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President's Corner

BY MARTY CORFMAN

I have some exciting updates on a couple key projects that Dubuque Audubon is championing. We have been busy, and I am grateful for the help of many dedicated members. Please contact me if you would be interested in getting involved with any of these projects or if you have any questions.

DAS Officers

Note the switch!

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

DAS Board Members

Chuck Isenhardt, Mary Leigh (Web Admin), Tony Moline, Lori Ollendick, Joe Tollari, Bob Walton (Iowa Audubon Liaison), Sandy Walton, Kari Zelinskas

DAS Committee Chairs

Membership	Mary Leigh
Program	Bob & Sandy Walton
Field Trips & Volunteer	
Opportunities	Tony Moline
Conservation	Chuck Isenhardt
Publicity	Marty Corfman
Newsletter	M Corfman, M Leigh
Technology	Lori Ollendick

Website audubondubuque.org



Email contact@audubondubuque.org

Facebook [Dubuque Audubon Society](https://www.facebook.com/DubuqueAudubonSociety)

YouTube [Dubuque Audubon](https://www.youtube.com/DubuqueAudubon)

Bird Friendly Iowa



Our chapter has officially begun the process of earning a Bird Friendly Iowa (BFI) designation for the City of Dubuque. After a great program with BFI's Dan Cohen in May, we are now compiling the necessary information for the application.

The BFI designation recognizes communities that are actively protecting and enhancing bird habitat, reducing threats to birds, and educating the public about conservation. This is a crucial step in formalizing our city's commitment to our feathered friends. A big thank you to board member Lori Ollendick and member Joyce Giannakouros for their dedicated work on this project. We'll be sure to keep you posted on our progress!

Making Dubuque Even MORE Bird-Friendly

Good news! Our work with the City of Dubuque on bird-friendly building practices is progressing. The DAS Conservation Committee has been in communication with city management and architects about a growing number of new building projects. We've received positive responses and are working to ensure best practices are recommended for future projects. Soon, our efforts may include providing

"Bird-Friendly Building" handouts with the packets for Major Site Plan Applications. A big thank you to Conservation Committee member Joyce Giannakouros for all her help!

Updates to the Bylaws

The board has been working to amend our bylaws, and we are now ready for a membership vote. The draft bylaws can be found on our website (look for the gavel!), or you can request a copy by contacting me directly.

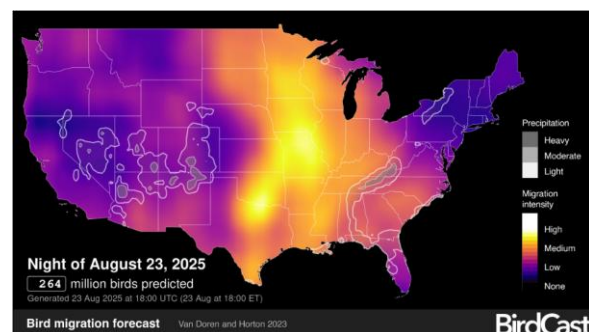


We will hold a membership meeting to vote on the changes at 6:30 PM on Thursday, October 9th, just before our monthly program. We encourage you to review the document and attend the meeting.

Local Bird Migration Alerts

An exciting way to enjoy fall migration is to key into when large numbers of migrating birds are passing through our area. Sometimes, a storm at night can disrupt their travels and cause a "fallout" for the next morning, giving us a chance for some fun observations.

See the birdcast.info website for migration information. You can enter your county for the migration dashboard or scroll down to enter your county to subscribe to local migration alerts.



Eastern Bluebird
Mines of Spain SRA (5/1/25)
© Ken Kiss

Bluebird Monitoring

BY KEN KISS

It was another successful season for the bluebirds nesting at the Mines of Spain. This year Tom Davis and Galen Mathis joined me in monitoring 30 bird houses on a weekly basis. The results were very comparable to last year, when we had 25 houses.

We do not keep track of Northern House Wrens, which also actively use the boxes. Black-capped Chickadees have not nested since 2021, when we had 5 fledglings.

If anyone is interested in helping monitor bluebird boxes next year, feel free to contact me.

2025

Eastern Bluebird	Tree Swallow
Eggs 86	Eggs 30
Nestlings 65	Nestlings 9
Fledglings 63	Fledglings 3

2024

Eastern Bluebird	Tree Swallow
Eggs 99	Eggs 29
Nestlings 73	Nestlings 20
Fledglings 52	Fledglings 5

See the [Projects](#) page on our website for more details.

Feeding Bread to Birds (Or Not)

BY KEVIN KOCH



The next time you're tempted to feed the birds from that bag of bread, think again! You might just be depriving your feathered friends of a broader range of nutrition they'll need throughout the year.

