



PILEATED DRUMMING

Dubuque Audubon Society

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Das Board Update! By Pat Fisher

Ah, spring! Season of rebirth. How drab life would be without change!

Change is afoot in Dubuque Audubon as well. May is the changing of the guard; at least some of the guard. We have such a dedicated board! Many thanks to all the board members, past, present and future, who volunteer their time to help fulfill the mission of Dubuque Audubon, which is “to provide educational opportunities to the people of the tri-state area and to preserve the natural habitat of birds and other wildlife.”

Roseann Wiederholt, secretary, is stepping off the board. She is the most thorough note-taker of any I have seen. Thanks Roseann for keeping us straight when memories fail!

Joe Ingram, at-large board member, is also leaving the board. Many thanks Joe for your faithful presence at meetings and functions. We could always count on you!

I will be leaving the president’s position but will remain on the board in whatever capacity is needed.

Wayne Buchholtz has been in the position of conservation. He has agreed to run for the open president’s position. Thank you Wayne! In addition, Joe Tollari has agreed to fill the vice-president’s position, a spot that has been unfilled for the last 4 years. Thank you Joe!

Two other members have opted to run for board positions: Terri Stanton and Lalith Jayawickrama. New members bring fresh ideas and renewed energy to an organization and we are excited! Thank you!!

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Das Board Update! Continued from Page 1...

Other board members that will retain their positions are:

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Maggie O' Connell, Treasurer

Michele Zuercher, Programs/Publicity

Joe Tollari, Membership/Newsletter/Iowa Audubon Liaison

Charlie Winterwood, Field Trip Coordinator

Jenny Ammon, Website

Nita Wiederanders, Bald Eagle Watch Committee

This is the slate of officers and board members that will be presented at the annual meeting in May. Nominations are also taken from the floor. Board meetings are 1½ hours before the regular membership meetings October through May. We would welcome with open arms anyone who would like to join the board in furthering Audubon's mission.

WARBLERS

By Wayne Buchholtz

Warblers are popular birds for birders to look for every spring. Unfortunately, these small but beautiful birds primarily eat insects and are not as likely to regularly visit backyard bird feeders as many other spring migrants. There are more than 50 species of warblers that can be seen in North America. The bright colors of these birds and their diversity make them attractive birds to find. Finding them though can be a bit of a challenge. You first need to know where to look. Warblers are insect-eating birds; they hunt by flitting from a branch to catch an insect and quickly returning to the same perch. Popular places to look for warblers include woodland edges, trees that are just beginning to leaf out and open woodlands. You need to look for warblers from the ground up to the very tops of the oldest trees. Depending on the warbler species, they are active at all layers of the forest. Warblers can be found at any time of day, but they will be most active when insects are active

just after sunrise, just before sundown or after a rainstorm.

The easiest way to spot warblers is to watch for quick, active movements in the leaves of trees and shrubs, combined with brief flashes of color from the birds' brilliant feathers. Warblers will generally use the same perch for several minutes if food is readily available. Another great way to locate warblers is by sound. Birders who are able to bird by ear can easily learn warblers' unique songs. You can use those songs to locate the birds. Many warblers will perch in the open to sing as part of their courtship or territorial displays.

Spring is warbler season for many birders, and knowing where, when and how to find warblers can help birders add a wide range of warbler species to their life lists every year. Warblers come in a variety of colors: orange, yellow, blue, black, green, they are striped, speckled, blotched and they have eyebrows, cheek patches, wing bars and more. Best advice – purchase a few good bird identification books and a good CD of songs and start learning your spring birds. The fall warblers are a whole new ball game.

AUDUBON FACTOIDS:

One quarter of U.S. birds need our help to keep them from slipping toward extinction.

Nearly 60% of the 305 widely distributed bird species found in North America in winter are on the move, shifting their ranges northward by an average of 35 miles.

Did you know that birding is a popular sport in America? According to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, there are currently 48 million or one in five birders in the United States alone.

