

BIG BLUESTEM FLYER

Volume 27, No. 3

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

November 1991

MONTHLY MEETING

Natural Features of Western Texas

Wolfgang Oesterreich

Thursday, November 21, 7:30 PM

Room 181, Design Center, ISU Campus

Wolfgang is an active member of our Audubon Chapter and works as a Biological Technician at the U.S.D.A. National Soil Tilth Lab here in Ames. He has a B.S. degree in Wildlife Management from Humboldt State University in California. Before coming to Ames, he lived in Lubbock, Texas for 8 1/2 years, working with the U.S.D.A.-A.R.S. Cropping Systems Laboratory. While in Texas he birded extensively. The program he will present will include many aspects of the natural history (birds, plants, butterflies, etc.) of the Llano Estacado ("Staked Plain") of Western Texas.

FIELD TRIPS

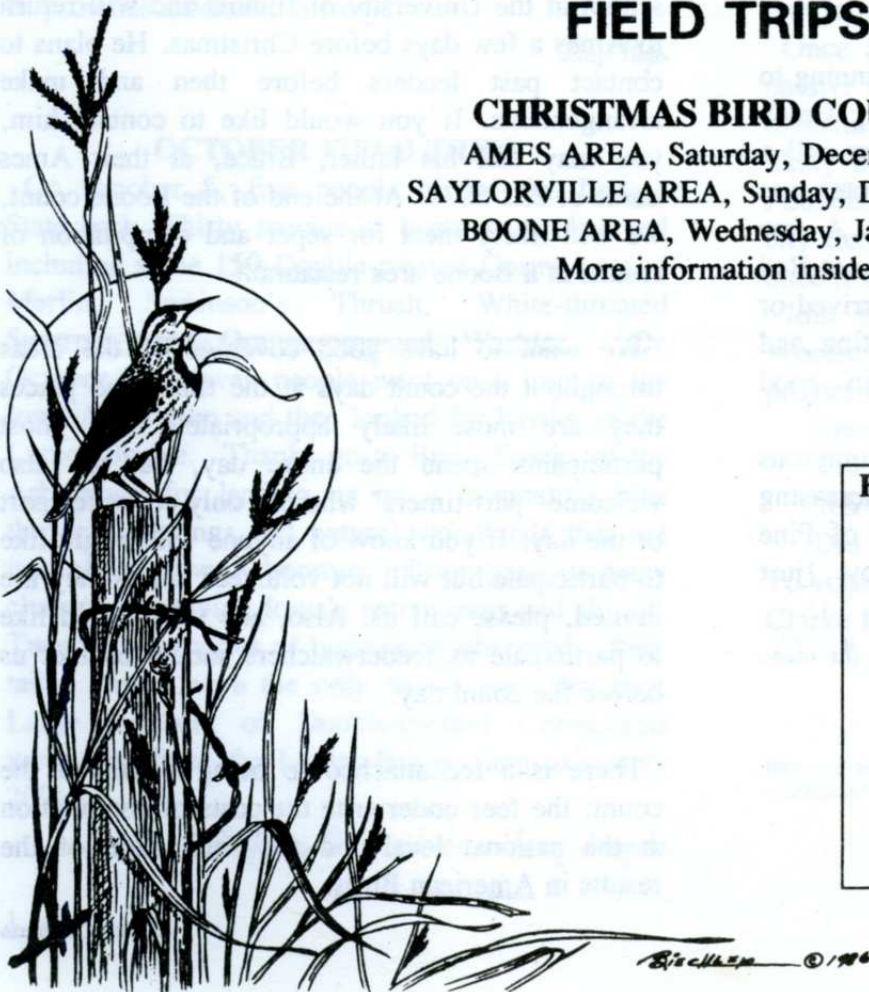
CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

AMES AREA, Saturday, December 14

SAYLORVILLE AREA, Sunday, December 15

BOONE AREA, Wednesday, January 1

More information inside.



BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY

1991-1992

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FORUM ON WETLANDS

The Soil & Water Conservation Club and the Student Environmental Council are sponsoring a forum on Wetlands, discussing the diversity and ecological importance of wetlands, their status, and how to protect them. It is free and open to everyone. It will be held Wednesday, November 13, 7 PM, in the Gold Room of the Memorial Union at ISU.

