

## ***THE WARBLER***

**DES MOINES AUDUBON SOCIETY**

**VOLUME XXXI, NUMBER 7**

**AUGUST 2025**

**EDITOR: JANE R. CLARK**



### **Des Moines Audubon Field Trip**

**Saturday, August 9, 2025, 8 a.m.**

**Brenton Slough**

We will meet in the parking lot of Grimes Waterworks Park at 8:00 a.m. The parking area is at the corner of James Street and 1<sup>st</sup> Street in Grimes (where we have met before). Address is 100 N. James Street next to the old Grimes Library. We have permission from Polk County Conservation to visit their portion of Brenton Slough. All levels of bird watchers are encouraged to attend. Beginners are welcome and this is a great way to improve your birding skills by joining a wide range of birders. Dress for conditions. We will be walking on unpaved paths so bring appropriate footwear. Binoculars and/or scopes will be helpful if you have them. Contact Denny Thompson 515-229-9612 or [cndthomps@gmail.com](mailto:cndthomps@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

### **FLAMINGO WANDERINGS**

You might remember the scattering of scores of American Flamingos after Hurricane Idalia hit Florida in late August of 2023, impacting western and northern Florida and proceeding northward. These pink wonders were reported in odd places along the Gulf of Mexico and later as far away as Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Missouri, and Pennsylvania.

Some of these flamingos have apparently congregated into a flock moving around the Everglades and Florida Bay. In June of this year, a flock of over 120 birds was reported from that area, perhaps an indication of a cycle of at least seasonal migratory traffic.

But one of those original wandering American Flamingos, an individual found waterlogged, exhausted, and floating in Pinellas County in west-central Florida in 2023, has been re-located in Mexico. "Peaches," as this bird was named, had been rehabilitated and released, and was found in May helping raise a young flamingo chick in the Yucatan.

From The Birding Community Bulletin, July 2025

## Bluebird Trails in Polk County Iowa

### by Carl Nollen

One of our favorite birds is the Eastern Bluebird. This early spring migrant gets the jump on the nesting season by beginning as early as late March. It beats its chief competitor, the House Wren, by a month. Our beautifully blue bird has received much attention all over the U.S.A. and Canada. A colorful quarterly magazine, "Bluebird" has been published for 47 years, covering the American continent for not only the Eastern Bluebird, but also the Mountain Bluebird and the Western Bluebird. Thousands of bird houses built especially for bluebirds have been put up throughout the country in an effort to increase the population of this cavity-nesting bird.

In Polk County, bluebird trails have been established for 25 years and in Des Moines since 2014. The Polk County Conservation Board originated the bluebird trails effort. Volunteers regularly visit parks and cemeteries where many bird houses have been set up. They keep records of the successes and failures of bluebirds and other birds who may use the bird houses. This season begins in March with an annual meeting where volunteers and leaders get together to plan the upcoming season which lasts until September. Eastern Bluebirds are noteworthy as repeat nesters. They will regularly raise two or three broods a season regardless whether their first brood was successful. This natural habit helps increase the population of this desirable species.

Here are some records of how our bluebirds fared in 2024. Your writer has volunteered at Yellow Banks Park in Four Mile Township, southeast of Des Moines, for 25 years. Joel Van Roekel, Parks, and Recreation Manager for the City of Des Moines, leads the volunteer efforts there and Michael French, Polk County Conservation Board, was the leader for the county.

County Locale	Eggs Laid	Fledged	City Locale	Fledged
Chichaqua	43	35	Ewing Park	30
Easter Lake	38	16	Grays Lake	5
Fort Des Moines	38	22	Glendale Cemetery	64
Jester Park	195	103	Laurel Hill Cemetery	55
Thomas Mitchell	28	28	Woodland Cemetery	21
Yellow Banks	157	60	Raccoon River	26

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## NEW WORLD LIST: 11,131 SPECIES

The major world checklists for birds of the world - the IOC, Clements/eBird, and Birdlife International/Handbook of Birds of the World – have merged into a single unified list announced last month. This means that, for the first time, there is one global checklist of all bird species found on planet Earth.

It is called AviList, and it contains 11,131 species, 19,879 subspecies, 2,376 genera, 252 families, and 46 orders. Until now, ornithologists, conservationists, and birders have used a selection of global checklists, each with its own rationale over what constitutes a bird species. AviList, intended to harmonize the global checklists, has been developed by the Working Group on Avian Checklists, with representatives from BirdLife International, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the American Ornithological Society, the International Ornithologists' Union, and Avibase.

The AviList team worked for four years to make this all possible. Of course, there will be a time of adjustment. For example, BirdLife International will gradually adopt the unified bird list, along with some systematic background checks that will need to be run concerning the conservation status of various species.

