



2024, Volume 4 — WINTER

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Officers

President: Marty Corfman
Vice President: Ken Kiss
Treasurer: Maggie O'Connell
Secretary: Andrea Pellerito

Board Members

Chuck Isenhardt, Tony Moline,
 Lynn Schroeder, Joe Tollari,
 George Tuft, Sandy Walton

Website Admin: Mary Leigh
Iowa Audubon Liaison: Bob Walton

Committee Chairs

Membership: Ken Kiss
Program: Lynn Schroeder
Field Trip/Volunteer Opportunities: Tony Moline
Conservation: Chuck Isenhardt
Web & Publicity: Marty Corfman
Newsletter: George Tuft

Website: www.audubondubuque.org



Email: audubondubuque@gmail.com

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[Dubuque Audubon Society](#)

President's Corner

By Marty Corfman

Dear DAS members and fans,

Your board has been busy! We've been working on many projects, and we hope you're starting to see more activities and opportunities to be involved. Here are just a few:

- We've established committees to get more work done outside of board meetings. We welcome member participation on these committees! If you have a talent or passion in one of these areas, please reach out to one of us, and we will connect you with the right person. We could use your help and knowledge. Thank you!
- The committees are Membership; Program; Conservation; Field Trips and Volunteer Opportunities; Newsletter; Website and Publicity; Nominating (for future board elections).
- We've started planning Birding Pop-Up events. They are fun, often spontaneous, and the attendees have provided positive feedback. We intend to continue these throughout the year. Would you be interested in helping or planning one of these? Let us know!
- We've organized our membership list and how we communicate with you. This should make for more timely reminders for upcoming programs and field trips. Please let us know if you get any emails from us that are not of interest to you, and we will remove you from those. If you don't get emails from us, please send us an email at audubondubuquemembership@gmail.com.
- If you haven't checked out our completely redesigned website for a while, please do so! There's a ton of information on there, and we will

PROGRESS!

continue to update our events as we get details. Mary Leigh, our board member, has gone way above and beyond to create this website. Thank you, Mary!

Happy Birding!
Marty



© George Tuft

Q&A Corner

By Mary Leigh

Question: Do American Robins remain in the Midwest all winter?

Answer: Yes! Although American Robins are regarded as a sign of spring in the Midwest, they are here year-round. On last year's annual Christmas Bird Count, we counted 14, and we counted 184 in 2022.

In fall and winter, American Robins become less territorial and more social, gathering in large flocks. These large flocks move around to find food sources. They are most often seen in trees and shrubs, roosting as well as eating berries and fruits. Some may migrate short distances to the south, depending on the weather and food supply. We were definitely seeing an example of a flock at Mines of Spain in 2022.

In the spring, whether they are actually returning or not, they become more visible and so seem to be a sign of spring. The large flocks split, and the birds become more territorial. They are seen more often on the ground, searching for earthworms, and they sing more to attract mates.

Mark your calendar for our Christmas Bird Count on 12/28, and maybe we'll count some Robins!

Membership, eMails, and Newsletters

- Our events are free and open to the public, not just to DAS members!
- Our email list is open to all! (Just contact us to sign up for our email broadcasts.)
- Our newsletters are available in color to all on our website.

So, our focus is not on tracking membership and dues, but our new membership committee is working hard to get our membership roster up to date, so that all national members in our coverage area reliably hear from us and so that we do not continue to mail printed newsletters to those who may no longer be interested (thus ensuring responsible spending of member dues and donations).

We plan to continue to mail printed newsletters to local members who have requested a mailed copy as well as to all active national members in our coverage area whose emails we do not have (unless

we hear otherwise). With this winter newsletter, those of you receiving a printed newsletter will notice that somewhere near your address label, we have added membership information. You'll see your membership expiration date, and if your membership has expired, you'll see a message indicating to join or renew to continue receiving a mailed newsletter.

Please contact us if you are receiving a printed copy but are not interested or if you are a member on our email list and would like to start receiving a printed copy. If you want to continue receiving a mailed copy but the \$10/year local dues are a hardship, please contact us to request continued mailing.

With this winter newsletter, we are pleased to announce that we have succeeded in being a quarterly publication in 2024! We'll try to keep that schedule going.

We have many members for whom we do not have an email address, so please contact us

if you want to receive our email broadcasts, which include announcements of upcoming programs, annual field trips, pop-up field trips, and newsletters.

To contact us, you can use the [Contact Us](#) form on our website, or you can email us directly. For membership issues, email AuduboneDubuqueMembership@gmail.com. For anything else, email AudubonDubuque@gmail.com.



2024 eBird Taxonomy Update

By Mary Leigh

I noticed recently that my eBird life list bird count increased by 1 when I hadn't added any new species. The explanation was the annual taxonomy update! Every year, based on new insights by ornithologists, species are split, lumped, and renamed. According to an eBird article (<https://ebird.org/news/2024-taxonomy-update>), the 2024 taxonomy update is complete, and there were 141 species gained through splits, 16 dropped due to lumps, and 3 new species added. The new total of bird species worldwide is 11,145.

The Herring Gull was split into four species. I'd seen one at home and in Ireland, so I checked to see that eBird now showed American Herring Gull and European Herring Gull on my life list. Over 7 million observations in eBird were impacted by the Herring Gull splits, which is the largest number impacted by a revision in eBird history!

The House Wren split into 7 species, so I now counted Northern House Wren and Southern House Wren. Thus, I gained 2 birds due to splits, but my total went up by 1, so

did I also lose one to a lump?

