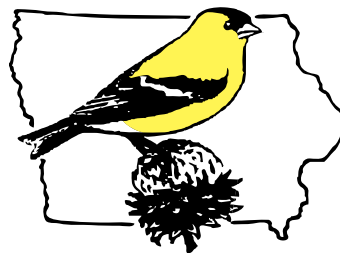


IOU News



Summer 2012 

Volume 28 - Number 2

Spring 2012 IOU Meeting Wrap-up



Alvaro Jaramillo with birders at Lake MacBride. Photo by Tom Schilke

Friday, May 25th

Registration opened at 5:00 p.m Friday in Bird Hall in the Natural History Museum on the campus of the University of Iowa. Over 1000 recently restored mounted birds and bird exhibits in Bird Hall provided the perfect venue for a large group of registrants as they munched on a fine assortment of snacks, visited, and wandered through the exhibits. Many thanks to John Logsdon Jr. and the museum staff for aiding the

Iowa City Bird Club in making this event happen.

An overflow crowd gathered to hear Tom Kent's historical talk "The Annotated History of Birds Prior to 1900." Presented in a humorous multiple choice quiz show format, Tom conned expert birders Jim Fuller and Carl Bendorf into being contestants. Everyone was a winner in this quiz show as we discovered much about early Iowa birding history in a fun way.

IOU News

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

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this newsletter was mailed to 283 members.

Spring Meeting - Iowa City 2012 Bird List 148 Species

Snow Goose	Hairy Woodpecker	Louisiana Waterthrush
Canada Goose	Northern Flicker	Kentucky Warbler
Trumpeter Swan	Pileated Woodpecker	Connecticut Warbler
Wood Duck	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Mourning Warbler
Mallard	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Common Yellowthroat
Blue-winged Teal	Acadian Flycatcher	Hooded Warbler
Northern Shoveler	Alder Flycatcher	Wilson's warbler
Hooded Merganser	Willow Flycatcher	Canada Warbler
Ring-necked Pheasant	Least Flycatcher	Summer Tanager
Wild Turkey	Eastern Phoebe	Scarlet Tanager
Common Loon	Great Crested Flycatcher	Eastern Towhee
Pied-billed Grebe	Eastern Kingbird	Chipping Sparrow
American White Pelican	White-eyed Vireo	Field Sparrow
Double-crested Cormorant	Bell's Vireo	Lark Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	Yellow-throated Vireo	Savannah Sparrow
Great Egret	Warbling Vireo	Grasshopper Sparrow
Green Heron	Red-eyed Vireo	Henslow's Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Blue Jay	Song Sparrow
Osprey	American Crow	Northern Cardinal
Bald Eagle	Horned Lark	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Cooper's Hawk	Purple Martin	Blue Grosbeak
Broad-winged Hawk	Tree Swallow	Indigo Bunting
Red-tailed Hawk	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Dickcissel
American Kestrel	Bank Swallow	Bobolink
American Coot	Cliff Swallow	Red-winged blackbird
Black-bellied Plover	Barn Swallow	Eastern Meadowlark
Semi-palmated Plover	Black-capped Chickadee	Western Meadowlark
Killdeer	Tufted Titmouse	Brewer's Blackbird
American Avocet	White-breasted Nuthatch	Common Grackle
Yellowlegs Species	Carolina Wren	Brown-headed Cowbird
Spotted Sandpiper	House Wren	Orchard Oriole
Godwit Species	Sedge Wren	Baltimore Oriole
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	House Finch
Least Sandpiper	Eastern Bluebird	American Goldfinch
White-rumped Sandpiper	Veery	House Sparrow
Pectoral Sandpiper	Swainson's Thrush	Eurasian Tree Sparrow
Dunlin	Wood Thrush	
Short-billed Dowitcher	American Robin	
Franklin's Gull	Gray Catbird	
Caspian Tern	Brown Thrasher	
Forster's Tern	European Starling	
Rock Pigeon	Cedar Waxwing	
Eurasian Collared Dove	Tennessee Warbler	
Mourning Dove	Northern Parula	
Black-billed Cuckoo	Yellow Warbler	
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Chestnut-sided Warbler	
Eastern Screech Owl	Magnolia Warbler	
Great-horned Owl	Black-throated Green Warbler	
Barred owl	Blackburnian Warbler	
Common Nighthawk	Yellow-throated Warbler	
Chimney Swift	Blackpoll Warbler	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Cerulean Warbler	
Belted Kingfisher	Black-and-white Warbler	
Red-headed Woodpecker	American Redstart	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Prothonotary Warbler	
Downy Woodpecker	Ovenbird	

