



KINGFISHER



Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

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Representing the National Audubon Society
in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

Dec/Jan 2000-01

President's Message

Snow outside--that means swan watching. What lovely birds. Bob Janssen, working along the Minnesota River, saw constant flights heading east to the Mississippi River, from where they head south, stopping at the places we go to watch them. How fortunate we are to live on a major flyway. One of my "forever" memories is my first trip to Weaver's Marsh. We came over a rise in the road and suddenly there on the river were THOUSANDS of swans, filling the whole marsh area, and --all talking. If you missed the Chapter trip to view swans, it's still not too late to go. Terry Brashear, Tom Mahan, or I are among the people who would give you directions.

Like you, the chapter gets mail from similar organizations. This month it reinforced to me how cooperation among many groups is making a big impact. Perhaps you got the striking material from Nature Conservancy about preserving bird habitat along the whole flyway. From transmitters on a pair of ospreys they mapped their stops on the way south. They also had a folder about managing bird feeders (we'll get some to have at our meeting or get permission to copy the information).

We were asked to give a presentation to Brooklyn Center Lions; Mary Ellen Vetter was able to do that, giving them the requested information about bird feeders in parks and offering our help in their getting started. Thanks for the good job, Mary Ellen.

The St. Paul chapter had 2 buckthorn removal work "parties". The buckthorn has invaded our oak savannas, crowding out the native oaks. Could we have 1 or more work days in the spring to help in this important work? (We work to keep such "immigrants" out of the native areas even knowing about survival of the fittest.--the difference in cases like buckthorn and purple loosestrife is that they have been imported by humans, often to solve a problem. They then created a greater problem.--When will we learn?) Also, St. Paul chapter is adding a potluck, telling favorite nature stories, and singing, to the end of their Christmas bird count day. Sounds great to me, how about you? Should we do that? Potluck and bird stories by a fire--what a way to end a birding day.

A phone call this month asked about giving a membership as a Christmas gift.--good idea. Who would you like to give a membership to, for a holiday, birthday, or thank you???

A reminder--bring someone with you to meetings. A member has donated a year's membership each meeting to a non-member. More members mean more we can accomplish to help our world and its birds.

—Dorothy Kuether

Upcoming Program

Tuesday, December 5

Global Warming

The globe is only 5 to 9 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than it was in the last ice age (18,000 to 20,000 years ago). Not bad. But, global warming at the rate of 1 degree in the last 100 years, and that rate of warming accelerating in the last 25 years. Bad?

John Pastor, Ph.D. will tell us how bad. Until 1994 he had concentrated mainly on the response of upland forests to climate change. He has more recently been studying how peatlands might respond to warming.

Some years ago the environmental damage to Lake Erie was visibly evident when Lake Erie caught on fire. When it is so "in your face", ecosystem degradation cannot be denied.

Global warming is more subtle; results less readily or easily observed. Forests change. Ecosystems change. For some, Lake Superior means cold water, fishing or sailing, biking or hiking. Dr. Pastor also sees ecosystems. For fifteen years he has worked on the problem of how ecosystems of the Lake Superior region will respond to global warming. He knows the difference 1 degree can make and he is concerned.

When Dr. Pastor spoke to us in March 1998, we learned from him and we enthusiastically applauded him. He had addressed our chapter on his observations of warblers in the forests of Voyageurs National Park. He returns to us in December to spread the message of urgency related to global warming.

Dr. Pastor holds a Ph.D. in Forestry and Soil Science from the University of Wisconsin, and is Professor of Biology at the University of Minnesota, Duluth.

The meeting is preceded by a pot-luck at 6:00 p.m. We meet at Mayflower Church, located immediately west of 35W at the Diamond Lake Road exit. See you there.

