



# 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 32 Number 2

November/December 1996

## Featured Speaker—November 21 meeting: *Carl Kurtz, "Iowa's Wild Places: An Exploration . . ."*

Hear Carl Kurtz speak about *Iowa's Wild Places: An Exploration with Carl Kurtz*. If you haven't seen or listened to one of Carl's presentations, then this is not to be missed. If you have seen and heard him, then you know just how stunning is Carl's photography and what a love for the land he communicates. Carl's programs have always been well loved and well attended. This book we have all been waiting for is published by ISU Press and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, 1966. The photographs are of Iowa forests, prairies, and wetlands. There will be signed copies available for purchase after the lecture.

## Audubon Holiday Party—December 12 meeting

This is the annual Audubon Holiday Party for people and birds. Kevin Healy will moderate the evening which begins at 7:00 p.m. The BBAS Christmas party will be held at the Story County Conservation Center in McFarland Park. Bring 5 slides, a treat to share, and a contribution of money or seed for the Center's feeders. We'll make plans for the Ames, Boone, and Saylorville Christmas Bird Counts which follow in the next two weeks. Check the calendar for the exact dates. For information about the origin of the Christmas counts, please see the article on page 4 by Dr. James Dinsmore. It will help you understand the importance of the Christmas counts and your participation. If you need directions to the Story County Conservation Center, please call Kevin or any of the BBAS board members. See you there!!

The Big Bluestem Audubon Society (BBAS) meetings are held monthly, September-May (except December) 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 Kevin Healy at 233-5914 to confirm space and location.*

### Coming Field Trips: November & December

*Jon Bahrenfus, Field Trip Chair*

#### November

23—Waterfowl and other fall migrants at Desoto Bend National Wildlife Refuge.

At 9:00 am on Saturday, 23 November, we will be meeting at the Visitors' Center at the National Wildlife Refuge to begin our tour of the refuge and hopefully view large numbers of migrating snow geese and other waterfowl on their

southward trek through the Missouri River valley. The refuge (phone 712-642-4121) is located on the south side of US 30 between Missouri Valley,

*(continued on page 6)*

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**Quote of the Month:** *There is no achievement without goals.*—Robert J. McKain

# As the Crow Flies . . .

Stan Cyran, President

Things just keep getting better for Big Bluestem Audubon Society. We have had two well attended and wonderfully enjoyable programs, and three well organized field trips. We enjoyed an excellent letter writing response on behalf of Engeldinger Marsh. More exciting meetings and field trips are yet to come!

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will see our new (and improved) coupons, to be used when buying bird seed and other bird-related items. We have a second sponsor, Country Landscapes, who have agreed, along with Brekkes, to provide a donation to BBAS when the coupons are presented at the time of purchase. This year there will be no discount for the buyer, so that all of the funds can go to BBAS. Proceeds will go toward *Audubon Adventures*—a program of environmental education provided to selected elementary classrooms. Funds may also be used to support habitat restoration and wilderness education scholarships. And so, I urge you all to clip your coupons and patronize our sponsors!

Get ready also for a raffle of a very special item next meeting—a signed copy of Carl Kurtz's new book, *Iowa's Wild Places: An Exploration with Carl Kurtz*.

If you haven't done so already, our new web site—the fruits of Rebecca Shivvers' talents and hard work—is a must see. Let her know if you have ideas for further WWW information.

Please let me or any officer or board member know if you have any suggestions or if there is any way we can help the Big Bluestem Audubon Society to fulfill its mission to the utmost and meet your needs.

