

RRWA News—Jan 1 New Year, 2021

(Solstice Photo by Tom Scherer)



This Edition:

Reaching out to members from 2005 and 2006—hope all are well.

[Birds in the Raccoon Watershed](#)

[Facebook Page](#)

Pay your 2021 dues—please.

Birds in the watershed.



(Photograph by Ray Harden—Downy Woodpecker)

Downy Woodpeckers are year-round in the Raccoon Watershed. Put up a suet block and they will come. The male has red on its head. The Hairy Woodpecker looks very much like the Downy but is much larger—Blue Jay size.)

It looks like the RRWA birders and others have seen 258 different species of birds in the Raccoon River Watershed in 2020. Last year their total was 246. The RRWA was founded to preserve and improve LIFE in the Raccoon River Watershed—human life, wildlife, all life. And, it has. The RRWA has helped create a water trail, have helped clean up trash and maybe even had some influence reducing the amount of pollution (or slowing the increase). That improves the quality of live for the humans in the watershed and those who visit for recreation. The RRWA

has promoted “Land Stewardship.” Who knows? Maybe the quality of hunting and fishing is better than it otherwise would be with the adoption of conservation practices by landowners. What about the birds. Like the “Canary in the Coal Mine” each species of bird tells us something about the habitat in the watershed. Even the migrators tell us something about our ecosystem when and where they stop on their way North or South. Our members not only note the presence of bird species. Some of them help our birds with food, habitat and nesting boxes. Maybe some of our professional birders can add something to our understanding of our avian friends. They may tell us if numbers of individuals and species are increasing, decreasing or staying stable. We have altered our landscape dramatically in the Raccoon Watershed and we are altering the climate. What is happening to our birds. Overall, I think the news has been good for some time now. I saw a small group of Trumpeters flying low north of Adel. I see Eagles nearly every day now. The Barred and Great Horned Owls call daily at my place. I love the Woodcock dances, flights and twitters in the early spring. The Herons, Egrets, and Kingfishers still seem to find enough fish to eat. The Orioles, Hummers and Blue Birds seem as happy as I can ever recall at my place. So, with all the bad news on a global and national scale, there is reason for hope and pride in the Natural Capital that is the Raccoon River Watershed. Have a great 2021. (Delaney)

2021 Bird List

Let’s encourage our young birders. During the month of January have your under 14 youngsters e-mail me their bird observations mikedelaney1@mac.com. Have them send me: the name of the bird, where they saw it in the watershed, what day they saw it, their name. It is important to encourage our youth to know and love nature. Birding is an easy step in the right direction. **Roy Adolphson-** Thanks for managing the bird list.

Facebook Page and Group (907):

We have over 900 members of our facebook group.

We now also have a “Life in the Raccoon River Watershed” public page. Check it out for ongoing discussion about “Life in the Raccoon Watershed”

Raccoon River Watershed ---<https://www.facebook.com/groups/107052089361843>

2020 Dues structure

The RRWA is an all-volunteer non-profit with almost no overhead. While other organizations struggle to pay staff, office space, printing etc. the RRWA puts most of its resources into networking, education and research. The board has decided to eliminate new Lifetime memberships. However, our 75 lifetime memberships will continue to be honored. (Many of them still pay annual dues.) We would like to thank our Lifetime members for being wonderful supporters for many years and helping us to get where we.

Consider the Research and Education fund. Contributions are tax deductible. Charitable deduction rules have changed for the better for 2020. You may want to give before the year is out. According to Mike Murphy: "We have given out almost \$30,000 in grants since 2010, for research conducted in the watershed by students and staff at Drake University, ISU, Buena Vista University, and others. Subjects included chemical, bacterial, and biological (BMIs) water quality; insects, including bees, Monarchs, Dragonfly/Damselfly, etc.; prairie surveys and the effects of land use and agricultural best practices on lifeforms. The RRWA has also invested in water monitoring equipment.

- Basic--\$10
- Family--\$20
- Organization--\$50
- Business--\$50 (free ads in the newsletter included)
- Supporting--\$100
- Patron--\$500
- RRWA Research and Education Fund (Any amount or bequest welcomed)

Send your check to: Michael Murphy, 6507 Del Matro, Windsor Heights, 50324

Dues payable to the RRWA. Research and Education Funds should be made payable to INHF and sent to the address above

Tom Rosburg Class--\$5

<http://www.goldenhillsrwd.org/plantid.html>

FYI...

Two additional plant ID workshops have been added to the Golden Hills online plant ID courses in early 2021. These 1-hour classes will tackle *Helianthus* and *Asclepias*, and be offered on Jan. 25 and Feb. 1.

For registration, go to: <http://www.goldenhillsrcd.org/plantid.html>

Classes on Jan. 11 and 18 will cover *Symphyotrichum* and *Solidag*

EVENTS:

The Sac County CBC will be on January 3rd. Contact Liz Blessington

FYI---Eric Ollie of Ames will be running the 1st **Official Dunbar Slough CBC on January 1st**. This could help kick start the 2021 RRWA list.

Feedback welcome. Editor: Mike Delaney