



# Big Bluestem Flyer

Newsletter of the Big Bluestem Audubon Society

Volume 37, Number 3

January/February 2002

## Upcoming Programs

**January 17**—*Costa Rica—What a prize!*

In 2001, Rolf Koford and Bonnie Bowen won the chapter's Birdathon prize of a 4-day stay for two in a Costa Rican ecotourism lodge. Their kids talked them into a 9-day trip for four. Come hear about the highlights: colorful birds, howling monkeys, iridescent frogs, hot springs, and a rumbling volcano.

**February 21**—*Woodies and Hoodies*  
Ty Smedes has been co-owner of a 40-acre wetland in Dallas county since 1984. They have enhanced their wetland by creating (dozing out) additional backwater areas for waterfowl and other wildlife. The creation of a network of 25 Wood Duck nest boxes has helped to increase the local population of both Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers. His slideshow and talk will demonstrate what can be done with wetland restoration to enhance wildlife populations.

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.

## Get ready to count the birds!

**5th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count  
February 15-18, 2002**

*Linda Thomas*

For the fifth consecutive year, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, along with their major sponsor Wild Birds Unlimited, are planning to count the birds across America during the Fifth Annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) February 15-18, 2002. You can help!

You can spend as much or as little time as you want, and you can count birds in your backyard, local parks, or other locations. You can make it a fun family outing or a school or scout project. Your participation can define:

- Where birds are living and in what populations.
- Their migration patterns.
- Bird habitat needs.

It doesn't matter whether you identify and report the five species coming to your backyard feeder or the 75 species you see during a day's outing to a wildlife refuge or park. The data you collect will be combined with information nationwide. This information will help define bird ranges, populations, migration pathways, habitat needs, and ultimately help with wild bird conservation efforts.

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## Big Bluestem Audubon Society Officers and Committees

### Officers:

- President: Karl Jungbluth 432-5057  
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- Vice-President: John Pohlman 232-6816  
[pohlman@city.ames.ia.us](mailto:pohlman@city.ames.ia.us)
- Secretary: Mary Doud 795-4176  
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- Treasurer: Donna Flanagan 268-0458  
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### Board Members:

- Bruce Ehresman 296-2995 [behresma@opencominc.com](mailto:behresma@opencominc.com)
- Jeff Nichols, 795-4176 [jnichols1961@hotmail.com](mailto:jnichols1961@hotmail.com)
- Al Ravenscroft 268-0294
- Linda Thomas 956-3145 [wbuames@tebra.net](mailto:wbuames@tebra.net)

### Committee Chairs:

- Archivist: Hank Zalatel 382-427 [madowl@nevia.net](mailto:madowl@nevia.net)
- Bird-a-thon Co-chairs: Karl and Carmen Jungbluth
- Conservation Co-chairs: Bruce Ehresman and John Pohlman
- Education Chair: Ida Johnson 233-4831 [iwindj@aol.com](mailto:iwindj@aol.com)
- Field Trip Chair: Jeff Nichols
- Membership Chair: Al Johnson 233-4831  
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- Program Chair: John Snyder 232-8824  
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- Publicity Chair: Linda Thomas, 292-7534  
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- Publications & Electronic Media Co-Chairs: Rebecca Shivers 292-0691 and Joyce Bahrenfus 432-3396  
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### BBAS Web Site:

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

### National Audubon Society Web Site:

<http://www.audubon.org>

### Iowa Audubon State Director:

Iowa Bird Sightings Hotline—319-338-9881

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:  
February 15—2 p.m.



## Beyond the Backyard

Karl Jungbluth,  
President

One never knows what the New Year will bring, but at our house, Carmen discovered a pair of Golden-crowned Kinglets during the January 1 Christmas Bird Count. The kinglets were back the next day, selectively picking something off the blades of grass sticking through the dusting of snow. It pays to keep looking out the window!

The Boone Christmas Bird Count was very enjoyable again this year. Nice people and a nice selection of birds. There are still a lot of robins around our neighborhood. It seems that as long as the birds have food, some habitat, and a water source, they can survive the Iowa winter. Speaking of habitat, I hope that "helping a habitat" is on your list of New Year's resolutions.

