



KINGFISHER



APRIL 2006

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 55 No. 3

Representing the National Audubon Society in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

A Note from the President

I just returned from a cross-country ski trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Conditions were almost perfect. The lodge we stayed at provided bird seed for us to feed and observe the local winter birds. We were treated to numerous common redpolls, pine siskins, goldfinches and pine grosbeaks, fewer blue jays, chickadees and red-breasted nuthatches and finally, a couple of downy and hairy woodpeckers, gray jays and ravens. Unfortunately, we didn't see any owls. This trip reinforced my passion for preserving the wilderness - the wonderful views and the awesome quiet. The awful gasoline smell of snowmobiles and their noise only permeated the area when we were close to their trail and the lodge. The clear-cut areas were disconcerting, but all that snow hid them.

This is a reminder that the legislative session is in full swing now and your voice will be heard if you raise it. Hopefully, many of you attended the Legislative Forum and Lobby Day. I urge you to follow the issues as they emerge and take quick action when requested to support sound environmental legislation. Please review Audubon's priority issues and let your legislator know you support them. We can have a positive impact if we let those at the Capitol hear us.

On a more pleasant topic, John Arthur's *Yard Musings* article last month suggested that this newsletter could be a place to share your bird observations. I strongly agree. Last fall I tried to get a regular column started for memorable bird trips. Unfortunately only a couple of members submitted their memories. This is your newsletter and everyone enjoys your input on birds and nature as a whole. I would love to have more articles than we can print on your bird observations. Even if it is only two or three lines, we would be glad to share them. Send your observations to as an e-mail attachment to Marcia Marshall. Remember, articles maybe edited and are subject to space available.

Finally, I can't let an opportunity go by without mentioning that we are looking for nominations for our Board. Don't hesitate to let Jim Egge (Nomination Committee Chair, 612-827-7629) know you are interested. We also are in need of Program and Field Trip Chairs. As I have tried to convey to everyone, we don't exist without your volunteer help. **ASK TO HELP!**

—Jerry Bahls

April Program

WHERE DID THE HERONS GO?

There it was, five years ago: Peltier Lake in Lino Lakes. It was a Heron Rookery with 1,200 nesting pairs of great blue herons, great egrets, and black-crowned night herons. In March 2006, Peltier Lake's Rookery has only twenty-five nesting pairs.

For five years the herons have failed to produce; the colony deserted before chicks would have fledged. What could be the cause? A study of this depletion has been done by DNR's Steve Kittelson (who since shuffling within the DNR's Non-Game Program has now been assigned to Mankato) and by Andy Vonduyke, a second-year graduate student at the University of Minnesota in Conservation Biology.

Andy has had constantly-running cameras at the site over five years. He will tell his story with his photographs that span the time from heron abundance to depletion.

**Tuesday, April 4
Mayflower Church
7:00 p.m.**



Summer Electronic Kingfisher

Because the gap is so long between *Kingfisher* publications, it has been decided to publish a July/August *Kingfisher*; however it will only be published electronically (cost consideration).

It will be placed on our website for members to read and download. If you would like to be notified when it is available, please send Jerry Bahls (bahls001@tc.umn.edu) an e-mail asking to be put on the summer *Kingfisher* notification list.

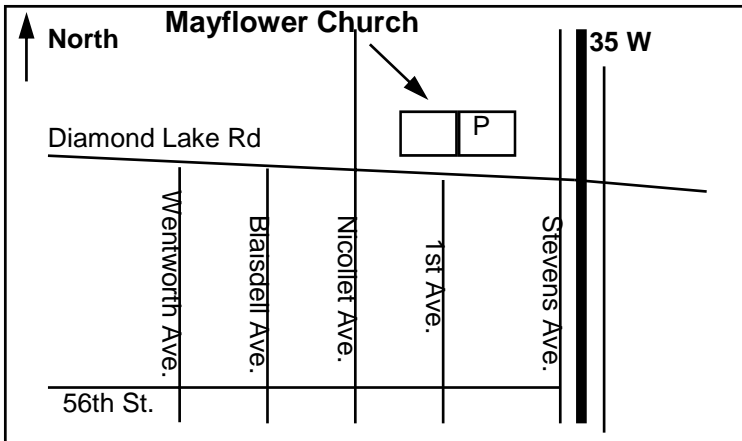
Come to Our Next Program!

DATE: Tuesday, April 4, 2006

Where Did the Herons Go?