**Newsletter Deadline: Friday, January 3, 1997 at 2 p.m.**

**I have extended it into January so we can get the Christmas Bird Count information included.**

## Big Bluestem Audubon Society Officers and Committees

### Officers:

- President: Stan Cyran 292-4876 scyran@mem.po.com
- Vice-President: Kay Niyo 233-8803 kniyo@aol.com
- Secretary: Joyce Bahrenfus 432-3396
- Treasurer: Paul Ovrom 292-8862 nc7ao@ars-grin.gov

### Board Members:

- Carol Berrier 965-8242
- David Guy 292-8825
- Kevin Healy 233-5914 khealy@ames.net
- Karl Jungbluth 432-5057 karl.a.jungbluth@noaa.gov
- Rebecca Shivvers 292-0691 shivvers@ameslab.gov

### Committee Chairs:

- Archivist: Hank Zalatel 382-5427 birdhank@aol.com
- Awards Chair: Stan Cyran
- Conservation Chair: Sherry Dragula 233-1532 mpwskd@aol.com
- Education Co-Chairs: Carol and Galin Berrier
- Field Trip Chair: Jon Bahrenfus
- Fund Raising Co-Chairs: Kay Niyo and Stan Cyran
- Membership Chair: Mark Widrechner 233-1532 mpwskd@aol.com
- Program Co-Chairs: Kevin and Roseann Healy
- Publicity Chair: Mary Doud 296-2178
- Publications and Electronic Media Chair: Rebecca Shivvers
- Service & Special Projects Co-Chairs: Karl and Carmen Jungbluth

### Web Site:

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

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

## Notes From the Field

Jon Bahrenfus, Field Trip Chair

Notes From the Field is a collaboration by the various field trip leaders since the last newsletter. Bird records are kept for each field trip and are brought to the BBAS general meetings, if you are interested in looking at the species, etc., that were observed for the trips. If you are interested in leading or helping lead any of the forthcoming trips, please contact me. Remember the dates of the Christmas bird counts—Ames, December 21, contact Dave Edwards, 292-3790; Saylorville, December 22, contact Steve Dinsmore, 292-3152; Boone, January 1, contact Mark Widrechner, 292-6507. Volunteers are needed to help in these events.

September 7, John Bahrenfus, trip leader, "Warbler Watch." A last minute change was made due to a conflict with a foot race at McFarland Park; so instead, 8 birders ventured to Brookside Park to search for migrating warblers. It was a clear day and 29 different species were seen.

September 21, Stan Cyran and Kay Niyo, trip leaders, "Engeldinger Marsh." Thirty people of all ages, from all over Iowa, and from all walks of life were on hand on a breezy, mostly sunny and warm early fall morning to discover the wonders of Engeldinger Marsh with Polk County conservationist Loren Lown. None were disappointed. Loren reminded everyone there are no other kettle hole marshes such as this in southern Iowa. He also added that 314 species of vascular plants and animals were identified in the marsh during a single year's survey, and 30 more were added the following year. Over 30 species of plants were identified by the trip participants that morning, including several species of milkweed, aster, mountain mint, Carex species, including Carex atheroides and Carex striata, bottle gentian, marsh marigold, and prairie cord grass. Birds seen included broad winged hawk, cedar waxwings, vesper sparrow, song sparrow, and eastern meadowlark. After a well earned and delicious snack of apple cider and fresh baked homemade banana bread provided by Kay Niyo, many of the group went on to Sand Hill Prairie, where one could literally lose oneself in big bluestem and Indian grass as tall as a man. Prairie drop seed, prairie clover, various Solidago species were seen as well. Overall, this was a worthwhile exploration of a unique (and threatened) natural area, and a reminder of what Iowa must have been like several hundred years ago.

October 5, Carol Berrier, trip leader, "Hawk Watch." Our hawk watch at Grammer Grove proved fruitful in spite of perfect autumn weather with blue skies, warm sunshine, beautiful leaves, and soft southerly breezes. A cold front with northwesterly winds to push the hawk migration failed to materialize. However, 21 people brought lawn chairs, lunches, and high hopes. White-throated sparrows and juncos flitted along the path from the parking lot. Beth Proescholdt gave us a warm welcome and tips on hawk identification using silhouettes of buteos, accipiters, falcons, and eagles. Mark Proescholdt and Steve Dinsmore also helped us with sharp and accurate spotting. Things were slow at first, but those who stayed five hours were rewarded with 50-55 sharp-shinned hawks, a dozen Cooper's, a dozen red-tailed, a red-shouldered, a broad-winged, an immature bald eagle, a kestrel, a merlin, and turkey vultures. Some of the smaller hawks came quite low over our heads, surprising themselves and us as they cleared the trees to the north.