While bread does contain carbohydrates, bird specialist Dr. David Shealer, Professor of Biology at Loras College in Dubuque, IA, points out that birds also need proteins and fats in their diet, especially as they head into spring nesting and—depending on the species—fall migration or a Midwestern winter.

Birds can get their protein from eating insects, earthworms, and other invertebrates. Seeds and nuts can provide fats. (Some birds add calcium to their diet by swallowing small pebbles, which will be ground up in the bird's "crop," an organ that mammals do not possess.) The danger is that too many carbs from bread can reduce their appetite for other food sources and hence deprive them of wider nutrition.

In addition, a too predictable and steady supply of bread from well-meaning enthusiasts can lead birds to become dependent on these easily-obtained meals, much like a human might become dependent on the ease of fast

food. Birds—especially geese and ducks—congregating around bread-feeding humans can also cause environmental havoc through their too-crowded feces leeching into lakes, streams, and rivers.

At the same time, Shealer approves of year-round nutritional feeding of birds. Once per ounce, birds typically have a higher metabolism than mammals and require more frequent nutritional re-fueling, sometimes more than what our paved-over world can provide.

To that end, suet is rich in the fats needed for long migratory hauls or for winter shivers. Shealer recommends black oil sunflower seeds as the best overall seed-based feed, providing fat, protein, and fiber. The seeds also provide minerals such as calcium and iron. And their thin shells are easier for birds to crack open and eat, compared to other sunflower seed varieties.

Shealer recommends the black oil sunflower seeds, too, over cheaper variety mixes of bird seed that can also be purchased in stores. "Birds often spit out the lesser seeds" from the variety packs, he says, resulting in "a lot of waste."

In his own yard, Shealer also likes to put out orange halves and grape jelly to attract fruit-consuming birds like orioles and catbirds.

Shealer also dispelled several bird-feeding myths. One myth is that bird feeders should not be stocked during the summer. Rather, he says, birds benefit from the proteins, fats, and good carbs that bird seed and suet can provide.

A second old myth needing to be dispelled is that rice shouldn't be thrown at weddings because birds will ingest the rice, which will in turn expand in their warm, moist stomachs and cause discomfort or worse. There may be other reasons not to throw rice at weddings, but a concern for birds need not be among them, as many species of birds feed regularly on rice and other grains.

Feeding bread to birds can be a favorite activity with small kids in tow or for a bird enthusiast wanting to draw the animals around him or herself. Good intentions aside, though, it's best not to introduce this artificial food source into their diets.

Instead, it's preferable to put up a bird feeder stocked with more nutritional, natural foods. Or to use your best binoculars to observe the birds in their natural feeding settings.

Kevin Koch is Professor Emeritus of English at Loras College, where he taught for 42 years. Many of his courses were nature-based writing workshops.

Did You Know? Monarch vs. Viceroy

Source: *Dubuque Conservation Nature Talk* (Vol. 25, No. 3)

The monarch butterfly has a lookalike called the viceroy.

Monarch

1. bigger in size (8.6 - 12.4 cm)
2. flies in a float-like pattern, known for its flap, flap, glide
3. migrate
4. thicker line segments
5. fewer black lines
6. more white dots
7. fore and hind wings will often overlap
8. poisonous
9. eats milkweed



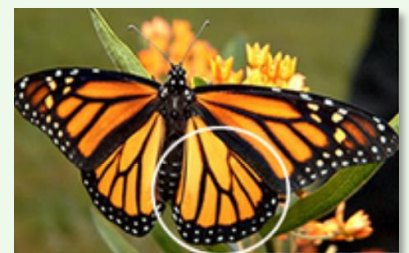
Monarch Caterpillar

Viceroy

1. smaller in size (6.3 - 8.6 cm)
2. flight is fast and erratic
3. do not migrate and instead overwinter
4. horizontal line on hind wings
5. thinner line segments
6. fewer white dots
7. fore and hind wings often are spread apart
8. not poisonous
9. eats willows, poplars, and cottonwoods



Viceroy Caterpillar



Monarch



Viceroy

Calendar of Events

Check the [EVENTS](#) page on our website for the latest information and additional details.

Our monthly meetings are held at EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights Road, Dubuque, unless stated otherwise.

DATE & TIME	EVENT	DESCRIPTION
Thursday, 9/11/25 6:45 PM Social Time 7 – 8 PM Program	Iowa’s Prairies: Remnants, Relics, and Restoration	*** Location Exception: Swiss Valley Nature Center *** Tony Vorwald, National Resources Ecologist for Jackson County Conservation, will discuss the natural history and restoration of remnant prairies, oak savannas, and oak woodlands in Jackson and Dubuque Counties.
Thursday, 10/9/25 6:30 PM Meeting 7 – 8 PM Program	Member Meeting: Bylaws Vote Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge – Unique Birding Opportunity	Member meeting to vote on bylaws (see page 1) Wildlife photographer Paul Winer will present a program on Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Northwest Nebraska, featuring photos from his visit in April 2025.
Thursday, 11/13/25 6:45 PM Social Time 7 – 8 PM Program	TBD	Our speaker will be Eric Schmechel, Watershed Program Director for Dubuque County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD). Check our website closer to the program date for the program title and description.



