

***THE WARBLER***  
**DES MOINES AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
**VOLUME XXI, NUMBER 9**  
**OCTOBER 2014**  
**EDITOR: JANE R. CLARK**



**Saturday, October 11 Field Trip**

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot of Saylorville Lake Visitor's Center on Saturday, October 11. From there we'll venture to various habitats around the lake and in the surrounding area. Bring binoculars, a snack and beverage and dress for the conditions. All levels of bird watchers are encouraged to attend! Contact field trip leader, Dennis Thompson at [cdnthomps@acm.org](mailto:cdnthomps@acm.org) or 515-254-0837 for more information.

Field trips, held the second Saturday of most months, provide wonderful outdoor experiences for Des Moines Audubon members and guests. Not only are these opportunities to see some good birds, they are also times of socializing with people who enjoy the same things that you do. Destinations are selected based on the likelihood of finding a nice selection of species for the time of year. Although many of the destinations are within close proximity of Des Moines proper, a few may venture outside the county.

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**Program for October 21: 2012 Iowa Big Year**  
**By Paul Roisen**

Paul Roisen's presentation for our Tuesday, October 21 meeting will be about his **2012 Iowa Big Year**. His program will include photos of many of the birds he was blessed to find. Paul's presentation style is very informal—he really enjoys interaction with and questions from the audience

Paul has been birding for just under ten years and has been blessed by the many helpful people around Iowa and in particular members of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union and the Loess Hills Audubon Society (Sioux City and surrounding area). Paul grew up in Madagascar, the son of a Lutheran missionary, where he attended a French pre-school and elementary school. He claims to be an addicted birder and travels all over the USA with his wife. They have also traveled to France, Norway, Germany, Spain, Mexico, and Canada. In January of 2013 he was privileged to spend 15 days in Ecuador with two fellow IOU members.

A "Big Year" is an informal competition to see as many bird species as possible within a geographic area in one calendar year, from January 1 through December 31.

Meetings of Des Moines Audubon Society begin at 7 p.m. and are held in the lower level of Westminster Presbyterian Church, which is located at the corner of Beaver and Franklin Avenues in Des Moines. Parking is available on the north and west sides of the church and an elevator can be accessed at the west door. For information about this program, please contact Jane Clark at [jrclark@radiks.net](mailto:jrclark@radiks.net) or 515-223-5047.

## ***“Fall Into Birds” Fall Bird Festival October 18***

Iowa Audubon and the Des Moines Audubon Society will hold a family birding festival and fundraiser from noon until 4 PM, Saturday, October 18. Location will be Crown Point Community Center in Johnston. Along with programs about birds and nature, exhibitor displays, and a field trip for beginning birdwatchers (weather permitting), there will be a silent auction to help the two organizations raise money for bird conservation and education. This year’s silent auction will highlight “Birds in Art”, offering many framed and un-framed bird prints, along with numerous other items focusing upon birds and nature. For more information visit Iowa Audubon’s web-site in September: [www.iowaaudubon.org](http://www.iowaaudubon.org) .



### **Dallas County – Monarch Heaven Sunday, October 19 ~ 3-5 pm Forest Park Museum and Arboretum, Perry**

This year’s version of Dallas County Conservation Board’s (DCCB) Halloween Hike invites you to join them – all the way to north-central Mexico! Over the past years they have tagged monarchs in the prairies of Dallas County and shared with participants the miracles of the monarchs’ migration. Dallas County’s wilds are a place of magic because of the monarch’s story written there.

One story they have not been able to share previously is the story of the monarchs’ wintering grounds in the transvolcanic mountain range of north central Mexico. This monarch sanctuary, some 300 square miles of heaven for migrating monarchs serves as the home for monarchs from the 3.5 million square miles of monarch habitat in North America. The sheer numbers of monarchs alone is a miracle, but the story is even more amazing than the numbers.

Karen Phelps, Naturalist with Benton CCB, will share the images and experiences of her trek to the wintering grounds of the monarch’s miracles. **\*Registration is required for this program. For more information, or to register for programs, contact:**

**Dallas County Conservation Board  
Perry, IA 50220  
515-465-3577  
Office hours M-F 8am - 4:30pm  
[conservation@co.dallas.ia.us](mailto:conservation@co.dallas.ia.us)  
[www.conservation.co.dallas.ia.us](http://www.conservation.co.dallas.ia.us)**



### **Bird Conservation in Northeast Iowa By Jon Stravers Polk County’s Jester Park Lodge November 5: at 11 a.m. or 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

For the past 33 years, Jon Stravers, Driftless Area National Wildlife Refuge - Bird Conservation Coordinator has specialized in monitoring Red-shouldered Hawks, Bald Eagles and Cerulean Warblers along the Mississippi River. He’ll share his findings, stories and pictures of these fascinating birds.

