



KINGFISHER



November 2005

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 54 No. 6

Representing the National Audubon Society in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

A Note from the President

First, I want to thank all of you who sent a donation in the envelope that was in your October Kingfisher. I'll let you know how successful it was in December.

This month, I want to return to a continuing concern I have for the future of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis and that is the need for volunteers. A few months ago, I lamented the many openings we have in our organization because we haven't had members step up to fill the positions. I stated at the time that I would take volunteers over money every time. I still feel that way even in the middle of our Fall Appeal.

At the current time we have no Board Secretary, two vacancies on the Board and two Committee Chair vacancies. Dorene Scriven has announced she will be stepping down as the chair of the Bluebird Recovery Program in December after over twenty years of service. Fran Duritsa will finish her self imposed tenure as the Program Chair and we should have a replacement ready to assist her this Spring so that Fran can train the replacement in the Program Chair's duties. It is unlikely that all three of the Board member's whose terms expire in May will agree to serve another term. I cannot serve another term as President next year - that is a Bylaws requirement. As you can see, if no one steps up, that leaves a large gap in our leadership in the coming months. It is imperative that we fill these Board positions to ensure a smooth transition for next year.

All organizations undergo leadership turnover when the current group gets to a point when various limitations make it very difficult for them to continue. The greatest of these is health, often a result of advancing age. Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis is currently undergoing this transition. Last year, the transition began when we lost three long-term volunteers from the Board. The concerns mentioned above show that this will continue this year. Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis needs to have a new wave of volunteers lead us for the next decade. The Bylaws allow the Past-President to remain on the Board and I intend to do so to help in this transition. **NOW** is a good time to do what you know you should. **CALL** me to be part of this dynamic new team that leads us into the future: 763.572.2333 or e-mail: bahls001@tc.umn.edu.

—Jerry Bahls, President

November Program

SEA BIRD MORTALITY AND OUR OCEAN LEGACY

The November program speaker, Pam Blackledge, is the Great Lakes Regional Organizer for a national campaign focusing on over-fishing, habitat destruction, and by-catch in our oceans. She is working with the National Environmental Trust (www.net.org) a national environmental group.

Bird groups are becoming more involved in the fate of our oceans due to habitat destruction and migration issues, but primarily because of a very destructive fishing technique called long-lining. The Pew Oceans Commission lists the long-lining industry as the number one threat to sea bird mortality. Consequently, many bird groups are active in the commercial fishing campaigns, such as that which will be presented by Pam Blackledge.

Overfishing, pollution, coastal development, and other problems have affected bird populations and severely eroded our vital marine and coastal ecosystems. Our current governmental structures are unable to adequately and effectively manage and protect these national treasures. The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy has concluded that "major changes are urgently needed."

Pam states that lobbying efforts supporting the Fisheries Science and Management Enhancement Act of 2005 – HR 1431 have begun. Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN) became an original co-sponsor of this legislation, which seeks to revamp how we managed the eight Regional Fishery Management Councils. If passed, such legislation could improve how we manage ocean resources, help end over-fishing, and rebuild over-fished stocks

**Please join us.
Tuesday,
November 1 at 7:00 p.m.
Mayflower Church**



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MOU Rare Bird Alert 763-780-8890
Minnesota Audubon 651-739-9332

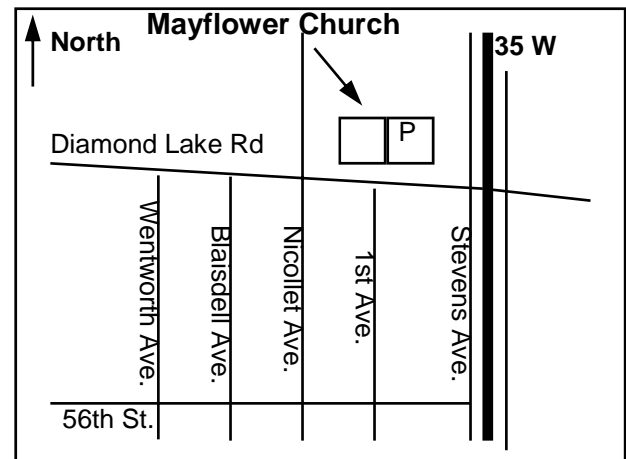
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Mary Ellen Vetter	mevetter@mninter.net

Come to Our Next Program!

