



KINGFISHER



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Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Representing the National Audubon Society in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

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Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Program meetings are held at 7:00 PM at Beth El Synagogue, 5224 W. 26th Street, St. Louis Park 55416 (unless otherwise noted*).

Tuesday, September 1st, 2015 - Sparky Stensaas, an Award Winning Photonaturalist, will speak about "**Winter Finches**". His beautiful wildlife photography can also be viewed at: thephotonaturalist.com. Sparky is one of the most sought out speakers, so please join us!

Tuesday, October 6th, 2015 – *This Program meeting will be held at the Brookdale Library, 6125 Shingle Creek Parkway 55430. **Ron Lawrenz**, President of the Minnesota Dragonfly Society will speak. He will address us on the "**Dragonflies of Minnesota**". Ron has a deep interest in geology, paleoecology, and aquatic ecosystems. This will be another great program, please join us!

Minneapolis Audubon Society

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Friday, September 11, 2015 12 p.m.

Everyone is welcome to our first meeting of the season and our POTLUCK PICNIC and 100th YEAR ANNIVERSARY! A raffle is scheduled for **12 noon** (with several great items to choose from,) potluck at **12:30 p.m.** (bring a dish to share and utensils.) The **program at 1 p.m.** will feature MINNESOTA'S WILDEST BIRDER, humorist Al Batt. Al writes four weekly humor and nature columns for many newspapers, and does nature shows on radio. He writes a number of popular cartoon strips that are syndicated nationally.

Friday, October 9, 2015 1 p.m.

F. Charles Governali will share his research on the birds of Tasmania.

Join the Minneapolis Audubon Society for food and fun at the Bryant Square Neighborhood Center, 31st & Bryant Avenue S, just one block south of Lake Street, easily accessible via the #4 bus, which runs every 15 minutes! For more information call 952-926-4205.

From the President

Sept/Oct 2015



At the recent joint program with the “Ikes”, Miranda Blandon talked about the action of bringing balance back to nature. She mentioned the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone and went into more detail about the increase of whales and the impact it had. I thought I would discuss the details of these for our readers.

When the grey wolf was reintroduced into Yellowstone in 1995, there was only one beaver colony. By 2011 there were nine. The wolf reintroduction set off a cascade of changes. Before reintroduction, the elk no longer had to move around during the winter browsing period and browsed heavily on willow, aspen and cottonwoods. Beaver depend on willow for their winter survival and consequently their numbers declined. The reintroduction of the wolf has seen an actual increase in elk and a healthy willow stand. Why? While the wolves were not killing more elk, they did keep the elk moving, not allowing them to browse so intensely, allowing the willow to develop normally. The healthy beaver population allowed them to expand and build their dams which have multiple beneficial effects such as “...evening out runoff; storing water to recharge the water table; and providing cold, shaded water for fish. The now robust willow stands also provide habitat for songbirds.”¹ “In Yellowstone, biologists have the rare, almost unique, opportunity to document what happens when an ecosystem becomes whole again, what happens when a key species is added back into the ecosystem equation.”¹

The health of the krill population may be dependent on the whales that eat them. Research has found baleen whale feces contain 10 million times as much iron as the surrounding sea water. This iron is necessary for the growth of plankton. The krill feed on the plankton which in turn is eaten by the baleen whales. It is estimated that before commercial whaling, their feces added about 7600 tons of iron back into the ocean. If the whales are allowed to increase to their pre-commercial numbers, it is believed that this iron will reset the system. This will sequester large amounts of CO₂ in the ocean, which will benefit us all by helping mitigate climate change.²

A report by Economics professor Scott Fausti of South Dakota State University says that a diverse insect population can reduce the need for pesticides. He examined the insect populations in cornfields and found that crop fields that had a lot of insect diversity had fewer harmful insects. Even where no pesticides were used there were fewer harmful insects. This is new evidence that a natural distribution of pests may potentially have a large economic impact by reducing the need for using costly pesticides.³

The above three examples show what could be achieved if we were able to get nature in balance. Unfortunately this may be unachievable practically and financially. However we should try.

