IOWA BIRD LIFE

IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

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Meet an Iowa Birder—Beth Brown

Robert I. Cecil

Beth Brown

When Beth Brown talks about the birds she has had the privilege of rehabilitating, it is not just with fascination but with maternal affection. Yet, while hundreds of raptors and other birds that have passed through her hands and through her home have produced myriad memories, one, Ms. Owl, is foremost in her mind, having shared 18 years together at their home in Osceola. Innumerable birders and friends have watched Ms. Owl drop in on silent wings to grab a mouse meal proffered by Beth, or to snatch one dangling from a long pole in front of her nest box. But Ms. Owl wasn't the beginning of Beth's life of devotion to birds; she was just one of many chapters.

Beth Taylor was born in 1932 on a dairy farm at Milford, a little Dickinson County town near Okoboji. According to the family lore, her father sold a pig to pay the attending physician. She described the Iowa Great Lakes as a wonderful place to have grown up, especially because all the tourists left each winter and had not yet built permanent homes along the lakeshores. She grew up in the home of a traditional Victorian-era father and a close-to-the-earth mother who shared and then imparted to Beth a love of outdoor things. While her mother had a special affection for songbirds and gardening, her father loved hawks. Beth recalled an injured red-tailed to which he once gave refuge in his barn. Her father's death while she was a senior in high school resulted in her staying in the home and working rather than going to college.

When Beth finally moved on from Milford, this self-described "party girl" wandered between jobs and schooling in Denver, Miami, and Des Moines, until she went out on a blind date with Jim Brown, a former Navy pilot who was a law student at Drake University in Des Moines. In 1957 they were married, and he worked as an attorney for the City of Des Moines. He then accepted a position in an Osceola private practice—a move that Beth accepted only after being bribed by the purchase of a cavernous old Victorian home there. While it was a fabulous place to rear their four children, the mansion's restoration was well beyond the means of their energy and their finances. It was here, however, that Beth's latent love of nature was rekindled, often in the form of baby birds and other creatures brought home by her children. Beth also recalls becoming more aware of the voices of the birds around her and her quests to identify Prothonotary Warbler and White-throated Sparrow songs.

As Beth's interest in birds grew, she did what many birders of the early 1980s did—she got in touch with Gladys Black, ***The Des Moines Register*** nature columnist and Grand Dame of Iowa birding. Beth was flattered when Gladys, in her gravely voice, asked her to

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Photos and graphics: Submit photos and slides preferably as TIFF (*.tif) images or as high resolution JPEG (*.jpg) images in e-mail attachment or on CD/DVD.

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UPCOMING MEETING OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION: Spring 2007: 18-20 May, Briar Cliff College, Sioux City

FRONT COVER PHOTO: Osprey adult tending successful nest at Jester Park, Saylorville Reservoir, *Polk*, 27 June 2006. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

BACK COVER PHOTO: Adult of first Least Tern nesting attempt (unsuccessful) by pair in Des Moines River Valley, Saylorville Reservoir, *Polk*, 27 June 2006. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA. See article and field reports in this issue.

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stop over. Beth did, and continued to visit once or twice a week for years to come. Like Beth, Gladys had a special affinity for raptors, an affection that became evident to both when Beth took her an injured Snowy Owl found in Clarke County by hunters in February 1981. Gladys quickly recognized potential in this eager neophyte, and promptly enlisted her help in leading bird trips and attending to injured birds. Under Gladys's tutelage, Beth went on to obtain permits for bird rehabilitation, possessing raptors for education purposes, and finally, bird banding as a sub-permittee under Ann Johnson. Beth notes that once Gladys got her fully involved in rehabilitation and doing frequent programs for schools, conservation groups, and civic organizations, Gladys turned the reins over to her "and went birding." Over the subsequent years, Beth has helped hundreds of raptors and other birds, sometimes as many as 80 per year. She suspects that her numbers have more recently declined because more people now know to leave stranded and orphaned birds alone. Because she needed to "pay for all this bird stuff— it's expensive," Beth worked at several local jobs before being hired by the Clarke County Conservation Board as a naturalist where she still works and is the now the oldest naturalist on the payroll in the state. In recognition of her contributions, she received the Hagie Award from the Natural Heritage Foundation in 1990 for her work with raptor rehabilitation and the Governor's Volunteer Award in 2002 for her work with wildlife and wildlife education.

Beth joined the Iowa Ornithologists' Union in 1982 after learning about it from Jim Sinclair and Ann Johnson at an Iowa Audubon meeting, and served as a member of the board of directors from 1994–1998. "The wonderful thing about the IOU is its people." She recalled her first meeting in Warren County, and her intimidation at the "big birders" who were there. Much of that intimidation was dispelled when, while standing along a trail with her new binoculars, Jim Dinsmore hung back with her, teaching her how to find birds based on their elevation, and how to identify some of them by their songs. Jim Sinclair and Ann Johnson became her favorite birding companions on trips around the country, including SE Arizona, the Gulf Coast, Colorado, Duluth, MN, New Jersey, Churchill, and to the Northeast hoping to see the Bicknell's Thrush. She credits Ann Johnson for getting her into tent camping, which made birding much more affordable. Like many Iowa birders, she has a special place in her memories for Beth Proescholdt who was a mentor and a friend and a constant recipient of her admiration.

Beth enjoys telling stories of her exploits. Her pet mouse from a pet shop was instrumental in capturing scores of American Kestrels, playing the role of bait. Beth placed it safely inside a trap surrounded by loops of string and then tossed it out on the roadside when she spotted a kestrel on a nearby wire. Proceeding on a short distance, she waited until the mouse attracted the bird's attention, which was ensnared when the capture was attempted. Beth then banded the kestrel and set it free. Another banding, that of a Barn Owl in Wayne County, was recovered in Texas. A junco she banded was recovered, more or less, in Stephens State Forest—the only remains was the band itself, setting on a stump. Presumably, a Cooper's or Sharp-shinned Hawk left behind the only inedible part of the meal. Still active in banding, in 2006, she banded 476 Eastern Bluebirds, Black-capped Chickadees, and Tree Swallows for the Red Rock U.S. Army Corps of Engineers nest box project.

One of Beth's specialties is the rehabilitation of Turkey Vultures, a species that rarely winds up with rehabilitators but of which she has had many. This experience has resulted in her being listed by the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association as a how-to resource for working with this species. Consequently, she receives numerous calls from around the

United States seeking her expertise. Her husband Jim, evidently willing to pitch in, has been known to bring home road-kill to feed her fledgling vultures. I suspect there would have been a number of people who would have savored the sight of a former District Court judge gathering up a dead opossum along a Clarke County roadside. Beth expressed amazement at the meticulousness with which the young vultures can clean a carcass down to white bones.

When one visits Beth or Jim in their current home just outside of Osceola, it is easy to miss it on the first pass, being naturally toned redwood and nestled into the surrounding trees. Entering, there is the sprinkling of art, artifacts from travels, scattered nature magazines and books and, of course, family pictures. The family pictures include twins Mary of Des Moines who works in food service in Des Moines and Susan of Houston a senior account manager at a financial services company, son Jeff who has worked with humanitarian causes in various parts of the world and is now based in the United Arab Emirates and working in Afghanistan, and Julie who is starting her master's degree in nutrition at the University of Central Arkansas, plus five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Jim retired from his position as District Judge in 2002 but continues to write opinions for the Court of Appeals. Beth describes him as a birder, but "only if they're big." Despite the fact that his first love is fly-fishing, he is sometimes helpful in finding birds for her to see.

Outside of their home, visitors encounter the thirteen bird feeders she has placed around the property, helping to attract some of the 78 species she has recorded there. And then they find the various outbuildings where she houses birds she is rehabilitating or birds, because of their severe injuries, that will never return to the wild and are used for educational purposes. She notes, when showing her Red-tailed Hawk, that red-taileds as well as Great-horned Owls easily imprint on humans and that great care must be exercised to prevent it from happening. She also notes that even with her favorite species to work with, the Barn Owl, she must be careful, recalling the time she "got sloppy" and wound up at the emergency room when a talon broke a blood vessel. The opossum-eating vultures share another building, awaiting release next spring, and a Short-eared Owl and an Eastern Screech-Owl share yet another. But one place is now empty—the roost occupied until last spring by Ms. Owl. Run off, perhaps, by an aggressive male, or perhaps struck by a car, or perhaps just off to greener woodlands, Ms. Owl took a part of Beth's heart with her, but a part she was happy to give.

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Field Reports—Summer 2006

James J. Dinsmore

James J. Dinsmore

WEATHER

June was somewhat warm and quite dry. Temperatures averaged 70.6 degrees, 0.8 degrees above average, and the 48th warmest June on record. It was quite hot the first nine days of June with temperatures reaching 101 degrees at Onawa on the 9th. The next several days were quite cool with a high of only 51 degrees at Northwood on the 10th and lows of 40 degrees at Cresco and Estherville on the 12th. Temperatures reached the 90s for several days, and then mild temperatures prevailed for the last 10 days of June. Precipitation averaged 2.38 inches, 2.26 below normal and the ninth driest June on record. It was the driest June since 1992 and, combined with the dry May, it was the sixth driest May–June period on record. Both Perry and Mapleton had less than 0.5 inches of rainfall.

The warm and dry pattern continued in July. Temperatures averaged 76.5 degrees, 2.7 degrees above average and the 23rd warmest July on record. Temperatures reached 99 at Sibley on 1 July and, after some milder weather with temperatures dropping to 47 degrees at Atlantic and Guthrie Center on 6 July, it was hot for much of the rest of the month. High temperatures reached three digits on six days with a temperature of 105 at Onawa and Mapleton on 19 July the highest. This is the highest official temperature recorded in Iowa since July 1999. Rainfall averaged 3.19 inches, 1.06 below average and the 49th driest July on record. Storms on 10–11 and 25–26 July brought significant rainfall to an east-west band across central Iowa, but northwestern Iowa was very dry. Popejoy in Franklin County received 7.3 inches of rainfall from the first of those storms whereas Sioux City, Sioux Center, and Estherville all received less than 0.4 inches of rainfall, their second driest July on record.

BIRDS OF SUMMER

Iowa's summer birds consist of three fairly distinct groups: breeding species, migrants including both late spring and early fall migrants, and rarities. Typically the last group is poorly represented during summer, although that has been somewhat different the last several years. This summer was fairly typical with interesting finds in all three groups.

Breeding Species

Several nesting species showed evidence of population increases. Bald Eagles, Eurasian Collared-Doves, and Henslow's Sparrows all continued to occupy new nesting areas in Iowa. Western Kingbirds and Blue Grosbeaks, species that historically have been confined largely to extreme western Iowa, continued to show up more frequently in areas far to the east, perhaps evidence of a gradual range expansion. Likewise, Clay-colored Sparrows are being

found more regularly in northern Iowa. The report of a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron nest in Chickasaw County, Iowa's first confirmed nest in several decades, was long overdue. Two reports of nesting American Bitterns, at least eight Barn Owl nests, and two Black-billed Magpie nests are likewise good news. Also, Prairie Warblers at two sites and a King Rail at one indicate that those species still persist in Iowa. With yet another report of a White-winged Dove, how long before that species becomes regular in Iowa?

Reports I received suggested that many grassland and woodland species were doing fairly well. Dickcissels, Bobolinks, and Grasshopper Sparrows were all reported as doing well by a number of observers. Likewise, surveys of woodland birds, especially by Shane and Katy Patterson, showed that species like Red-shouldered, Broad-winged, and Cooper's hawks, Acadian Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, Veery, Northern Parula, Cerulean Warbler, American Redstart, Ovenbird, Kentucky Warbler, Scarlet Tanager are all found in numerous larger woodlands in Iowa, including some that have been greatly under-birded in the past.

Not all was good news. Least Terns and Piping Plovers had a poor year at both nesting sites in western Iowa after a great year in 2005. There were no reports of nesting by Swainson's Hawk, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Forster's Tern, and probably Black Tern, species that were regular nesting species in Iowa 25 years ago.

Five reintroduced species had mixed years in terms of nesting success. Trumpeter Swan and Osprey did well with 21 successful swan nests and four Osprey nests. The former is a new high and takes it close to the program's goal. Peregrine Falcons had an off but not really poor year with five of ten nests successful. Most disappointing was the lack of success at two nests on natural cliffs in northeastern Iowa. Both Greater Prairie-Chicken and Sharp-tailed Grouse apparently had poor years with no broods reported for either species.

Migrants

This summer, as is typical, a few late warblers and flycatchers were still present in early June. For the rest of the summer, the only migrant songbirds were an enigmatic (summering?) White-throated Sparrow and an early fall Black-and-white Warbler.

This year shorebirds were a big story with 32 species found during the period, by far the most for the 23 years I have written this report. In previous years, the number of shorebird species reported has ranged from 19 (1993) to 27 (1998, 2000) with an average of just over 24 species per summer. This year, habitat conditions seemed to be very good at several potential shorebird hotspots including Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, Saylorville Reservoir, and Red Rock Reservoir, and birders gave those sites lots of attention. Other less frequently visited sites like Zirbel Slough and Big Wall Lake also had many shorebirds. Nearly every species of shorebird that might reasonably appear in Iowa in summer was found this year. There were also numerous reports of late shorebirds, so many in fact that for Lesser Yellowlegs, Semipalmated Sandpiper, and Pectoral Sandpiper, it was difficult to decide what direction they were heading. For those three, there were records basically throughout June. Typically, reports in early June are probably late migrants, reports at the end of June are probably early southbound birds, and those in mid-June could be heading either way or summering in Iowa.

Unusual Species

As in 2005, this summer was a good one for unusual species with two Accidental and six Casual species reported. Accidental species were Mottled Duck and Painted Bunting.

The former is a first Iowa record and the latter, a carryover from spring, is the second. Casual species reported were King Rail, Ruff, Laughing Gull, White-winged Dove, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, and Prairie Warbler. Other interesting finds included Red-throated Loon and Western Grebe.

SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Casual or Accidental species. * = documented. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: **alt** = alternate (plumage), **A** = area, **L** = lake, **m.ob.** = many observers, **NA** = nature area, **P** = park, **ph** = photo, **R** = river, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **SF** = state forest, **Sl** = slough, **SP** = state park, **SPre** = state preserve, **SRA** = state recreation area, **Twp** = township, **WA** = wildlife area, **WPA** = Waterfowl Production Area, **yg** = young.

Key to maps: light shading = species present in county, dark shading = evidence of nesting reported (nest, brood, etc.).

Greater White-fronted Goose: One on 1 Jun at Cone M *Louisa* (DP) and 1 on 14 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (PH) were the only reports.

Snow Goose: One or 2 in *Boone*, *Clay*, *Guthrie*, *Polk*, and *Wright* (m.ob.) is typical of summer.

Mute Swan: All: 1 on 1 Jun at Diamond L *Poweshiek* (KLP, SSP) was probably the same bird that was present last summer.

Trumpeter Swan: Swans had a good year with 28 nesting attempts, 21 of which were successful (RA). The reintroduction program is gradually establishing a nesting population in Iowa.

Gadwall: All: 2 on 1 Jun at Colo Ponds *Story* (HZ), a brood on 1 Jun at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), and 2 pairs on 1 Jun at Hanlontown M *Worth* (AB).

MOTTLED DUCK: A male on 7, 8 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (*SJD-ph, *AB, *AMJ, *JB, *MPr, *RIA, PHA, *DAk) is the first record for Iowa.

Northern Shoveler: All: 1 on 1 Jun at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK) and 1 on 14 Jun at Eagle L *Hancock* (MCK).

Northern Pintail: All: A male on 23, 26 Jun at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (PH, RGo) and 4 on 22 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (JS).

Green-winged Teal: All: 1 on 7 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB, SJD) and 6 on 29 Jul at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DeC).

Canvasback: All: singles on 3 Jun near Ventura *Cerro Gordo* (RGo), 5 Jun at Geode SP *Henry* (KLP, SSP), 11 Jun at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK, PH), 15 Jul at West Twin L *Hancock* (RGo), and 5 on 28 Jun at Pool 19 *Lee* (SJD).