**Big Bluestem Audubon Society**  
**REVISED Events Calendar—Spring 1997**  
**All events are free and open to the public.**

- General meetings are held Thursday evenings in Room 2532, Veterinary Medicine Building, Iowa State University, beginning at 7:30 p.m.
- Field trip participants meet in the west parking lot of the ISU Design Center. Check the newsletter or with trip leaders to confirm time.

January

- 1–Boone Christmas Bird Count, Mark Widrlechner (515-233-1532).  
 16–General Meeting: Bill Norris, "Northeast Iowa Neotropical Migrant Songbird Project: 1994-1996," 7:30 p.m.  
 18–Winter Bird Walk at the State Forest Nursery, Jon Bahrenfus (515-432-3396).  
 25–Omaha Zoo trip, weather permitting. Contact: Rebecca Shivvers (515-292-0691).

February

- 8–Raptor Road Trip to southern Iowa, Jon Bahrenfus (515-432-3396).  
 20–General Meeting: Roger Hill, "Cranes on the Platte River," 7:30 p.m.  
 22–Red Rock Eagle Watch. Contact: Rebecca Shivvers (515-292-0691).

March

- 20–General Meeting: Mike Meetz, "Loons on Isle Royale," 7:30 p.m.  
 21-23–Sandhill Crane trip to Grand Island via the marshes of the Waterfowl Production Areas of the Rainwater Basin Wetland Management District. Contact persons: Stan Cyran (515-292-4876) and Kay Niyo (515-233-8803).  
 29–Waterfowl, shore birds, etc., at Little Wall Lake, Tiegs, Bjorkboda, and Anderson's marshes. Contact: Kevin and Rosanne Healy, (515-233-5914).

April

- 12–Waterfowl watch at Harrier Marsh and Dunbar Slough, Jon Bahrenfus (515-432-3396).  
 17–General Meeting: Dr. Carol Vleck, "Research on the Adelie Penguins in the Antarctica," 7:30 p.m.  
 26–Shorebirds, Hank Zaletel (515-382-5427).

May

- 10–Warbler watching–join the Des Moines Audubon group–at the Ledges. Contact: Karl Jungbluth (515-432-5057).  
 11–Warbler walk at McFarland Park, Stan Cyran (515-292-4876).  
 15–General Meeting: Karl Jungbluth, "Birds on Radar," 7:30 p.m.  
 17–Canoe and birding at Don Williams Lake or Big Wall Lake. Contact: Rebecca Shivvers (515-292-0691).

June

- 7–Birders' Breakfast at the Ledges.



President	Stan Cyran	292-4876
Field Trip Chair	Jon Bahrenfus	432-3396
Program Chair	Kevin Healy	233-5914
Newsletter	Rebecca Shivvers	292-0691

**Big Bluestem Audubon Society**  
**REVISED Events Calendar—Fall 1996**  
All events are free and open to the public.

- General meetings are held Thursday evenings in Room 2532, Veterinary Medicine Building, Iowa State University, beginning at 7:30 p.m.
- Field trip participants meet in the west parking lot of the ISU Design Center. Check the newsletter or with trip leaders to confirm time.

September

- 7—Warbler Walk at McFarland Park with Dave Edwards (515-292-3790), 8:00 a.m.
- 19—General Meeting: Dr. Dean Roosa, "Engeldinger Marsh: A Local Treasure," 7:30 p.m.
- 21—Walk in Engeldinger Marsh and Prairie Uplands with Loren Lown, Polk County Conservation Officer, 8:00 a.m. Optional trip to nearby Sandhill Prairie afterwards. Contact persons: Stan Cyran (515-292-4876) and Kay Niyo (515-233-8803).

