

BIG BLUESTEM FLYER

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

Volume 24, No. 3

November 1989

MONTHLY MEETING

BOLIVIA: SAVANNAH GEOLOGY AND BOTANY

Tim Killeen, Botany Graduate Student

Tim and his wife spent time in Bolivia.

Tuesday, November 14, 7:30 p.m., Room 181, Design Center, ISU, Ames

FIELD TRIPS

WATERFOWL WATCH

Squaw Creek, MO or Desoto Bend National Wildlife Refuge

November 10-11, 1989; an overnight trip is planned.

Contact Steve Dinsmore for details. He will go even if just one person wants to come along.

and/or

Saylorville Reservoir; November 18, 1989

Meet below the dam at 7:30 a.m. or meet to carpool

at 6:45 a.m. at the Design Center parking lot.

Contact Steve Dinsmore,

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

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Steve Dinsmore, 292-1038 Field Trips

Andy Fix, 296-7554

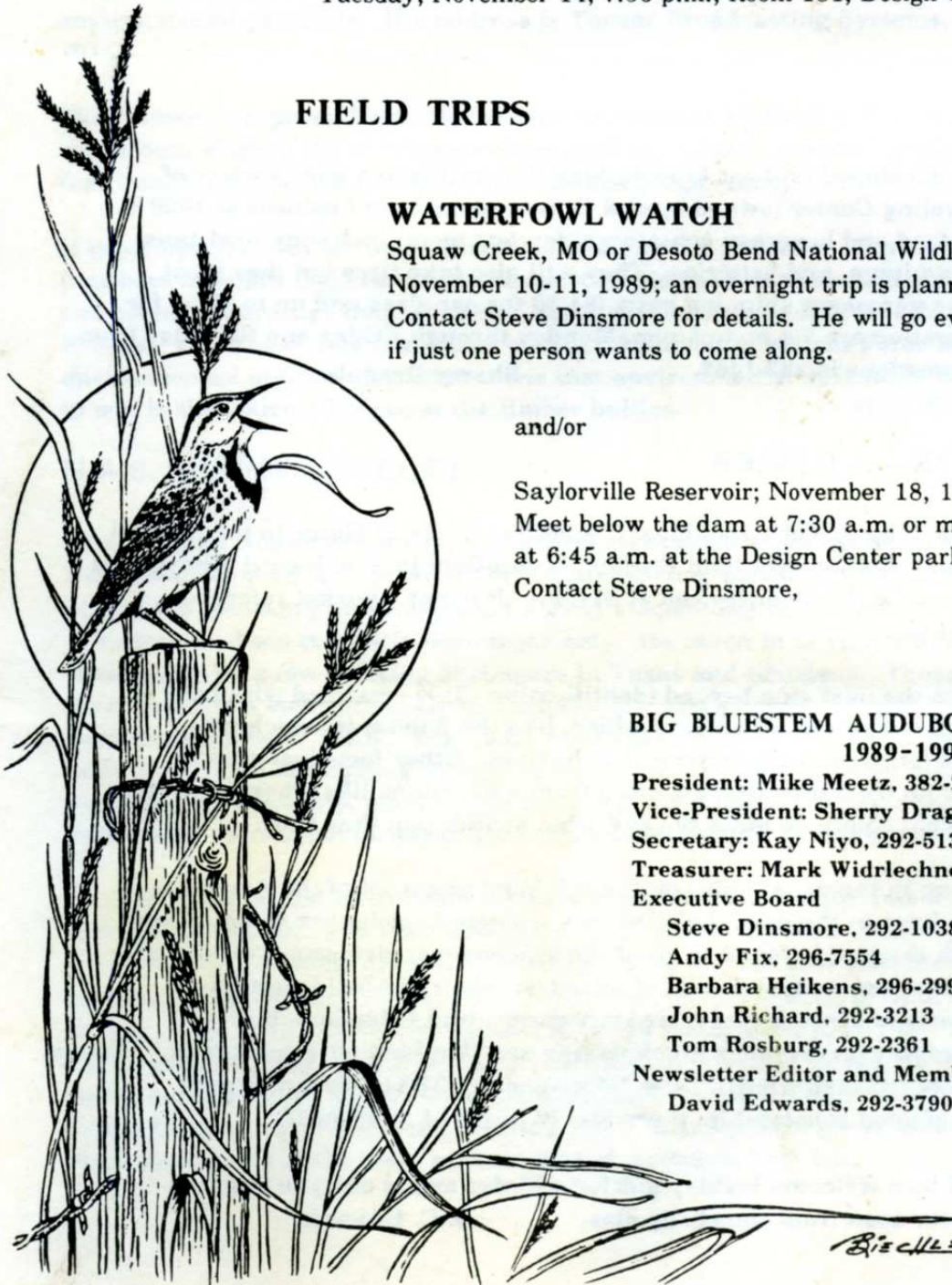
Barbara Heikens, 296-2999 Education Chair

John Richard, 292-3213

Tom Rosburg, 292-2361

Newsletter Editor and Membership Chair

David Edwards, 292-3790



ACID RAIN

Mike Meetz' four readings from the "Nevada station" (really a mile or so northeast of Kettlesen Greenwing Marsh) averaged a pH of 5.25, slightly acidic.

Mike also presented a program on acid rain measurement to the Iowa Conservation Education Council at their meeting at Springbrook on October 7.

Sherry Dragula provided information on acid rain for an ISU Daily article that appeared October 16.

R.E.A.P.

Also on October 7 (busy day for him) Mike Meetz represented the Iowa Audubon Council and our chapter at the organizational meeting for Story County mandated by the new state Resource Enhancement and Protection program.

RECYCLING

An recycling business has been developed on East Lincoln Way that will take a wide variety of materials. The Ames Area Recycling Center (owned by C & D Sanitation) is in business at 1820 E. Lincoln Way and will take glass food and beverage containers, ferrous metal including food cans, household plastic containers, aluminum, and batteries. They will also take tires but they must charge for that service due to the necessary shipping costs (\$1.50 for car sizes and up to \$5.50 for the biggest). Their hours of operation are 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon. Telephone for questions is 232-1462.

Sherry Dragula

THE BIRDER'S HANDBOOK -- A REVIEW

A recent book of some interest is "The Birder's Handbook," subtitled "A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds." Authors are Paul Ehrlich, David Dobkin, and Darryl Wheye, and it is published in paperback by Simon & Schuster (priced at \$14.95). It is not a pocket reference, unless you have large cargo pockets.

This is the book that takes you to the next step beyond identification. It is crammed with facts of all sorts. Some of its content will aid you in identifying a bird, like the habitat in which the bird is found, its nest, eggs, food forms, and characteristic behaviors. Other facts just answer those pesky questions that come up from time to time, often from nonbirders, like where does the Solitary Sandpiper winter and what colors do birds see and what sounds can they hear.

The book's format is one of listing in the usual order on the left-hand pages all of the American birds breeding now or known to have in the past. Labeled in a systematic order are common and scientific names, pages on which the bird is found in all of the guidebooks, pictograms of habitat, nesting facts, and feeding, and succinct written details of all sorts. The right-hand pages are essays of varying length on aspects of birds, birders, bird structures, bird behaviors, bird functions, and so on. Some example essays from a quick paging are "Walking versus hopping," "Empty shells," "Raptor hunting," "Pellets," "Territoriality," and "Monogamy." The treatment is very readable but also appears to be of good scholarship; there are 70 pages of references.

This is the sort of book that will be a welcome holiday gift for a birder and is one you ought to get for yourself if it doesn't appear soon from somebody else.

D. C. Edwards

ON BEER AND OLD FORESTS

The Editor's Opinion

Most Audubon publications have told the story of attempted extortion by Stroh Brewery against Turner Broadcasting Company. The details are simple. Stroh Brewery and other advertisers had long been committed to supporting the broadcast of the Audubon special programs. On hearing or imagining threats from northwest loggers to boycott their beer, Stroh withdrew its support of the first Audubon program of the season, "Rage over trees," just before its broadcast. In mindless lockstep, the others that had signed up for advertising also withdrew. These were Exxon, Sears, Ford, Citicorp, Michelin, Omni Magazine, and New York Life Insurance. To its great credit, Turner Broadcasting chose to air the program on schedule. The National Audubon Society is calling for its members to write to Turner to support his courageous sacrifice of advertising revenue in support of environmental principle. His address is Turner Broadcasting Systems, One CNN Center, Atlanta, GA 30348.

The disputed program, I am told (we are not blessed with cable TV), is an even-handed attempt to relate both sides of the old forests clear-cutting dispute. It would appear that the loggers most fear that the public would learn what has been happening.

It is my opinion that far more people consuming the products of these advertisers are Audubon members than are loggers. At the least, it would seem that there is no compelling reason to choose one brand of beverage over another. Perhaps Audubon people will think about the actions of Stroh Brewery when next they make that choice. Audubon president Peter Berle calls it hardball environmental politics. It seems to me that environmental defenders have by far the greater power to win in this skirmish against the timber bullies.

D. C. Edwards

N.A.S. SHRIMP BOYCOTT

The National Audubon Society, along with eight other environmental organizations, has called for a nationwide consumer boycott of shrimp and shrimp products. The call follows the frustration of seeing the Secretary of Commerce illegally suspending regulations to prevent the accidental drowning of endangered sea turtles in shrimpers nets. He caved in to violence, blocking of some ports with their boats, by a few bullying shrimpers in Texas and Louisiana. Those shrimpers refuse to add to their nets some specially-designed devices that allow turtles to swim free. These are called turtle excluder devices or TEDs. The TEDs work, have been shown not to reduce shrimp catches and have an additional value of allowing unwanted fish to also escape. Shrimp nets catch nine pounds of fish to every pound of shrimp, and the fish are simply thrown overboard dead or dying. Why their resistance? The usual formidable barriers to new ideas: tradition and ignorance.

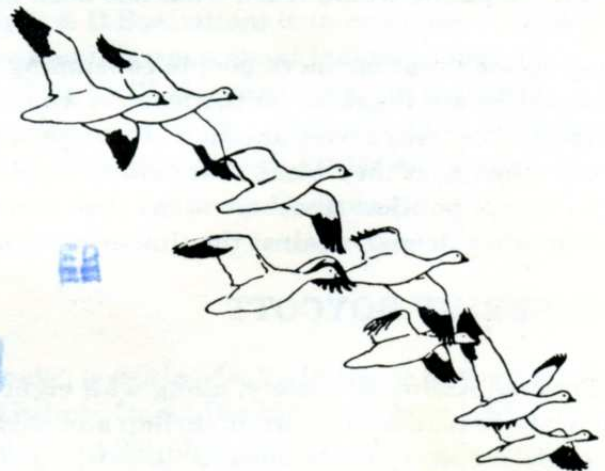
It is sad to know that citizens have had to resort to such drastic acts to force their government officials to obey the laws they have been appointed to enforce. This is just one event of many that are in process. Similar problems exist regarding the Tongass National Forest in Alaska, EPA clean air laws, EPA pesticide regulations, Forest Service permitting private luxury resorts on the "wild" stretch of the Wild and Scenic Salmon River in Idaho, Bureau of Land Management abetting environmental damage by uranium mining near the Grand Canyon, Denver wanting to destroy a river valley for more lawn water, Glen Canyon Dam's variable water release destroying wildlife in the Grand Canyon, and Los Angeles killing Mono Lake by taking more water than can be resupplied. All of these were items in the most recent issue of Audubon Activist.

CALENDAR FOR THE NEXT TWO MONTHS

- November 18 BBAS and IOU Waterfowl Watch at Saylorville. Meet 7:30 a.m. below the dam.
November 18 Cedar Rapids AS trip to Pleasant Cr. & Cedar Lake. Meet at Coe at 7:30 a.m.
December 2 Prairie Rapids AS trip to Dubuque area. Meet at 7 a.m. at Earl May at Crossroads Mall
December 12 BBAS Holidays party and slide show.
December 16 Christmas Bird Count - Ames, Story County. Contact Steve Dinsmore.
December 17 Christmas Bird Count - Saylorville, Polk County. Contact Steve Dinsmore.
December 30 Christmas Bird Count - Boone, Boone County. Contact Mark Widrlechner

BIRDERS' HOTLINE

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



November 1989

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

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