

Big Bluestem Flyer

March, 1995

Vol. 30, No. 6

Monthly Meeting

The California Desert- A Natural History of some lesser known areas by Wolfgang Oesterreich

Thursday, March 16, 7:30 PM, Room 2532, Veterinary Medicine Building, Iowa State University

Wolfgang Oesterreich will share with us some of the scenes, wildflowers, reptiles and other elements of the natural history of the lesser known areas of California's Desert. Wolf explored the desert over a couple of years as a Biological Technician for the Bureau of Land Management and did a study of the desert tortoise. He lived in California for 15 years and graduated from Humboldt State University. Currently, Wolf works as a Biological Science Technician for USDA-ARS at the National Soil Tilth Lab in Ames. An active member of the Big Bluestem Audubon Society, Wolf is an avid birder and regular field trip participant and leader.

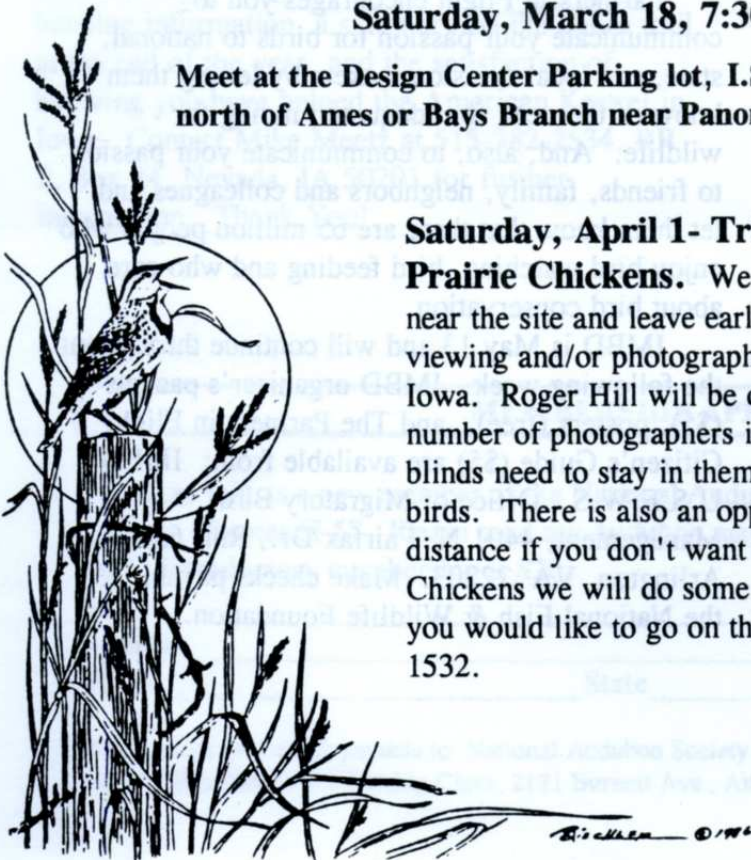
Field Trips

Saturday, March 18, 7:30 AM - Trip to view waterfowl

Meet at the Design Center Parking lot, I.S.U. We will either go to Little Wall Lake north of Ames or Bays Branch near Panora in Guthrie Co.

Saturday, April 1- Trip to Ringgold Co. to view & photograph

Prairie Chickens. We will stay overnight Friday, March 31 in a motel near the site and leave early (4:30 AM) Saturday morning to set up for viewing and/or photographing Prairie Chickens on their lek in southern Iowa. Roger Hill will be our guide. There is only room for a limited number of photographers in the blinds that will be set up. People in the blinds need to stay in them until about 9 AM so as not to disturb the booming birds. There is also an opportunity to view the Chickens from a further distance if you don't want to take pictures. After viewing the Prairie Chickens we will do some birding in the vicinity. Call Mark Widrlechner if you would like to go on this trip (if you have not already signed up) 233-1532.



February Field Trip Report

The eight Big Bluestem Audubon Society members that participated in our field trip on Saturday, February 18, enjoyed an unseasonably pleasant morning exploring the Des Moines River valley. Across the river from Camp Hantesa, the brush was thick and the weed seeds still in good enough supply for large numbers of cardinals and other seed eaters. Interesting finds included Harris's and White-throated Sparrows and a Rufous-sided Towhee (the western, spotted race). A possible Pileated Woodpecker was observed briefly as well. Downriver, on the east side of the river south of the E 57 bridge, Wolf Oesterreich led us to a large seep with open water, where snipe and a thrasher were located on the Boone County Bird Count. These birds could not be found, but we did see good numbers of Red-headed Woodpeckers, Bald Eagles, and a few Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawks.

Natural Areas of Ames

At our February 16 meeting, Bill Norris of the I.S.U. Botany Department presented a very informative program on a survey of natural areas in Ames and the surrounding two mile area. He told us about a ranking system he developed to differentiate higher quality areas from lesser quality areas. His findings are to be used by the City of Ames as it writes its new Land Use Policy Plan. One high quality area identified is the wooded area west of the YMCA property. It will take diligence by Ames citizens to make sure that these natural areas are protected.

International Migratory Bird Day, May 13

International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) is the hallmark event for Partners in Flight, the international coalition of organizations, agencies, academia and industry whose mission is to maintain populations of migratory birds. The theme for IMBD, 1995 is "Sharing a Passion for Birds".

