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**PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

*By Wayne Buchholtz*

I was out for a hike the other day, and the weather reminded me that winter is here. A couple of weeks ago, I was in northwest Iowa, and, yes, there was snow on the ground. Winter is not for everyone. Even some of the birds fly south to get away from it. But, some birds fly down to us, like the Dark-eyed Junco. Winter, even though it is sometimes cold out, is a great time to go birding. Check out wooded areas for woodpeckers (see article in the newsletter), open water for geese, or other waterfowl that have stayed behind. These are especially good areas now while there are still plenty of open areas to find a few ducks. Even Great Blue Herons will stick around as long as food can be found. Head out to the prairies or grasslands to search for pheasant, quail and other species that prefer the open areas. And on a long cold day when it is snowing, stay home and watch the birds at your feeders. Depending on your location, you should be able to draw in a good number of species

to observe.

At home I am able to watch as many as fifteen species. I feed black oiled sunflower seed and suet. Providing several types of feeders will also attract different birds, since not all can hang on a short perch and feed upside down like a Goldfinch. I generally can attract Goldfinch, Chickadee, Nuthatch, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Cardinal, Blue Jay, House Finch, House Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, Mourning Dove, and Junco. Most are not in big number but are coming and going all day long. According to my granddaughters we also get bird species by other names: for example, the zebra birds, blue birds, red birds, the grey ones and the ghost birds. The latter is the Goldfinch. I tell them they are there, but they keep looking for a black and yellow bird. They have not grasped the concept of molting. They say, "You know, birds will freeze without feathers, Papa." Some day they will understand.

There are two things I am getting at here:

1. Children need to be outdoors and need to learn about the



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outdoors and what is there, and

2. Adults need to be outdoors and need to learn about the outdoors. Both can teach the other. Take a kid out doors when you go, or take time and watch from the warmth of your home this winter. Get outdoors when weather permits. There are two books that I recently ordered: Learn to Play by Peter Grey and Nature Principles by Richard Louv. Some of you will recognize the name of Louv if you have read Last Child in the Woods, which is about children not being outdoors and linked to learning and the term “Nature Deficient Disorder.” Learn with Play is getting kids to be outdoors, but also to play and is connected to learning as well. Nature Principles is about adults getting outdoors to help with depression, health and much more. I will keep you informed about what each book has to offer. I am not a reader so do not expect this real soon, maybe the next newsletter.

Please give me a call with suggestions and comments for Dubuque Audubon. I want to hear from you, about what we are doing right, and what you would like to see us add or do differently. I encourage you to go out often to explore a park, nature area, your backyard or other. You never know what you will see next. Nature can be quite entertaining.

Birding is Great Anywhere and at Anytime,  
Wayne Buchholtz/President

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## Dubuque Christmas Bird Count, Saturday, December 28th

*by Charlie Winterwood*

Please join us for the **114<sup>th</sup> annual Christmas Bird Count** on Saturday, December 28th. 71,454 people participated in 2,369 areas last year. We will attempt to identify and count all the birds within a 15-mile diameter, centered on Dubuque. Bring your binoculars to EB Lyons at 8:00 AM Saturday, December 28th, or contact one of the leaders below

to participate. We will come together at 4:00 PM at EB Lyons Interpretive Center for a chili supper and to compile the bird lists. There will be an experienced birder on each route, and we will show pictures of the possible birds at the December meeting, so don't hesitate to participate.

### LEADERS:

- **Durango** Walking & driving  
Dave Shealer 557-7519
- **City of Dubuque** Walking & Driving  
Craig Kruse 582-0328
- **Airport** Driving (half-day)  
Charlie Winterwood 588-2783
- **Swiss Valley** Walking  
Bob Walton 563-686-4231
- **East Dbq-Wis** Walking & Driving  
Ted Harms 815-281-2959
- **Mines of Spain** Walking & Driving  
Wayne Buchholtz 556-0620
- **Centralia** Driving  
Maggie O'Connell 563-451-8818



