



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 34 Number 4

March/April 1999

Featured Speaker—March 11 meeting: *Jean Prior, “Basic Geology for Des Moines Lobe Birders”*

Dr. Jean Prior is a senior research geologist for the Geological Survey Bureau in Iowa City. She is the author of *Landforms of Iowa*, a captivating, authoritative guide to Iowa’s landscape features and their geologic ingredients.

The Des Moines Lobe of north-central Iowa is one of the state’s seven principal landform regions. This particular region reflects the last intrusion of glacial ice into Iowa, an event that can be traced in its landscapes and underlying earth materials. This program will help you interpret your own travels throughout this region, by pointing out characteristic landscape features and perhaps explaining the geologic origins of those favorite birding habitats and hotspots. In addition to enhanced appreciation of one’s surroundings, a clearer understanding of local and regional geology can lead to improved decisions on natural resource and environmental issues.

Featured Speaker—April 15 meeting, *Dr. Bob Dyas, “Spirit of the Savanna”*

Dr. Bob Dyas is Emeritus Distinguished Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture, Iowa State University.

Graphic presentation of the forest-grassland ecotone from mountains of western Alberta to the Gulf of Mexico in southern Texas. According to E. S. Eyre in *Vegetation and Soils*, this “. . . grassland-forest boundary is one of the most interesting and complicated zones of ecotone ever observed on earth. . . .” Dr. Dyas’ photographs were taken in autumn and spring when foliage and flower colors were most revealing. There are close-ups of individual plants, as well as savanna panoramas, in nine states in the United States and three Canadian provinces.

The Big Bluestem Audubon Society (BBAS) meetings are held monthly, September-May (except December and March) 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!

If you would like to meet and dine with the speakers and the BBAS board before the monthly meeting, there is a limited number of reservations available. Please call John Snyder at 232-8824 to confirm space and location.

Coming Field Trips: March & April

Kevin Healy, Field Trip Chair

March

27—Bays Branch. We will look for waterfowl and early shorebirds. Our agenda will depend on current conditions and Birdline information. Plan to be gone until mid-afternoon. Bring something to drink and a snack. Meet at the ISU Design Center parking lot at 0730. Call Kevin Healy @233-5914 for details.

April

18—Area Marshes. We will visit Kelly Pond, Harrier Marsh, Bjorkboda Marsh, and Teig’s Marsh. Meet at the ISU Design Center Parking lot at 1200. Call Kevin Healy @233-5914 for details.

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Bird Term of the Month: Salt gland—a gland situated just above the eye of a bird, extracting salt from its body and expelling it as a strong solution through the nostrils (a form of excretion). These glands are particularly useful for marine birds, which are thus enabled to drink seawater. From Peter Weaver’s *Birdwatcher’s Dictionary*.



View from the Prairie

Kay Niyo, President

At this writing on St. Valentine's Day in February, sunny days and warm spring-like temperatures are really tempting us with thoughts of spring! The snow has melted and our feeders are less busy as the winter birds spread out to glean seeds that have been uncovered. As we learned this past week, however, we can be sharply reminded that it really still is winter! So, keep the feeders full for our feathered friends so they are assured of a food supply when the weather turns nasty.

We have had some fun field trips since Christmas. Our field trip chair, Kevin Healy, has tried some new ideas that have been really successful. We greatly enjoyed visiting members' feeders in January. We thank the Edwards and the Stewarts who were gracious in welcoming a large group of birders into their homes to see the many types of feeders that attract an amazing variety of birds. We learned all kinds of new tricks from using old electric frying pans for a heated water supply for birds to ideas for squirrel-proofing feeders. Then we visited the new bird feeders and bird blind at McFarland Park. It is a wonderful project spearheaded by Amy Yoakum, Story County Naturalist, who recruited funds from local businesses and contacted Derek Watson to build it as his Eagle Scout project. Amazingly, we even saw a Brown Creeper while sitting in the blind. On another field trip, we enjoyed great close looks at 10 long-eared owls and 1 short-eared owl. We aren't always that lucky.

