



Big Bluestem Audubon Society  
Ames, Iowa

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# Bluestem Flyer

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## Monthly Meeting

**WHEN:** Tuesday, Feb. 12, at 7:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Room 181-1 (Jury Room), Design Center, ISU campus

**WHO:** Dr. Thomas Squires, Ames Lab, ISU

**TOPIC:** The Politics and Science of Acid Rain

## Upcoming Meetings and Events

**February Field Trip** -- Jim Murdock will lead a field trip in search of Saw-whet Owls and crossbills on Saturday, Feb. 16. Birders should meet in the parking lot south of C. Y. Stephens at 8 a.m. and plan to be back by noon. Anyone knowing the whereabouts of other birds of interest should see Jim at the Feb. 12 meeting so those birds can be included in the trip.

**March Field Trip** -- Mark your calendars now for a trip March 15-17 to see Sandhill Cranes along Nebraska's Platte River. Tentative plans are to leave Friday evening and stay over Friday and Saturday nights, returning on Sunday. Bill Horine of Nevada will lead the trip. More information will be available later.

**Conservation Committee** -- Instead of its regular meeting, the committee will hold a letter-writing session on current conservation issues on Feb. 25 at 7 p.m. at Sherry Dragula's home, 4409 Toronto #1. Fact sheets on various issues, two typewriters and stationery will be available.

**Newsletter Deadline** -- Articles and artwork for the March newsletter should be sent to Judy van der Linden, 610 9th St., before Monday, Feb. 25 at 5 p.m.





SPRING BIRD TRIPS

Bluestem Audubon members will lead two bird walks this spring that will be open to the public. The trips will be April 6th, to Hendrickson Marsh, and May 11th, to McFarland Park. Exact times will be announced later.

LITTLE THINGS MEAN A LOT ...

Would you like to help with chapter activities but feel you just don't have the time or know just what to do? Here are a few little jobs that would really help but take less than 20 minutes each month.

1. Writing a short thank-you note to each program speaker on behalf of the chapter. Stationery, stamps, addresses (and script suggestions, if you want!) provided.

2. Calling two people for bird reports each month and then calling Judy van der Linden with the results for the newsletter.

3. Passing around a treat sign-up list at meetings occasionally and then calling the two volunteers each month to remind them to bring the treats.

If you are willing to do one of these odd jobs, please contact Judy.

COMMITTEE

NEWS



Education -- Two

major projects will be undertaken by the Education Committee in 1985. The Audubon Trail at Brookside Park will have new numbered trail markers complete with an "exciting" trail guide that describes interesting aspects of the area's natural history. The trail work will be completed on a warm weekend in April. Ribbon-cutting ceremonies are pending!

The second project is the proposed sponsorship by our chapter of the new Audubon environmental education series "Audubon Adventures" in five or more 4th, 5th or 6th grade

classrooms in Ames schools. This program, which costs the chapter \$20 per classroom for sponsorship, includes a bi-monthly, 4-page tabloid newspaper that goes to each student. Also, each teacher receives a leader's guide containing further activities and background information to accompany each issue. If you teach or know of teachers interested in starting this program in their classrooms, please contact Tom Davis at 292-1869 after 5:30 p.m., before the first of April. I have several sample issues that anyone may borrow. (The budget request for this program's funding is being considered right now.-- Ed.)

Anyone who would like to help with these or other projects please contact Tom Davis.

Conservation -- At a meeting of the Conservation Committee on Jan. 28, members decided to send a letter to the Ames City Council supporting the proposed development of a trail between Ames and Kelly along abandoned railroad tracks. With respect to the Ames Reservoir proposal, members agreed to try to meet with the Sierra Club in February for an information update with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Anyone interested in attending such a meeting should call Sherry Dragula, 292-4014.

ETCETERA

Eagle Watch -- Audubon members are welcome to join a Sierra Club outing from Des Moines to Lock & Dam #14 in Davenport to see Bald Eagles on Saturday, Feb. 23. Carpooling and overnight lodging may be arranged. Contact Marge Heartney (255-5748).