Saturday, May 26th

After hearty morning breakfasts at Montgomery Hall on the Johnson County Fairgrounds, field trips dispensed in all directions to well known birding sites around Iowa City. Thanks to Chris Edwards for arranging the field trips. Birders reported that Hickory Hill lived up to its reputation as a hotspot for warblers. A Hooded Warbler was so cooperative one would believe it had been planted by the bird club. Hawkeye Wildlife Area always shows promise for a wide variety of birds. High water and windy conditions toughened the chances at finding good numbers of shorebirds. Nevertheless, a good mix of birds species was found in this large area.

A good number of birders followed Alvaro Jaramillo (our guest speaker for the weekend) and Carl Bendorf to the Amana Colonies for some upland birding. Being from California, Alvaro doesn't get to see some of our grassland species very often, so eyeballing Dickcissels and Bobolinks up close was even more of a pleasure for him as it was for us. This was his first trip to Iowa, but his expansive knowledge of birds and the natural world made it seem as though he had lived here and known us all his life.

Birders pointed from extended arms at a Scarlet Tanager perched in full sun. Veeries were singing in the distance, and a Kentucky Warbler circled as it sang on territory. American Redstarts were commonplace. Alvaro pointed out that Redstarts, with their wider mouths, stiff nasal bristles, and flycatching feeding behavior, have evolved more into a flycatcher than a warbler.

No matter what group you bird with at an IOU meeting, tidbits of birding knowledge circulate amongst the birders. There is something for everyone on field trips.

Lunch on Saturday was in the field. Very strong winds had us wishing we had more hands to eat with to keep our fine lunches (from Mickey's Catering) from blowing away.



Saturday Afternoon Sessions

A panel discussion "Working With Beginners" got the afternoon off to a good start. Panelists, Rick Hollis, Carl Bendorf, Lee Schoenewe and Alvaro Jaramillo first shared their diverse beginnings in becoming active birders. The memory of someone with a spark of passion for birds was a common thread in the discussion in kindling (or rekindling) an interest in birding. It is important to pass along the enthusiasm we have for birds and to find ways to kindle that spark of passion in others, especially with the very young. After all, birds are a gateway to our natural resources. Thanks to Rick Hollis for organizing this discussion.

Behind Alvaro's pleasant personality is a real bird ID expert with Blackbirds and Orioles being among his favorite birds. His presentation on the Blackbird-Oriole family was entertaining and fascinating. As he took us through the Old World and New World Blackbird and Oriole families and their relationships, it was as though we were traveling the Americas and enjoying the birds right along with him. He showed comparisons of Orioles with Grackles and Blackbirds with Meadowlarks. One couldn't help but come away with a better appreciation for the less spectacular birds of these families.

Ron Windingstad, from Minnesota Audubon, has taken his extensive knowledge about Chimney Swifts and put it into action. After listening to his presentation on this bird and its loss of nesting places,

one cannot help but look at chimneys with a whole new perspective. Chimneys are roost and nesting sites for the swifts. Only one pair will nest in a chimney but will allow other swifts to share the chimney for a roost site. With the reduction of chimneys usable by the swifts, Ron has been successful in preserving existing chimneys and in the building of towers suitable for nesting and roosting Chimney Swifts. If you didn't get plans for towers and other swift information at the meeting, they are available at mn.audubon.org.

