



PILEATED DRUMMING

Dubuque Audubon Society

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To continue the saga, the Nebraska full day birding trip with Pete Dunne was **AWESOME!** By Maggie O'Connell, President

It also gave me a full 8 hours to grill him – as he made the mistake of plopping down in the back row of the bus by the Dubuque Iowa representative – about his upcoming quartet of books – his version of Vivaldi's Four Seasons. The first book – already out – begins with Prairie Spring. His wife Linda, also his photographer, began the search for spring by documenting Pete doing his best groundhog imitation February 2. For the record, on that cold winter day at Pawnee National Grassland, Colorado – he SAW his shadow. From there he chronicles their adventures as in the next few months Spring alternately crawled or raced across the prairie. **I have always loved this part of the country we edge against, but there is still a thrill in hearing others discover its wonders.** His next books will be Cumberland Summer, Arctic Fall and the final wrap-up will be the Florida Keys in winter – sort of a departure from the usual winter scenes we have come to expect but, as Pat says, how appropriate for a birder because **THAT'S** where the birds are in winter. I don't know about you, but I know what's going on the top of my Christmas list.



Migration is in full swing now and each day just seems to get better and better. Isn't it wonderful that in this time of job uncertainty, jello stock market behavior and miserable "201K" value, we can still pick up our binoculars and walk out our front door and see the birds. This time of year, it seems like the alarm is unnecessary as the Robins have taken over that dreary function. Consider the Redwing blackbird (nobody – but nobody – can say that squawk is musical) – is there anything that heralds the end of winter so definitively?

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Continued from Page 1...

Even the Turkey Vultures look just right soaring overhead!



The Spring Bird Count (see calendar) is a great place to see a lot of these migrants and all levels of birders are

welcome. We also have a great program coming up in May and hope you will join us for a photographic record of a trip down the Mississippi River.

Finally, to business where a few details await your attention. Elsewhere, in this newsletter you will see the proposed slate of officers for next year. **You will note one name is missing - Jane Ward as Treasurer. She has retired after many years of service to the Dubuque Audubon Society.** It's hard to find enough words to say how much we have appreciated her willingness to step up to the plate in whatever capacity has been needed. How many organizations our size have been able to boast of having a CPA as Treasurer. Thank you Jane for everything you have done.

Pick up your bins – step out that door – BIRD! (That might just make a good bumper sticker!)

AUDUBON SHADE-GROWN COFFEE

By Dave Fisher

Audubon members who purchase and brew Audubon Premium Shade Grown Coffee make a difference in the environment with every cup!

When Audubon folks buy this delicious, shade grown coffee, they are protecting tropical, migratory bird habitats from deforestation.

Shade grown coffee beans yield a more complex and flavorful cup than non-shade grown coffees. 100% organic makes for healthier water supply and soils for the people and wildlife living and working in coffee-farming communities. **You can purchase this coffee at monthly Audubon meetings, EB Lyons Gift Shop, or Swiss Valley Nature Center. You can also order personally by calling Dave at 563-542-0864.**

THE STATE OF THE BIRDS

By Ric Zarwell

Dubuque Audubon Society picked up on this message from Ric Zarwell from Lansing, IA. The 6.5 minute video is very good. How many of the birds can you name?

Following is a link to the "State of the Birds Report" online version that newspapers and other media have picked up on in recent days. This is the first-ever comprehensive national report, and it provides at one website, a huge amount of vital information about birds in the U.S. The report lists 67 Threatened & Endangered Species and another 184 Species of Conservation Concern, and both

problems and solutions are highlighted.

The report gives plenty of reasons for birders to be involved in citizen science efforts such as Iowa's Breeding Bird Atlas, Breeding Bird Surveys, and a variety of other proactive bird monitoring activities in-state, or nearby. Of course, preserving the vital habitat that birds depend upon before it is converted to other landuses is the critical next step to having viable numbers of these 251 species to enjoy in the future.

Included at the homepage of this website is a video clip that provides a comprehensive overview. To understand the state of our nation's birds, paste the following link into your browser: www.stateofthebirds.org/

Note that a large proportion of the rapidly declining species are Neotropical migrants. These species spend only a brief part of their annual life cycles in the United States - - - their essential breeding season. Neotropical migrants are not even aware that our nation has a short season, when they are not here, for hunting; and the lists make very clear that it is not the hunted species that are rapidly declining.

