



KINGFISHER

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis



Vol. 51 No. 1

Representing the National Audubon Society
in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

February 2002

President's Message

We welcome the lengthening days, no matter what the weather, knowing soon it will be migration time. It's always good welcoming those birds, listening to their songs, enjoying their joy of life—and just being outside with friends. Our next 2 meetings will enrich that experience by teaching us more about loons and trumpeter swans. On page 5 in this *Kingfisher* you'll find information about Audubon & Cornell University's Great Backyard Bird Count. That can be a fellowship and learning time. We've arranged to have "watching times" at Wood Lake Nature Center, Westwood Hills Nature Center and Springbrook Nature Center; there will be Audubon people to help "beginners," and those of us who consider ourselves bird watchers rather than bird identifiers. Perhaps you live where birding in your yard is good; invite some "non-birders" to spend 1/2 hour with you. Tally results are sent to Cornell on computer - if you don't have a computer -no problem - any library does and they will help you send the tally. This should be a "fun time" - let's make it *big fun*!

The nominating committee is appointed — so is looking for people. 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. We are also in need of a Conservation Chair, and a Sales Co-chair. To be a vital organization we need many workers—and it's more fun to participate in some way than to just read what others are enjoying/accomplishing. Let Kim Halek (763-427-8656), Fran Duritsa (612-822-4822), or any board member know what you are interested in doing—and many thanks for helping.

Do you remember that for the wind energy program 1/3 of attendees were there for the first time? That says that we need your input—ideas for programs, either people or just topics.

Remember there are cookies and socializing before the February meeting—see you there!

—Dorothy Kuether

Upcoming Program

Tuesday, February 5
Monitoring Minnesota's Common Loon
Population with Citizen Observers

On February 5th, Rich Baker, a zoologist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will share with us details of the Minnesota Loon Watch Program. This program involves close to 1000 citizen volunteers a year who protect loons and their habitats; monitor loon populations and lake quality; and educate lake users and residents.

Not being from Minnesota, I heard my first loon call relatively late in life. At sunrise on August 27, 1990, in a canoe in the middle of a lake near Ely, I watched a pair of loons alternately diving in the water. I didn't even own binoculars or a field guide at that point in my life. I recognized the birds simply because I had been inundated with their image since moving to the Twin Cities the previous year. I was fascinated by their grace, and by the length of their dives. And then I heard that haunting call, and I felt like an intruder on the lake. Nothing had prepared me for that music.

Loons are so strongly associated with our environment in Minnesota, that I imagine most of us have similar stories, and none of us can picture our northern lakes without loons. Yet increasing human activities and development are disturbing traditional nesting sites. Citizen monitoring and surveying is providing the information we need to make careful decisions

about protecting the loons' habitat.

Please come out and learn more about loons and this essential monitoring program. Learn from Rich Baker how you might become involved.

Preceding the program, there will be a Cookie Social at 7:00. Bring some cookies to share, if you are able! Please join us. We meet at Mayflower Church, just off of 35W and Diamond Lake Road.

—Lisa McDonald



Happy

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis 2000-2001 Contacts

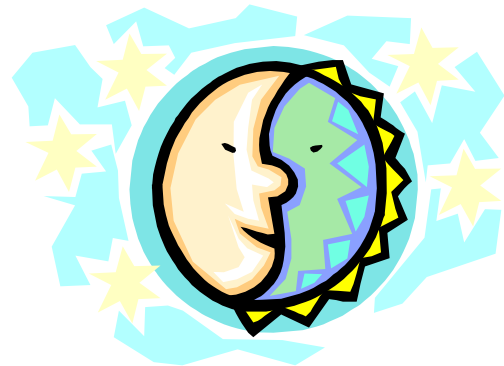
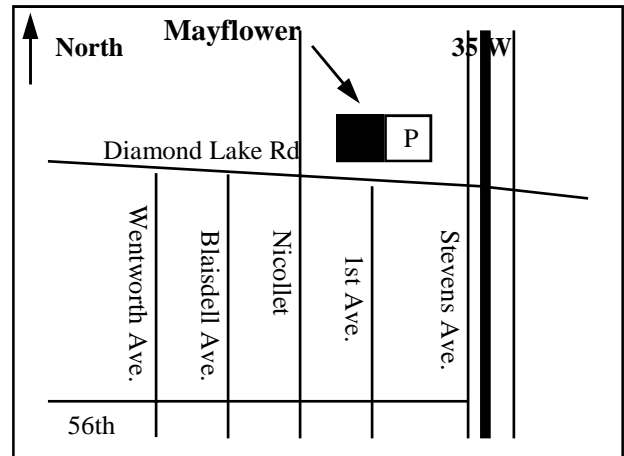
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Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
www.geocities.com/audubon.geo/
Minnesota Audubon
www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn/index.html
National Audubon Society
www.audubon.org

