



THE WARBLER
DES MOINES AUDUBON SOCIETY
VOLUME XXV, NUMBER 3
MARCH 2018
EDITOR: JANE R. CLARK

March 10th Field Trip

For the Saturday, March 10 field trip; plan to meet in the parking lot at the Saylorville Visitors Center at 8:00 a.m. We'll observe birds around the Visitor's Center and then depending on activity and conditions, we'll venture out in search of birds that might be found at various sites around the lake. Dress for conditions and bring a hot beverage and snack for break. Contact Denny Thompson at cdnthomps@gmail.com or 515-254-0837 for more information.

Tuesday, March 20th Program—7 p.m. **Butterflies, Pollinators, Plants and People** By Donald Lewis Extension Entomologist, Iowa State University

Declines in the number of domestic honey bees that began nearly a decade ago have led to increased interest in the "other" pollinators and what can be done by gardeners to promote and enhance the pollinator community on which much of our varied food supply depends. The 94% decline in the number of monarch butterflies (1996 to 2014) similarly has people wondering what they can do to help. What have you done for pollinators and butterflies lately? What more could you do? What more should you do? These and other questions and issues will be explored by Dr. Donald Lewis, ISU Extension & Outreach Entomologist. Be sure to bring your insect-related observations, anecdotes and questions for the Q&A.

Donald Lewis is a Professor and Extension Entomologist with the Iowa State University Department of Entomology. Dr. Lewis is responsible for outreach education on insect pest management in turfgrass, trees and shrubs, fruit, vegetables and households.

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.



Birding Basics at Gray's Lake with John Bissell

Birding Basics is a free Des Moines Parks and Recreation program for novice and experienced birders to learn how to identify Iowa's avian community! The program starts **March 7th** and runs **every Wednesday from 11:00 am - 11:45 am**. Interested parties should meet at Gray's Lake's (2101 Fleur Drive) beach parking lot. Pack a lunch and your binoculars, and come learn about Iowa's exquisite birds!

Iowa Statewide Bluebird Program Proposal

By Rogers Shell

State, county, city governments, and others have placed over 500 bluebird nest boxes in Polk County, monitored by more than 26 volunteers. These programs have been vital to increase Eastern Bluebird numbers previously diminished by loss of habitat, which was caused by land conversion to agricultural use, urban expansion, and competition for nesting cavities by the European Starling and the House Sparrow. We now make nest boxes with openings too small for the European Starling, and routinely monitor the boxes to deny occupancy to the House Sparrow. The result has been the recovery of bluebirds.

Surrounding states (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and Nebraska) already have established organizations for the support of bluebird enthusiasts. These organizations provide a platform for communication to provide facts, tips, techniques, trail installation assistance, etc., throughout the state wherever needed. These programs are all currently affiliated with the North American Bluebird Society, as will Des Moines Audubon if this proposal is accepted.

At our next Des Moines Audubon meeting, you will be asked to consider a proposal to form a committee to study the Des Moines Audubon Society's establishment of a statewide program designed to support bluebird trail monitors and others interested in bluebirds. Des Moines Audubon's support for this program furthers our mission of "Conservation of wildlife in general and the study and protection of birds in particular." Des Moines' central location, and Polk County's many bluebird trails will better serve a program located here.

This program can be comprised of volunteers to keep the expenses low. If this proposal is accepted, volunteers will be asked to serve on a steering committee, liaison with county coordinators and the North American Bluebird Society, speakers, website management, record keeping, and nest box construction and installation, etc.

We hope you will attend our next meeting and support the program with your vote.

Species at Risk Act (SARA) List Grows in Canada

The Canadian federal government recently announced its long-awaited decision to legally designate eight more bird species under Canada's Species at Risk Act (SARA). The additional eight bird species brings the total number of birds given special protection under SARA to 72. Three other species that had previously been assessed also underwent scheduled 10-year reviews: Cerulean Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Hooded Warbler. While the last species mentioned, Hooded Warbler, has seen a hopeful and dramatic increase since it was last assessed in 2000, most of the other news from SARA is less encouraging.

SARA is not unlike the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA) only with somewhat different qualifications. The whole process, from start to finish, can take upwards of 10 years (e.g. the newly SARA-listed Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, and Barn Swallow). The small number of government staff who are charged with overseeing Canada's species at risk process now have approximately 760 species of plants and animals to evaluate.

