



MISSISSIPPI CURRENTS

Newsletter of the Quad City Audubon Society



UPCOMING EVENTS *All activities open to the public.*

Vol. 34, No 3

Fall 2023

Saturday, September 9th, 2023, Louisa County, Iowa. Location: Big Sand Mound Nature Preserve, 3300 Cedar St., Muscatine, Iowa. Building Better Birders Workshop, 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. See page 3 for more details.

Sunday, September 10, 8:00am - noon, Quad City Audubon Society Field Trip, Wildcat Den State Park. Could be very good for fall migrating warblers. Meet for carpooling at Marquette Street Boat Landing at 8:00m. Further information, Tim Murphy 309-764-9779.

Thursday, September 14, 2023 7:00pm, Quad City Audubon Society Membership Meeting, Butterworth Center, 1105 8th Street, Moline. Amber Schorg, Renewable Energy Biologist, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services, Illinois-Iowa Ecological Service Field Office will present a program: "Wind Energy and Bats in the Midwest: Partnerships, Studies, and Innovations".

Friday and Saturday, September 22nd and 23rd, Johnson County, Iowa. Location: FW Kent Park, 2048, HWY 6 NW, Oxford, Iowa, Cangleska Wakan County Park, 4045 245th St., NE, Solon Iowa. Building Better Birders Workshop, see page 3 for times and details.

Tuesday and Wednesday, September 26th and 27th, Nahant Marsh. Location: Nahant Marsh Education Center, 4220 Wapello Ave., Davenport, Iowa, Sunderbruch Park, 4675 Telegraph Road, Davenport, Iowa, Eagle Point Park, 3943 N. 3rd St., Clinton, Iowa. Building Better Birders Workshops. See page 3 for times and details.

Thursday, October 12th, Scott County, Iowa. Location: Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, 31555 52nd Ave., Dixon, Iowa. Building Better Birders Workshop, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. See page 3 for more details.

Thursday, October 12, 2023, 7:00pm, Quad City Audubon Society Membership Meeting, Butterworth Center, 1105 8th Street, Moline, IL. Tyler Harms, Iowa DNR will present a Program: "Rails and Bitterns Response to Emergent Vegetation."

Saturday, October 14, 2023 8:00am - 11:00am, Quad City Audubon Society Field Trip, Crow Creek Park for migrating and resident songbirds. Meet at the Quarry parking lot at 8:00am. For further information contact Tim Murphy 309-764-9779.

Sunday, November 12, 2023 8:00am - 1:00pm. Quad City Audubon Society Field Trip Rapids City to Spring Lake for migrating waterfowl. Considered a full day field trip. Meet for carpooling at Shulers Shady Grove Boat Ramp, Rapids City at 8:00am. For further information contact Tim Murphy at 309-764-9779



Audubon

The Quad City Audubon Society is a Chapter of National Audubon Society

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From My Perch

A new season for Quad City Audubon has begun. Generally, we take a bit of a hiatus in the summer months. We certainly have no meetings and birds, while of course always present, tend to lay low in July. August brings shorebird migration but there is precious little shorebird habitat in our area. Early warbler migration also begins in August but really gets going in September.

Regardless, we had our first field trip of the fall season August 19th, and will follow those with monthly field trips through November. These are posted on our website and if you provide us with an email address you will get a reminder prior.

One does not have to be a great birder to attend a field trip. It is very helpful to have binoculars but we strive to help people find the birds as sighted. Admittedly, this can be a challenge as birds are not always helpful by posing. In addition we also identify birds by call. Again, this can seem to be daunting, there are a lot of very similar calls but with practice one can truly learn this skill and nowadays the app Merlin Bird ID can really assist.

We also will begin our Fall membership meetings with meetings at Butterworth Center the second Thursday in September, October and December at 7:00pm. We have a very short meeting followed by a program again listed on our website. One can attend in person or via Zoom.

It would be great to see you at any of our events. The public is always invited and there is no charge.

Tim Murphy
President
Quad City Audubon

Mission Statement

The Quad City Audubon Society is dedicated to the enjoyment of birds; a better understanding of the natural world; stewardship of natural areas and habitats; fellowship; improvement of community awareness of environmental issues; and education of youth for the benefit of future generations.

Thanks to those who contributed to this issue of *Mississippi Currents*. The next deadline is August 15th, 2023. Submissions are gladly accepted. Send to: Jason Monson, (309) 221-1177, jmonson75@hotmail.com

Visit us online at:
www.quadcityaudubon.org.

