

#### Bird's Eye--Mike Freiberg Birdwatcher--Ames Teen Has Recorded 500 Species of Birds by Mike Krapel

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Mike Freiberg flipped through his field guide. In there were all the birds of North America. And on page 271 was the sighting of the summer camp. That bird, with its glossy green head, its geranium red belly, its squaretipped tail, its sharp yellow bill, really was a sight. The field guide called it an Elegant Trogan.

Freiberg, a 17-year old senior at Ames High School, knows better.

"That's spelled wrong," he said. "It's really an O."

An O as in T-R-O-G-O-N; it's an Elegant Trogon. The guides say it breeds in the mountains of southeast Arizona and farther south, has a low call of kowm, kowm, kowm, and lives in mountain forests or pine-oak canyons.

Freiberg spotted the Trogon during a summer birding camp for eight of the country's best teen birders. Freiberg won a scholarship that paid half his way to the Tucson-based camp. There he learned from experts and spotted 64 different birds, including the Trogon.

"It's a very rare bird,"

Freiberg said. "It's probably the most beautiful bird I've ever seen."

That's saying something. Freiberg has seen, identified and recorded 500 species of birds. Freiberg, said James Dinsmore, a professor of Animal Ecology at Iowa State University and editor of Iowa Bird Life, knows his birds. When it comes to birding, the ornithologist said the Ames teen is "very enthusiastic, really turned on and has picked up a lot of knowledge."

Freiberg is hardly alone. Birdwatching in America and in Iowa is big business. Jim Pease, Iowa State extension's wildlife specialist, said a 1996 survey found Americans spent \$2.1 billion to attract birds to their yards. And that's just the money spent on seeds and feed. It doesn't count the money spent on feeders or waterers or bird books.

> Here in Iowa, people spend about \$25 million a year to feed birds, Pease said.

> The bird seed business is good for his shop, said Mel Brekke of Brekke's Town and Country Store on 580th Avenue in east Ames. There, birdwatchers can buy their sunflower seeds in 50-pound bags.

> Brekke figures he sells an average of 3,000 pounds of bird seed every week of the year. That's a ton and half of sunflower, safflower, thistle and millet seeds. Just a few years ago, he said the sales were primarily in the winter. It's a big deal," he said of the seed





sales. "It's a vital part of our business.

This warm winter weather isn't helping business, though. The ground is clear of snow, so birds can look all over for their dinner. Right now, he said, "sales are slower than they should be."

Why do people spend so much to attract a few birds?

For Freiberg, it's the wonder.

It amazes me to watch a common bird at the feeder," he said. "It amazes me that they can fly. I watch to see their habits, to see what they do. I'm an outdoor-type person. I'm just addicted.

Freiberg, just back from a day at Ames High, looking relaxed in his basketball shoes, jeans and Temple University sweatshirt, stood in at the back window of his family's home in south Ames. He's a big guy, a defensive tackle on the football team, a shot-putter and discus-thrower on the track team.

But he knows all about little things, too. Just ask him about the birds at his family's eight feeders.

There was a Downy Woodpecker with its small bill and white back.

Woodpeckers, Freiberg said, have a distinctive way of flying. They'll flap for a while, glide for a while, then flap for a while. Downies, he said, are the smallest of North America's woodpeckers.

Also out there was a carpet of Dark-eyed Juncos, gray little birds with white feathers on both sides of their tails. They're ground feeders, Freiberg explained. They clean up the mess that other birds spill from feeders.

There was a cute Chickadee, too. That's the Black-capped variety, Freiberg said. It's the only kind common to Iowa. You'll probably have to go south to find a Carolina Chickadee or north to find a Boreal Chickadee.

It only took a few minutes for Freiberg to get geared up for some birding. He put on an Iowa Ornithological Union cap, complete with pins commemorating the 100th and 400th species on his list of sightings. He hung lightweight but powerful binoculars around his neck. He pulled sturdy boots on his feet.

