

Michigan 1–29 Dec in Detroit, Wayne (KO). Also in those states, single Harris's Sparrows were seen 5 Feb in Brown, WI (NW) and 19–22 Jan in Watervliet Twp., Berrien, MI (DCh).

Single **Rose-breasted Grosbeaks** were rare lingerers in Michigan 4–5 Dec in Benton Twp., Berrien (CW), through late Dec in Davisburg, Oakland (BM), and 3 Jan–Feb in Baraga (BA). Also in that state was an unexpected **Indigo Bunting** that lingered through 20 Dec in Houghton (JK). Rare so late in Wisconsin were the single **Baltimore Orioles** 2 Dec–7 Jan in Dane (ST, RW; only the 3rd post-Dec record) and 13 Dec in Brown (TB, IB). Michigan also reported this species 22–26 Dec in Chickaming Twp., Berrien (TBa, JPe) and through 20 Jan in Alpena, Alpena (BG). Pine Grosbeaks were found in excellent numbers in n. Michigan and Wisconsin. Other winter finches were sporadic and found in lower numbers, with exception of redpolls, which were present in good numbers, particularly Hoary Redpolls in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

**Observers** (subregional editors in boldface): Tim Baerwald (TBa), **Karl Bardon** (Minnesota), Ida Baumann, Ty Baumann, Glenn Belyea, Chris Benson, Dave Benson, Murray Berner, John Bielefeldt (JBi), Paul Bruce, William Bruins, Kay Burcar (KBU), Adam Byrne, Steve Carlson, Diane Chandler (DCh), Allen Chartier, Daryl Christensen, Phil Chu, Julie Craves, Bob Domagalski, Dan Duso, Kim Eckert, Roger Erickson (REr), Tom Erdman, Ron Erpelding, Dave Evans, Craig Faanes, Sean Fitzgerald, Dan Floren (DFI), Mark Foote-Martin (MFO), Sue Foote-Martin (SFO), **Jim Frank**, Darlene Friedman (DFr), Dave Fritz, Jim Granlund, Bill Grigg, Dennis Gustafson, Lyle Hamilton, Jan Hansen (JHn), Judy Haseleu (JHa), Skye Haas, Etter Hale, Scott Hickman (SHi), John Hockema, Bob Holdreigh, Aaron Holschbach, Jim Holschbach (JHo), Allen Holzhueter (AHO), Mark Hubinger, Judith Huf (JHD), Robert Hughes (RHu), John Idzikowski, Joe Jacyna, Paul Jantscher (PJa), Scott Jennex, Per Johanssen, Karen Johnson, Robbye Johnson, Scott John-

son, Joe Kaplan, Martin Kehoe (MKe), Charles Kemper, Kate Kirk-Greenberg, Michael Kile, Roy Knispel, Steve Kupcho, Kelly Larson, Jim Lind, Charlotte Lukes, Roy Lukes, James P. Mattsson, Chester Martin, Jim May (JMa), Mike McDowell (MMc), Steve Millard, Kip Miller, Anne Moretti, **Brad Murphy** (Michigan), Darrin O'Brien, Karl Overman, Andy Paulios, Walter Pawloski, Jane Pederson (JPe), Larry Persico, Jesse Peterson, Steve Petzke, Janine Polk (JPo), Nolan Pope, Helen Pugh, Tom Prestby, Bill Rapai, **Wayne Rohde** (Wisconsin), Steve Santner, Al Shea (ASh), Dave Slager, Karen Smith, Jerry Smith, Edgar Spaulding, Joachim Strengbom (JSt), Aaron Stutz, Peder Svingen, Louis Taccolini, Scott Terry (STe), Daryl Tessen, Steve Thiessen, Kevin Thomas, Joel Trick, Bill Unzen, Tom Uttech, Don Van Duyse, Dave Vinnedge (DVi), Bill Volkert, Nick Walton, Keith Westphal, Jon Weupper, Steve Weston, Myles Willard, Jim Williams (JWi), Ron Windingstad, Marlyn Winters (MWi), Chuck Witkoski, Thomas Wood. 🌐

