

CHECK LIST OF THE BIRDS OF STORY COUNTY, IOWA

Abbreviations: C-Common M-Migrant  
U-Uncommon S-Summer Resident  
R-Rare W-Winter  
V-Visitor

Though primarily designed for the Story County area, this list also includes birds observed in the Ledges State Park area and Greene County. It includes the majority of the birds to be expected in these areas but strays not on the list may be encountered.

Compiled by: John Faaborg  
Jim Rod March, 1970

LOONS

Common RM

Blue-winged Teal CMRS

Cinnamon Teal R

Widgeon Cm

Shoveler CM

Wood CMUS

GREBES

Red-necked RM

Horned UM

Eared UM

Western RM

Pied-billed CS

DUCKS (Diving)

Redhead UMRS

Ring-necked CM

Canvasback UM

Lesser Scaup CM

Goldeneye UM

Bufflehead UM

PELICANS

White UM

CORMORANTS

Double-crested UM

DUCKS (Stiff-tailed)

Ruddy UMUS

HERONS, BITTERNs

Great Blue CMS

Green CS

Little Blue R

Common Egret UM

Snowy Egret R

Cattle Egret R

Black-crowned Night US

Yellow-crowned Night R

Least Bittern CS

American Bittern CMUS

MERGANSERS

Hooded UM

Common CM

Red-breasted UM

VULTURES

Turkey CSR

SWANS

Whistling RM

HAWKS

Goshawk RWV

Sharp-shinned CM

Cooper's UM

Red-tailed CMS

Red-shouldered UM

Broad-winged CMRS

Swainson's UMRS

Rough-legged CWV

Bald Eagle RM

Marsh CM

Osprey UM

GEESE

Canada CM

White-fronted UM

Snow CM

Blue CM

DUCKS (Surface Feeding)

Mallard CM

Black UM

Gadwall UM

Pintail CM

Green-winged Teal CM

FALCONS

Prairie RWV

Peregrine RM

Pigeon Hawk RM

Sparrow Hawk CMS

CHECK LIST OF THE BIRDS OF STORY COUNTY, IOWA (2)

QUAILS, PHEASANTS

Bobwhite C  
Ring-necked Pheasant C

CRANES

Snadhill RM

RAILS, GALLINULES, COOTS

King Rail UMS  
Virginia Rail CMS  
Sora CMS  
Yellow Rail R  
Common Gallinule UMRS  
Coot CMS

PLOVERS, TURNSTONES

Semipalmated UM  
Piping RM  
Killdeer CMS  
Golden UM  
Black-bellied RM  
Ruddy Turnstone RM

SANDPIPERS, ETC.

Woodcock UMRS  
Snipe CM  
Upland Plover RS  
Spotted CMS  
Solitary CM  
Willet RM  
Greater Yellowlegs CM  
Lesser Yellowlegs CM  
Pectoral CM  
White-rumped UM  
Baird's UM  
Least CM  
Dunlin UM  
Dowitcher UM  
Stilt RM  
Semipalmated CM  
Western RM  
Marbled Godwit RM  
Hudsonian Godwit UM  
Sanderling RM  
Avocet RM

PHALAROPES

Wilson's UM  
Northern RM

GULLS

Glaucos R  
Herring CM  
Ring-billed CM  
Franklin's CM  
Bonaparte's RM

TERNs

Forster's CM  
Common UM  
Least UM  
Caspian UM  
Black CMUS

DOVES

Mourning CMS

CUCKOOS

Yellow-billed CMS  
Black-billed CMS

OWLS

Barn R  
Screech C  
Horned C  
Snowy RWV  
Barred C  
Long-eared UWV  
Short-eared UWV  
Sawwhet UM

GOATSUCKERS

Whip-poor-will US  
Nighthawk CS

SWIFTS

Chimney CS

HUMMINGBIRDS

Ruby-throated CMS

KINGFISHERS

Belted CS

CHECK LIST OF THE BIRDS OF STORY COUNTY, IOWA (3)

WOODPECKERS

Yellow-shafted Flicker CS  
Red-bellied CS  
Red-headed CS  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker CMRS  
Hairy CS  
Downy CS

