

**IOWA BIRD LIFE**  
**IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION**



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## IOWA BIRD LIFE

*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life and IOU News are quarterly publications of the Union.*

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# Meet an Iowa Birder—Paul Roisen

*Robert Cecil*



*Paul Roisen at Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, Travis, Texas, 10 March 2011. Photograph by Anna Roisen*

Paul Roisen took his time getting to Iowa, but it was an interesting journey. He was born in 1950 in St. Paul, MN, the first of six children. His father, a pastor in the American Lutheran Church, felt called to the mission field. So, at age three, Paul and his family headed to France for a year to learn French before embarking for Madagascar, a large island off the southeastern coast of Africa. Paul and his family lived in the capitol, Antananarivo, where he attended a French elementary school until age eleven.

As a child growing up, Paul experienced a globally unique environment. The land of Madagascar contained lush tropical forests, arid spiny forests, odd bottle-shaped baobab trees, mountains, forests, and some of the most spectacular beaches in the world. This wide spectrum of habitat produced a unique array of butterflies, reptiles, orchids (300 species and growing), incredibly numerous newfound frog species, and the most diverse population of chameleons in the world. Madagascar, thought to have broken off from the coast of India millennia ago, is populated with much endemic flora and fauna. The endemics, most notably the fifty species of lemurs—seventeen on the endangered list—found only in Madagascar, the highly colored butterflies, and the birds made a great impression on Paul. It was this childhood immersion into a wondrous array of plants and animals and habitats that nurtured his lifelong fascination with nature. The mangos, papayas, lychees, coconuts, and sugar cane were there for virtually pennies. One of his early memories was of having taken a bike outing with other missionary kids and arrived at a small village where the natives had a lemur go up and pick fruit for them. The lemur was so humanlike as it followed directions just like human might.

Another story he remembers from his childhood was about the baobab tree. These trees, usually found in the spiny desert areas, looked like “upside down trees” with their branches being much smaller in proportion to the huge bottle-like trunk. The story was told by the natives that this was a result of God planting beautiful trees and making them grow

in this desert. The devil being very jealous of the attention God was getting came along and turned them all upside down during the night.

Paul and his family remained in Madagascar for 13 years where his father's missionary work involved overseeing the printing of all the mission's publications for the island. He explains that his early years in Madagascar as well as his other travel and his strong Christian faith have shaped his world view, making him more tolerant and accepting of different cultures.

After his family's return from Madagascar, they settled in Blair, Nebraska where Paul's father worked for a private printing company before returning to full-time service as a pastor. Paul went on to Wayne State College in Wayne, Nebraska, earning teaching certificates in sociology, social studies, and French—although commenting that while his family often had spoken French at home in Madagascar, his spelling and grammar needed a lot of work.

Paul started his teaching career at Stella, Nebraska in 1973, where his entire starting salary was \$6,200 which included coaching football, wrestling, and track. After five years at Stella, he moved on to Sioux City, Iowa where he continued teaching. In 2009, after thirty-six years of teaching he took early retirement to enjoy his family, traveling, and especially birding.

While for most people, birding leads them into photography, Paul's experience was different. On a trip to visit relatives in Norway, he took photos of wagtails and Grey Herons, although he did not know what species they were until he got back home and identified them with a bird book. He also looked for puffins but later realized he was there in the wrong season. His next birding foray was to the Black Hills, getting by with some 7x35 department store binoculars. Feeling the need to upgrade his optics and having no one to turn to for advice, he went with the "bigger is better" approach and bought some ponderous 12x50 - which he could not seem to find warblers with - for sixty dollars after discounts and used them proudly until, as he puts it, "I got optics figured out." He now uses Pentax binoculars and a Swarovski scope.

In December of 2004 he participated in the Sioux City Christmas Bird Count, going out with people "who knew what they were doing," like Jerry Probst, Bill Huser, Jerry Von Ehwegen, and Bob and Phyllis Nichols. He followed this up with the DeSoto and Akron/Westfield CBCs and the obsession was on. Being very competitive with himself and others he was off to the races. "By the next year I got pretty well known" after finding, among other birds, Garganey, Red-throated Loon, and Cinnamon Teal in Woodbury County. "You can find a lot if you go out a lot," he observes, adding that when he does something, he does it obsessively, an habit that started when he learned that "people keep lists of birds they have seen." He notes that some of the best birds he has seen he has found on his own, during his time of squeezing teaching in between his birding. He has driven "thousands of miles" chasing birds, mostly in Iowa, explaining that it would have been much easier if he had moved to a more central location, say, between Des Moines and Ames. His Iowa list is currently at 345 and his Lower 48 states list of 494 is just short of his 2010 goal of 500. Nebraska (284) and South Dakota (293) are two of his other state lists although he freely admits that he should probably not have started that rat race.

His photography is a big part of his birding, and he is disappointed when he doesn't get a decent photo of a bird he seen. He uses Canon DSLR bodies, and his favorite lens is a

Canon IS (image stabilized) 300 mm f2.8 followed closely by a Canon IS 100-400 lens. His published photos include a Snowy Plover and a Little Blue Heron on the covers of *Iowa Bird Life* and numerous other photos in its pages. He credits Jay Gilliam with helping with his photography and for sharing ideas and techniques. He and Jerry Von Ehwegen also wrote an *Iowa Bird Life* article on birding Owego Wetland (Von Ehwegen, J., and P. Roisen. 2007. Birding Owego wetlands complex. *Iowa Bird Life* 77:38–42). He has also written short notes for *IOU News* during his term as Iowa Ornithologists' Union (IOU) Vice President during 2008 and 2009. One of his greatest concerns for the IOU is lack of young members. He believes we need to work on encouraging and including young people to attend local and state outing. Using our current members to bring their children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, or neighbor kid and offering “no registration” for those 17 and younger might provide some incentive. We might even think about buying 6-12 sets of binoculars to lend them for the outing.

It was not until he began birding that he learned to appreciate the incredible gift that he had experienced in Madagascar. Just recently, Paul searched for “cheap” flights to Madagascar, having a lingering desire to visit the land of his childhood. In keeping up with events there over the years, he realizes that it will not be the same as when he left, in part because increasing poverty and population has created unsustainable demands upon the natural resources. Economic challenges have also reduced investments in transportation and public facilities, making travel more difficult for visitors and life more difficult for residents. Of great concern to Paul is that its vast forests are falling to the pressures of economic need as well as corruption—foreign loggers can offer incentives to local officials to turn a blind eye to illegal harvests. But Paul is hopeful that an increasing local environmental ethic and international concern will slow or halt the degradation, and that his homecoming will enable him to see all the life and the wonders that he didn't fully appreciate as a child. Through his photography he hopes be able to share the beauty of Madagascar and encourage other to become involved in conservation whether locally or in Madagascar.



*Paul Roisen at Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, Travis, Texas, 10 March 2011. Photograph by Anna Roisen*

While Paul's passion for birding remains unabated, his work of nine years with the prison ministry of the Prairie Hills Work Release facility is "the most important thing in my life now." He also spends time in West Des Moines, where his aging parents live and are now requiring more attention.

Paul ponders burning questions like 1) How could a pair of Harlequin Duck be in Iowa for twenty-nine days in early 2007 and then disappear never to be seen again approximately one hour before he arrived to view them?, and 2) What is up with his missing the Laughing Gulls in Iowa? He remembers arriving in Florida and headed straight for a beach. "Imagine my surprise" he grins "when I spot a Laughing Gull and yelled at my wife about this 'lifer' I was seeing. Imagine my embarrassment when I look up the beach and see five hundred or more of them on that beach alone!"

Paul plans to be involved in the IOU and be birding in Iowa for years to come, but does say he needs to move to the Des Moines area because "the west coast of Iowa" is just too far away from some of the best birding and finds each year. "Thank you Iowa and thank you IOU."

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# Field Reports—Fall 2010

*Paul Hertzell*



*Paul Hertzell*

## WEATHER

All four months of the fall season recorded higher-than-average temperatures. In fact, November was the 9th consecutive month with an above-normal average temperature. Oppressive heat and high humidity from the summer persisted into August until about the 16th. Temperatures became unstable in September with wide fluctuations continuing into October. Although the first hard freeze came early on 3, 4 Oct, the month still ended 3.2 degrees above average. It was still 75 degrees in Keokuk on 22 November.

A very wet pattern from June and July also continued into the fall. At the onset, heavy rains during 8-10 August caused widespread flooding in south-central Iowa. Rain persisted into September, which had more frequent than usual severe weather, with storms on 6, 12, 13, 15,

18, 21, and 22 September. August, September and also November all recorded above normal precipitation, but a very dry period from 26 September to 22 October caused October to be the 15th driest on record. In fact, several late October cold fronts passed through with high wind, but little precipitation. Following the October dry spell, a significant precipitation event finally occurred on 11-13 November including rain changing to snow in the northwest. At Emmetsburg, 14" of snow was recorded, and snow remained on the ground in NW Iowa through the end of the season.

## BIRDS OF FALL

### **Habitat Conditions and General Trends**

The warm, wet conditions this fall seemed to delay the departures of some species, but kept others, like shorebirds, from finding enough suitable habitat to visit in any significant numbers. Waterfowl, however, seemed unaffected, moving only when pushed to do so by weather. The season's first hard freeze at the end of the third week of October coincided with the appearance of the first Greater Scaup, Black and Surf scoters, and also the first Red-throated Loons and pockets of Common Loons. Shortly after, an enormous, record-setting low pressure system packing high winds brought in the season's high counts for Greater White-fronted Geese and dabblers like Gadwall, the first White-winged Scoters, and the first large influx of Ruddy Ducks. At the same time, along the Mississippi R, Tundra

Swan and Canvasback numbers peaked, the latter over 300,000. A later cold front on 22 Nov coincided with the passage of at least 600,000 Snow Geese in the far west.

The hawk watch at Hitchcock Nature Center in the Loess Hills had a second-best season total raptor count of 11,961 individuals. This included record flights for Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon, and 2nd-best flights for Osprey, Golden Eagle and Merlin. Also, after four straight years of recording fewer Swainson's Hawks than Broad-winged Hawks, the pattern reversed to what would be more expected for a site on Iowa's extreme western edge. At the Grammer Grove hawk watch in Marshall County flights were about average with their 13th highest raptor total in 21 years of operation. At both hawk watches, peak flights for Red-tailed Hawks and American Kestrels occurred in conjunction with the huge, late-October low pressure system.

Shorebirds were not so happy with Iowa's weather. The very wet conditions of late summer and early fall caused high water at most lakes, marshes and rivers, reducing shorebird habitat. Many traditional sites had few, if any shorebirds, and statewide numbers were considerably below what is typical. Some of the better locations were at transient sheet water sites. Two such sites in Humboldt County produced the season's high counts (all below normal) of nine different species – Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Solitary Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, and Wilson's Phalarope. Statewide, there were only single reports of Short-billed Dowitcher and Upland Sandpiper, and only two reports of Willets. After things dried out in October, people began to find a few late-lingering shorebirds. A Red-necked Phalarope was 2nd-latest, and Semipalmated and Pectoral sandpipers occurred on third-latest dates.

Also lingering to latest dates were a Little Blue Heron in Page County and a Sora in Emmet County, and a Snowy Egret was 2nd-latest in Fremont County. Two unprecedented November sightings of an ibis species could not have been the same bird, since one was in Allamakee County on the Mississippi River and the other was in the Loess Hills of Pottawattamie County.

Shorebirds were not the only ones with low numbers. In stark contrast to last fall, Red-headed Woodpecker movements at the Hitchcock NC hawk watch in the Loess Hills were nearly invisible, with the peak of 31 far below the 521 in 2009 or the 880 in 2008. Mark Orsag wrote "It is really hard to convey just how bad that peak count was". Indeed, the peak counts of many songbirds were low or unrecognizable. The most Eastern Kingbirds counted in a day at the height of migration was a mere 60; nobody reported any large groups of Purple Martins; 6 Golden-crowned Kinglets was the most, as was 20 Ruby-crowned Kinglets, 3 Eastern Bluebirds, and 15 Purple Finches. But songbird diversity was still good and the migration was punctuated with late lingering birds. Seven species stayed to record-late dates, including Willow Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, White-eyed Vireo, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Mourning Warbler, Summer Tanager, and Scarlet Tanager. Three others, Blue-winged Warbler, Kentucky Warbler and Blue Grosbeak, were found on 2nd or 3rd-latest dates.

### Unusual Species

The records committee acted to accept 22 documentations from this fall, including



11 accidental species and one species new to Iowa. By comparison, last fall there were two accidental species recorded. The new species was an Anna's Hummingbird noticed by Aaron Brees at his back yard feeder. Also found were two Rufous Hummingbirds, both at rural farmsteads of longtime IOU members. At wetlands around the state, people found a Black-bellied Whistling Duck, three Neotropical Cormorants, a Glossy Ibis, and two Red Phalaropes. Although no Black-headed Gulls were found at Spirit Lake this fall, gull diversity was otherwise good and included two Black-legged Kittiwakes, three Laughing Gulls, a Mew Gull, a California Gull and two Parasitic Jaegers, the first since 1995. Iowa's third Arctic Tern was found in November, and the state's fourth Lewis's Woodpecker was found in October.

#### 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: **A** = area, **L** = lake, **M** = marsh, **m.ob.** = many observers, **NA** = nature area, **NM** = National Monument, **NWR** = national wildlife refuge, **P** = park, **R** = river, **RA** = recreation area, **Res** = reservoir, **SF** = state forest, **SI** = slough, **SP** = state park, **USNWR** = Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, **WPA** = waterfowl production area, **WA** = wildlife area.

#### BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING DUCK:

A single bird was photographed 12 Aug at Lake Rathbun *Appanoose* (\*Jeff Telleen).

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** Suddenly appeared on 16 Oct in three different counties – 60 in *Story* (WO), 10 in *Polk* (SJD), and 7 in *Bremer* (DE). The most was 1300 on 28 Oct in *Pottawattamie* (MO). On 27 Nov, there were still 7 at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD).

**Snow Goose:** Following 3 isolated singles found in Aug and early Sep (SJD, DA), the first migrant flocks appeared in the far west on 28 Oct with 1000 in *Woodbury* (GLV) and 4400 at Hitchcock NC in *Pottawattamie* (MO). Another 7400 were counted at Hitchcock 13 Nov, but the main event was the approximately 600,000 esti-

mated to pass the tower 22 Nov. "The geese were like clouds, everywhere we looked for hours at a time." (JT) The next day, 47,000 more followed, and another 10,000 were at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* (USFWS). The high count away from the Missouri R valley was 400 at Saylorville *Polk* 13 Nov (CG).

**Ross's Goose:** Only small pockets were reported from 10 widely scattered counties. Some high counts were 7 on 19 Nov at Saylorville *Polk* (SJD), 7 on 22 Nov at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (LJP, BKP), 11 on 26 Nov at Little Wall L *Hamilton* (SJD), and the final group of 23 on 30 Nov at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* (MO).

**Cackling Goose:** A single in with *B. c. maxima* on 23 Sep in Ames may have spent the summer there (SJD). The first migrants appeared 4 Oct in the north when 710 were counted in multiple flocks in *Cerro Gordo* (PH). Other high counts were 300 on 3 Nov in *Kossuth* (MCK), 381 on 29 Nov at Ada Hayden P *Story* (SJD), and 610 on 28 Nov at Roberts Creek P *Marion* (AB).

**Canada Goose:** The first noisy *B. c. interior* migrants were a flock of 68 at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* 23 Sep (PH).

**Mute Swan:** One of uncertain origin was at Rock Creek SP *Jasper* 16-31 Oct (JG, CRE, JN, MP). Another was at Rapp P *Page* 26 Nov (KD).

**Trumpeter Swan:** After a high of 41 nest attempts during summer (Dinsmore

2010), family groups were reported in *Black Hawk*, *Cass*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Polk* and *Page* (MaP, DE, SJD, KD, JG, PH).

**Tundra Swan:** USFWS aerial surveys along the Mississippi R first encountered large migrant groups on 1 Nov at Pool #9 *Allamakee*. The high count of 2830 occurred there on 23 Nov. The only report away from the Mississippi R, was up to 13 at Saylorville *Polk* 20 Nov (JG-details, AB-details).

**Wood Duck:** High counts: In the east there were 3530 on 25 Oct at Pool #13 *Clinton* (USFWS); in the west there were 500 on 22 Sep at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* (USFWS).

**Gadwall:** A brood was at Coulter M *Franklin* 12 Aug (SJD). The peak movements occurred 28 Oct–1 Nov with 3200 at Saylorville *Polk* (AB, SJD), 4300 at Pool #9 *Allamakee* (USFWS), and 11,300 at Pool #13 *Clinton* (USFWS). The last large concentration was 1740 at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* 17 Nov (USFWS).

**American Wigeon:** After no summer reports, the first 2 were at Moeckley Prairie *Polk* 9 Sep (SJD). Peaks were early in the east with 6050 at Pool #9 *Allamakee* 27 Sep (USFWS), and late in the west with 2100 at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* 10 Nov (USFWS).

