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Inside this issue:

<i>Presidents Corner</i>	1
<i>Annual Appeal</i>	2
<i>Sri Lanka Birding Trip</i>	2
<i>Duck Waddle</i>	2
<i>Calendar of Events For April</i>	3
<i>The Spring Bird Count</i>	4
<i>International Migratory Bird Day - Bird Banding</i>	4
<i>Mix Species - Flock Feeding</i>	5
<i>Hummingbirds at Home</i>	6
<i>April Program - A River Runs Through Us</i>	7
<i>Dubuque Metro Area Solid Waste Agency</i>	7
<i>e-Newsletter Available</i>	7
<i>Future Programs</i>	7
<i>Officers & Board Members</i>	7

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Wayne Buchholtz



The Calendar may say that spring has arrived, March 21, but it does not seem like it. As I look out my window there is snow everywhere. But, on the bright side, my feeders are active as ever. If you are like me, then you have gone through a lot of bird feed this winter. We have several exciting programs coming the next two months at our regular meetings and field trips that will help you with bird identifications. In April, our program is about Catfish Creek and the one in May is on Climate Change. The spring species bird count on May 11 is when you try to count as many different species as the group can find. It should prove to be a challenging year, but as usual it is a good time to learn identification techniques, learn their calls, and

possibly see a bird you have not seen before. Spring migrations should and have started. I have seen my first large group of about 100 blue birds at the Mines of Spain's Cedar Ridge Trail. American Robins and Red-winged Blackbirds are making their mating calls. I hosted part of the Iowa Association of Naturalists Conference at the EB Lyons Center last Friday. Some of the naturalists for southern counties have seen Turkey Vultures, several waterfowl species, Great Blue Herons and other water birds. Keep an eye out for more of our spring migrants and summer residents. The board will be setting our summer schedule. If you have any ideas for meeting places please let me know. We try to have our summer programs at a local park or wildlife area where we can have a picnic and do some bird watching at the same time. I hope you will be able to attend the upcoming Audubon Programs and field trip. As usual, bird watching can be done anytime.

Birding is Great...
Anytime
Anywhere



Eastern Bluebird



ANNUAL APPEAL

Two additional contributions have been received. This means that 65 members have donated to support Dubuque Audubon programming and projects. Thank you.

Laura & Phillip Larabee

Chuck and Margreet Ryan

SRI LANKA BIRDING TRIP

By Joe Tollari and Lalith Jayawickrama

If you are interested in going, contact Joe Tollari (563-583-2077 or jtollari@mchsi.com) or Lalith Jayawickrama (563-495-0591 or lalithj@dbq.edu). Check the website (audubondubuque.org) for details.

DUCK WADDLE—2013

By Bob Walton

The foreboding forecast and the pounding rain on our house roof didn't lend itself to much optimism as we scrambled out of bed, microwaved a cup of day old coffee, and began the pre-dawn journey to Green Island for the annual Audubon Duck Waddle. The weather wasn't improving as we struggled through four inches of slush and mud on our gravel road, with freezing rain and two inch slush balls bombarding our windshield. Driving conditions improved as we headed eastward on D61, and I reassured Sandy that the worst weather for birdwatchers is usually the best for ducks. I also knew the real hardcore birders like Jim Oleson and Olivia Kruse wouldn't be deterred by a touch of bad weather.

As we arrived at Green Island around 6:15 am, it miraculously quit raining. We eased onto an unplowed Fish Lake Road and were treated to a Great Horned owl that did a nice fly by and landed in a cottonwood tree. We couldn't believe how much snow still covered the marsh as we pulled over to wait for the other duckwaddlers. As I quietly open and close the truck door, a pair of Sandhill Cranes announce their presence in the nearby corn food plot. Their calls reverberating across the snow covered marsh brightened our spirits and assured us that spring is indeed on the way. In the distance, several large flocks of White-fronted Geese lifted off the open Maquoketa River and head southward, joined by a larger flock

of Mallards, and numerous Canada Geese. As expected, we were soon joined by Jim Oleson, the Kruse family, and Jackson County residents, Dawn Carstensen and her daughter, Maggie. (Maggie O'Connell arrived later but never caught up to us.)

