



Big Bluestem Flyer

Big Bluestem Audubon Society Newsletter

The mission of the Big Bluestem Audubon Society is to enjoy the observation and study of birds and natural ecosystems, contribute to their preservation and restoration, and engage in educational activities to benefit humanity, and to gain a broader understanding and deeper appreciation of the world we live in.

Volume 33 Number 1

September/October 1997

Featured Speaker—September 18 meeting: *Dr. David Vleck, "The moundbuilders: Australian megapodes and their eggs"*

The Megapodes of Australia and Oceania are unique among birds. They use geothermal, solar, or bacterial heat rather than body heat to warm their eggs during incubation. This talk features two Australian Megapodes: the Brush Turkey and the Malee Fowl. Both build huge compost heaps and use the heat produced by the decomposition to warm their eggs. We'll hear about the specialized nest sites, remarkable eggs, and unusual behavior of these unique birds.

David Vleck is a biologist with the Department of Zoology and Genetics at Iowa State University. His research focuses on physiological adaptations of animals to unusual environments and unusual activities. Most of his research on birds has been in collaboration with his wife, Carol, who spoke to the BBAS last spring about penguins in the Antarctic.

Featured Speaker—October 16 meeting: *Dr. Rolf Koford, "LBJs in trouble: Conservation of grassland songbirds"*

Several species of songbirds that nest in North American grasslands have undergone substantial declines in population size since the mid-1960s. Natural resource managers, concerned by these declines, are focusing attention on species previously derided as little brown jobs (LBJs). Rolf will discuss some of the factors thought to be responsible for the declines, review his research on the effects of the Conservation Reserve Program on these birds, and point to the kinds of information needed to guide management and policy decisions.

Rolf Koford is Assistant Unit Leader for Wildlife in the Iowa Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit and is on the faculty of Animal Ecology Department at ISU. Before coming to Iowa, he conducted research on prairie wildlife in North Dakota, Mexican Jays in Arizona, Groove-billed Anis in Costa Rica, and tree squirrels in the Sierra Nevadas. His family has had a long connection with the Audubon Society, going back to his father's research on the California Condor in the 1940s.

The Big Bluestem Audubon Society (BBAS) meetings are held monthly, September-May on the third Thursday of the month (except December) at 7:30 p.m., Room 2532 Veterinary Medicine Building, Iowa State University. If you need directions, please call any of the BBAS officers or committee chairs. See you there!

If you would like to meet and dine with the speaker and the BBAS board before the monthly meeting, there are a limited number of reservations available. Please call Rebecca Shivvers at 292-0691 for September and John Snyder at 232-8824 for October to confirm space and location.

Coming Field Trips: September & October

Kevin Healy, Field Trip Chair

September

6- Fall shorebirds and waterfowl. Our first field trip of the season will depend on current local conditions. Meet Hank Zalatel as he leads us in a search for fall shorebirds and waterfowl. Meet Hank at the Nevada Courthouse by the cannon at 0800. Call Kevin or Rosanne at 233-

5914 if you need a ride from Ames. Trip leader, Hank Zalatel (515-382-5427). khealy@ames.net

27- Identify raptors at Grammer Grove in Marshall County with Mark Proescholdt. Meet Kevin Healy at

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Bird Term of the Month: *Crepuscular. Active at twilight.*

As the Crow Flies . . .

Stan Cyran, President

It was a curious summer, I am sure we will all agree, from the cold wet late spring to the deathly mid-summer heat and humidity, to the beautiful early days of August. It seems that I am always learning something new about what Iowa has to offer. With the all too soon coming of autumn, another year of monthly programs and field trips begins, and I am very excited about what BBAS has to offer. Additionally, an important anniversary for the BBAS is coming up (our 30th), and plans are underway to make it a memorable celebration. Stay tuned for further details.

The new directors and officers are enthusiastic and energetic. There are plans for new special projects, including the rebuilding of the Audubon Nature Trail. There will be even greater use of computers to disseminate information on where to find birds. Members who have an interest in these or other projects are invited to contact Karl Jungbluth, our special projects chair.

We received a very important piece of news this summer when we learned that the BBAS is a tax exempt organization. This means that any contributions to the BBAS are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by the law. Because of the many ways that our organization could use extra funds to accomplish our mission, we hope this will stir more contributions to our cause. Stay tuned for more fund raising efforts. All in all, it's going to be a very good year.

Calendar of Events

September 16: 4 p.m., Doolittle Prairie. Prairie Seed Harvest.

September 18: 4 p.m., McFarland Park. Prairie Seed Harvest.

September 20: Ferguson Timber (550 acres of old growth timber). LeGrand, Iowa. Forestry Field Day & Iowa Woodland Owners Annual Meeting. Field trip, lectures, and demonstrations. Contact 515/752-0033 for more information.

September 20: 7:30 p.m., Story County Conservation Center. Ames Area Amateur Astronomers monthly meeting and star party. Learn the constellations!

