

I.O.U. News

Iowa Ornithologists' Union Newsletter

Summer 1994 • Volume 10 Number 2

Five Years in Iowa by Randy Pinkston

My family and I moved to Iowa City from Texas in June 1989 to do a five year ENT residency at University Hospital. Since then, I have made many friends with whom I've shared some superb birding. By way of farewell, I thought I would recount some of the birding highlights of the past five years.

A common friend first placed me in contact with Jim Fuller when I visited Iowa City as a medical student in 1988. Besides being one of the keenest field observers I've known (a true "hawk-eye"), Jim is one heck of a nice guy and he sets the standard for quality Rare Bird Alerts. That fall Jim showed me my first of twelve lifers in Iowa, an American Black Duck in Cedar Rapids. Two years later Tom Kent confirmed his own suspicions by locating a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper in Johnson County, also a lifer and my first Iowa vagrant. My second came just two weeks later when Tom found a California Gull on the Coralville Reservoir. Of the 18 Iowa vagrants I tallied, 11 were seen in fall, 4 in winter, and 3 in spring. Fall 1991 was a banner year beginning with Red Phalarope at Saylorville, followed by two Sabine's Gulls at Bettendorf, Common Ground Dove in Cedar Rapids, and Pacific Loon at Pleasant Creek Lake.

This past September Tim Schantz located Iowa's first Reddish Egret near Colfax, a bird I had never seen away from the coast in Texas, and last Halloween morning Jim Fuller and Pete Wickham added Ross' Gull to the already amazing list at Red Rock Dam. I was admiring its pink underparts by early afternoon, thanks to them and to Ken Lowder who graciously called and offered me a ride before leaving town.

In September 1991, I attended my first IOU meeting in Indianola where I met several birders outside of Iowa City, including Bob and John Cecil, Jim Dinsmore, AnnJohnson, and Tim Schantz. The same month I was surprised by a Yellow Rail that flushed beneath my feet at the Coralville Reservoir.

Winter in Iowa is quite different from winter in Texas, both weatherwise and birdwise. Besides cold temperatures, the past five winters were most memorable for N. Saw-whet Owls in several locations, a Snowy Owl at Clio which I saw with my son Daniel in January, 1991, White-winged and Red Crossbills in hemlocks at University Hospital in January/ February 1990, and a cooperative N. Goshawk at Kent Park last December. Chuck Fuller discovered a colony of Eurasian Tree Sparrows near Burlington which produced my lifer in December 1989.



Two winters ago I enjoyed searching for and eventually finding Townsend's Solitaires with Curt Nelson along the Shell Rock River Greenbelt, and early this year Jim Schieb showed me his backyard Varied Thrush which stayed the winter. I added new gulls to my Iowa list each winter for a total of 15 species, four more than I've seen in Texas with its 400 miles of coastline! There was Steve Dinsmore's Ivory Gull at Red Rock dam on Christmas Eve 1990, Pete Petersen's Great Blackbacked at Bettendorf in February 1992, Iceland in Iowa City in January 1993, and finally Lesser Black-backed and Thaver's at the Coralville Reservoir in December 1993. Half these birds I would have missed without the longterm loan of Tom Kent's Balscope.

Springtime and wood-warblers are two of my favorite things, and Iowa has some of the best of both. I was fortunate to buy a house bordering Oakland Cemetery and Hickory Hill Park in Iowa City, the trails of which in May rival those at High Island, Texas. I remember meeting Beth and Mark Proescholdt there in 1990 when we saw a Prairie Warbler together. There and elsewhere I eventually tallied all of Iowa's 36 wood-warblers, including my lifer Connecticut in 1992. Spring also provided lifer Smith's Longspur near Lone Tree in April 1990 and Alder Flycatcher at Shimek State Forest in May 1991.

Spring can also be a great season for waterbirds and vagrants. In March 1992 I was surprised by a beautiful male Eurasian Wigeon south of Ventura. Unfortunately, it did not remain for others to enjoy. March 1993 was highlighted by a male Cinnamon Teal at Cone Marsh and an unlikely Black-throated Sparrow at a Waterloo feeder. In May 1993 Tom Kent called me about two Black-necked Stilts at Amana Lily Lake. I soon found them both, along with a Marbled Godwit, the last of my 34 shorebird species in Iowa.