DATE: Tuesday, November 1
**Seabird Mortality
and Our Ocean Legacy**
with Pam Blackledge

TIME: Program at 7:00 pm

AT: Mayflower Church, map below



Electronic Kingfisher

**SUBSCRIBE TO THE KINGFISHER
ELECTRONICALLY!**
Contact Jerry Bahls at
bahls001@tc.umn.edu

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
www.geocities.com/audubon.geo
Minnesota Audubon
www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn/index.html
National Audubon Society
www.audubon.org

November Field Trips

Saturday, November 12, all day

Swans and Eagles

We will join St. Paul Audubon members for A Big Day on the Mighty Mississippi to find Tundra Swans and Bald Eagles. Birds and birdwatchers will be at peak numbers. Our group will go to Wabasha and the surrounding area, and return on the Wisconsin-side of the river. Bring scopes as well as binoculars if you can, snacks and money to help with gas and for lunch. We'll return to St. Paul around 4:00-5:00 pm.

Carpool: Sears building, southwest corner parking lot at 8:00 a.m.

Directions: I-94E to Marion Street exit, go left over the freeway just past the Kelly Inn.

Leader: Chase Davies, 651.633.1663 and ccdavies@aol.com

Reservations are not required. You may call the trip leader if you need more information.

For December

December 3

MOU Annual Paper Session

Bell Museum, University of Minnesota

December 17

Christmas Bird Count

Springbrook Nature Center, Fridley

Contact Mary Ellen Vetter

Audubon Adventures Available

Teachers and other educators:

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis is looking for you to sign up for AUDUBON ADVENTURES. AUDUBON ADVENTURES is an environmental education program for children in grades 3 to 6. Developed by professional environmental educators, AUDUBON ADVENTURES presents basic, scientifically accurate facts about birds, wildlife, and their habitats. It comes to you packaged as a Classroom Kit (serving 32 students) or Individual Kit (serving 1 student). The program is used by classroom teachers, after-school program coordinators, special education instructors, language arts teachers, and home-schoolers. Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis has a limited number of these available for interested educators. Please contact Trudi Poquette at 612.824.4866 or Jerry Bahls at 763.572.2333 or e-mail bahls001@tc.umn.edu.

NOVEMBER BIRD OF THE MONTH

House Sparrow

Presented by Dorene Scriven

Learn about this controversial bird at our meeting on November 1.



A BRAND NEW BIRD

by Tim Birkhead

Basic Books, 2003 ISBN 0-465-00665-5

A Brand-New Bird tells the story of Hans Dunker and Karl Reich's efforts, beginning in the 1920's, to create a red canary. Dunker was a high school biology teacher with knowledge of genetics. Reich was a merchant and an avid canary breeder. Together they attempted to cross a canary with a red siskin to create a bird with the vocal characteristics of the canary and the red color of the siskin.

In order to tell this story, the author goes back to the 15th century, when the first canaries were brought to Europe from the Canary Islands. They were rare, and a status symbol. Wild canaries do not have a very striking appearance, but the volume, length and variety of their song is exceptional. By the mid 17th century, Germans were breeding canaries to improve their song. Enthusiasts in other countries bred them for color variations.

The story of the efforts of Dunker and Reich is interesting, but the background information is more interesting. Some of the topics covered are the culture of bird catching, controversies about Darwinian evolution, the nature and reason for bird song, competition (and cheating) in canary club competitions, and nature vs. nurture.

The book is sub-titled "How Two Amateur Scientists Created the First Genetically Engineered Animal." The subtitle is misleading. Genetic engineering generally means removing, modifying, or adding genes to a DNA molecule in order to change the information it contains. Dunker's basic technique was not different than the one animal breeders had been using for centuries. Nevertheless, this was an important improvement over past hybridizations, and his work is valuable in its own right.