Habitat can be as close as *your* backyard. Audubon will soon be launching a new initiative called "Audubon@Home". The idea is that we can all make a difference for birds at home, if no place else. Audubon@Home will help us landscape our backyards for birds, understand the perils of using yard chemicals, and how to stop using them and migrate toward more natural backyards. I was inspired by a rural yard on the Christmas Bird Count. Miles from good habitat in corn country, the farmstead had a large windbreak, a nice variety of shrubs and trees, bird feeders, water...and lots of birds! There were robins, chickadees, a red-bellied woodpecker and goldfinches for sure. It was a nice example of how we can make a difference.

I want to tell you about an exciting new beginning in our state Audubon program—: Important Bird Areas (IBAs). This program is designed to identify areas that are important to birds, monitor the bird populations and the quality of the habitat, and then develop conservation activities to ensure the well being of the birds that live there. IBAs bring to life the mission of Audubon. The program will start first in northeast Iowa, because that is where the funding was first located. As a chapter, we can help the IBA program by nominating sites, monitoring bird populations, and providing funding. I think this would be a great place to direct Birdathon proceeds this year, and bring the IBA program to central Iowa. Stay tuned.

Have a great Year 2002. Mark your calendars early for our programs and field trips, because spring will be here before you know it.



## Conservation Corner

*Bruce Ehresman*

### Supportive Steps for Iowa Wildlife

Despite the tragedy of last September's terrorist attacks and the setbacks it caused to legislative action in Washington, D.C., some good things have continued to happen to benefit wildlife in this country. Most importantly, an \$80 million state wildlife grants program was signed into law by President Bush. The funding is part of the fiscal year 2002 Department of Interior and Related Agencies' appropriations that passed the U.S. Congress the week of October 15, 2001. By providing the states with grants for wildlife conservation, Congress continues the precedent set by the 1937 Pittman-Robertson Act, the 1950 Dingell-Johnson Act, and the fiscal year 2001 Department of Interior and Commerce, Justice, and State (CJS) Departments appropriations of cooperation between the federal government and the states for managing and conserving their wildlife species.

The Interior appropriation act complements the 2001 appropriations that established the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program (WCRP) as part of the CJS appropriations. Like the WCRP, this new program will provide funds to all 50 states, U.S. Territories, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico through a formula based on land area and population. As many of you might know, CJS funds have already been ear-marked to purchase additional land for a shorebird conservation area at Harrier Marsh by Ogden; and additional acres will be bought with this money at the Kellerton Bird Conservation Area in southern Iowa where Iowa's population of prairie chickens occur. This new appropriation should bring in an additional \$976,000 to benefit Iowa's nongame wildlife through spending on wildlife conservation, education, and recreation.

The 2001 WCRP state grants program provided the means for the state fish and wildlife agencies to put in place a number of conservation initiatives that can be continued under the 2002 Interior program. Projects under the wildlife conservation and restoration program include the reintroduction of wildlife species; the restoration of wildlife-associated degraded habitat; the enhancement of recreational opportunities for bird watching, hiking, and canoeing; and the creation of wildlife-related education projects.

*Continued—page 6*

## Cyber Birding

*Rebecca Shivers*

<http://www-stat.wharton.upenn.edu/~siler/birding.html>  
—Birding on the Web

Birding on the Web, as its name implies, has many sources for birding. Some of the sources include World Birds Sibley-Monroe Classification, Bird Chat, Daily Mail, Exhibits, Lists, . . . Select Bird Families of the World and you encounter 146 genre of birds. Some of these names include Flock Berrypeckers (Paromythiidae) and Old World Warblers (Sylviidae). Unfortunately there are no photos to match the birds listed.

Under the Exhibit area, you can search images of birds. This also includes sites where you can purchase drawings, communicate with other naturalists who share their findings online, as well as some bird pictures. Check it out!

## Memorial Donations Make a Difference for Local Libraries

New bird books are gracing the shelves of the Ames and Boone Public Libraries. Donations in memory of several beloved Big Bluestem members were combined over the past 2 years into a significant gift for local readers. Big Bluestem members worked with the Ames Public Library and the Ericson Public Library in Boone to select over 40 books and CDs on birds and nature. The books included the latest Kaufman and Sibley Field Guides, backyard bird feeding books, identification CDs, guides to bird behavior, general nature discovery books, and books about birds around the world. Stop by the library to see what's new. Big Bluestem Audubon thanks the families and friends of David Guy, Phyllis Carr and Virginia Hatten for their generosity.

