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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Craig Kruse

As I'm writing this it's now mid-January. The next six months are an exciting time for birdwatchers in the Tri-States. We've just wrapped up the "Christmas Bird Count" and the "Eagle Watch," and looking forward, we have "The Great Backyard Bird Count" in February and other events planned right through May. And, of course, in a few months we will have the start of Spring Migration. We are even in the planning stages of an Audubon trip to the Chicago area to look for the Monk Parakeet, America's only wild Parakeet. There is a lot of bird watching in our future.



NEVER TOO YOUNG FOR BIRD WATCHING!

January can also be a good time to go birding. I just checked eBird's list (eBird.org) of the top birders of Iowa as of today, and there is a gentleman from somewhere in Iowa who has seventy-four birds recorded so far this year!

That's seventy-four birds in nineteen days. It does get pretty cold this time of year, but there are other ways to bird watch besides going outdoors. The Swiss Valley and Mines of Spain nature centers both have great bird-watching rooms, and I've spent a lot of time at both lately. You can get quite a bit of action. I've also found that my car can make a pretty good bird blind.



If you put a feeder in your yard, you can even watch our feathered friends from the comfort of your own home. My suggestion to you would be to not just pay attention to what's at the feeder but look into the distance and at the sky. Notice how the birds are moving around, the way they fly, and the way they behave. This is a good time of year to work on new identifying skills that you can use the rest of the year. There are a lot of opportunities for us to take advantage of this time of year. I'll see you out there somewhere.

Happy Valentine's Day



THE 2015 GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT (GBBC)

By Joe Tollari

The 2015 GBBC will take place Friday, February 13, through Monday, February 16, 2015. This is the 18th annual count. The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are. Everyone is welcome--from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as fifteen minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy and it helps the birds. You simply watch birds at your feeders or any location you wish to count. You watch the feeders and adjoining areas for at least fifteen minutes. Tally up the numbers of each species you see. You will want to count all the birds you see at one time. Keep counting and record the highest number of each species you see within the fifteen minutes. When you are finished counting, report your results online. Go to www.birdcount.org for instructions on how to get started. The site includes links to creating an account and submitting your observations.

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document and understand the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time. Scientists use the GBBC information, along with observations from other citizen-science projects, such as the Christmas Bird Count, Project FeederWatch, and eBird, to get the "big picture" about what is happening to bird populations. The longer these data are collected, the more meaningful they become in helping scientists investigate far-reaching questions.



by Wayne Buchholtz

The Dubuque Audubon Society took part in the 115th Annual Christmas Bird Count on January 3. The count is held worldwide to collect information on bird species. This data helps scientists to determine the health of all species of birds. They also are able to track movements, distributions, and populations of all bird species counted.

This year, 16 individuals spent 43.7 hours hiking or driving specific routes in and around Dubuque and East Dubuque. They hiked 23.3 miles and drove 193 miles to count



45 species of birds. **HORNED LARK** © Gerrit Vyn
Of these species they counted a total of 5,468 birds. The day was foggy, causing problems in identifying birds. I know there were times when I would hear geese flying overhead or a Bald Eagle in a tree and not be able to see them for an accurate count.

The high numbers included 1044 Canada Geese, 545 Mallards, 175 Rock Pigeons, 275 Black-capped Chickadees, 247 American Tree Sparrows, 429 Dark-eyed Juncos, 239 House Finches, and unfortunately 761 House Sparrows and 560 European Starlings.



Species that were highlights this year included 1 Common Merganser, 1 Great Blue Heron, 8 American Kestrels, 1 Eastern Screech Owl, 6 Belted Kingfishers, 3 Horned Larks, 5 Red-breasted Nuthatches, 24 Brown Creepers, 1 Winter Wren, 26 Eastern Bluebirds and 2 Swamp Sparrows. Seventy-nine American Robins were sighted. As someone stated, "Spring is here." Well, maybe in a couple of months.

Each year the Dubuque Audubon Society treks the Saturday after January 1st to take part in the largest and longest running research project on a global scale. Mark your calendars now to remind yourself that next year you will take part.



© Yves Dery **EASTERN SCREECH OWL**



© aka heehaw **RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH**

All woodpeckers were sighted except for the Red-headed. Others sighted included 56 Red-bellied Woodpeckers, 104 Downy Woodpeckers, 8 Pileated Woodpeckers, 1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and 5 Northern Flickers. Unfortunately, no Ivory Billed Woodpeckers were sighted. The habitat that the Red-headed Woodpecker requires is very limited, causing their populations to go down.



