



**Big Bluestem Audubon Society
Ames, Iowa**

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Bluestem Flyer

Volume 21, No. 5 January, 1987

Monthly Meeting

WHEN: Tuesday, January 20 at 7:30 p.m.

WHERE: Room 181-1 (Jury Room), College of Design, ISU Campus

WHO: Cindy Hildebrand of Ames, lobbyist, Iowa Audubon Council

TOPIC: "How To Help It Happen--a 1987 Iowa Conservation Update"

Upcoming Meetings & Events

Board Meeting -- The society's executive board will meet January 13 at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Dave Edwards, 2308 State.

Winter Signs -- A nature program and hike at Emma McCarthy Lee Park on Saturday, January 24, to look for signs of animal life during winter. The park is located off Ross Road in Ames -- meet at the lower shelter at 10 a.m.

Feeder Survey -- A statewide bird feeder survey is being sponsored-January 22-25 by the Iowa Ornithologist's Union and The Department of Natural Resources. Anyone with feeders who wishes to participate may use the survey form enclosed in this newsletter or contact Hank Zaletel (377-2889) for more information. Follow instructions on the form for filling in information and returning the completed form.

News and Notes

Bird Count Results -- Forty-six species of birds were seen by participants in the Story County Christmas Bird Count on December 20. A total of 9,767 birds were counted by the 27 participants. Unusual species including a Great Blue Heron and a Loggerhead Shrike. A Varied Thrush that was visiting a feeder at the Bruce Munson home was not seen on the day of the count but appeared the following day. The bird is a casual migrant from the Pacific northwest. Common species not seen on this year's count included Cedar Waxwing and Meadowlark.

Species seen were Great Blue Heron, Canada Goose, Mallard, Red-tailed Hawk, Pheasant, Gray Partridge, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Eastern Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, and Belted Kingfisher.

Also Common Flicker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Horned Lark, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper and American Robin.

Also Golden-crowned Kinglet, Loggerhead Shrike, European Starling, House Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Northern Cardinal, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Junco, American Tree Sparrow, Harris' Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow and Lapland Longspur.

Participants were Mark Ankeny, Barb Bettis, Cele Burnett, Barnett Cook, Jim Dinsmore, Sherry Dragula, David & Jeanne Edwards, Denny Hedrickson, Cindy Hildebrand, John Hill, Stu Huntington, Nick Kubik, Paul Martsching, John & Margie Mayfield, Mike Meetz, Barbara, Bruce & Erik Munson, Florence Olyphant, Bob Ratterman, Judy Shearer, Pat Trumbell, Judy van der Linden, Dianne Mumm, and Hank Zaletel, compiler.

Boone County Christmas Bird Count results will be included in next months newsletter.

Thanks to Munsons -- Special thanks to members of the Bruce Munson family for their generous hospitality during the Christmas Bird Count tally at their home on December 20.

Groundwater Clean-Up -- If you are concerned about Iowa's groundwater, please ask your legislators and Governor Brandstad to pass legislation to put fees on chemical containers, household hazardous products, and bulk agricultural chemicals. Such fees would provide badly needed funds for groundwater research, education, and protection programs. A current cost estimate for a comprehensive Iowa groundwater program is \$30 million per year! It is only fair that some of that cost be directly attached to polluting substances. This is particularly true for agricultural chemicals, since the research which could be funded by chemical fees would save farmers millions of dollars in reduced chemical use.

Chemical fees are being proposed, and a DNR survey shows that a majority of Iowans support the idea. Unfortunately, powerful interest groups will lobby hard to kill such bills (and last year they succeeded.) A fee plan which included household pollutants as well as farm chemicals would be fair, and would encourage the use of non-polluting alternatives. Your letter, call, or personal contact would really help, now or during the session. All legislators and Governor Brandstad can be reached at: Iowa Capitol, Des Moines, IA 50319.

Audubon TV Special -- The Audubon special "On the Edge Of Extinction: Panthers and Cheetahs," will air on cable Superstation WTBS on Thursday, January 8, at 9:05 p.m. EST; Thursday, January 15 at 12:00 a.m. EST; Sunday, January 18 at 5:35 p.m. EST; and Tuesday, January 20 at 8:05 p.m. EST. Future programs will feature alternative agriculture, waterfowl and the Woodstork of the Florida Everglades. Videocassettes are available. For more information: National Audubon Society, Audubon Television Programs, 801 Pennsylvania Avenue S.E., Suite 301, Washington D.C. 20003.

1987 WINTER BIRD FEEDER SURVEY

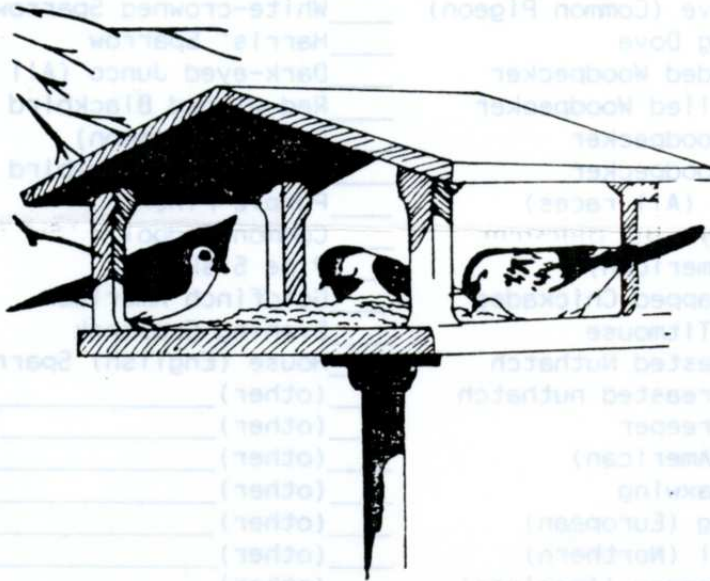
SPONSORED BY THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION

AND THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES NONGAME PROGRAM

On two consecutive days during January 22-25, 1987, 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 Juncoes 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 'umpteens' or 'too many to count.' Mail the completed form to me by February 2, 1987:

R. J. Hollis
3351 Lower West Branch Road
Iowa City, IA 52240

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.



FEEDER SURVEY JANUARY 22-25, 1987

1. Name _____
- 2A. Address _____
- 2B. County _____ 2C. City _____ 2D. Zip _____
3. The feeder survey period this year runs from Thursday, January 22nd to Sunday, January 25th. Count birds on two consecutive days only. Please record which days you counted birds for us in the space below.
Check one: _____ Thursday (1/22) and Friday (1/23),
_____ Friday (1/23) and Saturday (1/24), or
_____ Saturday (1/24) and Sunday (1/25).
4. Is your feeder in Town (including suburbs) or in the Country? Circle T or C
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 1986-87: About _____
8. Comments or additional description of your feeder or yard: _____

HIGHEST NUMBER SEEN FOR EACH SPECIES DURING 2 CONSECUTIVE DAYS

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

Please fill out carefully. Feel free to copy the form for friends and patrons.
Thank you and enjoy yourselves!

Birder's Notes

December 29 -- Bluestem members and other birders from as far away as Estherville and Tama joined forces on Saturday, December 20 to count all birds in and around Ames. The annual Christmas Bird Count in Story County yielded 46 species (or types of birds) and a total of 9,767 birds (see article on page 2.) A similar count in Boone County will take place on January 1. The data gathered from these two counts will be combined with data accumulated nationwide to determine trends in populations and locations of different species.

For now, the list of species seen on page 2 makes us aware of the many types of birds in and near Ames -- along roadsides, in woods and at feeders. Keep an eye out for these species, as well as the occasional rarity--the Varied Thrush, for example, that was seen up until December 21 at the home of Bruce Munson, 3223 West Street, Ames.

Warmer weather has kept creeks flowing and water around Red Rock Dam free of ice, attracting gulls, herons and an occasional Bald Eagle. Snipe, Bald Eagle and Long-eared Owl have been seen along the Des Moines River near Luther. Saw-whet Owl are less common so far this winter than last winter, presumably because of the milder weather.

Unusual Visitor -- The following article appeared December 18 in the "Ames Tribune." Erik Munson is a member of the Big Bluestem Audubon Society and an avid birder.

"Recently the bleak December scene outside my window on West Street was brightened by a colorful visitor. The bird was a Varied Thrush, the American Robin's counterpart in the Pacific Northwest. It had strayed nearly 2,000 miles off its normal migration route and ended up in my backyard.

The thrush perched on the snow below a sunflower seed feeder and pecked vigorously at the scattered seeds. In the morning sun the bird's breast feathers glowed orange like warm coals. This color was even brighter than the color of a robin. Another difference between the

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Varied Thrush and the American Robin is the prominent black necklace, or breastband, that interrupts the Varied Thrush's front side. Also, the Varied Thrush has a thick "eyebrow" of the same glowing orange.

The bird had obviously travelled a long way, so I was glad I could provide it with an easy meal. I was also glad it had chosen my feeder, because it was a historic occasion: the Varied Thrush had never before been seen in Story County.

The Varied Thrush feeds constantly below the sunflower feeder. Thanks to a northwest wind and a somewhat careless wanderer, the view out my back window has changed."

—By Erik Munson



January Bird Puzzles -- Each of the following short phrases describes a bird's name. Answers at the January meeting.

1. Party game - *Pin tail*
2. Lunch time - *Sandwich Tern*
3. Woodcutter's spin - *Forster Tern*
4. Robert on the golf course - *Bob-O-Link*
5. Slow mover - *Creepers*

Answers to December's puzzles are:

1. What you are doing after a two-mile run--puffin
2. Sorrowing distaff relative--Pine Siskin
3. Has a glass jaw--Canvasback
4. Traveling rube--Passenger Pigeon
5. Party on the prairie--Meadowlark

Chickadee Checkoff

Don't forget your opportunity to help Iowa's wildlife when you fill out your state income tax return this year. By donating to the Fish & Wildlife Protection Fund, you can support valuable non-game wildlife conservation programs across the state. These programs include reintroducing river otters and barn owls to Iowa, sponsoring pelican and Bald Eagle watches, organizing bluebird workshops, developing nature preserves and trails, acquiring critical habitats, publishing informational booklets and supporting research of non-game species. Your money is needed now, more than ever! Remember the Chickadee Checkoff this year and give generously!

Field Trip -- There will be a field trip to see owls on Sat., Jan. 10. Meet in the parking lot behind C.Y. Stephens at 8:30 a.m. For further information, contact Judy van der Linden, 232-3450.



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