The two main themes of this book are people and their interest in birds, and understanding genetics. Don't be put off by the science. *A Brand-New Bird* is very readable, and overall is an interesting book.

Reviewed by Donna Bahls

BOOKS FOR SALE

Did you know, Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis sells books and other merchandise at its program meetings?

We offer many of the most popular Field Guides for sale!
We have Bluebird Recovery items for sale!

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

All items are at *discount* prices.

This month's featured book is:

National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America

Minneapolis Audubon Society

Programs for 2005- 2006

November 11

Butterflies and Butterfly Gardens with Mary Vanderford

December 9

Birds and Animals of East Africa with Katie and Paul Sholz

January 13

Yangtze River and the Three Gorges with Lyall Schwarzkopf

February 10

"Interesting Things I've Seen" with Scott Sharkey

March 10

Photos of Western United States with Ted Galambos

April 14

Aitkin Encore and More! with Warren Nelson

May 12

Habitat Protection for Minnesota with Trust for Public Lands

Bryant Square Community Building 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Bryant Avenue South and 31st Street

Information: Mary McGee 612.377 063

THANK YOU

We extend our appreciation to all of the volunteers who staffed the Audubon Minnesota booth at the State Fair last summer. A steady stream of fairgoers stopped to test their bird identification skills at our new board of bird pictures and bird names. Visitors asked about what Audubon does, described birds they had seen, and took away Chapter and general information.

Heartfelt thanks to members Mary Abbey, John Arthur, Donna and Jerry Bahls, Ginny Black, Bill Caverly, Pam Deerwood, Lois and Ted Dick, Jim Egge, Paul Fusco, Ernie Gunderson, Joyce Holcomb, Elizabeth Javinsky, Jim Johannsen, Dorothy Kuether, Kitty and Roger Pickering, Trudi Poquette, Jean Scheii, Bill Sipe, Mary Ellen Vetter, and Sylvia Winkelman.

—Trudi Poquette,
State Fair Schedule Coordinator

AUDUBON CENTER OF THE
NORTH WOODS

IN SANDSTONE, MN



Saturday, November 12, 6:30 p.m.

DINNER AT THE LAKE

and a night of special musical and literary entertainment

"Earth Songs, Earth Stories"

with author Douglas Wood and his son Bryan.

\$18 for adults, \$8 for children 5-12 years, under 5, free.

Please RSVP for the dinner by calling 320.245.2648

Saturday, November 19, 7:00 p.m.

CONCERT

The Whistlepigs String Band presents internationally-acclaimed mandolinists and recording artists Mike Compton and David Long in concert.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.whistlepigs.com, by calling Fred Keller at 320.245.6799, or by e-mailing Fred at fkeller@scicable.net

Dec. 28, 2005 – Jan. 1, 2006

HOLIDAY FAMILY CAMP

Have five days of glorious fun, meet new friends and eat great food. We'll ring in the New Year with a bonfire. \$205.00 for adults, \$165.00 for children 5-18, no charge for children 4 and under. This fee includes all your meals, lodging and activities.

To make a reservation for your family, contact:

Audubon Center of the North Woods

P.O. Box 530

Sandstone, MN 55072

320-245-2648

Toll free in Minnesota 1-888-404-7743

E-mail: audubon1@audubon-center.org

Web site: www.audubon-center.org



This is Trudi Poquette's last year as State Fair Schedule Coordinator. Our chapter needs a new volunteer. Please call Trudi (612 824-4866) if you are willing to take on this important job starting summer 2006.

Yard Learnings

Yard learnings, as opposed to "lard yearnings" (having something to do with a desire for food at the State Fair), would be what Pamela and I have experienced and learned from our backyard.

About 5 years ago, we started replacing the sod in the yard with native plants. The virtues of doing this are many and might be the subject of future articles. Many of us have bird feeders and enjoy the birds coming to them. By planting natives, we are restoring some of the lost habitat (however small) that was here long ago.

We purchased a digital camera after a Harris' Sparrow was observed in the yard for a few days. Of course, the sparrows never returned after we bought the camera. Much of the activity in the yard has been documented since.

