



Big Bluestem Audubon Society
Ames, Iowa

Jim Murdock, Pres. 233-1199
Dave Edwards, Vice-Pres. 292-3790
Sherry Dragula, Sec. 292-4014
Judy Shearer, Treas. 292-4430
Judy van der Linden, Ed. 232-3450

For membership information,
contact one of the officers
listed above.

Bluestem Flyer

Vol. 20, No. 6 February, 1986

Monthly Meeting

WHEN: Tuesday, Feb. 18, 1986

WHERE: Room 181-1 (Jury Room), College of Design, ISU campus

WHO: Laura Jackson, Iowa Conservation Commission Nongame Urban
Wildlife Biologist

TOPIC: "Backyard Wildlife Habitat"

Upcoming Meetings and Events

Crane Field Trip -- There's still time to sign up for the March 14-16 field trip to see Sandhill Cranes along Nebraska's Platte River. Call trip leader Bill Horine at 382-4150 evenings or 7-8 a.m. as soon as possible if you are interested. Birders will carpool from Ames early Friday evening and stay at the Grand Island, Neb., Holiday Inn. (Camping in Grand Island is also available.) Bill has reserved a photo blind for Sunday. More details will be available at the February meeting.

Publication Committee Meeting -- Persons interested in helping improve the society's newsletter are asked to meet Thursday, March 6 at 7:30 p.m. at Judy van der Linden's home, 610-9th St., Ames.

Sewage Treatment Meeting -- A public meeting on the proposed new sewage treatment plant for Ames will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 26 at 7 p.m. in Benton Auditorium, Scheman Bldg., Iowa State Center.

Sierra Club -- "Outdoor Programs for Ames Parks" will be the program at a Sierra Club meeting Thursday, March 20 at 7:30 p.m. in Room 181-1, College of Design, ISU campus. Audubon members are invited.



1986 Program Calendar-- On the opposite page, you will see a calendar of BBAS programs for the rest of our 1985-86 meeting year. You may wish to post this page by your own calendar or on a bulletin board or in a window where you work.

Newsletter Deadline -- Unless otherwise noted, the deadline for submitting items for any month's newsletter will be the first Monday of that month. Send material to Judy van der Linden, 610-9th St., Ames.

Nominations Committee -- A committee to accept nominations for the society's upcoming election of new officers and board members will be formed at the February meeting. Contact Jim Murdock if you are interested in serving on the committee.

Roadside Spraying -- A petition that objects to indiscriminate spraying along Story County roads is being circulated. The petition statement urges a return to spot spraying for problem vegetation and requests 24-hour notice to local residents before spraying. Contact Dave and Jean-

ne Edwards or Cindy Hildebrand if you would like to sign or circulate a copy.

Pesticides Forum -- The Madison Audubon Society and five other environmental/political groups are sponsoring a citizen's forum entitled "Aldi-carb: Has the System Failed?" on March 8 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Wisconsin Center, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison. Contact Judy van der Linden for a registration form. Fee is \$25, including lunch.

Feb. Bird Puzzles/Jan. Answers!
Which birds are described by this month's five short phrases below?

1. A little league outfielder
2. A conversation
3. Murders a game animal
4. Is like sandpaper
5. Tie up a chicken

And, here are the answers to January's puzzles:

1. Old fool -- Coot
2. Arctic runner -- Northern Harrier
3. Give a letter a bath -- Scrub Jay
4. Must precede the gastric digestion -- Swallow
5. What bucks have when they celebrate -- Horned Lark (groan!)

CONSERVATION/THE ENVIRONMENT -- Sherry Dragula, 292-4014

Tree Planting -- Once again our society will be planting trees this spring to provide some wildlife habitat along Highway 30 east of Ames. If you would like to help organize this event or with the follow-up tree-watering during the summer, please contact Sherry. A sign-up sheet will be circulated at our February meeting.

Letters Still Needed -- Iowa legislators still need to hear from citizens concerned about the proposed elimination of the State Preserves Advisory Board. Gov. Terry Branstad has suggested its elimination as part of his state government reorganization plan. Please consider writing your senator or representative (at: State Capitol Building, Des Moines, IA 50319) and indicating that you want to retain a strong preserves system with increased funding and staffing. See the January newsletter or contact Sherry for more information.



BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY



The Big Bluestem Audubon Society is a National Audubon Society Chapter which serves Ames and the surrounding area. Our activities include nature programs, field trips, conservation projects, and work on environmental issues. We welcome new members, and all programs are free and open to the public.

For more information, please call Cindy Hildebrand (Publicity Chair) at 232-3807.

Field Trips

Field trips and conservation projects are announced at meetings and in our monthly newsletters. To find out about currently-scheduled events, call 232-3807.

Programs

Programs are part of our regular meetings, which are held on the third Tuesday of each month. Unless otherwise indicated, all meetings are held in Room 181 in the College of Design Building on the ISU campus in Ames at 7:30 p.m.

- Feb. 18 -- "Backyard Wildlife Habitat" by Laura Jackson, Iowa Conservation Commission Nongame Urban Wildlife Biologist.
- Mar. 18 -- "Introduction to Outdoor Sketching" by Dean Biechler, and "Introduction to Photography Outdoors" by Linda Gucciardo.
- Apr. 15 -- "Ferns of Iowa - Biology and Identification" by Don Farrar of the ISU Botany Department.
- May 20 -- "An Interpretive Nature Walk Along Montgomery Creek" by Marie Carlson of Boone.
- Jun. 17 -- A picnic potluck dinner at Robison Acres. For more information, call 232-3807.





BIRDER'S NOTES

Now is one of the best times of year to hear certain owls calling. Great Horned and Barred owls have begun to nest and are especially vocal right now. To hear and possibly see them, go out to a

wooded river valley -- the lower Ledges State Park south of Boone is best, but West Brookside Park, the Ames High School pine grove, the south end of Peterson Pits, Soper's Mill and East River Valley Park, all in or near Ames, are spots where owls are likely. Plan to be there right after sunset, and choose as calm a night as possible. Listen for the Great Horned's short "hoots" and the Barred's hooting phrase that sounds like "Who cooks for you?" Less often heard but probably more common than both of these big owls in this area is the Common Screech Owl, who will be more active in early April. All three of these owls can be lured in by playing tape recordings of their calls. BBAS hopes to offer an owl-calling field trip later this winter. You may also want to try to see one of the three Saw-whet Owls that are living now in the lower Ledges park near Lost Lake. For more information about owls, contact Steve Dinsmore.

In other birder's notes, a Northern Shrike has been seen at the Ledges at the intersection of two gravel roads about 1/2 mile east of the old deer pen, and a Goshawk was seen at Big Creek. Also, persons who wish to continue reading Gladys Black's articles in the Des Moines Register should write the editors requesting that they be published.

Keep up on unusual Iowa bird sightings or report some of your own by calling the Birdline (1-319-622-3353) established by the Iowa Ornithologist's Union. The tape-recorded message is updated every Monday afternoon and includes items of interest for birders and an opportunity at the end of the recording to leave messages about your own sightings.

BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX #1843
AMES, IOWA 50010



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S. Dragula/M. Widrlechner
R. R. 6
Ames, Iowa 50010