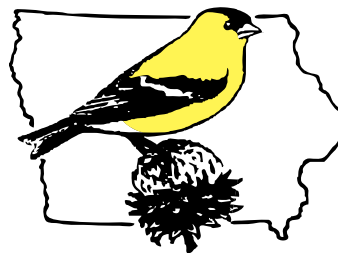


IOU News

Summer 2013 

Volume 29 - Number 2



Spring 2013 IOU Meeting Wrap-up



All Photos by Don Poggensee

The first weekend in May usually brings thoughts of the freshness of spring and the increasing intensity of bird migration – NOT piles of snow and the need to turn the heat back on.

To the roomful of birders huddled inside Fellowship Hall at Riverview Conference Center in Cedar Falls, the gloom of the frightful weather outside did nothing to dampen their spirits or conversations. Tables of homemade treats were set out for sampling by PRAS (Prairie Rapids Audubon Society), our Friday night social hosts. New reusable name

tags made it easier to greet and meet birders from all parts of the state and beyond. Bruce Ehresman finished setting up his display of bird nests and challenged anyone to correctly identify all 20 nests. Bill Schuerman of PRAS graciously took time to set up a sampling of his photography while still dealing with a flooding basement at home.

Snow slid from the roof into a pile making an additional handy cooler right outside the door. George Armistead, our guest speaker arrived safely with his volunteer IOU host Carl Bendorf. The Porters arrived from

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this newsletter was mailed to 252 members.

Spring Meeting 2013 Bird List 175 Species

Snow Goose	Wilson's Phalarope	Gray Catbird
Canada Goose	Franklin's Gull	Brown Thrasher
Trumpeter Swan	Bonaparte's Gull	European Starling
Wood Duck	Ring-billed Gull	American Pipit
Gadwall	Herring Gull	Cedar Waxwing
American Wigeon	Caspian Tern	Orange-crowned Warbler
Mallard	Forster's Tern	Nashville Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Rock Pigeon	Northern Parula
Northern Shoveler	Eurasian Collared Dove	Yellow Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Mourning Dove	Cape May Warbler
Canvasback	Great Horned Owl	Yellow-rumped warbler
Redhead	Barred Owl	Black-throated Green Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Whip-poor-will	Blackburnian Warbler
Lesser Scaup	Chimney Swift	Pine Warbler
Long-tailed Duck	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Palm Warbler
Bufflehead	Belted Kingfisher	Blackpoll Warbler
Hooded Merganser	Red-headed Woodpecker	Black-and-white Warbler
Red-breasted Merganser	Woodpecker	American Redstart
Ruddy Duck	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Prothonotary Warbler
Ring-necked Pheasant	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Ovenbird
Wild Turkey	Downy Woodpecker	Northern Waterthrush
Common Loon	Hairy Woodpecker	Louisiana Waterthrush
Pied-billed Grebe	Northern Flicker	Common Yellowthroat
Horned Grebe	Pileated Woodpecker	Eastern Towhee
Red-necked Grebe	Eastern Phoebe	American Tree Sparrow
Eared Grebe	Great Crested Flycatcher	Chipping Sparrow
American White Pelican	Eastern Kingbird	Clay-colored Sparrow
Double-crested Cormorant	Blue-headed Vireo	Field Sparrow
American Bittern	Blue Jay	Vesper Sparrow
Great Blue Heron	American Crow	Lark Sparrow
Great Egret	Horned Lark	Savannah Sparrow
Green Heron	Purple Martin	Le Conte's Sparrow
Black-crowned Night Heron	Tree Swallow	Song Sparrow
White-faced Ibis	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	Lincoln's Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Bank Swallow	Swamp Sparrow
Osprey	Cliff Swallow	White-throated Sparrow
Bald Eagle	Barn Swallow	Harris's Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Black-capped Chickadee	White-crowned Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Tufted Titmouse	Dark-eyed Junco
Cooper's Hawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Northern Cardinal
Red-shouldered Hawk	White-breasted Nuthatch	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Broad-winged Hawk	Nuthatch	Indigo Bunting
Swainson's Hawk	Brown Creeper	Bobolink
Red-tailed Hawk	Carolina Wren	Red-winged Blackbird
American Kestrel	House Wren	Eastern Meadowlark
Peregrine Falcon	Winter Wren	Western Meadowlark
Virginia Rail	Sedge Wren	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Sora	Marsh Wren	Brewer's Blackbird
American Coot	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Common Grackle
Sandhill Crane	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Brown-headed Cowbird
Killdeer	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	Orchard Oriole
Spotted Sandpiper	Eastern Bluebird	Baltimore Oriole
Solitary Sandpiper	Veery	Purple Finch
Greater Yellowlegs	Gray-cheeked Thrush	House Finch
Willet	Swainson's Thrush	Pine Siskin
Lesser Yellowlegs	Hermit Thrush	American Goldfinch
Semipalmated Sandpiper	Wood Thrush	House Sparrow
Sandpiper	American Robin	Say's Phoebe
Least Sandpiper		
Pectoral Sandpiper		
Dunlin		
Wilson's Snipe		

