



# KINGFISHER



Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 50 No. 9

Representing the National Audubon Society  
in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

Dec./Jan. 2001-02

## President's Message

Hope you got to see the swans and some other of our migrating birds. Hasn't it been wonderful being outside, looking, and also enjoying the people you meet? Birders are indeed an amazing, interesting people. A couple I met today talked about going to Churchill, Manitoba to see polar bears; and wanting to go next July to see the birds, flowers and Beluga whales. Once addicted, some of us want to go "everywhere" to see all that's possible.- something new in each place. Such people also know the great importance of preserving the natural world - one of our Audubon aims.

We have been fortunate having super board members - now we have some "blows to the stomach" - 3 members feel they must resign - Jim Sharpsteen, the Sales Chair (he's gotten the books and other fine materials available to you at each meeting). Tom Rice, the Conservation Chair (who had such fine programs: water testing, bird counts at Theodore Wirth Golf area, planting over 200 trees on Cedar Lake greenway. He got many people involved). Fran Duritsa, past Program Chair and a great resource of how and when.

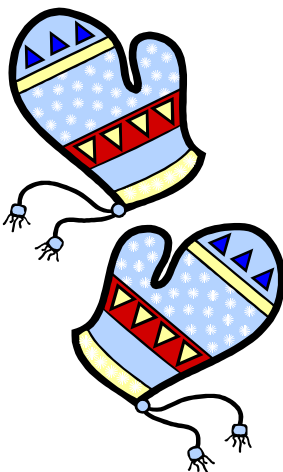
We are missing these people, and NEED to find someone to continue the good work. Could YOU be one of the people we need? Our monthly program meetings have good programs and are fine socializers; but so much more goes on and people are needed. As you know many hands

make light work. Please consider how you can contribute your skills and talents and let a board member know.

The St Paul chapter is invited to our December potluck and meeting. If you know some of these members, do encourage them to join us - a personal invitation is always stronger than a meeting announcement.

Perhaps there will be snow, we'll see!

—Dorothy Kuether



## Upcoming Program



Tuesday, December 4

Wildlife Enhancement on Farmlands

Tony Thompson, a third generation farmer from Windom, Minnesota, will be joining us in December. Tony and his family have been involved in the Heron Lake conservation efforts from the beginning, and in the last decades, they have garnered support from The Nature Conservancy. Those of you who have not been there should certainly plan a trip to Heron Lake. The birding is amazing, and enhanced by the quiet.

Tony has a degree in botany, and he often uses his farmlands as a laboratory for innovations in integrating the landscape with production and wildlife needs. He does outreach to the community through his native seed business, and birding festivals. This year he hosted the first annual Agro-Ecology Summit, to encourage more thinking on issues of wildlife enhancement on farmlands. In his own fields, he has been very successful with managing nesting birds around the growing season. Since I know many of you are native gardeners and backyard habitat builders, as well as conservationists, this is a great opportunity for dialogue regarding the similarities and differences of managing rural and urban lands.

Please join us at Mayflower Church December 5, for a potluck at 6:00 followed by a great program on Wildlife Enhancement on Farmlands at 7:30.

—Lisa McDonald

## Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis 2000-2001 Contacts

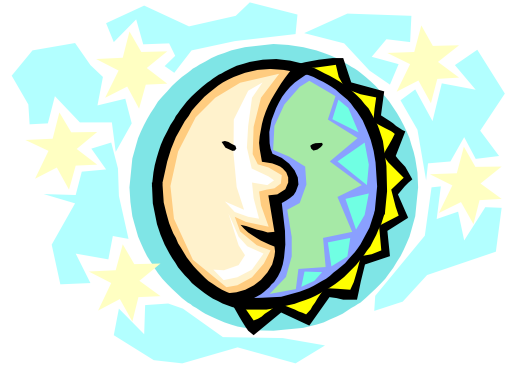
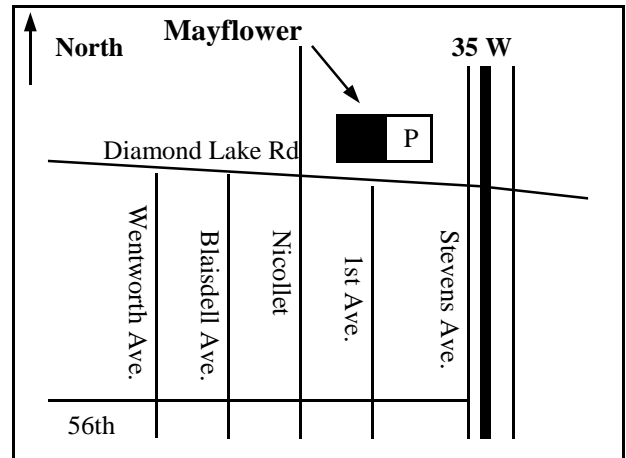
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**Minnesota Audubon**  
www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn/index.html  
**National Audubon Society**  
www.audubon.org

