



Big Bluestem Audubon Society
Ames, Iowa

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Bluestem Flyer

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Monthly Meeting

- WHEN:** Tuesday, Jan. 15, at 7:30 p.m. (note this is the 3rd Tuesday of month)
- WHERE:** Room 181-1 (Jury Room), Design Center, ISU campus
- WHO:** Dr. James Christiansen, Drake University, Des Moines
- TOPIC:** "Amphibians and Reptiles of Iowa"

Upcoming Meetings and Events

Board Meeting -- The society's executive board will meet Wednesday, Jan. 9, at 7:30 p.m. at Mary Owings home, 410 9th St., Ames. Anyone interested may attend.

Conservation Committee -- The committee will meet Monday, Jan. 28, at 7 p.m. in Room 411, Design Center, ISU campus. (See Ames Reservoir article inside for more information.)

Newsletter Deadline -- Articles and artwork for the February newsletter should be delivered by Monday, Jan. 28, to Judy van der Linden, 610 9th St., Ames.

Budget Subcommittee -- A subcommittee set up to prepare the society's 1985-86 budget will meet Feb. 4 at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Judy van der Linden, 610 9th St. Chairpersons of the society's six working committees are asked to outline their group's financial needs for the year and send this information before Feb. 4 to Judy van der Linden, Judy Shearer or Dave Edwards, subcommittee members. Other members with budget ideas may submit them, as well.

Audubon Regional Workshop -- Persons still interested in attending the chapter leadership workshop sponsored Jan. 26-27 by the National Audubon Society should contact a Bluestem officer for information. Registration deadline is Jan. 14.

AT LAST MONTH'S MEETING

At the Dec. 11 meeting, chapter members voted to purchase 300 trees to plant for wildlife along highway 30 east of Ames. The trees will be planted this spring in areas where previous years' plantings have died. Members also voted to pay the chapter's \$25 dues to The Nature Conservancy.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT TALLY

Twenty-six persons participated in the Big Bluestem Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 15, which one birder termed "a pretty miserable day." The weather was cold and foggy with intermittent drizzle or hard rain. Despite these conditions, a total of 45 species of birds was seen with a total count of 7,428 individuals. Two new birds seen on this count were a Lesser Scaup and a Common Goldeneye at Hallet's Quarry. Birds seen during count week but not on count day included: Bufflehead, Common Merganser, Ring-billed Gull and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

Birds seen on Dec. 15 included: Canada Goose, Mallard, Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneye, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Common Snipe, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Great-horned Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Common Flicker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Horned Lark, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, American Robin, Golden-crowned Kinglet, European Starling, House Sparrow, Meadowlark species, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Northern Cardinal, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Junco, American Tree Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lapland Longspur, Snow Bunting.

Participants in this year's count were: Ralph Ackerman, George & Gordon Brown, Cele Burnett, Barnett Cook, Tom Davis, Steve Dinsmore, Sherry Dragula, David & Jeanne Edwards, Fritz Franzen, Sven Gafvert, Janet Greisch, Tim Grotheer, Stu Huntington, Kevin Kraus, Paul Martsching, John Mayfield, Bruce & Erik Munson, Jim Murdock, Steve Richards, Judy Shearer, John Stampe, Mark Widrlechner, Fred Whitford and Hank Zaletel.

FOR NEXT YEAR'S COUNT

What do Ledges State Park, the Iowa Arboretum and the Holst State Forest have in common? None of these fine birding areas is included in an Audubon Christmas bird count!

If you would be interested in participating in a new Boone County Christmas Bird Count with a proposed count circle that would include all of these areas, please let me know. I am trying to organize this count for New Year's day, 1986, and would very much like your help.

-- Mark Widrlechner, 4409 Toronto #1, Ames. 292-4014

FAREWELL TO THE NEWHOUSES

Former Bluestem society members Dave and Mary Newhouse have left Ames for Michigan City, Indiana, where Dave has begun his new job as the regional representative for National Audubon Society's Central Midwest Region (including Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee).