1. <http://www.yellowstonepark.com/2011/06/wolf-reintroduction-changes-ecosystem/>
2. <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn18807-whale-poop-is-vital-to-oceans-carbon-cycle/>
3. Lundgren and Fausti, Sci. Adv. 2015; 1:e1500558 31 July 2015

Jerry Bahls

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Audubon Chapter is to inform and educate our members and the public about birds and other wildlife and the demands that a large metropolitan center puts on their habitat, to engage in advocacy to preserve, protect and improve existing habitat and to develop and maintain new bird and wildlife sanctuaries, including backyards, to enhance the human experience.

Bird story, Bird Quiz, Contacts

ACM member Wendy Haan describes an interesting bird and bat interaction she recently observed:

Early one morning this past May, I was birding down in the woods on the west side of the Mississippi River, below E. 33rd Street and West River Parkway in Minneapolis. I was startled to observe a Red-bellied Woodpecker holding a bat in its beak. Last I heard bats were not part of the diet of Red-bellied Woodpeckers!? I had perfect viewing through my binoculars and set myself up to watch the show. The woodpecker was clinging to the side of a snag and was attempting to stuff the bat between the trunk and some peeling bark. The bat was struggling and furling out its wings and was difficult to control. Eventually the woodpecker succeeded in securing the bat behind the bark and then proceeded to bludgeon the bat to death. It was a bloody mess and the whole operation took about 15 minutes. My theory is that the unfortunate nocturnal bat ended up in the woodpecker's nesting cavity while searching for a place to sleep. Upon finding this intruder, the woodpecker took defensive action and made certain this bat would never return.



DO YOU KNOW THE DENDROICA'S?

By Jim Egge.



The Dendroica genus makes up the largest part of the Wood warbler family. The word comes from Latin which is the origin of "dentist" and "dendrites", meaning branching like a tree. In all, there are 21 members of this genus in North America. See if you can identify these 10 Dendroica's from the descriptions:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Nests only in jackpine forests | a) Canada warbler |
| 2. Its call resembles "pleased, pleased, pleased to meet you" | b) Kirtland's warbler |
| 3. Red stripes on breast | c) Black and White warbler |
| 4. Male and female were once thought to be different species | d) Yellow-rumped warbler |
| 5. Wears a black "necklace" | e) Black-throated Blue warbler |
| 6. Northernmost nesting warbler | f) Chestnut-sided warbler |
| 7. Tree creeper like a nuthatch | g) Blackpoll warbler |
| 8. Bobs its tail | h) Yellow warbler |
| 9. Orange throat | i) Palm warbler |
| 10. Has an Eastern and Western subspecies | j) Blackburnian warbler |

Answers on page 4

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Audubon Center of the North Woods	www.audubon-center.org		
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis	www.audubonchapterofminneapolis.org		
Audubon Minnesota	www.audubon.org/chapter/mn		

MOU Rare Bird Alert: 763-780-8890

Bird Counts, Quiz answers

2015 North American Trumpeter Swan Count – Minnesota participation– Madeleine Linke

The 2015 North American Trumpeter Swan Survey is an official survey of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Canadian Wildlife Service and other cooperators that count Trumpeter Swans every 5 years on a Continent-wide basis. The swan count was begun in 1968 and has continued in 5-year intervals since 1975 as an official assessment of the species.

Three Rivers Park District, the Minnesota DNR Nongame Wildlife Program, and The Trumpeter Swan Society coordinated a survey of Trumpeter Swans May-June in five metro counties and out state Minnesota.

Three Rivers Park District first Trumpeter Swans back to Trumpeter Swan to East Department of Natural efforts to Western Minnesota. Swan as a breeding species been a major wildlife success



(formerly Hennepin Parks) brought the Minnesota in 1966 to restore the Central Minnesota. The Minnesota Resources followed in restoration The restoration of the Trumpeter in Minnesota and the Midwest has story.

