

Dear fellow birders,

The IOU is setting up a Birdline. A committee was formed after the Spring 1981 meeting. After consultation with the IOU Executive Committee we offer the following proposal.

We believe that a Birdline will benefit many people in the state, not just the hard core birders. A single phone call will provide up to the date information on: 1. Rare birds (detailed directions, local contacts and the last date seen), 2. General information (migrant arrivals, unusual concentrations, etc.), and 3. Scheduled events (Christmas Counts, meetings, etc.). Providing this information does not mean that everyone who hears the tape should track down every rare bird. It will make us all aware of what is present around the state. This is not meant as a substitute for the Field Reports.

The line will operate as follows: A machine located in Iowa City would answer a telephone line. It would first give the message, then allow the caller to leave a message for the editor. The editor would sort through the messages and prepare a new tape. New tapes would be put on line daily during busy seasons and less often at other times.

A system such as this has several advantages over the present informal system of information dispersal. Everyone has access--- you are only calling a machine, so you do not have to know or bother any person. The information will be available instantly, not 3-6 months later when the Field Reports are published.

The line will cost an estimated \$350 annually, plus an additional \$200-400 for the first year. Answering device \$100-300, Telephone costs: business line \$250 per year, installation \$68, and deposit \$75. Stationary and miscellaneous costs to the editor \$100. We are going to fund the line through private donations to the IOU. These tax deductible donations will only be used for the Birdline. We estimate that contributions of \$20-25 should suffice.

A survey has indicated that the line will be used frequently, that there will be many items put on the tape and that \$470 has already been pledged.

Our decision to go ahead and set up the Birdline will be made, based on the amount of money received by the Treasurer 3 weeks after you receive this issue.

Rick Hollis

*****cut here*****
and send along
with your check

I am contributing \$_____ to the IOU for the Birdline.
Name:

Address:

Make out your checks to the Iowa Ornithologists' Union and send them to Hank Zaletel, 667 Pammel Court, Ames, IA 50010. Your check will not be cash-ed immediately. They will be held until the go ahead decision is made. Should we not set up the line, your check will be destroyed. The decision will be made three weeks after this issue of Iowa BirdLife reaches you.