



The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter

Trumpeter

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www.MRVAC.org

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Matthew's Musings

by Matthew Schaut, Board President

I have been more active than usual this year with other Audubon chapters and with the Minnesota and National Audubon organizations. The state chapters had a meet up in St. Cloud with Minnesota Audubon last spring where we shared each chapter's accomplishments and focus and made plans to continue to coordinate efforts. There is another meeting planned for this fall and we hope that more chapter board members will attend.

I applied for and received a scholarship to attend this year's National Audubon Conference in Milwaukee. This was my first National Conference and I found it quite rewarding. My intent on going was to learn strategies for running advocacy campaigns and attracting new board members. While meeting and listening to other chapter leaders speak about their efforts, I developed a greater appreciation for what MRVAC does. Some of the chapters have budgets in six-figures (or more) and committees of several people in different areas. MRVAC's budget is in the low five-figures and most committees have a membership of one. Yet look at all that we do. There is probably no chapter with a more robust field trip program! Our Trumpeter newsletter is exemplary! Our Refuge presentations are unique and of the highest quality! It is truly incredible what MRVAC has consistently done through pure volunteer effort and commitment for decades.

Areas that I identified where MRVAC could increase its engagement include pollinator-friendly planting, renewal of the bird safe window and lights out initiatives in Minnesota, and an advocacy campaign to improve land use practices and water quality in our watershed, the Minnesota River. (This last part would probably require more than a committee of one.)

At the conference I was able to meet several of the Mississippi Flyway Audubon staff. The new staff adds capacity for wildlife biology, habitat preservation and restoration, and translations in Spanish. So many flyway birds migrate to Spanish-speaking areas, and often little is known about them in those places.

There is always tension in the Audubon Society between taking a middle of the road approach and the need for more direct action. I would recommend interested people watch

the conference keynotes. David Yarnold's keynote delineates the truly incredible amount of work Audubon is doing. Winona LaDuke's astounding final day keynote is an inspiring call to direct action. Audubon may continue to believe progress is made when all parties sit together at the table. However, part of me suspects that we all know that in the current disastrous political climate, if we don't act, there will be no table.

Meeting & Special Presentation

Thursday, October 24, 2019, 7:00 PM
MVNWR Bloomington Visitor Center

"Tales from the Bird Chick"
with Sharon Stiteler, National Park Ranger

Come hear the latest rambunctious tales from the Bird Chick. You would never guess the improbable bird she encountered in Minnesota. But, even better is what she wore so to not stand out in her quest for another bird. Rated PG-13.

Join us at 7:00 PM to socialize over cookies. A brief business meeting followed by the featured presentation will begin at 7:30 PM. The meeting will conclude before 9:00 PM.

The MVNWR Bloomington Visitor Center is located at 3815 American Boulevard East in Bloomington and is accessible by the METRO Blue Line (Hiawatha Light Rail) at the American Boulevard stop.

2019 MRVAC Holiday Auction

Thursday, November 21, 2019, 5:00 PM
REI Community Room, Bloomington MN

Mark your calendars for the annual MRVAC Holiday Auction! This year's event will take place in the REI Community Room located at 750 American Boulevard West in Bloomington. Set up will begin at 5:00 PM, the live auction begins at 6:00 PM, and cleanup will conclude by 8:30 PM. Please bring your checkbook or cash to pay for any items that you take home. Donations of items to be auctioned off are appreciated. If you cannot make it to the auction but would like to donate an auction item, please send an initial email to jhsweet0201@gmail.com.

The funds raised from last year's auction went towards bird education, research, and conservation in the river valley in the form of grants that were awarded to local organizations and schools.

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society



MRVAC Chapter News

Give to the Max on November 14!

by Bob Williams, Board Member



One way that MRVAC is able to raise money each year is by participating in the annual fundraising event in Minnesota known as Give to the Max Day. Many non-profit organizations choose to participate in the event put on by GiveMN and this year's event will take place on November 14, 2019.

