



PROGRAMS

April 15, 2021 | Mike Meetz | Common Loon Survey of Isle Royale National Park: 30 Years and Still Going

For 30 years Mike, worked with the National Park Service and the state of Michigan. His volunteer work has been focused on collecting survey data for the Common Loons on Isle Royale National Park on Lake Superior.

Biography: Mike retired from the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory at the Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine after 35 years as a scientist specializing in animal viral diagnostics, quality assurance, and laboratory safety. He is a member of many environmental organizations and volunteers for various governmental conservation agencies. As a BBAS chapter member, Mike and his wife Linda own and manage 38 rural acres for prairie reconstruction and conservation purposes.

May 20, 2021 | Steve Albert & Lauren Helton | Linking Bird Conservation Groups Across the Full Annual Cycle

Over the past few years, we've all read distressing news about the accumulated loss of three billion North American birds and the sudden demise of thousands more in the Southwest. Birds, especially migratory species, need our help. In partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Institute for Bird Populations (IBP), a non-profit conservation science organization, is launching a new initiative to establish connections between conservation organizations in Iowa and other parts of the Upper Midwest with our network of collaborators that are working to conserve the same species on their wintering grounds in Latin America. IBP works with 100 conservation groups in Latin America to help conserve the migratory birds we share across their life cycle. We believe establishing partnerships provide tangible benefits to all partners involved.

Local and state Audubon chapters will play a central role in this project.

Biography: Steve is an Assistant Director at IBP and works primarily with the organization's two signature bird banding and monitoring programs, the MAPS and MoSI networks. Steve previously worked for various federal and state agencies and several Indian tribes. One of his primary interests is exploring how research, management, and policy can work together to protect migratory birds through their full annual cycle.

Biography: Lauren is a staff biologist and scientific illustrator at IBP. She recruits and trains seasonal bird banding crews and teaches bird banding classes for the MAPS, MoSI, and TMAPS (tropical MAPS) banding programs across the Americas and in the Pacific Islands. When not in the field, she helps maintain the quality of all bird banding data in these programs and provides illustrations for IBP's publications.

FIELD TRIPS

NOTICE

Because of the COVID-19 situation, no BBAS field trips are currently scheduled. We plan on resuming our field trip schedule this coming fall 2021. Watch for email notifications and information in future newsletters.



Rusty Blackbird in rural Boone County | Photo by Larry Dau

PLEASE NOTE

BBAS Programs will be Zoom meetings for the remainder of this year. Watch for notification emails containing Zoom information and the link.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2 | Officers and Committees; President's Corner; Membership Form |
| 3 | Photos |
| 4 | Field Trip Reports, Bird-A-Thon |
| 5 | Ames CBC |
| 6 | Boone CBC |
| 7 | Saylorville CBC |
| 8 | New members |

The mission of the Big Bluestem Audubon Society is to enjoy the observation and study of birds and natural ecosystems, contribute to their conservation and restoration, engage in educational activities to benefit humanity, and gain a broader understanding and deeper appreciation of the world in which we live.

Notice to New Members of Big Bluestem Audubon Society Only:

We are sending you this printed version of our BBAS newsletter for the first two issues after you have joined the National Audubon Society or become a local member. We have now converted to a mostly electronically-delivered newsletter to save costs and be more green. If you want to receive a printed version, please notify me. Otherwise, you will receive the online version. If you supplied your email address upon joining, we will send you a notice and link for the newsletter each time a new version is available.

Thanks,
Larry Dau
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PRESIDENT'S CORNER WITH TIM GARNER

On Sunday, February 28, I looked out my west window in my Ames home, and I spied a fox squirrel gathering grass from my front yard. She assiduously went about her task, and after having taken as much as she could hold in her mouth, scurried up my silver maple tree - one that had been damaged in the derecho last August. She found a cavity created by a fallen limb from that storm and carefully lined that cavity with the dried grass. My assumption is that she is building a nest in preparation for the young that she will soon bear.

The whole episode reminds me of the symbiotic relationship that living things have with each other. The storm damaged a tree, which then provided an opportunity for an enterprising rodent with which she could build a safe home for her offspring. The tree's loss was the squirrel's gain. What a beautiful thing to watch!

