# Iowa Ornithologists' Union



Spring 2010 🚿 Volume 26 - Number 1





Morning field trips at the spring meeting will include Wildcat Den State Park in Muscatine County. Photo by P. Hertzel.

# IOU 2010 Spring Meeting Bettendorf, Iowa – April 30 - May 2, 2010

The Iowa Ornithologists' Union Spring Meeting will be held April 30-May 2, 2010 in Bettendorf, Iowa. Our hosts for the meeting will be the Quad Cities Audubon Society. All meeting activities will take place at the Ramada Inn in Bettendorf. The Quad Cities area is known for excellent woodland birding and of course, the Mississippi River. This meeting should be timed to take advantage of both as the first of the warblers and other neotropical migrants will just be arriving, while the tail end of the *Continued on page 3* 

# **IOU News**

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

### IOU News Editor:

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## IOU News issues:

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## IOU Journal:

*Iowa Bird Life* Stephen J. Dinsmore, Editor *cootjr@iastate.edu* 

## Website:

http://www.iowabirds.org/

IOU Membership / Subscriptions: Doug Hunt 1201 High Avenue W Oskaloosa, IA 52577 http://www.iowabirds.org/

this newsletter was mailed to 431 members.

# **Slate of Officers**

The IOU Nominations Committee offers the following Slate of Officers

Secretary:	Cathy Konrad
	(for a 2nd two-year term)
Treasurer:	Doug Hunt
	(for a 2nd two-year term)
Board member:	Jay Gilliam
	(to replace Jon Bissell)
Board member:	Tom Schilke
	(to serve a 2nd two-year term)
Board member:	Ken Lowder
	(to serve a 2nd two-year term)

Respectfully submitted by John Rutenbeck Mark Proesholdt Sharon Stilwell

# Chickadee Check-off" (Fish and Wildlife Fund)

April 15th. Abe Lincoln died. The Titanic sank. We deal with the IRS. Thankfully, there is a bright spot to this otherwise inauspicious date on the calendar. Via the "Chickadee Check-off", Iowa birders can designate a portion of their Form 1040 tax refund to the Wildlife Diversity Program, which promotes conservation of non-game wildlife. Initially established in 1981, this fund remains an important source of revenue for the WDP, but voluntary donations have decreased substantially in recent years.

One of the co-editors of IOU News was born on April 15th. Checking off the "Fish and Wildlife" line on his 1040 is a welcome feel-good experience on this otherwise somber day.

More information about the Wildlife Diversity Program can be found at: www.iowadnr.gov/wildlife/diversity/ funding/html

## Continued from page 1

waterbird migration should still be underway.

Potential fieldtrip locations include Wildcat Den State Park, Credit Island and Nahant Marsh, Wapsi Environmental Center, Lost Creek Lake, Sherman Park, Rock Creek State Park, Princeton Marsh, and Lock and Dams 13, 14, 15, and 16 on the Mississippi River. Some trips may also include areas on the Illinois side of the river.

In addition, there will be a special limited opportunity to visit Big Sand Mound Nature Preserve. Monsanto and MidAmerican Energy own and manage this 510 acre property along the Mississippi River near Muscatine. The preserve's purpose is to "conserve and enhance existing ecological communities, manage endangered species, protect archaeological features, and accommodate university research." Because access to this unique site is restricted, there will be a single Saturday fieldtrip which will be limited to fifteen people. The fifteen slots will be available to the first fifteen people to register for the meeting and select this fieldtrip.

**Directions:** The Ramada Inn is located just off Interstate 74 at the Kimberly Rd./Spruce Hills Dr. exit. It is less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile off the Interstate.



## Motels:

Ramada Inn, 3020 Utica Ridge, Bettendorf, (563) 355-7575 \$69 IOU discount rate until March 31

Fairfield Inn, 3206 E. Kimberly Rd, Davenport, (563) 391-8222

Holiday Inn, 909 Middle Rd. Bettendorf, (563) 355-4761

Days Inn, 3202 E. Kimberly Rd, (563) 359-7165

## **Camping:**

Buffalo Shores Campground - Hwy 22 ~1 mile west of Buffalo, Iowa

West Lake Campground - Locust St exit or Hwy 61 exit off Interstate 280, west to 110<sup>th</sup> St

Scott County Park - north on Hwy 61 past Eldridge near the community of Park View

## Keynote Speaker:

# Dr. Brian Peer

Brian Peer became interested in birds in graduate school at the University of Illinois under the tutelage of Dr. Scott Robinson. After completing his Ph.D., he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Smithsonian Institution combining molecular genetic techniques with field studies of Brown-headed Cowbirds. Brian began his career as a professor of biology at Simpson College and is now an Associate Professor of Biology at Western Illinois University in Macomb. Brian's studies are diverse and have taken him throughout North America and Europe, and have included topics such as gynandromorphic birds, sexual selection, animal signals, and

brood parasitism in wild turkeys, but his primary area of interest is the interaction between the Brown-headed Cowbird and its hosts. Brian has more than 40 publications and has secured more than \$300,000.00 in grants to support his research.





Dr. Peer's studies include brood parasitism. On the left, a single Dickcissel egg is flanked by two Brown-headed Cowbird eggs.

# IOU Spring Meeting 2010 – Schedule

## FRIDAY, April 30 - Ramada Inn

5:30-9:00 P.M.

Registration Social time with snacks Field trip sign-up



# SATURDAY, May 1 – Ramada Inn

6:00 A.M.	Breakfast
7:00 A.M.	Field trips depart
12:00 Noon	Lunch
1:00-1:30 P.M.	Larry Stone and Jon Stravers –
	Gladys Black: The Legacy of Iowa's Bird Lady
1:35-2:05 P.M.	Kelly McKay – Milan Bottom's Bald Eagle Study
2:15-4:00 P.M.	IOU General Business Meeting
4:00-4:10 P.M.	Introduction of new IOU members
4:15-5:15 P.M.	IOU Board Meeting
6:30-7:30 P.M.	Saturday Evening Banquet
7:30-8:30 P.M.	Speaker: Dr. Brian Peer –
	The Cowbird Conundrum: Why Birders Should
	Care About Cowbirds

## SUNDAY, May 2 – Ramada Inn

6:00 A.M.	Breakfast
7:00 A.M.	Field trips depart
12:00 Noon	Field trips return
	Lunch
	Final compilation



The Mighty Mississippi. Photo by Paul Hertzel.

