



PILEATED DRUMMING

Dubuque Audubon Society

VOL. XXXVIII—NO. 8

November 2010

Published monthly exc Jan., July, Aug.

www.audubondubuque.org

Treasures in Our Midst! By Pat Fisher

We are so fortunate to live in the tri-state area with two wonderful nature centers. Recently, we enjoyed the Swiss Valley Nature Center with our two little granddaughters. It was a discovery of flora and fauna, with new delights every few steps. There was even an element of fear with the ferocious-looking bears. Everything is exciting through the eyes of a child!

We are looking forward to exploring the newly remodeled E. B. Lyons Nature Center at the Mines of Spain with these same little girls. Having toured the center at the open house, we can't wait to explore the nooks and crannies with a child in tow.

If you haven't been in these nature centers, you are in store for a treat. Visit soon and visit often, and whenever possible, take along a young person to introduce them to the wonders of nature.

While visiting, allow some time to walk the trails. With the leaves down, wonderful vistas are exposed. I have been doing some trail walking and have seen my first juncos of the season. By the time you read this, they may be back in full force. I also saw some red-breasted nuthatches at Whitewater Canyon. Both birds mark the change of seasons. So get out and enjoy the crisp fall weather while the trails are still free of snow.

Inside the new Jane Ward Bird Observation Room at the Lyons Nature Center, you will see the computer birding program that was purchased with the Del Erzen memorial.

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Treasures in Our Midst!

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Calling all you computer-savvy people out there!

We would love to recruit a few people who love computers and also love birds who would spend a little time with this new program learning all the ins and outs. Then we could schedule some programs to teach others more timid with computers how to use this program to increase their birding knowledge. If you are interested, call me and let me know so that I can compile a list of "birding computer experts". You can reach me at 563-556-5814. Please let me hear from you.

This is a great way to familiarize ourselves with bird song. We all know that we hear many more birds than we see. Learning bird songs increases our enjoyment of the outdoors because we know which birds are around us even when we don't have our binoculars with us (or have binoculars but can't locate the birds). We will definitely use this program for our own membership to learn warbler songs prior to our spring bird count. And we would love to share our love of birds with others thru the technology that is so much a part of our world.



Cedar Waxwing
-Stephen Baird

CARBON TAX OR TAXED CONSCIENCE

By Richard Fischer

A chance to cross the equator, see the southern cross and experience a foreign country; all good reasons to fly 10,000 miles. But combine them with seeing over 130 new species of birds, accompanied by knowledgeable, friendly, informative guides and fellow birders and travelers, and there was no excuse

for not traveling from Dubuque to Asuncion, Paraguay except one, Global Warming.

What would my carbon footprint look like if I spent sixteen days on planes and vans? To answer this I went to several carbon footprint calculators and discovered that the van rides, because we filled most seats, was almost carbon neutral or similar to my daily use at home. Depending on which calculator I used and how I entered my flights, I discovered that I would be responsible for releasing 1.82 to 5.567 tons of Green House Gas into the atmosphere (tCO₂e).

I looked for an offset for this and discovered a review of various organizations and companies that would be happy to allow me to pay a carbon tax. The following website provided a review of and recommendations for various carbon traders:

<http://www.tufts.edu/tie/carbonoffsets/ratings.htm>.

I chose CarbonFund.org and paid \$49.21 or about \$10 per ton to offset the tCO₂e generated by my flight. This price also included something called radiative forcing. This is the effect on solar absorption or reflection caused by contrails; those gas trails, visible or not, left in the sky by aircraft. Our trip topped out at 40,000 feet with an outside temperature near -50° F. Hence, I was not only putting 1.82 tCO₂e into the atmosphere, but was doing so at altitudes that caused it to be equal to placing 4.92 tCO₂e into the atmosphere at the surface.

