



Big Bluestem Audubon Society
Ames, Iowa

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Bluestem Flyer

Vol. 19, No. 9

May, 1985

Monthly Meeting

WHEN: Tuesday, May 14 at 7:30 p.m.

WHERE: Room 181-1 (Jury Room), College of Design, I.S.U. campus

WHO: Lawrence Ladin of Des Moines

TOPIC: "Hiking in Nepal"

Upcoming Meetings and Events

Spring Bird Walk -- Saturday, May 11 at 8 a.m. at McFarland Park, co-sponsored by our Audubon society and the Story County Conservation Board. Bring binoculars and field guide.

Earth Care Week -- May 5-11 in Iowa (see story on p. 2).

National Audubon Society Convention -- June 16-21 at Silver Bay, New York. Call Judy van der Linden for more information. Reservations must be in soon.

Newsletter Deadline -- Tuesday, May 28. Please send articles or artwork for the June issue to Judy van der Linden, 610-9th St., Ames. June's newsletter will be the last issue until next fall.

June Potluck -- A potluck supper at the Iowa Arboretum will take the place of our regular chapter meeting on June 11. See details in the June newsletter.



EARTH CARE WEEK -- MAY 5-11

On April 18, Gov. Terry Branstad signed a proclamation which established May 5-11, 1985, as Earth Care Week. The purpose of Earth Care Week is to increase environmental awareness in Iowa through a variety of activities sponsored by conservation groups.

The proclamation declares "The land we cultivate, the water we drink and the air we breathe are vital to Iowans and our quality of life...it is the responsibility of Iowans to make sure these natural resources are not degraded or compromised. We are all stewards of our environment."

In Story County, Earth Care Week can be celebrated by participating in the bird walk at McFarland Park on May 11 (see calendar on p. 1) or by touring an exhibit on household hazardous waste sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Ames. The exhibit will be on display at the Ames Public Library from May 5 through May 11.

Our society's tree planting project this past weekend was timed to correspond with Earth Care Week.

TRAIL WORK COMPLETE

Bluestem members Tom Davis, Mary Owings and Dave Edwards set out the remaining Audubon Trail marker posts at Brookside Park in Ames on April 13. All 24 posts are now in place, painted and numbered, and work on the accompanying trail guide will resume this week.



STRIKE UP THE BAND!

As a person becomes adept at basic bird identification, he or she must find other ways to maintain bird-watching enthusiasm. One way is to be alert to the presence of banded birds.

Many professional and amateur researchers are licensed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to band birds. Banding is an important research tool providing information on migration routes, survival rates, harvest patterns of game species, and general behavior. The USFWS provides the leg bands and a stringent set of procedures while the researcher provides the mist nets or other trapping devices, the tools and the time.

As a birdwatcher, what do you do if you see a banded bird? First of all, don't kill the bird to get the band number. If you can read the band number, record it plus the species, date, where seen, whether alive or dead, possible cause of death (hit by car, flew into window, etc.) and any other information you may think is valuable to a researcher. If a banded dead bird is discovered, it is only necessary to send in the band number. It is not necessary to send in the band or the dead bird. Send the sighting information to: United States Department of Interior, Bird Banding Laboratory, Office of Migratory Bird Management, Laurel, Maryland, 20708.

That office then reports your sighting to the appropriate researcher or bander. If your information is correct, you may receive a reply from the bander and/or he will submit a report to the laboratory which then sends a certificate of appreciation telling you where and when the bird was banded.

It is always thrilling to see a banded bird and to receive information about that bird.

-Badger Tracks by Anita Carpenter-

BIRDER'S NOTES



King Rail

Many of Iowa's summer resident birds have now returned -- those heard most recently include the Rufous-sided Towhee, Brown Thrasher, House Wren, Northern Oriole and Chimney Swift. A wave of migrating, early warblers (Yellow-rumped, Orange-crowned and Black-

and-White) passed through the Ames area during the warm weekend of April 20. Three rare rails -- a King Rail and two Yellow Rails -- were seen at the Doolittle prairie potholes north of Ames on April 27-28. One Ames resident reported a two-tone grackle in his neighborhood -- its black body contrasting with a bright white tail! Unfortunately, scant rainfall in April has left the area's best shorebird watching spot, the Colo ponds, dry.

CONSERVATION/THE ENVIRONMENT

(Sherry Dragula, 292-4014; Cindy Hildebrand, 232-3807)

Drainage Rules Proposal -- If you haven't written a letter yet to the Iowa Water, Air and Waste Management Commission about their proposed drainage rules, there's still plenty of time and plenty of need! For information, call Cindy. (Ed. note: Cindy has prepared an excellent fact sheet that makes letter-writing much easier for this critical issue. This is a good chance to do something to maintain stream and wetland quality in Iowa.)

Garrison, again?? -- A well-written and widely-read editorial by an agriculture writer for the Washington Post has apparently helped stall funding for the Garrison project in the past week. The editorial appeared in the April 30 Des Moines Register. Post reporter Ward Sinclair wrote that a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee was scheduled to take up legislation soon that could, once and for all, kill the Garrison project, a billion-dollar irrigation program for North Dakota that has been fought by conservationists for years.

Sinclair's editorial, highly critical of Garrison, apparently had some effect. We now understand that the subcommittee decision on Garrison, which was supposed to have been made on April 30, has been postponed, perhaps for months.

Audubon members have a golden opportunity to help kill the project by writing letters now to the Water and Power Resources Subcommittee, 1522 Longworth House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515. Subcommittee chairman Congressman George Miller, a California Democrat, has a reputation for sidetracking projects like Garrison and is apparently leaning toward doing so, according to Sinclair.

J. J. Audubon Month -- Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad did proclaim April as John James Audubon Month in recognition of the famous wildlife artist's 200th birthday. Perhaps this gesture and other celebrations of the anniversary around the country will increase Americans' awareness of Audubon, his role in wildlife preservation and our society.

VACATION TIME?

Northwoods Audubon Center, Sandstone, Minn., is offering a number of spring and summer field trips in the north country, among them Natural History of Lake Superior's Northshore (June 9-16), a Boundary Waters Canoe Area canoe trip (May 18-26, July 6-13), an Apostle Island sailing trip (July 15-19, July 21-26, Aug. 1-3) and trips to Isle Royale. Northwoods also offers ecology camp for boys and girls, ages 10-16. Contact Judy van der Linden for more information.

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse will again offer Birding Northwestern Wisconsin, a workshop on bird identification that features field trips to a variety of habitats in upper Wisconsin. The workshop will be held May 26-31, to provide viewing of late migrants, and again Aug. 11-16, to catch early fall migrants. Fee of \$275 includes all meals, lodging, transportation during the course and a boat trip. Judy van der Linden has details and a registration form.



Bighorn Sheep

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