



# KINGFISHER



February 2005

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 54 No.1

Representing the National Audubon Society in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

## A Note from the President

It's a new year and a time to start over. I would like to do better in 2005 by identifying volunteers to help run the programs that are vital to keeping our chapter vibrant. This can't be done without you! Don't wait to be asked to help, ask to help!

Now is time to start planning for the next fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) for Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis. The first requirement is to appoint a Nominating Committee (minimum of three and there must be an odd number) to select new officers and three new Board members. The Nominating Committee Chair must be a Board member. The remainder can come from the general membership. I would like to appoint 5 members to the Nominating Committee to help in a wide search to find the people we would like on our Board. Nearly all of the workload is in the period of March to May, unless we have an opening during the year that the Committee will need to fill, but that usually doesn't take much time. If you would like to serve on the Nominating Committee, please contact me (see page 2 for contact information).

It would help the Nominating Committee if members would step forward to volunteer to be on the Board or serve as an officer of the Chapter. The Nominating Committee usually selects the nominees from members who come to the programs, frequent the field trips or are serving on a committee. This is a small fraction of the total membership of Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis. Many of you have conflicts with our activities and can't participate. But if your status has changed, for example, if you are a recent retiree, please seriously consider volunteering for one of the Board positions. If you are new to the community and miss the volunteer opportunities you had in the past, we can use you. Being a Board member requires about 2 - 4 hours per month. A Board member is expected to serve on one of our standing committees. An experienced Board member is usually a chair of the committee. If you are interested in being a Board member or an officer of the chapter, contact me or any member of the Nominating Committee (their names will be published in the March Kingfisher).

**Ask to help!**

— Jerry Bahls, President

## February Program Speaker

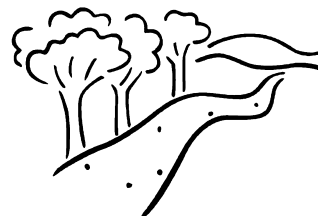
### Drainage Tile and Ditches, Streams and Riverbeds

This past fall, many duck hunters were asking, "Where are the ducks?" In a recent study by Al Afton of Louisiana State University, it was found that in the spring, lesser scaups migrated from Minnesota in poorer physical condition than when they entered. This is a disturbing turn of events for a state that in the past was a significant production area for waterfowl.

Mark Holsten, the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, will try to shed some light on this at our February meeting. In an interview with Dennis Anderson in the *Star Tribune*, Commissioner Holsten raised the question of drainage. He felt it was time to bring the agricultural, conservation and environmental communities together to have a discussion. Hear what he has learned, and what we can do to help improve wetland quality without causing major disruptions to the agricultural community.

Can these communities be brought together to reform our current drainage laws to improve wetlands for waterfowl habitat and still provide the drainage needed by farmers to keep their fields dry? This is a great opportunity for you to meet the Deputy Commissioner and learn about drainage problems and wetland.

Deputy Commissioner Holsten is a former Representative from the Stillwater area. While in the House of Representatives, he chaired the Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee from 1999 until 2002, when he was appointed Deputy Commissioner of the DNR. He is a graduate of St. Thomas University and has been a teacher and coach in the Stillwater School District.



**Please join us for the next Audubon program on Tuesday, February 1, 7:00 pm.**

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Board Member	Dorene Scriven	612-922-4586
Board Member	Trudi Poquette	612-824-4866
Board Member	Jean Kelley	763-862-1421
Board Member	Michael Flannery	952-404-9380
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MOU Rare Bird Alert 763-780-8890  
Minnesota Audubon 651-739-9332

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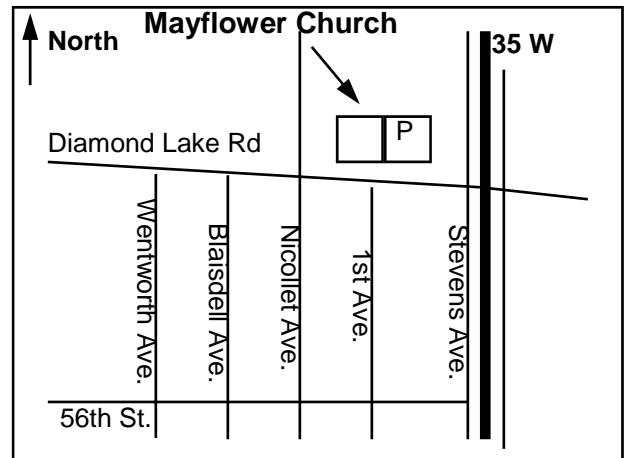
**Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis**  
www.geocities.com/audubon.geo  
**Minnesota Audubon**  
www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn/index.html  
**National Audubon Society**  
www.audubon.org