October

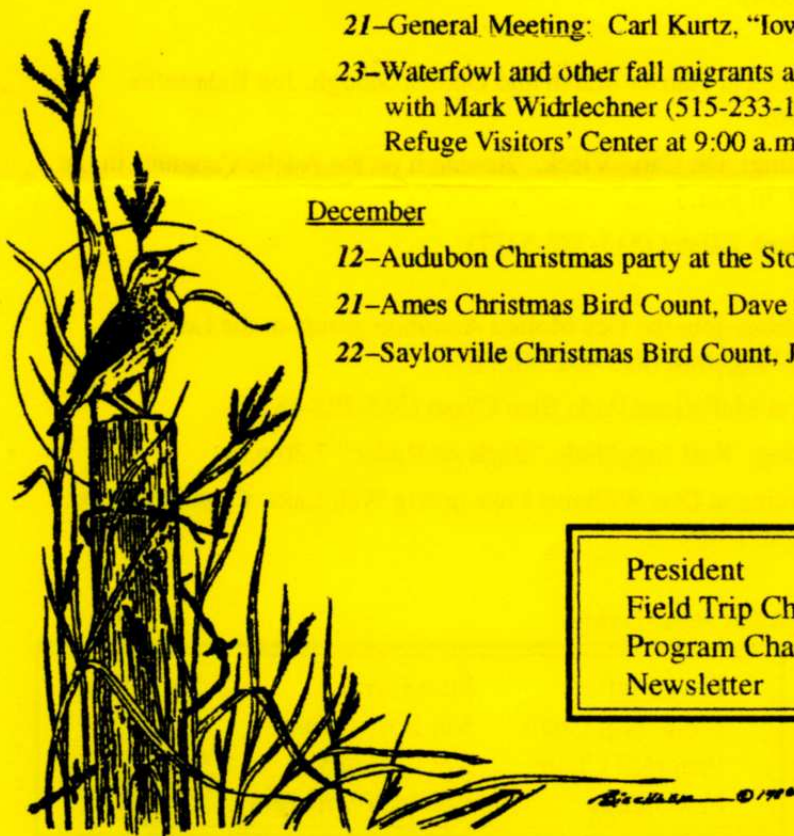
- 5—Hawk watch on Iowa River Cliffs near Grammer Grove Park in Marshall County, with Beth and Mark Proescholdt, 8:30 a.m. An optional trip to nearby Marietta Sand Prairie afterwards. Contact person: Carol Berrier (515-965-8242).
- 17—General Meeting: Dr. James Fuller, "Birding Attu and Alaska," 7:30 p.m.
- 26—Waterfowl trip to the Runnells/Red Rock Lake area with Stan Cyran (515-292-4876) and Rebecca Shivvers (515-292-0691), 8 a.m.

November

- 21—General Meeting: Carl Kurtz, "Iowa's Wild Places: An Exploration," 7:30 p.m.
- 23—Waterfowl and other fall migrants at Desoto Bend National Wildlife Refuge, with Mark Widrechner (515-233-1532). Meet at the Desoto National Wildlife Refuge Visitors' Center at 9:00 a.m.

December

- 12—Audubon Christmas party at the Story County Conservation Center, 7:00 p.m.
- 21—Ames Christmas Bird Count, Dave Edwards (515-292-3790).
- 22—Saylorville Christmas Bird Count, Jim or Steve Dinsmore (515-292-3152).



President	Stan Cyran	292-4876
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## Birder of the Month

*This is another in an ongoing series profiling the birders in our midst. Why are they birders? What got them started? Where do they go birding?*

Maridel Jackson would like to see Christmas come more than once a year. Not for the gifts under the tree, or the visits from Jolly Saint Nick, but because of the Audubon Christmas bird counts. There are just not enough days in the Christmas season to be able to make it to all of them.