**American Black Duck:** The first was 1 on 28 Oct at Little Wall L *Hamilton* (CG). Large groups occurred only along the Mississippi R where the peak was 370 at Pool #13 *Clinton* 29 Nov (USFWS). There were no reports west of *Webster* where 1 was at Brushy Creek RA 26 Nov (SJD).

**Blue-winged Teal:** Peaked at Saylorville *Polk* on 18 Sep when 5370 were counted there (SJD). 2200 were still at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* 28 Oct (USFWS).

**Northern Shoveler:** The first large gathering was 250 at Runnels WA *Polk* 26 Sep (JS). The peak was 650 at Saylorville 23 Oct (SJD).

**Northern Pintail:** Peaked along the Mississippi R with 6650 on 1 Nov at Pool #13 *Clinton* (USFWS), and along the Missouri R with 3575 on 10 Nov at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* (USFWS). In central Iowa, 1644 were at Red Rock *Marion* 23 Oct (SJD).

**Green-winged Teal:** A female with brood was found near Coulter M *Franklin* 6 Aug (SJD). Numbers began to gather in late October. High counts were 2900 in the east 1 Nov at Pool #13 *Clinton* (USFWS), 2022 in the central 23 Oct at Red Rock *Marion* (SJD), and 3400 in the west 10 Nov at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* (USFWS).

**Canvasback:** The first big numbers along the Mississippi R occurred 12 Oct at Pool #9 *Allamakee* when 15,400 were counted by aerial survey (USFWS). Peaked there 1 Nov with 330,055 estimated (USFWS).

**Redhead:** The first group was 53 on 14 Oct at Saylorville *Polk* (SJD). Peaked along the Mississippi R on 8 Nov with 600 at Pool #9 *Allamakee* (USFWS).

**Ring-necked Duck:** High count was 2300 on 8 Nov at Pool #13 *Clinton* (USFWS).

**Greater Scaup:** 54 at Spirit L *Dickinson* 31 Oct increased to 73 by 14 Nov (SJD, ET). Otherwise reported in very small numbers from 5 counties.

**Lesser Scaup:** Peaked in early November. At Pool #9 *Allamakee*, 39,700 on 1 Nov decreased only slightly to 34,055 by 8 Nov (USFWS). In the middle part of the state, 3860 were at Saylorville *Polk* 13 Nov (AB).

**Surf Scoter:** The first 3 appeared at Little Wall L *Hamilton* 18–20 Oct (CG, SJD). A season total of 12 individuals, all fem/imm, was the lowest since 2004. The most was 6 at Red Rock Res *Marion* 24 Oct (SJD, JB).

**White-winged Scoter:** The first was a juv at Saylorville *Polk* 30 Oct (SJD). 7 individuals including 1 adult male was about the 10-year seasonal average. Except for 2 at Cedar L *Linn* 13 Nov (DP), all were singles.

**Black Scoter:** The first 2 were on the Mississippi R *Scott* 22 Oct (WMZ). The season total of 24 individuals was the second-highest in the 30 years for which I have records, and more than twice the average over the last 10 years. Groups of 4 were at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* 5-13 Nov (CG, CJF), Trumbull L *Clay* 31 Oct (SJD), and there were up to 5 at a time at Saylorville Res *Polk* 29 Oct-19 Nov (mob).

**Long-tailed Duck:** The first appeared at Little Wall L *Hamilton* 18 Nov (CG) a few days after the first major snow. All others: up to 5 at Saylorville *Polk* 19-26 Nov (SJD, JB, AB, JG, DTh), and 1 at Red Rock *Marion* 21 Nov (SJD).

**Bufflehead:** After no summer reports, the first was 1 at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* 17 Oct (CG). The peak of 9660 at Pool #9 *Allamakee* along the Mississippi R on 1 Nov was a possible Midwest record count (USFWS). The most away from the river was 459 at Red Rock *Marion* 20 Nov (AB).

**Common Goldeneye:** By 1 Nov, 500 were at Pool #9 *Allamakee*, and peaked there at 2245 on 15 Nov (USFWS). 218 were still at L *Macbride Johnson* 27 Nov (SJD).

**Hooded Merganser:** Following the first major snow of the season, 126 found their way to Saylorville *Polk* 18 Nov (DTh), and peaked there at 160 a week later (RLC).

**Common Merganser:** The first was at Industrial Park L *Black Hawk* 13 Nov (DE). The peak at Saylorville *Polk* was 443 on 27 Nov (SJD, AB).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** The first was 1 on 20 Oct at Little Wall L *Hamilton*

(SJD). Most was 102 at Red Rock *Marion* 27 Nov (SJD).

**Ruddy Duck:** After seven isolated summer reports (Dinsmore 2010), a brood was found 12 Aug at Coulter M *Franklin* (SJD). Large rafts were first noticed with 769 on 29 Oct at Saylorville *Polk* (SJD), and 580 on 1 Nov at Pool #9 *Allamakee* (USFWS). Highest count was 3200 at Pool #13 *Clinton* 15-23 Nov (USFWS).

**Northern Bobwhite:** There were two reports, from *Appanoose* and *Ringgold* along the Missouri border (JB, RLC). Iowa DNR roadside surveys conducted during the month of August recorded a 70% decrease over 2009 survey numbers.

**Gray Partridge:** A family group of 8 was found 8 Aug in *Kossuth* (MCK), and another group of 11 was seen in *Bremer* 29 Nov (DK). Also reported from *Hancock*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Hamilton* and *Story* (RG, WO, SJD).

**Ring-necked Pheasant:** DNR Roadside Surveys conducted in August detected pheasants at the lowest rate since the surveys began.

**Ruffed Grouse:** The only report was 1 on 17 Aug in *Winneshiek* (DK).

**Greater Prairie-Chicken:** If anyone visited the lek in *Ringgold*, they didn't report what they found. At the IOU Fall Meeting in *Jasper*, DNR biologist Stephanie Shepherd confirmed that the birds are persisting, but a recent genetic study of this population suggests that inbreeding may be threatening its sustainability.

**Wild Turkey:** Broods were found in *Ida*, *Howard* and *Decatur* (SJD). The most was 255 counted at DeSoto NWR *Harrison* 23 Nov (USFWS).

**Red-throated Loon:** There were three juveniles found—1 on 23, 24 Oct at Red Rock Res *Marion* (SJD, JB), another at Lost Island L *Palo Alto* 31 Oct (SJD), and a third at Red Rock 27, 28 Nov (SJD, AB, JG).

**Pacific Loon:** Five matched the historical season high set in 1995: 1 at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* 30 Oct–7 Nov (PH, CFJ, CG), 1 at Spirit L *Dickinson* 31 Oct (SJD), 1 at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 31 Oct–2 Nov (KD, LJP, BKP), and 2 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 20, 21 Nov (JG, AB, SJD).

**Common Loon:** Singles were found as early as mid-Sep, but the migrant groups weren't noticed until the fourth week of Oct at Saylorville *Polk*, Red Rock *Marion* and Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (JG, JB, PH). Peaked on 20, 21 Nov at both Saylorville and Red Rock Res with totals less than 90 at each location (m.ob.).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** Family groups with small juveniles were still being found in Aug (RG, JB). The peak count was 105 on 18 Sep at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD).

**Horned Grebe:** First: 1 on 26 Sep at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (JJD). Very widely reported with the first migrant groups 30 Oct at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH) and Saylorville Res *Polk* (JG). The most was 32 at Saylorville 31 Oct (BE).

**Red-necked Grebe:** All: 1 juv at Saylorville Res *Polk* 4 Nov (SJD), 1 at W Okoboji L *Dickinson* 11 Nov (ET), and 1 juv at Red Rock Res *Marion* 21 Nov (SJD).

**Eared Grebe:** All: 1 in *O'Brien* 12 Sep (SJD), up to 3 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 11 Oct–21 Nov (SJD, AB, DT), 2 at Spirit L *Dickinson* 11 Nov (ET), and 1 at Red Rock *Marion* 27 Nov (SJD).

**Western Grebe:** All: 1 at Saylorville *Polk* 21–30 Oct (AB, JG, SJD, CG, JB, BT), 1 at L Rathbun *Appanoose* 14 Nov (RLC, TJ), another single at Saylorville 27 Nov (RLC, AB), and the last on 28 Nov at L *Icaria Adams* (Steve Kinder).

**NEOTROPIC CORMORANT:** A bird discovered in spring in *Page* (Kenne 2010) finally left 1 Sep (KD). Another was discovered 1 Aug at Waubonsie Access *Fremont*

and stayed through 8 Aug (\*KD, JG). A third was found 8 Sep at Cedar L *Linn* (\*JF, \*CRE, \*BSc) and stayed through 18 Sep (JJD).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** Some of the largest counts were 716 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 19 Sep (SJD), up to 990 at Red Rock Res *Marion* 9–16 Oct (JG, JS), 1050 at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* 29 Sep (MO), and up to 2500 at Waubonsie Access *Fremont* 10–25 Oct (KD).

**American White Pelican:** Large concentrations of migrants appeared in the 2nd-week of Sep with 2500 at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP) and 3765 at Saylorville Res *Polk* (SJD). Peaked in the 3rd week with 7725 at Red Rock *Marion* on 21 Sep (SJD) and 3700 at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* 24 Sep (MO). There were still 1890 at Red Rock 27 Nov (SJD).

**American Bittern:** One injured a wing in high winds over Algona 27 Oct, and was transported to Spirit Lake for rehab following surgery (MCK). The last was at Errington M *Polk* 4 Nov (SJD).

**Least Bittern:** All: 1 at USNWR *Kosuth* 8 Aug (MCK), 4 at Otter Creek M *Tama* 29 Aug (JF), and 1 at Table M *Woodbury* 16 Sep (GLV).

**Great Egret:** Most: 436 counted on 21 Sep at two locations – around Red Rock *Marion* and along the north side of Maskunkya M *Mahaska* (JJD, SJD). The last was along Lewis Bottoms Road *Linn* 19 Nov (BSc).

**Snowy Egret:** Singles were in *Fremont*, *Johnson*, *Marion*, and *Page* (JF, JG, KD). The last, on 21 Oct at Waubonsie Access *Fremont* (KD-photo) was 2nd-latest.

**Little Blue Heron:** All: 1 or 2 juvs at Waubonsie Access *Fremont* 7 Aug–17 Sep (KD, JB), 1 juv at Saylorville *Polk* 9 Aug (JG), and 1 at Rapp P *Page* on 11 Oct (KD) tied the latest date on record.

**Cattle Egret:** Up to 220 birds moved

around several locations in *Fremont* 4 Aug–12 Sep (JLF, JG, KD, PS). Elsewhere, the largest groups were 12 on 10 Oct in *Kossuth* (Mark Lenz *fide* MCK) and 16 on 7 Aug in *Mills* (JG). Also reported in *Franklin, Louisa, Marshall, Polk* and *Pottawattamie*.

**Green Heron:** The most was 4 on 16 Sep in *Lee* (JJD), and the last was 1 on 9 Oct at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** Five adults were at *Polk City WA Polk* 12 Sep (RLC). Another 2 adults and 9 juvs were at *Cone M Louisa* 10 Oct (JWR). Also reported in small numbers from *Fremont, Linn, Page, Scott, Story* and *Woodbury*. The last 3 were at *Ada Hayden P Story* through the end of the season (WO).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** Following a summer with no reports, the first were 2 ads and 4 juvs at *Auldon Bar Fremont* 4 Aug (KD). Three juvs were at *Hawkeye WA Johnson* 8–11 Aug (JLF, DP) and two juvs were at *Sedan Appanoose* 18 Aug (TJ, RLC). Single birds were also found in Aug at *Colyn Lucas* (JG), *Moeckley Prairie Polk* (SJD), and *Saylorville Polk* (SJD). The most and the last were 11 juvs at *Sandhill L Woodbury* 24 Aug (GLV).

**GLOSSY IBIS:** One was photographed 21 Oct at *Sycamore Bottoms* near *Iowa City Johnson* (\*JF).

**White-faced Ibis:** By far the most was 44 counted at *Waubonsie Access Fremont* 12 Sep (KD). Most birds found after this date were left as ibis species.

**Plegadis species:** A sequence of four unusually late-date *Plegadis* sightings ended with two unprecedented November sightings, the first on 12 Nov at *Pool #9 Allamakee* (\*CW-photo), and the second on 20 Nov at *Hitchcock NC Pottawattamie* (MO-details).

**Turkey Vulture:** Two fledged from a hollow white oak near *Lake Meyer Win-*



*Sharp-shinned Hawk, Hardin, 16 October 2010. Photograph by Tom Schilke, Waterloo, IA.*

*neshiek* 10 Aug (LR). The hawk watch at *Hitchcock NC Pottawattamie* set a new season record total of 4366 (MO). The biggest flight day was 22 Sep when 347 were counted there. Away from the hawk watch, the most was 230 on 11 Oct at *Hooper WA Warren* (JS). Last was 1 late bird on 11 Nov at *Hitchcock* (MO).

**Osprey:** In late Aug, nests in *Monona* and *Black Hawk* were still active (GLV, DE). Migrants were very widely reported (17 counties) with peaks at both hawk watches in the second half of Sep (MP, MO). The last two were on 26 Oct in *Story* (WO, SJD) and 28 Oct in *Pottawattamie* (MO). At *Hitchcock NC* in the *Loess Hills*, the season total of 182 was the second-highest on record.

**Mississippi Kite:** One was still in *Des Moines* on 22 Aug (CG). All 12 others were

migrants counted in Sep at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* with the last 2 on 28 Sep (MO).

**Bald Eagle:** 1126 was the most recorded in a single season at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* (MO). Away from there, the most was 49 on 13 Nov at Grammer Grove *Marshall* (MP).

**Northern Harrier:** Widely reported in ones and twos from 1 Sep in *Kossuth* (MCK) to 17 Nov in *Hancock* (RG). The largest flight at Hitchcock was 19 on 14 Nov (MO).

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** The first two of the season were recorded at each of the hawk watches—1 on 2 Sep at Hitchcock and 1 on 4 Sep at Grammer Grove (MO, MP). Some big days were 44 at Algona 19 Sep (MCK), 79 at Hitchcock on 21 Sep (MO), and 95 at Grammer Grove 29 Sep (MP).

**Cooper's Hawk:** A family group of 3 was found in SE Cedar Rapids 29 Sep (BSc). Reported statewide in small numbers. The season total of 45 at Grammer Grove was far below the mean.

**Northern Goshawk:** The first was 1 on 17 Sep at Hitchcock NC in *Pottawattamie* where they added 4 more in Oct (MO). Elsewhere there were only two reports—1 on 14 Nov at Grammer Grove *Marshall* (MP), and 1 photographed on 28 Nov in *Scott* (Ruth Arp *vide* AB).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** Single birds were reported from 8 eastern counties which included 3 separate locations in *Black Hawk*. In the west, 4 counted during a season of 11,961 raptors at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* was typical (MO).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** A likely family group of 3 was observed at Diamond L *Poweshiek* 16 Aug (MP). The first big kettles of migrants occurred on 19 Sep in the north—350 at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH) and 316 at Algona *Kossuth* (MCK). Peaked



*Red-tailed Hawk (leucistic individual), Des Moines, Polk, 30 November 2010. Photograph by Richard S. Wacha, Des Moines, IA.*

at both hawk watches a few days later on 24 Sep (MP, MO). The last 2 on 18 Oct in Ames (TMH) were 4th latest.

**Swainson's Hawk:** The season total of 693 at Hitchcock NC in the Loess Hills was the most since 2006 (MO), though far below the 3648 counted in 2005. The peak was the 2-day period 9, 10 Oct when 171 and 233 were counted. The season ended abruptly the next day with 2 isolated stragglers. Away from Hitchcock, there was only one sighting, on 19 Aug in Algona (MCK).

**Red-tailed Hawk:** A Krider's was at Otter Creek M *Tama* 1 Oct (BT), and a Harlan's was at Colo Ponds *Story* 19 Nov (MP). The peak counts at both hawk watches occurred in the final days of October (MP, MO).

**Ferruginous Hawk:** An immature

light morph was spotted 21 Nov from the hawk watch tower at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* (\*MO, \*Sandy Reinken, \*Veronica Mecko).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** The first of the season was northwest of Mason City *Cerro Gordo* 23 Oct (CJF).

**Golden Eagle:** The first 2 were at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* 14 Oct (MO). Of 28 found statewide, only three were away from the western tier of counties—a subadult in *Allamakee* on 7 Nov (BSc) and an adult there on 14 Nov (DP), and 1 in *Mitchell* on 14 Nov (RG). In the far west, 25 sightings included 1 in rural *Woodbury* (TLu), 1 at L Manawa in *Pottawattamie* (LJP, BKP), and 23 at Hitchcock NC (MO).

**American Kestrel:** At Grammer Grove *Marshall*, 11 was the 3rd-lowest season total in 21 years of records. Similarly, Hitchcock recorded their second-lowest season total in 9 years of operation.

