

Big Bluestem Flyer

Volume 23 No. 6

February 1989

Monthly Meeting

PRAIRIE RESTORATION

Dorothy Baringer

Tuesday, February 21, 7:30 PM, Rm 181, Design Center, ISU, Ames

Field Trip

OWL WALK

Saturday, February 18, 1989, Ledges and Big Creek State Parks. Meet at 7:30 AM in ISU Design Center Parking Lot for carpooling. Be prepared for moderate difficulty walking in brushy areas.

WATERFOWL WATCH

Saturday, March 18; Bay's Branch, Guthrie County Meet at 7:30 AM in ISU Design Center Parking Lot. Dress for standing in place and some walking.



BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS

1988-1989

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1988-1989 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

AMES, December 17, 1988 Compiler - Steve Dinsmore

Ten feeder watchers and 36 field observers helped to register 51 species, the second highest count recorded for Ames. The most unusual sightings were the five new species to the Ames count: American Black Duck, Northern Pintail, Gadwall, American Wigeon, and Wild Turkey. Other unusual birds seen were a Carolina Wren and five Easter bluebirds.

SAYLORVILLE, December 18, 1988 Compiler - Steve Dinsmore

The Saylorvill count was new this year and co-sponsored by members of the Des Moines Audubon Society. An amazing 82 species were tallied, one of the highest counts ever for Iowa, aided by good participation and weather. Some of the more unusual sightings included the Great Blue Heron, Greater Scaup, Red-shouldered Hawk, Merlin, Sandhill Crane, Carolina Wren, 26 Eastern Bluebirds, Rufous-sided Towhee, and 45 Snow Buntings.

BOONE, January 2, 1989, Compiler - Mark Widrlechner

Among the good sightings on the Boone count were the 154 Wild Turkey, Winter Wren, Caroline Wren (did the same bird make each count?), Rufous-sided Towhee, and Evening Grosbeak. The species count was 53.

	AMES	SAYLORVILLE	BOONE				
Great Blue Heron		1		Ring-billed Gull		10	
Snow Goose		1		Herring Gull		58	
Canada Goose	420	21	664	Rock Dove	313	258	199
Green-winger Teal		9		Mourning Dove		35	19
American Black Duck	12	32		Eastern Screech-Own	1	11	15
Mallard	12227	22000	26	Great-horned Owl	6	18	14
Northern Pintail	3	7		Barred Owl	4	7	9
Northern Shoveler		4		Long-eared Owl		11	10
Gadwall	1	7		Short-eared Owl	3	3	1
American Wigeon	2	8		Northern Saw-whet Owl		2	5
Canvasback		1		Belted Kingfisher	2	10	10
Greater Scaup		6		Red-headed Woodpecker	2	60	5
Lesser Scaup		28		Red-bellied Woodpecker	45	58	102
Common Goldeneye		236		Downy Woodpecker	140	130	137
Hooded Merganser		9		Hairy Woodpecker	33	13	50
Common Merganser		261		Northern Flicker	12	17	10
Bald Eagle		9	3	Horned Lark	9	2	x
Northern Harrier	2	13	6	Blue Jay	110	142	120
Sharp-shinned Hawk		4	1	American Crow	3000	726	406
Cooper's Hawk		3	1	Black-capped Chickadee	366	501	639
Accipiter sp		2	3	Tufted Titmouse	5	4	52
Red-shouldered Hawk		2		Red-breasted Nuthatch		2	2
Red-tailed Hawk	26	53	64	White-breasted Nuthatch	151	75	215
Rough-legged Hawk	3	1	9	Brown Creeper	15	3	13
American Kestrel	11	39	10	Carolina Wren	1	1	1
Merlin		1		Winter Wren			2
Gray Partridge	23	5		Golden-crowned Kinglet	3		2
Ring-necked Pheasant	102	135	32	Eastern Bluebird	5	26	6
Wild Turkey	1	1	154	American Robin	12	3	7
Northern Bobwhite		5		Cedar Waxwing	5	164	200
Sandhill Crane		1		Northern Shrike		4	3
Kildeer		21		Shrike sp	1		
Common Snipe		2		European Starling	2118	2115	956