UPCOMING STORY COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD ACTIVITIES

- Nov. 14, Thurs., 7:30 - 9 PM, Conservation Center, Forum: Pheasant & Upland Game Status
- Nov. 17, Sun., 2 PM, YMCA Interpretive Center, "Reptiles & Amphibians"
- Dec. 7, Sat., 8-5, Conservation Center, Snowmobile Safety Course
- Dec. 8, Sun., 2-4 PM, Conservation Center, Wildlife Holiday workshop and display (all month)
- Dec. 9, Mon., 7:30 PM, Conservation Center, Story Co. Conservation Board Meeting

BIRDER'S NOTES

At the end of October the water was beginning to freeze on the backwaters and ponds of Big Creek Lake and Saylorville Reservoir. There was still a variety of ducks seen. A white-winged Scoter was in the ponds below the Saylorville Dam. A few Bald Eagles have appeared, more regularly at Red Rock Lake. Northern ground birds have arrived or are more apparent, including Snow Bunting and Horned Lark. Red-breasted Nuthatch in good numbers were seen in Jester Park.

On the feeders Purple Finch have been numerous and the cold, nasty weather has brought increasing numbers of the regulars. No reports yet of Pine Siskin, Redpoll, or Blue-footed Booby [just checking to see if you were still reading!].

Maridel Jackson as relayed to the editor

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Planning is underway for the Christmas Bird Counts in Ames and Boone. The Ames count will be organized by Mike Meetz and me, Dave Edwards, and we plan some review of the territories with count leaders and interested others. Please call either of us (numbers on the front cover) if you have suggestions or concerns. We especially want to hear about things that did not work well that can be fixed or things that work very well and should not be altered. The Ames count day is Saturday, December 14. At the end of the count day we will meet at David and Jeanne Edwards's home for a chili supper.

The Saylorville count will be the day after the Ames count on Sunday, December 15. Steve Dinsmore is the count leader, and because he is in graduate school in North Carolina, his father, Jim is receiving calls and helping with the arrangements. Jim can be reached at 292-3152.

The Boone count, scheduled for January 1, will again be led by Erik Munson. Erik is in graduate school at the University of Illinois and will return to Ames a few days before Christmas. He plans to contact past leaders before then and make arrangements. If you would like to contact him, you may call his father, Bruce, at their Ames home at 232-5077. At the end of the Boone count, we will likely meet for supper and compilation of results at a Boone area restaurant.

We want to have good coverage of the areas throughout the count days at the times and places they are most likely appropriate. Thus most participants spend the entire day, but we also welcome "part-timers" who can only count for part of the day. If you know of anyone who might like to participate but will not volunteer unless they are invited, please call us. Also, any who would like to participate as feederwatchers should contact us before the count day.

There is a fee attached to being a part of the count; the fees underwrite the costs of compilation at the national level and the publication of the results in American Birds.

David Edwards

BOOK REVIEW CORNER

Dan Sholly with Steven Newman. 1991.
Guardians of Yellowstone: An intimate look at the challenges of protecting America's foremost wilderness park. New York: William Morrow and Co. [Available at Ames Public Library]

Chief Ranger Dan Sholly provides a perspective of the challenge of protecting America's foremost wilderness park during 1985 to 1991. He left an administrative position in Washington, D.C. in 1985 to become Chief Ranger of Yellowstone Park. His wife, a naturalist, and children came with him to live in the old headquarters buildings and began a relatively isolated life, especially in winter.

Sholly vividly describes the beautiful back country and its creatures that most tourists never get to experience. He also provides an awareness of the isolation and dangerous winter conditions in the park. Throughout the book, he makes us aware of the political struggle he and his staff and supervisor face in trying to administer ecologically sane practices. Of course this was especially true during the recent major fire in the park, of which he provides a detailed history.