Freiberg is comfortable in the gear and about telling his friends he's a birder. He has been birdwatching since he was about 5. He picked it up from his father, Paul, who picked it up from his father, Harry.

The young Freiberg didn't just inherit birds on the brain, though. Karen Freiberg, said he's willing to get up at 2 a.m. to chase a bird. And he does "a lot of practice, reading and listening to bird calls. If he put half that energy into his school work ..."

That doesn't mean Freiberg is without academic ambitions. He's thinking

he'll study wildlife biology or marketing sales, perhaps at Iowa State or maybe a school closer to his family's roots in Philadelphia.

Wherever he goes, he'll take memories of a least 500 different birds species with him. That's quite a few birds," said Kay Niyo, the president of the local chapter of the Audubon Society. "A lot of adults don't have that many birds on their life lists."

What makes Freiberg a good birder, she said, is that "he's quick to spot the unusual."

Take, for example, the 500th species on his list, the Yellow-billed Loon. One showed up at Little Wall Lake just south of Jewell in December. That's an unusual sight around here. The Yellow-billed Loon breeds in the arctic and spends its winters on the Pacific coast. It was only the second time one has been recorded in Iowa. When it showed up at Hallett's Quarry north of Ames, it was the first time one has been spotted in Story County.

While Freiberg wasn't the first mid-Iowan to spot the Loon with its upturned, ivory bill, it wasn't long before he was out in the field looking for it. Sure enough he found it at the far end of Little Wall Lake.

"Ha-oo-oo," is what a Loon would say about a big day like that. "I was excited," is what Freiberg said. "Five hundred is a pretty big milestone to hit, especially for my age. I felt like jumping up and down."



#### Iowa is for the Birds

by Tim Engstrom

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Iowa has an identity crisis when it comes to its favorite bird. The state bird is the Eastern Goldfinch. Yet, Iowa is the Hawkeye State. So, what bird does it put on its flag? The Bald Eagle.

This confusion has been passed on to its universities. The University of Iowa sports teams are the Hawkeyes but a hawk is its mascot, not a hawk's eye or the American Indian character Hawkeye from James Fenimore Cooper's "Last of the Mohicans." The mascot's name is Herky, short for Hercules, and the school seems afraid of putting him on sports logos.

And Iowa State University is the Cyclones but has a Cardinal for a mascot. Its name is Cy the Cyclone, though he looks like a teethy Cardinal. A few years ago, the university redesigned him to have a cyclonic butt, but at least he's prominently displayed.

Top this off with the fact that Iowa is the nation' s leading state for Pheasant hunting.

Why the Eastern Goldfinch? Because legislators in 1933 followed the recommendations of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union, noting the bird as a common, year-round bird. At the time, some thought the bird helps farmers by eating grasshoppers and worms, when in fact it eats thistleseed.

Why a Bald Eagle? Because the flag's designer, Dixie Cornell Gebhardt of Knoxville, borrowed it from the official seal of Iowa in 1917. The seal was created in 1847 when the eagle was a national symbol but Iowa had no state bird.

Why Hawkeye? Because the state's early pioneers adopted the name from Cooper's novel when dreaming up a state nickname.

Why a hawk? Because the U of I would rather have a hawk as a mascot than Hawkeye, a book character, to face teams like the Wolverines and the Golden Gophers. Why a Cardinal? Because in 1954, students wanted a mascot and couldn't stuff a cyclone, so because cardinal was a school color, the mascot became a cardinal.

Why Pheasants? Because they are tasty and plentiful.

Oh, and then we have the annual political debate over whether to legalize dove hunting.

And besides Pheasants, we hunt Bobwhite Quail, Gray Partridge, Turkeys, Ruffed Grouse, Crows, Pigeons, ducks, Snow Geese, Woodcocks, Snipes and rails.

The state's bird watchers each year near Christmas scatter the countryside counting birds.