Audubon's unprecedented analysis of forty years of citizen-science bird population data from our own Christmas Bird Count plus the Breeding Bird Survey reveals the alarming decline of many of our most common and beloved birds.

DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May, 2011

May 7 – Sat.	Spring Species Count	<p>8:00 am. Meet at the North Entrance to Eagle Point Park. This event is great for beginning bird watchers. Experienced bird watchers will help with locating and identifying resident and migrating birds. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather.</p> <p>6:00 pm Meet at the Sycamore picnic shelter area at Swiss Valley Park (good weather) or Swiss Valley Nature Center (cold/rainy weather) to tabulate the results and share experiences. Audubon will provide the brats and hot dogs. Bring your own table service, beverage, and a dish to pass.</p>
May 12 – Thurs.	DUB. AUDUON PROGRAM: Chasing Shadows in the Dark	<p>EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Hts, Dubuque, IA</p> <p>5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting</p> <p>7:00 pm – Program: Tori Ballweg and Christine Grannis, students at the University of Dubuque, will speak on their research on the flying squirrel population at Mines of Spain. See article elsewhere in the newsletter for more information.</p>
May 22 – Sun.	Kite Flying	<p>2:00 pm at Hurstville Interpretive Center, 18670 63rd St., Maquoketa. Bring a kite or make and decorate one to take home. Let's hope for a windy day as we fly them over the prairie! Cost is \$4 to make a kite.</p>
May 28 – Sat.	The Birds and the Bees	<p>2:00 pm at Hurstville Interpretive Center, 18670 63rd 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!). Come and learn some of the fascinating stories of pollinators.</p>

OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

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

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Wayne Buchholtz

Joe Ingram

Nita Wiederaenders

Charlie Winterwood

Michele Zuercher

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KIDS KORNER

By Wayne Buchholtz

Spring is a time when flowers are blooming, animals are being born, plants are sprouting and your kids are likely ready to get outside. Nothing's better at keeping your family healthy than staying active. And nothing keeps kids more active than fun & interesting things to explore and do in nature. So, get outside and enjoy playing and exploring in nature this spring! Your whole family will be healthier, happier and smarter. If you have young kids, you may wonder what they can do. Here are just a few ideas for the young. But then, the young can be of any age. So actually these can be for anyone.

1. Take off your shoes and explore nature through your toes! Feel different surfaces with your bare feet. What does the dirt feel like? The grass? Gravel (ouch)? Mud?

2. Put a hula hoop on the grass, and ask your child to lie down on her stomach and study the area inside

the hoop. Your child should describe what he or she sees — from weeds to bugs — and record their observations in a special "naturalist" notebook.

3. Have a texture scavenger hunt, where you challenge your child to find things in nature that feel smooth, slippery, rough, cool, hot, etc..

4 Ask your child to sit down on the grass, close their eyes, keep quiet and listen carefully for five minutes. Afterwards, talk about what was heard. Could your child hear better than he or she usually does?

5. Create play binoculars to train your child to focus their gaze. Tape two toilet paper rolls together side-by-side and attach a string so your child can wear them around their neck.

Search for the words "nature", "kids" and "activities" on the internet and you will be loaded with fun things to do throughout the year.

Inspire your child's imagination and get them outdoors and active with fun at-home activities. There is something so invigorating about the springtime. It is a reminder to move life outdoors and celebrate. Experience and explore the great outdoors with your child — it's good for them!

CHASING SHADOWS IN THE DARK: THE FLYING SQUIRRELS OF MINES OF SPAIN STATE PARK

By Tori Ballweg and Christine Grannis

The May program is a report from Tori Ballweg and Christine Grannis on their research on the flying squirrels found in the Mines of Spain. Southern flying squirrels, *Glaucomys volans*, are considered a species of "Special Concern" in Iowa; their abundance is "Uncommon" and their population trend is "Unknown." Flying squirrels were successfully captured and tagged at Mines of Spain State Park. Of the individuals captured in 2010, females stayed in a local area, while males covered large areas. On average, daily movements by males were more than five-times greater than those by females. We will continue to investigate the ecology of this unique mammal during 2011. Come and learn more about this unique population.

