



Big Bluestem Flyer

Big Bluestem Audubon Society Newsletter

The mission of the Big Bluestem Audubon Society is to enjoy the observation and study of birds and natural ecosystems, contribute to their preservation and restoration, and engage in educational activities to benefit humanity, and to gain a broader understanding and deeper appreciation of the world we live in.

Volume 34 Number 1

September/October 1998

Featured Speaker—September 17 meeting: *Dr. Lois Tiffany, "Fall Fungi: A Diverse Harvest"*

Dr. Tiffany will present an introduction to the fleshy fungi of summer and fall in Iowa. There are many interesting and/or edible fleshy fungi later in the season after the spring Morels are history! Dr. Tiffany is a Distinguished Professor of Botany in the Department of Botany at Iowa State University. A recent book, which she coauthored, may be of interest—*Mushrooms and Other Fungi of the Midcontinental United States*.

Featured Speaker—October 15 meeting: *Mike Havlik, "Big Owls Hoot and Little Owls Toot"*

Plan to bring a friend to see a live barred owl. Mike Havlik, Head Naturalist at the Des Moines YMCA Camp, will discuss owl adaptations which make them successful night hunters. He will bring the Y-Camp's barred owl which has been injured and cannot live in the wild. For fun, Mike plans to teach us some owl songs. Mr. Havlik is an expert birder and was instrumental in setting up the bird feeding station and blind at the Y-camp. They teach nature materials, including birding, to about 22,000 kids of all ages per year at the camp. This program should be entertaining and educational for all ages.

The Big Bluestem Audubon Society (BBAS) meetings are held monthly, September-May (except December and March) on the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m., Room 2532 Veterinary Medicine Building, Iowa State University. If you need directions, please call any of the BBAS officers or committee chairs. See you there!

If you would like to meet and dine with the speaker and the BBAS board before the monthly meeting, there are a limited number of reservations available. Please call John Snyder at 232-8824 to confirm space and location.

Coming Field Trips: September & October

Kevin Healy, Field Trip Chair

September

5- Big Creek Wildlife Refuge. Liven up your Labor Day weekend with a trip to Big Creek Wildlife Refuge. Hank Zalatel is always out and about and will lead us to the best shore birds in Central Iowa. Meet at ISU Design Center at 0730 or the Story County Courthouse

(by the cannon) in Nevada at 0800. Call Kevin Healy, 233-5914, for details. Trip leader, Hank Zalatel (515-382-5427).

12- No BBAS field trip. Try to make it to one or more of the Fall 1998 IOU

(continued on page 8)

In this Issue:

Page 2

- View From the Prairie

Page 3

- Out and About in Boone County
- Conservation Corner

Page 4

- Board Happenings
- Fall IOU Meeting

Page 5

- BBAS Birdathon . . .
- Errington Lecture

Bird Info of the Month: *Bobwhites roost in a circle. These birds haunt large open areas and by using this formation can guard against predators approaching from any direction.*



View from the Prairie

Kay Niyo, President

Welcome back from a summer of travels, vacations, family reunions, or whatever—hope you were able to include some birding during the summer and will have stories (and slides for the Christmas party) to share. The BBAS has another exciting year of programs and field trips planned. Speakers include some favorites from previous years including Lois Tiffany, who will not only tell us about delicious fall mushrooms, but will

lead us on a field trip and show us. And, Jean Prior agreed to provide another wonderful “geology for birders” as only she can do. We’ll have some great new programs, too. Bonnie Bowen will share her three years of research and life in Costa Rica. Mike Havlik is bringing a Barred Owl from the YMCA Camp; you can guess what he will talk about! Bob Dyas will provide a marvelous slide presentation of a photographic sabbatical that is accompanied by Copland’s “Appalachian Spring.” I experienced this several years ago and have never forgotten it. Two of our BBAS Internet birders, Kevin Healy and Paul Bystrak, are going to treat us to an evening birding on the Internet, “Thursday Night Live”!! And Paul Zeph, our new state Audubon director, will explain our new state office.

