



The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter

# Trumpeter

Volume 44 Issue 3—Bloomington MN  
www.MRVAC.org

November & December 2010

Anne Hanley, Editor  
anne\_hanley90@hotmail.com

## Holiday Auction November 18

### Great items available

By Anne Hanley & Patti Larson

**Where:** Our annual fundraising auction will be held at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center: 3815 American Blvd E, Bloomington

**When:** Thursday November 18, 2010 6:00-9:00 pm

**6:00 pm Drop off auction donations**, check out the other items and enjoy **refreshments**

**7:00 – 8:20 pm Live auction with Sharon Stietler (The Bird Chick) as our auctioneer.**

**8:20 – 8:55 pm** check out and clean up

**Why:** Raise money for the Refuge and other environmental education projects

**Who:** You and your friends. Please come to the Auction and buy something. We will have items in every price range. If you can donate something to sell, wonderful!

Get some of your holiday shopping done, have fun and raise money to support a variety of environmental education projects. Here are some examples of items you will find at the auction:

- ❑ **Spotting scope and tripod:** Vortex Skyline 20-60x80 Angled Spotting Scope donated by Eagle Optics (list price \$648)
- ❑ Front row seat at Wood-duck jump party, includes breakfast
- ❑ **Audubon's Birds of America** The Audubon Society Baby Elephant Folio (Abbeyville Press-1981) edited by Roger Tory Peterson and Virginia Marie Peterson
- ❑ Home-made goodies: bread, cookies, candy and jams
- ❑ Local food (cheese, squash)
- ❑ Gift certificates for local businesses
- ❑ Prints of East African Birds by Louis Agassiz Fuertes, US bird prints by Al Dornisch and scenes from *High Arctic* by George Miksch Sutton and Lenox bird figurines.

*continued on page 2*

## Terry's Perch

By Terry Houle, MRVAC President

In September, I attended the Tar Sands symposium sponsored by Audubon MN and other groups. I never realized Minnesota gets nearly 80% of its oil from Canada and a major portion of that is from Tar Sands. National Geographic covered the issue well in 2009. You can see a variety of photos and a several-page overview of the situation (see URL below). The Tar Sands process uses a great deal of natural gas to heat water to extract the oil and results in heavy metal pollution, toxic tailings, boreal forest destruction and therefore loss of habitat.

The presenters made a strong case that the Tar Sands process was a globally significant threat to the environment. It has been called the world's dirtiest oil. If nothing else, the fact that the Tar Sands process makes economic sense is a strong indication we've used up the relatively easy-to-reach oil.

What can we, as individuals, do?

- Learn about more about the Tar Sands issue and talk about it with your friends.
- Some of the web sites below have online petitions or online letters you can send to elected officials.
- Buy less gasoline. Every time you buy gasoline you are voting for more gasoline to be produced.

I will put some information on the MRVAC website and Facebook page with additional information and URL's to find more online. Here are a few URL's to check out:

[www.oilsandswatch.org](http://www.oilsandswatch.org)

[www.borealbirds.org](http://www.borealbirds.org)

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2009/03/canadian-oil-sands/kunzig-text>

Thanks for being concerned citizens!



## MRVAC Chapter News

### Holiday Auction Continued from page 1

Come and bid often, bid high and have fun doing it for our environmental education program!

#### If you can donate auction items or provide refreshments, thank you!!

1. Make plans to drop off your contribution ahead of time. This will help us set up quickly on Thursday evening. Coordinate with Anne: 952-936-0811(h) [anne\\_hanley90@hotmail.com](mailto:anne_hanley90@hotmail.com)
2. Please let Jan Carlson know if you can bring some snacks. 952.858.8604 or [jcelliot@yahoo.com](mailto:jcelliot@yahoo.com)
3. If you need to bring your items on Thursday evening, please make every effort to deliver them between 5:30 and 6:30 pm. so people can preview your items before the bidding starts.

### Hummingbirds in January:

On January 27, 2011 MRVAC is pleased to present **Amazing Hummingbirds, Unique images and Characteristics by Stan Teikela.**

This talk takes a fun and entertaining look at the world of hummingbirds. Stan traveled all over the US to capture the dazzling images of hummingbirds that adorn his book and presentation. Stan will talk about how hummingbirds feed, catch insects, mate, migrate and so much more. This talk will appeal to hummingbird fans of all ages.

Time: 7:00-7:30 pm Socialize and enjoy refreshments;  
7:30 pm Presentation begins.

#### Chapter Contacts:

President: Terry Houle  
952-686-1493 or [Terry99@gmail.com](mailto:Terry99@gmail.com)  
Membership: Patti (Poladian) Larson  
952-934-0792 [pattilarson@comcast.net](mailto:pattilarson@comcast.net)

### Suggestion for a Good Read

By George Skinner

We really enjoyed Wesley the Owl: The Remarkable Love Story of an Owl and His Girl by Stacey O'Brien. You can learn a lot about owls by living with one!