Redhead: Broods were found on 3 Jun at Smith Sl *Clay* (LAS) and on 14 Jun near Forest City *Hancock* (MCK). Away from its breeding range, single drakes were found on 5, 7 Jun at Diehl Wetlands *Warren* (AB) and on 28 Jun at Pool 19 *Lee* (SJD).

Ring-necked Duck: All: 1 on 1 Jun, 8 Jul at Colo Ponds *Story* (HZ, WO), a pair on 1 Jun at Hanlontown M *Worth* (AB), 1 on 3 Jun near Ventura *Cerro Gordo* (RGo), and 1 on 25, 28 Jun at Greenville M *Lucas* (RIA, PHA, JRL).

Lesser Scaup: One or 2 were in *Cerro Gordo*, *Clay*, *Dickinson*, *Hancock*, *Polk*, *Story*, and *Warren* (m.ob.), typical for summer. The 11 on 28 Jun at Pool 19 *Lee* (SJD) was the most.

Hooded Merganser: Broods were found in *Clay*, *Clayton*, *Dallas*, *Polk*, and *Winneshiek* (LAS, ETh, DK, JB, BE).

Ruddy Duck: All: 7 on 1 Jun at Colo

Ponds *Story* (HZ) and 1 on 4 Jun at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DeC).

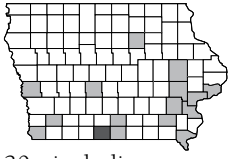
Gray Partridge: One or 2 were found in *Boone*, *Buchanan*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Delaware*, *Greene*, and *Hancock* (JB, DAk, RGo, PH, MPr, SSP, JJD, AB). The only brood mentioned was on 4 Jul near Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DeC). Surveys by the Iowa DNR indicated a 29% population decline from 2005.

Ruffed Grouse: One or 2 on 16, 22 Jun at Whitebreast Unit, Stephens SF *Lucas* (KLP, JRL) confirmed the continued presence of that introduced population. The only other report was 1 on 3 Jul at White Pine Hollow SPre *Dubuque* (DAk).

Sharp-tailed Grouse: With limited coverage, there were no sightings this summer (Ed Weiner fide JJD). With only a small population to begin with, this species may be on its way out.

Greater Prairie-Chicken: No broods were reported but a few adults were seen at the Kellerton BCA *Ringgold* (Chad Paup and Micah Lee fide JJD).

Northern Bobwhite: A few were found in 16 counties, mainly in S Iowa and as far north as *Butler* (AlB). As many as 30, including coveys with young, were found in southern *Decatur* (JRL, NJM), apparently a stronghold for the species in Iowa. Surveys by the Iowa DNR indicated a 32% population increase from 2005.



Red-throated Loon: One on 16, 17 Jun at Port Neal *Woodbury* (PR-ph, BFH) was Iowa's second summer record; the other was in 1999.

Common Loon: All: 2 on 1 Jun (1 alt, 1 basic) and 1 (basic) on 4 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), 1 on 20 Jun at West Okoboji L *Dickinson* (LAS), and 1 on 18 Jul at Easter L *Polk* (BN).

Pied-billed Grebe: Broods were reported in *Iowa*, *Polk*, *Story*, *Winnebago*, and *Winneshiek* (DP, BE, Mike Meetz fide HZ, JB, RGo, DeC).

Eared Grebe: One on 13 Jun at Silver L *Dickinson* (LAS) was the only report.

Western Grebe: All: 1 on 3 Jun at Trumbull L.*Clay* (LAS); 2 on 7, 8 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO, JJD, HZ); 1 on 13 Jun at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (BKP, LJP); 5 on 19 Jun at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK); and 1 on 8–11 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (WO, DP, AB).

American White Pelican: The usual small flocks were seen in June/early July in *Cerro Gordo*, *Hancock*, *Johnson*, *Kossuth*, *Lee*, *Polk*, *Scott, Winneshiek,* and *Wright* (m.ob.). The largest were 300 on 23 Jun at Ventura M *Cerro Gordo/Hancock* (PH, MPr) and 500 on 30 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (RGo, PH). By mid-July, flocks of migrants arrived with 370 on 16 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), 730 on 23 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), and 2,000 on 23 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD).

Double-crested Cormorant: The 67 on 28 Jun at Pool 19 *Lee* (SJD) was by far the most. Elsewhere, from 1–14 were found in *Clayton*, *Kossuth*, *Story*, and *Winneshiek* (DAk, PH, MCK, WO, HZ, DeC), fewer reports than most recent years.

American Bittern: All: 1 young bird on 7 Jul near Ames *Story* (Mike Meetz fide HZ), an adult with 3 young on 24 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (Chuck Kakac fide SJD), and an adult on 29 Jul at Dugout Creek *Dickinson* (ETh).

Least Bittern: A few were found in *Black Hawk*, *Clay*, *Hancock*, *Polk*, *Tama*, and *Winnebago* (m.ob.). Broods were found at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (RGo) and Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (EB, DeC).

Great Blue Heron: Small colonies were found at Geode SP *Des Moines* (SSP) and in *Monona* (GLV). The largest post-breeding concentration was 372 on 27 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (SJD).

Great Egret: The only large concentrations reported were on 29 Jul: 117 at Nahant M *Scott* (DR) and 136 at Runnells WA *Marion* (JB).

Snowy Egret: Two on 30 Jul and 1 on 31 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (JS, AB) were the only reports.

Little Blue Heron: One on 9 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK) was the only report.

Green Heron: A few were found in 18 counties scattered across Iowa (m.ob); 12 on 7 Jul at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (PH) was the most. Active nests or broods were noted in *Decatur* (JRL), *Linn* (BSc), and *Story* (WO).

Black-crowned Night-Heron: Singles were found in *Hancock*, *Kossuth*, *Winnebago*, and *Woodbury* (RGo, PH, MCK, BFH). Other than 1 on 4 Jun at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (BFH), all were seen after 15 Jul and may have been post-breeding birds. I am not aware of an active nesting colony of this species in Iowa.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: A nest found along the Wapsipinicon R near Ionia *Chickasaw* in May had 4 yg on 17 Jun. The nest was blown down in early Jul but 3 yg probably survived (RHA). This seems to be Iowa's first confirmed nest since 1961. Starting with 5 on 21 Jun at Colyn A *Lucas* (SSP), 1–5 were seen there through 21 Jul (AB, AMJ, JG, DP). Two were seen on 4 Jul at Chichaqua WA *Polk* (DK) and 1 on 27 Jul at Big Wall L *Wright* (SJD). The Colyn birds may have been nesting nearby.

Turkey Vulture: The only nest reported was near Davis City *Decatur* (NJM). Large groups were 52 on 16 Jul in West Des Moines *Polk* (RIA, PHA) and 60 on 31 Jul at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (GLV).

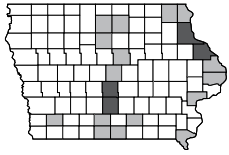
Osprey: Ospreys had a good year. Nests at Cedar Falls *Black Hawk* (2 yg), Don Williams L *Boone* (2 yg), Coralville Res *Johnson* (2 yg), and Saylorville Res *Polk* (2 yg), were successful (PS), while a second nest at Coralville Res and one at Wickiup Hill NA *Linn* were unsuccessful (PS). Five young were released each at Don Williams L *Boone*, Clear L *Cerro Gordo*, White Rock Conservancy *Guthrie*, Wickiup Hill NA *Linn*, and Elk Rock SP *Marion* (PS).

Mississippi Kite: After 1 was found 1 Jul at Waterworks P, Des Moines *Polk* (JG), 1 or 2 were seen several times from 7–24 Jul in Des Moines (AB, RIA, PHA, PH, SJD).

Bald Eagle: With about 200 active nests, Iowa's Bald Eagle breeding population continues to increase. Nests were found in *Boone*, *Dickinson*, *Franklin*, *O'Brien*, *Page*, and *Wapello* bringing the total to 77 counties with active nests (BEh).

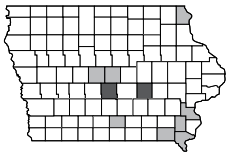
Northern Harrier: The only breeding reports were an active nest on 18 Jun at Chipera Prairie *Winneshiek* (Larry Reis fide DeC) and a nest near Corning *Adams* that fledged 5 young (Ryan Marquardt fide SJD). Singles were seen in *Howard* and *Wayne* (SSP, AB).

Cooper's Hawk: From 1–4 were reported in 20 counties (m.ob.). Other than 1 on 13 Jun in *Montgomery* (SSP), all were in the E and central thirds of the state. The only reports of breeding were a nest with 2 young at Lake Ahquabi SP *Warren* (JS), an active nest at White Pine Hollow SPre *Dubuque* (DK), a brood at Mossy Glen Pre *Clayton*, and a brood at Waterworks P *Polk* (RIA, PHA).



Red-shouldered Hawk: The most was 3 pairs on 26 Jun along the Wapsie River Greenbelt *Bremer* (SSP). A nest was found on 3 Jun at Swamp White Oak Pre *Muscatine* (SSP), and young birds were seen on 9, 16 Jul in *Lucas* (AMJ, AB) and 14 Jul at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (SSP). Additionally, 1 or 2 were found in *Allamakee*, *Bremer*, *Delaware*, *Lee* (2 sites), *Lucas* (2 sites), *Muscatine*, and *Wayne* in E and south-central Iowa (DK, SSP, AlB, KLP, AMJ, JG).

Broad-winged Hawk: One or 2 were found in nine counties in SE and central Iowa (m.ob.). Active nests were found in Des Moines *Polk* (PJW) and at Fox Forest WA *Poweshiek* (SSP, KLP).



Swainson's Hawk: As in 2005, no reports. Has this bird slipped away as a nesting species in Iowa?

Red-tailed Hawk: A bird that showed characteristics of the western race was found on 25 Jul at Clear Lake *Cerro Gordo* (PH).

Peregrine Falcon: Five of 10 nesting attempts were successful. Nests in *Des Moines* (1 yg), *Linn* (4 yg), *Louisa* (4 yg), *Scott* (2 yg), and *Wapello* (2 yg) were successful while two nesting attempts each in *Allamakee* and *Scott* and one in *Polk* failed (PS). The failure of the nests on natural cliffs in NE Iowa after one was successful in 2005, is particularly disheartening.

KING RAIL: One on 30 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (JS) was the only report.

Virginia Rail: All: singles at Yaeger Sl *Dickinson* (ETh), Silver Lake M *Dickinson* (ETh), Banner WA *Warren* (JS), and Myre Sl *Winnebago* (RGo), and 2–5 at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (PH, MPr),

Sora: All: singles at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (RGo), Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DeC), and near Iowa City *Johnson* (DP).

Common Moorhen: All reports were from Cardinal M *Winneshiek*. Four adults and 8 yg there on 4 Jul (EB) had dwindled to 3 adults and 5 yg on 12 Jul (DeC).

American Coot: A nest at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (Larry Reis fide DeC) and a brood near Ames *Story* (Mike Meetz fide HZ) were the only reports of nesting.

Sandhill Crane: A pair calling on 1 Jun at Fox Forest WA *Poweshiek* (SSP, KLP) was unexpected. Two or 3 at Sweet M *Bremer* (AlB) and Otter Creek M *Tama* (BSc), and a brood at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DeC, PH) were at established sites.

Black-bellied Plover: One on 18 Jun at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (JJD) [ties second latest] was late. Singles on 4, 6, 24 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG, SJD, DR) and 31 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK) were probably southbound.

American Golden-Plover: All: 1 on 13 Jun at Morse L WPA *Wright* (JJD) may have been summering whereas 1 on 25, 28 Jun, 6 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* was injured (SJD, JB).

Semipalmated Plover: Last: 3 on 11 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE). First: 2 on 2 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK). Most: 27 on 25 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (SJD).

Piping Plover: In W Iowa, 6 adults and 2 nests were present on 2 Jun and 7 adults and 1 young bird on 22 Jun at Port Neal *Woodbury* (PR). On 11 Jun an adult appeared to be incubating a nest at MidAmerican Energy Ponds *Pottawattamie* (ElB). One was at Saylorville Res *Polk* on 27 Jun (SJD).

Killdeer: Several impressive post-breeding counts were reported: 483 on 6 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 510 on 16 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), and 2,032 there on 27 Jul (SJD).

American Avocet: All: 1 on 1 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (AB) [second latest] and 2–4 on 27 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK, SJD).

Greater Yellowlegs: First: 1 on 28 Jun (MCK); most: 41 on 27 Jul (SJD), both at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth*.

Lesser Yellowlegs: Last: 1 on 2 Jun at Coralville Res *Johnson* (DP). First: 1 on 24 Jun in *Franklin* (SJD). One on 13 Jun at Morse Lake WPA *Wright* (JJD) may have been summering. Counts of 500 on 25 Jul at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (PH) and 1,148 on 27 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (SJD) were

the most and the highest summer counts in Iowa in several years.

Solitary Sandpiper: First: 1 on 30 Jun at East Twin L *Hancock* (RGo, PH). The 205 on 27 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (SJD) was by far the most.

Willet: All: 3 on 2 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE), 1 on 4 Jul near Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS), 5 on 11 Jul and 1 on 22 Jul at Saylorville Res (AB, SJD), 1 on 27 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (SJD, MCK), and 1 at Runnells WA *Marion* (DAk) and 5 at New L *Woodbury* (GLV), both on 31 Jul. This is more than are normally reported in Iowa in summer.

Spotted Sandpiper: The only report of nesting was at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). A count of 27 on 27 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (SJD) is unusually high.

Upland Sandpiper: A few were reported from 17 counties scattered across Iowa (m.ob.). No one mentioned any evidence of nesting.

Hudsonian Godwit: All: 1 on 1 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (AB) and 1 on 10 Jun near Kindlespire P *Clay* (LAS) [ties record latest]. The latter bird was injured.

Marbled Godwit: All: Singles on 2 Jul (BE) and 28 Jul (SJD), both at Saylorville Res *Polk*.

Ruddy Turnstone: All: 1 on 20 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD-ph) [ties second earliest] and 1 on 27 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (SJD, MCK).

Sanderling: All: 1 on 18, 20 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD, RIA, PHA).

Semipalmated Sandpiper: The usual early June birds dwindled from 268 on 1 Jun at Big Wall L *Wright* (AB) to 1–16 seen from 11 Jun–1 Jul in *Cerro Gordo*, *Greene*, *Kossuth*, *Polk*, *Story*, *Warren*, *Woodbury*, and *Wright* (m.ob.). The first likely southbound bird was 1 on 12 Jul at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). Birds arrived rapidly with 62 on 23 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK) and 367 there on 27 Jul (SJD).

Western Sandpiper: All: 1 on 23 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (SJD-details, JG).

Least Sandpiper: Last: 6 on 1 Jun at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK-details). First: 1 on 25 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). High counts were 268 on 18 Jul at Saylorville Res (SJD) and 1,446 on 27 Jul at Union Sl NWR (SJD).

White-rumped Sandpiper: The usual early June flocks (e.g., 26 at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* [MCK] and 28 at Big Wall L *Wright* (AB), both on 1 Jun) left soon with the last reports on 19 Jun (6 at Dunbar Sl *Greene* [RIA, PHA] and 16 at Union Sl NWR [MCK]). One on 2 Jul at Union Sl NWR (MCK) [second latest] was injured.

Baird's Sandpiper: Last: 2 on 1 Jun at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK-details). First: 1 on 2 Jul at Union Sl NWR (MCK-details) [ties third earliest]. Most: 14 on 27 Jul at Union Sl NWR (SJD).

Pectoral Sandpiper: From 1–3 in June in *Allamakee*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Hancock*, *Polk*, and *Wright* (DK, MPr, PH, SJD, JJD) were probably a mixture of late migrants, summering birds, or early southbound birds. Five on 7 Jul at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (PH) were the first clearly southbound birds. By late July, conditions apparently were ideal for this species, as evidenced by counts of 495 on 18 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD), 994 on 23 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (SJD), and 6,230 on 27 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (SJD).

