

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



Field Trip
Saturday, November 9, 8:00 a.m.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot of Saylorville Lake Visitor's Center on Saturday, November 9th. From there we will travel to various habitats and locations around the lake and in the surrounding area. We will be looking for migrating species such as waterfowl, loons, grebes, and gulls. 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 cdnthomps@gmail.com or 515-254-0837 for more information.

Tuesday, November 19, 7:00 p.m.
A Panama Adventure
By Debra Talbott

Our guest speaker, Debra Talbott, will be talking about her trip to the Darien region of Panama that she took last spring. The trip focused on trying to see as many endemics in the region as possible, but of course she saw many more birds than that, including the elusive Harpy Eagle. At one point the tour participants also saw an adult King Vulture with a juvenile. This was special for Deb as she cared for kings at the National Zoo for 30 years.

For folks who do not know, Deb is a retired zookeeper from the birdhouse at Smithsonian's National Zoological Park in Washington DC. She also has worked as a zookeeper at Busch Gardens in Tampa Florida. She is retired from the Air Force Reserves where she was a medic and before that was active-duty Navy where Deb worked in the field of meteorology. She has done a bit of traveling and will be headed to Thailand in January to see some southeast Asian birds.

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 jrclark@radiks.net or call 515-223-5047.

No December Meeting

Wildlife Diversity News Iowa Department of Natural Resources October 4, 2024

Celebrating 15 Years of Migratory Bird Conservation with Southern Wings!

The start of fall and cooler temperatures means many migratory birds have begun their journey south or will soon be journeying south for winter. Many of the birds you see during the summer in Iowa spend the winter months in Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. With many of these bird species in decline, it is important to do conservation work that supports them year-round (which is called the full annual cycle); both in Iowa and where they spend the winter months.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources contributes annually to the Southern Wings program, organized by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), that organizes conservation work south of the US border. 2024 marks 15 years since the inception of Southern Wings, when it was created by the AFWA Bird Conservation Committee. In fifteen years, 41 states have contributed more than \$4.2 million to Southern Wings projects, which focus on bird conservation in Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. These projects have aided in the conservation of 81 migratory bird species of greatest conservation need across 26 projects in 12 countries.

Southern Wings coordinates various projects targeted at specific areas and species. For 12 years, the Iowa DNR has joined Oklahoma, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, and the Pacific Flyway Council in contributing to a project entitled, Conservation of Migratory Bird Habitat of Desert Grasslands in the El Tokio BirdScape, Mexico. This project focuses on the El Tokio Grassland Priority Conservation Area in the Chihuahuan Desert of Mexico with one of the main goals of conserving the wintering habitat of many grassland birds. Southern Wings has partnered with the American Bird Conservancy, Pronatura Noreste, Autonomous University of Nuevo León, and Ejidos (local communities with communal land) to improve bird habitat through invasive shrub removal, restoring native grasslands, improving cattle fencing, holding educational workshops, implementing conservation easements, and developing plans for cattle ranching that benefits birds.

The El Tokio Grassland Priority Conservation Area is an important winter home for many bird species that can be found in Iowa during the summer, including Iowa breeding birds such as Loggerhead Shrike, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, Chipping Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Vesper Sparrow as well as birds that spend time in Iowa but do not breed here like Long-billed Curlew and Sprague's Pipit. Southern Wings, therefore, plays an important role in maintaining these and many other species that breed and migrate through Iowa and across North, Central, and South America each year.

About Southern Wings

Southern Wings facilitates state fish and wildlife agency participation in the conservation of priority migratory birds across their annual lifecycle (breeding, migration, and nonbreeding sites). Birds are not aware of political borders, but their challenges transcend these boundaries and so must our planning and initiatives on their behalf.

BOOK NOTE: IT'S FINCH TIME!

If you ever wanted a way to unravel the complexities of identifying and understanding better the world of North American finches – grosbeaks, rosy-finches, crossbills, goldfinches, and the other myriad finches – you now have a book that should seriously help you in your quest. It's The Stokes Guide to Finches of the United States and Canada (Little, Brown and Company, 2024) by Lillian Q. Stokes and Matthew A. Young.

The birds in the guide are smartly arranged into three groups: 18 main breeding finches, 9 vagrant finches, and the 17 endemic finches (honeycreepers) of Hawaii. But the book contains much more than the ID specifics – with revealing color photos for each species (including plumages, subspecies, and voice). The book also has excellent range maps, wonderful and brief information on the usual life-history for each species, summaries on up-to-date research, extensive details to help understand finch irruptions, conservation, research, attracting finches, and more. The formatting of the book is both creative and user-friendly. Yes, the book presents just about everything you wanted to know about finches, including things you might not even have considered!

Some of our favorite – and sometimes surprising - sections are the readable and often entertaining “Quick Takes,” that introduce each species (some highlights: Pine Grosbeak, the rosy-finches, House Finch, Common/Hoary redpoll, and the Red Crossbill complex). These sections are different, readable, and entertaining to read.

Particularly noteworthy is the portion of the book on the unique Hawaiian honeycreepers. And do not miss the brief and creative section at the end of the book on Conservation and Research, replete with ongoing topics of interest with questions yet to be answered in the finch-world, and the challenges presented in a section on “How you can help.”

The timing of this book by Stokes and Young is perfect, ideal to guide us through the finches we encounter, pursue, and even attract this fall and winter. It's also sure to become an essential resource to take us into the field and into the future.

From: Birding Community E-bulletin, October 2024

**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 or email.**

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 _____

Help Birds and Wildlife by Leaving the Leaves this Fall From Wild Birds Unlimited, October 8

Across much of North America, it is a fall tradition: raking and bagging leaves. Even if you live in a region that does not have this annual chore, you may make it a habit of tidying up other organic matter like pine needles.

There is a new way of thinking when it comes to this fall activity; don't do it! Leave the Leaves is good for the birds and other wildlife (not to mention your back).

Wild Birds Unlimited is proud to support the effort to raise awareness about the benefits of letting the leaves lie. To kick things off, the National Wildlife Federation has shared a document with tips on How to Leave the Leaves.

While the idea is to "leave the leaves" permanently, if you do decide you need to clean up the garden and remove the leaves in spring, make sure you wait until late in the season so as not to destroy all the life you've worked to protect. Your local wildlife will thank you.

Here are a few good reasons to Leave the Leaves

- Fallen leaves serve as an overwinter habitat for lizards, birds, turtles, frogs and insects. In turn, these living creatures help keep pests down and increase pollination in your garden.
- Leaves create a natural mulch that helps to suppress weeds while fertilizing the soil as it breaks down.
- Most butterflies and moths overwinter in the landscape as an egg, caterpillar, pupa or adult. In all but the warmest climates, these butterflies use leaf litter for winter cover.
- Bumble bees also rely on leaf litter for protection. At the end of summer, mated queen bumble bees burrow only an inch or two into the earth to hibernate for winter. An extra thick layer of leaves is welcome protection from the elements.

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