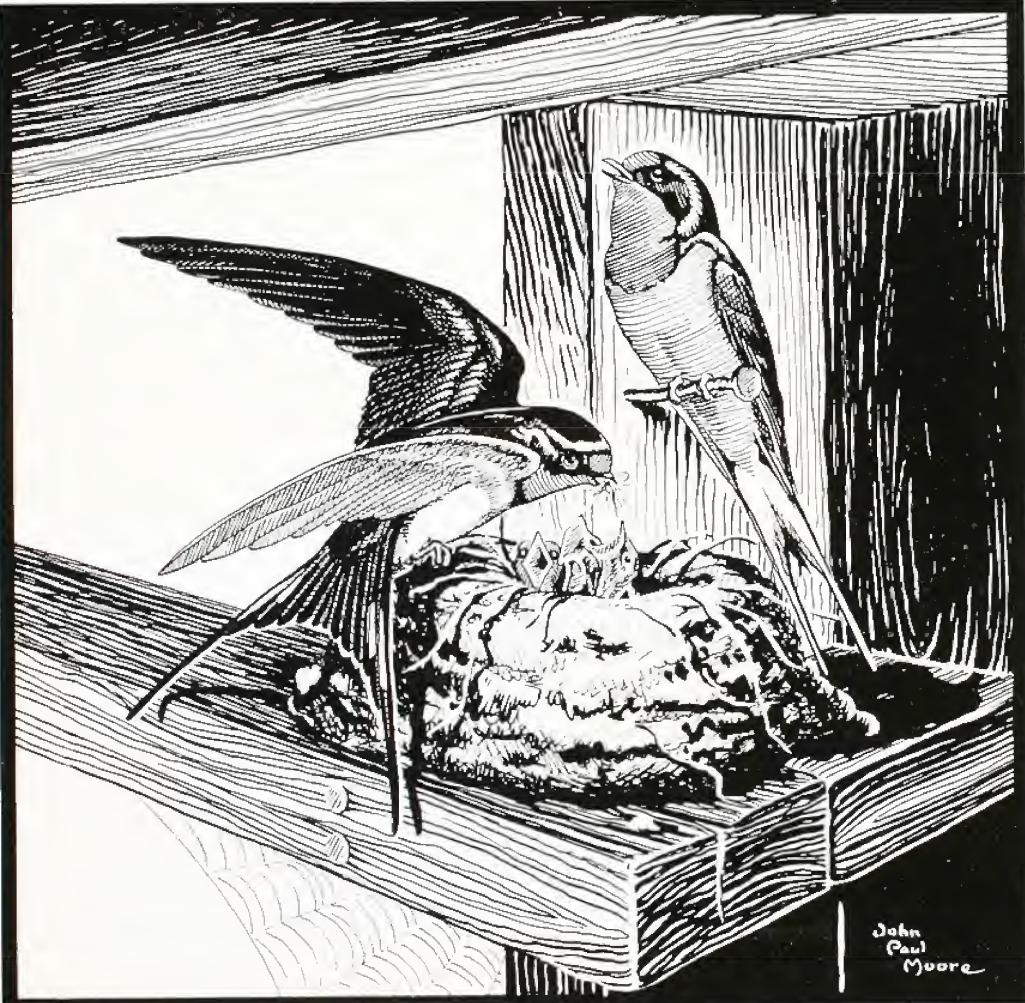


# IOWA Bird Life



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## THE 1963 CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS IN IOWA

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At least one record was broken in the taking of the 27th Christmas Bird Census when 103 species were reported from the 25 stations included in the tabulation. The previous high was 98 species listed in 1957.

The temperatures prevailing during the hours of the census may also be a record low, as those parties making the count from the 19th to the 22nd reported sub-zero readings. The five groups out during this period all had **mean** temperatures ranging from -3° to -10°; Muscatine and Union Slough reporting 0° and -5° as their maximums. Several compilers felt the weather was responsible for their failure to have higher counts while one compiler felt it was beneficial. For the statistically minded the average of all of the mean temperatures reported was 12°.

In contrast to last year, a number of winter visitants were counted this time; Goshawks from three stations; Evening Grosbeaks from five (and present during the count period at six others), Common Redpolls from five stations, and Red Crossbills from three. The Pine Grosbeak was present in Des Moines during the count period but was not seen on census day. There has also been a minor invasion of Red-breasted Nuthatches, which were scarce in 1962. Robins, on the contrary, appear not to be wintering in usual numbers, and Golden-crowned Kinglets have been relatively few. There also have been no reports of the large roosts of blackbirds (except Red-winged in Davenport) as was the case last year. Downy Woodpeckers, Common Crows, Black-capped Chickadees, Starlings, Slate-colored Juncos, and Tree Sparrows were the species seen at all stations.

At present 25 is the largest number of censuses which may be included in the tabulation. There have accordingly been selected from the reports received this number which most closely follow the rules of the National Audubon Society, viz., a minimum of eight hours in the field, and the territory censused must lie within a 15-mile diameter circle. The reports not included in the tabulation follow in narrative form.

1. AKRON (3 mile radius of Akron). Dec. 19; 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Temp. 0-10; wind none. Cold, clear, 4 inches snow. Observers (1) in 1 party: Eldon J. Bryant.

2. ALEDO, ILLINOIS (7½ mile radius centered 4 mi. S.W. of Joy, Ill.) Dec. 29; 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Temp. 0-12; wind 8-10 m.p.h. from NW. Clear 1-4" of old snow on ground, river 95% ice covered. Observers (16) in 5 parties: Bruce Bergstrom, Wendell Bergstrom, Allen Carlson, Elton Fawks, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Frink, Carroll Greer, Dick Greer, Ted Greer, Mary Lou Petersen, Peter C. Petersen, Jr., Frank Rodl, Dick Tolzman, Marjie Trial, Robert J. Trial (compiler) and Norman Ward.

3. AMES (Munn's Woods, Onion, and College Creek; several stands of pine; bird feeders). Dec. 24; 8:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp. 32 to 41; wind 8 m.p.h. from NW; Weather sunny with few clouds, and ground cover, 3 inches of old snow and streams and ponds frozen. Observers (2) in 1 party: Bob and Dick Knight.

4. BACKBONE STATE PARK (Park, roadsides to and from the park; and various localities in Buchanan County.) Dec. 25; 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 2 to 5 p.m. Temp. 20-38; wind 5 m.p.h. from S. About 5 in. of snow on ground. Observers (6) in 1 party: Mr. and Mrs. Fred J. Pierce, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Pierce, and Sandra and Vicki Pierce.

5. BURLINGTON (15-mile diameter circle, center at Flint Hill Golf Course, including part of I.A.A.P., Crystal Lake in Illinois and Lock & Dam 18.) Dec. 29; 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp. 2-12; wind 12 m.p.h. from N. Weather clear. One inch snow cover. Mississippi River 98 per cent frozen. Observers (22) in 5 parties: Mr. and Mrs. E. E. Barker, Jim Barker, Nancy Barker, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Bjork, Mrs. Jane Fuller, Freda Haffner, Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Leopold, Mrs. Harold Linder, Elaine Linder, Wayne Linder, Mrs. Anna May Lowther, Peter Lowther, Jack McLane, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Niemann, Nancy Niemann, Ted Niemann, Robert Shanklin, Jay Shanklin.

Details of unusual observations: Great Blue Herons were on frozen Henderson Creek but nearby drainage ditches had spots kept open by ducks. Pigeon Hawk was well seen and identified by size, speed and manner of flight as it flew across a weedy field. Peregrines were seen in fields south of the dam, and field marks carefully noted. Field Sparrows were seen in two places, a brushy ravine in Crapo Park, and in brush along the creek in the Wildlife Refuge. All species observed by more than one birder.

6. CEDAR RAPIDS (All points within a 15-mile circle, centered at Federal building, Clear Lake, Waterworks and roadsides to Linn Junction, Shaver Park, Marion Springs, Beaver Park, Lakeside, south along the Cedar river, Ellis Park, Rosemont). Dec. 28; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 1-20; wind 6 m.p.h. from NW. Clear to partly cloudy, ground 90% snow covered. Creeks and rivers with little open water. Observers (7) in 3 parties: Robert Cecil, Beryl Layton, Lillian Serbousek, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Vane, Robert S. Vane, Myra Willis.

7. CLINTON (7½-mile radius from Elk River Junction, as in previous years). Dec. 28; 7:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Temp. -5 to 23; wind 4-10 m.p.h. from W. Clear to partly overcast, ground covered by 1-6" of old snow, river 98% ice covered. Observers (8) in 2 parties: Larry Dau, Mrs. Ross King, Fred, Jolene and Maurice Lesher, Mary Lou Petersen, Peter Petersen, Jr. (compiler), and Norman Ward.

Details of unusual observations: Green-winged Teal a pair with male Mallard observed through 40X scope at 200 yards in excellent light (PCP, NW). Snowy Owl seen for several minutes perched and in flight (FL, ML, LD). Red Crossbills seen by all observers (except Mrs. RK).

8. DAVENPORT (7½-mile radius of Memorial Bridge as in previous years). Dec. 22; 5:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Temp. -20 to 5; wind 0-3 m.p.h. from SSW. Clear, ground covered with 2-6" of old snow, river 97% ice covered. Observers (38) in 21 parties: Steve Aupperly, Lewis Blevins, Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Cabor, Harry Carl, Larry Dau, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dau, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Dau, Dale Dickinson, Elton Fawks, Mrs. A. H. Fisher, Tom Frank, Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Gold, Mrs. Frank Gordon, Ivan Graham, Jim Hanssen, Hazel Johnson, Frances Johnson, Ted Lorenzen, Katherine Love, Mrs. Frank Marquis, Ralph Money, Mary Lou Petersen, Peter Petersen Jr. (compiler), Mr. and Mrs. Pete Petersen, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Don Price, Frank Rodl, Gloria Simpson, Kent Stewart, Robert Trial, Joe Tracy, Norman Ward, and Michael Yeast.

Details of unusual observations: Goshawks seen at very close range several times (RT). Broad-winged Hawk seen by two observers, two at close range, one calling (RT) and the other in good light (NW) with two tail bands only in each case. Golden Eagle seen good light, band on tail (EF).

9. DECORAH (Center N.E. corner Sec. 24, T99N, R8W; river and creek bottoms 60%, fields 20%, city 5%, coniferous plantings 2%, farmyards 6% and pasture 7%). Dec. 28; 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp. 5-15; wind 9 m.p.h. from NNW. Some snow flurries P.M., 1-3 inch snow cover, creeks 75% frozen, cloudy. Observers (22) in 4 parties: Mrs. Florence Albright, Vernon Bahr, Paul Cote, Mary Faldet, Mrs. H. P. Field, Mrs. Burt Henning, Mr. and Mrs. Gus Heuser, Cletus Houdek, Mr. and Mrs. O. M. Hovde, Janice Johnson, Darwin Koenig (compiler), Randall Koenig, George Knudson, Mrs. Mabel LaFleur, Marilyn Matter, David Pierce, Arnold Rohm, Delores Rohm, Roy Schultz, A. H. Taeger.