After moving to Iowa from Ohio in 1979, Maridel met some remarkably knowledgeable birders and naturalists, including Gary Nelson who teaches at DMACC, Bob Myers of the Dallas County Conservation Board, Steve Dinsmore of Ames, and later Eugene and Eloise Armstrong of the Des Moines Audubon Society. "I was fascinated by just how much they knew," she marvels, and she began joining field trips with them. It was while tagging along on a Christmas bird count in 1989 that Maridel got hooked on birding. Since that time, she has never failed to make at least three Christmas bird counts every year. One of Maridel's most memorable birding experiences was a trip to New Mexico and Arizona in 1991 with Eugene and Eloise, and Carol Strohmeier, another Des Moines Audubon member. She added approximately 50 birds to her life list then. "We would go to some place out in the middle of nowhere," she adds, "and suddenly there would be a Vermillion Flycatcher, just where they told me it would be." In 1993, she birded all of south Texas with Eugene and Eloise, and Bob Myers and, again, was struck by their ability to predict where a certain bird would be seen, whether in a dusty little town or in the wilderness of Santa Anna national wildlife refuge.

Although, clearly this was birding on a very high level, Maridel is passionate about birdwatching because, as she states, "you can be as uncomplicated or as deep as you want. You can learn as much as possible, or you can just enjoy the walk," she continues. "I have a friend who didn't even take binoculars on a Christmas count and enjoyed it as much as all of the rest of us." Maridel has kept a birding life list since 1990, and already has 435 North American birds on it. "Outside of my work and my family," she declares, "birding is my main interest." She works at the warehouse of C.T. Farm and County, and even there manages to combine her love of nature with her work. She never misses an opportunity to talk to the customers, many of them farmers, about prairies, wetlands, and forests, and about the programs that are available to them, such as putting a pond on their property, forest reserve and county help with prairies.

Maridel is currently the vice president of the Des Moines Audubon Society. She was president of the Big Bluestem Audubon Society in 1992 and 1993, during which time the club flourished. She initiated the birdseed donations to the Story County Conservation Center, and "for better or worse," she states, she changed the room location of the monthly meetings from the Design Center to the current location in the Veterinary Medicine building. "It was just too difficult to keep the same room in the Design Center. We were always getting moved."

There may or there may not be a Santa, but as long as there are Christmas bird counts, Maridel will be there with her binoculars and her genuine interest.

### Hank Zalatel—New Archive Chair

The board passed a motion to accept Hank Zalatel as the new Archive Chair. Everyone is encouraged to turn over any old files of newsletters, clippings, etc., that might help augment existing files which are few and are scattered. If you want to keep the original is ok, but we would like to have a copy for the Archivist.

## Board Happenings

Joyce Bahrenfus, Secretary

Since the last newsletter, we had two board meeting, August 25 and October 13. Excerpts from each follow.

**August 25.** Committees reports to the board included: Conservation— regarding the status of REAP funding for the Brookside trail proposal and letters are needed to the DOT regarding the Engledinger Marsh; Education— getting interested teachers on the mailing list for the *Audubon Adventures*; Field Trips— noted several changes to the calendar; Membership— suggestions for sending newsletters to new program and field trip attendees; and Publicity— news releases and posting of general meeting flyers. The BBAS currently is a nonprofit organization working on tax-exempt status (501-C3). There was discussion about where to sell the *Birds of Story County*.

**October 13.** Committee reports to the board included: Conservation— update on the Engledinger Marsh and the Fish and Wildlife Fund Amendment; Field Trips— a notebook with information collected from the field trips will be available for all at the general meetings; Fund Raising— Brekke's and Country Landscapes will participate in the birdseed/supplies coupon to be published in the newsletter and good through February 28, 1997, several raffle ideas are in the works; Membership— membership directory may be made available to members who want them; Program— requests for ideas for information of interest to be presented at meetings; Publicity— sites were selected for posters for the general meetings and the calendar; Publications— the web site is up and National has been notified.