Our field trips will be equally fun times. We’ll be sure to hit all the Central Iowa hot spots for migrating birds, hopefully when they are hot. Steve Dinsmore tells me that Saylorville has the greatest concentration (during mid to late September) of migrating American Pelicans in North America—10,000. We also have some new trips planned. Kevin Healy, our field trip chair, will take us to northeastern Iowa for a long weekend in October to visit Bob Anderson’s Raptor Research Project and to learn about his success with Peregrine releases on the Upper Iowa River bluffs this year and to see some new birding sites. Kevin is determined to convert all of us to migrating raptor experts and enthusiasts and has some new sites selected for that amazing spectacle! We’re also planning a canoeing/birding trip in the spring. Of course, plan on participating in the many Christmas Bird Counts held in the area.

So, check our first semester’s calendar enclosed with this newsletter and the one for second semester that will be published in January and mark the dates on your calendar.

The anniversaries continue! Celebrate 75 years with the Iowa Ornithologists’ Union and the Des Moines Audubon Society and enjoy Pete Dunne the afternoon and evening of September 12. They have other slide presentations planned that will be very enjoyable. See the registration and program information in this newsletter and send it in.

We hope you’ll join us for a year of fun and discovery, and I guarantee, one or two experiences that you’ll never forget!! Every year has them!

Don’t forget to enjoy our beautiful prairies this fall. Forbs and grasses are resplendent in glorious hues of yellow, gold, bronze, purple, and even blue—if you are lucky enough to find a Gentian.



Gladys Black will be Missed

Reknown ornithologist and conservationist, Gladys Black, died Sunday, July 19. I first met Mrs. Black at a Pleasantville High School assembly several decades ago. She lived a couple of blocks from my school and was known back then as the “bird lady.” She was a very fascinating lady who spoke her mind and let nothing get in her way. She had a weekly column in the Knoxville newspaper—*The Chronicle* among other state newspapers. As stated in *The Chronicle*, “Even people who never had her passion for birds became avid readers. Her columns were fueled by questions residents had concerning birds they saw but didn’t know. . . . For 40 years she was in demand as a speaker from school age children to adults showing slides highlighting the birds of Red Rock. Church groups requested her presentation on *Birds of the Bible* and was featured on several Iowa Public Television programs. For 25 years she was involved in bird banding, rehabilitation of injured birds, nest studies, and migration reports. She was involved in more than 40 years of volunteer work in environmental education including participation in the Red Rock Corps of Engineers Bald Eagle Days.

“Her volunteer work led to an honorary Doctor of Science degree from Simpson College, honorary lifetime membership in the Iowa Ornithologists’ Union and the Des Moines Audubon Society. She was named a Fellow of othe Iowa Academy of Science, and in 1985, she was inducted into the Iowa Women’s Hall of Fame.”

A Gladys Black Memorial Fund has been established at the Pleasantville State Bank, 102 North Washington Street, Pleasantville, IA 50225. She will be greatly missed.

Big Bluestem Audubon Society Officers and Committees

Officers:

- President: Kay Niyo 233-8803 kniyo@aol.com
- Vice-President: 432-5057 Karl.A.Jungbluth@noaa.gov
- Secretary: Mary Doud 296-2178 mf@doud@Ames.net
- Treasurer: Paul Ovrom 292-8862 nc7ao@ars-grin.gov

Board Members:

- Carol Berrier 965-8242
- Mike Freiberg 233-8213 freiberg9@hotmail.com
- Kevin Healy 233-5914 khealy@ames.net
- Stuart Huntington 296-0248 xlhuntin@exnet.iastate.edu
- John Pohlman 232-6816

Committee Chairs:

- Archivist: Hank Zalatel 382-5427 madowl@nevia.net
- Awards Chair: Stan Cyran 292-4876 scyrans@pol.net
- Conservation Chair: Sherry Dragula 233-1532 mpwskd@aol.com
- Education Co-Chairs: Carol and Galin Berrier
- Field Trip Chair: Kevin Healy
- Fund Raising Chairs: Stan Cyran
- Membership Chair: Mark Widrechner 233-1532 mpwskd@aol.com
- Program Chair: John Snyder 232-8824 JESnyder@ix.netcom.com
- Publicity Chair: Mary Doud 296-2178
- Publications and Electronic Media Chair: Rebecca Shivers 292-0691 shivers@ameslab.gov
- Special Publications Chair: Joyce Bahrenfus 432-3396
- Service & Special Projects Co-Chairs: Karl and Carmen Jungbluth