BIRDING WITH A PURPOSE – SEASON FOUR BEGINS!

By Billy Reiter-Marolf

Spring is finally here! I don't know about you, but ever since the end of August last year I have been counting down the days until the 2011 Breeding Bird Atlas season. Last year we reached the impressive milestone of visiting all 791 blocks and we bumped the list of potential breeders up to 191 species! Now it seems that everyday a new bird species arrives from the south, beckoning us to once again take up our binoculars and go atlasing. By mid-April, almost 60 species will be displaying breeding behavior and by mid-May, the number will be over 130 species. So in other words, now is the time to begin collecting data for Iowa's 2nd Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA).

Statewide, volunteers have logged over 5,180 hours of observation, but with only 41 blocks completed, we have a long way to go to reach our goals. To focus our efforts for 2011, the progress completion map on the website has been revised. Red pins now represent blocks with less than 5 hours of effort, yellow pins represent blocks with between 5 and 10 hours of effort and blue and green pins remain the same. This year, we should especially target the 415 blocks with less than 5 hours of recorded effort. After all, this data is crucial for the conservation and management of Iowa's wonderful birdlife.

In Dubuque, Jackson and Clayton counties, the BBA offers a wide variety of birding opportunities with a total of 33 survey blocks. Below is a list of the incomplete blocks in the area that could really use some work in 2011:

Dubuque county targets:

- 327 - Dubuque Liberty (2.4 hrs. and 36 spp.)
- 328 - Dubuque Jefferson (12.5 hrs. and 65 spp.)
- 329 - South Dodge (1.5 hrs. and 21 spp.)
- 330 - Dubuque Vernon (7.55 hrs. and 50 spp.)
- 332 - Massey Marina (5 hrs. and 47 spp.)

Jackson county targets:

- 413 - Mississippi River Lands (Jackson) (5 hrs. and 42 spp.)
- 414 - Jackson Butler (1.3 hrs. and 48 spp.)

- 415 - Jackson Richland (1.5 hrs. and 44 spp.)
- 416 - Big Mill Creek WMA (6.6 hrs. and 65 spp.)
- 417 - Bellevue State Park (11.4 hrs. and 75 spp.)
- 418 - Ozark Wildlife Area (6.65 hrs. and 69 spp.)
- 419 - Buzzard Ridge Wildlife Area (7 hrs. and 63 spp.)
- 420 - Upper Miss (Jackson Washington) (5.2 hrs. and 61 spp.)
- 421 - Green Island WMA East (14.35 hrs. and 71 spp.)
- 422 - Green Island WMA West (1.9 hrs. and 44 spp.)
- 423 - Upper Miss (Jackson Iowa) (0.45 hrs. and 27 spp.)
- 424 - Upper Miss (Jackson Union) (1 hrs. and 45 spp.)
- 425 - Milrock-Baldwin (0.6 hrs. and 52 spp.)
- 426 - Jackson Maquoketa (2.1 hrs. and 51 spp.)
- 427 - McNeil (0.75 hrs. and 30 spp.)
- 428 - Sabula Lakes Park (5.1 hrs. and 61 spp.)

Clayton county targets:

- 181 - Bloody Run Creek WMA (5.5 hrs. and 56 spp.)
- 182 - Trout Hatchery West (6.25 hrs. and 57 spp.)
- 183 - Big Springs Trout Hatchery (3.7 hrs. and 49 spp.)
- 184 - South Farmersburg (0.5 hrs. and 7 spp.)
- 185 - Upper Miss NWFR (Clayton) (1.19 hrs. and 34 spp.)
- 186 - Hewett Creek (5.25 hrs. and 55 spp.)
- 187 - Elkport-Garber (5.1 hrs. and 53 spp.)
- 188 - Mississippi River Pools (Guttenberg South) (0.8 hrs. and 20 spp.)
- 189 - Joy Springs Park (6.75 hrs. and 69 spp.)
- 190 - Upper Miss (North Buena Vista West) (2.25 hrs. and 47 spp.)

