



# KINGFISHER



November 2009

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 58 No. 7

Representing the National Audubon Society in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

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## A Note from the President

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This past week I've been absorbed watching the 12-hour PBC special on our National Parks, "America's Best Idea." I'm immediately tossed back into the 50's when my father packed up tents, campers, bags, and five kids to trek cross-country to the great mountain ranges and sights he had dreamed about as a boy. It was a lark for us kids, riding in a car 400 miles a day with brief stops at museums, relatives, and spectacular views. My mother had the brunt of it, feeding and cleaning after us, and spending most nights in a campground and having most meals on park benches. But we loved it and developed an appreciation that never dimmed.

I think we assumed that these places had always been parks and had simply been set aside from public land to enjoy. Ken Burns has brought a new understanding of the struggle to preserve the National Parks/Monument legacy, which in many cases almost didn't happen except for the passion and tenacity of Muir, Mather, Teddy Roosevelt, and countless others. Thanks to these farsighted individuals, many of whom sacrificed political careers or great profits to guarantee this inheritance, we own Yosemite. We own Yellowstone, Valley Forge, and the Grand Canyon—not developers or private individuals. What a privilege!

In 1965, while attending the University of Arizona, I met a student whose father was a park ranger at the Grand Canyon. We talked about hiking to the bottom of the canyon, so during Easter break, seven of us walked the 12 miles down Bright Angel Trail to spend three nights on the banks of the Colorado River. I even got used to creeping along the same five-foot ledges with 1000' drops where some of the greatest pioneers walked. Coming up on Kaibab Trail, we started our seven mile ascent at 5 AM on Sunday morning, never failing to drink in breath-taking scenery with every step. Partway up, an Easter sunrise greeted us over the rim, and we could see our shadows miles away. That afternoon we emerged, exhausted, over the edge, and I would never be the same again.

The role that Theodore Roosevelt played in all of the early park history was molded by his relationship with John Muir. Don't miss the second of the six segments which focuses on the dreams and anguish of these two men. I felt some of the same feelings last year on the Oregon coast. We drove through stretches of ancient cedar forests, a century ago reduced to massive stumps. They've never recovered, and today are still essentially deserts.

*Continued on page 2*

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## November Program

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### **Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas** with Bonnie Sample

The Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas is an important bird conservation project which will identify every species that breeds in the state and where in the state they breed. Minnesota is one of only seven states—and the only state along the Mississippi Flyway—that has not developed an atlas.

Over the next five years, hundreds of volunteers will conduct bird surveys throughout all of Minnesota and document the breeding behavior for all the species they observe.

Hundreds, often thousands of volunteers, both professional and amateur, watch and record breeding evidence for birds in selected survey areas. The data collected by these volunteer surveyors provide the information used to create maps to describe which species breed in the state and where in the state they breed. Although the project lasts from five to six years, it is still considered a snapshot in time because it is conducted during a limited number of breeding seasons and is not based on historical information.

Results from the MNBBA will enable us to:

- ◆ Map the occurrence and breeding status of all species in the state
- ◆ Produce baseline information for monitoring future changes to bird populations
- ◆ Support local and statewide conservation planning with current, science-based information

Come and learn more about this important project and how you can become more involved!

**Tuesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 pm**  
**Mayflower Church**

### *2009 Fall Appeal*

Enclosed in this Kingfisher is an envelope addressed to the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis. Please use this envelope to send a fully tax deductible donation to the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis. Donations will be designated for programs and other educational uses. Make checks payable to Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis.

