



## OCTOBER 2012 EDITION

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### (VICE) PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Joe Tollari

This month, Wayne Buchholtz, our President, is on vacation in Rock Mountain National Park in Colorado. I hope that he is enjoying his much deserved vacation. I, on the other hand, am doing what Vice-Presidents are supposed to do - namely, filling in for the President.

By now, you have noticed the new look for the Pileated Drumming. The new masthead symbolizes the sound waves emanating from the Pileated Woodpecker drumming on a tree. Many of the early European settlers were impressed with how the sound carried through the woods as if delivering a message. (They were correct. The Pileated is establishing territory by the drumming.) Another new item on the front page is the index which will be helpful in larger issues of the newsletter. Other features like the page headings and a new font help to freshen up the entire newsletter. Unfortunately, we are not able to print the newsletter in color. But, you can go to:

[www.audubondubuque.org](http://www.audubondubuque.org)

to see the full color version. I think that it is impressive.

The new format has initiated a discussion on the Audubon Board about

distribution of the Newsletter.

Currently, we are sending out nearly 500 copies each month. Most of you receive a copy because you are members of National Audubon Society. We also have a smaller list of those who choose to be members of Dubuque Audubon Society only. We also send complimentary newsletters to several media outlets and to other organizations. We are, of course, concerned about the environmental cost of the newsletter and about the mailing costs. So like many other non-profit organizations, we are prepared to offer you one of three options.

- **Option 1:** you can continue to receive a print copy through the mail.
- **Option 2:** you can receive an electronic copy through e-mail.
- **Option 3:** you can go to the website and read the newsletter there. We can send you an e-mail prompt to let you know when the newsletter is on-line.

Let us know your preference. If you choose option 1, do nothing, and we will continue to send you the newsletter in the mail. If you prefer option 2 or 3, send me a message at [jtollari@mchsi.com](mailto:jtollari@mchsi.com) with your option choice. I'll capture your e-mail address at that time. We hope to have the system in place for the first issue of 2013.





**MONARCH POPULATION STATUS**

By Chip Taylor, Director,  
Monarch Watch  
[monarchwatch.org](http://monarchwatch.org)



In early July I wrote the text for the pre-migration newsletter in which I stated that there was no real basis for making a prediction about the size of the fall migratory population of Monarch butterflies:

“If there is sufficient rainfall and normal to above normal temperatures in the northern breeding range through August, the migratory population may be the largest since 2003 – perhaps 6-7 hectares. On the other hand, a continuation of the extreme heat and drought conditions could result in another overwintering population in the 2-3 hectare range – well below the long-term average of 7 hectares.” [Monarch populations are estimated in hectares. In the wintering grounds in Mexico, there are too many butterflies to count individually. Scientists estimate that there are anywhere from 10 to 70 million Monarchs per hectare. One hectare equals 2.47 acres. If the wintering population covers 6 hectares, scientists estimate that there are 60 to 420 million Monarchs.]

It is now clear that fall population will be on the low side with an overwintering population close to 3 hectares once again. I don't need to tell you that the summer was hot and dry – too hot and dry in many areas for good monarch reproduction. We have received many comments on the poor quality of the milkweed available to monarchs for the last generation. In eastern Kansas, where the drought ranges from extreme to exceptional, milkweeds, even blue vine (*Cynanchum laeve*), suitable for egg laying, are scarce. The best areas for the production of fall migrants appear to be northwest and central Minnesota, northern Wisconsin and Michigan, and much of New England. Reports from New England suggest that the number of monarchs passing through Cape May will be higher than normal this fall. Elsewhere, we can expect the number of fall migrants to be similar to that seen over the last several years.

The low number of nectar sources that will be available to monarchs moving through the lower Midwest in September is a concern. Some fall flowers have already bloomed, some have died and many of the others are stunted and just barely alive. There will be nectar but it will be harder for the monarchs to find. Rain in the areas of Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Iowa, Arkansas, and Illinois over the next three weeks could make a big difference in the proportion of the fall migrants that reach Mexico.

*From Monarch Watch*

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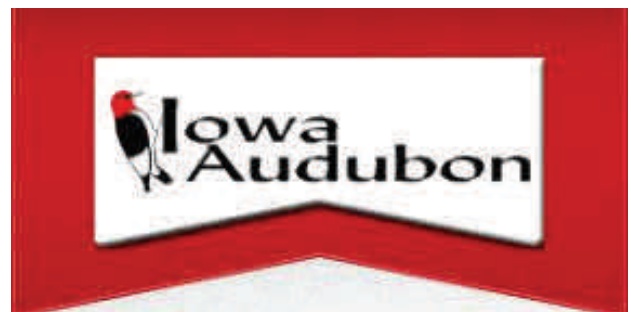
**NEW GROUP FORMED  
FOR YOUNG BIRDERS IN IOWA**

From Iowa Audubon Newsletter

Iowa Young Birders is a brand new organization dedicated to encouraging all young people, ages 8 to 18, who are interested in learning more about the exciting world of birds and birding. Each year, experienced birders will lead guided field trips to prime birding spots across Iowa. If you know of any young persons who may be new to birding or who already have a growing checklist of birds identified, this is the organization for them. To learn more about joining, upcoming field trips, events, and more, check out their website at:

[www.iowayoungbirders.org](http://www.iowayoungbirders.org).