When I think of summer in Iowa, I think of the southeast. That corner of the state is optimally positioned over the northern limit of several species' breeding ranges. Interestingly, many of these same species reach their southern limit in coastal Texas where I was raised. Among the attractions are Acadian Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, White-eyed Vireo, ten "specialty" warblers, Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, Orchard Oriole, and I can't forget Henslow's Sparrow or the junkyard Bewick's Wren. Also in summer, I've witnessed the near regular appearance of Mississippi Kites in Iowa since 1989, and the reappearance of Sandhill Crane as a nester since 1992.

Somewhere along the way I challenged myself to see 300 birds in Iowa before the end of my residency. I had reached 100 before moving here five years ago. I believe Virginia Rail was #200 at Otter Creek Marsh in April, 1991.

Three years later I achieved my goal with Ruffed Grouse at Yellow River Forest. Since then I have added Yellowcrowned Night-heron, Surf Scoter, and Purple Gallinule, but that's probably where my list will stay for awhile. My residency is now over and my family and I are moving to Salado, Texas, which is 45 minutes north of Austin. Iowa has many great birds and birders. I will miss both very much. Please keep in touch.

> New Address Newsletter Editors have moved! Our new address is : Hank & Linda Zaletel 1928 th St Nevada, IA 50201 515/382-5427

1994 Spring Meeting by Dan Dorrance, Davenport

The I.O.U. Spring Meeting was held 20-22 May in Ames, Iowa. Such a central location made it easy traveling from all points in Iowa. The Maple-Willow-Larch dorm complex provided the setting for the meetings, meals and site of the Friday social hour.

It was interesting and fun to hear about other I.O.U. members' trips to faroff places like Brazil, Churchill, Manitoba, Alaska, and Arizona. They shared stories about birds they saw and ones they wished they had seen.

Field trips got off to early starts both days and the good weather followed. The highlight of Sunday's outing to Peterson Pits in Story County was the sighting of a Mississipi Kite. Other field trips went to Ledges State Park, Hendrickson Marsh, Brookside Park in Ames, Bob Pyle Marsh, Little Wall Lake, Saylorville, and Anderson Lake. None will forget the Bobolinks at Bob Pyle Marsh having a grand time as one of them buzzed us for a "closer look." Other noteworthy birds included Moorhens, Yellow-throated, Cerulean. Wilsons. Mourning, Blackburnian and Blackpoll Warblers. A Great-tailed Grackle made a special appearance as did a Cooper's Hawk, a woodcock, a Louisiana Waterthrush, and a Broad-winged Hawk. Field trip leaders were Maridel Jackson, Hank Zaletel, Mark Proescholdt, Jim and Steve Dinsmore.

Saturday's programs took a different focus than the usual topics of identifying tricky birds. Matte Patterson spoke about CRP land (Conservation Reserve Program) and accompanied his presentation with picture slides. The CRP programs establish habitat which in turn

attracts birds and other wildlife. Matte spoke on the results of this added habitat.

Jim Dinsmore, our convention cohost, spoke about his new book *A Country So Full of Game*. The book chronicles the history of Iowa wildlife both past and present.

Pat Schlarbaum of the DNR presented an overview of the Trumpeter Swan reintroduction program currently underway in Iowa. The program's goal is to have 15 nesting pairs by the year 2003. The last nest in Iowa was recorded in 1883.

After a short break with tasty cookies and red tea, the business meeting commenced. The Records Committee completed its review of 1993 records. New committee members were announced and new officers were voted on. The I.O.U. has a newly adopted code of ethics that is effective on your next outing. We will soon have I.O.U. decals for your car windows. Tom Kent received the President's Award for his tireless work on recording Iowa bird records. Tom was unable to accept the award in person as he was on two week outing to Alaska.

The Saturday night banquet prepared by the Maple-Willow-Larch food service was excellent. This led into our featured speaker, Jon Atwood of the Manomet Observatory for Conservation Sciences in Massachusetts. At the conclusion of Jon's presentation on Gnatcatchers, I never saw or heard such an immediate applause in response to his captivating presentation. Not only was he able to present an informative slide presentation on his work with Gnatcatchers in California, and how they were separated into two sub-species, but he is currently working with the federal govern-



ment in getting the California Gnatcatcher declared an endangered species.

Jon had great insight into the recent controversies that often arise with this work. Jon concluded on the topic of natural community conservation planning which when implemented would preserve endangered habitats and hopefully avoid costly legal showdowns. Our thanks to the convention committee and Jim Dinsmore for bringing Jon Atwood to Ames.

The weekend concluded at Story County's McFarland Park. Again, the Maple-Willow-Larch food service outdid themselves in preparing a picnic lunch featuring chicken breast sandwiches and all the trimmings. Pete Petersen conducted the compilation which netted a total species count of 142 birds for the weekend. Special thanks to Jim Dinsmore, Hank Zaletel and the members of Big Bluestem Audubon for their work in making this meeting so successful.

Plan to attend the fall I.O.U. meeting in Pella, 28-30 October and catch some of the excitement of Iowa birding, it fantastic!

Papers related to Jon Atwood's presentation:

1. Atwood, J.A. 1993. The politics of protection: can the building industry's "worst enemy" hang on in southern California? LivingBird, Spring, 1993, pp. 14-21.

2. Atwood, J.A. 1993. California gnatcatchers and coastal sage scrub: the biological basis for endangered species listing. Interface Between Ecology and Land Development in California. Southern California Academy of Sciences, Los Angeles, pp. 149-169.

Attendance:

Adel: Janet Eppard.

Ames: Barb Bettis, Stanley

Cyran, Jim & Steve Dinsmore, Bruce & Marlene Ehresman.

Ankeny: Maridel Jackson, Wendy Van de Walle.

Booneville: Eloise & Eugene Armstrong.

Centerville: Ray Cummins. **Clear Lake:** Joan & Vergil Eness.

Clive: Jane Clark.

Cordova Park: Tim Schantz.

Davenport: Dan Dorrance,

Mary Lou & Pete Petersen.

Dayton: Karen Roosa Hansen.

Des Moines: John Fleckenstein, Barb Miller, Cecille & Dennis Thompson.

Fairfield: Donna Findling, Gloria Foster.

Ft. Dodge: Judy Garton, Mary Kuhlman, Mina Landes, Dorothy Zehr.

Garwin: Marlys Huff.

Ida Grove: Don Poggensee.

Indianola: Roy Godwin, Daryl Howell, Jim Sinclair.

Iowa City: Margrieta Della, Karen Disbrow, Jim Fuller, Bud Gode, Rick Hollis, Daniel & Randy Pinkston, Jim Schieb.

Lake Mills: Sibyl Sand. Liscomb: Beth & Mark Proescholdt.

Madrid: Laura Jackson.

Marion: Jim & Joyce Durbin.

Marshalltown: Jean Eige, Alice Smith, Linda Tasler.

Mason City: Carolyn Fischer, Rita Gorenson, Jan Walter.

Mystic: Tom Johnson. Nevada: Hank Zaletel. Nora Springs: Reve Pedelty. Norwalk: Ann Johnson. Osceola: Beth Brown. Paullina: Darwin Koenig. Princeton: Ann Barker.

Waterloo: Kick Kraemer, Francis Moore.

West Des Moines: Pam & Reid Allen.

San Francisco, CA: Richard Lawton.



November Field Trip

The November field trip will target ducks, geese, gulls and eagles. We always hope for a scoter and unusual loons. We'll meet at the city park on the northwest side of Lake Manawa at 8:00 am. Lake Manawa is located south of Council Bluffs in Pottawattamie County. After checking Lake Manawa, we'll drive to the Midwest Power ponds, Carter Lake and DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge.

Should you wish to spend the night in the area, a Comfort Inn is located just north of Lake Manawa at the Manawa exit on I-80 next to Hardees and Perkins. Comfort Inn serves a continental breakfast beginning at 6:00. The cost for two people, two beds is about \$45.00. Toll free reservations at 1/800-221-2222. A Super 8 Motel is located at South 24th St. exit on I-80. The rate is about a dollar less. Reservations at 1/800-800-8000.

