

BIG BLUESTEM FLYER

Volume 28, No. 4

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

December 1992

MONTHLY MEETING

HOLIDAY PARTY

MEMBERS' SLIDES, TREATS FOR THE BIRDS, TREATS FOR US

Thursday, December 10, 7:30 PM
Story County Conservation Center
McFarland Park, Ames

Please bring a "treat for the birds" at the Conservation Center. Seed, suet or a donation to purchase seed is needed. This is our Holiday meeting and the program will consist of members' slides from the past year. Bring some slides (about 10) to share. We will enjoy Holiday treats before and after the program, drinks will be provided, bring along a treat to share.

Co-sponsored by the Story County Conservation Board.

FIELD TRIPS

AMES AREA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Saturday, December 19

The Ames count is organized by David Edwards (292-3790) and Mike Meetz (382- 2534). Please call them with your questions. Feeder watchers especially are needed (people who count the birds at their feeders on count day). At the end of the day we will meet at the home of David & Jeanne Edwards, 2308 State Ave. for a tally and chili supper.

SAYLORVILLE AREA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Sunday, December 20

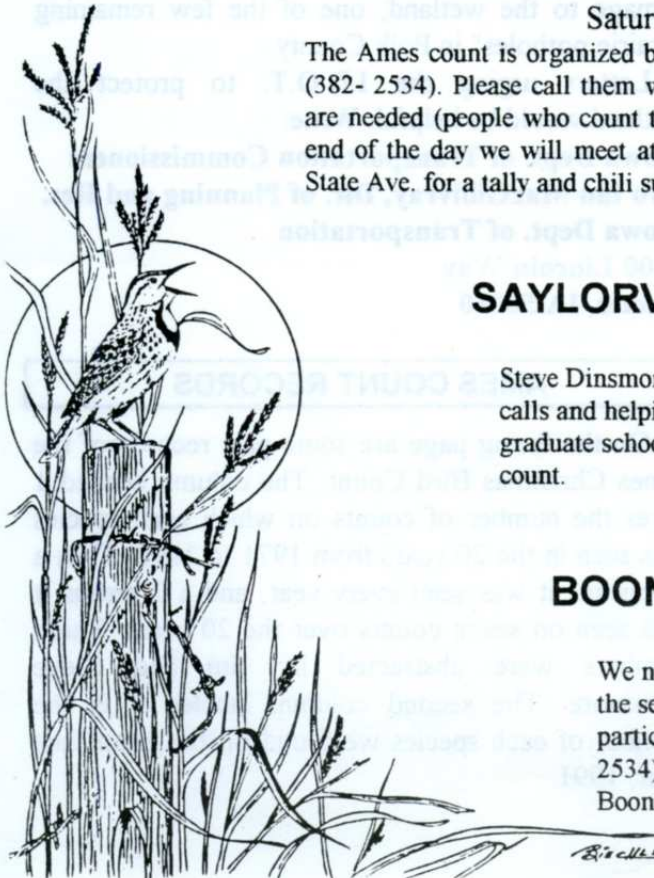
Steve Dinsmore is the count leader, assisted by his father, Jim, who is receiving calls and helping with the arrangements. Call Jim at 292-3152. Steve is away at graduate school but will be back in time to finalize count plans and lead the count.

BOONE AREA AREA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Saturday, January 2

We need more people for the Boone area count. There are lots of good areas in the seven mile radius of Boone that we are not able to search well. If you can participate in this count call David Edwards (292-3790) or Mike Meetz (382-2534) or Jon/Joyce Bahrenfus (432-3396).

Boone area feeder watchers are especially needed.



STATE ECOLOGIST NEEDED

There's an important vacuum in Iowa, the kind abhorred by Nature--we have no state ecologist. Dean Roosa resigned from that position several weeks ago, and may not be replaced unless concerned Iowans speak out. The position of the state ecologist is in the Bureau of Preserves and Ecological Services of the Department of Natural Resources. The Bureau used to have six staff members. One fulltime botanist was eliminated last year, and now that Dean Roosa is gone, four people are trying to carry what used to be a heavy work load for six.

Bureau work includes developing management plans for state preserves. The state preserve system was set up to protect some of our most valuable, high- quality natural areas. But money and staff for preserve management are limited. Some of Iowa's preserves, threatened by problems from outside their boundaries, and by their own small size need more help than they are getting. Unfortunately, the vacuum of an empty state ecologist position makes preserve planning and management even more difficult. It also hurts the critical effort to determine which Iowa plant species should be legally designated as threatened, endangered, or in need of special concern.

