



KINGFISHER



December 2002

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 51 No. 8

Representing the National Audubon Society in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

Birds and Donuts!

Volunteers Needed for the Annual Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Paper Session

This year, it is our Chapter's turn to serve the refreshments at the annual M.O.U. Paper Session on Saturday, December 7th.



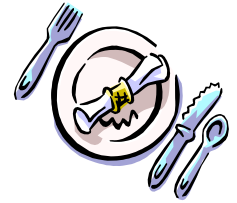
In return for *free admission* to the event, approximately fifteen volunteers are needed to help serve refreshments during the morning and afternoon program breaks, and to assist with the set-up and clean-up of treats.

The event is held at the J.F. Bell Museum of Natural History on the University of Minnesota campus, and helpers are needed beginning at 7:30 a.m.

If you would consider trading your waiter or waitressing skills for an entertaining day of interesting birding information, please contact Tom Mahan at 763/588. Thanks!

December Potluck & Program

Holiday Potluck December 3rd Followed by the Program...



Hooray, more food! Please join the Chapter on Tuesday, December 3 at 6:00 p.m. for it's annual Holiday Potluck.

Bring a dish or dessert to pass, as well as your own dinner utensils (economically AND environmentally thoughtful!) The Chapter will provide the beverages. We always get an excellent variety of great food, and this is a nice way to start the holiday social season...

The potluck will be followed by the monthly program at 7:30 p.m. James Johnson from the Three Rivers Park District will present "Phosphorus: Results of Lawn Fertilizer Study."

A map and directions can be found on page 2, and guests are always welcome. See you then...

A TRIBUTE TO DOROTHY LINDEEN

One of the Minneapolis Birding Club members who was active when the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis was formed, died on September 3rd. Dorothy Lindeen was an active helper with the chapter and religiously assisted in the preparation of the Kingfisher mailing, despite her age—90+ years!

Since 1998, she was absent only six times from the monthly gathering of assistants who aided with the insertion, folding and labeling of our chapter's newsletter. Her cheerful demeanor and pleasant disposition will be truly missed.

She was an active birder, taking at least one trip a year to watch birds; now she has a prime view of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.

Please have another cup of coffee for Dorothy...

"Cranes of the World" Program

On January 9 at 7:15 PM, the **St Paul Audubon Society** and **Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis** are partnering to offer a presentation about cranes by Dr. George Archibald, founder and Director of the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, Wisconsin. Dr. Archibald is one of the world's greatest experts on cranes, and has been instrumental in gaining protection for these birds around the world. The presentation will be held at the Mayflower Congregational Church, 109 E Diamond Lake Rd, Minneapolis (just off I-35W).

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis 2002-2003 Contacts

President	Tom Mahan	763-588-5440
Vice President	John Arthur	952-931-0819
Treasurer	Lee Zurek	612-825-3419
Secretary	Nancy Witt	763-533-2130
Board Member	Jerry Bahls	763-572-2333
Board Member	Dorene Scriven	612-922-4586
Board Member	Louise Cameron	612-825-2675
Board Member	Jean Kelley	763-862-1421
Board Member	Bill Sipe	763-537-6397
Board Member	Lisa McDonald	612-721-2672
Board Member	Dorothy Kuether	952-926-4205
Board Member	Mary Ellen Vetter	763-561-1761
Board Member	<open>	
Birdathon Coord	<open>	
Bluebird Recovery	Dorene Scriven	612-922-4586
Camps/Hunt Hill	Marion Borell	612-866-1266
Camps/North Woods	Bob Nelson	952-933-7340
Conservation	<open>	
Education Outreach	Mary Ellen Vetter	763-561-1761
Field Trips Chair	Terry Brashear	612-929-1976
Field Trip Leader	Tom Mahan	763-588-5440
<i>Kingfisher</i> Editor	Kim Halek	763-427-8656
Lending Library	Dorene Scriven	612-922-4586
Mailing	Jerry Bahls	763-572-2333
Membership	Jerry Bahls	763-572-2333
Park Feeders	Tom Mahan	763-588-5440
Programs	Lisa McDonald	612-721-2672
Publicity/Exhibits	Bill Sipe	763-331-1223
Sales	Jean Kelley	763-862-1421
Social	Helen Weides	612-824-6268
MOU Rare Bird Alert		763-780-8890
Minnesota Audubon		651-739-9332

