

Big Bluestem Flyer

Volume 23 No. 4

December 1988

Monthly Meeting

**CHRISTMAS PARTY
AND MEMBERS SLIDE SHOW**

Tuesday, December 13, 7:30 PM, Rm 181, Design Center, ISU, Ames

Field Trip

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

AMES - Saturday, December 17
Steve Dinsmore, Coordinator

SAYLORVILLE - Sunday, December 18
Steve Dinsmore, Coordinator

BOONE - Monday, January 22
Mark Widrlechner, Coordinator

BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY OFFICERS

1988-1989

President: Mike Meetz, 382-2534
Vice-President: Sherry Dragula, 292-4014
Conservation Chair

Secretary: Kay Niyo, 292-5130
Treasurer: Mark Widrlechner, 292-4014

Executive Board

Elizabeth Carbrey, 292-2404
Steve Dinsmore, 292-1038

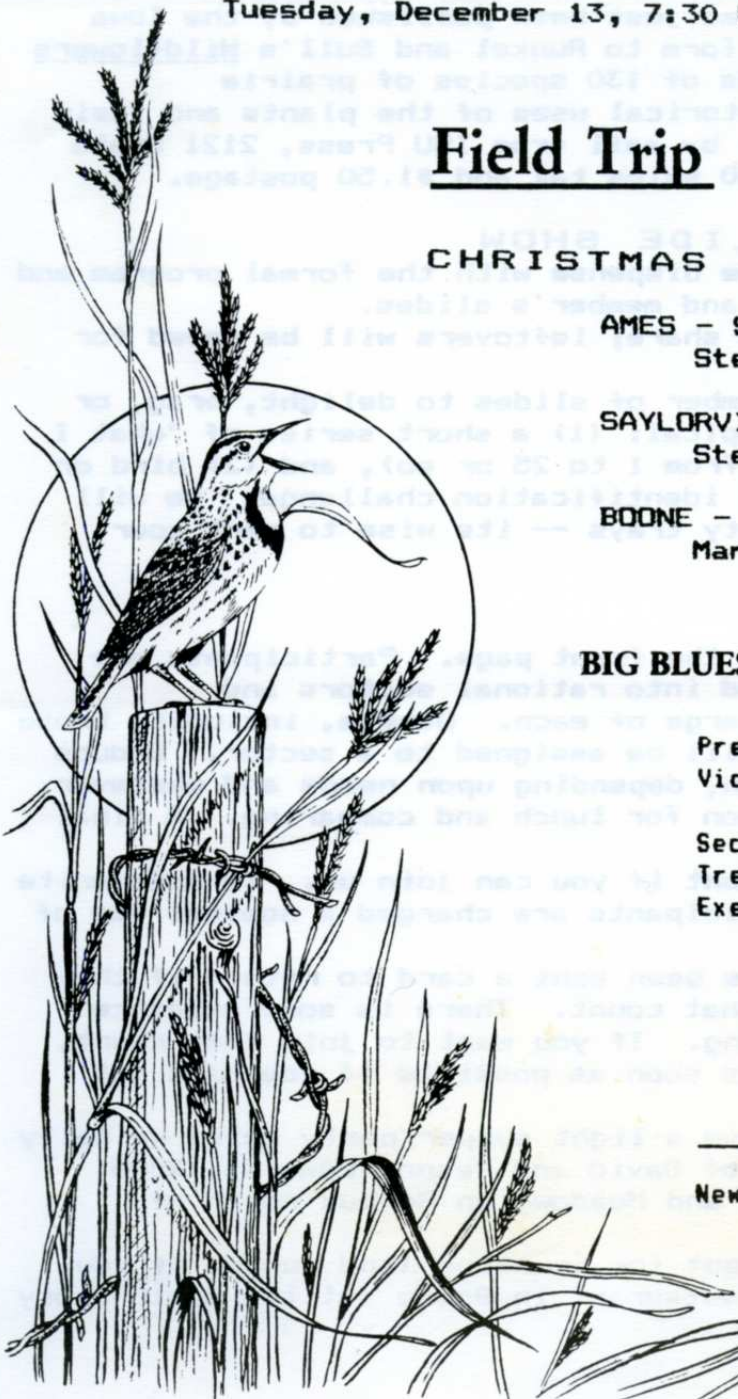
Field Trips

Andy Fix, 296-7554
Barbara Heikens, 296-2999

Education Chair

Tom Rosburg, 292-2361

Newsletter Editor and Membership Chair
David Edwards, 292-3790



BBAS LOGO T-SHIRTS AND SWEATSHIRTS

There is still plenty of time to order your T-shirts and sweatshirts emblazoned with the melodious meadowlark against the morning sun and our chapter name. T-shirts are 50-50 medium weight, and sweatshirts are 50-50 with a heavy 9 oz. fleece. Available colors include raspberry (a light red), yellow, gold, beige, or powder blue. The cost is a low \$7.50 for a T-shirt and \$13.50 for a sweatshirt. The printing is 100% guaranteed. Sizes are as follows:

YOUTH		ADULT	
XS	2-4	S	34-36
S	6-8	M	38-40
M	10-12	L	42-44
L	14-16	XL	46-48
XL	18-20	XXL	50-52

We plan to send our order after the December 13 meeting, so bring your order then or call Tom Rosburg at 292-2361.

WILDFLOWERS OF THE TALL-GRASS PRAIRIE

by Sylvan T. Runkel and Dean Roosa has just been published by the Iowa State University Press. Similar in form to Runkel and Bull's Wildflowers of Iowa Woodlands, it has photographs of 130 species of prairie wildflowers plus a discussion of historical uses of the plants and their ecology. Available in bookstores or by mail from ISU Press, 2121 State Ave., Ames, IA 50010 (\$19.95 plus .80 sales tax and \$1.50 postage).

CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SLIDE SHOW

At our traditional holiday meeting we dispense with the formal program and treat ourselves to pot luck goodies and member's slides.

Bring a plate of something munchy to share; leftovers will be saved for the End-of-the-Ames-Count party.

All are invited to bring a modest number of slides to delight, brag, or confuse. Two categories are most typical: (1) a short series of "what I did and saw this year" (short means from 1 to 25 or so), and (2) bird or other species slides that present an identification challenge. We will have a Kodak machine and several empty trays -- its wise to mark your slides for safe return.

BIRD COUNTS

The dates of our counts are shown on the front page. Participants are always welcome. Each area is divided into rational sectors and experienced leaders are placed in charge of each. Others, including those who can only go for part of a day, will be assigned to a sector. Groups vary from 2 to more than half a dozen, depending upon needs and whatever. A brief rendezvous is optional at noon for lunch and comparing. A final tally is scheduled at dark.

Contact the coordinators for each count if you can join us. To underwrite the costs of national tallying, participants are charged a nominal fee of \$4.

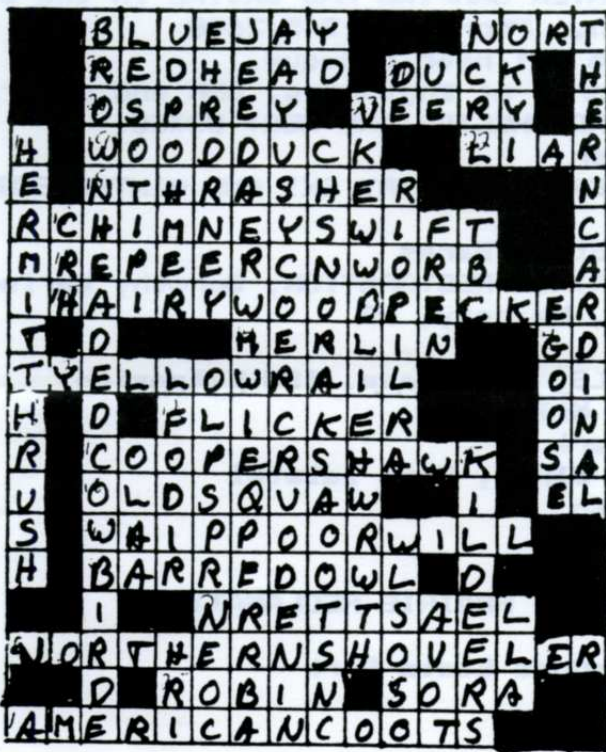
Special note: Boone area members have been sent a card to return if they are interested in participating in that count. There is some evidence that not all have received the mailing. If you want to join that count, please call or drop a note to Mark as soon as possible if you have not already done so.

Following the Ames Count, we will have a light supper/party while we tally and brag. The location is the home of David and Jeanne Edwards, 2308 State Ave, Ames (south of Highway 30 and Meadowglen Rd but north of Oakwood Road).

