

THE WARBLER
DES MOINES AUDUBON SOCIETY
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OCTOBER 2017
EDITOR: JANE R. CLARK



FIELD TRIP TO CHICHAQUA—SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14TH

The Des Moines Audubon Society field trip will be held on Saturday, October 14 and the destination will be Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt and Errington Marsh in northeast Polk County. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot on the west side of the Ramada Inn (used to be Best Western Motel) located in the SW corner of the Ankeny 1st Street Interchange on I-35. Chichaqua Bottoms includes over 8,000 acres along the Skunk River, with prairie, wetlands and riparian woodlands supporting about 200 species of birds. Dress for conditions. Contact Denny Thompson for more information at cnthomps@gmail.com or 515-254-0837.

Welcome to "Bird Friendly Iowa"

By Doug Harr

Tuesday, October 17, 7 p.m.

Bird Friendly Iowa is a new, statewide program created by a partnership of multiple conservation organizations. Its intent is to protect, restore and enhance bird habitat; reduce threats to birds; and educate and engage people in birding and conservation. The first phase of this new plan is to work with cities or towns which meet certain program qualifications, with each successful applicant then designated a Bird Friendly Community. This presentation will describe what communities must achieve in order to receive such recognition, and it encourages local city officials, civic groups, conservation organizations, garden clubs or others to work in support of their community to become a much healthier place for birds. The city of Waterloo is being named the first official Bird Friendly City in Iowa on October 16.

Our speaker, Doug Harr, is a Certified Wildlife Biologist, retired after more than 38 years with Iowa DNR. He holds BS and MS degrees in Wildlife Biology from South Dakota State University. Doug was a Wildlife Management Biologist in NW Iowa from 1972 to 2001, and then spent a year as a Wildlife Diversity Biologist at the Boone Wildlife Research Station. From 2002 to 2010 he was DNR's State Coordinator of the Wildlife Diversity Program. Today he is President of Iowa Audubon, Vice-president of Big Bluestem Audubon (Ames) and also serves on the board of Audubon Minnesota which is a National Audubon Society office. Doug is an active member of many other conservation organizations, does independent contract work related to birds, and is Iowa's coordinator of the federal Breeding Bird Survey.

Des Moines Audubon meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. and are held in the lunchroom of the Northwest Community Center, which is located at 51st and Franklin Avenue in Des Moines. The Center is just west of Franklin Library. There is ample parking and the building is accessible. If you have questions about the meeting place or the program, please contact Jane Clark at 515-223-5047 or jrclark@radiks.net.

Reports of Nesting Barn Owls on the Rise From the Iowa DNR's September 5 Iowa Outdoors

State wildlife experts are crediting a series of mild winters and an abundance of meadow vole prey in grasslands for a nesting boon for barn owls, primarily across southern Iowa.

So far this year, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has received 25 reports of barn owl nests, most coming in the last three weeks, including a nest in Chickasaw County which is the first report in that county since before 1960. This is the fourth year in a row that the number of reported nesting barn owls has increased. The barn owl has no federal listing, but is listed as a state endangered species in Iowa.

“This is really great news that things are going well for barn owls,” said Bruce Ehresman, wildlife biologist with the Iowa DNR.

He said many of the calls are coming from agriculture producers who find the owls nesting in their grain bins or silos while preparing to move products. He said grain bins are perfect for nesting barn owls – the structure keeps invaders, like raccoons, out and keeps the young in, until they can fly. Owls aren't too picky, he said. They will nest on the floor of the bin or on top of any grain stored within it.

“What we have been telling farmers is that if they can wait for a week or two, the owls will likely fledge and the issue will resolve itself. Once the birds are gone, owners can close off the owl entry points to prevent them from again using the grain bin as a nesting site,” Ehresman said.

He said the producer should call their local conservation officer or wildlife biologist to report nesting barn owls, and if waiting for young to fledge is not an option, then there may be an opportunity to work with a local wildlife rehabilitator.

“We really would like to leave the young alone if at all possible. Moving them is the absolute last resort,” he said. “We want to minimize nest disturbance to avoid having the adult abandon the nest, and we strongly encourage birders who are looking to add barn owl to their list to view them from a distance.”

Since the owls are using the area to rear their young, Ehresman has been encouraging producers to install a nesting box as an alternative to the grain bin. The Iowa DNR has information to build and install barn owl boxes on its website at:

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Portals/idnr/uploads/education/Species/birds/BarnOwlBrochure.pdf>

“We've been installing nesting boxes on posts at different locations for about a year and we are seeing use, which is exciting,” Ehresman said.

Contact: Bruce Ehresman, Wildlife Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-432-2823 ext 106.

High Trestle Hawk Watch Sunday October 8th, 10:00am—4:00pm High Trestle Trail Overlook

Come experience the “River of Raptors” as hawks, eagles and falcons migrate south through the Des Moines River valley. Several bird watchers will be on hand to help with identification. For beginners and more experienced birders. Viewing will be on the west overlook on the Woodward side of the HTB. Parking is on the east side off of QF in Boone County. A half mile walk on level ground is required

Des Moines Audubon Member Survey

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey and then mail your response to Jane Clark, 9871 Lincoln Avenue, Clive, IA 50325 or email it to jrclark@radiks.net . Thank you for your time and input!

Would you be willing to receive The Warbler newsletter in a document by email, or by email notice?

Yes No

Do you have an interest or experience that you could offer to Des Moines Audubon Society as a volunteer?

- Bookkeeping
- Writing articles for newsletter or website
- Newsletter preparation
- Board member
- Webpage experience
- Presenting a program
- Other

Please indicate how you would like to volunteer.

What do you like about Des Moines Audubon Society?

What do you like about field trips?

What can you suggest to improve what we do or to encourage new members to join?

Do you enjoy the programs or do you have suggestions for other programs?

Are you willing to pay an increased fee for membership? It is currently \$10.00/individual and \$15.00 for a family.

- \$15.00 Individual and \$20.00 for family
- \$20.00 individual and \$25.00 for family

**Des Moines Audubon Society membership is for one year, from July to June.
Dues should be mailed to our Treasurer,
Jim Clark, 9871 Lincoln Avenue, Clive, IA 50325
If you are unsure if your dues are unpaid, please email jrclark@radiks.net or call 515-223-5047.
Please make checks payable to "Des Moines Audubon Society"**

Membership Levels and Dues:

Student (under 18).....\$1.00
Individual Adult..... \$10.00
Family.....\$15.00
Life.....\$125.00
(May be paid in five annual payments of \$25.00)

*Additional Contribution for Conservation Projects _____

*Additional Contribution for Bird Feeding Projects _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

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9871 LINCOLN AVENUE
CLIVE, IA 50325



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