



PILEATED DRUMMING

Dubuque Audubon Society

VOL. XXXVIII—NO. 1

FEBRUARY, 2010

Published monthly exc Jan., July, Aug.

www.audubondubuque.org

Now is the time to get out and see winter birds!

By Pat Fisher

Now is the time to get out and see winter birds! My husband, Dave, and I were slowly driving country roads looking for birds. We first spotted crows flying up from a field recently spread with manure. On closer examination, we saw horned larks. Mixed in with the larks were Lapland longspurs! This was our first look at longspurs, so we were very excited. It was a good, close look, so we could make a positive identification. On another section of road, we saw American tree sparrows and juncos feeding at the grassy edge.

I hope everyone spent some time at the Bald Eagle Watch. It was a fun-filled, educational event, truly an event that we can be proud to be a part of! From the eyes of my 3-year-old granddaughter, here were the highlights:

- a stamp on her hand saying “reduce, reuse, recycle” from the Dubuque Metropolitan Area Solid Waste Agency,
- playing a bird memory matching game with naturalist Jenny Ammon from Swiss Valley Nature Center,
- building an eagle’s nest with BIG sticks provided by E. B. Lyons Nature Center,
- seeing a live salamander from the River Museum,
- listening to the talking eagle at the Wild Birds Unlimited table,
- and of course, seeing the real eagle at the program by the University of Minnesota Raptor Center.



Maggie O’Connell Uses Spotting Scope

None of this could have happened without the dedication and hard work of many Audubon members. Special thanks to Nita Wiederaenders, Joe Tollari, Maggie O’Connell, Roseann Wiederholt, Michele Zuercher, Nancy Wright, Sally Ryan, Joe Ingram, Charles Ryan, Dave Fisher, Jenny Ammon, Charlie Winterwood, and Wayne Buchholtz. Collaboration with our many community partners, including our newest partner, Team Dubuque, has made this event a favorite in the community.

(Continued on Page 2...)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Continued from Page 1...

Looking ahead in Audubon: The Duck Waddle fieldtrip to Green Island is right around the corner. (See details in the calendar.) **That means the sure signs of spring in the birding world, ducks, red-winged blackbirds, bluebirds, and robins will be gracing the tri-state area in short order.** Just thinking of these beauties makes my heart sing. Before you know it, we'll be out counting warblers at the Spring Bird Count! Hooray! Don't miss the monthly programs. Our speakers have been fascinating! Hope to see you in February!

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

By Michele Zuercher

On Thursday, February 11, 2010, at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, downstairs, 1755 Delhi St., Dubuque, Iowa, Dr. Dale Easley, professor at the University of Dubuque, will present a program entitled *Global Warming: A Geologist's Perspective*. Dr. Easley will discuss global warming and climatic changes which have been taking place for millions of years. From that geologic perspective it is clear that warming and cooling cycles have occurred previously and that humans are very likely speeding the rate of current warming. Everyone is invited!

CONSERVATION CORNER

By Wayne Buchholtz/Conservation Chair

Ever wonder where the name *Pileated Drumblings* for the newsletter comes from?

There is a cartoon bird named Woody Wood Pecker that many of you have seen. This particular bird was patterned after the Pileated Woodpecker. This is a



bird with a bright red head with a red tuft on top. The rest of its body is black and white. That is a common description of many of our woodpeckers in the Midwest, but what makes this woodpecker unusual

is that it is about the size of a crow. Males and females

are similar, but males have a red forehead, and females have a gray to yellowish brown forehead. The Pileated Woodpecker is about 15 inches in length and is the largest woodpecker found in North America. They eat insects, fruits, and nuts. A large part of its diet is made up of carpenter ants and beetle larvae. It uses its sharp bill to pull bark off a tree to expose ant colonies. It



uses its long, sticky tongue to poke into holes and drag out the ants. It also digs out large rectangular holes in trees to create roosting and nesting spots and to expose insects. These excavations are normally about 3 inches wide and 6-8 inches high and can be all the way

causing it to fall over.

The Pileated Woodpecker "drums" on hollow trees with its bill to claim territory. It also has a call that sounds faintly like a monkey. Now you know. Therefore, when you see that large woodpecker or hear a monkey in the woods you will know you what it is and will not have to wonder if you saw what you thought you saw. It is a good time to go birding. The photo of the hole and wood chips were taken near the wetland at the Mines of Spain



AUDUBON COFFEE SPECIAL FOR FEBRUARY

By Dave Fisher

From now until the end of February, if you buy two bags of Audubon Coffee you will get a third bag free. Coffee will be available at our next Audubon meeting on February 11, or you can order by calling Dave on his cell phone: 563-542-0864. Regular is \$8 and Decaf is \$8.50. What a bargain! In addition, of course, freshly brewed Audubon Premium Shade Grown Coffee is served at DAS monthly meetings. So enjoy a steamy mug, notice the difference, and get a free bag of coffee with purchase.

DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February, 2010

Feb. 11 – Thurs.	Global Warming: A Geologist's Perspective	Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 1755 Delhi, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Program: Global Warming: A Geologist's Perspective is presented by Dr. Dale Easley. 8:00 pm – Birding in Paraguay informational meeting with Dr. Gerry Zuercher
Feb 12 – Feb 15	Great Backyard Bird Count	Plan on participating in this fun event which you can do from the warm comfort of your home. Refer to the article on page 6 of the newsletter. You can also go to www.birdsource.org/gbbc/ to watch an informational video and learn about the photo contest.
Feb. 13 – Sat.	Eco Expo Grow Green	10:00 am-1:00 pm at Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Rd. Keep Dubuque County Clean & Green is proud to present a FREE eco education day for all ages and stages. Exhibitors are Winter Farmers Market, Garden Organic, KDCCG, IDNR, Dubuque County Conservation Board, Audubon, DMASWA, Green Dubuque, Upper Catfish Creek Watershed Coalition, Arboretum, Ion Seed Exchange, Steve's Ace, Sierra Club and more!
Feb 14 – Sun.	Raptor ID	1:00 pm at Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Rd. Break valentine tradition and ditch the wine/flowers/chocolate...instead join your naturalist for a hands-on identification program. Bring your love to the Swiss Valley Nature Center for Raptor ID.
Feb 20 – Sat	Owl Prowl	6:00 pm at Hurstville Interpretive Center, 18670 63 rd St., Maquoketa, IA Hooting for a good time? Learn how to tell one hoot from another and then head outside to do some owl calling! Dress for the weather. All ages welcome!
Mar. 11 –Thurs.		Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 1755 Delhi, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Program:
Mar. 13 – Sat.	Annual Duck Waddle	6:00 am – Leave the parking lot at Banworth and Udelhoven Furniture Store. If you miss our departure, meet us at Green Island. 8:30 am – Breakfast at Rivervue Café in Bellevue, Iowa (Time approximate)

E COTOUR OF PARAGUAY

By Michele Zuercher

Paraguay, with its tropical/subtropical latitude and multiple habitats, is a birding paradise. The Dubuque Audubon Society is invited to develop a “Birding and Biodiversity Ecotour of Paraguay”.

The dates would be 7 August through 22 August (16 days) broken down as follows:

- 2 days – travel to Paraguay from Dubuque;
- 4 days – birding in the Chaco region of Paraguay;
- 4 days – birding in the Mbaracayu Forest Biosphere Reserve;
- 3 days – a visit to the Iguasu Falls (Brazil/Argentina border);
- 1 day – in Asuncion, Paraguay (many options here including some birding in Asuncion Bay);
- 2 days – travel from Paraguay to Dubuque.

Interested persons could arrive later or depart earlier because Asuncion is the hub for all activities and we will be there every 4 days. It would require some careful planning. August is in the middle of the southern hemisphere winter. For Asuncion, Paraguay, this means an average high temperature of 78° F, and average low temperature of 57° F, and an average humidity of 66%. Of course, variation does occur, not only from year-to-year, but also from region to region within Paraguay. The Chaco region and Mbaracayu Reserve will likely be warmer than Asuncion. Either site may be wetter or drier depending on El Niño conditions. An informational meeting for all of those interested will occur after Dale Easley’s presentation on February 11 at the regularly scheduled Audubon Society meeting. Gerry Zuercher will be available at about 8:00 pm to discuss details of this adventure.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT 2010

By Charlie Winterwood and Joe Tollari

On January 2, 2010, sixteen members of the Dubuque Audubon Society completed the 2009 Christmas Bird Count. With temperatures hovering between -9° F and 4° F, you can understand why we did most of our birding from cars. We logged 225 miles by car and only 7.5 miles on foot. **At the end of the day, we counted 2,958 individuals in 48 species.** Here are the results of the

count. (The notation “cw” means that the species was spotted during the count week not on the actual day of the count.)

