



KINGFISHER



February 2010

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 59 No. 1

Representing the National Audubon Society in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

A Note from the President

As Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis begins the year 2010, we can always gain from a little reflection. This is the 35th year as ACM, but we are 30+ years older as an organization. Our origin goes back to the Minneapolis Bird Club, which became ACM in 1975. During those earlier years, there were few laws to protect habitats that would soon come under heavy attack for development. It is especially remarkable that a few far-sighted individuals would take the leadership in preserving the parks, rivers, and lakes that make the Twin Cities such a quality place to live.

In the 1930's and 40's, a man from Wisconsin, Aldo Leopold, would set down his philosophy of land ethic and conservation in a book titled *A Sand County Almanac*. If you have never read his writings, I envy the joy that may be in store for you as you read them for the first time. I recently began the sixth journey through his mind and still am awed by his ability see the natural world in such depth of understanding. He says things the way I've wished I could say them, merging science, romance, and a kinship with wild things. For example, here is Leopold's quote about the complexity of the land organism: "Only those who know most about it, can appreciate how little is known about it. The last word in ignorance is the man who says about an animal or plant, 'What good is it?'"

He was a lover of cranes, which led to the development of the International Crane Foundation near his Wisconsin summer home. In his discussion of cranes he states, "Our ability to perceive quality in nature begins, as in art with the pretty. It expands through successive stages of the beautiful, to values as yet uncaptured by language." In a memorial to the passenger pigeon he says, "To love what 'was' is a new thing under the sun, unknown to most people and to all pigeons." Or about the Flambeau River, "Perhaps our grandsons, having never seen a wild river, will never miss the chance to set a canoe in singing waters."

Aldo Leopold starts the Foreword in his book this way: "There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot. These essays are the delights and dilemmas of one who cannot."

We have many such people in Audubon who feel this way and pass on this attitude to others around them. A special thanks to those this past year that have given of their time and abilities as volunteers. Many have made special contributions to the projects of ACM in our Fall Appeal. It was our most successful ever and allows us to expand our education programs further.

—Jim Egge

February Program

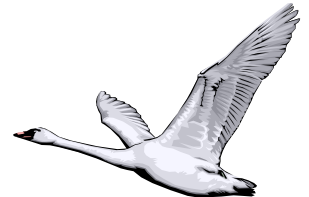
Big Water Birds Galore

Arnie Fredrickson

Everything you wanted to know about water birds and more! Arnie Frederickson will be presenting a slideshow on sandhill cranes, trumpeter and tundra swans, snow geese, and white pelicans.

Arnie is retired from the University of Minnesota where he served as a member of the faculty of the Department of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science. He got interested in photography at the age of 32 when he received a Kodak Instamatic camera for his birthday. Arnie started out photographing wildflowers and landscapes. He discovered white pelicans at age 66 and was hooked. Soon he included tundra and trumpeter swans, herons and egrets, and sandhill cranes in his passion for the big birds. Arnie also serves as the volunteer trumpeter swan monitor for the Three Rivers Park District.

Tuesday, February 2nd
at 7:00 p.m.
Mayflower Church



Upcoming programs:

March 2, 2010

Birding Sites in Minnesota

Kim Eckert

Author of *A Birder's Guide to Minnesota*

April 6, 2010

Captivating Bluebirds

Stan Tekeila

Author of *Birds of Minnesota*, *Captivating Bluebirds*, and many more books

May 4, 2010

Saving our Wetlands and Bird Habitats

Tom Cooper, U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

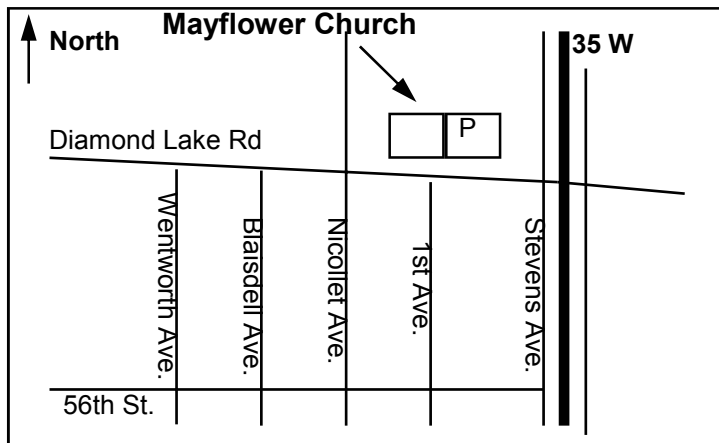
Come to Our Next Program!

DATE: Tuesday, February 2, 2010

“Big Water Birds Galore”
with Arnie Frederickson

TIME: Program at 7:00 p.m.

