



2024, Volume 3 — FALL

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## OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

**President:** Marty Corfman  
**Vice President:** Ken Kiss  
**Secretary:** Andrea Pellerito  
**Treasurer:** Maggie O'Connell

**Field Trips:** Tony Moline  
**Membership:** Ken Kiss  
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**Web Admin:** Mary Leigh  
**Newsletter:** George Tuft  
**Conservation:** Chuck Isenhardt  
**Iowa Audubon Liaison:** Bob Walton

**At-Large Board Members:**  
 Lynn Schroeder Joe Tollari  
 George Tuft Bob Walton  
 Sandy Walton

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Marty Corfman

I am excited to be a relatively new member of our local Audubon Society and board of directors. I am doubly excited to be welcomed as your new board President! We have a great group of members, and your wealth of knowledge is amazing. I'm learning so much from all of you! The [2024-2025 DAS Board Members](#) are listed on our website.

### MAGIC

I recently had the pleasure of attending a Zoom meeting for the Audubon Upper Mississippi River Network. There was some discussion about Chimney Swifts that led me to research their nightly roosting habits. A couple of weeks later, my husband and I were driving past Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque at dusk, and I heard and saw many swifts hunting insects in the sky. I said, "Pull over, honey! This is gonna be cool!"

My unsuspecting hubby went along with his crazy birder wife, thank goodness. Having just learned about how swifts sometimes roost in swarms in broad chimneys, I was hoping my intuition was right. As the light faded, hundreds more swifts accumulated in the sky and began a circular swarm around the chimney. Soon a few birds here and there would drop into the chimney by raising their wings above their backs and dropping straight down. Inside they cling to the walls with their feet, using their peculiar spiny tail

feathers as props. In the last 5 minutes of dusk, the sky blackened above the chimney with my estimate of 1,500-3,000 birds (impossible to tell!) and we could see them rapidly dropping into the chimney.

Suddenly the sky was empty and their loud twittering voices were silent as if they'd never been there. It was a magical experience, and I was so happy to be able to plan a "pop-up" birding outing for the next night.

The swifts are migrating to South America right now, so I thought we'd better meet quickly, and 15 people came to experience this thrill! I'd say only about 1/2 as many birds were present as the night before. Keep your eyes and ears open at dusk in the fall and maybe you, too, can share in this spectacle of nature.

### POP-UP BIRDING

Our Website administrator/board member, Mary Leigh, has been planning some other "pop-up" birding events, in addition to those planned by our Field Trip leader, Tony Moline. Bob Walton and Bob Pape have been helping lead as well. We will continue to plan these periodically, so keep an eye on your email and our website/[Facebook](#) page for updates!

### GET INVOLVED!

We welcome our members and friends to also lead outings and would love your participation and input! If you are interested or have ideas to share, please email us at [audubondubuque@gmail.com](mailto:audubondubuque@gmail.com). We also have several committees put

together that do much of our work outside of our board meetings. We know we have members with experience and knowledge that would help make our group better. If you would consider participating on one of these committees, or possibly future board membership, we would love to hear from you!



Chimney Swifts above Wartburg Theological Seminary

## NEWSLETTER & MEMBERSHIP

**Please Note:** We have over 250 members for whom we have no email address. We would greatly prefer to reduce the number of mailed copies of this newsletter, if possible. If you get the hard copy and would switch to an emailed version, please email us at [audubondubuque@gmail.com](mailto:audubondubuque@gmail.com).

If we have your email address, you'll also receive notifications of upcoming programs, annual field trips, and pop-up field trips, along with occasional emails about other topics of potential interest (unless you request otherwise). If you're not already receiving such emails, we don't have your email address!

## WINDOW PROTECTION

By Ken Kiss

You may have noticed the white dots covering some of the windows at E.B. Lyons. The Friends of Mines of Spain purchased this material, and Dubuque County Conservation installed.



Window protection

These dots are to prevent birds from running into windows. Sometimes birds fly into windows, thinking there is open space because of reflections.

I was temporarily not filling the feeders closest to the building in the rear of E.B. Lyons for this reason. I have gone back to using all the feeders, and we have seen no bird fatalities from hitting the windows.

## ON THE MOVE!

By Tony Moline

As winter approaches, so does the final push of migratory birds, waterfowl, and gulls! Although some species start as early as September, peak migration for these birds happens October through November.

The arrival of waterfowl also marks the beginning of waterfowl hunting season. Most local public spaces are open for hunting, including the Upper Mississippi Wildlife Refuge access areas of Mud Lake, Deere Dike and Green Island Wildlife Area.