Audubon Christmas Bird Count  
December 24th - January 5th

Ewing Grosbeck by 113th CBC participant, Week Two



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

**DECEMBER 2013 - JANUARY 2014**

December 12th Thursday	DUB. AUDUBON PROGRAM:	EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights, Dubuque, IA. Bring your favorite Holiday cookies to share. 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Program: TBA
December 28th Saturday	CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT	8:00 am EB Lyons Interpretive Center. Meet to divide up into routes. 4:00 pm Meet at EB Lyons Interpretive Center to tally results and enjoy a chili supper while recounting the highlights of the day's events.
January 5th Sunday	MIDWINTER BALD EAGLE SURVEY	9:00 am. Meet first at Dyersville's Payless parking lot.
January 9th Thursday	DUBUQUE AUDUBON PROGRAM:	EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights, Dubuque, IA. Bring your favorite Holiday cookies to share. 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Program: TBA
January 12th Sunday.	WINTER PROGRAMING AT MINES OF SPAIN	1:00 pm at EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights, Dubuque, IA. Every second and fourth Sunday in January, February, and March.
January 18th Saturday	BALD EAGLE WATCH	Grand River Center, Port of Dubuque. Doors open at 9:00 am. Exhibitors, vendors, and children's activities all day. Minnesota Raptor Center at 9:30 am, 12:15 pm, and 3:00pm. Pella Wildlife at 11:00 am and 1:45 pm 9:00 am – 4:00 pm Eagle viewing at Lock and Dam #11
January 20th Monday	SNOWSHOEING AND BIRDING	9:00 am at Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Rd., Peosta. <b>NO SCHOOL!</b> Call to reserve your pair of snowshoes and join a naturalist to explore the winter birds through the preserve. If you have your own snowshoes, join the fun! We will hike approximately 2 miles looking for our feathered friends, then warm up inside! 563.556.6745





### THE CARPENTERS OF THE WOODS

by Craig Kruse

It's seven o'clock in the morning, and Olivia and I are hiking somewhere along the Sack and Fox trail at the Mines of Spain. It's late October, most of the leaves have found the ground and the morning air is brisk. Our bird count is low so far. We're rounding a bend about half way up the hill when we hear a distant hammering. As always Olivia gets her binoculars out and finds the bird shortly before I do. It's a Downy Woodpecker, the United States smallest Woodpecker, looking for food beneath the surface of a large maple tree. The carpenters of the woods are at work again.....

Woodpeckers are ancient birds. A fossilized leg bone of one was found in Germany dating back to 25 million years ago. That being said, no one has been able to determine where they originate. These birds are found on every continent except Antarctica and Australia. In Iowa, we are lucky to have seven species of woodpeckers that thrive here. The Downy, Hairy, Red-headed, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers live here as do the Northern Flicker and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Our most magnificent woodpecker (who also happens to be Dubuque Audubon's mascot and the inspiration for Woody the Woodpecker) is the crow sized Pileated Woodpecker. If you spend an afternoon hiking at The Mines of

Spain or Swiss Valley, you stand a good chance at seeing most of these species.

All woodpeckers share certain physical similarities that help them live their lives in the trees. Short legs and long toes help them climb as well as long stiff tails that they use to brace



themselves against the trees as they hammer and probe for food. In addition, they have a long straight bill and a

strong head designed for heavy pounding against the trees where they look for food. They also have a long, barb tipped tongue they use to probe for food in deep crevices. Feathers cover their nostrils to help keep them free from debris. All of these special attributes help them live their day to day lives moving from tree to tree looking for their next meal or excavating their next home.

All members of the woodpecker family eat insects to some degree. Ants and beetles seem to be at the top of the menu. Northern Flickers and Pileated Woodpeckers are so fond of ants that they have been found with their bellies filled with hundreds of them. All North American Woodpeckers also consume some sort of plant food. Often times this consists of berries, nuts and seeds. Sapsuckers drill holes in trees or shrubs so that they can feed on the sap that drains from them.



Red-headed Woodpeckers have even been known to supplement their diet by swooping down and nabbing a lizard or a mouse. Red-bellied Woodpeckers, on the other hand, have been known to kill and eat small nesting birds. Woodpeckers spend a large part of their day foraging for food. So, if you look for their food source, then you may be able to find a couple of different types of woodpeckers.

I refer to these magnificent birds as “The Carpenters of the Woods” for one simple reason. As they look for their food and carve out cavities to make their nests, they are also creating eventual homes for a variety of other species. When Woodpeckers abandon their homes, more often than not, these disregarded holes become homes for one of a dozen or more second-hand cavity users. An abandoned Pileated Woodpecker cavity has been known to measure twelve inches long, and they have been known to be extensive enough to topple trees. Among the many critters known to use woodpecker holes as their homes are small birds and owls, tree squirrels, chipmunks, bats, snakes and lizards. Woodpeckers truly build homes for a wide variety of species. They truly are “The Carpenters of the Woods.”



Are you trying to get your kids outdoors and active in the winter? Here are a dozen fun ideas to keep them moving and connect them with the natural world, recommended by AMC experts. All these activities can be done in the backyard or around the neighborhood.