## Come to Our Next Program!

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 1  
"Drainage Tile and Ditches,  
Streams and Riverbeds,"  
by Mark Holsten, Deputy Commissioner,  
Department of Natural Resources

**TIME:** Program at 7:00 pm

**AT:** Mayflower Church, map below



**Looking for a volunteer  
opportunity? Check out the  
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis'  
website at  
[http://www.geocities.com/  
audubon.geo](http://www.geocities.com/audubon.geo)  
and click on  
"Volunteer Opportunities."**

## Electronic Kingfisher

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

# ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

## What's Going on in Minnesota and Elsewhere

- ◆ If you haven't strolled or biked in Cedar Lake Park recently, here's a chance to vary your scenery. Walk along the trails where James J Hill developed a railroad grade in the 1880's just north of Cedar Lake and south of Brownie Lake. This trail goes through a restored prairie on soils that have been greatly disturbed. You can find no less than 24 species of native wildflowers along the trail. Those of you interested in working on this project may volunteer with the Cedar Lake Park Association. Donations are also needed to continue revitalization of this unique metro park. Contact: CLPA, 2000 Aldrich Ave. S., Minneapolis, 55405
- ◆ On January 27, Bill Lane will be giving a program on northern owls at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor's Center. Social time with coffee, cookies and exhibits begins at 7:00, and the program is from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. 3815 American Blvd E., Bloomington. Near the airport, exit 494 south on 34th Ave., left on 80th St.
- ◆ Audubon Minnesota has made a high priority of encouraging anglers to use non-lead fishing sinkers. In cooperation with the DNR, awareness programs and education activities are being promoted statewide. If you weren't at the October meeting, you missed a good program on the importance of eliminating lead.
- ◆ Check out the conservation voting records of legislators at [www.mnclv.org](http://www.mnclv.org). You'll need Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is free at [www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html).
- ◆ Try birding an intriguing new area - Williston, ND. The Williston Marsh is a birder's paradise. Birds that may be seen include the Interior Least Tern and the Piping Plover. The area is designed to encourage young birders. Website is [cvbsales@ci.williston.nd.us](mailto:cvbsales@ci.williston.nd.us) for lodging and birding information.

**As always, you can get more info on these and other opportunities by contacting Jim Egge at 612.827.7629.**

## Conservation Committee Report

The Conservation Committee did not meet in January. We would like to thank the members who attended the Legislative Forum. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend the "Citizen's Day at the Capitol" on February 23. This is a very good opportunity to flex your constituent muscles. See details in the next column...

The committee will be getting a table at the Living Green Expo and promoting the use of buckthorn as a medium for crafts and arts projects. We would like to create a market for buckthorn wood. If you know of anyone interested in participating by providing samples of items made from buckthorn, please contact Jerry Bahls.

Anyone interested in helping with this and other projects, please come to our next meeting which will be held on February 2 at 7:00 p.m. at the Panera Bread restaurant at 3024 Hennepin Ave. in Minneapolis, just south of Lake Street in the Uptown area. Call Jerry Bahls for other project information at 763.572.2333.

## Citizens' Day at the Capitol

**February 23, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**  
**Morning Training at the Four Points Sheraton**

Join Audubon and many other environmental organizations for the 4th Annual "Protect Our Water Citizens' Day" at the Capitol. Hundreds of citizens from across Minnesota will rally in the capitol rotunda and meet with their Legislators to urge them to Protect Our Water! Join in the fun and make a difference!