**Merlin:** The first, on 2 Sep at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* (MO) began a steady stream of sightings there. Away from the hawk watch, the first few were noticed 18 Sep in *Marshall* (MP) and *Story* (WO) and 19 Sep in *Polk* (BE), *Warren* (JS) and *Kossuth* (MCK). The Glendale Cemetery wintering site saw its first return on 14 Oct (RIC). 11 reports mentioned subspecies with 9 *columbarius* and 2 *richardsonii*. Also reported in *Appanoose*, *Black Hawk*, *Cedar*, *Dickinson* and *Jasper*.

**Peregrine Falcon:** Reported almost always as single birds from 11 heavily-birded counties. The season total of 69 at Hitchcock NC hawk watch was their highest to date, and included a single-day record of 28 on 20 Sep (MO). The last was 1 at Jester Park *Polk* 1 Nov (PS). Of those that were aged by the observer, 75% were judged to be adults.

**Prairie Falcon:** All three were No-

vember birds at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie*—an adult on 7 Nov (MO-details), 1 on 13 Nov (RE-details), and a juv on 21 Nov (MO-details).

**Yellow Rail:** The only report was a single bird flushed from a prairie in *Marshall* while the observer harvested seed in the 2nd week of October (CK).

**Virginia Rail:** Family groups were found 7 Aug at Ham M *Buchanan* (SJD) and 12 Sep at Snake Creek M *Greene* (LGD).

**Sora:** 13 were counted at Waterman Prairie *O'Brien* 12 Sep (SJD) and 5 were still at Harrier M *Boone* on 3 Oct (CG). The last 2 would have been the pair found at Sedan *Appanoose* 10 Oct (RLC) were it not for one flushed from an icy marsh in *Emmet* on the record late date of 27 Nov (Bruce Marzinske *vide* RG).

**Common Moorhen:** A family group of 2 adults and 5 juveniles was found at Otter Creek M *Tama* 29 Aug (JF). At least one was still there on 9 Sep (DP).

**American Coot:** USFWS aerial surveys counted 52,505 on 1 Nov in the vicinity of Pool #9 *Allamakee*. The most away from the Mississippi R was 9060 at Saylorville *Polk* 30 Oct (SJD).

**Sandhill Crane:** An accumulated total of 600 resulting from a steady flight witnessed 27 Oct from the hawk watch tower at Hitchcock NC *Pottawattamie* (MO) was considerably more than the previous Iowa high count of 250 in the spring of 1982 in Lyon (Kent 1982). The next day, another 61 were spotted at Saylorville *Polk* (SJD). The largest group of likely local breeders was 16 at Otter Creek M *Tama* 9 Sep (DP). From 1–7 were also reported from *Bremer*, *Fremont*, *Jasper*, *Johnson*, *Louisa*, *Polk*, *Scott* and *Winneshiek*. The last was a group of 7 at Cone Marsh *Louisa* 27 Nov (Candace Havely).

**Black-bellied Plover:** First few: 1 at



American Golden-Plover, Humboldt, 13 August 2010. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

Maynard Reece Kossuth 8 Aug (MCK), 5 in Warren 10 Aug (JS) and 1 at Hawkeye WA Johnson 10 Aug (JLF). The most was up to 65 at Red Rock Marion 22, 23 Oct (SJD, MP, JB). Also reported in small numbers in Cerro Gordo, Louisa and Polk. Last were 2 at Saylorville 11 Nov (AB).

**American Golden-Plover:** The first was 1 on 8 Sep along Lewis Bottoms Road Linn (BT). Some of the notable groups were 30 on 2 Oct at Huxley Story (CG), 26 on 3 Oct at Runnells Polk (JS), 50 on 14–20 Oct at Hawkeye WA Johnson (JF), and up to 123 on 22, 23 Oct at Red Rock Marion (SJD, JB). Last was 1 still lingering at Red Rock 21 Nov (SJD).

**Semipalmated Plover:** The early migrants arrived in summer (Dinsmore 2010). The most was a mere 28 on 13 Aug in Humboldt (SJD), and the last was a juv at Saylorville 14 Oct (SJD).

**Piping Plover:** One was at MidAmerican ponds Pottawattamie 7 Aug (JB), and another was at the Wapsi R Access Buchanan 28 Aug (SJD).

**Killdeer:** The most was 1210 at sev-

eral sheetwater locations in Humboldt 12 Aug (SJD). There were up to 646 at Saylorville and 591 at Red Rock in late October (AB, SJD).

**American Avocet:** Approximately 50 birds were found scattered through ten locations in Johnson, Linn, Louisa, Mills, Marion, Marshall, Page, Polk and Warren. The larger groups were 7 on 1 Oct at Pleasant Creek Linn (BSc), 8 at Runnells Marion 21 Sep (JJD, SJD), and 11 on 10 Oct at Cone M

Louisa (JWR). The last 4 were at Saylorville 30 Oct (AB, JB, SJD).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** The last was a juv at Runnells WA Marion 22 Oct (SJD).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** The high count was 38 at several sheetwater sites in Humboldt 13 Aug (SJD). The last 3 were found 22 Aug in rural Polk (RLC).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** The most was 45 on 13 Oct at DeSoto NWR Harrison (US-FWS). Another 41 were at Saylorville 16, 17 Oct (SJD, BE). The last was at Clear L Cerro Gordo 30 Oct (PH).

**Willet:** All: 5 at Waubonsie Access Fremont 4 Aug (KD), and 1 at Hawkeye WA Johnson 27 Aug (JF).

**Lesser Yellowlegs.** There were not many this season—only a few concentrations: 100 on 1 Aug in Kossuth (MCK), 331 on 16 Aug in Humboldt (SJD), 112 on 10 Sep at Waubonsie Access Fremont (KD), 40 at Clear L Cerro Gordo 19 Sep (PH), and 18 at Sedan Appanoose 19 Sep (RLC). All other reports were of single birds, including the last on 4 Nov at Errington M Polk (SJD).

**Upland Sandpiper:** The only report



was 1 on 11 Aug at Luton WMA Woodbury (TLu).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** A single juv was seen in flight over Red Rock Marion 22 Oct (SJD).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** All: 2 on 4 Aug near Riverton Fremont (JLF), 1 on 18 Aug in sheetwater in Humboldt (JN), and 1 on 17 Sep at Colo Ponds Story (MP).

**Red Knot:** One was at Hawkeye WA Johnson 31 Aug (JF).

**Sanderling:** First: 2 on 12 Aug in Humboldt (SJD). The most was 17–25 at a time at Saylorville Res Polk 15 Sep – 15 Oct (AB, JG, SJD). The last were at Saylorville 15 Oct (AB).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** A few individuals returned in mid-July (Dinsmore 2010), but the first group appeared on 1 Aug when 31 were found in Kossuth (MCK). The only other groups were 138 on 2 Sep in Humboldt (SJD) and 22 at Clear L Cerro Gordo 19 Sep (PH). The last was 1 on 24 Oct along Lewis Bottom Rd. Linn (BT).

**Western Sandpiper:** A juv was at the Runnells Overlook Warren 25 Sep (JG-de-tails).

**Least Sandpiper:** The first adults returned in June and July (Dinsmore 2010) followed by groups containing juvs in August. On 1 Aug, 82 were in Kossuth (MCK) and at least 580 were counted 13 Aug at several sheetwater sites in Humboldt (SJD). Pockets of 20–30 were found in Sep in Appanoose, Cerro Gordo, Fremont and Page (RLC, KD, PH). The last big group was 109 on 9 Oct at Red Rock Marion (JG), the same place the last 5 birds were still lingering 11 Nov (CG-photo).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** There were two reports of this rare fall migrant, but only one with details. A large peep at Saylorville Res Polk that was among Least Sandpipers on 5 Oct had white rump, lon-

ger drooped bill, colder gray plumage and prominent large spots on flanks.

**Baird's Sandpiper:** The most was 40 on 2 Sep in Humboldt (SJD). Elsewhere, from 1–5 were in Fremont, Hardin, Johnson and Polk (JB, DP, MP, KD, DA, AB). The last was a juv at Saylorville 4 Nov (SJD).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** Only one location provided really decent habitat for this species, a series of transient pools in Humboldt where 3538 were counted 12 Aug (SJD). The only other significant groups were 250 on 1 Aug in Kossuth (MCK), 110 on 19 Sep near Clear L Cerro Gordo (PH), 56 on 12 Sep in Fremont (KD) and 40 on 19 Sep at Sedan Appanoose (RLC). The last was 1 at Red Rock Marion 27 Nov (SJD), which was a 3rd-latest date.

**Dunlin:** The first 2 were found on 3 Oct in Polk at Runnells WA and Errington M (DP, JS, CG). The most was 31–35 near Red Rock Marion 22, 23 Oct (MP, JB, SJD). Last was an injured juv lingering at Red Rock Marion 21 Nov (SJD).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** Some high counts were 68 on 19 Sep at Burr Oak L Emmet (LAS), 102 on 13 Aug in Humboldt (SJD), and 120 on 12 Sep at Banner WA Warren (JS). Last was a juv on 14 Oct at Saylorville Polk (SJD).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper:** There were at least 44 individuals reported in groups of 1–8 at 16 locations across 14 counties. The first 2 were at Blue Grass Sod Farm Linn 3 Aug (BSc), and the most was 8 at Hawkeye WA Johnson 10 Aug (JLF, DP). The last 4 were at Saylorville Polk on 16 Sep (JG, SJD).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** After July, this species pretty much scorned a saturated Iowa. The only report was 1 on 7 Aug at Hawkeye Johnson (DP).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** All: 1 on 15 Sep at Hawkeye Johnson (DP), 1–11 at Saylorville Polk 3–30 Oct (BE, SJD), 1 on 19

Oct at Colo Ponds *Story* (MP), and 7 on 5 Nov at Palo M *Linn* (BSc).

**Wilson's Snipe:** Very widely reported throughout the season. Some high counts were 105 on 12 Sep at Waubonsie Access *Fremont* (KD) and 225 on 13 Nov at Sedan *Appanoose* (TJ, RLC).

**American Woodcock:** All: 1 on 6 Oct at McIntosh SP *Cerro Gordo* (CJF), 1 on 17 Oct in Mary Cecil's urban back yard *Polk*, 2 on 18 Oct in *Black Hawk* (DE), and 1 on 18 Oct in Beaver Bottoms Wetland *Dallas* (TS).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** All: An adult was foraging with 2 juvs on 1 Aug in *Kosuth* (MCK), 12 individuals were scattered across several *Humboldt* pools 12 Aug (SJD), 2 were at Table M *Woodbury* 21 Aug (GLV), 11 were in *Pottawattamie* 2 Sep (MO), 1 was in *Pocahontas* 2 Sep (SJD), 2 at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* 12 Sep (PH), and the last was at a Hubbard sewage lagoon *Hardin* 24 Sep (MP).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** The first 2 were in *Humboldt* 12 Aug (SJD), and the most was 9 at Saylorville Res *Polk* 4 Sep (SJD). Elsewhere, 1 or 2 were found at 7 scattered locations with the last a juv at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* on 14 Oct (JF), a 2nd-latest date.

**RED PHALAROPE:** Two were found this fall— a juv at Jester Park *Polk* 5 Oct (\*SJD), and an adult 15–20 Oct at Rock Creek SP *Jasper* (\*JF-photo, \*CC, \*CRE, \*JM-photo).

**BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE:** A juv was below the Red Rock Res

dam *Marion* 17 Nov (\*CG-photo), and an adult appeared at the same location 23–28 Nov (\*JF-photo, JG).

**Sabine's Gull:** All: at least 1 juv at Red Rock *Marion* 6–21 Sep (SJD, JG, JWR), 2 juvs at Spirit L *Dickinson* 12 Sep (SJD), 1 juv at Saylorville *Polk* 15–19 Sep (CG, AB, CG, DA) and another there 1 Oct (JG), and 1 juv at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 21 Sep–7 Oct (LJP, BKP, DA, KD, AMJ, JS).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** After two were found in July (Dinsmore 2010), the first fall sighting occurred on 18 Sep at Pleasant Creek *Linn* (BSc). Later groups included 10 at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 28 Oct (LJP, BKP), 51 at Saylorville *Polk* on 20 Nov (RLC, SJD), 75 at L Macbride *Johnson* 21 Nov (CRE), and up to 147 at L Rathbun *Appanoose* 20, 21 Nov (RLC, SJD).

**BLACK-HEADED GULL:** For the first time in 14 years, a Black-headed Gull did not appear at Spirit L *Dickinson* (LAS). First discovered in 1994 in the vicinity of



*Wilson's Snipe*, *Humboldt*, 13 August 2010. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



*Red Phalarope, Rock Creek SP, Jasper, 15 October 2010. Photograph by James Forde, Cedar Rapids, IA.*

Spirit L, 1 or 2 adults have reappeared in late summer or early fall every year since 1996. The birds always departed before the arrival of snow, and wintered in unknown

gulf breeder have become increasingly common in late-summer and early-fall. This year, there was also a spring report (Kenne 2010), making perhaps as many as four individuals

(to Iowans) locations. It may be the end of an era. Black-headed Gulls are regular in North America only along the north Atlantic Coast.

**LAUGHING GULL:**

Possibly three individuals of this casual species were found—an adult at Jester Park Polk 13–20 Aug (\*SJD, CG-photo), which may have been the same bird as an adult at Red Rock Marion 6 Sep (\*SJD-photo), and a juv at Red Rock 10–25 Sep (\*JF-photo, \*JWR, \*AB-photo). Reports of this



*Laughing Gull, Red Rock Reservoir, Marion, 6 September 2010. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

in the state in 2010. It has now been seen in 8 of the last 10 years in Iowa.

**Franklin's Gull:** Movements were typical, gathering by the thousands in mid-to-late Sep at most large bodies of water. In excess of 5000 at a time were counted at Clear L *Cerro Gordo*, L *Manawa Pottawattamie*, Saylorville Res *Polk*, Red Rock *Marion*, with the peak 28,000 at L *Rathbun Appanoose* 16 Oct (RLC). The last large concentration was 5000 at Saylorville 17 Oct (AB).

**MEW GULL:** An adult was photographed by Jim Forde at the Red Rock dam *Marion* 16 Nov.

**Ring-billed Gull:** By 27 Nov, numbers at Red Rock *Marion* had grown to about 23,000 (SJD).

**CALIFORNIA GULL:** An adult was at Saylorville Res *Polk* 30 Nov–5 Dec (\*SJD, \*AB-photo, \*CG-photo).

**Herring Gull:** After a first historical nesting in Iowa on the extreme eastern edge of the state (Dinsmore and Griffin 2010),

the first likely migrants were reported on the extreme western edge at Waubonsie Access *Fremont* 17 Sep (KD).

**Thayer's Gull:** All: a juv at Red Rock *Marion* 17–28 Nov (CG-photo, JG, SJD, AB), an adult at Saylorville *Polk*, 21 Nov (AB), and a juv at Cedar L *Linn* 28 Nov (BSc).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** All: an adult at W Okoboji L *Dickinson* 30 Oct–2 Nov (LAS, ET-photo), a juv at Saylorville *Polk* 19–21 Nov (SJD), and what may have been the same bird at Red Rock *Marion* 27 Nov (SJD), and a 2nd-cycle bird at Saylorville 30 Nov (SJD).

**Glaucous Gull:** At dusk on 20 Nov, a juv appeared at Saylorville *Polk* to roost on the ice (JG).

**Least Tern:** In early Aug, as many as 21 were counted at MidAmerican Ponds *Pottawattamie* where the species breeds (JLF, JB, PS). The only report away from there was a juv on 16 Aug at Hendrickson *M Story* (CG).

**Caspian Tern:**

Numbers built at Saylorville to as many as 280 on 1 Sep (JG, DA, JB, CG), then dropped off dramatically. The most away from Saylorville was a mere 19 at Cedar L *Linn* 3 Sep (BT), the same place an adult was seen feeding a juvenile on 18 Sep (JJD). There were still 8 at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH) and 2 at Saylorville (DA) on 19 Sep, and the last was 1 at Ada Hayden P



*Barn Owl, Crawford, 22 August 2010. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*

*Story* 22 Sep (WO). Also reported in *Johnson, Page, Marshall* and *Pottawattamie*.

**Black Tern:** The most was 62 at Red Rock *Marion* 19 Sep (SJD), and the last was 1 still at Spirit L *Dickinson* on 9 Oct (LAS).

**Common Tern:** The first few were 2 at Saylorville *Polk* 1 Sep (JG, JB, CG) and 2 at Rapp P *Page* (KD). In mid-Sep from 1–5 were also in *Dickinson, Story, Linn* and *Marion* (BSc, JJD, SJD). The last were the only two Oct reports—2 at Little Wall L *Hamilton* 6 Oct (CG), and 1 at Jester P *Polk* 7 Oct (CG).