# 2010 IOU Spring Meeting Bettendorf, Iowa

# **REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

# **On-line registration:**

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

Make checks payable to: Iowa Ornithologists' Union

Mail to: Aaron Brees 6759 NW 6<sup>th</sup> Dr. Des Moines, IA 50313

## Mail-in registration:

# 2010 IOU Sspring Meeting Registration Form

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

Name(s):				
			ns registering on this form )	
Address:			City:	State:
Phone #:		Email:		
Big Sand Mound Field	Trip (Check	·	sh to participate)	— Total Cost
Registration Fee: Meals:	\$15.00	X	= \$	
Sat. Breakfast:	\$ 7.00	x	= \$	
Sat Lunch:	\$ 6.00	V	— ¢	

Sat. Lunch:	\$ 6.00	x	= \$	_
Sat. Banquet:	\$13.00	x	= \$	_
Sun. Breakfast:	\$ 7.00	x	= \$	_
Sun. Lunch:	\$ 6.00	x	= \$	_
Meatless Optior	n? Please check	here	\$	Total

# Evening Grosbeaks in Iowa: An Avian Mystery

# James J. Dinsmore

For many Iowa birders, Evening Grosbeak is probably one of the most enigmatic species on the state list. Although never common, Evening Grosbeaks were seen almost yearly in Iowa during the 1970's and '80's, often on Christmas Bird Counts. Still, the bird was easily missed and by the 1990's it was seldom being seen in the state. The last Evening Grosbeak reported in Iowa was a single bird in Fairfield in April 1998 (T.H. Kent, *IBL 68:97, 1998*). For people who started birding after about 1990, most have probably not seen Evening Grosbeaks in Iowa and must travel to Minnesota or even further to where they still appear in most years. So what is the story of this colorful bird? What has happened to its population?

Prior to about 1850, Evening Grosbeak was considered a bird of the western mountains and was rare east of the Mississippi River. In the latter half of the 1800's, Evening Grosbeaks underwent a major range expansion eastward, reaching the boreal forests of Canada and northeastern United States by the 1930's. It is unclear what caused this range extension but presumably food supply, climate and perhaps other factors were involved. By the 1940's, the number of Evening Grosbeaks reported in eastern North America increased considerably and peaked in the mid 1980's to early '90's. Then the trend abruptly and mysteriously reversed and populations declined rapidly, both in the East and elsewhere in its range.

Although we have little data from Iowa for much of the 1900's, Evening Grosbeaks were reported, especially in winter, from the mid 1900's into the 1990's. Like several other boreal species, it showed periodic fluctuations with fair numbers reported some years and few or none in others. Although most Evening

CBC	Ttl	CBC	Ttl	CBC	Ttl
70-71	3	83-84	115	96-97	1
71-72	54	84-85	0	97-98	1
72-73	75	85-86	408	98-99	0
73-74	2	86-87	0	99-00	0
74-75	11	87-88	13	00-01	0
75-76	134	88-89	4	01-02	0
76-77	2	89-90	2	02-03	0
77-78	25	90-91	0	03-04	0
78-79	20	91-92	0	04-05	0
79-80	5	92-93	0	05-06	0
80-81	123	93-94	2	06-07	0
81-82	9	94-95	0	07-08	0
82-83	0	95-96	2	08-09	0



Evening Grosbeaks have not been seen in Iowa since 1998. This one was photographed in neighboring Minnesota, by Anthony Hertzel in 2009.

Grosbeaks stayed north of Iowa, in the peak population years a few likely reached Iowa and occasionally an irruption brought greater numbers southward. Two summaries of CBC data give an idea of changes in its abundance. From 1937-1956, Evening Grosbeaks were found on CBC's in only 3 of 20 years, 1941, 1946, 1953 (W. Brown, *IBL 27:89, 1957*). Evening Grosbeaks were found on 25 of 36 Christmas Counts from 1960 to 1995, with notably high numbers reported on 1961, 1975 and 1985 CBC's (T.H. Kent and J.J. Dinsmore, *Birds in Iowa: 1996, p. 359*). In the last decade, though, the species seems to have disappeared from our state.

A recent paper provides a more complete picture of this puzzling population decline. Using data from Project Feeder Watch conducted by Cornell University and Bird Studies Canada, David Bonter and Michael Harvey determined the number of Grosbeaks seen from November 1988 through April 2006 (Condor 110:376-381, 2008). They divided their results into three 6-year periods: 1989-1994, 1995-2000, and 2001-2006. They found that Evening Grosbeaks were reported on nearly 59,000 checklists from a total sample of almost 1.2 million checklists. However, the percentage of sites reporting Evening Grosbeaks declined from 19.4% in 1989-1994 to only 9.7% from 2001-2006, a 50% decrease. They also noted that the average flock size declined by 27%, from 11.8 to 8.6 birds over the study period. Thus, there was strong evidence of a population decline, with fewer stations reporting the species and with a similar drop in the number of birds per station. These declines were evident across the entire range of the species, with decreases of more than 50% in parts of the Pacific Northwest, Mountain West, and northeastern North America. Somewhat less severe declines were noted in the Great Lakes region, presumably the origin of any birds found in Iowa.

