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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Craig Kruse

Last Friday I went to Chicago for the first time since Dubuque Audubon's excursion to see the Monk Parakeets living there in the wild. My brother was able to get four tickets to see David Gilmour (from Pink Floyd), and I was invited to go. The group consisted of my Uncle Don, my brother Chad, his wife Katie, and me. Basically, I knew birding wasn't going to be on the itinerary, but Chad was kind enough to let me book the hotel, and I knew one of the places the Monk Parakeets nested. So I booked the same hotel that we used a year ago near the nest site and reminded the rest of my group at every opportunity that we had to stop & see if they were still there. I must have mentioned those birds at least a dozen times in a 7-hour period, right up to the show. David Gilmour's new album is called *Rattle that Lock*, and its cover is the image of several birds escaping from a cage.

I mentioned the parakeets so much that when the concert opened that night to the sound of bird calls, I got three heads to turn in unison to give be a funny look. I just shrugged. The next morning I was rewarded with a brief stop at last year's viewing spot. I grabbed my binoculars and climbed out of the car for a look-see. It didn't

take long to find the first parakeet feeding on the ground beneath its' nest. Soon, it was joined by four others, and I was joined by the rest of my party. We were even lucky enough to have two of the parakeets give us a fly-by as they took off to the nearby neighborhood. I think my traveling companions were happy we stopped. I don't know what kind of birds are on the cover of David Gilmour's album, but whenever I look at it I'll think of those parakeets.

Dubuque Audubon's calendar year is winding down. **Thursday, May 12th**, will be our last official meeting of the year. I hope to see you there. That night, we will be voting in our new board members for next year. If you're interested in joining our board, it's a rewarding experience, and I encourage you to do so. If you're able, feel free to join us on the 12th at 5:30p.m. before the public meeting. It's fun to get to help our group grow and introduce new people to birding and different aspects the environment around us. Also, the fun doesn't stop at the end of May. In June, we always have a potluck, and in July we have the Butterfly Count. Don't forget that September will bring the 2nd annual Big Sit. So, there is still lots to look forward and do. Until then, I'll see you in the field.



The Eurasian Invasion

by Bob Walton

During the last few years “aliens of a different feather” have been immigrating to the Dubuque area. Most common of the Eurasian immigrants is a member of the dove family known as the **Eurasian Collared Dove**. This dove was introduced in Florida from Europe and is rapidly colonizing northward in the United States.



They are larger than a Mourning Dove, have a long, squared tail, are very pale gray in coloration, and true to their name, have a black collar on the back of their neck. I saw my first Eurasian Collared Dove about seven years ago in Maquoketa, foraging around the Dairy Queen on the south side of town. They seem to prefer the small town atmosphere of Jackson County and have colonized in Preston, Miles, and Delmar. They also like the Hurstville Nature Center where I have seen them perch on the building, nest under a pavilion, and sit on adjacent power lines and poles. The epicenter in Dubuque County appears to be Bernard, where I have oftentimes observed over 30 of the doves in the dense spruce trees near Pearl’s Café. They seem to prefer conifers for nesting, but in addition to large evergreens, I was quite surprised to see a pair nesting in the eaves of the old barn on our farm near Specht’s Ferry - a site usually reserved for common Rock Pigeons. They frequent local grain elevators and feed stores where they glean ample waste grain, especially during a severe winter. Overall, I think the naturalization of the Eurasian Collared Dove is not going to have an adverse effect on our native birds, plus they add some interesting color and sounds to the small communities they occupy.

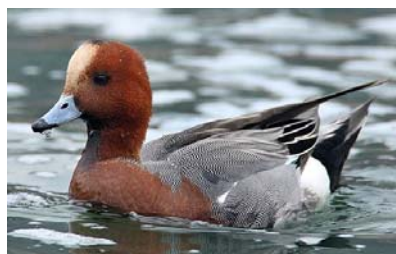


Another Eurasian newcomer to northeast Iowa is the **Eurasian Tree Sparrow**. These sparrows nest in natural cavities and manmade

structures. They resemble the common male House Sparrow, but are smaller in size, have a brown crown instead of a gray crown, and a large, black ear spot that contrasts with its white face. Introduced in St. Louis, Missouri, in the 1960’s, this sparrow is now locally common in parks, suburbs, and farmlands around St. Louis, nearby areas of Illinois, and has slowly been spreading northward.