Details of unusual observations: Blue-winged Teal, Male. Definitely identified by 3 good observers at 60 feet. They noted the white crescent between the eye and the bill, the white patch by the tail, the small size, and when flushed the light blue shoulder patches. Bald Eagle, two adults, have been observed for some time prior to the count. Red-breasted Nuthatch, some have been around all fall, all field marks checked. Evening Grosbeak, they have been around town for about two weeks, all field marks checked by many observers. Oregon Junco, I noted the black hood contrasting with the brown back and pinkish brown sides, was with Slate-colored Juncos.

10. DES MOINES (Ashworth, Brown's Woods, Imp. Res., Fisher's L. Crocker, Wakonsa, Flint Acres, Sycamore Pk., Camp Dodge, Glendale, Waterworks). Dec. 28; 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Temp. 9-28; wind 9 m.p.h. from SW-NW. Clear cloudy, 3-in. snow cover, ponds and rivers mostly frozen. Observers (16) in 4 parties: A. C. Berkowitz, Mrs. A. J. Binsfield, William Boller, Mrs. Margaret Brooke, Woodward H. Brown, Ruth Chapman, Ruth Dallinger, Mrs. Lester Haskell, Joe Kennedy, Henry Kroeger, Mrs. Jay Lynch, Richard Mooney, Dr. Harold Peasley, Mrs. Harold Peasley, Mary Elizabeth Peck, Mary Ellen Warters.

Details of unusual observations: Great Blue Heron and Mallard seen near open water flowing from an industrial plant.

11. DUBUQUE (Linwood Cemetery, City Island, Dubuque's Grave area, Eagle Point Park, John Deere, and river sloughs in Wisconsin). Dec. 21; 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Temp. -14-3; wind calm. Haze to clear with 7" of old snow, river open 100 yds. below dam. Observers (6) in 1 party: Basil Beal, Frieda Crossley, George Crossley (compiler), Howard Higley, Delbert Ludwig, Phyllis Shultz.

Details of unusual observations: Gadwall in powerhouse open water with Mallards. Snipe in open drainage between two sloughs. Sapsucker, Purple Finch, and Evening Grosbeak had been visiting feeders up to and on census date. White-crowned Sparrows seen by entire party at 25 feet.

12. ESTHERVILLE (Eagle Lake, Christopherson Slough, Swan, Four Mile, Cheever, Ryan, High Ingham Lakes). Dec. 26; 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Temp. 20-25; wind 5-20 m.p.h. Cloudy-snow 0"-3" water frozen. Observers (4) in 1 party: Mrs. B. A. La Doux, Mrs. J. B. Osher and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Wolden.

13. GOLDFIELD (15 mi. radius centered at Goldfield—including Lake Cornelius, Elm Lake and Morse Lake). Dec. 27; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 12-19;

wind 12-24 m.p.h. from NW. Clear, ground 30% covered with old snow. Observers (4) in 1 party: Mike Brown, Charles McKean, Dan Oviatt, and Dean M. Roosa.

14. IOWA CITY (15-mile circle including Iowa City, Lake Macbride, Coralville Reservoir, and west). Dec. 28; 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 4-22; wind 0-10 m.p.h. from W. 4 inches old snow, rivers, ponds and lakes frozen except some open water below Reservoir dam. Observers (11) in 4 parties: Seddie Cogswell, R. L. Hulbary, Bob Kent, F. W. and Mrs. Kent, Dr. T. H. Kent, Dr. and Mrs. P. P. Laude, Dr. and Mrs. Max Pepernik, W. M. Weld.

15. JEFFERSON (Goose Lake, woods on Raccoon River SW of Jefferson, roads north of Jefferson). Dec. 29; 8 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Temp. 0-10; wind 8 m.p.h. from NW. Clear, cold, 2 to 3 inches of scattered crusted snow. Observers (1) in 1 party: John Faaborg.

Details of unusual observations: Redpolls seen in patch of sorghum next to large grove of pine trees at Goose Lake.

16. LAMONI (Roadsides, farm lands, within part of 7½ mile radius, also part of Graceland College campus and Nine Eagles Park, also 2 feeding stations observed). Dec. 27; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 15-25; wind 5 m.p.h. from NW. Partly cloudy, partial snow cover, streams frozen, roads excellent. Observers (9) in 3 parties: Madeline Ballantyne, Mrs. W. C. DeLong, Billy, Jimmy and J. Donald Gillaspey (compiler), Delmar T. Goode, Mike Silver, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Silver.

17. LEHIGH (10-mi. radius centered on Lehigh including Dolliver State Park). Dec. 26; 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Temp. 29-31; wind 12-17 m.p.h. from NW. Clear to partly cloudy, ground 50% covered with old snow. Observers (1) in 1 party: Dean Roosa.

Details of unusual observations. Goshawk seen at 75' as it flew in front of car. Seen six times on succeeding days. Ring-billed Gull observed in flight for 4 minutes. It flew over at 100'.

18. MUSCATINE (7½-mile radius of Lock and Dam 16, as in previous years). Dec. 21; 6:45 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. Temp. -20-0; wind 0-5 m.p.h. from W. Clear, ground covered with 2"-6" of old snow, river 98% ice covered. Observers (10) in 3 parties: Allen Carlson, Larry Dau, Elton Fawks, Ralph Money, Mary Lou Petersen, Peter Petersen Jr. (compiler), Frank Rodl, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Trial and Norman Ward.

Details of unusual observations: Shoveler was a male observed in good light (E.F.) as was the towhee.

19. OGDEN (8-mile radius centering on Beaver Creek). Dec. 26; 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp. 32-23; wind 12 m.p.h. from NW. Partly cloudy to cloudy, ground partially snow-covered, creek frozen except at tile outlets. Observers (2) in 1 party: Mr. and Mrs. Jim Keenan

20. SHENANDOAH (All points within 15 mile diameter circle, centering at Farragut, including Riverton and Shenandoah; river and other woodlands, open farms and prairies). Jan. 1; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 27-45; wind 5 m.p.h. from south. Partly cloudy, scattered snow patches, rivers mostly frozen, springs open. Observers (4) in 2 parties: Mrs. Robert Bordner, Mrs. F. M. Braley (compiler), Don Burrichter, E. C. Vaughn.

21. SIGOURNEY (within 15 mi. diameter circle, roadsides, county parks). Dec. 31; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 4-20; wind 8-10 m.p.h. from SW. Fair, snow on most of ground, bare in spots. Observers (3) in 2 parties: Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Millikin and Mr. Walter Voltmer.

22. SIOUX CITY (Same as previous years). Dec. 22; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 8-14; wind 5 m.p.h. from NW. Severe cold and clear, 4 in. snow drifted with open patches, most water not open. Observers (20) in 6 parties: Miss Ann Barrett, Miss Eunice Barrett, Mrs. W. W. Barrett, Mr. and Mrs. P. B. Davison, Robert DeLoss, Mr. and Mrs. Darrell M. Hanna, Howard Johnson, Mrs. Philip Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Kirkpatrick, Mr. and Mrs. George Marsh, Miss Margaret Marsh, L. J. Nickolson, Robert L. Nickolson (compiler), Mrs. R. F. Remer, Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Stiegelmeyer.

23. UNION SLOUGH (Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, 2077 acres and the area along roads from Titonka lying 5 miles east of the refuge). Dec. 19; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. -5 to -10; wind 10-20 m.p.h. from NW. Clear a.m.; cloudy p.m.; 4" snow on ground 1 per cent open water at tile outlets. Observers (1) in 1 party: John E. Wilbrecht.

24. WATERLOO formerly Wapsipinicon River Valley. (Seven Bridges Park, Sweet Marsh, Crane Creek, Plum Creek mostly in Bremer County; farmland 50%, woodland 50%). Dec. 28; 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Temp. -4 to 19; wind 15 m.p.h. from W. Scattered clouds, crusty snow cover, some open water. Observers (15) in 1 party: Dr. Myrle M. Burk (compiler), David Falks, Mabelle Hinckley, Alice Hughes, Arthur Hughes, Jeanne Hughes, Nancy Hughes, Wayne McClintock, Charles S. Moon, D. Thomas Moon, Margaret Nagel, John Osness, Lois Osness, Nick Osness, Arlo Raim.

Details of unusual observations: Three Barn Owls seen in grove of scotch pine in unfrequented area. Barred Owl and Great Horned Owl also seen here.

25. YELLOW RIVER FOREST (center NE corner Sec. 8, T96N, R3W, Mississippi River with timbered bluffs 30%, small streams with wooded hills 30%, fields and pastures 20%, marsh 5%, roads 5%, towns 5% and farmyards 5%). Dec. 31; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Temp. 0-12; wind 5-10 m.p.h. from SSE. Clear, most water frozen, 3-4 inch snow cover. Observers (2) in 1 party: Darwin Koenig (compiler), Roy Schultz.

Details of unusual observations: Blue-winged Teal. We noted the small size and, in flight, the blue wing patches. We were able to get within 75 ft. from it as it was sleeping on the water. We then flushed it to look at the wing patches. It was a female and was by two Mallards. Cooper's Hawk—we noted its Crow size, long tail and short rounded wings, rounded tail, and rusty breast. Common Redpoll—we noted the red forehead patch and black chin, streaked sides, and wing-bars.

#### ADDITIONAL BIRD NOTES WHICH ACCOMPANIED THE CENSUSES

Akron.—Birds were inactive due to the cold. Three Common Crows were picking at a lump of slush dropped from a car, apparently to obtain the salt used to de-ice the roads. Other species seen during the census period were Red-winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, Gray Partridge, Song Sparrow, Short-eared Owl, W. Meadowlark, Sparrow Hawk, Harris' Sparrow, American Goldfinch and Lapland Longspur.

Ames.—A Red-bellied Woodpecker was seen before and after the count day.

Backbone State Park.—This was Fred J. Pierce's 44th consecutive Christmas census in northeast Iowa!

Burlington.—There were an estimated 50,000 ducks, mostly Mallards, with some Black and Pintails in the area, according to the Henderson County, Ill.

Conservation Officer. Other species during the period, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Red-winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Siskin, Rufous-sided Towhee.

Cedar Rapids.—Oldsquaw, Marsh Hawk, American Coot, Common Snipe, Great Horned Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Cedar Waxwing, were other species seen during census period.

Clinton.—Golden-crowned Kinglet seen during census period.

Des Moines.—Other species seen during count period, Common Snipe, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Grosbeak, Rufous-sided Towhee.

Dubuque.—Sparrow Hawk, Brown Thrasher and Robin were present during count period.

Estherville.—Marsh Hawk, Meadowlark, sp., Evening Grosbeak, Common Redpoll, Song Sparrow were also seen during the count period.

Iowa City.—Seen during the count period were, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Screech Owl, Cedar Waxwing, Evening Grosbeak, Rufous-sided Towee (probably *P. e. articus*), Harris' Sparrow.

Jefferson.—Shrike sp. and Harris' Sparrow were seen during the period.