Come to Our Next Program!

DATE: Tuesday, February 5, 2002
TIME: 7:00 p.m. Cookie Social, bring a dozen to share!
 7:30 p.m. **"Monitoring Minnesota's Common Loon Population with Citizen Observers"**
AT: Mayflower Church (Lower Level)
 109 E. Diamond Lake Road, Minneapolis
 (35W & East Diamond Lake Road)



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SAVE A TREE!
SAVE US SOME MONEY!
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 Contact Jerry Bahls at
bahls001@tc.umn.edu today!



Magic Happens

As I write this, winter has finally come to Minnesota. I am sure that many people are complaining about the cold weather and wondering why they chose to live in Minnesota. I cannot join in their complaints. Minnesota, even in its urban areas, is a place where magic happens.

This fall, while trying to walk off the doldrums in one of our local nature centers, I turned a corner and heard a splash—river otters! Here, less than half a mile from a big shopping center, major highways and train tracks which carry a lot of traffic, I sat for about half an hour watching river otters playing and fishing. How many urban areas can offer that?

My otters were not a singular experience. After all, not more than a couple miles from my house there is a huge heron and egret rookery. In the spring you can watch the birds carrying new sticks to their nests. With a scope or good binoculars you can watch some of their courtship rituals.

When we had our first big snow fall this year, I checked out a boulevard that is full of ornamental crabapples. What I found was a flock of about fifty to sixty Cedar Waxwings feeding on the apples. It was a beautiful picture—these elegant birds in shades of gold, red apples and white, white snow. Magic! The next day the waxwings had moved, but the trees were covered with American Robins. Beautiful.

Our city lakes draw migrating waterfowl. This year I was able to photograph Common Loons no further than 15 feet from me at Moore Lake which is surrounded by busy streets. On the lake were also Buffleheads. I snapped pictures of Northern Shovelers up close and personal on Lake of the Isles and a Ruddy Duck in a pond in Richfield. Hooded Mergansers are fairly common in neighborhood ponds and small lakes. At Lake Harriet every spring and fall you can watch Horned Grebes and Red-breasted Mergansers.

We have such excellent resources within our metro area. Even persons that cannot drive may have access to them by city bus and a short walk. We need to treasure these places. I don't know how many of you read Dennis Anderson's excellent series of articles in the Star Tribune about how we are neglecting and destroying our natural areas. I hope a lot of you did. One small way we can all help in their preservation is to be very vocal about the treasures that we have available to us. The more people we can get to cherish them, the better our chances of preserving them.

—Vija Kelly



November Program Review

About 50 people attended an interesting and informative talk by John Dunlop, from the Midwest Wind Energy Association. Many of these attendees were new to Audubon, which is always a good thing.

Minnesota has been a leader in the development of wind energy, since state money has been dedicated to it for over twenty years. Voters have been interested in its development throughout that time, and it gained a big boost in 1994 when the Legislature cut a deal with NSP over the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant waste storage. For allowing extra storage, the Legislature got NSP to agree to invest in renewable energy, which meant big growth in wind energy development.

Mr. Dunlop gave us an interesting overview of the history of wind energy, from Dutch windmills to the windmills common on western farms and ranches, to the first small electricity-producing wind turbines of the 1920s and 30s. The first "wind farms" started in California after the Energy Crisis in the 1970s. Though under the Reagan Administration growth slowed in the U.S., the model of California spurred interest in Europe.