Dunlin: Last: 3 on 3 Jun near Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS) and 1 on 11 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE) [second latest]. The only southbound bird reported was 1 on 26 Jul at Port Neal *Woodbury* (BFH) [third earliest].

Stilt Sandpiper: Last: 1 on 3 Jun near Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS) and 5 on 9 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB) [third latest] were late. First: 1 on 30 Jun at East Twin L *Hancock* (RGo, PH). Most: 273 on 27 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (SJD).

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: 1 on 22 Jul at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (RGo) [ties second earliest], 2 on 23 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK) [third earliest], and 2 on 24 Jul at Cedar Falls *Black Hawk* (AlB) were early arrivals. Most: 30 on 27 Jul at Union Sl NWR (SJD). From 1–5 were seen in *Clay*, *Johnson*, and *Wright* (LAS, DP, SJD).

RUFF: A molting male on 31 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (*PHA, RIA-ph, *AB-ph, *AMJ, JG-ph, m.ob.) [second earliest] is Iowa's 13th record.

Short-billed Dowitcher: First: 1 on 3 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB). From 1–8 were there through the end of July. One or 2 were in *Winneshiek* and *Woodbury* in mid- and late Jul (DeC, GLV).

Long-billed Dowitcher: All: 1 or 2 on 23, 25 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (SJD-details, JG) and 1 on 28 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

Wilson's Snipe: Two on 7 Jun at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (MPr) and 1 on 5, 10 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK, RGo) were in parts of the state where this species could nest. One on 23 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (SJD) was probably a migrant.

American Woodcock: One or 2 were found in *Decatur*, *Dubuque*, *Hancock*, *Lee*, *Polk*, and *Winneshiek* (SSP, PH, SJD, DTh, DeC), more than most summers.

Wilson's Phalarope: 1 or 2 juveniles on 12, 16 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK) suggested local nesting, whereas 12 there on 27 Jul (SJD) were probably migrants. Elsewhere, singles on 18, 22 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and 30 Jul at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (RGo), and 5 on 23, 25 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (SJD) were probably migrants.

Red-necked Phalarope: All: An adult and juvenile on 27 Jul [third earliest] at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (SJD-ph).

LAUGHING GULL: One in second-alternate plumage on 25 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (*SJD-ph) was the only report.

Franklin's Gull: Peak June counts were 24 on 19 Jun at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK) and 15 on 21 Jun at Saylorvile Res *Polk* (RIA, PHA). Other June reports were from *Cerro Gordo*, *Kossuth*, *Polk*, *Winnebago*, *Woodbury,* and *Worth* (m.ob.). Other than 13 on 29 Jul at L Panorama *Guthrie* (DAk), all reports after 25 Jun were from Saylorville Res.

Ring-billed Gull: As is typical, a few were found in June in *Clayton*, *Kossuth*, *Polk*, and *Story* (DAk, MCK, SJD, JG, WO). The most was 19 on 28 Jun at Saylorville Res *Polk* (JB). Migrants were evident by mid-July with 63 on 18 Jul at Saylorville Res (SJD). Those flocks grew rapidly with 224 on 25 Jul at Saylorville Res (SJD) and 645 on 25 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD).

Herring Gull: A first-alternate bird on 18, 23 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD) and an adult on 31 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (DAk) were the only reports.

Caspian Tern: On 11 Jun, 2 were at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE) and at Eagle L *Hancock* (PH). From 23 Jun–15 Jul a few were seen repeatedly at Saylorville Res with a peak of 16 on 7 Jul (JG). Elsewhere, 1 was at Roberts Creek P *Marion* on 25 Jul (SJD).

Common Tern: All: 1 in alt plumage on 27 Jun, 7, 22 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD-ph, JG) and 1 in alt plumage on 25 Jul at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD-details).

Forster's Tern: One or 2 in June in *Greene*, *Kossuth*, *Lee*, *Polk*, and *Winnebago* (m.ob.) were probably late migrants or wanderers but 16 on 28 Jun at Spirit L *Dickinson* (ETh) suggest a nearby breeding colony. Five on 3 Jul at Saylorville Res *Polk* (WO) were probably southbound as were singles in late July in *Story* (WO, HZ), 13 on 9 Jul at Union Sl. NWR *Kossuth* (MCK), and 33 on 25 Jul at Saylorville Res (SJD).

Least Tern: In W Iowa, 3 adults were at Port Neal *Woodbury* on 16 Jun (BFH) and 5 on 20, 21 Jun (PR), but no nest was found. On 11 Jun, 14 were at the MidAmerican En-

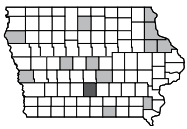
ergy Ponds *Pottawattamie* including 4 that seemed to be on nests (ElB). Most surprising was a pair that attempted to nest at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE, SJD, AB, m.ob.) (see note in this issue). The only other report was 1 on 4 Jun at Banner WA *Warren* (JS).

Black Tern: In June, groups of up to 25 in 12 counties scattered across Iowa (m.ob.) probably were late migrants. Terns were present throughout the summer at Myre Sl *Winnebago* (14 on 3 Jun, 12 on 17 Jun, 27 on 23 Jul including juveniles [JB, RGo]) and may have nested there although no definitive evidence was found. Nesting was also suspected but not confirmed at Spring Run WA *Dickinson* (ETh) and Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK). The 211 on 27 Jul at Union Sl NWR (SJD) must have been mostly or all migrants. Small groups in late July in *Marion*, *Story*, *Winneshiek,* and *Woodbury* (JB, WO, HZ, DeC, GLV) were southbound.

Eurasian Collared-Dove: Besides reports from 10 counties where this species has been found previously (m.ob.), 1 on 3 Jun at Earlham *Madison* (RIA, PHA) and 1 on 11 Jul in *Hardin* (SSP) seem to represent new county records. I am aware of reports from 69 of Iowa's counties. Northeastern Iowa seems to be the section of the state with the fewest reports.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE: One from 1–10 Jun at Swaledale *Cerro Gordo* (RGoph) adds to the growing presence of this species in Iowa.

Black-billed Cuckoo: A few were reported from 13 counties scattered across Iowa (m.ob.). A nest with eggs on 11 Jun in *Warren* (JS) was the only evidence of breeding reported. Some observers commented on the apparent scarcity of this species.



Yellow-billed Cuckoo: As many as 13 were reported from 48 counties encompassing all sections of the state (m.ob.). I received 92 reports of this species versus 18 of the Black-billed Cuckoo, perhaps an indication of the relative abundance of these two in Iowa.

Barn Owl: Nests in *Clarke* (1 yg), *Guthrie* (3 yg), *Montgomery* (3 yg), *Page* (1 yg), and *Woodbury* (1 yg) were successful, and nests in *Lucas* and *Sac* were not (BEh). In addition, a nest with 3 large young was in *Wayne* (AB). This is more nests than most recent years in Iowa. On 11 Jun a fresh road-killed bird was found in NW *Mills* (ElB) suggesting nesting there as well.

Chuck-will's-widow: At the usual site near Waubonsie SP *Fremont*, none were heard on 13 Jun (MPr). Elsewhere, 1 was heard on 21–23 Jun at Whitebreast Unit, Stephens SF *Lucas* (*JRL).

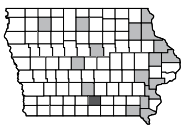
Whip-poor-will: A few were found in 8 counties mostly in S Iowa or the Loess Hills (m.ob.); 9 at Loess Hills SF *Monona* were the most (SSP). Two on 23 Jul at Big Sioux River WA *Lyon* (SSP) were north of where this species typically is reported.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: A few were found in 23 counties (m.ob.). Only two reports came from the western third of the state. A nest was found in Ashworth P, Des Moines *Polk* (RIC).

Red-headed Woodpecker: A few were found in 28 counties statewide (m.ob.). Although populations of this species may be somewhat reduced, it is still fairly common in Iowa.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: From 1–8 were found in *Allamakee*, *Clay*, *Hancock*, *Lyon*, *Winneshiek*, and *Woodbury* (SSP, LAS, PH, EB, DeC, DK, BFH). Nests or broods were found at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (EB), Coon Creek WA *Winneshiek* (DK), and Gitchie Manitou SPre *Lyon* (SSP).

Pileated Woodpecker: A few were found in 18 counties (m.ob.), but the only report from the western third of the state was at

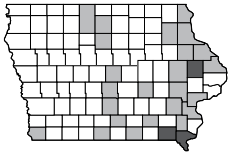


Wanata SP *Clay* (LAS). The only evidence of nesting was adults attending a fledgling at Whitebreast Unit, Stephens SF *Lucas* (SSP).

Olive-sided Flycatcher: One on 3 Jun at Trumbull L *Clay* (LAS) was the only report.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Last: 2 at Burr Oak *Kossuth* and 1 at A.A. Call SP *Kossuth*, both on 11 Jun (MCK-details, PH-details) [ties third latest].

Acadian Flycatcher: This species



was found in 27 counties covering all except NW and W-Cen Iowa (m. ob.). With counts of 20 at Lick Creek Unit, Shimek SF *Lee* (KLP, SSP), 21 at Brinton Timber *Washington* (MCD), and 24 at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (SSP), it was more common than typically thought. Nests were found at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* and Croton Unit, Shimek SF *Lee* (KLP, SSP), and an adult was attending young at Indian Bluffs WA *Jones* (SSP).

Alder Flycatcher: Last: singles on 7 Jun near Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (MPr) and at Pleasant Creek SRA *Benton* (RGo).

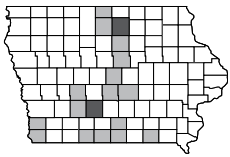
Willow Flycatcher: A few were found in 30 counties in all but NW Iowa (m.ob.). A nest at Lost Grove Lake WA *Scott* (DR) was the only mention of nesting. Eleven birds at Hayden Prairie *Howard* (SSP) were the most.

Least Flycatcher: Singles from 1–9 Jun in *Clayton*, *Hancock*, *Louisa*, *Muscatine*, and *Tama* (DAk, PH, SSP, KLP, MPr) were probably late migrants. Two on 9 Jun at Sweet M *Bremer* (AlB), an apparent pair on 15 Jun in *Allamakee* (ABr), a pair on 23 Jun at Pioneer Ridge NA *Wapello* (SSP), and 1 on 3 Jul at White Pine Hollow SPre *Dubuque* (DAk) were suggestive of breeding birds.

Western Kingbird: Most reports were from *Polk* where birds were found in Des Moines (nests at 2 sites), West Des Moines, and Johnston (nest) (RIA, PHA, m.ob.). Besides birds found in their usual haunts in *Harrison*, *Mills*, *Pottawattamie*, and *Woodbury* (SSP, SJD, MPr, GLV), singles on 1 Jun near Homestead *Iowa* (BSc) and 14 Jul at Eldora *Hardin* (DJN) were far out of range.

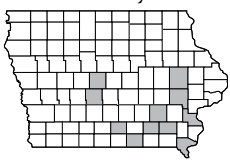
SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER: One at Chichaqua A *Polk* on 29 Jul (Matt Bass-ph) was the only report.

Loggerhead Shrike: One or 2 were



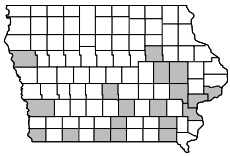
found in 18 counties scattered across Cen and S Iowa but missing from NW and E Iowa (m.ob.). Nests were found in *Cerro Gordo* (PH) and *Madison* (Eloise and Eugene Armstrong fide DTh).

White-eyed Vireo: From 1–4 were



found in 11 counties (m.ob.), mostly in the SE quarter of Iowa.

Bell's Vireo: A few were found in 19



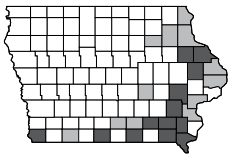
counties, none in the N third of the state (m.ob.). The most was 12 at Sioux City Prairie *Woodbury* (GLV).

Yellow-throated Vireo: Reported from 39 counties covering all sections of the state (m.ob.), this species seems to be reasonably common in suitable woodland habitat. The most reported was 16 at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (SSP).

Black-billed Magpie: Two nests at Broken Kettle Grassland *Plymouth* apparently were successful (Scott Moats fide JJD).

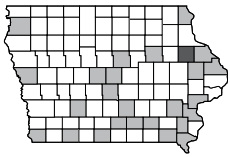
Purple Martin: The largest colony reported was 40 pairs in western *Van Buren* (KLP, SSP).

Tufted Titmouse: Found in 25 counties, mainly in E and S Iowa (m.ob.), it was not reported from the NW half of the state. Titmice were common in many of the larger wooded areas of S Iowa (e.g., 18 adults plus 2 broods at Geode SP *Henry* and 15 adults and 4 broods at Lick Creek Unit, Shimek SF *Lee* [SSP, KLP]).



Brown Creeper: All: 1 on 3 Jun at Klum L *Louisa* (MCD) and 1 on 15 Jul at Schuetzen P, Davenport *Scott* (WMZ). Few birders venture into the river-bottom habitat where this species typically is found.

Carolina Wren: Reported from 26 counties, mostly in the SE half of Iowa (m.ob.). By far the most northwestern report was 1 on 17, 31 Jul at Sioux Center *Sioux*, a local first for longtime observer John Van Dyk. Eight territories were found at Lick Creek Unit, Shimek SF *Lee* (SSP, KLP), and a brood was noted in *Delaware* (SSP).



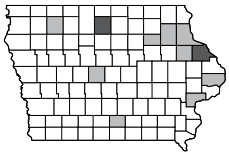
Bewick's Wren: This barely-in-Iowa species again graced the famous junkyard near Argyle *Lee* (PH, JG, KLP, SSP, MPr).

Sedge Wren: A few were reported from across much of Iowa (m.ob.). Reports from southern *Decatur* and *Taylor* (JRL, NJM, SSP) indicate that this species' summer range extends south to the Missouri border. Sedge Wrens were not reported from *Decatur* during the Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas project (Jackson et al. 1996).

Marsh Wren: The 30 on 23, 25 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (SJD) and 4 on 29 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (JB) were near the southern edge of this species' Iowa nesting range.

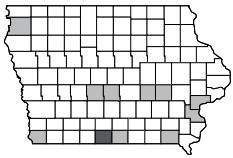
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Two on 24 Jul at Stone SP *Woodbury* (SSP) were the furthest north Shane Patterson found this species in w Iowa. The furthest north confirmed nest in western Iowa found during the Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas project was also at Stone SP (Jackson et al. 1996).

Veery: Birds were found in 11 counties but generally not in the large wooded areas of S Iowa (m.ob.). The most was 15 at Backbone SP *Delaware* (SSP). Adults carrying food for young were seen at Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (RGo) and White Pine Hollow SPre *Dubuque* (SSP).

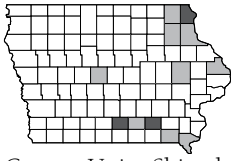


Wood Thrush: Wood Thrushes were found in 41 counties throughout the state with peak counts of 12 singing males at Brinton Timber *Washington* and Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (SSP). An active nest was found in Nine Eagles SP *Decatur* (KLP, SSP) and adults were seen attending young at Donnellson and Lick Creek Units, Shimek SF *Lee* (SSP, KLP), Pioneer Ridge NA *Wapello* (SSP), and Volga River SRA *Fayette* (SSP).

Northern Mockingbird: A few were found in 11 counties, mostly south of Interstate 80. One on 14 Jul in southern *Sioux* was unexpected (JVD). A brood was seen near Davis City *Decatur* where several were reported (JRL, NJM, SSP).