John Arthur	jarthur@visi.com
Jerry Bahls	bahls001@tc.umn.edu
Terry Brashear	terence.p.brashear@syntegra.com
Kim Halek	khalek@mninter.net
Dorothy Kuether	dkuether@juno.com
Tom/Phyllis Mahan	mahan-mail@att.net
Dorene Scriven	scriv001@tc.umn.edu
Lee Zurek	leezurek@msn.com

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
www.geocities.com/audubon.geo/

Minnesota Audubon
www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn/index.html

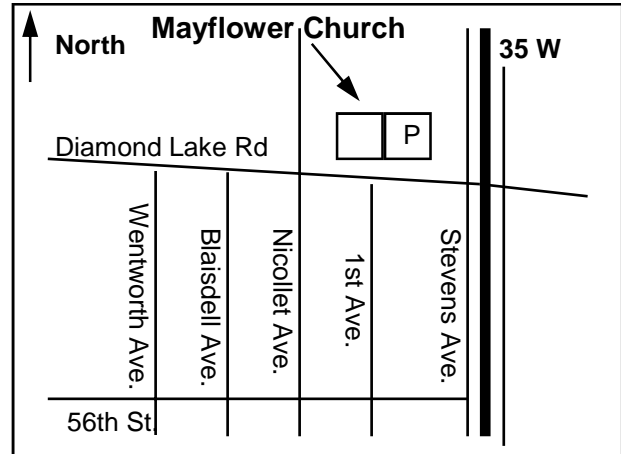
National Audubon Society
www.audubon.org

Come to Our Next Program!

DATE: Tuesday, December 3

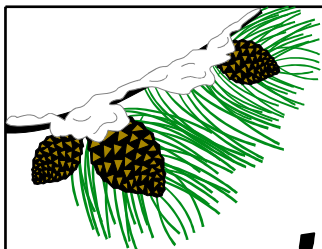
TIME: Potluck begins at 6:00 p.m. program at 7:30 p.m.

AT: Mayflower Church (Lower Level)
109 E. Diamond Lake Road, Minneapolis
(35W & East Diamond Lake Road)



Electronic Kingfisher

SUBSCRIBE TO THE KINGFISHER
ELECTRONICALLY!
Contact Jerry Bahls at
bahls001@tc.umn.edu



Season's Greetings



2002 Christmas Bird Count

December _____



The Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis will participate in the 103rd annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) on Saturday, December 14 at the Springbrook Nature Center in Fridley.

Our chapter has participated in the CBC since the 1950's and the data we gather is compiled and submitted to the National Audubon Society, along with the data of 50,000 other birders.

The primary objective of the CBC is to monitor the status and distribution of bird populations across the Western Hemisphere. The count period, which is held every year from December 14th to January 5th, is referred to as "early winter," because many birds are still in the late stages of their migration so it is not yet "true winter." From the day-long census, ornithologists are able to formulate local trends in bird populations, including changes in time, space and habitat, species distribution, and environmental threats.

Seasoned birders as well as newcomers are invited to participate with fellow Chapter members—we will form field teams of mixed birding experience, so don't feel you have to be an expert to take part!

Some of the interesting species noted during past counts include Trumpeter Swan, Northern Hawk Owl, and White-winged Crossbill.

If you'd like to attend this outing, meet at Springbrook Nature Center—100 85th Avenue N.E. in Fridley—at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday, December 14; hot drinks and treats will be provided. There is a \$5 fee assessed by the National Audubon Society which will be collected the morning of the count.

Any questions? Contact Tom Mahan at 763/588-5440.

Please send us your program ideas, newsletter articles and stories, and general suggestions... we'd like to hear from you!