Today, the evolving technology of wind turbines has made this form of energy production very cost effective when compared to the use of fossil fuels. Some large turbines now produce upwards of 1.5 megawatts, at just 3 cents per kilowatt hour.

Minnesota and the Dakotas have some of the best areas in the country for building wind farms, and the potential for growth is huge. Concerns of the past have been addressed (at least partially), so growth is more likely. Of special concern to Audubon members is the killing of birds by the blades. Mr. Dunlop explained that two things have helped to reduce this problem: today's huge turbines move much more slowly, and all new turbines have their generators (where birds perch) behind the blades, and away from the direction of the wind. So when birds take off, they are blown away from, rather than into, the turbines.

All in all, things look bright for the future of this non-polluting, renewable energy resource, and it was a pleasure to hear about it.

—Paul Kinzer

December Program Review

Our December Program was a lot of fun! A fair sized group showed up to join in our potluck supper (which was varied and very good), and even more came for the evening's speaker.

Unfortunately, the speaker did not show up! So what did we do? We listened and watched while Tom Mahan showed us slides from the trip he and Phyllis took to Kenya and Tanzania. It was very interesting to hear how the tours are organized and run, and the slides were amazing. They got close-up views of everything from lions, cheetahs, and leopards, to giraffes, elephants, and various antelope species. Also baboons, warthogs, hippos, and rhinos. Oh, and they identified 245 different birds! I'm jealous.

—Paul Kinzer



Fiscal Year Bylaw Change

Because National Audubon has changed the manner in which Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis is reimbursed, we have found it beneficial to change our fiscal year to coincide with National Audubon's fiscal year, which is July 1st - June 30th. Therefore the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis Board recommends the following change to Bylaw 12 Fiscal Year: From -"The fiscal year of the chapter shall be from January 1 to December 31, both inclusive." To - "The fiscal year of the chapter shall be from July 1 to June 30, both inclusive."

We will vote on this at the February meeting in order to make the change.

—Jerry Bahls

Invitation to Enjoy Bluebirds— Intimately!

Two well-established successful bluebird trails need new monitors. Jeff Smith of Excelsior is reluctantly giving up checking the 22 paired bluebird nestboxes in the U of M Arboretum in Chanhassen. 53 bluebirds fledged from 13 successful nests last year in this beautiful setting. Monitoring involves 11 easy stops once a week during the nesting season, early April to July, checking nests, eggs and babies of bluebirds and tree swallows. All materials and instructions are provided.

The second opportunity involves one of the most visible and public trails in Minnesota: along Interstate 35 just north of Forest Lake. Tim & Jeanne McCloskey have lovingly tended 114 nestboxes there (57 stops, as the boxes are in pairs) for many years. 177 bluebirds were fledged this past year. Weekly visits are ideal, but they can be divided between several teams. The Department of Transportation provides stopping permits, orange vests, and "bubble" (revolving) car rooftop lights. A fun way to get out of the cities, while being part of a great conservation effort.

Please call or email Dorene Scriven, 612-922-4586, scriv001@umn.edu, for more details if you would like to be part of the Minnesota Bluebird Recovery Program and help in these truly rewarding volunteer endeavors.

—Dorene



Seasonal Celebrations at the Audubon Center of the North Woods

In 2002, we are offering something new and **FREE** to Audubon members and Friends of North Woods. On January 26 and April 27, 2002 we will host seasonal celebrations. It is an opportunity for you and your family to share the Audubon Center experience.

Spend the day with us and learn about our raptors (a bald eagle and several hawks are permanent residents here). Share lunch. Then enjoy an outdoor activity on our 535 acres of woods, prairie, lake, streams and wetlands.