The reason(s) for these observations remain speculative. There are numerous ideas but no one has been able to pinpoint the exact cause or causes. Loss of habitat due to timber harvest or energy development (gas, oil, hydroelectric), avian disease, or decline of an important food source (spruce budworm) have all been proposed. Because the Evening Grosbeak inhabits the northern boreal forest, one of the largest and to date least altered ecosystems in North America, this decline is even more puzzling. However, the boreal forest has been exposed to numerous threats and vast areas have been dramatically altered in recent years. For example, changes in forestry management practices may negatively affect Evening Grosbeaks. Several studies have indicated the species favors older forests ( trees greater than 100 years old ) and forests with a diversity of tree species. Current practices that encourage harvesting of older trees and replanting stands of a single tree species lead to less favorable habitat for Evening Grosbeaks.

Although I have birded in Iowa for many years, I have limited experience with Evening Grosbeaks. Growing up in southern Minnesota, I never saw the species. My parents, who long maintained a winter bird feeder, began seeing the birds in the early 1970's. Finally, in November 1975, I saw my first Evening Grosbeaks on a visit there. In March, 1978, I saw my first ( and only ) Evening Grosbeaks in Iowa while on an ornithology class field trip to Brookside Park in Ames. Since then I have seen them a few times in Minnesota and elsewhere but never again in Iowa.

Famous for their bright colors and voracious appetites, Evening Grosbeaks were a winter highlight for people who had them visit their feeders. The events of recent years suggest that Evening Grosbeaks might not return to Iowa, at least in the numbers observed in the past. And, as for other species, global climate change has been proposed as another concern. Some climate change models predict that balsam fir, an important tree species for Evening Grosbeaks in the northeastern United States, will gradually retreat into Canada. As is commonly said, only time will tell.



Evening Grosbeak, Evergreen, Colorado, 2007. Photo by Kay Niyo.

# IOU Central California Birding Tour – October, 2009

## Lee Schoenewe

The allure of a California birding tour with pelagic excursions on Monterey Bay was enough for me and ten other folks to sign up. The trip was sponsored by the IOU and very capably led by Ann Johnson and Jim Bangma of Hologram Bird Tours. We finished the trip with over 170 bird species on the official list.

The first big miss of the tour came for Dick Tetrault and Mark Brown when they failed to find their Double-winged Fuel Hawk at the Denver airport. They did manage to catch another plane and find the group at the end of the first day.

The first day at Muir Woods was packed with people on a Saturday, and although birds were not expected in such a busy place, two encounters with the same mixed flock produced Cassin's Vireo and Hermit Warbler along with the expected Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Townsend's Warblers and others. (The Hermit Warbler was not an official trip bird since neither of the tour leaders was able to see it. Lee, Jerry, Karen and Linda are sorry about this.)

Bolinas Lagoon had a variety of shorebirds and water birds, and various locations at Point Reyes National Seashore gave us Black-throated Gray Warbler, Golden-crowned Sparrow, California Towhee, Anna's Hummingbird, great looks at a pair of Wrentits and our first encounter with a flock of seventeen Bushtits. We saw Bushtits on four of the ten days on the tour, and the count was always seventeen birds. Go figure.



Yellow-billed Magpies were numerous. Photo by Mark Brown.

Endemic Yellow-billed Magpies were numerous when we looked in the right farm country locales. We saw them regularly for three straight days. Del Valle State Park was a woodpecker bonanza, yielding Nuttall's WP and Red-breasted Sapsucker in addition to the regulars. We also learned that tarantulas and bobcats, like chickens, do cross the road. The "Critter List" of things besides birds seen on the tour was very impressive!

A flock of elusive Lawrence's Goldfinches was found at the arid Frank Raines Regional Park. We missed California Condor at Pinnacles National Monument, but found our first California Thrasher. Other highlights included Rock Wren, Ash-throated Flycatcher and the Bell's coastal race of Sage Sparrow.

A late afternoon excursion to Los Padres National Forest gave us a calling Northern Pygmy Owl. In the fading light, Mountain Quail ran in front of the lead van. Dick lost a glove in the excitement and only a few of the group got diagnostic looks. Luckily, the next morning we found the flock moving down the hillside in good light. And Dick found his glove.



A pair of White-tailed Kites quarrel over a recent catch. Photo by Mark Brown.

We rolled into Monterey at lunch time and spent the afternoon at the Monterey Aquarium. The view from the deck out over Monterey Bay is spectacular. Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorants, Heerman's Gulls, Elegant Terns and several pelagic species could be seen, as well as seals and sea otters. In one section of the building, a Peregrine Falcon hunts pigeons and drops their feet onto a glass ceiling!

What can I say about the two days out on the bay with the Monterey Seabirds tour boat? There were shearwaters, jaegers, skuas and auklets plus Black-footed Albatross. At one point we had all three morphs of Northern Fulmar swimming around the boat. We were lucky to see Blue Whales, the largest animal on the planet, on both days.

In Monterey for several days, we spent a lot of time working Asilomar State Beach, including Point Pinos Seashore Park. We found Glaucous-winged Gull, Whimbrel, Black Oystercatcher, Black Turnstone, Surfbird and the shorebird whose name I most love to say, Wandering Tattler.



A Black-footed Albatross was photographed from the deck of the Monterrey Seabirds tour boat. Photo by Mark Brown.



South Polar Skua. Photo by Mark Brown.



All three morphs of the Northern Fulmar were seen swimming in Monterrey Bay. Photo by Mark Brown.



Black Oystercatchers were found along Asilomar State Beach. Photo by Mark Brown.

The bird of the trip, however, was a species not expected west of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. We saw lots of Western Bluebirds but when Jerry and I tried to make one into a Mountain Bluebird, leader Jim informed us that they migrate east of the Sierras and are very rare in the west where we were. Imagine our surprise, then, at finding an immature male Mountain Bluebird on Point Pinos Beach! It was only the third record for Monterey County. An article about the rare bird appeared in the *Monterey Herald* and Iowa birders were given due credit.

The bluebird discovery happened not only to be on the beach where John Denver's fatal plane crash occurred, but also on the anniversary of his death. As I was leaving San Francisco on a jet plane, I looked back on a birding tour where the sunshine almost always made me high. It was very interesting to visit California, but I thank God I'm a country boy!