You can make your donation online using a credit card and the site will also ask you if you want to cover the fee that GiveMN charges each non-profit organization for each donation they receive. In addition, you can schedule your donation well ahead of time which is advisable as the website can be overloaded on the day of the event.

Another benefit of using the GiveMN website are the bonuses that organizations can receive that are randomly selected during the day. Last year we received a \$100 bonus, but many bonuses can be much higher.

This year it is our goal to raise \$1000 on Give to the Max Day. To make your contribution please visit www.GiveMN.org and look for the Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter page. Thank you in advance for your support!

Get Involved with

the River Valley Community

by Monica Rauchwarter, Board Member
(612) 470 2011 – mrauchwarter@gmail.com

From habitat restoration to sharing your passion and knowledge about birds, there are several ways to foster bird-friendly communities in the river valley and the larger metro area. Contact Board Member-at-Large, Monica Rauchwarter in person at an upcoming meeting, over the phone, or through email to discuss bird habitat conservation, research, and education-related volunteer opportunities in the area.

In Memory of Bob Russell

Robert P. Russell (11/2/1945 – 6/30/2019)

by Steve Weston, Board Member

One of Minnesota's top birders, Bob Russel, died unexpectedly in June. He worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for many years. He served on the Records Committee for the Minnesota Ornithologist's Union and was the most active contributor to the recently completed Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas.

Bob believed that the Ivory-billed Woodpecker and Eskimo Curlew might not be extinct and helped search for them. He was a friend of MRVAC, often attending meetings, sometimes as the main attraction up front. He once made a cameo appearance as a Whooping Crane.

Quixotic, knowledgeable, a superb birder... He will be missed.

Bloomington CBC Update

by Greg Burnes, MRVAC Membership Chair
(612) 205 3071 – gburnes@comcast.net

We had a record number of participants last year at the Bloomington Christmas Bird Count (BCBC) and we hope to grow that number in 2019. We will be partnering with staff at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Lebanon Hills Regional Park and Fort Snelling State Park to provide our birders with even more resources. We will also be holding our BCBC dinner at the refuge this year and are working on organizing a fun evening.

The 2019 BCBC and dinner will be held on Saturday, December 14. I will be sending "save the date" emails to all who joined us last year. If you are interested in participating there are plenty of spaces. It doesn't matter if you are a novice or expert birder, have only an hour or a day to spare, we can use your help. Send me an email or give me a call and I can fill you in on how it works and get you signed up!

Want more from the Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter?

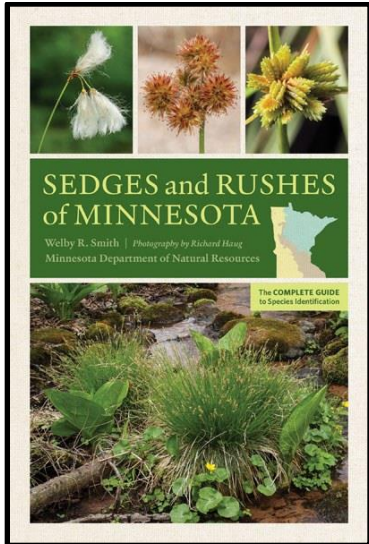




Nature Notes

Sedges and Rushes of Minnesota

by **Welby R. Smith**
with **Photography by Richard Haug**
Review written by Anne Hanley



As I learn more about native plants and as we add more natives to our yard, plant identification becomes more interesting to me. If you find yourself in this same category, you may want to consider this fairly new book on Minnesota sedges and rushes. The book is written for field biologists who need to be able to identify any plant they encounter. If you read this to mean that the book is pretty technical, you are correct, although there are aspects of the book that make it appealing for a more casual user.

I appreciate the short section in the preface (page viii) that gave general rules about how to determine if I'm looking at a grass, sedge or rush. If you are looking at a plant catalogue trying to decide which sedge to add to your yard, you can use this book to find the plant's distribution and habitat.

When you first open the book, you will see an appealing layout; each species is described on two pages with text plus several photos and a distribution map that includes locations of both current and historical specimens. If you are like me, you will need to refer to the Glossary at the back of the book to better understand the written descriptions.

