

Big Bluestem Flyer

Volume 22, No. 1

September, 1987

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, September 15, 1987, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

Room 181-1, College of Design, ISU Campus

"Common Migrating Raptors Found in Iowa:

A Field Guide and Natural History"

Doug Reeves, Non-game Biologist, Iowa DNR

(Refreshments: Edwards & Meetz)

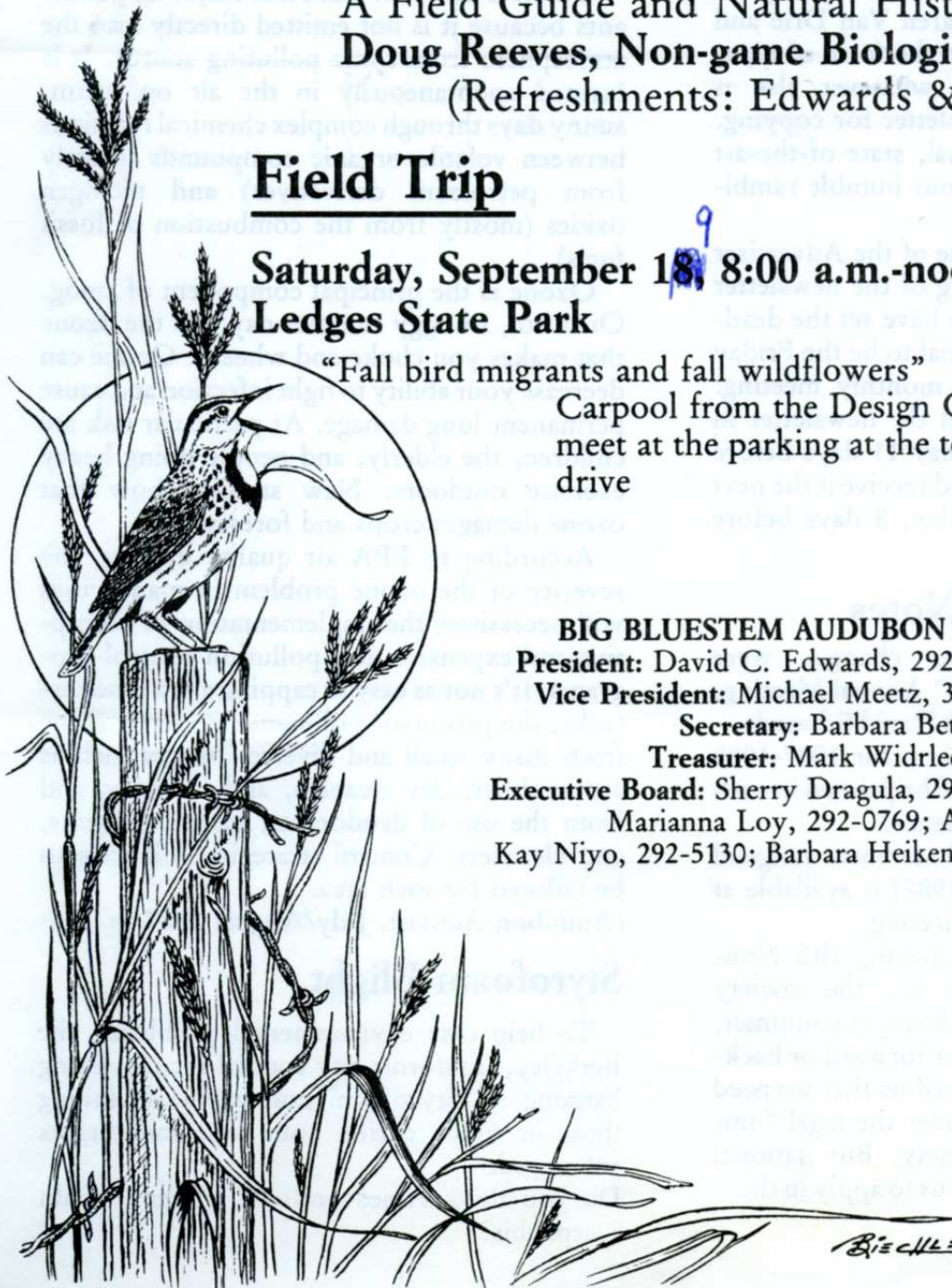
Field Trip

Saturday, September 18, 8:00 a.m.-noon,

Ledges State Park

"Fall bird migrants and fall wildflowers"

