

# BIG BLUESTEM FLYER

Newsletter of the Mid-Iowa Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Volume 24, No. 4

December 1989

## MONTHLY MEETING

### CHRISTMAS PARTY AND MEMBERS SLIDE SHOW

Details inside.

Tuesday, December 12, 7:30 p.m., Room 181, Design Center, ISU, Ames

## FIELD TRIPS

### CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Details inside.

AMES - Saturday, December 16

Steve Dinsmore, Coordinator

SAYLORVILLE - Sunday, December 17

Steve Dinsmore, Co-Coordinator

BOONE - ~~Monday~~, December 30

Mark Widrlechner, Coordinator

### BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS

1989-1990

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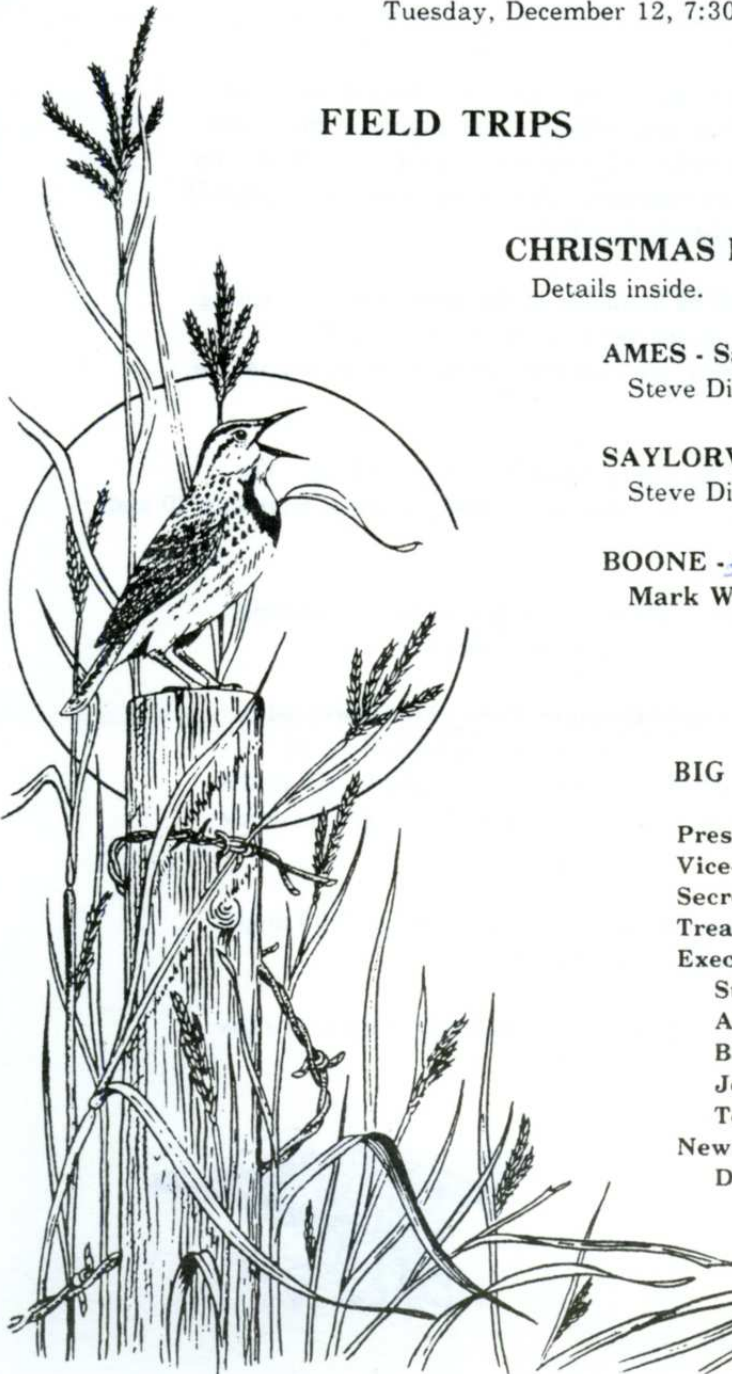
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Newsletter Editor and Membership Chair

David Edwards, 292-3790



## CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SLIDE SHOW

At our traditional holiday meeting we dispense with the formal program and treat ourselves to snacks, goodies, and member's slides.

Bring a plate of something munchy to share; leftovers will be saved for the End-of-the-Ames-Count party.

All are invited to bring a modest number of slides to delight, brag, or confuse. Two categories are most typical: (1) a short series of "what I did and saw this year" (short means from 1 to 25 or so), and (2) bird or other species slides that present an identification challenge. We will have a Kodak machine and several empty trays -- it's wise to mark your slides for safe return.

