



KINGFISHER



FEBRUARY 2006

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 55 No. 1

Representing the National Audubon Society in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

A Note from the President

It is time to begin the planning for the coming nesting season. It's been a couple of months since I returned my bluebird nesting survey and completed my report to The Bird House Network at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, but it's now 2006 and I need to think about my new bluebird trail and wood duck boxes. Should I add new boxes? Select a different site? Try to attract a new bird?

My answer is to try and attract a new bird. Last fall at the Audubon Fall Dinner, Laura Erickson told us about a couple of birds that were in decline: the nighthawk and chimney swift. Because I live on the river I see both fairly often. Both birds are prolific insect eaters, often mosquitoes. Attracting chimney swifts just involves building a chimney! It is well known that they do nest in them; after all, their name is "chimney swift." But how do you present one to them? Do I build a fake chimney on top of my house? Or do I make a free-standing one in my yard?

In the case of the nighthawk the answer is not as clear. I do know they often nest on flat roofs. My house and garage roofs aren't flat. Would a flat platform on a pole work? How big should it be? What do you line it with? The answer to many of these questions lies in with the experts, and they often write it down and publish it on the Internet.

Maybe I'll find there aren't any answers out there! There is no Bluebird Recovery Program or Wood Duck Society or Purple Martin Society to turn to. Should I just give up then? At some time, that is what must have caused Dick Peterson, founder of the BBRP, to begin experimenting with bluebird houses. I plan to do the same. Do you have a favorite bird you want to help? Red-headed woodpecker? Western meadowlark? Bobolink? How can you help their nesting efforts? Just remember, you don't have to be a PhD to study them! Most of the beginning information you need is at your finger tips on the Internet.

If you have an idea, research it and then try it! The experience is priceless.

—Jerry Bahls
President

February Program

Falkland Islands and the Antarctic

Paul and Katie Sholtz bring us proof that a wonderful means of studying birds is travel and photography. Katie's life list includes over 1750 species. Paul, after many years of still photography, has found much satisfaction in creating videos of their travels.

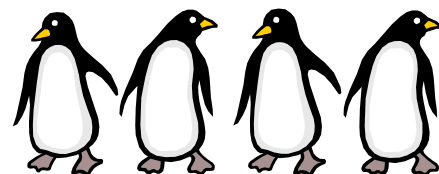
The February program centers on the Falkland Islands and Antarctica. The Falklands in the South Pacific Ocean are a group of islands where nature is still in charge. Unbelievable wildlife adapts to the cool, damp climate on those beautiful and remote islands. Since severe winds whip across the islands, rendering them treeless, a question for Katie Sholtz might be, "If the islands are treeless, what and where is the bird habitat?"

That same habitat question might be put to Paul Sholtz, as his pictures show the starkness of Antarctica. Along with the wingless penguins are many winged birds including southern and giant fulmars, cape pigeons, and petrels. Arctic terns visit the Antarctic each summer, some of them flying the 11,000 miles south from their breeding grounds in the Arctic.

In their working lives, Katie Sholtz was a medical librarian at the Mayo Clinic and retired from her position as Library Director at Western Connecticut State University. Paul received degrees in Physics and Electrical Engineering and is a retired Senior Programmer at the IBM Research Center.

Please join us!

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



BOOKS For SALE

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis offers books and other merchandise for sale at its program meetings.

We offer many of the most popular field guides for sale!

We offer Bluebird Recovery items for sale!

We offer Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis patches and pins as well as National Audubon Society pins.

All items are offered at *discount* prices.

This month's featured book is –

"Backyard Bird Watchers" by Donald S. Heintzelman

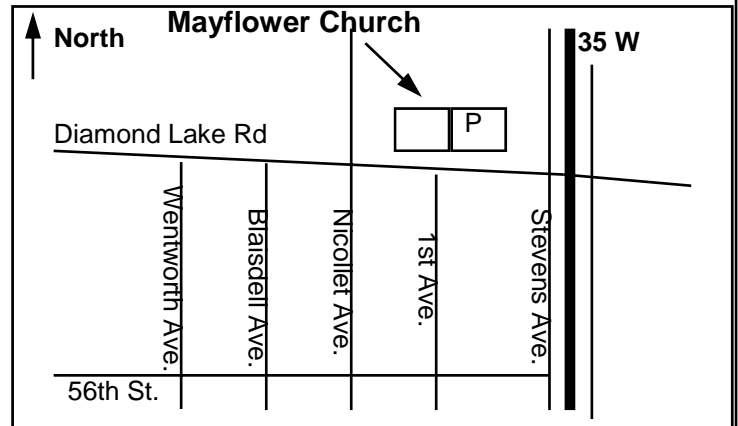
Come to Our Next Program!

