



PILEATED DRUMMINGS

Dubuque Audubon Society

VOL. XXXVII—NO. 8

NOVEMBER, 2009

Published monthly exc Jan., July, Aug

www.audubondubuque.org

Birds Are Spectacular!

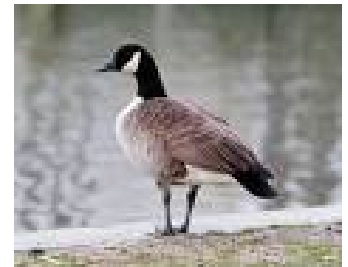
By Pat Fisher, President

There is such a huge difference in seeing a bird without binoculars and then seeing that same bird with binoculars! What looks like a "little brown jobbie" becomes a bird of great beauty when individual feathers can be distinguished, the color of the beak and feet can be seen, and eye rings and eyelines jump out.

Without binoculars we would never notice the orange flanks (under the wings) on the tufted titmouse, or the buffy flanks on the chickadee. We hardly need binoculars to see the striking red of male cardinals. Female cardinals look drab in comparison, until you put binoculars on her. Female cardinals are strikingly beautiful with their orange crest and reddish wings and tail. And with the sun on them ... wow!

Even starlings, which we think of as black, have greens and purples and lots of spots to show off when viewed with binoculars. With Blue Jays, have you seen that dark necklace up close? Or the stark white and black feathers contrasting with their stunning blue back and wings? Or the black strips down their long blue tail? When you look at a robin with binoculars, their broken eye ring can be seen. I think every bird deserves a close look with binoculars, even house sparrows with their varied colors. Binoculars provide the opportunity for so many treasures that wouldn't be found without using them.

If you don't use binoculars because you get frustrated with trying to focus them, or you feel like you don't see any better with them than without them, then it's probably the binoculars that are the problem. A good pair of binoculars will bring birds into view quickly and clearly, and the colors will sing out. If yours don't do that, then it's time for a change.



(Continued on Page 2...)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Continued from Page 1...

Audubon has just published "The Audubon Guide to Binoculars" in the Nov/Dec, 2009 issue of Audubon magazine. Our chapter has purchased reprints of this article for distribution to it's members and the public. This handout will be available at Audubon meetings as well as at our booth at Bald Eagle Watch. If you're in the market for a new pair of binoculars, perhaps a pair is on your Christmas list, be sure to read this guide before purchasing.

There are 2 recommended brands in the "less than \$100" range, 6 choices in the "less than \$500" range and 6 choices in even higher price ranges. The article not only recommends brands but tells what to look for in a new pair, what those confusing numbers mean and how to care for your binoculars. Learn from the experts so you end up with a pair that lets you in on the beauty of an "up close and personal look" at both familiar and unfamiliar birds.

Last winter my husband and I spent a number of weekend days driving the back roads specifically looking for "winter birds," American tree sparrows, horned larks, snow buntings and rough-legged hawks. And we saw all of them on most of our outings. I remember patiently scanning a roadside full of horned larks and finding a snow bunting in their midst; a first for me! I never would have known I was looking at horned larks, and certainly wouldn't have been able to pick out the snow bunting, without binoculars.

So keep a pair handy by your feeding station at home and don't forget to travel with binoculars in your car. You just never know what spectacular beauty awaits you.



NOTICE: MEETING PLACE CHANGE

We want to remind you that our monthly meetings will be held at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 1755 Delhi, Dubuque, IA. Parking is on the west side.

Enter from the alley side. The change in location will be in effect while construction continues on the new addition to the E.B. Lyons Interpretive Center.



VARIABLE MIGRATION

By Janea Little, Senior Naturalist, Chippewa Nature Center, Midland, MI

How long does it take to drive to the Mackinac Bridge? To Chicago? Miami? Your answer depends on many variables. A trip with the kids, dogs, and in-laws with dietary restrictions will obviously take longer than driving solo. Throw in bad weather, road construction and unexpected detours, and the journey gets a lot longer.

Migrating birds are affected by similar factors – distance, diet, weather, and detours such as the destruction of a stopover spot. As a result, some birds begin migration in July, while others don't start until October. Some take only a few weeks to reach their destination, while others spend months at the task.

At this time of year, long-distance migrants, as well as those that catch flying insects, are long gone. Chimney Swifts, swallows, flycatchers and many shorebirds left in July and August, while warblers, tanagers and vireos headed out in September. They all have long journeys to Mexico, Central and South America, or the Caribbean. An added incentive is their dependency on insects as food. With such a dietary restriction, they can't risk a late start, because an early frost could eliminate their food supply.

Other migrating birds are more relaxed about their departure time. Blackbirds, grackles, and many sparrows, traveling only as far as the southern U.S., head out in October. Weather events have less impact on these seed-eaters because their food sources will still be available during cold weather.