By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have enjoyed a program and trip with Dr. Bonnie Bowen to sunny, warm Costa Rica and we will be looking forward to spring bird migration season, which always is a busy time for birders. Check the schedule for spring field trips and join us for some good central Iowa birding.

We have more outstanding programs scheduled for this spring that you won't want to miss. Jean Prior, senior research geologist for the Geologic Survey Bureau in Iowa City, is always a favorite with our audience as she skillfully informs us that all of our nature loving activities depend on geology and why they do! Note that Jean's presentation is on March 11 prior to spring break at ISU. On April 15, Dr.

Bob Dyas, Emeritus Distinguished Professor of the Landscape Architecture Department at ISU, will provide a marvelous slide presentation of a photographic sabbatical that is accompanied by Copland's "Appalachian Spring." I experienced this several years ago at a Sierra Club meeting and have never forgotten it. Read the details on the front page of this newsletter.

We sincerely thank our anonymous donors and all of the other individuals who donated so generously to the funds for the Kellerton Bird Conservation Area. Karl Jungbluth discusses this elsewhere in the newsletter. The BBAS is pleased to be a part of this worthy project. Start making your plans for the May 8th Birdathon! We hope to beat our great fundraising results of last year!

Please join us for our monthly meetings with interesting speakers and for our fun explorations of great birding areas nearby!



Big Bluestem Audubon Society Officers and Committees

Officers:

- President: Kay Niyo 233-8803 kniyo@aol.com
- Vice President: Karl Jungbluth 432-5057 weatherbird@opencominc.com
- Secretary: Mary Doud 296-2178 mfdoud@ames.net
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- Field Trip Chair: Kevin Healy
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- Service & Special Projects Co-Chairs: Karl and Carmen Jungbluth

BBAS Web Site:

<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~shivvers/bluestem.html>

National Audubon Society Web Site:

<http://www.audubon.org>

Iowa Audubon State Director:

Paul Zeph pzeph@audubon.org

Iowa Bird Sightings Hotline—1-319-338-9881

Bird's-Eye View— Nature Observations From the Bluebird Bed & Breakfast

Karl and Carmen Jungbluth

January 1, 1999 - New Year's Day dawns cold and snowy. Karl is out with a team on the Boone Christmas Bird Count. I wisely choose to stay inside and be a "feeder watcher."

The last two days I've seen a Rusty Blackbird under the lilac, but it didn't show up today. I end up logging 14 species:

- 1 Purple Finch
- 22 Cardinals
- 3 Downy Woodpeckers
- 3 Hairy Woodpeckers
- 2 Red-bellied Woodpeckers
- 4 Tufted Titmice
- 3 White-breasted Nuthatches
- 10 Chickadees
- 8 Bluejays
- 50 Juncos
- 15 House Sparrows
- 14 Goldfinches
- 2 Tree Sparrows
- 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk

On Christmas Eve, we picked up three Christmas trees from Hy-Vee (free!) and "planted" them in the back yard to provide more cover for the birds. I think the birds have appreciated them, especially when the Sharp-shinned Hawk makes a surprise swoop through the feeder area.

Being able to look out at the birds while doing the dishes makes that task more bearable. Although one day during fall migration, it took me all morning to get through them. My dishwasher kept cooling off while I stopped to get the binoculars or consult the bird books. I know a few warblers on sight, but I'm still learning.

February 1, 1999—We've had a warm spell lately, but there are still several inches of slushy snow in the yard and the nearby woods. Activity at our feeders has slowed, so apparently the birds are finding food elsewhere as the snow melts.

We had 11 pine siskins eating thistle and buzzing in the trees again today. They showed up in mid-January, but the gold finches have been few and far between. The normal crowd of juncos has thinned with the warm weather. Another bird which has returned to our peanut feeders is the red-headed woodpecker, first seen on January 24th.