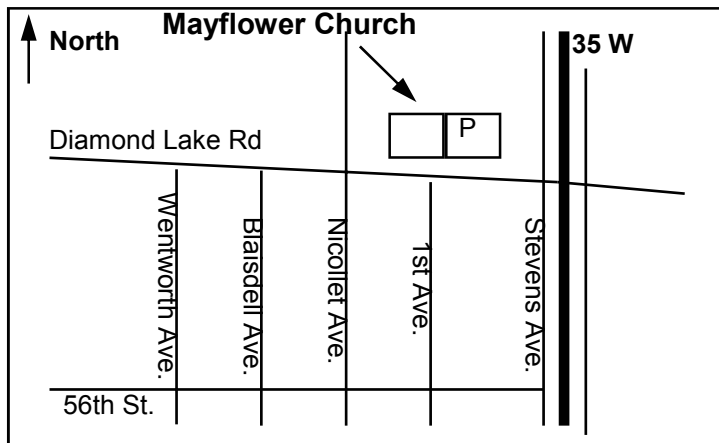
## Come to Our Next Program!

**DATE:** November 3, 2009

**"Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas"**  
with Bonnie Sample

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

**AT:** Mayflower Church, Minneapolis, 35W & Diamond Lake (road map below)



### **Note from the President, continued from page 1**

During an interview with Charlie Rose, the producer Ken Burns made the statement that "History is not just about the past." Indeed, history prompts us to pass on the best aspects of our culture to our children without having to repeat some of the mistakes. Everything I've ever learned and everything I've experienced affects every thought and feeling I have today. I would wish for every child to have the same opportunity to experience America's beauty that my parents gave me. Thomas Kiernan, president of the National Parks Association, quotes Margaret Mead in the Fall NPCA magazine: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

—Jim Egge

## Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis - 2009-2010 Contacts

President	Jim Egge	612-827-7629	aubullet2@yahoo.com
Vice President	John Arthur	952-931-0819	jarthur@visi.com
Treasurer	Ernie Gunderson	612-721-9103	egunde@aol.com
<i>Kingfisher</i> Editor	Marcia Marshall	612-871-6611	marciamarshall@comcast.net
<i>Kingfisher</i> Editor	Kim Halek	763-427-8656	mrvogelfrau05@visi.com
Audubon Center of the North Woods	www.audubon-center.org		
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis	www.geocities.com/audubon.geo		
Audubon Minnesota	www.audubon.org/chapter/mn		

**MOU Rare Bird Alert:**  
**763-780-8890**

## Audubon Minnesota Annual Meeting



On Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm, all Audubon Minnesota members are invited to come to the Annual Meeting. It will be held at the new Wilder Center in St. Paul and the parking is free. In addition to selecting our 2010 issue priorities, members will get updates from each of the Audubon chapters, network with one another and hear about exciting new bird conservation work. The cost will be \$15 to cover a great lunch and other expenses. Meeting details will be on our website (see contact list below).

## Minneapolis Audubon Society Bryant Square (31<sup>st</sup> & Bryant Avenue S.)

### **Friday, November 13, 2009 1:00 pm**

Jim Williams will familiarize us with North American birds in different areas of the U.S.

### **Friday, December 11, 2009 1:00 pm**

Paul Fusco will update us on his "Ten Years with an Osprey Family."

### **Friday, January 8, 2010 1:00 pm**

Don Luce, Bell Museum Curator of Exhibits, will speak on "Avian Art History."

### **Friday, February 12, 2010 1:00 pm**

Dr. Scott Sharkey will share his outstanding photography.

### **Friday, March 12, 2010 1:00 pm** Ted Galambos

### **Friday, April 9, 2010 1:00 pm** Warren Nelson

### **Friday, May 14, 2010 1:00 pm**

Jerry Bahls will update us on the Redheaded Woodpecker Recovery Program.

**Please join us for the program and refreshments.  
All are welcome.**

## Buckthorn: Current Problem and Future Problem

In the last couple of weeks, I had the opportunity to observe an extreme case of the current and the future problem with buckthorn. The current problem was observed at the golf course at Wirth Park. Buckthorn is everywhere and at every stage of development, from first-year plants to mature female trees with thousands of berries. Drastic control techniques are being used. All plants have been cut at soil level in many places. It is hard to imagine how it can be brought under control in a short period of time and at a reasonable cost.