THANK YOU, CINDY -- The newsletter editor and her newborn daughter want to thank Cindy Hildebrand for writing, editing and mailing out the December "Bluestem Flyer," giving mom a chance to relax before the baby arrived!



BIRD  
NOTES



Some good winter birding is possible in the Des Moines area right now. Red and White-winged Crossbills, a Gos-hawk, Red-breasted Nuthatches, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Bohemian Waxwings were all seen Jan. 27 at

Glendale Cemetery, near 48th and University.

Elsewhere in Iowa, Long-eared Owls can be seen near Rhodes, Pine Siskins and Red-breasted Nuthatches can be seen in the Nevada cemetery and Short-eared Owls are present at Tieg's Marsh, north of Ames. A Mountain Bluebird is still at Lamoni and Saw-whet and Long-eared Owls have been reported at Grammer Grove Park in northwest Marshall County. Contact Hank Zaletel (377-2889) for directions to any of these birding spots.

CONSERVATION/THE ENVIRONMENT

Iowa Plan -- Action Needed Now -- Iowa conservationists are being asked by the Iowa Conservation Commission (ICC) to contact their legislators by Feb. 10 to express support for the conservation and recreation portion of the Iowa Plan. The Plan (for spending money from the proposed lottery) would provide \$33 million to the ICC over five years to fund a variety of projects. This would equal about 13% of expected lottery revenues.

The proposed ICC projects include money for the purchase of habitat for threatened and endangered species, money to help county conservation boards acquire trails, and land purchases to enlarge and improve the state park system. Unfortunately, a few proposals involve development projects that Audubon has opposed, including a lake at Brushy Creek.

The Iowa Audubon Council (and Sierra Club) both believe that since the lottery will almost certainly pass, we should support the proposed funding for the ICC. If the ICC gets the money, we should then be prepared to influence ICC spending decisions. Conservation groups have been warned that unless we contact our legislators and ask them to support the money for the conservation and recreation component, the funds will probably go to other interest groups with more influence. The bill is scheduled for debate Feb. 11.

Iowa's Drainage Problems -- The committee appointed by state legislators to study drainage problems is working out the details of a proposed compromise for possible legislation, several aspects of which may be cause for concern by conservationists. It may become important to express our concerns to members of commissions reviewing the compromise, as well as to legislators. If you are willing to call or write on this important issue, please make sure that Sherry Dragula or Cindy Hildebrand knows so that you can be contacted when necessary.

No Decision on Diamonds -- The city Parks and Recreation Commission still has not decided where to locate four new baseball diamonds for Little League play in Ames. The latest suggestion, discussed at a commission meeting Jan. 29, is to move Little League play to South River Valley Park and relocate softball games there to North River Valley Park. A final decision probably will not be made before March.

Garrison Decision -- A federal panel's final recommendations for the Garrison Diversion Project, issued in December, eliminate some highly



destructive parts of the project but retain other environmentally-damaging portions.

The panel recommended cutting the irrigation portion of the project roughly in half and preserving Kraft Slough and seven of 12 national wildlife refuges that were scheduled to be damaged or destroyed. It also recommended against construction of the Lone Tree Reservoir, but there is still a possibility that it could be built. Perhaps most distressing was that the panel OKed channelization of the James River, one of the finest scenic rivers in the Dakotas. A request for funding the bulk of the project will go to Congress in mid-February. For more information about the panel's report, contact Sherry Dragula.

BIRD NUMBERS DECREASING?

Many of the warblers and other small land birds that migrate through Iowa are having a harder and harder time finding a place to spend the winter in Broward County, Florida. That's the finding, continuing a 20-year trend, of the Broward Audubon Society after its annual Christmas bird count this year. Birdwatchers who participated identified a decrease in the number of species as well as individual birds in the county. Among their observations -- the species with the greatest number of birds was the starling; numbers of warblers and small migrating land birds are steadily decreasing in the area; many places birdwatchers used to visit during the count are now inaccessible, either paved over or developed for homes.

-- From a Florida newspaper --



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