Around the neighborhood, up to 14 turkeys have been foraging in a cornfield just down the road. I even heard a gobbler the other day. A Red-tailed Hawk has been a regular sight between our house and Boone. While walking down to the creek today, the woodpeckers were being quite vocal and visible, and I could hear robins and cedar waxwings, but they remained out of sight.



Conservation Corner

*Sherry Dragula,
Conservation Chair*

Iowa Audubon Issues Statement on Mourning Doves

Following is a statement from Paul Zeph of the Iowa Audubon Office.

The Iowa Audubon Council, which consists of twelve local Audubon groups from throughout Iowa, is opposed to SF 37, known as the "Mourning Dove Hunting Bill." It is the position of the Iowa Audubon Council that the status of the Mourning Dove as a protected songbird should not be changed to that of a game species. Audubon is not opposed to hunting. In fact, many Audubon members are avid hunters. Last year, the National Audubon Society adopted a policy to support the hunting of snow geese when it became clear their increasing numbers were having a devastating effect on their tundra nesting grounds. Birdwatching (which includes backyard bird feeding) is the second most popular recreational activity in the country (walking is first), and Mourning Doves have been viewed as backyard songbirds by Iowans for over 80 years. There also does not appear to be widespread public support for this initiative—in fact, just the opposite appears to be true. A recent Cedar Rapids Gazette reader poll showed that 97% of the respondents were opposed to a Mourning Dove hunting season. The Audubon Council finds no compelling reason to support changing the Mourning Dove's status in Iowa. We feel the majority of citizens in this state agree and do not want to see their backyard visitors shot for unnecessary sport.

Legislation would help Migratory Birds during their Central American Sojourns

Audubon's Dan Beard testified to the U.S. House Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife, and Oceans on February 11 in support of H.R. 39, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1999, which was introduced by Reps. Young (R-AK) and Miller (D-CA). The bill responds to the need to protect winter habitat for neotropical migratory birds (many spend the season in Central America and the Caribbean) where conservation efforts often take a back seat to basic subsistence. In these countries, deforestation and development have left migratory birds with fewer places to stop on their long migrations and fewer places to spend the winter. For example, Central America, which plays host to as many as one-third of all avian migrants, lost about 2.3 million acres of forest cover per year between 1990 and 1995. "By supporting proactive conservation measures such as those that would be covered by the bill, we can help avoid the costly process of helping endangered species recover," said Beard. Audubon supports the bill but urged a series of changes to the legislation that would ensure that the bill's good intentions are fully implemented. Beard asked that specific language be included that calls for the "protection" of neotropical birds and that a neotropical migratory bird advisory committee be authorized to raise the visibility of this issue among federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, and Latin American and Caribbean governments. In addition, Beard testified that the bill should be amended to ensure that a majority of funds appropriated are spent in Latin America and the Caribbean. Prospects for passage of this bill are very good. A similar bill passed the Senate in the last Congress, but the House did not have time to complete action. Committee sources say that they will start moving the bill at the end of February.

Notes From the Field

Kevin Healy, Field Trip Chair

January 16—State Forest Nursery

Mike Freiberg led a group of six through the State Forest Nursery. The weather was good and we saw twenty-one species. A Pine Siskin (uncommon this winter in Ames) was spotted, as well as a Brown Creeper, the first seen on this field trip in the last few years.

January 30—Tour de Feeders

Ten BBAS birders braved dense fog to attend the Tour de Feeders. Our first stop was the Edwards' home south of Ames where we enjoyed good views of their feeders and watched Dave's video of a Sharp-shinned Hawk perching on one of their feeders. We next visited the new blind at McFarland Park. This blind, brought to us courtesy of Amy Yoakum and the Story County Conservation Board, is found in the woods on the northwest edge of the clearing beyond the prairie grass. Our final stop was the home of Cecil and Phyllis Stewart. They live just north of Northridge on George Washington Carver Avenue. Their yard is very hospitable to birds and we brought away with us a valuable tip: a rummage sale electric frying pan makes a good heated birdbath.

