



Big Bluestem Flyer

Newsletter of the Big Bluestem Audubon Society

Volume 37, Number 1

September/October 2001

Upcoming Programs

September 20—*Hawaii* 2000

Join Hank and Linda Zaletel as they explore with you Kauai, Hawaii, where they went on an environmental work vacation in the summer of 2000. They worked four or five hours each morning in a National Wildlife Refuge, an archaeological dig, or a National Botanical Garden. Afternoons were filled with snorkeling on the reef. Not your ordinary Hawaiian vacation, by any means.

October 18—*When the well goes dry, we know the worth of water.*

Erv Klaas will describe the history of events leading up to the current crisis and what measures are being taken by the city to protect Hallett's Quarry Lake and its aquifer. The quarry lake holds about 1-billion gallons of water that Ames has drawn from twice before (1977, 1988) to recharge Ames' wells. Gravel and sand deposits excavated from Hallett's Quarry on the north side of the city exposed another aquifer that is only several feet beneath the surface.

Program meetings are held monthly, September-May (except December) on the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m., Room 2226 [note room change] Veterinary Medicine Building, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. If you need directions, please see the map on the back of the Events Calendar. If you would like to meet and dine with the speaker and the BBAS board before the monthly meeting. Please call John Snyder, 515-232-8824, to confirm space and location.

Population and the Environment



Karl & Carmen Jungbluth

Did you know that the world's population could double from 6 billion to 12 billion people in the next 50 years? That wildlife habitat is being destroyed at a record rate by development, pollution and erosion caused by people? Did you know that something CAN be done about it?

Audubon is at the forefront of educating citizens about the connection between population and the environment. Through a generous grant, Audubon held a workshop and lobby day in Washington D.C. We attended, along with Linda Bystrak.

Once you think about it, the world population explosion is a very big deal. Over a billion teenagers are reaching their reproductive years, and the choices they make in the next 10 years will change the world. Audubon believes that international family planning services are the key. Modest investments now for voluntary family planning and the delivery of basic contraceptive services will pay real dividends for women, children, wildlife and national economies.

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Big Bluestem Audubon Society Officers and Committees

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weatherbird@opencominc.com
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- Linda Thomas 956-3145 wbuames@tebra.net

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- Bird-a-thon Co-chairs: Karl and Carmen Jungbluth
- Conservation Co-chairs: Bruce Ehresman, Kathy Andersen, John Pohlman
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BBAS Web Site:

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

National Audubon Society Web Site:

<http://www.audubon.org>

Iowa Audubon State Director:

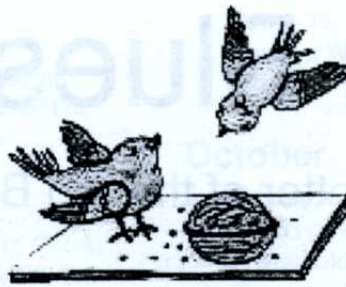
Paul Zeph 515-727-4271 pzeph@audubon.org

Iowa Bird Sightings Hotline—319-338-9881 iwindjaol.com

Wildlife Care Clinic—515-294-4900

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.

**Newsletter deadline:
October 12—2 p.m.**



Beyond the Backyard

Karl Jungbluth,
President

After a wet spring, when our Birdathon team resorted to scouting for birds by canoe in flooded Ledges State Park, summer turned amazingly dry. Yet, nature marches on. Bluebirds down the road successfully fledged four youngsters in the scorching August heat! And the hummingbirds are back, drinking us out of house and home as they fuel up for another aerial tussle. Catbirds raised two broods in our native shrub planting, and the female eventually quit meowing at me as I wandered around the yard. Two baby woodchucks took up residence in the compost pile, and they were fun to watch, even though we knew they were munching in the garden.

Just yesterday, our board of directors held a strategic planning meeting. Field trips and programs had been decided earlier, so we wanted to answer the question "Should we tackle an Audubon project?" The answer was yes, but we had trouble choosing one of many ideas on a scale we could handle. Some of the project favorites included improving the prairie planting and developing interpretive displays at the Interstate pullout north of Ames, conserving the Bjorkboda Marsh area of the Squaw Creek Watershed in northern Boone and southern Hamilton counties, or helping with habitat and interpretive displays in Ledges State Park. If any of these ideas catch your fancy, or you have other ideas for a project, let me know. We want to DO something for birds, habitats and other wildlife in the next couple of years. We also would like more visibility for the good things we do. Please let me know if you'd like to help in that regard.