The 2015 continent- wide survey followed a new protocol in Minnesota, focusing on counting swans in late spring on small, shallow wetlands typically utilized by Trumpeter Swans during their nesting season. In previous surveys, swans were counted at traditional wintering locations. The 2010 survey estimated a count of 6,070 Minnesota Trumpeter Swans. Both the Minnesota DNR and Three Rivers Park District conducted aerial surveys in May 2015 with funding assistance from The Trumpeter Swan Society and the Minnesota DNR.. Other swan reports were assembled from sightings by the public.

Trumpeter Swans return to nesting territories in April and typically remain on territory through early fall. A long-lived species, swan pairs will return to the same wetland for many years. Trumpeter Swans are also very faithful to wintering locations where open water is found during the winter months.

Official results are not yet tabulated from all the surveys. However, in the metro survey, preliminary numbers indicate 268 swans were counted in pairs or small flocks. Also, of interest, a minimum count of 23 Trumpeter Swan nests were observed in Hennepin County and 29 nests were confirmed in Wright County. Adult swans were counted in Anoka, Ramsey and Washington counties, but few nests were confirmed.

Answers – Dendroica Warbler Quiz, from page 3.

1) b, 2) f, 3) h, 4) e, 5) a, 6) g, 7) c, 8) i, 9) j, 10) d

BIRDING - FAUX PAS', FOIBLES, AND FLUSTERS

By Jim Egge

The most interesting aspect of bird-watching to me is its difficulty. As Teddy Roosevelt once said, "There is not much in this world that is easy, that is worth doing. We should do things simply because they are difficult." That's not an exact quote but it gives us insight into what drove him to accomplish so much. No beginning birder would disagree, although they might wish for simplicity. That's why we take a new birder along and guide them into the fascinating world that we love. It's the unexpected surprises and also the failures that keep us excited about birding.

Many years ago I misidentified a catbird as a singing robin, but it wasn't that long ago that the red-eyed vireo I was hearing also had a long gray tail. After all, they are in the mockingbird family.

One day, from our kitchen, I proudly announced to my wife that the call she was hearing, was a blue jay that sounded like a squeaking door opening. But since we live across the street from a church, we looked outside and you guessed it. The church secretary was actually leaving the building.

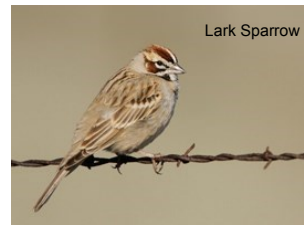


Grey Catbird



Blue jay

Leading a bird trip one time, I told the group that they were looking at a distant female grosbeak, only to be corrected that it was a lark sparrow. Many birders I'm sure have heard a great-crowned flycatcher, which evolved into a frog.



Lark Sparrow

Paul Fusco and I, while discussing politics in my front yard, listened to a yellow warbler singing for ten minutes before we decided to check it out. It was a goldfinch with a big grin on its face.

Down in Miesville, on the breeding bird survey, a chipping sparrow did a perfect worm-eating warbler impression in the rain. It took us 15 minutes and a good soaking to find that out. A few blocks from my house I was sure I was hearing a brand new species that I could report to the MOU. After a 20 minute search, it was a Cooper's hawk calling as it fed on a songbird. And I can't forget the Wilson's warbler that I told some other birders appeared to be a female hooded warbler.



Cooper's Hawk

...Cont'd on page 6

BIRDING Cont'd

About 10 years ago I was camping with my wife in Newfoundland. I kept hearing screech owls from at least 3 locations. The next morning I found out why. There was a winnowing snipe doing loops over our campground. Also, I was puzzled by the warbler whose call sounded like "I'm so silleee, don't you think?" I had never heard the breeding call of the black and white warbler before.



Last week while sitting in a fishing boat in northern Wisconsin, I watched 3 kingfishers noisily "fly catching" over the water. I had seen gulls do that before but not kingfishers. In my back yard the other day, I watched a female cardinal chasing a flying moth. As the cardinal closed in on it, suddenly a mob of 6 house sparrows attacked it and drove it away.



Six years ago we had a cardinal nesting in my lilac bush with babies about half-grown. As I drove in the driveway one day, I spotted a grackle on the ground pecking at something. Sure enough, it had found the young cardinals in the nest and was eating one. In the same nature's food chain sort of way, my wife and I watched a blue jay being dive-bombed by 4 peewees, while it calmly perched on a limb, eating one of their young.