Lamoni.—Cedar Waxwing and Evening Grosbeak were other species. We picked a cold, chilly day and birds were not in evidence as they are on other days. Short-eared Owls are abundant here this winter; I saw 14 at once one day. On January 6 there was a Snowy Owl here on the lake. It was seen that day only.

Ogden.—I was amazed and delighted to see an increase in Downy Woodpeckers and Cardinals, and a decrease in Starlings . . . The absence of Ring-necked Pheasants stumped me, as they have been numerous here . . . Also many Meadowlarks were seen here until about a day or two before Christmas. Whether they perished in the extreme cold or moved, I do not know. Sparrow Hawk was also seen during census week.

Sioux City.—Sparrow Hawk and Evening Grosbeak were seen during the period.

Waterloo.—January 28 was marked by a raw chilling wind. The count of the smaller birds, American Goldfinches, Slate-colored Juncos, and Tree Sparrows I consider underestimated. They were usually in the husked corn fields and were hidden by the foliage.

Mrs. Harold B. Brown, Mrs. Eldon Hasbrook and Miss LaVerne Jontz on January 1 made a 58-mile trip from Grundy Center to Eldora, Steamboat Rock, and along the Iowa River to Hardin City. They saw the following: Mallard, 4; Red-tailed Hawk, 5; Red-shouldered Hawk, 1; Rough-legged Hawk, 3; Sparrow Hawk, 2; Ring-necked Pheasant, 50 plus; Mourning Dove, 4; Short-eared Owl, 1; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 2; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 2; Red-headed Woodpecker, 6; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 4; Blue Jay, 9; Crow, over 100; Black-capped Chickadee, 5; Tufted Titmouse, 1; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Bohemian Waxwing, 3; Starling, over 100; House Sparrow, over 100; E. Meadowlark, 25; Cardinal, 7; American Goldfinch, 10; Slate-colored Junco, 100; Tree Sparrow, 25.



## CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS

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See data under station in body of article      \*\*No estimate made of number in flocks seen      Total Iowa List      103

M. L. Jones, Loren Jones and Fred J. Pierce checked roadsides in Buchanan County, and drove through Backbone State Park on December 29 making the following observations: Rough-legged Hawk, 1; Ring-necked Pheasant, 4; Belted Kingfisher, 1; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 2; Red-headed Woodpecker, 1; Blue Jay, 5; Common Crow, 15; Black-capped Chickadee, 2; White-breasted Nuthatch, 6; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 1; Brown Creeper, 2; Starling, 50; House Sparrow, 50; Meadowlark sp., 4; Common Grackle, 1; Cardinal, 18; Slate-colored Junco, 20; Tree Sparrow, 500 plus.

Ron Muilenburg's first census report comes from the Hawarden area where on December 24 he covered points along the Rock and Big Sioux Rivers, Oak Grove Park, the Rock-Sioux access and other points in southwestern Sioux County. He identified these: Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Rough-legged Hawk, 3; Sparrow Hawk, 2; Ring-necked Pheasant, 18; Great Horned Owl, 1; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 3; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 1; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 55; Horned Lark, 8; Blue Jay, 8; Common Crow, 16; Black-capped Chickadee, 40; White-breasted Nuthatch, 4; Red-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Starling, 35; House Sparrow, 65; W. Meadowlark, 1; Cardinal, 1; American Goldfinch, 3; Slate-colored Junco, 50; Tree Sparrow, 12; Harris' Sparrow, 1; Song Sparrow, 7.

Mrs. Orville T. Upp covered about the southern fourth of Wapello County on December 28, listing the following: Mallard, 14; Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1; Red-tailed Hawk, 8; Rough-legged Hawk, 1; Sparrow Hawk, 5; Bobwhite, 8; Mourning Dove, 2; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 3; Red-headed Woodpecker, 5; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 2; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 8; Horned Lark, 12; Blue Jay, 15; Common Crow, 17; Black-capped Chickadee, 16; Tufted Titmouse, 2; White-breasted Nuthatch, 2; Robin, 2; E. Bluebird, 1; Loggerhead Shrike, 1; Starling, 238; House Sparrow, 215; Cardinal, 28; Purple Finch, 10; Slate-colored Junco, 88; Tree Sparrow, 104.

George and Frieda Crossley on New Year's Day again made the trip from Farley to Pine Hollow and the Forest Preserve, compiling the following list: Red-tailed Hawk, 1; Common Snipe, 1; Mourning Dove, 1; Great Horned Owl, 2; Yellow-shafted Flicker, 1; Red-bellied Woodpecker, 8; Red-headed Woodpecker, 11; Hairy Woodpecker, 1; Downy Woodpecker, 7; Horned Lark, 5; Blue Jay, 11; Common Crow, 14; Black-capped Chickadee, 5; White-breasted Nuthatch, 10; Starling, 63; House Sparrow, 251; Cardinal, 14; American Goldfinch, 5; Slate-colored Junco, 32; Tree Sparrow, 121; Swamp Sparrow, 2; Song Sparrow, 2.

## IOWA BIRD BANDING SUMMARY FOR 1963

DEAN M. ROOSA

GOLDFIELD, IOWA

Another banner year for Iowa Banders! Good migrations, a few new banders, and good weather combined to more than double the number of birds banded in Iowa in 1963 over 1962, and to increase the number of species banded by thirty-three. Interesting records of species and numbers of individuals of a species are seen in the composite list.

Some of the more interesting and unusual records are Least Bitterns by Bob Trial and Homer Rinehart, Ferruginous Hawk by Rinehart, Henslow's Sparrow by Fred Lesher and Rinehart, White-rumped Sandpiper, Dunlin, six-

teen Saw-whet Owls, Say's Phoebe, and Lapland Longspur all banded by Peter C. Petersen, Jr., Pine Warblers by Petersen and John Moeding. White-eyed Vireo in breeding season by Mr. and Mrs. Myrle Jones, two more Summer Tanagers by the Ayres' and one by Gladys Black. The American Goldfinch proved it was truly our state bird by letting itself get in the nets 724 times.

A group banding project was undertaken by some of the banders last May when we met at Muskrat Slough, near Olin, for shorebird banding (**Iowa Bird Life** 33, p. 32). Very interesting shorebird records were made as can be seen by the list. Although it was a lot of work, and while not much can be said in favor of wading over your knees in mud, it was very worthwhile. We plan on a similar project this spring, and editor Petersen will send details to banders.

It is the feeling of the writer, shared by some of the other banders, that group projects are ultimately most valuable. The closer Iowa banders keep in contact, the stronger our program will be. Working in close contact with the banding office, we could concentrate on the species where work is needed, not to the exclusion of other species, but each making an attempt to band a good number of a selected species or group of species. Such studies would also provide good material for **Iowa Bird Life**.

Following is a list of banders and the numbers of species and individuals they banded this year in Iowa:

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ayres, Ottumwa .....	73	787
Gladys Black, Pleasantville .....	65	940
Eugene Brady, Perry .....	5	6
Dr. Myrle Burk, Waterloo .....	63	572
Conservation Commission .....	15	4951
George Crane, Mt. Pleasant .....	46	203
Mrs. W. C. DeLong, Shenandoah .....	30	237
Mr. and Mrs. Myrle Jones, Bellevue .....	46	223
Jim Grier, new bander this year, student at SCI, Cedar Falls .....	36	365
Terrence Ingram, Apple River, Illinois .....	10	32
Fred Lesher, Decorah (now Minneapolis, new bander formerly instructor at Luther) .....	12	87
Rev. Kay V. Mills, new bander this year, pastor of Presbyterian Church, Goldfield .....	26	148
John Moeding, Manson .....	46	196
Robert Paulson, 2504 College St., Cedar Falls, New bander, student at SCI, Cedar Falls .....	40	944
Peter C. Petersen, Jr., Davenport .....	138	4848
Arlo Raim, Waverly .....	33	243
Mr. and Mrs. Homer Rinehart, Marshalltown, new banders this year .....	103	1596
Dean M. Roosa, Goldfield .....	53	337
Robert Trial, Aledo, Ill. ....	12	21
John Wilbrecht, Mgr. Union Slough, Titonka .....	7	416
Totals .....	172	17153

## BIRDS BANDED IN IOWA IN 1963

Pied-billed Grebe .....	11	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker .....	14
Green Heron .....	3	Hairy Woodpecker .....	29
Least Bittern .....	2	Downy Woodpecker .....	140
Mallard .....	291	Eastern Kingbird .....	7
Black Duck .....	1	Crested Flycatcher .....	15
Pintail .....	27	Eastern Phoebe .....	61
Green-winged Teal .....	26	Say's Phoebe .....	3
Blue-winged Teal .....	3794	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher .....	46
Shoveler .....	1	Acadian Flycatcher .....	14
Wood Duck .....	989	Traill's Flycatcher .....	41
Redhead .....	23	Least Flycatcher .....	65
Ring-necked Duck .....	1	Empidonax sp. ....	9
Ruddy Duck .....	1	Eastern Wood Pewee .....	59
Sharp-shinned Hawk .....	9	Olive-sided Flycatcher .....	3
Cooper's Hawk .....	1	Horned Lark .....	1
Red-tailed Hawk .....	5	Tree Swallow .....	2
Red-shouldered Hawk .....	2	Bank Swallow .....	26
Rough-legged Hawk .....	1	Barn Swallow .....	55
Ferruginous Hawk .....	1	Cliff Swallow .....	93
Sparrow Hawk .....	17	Purple Martin .....	100
Bobwhite .....	3	Blue Jay .....	342
Virginia Rail .....	1	Common Crow .....	1
Sora .....	12	Black-capped Chickadee .....	240
Common Gallinule .....	4	Tufted Titmouse .....	52
Coot .....	190	White-breasted Nuthatch .....	90
Semipalmated Plover .....	14	Red-breasted Nuthatch .....	13
Killdeer .....	3	Brown Creeper .....	44
American Woodcock .....	3	House Wren .....	97
Common Snipe .....	5	Winter Wren .....	5
Spotted Sandpiper .....	4	Long-billed Marsh Wren .....	1
Solitary Sandpiper .....	12	Short-billed Marsh Wren .....	3
Lesser Yellowlegs .....	1	Catbird .....	410
Pectoral Sandpiper .....	10	Brown Thrasher .....	189
White-rumped Sandpiper .....	1	Robin .....	611
Least Sandpiper .....	58	Wood Thrush .....	15
Dunlin .....	1	Hermit Thrush .....	62
Short-billed Dowitcher .....	1	Swainson's Thrush .....	201
Semipalmated Sandpiper .....	38	Gray-cheeked Thrush .....	71
Black Tern .....	1	Veery .....	45
Mourning Dove .....	83	Eastern Bluebird .....	96
Yellow-billed Cuckoo .....	29	Golden-crowned Kinglet .....	18
Black-billed Cuckoo .....	10	Ruby-crowned Kinglet .....	169
Screech Owl .....	7	Cedar Waxwing .....	42
Barred Owl .....	4	Loggerhead Shrike .....	30
Long-eared Owl .....	2	Starling .....	24
Saw-whet Owl .....	16	White-eyed Vireo .....	1
Whip-poor-will .....	6	Bell's Vireo .....	5
Common Nighthawk .....	5	Yellow-throated Vireo .....	3
Chimney Swift .....	49	Solitary Vireo .....	21
Ruby-throated Hummingbird .....	13	Red-eyed Vireo .....	84
Belted Kingfisher .....	3	Philadelphia Vireo .....	3
Yellow-shafted Flicker .....	82	Warbling Vireo .....	35
Red-bellied Woodpecker .....	30	Black-and-white Warbler .....	29
Red-headed Woodpecker .....	19	Prothonotary Warbler .....	2

