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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Craig Kruse

As the calendar end nears, New Year's Eve and a strong impulse to look at the past year as a whole come to mind. Most birders keep track of their "birds seen list" by following the traditional calendar, January through December. It has been a crazy year with migrating birds showing up at unusual times and hanging around far longer than they usually do. We've also had many are visitors that usually aren't found in Dubuque-land.



Townsend's Solitaire
 by C.Kruse

Our first unusual visitor (that I know about) was a **Townsend's Solitaire** when it was reported at the Mines of Spain rock quarry. This was reported in January by a gentleman from the Quad Cities. This is a very cool west coast bird, and we are just outside of its eastern range.

Shortly after the spring thaw in March, a gentleman who lives just east of Kieler, Wisconsin, reported a Band-tailed Pigeon that was visiting his feeder every morning. Shortly after the phone call about the bird,



Dubuque Audubon board member Wayne Buchholtz picked me up, and we headed east. Twenty minutes after that, we were standing in the middle of a group of fifteen people with our scopes and binoculars, trained on this guy's feeders and waiting for an appearance by this rare visitor. One of the gentlemen in our group had driven all the way from Milwaukee after getting the report of this sighting. None of us were disappointed. The bird showed within two hours and we all got a good look at it. The **Band-tailed Pigeon** is rarely seen east of New Mexico.



Our next visitor is probably our most famous, "Kevin" the Whooping Crane. Kevin became a tri-state celebrity when he landed in the field between Star Cinema and Buffalo Wild Wings in Dubuque. He stayed with us for a week and made the front page of the



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PRESIDENT'S CORNER, continued

Telegraph Herald and more than one local news program. While Whooping Cranes visit Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin regularly, this is the first one reported in Dubuque in a hundred years or so.

Lastly, in late October, local wildlife photographer Tony Moline spotted a Varied Thrush at Linwood Cemetery when he was looking for Crossbills. This is another Dubuque first. Once again I found myself standing with Wayne in the middle of a group of people from cities other than Dubuque waiting to spot an unusual visitor to our town. This time, we had people with us from Dubuque, Rockford, Cedar Rapids, and Iowa City. And once again, we weren't let down when my daughter Olivia spotted Tony's find, feeding on the ground near a tombstone.



A **Varied Thrush** is a VERY rare visitor to the mid-west from the west coast. It's a robin-sized member of the Thrush family and considered by many to be one of the most spectacular looking birds in America. This one was no exception.

I guess the point I'm trying to get to here is that there is a lot of very cool and unusual stuff for us to see right here in our backyards. I don't know if this is because migration patterns are changing or if it's because more people are out there looking. I know we have people from hours away coming here to Dubuque to see what we have here in our town, and we are seeing unusual things all year-round. So, if you have some free time, turn off the T.V. , shut down the computer, and go for a walk. Take time to look around you. You may see something you haven't seen before. I'll see you in the field.



DECEMBER PROGRAM

The program, **Monarchs in Mexico**, will be presented by Ann Burns. You saw them in your yards and natural areas in September. Now, take an arm-chair tour of the monarch butterflies' wintering site in the Trans-volcanic region of Mexico. In addition to the astonishing spectacle of overwintering monarch colonies near the villages of Chincua and LaSalud, you will visually visit historic sites including the Tzintzuntzan Pyramid and Paracutin Volcano. Contemporary sites such as a village market and a hacienda with the mission to reforest mountainsides in the overwintering area were also part of the tour. There have been political, economic, and public safety changes in Mexico since I participated in this 2009 visit to Michoacan, Mexico. We will briefly discuss how these changes have impacted the monarch sites.

Ann Burns recently retired as the environmental education coordinator for Jackson County Conservation. She continues to be involved with education and natural resources as a substitute teacher and a volunteer surveyor/monitor of frogs and toads, wintering bald eagles, bald eagle nests, sandhill cranes, bats, Prairie Creek water quality, and native plant populations – and of course, a monarch tagger!

JANUARY PROGRAM

The January program, **Birds of the North**, will be presented by Bob and Sandy Walton with special guest Maggie O'Connell. The Upper Peninsula of Michigan is home to some of the most picturesque areas in the Midwest. Learn about the area's birds and its astounding natural beauty—from cascading waterfalls to old growth forests, never touched by saw or axe. Bob and Sandy Walton have been involved in conservation for over 35 years. Sandy is a retired Physics Teacher and Bob is a retired Director/Naturalist. They love the outdoors and are fantastic birders.



DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

<p>Thursday December 10th</p>	<p>Dubuque Audubon Program: Monarchs in Mexico</p>	<p>EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Hts, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Ann Burns will speak on the amazing Monarch butterflies, a truly North American Treasure.</p>
<p>Friday December 18th</p>	<p>Bellevue Christmas Bird Count</p>	<p>7:30 am, Lock and Dam # 12. Meet to organize.</p>
<p>Saturday January 2nd</p>	<p>Dubuque Christmas Bird Count</p>	<p>8:00 am E.B. Lyons Interpretive Center. Meet to divide up into routes. 4:30 pm Meet at E.B. Lyons Interpretive Center to tally results and enjoy a chili supper while recounting the high lights of the days events.</p>
<p>Saturday January 9th</p>	<p>Midwinter Bald Eagle Count</p>	<p>10:00 am. Meet at the Save-U-More Supermarket parking lot in Dyersville, IA, to organize.</p>
<p>Thursday January 14th</p>	<p>Dubuque Audubon Program: Birds of the North</p>	<p>EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Hts, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Bob and Sandy Walton with special guest Maggie O’Connell will present the wonders of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.</p>
<p>Saturday January 16th</p>	<p>BALD EAGLE WATCH</p>	<p>Grand River Center, Port of Dubuque. Doors open at 9:00 am. Exhibitors, vendors, and children’s activities all day. Minnesota Raptor Center at 9:30am, 12:15pm, and 3:00pm. Audubon Center of the North Woods at 11:00am and 1:45pm 9:00am – 4:00pm Eagle viewing at Lock and Dam #11</p>

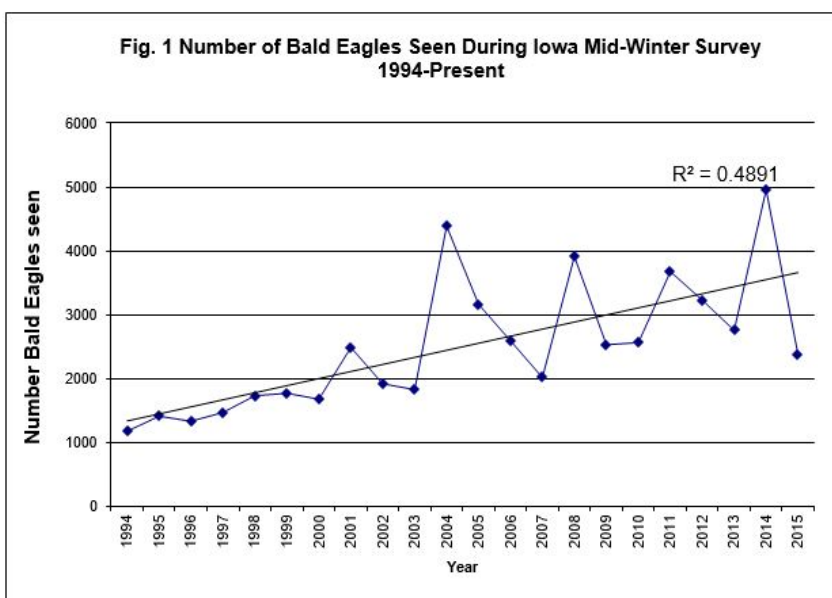


Iowa's 2015 Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey

Survey coordinated and written by Stephanie Shepherd | Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity | Wildlife Research Station
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A total of 2,375 Bald Eagles were counted during the 2015 Bald Eagle Midwinter Count, which was the second lowest number of eagles counted on the annual survey since 2007 (Fig. 1). This is below the previous 10 year's surveys average of 3,254. The average number of birds counted per route was 46 or 1.4 eagles per mile surveyed. Fifty-two routes were completed in 47 counties, covering 1,704 miles of habitat.

