



# PERLEATED DRUMMING

*Dubuque Audubon Society*

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## **S**pring Miracles By Pat Fisher

Spring is my favorite season. There is always something new to marvel over. A few weeks ago the robins and red-wing blackbirds arrived in full force. Now there are red-wing blackbirds on every wire, setting up their territory in preparation for nesting. Killdeers are singing their names for all to hear. I saw a flock of 50 turkey vultures lazily circling on their return from the south. Eagles are amassing in large groups as they return north for nesting. These may be ho-hum birds by the end of summer, but they sure provide a pick-me-up when they first return.



The break-up of the ice on the Mississippi River is another marvel: frozen one day and broken up and free-flowing the next. And floating among the ice chunks is every kind of duck that migrates through our area. Those ducks must be right on the edge of the ice waiting for it to break up! Before we know it, we'll have warblers announcing their presence as they migrate through.

As I write this, I'm in Seattle where spring is in full bloom. Flowering trees, shrubs, and lots of flowers are making everything look stunning and smell wonderful. This is a wonderful preview of what is right around the corner in the Midwest.

(Continued on Page 2...)

# PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Continued from Page 1...

If you have been hibernating all winter, get your binoculars out and get ready to see some beautiful birds. The spring bird count is Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. Mark your calendars now, so you don't miss it!

## APRIL PROGRAM

BY Michele Zuercher

**Jon Stavers presents *A Tale of Two Extremes: Observations from the Tropical and Polar Regions.*** Jon worked with his brother for a summer on the glacial geology of the Meta Incognita Peninsula of southern Baffin Island, while also spending the days birding and avoiding wildlife (**Northern Phalaropes, Arctic Loons, Polar Bears**).

He also spent six weeks in the tropical highland jungles of Costa Rica where his daughter lived for two years during her work with the Peace Corps (**Swallow-tailed Kites, Prothonotary Warblers, Montezumas Oropendulas and raptor migrations of 10,000 bird per hour**).

## MARCH PROGRAM REVIEWED

BY Michele Zuercher

**Our March speaker was Billy Reiter-Marolf who presented *Time Flies When You're Atlasing: An Update on Iowa's 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas.*** By identifying the particular kinds of breeding birds for contribution to the atlas, a couple of the goals are to provide a baseline for future comparisons of changes and to evaluate the habitat availability in Iowa. As we better understand these species and their nesting areas, we can see how land policy changes can impact Iowa's birds. **Volunteers are needed to survey the square mile blocks by car. Directions, maps, and the ability of input your data are all available by visiting [bba.iowabirds.org](http://bba.iowabirds.org) or by contacting him at 515.298.3072. The Clinton, Dubuque, and Jackson counties' blockbusting weekend is June 19 and 20.**

## AUDUBON COFFEE IS FOR THE BIRDS

By David Fisher

Audubon Coffee is not only 100% organic and "fairly traded," but it's also "shade grown." With shade

grown coffee, trees are planted under the canopy of the tropical forests of Central and South America and Mexico. Growers harvest the bright red coffee "cherries" once because the beans grow slowly. This can create a bean with greater flavor.

In contrast to shade grown coffee, commercially grown coffee trees are often planted after the tropical forest with its protective canopy is cleared away. The coffee trees grow in full sun. The coffee cherries grow quickly and with some varieties of beans harvesters can pick twice a season. The result is a often a coffee bean suitable for massed produced or "canned coffee."

**So do these very different ways of growing coffee affect the birds we love? You betcha! Researchers in Columbia and Mexico have found that there are 94-97% fewer bird species in "full sun" coffee plantations than in shade coffee forests. What a huge difference!**

At the mid-elevations of Columbia, Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico most of the forests still standing are in traditional coffee plantations. These forests provide the last refuge for birds that have lost their habitat to the destruction of tropical forests.

