

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



Saturday, September 8th Field Trip
Saylorville Visitor's Center at 8:00 a.m.

Join Des Moines Audubon members on Saturday, September 8th in the parking lot of the Visitors' Center at Saylorville Lake at 8:00 a.m. We'll work around the reservoir where we'll hope for good shorebird habitat and fall passerine migration should be in full swing. Bring a beverage and snack for break and dress for conditions. All levels of bird watchers are encouraged to attend! Please contact Denny Thompson at 515-254-0837 or cndthomps@gmail.com for more information.

Tuesday, September 18, 7:00 p.m.
Birds of the Southwest
By Ray Harden

In late February and early March of 2018 Margaret and Ray Harden took a birding vacation to Arizona and New Mexico. They were too early to see tropical migrants but they did see many native winter birds of the area. In New Mexico they stopped at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge and observed many species of waterfowl on the ponds and birds along the Rio Grande River. In Willcox, Arizona they saw thousands of Sandhill Cranes and in Tucson they spotted many birds that live in the desert of Saguaro National Park.

They stayed four nights at Battiste's Birders Bed and Breakfast near Sierra Vista, Arizona. From there they visited the birding hot spots nearby such as Ramsey Canyon, San Pedro River Reserve, and the hummingbird reserve in Patagonia. They also made stops at many state parks and took slow drives through various natural forest and national monuments.

Ray has a Bachelor's Degree in Biology from the University of Missouri in Columbia, a Master's Degree in biology from Colby College in Waterville, Maine, and he worked on a doctorate degree at Drake University studying environmental education. Before retiring in 1998 from the Perry Community Schools, he taught science for 38 years, 28 of those years in Perry. In 1999 he began teaching Environmental Science for DMACC and William Penn University and retired again in 2004 from teaching.

Ray and his wife Margaret have traveled to many foreign countries and have done environmental studies in four Central America countries, Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Belize. Most recently they took birding trips to Nepal, Ecuador, and North Catalonia and have birded in Florida, Arkansas, New Mexico and Arizona. They have also volunteered for extensive environmental work projects in Arizona, Hawaii, and Iowa.

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.

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge From US Fish and Wildlife Service

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge is located in southern New Mexico. It was founded in 1939 and is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It is a favorite spot to watch the migration of the Sandhill cranes in the fall. The reserve is open year-round and provides safe harbor for its varied wildlife.

The name of the refuge means "woods of the Apache" in Spanish, named for the Apache tribes that once camped in the forests along the Rio Grande.

Bosque del Apache is one of the most spectacular national wildlife refuges in North America. The heart of the refuge comprises Rio Grande floodplain and irrigated farms and wetlands. In addition, the refuge contains arid grasslands and foothills of the Chupadera and San Pascual Mountains. About 30,000 acres of this is designated as wilderness, most of which is desert scrub/mesquite and grassland habitat. A twelve-mile-long loop road divided by a cutoff into a "Farm Loop" and "Marsh Loop" allows automobile drivers excellent views of wetland wildlife and raptors.

Ornithological Summary

Over 340 species of birds live at Bosque del Apache NWR. During winter, there are huge flocks of Snow Geese and Sandhill Cranes; dabbling ducks abound (35000+); Black-throated and Sage Sparrows can be found in the drier areas; and raptors including Bald Eagles and Ferruginous Hawks are present. During summer look for Vermillion Flycatcher and Lucy's Warbler (both at the northern edge of their range), Lesser Nighthawk, Yellow-billed Cuckoo and Willow Flycatcher. Migration brings shorebirds as well as migrating passerines.

Did You Know?

A fossil of a crane was found in Nebraska that is estimated to be nearly 10 million years old. This makes cranes one of the oldest known species of birds in existence today.

August Field Trip Report By Tom Dougherty

The first field trip of the 2018-2019 season took place on August 11 with stops at Marsh Farm Wetland in Dallas County along with a visit to Bays Branch Wildlife Management Area and a final quick tour of Springbrook State Park, both in Guthrie County. We had a great turnout with about 18 birders collectively tallying 57 species on the day. The group met in Grimes at 7:30 a.m. and headed to Marsh Farm Wetland, a 100 acre Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program area that often provides good waterfowl and shorebird viewing. Although not many species were present, some early-arriving blue-winged teals made an appearance as did a singing sedge wren. Sedge wrens are common in Dallas County in August but it's not a very common bird at Marsh Farm Wetland so that was a nice surprise.

Bays Branch Wildlife Management Area, about three miles northeast of Panora, is a 990 acre wildlife area that is an under-appreciated birding hotspot. There was good shorebird activity during our visit with Baird's, pectoral, least, spotted, solitary sandpipers milling about the southwest side of the lake along with the some lesser yellowlegs and the ever-present killdeers. We also spotted an immature Cooper's hawk keeping an eye on things from its perch on the south side of the lake. While checking the west side of the lake, we came across a surprisingly large group of bank swallows perched on the telephone wires adjacent to the road. Additionally, we checked-off all the other swallow species with the exception of purple martins. We then proceeded to check out the central part of the lake by taking County Road F31 east to the bridge over the lake. Although that part of the lake was quiet, the group spotted a number of great-tailed grackles, a good find for the central Iowa area.