DATE: Tuesday, February 7, 2006

"Falkland Islands and the Antarctic"
with Paul and Katie Sholtz

TIME: Program at 7:00 pm

AT: Mayflower Church, map below

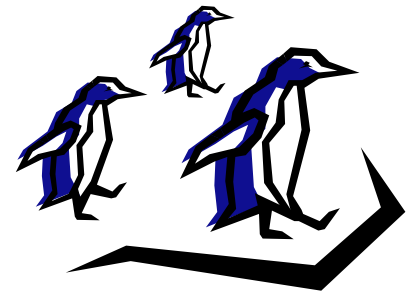


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MOU Rare Bird Alert 763-780-8890

www.geocities.com/audubon.geo
www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn/index.html
www.audubon.org



Electronic Kingfisher

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

February Bird of the Month

Cedar Waxwing

Presented by -

Donna Bahls

Learn about this berry-eating bird at our meeting on
February 7th



MARCH FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, March 4 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm

Roseville-Wildlife Rehabilitation Clinic

Director Phil Jenni will give Chapter members a private tour of the Clinic.

Details will appear in the March Kingfisher, but mark your calendar now! Registration not necessary.

Saturday, March 18 10:00 am to noon

University of Minnesota's

Bell Museum of Natural History

17th Ave. SE and University Ave. Minneapolis

Exhibits Curator Don Luce will give Chapter members a private tour of the museum's acclaimed dioramas depicting Minnesota's wildlife.

Museum admission: Adults \$5, Seniors/Students \$3, Bell Members free.

Parking: Nolte Garage or campus ramps within 1 block.

Group limit: 15

To pre-register or for more information, contact Mary Ellen at 763.561.1761 or mevetter@mninter.net

Recycling for Raptors

Mail empty inkjet printer cartridges to The Raptor Center on the St. Paul campus of the U of MN. The Raptor Center receives money for each inkjet. Recycle and help The Raptor Center at the same time. Need more info? <http://www.cvm.umn.edu/raptor> or 612-624-6945 or trcink@umn.edu

Great Backyard Bird Count

On February 17- 20, Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology is having their 9th annual Great Backyard Bird Count. Make this a great nationwide event. You don't need to do anything to advance-register, just select a site (probably your 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. We will report results if you don't have access to the Internet. Call the phone number below for details.

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis is planning a couple of ways for you to participate. On Saturday, February 18, we have four choices for you!

- * 10:00 am to 11:00 am at the Springbrook Nature Center in Fridley
- * Noon to 1:00 pm at the Westwood Hills Nature Center in St. Louis Park
- * 10:00 am to 11:00 am at Wood Lake Nature Center in Richfield
- * 10:00 am to 11:00 am at Eastman Nature Center in Dayton

There will be Audubon members there to help you identify birds. Come, learn, have fun, and bring friends.

Host a party for the birds! For more information call Jerry Bahls at 763.572.2333 or any Board member (see page 2).

Count the Birds!

ENVIRONMENTAL ROUND-UP

The Austin Audubon Society sponsored a celebration of wilderness with the music, poetry, and photography of Walkin' Jim Stolz. After the concert, Gary Munson of Quarry Hill Nature Center set up bird-banding nets to try to capture Saw Whet Owls.

This appeal comes through the Duluth Audubon Society. The Great Lakes Regional Collaboration has proposed a 15-year, \$20-billion effort aimed at fighting pollution, invasive species, and sewage overflows. The Administration has recommended zero increase in Great Lakes funding, putting the proposal at risk. Interested persons can pressure the president at:

comments@whitehouse.gov or call the White House at: 202.456.1111. More info: www.restorethelakes.org.

Also, don't forget the "Owls on the Move" symposium March 17-19 in Duluth hosted by the Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory.

A new high school environmental curriculum designed to engage and educate the next generation of leaders is now available. It has been endorsed by the National Audubon Society, Union of Concerned Scientists, Sierra Club, etc. It consists of a 60-minute video in 7 parts, profiling 17 Goldman Environmental Prize winners whose powerful stories challenge student to explore their own attitudes toward the natural world. Teachers especially are encouraged to examine this curriculum, at: www.envethics.org.

—Jim Egge

New Program Chair- person Needed



Many program ideas come from Chapter members. Many are borrowed from other chapters. Some programs come from organizations that want to tell their story. Many programs grow out of DNR activities, and some come from word of mouth.

At the April Board Meeting, the Board helps prioritize program ideas and often adds new ones. The chairperson contacts possible presenters.

Please ask us your questions. Please talk to us.

Fran Duritsa 612-822-4822 fduritsa@aol.com
Jerry Bahls 763-572-2333 bahls001@tc.umn.edu

March Kids' Fair

Kids' Fair Night will take place at our March Audubon program, for the 8th grade-and-under wildlife enthusiasts.