**"Hummingbirds, swallows, warblers, orioles, tanagers and other migratory birds that breed in North America in the summer find abundant food and safe haven in the remaining forests of shade coffee plantations in the winter."**

"However, populations of migratory birds in North America have plunged dramatically over the past 25 years. Clear-cutting of forests for sun-coffee, lumber and cattle production has severely depleted these species' winter homes." (Seattle WA Audubon NW Shade Coffee Campaign: [www.shadecoffee.org](http://www.shadecoffee.org))

So when you enjoy Audubon Premium Shade Grown Coffee, you're not only drinking a richer, more flavorful cup, but also you're saving the tropical forest habitat and the many birds that depend on it.

**To order Audubon Shade Grown Coffee, call Dave at 563-542-0864. You can also buy Audubon Coffee at monthly meetings of the Dubuque Audubon Society where fresh coffee is served!**

# **D**UBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**April, 2010**

Apr. 8 – Thurs.	A Tale of Two Extremes: Observations from the Tropical and Polar Regions.	Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 1755 Delhi, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Program: John Stravers will speak on his work from Canada to Central America.
Apr. 9 – Fri.	Woodcock Walk	7:00 pm at Whitewater Canyon. Meet in the parking lot. Dubuque County Conservation Board naturalist, Jenny Ammon, will lead a walk looking and listening for the elusive American Woodcock. Woodcocks should be practicing their mating displays. Dress for the weather.
Apr. 11 – Sun.	Waterfowl Observation	1:00 pm at Hurstville Interpretive Center, 18670 63 <sup>rd</sup> St., Maquoketa, Join Charlie Winterwood and Bob Walton to view waterfowl at Hurstville Nature Center. Scopes will be provided.
Apr. 11 – Sun	Frogs and Toads	1:00 pm at Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Road. Tis the season for chirping birds, spring fever, and calling frogs. Come to the Swiss Valley Nature Center for an informative program on frogs and toads of Iowa. You will learn their calls, places to hear the singing amphibians, and how to identify them by sight.
May 2 – Sun.	The Birds and the Bees (Mostly Bees)	1:00 pm at Hurstville Interpretive Center, 18670 63 <sup>rd</sup> St., Maquoketa. Who helps make 1/3 of the food you eat? That job rests on the tiny shoulders of bees, butterflies (and a couple birds and even bats!). Join naturalist Ann Burns to learn some of the fascinating stories of pollinators and what you can do to make the world a better place for these friends of farmers and gardeners. Attendees can make a “bee box” to place in their yard or garden to invite native bees to their home. Pre-registration is required by April 19 to make a bee box. Cost for the bee box is \$2.00. Call 563-652-3783.
May 8 – Sat.	Spring Species Count	Mark the date on your calendar. More information will be coming in the next newsletter.
May 13 – Thurs.		Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 1755 Delhi, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Program:

## DUCK WADDLE 2010

By Joe Tollari

**Unpredictable weather is certainly a hallmark of March in Iowa. Fourteen watchers faced a persistent drizzle which made this the wettest Duck Waddle.** There were enough breaks in the drizzle to allow us to get out and set up spotting scopes, but much of our observations were made from our vehicles. **The lack of large expanses of open water forces the water fowl into the fields to feed. The ice layer, at times, gave us the illusion of Canada Geese walking on water.** One unusual observation occurred in the parking lot before we left Dubuque. As we were milling about deciding on carpooling, a red fox came up over the hill, ran toward us, and veered off at the last moment. It was a fun experience. Below is a list of the 30 species we observed on the 2010 Duck Waddle.