**ARCTIC TERN:** A juv found by Jim Forde 20 Nov at the L Macbride/Coralville Res complex *Johnson* stayed around until 29 Nov (\*JF-photo, \*CRE, \*CC, \*BSc, \*MB-photo, \*AB-photo). This was Iowa's third individual of this species. An adult and a juv were at Saylorville *Polk* in Aug 1999 (IBL 69:133-135).

**Forster's Tern:** The last was 1 on 6 Oct at Ada Hayden P *Story* (CG).

**PARASITIC JAEGER:** Two records were Iowa's first since 1995. A juv was found 17 Sep at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (\*LJP, \*BKP, \*AB-photo, JJD-details) and stayed through 2 Oct. A second juv was at Red Rock *Marion* 19–21 Sep (\*SJD, JJD).

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** There were scattered reports of 1–3 from six counties.

**White-winged Dove:** After Iowa's first nesting in a Shenandoah yard (Dyche 2010), up to five remained in the area through 20 Nov (KD, JLF, JB, JG).

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** There were only three reports of single birds—1 at Jester P *Polk* 15 Aug (JB), 1 along a Fayette city trail *Fayette* 28 Aug (MP), and 1 on 30 Sep at Little Wall L *Hamilton* (CG).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** Of nine reports, none were from the western third of the state. All were single birds, with the last 1 at Little Wall L *Hamilton* 24 Sep (CG).

**Barn Owl:** There were 3 at a *Crawford* site 22 Aug (SJD), and a pair south of Ottumwa in *Wapello* fledged four in early Nov (BrE).

**Eastern Screech-Owl:** Difficult to stumble across by accident, this widespread strictly-nocturnal owl is best found by knowing someone with a nestbox, like CJF, GLV, RG.

**Snowy Owl:** No reports.

**Long-eared Owl:** The first two, on 30 Oct at Moorehead P *Ida* (DoP) were not found again. The only other report, a single individual at Lime Creek *Cerro Gordo* 26 Nov (PH), also disappeared after heavy snows.

**Short-eared Owl:** All: up to 4 at a time at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* 21 Oct–23 Nov (KVS, JS, RG), 1 in *Hamilton* 31 Oct (SJD), and 2 at Diehl Wetlands *Warren* 27 Nov (JS).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** The first capture at the Hitchcock banding station in the Loess Hills occurred 8 Oct. They had a total of 55 captures through 21 Nov, with the most 6 on the night of 8 Nov (JT).

**Common Nighthawk:** The two-day period 31 Aug–1 Sep produced the biggest movements with 143 in *Woodbury* (GLV), 130 in *Appanoose* (RLC), 628 in *Story* (SJD), and 952 in *Polk* (DA). By the end of the month, sightings were down to a mere 1–5 per day, and continued until the last on 12 Oct in Ames (SJD).

**Whip-poor-will:** 1 was in Mason City 30, 31 Aug (RG), and another was on private property 5 Sep near Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (KVS).

**Chimney Swift:** As many as 50 were still at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 3 Oct (AMJ), but after that, the only two reports were 1 on 9 Oct at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), and 10 on 11 Oct in Saylor TWP *Polk* (AB).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** An al-



*Ruby-throated Hummingbird*, Boone, 19 August 2010. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.

bino was at a feeder in Van Meter Dallas 16 Sep (RIA-photo, PHA). The last of the season was still at a feeder in Saylor TWP Polk 14 Oct (AB).

**ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD:** Iowa's first Anna's Hummingbird, an immature male, was noticed on 31 Oct in the same Saylor TWP Polk yard as the last Ruby-throated Hummingbird two weeks prior. It stayed nearly a month, until 25 Nov, where it was seen by a least 80 people. (\*AB-photo, \*JES-photo, \*AMJ, \*JB, \*CRE, \*CC, \*RLC, \*SJD-photo).

**RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD:** Two were found this fall, an adult female 19-21 Aug at the Armstrong farmstead Madison (\*AB-photo) and a juv female 27, 28 Aug at the Livingston farmstead Decatur (\*MT-photo). These are the third and fourth records this century.

**LEWIS'S WOODPECKER:** Iowa's fourth Lewis' Woodpecker and the first since 1992, was seen in flight from the Hitchcock NC hawk watch tower in the

Loess Hills Pottawattamie 10 Oct (\*MO, \*Sandy Reinken, \*Veronica Mecko).

**Red-headed Woodpecker:** Noted as very scarce this fall by AMJ. The peak count of 31 at the Hitchcock NC hawk watch on 5 Sep was the worst in 9 years of record-keeping (MO).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** After good numbers in summer including at least three confirmed breeding sites (Dinsmore 2010), wandering birds began to show up at other locations in mid-Sep. One was at Saylorville

Polk 16 Sep (SJD), another in a Cedar Rapids Linn yard the next day (BSc), and another at the Runnells Overlook Marion the day after that (JJD). Eight were counted at Riverview Cemetery in Algona Kossuth on 22 Sep (MCK), the most.

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Widely reported as singles or pairs in the east and central, but none west of Boone.

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** The first was in the south at Stephens SF Lucas on 7 Aug (MB), followed by 1 in the north at Algona Kossuth 10 Aug (MCK). Steady reports followed, including 3 at Sedan Bottoms Appanoose 1 Sep (RLC), until the last two on 21 Sep in Kossuth and Taylor (MCK, DA).

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** As many as twelve were counted at L Rathbun Appanoose 8 Sep (RLC). The last was 1 at West Oak Forest Mills 21 Sep (DA).

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** There were 11 reports starting with 2 on 25 Aug at Backbone SP Delaware and Grammer Grove

Marshall (BSc, MP), and ending with 1 at Porter's L Page 28 Sep (KD).

**Acadian Flycatcher:** The only report was 1 at Call SP Kossuth 3 Aug (MCK).

**Alder Flycatcher:** The first 2 were found on 6 Aug in *Decatur* and *Franklin* (JRL, SJD). Four on 13 Aug in *Humboldt* and *Webster* (SJD) were the most, and the last, on 22 Aug at Smith L Kossuth was still vocalizing (MCK).

**Willow Flycatcher:** The last, on 26 Sep at Oak Grove RA Polk, was record late by a day (CG-photo).

**Least Flycatcher:** The last on 30 Sep at Bay's Branch Guthrie was getting late (RIA, PHA).

**Eastern Phoebe:** One on 18 Nov in *Dickinson* (LAS) was a record-late date for the fall season (there are 3 winter records). It became 2nd-latest the next day when BSc found one at Squaw Creek P Linn, and then the 3rd-latest when one appeared on 29 Nov at Newton, *Jasper* (Edge Wade).

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** The last was 1 at Sparks Cemetery Boone on 20 Sep (LGD).

**Western Kingbird:** No reports.

**Eastern Kingbird:** The only groups were 42 on 31 Aug in *Page* (KD), and 60 on 1 Sep in *Appanoose* (RLC). The last was 1 on 11 Sep at Liscomb *Marshall* (MP).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** Last in the north was 1 on 16 Aug at Waterman Prairie O'Brien (SJD).

**Northern Shrike:** The first two were 1 at Lake Meyer *Winneshiek* 21 Oct (LR), and 1 in Iowa City 22 Oct (JF). The other four reports were in Nov from *Woodbury*, *War-*



*Olive-sided Flycatcher*, Stephens State Forest, Lucas, 7 August 2010. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.

*ren*, *Johnson* and *Polk* (GLV, JS, DP, JB).

**White-eyed Vireo:** One photographed at Ledges SP Boone 2 Oct matched the latest date on record (CG).

**Bell's Vireo:** The last few were 2 near Centerville *Appanoose* on 4 Sep (RLC), and 3 on 7 Sep at Rapp P *Page* (KD).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** The last was 1 at Summerset Bike Path Warren 26 Sep (RIA, PHA).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** The first two were on 5 Sep in *Algona Kossuth* and at Saylorville *Polk* (MCK, RLC). There were many reports from all parts of the state, with the last 1 on 20 Oct at Black Hawk P *Black Hawk* (DE).

**Warbling Vireo:** The last was 1 on 26 Sep at Ledges SP Boone (CG).

**Philadelphia Vireo:** The first few were 1 on 23 Aug at Diamond L *Poweshiek* (MP), 1 on 25 Aug at Saylorville *Polk* (JG), and 2 at Backbone SP *Delaware* (BSc). 60%

of the 38 birds reported were found 11–23 Sep. The last 3 were at Ledges SP *Boone* 2 Oct (CG-photo).

**Red-eyed Vireo:** An agitated adult drove a pair of Red-headed Woodpeckers from its presence in A. A. Call SP *Kossuth* 3 Aug (MCK), and an adult was still feeding young on 12 Sep at Polk City WA *Polk* (RLC). The last was still singing at Indian Creek Nature Center Linn 8 Oct (BSc).

**Blue Jay:** Finding himself surrounded by Blue Jays at River-view Cemetery *Kossuth* 21 Sep, MCK began



*Red-breasted Nuthatch, Iowa City, Johnson, 1 October 2010. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*



*Bank Swallow, Boone, 16 September 2010. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.*

counting and tallied 1465 in the span of 1 hour.

**Black-billed Magpie:** No reports.

**Horned Lark:** A juvenile of this early-nesting species was still in spotted plumage 19 Aug in *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Purple Martin:** No one reported any large groups. The most was 12 at Wells-burg *Grundy* 19 Aug (MP). Last were 6 at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 21 Sep (DA).

**Tree Swallow:** Peaked twice, first on 19 Sep with 5800 at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH) and 6780 at Red Rock *Marion* (SJD), then, a month later, another 5500 were counted at Saylorville *Polk* 16 Oct (SJD). The last was 4th-latest on 24 Nov at Big Creek *Polk* (SJD).

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** One discovered at Brushy Creek RA *Webster* on 24 Nov (SJD-photo) was a month later than the historical latest date. Despite inclement weather and below-freezing temperatures, it persisted below the dam through the end of the season.

**Bank Swallow:** Peaked in the third week of Aug with 375 in *Humboldt* and an-



other 300 in *Warren* (SJD, AB). The last few were found 21 Sep in *Fremont* and *Pottawattamie* (DA).

**Cliff Swallow:** The only report was 1 on 9 Sep at Otter Creek M *Tama* (DP).

**Barn Swallow:** The most was 516 at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* 21 Sep (DA). The last were found on 24 Oct at two different locations – 4 at Red Rock *Marion* (JB, SJD), and 7 at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (MCK).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** A stream of steady reports from 15 counties began with 1 on 31 Aug in *Page* (KD). Reported from all parts of the state except the NW and always in singles except 5 on 17 Sep at Sparks Cemetery in *Boone* (LGD).

**Brown Creeper:** After a summer with no reports (Dinsmore 2010), the first noticed in fall was at Echo Valley SP *Fayette* 25 Sep (MP) and another at Manhattan P in Cedar Rapids 27 Sep (DP). Also reported from *Black Hawk*, *Jasper*, *Kossuth*, *Polk* and *Story* (DE, JG, MCK, JB, DA).

**Carolina Wren:** Singles were found in *Buchanan*, *Cherokee*, *Delaware*, *Fayette*, *Fremont*, *Hardin* and *Warren* (SJD, BSc, MP, KD, MP, JS). Pairs were in *Page* (KD), and *Warren* where JS commented the species has not recovered from last winter's harsh conditions.

**House Wren:** The season's last was at Belva-Deer RA *Keokuk* on 9 Oct (BSc).

**Winter Wren:** The first, on 5 Sep at Woodland Mounds *Warren* (JS) was the earliest since 2000, and 15 days earlier than the median arrival over the last 25 years. The most was 7 at Smith WA *Kossuth* on 6 Oct (MCK).

**Sedge Wren:** The last found were at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* during the IOU Fall Meeting 23, 24 Oct (mob).

**Marsh Wren:** Adults were still feeding young on 5 Sep in Patterson WA *Kossuth* (MCK). Up to 8 were at Harrier M *Boone* 12 Sep and Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* 20 Oct

(LGD, RLC). The last was 1 at Harrier M 16 Oct (CG).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** The last was 1 on 26 Sep at Lime Creek *Cerro Gordo* (RG).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** The first, at Willowglen Nursery *Winneshiek* (LZ) on 17 Sep, was a 4th-earliest date, and was followed quickly by another on 19 Sep at Little Wall L *Hamilton* (CG). The most, and last were 6 on 13 Nov at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (RLC).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** The first few were 2 on 12 Sep at Polk City WA *Polk* (RLC), 6 on 13 Sep at Algona (MCK), and 1 on 13 Sep at Diamond L *Poweshiek* (MP). The high count was a mere 20 on 19 Sep at Bacon Creek *Woodbury* (GLV). The last one was at Brown's L *Woodbury* 13 Nov (TLu).

**Veery:** All: 2 along the Comet Trail *Grundy* 1 Sep (MP), 1 at Oak Grove RA *Polk* 1 Sep (CG), and 1 at Red Rock *Marion* 19 Sep (SJD).



*Sedge Wren*, Franklin, 6 August 2010. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.



*Golden-crowned Kinglet, Hardin, 28 October 2010. Photograph by Tom Schilke, Waterloo, IA.*

**Gray-cheeked Thrush:** The first was at Willowglen Nursery *Winneshiek* on 5 Sep (LZ). Another was in *Fremont* on 8 Sep (KD), and 3 were reported from Robison *WA Story* 30 Sep (DA). The last, which was a bit late on 6 Oct in *Kossuth*, was carefully described to separate it from Hermit Thrush (MCK-details).

**Swainson's Thrush:** The first to arrive was at Squaw Creek P *Linn* 26–28 Aug (DP, BSc). Sightings were common throughout Sep then trailed off with two reports in the first week of Oct—1 at Sioux City *Woodbury* 3 Oct (GLV), and another at Sparks Cemetery *Boone* 3 Oct (LGD). Two late-Oct reports had no details separating them from the more likely Hermit Thrush.

**Hermit Thrush:** The first two were 3rd-earliest on 18 Sep at Grammer Grove *Marshall* and Maynes Grove P *Franklin* (MP, RG). As many as 10 were at Little Wall L *Hamilton* 30 Sep (CG) and up to 12 were at Smith *WA Kossuth* 6 Oct (MCK). The last two were late Nov birds undaunted by the snow—1 on 16 Nov in *Kossuth*

(MCK), and 1 on 20 Nov at L Ahquabi *Warren* (JS).

**Wood Thrush:** All: 2 at Davenport *Scott* on 6 Sep (CG), and 1 at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* 21 Sep (RG).

**American Robin:** About 5000 continued to use a roost in Shenandoah *Page* from mid-Oct through the end of the season (KD).

**Gray Catbird:** At Fontana P *Buchanan*, 28 were counted 20

Sep (BT). The last was an Iowa City yard bird for JLF on 1 Nov.

**Northern Mockingbird:** One was at Honey Creek near L Rathbun *Appanoose* 3 Aug (DT), and another was in rural *Poweshiek* on 16 Aug (MP).

**Brown Thrasher:** The last visited a birdbath in a Johnston *Polk* yard 29 Oct (DTh), and then disappeared.

**American Pipit:** The first two were found 18 Sep when a birder scanned the mud at Lewis Bottoms *Linn* looking for shorebirds (BSc). Some high counts were 54 on 17 Oct at Moeckley Prairie *Polk* (SJD), about 200 on 24 Oct in erratic flight in rural *Cerro Gordo* (PH), and 225 on 30 Oct at Saylorville *Polk* (SJD). The last was 1 on 24 Nov at Brushy Creek RA *Webster* (SJD).

**Cedar Waxwing:** The earliest large flock was 150 on 28 Oct at Decorah *Winneshiek* (DC).

**Lapland Longspur:** The first 3 were at Blue-wing M *Cerro Gordo* on 10 Oct (CG). As many as 2000 were near Havelock *Pocahontas* 31 Oct (MCK, SJD), and another

1000 were at Bobolink WA *Kossuth* 3 Nov (MCK).

**Smith's Longspur:** All: Two were at Rapp P *Page* 14 Oct (KD), between 1–50 at a WPA near Havelock *Pocahontas* 17–31 Oct (MCK, CG, SJD), and 12–43 at a private field near Clear L *Cerro Gordo* 30 Oct–4 Nov (PH, RG).

**Snow Bunting:** The first 2 were at Saylorville *Polk* 31 Oct (BE) where up to 10 could be found through the month of Nov (KVS, JB, JG, SJD). Another 5 were at Meier WA *Hardin* 19 Nov (MP).

**Blue-winged Warbler:** The last 2, on 25 Sep at Thelman WA *Fayette* (MP), were 2nd-latest.

**Golden-winged Warbler:** The first fall migrants arrived on 18 Aug in *Cerro Gordo*, *Winneshiek* and *Allamakee* (RG, DK). There were 17 reports including 4 at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* 1 Sep (RG), and 3 males at L Ahquabi *Warren* 3 Sep (JS). The last was 1 in Urbandale 24 Sep (BE).