The next, and final, stop was Springbrook State Park, north of Guthrie Center. As we were close to the end of our trip, we headed to the northeast section of the park to check for some woodland species and a number of redheaded woodpeckers were seen by the group. The trip wrapped up around 11:30 a.m. and the group headed back home.

Five Threats To Birds – From Birdlife International

In June, BirdLife International announced its "top five threats to birds." Some were predictable and others less-so: Industrial Farming, Logging, Invasive Species, Illegal Hunting and Trapping, and Climate Change. Solutions range from wildlife-friendly farming practices (including refraining from using pesticides and herbicides), bold reforestation, invasive eradication efforts (especially on islands), new campaigns against illegal bird-cage trade, and the promotion of carbon sinks. The five problems - and their solutions - are presented on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/news/top-five-threats-birds-may-surprise-you> .

By Margaret Sessa-Hawkins

Sometimes it's easy to see what's harming birds – especially if it's in your backyard. But the bigger threats are less visual, and less direct. This doesn't make them any less urgent. Our latest report, *State of the World's Birds 2018*, found that one in eight birds is in danger of extinction, and 40% of the world's 10,000+ species are declining. The chief driving forces are, as the paper's editor-in-chief Tris Allinson said, "invariably of humanity's making". But that also means we can strive to reverse them.

1. Industrial Farming

The problem: More than a third of the earth's land surface is dedicated to agriculture. We often think of farmland as an idyllic, natural landscape; but the expansion and intensification of farming impacts a massive 74% of globally threatened birds. Not only does it destroy much-needed habitats, but some pesticides are poisonous to birds.

The solution: Luckily, it is possible to farm in a way that is sustainable and compatible with nature, while still earning a good livelihood. For example, BirdLife Cambodia works with IBIS rice, a non-profit organization which helps local farmers to grow wildlife-friendly organic jasmine rice. In exchange for not using pesticides or herbicides, and refraining from hunting or logging, farmers receive a premium price for their produce.

2. Logging

The Problem: Since nearly two-thirds of species are found in forests, logging is a huge problem for birds. Many of these species cannot live outside of forests, and are unable to fly between remaining fragments. Logging is driven by a global demand for timber, paper and land on which to grow commodity crops and biofuels.

The solution: BirdLife is working hard to reverse this trend. We're part of the ambitious Trillion Trees partnership to plant, protect and restore a trillion trees by 2050. We also coordinate the Asia-Pacific Forest Governance Project, which uses a mobile app to empower local people to monitor and manage their own rainforest.

3. Invasive Species

The Problem: We've all heard of invasive species, but few people realize how harmful they are to birds. Over the last half-century, interlopers such as rats and mice have been responsible for more than 70% of bird extinctions. Birds on remote islands are susceptible to this threat, as they evolved with few natural predators.

The Solution: BirdLife has identified 88 islands around the globe where highly threatened native bird species are in danger from invasive mammals. If eradications on these islands are all successful, roughly 55 globally threatened bird species could be protected.

4. Hunting & Trapping

The Problem: The illegal hunting and capturing of birds can cause huge population plummets in a short space of time. One of the most harrowing examples is the Helmeted Hornbill. In 2015, this spectacular bird went from being listed as Near Threatened to Critically Endangered after hunters began targeting it for its highly sought-after solid "Red Ivory" casque.

The solution: One of the main ways to curb this danger is to change the law – or strengthen existing ones. Currently, 155 bird species are protected by CITES, the illegal wildlife trade convention. Several BirdLife partners are also working to prevent illegal hunting in their country. In Brazil, undercover agents infiltrated trading networks to stop the capture of the Lear's Macaw .

5. Climate Change

The Problem: So far, nearly a quarter of bird species studied globally have been negatively affected by climate change. Already, breeding and migratory cycles are changing; warmer springs are causing caterpillar numbers to spike earlier, meaning that by the time many bird chicks hatch, there are not enough caterpillars to eat.

The Solution: BirdLife's Important Bird and Biodiversity Area network identifies vital natural areas that don't just benefit birds. Many of these areas serve as carbon sinks, with trees and vegetation soaking up excess carbon in the atmosphere and helping to reduce the effects of climate change.

Excerpted from BirdLife International's Five Threats to Birds

**Des Moines Audubon Society membership is for one year, from July to June.
Dues should be mailed to: Jane Clark, 9871 Lincoln Avenue, Clive, IA 50325.
If you are unsure of the status of your membership please 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

*Additional Contribution for Conservation Projects _____

*Additional Contribution for Bird Feeding Projects _____

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