



KINGFISHER



November 2007

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 56 No. 7

Representing the National Audubon Society in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

A Note from the President

Bird of the Month

Does our calendar naturally have a "Bird of the Month?" November certainly does with the Turkey in honor of Thanksgiving. Or should it be the Tundra and Trumpeter Swans that migrate through about this time? Would July's bird be the Bald Eagle to go with the 4th of July? On the mythical side, could the bird for January be a Phoenix rising from the ashes of the previous year? I started to think about my own Bird of the Month calendar.

My January would start with a Great Grey Owl as that is when we have seen them most often. February would have for its symbol a Calico Pennant Dragonfly (okay, not all of my birds would be birds), as it has heart-shaped markings on its abdomen for Valentine's Day. March celebrates the return of Canada Geese. April has so many spring migrants that it might be hard to choose. A Common Yellowthroat Warbler would be appropriate. May would feature a Robin poking in the grass for food. June would be a return to dragonflies in general as this is the month when most are in flight. I mentioned the Bald Eagle for July above, but my choice would be the Goldfinches visiting our yard to feed on the tall Coneflower seeds. With the start of the fall migration, I would have to choose the American Kestrel, as they follow the dragonflies south. September would have to be the Sharp-shinned Hawk seen in great numbers at Hawk Ridge during Hawk Ridge Weekend. Would fall colors be enhanced with those "Confusing Fall Warblers"? So October's vote goes to the Tennessee Warbler that I cannot tell from the Kentucky or many other warblers. Finishing out the year would be the Tundra Swan for November and the Pine Grosbeak for its wonderful red color.

Those would be my picks for a calendar year, but these are only my picks. What would the reader pick? I would love to hear back from some of you.

Of course, my real reason to write about "Bird of the Month" is to ask our members to consider making a presentation at an upcoming meeting. Presentations need not be anything spectacular or highly polished. A few slides or even handouts about your favorite (or least favorite) bird makes for a great show. If you need help putting it together, a board member may be able to help with photos or technical support with Power Point.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

—John Arthur

November Program

Eloise Butler Garden Celebrates 100 Years of Growth

Among the natural jewels in the Twin Cities is the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary, the oldest public wildflower garden in the nation. This year marks its 100th birthday and November's program features a presentation by J. Pam Weiner about the past and future of the Garden. Located in Theodore Wirth Regional Park, the garden dates back to 1907 when Minneapolis botanist Eloise Butler successfully petitioned the Minneapolis Park Board to create a natural botanic garden to preserve native flora as the city grew. Three acres of bog, meadow, and hillside were fenced and the Wild Botanic Garden opened on April 27, 1907. Today the sanctuary encompasses 15 acres and is home to 500 plant species of 140 bird species.



Ms. Weiner is the president of the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, the support organization for the garden and bird sanctuary. She is a psychologist in private practice in Minneapolis, a part-time snowbird in the Tucson area, and a budding birder and Audubon member. In addition to showing a DVD commissioned to celebrate the anniversary, she will discuss the health of the garden's plant and bird communities and report on the status of invasive species control, along with possibilities for volunteering.

**Tuesday, November 6
at 7:00 p.m.
Mayflower Church**

2007 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.

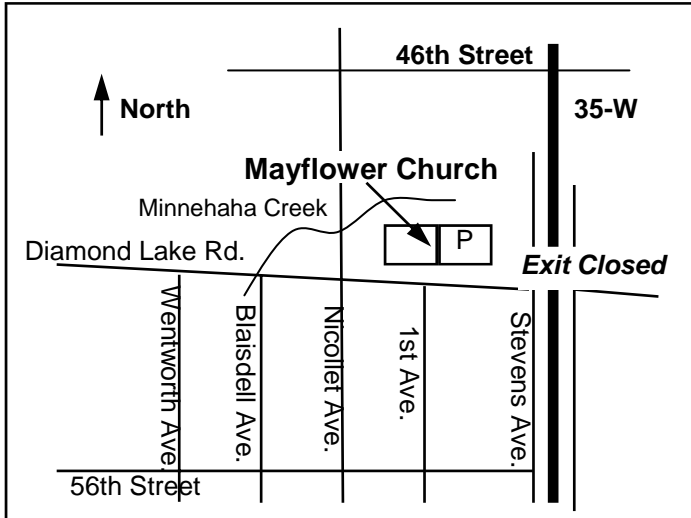
Come to Our Next Program!

