

Big Bluestem Audubon Society, Ames, Iowa  
March, 1984  
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John Stampe, Pres. 294-3370  
Tom Davis, Vice-Pres. 292-1869  
Laura Marek, Sec. 292-9762  
Judy Shearer, Treas. 292-4430  
Judy van der Linden, Ed. 232-3450

### MARCH MEETING

**WHEN:** Tuesday, March 13, at 7:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Room 205, Bessey Hall, ISU campus

**WHO:** Paul Anderson, member of the Citizens Advisory Council to the Story County Conservation Board; Jim Patchett, Story County Recreation Planner, and Cecelia Burnett, former Story County naturalist intern

**TOPIC:** The Future of Story County Environmental Education. Current proposals and a movement to create a permanent nature center and outdoor education program in the county will be discussed.

### UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

**March Field Trip** -- Jim Murdock will lead a field trip on Saturday, March 31, leaving at 9 a.m. from the parking lot south of C.Y. Stephens Auditorium. Jim will announce the destination of the trip at the March 13 chapter meeting.

**Conservation Committee** -- The Conservation Committee will meet on Monday, March 19, at 5 p.m. at the home of Peter and Judy van der Linden, 610 9th St., Ames. We will be making plans for this spring's tree planting project and discussing any other business that may arise. Anyone with an interest in conservation is welcome to attend.

**IQU Meeting** -- Mark the weekend of May 5th on your calendars. The spring meeting of the Iowa Ornithologist's Union will be held that weekend at Indianola, hosted by the Rolling Hills Audubon Society. Contact Hank Zaletel for more information (Ames -- work, 239-1379, or Colo -- home, 377-2889).

**April Newsletter** -- Deadline for submitting items for the April newsletter will be Thursday, March 29 at 5 p.m. Send copy to Judy van der Linden, 610 9th St., Ames.

**Board Meeting** -- The society's executive board will meet April 4 at 7:30 p.m. in room 210, Bessey Hall, ISU campus. Anyone may attend.

## FIRST NEWSLETTER?

A number of you are receiving this newsletter for the first time. Our membership lists from National Audubon Society show that you recently joined or transferred into the Ames area Big Bluestem chapter of the society. We welcome you and hope you will note and take advantage of the monthly programs and field trips this group offers. Our chapter also welcomes volunteers to serve on committees and provide manpower for special projects. If you have particular areas of interest or expertise, don't hesitate to contact a chapter officer (listed at top of page 1), who will put you in touch with the proper person.

Again, welcome and we hope you enjoy the Big Bluestem Audubon Society.

## CONSERVATION/THE ENVIRONMENT

Lead Versus Steel -- [This is the time of year when thousands of ducks pass through Iowa on their way north. Unfortunately, many of those ducks will be poisoned by lead shot left in their feeding areas, and eagles and other predators are often poisoned when they feed on the poisoned ducks.] The Iowa House of Representatives will soon consider a bill which would require the use of steel shot for waterfowl hunting throughout Iowa, and a hearing will be held on the bill this month. Two Bluestem members plan to attend, and would be happy to take others. The hearing will be held in Des Moines in the evening, and the date and location will be announced in the Des Moines Register.

Please consider writing your representative if you cannot attend the hearing -- this bill is already the subject of heavy lobbying by pro-lead-shot hunters. More information is available on this issue, and if you would like a mailing sent to you, please contact Sherry Dragula (292-4014) or Cindy Hildebrand (232-3807).

Clean Water Act -- Votes in the U.S. House and Senate will be taken on the Clean Water Act in early March. The status of the act, as of Feb. 21, is summarized here.

In the House of Representatives, the Clean Water Renewal Act, HR 3282, a strong reauthorization package which the National Audubon Society supports, has 100 cosponsors but is bogged down in subcommittee. HR 4037, Congressman Oberstar's (D-MN) amendment to control non-point sources of pollution, is also supported by the national society.

In the Senate, Senator Chafee's bill, S 431, to reauthorize and amend the Clean Water Act, has been approved by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. National Audubon supports this bill, as well as S 2006, a compromise bill also passed by committee that addresses non-point sources of pollution. Senator Wallop (R-WY) is attempting to weaken Section 404 of the act by proposing an amendment that would bar the Army Corps of Engineers from considering the effects of water diversion projects on wetlands. Senator Symms (R-ID) is considering proposing an amendment that would weaken the law's current provisions on the pretreatment of wastes discharged into sewers.

Action on the Senate floor has been scheduled for March 12 and 13.