**1. Make snow angels and snowmen.**

If snow falls in abundance, bundle your kids and have them lie down and wave their arms and



legs to make snow angels. Or try rolling balls of snow to build snowmen and snowwomen.

**2. Build snow forts and their variations: snow mazes and more serious snow shelters.**

For simpler mazes and forts, you can make snow “bricks” by packing snow into plastic bins or wastebaskets, then letting it air-harden before building. Decorate your creations with food coloring, pine cones, or other flourishes.

**3. Try tracking.**

Try exploring the untrampled edges of local parks after a snowfall to look for animal tracks



**4. Break out the binoculars.**

Make a simple pine cone birdfeeder (just add peanut butter and birdseed), setting it out in the backyard, and observing the birds (or other critters) that come to visit. Many birds are easier





to spot in winter, because leaves have fallen from the trees. Various owls, certain ducks, snow buntings, red-tailed hawks, and other species are visible primarily in winter.

### 5. Play winter "horseshoes."

Bury a wide-mouthed water bottle, can or bowl in the snow so that the mouth is flush with the snow's surface, then gathering sticks or small stones to toss into it from a few yards back.

### 6. Establish snowball-throwing or sled-pulling contests.

Try aiming snowballs at tree trunks. When pulling sleds, see who can pull faster, and try variations with different things on the sleds. You can



also see who can roll the biggest snowball or successfully form a mound of snow into a shape other than the traditional ball.



### 7. Create a treasure hunt.

This year-round favorite can be tailored to the season, with clues that refer to icicles and items hidden in snow-banks. Similarly, you can set children off in search of the longest or fattest icicle they can find. Bring a cloth or vinyl measuring tape to keep track.

### 8. Make ice art.

Freeze water colored with food coloring into blocks and other shapes, using ice cube trays, muffin tins, Jell-O molds, and old yogurt containers. (This step is more easily done in your freezer, but you can also try it outdoors.) Then bring your colorful ice blocks outside, along with any natural ice and snow you can collect, to create your own ice sculptures.



### 9. Catalogue conifers.

How many different kinds of evergreens can you identify in your neighborhood or around town?



### 10. Head to the playground.

Your child's favorite summer space will be transformed by snow and ice, and more likely than not, you'll have it all to yourselves.

### 11. Make s'mores.

Build a fire in an appropriate place and roast marshmallows or sip hot chocolate outside. Yes, outdoors in the winter. The fire will keep you warm.



### 12. Skate, sled, swirl on a saucer, snowboard, or ski.

Get out there and dive into the white stuff! Older kids in particular may need to burn some energy if they've been indoors watching the snow come down—or if they woke up to find a blanket of white already there. If you don't have the equipment, or need to get bigger sizes, look for ski swaps and other community sales for used gear. No matter the steepness of the slope, it is a good idea to bring a bike helmet in case conditions turn quickly slick.



# IT'S WINTER IN DUBUQUE - LET'S ENJOY IT!!





**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](mailto:audubondubuque@gmail.com).



I have noticed over the last several months that it is taking longer for the print copy to reach your home through bulk mail. So, another advantage to receiving an electronic copy is that the newsletter will get to you quicker.

**DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY ON FACEBOOK**



Have you visited the Dubuque Audubon Society Facebook account yet? If not, you should consider checking it out. When you visit you can read some interesting articles, check out the photo quiz, and find reminders of events and meetings. So, if you are on Facebook look us up and make sure you *“like us.”* If you are not yet on Facebook consider opening an account so you can check us out. When Facebook is used properly it is a great tool and it can be fun too.



**SEASONS GREETINGS**

**OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS**

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

President::	Wayne Buchholtz	563-582-7215
Vice President:	Craig Kruse	563-583-2077
Secretary:	Nick Courtney	
Treasurer:	Maggie O'Connell	563-923-4308

**At-Large Board Members:**

Jenny Ammon	Michele Zuercher
Lalith Jayawickrama	Charlie Winterwood
Terri Stanton	

Field Trips:	Terri Stanton	
Membership:	Joe Tollari	563-583-2077
Newsletter:		
Conservation:	Charlie Winterwood	563-588-2783
Programs:	Michele Zuercher	
Iowa Audubon		
Liason	Joe Tollari	563-583-2077
Web Master	Jan Friedman	janfrdmn@gmail.com

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

**Dubuque Audubon Society**

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Permit # 459



**DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY**

**NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

*If you are a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically a member of the local Audubon Society and do not need to sign-up separately.*

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 \_\_\_\_\_

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**Dubuque Audubon Society**

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