



# KINGFISHER

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis



Vol. 51 No. 2

Representing the National Audubon Society  
in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

March 2002

## President's Message

Are you ready for birding? Did you participate in GBBC (Greater Backyard Bird Count) sponsored by National Audubon and Cornell Ornithology Lab.? We participated in this at Wood Lake, Westwood Hills, Springbrook Nature Center, and two homes. If you did this at your home, please send a postcard to our chapter address telling us about it --who, number of people involved, amount of time you watched, number of species seen, and any special happenings. At the March meeting, we will have a compilation of our Chapter's involvement.

From the clipboards passed at the February meeting we gained many good suggestions and several people willing to help. If you have more ideas or suggestions, please contact the chairperson in that area, or any board member. Also, we're always glad to hear that you want to help, just let us know what, how, and when you have time. Many people will be needed to monitor the tree cutting and replanting, and watering of new plants in parks. When you volunteer with the park board, let the person know you're an



Audubon member. Let's help the community know what an active, interested group we are.

Do you need or want help in bird identification?? Our own Jerry Bahls has planned a class and bird walk at Westwood Hills Nature Center on April 27 (more about that next month). Another member, Dee Schmalz, will have two classes at Lennox Center in St. Louis Park in April. These are good opportunities to introduce a friend or neighbor to a very satisfying hobby. Also a time to make new friends. Start checking neighborhood papers, the nature centers, and community education programs. Let me know of other opportunities; I'll post them at the March, April, and May meetings.

Have you just returned from AZ, TX, or other winter bird area? Before the March meeting (7:15) we'll have a sharing time. Come to tell your birding joys, and show photos or come to listen.

Hope to see you at the March meeting to learn about tundra swans at Crex Meadows.

—Dorothy Kuether

## Upcoming Program

Tuesday, March 5  
Trumpeter Swans at Crex Meadows

On March 5, Jim Hoefler will present a program on trumpeter swans at Crex Meadows. Jim is a wildlife biologist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and has worked at the Crex Meadows Wildlife Area since 1980. He spends about half of his time doing wildlife education programs and the other half on wildlife management activities such as prescribed burning, wetland restorations and management, surveys, and maintenance and development projects. He has an undergraduate degree in biology and a master's degree in wildlife management.

Crex Meadows is a 30,000 acre wildlife management area located near Grantsburg in northwest Wisconsin. Wisconsin's trumpeter swan reintroduction program began at Crex Meadows in 1989. The slide program will include a brief introduction to Crex Meadows, a description of the trumpeter swan project and the current status of trumpeters in Wisconsin.

Come join us and bring your own observations and questions to share.

In May, Desiree Sorenson, from Audubon's Population and Habitat program in Washington, DC., will be discussing the relationship between songbirds and human populations.

—Lisa McDonald



## Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis 2000-2001 Contacts

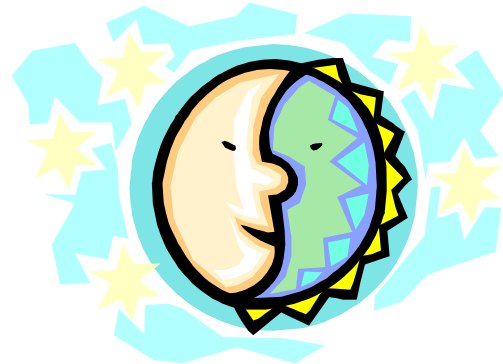
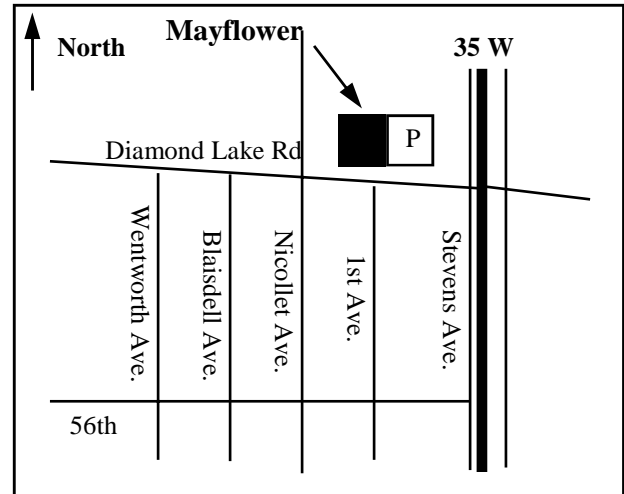
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**Minnesota Audubon**  
[www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn/index.html](http://www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn/index.html)  
**National Audubon Society**  
[www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)

## Come to Our Next Program!

**DATE:** Tuesday, March 5, 2002  
**TIME:** 7:15 p.m. Winter Birding Sharing Time  
 7:30 p.m. "Trumpeter Swans at  
**Crex Meadows"**  
**AT:** Mayflower Church (Lower Level)  
 109 E. Diamond Lake Road, Minneapolis  
 (35W & East Diamond Lake Road)



## Electronic Kingfisher

SAVE A TREE!  
 SAVE US SOME MONEY!  
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 Contact Jerry Bahls at  
[bahls001@tc.umn.edu](mailto:bahls001@tc.umn.edu) today!



