



The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter

Trumpeter

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www.MRVAC.org

March & April 2009

Anne Hanley, Editor
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Birdathon 2009

By Ron Windingstad, MRVAC President

Last year we raised almost \$4,000 during our spring Birdathon. This year we are counting on you to help MRVAC raise even more! This is one of just two fundraising events we have.

Here are some of the environmental projects that we were able to fund as a result of last years' efforts:

1. Busing grants for the area schools that bring students to the refuge for environmental education.
2. Four spotting scopes and tripods for the Minnesota Valley NWR
3. Assistance to help the Audubon Center of the North Woods build a large Corvid cage where their educational raven will live.
4. Audubon Adventure kits for many area schools.
5. Youth Scholarship to Hunt Hill Audubon Center

This year MRVAC is considering more exciting new projects so we are hoping to raise even more money to help make them happen.

The dates for this year's Birdathon are May 1st through May 17th. Participating birders should pick up a sponsor sheet at one of our monthly meetings or request one from Bob Williams at bxwilliams@cbburnet.com or at 612-728-2232.

We recommend that you begin seeking sponsors as soon as possible. Put out the word to your friends, relatives and fellow workers about the great things that MRVAC is doing with the money that is raised. Your sponsors can donate a fixed amount or donate an amount for each species seen by you or your Birdathon team.

You or your team can bird on any one day between the 1st and the 17th and can bird locally or anywhere in the world. The Birdathon is really a great way to combine the pleasures of birding with the rewards of raising money for some great environmental projects. Thank you for your consideration of becoming a participant or for your pledges.

Special Presentations in March and April Open to the Public

Thursday, March 26 at 7:30 pm at REI
Stories from the Avian Tree of Life

by Professor Scott Lanyon, U of M Dept of Ecology

Long thought to be beyond the reach of science, the avian tree of life (the genealogy for bird species) is now being revealed at an astonishing rate through the work of museum scientists and molecular biologists. My colleagues and I have been working on one major branch of the bird tree, that containing the New World Blackbirds, New World Sparrows, New World Warblers, Tanagers, and Cardinals.

In this talk I'll give a little background on how we discover genealogies that cover tens of millions of years, describe why understanding this genealogy is important to science, and provide glimpses of some of the implications of this research.

Thursday, April 24 at 7:30 pm at REI
Is Too Much Nitrogen a Bad Thing?

By Daniel Hernandez

Assistant Professor, Biology Dept, Hamline University

Nitrogen is an essential element to sustain life on Earth. Although it is required for almost every biological function, nitrogen is in scarce supply in natural ecosystems. Human activities have greatly increased the amount of available nitrogen in the biosphere, with profound consequences for the health of humans and the environment.

Nitrogen pollution is often a factor in environmental problems such as biodiversity loss, invasive species, and habitat degradation. Nevertheless, nitrogen pollution receives relatively little attention in environmental policy debates. This talk will review the human impacts on the nitrogen cycle, its consequences for ecosystems, and discuss some research into efforts to mitigate the effects of nitrogen pollution.

See location and time details on page 2

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society



MRVAC Chapter News

Bloomington 2008 Christmas Bird Count Report

By Mark Ochs, Bloomington CBC Compiler

The weather was chilly but calm during this year's Bloomington Christmas Count, which was held on December 20, 2008. We had our worst species count in 12 years and fewest total birds in 18 years, but still managed to tally 60 species and 8,809 birds.

No new birds were added to the count. However, we logged record totals for four species:

7 Eastern Bluebirds, 2 Hermit Thrushes, 1,154 American Robins and 154 Pine Siskins. Additionally, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Snowy Owl, Winter Wren and 23 Brown-headed Cowbirds rounded out the interesting finds.

This year's counters: Jerry Spangler, Sean Peterson, Molly Jo Miller-Johnson, Karen Jenkins, Art Braun, Jay Miller, Susan Plankis, Susan Fuchs, Doug Roy, Bruce Baer, Doug Kieser, Barbara Christensen, Molly Eichten, Linda Whyte, Diana Doyle, Krishna Seshan, Cheryl Fox, Tom Bloom, Scott Krych, Harriet Liedtke, Ross Johnson, Patricia Jimenez, Bart Anderson, Paul Budde, Tom Goodwin, Jane Stull, Walt Stull, Dave Cahlander, Marj Cahlander, Tony Smith, Lois Norrgard, Gary Hansen, Sue Kratsch, Mary Heltsley, Kathy Eich, Arden Aanestad, Pat Telfer, John Telfer, Joel Claus, Chris Hills, Randy Hills, Emma Hills, Doug Mayo, Ken Oulman, Karol Gresser, Drew Smith, Becky Smith, Jim Ryan, Steve Weston, Frank Berdan, Linda Sparling, Fred Arey, Linnea Rowse, Nick Rowse, Michael Huber, Jane Tunseth, Devin Tunseth and Mark Ochs.