A Mountain Bluebird found on Point Pinos Beach was only the third record for Monterey County. Photo by Mark Brown.

# **Ospreys in Iowa -- an Update**

Pat Schlarbaum

Editor's note: In the last issue of IOU News (25:4), Pat Schlarbaum of Iowa DNR gave us an informative review of the current status of Ospreys in Iowa. Since that article, 2009's nesting results have become available. Here follows a summary of last year's efforts. Thanks to Pat and to all of those dedicated folks involved in this exciting statewide endeavor.

Twelve Osprey pairs were reported in Iowa in 2009. There were 9 successful nestings, producing 19 young birds. This year an additional 10 Ospreys were brought to Iowa from Minnesota, and another 10 were relocated from Wisconsin, with birds released at Spirit Lake, White Rock Conservancy, Mud Lake (Dubuque), Annett Nature Center in Warren County and at Lake Red Rock.

We know that there are three nesting pairs around Coralville Reservoir in Johnson County, thanks to the staff of the Macbride Raptor Project. Each site produced young, for a total of 7 new



birds in the Macbride area. There are four pairs in the Cedar Falls/Waterloo area in Black Hawk County (County Conservation Board at Hartman Reserve Nature Center), but only one site (Gilbertville) saw success, with 2 chicks. One of the two pairs in Polk County (Polk County Conservation Board) produced two young. A nesting pair at Don Williams Lake (Boone CCB staff) hatched two birds, and a pair at the Duane Arnold Energy Plant in Linn County (Linn CCB staff at Wickiup Hill) produced one youngster. Finally, a nesting pair is in Woodbury County along the Missouri River successfully fledged 3 young Osprey. A nest site at Rathbun Lake was swamped by June floods.

Since 1997, a total of 228 Ospreys have been released at 11 sites in Iowa. Since 2003, 52 wild Ospreys have been produced at 24 successful nesting sites.

# Common Birds at Unusual Times A Plea for Documentation

# Stephen Dinsmore

One of the roles of the IOU is to gather and maintain data on Iowa's birds -- their status, timing of occurrence, breeding distribution, and much more. As our database of knowledge continues to grow, it becomes that much more valuable to efforts like the Breeding Bird Atlas, Birds in Iowa, and other projects. But all of this requires a database of reliable information.

During the last several years, technological advances have made it easier to obtain quality photographs and recordings of birds as a means of documentation. Nowhere has this been more evident than the IOU Records Committee, where greater than 50% of the records we evaluate now include a good photograph. While many birders readily provide such documentation for genuine rarities and vagrants, few make the effort to document more common birds at unusual times. The purpose of this message is to encourage birders to make that effort, and to suggest some target species.

We've spent many years as birders figuring out when (and where) the various bird species occur in Iowa. For example, we've learned that Sabine's Gull is a regular early fall migrant at largebodies of water, yet only 20 years ago we thought it an accidental vagrant! But as I look at the list of Iowa's birds, there are a small number of species that are often reported outside the firmly documented period of occurrence. In most cases, there are few or no accepted photographs to support such reports, and my aim here is to provide a list of species for which we could clearly benefit from having additional information. Here are a few that come to mind, although there are no doubt others:

Osprey: any report from 1 Dec to 25 Mar. There are many reports during this time period, but zero photographs of a bird that should be easy to document in even the poorest image.

Western Sandpiper: any spring report. There are scant few documented records period (so even fall reports should be photographed, if possible), but especially in spring when this species might be confused with an alternate-plumaged White-rumped Sandpiper.

White-rumped Sandpiper: any fall report. This species migrates in fall off the Atlantic Coast and I am aware of only one photographed fall bird from Iowa. Based on migration patterns elsewhere, I would expect most reports in Iowa in Sep/Oct, so early fall reports in particular are of interest.

Common Tern: any "summer" records between, say, 10 Jun and 15 Aug. I am aware of only a couple of photographed birds during this time period, although they are reported almost annually. This species is of interest because many birders are not aware of confusion with molting Forster's Tern, many of which show dark primaries in summer.



Western Sandpiper in spring is very rare in lowa, and occurrences should be documented with photos. Photo by S. Dinsmore.

Fall Empidonax: each fall there are dozens of reports to the species level, many without any details on how the bird was identified. We desperately need high quality photographs (or banding data) to better understand the timing of migration for each species in fall. I suspect there is a temptation to assume most are the "de-fault" species, Least Flycatcher, which may not be correct. Unless an individual is singing, or captured, or seen extremely well, most are probably best left unidentified.



Which Empidonax flycatcher is this? Stubby bill, big head, short wing projection - could be a Least. Actually, it's a juvenile Phoebe. Photo by Dick Stilwell.

Tennessee/Orange-crowned Warbler: the timing of migration needs a better understanding. Most data indicate sharp switches between the two species in spring (5 May -- Orange-crowned before and Tennessee after) and again in fall (20 Sep -- Tennessee before and Orange-crowned after). A record of either species that is on the wrong side of these dates by a week or more (e.g., a mid-April Tennessee) should be documented by photographs if possible. Connecticut Warbler: any fall report. Like White-rumped Sandpiper, this is an Atlantic Coast migrant in fall and not expected in the Interior U.S. Banding and television tower kill have not documented this species in Iowa in fall, so many such reports may pertain to the similar Mourning Warbler or some other species.

Chipping Sparrow: any winter report between mid-Nov and 1 Apr. There are few photographs of winter birds, despite almost yearly reports and their presence at feeders where obtaining a photo should be relatively easy.

Clay-colored Sparrow: any fall report. They could occur any time between Aug and late Oct, although there are scant photographs to document a migration window. Photos would also help sort out possible confusion will fall Chipping Sparrows.

Lincoln's Sparrow: any winter report between mid-Nov and mid-Apr. This species is reported almost annually in winter, and frequently on one or more CBCs. In my years of editing the CBC report, I never once received a photo of one, nor am I aware of any winter photos for Iowa. Photographs are badly needed to confirm that some of these aren't juvenile Song Sparrows.