## Magic Happens

Way back in 1975, Brooks Atkinson wrote the following: "Life has become so mechanized, life is so lacking in flavor, that anything learned about anything rescues people from the boredom of civil obedience. In a technological age the man who knows where the Bergamot grows in some brushy back field or knows when and where to look for the Pleiades is a revolutionary. He has published his declaration of independence. He can no longer be conveniently catalogued or efficiently computerized or checked off as a safe statistic."

Brooks Atkinson was a birder and writer on nature. Since he wrote these words, I think our lives have become even more mechanized and technologized. Our world has become one of uniformity and pre-packaged everything. For those of us that have chosen to be "revolutionaries" and stay in touch with other rhythms there is a cost.

I have recently found out how difficult it is to chart your own way in the birding life. My husband's boss let him know that he needed to take a vacation. Ed was in the middle of a plant expansion and installing new equipment, working 12 hours a day, so he told me to pick the time and the place. I had a bit of a case of nerves about that because I knew that I wanted to go where I could photograph birds and other wildlife. A good friend of mine calmed me down with the simple statement, "Don't you think he knows that." Sometimes the obvious is not so obvious to those of us who are not used to putting ourselves first. Well, I chose southern Florida. I have never been to Everglades National Park and I wanted to revisit Ding Darling and Corkscrew Swamp, the Venice rookery, etc. That's where the fun began. In trying to make flight reservation, I found out that all of the cheap fares had long been taken by the pre-packaged crowd, in this case those going on cruises. Booking your own trip to do what you wanted to do wasn't so easy.

I turned to a travel agent. This dear man usually does customized trips to the Pribiloffs. Although he got us good fares to Florida, it had to be the way the airlines wanted it. You had to go Tuesday to Tuesday. You couldn't go Tuesday to the following Thursday. I had to laugh when he wanted to lay out a trip plan and was asking how much time I wanted to spend in Ding Darling, etc. and which day did I want to go. I told him he could just get lodging in the area and I would figure out the rest. Where I went when depended upon the tide tables, the weather and which birds happened to be nesting where at the time. You know, leaving things that vague was a revolutionary concept. Apparently, most people wanted every moment of everyday planned out for them. The agent even asked me whether I wanted to schedule the romantic walk on the beach I asked for at the beginning or the end of the trip. Like you can preplan romantic evenings?

Yes, not following the pre-packaged mob was more difficult, but the trip is scheduled and I hope I bring back a lot of good slides to share with you all.

—Vija Kelly

## February Program Review

A program about loons, the Minnesota state bird, attracted a full house to an Audubon meeting at Mayflower Church on February 5.

Rich Baker, a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Zoologist, said the loon population here has stabilized, despite shrinking habitat, encroachment by watercraft, and declining revenue for habitat restoration from the Minnesota income-tax form checkoff.

For perspective, keep in mind that loons can live 20 to 30 years. Pairs mate for life and usually produce two eggs per year. Raptors and some humans are predatory threats.

The summer loon population is about 12,000 to 13,000. In prime habitat counties, such as in Aitkin and Crow Wing, there are two loons per 100 acres of water. Baker said loons have become used to sharing habitat with us, not that they have any choice, of course. He said familiarity with watercraft makes loons more vulnerable to injury because they may fail to dive soon enough to avoid them.

There are more loons in Minnesota than in all other states except Alaska. "They're an economic asset, an important component of tourism," he said. "Visitors ask where they can go to see a loon. So, you can see loons are pretty important to us." Indeed, the ancient bird has become part of Minnesota's identity. Its image appears on state licenses and lottery promotions, and it is also the symbol of the Minnesota Ornithologist Union.

The DNR protects loons in land and water we use for recreation with buoys, signs and nesting platforms. The signs say "Loon Nesting Area" and "No Camping." The state agency sends *Woodworking for Wildlife* platform plans to anyone requesting them. "I don't think loon platforms are going to be the saving grace for loons," Baker said. "More could be done to warn of the danger of watercraft, discarded monofilament fishing line, and lead sinkers."