Birdathon soared again this year. Twenty-eight families will be getting a new Audubon membership because they donated \$30 or more to our Birdathon, and we've reached people all over the state and as far east as Massachusetts. Thanks to our Birdathoners for reaching beyond the backyard!

Speaking of beyond the backyard, Carmen, Linda Bystrak and I ventured to Washington D.C. in June to learn about the affects of population growth on the environment, and to talk with our legislators about increased funding for voluntary planning services. It was an eye opening experience in many ways, so read about it elsewhere in our newsletter.

What was your highlight of the summer? For me, it was probably getting out in a canoe with our niece and nephew on the Boone River, spending some quiet time and talking about birds and the value of wildness in our world. It was an experience that might shape their lives. Personal experiences and personal invitations make a big impact. So, grab a friend, invite them to a field trip or program, even if you've never been on one yourself. Or, join us on a project in the coming year. You'll get back more than the time you put in. And thanks Jon and Joyce for lending us your canoe!

Big Bluestem Audubon Society Events Calendar—Fall 2001

All events are free and open to the public.

- General meetings are held Thursday evenings in Room 2226 [**note room change**], Veterinary Medicine Building, Iowa State University, beginning at 7:30 p.m. See map on reverse side.
- Field trip participants meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Wild Birds Unlimited, unless otherwise noted. Check the newsletter or with trip leaders to confirm time. See map on reverse side.

September

- 1 **Fall shorebirds and waterfowl trip** to Big Creek, Saylorville Lake, Jester Park, and Big Creek Wildlife Area.
- 7-9 **FYI (Fri-Sun) IOU Fall Meeting**, Carroll, IA. Presentations, fellowship, and field trips (Dunbar Slough, Raccoon River areas). Contact Rob Thelen (712-792-1793, rthelen@pionet.net) for registration information.
- 16 (Sunday) **Pelican Watch Festival**, 10 am to 6 pm at Jester Park Campground #4 at Saylorville Lake. Event sponsored by Iowa Audubon, Polk County Conservation Board, and US Corps of Engineers. Speakers, information booths, Kid's Tent, recently released Osprey, and thousands of pelicans. Meet at WBU at 9 am to carpool from Ames.
- 20 **Monthly Meeting** - Hank and Linda Zaletel, "Hawaiiowa 2000."
- 22-23 **FYI. Hawk Celebration at Effigy Mounds National Monument**. Live hawk and owl programs, activities for kids, trapping and banding migrating raptors, official count by IDNR and Upper Iowa Audubon Soc. Effigy Mounds NM is located in north-eastern Iowa on Hwy. 76, three miles north of Marquette or 17 miles south of Waukon. Call 319-873-3491 for more information.

October

- 6 **Grammar Grove Wildlife Area**, Marshall Co. View hawks and other migrants with Beth and Mark Proescholdt. Meet at WBU at 730 am to carpool to Grammar Grove. We will meet the Proescholdts at the east side of Grammar Grove at 845 am. Bring binoculars, lunch, lawn chairs, and bug repellent.
- 18 **Monthly Meeting** – Erv Klaas, When the well goes dry, we know the worth of water.
- 20 **Chichaqua Wildlife Area**. Loren Lown will give us a tour of the Chichaqua Wildlife Area in Polk County. Meet at the WBU at 8 am to carpool from Ames. We'll meet Loren at the Sand Hill area, about 10 miles west of Engeldinger Marsh, 118th Ave., at 830 am.

November

- 10-11 **18th Annual Winona Tundra Swan Watch**, Winona, MN. Presentation Saturday night and bus tour (\$10/person) to view swans on Sunday. Stops on the tour include Rieck's Lake Park, Alma, Wisconsin, and Weaver Bottoms, along Hwy. 61 between Winona and Wabasha. For reservations and lodging information, contact Winona CVB at 515-452-2272, 800-675-4972, or <http://visitwinona.com>. **Early registration is recommended.** Make your own carpooling and accommodation arrangements. Contact Jeff Nichols (515-296-2178) for more information.

