



KINGFISHER



NOV/DEC 2011

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 60 No. 6

Representing the National Audubon Society in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

2011 Buckthorn Pulls

Everyone is welcome; children under 12 must be supervised by a parent or guardian.

The pulls last two and a half hours but you don't have to stay for the whole time. Feel free to arrive late and/or leave early.

We have some gloves available; it's helpful if you bring your own. We recommend the heavy duty canvas style gloves. We provide the tools - weed wrenches & root talons. They're easy to use; we'll show you how.

Dress for the weather; layers work best. Expect to get dirty. Consider bringing water (or some other beverage) and bug spray. Pulls will be cancelled if it is raining or snowing heavily - check the ACM website for cancellation updates.

Roberts Bird Sanctuary: Meet at the RBS Visitors Shelter at 4124 Roseway Road (next to the Peace Garden and across the street from the Rose Garden).

Saturday, October 22: 12:30 to 3:00 p.m.
Saturday, November 5: 12:30 to 3:00 p.m.

William Berry Woods: Located between lakes Harriet & Calhoun in Minneapolis—meet at the W. 40th Street side.

Sunday, October 30: 12:30 to 3:00 p.m.

November Issue

Upcoming Programs

All programs are free and open to the public. Programs start at 7 p.m. and end by 9 p.m. Held at Beth-El Synagogue, 5224 W. 26th Street, St. Louis Park.

November 8—*Stan Tekiela*

Uncommon Facts About Common Birds

December 6—*Val Cunningham*

Wildscaping: Gardening with Birds & Other Wildlife in Mind

February 7—*Tom Will*

Destructiveness of free-roaming cats

March 6—*To Be Determined*

April 3—*Carrol Henderson*

Birds of Kuwait

~**~ 2011 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 uses. Make checks payable to Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis.

A Note from the President

It has been about 40 years since the first Earth Day. That was the springboard from which hundreds of programs and millions of individuals took off on their mission to improve as much of their natural world as possible. The 70's were years of zealous folk trying to make a statement that would shake others into a sense of urgency. Perhaps many of you recall the Greenpeace boat running up into the intake chute of a Russian whaling ship and confronting the captain and crew. We saw pictures of activists dumping polluted water on the desks of corporate CEO's. Citizens were either turned on or turned off by the high impact approach.

The next 20 years saw quite a change in the environmental movement. What the public needed most was information and leadership. These required careful study and, of course, lots of money. Each organization formed its own plans to offer people an opportunity to be a part of united action. But it soon became clear that groups needed to narrow their direction to have the most impact. Organizations then focused on legislation, education, marine and coastal protection, fighting polluters, elections, land acquisition, court battles, etc. Everything hinged on an informed public to use their pen, pocketbook, and vote to back it up.

As a science teacher I began to seek out materials that would develop an interest in students about environmental protection, as well as a knowledge base for further learning. I've always had a fear of decision-making without as much information as possible, and tried to pass that on to my students. It seemed to me that too many people had too strong opinions, with too little knowledge, on either side of the issue. During the 70's, there was a controversy over taconite tailings – whether or not to dump them into Lake Superior. So as a class we dove into the discussion surrounding Reserve Mining Company. Students clipped newspaper articles, read reports of the trial, researched the asbestos studies about the tailings, and generally tried to find as much as they could about all aspects of the issue. They wrote letters to legislators and newspapers. They made bulletin boards and got involved in vigorous class discussions. Ultimately I think they learned that Science was the

broad search for information, and communicating that information. They learned that citizenship was involvement, but that one had to earn the right to get involved.

In 2008, for the first time around the world, more people lived in cities than rural. In the U.S. the figure is 80% city residents. On average, children today have less exposure to nature than any prior generation. The people who started the environmental movement are today mostly retired. Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis is committed to helping raise a generation of knowledgeable citizens who want to pass on our great natural legacy.

There are not many environmental programs in schools today, and they often are not part of the required curricula. It is important that we provide as many outdoor opportunities for young people as we can, in the face of increasing headwinds.