What self-respecting Iowa homeowner doesn't have birdfeeders hanging near the back window.

Towns in Iowa are using eco-tourism to

bring in money, notably the Bald Eagle days along the Mississippi River in the winter.

Iowa has a county named for 1830s naturalist John Audubon, who painted birds such as Curlews, Mallards, and Plovers. Land near the Iowa towns of Curlew, Mallard, and Plover had plenty of birds for market hunters before the prairie was drained. A railroad soon connected the three northwest Iowa

towns and an engineer named them after birds in the area.

Perhaps the problem is Iowa likes birds so much it cannot decide which is its favorite. My favorite bird is the flying squirrel, but birdwatcher Hank Zaletel tells me it is not a bird.

But in Iowa, we can count it as a bird.

Iowa Ornithologists' Union Web Page WWW.IOWABIRDS.ORG



# Summer 2000 At Iowa Lakeside Laboratory

Iowa Lakeside Laboratory was one of the first private summer field stations in the United States. Professor Thomas H. Macbride of the University of Iowa and a number of biologists from other Iowa colleges established Lakeside in 1909. In 1936 Lakeside became a state institution, and today it is run cooperatively by Iowa State University, the University of Northern Iowa, and the University of Iowa through the Iowa State Board of Regents. Since its foundation, Lakeside's mission has been to provide students an opportunity to get hands-on experience working with Iowa's natural and human environments through its field-oriented summer courses and to provide research facilities and support for graduate students and faculty working on research projects in northwestern Iowa.

Five sections of the Natural History Workshop, each on a different aspect of the natural history of lowa will be taught in 2000. There are no prerequisites, and each section can be taken for credit or non-credit.

Amphibians and Reptiles, August 13-18 Nature Photography, August 13-18 Mushrooms and Other Fungi, August 13-18 Prairies and Prairie Restoration, August 13-18 Field Archaeology, May 29-June 2, June 4-9, or May 29-June 9

Other courses being offered during the summer of 2000 are:

First Term: May 21-June 16 Archaeology Behavioral Ecology Ecology Introduction to Environmental Planning Illustrating Nature: Sketching (Meets May 21-June 2) Illustrating Nature: Photography (Meets June 4-16) Wetland Ecology

Second Term: June 18-July 14 Aquatic Biology Ecology and Systematics of Diatoms Fish Ecology Plant Taxonomy Prairie Ecology

<u>Third Term: July 16-August 11</u> Amphibians and Reptiles Field Mycology Physical Geology Plant Ecology Soil Genesis and Landscape Relationships

Other Short Courses Diatom Clinic, July 16-21 Introduction to GIS Modeling, May 21-26

An Adult Nature Weekend will be held August 18-20, 2000. This is an opportunity to participate in field trips to various natural areas in the Iowa Great Lakes region supplemented by evening interpretive programs. Learn more about Iowa's natural history from some of the leading naturalists in the state while in a relaxed and congenial setting.

For more information on courses at Iowa Lakeside Laboratory, please contact the Administrative Office, 131 Bessey Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011-1020; phone: 515-294-2488; email: lakeside@iastate.edu; Web site: http://www.lakeside.iastate.edu.

## **Report of the Nominating Committee**

Mary Kuhlman, Chair Jim Fuller Ann Johnson

We propose the following slate of officers and directors for the election at the spring meeting:

> Secretary: Jane Clark Treasurer: Rita Goranson

> > Board of Directors Two Year Terms

> > > Jim Scheib Judy Garton

### State & County Bird Lists

Members are encouraged to submit their state and county bird lists for the 1999 calendar year. The threshold for the state is 200 species and 150 for all counties. This is a life long total and covers all species of wild birds positively recorded with the county or state. It is hoped that everyone will be able to submit a total of 150 species for their home county. One does not need to be a resident of Iowa, just an IOU member. Records through 1999 are due by May 30 and should be sent to Mary Lou Petersen, 3448 Maple Glen Dr., Bettendorf, IA 52722.

