



KINGFISHER



Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

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Representing the National Audubon Society
in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

Mar 2000

Upcoming Program

Many of you are photographers, and have asked for a program to learn more about what it takes to produce professional results. Here is your chance to see, hear, and learn. You will go, "Oh, wow, look at that!" when you see a swan pictured as it lifts off the icy waters of the Mississippi River near Monticello.

Renowned Minnesota photographers, John and Jenny Gregor, will present the work of ColdSnap Photography. ColdSnap specializes in photography of natural history, gardening, and outdoor activities. They will present work from last year's project for the Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA) Program of the Minnesota DNR, which included 31 SNA locations throughout Minnesota. Some of this work was included in the book, *Worlds Within a World*, a collection of essays by Paul Gruchow about selected SNA sites.

In addition, ColdSnap Photography has illustrated several other recently released and soon to be released books. *Growing Home* and *Trees and Shrubs for Northern Gardens* are being released this month, March 2000. *Northland Wildflowers* will be released in 2001.

You will discover some of the secret gems hidden in the Minnesota landscape by attending the program starting at 7:30 p.m. This is at Mayflower Church located immediately west of Hwy 35W at the Diamond Lake Road exit. If you come by bus, get off at Diamond Lake Road and Nicollet, walk one block east to the church. Enter through parking lot door. Map on page 2.

-Fran Duritsa

Web Sites

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
www.geocities.com/RainForest/5835

MN Audubon Council
www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn/index.html-ssi

National Audubon Society
www.audubon.org

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Minnesota Audubon EIC Meeting

There will be an Environmental Issues Committee (EIC) meeting at 5:45 p.m., March 7, prior to our program. It will be at the Mayflower Church, in the same meeting room. All Audubon members are invited to attend. All Audubon members have a vote on the issues discussed. The EIC is the primary advisory group for Minnesota Audubon's Lobbyist, Don Arnosti. The EIC sets legislative priorities and helps allocate Lobbyist time. This is a very important statewide committee. It is one of the links that makes Minnesota Audubon the effective organization it is. Please take advantage of this meeting time and place to give your voice to the many issues that come before this committee. Maybe you will even be motivated to attend more of these in the future.

You may also attend the meeting via your phone, just call Suzanne Plass at the MN Audubon Council prior to the meeting night. Suzanne will give you instructions on how to hook up to the meeting using your phone. 651-225-1830

Audubon Forest Campaign

National Audubon Society is trying a new strategy to enlist Audubon's nationwide strength. They have identified 7 actions in 2000 to help save forests across the country. They have enlisted chapters across the country to commit to at least one action on each issue. The Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (ACM) has enlisted to do our part. Jerry Bahls has agreed to be the point person in this effort for ACM. Most of the actions will involve writing letters to politicians and government officials. Occasionally when an event is occurring in Minnesota we may be asked to attend a meeting or a rally.

The seven issues for 2000 are: January - Protect Forests in Your State or Alaska, February - Fund Federal and State Purchase of Priority Private Lands, March/April - Contain Chip Mill Threat, April/May - Authorize Most Current Science in Federal Forest Policy, June/July - Influence How Congress Spends Your Money, August/September - Fight Special Interest Riders and Priorities, October/November - Wrap up and VOTE. Mailings are sent to the point person who then distributes the information to interested members. Obviously we have missed both January and February, however there is the rest of the year to help protect the valuable bird habitat in the state and the country.

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis is looking for members who are interested in the State and Country's Forests to help with this effort. To help with this effort call Jerry at 612 572-2333 or e-mail him at bahls001@tc.umn.edu.

Lessons in Humility

Sometimes I wonder why I allow myself to continue in this crazy hobby of birding and bird photography. It seems to me it leads to nothing but frustration, self doubt, too many miles driven, too much film wasted and too much money spent. To what end, I ask you.

A couple of weeks ago, I headed north to Aitkin county, one of my favorite places to bird. I had been skunked on owls in the Sax-Zim bog, and I knew that the Pietz's road owls were fairly reliable. Also, I had just heard about a yard whose feeders drew all the neat northern birds such as Common and Hoary Redpolls, Evening and Pine Grosbeaks, Red-breasted Nuthatches and even Northern Shrikes.

