



The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter

# Trumpeter

Volume 45 Issue 1—Bloomington MN  
On the web at [MRVAC.org](http://MRVAC.org)

July & August 2011

Anne Hanley, Editor  
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## MRVAC Donates Over \$7000

*By Bob Williams, MRVAC Treasurer*

Thanks to contributions from members and friends plus your enthusiastic participation in our two annual fundraising events, we have been able to support a variety of interesting projects related to youth and nature. During this past program year, from June 2010 through May 2011, MRVAC paid for busing young people to the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and for an intern who can help educate students; sponsored a film about the Minnesota River to help educate people about issues; contributed to two nest structures and gave binoculars to Richardson and Lowry Nature Centers so young people can see birds and nature close up.

You should feel great about what you have made possible:

- \$4,000 to Refuge Friends Inc - \$2000 for busing kids to the refuge and \$2000 for summer interns at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
- \$1,087.91 for binoculars that were donated to Lowry Nature Center and Richardson Nature Center. Thanks to Eagle Optics for their matching grant!
- \$688.61 for Audubon Adventures kits for local grade school classrooms
- \$500 to Audubon Center for the North Woods for their general fund
- \$500 to Friends of the MN Valley for a sponsorship spot on the DVD and during the airing of River Revival: Working Together to Save the MN River which aired on KARE 11 June 12 at 6PM
- \$400 to Diana Doyle for a Purple Martin house at Lake Hiawatha in Minneapolis
- \$250 to Paul Randall, an Eagle Scout and son of Dennis Randall (MRVAC member) to put up a Chimney Swift tower at Meadows Park in Rosemount
- \$250 to Henderson Feathers to help sponsor the 3rd Annual Henderson Hummingbird Hurrah on August 20-21

## Terry's Perch

*by Terry Houle, MRVAC President*

Well, it's time to turn the page on another chapter in my life. My two years of President of Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter (MRVAC) has come to an end. We have seen our membership grow in tough times and that is due to the efforts of you the volunteers and members of this chapter. We have a new web site, Facebook page and email lists to help us communicate more rapidly and broadly. That is in addition to our outstanding Trumpeter newsletter.

The Natural Resources Committee has been rejuvenated and rebranded as the Environment Action Committee. As you may know I am not a great birder but I do care deeply about their home and where they live. Of course this is where we live also.

The MRVAC backbone is our approximately 65 field trips per year, led by outstanding and knowledgeable volunteers plus great programs that entertain and inform us about our natural world. Our fun and successful Birdathon and Holiday Auction help support MRVAC and our outreach efforts, which are described in more detail on this page.

We delighted to be meeting again at our "home" in the newly renovated Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center. A wonderful place and the Bloomington headquarters has been a real treasure to have in our very own backyard and one that few metropolitan areas can claim. I look at that relationship as very special and want us all to continue to nurture it.

So for now my title will just change to Past President. I Thank You All for the opportunity you have given me. But as always please remember to be good role models and stewards of the only earth we have.

## MRVAC Chapter News

### Anne Hanley and George Skinner Receive the Trumpeter Award

By Becky Lystig, MRVAC Board Member at Large

The Trumpeter Award is presented annually to a MRVAC member (or a couple in this case) who has given long term outstanding service to the chapter. The award was presented at the May meeting. Anne and George have been active members for many years. Anne served on the Board from 2001 to 2010. She was treasurer from 2001 to 2004. During this time she was often out of town, but she always attended meetings via speaker telephone! She was President from 2004 to 2006. She has been editor of the Trumpeter from 2004 to the present – this means she was president and editor, two of the most time consuming jobs, at the same time!! She helps organize the Holiday Auction and keeps it running smoothly, as well as contributing many home baked items to it.

George was Field Trip chair from 2001 to 2010, providing an outstanding trip schedule that is the envy of most other chapters! He was Director at Large from 2004 to 2010. For the past 2 years at least, he has faithfully reported on MOUnet the presence (or absence) of the Screech Owl that roosts in their Wood Duck box in the winter, so that other birders can come see it.!

Anne and George have for many years taught a community ed class on birding. In lieu of being paid, they gave Audubon memberships to all the participants! They manned the MRVAC table at the Living Green Expo in 2008, 2009 and 2010. They manned a table at the Kids' Birdwatching Fair in 2009 and 2010. They have led an incredible number of field trips for MRVAC, averaging around 20 trips per year! That's a lot of trips. When someone donated over 30 Lenox bird figurines to MRVAC to use as a fundraiser, they offered to store them at their house, so that people could purchase them directly from them. (Such as when visitors came to see the Screech Owl!) They also carted them back and forth to meetings so they were available to sell. They also took the effort to photograph them and put the photos on Facebook as another way to advertise them

A big thank you for all you do, from all of us, Anne and George!!