Both presentations at Jester Park are free, but an optional luncheon follows the 11 a.m. program. Pre-registration is required for the lunch. The cost of the catered lunch is \$9.00. **Lunch registration is due the Friday before the program.** To register for lunch: [www.leadingyououtdoors.org](http://www.leadingyououtdoors.org) .

## **Monarch Butterflies are in Trouble. What Can You Do? Plant Milkweed, Say Experts. Here's How**

Monarch butterflies are struggling. Counts of the familiar orange-and-black insects, admired for their flights of up to 5,000 miles a year, are trending down so sharply that their migration is now under threat. That means fewer monarchs to pollinate crops, spread seeds and feed birds.

So how can we help? One simple way is to follow the lead of Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge in Iowa and consider collecting and sowing milkweed seed. But don't delay. In much of the country, milkweed pods are ripe for picking in early fall.

Why milkweed? Milkweed is the host plant for monarchs—the lone plant on which the butterflies lay their eggs in spring and the only food source for monarch larvae. One reason monarchs are failing is that milkweed is disappearing from the American landscape. Scientists blame land-use practices such as farming with crops genetically modified to resist herbicides. The herbicides kill plants such as milkweed that grow around farm fields and have no such protection. Urban sprawl and development have also chewed up monarch habitat.

While conservationists weigh broad-scale rescue options, individual efforts can make a difference. “Every little bit helps,” says wildlife biologist Karen Viste-Sparkman at Neal Smith Refuge. “It doesn't take a huge number of plants in any one place to help monarchs, especially during migration.” She suggests planting milkweed seedlings near nectar-bearing plants that monarchs also need, such as asters, goldenrod and blazing star.

Here's a primer on how to do it.

**\*How do I recognize milkweed?\***

The Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service has photos of many varieties of milkweed in various stages of growth here: <http://1.usa.gov/1maS5yq>

**\*How do I collect seed?\***

Wear gloves and avoid touching your face; milkweed sap can injure your eyes. Seek permission before harvesting seed on private, federal or state property. “Collect only the gray seed pods, not the green ones,” says Wedge Watkins, wildlife biologist at Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge in Missouri. “If you squeeze the pod and it pops open, it's ready to pick.” When gathering pods in any one spot, leave a few behind on each plant. Don't collect seeds unless you plan to sow them.

The University of Kansas's MonarchWatch offers more guidance: <http://bit.ly/1u81tS2>

**\*What do I do with the seed pods I've collected?\***

You can send the pods to MonarchWatch (Monarch Watch, University of Kansas, 201 Constant Ave, Lawrence, KS 66047 for processing and planting. Or you can process and plant seeds yourself.

To separate seeds from milkweed silk – the white fluff inside a milkweed pod to which seeds attach – place a few coins in a clean, empty plastic container. Add the contents of the milkweed pod and close the container tightly. Now, shake the container until the seeds fall to the bottom and the fluff forms a ball on top. Unscrew the lid and remove the ball of silk fluff.

Either sow the seeds outdoors on bare soil before the first snow, or place them in a labeled, rodent-proof container that has air flow and store them in a cool, dry, ventilated area.

**\*Where can I learn more about monarchs and milkweed?\***

<http://monarchwatch.org/bring-back-the-monarchs/>  
[www.monarchjointventure.org](http://www.monarchjointventure.org)  
<http://www.fws.gov/pollinators/>

From: USFWS News Release, September 24, 2014

~~~MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE~~~

Des Moines Audubon Society membership is for one year, from June to May.  
Dues should be mailed to our Treasurer,  
Jim Clark, 9871 Lincoln Avenue, Clive, IA 50325

Please make checks payable to "Des Moines Audubon Society"  
Membership Levels and Dues:

Student (under 18).....\$1.00  
Individual Adult..... \$10.00  
Family.....\$15.00  
Life.....\$125.00  
(May be paid in five annual payments of \$25.00)

\*Additional Contribution for Conservation Projects \_\_\_\_\_  
\*Additional Contribution for Bird Feeding Projects \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**