**Tennessee Warbler:** The first was in *Winneshiek* 17 Aug (DK), followed by another at Smith WA *Kossuth* 18 Aug (MCK). The most was 24 near Lacey-Keosauqua P *Van Buren* 18 Sep (RLC) which was also the last day any were seen (MP, DP).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** The first two were found 14 Sep at Cottonwood RA *Polk* (DA-details) and Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO). From 1–8 were reported in many locations especially in eastern and central Iowa, until the last 1 on 30 Oct at Banner WA *Warren* (JS).

**Nashville Warbler:** The first two were found 17 Aug at Shaver P *Linn* (BSc) and rural *Winneshiek* (DK). There were 29 reports (most of any warbler) from all areas of the state including 17 at Oak Grove RA *Polk* 16 Sep (DA) and 16 at Trumbull L *Clay* 26 Sep (LAS). The last was 1 at Sparks Cemetery *Boone* 12 Oct (LGD).



*Orange-crowned Warbler*, Boone, 13 October 2010. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

**Northern Parula:** Eight reports included one from October at George Wyth SP *Black Hawk* on the 15th (RIA, PHA), a 4th-latest date.

**Yellow Warbler:** The last was 1 on 26 Sep at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** 21 reports, all from eastern and central counties and none from the west, included 7 along the Comet Trail near Beaman *Grundy* 1 Sep (MP). The last was 1 at East Twin L *Hancock* 27 Sep (SJD).

**Magnolia Warbler:** Mark Proescholdt found the first at Diamond L *Poweshiek* 23 Aug, the most, 8, along the Comet Trail *Grundy* 1 Sep, and the last on 29 Sep at Grammer Grove *Marshall*.

**Cape May Warbler:** All: 1 on 11 Sep at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP), 1 on 12 Sep at Red Rock *Marion* (JG), 1 on 21 Sep at Diamond L *Poweshiek* (JJD, SJD), and 1 on 24 Sep at Little Wall L *Hamilton* (CG).

**Black-throated Blue Warbler:** All: A male on 5 Sep at Sycamore Access *Polk* (KVS), 1 on 15 Sep at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (CJF), another on 15 Sep at Sparks Cemetery *Boone* (LGD), a female on 19 Sep at Walnut Woods *Polk* (JG), and a female on

19 Sep at Red Rock Marion (SJD).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** The first few were found during 11–13 Sep in *Polk*, *Kossuth*, *Poweshiek* (SJD, MCK, MP). The high count was 84 on 29 Sep in Ankeny (DA), but counts of 30 or 40 were still occurring in mid-Oct (RLC, MP). The last was along Highway A26 *Allamakee* 21 Nov (CG).

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** A record early individual on 2 Aug at Brooks Golf Course

*Dickinson* was spotted from the seat of a golf cart, tracked to a nearby tree and carefully identified (\*ET). The next wasn't found until 24 Aug at Backbone SP *Delaware* (BSc). The last of 14 reports was 1 at Grammer Grove *Marshall* 29 Sep (MP).

**Blackburnian Warbler:** The first was 1 on 15 Aug at Emma McCarthy Lee P *Story* (CG). There were only six reports with the last on 18 Sep near Lacey-Keosauqua P *Van Buren* (RLC).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** One on 19 Sep at Palisades-Kepler SP *Linn* (BSc) was the only report.

**Pine Warbler:** One of two was at Nine Eagles SP *Decatur* 6 Sep (SJD), and the other was at Cedar L *Linn* 12 Sep (BT). Neither was near the lone summer report in *Lee* (Dinsmore 2010).

**Palm Warbler:** The first reported was a roving band of 16 near a small pond at Diehl Wetlands *Warren* 19 Sep (JS). Also in Sep was 1 at Grammer Grove *Marshall* on the 26th (MP). The other seven reports were in early Oct with the last 1 at Jester P *Polk* 7 Oct (CG).



*Black-and-white Warbler*, Lake Hendricks, Howard, 28 August 2010. Photograph by Stephen J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** There were ten reports with the first on 17 Aug in *Winneshiek* (DK) and the last 1 at Porters L *Page* on 19 Sep (KD). The most was 6 near Lacey-Keosauqua *Van Buren* on 18 Sep (RLC).

**Blackpoll Warbler:** Five reports: A solo bird not in a migrant flock on 25 Aug at Backbone SP *Delaware* (BSc), 1 on 5 Sep at Covered Bridge P *Keokuk* (JG), 2 at Ada Hayden P *Story* 6, 15 Sep (WO), and the last on 18 Sep at Maynes Grove P *Franklin* (RG).

**Cerulean Warbler:** Following a summer with very few reports (Dinsmore J. J., 2010) there were no fall reports.

**Black-and-white Warbler:** The first few were 2 in *Winneshiek* 17 Aug (DK), 1 in *Fayette* 18 Aug (MP), and 2 in *Kossuth* 18 Aug (MCK). From 1–10 were reported from 13 counties in the eastern two-thirds of the state, none in the west. The last was 1 at Grammer Grove *Marshall* and 2 at Emma McCarthy P *Story* 24 Sep (MP, CG).

**American Redstart:** The last two were at Grammer Grove *Marshall* 26 Sep (MP), and Little Wall L *Hamilton* 30 Sep (CG).



*Neotropic Cormorant, Cedar L, Cedar Rapids, Linn, 11 September 2010. Photograph by James Forde, Cedar Rapids, IA.*



*Bonaparte's Gull, Lake Macbride, Johnson, 22 November 2010. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*



*Glossy Ibis, Sycamore Bottoms, Johnson, 21 October 2010. Photograph by James Forde, Cedar Rapids, IA.*



*Juvenile Arctic Tern, Lake Macbride, Johnson, 23 November 2010. Photograph by Mark Brown, Iowa City, IA.*



*Ruby-throated Hummingbird (leucistic individual), Madison, 16 September 2010. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.*



*Red-bellied Woodpecker, Hardin, 18 October 2010. Photograph by Tom Schilke, Waterloo, IA.*



*Anna's Hummingbird, Saylorville, Polk, 7 November 2010. Photograph by Aaron Brees, Saylorville, IA.*



*Tree Swallow, Boone, 6 September 2010. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.*

*Marsh Wren, Hamilton,  
13 September 2010.  
Photograph by Jim  
Moreland, Boone, IA.*



*Summer Tanager,  
Cherokee, Cherokee, 14  
November 2010. Photo-  
graph by Dick Bierman,  
Cherokee, IA.*



*Yellow-throated Warbler, Iowa City, Johnson,  
24 August 2010. Photograph by Jim Scheib,  
Iowa City, IA.*



*Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Lake Hendricks, How-  
ard, 28 August 2010. Photograph by Stephen  
J. Dinsmore, Ames, IA.*



*Swamp Sparrow, Harrier M., Boone, 21 October 2010. Photograph by Doug Harr, Ogden, IA.*



*Le Conte's Sparrow, Harrier M., Boone, 12 October 2010. Photograph by Tyler M. Harms, Ames, IA.*



*Purple Finch, Boone, 18 November 2010. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



*Lincoln's Sparrow, Boone, 21 October 2010. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*



**Prothonotary Warbler:** The only report was 1 on 7 Aug near Otterville Bridge WMA Buchanan (SJD), a location not mentioned by observers in the summer months (Dinsmore 2010).

**Ovenbird:** The last was 1 on 5 Oct at Sycamore Access Polk (DA).

**Northern Waterthrush:** The first was 1 at Pine L SP Hardin (MP). There were 11 reports from eastern and central counties only, with the last 1 at Decorah Winneshiek 26 Sep (DC).

**Kentucky Warbler:** One was still singing on 28 Aug at Nine Mile Woods Polk (JWR). The last, on 22 Sep at Seminole Valley P Linn (BT), was 2nd-latest by 1 day.

**Mourning Warbler:** After the first on 14 Aug at Saylorville Polk (JB), there were 12 isolated reports of 1 or 2 during an expected migration window ending 18 Sep with 1 in Linn (BT). Then, 38 days later, one was photographed at Ledges SP Boone on 26 Oct (\*CG), a record-late date by nearly three weeks.

**Common Yellowthroat:** Very widely reported across the state until the last 4 were seen at Sedan Bottoms Appanoose 10 Oct (RLC).

**Wilson's Warbler:** The first 2 were found at Smith WA Kossuth 18 Aug (MCK). The 26 reports were second only to Nashville Warbler with 60% of the birds passing through in the first 10 days. The rest were all singles found intermittently over 30 days

with the last on 28 Sep at Ada Hayden P Story (WO).

**Canada Warbler:** The first 2 were at Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo 15 Aug (RG). The most was 3 along the Comet Trail Grundy 4 Sep (MP), and the last was 1 at Mt. Sterling M Van Buren 19 Sep (RLC).

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** The only one was a single at Hitchcock NC Pottawattamie 12 Sep (MO).

**Spotted Towhee:** The only two were found by Jim Sinclair 120 miles apart – 1 at Hitchcock NC Pottawattamie 7 Oct, and the other at Hooper WA Warren 11 Oct.

**Eastern Towhee:** There were seven reports from Appanoose, Black Hawk, Boone, Fremont, Story and Winnebago.

**American Tree Sparrow:** The first few arrived on time in mid-October—1 on 14 Oct in Linn (BT) and 3 on 15 Oct in Hardin (MP) and Hamilton (CG). There were only 8 reports with the most 18 at Rockford Fossil & Prairie P Floyd on 30 Oct (BT).

**Chipping Sparrow:** The last was 1



*American Redstart, Iowa City, Johnson, 3 September 2010. Photograph by Jim Scheib, Iowa City, IA.*

on 28 Oct in Cedar Rapids *Linn* (BT).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** There were two reports, one secondhand and the other on an unusual date for the southern half of the state. Rare in northern Iowa, summering birds sometimes can be found there into Aug or Sep, but the only photos of fall migrants of this species come from the 2nd week of October.

**Field Sparrow:** The last was 1 in Ames *Story* on 30 Oct (SJD).

**Vesper Sparrow:** The last was seen 23 Oct on an IOU Fall Meeting field trip at Neal Smith *Jasper* (KVS, DE).

**Lark Sparrow:** All: 1 on 7 Aug at Riverton WA *Fremont* (JB), and 1 on 8 Aug at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (DP).

**Savannah Sparrow:** Some high counts were 46 on 10 Oct at Errington M *Polk* (BE), and 56 on 19 Oct at Harrier M *Boone* (LGD). The last 7 were in rural *Black Hawk* on 6 Nov (DE).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** No reports.

**Henslow's Sparrow:** There were 3 reports of single birds on 7 Aug at Ham M *Buchanan* (SJD), 26 Sep at Diehl Wetlands *Warren* (JS, JG), and 1 Oct at Hickory Hills P *Tama* (DE).

**Le Conte's Sparrow:** Arrivals on 11 Sep at two locations were the 2nd-earliest for the month (historically, there are two inexplicable dates for Aug). At Errington M *Polk* 15 were counted on 11 Sep (DT), and 2 were photographed at Harrier M *Boone* the same day (CG). Harrier M was a good place to find this species with 30–56 counted there 9–14 Oct (CG, SJD), but it was also reported from wetlands in *Black Hawk*, *Butler*, *Dallas*, *Fremont*, *Iowa*, *Jasper*, *Keokuk*, *Pocahontas*, *Story* and *Warren*. There were



*White-throated Sparrow*, Boone, 5 October 2010.  
Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.

two Nov reports with 1 still at Errington M 4 Nov (SJD), and 2 at Riverton *Fremont* 19 Nov (KD).

**Nelson's Sparrow:** Like Le Conte's, this species was first noticed 11 Sep both at Errington M and Harrier M (DT, CG), which is a 4th-earliest date. Some high counts were 16 at Diehl Wetlands *Warren* 2 Oct (JS), and 10 at Harrier M 3 Oct (CG). The last were still around 22 Oct at Cone M *Louisa* and near Iowa City *Johnson* (JF).

**Fox Sparrow:** The first 3 were right on the 20-year median arrival date of 27 Sep near Elkhart *Polk* (CG). From 1–6 were reported from 12 counties except for a pocket of 25 on 17 Oct at Rolling Thunder Prairie *Warren* (JS).

**Song Sparrow:** The most was 20 on 10 Oct at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (RLC).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** First reported 2 Sep in Cedar Falls (DE). All 18 reports were of single birds except 2 on 25 Sep in *Fayette* (MP), and up to 8 at Riverton WA *Fremont* 8–18 Oct (KD, LJP, BKP). The last two were seen 23 Oct on IOU Fall Meeting field trips at Red Rock *Marion* and Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* (MP, KVS).



*Harris's Sparrow*, Boone, 7 October 2010. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

**Swamp Sparrow:** The highest counts occurred 8–10 Oct with 53 at Riverton WA Fremont (KD), 80 at Sedan Bottoms Appanoose (RLC), and 146 at Errington M Polk (BE).

**White-throated Sparrow:** First found



*White-crowned Sparrow*, Boone, 12 October 2010. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

5 Sep at Willowglen Nursery Winneshiek (LZ). In the 15 years prior to 2005, the median arrival date was 11 Sep, but over the last 6 years it has been 5 Sep, a full week earlier. The most reported was 134 on 30 Sep at Robison WA Story (DA).

**Harris's Sparrow:** The first was at Dakin's Lake P Story 25 Sep (BT). Never common, the most was 5 on 5 Nov in Boone (LGD). A juv was still at Pleasant Creek RA Linn 26 Nov (BSc).

**White-crowned Sparrow:** Aside from an undocumented group of 6 reported on a record-early date, the first 4 were

at Ada Hayden P Story 28 Sep (WO), right on the median arrival date over the last 20 years. From 1–4 were also reported from Appanoose, Boone, Dallas, Linn and Jasper (RLC, LGD, JB, KVS) with the last few at Pleasant Creek Linn 26 Nov (BSc).

**Dark-eyed Junco:** The first migrants were found on 26 Sep at three locations—Lime Creek Cerro Gordo (RG), Algona (MCK), and Little Wall L Hamilton (CG).

**Summer Tanager:** A record-late bird on 13 Nov was at a feeder in Spirit L Dickinson (Peter & Judy Vander Linden-photos *vide* LAS). The next day it disappeared, and one showed up at a feeder in Cherokee (DB-photos) staying through the 23rd. The only other November record is from 7 Nov 1999.

**Scarlet Tanager:** The last would have been the one on 24 Sep in Urbandale (BE), except another was found visiting a Cedar Rapids feeder 63 days later on Nov 26 (Carole Teator-photo *vide* BrE), a record-late date. It stayed through the end of the season.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** The last was 1 on 8 Oct at Waterworks P in the city of Des Moines (JB).

**Blue Grosbeak:** Reported as far east as *Cherokee* where a male was still singing on 19 Aug (DB). The last was 3rd-latest on 21 Sep in rural *Fremont* (DA).

**Indigo Bunting:** The last was 1 on 10 Oct at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (RLC).

**Dickcissel:** Two reports: 1 on 4 Oct at Errington M *Polk* 4 Oct (DA), and 4 on 8 Oct at Riverton WA *Fremont* (JS).

**Bobolink:** Some high counts were 93 at Ham M *Buchanan* 7 Aug (SJD) and 90 on 18 Aug at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (RLC). The last was a lone, lost single on 12 Oct at Harrier M *Boone* (SJD).

**Eastern Meadowlark:** Still singing, the last was identified by voice on 16 Nov at Jester P *Polk* (DT), a very late date.

**Western Meadowlark:** No reports.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Two reports: 15 on 11 Sep at Harrier M *Boone* (CG), and 5 on 20 Sep at L *Manawa Potawatamie* (LJP, BKP).

**Rusty Blackbird:** The first few were 2 at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* 8 Oct (DC), and 3 on 9 Oct at Kelley *Story* (CG). The only large flocks were in *Fremont*, which included 196 at Riverton WA 21 Nov (KD).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** The first 4 were at Colo Ponds *Story* 19 Oct (MP). At least 150 were in a rolling, mixed flock of blackbirds and Starlings in corn stubble west of USNWR *Kossuth* 10 Nov (MCK-details). About 100 in rural *Hancock* on 17 Nov was the largest pure flock RG had ever seen. The last fall report was 19 on 24 Nov in rural *Polk* (SJD).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** All: 1 on 22 Aug at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD), 1 on 9 Sep at Otter Creek M *Tama* (DP), 30 on 14 Oct at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), and 3 near Farragut *Fremont* on 13 Nov (KD).

**Orchard Oriole:** All: A possible family group of 3 on 1 Aug at USNWR *Kossuth* (MCK), 1 on 16 Aug at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO), and 1 on 27 Aug at Squaw Creek P *Linn* (BSc).

**Baltimore Oriole:** An immature male visiting a feeder in Clear L *Cerro Gordo* 17–19 Nov (RG) was the last report.

**Purple Finch:** The first was 1 on 6 Sep in Davenport (CG). The largest flock was only 15 on 23 Oct at Yellow Banks P along the Des Moines R in s *Polk* (DT). Also reported in *Boone*, *Cerro Gordo*, *Cherokee*, *Dallas*, *Dickinson*, *Linn*, and *Tama*.