© Raymond Lee **COMMON MERGANSER**





DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

FEBRUARY 2015

<p>SUNDAY February 8 th</p>	<p>BIRD FEEDING TIPS AND INFORMATION</p>	<p>1:00 pm, EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Hts, Dubuque, IA Julie Burser from WildBirds Unlimited in Galena, Illinois, will focus on winter bird feeding and why it is a good time to do it. She will show photos to identify bird species typically seen at area feeders. She will provide information on these birds and what is needed to attract them. Julie will have samples of feeders and seed to show what is best to attract the birds you want to see in your yard.</p>
<p>THURSDAY February 12th</p>	<p>DUB. AUDUBON PROGRAM: ALASKA WILDERNESS</p>	<p>EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Hts, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Lois Norrgard from Alaska Wilderness League will speak on preserving the Alaska Wilderness.</p>
<p>THURSDAY February 19th</p>	<p>OWL (Older, Wiser, Livelier) PROGRAM</p>	<p>12:00 pm lunch, 1:00 pm Program at Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Rd., Peosta. Larry Stone will be presenting the story of Gladys Black:"Iowa's Bird Lady." Gladys had a simple message: protect our birds and protect our planet. Join us before the program for a catered lunch from East Mill Bakery; cost for lunch is \$10 for Friends members and \$12 for non-members. Call 563.556.6745.</p>
<p>SATURDAY February 21st</p>	<p>SNOWSHOEING AND BIRDING</p>	<p>10:00 am. Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Rd., Peosta. Strap on a pair of snowshoes and walk into the winter woods looking for juncos, titmice, eagles, woodpeckers, and more! We will join you on a seasonal hike to explore the sights and sounds of Swiss! Call to register and reserve your snowshoes, 563.556.6745.</p>
<p>SATURDAY February 21st</p>	<p>"MYSTERIES OF THE DRIFTLESS" FILM</p>	<p>6:30 pm. GTA Owners' Club, 2000 Marina Drive, Galena. On a short-feature film, sponsored by the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation and Galena-Jo Daviess County Historical Society, a team of movie-making scientists kayak, go caving, hike, climb bluffs, and hop a prop plane to experience the geological "mysteries" of the driftless area and the unique habitats and species the region supports.</p>
<p>THURSDAY March 12th</p>	<p>DUB. AUDUBON PROGRAM: LEAD POISONING AND BALD EAGLES</p>	<p>EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Hts, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Ed Britton from USFWS will speak on the problem of lead poisoning in Bald Eagles. See article elsewhere in the newsletter.</p>



**March Program
“Lead Poisoning and Bald Eagles”**

The Dubuque Audubon Society program in March is titled, “Lead Poisoning and Bald Eagles” with Ed Britton. The program will be presented March 12, at 7:00 p.m. at the E. B. Lyons Interpretive Center. Ed Britton is the Wildlife Refuge Manager of the Savanna District on the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

The program will focus on a study summary during 2011-2012. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service researchers collected 168 dead Bald Eagles that were randomly found in Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois. They examined them for lead exposure. Liver analysis showed that 48% of the Eagles had detectable lead concentrations and 21% had lethal lead levels. Lead ammunition used in deer hunting became the focus for investigating a potential source where Eagles were being exposed to lead. During managed deer hunts held in 2012-2013, gut piles (that are typically discarded on the landscape) were collected from deer shot with lead ammunition and were radiographed. In addition, motion sensor cameras were placed at gut pile locations to document whether bald eagles scavenge on these discarded waste parts. This presentation will report the findings of this study.

The Bald Eagle is the symbol of the United States.



The Bald Eagle has made a remarkable come back from being placed on the Endangered Species List. Today, you see Bald Eagles throughout the year in the Midwest, but more often during the winter during their migration. Learn about what is and has happened to this bird and what could be done to eliminate further deaths.

The E. B. Lyons Interpretive Center is located at 8991 Bellevue Heights just south of Dubuque off Highway 52. The Dubuque Audubon Society holds programs monthly on nature topics. The programs are held the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. during the months of October through May.



PHOTO BY: Craig Kruse

OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

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

- President: Craig Kruse 563-582-0328
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- Secretary: Nick Courtney
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Dubuque Audubon Society

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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**

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Mail check payable to Dubuque Audubon Society. Mail to:

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PO Box 3174
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