Our monthly programs are typically held on the 2nd Thursday of the month, so you could mark your calendars for December – May.

We cannot confirm specific dates for our annual events yet, but here’s what we know:

TBD (between Dec. 14 and Jan. 5)	Annual Christmas Bird Count	Join our field trip leaders as we split into groups identify and count birds within a 15-mile-diameter circle centered in Dubuque. Details will follow.
Saturday, 3/14/26 (Tentative Date)	Annual Duck Waddle	Join us on our annual trip to Green Island Wildlife Management Area in Jackson County to observe migrating waterfowl. Details will follow.
Saturday, 5/9/26 (Tentative Date)	Annual Spring Species Count	Join us for all or part of our annual fun day of spring birding, ending with a potluck picnic. Details will follow.

Links to Articles

Did you know that audubondubuque.org has links to articles that might be of interest?



EB Lyons Interpretive Center
Dubuque, IA



Lights Out Philly

Scroll down our home page to find them.

We recently added a “**Protecting Birds from Window Strikes Day and Night**” section, with links to learn about the Lights Out program as well as bird-safe windows. Look for the photo of the dots on the windows at EB Lyons and of the darkened view of Philly during migration.

Spotlight on American Goldfinch

BY MARY LEIGH

This summer, I went on a guided bird walk at Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Sapsucker Woods, in Ithaca, NY. (On my first visit in 2021, about a year before I'd ever heard of Merlin or eBird, I didn't properly appreciate that location, but this time I got a t-shirt!) During the walk, our guide shared some fun facts about American Goldfinch that make them unusual. They feed regurgitated seeds, almost exclusively, to their young, rather than feeding insects or a variety of food sources. Additionally, they nest unusually late in the season, waiting until July and August. This delay ensures that they have a good supply of seeds available.



American Goldfinch are consistent vegetarians. One site claimed they only eat insects if one accidentally flies into their open beaks! Their uncommon agility allows them to access seed sources other birds cannot, and they can extract seeds from almost any position. Thistle and sunflower seeds are favorites, but almost any seed will do. Baby cowbirds (whose parents deposit eggs in the nests of other birds) are doomed in an American Goldfinch nest, since they cannot survive more than a few days on seeds alone.

For comparison, House Finch are also vegetarians who feed regurgitated seeds to their young, but they breed earlier, and their diet includes buds, flower parts, berries, and small fruits, rather than almost exclusively seeds.

Dubuque Audubon Society

PO Box 3174

Dubuque IA 52004-3174

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Permit # 459

If you're not on our email list, please email contact@audubondubuque.org to be added.

We send notifications for our monthly programs (Sept - May), quarterly newsletters, field trips, and other items of interest. We aim not to send too many!

Board meetings are held at 5:30 PM ahead of monthly programs and are open to members and the public. However, requests to speak must be made at least one week in advance, to be included on the agenda.



DUBUQUE Audubon Society

The mission of Dubuque Audubon Society is to provide educational opportunities to the people of the tri-state area and to preserve the natural habitat of birds and other wildlife.



Red-headed Woodpecker



Red-bellied Woodpecker



Ruby-throated Hummingbird



Eastern Wood-Pewee



American Robin

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

If you wish to join the **National Audubon Society** which will automatically give you membership in the **Dubuque Audubon Society**, we would appreciate you doing so through our website at audubondubuque.org/join. The cost for an annual national membership is a \$20 minimum annual donation, which is for a family or an individual, although you may see higher values suggested. Members will receive the award-winning *Audubon* magazine.

National renewals are handled directly with the National Audubon Society; we are NOT involved.

DUBUQUE AUDUBON SOCIETY

Some people elect to join only the local chapter, without national membership. If so, please use this form to join or renew. You may also use this form to make a tax-deductible contribution directly to the local chapter.

A \$10 minimum annual donation includes local membership, which is for a family or an individual. Membership expires one year from sign-up.

Name: _____ Email*: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

** If you provide your email address, you'll receive notifications of upcoming programs & field trips, notifications when our newsletters are published on our website (in color with clickable links), and occasional emails about other topics of potential interest.*

☐

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

Make check payable to "Dubuque Audubon Society" and mail to: Dubuque Audubon Society, P.O. Box 3174, Dubuque, IA 52004-3174