Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program decided to make an effort to assist this species, and 427 Barn Owls were released in 28 counties from 1983 to 1987. Radio tracking of 36 of these released birds indicated that perhaps one-third of them were eaten by Great-horned Owls and another one-third of these owls died from other causes. While the number of Barn Owls sighted annually during this project increased substantially, none of the released barn owls were documented nesting. However, during the Barn Owl release period from 1983-1987, 171 Barn Owl sightings were verified, seven nests were confirmed, and seven other possible nests were reported. To further enhance the nesting potential of release site areas, Barn Owl nest boxes were erected in release areas, as well. Many of these nest boxes have since been used as nest sites by Barn Owls.

Undoubtedly the greatest boon to the Barn Owl

First Year in which a Barn Owl Nest was Reported, 1960-2009



in several decades was the addition of over two million acres of grassland, idled in Iowa under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) of the 1985 Farm Bill. In 1994, six Iowa Barn Owl nests were confirmed, the most nests recorded in one year ever. Three nests were in Barn Owl nest boxes, and all nests occurred adjacent to large tracts of CRP grassland. During 1995, 12 nests were documented in six counties: Taylor, Wayne, Ringgold, Mills, Guthrie, and Tama. Seven of the nests were in nest boxes, and five of these nests were on the property of former “Barn Owl guardian,” Zelbert Freemyer, in Taylor County. Zelbert is no longer with us today, but from 1989 through 2005, at least 50 Barn Owls fledged from his nest boxes. I think it is safe to say that no single Iowa landowner contributed more to the survival of the Barn Owl than Zelbert.

In recent years, it seems the barn owl has been making a comeback. After several years of mild winters in the early 2000s, barn owl numbers were steadily growing, with 8 barn owl nests reported in 2005 (2 nests in Taylor and 1 nest each in Adair, Page, Lucas, Mahaska, Tama, and Jones counties). That was followed by 8 nests in 2006 in 8 different counties: Sac, Woodbury, Montgomery, Page, Guthrie, Clarke, Lucas, Wayne. Even with a very rainy season in 2007, there were 6 nests reported in 5 counties: 2 nests in

Lucas and 1 nest each in Taylor, Woodbury, Carroll, and Muscatine. All told, Barn Owls were reported in 16 counties in 2007. Then the harsh winter of 2007-08, followed by record amounts of rainfall in spring and summer of 2008, may have led to further declines in number of barn owls reported. In 2008, 4 barn owl nests were documented, 1 nest each in Carroll, Lucas, Muscatine, and Greene counties. Single bird reports were also received from Des Moines, Jefferson, and Tama counties.

Harsh winters and above average annual rainfall continued since 2008, and it appears this weather pattern is not good for Barn Owl survival or productivity. In 2009, only two barn owl nests were documented, one nest each in Calhoun and Taylor counties, but evidence of a third nest site was found when two young barn owls were heard food begging near Honey Creek Resort in Appanoose County. So far, in 2010, no barn owl nests have been reported, but there have been Barn Owls sighted in Taylor, Decatur, and Mahaska counties. Since Barn Owls often nest later in the summer (and even fall), it is hoped that nest reports are still forthcoming.

Since 1960, Iowa DNR records indicate that Barn Owls have nested in 36 counties. As you can see from the map, 14 of these county nest records have occurred since 2000, which I interpret as a good sign for the Barn Owl (assuming no more loss of Iowa grasslands). Obviously, the southern half the state, and especially southwestern Iowa, continues to be the Barn Owl stronghold, but who knows what effects our changing climate might have for future distribution. As always, the critical element for its survival will most likely be whether or not there continues to be enough appropriate habitat.

As a result of its efforts to help the Barn Owl, the DNR Wildlife Diversity Program gained valuable information about Barn Owl life history in Iowa, and we now have a much better idea of where these birds prefer to nest. Emphasis of the program now is directed at placing nest boxes in quality habitat areas (grasslands) where these owls are known to occur and encouraging landowners to maintain and restore prairie remnants, savannas, or other grassland areas which benefit this unique species.



Nebraska Breeding Birds

Soon to Become Iowa Breeding Birds?

Ross Silcock

Former editor Bill Scheible asked me to discuss the likelihood that any Nebraska breeding birds might eventually expand their breeding ranges into Iowa. The species that breed in Nebraska but not in Iowa can be sorted into 4 roughly defined groups: (1) no chance, (2) maybe, (3) how could you tell, and (4) hmmm.

