



# KINGFISHER



MARCH / APRIL 2011

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 60 No. 2

*Representing the National Audubon Society in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County*

## A Note from the President

When one thinks about wildlife watching, he or she usually envisions grabbing optics and hopping in the car. Wildlife is out there, in the wild. Those who have a home attached to acreage or a park, may not think this way. But we who live on a city lot perhaps could find much more wildlife in our own yards than we do.

I live on a 42 foot city lot and often consider them a nuisance as much as a joy. Quack grass, Creeping Charlie, dandelions, and violets are to be done away with, not appreciated. We tolerate only pure patches of fescue or Kentucky Blue. The squirrels which dig a deep, swirling hole to find or hide “who knows what”, don’t receive my blessing. I probably have 5-10,000 such holes, making my yard totally unsuitable for croquet. I borrowed a trap to see if relocation was the answer, baited it with peanuts, and nabbed one within hours. It was released 2 miles away, and may have gotten back before I did. For the next 3 weeks, I kept setting the trap to no avail. Every day the trap was sprung and empty of both peanuts and squirrels. My theory is that the chipmunk who lives under my deck has gone in, sprung the trap, eaten the peanuts, and squeezed out between the narrow wires. His weight gain belies his innocence.

*Continued on page 2*

## March Issue

### Upcoming Programs

March 8, 2011: Past, Present and Future—Richard Crossley

*[This meeting will be held the SECOND Tuesday of March. Location is the Brookdale Library, 6125 Shingle Creek Parkway, Brooklyn Center, MN. Date was changed to accommodate the schedule of Richard Crossley]*

A story of past lessons learned from days growing up in the wild British birding scene, from travels around the world to living in Cape May. Richard now creates books and media that bring birding into the 21st century. The story is told in a Yorkshire brogue through a camera lens that loves color and art. But what of birding in the future - perhaps this will change your thoughts!

Come and hear Richard Crossley also discuss his new book, *The Crossley ID Guide: Eastern Birds*, which will be released in the spring of 2011. This stunningly illustrated book from acclaimed birder and photographer Richard Crossley revolutionizes birding by providing the first real-life approach to identification. Whether you are a beginner, expert, or anywhere in between, *The Crossley ID Guide* will vastly improve your ability to identify birds.

April 5, 2011: Floodplain Bird Life: The Ganges Conundrum—KS Gopi Sundar

Graduate Student (Conservation Biology Program, UMN) and Research Associate (International Crane Foundation)

Imagine a fertile floodplain the size of Minnesota with 8,000 years of cultivation history, 70% of the landscape dedicated to rice and wheat crops, 166 million people, and 7 million cattle and poultry.

*Continued on page 4*

## ***Roberts Bird Sanctuary Revitalization Project Update***

Last fall, we asked for input from chapter members and members of the larger birding community regarding the long term management of Roberts Bird Sanctuary, which is located on the north side of Lake Harriet in Minneapolis. We incorporated the input into a white paper entitled “Roberts Revitalization Project Priorities & Recommendations” and presented the paper in early November to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) staff with the hope that the MPRB would, in turn, incorporate all (or at least most) of the input into its long term management plan for Roberts. This winter, MPRB staff are writing the draft management plan and sometime in the late spring, the draft will be available for public comment.

*Continued on page 4*

*(President's Note continued)*

Speaking about the chipmunk, last summer, I daily found 3-5 cherry tomato skins or parts near his hideout. In 2 months we're talking about quite a few pints at organic tomato prices.

One thing that may be keeping us from spending time viewing nature in our yards, is electronics – the computer, TV, etc. Sometimes, but not often enough, I will hook up one or the other on the deck. One day as I was watching our nearly tame rabbit nibbling in the back, I spotted a Cooper's Hawk on a pole 80' away. It flew over the yard 10 feet over my head, then circled and lit in a tree behind my garage. About two minutes later, using the garage as a screen, it came streaking

over the shed and dove down at the rabbit. The rabbit scurried in the nick of time under my gooseberries.