Then, over the Labor Day weekend while hunting for mushrooms in Aitkin County, I came across a bad infestation of buckthorn. This is a very serious matter. If this infestation isn't removed, it will give a base for the spread of buckthorn into a very important logging area. Buckthorn's domination of the understory will affect the future of the Aitkin forest's ability to regenerate. It will explode in areas where it is present after trees are logged. If not kept in check, it could have a very pronounced effect upon the economy of the area.

While the buckthorn problem, I believe, isn't widespread up north, it is obviously spreading. The state needs to increase its efforts to eradicate it. One problem that often is missed with the buckthorn is the effect it can have on birds. Birds, at their most vulnerable in the winter and early spring, often turn to berries to survive. If buckthorn berries are available, birds will eat them when other foods are hard to find. Since they are cathartic, birds will defecate within about 15 minutes. This exacerbates the birds' problems finding enough to eat and potentially can cause dehydration too, doubling its effect on the birds' ability to survive during this difficult period.

—Jerry Bahls



## Fall Fund Appeal This November

The 2009-2010 fiscal year budget, as set by the Finance Committee of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (ACM) and approved by the Board last May, calls for raising \$1,500 to balance our budget. This will allow us to continue our current level of activity: we'll continue to publish eight *Kingfisher* issues and have eight programs during the year. The *Kingfisher* and programs continue to represent over 80% of our budget. National Audubon Society's (NAS) dues reimbursement will cover most of these expenses. The remaining expenses are covered by a variety of other sources. This year, ACM is very seriously considering committing funds to clean the buckthorn out of Roberts Bird Sanctuary. This effort will depend on co-operation of the Minneapolis Park Board. It may require us to dip into our reserves, but we feel this is a very important long-term project.

An envelope in this issue of the *Kingfisher* can be used to make a donation to ACM to cover expenses associated with our meeting programs and other education-related projects.

Please make your fully tax-deductible donation to help Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis continue our work to help the birds and other wildlife! Please make out the check to Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis. Thank you.

—Jerry Bahls

## Off-Highway Vehicle Issue Update

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis and Audubon Minnesota, along with other members of the OHV Coalition, have been working to put together a sane policy on the use of off-highway vehicles (OHV). Last year, some important legislation was passed and signed into law. It was the Seizure Law of OHV for egregious destruction of the environment (such as wetlands). This was a piece of legislation ACM and the Coalition had been working on for years. Senator Satveer Chaudhary of Fridley was the hero in getting this passed.

In recent years we have had very limited success and in fact, one might say that things have slipped backwards. The biggest backslide occurred a couple of years ago when Minnesota forests north of U.S. Highway 2 were designated as "managed forests." For your information, a managed forest allows travel by an OHV anywhere on an existing trail. This effectively means that if a trail is made illegally, the second vehicle that travels over it is traveling legally. The Coalition will continue to work to overturn this legislation.

Last year, the Coalition introduced a couple of bills which did not pass—or even get adequate hearings—which are common sense issues that need to be passed into law. One is the trespass law that requires a landowner to tell OHV operators that they are not allowed to be on their land. Hunters are not allowed to be on land that is simply posted as "No Trespassing." The proposed change would treat OHV riders the same as hunters. We expect to pursue this again this year.

The second bill deals with the Open Bottle law. Operators of OHV's are not covered under the existing laws. We expect to pass a law that would treat an OHV like any other motorized vehicle, making it illegal to operate an OHV with an open bottle of an alcoholic beverage.

Another activity that the Coalition will be supporting is the Sierra Club's Forest Monitoring Project. This will involve someone actively watching the forests to help keep them sustainable. The Coalition will also be monitoring OHV legislation that we view as not in the best interest of Minnesota.

If you are interested in helping with these issues, contact John Curry of Audubon Minnesota.

## Volunteer for a Clean Planet

Every Tuesday between now and this fall's vote on the American Clean Energy and Security Act, Audubon will be helping to coordinate a volunteer phone bank to encourage our supporters to call Senator Franken and Senator Klobuchar. By donating 2.5 hours of your time (6:00 pm– 8:30 pm) on any Tuesday, you can help pass this generation's most important initiative for bird conservation. And get this: you can join us at the Minneapolis phone bank, or you can call from your home by hooking up to our web based software. Pretty slick, eh? Call 651-739-9332 or [email John Curry](mailto:John.Curry@audubon.org) to be a part this important effort.