> Madowl Publishing Hank & Linda Zaletel 1928 6th St. Nevada, IA 50201 madowl@nevia.net

# Iowa Spring Bird Count Is Your County Counted?

The 8th annual Iowa Spring Bird Count will be held on Saturday May 13th, 2000. It is held on the same day, and according to the same rules, as the North American Migration



Count, so that totals may be submitted to both counts.

Each county is a count territory, and in the interest of expanding our knowledge of spring migration in the state, we would like to have participation from as many of Iowa's 99 counties as possible. A county compiler organizes the count within the county, assigns territories to be covered, and compiles the results, which are then submitted to the state compiler, and published in Iowa Bird Life.

Can you help? Compilers may do the count themselves, without any help, or may organize parties to cover assigned territories. One person can act as a compiler for more than one county. Even, if only one individual counts birds for part of a day, results can be submitted and will contribute to the data base. A count may be done as a county Big Day, or as a competition for a fundraiser for your local birding club. Use your imagination!

If you can act as a compiler for a county of your choice, please contact me at the address below, and the forms will be sent to you.

Ann Barker 3204 Crestline Dr. Davenport, IA 52803 319/355-6271 E-mail Annbarker4@aol.com



# **Iowa Ornithologists' Union** Spring Meeting, May 19-21, 2000 Camp Ewalu in Clayton County 3 Miles West of Strawberry Point

Field trips will be at Joy Springs County Park and Backbone State Park, Iowa's first state park, White Pine Hollow State Park, Fountain Springs and Twin Bridges County Parks and Bixby State Park, and maybe to the Mississippi River on Sunday. There are lovely wooded areas at all these areas. Specialties may included Red-shouldered Hawk, Pileated Woodpecker, Ruffed Grouse, Louisiana Waterthrush, Veery, and migrant warblers.

#### **Schedule of Events**

Friday, May 19	6:30-9:00 PM	Registration and get- together at Camp Ewalu
Saturday, May 20	6:00-6:45 AM	Breakfast at Ewalu
	7:00-12:00 12:00-1:00 PM 1:00-4:00 PM	Field trips Lunch at Ewalu Programs
- Care-	Birds of Iowa's Restored Wetlands Jim Dinsmore Birds of Prey of Iowa Bruce Ehresman Iowa, Portrait of the Land Larry Stone	
		Business meeting Dinner at Ewalu A Touch of Antarctica: n to South Georgia and the Islands by Ann Barker.
Sunday, May 21	6:00-6:45 AM 7:00-12:00 12:00-noon	Breakfast at Ewalu Field trips Lunch and compilation

at Ewalu

## Accommodations

Camp Ewalu — sleeping cabins. Lodge mearby with bathrooms and showers. Bedding and towels not provided. Bring flashlight Lodging at Ewalu — first night—\$13.50, second night—\$9.50

Motels

Strawberry Point	Strawberry Motel — 319/933-6163 Franklin Motel — 319/933-4788
Elkader	Elkader Inn — 319/245-2020
Oelwein	Meadow Mist Motel — 319/283-3330 Park View Motel — 319/283-3622
Manchester	Super 8 Motel — 319/927-2533 Sleepy Hollow — 319/927-4850

#### Camping

Camp Ewalu — with flush toilets (showers elsewhere) — \$8.00/night non-electrical, — \$11.00/night — electrical Backbone State Park

#### Registration

Registration: Saturday breakfast Saturday lunch Saturday dinner Sunday breakfast Sunday lunch	\$5.00 per person \$4.75 \$5.75 \$6.75 \$4.75 \$5.75	\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$
Camp Ewalu lodging	First night/\$13.50/perso Second night/\$9.50/pers	
	Total	\$
Send registration to:	Mark Proescholdt Box 65 Liscomb, IA 50148 515/496-5219	
Names(s) Address: Phone:		* Laure Zerzan From "ECONEWS"

#### Checks should be made payable to Mark Proescholdt.

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#### Number

°F

Dawn

a.m.

p.m.

