

BIG BLUESTEM AUDUBON SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER Volume 58 | Number 2 | Jan./Feb./Mar. 2023
<http://bigbluestemaudubon.org/>



*Snow Bunting Harrier |
Marsh Area Boone Co.
Photo by Larry Dau*



2023 Big Bluestem Audubon Society Programs

All programs are held at the
Ames Public Library (515 Douglas Ave.)
except the December Christmas party.
Program meetings take place in the

Business Meetings begin at 6:30 PM;
programs begin at 7:00 PM, except the December mtg

May 18th:

Stephanie Shepherd, Iowa Department of Natural Resources.
Topic: Tax Preparation and License Plates: How Do
These Help Wildlife in Iowa?

Sept. 21st:

Todd Burras and Ty Harms.
Topic: Chimney Swifts in Ames

Oct. 19th:

Tim Gedler. Topic: Purple Martins in Iowa

Nov. 16th:

TBA

Dec. 14th:

Christmas Party at McFarland Park.
Meeting begins at 6 p.m.

Jan. 18th:

Jim Pease. Topic: Paddling for Critters

NORTHERN SHRIKE & TREE SWALLOWS

The Northern Shrike that has been seen by several people for maybe 2-3 months was found again today at Big Creek WMA. It was on the west side of Big Creek Lake, near the south dead-end of NW 100th St. After flying down the road it perched on a shrub fairly near my car, so I was able to get a couple of decent photos before it took off into the strong SW wind.

Then on the way home and crossing the Des Moines River on Hwy. 210 west of Madrid, I spotted a pair of Tree Swallows (FOY) soaring not far north of the bridge. Spring is definitely here!

Doug Harr
Ogden

Notice to New Members of Big Bluestem Audubon Society Only:

We are sending you this printed version of our BBAS newsletter for the first two issues after you have joined the National Audubon Society or become a local member. We have now converted to a mostly electronically-delivered newsletter to save costs and be more green. If you want to receive a printed version, please notify me. Otherwise, you will receive the online version. If you supplied your email address upon joining, we will send you a notice and link for the newsletter each time a new version is available.

Thanks,
Tim Garner
timgarner@mediacombb.net



Support conservation
in Iowa.

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Greetings!

The 2023 BBAS Birdathon will take place on Saturday, May 13th.

This is Big Bluestem's main fundraiser. The success of this event largely determines what BBAS can do throughout the year. Please consider participating. If you cannot join in on the birding, please consider supporting a team by offering a pledge.

It is easy to participate. Simply form a team, choose a team name and a captain, register your team with the compiler, collect pledges (per bird or a lump sum) from donors for your team, and then go out birding on May 13th.

After the event is over, report your bird list to the compiler, collect from your donors, and then send the money you collect to the BBAS Treasurer (not to the compiler) at:

BBAS | PO Box 543 | Ames, IA 50010

For more details or to ask questions please email the compiler.

Thank you so much and GOOD BIRDING!!!

Eric Ollie
BBAS Birdathon Compiler
uphawkeye@gmail.com

Membership Application Form

☐

New member of the National Audubon Society. You will receive the *Audubon* magazine, the *Big Bluestem Flyer*, membership card. - \$20

Please make your check payable to *National Audubon Society* and include "Chapter Code H-57" on the check

☐

Subscribe to the *Big Bluestem Flyer* for one year and participate in some Big Bluestem Society Activities - \$10
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:

Big Bluestem Audubon Society
P.O. Box 543, Ames IA 50010

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

*Please do not use this form for renewals
to the National Audubon Society.*

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C1ZH570Z

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN April, 2023

I write this column on March 18th, an unseasonably cold late winter day, with temperatures in the low 20s and a wind chill near zero. Garrison Keiller, the author and former host of the National Public Radio program A Prairie Home Companion once wrote that March weather is nature's way of telling people who don't drink what a hangover is like. I think he was on to something.

But March is also the time when we notice the spring migration, whether it is the robins returning in full force, or the juncos leaving the relatively warm confines of the Hawkeye state for their nesting grounds further north.

Birds inspire us in so many ways, not the least of which is in our songs and sayings. A few sayings come to mind: Birds of a feather flock together. Sing like a bird. In education, when teachers go on a bird walk, it means to deviate or digress from the subject at hand to discuss some topic that, while interesting, is not always germane to the lesson being taught.

And the songs! Here are a few that come to mind: 3 Little Birds by Bob Marley. Free Bird by Lynyrd Skynyrd. Bird Dog by the Everly Brothers. Feed the Birds from the movie Mary Poppins. Black Bird by the Beatles. Some of the songs about birds are meant to inspire when times are bleak. When Great Britain was under attack during the Blitz in the early years of World War II, a popular song contained the lyrics "there will be bluebirds over the white cliffs of Dover, just you wait and see." Feed the Birds reminds us to take joy in the simple things in life, and to appreciate the beauty and meaning that those acts can bring us. And the Chicken Dance is a staple at many wedding dances-a fun, joyous, and carefree way to celebrate the joining of 2 people who love each other so much that they have decided to commit themselves to each other for the rest of their lives.