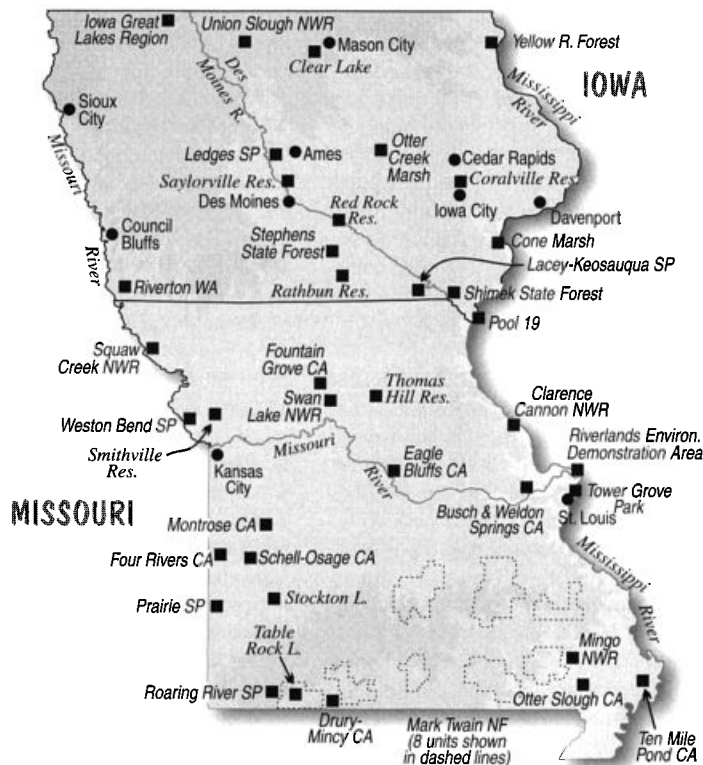
# Iowa & Missouri

**Robert Cecil**

1315 41st Street

Des Moines, Iowa 50311

(wewarb@aol.com)



**I**t was unseasonably mild for the first half of the season, but around 15 January, it turned into one of those winters that only kids like—cold, lots of snow, and lots of snow days. Waterfowl exited all but the Mississippi River by early January, quickly followed by gulls. Two Mississippi River gull hotspots produced good birds throughout the season: the Davenport, Iowa area and the Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area north of St. Louis. Curiously, of three Arctic raptor species, two—Rough-legged and Northern Shrike—appeared in unusually high numbers, while Snowy Owl was unreported for the first time in many years.

The snow cover of the last half of the season produced high counts of open-country species, but was boom or bust for winter finches. Invasion status could be conferred on Common Redpoll and Pine Siskin (at least in Iowa), and it was a very good year for Purple Finch. Conversely, neither crossbill was reported, nor were any of the more esoteric species such as Pine and Evening Grosbeaks. Although the last half of the season's weather was harsh, it did not prevent an early return of numerous species. For example, waterfowl, American Robins, and icterids began trickling into Iowa between 18

and 22 February, and within a few days they had reached the northern part of the state.

Overall, it was a good year for rarities. The best are boldfaced below; others include Ferruginous Hawk, Iceland Gull, Mountain Bluebird, Bohemian Waxwing, Ovenbird, and Baltimore Oriole.

**Abbreviations:** H.N.A. (Hitchcock Nature Area, Pottawattamie, IA); R.E.D.A. (Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area, St. Charles, MO).