One last experience I'll never forget was the time I was birding near Crookston, MN on a stretch of prairie. I heard the ticking sound in the grass that I thought was a sharp-tailed sparrow. I tried to get close to it, but it scurried through the grass as fast as I could walk. I couldn't flush it, since it must have had tunnels under the grass, ticking as it ran. I never did see it but later found out that there are 3 or 4 sparrows that do the same thing.

Birding Trail Guides now online!

Now you can find great birding trails in Minnesota with Audubon Minnesota's new online birding trail guides. The Minnesota River Valley, Great River (Headwaters to the Minnesota-Iowa Border), and North Shore Birding Trail Guides are now available in a beautiful, easy-to-use map tour application. Each online interactive map features location details, descriptions, and information about the main trail guide you have selected and also highlights locations from the companion bird trail guides. Find the online guides at <http://mn.audubon.org/birding-minnesota>

Conservation

Improved Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis website!

If you have visited our chapter's website in the past few weeks, you may have seen a notice that the site is undergoing an update to make it easier to use and more visually appealing. ACM has had a website for several years. While it has fulfilled the basic job of keeping chapter members and public informed about chapter events but, unfortunately, it often made users go through the cumbersome scrolling through numerous unrelated posts or clicking on out-of-date pages to find the information they were seeking. Worse yet, despite its being about the colorful subject of birds, the site was visually dull. The updated site will address these issues with a less linear layout, a more organized navigation system and a better use of color and photographs.

ACM President Jerry Bahls and a committee made up of chapter members spent time over the past few months checking out other websites, especially the sites of nonprofits, to get ideas about what might work for the ACM. Now the committee is in the process of trying out the ideas on the site; hence, the "Pardon our mess" notice. While we hope to complete the update soon, we want the site to continue to evolve. You can help this happen by checking out the site and letting us know what you like and what we could do better. Want to get really involved? Volunteer to be the ACM webmaster! Contact Jerry Bahls at jobaud@comcast.net if you are interested.

Tall Grasses Might Be Key to Cutting Birdstrikes

Audubon Magazine

By Todd Petty



An Audubon chapter is partnering with Dayton International Airport to reduce bird-aircraft collisions.

When birds and planes mix, the results can be deadly. Between 1990 and 2012, bird strikes in the United States killed 23 people and injured 240, damaged nearly 12,000 aircraft, and slew more than 120,000 birds. But reducing the carnage may be as simple as letting the grass grow.

Many airports have large expanses of turf, mowed regularly to a length of about eight inches. Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm in Ohio has partnered with the Dayton International Airport on a different approach, planting tall-grass prairie near the airfield instead of mowing or planting crops. The thinking is that this will deter the larger birds that can bring down a plane, like geese and gulls, since they tend to avoid longer vegetation, which hinders their ability to spot predators, says Charity Krueger, executive director of Aullwood Audubon. Smaller, less dangerous birds, such as sparrows and meadowlarks, tend to hide in the longer growth for safety. The Dayton airport aims to replace as many as 1,100 acres of its surrounding land with tall-grass prairie.

It's the first such endeavor at a commercial airfield, though six military airfields in the eastern United States are also converting swaths of turf-grass to switch-grass. If they show that the approach decreases bird strikes, efforts to replant native grasses near runways could take root across the country, says Krueger. "By working locally, it means we can have significant impact nationally."

Limiting bird strikes is the primary objective, but the benefits don't stop there. The vegetation provides critical habitat for threatened species like the local Henslow's sparrow. And it will likely reduce the airport's carbon footprint by scaling back on the use of agricultural equipment, and lighten its chemical load thanks to the reduced use of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers.

This story originally ran in the May-June 2014 issue as "Safer Skies."

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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

Aug. 25 Board Meeting – 6:00 pm

Sept. 22 Board Meeting – 6:00 pm

Oct. 27 Board Meeting – 6:00 pm

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.

www.audubonchapterofminneapolis.org

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