



The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter

Trumpeter

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Chip Notes

By Greg Burnes, MRVAC President

In late May I found a female and male Mourning Warbler along Nine-Mile Creek. I was elated that I was able to pick its song out from the vocalizing of many other birds and return the next day to hear and get a glimpse of these beautiful warblers. I know many of you are thinking, “what’s the big deal?”, but I consider myself an AA (Avid but Average) birder, so for me this was very exciting accomplishment.

But, before I got too proud of myself I got to thinking about how indebted I am to all those who have helped me gain the birding skills I do possess and have stoked my excitement for birding over the years,. This type of mentoring and support is really what binds any community together. It may be a metaphorical leap, but if we as a city, state, country and world could apply the same community-minded principles and selflessness we enjoy in our birding “lives”, we would live in a better world.

As many of you know MRVAC is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2017. In honor of this milestone, we are holding a special event at Cedar Creek on July 8th. Many of you know about the great work that the Red-Headed Woodpecker Recover Project (RHWRP) does at Cedar Creek and we will be getting a “back-stage” look at their work. Specifically we’ll learn about their new project to track the migratory habits of this amazing bird. Next, we will tour the “closed-to-the-public” RHWP nesting areas. There is more information in the Trumpeter and on mrvac.org and I encourage all of you to attend. There is no charge but limited space. Send an email to gurnes@comcast.net to register.

Lastly, I am stepping down as MRVAC President. I want to thank all of you who support our wonderful organization and I am proud to have had a very small part in its success.

Volunteer to Lead/Co-lead Bird Walks

By Cheri Fox

Where do you like to bird when you are birding alone or with a few friends? Birding by bike or canoe might be fun! Pick your favorite park or trail, somewhere close by or further afield, and contact me, Cheri Fox, about adding an outing to next year’s field trip schedule. We’d love to have a few more field trip leaders. I can be reached by phone at 612-590-1261 or cherifoxj@gmail.com

If you have been thinking about leading a walk but are a little unsure about it, you may set up a field trip with a co-leader. You need not be an expert, you just need to be welcoming to your participants and have some experience with the trip location. For example, it’s very helpful if you have birded there before, know the park features (restrooms, optional trails back to the parking lot) - and where at least a few birds are likely to be found.

Meetings Resume in September

The next general MRVAC meeting with a speaker will be on September 28, 2017.

In the meantime, if you need a project, think about local habitat improvements. Could you add some native plants and trees somewhere (or somewhere else) in your yard? Perhaps volunteer with your city, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge or Great River Greening on some habitat project.

Support a Great Native Plant Resource

The website <https://www.minnesotawildflowers.info/> is a great resource for learning about Minnesota native plants; you can find flowers by bloom date or color, for example, and lots of great photos. Help support this wonderful resource by contributing now to their fundraising campaign – at press time they were half way to their \$10,000 goal.

Conservation and Politics

Do You Remember When Turkeys Were Rare?

By Don Arnosti Conservation Program Director of the Izaak Walton League of America – Minnesota Division

Do you remember when it was rare to see a turkey in Minnesota? I do. When I started my conservation career about 30 years ago, they were few and far between. Now, they've become a big nuisance.

"Turkey" is my theme for this year's legislative session. Never in my 30 years' experience have the results for conservation and the environment been so poor. Never. And, there was plenty of gravy for the special interests who came to feast on this turkey.

I don't recall the election past being about subverting the will of Minnesota voters and shifting dedicated water clean-up funds to government salaries. Did I miss the promises to cut residents out of permitting processes for mining? How are we better off with the DNR prohibited from regulating lead shot...when there are effective alternatives? And, what has been so wrong about DNR wetland replacement decisions regarding mining – that they back-dated a law 26 years to 1991 to cover it up!?

I've heard that the 1% are getting ahead faster than most of us. That carried through into environmental permitting: companies with the means to pay to get to the head of the permitting line, can, to the detriment of other permit applicants. They also have the right to write their own Environmental Impact Statements...and keep their data and assumptions private. Don't even ask: We won't tell. Cities have up to sixteen years to comply with new clean water standards. Kicking the clean water can down the road.

Solar, wind and energy conservation programs were cut or repealed entirely. Residents who get their power from municipal or cooperative power companies lost the regulatory oversight from the state, leaving them open to excessive fees to hook up their solar or wind installations. Existing challenges to such charges were dismissed by law. Representative Gruenhagen from Glencoe, Minnesota, in a floor speech that was widely shared, said Global Warming, was "Global Lying" and that it was a United Nations plot.

