

BIG BLUESTEM FLYER

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

Volume 25, No. 5

January 1991

Monthly Meeting

Nature Folklore of Iowa - State Folklorist

Thursday, January 17, 7:30 PM,
at the **State Forest Nursery**, 2404 S. Duff, Ames.
Please note that this is a **change**
from our regular meeting site.

Field Trip

OWLING - Ledges and Big Creek State Parks

Saturday February 16, meet at 7:30 AM
in the west parking lot
of the Design Center, ISU

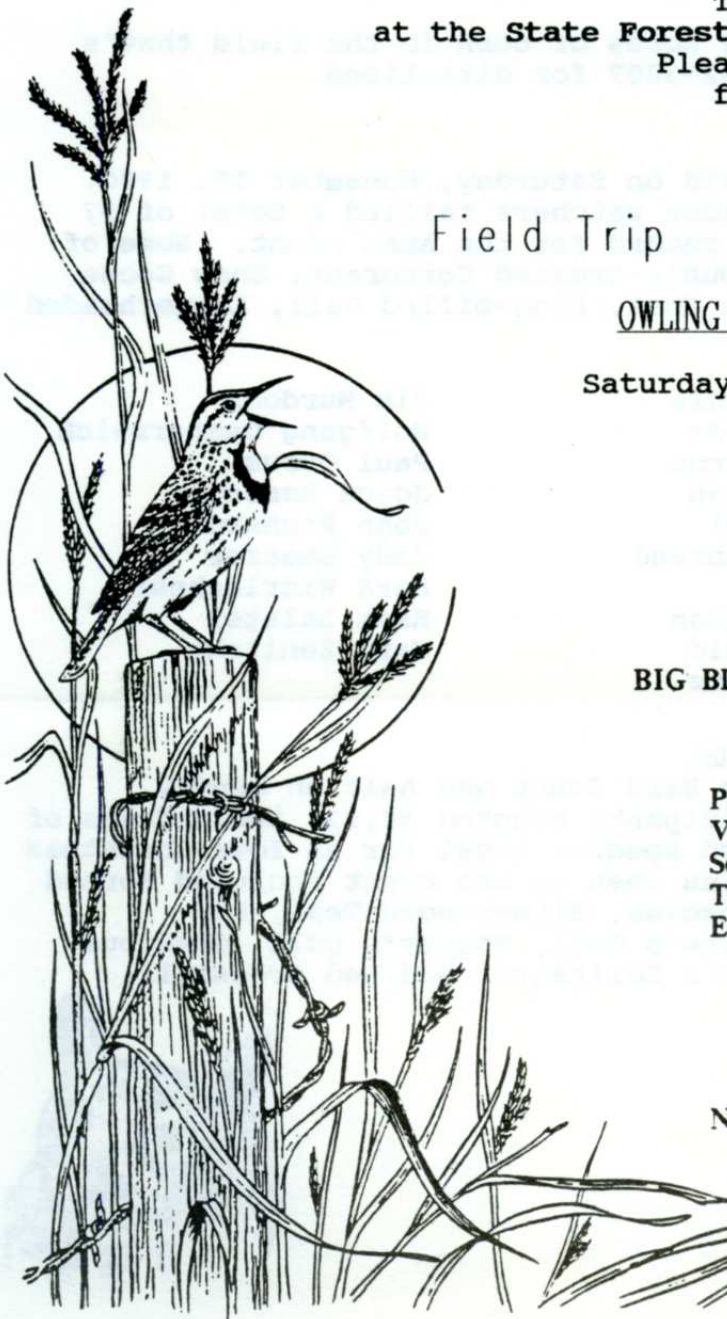
BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS 1990-1991

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David Edwards, 292-3790



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Winter Bird Feeder Survey

In your December newsletter you received a 1991 Winter Bird Feeder Survey. The survey is held on two consecutive days during January 24-27 (you choose the days). The survey provides important information on birds' use of feeders and is sponsored by the Nongame Program of the Department of Natural Resources and the Iowa Ornithologists Union. Your participation is appreciated. If you can't find your survey call Sherry at 292-4014 and she will mail you one.

Audubon Adventures

Our goal of securing funding for all of our Audubon Adventures subscriptions to elementary school classrooms has almost been met. Four more sponsorships of \$30 will enable us to finish paying for this valuable educational tool. If you would like to contribute send a check made out to: Big Bluestem Audubon Society, c/o Mark Widrlechner, Treasurer, RR 6, Ames, Iowa 50010.

Free Corn

Cindy Hildebrand has approximately 6 acres of corn in the field that's free for the taking. Call Cindy at 232-3807 for directions.

Ames Christmas Bird Count Report

The Ames Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 15, 1990. Twenty-five participants plus four feeder watchers tallied a total of 57 species and 18,255 individuals, a new record for the Ames count. Some of the interesting birds seen included Double-crested Cormorant, Snow Goose, Hooded Merganser, Bald Eagle, American Coot, Ring-billed Gull, Loggerheaded Shrike, and Vesper Sparrow.