First, essentially because of either habitat preferences lacking in Iowa or absence of any tendency to eastward vagrancy (or both), the following 14 species appear to have no chance of being found breeding any time soon in Iowa:

Merlin	Pine woodlands
Mountain Plover	Short-grass prairie
Marbled Godwit	Mixed-grass prairie
White-throated Swift	Rocky canyons and outcrops
Lewis's Woodpecker	Riparian woodland in arid areas
Cordilleran Flycatcher	Ravines in pine woodland
Cassin's Kingbird	Pine parkland
Plumbeous Vireo	Deciduous woodland in pine canyons
Pinyon Jay	Pine woodland
Violet-green Swallow	Rocky canyons and outcrops
Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler	Pine woodlands
Cassin's Sparrow	Brushy arid grassland
Brewer's Sparrow	Sage grassland
Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco	Pine woodland
McCown's Longspur	Short-grass prairie

Second, this group would have no chance also, except that they have some tendency to vagrancy that suggests a possible, but vanishingly small, chance of establishing an isolated breeding population:

Clark's Grebe	May occur with breeding Western Grebes in Iowa
Pygmy Nuthatch	Inexplicably has occurred in planted pines in Lincoln, Nebraska several times
Rock Wren	May have bred years ago in northwest Iowa
Mountain Bluebird	Easterly winter vagrants might breed or hybridize with Eastern Bluebirds
Townsend's Solitaire	Easterly winter vagrants may linger and breed
Western Tanager	Easterly winter vagrants may linger and breed; has hybridized with Scarlet Tanager
Brewer's Blackbird	Winter vagrants may linger and breed
Red Crossbill	Erratic breeder may do so in planted conifers

Third, the following species regularly hybridize to varying degrees with eastern counterparts, mostly westward in Nebraska, but Spotted Towhee mates assortatively as close to Iowa as Dixon County, Nebraska. Hybrids and back-crosses may not be able to compete for mates as effectively as phenotypically pure birds, but may breed in Iowa although most are likely to be overlooked:

Western Wood-Pewee	Eastern and Western are cryptic species; the quintessential "who would know" example
Black-headed Grosbeak	Several vagrant records
Lazuli Bunting	Several vagrant records
Spotted Towhee	Northeast Nebraska is a hybrid zone, and so phenotypically pure Spotted would seem unlikely east of the zone in summer
Bullock's Oriole	Hybrids restricted to western Nebraska, but a few vagrant records of Bullock's in Iowa

Finally, the “hmmm” group, those that get the mind to wondering.

Glossy Ibis	Recent increased numbers on the Great Plains raise possibility of breeding along with or hybridizing with White-faced Ibis, which is currently a rare breeder in Iowa. Breeding suspected but not confirmed in Nebraska
Greater Prairie-Chicken	Non-stocked birds breed in northeast Nebraska in Dixon County; winter vagrants might establish in loess hills prairie
Sharp-tailed Grouse	Breeds as close in Nebraska as Knox County, with wandering birds to Dixon County; less tendency to vagrancy than prairie-chickens
American Avocet	Has bred in south-central Nebraska and Holt County in the north; often occurs with Black-necked Stilt
Black-necked Stilt	Range is expanding; has bred as close as Seward County in eastern Nebraska
Willet	Mostly a Sandhills breeder in Nebraska; may once have bred in Iowa
White-winged Dove	May be breeding in Iowa currently, during major range expansion on the Great Plains
Common Poorwill	Never recorded in Iowa, but has bred as close as Lancaster County in Nebraska; may occur eastward as vagrant
Say's Phoebe	Apparently a cyclical breeder in Iowa, with about 15-year cycles (1960-72, 1977-83) but no breeding since 1983; Bred in 1997 in Dixon County, Nebraska. Might occur again in Iowa next 3-5 years.
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	Breeds in southeast Nebraska; very likely in southwest Iowa, if not breeding there already
Red-breasted Nuthatch	May linger and breed after invasion years
Lark Bunting	Several summer records northwest Iowa
Chestnut-collared Longspur	Breeds in Nebraska to Holt County; range shifts eastward in dry cycles. Possible in drier, extensive sections of loess hills prairie



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Willet. Photo by John Bissell

New Web Photo Sharing Site to Highlight IOU People, Meetings & Field Trips

Hank Zaletel

IOU Members have many avenues available where they can display their outstanding bird photography. But, up until recently, members did not have a public place where images of IOU members, meetings or field trips, etc. could be stored and shared.

Images of the just held Annual Meeting or the BBA Block Busting Field Trip are recent history. But, ten or twenty years from now, faces change, people move, people die and memories fade.

The Historical/Archive Committee, working with web master Ann Johnson, have set up an account with Flickr to preserve our corporate memory so that anyone can view, but only IOU members can add to the collection.