- 15 **Monthly Meeting** – Jon Stravers, "Red-shouldered Hawks and Birds of the Upper Mississippi River"

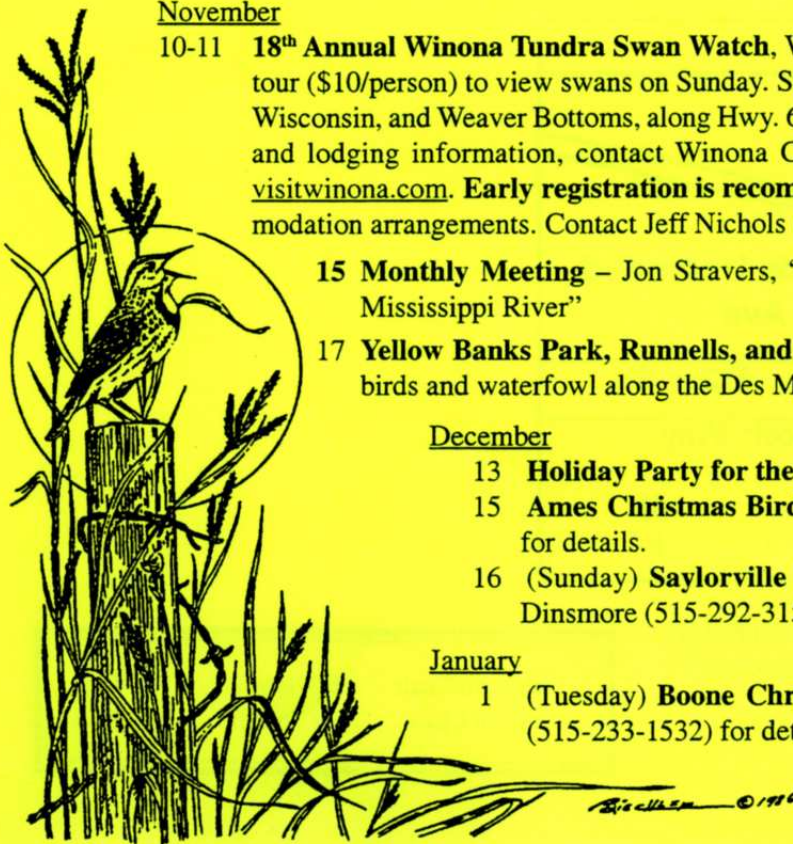
- 17 **Yellow Banks Park, Runnells, and Red Rock Wildlife Area**. View migrating song-birds and waterfowl along the Des Moines River and at Red Rock Lake.

December

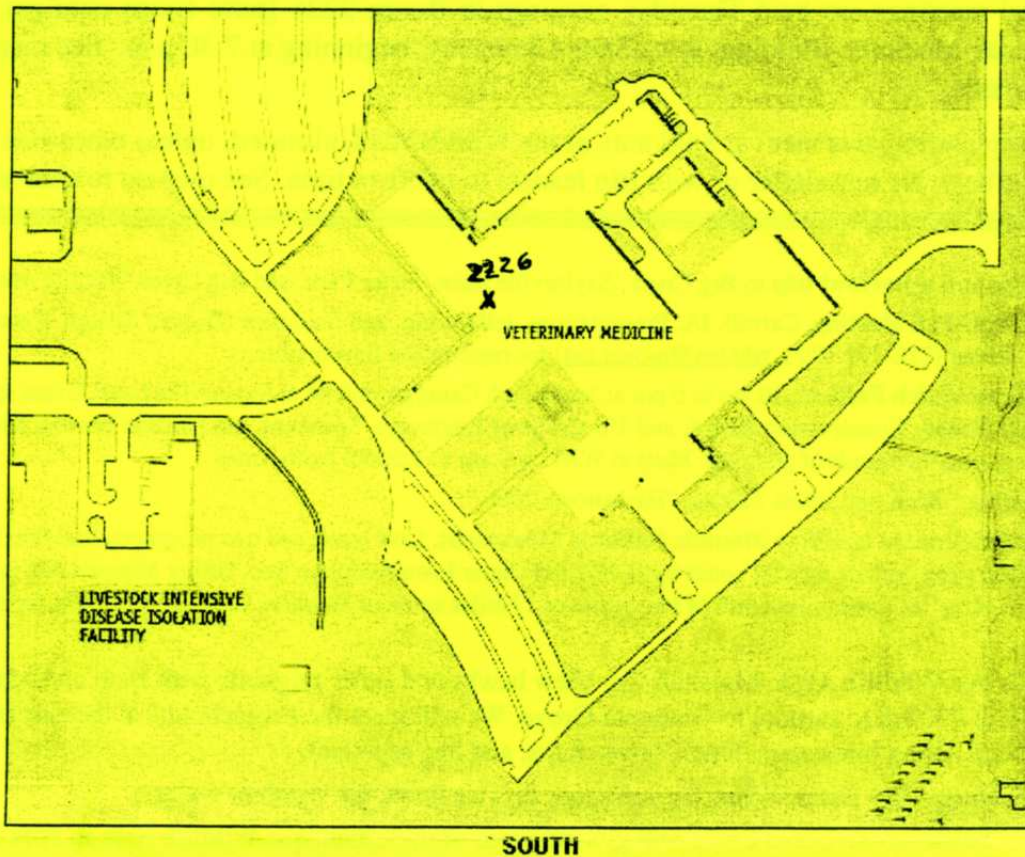
- 13 **Holiday Party for the Birds** at McFarland Park north of Ames.
- 15 **Ames Christmas Bird Count**. Contact Dave Edwards (515-292-3790) for details.
- 16 (Sunday) **Saylorville Christmas Bird Count**. Contact Jim or Steve Dinsmore (515-292-3152) for details.