February 7—Owls and dinner

This was the most successful field trip of the 98-99 season. A total of twenty participants, five who were new to our group, came along. The group left the ISU Design Center parking lot at 1320 and headed for the Y-Camp north of Boone. We saw Bald Eagles (mature and immature) and a Harlan's Hawk. From there we proceeded to the Ledges and had little luck. Karl Jungbluth suggested looking for owls in some state land on Opal Lane, southwest of the Iowa Arboretum. We were very fortunate, finding ten Long-eared Owls, a Short-eared Owl, and a Sharp-shinned Hawk. Near dusk we headed to Saylorville, but were disappointed. Many of the participants concluded the evening with dinner at the Cazador Restaurant in Ankeny.

Boone County Christmas Bird Count—Final Results

Mark Widrlechner

The 13th Boone County Christmas Bird Count was one of the most successful on record. A total of 58 different species was observed on New Year's Day and three others were noted during the count week: Rusty Blackbird, Fox Sparrow, and Common Redpoll. Two species were seen on the count for the first time this year: Hooded Merganser and Merlin. And all this took place on a difficult day for birding. Late in the day, blowing snow made driving difficult and caused us to cancel our traditional count dinner. We also had record numbers of Horned Larks, American Tree Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, and Lapland Longspurs.

Book Review

Kay Niyo

Red-tails in Love: A Wildlife Drama in Central Park by Marie Winn. 1998. Pantheon Books, New York. 305 pp. \$24.00. Available at the Ames Public Library.

If any of you saw "Birdwatch" on Channel 11 at 5:30 p.m. on Saturdays recently, you might have seen a fun interview with Marie Winn in Central Park in New York City. Marie writes a column on nature and birdwatching for The Wall Street Journal. She is our guide to the wonderful wilderness world that exists in the middle of New York City on Manhattan Island. There is a long history of birders who have documented the birds of Central Park. Marie introduces us to the fascinating personalities of a cross section of New Yorkers who are known as the "Regulars." They are a diverse group of nature lovers who devote themselves to the park and to its fauna and flora. Ornithologists, mammologists, and other scientists from the American Museum of Natural History often walk across the street to spend their lunch hours in the park. The Central Park Christmas counts and migrating hawk counts sound as exciting as those anywhere, and they document their sightings in a log they call the "Bird Register." A portion of Marie's book tells the saga of the Fifth Avenue Red-tailed Hawks who built a nest and raise young for several years on a ledge three floors above Mary Tyler Moore's apartment and across the street from Woody Allen's! It is a fascinating story especially if you have spent time in the familiar places that Marie describes.

Board Happenings

Mary Doud, Secretary

We will finish up the order for Audubon t-shirts at the February general meeting. If we are short of the 24 needed to get a discounted rate, we will buy some extras for future sales.

The use of Birdathon proceeds was discussed. It was decided that the budget committee could work on this. Some areas in need of funding are Kellerton and the State Office.

We would like to send out a letter and a brochure to the *Audubon Adventure* classrooms to inquire on how they are using the material and what their interest is for next year. In the letter, we would like to include a list of area resources (conservation centers, etc.).

Membership has peaked at 450 and is on a slight decline. National is conducting a pilot project wherein the chapter receives a greater portion of their dues in turn for increased membership responsibilities.

Hallett's Quarry—Hubbell is looking into buying for a recreation area/beach. There could also be some other development or building. One concern is a wetland area near the quarry. The County Conservation Board has been asked to manage the shore edge, but they feel this request is questionable.

Paul Zeph has suggested having a Pelican Festival in September to draw interest. The State Office will have a display at the RV/Camping Expo show in Des Moines from February 10-14. Paul Zeph needs volunteers to work at the display.