TIME: Program at 7:00 pm

AT: Mayflower Church, 35W & Diamond Lake Road—map below



ANNUAL BLUEBIRD CONFERENCE

The 2006 Annual Conference of the Bluebird Recovery Program will be held on Saturday April 22, 9:00 am to 4:30 pm at the Medford Public School 750 2nd. Avenue NE, Medford. Outstanding speakers, workshops, demonstrations, exhibits, sales items and a silent auction will be featured. Registration fee: \$4 before April 10, \$5 after April 10. Lunch cost: \$9.00

Registration: www.BBRP.org
Registration information at clmjmm@ll.net
or 507 332-7003

Electronic Kingfisher

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ELECTRONICALLY!

Contact Jerry Bahls at bahls001@tc.umn.edu

April's Bird of the Month

Vultures

Presented by **Jim Egge**

Learn about Nature's sanitation crew at the
April 4th meeting

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www.geocities.com/audubon.geo
www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn/index.html
www.audubon.org

BOOKS FOR SALE

Did you know, Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis sells books and other merchandise at its program meetings?

We offer many of the most popular Field Guides for sale!

We have Bluebird Recovery items for sale!

We offer Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis patches and pins as well as National Audubon Society pins.

All items are at *discount* prices.

This month's featured book is:

A Birder's Guide to Minnesota

by Kim Eckert

APRIL FIELD TRIPS

EVERY TUESDAY DURING APRIL AND MAY!

Each day:

9:00 AM Join the Minneapolis Audubon Society at Roberts Sanctuary, Lake Harriet.

Meet: East gate, north side of the Lake. Parking at Rose Garden lot or on the street.

11:30 AM Group will car caravan to another destination for afternoon birding. Bring a lunch and enjoy birding the whole day.

LOOKING AHEAD TO MAY: MORE TRIPS

May 6 Stearns County, 7 am to 3 pm. Good for waterfowl, shorebirds, forest and prairie birds.

May 6 Cedar Bridge/Bass Ponds, Bloomington, 7:30 to 11:00 am. Good for migrant warblers.

May 7 Butler Wildflower Gardens, Theodore Wirth Park 7:30 to 11:00 am. Both wildflowers and migrating birds.

Wood Lake Bird Festival

Circle your calendar for the first Wood Lake Bird Festival to be held on May 13th at the Wood Lake Nature Center in Richfield. Festivities will begin with an early morning bird walk, followed by family activities, bird information, nature film and other interesting features. Watch for more information in next month's Kingfisher.

BIRD BANDING TRIPS

Bird banding is a great way of seeing a bird up close and learning more about them. Help capture and release wild birds for this banding research project. Hold in your hand cardinals, chickadees, robins and more as they are released. Bird banding dates are as follows at

SPRINGBROOK NATURE CENTER

100 85TH Ave. NE, Fridley, MN

April 2	7:00—11:00 a.m.
April 23	6:30—11:00 a.m.
May 7	6:30—11:00 a.m.
May 21	6:30—11:00 a.m.
June 11	6:30—11:00 a.m.
July 9	6:30—11:00 a.m.
July 30	6:30—11:00 a.m.
August 20	6:30—11:00 a.m.

EASTMAN NATURE CENTER

1351 Elm Creek Road, Dayton, MN

May 20	9:00—noon
July 29	9:00—noon

Did you count? The birds, that is.

If you participated in the 2006 Great Backyard Bird Count from February 17-20 and sent your findings to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, you were among those birders who submitted more than 60,000 checklists.

Those lists tallied 623 species and more than 7.5 million individual birds during the four day event! WOW! The event's results can be viewed at www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO JOHN JAMES AUDUBON APRIL 26

The National Audubon Society, founded in 1905, is one of the oldest and largest conservation organizations in North America, but John James Audubon was never a member of the society. One of the most romantic figures of the nineteenth century, Audubon was an artist, naturalist, explorer, writer, publisher and environmentalist.

His monumental publication, *The Birds of North America*, with over 400 stunning watercolors, captures the rich diversity of the natural world through its depiction of birds from southern Florida to Labrador, from New York to the wilds of Kentucky, Pennsylvania and Louisiana.

Many credit Audubon's art with providing the spark for America's passion for bird-watching and for protecting wild life in general. Audubon's wife, Lucy, used her husband's paintings as teaching aids, which deeply impressed one of her students, George Bird Grinnell. When Grinnell formed a new bird protection organization, he named it for the artist, guaranteeing that Audubon's name and legacy would continue long after his death.