It will also help if you are comfortable using plant keys. You will find multiple keys which are used to figure out which species – is it a *Carex* or *Cyperus*? – and then within *Carex*, which section of *Carex*? There are 146 species of *Carex* sedges in Minnesota; each section of *Carex* has its own key.

Refuge Update

by Joel Vos, MVNWR Visitor Center Manager



Fall in Minnesota makes many of us think of turning colors and falling leaves on quiet trails. However, as this last year has shown us, the Minnesota River has changed how many of us experience the changing seasons. With a record flood stretching from March to late July this year, we at the Refuge are still working hard to get trails back in order. Staff at the Refuge maintain an alert page on our website to keep the public informed of closures, and if you plan on getting out to bird this season it's best you keep the link handy!

www.fws.gov/nwrs/threecolumn.aspx?id=2147614989

Trails have been covered by water, then silt and sand mixed with massive trees and debris, and again with heavy rainfall this summer. Due to weather events this summer and early fall, trail repairs have been slowly making progress. Not only did staff have to bulldoze trails clear from 5-foot high mountains of silt in many places, we have had to take down fallen trees and find ways to repair the trail surface to make it accessible to the public again. Thankfully the elevation at Bass Ponds makes it one of the first to dry out, and the birding on the ponds and looking out into Long Meadow Lake can be very good!

Visitors should also be aware of closures to trails due to human-made disturbances. We'll see construction of the Minnesota Valley State Trail ongoing from Lyndale Landing along portions of the Bluff Trail, and other maintenance and construction projects in the area. Be aware of hunting season as well in the areas you plan to visit, and pack some blaze orange just in case!

We're hoping that the weather will stay dry long enough without snow so we can complete repairs and maintenance on our trails, and we appreciate your patience and support to get things back in order after the extensive damage we witnessed this year. As many of you travel into the Refuge to pursue your passion for birding, you're often our eyes and ears for trail conditions. You can pass along any issues with downed trees, overgrown vegetation, or other concerns about the trails by calling us at (952) 854 5900 or emailing minnesotavalley@fws.gov. Be sure to leave your name, phone number, and a short description of the trail condition you are reporting. If you're interested in becoming an official Volunteer Trail Ranger, get in contact with our Volunteer Coordinator, Sarah Inouye-Leas by calling her at (952) 858 0724 or by sending an email to sarah_inouye@fws.gov.



Regional Events of Interest



Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory
3980 E. Skyline Pkwy. Duluth, MN 55804



Lowry Nature Center
7025 Victoria Dr. Victoria, MN 55386

Take Flight with Hawk Ridge Gala

Friday, October 11, 5:00 – 9:00 PM

Takes place at the Radisson – Downtown Duluth. Join us for an inspirational and important evening in celebration and support for Hawk Ridge. Enjoy a delicious dinner, cash bar, live education birds, book signing, and nature and artwork fundraiser. We'll share highlights from migration season, how your support makes a difference, and end the evening with a fantastic program "Owls: Souls of the Night" by Scott Weidensaul, ornithologist and author. Scott is well known for his many books and owl migratory research through Project SNOWstorm and Project OwlNet. \$65 per member; \$75 per non-member; \$500 per table of 8. Pre-registration is required online at www.HawkRidge.org.



Lowry Nature Center
7025 Victoria Dr. Victoria, MN 55386

Saw-whet Owl Banding

Friday, October 11, 8:00 – 11:00 PM

Saturday, October 12, 8:00 – 11:00 PM

Learn about Minnesota's owls, their adaptations, and research. Drive within Carver Park to observe master banders safely trapping and banding saw-whet owls. Reservations required. \$5 per person. Ages 10+. www.ThreeRiversParks.org.



