

# BIG BLUESTEM FLYER

Volume 27, No. 2

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

October 1991

## MONTHLY MEETING

### BIRDS OF THE PACIFIC

Presented by **Tim Schantz**

Naturalist, Marion County Conservation Board

Thursday, **October 17, 7:30 P.M.**

Room 181, **Design Center Building**, ISU Campus

Tim Schantz grew up in Dubuque and graduated from Simpson College in 1987 with a degree in Environmental Science and Biology. He worked for the National Audubon Society in northern Wisconsin and in the Rio Grande valley of Texas. He also worked for the National Park Service in South Dakota and the U.S. Forest Service near Yosemite. Most recently he worked as a field biologist for Point Reyes Bird Observatory in northern California. At Palomar Field Station in Bolinas, California he worked on one of the longest ongoing migration monitoring programs, censusing birds throughout the east tropical Pacific. His interest in birds has taken him throughout North America to Mexico and Panama, to the Galapagos, Farallon, and Hawaiian islands, to Tahiti and American Samoa.

## FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, October 12

### IOWA ARBORETUM AND LUTHER BRIDGE

Boone County west of Luther

Tour the Arboretum and afterward watch for Hawks on the bridge

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in ISU Design Center Parking Lot

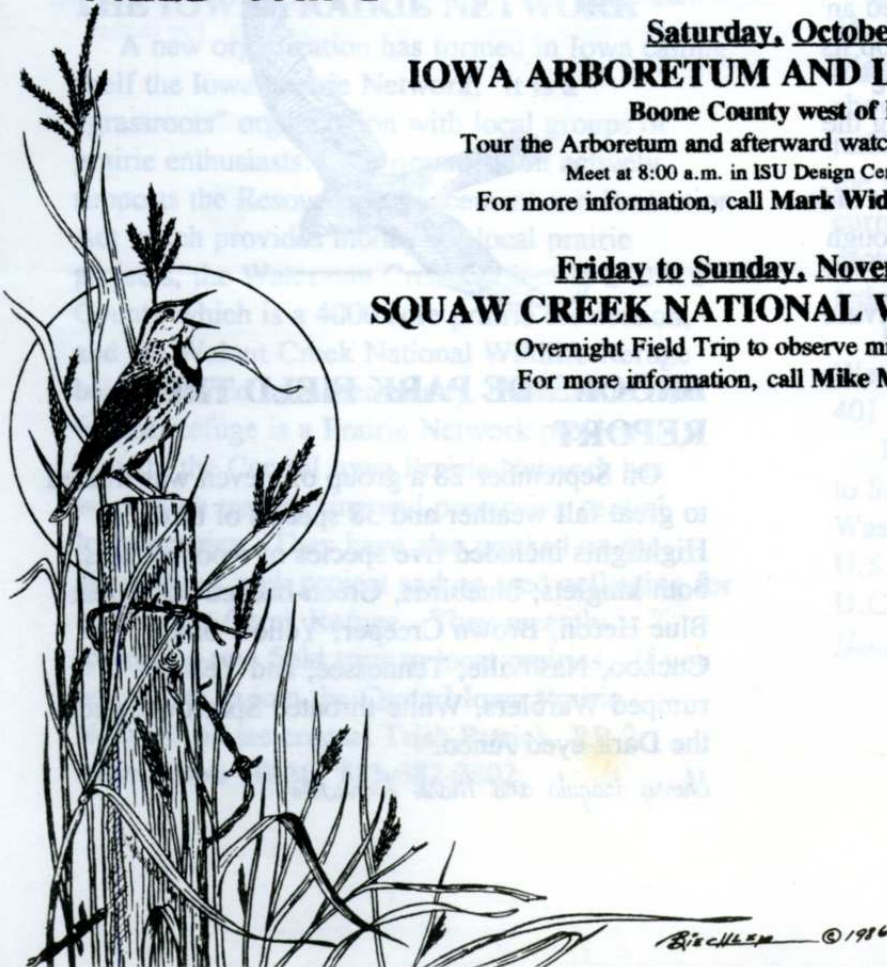
For more information, call **Mark Widrechner** at 292-4014

Friday to Sunday, November 15-17

### SQUAW CREEK NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Overnight Field Trip to observe migrating waterfowl

For more information, call **Mike Meetz** at 382-2534



### BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY

1991-1992

**President:** Sherry Dragula, 292-4014

**Vice-President:** Tom Rosburg, 377-2930

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## BIRDING NOTES

In central Iowa, Yellow Rails have been reported at Snake Creek near Rippey, Iowa. The elusive Black-throated Blue Warbler visited the home of Pam & Reid Allen in W. Des Moines. Yellow-rumped and Orange-crowned Warblers are coming through in good numbers. At Saylorville Reservoir, Gene & Eloise Armstrong reported seventeen American Avocets, a Piping Plover and a Ruddy Turnstone at Sandpiper Beach. Also at Sandpiper were a Red Phalarope and three Peregrine Falcons. Thousands of Franklin's Gulls and about 50 White Pelicans are also at Saylorville.

*from Maridel Jackson, 9-29-91*

## AUDUBON TV ATTACKED AGAIN

Audubon is under attack for offering a television special that portrays a controversial subject -- the grazing of private cattle on public land. The new show, "The Range Wars" about the devastation of our public lands in the West by overgrazing, has displeased the National Cattlemen's Association. Even though the show portrays the ranchers' perspective as well as that of environmentalists, the cattle lobby and the National Inholder's Association have launched an all-out campaign to try to persuade GE to drop its underwriting of Audubon television. They are seeking boycotts of GE products and deluging the company with mail.