So what happened to the \$49.21 I paid? About \$2.00 went into sending me a bumper sticker and an e-mailed certificate saying I did an offset. About \$3.00 went to paying administrative cost for the CarbonFund.org, \$0.50 went to fund raising, and \$45.75 went to purchase land in Brazil that would be placed into protected status so that it could not be harvested, cut, or deforested for 20 years. Preventing deforestation is one way to allow more carbon to be sequestered, in this case over the next 20 years the plants on the purchased land will absorb 4.92 tCO₂e.

When I watched the first of the Bobolinks leave this year, I wondered if they would find a small patch of land in Brazil to rest on during their Neotropical migration – if not a Bobolink, perhaps a Purple Martin.

DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November, 2010

Nov. 11 – Thurs.	DUB AUDUBON PROGRAM: Gladys Black – Iowa’s Bird Lady	EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Hts, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Program: Larry Stone will speak on the legendary Iowa bird watcher, Gladys Black.
Nov. 14 – Sun.	Bird Feeder Workshop	1:00 pm at Hurstville Interpretive Center, 18670 63 rd St., Maquoketa. Get ready to feed your winter visitors! This workshop will provide the materials and instruction to build your own bird feeder for your yard. We’ll discuss what types of seed attract which birds and how to keep them safe and healthy! Registration required by Nov. 8 to prepare materials. Cost: \$7
Nov. 27 – Sat.	Toddling into Owls	9:00 am Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Rd., Peosta. This program is for children ages 3-4 accompanied by an adult. We will get to hike and call owls, talk about owl adaptations, and discuss how owls help keep rodent population under control. Join us for this awesomely owls program! Please dress for the weather and call to register. 563.556.6745
Dec, 9 – Thurs.	DUB AUDUBON PROGRAM: Paraguay Adventure	EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Hts, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Program:
Dec. 18 – Sat.	Christmas Bird Count	Mark your calendars now. There will be more on this event in the next issue of <u>Pileated Drummings</u> .
Jan. 15, 2011	Bald Eagle Watch	Save the date. More information next month.
Feb. 18-21, 2011	Great Backyard Bird Count	Set the bird feeders up and be prepared for this fun bird experience that everyone can enjoy.

Correction: In the last issue, the computer and bird song program at the E.B. Lyons Interpretive Center were incorrectly attributed. The computer and program were purchased with funds from the Delbert Ernzen memorial. We apologize for the error.

HAWKWATCH 2010: NELSON DEWEY STATE PARK

By Charlie Winterwood

The last Saturday in September, we returned to Dubuque Audubon's old hawkwatch site at Governor Dewey State Park just North of Cassville. Pat Fisher blew a radiator just South of Tennyson, but Charlie and Gretel Winterwood, Nita and Bob Wiederanders, and Joe Ingram made it to the park. The weather was cloudy and started to drizzle by lunchtime (not ideal weather for hawk migration). The folks at Eagle Valley told me the big push was the day before. Oh well, those hawks just refuse to be scheduled! Below are the hawks and other birds seen:

39 Broad-winged Hawks (all across the river)
2 Cooper's Hawks (on Hwy 61)
3 Red Tailed Hawks
30 Turkey Vultures
2 Bald eagles (one mature & one immature)
250 White Pelicans
Goldfinches
Blue Jays
Bluebird
Cedar Waxwings
Downy Woodpecker
Red-Bellied Woodpecker
Red-headed Woodpecker
White-breasted Nuthatch
Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
Canada Geese
Chipping Sparrow
American Crow
Pileated Woodpecker (heard)

NOVEMBER PROGRAM - GLADYS BLACK: THE LEGACY OF IOWA'S BIRD LADY

By Michele Zuercher

Adored by a generation as "Iowa's Bird Lady", Gladys Black introduced thousands of people to the wonders of birds. Her *Des Moines Register* columns and Iowa Public TV appearances made her well known throughout Iowa. As a pioneer in outdoor education, her focus was always the same;

protect our birds and their environment. When Gladys died in 1998, the state lost not only an ardent bird lover and conservationist, but also a mentor who touched hundreds of lives.