Getting Closer to Birding

"Birds fly away! Every time I try to get close enough for a photograph, the bird flies away! What's the answer?" (Rhetorical question here, because that is what this article is about). These are some questions that my son was asking me the other day about how to take better bird photos. So I gave him my best fatherly advice about birding.

No matter how long a lens on the camera or the magnification of the scope, we always want to get closer (almost always: there was this time I was fairly close to a turkey vulture...) Adding a longer lens or a better scope can start eating into a budget in a hurry. I was reading a post on the Internet from a birder who was getting "lens envy" while viewing some snowy owls and only had a 400mm lens. Other photographers standing there had 500-600mm lenses. (Never mind that the 400mm lens costs about \$1500). Spotting scopes are a similar item, but a view of a "bird dot" is sometimes all we are looking for.

How to get close? (Another rhetorical question). I have found a couple of techniques that work. Not looking at the bird as we walk closer works. Try looking at the ground while approaching the bird and kind of wander from side to side. I read an article, probably by Jim Williams in the *Star Tribune*, about acting like a deer while walking through an area. Walk slowly, browse around, look at everything other than the bird except to keep it in sight. The bird might think that you are not a threat and allow you to venture closer.

Another technique in getting close to a bird is to use the car as a blind. This works in my experience until I stop and open the window. The appearance of a scope or camera out of the window spooks a fair number of birds, but I have had fairly good luck in places like Crex Meadows, WI with this technique.

There are other methods for getting closer such as using a blind, sitting in a chair by the target tree, or some that I do not have room to mention. If others are interested in sharing their techniques and tips for getting closer to birds, send me an e-mail (jarthur@visi.com) and they might be posted on the chapter web site.

—John Arthur

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 According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, bird-watching is the number one sport in America, with 51.3 million birders in the U.S. alone. Check out *Birding Basics* on the Audubon.org website under "Audubon at Home—Bird watching" for lots of info.
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ALSO OF INTEREST...

There is currently an exhibition at the American Swedish Institute, featuring Swedish wildlife artistry. It runs from now through May 14, 2006 at 2600 Park Ave.

The Audubon Center of the North Woods Birding Festival is June 9-11, 2006. See the article on page 5 for details. The Center also is having an exciting trip June 18-25 to the Black Hills of South Dakota. Excursions included are Devil's Tower and the Badlands, blending the landscape with the history of the area. Info: www.audubon-center.org.



The Bell Museum celebrates the beauty of nature March 31, 2006 with 20 renowned artists, including Jim Brandenburg, the evening's featured guest. Great food and live music embellish the evening at the McNamara Alumni Center in support of the Bell Museum. Cost is \$110/person. 612-624-9050

Here's an area in nearby Ontario most of us have never heard of. It's a paradise for canoe tripping, 60 miles north of Kenora, Ontario, called Woodland Caribou Provincial Park. Over 1,100 miles of waterways wind through over a million acres of Ontario's rocks, remnants of Lake Agassiz, rock paintings and haunting solitude. The park address is: PO box 5003, Red Lake, Ont. P0V 2M0.



Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center sponsors an interesting array of trips, camps, and courses. Canoe trips are an excellent way for teens especially to get in touch with nature. Summer camps run every week all summer for various ages, and include grandparent-grandchild programs once each month. Get info at www.wolf-ridge.org or 1-800-523-2733.

The Denver Audubon Society is working to protect two beautiful roadless areas: Pike-San Isabel National Forest and Arapahoe-Roosevelt National Forest. These areas are "under review," meaning their status may be changed, thus opening them to logging and development. Find out more: www.roadless.net



This Thing Called Birding

Urban Legends talk about a philosophy professor giving his students an exam with only one question, "Why?" And as legend has it, a witty student answered with, "Why not?"

The same could be asked about birding. Why do we go bird watching? Asking ten different people will probably retrieve ten different answers.

There are probably as many different types of birders as there are reasons to bird. There are the competitive types that are in a hurry to get 200 bird species by the 2nd of January. There are the "listers" that strive to identify every bird species in a given area and add to that list by state, county and possibly down to a specific GPS location.

So, what kind of birder are you?

Are you the beginning birder who is happy identifying a robin? Are you the birder who drives across 3 states to see a sasquatch pipit? Are you the birder who hears a sandhill crane and thinks that's pretty good until some other birders rush up asking if you heard the whooping crane that answered? (This happened to us in Necedah National Wildlife Refuge where the whoopers actually are).