**It is urgent that GE hear from the other side** -- from thousands of Americans who care enough to write or call GE in support of Audubon television. Please send a letter to GE as a **private citizen** at the following address, or call the number below. Praise GE for underwriting Audubon TV specials and request that they continue to do so. Write to Mr. Jack Welch, Chairman of the Board, GE, 3135 Easton Turnpike, Fairfield, CT 06431. Telephone 203/373-2971.

*in a letter from Peter Berke, Audubon President*



## MCFARLAND PARK FIELD TRIP REPORT

For our first field trip of 1991-1992 on September 21 there were clear skies but a cold breeze from the southeast. The cold temperatures had some of the eight hardy birders talking about Christmas bird counts. We were surprised to find only 23 species of birds, and that included an LBJ [little-brown-job] and a sleeping DOMESTIC goose floating on the lake. Along the trails much of the plant life was beginning to take on some color and was showing the effects of cooler weather and the drought. Puffballs and other fungi were along the trails. Mast (acorns, hickory nuts and walnuts), kept the Fox Squirrels busy and in full view. Deer were also seen down the trail from the dam.

Highlight birds included a Sharp-shinned Hawk and an American Kestrel. Others were the usual chickadees, nuthatches, and woodpeckers. Some flocks of robins, Blue Jays, and Cedar Waxwings kept us company along the trail.

After the walk we examined the new nature and conservation education building at the park. Mike saw a flock of Eastern Bluebirds later near Dayton Road.

*Mike Meatz*



## BROOKSIDE PARK FIELD TRIP REPORT

On September 28 a group of eleven was treated to great fall weather and 38 species of birds. Highlights included five species of woodpeckers, both kinglets, bluebirds, Green-backed and Great Blue Heron, Brown Creeper, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Nashville, Tennessee, and Yellow-rumped Warblers, White-throated Sparrows, and the Dark-eyed Junco.

*Sherry dragula and Mark Widrechner*



## IOWA AUDUBON COUNCIL

The I.A.C. met in Sioux City on September 14. Sixteen people representing seven Audubon Chapters in the state were in attendance. Cindy Hildebrand, our Legislative Coordinator, gave a report. She will testify for the Council in favor of the Waterman Creek Prairie Project on October 3. She will also write letters on behalf of the Council on the Non-game program position that is currently frozen and on the vacant position on the Iowa Environmental Protection Commission. The Council was briefed on the LeClaire Hydropower Project which would entail heavy fish losses if built as proposed. Conservation groups locally are pushing for a full Environmental Impact Statement. The next meeting of the I.A.C. will be in Cedar Rapids on November 9th. In early December, John Borneman of the Western Regional Office of National Audubon, will visit Iowa and present workshops on strengthening Audubon Chapters. He will conduct a workshop in Des Moines for our Chapter, the Tallgrass Prairie Chapter, and the Rolling Hills Chapter. More details to follow.

*Sherry Dragula*

## THE IOWA PRAIRIE NETWORK

A new organization has formed in Iowa calling itself the Iowa Prairie Network. It is a "grassroots" organization with local groups of prairie enthusiasts. The organization actively supports the Resource Enhancement and Protection Act which provides money for local prairie projects, the Waterman Creek project in O'Brien County which is a 4000 acre prairie restoration, and the Walnut Creek National Wildlife Refuge being planned in Jasper county. Seed collection for the Refuge is a Prairie Network project. Locally the Central Iowa Prairie Network has worked on maintaining and preserving central Iowa prairies. They have also worked on the Waterman Creek project and on seed collecting for the Walnut Creek Refuge. They recently sponsored two field trips to local prairies. If you would like to join the Central Iowa Prairie Network please contact Trish Patrick, RR 2, Ames, Iowa 50010, 515-382-2802.

## CONSERVATION CORNER

The nation's wetlands are currently threatened by a George Herbert Walker Bush administration proposal to "redefine" what constitutes a wetland. The Wetlands Delineation Manual is a guide to identify and determine boundaries of wetlands. It is used by agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Corps of Engineers. The following changes are being proposed for the Wetlands Manual:

\*Requiring an area to be wet or saturated for 21 days - 3 times longer than the present definition. This will make it more difficult to protect seasonal wetlands or wet areas suffering from drought.

\*Changing the definitions of "growing season" to meet an agricultural, rather than biological definition. Some wetland plants can begin growing from 4-6 weeks before the agricultural growing season and thus would not qualify an area as a wetland.

\*Requiring saturation "at the surface" to be a wetland. Currently if an area is wet "at or near the surface" it qualifies as a wetland because many wetland plants need saturation only in the root zone.

**Letters are needed to the E.P.A. by October 15, asking that the Wetlands Delineation Manual not be changed.** The changes outlined above make wetlands more likely to be developed rather than protected. If the proposed changes to the Manual are implemented, from 10 to 30 % of current wetlands would be excluded from protection under the Clean Water Act, the only federal law which regulates wetlands.

Please write to: Mr. Gregory Peck, Chief, Wetlands Branch-Mail Code A- 104F, E.P.A., 401 M St. SW, Washington, D.C. 20460

It would also help to send a copy of your letter to Senators Grassley and Harkin at: U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510 and to Rep. Smith at: U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515.

*Sherry Dragula*



## BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY EVENTS - 1991/1992

November 21	Thursday, 7:30 PM - Meeting, Carl Kurtz, St. Anthony, Photographer "Natural Beauty of Iowa" - [tentative - may be moved to January]
December 11	Wednesday, 7:30 PM - 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, Wolfgang Oesterreich, "Flora & Fauna of West Texas" - [tentative - may be moved to November]
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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**October 1991**  
**BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
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