Iowa has lost more of its original landscape than any other state. Iowans depend on our state preserves to protect the best examples of our remaining natural heritage. We need to write to Department of Natural Resources Director Larry Wilson and Governor Terry Branstad and ask for a new state ecologist. ADDRESSES:

The Hon. Terry E. Branstad
Governor of Iowa
State Capitol
Des Moines, IA 50319

Mr. Larry J. Wilson
Director Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources
Wallace Building
Des Moines, IA 50319

Excerpted from Nov./Dec. "Armchair Activist"
by Cindy Hildebrand.

For further information contact Sherry Dragula at 233-1532.

NOVEMBER 7 FIELD TRIP REPORT

A light snow was falling on Saturday morning as two Big Bluestem members made their way to Red Rock Reservoir. We met up with members of the Iowa Ornithologists Union and birded three locations at Red Rock. Sightings of interest included: Bonaparte's Gull, Hooded Mergansers, and Common Loon. Some I.O.U. members saw a Red-throated Loon that morning on the Reservoir.

ENGELDINGER MARSH

The Polk County Conservation Board has agreed to purchase 81 acres of marsh complex known as Engeldinger Marsh in northeast Polk Co. Funds for the project came from state wildlife habitat stamps and conservation groups. The property is split by U.S. Highway 65, the Des Moines-Marshalltown diagonal that the Iowa Department of Transportation wants to widen to four lanes through the wetland. That could destroy much of its value. Conservation groups are suggesting the I.D.O.T. build the road around the marsh or develop low impact alternatives which would cause minimal damage to the wetland, one of the few remaining "prairie potholes" in Polk County.

Letters urging the I.D.O.T. to protect the wetland would be helpful. Write:

Iowa Dept. of Transportation Commissioners
c/o Ian MacGillivray, Dir. of Planning and Res.
Iowa Dept. of Transportation
800 Lincoln Way
Ames, IA 50010

AMES COUNT RECORDS

On the facing page are some past records of the Ames Christmas Bird Count. The column headed 1 gives the number of counts on which each species was seen in the 20 years from 1971 to 1990. Thus a 20 means it was seen every year, and a 7 means it was seen on seven counts over the 20 years. These numbers were abstracted by Jim and Steve Dinsmore. The second column, labeled 2 is the number of each species we found on the count last year, 1991.

AMES CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RECORDS

See the explanation on the facing page.

	1	2
DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT	1	
GREAT BLUE HERON	4	1
SNOW GOOSE	1	
CANADA GOOSE	8	7
AMERICAN BLACK DUCK	1	
MALLARD	17	8
NORTHERN PINTAIL	1	
GADWALL	1	
AMERICAN WIGEON	1	
LESSER SCAUP	3	
COMMON GOLDENEYE	1	
HOODED MERGANSER	1	
BALD EAGLE	2	1
NORTHERN HARRIER	9	2
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK	3	1
COOPER'S HAWK	5	
NORTHERN GOSHAWK	1	
RED-TAILED HAWK	20	17
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK	10	2
AMERICAN KESTREL	20	17
GYRFALCON		1
GRAY PARTRIDGE	5	3
RING-NECKED PHEASANT	20	20
WILD TURKEY	2	
NORTHERN BOBWHITE	10	
COMMON SNIPE	8	1
RING-BILLED GULL	1	
HERRING GULL	1	
ROCK DOVE	20	243
MOURNING DOVE	19	5
EASTERN SCREECH-OWL	16	
GREAT-HORNED OWL	20	4
BARRED OWL	18	1
LONG-EARED OWL	11	
SHORT-EARED OWL	8	
NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL	1	
BELTED KINGFISHER	16	3
RED-HEADED WOODPECKER	19	8
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER	20	53
YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER	8	
DOWNY WOODPECKER	20	98
HAIRY WOODPECKER	20	8
NORTHERN FLICKER	19	5
NORTHERN (RED-SHAFTED) FLICKER	2	
HORNED LARK	20	45
BLUE JAY	20	99
AMERICAN CROW	20	9200
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE	20	245