Thanks to everyone who counted, the team who assisted with the soup supper and Diamond Lake Lutheran Church. Your continued support is critical to our success. Next year's count date is December 19, 2009. Please mark your calendars.

(more Christmas Bird Count stories on page 5 and 6)

Chapter Contacts:

President: Ron Windingstad
651-768-5287 or ronw44@msn.com
Membership: Patti (Poladian) Larson
952-934-0792 or pattilarson@comcast.net

New Opportunity! – Join the MRVAC Natural Resources Committee Network

By Lois Norrgard, Nature Resources Committee Chair

The Natural Resources Committee (NRC) is the advocacy arm of our Chapter. This is the place to be to make a difference for birds and other wildlife – and the special places we love to visit – in our Chapter area. We now have an online communication tool to better serve our members – join today for updates on the issues we work on as a Chapter – plus opportunities to take action for our birds.

Network Scope:

- Get monthly updates on relevant Chapter issues
- Review current Audubon priorities at the local, state and national level, and help devise strategies for influencing policies and decisions related to those issues
- Receive notices for opportunities to make a difference by writing a note or making a call to key decision-makers on behalf of the Chapter

Everyone is encouraged to join us and become familiar with the Committee and the issues we discuss. To join, please email Lois (Lnorrgard@bcmn.com).

Thank you!

March & April & May meetings will be held at REI Bloomington

When: Please join us at **7:00 pm** at the Bloomington REI store to socialize over coffee and cookies from 7:00 to 7:30 pm.

A brief business meeting and the featured speaker begin at **7:30 pm**. The meeting will conclude before 9:00 pm.

Where: REI is located at 750 W. 79th St. Bloomington, (at 494 and Lyndale Ave. South, in the southwest corner of the intersection – but since Lyndale is closed you need to use Nicollet or Penn to go south from 494 to American Blvd. REI's entrance is now accessed via American Blvd, just west of Lyndale).

REI's phone number is 952-884-4315. Their phone greeting includes driving directions around the construction.

Metro Transit: 612-373-3333 or on the web at www.metrotransit.org



Regional Events

MN Environmental Partnership's Visit your Legislator Day at the Capitol 3/5

Join us at the Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul on Thursday March 5 to protect Minnesota's future! Take this day to tell your state legislators that you value our lakes, rivers, streams and our Great Outdoors! We need your help to make sure Minnesotans are heard and Minnesota's future is protected.

Register on MEP's web site and they will make an appointment with your legislators for you:
http://www.mepartnership.org/mep_calendar.asp?cal_id=3161#register

International Festival of Owls 3/6-3/8

March 6-8, 2009 in Houston, MN. Families will enjoy the live owl programs, owl prowls to call in wild owls, owl crafts and activities, owl calling contest, owl-themed food and merchandise and Cub Scout program. For the more serious owl aficionados, there is a banquet featuring Norm Smith, who has done telemetry studies on Snowy Owls at Logan Airport; the World Owl Hall of Fame award presentations; and a raffle to benefit the Global Owl Project. For more information visit the festival website at www.festivalofowls.com or call the Houston Nature Center 504-896-HOOT (4668).

Annual Pancake Brunch & Maple Syrup Program in Sandstone 4/4

Saturday, April 4 from 10 am to 3 pm, come for a delicious pancake brunch with our own maple syrup then head out to learn and assist in the various phases of maple syrup production, from tapping trees to collecting sap to boiling it down into syrup.

Brunch and program - \$15/adult, \$10/child (5-12 yrs);
 Program only - \$5/person. A great event for families and youth groups!! Call 888-404-7743 or visit www.audubon-center.org for more info!

Bluebird Recovery Conference 4/18

To learn all about attracting Bluebirds and discouraging their enemies, come to the annual Bluebird Recovery Conference Saturday April 18 in Elk River, Minnesota. Although Bluebirds are not usually city birds, their numbers have rebounded greatly due to people putting up and monitoring birdhouses for them. Come to the conference and learn to be a better Bluebird host. For more info, please call Dave Baden at 952-445-4353.