Larry Stone and Jon Stravers knew Gladys for more than 20 years. Their book shares stories of Gladys and her place among Iowa conservation legends. Their program includes photos and anecdotes of this remarkable Iowan.

THE THREAT TO OUR FLYING FRIENDS

By Michele Zuercher

Around this time of year, bats are a symbol in Halloween decor, though there is nothing to fear with these mammals flying in the night. Bats are an integral part of pollinating fruit trees and munching on insects, to name a few important roles they play in the world's ecosystems.

In recent years, bats which hibernate (versus those that migrate) have succumbed to a fungus which has caused millions of them to die. To learn more, Dr. Jeff Huebschman from UW-Platteville presented *White-nose Syndrome in Bats: the Coming of an Epic Natural Disaster* to begin our new program series. He explained that bats (up to 95% of a colony) were found dead in New York caves and other areas in 2006. It was then learned a fungus (new to the U.S.) that thrives in temperatures of 40-50°F and 90% humidity was found on the dead bats.

Scientists don't know fully what happens when this fungus is on their skin flaps and face. They speculate that it irritates them and awakens them from their hibernation. They then try to find food, use up their fat reserves, and die. State-wide surveys are being conducted in Wisconsin and other states for baseline population data. Caves and mines are closed all over, including Iowa's own Maquoketa caves, to limit the potential human spread of the fungus to other sites. Hopefully in the very near future, research in transmission and prevention of this disease will yield clues to help these undervalued species continue flying in the night sky.

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

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PROTECT AGAINST ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS TASK FORCE MEETING

By Lalith Jayawickrama

A series of meetings were conducted by the City of Dubuque Health Services to form a 12 member subcommittee to evaluate the community health needs in hopes to assess and improve those needs so that the community is protected against environmental hazards.

How does this relate to Dubuque Audubon Society?

All factors that affect the Dubuque community's health due to environmental hazards (land, water & air) will also affect all other species as well (plants & animals). It is a major concern for the city of Dubuque since it is surrounded by traditional agricultural practices, major rivers and streams and also parks and nature reserves. Presently, this quiet Midwestern town is waking up to new environmental challenges caused by new industries, expanded population and quiet suburbs changing due to urban sprawl. Such transformations require a

new look at factors that affect the environment and community health needs. The new look requires us to evaluate the laws enforced by federal and state government; not just for the human community and environment but also for the environment at large. Therefore, the Audubon Society has a key role in this subcommittee to represent the voiceless other species (animals & plants) and also the environment as a whole.

The members of the subcommittee discussed various issues that have led to weakness in the quality of the environment. Besides the weaknesses, we also assessed the threats, opportunities and strengths in the selected topics. Environmental issues such as air quality, the Clean Water Act, medical waste, radon exposure (2nd leading cause of lung cancer), impaired surface water, lack of data to get classified as impaired, challenge funding for more testing of rivers and streams are just a few from a long list of issues that were evaluated. Some of the new expanded residential areas need to be evaluated for their prior land use practices, and they also need new plans for management of waste water, storm water, well water and septic tanks for sanitary waste. The number of homes approved also limits the amount of natural land left for wildlife, plants and wild flowers. Most of these new homes do not have access to city water and require well water for their needs. These untreated wells may have water that is contaminated with toxic materials and pathogens which could affect not just for humans but also for wildlife as well. If there are any old wells that don't meet the new standards or built to code, residents may not have the necessary education on this matter to make claims to improve the conditions. Lack of training and education, both for the residents and contractors, is an issue also raised by the subcommittee. To improve regulations for limiting subdivision size in areas where public utilities are unavailable is another topic assessed, and this is of great importance for Audubon Society's interest. It will provide some space for the nature to thrive in the ever expanding city of Dubuque.

All recommendations and assessments developed by the subcommittee will be turned into the state. A steering committee will review the assessments and recommendations from each subcommittee to take necessary action. Hopefully, in our favor.

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



Cooper's Hawk
- R. Hays Cummins

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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