

# BIG BLUESTEM FLYER

Volume 27, No. 1

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

September 1991

## MONTHLY MEETING

### WILDLIFE ALONG AN ARCTIC RIVER

Presented by **DAN VARLAND**

Thursday, September 19, 7:30 P.M.

Room 181, Design Center Building, ISU Campus

Dan Varland worked a part of a summer in Canada's Northwest Territories on a project surveying Gyrfalcon, Peregrine, and other birds. He will share with us his excellent slide program of birds, animals, plants, topography, and people of the area. Dan is a Ph.D. Student in Animal Ecology at Iowa State. He has also been researching Kestrel nesting in boxes along and near the interstate highways and spoke to us about that project in the past.

## FIELD TRIPS

For more information on Field Trips, call Mike Meetz 382-2534

### FOUR SATURDAYS OF MIGRATING BIRDS AND FALL WILDFLOWERS

Saturday, September 21

MCFARLAND PARK AND CONSERVATION CENTER

North end of Dayton Road, Northeast of Ames, Story County.

Meet at 8 a.m. in the parking lot.

Saturday, September 28

BROOKSIDE PARK

Sixth Street, Ames

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the north parking lot.

Saturday, October 5

LEDGES STATE PARK

South of Boone

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

or at 8:20 a.m. at the park upper picnic area

Saturday, October 12

IOWA ARBORETUM AND LUTHER BRIDGE

Boone County west of Luther

Meet at 8:00 a.m. in ISU Design Center Parking Lot or  
at 8:20 a.m. at the Des Moines River bridge west of Luther



### BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY

1991-1992

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

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

**Secretary:** Nancy Dionigi, 233-3195

**Treasurer:** Mark Widrechner, 292-4014

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Paul Ovrom, 292-8862

#### Newsletter Editor and Membership Chair

David Edwards, 292-3790

#### Field Trips Chair

Mike Meetz, 382-2534

## WHAT IS THE BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY?

The Big Bluestem Audubon Society is the latest form of a group of long standing. It began as an Ames birding group many decades ago changing its name at least once. In 1983 the group applied for and received formal chapter status with the National Audubon Society. The chapter is incorporated and has the requisite formal documents and obligations. One tie with the national group is a mutually beneficial one. Members of the N.A.S. in a defined area are automatically members of the local chapter. The N.A.S. returns a part (\$5.50) of those members fees. These funds are for our use in the aid of Audubon causes as defined in our documents. We supply a local effort in conservation causes including education, service projects, and membership recruitment. The N.A.S. gives \$15.50 in the first year for new members the chapter recruits, so it is very important that those you encourage to join use **our** application materials or place the chapter's designator code **H57** on them.

The chapter holds monthly meetings from September through May. Field trips are planned to meet the interests of the members and to be attractive to potential members. All meetings and field trips are open to the public, and there are no fees charged for any event.

What do we do at meetings? Each meeting typically begins with a short period of announcements and reports regarding different activities of the chapter. This is followed by a period in which members are encouraged to report interesting natural sightings and experiences -- the primary focus is usually on birding. One of the experienced members sometimes presents a short identification lesson called "Bird of the Month." The major time is given to the scheduled speaker or program. That presentation usually finishes before 9 p.m., leaving a time for socializing over refreshments before our closing time of about 9:30 p.m.

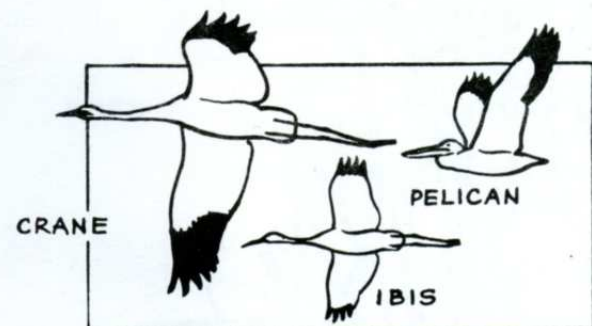
## BIRDING NOTES

Migration is underway for warblers, vireos, and may others. Maridel Jackson reported seeing twenty-one species of warblers from one position at the Ledges State Park on Labor day. No significant waterfowl groups have appeared yet on the big waters except the White Pelicans on Saylorville reservoir and some Canada Geese at Hickory Grove Park. Night Hawks have been grouping, and of course the grackle and blackbird hordes have been wheeling over the farm landscapes. By now the crows will have given up their solitary ways to congregate each night on campus to the 'delight' of passersby. No hawks to speak of have been seen moving through as yet. Drought will make for difficult shorebird sighting this year.