## BIRD BANDING SUMMARY

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Golden-winged Warbler .....	3	Rusty Blackbird .....	6
Blue-winged Warbler .....	4	Common Grackle .....	212
Tennessee Warbler .....	105	Brown-headed Cowbird .....	32
Orange-crowned Warbler .....	41	Scarlet Tanager .....	5
Nashville Warbler .....	97	Summer Tanager .....	3
Parula Warbler .....	2	Cardinal .....	230
Yellow Warbler .....	3	Rose-breasted Grosbeak .....	183
Magnolia Warbler .....	61	Indigo Bunting .....	68
Cape May Warbler .....	1	Dickcissel .....	34
Myrtle Warbler .....	221	Purple Finch .....	197
Black-throated Green Warbler .....	4	Common Redpoll .....	3
Blackburnian Warbler .....	5	Pine Siskin .....	4
Chestnut-sided Warbler .....	38	American Goldfinch .....	734
Bay-breasted Warbler .....	25	Red Crossbill .....	2
Blackpoll Warbler .....	7	Rufous-sided Towhee .....	24
Pine Warbler .....	4	Savannah Sparrow .....	4
Palm Warbler .....	16	Henslow's Sparrow .....	2
Ovenbird .....	147	Vesper Sparrow .....	7
Northern Waterthrush .....	86	Slate-colored Junco .....	1853
Kentucky Warbler .....	3	Tree Sparrow .....	336
Connecticut Warbler .....	6	Chipping Sparrow .....	28
Mourning Warbler .....	27	Clay-colored Sparrow .....	1
Yellowthroat .....	58	Field Sparrow .....	72
Yellow-breasted Chat .....	3	Harris' Sparrow .....	48
Wilson's Warbler .....	39	White-crowned Sparrow .....	24
Canada Warbler .....	20	White-throated Sparrow .....	1167
American Redstart .....	49	Fox Sparrow .....	203
House Sparrow .....	68	Lincoln's Sparrow .....	101
Bobolink .....	1	Swamp Sparrow .....	108
Eastern Meadowlark .....	6	Song Sparrow .....	362
Western Meadowlark .....	3	Lapland Longspur .....	1
Yellow-headed Blackbird .....	1	Total Species .....	172
Red-winged Blackbird .....	94	Individuals .....	17153
Baltimore Oriole .....	82		



SAW-WHET OWLS BANDED OCT. 12, 1963

BY PETER PETERSEN JR.

Photo by Urban Stratman

## ARMISTICE DAY IN THE FIELD

WM. YOUNGWORTH

3119 E. 2nd Street

SIOUX CITY, IOWA

November 11, 1963, dawned clear and crisp with the promise of a fine day in the field. Our path took us to the wooded hills along the Little Sioux and Maple Rivers in eastern Woodbury and Monona Counties. Killdeer still fed in the borrow pits along some of the newer highways. Lapland Longspurs had already settled for the winter, with several dozen logged. Hawks were in fair supply with seven Red-tails seen, twelve Rough-legs counted, one Marsh Hawk, and two Sparrow Hawks added to the list.

The cedar covered areas along the Little Sioux River however, was our prime target and while the bird count was not varied it was large. We found dozens of wintering Robins and Cedar Waxwings and one Golden-crowned Kinglet. This latter bird was so pale on the head and kept so well hidden that for a while I thought I had tied my late record for the Ruby-crowned Kinglet, but patient watching finally gave me nothing but a very, very pale Golden-crowned Kinglet. The Golden-crowned Kinglet is of course the winter kinglet in northern Iowa and can be found in the fall anytime after October 1. My earliest personal record happens to be September 29, 1957, when several were seen. Mid-winter records are very common and I have several dozen of them. My coldest record is January 16, 1953, when several kinglets were seen feeding in our elm trees with the temperature a minus twenty-three degrees.

The Ruby-crowned Kinglet arrives a bit earlier in the fall, with my earliest record being September 5, 1962. In the spring the proceedings are a bit different with the last of the winter residing Golden-crowns leaving about the time the Ruby-crowns show up in force. The latest I have ever seen the Golden-crowned Kinglet in the spring was on April 22, 1943, and April 21, 1928. The earliest date I have for spring arrival of the Ruby-crowned Kinglet is April 5, 1961, and I consider this about ten days ahead of normal arrival. The Ruby-crowns often then stay through most of the warbler flight. The latest I have ever seen them in the spring was May 21, 1931.

The question seems to be, can one expect to find the Ruby-crowned Kinglet as even an uncommon winter resident in the more northern parts of Iowa. To this writer's knowledge neither the late Dr. T. C. Stephens or the late Professor Chas. J. Spiker ever mentioned in their writings of wintering Ruby-crowned Kinglets. In going over some of the work of other earlier bird students in the area I find only Dr. Jean Laffoon giving a late November record of the Ruby-crowned Kinglet. This was published in his "Late Fall and Winter Bird Records 1938 to 1941 in the Sioux City Area," **Proceedings of the Iowa Academy of Science**, 1941. It is a record of the late Mrs. W. J. Armour, a very fine observer, made on November 20, 1938, when she reported a lone Ruby-crowned Kinglet here at Sioux City. Some prognosticators tell us that the winters in our area are getting warmer by the year. If this is true then it will be interesting to watch in the coming years, the effects it might have on some of our birds consistently staying farther north in winter.

## HOMING ABILITY EXPERIMENTS WITH SMALL LAND BIRDS

DEAN M. ROOSA

GOLDFIELD, IOWA

Although we have known for over 2500 years that certain species of birds possess a strongly developed homing instinct, there is still much to be discovered about this mechanism and the degree to which it operates in different species. Some species have been known to return to the nest from over 1200 miles while other species, doves, wrens, and titmice, have been unable to return when "displaced only a few kilometers" (Welty). This gives an idea of the extreme variation of the homing instinct.

Griffin has outlined three types of homing in birds. Type I is homing through reliance on visual landmarks within familiar territory and the use of visual remarks when the bird is released in unfamiliar country. Type II depends on the ability to maintain a certain direction even when crossing unfamiliar territory. Type III depends on the additional ability, which some show when released in unfamiliar territory, to choose correctly the approximate direction to their destination. While other theories have been proposed, the above alone is mentioned as it appears to be the most valid.

In this study an attempt has been made to determine which type of ability the various species exhibit, as well as size and sex differences, effect of weather conditions, and if homing ability is more pronounced when the bird is taken from eggs as opposed to being taken from young. Seven species of birds were chosen for the study, ranging in size from the Yellow-shafted Flicker to the Yellow-throat. Non-migratory as well as migratory birds were selected, to determine any correlation between migration and homing ability.

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Homing experiments are not new. However, they have been limited to a small number of species. As this study deals with land birds, the remarks herein will be largely limited to experiments with land birds.

Of the experiments done with non-migratory birds Ruppell in Germany, released 158 Starlings from distances of 44 miles to 440 miles, of which 60 returned. The percentage of return did not show a decline as the distance increased. Loos released 16 Starlings at distances of 1.5 to 22 miles and 10 of the birds returned. Wojtusiak released 17 House Sparrows at distances of .5 to 8 miles, of which 2 returned.

In work done with migratory birds, the following experiments are noteworthy. Ruppell released seven Robins at ten miles distance, none of which returned. Theinemann transported 76 Red-winged Blackbirds 30-210 miles, 13 of which found their way back to the nest. Manwell found 25 of the 57 Red-winged Blackbirds released from two to 25 miles returned. In the family Hirundinidae, Southern had complete success with the Purple Martin, wherein he released sixteen birds, the greatest distance being 234 miles and they all returned within 25.5 hours. Gillespie found that the two Rough-winged Swallows he released from three miles and thirty-two miles both returned. Sargent, working with the Bank Swallow, found that wind had no effect on initial heading.

There has not yet been a critical evaluation of sex differences in homing studies. Manwell used all males in his studies with the Red-winged Blackbird. Wood worked with the Brown-headed Cowbird and noted the female exhibited a much stronger homing instinct. He worked with a very small number of birds, however. Manwell found the male Brown-headed Cowbird to have stronger homing ability than the female.

The percentage of return has been quite variable. Manwell had about one-third of the released birds return, while Southern had complete success in having all the birds return. Sargent had about 80 percent return from 1-40 kilometers, and 40 percent return from 40-80 kilometers. In 30 experiments involving 570 land birds, covering distances of .5 to 28 miles, 35.7 percent of the birds returned. In experiments done outside of the breeding season, returns were rarely as high as 10 percent, generally far lower. Schifferli released 84 House Sparrows and had none return from distances of 40-62 miles. Cohen and Wenkel released 152 House Sparrows at distances of 3.5 to 9.5 miles and three returned. Hilprecht transported 112 Goldfinch 130-290 miles, one of which returned.

#### PROCEDURE

The birds were largely captured with Japanese mist nets which were placed on each side of the nest and the birds flushed into them. The cavity-nesters were captured with a trigger-type cage placed over the nest opening. Each bird was carefully color marked, either with a fast-drying dye or by gluing dyed feathers to its plumage. The birds were kept in a covered, dark container while being transported to the point of release. Here they were banded and the time, weather conditions, and location carefully noted. Nests were checked one-half after time of release and at subsequent half hour intervals until the return of the birds. Results are shown in Table I. In addition to the table, fourteen House Sparrows were taken from a roost on September 25 and transported thirty miles north. None of these birds returned.

In Table 1, birds (1) and (2) were a pair and were tested simultaneously. No sex difference was noted as they returned at the same time. The House Sparrows were released just at dusk. As some were back the next morning at dawn they probably flew during darkness. The Robin (4) was tested a second time as shown by (5) and the rate at which it returned was much poorer the second time. The Mourning Dove, however, when tested a second time improved its rate, as did the House Sparrow as shown by (10).

Numbers (6), (14), (17), (18) and (19) were taken from eggs, the rest from young. All birds taken from eggs or young returned, while only one of sixteen taken from a roost after the nesting season returned.

#### DISCUSSION

Some error is possible in checking the birds' return as they are much more shy when they return and will flush from the nest more easily or remain at some distance from the nest while the mate incubates. Although nests were checked at half-hour intervals, it is possible that the bird returned and remained unnoticed away from the nest.