—Fran Duritsa



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Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

www.geocities.com/audubon.geo/

MN Audubon Council

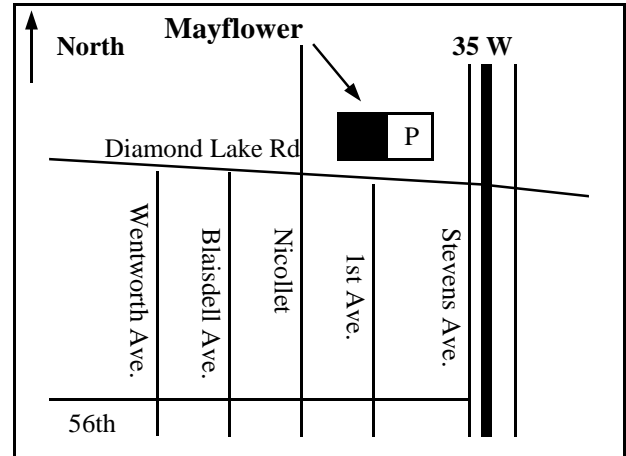
www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn/index.html-ssi

National Audubon Society

www.audubon.org

Come to Our Next Program!

DATE: Tuesday, December 5, 2000
TIME: 6:00 Pot Luck and Mini Bird ID Contest
 7:30 p.m. **"Global Warming"**
AT: Mayflower Church (Lower Level)
 109 E. Diamond Lake Road, Minneapolis



Make Use of the National Audubon Society Website

Visit the National Audubon Society website at www.audubon.org, and spend some quality time browsing.

- ◆ Click on the *Conservation & Action* link to find articles and calendar of activities for the Upper Mississippi River Campaign.
- ◆ Follow the *Take Action* link to learn about significant bills introduced in Congress, current issues and NAS response. Search the database of Congressional and state legislators.
- ◆ Click on *About Audubon* to study John James Audubon's life and view his artwork.
- ◆ In *Kids & Education*, take a virtual tour of Corkscrew Swamp sanctuary near Ft. Myers, Florida; which contains the largest remaining stand of ancient bald cypress in North America. Download WatchList 4 Kids to help keep at-risk birds from becoming extinct.

—this article first appeared in *The Source*, October 2000
 (Newsletter for the Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society)



Happy Holidays



Back to the Far North

I confess that my spiritual home is the boreal and sub-boreal forest where plant life ekes out a living from sheer granite. The wind soughing through the pines is a comfort to my soul. Walking through the fallen pine needles and smelling the resin from the trees is a balm. Whenever I can, I run away to the northern reaches of Minnesota to renew myself.

Thus it was last week that I escaped for a day and a half and drove to Grand Marais and beyond. I had hoped to find scoters on the big lake and the Townsend's Solitaire that had been reported in Two Harbors. It was the perfect time of the year to catch Golden Eagles on Hawk Ridge. And it should have been the peak flight time for Northern Goshawks and Rough-legged Hawks.

It was not to be. By the time I reached Duluth the fog was thick and the visibility nil. There could have been King Eiders in the harbor in full regalia and you would not have been able to see them. In Two Harbors, the flocks of American Robins among which the Townsend's Solitaire had been reported had fled. Only small flocks of Cedar Waxwings were feeding on the North American Mountain Ash. And, there were only Ring-billed and Herring Gulls in the harbor.

I drove on, nevertheless. Not that I believed the fog would clear by Grand Marais, but there was no reason to turn back for the Cities until the next day, and even walking the harbor in the fog had its attractions. This I was able to do that evening, and again early in the morning. There were Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs along the graveled shore and American Tree Sparrows in the shrubbery. Although the birds were not spectacular, the tonic of the north was having its normal effect.

By about eight o'clock, however, it was raining hard along the shore, so I turned inland—hoping that in the highlands the rain would not be as hard. Moreover, there had been Three-toed woodpeckers reported in a recent burn, and a Northern Hawk Owl off the beaten path on a gravel trail. I found where the woodpeckers had been working. Their peeling of the bark on burnt trees is fairly distinctive, but, alas, no birds were in sight. They must have been hiding from the rain. And I had no luck with the Hawk Owl, either.