Sharing your excitement for birds and birding is important to successful conservation of birds. Many species of neotropical migratory birds are at risk. Habitat loss has had the greatest impact on declines of these species.

Sixty five million Americans enjoy bird watching and bird feeding. Birders are a fast growing and potentially powerful constituency in the U.S. We outnumber golfers by more than two to one. We spent over \$18.1 billion on memberships, optics and photography equipment, birding trips and trip related costs in 1991 alone in the U.S.

Partners in Flight encourages you to communicate your passion for birds to national, state, and local decision makers by letting them know of the need for adequate funding for wildlife. And, also, to communicate your passion to friends, family, neighbors and colleagues and let them know that there are 65 million people who enjoy bird watching, bird feeding and who care about bird conservation.

IMBD is May 13 and will continue throughout the following week. IMBD organizer's packets (\$5), posters (free), and The Partners in Flight Citizen's Guide (\$5) are available from: IMBD, U.S.F.W.S., Office of Migratory Bird Management, 4401 N. Fairfax Dr., Rm. 634, Arlington, VA 22203. Make checks payable to the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation.

Audubon Strategic Planning

The National Audubon Society is in the middle of a strategic planning process to help it refocus and carry out its mission better. Chapters have been asked to contribute their suggestions and our Board has met to discuss ideas and has communicated them to National Audubon and the consultant working on the strategic plan. In the near future some 1200 members nationwide will be phoned and surveyed about suggestions for the strategic plan. We hope you will respond to the phone survey if you are called and share your concerns about how to make Audubon better.

Spring River Conference

The twenty fifth annual Spring River Conference will be held March 17-19 in Kearney, Nebraska. This is an opportunity to see thousands of sandhill cranes as they migrate north stopping along the Platte River in central Nebraska. The Conference will feature talks on wildlife and the sandhill cranes plus provide an opportunity to meet Audubon members in the West Central region. On Friday evening there will be a reception for the Board of Directors of the National Audubon Society. If you would like a conference brochure call Sherry Dragula, 233-1532.

American Kestrel "Adopt-A-Box" Program

Funds are being sought to help offset expenses incurred while maintaining the American Kestrel next box trail, which is located along I-35 in Story and Hamilton counties. For just \$35, you or your group can adopt a nest box for one year. You will receive a nesting and fledging report of your nest box, a color photograph of one of the nestlings, banding information, a summary on the entire trail at the end of the year, and the satisfaction of knowing you have helped the American Kestrel in Iowa. Contact Mike Meetz at 515-382-2534, RR 2, Box 24, Nevada, IA 50201 for further information. Thank You!

Three Events- April 8

There will be a morning Field Trip to view migrating shorebirds and waterfowl on April 8. Watch the next newsletter for meeting time and place but we will be going to Colo Ponds and Hendrickson Marsh.

At Noon, the Iowa Audubon Council will be meeting in Ames, probably at the Conservation Center, that meeting will last until 5. Big Bluestem members are welcome. Dinner with Council members will follow at a local restaurant. Call Sherry Dragula for details, 233-1532.

At 7:30 PM, Mike Meetz will lead a Woodcock Walk at the Izaak Walton League Park on Stagecoach Rd. Meet at the gate at 7:30 PM, call Mike for details at 382-2534.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

I'd like to join as a new member of the National Audubon Society and of the Big Bluestem Audubon Society, Chapter H-57. Please send me *Audubon* magazine, *The Big Bluestem Flyer* and my membership card. Introductory membership is \$20.

Name _____
Address _____
Town _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Please make your check payable to: National Audubon Society and include chapter code H-57 on the check. Send To: Mark Widrlechner, Membership Chair, 2121 Burnett Ave., Ames, Iowa 50010

Upcoming Events

- April 8, Saturday , Field Trip to see waterfowl at Hendrickson's Marsh & Colo Ponds
Iowa Audubon Council Meeting- Ames
Woodcock Watch at Izaak Walton League Park, Ames
April 20, Thursday, Meeting: Wildlife Diversity Program
May 14, Sunday, Warbler viewing at McFarland Park
May 18, Thursday, Meeting: Entomology by Ken Holscher
May 20-21 Campout & Birder's Breakfast at Springbrook State Park

Iowa Birdline

The Iowa Birdline is a recorded summary of interesting bird sightings updated weekly.
You can call the Birdline at **319-338-9881**, and hear a recorded message and leave a message of your interesting sightings.

Big Bluestem Audubon Society- Board Members

OFFICERS:

President: Mark Widrlechner, 233-1532
Vice-President: Jon Bahrenfus, 432-3396
Secretary: Joyce Bahrenfus, 432-3396
Treasurer: Barb Bettis, 232-4863

Additional BOARD MEMBERS:

Kay Niyo, 233-8803
Rebecca Shivvers, 292-0691
Lloyd Crim, 432-5026
Don Sanderson, 232-2227
Stan Cyran, 292-4876

Newsletter Editor: Sherry Dragula, 233-1532

Printed on Recycled Paper

BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY
2121 BURNETT AVE.
AMES, IOWA 50010

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 131
AMES, IA