Fairfield ready for birding and their Saturday presentation. Once the snow, rain, cold, and wind calmed down, experienced birders knew the outlook was good for some exceptional birding. Our speakers had arrived, 105 birders made the trip, 18 first time attendees, the food was great. Things work out.

“It was like the hand of God had swept over Black Hawk County,” one Saturday morning traveler mentioned after he arrived. The snow had cleared and the rain was ending. Breakfast was served. Field trips left as scheduled to Sweet Marsh, George Wyth Park, Big Woods Lake, Prairie Lakes, Greenbelt Lake and places in between including Hartman Reserve. In a historic twist, for the first time, car passes were issued allowing birders on the Cedar Valley Nature Trail trip to bird from their cars on the bike trail in place of a tram.

Birds appeared tired and hungry and there were many of them (see spring meeting birds).

PRAS provided lunches for the weekend - pot luck style. Candace Havelly expertly organized volunteers to provide the food and work the kitchen. In the process they made over \$600 for the local PRAS to use for building chimney swift towers.

Tyler Harms kicked off the Saturday afternoon sessions with a brief history of the Southern Wings program - a program that the IOU and its members support financially.

Southern wings and its partners are actively working to conserve wintering grounds (particularly grasslands) of species of concern in Mexico, and Central and South America. Maps were shown giving locations of work areas.

Bruce Ehresman of the non-game division of the DNR followed with a presentation on bird nest identification. Bruce has a wealth of experience doing



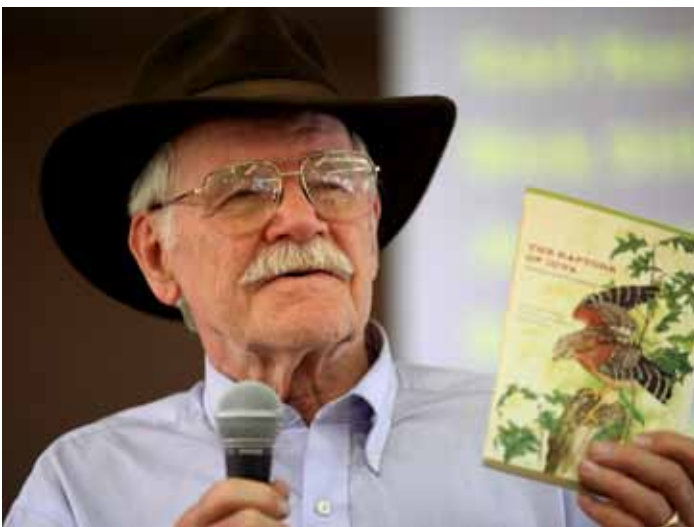
Breeding Bird Atlas work across the state. He first shared some interesting discoveries comparing BBA1 to BBA2, like the nesting increase in Sandhill Cranes, Trumpeter Swans and new found colony nesters on the Mississippi.

His expertly planned and organized powerpoint showed birds and their nests by nest type, such as large stick nests, colony nests, loosely made nests, no nest at all, etc.

Some birds are depending on buildings and man made structures for nesting sites. Bruce has found over 20 species of birds nesting under bridges.

Following the talk Dean Roosa stepped forward to introduce us to the new “Raptors of Iowa” book that he, Bruce, Jon Stravers, and Rich Patterson co-authored.

George Armistead has “fallen in love with ducks.” His afternoon talk about what he called the “Odd ducks - The mallard and the monochromatic mallards” gave plenty of reasons why he would love studying mallards, particularly the monochromatic Mottled and Mexican Duck.