FLYCATCHERS

Eastern Kingbird CS  
Western Kingbird RS  
Crested CS  
Eastern Phoebe CS  
Yellow-bellied UM  
Acadian UM  
Traill's CMS  
Least CMRS  
Wood Pewee CS  
Olive-sided UM

LARKS

Horned CMS

SWALLOWS

Tree CMUS  
Bank CS  
Rough-winged CS  
Barn CS  
Cliff CMUS  
Martin CS

JAYS, CROWS

Blue Jay CS  
Crow CS

TITMICE

Black-capped Chickadee CS  
Tufted Titmouse US

NUTHATCHES

White-breasted CS  
Red-breasted UMWV

CREEPERS

Brown CMRS

WRENS

House CS  
Winter UM  
Bewick's R  
Carolina R  
Long-billed Marsh US  
Short-billed Marsh US

MIMICS

Mockingbird R  
Catbird CS  
Brown Thrasher CS

THRUSHES

Robin CS  
Wood CS  
Hermit CM  
Swainson's CM  
Gray-cheeked CM  
Veery UMRS  
Eastern Bluebird CS

KINGLETS

Blue Gray Gnatcatcher RS  
Golden-crowned CM  
Ruby-crowned CM

PIPITS

Sprague's RM  
Water UM

WAXWINGS

Bohemian RWV  
Cedar CMRS

SHRIKES

Loggerhead CS

STARLINGS

Starling CS

VIREOS

White-eyed R  
Bell's US  
Yellow-throated CS  
Solitary CM  
Red-eyed CS  
Philadelphia RM  
Warbling CS

WARBLERS

Black and White CM  
Prothonotary RM  
Golden-winged RM  
Blue-winged RS  
Tennessee CM  
Orange-crowned CM  
Nashville CM  
Parula RM  
Yellow CMS  
Magnolia UM

CHECK LIST OF THE BIRDS OF STORY COUNTY, IOWA (4)

WARBLERS (cont.)

Cape May RM  
Black-throated Blue RM  
Myrtle CM  
Black-throated Green UM  
Cerulean RMS  
Blackburnian UM  
Chestnut-sided UM  
Bay-breasted UM  
Blackpoll CM  
Pine UM  
Palm CM  
Ovenbird CMS  
Northern Waterthrush CM  
Louisiana Waterthrush UMS  
Kentucky RM  
Connecticut RM  
Mourning UM  
Yellowthroat CMS  
Yellow-breasted Chat UMS  
Wilson's CM  
Canada UM  
Redstart CMS

WEAVER FINCHES

House Sparrow C

BLACKBIRDS

Bobolink CMS  
Eastern Meadowlark CS  
Western Meadowlark CS  
Yellow-headed CMS  
Red-winged CS  
Orchard Oriole UMRS  
Baltimore Oriole CS  
Rusty CM  
Brewer's UM  
Common Grackle CS  
Cowbird CS

TANAGERS

Scarlet US

SPARROWS, FINCHES, ETC.

Cardinal CS  
Rose-breasted Grosbeak CS  
Indigo Bunting CS  
Dickcissel CS  
Evening Grosbeak RM  
Purple Finch CM  
Redpoll UWV  
Pine Siskin UWV

Goldfinch CS  
Red Crossbill UWV  
White-winged Crossbill RWV  
Towhee CS  
Savannah CMUS  
Grasshopper CS  
LeConte's UM  
Henslow's RM  
Vesper CS  
Lark US  
Slate-colored Junco CMWV  
Tree CWV  
Chipping CS  
Clay-colored UM  
Field CS  
Harris' UM  
White-crowned UM  
White-throated CM  
Fox CM  
Lincoln's CM  
Swamp CMRS  
Song CS  
Lapland Longspur CWV  
Snow Bunting UWV

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Once again we wish to emphasize that rare or unusual birds may be encountered. If you see a bird that you cannot identify or suspect may be rare, note carefully all details of plumage, size, color, behavior, and habitat. Such details should be written down along with a description of the song or call notes. If, after consulting books, the bird still cannot be identified contact one of the compilers of this check list for suggestions and/or more detailed books.

