

BIG BLUESTEM FLYER

Volume 28, No. 2

Newsletter of the Mid-Iowa Chapter of the National Audubon Society

October 1992

MONTHLY MEETING

ACCIDENTS HAPPEN

Bob Myers

Thursday, October 15, 1992, 7:30 PM
Room 280 Town Engineering, ISU Campus

Accidental species show up in Iowa on a fairly regular basis. These birds are way out of their normal range. Come and learn what birds, where they have shown up, and when and how to look for these interesting species. Bob Myers is an excellent Iowa birder, a former records committee member of the Iowa Ornithologists Union and is currently employed by Dallas County Conservation Board as Unit Ranger. He has a few "accidents" on his Iowa record.

FIELD TRIPS

KATE SHELLEY TRAIL HIKE

BOONE COUNTY

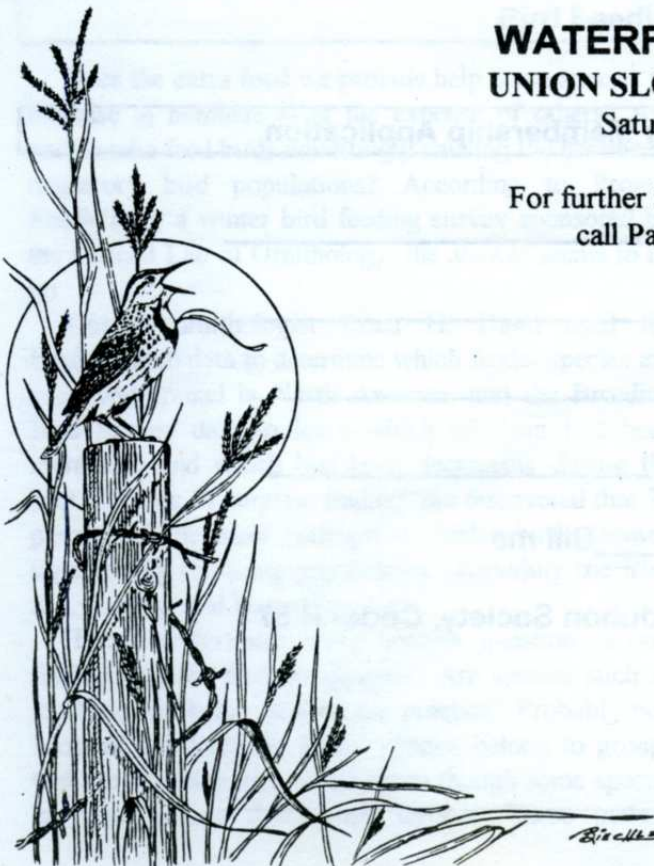
Saturday, October 17

WATERFOWL MIGRATION

UNION SLOUGH, Kossuth County

Saturday, November 7

For further information on Field Trips
call Paul Ovrom, 292-8862



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Dinner With the Speaker(s)

Anyone who is interested can join Audubon Board for dinner with our speaker prior to our Monthly Meetings. The dinners are held at 5:45 PM. We eat at various restaurants. Because we need to make a reservation, call Maridel Jackson at 964-0140, or Sherry Dragula at 233-1532 a few days ahead if you want to attend.

Membership Information

It was encouraging to see so many new faces at the September meeting. Non-members are welcome at our meetings, field trips and other events. However, if you would like to become a member here's some information for you. The Big Bluestem Audubon Society is a Chapter of the National Audubon Society. By joining the National Audubon Society you automatically become a member of Big Bluestem (if you live in these counties: Story, Boone, Greene, Hamilton, and parts of Marshall, Dallas, & Webster). New member dues are \$20 per year. In addition to membership in our Big Bluestem Chapter, you will receive this monthly newsletter from September through May, plus 6 bi-monthly issues of Audubon magazine. Your dues will also be supporting local and national efforts to protect wildlife and the environment.

If you wish to join please fill out the Membership Application in this newsletter. Please direct questions about membership to me at 233-1532.

Mark Widrechner

New Audubon Campaign

The SOLAR BRIGADE hopes to save the planet 170 million tons/year of carbon dioxide by pressuring utility companies to convert to 10 percent solar energy by the year 2000. We are asking people to send a monthly message to their utility company when they pay their bill that says "We want 10 percent solar in 2000 years."

Public pressure has worked before--for instance, in launching recycling programs and getting environmentally friendly products in the supermarket. The SOLAR BRIGADE intends to create a national referendum for the safest and cleanest energy available to us--solar. Since the cost of solar technology has dropped 75 percent in the last ten years, utilities have no excuses.

The key to this campaign is getting as many people as possible to register with Audubon, as well as send the message to their utility. Solar Power + People Power = the Solar Brigade. To register and get brochures directly write

Solar Brigade
National Audubon Society
950 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022
or call (212) 759-6345.