Once fully aligned, the benefits for sustainable taxonomic work, global consensus, and clarity over conservation priorities are immense. The AviList checklist is free for anyone to use and provides available open access in several formats.From

## The 2024 Iowa Motus Report and Wood Thrush Tagging

### Iowa DNR, Wildlife Diversity News

July 14, 2025

The Motus Wildlife Tracking Network continues to expand in Iowa, with over 30 automated radio telemetry receiver stations across the state detecting tagged migratory wildlife. The Motus system is a collaborative network of wildlife tagging projects and radio receiver stations across the Americas that communicate together and allow researchers to track long-distance movements of small animals, like birds and bats. For example, a bird captured and tagged with a Motus tag in Costa Rica in January has the potential to be detected by a Motus receiver station in Iowa during spring migration. In 2024, Iowa Motus stations recorded 291 detections of 151 individuals from 24 bird species. From the start of Motus in Iowa in 2021 through December of 2024, Iowa Motus stations recorded 607 detections of 340 individuals from 39 bird species. The information gathered by Motus is helping us understand the migratory speed, timing, and habitat use of many bird species that migrate through our state.

In 2024, we began placing Motus tags on birds that breed in Iowa. The Iowa DNR is participating in a regional collaboration to tag Wood Thrush across their eastern forest breeding range. Wood Thrush are a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in 25 states, including Iowa, and are considered a common forest bird in steep decline. By tagging Wood Thrush across their range and detecting them on the network of Motus stations throughout the year, we can learn about their migratory routes and timing, migratory connectivity, and annual survival.

During summer 2024, Iowa DNR staff tagged 27 Wood Thrush at nine sites across the state near existing Motus stations. Wood Thrush were captured and tagged under Federal Bird Banding permits using targeted mist netting and audio lures. Tags were attached to the Wood Thrush with a leg-loop harness and were 3% or less of the bird's body weight so they did not impact the bird's daily activity or flight. The battery lifespan of each tag is at least 400 days, allowing us to track the Wood Thrush during their fall and spring migration routes throughout a full annual cycle.

Iowa Wood Thrush started their fall migrations between September 20 and October 11, 2024. Many of the Wood Thrush were detected at Motus stations south of Iowa including in Missouri, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, and Texas. Six birds were detected outside the United States in Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize. Particularly interesting were two Wood Thrush that traveled through Belize and were detected at the same area as many other tagged Wood Thrush. Wood Thrush from across the breeding range were detected at this station including birds tagged in Missouri, Mississippi, Ohio, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, Vermont, New Jersey, Delaware, Georgia, Maine, and the Canadian Province of Ontario. This high detection rate indicates that this particular area of Belize is an important migratory corridor for the species at large, and that habitat conservation efforts in this region are necessary and valuable to Wood Thrush no matter where they breed.

Iowa tagged Wood Thrush began returning to Iowa in April of 2025, with the first detection on an Iowa Motus station on April 29th. A total of 14 Wood Thrush was detected in Iowa by early June, roughly 52% of all the Wood Thrush tagged in Iowa during 2024.

The more stations a bird is detected at during their migration, the better picture we can get of their migration route. For example, a Wood Thrush tagged at Brown's Woods Park in Des Moines with a Motus tag ID number of 88620 was detected by 5 stations during its fall migration and 3 stations during its spring migration. This allows us to see that this bird left its breeding grounds at Brown's Woods around October 11, 2024 and traveled through Missouri and was detected by four stations, then detected by a station in José Cardel, Mexico on November 9, and likely traveled as far south as Central America to overwinter. Wood Thrush 88620 was detected during its spring migration first on April 19, 2025 at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas, then at another location in Texas, then in Missouri, before finally being detected once again at Brown's Woods Park in Des Moines on May 1st. So far in 2025, the Iowa DNR has tagged an additional 10 Wood Thrush at five sites across eastern and central Iowa near existing Motus stations and is also collaborating with researchers at Iowa State University to tag more Wood Thrush in Iowa. These tagging efforts will continue to improve our understanding of Wood Thrush across their full annual cycle and help us to improve conservation efforts for this declining bird species. Check out to see where Iowa tagged Wood Thrush have been detected!

Fall bird migration will be starting soon, so keep an eye out for detections on Iowa Motus stations between August and October.

To view this article and maps see here: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/IACIO/bulletins/3e8f49b>  
The Motus site at Blank Park Zoo: <https://motus.org/data/receiverDeploymentDetections?id=10144>

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**Nonprofit  
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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

**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 \_\_\_\_\_

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