The dates for the 2015 survey were December 31 to January 14, with target dates of January 9 and 10. All but 2 of the 54 active routes were run, and all but 1 were done during the prescribed survey period. Twenty-eight of the 52 surveys were run on the target dates with another big group (12 routes) being run on January 7th which was the target date for the Midwinter Waterfowl Survey. The average temperature during the survey period was the lowest average survey temperature since 1994 at 9 degrees Fahrenheit. Overall, the temperature was quite variable during the survey period, ranging from -8 degrees to 33 degrees Fahrenheit, and the rest of the winter, outside of the survey period, was relatively mild. The average ice cover on waterways during the survey was estimated at 88%.



The most frequent distribution of Iowa's wintering eagles is with the highest percentage along the Mississippi River. This year the Mississippi River held 47% of the total birds counted on the survey while the Des Moines River held roughly 30%. Small numbers of birds were counted along the rest of the waterways, with the Skunk River being the only other river with over 100 birds. Overall, the birds were more evenly distributed across the state compared to 2014's survey when over 80% of the Eagles counted were on the Mississippi River.

The Midwinter Waterfowl Survey is run during the same time period and uses similar methods as the Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey and, in fact, some eagle and waterfowl surveys are run simultaneously. The target date for that survey was January 7th, 2015. The total number of bald eagles counted on the Waterfowl survey totaled 1,664 (1,198 adults and 466 immatures). A total of 112 (77 adults, 35 immatures) of these birds were counted in the 52 counties where no standardized bald eagle survey route exists, making the probability that these double counted birds are small. *See more at the above web address.*



BALD EAGLE WATCH



Join us for the 28th annual Bald Eagle Watch on Saturday, January 16, 2016, at the Grand River Center in the Port of Dubuque. This free family event celebrates the American Bald Eagle with live bird programs and children's activities. Vendors will have wildlife art, books and nature items available for purchase. Exhibitors will share information about opportunities to experience nature in the Tri-State area.

This year, the Minnesota Raptor Center will do three programs on raptors at 9:30 am and 12:15 and 3:00 pm. What better way to learn about bird conservation and the environment than to meet live birds of prey like hawks, owls, and the Bald Eagle? The Raptor Center always has an interesting and exciting presentation.

Our second program is Live Animals of the Northwoods Niche presented by the Audubon Center of the Northwoods in Sandstone, Minnesota, at 11:00 am and 1:45 pm. Explore the specific adaptations and the ways animals interact with both the living and non-living components of their habitat. Meet and learn about four different animals including a salamander, snake, porcupine, and an owl.

If the Eagles cooperate, we will have spotting scopes set up for live Eagle viewing at Lock and Dam #11.

This is always a fun-filled event. Bring the children (or grandchildren) and join us.

The Newsletter is available online as an electronic version. You can receive a monthly reminder to look through an e-mail attachment or a reminder to visit our web-site:



OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

If you have any questions or comments, please contact us!

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Audubon shade-grown coffee makes a great holiday gift.




Contact a board member, visit a Thursday evening program, or email us at the website. Audubon Premium Shade Grown Coffee is the official coffee of the National Audubon Society. It is available at local chapter meetings and events sponsored by the Dubuque Audubon Society (DAS) or at the gift shop of the EB Lyons Center at the Mines of Spain or at Swiss Valley Nature Center.

Dubuque Audubon Society

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The mission of Dubuque Audubon Society is to provide educational opportunities to the people of the tri-state area and to preserve the natural habitat of birds and other wildlife.

DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY

NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

If you are a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically a member of the local Audubon Society and do not need to sign-up separately.

Do NOT use this form to renew a membership in National Audubon Society. Use the form mailed to you by the National Audubon. There are two categories of memberships in the Dubuque Audubon Society

CATEGORY A: This category includes membership in National Audubon Society and the local chapter. You will receive 6 issues of Audubon Magazine and 9 issues of the local chapter newsletter, Pileated Drummings.

_____ National Audubon Society Free Membership **INTRODUCTORY ONLY – FIRST TIME MEMBERS ONLY**

CATEGORY B: This category of membership is local chapter only. You will receive 9 issues of the local chapter newsletter, Pileated Drummings. All funds will remain with the local chapter. Membership year is from July to June.

_____ Local Chapter Dues \$10.00

NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____

STREET _____ E-mail _____

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CODE: C5ZH500Z

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