BBAS Web Site:

<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~shivers/bluestem.html>

National Audubon Society Web Site:

<http://www.audubon.org>

Iowa Audubon State Director:

Paul Zeph pzeph@audubon.org

Iowa Bird Sightings Hotline—1-319-338-9881

Out and About in Boone County —Sportsman Access

Joyce and Jon Bahrenfus

Most of the public land in Boone County lies along the Des Moines River corridor. With large tracts of woodlands and open floodplain areas, the river corridor offers excellent birding opportunities. One of many good birding spots in the corridor is located at Sportsman Access, southwest of Luther. This is a public hunting area so caution should be taken if you are visiting during hunting season.

Though birding would be better in spring or fall or even early morning, we paid a visit to the area one hot August afternoon to see what birds we could turn up. A foot trail led us through an open field where we heard field sparrows and dickcissels. With an open view of the river corridor, it is a good place for viewing raptors and we spotted two red-tailed hawks and several turkey vultures soaring high overhead. About a 100 yards from the road, the foot trail reaches the timber edge and continues downhill 50 yards to a creek (you may need overshoes to cross at certain times of the year). The wooded area on either side of the creek draws a variety of birds. Here we saw indigo buntings, goldfinches, bluebirds, a chimney swift, white-breasted nuthatches, and American redstart, a house wren, blue-gray gnatcatchers, rose-breasted grosbeaks, a red-bellied woodpecker, and a great-crested flycatcher. We even surprised a wild turkey from its roost.

At the top of the hill on the far side of the creek, the trail emerges from the woods and forks to either the right or left, around the edge of a soybean field. Exploring the trail to the right, which heads toward the river, we followed along the edge of the woods and were rewarded with views of Baltimore orioles, cardinals, catbirds, yellow-billed cuckoos, blue jays, song sparrows, red-headed woodpeckers, and downy woodpeckers. As we moved into the bottomland area near the river, we spotted a great blue heron overhead and heard common yellowthroats in the willow thickets.

Retracing our steps and taking the left fork of the trail took us along more of the forest edge where we heard chickadees, an Eastern wood peewee, and killdeer. All told, we had 31 species in just over an hour's time—not bad birding for a hot, humid afternoon. This is a nice spot to cross-country ski in winter, an appealing thought on a hot day.

DIRECTIONS: From Hwy 30, turn south on Hwy 17. At the south edge of Luther, turn right (west) on County Road E57. After 2.5 miles, turn left (south) on Peach Avenue (gravel). Go 1 mile and turn right (west) on 280th Street. Go 1.5 miles (the road jogs south and west several times) and turn left on Opal Lane. Go .3 miles (just a few hundred yards before Opal Lane deadends at the river at Sportsman Access). You will see a "Foot Trail—No Vehicles" sign on the left side of the road. You can park along the road on either side of the drive but do not block the farmer's access drive. Good birding!

Editor's note: This is the first in a series about birding places in Boone and Story Counties. Several people have asked about birding areas other than the usual spots close to home. If you would like to contribute an area you have visited, please contact me. Thank you.

Newsletter Deadline: October 16, 1998 at 2 p.m.

Conservation Corner

Sherry Dragula, Conservation Chair

Before Congress adjourned in August they added a number of anti-environmental "riders" to appropriations bills for the Department of Interior. These riders will impact national forests, Endangered Species Act enforcement, and Alaska lands including a rider that would authorize road construction through the Copper River Delta in Alaska. The Delta is a 700,000-acre wetland complex that is a rich waterfowl feeding area and site for millions of migratory birds, including nearly all of the Pacific coast populations of Western Sandpipers and Dunlins. You can call your representative in Congress and Senator at 1-800-723-5246 and ask them to remove riders on the Interior Appropriations bill. You can contact Senator Grassley at: chuck_grassley@grassley.senate.gov, Senator Harkin at: tom_harkin@harkin.senate.gov and Rep. Boswell at: rep.boswell.ia03@mail.house.gov