**Pine Siskin:** The first was at a favorite Iowa spot, the Fischer's back yard in Mason City 10 Sep (CJF). A few more appeared in *O'Brien* and *Kossuth* in Sep before the first big group of 30 on 1 Oct in *Algona* (MCK). Other high counts were 42 on 21 Nov in Saylor TWP *Polk* (Torre Hovick *vide* AB), up to 45 at a time at yard feeders in *Scott* 10–30 Nov (WMZ), and 57 at yard feeders in *Cherokee* 25 Nov (DB).

**American Goldfinch:** As many as 600 were estimated to be at Neal Smith NWR *Jasper* 23 Oct (SJD).

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** Two were at a gravel pit in rural *Johnson* 29 Aug (MB), and one was at a back yard feeder in Gilbert *Story* 31 Oct–8 Nov (\*WO, JOB).

## COMMENT

This article is based on information submitted by 69 field observers whose initials appear in the text and whose names appear below, plus another 15 whose full names appear in the text. They submitted a total of 2693 reports including many, many details that help to construct the text, like, "... seen in fog – probably many more", and "... including the first juveniles of the season", and "a first-winter bird, seen along with White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows for a *Zonotrichia trifecta*". In addition, there were 56 documen-

tations and many photos, some spectacular. These reports came from 80 of Iowa's 99 counties, although 22% of all reports came from Polk County, and 60% came from ten heavily birded counties: Polk, Linn, Story, Marion, Johnson, Pottawattamie, Boone, Black Hawk, Marshall and Fremont (listed in decreasing order of greatest frequency). What would we find if each birder pledged to adopt a nearby, ornithologically-neglected county?

Summarized here is the presence of 274 species found in Iowa from 1 August to 30 September, 2010. There were eight additional, very common species for which at least some data were submitted, but which are not included here. These species are Mallard, Great Blue Heron, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Northern Flicker, Tufted Titmouse, Red-winged Blackbird, and Common Grackle.

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## **Hitchcock Nature Center Hawk Watch and Banding, Fall 2010**

*Mark Orsag*

Solid steady numbers across the entire season, of early, mid-, and late season migrants made 2010 the 2nd best season in the history of Hitchcock Nature Center Hawk Watch (HNCH) with a total of 11,961 migrant raptors of nineteen species counted. Approximately 816 hours of counting time were logged between 15 August and 20 December. The season's passage rate for migrating raptors was 14.7 raptors per hour. New season records were set for Turkey Vulture (4,366), Bald Eagle (1,126), and Peregrine Falcon (69). New single-day records were set for Peregrine Falcon (28) on 20 September and Rough-legged Hawk (14) on 12 December. Of the nineteen raptor species annually counted at Hitchcock, above average (as defined against the eight season HNCH full coverage average) counts were posted by seven species (Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Mississippi Kite, Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Merlin, and Peregrine Falcon). Essentially average (-/+ 10% in comparison to the 8-year HNCH average) counts were posted by six species (Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, and Ferruginous Hawk). Below average counts were posted by six species (Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, American Kestrel, and Prairie Falcon).

#### THE SEASON IN DETAIL

##### **August and September**

Observers manned the watch on only four days in August before full-time counting

commenced on 1 September. On 29 August, a strong push of Turkey Vultures (109), tacking as usual into southerly winds, produced a rare triple-digit day (113 total raptors) for August. September featured many south wind days and few strong fronts. This didn't seem to depress raptor numbers, however, as the Loess Hills and Missouri River Valley offer by far the most efficient pathways over the midcontinent flatlands for migrating raptors under such circumstances. A steady trickle of birds at the beginning of the month turned into a consistent strong flow beginning on 11 September. During the last 20 days of the month, there were 17 triple-digit flights. While there were no truly spectacular days, the nearly unremitting push of raptors made September 2011 the third best September in HNCH history. Count totals topped the 400 mark four times. On 22 September, 347 Turkey Vultures dominated a 458 raptor flight that also featured 58 Sharp-shinned Hawks and 12 Ospreys. This was the first of a series of big flights two days apart. On 24 September, one of the few reasonably strong frontal systems of the month pushed through 538 raptors, among them 136 Turkey Vultures, 168 Broad-winged Hawks, and a lone Mississippi Kite. Turkey Vultures (203) predominated again on 26 September leading an 11 species, 425 raptor flight. Right on the "every other day" schedule, on 28 September, 142 Turkey Vultures and 118 Swainson's Hawks led a 13 species, 453 raptor flight that also included two very late Mississippi Kites.

### **October**

October included more cold fronts and generally followed the steady pattern of good flights that emerged in September. The first 13 days of the month all witnessed triple-digit raptor flights. Nine more triple-digit flights occurred during the rest of October; October 2011 was the third best October in HNCH history. Flights of 400 or more raptors occurred on 2, 10, and 26 October. On 2 October, 237 Turkey Vultures and 114 Red-tailed Hawks dominated a 10 species, 436 raptor flight. The best flight of 2011 occurred on 10 October with 284 Turkey Vultures and 233 Swainson's Hawks comprising the bulk of an 11 species, 631 raptor flight. On 26 October, 320 Red-tailed Hawks and 76 Bald Eagles led a nine species, 451 raptor flight that also included a lone Golden Eagle.

### **November and December**

November began slowly with a relatively mild and inactive weather pattern. A series of powerful cold fronts toward the end of the month brought strong totals and produced the 4th strongest November (1,404 total raptors) in the history of HNCH. The big days were 22 November when Bald Eagles (79) dominated a flight of 103 raptors that was accompanied by a stunning total of 600,000 Snow Geese! An even stronger push of Bald Eagles (121) along with 2 Golden Eagles highlighted a flight of 201 raptors on 25 November. Two more Golden Eagles showed up the next day (26 November) during a flight of 120 raptors that was dominated by Red-tailed Hawks (85). November 30 saw yet another strong push of Bald Eagles (117) as part of a six species, 171 raptor flight.

Despite frigid temperatures, December was a disappointing month with only two flights of 50 or more birds. On 1 December a flight of 81 raptors of five species was evenly divided between Bald Eagles (45) and Red-tailed Hawks (33). A brutally cold, windy day on 12 December, preceded by a snowstorm the day before, produced 76 Bald Eagles, 30

Red-tailed Hawks, and a HNCH single-day record of 14 Rough-legged Hawks. After that flight, the season sputtered to a close with only 33 southbound raptors recorded during the last eight days of the watch.

#### SPECIES ACCOUNTS

**Black Vulture** (0). The last Black Vulture seen at Hitchcock was in 2005. Only one other sighting has occurred at HNCH—in 2002, the last year before full-time counting commenced. After the 2005 sighting, we began to hope that this species might be more or less regular (if not annual) at Hitchcock. At least at this point, that doesn't appear to be the case.

**Turkey Vulture** (4,366). The 2010 season was a record for Turkey Vultures with the count a whopping 35% above the HNCH average. With southerly winds predominant in the early to mid-season, flight conditions were favorable because these big birds love to tack into the wind. They were afforded plenty of opportunities to do so in 2010. September was the top month as these birds moved a bit early this season. The top day of the season for Turkey Vultures (347) was on 22 September, a day characterized by steady moderate (around 15 mph) southeasterly winds. The timing of the peak flight was a bit early. The last Turkey Vulture was recorded, a bit late, on 11 November.

**Osprey** (182). Ospreys (which are strongly pre-frontal migrants at HNCH) and Turkey Vultures are both early season migrants that like to tack into southerly winds at HNCH, and it is thus not surprising that Ospreys also had a very strong showing in 2010. The 2010 fall total was nearly a new season record, falling just short of the HNCH record total of 184 (2004). The 2010 flight was 46% above the 8-year HNCH average. September was, as always, the top month with the peak flight of 34 occurring, with normal timing, on 20

September—a pre-frontal day characterized by moderate to strong (around 20 mph) southerly winds. The last Osprey was recorded on 28 October.

**Mississippi Kite** (12). The 2010 season was good for Mississippi Kites at HNCH. This season's total was 38% above the HNCH average. All the kites recorded this year were seen in the month of September. The first appeared on 1 September with the last two seen on 28 September. Both 6 September and 28 September tied for the peak flight with two kites counted on each of those days.

**Bald Eagle** (1,126). These late season migrants, strongly post-frontal and favoring north winds, were recorded at an unusually brisk pace throughout the 2011 season at HNCH—a surprising total of 66 turned up in September and a stunning 249 were counted in October. The 2010 count, which was a new HNCH season record, was a whopping 32% above the HNCH average. November was, as usual, the top month with 614 Bald Eagles recorded. The peak flight (121) occurred with normal timing on 25 November with the rapid passage of a low pressure system that brought moderate to strong (20+ mph) northwest winds in its wake. The first two Bald Eagles showed up on 6 September. Rivers and lakes in the vicinity froze during an extended time period this fall but were all closed by the end of the season on 20 December. We also experienced an excellent Snow Goose flight down the Missouri River Valley this season. These two factors probably helped boost Bald Eagle totals considerably.

**Northern Harrier** (279). While 2010 wasn't a good season for harriers at HNCH



(particularly following a record setting year in 2009), it wasn't notably bad either. The 2010 count was just 3% below the HNCH average. The timing of the flight was very much on the late side, however, with November (77) actually beating the September total of 56. October (140) was, as usual, the top month. The shallow peak flight of 19 occurred somewhat late on 4 November, a day marked by the passage of a robust Pacific cold front that produced 20+ mph NNW winds. The first two southbound harriers were recorded, with normal timing, on 1 September. The last southbound harrier was recorded on 6 December.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk** (1,070). This was another species coming off a record showing in 2009. The 2010 total, however, was just 2% above the 8-year HNCH average. Migration was a bit early with September the top month. The first Sharp-shinned Hawk was recorded on 2 September. The shallow peak flight of 79 occurred slightly early, on 21 September, with the passage of a weak Pacific cold front that produced light to moderate (10 mph) NW winds and cloudy conditions. These very small, naturally buoyant raptors seem to prefer days where the winds and the lift (from thermals or updrafts) are not too strong. This presumably saves them a good deal of buffeting and allows them to expend less energy. Thus, their 2010 migration peak at HNCH on a gloomy, damp day with only light winds and 100% cloud cover is not unusual. Such a pattern would be unusual for almost every other annual raptor at HNCH, except perhaps for the highly adaptable and unpredictable Northern Harrier.

**Cooper's Hawk** (242). The Cooper's Hawk was yet another species that posted a record season total in 2009. The 2010 total was about 3% above the HNCH average. This species shows less annual varia-

tion than many others at Hitchcock, and the timing and volume of the unremarkable 2010 flight was consistent with that pattern. September was, as always, the top month for Cooper's Hawks at Hitchcock. The peak flight of 2010 (25) occurred, with normal timing, on 24 September; this flight occurred with sunny skies and moderate (15 mph) westerly winds following the passage of a low pressure system the night before. These conditions created good thermals, updrafts, and nice ridge-riding opportunities for the day's Cooper's Hawks. This species is an annual breeding and wintering resident at Hitchcock Nature Center, so I have not included any early/late data.

**Northern Goshawk** (5). While the 2010 total was 17% below the HNCH average, this represented a difference of just a single bird—5 versus the average count of 6. This is an uncommon raptor at HCNH. The first goshawk of the season was seen quite early on 17 September. The last migrant was recorded on 27 October, although a bird was later found at Hitchcock during the DeSoto NWR Christmas Bird Count in early January 2011. October was the top month for goshawks. The peak flight of 2 occurred on 21 October, a calm sunny day with excellent thermal conditions and light and variable winds.

**Red-shouldered Hawk** (4). The 2010 Red-shouldered Hawk total was 20% below the HNCH average, although this represented only one bird (4 birds versus the average of 5). This is a very uncommon species at Hitchcock and the season record is only 8 birds (2004). The first Red-shouldered Hawk was seen on 24 September with the last counted on 17 October. All four birds seen in 2010 were singles, so there was no peak flight.

**Broad-winged Hawk** (579). The 2010 flight was 17% below the HNCH average,

although as I have noted in past reports this is somewhat deceiving. Without the huge outlier of the Hurricane Katrina influenced 2005 flight (which is more than 700 birds above the next highest season total), the 2010 flight would be well above average. In 2010, the first Broad-winged Hawk was seen on 19 August, and the last a bit late on 10 October. The peak flight of 168 occurred with normal timing on 24 September, a day with sunny skies, good thermals, and moderate updrafts. Only one dark morph Broad-winged Hawk was counted this fall.

**Swainson's Hawk** (693). The 2010 total was 42% below the HNCH average but actually was the best showing at HNCH in the last four years. It was a heartening experience, and for some of our more recent volunteers a new one, to see kettles of these raptors again. The first Swainson's Hawk was seen on 26 August, and the last two were counted on 11 October. The peak flight (233) occurred, with very late timing, on 10 October, a sunny, unremarkable day with light and variable winds and good thermal conditions. A weak low pressure system induced falling barometric pressure readings throughout the day but no other effects were visible. Five dark morph and three rufous morph Swainson's Hawks were recorded in 2010.

**Red-tailed Hawk** (3,096). This season's total was 9% below the HNCH average. Flight timing was average with October, as always, the top month. The peak flight of 320 occurred a bit late on 26 October. This was a day when a strong Pacific cold front brought howling WNW winds, gusting to 50 mph, a typical peak day for Red-tailed Hawks. They are mid- to late season, updraft favoring, post-frontal migrants. The following Red-tailed Hawk color morphs/subspecies were recorded this year: 42 Har-

lan's dark morph, 2 Harlan's light morph, 10 Krider's, 16 Western dark morph, 5 Western rufous morph, 1 partial albino, and 35 birds recorded merely as indeterminate dark morph Red-tailed Hawks.

**Rough-legged Hawk** (36). An uncommon late season migrant, the Rough-legged Hawk flight in 2010 was 8% above the HNCH average. December was, as usual, the top month. The first two Rough-legs were recorded with normal timing on 31 October. The peak flight, a new HNCH day record, was 14 birds on 12 December. This was a sunny day with very strong NW winds and frigid temperatures following blizzard conditions on 11 December. The combination of the strong cold front and substantial snow cover may have induced these birds to move south. We have noticed a strong correlation between the appearance of snow cover and Rough-legged Hawk migration at HNCH in past seasons, and this was once again the case in 2010. Nine dark morph Rough-legged Hawks were recorded in 2010, 25% of the 2010 flight. This is about average for HNCH and suggests a mix of birds from the eastern and western Arctic.

**Ferruginous Hawk** (1). After a two season absence, a lone juvenile light morph bird was recorded, with fairly normal timing, on 21 November. This represents an average fall count at of this very rare migrant. The day that brought in the Ferruginous Hawk this year was cloudy with light westerly winds that saw an overall count of 92 raptors. This was the second day of a fairly strong but slow moving low pressure system. A Prairie Falcon was recorded a few hours before the Ferruginous Hawk. Western hawk migration sites, such as those run by Hawkwatch International, often experience strong flights based around low pressure systems.

**Golden Eagle** (23). The 2010 Golden Eagle total was 21% above the HNCH average. The whole dynamic of the flight was inexplicably different this year. The first two birds turned up right on schedule on 14 October. This species' baffling propensity for posting a daily count of two birds when it does turn up at HNCH continued strongly in 2010. This happened on six out of the thirteen days that Golden Eagles were recorded at HNCH in 2010. The peak flight of 4 occurred somewhat early on 30 October and October (not November) was the peak month, a surprising break from the traditional pattern with Golden Eagles at HNCH. The last bird moved through on schedule on 2 December. The day of the peak flight was uncharacteristic as well. Generally, Golden Eagles prefer to tack into southerly winds (like a late season version of Turkey Vultures or Osprey) or are pushed through with Bald Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks as ridge riders on blustery cold fronts with strong westerly or northerly winds. The peak on 30 October occurred on a sunny day that saw the passage of a weak Pacific frontal system; prevailing northwest winds were weak to moderate and gave thermalling birds only a slight push southward.

**American Kestrel** (90). The American Kestrel continued a steady pattern of decline at HNCH in 2010. This fall's count was 21% below average. The best HNCH counts for this species are a decade old now and often came in years when the counting at Hitchcock was only part-time. During the last five seasons, the average kestrel counts are, taken in aggregate, 13% below the current 8-year average. September was the best month this season with the peak flight of 14 on 13 September, a day of light southeasterly winds that were apparently enough to produce perfect flight conditions

for these small buoyant raptors. Kestrels don't mind tacking into light southerlies at HNCH, something that this year's peak flight illustrated once again.

**Merlin** (62). The pattern of strong flights in recent years for this species at HNCH continued in fall 2010. This fall's count was 29% above the HNCH average. The first and last Merlin were detected on 2 September and 2 December, both normal timing. However, the peak month and flight timing were unusual this year. The peak month in 2010 was September instead of October, although a late peak flight of 7 birds occurred on 27 October. The latter day was a day marked by the passage of a very strong cold front that produced westerly winds gusting to 50 mph and powerful updrafts at Hitchcock. It is a tribute to the amazing flying abilities of these little raptors that they shared the air on that day with numerous Bald Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks, species seemingly much better suited to such conditions.