Flickr is a popular photo sharing website that allows members to upload their own photos into customizable albums that can be labeled, organized, tagged and publicly posted.

The URL for the website is Flickr.com. An option is given to search photos, groups or people. Click on people and search iowabirds (lower case). Currently, there are photos of IOU meetings and people from the 1920s to the 1990s,

My wife and I were editors of the IOU News for over fifteen years. I took hundreds of photos of people, meetings and field trips during this time. I hope to add these photos in the next few months.

Ann Johnson is the administrator for this site. She has to establish that you are an IOU member before permission can be given to enter images to this site. Contact Ann at aj@hologrambirds.com and give her a heads-up that you wish to enter photos. Then, proceed to Flickr and follow their instructions on how to sign up. Ann will then send you the password to begin entering images.

Our Flickr site allows us to view our history from anywhere in the world without the need of visiting our archives in Ames. Remember, this site is only as good as what our members contribute.



24th Annual Iowa Ornithologists' Union Meeting, Mt. Vernon, Iowa, Bird Tally, May 5, 1946.



Third Annual IOU Meeting, Atlantic, Iowa, May 14-15, 1926.

Breeding Bird Atlas II:

Apparent trends in Iowa's Breeding Birds

Billy Reiter-Marolf (BBA Volunteer Coordinator)

We are approaching the halfway point of Iowa's Second Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) project. Volunteers began collecting data in 2008 and will continue atlasing through 2012. For some species, the data is already showing interesting trends. Some species are being recorded more often than they were during the first BBA and some species are being seen less frequently. For those species with more records now, this almost certainly indicates an expansion of breeding range. For the species that have fewer records now, one can only wonder if the data is truly showing a retraction in breeding range or just a deficiency in record collecting up to this point. Remember, we have only about two-and-a-half years of data so far, compared to six-years of data from the first atlas (1985-1990).

A perfect example of a species that is being documented more today than it was before is Henslow's Sparrow, a bird typically found in shrubby fields & weedy pastures. It was largely absent during the first atlas, with no nesting confirmations, only one probable and a few possible records. Since the first BBA, many row crop fields were entered into the Conservation Reserve Program, and now, two years into the second BBA, Henslow's is definitely benefiting from these changes in land use. There are currently four nesting confirmations, and numerous possible and probable records. Another species showing a positive trend is Bald Eagle. During the first BBA, there were only 3 nesting confirmations. Currently, there are 30 confirmed Bald Eagle nests in various BBA blocks throughout the state. This can be attributed both to the banning of DDT and the eagle's long tenure on the Endangered and then Threatened Species List until 2007. Another success story is Trumpeter Swan, which was absent during the first BBA. In the current BBA there are 13 nesting confirmations around the state, along with a handful of probable and possible records.

The Eurasian Collared Dove and Eurasian Tree

Sparrow were also absent during the first BBA, but both are now being documented. Eurasian Collared-Dove, first introduced to the Bahamas in the 1970's, has rapidly expanded its range across North America. During the current BBA, it has been documented as possible, probable and confirmed in many locations across the state. The Eurasian Tree Sparrow, has been expanding at a much slower pace. Introduced in St. Louis, MO in 1870, Eurasian Tree Sparrow now occurs only in parts of Missouri, Illinois and SE Iowa. There are 9 records of it so far in the current BBA, one confirmed and many possible and probable listings, primarily in SE Iowa along the Mississippi River.

In contrast to the previously mentioned species, there are some birds that are not being recorded as frequently during the current BBA. Ring-necked Pheasant, one of Iowa's upland game species, is an example. During the first BBA, nesting confirmations were numerous and occurred throughout the state. So far during the current BBA, Ring-necked Pheasant has been documented much less often. The story is similar for Northern Bobwhite, which had many confirmations in the southern half of Iowa during the first atlas. Currently, only three confirmed quail nests have been recorded. For Ruffed Grouse, there were 17 nesting confirmations in NE Iowa during the first BBA. So far for BBA II, there are no nesting confirmations and only one probable and 3 possible records. For Loggerhead Shrike, there were over 60 nesting confirmations during the first BBA, but now there are only 5. For American Woodcock, there were 29 nesting confirmations, now there are only 4. So, are these species truly declining? We will have to wait until the project is completed to be sure, but it is interesting to note where these species are missing from previously confirmed areas. If anything, it should inspire us to step up our atlasing efforts to make sure that all of Iowa's breeding birds are accounted for and thoroughly documented. Keep up the great work, atlasers!

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Iowa Ornithologists' Union

IOU News

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