There is one saying that I would love to expunge from the English language: calling someone a bird brain. Not only is it mean-spirited, but so inaccurate. After all, think about what birds can do. Many species migrate-traveling hundreds or thousands of miles, repeating the journey year after year, without so much as a map or compass. Many possess remarkable eyesight, particularly our raptors (eagle eye, eyes like a hawk come to mind). They can build nests using the materials they have available, and some of these nests (like those of the Baltimore oriole, or the bower bird) are truly marvels of engineering. When one considers these things, the term bird brain should actually be considered a mark of intelligence, a compliment.

So-here's to the birds! May they continue to inspire us, to fill our lives with awe and wonder.

Yours,
Tim Garner
President, Big Bluestem Audubon Society



*Eurasian-Collared Dove |
Marsh Area Boone Co.
Photo by Larry Dau*



*Ring-Necked Duck | Greene Co.
Photo by Larry Dau*



*Redhead Duck | Greene Co.
Photo by Larry Dau*

BIRD-A-THON SATURDAY, MAY 13, 2023

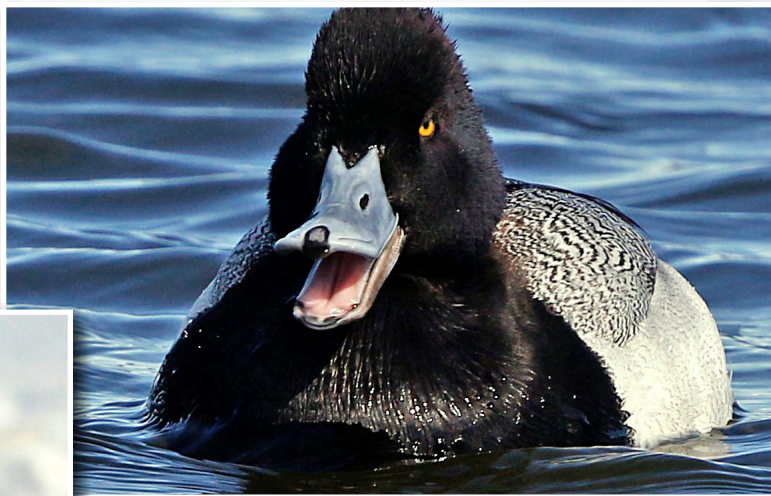
Bird-A-Thon is BBAS' main fundraiser and source of income.

A large percentage of what we like to do as a nature conservation, education, and appreciation organization is possible due to the efforts of those who participate in and contribute to Bird-A-Thon.

It is never too early to form your team, start recruiting sponsors, or begin forming your "game day" strategy. Eric Ollie has graciously agreed to compile the results of Bird-A-Thon.

***For more information or to register your team please email: Eric Ollie at uphawkeye@gmail.com
If registering a team, please include your team's name, team members, and captain's name***

*Horned-Lark | Harrier Marsh Boone Co.
Photo by Doug Harr*



*Scaup Duck | Greene Co.
Photo by Doug Harr*

PHOTOS AND CONTENT FOR NEWSLETTER BY TIM GARNER

Please submit any photos of birds, wildlife, habitat, or events that you would like to be included in the flyer newsletter to Tim Garner (timgarner@mediacombb.net). We are also looking for short content items and announcements.

The Big Bluestem Audubon Society Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Big Bluestem Audubon Society promotes fostering an inclusive, equitable, and diverse climate and culture, where all members of our organization can thrive. We welcome people of all backgrounds and seek to create a membership that is inclusive of diverse cultures, backgrounds, and life experiences while enhancing a culture of respect and civil discourse. We aspire to attract and retain a diverse membership.

Moving On



Bruce Ehresman, long-time member of Big Bluestem Audubon Society, has announced that he is retiring from his duties as Secretary on the Executive Board. Please join me in thanking Bruce for his many years of faithful and reliable service to our organization! Well done Bruce-and we're glad that you're still a fixture at our monthly meetings.

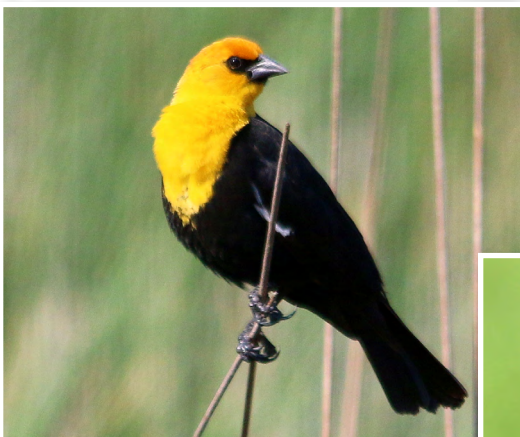
Eric Ollie has decided to step away from his duties as the leader of our local birding expeditions. Eric's encyclopedic knowledge of birds-their calls, their plumage, their habitat, their migratory pat-

terns-you name it-is just remarkable. Truly amazing. Thank you Eric for all of your work to make Big Bluestem Audubon Society a place where like-minded people can gather to enjoy bird watching.

