

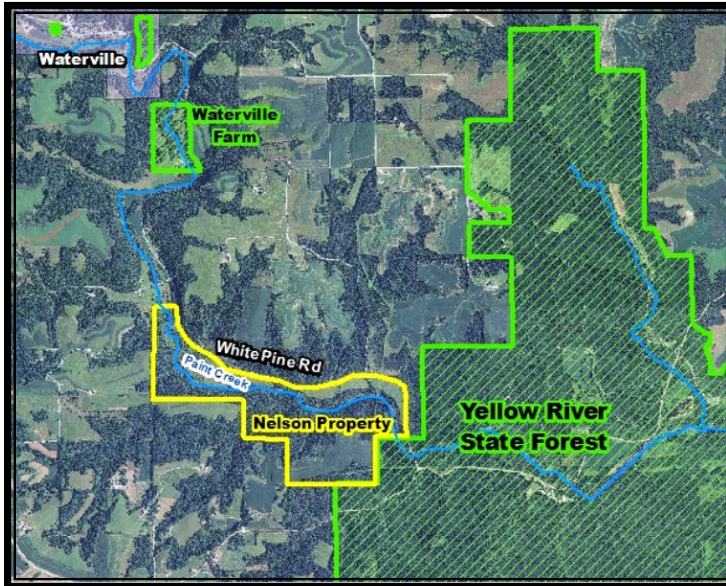


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YELLOW RIVER FOREST EXPANSION

By Doug Harr

At the November meeting of Iowa Audubon Board of Directors, we voted to assist Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation in a fundraising project to help DNR acquire a 368-acre addition (the Nelson Property) to the west side of the Paint Creek Unit of Yellow River State Forest (see attached map). The new addition will include more than another mile of Paint Creek, one of the state forest's most important watershed (& trout) streams. Also on the property are some algalic talus slopes, with their resident very rare plants and animals.

Although this piece of land has been partially logged, with time the forest here should produce additional habitat for Cerulean Warblers—and in the interim perhaps could host Golden-winged Warblers and other rarer birds. The tract actually

lies adjacent to part of the state forest currently housing one of the densest-known concentrations of Cerulean Warbler territories in the Midwest, if not the nation. Acquisition of this tract will also come closer to linking Yellow River Forest to other public, protected lands upstream on Paint Creek. It will also enlarge the core protected area of this joint DNR Bird Conservation Area and Audubon Globally Important Bird Area. A chance to help with a habitat conservation project as

important as this one does not come along often. I hope your chapter/affiliate might give this some serious consideration.

The Board of Iowa Audubon voted to pledge \$500 to help fund this project, which is being matched by the Quad Cities chapter. So this article is sent to encourage other chapters and affiliates to also consider a pledge to this project. [Editors note: at the December meeting, Dubuque Audubon Society Board of Directors voted to contribute \$500 to this land acquisition.]

Just a note to let you all know that we are now at a total of \$2,300 pledged to help INHF and DNR purchase the big new addition to the Paint Creek Unit at Yellow River State Forest. That's \$500 each from Quad Cities Audubon, Prairie Rapids Audubon (Waterloo), Dubuque Audubon, and Iowa Audubon and \$300 from Tallgrass Prairie Audubon (Grinnell).



Bald Eagle
(Haliaeetus leucocephalus)
Nesting in Iowa 2013



(This article was taken in part from the 2013 Bald Eagle Report from IA DNR. For full report, contact Wayne Buchholtz at the Mines of Spain Recreation Area 563-556-0620.)

Iowa has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of nesting Bald Eagles over the past 20 years. Nationally, the Bald Eagle has recovered enough from the dangerously low numbers of the 1960's and 1970's that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed it from the Threatened and Endangered species list (T&E list) in 2007. Iowa followed suit by upgrading the eagle from a status of Threatened to a status of Special Concern on the state T&E list in 2009. Despite the Bald Eagle population's apparent good health, challenges to their conservation still exist. Strategic monitoring of eagle activity in the state, particularly nesting, remains a priority.