We have observed bird behavior that we would not see at a feeder, such as American Goldfinches feeding directly on the Tall Coneflowers and Cup Plants. They are still coming to the yard even though the thistle feeder ran out long ago (we may never refill it). When we walk out into the garden, we regularly flush a few birds that are hiding in the tall grasses, such as Big and Little Bluestem.

Other birds have graced our yard, such as Chipping and White-crowned Sparrows. To our delight a couple of years ago, a young Cooper's Hawk caught and ate a House Sparrow in the back yard. Pamela and I pulled up chairs and watched for a couple of hours until the hawk left.

Birds are only a small part of our experience with the back yard. By planting natives, we not only learn about the plants seasonal growth, but what to look for to identify them in the field. Many times after learning a about a new (to us) plant on a field trip, we will plant the same in the yard. We currently have about 100 different species of native plants in the yard. When in doubt about what a plant is or looks like, we have a reference library just outside of the kitchen door.

Bugs are always of great interest in our small island of native habitat in the great ocean of suburbia. We have watched cicadas emerge from their pupal case a few times in the past few years. One of those events we recorded with a digital camera on a tripod that we set up to take a photo every 2 minutes. The resulting pictures were then assembled in a short video where we can watch the bug emerge, the wings unfold and then watch it crawl a short distance to harden up enough to make its first flight.

Young dragonflies have been seen in the yard before returning to a wetland. So far, we have observed at least eight different species of dragonfly in the yard and several species of damselflies. Damselflies have been seen to eat treehoppers and small grasshoppers. Last May, we were treated to a Hudsonian Whiteface dragonfly in the yard. This is normally a bog species and not usually found in a suburban setting.

—John Arthur,
Vice President

Audubon Minnesota

Saturday, November 12 Fall Members' Meeting and Annual Audubon Dinner

Meeting: to discuss state legislative issues
To register contact Susan Solterman 651 260 7040 or
ssolterman@audubon.org

First Annual Audubon Dinner
Embassy Suites at 5:00 p.m. \$25 per person

Guest Speaker: Laura Erickson

RSVP by November 1 to Susan Soltermann 651.260.7040
or Ssolterman@audubon.org



Representative Jean Wagenius Receives Award

Mary Ellen Vetter, a member of the Audubon Minnesota Board, and John Arthur, the Vice-President of the Minneapolis Audubon Chapter, presented Representative Jean Wagenius with the **Audubon Minnesota Legislative Leadership** award at the September 6th Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis meeting. Representative Wagenius has been a member of the legislature since 1986 and serves on both the policy and finance environmental committees. She is a fearless leader who is not afraid to take a tough position to advance good natural resource policy, often under difficult situations and unappreciative colleagues. Her list of legislative accomplishments includes nationally recognized state recycling laws including a prohibition on the sale of mercury in batteries. She has been a hero for the environment for many years and Audubon appreciates her public service and her commitment to protect bird habitat.

Phenology—the scientific study of periodic biological phenomena, such as flowering, breeding, and migration, in relation to climatic conditions.”
Be sure to take the opportunity to go on a Chapter field trip or get out on your own to catch the last bit of fall nature before the snow flies!

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
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Minneapolis MN 55403

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KINGFISHER
November 2005



National Audubon Society
Chapter Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to join! Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and my local chapter at the special introductory rate of \$20! Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.

Yes, I'd like to join! As a senior citizen or student, I am able to join for only \$15!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Send this application and make check payable to:

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



LOCAL CHAPTER

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
PO BOX 3801
Minneapolis, MN 55403
Chapter Code: **M02**
7XCHA

Calendar of Events

NOVEMBER

- 12 Mississippi River Trip, Wabasha**
- 12 Fall Members' Meeting and Dinner**

DECEMBER

- 3 MOU Paper Session**
- 17 Christmas Bird Count**

Field trips are led by expert birders to some of Minnesota's finest natural habitats. Please see details inside this issue or call Mary Ellen 763.561.1761.

Board meetings are held every month on the 2nd Tuesday at 7:15 pm at the Lund's store on Lake Street just west of Hennepin-except in July. All are welcome to programs, trips and board meetings. Call President Jerry Bahls for details!