My Early Wood Duck Observations

About six years ago, a Wood Duck nesting box washed up onto the shore of the river behind my house. I decided to repair it and put it up to attract wood ducks, as I had seen many of them in the trees behind my house during the spring. In October, I put up the box in the corner of my backyard within view of my living room, and waited for the ducks to arrive in March. They came, looked in the box and flew away. It was discouraging.

My younger brother in Wisconsin had had several successful Wood Duck hatches in previous years, so I swallowed my pride and sought his advice. He told me he had put sawdust in the box, about 4 inches from the bottom of the hole (you're suppose to put sawdust in the box??).

The next year—with sawdust in the box—I observed a female Wood Duck attempting to get into the box, without success. I measured the entrance and it was the minimum recommended size. I decided to enlarge the hole anyway and the next day, another female (the same one?) managed to squeeze herself in. She would revisit the box every morning for about 12 days, stay about half an hour and then leave. Soon she started staying all day and night. She was incubating!

It was great to watch the duck go out in the morning for breakfast and in the evening for her dinner. She was a source of entertainment for myself and others. My 80-year-old father-in-law became intrigued by the regularity of the duck's comings-and-goings. Unfortunately, we had to be away when the hatch occurred and we did not see "the jump". When I returned and observed no activity in the box, I concluded the eggs must have hatched. I cautiously looked in the box and saw that it was empty; I took it down and opened it up. There was a down mat with bits of sawdust in it and several flat items that resembled flattened ping pong balls. I figured out these were the membranes from the eggs. I counted them and found there were 9 of them. I thus concluded that I was the proud "father" of 9 young wood ducks. I was very, very proud!!

—Jerry Bahls

(First in a series on my Wood Duck observations. Next: "The Jump!")



Preparing for Winter

The avian world prepares for winter in both obvious and subtle ways. The really obvious one is, of course, migration. More subtle ways are setting up winter feeding territories and flocking to maximize the food-finding resources of many, as opposed to few, eyes.

Two traditional migration activities are part of my annual birdwatching year—a trip to Hawk Ridge and a trip to Rieck's Lake in Alma, Wisconsin to watch the Tundra Swans. I was able to make my pilgrimage to watch swans this last week and I picked a great day. Skein after skein of swans came in during the course of the morning. They would appear as moving black clouds in the distance and then, as they got closer and circled over the marsh, they glowed white in the intermittent sun. I worked hard to get photographs of them putting down their landing gear and splashing into the water. Swans are very vocal; each group of arrivals was greeted with much calling. A few disputes arose as they contested for feeding spots. Individual families tended to stick together.

The subtleties of winter preparations were more noticeable in my own back yard. The families of Downy Woodpeckers that came to the feeder in the late summer have now turned into competitive singles. Much chasing and arguing over feeding rights is taking place. It is not surprising that at the approaching time of fewer resources, the birds wish to protect their food supplies. I don't believe they know that they don't have to worry about it in *this* yard where food supplies will be plentiful throughout the year.

The birds have become warier as well. When the Dark-eyed Juncos first arrived from the north, they did not mind my presence as they fed in the yard. Now, they have started coming very early in the morning and during the day, if I come out into the yard, they flush immediately. Blue Jays who thumbed their beaks at me during the late summer, now set off their alarm calls the minute I start opening the back door.

Black-capped Chickadees and American Goldfinches have formed flocks; they always come in as a group to feed. The chickadees, however, have maintained their pecking order: only one bird at one time on any feeder is the rule.

Those birds lower in the pecking order wait their turn nearby. The upshot is a steady flight of little black-and-white sprites diving into the feeder, grabbing a seed and



flying to a nearby branch to eat it. The goldfinches divide their time between the feeder and the seed heads of the Purple Coneflowers, which I have left standing.

Blue Jays and White-breasted Nuthatches also engage in storing behavior. When I took down my hanging planters, I was surprised to find peanuts in them.

