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George Tuft, Sandy Walton

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Iowa Audubon Liaison	Bob Walton

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

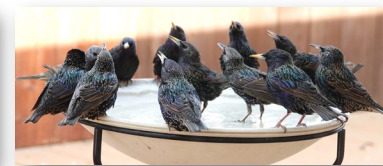
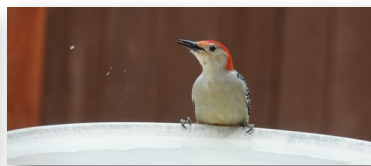
Website: www.audubondubuque.org



Email: audubondubuque@gmail.com

Facebook: [Dubuque Audubon Society](https://www.facebook.com/DubuqueAudubonSociety)

YouTube: [Dubuque Audubon](https://www.youtube.com/DubuqueAudubon)



President's Corner *by Marty Corfman*

Duck Waddle

Who's getting excited for spring migration? ME!!! Yes, I know it's only February, but at least the duck waddle is right around the corner! On Saturday, March 8, we will meet to go to Green Island, south of Bellevue, to identify and count waterfowl.

Every year is a bit different, and yes, it can be cold and wintry, but it is always fun! We hope you will join us for this annual tradition of welcoming the spring birding season. This is a great chance to learn about waterfowl from members that are very generous with their knowledge. Please check our [events page on our website](#) for more details.

Meanwhile...Winter Birding!

While I impatiently await spring, I'm enjoying the heated bird bath outside my office window right here in town. I've had quite a variety of birds this year. Northern Cardinals, American Goldfinches, House Finches, Dark-eyed Juncos and LOTS of House Sparrows come regularly.

This year, the Blue Jays have been so fun to watch, especially when they're in the sun and their bright blue colors really stand out.

A male American Robin, with his orange beak has been hanging out. But the star of the show has been a male Red-bellied Woodpecker. His gorgeous red-striped head is absolutely brilliant in the sun. The red blush on his belly is apparent, as he perches vertically, unlike the other birds.

All the birds clearly welcome the fresh water supply. Even the House Sparrows are interesting to watch.

They will often flood in like a flash mob, encircling the entire bird bath shoulder to shoulder. Each of them has unique markings, some with bright white feathers on their wings or tails.

The Starlings have begun mobbing the bird bath as well, emptying out the bath with their wild bathing, even in this frigid weather.

When it's a sunny day, my husband Rich and I love to go for a drive on country roads, soaking up the rich brown hues of the landscape in our beautiful corner of the world. The blue sky and clouds are a lovely backdrop to our attempts to spot winter birds.

We're always on the lookout for hawks, seeing fewer of them than we'd expect. Owls mostly reject our attempts to find them, but I'm sure they are there, looking right at us. A fun winter sight has been several Eastern Bluebirds. They are often near the parking lot at the Proving Grounds and [behind the old terminal](#) at the airport. We also often drive down to the dam to watch the Bald Eagles and various ducks where there's open water.

We're hoping for a good snow to push the Snow Buntings and Horned Larks to the edges of the fields where we can spot them. Country roads — especially gravel roads — with adjacent fields are good spots to try for them. Check out the Q&A in this newsletter about that subject!

Enjoy your bird sightings this winter!

Marty Corfman

Above images © Marty Corfman; From left to right: Blue Jay; Red-bellied Woodpecker; European Starlings

A Visit from Will Dilg & Songs from Our Mighty Mississippi

February 28, 2025, University of Dubuque, Babka Theater

101 years ago, a man named Will Dilg was the driving force behind the preservation of our 261-mile stretch of the Mississippi. The Dubuque Audubon Society, along with Dubuque County Conservation Society & Friends of Dubuque County Conservation Board, are excited to invite you to attend an entertaining and enlightening performance by Riverlorian Steven Marking, presenting "A Visit From Will Dilg".

The details of the performance can be found on our [events](#) page.