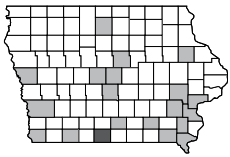


Blue-winged Warbler: A few were found in 12 counties, mainly in E and SE Iowa (m.ob.), with a high count of 7 singing males at Croton Unit, Shimek SF *Lee* (SSP, KLP). Evidence of breeding included a female attending young on 16 Jun at Whitebreast Unit, Stephens SF *Lucas* (KLP, SSP), 2 fledglings on 23 Jun at Pioneer Ridge NA *Wapello* (SSP), and 3 young on 15 Jul at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (SSP).



Tennessee Warbler: One singing on 19 Jun in Spencer *Clay* (LAS) was the only report.

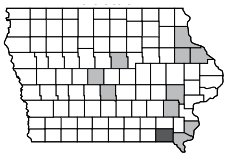
Northern Parula: A few were found in 20 counties that covered all except NW Iowa. The most was 14 males at Lick Creek Unit, Shimek SF *Lee* (SSP, KLP). The only evidence of breeding was an adult feeding young on 11 Jun near Davis City *Decatur* (NJM).



Chestnut-sided Warbler: All: 1 on 9 Jun at Silver L *Worth* (PH), 1 on 11, 16 Jun near Davis City *Decatur* (NJM, JRL), 3 in Yellow River SF *Allamakee* (DK), and 2 on 22 Jun at Coon Creek WA *Winneshiek* (DK).

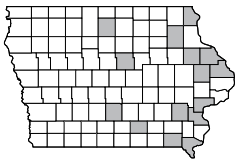
Magnolia Warbler: A male was singing on 14 Jun in Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* (RGo, MCK) [third latest].

Yellow-throated Warbler: A few were found in 11 counties, mostly in E Iowa (m.ob.). A nest was found at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (SSP, KLP).



PRAIRIE WARBLER: The male found in May at Pleasant Creek SRA *Benton* remained there until at least 1 Jul (*DAk, BSc, m.ob.). The only other report was 1 on 7, 15 Jun at Croton Unit, Shimek SF *Lee* (*SSP, MCD-details).

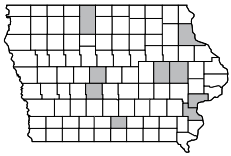
Cerulean Warbler: Reported from 15 counties, all east of Interstate 35 except for Pilot Knob SP *Hancock* where as many as 4 were found (RGo, PH). The high count was 7 males at Brinton Timber *Washington* (SSP). No one mentioned evidence of nesting.



Black-and-white Warbler: Singles on 3 Jun at Ledges SP *Boone* (WO) and 26 Jul at Backbone SP *Delaware* (Pete Wickham fide BSc) were probably late and early migrants respectively.

American Redstart: Widespread (reported in 30 counties throughout Iowa), and common (counts of 48 birds, mostly singing males, at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* and 59 at Volga River SRA *Fayette* [SSP]), this and the Ovenbird seem to be Iowa's 3rd and 4th most abundant nesting warblers after Common Yellowthroat and Yellow Warbler. A nest was found in *Kossuth* (MCK), and adults with young were found in *Allamakee* (SSP) and *Dubuque* (SSP).

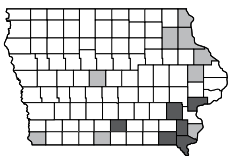
Prothonotary Warbler: A few were found in nine counties in E Iowa and north along the Des Moines R and its tributaries to *Boone* and *Kossuth* (m.ob.). No one mentioned evidence of nesting.



Worm-eating Warbler: As in the past, most reports were from *Lee*; singles at Croton and Donnellson units (JG, SSP, KLP) and 4 males on 8 Jun at Lick Creek Unit, Shimek SF (SSP, KLP). Elsewhere, singles were at Nine Eagles SP *Decatur* on 18 Jun, 12 Jul (KLP, SSP, JRL) and Lake Ahquabi SP *Warren* on 24 Jun (JS), and an adult was taking food to young on 23 Jun at Pioneer Ridge NA *Wapello* (SSP).

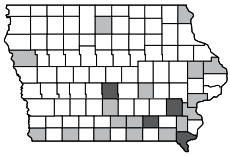
Ovenbird: Like the American Redstart, this species is widespread (reported in 33 counties throughout Iowa) and common (counts of 56 birds at Lick Creek Unit, Shimek SF *Lee* and 86 at Whitebreast Unit, Stephens SF *Lucas* [SSP, KLP]). Adults were seen attending young in *Lee*, *Lucas*, *Van Buren*, *Warren*, and *Washington* (SSP, KLP).

Louisiana Waterthrush: Up to 10 adults were found in 15 counties mainly in E and S Iowa (m.ob.). Nests or broods were found at Geode SP *Henry* (SSP, KLP), Donnellson



Unit, Shimek SF *Lee* (KLP, SSP), Croton Unit, Shimek SF *Lee* (AB, KLP, SSP), Stephens SF *Lucas* (SSP), Wildcat Den SP *Muscatine* (SSP), Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (KLP, SSP), and Brinton Timber *Washington* (MCD).

Kentucky Warbler: As many as 12 males were found in 21 counties, mainly in E and S Iowa (m.ob.). Only two reports were from the NW half of the state. Adults attending young birds were reported on 5, 8 Jun at the Donnellson and Lick Creek Units, Shimek SF *Lee* (SSP, KLP), 11 Jun at Brinton Timber *Washington* (MCD), 23 Jun at Pioneer Ridge NA *Wapello* (SSP), and 20 Jul at Brown's Woods *Polk* (SJD).

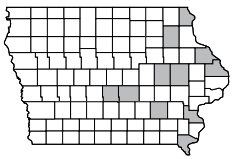


Mourning Warbler: Singles on 2 Jun at Pine Lake SP *Hardin* (MPr) and 3 Jun in Indianola *Warren* (JS) were the only reports.

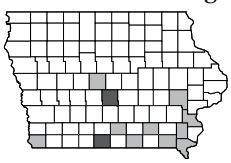
Hooded Warbler: Most reports were from the Donnellson Unit, Shimek SF *Lee* (JG, MPr, CRE, MHB) with 4 there on 5 Jun (SSP). Elsewhere, 1 on 18 Jun at Lake Ahquabi SP *Warren* was carrying food (JS); 1 was still there on 1 Jul (JG).

Wilson's Warbler: One was singing on 8 Jun in Jane Clark's yard in Clive *Polk* (JRC, AMJ, RIA, PHA) [record latest].

Yellow-breasted Chat: A few were found in 11 counties, mostly in E Iowa (m.ob.). Most were probably nesting but no direct evidence was provided.



Summer Tanager: A few were found in 12 counties, mainly in S Iowa (m.ob.) and north to *Boone* and *Johnson* (DJN, WO, MHB). Evidence of breeding included a nest at Brown's Woods *Polk* (m.ob.) and an adult carrying food at Nine Eagles SP *Decatur* (SSP, KLP).



Scarlet Tanager: Still fairly common in large wooded areas (e.g., 21 at Yellow River SF *Allamakee* and 17 at Volga River SRA *Fayette* [SSP]), birds were found in 37 counties statewide (m.ob.). Adults were seen attending broods in *Decatur* (JRL), *Fayette* (SSP), *Polk* (RIC), and *Warren* (SSP).

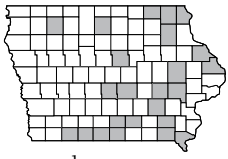
Eastern Towhee: Towhees were found in 36 counties scattered throughout Iowa (m.ob.) and in some places were common (e.g., 28 at Volga River SRA *Fayette* and 29 at Lake of Three Fires SP *Taylor* [SSP]). A nest was found in *Decatur* (JRL) and adults were seen attending young in *Lee*, *Louisa*, *Lucas*, *Muscatine*, *Wapello*, and *Winneshiek* (SSP, KLP, DeC).

Clay-colored Sparrow: All: 1 on 1 Jun at Russ WA *Hancock* (AB), 2 on 9 Jun at Elk Creek M *Worth* (PH), 1 on 22 Jun at Hurlburt WA *Kossuth* (MCK), 3 on 13 Jul in Bluffton Twp *Winneshiek* (SSP), and an adult feeding a young bird on 27 Jul at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (SJD). These add to our growing knowledge of the apparent nesting range of this species across N Iowa.

Lark Sparrow: From 1–10 were found in 18 counties scattered across most of Iowa (m.ob.). Broods were found in *Boone*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Story*, and *Wapello* (SSP, RGo, WO, HZ).

Grasshopper Sparrow: This species seemed to be common with reports from 25 counties spread across all sections of the state (m.ob.). The report of 135 near Davis City *Decatur* (NJM) was by far the most.

Henslow's Sparrow: From 1–14 were found in 24 counties spread across all but far W Iowa (m.ob.). The increase in reports over the past two decades is amazing. Henslow's Sparrows were found in only



seven blocks in six counties during the Iowa Breeding Bird Atlas from 1985–1990 (Jackson et al. 1996).

Swamp Sparrow: One on 3 Jun at Swamp White Oak Pre *Muscatine* (KLP) was near the southern edge of this species' Iowa range.

White-throated Sparrow: One on 5 Jul at Liscomb *Marshall* (MPr) is Iowa's tenth summer record and the first since 2003.

Blue Grosbeak: Besides the usual reports from *Fremont*, *Harrison*, and *Woodbury* in the Missouri River floodplain (MPr, LJP, BKP, SSP, BFH, GLV), singles on 3 Jun at Croton Unit, Shimek SF *Lee* (JG), 6, 7 Jun at Pleasant Creek SRA *Linn* (DAk, RGo), 23 Jun at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), and 3 Jul at White Pine Hollow SPre *Dubuque* (DAk) were outside of its usual range. The Shimek SF bird adds to several reports from that corner of Iowa.

PAINTED BUNTING: The male found in May at Brookside P, Ames *Story* was seen sporadically through the end of July (WO, SSP).

Dickcissel: This species seemed to be common throughout Iowa.

Bobolink: The reports I received suggested that Bobolinks were reasonably common in suitable habitat.

Eastern Meadowlark: A pair on 2 Jun at Floyd River Greenbelt *Woodbury* (BFH) and 1 on 4 Jun at Fen Valley *Clay* (LAS) were out of this species' usual range.

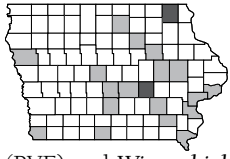
Western Meadowlark: One on 31 Jul near Davenport *Scott* (WMZ) was about as far east as it can occur and still be in Iowa.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: One on 25 Jul at Runnells WA *Marion* (SJD) was a bit out of range for summer.

Great-tailed Grackle: Besides reports from *Cerro Gordo*, *Polk*, and *Tama* (RGo, BE, RIA, PHA, MPr) where this species has been found previously, 4 on 7 Jun at Big M *Butler* (RGo) and 1 on 18 Jun at Myre Sl *Winnebago* (AB) seem to be new county records.

Brown-headed Cowbird: The following reports of cowbird brood parasitism are of some interest: Red-eyed Vireo at Mines of Spain SRA *Dubuque* (SSP), Wood Thrush at White Pine Hollow SPre *Dubuque* (DAk), Yellow-throated Warbler at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (MPr), Ovenbird at Lick Creek Unit, Shimek SF *Lee* and Thousand Acre Unit, Stephens SF *Monroe* (SSP, KLP), Louisiana Waterthrush at Donnellson Unit, Shimek SF *Lee* (SSP, KLP), Scarlet Tanager at Volga River SRA *Fayette* (SSP), Eastern Towhee at Unionville Unit, Shimek SF *Appanoose* (SSP), and Orchard Oriole near Davis City *Decatur* (JRL).

Orchard Oriole: A few were found in 20 counties scattered across Iowa (m.ob.). Adults attending broods were seen in *Poweshiek* (RVE) and *Winneshiek* (DeC).



Eurasian Tree Sparrow: Two on 15 Jun in Donnellson *Lee* (MPr) and 2 on 2 Jul in Iowa Twp *Washington* (MCD, BSc) were along the edge of this species' expanding range. The latter two seemed to be nesting in a Purple Martin house.

COMMENT

I received about 2,250 reports from more than 50 people, the most material I have ever received for the summer season. I greatly appreciate the willingness of all of the contributors to send in material. Most of you now submit your material on the web site. This helps reduce errors in data entry as well as saving me considerable time. Thank you all for your cooperation. Again this year I have added maps for a few species, mainly species

whose range is limited in Iowa. Hopefully the maps help provide some idea of where those species limits are and will encourage others to search for them in other areas.

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Successful Osprey nest at Jester Park, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk, *1 July 2006. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

American Kestrels in nest box below Saylorville dam, Polk, *1 June 2006. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

Laughing Gull, below Red Rock Reservoir dam, Polk, *25 July 2006. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

Yellow-breasted Chat at Croton Unit of Shimek State Forest, Lee, *03 June 2006. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

Western Kingbird at state capitol complex, Polk, *10 June 2006. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

Ruff at Pinchey Bottoms, Marion, *31 July 2006. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

Yellow-billed Cuckoo that nested at Cumming wetlands area, Warren, *23 June 2006. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

Willow Flycatcher that nested at Cumming wetlands area, Warren, *17 June 2006. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

Blue-winged Warbler at Croton Unit of Shimek SF, Lee, *03 June 2006. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

Bell's Vireo that nested at Cumming wetlands area, Warren, *23 June 2006. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

Prothonotary Warbler at Beaver Bottoms wetland area, Dallas, *24 June 2006. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.*

Least Terns Nesting in Central Iowa

Stephen J. Dinsmore

In summer 2006, a pair of Least Terns nested unsuccessfully at Saylorville Reservoir in Polk County, marking the first modern nesting record for this species in Iowa away from the Missouri River. This nesting record was doubtless a result of dramatic habitat changes due to siltation at the upper end of the lake during the last 20 years. In the mid-1980s, a single small island was located along the south side of the main river channel, approximately one-quarter mile east of Highway 17. By the mid-1990s, several low-relief islands formed to the east of this large island, and that pattern has accelerated in the ensuing decade. At present, there are nearly 100 hectares of low-relief mud and sand flats in the upper reaches of the lake at normal pool. These islands appear to be good nesting habitat for species such as the Piping Plover and Least Tern, although they are subject to flooding if reservoir water levels are raised even slightly.

Figure 1. First modern record of nesting attempt (unsuccessful) by Least Terns in Des Moines River Valley, Saylorville Reservoir, Polk*, 7 July 2006. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

The Least Tern is considered a rare migrant in Polk County with most records coming from the post-breeding period in mid-July through late August (Dinsmore 1995). The first report in 2006 was of a single adult on the extensive mudflats off Jester Park on 18 June (Bery Engebretsen, pers. comm.), an unusual mid-summer occurrence. By 25 June, a pair was present and one adult was apparently sitting on a nest. On 27 June, Scott Rolfes and I boated to the island and confirmed a nest with one egg defended by both adults. We returned on 7 July and the nest contained two eggs (Figure 1) and was still being defended by both adults. On 10 July, more than three centimeters of rain fell to the north of the reservoir in the Des Moines River floodplain. As a result, water levels at the reservoir rose slightly on the 12th, but the pool returned to normal by the 13th. It is possible that water may have seeped into the small depression that held the nest, causing the adults to abandon it shortly thereafter. In any case, the nesting attempt was unsuccessful. The last sighting was of the adults engaged in courtship flights on 20 July (pers. obs.), but they were not seen thereafter.

Least Terns are rare breeders in Iowa. This species was formerly more common along

the Missouri River, but by the late 1900s was restricted to nesting on fly-ash deposits at power plants near Council Bluffs and Sioux City (Dinsmore et al. 1999). They have nested almost annually at the power plant south of Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County with a peak of 14 pairs in 1987 (Dinsmore et al. 2004). Fewer nest at the power plant south of Sioux City, Woodbury County—typically no more than two pairs per year since 1986 (Dinsmore et al. 2004).

The Saylorville record is notable because it represents the first nesting record in the Des Moines River Valley. I suspect that as the large reservoirs in central Iowa gradually silt in, nesting opportunities for this species may increase. However, the timing of available habitat will be important because many of these reservoirs often hold water well into summer. In 2006, drought conditions caused the pool at Saylorville Reservoir to drop to normal by mid-June, almost a month earlier than normal. This meant that suitable nesting habitat for terns was available near the peak nesting period, something that would not occur in a typical year.