A drive out Fish Lake Road revealed only Killdeer, several Rough-legged Hawks, a Red-tailed Hawk, more Canada Geese, and half a dozen immature Eagles. We decide to check out the pond by the DNR Research Station, which had been full of Canada Geese and Trumpeter Swans several days earlier. On the way there we stopped to view a large flock of Common Redpolls and over a hundred Tree Sparrows and Juncos. The willow thickets in the distance were covered with hundreds of Red-winged Blackbirds, but the only waterfowl visible were our resident Canada Geese. The small open pond near the DNR headquarters was packed with Canada Geese but no swans or ducks. Jim Oleson did spot a Pileated Woodpecker doing a quick flyover into the forested bluff lands.

The morning was still young so we decided to head south to Sabula in hopes of finding more open water. As we traveled the highway into Sabula, we were rewarded with the sights and sounds of hundreds of gulls, 50+ eagles, and a half dozen Great Blue Herons feeding on dead shad that were melting out of the ice. The small patches of open water along the east shoreline of South Sabula Lake were packed with hundreds of Goldeneyes, and a large flock of beautiful Hooded Mergansers. Scattered throughout were Buffleheads, Lesser Scaup, a dozen Shovelers, and a single Ruddy Duck. A closer look at some different looking gulls with the spotting scope revealed several Thayer's Gulls and a single giant gull, known appropriately as a Greater Black-backed Gull. At the south edge of the campground, several Eagles, and a single Red-shouldered Hawk were roosting in a large cottonwood tree. Sadly, there was also a dead Great Blue Heron suspended from a branch of the tree by a length of monofilament fishing line.

We decided to keep birding and headed to Lock and Dam 13. We were welcomed to Illinois by a Peregrine Falcon perched on the bridge and a Kestrel on the highline at the edge of Savanna. South of Savanna we took Riverside Road past the Ingersoll Nature Center. We flushed numerous Horned Larks, Eastern Bluebirds, and a single Lapland Longspur from the roadway.



DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<p>April 10th Wednesday</p>	<p>OWL PROWL</p>	<p>7:00 pm at the Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Rd., Peosta. We will start inside the nature center with an educational talk about owls and their many awesome adaptations! We will then venture into the night to listen for and call for the mysterious silent flyer known as the OWL! Please dress for the weather and be prepared to hike.</p>
<p>April 11th Thursday</p>	<p>DUBUQUE AUDUBON PROGRAM: A RIVER RUNS THROUGH US</p>	<p>EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm - Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm - Program: Adam Hoffman will explore the connection between John James Audubon, water quality, and biological diversity.</p>
<p>May 9th Thursday</p>	<p>DUBUQUE AUDUBON PROGRAM: CLIMATE CHANGE</p>	<p>EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm - Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm - Program: Ed Maslowsky will discuss Climate Change.</p>
<p>May 11th Saturday</p>	<p>SPRING SPECIES COUNT</p>	<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. 5:00 pm Meet at the Swiss Valley Nature Center 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>
<p>June 13th Thursday</p>	<p>Audubon Spring Potluck</p>	<p>Come to enjoy good food and good company. More information next month.</p>



Continued from Page 2

We stopped at a back yard bird feeder full of Eurasian Tree Sparrows—a new species that I had promised Olivia Kruse. We warmed up and refueled on pancakes at one of my favorite restaurants near Thomson and then headed to Lock and Dam 13 in search of puddle ducks. Along the causeway, we finally found the mother lode—hundreds of Gadwalls, Wood Ducks, Widgeons, Shovelers, Green-winged Teal, Pintails, and the largest flock of Black Ducks I’ve seen on the Mississippi! From the observation deck, sharp-eyed Dawn Carstensen spotted our first Pelicans of the year—a small flock of 6 followed by 600 more that were utilizing a strong southeastern wind to kettle and head north. We also saw a dozen Cormorants, and a large raft of diving ducks that included Ring Necks, Goldeneyes, Canvasbacks, Redheads, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, and Buffleheads. A large flock of White-fronted Geese and a string of twenty Tundra Swans passed over our heads.

Around 11:30 it started to drizzle, putting an end to our bird watching. With a total of 58 species, the 2013 Duck Waddle won’t go down as a record, however, it will be a very memorable one for me. We found some rare gulls, viewed beautiful waterfowl, and were accompanied by two youth who woke before dawn, disconnected from the digital world and ventured outdoors with a bunch of “old people.” Today’s youth will be the stewards whose actions will ultimately determine the fate of our remaining natural resources. After spending a rainy morning with two enthusiastic young people, I am reassured that yes, indeed; there is hope for the future! Next time you venture out birding, take a youth along. Their enthusiasm is contagious and you just might rediscover how beautiful a drake Mallard and a Cardinal are at sunrise!

THE SPRING BIRD COUNT

By Olivia Kruse

Everyone, mark your calendar for May 11th, because it’s time for the Spring Bird Count! For those of you who are going to join us on this fun trip, we will meet at Eagle Point Park at the north entry parking lot at 8:00 am. Then, we will start our day looking for birds around the whole park. You can go all day if you want and can stop anytime you would like to. At the end of the day we all meet together at Swiss Valley at 5:00 pm

to add up the species and eat dinner. Brats will be provided and please bring a dish to pass. Some of the exiting birds we saw last year were the Least Sandpiper, Scarlet Tanager, the Blue Gray Gnatcatcher, many different kinds of woodpeckers, and lots of warblers. I hope everyone can make it!

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD DAY BIRD BANDING @ Mines of Spain

International Migratory Bird Day celebrates and brings attention to one of the most important and spectacular events in the Americas - bird migration. Bird Day is celebrated in Canada, the United States, Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean and now for the fourth year, the Mines of Spain Recreation Area. Public awareness and concern are crucial components of migratory bird conservation. You can help by attending the day’s events. The more you learn about birds the more enthusiastic about birds you will become. You will be informed about threats birds have, be empowered to become involved in addressing those threats, and make a tremendous contribution to maintaining healthy bird populations. International Migratory Bird Day at the Mines of Spain is Saturday May 11. A special event is planned at 9:00 am thru 1:00 pm at the Mines of Spain Recreation Area. The event will be held at the Canoe Launch on Catfish Creek. The launch is along the main park road.

David Shealer and Dan Wenny, Professors from Loras College in Dubuque, will be on hand to provide information on migratory birds that come to the area for the summer to nest or to rest on their northerly migration. David and Dan will be monitoring mist nets along the hiking trails in the area and along Catfish Creek in hopes of capturing migratory birds. The birds will be weighed, measured, sexed and banded and then released. The data will be sent to research labs for continued research on birds throughout the world. Birds captured last year included orioles, warblers, Redstarts, grosbeaks and more. Some birds are exciting to see as you usually only see them briefly through binoculars in the tree tops, or for just a few days as they rest, or only hear them as they sing amongst the leaves. The birds will be available for you to view and photograph. Bring binoculars to spot birds up in the tree tops



Continued from Page 4

or across the creek. For more information about this program or about the Mines of Spain call the E. B. Lyons Interpretive Center at 563-556-.0620 to learn about upcoming programs visit the parks website at www.minesofspain.org or go to <http://www.birdday.org/> for more information on International Migratory Bird Day and other events going on around the country.

FACTS:

Windows collide with birds! Collisions are a frequent cause of bird death - especially during migrations. Birds can see trees or the sky reflected in windows or mistake houseplants for outdoor plants - they don't see glass! You can help by making your windows more visible to birds

Plant Native! Native plants provide food, nest sites, and cover for birds. Birds can use native plants as a food source, a place to raise their young and as a place to escape predators.

Teach Others About Birds! Talk to your friends about birds and start a club in your community to teach people about the challenges birds face. The more people know, the more they can do to help.

Get Outdoors and Enjoy Nature! You can appreciate the bird habitat near your home. Find a local park and go for a walk or just stroll around your neighborhood.

Take a Friend Bird Watching! Invite a buddy and see if together you can spot more birds.

sub canopy, canopy, above canopy and emergent. The Sinharaja rainforest, as its name implies, receives plenty of rain. The average annual rainfall here is between 148-200 inches and 220 rainy days greater than 3 inches of rain/day; when compared to Dubuque's 36 inches of rain, 115 days of rain & snow. Under these conditions, one could observe a unique feeding behavior known as "**Mixed Species Feeding Bird Flocks**" or "**Bird Waves**". Those who are not experienced with rainforest habitats one might think that rainforests are full of exotic animals and tropical food hanging on trees. But the reality is far from this, and much of the life and food are rare and are virtually hidden to the naked eye.

