



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 5

May/June 1998

The Big Bluestem Audubon Society (BBAS) meetings are held monthly, September-May (except December) on the third Thursday of the month 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!

Featured Speaker—May 21 meeting: *Lisa Hein, "Protecting the Mississippi Blufflands"*

Lisa will discuss the work that the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation is doing to protect the Mississippi Blufflands region, including a partnership with Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois to focus attention and efforts on protecting the bluffs. Since 1979, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation has protected over 50,000 acres of natural, wildlife, cultural, and recreational resource lands, with the assistance of 6,000 members and donors. They frequently work with county conservation boards and local governments in acquiring land for parks and open spaces.

Lisa Hein is Trails and Greenways Program Director for the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.

Featured Activity—June 6: *"Birder's Breakfast at the Ledges State Park"*

Don't miss the annual birder's breakfast at the Ledges State Park near Boone. See the *Coming Field Trips*... for more details. 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 John Snyder, 232-8824, to confirm space and location.

Coming Field Trips: May & June

Kevin Healy, Field Trip Chair

There are several good opportunities coming up to see lots of warblers and other birds, and to enjoy springtime in Iowa. Please join us on one of the exciting field trips.

May

10—Mother's Day warbler walk. Meet at north parking lot at Brookside Park at 0800. Trip leader, Stan Cyran (292-4876).

15-17 IOU meeting and field trips, at BBAS 30th Anniversary Celebration. (More information on page 8.)

June

6— The annual birder's breakfast will be held at the Ledges State Park near Boone. We will meet at the upper part of the park near the shelter houses at 7:30 a.m.

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Bird Term of the Month: *False brooding*—an adult bird, for example, the Killdeer and sandpipers, may sit on nothing in particular to confuse observers.

As the Crow Flies . . .

Stan Cyran, President

This is a year of celebrations. Not only is it the Iowa Ornithologists' Union's (IOU) 75th anniversary, but it is also the 30th anniversary of the Big Bluestem Audubon Society. At the Spring meeting of the IOU, which will be held in Ames this year, both milestones will be celebrated. The event will take place May 15-17, 1998 and there will be something for everyone. On Friday evening there will be an informal reception and a field trip to view "birds on weather radar." The weekend will continue with interesting field trips and talks, including the keynote speaker on Saturday evening, Jim Herkert, speaking on "Grassland Bird Conservation in Illinois." Come share anniversary cake on Saturday evening as well.

I hope everyone can attend all or part of this important event. We would especially like to see members from the early days of the Big Bluestem and Ames Audubon Society who might have memories to share. Look for Sherry Dragula's announcement providing more details on page 8 in this newsletter.

International Migratory Bird Day will occur on May 9th this year. This annual event is sponsored by Partners in Flight, and National Audubon Society is a key partner. Big Bluestem will be celebrating this day with our First Annual Bird-a-thon. Look for Karl Jungbluth's article providing more details (page 4), and consider doing the bird-a-thon or making a pledge. Finally, our annual Mother's Day warbler and wildflower walk, will be Sunday, May 10th. Details are elsewhere in the newsletter.

Big Bluestem Audubon Society Officers and Committees

Officers:

- President: Stan Cyran 292-4876 scyran@pol.net
- Vice-President: Kay Niyo 233-8803 kniyo@aol.com
- Secretary: Mary Doud 296-2178 mfdoud@Ames.net
- Treasurer: Paul Ovrom 233-2910 nc7ao@ars-grin.gov

Board Members:

- Carol Berrier 965-8242
- David Guy 232-8825
- 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 madowl@nevia.net
- 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 Widriechner 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 Shivers 292-0691 shivers@ameslab.gov
- Special Publications Chair: Joyce Bahrenfus 432-3396
- Service & Special Projects Co-Chairs: Karl and Carmen Jungbluth

Notes from the Field

Kevin Healy, Field Trip Chair

Waterfowl Trip

Twelve central Iowa birders spent March 27-29 touring Nebraska. We assembled at Burchard Park in SE Nebraska at 5:00 p.m. on March 27. Led by Kay Niyo, veteran prairie chicken observer, we entered blinds on either side of the Greater Prairie Chicken lek about 5:30 p.m. The sky was overcast after a day of rain. A few birds came to the lek about 6:00 p.m. but flushed almost immediately. We heard a Great Horned Owl and some coyotes howling about 6:30 p.m. We left the blinds at 6:50 p.m. and made our way to the Lincoln NE West O Super-8.

Saturday morning was cool and overcast. Guided by Kay Niyo, we hit the road in the morning and toured waterfowl production areas in Fillmore and Clay counties. Snow Geese were present in full force and a Ross's Goose was seen by some sharp-eyed observers. We also saw a variety of ducks, White-Fronted Geese and raptors. Highlights included hearing Snow Geese as they flew overhead, line after line coming in from the east, parting so as not to fly over the people below and reforming their flight line beyond you; watching through a spotting scope as Snow Geese fly over a pond 200 yards in front of you (they reminded me of watching the snowflakes under a streetlight in a blizzard); watching a Merlin chase a Killdeer above us on a gravel road. Road conditions were interesting but no one got stuck.

After a break for lunch we reassembled at the Holiday Inn on the Platte River in Grand Island, NE. We spent about an hour looking at Sandhill Cranes but were not able to find the Whooping Crane, which had been seen earlier in the day. Most of the group went to the Alda Bridge at sunset to watch the birds come in to roost for the night.

The next morning we headed for home. The sky was clear to cloudy with very strong wind from the south. Some of us stopped at Snake Creek Marsh north of Rippey where we saw Fox Sparrows and a Snipe.

Des Moines River Bottom Field Trip

Nine people enjoyed birding on a dreary morning, March 7, before the big snowstorm, with 35 species identified by early afternoon. There was a good variety of waterfowl at Dickcissel Park along Highway 30, but the Redhead, Goldeneyes, and Scaup departed as our group grew larger. The river bottom south of Moingona produced many common winter residents, plus a Rufous-sided Towhee, six Wood Ducks, and several treetop views of Common Mergansers flying up river. Numerous large flocks of Ring-Billed Gulls also passed overhead. We ended the day by spending a few minutes at the YMCA camp bird feeding stations, which are quite nice. John, Jason, and Mike from the Y-Camp invite Auduboners to stop by any time.

(continued on page 5)

Newsletter Deadline: Friday, August 14, 1998 at 2 p.m.



Birders of the Month

by Stan Cyran

(This is another in an on-going series profiling 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?)

Ed and Elizabeth Carbrej are not your average birders. Not, that is, unless Venezuela (two times), Ecuador, Peru, Belize, Costa Rica (two times) and Panama are your average birding destinations. In fact, it was an exotic birding destination that got Ed really started in birding. "Elizabeth had always been a birder," Ed notes, "and I drove her around like a chauffeur." But after they took a trip together to the Asa Wright Nature Center in Trinidad in 1988, shortly after Ed retired as a veterinary virologist, he was hooked. "I didn't even have a pair of binoculars before the trip," he adds, "but I had a great time, and now I love it."

Ed keeps a life list and Elizabeth doesn't. Elizabeth explains this easily enough—"I am an artist, and Ed is a scientist." Indeed, Elizabeth has had many memorable birding experiences while painting her favorite subjects, houses and barns. While they remained motionless, she and her friend Dianne Mumm would often be surrounded by birds that had become accustomed to their presence.

What is it that draws Ed to birding? "It is the thrill of seeing birds," he states, without hesitation. "It is almost like a religious experience for me, to see something alive and living free; something that might not even be there someday." Ed also takes his birding interest far beyond just the observation and the life list. "As a veterinarian, I love animals, and I love knowing about their life cycles—what the field guides don't tell." He finds *The Birder's Handbook*, by Ehrlich, Dobkin, and Wheye to be indispensable.

Ed's most memorable birding experience? Here we have to go far away again, to southern Venezuela. "During a recent trip to Venezuela, the guide made sure that we saw as many birds as possible—even the Musician Wren, which everyone says that you don't see," Ed recalls. Other birds they saw on that trip include the Harpy Eagle, the Capuchinbird, the Pompadour Cotinga, and the Guianan Cock-of-the-Rock.

Although most of us mere mortals do well to just count the birds at our birdfeeders and go out together on the local Big Bluestem birding trips, still, it helps to erase a little of the grey on a gloomy winter day to know that somewhere in the world, where it is sunny and lush and wild, Ed and Elizabeth are peering through binoculars, swatting at the mosquitoes, and seeing colors and hearing music that we may only be able to dream about.



Board Happenings

Mary Doud, Secretary

Since the last newsletter, there has been one board meeting, April 5. The next board meeting will be in the summer. Excerpts follow.

The BBAS has been asked to provide the meal for the Master Conservationist Program to be held June 23 at the Story County Conservation building at McFarland Park. A sign-up sheet will be passed around at the May meeting. The IOU Spring meeting was discussed by Sherry Dragula. The Board suggested giving a history of our chapter from the beginning to current activities. Volunteers are needed for registration and field trip leaders.

Iowa Audubon Council/State Office is still searching for a director. April 17th is the cut-off date for submitting an application and interviews will be held in early May. BBAS will sponsor the next Iowa Audubon Council meeting to be held in Boone at the Historical Building at noon. Karl and Carmen Jungbluth are coordinating this meeting. The Board voted to donate the following monetary chapter support to the Council and the State Office—\$150 to be a founding member of the Iowa Audubon State Office and \$50 to the Council so they can continue their work toward the opening of a state office (hiring, by-laws, formation of a board of directors, etc.).

Kevin Healy purchased a spotting scope for the chapter with funds from the Oliphant Memorial Fund for \$600. Kevin also purchased, as his donation, a tripod and cover for the scope. Stan Cyran donated a tripod for the old BBAS scope. Steve Dinsmore has been updating *Birds of Story County* for a 2nd edition. Three hundred copies will be available for the IOU meeting in May.

Carol Berrier suggested our involvement in raising funds to protect rain forest habitat being destroyed around coffee plantations and replaced with more coffee trees that require the use of synthetic pesticides. To raise funds, the Board approved the purchase of \$200 worth of T-shirts. Discussion on the purchase of the coffee will continue.

The ISU Veterinary Clinic requested the BBAS donate some money for an injured eagle. The request was denied. The eagle will go to the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife.

This is the last board meeting for the 1997-1998 year.

Nominations Committee Report

The Nominations Committee submits the following slate of candidates for election at the May meeting of the Big Bluestem Audubon Society: President—Kay Niyo, Vice-President—Karl Jungbluth, Secretary—Mary Doud, Treasurer—Paul Ovrom. Board Members: Carol Berrier, Mike Frieburg, Kevin Healy, Stu Huntington, and Jon Pohlman. Thanks to Joyce Barenfus, Kevin Healy, and Mary Doud. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.



BIRDATHON

MAY 9, 1998

Big Bluestem
Audubon Society

Boone, Story, Hamilton counties
I O W A

More Information for BBAS Birdathon Participants

Birdathon birders ask sponsors for pledges, and then record as many species as they can on May 9th! Birdathon Teams have a minimum of two members, and you are encouraged to ask youngsters or new birders to join the fun. You can bird midnight to midnight, only in the morning, or for just a few hours, but two birders must identify a species simultaneously for it to count. We suggest that you stay in Boone, Story and Hamilton counties, which will highlight the birds we see locally. Or you can just bird your backyard with friends.

Prizes Will be Awarded-- Prizes donated by local businesses and individuals will be awarded for Most Species Seen, Most Pledges, Most Dollars Raised, Youngest Birder and more!
All participants will also be entered into drawings for even more prizes.

Here's what to do--

- Plan to spend all or part of International Migratory Bird Day, May 9th, Birdathoning.
- Form a Birdathon Team of at least two members, preferably more. Register with the Birdathon Coordinators. All teams are encouraged to include beginning birders.
- All birders and team members collect pledges from sponsors to support Audubon efforts. Ask relatives, friends, neighbors, co-workers, church members, schoolmates, etc.
- Contact potential sponsors in person or by phone if possible, and ask them to consider sponsoring your Birdathon effort with a pledge. Follow up with a pledge card (provided).
- Sponsors can pledge a specific amount per species identified (at least 10 cents per species is suggested) or they can pledge a fixed amount of \$10, \$20, \$50 or more.
- An active Birdathon team can expect to spot between 60 and 100 species, or more.
- Tell sponsors that their pledge will help Big Bluestem Audubon to place *Audubon Adventures* educational materials into at least sixteen 4th & 5th grade classrooms in Story, Boone and Hamilton counties. And, their pledge will help to start up the new Iowa Audubon Field Office, which will support birds, wildlife and their habitats throughout Iowa.
- Inquire if their employer has a *Corporate Matching Gift Program* which will multiply their pledge.
- Contact the Birdathon Coordinators, Karl & Carmen Jungbluth at 515-432-5057, for more pledge forms, pledge cards, promotional materials or information.
- Be enthusiastic, practice your presentation, and remember that the money goes to a great cause!

By June 1-- Return pledges, donations and forms to the Birdathon coordinators.

Make checks payable to *Big Bluestem Audubon Society*.

- Write a fun Birdathon report and send it to all of your sponsors reminding them to pay. Tell them where you went, list the birds you saw and highlight neotropical migrants.

Thank You for being a Birdathon Birder!!!



B I R D A T H O N

MAY 9, 1998

Big Bluestem
Audubon Society

Boone, Story, Hamilton counties
I O W A

First ever BBAS Birdathon to be held on May 9, 1998. Join Us!

We Need You!-- Big Bluestem Audubon is gearing up for a new type of fun, and fundraising, in celebration of International Migratory Bird Day, May 9th. Birdathon is Audubon's birding "marathon" in which participants form teams, count bird species for up to 24 hours, and raise money for Audubon's efforts nationwide. Sponsors pledge support based upon the number of bird species seen in Boone, Story and Hamilton counties. Prizes are already being lined up for Birdathoners and their sponsors.

Who Participates?-- Anyone! Audubon Society members, expert birders, beginners, friends and family join in. Everyone is invited to help birds, other wildlife and their habitats.

Birdathon '98 Goal-- The Big Bluestem Audubon 1998 Birdathon goal is:

Highlight the birds we see locally

Raise \$1000 for local Audubon efforts!

Fund Audubon Adventures in 4th & 5th grade classrooms



About Audubon Adventures-- These educational materials help young people learn about birds, habitat and environmental issues in schools. Nancy Kurrle uses Audubon Adventures in Ames and she says "Audubon Adventures is a very topical resource which I use to enhance my curriculum. The packet on migrations was excellent." The Big Bluestem Audubon Society goal is to fund Audubon Adventures for 16 classrooms in Boone, Story and Hamilton counties.

Here's what to do-- Form a Birdathon team and collect pledges for each species you see on May 9th. A pledge form and more information are on the insert in this newsletter. If you don't have a team, or need more pledge materials, contact the Birdathon Coordinators and we'll set you up. If you can't go birding on May 9th, pledge 10 cents, 25 cents, or more to your favorite team. Or, you can pledge a fixed amount. *Every penny raised in the BBAS Birdathon will stay in Iowa, and it is tax deductible.*

"Conservation Coffee", June 4-- Come to the party for participants and their sponsors! We'll review the Birdathon and award prizes. More details later.

Birdathon Coordinators-- If you need more information or motivation, contact Karl and Carmen Jungbluth, 515-432-5057. Join us on May 9th!

Big Bluestem Audubon Society Budget

Income	Estimated 97-98	Proposed 98-99
National Audubon Rebate	2223	1925
Newsletter/Donations	525	260
<i>Audubon Adventures</i> Donations	65	285
Brekke's Coupons	150	150
<i>Bird's of Story County</i>	39	150
Turn-around Donations	385	550
U.S. Treasury Reimbursement	150	0
Interest Earned on Checking Account	15	14
T-shirt Sales	0	250
Total	3552	3584
Expenses		
Newsletter	1042	1050
<i>Audubon Adventures</i> Subscriptions (14)	490	560
Iowa Audubon Council	50	75
Programs (Speaker's Dinner)	71	75
Insurance	225	225
Administration (copies, postage)	24	25
Bulk Mailing Fee for 1999/2000	85	85
<i>Birds of Story County</i> '98 edition	0	400
30th Anniversary Celebration (97-98 includes T-shirts)	200	100
Turn-around Donations	385	550
Other Donations	25	50
Scope Purchase	643	0
Miscellaneous	2	2
Total	3242	3197

Bird Chat

Dear B.C.:

I am exhausted. I just flew over 3,000 miles northward on the recent warm winds from the Gulf. Within hours after I arrived, some of my friends, who had arrived a couple of weeks earlier, and were rested and well fed, wanted to rumble for space. I don't believe in physically fighting the turf wars, even if they did arrive a little earlier and have staked claims to space. Isn't there a more peaceful solution?

Anonymous

Dear Anonymous:

I commend you for your endurance and the desire for a peaceful solution. I have noticed several birds fighting with birds who are not of the same species (Robin chasing the Brown Thrasher). They may have a problem to a peaceful solution, since they don't speak the same language and both enjoy worms in the mulch. However, even though there is no single language, tone and song are important. I suggest you sing your territorial song and ignore the physical fighters. It will probably irritate them that you would rather sing than fight and they will move on or let you have your way. Since you have protected yourself by remaining anonymous, I can't suggest any specific songs to help you.

B.C.

Continued page 2—Notes From the Field

April Field Trip

Twelve people attended the April 4th field trip. The weather was beautiful, clear skies, light and variable winds, with temperatures between 50-60F.

On the south side of Hallet's Quarry, Horned Grebes and Double Crested Cormorant were observed. On the north side of Hallet's Quarry, Snow Geese, Red-Breasted Mergansers, and E. Phoebe were around. At Little Wall Lake near the south boat ramp the birds were Buffleheads, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Ducks, Pied-billed Grebes, Redheads, Canvasbacks, Blue-winged Teal, Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher, and Mallards. A short drive to the north side found Rusty Blackbirds and more ducks.

The group then went to Anderson Lake where more ducks, Greater White-fronted Geese, Green-winged Teal, and Wood Ducks abounded. The next stop, Colo Ponds, found Eared Grebe, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Cooper's Hawk (some dissent on this ID). The final stop, Hendrickson Marsh, delighted viewers with Horned Lark, Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Tree Sparrows, Fox Sparrows, and Tree Swallows.

EDDYVILLE DUNES — A NATURAL HERITAGE OF THE STATE

by Jane Clark

The wind-blown sands of Eddyville Dunes were deposited 12-15,000 years ago in a process very similar to the formation of Iowa's Loess Hills, according to Pat McAdams and Glenda Buenger of Rose Hill. Sand deposits of the "Dunes" are up to 60 feet thick and there are also numerous open water wetlands and wet meadows. State endangered pale-green or tubercled orchid and seven species of special concern are found there. The Eddyville Dunes area is also rich in birdlife. Breeding Bird surveys done there recorded at least 90 nesting species, making it one of the top breeding bird blocks in the state.

Dr. Jim Christiansen of Drake University, after a 1997 survey, wrote that the Eddyville site represents "one of the most complete, although fragile, prairie communities present in Iowa." His survey showed ornate box turtle, a state threatened species, and Blanding's turtle, a species of Federal special concern.

Iowa Code requires that "Cities, counties, and the department [Department of Transportation] shall to the extent practicable preserve and protect the natural and historic heritage of the state in the design, construction, reconstruction, relocation, repair, or maintenance of roads, streets, or highways. Destruction or damage to natural areas, including but not limited to prime agricultural land, parks, preserves, woodlands, wetlands, recreation areas, greenbelts, historical sites, or archaeological sites shall be avoided, if reasonable alternatives are available for the location of roads, streets, or highways at no significantly greater cost. In implementing this section, cities, counties, and the department [DOT] shall make a diligent effort to identify and examine the comparative cost of utilizing alternative locations for roads, streets, or highways."

This past December, the Federal Highway Administration required the DOT to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Eddyville By-pass. The purpose of an EIS is to assess alternate routes which would avoid and/or minimize environmental impacts. **An EIS is supposed to objectively evaluate and compare reasonable alternatives** and usually takes a year and a half to complete. *However, the Draft EIS for the Eddyville By-pass was completed in two months!* In the case of Eddyville Dunes, fieldwork to gather the facts was limited by the length of time taken (two months) and by the winter season. Therefore, **it cannot contain enough reliable and accurate information about impacts on the natural resources to provide a fair and equivalent comparison of the alternatives as it is required to do.**

If you are concerned about our few remaining unique natural areas, please consider writing to express your views to any or all of the following people. Tell them there **was not sufficient time** to gather information and that you as a taxpayer want an adequate Environmental Impact Statement. Tell them you want threatened and endangered species protected. Tell them you **don't want a "pre-determined" route** to take priority over state and federal laws. Tell them **this natural area and these endangered pale-green orchids are an irretrievable asset** and that constructing a road through the unique resources of the Dunes will have irreversible effects.

Send a letter to the DOT and the Federal Highway Administration and tell them you want an impartial assessment of alternatives and a balanced consideration of impacts. Remind the Corps of Engineers to seek the least environmentally damaging practical alternative and to require adequate documentation:

Harry Budd
Director
Office of Project Planning
Iowa Department of Transportation
Ames, IA 50010

Robert L. Lee
Iowa Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
105 Sixth Street
Ames, IA 50010

Neal Johnson
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Clocktower Building
P. O. Box 2000
Rock Island, IL 61204

SEND COPIES TO:

Jeannette Schafer
US Environmental Protection Agency
Region VII
726 Minnesota Avenue
Kansas City, KS 66101

Senator Tom Harkin
531 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Charles Grassley
135 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman Leonard Boswell
1029 Longworth House Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515-1503

Update on the Phase III Extension of NW 86th Street Through Camp Dodge in Johnston

Polk County has asked Rust Environment to conduct a new environmental assessment of this project. Environmentalists have many concerns. The road would threaten a unique prairie pothole and wetlands area and affect the Beaver Creek wildlife corridor. It will be very costly; an estimated 7-14 million dollars. Ongoing environmental research and restoration will be impacted and natural areas fragmented. Nesting areas of

some sensitive species of birds would be impacted. It would be fenced through Camp Dodge; the public would see very little benefit. There is a viable alternative—a diagonal from the Mile-Long Bridge to Hwy 141—which would be shorter and have less damaging environmental impact. If you share these concerns, send your comments, by April 24, to Terry VanDeWalle, Rust Environment & Infrastructure, 501 Sycamore St., Suite 222, Waterloo, IA 50704-1497.

Conservation Corner

Sherry Dragula, Conservation Chair

Endangered Species Act

The unacceptable Endangered Species Act rewrite, S. 1180 may be moving soon. The bill could come to a vote after April 20. Now would be a good time to ask Senators Harkin and Grassley to oppose S. 1180. The bill is particularly weak in the area of Habitat Conservation Plans. For the Endangered Species Act to achieve its stated goal—the recovery of imperiled species—approval standards for Habitat Conservation Plans must be strengthened to emphasize recovery. The Senators can be reached at: U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510.

Victory for Forests

The U.S. House voted 201-181 against Rep. Bob Smith's logging bill, H.R. 2515. This vote struck down the philosophy that logging is the solution to all problems facing our national forests. The bill would have allowed logging and road building in our healthiest forests, including roadless and ancient forests. Congressmen Boswell and Ganske both voted against H.R. 2515 and they deserve our thanks (you can call them at 1-800-522-6721). And thanks to all of you who contacted your representative in Congress. It was a close vote and your calls and letters really made a difference.

Bird Drop-ins

Below are some bird citations by BBAS members. If you have any special sightings to report, please e-mail me at shivvers@ameslab.gov so we can include them in our next newsletter.

Kevin and Rosanne Healy went to Hallet's Pond, April 2, at 1600. They observed Redbreasted Mergansers courting (male lowers head to just above water line, and charges toward the female; male raises head and extends, neck, showing breast to others; female snaps at male after charge). A pair of Horned Grebes, male is developing breeding plumage, a female (or late blooming male) were also present. There were assorted Common Loons, Ruddy Ducks, and female Buffleheads.



On April 4, Hank Zaletel was at the Colo Ponds at 1100. He saw a very rare Eared Grebe on the north side of old hwy 30 (E-41), 2.75 miles east of Colo. There were also the first Lesser Yellowlegs of the year, about two miles to the north. Use either of the north roads on either side of the main pond. There were about 130 Snow Geese in addition to hundreds of other ducks—good birding.



John Snyder was in Guthrie County, April 11, visiting Bay's Branch, Lakin Slough, and Springbrook State Park. Highlights of the trip were Great-tailed Grackle, Great Egrets, and a big flock of American Pelicans at Lakin Slough, Lark Sparrow along the roads in-between, and Ruby-Crowned Kinglet and Red-Headed Woodpecker at Springbrook. At Bay's Branch he saw Northern Shoveler, Bufflehead, Canvasback, Pintail, Mallard, Snow and Canada Geese, Coot, Cowbird, Turkey Vultures, and both kinds of Meadowlarks.

Iowa Audubon Council Meeting April 25 in Boone

Karl Jungbluth

All Big Bluestem Audubon members are invited to attend the Iowa Audubon Council meeting from noon to 5:30 p.m. at the Boone County Historical Center, April 25. The meeting will discuss developments on the new Iowa Audubon Field Office, in addition to bird and conservation issues of interest across the state. Join Audubon members from around Iowa at this informative meeting. Lunch will be provided, reservations required. Contact Karl or Carmen Jungbluth at 515/432-5057. A full meeting agenda is available upon request.

Continued page 1—Coming Field Trips

(Drive past the campground at the northeast entrance and stop before the road heads down hill.) Don't forget to bring your breakfast. We will bird for about an hour and then we will eat. Trip leader, Kevin Healy (233-5914).



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 _____
e-mail _____ fax _____

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

Come Celebrate with Big Bluestem and Iowa Ornithologists' Union

This year is the Big Bluestem Audubon Society's 30th Anniversary and the Iowa Ornithologists' Union's 75th Anniversary. Help us celebrate by attending the IOU Spring Meeting on May 15-17, 1998. The place is the Willow Residence Hall of Iowa State University, part of the complex of residence halls just north of the Iowa State Center on Lincoln Way. Great birding trips, interesting speakers, wonderful fellowship and an air of celebration will be the focus of the weekend. The event kicks off with an informal registration and get together in the lounge of Willow Hall as well as a field trip to view "birds on weather radar" on Friday evening.

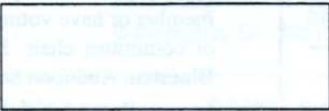
On Saturday and Sunday mornings there will be field trips to sites especially chosen as the best birding areas around. They include Ledges State Park, Saylorville Reservoir, Colo Ponds and Hendrickson Marsh, Bob Pyle Marsh and Little Wall Lake, and Brookside Park.

After the field trip on Saturday, talks on topics such as "Partners in Flight," "Birds on Weather Radar," and "Before the I.O.U." will capture birders attention. During the meeting, x copies of the newly updated "Bird's of Story County" will be on sale. Saturday evening a banquet will be held with keynote speaker Jim Herkert, Project Manager with the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board, sharing his expertise on "Grassland Bird Conservation in Illinois." To round out the evening, we will share some Anniversary Cake.

Sunday morning enjoy a field trip and afterward meet at McFarland Park for the noon meal. For those wanting to linger, the park offers more great birding.

Plan now to attend this meeting and celebration. For details on registration, meals and lodging contact: Sherry Dragula, 2121 Burnett Ave., Ames, IA 50010, 515-233-1532, mpwskd@aol.com

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Rebecca A. Shivers, Editor
Big Bluestem Audubon Society
2380 220th Street
Boone, Iowa 50036