## WILDFLOWER WATCH

Here are some wildflowers to watch for in September and October. In shady woodland areas are White Snakeroot and Woodland Sunflowers. Also on the underside of Solomon's Seal are large, heavy, navy-blue berries, and at the tips of False Solomon Seal fronds are smaller, bright-red berries. In sunny, prairie areas are goldenrods, sunflowers, Little White Asters, Purple New England Asters, and Evening Primroses.

More wildflower information will appear in the April and May newsletters.



## **WATERMAN CREEK PRAIRIE DEDICATION**

Letters are needed to support the proposed Waterman Creek Prairie project. The Iowa Natural Resources Commission will decide whether to approve the project on October 3rd. The project would involve about 4,700 acres in northwest Iowa, bought from willing sellers over fifteen to twenty years. Both prairies and savannas, including some endangered and threatened species, would be protected and restored. The project would be large enough to give the prairies badly-needed buffer zones and connecting corridors.

Some Iowans who would like to stop or severely reduce the Waterman Creek project have hired one of Governor Branstad's former top aides to help them. This project is becoming a test case for some Iowans who would like to see an end to ALL further public land acquisition in Iowa. What happens to the Waterman Creek proposal could affect other land acquisition projects for years to come. Please write to the Commission c/o the Department of Natural Resources, Wallace Building, Des Moines, IA 50319, by Oct. 3.

For more information contact Cindy Hildebrand, 515-232-3807

## **AUDUBON ADVENTURES PROGRAM**

Once again our Society will be providing the National Audubon Adventures program for 10 classrooms in Story County. This means students in each selected classroom will receive a monthly subscription to the Audubon Adventures learning series on our environment. Each of the 10 selected teachers will receive a special teacher's packet each month to guide students through the series and to provide supplemental material. Our Society pays \$30 per classroom subscription, and we are seeking donations for this valuable learning tool.

If you would like to contribute to our local environmental education program, please make your check out to: Big Bluestem Audubon Society, and send to:

Mark Widrechner  
BBAS Treasurer  
R.R. 6  
Ames, IA 50010.

## **CONSERVATION CORNER ARMCHAIR ACTIVISM**

Our Chapter would like to be part of a new Audubon program based on two simple but effective methods of citizen action-letters and phone calls to government officials. The Armchair Activist program began in a Chicago area Chapter and has spread to Chapters nationwide. At least 5 Chapters in Iowa are starting up the program this fall. The program has two components: The Letter of the Month Club & the Telephone Rapid Response Team.

The Letter of the Month Club requires about one hour per month. The only expense is for postage and stationery. The participants write one letter per month to elected officials on a state, local or federal issue. A summary of the topic is sent to volunteers, along with an explanation of current legislation and a sample letter.

The Telephone Rapid Response Team requires only an occasional phone call. As a member of the team, you stand ready to call government officials on short notice. Calls maybe be local, to Des Moines or to Washington D.C. Participants also agree to call up to two other Audubon volunteers to solicit their involvement.

If you are interested in participating in either the Letter of the Month Club or the Telephone Team please give Sherry Dragula a call at 292-4014.

## **CONSERVATION CENTER DEDICATION**

The Story County Conservation Center will be having its dedication and Open House on Sunday September 15, at 1 PM. Let's all be there to support our new Center. And to make it look "just right" there is a need for some volunteers to help finish up the landscaping around the Center. If you can spare an hour or two before Sept. 15, call Carol Williams at the Center, 232-2516.



## BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY EVENTS - 1991/1992

October 17	Thursday, 7:30 PM - Meeting, Tim Schantz, Marion Co. "Birds of the Pacific"
November 15-17	Friday-Sunday, Overnight Field Trip to observe migrating waterfowl at Desoto Bend or Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuges
November 21	Thursday, 7:30 PM - Meeting, Carl Kurtz, St. Anthony, Photographer "Natural Beauty of Iowa"
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, Wolfgang Oesterreich, "Flora & Fauna of West Texas"
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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**September 1991**  
**BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
 2308 STATE AVE, RR 5  
 AMES IA 50010

BULK RATE U.S. POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO. 131 AMES, IOWA
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\*HANK ZALATEL  
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