

BIG BLUESTEM FLYER

Newsletter of the Mid-Iowa Chapter of the National Audubon Society

Volume 25, No. 4

December 1990

Monthly Meeting

Member's Slide Show and Holiday Party

Thursday December 13, 7:30 PM, Room 181, Design Center ISU.
Please bring some of your favorite slides and a snack or treat to share. See details inside.

Field Trips

Christmas Bird Counts - details inside

Ames Area - Saturday December 15
Contact Steve Dinsmore, 292-3152

Saylorville - Sunday December 16
Contact Steve Dinsmore, 292-3152

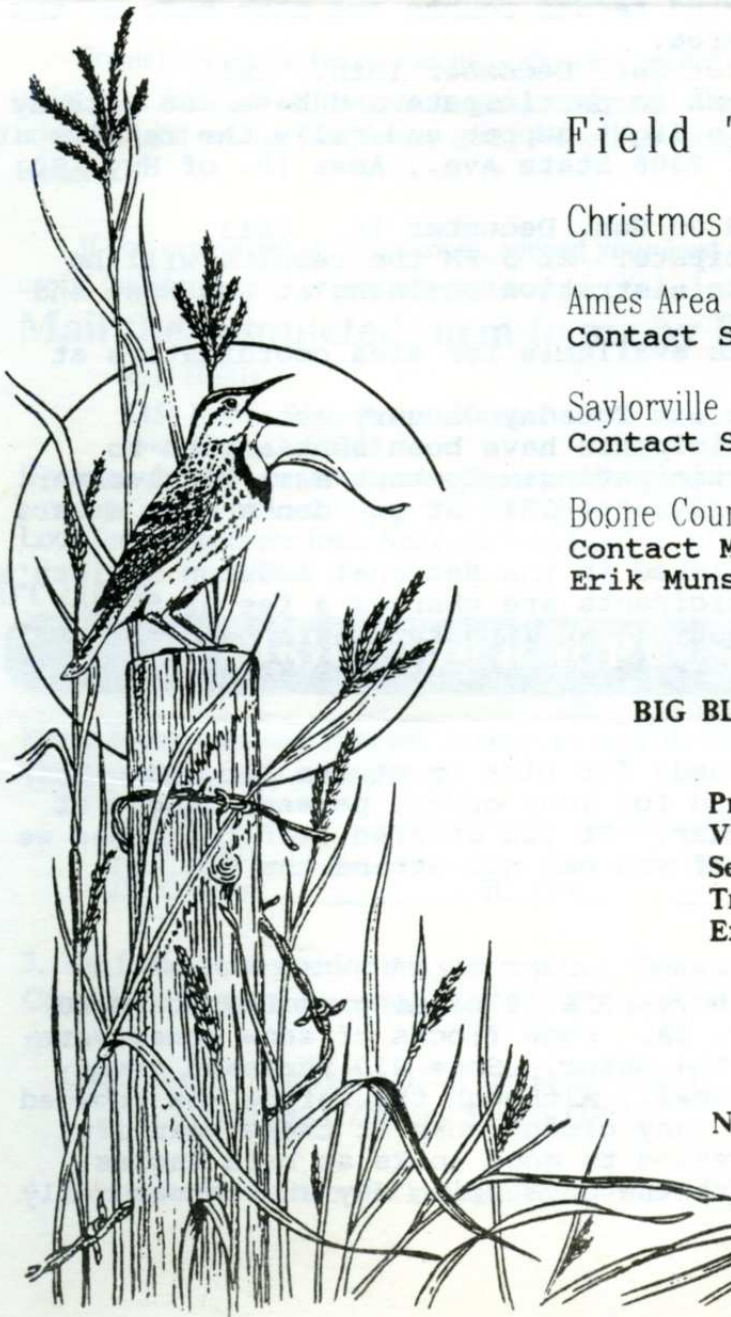
Boone County - Tuesday January 1
Contact Mark Widrlechner, 292-4014 or
Erik Munson (after Dec. 18), 292-1712

BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS 1990-1991

President: Sherry Dragula, 292-4014
Vice-President: Andy Fix, 233-4956
Secretary: Kay Niyo, 292-5130
Treasurer: Mark Widrlechner, 292-4014
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Diane Hellwig, 232-8185
Judy Shearer, 296-7512
Tom Rosburg, 377-2930

Newsletter Editor and Membership Chair
David Edwards, 292-3790



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Member's Slideshow & Party

Our December 13 meeting will feature your slides and good cheer. Please bring some of your slides of: birds for us to identify, natural areas you visited this year, or other nature-related slides you think would interest the group. Also please bring a snack or treat to share. Leftovers will be saved for the Ames Bird Count party at the Edwards' house.

Bird Counts

The 91st North American Christmas Bird Count will be held at 1500 locations from Dec. 15 through Jan. 3. You are invited to join with 42,000 birders in censusing the birds in a defined area on one chosen day.

You have three opportunities to participate in local counts. You do not need experience to join in a count. Experienced leaders are placed in charge of an area and other birders, including those who can only go for part of a day, will be assigned to them. Groups vary from 2-6, depending upon the area to be covered and how many wish to participate. A final group tally is scheduled at dark. Bird feeder counts are also made on the same day as the field count for an area.