AT: Mayflower Church, Minneapolis, 35W & Diamond
Lake Road (map below)



Tour the Bell Museum's Ornithology Lab

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis has arranged to have tours of the Bell Museum's Ornithology Labs on the St. Paul Campus of the University of Minnesota. One tour will be on January 27th at 6:00 pm and the other will be on February 9th also at 6:00 pm. Since space will be limited, we are asking that you sign up by calling or e-mailing either Jerry Bahls (763.572.2333) jobaud@comcast.net or Susan Tertell (612.729.1566) stertell@gmail.com with your date preference, and details will be given at time of sign-up.

13th Annual

Great Backyard Bird Count

From February 12-15, Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology are having their 13th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC). Join them and you will be a citizen scientist! You don't need to do anything to advance-register, just select a site (probably your own backyard) and a time period, then count the number of birds you see. Note each species and the largest number you see at any one time, and at the end of the day report your results via the internet on the GBBC website. For more information, go to the GBBC website at <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/> for detailed information on participation. We will report results if you don't have access to the Internet.

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis is planning on having a couple of ways you can participate. On Saturday, February 13, we have four choices for you! From 10:00-11:00 am at the Springbrook Nature Center in Fridley, from noon to 1:00 pm at the Westwood Hills Nature Center in St. Louis Park, from 10:00-11:00 am at Wood Lake Nature Center in Richfield and from 10:00-11:00 am at Eastman Nature Center in Dayton. Audubon members will be there to help with bird identification. Come, learn, have fun, and bring friends. Host a party for the birds! Enter the GBBC Photo Contest, see the GBBC website for details. For more information call Jerry Bahls at 763.572.2333 or anyone on the contact list below, or e-mail jobaud@comcast.net.

Minneapolis Audubon Society Bryant Square (31st & Bryant Avenue S.)

Friday, February 12, 1:00 pm

Dr. Scott Sharkey will share some breathtaking photography from his Minnesota River world. Please join us for the program and refreshments. All are welcome.

For more information call 952-920-0176.

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis - 2009-2010 Contacts

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Audubon Center of the North Woods	www.audubon-center.org		
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis	www.AudubonChapterofMinneapolis.org		
Audubon Minnesota	www.audubon.org/chapter/mn		

**MOU Rare Bird Alert:
763-780-8890**

Christmas Bird Count 2009

On one of the more pleasant Christmas Bird Count days in recent years, 26 people spent the day on December 19 counting birds for the Minneapolis North Christmas Bird Count. The group broke up into 9 different subgroups, each assigned an area within the 15-mile diameter circle centered on Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park. A total of 8,925 birds were counted, representing 39 species. Many more birds were counted this year than in the blizzard on the count day in 2008 (4,451), but fewer species (43 in 2008) were seen this year. Group members slowly drove over 450 miles of local roads while watching for birds, and they hiked 18½ miles. Of special interest were the Varied Thrush seen at Eastman Nature Center, Hooded and Common Mergansers, and a black duck. Each of the nine subgroups spotted robins in their areas, the first time that has ever happened. A total of 428 robins were reported, compared to 24 in 2008. Wild turkeys also significantly increased in number: only four were seen in 2008 compared to 120 seen this year. Mallard duck numbers were also significantly higher, with 2,301 seen in 2008 and 5,164 seen this year.

Thanks to all who helped count and a special thanks to those who brought food for the potluck lunch at Springbrook Nature Center.

—Siah St. Clair

Minneapolis North CBC Count Coordinator.

Thank You

from Fifth Grade Students at Aurora Academy

I want to thank you for taking us to the park and letting us use binocular to find birds. I also want to thank you for pointing to where birds were. Mr. Egge, I also thank you not only for teaching us how birds were, for teaching us about trees. I thank you for making the trip fun.

Sincerely, Orlando

Thank you for showing different kinds of birds and for saying that if we go out we can have the voice of different birds. I also thank you so much because now I learn a lot of birds. I'm thankful for letting us know how to use the binoculars. I would to see you again so we all can go to the park and see other birds or maybe the same birds.

I also wanted to say to you that I saw different kinds of birds, but I don't know what's their named. Mr. Egge, do you know what's the name of a bird that is all black on his body and on his chin it was like yellow or orange and if you know you it can you send me a letter so I can know the name and tell my cousent [*sic*] because he has a medium bird like that.

Sincerely, Jacqueline

Great Horned Owl Vigil

Under a cold
February moon,
a secluded forest tree
anchors the owls'
borrowed, flimsy nest.

Silent after courtship,
the night-time shapes
ferociously guard
their precious future.
Under soft feathers,
two or three round,
dusty-white eggs—
hatch.

Now—
they watch for intruders
and promises of
meager food.