My first thought was "squirrels," but it is impossible for the squirrels to get at the feeders. Then, as I was watching the feeders, I observed Blue Jays come in, fill their craws and depart. Mystery solved—it was the jays that were stashing peanuts.

Some birds are already thinking spring. Our local Great Horned Owl has been calling at night, right outside my bedroom window; after all, they start nesting in February.

Nature watching—an endlessly fascinating pastime. Engage in it and you will never be bored.

—Vija Kelly



Looking for a way to keep your brain busy during the approaching winter months?

We may have another mild winter this year, but in case the cold and snow keep you homebound this season, why not keep your mind exercised and increase your knowledge of birds at the same time?

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology (of Cornell University in New York) offers a self-directed, college-level Bird Biology course in basic ornithology. All major topics are covered including how to identify birds; bird anatomy; the miracle of flight; the vocal and social behavior of birds; bird conservation; and the history of birds in human societies.

You can take as long as you like to finish the course—from a few months to any number of years—but to successfully complete the class you must read the 10 chapters sequentially, answer the exam questions at the end of each chapter, and submit your exams to the Lab for grading. Course staff are available to answer your questions by e-mail or phone.

After you complete the 10 chapters and exams with passing grades, you receive a graduation certificate from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The Lab does not offer college credit, but many students have arranged for credit through their local college or university.

The cost of the program is \$285 for non-members/\$250 for Lab members and includes your text, CD of bird sounds, exams, and staff support (*cheeper* than college!)

For more information, call 800/843-BIRD or send an e-mail to hstudy@cornell.edu or visit www.birds.cornell.edu/homestudy.

Electronic Audubon Resources

(reprinted from the Audubon *Chapter Networker*)

Audubon has many electronic resources available to its members. Listed below are several electronic newsletters, listserves and sites that may be of special interest:

News and Action Alerts

◆ Audubon Advisory

<<http://www.audubon.org/campaign/aa/index.html>>

This is a free bi-weekly electronic newsletter with information and insider reports on conservation legislation pending in the House, Senate, and governmental agencies; subscribe to it online.

◆ Audubon News

<http://www.freelists.org/cgi-bin/list?list_id=audubon-news>

An electronic listserv for information about environmental policy and Audubon; subscribe to it online.

◆ Bird Conservation News

<<http://www.audubon.org/bird/news.html>>

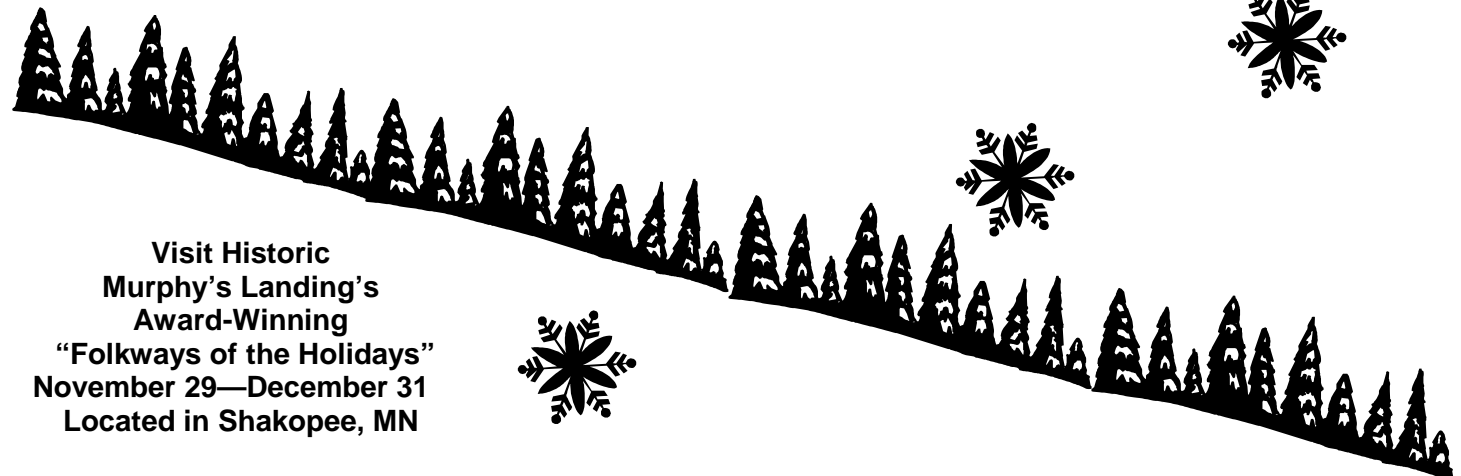
A periodical newsletter with extensive information on Audubon's bird conservation issues.