January

- 1 (Tuesday) **Boone Christmas Bird Count**. Contact Mark Widrechner (515-233-1532) for details.



Map for general meetings.



Map for field trips meeting location.



Located in Duff Centre South of Dutch Oven Bakery
1 Block North of Lincoln Way & Duff Ave Intersection

Field Trip Chair	Jeff Nichols	296-2178
Program Chair	John Snyder	232-8824



Conservation Corner

Bruce Ehresman

Another Chance to Help Iowa Wildlife

Most of you are aware that Iowa's nongame wildlife is steadily declining in numbers. Sure, some species like the Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, and Trumpeter Swan are staging a comeback – thanks to restoration efforts. But, overall, studies indicate that North America might have 50% fewer birds than it had only 30 years ago. Reptiles and amphibians are also declining, and about one-third of Iowa's reptiles (turtles, snakes, and lizards) are on the state Endangered/Threatened Species List. I can go on in more detail, but I think you get the picture.

So how do we reverse this trend? The first and most important step is to protect and restore the environments (think habitat) in which these animals survive. To do this, funding is required. This brings us to CARA, the Conservation and Reinvestment Act. This is essentially the same Federal bill that was passed last year with a two-thirds majority in the House, had plenty of support to pass in the Senate, but died when it was not brought to the floor of the Senate for a vote. Since 80% of the American public supports passage of CARA, there really is no good excuse for not passing this bill.

This year, CARA has already passed in its House committee and will be up for a full House vote when Congress reconvenes. A Senate version of CARA has also been introduced. What the passage of CARA means to Iowa is an **annual appropriation for the next 15 years of about \$4.6 million for wildlife conservation and endangered species and \$5.5 million for the Land and Water Conservation Fund**. Nationally, the total bill package would provide the largest infusion of funding for conservation in U.S. history.

So far, Iowa Representatives Jim Leach and Leonard Boswell have signed on as cosponsors of the bill. There is still a need to gain more cosponsors, so Iowa's CARA Coalition of over 330 organizations and groups is attempting to get Representatives Greg Ganske and Jim Nussle to cosponsor the CARA bill too. Please do what you can to encourage these representatives to support CARA, and don't hesitate to contact Senators Tom Harkin and Chuck Grassley, as well. All of these gentlemen were supportive of CARA last year, so you could remind them of that.

When you contact Senators Grassley and Harkin, please also remind them to support conservation funding provisions of the Farm Bill like the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). Funding programs, like these, that provide incentives for good conservation practices also benefits Iowa wildlife. The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) has, for several decades, been instrumental in promoting funding of wildlife programs and now leads the effort for nongame wildlife funding through CARA. For more CARA information, check out the IAFWA website at: www.teaming.com

Cyber Birding

Rebecca Shivers

Peterson Online Birds
www.petersonline.com

The Peterson online birding links is a very fascinating website and one of the most comprehensive sites of its type. It includes links from all continents around the world, Peterson's picks, as well as links by state/provinces. The birding web links are arranged geographically and further subdivided. Other categories include associations and sanctuaries, bird sites and sightings, environmental web pages, focus on a group or species, general birding resources, online birding magazines, population monitoring, migration, and ornithology.

As an example, I clicked on the international birding link, followed the world, association, groups & species to the "Electronic Nuthatch" site, set up by another group.

The Electronic Nuthatch has a plethora of information about all species of nuthatches. Both the Eurasian Nuthatch and the North American Nuthatches are included with excellent pictures. This site, in turn, brings in many links from around the world written by those interested only the nuthatch species. Fascinating that so many people are interested in only them. The site also includes many studies about the nuthatch—its habitat, social organization, a study on the analysis of seasonal variation in bill length, possibly caused by diet changes!! . . .

