



The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter

# Trumpeter

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

November – December 2021

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## MRVAC Birding Weekend Recap

*by Bob Williams, Board Member*

We had a successful MRVAC Birding Weekend again this year on August 21 and 22. We received 17 donations totaling \$1,091. The award for the most species seen goes to Steph MacPhail who birded in Forestville/Mystery Cave State Park in Fillmore County with a total of 53 species. The most unusual bird reported was a Western Kingbird that showed up in my backyard with a couple of Eastern Kingbirds. Many thanks to all who participated! We hope to host another Birding Weekend in 2022.

## Christmas Bird Count Update

*by Steve Weston, Board Vice President*

Local Christmas Bird Counts are expected to happen on schedule, but operations may be modified due to Covid-19 as mandated by future Audubon guidelines. Last year birding by car only occurred within family/household groups or existing social pods with no new counters assigned to groups. Existing teams were expected to bird in separate cars. With vaccines widely used by birders, it is expected that most restrictions will be relaxed, especially for the vaccinated. As this time however, no decisions have been made.

Gatherings such as Bloomington's traditional soup dinner and Cedar Creek Bog's lunch may not happen, and some groups may have post-count Zoom meetings. An email with more details will be sent directly to participants. Unless restrictions tighten up again, there should be openings for birders in mist of the 80+ counts in the state. The season will run from December 14, 2021 through January 5, 2022. More information is available online at [www.moumn.org/CBC/index.php](http://www.moumn.org/CBC/index.php). Contact Steve via email with additional questions.

Bloomington CBC: Liz Stanley [lizmstanley@gmail.com](mailto:lizmstanley@gmail.com)  
Excelsior CBC: Howard Towle [towle001@umn.edu](mailto:towle001@umn.edu)  
Cedar Creek Bog or other CBCs: Steve Weston [sweston2@comcast.net](mailto:sweston2@comcast.net)

## Upcoming Member Meeting

*by Steve Weston, Board Vice President  
and Meeting Program Chair*

The Minnesota River Valley Wildlife Refuge staff have informed us that the Visitor Center is expected to be unavailable for meetings for the foreseeable future. We are planning on holding a virtual meeting in November and as usual, there will be no meeting in December. Virtual meetings start at 7:30 PM with a link sent out about a week before.

**"Attu Island"**

**Alex Sundvall, Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory**

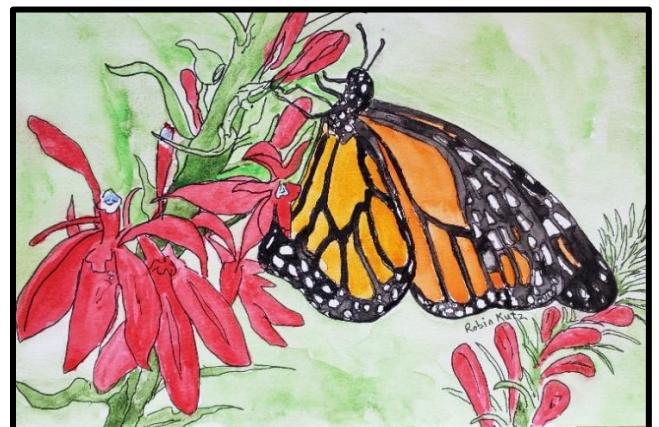
Thursday, November 18, 2021, 7:30 PM  
Virtual Presentation

Join us for a virtual visit to this far remote corner of Alaska. Attu Island in the western Aleutian Islands has been a bird-watching Mecca that has been inaccessible for years. Closer to Siberia than Alaska, it has a reputation for Eurasian birds that never find their way to the mainland.

## Featured Artwork:

### Monarch Butterfly

*by Robin Kutz, MRVAC Member*





## Refuge Highlight: Louisville Swamp

by Cortney Solum,  
MVNWR Assistant Visitor Services Manager

Louisville Swamp between Shakopee and Jordan is a hidden gem near the Twin Cities. This unit of Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge sits along the east bank of the Minnesota River and offers a variety of experiences to explore.

From the Middle Road entrance off of Bluff Drive and Jordan Avenue north of Jordan, a quick hike in will take you to a gigantic rock left by the glaciers that formed the river valley. Hike a bit further into the unit from Middle Road to see the historically significant Inyan Ceyaka Otunwe (Village at the Barrier of Stone), also called Little Rapids. When the Minnesota River is low enough, like it was this summer, you can see how the location earned its name. Rocks and riverbed are exposed by low waters creating small rapids that produce a mesmerizing sound not normally heard along this river.

Inyan Ceyaka, was a summer planting village of the Wahpeton Dakota. It is estimated that more than three hundred Wahpeton lived here long the river in summer to plant, tend, and harvest corn; gather berries and roots; hunt and fish. MNopedia states that the “village included a dance area—a smooth, dry semi-circle surrounded by a low earthen embankment.” The dance area was likely used for medicine dances because Mazamani (Walking Iron), a spokesman of the Wahpeton in the early nineteenth century, was a well-known leader of the Medicine Lodge at this site.