This list was compiled from Grants " A Checklist of Iowa Birds ", 1963. Revisions in the list to limit it to the Story County area were made by the compilers.

The following is a list of the better birding areas in the Story, Boone, and Greene County area covered by the checklist. Each will be briefly described, directions for reaching it given, and birds for which it is especially suitable indicated.

By visiting a variety of habitats during the migration or any time a much better idea may be had of the bird life in this area and the resulting list will be more rewarding.

Compiled by: Jim Rod  
John Faaborg  
March, 1970

#### BOONE COUNTY, IOWA

Ledges State Park - The park, which consists of upland, river bottom, and deciduous forest, may be reached by driving south from the Highway 30 and 17 junction west of Ames and following the signs to the park.

Ledges is especially good during the migration for warblers, flycatchers, vireos, thrushes, and woodpeckers. Hawks and owls frequent the park and there is a resident flock of turkey vultures. If the small creek that runs through the bottom of the park is followed upstream away from the park, nesting veerys, cerulean, and blue-winged warblers may be found. The Louisiana waterthrush has been known to nest there and the extremely rare yellow-throated warbler has been seen there in the summer.

Other good areas are the upland and second growth habitat just inside the entrance and the nature trail which includes a pond. The Des Moines River flows through the park and ducks and water birds may be found there. Ovenbirds are common nesters.

McHose Park - This city park is located on the south edge of Boone west of Story St. It is primarily a deciduous park with ravines and a small creek. There are a certain amount of conifers. Woodpeckers and other woodland birds are often abundant and crossbills and siskins may occasionally be found in the conifers.

#### GREENE COUNTY, IOWA -

Goose Lake - Goose Lake is a large state-owned marsh located six miles north of Jefferson and one mile west. Beginning in early March the waterfowl arrive and for weeks large numbers may be easily observed here. Following closely behind are the shorebirds and when water levels are somewhat down exposing mud flats they may be seen by the hundreds. The emergent vegetation around the marsh close to the road usually hides rails, King, Virginia, and Sora.

Goose Lake (cont.)

Traill's flycatchers breed abundantly in the scrubby growth around the edges of the marsh. Several species of ducks and other water birds plus marsh wrens and sparrows also breed. Near the north parking lot there is a long grove of conifers. This has contained horned, barred, long-eared, and short-eared owls and other typical pine-land birds. The weed patches around the margin often contain large flocks of migrating sparrows.

Birds that have been observed at Goose include peregrine falcon, white-faced ibis, piping plover, barn owl, and snowy owl. A few years ago there was a large colony of black-crowned night herons nesting in a long row of dead trees that cross the marsh but recently they have not nested although they may often be seen on the marsh along with both bitterns.

Dunbar Slough - Dunbar Slough, another state owned area, may be reached from Jefferson by driving west to Scranton, south four miles, then west three miles to a dirt road that leads to the marsh. The area is almost three miles long and other parts may be reached by driving west to the first road, then north and back east. Dunbar is equally good for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. It contains much more open water than Goose and consequently attracts gulls and terns frequently. Bell's vireo nest in the plum thicket near the spillway on the south end of the lake and other birds that have been observed there include several species of grebes, white pelicans, peregrine falcon, cattle egret, avocet, sanderling, water pipit, LeConte's Sparrow, and least and caspian terns.

Finn Pond - This is a small marsh located two miles west of Jefferson on the south side of highway 30. Birds may be observed from the shoulder of the road if care is taken to pull the car well off the road. This small pond attracts many ducks during the migration and several remain to nest in years of adequate water.

STORY COUNTY, IOWA

Hendrickson<sup>m</sup>a Marsh - This marsh is state owned and was created by a dam on Willow Creek. It is reached by driving four miles south of Colo on Highway 65, four miles east, and a half south. Although there is much open water the area is attractive to migrating water-

Hendrickson's Marsh (cont.)

fowl. The marsh has not been in existence long and not much is known about the breeding birds. The south end of the marsh may be reached from the black top just south of the marsh and is often good for shorebirds. In the fall large numbers of common egrets and other herons have been observed there.

