



JULY 2023

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Ken Kiss

Grassland Preserve Initiative

I am sure most of you have seen the recent articles in the Telegraph Herald on the Plaza Drive development in which the contractor mowed the grass area in late June, during the nesting season. We were very disappointed, since last fall this issue was raised to the Dubuque City Council, and in May I mailed and emailed the contractor requesting that they avoid disturbing this ground until July 15, after the nesting season (or alternatively, that they mow immediately so that the birds would look elsewhere to build their nests). After this incident, it was discovered the city owned land in the Key West Technology Park that they were managing in such a way that it attracted grassland birds such as the Bobolink, Dickcissel, and Eastern Meadowlark. The Audubon Board approved a motion to go before the Dubuque City Council and propose that a section of the undeveloped area be set aside as a grassland preserve.

Audubon proposed to construct a viewing platform and signs educating the public about the grassland birds. The city council tabled the suggestion for now, but if enough support is shown, it could be added to their priority list for next year. The mayor also suggested that the Dubuque Audubon Society continue advocating for the project and propose alternate locations. Because of the investment in infrastructure at the technology park and because the land was to be used to bring more jobs and development to Dubuque, there was some reluctance by the city council to set aside a preserve. We feel the Audubon board request is reasonable, as we only asked for half of the area as a preserve, allowing for development on the remaining area, especially since this land has been undeveloped since the 1990s, and the area

includes two vacant buildings which are hopefully available for repurposing, along with several acres available for development.

What can you do to help? As an Audubon member living in Dubuque or the vicinity, you can express your opinion to the Mayor and city council members asking to add this item to their 2024 priority list. This will allow the city council to direct the city staff to consider our proposal. You can get addresses and emails for the mayor and city council at cityofdubuque.org (on the "Mayor & City Council" page found under GOVERNMENT tab). Feel free to use your own words, but here are some suggestions:

"I am in support of the Dubuque Audubon Society's proposal to set aside part of the Key West Technology Park as a grassland preserve. Please consider adding this item to your goals and priorities for 2024. We realize as a representative of the city you must balance jobs and development with a community that cares about the environment, and we believe this proposal is a good compromise."

You can also sign the online "Dubuque Grassland Preserve" petition at change.org.

Find the petition by searching for the petition name via the search button near the top right.

Time is crucial as the goals and priorities are discussed by the Dubuque city council on August 22-24th. Thanks in advance for your participation.

Membership Renewal

It's time again to renew your membership if you are a local Audubon member. You can use the attached form at the end of this newsletter to pay your dues or pay them in the fall when our

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OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

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

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programs start. It also would be helpful if you return the form to make sure we have your current address and email. I've noticed that when I send out emails, I get a lot of undeliverable notices. Also, let me know if you want hard copies of our newsletter or just an email copy.

Note that if you are a National Audubon member you renew your membership by making a minimum of a \$20 donation at Audubon.org on or before your anniversary date. National members get the Audubon magazine and are automatically enrolled as local members.

Programming

Our programs will normally be on the second Thursday of the month from 6 – 7 PM from October – May. However, please check the website or Facebook page for changes. Our September program is scheduled for September 21 from 6 – 7 PM at the University of Dubuque (room 105 of the Science Building). Anna Buckardt, Iowa DNR Avian Ecologist, will talk about grassland prairies and the Motus system, which is a new migratory bird tracking system.

Spring Species Count



Yellow Warbler

Our spring bird species count was held on May 6, 2023. For this count, members spend part or all of the day observing and recording species in their favorite birding areas. We then get together for a picnic to tabulate the results. This year we tabulated 136 species. See the list to the right.

Bluebird Monitoring at Mines of Spain

I am again monitoring bluebird houses in the Mines of Spain. Lynn Schroeder has been helping/learning about the process of monitoring the bluebird houses this year. If anyone is interested in learning about bluebirds and sharing in this monitoring program, let me know. There are 25 bluebird houses throughout the park. Another cavity nester that uses these boxes is the Tree Swallow, and we get a lot of House Wrens.