Photos of winter Lincoln's Sparrow would help confirm a rare presence during that season. This photo, by P. Hertzel, was not taken during winter.

I hope birders will take this as a challenge and begin to better document some of these species. I don't doubt that these species occur in Iowa during the above time periods, but I am frustrated that we haven't obtained a level of evidence that matches our standard for other species. As an added benefit, if firm patterns are established for any of these species, the future need for details or documentation might be removed. So, dust off those cameras and visit your favorite birding locale -- one of these species is surely lurking somewhere!

# **Time Flies When You're Atlasing:**

An Update on Iowa's 2<sup>nd</sup> Breeding Bird Atlas

Birders continue to collect valuable data as Iowa's 2<sup>nd</sup> Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA) enters its third year. Statewide, volunteers have logged more than 3,300 hours of observation, visited 650 blocks and recorded 190 species. These impressive numbers are testament to the dedication and enthusiasm of Iowa's BBA volunteers. However, with only 21 blocks completed, we still have a long way to go to reach our goals. This year we should aim to re-visit the 553 blocks with less than 10 hours of effort, and it's essential to put some effort into those 141 blocks that have yet to be surveyed. Everyone is invited to participate! In fact, you can start right now by searching for used nests or for species known to nest early such as Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk and Great Horned Owl.

Currently the North Ames / Ames High Prairie block in Story County has logged the most species (spp.) with 123, with Ledges State Park in Boone County (116 spp.) being a close second. Rounding out the top 5 are Chichaqua Bottoms North in Polk County, Whiterock Conservancy in Guthrie County, and Big Marsh East in Butler County. Keep in mind that although the total number of species in a given block is important, it is also crucial to insure adequate coverage by visiting as many square-mile sections in a block as possible. Similarly, a confirmed record is much more valuable than a probable, possible or observed account, so aim to update evidence codes as the opportunity arises.

Finally, thanks to all the volunteers who have dedicated their time to the Breeding Bird Atlas project. Iowa birders are making great progress. Your efforts are inspiring, and I can't wait to see what you accomplish in 2010!

# **2010 BBA Blockbusting Weekends**

# Burlington / Muscatine: May 22-23 Clinton / Dubuque: June 19-20 Red Rock: July 10-11

( More info at: http://iowabirds.org)

Billy Reiter-Marolf BBA Volunteer Coordinator, AmeriCorps (515) 432-2823 ext. 117 bbacoordinator@iowabirds.org

# **Iowa 2009 Listing and Big Day Totals**

Forty-three Iowa birders submitted to *IOU News* state list lifetime totals through calendar year 2009. All totals listed below are current through December 31, 2009, and do not include additions from 2010.

Tom Kent leads all birders with 386 species recorded in the state, but Jim Fuller added one new state bird in 2009, inching him to within two of the leader. Four birders are clustered at 378, six behind Fuller. Tucker Lutter increased his state list by 14 birds in 2009, the most of anyone. Steve Dinsmore recorded the most species, 300, in the calendar year, and Nathan Miller recorded the highest percentage of his life list, .866, in 2009. Dinsmore and Miller are the *IOU News* **Top Birders for 2009**.

### Iowa State Life Lists

### 2009 Annual Lists

386 Tom Kent 384 Jim Fuller 378 Reid & Pam Allen 378 Richard Tetrault 378 Stephen Dinsmore 376 Chuck Fuller 373 Mark Proescholdt 372 Ann Johnson 365 Jim Sinclair 365 Pete Wickham 360 John Rutenbeck 355 Chris Edwards 354 Aaron Brees 353 Jay Gilliam 352 Jim Dinsmore 349 Ray Cummins 342 Rita Goranson 339 Carolyn Fischer 338 Paul Roisen 336 Danny Akers 333 Bill Scheible 332 Lee Schoenewe 330 Mary Lou Petersen 328 Paul Hertzel 325 Ric Zarwell 323 Bill Huser 321 Dale Fye 318 Don Brown 315 Ed Thelen 311 Keith Dyche 307John Bissell 299 Jeff Livingston 298 Gerald Von Ehwegen 292 Doug Harr 290 Nathan Miller 286 Dick Bierman 274 Tucker Lutter 254 Harley Winfrey 242 David Eastman 234 Bill Tollefson 208 Mark Carson 187 Jacob Newton 158 Willard J Piercy

300 Stephen Dinsmore 298 Jay Gilliam 281 John Rutenbeck 276 Paul Roisen 262 Keith Dyche 261 Jim Fuller 261 Mark Proescholdt 259 Pam & Reid Allen 255 Aaron Brees 252 John Bissell 251 Nathan Miller 250 Chris Edwards 242 Lee Schoenewe 242 David Eastman 235 Rita Goranson 231 Bill Scheible 230 Gerald Von Ehwegen 223 Jeff Livingston 213 Bill Tollefson 178 Danny Akers 176 Jon Strong 164 Dale Fye 160 Don Brown 145 Mark Carson 77 Willard J Piercy

### IA Personally Found List

344 Stephen Dinsmore 326 Jim Fuller 321 Ray Cummins 313 Lee Schoenewe 311 Jav Gilliam 309 Mark Proescholdt 308 Aaron Brees 307 Pam & Reid Allen 295 Matt Kenne 295 Paul Hertzel 293 Ed Thelen 291 Rita Goranson 279 Keith Dvche 278 Nathan Miller 276 Carolyn Fischer 208 Mark Carson 195 David Eastman 110 Willard J Piercy

The *Big Green Big Year* has the acronym BIGBY ... and it is simply a Big Year in which you only count those species seen within walking or cycling distance of your home or principle place of work. As simple as that, no dashing off to the far corners of the planet burning fossil fuels as you go.