Shane Patterson, the new BBA coordinator, gave a concise presentation comparing data received so far with results of the 1996 BBA. As we enter the fifth and final year of recording the data for the project, Shane thanked us for the excellent work done so far and reminded us that a lot of work remains to be completed. Data on nesting owls, for example,

is lacking so far. Is it because there are less owls (screech owl in particular), or is a better effort needed to locate them? At any rate, all time in the field doing BBA work is much appreciated and needed.

Carl Bendorf presented information on a new venture for getting kids involved in birding. "Iowa Young Birders" has a website (under the same name) and has begun work setting up field trips and informing kids and the general public about this birding organization for kids. The IOU has awarded Iowa Young Birders with a \$1500 grant for the purchase of optics for the group.

During the weekend a splendid selection of over 30 door prizes, collected by the Iowa City Bird Club, were awarded to lucky winners. Somehow Paul Roisen's name was drawn repeatedly - what are the chances? Hmmm.

Good news during the IOU general business

Meeting Attendees

Pam Allen, West Des Moines, IA	Nola Edwards, Iowa City, IA	Chris Lawton, Iowa City, IA	Jim Sinclair, Indianola, IA
Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA	Vic Edwards, Iowa City, IA	Rick Lawton, San Francisco, CA	Paul Skrade, Ames, IA,
Michael Becker, Cedar Rapids, IA	Linda Fisher, Iowa City, IA	Chuck Lemaster, Charles City, IA	Nancy Slife, Iowa Falls, IA
Carl Bendorf, Solon, IA	Jim Fuller, Iowa City, IA	Susan Lemaster, Charles City, IA	Bernice Smedes, Urbandale, IA
Linda Bendorf, Solon, IA	J. Bruce Gardner, Iowa City, IA	Nancy Lynch, Iowa City, IA	Ty Smedes, Urbandale, IA
Paula Bergstrom, Marengo, IA	Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA	Dave Markham, Cedar Rapids, IA	Sharon Somers, North Liberty, IA
Carol Berrier, Delavan, WI	Elrose Gingrich, Kalona, IA	Jason McCurdy, Coralville, IA	Stuart Sparkman, Des Moines, IA
Galin Berrier, Delavan, WI	Evan Gingrich, Kalona, IA	Ramona McGurk, Iowa City, IA	Michael Stark, Marion, IA
John Bissell, Grimes, IA	Rita Goranson, Mason City, IA	Gail McLure, Iowa City, IA	Walter Stephenson, Cedar Rapids, IA
Susan Boehlje, Iowa City, IA	Ken Gregory, Dysart, IA	Francis Moore, Waterloo, IA	Tom Stone, Waterloo, IA
Diane Bradbury, Cedar Rapids, IA	Mary Ann Gregory, Dysart, IA	Jim Murdock, Ames, IA	Tommy Stone, Evansdale, IA
Christopher Brochu, Iowa City, IA	Joel Haack, Cedar Falls, IA	Kevin Murphy, Ames, IA	Elisabeth Swain, Riverside, IA
Donald Brown, West Des Moines, IA	Linda Haack, Cedar Falls, IA	Kathy Myers, Des Moines, IA	Gerry Teig, Cedar Rapids, IA
Bill Burch, Des Moines, IA	Tyler Harms, Ames, IA	Babs Padelford, Bellevue, NE	Gerry Tetrault, Iowa City, IA
Joyce Burch, Des Moines, IA	Doug Harr, Ogden, IA	Loren Padelford, Bellevue, NE	Richar Tetrault, Iowa City, IA
Barry Buschelman, North Liberty, IA	Judy Hartley, Moline, IL	Jason Paulios, Iowa City, IA	Cecille Thompson, Johnston, IA
Chris Caster, Coralville, IA	Barbara Heikens, Burlington, IA	Diana Pesek, Cedar Rapids, IA	Dennis Thompson, Johnston, IA
Bob Cecil, Des Moines, IA	Rick Hollis, North Liberty, IA	Mary Lou Petersen, Bettendorf, IA	J Pat Valentik, Huntsville, AR
John Cecil, Des Moines, IA	Bob Hoover, Solon, IA	Mark Proescholdt, Liscomb, IA	Karen Viste-Sparkman, Des Moines, IA
Ray Cummings, Centerville, IA	Jo Hoover, Solon, IA	Judy Putney, Iowa City, IA	Kai Weatherman, Iowa City, IA
Rocky Dales, Cedar Rapids, IA	Lorinda Hoover, Solon, IA	Paul Roisen, Sioux City, IA	Cathy White, Moline, IL
Gerald Denning, Iowa City, IA	Doug Hunt, Oskaloosa, IA	Linda Rudolph, Coralville, IA	Gerald White, Muscatine, IA
Drew Dilman, Iowa City, IA	Mary Beth Hunt, Oskaloosa, IA	Maria Rundquist, Sioux City, IA	JoAnn Whitmore, Moline, IL
Karen Disbrow, Iowa City, IA	James Huntington, Iowa City, IA	Rex Rundquist, Sioux City, IA	Joy Wilson, Mt. Pleasant, IA
Mark Dobbe, Ames, IA	Alvaro Jaramillo, Half Moon Bay, CA	Richard Sayles, Blue Grass, IA	Steve Wilson, Mt. Pleasant, IA
John Donelson, Iowa City, IA	Ann Johnson, Norwalk, IA	Linda Scarth, Cedar Rapids, IA	Ron Windingstad, St. Paul, MN
Linda Donelson, Iowa City, IA	Tom Johnson, Mystic, IA	Robert Scarth, Cedar Rapids, IA	Carol Winter, Iowa City, IA
Rose Dooley, Evansdale, IA	Dorothy Kelley, Des Moines, IA	James Scheib, Iowa City, IA	Charlie Winterwood, Dubuque, IA
Dan Dorrance, Red Oak, IA	Mike Kelley, Des Moines, IA	Tom Schilke, Waterloo, IA	Gretel Winterwood, Dubuque, IA
Keith Dyche, Shenandoah, IA	Tom Kent, Iowa City, IA	Lee Schoenewe, Spencer, IA	Hank Zaletel, Nevada, IA
Dave Eastman, Cedar Falls, IA	Cathy Konrad, Bettendorf, IA	Ross Silcock, Tabor, IA	
Chris Edwards, Solon, IA	David Kyllingstad, Iowa City, IA	Rachel Simmons, Carroll, IA	