DATE: Tuesday, November 6, 2007

Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden

TIME: Program at 7:00 p.m.

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



Mayflower Church Exit Closed

Diamond Lake Road Exit from 35W to Diamond Lake Road will be closed for the next year. Consequently, most of us who usually take that exit to get to the Mayflower Church for our Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis programs will need to take an alternate exit this year. For those of us coming from the north of Mayflower Church, a convenient exit will be the 46th Street exit. Go west to Nicollet, then south to Diamond Lake Road and east to the church. This may actually be a convenient exit for some of you coming from the south also. Exiting on Lyndale Avenue and going north to Diamond Lake Road may also work. Those coming from the east will need to cross 35W at either 46th or 60th Street to get to Nicollet and then proceed either north or south to Diamond Lake Road. Those coming from the west will not be affected. We hope the exit closing does not deter you from attending our fine schedule of programs.

Electronic Kingfisher

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ELECTRONICALLY!

Contact Jerry Bahls at jobaud@comcast.net

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NOVEMBER
BIRD OF THE
MONTH:

THE
PELICAN

PRESENTED

BY
JOHN
ARTHUR

Minnesota River Valley Field Trips



November 3

2:00 pm. Beginning Bird-Watching Workshop, MRVWR
George Skinner 952-938-0811

November 12

7:00 am. Metro Birding. Call for details.
Craig Mandel 952-546-3407

November 17

9:00 am. Swans on the Mississippi,
Lake City Bakery
Mark Lystig 651-452-1133

December 3

7:00 am. Metro birding. Call for details
Craig Mandel 952-546-3407

December 9

2:00 pm. Winter birds at Black Dog Lake MVNWR
Craig Mandel 952-546- 3407

December 15

Christmas Bird Counts
George Skinner 952-936-0811
Mark Ochs 952-681-9207
Craig Mandel 952-546-3407

December 16

Christmas Bird Count
Steve Weston, 612-978-3993

**Please contact the trip leader for further
information.**

Bird Banding at Springbrook Nature Center

One of the best ways to see birds up close is to attend a bird banding event. Springbrook Nature Center continues to have bird banding scheduled every month on Sunday mornings on the following dates: November 11, December 9, January 6, February 3 and March 2 beginning at 7:30 am. Show up at any time during the morning and enjoy the bird show!

Is Sulfide Mining Coming to Minnesota?

Sulfide ores are ores containing heavy metals (such as copper or nickel) that are bonded to sulfur, forming sulfide minerals. When exposed to air and moisture, a chemical reaction generates sulfuric acid that can leach into the surrounding environment and cause the release of the metals into streams and lakes. These metals are toxic to fish and other aquatic life, ultimately affecting birds. This phenomenon is known as ***Acid Mine Drainage (AMD)***. The mining of these ores, called sulfide mining, has not been conducted in Minnesota; however PolyMet Mining proposes to mine sulfide ore on U. S. Forest Service land near the towns of Hoyt Lakes and Babbitt.