Introducing Tullik's Odyssey: The American Golden-Plover Southbound Migration Project

Courtesy National Audubon Society

We are happy to announce a new project: Tullik's Odyssey: The American Golden-Plover Southbound Migration Project—a collaboration between Audubon Alaska, Audubon's Boreal Conservation Program, Audubon Americas, Manomet, Inc., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-Alaska Region, and Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative.

In June 2023, eight American Golden-Plovers (*Pluvialis dominica*) were equipped with 3.5-gram PinPoint GPS Argos tags (the world's smallest GPS Argos tags) at Teshekpuk Lake Special Use Area within the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. Fitting these individuals with GPS tags is the first step of a project that will highlight the importance of migratory bird habitat by following the southbound route of the American Golden-Plover—a medium-sized, black-bellied wading bird.

The species starts in the Alaskan Arctic, courses through northern Canada to the northeastern United States, darts across the Atlantic Ocean, and winds up in Argentina. This means the American Golden-Plover makes one of the longest migration journeys of any bird.

"Migratory shorebirds challenge and inspire us with their long-distance journeys across the Americas," says River Gates, Pacific Shorebird Conservation Initiative Coordinator with National Audubon Society. "To help protect and manage the places they need to thrive, collaborative partnerships have been the driving force for leveraging the human potential and commitment to protecting migratory shorebirds."

- continued on page 4

Building Better Birders Workshops Continue Serving Iowa

Now in their fourth year, the Building Better Birders workshops continue to offer programs across Iowa promoting interest in the natural world and encouraging participation in citizen science projects. Kelly McKay (BioEco Research and Monitoring Center), Mark Roberts (Clinton County Conservation, retired), Brian Ritter and James Wiebler (Nahant Marsh Education Center) have been providing bird hikes, owl prowls and various avian presentations across the state since 2019. The program has enjoyed success and received the 2021 “Ding” Darling Environmental Education Award from the Iowa Association of Naturalists and Iowa Conservation Education Coalition. Funded by REAP-CEP grants, this program comes to the public free of charge. See our calendar page and below to learn more about programs coming to the area this fall. More information can be found at the website, www.buildingbetterbirders.com.

Sponsored by the following:



Saturday, September 9th, 2023, Louisa County, Iowa. Location: Big Sand Mound Nature Preserve, 3300 Cedar St., Muscatine, Iowa

Time: 7AM-5 PM (Come for as many or as few of sessions as you would like!) Sessions include: Bird Hike at Big Sand Mound Nature Preserve, “Flycatchers, Vireos, Swallows and Similar Species of Iowa” Presentation at Big Sand Mound Nature Preserve (Bayer Recreation Building), Migratory Insects and Interesting Species at Big Sand Mound Nature Preserve Presentation with Paul Mayes at Big Sand Mound Nature Preserve (Bayer Recreation Building), Insect Hike with Paul Mayes at Big Sand Mound Nature Preserve, Monarch Butterfly Tagging with Louisa County Conservation at Louisa County Conservation Board Office.

Friday and Saturday, September 22nd and 23rd, Johnson County, Iowa. Location: FW Kent Park, 2048, HWY 6 NW, Oxford, Iowa

Cangleska Wakan County Park, 4045 245th St., NE, Solon Iowa 52333

Time: 7:30 PM-10 PM (Friday) & 7 AM –3:45 PM (Saturday) (Come for as many or as few of sessions as you would like!) Sessions include: Friday-“Nocturnal Raptors of Iowa” Presentation at Cangleska Wakan County Park, Owl Prowl at Cangleska Wakan County Park. Saturday-Bird Hike at FW Kent Park, “Diurnal Raptors of Iowa” Presentation at FW Kent Park, Live Raptor Program by Raptology at FW Kent Park, “Midwestern Raptor Population Trends Using 40 Years of Christmas Bird Count Data” Presentation at FW Kent Park.

Tuesday and Wednesday, September 26th and 27th, Nahant Marsh. Location: Nahant Marsh Education Center, 4220 Wapello Ave., Davenport, Iowa

Sunderbruch Park, 4675 Telegraph Road, Davenport Iowa, 52804. Eagle Point Park, 3943 N. 3rd St., Clinton Iowa 52732.

Time: 4:30 PM-9 PM (Tuesday) & 7 AM –3:30 PM (Wednesday) (Come for as many or as few of sessions as you would like!) Sessions include: Tuesday-“Diurnal Raptors of Iowa” Presentation at Nahant Marsh Education Center, “Nocturnal Raptors of Iowa” Presentation at Nahant Marsh Education Center, Owl Prowl Hike at Sunderbruch Park.