These kinds of interactions in nature play out countless times wherever we live. I was just fortunate enough to see it. My hope for all of you is, in the midst of this pandemic - of which we have long since grown very weary - that you will see these remarkable relationships in nature, things that will make you smile in happy wonderment, and that will sustain your spirits during this challenging time.



Black-crowned Night Heron at Bjorkboda
Marsh in Boone County | Photo By Larry Dau

Membership Application Form

☐

New member of the National Audubon Society. You will receive the *Audubon* magazine, the ***Big Bluestem Flyer***, membership card. — \$20

Please make your check payable to **National Audubon Society** and include "Chapter Code H-57" on the check

☐

Subscribe to the ***Big Bluestem Flyer*** for one year and participate in some Big Bluestem Society Activities — \$10

Restrictions are that you will not be a National Audubon Society member or have voting privileges, and you cannot be an officer or committee chair.

Please make your check payable to ***Big Bluestem Audubon Society***.

Send your check and this coupon to:
Big Bluestem Audubon Society
P.O. Box 543, Ames IA 50010

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

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*Please do not use this form for renewals
to the National Audubon Society.*

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White-faced Ibis at Snake Creek Marsh in Greene County
Photo by Larry Dau



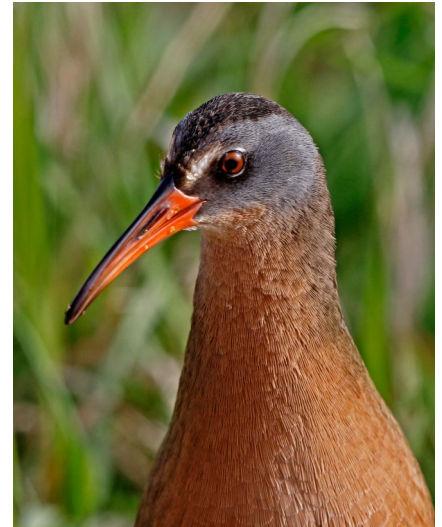
Sora in Hamilton County near Bjorkboda Marsh
Photo by Larry Dau



Willet at Bjorkboda Marsh in Hamilton County
Photo by Larry Dau



Short-billed Dowitcher in Boone County
near Bjorkboda Marsh
Photo by Larry Dau



Virginia Rail in Hamilton County near
Bjorkboda Marsh | Photo by Larry Dau

PHOTOS AND CONTENT FOR NEWSLETTER BY LARRY DAU

Please send any photos you have of events, birds, wildlife, habitat or BBAS members in the field that you would like to see in the newsletter. We are also looking for short content items and announcements to include. Stefany Hulsebus edits all content and creates the layout of the BBAS Newsletter. We appreciate her expertise and help.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS ERIC OLLIE

NOTICE

Due to COVID-19, we have not had any recent field trips. Therefore, there are no field trips to report.

BIRD-A-THON 2021

BBAS is tentatively planning to have Bird-A-Thon this coming May 2021. May 8 is the tentative date. We hope this will be possible as more people are vaccinated and with social distancing. Watch for notification emails with more information. Participation in Bird-A-Thon is fun and our largest fundraising event.



Chestnut-sided Warbler in rural NW Wisconsin
Photo By Larry Dau



Ring-neck Pheasant crowing in rural Bone County
Photo By Larry Dau

Buying from the businesses listed on this page not only benefits the birds but also helps our local economy and provides funding for BBAS. Donations fund various habitat restoration and educational projects. Present the coupons at the time of your purchase and a donation will be given to BBAS.

Donate \$5 of your next purchase* of \$25 or more at WBU to BBAS

Big Bluestem Audubon Society



*Coupon must be presented at time of purchase.
One coupon per purchase.
May not be combined with any other offer.
Valid only at Wild Birds Unlimited of Ames.