*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.*

**Board Meetings—1996-1997:** November 17, December 8, February 23, March 30, April 20. All Board meetings are on Sunday evenings at 7:00 p.m. The November Board meeting will be held at Kevin Healy's home and the December Board meeting place has not yet been decided. Future locations will be announced in the newsletter.

## Book Review

by Kevin Healy

Hamerstrom, Frances. *An Eagle to the Sky* (1970), Iowa State University Press; 1978, The Crossing Press, Trumansburg, New York. (Out of print). The book is at the Ames Public Library.

This fascinating book recounts a remarkable woman's intimacy with two golden eagles. Frances Hamerstrom, a sixty-year old veterinarian living on a primitive farm in Wisconsin, was given a captured golden eagle. Dr. Hamerstrom named her Chrys, monitored her breeding cycle, and procured a male eagle for her. She persevered through the unexplained death of one male and the incompatibility of the second male and Chrys. "Indomitable" describes Dr. Hamerstrom well. She learned the techniques of avian artificial insemination from a turkey breeder, acted as a surrogate mate to obtain semen from the male eagle, and bred Chrys, but without success. In a later season Chrys was successfully bred at the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology. In her second story Dr. Hamerstrom tells of hunting with Nancy, a female golden eagle which she nursed back to health. Pride and gratitude are evident as she describes the sight of a golden eagle swooping over a snow-covered field to land on her glove.

## Conservation Corner

Sherry Dragula, Conservation Chair

### Update on Engeldinger Marsh

At our September meeting and field trip BBAS members learned about and visited a unique natural area in central Iowa, Engeldinger Marsh. It includes a high quality marsh, plus prairie and surrounding hills. Containing more species than some state preserves, it is an outdoor museum and classroom showcasing Iowa's natural heritage. On November 13th, the Polk County Conservation Board will be asked by the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) to agree to allow the new lanes of Highway 65 to be built through Engeldinger Marsh. There is still time to write to the Conservation Board and ask them NOT to agree to allow the new construction at least until they can review detailed IDOT plans. An environmental impact statement should also be prepared that would assess the full impact of the proposed construction on the marsh, prairie, hills and groundwater. Critical questions of how much damage would be done have not been answered and the Conservation Board deserves answers before agreeing to any new construction. The address for the Polk County Conservation Board is: Jester Park, Granger, IA 50109.

**REMEMBER TO VOTE: NOVEMBER 5, 1996!**

### Fish & Wildlife Trust Fund Constitutional Amendment

by Sherry Dragula

Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund Constitutional Amendment On November 5th, Iowans will have the opportunity to guarantee that fish and wildlife funds (licenses, stamps, donations) will be used exclusively for these purposes. Iowans will vote on a proposed Amendment to the Constitution of the State of Iowa. Wildlife enthusiasts need to encourage their friends to VOTE YES on the Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund Amendment. Many of you remember the fight that Iowa conservationists and sports people waged 5 years ago when lawmakers tried to steal this funding to balance the state budget. We won that short-term battle. However, this constitutional amendment will guarantee that all dollars earmarked for fish and wildlife in Iowa will be used for their intended purpose and are not held hostage by politicians in the future. The proposed Constitutional amendment has been approved twice by the Iowa Legislature, as required by Iowa law. Now the voters of the State must approve the proposed amendment in the November 5, 1996 general election.