Since eagles returned to nest in Iowa in the late 1970's, the DNR has engaged in opportunistic data collection on eagle nesting territories. In 2010, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) started collecting data on bald eagle nesting territories in two different ways; one opportunistic and one systematic. Both of these data collection methods rely on citizen volunteers. The "opportunistic" includes casual monitoring of some eagle nests by DNR personnel as well as reports of nest locations and activity from Iowa citizens. These data are not systematically collected so the data available for each territory varies. Additionally, territories reported on may not be representative (i.e. people may be more likely to report on an active nest than an inactive nest).

In 2010, the DNR began a second and more formal program for monitoring eagle nests. This program involves randomly selecting a targeted number of nesting territories and establishing them as "sentinel" sites. Each of these sentinel sites is assigned a volunteer as its official monitor. The monitor makes three visits to the nest site and systematically collects data on the activity and productivity of the territory. The number of sentinel territories is 130 and represents at least 50% of our known active territories in the state (excluding territories on the Upper Mississippi Wildlife Refuge).

Since 1977, approximately 683 bald eagle territories have been reported to the Iowa DNR. There are reports of nests from 96 of Iowa's 99 counties, with Crawford, Ida, Madison and Shelby counties having their first confirmed report in 2013. Allamakee County, with 127, has the highest number of nests reported, followed by Clayton County with 64). Following the 2013 nesting

season, 363 territories have an overall designation of active, 136 are designated inactive, and 162 have an unknown status (this usually means they have not been reported on >3 years but the nest was active at last report). Within the active territories, 126 of them are located on the Iowa portion of the Upper Mississippi Wildlife Refuge and 237 of them are spread throughout the rest of the state (called inland territories).

In 2013, reports were received for 347 territories with 59 being reported for the first time. Roughly 69% (241) of the territories were reported active in 2013, and 18% (63) were reported inactive. The remaining 43 territories were reported with unknown activity.

Forty-five percent (109) of the territories reported as active in 2013 included data on the outcome of the nesting season. Twenty-three (21%) of the 109 nests ended up failing, and 86 (79%) were successful in producing young. For the 109 territories for which we have a good count of fledglings, a total of 148 young were produced, which averages to 1.36 young produced per nest. If we extrapolate, assuming 79% of all nests reported as active would be successful (n=190); this would produce an estimate of 258 young fledged from Iowa nests in 2013.

A huge debt of gratitude goes out to our Bald Eagle Nests Monitors, who continue to provide many insights, along with their data, about Bald Eagles in Iowa. Thank you!



In case you missed December's program:

***Upslope migration in the Sierra Nevada Mountains
and the use of montane meadows for molting***

by Dan Wenny

Feather replacement or molt is an important phase of the annual cycle in birds. Feathers are used for flight, thermoregulation, camouflage, and intraspecific communication and thus are crucial for survival. Most songbirds replace all feathers at least once each year. In western US, several species that breed at lower elevations (~4000 - 6000 ft) migrate to higher elevations (~7000-9000 ft) after nesting but the extent and selective advantages of such upslope migration are not well understood. I mist-netted birds at several sites between 7000 and 8000 ft in Stanislaus National Forest in Alpine County, CA in late July to





DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY CALENDAR OF EVENTS



MARCH 2014

March 7th Friday	PROJECT FEEDER WATCH	3:00 - 4:00 pm AT Hurstville Interpretive Center, 18670 63rd Street, Maquoketa, IA 52060. Join volunteer Karen Manning in watching the birds at the Hurstville Center and record the information for Porject Feeder Watch. Bird crafts and activities will be provided for the kids..
March 9th Sunday	BIRD BANDING	1:00 p.m. at EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights, Dubuque, IA. Join Dave Shealer as he nets, weighs, measures, determines the age and sex of birds before he bands them. This is a great opportunity for you and your family to see birds up close.
March 13th Thursday	DUBUQUE AUDUBON PROGRAM	EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights, Dubuque, Iowa. 5:30 pm - Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting. 7:00 pm - Program: January journey to Paradise. UD students will share photos of wildlife and vistas on the islands of Trinidad and Tobago.
March 15th Saturday	BLUE BIRD WORKSHOP	10:00 AM, Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Road, Peosta. Dubuque County Conservation Society is sponsoring the Annual Bluebird Workshop and we would love to have you join us to create new habitat for the birds. Please call to pre-register 563-556-6745
March 15th Saturday	ANNUAL DUCK WADDLE	6:00 AM - meet at Banworth and Udelhoven Furniture parking lot, junction of US 61/151 and US 52. We will leave promptly at 6:00 am and drive to Green Island Wildlife Area to observe the spring migration of waterfowl. Dress warmly. After our adventure we will have breakfast at the Riverview Café in Bellevue, IA, to compile our list and share stories of bird adventures.
April 11th Friday	WOODCOCK WATCH	7:30 PM AT Whitewater Canyon. Join the Dubuque County Naturalist, Jackson County Naturalist, and Bob Walton as they hike the trails of Whitewater searching for mating dance and calls of the American Woodcock. Dress for the weather and wear appropriate shoes.

E-Newsletter Available



In an effort to control costs and save resources, Dubuque Audubon Society is offering an electronic version of this newsletter to our members. You can receive the Newsletter as an e-mail attachment or as a prompt to go to the Dubuque Audubon Web-Site to view the Newsletter. E-Mail your request to be added to this program to: audubondubuque@gmail.com



Continued from Page 2

early August of 2009 – 2013 to determine which habitats are used by upslope migrants, which bird species migrate upslope, and what the purposes of upslope migration might be. Preliminary results indicate that wet meadows with willows are used

heavily by upslope migrants, riparian thickets used to a lesser extent, and chaparral used not at all. Over 500 individuals of 34 species were captured. Of these the majority were Audubon's Warbler, Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Nashville Warbler.

The former two species nest in or near the meadows; the latter two species nest at lower elevations and appear at higher elevations in mid to late summer. The vast majority of these upslope migrants were young birds (HYs) undergoing molt of body plumage or greater coverts (feathers on the wing that protect the bases of the flight feathers). Thus, it appears that montane meadows are important stopover sites for upslope migrants to complete molting.

WOODCOCK PROJECT

By Cari Elizabeth Sebright

Although it is still blustery and cold across much of the region we are closing in on the time that American woodcock will be heading north along their spring migration routes. In the 'early bird gets the worm' mentality, woodcock migrate earlier than most other species leaving their southern wintering grounds sometimes before February to arrive on northern breeding grounds often when there is still snow on the ground. Despite the species' allure, there is still very little known about the ecology of American woodcock along the spring migration routes. Any information on spring migration habitat is critical for better management of woodcock. It is our hope to bridge this knowledge gap. With your help and the help of other volunteers, we hope to collect abundance and general habitat data across Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois and Iowa during the spring migration.

We need your help to make this effort a success!

How you can help:

1. Venture out this spring and watch and listen to woodcock perform their conspicuous courtship dances, record your observations on the provided data sheet (email me to request data sheets) and send the data sheet to cesebrig@uark.edu when you are finished.
2. Spread the word and help us to find more volunteers to widen our survey range and fill in missing areas. Thanks to those of you who have taken the time to read through

this post and thank you in advanced to all who plan to volunteer to collect data for us this spring. I look forward to hearing from you and working with you.

Cari Sebright is a graduate assistant at Arkansas Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

The Christmas Bird Count

by Olivia Kruse

It was a chilly winter morning when we met at the E.B. Lyons Nature Center. As my grandpa put the car in park, I looked out the window to investigate the parking lot. It made me smile when I viewed all the cars. Stepping out of the car, I was careful not to slip on ice, while looking for birds in the nearby feeders. We all hurried inside to get away from the brutally cold wind. While looking at a map to give us an idea on our routes, we broke into groups. We wished each other luck as everyone headed out the door hoping for a great day of birding.