### 2009 Bigby

241 Nathan Miller 193 Jeff Livingston

### County Big Years

2009 Linn County 2009 Decatur County 231 Bill Scheible 208 Jeff Livingston

### **Roadkills**

75 Dick Bierman

### **Yardlists**

208 Jim Fuller (Johnson Co) 190 Carolyn Fischer (Cerro Gordo Co) 188 Ed Thelen (Dickinson Co) 185 Rita Goranson (Cerro Gordo Co) 184 Ann Johnson (Warren Co) 179 Matt Kenne (Kossuth Co) 177 Lee Schoenewe (Clay Co) 175 Ric Zarwell (Allamakee Co) 155 Stephen Dinsmore (Story Co) 150 Mark Proescholdt (Marshall Co) 127 Dick Bierman (Cherokee Co) 123 Chris Edwards (Johnson Co) 110 Bill Scheible (Linn Co) 108 Jay Gilliam (Warren Co) 108 Dale Fye (Linn Co) 105 Bill Tollefson 104 Reid & Pam Allen (Dallas Co) 91 Keith Dyche (Page Co) 68 Mark Carson (Story) 56 David Eastman (Black Hawk)



Sixteen Big Days were conducted in 2009, including new records for three different months, and first county Big Days for seven different counties.

On 23 February, Jim Fuller, John Rutenbeck and Ken Lowder set a new record for the month of February, only to be surpassed two days later by Jeff Livingston, Nathan Miller and Matthew Torres. The tables turned in March when four birders from Decatur County established a new record of 98 for the month of March, only to see it slip away five days later when Jim Fuller, Chuck Fuller and John Rutenbeck hit 102 on the 27th of March.

Steve Dinsmore and Jay Gilliam put together three noteworthy Big Days including a new January record of 78, a first Marion County Big Day, and a new high total for a single county with 173 species tallied in Polk County on 17 May. This total surpassed the previous high of 171 set in Fremont County in 1991.

Bill Scheible participated in Big Days in Linn, Delaware and Keokuk counties, all first county events. There are now Big Day records for 28 of Iowa's 99 counties. Paul Hertzel holds the distinction of participating in nine of these first county Big Days, with six different companions. Rita Goranson has participated in seven, and Steve Dinsmore in six.

## 2009 Big Days

173	<b>Polk Co</b> ., 17 May 2009, S Dinsmore, J Gilliam [ new record high total for a county Big Day ]
156	Woodbury Co., 08 May 2009, J Probst, B Livermore, D Stage
153	Statewide, 11 May 2009, D Thompson, E&E Armstrong, P Walsh
142	Boone Co., 13 May 2009, S Dinsmore, J Moreland [ first Boone County Big Day ]
142	Linn Co., 14 May 2009, B Scheible, P Hertzel [ first Linn County Big Day ]
141	<b>Marion Co</b> ., 10 May 2009, S Dinsmore, J Gilliam [ first Marion County Big Day ]
136	<b>Decatur Co</b> . (Green Big Day), 10 May 2009, N Miller, Z Miller, B Baldwin. [new record high total for Decatur County]
129	Appanoose Co., 10 May 2009, Johnson, Stephens, Stephens, Cummins, Tiemeier, Piatt, Schwerdtfeger [ first Appanoose County Big Day ]
119	<b>Ringgold Co</b> ., 09 May 2009, T Hovick, J Lautenbach [first Ringgold County Big Day]
112	<b>Keokuk Co</b> ., 08 May 2009, C Edwards, B Scheible [first Keokuk County Big Day]
102	March Big Day, 27 Mar 2009, J Fuller, C Fuller, J Rutenbeck [ new record total for March ]
98	March Big Day, 22 Mar 2009, N Miller, Z Miller, C Wilson, A Bergstrom. [new record total for March, held for five days]
94	<b>Delaware Co</b> ., 27 May 2009, C Edwards, B Scheible [ first Delaware County Big Day ]
78	January Big Day , 31 Jan 2009, S Dinsmore, J Gilliam [ new record total for January ]
76	<b>February</b> Big Day, 25 Feb 2009, J Livingston, N Miller, M Torres [ new record total for February ]

**68 February** Big Day, 23 Feb 2009, J Fuller, J Rutenbeck, K Lowder [new record total for February, held for two days ]

### lowa Record Big Days by County

Allamakee	126	10 May 2003 Ric Zarwell, Betty Zarwell, Meliss Wolfe, Matt Paulson
Appanoose	129	10 May 2009 T Johnson, V Stephens, M Stephens, R Cummins, D Teimeier, L Piatt, L Schwerdtfeger
Boone	142	13 May 2009 Stephen J Dinsmore, Jim Moreland
Cerro Gordo	145	11 May, 2002 Paul Hertzel, Rita Goranson, Carolyn Fischer
Clayton	107	12 May 2007 Danny Akers, Julie Brazell
Clay	148	09 May, 2004 Lee Schoenewe, Gary Grange, Pete Ernzen
Decatur	136	10 May 2009 Nathan Miller, Zack Miller, Ben Baldwin
Delaware	94	27 May 2009 Chris Edwards, Bill Scheible
Dickinson	111	27 Aug 2008 Lee Schoenewe, E&E Armstrong
Emmet	140	16 May 2007 Rita Goranson, Matt Kenne, Paul Hertzel
Floyd	118	21 May 2005 Curt Nelson, Rita Goranson, Paul Hertzel
Fremont	171	11 May, 1991 Steve Dinsmore, Ross Silcock, BJ Rose, Doug Rose
Greene	150	11 May 2007 Steve Dinsmore, Jay Gilliam
Guthrie	147	11 May 2008 Jay Gilliam, Steve Dinsmore, Aaron Brees
Hancock	141	09 May, 2005 Carolyn Fischer, Rita Goranson, Paul Hertzel
Johnson	136	08 May, 2004 Tom Kent, Jim Fuller
Keokuk	112	08 May 2009 Chris Edwards, Bill Scheible
Kossuth	153	14 May, 2002 Matt Kenne, Paul Hertzel
Linn	142	14 May 2009 Bill Scheible, Paul Hertzel
Marion	141	10 May 2009 Stephen J Dinsmore, Jay Gilliam
Marshall	123	10 May, 2003 Mark Proescholdt, Paul Hertzel
Mitchell	90	14 May, 2007 Carolyn Fischer, Rita Goranson
Polk	173	17 May, 2009 Stephen Dinsmore, Jay Gilliam
Ringgold	119	09 May 2009 Torre Hovick, Joseph Lautenbach
Warren	154	09 May, 2003 Aaron Brees, Jim Sinclair
Winnebago	127	09 May, 2004 Paul Hertzel, Rita Goranson
Woodbury	165	08 May, 2004 Jerry Probst, Bob Livermore, Dave Stage
Worth	136	13 May, 2003 Paul Hertzel, Rita Goranson