Before the article led me to the answer, I read, "Three Redpolls Become One." Inspired by Tony Moline's program last year on winter wildlife watching in Sax Zim Bog, my husband and I went to Minnesota in January. I was thrilled to see many Common Redpoll, but we were unable to find a Hoary Redpoll in the mix. That disappointment now translates into dodging a lump! (My condolences to Tony and others who had counted a Hoary Redpoll.)

Here comes the part about "spuhs" and slashes. When entering an eBird checklist, when a birder is unsure of a bird but can identify the family, a "spuh" can be reported, such as gull sp. or duck sp., where "sp." is short for "species" and is pronounced "spuh". A "slash" can be used when a bird can be narrowed down to a certain pair of species, such as Trumpeter/Tundra Swan. These reports do not count towards your life list but are listed at the bottom in an "Additional Taxa" section. With the taxonomy update, if eBird is unable to reassign a bird to its new

species, it may change it to a spuh or slash. Looking at my Additional Taxa, I saw a new slash. Fortunately, the new species choice was obvious based on my photo, so fixing it corrected my total, so now it was up by two.

The eBird website is automatically updated, but if you use the eBird mobile app, you will need to update it and any installed bird packs to see the changes. Similarly, if you use Merlin, you'll need to update your bird packs.

These taxonomy changes happen annually in October, so I plan to be ready next year (exporting my list from eBird *before* the update, to make it easier to see what changed)!




Herring Gull Split

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Check the [EVENTS](#) page on our website for the latest information and additional details!

DATE & TIME	EVENT	DESCRIPTION & LOCATION
Thursday, 12/12/24 6:45 PM Social Time 7 - 8 PM Program	<i>December Program:</i> Ducks Unlimited – Wetlands Conservation	Mike Shannon , senior regional biologist in Iowa for Ducks Unlimited, will provide a brief overview of the continental work Ducks Unlimited is doing and then focus his presentation on wetland work in Iowa. EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights Road, Dubuque
Saturday, 12/28/24 Start: 8 AM Compilation: 5 PM <i>Note location change.</i>	Dubuque Audubon Annual Christmas Bird Count	Join our field trip leaders as we split into groups to identify and count birds within a 10-mile radius of Center Grove Methodist Church, Dubuque, IA. All skill levels are welcome. You may also sign up to participate by feeder-watching from home. See website for details. <i>We'll start at EB Lyons and end at Swiss Valley Nature Center with the compilation and a potluck.</i> We'll provide chili options.
Thursday, 1/9/25 6:45 PM Social Time 7 - 8 PM Program	<i>January Program:</i> Improving the River Environment	Jeremiah Haas , fisheries biologist at Quad Cities Clean Energy Center, will speak to us about their Mississippi River monitoring, hatchery operation, and outreach. EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights Road, Dubuque
Thursday, 2/13/25	February Program: TBD	Program is to be determined. See website later for finalized information.
Saturday, 3/8/25 See website for details.	Annual Duck Waddle	Join us on our annual trip to Green Island to observe migrating waterfowl! Audubon guides will help identify bird species. Binoculars are recommended. You may come and go as you choose. Green Island Wildlife Management Area in Jackson County, IA
Thursday, 3/13/25 6:45 PM Social Time 7 - 8 PM Program	<i>March Program:</i> Forest Management for Birds	Dr. Adam Janke of Iowa State University will speak about the biology and ecology of the birds we share our forests with and explore how forest management practices can help ensure the soundtrack of summer keeps playing in our forests for years to come. EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights Road, Dubuque
Thursday, 4/10/25 6:45 PM Social Time 7 - 8 PM Program	<i>April Program:</i> Backyard Birding and Photography	Stan Bousson will talk about backyard birding and photography. EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights Road, Dubuque
Thursday, 5/8/25	May Program: TBD	Program is to be determined.




Dubuque Audubon has started a [new Facebook page](#) due to loss of admin status. Look for the profile pic pictured on the left to be sure you're liking and following our new page!

Then please unfollow the old page. Eventually, we will stop using the old page. Thanks for your help!

Dubuque Audubon Society

PO Box 3174

Dubuque IA 52004-3174

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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.

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

Joining the National Audubon Society with Dubuque Audubon as your local chapter is done most easily through our website at <https://www.audubondubuque.org/join/>. The annual cost is a \$20 minimum donation, which is for a family or an individual.

National members will receive the award-winning *Audubon* magazine. We recommend noting the month you join, so that you will not be confused by early renewal reminders. It will take 4-12 weeks for us to be notified, so if you want to be added to our local list sooner, please email AudubonDubuqueMembership@gmail.com to let us know!

DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY

NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & RENEWAL FORM

Do NOT use this form for joining or renewing at the national level.

If you wish to join or renew membership in the Dubuque Audubon Society *without* joining the National Audubon Society, then please fill out this form. Local chapter dues are \$10 per year, and dues remain with the local chapter. Our membership year runs from July to June.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

If you provide your email address, you'll receive our quarterly newsletter, notifications of upcoming programs & field trips, & occasional emails about other topics of potential interest.

Email: _____

Phone: _____

We are trying to reduce printing and postage costs by emailing more newsletters, but let us know below if you'd like to request a mailed black-and-white copy. Our electronic newsletters have the advantage of being in color, and you can click on links where applicable. Our newsletters are available for viewing anytime from our website.

Check the box to request a black-and-white printed newsletter by postal mail.

Make check payable to "Dubuque Audubon Society" and mail to: Dubuque Audubon Society
P.O. Box 3174
Dubuque, IA 52004-3174