## Come to Our Next Program!

**DATE:** Tuesday, December 4, 2001  
**TIME:** 6:00 p.m. Potluck Supper  
7:30 p.m. **“Wildlife Enhancement of Farmlands”**  
**AT:** Mayflower Church (Lower Level)  
109 E. Diamond Lake Road, Minneapolis  
(35W & East Diamond Lake Road)



## Electronic Kingfisher

SAVE A TREE!  
SAVE US SOME MONEY!  
SUBSCRIBE TO THE KINGFISHER  
ELECTRONICALLY.  
Contact Jerry Bahls at  
bahls001@tc.umn.edu today!



## On Feeding Birds

The first thing you should realize when you begin feeding birds, is that you do it for your own pleasure—not for the birds. Although some of the northward movement of birds such as Northern Cardinals has been attributed to the increase in bird feeding, birds do not need the food that humans put out for them. Except under severe weather conditions birds are quite capable of finding their own food supplies. In severe weather the helping hand of man can make the difference between life and death.

Birds will often prefer their natural foods to the seed you put out for them. I had a graphic example of this in my own back yard. We have a Green Ash which had been allowed to grow in a very awkward shape. One of the side limbs was too heavy and I worried about it coming off in a storm. Additionally, it was growing into my neighbors' apple trees. I had someone come in and cut off the awkward limb and severely prune the tree so that it would grow out into a more pleasing and stable shape. The next year, in response to the stress of severe trimming, the tree put out a record crop of seeds. Although this is the very tree from which all of my bird feeders hang, the birds first went to the seeds on the tree. I have never seen so many birds in the yard. The abundance of seeds also brought red squirrels in addition to the grays that normally prowl around here.

As I wrote in an earlier article, this past summer I planted a lot of Purple Coneflower. Although I have both nyger and black-oil sunflower seeds in my feeders, the goldfinches came first to the seed heads of the purple coneflower. They have all been stripped bare.

Of course, the birds do come to the feeders as well. I have a number of them out: a thistle feeder, a sunflower seed feeder with numerous ports, a suet feeder, a peanut feeder and a nectar feeder. I also throw cracked corn and millet on the patio for sparrows. I have to laugh at the Downy Woodpeckers. This is their idea of a balanced diet: 1) stop at the peanut feeder for a bite, 2) grab a few sunflower seeds, 3) eat some suet. The nut-hatches primarily alternate between sunflower seeds and suet. The goldfinches fly between the thistle feeder, the sunflower seeds and the coneflowers. Chickadees will feed from all the feeders. The biggest surprise has been the Red-bellied Woodpecker who enjoys fruit and seeds, but not suet.

Since the birds gladly accept your offerings, but you feed them primarily for your own enjoyment, place the feeders where you can watch the birds. My best view is out of the kitchen window so I can watch while I do kitchen chores or just go into the kitchen to fill my coffee cup. Also, don't worry about being gone. The birds will find other sources of food. Empty feeders will cause them to look elsewhere, but once you refill the feeders it won't take them long to come back. They will find almost any feeder. One of my friends has an apartment. She put a thistle feeder outside her window on the third floor and now enjoys House Finches and American Goldfinches. I told her to add a peanut or suet feeder. Sure enough, the Downy woodpeckers found it.

—Vija Kelly

## Three Board Members and Two Committee Chairs Sought

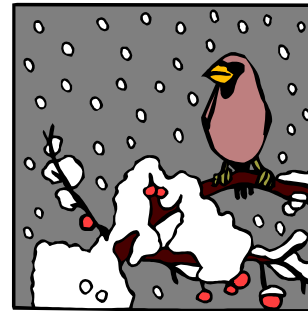
Three board positions need to be filled. Board members conduct the business of the Chapter, determine its policies and its actions. Each board member is expected to be part of some committee. The board meets the second Tuesday of the month, Sept. to June (except when there are Nov. elections, which postpones chapter and board meetings one week,) with January off.

Committee people needed (could be board members) are:  
**Sales Co-chair-** This committee is responsible for stocking books and materials for sale at Chapter meetings. You would work with co-chair Jean Kelley.

**Conservation Chair** (could be 2 people as co-chairs)- This committee keeps the Chapter informed on government policies and actions affecting the natural environment, and conservation of natural resources. It also carries out Chapter conservation policies. Tom Rice, former chair, started several fine projects which could be continued.