meeting! A record 32 first time attendees to an IOU meeting were recognized. Tom Kent graciously arranged to autograph copies of the book "Birds In Iowa" awarded to our first timers. Tom and Jim Dinsmore had co-authored the book.

The popular Silent Auction was a success again. Tables of books were sold to the highest bidder raising over \$330 for the IOU. Thanks to John Cecil for organizing this. Clean off your bookshelves for the next silent auction in Marshalltown. As the late George Carlin once quipped, "You need to get rid of your stuff so you can buy more stuff."

Prior to the banquet, special arrangements were made by Karen Disbrow to have a group photo professionally taken of the spring meeting attendees. The photo of 71 of our smiling attendees will be viewed as being historic in years to come. Thanks to the Iowa City Bird Club for sponsoring this and to the photographer Mark Tade. The photograph is posted on the IOU Flickr page.

Banquet

Following a tasty meal provided by Mickey's Catering, the always smiling, very pleasant, and happy to be in Iowa birding with us, Alvaro Jaramillo presented "Birding Outside the Box. How Our Brain Identifies Birds." Alvaro equated how our brain functions with how we identify birds. Recognizing birds and how we recognize faces use the same part of the brain, he said. Objects and places are recognized in different parts of the brain. Speed reading parallels with birding. Because of our experience, our brain is able to fill in the information needed. As an example,

he flashed a picture of a bird in a micro-second across the screen. In that instant, most of us recognized the bird as a Rock Pigeon. To be good at birding (like facial recognition) takes experience. To bird like a pro, it takes 10,000 hours of birding, or 3 hours a day for 10 years. Alvaro reminds us to have a good time when birding and not to lose our appreciation for the common birds. "You can always learn something from even the most common birds" he pointed out. Find people you enjoy to bird with and go with them. Know who you are as a birder. Are you adventurous, type A, competitive, or just love watching birds? Use context to help you with your identification. The landscape, smells, and other birds nearby will help with your memory. After getting to know Alvaro during his short visit to Iowa, I think he is one we would all like to have as a birding companion.