For additional information call Loren Padelford at 402/292-5556.

Endangered Species

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources recently revised their state list of endangered and threatened species. The list includes birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians, butterflies, snails, mussels, and plants, with the wide majority of forms (386 of 501) being plants. Thirteen species of birds are listed as follows:

Endangered:

Red-shouldered Hawk Bald Eagle Northern Harrier Peregrine Falcon King Rail Piping Plover Barn Owl Least Tern Short-eared Owl

Threatened: Long-eared Owl Henslow's Sparrow

Special Concern: Forster's Tern Black Tern







By Jim Fuller, Iowa City

April 1 - June 10, 1994

Rare birds on the Iowa Birdline are considered hypothetical until documented and accepted by the Records Committee.

The best bird reported on the Birdline was a potential first state record. A Fish Crow was found by Kelly McKay and Mike Bornstein along the Mississippi River in the Big Timber area of Louisa County on April 25, and was seen irregularly through May 11. On the same day, David Dankert discovered a male Western Tanager at Swan Lake in Johnson County. A Sprague's Pipit was seen at the Kettleson Area in Dickinson County by Lee Schoenewe and LaVonn Foote.

A Purple Gallinule, discovered by Tom Stone at Sweet Marsh in Bremer County on May 24, was seen by many during the next two weeks. A Lark Bunting was located by Chuck Fuller near Burlington on April 29. In Worth County on May 7, an impressive assortment of unusual waterfowl at Silver Lake included Red-throated Loon, Red-necked Grebe, and Western Grebe. Other Red-necked Grebes were reported from Johnson, Carroll, Dickinson, and Clay Counties, while additional Western Grebe reports came from Story, Dickinson, Clay and Monona Counties. A hot birding spot this spring was Blue Lake in Monona County, where rare sightings included White-faced Ibis, Red Knot, and Buff-breasted Sandpiper. Eugene and Eloise Armstrong found a male Black-headed Grosbeak at Big Creek State Park on May 15 at the same location many were able to view a Black Scoter for a week beginning April 9. Both other scoter species were also reported, with Surf in Linn and Marion Counties, and Whitewinged in Winnebago County. A Ruff was the highlight of a Big Day in Linn County on May 14, and the Proescholdts had a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher at Lake Cornelia in Wright County on May 18.

Other May highlights were a Yellow Rail flushed from a dike at Otter Creek Marsh on the 6th, a female Red-necked Phalarope in breeding plumage at Red Rock Reservoir on the 27th. Mississippi Kites were reported from Johnson, Boone, and Story Counties on May 14-22. Yellow-crown night herons were reported from six locations across the state, and Marbled Godwits were unusually widely sighted.

Cinnamon Teal reports came from four locations in April, and Sandhill Cranes were at six different sites, with nine reported from Otter Creek Marsh at one time. Piping Plovers and Least Terns returned to nest at the IPL Ponds south of Council Bluffs.

Other excellent sightings included Bewick's Wren, Prairie Warbler, Smith's Longspur, Short-eared Owl, and Henslow's Sparrow. And the Varied Thrush, which wintered around the Scheib yard north of Iowa City, was last reported on April 13.





Meeting Scholarship

At its fall meeting in November, the Board of Directors voted to establish a meeting attendance scholarship to be awarded to a student from the community where each meeting is held. The student is selected by the local host. The scholarship covers registration and meals for the weekend, and includes a membership in the Iowa Ornithologists' Union for a year.

The idea behind the board's action is to encourage involvement of young people in the I.O.U. Hosts for spring and fall meetings should select a student who would like to attend, and notify treasurer Pam Allen, 1601 Pleasant St., West Des Moines, IA 50265.

Proposed Amendment

The following amendment to the Constitution of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union is proposed by the Board of Directors:

Under Article IV - Officers, Section 2, replace the second sentence with:

After serving two consecutive terms (excluding partial terms), a member is not eligible for reelection to the same office until one full term has elapsed.