Northern Cardinal	128	291	257	Red-winger Blackbird	6	118	
Rufous-sided Towhee		1	1	Meadowlark sp		1	
American Tree Sparrow	805	3398	381	Rusty Blackbird	6		
Fox Sparrow	1	1		Common Grackle	3	1	
Song Sparrow	8	47	16	Brown-headed Cowbird		1	
Lincoln's Sparrow		4		Purple Finch	6	46	13
Swamp Sparrow		1		Pine Siskin	2		2
White-throated Sparrow		3	1	American Goldfinch	118	225	283
White-crowned Sparrow		39		Evening Grosbeak			1
Harris' Sparrow	2	48	4	House Sparrow	5625	1886	1901
Dark-eyed Junco	951	1305	982				
Lapland Longspur	20	2					
Snow Bunting		45					

ACID RAIN

The recent precipitation events measured a pH of 6.0, 5.6, and 5.0. All were mixed with wind-blown soil which raises the pH.

NATURE BOOK OF THE MONTH

The complete birder: A guide to better birding, by Jack Connor and published in 1988 by Houghton Mifflin (\$18.95), has a rather impressive title for a slim book, but the content is among the most practical and useful of guides I have seen. The mission of the book is to guide, not intimidate, and the author assumes that the best birding skills will be acquired slowly, building upon good foundations. The chapters are divided into good advice on equipment, descriptions of migrations, winter and summer birding, and five excellent chapters identifying the families giving the most trouble: warblers, hawks, shorebirds, terns, and gulls. Its not easy to briefly describe the quality of his advice but in one respect he goes one step further than Peterson's famous system of key marks by placing groups of birds in patterns of similarities. In the warbler section he urges that just a few key warblers be learned extremely well before using those to branch into the others. Several good tables and charts illustrate the system. An added bonus is Connor's wit. His description of watching warblers, for example, is "Hey!. What? Uh...Damn!." And on buying scopes: "If you enjoy poking sleeping dogs with sharp sticks, ask the zoom owner to show you something in his scope that you can't see in the fixed-focus." [Ames Public Library number 598.07 CON] D. C. Edwards

Attention, Cranewatchers!

Audubon's annual River Conference celebrates the arrival of the sandhill cranes on Nebraska's Platte River during their northward migration. This year's conference, held as usual in Kearney, Nebraska, will run from March 16-20. As always, the highlight of the conference will be dawn and sunset trips to the river for spectacular cranewatching. For information, contact Audubon's West Central regional office, 200 South Wind Place, Manhattan, Kan. 66502; (913) 537-4385.



CALENDAR

- March 4 - Dubuque AS, 7th Annual Duck Waddle to Green Isle, 319-583-0537
March 10-12 Northwoods AC, Minn, Native American Crafts and Maple Syrup
Weekend 612-245-2648
March 17-19 - NAS Spring River Conference, Kearney, NE
March 18 - BBAS WATERFOWL WATCH, Bay's Branch
March 21 - BBAS public meeting, MAMMALS, Jim Pease, ISU Extension
April - AUDUBON MONTH. Theme: Rivers and Wildlife
April 8 - BBAS WOODCOCK WATCH, Izaak Walton Park
April 14 - Northwoods AC, Minn, Map and Compass Wilderness Navigation
612-245-2648
April 18 - BBAS public meeting, SHORE BIRDS, Hank Zaletel
April 21-23, 28-30 - Northwoods AC, Minn, Discover Adventure Whitewater
Canoe Weekends 612-245-2648
April 22 - BBAS, SHORE BIRDS, Hendrickson's Marsh
May 6 - BBAS, WATER BIRDS, Saylorville reservoir
May 13 - BBAS, WARBLERS, Brookside Park
May 16 - BBAS public meeting, HIGH SCHOOL PRAIRIE RECLAMATION,
Judy Shearer, Nature Conservancy
May 27-30 - Northwoods AC, Minn, Paddle the Namekagon and
St. Croix Rivers 612-245-2648
June 3 - 2ND ANNUAL BBAS BIRDERS' BREAKFAST, Ledges State Park
June 4-10 - Northwoods AC, Minn, Black Hills Backpacking Trip
612-245-2648
June/July - BBAS CANOE TRIP to Big Wall Lake
Sep 11-16 - NAS Biennial Convention, Tucson, AZ

The public is invited to attend any BBAS sponsored event.

BIRDER'S HOTLINE
319/338-9881 for state-wide sightings.

REMEMBER THE CHICKADEE CHECKOFF!

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