Wednesday-Bird Hike (Hawk Watch) at Eagle Point Park, north overlook. This is a stationary watch, so bring a comfy chair!

Thursday, October 12th, Scott County, Iowa. Location: Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, 31555 52nd Ave., Dixon, Iowa

Time: 9 AM-3 PM (Come for as many or as few of sessions as you would like!) Sessions include: “Diurnal Raptors of Iowa” Presentation at Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, “Nocturnal Raptors of Iowa” Presentation at Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, Bird Hike Concentrating on Raptors at Wapsi River Environmental Education Center.

Call Kelly McKay for any questions: 309-235-4661. Visit buildingbetterbirders.com for a more detailed schedule, times and itinerary.

Field Trip Wapsi River Environmental Education Center 08-19-23

On a near perfect Saturday morning four Audubon members, Terri and Sherif Ragheb, Cathy White and Tim Murphy met at Farm and Fleet in Davenport for a trip to Wapsi River Environmental Education Center, near Dixon, Iowa.

On our way out we stopped at the sod farms on 90th Street. In the long past the sod farms had been a potential hot spot for short grass shore birds. However water which used to stand in the sod farms has been drained away and the sod farms themselves are giving way to row crops and are much smaller than in previous years. Our stops only yielded killdeer (35) at our first stop and rock pigeon.

We then proceeded to Sherman Park which is adjacent to Wapsi River. Just before Sherman Park, we crossed the Wapsipinicon River. The bridge proved to be a great viewing platform of the river. Here we had great blue heron, kingfisher, red-headed woodpecker, kingbird, eastern wood peewee, Baltimore oriole and a good variety of other birds identified by call. In addition we had along sandbars killdeer, spotted sandpipers, solitary sandpipers and least sandpipers.

The breeze through the river valley was from the south but still had a morning cool to it. The light was to our back and the viewing conditions were actually quite spectacular.

We stopped at the Sherman Park Campground and the camp hosts have placed feeders near their RV. We watched a hummingbird come to the feeder. Saw cedar waxwing and a pair of bald eagles along the River with red-headed woodpeckers continuing to be common.

From here we went into "Upper Sherman Park" which is woodlands surrounding a several acre field of prairie plants and early second growth vegetation. Eastern towhee's were everywhere. We finally spotted one in the interior branched of a tree and another on the ground but overall we had mostly to entertain ourselves with their calls.

We did get a good look and an empidonax flycatcher. Of course it did not call. It appeared to be in very good fresh plumage perched on the forest edge. We tentatively identified as a least flycatcher though the adjacent habitat had good potential to hold willow flycatcher. We also had our only warbler of the day other than redstart. A yellow and blue backed bird that stopped for about two seconds. The coloration seemed most consistent with a Nashville warbler.

From our walk in Sherman Park we went to the Wapsi River Education Center and toured the interpretive center. The Eco-Center has a lot of great mounts and displays depicting the wildlife in the area. In addition they have a small display of turtles, snakes and a barred, great-horned and screech owls. It pays to call beforehand if you would like to tour the Eco-Center as it is staffed by volunteers and not open daily.

Since it was about 11:00am we decided to head back to QC and arrived back at Farm and Fleet before noon. All in all it was an exceptionally pleasant morning with 45 species identified.

Tim Murphy
President
Quad City Audubon



American Golden-Plover

Tullik's Odyssey *Continued from page 2*

This summer, during the post-breeding period, the marked birds will be possibly detected in the foothills of the Brooks Range or the Foxe Basin Peninsula in Canada. In late summer, the focus may shift to Hudson Bay and spots in New England. And from August through December, we may follow along through the upper Amazon in Brazil and coastal grass-lands in Uruguay.

But the public may follow along at TulliksOdyssey.org—which will feature interviews, tracking data, and content focusing on the species' post-breeding locations, staging areas, and stopover sites, and how the conservation of those places is vital for transoceanic migrations.

The American Golden-Plover is a focal species for the Atlantic and Midcontinent shorebird conservation initiatives. By tracking these eight individuals, Audubon Alaska and its partners hope to underscore important work, like the Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring (PRISM), an international collaborative science and bird population estimate and trend monitoring program.

On the conservation side, threats like oil and gas development, human disturbance, and climate change to the Arctic tundra—an essential region for breeding and migration—will be spotlighted with storytelling and social media campaigns. This will tie into highlighting the accelerating decline of North America's shorebirds, and how urgent conservation solutions are needed.

Stay tuned for more to come from Tullik's Odyssey as we follow the American Golden-Plover on their southbound migration journey!