—Clem Nagel

BirdCam and the Raptor Resource Project

The Raptor Resource Project was established in 1988 to preserve owls, eagles, hawks, falcons, and other large birds of prey. They maintain many nesting sites, as well as research and training nation-wide. The Peregrine-Utility Program was started in 1990 at an Xcel plant in Bayport, MN. Since that time, over 300 falcons have been fledged from power plants along the Mississippi and other rivers.

Xcel was one of the first companies to install cameras and make pictures available on line for the public. This original BirdCam featured Mae, the first falcon to nest at a power plant, and visitors to the site watched her feed and raise her young. BirdCam has expanded to other plants and includes owls and eagles, which can be viewed and downloaded. The owls required an infrared camera so night filming could be done. Check out BirdCam at birdcam.xcelenergy.com and be sure to get any young people you know pointed to the site as well.

—Jim Egge

Environmental Resilience

In my December column, I talked about the need for policies that promote sustainability. There is another concept that goes hand-in-hand with sustainability that is not often addressed, and that is environmental resilience. Just as it sounds, resilience is the ability of biosystems and populations to absorb and bounce back from negative impacts. In cities like Minneapolis, citizens can increase resilience by building rain gardens and landscaping with native species for wildlife. Getting out the word on prevention of birds flying into windows of houses, as well as lighted buildings during migrations, allows populations of some species to rebound on their own. But it goes much farther than that.

In Florida and other sub-tropical areas, biologists have found that preserving mangrove margins is critical to the very survival of the shorelines and their ecosystems. Mangroves capture sediment and help filter the water, in addition to preventing erosion from storms. In their root systems minnows and invertebrates thrive, leading to healthy bird populations.

A friend of mine visited Yellowstone a few years back, remarking about the tragedy of forest fires that had consumed large tracts of timber. But those forests burned completely because cold-burning had not been allowed to regularly clear the forest of combustible brush. The forest was resilient to fire for centuries before Smokey the Bear because it burned naturally on a regular basis. The forest will bounce back and the ecosystem will restore. Not so for the forests that are clearcut and managed for the amount of boardfeet. My friend mistook trees for a forest, and vice versa. Selective cutting in a forest to preserve a wide range of tree sizes and diversity will be sustainable to harvest, as well as promote wildlife. Low impact forestry is more expensive, but conducive to nesting of Marbled Murrelets, Fishers, and Spotted Owls.

Crop-damaging elephants are fitted with GPS collars in India and Africa, trying to promote peaceful coexistence with farmers. Buffer zones are created between loggers and miners, and riparian habitats. This prevents the most vulnerable lands from being damaged beyond repair. But even so, in some cases only a ban on certain types of mining or logging can mitigate environmental damage.

Interesting was the article in December *Audubon* titled "Buying Time." Researchers have found that cutting hay before July 15 doesn't allow the Bobolink to complete its nesting. June cutting causes "ecological traps." Birds nesting there find their first attempt obliterated and nests that survive become targets for predators. Biologists tell of Bobolinks trying to feed their young buried below cut grass. Soil dries out and grasslands lose bacteria, mushrooms, and mosses. Delaying hay cutting until July 15 preserves insects and flower diversity and allows floral reproduction. A compromise is to cut the grass before June 2, getting the freshest grass, but destroying most birds nests. The birds renest and raise young, and a later cutting produces another crop for the farmer.

Ecosystems are much like the economy. If any unusual pressure is placed on the system, a "bubble" can result. When grasslands dry out, insects and ground snails disappear. Shrews, which feed on these, diminish, while mice may increase. A temporary increase in mice produces a bubble in hawks and Short-Eared Owls. As the grasslands reestablish the balance, hawks and owls crash in their numbers.

Populations cannot thrive in fragmented habitats. This results in bio-isolation, and often, poor genetic health. Providing corridors for species to move, imparts resilience to fire, disease, and development.

— Jim Egge

Bird Lore

The Woodpecker Finch on the Galapagos is a rare "tool-user." It uses a cactus spine to dig insects out of holes.

Birds with weak feet (such as swallows) that spend most of their time flying, dip into the water in flight to take a "flying bath."

Birds that perch are called passerines. They have three toes forward and one back. Passerines make up 60% of all bird species.

Eggs are less sensitive to cold than to heat. Mallard eggs have been known to crack from freezing and still hatch successfully.



Golden Eagles defend a territory of about 35 square miles. In resource-rich salt marshes, these birds may only need to defend a range of 15 yards from the nest.

The Carolina Chickadee has likely been in Minnesota recently, but it may not get reported due to the difficulty of identification, even for experts.

Wood Lake Nature Center!