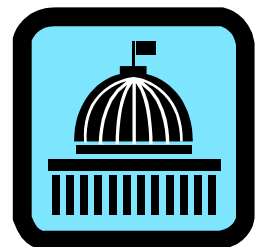
"Protect Our Water Citizens' Day" at the Capitol is a great opportunity to tell your state Legislators that clean and safe water is important to you.

You can register on-line at

[http://www.mepartnership.org/mep\\_calendar.asp](http://www.mepartnership.org/mep_calendar.asp)

or call Jen Lynch at

651 290-0154



## A Memorable Birding Experience

*This is the first of what is hoped will be a permanent brief column of Audubon member's memorable experiences while birding. Please send your memorable birding experience to bahls001@tc.umn.edu and we will share it with everyone. Half the joy of the experience is sharing it with others. Try to limit it to a couple of short paragraphs telling us where, when and what the experience was.]*

In late June 2003 on a trip to Alaska, my wife and I took a side trip to Barrow. We were going to stay over "night" and experience the midnight sun. While waiting for midnight, we decided to go birding and had an unforgettable experience. Birds had just migrated in and were in full breeding plumage. We saw the most wonderfully-colored plovers and phalaropes. We chased a snowy owl trying to get the perfect picture (they were all good). They looked like white footballs from a distance. If you every get the chance, I highly recommend this side trip, but spend a couple of days and bring warm boots!

—Jerry Bahls



## A Banner Year for Bluebirds!

Though we seemed to have a lot of cold and rain in 2004, it turned out to be ideal for bluebirds. Last year had the second highest reported number of bluebirds fledged since 1989. This is based on 22 years of records submitted to the Bluebird Recovery Program. In 2004, 11,926 bluebirds were produced from 8,008 Minnesota bluebird boxes. Minnesotans usually pair their boxes so one box is available for bluebirds and the second box can be used by tree swallows, chickadees, nuthatches, and sometimes great-crested flycatchers.

BBRP thanks the 400 people who sent in detailed reports this year. The boxes on Interstate 35 north of the Twin Cities also had record numbers, thanks to the three volunteers who braved all sorts of conditions to help our blues.

And thanks to four Audubon volunteers who answered the call for Wirth Park monitors. We still need some assistants for 32 boxes at Bunker Hills Park near Anoka, and for William O'Brien State Park's bluebird kiosk, which requires checking just twice a year. Please contact me if interested.

—Dorene H. Scriven

## The Great Backyard Bird Count, February 18-21

On February 18-21, the Audubon Society, along with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, is having their 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Backyard Bird Count. Help us make this a great nationwide event! You don't need to do anything in advance; just select a site (most people will choose their own backyard) and count the number of birds you see. Note each species and the largest number you see at any one time during the four-day counting period. Then, 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. Audubon will provide sites to report results if you don't have access to the internet.

### Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis is planning a couple of ways you can participate...

#### ***On Saturday, February 19, we have four choices for you!***

- \* From 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Springbrook Nature Center in Fridley
- \* From 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the Westwood Hills Nature Center in St. Louis Park
- \* From 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at Wood Lake Nature Center in Richfield
- \* From 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at Eastman Nature Center in Dayton

There will be an Audubon member present to help with identifications. Come, watch, have fun with others, and bring friends!

It is anticipated that some Audubon members will be hosting parties where birding enthusiasts can gather to observe birds or to gather to travel to their favorite birding site for their counts. Pass this information on to everyone you know. Host your own party for your friends! For more information call Jerry Bahls at 763.572.2333 or any Board member (see page 2).

## Hope to see you counting!



## February and March Field Trips

### **Saturday, Feb. 5** **Sax-Zim Bog, St. Louis County** (alternate weather date Feb. 26)

7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., bring your lunch  
Meet at the Park & Ride lot, 65<sup>th</sup> Ave. N. and Brooklyn Blvd.,  
Brooklyn Center  
Leader: Paul Fusco  
We'll look for the winter migrating northern owls, (Great  
Gray, Snowy). Other possibilities include Boreal Chickadee,  
White-winged Crossbills, and Evening Grosbeaks.  
**Pre-registration necessary!**

### **Saturday, March 5** **Roseville—Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic**

1:00 to 2:30 p.m.  
Director Phil Jenni will give Chapter members a private tour  
of the clinic.  
Details will appear in the March Kingfisher, but mark your  
calendars now!