TABLE I

Species and Sex	Date released	Date returned	Elapsed time	Distance	Direction	Weather
(1) Robin ( <i>Turdus migratorius</i> ) F	6-3-63	6-3-63	35 min	1 mi	NE	Clr wind 5-8 S.
(2) Robin M	6-3-63	6-3-63	35 min	1 mi	NE	same
(3) Robin M	6-4-63	6-6-63	38 hrs	3.5 mi	S	Storm threatening rained after release
(4) Robin F	6-5-63	6-5-63	40 min	3 mi	W	Clr wind 11 S.
(5) Same bird as (4)	6-6-63	6-7-63	24 hr	4 mi	N	Clr wind 11-17 S.
(6) Robin F	6-7-63	6-7-63	1 hr 15 min	6 mi	W	same
(7) Robin F	6-7-63	6-7-63	3 hrs	6 mi	N	Clr wind 11 S.
(8) House Sparrow ( <i>Passer domesticus</i> ) M	6-6-63	6-6-63	40 min	1 mi	S	same
(9) House Sparrow M	6-6-63	6-7-63	12 hrs	1 mi	S	same
(10) Same bird as (8)	6-10-63	6-11-63	11 hrs	8 mi	SE	Clr wind 5-8 S.
(11) House Sparrow M	6-10-63	6-11-63	11 hrs	8 mi	SE	same
(12) House Sparrow M	6-10-63	6-11-63	11 hrs	8 mi	SE	same
(13) House Sparrow M	6-10-63	6-11-63	11 hrs	8 mi	SE	same
(14) House Sparrow F	6-10-63	6-11-63	18 hrs	8 mi	SE	same
(15) House Sparrow M	6-10-63	6-11-63	19 hrs	8 mi	SE	same
(16) House Sparrow F	6-10-63	6-12-63	36 hrs	8 mi	SE	same
(17) House Sparrow F	6-10-63	6-12-63	36 hrs	8 mi	SE	same
(18) Yellow throat ( <i>Geothlypis trichas</i> ) M	6-6-63	6-6-63	5 hrs	1.5 mi	NE	Clr wind 11-17 S.
(19) Red-winged Blackbird ( <i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i> ) F	6-6-63	6-6-63	4 hrs	2 mi	NE	same
(20) Mourning Dove ( <i>Zenaidura macroura</i> ) M	6-7-63	6-7-63	1 hr 20 min	4 mi	W	Clr wind 11 S.
(21) Same bird as (20)	6-10-63	6-10-63	2 hrs	6 mi	N	same
(22) Catbird	6-9-63	6-9-63	2 hrs	4 mi	S	Clr 7-11 S.
(23) Yellow-shafted Flicker ( <i>Colaptes auratus</i> ) F	6-9-63	6-9-63	4 hrs 45 min	4 mi	W	Ply Cl dy after rain wind 11 W.
(24) House Sparrow M	9-19-63	9-20-63	36 hrs	35 mi	SW	Clr wind 1-3 S.
(25) House Sparrow M	9-18-63	.....	.....	35 mi	SW	same

### SUMMARY

Twenty-one small land birds of seven species were tested during nesting season for homing ability. They were removed from a nest containing eggs or young, transported in a covered, dark container several miles in various directions where they were banded, color-marked and released. Data was taken on weather conditions, direction from nest, sex of bird, and time of release. Of the breeding birds, 100 percent returned from distances of one to eight miles. Sex differences, direction, time of release, whether the bird was taken from eggs or young, and whether the bird was migratory or non-migratory had no apparent effect on the homing ability. Weather conditions apparently affects some species. Sixteen birds were tested after the breeding season. Of these birds, released at distances of 30-35 miles, only one returned. The lack of success with non-breeding birds compares well with other experiments.

### CONCLUSIONS

1. Migration has little to do with homing ability, as non-migratory birds returned as well as migratory birds.
2. Weather appears to have an effect on some species, as a Robin released just before a storm took much longer to return than did Robins released during fair weather.
3. No sex differences were noted in homing ability in the species tested in this study.
4. There was no difference in homing ability between birds taken from eggs and birds taken from young.
5. Homing ability was practically non-existent in birds after the breeding season.
6. Time of day of release of birds had no effect on the percent of birds that returned.
7. Although the distances at which the birds were tested were not great, the study indicated homing instinct was present in all species tested and will serve as groundwork for experimentation the writer hopes to do in the future.

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## CONVENTION AT DECORAH MAY 15-17, 1964

This spring we return to Decorah where many of us recall the excellent warbler migration which greeted us just eight years ago. This year the local committee, which includes George Knudson, Mrs. Florence Albright, Paul Cote, and Roy Schultz, plans a full weekend. The Friday night session will be an informal reception. Saturday paper sessions will be at Luther College. Among the subjects will be the Upper Mississippi Refuge and ornithological work carried on there by Assistant Refuge Manager Kenneth Krumm; visits with European ornithologists by Shirley Briggs; the Sherman Swift Tower by R. W. Daubendick; and a discussion on bird banding by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ayres. Other subjects and speakers are uncertain at present. Full details will be available by late April.

It is hoped that the banquet program will be a film by Cleveland Grant. Mr. Grant will not be present but plans to tape record his lecture to be given with the film. On Sunday the field trips will cover the local birding areas. This wooded section of Iowa is very beautiful in spring and makes an excellent setting for a convention.

Banders will be interested in the banding weekend to be held May 22-24 at Muskrat Slough. Last year we had very good luck with shorebirds and hope to do as well this spring. Full details will be sent to all banders and others requesting it in early May. ed.

## FIELD REPORTS

After a slightly warmer than normal November, December proceeded to break most records for cold. There was little snow in most places. January was the warmest in 20 years in the central area and dry also. Winter visitors in many places were more numerous than usual: Rough-legged Hawks were frequently seen, Red-breasted Nuthatches were widely reported, and Red Crossbills put in appearances in several locations. A rare species for the state, a Parasitic Jaeger, was at Davenport and is covered in a separate note. Due to a series of delays, an interesting Christmas census taken at Buffalo Center, and reported by Tim Moermond, was received much too late to be included in the compilation. The more unusual observations are mentioned below, but the following comments do not include the census observations elsewhere. A belated report of a Glossy Ibis seen and photographed at High Lake by Fred Wolden on 23 May, 1963, has been received from Mrs. J. B. Osher.

**Herons, Swans, Geese, Ducks.** Several Great Blue Herons were seen on unusually late dates; one at Harper's Ferry on 24 November, (DP); at Davenport on 8 December, (PP); and another found open water in Des Moines and was still there on 1 February. Dr. H. J. Seyffert on 21 December saw three Whistling Swans near Buffalo Center, and a few days later what were probably the same birds. No swans have been reported on any previous Iowa Christmas census. Common Mergansers at Davenport were down with only about a dozen compared with the usual hundred or more, (PP), and there was a noticeable reduction in the numbers seen at Des Moines. At Bellevue there were 25 on 11 January, (MJ). The large number of ducks remaining at Coralville Reservoir was thought unusual, (FK), whereas the waterfowl, other than a lone Mallard found with the heron above, left Des Moines about 10 December. Two hundred Common Goldeneyes appeared on the Missouri River after the weather had moderated. (DH).

**Hawks, Eagles.** A Sharp-shinned at Sioux City was a picture window casualty, (DH). One of the few reports of a Red-shouldered comes from Wheatland, (EC). These appear to have become increasingly scarce in most places. Red-tailed have been relatively plentiful, with the exception of Decorah where they were noticeably down, (DK). Abundant all winter, (DG); seen regularly, (EC); up from last year, (Dick K.); 16 seen on a trip to Titonic and fairly numerous generally, (DH); normal, (KL); and at least as numerous as other years in Des Moines. Rough-legged were very few, (DH); down, (FK); no reports, (DK); unusually abundant with 38 on the Buffalo Center census; observed regularly after 1 December, (DG); one seen at Wheatland, (EC); and a number of January observations, (JK). A Ferruginous Hawk was reported as seen near Cherokee, (EB). One Golden Eagle was well seen near Ogden on 22 January, (JK). Bald Eagles were scattered, with three at Palisades on 4 January, and seven seen by Seddie Cogswell, (FK); three at the Lynxville Dam on 24 November, (DP); counts of 24, 36, and 75 in January, (MJ); and one immature by Bob Nickolson near Sloan, (DH). Marsh Hawk reports ranged from more than usual with 12 on 26 January, (FK), and commonly seen, (DG), to only a few, (DH), and very scarce, (KL). Sparrow Hawks were not in usual numbers, (JK), and very few, (DH).

**Partridges, Bobwhites, Pheasants.** Buffalo Center had 16 Gray Partridges on their census. Bobwhites and Ring-necked Pheasants were absent around Oskaloosa, but 15 Pheasants were seen near Newton on 19 January, (KL). Pheasants were very scarce, or at least hard to find, (DH).

**Coots, Killdeers, Snipes.** On 6 December there were 1,500 American Coots at Iowa City, (FK). Killdeers were wintering by open water and springs, (PP); two were at Elkader on 26 December, (FP); and they stayed late at Lamoni, (DG). Common Snipe also were wintering, (PP).

**Doves, Owls.** Doves were present regularly in small numbers, (DG, JK); a flock of more than 200 at Des Moines on 2 January; 10 at Ames as late as 31 December, (Dick K.); and as many as 17 at a time at the feeder, (KL). Barn Owls are seldom mentioned, but one was found at Sioux City evidently shot, (DH), and another found late in December near Davenport appeared to have died of cold and/or starvation, (EC). Snowy Owl reports were one on 9 January from Dr. P. Laude; Buffalo Center on 21 December; 11 and 12 December and 30 January into February (PP), 6 January, (DG); and one near Ottumwa Air Base, (KL). Two reports from Sioux City were labelled "vague," (DH). At least five Barred Owls are in the city limits of Ames, (Dick K.). Fred Kent on 18 and 19 January found 19 Long-eared, 6 Short-eared, and 5 Saw-whets. A flock of about 8 Long-eared are wintering in Des Moines after an absence of the species for several years. A Long-eared at Sioux City was evidently shot. Three of a group of ten Long-eared banded at Davenport (PP). A number of Short-eared are reported; 11 in a 4-5 square mile area, (DH); largest numbers in five years, with 14 at one time on 20 December, (DG); one at Jesup by Mrs. Hewitt on 1 January, and one near Waterloo on 7 January, (RH); with 8 on 5 January by Mrs. Barlow, (AH).

**Woodpeckers.** Yellow-shafted Flickers were seen on most field trips at Ames and Decorah, (DP), and frequently, (JK). There were only two reports at Sioux City, with few wintering at Des Moines. Red-bellied: common at Ames, (Dick K.), and more regularly than in previous years, (JK). Red-headed: more than usual, (FK), very few in Des Moines; 8 to 10 wintering in Lamoni. Hairy Woodpeckers are down, (FK, Dick K.), but Downy up according to the latter. The usual number of both at feeders, but few in the field, (DH).

**Horned Larks, Blue Jays, Crows.** Horned Larks in very good numbers, (PP); usual numbers, (DG); only a few scattered flocks, (DH); not many at Des Moines; and not in usual numbers at either Ames or Decorah, (DP). Blue Jays are down, (Dick K.). Several hundred Common Crows wintering near Sanborn, (DH), and a roost with 2-3,000 in Des Moines.