Loons are diving birds that catch and eat fish. They need to swallow rocks for digestive grist, but lead sinkers poison them. They can be strangled in fishing line and drown.

"There is an educational need to protect loons," he said. "You can't tell people on lakes that no longer have loons, that there isn't a problem. States like Iowa and Ohio used to have loons. There has been a contraction of their range to some extent. Assessing the extent of the problem isn't easy, but the DNR is trying. Since 1989 the department has directed a statewide loon survey, using a volunteer workforce. "We selected 700 lakes, some of all sizes, in all parts of the state," Baker said. "We discovered, to our surprise, that small lakes provide significant habitat. Thirty percent of lakes of 10 to 49 acres have at least one loon." Baker urged Audubon members to become volunteers for this year's loon monitoring program July 4-14. "It would be a good chapter project."

Baker said the survey has the secondary benefit of helping the DNR determine water quality. "Loons are a wonderful indicator of lake health," he said. "They need clean, clean water."

—Tom Waller



## Beginning Birding Class

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis will be having their annual Beginning Birding Class on April 27th in time to catch the returning birds in May. The class is designed to help the beginner to lift the fog from the bird recognition center in their brain. It will help active individuals who know that birds have feathers and most of them fly. Differences between mosquitoes and hummingbirds will be pointed out. After the class you will



know that all blue birds are not bluebirds. So bring a note pad and pay attention. It will make your appreciation of your backyard and your lake cabin that much more enjoyable.

We have again reserved the morning at Westwood Hills Nature Center in St. Louis Park for the class. It will begin at 9:00 a.m. on April 27th. After the class we will have a little practical experience by doing an hour field trip (rain or shine!) at the Nature Center. So bring the bird watching equipment that you have and prepare to spend about 2

enjoyable hours learning about birds. Watch for more information in next month's *Kingfisher* or in flyers that will be distributed around the area in your libraries and other similar places after April Fool's Day. Please let your friends and neighbors know about this event and circle April 27th on your calendars.

See you there!

—Jerry Bahls

## Andy Keller Presentation

The Audubon Center of the North Woods in Sandstone hosted a visit by Andy Keller on Saturday, Jan. 12. Andy is known to Minneapolis Chapter members as "Audubon's man in Alaska". Since the 1980's, Andy has been directly involved in biological research, management policies, and campaigns to preserve the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. His presentation included the past history and the current status of the Refuge, now under political threat of oil drilling.

Andy served as a Chapter Board member and Conservation Chairman, and among a wide variety of environmental issues, was instrumental in Boundary Waters and Voyageurs Park legislation.

Andy is currently a graduate student and Teaching Assistant at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. His academic work is focused on the debate over management of the Arctic Refuge with special emphasis on the human value of preserving wilderness areas.

—Mary Ellen Vetter

## Protect Our Water Lobby Day

Audubon Minnesota invites you to join them, along with the member organizations of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership (MEP), in a day at the Capitol dedicated to Protecting Our Water. February 28th has been designated as the Lobby Day, when citizens concerned about our water will gather at the Capitol to meet with their legislators and tell them about how they can Protect Our Water.

DATE: February 28, 2002

TIME: 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

10:00 am - sign-in

11:00 am - issue and lobby training

11:30 am - rally at rotunda

12:00 pm - lunch on your own,

meetings with legislators

PLACE: State Office Building, Rms 500N & 500S

-The message for the Lobby Day will be to **Protect Our Water!**-

To **Protect Our Water** is a ...

\* Smart Investment that we need to make now. It's a win for Minnesotans, Minnesota's water, lakes and streams and for the Minnesota economy today and in the future.

\*Fair Deal—a win for taxpayers and Minnesotans because it gets rid of unfair taxes that single out and harm small landowners and helps them do the right thing for Minnesota's heritage and future—conserve the land that protects our water, lakes and rivers.

\*Gets Minnesotans more involved in making our communities better and our water cleaner by giving citizens the power to participate more fully in monitoring of water quality in their communities, ensuring their right to know about pollutants in their water, and making pollutant-free fertilizer readily available to homeowners across the state.

For more information in how you can participate call the Audubon Minnesota office at 651-739-9332. Please help by joining us to Protect Our Water!