It was a beautiful day. I started out before dawn so that I could catch the owls. Unfortunately, I just got a fleeting glance of one as it took off from the gravel road with something in its beak. Ah, well, such is birding—off to the feeders. I followed another gravel to its end and turned off on a road brand new to me. It was quiet and peaceful. The road wound through some bog, some meadow, some woods and along a river. I saw Rough-legged hawks and White-tailed deer. There were fox and coyote tracks in the snow.

I found the feeders, asked permission to park the car in the drive and sat with my camera ready. It was a treat! Never had I been so close to Evening Grosbeaks. Truly their colors are like antique gold against black and white velvet. What a variety there is in redpoll coloring. Some of the birds looked like valentines all pink and red. In others only the red cap was colorful against cream and brown. Pine Grosbeak males are almost garishly pink and the females a beautiful gold and gray. I blew through about three rolls of film before moving on.

My next stop was for Bohemian Waxwings. Again I was very, very lucky. I got to within maybe fifteen feet of them. Field guides do not do these birds justice. They are very colorful: red, orange, yellow, silky gray, buff brown. They are also very animated. Hardly still for a moment, they flitted around the crabapple trees, picking off the fruit. Then they would drop to the ground, digging about in the snow for fruit that had fallen; then back into the tree. Then they would all take off only to return ten to fifteen minutes later.

So, you ask, where is the lesson in humility in all of that? It sounds wonderful. And it was, until I got my film developed. The redpolls took up maybe 10% of the frame, the waxwings had moved and were blurry. Although the grosbeak pictures were nice, again the birds did not take up enough of the frame to really stand out. I almost cried.

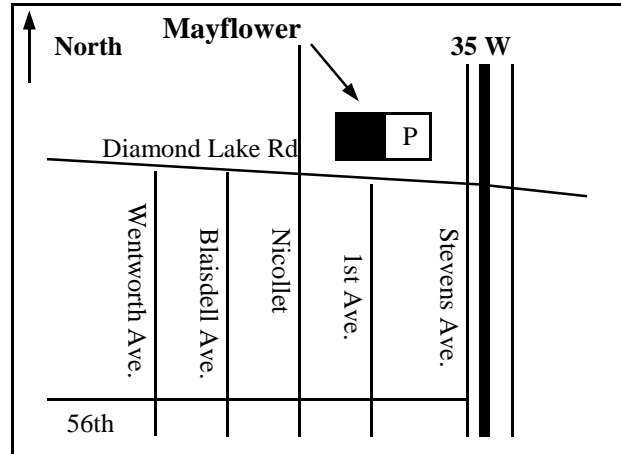
Instead, I repeated the whole trip again last weekend—with similar results. I got skunked on the owls. I don't dare develop my film because I might be disappointed. I put way too many miles on the car. Why oh why do I do this? I don't know, but I'm planning to return—maybe this weekend. It's a disease. No, it's a passion, and a reason to keep looking for the next opportunity to make it all come out perfectly.



-Vija Kelly

Come to our next program!

DATE: Tuesday, March 7, 2000
TIME: 5:45 p.m. EIC Meeting
 7:30 p.m. "Natural History Photography"
AT: Mayflower Church (Lower Level)
 109 E. Diamond Lake Road, Minneapolis
 (35W & East Diamond Lake Road)



Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis 1999-2000 Contacts

President	Tom Mahan	588-5440
Vice President	Phyllis Mahan	588-5440
Treasurer	Kim Halek	427-8656
Secretary	Dorothy Kuether	926-4205
Board Member	Jerry Bahls	572-2333
Board Member	Fran Duritsa	822-4822
Board Member	Dorene Scriven	922-4586
Board Member	Tom Stinson	767-8736
Board Member	John Arthur	931-0819
Board Member	Jim Sharpsteen	722-9109
Board Member	Jean Kelley	862-1421
Board Member	Bill Sipe	331-1223
Board Member	Ann Leykom	827-2245
Birdathon/Big Day Coord	<open>	
Bluebird Recovery	Dorene Scriven	922-4586
Camperships Hunt Hill	Marion Borell	866-1266
Camperships North Woods	Bob Nelson	933-7340
Conservation Chair	<open>	
Education Outreach	Mary Ellen Vetter	561-1761
Field Trips Chair	Terry Brashear	929-1976
Field Trip Leader	Don Wanschura	866-3276
<i>Kingfisher</i> Editor	Wina Mortenson	781-7998
<i>Kingfisher</i> Editor	Paul Kinzer	781-7998
Lending Library	Dorene Scriven	922-4586
Mailing / Membership	Jerry Bahls	572-2333
Park Feeders	David Stamps	374-3609
Programs	Fran Duritsa	822-4822
Publicity/Exhibits	Bill Sipe	331-1223
Sales	Tom Stinson	767-8736
Social	Phyllis Mahan	588-5440
MOU Rare Bird Alert		780-8890
MN Audubon Office		651-225-1830