Too happy in these surroundings to be discouraged, I found a snowmobile trail to hike. Where I parked, there were more Snow Buntings. As I moved up the trail, I was adopted by a Ruffed Grouse who decided that a walk was a very fine thing. I made a portrait of him and then we proceeded on. The woods were full of chickadees and nuthatches. We stopped to listen. Among the Black-capped Chickadee calls were one or two Boreal Chickadees, identified by their distinctive lisps. The nuthatches were Red-breasted Nuthatches honking away like miniature trumpets. A whistle call stopped me in my tracks for a while. Luckily, the bird came close enough to be identified. It was a Pine Grosbeak, a juvenile, plumaged like a female with russet-orange on the head and a grayish body instead of pink. The final find of the day was a small flock of Red Crossbills, so high in the trees that they were difficult to identify.

Finally, my walk and my day in the woods both came to an

end. The grouse and I parted company, each off to our own responsibilities. I hope that he was as richly blessed with the encounter as I.

—Vija Kelly



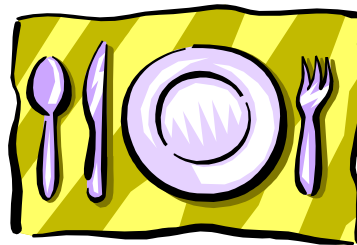
Holiday Family Camp

Looking for something special for New Year's? Audubon Center of the North Woods is having a Holiday Family Camp, Dec 29 to Jan 2, 2001. There are lots of activities in a beautiful setting, and the price is reasonable. Call 888-404-7743 or write PO Box 530, Sandstone, MN 55072 or www.audubon-center.com.

Annual Potluck Dinner Tuesday, December 5, at 6:00

Come one, come all, to the annual potluck supper to celebrate the holiday season! Join your fellow Audubon members in some good food and conversation.

Bring along a food item to share: salads, hot dishes, desserts,



etc. Beverages will be provided by the chapter - coffee, tea, and apple cider, as well as a meat platter. We will also provide plates, forks and cups, but you can help save on plastic and paper by bringing your own.

Following the potluck supper will be our mini version of the Bird ID Contest. At 7:30 we will hear a presentation by Dr. John Pastor on global warming.

We look forward to seeing you there!

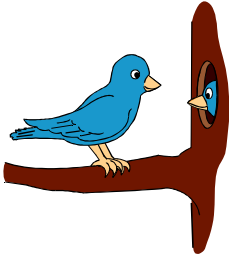
—Phyllis Mahan

On November 10, Marge Cross, Mpls. Chapter member since its beginning, died after a massive stroke. Her tribute will appear in the February 2001 Kingfisher.

Anyone who wishes to add a few words of tribute to Marge, please e-mail Dorene Scriven, scriv001@tc.umn.edu or call Dorene at 612-922-4586.



Bluebirds in the Year 2000



The Bluebird Recovery Program, a committee of our chapter, received 301 reports from our members in Minnesota (and 70 reports from members in other states). These represent about one-third of our members, who have anywhere from two nestboxes to several hundred.

The statistics for Minnesota this year:

6,701 nestboxes had 2,201 successful bluebird broods. 11,728 eggs were laid, from which 9,595 hatched, and 8,934 fledged. These figures are slightly above last year's, though not the best year we've every had. However, we averaged 4.06 bluebirds fledged from each successful brood, which is considerably above the national average, according to Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Of course there are many more unreported bluebird successes, and these are just the bluebirds fledged, not the tree swallows, occasional chickadees, wrens and other native cavity nesters which also use bluebird boxes.

Thanks to all our bluebirders, and to those Minneapolis Audubon Chapter members who helped put out our Annual Directory of Bluebirders; as well as our quarterly newsletters -- Fran Duritsa, Dick Eide, Mary McGee, Marge Cross and Mary Ellen Vetter.

—Dorene Scriven

Book Review

The mildly curious person who might be vaguely interested in "what bird is that?" will do well to consult the several popular small field guides available. However, for the serious birder all the way up to and including the life-listers, David Allen Sibley's *Guide to the Birds* is a "must-have" book - magnificent, and all-encompassing. Hardly a hip-pocket or fanny-pack size: - it's almost 10 by 6 1/4 inches, 545 pages and weighs a little over two pounds. But there will undoubtedly be one copy kept in the car and another in the home library of anyone calling him/herself a true "birder."