This proposed amendment reads: "All revenue derived from state license fees for hunting, fishing, and trapping, and all state funds appropriated for, and federal or private funds received by the state for, the regulation or advancement of hunting, fishing, or trapping, or the protection, propagation, restoration, management, or harvest of fish or wildlife, shall be used exclusively for the performance and administration of activities related to those purposes." Approval of this amendment by the voters will guarantee that hunting, fishing and trapping license fees, Chickadee Checkoff donations, and funds designated for fish and wildlife will go for those purposes. Every person interested in the management, protection, and future populations of Iowa's fish and wildlife resources should work to assure voter approval of this Constitutional amendment.

## Christmas Counts—How They Began

by Dr. James Dinsmore

Christmas Bird Counts began in 1900 as a way to get people to count birds rather than to shoot them. At the time, it was a tradition for people to go hunting on Christmas Day and this provided a different sort of bird activity. The first Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in Iowa was held at Decorah in 1903. A number of other cities added counts so that by 1922, 10 cities had counts in Iowa. Ames' first CBC count began in 1923 until 1930 when it became inactive. Counts were revived in Ames in the 1960s and have been held most years since then. In recent years about 40 to 45 counts have been held in Iowa each year. Nationally, more than 1600 counts involving more than 43,000 people are held each year in North America as well as parts of Latin America.

The basic methods for the CBC have been well established for a number of years. Each count covers a 7.5 mile radius circle, selected by a local group. The idea is for the group to try to find and count as many birds within that area as they can during one calendar day. Counts may be held on any day within a 16-day period, usually starting about 18-20 December and continuing into the first days of January. In many places, some people start counting owls or other nocturnal species well before daybreak on count day and some counts continue well past dusk, although most birds are counted during the daylight hours. Obviously, many birds are missed since most counts have relatively few observers (fewer than 25) and very few have more than 100 people participating. However, participants are asked to keep careful records of the number of hours they are in the field and the number of miles they travel on foot, in car, by boat, etc. These provide a way to standardize the counts which are usually expressed as the number of birds seen per party hour (a party is a group of individuals who travel together and count birds as a group). Although less-than-perfect, this does provide a way to compare results from different areas or different years.

In fact, some of the large, conspicuous or habitat-specific birds are counted quite well while other more common but less conspicuous birds are poorly counted. Thus in Iowa, most bald eagles and ducks are probably well counted, since they concentrate in a few areas where they can be counted well. In contrast, groups like the woodpeckers and sparrows are greatly undercounted but at least an index to their abundance can be derived from the data.

What good are the Christmas Bird Counts? Despite some problems with the data, these counts do provide us with a good index to bird populations in early winter. They have been especially useful in tracking long-term changes in the populations of some species (e.g., bald eagles) or in following range expansions of others (e.g., the movement of house finches westward across eastern United States). They also have been useful to document the effect of severe weather on some species of birds. For example, species like northern bobwhite and Carolina wrens are decimated by severe winters and CBC data have been useful to document those declines and any subsequent recovery of the populations. They also have been useful to document sudden eruptions of the populations of some species such as the periodic influxes of red-breasted nuthatches, crossbills, and several winter finches.

In Iowa, most CBCs detect from 40-65 species with a few exceptional counts exceeding 75. In warmer areas and in coastal regions, counts commonly exceed 100 species, and a few counts exceed 200 species each year.

October 1996 Iowa Audubon Council Meeting  
Report  
by Sherry Dragula

On Saturday, October 5, thirty-three members of Iowa Audubon Chapters, including six members of BBAS gathered in Ames to discuss statewide Audubon priorities and the possible creation of a state office for Audubon in Iowa. We learned about National Audubon efforts at the state level and resources being made available to help with establishment of state offices.

The group decided to do a strategic plan at the state level with a focus on establishing a state office with staff. Key activity areas for a state office were identified: communications, education and advocacy. Extensive lists of activities in each of these areas were made. Preliminary discussion on issues to be addressed at the state level occurred. These issues were: natural area management, water quality, rivers and streams, land use planning, birds & their habitats, restoration of prairies and wetlands, and species reintroduction.