The Ames Area Count is scheduled for Sat. December 15th. Call Steve Dinsmore at 292-3152 if you wish to participate and have not already signed up. At sundown we will have a light supper and tally the results at the home of Dave and Jeanne Edwards, 2308 State Ave., Ames (S. of Hwy. 30, N. of Oakwood Rd.).

The Saylorville Count will be held on Sun. December 16. Call Steve Dinsmore at 292-3152 to participate. At 5 PM the results will be tallied at the Corps of Engineers Administration Building at the West end of Saylorville Dam.

Steve will have information packets available for area coordinators at the December 13 meeting.

The Boone County Count will take place Tuesday January 1st. Boone area members and previous participants have been sent a card to return if they are interested in participating. Contact Mark Widrlechner, 292-4014 or Erik Munson (after Dec. 18), 292-1712 if you don't have a card and want to work on the count.

The results of the Counts are published in the National Audubon Society's journal, American Birds. Field participants are charged a fee of \$5 to cover the costs of publishing the results- an important data base for studies of bird populations. There are no fees for feeder watchers.

Chapter logo Sweatshirt & T-Shirt Pick-up

Sweatshirts and T-Shirts will be ready for pick up at the Dec. 13 meeting. If you have not already paid for your order, payment is due at the meeting when you pick up your order. If you ordered over the phone we will be calling to arrange delivery if you can not attend the Dec. 13 meeting.

DeSoto Field Trip

Eight people spent the weekend on Nov. 17 & 18 birding at DeSoto Bend Wildlife Refuge near Missouri Valley, IA. Huge flocks of snow geese were observed overhead, in fields and on the water. Some 230 thousand geese were there according to refuge personnel. Although the refuge was crowded with humans as well as geese, we had many close looks at these beautiful and graceful birds. We were also treated to good looks at bald eagles, seeing as many as 8 at one time. With the days being dry and unseasonably warm it was a wonderful weekend trip.

1991 WINTER BIRD FEEDER SURVEY

SPONSORED BY THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION

AND THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES NONGAME PROGRAM

On two consecutive days during January 24-27, 1991, observe your feeder and using this form, describe your feeder and record the birds that visited you.

In the space provided, list the highest number of each species that you saw together at any one time. For example, if you saw 10 juncos at 9:00, 11 at 12:00 and 7 at 4:00, the number you should record is 11. If males and females can be distinguished (cardinals, downy woodpecker etc.) record the combined total. For example, if you saw 3 male cardinals at 11:00 then 1 male and 2 females at 2:00, record 5 cardinals—the highest count for the males and the highest count for the females combined.

Count only on the two consecutive days and record only the birds that you see at your feeder, under your feeder or in the trees around your feeder. Do not count birds which just flew past your house and did not use your feeder area. We want information only about birds influenced by your feeders.

If you cannot get an exact count, **record your best estimate**. An honest estimate is far more useful than 'umpteen' or 'too many to count.'

Mail the completed form to me by February 12, 1991

R. J. Hollis
3351 Lower West Branch Road
Iowa City, IA 52245

If you would like a personal reply, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope and be patient; it may take 12 months before I can get back to you. Look for results in the Iowa Nongame News and the I.O.U. newsletter.

Start Here

BIRDFEEDER SURVEY JANUARY 24-27, 1991

Please fill out carefully. Feel free to copy the form for friends and patrons.

Thank you and enjoy yourselves!

1. Name _____
2A. Address _____
2B. County _____ 2C. City _____ 2D. Zip _____

3. The feeder survey period this year runs from Thursday, January 24th to Sunday, January 27th. Count birds on two consecutive days only. Please record which days you counted birds for us in the space below.

Check one: ___ Thursday (1/24) and Friday (1/25) ___ Friday (1/25) and Saturday (1/26), or
___ Saturday (1/26) and Sunday (1/27).

4. Is your feeder in Town (including suburbs) or in the Country? Circle T or C

continued on other side

5. Check the **ONE** description which best describes the area within a 2-block circle around your feeder:
- suburban, houses with shrubs and small trees but few trees wider than 20 inches.
 - suburban bordered by: (circle 1) timber, grass, field or row crop.
 - town, neighborhood has many mature shade and street trees.
 - downtown with mostly buildings, sidewalks, roads, parking lots, high rises
 - pasture
 - row crop (corn, beans, etc.)
 - timber
 - farmstead with mature trees and shrubs around house.
6. Type and number of feeders: Thistle, Sunflower(only), Fruit, Safflower, Peanuts, Mixed seed, Peanut Butter, Suet, Cracked Sunflower, Corn, Millet(only), unfrozen water, other _____
7. On what date did you start feeding during 1990-91: About _____
8. Comments or additional description of your feeder or yard: _____