Participants were

Jon Bahrenfus
Joyce Bahrenfus
George Brown
Gordon Brown
Cele Burnett
Barnett Cook
Lloyd Crim
Gaylan Crim
Jim Dinsmore
Steve Dinsmore

Sherry Dragula
David Edwards
Jeanne Edwards
Fritz Franzen
Paul Hertzell
Cindy Hildebrand
Jackie Hill
Stu Huntington
John Mayfield
Michael Meetz

Jim Murdoch
Wolfgang Oesterreich
Paul Ovrum
Joyce Ramsey
John Richard
Judy Shearer
Mark Widrlechner
Hank Zalatel
Gary Zenitsky

Saylorville Reservoir Christmas Bird Count Report

The Saylorville Reservoir Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, December 16, 1990. Thirty-seven participants counted 58,223 individuals of 92 species. This is an all-time record species total for an Iowa Christmas Bird Count. Some of the unusual species seen on the count included Horned Grebe, American White Pelican, swan species, Blue-winged Teal, Red-shouldered Hawk, Golden Eagle, Bonaparte's Gull, Thayer's Gull, Glaucous Gull, Black-legged Kittiwake, Townsend's Solitaire, and Red Crossbill.



REAP is in Danger

(from a report by Cindy Hildbrand, Legislative Coordinator for the Iowa Audubon Council)

When the Resources Enhancement and Protection Act was enacted by the Iowa legislature, it included a specific formula for spending allocations and a plan to increase REAP funding from \$20 million to \$30 million per year from lottery revenues. In times of financial needs, there are a number of ways of thinking that can do damage to the REAP programs.

1. **THE CHRISTMAS TREE SYNDROME** -- With revenues short, some lawmakers may want to amend REAP to pay for individual projects (dams, marshdredgings, trails) that they support. If one such amendment passes, it would open the gate for others, making the original REAP formula meaningless and turning REAP into a "Christmas tree" of individual projects (which may or may not be projects that the council would want to support).

2. **THE BYE-BYE FUNDING SYNDROME** -- There is a proposal to put all lottery revenues into the General Fund, and there may well be an attempt to keep REAP funding at \$20 million per year (rather than increase it as was originally planned) or even reduce it to less than \$20 million per year.

3. **THE CHANGE-IT SYNDROME** -- The Iowa Farm Bureau has passed a 1991 policy on "County REAP Committees" which states

"We believe that representatives to the state REAP Congress should not be employees of county conservation boards, the Soil Conservation Service, or the Department of Natural Resources."

This would deprive REAP regional assemblies of the chance to elect such employees to the Congress, regardless of their qualifications and expertise.

The Farm Bureau policy on "Public Lands" states

"We believe the state of Iowa should concentrate more on the management of currently owned state land and reduce the effort to acquire more public land....We further believe that any group that purchases land for habitat preservation shall own and pay taxes at current annual rates and valuation for ten years on that land before the land can be accepted by a government agency."

Consider how that proposal would affect groups like the Nature Conservancy and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.

4. **THE OTHER-NEEDS SYNDROME** -- It's been proposed that lottery money pay to clean up leaking underground storage tanks and pay for environmental programs. More funds are also needed for soil conservation. It's possible that a proposal will be made to reduce REAP monies to pay for other environmental needs. REAP needs and other environmental needs are ALL important, and shouldn't be traded off against each other.

MANY IOWANS WORKED VERY HARD TO MAKE REAP A REALITY, AND THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE SURE IT STAYS A REALITY IS TO SUPPORT IT THIS YEAR.

AS A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION, PLEASE RESOLVE TO WRITE OR CALL YOUR LEGISLATORS AND/OR THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE AT LEAST ONCE DURING THE NEXT FEW MONTHS ABOUT AN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE.

Express your appreciation for lawmakers passing and supporting REAP, strong support for REAP programs, and support for retaining the current REAP structure and formula for increasing the level of REAP funding. When elected officials have PROOF that voters care, it really makes a difference.

EcoAction Environmental Fair

On Saturday January 26, the EcoAction Network of Mid-Iowa will be sponsoring an Environmental Fair at the Ames Public Library. Information on energy efficiency, recycling, local conservation groups and activities, organic food, composting, household hazardous waste and more will be available. Our Society plans on having an information table set up. If you would like to help put information together for our table or would be willing to staff the table for part of the day please contact Sherry.

Audubon 1991 Camps and Workshops

Join one of Audubon's workshops and do some on-site learning! Workshops last from 6 days to 2 weeks and take place in the United States and in foreign countries. Full-color brochures are available at the meeting or call Sherry at 292-4014.

BIRDERS' HOTLINE

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

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Big Bluestem Audubon Society
2308 State Avenue, RR 5
Ames, Iowa 50010

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SHERRY DRAGULA
MARK WIDRLECHNER
RR 6
AMES, IA 50010