In "Sinharaja", the combinations of rainfall and forest structure hinder birds from locating food and therefore move in a group to help them to find food. By definition, when two or more species of birds feeding and moving in the same direction is known as a "Mixed Species Feeding Flock". Usually on the average a flock could have as many as 35 to 50 individual birds from 12 or more different species of birds. Some research observations describe as high as over 100 individual birds in a flock. Since early 1980's, the research on bird flocks continued with over 500+ observations to date, making the feeding flocks of Sinharaja the most studied bird flocks in the world. This is a well-documented phenomenon but unfortunately also least understood.

**MIX SPECIES - FLOCK FEEDING:
A UNIQUE FEEDING BEHAVIOR AMONG
RAIN FOREST BIRDS IN SRI LANKA**

By Lalith Jayawickrama

Sri Lanka a small tropical island, about the size of West Virginia, is also known as a global biodiversity hotspot. It has an impressively high species count within such a limited area, makes it one of the most ecologically significant places. The richness of Sri Lanka's biodiversity is well reflected by its avifauna; **439 resident species** have been recorded and with the presence of **33 endemic species**. Much of these endemic bird species are found in the last remaining rainforests.

"Sinharaja rainforest" (a UNESCO World Heritage Site: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/405>), the most famous of Sri Lankan rainforests, can be divided into distinctly different levels (or strata), based on height and vegetation; namely ground, under story,

Initially, when an observer enters "Sinharaja" rainforest at daytime may see virtually no birds at all and will experience an absolute eerie silence. This quiet daytime silence is broken usually in the morning, by the noisy call of "Greater racket-tailed Drongo (crested drongo)" which inhabits the forest canopy. This is known as a wakeup call for the rest of the flock members. Soon after, the "Orange billed babblers" join in to lead and steer the flock forward. This call sends a signal to several other species of birds to join in. As I have witnessed, this is a spectacular sight and the usually silent rainforest erupts into an orchestra of bird calls for few minutes, as the flock approaches. The bird flock will occupy all levels (strata) of the forest but does not stay for a long time in one place, as they move forward like a "Bird Wave" while feeding. In a few minutes, the noise recedes and once again the forest returns to its eerie silence. The bird species that initiate the wakeup call to form and lead the flock is known as "**Nuclear or Centric species**". The species that trail the feeding flock



are known as "Attendant species".

There are two main advantages for this type of behavior. **Nutrition and efficiency of finding food** (feeding efficiency) is one of the main reasons observed for the formation of a flock. Each species of bird is specialized to feed at a specific different level (strata) of the forest. Therefore the bird wave disturbs insects/food at all levels of the forest and makes food available to every member of the flock in an efficient manner. Also, since much of the food is invisible in a rainforest, having more eyes will help to reduce the energy expenditure used for locating food. The second reason observed is the **protection from predation**. When feeding, birds are exposed and distracted towards feeding, and reduce the vigilant behavior. Therefore feeding is a very vulnerable time for all species and could end as food of another predator. These feeding birds can become easy prey for the predatory birds hovering above at canopy level. Security is therefore a major advantage these birds enjoy when moving as a unit. Many birds mean many eyes that are able to detect a predator and warn others. Some of the researchers have also identified specific vocal signals (alarm calls) used by the Crested Drongos which play the role of sentinels, usually warning of any danger from above. As soon as the Drongos make the alarm call, the entire feeding flock goes silent and "freezes", in order not to reveal their location to the probable predator. Only after the Drongos give the "Ok, all clear" call the flock will come out and feeding continues.



Greater Racket-tailed Drongo

If you join us this summer on the planned bird watching trip to Sri Lanka, you will have a chance be a first-hand witness to this unique bird feeding behavior. So, come join the flock !

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo: http://youtu.be/g_3c2iNev1w & <http://youtu.be/sSKO-06Aor8>

Sri Lanka Bird Wave:

- <http://youtu.be/QgNaKaik7dw>
- <http://www.arkive.org/orange-billed-babbler/turdoides-rufescens/video-07a.html>
- <http://www.arkive.org/orange-billed-babbler/turdoides-rufescens/video-08a.html>

**HUMMINGBIRDS AT HOME:
AUDUBON'S NEW CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECT**

From National Audubon Society

Hummingbirds visit our yards each spring to breed, looking for nectar from our gardens and feeders. Fascinating to watch, hummingbirds captivate us with their magical feats of flight and their showy colors. The Continental US is breeding home to 14 species of hummingbirds, with a few other species making rare appearances.