A feature I appreciated about Peterson's site is the fact the site links are verified. Many times I have used other birding sites, only to find they have either moved or are no longer found.

As summer turns into autumn and the birds begin their migration, this site is very worthwhile in helping with bird identification, etc. I'm sure with the plethora of information found, you can't help leaving the site without an interesting newly learned bird fact or two.

Join **Project FeederWatch** Today!

Linda Thomas

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology operates Project FeederWatch (PFW) in partnership with the National Audubon Society, Bird Studies of Canada, and the Canadian Nature Federation. Volunteers are crucial to the success of the November through April survey of birds that visit backyard feeders, nature centers, and other locations in North America.

Anyone can participate! Your participation can make a difference! By participating, you will contribute to ongoing research and conservation by sharing your backyard bird observations with scientists. PFW results are regularly published in scientific journals and national magazines include the *Audubon Magazine*.

As a participant, you count birds at a particular site you select on the bird-count days you select - once every two weeks for all or part of the day. As a participant, you receive a Research Kit and the Lab's quarterly newsletter, *Birdscope*. The kit contains instructions, a bird identification poster, a wall calendar, a birdfeeding resource guide, and data forms.

For more information and registration visit <http://birds.cornell.edu/pfw> or contact Wild Birds Unlimited of Ames, 213 Duff Avenue, (515) 956-3145.

Join **Project FeederWatch** today and make a difference!

A new feature beginning with the next issue is "View from Wolf's Den." Wolf Oesterrich has the perfect view of Hallett's Quarry located in the northeastern section of Ames, Iowa. As the trees lose their leaves, Wolf has the advantage of being able to see the comings and goings of the water fowl. This should be an interesting column.

Welcome New Members!

Jane Alexander, Katherine Andersen, Charlyn Andrews, Jenny Bassett, Amy Bowdish, Kay Colby, Martha Colony, Jacki Dollinger, Lynn Engen, Patrick Fairchild, Brenda Fisher, Robert Gardner, Mohammad Heidari, Jaclyn Hill, Tyler Hill, Esther Hollenbach, Doris House, Barb Hunt, G. Johnson, Carol Knapp, Edith Landin, Rodney Larson, Richard Longnecker, Isabel Matterson, Eugene McClintock, Patricia McKee, H. Messmaker, Marylou Nelson, Yvonne Nilles, Joshua Nunez, Zola Prokop, Carolyn Raffensperger, Endel Reinap, M. V. Richards, Wayne Rouse, Rohn Shelley, Cynthia Shriver, Helen Smalling, Evelyn Smith, Deann Stephens, Shirley Thede, Walter Toporek, Mary Von Ah-Gregory, Kathy Wiederin, and Richard Zenor.

The osprey hack tower. (Photo by Karl Jungbluth)



BIRDATHON 2001—WOW!!!

Karl Jungbluth

Our 2001 Birdathon was on May 12th. It was a beautiful spring day enjoyed by 28 “Birdathoners.” Let’s look at the numbers.

- \$5712 raised, our biggest year by almost \$1000!
- 240 sponsors. Thank you!
- 165 species seen by our chapter
- The “Baffled Birders” won the Birdathon Trophy with 124 species
 - Bruce and Marlene Ehresman, Kathy Andersen and Gina McAndrews weren’t baffled at all, and they raised over \$500
- Coverage in several newspapers, including a full-page, full-color article by Todd Burras on the Tribune’s Outdoor page
- Several newcomers introduced to birding by “Team Bluebird”
- Rookie Birdathoner Matt Wetrich raised \$476!
- Superkids Karl Grotheer and Marissa Berrier participated again
- Strong support for the Audubon Iowa State Office
- Dollars will sponsor 30 “Audubon Adventures” classroom kits this year
- \$1000 to the Saylorville Osprey Introduction Project
- 3 local kids sponsored at the Y-camp’s Young Naturalist Workshop



Volunteers Needed for the Pelican Watch Festival

Sunday, September 16

Volunteers are needed for the Pelican Watch Festival. If you or your friends are available, please contact Paul Zeph, at pzeph@Audubon.org

All shifts are: 9:45-noon, noon-2:00, 2:00-4:00, 4:00-6:00

Various opportunities include:

Parking—You get to wear a colorful vest, count people on hand-clickers, and wave at cars!