Salt Lake (MN) Birding weekend 4/25

Since 1975 birders have welcomed the spring migration at Salt Lake on the western border of Lac Qui Parle County. Last year, despite the 10" of fresh snow on Friday, 141 species of birds were identified. Any year, rarities such as Glossy Ibis, American Avocet, Great-tailed Grackle, or Little Gull may be observed.

On Saturday April 25, meet at 7 a.m. at the Marietta American Legion, located one block west of the intersection of County Road 7 and State Highway 40, 11 miles west of Madison. Coffee, sweet rolls, and milk are available. Guided car caravans with volunteer leaders will leave between 7 and 8 am. At noon, stop back at the Legion for lunch and to compare notes.

A Saturday chicken dinner, for \$10, will be served at 7:30 pm at the Sons of Norway Hall on Highway 75 in Madison. Reservations are necessary; please contact Becky Skallerud at beckaberk@yahoo.com or 320-598-3797. After dinner there will be a short program and then the species count for the day will be recorded. Sunday birding is on your own or stop by Prairie Marsh Farm for directions to local sites.

Local lodging is available at Lou's Lodge in Madison 320-598-7518, the Vali Vu Motel in Ortonville 320-839-2558, the Super 8 in Appleton 320-289-2500, and the Country Inn Suites in Montevideo 320-269-5554. Camping is available at Prairie Marsh Farm, 1770 151st Ave, Marietta, located 7 miles west of US 75 and 1.5 miles south of 212. Contact Ken Larson for more information: home 952-595-9265, cell 612-210-8486 or at prairiemarshfarm@comcast.net

Women's Weekend May 1-3 at ACNW

By Laurie Fenner, Audubon Center of the North Woods

May 1-3, 2009 All-inclusive, complete holistic retreat in Sandstone - comfy lodging, wonderful food, and a variety of classes and activities to choose from, ranging from **Adventure & Challenge** (including high or low ropes course, canoeing), **Wellness & Nature** (including yoga, massage, reiki, hypnosis, meditation, hikes, bird banding), and **Creative Expressions** (including art classes, crafts classes, gardening courses, ethical wills, nature journaling, etc.).

Lodging, meals, all programming and 10 minutes of massage or reiki are included in the weekend fee. Call 888-404-7743 or visit www.audubon-center.org for more info!



Conservation & Habitat

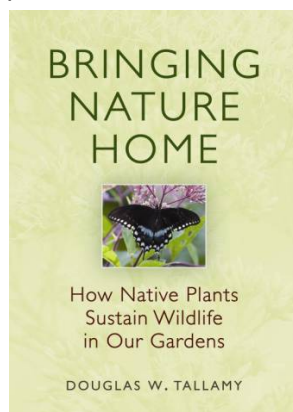
Douglas Tallamy Argues for Native Plants on March 16 at Macalester

Douglas Tallamy, author of a new book that calls for planting gardens that appeal to wildlife—especially insects—brings his important message to St. Paul on Monday, March 16. The author of *Bringing Nature Home*, *How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens*, will speak at 7:00 p.m. in the John B. Davis Lecture Hall in the Ruth Stricker Dayton Campus Center at Macalester College. The event is free and open to the public.

Many birders and gardeners are already great fans of Tallamy's book and viewpoint. An entomologist and dynamic speaker, he will discuss the clear link between native plant species and native wildlife.

As more and more of nature disappears under bulldozers and chain saws, gardeners may just be the salvation of birds and other wildlife. Wild creatures are losing places to live and breed at an alarming rate, and their food sources are shrinking. If more and more of us filled our yards and gardens with native plants, we'd help create the biodiversity that sustains all life forms, including our own.

Tallamy clearly makes the case for natives and against alien plants. He shows how non-native plants are nearly invisible to native insects and other wildlife: if insect larvae haven't evolved with a plant they can't use it. In this way we lose strands in the web of life, a scenario occurring all over the world. How important is this? Research shows that 96 percent of North American's land birds rely on insects to feed their nestlings, and insects rely on native plants.



"We help decide which animals will make it and which will not every time we plant or remove something from our yards," Tallamy says.

For everyone interested in the conservation of birds and other wildlife and everyone who gardens, this is a "don't miss" event.