—Jerry Bahls

## New Audubon Minnesota Office

Audubon Minnesota, the National Audubon state office, has moved from their downtown St. Paul office to a new location in Woodbury. Their new address is 2357 Ventura Drive, Suite # 106, Woodbury 55125-3959. They also have a new phone number: 651 739-9332. The new fax number is 651 731-1330. Please write these down in your phone book or place you keep numbers of importance. The new office is located just off I-494, exit at Lake Drive, East one block, North one block on Wooddale Drive, then East on Ventura Drive. Proceed until Ventura Drive turns South, 2357 is in the North side. Suite #106 is the furthest from the street. Feel free to visit their more spacious office any time during working hours. An open house is planned, watch for the announcement.

—Jerry Bahls





## Christmas Bird Count 2001

The chapter held its annual Christmas Bird Count on December 15, 2001. Above average temperatures and lots of open water gave us hopes for a high count. The exact opposite occurred. With such warm weather, a lot of expected species were not present, and waterfowl that should have been around due to so much open water were non-existent. We finished with 45 species for the day. 28 observers spent a combined total of 65.35 hours and covered 530 miles in search of birds.

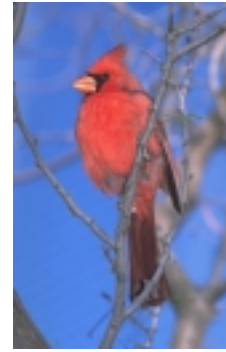
Species seen:

Canada Goose	American Crow
American Black Duck	Black-capped Chickadee
Mallard	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Ring-necked Duck	White-breasted Nuthatch
Lesser Scaup	Brown Creeper
Bufflehead	European Starling
Common Goldeneye	Cedar Waxwing
Hooded Merganser	American Tree Sparrow
Bald Eagle	Dark-eyed Junco
Cooper's Hawk	Northern Cardinal
Red-tailed Hawk	Common Grackle
Buteo Species	House Finch
American Kestrel	Common Redpoll
Ring-billed Gull	American Goldfinch
Herring Gull	House Sparrow
Rock Dove	Red-bellied Woodpecker
Mourning Dove	Downy Woodpecker
Eastern Screech-Owl	Hairy Woodpecker
Great Horned Owl	Pileated Woodpecker
Ring-necked Pheasant	
Blue Jay	
Peregrine Falcon - only the second time on the count	
Wild Turkey - Second time on the count	
Northern Flicker (11) largest number seen in count history	
American Robin (1067) largest number seen in count history	

A big thank you to Siah St. Clair and Springbrook Nature Center for allowing us to use their space and for hosting the lunch!

Thank you to all the participants who make this possible.

—Terry Brashear



## Leadership Pool

The Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis' Nominating Committee is in the process of soliciting members to fill Board seats, whose terms are expiring. They are also in the process of finding members who will be our President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. Some of the incumbents will agree to serve another term if elected. Dorothy Kuether has served two consecutive terms as President and thus is not eligible to run again. We thank Dorothy for her two years of fine leadership. Thus we will have a new President in May.

When the Nominating Committee is searching for replacement Board members or chapter officers, it is not evident that there is a ready pool to select from. It would be wonderful if we had an election where we have two, if not three, highly qualified individuals to run for each of the eligible slots. Therefore we would like to request that all of you, who have a small amount of time that you can devote to the chapter, to let any Board member or officer know that you would like to help.

The health of an organization depends upon its leadership. Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis faces some very difficult fiscal decisions in the near future, because of the changes that National Audubon has made concerning dues reimbursement. An example of this is the fact that the Board has decided to drop one issue of the Kingfisher; the July/August issue will no longer be published, because of our projected income for fiscal year 2002. This was also a prime factor in changing the fiscal year from January - December to July - June, which coincides with National Audubon's fiscal year. Lacking leaders causes us to not provide community services, which is part of our mission. An example is our Conservation Chair opening. We have not had a Birdathon Coordinator in over 4 years. This has affected our income. Also we can always use more Field Trip leaders.

We need to fill these openings and have volunteers step forward to work on our committees to make Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis the dynamic, vibrant organization that provides the community with the services that it deserves and desperately needs. The great part about many of these "jobs" is they are very enjoyable and require only a small commitment. But they do provide you with an understanding of the organization and some training in leading the chapter, and thus become part of the leadership pool we desperately want. Remember, being part of any organization requires some give and not all take!

—Jerry Bahls



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**KINGFISHER**  
March 2002



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- 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!

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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

28 Lobby Day

### March

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

### April

2 Chapter Program, 7:30 p.m.  
"Locks and Dams on the Mississippi"  
9 Chapter Board Meeting, 7:15 p.m.  
27 Beginning Birding Class, 9:00 a.m.  
Westwood Hills Nature Center

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