## The View from Wolf's Den

*Wolf Oesterrich*



November saw only 41 species (note the downward trend). Two Double-crested Cormorants were present for much of the month. Thirteen species of waterfowl were recorded, many of which were only seen on one day late in the month. The Northern Shovelers (29<sup>th</sup>) and Green-winged Teal (27<sup>th</sup>) may represent the new late extreme Fall records for Story County. Half of the 6 sparrow species were present only in the early part of the month, with American Tree, Harris', and Dark-eyed Junco remaining all month long. The best find of the month were the 2 Common Redpolls on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. One stayed most of the day, visiting the various feeders. They may have also set a new early extreme Fall/Winter date for Story County, beating the current record of 8 December 1985.

I only recorded 35 species in December, but then I had left the state for California on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Who knows what passed through after that day, especially since it had become much colder. A Common Loon arrived on the 7<sup>th</sup>, stayed for the Ames Christmas Bird Count, and was last seen by me on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The sighting on the 18<sup>th</sup> may represent the new late extreme Fall record for Story County, unless someone else found it after that date. Nine species of waterfowl were recorded, including all 3 merganser species. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> I heard a loud thump from the window of my study. I looked down and saw a Sharp-shinned Hawk perched on a bench with a House Sparrow in its bill. Within seconds the hawk flew off with its catch and disappeared into the thicket along the east property line. On the 6<sup>th</sup>, I had both a Cooper's and a Sharp-shinned Hawk perched in the trees, about 10 feet apart from each other. It was a wonderful opportunity to see the distinguishing field marks and size difference between the two species. The Cooper's ended up chasing off the Sharpie. Two Harris' Sparrows continued to be seen throughout the month. Two Common Grackles visited the feeders on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

We returned on 4 January and found much colder temperatures and a nearly (more than 95%

## Notes From the Field Trips

*(Reports submitted by trip leaders)*

**Chichaqua Wildlife Area.** October 20. Field trip leaders Karl Jungbluth and Jeff Nichols. Loren Lown of Polk County Conservation graciously provided eight Big Bluestem members with an overview of the history, culture, flora and fauna of the Chichaqua Wildlife Area in eastern Polk County. It was a beautifully clear and cool fall day, and we enjoyed a nice hike through the area, seeing 30 species of birds along the way. We saw a Common Snipe and LOTS of Song Sparrows in the tall grass surrounding a prairie pothole, and we enjoyed very close looks at several Sedge Wrens in the grass beside a road.

**Tundra Swan Watch, Winona, Minnesota.** November 10-11. Field trip leader Jeff Nichols. Ten central Iowa birders trekked to Winona, MN for the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Tundra Swan Watch. Several of us traveled to the area on Friday (the 9<sup>th</sup>), so we could join a field trip hosted by the Zumbro Valley Audubon Society. We joined them Saturday morning at the Whitewater State Park Visitor's Center. Several Pine Siskins, woodpeckers, and chickadees were at the feeders. While touring the Park we saw a pair of Sandhill Cranes, a Lesser Yellowlegs, and a Common Snipe, as well as numerous ducks and geese. We observed our first Tundra Swans at Weaver Bottoms on the Mississippi River. At Reick's Lake near Alma, Wisconsin, we saw many more swans and American Black Ducks. Saturday evening we watched a presentation by local birding guide Carol Schumacher. She discussed the biology and behavior of Tundra Swans and provided helpful tips for distinguishing between Tundra and Trumpeter Swans. Several of our group also took advantage of the Sunday afternoon bus tours offered by Winona CVB and led by local naturalists.

**Yellow Banks State Park.** November 17. On a nice fall day, a small group of birders enjoyed a field trip to Big Creek State Park and Lake Red rock. Originally, we had planned to visit Yellow Banks State Park, but a scouting trip turned up very little bird activity, therefore the plans changed. At Big Creek, the major sighting was a Red-throated Loon. Not many waterfowl had migrated down yet, but we saw a nice mix of duck species and also a Bald Eagle at the refuge near Swan at Lake Red Rock. The group spent considerable time below the dam at Red Rock scoping out the gulls, but nothing too unusual turned up.