## Acid Levels in the Oceans

There has been a lot of discussion recently about the increasing acidity of the oceans and the problems associated with that trend. When acidity increases, we measure a lowering of the pH level. The acid comes from non-metal oxides such as SO<sub>3</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, or CO<sub>2</sub>, the source of which is the burning of fossil fuels: coal, peat, and wood contain the most oxides, with oil close behind.

SO<sub>3</sub> is the most severe of the acid pollutants but is produced in small amounts. NO<sub>2</sub> comes mainly from autos and trucks, and is the brown gas present in smog. CO<sub>2</sub> is the least acidic but is produced in massive amounts from burning any fossil fuel, including natural gas.

The CO<sub>2</sub> not only traps heat in the atmosphere for climate change, but it dissolves in water to make carbonic acid.  $H_2O + CO_2 \leftrightarrow H_2CO_3$

As the CO<sub>2</sub> in the air increases, it begins to dissolve faster in the oceans, disturbing the natural equilibrium. As the oceans' acidity increases, so does the solubility of CaCO<sub>3</sub> needed for the development of shells and bones. Shellfish have difficulty making shells, plankton has trouble reproducing, and coral reefs struggle to grow and maintain themselves.

The oceans can only hold so much CO<sub>2</sub>. When we begin to approach that limit, CO<sub>2</sub> is released back into the air where it builds dramatically, raising global temperatures. It's not just coincidence that as we use more fossil fuels the acidity measured in all waters has increased.

—Jerry Bahls

## Cards with Real Bird Songs and Calls

*Ithaca, NY*—A woodpecker may hammer, a loon wail, or a cardinal sing. Open a card from a new series of collectible greetings and out pop cheeps, peeps, whistles, and croaks from a variety of beautiful birds. The cards are produced by the U.K.'s Really Wild Cards and their authentic bird recordings come from the Macaulay Library archive at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Each card features an elegant painting selected from the Cornell Lab's art collection and contains information about the bird.

Really Wild Cards: <http://www.reallywildcards.com>

## Conservation Committee News

by Kit Headley

Tuesday, November 3, is Election Day in Minneapolis. The city's voters will go to the polls to choose a Mayor, City Council, Board of Estimate and Taxation, and Park and Recreation Board. If you live in the city and are eligible to vote, I urge you to do so. Before you go to the polls, however, please become an informed citizen. Take the time to find out where the candidates stand on positions that matter to you. One of the best ways to do this is to attend a candidates forum.

All of the elections are important but at this time, the chapter has chosen to focus on the Park Board races. All nine seats, the three at-large ones and the six district ones, are up for grabs. If you're reading this online, you can go to the chapter's new website:

[www.audubonchapterofminneapolis.org](http://www.audubonchapterofminneapolis.org)

and find the dates and locations of the Board candidates forums. If you're reading the print version of this newsletter, which arrives later than the online edition, you can still go online to find out about the forums. Many of them will have already taken place, but there are some scheduled for late October that you may be able to attend.

Another source of information may be Minnesota Public Radio (KNOW 91.1 FM) or WCCO (830 AM.). With all the controversy surrounding the Board elections, these stations (or other ones) may decide to broadcast a candidates forum. It's worth checking the program listings and even calling the stations to request one.

Checking out candidates' websites is another good way to become informed. Don't just read what the candidates have to say about themselves, however. Instead, make certain to pay attention to which organizations have endorsed the candidates as well. Then follow through by finding out the criteria used by the organizations to make their endorsements and decide whether you agree with the criteria. Taking these steps will help you figure out which candidate is a good match for you.

Of course, the last step is to go to the polls where you'll be . . . confused by Ranked Choice Voting (aka Instant Runoff Voting), but that's another column!