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Sprague's Pipit in Fremont County

Stephen J. Dinsmore, Aaron Brees, and Jay Gilliam

In April 2006, we planned a birding trip to southwestern Iowa, in part to look for Sprague's Pipit. This species is accidental in Iowa, but we believed Iowa records were not representative because of this species' secretive habits, preference for a habitat not often visited by birders, and a general lack of targeted efforts to find this species in Iowa. Based

on records from surrounding states, we surmised that Sprague's Pipit would be most likely to occur in the far southwestern corner of Iowa (Fremont County) and that it could occur in spring between mid-April and early May and in fall between late September and late October. Here, we report the details of a sight record of a Sprague's Pipit on 22 April 2006 in Fremont County, Iowa.

On 22 April, we began the day by birding at Riverton Wildlife Area where we met Jim Sinclair and Rick Trieff and joined forces. Just before noon we entered the Missouri River Valley north of Hamburg and began searching for presumed Sprague's Pipit habitat. In particular, we were searching for relatively large, flat grassy areas with short vegetation (generally <6 in. tall) interspersed with bare ground. After working our way north for about 30 minutes, we finally located a suitable field east of Percival and obtained permission to walk the field. We made several east-west organized passes through the field, but found only sparrows, primarily Savannah and Le Conte's sparrows. As we were returning to our cars, an interesting medium-sized bird with white outer rectrices flushed, flew a short distance, and landed. Subsequent to this initial sighting, we flushed the bird 4 to 5 more times between 1:10 and 1:25 P.M. from distances as close as 10 meters and easily identified the bird as a Sprague's Pipit.

The following description was compiled from field notes taken by us immediately after the sighting. The bird was noticeably larger than a Savannah Sparrow, and appeared only slightly larger than a Vesper Sparrow. Compared to a Savannah Sparrow, this bird had a proportionately longer tail and looked slimmer, giving the bird a more attenuated appearance. When flushed, we could easily discern the white outer rectrices and darker central rectrices. Because we saw the bird only in flight, it was hard to discern subtle plumage features. When flushing straight away, the bird's dark brown mantle was marked by a few longitudinal pale stripes, giving the bird a somewhat scaly appearance. We also noted that the breast was a pale buff color, shading to white on the vent. On each flush, the bird gave the distinctive ***squeet*** call note of this species, sometimes singly but usually paired. We listened for, and immediately recognized, this call note when we heard it. Lastly, the bird's behavior provided a strong clue to its identity. When flushed, it generally gained altitude rapidly, circled over part of the area, and then folded like a falcon and plummeted back to the ground, landing in the grass. We tried unsuccessfully to see the bird on the ground, but it always remained motionless and well hidden before flushing.

This represents the third record of a Sprague's Pipit in Iowa. Other records were of single individuals on 22 Apr 1998 at Union Hills W.A., Cerro Gordo Co. and 5 May 2004 at Eagle L., Hancock Co. Our success in finding this species on our first attempt suggests that it may be a more regular migrant in Iowa than previously thought. Future searches of suitable habitat during migration will probably change this species' status in Iowa.

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Birding Clayton County

Danny Akers

Clayton County, in scenic Northeast Iowa, is known for several reasons: a weekend getaway from the big city, recreational activity and tourism, and the fifth largest county in Iowa. It also should be known for its avian wildlife.

The northeastern part of the county boasts some of the most beautiful scenery in Iowa. Popular destinations in this area include Bloody Run County Park, Marquette/McGregor, Pikes Peak State Park, and Effigy Mounds National Monument.

Bloody Run County Park (Figure 1.1) occupies about 150 acres of woodland and edge habitat and contains several camping sites. Bloody Run Creek flows throughout the park. Turning onto 128th Street from U.S. Highway 18 (about a mile west of Marquette) and following the mile long road to the county road, one cannot help but admire the sheer beauty of Bloody Run Creek as it meanders along the road. Abruptly turning south near a gathering of homes, a large grassy opening emerges on the west side of the road. The edges of this grassy area often hold many species during migration. Continuing, the road crosses the railroad tracks. A second camping area is near the railroad tracks along the creek. In this area and across the creek, Blue-winged Warbler is fairly common in the spring, summer, and early fall. It also is home to several species of sparrows in both spring and fall migration. The road doubles back across the railroad tracks to a third camping area tucked into a small patch of young timber. This area is often the best location to search for birds in the park. I have had 23 warblers in this area. Pileated Woodpecker and Louisiana Waterthrush also are found here.

Another notable birding stop is located at the intersection of U.S. Highway 18 and County Road B45 in **Marquette** (Figure 1.2). The ponds have been home to Willow and Least flycatchers and Marsh Wren during the summer season, and are always a worthwhile destination on a Clayton County Big Day.

The South Unit of **Effigy Mounds National Monument** (Figure 1.3) is in extreme northeastern Clayton County. The access road is not accessible by public vehicle and it is best to ask at the headquarters before hiking this area of the monument. The primary birding area is located on top of the bluff. Acadian Flycatcher, Cerulean Warbler, and Eastern Towhee are common here during the summer months. Ruffed Grouse has been heard in this section.

A stop at **Pikes Peak State Park** (Figure 1.4, map available at park), south of McGregor, is a necessity when considering a birding trip in Clayton County. My best birding in the park has always been near the main overlook at the south entrance to the park. Just north of the main overlook is a bear mound. At least one Yellow-throated Warbler, a real gem this far north, has been seen here in the spring and early summer months since 2004. A walk to the Crow's Nest and down to Bridal Veil Falls is always productive as well, as is a walk along the edge at the parking lot and to the Bear Mound north of the overlook. My Pikes Peak list is nearly 150 species. Highlights have included all seven regular woodpeckers, the five regular *Empidonax* flycatchers, Carolina and Winter wrens, both Kinglets, Gray-cheeked, Swainson's, Hermit, and Wood thrushes, 27 warblers, including Pine, and several sparrows. During the summer months, there are usually four or five hummingbird

feeders hung from a pine tree at the shelter at the north edge of the parking lot. I have estimated up to 55 hummingbirds here in the fall, but have not found anything unusual.

The **Sny Magill Area** (Figure 1.5), a vast area of private and public lands, is usually a good stop for someone birding Clayton County. From Pikes Peak State Park, turn north toward McGregor, go approximately one-fourth mile, turn west onto King Road and follow for approximately two miles. The road curves sharply to the west and downhill. After the first descent, the road becomes level for a short distance. Here, both species of cuckoos, Pileated Woodpecker, Wood Thrush, and Blue-winged Warbler can be heard. Continuing down the road and around another sharp corner, the road straightens, and excellent edge habitat becomes visible on both sides of the road. I have counted over a dozen Blue-winged Warblers along this half-mile stretch of road during late May and early June. A summer Broad-winged Hawk has been seen occasionally in this area. Continuing just past the intersection with Keystone Road, cross a bridge, and a parking area is available just to the east. A stagnant pond is visible across the road. Pied-billed Grebe and Green Heron have nested at this pond for at least a couple of years. Walking along Sny Magill Creek to the east, one can find Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Least Flycatcher, Cerulean Warbler, and Louisiana Waterthrush. Although not the best location for warblers in the county, I have found no less than 16 species in this area.

Driving back to Keystone Road, turn to the east and travel along Sny Magill Creek for about four miles, to the intersection with County Road X56. Turn to the south and enjoy looks at more agricultural species, such as Gray Partridge, American Kestrel, and both species of meadowlarks.

Continue on County X56 for about five miles, watch for **Mississippi Road** (Figure 1.6) and turn to the east. As the name suggests, the road follows the Mississippi River. However, one must be cautious, as this gravel road is home to some of the most dangerous corners in the county. You will notice a gathering of homes and trailers, commonly referred to as Willy's Resort, or Frenchtown. The boat ramp can reward birders with views of a few waterfowl species and a few migrants. Continuing south you will see **Frenchtown Park** (Figure 1.7), a county park, on the east side of the road. The entrance from the north can be a bit awkward to get into. You must take the turn wide (it is a 300-degree turn), cross the tracks (slowly, they are a bit rough), and it may wash out when it rains. Driving into the park and to the boat ramp can be rewarding. By far, this is the best area for waterfowl in the county. Puddle ducks are abundant in migration and diving ducks are a bit more abundant just to the south. Louisiana Waterthrush is common in the summer, as are warblers, sparrows, and other migrants in migration. I have found nearly 100 species in and around the park, including 20 species of warblers. About one-fourth mile south of the Frenchtown Park entrance is a spectacular view of the Mississippi River and its backwaters. Though I have not viewed Snow and Ross's goose, Mute Swan, or any of the sea ducks from this location, all are rare possibilities. Hiking the railroad tracks along this stretch will kick up sparrows in the fall. Canoeing this area could turn up several waders or possibly a Yellow-headed Blackbird (a species that to my knowledge has not occurred in Clayton County).

Just a mile or two to the south, along the Great River Road, is the access road to Abel and Esmann Island known as **Island Road** (Figure 1.8). This half-mile stretch of road is home to riparian habitat on the north side and more Mississippi River backwater to the south. Prothonotary Warbler is plentiful during June, with up to a dozen singing males. This has been the only reliable area for Sora in the county as well. Small numbers of water-

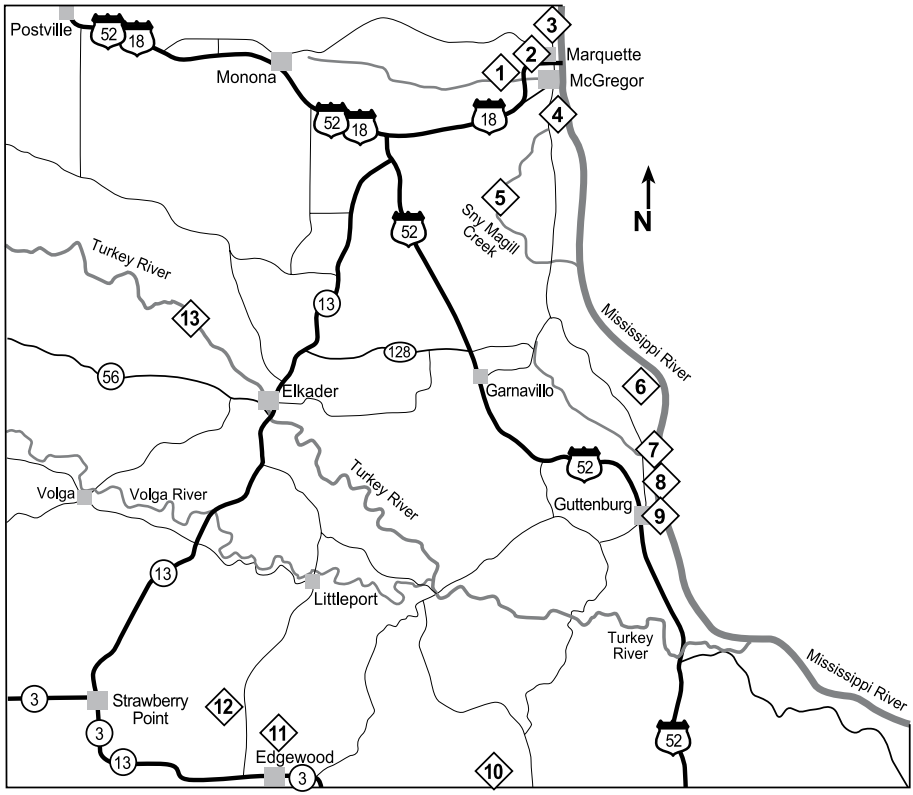

Figure 1. Birding areas in Clayton County: (1) Bloody Run County Park, (2) Marquette, (3) Effigy Mounds National Monument, South Unit, (4) Pikes Peak State Park, (5) Sny Magill Area, (6) Mississippi Road, (7) Frenchtown Park, (8) Island Road, (9) Guttenberg, (10) Camp Klaus, (11) Bixby State Preserve, (12) Mossy Glen State Preserve, (13) Big Spring Road.

fowl are on the south side during migration and this side of the road is one of two reliable areas in the county for shorebirds, with Willet being my best find in this area. Though shorebirds are not usually abundant in this area, it is worth a check if you are in the area.

Guttenberg (Figure 1.9) is a beautiful riverside town with kind people and plenty of waterfront to search for birds. A Western Grebe made a weekend stopover on the north side of town in November 2005. Horned Grebe and Bonaparte's Gull, as well as several waterfowl species, use the river as an efficient migration corridor. Least Flycatcher has been found during the summer on a human-made island just south of the marina. Cape May Warbler has been found in backyards. The dike at Lock and Dam 10 is a spectacular walk, if granted permission. Great shorebird habitat exists along the south side of the dike during migration. A Bohemian Waxwing even made an appearance on the southwest side of town in 2003. A new nature trail can be found heading south from the boat ramp located below the dam, and is worth a walk if you have the time.

Several other areas are certainly noteworthy throughout the county and it is very difficult to bird all of these in one day. If you have the time, spend a couple of days in the county, and bird these areas as well.

Camp Klaus (Figure 1.10) is a Boy Scout camp located about one mile north of the Clayton/Delaware County lines. From County Road X3C, just one mile north of Colesburg, turn west onto Horseshoe Road. This road travels a straight, albeit hilly, line for about two miles before curving to the northwest. After another three-fourths mile or so, you will see the entrance to Camp Klaus. I first visited this area on a required event my sophomore year in high school and was very impressed. Migrants were numerous, and I remember my life Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Multiple trips back to the Camp have yielded a checklist of nearly 100 species, including Green Heron, Red-shouldered Hawk, both cuckoos, Pileated Woodpecker, four out of five *Empidonax* flycatchers (no Alder), Carolina Wren, Wood Thrush, a dozen species of warblers, and a few species of sparrows. No visit to Camp Klaus is complete without viewing the spring-fed waterfall at the south end of the camp.

Located two miles north of Edgewood, off Fortune Ave., is **Bixby State Preserve** (formerly a state park) (Figure 1.11), one of the most primitive, yet bird-friendly, areas in the county. I have recorded 80 species here, including Red-shouldered Hawk, both cuckoos, Pileated Woodpecker, three *Empidonax* flycatchers, Bell's Vireo, Carolina Wren, Veery and Wood thrushes, 17 warbler species, and a few sparrows. A walk along the creek to the east can be rewarding; I found nesting Bell's Vireos here in summer 2005.

Proceeding north out of Bixby State Preserve, turn west onto Faucet Road and continue to the intersection of County Road X21. Turn north for approximately one-fourth mile and turn west onto 370th Street. Continue west for a mile and turn north onto Eagle Ave. After about a mile, the road condition drops to a "B-level" road when it runs through a farm. It is recommended to park here and walk for a few minutes to **Mossy Glen State Preserve** (Figure 1.12). It is not advisable to drive on this B-level section, especially if precipitation has occurred in the past few days. Not a hotspot, but this location holds decent numbers of Acadian Flycatchers and woodland/edge species.

One of my favorite areas to bird in Clayton County is the **Big Spring Road** (Figure 1.13) located about 10 or 11 miles northwest of Elkader. This area is heavily birded during the Northwest Clayton County Christmas Bird Count. From the Trout Hatchery itself, drive along Big Spring Road for three to four miles to the intersection with Cable Ave. Most of this road is B-level and can be difficult to navigate during certain seasons, primarily during the spring thaw. (I speak from experience!) The Turkey River flows within 30 feet of the road on one side of the road and a cedar bluff stretches at least two miles along the other side. The western mile of the road is bordered by a large crop field on the north side. This road would be spectacular during migration. A winter visit to Clayton County is not complete without a drive along this road. The Christmas Bird Count has produced Golden Eagle, a few owls, Belted Kingfisher, Pileated Woodpecker, Northern Shrike, Carolina and Winter wrens, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and a few sparrows.