Valid through June 30, 2021

Wild Birds Unlimited
Nature Shop

213 Duff Ave. Ames, IA 50010 (515) 956-3145
Monday-Friday 9:30-5:30 Saturday 9-5 Sunday 12-4
www.ames.wbu.com

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1 1/2 miles east of I-35 on new U.S. 30 and 1/4 mile north

Hours: 8-6 M-F, 8-4 Sat. (515) 232-7906

<u>Purchase</u>	<u>Donation</u>
Up to \$15	\$1.50
\$15 and over	\$3.00
\$35 and over	\$5.00
Over \$70	\$7.50

Brekke's offers Big Bluestem Audubon Society a donation when bird seed or other bird products are purchased.

Present this coupon with your purchase and a donation will be given to BBAS.

Offer good until June 30, 2021

AMES CBC BY SHANE PATTERSON

Species rarity key:

Bold Italics = an uncommon or rare species for the Ames CBC

Bold Underlined Italics = a new species for the Ames CBC

Species count key:

Blue = an unusually low count for this species on the Ames CBC

Red = an unusually high count for this species on the Ames CBC

cw = count week

Ten species that often occur on the Ames CBC but didn't this year:

Gray Partridge, Long-eared Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Shrike, Winter Wren, Snow Bunting, Lapland Longspur, Red-winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle

Ten species that often occur on the Ames CBC but didn't this year:

Gray Partridge, Long-eared Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Northern Shrike, Winter Wren, Snow Bunting, Lapland Longspur, Red-winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, Common Grackle

<i>Ross's Goose</i>	1	<i>Pileated Woodpecker</i>	1	<i>Yellow-rumped Warbler</i>	1
<i>Greater White-fronted Goose</i>	1	American Kestrel	13	Northern Cardinal	304
Cackling Goose	148	<i>Merlin</i>	3	Total species on count day:	70
Canada Goose	9035	Blue Jay	172	(slightly lower than most recent years)	
Trumpeter Swan	4	American Crow	13400	Total individual birds on count day:	31607
<i>Gadwall</i>	3	Horned Lark	1	(a rather high total)	
Mallard	502	Black-capped Chickadee	328		
<i>Green-winged Teal</i>	5	Tufted Titmouse	2		
<i>Redhead</i>	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	11	plus 1 count-day hybrid	
Lesser Scaup	cw	White-breasted Nuthatch	210	and 4 count-week species	
Bufflehead	cw	Brown Creeper	13		
Common Goldeneye	18	Carolina Wren	15		
Hooded Merganser	cw	<i>Golden-crowned Kinglet</i>	1		
Common Merganser	1	Eastern Bluebird	14		
Ruddy Duck	cw	<i>Hermit Thrush</i>	1		
Wild Turkey	11	American Robin	126		
Ring-necked Pheasant	178	European Starling	2709		
<i>Pied-billed Grebe</i>	1	Cedar Waxwing	96		
Rock Pigeon	286	House Sparrow	1153		
Eurasian Collared-Dove	66	Eurasian Tree Sparrow x House Sparrow			
Mourning Dove	126		1		
<i>Ring-billed Gull</i>	1	<i>Eurasian Tree Sparrow</i>	6		
<u>American White Pelican</u>	1	House Finch	409		
Northern Harrier	3	Purple Finch	8		
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	<i>Common Redpoll</i>	4		
Cooper's Hawk	11	Pine Siskin	57		
Bald Eagle	60	American Goldfinch	155		
Red-tailed Hawk	61	<i>Fox Sparrow</i>	3		
Rough-legged Hawk	3	American Tree Sparrow	457		
<i>Eastern Screech-Owl</i>	3	Dark-eyed Junco	809		
Great Horned Owl	8	<i>White-crowned Sparrow</i>	10		
Barred Owl	13	<i>Harris's Sparrow</i>	18		
Belted Kingfisher	2	White-throated Sparrow	38		
Red-bellied Woodpecker	126	Song Sparrow	21		
Downy Woodpecker	221	<i>Swamp Sparrow</i>	1		
Hairy Woodpecker	56	Meadowlark sp.	20		
Northern Flicker	2	Brown-headed Cowbird	57		