**New Audubon bird ID tool on-line:**

**<http://www.audubonbirds.org/>**

Try the Advanced Search feature!

### Meet MRVAC Board Members: Matthew Schaut and Shannon Martin

Each issue this year we'll give some of our board members a chance to introduce themselves.

**Matthew Schaut**, our new president, moved to Minnesota just over 5 years ago, and was blown away by the Minnesota River Valley and that it had been preserved as a refuge. Matthew shares a birthday with John Muir and has been an avid environmentalist from a young age.

He became a birder after experiencing warbler fallout at Point Pelee National Park, in Ontario, Canada. His involvement with MRVAC began gradually with participation in birding field trips, and when his work schedule finally permitted it, attendance at MRVAC sponsored refuge presentations and other MRVAC events.

Matthew also went to Washington, DC for an Audubon Great Lakes Initiative activist training, where participants were challenged to increase their involvement in environmental activism and the Audubon Society. Becoming a member of the MRVAC Board is one substantial way to fulfill that mandate.

Matthew has a Masters in Mental Health Counseling, and works with clients with serious and persistent mental illness during the day. Day and night, he dreams about birds.

**Shannon Martin** is delighted to join the MRVAC board this year as a member-at-large. Her love of wildlife and interest in ecosystem conservation motivated her to travel to Nebraska to see the Sandhill Crane migration this past spring - an experience that inspired her to get more involved in bird conservation in Minnesota and join the MRVAC board.

During the day, Shannon works for The Nature Conservancy, leading programs to reconnect youth to their environment in coastal British Columbia. She clarified she actually works for the Canada Program (running youth programs in British Columbia and soon to be in Northwest Territories). She just happens to be based out of Minnesota, but doesn't work for The Nature Conservancy Minnesota chapter.

She also has a background in animal care, having worked as a vet tech for two years and currently volunteers at the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Roseville.

## Conservation and Environmental Education News

### You Can Help with Audubon MN's 3rd Annual Chimney Swift Sit

by Ron Windingstad, Audubon Minnesota

Once again, volunteers throughout the state are needed to participate in Audubon Minnesota's Second Annual Chimney Swift Sit for an hour on any day during July 29-August 1, or August 26-29.



Chimney Swift populations have declined 54 percent over the past 40 years. This species is important to the environment, as each day Chimney Swifts consume one-third of their weight in flying insects, such as mosquitoes and flies, making them a natural insect control. The data that volunteers collect will help us better understand the distribution of migrating Chimney Swifts in Minnesota.

**Here's how the Sit works:** Participants "sit" at a chimney they know have swifts, or suspects there are swifts, for about an hour any day between July 29-August 1, or August 26-29 and count/estimate the number of chimney swifts as they enter a nighttime roosting place, and record the data on their Sit participation form. Volunteers can count on one night or on several nights during the designated period.

For more information about the Sit and to download a participation form, go to <http://mn.audubon.org>. If you cannot participate in the Sit but know of places where Chimney Swifts are roosting, please contact Ron Windingstad at [rwindingstad@audubon.org](mailto:rwindingstad@audubon.org) or 651-739-9332 ext 14.

In addition to the Sit, Audubon Minnesota is promoting Chimney Swift conservation efforts by educating chimney owners about the habitat needs of Chimney Swifts and facilitating the building of new structures specifically for use by these birds as nest and roost sites. The Chimney Swift was just declared an endangered species in Nova Scotia this past year and we hope our efforts through research and education will help halt the decline here in Minnesota.

For more information about Chimney Swift conservation, visit <http://mn.audubon.org>. You may have seen a tower at Rapids Lake in Carver or at Westwood Hills NC in St. Louis Park.

### Arctic NWR Events at the Bell

**America's Wildest Refuge (film) Thursday, July 14, 7p.m., doors open at 6 p.m. Bell Museum Auditorium Free with admission**

Join us for this hour-long film that includes sweeping views of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, its wildlife, and interviews with those who know it best. After the video, Sarah Hobbie, a University of Minnesota ecologist who has worked extensively in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge will offer brief remarks and answer questions. Join us afterwards for light refreshments and time in the Arctic Sanctuary exhibition

**Arctic Sanctuary: Our Collective Refuge Opening June 25 - Free with museum admission**

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the exhibition combines Jeff Jones' spectacular panoramic photographs of America's wildest lands with poetry, interpretive text, maps, and information about the refuge. Whether your interest is wilderness, the arctic, conservation, or spectacularly beautiful images, this show will speak to you. Jones' keen understanding of the natural world, coupled with decades of experience in remote backcountry and wilderness areas, form the foundation for his exceptional landscape photography.