Canada Goose	205
Am. Black Duck	1
Mallard	159
Common Goldeneye	2
Common Merganser	cw
Ring-necked Pheasant	1
Wild Turkey	74
Great Blue Heron	3
Bald Eagle	42
Cooper’s Hawk	4
Red-tailed Hawk	55
Rough-legged Hawk	5
American Kestrel	6
Ring-billed Gull	30
Rock Pigeon	87
Mourning Dove	27
Barred Owl	2
Belted Kingfisher	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	50
Downy Woodpecker	78
Hairy Woodpecker	19
Northern Flicker	5
Pileated Woodpecker	2
Blue Jay	95
American Crow	135
Horned Lark	2
Black-capped Chickadee	224
Tufted Titmouse	29
White-breasted Nuthatch	68
Brown Creeper	5
Carolina Wren	2
Winter Wren	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1
Eastern Bluebird	4
American Robin	1
European Starling	366
Cedar Waxwing	34
American Tree Sparrow	92
Fox Sparrow	cw
Song Sparrow	13
White-throated Sparrow	1
Dark-eyed Junco	312
Lapland Longspur	1
Northern Cardinal	189
House Finch	86
Pine Siskin	1
American Goldfinch	94
House Sparrow	344

MIDWINTER BALD EAGLE SURVEY

Eighty (80) Bald Eagles were counted on January 9, 2010 in western Dubuque County and eastern Delaware County. There were 52 adults, 19 immature birds, and 9 of unknown age.

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

flower seed. Grass seed will also be contributed by the Iowa DNR's Wildlife Bureau.

The project area will be located in the extreme southern end of the Mines of Spain Recreation Area. Since 1982 the park has had fields leased out for farming. Over the years the fields have been reduced in acreage and the last 50 acres has been taken out of production. These fields will be restored back to tall grass prairie. With this planting, the entire park will consist of native habitats. The habitats include prairie, upland forest, lowland forest, a wetland and streams. The fields were prepared for planting last fall and seeding is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2010. The seed mix will be comprised of eight grass species and 60 flower species native to the area. When this project is completed, the park will have approximately 350 acres of tall grass prairie. **For further information on this grant and the prairie project contact Wayne Buchholtz, Park Ranger at 563-556-0620.**

COLLABORATIVE FUNDING

By Wayne Buchholtz, Conservation Chair

The Dubuque Audubon Society recently received word that they were awarded a National Audubon Society Collaborative Funding Grant. The grant is for the amount of \$850.00. The grant will assist in the planting of tall grass prairie at the Mines of Spain Recreation Area.

The grant specifically required the Dubuque Audubon Society to partner with other organizations as part of the project. Partners in the project will include the Mines of Spain Recreation Area, Friends of the Mines of Spain, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Pheasants for Ever and local community schools. The funds will assist in the purchasing of wild flower seeds and will supplement seed purchased by Pheasant Forever. The Mines of Spain had over 300 students from several Dubuque Schools collect grass seed last fall from existing prairies in the park. Many other volunteers and members of the Friends of the Mines of Spain also assisted in the collection of grass and



Students collecting prairie seed at the Mines of Spain Recreation Area

Photo by Wayne Buchholtz

BREW UP SOME GOOD READING ABOUT COFFEE

By Dave Fisher

If you enjoy reading about coffee, Dave, the Dubuque Audubon coffee guy, is willing to share books from his coffee library with DAS members. The following titles are available: Uncommon Grounds by Mark Pendergrast. Coffee Basics: A Quick and Easy Guide by Knox and Huffaker. Three titles by Kenneth Davids: Coffee: A Guide to Buying, Brewing, and Enjoying, Espresso: Ultimate Coffee, and Home Coffee Roasting: Romance and Revival. If you would be interested in reading any of these books, just contact Dave.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

By Joe Tollari

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event February 12-15, 2010, that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent and in Hawaii. Anyone can participate, from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as 15 minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event.

Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count. You can count for longer than that if you wish! Count birds in as many places and on as many days as you like—one day, two days, or all four days. Submit a separate checklist for each new day. You can also submit more than one checklist per day if you count in other locations on that day. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time. **When you're finished, enter your results at www.birdsource.org**

Last year, I participated for the first time. In the period leading up to the count, there had been considerable bird activity in my backyard especially a late afternoon feeding frenzy. For the first three days, I sat down at the window, pulled out my binoculars, and ... nothing. In fact, there wasn't much activity at any time of the day. On the last day, I happened to walk by a window and saw what I thought was an odd looking finch at the feeder. On closer look, the odd finches turned out to be 5 Common Redpolls. I knew that they had been showing up at feeders in the Dubuque area, and I

had been on the lookout for them. That afternoon, was the only time they visited my feeders.

Suddenly, a handful of the usual birds showed up

(juncos, chickadees, house finches, Mourning Doves, and a Downy Woodpecker). I counted for the required 15 minutes, went to the web site to

report my count, and suddenly became a GBBC veteran! I am now hooked.

I do recommend that you go to the web site before the event. There is a great deal of information which will increase your enjoyment. You might be interested in participating in the photo contest or just look at the winners from last year. Have fun.