- President Jim Egge

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis - 2011-2012 Contacts

President	Jim Egge	612-827-7629	aubullet2@yahoo.com
Vice President	Susan Tertell	612-729-1566	stertell@gmail.com
Treasurer	Ernie Gunderson	612-721-9103	egunde@aol.com
<i>Kingfisher</i> Editor	Shannon Huebscher		kingfishereditor@gmail.com
Audubon Center of the North Woods	Www.audubon-center.org		
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis	Www.audubonchapterofminneapolis.org		MOU Rare Bird Alert: 763-780-8890
Audubon Minnesota	Www.audubon.org/chapter/mn		

SWELL SWALLOW SWOON

Swallows are sort of a forgotten group of birds since they are mostly common and everyone has recorded them on their lists. The name swallow comes from the Anglo-Saxon word “swalewe”. In spite of their similarities, swifts and swallows are not closely related. In early spring before insects are plentiful, they are known to eat berries or feed on the ground.

Brood parasitism has been studied in Cliff Swallows extensively. They are known to drop eggs in the nests of other swallows in the colony. This happens because the nesting is synchronized, and most hatch about the same time. Virtually all of the eggs in adopted parents’ nests are successful. Bluebirders know that swallows can be very tenacious parents, and will strike intruders. I personally have seen up to 8 swallow eggs in the nest of a bluebird box.

Swallows never stop during migration. They simply feed on the way. They also aerial baths by diving into the water at a shallow angle. As they hit the water they raise their tail, giving themselves a spray.

Test your ID skills by naming these 8 swallows that have been seen in Minnesota.

- 1) Which 2 swallows are accidental in Minnesota?
- 2) Which swallow makes mud nests on buildings and has the longest tail.
- 3) Most likely nester under bridges and culverts. It has a buffy rump.
- 4) Gravel pit nester. Has a white throat and a black necklace.
- 5) Has a brown back and mostly whitish below.
- 6) Blue-green back with a white breast and belly. It is the first swallow back in the spring and the last to leave in fall.
- 7) Only swallow with very dark back and below. It is our largest swallow.

Answers on the next page!

Spotlight on December’s Program Speaker: Val Cunningham

Some people say that you can’t be both a bird-watcher and a gardener, but Val Cunningham hopes to prove them wrong. After getting bitten by the bird-watching “bug” back in the 1980s, she took a hard look at her gardens and decided that every plant had to provide food or shelter for birds. On her narrow St. Paul lot she replaced an old lilac hedge with native dogwood, chokeberry and elderberry shrubs—good berry plants for birds. Hostas gave way to goldenrod, monarda and rudbeckia, whose seed heads nourish finches and others. When out of her garden, Val leads bird walks for the St. Paul Audubon chapter and writes about birds for the *Star Tribune's* weekly On the Wing page. Her book, *The Gardener’s Hummingbird Book*, was published in 2004. Val now leads many spring, summer and fall bird walks for the St. Paul Audubon chapter.

Wood Lake Book Club

Tuesdays, 6:30pm-8pm at Wood Lake Nature Center \$5/person, free for members

September 13- *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* by Barbara Kingsolver

October 11- *Under a Flaming Sky* by Daniel James Brown

November 15- *Four Fish* by Paul Greenberg

December 13- *The Wild Muir* by Lee Stetson



Please let Amy Markle know if you need a copy of the book. She can be reached at:

Wood Lake Nature Center

612-861-9369

Bird Banding Event at the Lowry Nature Center

Close encounters with wild birds! See wild songbirds being safely trapped, studied and tagged with numbered rings. You may get a chance to listen the rapid beat of a bird's heart and help release it.

Restricted to participants age 4 and older. This event is free.

