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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Craig Kruse

Something fun happened to Olivia and me right after Christmas. So, there we were driving down Highway 61 while doing some birding. It was one of those very cold days with very high winds. We had just passed Key West and were heading up the hill to Grandview when Liv said she thought she saw an Eastern Screech Owl sitting on the side of the highway. This was at 1:15 in the afternoon, so I thought to myself, "Ok it was just a funny looking pile of leaves or something, but let's go have a look anyway." We turned the car around and drove to Key West to retrace our tracks. We got back to the spot where she thought she saw the bird and pulled over to the side of the road. When I turned my head to look, I got quite a surprise. There, sitting on the ground by the concrete barrier that separates the highway was an Eastern Screech Owl. Not only did Olivia notice the owl at 55 miles per hour but she correctly identified it! As we watched the owl, the gusts of winds were coaxing the bird away from the barrier and toward the edge of the traffic. This wasn't going to end well. So, I hopped out of the car and waited for a break in the traffic while Olivia tore apart

the trunk looking for something we could transport an injured bird. Finally, I got a long break in the passing cars, so I slowly walked toward the owl. At first it totally ignored me, fluffing up and looking a bit larger than it should have (probably due to the cold temps). When I got about 15 feet from the bird, it turned casually, looked at me, and took off with strong steady wing beats. We looked on as the owl landed perfectly on a tree branch, just off the edge of the highway. It sure didn't look injured to me. I asked Liv to stay with the car as I walked over to get a good look at him, but by the time I got close enough, the little Screech Owl had disappeared into the forest. A good sign, I think. My best guess is that the high winds caught the owl and made it take shelter or maybe blew the owl out of a tree. That barrier could have been the first shelter it could find. Anyway, that's my Christmas story. It was kind of fun, and the Screech Owl flew away, so it had a happy ending.



I'll see you in the field
Craig Kruse, President

**2016 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|--------------------------------|-----|
| <i>Pied-billed Grebe</i> | 1 | <i>Hairy Woodpecker</i> | 15 |
| <i>Gr. Blue Heron</i> | 2 | <i>Northern Flicker</i> | 3 |
| <i>Canada Goose</i> | 705 | <i>Blue Jay</i> | 53 |
| <i>Trumpeter Swan</i> | 1 | <i>Am. Crow</i> | 146 |
| <i>Am. Black Duck</i> | 1 | <i>Horned Lark</i> | 75 |
| <i>Mallard</i> | 249 | <i>Black-capped Chickadee</i> | 133 |
| <i>Ring-necked Duck</i> | 2 | <i>Tufted Titmouse</i> | 16 |
| <i>Common Goldeneye</i> | 21 | <i>Red-breasted Nuthatch</i> | 2 |
| <i>Ruddy duck</i> | 1 | <i>White-breasted Nuthatch</i> | 48 |
| <i>Bald Eagle</i> | 36 | <i>Eastern Bluebird</i> | 3 |
| <i>Northern Harrier</i> | 2 | <i>Am. Robin</i> | 12 |
| <i>Sharp-shinned Hawk</i> | 3 | <i>European Starling</i> | 877 |
| <i>Cooper's Hawk</i> | 3 | <i>Am. Tree Sparrow</i> | 36 |
| <i>Red-tailed Hawk</i> | 29 | <i>Fox Sparrow</i> | 4 |
| <i>Rough-legged Hawk</i> | 3 | <i>Song Sparrow</i> | 5 |
| <i>Am. Kestrel</i> | 7 | <i>White-throated Sparrow</i> | 11 |
| <i>Merlin</i> | 1 | <i>White-crowned Sparrow</i> | 2 |
| <i>Ring-necked Pheasant</i> | 6 | <i>Dark-eyed Junco</i> | 960 |
| <i>Wild Turkey</i> | 180 | <i>Northern Cardinal</i> | 178 |
| <i>Rock Pigeon</i> | 306 | <i>Purple Finch</i> | 7 |
| <i>Mourning Dove</i> | 76 | <i>House Finch</i> | 32 |
| <i>Barred Owl</i> | 1 | <i>Am. Goldfinch</i> | 124 |
| <i>Long-eared Owl</i> | 1 | <i>House Sparrow</i> | 320 |
| <i>Belted Kingfisher</i> | 2 | <i>Red-bellied Woodpecker</i> | 48 |
| <i>Downy Woodpecker</i> | 31 | | |

THE 2017 GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

By Joe Tollari



The 2017 GBBC will take place Friday, **February 17, through Monday, February 20, 2017**. This is the 20th annual count. The Great Backyard Bird Count is a world-wide 4-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. I usually end up watching for thirty or more minutes. Tally up the numbers of each species you see. Keep counting and record the highest number of each species you see at any one time 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, how to conduct a count, 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.

OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

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

President: Craig Kruse 563-582-7215

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Secretary: Olivia Kruse / Joe Tollari

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DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS



FEBRUARY 2017

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| February 9th Thursday | Dubuque Audubon Program: Yellow Beacons in a Dark Flooded Forest: Prothonotary Warbler Research | EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Belevue Hts. Dubuque, IA 5:30 p.m. - Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 p.m. - Tom Davis, Professor of Biology, Loras College, will speak on the nesting success in artificial nest boxes for Prothonotary Warblers on the Mississippi River. |
| February 10th Friday | OWL PROWL | 7:00 p.m. Bellevue State Park, Bellevue, IA. Join naturalist Jennifer Meyer in learning more about Iowa's Owl species and try to call them in! |
| February 17th - 20th Friday to Monday | GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT | See article elsewhere for more information. |
| February 26th Sunday | VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE WORLD | 1:00 p.m. Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Road, Peosta, IA. Join Ty Smedes for an educational and visually stunning presentation about Antarctica, a beautiful and wildlife-rich part of the world. Ty's photos have been published by many major magazines and book publishers. |
| March 9th Thursday | DUBUQUE AUDUBON PROGRAM: Water Fowl on Migration | EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights, Dubuque, IA. 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Program: Bob Walton will review field markings For water fowl as we prepare for the Duck Waddle. |
| March 18th Saturday | ANNUAL DUCK WADDLE | Mark your calendar for this fun event. More information in the next newsletter |

BIRDING BASICS & BEYOND

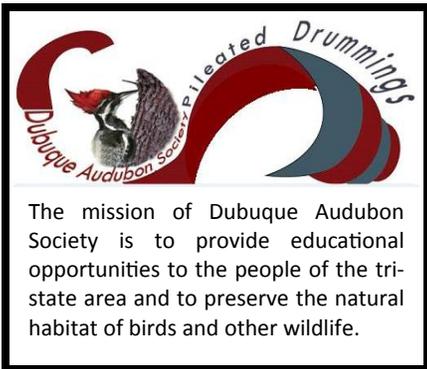
by Joe Tollari

Bird Watchers Digest and Vanguard Equipment have joined forces to bring you a series of videos designed to help you become a better bird watcher. From cleaning binoculars to packing for a field trip, each of these short (about 3 minutes), how-to videos includes practical information that you can use to improve your field skills. To access the videos go to www.youtube.com and type "birding basics and beyond" in the search bar. I found these videos last year. **They are especially good for beginning bird watchers.**

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

NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____

STREET _____ E-mail _____

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CODE: C1ZH600Z

**Dubuque Audubon Society
PO Box 3174**

Mail check payable to Dubuque Audubon Society. Mail to:

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