It is difficult to provide the most timely information on issues in a bi-monthly newsletter. For up-to-date information on national conservation issues consider subscribing (for free) to "The Advisory." It is the National Audubon Society's Weekly Policy Report. You can get it via regular mail or by e-mail. By regular mail contact: National Audubon Society, 1901 Penn Ave., NW, #1100, Washington, D.C. 20006 or call 202-861-2242. Or, send an e-mail message as follows:

To: listserv@list.audubon.org
From: <your e-mail address>
Subject: <leave this blank>
Text: sub audubon-news

If you would like to receive and share information on issues, announcements and concerns of Audubon leaders and members in Iowa, there is an e-mail newsgroup called iacom. Postings are approximately one per day. To subscribe send a message to: mailserve@service.grin.edu

Leave the subject line blank. Your message should say: subscribe iacom <your e-mail address>

And finally, don't forget about the National Audubon Society's Web Page at <http://www.audubon.org>. If you click on National Campaigns from that web page you will get a list of campaigns (Wetlands, Endangered species, Wildlife refuges, Forests, Population and habitat, Everglades) and you can click on a specific campaign to get more detailed information. Most Audubon Campaigns have a periodic newsletter they will mail you. Contact: National Audubon Society, 1901 Penn Ave. NW #1100, Washington, D.C. 20006, 202-861-2242. Three campaigns, Population, Refuges, and Wetlands have e-mail newsletters, too. For information on how to subscribe see this web page: www.audubon.org/net/list

Notes from the Field

Kevin Healy, Field Trip Chair

Saturday, June 6, was a nice day for the annual Birder's Breakfast. We had a nice turnout as well. Approximately 25 people strolled down the canyon road, and many of the resident birds were sighted or in song. Jim Dinsmore shared some of his extensive birding knowledge, and everyone shared a tasty selection of breakfast goodies at the end of the morning. The birding highlight was easily agreed upon—two young pileated woodpeckers looking out of their nest hole, while an adult hammered away close by on the same tree!

Fall Iowa Ornithologists' Union Meeting

Jane Clark—Des Moines Audubon Society

The Fall Iowa Ornithologists' Union meeting will be held September 11-13 at Camp Sunnyside, adjacent to Margo Frankel Woods State Park. Pete Dunne, noted author, speaker, and trip leader, will be the featured guest. He will give a hawk workshop in the afternoon and will give a talk about flycatchers in the evening. Other programs include "Sparrows—Cinderellas of the Bird World" by Eugene and Eloise Armstrong and "Mexico" by Rick Hollis.

The Des Moines Audubon Society is the host.

Pete Dunne

Adapted from: <http://www.nj.com/audubon/petes/petes.html>



Pete Dunne is the Director of Natural History Information and Director of the Cape May Point Bird Observatory for the New Jersey Audubon Society, as well as a well-known spokesperson for birders. Mr. Dunne has been bird watching since he was seven years old and has been observing and writing about birding and birds for over twenty years. He is a recognized columnist, lecturer, and expert on the optics needs of birders and is the author of several books—*Tales of a Low Rent Birder*, *More Tales of a Low Rent Birder*, *Before the Echo*, *The Feather Quest*, *The Wind Masters*, and co-author of *Hawks in Flight*. His latest book, due out September 1998, is entitled *Small-headed Flycatcher. Seen Yesterday. He Didn't Leave His Name*, and other stories.

Board Happenings

Mary Doud, Secretary

The board met on June 29 at Kay Niyo's house and made plans for programs and field trips for 1998/1999.