**Chickadees, Titmice, Nuthatches, Creepers, Wrens.** Black-capped Chickadees and Tufted Titmice down, (FK), but plentiful, (KL). Chickadees seem up in Des Moines, and in usual numbers together with White-breasted Nuthatches and Brown Creepers, (DH). A tremendous increase in White-breasted Nuthatches, (JK). Red-breasted Nuthatches; a very good year, (PP); and up in Des Moines; two seen regularly, (DG); from 2-10 seen daily in Ames, (DP, Dick K.), but only two reports at Sioux City. There was a wave of Brown Creepers in mid-December, then they became scarce, (DP). Carolina Wrens apparently completely wiped out at Davenport and Clinton, (PP), with none seen at Des Moines in several years.

**Mimics, Thrushes.** Mockingbirds absent this winter, (DG), but one at Goose Lake (Dick K.). No Robins are wintering at Lamoni or Des Moines, but several at Ames, (Dick K.). William Youngworth saw four dozen at Titonic Cemetery and there was a flock at Sioux City. (DH).

**Kinglets, Pipits, Waxwings, Shrikes.** Golden-crowned Kinglets; probably down at Ames, (DP); few at Des Moines; and generally scarce with only one report at Pleasantville. A late Ruby-crowned was at Ames 10 January, (DP). A Water Pipit was seen on the Buffalo Center census. The only Bohemian Waxwing report is from Pearl Knoop at Marble Rock with two on 4 December. There were two flocks of Cedars in Sioux City and another near Smithland, (DH), but none seen at Oskaloosa. The usual number of shrikes (sp) around Lamoni.

**Blackbirds.** Meadowlarks wintering in good numbers, (PP); in usual numbers, (DG); seen on nearly every drive, (EC); many seen near Newton on 19 January, (KL); but only a few, (DH); and scarce at Des Moines. The Davenport roost of 8-10,000 birds is double the size in previous years with 95% Red-winged Blackbirds, the balance Common Grackles, Rusty Blackbirds and Brown-headed Cowbirds.

**Finches, Sparrows.** Evening Grosbeaks: a few scattered around Davenport and Des Moines, one seen at Pleasantville, one seen occasionally at Lamoni, at Bellevue a flock in mid-December for a day or two. About 15 were still in Sioux City at the end of January, while a flock of 14 was in Decorah during December, (DK). Purple Finches: one report from Ames, (Dick K.). Common Redpolls: a flock of eight at Pleasantville; two at Ames seen, (DP and Dick K.); and one flock at Des Moines at the end of December. Pine Siskins: seen in two places, (FK), six on the campus at Ames, (DP), and one observation of a small flock in Des Moines in December. At Sioux City they are fewer in numbers or else scattered, while American Goldfinches are absent. Red-Crossbills: five seen on 26 January (FK), 15 on 31 December, (DK), and 5-10 seen on several dates in Des Moines. Slate-colored Juncos seem more numerous than usual, (FK); very plentiful, (KL); at least normal numbers in Des Moines; but few reports, (DH). Tree Sparrow reports parallel those of juncos. Harris' Sparrows: William Youngworth had a small flock in his yard, (DH); and a few, together with a flock of White-crowned Sparrows, remained near Des Moines as late as 19 January. Kent considered White-crowned to be up, with 80-100 in one day. He also had two Fox Sparrows on the late date 26 January. Song Sparrows: common at Ames, (DP); and up, (FK). Lapland Longspurs: fewer than a dozen flocks on a trip from Sloan to Estherville, (DH); 10 on

17 November and 100 on 3 January but missing thereafter, (DG); a total of 38 at Buffalo Center in two flocks, one of which also contained 12 Snow Buntings. As many as 50-60 Snow Buntings in one day, (FK).

Contributors: Mrs. Gladys Black, Pleasantville; Eldon Bryant, Akron; Esther Copp, Wheatland; Donald Gillaspey, Lamoni; Annette Haffner, Cedar Falls; Mrs. Darrell Hanna, Sioux City; Russell Hays, Waterloo; Myrle Jones, Bellevue; F. W. Kent, Iowa City; Jim Keenan, Ogden; Dick Knight, Ames; Darwin Koenig, Castalia; Keith D. Layton, Oskaloosa; Peter C. Petersen, Jr., Davenport; Don Peterson, Ames and Decorah; Fred J. Pierce, Winthrop. WOODWARD H. BROWN, 4815 Ingersoll, Des Moines, Iowa 50312.

### GENERAL NOTES

**Very Rambling Notes on Car Birding in Lucas County, Iowa**—Don't write this area off for birding—we have lots of water, four lakes the size of one mile-long and one-fourth to one-half mile wide within 3 or 4 miles of Chariton and more than 1200 farm ponds in Lucas County as well as the extensive Chariton River bottoms. All of this is surrounded by plenty of timber and rough country but well covered by roads. This leads us to our rather revolutionary plan of car birding. It isn't exactly new but we feel each year it is more popular. We do not discount the fact that a walk in the woods is better but when you do not have the time, the health or the inclination to walk, why not substitute car birding? Four pair of eyes can pick up a lot of birds and you can cover a lot of ground in a short period. Thirty-five to forty-five species can be seen on a two-hour ride in proper season. We get out early in the season to spot where the particular birds are, then as the season goes on we take out newcomers and, as a rule, you will see the birds again or can call them out. This plan makes it interesting for new people, gets them started and also give you a wonderful feeling of passing your hobby to others. To me, this sharing is the most important part of birding. No matter how expert you become, if you can't listen to the beginner you are missing a lot. Don't get too many in a car or some can't see and it will turn into a delightful ride and not many birds seen. We never fail to stress car safety. Rural roads are no place to take chances. Don't stop anywhere to see a bird if it isn't safe. Let it go and you'll be around to see it later. Never stop on the top of a hill. You can see two cars coming towards you from opposite directions but they can't see each other. In passing you they could bang head on.

A thing that helped create an interest in birds in this area the past season was the locust. They came by the millions. Oak trees seemed to be their favorite and the damage to the trees was short lasting, but very unsightly. Birds of all descriptions seemed to enjoy riding them to the ground, shucking off the tough outer coat and either eating the body there or carrying it back to their young. Many a timid bird, in nesting time, will ride a locust down to the bare road and is more intent on the locust than on watching you; thus affording a wonderful view of the bird. It is true that most of the time birds of the woodpecker family would swoop down catch the locust and go back up to a bare limb. Driving your car along the road you would come to a spot where the locust noise was deafening. Park your car in a safe place, as the birds have heard the noise too, and a good show could be seen from your car. Most all birds that compete with Starlings for nesting sites seemed to be here in goodly numbers—such as Yellow-shafted Flickers, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Great Crested Flycatchers and Eastern Bluebirds.

This past summer a young man, Tom Smith, a sophomore at Iowa U. who lives at one of our lakes, brought in a Red-headed Woodpecker with a small fish hook caught in its back just below the neck. Also twelve or so inches of almost invisible wire leader was caught under the feathers of the wings. It looked hopeless but he wanted to try removing it. I held the light and he worked patiently for 15 to 20 minutes unwinding the line and avoiding the bird's beak. He finally came to the hook—I cut it in two with wire cutters, pulled the barbed end out backwards and applied merthiolate; after which he took the bird home and reported that almost at once he was busy carrying food up to the nest in a nearby tree seemingly as good as ever.

Mockingbirds are here in increasing numbers each year. We can usually see a pair each trip out. The Western Meadowlark is also here in greater numbers. Field identification by sight is almost impossible but the beautiful voice with its distinctive liquid quality is readily recognized. This is a good point with which to open a bird conversation with farmers. They have heard it and wondered about the difference in voice when the birds look alike. I think we miss a good thing by not talking more to farmers. You would be surprised how much the birds are a part of their lives especially in the fields. They are interested and interesting to talk to as they have an ideal situation to observe birds. They know many birds by sight and if you loan them a bird book they will look you up in a few days with many birds identified and questions to ask on others. Suggest a good, easy-to-use bird book to them. Most all libraries have several copies and they can, at your suggestion, find the one they like best and buy it from a book store.

As I said in the beginning these notes are rambling and disconnected, but tell the story of a hobby for which you need purchase only binoculars and a book and your expenses will be ended, as you would probably be riding anyway. We have combined our bird study with wild flowers the last few years. It's a good double hobby. Let it be known that you will give bird talks and you will be busy. People really know a lot about birds and just need to be guided and drawn out. They will do the talking and you can be the expert. Above all start some one on birds. One couple that we have started is Mr. and Mrs. Joyce C. Tennant, Chariton, Iowa. They love it, they practice it every day they can, they feed on a grand scale and keep good records. They have gone far beyond us in all phases and are the best I know of, as amateurs, on the warblers and small birds. I read **Iowa Bird Life** regularly and feel this nontechnical article might be interesting. I also admit my wife knows more about birds than I do.  
ROBERT L. PIPER, Chariton.

**Killdeer On a Rooftop**—A Killdeer demonstrated some unusual behavior on June 26 and 27 in 1962. It ran back and forth on the ridgepole of a hoghouse for considerable periods of time on those two days, all the while uttering the usual alarm call of this bird. This building is about 20 feet long and the peak of the roof about 12 feet high. So the bird was really off the ground. They frequently come to barnlots to feed and run around on the bare ground. Upland Plovers frequently perch on fence posts and utility poles. But this is the only time I have observed any other shore bird perched on any kind of structure above ground. J. DONALD GILLASPEY, Lamoni.

**Mockingbird at Winter Roost**—For about a week in January, 1963, a mockingbird came to roost regularly in some shrubbery behind our house. Promptly about 15 minutes after sunset every night it would fly in from somewhere uttering loud smacking notes at slow intervals of JIP' JIP'. It would repeat this single note rather slowly from 10 to 20 times, then stop

entirely. It came so regularly that I could almost set my watch by the time of its appearance. After about 8 or 10 days of this it went elsewhere. —J. DONALD GILLASPEY, Lamoni.

**Short-eared Owls at Lamoni.**—This winter of 63-64 we had Short-eared Owls here in the largest numbers since the winter of 58-59. They first appeared about November 15 and could be seen daily afterwards. On December 20 at 1:30 p.m. I counted 14 in the air at one time at the local lake. On this day of zero weather they were bunched together and swirling in the air at midday. Other days of more favorable weather they would start their evening hunting about one hour before sunset. Usually two or three could be seen hunting together and frequently a marsh hawk might be seen with them. They are generally quite tame. Quite often one will remain on a fence post as an auto goes past within twenty feet. J. DONALD GILLASPEY, Lamoni.

**Rough-legged Hawk Hovering.**—In the forenoon of December 14, 1964, we enjoyed an unusual opportunity to watch this fine hawk at close range from our living room windows. One youngster noticed it and we all ran quickly to the windows. Only 50 feet above the front lawn was this hawk hovering over one spot. It must have remained there between one and two minutes. We had a wonderful view of the underwing with the large black area the size of a man's hand on each wing. This hawk is found regularly here this winter in small numbers. —J. DONALD GILLASPEY, Lamoni.