International Owl Center
126 E. Cedar St. Houston, MN 55943

Expert-led Owl Prowls

Saturday, October 12, 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Saturday, November 16, 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Owls live all around us but are very good at evading detection. Come learn how to identify local owls by size, shape, silhouette and sound. Following the indoor portion of the program, participants will carpool to known owl territories around Houston to call and listen for Eastern Screech Owls, Barred Owls, and Great Horned Owls. Dress for the weather and try to wear clothes that don't make noise when you move. Little walking is required. Kids are welcome but must be able to stand quietly for at least 10 minutes at a time. Members: \$7 Non-members: \$10. Registration required by sending an email to karla@internationalowlcenter.org. More information is available online at www.InternationalOwlCenter.org.

Fall Waterfowl Hike

Sunday, October 13, 3:00 – 4:00 PM

Learn about migratory waterfowl traveling through Carver Park and the best locations to spot them. Look for widgeon, gadwall, green-winged teal, scaup, buffleheads and more. Scope and binoculars provided or feel free to bring your own. Led by Naturalist, Kirk Mona. Advanced registration is recommended. Free. All ages welcome. www.ThreeRiversParks.org



Audubon Center of the North Woods
54165 Audubon Dr. Sandstone, MN 55072

Bids for Kids 2019

Thursday, November 7, 6:00 – 8:30 PM

Takes place at Silverwood Park in St. Anthony, MN. Join us for this inspiring evening to support the Audubon Center of the North Woods' K-12 environmental learners. Includes silent auction, social hour, program and live auction. Guest speaker, Belinda Jensen from KARE-11 TV. Pre-registration is required. \$50 per person. More information including the address for Silverwood Park is available online at www.Audubon-Center.org.



Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
3815 American Blvd. E. Bloomington, MN 55425

Puppet Show Series

Saturday, Oct. 26, 10:30 AM – 11:15 AM: *Little Brown Bat*

Saturday, Oct. 26, 2:00 PM – 2:30 PM: *Little Brown Bat*

Saturday, Nov. 2, 2:00 – 3:15 PM: *Skeletons in the Closet*

Little Brown Bat: This shadow puppet show shares about Minnesota's most common bat – the Little Brown Bat (*myotis lucifugus*) and its current struggles with white nose syndrome with subtitles in Spanish.

Skeletons in the Closet: This bilingual puppet show (Spanish-English) celebrates love and the cycle of life. With statue, rod, bunraku and shadow puppets, journey through the three traditional realms as a brother and sister follow their curiosity. They discover the meaning of the Day of the Dead (Dia de las Muertos) and that the connection they have with their grandparents continues after death. They learn how the celebration helps to remember and honor loved ones who have passed away. The puppet show will be followed by a craft activity. www.FWS.gov/Refuge/Minnesota_Valley/



MRVAC Field Trips



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

Beginning birders are welcome on all field trips.

All of the Refuge field trips are listed below, followed by Refuge addresses, and field trips to other locations in chronological order.

Refuge Bird Watching Treks (Oct. - Nov.)

Sunday, Oct. 6, 8:00-10:30 AM, Rapids Lake
 Monday, Oct. 7, 8:00-10:30 AM, Bass Ponds
 Saturday, Oct. 19, 8:00-10:30 AM, Rapids Lake
 Sunday, Oct. 20, 8:00-10:30 AM, Bass Ponds
 Saturday, Oct. 26, 8:00-10:30 AM, Rapids Lake
 Saturday, Nov. 9, 8:00-10:30 AM, Wilkie Unit
 Monday, Nov. 11, 8:00-10:30 AM, Bass Ponds
 Sunday, Nov. 17, 8:00-10:30 AM, Wilkie Unit
 Saturday, Nov. 23, 8:00-10:30 AM, Bass Ponds

Join us for a bird walk on one of the Refuge's many units. Learn which species of birds use the Refuge as a migratory stop and those that call the Refuge home for the summer nesting season. Birders of all skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars, your favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather. Led by Craig Mandel, Volunteer Refuge Naturalist.