So, be aware when birding in these areas. The UMWR is, however, as its name suggests, a refuge. Hunting and even trespassing is not permitted in marked areas along the refuge. Popular birding areas where trespass and hunting are not permitted include the section of Deere Dike along Riverside Road extending to the river channel (so watch from the road) and from 501st Rd to the other side of Fish Lake Rd (closed in season) at Green Island.

Rare and unusual species to keep an eye out for include: Western and Red-necked Grebe, Red-throated and



Western Grebe

Pacific Loon, Black Scoter, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Lesser and Great Black-backed Gull, Glaucous Gull, Sabine's Gull, and Black-legged Kittiwake.

## BIRDING ETHICS

By Bob Walton

*In the United States alone, recent studies have put the number of birders at nearly 96 million, making this one of the top outdoor leisure activities. This volume of birding enthusiasts has placed pressure on our precious few public natural resource areas that are crucial for the survival of our birds. In addition to intrusion into the nesting, feeding, and roosting locations for birds, the use of modern technology, including cell phone apps, recordings, and rare bird alerts further intrude into the lives of birds that are already threatened by loss of habitat, pesticides, and urban sprawl.*

*All sports have rules to follow, and birding should be no different. It is important that the welfare of all our birds be respected, resulting in little or no disturbance to the birds. The American Birding Association (ABA) has developed a Code of Birding Ethics that promotes respectful, enjoyable, and thoughtful birding:*

### ABA CODE OF BIRDING ETHICS V.2.1, Nov. 2019

#### 1. RESPECT AND PROMOTE BIRDS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

- A) Support the conservation of birds and their habitats. Engage in and promote bird-friendly practices whenever possible, such as keeping cats and other domestic animals indoors or controlled, acting to prevent window strikes, maintaining safe bird feeding stations, landscaping native plants, drinking shade-grown coffee, and advocating for conservation policies. Be mindful of any negative environmental impacts of your activities, including contributing to climate change. Reduce or offset such impacts as much as you are able.
- B) Avoid stressing birds or exposing them to danger. Be particularly cautious around active nests and nesting colonies, roosts, display sites, and feeding sites. Limit the use of recordings and other audio methods of attracting birds, particularly in heavily birded areas, for species that are rare in the area, and for species that are threatened or endangered. Always exercise caution and restraint when photographing, recording, or otherwise approaching birds.
- C) Always minimize habitat disturbance. Consider the benefit of staying on trails, preserving snags, and similar practices.

#### 2. RESPECT AND PROMOTE THE BIRDING COMMUNITY AND ITS INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

- A) Be an exemplary ethical role model by following this Code and leading by example. Always bird and report with honesty and integrity.

- B) Respect the interests, rights, and skill levels of fellow birders, as well as people participating in other outdoor activities. Freely share your knowledge and experience and be especially helpful to beginning birders.
- C) Share bird observations freely, provided such reporting would not violate other sections of the Code, as birders, ornithologists, and conservationists derive considerable benefit from publicly available bird sightings.
- D) Approach instances of perceived unethical birding behavior with sensitivity and respect; try to resolve the matter in a positive manner, keeping in mind that perspectives vary. Use the situation as an opportunity to teach by example and introduce more people to this Code.
- E) In group birding situations, promote knowledge by everyone in the group of the practices in this Code and ensure that the group does not unduly interfere with others using the same area.

#### 3. RESPECT AND PROMOTE THE LAW AND THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS

- A) Never enter private property without the landowner's permission. Respect the interests of and interact positively with people living in the area where you are birding.
- B) Familiarize yourself with and follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing activities at your birding location. In particular, be aware of regulations related to birds, such as disturbance of protected nesting areas or sensitive habitats, and the use audio or food lures.

*Tri-state birders are fortunate to have free public access to many federal, state, county, and city lands. The largest and some of the most popular are in the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. This national refuge is a 261-mile-long refuge and is the longest contiguous river refuge in the continental United States. It was established in 1924 as a refuge for fish, wildlife, and plants, and as a feeding, nesting, and migrating area for birds using the Mississippi flyway. Birders must be aware that areas of the Mississippi Refuge are closed to all visitors, primarily during the migratory bird hunting seasons, to allow migrating waterfowl safe feeding and resting areas. Maps of the closed areas may be reviewed by visiting district refuge offices or by downloading from the U.S. Fisheries and Wildlife website at [fws.gov/refuge/upper-mississippi-river](http://fws.gov/refuge/upper-mississippi-river).*

*I hope everyone enjoys their fall birding adventures. Maximize the benefits of being out in nature. It reduces stress, provides fresh air, and allows you to enjoy the surrounding natural beauty. Lastly, keep the distracting technology to a bare minimum—after all simple experiences are often the best and most rewarding.*

## WHITEWATER CANYON SURVEY RESULTS

Dubuque Audubon's 3-year survey of grassland birds at Whitewater Canyon Wildlife Management Area is complete!