Let's all work together to address the real issue - providing more and better habitat, rather than debating the red herring issue of hunting vs. not hunting that isn't likely to be resolved in our lifetimes.

Enjoy the invigorating spring season!

DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May, 2009

May 9 – Sat.	Spring Species Count	8:00 am – Meet at the north entrance to Eagle Point Park to begin the day. Eagle Point is great habitat for migrating warblers. Continue at various other sites in Dubuque County for the remainder of the day. Do as little or as much as you wish. 5:30 pm – Meet at the Sycamore Pavilion at Swiss Valley Park to tally our observations and enjoy a picnic supper.
May 14 – Thurs,	Board Meeting and Regular Meeting	E.B. Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights 5:30 pm – Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Program: <u>Mississippi River Panorama</u>, Abdul and Rafic Sinno will present panoramic vistas of the Mississippi accumulated over eight years of travel.
May 23 – Sat.	Nature Hike	1:00 pm Swiss Valley Nature Center. All ages are welcome to hike through the Swiss Valley Nature Preserve on Saturday, May 23rd at 1:00 pm. We will visit the woodland wildflowers, Catfish Creek, bluebird habitats and much more. Please dress for the weather.
June 11 – Thurs.	Potluck Supper	Worthington Sportsman’s Club. This is a new location for us. Directions in the next newsletter. Plan now to attend.

ELECTION TIME

The annual election will be held at the May meeting. If you wish to run for any position, nominations will be taken from the floor at the meeting. The Dubuque Audubon Society Board of Directors proposes the following slate of candidates.

President: Pat Fisher
Vice-President: Margreet Ryan
Secretary: Roseann Wiederholt
Treasurer: Maggie O’Connell
At-Large Directors: Jenny Ammon, Wayne Buchholtz, Joe Ingraam, Joe Tollari
Charlie Winterwood, Michelle Zuecher



MAY PROGRAM

By Pat Fisher

On Thursday, May 14, 2009, 7 p.m. at E. B. Lyons Nature Center, Mines of Spain State Park, Dubuque, Iowa, Dubuque Audubon Society is sponsoring "**Border to Border: A Journey of The Mississippi.**" The Mississippi is a source of beauty and legend. View over 2,000 miles of the Mississippi's sweeping vistas in stunning panoramic photographs by acclaimed author and photographer Dr. Abdul K. Sinno and his son Rafic in a landmark presentation eight years in the making. Together they have covered the Mississippi from Lake Itasca to the Gulf of Mexico in various seasons and times, capturing the character of each scene from the warm colors of fall to the vivid greens of summer. Accompanying these breathtaking vistas are Dr. Sinno's highly descriptive and poetic impressions that will motivate you to rediscover your national heritage, find inspiration, persevere with happiness, and discover yourself as you journey through a river that unites the nation. Everyone is invited!

THE PURPLE MARTINS ARE BACK!

By Todd Peil, Bellevue, IA

One of the most wonderful events of spring that I look forward to is the return of Purple Martins to the Dubuqueland area. They returned to my Martin house north of Bellevue, IA April 6th this year. They usually arrive to this area around March 31st or early April. Since the last pair of Martins vacated my Martin house with their brood around mid August last year, I have been eagerly awaiting their return. Oh, what a sad day, when you realize that you must wait for months on end to hear their wonderful chattering and vocalizations. **A large part of enjoying Purple Martins is the vocal aspect of their visit to your yard. They have a delightfully distinct sound that marks their arrival.**

The adult males arrive first. Then, a few weeks later the adult females and one year olds arrive to the delight of the adult males. The adult males sing and chirp loudly to attract any passersby and fly wonderful acrobatic maneuvers towards the Martin house in an effort to entice any others to check out the Martin house accommodations. There is a flurry of activity during this

period. It is always exciting to see how many pairs have joined the colony and alight on your Martin house. I had 16 pairs nest last year in my colony. This is the largest colony I have hosted in the 10 years that I have been a Martin landlord.

In Bellevue, IA, there is great opportunity to enjoy Purple Martins easily. Along the riverwalk that runs the whole length of the HWY 52 stretch that runs through town, along the Mississippi River, you will see 6 different Martin houses. Last year each house had occupants. I regularly check out these Martin houses, and adult males are there already as well. In May and June you may see 100 or more Martins flying all about the skies of Bellevue along the riverfront. It is a beautiful sight watching them swoop and dive, chasing after flying insects.