October 12-18: National Wildlife Refuge Week.

December 20: The Ames Christmas Bird Count.

December 21: The Saylorville Christmas Bird Count.

January 1: The Boone Christmas Count.

Did you know?

A filoplume is a hairlike or bristlelike feather that consists of a shaft, few side branches, and no vanes.

Big Bluestem Audubon Society Officers and Committees

Officers:

- President: Stan Cyran 292-4876 scyran@mem.po.com
- Vice-President: Kay Niyo 233-8803 kniyo@aol.com
- Secretary: Mary Doud 296-2178
- Treasurer: Paul Ovrom 292-8862 nc7ao@ars-grin.gov

Board Members:

- Carol Berrier 965-8242
- David Guy 292-8825
- Kevin Healy 233-5914 khealy@ames.net
- Karl Jungbluth 432-5057 Karl.A.Jungbluth@noaa.gov
- John Pohlman 232-6816

Committee Chairs:

- Archivist: Hank Zalatel 382-5427 birdhank@aol.com
- Awards Chair: Stan Cyran
- Conservation Chair: Sherry Dragula 233-1532 mpwskd@aol.com
- Education Co-Chairs: Carol and Galin Berrier
- Field Trip Chair: Kevin Healy
- Fund Raising Co-Chairs: Kay Niyo and Stan Cyran
- Membership Chair: Mark Widrechner 233-1532 mpwskd@aol.com
- Program Chair: John Snyder 232-8824 JESnyder@ix.netcom.com
- Publicity Chair: Mary Doud 296-2178
- Publications and Electronic Media Chair: Rebecca Shivvers 292-0691 shivvers@ameslab.gov
- Special Publications Chair: Joyce Bahrenfus 432-3396
- Service & Special Projects Co-Chairs: Karl and Carmen Jungbluth

Web Site:

<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~shivvers/bluestem.html>

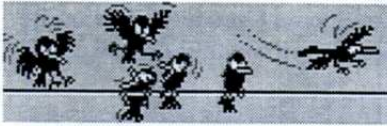
Iowa Bird Sightings Hotline—1-319-338-9881

Notes from the Field

Jon Bahrenfus, Past Field Trip Chair

Saturday, June 7, was the annual Birder's Breakfast. About fifteen BBAS members went to the Ledges State Park, where the highlight of the trip was the sighting of a Mississippi Kite! We also saw some of the newly hatched 17-year locusts that were exiting from the ground. Other birds we observed were pileated woodpecker, black billed cuckoo, yellow billed cuckoo, yellow throated vireo, warbling vireo, red eyed vireo, northern parula, yellow warbler, yellow throated warbler, cerulean warbler, mourning warbler, common yellow throat, and scarlet tanager. Breakfast was at the upper shelter house.

**Newsletter Deadline:
October 17, 1997 at 2 p.m.**



Birder of the Month

by Stan Cyran

This is another in a series of columns exploring the birders in our midst. Why are they birders? How do they spend their time? How do they contribute their talents to society at large?

As one of 14 children, Mary Doud was at no loss for teachers and coaches. It was her father, though, who first piqued Mary's interest in birds at a very young age. "He enjoyed birds, and he especially loved to imitate their calls," she remembers. Mary developed a much more formal interest in birding when she joined Big Bluestem Audubon Society three years ago, on the urging of a co-worker. "I still consider myself a beginning birder," she notes, "but I have learned a lot of new ones since I joined." Mary's favorite bird is the cardinal. "It's a common bird, but I like its bright color and I can recognize it by its song."

Another colorful bird, a scarlet tanager, provided one of Mary's most memorable birding experiences. During a trip to Holst State Forest, she was one of a group of birders who was able to observe a scarlet tanager for quite a long time. Mary sees her interest in birding as a part of a greater interest in nature and the outdoors. She is a member of the Sierra Club, and the Nature Conservancy as well. She parlayed her interests into a trip to Alaska last year, where she camped in Denali for a night, toured a glacier, took a ride down a river, and caught and grilled salmon.

Mary became the BBAS Publicity Chair last year, spreading the word far and wide, and increasing attendance at the meetings and field trips. She is the BBAS secretary this year as well. Part of her dedication to the BBAS is because of the monthly meetings. "The speakers are always excellent, and every meeting is like a seminar," she opines. "I don't get to travel a lot, and the monthly programs are the next best thing."

To the extent that many members feel that BBAS is one big happy family, it is not hard to see why Mary Doud feels right at home.



Editor's Welcome

Rebecca Shivvers, Editor

Welcome to another new year with the Big Bluestem Audubon Society. To continue receiving the newsletter, please check your address label. If there is an X, you need to renew your membership or you will not receive further issues. Please check page 7 of this issue for details.

Many thanks to several of you who submitted articles and ideas to make the *Big Bluestem Flyer* a success last year. But, we continue to need your help with ideas and feature articles. I may call you for ideas and assistance.