*Continued on page 6*

## The Results of the Ames, Saylorville Reservoir, and Boone Christmas Bird Counts

The Ames Count was held on Saturday, December 15, Saylorville Count was Sunday, December 16, 2001 and the Boone Count was Tuesday, January 1, 2002. The organizers were Dave Edwards, Jim Dinsmore, and Mark Widrechner, respectively. The results were as follows:

	Ames	Saylorville	Boone		Ames	Saylorville	Boone
Common Loon	1	4					
Horned Grebe	cw	1		Blue-headed Vireo	1		
Double-crested Cormorant		3		Blue Jay	71	75	30
Great Blue Heron	1	2		American Crow	10,011	293	877
Snow Goose	2	1		Horned Lark	21		
Canada Goose	667	514	321	Black-capped Chickadee	347	482	562
Mallard	104	1,838	1	Tufted Titmouse	11	23	40
Gadwall		39		Red-breasted Nuthatch	15	9	17
American Wigeon		40		White-breasted Nuthatch	140	108	223
American Black Duck		2		Brown Creeper	38	12	26
Northern Shoveler		10		Marsh Wren		1	
Northern Pintail		7		Winter Wren	1		2
Green-winged Teal		39		Golden-crowned Kinglet	5		6
Canvasback		5		Hermit Thrush			1
Redhead		9		Eastern Bluebird	16	61	12
Ring-necked Duck		18		American Robin	165	3,144	120
Lesser Scaup		100		Brown Thrasher			1
Bufflehead		11		European Starling	1695	2,038	2,823
Common Goldeneye		39		Cedar Waxwing	184	176	22
Hooded Merganser		29		Northern Shrike			1
Common Merganser		622		Yellow-rumped Warbler	1		
Red-breasted Merganser		4		American Tree Sparrow	207	690	644
Ruddy Duck		8		Fox Sparrow		1	2
Bald Eagle	7	20	22	Song Sparrow	8	50	25
Northern Harrier		1		Swamp Sparrow		3	1
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1		1	White-throated Sparrow	4	10	5
Cooper's Hawk	5	1	4	Harris' Sparrow	30	3	12
Accipiter sp.			2	White-crowned Sparrow	1		4
Red-tailed Hawk	63	5	83	Dark-eyed Junco	515	614	1,001
Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk			1	Snow Bunting		16	
Buteo sp.			2	Meadowlark sp.	21		
Hawk sp.			1	Northern Cardinal	136	280	236
American Kestrel	17	17	13	Red-winged Blackbird	7	500	1
Merlin (prairie race)		1		Rusty Blackbird		9	
Gray Partridge	4			Brewer's Blackbird		1	
Ring-necked Pheasant	39	22	25	Common Grackle	7	30	5
Wild Turkey	cw	20	65	Brown-headed Cowbird	1		
American Coot		35		Purple Finch	2	54	68
Killdeer	1	1		House Finch	55	31	50
Ring-billed Gull	2	3,050		Pine Siskin	19	2	1
Herring Gull		2		American Goldfinch	159	281	190
Common Snipe		5		House Sparrow	588	234	1,329
Rock Dove	347	350	174				
Mourning Dove	121	286	15	<b>NUMBER OF SPECIES</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>54</b>
Eastern Screech-Owl	2	7	12				
Great Horned Owl	5	18	18				
Barred Owl	4	10	5				
Owl sp.			1				
Snowy Owl	cw						
Long-eared Owl		7					
Belted Kingfisher	6	7	4				
Red-headed Woodpecker		1	1				
Red-bellied Woodpecker	81	113	142				
Downy Woodpecker	133	112	200				
Hairy Woodpecker	24	11	44				
Northern Flicker	46	85	24				
Pileated Woodpecker			1				
Northern Shrike	1						

# Big Bluestem Audubon Society Field Trip and Program Calendar- Spring 2002

**Monthly meetings** are held Thursday evenings in Room 2226 on the west side of the Veterinary Medicine Building, ISU, beginning at 7:30 p.m. **Field trips** meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot *behind* Wild Birds Unlimited (WBU), Duff Avenue, Ames, unless otherwise noted. [Maps, backside of sheet]

## January

- 12 **Ann Munn Woods and Emma McCarthy Lee Park** followed by a **Chili lunch!** at Al Ravenscroft's home. Meet at WBU to carpool to Al's home in west Ames.
- 17 **Monthly Meeting** – Rolf Koford and Bonnie Bowen, "Costa Rica: What a Prize"
- 26 **Tour de Feeders** – Watch birds at some of the best backyard bird feeder setups in the area. Meet at WBU to carpool.

## February

- 9 **Owls and Dinner.** Meet at WBU at 1:00 pm. Note the time. We'll look for owls and other winter residents, finish up around dark, then go out for dinner.
- 15-18 **Great Backyard Bird Count.** Get together with friends, count birds in your backyard, enter data online and see the results! [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org) or contact Linda Thomas at Wild Birds Unlimited (956-3145) for forms, info and online entry.
- 21 **Monthly Meeting** – Ty Smedes, photographer, "Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers"
- 23 **Bald Eagle Days** at Lake Red Rock. We'll watch Bald Eagles at one of the best locations in the state, look for other waterfowl and gulls, then head into Pella for the Eagle Program (includes live eagles and other birds of prey), followed by lunch.