Meeting Attendees

Pam Allen, West Des Moines, IA
 Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA
 George Armistead, Philadelphia, PA
 Eloise Armstrong, Van Meter, IA
 Eugene Armstrong, Van Meter, IA
 Michael Becker, Cedar Rapids, IA
 Carl Bendorf, Solon, IA
 Carol Berrier, Delevan, WI
 Galin Berrier, Delevan, WI
 John Bissell, Grimes, IA
 Alan Brown, Cedar Falls, IA
 Joyce Burch, Des Moines, IA
 Brandon Caswell, Cedar Rapids, IA
 Elaine Dalrymple, Cedar Falls, IA
 Diane Dentlinger, Des Moines, IA
 Stephen Dinsmore, Ames, IA
 Karen Disbrow, Iowa City, IA
 Rose Dooley, Evansdale, IA
 Keith Dyche, Shenandoah, IA
 Dave Eastman, Cedar Falls, IA
 Sue Eastman, Cedar Falls, IA
 Lois Eggleston, Waverly, IA
 Bruce Ehresman, Ames, IA
 Donna Flanagan, Ames, IA
 Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA
 Krista Goodman, Colfax, IA

Rita Goranson, Mason City, IA
 Ken Gregory, Dysart, IA
 Mary Ann Gregory, Dysart, IA
 Joel Haack, Cedar Falls, IA
 Linda Haack, Cedar Falls, IA
 Jean Hall, Waterloo, IA
 Tyler Harms, Ames, IA
 Doug Harr, Ogden, IA
 Mary Jo Hartogh, Elma, IA
 Candace Havelly, Waterloo, IA
 Rick Hollis, North Liberty, IA
 Douglas Hunt, Oskaloosa, IA
 Mary Beth Hunt, Oskaloosa, IA
 Ginny Huntington, Ames, IA
 Stu Huntington, Ames, IA
 Ann Johnson, Norwalk, IA
 Dorothy Kelley, Des Moines, IA
 Mike Kelley, Des Moines, IA
 Chuck LeMaster, Charles City, IA
 Susan LeMaster, Charles City, IA
 Richard Lynch, Cedar Falls, IA
 Lynn Marsh, Ankeny, IA
 Jason McCurdy, Coralville, IA
 Kristen McNutt, Cedar Falls, IA
 Carol Mefford, Ankeny, IA
 Francis Moore, Waterloo, IA

Carol Morgan, Waterloo, IA
 Jim Murdock, Ames, IA
 Kathy Myers, Des Moines, IA
 Diane Newman, Tripoli, IA
 Art Ollie, Clinton, IA
 Eric Ollie, Ames, IA
 Joyce Ollie, Clinton, IA
 Shane Patterson, Ames, IA
 Marietta Petersen, Walnut, IA
 Mary Jo Piech, Cedar Falls, IA
 Bruce Plakke, Cedar Falls, IA
 Linda Plakke, Cedar Falls, IA
 Katie Pletcher, Iowa City, IA
 Don Poggensee, Ida Grove, IA
 Diane Porter, Fairfield, IA
 Michael Porter, Fairfield, IA
 Mark Proescholdt, Liscomb, IA
 Craig Rash, Denver, IA
 Kris Rash, Denver, IA
 Paul Roisen, Sioux City, IA
 Dean Roosa, Ames, IA
 Linda Rudolph, Coralville, IA
 Rex Rundquist, Sioux City, IA
 Soren Rundquist, Ames, IA
 John Rutenbeck, Burlington, IA
 Barbara Sanders, Cedar Falls, IA

Bill Scheible, Cedar Rapids, IA
 Tom Schilke, Waterloo, IA
 Clark Schloz, Maquoketa, IA
 Bill Schuerman, Cedar Falls, IA
 Jim Sinclair, Indianola, IA
 Anne Sloth, Cedar Falls, IA
 Sharon Somers North Liberty IA
 Stuart Sparkman Des Moines IA
 Danny Stark Nevada IA
 Michael Stark Marion IA
 Matt Stephenson Ames IA
 Walt Stephenson Cedar Rapids IA
 Dick Stilwell, W Des Moines, IA
 Sharon Stilwell, W Des Moines, IA
 Tom Stone, Waterloo, IA
 Tommy Stone, Evansdale, IA
 Dennis Thompson, Johnston, IA
 Mike Tompkins, Waterloo, IA
 Karen Viste-Sparkman, Des Moines, IA
 David Voigts, Jesup, IA
 Christine Wagner-Hecht, Cedar Rapids, IA
 Walt Wagner-Hecht, Cedar Rapids, IA
 Lorene Wellnitz, Cedar Falls, IA
 Hank Welnitz, Cedar Falls, IA
 Gerald White, Muscatine, IA
 Hank Zaletel, Nevada, IA

With the Mallard as the king of hybridizers, more information needs to be gathered to set them apart such as water preference, length of pair bonding, range restrictions, etc.