### Christmas Bird Count - Dec 18 and 19 MRVAC members encouraged to participate

The first Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was conducted in 1900 by twenty-six individuals who spent several hours on Christmas Day in their neighborhoods, counting all of the birds they observed or heard. This survey has been coordinated by the National Audubon Society ever since, and has become the oldest continuous wildlife survey in North America. Over the years Christmas Bird Count records have been used to study changes in bird populations and wintering ranges

You can participate in this year's CBC by going out in the field or by counting the birds in your yard (if you live in the Count area) and reporting them to the compiler.

**MRVAC sponsors the Bloomington CBC** on Saturday, December 18<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to help count, please call Randy Hills: 952-953-3613 or send him an email at [rhills@frontiernet.net](mailto:rhills@frontiernet.net).

After counting, gather between 4:30 and 5 pm to help set up for a potluck soup supper at the Diamond Lake Lutheran Church, 5760 Portland Ave 55417. Juice and coffee will be available from 5 to 5:30 and the meal begins at 5:30 pm. Please bring soup, bread or dessert. Please call Jan Carlson at 952.858.8604 or by email at [jcelliot@yahoo.com](mailto:jcelliot@yahoo.com) what you intend to bring so she knows what supplementary food may be needed. You are welcome at the supper whether you counted with the Bloomington CBC or not.

**The 52<sup>nd</sup> Excelsior CBC** is also scheduled for December 18. This count is centered on the intersection of Hwys 5 and 101 in Eden Prairie and includes parts or all of Minnetonka, Eden Prairie, Excelsior, Chanhassen, Chaska and Shakopee. Howard Towle is the compiler for the Excelsior Count. If you'd like to help count in the SW Metro area, call Howard 763-545-5458 – or email him at [towle001@umn.edu](mailto:towle001@umn.edu). Alternatively, you can participate in this count by helping to cover a portion of Carver Park. If you would like to do so, contact Judy Voigt Englund, Naturalist, Lowry Nature Center at [jvenglund@threeriversparkdistrict.org](mailto:jvenglund@threeriversparkdistrict.org).

In addition to the Bloomington count, MRVAC members also organize the **Cedar Creek Bog CBC** in northern Anoka County. Join us on Sunday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. For more information, contact Steve Weston at 612-978-3993 or [sweston2@comcast.net](mailto:sweston2@comcast.net)

If you are interested in birding further afield, see the MOU website at <http://moumn.org/CBC/>



## Regional and Environmental Action News

### Purple Martin House Installed at Lake Hiawatha

By Diana Doyle

Thanks to the financial support of MRVAC, this summer a Purple Martin house was installed along the shoreline restoration area of Lake Hiawatha in Minneapolis. The Standish-Ericsson Neighborhood Association and the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board also contributed to the project. Hundreds of people walk, run, bike, roller-blade, or picnic by this location every day. Maybe next year city residents can enjoy the sight of Purple Martins hawking insects over Lake Hiawatha.

Purple Martins, our largest American swallow, are unique: they are the only songbird that is nearly completely dependent on human-supplied housing for reproduction. Native Americans fostered martin colonies in their campsites, hanging clusters of hollowed-out gourds. Purple Martins were seen as beneficial insect-eaters and as an early warning system for the campsite. European settlers continued the tradition, installing gable-roofed martin houses.

Purple Martin houses, with their white multi-unit houses mounted on tall poles, were once a common sight on Minnesota farms. But with fewer family farms, and the invasion of non-native House Sparrows, Purple Martin numbers have plummeted—down an alarming 78% since 1966. The population continues to decline 3.9% each year, according to the Audubon Breeding Bird Survey and the East Central Minnesota Purple Martin Recovery Project. For more information on martins, visit [www.purplemartinrecovery.org](http://www.purplemartinrecovery.org) and [MNMartin.org](http://MNMartin.org).

Unfortunately, with less housing available, Purple Martin numbers will only continue to decline. It is now our responsibility to provide housing in order to preserve the species in Minnesota. Daryl Lindstrom, of the East Central Minnesota Purple Martin Recovery Project, spoke at the MRVAC meeting in March 2010 about Purple Martins. His presentation was a big impetus to proposing a martin colony along the city lakes.

The Lake Hiawatha martin house consists of 12 gourds ("Troyer horizontal gourds with Conley II entrances"), specially designed to deter non-native species such as European Starlings and House Sparrows. The gourds will remain up into early fall, in hopes of attracting migrating sub-adults on the look-out for available housing where they can start their own colony this spring. The nearest known active Purple Martin colony is at the Braemar Golf Course in Edina, about eight miles away. Wish us luck!