### Two Nights at Shady Hollow Resort

By Anne Hanley & George Skinner

Normally a resort review isn't what you'd expect on the Conservation page – but our stay there raised money for environmental education projects and the resort is working hard to be 'green'. We stayed at the Shady Hollow Resort in the Brainerd-Pillager area over Memorial Day – we were lucky enough to be the successful bidders for the two-night stay they kindly donated to our chapter's Holiday Auction last November.

It's a smaller resort on Hardy Lake that offers both older "cabiny" cabins and newer cabins with central air, heat and dishwashers. The resort has several 'green' initiatives including a nice garden of native plants by the lake and around many of the cabins. They offer kayaks, canoes and a paddleboat and fishing for pan fish right off the dock if you aren't into swimming.

If you are looking for a resort within a 2 hour drive of the Twin Cities, consider [shadyhollowresort.com](http://shadyhollowresort.com)

**Please save this list** so you can contact Board and Committee members.

It will not be published again until July 2011. Thanks to all our volunteers!

### 2011 - 2012 MRVAC OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS, COORDINATORS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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## Family Events at the Minnesota Valley NWR + Field Trips

### Refuge Rambles, Sundays in July

Every Sunday in July and August from 2:00-3:00 pm  
July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 and August 7, 14, 21, 28  
At both the Bloomington & Rapids Lake Visitor Centers  
Join refuge staff for a weekly walk exploring trails and  
observing the natural world. Enjoy the solitude of the  
Minnesota River valley tucked into the midst of our busy  
urban landscape. Explore prairie, forest and wetland  
habitats and discover the diverse plants and animals that  
depend on the refuge for survival. All ages.

### Going Wild: Rail to Refuge

Date: Sunday, July 10 from 12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
Place: Bloomington Visitor Center  
Ride with a Ranger on the Hiawatha Light Rail and  
discover how to access one of the Twin Cities best  
preserved natural areas via mass transit. Meet at the  
Bloomington Visitor Center and come prepared for a  
guided ride and hike to the Bass Ponds. Weekend Light  
Rail fares are \$1.75. Judy Geck, Park Ranger

### Become a Junior Refuge Manager!

Date: Tuesday, July 12 from 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.  
Place: Bloomington Visitor Center  
Become a Jr. Refuge Manager! Children ages 5 and up  
will go "behind the scenes" of Minnesota Valley National  
Wildlife Refuge. Several activities from the Jr. Refuge  
Manager Activity Booklet will be completed to earn their  
Jr. Refuge Manager badge. Please dress for being  
outdoors. Please call 952-858-0710 for more  
information. Mara Koenig, Park Ranger

### Wetland Safari at Bass Ponds Trailhead

Date: Saturday, August 6 from 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.  
Take a look at that quiet, empty pond of water. Now take  
a closer look - and you will find an entire world of small  
creatures living and thriving in that "empty" watery  
habitat. Take a turn at dip-netting to capture and study  
dragonfly nymphs, water striders, crayfish, and many  
more creatures that call the pond their home.  
Suitable for families with children ages 5 and up.  
Marcia Lewis, Volunteer Master Naturalist

### Insect Investigation -Bloomington Visitor Center

Date: Thursday, August 11 from 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.  
What creatures have a tough outer shell-like covering,  
three body parts, and six legs, and have been found on  
earth for 350 million years? INSECTS! Come investigate  
the prairie area outside the Visitors Center where many  
of these amazing animals make their home. Large and  
small, fliers and crawlers, brightly colored and almost  
invisible, insects are some of the most abundant and  
diverse animals on earth! Suitable for families with  
children ages 5 and up. Master Naturalist Marcia Lewis

### Street addresses for the Refuge events listed:

Visitor Center, 3815 American Blvd. E., Bloomington,  
Bass Ponds, 2501 86th St. E., Bloomington  
Louisville Swamp Unit, 3801 145th St. W., Shakopee  
Rapids Lake Education Cntr, 15865 Carver Highlands Dr  
Carver, 952-361-4500

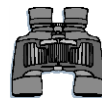
Please check the Refuge web site for more events,  
maps and directions:

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/minnesotavalley>

### **Hummingbird Festival in August**

Audubon Minnesota is co-hosting the Henderson  
Hummingbird Hurrah August 20-21, 2011 featuring:  
hummingbird banding, guided tours of flower gardens  
and hummingbird habitat, speakers, children's activities,  
book signings and vendors. Free. For more information,  
see <http://hendersonmn.com/>

Henderson is between Belle Plaine and Le Sueur on the  
Minnesota River in Sibley County.