Brookside Park - This city park in Ames is located off Sixth St. west of Ridgewood Ave. The north end of the park consists of brushy deciduous woods and nature trails. Squaw Creek flows through the park. The remainder is open, mowed, woods. The park is very good for warblers and other small woodland birds during migration. Woodpeckers are usually abundant all year and a green heron may often be seen along the creek during the spring. A pair of broad-winged hawks has been known to nest in the park.

River Valley Park - The best birding areas in River Valley Park may be reached by driving east on Thirteenth St. to the first gravel road north across the Skunk River bridge. This road is followed north and shortly after the entrance to Izaak Walton Park is passed on the right, the entrance to River Valley will be seen on the left. This road leads back to the river and the bottomland woods are often excellent for the small woodland birds. Red-tailed hawks and great-horned owls are known to nest in the woods along the river.

Jensen's Orchard - This large, rather run-down apple orchard is located north of Ontario road west of its intersection with N. Hyland. Permission to enter should be obtained from the owners whose residence is on the north side of Ontario Road on the edge of the orchard. The best birding area may be reached by driving west on Ontario road to the first dirt road north which should be taken across the bridge. The orchard is now on the right. It is especially good in winter for waxwings and an occasional robin. Redpolls can often be found there as may many small birds during the migration.

- Pammel Woods - This University owned tract of deciduous forest is located just west of the University golf course. Though rather small it is often good during the migration for warblers and sparrows and other small birds. There is usually a resident pair of barred owls to be found.
- Onion Creek - To reach Onion Creek drive west on Ontario Road to North Dakota Ave. Turn north and follow the gravel for about a mile until a small wooden bridge is crossed. This is Onion Creek. Permission may usually be obtained from Mr. South, who lives just north of the bridge to follow the creek east for several hundred yards. It will lead eventually to a small grove of red pines just north of the creek. The saw whet owl has been observed here every winter for seven years. Sharp-shinned and Coopers hawks are often numerous during the migration. The woodcock has been observed along the creek near here in late spring performing it's courtship flight. The creek along it's entire length is excellent for migrating land birds. There are usually resident red-tails and horned owls in the vicinity.
- Emma McCarthy Lee Park - This city park is located south of Ross Road west of North Hyland. It is another excellent spot for migrant woodland birds. The clay-colored sparrow has been observed in some numbers singing here in spring.
- Soper's Mill Access - This small state-owned area may be reached by driving north on Highway 69 to the Gilbert corner is reached & (about six miles), then turning east to the Skunk River. There is open field habitat and deciduous woodland that is often productive.
- Lake Komar - This small farm pond is located three miles straight south of Story City. It is artesian fed and privately owned. Waterfowl and shore-birds may be easily observed from the gravel road on the east side of the pond.
- Pine Groves - There are several pine groves in the Ames area suitable for such birds as crossbills and siskins. The four best are the Ames Cemetery, the Nevada cemetery, the pine grove located between sixteenth and thirteenth streets west of Ridgewood Ave. in Ames, and a grove located at the far south end of South Franklin Ave. at the Univ.



Goose Lake, (Anderson Lake), Hamilton Co. -

This marsh is located east of Jewell, Iowa on Highway 175 about one mile then north a short distance on a gravel road. Goose Lake (the name has been recently changed to Anderson Lake) is privately owned by a hunting club and permission for members of Ames Audubon to enter and bird is being worked on. This marsh has long been excellent for migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. Common gallinules may be seen there and sanderling and marbled godwit have been observed there. Birds may be easily observed there from the car or along the gravel road without entering the hunting club property.

Little Wall Lake - This large open water lake is located on Highway 69 south of Jewell. It is attractive to geese and diving ducks, such as buffleheads, goldeneyes, redheads, canvasbacks, and scaup. At the south end of the lake is a small bay that often contains a few diving ducks and puddle ducks such as teal. Marbled godwit and ruddy turnstone are among the unusual shorebirds that have been observed along the shores. Loons and a western grebe have appeared as have ospreys. Bonaparte's gull and caspian terns have also been seen over Little Wall and there is at least one record of the bald eagle here and at Goose.