From my deck, in 2009 I watched a beautiful Cape May Warbler among others. There's the crow family that sits in the front elm, shredding young birds or mice, with the juvenile complaining about its share. There was the Downey Woodpecker that woke me last fall looking for bugs under the siding of my shed. How do you fix holes in cedar shingles? I wonder where the oriole picking bugs in my rhubarb could be nesting. I also wonder if the lack of mosquitoes, perhaps from over spraying, could be why I rarely hear a single Nighthawk evenings, when 3 or 4 used to be

common. At nights in September I listen for the squeaking of migrating warblers flying over. In November it's Snow geese or swans faintly visible in the red glow of downtown Minneapolis.

Last December I was often treated to the hoots of the Great Horned Owl, which I surmised was perched in the bell tower of the church across the street. We don't have to go far, if we take the time to wait and listen, right at home.

~ Jim Egge

## Wood Lake Nature Center Environmental Book Club

Here is the upcoming schedule, please request, and read books early if there are limited copies.

Both Hennepin and Dakota County libraries usually have multiple copies, and several of the upcoming books are either classics or best-sellers so they should not be hard to find at used book stores.

March 22 - *Eating Animals*, by Jonathan Safran Foer

April 19 - *Bats Sing, Mice Giggle*, by Karen Shanor and Jagmeet Kanwal

May 17 - *Hawks Rest*, by Gary Ferguson

6:30pm-8pm \$5, free for members

For more information contact:

Amy Markle

Naturalist

Wood Lake Nature Center

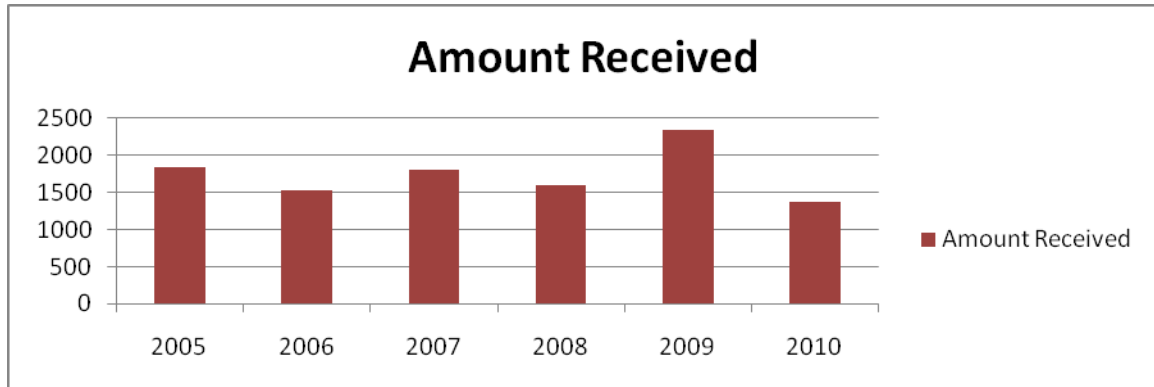
612-861-9369

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Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis	Www.audubonchapterofminneapolis.org		<b>MOU Rare Bird Alert: 763-780-8890</b>
Audubon Minnesota	Www.audubon.org/chapter/mn		

# Fall Appeal Results

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis would like to thank the members listed below for their support during our annual Fall Appeal. We received \$1365 in donations. This is less than our average over the six years that we have made the Fall Appeal. However this is not surprising in this difficult financial period. The donations ranged from \$10 to \$100. The graph below shows the donations received over the 2005 – 2010 period.