Diane and Michael Porter have a passion for birds and birding. Their acreage near Fairfield provides splendid opportunities to watch birds and get to know them well. Diane has devised a chart to keep track of the birds on the property which, at a glance, can show when to expect new arrivals and nesters. Diane's stories, photos, and video were complimented by Michael's technical skills. Diane's use of meal worms to entice Bluebirds to use nest boxes is a handy trick. Their video of a House Wren trained to take food from inside Diane's shirt pocket was especially entertaining. Michael briefed us on using Birdbrain listing software and new digi-scoping attachments for Swarovski scopes. Much more information about birds and birding can be found on the Porter's website "Birdwatching.com."

Following a brisk IOU membership meeting and afternoon break, banquet food arrived from Edgewood Locker. The evening buffet food and service were well received.

Shane Patterson and Steve Dinsmore started off the evening program with BBA awards. Many, many, volunteers spent hundreds of hours collecting and reporting data for the five year DNR/IOU project. In appreciation, awards were issued for top efforts during the 2012 season and for overall efforts for the whole five year project. Prizes were first rate field guides and \$100 gift certificates to Eagle Optics.

Bruce Ehresman had one person correctly identify all 20 bird nests on his quiz - Chris Rash from Denver Iowa. She received a copy of the first Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas.

Carl Bendorf's introduction of our keynote speaker George Armistead from Philadelphia, filled us in on some interesting historical background on the young man. We had already gotten to know him as a humorous, friendly, and inquisitive expert birder (his descriptions of distant hikers, as though they were birds in breeding plumage, had those with him in stitches). As Carl pointed out, George comes from a long line of historical figures including George Armistead who was the commander of Fort



McHenry (Star Spangled Banner) during the war of 1812.

George's talk "pOrnithology - The Birds, and the Birds and the Bees" was full of humor and interesting information about the avian mating process. We are "Peeping Toms" George says. George's photos and commentary gave us plenty of examples of the usual and the unusual ways birds attract mates, form pairs, and well, "do it." Females, while selecting for fitness and plumage, look for 'snazzy dressers' and 'good dancers' in many of the 230 bird families of the world. There are divorce rates, extra marital relations, and odd behaviors. Ruffs on the lek are actually displaying for other males. A video of the very rare Kakapo flightless parrot of New Zealand showed an aggressive male that perched on top of a researcher's and repeatedly tried to mate with his head.

So, how do they "do it"? Copulation is usually about one second in duration. Swifts do it in the air. But, who gives a flying The Dunnock does it 100 times a day at 1/10 second intervals. A Smith's Longspur was recorded doing it 629 times in six days. The champs, however, are the Vasa Parrot and the Fiery-throated Hummingbird that has a copulation recorded lasting 56 minutes.

Sunday morning birding was sunny and pleasant but less spectacular than Saturday's listings. A well attended BBQ lunch preceded the compilation. Many thanks to field trip leaders, Tom and Tommy Stone, Francis Moore, Al Brown, Mary Ann and Ken Gregory, Candace Havelly, Dave Eastman, all the PRAS and IOU volunteers, and all our attendees for a memorable weekend.



Notes From the Field

175 bird species were counted in Black Hawk and Bremer counties from the opening of registration at 6:00 p.m. May 3rd to the close of the meeting at 1:00 p.m. Sunday, May 5th. 160 species were recorded on Saturday alone. The odd snow/rain weather system no doubt had a positive affect on the numbers and variety of birds seen.

Birds were recorded on the large master list using a letter code that identified which field trip or site the bird had been located. At a glance, one could see where birds were being seen commonly, and where the more rare birds had been spotted. Over 130 species were seen at multiple sites. Red Shouldered Hawks were seen on five trips, Peregrine Falcons at three sites including three individuals at Sweet Marsh. Horned Grebes were found on about every body of water. 38 were scoped at Prairie Lakes alone.

Great looks were reported of a colorful, low feeding Black-throated Green Warbler, a Whip-poor-will that flushed to a branch, American White Pelicans from the nature trail, and a male Long-tailed Duck in breeding plumage at Green Belt Lake that had one viewer exclaim "Wowee, it looks like a pheasant!" Three of the youngsters on the successful Iowa Young Birders field trip compared notes on Swainson's, Hermit and Gray-cheeked Thrushes as the birds posed together for close examination.

Other notable sightings for the area were Pine Warblers close to the venue, Eared Grebe, Swainson's Hawk, White-faced Ibis, Brewer's Blackbird, and Red-necked Grebes. Many got to see the Say's Phoebe at Sweet Marsh - quite a find.