There is an established, stable population in the Quad Cities, and over the past several years, I have observed small flocks at backyard feeders near Thomson, Illinois, and birds nesting in the Purple Martin houses at Lock and Dam 13. The first Eurasian Tree Sparrow showed up at our Otter Creek bird feeder this winter but I have yet to see one in Dubuque. They will probably quickly colonize in Dubuque in the near future.

One last Eurasian alien that we observed in early March was a single **Eurasian Wigeon** that



Sandy and I sited feeding with a large flock of American Wigeon at Green Island. It is a beautiful bird and differs from the American Wigeon in that it

has a rufous head, a buffy forehead, and a grayish colored back. The Eurasian Wigeon is a rare but regular winter visitor along both coasts, more common in the West, and a rare visitor in the Midwest during the spring. I’ve been fortunate enough to have seen three—all at Green Island and Goose Lake.

As you venture outdoors this spring, keep a look out for these recent immigrants, and possibly add several new species to your life list.





Spring is a prime birding season as birds arrive in their bright breeding plumage, and while winter birds are always welcome, the return of colorful spring birds signals warmer temperatures, fresh growth and longer days perfect for birding. Backyard birders who feed birds in spring can enjoy these birds right at home and encourage them to stay nearby throughout the season.



DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS



<p>SATURDAY May 7th</p>	<p>Spring Species Count</p>	<p>8:00 am. Meet at the North Entrance to Eagle Point Park. This event is great for beginning bird watchers. Experienced bird watchers will help with locating and identifying resident and migrating birds. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. 5:00 pm. Meet at the Swiss Valley Park (first site on the right as you enter the park) to tabulate the results and share experiences. Audubon will provide the brats and hot dogs. Bring your own table service, beverage, and a dish to pass.</p>
<p>THURSDAY May 12th</p>	<p>Dubuque Audubon Program: Local Foods Programs</p>	<p>EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Hts, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Carolyn Scherf, ISU Extension, Local Food Coordinator will outline how to access local food programs and products.</p>
<p>SATURDAY May 14th</p>	<p>Lost Mound Birding Tour</p>	<p>Migration is in full swing. This is a perfect time to get a glimpse of those migrants as they travel to their perspective breeding grounds. Join experienced birders as we travel through largest sand prairie in Illinois. You will learn about some of the history of the former Savanna Army Depot, current habitat management and get a chance to see various species of birds. The van will leave from the Lost Mound Office promptly at 4:00 pm and will return at 7:00 pm. Participants are to meet at 3:45 pm Tours are free, but seating is limited. Contact the refuge office at 815-273-2732 to register.</p>
<p>THURSDAY June 9th</p>	<p>AUDUBON SPRING POTLUCK</p>	<p>Come to enjoy good food and good company. More information next month.</p>
		

e-NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE

In an effort to control costs and save resources, Dubuque Audubon Society is offering an electronic version of this newsletter. You can receive the newsletter as an e-mail attachment or as a prompt to go to the Dubuque Audubon website to view the newsletter. E-mail your request to audubondubuque@gmail.com.



SPRING BIRD COUNT

Join Audubon for our **Annual Spring Bird Count on Saturday, May 7**. This is the time of year that we enjoy the parade of warblers and shore birds that are making their way to breeding areas further north in the U.S. and Canada. We also welcome back summer residents like Baltimore Orioles, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and others. We typically see more than a hundred different species of birds. All you need is a pair of binoculars to join. There will be experienced birdwatchers to help point out the birds. **Meet at the North entrance (tennis courts) of Eagle Point Park at 8AM.** This is an all day event for us. But you can stay for whatever fits your schedule. We start at Eagle Point but continue to other habitats like the marsh behind John Deere. We will tabulate our results at 5PM at the Sycamore picnic shelter at Swiss Valley Park if the weather is nice or at the Swiss Valley Nature Center if the weather is cold and rainy. Audubon will provide the brats and hot dogs, and you provide your tableware, drinks and a dish to pass. *See you there!*



MAY PROGRAM



Carolyn Scherf is the Local Food Coordinator for the ISU Extension Service in Dubuque County. Carolyn works to maximize the potential for community-based, economically sustainable, and environmentally and socially responsible food enterprises by facilitating partnerships in Dubuque, Delaware, and Jackson counties. Every one of us participates in the food system - from consumers to cooks, producers to processors, wholesalers to waste management professionals. At Dubuque County Extension, we work together to build a resilient and sustainable food shed in the tri-state area, providing education, and facilitating partnerships to expand opportunity for health and resilience in the food system.