COVID-19 required us to give up many things to protect health and safety this year, but we forged ahead with a socially-distanced Christmas Bird Count to finish on a good note. Pleasantly, the weather on the day of the count hovered around 36 degrees Fahrenheit at the warmest point. Without heavy snow cover and a clear day the visibility was great. Thanks to the effort of our generous volunteer counters, over 500 miles were traveled via car and foot to accomplish the intimidating task. As a whole, the count registered 56 different species, same as in 2019. This year was a fantastic year for Bald Eagles! There were 124 (59 immature) spotted across the county, most around open water on the Des Moines River near Fraser. A Golden Eagle was counted among a flock of Bald Eagles, adding some excitement to the already awesome sight of soaring eagles. A trend to note in the last two years' counts is a continued drop in Junco numbers, with around 300 counted (down from over 1,100!). This is a number to watch in coming years, as it may be a situational anomaly or a significant trend. Also missing from this year's count was the Red Headed Woodpecker, an odd absence compared with years past. We managed to blow past years' total and finish with just over 9,000 total counted!

Gr. White-fronted Goose	0	Gull sp.	0	Spotted Towhee	0
Canada Goose	1343	Rock Pigeon	360	Eastern Towhee	0
Cackling Goose	0	Eurasian Collared-Dove	50	American Tree Sparrow	334
Tundra Swan	2	Mourning Dove	43	Field Sparrow	0
Trumpeter Swan	2	Eastern Screech-Owl	23	Savannah Sparrow	0
Swan species	0	Great Horned Owl	14	Fox Sparrow	0
Wood Duck	0	Barred Owl	15	Song Sparrow	37
Mallard	9	Long-eared Owl	0	Lincoln's Sparrow	0
Gadwall	0	Short-eared Owl	0	Swamp Sparrow	3
Hooded Merganser	0	Northern Saw-whet Owl	0	White-throated Sparrow	1
Common Merganser	0	Owl species	0	White-crowned Sparrow	0
Duck species	0	Belted Kingfisher	2	Harris's Sparrow	9
Gray Partridge	0	Red-headed Woodpecker	0	Dark-eyed Junco	344
Ring-necked Pheasant	53	Red-bellied Woodpecker	114	Oregon Junco	0
Wild Turkey	59	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	0	Lapland Longspur	0
Northern Bobwhite	0	Downy Woodpecker	195	Snow Bunting	0
Double-crested Cormorant	0	Hairy Woodpecker	68	Northern Cardinal	188
Great Blue Heron	0	Northern Flicker	5	Red-winged Blackbird	1
Turkey Vulture	0	Pileated Woodpecker	10	Eastern Meadowlark	0
Bald Eagle	124	Loggerhead Shrike	0	Western Meadowlark	0
Bald Eagle Imm.	59	Northern Shrike	0	Meadowlark species	3
Northern Harrier	1	Shrike species	0	Rusty Blackbird	3
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	Blue Jay	96	Brewer's Blackbird	0
Cooper's Hawk	4	American Crow	189	Common Grackle	1
Northern Goshawk	0	Horned Lark	1	Brown-headed Cowbird	0
Accipiter species	0	Black-capped Chickadee	276	Blackbird species	0
Red-shouldered Hawk	0	Tufted Titmouse	55	Purple Finch	22
Red-tailed Hawk	51	Red-breasted Nuthatch	5	House Finch	36
Harlan's Hawk	0	White-breasted Nuthatch	149	Common Redpoll	0
Krider's Hawk	0	Brown Creeper	1	Pine Siskin	39
Rough-legged Hawk	6	Carolina Wren	8	American Goldfinch	68
Buteo species	2	Winter Wren	1	Evening Grosbeak	0
Golden Eagle	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet	0	House Sparrow	1171
American Kestrel	8	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	0	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	0
Merlin	0	Eastern Bluebird	13	Spotted Sandpiper	0
Falcon species	0	Hermit Thrush	0		
Hawk species	0	American Robin	1	# of birds	9214
Killdeer	0	Brown Thrasher	0	# of species (count day)	58
Wilson's Snipe	0	European Starling	3458	# of species (count week)	58
Ring-billed Gull	0	Cedar Waxwing	74		
Herring Gull	0	Yellow-rumped Warbler	0		

SAYLORVILLE CBC BY STEVE DINSMORE

Participants:

John Bissell	Bery Engebretsen	Adam Janke	Shane Patterson
John Cecil	Jay Gilliam	Kevin Murphy	Matthew Wetrich
Alex Constant	Tyler Harms	Wolf Oesterreich	Clayton Will
Raymond Cummins	Max Havlik	Eric Ollie	Kyla Yuza-Pate
Stephen J. Dinsmore	Mike Havlik	Dylan Osterhaus	

Greater White-fronted Goose	1	Double-crested Cormorant	cw	Golden-crowned Kinglet	1
Snow Goose	2	Great Blue Heron	1	Eastern Bluebird	50
Cackling Goose	24	Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Hermit Thrush	1
Canada Goose	4298	Cooper's Hawk	4	American Robin	87
Trumpeter Swan	26	Accipiter sp.	0	European Starling	1389
Wood Duck	1	Bald Eagle: Adult	68	Cedar Waxwing	89
Northern Shoveler	279	Bald Eagle: Immature	40	House Sparrow	344
Gadwall	12	Bald Eagle: Unknown	9	House Finch	76
Mallard	8046	Red-tailed Hawk	65	Purple Finch	11
American Black Duck	1	Rough-legged Hawk	2	Common Redpoll	4
Northern Pintail	15	Eastern Screech-Owl	11	Pine Siskin	13
Green-winged Teal	28	Great Horned Owl	34	American Goldfinch	203
Redhead	cw	Barred Owl	32	American Tree Sparrow	326
Ring-necked Duck	cw	Long-eared Owl	11	Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco	491
Greater Scaup	1	Short-eared Owl	2	White-crowned Sparrow	6
Lesser Scaup	28	Northern Saw-whet Owl	1	Harris' Sparrow	6
Bufflehead	3	Red-bellied Woodpecker	85	White-throated Sparrow	18
Common Goldeneye	62	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	Song Sparrow	53
Hooded Merganser	3	Downy Woodpecker	83	Swamp Sparrow	11
Common Merganser	1409	Hairy Woodpecker	32	Eastern Meadowlark	1
Red-breasted Merganser	1	Northern Flicker	10	Meadowlark sp.	19
Ruddy Duck	338	Pileated Woodpecker	4	Red-winged Blackbird	376
Gray Partridge	6	American Kestrel	11	Brown-headed Cowbird	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	57	Merlin	2	Rusty Blackbird	1
Wild Turkey	91	Peregrine Falcon	1	Yellow-rumped Warbler	2
American Coot	cw	Northern Shrike	1	Northern Cardinal	220
Rock Pigeon	237	Blue Jay	138		
Eurasian Collared-Dove	27	American Crow	141	Species	88
Mourning Dove	106	Horned Lark	10	Individuals	22951
Ring-billed Gull	2514	Black-capped Chickadee	173	Observers	19
California Gull	1	Tufted Titmouse	9	Owling hours	8
Herring Gull	419	Red-breasted Nuthatch	17	Owling miles	47
Iceland Gull	1	White-breasted Nuthatch	105	Foot hours	32
Lesser Black-backed Gull	3	Brown Creeper	6	Foot miles	33
American White Pelican	4	Carolina Wren	1	Car hours	45
				Car miles	514

NEW MEMBERS OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Ames
Anne Grevstad-Nordbrock, Paul Gryte, Harriett Hedges,
Barbara Houston, Robert Jolly, Kitty Lamont, Harvey Lapan,
Douglas Maguire, Francis Mariner, Rhonda Marsbach,
Anita Nichols, Bobbie Nordyke, Sandra Oberbroeckling,
Doug Paris, Steven Pacenka, Daniel Roepke, Barbara Sacks,
Patricia Schwarz, Carol Swanson, James Vanbergen,
Sue Vicente, Connie Wilson, Lester Wilson, Toni Woodman

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Marvin Ross
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Nevada
Sherri Beaty

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Karen Burk
Laurie Textor

Huxley
Tracy Kangas

Melbourne
Mary Isaacson

Roland
Aubrey Ellig

Woodward
Ann Hartwig
Paul Thompson
Jerry Thornburgh



Mink at Swan Lake State Park in Carroll, Iowa. | Photo by Larry Dau

NEWSLETTER Volume 56 | Number 3 | March/April/May 2021
<http://bigbluestemaudubon.org/>



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

We welcome new members!

Big Bluestem Flyer
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