## BIRD COUNTS

The dates of our bird counts are shown on the front page. Participants are always welcome. Experienced leaders are placed in charge of each area, and other birders, including those who can only go for part of a day, will be assigned to them for coordination. Groups vary from two to more than half a dozen, depending upon needs and whatever. A brief rendezvous is optional at noon for lunch and comparing. A final tally is scheduled at dark.

Materials regarding the counts and assignments will be available at the December 12 meeting. Contact the coordinators for each count if you can join us (see masthead for telephone numbers). To underwrite the costs of national tallying, participants are charged a nominal fee of \$4.

Following the Ames Count, we will have a light supper/party while we tally and brag. The location is the home of David and Jeanne Edwards, 2308 State Ave, Ames (south of Highway 30 and MeadowGlen Rd but north of Oakwood Road).

More information about the Saylorville count will be available at the December 12 meeting. Last year the BBAS birders were assigned the Big Creek State Park area.

Special note: Boone area members have been sent a card to return if they are interested in participating in that count. Mark is still looking for a few more birders to provide good coverage of the Boone area. If you want to join that count, and you don't have to live in the area to join the count, please call or drop a note to Mark as soon as possible (if you have not already done so).

Following the Boone count, we will meet for counting (and supper if you wish) at 5:30 at the Golden Corral Restaurant in Boone (on the south Story St. shopping strip).

Bird feeder counts are also made on those same days by anyone in the area. Call or see the coordinators for instructions and materials.



## **WOLF ADVENTURE WEEKENDS**

For the more adventurous, the Audubon Center of the North Woods is again offering the opportunity to explore the world of the timber wolf through air flights, skiing, snowshoeing, tracks, howling (theirs, not yours), kill site study (ditto), Boreal ecology, and discussions on wolf facts. The "warm and comfortable" accommodations are near Ely. Costs are \$240 per person. Dates are January 5-7 or 12-14, February 2-4 or 23-25, or March 9-11 or 16-18.

If you have even more time (and money), they also offer WINTER RESEARCH EXPERIENCES IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA AND THE SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST in which you will work with the Wisconsin DNR to locate MN/WI wolf packs and spend a week on the North Shore of Lake Superior studying the Jonvik Deer Yard. Lodging will be at Northwoods and at Solbakken Cabins. Cost is \$590 and dates are January 3-22.

They are also offering again their NEW YEAR'S EVE DOG SLEDDING/WINTER CAMPING/SKIING weekend December 29 to January 1 for \$220. This will bring your year to an exciting close in the BWCA by learning how to travel by dog team and winter camp in tents and in snow caves. But then you will miss our Boone bird count.

Contact the center at Rte 1, Box 288, Sandstone, MN 55072 or call 612/245-2648.

## **BIRDER IDENTIFICATION QUIZ**

Think of yourself as a bird and just beginning to learn birder identification. You will of course have the latest copy of the Robin's "Birders of North America" with the familiar blue cover or perhaps the "Field Guide to the Birders East of the Rockies" by Petrelson with the famous key field marks indicated with arrows. Identification begins with certain questions. What is the birders size, shape, behavior, sounds, field marks, and habitat. Many good birderers suggest that a few common birders be learned well for use as standards for comparison. These few will start the process, but the birder's name is left for you to determine.

Birder A: Medium to large-sized; well-rounded in shape; often seen carrying large sticks with which much noise is made, though sometimes carries just a small silvery object with a shiny end that makes clicking and swishing sounds when held to its eye; birder emits nearly continuous sounds sometimes making other birders groan or laugh; field marks include a black flap of fur above the mouth with matching black fur on the head, body is usually covered with woodsy looking patches of cloth; seen in prairies, in woods, or paddling a large wooden dish on rivers.

Birder B will be presented next month.

## **BIRD QUIZ PREPARATION FOR THE COUNTS**

Which of these is unlikely at the counts and will require documentation?

- Tree Sparrow or Chipping Sparrow?
- Ruby-crowned Kinglet or Golden-crowned Kinglet?
- House Wren or Winter Wren?
- Brewer's Blackbird or Rusty Blackbird?
- Bald Eagle or Osprey?

## CALENDAR FOR THE NEXT TWO MONTHS

January 13 Prairie Rapids AS local areas field trip. Meet at George Wyeth entrance. 7:00 a.m.

January 16 BBAS Meeting. Bolivia: Birding the Savannahs. Susan Davis

February 17 BBAS Winter Owl Walk.

February 20 BBAS Meeting. Iowa's bluebirds. Iowa Non-Game DNR

## BIRDERS' HOTLINE

319/338-9881 for state-wide sightings.

712/262-5958 for northwest Iowa sightings.



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**Big Bluestem Audubon Society**  
2308 State Avenue, RR 5  
Ames, Iowa 50010

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