The Audubon Center Experience

Founded in 1968, the Audubon Center of the North Woods is an environmental education sanctuary, located in Pine County, Minnesota, about halfway between the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area and Duluth.

The Center features an historic lodge, wildlife barn, bird banding center, a yurt, log cabin classroom and a shack for the production of maple syrup. These buildings complement a newly-constructed dining hall and dormitory complex to accommodate large group meals and meetings.

The site is located amid old-growth pines along the edge of cold, clear Grindstone Lake. Restored Wetlands, a board walk and scenic hiking trails complete what is truly a beautiful place. An international, professional staff of educators makes the Audubon Center a special place to visit and learn.

The Audubon Center of the North Woods is open for all Audubon members to explore and enjoy. The Center also offers Family Camps, Adult Camps, Youth Camps, Schools Programs, College Courses and Adult Tours. Plan to visit the Center soon and have an Audubon Experience of your own!

Spring Family Camp March 24, 25 & 26

“Celebrate Spring with Us”

Experience maple syruping, discover the tools of bird identification, learn about Slovakia and Nepal from our international interns, and star gaze with Mike Lynch from WCCO Radio!

The Audubon Center of the North Woods is offering a wonderful weekend as they celebrate Spring.

They are located on the picturesque shores of Grindstone Lake about 90 miles north of the Twin Cities, 75 miles east of St. Cloud, and 5 miles from Interstate 35.

Your accommodations will include a private room and bath for each family. Each room has four bunks and can sleep up to eight people. Home cooked meals are served in the spacious dining room with its beautiful stone fireplace.

The cost for Spring Family Camp is \$75/Adult, \$60/First Child, \$45/Additional Children. Children 4 and under are FREE. Childcare is available during day sessions for a small fee.

For more information, contact Audubon Center of the North Woods by phone at 320-245-2648, or (reservations) 1-888-404-7743 e-mail: audubon1@ecenet.com or on the web at www.audubon-center.com

The Natural History Series

The Audubon Center of the North Woods is offering weekend classes, good for graduate credit from Hamline University.

March 25-26: Forest Natural History

April 15-16: Aquatic Studies

May 6-7: Natural History of Rivers

June 17-18: Birds of Minnesota

Be prepared, these are planned to be outdoor weekends.

You should be ready and dressed for walking through mud and water, canoeing, etc.

Cost: 1 semester credit - \$170; no credit - \$75

Time: All weekends start at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, and end at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday.

For more information, contact the Audubon Center. See the contact info at the bottom of the previous article.

100th Christmas Bird Count, 1999

We had a nice turn out for our annual Christmas Bird Count this year. 28 participants braved the snowy weather to help gather data for the National Audubon Society's 100th Christmas Bird Count. Once again Siah St. Clair and the Springbrook Nature Center were gracious enough to host the event – including supplying a hot lunch for all the participants. We greatly appreciate the use of their facilities, and we usually get some good birds at the nature center's feeders.

We found a total of 43 species, and 12,285 individuals this year. The best bird of the count had to be the well documented Hoary Redpoll found by Warren Woessner and Derral Reeve.