Mark your calendars! This summer, the Iowa Ornithologists' Union and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will be hosting four BBA Blockbusting Weekends around the state. Each weekend will begin with a presentation about the BBA on Friday evening. Volunteers will learn how to participate, how to determine breeding bird status and how to turn in observations. During Saturday and Sunday, volunteers will be out in blocks searching for nesting birds. For more information on the blockbusting weekends and atlasing, or to view up-to-date progress, either contact me or check out the website at: <http://bba.iowabirds.org>. I can't wait to see what we accomplish this year. Happy Birding!

Billy Reiter-Marolf, BBA Volunteer Coordinator,
AmeriCorps

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HAWK MAN

By Pat Fisher

National Audubon's Annual Report, a very impressive publication filled with awe-inspiring conservation work all over the country (including work in Central and South America), included one sentence about our little corner of the world. To quote: "Timer management practices in Northeastern Iowa's Yellow River Forest Important Bird Area are more bird-friendly, thanks to a 33-year Audubon study of red-shouldered hawks nesting preferences and reproductive success."

Unnamed in the report, but well-known in our area, is the author of this study, our own Jon "Hawk" Stravers! Jon has spoken at our membership meetings on a regular basis as well as the Midwest Audubon Conference in Dubuque a few years ago. Dubuque Audubon has also provided financial support for Jon's on-going research.

Kevin Koch, local author, captured the feel of Jon and his research in his latest book, **The Driftless Land, Spirit of Place in the Upper Mississippi Valley**. Kevin granted permission for me to share some of his words about Jon in this article. Thanks, Kevin!

"I am connected to the river from a spiritual basis to a work basis to a musical basis," Jon Stravers told me the first time I met him at a small upscale bar in Dubuque. Stravers, a tall man with graying hair tied back in a smallish ponytail and a sun-and-wind tanned face already in April, explained that the Mississippi became his refuge when he returned from Vietnam in the 1970s. "My return strategy was to get in a canoe and escape." He said. The avocation soon became his vocation. He met Gladys Black, a self-taught ornithologist known as "Iowa's bird lady," who introduced him to the world of raptors and helped him get licensed for bird banding. Soon Jon was doing bird species surveys for the Audubon Society, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, and area colleges, particularly specializing in red-shouldered hawks.

Waterfowl and raptors – and the river itself – are all making incredible comebacks due to habitat restoration, the ban on DDT, wild-life land acquisitions, and other environmental improvements, Jon said when I first met him. "I'm a creature of

hope." He maintained. But even so, preserving large sections of river bottom and backwater is a continued necessity. "unless you have five hundred acres of wild-ass woods, you won't have these hawks," he warned.

So on a Monday morning in mid-April, we are setting out on the river to check the neighborhood in Stravers' 18-foot flatbottom jonboat ... the river is hovering at flood stage. Entering the backwaters in flood season allows us to boat right on up into the river-bottom woods. In surveying the red-shouldered hawk nests, Stravers returns to each site six times over a twelve-week period... "You just wait in the right place and listen for the conversation." If all is well, there will be a certain intonation between the calls of the male and the female. If the nest is full, the male may have been up all night hunting for the female and the young. "When he brings something back, she responds in a certain way. If there are young in the nest, there is going to be a conversation." But if something happens to the eggs, "There is not a conversation going on."

Jon often locates a nest with relative ease, as the red-shouldered hawks like to settle in at a spot where a small spring-fed draw enters the river. There they will hunt small animals attracted to the stream. Hawks, Jon adds, have a "high nest-site fidelity." One nest he'd observed was active with the same pair of hawks for thirteen consecutive years. It was empty the fourteenth year, and then a new nest appeared in the same tree the following year. Jon speculates that perhaps one of the birds died and then the survivor re-mated.