Environmental Book Club reading list

February 2- *The Gift of the Deer*, by Helen Hoover
March 2- *Eco Barons*, by Edward Humes

Tuesdays, 6:30pm-8pm
\$5/person, Free for members

Check out some of our other classes for adults:

Winter Photography Snowshoe Hike

Challenge your photographic creativity on a guided snowshoe hike. Warm up inside with a big-screen photograph and hike review.

Saturday, January 16, 1-3pm \$12, \$9 for members

Wolf and Snow Moon Snowshoe Strolls

Learn the joy of snowshoeing along moon-lit trails at Wood Lake. Afterwards, enjoy hot chocolate and the warmth of a fire. Please wear snow boots and warm clothing. If snow conditions are poor we will hike the trails. Snowshoes available for rent.

Limit 20, ages 16 and up

Please call to register 612.861.9365.

Thursdays, January 28 & February 25, 7:00-8:30 pm
\$5/ person, \$1 for members

Winter Speaker Series: Energy for Our Future

“Improving Your Home with Energy Efficiency”

Speaker Neely Crane Smith from the MN Energy Challenge
Thursday, January 14, 7:00-8:00 pm
FREE, donations will be taken

“Solar Power 101”

Speaker Rebecca Lundberg, owner of Powerfully Green
Thursday, February 4, 7:00-8:00 pm
FREE, donations will be taken

“Wind Energy, Sustainable Energy for our Future”

with guest speaker Christina Mills from Windustry
Thursday, March 4, 7:00-8:00 pm
FREE, donations will be taken

Amy Markle, Naturalist 612.861.9396

From the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden

On behalf of the Friends of the Wildflower Garden, thank you for your contribution to the invasive plant volunteer project to remove these destructive species from the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary and its buffer zone.

We are grateful for the tools, gloves and supplies obtained with your gift and for your on-going support in the newsletter and with your members. We hope to stay connected and work on our shared concerns in the future.

Sincerely,

J. Pamela Weiner, Friends Board President

Conservation Committee News

Kit Healey



As I write this, the outside temperature is falling below zero and the wind is picking up. The snow is already several inches deep and it looks as if we may not see bare ground for months. Given these conditions, it's tempting to put aside the issue of buckthorn and curl up by the fire with a good book instead. Well, go ahead. Indulge. Read a chapter or two. Or catch a movie or knit a sweater or

organize your closet. Just don't think that you have to wait until spring to do something about buckthorn, however.

Winter may not be the season for large, organized buckthorn pulls but it can be a fine time to do some strategic removal and it's a grand time to get to know Ruth Jones. Ruth is a longtime volunteer with the Cedar Lake Park Association (CLPA). She and another CLPA volunteer, Mary Conway, have taken charge of restoring the parkland near the intersection of Burnham Road and Burnham Boulevard on the southeast side of Cedar Lake. Five years ago, the site was nothing more than a buckthorn forest. Now, thanks to the hard work of Ruth, Mary, and the dozens of volunteers they've led, there are pockets of native flowers growing around oak and red cedar trees. Read the Fall 2009 issue of the CLPA newsletter for more about Ruth and Mary's work (www.cedarlakepark.org).

So, what's the connection between Ruth and winter buckthorn removal? Well, Ruth works with buckthorn and volunteers year-round! In the winter, she focuses on removing the branches with berries from the trees and then deberrying the branches before breaking them into mulch-sized pieces and scattering them. And she's always happy to have company. She's willing to teach novices what they need to know or to work beside experienced pullers. Of course, she does have other commitments so before you head out to the site, you need to arrange a time that works for both of you. You can email her at ruthjones@prodigy.net.

Even if you can't make it over to Cedar Lake to remove buckthorn, you can still help the site. Ruth and Mary are always in need of suitable native plants for the site. Right now, if you or anyone you know has a live Christmas tree that you don't plan to keep, if you can hang onto it until the ground thaws and then drop it off at the site, Ruth or Mary will plant it. Contact Ruth for more information.

The Conservation Committee meets on Tuesday, January 26 from 6-7 pm. We won't be meeting at the Uptown Lunds, however. Instead, in January, February, and March, we'll be meeting at Lake Harriet Methodist Church, 4901 Chowen Av South in Minneapolis. Hope to see you there!



Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
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KINGFISHER
February 2010



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
P.O. Box 422250
Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250



LOCAL CHAPTER
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
PO BOX 3801
Minneapolis, MN 55403
Incentive Code:
C9ZM020Z

Calendar of Events

JANUARY

27 Bell Museum Ornithology Lab Tour

FEBRUARY

2 Chapter Program 7:00 pm
6 Bell Museum Ornithology Lab Tour
12-16 Great Backyard Bird Count

Board meetings are held every month on the 4th Tuesday at 7:00 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 Jerry Bahls for details!

The *Kingfisher* is published monthly September through December and February through May.

Electronic Kingfisher

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Contact Jerry Bahls at jobaud@comcast.net