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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Craig Kruse

Bluebirds and Bald Eagles are on my mind. But that's not surprising since I'm writing this on the Monday after the Bald Eagle Watch, and today's the last day of the Bluebird Count. With two huge events like that on the same weekend, I've got to do a shout-out to all of the generous people who donated time and effort to allow us to pull this off. I was able to spend a couple of hours with Olivia



Adult Eagle - photo by C. Kruse

manning the spotting scopes by the river, and the crowds were so into it that nobody seemed to mind the cold. When I finally made it up to the convention center, there were people everywhere. I was able to take some time and talk to some old friends who I hadn't seen in a while and watch as the knowledgeable people manning our booths taught people about the world around us. I've got this picture stuck in my head of a young boy, maybe 6 or 7, who was looking in awe at a real pheasant feather at the Pheasants Forever booth. When he held it, it was like he was holding the most fragile thing in the world. That right there is what makes this event special every year we do it.

By 1:00 it was time for me to head out, grab a burger and look for Bluebirds. About three months ago, National Audubon Society had asked us to participate in a survey of Dubuque county counting every Bluebird we could find. Saturday was the second day of the four-day event, and I was to do my third route. Once again we never would have made it through this if it wasn't for the people who donated their time to the project. I figure, over the three days I was in a car, we logged around 250 miles driving roads that I didn't know existed. Cold or not, it was fun. I only saw one Bluebird the entire time. Olivia spotted one on Sunday near Durango when we did a route together. In the ten routes that people with Dubuque Audubon did, we only saw eight Bluebirds. That's not necessarily a bad thing. It's expected that many of this species are not going to be around in the winter, and now we have a basis for future winter counts. If in the future when we do this, we see a lot more, or even less, scientists can look for the reason for the change. All in all, it was a great/productive weekend.



Bald Eagle Watch - photo by C. Kruse



Continued from page 1

If January was a busy month, then February is shaping up to be an exciting month, also. The fun starts on the 11th with our next in a line of outstanding programs this year. Mark Wagner will be joining us from the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium. Mark is the Director of Education at the Museum and he will be talking to us about the wildlife in eastern and western Africa and the work he did in the game park there as a Peace Corps Volunteer. From February 12 to the 15th we can all participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count. Last year more than 140,000 participants helped Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon gather information to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations, and this year could even be bigger. Participants are asked to count birds for as little as fifteen minutes (or as long as they like) for one or more days of the four-day event and then report their sightings at birdcount.org. Anyone can participate in this event at any skill level. You can count from anywhere you like, even your kitchen window. If you're looking for me I'm usually easy to find that weekend. At some point I'll be counting at Swiss Valley, The Mines of Spain, and, of course, I'll have to do one at John Deere Marsh.

It'll be fun, so hopefully I'll see you in the field.

Craig Kruse, president



FEBRUARY PROGRAM

ANIMALS OF AFRICA



Mark Wagner will present a program entitled **Animals of Africa**. Mark is the Director of Education for the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium in Dubuque, Iowa. He has been an environmental educator and conservationist for over 30 years, a natural resource manager, and living history demonstrator. He graduated from Iowa State University in 1972 with a degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Management. He served a three year term in the Peace Corps, working in agricultural programs and in a 250,000 acre national park in West Africa. He has twice returned to Africa for special assignments. He will present a program on Africa, mainly focusing on wildlife in both East and West Africa and the work he did in the game park in the 70's as a Peace Corps Volunteer. He will use a slide projector (retro technology) as he is working on copying his slides to digital media.





DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**



THURSDAY February 11th	Dubuque Audubon Program: ANIMALS OF AFRICA	EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Hts, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Mark Wagner, Director of Education at the Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium, will speak on his experiences in Africa.
FEBRUARY 12th—15th	Great Backyard Bird Count	See article on Page 4 for more information.
SUNDAY February 21st	Iowa's Wild Beauty	1:00 pm. Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Rd., Peosta, IA. Ty Smedes, renowned Urbandale writer and nature photographer, has created one of the most beautiful and diverse collections of Iowa nature images ever to appear in a single book. This visual treasure takes the reader on a photographic journey to every corner of the state.
THURSDAY March 10th	Dubuque Audubon Program: BACKWATER FISH HABITATS	EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Hts, Dubuque, IA 5:30 pm – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 7:00 pm – Scott Gritters, Iowa Dept of Natural Resources
SATURDAY March 19th	Annual Duck Waddle	Mark your calendar for this fun event — more information to come.