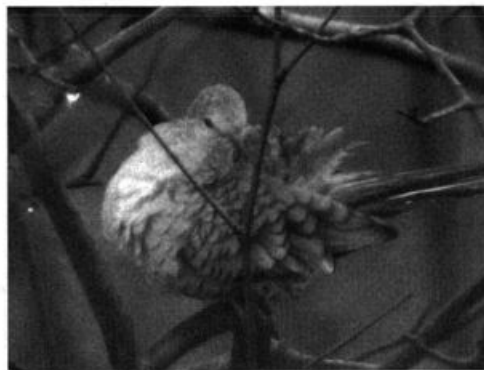
## LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Single Common Loons lingered until 4 Jan in Johnson, IA (JF); in Missouri, there was one 1 Jan at R.E.D.A. (CM, JM) and one 17 Jan at Table Rock L. (DR, m. ob.). Continuing a multi-year run, 2 Pied-billed Grebes wintered at Cedar Rapids, IA (BSc, CC, MD). Single Horned Grebes lingered until 4 Jan at West Okoboji L. in Dickinson, IA (ET, LS), 4 Jan at R.E.D.A. (JU), and 17 Jan at Table Rock L. (DR, m. ob.). Very unusual was a Western Grebe at Table Rock 17 Jan (DR, GS, LB, CB). On 21 Feb, American White Pelicans returned to R.E.D.A. (CM, JM); a single made it to Red Rock Res. (WO), and others arrived in cen. Iowa by the end of the month. Double-crested Cormorants had departed Iowa by mid-Dec, while up to 25 wintered at R.E.D.A. (JU). There were 2 crippled birds on 29 Dec at Pool 19 (SD); one wonders how many of these very late aquatic species may be unable to migrate. For the 6th consecutive year, Black-crowned Night-Herons wintered at Cedar Rapids, IA, this year a subad. and an imm. (BS, MD, JF). Turkey Vultures are lingering at more northerly Missouri locations, such as one on 23 Dec at Nodaway (DE), one in Jackson 1 Jan (JZ, m. ob.), and 4 on 3 Jan in St. Charles (CM). Very early returning birds included 4 on 16 Feb in Boone, MO (BG) and one on 24 Feb in Black Hawk, IA (RG). A decent fall count of Greater White-fronted Geese for Missouri was 800 on 9 Dec in Holt (TR); good numbers of migrants had arrived in both states by the end of the period. On 28 Feb, Snow Goose numbers were estimated at 180,000 at Squaw Creek N.W.R., Holt, MO (TR) and 4000 in Union, IA (AB). Missouri's only Ross's Goose was at Clarence Cannon N.W.R. in Pike 28 Feb (JU, JM, JE), while Iowa had 6 in Dec, none in Jan, and peaks of 11 on 28 Feb in Woodbury (BH) and 5 on 29 Feb at Clear L. (PH). Missouri fared better (or worse) than normal with Mute Swan, where up to 4 wintered in Boone (KM, BG) and one was seen 1 & 28 Feb at R.E.D.A. (BR, CM, m. ob.). The Trumpeter Swan reintroduction program seems to be coming right along, with 72 on 31 Dec at R.E.D.A. (TR) and about 10 other reports of one to 3 from Iowa and the n. half of Missouri. Tundra Swans were scarce; the only reports after the C.B.C. period were of 3 on 1

**SA** Glendale Cemetery in Des Moines provided birders around the Region a unique opportunity to study Merlins up close. Unprecedented, at least in Iowa, was a roost where birds arrived each evening near sunset, resting conspicuously in deciduous trees until finally retiring for the evening in nearby conifers. The group included one ad. male of the Taiga race, one female Taiga, one ad. male Prairie (Richardson's), one ad. female Prairie, and 2 first-year female Prairies (JG, RC, m. ob.). As this location has been a reliable hangout for Merlins in past winters, it is possible that this roost has been in use for some time. Interestingly, similar phenomena may be taking place in Missouri, where 4 ad. males (3 Prairie and one nominate) were observed simultaneously 29 Dec at Taberville Prairie, St. Clair (MR); 3 were also seen here in winter 1998–1999. In addition to the Des Moines and Taberville Prairie birds, there were about 17 Merlin reports in the Region.

Jan+ in Buchanan, MO (TR) and one 15 Feb+ at R.E.D.A. (BR, CM). A **Whooper Swan** in Marshall, IA in Feb (TPr, BPr) will probably not be accepted as a wild individual by the state records committee.

With the usual exception of very small numbers wintering on open water, dabbling ducks were squeezed out of Iowa by 1 Jan, and most were out of Missouri soon after. In Iowa, divers followed the dabblers out a few days later. The only large number reported was 12,000 Canvasbacks 29 Dec at the usual Pool 19 staging area (SD). Peak Greater Scaup counts were 17 on 29 Dec at Pool 19 (SD) and 25 during Feb at R.E.D.A. (BR); the only Jan report was of 4 on 3 Jan at Saylorville Res. (BE). A **Harlequin Duck** was among the standouts of Iowa's winter season: the first since 1976 and the 3rd overall was a female/imm. at Saylorville Res. 12–14 Jan (TAB, †AJ, m. ob.). Amazingly, another, a female, was found 29 Feb on the Illinois side of the Quad Cities but was seen "in the middle of the river," making it an Iowa bird as well (†AF, †TK; ph.). Missouri alone scored a scoter hat-trick, with all three at R.E.D.A.: 2 Surfs 4–7 Dec (CM, JM, BR, JU), 2 Blacks 7 & 9 Dec (JU) and one until 1 Jan (CM, JM), and up to 3 White-wingeds through the season (JU, CM, JM, BR). In Iowa, there were 6 White-winged Scoters 6 Dec at West Okoboji L. (LS,



This Inca Dove found on New Year's Day (here 4 January 2004) in the St. Louis area, St. Charles County, Missouri provided a third state record; the bird remained until 22 February. Photograph by Jim Malone.