On Sunday, the Lake McBride field trippers with Alvaro and Carl discovered a Connecticut Warbler right at the parking lot. A Common Loon was on the lake and onlookers had a good view of a Red-headed Woodpecker excavating a hole in a tree. Birds that are sometimes taken for granted sometimes give the viewer a whole new birding experience.

Kent Park has a great trail system for birding that winds through all sorts of habitats. A Bell's Vireo, Bobolink, Cerulean Warbler and Orchard Orioles highlighted the morning trip led by Rick Hollis. A fine nature center in the park (with well stocked bird feeders) was made comfortably available to us by director Harry Graves and naturalist Brad Friedhof of Johnson County Conservation as a place to have Sunday lunch and hold our final compilation. After the last bird was checked off (fittingly, a Eurasian Tree Sparrow) the grand total species count for the weekend was 148, of which 22 were warblers.

Because of the efforts of Karen Disbrow and the Iowa City Bird Club this meeting was much like a birding festival. This wrap-up only begins to touch on all the field trip sightings, educational happenings, and fun times the 126 attendees experienced during the weekend. Special thanks to Karen Disbrow and Bruce Gardner for their leadership and behind the scenes work in making this special and historic meeting one to remember.

IOU Fall Meeting

Marshalltown August 24 - 26, 2012

The Iowa River Valley, or “The Greenbelt” as the locals often call it, is a natural corridor for migrant birds and holds much of the preferred birding habitat for this part of central Iowa.

Marshalltown, and all of its amenities, is about smack dab in the middle of Iowa. The Iowa River runs through it to the North. Late August is a good time to get together for birding. Many summer breeders are still around and the fall migration is getting under way.

Sheri Williamson, an authority (if not the authority) on hummingbirds in the U.S. will be with us for the weekend as our keynote speaker and fellow birder. In addition, fellow IOU member Gerald White will share his expertise on recording bird calls and songs. Acclaimed wildlife photographer and IOU grant recipient, Ron Huelse will share his

photography skills and bring us up to date on the Gladys Black Eagle Cam project and its educational component. Ron’s photographs are frequently used in the Iowa Outdoors magazine calendar.

Field trips from Grammer Grove to Otter Creek and places in between will bring you to new and familiar habitats that are attractive to birds. A Saturday only field trip led by prairie experts Carl and Linda Kurtz (Carl is a former IOU president) will take participants to Marietta Sand Prairie Preserve and other grasslands in search of birds and a better understanding of the prairie ecosystem.

All in all, IOU meetings are for the novice and expert alike. It is a time to share, learn, laugh, and buy stuff. Remember to bring things for famed Saturday Night’s “Silent Auction”



Directions to the Marshalltown Meeting

Hwy 14 runs north and south right through Marshalltown. The Regency Inn and Fisher Comm. Center are 2.2 miles apart on Hwy 14 (also known as Center Street) in the southern portion of town. The Regency Inn is a block off Hwy. 30/Hwy14 interchange and the Fisher Comm. Center is across the street west of the big HyVee store.

Lodging

Blocks of rooms are set aside at an IOU discount rate at the Regency Inn and Super 8 until Aug. 13th

Best Western Regency Inn

3315 South Center Street
Marshalltown, Iowa 50158

exit 186 off US 30 bypass and north one block which is South Center Street or Hwy 14.

(641) 752-6321 or (800) 241 2974

Single and double rooms
\$78.40 (tax included in the price)
Breakfast is free when staying here.