**HAPPY
VALENTINE'S
DAY**

**Christmas Bird Count 2015 (Dubuque)**

Wild Turkey	172
Great Blue Heron (Blue form)	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2
Cooper's Hawk	5
Bald Eagle	49
Red-tailed Hawk	60
Rough-legged Hawk	1
American Coot	1
Ring-billed Gull	123
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon)	251
Mourning Dove	48
Great Horned Owl	1
Barred Owl	1
Belted Kingfisher	5
Red-bellied Woodpecker	55
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1
Downy Woodpecker	30
Hairy Woodpecker	7
Northern Flicker (Yellow-shafted)	2
Pileated Woodpecker	8
American Kestrel	10
Northern Shrike	cw
Blue Jay	91
American Crow	319
Horned Lark	33
Black-capped Chickadee	150
Tufted Titmouse	36
White-breasted Nuthatch	49
Brown Creeper	4
Winter Wren	1
Carolina Wren	1
Eastern Bluebird	14
American Robin	24
European Starling	335
Cedar Waxwing	7
Snow Bunting	cw
American Tree Sparrow	439
Dark-eyed Junco (Slate-colored)	973
Song Sparrow	8
Northern Cardinal	150
House Finch	98
Common Redpoll	4
American Goldfinch	66
House Sparrow	544
Total Individuals	5872
Total Species Reported	54

**THE 2016 GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT (GBBC)**

By Joe Tollari

The 2016 GBBC will take place Friday, February 12, through Monday, February 15, 2016. This is the 19th annual count. The Great Backyard Bird Count is a world-wide 4-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are. Everyone is welcome--from beginning bird watchers to experts. It takes as little as fifteen minutes on one day, or you can count for as long as you like each day of the event. It's free, fun, and easy and it helps the birds. You simply watch birds at your feeders or any location you wish to count for at least fifteen minutes. I usually end up watching for thirty or more minutes. Tally up the numbers of each species you see. Keep counting and record the highest number of each species you see at any one time within the fifteen minutes. When you are finished counting, report your results online. Go to www.birdcount.org for instructions on how to get started. The site includes links to creating an account, how to conduct a count, and submitting your observations.

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document and understand the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time. Scientists use the GBBC information, along with observations from other citizen-science projects, such as the Christmas Bird Count, Project FeederWatch, and eBird, to get the "big picture" about what is happening to bird populations. The longer these data are collected, the more meaningful they become in helping scientists investigate far-reaching questions.



CLIMATE CHANGE

From Audubon.org



Climate change threatens the birds we see every day. Our warming world poses profound challenges to conservation. The effects of climate change are already apparent—from habitat loss to devastating breaks in the delicate links that connect birds, migration, and food sources.

The Threat

Audubon’s Birds and Climate Change Report, published in September 2014, confirmed that climate change is the single greatest threat to North American birds. Seven years in the making, the report warns that 314 North American bird species could lose more than half of their current ranges by 2080 due to rising temperatures. (For more on the methodology, and links to peer-reviewed articles published out of this research, visit the FAQ page or read the full report.)

For those of us who care deeply about birds, from the Wood Thrush in eastern forests to the Burrowing Owl in western grasslands, this is a warning call that demands urgent action.

Audubon’s Solution

The situation is indeed dire—more than half of bird species on the continent are at risk—but there are reasons for hope. By identifying which birds are most sensitive to climate change and where those changes are most likely to occur, this research provides a roadmap for future conservation and advocacy efforts.

Audubon’s Climate Initiative, the organizational response to this threat, taps into its members’ love and commitment for birds to build population resilience and demand solutions to slow the pace of warming. Audubon is encouraging its members to take steps to address the climate change threat in their backyards, in their communities, in the Important Bird Areas (IBAs) near their homes, and in the state houses.

That requires a diverse network of climate activists with a shared value—a love and appreciation of birds. Take a look at how Audubon’s network of chapters, centers, state offices, and individual activists is helping birds adapt and pushing for solutions on behalf of birds.



Bird Watchers Digest and Vanguard have joined forces to bring you a series of videos designed to help you become a better bird watcher. From cleaning binoculars to packing for a field trip, each of these short (about 3 minutes) how-to videos includes practical information that you can use to improve your field skills. New videos will be added throughout the year.

To access the videos, go to www.youtube.com and type “birding basics and beyond” in the search bar. There are currently four titles available. In addition to the two videos mentioned above, you can learn how to spot a bird with binoculars and how to use a field guide. These are good tutorials for beginning bird watchers.



OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

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

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V-Pres.: Brent Groesch

Secretary: Nick Courtney

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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

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 _____ TELEPHONE _____

STREET _____ E-mail _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

CODE: C1ZH500Z

Mail check payable to Dubuque Audubon Society. Mail to:

**Dubuque Audubon Society
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Dubuque, IA 52004-3174**