## March

- 9 **Des Moines River Bottom** to view early migrating waterfowl, songbirds, and raptors. Trip Leader: Karl Jungbluth (515-432-5057).
- 14 **Monthly Meeting** – Mike Meetz, "Kestrel Nest Box Program along I-35"
- 15-17 **32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Rivers & Wildlife Celebration,** Holiday Inn, Kearney, NE. Field trips to see migrating Sandhill Cranes, Prairie Chicken and Sharp-tailed Grouse leks, and other hot birding spots in central Nebraska; Kenn Kaufmann and other speakers; activities for kids. Sponsored by Rowe Sanctuary and Audubon Nebraska. Request a registration brochure at [nebraska@audubon.org](mailto:nebraska@audubon.org). Contact Jeff Nichols for details (515-795-4176).
- 23 **Hallett's Quarry, Little Wall Lake, Anderson Lake,** and other areas for waterfowl. Trip Leader: Hank Zaletel (515-382-5427).

## April

- 6 **Boone Gravel Pits, Harrier Marsh, Bjorkboda Marsh, and Bob Pyle/Tieg's Marsh** to look for shorebirds, waterfowl, and other marsh dwellers.  
**Bluebirds in Iowa meeting,** 1:30 pm at McFarland Park in north Ames. Learn all about bluebirds and bluebird boxes. Carol Williams (515-232-2516)
- 18 **Monthly Meeting** – Desiree Groves, "Audubon's Grassroots Action Plan for the Midwest"
- 20 **FYI – Earth Day**
- 26-28 **FYI - IOU Spring Meeting,** Ottumwa. This year's meeting will be hosted by the Ottumwa Bird Club. Location will be the Forest Lake Baptist Camp south of town. Bird banding and field trips. Contact Darleen Ayres (515-682-1697, [DJAYR@prodigy.net](mailto:DJAYR@prodigy.net)) for more information.