The Tallamy presentation will be held in the building marked

#25 on the campus map at:

http://www.macalester.edu/about/macalester_campusmap.pdf

Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas Takes Off

The MN Breeding Bird Atlas is gearing up for our first season in spring 2009. A breeding bird atlas is a comprehensive, systematic survey of the occurrence and distribution of breeding birds, conducted by citizen scientists. Our goals are to map the occurrence and breeding status of all species in the state,



2009 sleeve patch

produce base-line information for monitoring future changes to bird populations, and increase opportunities for citizen scientists. We expect to learn a lot of new information about Minnesota's breeding birds that will be valuable to everyone interested in bird conservation.

There are 2352 Priority Blocks in the state so we need hundreds of volunteer surveyors. Volunteers sign-up to 'adopt' a Priority Block and make multiple visits during the breeding season to record the species observed and their breeding status based on evidence by sight or sound. Some additional information will be required for species that are rarities, are state-listed, or are of Special Conservation Interest. The goal is to document the strongest breeding evidence for as many species as possible, within the block. The estimated time required to complete a block is 25 hours, but it can vary depending on the surveyor's skill, the habitats present, and the ease of access. If a block cannot be completed in one season, final observations can be made in subsequent years.

Priority Block maps, a handbook and other information will be available on an upcoming MN BBA website.

We welcome all interested volunteers. Please join us! To add your name to the list of interested surveyors or to learn more about the MN Breeding Bird Atlas, please contact Bonnie Sample, MN Breeding Bird Atlas Coordinator at bsample@audubon.org or 651-739-9332.

Volunteers earn a sleeve patch for each year of participation. The 2009 patch, pictured above, features a Golden-Winged Warbler.

Excelsior Christmas Bird Count

By Howard Towle

After compiling this count for 6 years, the one thing that I've learned is that every year is exceptional and this year was no exception.

The final tally for 2008 was 54 species and 5937 total birds seen, compared to our previous 22-year average of 55 species and 11,152 individuals. Several factors contributed to one of the lowest total number of birds seen in a long while: almost no open water, maintenance work at the Blue Lake Water Treatment Facility resulted in the main pond there being drained during the count and the snow falling strongly throughout most of the count day. A big cheer to all who braved the conditions!

Given that the Blue Water maintenance easily took out 4 to 5 divers from our total species (e.g., Lesser Scaup, Common Merganser), 54 is really a respectable number. Our species total was aided by a number of very 'good' birds. Some of the highlights:

- The most remarkable bird was undoubtedly an immature Chipping Sparrow that was being hosted by Denny and Barb Martin at their feeder – the first record for the count in the 48 years for which I have results!
- The crew at Carver Park, led by Mary Vanderford, found a Northern Saw-Whet Owl, a species with only 3 records in the last 22 years and missed since 1999. Great! The hardy folks at Carver Park also found our only Ring-necked Pheasants (which is pretty alarming), our only Barred Owl and our only Cooper's Hawk.
- Barry Jones, who put in a remarkable 9 miles walking in the snow, was rewarded with four Eastern Bluebirds, a species only recorded in 5 of the last 22 years. Barry also turned up two icterids – a single Red-winged Blackbird and a single Common Grackle, both of which we missed last year.
- Tony Hertz, doing a little freelance work for us thanks to the snowstorm preventing him from getting to Duluth, found a single Golden-crowned Kinglet – a bird we find on about 50% of our counts. Tony also dug up our only American Coot!
- Renner Anderson, his daughter Abigail Anderson, and newcomers Jack and Joe Harkness, deprived of all those Blue Lake divers, found two Swamp Sparrows south of the Minnesota River. They also contributed several dabblers from the open Blue Lake area behind the treatment facility.

- Jerry Bonkoski, who annually comes up with our only farmland-type birds on the roads south around Shakopee, found a few Horned Larks for the count.
- Scott and Marilyn Clark had a close encounter with a Rough-legged Hawk near the Minnesota River, as did Barry (maybe the same bird?).
- Three groups (Hap and Ron Huber, Tony, and the Carver crew) came up with Song Sparrows, another 50%-er on our count. Three groups (newcomers Alicia & Jim Johson & Steve Engler; Joan Stenberg and Barry once again) also found White-throated Sparrows – another casual bird on our count.
- Another remarkable bird that was not found on the count day, but during the count week was a Virginia Rail, located by Doug Kieser while scouting for the count. I was surprised to find that we had one previous record of this species – way back in 1961, when Doug was probably just a twinkle in his parents' eyes.

