



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

Saturday, November 9 Field Trip

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot of Saylorville Lake Visitor's Center on Saturday, November 9th. From there we'll venture to various habitats around the lake and in the surrounding area, looking for waterfowl, loons, grebes, gulls and other migrating species. Kinglets, White-throated Sparrows and juncos will be busy flitting among the trees and falling leaves. Bring binoculars, a snack and beverage and dress for the conditions. All levels of bird watchers are encouraged to attend! Contact field trip leader, Dennis Thompson at cdnthomps@gmail.com or 515-254-0837 for more information.

Des Moines Audubon Program, Tuesday, November 19, 7 p.m.
Bumbling After Bumblebees
The search for the Endangered Rusty-patched Bumblebee in Iowa
By Stephanie Shepherd, Iowa DNR

Stephanie Shepherd has been a biologist with the Iowa DNR's Wildlife Diversity Program for the last 14 years working with wildlife as diverse as Bald Eagles, frogs and toads and Ottoe skipper butterflies. In 2018 and 2019, she was given the opportunity to help investigate the Iowa status of the federally endangered Rusty-patched Bumblebee (*Bombus affinis*). Stephanie will present on the results of those two years of surveys as well as the broader picture of bumblebees and their place in Iowa's ecosystems.

Anna Buckardt Thomas, the new Avian Ecologist for the Iowa DNR's Wildlife Diversity Program, will also be attending the meeting to introduce herself to our members. Anna grew up in Illinois and got her BS at Michigan Tech and recently finished her MS at the University of Maine. She is excited to be back in the Midwest and looks forward to working with Audubon groups to conserve and protect Iowa's birds. She is in the process of building her research and monitoring program and would like to hear any thoughts on pressing or interesting conservation or research needs in the state,

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 5110 Franklin Avenue in Des Moines. The Center is just west of Franklin Library. If you have questions about the meeting place or the program, please contact Jane Clark at 515-223-5047 or jrclark@radiks.net.

Reminder--no program meeting in December

Des Moines Audubon Christmas Bird Count **Saturday, December 21, 2019**

Please note there will be no December field trip other than the Christmas Bird Count

Des Moines Audubon Christmas Bird Count Saturday, December 21, 2019

Des Moines Audubon Society's 2019 Christmas Bird Count will be held on Saturday, December 21 beginning at 8:00 a.m. The annual Christmas Bird Count will take the place of our regular field trip in December—plan for a day or part of a day of counting birds in the Des Moines count circle. We'll meet at the Des Moines Art Center parking lot, but please contact Denny Thompson at 515-254-0837 or cnthomps@gmail.com ahead of time if you plan to participate. We'll be dividing into teams to check various Des Moines areas. *Dress warmly and appropriately.* Bring food and beverage for the day and plan to stay as long as possible. If you wish to remain at home but still want to be a part of this count, you may do so by keeping track of the birds visiting your neighborhood, in your backyard and at your feeders. Keep track of how many of each species you see during the day and at the end of the day, report to Denny. The Des Moines 15-mile diameter is centered at 63rd and University and it runs from Saylorville Dam to Lake Colchester (north of Norwalk) and the I-80 rest stop to the fairgrounds. The Des Moines CBC has been held since 1948.

***Please note there will be no December field trip other than the Christmas Bird Count**

Seven Simple Actions to Help Birds From: Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Even Common Birds Are Vanishing

As reported last month, a new study led by Cornell Lab of Ornithology scientists, has found that the breeding population of birds in the U.S. and Canada has dropped nearly 30% since 1970. These staggering losses have occurred across all habitats, from grasslands to the Arctic, shorelines to forests—and have taken a massive toll on even common species, such as sparrows, warblers, blackbirds.

Common birds—the species that many people see every day—have suffered the greatest losses, according to the study. More than 90% of the losses (more than 2.5 billion birds) come from just 12 families including the sparrows, blackbirds, warblers, and finches. The losses include favorite species seen at bird feeders, such as Dark-eyed Juncos (or “snowbirds,” down by 168 million) and sweet-singing White-throated Sparrows (down by 93 million). Eastern and Western Meadowlarks are down by a combined 139 million individuals. Even the beloved Red-winged Blackbird—a common sight in virtually every marsh and wet roadside across the continent—has declined by 92 million birds.

The study noted that the largest factor driving these declines is likely the widespread loss and degradation of habitat, especially due to agricultural intensification and urbanization. Other studies have documented mortality from predation by free-roaming domestic cats; collisions with glass, buildings, and other structures; and pervasive use of pesticides associated with widespread declines in insects, an essential food source for birds. Climate change is expected to compound these challenges by altering habitats and threatening plant communities that birds need to survive. More research is needed to pinpoint primary causes for declines in individual species.

This new knowledge is a wake-up call—a signal that our natural systems are losing the ability to support the richness and diversity of life that they once did just decades ago. Birds are resilient when we give them a chance. For instance, waterfowl are up by 56%, and raptors have increased by 200% thanks to focused conservation funding and protections.

Coauthor of the study, Michael Parr, president of American Bird Conservancy said, “There are so many ways to help save birds. Some require policy decisions such as strengthening the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. We can also work to ban harmful pesticides and properly fund effective bird conservation programs.”