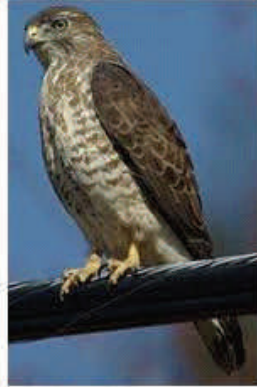
The organization was recently established by Carl Bendorf of Solon as an offspring of a similar national program conducted by the American Birding Association. Carl is a member of the ABA Board of Directors and is well known to birders across Iowa.





**BROAD-WINGED HAWK**

This small woodland hawk is a common migrant but uncommon nesting species in Iowa. Nesting birds are usually found in eastern or southern Iowa but have been found elsewhere as well. Broad-wings spend much of their time within the forest canopy and often are missed, even when they are nesting in an area.



By Julie Waters

This smallest of North American buteos is found in light and dark morphs, with the lighter being much more common. Head, back and wings are brown, throat is white, wingtips are dark, and the tail is dark with one wide white band and, when the tail is fanned, a second, thinner white band may be seen. Undersides are white with ruddy barring on the breast that fades onto the belly. On some birds the upper breast is dark-bibbed. Juveniles are similar in color, although somewhat more faded, with a pale eyebrow line on the head and prominent cheek stripe. The brown tail has multiple dark bands.

Breeding across all of eastern North America, they select nest sites hidden in dense deciduous and mixed coniferous forests. Small, loose nests are built 20' to 60' high near the trunk of a tree, and consist of sticks and leaves, lined with bark strips, lichens and leaves or conifer needles. Broad-wings are monogamous, but pair bonds last for no more than a year. Typically, 2-3 eggs are laid and incubated for a month, with young fledging 35 days later. They are somewhat sedentary, opportunistic feeders, preferring to catch herptiles, young birds, and hawking large insects.

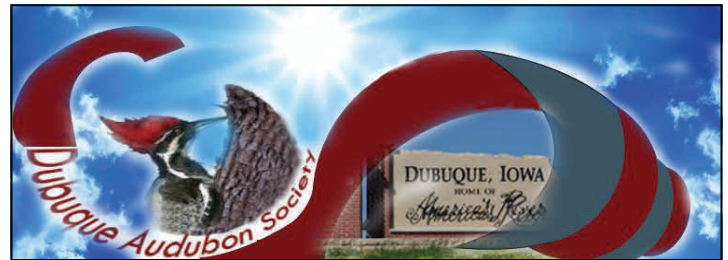
This species is perhaps best-known for its spectacular migrations, especially in fall when hundreds gather in large flocks, called "kettles," to migrate to wintering grounds in Central and South America. It was such large migrating flocks that led to saving such important "funneling" spots as Hawk Mountain, PA, and Hawk Ridge at Duluth, MN. This

also led to our modern day "hawk watches" and migration surveys, such as that conducted annually at Hitchcock Nature center, near Council Bluffs. One of the world's most spectacular wildlife sights is the concentration of hundreds of thousands of Broad-winged and Swainson's Hawks as they funnel over Vera Cruz, Mexico each autumn.

Although its numbers may be reduced from the past, we know little about any reasons for that decline. Although fairly uncommon Iowa nesters, nationwide their populations appear stable. Presumably forest loss and fragmentation of remaining forest habitat are involved, especially here in Iowa, but other factors such as pesticides may also be important.



From birding.com



**OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS**

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

- President:** Wayne Buchholtz 563-582-7215
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- Editor:** James Brown



## AUTUMN BIRDING

By Melissa Mayntz, About.com

Fall is a great time to go birding, but just as birds adjust their behaviors as the seasons change, so too must birders adjust how they interact with birds if they hope to enjoy the great diversity of autumn [avian](#) life.

Fall is a wonderful birding season for many reasons. Temperatures are dropping and the weather is more tolerable for long trips into the field, unlike summer's stifling heat. As the temperatures cool, leaves begin to fall from trees and it can be easier to see birds in densely wooded areas.