Am. White Pelican	Hooded Merganser
Great Blue Heron	Bald Eagle
Gr. White-fronted Goose	Northern Harrier
Snow Goose	American Coot
Canada Goose	Sandhill Crane
Cackling Goose	Ring-billed Gull
Wood Duck	Herring Gull
Green-winged Teal	Rock Pigeon
Am. Black Duck	Rd-bell'd Woodpecker
Mallard	Pileated Woodpecker
Northern Pintail	American Crow
Blue-winged Teal	American Robin
Northern Shoveler	Song Sparrow
Gadwall	Rd-winged Blackbird
American Wigeon	Eastern Meadowlark

## CALLS FOR A PRESCRIPTION FOR OUTDOOR TIME FOR KIDS

**DES MOINES, Iowa - Iowa doctors are joining 200 national groups in asking the U.S. Surgeon General to make more time outdoors a national health priority for children. The United States is battling high rates of child obesity, which a new study says is largely because the average child is so sedentary.**

Kevin Coyle, vice president for education and training with the *National Wildlife Federation*, says research from the *Kaiser Family Foundation* found

that the average American child spends more than seven hours a day staring at television or computer screens.

"That's really a very shocking number, when you consider that many kids are spending less than a few minutes a day playing outdoors."

**Coyle says they're asking parents to build a "green hour" into each day, at least sixty minutes daily devoted to outdoor play.**

**"Just simple things like taking a walk, playing in the backyard, backyard scavenger hunts, getting out and doing some fishing."**

Many believe that too much screen time also has a social cost, he adds.

"Kids are not getting out and learning how to play with one another and form partnerships and to work with each other in teams and that kind of thing."

**While kids in Iowa may have more opportunities for outdoor activity than in many other states, the childhood obesity rate has more than doubled over the last three decades. Coyle says that's only one symptom of less outdoor play time. He says too much screen time has also led to increases in nearsightedness, attention-deficit issues, and vitamin D deficiency.**

More ideas for outdoor activities can be found at [greenhour.org](http://greenhour.org)

[The Kaiser study is at www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org)



Hooded Merganser

**OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS**

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

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**DELBERT ERNZEN MEMORIAL FOR DUBUQUE AUDUBON**  
By Pat Fisher

A sincere thank-you is extended to the Ernzen family for making a donation to the Dubuque Audubon Society in memory of Del Ernzen. The following letter was received and is being reprinted with permission.

Dear Members,

I'm writing this letter to let you know why the Audubon Society was chosen as a recipient of a memorial for my husband, Delbert Ernzen. He was a man interested in the birds of America and the comeback of the bald eagle and the whooping crane.

One of his favorite past-times in the summer and winter was feeding the birds and watching their antics out the back door. His favorite was the goldfinch when they would come to harvest the sunflower seeds.

He delighted in their antics and acrobatics as they obtained the seeds.

Another thing that gave him pleasure and pride was knowing that his son Peter was known as the Warbler Man of Iowa and his sighting of the long-tailed jaeger, which had not been seen in Iowa for over one hundred years and that it was documented by wildlife photographer, Don Poggensee of Ida Grove, Iowa.

Again, accept this check in his memory.

Sincerely,  
Phoebe Ernzen

**ATTRACTING BIRDS IN SPRING**

By Melissa Mayntz, About.com Guide

**Be an Early Bird**

The first step to attracting birds in spring is to be an early bird. The first migrating birds may appear as early as February, long before the snow is gone and flowers are blooming. Birders who act early to attract these initial migrants will establish their yard as a healthy, suitable habitat, and many times the first migrants may stay nearby throughout the spring and summer.

**How to Attract Birds in Spring**

The key to attracting birds in spring is to meet their needs after a long migration flight and as they prepare for the nesting season. Backyard birders who pay attention to birds' food, water, shelter and nesting requirements can be successful in attracting them.

**Food**

In the spring there are few berries, seeds or insects available for newly arrived migrating birds. Offering more birdfeeders with different types of birdseed will help nourish these birds, and keeping suet and other winter bird foods available will also help the birds recover from their long journeys. Hummingbird feeders should be put out at least two weeks before last year's first arrivals were spotted to be sure to attract the attention of early migrants, and all birdfeeders should be kept clean. For a natural food source, avoid raking dead leaves and lawns to allow birds to glean insects from the debris.