Waste Treatment Lagoons - The lagoon just east of Jewell and a similar lagoon just south of Roland often contain good numbers of ducks and shorebirds.

Open field habitat - This varies from year to year in the Story County area due to farming practices but alfalfa and clover fields are worth checking for grasshopper sparrows and upland plovers that are occasionally seen.

We realize that there are other good areas in the vicinity that offer excellent birding at times. The areas we have selected above, however, offer a wide variety of habitats that can be visited and entered easily and many records of rare and unusual birds for Iowa have been made at one or another of these areas. Do not neglect them after the migration is over.

## AVERAGE ARRIVAL DATES FOR SPRING MIGRANTS IN IOWA

This chart shows the average arrival dates of the commoner Iowa migrants. Many of these birds are present in limited numbers in the winter in Iowa and many individuals arrive before the dates shown in the spring, however, these dates are when one can expect to see the first "wave" of spring migrants. This list was originally compiled in checklist order by Robt. Moorman, I.S.U., and the present compilers have rearranged it in calendar order.

Compiled by: Jim Rod  
John Faaborg

### MARCH

- 1 - Marsh Hawk
- 7 - Cedar Waxwing
- 8 - Eastern Bluebird  
Robin
- 9 - Lesser Scaup
- 10 - Killdeer  
Meadowlarks
- 12 - Red-winged Blackbird  
Red-tailed Hawk  
Green-winged teal
- 14 - Grackle  
Red-shouldered Hawk  
Sparrow Hawk
- 15 - Gadwall  
Pintail
- 18 - Canvasback  
Eastern Phoebe  
Redhead  
Blue-winged Teal
- 20 - Flicker  
Com. Merganser  
Song Sparrow  
Wood Duck
- 21 - Rusty Blackbird
- 24 - Mourning Dove  
Purple Finch  
Broadwinged Hawk
- 25 - Bufflehead  
Coot  
Snipe
- 27 - Kingfisher
- 28 - Loggerhead Shrike

### APRIL

- 1 - Chipping Sparrow  
Turkey Vulture
- 2 - Golden-crowned Kinglet  
Vesper Sparrow
- 3 - Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- 4 - Herring Gull  
Winter Wren
- 5 - Ruddy Duck  
Tree Swallow
- 6 - Fox Sparrow
- 8 - Purple Martin
- 9 - Woodcock
- 10 - Cowbird  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet  
Hermit Thrush
- 11 - Field Sparrow
- 14 - Yellow-headed Blackbird  
Swainson's Hawk  
Towhee
- 15 - Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
- 16 - Upland Plover  
Brown Thrasher
- 17 - King Rail
- 18 - Chimney Swift  
Clay-colored Sparrow
- 19 - Rough-winged Swallow
- 20 - Grasshopper Sparrow  
Bank Swallow  
Barn Swallow  
Myrtle Warbler
- 21 - Lark Sparrow
- 23 - Solitary Sandpiper  
La. Waterthrush
- 24 - Virginia Rail  
Pine Siskin  
Cliff Swallow
- 26 - White-throated Sparrow  
Whip-poor-will  
House Wren
- 27 - Black and White Wblr.
- 28 - Common Tern

### MAY

- 1 - Bobolink  
Catbird  
Bonaparte's Gull  
Rose-brst. Grsbeak  
Baltimore Oriole  
R. H. Woodpecker
- 3 - Nighthawk  
Wood Thrush  
Yellow Warbler
- 5 - Ovenbird
- 6 - Indigo Bunting  
White-crown. Sparrow  
Red-eyed Vireo  
Nashville Warbler  
Short-bill. Msh. Wren
- 7 - Ruby-thr. Hummingbd.  
North Waterthrush
- 8 - Crested Flycatcher  
Western Kingbird  
Amer. Redstart  
Scarlet Tanager
- 9 - Harris' Sparrow
- 10 - Orchard Oriole  
Swainson's Thrush  
Tennessee Wblr.
- 12 - Black-billed Cuckoo  
Magnolia Warbler
- 16 - Dickcissel  
Yellow-bill. Cuckoo