HIGHEST NUMBER SEEN FOR EACH SPECIES DURING TWO CONSECUTIVE DAYS

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Pheasant | <input type="checkbox"/> White-throated Sparrow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rock Dove (Common Pigeon) | <input type="checkbox"/> White-crowned Sparrow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Dove | <input type="checkbox"/> Harris' Sparrow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red-headed Woodpecker | <input type="checkbox"/> Dark-eyed Junco (All races) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red-bellied Woodpecker | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-winged Blackbird |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Downy Woodpecker | <input type="checkbox"/> Grackle (Common) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hairy Woodpecker | <input type="checkbox"/> Brown-headed Cowbird |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flicker (All races) | <input type="checkbox"/> Purple Finch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Jay | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Redpoll |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crow (American) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pine Siskin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black-capped Chickadee | <input type="checkbox"/> Goldfinch American |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tufted Titmouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Evening Grosbeak |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red-breasted Nuthatch | <input type="checkbox"/> House (English) Sparrow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White-breasted Nuthatch | <input type="checkbox"/> House Finch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brown Creeper | <input type="checkbox"/> (other) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Robin (American) | <input type="checkbox"/> (other) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cedar Waxwing | <input type="checkbox"/> (other) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Starling (European) | <input type="checkbox"/> (other) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cardinal (Northern) | <input type="checkbox"/> (other) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Sparrow (American) | <input type="checkbox"/> (other) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Song Sparrow | <input type="checkbox"/> TOTAL DIFFERENT SPECIES SEEN |

I would like to receive the free *Nongame News*.

I would like information about the Iowa Ornithologists Union which is a statewide bird organization.

If you see a rare or unusual bird, please report it to the Iowa birdline 319/338-9881.

Nominations sought for Chapter Candidate to National Audubon Board

Nominations are now open for the West Central Region's chapter-selected candidate to the National Audubon Society Board of Directors. Elections will be held in the spring. For further information and to make a suggestion contact Sherry Dragula.

Information available from Audubon

Solid Solutions for Solid Waste - a brochure which outlines actions people can take to reduce the garbage glut in their homes, offices and communities.

Top Ten Tips for Saving the Planet - a poster which features cartoons and useful tips on how an individual can make a difference. Recycling, water consumption, wildlife, and energy are among the topics covered.

Each is available from Information Services, National Audubon Society, 950 Third Ave., New York, New York 10022, 212-832-3200.

Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP)

Following is a report from Mike Meetz who is the BBAS representative to the Story County Resources Enhancement Committee.

One of the most important responsibilities of the County Resources Enhancement Committee is preparation of a five-year county REAP plan. Included in that is a one-year expenditure plan.

Of the 99 counties only 71 has completed their plan and submitted it to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) by their September/October newsletter printing. The Story County REAP committee completed its plan and submitted before the midsummer deadline. Because no precedents or guidelines were available, the task proved to be interesting and at times frustrating. It was learned later that the Story County plan was cited as a model and guide to the counties that were having trouble constructing theirs.

The importance of the five-year plan is evident during the grant writing process. Communities and organizations can submit grant proposals for funds for various local projects that meet REAP guidelines. A grant application will score higher for REAP grant money if it can be shown to fit into or fulfill a goal of the county five-year plan.

The following outline the mission and goals of the Story County plan:

- 1) Protect and enhance riparian greenbelts throughout Story County to create connected corridors of quality open spaces;
- 2) Protect and enhance right-of-ways along existing transportation routes including railroads, primary and secondary roads, especially those that link existing open spaces;
- 3) Protect and enhance the open spaces, especially those involving wetlands and prairie areas and existing parks;
- 4) Preserve and enhance the historical resources found in Story County;
- 5) Assist landowners and land managers in protecting and enhancing soil and water quality;
- 6) Expand environmental education opportunities for all age groups;
- 7) Complete, update, and publish a comprehensive inventory and a public guide of Story County's natural resources, including compilation of accurate maps of trails, hunting and nonhunting areas, endangered species, prairies, wetlands, woodlands, and savannahs;
- 8) Implement other plans to improve the environment of Story County.

January and February Chapter Meetings

The January and February meetings of the Chapter will be held at the State Forest Nursery off of S. Duff and Airport Rd. in Ames. This is a change from the calendar which was mailed in Sept. The dates remain the same, the third Thursday of the month.

Acid Rain Since May

Mike Meetz has been monitoring rainfall ("events") and reporting that information to us periodically. He is participating the National Audubon's Citizen's Acid Rain Monitoring Network. They summarize acidity of precipitation across the United States; a summary of three years' data has been provided to the U. S. Congress.

Acidity is measured on a pH scale which ranges from 0 to 14. Acid is at the lower end; for example lemon juice tests about 2. Distilled water is at 7. One whole number is a tenfold change in acidity. Normal rain is said to be 5.6. The test materials used are read to an accuracy of only 0.5 pH.

From Mike's data it seems clear that we do not have a problem in this area. He reported 29.5 inches of rain in the 31 events spread over six months. The amounts varied from 0.1 to 2.8 inches, and had pH from 5.0 to 6.25. If all the water was poured into one jar and measured, the pH would have been 5.69.

BIRDERS' HOTLINE

319/338-9881 for state-wide sightings.
712/262-5958 for northwest Iowa sightings.

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RENEW