When the Whitewater Canyon property was purchased in 2006 by the Dubuque County Conservation Board, the majority of the surveyed area had been cropland of corn, alfalfa, and oats that was converted to a CRP mixture of brome grass, bird's-foot trefoil, and alfalfa, with a small amount of prairie grass and forbes.

Since the purchase, the Conservation Board has made yearly plantings of tall grass prairie and forbes to convert the entire area to prairie, thus providing better habitat for grassland birds. The primary objective has been to maintain the existing grasslands with a maximum diversity of prairie grasses and forbes.

To encourage a diversity of wildlife, the Dubuque County Conservation Board instigated a management plan

that involves a rotational burning of approximately 1/3 of the prairie grasslands each year. With rotational burning, the invasion of undesirable trees can be eliminated, and the diversity and density of the grasslands will promote grassland wildlife.



*Henslow's Sparrow*

Throughout the 3 years of observation, the current management strategy of burning approximately 1/3 of the prairie each year has resulted in a stable population of the main "species of concern" grassland birds, especially the Henslow's and Grasshopper Sparrows.

See the [Projects](#) page for more details, including links to the 3 annual reports and the summary report (source of above excerpts).

## Dubuque Audubon October Program BIRDS OF THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER REFUGE

Thursday, 10/10/24

6:45 PM Social/Sharing Time  
7 – 8 PM Program  
EB Lyons Interpretive Center

8991 Bellevue Heights Road  
Dubuque, IA 52003

[View Map](#)

Wildlife photographer Paul Winer will present a public program entitled "Birds of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge." Paul's program will feature photographic images from his numerous ramblings within the Savanna District of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge.



## Dubuque Audubon November Program MISSISSIPPI RIVER FISH, TURTLES, & MORE!

Thursday, 11/14/24

6:45 PM Social/Sharing Time  
7 – 8 PM Program

EB Lyons Interpretive Center  
8991 Bellevue Heights Road  
Dubuque, IA 52003

[View Map](#)

Denny Weiss worked 35 years for the Iowa DNR in fisheries research on the Mississippi River at the Fairport and Bellevue fisheries stations. Denny will share his knowledge and hands-on experience about the unique and interesting fish, turtles, and animals that call the Mississippi River their home.



## DUBUQUE AUDUBON ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Saturday, 12/28/24

Start: 8 AM  
Result Compilation: 5 PM

EB Lyons Interpretive Center  
8991 Bellevue Heights Road  
Dubuque, IA 52003

[View Map](#)

The annual Audubon Christmas Bird count is the longest running organized citizen science project in the United States.

Join Dubuque Audubon field trip leaders as we split into groups to identify and count birds within a 10 mile radius of Center Grove Methodist Church, Dubuque, IA. Sectors include Swiss Valley, Mines of Spain, City of Dubuque, Western Dubuque, Deere Dike/north of Dubuque, Dubuque Airport, and western Grant County.

Meet at EB Lyons at 8 AM. All skill levels are welcome. As we move between locations, you can carpool with leaders or drive separately, depending on space and preference. Compilation will be at 5 pm inside EB Lyons. All data will be submitted to the National Audubon Society and used to track trends in bird diversity.

See the [events page](#) on our website for details on the option to feeder-watch from home.



*American Robin*



**Dubuque Audubon Society**

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**NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY**

*If you join the National Audubon Society, you are automatically a member of your local Audubon Society and do not need to sign up separately.*

Joining the National Audubon Society with Dubuque Audubon as your local chapter is done most easily through our website at [audubondubuque.org/join](http://audubondubuque.org/join). The annual cost is a \$20 minimum donation, which is for a family or an individual.

National members will receive the award-winning *Audubon* magazine. We recommend noting the month you join, so that you will not be confused by early renewal reminders.

**DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY**

**NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & RENEWAL FORM**

*Do NOT use this form for joining or renewing at the national level.*

If you wish to join or renew membership in the Dubuque Audubon Society *without* joining the National Audubon Society, then please fill out this form. Local chapter dues are \$10 per year, and dues remain with the local chapter. Our membership year runs from July to June.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

*If you provide your email address, you'll receive our quarterly newsletter, notifications of upcoming programs & field trips, & occasional emails about other topics of potential interest.*

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*We are trying to reduce printing and postage costs by emailing more newsletters, but let us know below if you'd like to request a mailed black-and-white copy. Our electronic newsletters have the advantage of being in color, and you can click on links where applicable. Our newsletters are available for viewing anytime from our website.*

Check the box to request a black-and-white printed newsletter by postal mail.

**Make check payable to "Dubuque Audubon Society" and mail to:**

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