A board meeting was held on August 9, 1998 at the same place. Several items were discussed. The birdathon grossed \$1,902.75 and netted \$1,766.25. One-half (\$883.12) was sent to National Audubon for State Audubon office use. The board moved to commend Carmen and Karl Jungbluth for their outstanding effort as cochairs of the Birdathon effort. The calendar of events for 1998/1999 was discussed. Speakers have been confirmed for all but the May meeting. Kevin Healy provided information on field trips. Discussion was held about additional field trips. An announcement was made about the IOU/Des Moines Audubon Society's 75th anniversary meeting on September 11-13. The board authorized Carol Berrier to attempt to find up to 30 teachers, ideally in different schools, who want to receive Audubon Adventures and to obtain feedback as to its usefulness. The board authorized Joyce Bahrenfus to print 200 black and white BBAS brochures spending less than \$50. We will place them at the Ames and Boone public libraries, McFarland Park, Brekke's, and other locations. Mark Widrlechner reported that our membership has increased about 5% over last year. The board had voted for ISU Archives at Parks Library to house the BBAS archives. Mike Freiberg will present a tribute to Gladys, who died at age 89, at the September meeting. The IOU was pleased with the assistance that several members of BBAS provided for the IOU/BBAS Anniversary meeting held in May. The next meeting will be September 27 at Kay Niyo's home.

If you would like to help on any committee, contact the chairperson, or if you have any concerns, issues, or information you would like brought before the board, please give it to any board member at least one week before the next meeting so it will get on the agenda. Thanks.

Cindy Hildebrand Wins the Lawrence and Eula Hagie Heritage Award

Congratulations to BBAS member, Cindy Hildebrand, who recently was selected as the recipient of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation's top conservation award—the Lawrence and Eula Hagie Heritage Award. Her work included prairie restorations and conservation lobbying. In the mid-1980s, Cindy lobbied at the Statehouse on behalf of the Iowa Audubon Council. She later co-founded the Iowa Prairie Network. This group identifies and restores prairies. She will receive her award September 12 and \$1,000 at the meeting of the Iowa Prairie Network.

1998 BBAS Birdathon Raises Over \$1700 !

*Karl and Carmen Jungbluth,
Birdathon Coordinators*

Big Bluestem Audubon's first Birdathon in many years succeeded on many fronts. A big Thank You goes out to our Birdathoners and sponsors for making May 9th a great day for the birds!

- Sixteen birders identified a total of 134 species, mostly in Boone and Story counties.
- The top team, Mike Havlik and Amy Yoakum, spotted 85 species.
- Mark Widrelechner and Sherry Dragula weren't far behind at 84 species.
- Birdathon Participants raised \$1766 for local Audubon efforts!
- Half of the money will go toward Audubon Adventures in local classrooms.
- The other half will support the new Iowa Audubon State Office.
- Over one dozen prizes from local businesses were awarded to Birdathoners and sponsors.
- Birdathon 1998 received coverage in Ames and Boone newspapers.
- Annamarie Osterreich, age 6, raised \$45 and counted 18 species!
- We had over 100 sponsors.

Thank You's abound. Specifically, we'd like to thank our top money raisers: Carol and Galin Berrier, Sherry Dragula, Mark Widrelechner, Karl and Carmen Jungbluth, Mike Havlik and Amy Yoakum.

Thanks also to Kevin Healy and Mary Doud for soliciting prizes from Ames businesses.

Thanks to our business sponsors (see page 6). And a big thank you to all of our Birdathon 1998 participants and their sponsors!

Next year's Birdathon can only be bigger and better. We hope to have more birders in the field, more sponsors and more business participation. We would like to include every Big Bluestem member. And our goal will once again be to raise money for Audubon education and efforts in Iowa, and to raise awareness of the birds, habitat, and birders in our midst.

If you know of 4th or 5th grade teachers who would like to have *Audubon Adventures* in their classroom, please contact Carol Berrier or Karl Jungbluth.

Highlights from the First Thirty Years of Big Bluestem Audubon Society (formerly the Ames Audubon Society), Part 1 by Sherry Dragula

On April 25, 1968, the Ames Audubon Society was formed. Its founding purpose was:

"To engage in and encourage the enjoyment and study of birds, other wildlife, plants and the many facets of nature to gain a broader understanding and a deeper appreciation of the world we live in.

"And, to engage in educational activities relating to the conservation of wildlife, other natural resources and the quality of our natural environment."

There were fourteen founding members and Ben Bereskin served as the first President. One of the Society's first concerns was the use of DDT. They got the City of Ames to stop using DDT in the Spring of 1968. By May of 1969 there were 64 members and in November of 1969 the Society incorporated as a non-profit organization.