Celebrating the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge



Steven Marking as Will Dilg

“The Best Friend Ducks Ever Had” *by Bob Walton*

The Federal Duck Stamp

The Duck Stamp Program had its origin in 1933 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed a special “duck committee” to evaluate the situation and recommend a waterfowl restoration plan. Prominent members of the committee were Aldo Leopold, Thomas Beck (editor-in-chief at Collier’s Weekly), and D.J. (Ding) Darling, a brilliant cartoonist from Iowa.

At the outset of the committee deliberations there was considerable optimism. In announcing the committee creation, a White House spokesman promised \$1 million to fund their plan if it was approved by Congress.

Five weeks after beginning their work, they published a report that was highly critical of the current Biological Survey. They called it incompetent and unscientific, and recommended it be abolished.

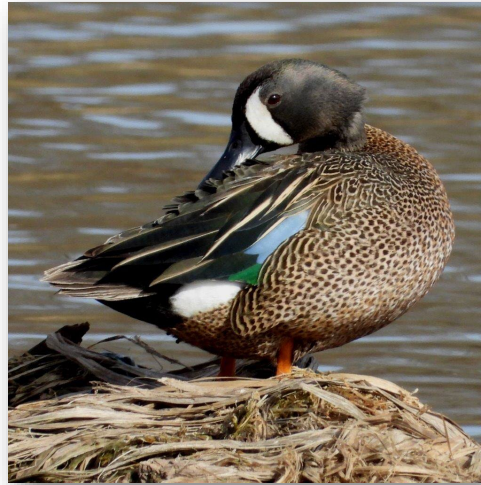
Also, in this report were serious recommendations, the most important of which were for the federal government to spend \$25 million on wildlife restoration, to purchase 12 million acres of land for wildlife protection, and \$25 million to the Public Works Administration to restore this land.

The committee was disbanded, and President Roosevelt took the unusual step of asking Darling to return to Washington and take over as head of the Biological Survey. After deliberation, he decided to take the job and leave his six-figure income as a nationally syndicated cartoonist at the Des Moines Register. He vowed to put the Biological Survey back on its feet and help the cause of wildlife protection, especially as it pertained to migratory waterfowl.

Darling was sworn in on March 10, 1934, and six days later Roosevelt signed into law the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act (a precursor to the Duck Stamp Bill that was enacted at the end of the Hoover administration).

The new law required any person, sixteen years or older, who wanted to hunt migratory game, to have a \$1 Duck Stamp, purchased at a U.S. Post Office, affixed to their state hunting license.

All revenue generated went to a Migratory Bird Conservation Fund.



Blue-winged Teal © Mary Leigh



Lesser Scaup © Mary Leigh

90% of the money was available for the locating, assessment, acquisition, administration, maintenance, and development of suitable areas as inviolate migratory bird sanctuaries. The remaining 10% was for the printing and enforcement of the act.

It came none too soon. By one estimate, 1934 marked an all time low for migratory waterfowl populations, due mainly to poor nesting conditions and overharvest of waterfowl.

Darling also played a particularly unique role in the creation of the first stamp in 1934. With the bill in place, the actual duck stamp was needed. He sketched on the cardboard insert of his shirt collar an idea and it was rushed to printing. He had hoped to submit a more artistic design, but he needn’t have worried: the stamp was a success, and 635,000 were sold!

In following years, it became a competition for artists to design the yearly stamp, and millions have been raised for wetlands. I purchased my first duck stamp in 1965, and in mint condition, it would be worth \$125-\$400. Unfortunately, many of my early hunting trips resulted in stumbles and falls that filled my waders with muddy Mississippi

water and left that stamp barely legible. I was 15, and I still remember proudly showing it off at school. The immediate response of this cute cheerleader I was dating at the time was that it is mean and cruel to kill those pretty ducks. Considering my passion for hunting and fishing, that response put an immediate end to our relationship!

A major change came in 1977 when the name of the stamp was changed from “Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp” to “Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp.” The change was made to more truly reflect the broad scope of the duck stamp program and to encourage other users of refuges like photographers, canoeists, and bird watchers to purchase the stamp.

It benefits all outdoor enthusiasts to purchase and proudly display their duck stamp, especially while on refuge property. Areas that we all enjoy like Green Island were purchased and maintained with the help of money from the sale of these stamps. Stamps may be purchased at any U.S. Post Office or Fish and Wildlife Offices. One idea is to put it in a luggage tag holder and hang it from your spotting scope tripod or camera bag.