We again want to thank the following contributors -

- |                    |                               |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| June Aaker         | Catherine R. Iverson          | James F. Patrykus       |
| Anita Anderson     | Lary Johnson                  | Elizabeth A. Peterson   |
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| John W. Gausman    | Clem & Elizabeth Nagel        | Elizabeth Weir          |
| A. Stuart Hanson   | Don & Darlene Olson           | John & Sylvia Winkelman |
| Mary Hurwitz       | Dr. Charles & Marjorie Ostrov |                         |
| Kathryn Iverson    | Dorothy Parker                |                         |

*Continued from page 1* In anticipation of the public comment period for the draft management plan, we're asking chapter members to review the Priorities & Recommendations paper. With its cover letter, appendix, and lists of birds, the paper is thirteen pages long so it's too lengthy to reprint in the Kingfisher but it is available on the chapter website at [www.audubonchapterofminneapolis.org](http://www.audubonchapterofminneapolis.org). We didn't post the paper online last year because we wanted to give the MPRB time to review it. Now it's time for chapter members to review the paper to prepare for commenting on the draft. Please visit the ACM website to review the paper and for updates on when the comment period for the draft management plan will be held and where the draft management plan will be available.

#### *Guided walks at Roberts Bird Sanctuary*

Join us on Saturday, March 5 for a beginner's walk. We'll be looking for signs of winter's departure and spring's arrival. The walk starts at 8 am at the Visitors Shelter. It's free and open to everyone. We'll be offering more guided walks during the migratory season. So far we have walks scheduled every Saturday in May starting at 8 am at the Visitors Shelter. We hope to add walks during April, throughout the summer, and in the fall. Information about walks will be posted on the ACM website and at the Roberts Visitors Shelter.

We're always looking for volunteer guides. You don't have to be an experienced guide - we'll help train you. You can set the dates and times and can designate the experience level of the walk(s) if you want. If you have any interest in leading walks at Roberts, contact Kit Healy at [heal0055@umn.edu](mailto:heal0055@umn.edu). If you would like to lead a walk at some other site in our membership area, contact Susan Tertell at [stertell@gmail.com](mailto:stertell@gmail.com). For many years the Minneapolis Audubon Society has been leading walks at Roberts every Tuesday during April and May. The walks start at 9 am at the Visitors Shelter. The walks are free and open to everyone.

#### *Our 2011 Adopt-a-Park Agreement (now called Park Stewards)*

The MPRB has revamped its Adopt-a-Park Program. It's now called the Park Stewards Program and better reflects the individual needs of each "adopted" park in the MPRB system. We're looking forward to working with the MPRB on the 2011 agreement for Roberts that will include many activities and events at the Sanctuary. One project already underway is updating the information in the display cases at the Visitors Shelter. If you would like to help with this project or any other project at Roberts, contact Kit Healy at [heal0055@umn.edu](mailto:heal0055@umn.edu). Check the ACM website for more details about the display cases project and other events and activities at Roberts.



## Member Poetry Corner



### *March Butterfly*

I walk along a still snowy,  
wooded path covered in  
day-bright, warming sunshine.  
Then –  
glimpse an erratic flight.  
I see something again.

Unmistakable rich browns  
of a Mourning Cloak.  
It lands, with angular wings  
oriented to the sun,  
blues and purples scattered  
within cream-yellow fringes.

Then off again!  
Fleeting and gliding to  
find dripping tree sap,  
and perchance, a bark crevice  
under which to outlast  
the remaining winter.

- Clem Nagel

*Continued from page 1* This accurately describes the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Less known facts about the state, however, are even more remarkable. It hosts the world's largest known population of Sarus Cranes and Black-necked Storks – both birds over 4 feet in height. In addition, an unknown number of bird species are reputed to persist here, but ornithological explorations are just beginning. How is this apparent and idyllic coexistence of high human use and birds possible? What are the challenges for bird conservation on this landscape that has human densities of >450 people km<sup>-2</sup>? In this illustrated talk, I explore these questions with information from the first ever landscape-level ornithological survey in the state.