The early years were marked with conservation activism and wildlife education. In 1969 and 1970, the Audubon Trail in Brookside Park was established and interpreted. Audubon Wildlife Films were shown from 1969 through 1974. Since 1968, Big Bluestem members have worked to protect Ames High Prairie. Today it has State Preserve status. The Society worked to stop the flooding of Ledges State Park in the early 1970s. Ames Audubon also conducted bird censuses and sponsored the Christmas Count in Ames starting in 1971. In the early 1970s and again in the late 1980s the Society helped stop a proposed Ames Reservoir.

Monthly programs and field trips continued through most of the 1970s. In 1974, John Madson, author of "Where the Sky Began" was a featured speaker on the "Tall Prairie." Also in 1974, the Ames Audubon hosted the Iowa Ornithologist's Fall Meeting. In 1975 discussions were held on becoming a Chapter of the National Audubon Society. But, that would not occur until March of 1982.

In April of 1981, a tree planting project, along Highway 30 east of Ames, began that lasted until 1986. Over 2000 trees were planted. A "Bird-a-thon" was held in May 1981 to raise funds for the Society. That same month, a student group came to the Ames Audubon Society wanting to form a Chapter of the National Audubon. In January of 1982 the Society changed its name to Big Bluestem Audubon Society and then in March it was granted Chapter status. The Chapter now had approximately 300 members.

Iowa Audubon Council Report

Karl Jungbluth, IAC representative

The highlight of the July 25th meeting was the introduction of our new Executive Director for the Iowa Field Office, Paul Zeph. Paul began working full time in August, and comes to Iowa Audubon with an extensive background in environmental education and volunteerism. His connections with the Audubon Society go back many years in locations such as Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Paul and his wife, Ellen, will be moving to Iowa August 10th.

Paul talked about his number one goal for the Iowa Field Office: to work for chapters such as Big Bluestem by building on our strengths. His second goal will be to positively increase Audubon's presence statewide, and he would like to start off with a signature program to build common enthusiasm. Paul has the energy to excite Audubon members, and wants to relate stories of our local activities and successes. If you have ideas for Paul, he can be reached at pzeph@audubon.org, or talk to Karl Jungbluth, our BBAS Audubon Council representative.

There is good news regarding office space for the new Iowa Audubon Field Office. The Corps of Engineers is willing to donate the use of a small ranch house/office near the Saylorville Reservoir spillway. Big Bluestem members may be asked to help spruce up the place this fall.

The Iowa Audubon Council is still in the process of selecting a Board of Directors for the Iowa Field Office, and continues to work to identify major partners and donors for the effort. Any ideas you have on this subject should be relayed to Karl.

The Council was also privileged to meet Dan McGuinness, brand new Director of National Audubon's Upper Mississippi River Campaign. Dan told us that he wants the Upper Mississippi River and its watershed to be a place where people prosper, and birds, fish and wildlife thrive in a healthy environment. Big Bluestem's counties are in this watershed. The Campaign has three immediate objectives, which are detailed in the November/December issue of the *Big Bluestem Flyer*.

In short, the Iowa Audubon Council meeting showed that Audubon is moving forward big time in Iowa, with new personnel and new campaigns. There are many opportunities for BBAS members to get involved and make an impact. Please join in!

Thanks to our BBAS Birdathon '98 Business Sponsors

Ames

Campus Book Store
Explore Store
Big Table Books
Earl May Garden Center
Brekke's Town and Country

Boone

Earl May Garden Center
The Bluebird Bed & Breakfast
Duffee Insurance Agency

Errington Lecture

Diane Debinski

Dr. Fred Wagner is the Errington Lecturer scheduled to speak October 5 and 6. He is the director of the Ecology Center at Utah State University, program chair for the Ecological Society of America meeting this summer, and is currently working on a synthesis on the issue of natural regulation while at UCSB's National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis. Fred is an excellent speaker and very good at interacting with people. His work on wildlife management in the national parks is also very timely.

(Errington Lecture Continued)

Monday, October 5, 8 p.m., 1414 Molecular Biology.