Now here's the pitch to all of our rank and file members:

Please consider donating some of your time to Big Bluestem Audubon Society. We would love to have someone organize a local birding trip on some Saturday. We would be honored if someone would volunteer to be our secretary. These need not and indeed are not demanding positions in terms of commitment of time. I guarantee you will be rewarded with the warm feeling that comes with volunteer service.

Tim Garner



*Yellow Headed Blackbird
Photo by Doug Harr*



*Brown Thrasher
Photo by Doug Harr*



*Lark Sparrow
Photo by Doug Harr*



Barnswallow
Photo by Doug Harr



Blue Gray Gnatcatcher
Photo by Doug Harr



Willet
Photo by Doug Harr



Great Crested Flycatcher
Photo by Doug Harr



Whooping Crane
Photo by Doug Harr

My feeding area has been dominated by 200+ Common Grackles and about 100+ Red-winged Blackbirds today. Also over 70 American Tree Sparrows. I have put out about 20 pounds of cracked corn on the ground! The Wild Turkeys couldn't even get their share. Large Robin flocks around. They are looking for crab apples on my front trees, but Turkeys ate all them 2 weeks back. That was quite a sight with my front flower bed trees full of Turkeys. I have videos. 7 Harriss' Sparrows still around.

Larry Dau
Boone Co.



In Memoriam

It is with sadness that we learned of the death
of Big Bluestem Audubon Society member

Lynne Bishop

We offer our condolences to Lynne's
family during this sorrowful time.

BBAS Businesses

Please know that if you make a purchase at either Wild Birds Unlimited or Brekke's Town and Country Store, Inc. that these businesses will make a donation to Big Bluestem Audubon Society. Be sure to present the coupon when making the purchase. We thank these fine businesses for their generous support.

**Donate \$5 of your
next purchase*
of \$25 or more
at WBU to BBAS**



**Big Bluestem
Audubon Society**



*Coupon must be presented at time of purchase.
One coupon per purchase.
May not be combined with any other offer.
Valid only at Wild Birds Unlimited of Ames.

Valid through 8-31-2023

213 Duff Ave. Ames, IA 50010 (515) 956-3145
Monday-Friday 9:30-5:30 Saturday 9-5 Sunday 12-4
www.ames.wbu.com

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<u>Purchase</u>		<u>Donation</u>
Up to \$15	\$	1.50
\$15 and over	\$	3.00
\$35 and over	\$	5.00
Over \$70	\$	7.50

Brekke's offers Big Bluestem Audubon Society a donation when bird seed or other bird products are purchased.

Present this coupon with your purchase and a donation will be given to BBAS.

Offer good until 8-31-2023

NEW MEMBERS
OF NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

We are pleased to announce that the following people have joined the Big Bluestem Audubon Society.

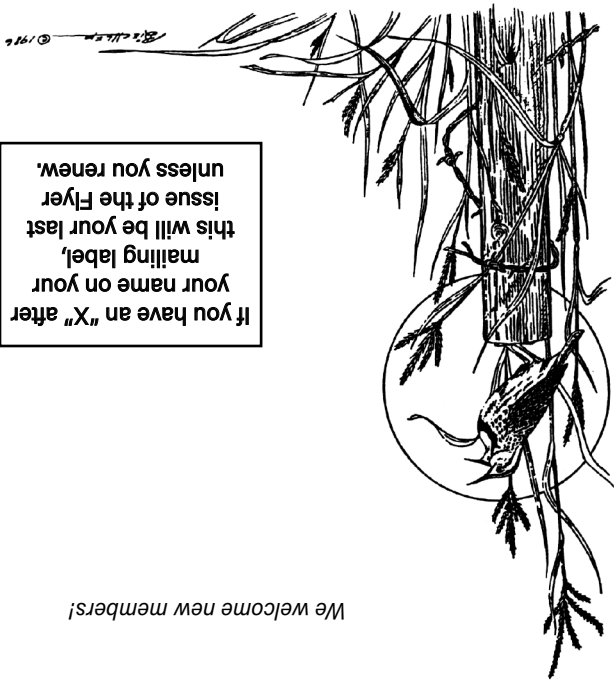
Welcome!

And thank you for joining our ranks.

- Joan Van Gorp
- Kenneth Hampson
- Julie Curry
- Kristi Hawkins
- Charli Hanway

The mission of the Big Bluestem Audubon Society is to enjoy the observation and study of birds and natural ecosystems, contribute to their conservation and restoration, engage in educational activities to benefit humanity, and gain a broader understanding and deeper appreciation of the world in which we live.

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If you have an "X" after
your name on your
mailing label,
this will be your last
issue of the Flyer
unless you renew.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

We welcome new members!

Big Bluestem Flyer
Tim Garner, President
Big Bluestem Audubon Society
PO Box 543
Ames, IA 50010-0543