Monitoring at Whitewater Canyon & New Melleray Abbey

What projects has the Dubuque Audubon been up to? Members continued to monitor the prairie birds at Whitewater Canyon. We set up 6 monitoring locations and took bird surveys every two weeks for two months. We are interested to find out if we see any Bobolinks, Henlow's Sparrows, and Grasshopper Sparrows. It seems like these species were more prevalent at Whitewater in the past. We

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2023 Spring Species Bird Count

May 6, 2023

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Canada Goose | Greater Yellowlegs | European Starling |
| Trumpeter Swan | Lesser Yellowlegs | American Pipit |
| Wood Duck | Semipalmated Sandpiper | Blue-wing Warbler |
| Gadwall | Least Sandpiper | Tennessee Warbler |
| Mallard | Baird's Sandpiper | Nashville Warbler |
| Blue-winged Teal | Pectoral Sandpiper | Northern Parula |
| Northern Shoveler | Dunlin | Yellow Warbler |
| Green-winged Teal | American Woodcock | Yellow-rumped Warbler |
| Ring-necked Duck | Ring-billed Gull | Black-throated Green Warbler |
| Lesser Scaup | Herring Gull | Yellow-throated Warbler |
| Hooded Merganser | Forster's Tern | Palm Warbler |
| Common Merganser | Rock Pigeon | Blackpoll Warbler |
| Red-breasted Merganser | Mourning Dove | Cerulean Warbler |
| Ring-necked Pheasant | Great Horned Owl | Black-and-white Warbler |
| Wild Turkey | Barred Owl | American Redstart |
| Common Loon | Chimney Swift | Prothonotary Warbler |
| Pied-billed Grebe | Ruby-throated Hummingbird | Ovenbird |
| Horned Grebe | Belted Kingfisher | Northern Waterthrush |
| Double-crested Cormorant | Red-headed Woodpecker | Louisiana Waterthrush |
| American White Pelican | Red-bellied Woodpecker | Common Yellowthroat |
| Great Blue Heron | Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | Eastern Towhee |
| Great Egret | Downy Woodpecker | Chipping Sparrow |
| Green Heron | Hairy Woodpecker | Field Sparrow |
| Turkey Vulture | Northern Flicker | Vesper Sparrow |
| Bald Eagle | Pileated Woodpecker | Savannah Sparrow |
| Northern Harrier | Eastern Wood-Pewee | Grasshopper Sparrow |
| Red-tailed Hawk | Least Flycatcher | Song Sparrow |
| Peregrine Falcon | Eastern Phoebe | Lincoln's Sparrow |
| Virginia Rail | Great Crested Flycatcher | Swamp Sparrow |
| | Yellow-throated Vireo | White-throated Sparrow |
| | Warbling Vireo | White-crowned Sparrow |
| | Blue Jay | Northern Cardinal |
| | American Crow | Rose-breasted Grosbeak |
| | Purple Martin | Indigo Bunting |
| | Tree Swallow | Bobolink |
| | Northern Rough-winged Swallow | Red-winged Blackbird |
| | Bank Swallow | Eastern Meadowlark |
| | Cliff Swallow | Western Meadowlark |
| | Barn Swallow | Common Grackle |
| | Black-capped Chickadee | Brown-headed Cowbird |
| | Tufted Titmouse | Orchard Oriole |
| | White-breasted Nuthatch | Baltimore Oriole |
| | Carolina Wren | Purple Finch |
| | House Wren | House Finch |
| | Blue-gray Gnatcatcher | American Gold Finch |
| | Ruby-crowned Kinglet | House Sparrow |
| | Eastern Bluebird | Eurasian Tree Sparrow |
| | Swanson's Thrust | |
| | Wood Thrust | TOTAL: 136 |
| | American Robin | |
| | Gray Catbird | |
| | Brown Thrasher | |



Sora



- Common Moorhen
- American Coot
- Sandhill Crane
- American Golden-Plover
- Killdeer
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Solitary Sandpiper



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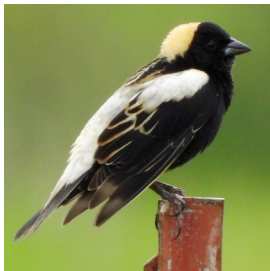
are planning to do this again next summer, which will be our 3rd season, and then we will tabulate our results.