Plan to come early for a fun-filled time of games, learning, and prizes. We will start the Kids' Fair at 6:45 pm so kids will have time to play games, stay for the program with live birds, and still be home early on a school night.

The regular program on hawks will start at 7 pm, so bring the whole family, a friend, and Grandma and Grandpa to the Mayflower Church on Tuesday, Mar 7.

NEIGHBORS OPPOSE BUILDING ON GRASS LAKE WETLAND

Grass Lake is a 30-acre, type 5 wetland in Southwest Minneapolis at Lyndale Avenue South and Crosstown Highway 62.

It is surrounded by a 50 to 100-foot zone of trees, shrubs, and native prairie plants and is home to duck nesting areas and 53 species of birds. Area residents, a representative from the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, and members from the Minneapolis Audubon Chapter were part of the opposition group at the Planning Commission meeting.

On November 14, the Minneapolis Planning Commission rejected proposed plans to build a single-family home on property at 5912 Girard Avenue South. Conditional use permits and variances were not approved.

Follow up action: In mid-January 2006, the determined builder took his appeal to the Minneapolis City Council. The opposition group was again present.

At print time, results of this appeal were not available.

(from the *Southwest Journal*, Dec. 5-18, 2005)

Swedish Wildlife Artistry Exhibit

The American Swedish Institute presents an exhibition of over sixty works in its Swedish Wildlife Artistry Exhibit. The exhibition runs from February 8 to May 14, 2006.

The American Swedish Institute
2600 Park Ave.
Minneapolis, MN 55407.

For more information, call 612. 870.3374

YARD BIRDING

And Other Delights



Just when you start to get discouraged that the native plants in the yard are not attracting wildlife, we are presented with a pleasant surprise. Earlier, we wrote about goldfinches coming to the yard without the aid of a feeder. We also talked about the native plants attracting butterflies and other pollinators. Up until the first snowfall, it did not look like much was happening in the yard.

With the first snow, we started noticing tracks and tunnels throughout the backyard. Then one late afternoon we were rewarded when looking out of the kitchen window, we observed some motion by a clump of grass. Our first thought, since the movement had a gray cast to it, our first thoughts were that we had a Dark-eyed Junco, but the critter ran back into a hole in the snow. Not a junco! We waited and a nose appeared, followed by the rest of the furry little guy. A gray afternoon in late December is not the best time for taking photos, but we had to know. Blurry and grainy though they were, the photos showed that we had a Short-tailed Shrew.

Short-tailed Shrews are wonderful little creatures. They eat earthworms among other prey. Short-tailed Shrews are also food for larger predators and a few days later, we were rewarded with one sitting on the back fence.

A Cooper's Hawk was perched on the fence as we arrived home a few days after seeing the shrew. The hawk was scanning the ground below the fence and seemed to be looking for the shrew that we had seen earlier. It stayed on the fence long enough to get a camera and take a couple of pictures. Again, due to the late afternoon and the cloudy sky, the picture is not the greatest, but worth reprinting in this newsletter.

None of the birds and other critters in the yard are something that a serious birder would drive halfway across the state to observe, but enjoying the "close at hand" can be just as exciting.

—John Arthur and Pamela Deerwood

AUDUBON MINNESOTA

Wednesday, March 1, 2006, 5 – 8 p.m.
10th Annual Legislative Forum

Tuesday, March 14, 2006
Audubon Lobby Day at the Capitol

Register early by e-mailing Susan Solterman at ssolterman@audubon.org or calling her at 651.260.7040. A packet of information will be sent to you in early March.



ADULT WINTER ADVENTURE WEEKEND

FEBRUARY 10-12, 2006

Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, high ropes course, climbing wall, night hike, quinzhee building (snow shelters) and more.

For more information, call the Audubon Center of the North Woods at 888.404.7743 or audubon1@audubon-center.org or www.audubon-center.org

Volunteers Wanted

We are looking for volunteers for the Northwest Sport Show from Tuesday March 28th to Sunday April 2nd at the Minneapolis Convention Center. All volunteers receive a free admission ticket to the show. Contact: Jenny Vitale at 651.739.9332 by Feb. 15.

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
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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.
- 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

- 7 Chapter Program
- 10-12 Adult Weekend Adventure
- 17-20 Great Backyard Bird Count

March

- 1 Legislative Forum
- 4 Roseville Clinic
- 7 Kids' Fair
- 14 Audubon Lobby Day
- 17-19 Owls on the Move
- 18 Bell Museum 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 Vetter 763 561-1761.

Board meetings are held every month on the 2nd Tuesday at 7:15 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 President Jerry Bahls for details!