Dave is reportedly enjoying working with the active and dedicated volunteers in 70 Audubon chapters in the region. Central Midwest's regional office is a restored 1904 mansion, surrounded by a 30-acre TNC (The Nature Conservancy) preserve. Mary just received a master's degree in Landscape Architecture from ISU and will be looking for work in the Lake Michigan "dunes" area, their new home.

They invite you to stop by to chat or to bird if you are traveling east past Chicago. They can be reached at 219-879-3227.

CONSERVATION/THE ENVIRONMENT

Baseball Diamonds Proposal -- At a meeting Dec. 13, the Ames Parks and Recreation Commission voted to postpone action on the proposed construction of baseball diamonds in East River Valley Park until other alternatives could be explored. The next meeting will be Jan. 14. One alternative that met favor with most conservationists at the meeting was a plan to construct the Little League diamonds in West Brookside Park, an area already considerably more disturbed than East River Valley Park. A fact sheet on all aspects of this issue is available from Sherry Dragula (292-4014). Letters and phone calls expressing your opinions are still useful, and can be directed to persons listed on the fact sheet.

Scissors, Please -- If you subscribe to an Iowa newspaper other than the Des Moines Register and Ames Tribune, your clippings are needed. Any news about state environmental issues (particularly if your state legislators are involved) can be sent to Cindy Hildebrand (Iowa Audubon Council Legislative Chair) at the address below. These clippings can provide information not covered elsewhere that will help our Iowa legislative work this year. Thank you! (3323 Harcourt Dr., Ames, IA 50010)

Drainage Again -- The question of whether or not drainage district projects should be exempt from state control will be an issue in the Iowa legislature this year after all. A change in interim committee sentiment means that a study of drainage laws by state and county agencies must be completed by Feb. 1, and legislative changes may be proposed before or after that date. If you want to be contacted by phone or mail when this important issue comes up, please notify Cindy Hildebrand or Sherry Dragula.

Ames Reservoir -- Several Bluestem members attended a workshop held Dec. 12 to gather public opinion on the proposed Ames Reservoir and on water resource needs of this area. The forum was sponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and was loosely organized, with about ten Corps representatives present to listen to comments and answer questions.

The society's Conservation Committee presented a written and oral statement listing items it would like to see included in a reevaluation study of the reservoir. Items included studying alternatives like greenbelt zoning, water conservation programs, erosion control through soil conservation and consideration of additional wells. Committee members also emphasized that public input throughout the study was vital.

Next the Corps will set up a committee to formulate alternatives to the proposed reservoir. Corps representatives will meet again in February with various interest groups, including Bluestem's Conservation Committee. Items to discuss with Corps personnel will be one topic of the Conservation Committee meeting on Jan. 28. Anyone interested in the reservoir is urged to attend this meeting.

They invite you to stop by to chat or to bid if you are traveling east past Chicago. They can be reached at 219-879-3227.

CONSERVATION/THE ENVIRONMENT

Basinall Diamonds Proposal -- At a meeting Dec. 13, the Ames Parks and Recreation Commission voted to postpone action on the proposed construction of Basinall diamonds in East River Valley Park until other alternatives could be explored. The next meeting will be Jan. 14. One alternative that met favor with most conservationists at the meeting was a plan to construct the Basinall diamonds in West Brookside Park, an area already considerably more disturbed than East River Valley Park. A fact sheet on all aspects of this issue is available from Sherry Dwyer (252-4014). Letters and phone calls expressing your opinions are still needed, and can be directed to persons listed on the fact sheet.

Legislators, Please -- If you subscribe to an Iowa newspaper other than the Des Moines Register and Iowa Tribune, your clippings are needed. Any news about state environmental issues (particularly if your state legislators are involved) can be sent to Cindy Hildebrand (Iowa Audubon Society) at the address below. These clippings can provide information not covered elsewhere that will help our legislators.

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