

***THE WARBLER***  
**DES MOINES AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
**VOLUME XXIX, NUMBER 10**  
**NOVEMBER 2022**  
**EDITOR: JANE R. CLARK**



### **Saturday, November 12 Field Trip**

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot of Saylorville Lake Visitor's Center on Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup>. From there we'll venture to various habitats and locations 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 fallen leaves. Bring binoculars if you have them and dress for the conditions. All levels of bird watchers are encouraged to attend! Contact field trip leader, Dennis Thompson at [cnthomps@gmail.com](mailto:cnthomps@gmail.com) or 515-254-0837 for more information.

### **Iowa's Bat Population: How are they doing? Tuesday, November 15, 7 p.m. By Stephanie Shepherd, Iowa DNR**

North American bats are currently facing a number of threats. All but two of Iowa's nine species of bat are being discussed on the international scale as needing conservation intervention but how are those species faring within the borders of the state? Since 2013, Iowa State University and the Iowa DNR have been conducting acoustic surveys for bats in select locations around the state. The acoustic technology allows us to collect data on the state's bat populations with minimal disturbance to the bats and is shedding some light on how our populations are doing under the onslaught of White-nose Syndrome, wind energy development and other threats.

Stephanie started her wildlife career in Virginia but moved to Iowa in the early 2000s to pursue a master's degree at Iowa State University. She has been a biologist with the Iowa DNR's Wildlife Diversity Program since 2005 and in that time, she's been lucky enough to work with and study everything from bald eagles to butterflies to bats.

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 email: [jrclark@radiks.net](mailto:jrclark@radiks.net).

### **Reminder--no program meeting in December**

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

**October 8, 2022 Field Trip Report, by Tim Gedler  
Des Moines Audubon Society**

Held at Walnut Woods State Park, about 12 people attended this field trip which began near the bird feeding station parking area. It was hat and glove weather with morning temperatures in the mid-30s to start the day. Wind was calm and skies were mostly sunny. Birders enjoyed a kinglet invasion of sorts near the parking area with both Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets identified along with other species. The kinglets were foraging high and low in the shrubs and trees.

It was tough to walk away from the bird activity in this area but eventually the group made its way onto the main hiking trail along the Raccoon River and then looping back to our vehicles. The field trip ended with some birding at nearby Purple Martin Lake until late morning.

A total of 40 species were observed. In addition to the aforementioned kinglets, other species seen were Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned warblers and Brown Creeper. A pair of Pileated Woodpeckers were seen flying across the Raccoon River and a Belted Kingfisher made an appearance. Migrating American White Pelicans brightened the sky as well. All in all, a fun morning of birding!

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**Des Moines Audubon Christmas Bird Count  
Monday, December 26**

Des Moines Audubon Society's 2022 Christmas Bird Count will be held on Monday, December 26 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. Please contact John Cecil at 515-850-9694 or email at [jcecil01@gmail.com](mailto:jcecil01@gmail.com) ahead of time if you plan to participate. Dress appropriately. Bring your own 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 John Cecil. The Des Moines Christmas Bird Count's 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.

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**Dallas County Christmas Bird Count  
Saturday, December 17**

LOCATION: Dallas County-wide, Territories as assigned. Join Dallas County Conservation Board and Raccoon River Watershed Association for a day of birding with a purpose. Each year local bird clubs gather around the Christmas holiday to take a "snapshot" of what birds are in their area. This information is sent to the National Audubon Society which looks at the long-term health of bird populations over the last 100+ years. Participants are divided into groups, each with an experienced birder in a different location in the county. We usually hike in the morning and drive the area in the afternoon. It does not matter if you are a beginning or experienced birder, the day is filled with beauty and opportunities for learning. Email Mike Havlik at [mike.havlik@dallascountyiowa.gov](mailto:mike.havlik@dallascountyiowa.gov).  
**\*Registration is required.**

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**Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge Christmas Bird Count  
Saturday, January 4**

The Neal Smith NWR Christmas Bird Count will be held on January 4, 2023. Birders of all skill levels are welcome to participate. If interested, contact Karen Viste-Sparkman at [karen\\_vistesparkman@fws.gov](mailto:karen_vistesparkman@fws.gov) or 515-994-3400 (office) or 641-521-5720 (cell).