Although we had such a low total number of birds, a few species hit highs. The Trumpeter Swan recovery has obviously done a remarkable job, as we had 56 birds, far exceeding our previous high of 10 (although it probably helped that the DNR was restricting feeding of swans at Monticello at the time). Northern Flickers had a good year with a count of 8, the second highest total in 22 years. As most people know, Pine Siskins are abundant in the Twin Cities area this year. We had our third highest total in count history and the highest count since way back in 1969. American Goldfinches were one of the other few species encountered at higher than average levels.

Remarkable lows were seen in House Sparrows, by far the lowest total ever in the count's history (yea?), American Crows (lowest in last 22 years), the aforementioned Ring-necked Pheasant (second lowest in count history) and Rock Pigeons (third lowest count in our history). Obviously weather was a significant factor in some of these results, but probably not the only factor.

Thanks again to all who participated, especially those of us who covered the less glamorous suburban deserts of Minnetonka, Hopkins, Eden Prairie, Bloomington and Chaska. All this information is valuable to the Audubon Society in tracking trends in a count area that has changed as rapidly as ours has in the past 60 years. Compiling this count does take a little effort, but the cooperation of so many people does make it a lot easier! Join us 12/19/09.

George Tkach Receives 2009 Trumpeter Award

George Tkach was honored at the January 2009 MRVAC membership meeting with the 2009 Trumpeter Award. He served the chapter in many ways since joining in 1994.

George taught popular bird classes that included a field trip to Wood Lake Nature Center. He served as Vice President and Program Chair from 1996-1999, which included contacting, coordinating and introducing speakers at membership meetings. George continued on the MRVAC board of directors through 2005.

Leading field trips was another of George's important contributions. In addition to Wood Lake trips, he guided birders at Louisville Swamp, the Bass Ponds in Bloomington, Springbrook Nature Center in Fridley and to Churchill, Canada.

Previous recipients of the Trumpeter Award are:

| | |
|------|---------------------|
| 2001 | Karol Gresser |
| 2002 | Joe White |
| 2003 | Pat and Jack Telfer |
| 2004 | Edith Grace Quam |
| 2005 | Craig Mandel |
| 2006 | John Rehbein |
| 2007 | Jack Mauritz |
| 2008 | Lois Norrgard |

Cedar Creek Christmas Bird Count

by Steve Weston, MRVAC Vice President

The sixty first Cedar Creek Bog Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, December 14th, under less than ideal conditions. Rain and low visibility definitely reduced the bird activity, as well as the visibility and audibility of the birds that were out. But, the troublesome wintry conditions that cancelled CBC's to the north and west held off for most of the day and only shortened the count by about an hour or two for most participants.

We found 36 species, but another eight species seen in the count period before the storm were missed. While most species (including all hawks and woodpeckers) were found in significantly low numbers, two species set records. 234 Wild Turkeys were observed (previous high 142) and 52 Northern Cardinals (previous high 50). The woods were barren. Only a dozen small birds were seen on Carlos Avery. Most birds were found at feeders, even though many feeder set-ups were unoccupied. The most interesting bird: Fox Sparrow. Finch numbers were lower than expected, with the exception of Pine Siskins (131), 90 or which were in one flock. Only 5 Red-headed Woodpeckers were still on territory.

Birdwatcher: The Life of Roger Tory Peterson by Elizabeth Rosenthal

Book review by Anne Hanley

The new biography of Roger Tory Peterson by Elizabeth Rosenthal is a fascinating history of Roger's life as well as the evolution of field guides, environmental education, the conservation movement, nature travel and the National Audubon Society. I enjoyed the book and think you will too.

There's a saying "do what you love and the money will follow". Roger Tory Peterson's life is a perfect example of this. He loved birding, watching moths and butterflies, painting birds and teaching about nature.

Ms. Rosenthal shows how Roger's talent for distilling and describing the key field marks along with his painting skill – and meeting the right people - combined to create the ground-breaking first edition of the Field Guide to the Birds in 1934. This guidebook allowed the general public to much more easily identify the birds around them and this led to increased interest in conservation and habitat protection. Subsequent editions evolved into the format we know today with pictures near the text.