Sandhill Crane Migration Focus of 40th Annual Rivers and Wildlife Celebration by Kevin Poague, Audubon Nebraska

The 40th annual Rivers and Wildlife Celebration will be held March 18-21, 2010, in Kearney, Nebraska. Organized by Audubon Nebraska and the Nebraska Bird Partnership, the conference gathers together nature enthusiasts from across the county to witness the migration of over half a million sandhill cranes and millions of waterfowl and other birds through central Nebraska. Events include guided field trips, a photography workshop, a family fun room, and daily visits to river blinds operated by Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary for up-close views of cranes roosting on the Platte River.

Local and national speakers will present information on a variety of wildlife and conservation topics. Main speakers are Scott Weidensaul, author of more than two dozen natural history books, including *Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds*, a Pulitzer Prize finalist; Mike Forsberg, nature photographer and author of *Great Plains: America's Lingerin Wild*; Ron Klataske, executive director of Audubon of Kansas; and Chris Wood, eBird Project Leader, Cornell Lab of Ornithology. More than twenty local environmental organizations will have information booths and free hands-on activities on Saturday for families.

The celebration is open to the general public. Registration materials can be found at www.nebraska.audubon.org. Or contact Audubon Nebraska to be put on the mailing list: Nebraska@audubon.org; 402/797-2301. Rowe Sanctuary has information about viewing the sandhill crane migration, 308/468-5282; www.rowsanctuary.org.



DECEMBER PROGRAM REVIEWED

By Michele Zuercher

Our December speaker was Barbara Baird who presented *Iceland: Land of Fire and Ice*. This presentation was an overview of the landscape and wildlife. She discussed the absence of pollution through their dependence on geothermal energy. With much of the country's interior having been deforested long ago, a mossy-like carpet prevails amongst the rocky terrain, hot springs, waterfalls, and mountains. Iceland is home to half the world's Atlantic puffins. These birds live in burrows as monogamous pairs, laying only one egg each year. Some of the other birds include Razorbill, Yellow-mouth Guillemot, Great Skua, Northern Fulmar, and the Black-headed Gull. Last, but not least, are the sheep; they outnumber people four to one.

JANUARY PROGRAM REVIEWED

By Michele Zuercher

Our January speaker was Dr. Richard Van Iten who presented *A Design for a Comprehensive Environmental Ethic*. He proposed an environmental "code" toward natural systems based on the principles and understanding of nature. It encompasses the thoughts on how a community group's current state of knowledge relates to what the group ought to do through policy based on their goals of sustainability. In part, the "code" would combine what we know (realism) with what we'd like (idealism). One strategy would emphasize reaching people at the level of self so they will think about the community as a whole to reach their vision.

Help Smaller Birds Beat Their Winter Woes

From Wild Birds Unlimited.

Normally, birds that come to feeders obtain only about 20% of their daily calories from food offered in feeders; the rest come from natural food sources. In contrast, during periods of cold weather, your birds may use your feeders to load up on calories as a means of survival. This winter, you can help smaller birds, such as finches, chickadees and nuthatches, by offering food in feeders that are designed to meet their needs. These feeders not only cater to smaller birds, but they also discourage larger, more intimidating birds, such as pigeons, starlings and grackles

Don't Miss Audubon's Live Webcast with Author of Birds & Climate Report

<http://www.audubon.org/bird/bacc/webcast.html>

It's not too late to register — we hope you'll join us for our live webcast featuring Birds and Climate report coauthor Dr. Greg Butcher, Audubon's Director of Bird Conservation. Don't miss this opportunity to hear first hand how you can help birds survive this urgent threat.

Join us for the webcast.

WHAT: A *live* webcast with Dr. Greg Butcher as he reviews the groundbreaking report *Birds and*

Climate Change: Ecological Disruption in Motion. The webcast will feature an interactive slideshow and presentation, followed by questions and answers.

WHEN: February 20 at 1 PM EST/10 AM PST

More Information

We wish we could send Dr. Butcher to communities across the country, but since we can't, we wanted to offer the next best thing. The webcast will be a live event that you watch and listen to on your computer. All you need is an internet connection and computer speakers — there's no special software to install. This is your chance to hear from — and ask questions of — one of Audubon's top bird scientists. Can't make the webcast? Don't worry! An archive of the event will be available on our website.

[Join Us!](#)



Dr. Greg Butcher, Audubon's Director of Bird Conservation, will give you an inside look into his groundbreaking report, *Birds and Climate Change: Ecological Disruption in Motion*, live at **1 PM EST/10 AM PST TODAY, February 20.**

[Join the live webcast.](#)

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

Non-Profit Organization
US Postage Paid
Dubuque, IA 52001
Permit # 459



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: C0ZH500Z

Mail check payable to Dubuque Audubon Society. Mail to:
Dubuque Audubon Society
PO Box 3174
Dubuque, IA 52004-3174