We tied our hands when it comes to pesticide applications – Minnesota can't require a "demonstrated need" before use of certain pesticides. Bees and other pollinators are to be researched with a little extra money, but we've already eliminated one possible way to help them. Finally, the rarest of wetlands, calcareous fens (groundwater-fed wetlands, with many rare plants) are

now on a "Commissioner's Choice" list. Because one farmer wants to irrigate corn near a fen and his Senator is in his pocket, our protective law dating back a quarter century is now permissive. A future DNR Commissioner may allow "seasonal drawdowns" of groundwater in fens...so that we can have a few more acres of crops. More "turkey trimmings" (and a few small edible bits) can be found in my full legislative report on our website: www.mnikes.org.

I have indigestion from this Turkey of a session, and so does Minnesota's environment. We are moving backwards on our promise of clean water and our need to transition to clean energy. We are doing nothing to improve our state parks. Did I mention we barely avoided a freeze on further acquisition of public wildlife lands?

When you are out and about this summer in Minnesota's Great Outdoors, look around you. Do you want to pass this along to your children and their children? If so, please tell every elected official that represents you: No More Turkeys!

Citizen Science Opportunity: Phenology & Changing Seasonal Patterns

The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge has recently mapped out a series of observation points to collect data on the effects of seasonal change for several plant and animal species. These observation points are connected in a series of three "phenology trails" along the refuge. These observations provide important information to scientists in the National Phenology Network, along with our own biologists, as they seek to better understand how species are effected by changing seasonal patterns.

Their research depends on people like you, the citizen scientists, to help collect invaluable field data all across the nation. The data collection is done through a citizen science initiative known as "Nature's Notebook", which utilizes a user-friendly website and mobile application to aid in simple and accurate data collection.

If you are interested in joining this campaign, please consider attending an upcoming (as yet unscheduled) workshop, where you will learn about the importance of phenology and how to use Nature's Notebook to collect data, along with finding opportunities to get involved.

For more information please contact Cortney Solum at cortney_solum@fws.gov

News from the Region

Successful Native Plant Market

By Caleb Ashling, City of Burnsville

Despite 45 degree temperatures and constant rain, 430 native plant enthusiasts came out to make the third annual Burnsville Native Plant Market another successful event! The market, held on May 20, featured 5 different native plant vendors selling a wide variety of bird and pollinator friendly plants. More than 4,000 native plants were sold at the event. Thanks to all who attended for supporting wildlife friendly landscaping. The event will be held again in 2018.

Hummingbird Hurrah Aug 19

Celebrate all things hummingbird on Saturday, August 19th, 2017 from 9 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Rain or Shine! Activities are at Bender Park, 200 N. Third St. and at the Minnesota New Country School (MNCS) in Henderson, MN. Produced by Henderson Feathers and sponsored by the Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter.

Hummingbird Banding – 9:00 a.m. – Noon
 Speakers: Al Batt, Donald Mitchell, Sarah Malchow,
 Educational Booths: Minnesota River Valley Audubon
 Chapter, Jim Gilbert, Chimney Swift information & more.
 Children's activities including coloring contest with cash prizes!
 Garden Tours: 1 Hour Morning & 1 Hour Afternoon with
 Master Gardeners: Sarah Malchow and Jackie Smith.
 Hummingbird Mall Vendors... Food... Raffle Prizes!!
 Website: www.hendersonhummingbirdhurrah.com
 We're also on Facebook!

Volunteer Work Weekends; ACNW

Audubon Center of the North Woods, Sandstone
 July 7-9 and September 8-10, 2017

Enjoy a summer weekend at the Audubon Center of the North Woods – in exchange for some volunteer help on a variety of service projects on the Center's grounds and buildings. We provide two nights lodging in our Crosby Lodge and all meals. Ages 12 years and up only please (children must be accompanied by an adult/parent)

<http://audubon-center.org/calendar/>

Bluebird Monitors Needed

Volunteers wanted to monitor 2 existing bluebird trails:
 Bloomington = 4 boxes at 102nd St E & Park Ave.
 Forest Lake = 6 boxes at Tanners Brook Golf Course;
 (plans are to expand to 10 later).
 Contact Jack Hauser at jgshauser@gmail.com
 Or call 952-831-8132

Salt Lake Weekend Birding Recap

By Ken Larson - - PrairieMarshFarm@Comcast.net

On April 29 over 100 birders from around the state searched the lakes, wetlands, woods and prairies of Lac Qui Parle, Big Stone and Yellow Medicine counties, finding 147 species of birds. Cold wet weather 2 days before and the later date for the weekend resulted in a good variety of waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds, warblers and sparrows.

Some of the best birds of the weekend were the Black-necked Stilt at Lone Tree Lake and a Prairie Falcon in southwestern Lac Qui Parle County, both reported by Jason Frank. Scott and Marilyn Scott spotted a Golden Eagle near Big Stone Lake and three miles northwest of Madison, Rebecca Flood was the first to spot a large flock of over 648 American Golden Plovers. Nearby at Madrena WMA, three White-faced Ibis, 123 American White Pelicans and one Western Grebe were spotted. Two Ferruginous Hawks were seen as well as numerous Swainson's Hawks. Altogether 23 shorebird, 15 sparrow and 5 warbler species were counted.