Recent science reports that flowers are blooming earlier and earlier due to climate change. Some flowers are blooming as many as 17 days before the migrating hummingbirds arrive. The impact for migrating and breeding hummingbirds is unknown.

Building on our Christmas Bird Count (CBC) legacy and the more recent success of the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), Audubon is launching a new program called Hummingbirds at Home.

Through this new program Audubon's goal is to gather data that will help document the hummingbirds' journey, and better understand how changing flowering patterns and supplemental feeding by people relate to hummingbirds' migration and breeding success, and also climate change. Since nectar is critical to hummingbirds, we're asking people to document which flowering plants hummingbirds are feeding on in their backyards as well as whether hummingbird feeders are supplied and used. The Hummingbirds at Home program will provide an opportunity for citizen scientists to help us learn how these changes in the environment are impacting hummingbirds.

In this family-friendly program, participants will log hummingbird sightings and the flowering plants or feeders they visit, with free mobile technology or on desktop computers. Participants can also view hummingbird sightings online in real time. Scientists will use the data to better understand how hummingbirds are impacted by feeders, non-native nectar sources in gardens, shifting flowering times, and climate change.

Do you enjoy watching hummingbirds and want to become involved in this program? You can participate at a level that fits your schedule - from one sighting to watching hummingbirds over several weekends throughout the program. To learn more about this exciting citizen science project, go to www.audubon.org/citizenscience.



**APRIL PROGRAM:
A RIVER RUNS THROUGH US**

Adam Hoffman, Associate Professor at the University of Dubuque, will explore the connection between John James Audubon, water quality, and biological diversity. Through examination of past and present research on the Mississippi River and Catfish Creek, we'll examine how the Audubon Society's mission is reflected in the quest to meet the environmental challenges of today, notably clean and potable water. Topics of investigation will include what mussel data tells us about the influence of locks and dams, how nutrient pollution from Iowa is driving the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico, and comparing chloride levels between the different branches of Catfish Creek. Student research from the University of Dubuque's Environmental Science Program will be utilized in this interactive presentation.

e-NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE

By Joe Tollari

In an effort to control costs and save resources, Dubuque Audubon Society is offering an electronic version of this newsletter. You can receive the newsletter as an e-mail attachment or as a prompt to go to the Dubuque Audubon website to view the newsletter. E-mail your request to audubondubuque@gmail.com. This is a great way to celebrate Earth Day 2013.

FUTURE PROGRAMS

May: Ed Maslowsky will discuss climate change.

June: Annual Potluck

OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

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

President:	Wayne Buchholtz	563-582-7215
Vice President:	Joe Tollari	563-583-2077
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Conservation:	Charlie Winterwood	563-588-2783
Programs:	Michele Zuercher	
Iowa Audubon		
Liaison	Joe Tollari	563-583-2077
Web Master	Jan Friedman	janfrdmn@gmail.com
Website:	www.audubondubuque.org	

**The Dubuque Metropolitan Area Solid
Waste Agency
Is Ready For Your Spring Projects!**

During Spring house cleaning, many residents find themselves with leftover fertilizers, paint thinners, antifreeze, and other hazardous materials that they know they will never need again. That's where the Dubuque Metropolitan Area Solid Waste Agency's (DMASWA) Regional Collection Center for Household Hazardous Materials can be of help. If you have materials you cannot use, give away, or safely manage at home, take them to the Regional Collection Center (RCC). This service is FREE to Dubuque and Delaware county households and farms. Materials can be dropped off anytime between 7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from April through October. The RCC is located at the Dubuque Metro Landfill on the north side of U.S. Highway 20 on Dubuque's west side. It can be contacted at (563) 557-8220.

Dubuque Audubon Society

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Dubuque IA 52004-3174

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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.

____ 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

NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____

STREET _____ E-mail _____

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Mail check payable to Dubuque Audubon Society. Mail to:

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