WHERE: 7025 Victoria Drive Victoria, MN 55386

WHEN: Saturday November 12th, 9AM-12PM

PHONE: 763.694.7650



Project BirdSafe

Project BirdSafe is looking for new volunteers. This research project is run by the University of Minnesota and Audubon Minnesota and focuses on bird-building collisions. Volunteers walk research routes to pick up birds that have hit windows. Volunteer training sessions will be held April 14th (and April 9th if necessary). For more information visit <http://mn.audubon.org/events/2329>

Answers from Swell Swallow Swoon on previous page

- 1) Cave, Violet Swallows
- 2) Barn
- 3) Cliff
- 4) Bank
- 5) Rough Winged
- 6) Tree
- 7) Purple Martin

Fall Fund Appeal Is Here

Our goal this year is about the same as previous years which will allow us to continue a similar level of activity. We'll continue to publish only 6 Kingfishers and have 8 programs during the year. The Kingfishers 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 will continue committing funds to restore Roberts Bird Sanctuary. We have the cooperation of the Minneapolis Park Board. This might require us to dip into our reserves, but 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



Volunteer crew: from left to right Dennis, Jean, Christine, Travis, Larry, Sigurd, and Kami. Oh, and lets not forget Annie the dog!

Photo courtesy of Paul Fusco

Some Community Volunteer Work in the North Metro Area

An unofficial organization Friends of Palmer Lake Park with a small group of people picked a day to help clean-up Palmer Lake Park in the north Metro area. In four morning hours, from 8 AM to Noon, with help from Brooklyn Center Parks and Recreation, who provided garbage bags and grabbers, picked up garbage along the trails and some local pond areas. At the end of the clean up had removed 14 bags of garbage and that was just a trial run! Next spring the group plans to tackle even more and even work on restoring the native plants and trees to the area too. If you live in the area and think you might be interested next spring to help out, email: PalmerLakeGuy@gmail.com. Put PLP Helper in the subject line. And follow the Palmer Lake Park Blog at: <http://palmerlakepark.blogspot.com>

Thanks in advance!

- Paul Fusco

Books in Brief

Aaaaw to zzzzzd: the words of birds: North America, Britain and Northern Europe, by John Bevis, MIT Press, 2010. \$12.95

Black skimmer (aaaaw) to lazuli bunting (zzzzzd); this charming little book is worth the price just for the author's chapters on "The songs of birds" and "The words of birds". Bevis talks about his early experiences as a *birdwatcher*, when he would sit quietly and wait for birds, or skulk around in bushes looking for them, and how much his experience changed when he went on a birding trip and the leader explained what birds were in the area and where by their songs. Although Bevis doesn't label this an epiphany, it certainly was for him and for many other birders. Hearing the blue-winged warbler not only lets one know it is in the area, but gives a good idea of where to begin looking for it.

He has many interesting observations: that there is evidence that difference species have adopted different acoustical niches (just like different frequencies for radio stations); that urban birds of the same species may have shorter, faster-paced, and higher-pitched songs than their rural counterparts to deal with increased city noise, and that birds in different regions have dialects. I noticed the regional dialects on a visit to Maryland, where I grew up, and realized the cardinals sounded quite different. Of course, I assumed I was the only person to have ever noticed this.

Bevis is quite lyrical about the beauty of bird song, and how often poets use bird song to express the beauty of nature. His lexicon is not that helpful to me (as one who is not very good at birding by ear), and it is only by sound to bird and not vice versa. So if you can figure out the bird you are hearing is saying "chip chip wheedle wheedle che" you can look in the lexicon and find that it is likely yellow-eyed junco. I am not that good! He also includes some mnemonics: like "drink your teeee" for the towhee. His final chapter is on "Some other methods of collecting birdsong", and he includes a good bibliography.

For the price, this is a good addition to the birder's bookshelf.



Down and dirty birding: from the sublime to the ridiculous – here's all the outrageous but true stuff you've ever wanted to know about North American birds, by Joey Slinger, Simon and Schuster, 1996.

This book is no longer in print, but is widely available online, so do yourself a favor and track it down and buy a copy. Joey Slinger, a Canadian comedian, has written a book for the beginning birder, but anyone interested in birds will not only get useful information from it, but will laugh out loud on almost every page. Guaranteed to make your spouse ask "What is that you are reading?" and not believe you when you reply "A book on birding."

