

# BIG BLUESTEM FLYER

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

Volume 24, No. 5

January 1990

## MONTHLY MEETING

### **BOLIVIA: BIRDING THE SAVANNAHS**

Susan Davis

Tuesday, January 16, 7:30 p.m., Room 181, Design Center, ISU, Ames

## FIELD TRIPS

### **WINTER OWL WALK**

Ledges and Big Creek State Parks

Saturday, February 17, 7:30 a.m. meet at Design Center Parking Lot

### **BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS 1989-1990**

President: Mike Meetz, 382-2534

Vice-President: Sherry Dragula, 292-4014 Conservation Chair

Secretary: Kay Niyo, 292-5130

Treasurer: Mark Widrlechner, 292-4014

#### Executive Board

Steve Dinsmore, 292-3152 Field Trips

Andy Fix, 296-7554

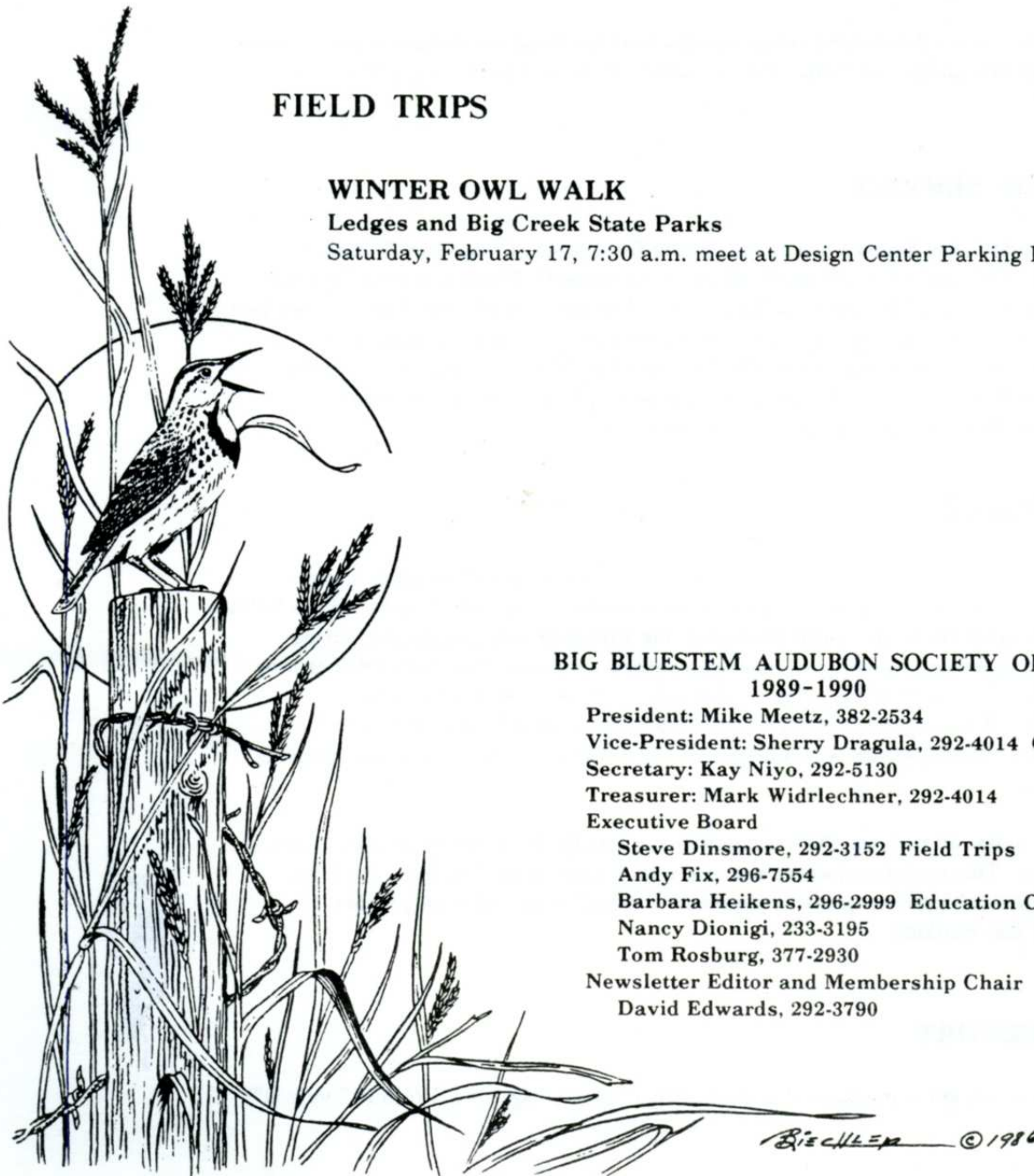
Barbara Heikens, 296-2999 Education Chair