Carpool from the Design Center parking lot or meet at the parking at the top of the Ledges canyon drive



BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS

President: David C. Edwards, 292-3790, Membership Chair

Vice President: Michael Meetz, 382-2534, Program Chair

Secretary: Barbara Bettis, 232-4863

Treasurer: Mark Widrlechner, 292-4014

Executive Board: Sherry Dragula, 292-4014, Conservation Chair

Marianna Loy, 292-0769; Andy Fix, 296-7554

Kay Niyo, 292-5130; Barbara Heikens, 296-2999, Education Chair

Notes on the Newsletter

Our society newsletter has many changes this year. First, we have lost the able service of Judy van der Linden who edited the newsletter through many years of quality development. We hope that we can maintain her standards.

We begin this year with a beautiful and appropriate new logo prepared by Dean Biechler. We plan also to use the design on stationary for official letters and are thinking about patches, clothing, and the like to be available to the members and for sale to the public.

Continuing this year, we are accepting the gracious contribution of Karen Van Drie and her staff at the Advertiser in the form of typesetting, composition, and whatever else is needed to prepare the newsletter for copying. Their work is a professional, state-of-the-art product that gives class to our humble ramblings.

To meet the available time of the Advertiser people and to assure mailing of the newsletter well before the meeting, we have set the deadline for submission of material to be the Friday that is 18 days before the monthly meeting. That should allow us to get the newsletter in the mail to you by the Friday 11 days before the meeting, and most should receive it the next day or the following Monday, 8 days before the meeting.

Chapter Business Notes

--The proposed bylaws changes were adopted at the May "official" Annual Meeting. If you wish a copy, please ask David Edwards.

--The officers of the society for 1987-1988 and the committee chairs will be printed in each newsletter for your convenience.

--A roster of all National members assigned to our society [as of June 1987] is available at the monthly membership meeting.

--The long process of achieving IRS Non-profit organization status for the society achieved another milestone during the summer, but we're not sure if we went forward or backward. The IRS agent informed us that we need not apply because we fit under the legal "umbrella" of the national society. But national folks were the ones who told us to apply in the

first place. We are awaiting word from national on this. Recall that the reason we wanted this at all was to get much less expensive mailing rates for this newsletter. In the meantime, because of the increase in number of newsletters being sent, we have been qualifying for a bulk mailing rate that is nearly as low as that for non-profit. The difference is probably not worth the effort we have been exerting. Sigh!

On Air Quality

Ozone is different than other major air pollutants because it is not emitted directly into the atmosphere from some polluting source. It is formed spontaneously in the air on warm, sunny days through complex chemical reactions between volatile organic compounds (mostly from petroleum derivatives) and nitrogen oxides (mostly from the combustion of fossil fuels).

Ozone is the principal component of smog. On a hot, smoggy summer day, it's the ozone that makes you choke and wheeze. Ozone can decrease your ability to fight infection and cause permanent lung damage. At particular risk are children, the elderly, and people doing heavy exercise outdoors. New studies show that ozone damages crops and forests.

According to EPA air quality experts, the severity of the ozone problem in many cities will necessitate the implementation of disruptive and expensive new pollution control programs. It's not as easy as capping a few smokestacks; the precursor pollutants to ozone come from many small and diverse sources such as automobiles, dry cleaners, and bakeries, and from the use of deodorants, paints, solvents, and cleansers. Control strategies will have to be tailored for each area.

(Audubon Activist, July/August 1987, p. 16)

Styrofoam Blight

To help ease environmental problems, the Berkeley, California city council is considering banning all Styrofoam containers, including those in which coffee, soup and hamburgers are served.

Do you think Ames or Iowa citizens would accept this?