Beautifully illustrated is not only the breeding plumage of both sexes; there is also the winter plumage, the juvenile plumage, the first-year plumage, even the "dull plumage," and, in addition, the geographic variances, all the way from the common robin to the most rare occasional visitor to the U.S. Every page has not only maps, but full-color paintings of each bird in its many different appearances. Rarely would we have to go beyond, to the myriad small books specific to one species to find out more.

One slight criticism: the often overly-bright breeding plumage depicted on many of the more colorful birds. This is undoubtedly done with a purpose - to accent the field markings. The book is \$35 in most book stores; \$22 at Sam's Club stores.

—Dorene Scriven

The Great Backyard Bird Count

Tell your friends and neighbors about the Great Backyard Bird Count. December and January are a great time to contact your local scout troupes, youth groups, and teachers, to promote the Great Backyard Bird Count. The count will take place February 16th through the 19th, 2001. Count participation is FREE, and backyards are not required! For more information go to www.birdsource.org. or call Suzanne at 651-225-1830.

—Suzanne Plass

Kids & Parents Corner

Make your own seedcakes

Adult supervision is needed.

Recipe

Suet	Peanut hearts
Cracked Corn	Sunflower seeds
White proso millet	Other seeds of your choice
Niger thistle seeds	

1. Chop suet into small pieces and simmer down to liquid state over very low heat in a heavy pan. This is a good project to do outdoors over a campstove. Consider doing it over water, in a double-boiler system. If it gets too hot, it can burst into flames, so be very careful.
2. Remove from heat, and remove any unmelted bits.
3. After cooling awhile, it will start to thicken up. At this time, add your combination of seeds and nuts. Use your imagination!
4. Stir thoroughly and spoon into ice cube trays (if you have the old-fashioned metal kind, where the cube maker lifts out). When the seedcake sets up completely, cut in half, wrap in foil and store in freezer. This shape will work well in commercial seed cake holders. Experiment with using tin can bottoms or other trays for forms. Your winter bird guests will be so pleased!

—Ellie Nelson

(This originally appeared the *The Source*, October 2000.)

Make a Date with you Legislator

Plan to meet with your state legislators on the 26th of February as part of Minnesota Audubon's annual Conservationist's Day at the Capitol. We will have a training session the afternoon of the 25th, to help you learn how to communicate with legislators on conservation issues that are important to you. On the 26th we will have opportunities to tour the Capitol, meet with legislative leaders and pair up with other Auduboners to speak with your legislators. For more information and registration, contact Suzanne Plass at the Minnesota Audubon office in St. Paul, 651-225-1830 or splass@audubon.org, or see the February CARDINAL.

—Suzanne Plass



“Working the Booth”—State Fair 2000



September 1st from six to nine PM. That was my time slot at the booth at this year’s “Great Minnesota Get Together.” I first heard the call for volunteers at the May chapter meeting and told Mary Ellen Vetter that I would take a slot, but did not know exactly which one. She knew that I could be counted on. After all, I have been doing the booth for the past four years. In fact, I look forward to it.

The booth is a distillation of Minnesota Audubon. All the chapters are represented and our statewide goals are prominently displayed. This year, one of our goals was to gather signatures on cards that would be sent to our state legislators, to ask them to keep funding the county biological survey. It was a good way to begin a conversation with people stopping by the booth. Another good way was to help them with the bird identification display that is a fixture in the booth.

When I first heard about the booth some four years ago, I was reluctant to volunteer. I didn’t think I knew enough about birding, or Audubon in general, to successfully represent the society. Well, it turns out that what a person may lack in specific knowledge, they can certainly make up for in enthusiasm. There is an endless supply of LBB (little brown bird) questions that couldn’t be answered by John J. himself, and plenty of others about how to keep squirrels out of the birdfeeder. I find it refreshing that there are so many people interested in the natural world around them.