All the birders involved extend thanks to the City of Marietta and the American Legion Womens Auxilary for breakfast and lunch and to the City of Madison and the Sons of Norway for dinner. Anyone wishing a complete list can email me directly at

PrairieMarshFarm@comcast.net

or find it on the MOU web site:

<http://moumn.org/saltlake/>.

ACNW Summer Camps for Kids

Still looking for a summer camp?

Outdoor Explorations July 9-14 (entering Grades 5-7)
 During this camp we will hike in the woods; canoe, fish and swim in beautiful Grindstone Lake; practice shooting a bow and arrow; climb high on our rock wall and high ropes course; learn how to build a fire; construct a survival fort; use a compass for orienteering, and more. It's a week of adventures, challenges and endless fun!

Ways of Wildlife July 30 - Aug 4 (entering Grades 5-7)

Spend the week learning about caring for captive animals and exploring the lives of animals in the wild. You will have the chance to get up close and personal with the animals at the Audubon Center as well as take a number of wildlife-focused field trips. In addition to our time with animals we'll also traverse the high ropes course and have time to cool off in Grindstone Lake.

<http://audubon-center.org/> or 1-888-404-7743



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

Beginning birders are welcome on all field trips:

MN Valley Nat'l Wildlife Refuge Bird Treks

Schedule will be 8:00 - 10:30 am for all these walks

- Sun, July 2 Bass Ponds 2501 86th St E Bloomington
- Mon, July 17 Bass Ponds
- Sun, July 30 Bass Ponds
- Mon, Aug 7 Bass Ponds
- Sat, Aug 12 Bass Ponds
- Tue, Aug 15 Visitor Cntr 3815 American Blvd E Bloomington
- Tue, Aug 22 Bass Ponds
- Sun, Aug 27 Rapids Lake 15865 Rapids Lake Rd Carver

Join us for a bird walk at one of the many refuge units and learn about the 100 species of nesting birds. Birders of all skill levels are welcome on these walks. Bring along your binoculars, favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather. Craig Mandel, Volunteer Refuge Naturalist

Louisville Swamp Unit, MVNWR Shakopee

Saturday, July 8, 2017 at 8:30 AM

George Skinner & Anne Hanley 952-936-0811

We'll look for resident birds in this oak savanna and riparian habitat near the Renaissance Festival grounds, just off Highway 169, south of Shakopee on 145th 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. Note, there are no restrooms.

Back-Stage at Cedar Creek – Red Headed Woodpeckers

Saturday, July 8, 2017, 9:30am - noon

Greg Burnes 612-205-3071

This is a unique opportunity to get a "back-stage" look at the Cedar Creek Scientific study area. We will start the day with a short presentation about the RHWPRP initiative to track the Red-Headed's migratory path and then a guided walk into the closed nesting area. To reserve a spot, please email gburnes@comcast.net. There is no charge, though any donations would be appreciated to help support MRVAC's on-going work. We have limited space and will send out more information as we get closer to July 8th.

Southwest Minnesota Birding Days

Thursday, Friday, July 20 - 21, 2017, 6:00 am

Craig Mandel 952-240-7647

\$35/non-MRVAC members; \$25/MRVAC members

On this trip we will spend time birding in Yellow Medicine and Renville counties. Some of the locations we may explore include; Upper Sioux Agency State Park, Timm & Miller Lakes, Beaver Falls County Park and a number of sewage ponds. With luck we'll have a nice mix of early migrant shorebirds and some lingering nesting birds. Please contact Craig to register for this trip.

Western Minnesota Birding Days

Thursday, Friday, August 17 - 18, 2017, 6:30 am

Craig Mandel 952-240-7647

\$35/non-MRVAC members; \$25/MRVAC members

On this trip we will be birding in Wilkin, Traverse and Grant counties. Some of the locations we may explore include Rothsay WMA, Manston Marsh WMA, the North Ottawa Impoundment and a few sewage ponds. We'll be searching for species that nest in the prairies and for migrant shorebirds. Please contact Craig to register for this trip.

Rapids Lake 15865 Rapids Lake Rd Carver

Saturday, Aug 5, 2017 at 8:30 AM

George Skinner & Anne Hanley 952-936-0811

We'll bird around the Visitor / Education Center then walk along the Minnesota River to check out the woods and river habitats. The last part of the morning we'll look for prairie birds at the upper parking lots. We'll have extra binoculars and scope. A restroom is available.

Cannon River Bottoms

Sunday, August 20, 2017, 8:00 am

Steve Weston (612) 978-3993

We will be hiking a productive, but little known state forest trail near Redwing. Birds seen along this trail include Acadian Flycatcher, Scarlet Tanager, Cerulean Warbler, Ovenbird, Wood Thrush and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Call Steve for more information.