## THOUGHTS AFIELD -- a monthly column by Tom Davis

The Wings of Spring -- The light tint of green leaves across the river valley seems only inches away. The wispy clouds are within reach from the treetops. The gentle April breeze blows from the south, ushering in the crisp spring air and the first wave of arriving migrants. It is a special day -- the wings of spring have returned to the Missouri River valley.

The Snow Geese, brilliant white against the turquoise sky, have arrived from Texas and Louisiana. Some will rest here briefly. Others pass overhead, flying

(Cont. )

nonstop for 60 hours, an average of 1100 Km per day, to arrive at their arctic nesting ground in the tundra near James Bay. A Golden Plover is sighted among the shorebirds probing for food on the muddy shallows. The plover follows a similar but much longer path of migration, wintering in South America and breeding among the sparse tundra vegetation of Alaska.

A raft of Redheads rides the waves of a reservoir above the dam. Canvasbacks, Redheads and other waterfowl follow an east-west migration route just now returning from the salty Atlantic Ocean, across the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, to breed here among the prairie potholes of the plains. A Gray-cheeked Thrush darts from branch to log among the sprouting understory vegetation. It moves about 200 Km per day northward, seeking adequate food and breeding territories. A Black-and-white Warbler, clinging upside down, nuthatch-like, under a worn oak trunk, searches for the season's first worms and beetles. It moves north more slowly -- about 32 Km per day -- almost in a determined, methodical manner, so as not to miss any hiding places in the bark of old trees along the way.

For reasons unknown, birds tend to move north faster in the spring than they move south in the fall. The excitement must be contagious. Other birds pass unseen, flying at night, many over a mile high, driven by a sense of direction that remains today as one of nature's best-kept secrets. Geese have been observed flying at about 20,000 feet on their migrational adventures. The physiology of breathing, maintaining body temperature and, in addition, flying at that elevation, is an incredible ability.

A delicate, flute-like call announces the return of the Veery back to its favorite riverbank thicket. It may lose 1.3% of its body weight per hour during its flight back from the South. The White-crowned Sparrow has also returned, but may be in better shape, since it is able to increase its body weight from 24 to 34 grams in four days by not "eating like a bird" before its stressful flight north begins. The warblers will soon be here officially proclaiming the start of spring and making the riverbank treetops come alive with the flashy wings of migration. Hopefully in the weeks to come we can all experience the beauty and share in the excitement of spring migration along our Iowa rivers.

### PLACES TO GO, BIRDS TO SEE...

The Flyer hopes to publish a list of birds to see and birding "hot spots" each issue during the spring. Reports will be compiled as close to publication time as possible, but remember that spring migrants may leave an area quickly if the weather is favorable. For the latest information, consult the person whose name or initials follows each entry.

#### Date sighted -- Location -- Birds seen -- Contact for latest information

1. Feb. 25-26 -- Old Hwy 30 near Colo, flooded fields -- 200-400 Canada Geese, 200 Mallards, 8-10 Canvasbacks, Pintail -- Hank Zaletel (HZ), 377-2889, evenings
2. Feb. 25-26 -- Hendrickson Marsh -- Canada Geese, Pintails, Common Mergansers-- HZ
3. February -- South & east of Hwys 65 & 30 interchange -- Great Horned Owls -- HZ

Hank will help you pinpoint the location of any of these sightings. He also notes that hawks are migrating now, especially Rough-legged Hawks, and recommends birders keep their eyes out for these.

### ETCETERA

Apology Received -- Organizers of the Christmas Bird Count tally would like to apologize for any inconvenience caused by the necessity to move tally headquarters at the last minute. Counters were to meet for the tally at the YMCA Interpretive Center, but found the doors locked and had to move to Lynn Fuhrer (Cont.)

Lodge nearby. Janice Heling, director of the Interpretive Center Advisory Committee, said in a letter of apology to Bluestem members that a misunderstanding between herself and the person designated to ready the center was chiefly responsible.

Membership List -- Most of the incongruities have been worked out of Big Bluestem's complicated membership lists, according to Janet Graver, Membership Committee chair, but a completed list for members is still in the making. The membership committee has spent hours sorting names and addresses that have been confused because National Audubon Society recently employed a new computer system for its membership data. Individuals can help Janet by checking the expiration date on their most recent Audubon membership card to be certain they are current members. Those renewing their membership should be sure to indicate on the renewal form that they wish to be affiliated with the Big Bluestem chapter (chapter #H-57) in Ames. If you have questions about your current status with the national or local organization, contact Janet at 232-8185 in the evenings.

Northwoods Programs -- Northwoods Audubon Center, Rt. 1, Sandstone, MN, offers a number of reasonably-priced weekend programs this spring, ranging in subject from maple syruping and handling wilderness emergencies to canoeing. Contact Judy van der Linden (232-3450, evenings) for more information.

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