# **D**UBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY ANNUAL APPEAL By Joe Tollari

Again, the response to the annual appeal was overwhelming. Fifty-two members contributed \$2100. Your generosity will allow us to continue our mission to educate the public on bird conservation issues. The tri-state character of our chapter was apparent. We received contributions from members in Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin. Thank you for your generosity. Here is an alphabetical list of our contributors.

Jennifer Ackerman, Galena  
Margaret Adams, Platteville  
Connie Allendorf/Colleen Yonda, Galena  
Jenny Ammon, Dubuque  
Anonymous  
Marjorie Bierbrauer, Platteville  
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## **HELP YOUR BIRDS DURING NESTING SEASON**

**From Wild Birds Unlimited**

You can play a helpful, interactive role during this season by offering bird houses and nesting materials, possibly enticing some of the many cavity nesting birds to your backyard.

Providing bird houses can make your birds' lives a little easier. After all, they're expending lots of energy migrating, courting and looking for scarce food.

Birds often use string, yarn, feathers, straw, hair clippings, soft cloth strips, thread and even dog or cat fur to construct their nests. We have pre-packaged nesting materials that you can offer your birds to help them with their nest building



# **A** TTRACT BIRDS WITH NESTING MATERIAL

By Melissa Mayntz, About.com Guide

Spring is the perfect time to attract birds with nesting material, encouraging them to take up residence in your backyard. This gives birders the unique opportunity to see the entire life cycle of backyard birds, from courtship behavior to nest building to raising the young fledglings. With the right nesting material, you may even be able to attract several families of birds to your backyard.

## **Purpose of Nesting Material**

The term “nesting material” refers to anything that birds may use to construct a nest, whether they create a simple depression of sticks and straw or if they have a more elaborate type of nest structure with intricate architecture and widely varied materials. Regardless of the nest size or shape, the nesting material serves several purposes:

- Cushioning eggs from the ground and parents' weight
- Insulating eggs from temperature changes
- Holding the clutch together for heat efficiency
- Camouflaging the nest from predators
- Protecting the nest from the elements

To best protect their eggs, parent birds select nesting material carefully, and many birds use several types of material to construct a single nest.

## **Types of Nesting Material**

Different birds will use different materials to build their nests depending on the size of the nest, where it is constructed and how it will be used in terms of number of eggs, multiple broods and yearly reuse. Materials popular for building nests include:

- Twigs or sticks
- Dead leaves
- Grass clippings or dead grass
- Yarn, string or thread
- Human hair or animal fur
- Feathers
- Cattail fluff
- Moss or lichen
- Pine needles
- Mud
- Pebbles or small rocks
- Spider web silk
- Straw or other plant stems
- Dental floss

- Shredded paper
- Broom bristles or mop string
- Cotton balls

While some of these materials are available naturally in birds' environments, birders who wish to encourage their backyard birds to nest can provide supplementary sources of nesting material to attract birds.

## **How to Attract Birds With Nesting Material**

There are several ways to offer nesting material in the backyard to attract birds.

- Drape material over trees or shrubs near birdfeeders or sheltered spots where birds may build nests. Do not tie the material down, as the purpose is to allow birds to take it away.
- Use a clean suet cage or similar feeder design and fill it with nesting material. Hang this arrangement in a visible area where birds will notice it.
- Create small piles of nesting material in places where it won't blow away or be soaked in spring rains. A tray feeder can be temporarily used for this purpose.
- Fill a mesh bag or basket loosely with suitable nesting material. Be sure the mesh is wide enough for birds to extract the material, and hang it in a visible location.

For the best results, offer several types of nesting material in several different ways to appeal to different birds. *Joyce Cory*

## **WANTED: NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

**Dubuque Audubon Society is looking for a person to edit the *Pileated Drummings* newsletter. There are nine issues each year. All work is done through e-mail. Articles are submitted as Word documents. The editor is responsible for layout and selection of graphics. The completed newsletter is sent to the printer by e-mail. Fee is negotiable. Contact Pat Fisher at [elkrun2@gmail.com](mailto:elkrun2@gmail.com) or 563-556-5814.**

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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**

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

**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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