Please keep sending your questions to "Bird Chat," to answer your birding questions, offer birding tips, and advice.

Many of you have read good books about birds, the environment, ecological issues, source books, bird guides, video tapes, etc. Send me a short review to share with other BBAS members. If you would like to submit an article, a letter to the editor, or have a by-line, please send it or email me, shivvers@ameslab.gov. Thank you for your support.

Conservation Corner

Sherry Dragula, Conservation Chair

Endangered Species Recovery Act Introduced

On July 31st, the Endangered Species Recovery Act, H.R. 2351, was introduced in Congress. This bill reauthorizes the Endangered Species Act, our nation's preeminent wildlife law, which is responsible for the survival of species such as the peregrine falcon, and the recovery of the bald eagle. With a solid initial showing of support from 55 co-sponsors, the drive is on to enlist more Congressional co-sponsors for this important bill.

The Endangered Species Recovery Act (ESRA) will help species recover and move toward removal from the endangered species list by strengthening protections for species on federal lands. ESRA will improve the scientific basis for decisions under the ESRA by implementing many of the recommendations made by the National Academy of Sciences in their 1995 report on the ESRA. It will improve species protection on private lands by strengthening the biological requirements for Habitat Conservation Plans, and by providing balanced incentives to private landowners who take steps to conserve listed and declining species. Finally, ESRA will help small landowners by creating a technical assistance program to help them comply with the ESRA and by creating a streamlined approval process for truly low-impact conservation plans. In short, ESRA represents a strong and balanced approach for the conservation of our nation's imperiled wildlife.

Letters and calls to your Congressperson asking them to co-sponsor H.R. 2351, the Endangered Species Recovery Act, are needed. They can be reached at 1-800-723-5246, the Capitol Switchboard. The address is: (Your Congressperson's name), U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515

Iowa Mourning Dove Hunting Season is Proposed

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has proposed that mourning doves be hunted in Iowa. It will take legislative action to make the season a reality. At its August board meeting, the Big Bluestem Audubon Society passed a resolution opposing the hunting of mourning doves in Iowa. It is important to make your feelings on this issue known to your Iowa legislator. For more information, contact Sherry Dragula, 233-1532 or mpwskd@aol.com.

TO THE RESCUE

Helping Parent Two Baby Orioles

by Carolyn Guay
Perry, Iowa

We love sleeping on our enclosed porch as much as we can during the warmer seasons. It gives the feeling of being a part of nature with the wonderful sounds of the birds, aromas of flowers and new mown hay, light and color breaking over the horizon. Our yard is full of no more than fifteen-year-old trees with plenty of open space. Without planning it has become the perfect habitat for birds. Humans are relegated to the porch viewing area, so with binoculars and spotting scope, we catch a lot of the winged action around the yard.

We had enjoyed the return of our oriole couple. Luckily, they chose to build their pendulous nest right in full view of our favorite summer room, the porch. We dutifully put out orange and apple halves, which they voraciously devoured. We observed courtship, nest building, and feeding plus the entertainment of their cheerful song. My husband became good at simulating their whistle, which they seemed to enjoy answering.

One Saturday morning we woke to insistent chirping coming from a spot under the cottonwood about fifty feet in front of the porch. We rushed out to find two very small, very hungry baby orioles on the ground. ACTION! First we put the cat inside the house. Next, we cut the side out of a two-liter bottle, added a makeshift nest of moss and hung it in the tree. Our hope was that the mother bird would get the hint and come remedy the hunger pains. Nothing happened and it was quite evident the nest idea was not a favorite of the young hatchlings or their mom.

The immediate problem was starvation. A trip to the neighboring town for some mealworms seemed a likely solution. But that would take at least an hour to make the round trip. They were hungry now! One newly initiated surrogate parent went for the worms as the other stood guard. We worried about the cats. Ours were inside but what of the strays that loved coming over. There was so much to consider on this mission of mercy. While calculating how long it would take a small bird to starve, I remembered I had seen some worms on my peas the day before. Perhaps that would curb their appetite and stave off their hunger pangs. Out to the garden I went, collected worms and headed back, tweezers in hand. We had, so far, been very careful to not touch the birds with human hands. Sweet success. They loved the worms and not knowing a proper amount, I gave them as many as they would eat. The mealworms were also acceptable when offered an hour later.

Now the day watch began. My husband, one of those self starter type A's who is never idle, spent the whole day on the porch guarding or watching "our new kids" with me right beside him. The mother bird was quite agitated most of the day, but could not bring herself to feed them in the pop bottle. With time to make better plans, we got out the bird books to learn all we could about our new and not too feathered friends. A call to a

conservation agent brought no response whatsoever. Obviously, we were into a no win situation, or so it would seem, and on our own charting new territory.

Toward evening when some friends came over to marvel at our young family, I noticed my husband, a building contractor by trade, was not with us. About that time he came from the workshop with a beautiful cage. It was a yard square cube with the four sides covered in black plastic mesh, solid plywood bottom and a wooden removable lid. Perfect! We hauled around a 50-gallon drum to set it on. That brought it up near leaf level and hopefully would keep any predators at bay. The chicks liked it, but were relegated to sitting on the floor all the time. It didn't take us long to cut a few branches and add to the cage as roosts. Wow! We're getting pretty good at this. Do you suppose we could really win and save them?

With night coming on we decided to bring the baby birds into the porch and put our cat out. She had not been happy with the present arrangement of staying in the house the whole day. By the time the birds were installed inside with us, their heads had gone under their wings. We thought that was a folk tale, but they really did put their little heads under one tiny wing. And there they were for the whole night without a peep.

First thing the next morning, the passionate insistent peeping of these starving new babies roused us out. Under the tree they went as quickly as we could hustle. The top board of the cage was left askew. Within a few minutes, the mother oriole was diving in feeding her young. It was totally amazing. Something considered impossible was happening with the animal kingdom in our front yard. Great, this was Sunday, and we had one more day to watch and learn. We felt pretty indignant when we thought mom was playing favorites. We could assist in the feeding and assure everyone a proper helping. She didn't seem to mind. We thought she must have been getting pretty tired with her routine so we put a dish of mealworms in the bottom of the cage. "Thanks for the help," she seemed to say. Soon the worms were gone and mom had not spent so much time on the wing. By now we were all friends and we could handle the birds without any objections from mother.

The work week started with oriole mom still on feeding detail. I was very happy for my summer vacation from teaching which allowed me more time to watch the unfolding saga. On this Monday, their mother changed their diet to fruit, perhaps because the mulberries along the fence line were really succulent. At one point, trying to be helpful, I went out with more mealworms. No luck at all. They wouldn't even try a nibble. It was obviously fruit day with carbohydrates, no protein allowed. Convinced, my husband cut a six-foot branch off the mulberry tree and hauled it close to conserve her flying time.

When we initially found the pair they had a few real feathers but were mostly covered with pinfeathers. The bird books said that orioles only stay in the nest fourteen days from hatch to fledge. We had kept them three days already and there was no way they looked like they were going to fly soon. How and why they had left their nest was still a mystery. There had been no storms or winds for days before their fall. My theory is they were goofing off, like kids will even in nature, and they simply tumbled out. Could we come to completion on this

Big Bluestem Audubon Society

Events Calendar—Fall 1997

All events are free and open to the public.

- General meetings are held Thursday evenings in Room 2532, Veterinary Medicine Building, Iowa State University, beginning at 7:30 p.m.
- Field trip participants meet in the west parking lot of the ISU Design Center. Check the newsletter or with trip leaders to confirm time.

September

- 6—Fall shorebirds and waterfowl. Meet Hank Zalatel at the Nevada Courthouse by the cannon at 0800. Call Kevin or Rosanne at 233-5914 if you need a ride from Ames. Trip leader Hank Zaletel (515-382-5427).
- 18—General Meeting: Dr. David Vleck, "The Moundbuilders: Australian Megapodes and Their Eggs," 7:30 p.m.
- 27—Identify raptors at Grammer Grove in Marshall County with Mark Proescholdt. Meet Kevin Healy at the ISU Design Center at 0730 to carpool to Grammer Grove. We will meet Mark at the east side of Grammer Grove at 0845. Call Kevin at 233-5914 if you have questions.

October

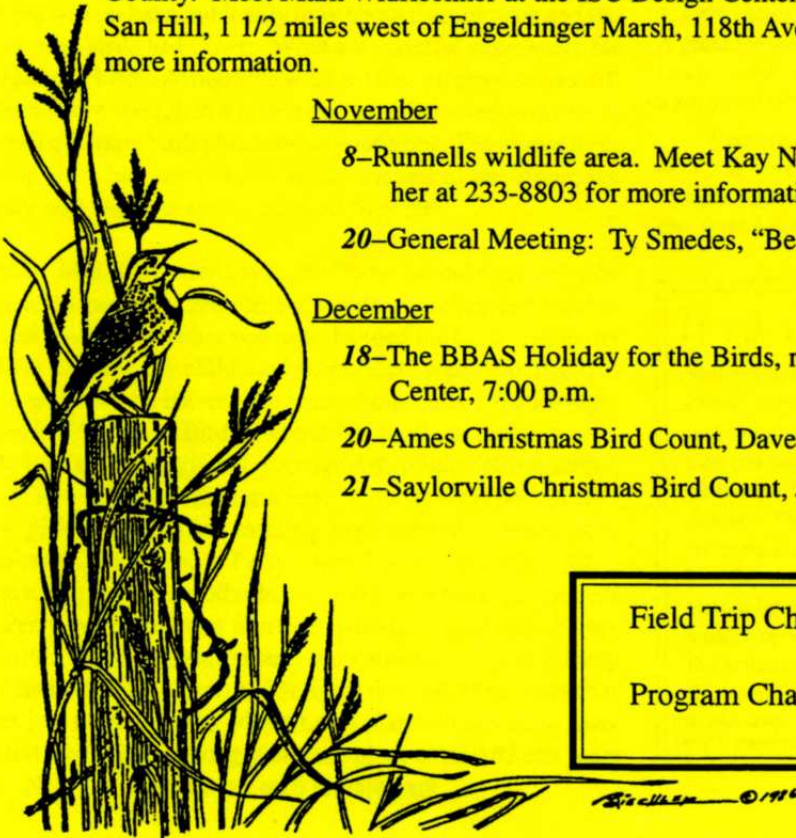
- 3-5—Road trip to NE Iowa. Migratory birds along the Mississippi. Fall colors. Mushrooms you never dreamed existed. Visit a peregrine falcon hatchery near Bluffton, IA. Call Kevin Healy for details, 233-5914.
- 16—General Meeting: Dr. Rolf Koford, "LBJs in Trouble: Conservation of Grassland Songbirds," 7:30 p.m.
- 18—Chichaqua Wildlife Area. Loren Lown will show us around the Chichaqua Wildlife Area in Polk County. Meet Mark Widrechner at the ISU Design Center at 0745 to carpool. We will meet Loren at San Hill, 1 1/2 miles west of Engeldinger Marsh, 118th Avenue, at 0830. Call Mark at 233-1532 for more information.

November

- 8—Runnells wildlife area. Meet Kay Niyo at the ISU Design Center at 0800. Call her at 233-8803 for more information.
- 20—General Meeting: Ty Smedes, "Best of Brazil Photo Tour," 7:30 p.m.

December

- 18—The BBAS Holiday for the Birds, no speaker, at the Story County Conservation Center, 7:00 p.m.
- 20—Ames Christmas Bird Count, Dave Edwards (515-292-3790).
- 21—Saylorville Christmas Bird Count, Jim or Steve Dinsmore (515-292-3152).



Field Trip Chair	Kevin Healy	233-5914
	<i>khealy@ames.net</i>	
Program Chair	John Snyder	232-8824
	<i>JESnyder@ix.netcom.com</i>	

living science experiment with success?

One day a robin came to sit on the old garden plow that hangs on the side of the cottonwood. It was only about three feet from the cage. She seemed to be watching the babies; then she flew away but soon returned with a worm in her mouth. She took up her perch and again stared at the young. She flew near the opening but not into the cage several times. It was quite apparent her intention was to help with the feeding, but she couldn't quite muster up the nerve. The mother had been in and out several times and did not seem at all bothered by the robin and her intent to help. Obviously, the bird kingdom found the whole new living arrangement of this oriole family as interesting as we did and wanted in on the act, too.

One day, the shadow of a hawk flew very low over the yard. The cat, which had gone out with us, noticed and tore for the house. It looked like the whole neighborhood knew of the situation and we were getting a little too popular. Caution would have to be the rule from now on.

Finally, the babies were fully feathered and doing a lot of flying within the cage. Once in a while they would get lucky and come close to flying out. We made the decision that the next morning, day eight, if all the feathered friends agreed, would be fly day. We had overheard quite a chorus. The lower level in the case would sing and then an answering song would come from their old nest above. We were pretty surprised at this. Had father Oriole been caring for some remaining family in the upper story? Once we saw him come to help mom with the first floor dwellers. No way, mother chased him back to the top of the tree in one fell swoop. That was his domain and she was in charge down here on first floor and he should have known it.

Fly day started with lots of chirping and agitation. The fledglings were feeling cooped up. We took the cage back out to the barrel under the tree and left the lid completely off. Mother was on hand but it only took about five minutes and the two young birds had flown. What a wonderful experience for humans and birds. At noon we went out to see if anyone was still around. Sure enough in a maple tree not fifteen feet away were our pair of young birds plus another young one. The singer from the top story had come down to join the rest of the brood; the family was together again. And off they flew . . .

NOTE: Mrs. Guay teaches in the Perry School System. She goes on to say, "My seventh and eighth grade English teacher was an avid birdwatcher who also banded birds. It was in my class in Lamoni, my childhood home, that I was encouraged to write and where I learned the most about birds. We lovingly called her "Tweety Bird," behind her back, as children will. Now I am an eighth grade Language Arts teacher also teaching Art to seventh and eighth graders. Wonder what pet names I have picked up? After meeting my husband at Iowa State University, we moved to Perry where I taught art for six years. With a long lapse for motherhood, I have been back teaching for the Perry system another fourteen. Middle school is by far my favorite. They are creative and spontaneous. Maybe Tweety Bird had more impact on my life than I thought. We live on four acres just north of town where Louis planted trees from Iowa ditches when we first bought the bare piece of land fifteen years ago. Now it resembles our own private park.

Board Happenings

Mary Doud, Secretary

The BBAS held its second annual board retreat, June 29, at Kay Niyo's home to plan the forthcoming year. Stan notified us about our 501(c)(3) not for profit/tax deductible status. We will have different postal rates and permits; distribution of funds will need to be documented for the Iowa Audubon Council; and the organization will be able to conduct fund raising activities and solicit tax deductible donations. The Iowa Ornithologist Union's spring meeting will be held May 1998. We may use this to kickoff our 30th Anniversary celebration.

Several service projects were discussed. The Girl Scouts are our new affiliates. We need to formulate requirements for earning a BBAS badge. A self-guided tour for Brookside Park trails needs to be redeveloped from what was originally set up by the BBAS. The Reactor Woods needs weeding and cleaning up. The *Birds of Story County* may be updated and printed for the 1998 May meeting. A new committee was announced—Special Publications. Joyce Bahrenfus will head this committee, which will develop a brochure that will publicize our mission statement and other items such as membership rates/applications, meetings and field trip schedules, projects, etc.

On August 3, Board members met at Kay Niyo's house to finalize the program and the field trip schedules. Carol Berrier and Mary Doud will make the contacts for the *Audubon Adventures* program. The IOU Spring Meeting/30th Anniversary Kickoff will be held at the Maple-Willow-Larch complex on the ISU campus. The following is a tentative schedule: Friday, May 15, 1998—registration and social gathering. Saturday, May 16, 1998—a.m. field trips, day sessions on IOU history, p.m. banquet/speaker. Sunday, May 17, 1998—a.m. field trips, noon barbeque at McFarland Park. The Des Moines Audubon Society will be celebrating their 75th anniversary.

The Iowa Audubon Council said the plans for the state office are progressing. A job description for the executive position is being prepared and the council hopes to have the position filled by January 1, 1998. Sites for the new office are being looked at in the local area. A grant for the Kellerton Wildlife Refuge, a DNR project, likely will be approved. The BBAS will send a \$25 contribution to the DNR as a supporter of the project.

If you would like to help on any committee, contact the chairperson, or if you have any concerns, issues, or information you would like brought before the board, please give it to any board member at least one week before the next meeting so it will get on the agenda. Thanks.

Bird Tip:

Humming birds are busy eating up to 30% of their weight in nectar daily. Their nectar diet is balanced by eating small insects and spiders. If you run out of food at your humming bird feeder, you can make a nectar mixture of four parts water to one part cane sugar which is boiled, left to cool, and then place in your feeder. The balance can be refrigerated until needed. Red coloring is not necessary in the water, because most humming bird feeders have red feeder ports. In warm weather, the mixture should be changed every 3-5 days and thoroughly cleaned. A small bag of over-ripe bananas or cantaloupe can be hung near the hummingbird feeder to attract fruit flies, another favorite for the hummingbirds.

Wild About Birds. The DNR Bird Feeding Guide. Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Carrol L. Henderson. 1995. Page 83.

In the beginning . . .

Since we will be celebrating our first thirty years, I think it is appropriate to recall the first year through the minutes of the meetings. The first minutes begin . . .

On April 25, 1968, it was agreed to form an Ames Audubon Society which would be affiliated on a one year trial basis with the National Audubon Society.

The seven families meeting in Room 124 Killdee [sic] Hall, Iowa State University campus discussed local and national programs, and then elected Mr. Ben Bereskin, Mr. Norm Hamilton, and Mrs. Gerald Robinson to serve respectively as president, vice president, and secretary-treasurer until September. An executive committee will consist of the club officers. Dues were set at: \$2.00 for youth and student, \$3.00 for adult, and \$4.50 for a family (2 or more).

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Robinson

Approved May 7, 1968



The Ames Audubon meeting was called to order May 7 at Room 124 Killdee Hall. Twelve people attended including Mrs. Johnson of Webster City and Mrs. McConnell of Mission Texas, who brought insights from her wide knowledge of Audubon organizations and from her membership in the Mission Valley Audubon group. Minutes were read and approved as corrected. The treasurer's report was received.

After introduction of the members President Bereskin spoke on our goal and its achievement through the democratic process with projects which would attract new members.

The dangerous pesticides were discussed and their effect on the environment of Ames. The possibilities of a gardening forum was brought up. Walter Hearn was named chairman of the committee to draw up a constitution and by-laws. The DDT resolution was discussed. Mr. Norm Hamilton moved that the president appoint a committee to perfect the resolution and present it to the city council. Dr. Morgan moved that the committee be empowered to act without the return to forum. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Morgan suggested River Valley Park for the May nature outing. It was decided to have the hike and picnic after the Isaac Walton League sports show. May 19th was the suggested date. Mrs. Hanselman, Mrs. Hamilton, Mrs. Hearn, Mrs. Robinson, and Mrs. Bereskin were named to the food committee. Dr. and Mrs. Morgan, Dr. and Mrs. Miller were to plan the hike.

Mrs. Elwell read a resolution to Governor Hughes on Dutch Elm disease control that urged the dropping of the use of DDT. The bird feeding project was discussed. The question of whether county roads came under the jurisdiction of the club was brought up by Dr. Morgan. It was thought that the approach to this would be through the Iowa legislature, but the club was warned against overexpansion in its initial stages.

It was decided to name the club's affiliation date as June 1, 1968.

Respectfully submitted,
Mrs. Gerald Robinson

Approved June 18, 1968

Richard W. Pohl Memorial Preserve

On Monday, August 18, 1997 at 3:00 p.m., the Ames High School prairie was officially renamed—Richard W. Pohl Memorial Preserve. Gary Reiners, director of the Nature Conservancy, hosted the dedication. Dr. Pohl's wife, Marjorie, their three children and grandchildren were present for this historical event. Professor Pohl, in 1967, campaigned through an editorial to *The Daily Tribune* about the need for conserving and preserving the Ames High School Prairie. He died in 1993 without seeing the full results of his campaign. Dr. Pohl was a professor of botany at Iowa State University until his retirement in 1989. He used the prairie as one of his many educational tools to show students how Iowa was before development, what the big bluestem and the purple coneflower looked like. Many people reminisced at the dedication about his humor and love of plants and grasses. The prairie has a \$50,000 endowment for continued education on the site, maintenance, weed removal, and plaques to identify the many prairie species. The prairie, once grazed but never plowed, will now continue as Dr. Pohl's legacy.

Bird Chat

Dear B.C.:

My folks are always drumming their beaks on the trees and the telephone poles. Will they ever get nose bleeds?

Anonymous Immature R.-H. Woody

Dear Woody:

After looking through the journals, I could find no record of nose bleeds in Red-Headed Woodpeckers or any bird which uses its beak to dig out cavities for nests or in search of food. "The beak is normally hard and thick, especially at the tip, where wear is greatest. Frequently the edges are sharp, and useful for cutting food. The beaks are essentially a compact layer of epidermal cells molded around the bony core of each mandible. The epidermis of the skin covering the upper and lower mandibles is stratified into two layers. Outwardly, as in the human skin, there is a horny stratum corneum, which contributes directly to the formation of the beak. Inwardly, next to the dermis, is the stratum germinativum, where the epidermal cells actively multiply. These cells produce the keratin that is concentrated in the stratum corneum to make the beak proper." So you see Woody, your nose is protected by your beak, hence, no nose bleeds.

B.C.

Source: Joel C. Welty and Luis Baptista. (1988). The Life of Birds. 4th Edition. Saunders College Publications, New York.

Meet Your New Board Members and Committee Chair

At the annual meeting last May 1997, the membership voted for the renewal of several board members as well as new members. Who are the new members elected to lead us this year?

John Pohlman replaces Rebecca Shivers on the board. John resides with his wife Lynette and daughter Jessica in the southern part of Ames. He is the assistant superintendent at the city's Resource Recovery Plant, where they process Story County's solid waste into fuel and recyclables. After years of being a part-time student at ISU, John received a bachelor's degree last December. John says, "While I am not much of a birder, I do enjoy being outdoors. More importantly, I recognize our need to improve or expand habitats for birds and other wildlife. I also enjoy music, art, and woodworking."

Mary Doud replaces Joyce Bahrenfus as secretary of the BBAS. Mary moved to Ames four years ago. She is originally from Stuart, Iowa. In 1985, Mary graduated in Elementary Education from Iowa State University. She has worked for the United States Department of Agriculture for eleven years—seven for the Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Services, one for Food Safety Inspection Services, and three for the Center for Veterinary Biologics—Inspection and Compliance. More information can be found about Mary under the *Birder of the Month* column in this issue.

(Besides the elected Board members, we have a new Program Chair, John Snyder. Former chair, Kevin Healy, replaces Jon Bahrenfus, as chair of the Field Trip Committee.) John moved to Ames four months ago, after living in the Washington, DC area (Alexandria, VA) for three years. Before that, he lived in Pittsburgh, PA for 14 years. With a Ph.D. in physics, he works as a materials scientist at the Ames Laboratory, specializing in fabrication, structure, and properties of magnetic materials. John says, "Although I always enjoyed the outdoors, I did not start birding until three years ago when I moved to Virginia. There I lived five blocks from Dyke Marsh National Wildlife Refuge, which is a rare freshwater tidal marsh. They had birdwalks every Sunday morning, all year round. About three miles up over the ridge was Huntley Meadows, a 1000+ acre county park, with a 400 foot beaver dam, and a boardwalk that led right out through the marsh and pond, so you could see marsh life right up close. Living in the middle of such wonderful natural resources, I naturally became a birder, and amateur outdoor photographer. In three years, I have compiled a life list of 180 bird species, from northern Virginia and central Iowa alone. In addition to birding and walking the trails, I also enjoy canoeing and fishing here in Iowa. I have been quite impressed at how friendly the people are here in central Iowa, in general, and at the BBAS, in particular. And, I'm thankful for all the help of the board members and my fellow committee chairs helping me get started as new program chair. I'm looking forward to a great year of programs, thanks to 'a little help from my friends'."