Lacking were the usual vireos, shorebirds, and flycatchers. Not lacking were "life" birds, "life" places, and "life" experiences. One smiling first time attendee had 40 life birds! Check the meeting list to see which birds may have been lifers for you.

2012 IOU Projects Committee grants update

The IOU Projects Committee fully or partially funded nine of the applications received in 2012. The Committee had a budget of \$5,000 with which to work, but an unprecedented number of proposals was submitted. An appeal to the IOU Board of Directors resulted in the allocation of an additional \$3,000 – thank you, BOD!

Brief summaries of these awards are hereby presented. Each of them fulfills the mission statement of IOU: the identification, study and protection of birds in Iowa.

- 1. \$2,000 to Jon Stravers/National Audubon Society.** This ongoing project focuses on Cerulean Warblers, a species of conservation concern. IOU funding assisted efforts to monitor known suitable habitat in the Yellow River State Forest / Effigy Mounds region in NE Iowa. A total of 169 active CEWA territories was documented. Cerulean Warblers appear to be “clan” nesters, with clustering of active territories in a given area. This survey suggests that this area might be one of the most significant population densities of Cerulean Warblers in the upper Midwest.
- 2. \$1,500 to Iowa Young Birders.** Most of us are aware of the disconnect between today’s youth and the natural world. To encourage young people to become engaged through birding, Carl Bendorf of Iowa City has founded a non-profit organization focused on “hands-on” education through birding field trips. To further this end, IOU funding was awarded and was used to purchase 12 pair of binoculars and a spotting scope and tripod for participant use on scheduled trips. The first year of this program has been encouraging, with children ages 8 to 18 joining trips to various locations around the state.
- 3. \$1,000 to Woodbury County Conservation Board.** This grant was used to build an environmental education raptor enclosure at Dorothy Pecaat Nature Center near Sioux City. Construction began in Fall 2012, and a formal dedication and open house, attended by more than 100 people, was held in May of this year. Currently, the facility houses three species of birds of prey which will be used by staff for public education.
- 4. \$1,000 to Pottawattamie County Conservation Board.** IOU grant money covered additional costs of an extended raptor banding season at Hitchcock Nature Center north of Council Bluffs. The Fall 2012 banding effort produced 161 diurnal raptors, including 3 new species for this multi-year project (Red-shouldered Hawk, Northern Harrier, Prairie Falcon). The ongoing Saw-whet Owl banding season yielded 69 new captures and 4 additional owls previously banded in Minnesota.
- 5. \$500 to Jackson County Conservation Board.** Friends of Jackson CCB used this IOU award to fund construction of a Chimney Swift tower at Hurstville Interpretive Center north of Maquoketa. The tower is designed for nesting and roosting by swifts, a species for which suitable sites are rapidly disappearing. No Chimney Swifts were sighted during this first year of operation (2012), but experience shows that it typically takes up to 3 years for swifts to occupy a new tower.
- 6. \$500 to Courtney Duchardt / Univ. of Illinois.** This is a research grant to assist in the study of nest site selection by grassland birds. Birds may choose nesting sites based upon the breeding success of other species in a given area. In Ringgold County, in May and June 2012, researchers looked at Grasshopper Sparrow reliance on early-breeding Eastern Meadowlarks as a signal of high quality habitat. Results of this study will be forthcoming after another year of observation.
- 7. \$500 to Lee County Conservation Board.** To enhance public participation and education at the annual Keokuk Bald Eagle Days celebration, an IOU award was used to purchase binoculars and a spotting scope tripod for use by attendees. Money was also used for teacher education packets. At this year’s celebration, 402 schoolchildren attended the Friday program, and 1838 people visited on the weekend public days.
- 8. \$500 to Iowa Wildlife Center.** Near Ledges State Park, the Iowa Wildlife Center is a new non-profit wildlife rehabilitation and education center. As part of its mission, the Center holds an annual hawk-watch on the High Trestle Trail between Madrid and Woodward. IOU provided funding for this event and funds were also allocated to a day-long “BioBlitz”, a survey of wildlife diversity on the property prior to anticipated habitat restoration efforts.
- 9. \$500 to Iowa County Conservation Board.** This award was used to produce bird identification packets for the conservation education program at Lake Iowa State Park. The park is a multi-use recreational area and is the largest in the county. Naturalist programs are offered throughout the year and are attended by visitors from surrounding counties.

IOU’s Projects Committee, in my opinion, serves a crucial role in furthering the goals of our organization. It has been an honor and a pleasure to work on behalf of the IOU community.

Bill Scheible
Immediate past Chair, IOU Projects Comm

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Iowa Ornithologists' Union

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