Come to the Conservation Committee meeting on November 24 at Lunds from 6-7 pm and tell us all about your voting experience.

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**Since** the first successful reintroduction of *Meleagris gallopavo* (the wild turkey) to Minnesota in the 1960's, the population of this handsome bird (well, okay, beauty in the eye and all that...) has exploded. Live-trapped wild turkeys from Missouri were released in Houston County, MN (Caledonia MN is known as the "Wild Turkey Capital of MN") and they quickly adapted to the turkey-friendly habitat of mixed forest and agricultural land in the area. Wild turkeys appreciate the roosting sites and cover that forests provide, as well as the berries, seeds, nuts, insects, and grasses that they forage from their surroundings. So as you're having your Thanksgiving dinner this month, give a thought to those wild beauties strutting through the woods!

## Slant Light of Winter

Skimming the morning landscape,  
low sunbeams cast their  
long shadows.  
Long shadows,  
longer than real life.  
A small boy stands  
with sun at his back.  
His long shadow  
lends importance  
for a while.

—Clem Nagel



**According to last year's FeederWatch, there was a massive southern movement of Pine Siskins during the 2008-09 season.**

## Help Project FeederWatch Track Backyard Birds

Birdwatchers needed to help scientists discover changes in bird populations

*Ithaca, NY* What happens in the backyard should not stay in the backyard—at least when it comes to bird feeders. By sharing information about which birds visit their feeders between November and April, backyard birdwatchers can help scientists track changes in bird numbers and movements from year to year through [Project FeederWatch](#), a citizen-science program from the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#) and [Bird Studies Canada](#).

Project FeederWatch begins on November 14 and runs through early April. Taking part is easy—anyone can count the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders and enter their information on the FeederWatch website. Participants submitted nearly 117,000 checklists last season. Since 1987, more than 40,000 people from the United States and Canada have taken part in the project.

“To get the most complete picture of bird movements, we always need new sets of eyes to tell us what species are showing up at backyard feeders,” says David Bonter, leader of Project FeederWatch. “Participants always tell us how much fun it is and how good it feels to contribute to our understanding of birds by submitting their sightings.”

Project FeederWatch is for people of all ages and skill levels. To learn more and to sign up, visit [www.feederwatch.org](http://www.feederwatch.org) or call the Cornell Lab toll-free at (866) 982-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Cornell Lab members) participants receive the *FeederWatcher's Handbook*, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds, a calendar, complete instructions, and *Winter Bird Highlights*, an annual summary of FeederWatch findings.

“The GBBC is a perfect first step toward the sort of intensive monitoring needed to discover how birds are responding to environmental change,” said Janis Dickinson, director of Citizen Science at the Cornell Lab. “Winter is such a vulnerable period for birds, so winter bird distributions are likely to be very sensitive to change. There is only one way—citizen science—to gather data on private lands where people live and doing this across the continent over many years. GBBC has enormous potential both as an early warning system and in capturing and engaging people in more intensive sampling of birds across the landscape.”

*urban Myth: leaving your birdfeeders up in the fall will NOT prevent birds from migrating!  
Help out our feathered friends and keep your feeders stocked during the fall, too. They'd also appreciate a fresh drink of unfrozen water—DON'T add glycerin or anti-freeze! ☺*

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis  
PO Box 3801  
Minneapolis MN 55403

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**KINGFISHER**  
November 2009



**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**

**NOVEMBER**

- 3 Election Day
- 3 Chapter Program at 7:00 pm
- 13 Minneapolis Audubon Society meeting
- 14 Minnesota Audubon Annual Meeting
- 14 Project FederWatch begins

**DECEMBER**

- 1 Chapter Program 7:00 pm

Board meetings are held every month on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday at 7:00 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 Jerry Bahls for details!

The *Kingfisher* is published monthly September through December and February through May.

**Electronic Kingfisher**

**SUBSCRIBE TO THE KINGFISHER ELECTRONICALLY!**  
Contact Jerry Bahls at [jobaud@comcast.net](mailto:jobaud@comcast.net)