Wisconsin allowed sulfide mining in the Flambeau Mine from 1991 to 1997, with the intention of demonstrating how protective modern mining methods can be. In 1999, water samples began to show evidence of contamination. In 2005, runoff within the site still contained copper levels as high as 100,000 µg/L. Water discharging from a runoff holding pond at the edge of the mine site contained 27–61 µg/L of copper—the acute toxicity water quality standard for copper is 7 µg/L. *Wisconsin now has a moratorium on sulfide mining.*

Please help protect Minnesota's Arrowhead region from a new source of pollution. There is a coalition of six environmental groups working to protect Minnesota. Let them know that Audubon members support their efforts. Contact any of these groups to see how you can help:

- * Save Our Sky Blue Waters
- * National Wildlife Federation
- * Save Lake Superior Association
- * Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
- * Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness
 - * The Sierra Club

MOU PAPER SESSION

Saturday, December 1 at 8:00 a.m.
Bell Museum
University of Minnesota
10 Church Street SE
Minneapolis

Fall Members' Meeting

9:00 am to 3:00 pm,
Saturday, November 10

Register Now!

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
Bloomington, Minnesota
Coffee and Scones and
Lunch Catered by Taste of Scandinavia
\$12

Spend some time with Audubon folks in a casual, relaxed forum. We'll hear from state experts on the issues described above, with time for questions and answers. This is a great opportunity to "get smart" on Minnesota's most important environmental issues.

To register, contact Susan Solterman at
ssolterman@audubon.org
or call her at 651-260-7040.

Watch the Audubon Minnesota website,
www.mn.audubon.org
for agenda details

November Fall Fund Appeal

In order to meet our 2007–2008 fiscal year budget as set by the Finance Committee of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis and approved by the Board last May, we need to raise \$1,500 to balance our budget. This will allow us to continue our current level of activity. Thus, we'll continue to publish eight *Kingfisher* newsletters and have eight programs during the year.

To do this, we need to raise more than the \$1,000 goal of last year due to the loss of our printing benefactor who printed the middle pages of the *Kingfisher* at no cost. 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. Members will receive an envelope in this issue of their *Kingfisher* to use 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!

—Jerry Bahls

Experience the Best of Minnesota Birding

Birding guides for many great places in Minnesota are now in a bookstore near you! Audubon Minnesota has finished its three-volume collection: *Minnesota River Valley Birding Trail*; *North Shore Birding Trail: Duluth to Grand Portage*; and the latest, *Great River Birding Trail: Mississippi River from Headwaters to the Minnesota—Iowa Border*. You can also order these guides at: www.adventurepublications.net.

Good Birders Don't Wear White *50 Tips from North America's Top* *Birders*

edited by Lisa White

This book is a compilation of essays by fifty top birders, including Kenn Kaufman, David Sibley, Don & Lillian Sibley, and Laura Erickson.

The essays are divided into sections on backyard birding, equipment & clothing, techniques, locations, ethics, photography and other topics. Sometimes one essay reinforces the message of another, such as "Take Field Notes" by Jessie H. Barry and "Learn by Drawing" by David Sibley. Both encourage us to make sketches of the birds we see. Other essays contradict each other: Sheri Williamson ("Good Birders Don't Wear White") warns us to avoid white clothing when birding, but Kenn Kaufman ("Question Authority: Good Birders Sometimes Wear White") suggests that in some locations such as hawk-watching or pelagic trips, it probably doesn't matter. David Jasper in "Surrender (Or at Least Wave a White Flag)" suggests that waving a white towel or scarf can attract loons, grebes and diving ducks.

My least favorite essay was by Steve Howell on pelagic birding. His advice on avoiding sea sickness (get a good night's sleep and drink lots of water) was clearly from someone who has never spent several hours wishing a boat ride would end.

My favorite essay was "Slow Down and See More Birds: The Rule of Sandwiches" by John Acorn. This essay reminds us that sometimes we can see more birds by sitting in one spot than by vigorously walking in woods or fields.

Overall, the message that seemed to be repeated over and over is to spend less time focusing on adding birds to your life list and instead, spend more time enjoying birds, learning about birds, and encouraging others to enjoy birds.

—Jerry Bahls

HAWK RIDGE

Fall funneling of
feathers on the move!
Swirling kettles of
migrating hawks
lofted upward on
winds of warmth—
tracing the
Superior shore.