National Audubon Society- Chapter Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

New Member rate \$20, Payment enclosed, Bill me

Local Chapter: Big Bluestem Audubon Society, Code- H 57

Send this application to: National Audubon Society,
Chapter Membership Data Center
P.O. Box 51001, Boulder, CO 80322-1001

September 19 Field Trip Report

The VOAS Nature Area of Dallas County was the site of September's trip. Fifteen people spent the morning exploring its diverse habitat with expert guide (and October meeting speaker) Bob Myers. Bob also gave a history of the site and showed the group an extra feature of the site, a large rock collection, which will soon be open to the public. Forty one species of birds were observed including: Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Tennessee Warbler, Lincoln's and Song Sparrow, Eastern Bluebirds, Cedar Waxwings, E. Phoebe. Although not seen on this trip, Bob says that this area is a good place to see White-throated and Harris' Sparrow. Puffballs, coral fungus and a tree frog added to the enjoyment of this beautiful 265 acre area.

Mark Dobbe & Maridel Jackson

Holiday Cards

Order your Holiday cards now!

Our Society is selling Holiday greeting cards as a fundraiser. There are nine different designs to chose from--each a beautiful photograph of nature. The cards sell for \$7.95 per box of 15 cards and envelopes. They are made of recycled paper and have the Audubon logo on the back.

Bird Feeding: Boon or Band?

Does the extra food we provide help some species to increase in numbers -- at the expense of others? Are people who feed birds unwittingly causing the decline of migratory bird populations? According to Project FeedWatch, a winter bird feeding survey sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the answer seems to be no.

Cornell ornithologist Erica H. Dunn used the FeederWatch data to determine which feeder species are most widespread in North America, and the Breeding Bird Survey data to learn which of them had been increasing and which had been decreasing during the past 25 years. A surprise finding: she discovered that 70 percent of the most widespread feeder birds showed significantly declining populations, including the Blue Jay, starling, and House Sparrow.

These observations raise another question--is bird feeding bad for bird populations? Are species such as the Blue Jay being hurt by the practice? Probably not. Most of the declining feeder species belong to groups that are declining as a whole--even though some species in these groups don't visit feeders. These include

Contact any Board member to place your order (phone numbers listed elsewhere in this newsletter). Orders will also be taken at the October meeting.

Armchair Activist

The Armchair Activist is a project of the National Audubon Society, produced in coordination with Audubon chapters nationwide by Jeff Lippert of Flossmoor, Illinois. Our chapter and six others in Iowa are participating in one part of the project, the "Letter of the Month Club". If you join, every month (except Dec. & Aug.) you will receive a mailing on a conservation issue. It will be a national, state or local issue. The mailing will contain background information on the issue plus a sample letter and a listing of where your letter should be sent. By working together on the same issue each month it is hoped we will have more influence on policy decisions affecting the environment. This month's "Letter" is on the Endangered Species Act. If you want to join the "Letter of the Month Club" contact me, 233-1532.

Sherry Dragula

mimids (thrashers and mockingbirds), towhees, certain blackbirds, and sparrows--birds that nest primarily in grassland or shrub habitats, which are also declining.

We don't know whether Blue Jays are responding to feeding by nesting in suburbia, only to suffer insupportable predation by cats and raccoons. We do know that American Robins, which often nest in suburbia, are showing population *increases* nationwide.

If you feed birds in your backyard and you'd like to contribute to an international effort to monitor bird populations, now is the time to sign up for the 1992-1993 FeederWatch season. Participants receive a complete instruction packet, data forms, and a subscription to *FeedWatch News*, a biannual newsletter that covers not only FeedWatch results but bird feeding tips, notes on feeder bird behavior, and more. For more information write to:

Project Feederwatch
Cornell Lab of Ornithology
159 Sapsucker Woods Road
Ithaca, NY 14850
or call (607) 254-2414

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

October 15, Thursday	7:30 PM, BBAS Meeting, Bob Myers, "Accidental Birds in Iowa"
October 17, Saturday	BBAS Field Trip, Hike along the Kate Shelley Trail, Boone County
November 7, Saturday	BBAS Field Trip, Waterfowl migration, Union Slough, Kossuth County
November 19, Thursday	7:30 PM, BBAS Meeting, Ty Smedes, Nature Photographer
November 21-22, Saturday and Sunday	BBAS Field Trip to DeSoto Bend or Squaw Creek Refuge on the Missouri River to view waterfowl
December 10, Thursday	7:30 PM, BBAS Meeting, Story County Conservation Center, Members' Slides and Treats, also Treats for the Birds (seeds, suet, and donations) will be collected and given to the Center.
December 19, Saturday	Ames Christmas Bird Count with Chili supper following
December 20, Sunday	Saylorville Christmas Bird Count
January 2, Saturday	Boone Christmas Bird Count

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