A committee of six was chosen to be the strategic planning committee. The committee members are: Vern and Lenore Durkee, Pat and Pam Heidenreich, Karl Jungbluth, and Bob Van Ersvelde. Vern Durkee will serve as Chair of the committee. Suggestions/comments from Chapters/members are welcome. Send to: Vern Durkee, 301 Juniper, Kellogg, IA 50135. E-Mail: durkee@ac.grin.edu

The next meeting of the Iowa Audubon Council will be January 25 or February 1, 1997 in Grinnell.

*Editor's Note: Please contact our IAC representative, Karl Jungbluth, about your thoughts for a state Audubon office or if you would like more general information. Sherry Dragula is the President of the IAC.*



## 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.

## Donate Dollars to Your BBAS by Buying Bird Products

Two major businesses generously offer Big Bluestem Audubon Society (BBAS) a donation when bird seed and other bird products are purchased. Present these coupons with your purchase and a donation will be given to BBAS. Donations will fund habitat restoration; wilderness education; and *Audubon Adventures*, a bimonthly elementary classroom teaching program used in central Iowa schools.

### Country Landscapes, Inc.

1/2 mile east of I-35 on Lincoln Way  
(515) 232-6864

Purchase	Donation
up to \$15	\$1.50
\$15 and over	\$3.00
\$35 and over	\$5.00
over \$70	\$7.50

Offer good until February 28, 1997

### Brekke's Town & Country Store, Inc.

1 1/2 miles east of I-35 on new U.S. 30 and 1/4 mile north  
Hours: 8-6 M-F, 8-4 Sat. (515) 232-7906

Purchase	Donation
up to \$15	\$1.50
\$15 and over	\$3.00
\$35 and over	\$5.00
over \$70	\$7.50

Offer good until February 28, 1997

Continued page 1—Coming Field Trips

Iowa and Blair, Nebraska. At the Visitor's Center, first we will view birds from the scopes set up there. Next, depending on the weather, we will either take the Auto Tour through the refuge, or see the refuge's exhibits (including a very interesting collection of artifacts salvaged from the Bertrand, an 1850s pioneer supply boat). The gate fee for the refuge is \$3 per vehicle.

After we complete our tour of the refuge, we will travel to Missouri Valley for lunch. If there is still more to see at the refuge, we may return there after lunch, but it is more likely that we will drive south to Council Bluffs and visit Lake Manawa State Park. From past years, we have discovered that Lake Manawa is often a better spot for getting better looks at a wide variety of ducks than is De Soto. At 3:30 pm, we will end the trip.

Participants will need to make their own travel arrangements to the refuge. Travel time to the refuge from Ames is approximately 3 1/2 hours. If staying overnight Friday night, there are three motels convenient to De Soto. They are all at the Missouri Valley exit on I-29. These are the Days Inn (phone 712-642-4003); Super 8 (phone 712-642-4788); and Rath Traveler's Inn (phone 712-642-2723).

If you have any questions about this field trip, please contact Mark Widrlechner at 233-1532 (email: mpwskd@aol.com).

December

21—Ames Christmas Bird Count. Dave Edwards (515-292-3790).

22—Saylorville Christmas Bird Count. Meet at the Design Center, ISU, at 8 a.m. Jim or Steve Dinsmore

Winter Bird Survey of Walnut Creek Refuge

Dr. Erwin Klaas

Volunteer birders are needed to help conduct a second winter survey of birds at Walnut Creek. Each birder will be assigned two quarter-section (160 acres) plots to survey each month in December, January, and February. The refuge has been marked off into 28 plots. With 14 observers, each plot can be surveyed 3 times each month. Each observer (only observer per plot) will be asked to walk the assigned plot (different plots each month) and count all birds seen or heard. A plot can be covered in about 2 hours. Thus, two plots can be done on the same day. If you are interested in participating, contact Erv Klaas by November 15 at 294-7990 or e-mail: eklaas@iastate.edu. A similar survey is planned for the spring if this one goes well.

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