Roger Tory Peterson (RTP) taught at nature camps, including the well-known Hog Island Audubon camp in Maine, wrote educational materials designed for children in addition to his field guides, studied the effects of DDT and actively lobbied for environmental causes and inspired most of the well-known names in ornithology and nature photography today.

I can personally attest to the breadth of his publishing scope. We own at twelve or more Peterson Field Guides (trees, insects, wildflowers...) including at least four copies of different editions of the Field Guide to the Birds East of the Rockies. One 1980 edition that belonged to my parents is autographed "To the Hanleys – Good Birding! Roger Tory Peterson".

I enjoyed reading about the eventual banning of DDT, the impact RTP had on bird book authors in our library: Ken Kauffman, David Allen Sibley, Pete Dunne as well as Eric Lindblad of Lindblad travel and nature film makers Judith and Michael Feith who created "Watching Warblers" and "Watching Sparrows".

I think it is especially important to remember he was always speaking out for conservation and habitat protection. Our voices make a difference! Raise yours!



FIELD TRIPS – join us. All trips are free unless otherwise noted.

Long Meadow Lake Unit - Old Cedar Ave. Bridge

Saturday, March 21, 2009 at 4:00 pm
Saturday, March 28, 2009 at 4:00pm
Craig Mandel - 952-546-3407

Join us for a bird walk around the Old Cedar Ave bridge during spring migration. The variety of habitats at this unit makes it possible to observe waterfowl, raptors and songbirds at one site. Our first walks will focus on migrating waterfowl and as spring progresses, we will add raptors and song birds. Birders of all skill levels are welcome on these walks. Bring along your binoculars, favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather. Please contact Craig to register.

Metro Birding

Monday, March 23, 2009 at 7:00 am
Craig Mandel - 952-546-3407

Join us for a day of birding at a variety of locations around the Twin Cities. We will focus on a county, or park that has some open water on its lakes, or some other feature that is attractive to early spring migrants. This may also include some woods birding and if possible some feeder watching over lunch. For more information or to register, contact Craig

Western Minnesota Birds

Sunday/Tuesday, March 29-31, 2009
beginning at 6:00 pm in Appleton MN
Craig Mandel 952-546-3407

(\$25/non-MRVAC members; \$15/MRVAC members)
While last year's trip included a snowfall of about 10 inches, it did not slow down the birds or our group. We will again spend time birding in Big Stone, Lac Qui Parle and Swift counties. With some luck we may encounter Ross's, Snow and Greater White-fronted Geese. With a good snow melt, there should be many places to check, for waterfowl. We will also spend some time at Plover Prairie, in search of Short-eared Owls and try for several other species of owls at other locations. Highlights from last year's trip included Greater Prairie Chicken, Sharp-tailed Grouse and 24 species of waterfowl, many in flocks too large to count. Please contact Craig to register.

Evening Bird Walk at Old Cedar Ave Bridge

Wednesday, April 1, 2009 at 6:30 pm
George Skinner - 952-936-0811

Walk refuge trails to search for birds and other wildlife as night settles over the valley. I will have a few extra binoculars to loan if needed. Those staying until dusk will have a chance to view planets and stars. Pre-registration not required.

Long Meadow Lake Unit - Old Cedar Ave. Bridge

Saturday, April 4, 2009 at 4:00 pm
Craig Mandel - 952-546-3407 (see March 21)

Beginning Bird Watching Workshop

Sunday, April 5, 2009 **CANCELED.**

Since the refuge Visitor Center building is expected to be closed, the class is canceled.

Blue Earth County Birding Day

Monday, April 6, 2009, at 6:00 am
Craig Mandel 952-546-3407

On this field trip we will spend the day observing migrant waterfowl on the many lakes in Blue Earth county and search some of the local parks for early migrant song birds. We will also spend time birding at Minneopa State Park. Other parks we may visit include, Daly, Schimek and Rapidan county parks, in addition to Williams Nature Center. Please contact Craig for more info or to register.

Le Sueur County Birding Day

Tuesday, April 7, 2009, at 7:00am
Craig Mandel 952-546-3407

On this field trip we will spend the day observing migrant waterfowl on the many lakes in Le Sueur county and search some of the local parks for early migrant song birds. Some of the local parks we may stop at include, Sakatah Lake State Park, Lake Washington and Richter Woods county parks. Other spots of interest are Kasota Prairie and the Fish Hatchery at Waterville. Please contact Craig for more information, or to register.