Kay Niyo

OCTOBER FIELD TRIPS

On October 5, five people birded the Ledges State park. Thirty species of birds were observed including some 150 Double-crested Cormorants, a Merlin, Swainson's Thrush, White-throated Sparrow, and Orange-crowned Warbler. On October 12, eleven people went on a tour of the Iowa Arboretum and then looked for hawks on the Luther Bridge. Thanks go to Brian Sparks of the Arboretum for leading us on a fascinating hike through plantings and natural woodlands that are part of the Iowa Arboretum. Brian gave us many clues to identifying Iowa's native trees and shrubs. Twenty two species of birds were observed. Red-tailed hawks were the only hawks seen that day. Large numbers of Double-crested Cormorants were seen from the Luther Bridge (approximately 200).

Wolfgang Oesterreich and Sherry Dragula

ANN MUNN HERITAGE WOODS

The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation has acquired an option to purchase this woodland--forty acres of mature, diverse woods with steep valleys and moderate slopes surrounding Clear Creek in west Ames. Located west of Emma McCarthy Lee Park, east of N. Dakota Ave., between Phoenix and Hickory Drives, the undeveloped plot is a wildlife haven. Dr. James Dinsmore, ISU Ornithologist, has identified 110 species of birds in this woodland. There are only footpaths traversing this natural area.

The property, now owned by Munn Building Center, has been offered for sale to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation at less than half its appraised value. The people of Ames and surrounding communities now have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to protect this oasis for their enjoyment and for future generations. If the Foundation and a local volunteer committee cannot raise \$116,000 by April 1, 1992, the option will expire and the land will likely be sold for residential development. Foundations, businesses, and especially individuals will all have to do their part to achieve this goal.

Once acquired, the woods will be available for passive recreation only, leaving the woodland in an undisturbed state. The title to the property will likely be offered to the City of Ames, with the Foundation retaining restrictive covenants. The city may be interested in managing the woodland once it is purchased.

Join this effort to save Ann Munn Heritage Woods! Tax-deductible contributions to the project may be sent to:

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
444 Insurance Exchange Building
505 Fifth Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50309

To volunteer, contact local committee member,
Clarke Pasley, 292-2084

Have you heard about the lemming who didn't want to jump to a conclusion?

BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY EVENTS - 1991/1992

December 11	Wednesday, 7:30PM - Members Slides and Holiday Treats at the Story County Conservation Center, McFarland Park
December 14	Saturday, Ames Christmas Bird Count
December 15	Sunday, Saylorville Christmas Bird Count
January 1	Wednesday, Boone Christmas Bird Count
January 16	Thursday, 7:30 PM - Meeting, Room 280 Town Engineering, Carl Kurtz, St. Anthony, Photographer, "Natural Beauty of Iowa"
January 25	Saturday, Field Trip, Skiing or Hiking, Camp Hantesa or E. River Valley Park
February 15	Saturday, before sunrise, Owl Prowl
February 20	Thursday, 7:30 PM - Meeting, Dr. Richard Schultz, "Local Forestation Project on land treated with sludge"
February 29	Saturday - Field Trip to watch eagles at Red Rock or Saylorville
March 19	Thursday, 7:30 PM - Meeting, Malvin Moe "Prairie Chickens in Southern Iowa"
March 21	Saturday - Field trip to Watch Waterfowl
April 16	Thursday, 7:30 PM - Meeting, Laura Jackson, DNR Nongame Biologist "Birding Costa Rica"
April 18	Saturday - Field Trip to Tieg's Marsh, Shorebirds & Waterfowl
April 25	Saturday - Field Trip to local marshes
May 2	Saturday - Field Trip to McFarland Park to see Warblers & Wildflowers
May 9	Saturday - Field Trip to Brookside Park to see Warblers & Wildflowers
May 21	Thursday, 7:30 PM - Meeting, Tom Rosburg "Iowa's Loess Hills"
June 5-7	Friday-Sunday, Loess Hills Seminar and Field Trip
June 13	Saturday - Birder's Breakfast and Hike, Ledges State Park

Our regular meeting place is Room 181, Design Center, ISU campus. Meeting place and Field Trips are subject to change. Field Trip starting times and meeting place will be printed in the monthly newsletter and announced at monthly meetings. For further information call Sherry Dragula, President at 292-4014 or Mike Meetz, Field Trip Chair at 382-2534.

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