A LETTER FROM YOUR BIRDATHON COORDINATORS

The Big Bluestem Audubon Society's 1999 Birdathon is on Saturday, May 8th. Mark your calendar! We have three big goals this year, and you can help make them a reality:

1. Have fun birding while raising awareness of our local birds and habitats.
2. Increase the number of participants.
3. Raise \$2500 for *Audubon Adventures*, bird education programs at the YMCA Camp near Boone, and the Iowa Audubon State Office.

Last year's Birdathon experiences were all positive for us. We introduced a friend and his family to the joys of birding around Boone. Finding sponsors wasn't too tough because our friends, family and acquaintances already knew we cared about birds and that their money would go to a good cause. And, we were amazed at how willingly local businesses donated Birdathon prizes.

There's nothing better than a full day of birding in early May, especially when you know that every bird species you see raises funds for the Audubon cause. Join us. It's as easy as saying YES!

Karl and Carmen Jungbluth, BBAS Birdathon Coordinators



HELPFUL HINTS: ASKING FOR PLEDGES

Many people find that asking for donations is a difficult thing to do. Try these ideas to make birdathon fun.

- Ask people you know (friends, family, co-workers, neighbors), either in person or by the phone.
- Approach people that you know enjoy birds and who talk about birds with you.
- People *enjoy* giving to those they know and trust. They actually *like* giving to causes which you support. It makes them feel good to support a worthy cause.
- Write down your pledge first on the sheet. Others will be happy to join you.
- Tell sponsors what the Birdathon will benefit and why Audubon is important to the community.
- Suggest a specific amount appropriate for the person. No donation is too small (or too large!).
- Use Birdathon as an opportunity to tell people about Audubon's work to conserve birds, other wildlife and their habitats.
- **The Key-** Find just five people that you know enjoy birds. They'll be glad to sponsor your Birdathon. After success with the first five, you'll be willing to try for more!

NATIONAL AUDUBON BIRDATHON



OFFICIAL SPONSOR SHEET

100% of all donations go directly to protect birds, other wildlife and their habitat!
Your Gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law.

Name: _____	Likely Species Count: _____
Street Address: _____	_____
City, State, Zip: _____	
Phone, Day: _____ Night: _____	My Goal: \$ _____
Chapter: _____	

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY— MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO _____

Sponsor's Name	Address	Phone Number	Pledge Per Species	Gift	Corp. Match?	Date Paid
Total Pledged						
						Total Paid

Top Copy - Birder
Bottom - Coordinator



BIRDATHON

MAY 8, 1999

Big Bluestem
Audubon Society

Boone, Story, Hamilton counties
I O W A

Join the Fun!-- Last year's Birdathon was great. Join us and this year will be even better!

Big Bluestem's Birdathon raised \$1766 for Audubon Adventures and the new Iowa Audubon Field Office in 1998. Eighteen people went birding, we had over 100 sponsors and 134 species were sighted in a single day. Nationwide, Audubon chapters raised over \$700,000 for birds and habitat. And, we had fun doing it!

Birdathon participants form teams, count bird species for up to 24 hours, and raise money for Audubon's efforts. Sponsors pledge support based upon the number of bird species seen, or they can pledge a fixed amount. All of the money stays in Iowa! Birdathoners and their sponsors were awarded prizes from local businesses worth \$178 last year, and this year's prizes will be even better.

Who Participates?-- Anyone who wants to! Audubon Society members, expert birders, beginners, friends and family. It all starts with you!

Birdathon '99 Goal-- The Big Bluestem Audubon 1999 Birdathon goal is:

Highlight the birds we see locally

Raise \$2500 for local Audubon efforts!

Fund Audubon Adventures in 4th & 5th grade classrooms

Support bird education at the Des Moines YMCA Camp near Boone

Support the Iowa Audubon Field Office



About Audubon Adventures-- These educational materials help young people in school to learn about birds, habitat and environmental issues. Our Big Bluestem chapter sponsored 34 local Audubon Adventures classrooms as a result of the 1998 Birdathon success! Audubon Adventures provides a student newspaper, a videotape, Teacher's Resource Manual and classroom activities.