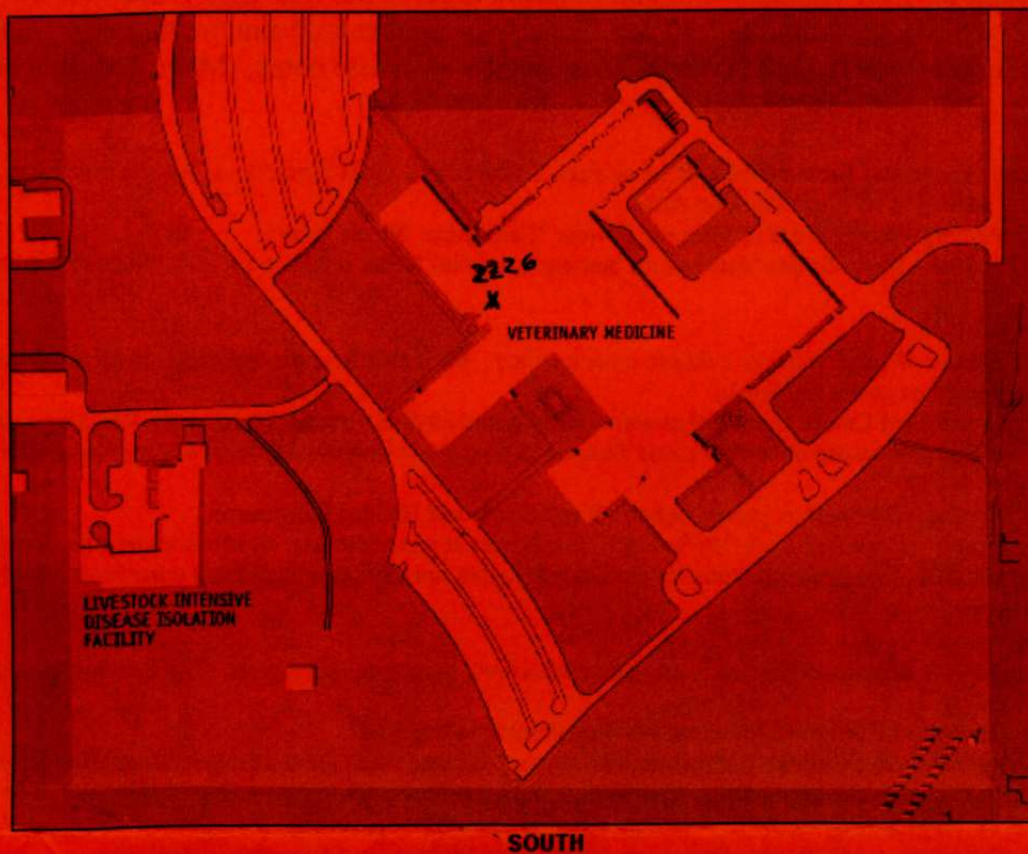
## May

- 11 **Birdathon!** Join Audubon's all-day birding and fundraising event. Prizes will be awarded. Contact Karl Jungbluth for more information (515-432-5057).
- 12 **Mother's Day Warbler Walk** at McFarland Park.
- 16 **Monthly Meeting** – Harlan Ratcliff, "A Photo Essay of Iowa's Wildlife Diversity"
- 17-18 Road trip to **Sweet Marsh,** northeast of Waverly. Several thousand acres of wetland, prairie and woodland. Travel to Waverly area Friday night; meet at 0700 in the Waverly Super8 lobby to carpool to the marsh. Contact Jeff Nichols (515-795-4176) for details.
- 25 Waterfowl and shorebirds at **Colo Ponds and Hendrickson Marsh.** Meet at the cannon in the parking lot at the Nevada courthouse at 8:00 am. Trip Leader: Hank Zaletel (515-382-5427).

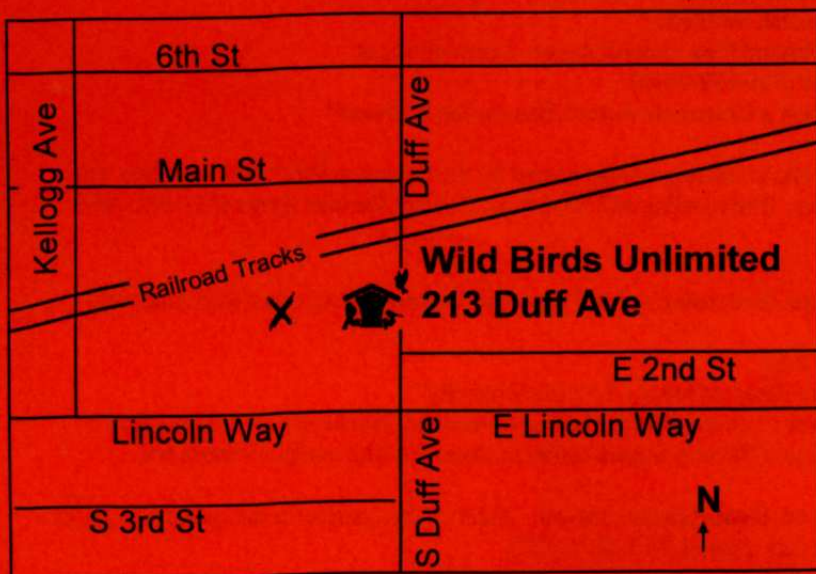
## June

- 1 **Annual Birder's Brunch** at the Ledges State Park south of Boone. Meet in the upper Ledges at 8:00 am. We'll bird as we hike down the hill and have brunch in the lower Ledges. Please bring a food item to share.
- 10-16 **FYI American Birding Assoc. Annual Convention,** Duluth, MN. Prime birding habitats including boreal forests to the north, grasslands and marshes to the west, and mixed deciduous woodlands to the southwest. Field trips coordinated by Kim Eckert, author of *A Birder's Guide to Minnesota*. Evening programs, artists, authors, exhibits, sales. Contact Jeff Nichols (515-795-4176) for more info.

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

Continued from page 1—GBBC . . .

It's easy to participate. To take part in this year's GBBC, just count the highest number of each bird species seen at one time (to ensure the birds are not counted more than once) and keep track of the amount of time spent counting. Then log on to the BirdSource web site at [www.birdsource.org](http://www.birdsource.org) or <http://birdsource.cornell.edu/gbbc/>, click on the appropriate state for a checklist of the most frequently reported birds in that region, and enter your results. Online results are updated hourly in the form of animated maps and colorful graphs. You will be able to see almost immediately how your observations fit into the continent wide perspective. Or bring your results to Wild Birds Unlimited of Ames for entry.