Following the Boone count, we will meet for counting (and supper if you wish) at 5:30 at the Golden Corral Restaurant in Boone (at the south Story St. shopping strip).

MIKE'S PUN AND GAME BIRD PUZZLE

His Answers



ACID RAIN UPDATES

Seven rain samples totaling 2.7 inches were measured in November. The pH readings ranged from 4.8 to 5.5. One sample was collected with a pH reading of 6.0, but was contaminated with wind-blown soils. Mike Meetz

LITTER LASTS

Paper	2-5 months
Orange Peel	6 months
Milk Carton	5 years
Cigarette Butt	10 years
Plastic Bag	15 years
Nylon	35 years
Aluminum	90 years
Plastic Foam	until volcanic flow or glaciation covers it

COWBIRD SONGS

Male cowbirds learn to sing through the teaching of songless females, according to psychologists Meredith West and Andrew King who have raised and studied the species for 15 years. The discovery was pure serendipity, but the finding was checked in various ways. The events happen like this. The male sings a variety of songs in the presence of the female, 94 percent (by actual count) leave the female unmoved. But with the right song, the female makes a flashing wing stroke, up and away from the body, lasting only a few milliseconds. Thereafter, the males stopped signing the other songs and concentrated on the rewarded one. The favored song is described as having a very liquid quality, transcribed as *burble burble tse* or *glug glug tse*. For more information, see the write-up in Science News, October 29, 1988.

FIELD TRIP

The DeSoto Bend Wildlife Refuge field trip never happened. That was unfortunate because the Snow Goose population was estimated at 250,000. Members who did get there before or after that weekend were treated to large numbers of Snow and Canada Geese along with various ducks, Bald Eagles, and other birds plus deer, fox, and coyote. Mike Meetz

THE PRESIDENT ADMONISHES

Our November meeting turn-out was down due in part to the unfavorable weather. Burke Thayer, our speaker for the evening, came from Iowa City to present a most interesting and entertaining program on raptors and their rehabilitation. He brought a Red-tailed Hawk and a Barn Owl which gave some of our members a once-in-a-lifetime close-up view of these living birds. If you weren't there, you missed a good one.

CALENDAR

- December 18 - WINTER SOLSTICE NIGHT WALK, Sunday, 7 PM, McFarland Park
December 29-January 2 - New Year's Eve WINTER CAMPING AND SKIING in the BWCA
Northwoods Audubon Center. \$175 each, Phone 612-245-2648
January 7 - ANNUAL EAGLE WATCH, Lock & Dam #11 near Dubuque,
Sponsored by Dubuque Audubon, Army Corps of Engineers, DNR and others.
January 17 - BBAS membership meeting. BIRD SHELTER AND NEST BOXES,
by Pat Schlarbaum, DNR Nongame Officer
February 4-5 - Northwoods Audubon Center CROSS COUNTRY SKI AND WINTER ECOLOGY,
\$65 each. 612-245-2648
February 18 - OWL WALK, Ledges/Big Creek State Parks
February 21 - BBAS membership meeting, PRAIRIE RESTORATION, Dorothy Baringer
March 17-19 - NAS Spring River Conference, Kearney, NE
March 18 - WATERFOWL WATCH, Bay's Branch
March 21 - BBAS membership meeting, MAMMALS, Jim Pease, ISU Extension
April - AUDUBON MONTH. Theme: Rivers and Wildlife
April 8 - WOODCOCK WATCH, Izaak Walton Park
April 18 - BBAS membership meeting, SHORE BIRDS, Hank Zaletel
April 22 - SHORE BIRDS, Hendrickson's Marsh
May 6 - WATER BIRDS, Saylorville reservoir
May 13 - WARBLERS, Brookside Park
May 16 - BBAS membership meeting, HIGH SCHOOL PRAIRIE RECLAMATION,
Judy Shearer, Nature Conservancy
June 3 - 2ND ANNUAL BIRDERS' BREAKFAST, Ledges State Park
June/July - CANOE TRIP to Big Wall Lake
Sep 11-16 - NAS Biennial Convention, Tucson, AZ

BIRDER'S HOTLINE

319/338-9881 for state-wide sightings.

Big Bluestem Audubon Society
2308 State Avenue, RR 5
Ames, Iowa 500 10

BULK RATE U.S. POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO. 131 AMES, IOWA