Here's what to do-- Form a Birdathon team and collect pledges for each species you see on May 8th. If you don't have a team, contact the Birdathon Coordinators and we'll set you up with one. A pledge form and more information are in this newsletter. If you can't go birding on May 8th, pledge to the chapter or your favorite team. You can pledge per species, or a fixed amount. *Every penny raised in the BBAS Birdathon will stay in Iowa, and it is tax deductible.*

Birdathon Coordinators-- If you have questions or need motivation, contact Karl and Carmen Jungbluth, 1372 Peony Lane, Boone, Iowa, 50036 or phone 515-432-5057. E-mail us at bluebird@opencominc.com

(over)



PLANNING TO BE A BIRDATHON PARTICIPANT? READ ON...

Birdathon birders ask sponsors for pledges, and then record as many species as they can on May 8th! It's more fun to bird as a team (two people or more), and you only need a few sponsors to make Birdathon a big success. You are encouraged to ask youngsters or new birders to join the fun.

Teams can bird midnight to midnight, 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 surrounding 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! We've got T-shirts, bird books and feeders. 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 8th, Birdathoning.
- Form a Birdathon Team and register with the Birdathon Coordinators.
- 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 pledge to your Birdathon effort. 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. Last year's winning team saw 85.
- Tell sponsors that their pledge will help Big Bluestem Audubon to place *Audubon Adventures* educational materials into 4th & 5th grade classrooms in Story, Boone and Hamilton counties.
 - And, their pledge will help fund the new Iowa Audubon Field Office, which will support birds, wildlife and their habitats throughout Iowa.
 - We'll also be supporting the Des Moines YMCA Camp's bird education programs.
- 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. E-mail is bluebird@opencominc.com
- Be enthusiastic, 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. Sponsors love to hear about local birds and birding hotspots!

About Big Bluestem Audubon Society-- Our chapter has been active for 30 years. Our mission is to enjoy birds and natural ecosystems, contribute to their preservation and restoration, and engage in educational activities to benefit humanity.

Thank You for being a Birdathon Birder!!!

Iowa Audubon Council Meeting

Karl Jungbluth

Big Bluestem was host to the Iowa Audubon Council meeting, and the first ever Iowa Audubon Board of Directors meeting on January 30th. Thanks to Carmen Jungbluth for providing lunch, and to Sherry Dragula and Mary Doud for desserts. Seventeen Auduboners from around the state attended.

The newly formed Board of Directors met first, and set about to form committees and elect officers. The short-term goal of the Board is to approve bylaws, and to begin work immediately in the committees which include: Conservation, Education, Development/Fundraising and Nominations. The Board elected Karl Jungbluth to a one-year term as President of the Board, so please contact him with input or if you would like to join a committee. Committees are open to everyone.

Much of the Iowa Audubon Council meeting was a discussion of environmental issues, and discussion of the future of the Council itself was brief. It was generally agreed that the Council, in its present form, will eventually be phased out. This will likely occur at the April or July meeting, once the Council is assured that the Board of Directors is ready, and that the committees of the Board can fully assume functions previously performed by the Council. The Council and the Board will assure that Iowa Audubon remains open to participation from all chapters and members through open committee membership, and All-Iowa Audubon meetings to be held at least once a year.

Issues, as reported by Executive Director Paul Zeph, and Council President LeRoy Sowl included Mississippi River Campaigns, education, the Spring River Conference in Kearney NE, and chapter visits by Paul. Paul says he is gaining a lot of energy from the chapters and he has been very active in forging partnerships with the Nature Conservancy and the REAP conservation alliance. Paul also provided a legislative action guide, which is available to interested members.

After a long discussion, the Council passed a resolution regarding the Mourning Dove hunting issue. It reads: *It is the position of the Iowa Audubon Council that the status of mourning doves as protected song birds should not be changed to that of a game species.*

The next meeting of the Council, and of the Board of Directors, will be in Cedar Rapids on April 17th. Both are open to everyone. Contact Karl Jungbluth, 515-432-5057 for details.