The ultimate late migrators are waterfowl. Well into November, you will still find two dozen species of ducks, geese and swans on area bays, ponds and rivers. This group's only real incentive to keep moving is the need for open water. And about the time they reach their southern U.S. destinations, the long-distance migrants are getting ready to start north again!



DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November, 2009

Nov. 12 – Thurs.	Board Meeting and Regular Meeting	Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 1755 Delhi, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm – Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Program: Birds, Butterflies, and Beasties in Paraguay. Gerald Zuercher, Associate Professor of Vertebrate Ecology at the University of Dubuque will share some of the biological diversity of the South American country.
Nov. 14 – Sat.	Wildlife Photography with Stan Bousson-	1:00 pm at Swiss Valley Nature Center Stan Bousson is a talented Wildlife Photographer who will be presenting a program on his latest images. He is very knowledgeable about both wildlife and photography, this is a must attend program.
Nov. 14-15 – Sat. and Sun.	Rivers and Bluffs Fall Migration Cruises	9:00 am and 1:00 pm in Lansing, IA. These are the last cruises available at the Rivers and Bluffs Birding Festival. Cruises will explore Pool 9 of the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Experienced birders and river naturalists will accompany each cruise. Visitors will experience close-up views of Tundra Swans and a variety of waterfowl numbering in the hundreds of thousands. For reservations, e-mail ric.zarwell@mchsi.com or phone 563.538.4991. Inquire about cost when making reservations.
Dec. 10 – Thurs.	Board Meeting and Regular Meeting	Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 1755 Delhi, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm – Board Meeting 7:00 pm –
Dec. 11 – Fri.	Capture Dubuque Photo Contest	3:30 pm at Swiss Valley Nature Center. Final deadline for submitting entries in the Capture Dubuque Photo Contest. See article elsewhere in the newsletter.
Jan. 2, 2010 – Sat.	Christmas Bird Count	Place this date in your calendar. Plan to join us for this premier birding experience.
Jan. 23, 2010 – Sat.	Bald Eagle Day	Grand River Center and Lock and Dam 11. Activities all day. Plan now to attend.



NOVEMBER PROGRAM

By Michele Zuercher

Birds, Butterflies, and Beasties in

Paraguay will be presented Thursday, November 12, 2009, 7 p.m. at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, downstairs at 1755 Delhi St., Dubuque, Iowa. The Audubon Society will be hosting Gerald Zuercher, Associate Professor of Vertebrate Ecology at the University of Dubuque. Dr. Zuercher has studied wildlife in Paraguay since 1997 and will share some of the biological diversity of the South American country. **Everyone is invited!**

CAPTURE DUBUQUE PHOTO CONTEST

By Joe Tollari

Once again, the Dubuque County Conservation Board is sponsoring the Capture Dubuque Photo Contest. The entry deadline is December 11, 2009. The Adult and Junior categories are: Wildlife, People in Nature, Plants, and Vistas. Photos must be taken in Dubuque County Conservation Board areas, e.g. Bankston Park, Fillmore, Finley's Landing, Graf Park, Heritage Trail, Heritage Pond, IPC Forest Preserve, Little Maquoketa River Mounds, Massey Marina, Mud Lake, New Wine Park, Pohlman Prairie, Ringneck Ridge, Swiss Valley, Whitewater Canyon. Write your name, phone, and location photo was taken on the back of the photo. No more than two entries per category per person, postmarked by December 11th, 2009. Photos must be 8X10, do not matte or mount photo. Pictures will not be returned unless accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelope. Members and employees of DCCB, the judging team, and their immediate families will not be eligible for this contest. Individuals whose main source of income is photography are not eligible for this contest. The DCCB reserves the right to display photos in public areas, newsletters, or any other publications. Each photo must be accompanied by a separate, completed entry form. Copies of the form are acceptable and can be obtained by calling 563.556.6745. The DCCB reserves the right to make any and all decisions regarding interpretation of rules. The 2008 winning photographs can be viewed at

www.dubuqu county.org/conservation/calendarofevents.

IOWA'S WATER AND LAND LEGACY COALITION

By Charlie Winterwood

The Board of the Dubuque Audubon Society voted to join the Iowa's Water and Land Legacy Coalition. This coalition is conducting a public education campaign about the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund which will provide a permanent and constitutionally protected funding source for Iowa's natural resources - to improve our diverse natural environment and outdoor recreational opportunities.

In November of 2010 Iowans will vote on a constitutional amendment that will designate 3/8 of one cent of the NEXT sales tax increase toward the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. This would provide \$150 million dollars per year in permanent funding that would be allocated as follows:

- Resource Enhancement and Protection: \$20 million additional funds for the present fund that is supported by the popular Goldfinch, Bald Eagle, and Pheasant license plates
- Local Conservation Partnership Programs: \$20 million total with \$12 million available to county conservation boards, \$3 million to cities, and \$5 million to nongovernmental organizations such as Audubon for local conservation projects
- Lakes Restoration: \$20 million
- Trails: \$15 million for new hiking, biking, and water trails
- Natural Resources Management: \$35 million for state parks, non-game wildlife programs and private landowner-public access partnerships
- Agriculture and Land Stewardship: \$30 million for soil conservation and watershed protection



The Dubuque Audubon Society also voted to donate \$100 this year and \$100 next year to support the public education campaign about the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Fund.

OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

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

President: Pat Fisher 563-556-5814
V-Pres.:
Secretary: Roseann Wiederholt 608-748-4770
Treasurer: Maggie O'Connell 563-923-4308
At-Large Board Members:
Jenny Ammon
Wayne Buchholtz
Joe Ingram
Nita Wiederaenders
Charlie Winterwood
Michele Zuercher
Field Trips: Charlie Winterwood 563-588-2783
Membership: Nita Wiederaenders 563-583-0537
Conservation: Wayne Buchholtz 563-582-7215
Programs: Michele Zuercher 563-557-3021
Newsletter & Iowa Liaison: Joe Tollari 563-583-2077
Web Master: Jan Friedman: janfrdmn@yahoo.com
Web site: www.audubondubuque.org
Editor: Lois Theisen: ltheisen@mchsi.com

Winter Bird Feeding
Wayne Buchholtz/Conservation

In the, Midwest winter is a difficult time for birds. Days are often windy and cold; nights are long and even colder. The vegetation that held berries and nuts during the summer and fall has been eaten by animals or has dried up. Those birds that depend on insects have migrated south since their food source has died or gone dormant for the winter months.

Birds can have a difficult time finding food during the winter, especially if the snow becomes deep and the extreme cold cause's food to freeze. Setting up a backyard bird feeder makes their lives easier and ours more enjoyable. By placing feeders in the right location you can observe birds from the comfort of own home.

During the spring and summer months, the diet of most songbirds is composed mainly of insects and spiders. During fall and winter, however, non-migratory songbirds must shift their diets to fruits and seeds to survive. This is the time of year when you should set out a thanksgiving feast for the birds. The question is what should you serve? Stores have so many types of seeds, suet cakes, and so forth that it becomes as difficult to pick the food as it is to pick the feeder. You may find the task of selecting the best

foods a bit overwhelming. One key to attracting a large variety of bird species is to provide a variety of food types. But, you do not need to purchase one of everything

The seeds that attract the greatest number of species are black-oil sunflower. These seeds are nutritious and high in fat and their small size and thin shells make them easy for small birds to handle and crack. Striped sunflower seeds are larger and have a thicker seed coat. .

Nijer, or thistle seed, is a delicacy for small finches such as goldfinches, siskins, and redpolls. Because nijer seeds are small and expensive, it's best to offer them in a special nijer feeder, which has tiny ports that prevent the seeds from spilling out.

Safflower is another seed that many birds like—most notably, cardinals. As an added bonus, it has limited appeal to starlings and House Sparrows (non-native species), and squirrels.

Corn is a favorite food for jays, pigeons, doves, quail, and pheasants. It is perhaps the least expensive of all birdseeds. Cracked corn, however, is easier to eat for blackbirds, finches, and sparrows. Peanuts are another readily available food that many backyard birds will eat. Millet comes in red and white varieties, but most birds prefer white millet over red.

All the seeds mentioned will and do attract a variety of bird species. It is best to purchase small quantities to start. See what eats each type of seed. Some seed may not be touched at all. It is often wasteful to fill a feeder with a standard mix—a blend of sunflower, milo, millet, oats, wheat, flax, and buckwheat seeds— since your visitors may eat the prized sunflower seeds and leave the rest. Some of the seed like corn or cracked corn can lead to attracting undesirable birds to your feeds.

The best thanksgiving dinner to serve your birds is several different kinds of seed, each in their own feeder. Don't forget the suet and suet cakes that fit nicely into prepared cages that can be purchased with them.

The last thing that you should provide along with the seed is water. Try and provide a source of water for the birds to drink and bathe in. A bird feeder with a heater works well. I have even used a heated dog dish. Remember to place a rock in the middle as the dishes are quite deep. If you want to think bigger, plan on constructing a pond in your backyard and put a stock tank heater in during the winter. You can also have the added benefit of having gold fish to watch all year long as well. Now you can have fun watching the birds from the comfort of your own home.

Dubuque Audubon Society
Lois Theisen, Editor
PO Box 3174
Dubuque IA 52004-3174

Non-Profit Organization
US Postage Paid
Permit #164
Dubuque IA 52001

Return Service Requested

Have A
Great
Thanksgiving



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 Drummings.

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 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 _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

CODE: C9ZH500Z

Mail check payable to Dubuque Audubon Society. Mail to:
Dubuque Audubon Society
PO Box 3174
Dubuque, IA 52001