Dusk

dir

Speed

Clouds

Number		Numb	er		Number
	Northern Mockingbird			Waterthrush	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
	Brown Thrasher		Kentucky		Blue Grosbeak * in E
	European Starling American Pipit			ut Warbler*	Indigo Bunting
	Cedar Waxwing		Mourning	Yellowthroat	Dickcissel Bobolink
	Blue-winged Warbler	A LANDARY AND A REAL	Hooded V		Red-winged Blackbird
	Golden-winged Warble	т —	Wilson's		Eastern Meadowlark
	Tennessee Warbler		Canada W	arbler	Western Meadowlark
	Orange-crowned Warb	ler		reasted Chat	Meadowlark sp.
	Nashville Warbler	1	Summer 7		Yellow-headed Blackbird
	Northern Parula Yellow Warbler		Scarlet Ta Spotted T	0	Common Grackle
	Chestnut-sided Warble		Eastern To		Great-tailed Grackle * Brown-headed Cowbird
	Magnolia Warbler		Chipping		Blackbird sp.
	Cape May Warbler			red Sparrow	Orchard Oriole
	Black-throated Blue W		Field Span		Baltimore Oriole
	Yellow-rumped Warble		Vesper Sp		Purple Finch
	Black-throated Green	F			House Finch
	Blackburnian Warbler Yellow-throated Warbl	or *	r * Savannah Sp Grasshopper		Pine Siskin
	Pine Warbler *	er *		Sparrow *	American Goldfinch Evening Grosbeak**
	Prairie Warbler **	in the second second		s Sparrow *	House Sparrow
	Palm Warbler			Sharp-tailed Sparrow *	Eurasian Tree Sparrow *
	Bay-breasted Warbler		Fox Sparr		
	Blackpoll Warbler		Song Span		
	Cerulean Warbler Black-and-white Warb		Lincoln's		
	American Redstart		Swamp Sp	barrow bated Sparrow	
	Prothonotary Warbler		Harris's S		
	Worm-eating Warbler			wned Sparrow	FULL DOCUMENTATION NEEDED FOR ANY
	Ovenbird Northern Waterthrush		Dark-eyed		SPECIES NOT LISTED
** NE	EED FULL DOCUME	NTATION		a liter section of	a marte de la constante
	# of Observers			Stationary	
	# of Parties	Total Species:	_	Hours	
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	Hours by Car			Telephone	
	Hours by Boat			E-mail	
-	Hours by Other (			List All Observers (us	e separate sheet if necessary)
	Miles by Foot				· ····································
	Miles by Car				
	Miles by Boat				
	Miles by Other (				
Weather	Temp Wind		Precip.	No Transactions	

County Compilers please send by 30 May to:

Ann Barker 3204 Crestline Drive Davenport, IA 52803

E-mail: Annbarker4@aol.com

#### **IOWA STATEWIDE MAY COUNT**

MAY 13, 2000

COUNTY

Number Common Loon Pied-billed Grebe Horned Grebe Eared Grebe \* American White Pelican Double-crested Cormorant American Bittern Least Bittem Great Blue Heron Great Egret Snowy Egret \* Little Blue Heron \* Cattle Egret Green Heron Black-crowned Night-Heron Yellow-crowned Night-Heron White-faced Ibis Turkey Vulture Greater White-fronted Goose \* Snow Goose Canada Goose Mute Swan Trumpeter Swan \*\* Wood Duck Gadwall American Wigeon American Black Duck Mallard Blue-winged Teal Cinnamon Teal Northern Shoveler Northern Pintail Green-winged Teal Canvasback Redhead **Ring-necked** Duck Greater Scaup \*\* Lesser Scaup Scaup sp. Surf Scoter \*\* White-winged Scoter \*\* Black Scoter \*\* Oldsquaw \*\* Bufflehead **Common Goldeneye** Hooded Merganser Common Merganser Red-breasted Merganser Ruddy Duck Osprey **Bald Eagle** Northern Harrier Sharp-shinned Hawk Cooper's Hawk Accipiter sp. Red-shouldered Hawk Broad-winged Hawk Swainson's Hawk \* in E Red-tailed Hawk Rough-legged Hawk \*\* Buteo sp. American Kestrel Merlin \* Peregrine Falcon \* Gray Partridge **Ring-necked** Pheasant **Ruffed** Grouse