**Snowy Owl at Lamoni.**—On January 6, 1964, a Snowy Owl spent the day near the 100 acre city lake here. P. L. Cole, superintendent of the local waterworks, was first to observe it. He was puzzled by what appeared to be an unusual ball of snow on the ice out in the center of the lake. He walked out toward it and found it to be an owl, which flew to a fence post and perched. It remained on that same post for about the next four hours. Ralph Silver approached to within about 100 yards and observed it for some time. This writer also walked to within the same distance and studied it. We kept it under observation later from our house half a mile away. It could be easily studied by binocular at that distance, also clearly noticeable as a white speck on the landscape by eye only after we knew what to look for. Later in the day Carl Green observed it sitting out on the ice on another part of the lake.

It might be useful to point out that this lake has a shore line of meadow, with no trees. Such open country is probably preferred by this species. We watched diligently for the owl on succeeding days, but it was not seen again. —J. DONALD GILLASPEY, Lamoni.

**Birding in Southern Texas.** This winter my family and I traveled to southern Texas for a vacation. My main interests were over the new birds which I might find. I planned to increase my life-list as well as observe and record any interesting habits and peculiarities seen. We traveled south through Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. In Texas, we traveled the southern coastline from Port Isabel, through Brownsville and Corpus Christi, to Austwell, then north and home again.

The first new species seen was the handsome Lark Sparrow. It was on a fence-post north of Hobbs, Texas. Later, more were seen in this semi-arid cactus land. Along the way I watched for hawks and related species on telephone and electric poles. Near El Paso, I saw a very large black bird sitting on an electric-pole about one thousand feet from the road. We stopped the car and I hopped out to take a look. When it took flight I could see that it was an immature Golden Eagle. The white basal area on the tail and white ventral patches on the wings were quite evident.

The one traditional bird of the Southwest that I wanted to see was the Roadrunner. Well, we saw one, and in due respects to its name, it even ran ahead of us on the road. South of Laredo, Texas, I saw my first Sandhill Crane. There were one hundred of them feeding in a tall-grass field. From then on they were seen on the entire trip, convincing me why southern bird-lists call it a common winter resident. Another interesting bird seen, which we can occasionally see in our own state, was the White Pelican. It is a common bird, gathering in large flocks around Brownsville, Texas.

The largest mud and sand flats that I have ever seen were at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge on the coast of southern Texas. The flats extend for miles, harboring thousands of sandpipers, plovers, and curlews. If you specialized in shorebirds (Charadriiformes), this would be your paradise. A strong suggestion, though, come prepared with a spotting-scope, which is necessary in this immense area. Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge is a main wintering area for the Redhead. Here, millions are protected and safely spent the winter months feeding in bayous, marshes, and saltwater lagoons.

Wild Turkeys are common in certain areas of southern Texas, especially around the famous King Ranch. Here we saw three, adding another new species to my list. A popular summer resort area along the Texas coast is at Rockport. During the winter, the off-tourist season, one has the chance to see Pintail, teal, American Widgeon, and Coot, in great numbers. Also, the many miles of sand beaches and flats attract many species of sandpiper, plovers, and curlews. The sandpipers seem to be the hardest family to identify. At Rockport I had plenty of practice with all the fall plummages. Probably one of the most beautiful birds that I have seen was the Black Skimmer. I added this new species at Rockport, a bird found only on the east and southern coasts.

One evening while driving the beaches at Rockport looking for sandpipers, I met an avid bird-watcher, Mr. Dean, from Chicago. After introducing ourselves, he invited me to go on an early morning car-trip to look for some Roseate Spoonbills. The day before he saw twenty. The next morning we saw one, a truly beautiful bird. Besides the Spoonbill, we saw Snowy Egrets and White Ibis.

One interesting note is that he and I both on separate occasions had seen Pine Siskins, an uncommon bird at Rockport. This winter visitor of Iowa does seem to get around.

Our last stop before turning home was at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. At about nine o'clock that morning from the observation tower we saw two Whooping Cranes. They were about one-half mile away feeding on the coastal saltflats. This was the high-light of our vacation. Aransas holds an enormous number of deer. In a two hour drive we counted eighty-three (83). We also saw the Peccary (wild pig) and the armorplated Armadillo to within five feet before he realized our presence and fled.

During the entire trip I counted (648) hawks, representing eight species. Those new ones were the Ferruginous, Harris's, and Krider's Red-tail. Another unusual related species seen was the Mexican Eagle, better known as the Audubon's Caracara. It was seen at Aransas, which is its northern most limit. The entire vacation was enjoyable. I added forty-two new species to my life-list and collected some interesting notes. The winter months are generally thought to be devoid of bird-life. In our southern states, though, new species are awaiting, as well as enjoyment for those who travel there.—DONALD J. PETERSON, 714 Pine St., Decorah.

**Whooping Cranes in Iowa.**—On the afternoon of October 23, 1963 approximately 2 p.m. it was my pleasure to see two Whooping Cranes (one adult and one juvenile) land in a mowed stubble area located approximately two hundred yards north of the northern most dike of the Riverton public hunting area, Fremont county. These birds had not yet left the area at the close of hunting hours that day, however they were not in that immediate area the following day.—CARL W. MATHERLY, 6810 N.W. Beaver Drive, Johnston. (This note was supplied by Mr. Jack Musgrove who added the following comments on the observer: "This man has had considerable experience and I have no reason to question his identification. I am sure he would know a Whooper from any possibilities. He has spent many years as a waterfowl hunter in this area and is well acquainted with such large species as pelicans, swans, and others that might be mistaken for a whooper. I would regard his observation as unquestionable." ed.)

**Parasitic Jaeger in Eastern Iowa.**—An immature Parasitic Jaeger was seen on December 6, 1963, at Lock #14 Pleasant Valley, Iowa, by Elton Fawks. The bird was seen the following day by Peter Petersen Jr. and Mr. and Mrs. Don Price. On December 8 it was seen by Bob Trial and Ted Greer. It was probably seen on December 11 by Fawks. The bird chased Herring and Ring-billed Gulls making a size comparison easy. It was a little smaller than the Ring-billed Gulls and showed a very dark plumage except for white quills on about four outermost primaries. The bill also appeared finer and more noticeably hooked than the gulls' bills. This apparently constitutes the third Iowa record of this species.—PETER PETERSEN JR., 2736 East High Street, Davenport.

**Observations of the Commonplace**—I have noticed that among those of us who may be correctly classed as eager amateurs, we tend to stress seeing new or rare birds and disregard those species which are readily available for study. I will relate a few observations of mine which point out clearly to me that we might well not understand our common species as well as we may believe.

In 1962 a Robin built her nest on top of a fence post which leaned against a shed standing a few feet from the overhead tank where I store fuels for my tractors. By the time her three eggs had hatched and the young a few days old, the mother bird had grown accustomed to having me working near the nest and was not too fearful. One day as I was filling the tractor with gasoline, the mother bird returned to the nest with three meal worms in her beak. I stood quietly and watched her perch on the edge of the nest in which her three babies were soundly sleeping. Without opening her beak, she made a mewing sound and immediately three small jack-in-the-boxes raised their heads and wide open beaks as high as they could. Without a fumble, Mrs. Robin deftly dropped a worm into each hungry child and flew away. This multiple feeding trick was new to me, but I had to admit, I may not have looked very closely before.

There is an unkempt old farm windbreak near my home where I go when there is time for birding. The northwest corner is a thick tangle of box-elder, Chinese elm and honeysuckle. The growth is so thick the shade prevents much undergrowth. When I work my way to the center of this tangle the leaves overhead cut off most of the view upward but I can see about fifteen or more feet of the surrounding ground area. I have learned to sit quietly in this shaded spot with a fallen tree for my backrest and after a short time the birds will move into the area and approach very closely. Chickadees and kinglets will perch within arms reach. Ovenbirds, various sparrows and other birds work their way very near me as they

search the ground for their food. Many seem not to see me while others are obviously studying me too.

While sitting in this shady tangle I have had the privilege of hearing the warbling song of that usually harsh squawker, the Common Crow. Others have reported hearing this song but one must be close and unobserved. As I have sat quietly here, I have heard the Ring-necked Pheasants sing a soft song of apparent happy contentment as they pick their way through. They remind me of the happy but muted conversation of ladies who have finally put the baby to sleep. This song bears no resemblance to the sharp calls the pheasants usually give. —ELDON J. BRYANT, Route 1, Akron.

**Bell's Vireo in Late Summer.**—Bell's Vireo is a common summer resident in southern and western Iowa and is well known to most observers. The fact that it is a late singer is also known to many of you, but how many know this vireo as a tail-wagger when it isn't singing? Twenty eight September record for the Bell's Vireo have been made by this observer in the Sioux City area and every one of them was of course tipped off by the song of the bird. The average departure date seems to be about September 12, with exceptionally late dates on September 17 and 23, 1955. I have noticed that sometimes when one approaches too close to a non-singing Bell's Vireo that the bird will gently move the tail up and down. This is not the vigorous wagging of the water thrush, but a very gentle motion. Whether it is performed by all Bell's Vireos and can be taken as a means of identifying this vireo can only be determined by many observers reporting their observations.—WILLIAM YOUNGWORTH, 3119 East Second Street, Sioux City.

**Bird Nests — Early or Late.**—Arthur Cleveland Bent once wrote, "It seems strange that so little has been published on the care and development of the young of such a common bird as the Purple Grackle." I think this is also true about the actual nesting dates of many of our common birds. How many people have actually bothered much to determine the actual first or last nesting date of many of our common birds? Published bird books give a few nesting dates, often not from your area and nothing much more is said about it. When one is still able to go into the field and has tired a bit of recording that first or last Lark Sparrow or Chimney Swift, wouldn't it be a bit of a challenge to see how early the Lark Sparrow does nest in your area or how late a belated grackle will actually nest?

In my own case I have often found the Lark Sparrow nesting in mid-May, but it was not until May 8, 1958, that I actually made my earliest personal nesting record for this species. On this day while trying to determine if Clay-colored Sparrows actually nested in northwest Iowa, I flushed a female Lark Sparrow from her nest, which contained three eggs.

On the opposite side of the nesting ledger, just how late will certain birds nest if their first nesting was unsuccessful or if they are late nesters by habit for maybe a second or third brood? The grackle will start to nest early in April in this area, but I did not realize until this year just how late they would nest in the summer. During mid-June a pair of Common Grackles were moping about the yard and taking frequent baths, but gave little evidence of any other activity, suddenly one morning the female started to build a nest. The nest was in a deep fork of a nearby elm tree and was about thirty feet up. Allowing fourteen days for incubation, the first egg was probably laid about June 15th. On July 16, with the usual commotion of young birds leaving the nest, the young grackles left the nest. There were only two of them. Young grackles stay in the nest longer than most birds and these probably had stayed in the nest at least sixteen days.

With rapidly disappearing native prairie and woodland it should concern the interested student of birdlife to record as many little observations about the native birds as possible. Little things like early or late nestings, which have been recorded in print now, might be of great interest to interested nature lovers in future generations of Americans.—WILLIAM YOUNGWORTH, 3119 East Second Street, Sioux City.