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Field Trip Locations & Addresses

MVNWR Bloomington Visitor Center
 3815 American Blvd. E., Bloomington, MN

Bass Ponds Trailhead
 2501 86th St. E., Bloomington, MN

Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center
 15865 Rapids Lake Rd, Carver, MN

Wilkie Unit Trailhead
 7701 County Road 101 E., Shakopee, MN

Carver County Birding Day

Thursday, November 7, 2019, 7:00 AM
 Craig Mandel – (952) 240 7647

Lake Waconia, Goose Lake, Lippert Lake and Swede Lake are a few of the lakes we will check for waterfowl and we should also have time for some birding at Carver Park Reserve, Baylor County Park, and maybe a stop at the Rapids Lake Unit of the MVNWR. Please contact Craig to register.

Swans on the Mississippi & Weaver Bottoms

Saturday, November 16, 2019

Please contact Mark Lystig at (651) 452 1133 for more information and to register.

Hennepin County Birding Day

Thursday, December 5, 2019, 8:00 AM
 Craig Mandel – (952) 240 7647

Winter birding in Hennepin County can offer some interested species of birds to search for. Some years there are multiple locations to search for owls and there are locations that hold over-wintering waterfowl. Plus some great feeding stations. It will be interesting to see what we find on this day trip in Hennepin County. Please contact Craig to register.

International Birding Excursions with the Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter



Costa Rica

February 6-16, 2020

San Jose, Costa Rica

Tour price with 10 participants: \$2825 + airfare
 Highlight Birds: Sunbittern, Great Green Macaw,
 Umbrellabirds, and Resplendent Quetzal



Ecuador – Choco-Andes Region

November 4-13, 2020

Quito, Ecuador

Tour price with 7 participants: \$3175 + airfare
 Highlight Birds: 30 species of hummingbirds and the
 rare Moss-backed Tanager

To learn more about a tour or to register, visit www.HolbrookTravel.com. Click on 'Join a Trip,' enter the location and dates above, and scroll to see trips that mention MRVAC in the title.

MRVAC Contact: Craig Mandel
(952) 240 7647 · egretcman@msn.com

COMING SOON...

Bloomington Christmas Bird Count & Dinner

Saturday, December 14, 2019

MVNWR Bloomington Visitor Center

Cedar Creek Bog Christmas Bird Count

Sunday, December 15, 2019

Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve

Excelsior Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 21, 2019

Lowry Nature Center



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

Minnesota River Valley
Audubon Chapter
Membership Form

To join the Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter (MRVAC), please complete this form and mail it with your \$15 check (made payable to MRVAC) to:

Membership Coordinator
Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter
PO Box 20400
Bloomington, MN 55420

Yes! Please enroll me as a member of the Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter. I will receive *The Trumpeter*, MRVAC's newsletter, along with notifications of chapter meetings and field trips. (Memberships are renewable annually.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Check one:

- I would like to receive *The Trumpeter* newsletter and other updates via email.
- I would like to receive a printed copy of *The Trumpeter* newsletter by USPS mail.

Volunteering (optional):

- I am interested in volunteering for MRVAC. Please contact me.

Areas of Interest:

- Field Trips
- Conservation and Environmental Action
- Habitat Restoration Work
- Activities with Children
- Chapter Administration
- Other: _____

The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Thank you for joining!

Audubon Memberships

by Greg Burnes, Membership Chair
 (612) 205 3071 – gburnes@comcast.net

As MRVAC's Membership Chair, I get many questions about the differences between local and National Audubon memberships.

A **National Audubon Society membership** supports a wide range of national and international conservation and educational initiatives. When you join or renew, the national association assigns you to a local chapter based on your zip code, so please specify MRVAC (M05) as your local chapter. Getting this right affects the dollars (about \$1.75 per member annually) that the national association sends to MRVAC. You can contact membership services at 1 (800) 428 3826 if you are not sure to which local chapter you've been assigned.

A **MRVAC membership** provides needed support to local conservation and educational efforts along with great monthly refuge presentations, field trips, and *The Trumpeter* newsletter. If you want to become a MRVAC member or have questions about a current membership, you can contact me via email or phone.

Each Audubon organization has separate but complimentary missions and we suggest that you become members of both.