The eight bird species recently designated include the following:

- Western Grebe
- Eastern Wood Pewee
- Bank Swallow
- Barn Swallow
- Wood Thrush
- Grasshopper Sparrow (eastern subspecies)
- Bobolink
- Eastern Meadowlark

For more on the SARA process and species in question, see: <http://www.birdscanada.org/research.jsp?lang=en>

From: The Birding Community E-bulletin, January 2018

BIRD BLIND AT WALNUT WOODS

By Linda MacBride, President, Friends of Walnut Woods State Park

The bird feeding blind in Walnut Woods State Park was built in 2003 by park manager Tim Gedler and his brother, Mark. The idea to build a blind was inspired by the bird blinds in Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in southern Texas. Tim worked there in 1986 and saw how popular they were with visitors to the refuge, and wanted to bring a similar experience to the visitors of Walnut Woods. Feeders were put up and the surrounding landscape work was done by a local Boy Scout as his Eagle Scout Project. The original copper top feeders, which are still in use, were donated by Woodlink Inc. a local manufacture of feeders.

From 2003-2009 Tim was able to keep the feeders filled with donations from Des Moines Audubon and Des Moines Feed Company along with some private donations of seed. The blind added beautiful bird identification signs in 2009, with photos from Reid Allen, Richard Stilwell and Jay Gilliam.

In 2009 the Friends of Walnut Woods started taking a more active role in the feeders. The much appreciated yearly donations from Des Moines Audubon and Des Moines Feed Co continued, but those alone were no longer able to keep the feeders filled. Additional food was purchased by the Friends group and I took on the responsibility of filling them. I had a variety of feeders at my own home and enjoyed visiting birding sites in Southern TX when visiting my parents. Santa Ana was one of my favorite sites to visit and found it interesting that it was Tim's inspiration for the Walnut Woods blind. Visiting feeding stations with empty feeders is frustrating, so my goal has always been to make sure there is always food available.

The layout of the feeders has changed a little over the years. After a tree fell on the feeders, new posts and rails were put up, which makes it easier to add additional feeders. In 2016 Tim had the brush around the blind cleaned out, allowing better visualization for large groups, opening it up for the birds, and making it less isolated. Vandalism has luckily been minimal, but in 2015 a pellet and BB gun were used to shoot holes in the feeders. There were no signs that any birds had been shot, but you can still see the holes in the feeders and dents on the posts.

In 2017 the Friends Group spent \$750 above the donations received from Des Moines Audubon and Des Moines Feed Co. to keep the feeders filled. We purchase black oil sunflower seeds, peanut pickouts, Cardinal Brand Mix, and Nyger & Hearts finch blend throughout the year from DM Feed Co. We also purchase suet from the locker in Winterset and grape jelly for Oriole feeders. The feeders are filled twice a week on Monday or Tuesday and Friday or Saturday. I am assisted by another Friends member every other weekend and when I am on vacation. We have a Facebook page, Friends of Walnut Woods State Park, and encourage photographers and bird lovers to post their photos on the site.

The positive responses that Tim and I receive about the blind make it all worthwhile and the donations we have received from Des Moines Audubon have helped to make it possible.

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

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

*Additional Contribution for Conservation Projects _____

*Additional Contribution for Bird Feeding Projects _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

IZEMBEK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE THREAT

Other bird-filled refuges have been put in jeopardy recently, including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge which is now open to oil drilling. That subject was covered in last month's issue of The Birding Community E-bulletin: <https://tinyurl.com/Jan18Ebulletin> .

But it was also mentioned in that coverage that "the next shoe to drop" in the assault on Alaska refuges could be the construction of a much-contested road through a federally designated Wilderness Area (and a Globally Important Bird Area) at Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. Unfortunately, the shoe dropped.

Millions of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds find food and shelter in the coastal lagoons and freshwater wetlands on their way to and from their subarctic and arctic breeding grounds. This extraordinary abundance and diversity of waterfowl has attracted international attention. In 1986, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge and Izembek State Game Refuge, which encompasses the submerged land of Izembek Lagoon, was the first wetland area in the United States to be recognized as a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention.

On 22 January, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke approved a land-transfer deal to allow a road about 11 miles in length to be built through Izembek. Under the transfer-deal, about 500 acres would be taken from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and given to the community of King Cove, and the same amount, plus one acre, would be transferred from the Alaska Native authority to the refuge. (A previously rejected offer, made in 2013, had been for over 56,000 acres in exchange for the road right-of-way.) Regardless, this land swap is inconsistent with the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, runs contrary to official Wilderness designation, and contradicts the Department of the Interior's own very involved findings that such a swap is not in the public interest. The recent decision will likely be challenged in federal court.

More details here, from The Hill:

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/370106-zinke-advances-road-through-alaska-wildlife-refuge>

From: The Birding Community E-bulletin, February 2018

THE WARBLER
VOLUME XXV, NUMBER 3
MARCH 2018
DES MOINES AUDUBON SOCIETY
9871 LINCOLN AVENUE
CLIVE, IA 50325



**Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 1142
Des Moines, IA**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED