

# BIG BLUESTEM FLYER

Volume 29, No. 6    Newsletter of the Mid-Iowa Chapter of the National Audubon Society    February 1994

## MONTHLY MEETING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS CELE BURNETT

Fifteen pre-schoolers hopping like rabbits through the prairie. Landowners learning how to develop wildlife habitat on their property. Fifth graders cooking a pioneer dinner over an open fire. Families sitting under the starry skies watching for meteors. What do these events have in common? They are all part of the Story County Conservation Board's Environmental Education Program. Join Cele Burnett, Environmental Education Coordinator for an introduction to the County's program.

Thursday, **February 17**, 7:30 PM  
Room 2532, Veterinary Medicine Building, I.S.U., Ames

## FIELD TRIPS STATE FOREST NURSERY SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Meet at 8:00 AM at the State Forest Nursery parking lot. To reach the Nursery, turn east where Airport Road meets S. Duff. Then turn south and follow the drive to the parking lot.

## SWEDE POINT PARK SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Meet at 8:00 AM at the Design Center parking lot, I.S.U. Campus. The park is located between Madrid and Woodward.

## OTHER FEBRUARY EVENTS

February 5, Saturday, 1 pm, 4343 Valley Dr., Des Moines, Reap Regional Assembly

February 8 & 22, 7 pm, Beginning Birding Class, Conservation Center, McFarland Park

February 20, Corps Eagle Watch at Saylorville Reservoir

February 26 & 27, DNR Eagle Watch at Red Rock Reservoir, Saturday, 9-4 & Sunday, 12-4 At Pella Community Center





### **Beginning Birding Course**

A beginning birding class will start on February 8th at 7 PM, at the Story County Conservation Center at McFarland Park. Topics to be covered include: basic identification tips, optical equipment, bird lists, guides, publications and winter feeding tips. The second class will be held February 22 at 7 PM at the Conservation Center. Topics for this session include: birding by habitat, basic shorebird identification, common woodland species, Audubon and other organizations and BBAS field trips. The third and final class, March 8, will deal with: bird vocalizations, grassland species, waterfowl basics, raptors and the Nongame program. All sessions will end at 9 PM. Individual sessions cost \$2, all three sessions for \$5. For more information contact the park at 232-2516 or Mike Meetz at 382-2534.

### **American Kestrel "Adopt-A-Box" Program**

There's still time to join this program. For \$35 you can adopt a nest box for one year. Mike Meetz will provide a nesting and fledging report of your box, a color photo of one of the nestlings, banding information and a summary of the nest box trail on Interstate 35 north of Ames. Contact Mike Meetz at 515-382-2534. RR 2, Box 24, Nevada, IA 50201 for further information.

### **Platte River Spring Conference**

This year's conference will be held March 17-21 at Kearney, Nebraska. If you haven't been to see the thousands of migrating sandhill cranes, which gather by the Platte River in central Nebraska every spring, you are missing a spectacular natural sight. And, if you have been to see the cranes, you know that this sight is as meaningful a harbinger of spring as any in the midwest. This conference offers many opportunities to see the cranes and to learn about this very special area. You can go for one, two or all of the days. If you would like a conference brochure, call or write Sherry Dragula, 233-1532, 2121 Burnett, Ames, IA 50010.

### **It's Chickadee Checkoff Time**

Want to invest in Iowa's future? Then contribute to the Chickadee Checkoff (Fish and Wildlife Trust Fund) on your state income tax form. Your donation will be used to help 80 percent of the state's wildlife ranging from frogs and turtles to bats, river otters, bald eagles and songbirds. Your money will also be used to directly educate over 25,000 Iowans about our natural resources and help expose thousands more to topics like bird feeding, landscaping for wildlife and the life history of various animals.

The checkoff funds the Nongame Program which last year conducted surveys on frogs and toads, birds at feeders, wintering bald eagles, migrating shorebirds, heron rookeries, bat houses and bluebird houses. All in all, the program was involved in more than 40 projects, helping over 250 of Iowa's 400+ nongame species. The Chickadee Checkoff is the only source of funding for this program. So please contribute on your tax form. Also, you can receive a poster featuring sandhill cranes by sending a \$5 or more contribution to: the Nongame Program, 1436 255th St., Boone, Iowa 50036.

### **REAP Update**

Iowa's Resource Enhancement And Protection (REAP) program is a leader in natural resources funding throughout the country. Unfortunately, funding for REAP has never reached its intended amount of \$30 million per year. Last year, some \$8.5 million was allocated for REAP in Iowa. Despite setbacks in funding levels, REAP projects have been successful and well received. For example, in Story County REAP funds have been used for Moore Park in Ames, for the Heart of Iowa Trail, to repair the Hickory Grove Lake spillway, to help construct the Conservation Center at McFarland Park and to purchase the Hickory Grove Schoolhouse.

To encourage public input into the REAP program, a regional assembly will be held on Saturday, February 5, at 1 PM at the Izaak Walton League Clubhouse, 4343 Valley Dr. (off Fleur Dr.) in Des Moines. For carpool information contact the Story Co. Conservation Board at 232-2516. If you can't be at this assembly, then consider writing a note of support for the REAP program to your state legislator. (Legislators can be reached at the Statehouse, Des Moines, IA, 50319).





### Ames High School Prairie Maintenance

Saturday, February 5, 1-3 PM, wood and brush cutting at the west prairie. Bring your tools, and take precautions against poison ivy.

Saturday, March 26, 9-12 AM, cut sprouts from stumps that were cut in previous years. Afterwards an optional restaurant lunch. Call Dave Brenner, 292-3114 if you have questions.

### BOONE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT JANUARY 1, 1994

Bald Eagle	5
Northern Harrier	1
Cooper's Hawk	1
Accipiter sp.	2
Red-shouldered Hawk	CW
Red-tailed Hawk	35
Rough-legged Hawk	2
American Kestrel	6
Hawk sp.	1
Ring-necked Pheasant	38
Wild Turkey	53
Rock Dove	250
Mourning Dove	7
Great Horned Owl	2
Barred Owl	2
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1
Belted Kingfisher	CW
Red-headed Woodpecker	26
Red-bellied Woodpecker	106
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1
Downy Woodpecker	105
Hairy Woodpecker	48
Northern (Yellow-shafted) Flicker	6
Pileated Woodpecker	1

Horned Lark	16
Blue Jay	117
American Crow	266
Black-capped Chickadee	411
Tufted Titmouse	48
Red-breasted Nuthatch	35
White-breasted Nuthatch	164
Brown Creeper	7
Winter Wren	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	2
Eastern Bluebird	4
American Robin	2
Cedar Waxwing	11
Eurasian Starling	602
Northern Cardinal	187
Rufous-sided (Eastern) Towhee	1
American Tree Sparrow	232
Song Sparrow	1
Swamp Sparrow	1
White-throated Sparrow	5
Harris' Sparrow	2
Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco	479
Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco	3
Snow Bunting	1
Red-winged Blackbird	3
Meadowlark sp.	6
Common Grackle	10
Purple Finch	38
House Finch	12
Pine Siskin	27
American Goldfinch	207
House Sparrow	982
<b>TOTALS 51 species plus two CW</b>	<b>4582</b>

CW = count week but not on 1/1/96

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

I'd like to join as a new member of the National Audubon Society and of the Big Bluestem Audubon Society, Chapter H-57. Please send me Audubon magazine, the Big Bluestem Flyer and my membership card. Introductory membership is \$20.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to: **National Audubon Society** and include chapter code **H-57** on the check. Send to:

Big Bluestem Audubon Society  
c/o Mark Widrlechner, Membership Chair  
2121 Burnett  
Ames, IA 50010.



## CURRENTLY PLANNED EVENTS

March 8, Tuesday, 7:00 PM	Conservation Center, Beginning Birding Class
March 17, Thursday, 7:30 PM	Meeting: Dr. Jim Dinsmore, Ornithologist
March 26, Saturday, 9-12 AM	Ames High Prairie Work Day
March 26, Saturday, 1 PM	BBAS Field TRip to Tiegs Marsh and Little Wall Lake
*April 9, Saturday	IOU Trip to Cone Marsh
April ?	BBAS Field Trip to Hendrickson's Marsh and Colo Ponds
April 21, Thursday, 7:30 PM	Meeting: "Walnut Creek Wildlife Refuge"(tentative)
May 8, Sunday, morning	Warbler Watch at McFarland Park and Peterson's Pits
May 19, Thursday, 7:30 PM	Meeting: "Photographers View of Trees", Betty Stanley (tentative)
*May 20-22, Friday-Sunday	Iowa Ornithologists' Union Meeting, Ames
June 11, Saturday	Birder's Breakfast and Hike (plus bluebird trail), Ledges State Park

Unless otherwise specified, the location for meetings is Room 2532, Veterinary Medicine Building, Iowa State University, Ames, IA.

\* These are events of interest to Audubon members but are not sponsored by the Big Bluestem Audubon Society



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