The most important aspect of becoming a Purple Martin Landlord is being very diligent to keep starlings and house sparrows from nesting in your Martin house. Starlings and sparrows are very aggressive and will chase your Martins away. They will even poke holes in Martin eggs and kill hatchlings. It is absolutely necessary to eradicate any starling or house sparrow activity. This may be labor intensive or even considered a hassle, but it is necessary to the survival and return of Purple Martins to your Martin house.

Remember that Martins need an open area for their Martin house. A 100 foot area without obstructions is acceptable. Martins also need to be by people. Place your Martin house where human activity is noticeable so they feel more secure. Martins also prefer to be near a water source.

Martins are very tame and will let you walk right up under the house and watch them. I believe they enjoy watching people as much as we

enjoy watching them. I have never had any problem with them being scared away by my presence, or even by cutting the grass under the house on my riding lawn mower.



Take time this year to look up and listen for the insect eating, acrobatic, people loving, chirping, purple colored feathered friends of the skies, and enjoy one of nature's many wonders, the Purple Martin.

OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

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

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SUMMER PROGRAMS FOR KIDS

By Joe Tollari

I hope that you realize how lucky we are to have three topnotch Nature Centers in the Dubuque Audubon Society area. I try to highlight some of the programs offered each month in the calendar section. E.B. Lyons Interpretive Center in Dubuque, Hurstville Interpretive Center in Maquoketa, and Swiss Valley Nature Center in Dubuque County all offer a variety of programs throughout the year. Everyone should find something of interest.

This summer, all three will be offering summer programs for children ranging in age from four to teens. We do not have space in this newsletter to detail all of the camps. I strongly encourage you to either call the nature center or visit their websites for more information on content and registration.

E.B. Lyons Interpretive Center will offer Nature Day for Kids each Saturday morning from May through August. Visit www.minesofspain.org or call the park office at 563-556-0620.

Hurstville Interpretive Center offers three age-appropriate camps in June and July. Visit www.jacksonccb.com or call 563.652.3783.

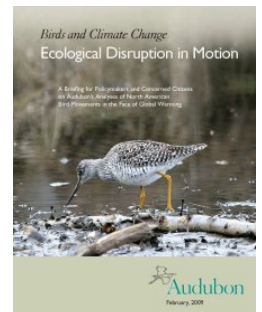
Swiss Valley Nature Center will again hold four different camps geared to various age groups

BIRDS AND CLIMATE CHANGE: ECOLOGICAL DISRUPTION IN MOTION

Audubon recently released a new study using Christmas Bird Count Data. These analyses would not have been possible without the hard work of CBC participants and the many chapters that organize and lead counts. We thank all that have participated over the years for their effort. The study explored if birds had shown significant shifts in their winter distribution over the last 40 years. As we all know, birds are good indicators of the environment. We think birds provide important information to people on changes in the environment and human quality of life. Audubon has a goal of working bird indicators into regular reviews of how the environment in the US is doing and hopefully helping drive policy and funding that benefits the environment and birds. These analyses of the CBC dataset on winter distribution are part of that effort.

The report, *Birds and Climate Change*, is available on Audubon's web site at <http://www.audubon.org/bird/bacc/cbcanalysis.html> and provides more details on the analyses and results. To download the report from this web site, click on the "Download Report" link on the left side of the page or on the image of the report cover.

We will continue to undertake scientific analyses of these data to learn more about the status of birds and conservation needs. Please consider donating through the web site to help us continue using the CBC data to move a conservation agenda.



SPRING SPECIES COUNT By Pat Fisher

The Spring species count on May 9 is always a good time. We'll hike the park looking for all the birds we can find, especially warblers. Then, it's on to John Deere Dike to look for marsh and shore birds. The afternoon may find us in different places. Join us for as much of the day as you can. **We finish for a tally and supper at Swiss Valley Picnic area around 5 pm. Brats and buns provided. Bring a dish to pass, a drink and your table service. New birders are VERY WELCOME!**

Dubuque Audubon Society
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Purple Martins at Todd Peil's Bellevue home

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

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 Drumblings.

_____ Introductory Dues \$20.00
_____ Student/Senior Dues 15.00

CATEGORY B: This category of membership is local chapter only. You will receive 9 issues of the local chapter newsletter, Pileated Drumblings. 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: C9ZH500Z

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