ET); the only Blacks were 2 on 7 & 11 Dec at Saylorville Res. (AB) and 1 on 29 Dec at Pool 19 (SD). Missouri reported no Long-tailed Ducks. Among four Iowa reports totaling 11 birds, the only ones after the C.B.C. period were 3 on 21 Feb in Lee (BS). Divers returned to Iowa between 17 and 21 Feb. A Hooded

Merganser x Common Goldeneye was identified 28 Jan at R.E.D.A. (CM).

## RAPTORS THROUGH GULLS

An Osprey was in Pottawattamie, IA 3 Dec (†JT). An excellent Northern Harrier count was of 51 on 29 Dec in se. Missouri, with 27 in St. Clair (MB); otherwise, numbers were normal. Interesting was a 28 Dec report of a Northern Goshawk in Dallas, MO that captured and dined on a Bantam rooster (PS); the only one in s. Iowa was seen 28 Dec in Union (SD). Unusual in nw. Missouri was a Red-shouldered Hawk 24 Jan in Buchanan (JH); unusual in nw. Iowa was one on 3 Jan in Dickinson (LS). Single Ferruginous Hawks were seen 10 & 18 Dec at the H.N.A. hawkwatch in Pottawattamie, IA (†MOr). This species may prove to be annual at this heavily monitored site. It was an excellent season for Rough-legged Hawk. The H.N.A. hawkwatch set a daily record of 10 on 16 Dec (MO); there were 8 on 21 Feb in Appanoose, IA (TJ), and about 50 others reported in Iowa. Among about 10 Missouri reports of 13 birds, the most southerly was one on 9 Feb in Dallas (PS). Prairie Falcon reports included 2 on 18 Dec at H.N.A. (MO, CK), 2 on 29 Dec in Barton, MO (JU), and one on 8 Jan in Poweshiek, IA (MP).

Gray Partridge were unreported in the s. third of Iowa; the somewhat higher number of statewide Iowa reports this season was due to snow cover. There were 16 Northern Bobwhites, 61 Wild Turkeys, and 58 Ring-necked Pheasants 14 Dec at the Maryville, MO C.B.C. Again this year, 5 Virginia Rails were at the Columbia, MO S.T.P., this year on 20 Dec. Very early was a Lesser Yellowlegs 28 Feb in Stoddard, MO (BL). Least Sandpipers again wintered near Winfield Dam in Lincoln, MO, with up to 8 on 21 Jan (CM).

Missouri had an excellent selection of gulls this year, all at R.E.D.A. Iowa's main hotspot was in the Davenport area at Lock and Dams 14 & 15, but there were some good birds from other locations. A Missouri birder found an alternate-plumaged Franklin's Gull in Wapello, IA 27 Dec (†KA); this or another bird was at R.E.D.A. 31 Dec–2 Jan (CM, JM), and a first-winter bird was at Pottawattamie, IA (BP, LP). The only Bonaparte's Gull report was of 25 on 12 Dec at R.E.D.A. (JM, CM). A Laughing Gull was reported 30 Jan at R.E.D.A. (p. a., JU). At Lock and Dam 14 & 15, Steve Freed reported Thayer's Gulls 8 Dec+, with a peak of 8 (3 ads.,

3 juvs., one second-winter, and one third-winter) 16 Feb that probably represented most of the birds reported there by many observers. A very pale juv. there 1 Jan generated much discussion (†MCD, THK). Other Iowa reports included up to 4 birds until 4 Jan at Red Rock Res. (AB), an ad. 20 Dec at Iowa City (†MD), and a juv. 29 Dec at Pool 19 (SD). At R.E.D.A., where CM observed that the increased incidence of Thayer's Gull reports may be a function of more observer scrutiny, somewhere between 6 and 10 were found 24 Jan+, split roughly between ad. and first-winter birds (CM, JM, BR). In Iowa, Iceland Gulls (all p.a.) were reported as follows: one first-winter 10–29 Feb at Lock and Dam 14 (ph., †SF), one first- or second-winter in the same area 8–12 Feb (†SF), and one on the Keokuk C.B.C. (AB). R.E.D.A. reports included one first-winter 15 Feb (†BR) and the same or another 20 & 22 Feb (JM, CM). An ad. Lesser Black-backed Gull was found 12 Dec at Red Rock Res. (ABr); a first-winter and 2 ads. were at Lock and Dams 14 & 15 on 15 Jan+ (JF, SF, DR, TK). From mid-Jan through mid-Feb, R.E.D.A. produced about one first-winter, one third-winter, and 2 ad. Lessers (BR, CM, JM, JU). The first Glaucous Gulls included one juv. 12 Dec and one ad. 17 Dec at Red Rock Res. (AB); there were about 5 others reported this season. Missouri's first Glaucous Gulls of the season were 3 on 1 Feb+ at R.E.D.A. (BR, CM, JM, JU). Great Black-backed Gulls included one ad. 22–26 Feb at Lock and Dam 14 (†CE, †CC, m. ob.) and a first-winter and a first- or second-winter 7–24 Feb at R.E.D.A. (BR, JU).