Under Article VIII, Section 4, replace the entire section with:

The order of election shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Board Members. The election for each position shall be carried out separately except for the election of Board Members, which shall be considered together. In each case, the presiding officer shall ask for additional nominations from the floor and not in any way allow or suggest limitation of nominations until no more are

forthcoming. In order to be nominated at the meeting, the nominee must agree to serve, either by prior consent to the the nominator or directly at the meeting. If only one person is nominated or, in the case of the Board of Directors, the number matches the number of positions available, the presiding officer shall declare such persons elected. Otherwise, a vote shall be taken by secret ballot among members present at the meeting. A candidate receiving a majority vote of those voting is elected. If needed, a runoff vote will be among the two candidates with the most votes (and ties). In the election for Board positions, each member present may vote for as many candidates as there are positions available. If needed, the runoff vote will be among twice as many candidates (and ties) as there are positions left to be filled.

The purpose of the proposed amendment is to clarify term eligibility and the detail of the election process. It was the Board's feeling that, as written, rules concerning reelection to an office and the procedure for the election are ambiguous and unclear. For your reference, the constitution is published in *Iowa Bird Life* vol. 55, no. 4, December, 1985. We will consider this amendment during the business meeting at Pella on Saturday, October 29th.

Note from Editors: I'ts been a hectic summer for the Zaletels, and our computer has not been cooperating Sorry for the delay! Next newsletter coming out soon!!



Birds seen on field trips at the annual meeting in Ames, May 21/22, 1994 S=Seen on Saturday only.

REGULAR SPECIES (recorded in at least 8 of last GAVIIDAE 10 years)

GAVIIDAE _____Common Loon PODICIPEDIDAE _____SPed-billed Grebe _____Red-necked Grebe ______Red-necked Grebe ______Eared Grebe Western Grebe
 PELECANIDAE
 SAmerican White Pelican
 PHALACROCORACIDAE Cable Enve Heron Cable Egnet Green-backed Heron Black-crowned Night-Heron ANA TIDAE Greater White-Ironted
 Snow Goose
 Ross Goose
 Canada Goose
 Goose
 Goose
 Green-winged Teal
 American Black Duck
 Mattard
 Northern Printail
 Bite winced Teal Blue-winged Teal Northern Shoveler Gadwall American Wigeon Canvasback Redhead Redhead Ring-necked Duck

____Oldsquaw ____Oldsquaw _____Black Scoter _____Surf Scoter ACCIPITHIDAE _____Osprey ____Baid Eagle _____Sharp shinned Hawk _____Coopris Hawk _____Northern Goshawk _____(Accipiter species) _____Bed-buildered Hawk Red-shouldered Hawk Red-shouldered Haw Broad-winged Hawk Swainson's Hawk Red-tailed Hawk Wild Turkey RALLIDAE
_____Yellow Rail
_____Yellow Rail
_____Ying Rail
_____Virginia Rail
_____Sora
V____Common Moorhen
V_____American Coot

GRUIDAE
____Sanchill Crane
CHARADRINCAE
___Black-belied Plover
___Seser Golden-Plover
____Piping Plover
____Kildeer
RECURVIROSTRIDAE
____Mrecian Avoort
SCOLOPACIDAE
____Creater Yellowlegs
____Solitary Sandpiper
____Witet GRUIDAE Southary Sandpiper
 Wilet
 Soptied Sandpiper
 Upland Sandpiper
 Hudsonian Godwit
 Marbled Godwit
 Ruddy Turnstone
 Sandpring
 Sempalmated Sandpiper
 Wetern Sandpiper
 Usast Sandpiper
 Baird's Sandpiper
 Serical Sandpiper
 Spectaril Sandpiper
 Dunin
 Stit Sandpiper
 Buff-brasted Sandpiper
 "Short-billed Dowitcher
 Combined Dowitcher
 Common Snipe
 Common Snipe
 Amora Sandpiper
 Misson's Phalarope
 Inde-necked Phalarope
 LARIDAE
 Speckin's Guil ____S Franklin's Gull _____Bonaparte's Gull _____Ring-billed Gull ____Herring Gull _____*Glaucous Gull ____Glaucous Gui *Common Tern