You can have a real impact on the birds around you by taking any of these Seven Simple Actions to Help Birds.

Seven Simple Actions to Help Birds

1. Make Windows Safer, Day and Night

The challenge: Up to 1 billion birds are estimated to die each year after hitting windows in the United States and Canada. **The cause:** By day, birds perceive reflections in glass as habitat they can fly into. By night, migratory birds drawn in by city lights are at high risk of colliding with buildings.

*These simple steps save birds: On the outside of the window, install screens or break up reflections—using film, paint, or Acopian BirdSavers or other string spaced no more than two inches high or four inches wide.

Seven Simple Actions to Help Birds (continued)

2. Keep Cats Indoors

The challenge: Cats are estimated to kill more than 2.6 billion birds annually in the U.S. and Canada. This is the #1 human-caused reason for the loss of birds, aside from habitat loss. **The cause:** Cats can make great pets, but more than 110 million feral and pet cats now roam in the United States and Canada. These nonnative predators instinctively hunt and kill birds even when well fed.

*A solution that's good for cats and birds: Save birds and keep cats healthy by keeping cats indoors or creating an outdoor "catio." You can also train your cat to walk on a leash.

3. Reduce Lawn, Plant Natives

The challenge: Birds have fewer places to safely rest during migration and to raise their young: More than 10 million acres of land in the United States were converted to developed land from 1982 to 1997. **The cause:** Lawns and pavement don't offer enough food or shelter for many birds and other wildlife. With more than 40 million acres of lawn in the U.S. alone there's huge potential to support wildlife by replacing lawns with native plantings.

*Add native plants, watch birds come in: Native plants add interest and beauty to your yard and neighborhood, and provide shelter and nesting areas for birds. The nectar, seeds, berries, and insects will sustain birds and diverse wildlife.

4. Avoid Pesticides

The challenge: More than 1 billion pounds of pesticides are applied in the United States each year. The continent's most widely used insecticides, called neonicotinoids or "neonics," are lethal to birds and to the insects that birds consume. Common weed killers used around homes, such as 2, 4-D and glyphosate (used in Roundup), can be toxic to wildlife, and glyphosate has been declared a probable human carcinogen. **The cause:** Pesticides that are toxic to birds can harm them directly through contact, or if they eat contaminated seeds or prey. Pesticides can also harm birds indirectly by reducing the number of available insects, which birds need to survive.

*A healthy choice for you, your family, and birds: Consider purchasing organic food. Nearly 70% of produce sold in the U.S. contains pesticides. Reduce pesticides around your home and garden.

5. Drink Coffee That's Good for Birds

The challenge: Three-quarters of the world's coffee farms grow their plants in the sun destroying forests that birds and other wildlife need for food and shelter. Sun-grown coffee also often requires using environmentally harmful pesticides and fertilizers. On the other hand, shade-grown coffee preserves a forest canopy that helps migratory birds survive the winter. **The cause:** Too few consumers are aware of the problems of sun coffee. Those who are aware may be reluctant to pay more for environmentally sustainable coffee.

*Enjoy shade-grown coffee: It's a win-win-win: it's delicious, economically beneficial to coffee farmers, and helps more than 42 species of North American migratory songbirds that winter in coffee plantations, including orioles, warblers, and thrushes. Look for Bird Friendly coffee, a certification from the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center that also includes organic standards. Educate coffee shops and grocery stores about shade-grown coffees.

6. Protect Our Planet from Plastic

The challenge: It's estimated that 4,900 million metric tons of plastic have accumulated in landfills and in our environment worldwide polluting our oceans and harming wildlife such as seabirds, whales, and turtles that mistakenly eat plastic, or become entangled in it. **The cause:** Plastic takes more than 400 years to degrade, and 91% of plastics created are not recycled. Studies show that at least 80 seabird species ingest plastic, mistaking it for food. Cigarette lighters, toothbrushes, and other trash have been found in the stomachs of dead albatrosses.

*Reduce your plastics: Avoid single-use plastics including bags, bottles, wraps, and disposable utensils. It's far better to choose reusable items, but if you do have disposable plastic, be sure to recycle it.

7. Watch Birds, Share What You See

The challenge: The world's most abundant bird, the Passenger Pigeon, went extinct, and people didn't realize how quickly it was vanishing until it was too late. Monitoring birds is essential to help protect them, but tracking the health of the world's 10,000 bird species is an immense challenge. **The cause:** To understand how birds are faring, scientists need hundreds of thousands of people to report what they're seeing in backyards, neighborhoods, and wild places around the world. Without this information, scientists will not have enough timely data to show where and when birds are declining around the world.

*Enjoy birds while helping science and conservation: Join a project such as eBird, Project FeederWatch, a Christmas Bird Count, or a Breeding Bird Survey to record your bird observations. Your contributions will provide valuable information to show where birds are thriving—and where they need our help.

**Des Moines Audubon Society membership is for one year, from July to June.
 National Audubon dues do not include Des Moines Audubon dues.
 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 _____

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State/Zip Code _____
 Telephone _____ E-mail _____

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