This basically summarizes the birding hotspots of Clayton County. Driving around the back roads of the county, however, may turn up several good finds. Highway 52 between Highway 13 and Guttenberg can be good for Gray Partridge during July and August. Bixby Avenue, located one-half mile west of Volga along county road C2W, and specifically 1 mile south of C2W, can be superb for grassland species including Sedge Wren, Bobolink, and

Western Meadowlark. Grassland sparrows could easily be found and/or overlooked in any area of the county. I have noted excellent habitat for Henslow's and Grasshopper sparrows sporadically throughout the southwestern half of Clayton County. A canoe trip on the Turkey River between Elkader and Millville can be a rewarding and a relaxing venture. When the Turkey River floods during the spring and/or summer months, it can create wonderful shorebird habitat in the agricultural fields around Millville. Without a doubt, there are many areas yet to be explored and/or discovered in Clayton County, and future birding expeditions will undoubtedly increase the knowledge of birdlife in this scenic Northeast Iowa county.

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Book Review: *Iowa Bird Watching*

James J. Dinsmore

Book Review: *Iowa Bird Watching. A Year-Round Guide* by Bill Thompson, III. 2005. Cool Springs Press, Nashville, TN. 176 pp, $17

This is one in a series of guides for beginning birders, each "customized" for an individual state and written by Iowa native Bill Thompson. Longtime IOU member Diane Porter of Fairfield provided the information specific to Iowa starting with tips for birding in Iowa, a brief history of birding in Iowa, and notes on reintroduced species and bird conservation. Short descriptions of four major ecoregions of Iowa and birds that are typical of each follow. Although only four ecoregions are covered (most similar works divide Iowa into more regions), the divisions seem reasonable. A seasonal summary of birding in Iowa including a brief discussion of where to go and what species one could expect to find during each of the four seasons adds greatly to the book.

Porter's contribution ends with a list of ten "must-see" birds in Iowa and how to find them, Iowa's ten best birding sites, and resources for Iowa's birders. In general, these sections are well done and packed with lots of information. The top ten birding sites are scattered across Iowa and are all great places for birding. My biggest quibble is with the list of not-to-be-missed species. American White Pelican, Bobolink, and Dickcissel are great choices but some of the others (e.g., Short-eared Owl, Yellow-throated Warbler) are not always easy to find in the state. The resources for birders include web site addresses for several Iowa organizations and bird clubs as well as a good list of birding books for the beginner.

The rest of the book seems to be generic with what appear to be boiler-plate sections

on getting started, bird feeders and houses, how to use the book, and brief biographies of 100 commonly encountered birds in Iowa. The book ends with about 20 pages of resources including information on bird feeders and houses, a glossary of birding terms, frequently asked questions, plans for a birdhouse, plants to attract birds, and national birding organizations.

The species accounts comprise more than half of the book with a page devoted to each. All the species selected are ones that Iowans can reasonably expect to encounter. Each account includes a photograph, a range map, and a paragraph on habitat, food habits, nesting, and general comments, often focused on whether this species can be attracted to your yard. The material in these accounts seems useful and accurate. My biggest complaint is that I couldn't find a single comment in any of the accounts that related to Iowa. No mention of the success of the restocking program for Wild Turkey, the growth of nesting Bald Eagle populations in Iowa, or the recent efforts to try to establish a nesting population of Ospreys. All the species accounts could just as easily have been used, verbatim, in a book for Indiana or North Carolina or wherever. This is common practice with many book series but is it too much to ask an author who is writing a book about Iowa birds to add a few tidbits of Iowa-specific information for at least some of the species?

Despite these shortcomings, I believe that this book will be useful to beginning birders. Porter's fine contributions give part of the book a strong Iowa flavor and will be welcomed by many.

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Iowa Ornithologists' Union Fall Business Meeting, 2006

9 September 2006

The IOU fall business meeting was held at the Hotel Manning at Keosauqua, IA. In attendance were Sharon Stilwell, president; John Rutenbeck, vice president; Robert Cecil, secretary; Tammy Hertzel, treasurer; board members Carolyn Fischer, Jim Fuller, John Bissell, Tim Humpal, and members of the organization. The meeting was called to order at 1:45 P.M.

Secretary's Report. The minutes of the spring business meeting were approved as published in *IBL* 76(2):114–115.

Registrar's Report. Registrar Doug Hunt reported that there were 412 members as of the

spring 2006 meeting and that there were currently 458 members. He has contacted or attempted to contact by phone the approximately 50 members who have not renewed their memberships.

Membership Committee Report. Karen Disbrow reported that she is checking on shirts for sale and asked for suggestions on styles and colors. The membership preferred a plain polo-style shirt with IOU's logo. Other suggestions included a tee-shirt with illustrations of some of the state's recent rarities. It was noted by Karen that it would be desirable to have a shirt with more universal appeal to non-IOU members. Steve Dinsmore observed that the shirts that had not yet sold were of bright colors such as orange and yellow.

Karen also reported that she was planning an IOU presence at the Effigy Mounds Hawkwatch at Effigy Mounds National Monument on 22–24 Sep, the Rivers and Bluffs Fall Birding Festival at Lansing 10–12 Nov, and the Prairie Preview meeting in Iowa City in March. Additionally, she is seeking artwork, new books, photography, etc. that can be highlighted at IOU membership booths.

Projects Committee. Tom Johnson reported that the committee is now taking applications for projects seeking IOU support, and that decisions on funding would begin on 1 Feb. He also requested project ideas from IOU members. The application form will be available on-line at the Iowabirds web site.

Travel Committee. Bill Scheible reported that there had been "a groundswell of enthusiasm" for the trips offered by the IOU as evidenced by the successful trip to southeast Arizona led by Ann Johnson as well as trips to Crex Meadows in Wisconsin led by Jim Scheib and to southwest Iowa led by Ross Silcock. Under consideration for next year is a trip to the Rio Grande Valley of Texas and, possibly, a trip coordinated with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation to visit some of their sites around the state. Jim Fuller noted that the committee is looking for additional trip ideas.

Records Committee. Ann Johnson reported that the committee is current with its review of records except for a very recent one. She also noted that documentations of rarities are inconsistent, with many documentations received for some birds and very few received for others. She stressed the importance of documenting casual and accidental birds.

Publications Committee. *IBL* editor Kay Niyo reported that the latest issue is on the way, adding that she has had to monitor page counts because of the abundance of material. The membership was reminded that Paul Hertzel was seeking a replacement for editor of the *IOU News*. Interested persons may contact any member of the Publications Committee.

Ann Johnson reported that she has purchased a software package that will greatly improve the on-line store. Tom Johnson reminded the membership that they could purchase products from Amazon.com on the Iowabirds web site, producing revenue for the IOU. She also reported that pending funding authorization from the board to create the Ann Barker Memorial Library, the committee will move forward with archiving the journal and making it available on-line.

Old Business. None.

New Business. President Stilwell requested approval from the membership to increase the price of an IOU membership for international members to $35. This increase is necessary due to the increase in postage costs, which can be as much as $20 per year. It was moved to do so by John Rutenbeck and seconded by Ross Silcock. All ayes, motion carried.

Karen Disbrow reported that she was trying to get at least 25 IOU membership brochures in all birding related business in the state and encouraged members to pick up brochures for such business in their areas. President Stilwell asked members to be alert to possible locations.

John Rutenbeck reported that the spring meeting 2007 would be held in Sioux City at Briar Cliff College on 18–20 May, and thanked Bob and Phyllis Nickolson for their work in setting it up. He also reported that he was looking for a banquet speaker. Tonight's scheduled banquet speaker, Jim Rising, was forced to reschedule until the fall 2007 meeting and Ross Silcock agreed to replace him. President Stilwell asked members to be alert to possible locations for future meetings. Steve Dinsmore suggested the possibility of a late fall meeting in central Iowa.

Treasurer's Report. Tammy Hertzel reported revenues and expenses for the current year were about the same. She also reported that a new speaker system had been purchased for use at meetings, and that the Kent memorial fund had been used to cover the $172.20 cost.

Adjournment. Steve Dinsmore moved to adjourn at 2:15 P.M. and Bob Nickolson seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by Robert I. Cecil, secretary

Iowa Ornithologists' Union Board Meeting

9 September 2006

The IOU board meeting was held at the Hotel Manning in Keosauqua, IA. President Stilwell called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M. In attendance were Sharon Stilwell, president; John Rutenbeck, vice president; Robert Cecil, secretary; Tammy Hertzel, secretary; board members Carolyn Fischer, Jim Fuller, John Bissell, Tim Humpal; Doug Hunt, registrar; and Ann Johnson.

Secretary's Report. The minutes of the fall board meeting were approved as published in *IBL* 76(2):116–122

Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Tammy Hertzel distributed the Statement of Revenues, Ex-

penses, and Budgets, which compared financial information for the years ending 31 Dec 2004 and 2005 and year-to-date through 8 Sep 2006. She noted that IOU trips showed a net profit of $101.41 but meetings had shown a net loss of $624.60. The report was accepted as given.

Registrar's Report. Registrar Doug Hunt reported that he has contacted all non-renewing members twice and asked for guidance from the board regarding what, if any, additional actions should be taken. Sharon Stilwell suggested that the names of those persons should be retained for possible contact at a later date. Doug suggested that gift memberships could be given as Christmas presents. Ann Johnson suggested that a renewal letter should go out around Thanksgiving, which also gives respondents an opportunity to make a tax-deductible contribution for the current tax year.

Membership Committee Report. Karen Disbrow reported that the IOU would be represented by a table at the Oct 2007 Midwest Birding Symposium in Davenport.

Projects Committee Report. Reporting for Tom Johnson, President Stilwell noted that there was a need to develop a regular funding mechanism for the committee and to consider the possibility of fund-raising. Also noted was the desire to carry forward until next year the current funding allocation.

Publications Committee Report. Ann Johnson suggested that up to $5,000 from the Ann Barker Memorial Fund should be allocated for Phase One of electronically archiving past issues of *IBL* and the organization's newsletters that preceded it. A preliminary cost estimate was about 30 cents per page for scanning with an additional 19 cents per page for optimizing. Optimizing enables the creation of a searchable database. The $5,000 estimate cost would include archival preservation of the volumes used for the project since they must be disassembled for the scanning. It was moved by Carolyn Fischer and seconded by Jim Fuller to have the scanning done, utilizing the Ann Barker fund. During discussion, it was agreed that this expenditure was consistent with the purpose of the memorial. The first phase of the project will begin once a second bid has been obtained. Regarding the second phase, the searchable database, Ann Johnson reported that it was difficult to find a bidder for the work that would not involve on-going costs but that the committee was exploring options. She will report progress to the board at the spring meeting. All ayes, motion carried.

Travel Committee. President Stilwell reported for Kent Nickell that the committee would be meeting soon. President Stilwell thought there should be a minimum charge built into each trip that could be used for scouting costs, gasoline, etc., and that unused funds, if any, could be carried over to future trips. Following discussion, Tammy Hertzel moved and John Bissell seconded that in-state trip leaders be reimbursed at 30 cents per mile. All ayes, motion carried. Other reimbursements would be decided by the committee.

Library Committee. President Stilwell reported for Hank Zaletel that Jim Dinsmore had given a lot of his notes and other materials to the IOU archive at Iowa State University. She reported that Hank also monitors listservs and Iowa newspapers for IOU news, which he also sends to the archive.

President Stilwell reported that Dennis Carter had resigned from the committee. Discussion followed regarding the function of the committee, especially in view of Hank Zaletel's unique position to single-handedly perform all of the committee's normal activities. President Stilwell noted that she would not immediately replace Dennis Carter on the committee, but that the committee would continue.

Sharon Stilwell also reported that the IOU's Articles of Incorporation were now on the Iowabirds web site.

Old Business. President Stilwell reminded the board that the Project Committee bylaws had been approved over the summer by an on-line vote, as had the purchase of a sound system for IOU meetings, using money from the Kent Memorial fund. The purchase price for the unit was $172.20, which left funds remaining in the memorial.

There was discussion of how the death of IOU members should be publicized for the membership; for example, whether it should be in the journal or in the newsletter, and how much detail should be included. It was decided that, at the very least, a short notice should be placed in the journal. It was also decided that the Publications Committee should develop some guidelines for addressing this matter.

Finally, President Stilwell reported that a procedure for voting on-line will be finalized soon. Such actions will be used by the board for conducting urgent business between meetings. The results of these actions will be reported to the membership.

New Business. Treasurer Tammy Hertzel distributed the proposed budget for 2007. Discussed was the disposition of $6,070 that had been allocated to the Projects Committee for 2006 but had not been spent and would not be spent until projects were announced in early 2007. It was decided to forward the amount to the committee's 2007 budget. Also discussed was the 2007 Midwest Birding Symposium and whether to purchase table space and/or sponsor the symposium itself for $200. Carolyn Fischer thanked Tammy for her excellent work as treasurer.

Adjournment. John Rutenbeck moved to adjourn at 5:25 P.M. and John Bissell seconded. All ayes, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by Robert I. Cecil, secretary

Fifty Years Ago in *Iowa Bird Life*

James J. Dinsmore

The December 1956 ***Iowa Bird Life*** was a fairly thin, 20-page issue. The lead article by Fred Kent described a recent trip to Saskatchewan and featured several great photographs. Much of the article discussed species he saw that are common migrants through Iowa, especially the vast flocks of Franklin's Gulls.

An article by Ward Tanner and George Hendrickson described their recent study of the nesting biology of Soras in wetlands near Ruthven. They provide detailed data on several aspects of the biology of this secretive species. Another article describes some of the birds found on a 20-acre sanctuary northeast of Waterloo. Now known as the Sage Sanctuary, these early records might provide an interesting comparison for a follow-up study. Likewise, a list of interesting birds found by Dennis Carter in Cass and Pottawattamie counties in 1956 includes some interesting finds.

Among several shorter notes, one of the most interesting is the report of a trip to Lansing in northeastern Iowa by Peter Petersen. Although he was too late to see nesting Peregrine Falcons, talks with people in the area suggested that two pairs had nested that year, one near Waukon Junction and the other near Lansing. This is the area where recent attempts have been made to reestablish nesting Peregrine Falcons on these cliffs.

