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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Joe Tollari

The end of 2018 and the start of 2019 is a busy time for the Dubuque Audubon Society.

The 119th Christmas Bird Count will be conducted on Saturday, December 29, 2018 (snow date Saturday, January 5, 2019). Six teams spread out over fixed routes to count the birds in the Tri-State area. While it is an impossible task to count every bird, our sampling method has produced valuable information about bird populations over the years. This event is open to all. Beginning birders will be teamed up with veteran bird watchers. It is a great opportunity to learn about birds and bird-watching. We will meet at 8:00 am in the parking lot at E. B. Lyons Interpretive Center and fan out from there. You can join a team for a half day or a full day whatever you're your schedule. Dress warmly and bring binoculars if you have them. We will meet again at 4:30 pm (It gets dark early!) to tabulated results, share stories, and enjoy a chili supper. It's a fun time.

The annual Bald Eagle Watch will be held on Saturday, January 19, 2019. This year we will feature The World Bird Sanctuary from St. Louis, MO. They always have an informative and exciting program with flying birds. I'm looking forward to our second speaker – John Howe from the Raptor Resource Project. John will speak on the Decorah Eagles. This will be exciting for all those who have followed the Decorah Eagles online.

We always need volunteers for the Bald Eagle Watch. We need people to greet visitors as they arrive and staff the information table. We also need people who are willing to spend a couple hours at Lock and Dam 11 to help with the spotting scopes. It is always fun sharing in the excitement of the day.

I hope that you can share in the excitement of one of these days.

Christmas Bird Count 2018

by Charlie Winterwood

The 119th Christmas Bird count will be held Saturday, December 29, with a snow date of January 5. We will meet at 8AM at EB Lyons Interpretive Center and return at 4:30PM for a chili supper and tabulate results.

Each count takes place in an established 15-mile wide diameter circle, and is organized by a count compiler. Count volunteers follow specified routes through a designated 15-mile (24-km) diameter circle, counting every bird they see or hear all day. It's not just a species tally—all birds are counted all day, giving an indication of the total number of birds in the circle that day.

If you are a beginning birder, you will be able to join a group that includes at least one experienced birdwatcher. Dress warmly.

If your home is within the boundaries of a CBC circle, then you can stay at home and report the birds that visit your feeder on count day as long as you have made prior arrangement with the count compiler. Call 563-513-5246 the afternoon of the count to report.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We are in need of volunteers who will help with Bald Eagle Day on January 19, 2019. We need greeters who will help direct people as they come up the escalator at the Grand River Center. It is always a fun time interacting with the children and their parents. We also need members to staff the Dubuque Audubon Society table in the main concourse. Finally, if you really want to experience Bald Eagle Day, we need volunteers to help out at the spotting scopes at Lock and Dam #11. We hope to have enough volunteers to work a 2-hour shift. There is always time to visit the exhibits and to attend the programs. If you are will to give up a couple hours of your time and learn more about Bald Eagles, contact Joe Tollari at 563-583-2077.

WHO WINS THE FEEDER WARS?

Feeders might seem like friendly spots where chickadees, finches, woodpeckers, and nuthatches can kumbaya over a good meal, but that couldn't be further from the truth. Some of the most intense avian rivalries are hashed out among the seeds and suet, says Eliot Miller, a researcher at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and author of [a new feeder-hierarchy study](#). "Feeders are these arenas where birds gather and fight," he says. "There's an increased rate of aggression to some degree."

By combing through thousands of observations from [Project FeederWatch](#), a volunteer science count that runs from November to April, Miller [uncovered a Hunger Games-like world](#) involving 136 common North American species.

As birds compete for access to feeder supplies, they reveal where they belong in the pecking order. So, by simply noting which species flew off and which ones stood their ground, Miller and his colleagues were able to build a database of victors and losers. They then used some complex statistical modeling to sort those interactions into clear levels of domination. In general, they found that bigger birds were more intimidating. A chickadee may be spunky for its size, but at half an ounce, it stands little chance against a four-pound Common Raven.

Some of the winners were a little more surprising. For instance, Downy Woodpeckers were feared despite their small stature. Miller is convinced it's because of their formidable bills, which are used for hammering into trees and could double as battle gear. for hammering into trees and could double as battle gear. Hummingbirds also defied their delicate reputations and came out on top. "They need to feed really regularly.

In short, they don't really want to take any crap from anyone else," Miller says. "I think that has played out over an evolutionary time scale where things like hummingbirds are very quick to be aggressive." Their moxie allows them to push warblers and wrens away from nectar feeders.

The best part is that Miller's study is far from over. "The database has doubled in size since I wrote the paper," he says. "I'm constantly shocked by what people see." He recently received an email about a grackle catching and eating chickadees that stood in its way (morbid, but not shocking). As more observations roll in, he'll use them to look at how standings differ in various parts of the country. For now, though, he's amazed by how well the patterns have held.