In Iowa last year, 77 species were reported across the state. Ames participants reported 43 species, number two in the state behind Cedar Rapids with 48. Boone ranked number 6 with 33 species reported.

Birds count, really they do! And you can to! So, mark you calendars for February 15-18<sup>th</sup>. Grab your binoculars and field guide; invite a friend, neighbor, or someone new to birding; and have fun counting the birds!



BBAS participants enjoying people treats at the annual Holiday for the Birds held at the McFarland Park, December 13, 2001.

## Bird Drop-ins

Sightings by  
BBAS Members



Wolf Oesterrich notes that a Common Loon has been visiting Hallett's Quarry (south lake) since November 7. This bird sets a new late Fall extreme date for Story County. The previous late date was 20 November 1994. He usually sees it only in the morning. However, Hank Zaletel saw it today around noon, near the causeway between the two lakes.

### Is this December or April???

Bruce Ehresman, Ames, heard a vireo singing just northwest of the Boone Wildlife Research Station (south edge of Ledges State Park) at 2 pm Sunday, Dec. 16. The song was repeated 3 times and sounded like a slow red-eyed vireo song with robin-like qualities. He didn't see the bird, but he did immediately go into his office and listen to vireo calls on a CD-ROM. The song that Bruce heard sounded like that of the blue-headed vireo. He heard bluebirds and robins singing that week, but to hear a vireo singing in December seems indeed odd!

Kevin Healy reported a Snowy Owl perched on the ground about 15 feet from the west side of Stang Road, about 50 feet south of the Stang-Bloomington intersection, December 19. He last saw it at 9:20 pm, readily visible against the stubblefield. Thanks to Jim Pease and Hank Zalatel for the information. Also on the 20th, a robin's egg (FRESH) was found broken on a sidewalk in Ogden. Looks like at least one of the thousands of robins still hanging around has her seasons mixed up!

Karl Jungbluth noticed January 5, 2002, that the goldfinches at his feeders are already beginning to molt into breeding plumage. There are many males showing a bright yellow feather or two, yellow feather edges, and bits of a black cap coming in. He has never recorded dates of such observations before, but it sure seems early! There are also lots of starlings and robins arriving together to empty the bird bath. One flock of starlings also included several grackles. Grackles are not common around here in winter. Should we just cancel winter for lack of interest?



Continued from page 3—Conservation . . .

Another positive step toward the passage of the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) and more stable, long-term wildlife funding happened when the U.S. Senate passed the American Wildlife Enhancement Act of 2001 (S. 990) by unanimous consent as the First Session of the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress came to a close. S. 990 provides an authorization (not an appropriation) for \$350 million to the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program, as well as to three other wildlife related conservation titles. Essentially, this bill provides the framework needed to help implement the passage of CARA when the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress reconvenes.

Many thanks to those of you who have contacted Congressmen and spoken out in support of funding for nongame wildlife! Until that "pie-in-the-sky" funding does come through for Iowa's nongame wildlife, please remember to contribute to the Fish and Wildlife Restoration Fund (Chickadee Checkoff) on Iowa's Income Tax forms. It is still our only consistent funding mechanism for about 400 species of nongame wildlife!

Continued from page 4—The View . . .

We returned on 4 January and found much colder temperatures and a nearly (more than 95% ice-covered) frozen-over Hallett's lakes. About 100 of each species of Canada Geese and Mallards were on the only open water available. I also found a male American Black Duck, a male Ring-necked Duck, and a male Lesser Scaup. On the 6<sup>th</sup>, an adult Bald Eagle scattered the geese and ducks on several occasions.

**ADDENDUM:** Ames residents voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Hallett's bond issue. Now it's up to the city to go through with the purchase plans. The conservation community will be called upon to lend a helping hand in the creation of this "natural" park. I hope that Big Bluestem Audubon members will offer their expertise and labor. It'll take several years of hard work to get this park in shape.

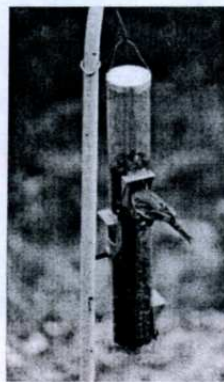
Letter to the Editor,

For the past five years I have been conducting frog and toad surveys for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. One of my favorite stops is the Polk City Cemetery. This little remnant of the past is adjacent to Polk City Wildlife Refuge—a refuge for man as well as beast in the onslaught of development. I drive into the cemetery after dark and sit quietly, listening to the amphibian chorus of Western Chorus Frogs, American Toads, Eastern Gray Tree Frogs, Cricket Frogs, and, if my ears are sharp, Leopard Frogs. The chorus of singers changes with the season from March through July. Occasionally the Barred Owl auditions with its haunting call.