For instance, there was the fellow who put up five bluebird boxes on his property and managed to get one nesting pair of blues. They fledged five offspring and then double clutched with another five! This guy was happy to be talking about it to someone who shared his excitement. Or, how about the 10-year-old boy who stood in front of the bird ID display randomly pushing buttons without success? I explained that he was to push two buttons at the same time to determine if his guess was correct. He sheepishly replied that he “didn’t know nothin’ about birds.” I pointed to the blue jay and asked if he knew that one. “It’s a blue jay,” he replied. “Oh,” I said. “You do know one. How about this one,” I asked pointing to the cardinal. “A cardinal,” he said. And so it went for the loon, crow, eagle, pigeon, and mallards. “Not bad for somebody who doesn’t know anything about birds,” I said. He looked at me and smiled. I handed him a poster that we give away to teachers and told him to keep watching. He thanked me and ran off after his father holding his prize aloft.

The wingspan display also offered an opportunity to talk with visitors. As the children stood with outstretched arms against the display, my booth partner, Bonnie Sample, would talk up the parents about signing a card. It was always fun to see a group of children competing to determine which of them had the largest wingspan. “I think you will pass the osprey by next year,” I told more than a few of them. As they ran off to the next booth I looked at Bonnie and said, “Kids are great!”

Teachers can always be counted upon to stop by. Audubon supports a number of educational programs through Audubon Adventures, Audubon Center of the North Woods and various Audubon camps around the country. The state office always has some type of give-away for teachers, and we booth-tenders have an opportunity to speak with many of them. My favorite this year was the young woman who saw that teachers could pick up a free poster. “I’m a teacher,” she said. “May I have a poster?” I looked at her and said that she looked more like a student than a teacher. She laughed saying that this was to be her first year in the classroom. I proudly handed her the poster and wished her all the best in her rookie year. The excitement about her upcoming year shone in her eyes. As she walked away I grabbed a copy of Audubon Adventures and went after her. “This may help too,” I said. She took it and went off to touch the future.

Human nature never ceases to astound me, and the fair booth is an ideal place to witness it. One thing I noticed this year was that boys would approach the bird ID display and randomly pick a bird to identify. Top row right, bottom row center, third row left. They are literally all over the board! They also tend to compete amongst themselves. Girls, however, will work as a team. One would press the button next to the bird while the other presses the one next to the name. They also worked methodically from the upper left hand corner across to the end and onto the next row. I sometimes find it hard to believe that human male and female are the same species!

As a rookie volunteer, I learned that you couldn’t answer all the questions. My average is certainly less than 50%. What does matter is being there to support the things you believe. The people who visit the booth aren’t all looking for answers. Some just want to share their ideas or talk about the experiences they have had regarding birds, conservation or nature watching. Listening is half the job and the education you receive is free. Igniting a spark of interest in the children is my greatest reward. When they identify a bird on the board, or tell you about the baby birds they observed nesting outside of their bedroom window, I can’t help but feel that the effort was worth it. In fact, maybe I should sign up now for a slot at next year’s fair. I don’t want to miss out.

—Frank De Steno

(This article originally appeared in the Fall *Audubon Agenda*.)



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Dec/Jan 2000-01



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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.
- 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: **CM02**
9M99

Calendar of Events

December

- 5 Holiday Potluck, 6:00 p.m.
- Mini Bird ID Contest, around 7:00 p.m.
- Chapter Program, 7:30 p.m.
- "Global Warming – Yes, It's Real"
- 12 Chapter Board Meeting, 6:45 p.m.
- 23 Christmas Bird Count
- Springbrook Nature Center
- 29-Jan 2 Holiday Family Camp

January

No Chapter program this month.

February

- 6 Chapter Program, 7:30 p.m.
- "Wildlife of the Minnesota River Valley"
- 13 Chapter Board Meeting, 6:45 p.m.

Field trips usually begin at 7:30 a.m., call the Field Trips Chair for details.

All are welcome to the Chapter Board Meetings!
Board Meetings are held at North Regional Library
1315 Lowry Ave. N. in Minneapolis
Call the president for details.