Nancy Dionigi, 233-3195

Tom Rosburg, 377-2930

Newsletter Editor and Membership Chair

David Edwards, 292-3790



## **NONGAME PROGRAM FUNDING**

The Chickadee Checkoff (its formal name is the Fish and Wildlife Protection Fund) received about ten percent fewer contributions in 1988 compared to 1987. These contributions are essentially the only support for the nongame programs of the Iowa DNR. It is our support that funds the Otter, Bluebird, Peregrine Falcon, and Barn Owl introduction programs. Other activities are the Bird Feeder Survey, Breeding Bird Atlas, hawk watches and Bald Eagle programs, and aiding injured raptors to return to the wild. Research is sponsored on Cooper's Hawks, kestrels, nighthawks, nongame birds in reestablished wetlands, Loggerhead Shrikes, Red-shouldered Hawks, and butterflies in the Loess Hills. Many education programs and materials are prepared and delivered. All of this depends on our contributions.

The easiest way to aid our Iowa nongame programs is at tax time, by making a contribution on the appropriate line on the tax form. Please remember to contribute to the Fish and Wildlife Checkoff.

## **BBAS PRAIRIE SERVICE**

The Big Bluestem Audubon Society has asked to care for a piece of neglected "roadside prairie" in Ames. The City administrative officers have agreed. There are some "humps" of land in the roadway near Mortenson Road and Ash Avenue in southwest Ames. The plant communities on these are interesting and make a good start for a self-sustaining and beautiful pocket of land. An ad hoc committee co-chaired by Tom Rosburg and Kay Niyo will begin by inventorying the existing plants during the next growing season. Some small marker may be placed to identify the project and its value.

## **ROADSIDE TREES**

Many of us recall the time and money spent in past years planting and weeding around shrubs and trees on the right-of-way of Highway 30 between Ames and Nevada. Hank Zalatel has provided leadership spirit and much sweat for this BBAS service project that lasted many years. The surviving plants have reached a respectable size. The Iowa DOT is now planning to widen that stretch of highway to four lanes. Hank attended the public hearings and received assurances that as much of those plantings will be saved as is reasonable. If they cannot remain where they are, they will be replanted to other highway roadside locations.

Hank is now a member of an Iowa DOT committee responsible for overseeing state highway roadside plantings. This ecology-oriented activity was mandated by law from the Iowa legislature. The several highway projects planned in central Iowa will soon provide visible benefits of this thinking.



## **ACID RAIN REPORT**

Mike Meetz reports one snow measure this past month, measuring 5.4 pH (5.6 is "normal").



## **BBAS EXECUTIVE BOARD CHANGES**

John Richard has been an active member of the BBAS for some time and was recently elected to the board. John is a research scientist, and his work is now focused in laboratories in Peoria, Illinois. He moved at the first of the year, thus resigning his BBAS board position. We will miss him, though he promises to visit often.

To fill his Executive Board position, according to the BBAS by-laws, the president, with the concurrence of the Executive Board, has appointed Nancy Dionigi. Nancy, employed as Ames City Clerk, has been an enthusiastic and knowledgeable society member. We appreciate her willingness to serve.