Finally we hear the "kee-kee-kee" of a red-shouldered hawk, who keeps "saying the same thing over and over." Stravers will spend every day from April through July out here on the river or in the surrounding blufflands, weather permitting. In winter he will walk the frozen backwaters, write, travel, visit family, "and sleep a lot." But here in spring, he will come to a flooded woods like this and spend most of the day."

Rowing through the flooded woods, Jon says, "People are attracted to the river in different ways. But when you can boat through the flooded forest, you don't run into a lot of people back here. This is

my experience with the river. These few weeks in spring with high water, this is the part that got me thirty years ago. I will always be doing this as long as I'm physically able."

Faintly we hear two red-shouldered hawks. One adds an extra syllable: "kee-yaw, kee-yaw, kee-yaw." The extra syllable means it's a female, we're near the nest, and she doesn't like it. Although we haven't actually spotted the hawks or seen the nest, Jon says contentedly, "My work is done for the day. I know they're here."

CONSERVATION CORNER

By Wayne Buchholtz

There are always tons of questions when it comes to birds - the how's, what if's, why's and more. Below are just some questions that many people have. You can go to <http://birds.audubon.org/faq/birds> to find more answers to these questions and more.

What do I do with an orphaned bird? If you have found an orphaned bird, the first step is to determine if it is really orphaned. When many young birds first fledge and leave the nest, they may still have a little down with short tail and wing feathers. Their parents will still care for them on the ground.

When is it safe to remove nests around buildings? Most songbirds only use a nest once, and are genetically programmed to build a new one before they lay eggs. Once young have left the nest, you can remove a nest and clean the site.

I found a dead bird with band. What do I do with the band or the information? All federal metal bands, colored leg and neckbands for geese, and bands from foreign governments should be reported to the Bird Banding Laboratory by calling the telephone number on the band or logging onto <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL> and following the links on how to identify and report a bird band. The person making the report usually gets a reply with information on the bird that was banded.

Why is a woodpecker damaging my house and how do I stop it? Woodpeckers peck at homes

for two reasons. First, the fast machine-gun pecking, referred to as "drumming" is the male woodpecker's attempt to make as loud a noise as possible to attract a mate and to announce to other male woodpeckers that this is his territory. Hanging flashy objects nearby can also scare the woodpeckers away.

The second reason for pecking on homes is the birds' search for insects. If you are seeing holes dripped or chipped away, it may mean you have insects living in your external boards that the woodpecker found. Attaching an untreated board onto the outside of your house for the bees will provide habitat for valuable pollinator species, and you can replace it as often as needed! Scaring woodpeckers with hanging shiny objects or metallic strips can also discourage them from investigating for insects.

How can I prevent birds from hitting my windows by mistake? During certain times of the year, the angle of the sun can make windows turn into mirrors, reflecting the sky and vegetation making the window look like an open place to fly. Inside, hanging blinds or curtains that can be partly closed will let in light while breaking up the reflection.

Outside, hanging shiny objects in front of the window, covering the window with netting or stringing store-bought feathers across windows may have some effect. There are decals sold at bird stores and online that have various wildlife images with a special coating that reflects ultraviolet light, which looks blue to birds but is clear to humans.

SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendar now. PBS Nature will be airing a spectacular three-part series with Chris Morgan on the bears of Alaska on May 8, 15 and 22. The third installment will feature the National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska and will look at how the Reserve is one of our nation's best-kept wild secrets. On May 22, Alaska Wilderness League will be hosting screenings and house parties across the country – check back at AlaskaWild.org for details. Be sure to tune in to see why the League is so committed to keeping the Reserve wild.

Dubuque Audubon Society
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Yellow Warbler

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 **INTRODUCTORY ONLY**

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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