Number Wild Turkey Northern Bobwhite Yellow Rail \*\* King Rail \* Virginia Rail Sora Common Moorhen American Coot Sandhill Crane \* Black-bellied Plover American Golden-Plover Semipalmated Plover Piping Plover \*\* Killdeer American Avocet Greater Yellowlegs Lesser Yellowlegs Solitary Sandpiper Willet Spotted Sandpiper Upland Sandpiper Hudsonian Godwit Marbled Godwit \* Ruddy Turnstone Sanderling \* Semipalmated Sandpiper Western Sandpiper \* Least Sandpiper White-rumped Sandpiper Baird's Sandpiper Pectoral Sandpiper Dunlin Stilt Sandpiper Buff-breasted Sandpiper \*\* Short-billed Dowitcher \* Long-billed Dowitcher \* Dowitcher sp. **Common Snipe** American Woodcock Wilson's Phalarope Red-necked Phalarope Franklin's Gull Bonaparte's Gull **Ring-billed** Gull Herring Gull Gull sp. Caspian Tern Common Tern \* Forster's Tern Sterna sp. Least Tern Black Tern Rock Dove Mourning Dove Black-billed Cuckoo Yellow-billed Cuckoo Barn Owl \*\* Eastern Screech-Owl Great Horned Owl Barred Owl Long-eared Owl \* Short-eared Owl \* Common Nighthawk Chuck-will's-widow Whip-poor-will Chimney Swift Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Number	
	Belted Kingfisher
	Red-headed Woodpecker
and the second	Red-bellied Woodpecker
	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
	Downy Woodpecker
	Hairy Woodpecker
	Northern Flicker
	Pileated Woodpecker
	Olive-sided Flycatcher
	Eastern Wood-Pewee
	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher *
	Acadian Flycatcher
	Alder Flycatcher *
	Willow Flycatcher
	Least Flycatcher
	Empidonax sp.
A REAL PROPERTY	Eastern Phoebe
	Great Crested Flycatcher
	Western Kingbird * in E
	Eastern Kingbird
	Scissor-tailed Flycatcher **
	Loggerhead Shrike
	White-eyed Vireo
	Bell's Vireo
	Blue-headed Vireo
	Yellow-throated Vireo
	Warbling Vireo
	Philadelphia Vireo
	Red-eyed Vireo
	Blue Jay
	American Crow
	Horned Lark
	Purple Martin
	Tree Swallow Northern Rough-winged Swallo
	Bank Swallow
	Cliff Swallow
	Barn Swallow
	Swallow sp.
	Black-capped Chickadee
	Tufted Titmouse
	Red-breasted Nuthatch *
	White-breasted Nuthatch
	Brown Creeper
	Carolina Wren
	Bewick's Wren **
	House Wren
	Winter Wren
	Sedge Wren
	Marsh Wren
	Golden-crowned Kinglet
	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
1.1.1.1.1	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
	Eastern Bluebird
	Veery
	Gray-cheeked Thrush
	Swainson's Thrush
	Hermit Thrush*
	Wood Thrush
	American Robin
	Gray Catbird
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> to the e-mail address: listserv@list.audubon.org



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Iowa Ornithologists' Union Newsletter

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