Our first stop was Mount Carmel! As my grandpa pulled around the building, my dad and I scouted the area for any kind of excitement. Strange, all we saw in eyes distance was a House Sparrow on a nearby pine tree. Getting on my boots was tough because of my warm, fuzzy mittens, and if that wasn't enough, I couldn't feel my feet nor my ankles because of how many pairs of socks I had on (not to mention I had more pairs waiting in my bird bag just in case my toes would get cold). As we walked through the cemetery, the only thing moving was a dead branch swaying back and forth from the wind. To sum this place up - we struck out.

The highlight of the day was our second stop, Maus Park. There we saw, among other things, a Brown Creeper, a Belted Kingfisher, and a Winter Wren. From there we made our way to the dam, stopping at every spot we possibly could to add a new species to our list. On our way through, we stopped at the detention basin and spotted a Double-Crested Cormorant that forgot to go south for the winter. When we finally got to the dam, Eagles were perching on every other tree, searching for fish or any other small creatures. To make our list more interesting, we spotted a Coot that was trying to keep warm in the lock. When we got back in the car, I warmed up my hands before we got to our next location. Eagle Point Park was exactly like our first stop. Even though it wasn't too cold out, all we saw were a few woodpeckers. Our last stop was the Arboretum. There, we viewed a couple of Cedar Waxwings and a few Black-Capped Chickadees, among other species.

To wrap up this fine day, everyone met up at E.B. Lyons for some steaming hot chili to warm us up. It was fun to hear other peoples exciting stories as we checked each other's bird counts. I can honestly say this was a great day!



*We Dabble in Water:
the Northern Shoveler*

by Craig Kruse

With its black bill, dark glossy green head, and chestnut-brown sides, the Northern Shoveler may be the most distinct looking of the dabbling ducks. A dabbling duck is a duck that feeds from the surface of the water or close to it. Most dabblers tip their body up to feed, dunking their heads and upper body under water to look for food. Unlike other dabblers, Shovelers generally do not do this. They swim across the surface of the water with their bills lowered into it, straining out small crustaceans and other invertebrates with special comb-like projections that are built into their bills. They will also feed on vegetation.

During the winter they migrate to the Pacific Coast and the southern U.S.A. all the way to northern South America. This time of year, they can often be found mixed with groups of Teal. In the summer, the Northern Shoveler inhabits freshwater lakes, marshes, and wetlands from Alaska through western and central Canada, south to Colorado and northern New Mexico, and east to Massachusetts Bay.

Northern Shovelers are typically found in pairs or sometimes alone during the breeding season. Males exhibit elaborate courtship behavior including various calls, turns, dips, and wing flaps. Pairs breed in open



shallow wetlands. The female lays eight to twelve eggs in a nest made of grass and leaves and lined with down and feathers. The nest is built on the ground under a bush or in tall vegetation. The female incubates the eggs and, when flushed from its nest, will often defecate on its eggs, apparently to deter predators. Eggs hatch in about three weeks, and then the female leads the ducklings to the water. The ducklings fledge in forty to seventy days. Northern Shoveler pairs are monogamous and remain together longer than pairs of other dabbling duck species.

In some sections of the U.S., Idaho Shovelers can be found year-round. Typically, they migrate through Iowa in the springtime and are often seen on Audubon's Duck Waddle, feeding in the waters of Green Island and in the backwaters of the Mississippi.

Eagle Survey 2014

by Charlie & Gretel Winterwood & Ron Wiscus



Every year, Iowa conducts an eagle survey in January to count how many eagles on in the state. Dubuque Audubon has counted eagles in western Dubuque and eastern Delaware counties for several

years. We usually have around sixty eagles, but this year we only had thirty. We also had fewer immature eagles than we normally have.



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

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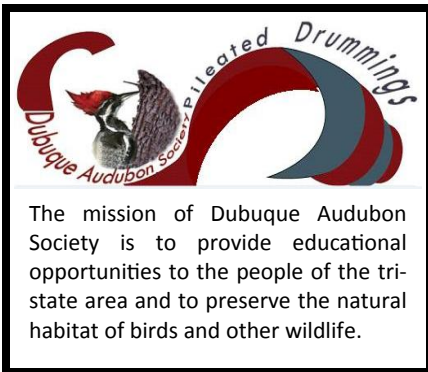
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DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

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