Super 8 Motel

3315 South Center Street
(right next to the Regency Inn)

(641) 753-4111

Single and double rooms
\$61.60 (tax included in the price)

Other Lodging (NO IOU discount)

AmericInn Motel & Suites

115 Iowa Ave. W.
641-752 4844

Comfort Inn

2613 S. Center St.
641-752-6000

Economy Inn Motel

3108 S. Center St.
641-752-5485

Days Inn Motel

18E Berle Rd.
641-753-8181

Camping

River View City Park

On the North edge of Marshalltown along Highway 14 adjacent to the Iowa River. (402 Woodland Street)
Reservations are not accepted.

Full hookups \$17.00
RV/Camper electric \$12.00
Tent \$10.00

Schedule

Friday, Aug. 24th

Social at the Best Western Regency Inn

- 6:00 p.m.** Registration opens
6:30 - 7:00 p.m. Free wine, cheese, soda, crackers and sausage reception by the Marshalltown Chamber of Commerce
7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Cash bar and snacks. Sign up for field trips, pick up the schedule and “ maps.

Saturday, Aug. 25th

- 6:00 a.m.** Breakfast at the Best Western Regency Inn
7:00 a.m. Field trips depart from the open parking lot north and across the street from the Best Western Regency Inn.

Saturday's PM activities are at the Fisher Community Center

- 12:45 p.m.** Lunch delivered to Marshalltown Fisher Community Center
1:30 p.m. Gerald White
“Recording Birds 101”
2:15 p.m. Break
2:30 p.m. Sheri Williamson
“Good Birders Don’t Wear White”
A lighthearted look at birding.
3:00 p.m. Break
3:15 p.m. Ron Huelse
Gladys Black Eagle Cam and Wildlife Photography
4:00 p.m. IOU Business Meeting
5:00 p.m. IOU Board Meeting
6:30 p.m. Banquet
7:30 p.m. Sheri Williamson
Keynote address - “Hummingbirds, More Than Just Eye Candy”

Sunday, Aug. 26th

- 6:00 a.m.** Breakfast at the Regency Inn
7:00 a.m. Field trips depart
12:00 noon Lunch and compilation at the Regency Inn

Meals

All meals include tax and gratuity

Breakfast: \$6.00

Scrambled eggs, biscuits and gravy, sausage, waffles, fruit, muffins, coffee and juices.

Lunch: \$6.50

(Distributed at 12:45 p.m. at Fisher Comm. Center)
Selection of croissant meat sandwiches, pasta salad, whole fruit, cookie, drink. Veg. Sandwich available.

Banquet: \$14.00

Baked chicken and Roast beef, salad, potatoes and gravy, vegetable, drink. Veg. Lasagna.

Sunday Lunch: \$12.50

Pizza buffet, breadsticks and dipping sauce, drinks

Field Trips

Many fine birding possibilities a short distance from Marshalltown including:

Grammer Grove

121 acre refuge on the Iowa River, well known for the Proescholdt's hawk watch and good birding year round.

Otter Creek Marsh

3000 acre+ wetland dissected by dikes in Tama County - a quick jaunt from Marshalltown. Sandhill cranes, rails, migrants - lots of possibilities, maybe even Great-tailed Grackle, Common Gallinule, or Barn Owl.

Marietta Sand Prairie (and other grasslands)

229 acre preserve - Henslow's Sparrow and other grassland birds.

Union Grove State Park

Has a 110 acre lake, trails, and a variety of habitats for birds.

Marshalltown County Wildlife Areas

Arney Bend, Grimes Farm, Sand Lake, Green Castle, and other areas to explore along the Iowa River greenbelt.

Wolfe Creek County Park

Overlooked fine birding area in Grundy Co.



Sheri Williamson Keynote speaker

Sheri Williamson, Director/Naturalist for the Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory (SABO) and author of *A Field Guide to Hummingbirds of North America* (Peterson Field Guide Series), grew up in Texas with a passion for wildlife, chasing lizards from the time she could walk and taking up birding at age 10. In 1988, she and her husband Tom Wood moved to southeastern Arizona to work as resident managers of The Nature Conservancy's Ramsey Canyon Preserve. In 1996, Sheri and Tom left TNC to found SABO and expand their efforts in science and education. She also the author of *Attracting and Feeding Hummingbirds* (T.F.H. Publications) and the script for the Advanced Birding Video: *Hummingbirds of North America* (Peregrine Video), co-author of the Ultimate Texas Nature Guide app (Audubon Guides), and a columnist for "WildBird" magazine. In her free time, Sheri watches birds and butterflies, tends her garden of native and wildlife-friendly plants, plays the autoharp, and sings Led Zeppelin on karaoke night.