#### **May 3: An Idiosyncratic Selection of Bird Photographs – Jim Williams, Minneapolis Star Tribune**

From the files of Jim Williams, who photographs birds and writes about them for the Minneapolis Star Tribune. You can read his blog at [www.startribune.com/blogs/wingnut](http://www.startribune.com/blogs/wingnut). Jim Williams has been watching birds and writing about their antics since before "Gilligan's Island" went into reruns. Join him on his blog for his unique insights, his everyday adventures and an open conversation about the birds in your back yard and beyond.

***Programs are held at the Mayflower Church at 35W and Diamond Lake Road in Minneapolis, except where noted. The programs run from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.***



## 2010 Christmas Bird Count Results



Twenty-five people gathered on December 18, 2010 to participate in the Minneapolis North Christmas Bird Count. The count is conducted in a 7.5 mile radius circle with the Coon Rapids Dam as the center. Springbrook Nature Center in Fridley is the gathering site for hot drinks, a potluck lunch and reporting.

The participants clocked almost 69.5 hours looking for and counting birds. They found a total of 6300 birds of 38 species. Of course, all the usual suspects were seen, for example: 480 black-capped chickadees, 707 crows, 2352 mallards, and 175 blue jays. Some of the rarer and therefore more exciting sightings included a northern shrike, 6 white-winged crossbills and 14 common redpolls all between Long Lake and Pike Lake; and one varied thrush in Champlin.

Some of the birds that are usually seen, such as common mergansers and goldeneyes, were not seen because the river was iced over; and others, such as some sparrows, were scarce because the deep snow has forced them to move to other areas.

As a comparison in 2009, 8935 birds and 39 species and in 2008, 4451 birds and 43 species were found. The Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis would like to thank those that participated in the count this year and invite you to come to the 2011 CBC.

The full report is given below.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Count</u>
Canada Goose	358	Blue Jay	175
Mallard	2352	American Crow	707
Ring-Necked Pheasant	8	Black-capped Chickadee	480
Wild Turkey	39	Red-breasted Nuthatch	1
Bald Eagle	14	White-breasted Nuthatch	97
Sharp-shinned Hawk	2	Brown Creeper	3
American Kestrel	1	American Robin	17
Rough-legged Hawk	1	Varied Thrush	1
Rock Pigeon	212	European Starling	405
Mourning Dove	45	Cedar Waxwing	18
Great Horned Owl	2	American Tree Sparrow	8
Barred Owl	2	Dark-eyed Junco	82
Belted Kingfisher	2	Northern Cardinal	94
Red-bellied Woodpecker	21	House Finch	219
Downey Woodpecker	69	Purple Finch	1
Hairy Woodpecker	34	American Goldfinch	203
Northern Flicker	3	White-winged Crossbill	6
Pileated Woodpecker	2	Common Redpoll	14
Northern Shrike	3	House Sparrow	584

### **LOON LORE**

Loon chicks spend up to 65% of their time carried on the back of an adult, being transported to and from a “nursery pool”. This is a place where chicks can easily find food (plants, crayfish, and invertebrates) safe from turtles and other predators. It also should be free of wind and wave action, which can separate chicks from parents.

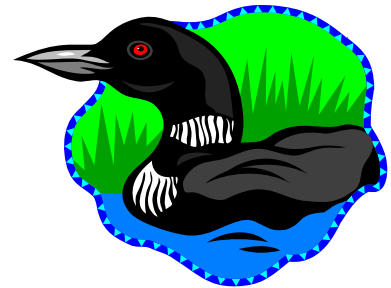
Loons have suffered serious declines since 1965. Lakes with increased boat traffic have had the biggest drop in nesting. Loons in some areas have adapted, but most have not, and are regularly chased

off nests. This causes predators, waiting for both adults to leave, to prey on the eggs. Also, lakes with high acid levels from acid rain and low neutralization capacity, have experienced the greatest declines compared to healthy lakes. This appears to be due to reduced invertebrates and fish hatches. Many loons hatched on acid lakes begin to develop normally and then simply starve to death. Acid rain is blamed on fossil fuels, particularly coal, which produces SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> gas.