Spotting Scope Attendant—Interact with people watching pelicans and help with the scopes. You also serve as “casual” educator by answering bird questions and offering bird/migration information.

Audubon Booth—Promote Audubon memberships and sell stuff.

Information Tent—Answer questions, tell folks where the bathrooms are, smile a lot!

Kid’s Tent—Assist small children with craft projects and the hands-on table.

Speaker’s Tent—Introduce speakers (blurb will be provided), assist with any materials to hand out, etc.

Thanks to our BIRDATHON 2001 Business Sponsors

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National Camera Exchange—Minneapolis

Preston Engineering—Johnston

As bird watchers and nature enthusiasts, these aren't the kind of things we normally like to think about. But, world population will hit close to home. For example, the last days of the Monarch Butterfly may be in sight. Rapid deforestation in Mexico, triggered by population growth, could wipe out the Monarch's wintering ground. As a result, the Monarch Butterfly could disappear from the Iowa summer forever.

But there is good news: solid numbers indicate that Audubon's priorities work. Because of a widely accepted family planning initiative, Mexico's population grew by 30 million *less* people than predicted in 1970.

So, while in Washington, we met with Senator Chuck Grassley, Rep. Leonard Boswell and Rep. Tom Latham to encourage increased funding for voluntary international family planning services. The United States has not met commitments made to the international community in 1995. Rep. Boswell quickly agreed to sign on. Senator Grassley showed great respect for our position, but thought that aid for economic development might be a better way to curb population growth. We argued that no single investment in human health, environmental protection, or economic and political stability can match investments made in international family planning. Our meeting with Rep. Latham was a race across the street as he rushed to a vote! Carmen matched him stride for stride, but Rep. Latham declined to support increased funding.

Here's what you can do:

- Pick up Audubon's "Population & Habitat-Making the Connection" booklet at the next Big Bluestem meeting. It's an eye-opener!
- Contact your congressmen and urge them to support more funding for voluntary international family planning. Congressmen are busy people, and they need to hear from us more than once on this issue.
- Log on. "Planet" is an awareness campaign on population issues. www.familyplanet.org or www.audubonpopulation.org

Bird Drop-ins

Sightings by
BBAS Members



With the fall migration season fast approaching, many BBAS members enjoy knowing which birds are being seen, when, and where. As you follow the birds this fall, please email me,

shivversnaturesanctuary@hotmail.com
any bird sightings so that I can include them in the next newsletter. Please include the date, place, and location along with your general bird descriptions. Thank you!

Ty Smedes reports things were really hopping at Saylorville, Jester Park Campground #4 Sunday evening, August 12. Flocks of Cedar Waxwings were feeding on Dogwood berries, Turkey Vultures were kettling overhead, Pelicans were drifting in, and a Peregrine was delightfully chasing the young Ospreys back and forth across the lake. It was hard to imagine I was in Iowa, let alone in Polk County, in light of all the neat wildlife happenings! To top it off, I was surrounded by hundreds of Painted Lady butterflies.

The Peregrine was a banded, immature bird. He came down the lake shore, and would chase one of the Ospreys off the hack tower, or out of a tree, and the chase was on! One of the Ospreys was feeding on a piece of fish that had been supplied that morning, but he didn't give it up! The Peregrine would finally pull up a bit, which gave the Osprey a chance to sit down, on a log.

The Peregrine came and went several times and was probably present for about one-half hour.

I'm guessing that approx. 200 Pelicans came in, but it was hard to concentrate on counting them with the Peregrine/Osprey sideshow going on!

On Friday morning one of the Ospreys was sitting on a snag in the lake. He made a low flight (about 5ft off the water), and dove for a fish. He came up empty handed, but at least he tried!

Also, there are now more small flocks of Blue-winged Teal, as well as good numbers of shore birds.



Big Bluestem Audubon Society members and friends enjoy "Birder's Brunch at Ledges State Park in early June." (Photo supplied by Karl Jungbluth.)



Clip and Join

Don't forget gift memberships!



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

New member of the National Audubon Society (receive the *Audubon* magazine, the *Big Bluestem Flyer*, membership card)—\$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 _____

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Town _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

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

Wild Birds Unlimited



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Field Trips

Field trips meet at the Ames Wild Birds Unlimited at 8:00 am unless otherwise indicated. Contact Jeff Nichols (515-296-2178, jnichols1961@hotmail.com) for additional information.

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 Rebecca A. Shivers, Editor
Big Bluestem Audubon Society
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 Boone, Iowa 50036

We welcome new members!



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