NOTE: There were two incorrect dates on the Spring calendar sent out in the January/February newsletter. The May general meeting is May 20 and the Birder's Breakfast is June 5.

May/June
NEWSLETTER DEADLINE—April 15

Chapter Raises over \$1500 for Kellerton Bird Conservation Area!!!

Paul Ovrom—Treasurer

Thanks to the generosity of Big Bluestem members, over \$1500 has been raised for purchase of land in the Kellerton Bird Conservation Area. This is a great show of support for Iowa's first wildlife area to be managed for the benefit of nongame birds and animals. The money has been donated in the name of Big Bluestem Audubon Society, and shows Audubon's support for the Wildlife Diversity Program of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources as well.

Jaime Edwards of the DNR Wildlife Diversity Program says that viewing blinds will be set up near the prairie chicken booming grounds as early as this spring. Kellerton would be an excellent destination for a future BBAS field trip. Keep checking the *Flyer* for more information.

It is not too late to make a donation for the Kellerton Bird conservation Area. Make checks payable to Big Bluestem Audubon Society, marked "Kellerton." Send to Paul Ovrom, BBAS Treasurer, 1515 Burnett Avenue, Ames, IA 50010.



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.

Around Story County—Acquiring a Dream: The Colo Wetland

Hank Zaletel

The landscape of Story County, Iowa was shaped by the Wisconsin glacier some 13,000 years ago. Eastern Story County, especially, was molded by the advance and retreat of this ice mass. The land can be characterized by its rounded hills and poorly drained depressions. Numerous potholes dot the landscape east of Colo, providing a welcome habitat for the thousands of geese and waterfowl in early spring. Then, in May, the sloping hills east of Colo are dotted with thousands of Lesser Golden Plover, while the shallow potholes yield hundreds of shorebirds. Pheasant and Gray Partridge abound.

Long appreciated by sportsmen and nature enthusiasts, this wetland has been studied by soil scientists for over a fifty-year period in an attempt to explain the nature and history of the soils. The Colo Bog is so unique that it is considered a benchmark, a site which all others can be compared. Ten scientific papers have been based, in part, on this remarkable area.

Attempts to purchase portions of this area were stymied by the \$2,000/acre cost. In April 1995, a willing landowner agreed to sell a portion of the Colo Bog, 8 acres of marsh and 17 acres of upland for \$36,000. Story County Pheasants Forever (SCPF) purchased the area and deeded it to the Story County Conservation Board. Efforts continued to acquire additional land in this complex. In spring 1996, SCPF board members—Don Mangels and Hank Zaletel—and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) agent, Tony Maxwell, went to the NRCS state headquarters in Des Moines in an attempt to get a sizeable portion of the Colo wetlands

included in the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). After nearly a year of negotiations with five different landowners and five concerned organizations, 463 acres were accepted into WRP for \$949,150 (\$2,050/acre).

WRP places a permanent, restrictive easement on these lands. They are still owned by the landowners, but they cannot be used for agricultural purposes. To become public lands, a \$100-200 fee title had to be paid to these landowners. Central Iowa Pheasants Forever chapters contributed nearly \$84,000 towards this project.

At the time of these negotiations, the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) was constructing an additional two lanes to U.S. Highway 30 between Nevada and Colo. To mitigate wetland losses along the highway, the Iowa DOT was eager to find a local project to compensate for these damages. The Colo Bog was an excellent vehicle for this purpose and they provided \$42,838 to acquire these fee titles. Ducks Unlimited contributed \$50,096 toward the acquisition of fee titles, too.

Restoration of these wetlands has continued under the direction and ownership of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Summer 1998 saw the building of dikes and the breaking of tileage lines. Native grasses were planted on a portion of the area with the remainder to be done spring 1999. Future land additions to the complex are contemplated. Thanks to the efforts of many people and these agencies, this unique area has been saved for the enjoyment of generations to come.

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