Events of the day are as follows:

10:00 am - 10:30 am Arrival and Welcome

10:30 am - 11:30 am Indoor Activity – Bird Program

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm Lunch (purchase for \$5.00, or bring a bag lunch)

1:30 pm - 3:00 pm Outdoor Activity Options –

Jan. 1) Guided Snowshoe Hike (snowshoes provided) OR

2) Free Ski Time on 9 miles of trails (bring your skis)

April (to be announced)



Please call the Audubon Center of the North Woods (1-888-404-7743 toll free, or 320-245-2648) to let us know if you plan to attend one of the seasonal celebrations. The RSVP deadlines are:

<u>Celebration Day</u>	<u>RSVP Deadline</u>
January 26th Winter Celebration	January 18, 2002
April 27th Spring Celebration	April 19, 2002

If you plan on buying lunch please make sure to indicate when you RSVP. Thanks!

We are constantly seeking ways of offering opportunities for Audubon Chapters and their members to interact socially and to get to know about the resource they have in the Audubon Center of the North Woods. We want to encourage you to attend and enjoy the activities we have planned and the beauty of the property.

—Kate Crowley



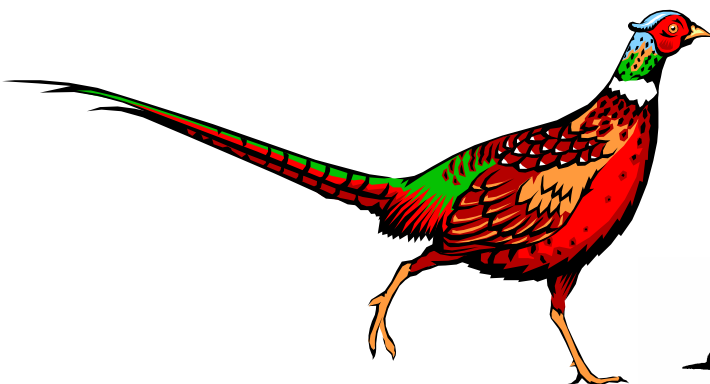
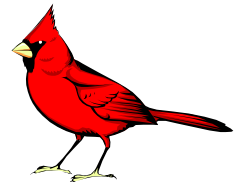


Great Backyard Bird Count

On February 15 - 18, Audubon, along with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, is having their 5th annual Great Backyard Bird Count. Help us make this a great nationwide event. You don't need to do anything to advance register. Just select a site (most will choose their backyard) and count the number of birds you see. Note each species and the largest number you see at any one time. Then at the end of the day report your results via the internet at the GBBC website. For more information, go to the GBBC website at <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/> for detailed information on participation. Audubon will provide sites to report results if you don't have access to the internet. Call the phone numbers below for details.



Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis is planning on having a couple of ways you can participate. *On Saturday, February 16, we have three choices for you! From 10:00 a.m. until noon at the Springbrook Nature Center in Fridley, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Westwood Hills Nature Center in St. Louis Park or from 10:00 to 11:00 at Wood Lake Nature Center in Richfield. There will be Audubon members there to help with I.D. Some binoculars will be available to borrow. Come, watch, have fun with others, and bring friends.* Look for posters announcing the event at your local library and other sites where birders may gather. It is anticipated that some Audubon members will be hosting parties where birding enthusiasts can gather to observe birds or to gather to go to their favorite birding site to do their counts. Pass this information on to everyone you know. Host your own party for your friends! There will be prizes for participants, especially those who decide to join Audubon during the Count! For more information about prizes or other general information call Jerry Bahls at 763-572-2333 or Dorothy Kuether at 952-926-4205, or any Board member (see page 2).



Hope to see you counting!

—Jerry Bahls



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February 2002



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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:

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Chapter Membership Data Center
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Boulder, CO 80322-1001



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

Calendar of Events

February

- 5 Cookie Social, 7:00 p.m.
Chapter Program, 7:30 p.m.
"Monitoring Minnesota's Common Loon
Population with Citizen Observers"
- 12 Chapter Board Meeting, 7:15 p.m.
- 15-18 Great Backyard Bird Count
- 16 GBBC at Springbrook, 10:00 a.m.-Noon.
GBBC at Westwood Hills, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
GBBC at Wood Lake, 10:00 -11:00 a.m.

March

- 5 Chapter Program, 7:30 p.m.
"Trumpeter Swans at Crex Meadows"
- 12 Chapter Board Meeting, 7:15 p.m.

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