Iowa GAP Analysis Project State-wide Vegetation Survey

The Iowa Gap Analysis Project is seeking volunteers to help with a state-wide vegetation survey. The survey will provide documentation of the exact location of several "vegetation classes" throughout the state. These survey results will be matched with satellite imagery. GIS techniques will then be used to determine the vegetation class for all areas that were not covered by the survey.

The vegetation class is determined by several factors: total canopy cover, canopy composition (species of trees), total sapling/shrub cover, total woody cover by grazing indicators, and herbaceous species.

Anyone interested in helping with this vegetation survey should contact, as soon as possible, Erv Klaas, Unit Leader, Iowa Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit, 11 Science II, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011-3221; 515/294-7990; email: eklaas@iastate.edu.



Clip and Join

Do you have a friend who has a burning desire to learn about birds and the natural world, and wants to meet other like-minded individuals? Or, are you looking for that unique and special gift? Don't wait any longer, just clip the membership application form below and send it in.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

New member of the National Audubon Society (receive the *Audubon* magazine, the *Big Bluestem Flyer*, membership card, and participate in all Big Bluestem Audubon Society activities)—\$20. Please make your check payable to: National Audubon Society and include "Chapter Code H-57" on the check.

OR

Subscribe to the *Big Bluestem Flyer* for one year and participate in some Big Bluestem Audubon Society activities—\$5.50. Restrictions are that you will not be a National Audubon Society member or have voting privileges, and you cannot be an officer or committee chair. Please make your check payable to: Big Bluestem Audubon Society.

Send your check and this coupon to Mark Widrechner, Membership Chair, 2121 Burnett Ave., Ames, Iowa 50010.

Name _____
 Address _____
 Town _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____
 email _____ fax _____

NOTE: Please do not use this form for renewals to the National Audubon Society.

Continued page 1—Coming Field Trips

the ISU Design Center at 0730 to carpool to Grammer Grove. We will meet Mark at the east side of Grammer Grove at 0845. Call Kevin at 233-5914 if you have questions. *khealy@ames.net*

October

3-5—Road trip to NE Iowa. Migratory birds along the Mississippi. Fall colors. Mushrooms you never dreamed existed. Visit a peregrine falcon hatchery near Bluffton, IA.

Friday, October 3: Four rooms reserved at Garnavillo Motel, (319) 964-2214. Two with full beds, two with two twin beds. Prices startlingly reasonable, possible to bunk extras on floor in sleeping bags.

Saturday, October 4: Bird along the Mississippi. Hike at Fish Farm Mounds. Other sites to be announced. Camp near Decorah, site to be announced.

Sunday, October 5: Bird early (if desired). Visit Raptor Resource Project, 2580 310th Street, Ridgeway, IA (one mile south of village of Bluffton). Our host is Robert Anderson. Begin return trip to Ames about noon. PLEASE CALL KEVIN AT 233-5914 TO RESERVE A SPACE. *khealy@ames.net*

18—Chichaqua Wildlife Area. Loren Lown will show us around the Chichaqua Wildlife Area in Polk County. Meet Mark Widrechner at the ISU Design Center at 0745 to carpool. We will meet Loren at Sand Hill, 1 1/2 miles west of Engeldinger Marsh, 118th Avenue, at 0830. Call Mark at 233-1532 for more information. *mpwskd@aol.com*

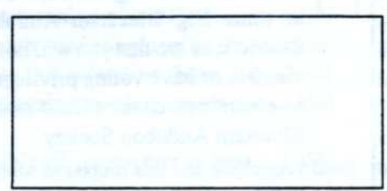
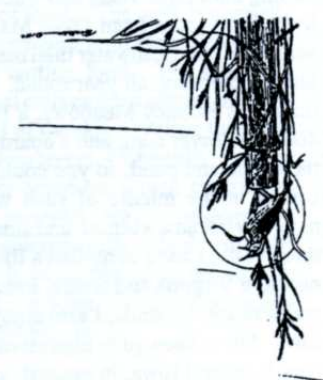
The Lawrence and Eula Hagle Heritage Award goes to Bill Horine

Bill Horine was presented with The Lawrence and Eula Hagle Heritage Award at McFarland Park in Ames on August 11, 1997. This is the most prestigious conservation award in Iowa given by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. Mr. Horine was honored for his work in conservation, which includes photography that illustrated the articles he wrote about conservation. He served on the Story County Conservation Board for 17 years, as director of the Outdoor Writers Association of America, and on the Governor's Committee for Conservation of Outdoor Resources. During the 1960s, Mr. Horine had a regular program on KRNT television, "Outdoor Talk," which continued for 13 years. This award also included \$1000.

Did You Know?

Bird nostrils are usually located in the upper mandible near its base or in the cere, but in the nocturnal kiwis, which find their food largely by scent, the nostrils are located at the tip of the beak!

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