I also frequent the cemetery in daylight, delighting in the prairie, a small remnant of the way Iowa looked before settlement. Eastern Bluebirds flitted there among the butterflies until their nesting boxes fell into disrepair. Less than .1% of our native tall grass prairie remains today—each parcel a valuable resource for study and seed collection for those attempting to restore or reconstruct prairies. Drought resistant prairies bloom from spring until frost, with little maintenance.

Much to my dismay, my last daylight visit to the cemetery revealed the magnificent prairie grasses and forbs mown flat, with piles of dirt dumped on part of it to even its undulations. Perhaps others, as I would like to be laid to rest in a peaceful, natural setting. But, at what price? To destroy its appeal in order to eke out a few more gravesites is shortsighted. Polk City is a rapidly growing area, and this historic spot should not be sacrificed when a new burial site is clearly needed. It is not too late to save it.

Sincerely,  
Carol Berrier  
530 N.E. 4th St.  
Ankeny, Iowa 50021-1956  
(151) 965-8242



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## Snow Goose Migration Assistance Needed

If you live in or frequent areas in or near snow goose migration country in Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, North Dakota or Minnesota, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is interested in any neck collar observations you obtain off snow geese and Ross' geese. We are looking at movement within and in and out of the Rainwater Basin area of south central Nebraska. If you are fairly certain you will be encountering snow goose flocks and would like to learn the secrets of finding and reading collars on snow and Ross' geese, I can provide you with a packet which includes instructions and our observation data sheets. If you would like a packet, please contact Laurie Hookham at the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (402-471-5597 or [lhookham@ngpc.state.ne.us](mailto:lhookham@ngpc.state.ne.us)).

Susan Traylor  
School of Natural Resource Sciences  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
402-471-5480



## Clip and Join

Don't forget gift memberships!

If you shop at Brekke's for your bird needs, please show them the coupon below, so they know Audubon members are shopping there! If people don't use the coupon or mention it, the Brekke coupon will probably be dropped next year. This coupon as well as the above coupon from Wild Birds Unlimited generate money for the Big Bluestem Audubon Society.

### 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 Al Johnson, Membership Chair, 3912 Squaw Road, Ames, Iowa 50014.

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

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Offer good until March 31, 2002.

## Field Trips

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

### January

- 12 **Ann Munn Woods and Emma McCarthy Lee Park** followed by a **Chili lunch!** at Al Ravenscroft's home. Meet at WBU to carpool to Al's home in west Ames.
- 26 **Tour de Feeders**—Watch birds at some of the best backyard bird feeder setups in the area. Meet at WBU to carpool.

### February

- 9 **Owls and Dinner.** Meet at WBU at 1:00 pm. Note the time. We'll look for owls and other winter residents, finish up around dark, then go out for dinner.
- 23 **Bald Eagle Days** at Lake Red Rock. We'll watch Bald Eagles at one of the best locations in the state, look for other waterfowl and gulls, then head into Pella for the Eagle Program (includes live eagles and other birds of prey), followed by lunch.

*Big Bluestem Flyer*  
Rebecca A. Shivvers, Editor  
*Big Bluestem Audubon Society*  
2380 220th Street  
Boone, Iowa 50036

*We welcome new members!*



## Welcome New Members!

Gary and Mary Anne Begg, Steve Brekke, Russel Carlson, Lynne Brookes and Derrick Grimmer, John Clary, Jill Clausen, Robert Deroy, Lowell and Mary Diersen, Gary Eyesly, Doug Flournoy, Kendall and Christa Fosse, Mr. and Mrs. Dave Fox, Gary Forster, Tom Gildehaus, Susan Goranson, Rosemary Hall, Bruce Hann, Adrienne Heno, Mr. & Mrs. John Hill, Yal Hinz, Shirley Huck, Mary Kautzky, Michael Kile, Irene Kimball, Max Knauer, Fran Leding, John Liepa, Kevin and Laura Meinert, Diane Morain, Anita Ogara, Cindi Olinger, Richard Safris, Tom Sowers, E. T. and Lucille Taylor, Perry Thostenson, Gary Twedt, Ken and Irene Walter, Mr. and Mrs. Sean Whalen, John Wassenaar, Dave Wetrich, Tom Wetrich,



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