[Audubon Climate Heroes](#)

What One Success Story Reveals About Talking to Politicians on Birds and Climate

By Liz Bergstrom

[This article was reprinted with permission from the National Audubon Society](#)

A California volunteer is building bridges with her legislator on climate change and birds, even if they might not agree on every issue.

It all started in fall 2015, when Rosalie Howarth of Walnut Creek, California, attended a town hall meeting hosted by her Republican legislator, Assembly member Catharine Baker. Howarth listened as many other constituents voiced concerns and questions, then she spoke up about the need to address the urgent problem of climate change. The reaction from the room was mostly eye-rolling, groaning, and dismissal, Howarth recalls. It was as if she had brought up UFOs. But Baker took the issue seriously and talked about the importance of new technologies to combat the effects of climate change.

Encouraged, Howarth followed up by emailing Baker and asking her to vote “yes” on two proposed bills to cut carbon emissions, SB 350 and SB 32. Baker sent a handwritten reply thanking her for the feedback and sharing that she had voted in favor of SB 350. (Baker opposed the other bill, [SB 32](#), which failed to gather enough support in the Assembly and may be reconsidered this year.) SB 350 passed after [a groundswell of support](#) from advocates across the state, including a March 2015 trip to the statehouse in Sacramento organized by Audubon California. This legislation will reduce the emissions driving climate change by increasing requirements for renewable energy and energy efficiency. Howarth is a longtime DJ for radio station KFOG in San Francisco.

Howarth was “grateful and amazed” by Baker’s response. Though she doesn’t identify as a Republican herself, she continues to communicate with Baker via email, and the two had the chance to meet face to face during a visit to Sacramento later that fall. There Howarth and several other [Mount Diablo Audubon](#)



Society (MDAS) members shared their concerns about climate change and other issues affecting birds, including proposed development and rodent poisons that kill raptors such as owls and hawks.

This February, Baker spoke at an MDAS meeting with more than 110 members in attendance. Recently the lawmaker hosted a “walk and talk” town-hall meeting by inviting her constituents on a hike in Shell Ridge Open Space - protected parkland with a network of trails. Howarth and other chapter members joined the hike with extra binoculars and helped point out birds such as Acorn Woodpeckers and Western Scrub-jays, while other attendees identified wildflowers.

Learning More About Climate Change

Howarth has worked for radio station KFOG in San Francisco for more than 30 years, mainly as a DJ hosting acoustic and world music shows. She’s also a longtime birder, who describes her small yard—filled with feeders—as a “bird riot,” frequented by many species such as climate-threatened House Finches and Pine Siskins. She became engaged with the issue of climate change through her interest in meteorology and her voracious reading of newspapers, newsletters, and magazines such as *Scientific American* and *National Geographic*. Its impact on birds and other wildlife alarmed her.

“Wildlife always gets dead-last consideration,” she says of humans’ development of Earth and its resources. As she puts it, people keep saying to wildlife, “‘We’re going to use this now—move over there.’ And the ‘there’ is forever getting smaller and smaller and more cut-up.”

Howarth has encountered other people dismissing climate change in her community, as demonstrated by a recent letter to her local newspaper scoffing at the consequences of a 2-degree Celsius temperature rise. But she believes that more people learning about climate science could help turn the tide. She also feels energized and encouraged by her conversations with Baker. “If we can identify, cultivate, and support independent thinkers like her,” Howarth says, “there may be hope!”

How to Talk With Your Elected Officials

As a professional communicator, Howarth offers this advice for how to connect with legislators on conservation issues:

- Attend town halls or ask for a meeting. “Addressing representatives requires that you respect their time and come prepared to give your best elevator speech

on each subject. Be brief, be powerful, be impassioned, and quote facts and statistics,” she says.

- Invite a local lawmaker to speak at one of your chapter meetings. If she or he accepts the invitation, promote the event to make sure as many people as possible are able to attend. This helps show how many people care deeply about bird conservation and other environmental issues.
- Begin building bridges early. “It’s really important to contact your local representatives not only on issues that have legislation pending, but [also] on issues you care about, just to get it on their radar,” Howarth says. That way, when they hear from another constituent, or they see something a representative is doing in another district, they will recognize it as a pressing issue.

Be polite but persistent. It also doesn’t hurt to ask how you can help support the lawmaker’s priorities, such as an upcoming bill that could use additional public input or expertise. “Above all, get involved,” says Howarth. “Those who oppose your views and threaten what you value certainly do. And even if you get booed . . . something good might come of it.”

OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

If you have questions or comments, please contact us!

- President: Craig Kruse birder1972@hotmail.com
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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

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