Please contact any board member if you feel that you could help out in any of these areas.

—Dorothy Kuether  
*Chapter President*



## Christmas Bird Count 2001

Mark December 15, 2001 in your calendars to come participate in the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count. Once again, we will be meeting at Springbrook Nature Center in Fridley, MN, to assign count areas, and compile our findings at the end of the day.

Siah St. Clair, Director of Springbrook Nature Center, has been gracious enough to allow us to use the nature center as our home base for the count. Springbrook Nature Center will also host a hot lunch. Meet at the nature center at 8:00 a.m. to get area assignments.

Our count area is centered around Coon Rapids Dam, and normally has at least 40 species seen on or around the count date.

Birders of all ages and skill levels are welcome, and there is a \$5 fee to participate – kids under 16 participate for free this year.

If you plan to participate, please contact me at 612-929-1976.

—Terry Brashear



## Potluck Supper Tuesday, December 4 at 6 p.m.

Please join us for our Holiday Potluck Supper before the December 4th chapter meeting.

We ask that you bring a salad, hotdish or dessert to



share. Beverages will be provided. We try to start at 6:00. Help save the environment! Bring your own plate, knife and fork.

## The Great River Birding Trail

Birds and bird habitat change as the great Mississippi River starts out a small stream through pine forests in Northern Minnesota, flows through what was once tall-grass prairie and oak savanna, through blufflands of southern Minnesota, then northeast Iowa, southwest Wisconsin and northwest Illinois, flowing ever mightily after joining the southern Illinois and Missouri Rivers.

Now the first of part of a wonderful self-guided Audubon birding tour of the river, on both sides, down to New Albin, Iowa, is available via a series of six full-color, illustrated maps depicting the great places to bird along the first 700 miles. The sites are accessible by auto, bike or walk-in, along or near the Great River Road. The maps also have an extensive checklist of birds of the regions.

The six bird-watching sections are: Bemidji to Deer River, MN; Brainerd to Camp Ripley; St. Cloud to Anoka; Twin Cities area; Cottage Grove to Kellogg, MN; and from Kellogg to New Albin, IA.

Individual sample Great Birding Trail maps are available for free from Audubon's Upper River Campaign office. For multiple orders of individual maps, or sets of the six maps, contact Jesse Meschievitz at:

651-290-1695 or email [jmeschievitz@audubon.org](mailto:jmeschievitz@audubon.org) or Bonnie Koop at: [bkoop@audubon.org](mailto:bkoop@audubon.org).

Price depends on the number of maps, and the mailing address.

—Dorene Scriven



## Chapter Volunteers Complete Two Conservation Projects

August marked the completion of what has become our most ambitious conservation project of the year, the Wetland Health Evaluation Program (WHEP). This program, just starting in Hennepin County, aims to assess wetland quality and is an extension of the work that has been going on in Dakota County for several years. Eight Minneapolis Chapter volunteers worked on the program, which began with training in field sampling and collection techniques in early May. Two additional days of training took place in June involving aquatic macroinvertebrate and plant identification. All training was done at the School of Environmental Studies in Apple Valley, a great local resource. Tim Reese of the Hennepin Conservation District selected the five wetland sites that we surveyed throughout the summer. They were, Bet Shalom, Minnetonka; Eureka Road Wetland, Shorewood; Hardscrabble Woods, Minnetrista; Greenwald Easement, Minnetrista; and Little Long Lake, Minnetrista. All, by the way, considered part of the greater Minnehaha Creek watershed. Each site is a naturally occurring wetland with the exception of the Greenwald Easement, which is a reclamation project. The field and lab guide, along with the associated protocol for establishing a metric ranking, was the work of Judy Helgen and Mark Gernes of the MPCA. With our Audubon team every step of the way was our 'professional', Mary Engelhard, from the biology lab at Normandale Community College. By the end of the project we had gathered enough data to provide a valuable benchmark on the health of these wetlands. My sincerest thanks to our Chapter volunteers John Vickery, Lisa McDonald, Sharon Moran, Tom Mahan, Clair Keister, Tim Dunnigan, and Kathy Smith for their hard work and commitment to this project....well over 250 hours of donated time.