**Peregrine Falcon** (69). The 2010 count was a new season record and a whopping 38% above the HNCH average. The first Peregrine Falcon was seen, a bit late, on 12 September. September was the top month. The last Peregrine Falcon was recorded with fairly normal timing on 27 October. The record peak flight of 28 occurred on 20 September, breaking the old record of 22 that was a decade old (Figure 1).

**Prairie Falcon** (3). Three single birds, all in November, were seen at HNCH this fall. This count was 25% below the HNCH average, but as with the Northern Goshawk and Red-shouldered Hawk, this represented a difference of only a single bird. Typically, sightings of this rare migrant at HNCH are spread out over the October to December period. November is usually the peak month for Prairie Falcons at Hitch-

cock. They also have a habit of turning up on days that aren't exactly raptor-filled (totals of 31, 52, and 92 raptor migrants on 7, 13, and 21 November 2010 respectively). They also turn up, unpredictably, under a wide variety of weather conditions; this too occurred in fall 2010. The first was seen on a day with moderate southerly winds,

the second on a day with strong northwest winds, and the third on a day with light westerly winds.

**Unidentified raptor** (23). Three unidentified accipiters, two unidentified buteos, two unidentified falcons, and sixteen birds classified only as unidentified raptors were recorded at Hitchcock in 2010.

## NONRAPTOR FLIGHT

Hitchcock Nature Center is overflowed by literally millions of southbound birds each fall. Many of these fly at night and others, although day flying, have too complex and confusing patterns for us to count—Canada Geese, Purple Martins and other swallows, American Robins, and icterids are just a few examples of such species. In recent years, we have settled into a pattern of counting eleven species (without the stringent protocols used for raptors) of non-raptors each fall and noting other species of interest. Below are the summaries of those counts for 2010.

### **Waterfowl, Shorebirds, Wading Birds, and Gulls**

American White Pelicans, after several down years, exploded this year at HNCH with a record count of 16,007; 14,834 of these birds were recorded in the month of September. Double-crested Cormorants, on the other hand, showed up in below-average numbers (4,228) this fall. The flight was fairly evenly split between the months of September and October. Great Blue Herons experienced a fairly robust flight with 48 counted this fall. October was the peak month, but two were counted in December! Snow Geese (741,160) posted a huge total largely based on a record 600,000 bird flight on 22 November. Ross's Geese, however, actually posted a below average total of 26. Perhaps the sheer mass of Snow Geese on 22 November, flying in formations described by observers as cloud-like, obscured their smaller cousins. Franklin's Gulls posted disappointing numbers again in 2010 and only 1,618 were counted at HNCH this season. None were seen during the month of October, which is simply bizarre. Ring-billed Gulls were also scarce at HNCH this year. Only 27 were recorded during the 2010 season. Other noteworthy counts included 1,350 Greater White-fronted Geese, 76 Great Egrets, 4 *Plegadis* (ibis) species, and a record 613 Sandhill Cranes.

### **Corvids and Other Species**

A respectable 106 Common Nighthawks were counted this season. Red-headed Woodpeckers posted very poor numbers in 2010, coming after a series of very strong and consistent flights over the past few seasons. This year's count of 122 is about 15% of what we have been averaging the past several seasons. Whether this was due to some meteorological or environmental quirk, or whether Red-headed Woodpeckers in the central United States are starting to follow the declines seen in the eastern United States remains to be seen. Blue Jays, on the other hand, experienced a sustained and robust flight. September was the big month for Blue Jays this season with a total of 6,167, the overwhelming bulk of the seasonal

total of 8,796 Blue Jays. The American Crow flight was a bit disappointing with only 12,371 recorded this fall. For the third year in a row, the Eastern Kingbird flight was paltry with a very poor total of only 19 this season. The lack of hours logged in August probably hurt the total.

Other notable species seen around the hawk tower included Lewis's Woodpecker (a juvenile seen on 10 October was the most surprising bird recorded at Hitchcock in 2010), Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Blue-headed Vireo, Tufted Titmouse, Swainson's Thrush, Northern Parula, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer Tanager, Rusty Blackbird, Great-tailed Grackle, and Purple Finch.



*Figure 1. Juvenile female Peregrine Falcon captured for banding at Hitchcock Nature Center Hawkwatch, 24 September 2010. Photograph by Sandy Reinkin*

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

HNCH couldn't function without the fine staff of Hitchcock Nature Center and the help of our great Hitchcock Hawkwatch Association volunteer group and visitors. Many thanks to Elliott Bedows, the late Fritz Davis, Linda Dennis, Kelly Dix, Dog (official hawk watch dog), Keith Dyche, Ryan Evans (our superb hawk counter), Chad Graeve, Griffin (official hawk watch mascot), Jonas Grundman, Janet Hascall, Richard Hendrick, Stan How, Bill Johnson, Jori Jones, Erin Kenney, Clem Klaphake, Jeanine Lackey, Sherry Leonardo, Lori Lind, Don Maas, Shirley Maas, Sue Mattix, Jason McMeen, Veronica Meckoray, Jim Meyer, Greg Nelson, Babs Padelford, Loren Padelford, Don Paseka, Janis Paseka, Donna Popp, Tina Popson, Sandy Reinken, Dana Ripper, Bob Russell, Tom Schilke, Jim Sinclair, Kent Skaggs, David Spencer, Meredith Spencer, Phil Swanson, Jerry Toll (simply the heart of HNCH), Jayu Yang, and Jean Yang.

Hitchcock Hawk Counter Ryan Evans offers the following tribute to longtime HNCH volunteer Fritz Davis, whom we tragically lost to an accident this fall:

Definitely one of a kind. Not only was he interesting to have on the tower, he was also a very thoughtful and selfless man. When he showed up, he almost always had a treat for me and Dog. Whether it was a recipe, a raptor natural history printout, or anything in between, he was always thinking of others. Even though he had a full load himself, he would always try to carry some of my stuff up the tower. I remember my last day with him well. Knowing that I was a Huskers fan, he brought a small portable radio up to the tower. He

had been at Hitchcock most of the day, and around 4 P.M. he left the banding station. But Fritz did not go home. He came back up on the tower, and the two of us listened to the rest of the game together. Even though they lost, it was great to be up there listening to the game as the last of the raptors came through for the day. I hope that I will always remember that. A great man to share space with...

## Raptor Banding at Hitchcock Hawk Watch, Fall 2010

*Jerry Toll*

### Raptor Banding Efforts

The diurnal banding season began favorably on 2 September when the mist nets were opened for the first time. A Merlin quickly flew into the net and became the first capture of the season. The capture rate remained well ahead of last year's record until the third week in October when it slowed. An extreme low pressure system with westerly winds brought numerous raptors (mostly adult Red-tailed Hawks), but they stayed west of the banding station and could not be lured to the trap. The capture rate dropped precipitously after late October and stayed low for the remainder of the season. We ended the season with 157 captures, slightly below last year's record of 164. Of this total, 107 were Red-tailed Hawks, of which 81 were juveniles. Other frequently captured species were 29 Sharp-shinned Hawks (12 males and 17 females) and 18 Cooper's Hawks (7 males and 11 females). We did not recapture any previously banded diurnal raptors this season. In addition to the Merlin, two other species were banded. On 14 September, a Broad-winged Hawk flew into a mist net without any human encouragement. It was early in the day and apparently flew from its perch and was attracted to the starling lure. This was the first Broad-winged Hawk banded at Hitchcock. It is unusual to capture this species in migration because they hunt from the perch and are not usually lured. On 20 September, there was an amazing push of Peregrine Falcons when 28 flew past the hawk watch in mid- to late afternoon. Of those 28 individuals, 12 were attracted to the pigeon lure and made close, low passes but were not captured. Still, every Peregrine pass at the lure, just a few feet from the observer, was exciting! It was an extraordinary day. On 24 September at around 9 A.M., I had begun luring and looked down for some reason. When I looked up there was a Peregrine in the mist net! Despite the bander's best efforts, most of our success is largely determined by the behavior of the individual bird, a reminder of humility and respect. All of the Peregrines that have been seen from the banding station or captured have been of the *tundrius* subspecies. The last capture of 2010 was on 14 November, a Red-tailed Hawk, but full coverage at the banding station ended on 31 October.

## Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding Activities

The nocturnal banding season of Northern Saw-whet Owls began at HNCH while we were still banding diurnal raptors on 8 October. Because of the intensity of the banding season, we restricted our nocturnal banding to four hours beginning after sunset, four evenings per week. We banded 25 evenings during a 46-day period and the owl-banding season ended on 21 November. The peak period was 28 October to 9 November (Figure 2). An “L” shaped array of mist nets was used in combination with an audio lure of the female spring call. Consequently, 74.5% of the captures were female, 14.5% were male, and 11% were of unknown gender. It was a successful season with 55 new Saw-whets banded, 4 recaptures of birds banded by others (foreign), and 10 recaptures of owls banded by us during the same season but not in the same evening (domestic). This exceeded last year’s

37 captures and two foreign recaptures. Of the 2010 foreign recaptures, two came from Hawk Ridge near Duluth, Minnesota, one came from a nature center near Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and the origin of the other remains unknown. Four of the domestic recaptures were of one individual, which was recaptured repeatedly over a 22-day period that suggested a nearby territory. Four individuals were recaptured once at intervals of 2 to 16 days from initial capture. Another individual was recaptured twice at 12 and 20 days from initial capture. The nets were open for a total of 96.25 hours which, including the foreign recaptures, yielded a capture rate of 0.61 owls per hour.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the Pottawattamie County Conservation Board and Foundation for financial, staff and facility support. The Iowa Ornithologists’ Union and Iowa Audubon provided continued financial support. Banding efforts were aided by Sandy Reinken (co-bander) and volunteer banders Carla Ahlschwede, Ruth Bentzinger, Denise Lewis, and Janis Paseka.



*Figure 2. Dana Ripper holding a Northern Saw-whet Owl captured for banding at Hitchcock Nature Center Hawkwatch, 7 November 2010. Photograph by Ethan Duke*

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# Anna's Hummingbird: First Iowa Record

*Aaron Brees*

On the evening of 31 October 2010, at approximately 5:00 P.M., I was surprised to see a hummingbird approach my hummingbird feeder in Saylor Township, Polk County. It had been two weeks since my last Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and this bird appeared too large to be that species. It returned to feed two more times before dark, allowing me to take some photographs from which I tentatively identified it as an Anna's Hummingbird. The photos were emailed to several birders, and hummingbird expert Sheri Williamson quickly replied, confirming the identification.

The hummingbird returned the next day under better viewing conditions. It was clearly larger than a Ruby-throated Hummingbird and rather chunky in build. The bill was straight and not particularly long. The forehead, crown, back, and rump were dark green and the tail appeared to be dark gray. The breast, flanks, and undertail coverts had a light gray background coloration and were heavily marked with dull green. The most striking feature of the bird was the shape and color of the gorget. It appeared dark and colorless at some angles, but in good light the gorget feathers were a stunning iridescent pink. The pink feathers covered most of the throat, but were generally absent immediately below the bill and eyes. A small number of pink feathers were present in the auricular area and single iridescent feathers were present on each side of the head above the supercilium. The lower corners of the gorget were elongated, pointing downward toward the wings. The amount of pink feathering was at or beyond the extreme for a female, while the lack of a complete gorget and pink crown ruled out an adult male. I concluded that the bird was a hatch-year male in the process of molting its adult gorget and crown feathers.

Over the course of its stay, the hummingbird spent much of its time away from the feeder sitting in the lilac bushes that line my back fence. Depending on the weather, it would vary its perch from high, exposed branches when warm and sunny, to concealed, interior branches when cold and windy. It could often be seen fly-catching insects from the tops of the bushes or carefully gleaning them from the tips of branches, the eaves of a garage, and the cracks of an old telephone pole in the corner of the yard. The bird regularly visited the feeder, but on some days it was more easily located by listening for its song. On warm, sunny days especially, it would persistently sing its mechanical, insect-like song from the tops of the lilac bushes or the neighbor's apple tree.

The Anna's Hummingbird was last seen on the morning of 25 November, ending its stay at 26 days. During the time it was present, the temperature reached a high of 73 degrees and dropped to a low of 16 degrees. On nights when the temperature dropped below freezing, the feeder was warmed with an outdoor flood light to keep the fluid from freezing. The bird never showed signs of being stressed by the cold weather, arriving at the same time every morning to feed regardless of temperature or precipitation. The temperatures around the time of its last appearance were not among the coldest it experienced, leading me to believe that it departed on its own rather than succumbing to the elements.



A minimum of 80 people came to see the Anna's Hummingbird in my yard. Amazingly, the first people to view the bird were Karen Schweitzer and Tom Vujovich who live two blocks east of my house. About one hour before it showed up at my feeder on 31 October, it made a brief appearance at their feeder. Recognizing that it was not a Ruby-throated, they took photos that clearly show it is the same bird.

This represents the first state record for Anna's Hummingbird in Iowa, although this occurrence was not unanticipated. *Birds in Iowa* (Kent and Dinsmore 1996) listed Anna's Hummingbird in the category of "Most likely species" to be added to the state list, and a survey of Iowa's most experienced birders conducted by Bill Scheible ranked it as the most likely next new addition to the state list (Scheible 2009). Anna's Hummingbird is the fourth hummingbird species to be documented in Iowa, which is fewer than most of our neighboring states. This fact, combined with the arrival of the Anna's well after the last Ruby-throated Hummingbirds had departed, demonstrates the value and great potential of maintaining hummingbird feeders as late in the fall as possible.

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Scheible, W. 2009. #422 for Iowa. *IOU News* 25:3.

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## **Birding Walnut Woods State Park and Vicinity**

*Tim Gedler*

Most large cities have refuge areas for birds in the form of city, state, and county parks, riparian zones, lakes, and bike trails. Des Moines is no exception. Birders from Iowa and other states may find themselves visiting the capital city for a variety of reasons. I am guilty of anthropomorphizing myself as a tired, migrating bird flying over a large city like Des Moines. I look down and think, "Wow! Look at *that* chunk of habitat!", mocking the lack of extensive habitat in many large urban areas. However, southwest Des Moines does have several large protected areas that are worth visiting. I was born and raised on the south side of Des Moines and began birding in the 1980s; this article highlights some of the areas

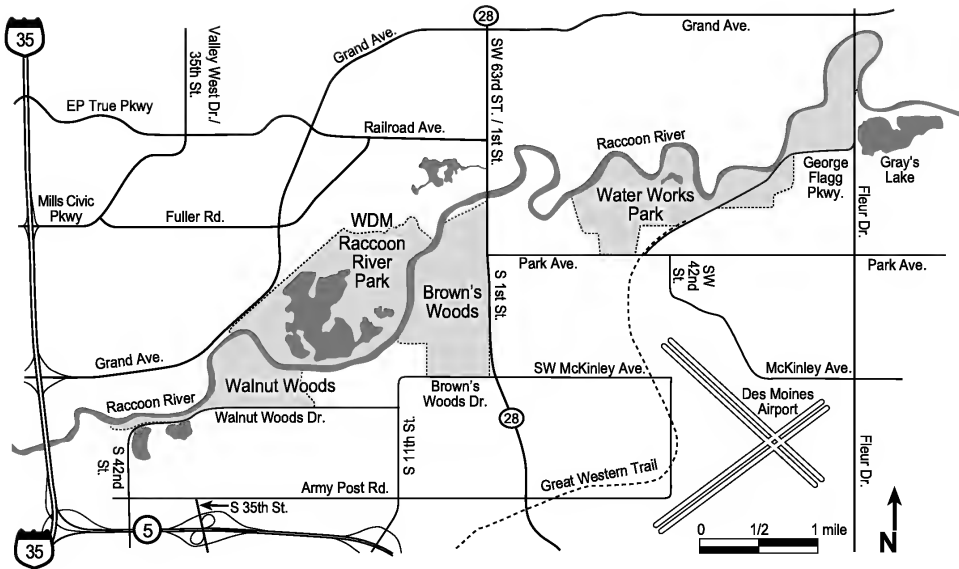


Figure 1. Map of southwest Des Moines showing the location of Walnut Woods State Park and other sites mentioned at the end of the article.

responsible for stimulating my birding interest. Walnut Woods State Park is featured in this article along with other birding sites in southwest Des Moines. I consider them urban gems in a sea of pavement.

### WALNUT WOODS STATE PARK

Walnut Woods State Park, established in the 1930s, encompasses more than 250 acres. Take exit 102 off the Highway 5 bypass on the south side of Des Moines and follow the signs north to the park (Figure 1). The park is an exceptional area for birds with more than 274 species observed in and near the park; the current breeding bird atlas project has recorded 79 species, of which 44 species are confirmed breeders. Other than the Iowa State Fairgrounds, Walnut Woods has the only public campground located within the Des Moines city limits. The campground has electric and full hookup sites suited for RVs and tent camping. The habitat within the park is bottomland floodplain forest. Upon entering the park, you will see impressive old-growth walnut trees along the main park roadway and throughout the park (Figure 2). Walnut Woods boasts the largest surviving stand of black walnut trees in North America, although the champion black walnut tree is in Oregon. Other dominant trees of the park include cottonwood, sycamore, hackberry, basswood, silver maple, and bur oak. The Raccoon River forms the park's northern boundary and is a site for wintering Bald Eagles. Evidence of flooding can be seen throughout the park including ice jam scars on the trunks of trees, driftwood throughout the forest, and steeply cut riverbanks. Record flooding occurred in 1986, 1993, 1998, and 2008.