Somewhere in between is where most of us are and with varying degrees of passion devoted to the activity. There are some who go out just to be in a natural area and enjoy all that there is, whether it be the trilliums in bloom or some dragonflies patrolling a wetland.

All of these birders have their place and none is superior to another.

Enjoy!
—John Arthur and
Pamela Deerwood

Beginning Birding Classes

Where: Westwood Hills Nature Center, 8300 West Franklin Ave, St. Louis Park

When: Thursday, April 20 7:00 – 8:30 pm & Saturday April 29 at 9:00 am ****NOTE DATE CHANGE****

Fee: \$5, one child free with paying adult

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis will be offering a two-session Beginning Birding Class this Spring at the **Westwood Hills Nature Center**. Parents, bring your children! This is a lifelong activity that you can enjoy with them. The preparation of this class has been partially funded by a grant from the Science Museum of Minnesota. The class will provide a basic knowledge of birds. Basic instructions on the use of binoculars and field guides will be included.

At the end of the class, it will be expected that the student will be able to identify 10 easily-recognized birds, and with a little study, they will be well on their way to being able to identify 25 common Minnesota birds. Finally, they will have the tools and knowledge on how to identify many of the migratory birds which pass through the area.

The class will include a field trip on Saturday to apply what has been learned in the classroom. Students are asked to bring a field guide and their binoculars to both sessions; a limited number of binoculars and field guides will be supplied. The field trip will be held rain or shine!

Anyone over the age of eight is encouraged to sign up for the class. One child between the ages 8 and 18 attending with a registered adult is free of charge. Please send your name, phone number and address along with your registration fee to Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, P.O. Box 3801, Minneapolis, MN 55403. Deadline for mail-in registration is April 10th.

Call 763-572-2333 or e-mail bahls001@tc.umn.edu for more information or late registration. This class will be limited to 25 students, so please register early!

Audubon Center of the North Woods

First Annual BIRDING FESTIVAL

June 9-11, 2006

Small groups of birders will be out exploring wetlands, forests and fields that make up the Center's 535 acres, as well as surrounding habitat in Pine County - an area rich in diversity. Central MN bird watching is best in June as the migrants have returned and are setting up territories and building nests.

Highlights include: raptor presentation, bird banding, hikes in North Woods, trips to nearby locations -- Sandstone Wildlife Refuge, Banning State Park, St. Croix State Park, the Nemadji Bogs and Blacklock's Nature Sanctuary.

Guest speaker: Laura Erickson. Trip Leader: Mark Alt. Registration Fee: \$35

Food & Lodging packages at the Center: Commuter Deal, 2 lunches & 2 dinners - \$36

Lodging for 1 night and 4 meals - \$78; Lodging for 2 nights and 6 meals - \$113

All pricing is per person based on 4 people/room. Private rooms may be available on request for an additional fee.

Please contact the Audubon Center to register: 888-404-7743 or 320-245-2648; email: crowley@audubon-center.org or www.audubon-center.org

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
PO Box 3801
Minneapolis MN 55403

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APRIL 2006



National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Application

- Yes, I'd like to join!* Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and my local chapter at the special introductory rate of \$20! Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.
- Yes, I'd like to join!* As a senior citizen or student, I am able to join for only \$15!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Send this application and make check payable to:

National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Data Center
PO Box 51001
Boulder, CO 80322-1001



LOCAL CHAPTER

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
PO BOX 3801
Minneapolis, MN 55403
Chapter Code: **M02**
7XCHA

Calendar of Events

APRIL

- 2 Bird Banding**—Springbrook, 7:00 am
4 Chapter Program, 7 pm - Andy Vonduyke, "Where Did the Herons Go?"
11 Chapter Board Meeting - 7:15 pm
20 Beginning Bird Class—Westwood Hills, 7:00 pm
22 Annual Bluebird Conference—Medford Public School, 9:00 am
23 Bird Banding—Springbrook, 6:30 am
29 Beginning Bird Class Field Trip—Westwood Hills, 9:00 am

MAY

- 6 Field Trip**—Stearns County, 7:00 am
6 Field Trip—Cedar Bridge/Bass Ponds, 7:30 am

Field trips are led by expert birders to some of Minnesota's finest natural habitats. Please see details inside this issue or call Mary Ellen Vetter at 763-561-1761

Board meetings are held every month on the 2nd Tuesday at 7:15 pm at the Lund's store on Lake Street just west of Hennepin-except in July. All are welcome to programs, trips and board meetings. Call President Jerry Bahls for details!