Fall is after most birds' nesting season and young birds help create larger flocks for birders to spot. This is also a peak [migration](#) time, bringing many unique birds to areas where they wouldn't normally be found. Because of this, fall can often be one of the most productive seasons for birders who know how to take advantage of it.

Knowing where to find birds during the autumn months can make the difference between seeing the same local species and spotting new migrating visitors. The best spots to bird in the fall include:

**Waterways:** Migrating waterfowl and shorebirds travel near bodies of water, including coastal areas, lakes and rivers.

**Cliffs:** Thermal air currents near steep mountainsides or cliffs are the best place to spot migrating raptors.

**Grasslands:** Open grasslands that have gone to seed are a hotspot for migrating sparrows and songbirds.

Of course, any suitable bird habitat can be a great place to check for unusual species in the fall. Don't neglect your favorite birding hotspots as you watch for traveling visitors.

To make the most of birding in the fall:

**Identify Birds Carefully:** Autumn is an exciting time that may bring many transient birds to an area, but avoid jumping to unusual conclusions when spotting an unfamiliar bird. Young birds often resemble other species and can be tricky to [identify properly](#).

**Dress Comfortably:** The weather can be unpredictable in the fall, ranging from Indian summer heat to pre-winter chills in just a few hours. Dress in layers, and don't forget to add a touch of bright yellow or orange to your attire if you will be birding in areas where hunting is popular.

**Watch the Time:** As the days grow shorter and the birds more diverse, it can be easy to forget when the sun goes down. If you are birding in the evening, be sure to keep an eye on the clock so you aren't caught far from safety as darkness settles.

**Attract Migrating Birds:** It isn't necessary to venture far to see unique migrating birds in the fall. Stock your backyard with seed and water, choose late blooming flowers, and try other tricks to [attract migrating birds](#) right to your door.

**Keep Dogs Leashed:** Birds gather in tremendous flocks in the fall as they prepare to journey to their winter habitats, and so many birds in one location can be overly stimulating to a dog. If your pet will be joining you on a birdwalk, keep it securely leashed so it does not disturb the birds.

**Check Flocks Thoroughly:** While from a distance a flock of birds may seem to be made up of a single species, many birds congregate in mixed flocks after the nesting season ends. Check flocks carefully to see if there are any unusual members you wouldn't want to miss.

**Bird Frequently:** During the [fall migration](#), new birds will arrive at the same location every day. Visiting one location repeatedly can yield a range of unique species and is a great way to learn the migration habits of different birds.

**Be Polite:** Birders should always follow proper [birding etiquette](#) and [birding ethics](#) in every season. During the fall, many hikers will be out to enjoy trails, and many other birders will also be exploring the territory.



# DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## OCTOBER - 2012

<p>October 11th Thursday</p>	<p>Dubuque Audubon Program: Life as a Wildlife Biologist with the US Fish &amp; Wildlife</p>	<p>EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm - Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm - Program: Jeramie T. Strickland will speak on <b><i>“Life as a Biologist with the US Fish &amp; Wildlife Service”</i></b></p>
<p>October 13th Saturday</p>	<p>Hurstville Outdoor Makeover</p>	<p>1:00 pm Hurstville Interpretive Center -18670 63rd Street - Maquoketa, Iowa. Join Friends of Jackson County Conservation in celebrating the completion of Phase I &amp; II of the Hurstville Outdoor Makeover Project. Ribbon cutting at 1:00 pm. Activities will be going on throughout the afternoon. Refreshments will be served.</p>
<p>October 14th Sunday</p>	<p>Wildlife in your Backyard With David Stokes</p>	<p>1:00 pm Swiss Valley Nature Center –13606 Swiss Valley Road, Peosta, Iowa. David Stokes is a fantastic speaker who can make young and old appreciate the wonders in nature! David is a naturalist who uses songs, live animals and puppets to teach all ages about Wildlife in Your Backyard.</p>
<p>November 8th Thursday</p>	<p>Dubuque Audubon Program: Wildlife Wonders Of Botswana</p>	<p>EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm - Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm - Program: Betsy Bainbridge &amp; Chelsie Cruise will speak on: <b><i>“Wildlife Wonders of Botswana”</i></b></p>
<p>November 17th Saturday</p>	<p>Turkey Tales</p>	<p>1:00 pm Swiss Valley Nature Center –13606 Swiss Valley Road, Peosta, Iowa. Learn about the wild turkey and all of its adaptations, like their calls, how they find a mate, what they eat, and where they live. All Ages are Welcome!</p>
<p>December 29th Saturday</p>	<p>CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT</p>	<p>Mark your calendar for this premier birding event for the year.</p>

**Dubuque Audubon Society**

James Brown, Editor  
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Dubuque IA 52004-3174

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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 **INTRODUCTORY ONLY – FIRST TIME MEMBERS 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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Dubuque, IA 52004-3174**