**More Notes on Fern-leaved Sumac Seed in Robin Diet.**—On May 23, 1963, a male Robin ate seventeen of the drupes before leaving. Later on another Robin consumed thirty of the drupes. On May 24 a Robin was watched closely as it swallowed thirty-eight drupes at one sitting. Many times during April, May, and June Robins were watched eating the sumac drupes. Sometimes as few as seven and as many as thirty-seven by one Robin on June 5. An interesting sideline on this sumac drupe eating is that often a parent will pick three or four drupes and instead of swallowing them it will hold them in the bill and then fly to a young bird of their brood and stuff the food into its gullet.

The eating of these sumac drupes from the previous years crop seems to have a very definite part in the diet of the Robin. The feces from this food is stained dark blue and the seed is free of the hairy coating and are smooth and un-digested of course. From my observations it would seem that the Fern-leaf Sumac plays a definite part in sustaining bird life and maybe more of them should be planted.—WILLIAM YOUNGWORTH, 3119 2nd Street, Sioux City.

**A Gardener's Friend.**—In our neighborhood a school teacher and a couple who hybridize new varieties of iris are the kind-hearted folks who feed the House Sparrows during the long winters. The results are a brood stock of sparrows carried over to spring and then a very large crop of young sparrows.

During May when the ground is covered with the seeds of both the American and Chinese Elm trees this sparrow crop comes to the aid of the gardener. The young sparrows gather in groups of ten or a dozen and in the center will be an adult, sometimes the female, but more often the male. These adults will patiently clip the edges from the elm seeds and then stuff them down the ever waiting young gullet. This process goes on all day long and day after day. Finally the young start to pick up their own seeds and seem to feed for a period almost entirely on these seeds.

Every gardener knows the back-breaking effort to keep pulling up the new crop of elm seedlings and they seem to be a legion. Every time a House Sparrow eats one of these seeds it means one less to pull later on. Thus while we often revile the noisy, dirty little House Sparrow, he is an able assistant to the home gardener.—WILLIAM YOUNGWORTH, 3119 2nd Street, Sioux City.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Naming the Birds at a Glance**—Lou Blanchly and Randolph Jenks, drawings by Sheridan Oman—Alfred A. Knopf, New York—331 p., many line drawings—1963—\$3.95.

This book represents a new approach in field guides. One identifies a bird by color combination, first looking in the color pattern guide located on both front and back endpapers as well as two blue pages in the text. This divides birds into color pattern groups and lists the pages for each group. Upon checking the pages the user finds all species of eastern land

birds sharing the general color pattern with each being illustrated in black and white. Of course many species are shown several times as they display different color patterns. Since one is led in this manner the hair-splitting choices of a key are avoided.

For example, suppose you observe a bird with a bluish-gray back, black cap, white stripe above the eye with a black stripe below, white throat and reddish breast. The color pattern guide begins with black, so lets look under birds with black caps. You are referred to pages 4-11, and the first bird under cap black has a black eye line surrounded by white, white throat and light chestnut underparts. Further reading tells you this bird is bluish above, verifying our identification as Red-breasted Nuthatch. It is also listed under blue coloration, no wing-bars; underparts solid chestnut or brown; and gray with black eye stripe or wash. At each place you are told it is an "upside-down" bird, is usually seen in evergreens, female is lighter than the male, voice is a sharp, high, nasal auk-auk and is a resident of Alaska, Canada, northern edge of Great Lakes States and in mountains to North Carolina.

Size is indicated by three horizontal lines, one representing House Sparrow, one Robin and one Common Crow, crossed by a vertical line representing the species being described. Colors are indicated in type with lines connecting them to the sketches. Woodpeckers are covered in the section with other species and in a section of their own as they can often be recognized as woodpeckers by anyone. Ground birds, owls and hawks are also covered in separate sections and omitted from the general section as anyone can readily recognize these birds by group. The American Woodcock is included as it often is found on dry ground. By the same token it would seem the Killdeer could have been included as it often occurs well away from water.

Females are only mentioned in the text, as in the example above, and cannot be located through the color pattern guide. This is necessary to keep the book from becoming complicated. Often in the field a pair is together and the male is also seen. Fall plumages differing from those of the spring are also omitted as well as any mention of immature plumages. Scientific names are avoided, a good idea in a beginning guide. This book is primarily intended for the beginner. It even refers one to some of the standard guides with color plates for further information. It should be in every public library. Secondary school libraries might also do well to consider its purchase. Persons with bird feeders who are interested in identifying the birds which visit their feeder would easily accomplish the task with this book, ed.

**Birds of the Labrador Peninsula and Adjacent Areas**—W. E. Clyde Todd, —8 color plates by George M. Sutton and one by Charles L. Ripper—University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Ontario—819 p.—9 color plates, many photos and maps—1963—\$18.00.

This voluminous work is based chiefly on twenty-five expeditions sponsored by the Carnegie Museum between 1901 and 1958. The text includes published references pertaining to the field of the work, the distribution, migration dates, returns from bird banding and additional records adding data to the picture of distribution. Illustrations depict nineteen species in color, fifteen shown in juvenile or natal plumage. The reproduction is excellent and subjects chosen fill a void in available illustrations in many cases.

The author gives a general picture of the geography, physiography, geology, climate, population, resources, ecology, and ornithological history

of Labrador. Specific details of the Carnegie Museum Expeditions are given. Seasonal occurrence is given by listing the species in the various categories by scientific name. Species are also listed by life zones. The geographic history of Labrador avifauna is discussed as well as conservation of its bird life. The bibliography is chronological, but authors are listed alphabetically with years of their contributions following their names. A very complete gazetteer of localities and a fairly detailed map as well as the index round out this work.

This volume is a very thorough treatment of this sparsely populated area. As a reference book it is of great value. For Todd it is the culmination of a life's work. The distribution of the birds of this area is the basic theme. A recent work on another, much smaller area offered at a similar price suffers by comparison both in lack of detail and failure to treat the subject completely. Truly this volume should be owned by every serious student of North American birds and collector of regional works. ed.

**The Great Auk**—a novel—Allan W. Eckert—Little, Brown and Company, Boston—202 p.—1963—\$4.75.

This interesting novel describes the last few years of existence of the Great Auk as a living species as seen through the eyes of the last bird to survive. The author has undoubtedly done an excellent job of familiarizing himself with the life history of these birds as well as it is known. The trials and tribulations of the survivors cover a wide field, but all doubtless played a part in their demise. The chief cause of the extinction of this species was the slaughter on the breeding grounds for feathers and meat by the fishermen of Iceland.

This book would make excellent reading for high school students and deserves consideration for high school libraries. Its graphic message of wanton destruction at a time when the birds had eggs or small young is one that cannot help but make an impression on the mind of any reader. While this book is a novel the impact is greater than narrative of pure scientific facts. ed.

**A Comparative Study of Bird Populations in Illinois, 1906-1909 and 1956-1958**—Richard R. and Jean W. Gruber—Illinois Natural History Survey, Urbana, Volume 28, Article 3—151 p., many photographs and tables—Paper-bound—1963—\$1.00.

The author surveyed the bird life of Illinois in a manner quite similar to a survey conducted fifty years before. Strip censuses were conducted in various habitats in the northern, central and southern sections of the state. The total estimated population of each species was obtained as a result of both surveys. Fluxuation in many cases is extremely slight. Habitat changes and variation of habit preferences were also brought to light. Data is organized and presented in detail on both a habitat and species basis and covers winter as well as the breeding season.

While the bulk of the text is a very detailed explanation of the data, the general discussion covering the last fifteen pages provides an excellent summary. Among the topics briefly covered are specific changes in avifauna, population density and avifaunal variety, population changes and latitude, range extensions, habitats and the future of the avifauna and man and the avifauna. Those with an interest in midwestern bird populations will find this book a wealth of information. The bulk of the volume is definitely beyond the scope of interest of the casual birder. ed.

**The Peregrine Falcon**—Robert Murphy—157 p. with black and white illustrations by Teco Slagboom—Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston—1963—\$4.00.

This book states on its dust jacket that it is "a novel of one year in the life of the noblest of our birds of prey." Though it is fiction, the book gives a factual account of the life and habits of the peregrine. The author is adept at painting verbal landscapes and one can easily picture the changing landscapes traversed by Verda on her first migration south.

In Verda the author develops a strong central character. Her parents nest in the tundra land above Hudson Bay where she spends her first summer. She is the largest of the brood, the most adventuresome, the most intelligent, and the most capable. Her adventures are many and varied. Here one might find one fault with the book or raise these questions: doesn't she have too many narrow escapes; isn't she forced into too many dangerous situations? If this is a fault it does not detract from the overall appeal of the novel, for the author is showing all of the possible things that can or do happen to the bird.

This book is aimed at an adult reader but it may be enjoyed by a junior high school youngster with a good reading vocabulary. The book is a good natural history adventure and should find shelf space in public and school libraries. The private collector will also enjoy owning this volume. — Mary Lou Petersen.

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Several members have commented on the lack of personal news concerning members of the union. The editor has printed little material of this type for several reasons: lack of space; doubt, until recently, of its merit; and lack of information. The following bits of information are offered in the hope that they may be of some interest. Comments on this material and further information are welcomed. A longer note on a trip by Donald Peterson can be found in the General Notes section.

**Dennis Carter** is currently park naturalist at Zion National Park. He has been banding and birding actively in S.W. Utah and Arizona and has made some Mexican trips. This winter he participated in five Christmas counts, totaling 77 species at St. George, Utah, on December 19; 67 species at Zion National Park Utah, on December 20; 94 species at Patagonia, Arizona, on December 26; Atascosa Highlands, Arizona, on December 28 and 114 species at Nogales, Arizona, on December 30. His address is Box 267, Springdale, Utah. **Fred Lesher** has moved to Minneapolis where he is teaching at Augsburg College and attending the University of Minnesota. He has been active in the field in Minnesota and especially enjoyed the Duluth area. His address is 1234 Knox Ave. North, Minneapolis. **Dr. Martin Grant** is a Fulbright Lecturer at Pahlavi University, Shiraz, Iran. He is enjoying the near East and was able to see much of Europe on the way over. The Grants will return to Cedar Falls this summer. Their address is Dept. of Biology, Pahlavi University, Shiraz, Iran. **Mrs. Edwin Getscher** and family took a winter vacation trip to Scottsdale, Arizona. They saw few birds but did find some interesting concentrations such as a hawk concentration north of Oklahoma City containing Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, Rough-legged, Ferruginous, Marsh and Sparrow Hawks. **Dr. Milton Weller** of I.S.U. will be in South America during the next school year. **Dean Roosa** attended the North American Falconer's Association meeting this winter. **J. P. Moore** contributed the cover for 1964, again demonstrating his excellent artistic ability.

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The Iowa Ornithologists' Union was organized at Ames, Iowa, February 28, 1923, for the study and protection of native birds and to promote fraternal relations among Iowa bird students.

The central design of the Union's official seal is the Eastern Goldfinch, designated State Bird of Iowa in 1933.

Publications of the Union: Mimeographed letters, 1923-1928; "The Bulletin," 1929-1930; "Iowa Bird Life," beginning 1931.

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