## **BIRDER IDENTIFICATION QUIZ NO. 2**

Think of yourself as a bird and just beginning to learn birder identification. You will of course have the latest copy of the Robin's "Birders of North America" with the familiar blue cover or perhaps the "Field Guide to the Birders East of the Rockies" by Petrelson with the famous key field marks indicated with arrows. Identification begins with certain questions. What is the birders size, shape, behavior, sounds, field marks, and habitat. Many good birderers suggest that a few common birders be learned well for use as standards for comparison. This the second in the series; the birder's name is left for you to determine.

Birder B: Slightly larger than Birder A but equally well-rounded in shape; most often seen with eye pressed against a fat tube with a watery-looking end, either inside a self-moving den or with tube attached to long heron-like legs; birder does not make many sounds unless provoked with the call "whadjacee;" field marks variable but include watery-looking disks in front of the eyes and often has less cloth covering than other birders, frequently with bare legs; habitat is statewide though most often and reliably seen at the Saylorville Reservoir.

## **ANNUAL BIRD FEEDER SURVEY**



Inserted into this newsletter is a copy of the form to report your bird feeder activity on two consecutive days of January 25-28, 1990. The instructions are included. This is, I believe, the seventh year of the project, and it is beginning to show interesting trends in bird populations. These are some comments from the Winter 1989 Nongame News.

"To continue to receive data, we need a large sample--that means a lot of people participating. We particularly need people who live near pastures, row crops and downtown areas. Many times people living in these areas think that they do not get enough "interesting" birds. We are interested in all birds, and we want to be able to document the "normal" birds for each type of habitat."

"Remember, you do not need to continuously watch your feeders for eight hours each day. Just look out the window often enough to see if any new species have appeared, or if the number of birds has increased."

## CALENDAR FOR THE COMING MONTHS

- January 13 Prairie Rapids AS local areas field trip. Meet at George Wyeth entrance. 7:00 a.m.
- February 20 BBAS Meeting. Iowa's bluebirds. Iowa Non-Game DNR.
- March 3 BBAS Eagle Watch. Red Rock reservoir.
- March 16-18. Spring River Conference, Kearney NE. West Central A.S. regional office.
- March 20 BBAS Meeting. American Kestrel Project. Dan Varland.
- March 24 BBAS Field Trip. Waterfowl Watch. Bays Branch, Guthrie County.
- April 7 or 8 BBAS Field Trip. Woodcock Watch. Izaak Walton and/or Ames High School Prairie.
- April 17 BBAS Meeting. Wetland Restoration: For the Birds? Dr. James Dinsmore, ornithologist.
- April 21 BBAS Field Trip. Waterfowl and Shorebirds. Hendrickson's Marsh, Colo ponds.
- April 29 BBAS Field Trip. Warblers and Wildflowers. N. W. Marshall County.
- May 12 BBAS Field Trip. Warblers and Wildflowers. Brookside Park, Ames.
- May 15 BBAS Meeting. Prairie Foray. Tom Rosburg, ISU Botany Department.
- June 2 BBAS Field Trip. Annual Birder's Breakfast and Bird Walk. Ledges State Park.

## BIRDERS' HOTLINE

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

239-3954

as of Sat night 2003-Townsend's Solitaires } S of Sioux City  
 50-Purple Finches }  
 WW Cross b. S. of Boone Sci UI

Brown's Lake

Red S Hawk 415 S of Polk City  
 3 Redpolls base of Saylorville Dam  
 3 WWC - Mt town Cem.  
 Pine Grosbeaks coming into Cl Minn

~~11~~ 11-Eurasian Tree Sparrows  
 N of Burlington 319-753-0710  
 12-WWC Clinton  
 3-WWC N. of Quadrangle UI  
 N'n Goshawk Sutcliffe + NW of Cedar Rapids  
 Mockingbird Oxford  
 Golden Eagle Allamakee Co.

January 1990

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

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