Listed below are the species seen on this year's count:

SNOW GOOSE	DOWNY WOODPECKER
CANADA GOOSE	HAIRY WOODPECKER
WOOD DUCK	NORTHERN FLICKER
BALD EAGLE	AMERICAN BLACK DUCK
MALLARD	COMMON GOLDENEYE
BLUE JAY	PILEATED WOODPECKER
HERRING GULL	SHARP-SHINNED HAWK
AMERICAN CROW	BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE
COOPER'S HAWK	RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH
RED-TAILED HAWK	WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH
BROWN CREEPER	RING-NECKED PHEASANT
ROCK DOVE	AMERICAN KESTREL
RING-BILLED GULL	RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER
CEDAR WAXWING	EASTERN SCREECH OWL
MOURNING DOVE	EUROPEAN STARLING
BARRED OWL	GREAT HORNED OWL
NORTHERN SHRIKE	AMERICAN TREE SPARROW
HOUSE FINCH	BELTED KINGFISHER
HOUSE SPARROW	NORTHERN CARDINAL
HOARY REDPOLL	AMERICAN GOLDFINCH
COMMON REDPOLL	DARK-EYED JUNCO
BLACKBIRD (SPECIES)	

-Terry Brashear

Talent Scouts

The nominating committee is in the process of finding talented people to serve on our Chapter's board. If you are interested, or know of anyone who may be, feel free to contact Fran Duritsa at 612-822-4822. Fran is serving as the Chair of the nominating committee and is assisted by Paul Fusco and Frank DeSteno.



Feb. Program Review

On February 1st, after snacking on the cookies and bars that people brought to share, about 45 to 50 people sat down to listen to Bob Capitola share his knowledge of racing pigeons. It was very interesting, since it was a topic that few of us seemed to know much about, and Bob was a dedicated expert, eager to enlighten us.

His knowledge is both deep and wide on the specialized topic of racing pigeons, a sport not widely popular in the U.S., but very heavily followed abroad (it's the National Sport of Belgium!)

After watching a short video on the topic, Bob expanded on what the video introduced: the biology and natural history of pigeons, and the history of the use of the rock dove (from which all the 40 or so breeds of pigeon are descended), both as a tool of communication and transport, and as a sport. Then he answered many questions from an intrigued audience.

Here is a sampling of some of the things we learned about pigeons:

*Though generally gregarious, pigeons will fight to the death over nest territories.

*May mate for life

*Both sexes take turns incubating their clutches of two eggs; they breed up to 7 clutches a year.

*Both sexes produce "crop milk," a cheese-like substance eaten by the hatchlings.

*In calm winds, pigeons can fly 40-45 mph, with a tail wind, they can reach 70-80 mph.

*Although it is still not clear how they do it, pigeons have an extremely strong homing drive and ability. After being released for a race, they circle a couple of times, then head off in a line for home. They fly fast and strong for hours, stopping only for water, and during longer trips, at night.

*Pigeons have been known to complete a 600 mile race in one day.

*It is believed that they have a built-in magnetic compass to help guide them.

*First domesticated in England, pigeons were historically used for delivery of messages during wartime, for stock listings and for journalism.

*They have also carried packages: blood samples from remote areas, and even diamonds smuggled from mines in South Africa.

There were many other facts, but what Bob does is raise and race pigeons, and that's what the most time was spent on. It's a sport with a fairly long history, and a passionate, if relatively small (in America) following. Racers from a given geographic area will meet with their "teams" of birds at a designated spot. The birds are released at the same moment, and are timed on their trips home. Since the birds have different distances to fly (they are flying to their own homes) adjustments are made in the results. Winners are determined by figuring out the quickest rate of travel, not the time it took them to get home.

Bob is obviously dedicated to his sport. He brought several antiques with him to show the history of pigeon racing: He had a vintage military pigeon roost, and several racing timers. It

used to be that owners had to remove temporary tags from the racer's leg, and insert this tag into the timer before stopping it. Today, it works more like a check-out line at the grocery store: when a racing bird enters its home nest, a code on its leg tag is read by a sensor, and the time is automatically recorded!

Bob also brought one of his beautiful birds with him. His gentleness with it, and its calmness assured us that these are well-cared-for athletes that take part in a sport that is possible because of the amazing abilities that only birds possess.

-Paul Kinzer



Lobby Days at the Capitol

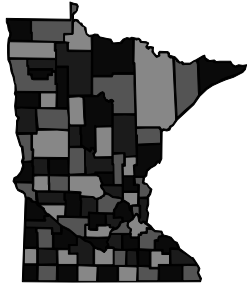
Every year Minnesota Audubon (MNAud) along with a few other environmental groups invites their members to the Capitol to talk to their legislative representatives. This year Lobby Days will be February 27 - 28, this next Sunday and Monday. On the first day, which is usually a Sunday, there is a training session of about two hours. Members who are new to lobbying their representatives are coached in the major and minor points of discussing an issue with the legislator. Usually MNAud has arranged for a legislator to be there to give these new lobbyists their slant on effective lobbying. The Minnesota Audubon Environmental Issues Committee picks an issue that will be supported. This issue is usually not very complex so that the new lobbyists aren't burdened with information that they probably don't have and consequently are embarrassed in front of their legislator. As of this writing the issue has not been picked.