## **A Day in October** **By Carl Nollen**

A bright, beautiful day in early October. Most people's favorite month of the year. The last hummingbird has flown south, the last of our summer migrants to leave. As soon as the night temperature dips below 50 degrees, they take off.

The yard is quiet, not a bird to be seen. With our summer birds away, the winter birds not yet here, all we have left is our year-round birds. But where are they? The blue jays, who have been so active and noisy from July through September, do not appear. They kept the peanut feeder swinging with their heavy landing. I have not heard the Carolina wrens for a while. I put up the peanut feeder last year especially for their benefit. The suet feeders, the favorite feeder for the woodpeckers, remain full. The flocks of Goldfinches and house finches do not show up at the seed feeders or on the ground. The nuthatch, who often announces my morning appearance to fill the seed feeders, is not there. Just last month, several were often heard and seen chasing and interacting with each other. No chickadee, no titmouse. In the orchard, the few apples left at the tops of the trees remain. The red-bellied woodpeckers enjoy pecking this fall treat. But not today. No waves of warblers flew through my trees. No swarms of sparrows found my brushy habitats.

Finally, two collared doves appear on the ground where I spread cracked corn. Then another sails in, and another, the white undersides of their fanned tails so evident. Their sleek plumage is so neat. Two mourning doves fly in to share the ground with their cousins. One cardinal joins the group and a nuthatch flies to a seed feeder. The scene remains quiet.

The day remains uneventful for someone who enjoys bird watching in the yard. The seeds, fruits and nuts are at their peak and the birds are at their ebb. The food supply is there and the birds aren't here to take advantage of it. This is a mystery of Nature.

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### **Heritage Hills Wildlife Management Area**

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) has protected 1,021 acres in Madison and Clarke counties. They recently celebrated with the Iowa DNR, Pheasants Forever and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation with a dedication of the Heritage Hills Wildlife Management Area on October 6.

Experts were available at the site to discuss turkey restoration efforts in Iowa, exploring upland hunting strategies, and observing the bird species on site. Stephanie Shepherd, Wildlife Biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, discussed how places like this are critical for Iowa's declining pollinators and how grant funding helped create needed habitat. This years-long project in south-central Iowa culminates in more habitat and more wild spaces.

Heritage Hills Wildlife Management Area is 45 minutes south of Des Moines, and was transferred to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources in May. According to the INHF website, the area was purchased by INHF in 2016. The property's size, habitat and proximity to the metro made it an unusual and important protection opportunity. The expansive, roadless area provides crucial habitat for Iowa's wildlife, including at least 18 bird and four mammal Species of Greatest Conservation Need. It is now open for the public's enjoyment.

Care has been taken to restore the woodland, savanna and remnant prairies. Seed mixes for prairie plantings could be thorough and diverse thanks to grant funding through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. "Restoration of the highly erodible hillsides began in 2018 with Iowa DNR restoring 100 acres to a diverse native prairie with an emphasis on native plant species that benefit monarch breeding and migration. Just this past spring, INHF coordinated the restoration of an additional 130 acres which will provide excellent habitat for wildlife, reduce runoff into Clanton Creek, and help to heal these soils long-term," according to Ross Baxter, INHF Land Projects Director.

As a designated Wildlife Management Area, the property will remain free of trails and structures with an emphasis on providing a place for wildlife to rest, feed and raise young. There is NO restroom facility at this site.

#### **DIRECTIONS**

Use this address to find the site: 3398 Nature Lane, Lorimor, IA. From Shore Street, turn north onto 110th Ave. (about .1 mi). Continue onto Nature Lane (.6 mi); turn right onto a gravel path before the homestead. If you need further help navigating to the site, enter 41.156741, -93.994277 into a mapping application such as Google Maps. There's a public parking lot just south of that address.

**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..... \$15.00  
Family..... \$20.00

\*Additional Contribution for Conservation Projects \_\_\_\_\_  
\*Additional Contribution for Bird Feeding Projects \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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