National Audubon Society Restructuring

Recall that we received word in May that the National Audubon Society Board had ordered a major restructuring of the regional offices and their services to chapters because they believed that they needed to reduce the operating budget. The proposal was quite complex but it meant that most chapters would have no regional staff or at best, sharply-reduced professional assistance. During the summer many chapters across the country registered strong protests and proposed various actions—from state withdraw from the national affiliation to movements to acquire proxy votes for national board elections. The national staff met with regional groups of state and local members (Cindy Hildbrand met with a regional group at Kansas City upon one day's notice - thanks Cindy!).

The Big Bluestem Executive Board met during the summer to discuss the possible positions and actions to be taken. We agreed to present a statement of our interests that could also be used by the Iowa Audubon Council.

In the meantime, as a result of the intense membership objections, the national plan was again modified. The latest plan is one of keeping the regional offices but reshuffling them to include larger areas. We are now allied with the West Central Regional Office in Manhattan, Kansas directed by Ron Klataske. This is an existing office including Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma, and now having Iowa, South Dakota, and North Dakota added to it. (Former member Dave Newhouse is in charge of a region to be administrated from Chicago.)

More dialog is to take place at the national convention underway now, and we will have to wait to see what the eventual impact will be of the final changes.

Iowa Audubon Council Legislative News from Cindy Hildebrand

The good news is that the bill turned out better than expected, considering the attempted hatchet job in the Senate. The League of

Women Voters of Iowa, the Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club, and environment-minded legislators all felt they could support the final bill, though it was weaker in some areas than desired. The bill does provide funding and programs to make a reasonable good start on developing solutions to groundwater pollution problems. A great deal will depend on making sure that the agency rules resulting from the bill are good ones, and information on that will follow.

The bad news is that the groundwater bill provided a scary demonstration of the powerful special-interest funding and organization which can work against environmental legislation. Such special-interest efforts can be quite effective, even if the general public supports the bill in question. One columnist speculated that many Iowans who supported the groundwater bill didn't bother to contact their legislators because they figured that on such an important issue, the Legislature would surely do the right thing. That kind of assumption can be dangerous. There is no substitute for letters and phone calls -- many thanks to those of you who made the effort.

(July 22, 1987)

Significant Quotes

"...Okoboji is a lively, fun place -- where you can find and do almost anything that entertains you.

"For all its openness and easy public access, Spirit Lake seems barren and sterile and funless for anyone who doesn't find some kind of ultimate in solitary fishing. It's a desert that has some water." (James Flansburg, Des Moines Register editorial writer, Friday, August 7, 1987, p. 154).

Significant Quotes, con't.

"An industry group fighting acid rain legislation outspent all other Capitol Hill lobbyists last year. Citizens for the Sensible Control of Acid Rain, which posed as a grassroots group but was financed largely by coal and electricity companies, reported that it ran up a tab of \$3,028,235. Most of the money financed a massive phone and direct mail campaign urging opposition to strict emission controls. Targeting senior citizens in particular, the group warned of huge increases in electric rates, and even provided a ready-made letter for citizens to sign and send off to lawmakers." (Audubon Activist, July/August 1987, p. 13)

"Several states have passed or are considering strong groundwater protection laws...the goal of (the Iowa) legislation is to prevent groundwater contamination, and if necessary restore tainted water to a drinkable state. This effort attracted chemical industry lobbyists from all over the country who had never before been seen in the halls of the Iowa assembly; among those fending off the big guns was Audubon Iowa lobbyist Cindy Hildebrand." (Audubon Activist, May 1987, p. 20).

Big Bluestem Audubon Society
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Acid Rain

Acidity inhibits the binding of nitrogen-producing bacteria to plant cells, according to scientists at the University of Michigan. They said they feared that soil tainted by acid rain might hinder or halt the necessary synthesis of nitrogen in legumes, such as beans, peas and many forage crops. These play important roles in restoring nitrogen, a crucial nutrient for plant growth, to soils.

The scientists studied rhizobial bacteria, which produce enzymes that legumes need to convert nitrogen into nitrates, a form that plants can use for growth. The scientists found that rhizobial bacteria in a solution whose pH was less than 5.3 (7 is neutral) did not bind to plant cells. Acid rain may leave the soil acidic enough to halt the binding process, they suggested.

Big Bluestem Audubon Society is participating in the national society's acid rain measurement program. We will report on the local results beginning in the next issue.

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