You can participate in Lobby Days by calling MNAud at 651 225-1830 or e-mail Suzanne Plass at splass@audubon.org. You'll need to call in order to find out where the Sunday meeting will be, and to find out where the "Lobby Center" will be on Monday. Also, so that MNAud can try and set up appointments with your legislator. This is a very interesting and exciting event for those who have never done it. It is an experience that you will remember and it is very important in getting the Minnesota Audubon Legislative agenda passed. This is one of those areas where legislators sit up and take notice, because MNAud has turned out a large number of their members to let them know what is important to them!

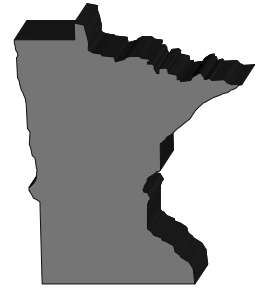
Help Wanted!

Your chapter is in need of a Birdathon Chairperson to supervise this annual fundraising event to be held in May. The Birdathon is our only fundraiser. Proceeds from the Birdathon go toward bringing Audubon Adventures to fourth, fifth and sixth grade classes. We need someone to lead this very important effort. If you would like to volunteer for this, or have any questions, please contact Tom Mahan. 588-5440





Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis Programs & Field Trips February - May 2000



Guests are welcome!

Programs



Programs are held the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.
Mayflower Church, 35W & East Diamond Lake Road, Minneapolis

Mar 7 "Natural History Photography" John Gregor will discuss the values of nature photography with the use of slides of the photography of ColdSnap Studios, and the natural history photography of the northern plains and forests.

Apr 4 "Hummingbirds of California" Don Mitchell is a graduate student at the University of Minnesota. He will present a slide program on the many delightful hummingbirds found in California.

May 2 "Fox Sparrows: Is One Species Enough?" Ann Kessen will explore the methods used by researchers to determine whether a group is a special species.

Field Trips

March 11-Mississippi River Valley (Bald Eagles)

We will meet at 8:00 a.m., near Walgreen's in the Hub Shopping Center in Richfield, and carpool from there. The Hub is on 66th and Lyndale Ave. S. We will head down Highway 61, stopping at various locations to look for eagles, and probably have lunch in Wabasha before heading home. Call Terry at 929-1976 for more information.

March

11 Mississippi River Valley (Bald Eagles)-Terry Brashear

April

29 Coon Rapids Dam, 7:30 a.m. ASM/MN Audubon/
FMR, contact 651-225-1830 FFI.
29-30 Spring Council Meeting, MN Audubon,
field trips throughout the weekend. Location TBA.
FFI: 651-225-1830. Tom Mahan

May

6 Rice Creek-Terry Brashear
7 Wood Lake Nature Center-Tom Mahan
11 Louisville Swamp-Don Wanschura
13 Old Cedar / Bass Ponds-Terry Brashear
18 Springbrook Nature Center-Siah St. Clair or
Steve Roman
20 Tom Crosby Park-Don Wanschura
TBA Big Day Bird Count
TBA Spring Lake Park



Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
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Calendar of Events

February

27-28 Lobby Days at Capitol

March

7 EIC Meeting, 5:45 p.m.
Chapter program, 7:30 p.m.
"Natural History Photography"
Mayflower Church
11 Field Trip, 8:00 a.m.
Mississippi River Valley
14 Chapter Board Meeting, 7:00 pm
Anwatin School

April

4 Chapter program, 7:30 p.m.
"Hummingbirds of California"
Mayflower Church
11 Chapter Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
Anwatin School
29 Field Trip, 7:30 a.m.
Coon Rapids Dam
29-30 Spring Council Meeting
Field Trips throughout the weekend

This schedule is also available at our Internet address:
www.geocities.com/RainForest/5835



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 check to:

National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Data Center
PO Box 51001
Boulder, CO 80322-1001



LOCAL CHAPTER
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
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9M99