If a loon were to land on a small pond surrounded by trees, it would likely spend the rest of its life there.

Loons require a minimum distance to sprint across the water to gain speed, much like a large airplane on a small runway.

Question- How many loon species have visited Minnesota recently? (Answer on next page!)



### **Cabrillo Aquarium's Baja Trip to Meet the Friendly Whales - great trip for birders!**

Join Cabrillo Marine Aquarium (CMA), March 6 through March 14, 2011, for a trip that truly is the Journey-of-a-Lifetime, especially for bird fans! Pacific gray whales return to San Ignacio Lagoon each year to mate and give birth. During this nine-day excursion we will spend three exciting days anchored in San Ignacio Lagoon where friendly gray whales and their curious calves swim within arm's length of the skiffs. For fans of our feathered friends this is a chance to see albatrosses, osprey, black and American oystercatchers, frigate birds, a wide variety of herons and egrets, not to mention all the birds that hang out in the mangroves found in San Ignacio. The trip also includes naturalist-led visits to uninhabited desert islands where passengers will have the chance to see even more birds, unique habitats, and tons of other wildlife.

For more information visit <https://sites.google.com/site/cmabajaadventure/> or contact Carolyn Kraft, Programs Assistant, Cabrillo Marine Aquarium @ [cmaprograms@gmail.com](mailto:cmaprograms@gmail.com)

### **Upcoming Minneapolis Audubon Meetings**

Friday, March 11th, 2011—1PM. Ron Windingstad, Minnesota's Audubon at Home Coordinator, will discuss the Audubon Minnesota Chimney Swift Conservation Project and what is being done to reestablish Chimney Swifts in an attempt to halt the rapid decline in this poorly understood species. Building artificial towers for the Swifts as well as the importance of native plants for native insects that are fed upon by so many of our species will also be discussed.

Friday, April 8th, 2011—1PM. Warren Nelson will share with us more “Wildlife of Aitkin County.”

Friday, May 13th, 2011—1PM. Stephen Saupe, Professor & Herbarium Curator at St. John's University, will discuss the Natural History of Edible Wild Plants.

All meetings are held at Bryant Square (31st & Bryant Avenue South). All are welcome for the program and refreshments are provided.

For more information please contact: Barbara Franklin, (p) 763.657.1907, (e) [bbfrankli@gmail.com](mailto:bbfrankli@gmail.com)



## Field Trip to Tiffany Bottoms, Wisconsin

The Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis is offering a wonderful chance to take a train ride in Tiffany Bottoms and look for spring birds. The date will be Sunday, May 15, 2011. Meeting time is 7:45 for 8:00 a.m. departure, and the cost is only \$15. The train ride is 6 hours (there will be several stops to walk around the area, and a stop by the river for lunch), and Tiffany Bottoms is about 25 minutes south of Eau Claire.

If you are interested in this field trip, you can make a reservation by contacting Susan Tertell, [stertell@gmail.com](mailto:stertell@gmail.com), 612-729-1566. A check for \$15 per person, made payable to Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (ACM) can be sent to Susan Tertell, 2841 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue So., Minneapolis, MN 55406. Please include contact information, with e-mail and telephone number in case we need to contact you. There is a limit of 75 people, so please reserve your spot as soon as possible.

**Bring:** Please bring a bag lunch and beverages, plus normal gear you would take for birding in uncertain weather – hat, raincoat, sunscreen, insect repellent, or whatever you think you may need. The train is open and we will go even if there is rain, so be prepared. If it is sunny, and for protection from bugs, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt are recommended. Also, the train stops in several locations for people to walk around and look for birds, observe wildflowers, etc. so wear sturdy shoes. There will not be a local guide on the trip, but there will be many experienced birders to help us all locate and identify the birds.

**Directions:** The trains depart from the upper DNR parking area south of Durand on Wisconsin state highway 25 about 2 ½ miles from where it intersects with Thibodeau

Road. (If you are using Mapquest or Google map you can search the intersection of Hwy 25 and Thibodeau Rd. in Durand to get directions from the Twin Cities).