Some Audubon members began a 5-year survey of migrating and resident birds at the New Melleray Abbey from April – June. A baseline is being established to see improvements in bird habitat from the 300' wide buffers they are adding around creeks on their property to improve water quality.

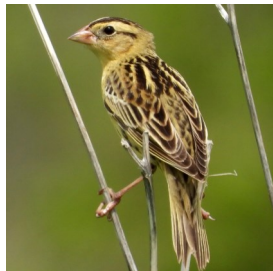
Bobolink Facts

Here are some facts about the Bobolink, which is one of the species nesting in the area we would like to preserve in the Key West Technology Park. (These facts are taken from The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's website.)

- The Bobolink is one of the world's most impressive songbird migrants, traveling some 12,500 miles (20,000 kilometers) to and from southern South America every year. Throughout its lifetime, it may travel the equivalent of 4 or 5 times around the circumference of the earth.
- A migrating Bobolink can orient itself with the earth's magnetic field, thanks to iron oxide in bristles of its nasal cavity and in tissues around the olfactory bulb and nerve. Bobolinks also use the starry night sky to guide their travels.



Male Bobolink



Female Bobolink

Motus Wildlife Tracking System

The Iowa DNR is participating in a new method of tracking migrating birds. They have installed 5 automated radio telemetry receivers as part of the Motus Wildlife Tracking System. Radio transmitters (tags deployed on wildlife that emit a radio signal) using two specific radio frequencies are micro-coded so that thousands of unique individuals can be identified. The purpose of this system is to collect data on bird migration or other wildlife. The receiver stations will be permanent fixtures, always listening for tagged wildlife in Iowa. This lays the groundwork for future research on the movements and migrations of Iowa's bird and bats. This summer a receiver was added at the Mines of Spain maintenance building, with Dubuque Audubon contributing \$1000. We will have a program this fall on this Motus System to learn about this new method of tracking migrating birds. I think it would be great if we could tag some Bobolinks from the area to see if any return to the same area.

2022 Christmas Bird Count

The 123rd Christmas Bird Count was held on December 17, 2022.

20 people participated and recorded 70 species!

An additional 5 species were recorded on other days during the count week. Here are the results:

| | | | |
|----------------------------|------|--|-----|
| 1. Cackling Goose | 9 | 43. Tufted Titmouse | 13 |
| 2. Canada Goose | 1300 | 44. Red-Breasted Nuthatch | 2 |
| 3. Trumpeter Swan | 14 | 45. White-Breasted Nuthatch | 55 |
| 4. Gadwall | 2 | 46. Brown Creeper | 4 |
| 5. Mallard | 295 | 47. Winter Wren | 1 |
| 6. American Black Duck | 3 | 48. Eastern Bluebird | 12 |
| 7. Northern Pintail | 4 | 49. American Robin | 184 |
| 8. Canvasback | 314 | 50. European Starling | 697 |
| 9. Ring-Necked Duck | 2 | 51. Cedar Waxwing | 50 |
| 10. Long-Tailed Duck | 1 | 52. House Sparrow | 703 |
| 11. Bufflehead | 44 | 53. Eurasian Tree Sparrow | 5 |
| 12. Common Goldeneye | 130 | 54. House Finch | 20 |
| 13. Hooded Merganser | 2 | 55. Purple Finch | 6 |
| 14. Common Merganser | 46 | 56. American Goldfinch | 60 |
| 15. Red-Breasted Merganser | 3 | 57. American Tree Sparrow | 117 |
| 16. Wild Turkey | 10 | 58. Field Sparrow | 1 |
| 17. Rock Pigeon | 103 | 59. Fox Sparrow | 1 |
| 18. Mourning Dove | 84 | 60. Song Sparrow | 7 |
| 19. Ring-Billed Gull | 719 | 61. Swamp Sparrow | 2 |
| 20. Herring Gull | 12 | 62. White-Throated Sparrow | 19 |
| 21. American Coot | 6 | 63. Harris's Sparrow | 2 |
| 22. Bald Eagle | 49 | 64. White-Crowned Sparrow | 8 |
| 23. Northern Harrier | 5 | 65. Dark-Eyed Junco | 900 |
| 24. Sharp-Shinned Hawk | 1 | 66. Red-Winged Blackbird | 1 |
| 25. Cooper's Hawk | 3 | 67. Brown-Headed Cowbird | 1 |
| 26. Red-Shouldered Hawk | 1 | 68. Rose-Breasted Grosbeak | 1 |
| 27. Red-Tailed Hawk | 18 | 69. Yellow-Rumped Warbler | 2 |
| 28. Rough-Legged Hawk | 4 | 70. Northern Cardinal | 163 |
| 29. Eastern Screech Owl | 4 | | |
| 30. Great-Horned Owl | 1 | Total Species Reported: 70 | |
| 31. Belted Kingfisher | 3 | Total Individuals: 6698 | |
| 32. Red-Headed Woodpecker | 15 | | |
| 33. Red-Bellied Woodpecker | 50 | | |
| 34. Downey Woodpecker | 55 | | |
| 35. Hairy Woodpecker | 12 | | |
| 36. Northern Flicker | 10 | | |
| 37. Pileated Woodpecker | 4 | | |
| 38. American Kestrel | 9 | | |
| 39. Blue Jay | 89 | | |
| 40. American Crow | 97 | | |
| 41. Horned Lark | 7 | | |
| 42. Black-Capped Chickadee | 121 | | |
| | | Count week birds not seen on count day include: | |
| | | 1. Common Grackle | |
| | | 2. Black-Legged Kittiwake | |
| | | 3. Tundra Swan | |
| | | 4. Carolina Wren | |
| | | 5. Snow Goose | |
| | | Grand Total: 75 Species | |



American Avocets with Ring-Billed Gull at A.Y. McDonald Park in July

Dubuque Audubon Society

PO Box 3174

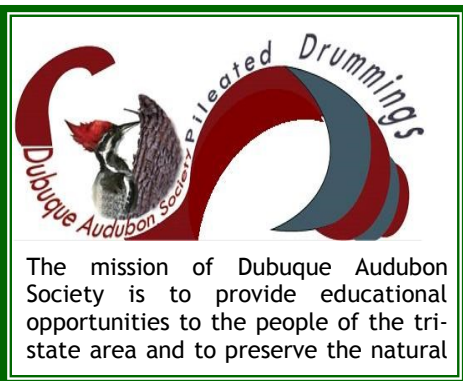
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DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY

NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & RENEWAL FORM

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.

LOCAL MEMBERSHIP: This category of membership is local chapter only. You will receive 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 *Pileated Drummings* sent by way of: E-mail or Postal mail

NATIONAL & LOCAL MEMBERSHIP: If you wish to become a member of both local and national:

➔ Go to Audubon.org ➔ Click on "JOIN" then "Become a member"

The membership in National is \$20 per year. Any amount you give above that is considered a donation. The National membership automatically gives you membership in the local group in addition to the award-winning *Audubon* magazine. It is a good idea to note the month you joined so you will not be confused by multiple early reminders.

NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____

STREET _____ CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____ E-mail _____

CODE: CIZH200Z

Mail check payable to Dubuque Audubon Society. Mail to:

**Dubuque Audubon Society
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