Public Lecture: *Science and Policy Setting for Public Lands: The Need for Public Process in Yellowstone and Other National Parks*. A policy is a statement or stated plan of how an organization will operate to achieve some goal. Recent literature concurs that we manage, not for the welfare of the resources themselves, but to satisfy public values assigned to them. The Forest Service and BLM have evolved out of the turn-of-the-century Progressive Era to policy-setting procedures involving major public participation. Science does not set policy, but rather is a service to the policy-setting process. Scientists should not advocate policy to preserve their credibility, objectivity, and trust to maximally serve the policy process. The National Park Service, with Yellowstone a prime example, struggles with ill-defined goals and remains in the Progressive Era with internal policy setting. The latter tends to hamper its science which is pressured to support its self-defined policies. It needs new legislation.

Tuesday, October 6, 2:10 p.m., LeBaron 1010. Scientific Lecture: *Effects of Elk on the Yellowstone Northern Range Ecosystem: A circuitous scientific saga.*

Meet your new Board members and committee chair

At the annual meeting last May 1998, the membership voted for the renewal of several Board members as well as new officers. Who are the new members you have elected to lead us this year?

Kay Niyo replaces Stan Cyran as president. You can read about Kay in the March/April 1997 *Birder of the Month* article.

Karl Jungbluth replaces Kay Niyo as vice-president. Karl works at the National Weather Service located in Johnston, Iowa. He was our featured speaker at the May 15, 1997 meeting, where he spoke about the migrating birds that are observed on the weather radar. He and his wife Carmen have just opened the Bluebird Bed and Breakfast near the ledges.

This year we have two new Board members—Mike Freiberg and Stu Huntington. Mike moved here from Deforest, Wisconsin and has been birding since he was six years old. As an avid birder, Mike has become interested in wildlife photography. On Mike's first bird outing with his family, he saw a snowy owl. This experience peaked his interest in birds, their habitats, sounds, etc. Owls fascinate him and are his favorite group of birds.

Stu Huntington says, "My favorite aunt gave me a bird book when I was eight years old and I've been fascinated by birds ever since." Dr. Huntington joined the faculty of the Department of Community and Regional Planning at ISU in 1982. Stu and his family moved to Ames from Reston, Virginia. Bernie Cook recruited Stu for the Christmas count that first year and Stu has been active in the BBAS ever since this time.

Book Review

Kay Niyo

Pete Dunne. *Before the Echo: Essays on Nature*. 1995. University of Texas Press, Austin, Texas. 140 pp. \$19.95, hardcover.

Join the Iowa Ornithological Union and the Des Moines Audubon Society on September 12th at their 75th Anniversary celebrations and welcome Pete Dunne to Iowa! Many of you probably have read some of Pete's books on hawks and birding. But, I wonder if you are aware of his delightful and compelling collection of essays on the diversity of and the need to preserve the natural world. Pete is a regular columnist for the New Jersey edition of the *Sunday New York Times*, where many of the essays first appeared. He treats us to vivid mental pictures of wilderness and wilderness experiences and then sneaks in a little glimmer of how humans may be encroaching on or destroying the wonderful wild world that many of us love so dearly. Pete's essays call to mind Aldo Leopold's writings, albeit an Aldo of the 1990s. With wonderful descriptions of natural experiences such as "onion snow," wild babes, "ice out" and ring-necked ducks, the Milky Way, and hugging a tree, he manages to gently provoke thoughts on urban sprawl, light pollution, and loss of tropical woods. This book would make a wonderful gift for fellow nature lovers and bookphiles.

Bird Chat

Dear B.C.:

My folks built a nest in a bird box for my brother and two sisters. It was nice, because we kept out of the rain. I'm not ungrateful to the box developer, but we got a bad case of some teeny ants towards the end of our stay. Us kids had fun in the beginning, chasing and eating them, but we didn't do very well in the dark. In the end, we were very happy to leave this place. What can we or the developer do next year so future box families won't have to put up with these unwelcome guests?