### DOVES THROUGH WARBLERS

Eurasian Collared-Doves continue to increase in the Region, with 19 on 28 Dec in *Union*, IA (AB) and 14 on 1 Jan in *St. Charles*, MO (JM, CM); reports from *Lee* and *Plymouth* bring to 29 the number of Iowa counties in which it has been reported. Missouri's 3rd Inca Dove was found 1 Jan in *St. Charles*, where it remained until 22 Feb (ph., †CM, †JM, RF, m. ob.). For the first time in many years, there were no Snowy Owls in the Region. Long-eared and Short-eared Owls were scarce, especially in Missouri, where there were only two reports of Long-eareds, the most being 6 on 24 Jan in *Worth* (KG, PK), and six reports totaling 11 Short-eareds. The most southerly of 7 Northern Saw-whet Owls reported was in *Warren*, IA (JS, JG).

Truly bizarre was a **Rufous Hummingbird** 10–14 Jan in *St. Louis* (†LC, JU). The only mid-winter reports of Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers were 1–25 Jan in *Warren*, IA (AJ) and 19 Jan in *Buchanan*, MO (JH). The season's only Northern (Red-shafted) Flicker was 23 Jan–25 Feb in *Cerro Gordo*, IA (CF, RG). Impressive was the count of 9 Loggerhead Shrikes on the *Maryville*, MO C.B.C.; there were no Iowa reports. In Iowa, the winter's count of 40 Northern Shrikes was roughly double the average of

the past six years; about 3 made it to extreme nw. Missouri. Very early or possibly wintering was a vocalizing Fish Crow 9 Feb at R.E.D.A. (CM); Dec and Jan birds have been noted in nearby Illinois. A Common Raven 22 Feb in *Allamakee*, IA (p. a., RZ) was most unusual. Two Tree Swallows 28 Feb at R.E.D.A. were early (JE, JU, JM, CM). It was a lackluster year for Red-breasted Nuthatch, with about 15 reports from the Region, the most southerly of those being three Missouri reports from *Boone* (BG) and *St. Charles* (JU). A Carolina Wren wintered at *Mason City*, IA (CF, PH, RG), and a Bewick's Wren was seen 29 Dec in *Vernon*, MO (JU). There were 6 Marsh Wrens again this season at the *Columbia*, MO S.T.P., this year on 20 Dec (BG), and another was in *St. Charles*, MO 3 Jan (BR). Five Sedge Wrens were counted 29 Dec in *Barton*, MO (MB). The only Ruby-crowned Kinglet report following the C.B.C. period was one 28 Feb in *St. Charles*, MO (JU).

An ad. male Mountain Bluebird was discovered on 28 Feb in *Black Hawk*, IA (†FM), where the species is casual. The season's only Townsend's Solitaires were one 20 Dec–2 Jan in *O'Brien*, IA (LS), and one 15 Jan and 16 Feb in *Buena Vista*, IA (LS). In Iowa, American Robins almost completely left the state in midwinter; evidently, they found cen. Missouri to be more to their liking, where huge numbers, estimated in the millions, descended in flocks "darkening the sky for an hour and a half." An excellent cedar berry crop enticed them to stay through the season (BJ). The only Varied Thrush was one 7 Dec in *Iowa City* (ph. RD). The most northerly Northern Mockingbird of midwinter was near the Missouri border in *Appanoose*, IA 10 Jan (TJ). A Brown Thrasher wintered in *Mason City*, IA, and another was found 8 Feb at *Saylorville Res.* (BE). Single Bohemian Waxwings were seen 3–7 Jan in *Cerro Gordo*, IA (\*PH, RGo) and on the *Sioux City*, IA C.B.C. The most northerly mid-winter Yellow-rumped Warbler report was of one 10 Jan in *O'Brien*, IA (LS). Presumably wintering were singles 21 Feb in *Buchanan*, MO (JH) and 29 Feb at *Davenport*, IA (DR). Pine Warblers arrive in Missouri much earlier than in Iowa; this year, a singing male was in *St. Louis* on 26 Feb (CM). Iowa's earliest dates are from mid-Apr. A freshly dead Ovenbird found 13 Dec in *Boone*, MO was very unusual (KP); the specimen was deposited at the University of Kansas.