My first visit to Walnut Woods was in the spring of 1986 on my bicycle with a pair of binoculars. I will not forget stopping to talk to a couple of birders along the main road, my

first encounter with Eugene and Eloise Armstrong. My warbler list couldn't have included much more than Tennessee and Yellow Warbler, so when Eugene mentioned "I've got a Blue-winged Warbler" I got excited. That is one of many life birds I have added at Walnut Woods.

Birding Walnut Woods is easy and a schedule can be adjusted to fit any time schedule. Three main parking areas provide access to the picnic areas and hiking trailheads (Figure 3). A 2.5-mile hiking trail covers the park from east to west. A variety of bird hikes, varying in length and time, can be planned by parking in one lot and birding the trail to another parking lot. This will allow for birding your way through picnic areas on the way back to your vehicle. The picnic areas can produce as many birds as the trails due to the large trees and attraction of the forest edge. On many days I have spent all of my time birding in the picnic areas without stepping foot on the trails. The picnic areas around the two westernmost parking lots (Figure 3) are the most popular starting place for birders. Look and listen for nesting Northern Parula and Yellow-throated Warbler in the large sycamores throughout the campground, picnic areas, and around the park lodge. Also concentrate on the forest edge that borders the picnic areas. Numerous tree and brush piles have accumulated over the years from clean-up efforts after storms and floods. Look and listen for a variety of shrub- and brush-loving species including Carolina Wren and Lincoln's Sparrow. The understory of Walnut Woods can present challenges to new and veteran birders—in spring, summer, and fall expect plenty of opportunities to practice identifying flycatchers, thrushes, and other forest birds.

The most sought after species in the park include a variety of woodpeckers, flycatchers, vireos, warblers, and woodland sparrows. Barred Owls are the common owl, but Eastern Screech- and Great Horned owls are also present. A Northern Saw-whet Owl was found one spring in a small cedar grove north of the east picnic area. Flooded timber along the



*Figure 2. View of the black walnut grove along the road through Walnut Woods State Park. Photograph by Tim Gedler*

old river channel and along Walnut Woods Drive between the two park entrances can attract waterfowl, herons, shorebirds, Prothonotary Warbler, and Northern Waterthrush during flood years. Two sand quarries that border Walnut Woods also attract waterfowl and are located along the south side of Walnut Woods Drive opposite the west end of the park (Figure 1). The quarries are private property but can be legally viewed atop the

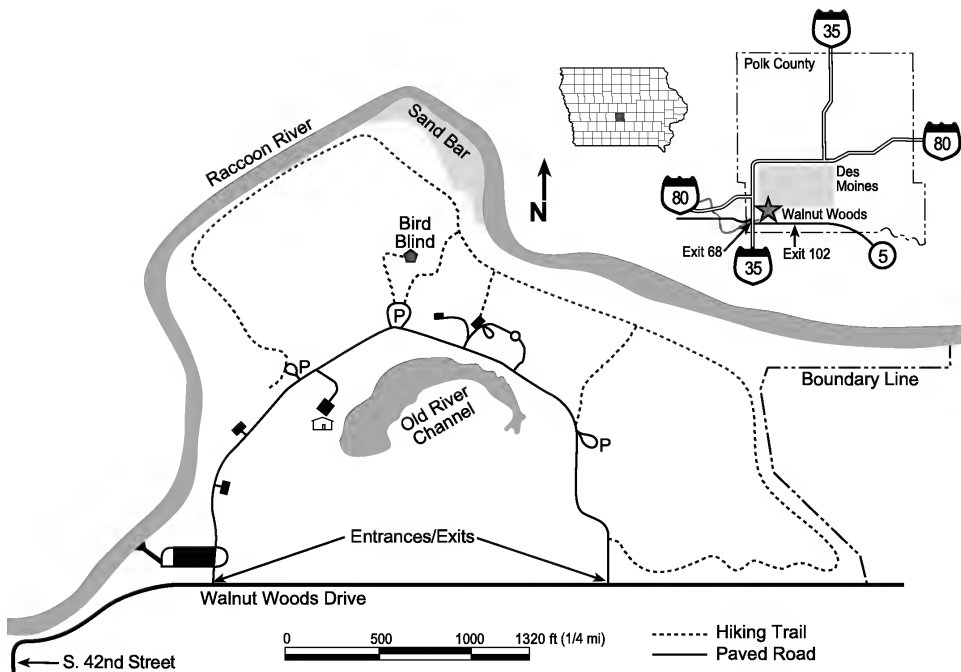


Figure 3. Map of Walnut Woods State Park showing the key birding spots mentioned in the article.

banks of right-of-way road ditches by ambitious birders. Waterfowl, American White Pelican, gulls, and terns occur during migration.

A visit to Walnut Woods should include a stop at the bird blind and feeding station located west of the park shop and office. The blind is located a short walk north of the middle parking lot (Figure 3). The blind has identification aids and is a great facility for both beginning and veteran birders and photographers. The feeders provide close-up views of many common resident birds plus a variety of other birds in season. Suet and jelly feeders attract woodpeckers, Tufted Titmouse, Gray Catbird, and Baltimore Oriole. A hummingbird feeder is maintained from spring through fall. During migration, the main feeders attract Eastern Towhee, many sparrows, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, and other species. The feeders are also maintained during winter months, providing a reliable food source for wintering and permanent resident birds. Also watch for occasional Sharpshinned and Cooper's hawks that find the feeders a great place for a meal!

Walnut Woods State Park is one of several good birding areas associated with the Raccoon River in southwest Des Moines. Although the city's west side has experienced much urban sprawl, these areas are flood-prone and remain relatively undisturbed as parks, preserves, and recreation areas. An extensive system of public lands continues east from Walnut Woods for nearly six miles until it reaches Grays Lake Park. Begin at **Raccoon River Park**, which is considered the crown jewel of the West Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department. The main park entrance is along Grand Avenue approximately 2.2 miles east of Interstate 35 (Figure 1). The park encompasses more than 630 acres including a 232-

acre lake. The park is across the Raccoon River from Walnut Woods State Park and offers a 3.2-mile crushed rock and asphalt nature trail that circles the lake. The trail winds its way between the lake and the Raccoon River providing a natural experience that can rarely be found in an urban environment. The trail is great for finding forest, marsh, lake, and riparian birds. **Brown's Woods** is a 484-acre forest preserve managed by the Polk County Conservation Board. It is the largest urban forest preserve in Iowa. The site is accessed from a small parking area on the north side of Brown's Woods Drive, 0.3 miles west of Highway 28 (SW 63rd Street) (Figure 1). The preserve has a well-maintained footpath comprised of two loops. The south loop meanders through upland oak-hickory forest. About mid-way through this loop, an optional loop to the north transitions into bottomland floodplain forest before winding its way back into the upland forest. The park is an excellent spot to see spring migrant passerines in May including a nice diversity of flycatchers, vireos, and warblers. Other less common birds include Wild Turkey, Red-shouldered Hawk, Pileated Woodpecker, Louisiana Waterthrush, Kentucky Warbler, and Summer and Scarlet tanagers. Continue east and north to Water Works Park and Grays Lake (Figure 1). **Water Works Park**, managed by Des Moines Water Works, is comprised of 1500 acres that include several small ponds and forested areas with roadways and trails. An arboretum at the east end of the park is a highlight of the area along with the paved Bill Riley Trail system; both offer great birding. Check the ponds in spring for waterfowl and other waterbirds, which are generally less common in fall. Pileated Woodpecker can sometimes be found along the river and Mississippi Kite is occasionally seen during summer over the river bluffs. The forested areas are good for migrant passerines in spring and fall. The 167-acre **Grays Lake Park** is located east of Water Works Park with the main entrance off Fleur Drive at the northwest corner of the lake. It is managed by the City of Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department. The 100-acre lake has a nice 1.9-mile paved trail around it. Check the lake in spring and fall for migrant waterfowl, Common Loon, grebes, and gulls. The small woodlot at the extreme eastern end of the lake sometimes has migrant passerines, although this park is primarily known for its waterbirds.

All of the areas mentioned in this article are within a 30-minute drive of one another and residents of Des Moines are fortunate to have them in such close proximity. Nonetheless, Walnut Woods State Park is viewed by many as a well-kept secret. Birders in central Iowa are well aware of the birding potential of these urban natural resource areas. For those not familiar with the Des Moines area, let yourself in on the secret on your next visit!

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# Fifty Years Ago in *Iowa Bird Life*

James J. Dinsmore

The March 1961 issue of *Iowa Bird Life* was the first of 100 issues produced by new editor Peter C. Petersen. A few changes were made, the most obvious being a change in the journal's cover. Pete introduced the use of a line drawing of a bird or birds, using the same drawing for a year and then changing to a new one. This issue featured Iowa's state bird, the American Goldfinch, and was done by Gary Yarrington of the Davenport Public Museum.

The lead article, by William Youngworth, discussed several winter birds of the Sioux City region. Of some interest, Youngworth noted that he saw a few Bohemian Waxwings and Evening Grosbeaks in November 1960 in Woodbury County. Both species have essentially disappeared from Iowa in recent decades. The 1960 Christmas Bird Count data were summarized by Woodward Brown. A total of 94 species was found on 22 counts, considerably fewer than species totals found in recent years, which typically average in the mid-130s. The high count was 74 species at Davenport, which also reported 91 Bald Eagles, a very high total for those years.

The fall meeting, which was growing in popularity, was held at Pikes Peak State Park and attracted about 60 people. A bird banding demonstration was held, and many of the attendees also visited the vacant home of Althea Sherman and her Chimney Swift tower in nearby National, Iowa.

The bird notes included one describing the sighting of five Whimbrels near Coralville Reservoir, at the time one of only a few Iowa sightings of that species since 1900. Near the end of the issue, the editor asked readers to submit sightings of birds that are unusual by season, scarcity of the species, or number seen, sending the reports to Woodward Brown who would compile the sightings. This was the formal beginning of what is now the Field Reports, a popular feature in each issue of *Iowa Bird Life*.

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# Iowa Ornithologists' Union

## Budget Meeting

22 December 2010

The IOU budget meeting was held via teleconference after a winter storm caused us to cancel an in-person meeting. President Steve Dinsmore called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. Also in attendance were Doug Hunt, Treasurer; board members Ken Lowder, Jay Gilliam, Paul Roisen, and Tom Schilke; and committee chairs and members Ann Johnson and Hank Zaletel.

**Formulation of 2011 Budget:** Treasurer Doug Hunt presented the IOU budget expenditures for 2010, current as of December 22. Based on 2010 actual revenues and expenditures, committee requests, and anticipated income and operating expenses, the 2011 budget was formulated.

**Transfer from Ann Barker memorial Fund:** \$500 requested by Ann Johnson to store scanned copies of *Iowa Bird Life* in archival boxes.

**Total Operating Revenue budgeted:** \$25,028.00.

### REVENUES

**Dues:** Proposed income of \$14,000 based on an estimate of current membership.

**Donations:** \$1,500 proposed. This amount remains unchanged from 2010. Actual donations for 2010 were \$1,392.

**Meeting and Bird Trips:** These have been break even items in the past and proposed to continue.

**Sales:** Sales from merchandise proposed to stay at the \$250 as in 2010. Actual sales for 2010 were \$142. On-line sales for 2011 budget proposed at \$100.

**Total interest income:** Treasurer Hunt proposed \$400 due to low current interest rates.

**Transfer from General Operation Fund Savings:** \$8,278.00 to balance the budget.

### EXPENDITURES

**Publications:** Ann Johnson presented a Publications budget request of \$16,883.00. Components of the \$16,883.00 proposed budget: Newsletter, \$3,115; *Iowa Bird Life* \$12,828, Listserv \$500, software \$300, and Internet service \$140. The 2011 budget was increased by \$2,200 to cover the printing and mailing costs of the last *Iowa Bird Life* issue of 2010, which was late.

**Membership:** \$500 proposed.

**Records:** \$25, down from \$100 in 2010.

**Library/Historical:** \$250 to cover the cost of archiving old issues of *Iowa Bird Life*.

**Conservation/Projects:** \$5,000.00 budgeted this year, up from 2010. The board decided to increase this amount to cover the many important requests received by the IOU.

**Meeting Expenses:** This was proposed as a break even item as recent meetings have made a small profit. There was some board discussion about running the meetings with the intent to make a reasonable profit, rather than the traditional break-even model.

**Bird Trip Expenses:** This has been budgeted in the past, but has been a break even pay as you go item so no expenses requested.

**Breeding Bird Atlas:** \$500 budgeted. President Dinsmore pointed out that BBA actually provided revenue last year due to sales of BBA t-shirts.

**Sales:** \$500 budgeted to purchase IOU clothing (\$250) and new IOU checklists (\$250). We also discussed the need to budget for large checklists for IOU meetings.

**Officers:** \$645 proposed. Actual expenses in 2010 were \$319.

**Bank, PayPal Fees, Insurance:** Bank and PayPal fees will be \$300 and liability will be \$425. Treasurer Hunt reported that no bonding expenses will be incurred until 2011.

**Total Operating Expenses:**  
**\$25,028.00.**

Motion to approve the balanced budget of \$25,028 was made by Paul Roisen and seconded by Jay Gilliam. Motion carried unanimously.

Ann Johnson offered to place the budget on the IOU web site under officers' menu so committee members can easily access throughout year.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
Stephen J. Dinsmore, acting Secretary





*Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Boone, 2 October 2010. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.*



*Red-eyed Vireo, Don Williams P, Boone, 13 September 2010. Photograph by Jim Moreland, Boone, IA.*



*Savannah Sparrow, Harrier M, Boone, 15 October 2010. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.*

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES** (renewable yearly): Fledgling (students) \$15, Institutional \$45, Foreign \$35, Goldfinch \$30, Bluebird \$35, Oriole \$50, Egret \$75, Osprey \$100, Bald Eagle \$250, and Peregrine Falcon \$500+. Membership dues entitle members to receive *Iowa Bird Life* and *IOU News* quarterly and to vote and hold office in the Union. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Join, give a gift, or manage your membership on-line at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>. Paper forms for new members and renewals may be mailed to the treasurer (see inside front cover). Back issues of *Iowa Bird Life* are available from Membership Coordinator Pam Allen, 7955 Wistful Vista Dr., #20, West Des Moines, IA 50266 (2birders@hickorytech.net).

**INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS:** Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other material relating to birds in Iowa should be sent by e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word to editor. Research manuscripts should include abstract, introduction, study area, methods, results, discussion, and literature cited sections and will be sent for peer review. Accepted manuscripts will be published promptly depending on space available.

**Photos and graphics:** Submit only original, unsized, and unenhanced photos in your camera's JPEG (\*.jpg) format. Photos must be 300 dpi at the size they will be printed (6-1/2" wide by 6-1/2" high for the cover and various smaller sizes inside), so setting your camera to its highest possible resolution is recommended. The editor will do any resizing and enhancing required because any previous adjustments to the photos may make them unusable. Submit photos and graphics as e-mail attachments.

E-mail all material other than seasonal reports to editor at [cootjr@iastate.edu](mailto:cootjr@iastate.edu). Deadlines for submission are **January 1 for winter issue** (Vol. xx[1]), **April 1 for spring issue** [2], **July 1 for summer issue** [3], **October 1 for fall issue** [4]. Send seasonal field reports to field reports editors by deadlines listed on inside front cover.

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**IOU WEB SITE:** <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>, Ann Johnson, Webmaster

**IOWA RBA:** John Bissell (jabissell@mchsi.com)

**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT:** Deadline for receipt of reports is 15 January. For forms and instructions, contact Christopher J. Caster, 4 South Ridge Ct., Coralville, IA 52241 (cjcaster@earthlink.net).

**BIRD SIGHTINGS:** Subscribe at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)>

**ADDRESS CHANGES:** Update your on-line profile at <[www.iowabirds.org](http://www.iowabirds.org)> or send address and e-mail changes to Membership Coordinator Pam Allen, 7955 Wistful Vista Dr., #20, West Des Moines, IA 50266 (2birders@hickorytech.net).

**UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION:** Spring 2011: 1–3 May 2011, Shenandoah.

**FRONT COVER PHOTO:** Rufous Hummingbird, *Madison*, 21 August 2010. Photograph by Reid Allen, West Des Moines, IA.

**BACK COVER PHOTO:** Fox Sparrow, *Boone*, 18 October 2010. Photograph by Larry Dau, Boone, IA.

DESIGN: Marshall Desktop Publishing Inc., Evergreen, CO

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