

Ames Audubon Society

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

Nancy E. Brown, Editor 3614 Story Street Ames, Iowa 50010 292-3388

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

WHAT: Conservation Issues in Iowa
WHO: Dr. C. C. Bowen
WHEN: Tuesday, February 12, 1975. 7:30 p.m.
WHERE: Room 101 CARVER HALL, I.S.U.

Dr. Bowen, as chairman of the Iowa Section of the Sierra Club, will describe some of their trials and successes in the past but will focus primarily on current projects. His many years of experience in the conservation movement in Iowa are well-known to many of us. With the Iowa legislature in session each of us should become acquainted with issues vital to all lovers of the wild spots still remaining in Iowa. Plan to attend.

FIELD TRIP

WHAT: Tour of bird feeders - an opportunity to become better acquainted with Ames Audubon members and maybe see some birds! Plan to visit one or all of our gracious hosts.
WHEN: Saturday, February 15, 1975. 1:00-4:30 p.m.
(any time within these hours)
WHERE: Mrs. Lois Carr, 619 8th Street
Mrs. Mary Cowen, 2303 Hayes
Mr. Sven Gafvert, Woodview Drive (Third house on the west side of Woodview Drive, which is off Oakwood, which is south and parallel to U.S. 30 between Elwood Drive and State Street)

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WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. Tacye Pedersen	827 24th Street	232-1750
Mr. and Mrs. Karl Kirk	1218 Wisconsin	292-1779

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BIRDING IN STORY COUNTY Contributed by Barney Cook

Snow Buntings! These little snow flakes of the bird world were seen at many locations around Ames during the storm early in the month. The first report I received was from Jeff Ruprecht who called me on Saturday (1/12) telling me that snow buntings had visited his yard all morning. Since this was a lifer for me, I dropped everything and went over to the west side. Six birds were in his driveway as I drove up. Shortly the Ladds drove up and were able to see the birds as well. Your field guide does not do justice to the beauty of these birds. The subtle orange-tinged browns of the collar pattern must be seen to be appreciated. The white in the wing was more restricted as the birds tensed their wings to withstand the fierce winds. In flight or when the wing is relaxed, more white is apparent. The birds fed on the icy driveway and in the snow, but even snow buntings would seek a sheltered depression to escape the forty mile an hour winds. The

birds appeared to have very short legs and their behavior was quite different than juncos or even horned larks feeding in the road. But this was not the last. When I came home, Larry Dow had called to report a flock of 100 snow buntings at the corner of Highway 69 and Airport Road and 40 birds at his feeder on Emerald Drive. Don Mullison and I tried to find these birds; however, only one snow bunting was seen on the south side of Ames. (We later saw the Ruprecht's birds feeding on the Ames High School lawn). Mixed flocks of Lapland Longspur and Horned Larks were seen feeding at the airport and along the highway. That day the birds seemed completely oblivious of autos and mindful only of the wind. We could drive to within several feet of the birds yet they would not fly. In contrast, the next day birds feeding in the road would fly whenever I approached to within ~~50~~-100 yards. That day I saw Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspur, and Horned Larks in large numbers on the road west of Ames that leads eventually to the Ledges. Also the next Sunday several hundred Horned Larks were seen on roads near Slater as well as more Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs. One week later none were seen along the roads east of Ames.

The Snowy Owl reported near Slater in December has been seen during this month. My trip to Slater was a futile effort to find the owl but my luck failed. Mrs. Hendrickson phoned me that her student boarder had sighted the bird on a second occasion. I heard a less authenticated report of a Snowy Owl along North Dakota Road. A Common Snipe was sighted in the headwaters of McFarland Lake and the owl in Franklin Woods still remains but as yet it has not been identified. It is probably the same Long-eared Owl that lived there last year. If you sight the bird please let me know.

More common birds present include Ring-necked Pheasants, Mourning Doves, Common Flickers, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Downy Woodpeckers, Hairy Woodpeckers, Blue Jays, Common Crows, Black-capped Chickadees, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatches, Cardinals, American Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Juncos (at least one Oregon), Tree Sparrows, and Song Sparrows.

Sven Gavvert also contributed to this report in addition to those mentioned in the text.