Anonymous

Dear Anonymous:

I'm sorry you had red ants bother you. My boxes, too, had the same problem as you had about five years ago. A BBAS member suggested using axel grease smeared around the post as a deterrent to ants. I smear the posts every spring and have not had any ants at my boxes since this time. However, I do have a problem with paper wasps coming once in a while. If anyone knows how I can deter them, I would like to know. I hope you and your siblings made a game out of catching them. They must have been a good dessert!

B.C.



Clip and Join

Do you have a friend who has a burning desire to learn about birds and the natural world, and wants to meet other like-minded individuals? Or, are you looking for that unique and special gift? Don't wait any longer, just clip the membership application form below and send it in.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

New member of the National Audubon Society (receive the *Audubon* magazine, the *Big Bluestem Flyer*, membership card, and participate in all Big Bluestem Audubon Society activities)—\$20. Please make your check payable to: National Audubon Society and include "Chapter Code H-57" on the check.

OR

Subscribe to the *Big Bluestem Flyer* for one year and participate in some Big Bluestem Audubon Society activities—\$5.50. Restrictions are that you will not be a National Audubon Society member or have voting privileges, and you cannot be an officer or committee chair. Please make your check payable to: Big Bluestem Audubon Society.

Send your check and this coupon to Mark Widrechner, Membership Chair, 2121 Burnett Ave., Ames, Iowa 50010.

Name _____
Address _____
Town _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____
e-mail _____ fax _____

NOTE: Please do not use this form for renewals to the National Audubon Society.

Continued page 1—Coming Field Trips

sessions at Camp Sunnyside.

19—Skunk River Greenbelt. Walk with Dr. Lois Tiffany, ISU Botany Dept., and Rosanne Healy, who will guide us to see fall migrants and mushrooms, while you brush up on tree identification. We will shuttle people to the Story City access and walk to Anderson Canoe access, about 3 miles. Be prepared for mud and standing water. Meet at the ISU Design Center parking lot at 0800. Call Rosanne Healy for details, 233-5914.

26—Kate Shelley High Bridge and the Des Moines River Valley. Nothing beats an autumn morning when migrating raptors are in the air. There is a vantage point just south of Kate Shelley High Bridge, west of Boone, with a panoramic upstream view of the Des Moines River Valley. Bring a lawn chair and the best optical equipment you can lay your hands on. If the morning is slow, we can prowl around the public land near the plank bridge. Meet at the ISU Design Center parking lot at 0800. Call Kevin Healy for details, 233-5914.

October

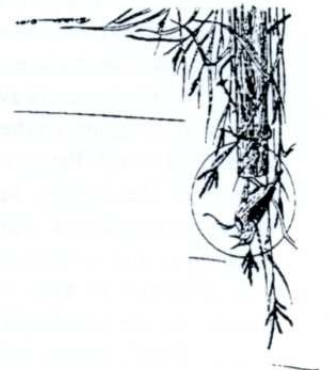
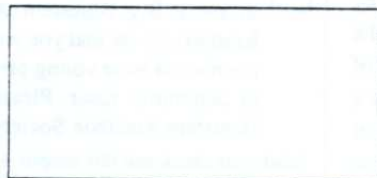
2-4—Road trip to NE Iowa. Spend Friday night in Decorah, Iowa. I have four rooms reserved at the Villager Inn so make your plans soon. Saturday

morning we'll bird around Decorah. We may be able to visit a banding station and probably go to Cardinal Marsh, 12 miles west of Decorah. In the afternoon, we'll head to Bluffton, a very small town northwest of Decorah. Nine Peregrine Falcons were released on the cliffs upstream from Bluffton in July. Some may still be in the neighborhood. There is a campground in Bluffton for those who wish to sleep out. Sunday we'll visit Bob Anderson's Raptor Resource Project south of Bluffton. Bob raises Peregrine Falcons, hoping to establish cliff-nesting, truly wild population. Return to Ames Sunday afternoon.

PLEASE CALL KEVIN AT 233-5914 TO RESERVE A SPACE. khealy@ames.net

24—Ledges State Park. More autumn birding. We might go back to the Kate Shelley High Bridge; we might prowl around the lower part of Ledges State Park. Our destination depends on current weather conditions and our experience in September and early October. Meet at the ISU Design Center parking lot at 0800. Call Kevin Healy for details, 233-5914.

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