TUFTED TITMOUSE	19	2
RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH	15	1
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH	20	79
BROWN CREEPER	20	9
CAROLINA WREN	2	1
WINTER WREN	4	
RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET	5	
GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET	17	1
EASTERN BLUEBIRD	6	
HERMIT THRUSH	1	1
AMERICAN ROBIN	18	
NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD	1	
BROWN THRASHER	5	
CEDAR WAXWING	14	7
NORTHERN SHRIKE	1	1
LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE	3	
SHRIKE SPECIES	7	
EUROPEAN STARLING	20	2145
NORTHERN CARDINAL	20	135
RUFIOUS-SIDED TOWHEE	2	
AMERICAN TREE SPARROW	19	115
FIELD SPARROW	3	
VESPER SPARROW	2	
FOX SPARROW	9	
SONG SPARROW	20	2
LINCOLN'S SPARROW	1	
SWAMP SPARROW	4	1
WHITE-THROATED SPARROW	9	4
WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW	1	
DARK-EYED JUNCO slate form	20	305
LAPLAND LONGSPUR	14	
SNOW BUNTING	7	
RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD	12	
MEADOWLARK SP.	17	1
RUSTY BLACKBIRD	5	
BREWER'S BLACKBIRD	1	
GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE	1	
COMMON GRACKLE	19	2
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD	6	
NORTHERN ORIOLE	1	
PURPLE FINCH	19	2
HOUSE FINCH	2	7
RED CROSSBILL	2	
WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL	1	
COMMON REDPOLL	4	19
PINE SISKIN	14	5
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH	20	105
HOUSE SPARROW	20	2288
NUMBER OF SPECIES SEEN	93	51

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

December 10, Thursday	7:30 PM, BBAS Meeting, Story County Conservation Center, Members' Slides and Treats, also Treats for the Birds (seeds, suet, and donations) will be collected and given to the Center.
December 19, Saturday	Ames Christmas Bird Count with Chili supper following
December 20, Sunday	Saylorville Christmas Bird Count
January 2, Saturday	Boone Christmas Bird Count
January 16, Saturday	BBAS Field Trip, Omaha Zoo- Lied Jungle (January 23 is backup date if bad weather)
January 21, Thursday	7:30 PM, BBAS Meeting, Pat Schlarbaum, Otter Re-introduction in Iowa
January 23, Saturday	BBAS Field Trip to local bird feeders (will be January 16 if no Omaha trip)
February 18, Thursday	7:30 PM, BBAS Meeting, Ty Smedes, Nature Photography
February 20, Saturday	BBAS Field Trip, local Owl Prowl
February 26-28, Friday-Sunday	DNR Eagle Days at Red Rock Lake
March 6, Saturday	BBAS Field Trip to watch Eagles at Red Rock Lake
March 18, Thursday	7:30 PM, BBAS Meeting, Dick Trump, Woodchucks
*March 19-21, Friday-Sunday	National Audubon's Spring River Conference in Kearney, NE, includes trips to see migrating sandhill cranes and waterfowl
March 27, Saturday	BBAS Field Trip, Hendrickson Marsh and possibly Saylorville, Bear Creek and Bays Branch

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BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY 1992-1993 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

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SECRETARY: *Carrie Dixon*, 233-6196

TREASURER: *Barb Bettis* 232-4863

FIELD TRIP CO-CHAIR: *Paul Ovrom*, 292-8862

FIELD TRIP CO-CHAIR: *Mark Dobbe*, 233-2845

Kay Niyo: 292-5130

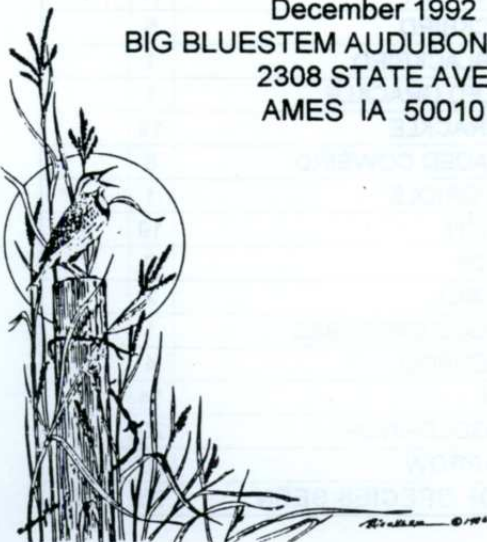
Jon Bahrenfus: 432-3396

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December 1992
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