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

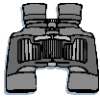
### Louisville Swamp Unit, Shakopee

Sunday, July 10, 2011 at 8:30 am  
George Skinner & Anne Hanley - 952-936-0811  
We'll look for resident birds in this oak savannah and  
riparian habitat near the Renaissance Festival grounds  
just off Highway 169 south of Shakopee. (from 169, turn  
R on 145<sup>th</sup> St.) Plan on walking 2-3 miles. Bring a snack  
and water. Long sleeves, long pants and a hat are  
recommended as it can be warm and/or buggy. We'll  
have a scope and some extra binoculars. We should be  
back to the cars around noon.

### Pope County Birds

Wed-Friday, July 13-15, 2011 - 6:00 pm  
Craig Mandel 952-546-3407  
\$35/non-members; \$25/MRVAC members  
Join us on a trip to Pope County. We will begin the trip  
in the town of Starbuck, at the Cedar Inn of Starbuck  
motel. The wide variety of habitats in the county - lakes,  
marsh's, prairie and woodlands - should give us the  
opportunity to observe a nice variety of birds. We may  
visit Glacial Lakes State Park, Lake Emily and Lake  
Johanna. With luck we will also catch the start of  
shorebird migration. Please contact Craig to register.

*More field trips on the next page*



**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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See previous page for more field trips

Address Service Requested

**Rapids Lake Education Cntr, MVNWR, Carver**

Sunday, July 17, 2011 from 8:30 to noon  
15865 Carver Highlands Dr, Carver  
George Skinner & Anne Hanley - 952-936-0811  
Orioles, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Lark Sparrows and other open-habitat birds live at this Refuge unit in Carver County, south of the town of Carver. We'll also check out the swallows flying over the Minnesota River and see what's on Rapids Lake. We'll bring extra binoculars and a scope. If you have a scope, please bring it for viewing the lake.

**Purgatory Creek Recreation Area (Eden Prairie)**

Wednesday, July 27, 2011 at 6:30 pm  
Meet at 13001 Technology Drive, Eden Prairie  
George Skinner & Anne Hanley - 952-936-0811  
Explore this woods and wetland trail network in the western suburbs near the Flagship Athletic Club and large SW Transit Center in Eden Prairie. Birds seen will depend on the water level. If the water level is low enough there should be herons, egrets, gulls and/or terns and possibly early migrant shorebirds.

**Birding at Rapid's Lake Unit, MN Valley NWR**

Tuesday, August 9, 2011 - 6:00 - 10:00 am  
Craig Mandel 952-546-3407  
Join us for an early morning walk, in search of nesting species at the Rapid's Lake Unit. With luck one can find both species of cuckoo, a variety of sparrows and Prothonotary and Cerulean Warblers. Please contact Craig to register for this program.

**Kandiyohi County Birds**

Wednesday-Friday, August 10-12, 2011 at 6:00 pm  
Craig Mandel 952-546-3407  
\$35/non-members; \$25/MRVAC members  
Join us on a trip to Kandiyohi County. This trip will begin in Willmar, at the Lakeview Inn. That evening we will search some wetlands south of town for marsh birds and migrating shorebirds. On the following days we will spend time birding in some of the county parks and at Sibley State Park. With lots of lakes and woodlands, plus 6 sewage ponds to check, we should have a chance to observe a wide variety of birds. Please contact Craig to register for this trip.

**Louisville Swamp Unit, Shakopee**

Sunday, August 14, 2011 at 8:30 am  
George Skinner & Anne Hanley - 952-936-0811  
See description on July 10, 2011 on page 5.

**Biking to and through the Refuge**

Sunday, August 14, 2011 at 12:30-1:30 pm  
Bloomington Visitor Center 3815 American Blvd E  
Learn from a ranger about biking trails in the refuge.

**Miesville Ravine, Dakota County**

Sunday, August 21, 2011 at 8:00 am  
Steve Weston - 612-978-3993  
Come hike the heavily wooded trails of the least-known and least-birded metro park, Miesville Ravine County Park. Directions: Take Hwy. 52 to Dakota Hwy. 50 east to Miesville. At Miesville take CR 91 south (right) until it T's at 280<sup>th</sup>. Turn east (left) and meet at the north parking lot in the ravine. For further info, call Steve.

**Rapids Lake Education Cntr, MVNWR, Carver**

Sunday, August 21, 2011 from 8:30 to noon  
15865 Carver Highlands Dr, Carver  
George Skinner & Anne Hanley - 952-936-0811  
Explore this Refuge unit in Carver County, south of the town of Carver, with us. We'll bird around the Visitor / Education Center building and walk a short ways along the Minnesota River to check out the swallows flying over the river and look for Bald Eagles. The last part of the morning we'll drive to the upland parking lots to look down on Rapids Lake. We'll bring extra binoculars and a scope. If you have a scope, please bring it for viewing the lake.