> **ACCIDENTAL SPECIES** (recorded in less than 4 of last 10 yrs)

Least Tern Black Tern COLUMBIDAE W_Rock Dove CUCULIDAE U_UCULIDAE ____Black-biled Cuckoo TYTONIDAE ____Common Barr Out 11 ____Common Barn-Owl _____SEastern Screech-Owl Snowy Owl Barred Ovi
 Long-eared Ovi
 Short-eared Ovi
 Short-eared Ovi
 Northern Saw-whet Ovi
 CAPRIMULGIDAE
 Common Nighthawk
 @Chuck-wills-widow (S)
 SWhip-poor-will
 APD01DAE
 Chimney Swift Chimney Switt Ruby-throated Hummingbird PIGIDAE ProTDAE
Protocology
Protocolo Acadian Flycatcher Eastern Phoebe

 Great Crested Flycatcher
 "____Great Crested Flycatcher
 "_____Western Kingbird (W)
 "_____Eastern Kingbird
 _____Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
 ALAUDIDAE Homed Lark India Lak
 India Lak
 India Lak
 Purple Martin
 Tree Swalow
 Swalow
 Satow
 South Swalow
 South Brown Creeper TROGLODYTIDAE
Catolina Within
House Wren
Writer Wren
Sodge Wren
Sodge Wren
Golden-crowed Kinglet
Golden-crowed Kinglet
Biue-gray Grastasther
Golden Biuebre
Catolicater
Golden Sodiater
Golden

MOTACILLIDAE Water Pipit BOMBYCILLIDAE Bohemian Waxwing Cedar Waxwing LANIIDAE LANIIDAE
 Northern Shrike
 Loggerhead Shrike
 Loggerhead Shrike
 Loggerhead Shrike
 StURNIDAE
 Luropean Starling
 VITEONIDAE
 Solits Vireo
 Solits Vireo __Solitary Vireo __Yellow-throated Vireo __Warbling Vireo __Philadelphia Vireo Red-eyed Vireo PARULINAE PAHDUMAE
_____Blue-winged Warbler
_____Golden.winged Warbler
_____Crange-crowned Warbler
_____Nashvile Warbler
_____Nothern Parula
_____Yellow Warbler Velker Wanteer
 Onestuni sided Warbier
 Magnolis Warbier
 Magnolis Warbier
 Biad-shroated Blue Warbier
 Biad-shroated Blue Warbier
 Biad-bornian Warbier
 Biad-bornian Warbier
 Warbier
 Paim Warbier
 Paim Warbier
 Paim Warbier
 Biad-poil Warbier
 Deviate Black and white Warbler American Redstart Prothonotary Warbler Worm-eating Warbler

 Ovenbird
 Norbern Waterthrush
 Louisiana Waterthrush
 Connecticul Warbier
 Connecticul Warbier
 Connecticul Warbier
 Motoring Warbier
 Ovenoming Warbier
 Milson's Warbier
 Ovenoming Warbier
 Ovenoming Warbier
 Milson's Warbier
 Ovenoming Blue Grosber ____Indigo Bunting ____Dickcissel Larksportsport
 Larksportsport
 Larksport
 Larksport
 Larksport
 Sparrow
 Sparrow
 Searrow
 Searr __ 'Sharp-tailed Sparrow __Fox Sparrow Shartow
 Shartow
 Song Sparrow
 Song Sparrow
 Song Sparrow
 Swarp Sparrow
 Swarp Sparrow
 White-troated Sparrow
 White-troated Sparrow
 Martis' Sparrow
 Lapland Longspur
 Snow Bunting
 KTERINAE ICTERINAE Bob Bobolink

Red-winged Blackbird Eastern Meedowlark Western Meedowlark (Meedowlark species) Ł V Yellow-headed Blackbird **Rusty Blackbird** Rusty Blackbird "Brewer's Blackbird "Great-tailed Grackle Common Grackle Brown-headed Cowbird Orchard Onicle Northern Onicle

FRINGILLIDAE FRINGLLUDAE
Purple Finch
Red Crossbill
Common Redpoil
Prosiskin
American Goldlinch
Evening Grossbak
PASSERIDAE
House Sparrow

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