Q&A *By Tony Moline*

Question

Why do birds flock to gravel roads in the wintertime?

Answer

Because they have no teeth!

Instead, birds have a gizzard, a muscular part of their stomach that helps them grind up food. Small rocks and sand (or grit) are ingested by birds to create “teeth” in the gizzard.

Although birds practice this year-round, winter snow depth makes plowed gravel an oasis of grit, especially for open county birds such as Lapland Longspurs, Snow Buntings and Horned Larks.



Snow Bunting © Marty Corfman



Chickadee Checkoff

Taxes are for the birds (and other vulnerable wildlife)!

Through the Chickadee Checkoff, Iowa taxpayers can donate to Iowa’s wildlife diversity programs on their state tax forms.

The funding assists thousands of vulnerable species such as songbirds, reptiles, amphibians, butterflies and more. If every Iowa taxpayer gave \$1 that would mean \$1.6 million for wildlife!

Check out the [Chickadee Checkoff page](#) on the Iowa DNR Website for more information.

Blog update

Check out these recent blog posts on our [website](https://www.audubondubuque.org/blog/):
(<https://www.audubondubuque.org/blog/>)

Check the website regularly for updates and new information!



📅 Jan 31, 2025

Articles, Bird Counts, Christmas Bird Count

[2024 Christmas Bird Count Follow-up Interview](#)

With 2024 being the 125th anniversary of the Christmas Bird Count, Science Friday did an interview in early January titled “What Scientists Have Learned from 125 Years of Bird Counts.”

[READ MORE »](#)



📅 Jan 28, 2025

Bird Counts, Events

[2025 Great Backyard Bird Count](#)

This year’s Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is February 14-17. Each February, the world joins to report bird observations... no need to sign up... If you already report birds using eBird or Merlin, just keep doing what you’re doing...

Jackson County Conservation is hosting a GBBC event on Saturday, February 15, from 10-12 at the



📅 Jan 10, 2025

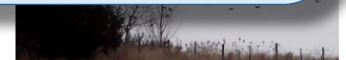
Articles, News

[Q&A: Birdfeeders & Avian Influenza](#)

Question: Should I be taking down my birdfeeders to avoid spreading avian influenza?

Answer: No. At this point, the increase is in waterfowl. Since early December, Iowa has seen a sharp jump in affected waterfowl, mostly north of Interstate 80.

[READ MORE »](#)



📅 Dec 30, 2024

Articles, Birds

[Starling Murmuration](#)

By Marty Corfman
Dubuque Audubon Society President

I will never stop being awed by this phenomenon, called a murmuration, when birds fly in synchronized patterns. This time of year, these formations can be seen most often toward dusk, when birds are looking for a roosting site, but they can be seen throughout the day as well.

Christmas Bird Count

On 12/28/24, Dubuque Audubon members and volunteers participated in the annual Christmas Bird Count.

Unseasonably high temperatures were both a blessing and a curse, as an iceless river led to lower-than-normal numbers for waterfowl.

Observers, however, added Greater White-fronted Goose (5) to the list for the first time in Dubuque count history.

Also of note, Eurasian Tree Sparrows tallied at a whopping 23, shattering the previous CBC record high of 5, indicating this non-native species is gaining a strong foothold in the county.

Audubon would like to thank those who participated both in the field and at their home feeders!

NOTE: CW = Count Week Additions

Greater White-fronted Goose	5	Rock Pigeon	250	Brown Creeper	7
Canada Goose	1045	Mourning Dove	49	Winter Wren	3
Trumpeter Swan	58	Eastern Screech-Owl	6	Carolina Wren	8
Gadwall	94	Great Horned Owl	4	Golden-crowned Kinglet	3
American Wigeon	1	Barred Owl	5	Eastern Bluebird	27
Mallard	210	Belted Kingfisher	4	American Robin	38
Canvasback	2	Red-headed Woodpecker	3	European Starling	681
Ring-necked Duck	9	Red-bellied Woodpecker	67	Cedar Waxwing	20
Lesser Scaup	19	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	3	American Tree Sparrow	121
Bufflehead	5	Downy Woodpecker	48	Dark-eyed Junco	206
Common Goldeneye	68	Hairy Woodpecker	16	White-crowned Sparrow	14
Common Merganser	94	Northern Flicker	10	White-throated Sparrow	7
Ring-necked Pheasant	4	Pileated Woodpecker	6	Song Sparrow	5
Wild Turkey	3	American Kestrel	18	Red-winged Blackbird	38
Northern Harrier	2	Merlin	2	Yellow-rumped Warbler	2
Sharp-Shinned Hawk	2	Blue Jay	89	Northern Cardinal	71
Cooper's Hawk	3	American Crow	85	House Finch	205
Bald Eagle	51	Horned Lark	CW	Purple Finch	1
Red-tailed Hawk	28	Black-capped Chickadee	137	Red Crossbill	CW
Rough-legged Hawk	1	Tufted Titmouse	23	American Goldfinch	98
Ring-billed Gull	107	Red-breasted Nuthatch	CW	House Sparrow	343
Herring Gull	3	White-breasted Nuthatch	74	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	23

Grand Total Individuals: 4,364

Total Species Reported: 63

Count Week Additions: 3

Grand Total Species Count: 66



"More Birding" Email Sign-up

As an experiment in 2025, we are going to try creating a separate email list for those who would like more group birding opportunities.

See the [sign-up](#) link on our website HOME or JOIN pages to read more.

Calendar of Events

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



DATE & TIME	EVENT	DESCRIPTION & LOCATION
February 14-17 See the DAS website for more information.	Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)	This year's Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) is February 14-17 . Each February, the world joins to report bird observations to help scientists better understand global bird populations before one of their annual migrations. You can join the world in reporting what you see, and <i>there is no need to sign up</i> . If you already report birds using eBird or Merlin, just keep doing what you're doing; any birds reported over these 4 days count toward GBBC.
Friday, 2/28/25 7 – 9 PM (with 15m intermission) See the DAS website for more information.	A Visit from Will Dilg & Songs from Our Mighty Mississippi	A special ticketed performance event , this 2-hour live performance is a can't-miss experience! Join us as Steven Marking , Minnesota Opera baritone (and "riverlorian"), shares this unique and unforgettable story of Will Dilg – a driving force behind America's grassroots environmental movement. Location: University of Dubuque Babka Theatre (Located in the Heritage Center) 2255 Bennett Street, Dubuque, IA 52001
Saturday, 3/8/25 See the DAS website for more information.	Dubuque Audubon 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. Location: Green Island Wildlife Management Area in Jackson County, IA
Thursday, 3/13/25 6:45 PM Social Time 7 - 8 PM Program	March Program 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. Location: EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights Road, Dubuque
Thursday, 4/10/25 6:45 PM Social Time 7 - 8 PM Program	April Program Capturing Moments in Nature	Stan Bousson will share photos that have been taken in many locations along the Mississippi River near his home in Illinois. Also included are photos taken at wildlife refuges and national parks from other areas of the country. He will discuss photographic equipment and techniques used to shoot those images and share information about where to look for wildlife you may want to observe or photograph. Location: EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights Road, Dubuque
Thursday, 5/8/25 6:45 PM Social Time 7 – 8 PM Program	May Program Bird Friendly Iowa	Dan Cohen will give a presentation on the Bird Friendly Iowa (BFI) program, and he'll include a few photos and experiences from his work on rivers in Dubuque County. Dan retired about a year ago from the Buchanan County Conservation Board after 38 years working in the field as a Naturalist (15 years) and the Executive Director (23 years).
Saturday, 5/10/25 See the DAS website for more information.	Dubuque Audubon Annual Spring Species Count	Join us for our annual fun day of spring birding! You're welcome to spend as much or as little time as you like. We'll meet up for a potluck picnic at the end of the day. This event is free, and no birding experience is required. Audubon guides will be on hand to help you identify species. Binoculars are recommended.

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 may 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
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