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Index—Volume 76

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A
Akers, Danny, Birding Clayton County, 213–217
Amana, 71, 76–85
Ames, 61–68, 70, 72, 76–86
Andalusia, Illinois, 72, 75, 77–86
Anderson, Bob, biography of, 1–4
Anhinga, 166
Ani, Groove-billed, 170
Appanoose County, 57–58, 100
Avocet, American, 24, 140, 153, 168, 197

B
Berrier, Carol, Meet an Iowa birder—Jane Clark, 125–127
Big Springs Road (Clayton County), 216
Bittern
  American, 21, 137, 167, 193, 195
  Least, 21, 137, 167, 195
Bixby State Preserve, 216
Blackbird
  Brewer's, 35, 72, 86, 95, 150, 176
  Red-winged, 34, 45, 54, 72, 84, 95, 176
  Rusty, 34–35, 46, 54, 72, 84, 150, 176
  Yellow-headed, 34, 55, 95, 110, 135, 150, 151, 158, 176, 205, 214
Black Hawk County, 100
Bloody Run County Park, 213
Bluebird
  Eastern, 30, 54, 72, 82, 94, 173
  Mountain, 173
Board of Directors meeting, *See* Iowa Ornithologists' Union
Bobolink, 17, 34, 135, 150, 176, 193, 205, 216
Bobwhite, Northern, 20, 70, 79, 90, 137, 166, 195
Book review, 217–218
Boone County, 71–73, 76–86, 99, 100
Brambling, 87, 95, 183–184
Brant, 87, 88, 159, 165
Brees, Aaron, *See* Dinsmore, Stephen J., et al.
Bremer County, 70, 74, 75, 77–86
Brookside Park (Ames) 61–68, 184–185, 185–186
Brown, Beth, biography of, 189–191
Buchanan County, 59
Bufflehead, 19, 70, 78, 90, 136, 165
Bunting
  Indigo, 34, 67, 150, 176
  Lark, 87, 94, 161, 175
  Lazuli, 67, 161, 164, 176
  Painted, 135, 150, 158, 163, 164, 176, 185–186, 193–194, 205
  Snow, 34, 72, 83, 95, 98, 150, 175
Burlington, 77–85
Bylaws of the Projects Committee, 187–188

C
Cabell, Sondra, Black Vulture in Hazleton, 59
Camp Klaus (Clayton County), 216
Canvasback, 16, 19, 70, 78, 89, 136, 165, 194
Caracara, Crested, 163, 164, 168
Cardinal, Northern, 67, 72, 84, 176
Carroll County, 69, 76–85, 100
Caster, Chris, Iowa Christmas Bird Count, 2005–2006, 69–86
Catbird, Gray, 31, 63, 67, 72, 86, 94, 135, 145, 173
Cecil, Robert I.
  Field reports—winter 2005–2006, 87–98
  In memoriam: Beth Proescholdt, 13 May 1922–10 February 2006, 108–109
  Meet an Iowa birder—Beth Brown, 189–191
Cedar Falls–Waterloo, 70–71, 76–85
Cedar Rapids, 70, 72, 74, 76–86
Cerro Gordo County, 99, 100
Chat, Yellow-breasted, 33, 148, 157, 175, 204, 207
Checklist of Iowa birds, 163–176
Cherokee, 71, 75, 77–86
Chickadee
  Black-capped, 67, 71, 82, 173
  Boreal, 164, 173
Christmas Bird Count, 69–86
Chuck-will's-widow, 143, 171, 200
Clark, Jane, biography of, 125–127
Clayton County, 213–217
Clinton, 69, 70, 75, 77–86
Collared-Dove, Eurasian, 17, 27, 71, 80, 92, 142, 164, 170, 192, 200
Coot, American, 24, 71, 80, 87, 91, 139, 168, 197
Cormorant
  Double-crested, 21, 41–44, 53, 70, 86, 90, 137, 166, 195
  Neotropic, 166
Cowbird, Brown-headed, 67, 72, 84, 95, 176, 205
Crane
  Sandhill, 24, 74, 86, 91, 109, 139, 168, 197
  Whooping, 135, 139, 168
Creeper, Brown, 30, 71–72, 82, 93, 145, 173, 202
Crossbill
  Red, 35, 73, 176
  White-winged, 35, 73, 135, 150, 176
Crow
  American, 40, 45, 54, 71, 81, 93, 172
  Fish, 172
  Hooded, 162

Crystal Lake, 112
Crystal Lake Wildlife Management Area, 112
Cuckoo
Black-billed, 27, 143, 170, 200
Yellow-billed, 27, 143, 170, 200, 208
Curlew
Eskimo, 168
Long-billed, 168

D
Dallas County, 100
Davenport, 69, 70, 72, 75, 77–86
Decorah, 69, 75, 77–86
Des Moines, 70, 74, 76–86
De Soto National Wildlife Refuge, 69–71, 75, 77–86
Dickcissel, 34, 150, 176, 193, 205
Dinsmore, James J.
Book review by, 217-218
Field reports—summer 2006, 192–206
Fifty years ago in ***Iowa Bird Life***, 122–123, 123, 187, 223
Recipient of Ludlow Griscom Award, 177–179
See Dinsmore, Stephen J., and James J. Dinsmore
Dinsmore, Stephen J.
Least Terns nesting in central Iowa, 210–211
See Hertzel, Paul, et al.
Dinsmore, Stephen J., Aaron Brees, and Jay Gilliam, Sprague's Pipit in Fremont County, 211–212
Dinsmore, Stephen J., and James J. Dinsmore, Brown Pelican in central Iowa, 60
Dinsmore, Stephen J., and Jay Gilliam, Royal Tern at Lake Rathbun, 57–58
Dove (*See also* Collared-Dove)
Mourning, 71, 80, 170
White-winged, 17, 27, 38, 88, 92, 159, 161, 164, 170, 193, 194, 200
Dowitcher
Long-billed, 26, 141, 151, 169, 199
Short-billed, 26, 141, 169, 180, 181, 199
Dubuque, 72, 75, 77–86
Duck (*See also* Whistling-Duck)
American Black, 18, 70, 77, 89, 136, 165
Harlequin, 165
Long-tailed, 16, 19, 70, 86, 89, 136, 163, 165
Mottled, 193–194
Ring-necked, 19, 70, 78, 89, 136, 165, 194
Ruddy, 20, 70, 78, 90, 137, 166, 194–195
Wood, 18, 70, 77, 88, 165
Dunlin, 25, 135, 141, 169, 180, 181, 182, 198

E
Eagle
Bald, 22, 41, 42, 45–47, 49, 70, 79, 90, 138, 167, 192, 196
Golden, 23, 45–47, 52, 71, 79, 91, 138, 167, 216
Eagle Lake (Hancock County), 109–110
East Twin Lake, 113
Effigy Mounds National Monument, 213
Egret
Cattle, 21, 138, 167
Great, 21, 55, 137, 167, 196
Reddish, 167
Snowy, 21, 135, 137–138, 167, 196
Ehresman, Bruce, Meet an Iowa birder—Bob Anderson, 1–4
Eider
Common, 165
King, 165
Eldora-Union, 74, 76–86
Elrod Sherman Park (Hancock County), 113
Emmet County, 99, 100
Empidonax species, 29

F
Falcon
Peregrine, 1–4, 4–15, 16, 23, 42, 44, 46, 53, 71, 86, 91, 139, 168, 193, 197
Prairie, 23, 40, 45–47, 53, 71, 86, 91, 160, 168
Fall meeting, *See* Iowa Ornithologists' Union
Field reports
fall 2005, 16–38
spring 2006, 134-155, 158
summer 2006, 192–206
winter 2005–2006, 87–98
Fifty years ago in ***Iowa Bird Life,*** 122–123, 123, 187, 223
Finch (*See also* Rosy-Finch)
House, 72, 84, 176
Purple, 35, 72, 84, 87, 95, 150, 176
Flicker
Northern, 55, 67, 71, 81, 171
Northern (Red-shafted), 71, 93, 143
Flycatcher
Acadian, 17, 29, 65, 111, 143, 171, 193, 201, 213
Alder, 29, 143, 162, 172, 201
Great crested, 29, 67, 144, 172
Least, 29, 144, 172, 201, 213, 214, 215
Olive-sided, 28, 63, 143, 171, 201
Scissor-tailed, 135, 144, 172, 194, 201
Vermilion, 17, 29, 161, 172
Western, 172
Willow, 29, 144, 172, 201, 209, 213
Yellow-bellied, 28–29, 143, 171, 201, 216
Fremont County, 211–212
Frenchtown Park (Clayton County), 214
Frigatebird
Magnificent, 17, 21, 106–107, 160, 166
species, 107, 160

G
Gadwall, 18, 46, 70, 77, 88, 136, 165, 194
Gallinule, Purple, 163, 168
Garganey, 135, 136, 153, 164, 165
Gilliam, Jay
See Dinsmore, Stephen J., and Jay Gilliam
See Dinsmore, Stephen J., et al.

Gnatcatcher, Blue-gray, 30, 145, 173, 202
Godwit
Hudsonian, 24, 140, 169, 180, 181, 198
Marbled, 25, 140, 169, 198
Goldeneye
Barrow's, 19, 161, 166
Common, 19, 70, 78, 90, 136, 166
Golden-Plover, American, 24, 139, 168, 180–182, 197
Goldfinch
American, 35, 72–73, 84, 157, 176
Lesser, 163, 164, 176
Goose
Bean, 165
Cackling, 18, 69, 77, 88, 127–133, 135, 163–165
Canada, 18, 46, 47, 53, 69, 77, 127–133, 165
Canada x Snow, 97
Greater White-fronted, 18, 45, 53, 69, 86, 88, 135, 165, 194
Ross's, 18, 46, 55, 69, 86, 88, 135, 165, 214
Snow, 16, 40, 46, 47, 53, 69, 77, 88, 135, 165, 194, 214
Goranson, Rita, Birding Hancock County, 109–113
Goshawk, Northern, 22, 46, 49, 70, 73, 91, 167
Grackle
Common, 35, 45, 54, 72, 84, 95, 176
Great-tailed, 35, 74, 86, 95, 150, 176, 205
Grebe
Clark's, 17, 21, 160, 164, 166
Eared, 20, 137, 166, 195
Horned, 20, 73, 90, 137, 166, 215
Pied-billed, 20, 70, 79, 87, 90, 137, 166, 195, 214
Red-necked, 20, 109, 137, 166
Western, 20–21, 109, 137, 166, 194, 195, 215
Green Island, 75, 77–86
Grinnell, 76–85
Grosbeak
Black-headed, 159, 161, 176
Blue, 34, 150, 164, 176, 192, 205
Evening, 73, 164, 176
Pine, 17, 35, 73, 159, 161, 176
Rose-breasted, 34, 150, 176
Ground-Dove, Common, 170
Grouse
Ruffed, 20, 70, 86, 137, 166, 195, 213
Sharp-tailed, 166, 193, 195
Grundy County, 56–57
Gull
Black-headed, 17, 26, 135, 142, 160, 169
Bonaparte's, 26, 74, 86, 92, 142, 161, 169, 215
California, 87, 92, 135, 142, 160, 169
Franklin's, 26, 40, 42, 43, 45, 53–54, 142, 169, 199
Glaucous, 71, 86, 92, 142, 154, 170
Great Black-backed, 87–88, 92, 135, 142, 154, 160, 164, 170
Herring, 26, 71, 80, 92, 142, 169, 199
Iceland, 87, 92, 135, 142, 154, 160, 169
Ivory, 170
Laughing, 164, 169, 194, 199, 207
Lesser Black-backed, 27, 92, 142, 169
Little, 17, 26, 160, 164, 169
Mew, 169
Ring-billed, 26, 45, 54, 71, 80, 87, 92, 142, 169, 199
Ross's, 170
Sabine's, 27, 170
Slaty-backed, 169
Thayer's, 27, 71, 86, 92, 142, 151, 169
Guttenberg, 215
Gyrfalcon, 161, 168

H

Hamilton County, 99, 100
Hancock County, 109–113
Harrier, Northern, 22, 41, 44, 45, 48–49, 70, 79, 91, 138, 167, 196
Harrison County, 100
Hawk
Broad-winged, 16, 22, 39, 41–43, 50, 138, 167, 193, 197, 214
Cooper's, 22, 49, 67–68, 70, 79, 91, 138, 167, 193, 196
Ferruginous, 17, 23, 40, 44, 47, 51–52, 160, 164, 167
Red-shouldered, 22, 41, 45, 50, 70–71, 79, 91, 138, 167, 193, 196, 216
Red-tailed, 23, 39, 41–47, 51, 71, 79, 91, 167, 197
Rough-legged, 23, 45–47, 51, 71, 79, 91, 138, 167
Sharp-shinned, 22, 41–43, 47, 49, 70, 79, 138, 167
Swainson's, 16, 23, 39, 43, 44, 50–51, 138, 167, 193, 197
Hawk watch, 39–56
Hazleton, 59
Heron (*See also* Night-Heron)
Great Blue, 55, 70, 79, 90, 167, 195
Green, 22, 138, 167, 196, 214, 216
Little Blue, 21, 138, 167, 196
Tricolored, 164, 167
Hertzel, Paul
Field reports—fall 2005, 16–38
Iowa Snowy Owls, 2005–2006, 99–101
Northern Hawk Owl in Worth County, 102–105
Hertzel, Paul, W. Ross Silcock, and Stephen J. Dinsmore, Identification of Cackling and Canada Geese in Iowa, 127–133
Hertzel, Tammy, Treasurers report, 119–122
Hitchcock Nature Center, 39–56
Humboldt County, 75, 77–85
Hummingbird (*See also* Green Violet-ear)
Ruby-throated, 28, 64, 135, 143, 171, 200
Rufous, 164, 171

I
Ibis
Glossy, 167
White, 167
White-faced, 138, 167
Ida County, 76–85, 100
Iowa City, 76–86
Iowa Ornithologists' Union
Board of Directors meeting, 116–118, 220–222
Bylaws of the Projects Committee, 187–188
Fall business meeting, 218–220
Records Committee, annual report of, 159–162
Spring business meeting, 114–115
Treasurer's report, 119–122

J
Jaeger
Long-tailed, 169
Parasitic, 169
Pomarine, 17, 26, 37, 160, 169
Jamaica, 71, 76–86
Jay
Blue, 29, 40, 42–44, 54, 71, 81, 172
Gray, 172
Pinyon, 172
Johnson, Ann
Official checklist of Iowa birds, 2005 edition, 163–176
Report of the Records Committee for 2005, 159–162
Johnson, Ann, and Keenan Zeltinger, Acorn Woodpecker in Story County: First Iowa record, 184–185
Johnson County, 100, 106–107
Jones County, 100
Junco
Dark-eyed, 34, 65, 72, 83, 149, 175
Dark-eyed (Oregon), 95

K
Kenne, Matthew C.
Field reports—spring 2006, 134–155, 158
Shorebird usage of spring sheet-water ponds, 179–182
Keokuk, 69–75, 77–86
Kestrel, American, 23, 41, 52, 71, 79, 168, 207, 214
Killdeer, 24, 71, 80, 87, 91, 168, 197
Kingbird
Eastern, 29, 40, 41, 54, 135, 144, 172
Western, 29, 144, 172, 192, 201, 208
Kingfisher, Belted, 71, 81, 93, 171, 216
Kinglet
Golden-crowned, 30, 38, 72, 82, 94, 145, 173, 216
Ruby-crowned, 30, 74, 86, 94, 145, 173
Kite
Mississippi, 22, 37, 41, 44, 48, 138, 167, 196
Swallow-tailed, 167
Kittiwake, Black-legged, 17, 27, 88, 92, 97, 159, 160, 164, 170
Knot, Red, 17, 25, 37, 160, 169
Kossuth County, 179–182

L
Lake Macbride, 106–107
Lake Rathbun, 57–58
Lark, Horned, 29, 46, 55, 71, 81, 144, 172
Linn County, 183–184
Longspur
Chestnut-collared, 175
Lapland, 34, 46, 55, 72, 83, 95, 149, 175
Smith's, 34, 134, 149–150, 175
Loon
Common, 20, 45, 74, 86, 90, 137, 166, 195
Pacific, 20, 166
Red-throated, 135, 137, 153, 166, 194, 195
Yellow-billed, 163, 164, 166
Lost Nation, 76–85
Lowder, Kenneth, Magnificent Frigatebird in Johnson County, 106–107

M
Madison County, 100
Magpie, Black-billed, 74, 86, 93, 135, 144, 162, 164, 172, 193, 201
Mallard, 19, 46, 54, 70, 77, 89, 136, 165
Manly, 102–105
Marshalltown, 76–85
Martin, Purple, 29, 144, 172, 201
Mason City, 69, 70, 75, 77–85
Meadowlark
Eastern, 34, 72, 86, 95, 150, 176, 205
species, 72, 84, 95
Western, 34, 72, 86, 95, 150, 176, 205, 217
Meredith Marsh, 113
Merganser
Common, 20, 70, 78, 90, 136, 166
Hooded, 19, 70, 78, 90, 136, 166, 194
Red-breasted, 20, 70, 86, 90, 136, 166
Merlin, 23, 41, 44, 47, 52–53, 71, 80, 91, 138–139, 168
Mockingbird, Northern, 31, 64, 72, 83, 94, 145, 173, 202
Moorhen, Common, 23, 110, 139, 168, 197
Mossy Glen State Preserve, 216
Murre, Thick-billed, 170
Murrelet
Ancient, 170
Long-billed, 170
Muscatine, 74, 75, 77–86

N
Neher, Lyle, and Marlene Neher, Green Violet-ear, First Iowa record, 56–57
Neher, Marlene, *See* Neher, Lyle and Marlene Neher
Nighthawk, Common, 28, 41, 54, 63, 143, 171