Parking is on the east (left) side of Hwy 25, and there will be someone there to direct drivers. The train will have a porti-potty attached to the end of the train. If you need further directions, please ask when you register.

**Further information:** Here are a couple of links for further information on Tiffany Bottoms and the Chippewa Valley Motor Car Association that provides the train rides.

<http://www.chippewavalleymotorcarassociation.ellawisc.com/index.html>

<http://www.ellawisc.com/tiffany.html>

A short video of the train ride can be viewed at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/video/flv/generic.html?s=inwi10s16e7q516>

### 3rd Annual Spring WingDing

This family-friendly event honors urban ecology and features food, fun, and activities for kids and grown-ups. Members of the ACM will lead bird walks at the park. Check the Audubon Neighborhood Association website for more information and updates on the times for the walks.

<http://audubonneighborhood.org/content/join-us-3rd-annual-audubon-park-spring-wingding-april-30>

### Winter Speaker Series at

#### Wood Lake Nature Center

“National Parks in Your Neck of the Woods”—National Park Ranger Dan Dressler

Did you know there are five National Park sites in Minnesota? Come learn more about these special places and plan your summer vacation to a national park without leaving the state!

Thursday, March 10th from 7PM-8PM

FREE, donations will be taken

Address for Wood Lake Nature Center:

6710 Lakeshore Drive Richfield MN 55423

### Whooo . . . is nesting now?

The Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas is heading into its 3<sup>rd</sup> season and now is the best time to stop, look, and listen for territorial and nesting owls. If you can identify owl species we need your help documenting their behavior and location. **Look** for potential nests now before trees leaf out and monitor nests as the season progresses. **Listen** for an owl calling in the same location - 5 or more days apart or a pair calling to each other. To report your observation, go to [www.mnbba.org](http://www.mnbba.org) and click on Enter Observations. We need the species, date, evidence code, and Atlas block id. If you are a Surveyor and have not yet found evidence of breeding owls where there is suitable habitat, visit the block this spring and remember to add the time spent surveying in the block as effort. Thanks for your help!

For more information please contact: Bonnie Sample, [bsample@audubon.org](mailto:bsample@audubon.org)

**Answer from page 6** – *Common, Pacific, Red-throated, Yellow-billed. Arctic has never been recorded here.*

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KINGFISHER  
March/April 2011



**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**

**March**

5: Beginners Walk @ Roberts Bird Sanctuary, Visitors Center, 8AM

8: Program: "The Crossley ID Guide" - Richard Crossley @ Brookdale Library, 6125 Shingle Creek Parkway, Brooklyn Center 7-9PM (\*\*this location is a potential site for future program meetings so please let us know what you think)

22: ACM Board Meeting @ Uptown Lunds, 7-8:45PM

**April**

5: Program: "Floodplain Bird Life: The Ganges Conundrum" - Gopi Sundar @ Mayflower Church, 106 E. Diamond Lake Rd, Mpls, 7-9PM

26: ACM Board Meeting @ Uptown Lunds, 7-8:45PM

30: Spring Wingding @ Audubon Park, Lincoln St & 29th Ave NE, Mpls, 11AM-2PM

**May**

3: Program: "An Idiosyncratic Selection of Bird Photographs" - Jim Williams @ Mayflower Church, 106 E. Diamond Lake Rd, 7-9PM

15: Field trip to Tiffany Bottoms, WI—more information in this issue

24: ACM Board Meeting @ Uptown Lunds, 7-8:45PM

*The Kingfisher is published every other month beginning with the January issue. All are welcome to programs, trips and board meetings! For more information on upcoming events please check out our website at : [www.audubonchapterofminneapolis.org](http://www.audubonchapterofminneapolis.org)*

**Electronic Kingfisher**

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Contact Jerry Bahls at [jobaud@comcast.net](mailto:jobaud@comcast.net)