The other notable project grew out of a request for assistance from Theodore Wirth Golf Course. We were asked to do a bird census as part of ongoing wildlife assessment. Meeting at the main Chalet before dawn on September 16, 2001, seven Chapter volunteers, outfitted with the best field guides and finest optics, divided up into three teams. During the next three hours we were able to canvas most of the 18-hole course plus much of the par 3. We were aided in our efforts by the generous support of Rick Grannes, Course Superintendent, who supplied us all with golf carts for transportation and acted as 'guide.' Also supplying a wealth of information was the course environmental intern, Pam Foster. As dawn broke we were greeted by dozens of golfers (naturally) who expressed their enthusiasm and support for our effort. Our total for the morning was 37 bird species and several mammals including Red Fox and White Tail Deer. The beautiful morning was made even more special through the skills and enthusiasm of Melissa Winn, Sylvia Winkelman, Tom Mahan, Sharon Moran, Clair Keister and Tim Dunnigan. Thanks to you all! Watch for a probable repeat of this project next spring.

—Tom Rice





# Happy Holidays!



## “Nature’s Diversity” Workshop Attracts Teachers

Our Chapter joined with St. Paul Audubon to offer two fall workshops attended by 50 area teachers. The Audubon Adventures classroom materials were introduced, including demonstrations of sample lessons. Outdoor work included basics of leading classes on nature hikes and the use of binoculars. Teachers voiced their appreciation for the practical ideas presented and the many resource materials available to take back to their classrooms. This is the third year we have offered this free workshop to aid teachers with environmental education.

—Mary Ellen Vetter  
Education Committee



*We took part in the workshop and found it both fun and full of useful information. We enjoyed the lessons on leading Nature Walks, Minnesota Frogs, and Invertebrates.*

—Paul Kinzer & Wina Mortenson

## This Benefit Was for the Birds

On Saturday, November 10th, about a dozen of us got together at Maple Grove Junior High to set up the fundraiser that Jerry Bahls and others had worked so hard on. The weather was beautiful, and that may explain the bad news: there were about twice as many helpers as attendees.

We were all quite disappointed, as well as surprised. The planned activities seemed irresistible: two different birding games (with prizes), prepared on computer by John Arthur; a representative from National Camera to talk about choosing binoculars; and Carrol Henderson, there to talk about his work with the Nongame Wildlife Program at the DNR, and to answer questions. (I would have come just for that.)

Well, we were a small group, but we made the best of it. We played the games, listened to and asked questions of the guests, got our pick of the prizes, and had a lot of fun. It would have been nice if others could have shared in it, but the games can be used again, and there are plenty of prizes left! Next time, I hope you’ll all come and join us.

—Paul Kinzer

## Help Save Quiet Places

Help save unique places like the Everglades and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by joining Armchair Activists. During these times many Americans are turning to quiet places to reflect upon spiritual matters. Many of these places are being threatened by development. Armchair Activists write one letter a month to government officials to help preserve these quiet places, and the birds and wildlife within these sanctuaries. Please help us by e-mailing bahls001@tc.umn.edu or calling 763-572-2333 to join.

Let’s preserve these unique places for the birds and for YOU!

—Jerry Bahls



## Tundra Swan Trip a Success

Despite a small turnout of participants, a group of five birders made their way down to Southeastern Minnesota in search of Tundra Swans. The warm weather was very nice, but too nice to be able see large groups of swans, which normally move when cold fronts move through.

We stopped at various spots along Highway 61 to see what other species were in the area. Highlights included a kettle of 30 Bald Eagles – with numerous other individuals seen along the way, a Pacific Loon on Lake Pepin, and 300 Tundra Swans in Alma, Wisconsin. We had lunch at the Anderson House in Wabasha, and went over the species we had seen. Then we made our way back up to the twin cities—all in all a good time!

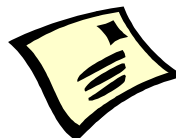
—Terry Brashear



## A BIG Thanks

In the October Kingfisher, I appealed for volunteers to help prepare the Kingfisher for mailing. The response was fantastic! I now have a very large base of volunteers. Nine members stepped forward to help. This sort of volunteer activity keeps Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis a vibrant asset to the community.

Thanks again.  
—Jerry Bahls  
Mailing Chair



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Dec./Jan. 2001-02



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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  
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Chapter Code: **M02**  
**7XCHA**

## Calendar of Events

### December

- 4 Holiday Potluck, 6:00 p.m.  
Chapter Program, 7:30 p.m.  
"Wildlife Enhancement on Farmlands"
- 11 Chapter Board Meeting, 7:15 p.m.
- 15 Christmas Bird Count, 8:00 a.m.  
Springbrook Nature Center

### January

Happy New Year!  
No Chapter Program or Board Meeting

All are welcome to the Chapter Board Meetings!  
Board Meetings are held at  
4350 Brookside Ct., Edina  
Call the president for details.