MINNESOTA BLUEBIRD REPORTS INCREASE - 10,000 BLUEBIRDS FLEDGE!

The Bluebird Recovery Program received 338 statewide reports this fall. Over 8,600 nest boxes were regularly checked in Minnesota. Despite the early cold and continued wet conditions which resulted in a lot of infertile eggs, and despite continued predation by House Sparrows, exactly **10,000** baby bluebirds successfully fledged from bluebird trails across the state. These birds came from over 2,600 successful nestings. A "successful" nesting is defined as having one or more babies leave the nest box. The program was started by the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis in 1979.

On April 12, 2003, the 22nd Annual Bluebird Conference will be held at North Branch Senior High School in North Branch, Minnesota. Over 300 bluebirders and other interested people are expected to attend this conference.

Any chapter members who would be willing to help with small part-time chores at the conference would be much appreciated. If you can help, please contact Dorene Scriven at 612-922-4586.



Visit Historic Murphy's Landing's Award-Winning

"Folkways of the Holidays"
November 29—December 31
Located in Shakopee, MN

Enjoy a horse-drawn trolley ride through the snow each weekend at Historic Murphy's Landing, the living history village operated by the Three Rivers Park District (formerly Hennepin Parks).

Eleven different ethnic homes are open for tours during the holiday season, and each weekend is celebrated in 19th century style with special food samples and folk-artist performances each featuring a different country. Some of the scheduled events include:

- ◆ December 1: Irish celebration—the St. Paul Irish Dancers, Irish beer bread and soda bread treats
- ◆ December 7: Czech/Slovakian celebration—singers and dancers, zilniky crackers and peppernuts
- ◆ December 8: Hanukkah celebration—accordion music, matzo and challa breads
- ◆ December 14: German celebration—music, stories, games and dances, molasses and honey cookies
- ◆ December 15: Finnish celebration—music and dancers, flat brod rye crackers and pulla cardamom bread
- ◆ December 21: Norwegian celebration—hardanger fiddle music, krumkake cookies and julekage fruit bread
- ◆ December 22: Swedish celebration—music, games, dances and stories, rye bread and pepperkakor cookies
- ◆ December 28 and 29: American celebration—holiday songs and a variety of Christmas cookies

Patron/regular admission is \$8.50/\$9.50 for adults and \$7/\$8 for youth and seniors; children 5 and younger are free. Contact Murphy's Landing for more information at 952/445-6901.

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
PO Box 3801
Minneapolis MN 55403

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Minneapolis, MN
Permit No. 280



KINGFISHER
December 2002



on recycled paper



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

December

- 3 Holiday Potluck dinner, 6:00 p.m. and Chapter program "Phosphorus: Results of Lawn Fertilizer Study" by James Johnson, Three Rivers Park District
- 10 Chapter Board Meeting, 7:15 p.m.
- 14 Annual Christmas Bird Count, 7:30 a.m. Springbrook Nature Center, Fridley

January

- 9 Special Meeting "Cranes of the World" by Dr. George Archibald, International Crane Foundation. 7:15 p.m. Partnered with St Paul Audubon Society at The Mayflower Congregational Church, 109 E Diamond Lake Rd, Minneapolis
- 14 Chapter Board Meeting, 7:15 p.m.

See you on the birding trails!

All are welcome to the Chapter Board Meetings!
Call President Tom Mahan for details...