### Iowa Record Big Days by Month

January	78	31 Jan 2009, Stephen Dinsmore, Jay Gilliam
February	76	25 Feb 2009, J Livingston, N Miller, M Torres
March	102	27 Mar 2009, J Fuller, C Fuller, J Rutenbeck
April	141	29 Apr 1989, S Dinsmore, P Hertzel
Мау	204	13 May 1996, P Petersen, B Blevins, D Moeller
June	135	1 Jun 2005, D Akers, R Goranson, P Hertzel
July	120	28 Jul 2005, E & E Armstrong, D Thompson
August	136	26 Aug 2005, L Schoenewe, E Thelen
September	135	5 Sep 1987, S Dinsmore, J Sinclair, A Fix
October	101	3 Oct 2008 Livingston, Livingston, Miller, Miller, Wilson
November	87	11 Nov 2003, E Thelen, L Schoenewe
December	75	19 Dec 2007, B Dick, C Fuller, J Fuller, J Rutenbeck

### 2009 County Listing

### Adair

133 Stephen Dinsmore 120 Pam & Reid Allen 104 Jay Gilliam 60 Mark Proescholdt 14 Dale Fye 13 Paul Roisen

### Adams

140 Stephen Dinsmore 112 Jay Gilliam 102 Reid & Pam Allen 62 Mark Proescholdt 57 Keith Dyche

### Allamakee

282 Ric Zarwell 183 Mark Proescholdt 178 Danny Akers 170 Rita Goranson 166 Chris Edwards 158 Stephen Dinsmore 121 Pam & Reid Allen 64 Keith Dyche 48 David Eastman 18 Dale Fve

### Appanoose

296 Ray Cummins 217 Stephen Dinsmore 187 Reid & Pam Allen 184 Jay Gilliam 183 Mark Proescholdt 125 Keith Dyche 116 Danny Akers 114 Chris Edwards 112 Paul Roisen 70 Bill Tollefson 65 David Eastman 27 Dale Fye

### Audubon

137 Stephen Dinsmore 106 Pam & Reid Allen 101 Jay Gilliam 66 Mark Proescholdt 26 Jon Strong

### Benton

- 179 Mark Proescholdt 144 Chris Edwards 137 Stephen Dinsmore 90 Reid & Pam Allen
- 81 Dale Fye 73 Bill Tollefson
- 51 Danny Akers
- 42 Paul Roisen

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160 Mark Proescholdt 125 Stephen Dinsmore 114 Chris Edwards 83 Danny Akers 67 Reid & Pam Allen 38 Paul Roisen 21 Dale Fve

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197 Dick Bierman 173 Lee Schoenewe 150 Stephen Dinsmore 93 Mark Proescholdt 78 Pam & Reid Allen 21 David Eastman 15 Dale Fye

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173 Stephen Dinsmore 160 Mark Proescholdt 127 Pam & Reid Allen 105 Jay Gilliam 60 Paul Roisen 38 Danny Akers 15 Dale Fye

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163 Chris Edwards 127 Stephen Dinsmore 80 Dale Fye 68 Reid & Pam Allen 58 Mark Proescholdt 17 Paul Roisen 16 Danny Akers

### Cerro Gordo

301 Carolyn Fischer 294 Rita Goranson 285 Paul Hertzel 205 Mark Proescholdt 201 Stephen Dinsmore 183 Dick Bierman 175 Pam & Reid Allen 175 Paul Roisen 173 .lim Dinsmore 108 Danny Akers 103 Jay Gilliam 92 Dale Fve 52 Keith Dyche 16 David Eastman

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# Chickasaw 141 Stephen Dinsmore

140 Paul Hertzel 83 Mark Proescholdt 60 Pam & Reid Allen 22 Danny Akers 21 Dale Fye

### Clarke

162 Jay Gilliam 132 Stephen Dinsmore 103 Reid & Pam Allen 83 Dale Fye 60 Mark Proescholdt 21 Keith Dyche

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292 Lee Schoenewe 201 Stephen Dinsmore 181 Dick Bierman 163 Jim Dinsmore 132 Paul Roisen 100 Pam & Reid Allen 89 Mark Proescholdt 30 Danny Akers

Clayton 221 Danny Akers 142 Stephen Dinsmore 112 Chris Edwards 109 Jay Gilliam 103 Reid & Pam Allen 89 Mark Proescholdt 33 Paul Roisen

## Clinton

210 Mary Lou Petersen 141 Stephen Dinsmore 127 Pam & Reid Allen 109 Chris Edwards 55 Mark Proescholdt 54 Paul Roisen

## 12 Danny Akers Crawford

143 Stephen Dinsmore 83 Reid & Pam Allen 62 Mark Proescholdt 62 Paul Roisen 41 Keith Dyche 21 Danny Akers

### Dallas

242 Pam & Reid Allen 206 Stephen Dinsmore 168 Mark Proescholdt 158 Jim Dinsmore 132 Jay Gilliam 90 Paul Roisen 87 Danny Akers 11 Keith Dyche

Davis 142 Stephen Dinsmore 134 Chris Edwards 100 Reid & Pam Allen 64 Mark Proescholdt

### Decatur

275 Nathan Miller 268 Jeffrey Livingston 141 Stephen Dinsmore 109 Pam & Reid Allen 92 Paul Roisen 78 Mark Proescholdt 45 Danny Akers 28 Keith Dyche 21 Dale Fye