You can test Miller's matchups by paying close attention to your own feeders during [the upcoming Great Backyard Bird Count](#). Here are five duels to look out for, as well as some important stats and facts for each species. Just hover over or tap the images to find out more about the contenders.

American Goldfinch vs. Black-capped Chickadee

Both of these birds are low on the feeder totem pole, but goldfinches have a slight edge in size. Still, Black-capped Chickadees are far more aggressive than American Goldfinches, meaning that they tend to get the prime spot.

Winner: Black-capped Chickadee

Mourning Dove vs. House Sparrow

These two species are perfectly matched, despite the Blue Jay's heavier weight and bullying nature. Miller has noticed that introduced species like starlings often don't fit neatly into the predicted pattern; he thinks this might have to do with how successful they've been at thriving in new environments.

Winner: Draw

Pileated Woodpecker vs. Red-bellied Woodpecker

You might think all woodpeckers are created equal. Not so. Miller's research found that there are obvious hierarchies within genuses, as seen with Red-bellieds, which dominate the feeder scene when compared to their larger Pileated cousins. Miller says we need more science on why, but in the meantime, just put your money on the Red-bellied's class coat.

Winner: Red-bellied Woodpecker

Common Raven vs. American Crow

Ravens are much heavier than crows and can beat them in any one-on-one battle. But when there's a groups of crows, the story is quite different. While ravens are typically solitary birds, crows work together to push rival species out of their territory.



DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**DECEMBER 2018
to JANUARY 2019**

December 9th Sunday	Prairie Seed Volunteer Day	9:00 AM – 5:00 PM Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Rd, Peosta. We have lots of prairie seed collected from this fall and we need your help to get it separated and ready to plant! We will be working on mostly milkweed seed and each volunteer will get to take a small amount home to help create monarch habitat in their own backyard! We will have seed set out all day so stop by for however long you can.
December 13th Thursday	DUBUQUE AUDUBON PROGRAM: <i>The BIG Year</i>	*CHANGE IN LOCATION* Univ of Dubuque University Science Center/ Goldthorp, 2000 University Avenue, room 105. 5:00PM – Dubuque Audubon Society Board Meeting 6:00PM – Join us for the comedy film, <i>The Big Year</i> , as actors Steve Martin, Jack Black, and Owen Wilson venture across the country to count more bird species than the others. Rated PG, 1hr 40min. Refreshments available.
December 21st Friday	Winter Solstice Hike	6:30 PM – 7:30 PM. Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Rd, Peosta. Celebrate the winter solstice with an evening hike along the illuminated trails of Swiss Valley. Warm up around the campfire with a cup of hot cocoa.
December 29th Saturday	119th Christmas Bird Count	8:00AM Meet at EB Lyons parking lot, 8991 Bellevue Hts, Dubuque. Experienced birders will lead anyone who would like to help count all the birds in a 15-mile diameter, centered in Dubuque. Just bring binoculars and warm clothing. In case of inclement weather, the count will be Saturday, January 5. 4:30PM Share a chili supper while compiling results. See article in newsletter for more info.
January 1st Tuesday	First Day Hike	12:45 PM - 2:00 PM E. B. Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Hts, Dubuque. The First Day Hike at the Mines of Spain Recreation Area is scheduled for January 1, 2019, to begin at 1:00 PM. Participants are urged to arrive 15 minutes early to register. Cocoa, coffee and refreshments will be available for all participants after the hike. The centers exhibits and displays will be open for viewing.
January 19th Saturday	Bald Eagle Watch	Grand River Center, 500 Bell St., Dubuque. Doors open at 9:00AM. Exhibitors, vendors, and children’s activities all day. The World Bird Sanctuary from St. Louis, MO, & Raptor Resource Project will be presenting. 9:00AM – 4:00PM Eagle viewing at Lock and Dam #11. Volunteers are needed – see articles in newsletter.

OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

President: Joe Tollari 563-583-2077
Vice President: Craig Kruse 563-582-0328
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**If you have any questions or comments,
please contact us!**

Dubuque Audubon Society

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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 Society. There are two categories of memberships in the Dubuque Audubon Society.

LOCAL MEMBERSHIP: 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

NATIONAL & LOCAL MEMBERSHIP: If you wish to become a member of both local and national:

Go to Audubon.org ➡ Click on "JOIN" then "Become a member"

The membership in National is \$20 per year. Any amount you give above that is considered a donation. The National membership automatically gives you membership in the local group in addition to the award winning Audubon Magazine. It is a good idea to note the month you joined so you will not be confused by multiple early reminders.

NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____

STREET _____ CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____ E-MAIL _____

CODE: C1ZH800Z

Mail check payable to Dubuque Audubon Society.

Mail to:

**Dubuque Audubon Society
P.O. Box 3174
Dubuque, IA 52004-3174**