### TOWHEES THROUGH FINCHES

There were four reports of Spotted Towhees after the C.B.C. period, the most easterly being one 10 Jan in *St. Charles* (JM). Except for the usual suspects, sparrows generally left the Region after the C.B.C. period, although C.B.C.s in Iowa produced convincing reports of one or 2 Vesper, Savannah, and Lincoln's Sparrows. The stellar sparrow of the season was Iowa's 3rd Golden-crowned Sparrow, an imm. male 24 Jan–15 Feb in *Winneshiek* (†DC, ph. †TK, m. ob.). As expected, the highest counts of La-

pland Longspurs in the Region coincided with the snow cover of late Jan and Feb: peak counts were 300 on 31 Jan in *Clinton*, IA (PV) and 300 on 1 Feb in *Worth*, IA (PH); in Missouri, top counts were of 200 on 7 Feb in *St. Charles*, MO (JU) and 130 on 15 Jan in *Holt* (TR). The most southerly Snow Buntings were 5 on 6 Feb in *Atchison* in the extreme ne. corner of Missouri (DE); Iowa numbers were about normal.

Western Meadowlarks wintered in high numbers in the *St. Louis*, MO area (BR). A Yellow-headed Blackbird was found on 4 Jan in *Iowa City* (RH). Rusty Blackbirds were scarce in Iowa in midwinter but appeared in both states by the end of the season. Great-tailed Grackles are expanding their wintering range, with up to 100 in *Warren/Polk*, IA (AJ) and 60 near *St. Louis* in *Lincoln*, MO (CM, BR). A female Baltimore Oriole at a feeder 3 Jan in *St. Charles*, MO was found dead on 7 Jan (†CM). After a series of off years, Purple Finches appeared in excellent numbers: 134 on 16 Dec at H.N.C. (MO), 112 on 13 Jan in *Macon*, MO (TR), and up to 57 through the period in *St. Charles*, MO (JU). It was also an invasion year for Common Redpolls, with small numbers appearing in Iowa in mid-Dec and peak counts of 31 on 21 Feb in *Winneshiek*, IA (DK) and 50 on 25 Feb in *O'Brien*, IA (JV). Beginning 5 Feb, Missouri had seven reports of 9 birds, mostly in the nw. corner; by far the most southerly report was one on 13 Feb in *St. Louis* (Jeanne Giebe, *vide* JU). Another invading winter finch was Pine Siskin, at least in Iowa, where there were the most reports in several years. In addition to 69 on the *Burlington*, IA C.B.C. and reports from numerous other C.B.C.s, there were 10 Iowa reports of up to 12 birds after the C.B.C. period. Missouri's most southerly Pine Siskins were from the *St. Louis* vicinity, where there were four reports of 11 birds.

Cited observers (subregional coordinators in boldface): Mike Beck, Lisa Berger, Aaron Brees, Charles Burwick, Dennis Carter, Chris Caster, Robert Cecil (Iowa), Lanny Chambers, Robert Dick, Steve Dinsmore, Mike Dooley, Joseph Eades, David Easterla, Chris Edwards, Bery Engbreetsen, Carolyn Fischer, Robert Fisher, Steve Freed, Al Frohlich, Jim Fuller, Jay Gilliam, Bill Goodge, Rita Goransen, Kirby Goslee, Paul Hertz, Jack Hilsabeck, Rick Hollis, Bill Huser, Brad Jacobs (Missouri), Ann Johnson, Tom Johnson, Tom Kent, Clem Klaphake, Darwin Koenig, Peter Kondrashov, Bob Lewis, Charlene Malone, Jim Malone, Knox McCrory Jeannie Moe, Francis Moore, Wolf Oesterreich, Mark Orsag, Babs Padelford, Loren Padelford, Kay Palmer, Beth Proescholdt, Mark Proescholdt, Dean Rising, Don Robinson, Tommie Rogers, Bill Rowe, Bill Scheible, Lee Schonewe, Patrick Sensenig, Jim Sinclair, Greg Swick, Ed Thelen, Ric Zarwell, Joshua Uffman, Paul Van Nieuwenhuysse, James Zellmer. ☉