### Audubon Minnesota 2010 Annual Meeting November 13, 2010

Join us as we celebrate another great year at Audubon! Learn about Minnesota bird conservation projects from the state office, hear from special guest speakers, find out about Audubon chapter activities, and meet and mingle with fellow bird enthusiasts.

**Featured speakers** include Dr. Paul Kemp, Vice President of Audubon's Gulf Coast Initiative and Jeb Barzen, Director of Field Biology, International Crane Foundation. Additional speakers will be added to the agenda in the coming weeks.

**When:** Saturday, November 13, 2010, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm (lunch provided)

**Where:** Wilder Center, 451 Lexington Parkway North, Saint Paul MN 55104 (free parking). See map at [http://www.wilder.org/fileadmin/wilder/pdf/Wilder\\_Center\\_map\\_directions.pdf](http://www.wilder.org/fileadmin/wilder/pdf/Wilder_Center_map_directions.pdf)

**Cost:** \$20 per person

**Registration deadline:** November 3, 2010 (register online or by mail – go to [mn.audubon.org](http://mn.audubon.org) for more information).

**Questions?** Contact us [mnaudubon@audubon.org](mailto:mnaudubon@audubon.org)



### Sax Zim Boreal Birding Festival in Feb

February 18-21, 2011. The festival offers field trips to look for Boreal specialties, evening meals and presentations Friday and Saturday. Registration deadline January 31. Limited to 150 participants. For more information, see the festival web site:

<http://moumn.org/sax-zim/>



Audubon Center of the North Woods Event:

### Winter Family Escape Dec 27-30, 2010

Activities range from active programs such as climbing wall and high ropes to educational programs such as raptors and winter survival to winter sports such as snowshoeing and dogsledding to quiet activities such as crafts and sleigh rides. Full food and lodging packages are available. For more information, see

[www.audubon-center.org](http://www.audubon-center.org)



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



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

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Audubon MN fall members meeting

Saturday November 13, 2010

The meeting will be held at the beautiful and new, LEED-certified headquarters of the Wilder Foundation, conveniently located one block north of I-94 and Lexington in St. Paul. Parking is free. Your RSVP is required by November 3; cost is \$20. Hope to see you there! For more information see the Audubon Minnesota website <http://mn.audubon.org/> or call the office at 651-739-9332.

Swans on the Mississippi

Saturday, November 13, 2010 call for carpooling  
Mark Lystig - 651-452-1133

Join us on a trip down along the Mississippi looking for Bald Eagles, ducks, gulls, shorebirds & Tundra Swans. Stops include Colville Park, just outside Red Wing, and Alma WI and the viewing platform at Rieck's Lake Park. We may disperse around noon or continue together to look for more birds on the way back north. The trip is suitable for beginning birders. We will always be close to the cars but the weather can be chilly so be prepared. For more info or to register, call Mark.

MRVAC Holiday Auction – see page 1

Thursday November 18, 2010 from 6:00 – 9:00 pm  
Sharon Stiteler will be our mistress of ceremonies and auctioneer. The live auction will begin at 7 pm.

Birding Trek – Wilkie Unit MN, Valley NWR

Saturday November 20, 2009 at 2:30 pm  
7701 Co Rd 101 E, Shakopee  
Craig Mandel - 952-546-3407

Join us for a bird walk on the Wilkie unit and learn about the fall migration of birds. During this walk we will search for migrating birds. Birders of all skill levels are welcome on these walks. Bring along your binoculars, favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather. The Wilkie Unit is located on Co Rd 101, a half mile west of the Hwy 169 and Co Rd 101 junction in Shakopee. Please register with Craig.

Birding Trek – Wilkie Unit (see Nov 21)

Saturday, December 4, 2:30 pm  
7701 Co Rd 101 E, Shakopee  
Craig Mandel - 952-546-3407

Birders of all skill levels are welcome. Bring along your binoculars, favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather. Please register with Craig.

MN Ornithologists Union Paper Session

Saturday December 4, 2010 from 8 am-4:30 pm  
For more info, call Dave Baden 952-445-4353 or  
<http://moumn.org>

Metro Birding – location TBD

Monday, December 6, 2010 meet at 7:00 am,  
Location to be determined  
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 that still has some open water. Locations will also include some woods birding and possibly feeder watching over lunch. For more info or to register, contact Craig.

Birding Trek – Wilkie Unit (see Nov 21)

Saturday, December 11 at 2:30 pm

Christmas Bird Count See details on page 2

- Saturday December 18, 2010–Bloomington & Excelsior – all day
- Saturday December 18, 2010–Bloomington Soup Supper Potluck at 5:30 pm at Diamond Lake Lutheran Church 5760 Portland Ave S. Mpls.
- Sunday December 19, 2010–Cedar Creek Bog in Anoka Co.

Birding Trek – Wilkie Unit (see Nov 21)

Saturday January 8, 2011 at 2:30 pm  
Craig Mandel - 952-546-3407