—Clem Nagel

AUDUBON GLEANINGS

This summer, I noticed some unusual behavior in my bluebird boxes at Murphy–Hanrehan Park. In one pair of houses, a female built a nest and laid five eggs. There was a nest started in the other box. After two weeks, I noticed that the first five eggs were cold, perhaps abandoned. I returned nine days later to find three more eggs in the first box, bringing the total to eight, and two eggs in the second box. The following week was disappointing, as all eight eggs had disappeared with little or no sign of predation. The cozy pair was still around and proceeded to lay four more eggs in the first box, which produced four fledges. The other two eggs never produced young, and I surmised that all 14 eggs may have come from the same pair. Could they have become confused about the boxes?

On some of those hot days this summer I worried about the young birds in the boxes. On at least two occasions, it appeared that the mother pushed the young out early, preferring to feed them in a nearby shade tree. I have heard of this behavior before, but since I monitored every 6-9 days, I had never observed early fledging. Bird behavior can be fascinating and I'm constantly struck with the drive for life and survival in our feathered citizens.

Also, I found another box by a lake occupied by three young bluebirds. They appeared to be one week from fledging. The following week when I returned, the box was vacant. When I opened the other box which had had swallows in it, there was one, possibly two, bluebirds there. It may have had swallows in there too, as it appeared full, but I didn't dare reopen it. Some head-scratching and memory-questioning determined that I had not made a mistake. These birds indeed probably had come from the other box. Until I see this again, I will remain bewildered.

Since I've started with bluebird behavior, I might as well continue in kind. This story happened to Dody Crockett of Glen Rock, PA. A pair had claimed a backyard house in late January, before the swallows returned to Pennsylvania. One day a swallow was trying to take over, poking its head in the hole. Ma-Blue grabbed its beak and had the swallow dangling out the front. Pa-Blue saw this activity and attacked the swallow, taking it to the ground. The bluebirds laid six eggs and most survived.

Try to plan a trip around Hawk Ridge in Duluth. There are spotters there every day in the fall keeping tallies. In 2006, increases were seen in banded Redstarts and Swainson's Thrushes, along with a disturbing and hopefully cyclic drop in Mourning and Chestnut-sided Warblers, and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. Wintering south of the Gulf, Redstarts have been on general decline for some time.

—Jim Egge
612-827-7629

Bird-Window Collisions During Fall Migration

There is a part of bird-loving that I hate at this time of year: the collision of migrating birds with my home's big window.

I keep my feeders and birdbaths a good distance from the house and screens dull the reflection of the windows that open, but there is a large decorative window above our entryway that is the trouble-spot of our home. The traveling birds adore the cranberry bushes and chokecherry and crabapple trees on our block, and today there was a flock of Cedar Waxwings passing through which numbered at least thirty. After scooping up two of them plus a Hermit Thrush from my front steps this afternoon (two stunned, one dead), I knew it was time for my annual tacky-but-effective DIY home decorating solution.

My family is mortified by the temporary weird appearance of our home's exterior, but I have found this helps to divert bird/window accidents in the fall: I bought packets of shiny silver fringed table garland from a local party supply store, cut it into many two-foot streamers, and taped one end of each strip to the top of the outer window frame (using a broom handle as an extension to push the tape onto the top edge of the window). The breeze rustles and flaps the metallic fringes, and [I hope] reduces the bird collisions.

On the occasion when I do hear the disheartening *thunk* on the window, I search for the fallen bird, lay it on the outdoor wicker sofa cushion away from activity and cover the patient with an airy willow basket. I peek at the bird every half hour or so, marveling at its close beauty, and when it has recovered its senses, I remove the basket and step away so the migrant can continue on its travels.

—Kim Halek

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KINGFISHER
NOVEMBER 2007



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

- 6** Chapter Meeting
- 10** Fall Members' Meeting
- 11** Bird banding—Springbrook

DECEMBER

- 1** MOU Paper Session
- 9** Bird banding—Springbrook

MRV field trips are held throughout the year.
Please check page 3 for current list

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 John Arthur or Jerry Bahls for details!

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