Registration Information

Name(s): _____

(please include first and last names of all persons registering)

Address: _____

Online registration:

If possible, please register through the IOU website at: <http://www.iowabirds.org>

Make checks payable to
 Iowa Ornithologists' Union
 Mail to: **Tom Schilke**
1432 Liberty Ave.
Waterloo, IA 50702

I am a new attendee

				No. of People		Total Cost
Registration Fee	\$20.00	x	_____	=	\$	_____
Sat. Breakfast	\$6.00	x	_____	=	\$	_____
Sat. Box Lunch	\$6.50	x	_____	=	\$	_____
Sat. Banquet	\$14.00	x	_____	=	\$	_____
Sun. Breakfast	\$6.00	x	_____	=	\$	_____
Sun. Pizza Lunch	\$12.50	x	_____	=	\$	_____
Meatless option?	check here		_____		Total \$	_____

Registering by mail:

Copy, fill out, and mail - don't forget your check!



IOU – Connected

By Ann Johnson

Back in 1996, when the first iteration of Iowa Birds & Birding was hatched, who would have imagined what it has become today? Has it really been 16 years of evolution? Beginning with the collection of data to determine Iowa IBAs and managing Records Committee reviews on-line, we quickly moved to managing our entire membership and seasonal field reports.

This latest version, which became public in December 2011, incorporates the latest technology and allows for distributed management. IOU members, the Board of Directors, and committees are critical to keeping our website up to date and relevant. Your keeping your contact information updated saves the IOU expensive re-mailings because publications are returned. Your entries into seasonal field reports is giving us some great data to look at changes in bird populations.

Because the newest site has so much potential and so much information, my intent is for this to become a regular column in IOU News to help highlight some of the cool things one can find when exploring. I hope it also illustrates the importance of your participation in our birding community.

This Issue's Highlight – Species Frequency

After a number of years putting data into our seasonal field reports, some fruits of our labor are

Select Your List Type

- Regular Passerines
- Regular Non-Passerines
- Casual/Accidental

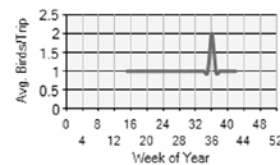
For reference today is Week 24.



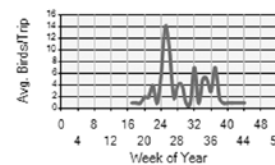
Select Region or Click Map Section

Entire State

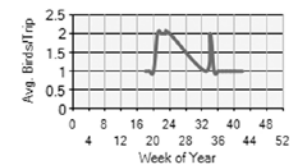
Olive-sided Flycatcher



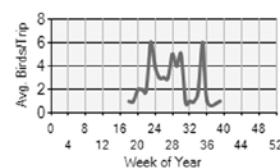
Eastern Wood-Pewee



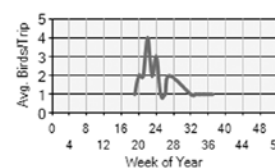
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher



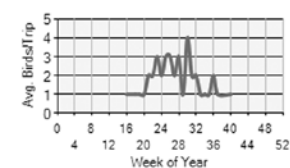
Acadian Flycatcher



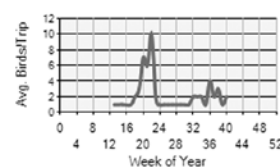
Alder Flycatcher



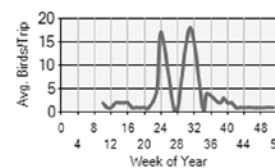
Willow Flycatcher



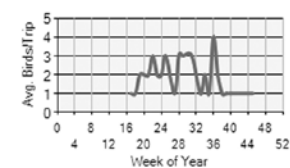
Least Flycatcher



Eastern Phoebe



Great Crested Flycatcher



now being realized for those of us who aren't editors. This page, <http://iowabirds.org/Birds/Frequency.aspx> (also found under Birds – Info), looks at the average number of birds seen at a location by week. The charts give a quick representation of when a species is most commonly seen in Iowa. Because it is so data intensive, the page has been divided into regularly occurring passerines and non-passerines as well as casual and accidental species. Once you have generated the initial list, you can then refine it by one of ten defined regions. Since the charts are generated from entries into field reports, your contributions are critical to making our knowledge more complete. Join in the fun!

The Southern Wings Program

Tyler M. Harms

For the past several years, bird conservation organizations throughout the Midwest have put forth countless efforts and money to create and maintain quality habitat for birds only to see those efforts fall short in curbing the decline of several populations of neotropical migrants. As we all well know, neotropical migrants travel thousands of miles each fall to spend the winter months in parts of Mexico, the Caribbean, or other Latin American countries, where they spend most of their time feeding and competing for areas with an abundant supply of food. These “world travelers” make up 50-75 percent of the bird species we see in the central United States. So why are bird populations still declining despite our hard work to provide ideal homes for our summer residents? Because quality habitat on the wintering grounds, areas where birds spend half if not more of their lives, is declining faster than you or I could imagine. Because food resources are so scarce even in the high-quality areas, the chances of an individual bird surviving the winter months and returning to the breeding grounds in the spring are small. Even if that bird does survive and return to our summer homes in the spring, the deleterious effects of having a rough winter reduces their ability to successfully reproduce. Needless to say, our efforts on the breeding grounds will continue to go unrealized until we start spreading our conservation actions to the wintering grounds.

The Southern Wings Program, a partnership between the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and the American Bird Conservancy (ABC), provides state fish and wildlife agencies and other organizations an avenue to protect species of conservation concern on the wintering grounds. The goal of the Southern Wings Program is to conserve priority species of state fish and wildlife agencies throughout their lifecycle. It is based on the biology explained above, that birds spend nearly half of their lives in parts of Latin America and the Caribbean Islands. To date, 11 states have participated in the program contributing between \$1,000 and \$30,000 each year. Over \$75,000 was raised for conservation efforts during Year 1 of the program,

and that increased to over \$128,000 in Year 2. The program is currently in Year 3 and has already raised nearly \$100,000. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is in its third year of contributing to the program and plans to give \$10,000 this year. In addition, the Iowa Audubon plans on adding \$500 to the Iowa DNR’s contribution this year. Monies contributed by state agencies go towards public education and outreach about wintering habitats for migratory birds and towards acquiring land in critical wintering areas. This program provides an opportunity for us, as Iowa citizens interested in bird conservation, to help protect those birds we enjoy seeing during spring and summer months.

The Iowa Ornithologists’ Union, with its other obligations, has limited funds to publically support major projects such as the Southern Wings Program. The Board of Directors, in response to the positive endorsement of the membership at the 2012 spring meeting, recently issued a challenge to the IOU membership to raise funds for contribution to the Southern Wings Program. Each dollar donated through the IOU by October 1, 2012 will be matched up to a maximum of \$1,000, at which time our total donation will be sent to the Southern Wings Program as a show of partnership from Iowa birders. This not only demonstrates our interest and passion about preserving our breeding bird populations, but also allows us to establish an international partnership in bird conservation. You may easily make your donation through our on-line form at <http://iowabirds.org/IOU/Donate.aspx>. For the donation type, be sure to select “Partnerships”. If you are sending a check, make it payable to the IOU and be sure to note in your check memo field, or in a short note that it is for Partnerships or Southern Wings, so our treasurer knows how to credit it. Send checks to Iowa Ornithologists’ Union, 1201 High Avenue West, Oskaloosa, IA 52577.

If you have any questions about the Southern Wings Program, feel free to contact Tyler Harms by email (harmsy@iastate.edu).

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[Address Service Requested]

Iowa Ornithologists' Union

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