### **Saturday, March 19** **University of Minnesota** **Bell Museum of Natural History**

10 a.m. to noon  
Exhibits Curator Don Luce will give Chapter members a pri-  
vate tour of the museum's nationally-acclaimed Minnesota  
Wildlife dioramas. He will present the history of the life-size  
window exhibit's artistic construction and scientific signifi-  
cance.  
Museum admission: Adults \$5, Students/Seniors \$3, Mem-  
bers free  
The museum is at the SE corner of 17<sup>th</sup> Ave./ University  
Ave.  
Parking: Nolte Garage, Campus ramps within 1 block  
**Group limited to 15—pre-registration necessary!**

**For more information or directions, call Mary Ellen at**  
**763.561.1761 or via e-mail at mevetter@mninter.net**

#### Feeding Birds in the Winter

Hard to believe that grocers now **SELL** the suet  
they once gave away for free, but if you purchase  
suet during the winter and pack it into old onion  
bags or wire baskets, or pressed into holes drilled  
into small logs, your neighborhood nuthatches,  
woodpeckers and chickadees will love you for it!  
It's still a "cheep" treat for your feathered  
friends. Recipe in the next column...

## Action Alert!

### **ACTION ALERT** **FOR AUDUBONERS WHO LOVE OUR** **NATIVE CAVITY-NESTING BIRDS**

Two identical bills pertaining to the Migratory Bird Conser-  
vation Act are before Congress right now. The present Act  
is due to expire in 2006. HR #4114 and S 2547 will restore  
the protection of our native birds, but will specifically ex-  
empt invasive species from legal protection.

The current Act is confusing to many people. The new bills  
will give power to state governments, making it illegal to  
release to the wild house sparrows, starlings and other in-  
troduced exotic species. The general public is not aware of  
the damage that house sparrows do to our native cavity  
nesters such as chickadees, nuthatches, bluebirds, martins  
as well as open nesters like robins. House sparrows are the  
major avian predators of bluebirds, smashing eggs and kill-  
ing nestlings and adult birds trapped in the cavity.

A number of rehabilitators and rehabilitating centers across  
the U.S. spend contribution funds and countless volunteer  
hours treating injured house sparrows and European star-  
lings, and then releasing them. This continues the cycle of  
the injury and killing of our native species by these invasive  
ones. In the first 9 months of 2004, 182 starlings and 452  
house sparrows were released by just one local rehabilita-  
tion center.

If the bills pass, specifically including these pests from pro-  
tection, the states will be able to make their release illegal.  
At present, Minnesota rules state only that it is illegal to in-  
troduce them into the state.

Many environmental organizations - National Audubon, The  
Nature Conservancy, National Wildlife Federation, Ducks  
Unlimited, Izaak Walton League, etc. support these two  
bills.

**PLEASE ACT NOW - CONTACT YOUR TWO SENATORS**  
**AND REPRESENTATIVE, AND URGE THEM TO TAKE**  
**UP AND PASS H.R. 4114 AND S2347!**

Please reply to: Dorene H. Scriven  
Scriv001@umn.edu

1 lb. suet, cut into small pieces  
1 cup each: rolled oats, yellow cornmeal, chunk-style  
peanut butter, sunflower seeds  
Melt suet over low heat; stir in remaining ingredients.  
Pour into paper-lined muffin tins and cool before  
"serving." Bon Appetit!

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis  
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Minneapolis MN 55403

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**KINGFISHER**  
February 2005



**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**

**February**

- 1 Chapter Program, 7:00 p.m.
- 2 Conservation Committee meeting
- 5 Sax-Zim Bog trip (see page 5)
- 18-21 Great Backyard Bird Count
- 23 Citizens' Day at the Capitol

**March**

- 5 Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic
- 19 Bell Museum of Natural History tour

Field trips are led by expert birders to some of Minnesota's finest natural habitats. Please see details inside this issue or call Mary Ellen (763.561.1761).

See you on the birding trails—  
guests are *always* welcome!

All are welcome to programs, trips and Board meetings. Call President Jerry Bahls for details on Board meetings and field trips.