Night-Heron
Black-crowned, 22, 74, 86, 90, 110, 138, 167, 193, 196
Yellow-crowned, 22, 138, 167, 193, 196
Niyo, Kayleen A., James J. Dinsmore, recipient of the ABA Ludlow Griscom Award, 177–179
North Linn, 76–85
Northwest Clayton County, 75, 77–85
Nutcracker, Clark's, 172
Nuthatch
Pygmy, 173
Red-breasted, 30, 71, 82, 93, 145, 173
White-breasted, 67, 71, 82, 173

O
Obituary, 108–109
Oldsquaw, *See* Duck, Long-tailed
Omaha, 70, 75, 77–85
Oriole
Baltimore, 35, 150, 176
Bullock's, 164, 176
Hooded, 163, 164, 176
Orchard, 35, 135, 150, 176, 205
Orsag, Mark, Hitchcock Nature Center hawk watch fall 2005, 39–56
Osceola County, 100
Osprey, 22, 41, 45, 48, 138, 161, 167, 193, 196, 207
Ovenbird, 32, 64, 147, 164, 174, 193, 203
Owl, *See also* Screech-owl
Barn, 27, 135, 143, 170, 193, 200
Barred, 67, 71, 81, 109–110, 171
Boreal, 163, 164, 171
Burrowing, 171
Great Gray, 161–162, 171
Great Horned, 71, 80, 110, 113, 170
Long-eared, 28, 71, 81, 93, 143, 171
Northern Hawk, 102–105, 161, 170
Northern Saw-whet, 28, 71, 81, 93, 97, 143, 171
Short-eared, 28, 47, 71, 86, 93, 113, 143, 171
Snowy, 28, 74, 86, 92–93, 99–101, 135, 143, 155, 164, 170

P
Parakeet, Carolina, 170
Partridge, Gray, 20, 70, 78, 90, 137, 166, 195, 214, 216
Parula, Northern, 31, 146, 174, 193, 203
Patterson, Shane S.
Birding Brookside Park in Ames, 61–68
Painted Bunting in Story County: Second Iowa record, 185–186
Pelican
American White, 21, 40, 41, 43, 44, 54, 60, 70, 86, 90, 137, 166, 195
Brown, 17, 21, 60, 159, 160, 161, 166
Pewee, *See* Wood-Pewee
Phalarope
Red, 164, 169
Red-necked, 26, 141, 169, 182, 199
Wilson's, 26, 141, 169, 180, 199
Pheasant, Ring-necked, 70, 79, 166
Phoebe
Eastern, 29, 38, 67, 135, 144, 151, 172
Say's, 172
Pigeon
Passenger, 170
Rock, 71, 80, 163, 170
Pikes Peak State Park, 213–214
Pilot Knob State Park, 110–112
Pintail, Northern, 19, 46, 70, 77, 89, 136, 165, 194
Pipit
American, 31, 73, 86, 94, 146, 151, 174
Sprague's, 110, 135, 146, 174, 211–212
Plegadis species, 22, 135, 138
Plover, *See also* Golden-Plover
Black-bellied, 24, 55, 139, 168, 180, 182, 197
Piping, 24, 139, 168, 193, 197
Semipalmated, 24, 135, 139, 168, 182, 197
Snowy, 17, 24, 135, 139, 159, 160, 168
Polk County, 60, 100, 210–211
Pottawattamie County, 39–56
Prairie-Chicken, Greater, 20, 137, 166, 193, 195
Princeton, 72, 75, 77–86
Proescholdt, Beth, 35, 108–109
Projects Committee Bylaws, 187–188

R
Rail
Black, 161, 168
King, 17, 23, 160, 164, 168, 193, 194, 197
Virginia, 23, 109, 135, 139, 168, 197
Yellow, 23, 135, 139, 168
Rathbun Reservoir, 69, 70, 72, 76–86
Raven, Common, 17, 29, 161, 172
Records Committee annual report, 159–162
Redhead, 46, 70, 78, 89, 136, 165, 194
Redpoll
Common, 72, 86, 87, 95, 135, 150, 176
Hoary, 162, 176
Red Rock Reservoir, 69, 70, 73, 76–86
Redstart, American, 32, 64, 147, 174, 193, 203
Robin, American, 31, 40, 45, 54, 72, 82, 94, 145, 173
Rosy-Finch, Gray-crowned, 176
Ruff, 159, 160, 169, 194, 199, 208

S
Sac County, 76–86
Sanderling, 25, 140, 169, 198
Sandpiper
Baird's, 25, 141, 169, 198
Buff-breasted, 26, 135, 141, 169, 199
Curlew, 135, 141, 169
Least, 25, 140–141, 169, 180, 181, 198
Pectoral, 25, 141, 169, 180–182, 193, 198
Semipalmated, 25, 140, 169, 180, 182, 193, 198
Sharp-tailed, 169
Solitary, 24, 140, 168, 180, 198
Spotted, 24, 140, 168, 198
Stilt, 25, 135, 141, 169, 198

Upland, 140, 168, 198
Western, 25, 140, 169, 198
White-rumped, 25, 141, 169, 180, 182, 198
Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied, 28, 71, 81, 93, 143, 171, 200, 214
Saylorville Reservoir, 60, 69–72, 74, 76–86, 210–211
Scaup
Greater, 19, 70, 86, 89, 136, 165
Lesser, 19, 70, 78, 89, 136, 165, 194
Scheible, William, Brambling in Linn County: First Iowa record, 183–184
Schlarbaum, Pat, Iowa's Peregrine Falcon restoration project, 4–15
Scoter
Black, 19, 70, 86, 89, 165
Surf, 16, 19, 165
White-winged, 19, 73, 165
Screech-Owl, Eastern, 28, 71, 80, 92, 164, 170
Selasphorus species, 162
Shenandoah, 69, 71–73, 75, 77–86
Shoveler, Northern, 19, 45, 70, 77, 89, 136, 165, 194
Shrike
Loggerhead, 29, 71, 81, 93, 144, 172, 201
Northern, 29, 71, 81, 93, 98, 144, 151, 172, 216
Siam-Hopkins, 71, 76–86
Silcock, W. Ross, *See* Hertzel, Paul, et al.
Sioux City, 71, 75, 77–85
Siskin, Pine, 35, 72, 84, 87, 95–96, 98, 151, 176
Snipe, Wilson's, 26, 71, 80, 92, 141, 164, 169, 199
Sny Magill Area, 214
Solitaire, Townsend's, 74, 86, 94, 159, 161, 164, 173
Sora, 23, 109, 139, 168, 197, 214
Southeast Clayton County, 70, 75, 77–86
Southeast Webster County, 76–86
Sparrow
American Tree, 33, 72, 83, 148, 175
Baird's, 163, 164, 175
Black-throated, 175
Chipping, 33, 148, 175
Clay-colored, 33, 134, 148, 175, 192, 204
Eurasian Tree, 35, 73, 85, 96, 151, 176, 205
Field, 33, 72, 86, 148, 175
Fox, 33, 64, 72, 83, 94, 149, 151, 175
Golden-crowned, 175
Grasshopper, 33, 135, 149, 175, 193, 204, 217
Harris's, 34, 64, 72, 83, 95, 134, 149, 175
Henslow's, 33, 134, 135, 149, 156, 175, 192, 204–204, 217
House, 73, 85, 176
Lark, 33, 149, 175, 204
Le Conte's, 33, 113, 149, 175, 212
Lincoln's, 34, 64, 72, 86, 149, 175
Nelson's Sharp-tailed, 17, 33, 113, 149, 175
Savannah, 33, 72, 86, 94, 135, 148, 175, 212
Song, 34, 64, 72, 83, 94, 149, 151, 175
Swamp, 34, 72, 83, 95, 149, 175, 205
Vesper, 33, 148–149, 175
White-crowned, 34, 64, 72, 83, 95, 149, 175
White-throated, 34, 64, 72, 83, 95, 149, 175, 193, 205
Spirit Lake, 70, 71, 75, 77–86
Spoonbill, Roseate, 167
Spring meeting, *See* Iowa Ornithologists' Union
Starling, European, 55, 72, 83, 174
Stilt, Black-necked, 135, 139, 164, 168
Stork, Wood, 167
Story County, 61–68, 184–185, 185–186
Swallow
Bank, 30, 144, 172
Barn, 30, 144, 172
Cliff, 30, 144, 172
Northern Rough-winged, 30, 67, 144, 172
Tree, 30, 135, 144, 172
Swan
Mute, 18, 69, 73, 88, 135–136, 165, 194, 214
Trumpeter, 18, 69, 77, 88, 136, 165, 193, 194
Tundra, 18, 70, 86, 88, 136, 165
Swift, Chimney, 28, 40, 41, 54, 63, 143, 171

T

Tanager
Scarlet, 33, 109, 148, 175, 193, 204
Summer, 33, 65, 66, 135, 148, 161, 175, 204
Western, 17, 33, 41, 161, 175
Taylor County, 74, 76–86
Teal
Blue-winged, 16, 19, 135, 136, 165
Cinnamon, 19, 136, 165
Green-winged, 19, 46, 70, 78, 89, 136, 165, 194
Tern
Arctic, 163, 164, 170
Black, 27, 55, 109, 135, 142, 170, 193, 200
Caspian, 27, 135, 142, 170, 199
Common, 27, 142, 170, 199
Forster's, 27, 135, 142, 170, 193, 199
Least, 27, 142, 170, 193, 199-200, 210–211
Royal, 17, 27, 37, 57–58, 159, 161, 163, 164, 170
Thompson, Bill, ***Iowa Bird Watching*** (review of), 217–218
Thrasher
Brown, 31, 63, 72, 86, 94, 145–146, 173
Curve-billed, 173
Sage, 173
Thrush
Gray-cheeked, 30, 145, 155, 173, 213
Hermit, 30–31, 72, 82, 94, 145, 173, 213, 216
Swainson's, 30, 145, 173, 213
Varied, 67, 74, 86, 94, 173
Wood, 31, 145, 173, 193, 202, 213, 214, 216
Titmouse, Tufted, 30, 67, 71, 82, 173, 202
Towhee
Eastern, 33, 72, 83, 94, 148, 175, 204, 213
Green-tailed, 175
Spotted, 33, 67, 72, 86, 94, 148, 175
Treasurer's Report, 119–122
Turkey, Wild, 70, 79, 166
Turnstone, Ruddy, 25, 140, 169, 198

U
Union County, 69, 70, 72, 74, 76–86, 100

V
Van Buren County, 69, 76–85
Veery, 30, 145, 157, 173, 193, 202, 216
Ventura Marsh, 112
Violet-ear, Green, 17, 28, 56–57, 159, 161, 163, 164, 171
Vireo
- Bell's, 29, 144, 172, 201, 209, 216
- Blue-headed, 29, 62, 144, 172
- Philadelphia, 29, 64, 144, 154, 172
- Red-eyed, 29, 144, 172
- Warbling, 29, 135, 144, 172
- White-eyed, 29, 65, 144, 172, 201
- Yellow-throated, 29, 144, 172, 201

Vulture
- Black, 17, 22, 40, 41, 48, 59, 160, 167
- Turkey, 16, 22, 41–44, 48, 73, 86, 90, 106, 138, 167, 196

W
Wapello County, 70, 76–85
Warbler
- Bay-breasted, 32, 63, 147, 174
- Black-and-white, 32, 64, 147, 174, 193, 203
- Blackburnian, 32, 63, 146–147, 174
- Blackpoll, 32, 63, 147, 174
- Black-throated Blue, 31–32, 66, 146, 174
- Black-throated Gray, 174
- Black-throated Green, 32, 146, 174
- Blue-winged, 31, 65, 146, 174, 202, 209, 213, 214
- Canada, 33, 64, 148, 175
- Cape May, 31, 146, 158, 174, 215
- Cerulean, 17, 32, 65, 111, 147, 174, 193, 203, 213, 214
- Chestnut-sided, 31, 64, 146, 174, 203
- Connecticut, 64, 148, 174
- Golden-winged, 31, 64, 146, 174
- Hooded, 17, 32, 65, 66, 148, 175, 204
- Kentucky, 32, 64, 65, 66, 135, 147–148, 174, 193, 204
- MacGillivray's, 162, 175
- Magnolia, 31, 146, 174, 203
- Mourning, 32, 64, 148, 175, 204
- Nashville, 32, 135, 146, 174
- Orange-crowned, 31, 146, 174
- Palm, 32, 147, 174
- Pine, 17, 32, 66, 147, 164, 174, 213
- Prairie, 17, 32, 135, 147, 155, 174, 193, 194, 203
- Prothonotary, 32, 65, 147, 174, 203, 209, 214
- Tennessee, 31, 64, 146, 174, 203
- Townsend's, 174
- Wilson's, 33, 148, 175, 204
- Worm-eating, 32, 65, 147, 174, 203
- Yellow, 17, 31, 146, 174
- Yellow-rumped, 32, 72, 83, 94, 146, 174, 216
- Yellow-rumped (Audubon's), 135
- Yellow-throated, 17, 32, 65, 147, 174, 203, 213

Waterloo, *See* Cedar Falls,
Waterthrush
- Louisiana, 17, 32, 147, 174, 203–204, 213, 214
- Northern, 32, 63, 64, 147, 174

Waxwing
- Bohemian, 174, 215
- Cedar, 31, 72, 83, 94, 113, 174

Wayne County, 100
Westfield, 70, 74, 75, 77–86
West Mercer County, 70, 73, 75, 77–85
West Twin Lake, 113
Whimbrel, 135, 140, 160, 168
Whip-poor-will, 28, 143, 171, 200
Whistling-Duck
- Black-bellied, 17, 159, 160, 165
- Fulvous, 162

Wigeon
- American, 18, 46, 77, 88, 136, 165
- Eurasian, 165

Willet, 24, 140, 168, 198
Woodcock, American, 26, 92, 141, 151, 169, 199
Woodpecker
- Acorn, 17, 28, 67, 159, 161, 163, 164, 171, 184–185
- Black-backed, 171
- Downy, 67, 71, 81, 171
- Hairy, 67, 71, 81, 171
- Lewis's, 171
- Pileated, 28, 71, 81, 93, 111, 143, 171, 200–201, 213, 214, 216
- Red-bellied, 67, 71, 81, 171
- Red-headed, 28, 40, 41, 54, 71, 81, 93, 143, 171, 200

Wood-Pewee
- Eastern, 28, 67, 143, 171
- Western, 171

Worth County, 69, 72, 75, 77–86, 102–105
Wren
- Bewick's, 135, 145, 173, 202
- Carolina, 17, 30, 67, 72, 82, 93, 145, 173, 202, 213, 216
- House, 17, 30, 67, 145, 173
- Marsh, 30, 74, 86, 94, 145, 173, 202, 213
- Rock, 173
- Sedge, 30, 135, 145, 156, 173, 202, 216
- Winter, 30, 64, 67, 72, 82, 94, 145, 173, 213, 216

Y
Yellowlegs
- Greater, 24, 140, 168, 180, 197
- Lesser, 24, 140, 168, 180, 182, 193, 197–198

Yellow River Forest, 75, 77–85
Yellowthroat, Common, 32, 67, 135, 148, 175

Z
Zeltinger, Keenan, *See* Johnson, Ann M., and Keenan Zeltinger

CONTENTS

Meet an Iowa Birder—Beth Brown
by Robert I. Cecil 189

Field Reports—Summer 2006
by James J. Dinsmore 192

Least Terns Nesting in Central Iowa
by Stephen J. Dinsmore 210

Sprague's Pipit in Fremont County
by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Aaron Brees, and Jay Gilliam *211*

Birding Clayton County
by Danny Akers *213*

Book Review: *Iowa Bird Watching*
by James J. Dinsmore *217*

IOU Fall Business and Board Minutes
by Robert I. Cecil *218*

Fifty Years Ago in *Iowa Bird Life*
by James J. Dinsmore *223*

Index, 2006
by James J. Dinsmore *224*