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154 Mark Proescholdt 128 Chris Edwards 125 Stephen Dinsmore 75 Reid & Pam Allen 54 Danny Akers

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253 John Rutenbeck 250 Jim Fuller 141 Stephen Dinsmore 141 Chris Edwards 104 Pam & Reid Allen 87 Paul Roisen 61 Mark Proescholdt 42 Dale Fye 13 Danny Akers

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120 Danny Akers 109 Pam & Reid Allen 133 Stephen Dinsmore 127 Chris Edwards 78 Paul Roisen 65 Mark Proescholdt 33 David Eastman

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265 Stephen Dinsmore 262 Keith Dyche 204 Mark Proescholdt 203 Reid & Pam Allen 189 Jay Gilliam 127 Chris Edwards 127 Paul Roisen 75 Danny Akers

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234 Stephen Dinsmore 202 Pam & Reid Allen 197 .lim Dinsmore 193 Jay Gilliam 186 Mark Proescholdt 62 Danny Akers 58 David Eastman 41 Paul Roisen

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### Guthrie

252 Stephen Dinsmore 220 Pam & Reid Allen 205 Mark Proescholdt 172 Jay Gilliam 168 Jim Dinsmore 101 Paul Roisen 44 Danny Akers 40 Jon Strong

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232 Stephen Dinsmore 228 Mark Proescholdt 226 Dennis Carter 182 Jim Dinsmore 179 Reid & Pam Allen 116 Paul Roisen 103 Jay Gilliam 62 Danny Akers 34 Dale Fye

### Hancock

231 Rita Goranson 218 Paul Hertzel 194 Stephen Dinsmore 173 Mark Proescholdt 163 Pam & Reid Allen 162 Paul Roisen 153 Jim Dinsmore 119 Jay Gilliam 78 Harley Winfrey 69 Danny Akers 12 David Eastman

### Hardin

263 Mark Proescholdt 160 Stephen Dinsmore 116 Reid & Pam Allen 103 Paul Roisen 89 Danny Akers 86 Keith Dyche 74 David Eastman 61 Bill Tollefson 35 Dale Fye

# Harrison 183 Dick Bierman

175 Stephen Dinsmore 146 Gerald Von Ehwegen 110 Pam & Reid Allen 110 Paul Roisen 88 Mark Proescholdt 86 Jon Strong

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134 Stephen Dinsmore 74 Mark Proescholdt 72 Pam & Reid Allen 65 Harley Winfrey 45 Danny Akers 16 Dale Eve 16 David Eastman

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139 Stephen Dinsmore 104 Jacob Newton 102 Reid & Pam Allen 64 Mark Proescholdt 20 Paul Roisen 14 Dale Fye

### Ida

### 139 Paul Roisen 130 Stephen Dinsmore 85 Pam & Reid Allen

58 Mark Proescholdt

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226 Chris Edwards 158 Mark Proescholdt 153 Stephen Dinsmore 119 Reid & Pam Allen 80 Dale Fye 58 Danny Akers 12 Paul Roisen

### Jackson

- 150 Chris Edwards 131 Stephen Dinsmore 102 Pam & Reid Allen 77 Mark Proescholdt 71 Paul Roisen 51 Bill Tollefson
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145 Chris Edwards 125 Stephen Dinsmore 103 Pam & Reid Allen 58 Mark Proescholdt 23 Danny Akers 10 Paul Roisen

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320 Jim Fuller 318 Tom Kent 300 Chris Edwards 254 Bill Scheible 208 Dale Fye 185 Mark Proescholdt 184 Danny Akers 178 Reid & Pam Allen 168 Stephen Dinsmore 149 Paul Roisen 117 John Rutenbeck 106 Jay Gilliam 95 Bill Tollefson 51 David Eastman 18 Keith Dyche

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201 Chris Edwards 156 Stephen Dinsmore 82 Pam & Reid Allen 59 Dale Fye 56 Mark Proescholdt 22 Danny Akers

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288 Pete Wickham 270 Dale Fye 258 Bill Scheible 229 Chris Edwards 202 Bill Tollefson 179 Mark Proescholdt 150 Stephen Dinsmore 137 Pam & Reid Allen 123 Danny Akers 98 Paul Roisen 68 David Eastman 31 Keith Dyche

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243 Aaron Brees 178 Pam & Reid Allen 170 Stephen Dinsmore 168 Jay Gilliam 164 Mark Proescholdt 107 Paul Roisen 73 Danny Akers 60 Keith Dyche

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169 Mark Proescholdt 163 Stephen Dinsmore 136 Jay Gilliam 117 Reid & Pam Allen 108 Paul Roisen 107 Chris Edwards 92 Danny Akers 89 Bill Tollefson 88 Harley Winfrey 78 Keith Dyche 49 Dale Fye

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149 Rita Goranson 141 Stephen Dinsmore 84 Harley Winfrey 74 Reid & Pam Allen 72 Mark Proescholdt 45 Jon Strong

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103 Danny Akers 86 Harley Winfrey 47 Keith Dyche

238 Paul Hertzel

34 Keith Dyche

25 Paul Roisen

224 Rita Goranson 152 Stephen Dinsmore

127 Reid & Pam Allen

77 Mark Proescholdt 57 Dale Fye 36 Danny Akers

Wright 234 Stephen Dinsmore

171 Mark Proescholdt

132 Pam & Reid Allen

169 Jim Dinsmore

119 Rita Goranson

County Total Ticks

9,934 Jay Gilliam

6,772 Paul Roisen 4,974 Danny Akers

2,872 Keith Dyche

515 Jon Strong

1,699 Bill Tollefson 1,236 David Eastman

125 Willard J Piercv

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16.281 Stephen Dinsmore

12,337 Pam & Reid Allen

12,199 Mark Proescholdt 11,211 Jim Dinsmore

27 Dale Fve

42 David Eastman

14 Dale Fye

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