Pasque Flowers at Nine Mile Creek Bluff Prairie

Tuesday April 7, 2009 at 6:00 pm
Mary Brown - 952-885-0913

Enjoy the earliest blooming spring wildflower, *Pulsatilla vulgaris*, on the hilly trail and bluffs above the mouth of Nine Mile Creek in Bloomington. No pre-registration required. From I-35W, exit at 106th Street, go west on 106th to Morgan Ave, turn to left (south) on Morgan, and continue to the Life Church parking lot. Meet at the far end of the parking lot. If you are late or wish to go another time, you can go around the Church on the right side to a large lawn area. At the far back right corner of the lawn is a trail. Follow the trail until you come to openings in the woods. The first area is savanna. Next, at the top of the bluff, is the prairie.

Blue Bird Recovery Conference

Saturday, April 18
see page 3

For more info, call Dave Baden 952-445-4353.



FIELD TRIPS – continued. All trips are free unless otherwise noted.

Beginning birders and non-members welcome



Minnesota River Valley
Audubon Chapter
P.O. Box 20400
Bloomington, MN 55420

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Crex Meadows (walking & driving)

Saturday April 18, 2009 at 7:00 am
Carpool from NW corner of Southdale parking lot
Chris and Randy Hills, 952-953-3613

We will depart from NW corner of Southdale at 7 am. Explore this great marsh and upland habitat. Crex Meadows is wild, open and windy, so bring layers, sunglasses and rain gear. We suggest you bring food and drink for the day. We usually stay until mid-afternoon, but each car can choose to leave at any time. Bring a scope if you have one. Please call Chris or Randy to register.

Long Meadow Lake Unit - Old Cedar Ave. Bridge

Saturday, April 18, 2009 at 4:00 pm
Craig Mandel - 952-546-3407
See March 21 for more details.

Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area

Sunday, April 19, 2009 at 7:00 am
Douglas Mayo - 952-922-0346
Carlos Avery WMA lies in the Anoka Sand Plain and contains extensive wetlands and uplands including grasslands, fields and oak savanna. This varied habitat provides opportunities to view Sandhill Cranes, waterfowl, herons, rails, raptors, sparrows, finches and woodland birds. In past years we've seen over seventy species. We'll drive the roads on the dikes surrounding various pools and hike short distances on refuge trails. Bring your binoculars and spotting scope, if you have one. Please call Doug to register and to form car pools.

Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden Walk

Tuesday, April 21, 2009 at 6:00 pm
Mary Brown - 952-885-0913
Enjoy early spring ephemerals along the hilly, woodchip paths in this 100-year-old garden. Directions: Take Hwy 55 west from Minneapolis. Turn south (left) at Theodore Wirth Pkwy. Watch for the signed garden entrance to the east (left). Park in the lot at the top of the hill. Bring quarters for the parking meters. Since the sun sets quickly we will start promptly - join us inside - take the first left. Pre-registration is not required.

Salt Lake MN

Saturday April 25, see page 3

Beginning bird class (Hopkins Comm. Ed A1311-A)

Beginning Mon April 27, 6:30 pm 1 class+3 field trips
Anne Hanley & George Skinner - cost \$27 per family
To register for class A1311-A, call Hopkins Community Education at 952-988-4070 during business hours.

Purgatory Creek

Wednesday, April 29, 2009 at 6:30 pm
Meet at 13001 Technology Dr Eden Prairie
George Skinner & Anne Hanley - 952-936-0811
Explore this Eden Prairie wetland. Depending on water levels we may see shorebirds. Expect to walk 1-2 miles.

Rapid's Lake Unit, Visitor Center trailhead

Saturday, May 2, 2009 at 4:00 pm
Craig Mandel - 952-546-3407
With the variety of habitats at the Refuge, it makes it possible to observe a remarkable variety of waterfowl, raptors, warblers and sparrows, as they migrate North in the spring. Birders of all skill levels are welcome on these walks. Bring along your binoculars, favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather.

Hok-Si-La Warblers

Saturday, May 9, 2009 at 7:30 am
Steve Weston - 612-978-3993
This is often the best weekend for migrating warblers and Hok-Si-La park is ideally situated to see birds traveling up the Mississippi River flyway – making this a great Birdathon trip. Meet at Hok-Si-La Park. Camp at Frontenac State Park Friday night or drive down in the morning. Call for exact meeting place.