Slinger covers many topics in an informative and humorous manner:

- The best places to see birds (a sewage lagoon is one of the tops)
- Feeding birds ("If you get serious about bird-feeding, you will be astonished to discover squirrels have an IQ of 170. As long as yours is higher, you will have no difficulty ... keeping squirrels out of your feeders)
- How birds do it (I am sure you all know about the cloacal kiss, so we will leave it at that)
- Misidentifying birds (for instance, a single female house sparrow in a remote location, or the first female redwing black-bird of spring. Admit it, you have done this, too. If you haven't, don't bother to read this book, you will not find it funny.)
- How birds keep cool (some species vomit on their feet, others pant)
- What birds eat ("What birds don't eat is a more reasonable question. Metal. That's about it.)
- Which birds fly for fun (pigeons and ravens)

Flocking ("Birds of a different feather flock together, too.)

Don't be misled by the humor, there is a lot of practical (and true) information in this book. Such as the fact that black feathers are more durable than white feathers, which is why many birds have black wing tips; how to choose binoculars and field guides; what to wear, and how to pronounce the names of birds so that you sound more knowledgeable.

This would be a good Christmas gift for someone special on your list, so start shopping!

Thanks to Susan Tertell for these—if you'd like to review a book about birding, contact the Editor!

Project Dragonfly

Applications are being accepted for 2011 summer/fall graduate field courses and a master's program that offer international conservation studies in 12 countries throughout Africa, Asia, Australia and the Americas. New in 2011 are courses in Australia and Guyana.

Created in 2004 by Miami University's Project Dragonfly and the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, Earth Expeditions graduate courses and now the Global Field Program (GFP) master's degree bring together graduate students, scientists, educators and community leaders at critical conservation field sites worldwide. In addition to Australia and Guyana, sites for 2011 include the Amazon, Baja, Belize, Borneo, Costa Rica, Kenya, Mongolia, Namibia, Thailand and Trinidad.

Tuition for seven graduate credits and all basic in-country expenses are covered in the \$1,250 course costs. Accepted students are responsible for airfare.

Earth Expeditions and the GFP, which can be completed part-time from anywhere in the United States or abroad, are open to educators and other professionals from all disciplines and settings. For information and to apply, please visit:

Earth Expeditions: <http://www.EarthExpeditions.org>

Global Field Program: <http://www.MastersGFP.org>

Applicants in the Cincinnati, Cleveland, Chicago and Seattle regions may be interested in Dragonfly's additional master's degrees, including the community-based Advanced Inquiry Program, co-delivered with premier learning institutions in select U.S. cities. For more information, visit <http://www.MyMasters.org>.

Project Dragonfly reaches millions of people each year through inquiry-driven learning media, public exhibits and graduate programs worldwide. Dragonfly is housed at Miami University, a state university in Oxford, Ohio, established in 1809 and listed as one of the eight original Public Ivies.

Project Dragonfly

Miami University

Oxford, Ohio 45056

513.529.5103

Oxford, Ohio 45056

513.529.5103; 513.529.8574, fax



Member Poetry Corner

By the Brule River—by Clem Nagel

Leaving Naniboujou Lodge

something seemed

to catch my eye, or . . .

maybe it was the plaintive,

slurred whistle.

Five plovers, in fall attire

ran robin-like along grass

beneath a cluster of red pine.

They paused.

Large staring eyes

looked through me.

One plover raised its wings,

but momentarily.

I glimpsed a dark underwing.

They continued searching

for food and

without warning . . .

lifted to the sky

only to disappear.

Were they ready

to leave?

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
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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

October

25: Board Meeting @ Roosevelt High School at 4029 28th Av S in Minneapolis, 7-8:45PM

November

8: Program: Stan Tekiela @ Beth El Synagogue, 5224 W. 26th Street, St. Louis Park, 7-9PM

22: Board Meeting @ Roosevelt High School at 4029 28th Av S in Minneapolis, 7-8:45PM

December

8: Program: Val Cunningham @ Beth El Synagogue, 5224 W. 26th Street, St. Louis Park, 7-9PM

27: Board Meeting @ Roosevelt High School at 4029 28th Av S in Minneapolis, 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*

Electronic Kingfisher

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Contact Jerry Bahls at jobaud@comcast.net