The northern end of the unit offers spectacular views of wildlife-filled wetlands below the Mazomani north trail. The Mazomani south trail traverses around the swamp, crossing Sand Creek and eventually connecting with Middle Road. If you're looking to get out of the city this fall and winter, Louisville Swamp will provide an opportunity for solitude and adventure.

Click or visit the following link for more information about the Wahpeton Dakota village at Little Rapids.  
[www.mnopedia.org/place/inyan-ceyaka-otunwe](http://www.mnopedia.org/place/inyan-ceyaka-otunwe)



Green Heron at Fox Woods Preserve in Chanhassen. Photo: J. Sweet

## Bereavement Notice for Jack Telfer

From the Minnesota Valley Unitarian  
Universalist Fellowship

With a heavy heart, we announce that Jack Telfer has died. Jack passed away on the evening of September 16. He had struggled with a slight respiratory illness the previous week (not Covid-19) and his 101 year old body was just too tired to recover from one more thing. A service honoring Jack may be set for a future date; we'll keep you posted.

Memorials in Jack's honor can be made to the Minnesota Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship or to the Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter.

## Asa Wright Nature Centre Closes

by Steve Weston, Board Vice President

On January 18, 2021, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, Asa Wright Nature Centre, the world class birding destination in Trinidad, announced unexpectedly that it would permanently cease operations. The main lodge was shuttered and the staff were all terminated without notice or compensation. The resulting animosity between the staff and the management was so great, that offers to maintain the buildings and grounds without compensation by the staff were denied.

All may not be lost. Management recently announced a Request For Proposals for a concession for an outside party to operate the eco-lodge for 10 years, but the main lodge is in shambles, needing millions of dollars to be restored. The grounds likewise have not been maintained. Financial and legal issues relating to the staff have yet to be resolved, but the government has funds that may be used for this crucial tourist resource. And, perhaps like the myth of the phoenix, it will rise again.

## Blake Road Restoration and Redevelopment

From the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District

The Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD) is leading an effort, in partnership with the City of Hopkins and numerous public and private partners, to transform a former industrial site at 325 Blake Road into a vibrant space where people and nature thrive together.

The project is an effort to marry two sets of goals. The restoration will complete a missing link in the Minnehaha Creek Greenway, a decade-long effort to restore the creek and connect a system of green space and trails around Minnehaha Creek to the surrounding community. At the same time, MCWD is working closely with the City of Hopkins and a private partner to integrate a transformative, transit-oriented redevelopment into the site.

Join the MCWD email list to receive updates on project progress. [www.minnehahacreek.org](http://www.minnehahacreek.org)



## The Green Scene

### Clean Water = Clean Streets & Gutters

by Anne Hanley, MRVAC Member

Remember that anything in the street and gutters will eventually flow into some body of water. Decaying leaves and grass clippings use up oxygen in the water which makes it harder for aquatic creatures to survive.

Ditto for salt. Use as little as possible to keep our waterways as fresh as possible. Once in the water, there's no way to remove the chloride, and it becomes a permanent pollutant. According to Brooke Asleson, MPCA Project Manager for the Twin Cities Metro Area chloride project, salt is a real threat to water quality.

It only takes one teaspoon of road salt to permanently pollute five gallons of water. Twelve ounces of salt — about as much as would fill a coffee mug — is enough to treat a 20-foot-long driveway or about 10 squares of sidewalk.



### Modern Mending

by Erin Lewis-Fitzgerald

Review written by Anne Hanley



Fall is here. On the down side, there will be only a few more days when I will be able to hang laundry outside to dry. On the plus side, fall and winter are good times to catch up on mending. Why mend? Producing clothing takes a lot of water and generates various types of pollution from dyes and synthetic fibers, so using your clothing as long as possible to reduce fashion waste is the best ecological choice.

If you are new to mending, you should check out Modern Mending by Erin Lewis-Fitzgerald. In addition to her book, you might also enjoy joining her Modern Mending Facebook group which is full of helpful tips and inspiring fixes by others in the mending universe to try yourself. In the book, she covers 6 basic types of mending and fix-it tips with lots of step by step instructional photos. The last third of the book is a collection of garments in need of repair, before and after. Lewis-Fitzgerald is a big fan of visible mending and I found it helpful to see her mending solutions that add some fun or panache to the garment.

Even if invisible mending is more appealing to you, the techniques covered in the book (stitching; patching; darning; needle felting; machine darning; buttons, zippers, ladders, snags + shoes) can be applied to both visible and invisible mending. No sewing machine? All but machine darning can be done with just hand tools – a needle and thread/yarn or a felting needle, so for many mending jobs, no sewing machine is required.

A long winter night is the perfect time to darn the heels of some warm wool socks. Give it a try!

### Biden Administration Restores Protections for Three National Monuments

Republished from the National Audubon Society  
Contact: Rachel Guillory, [Rachel.guillory@audubon.org](mailto:Rachel.guillory@audubon.org)

**WASHINGTON (October 8, 2021)** – Today, President Biden signed proclamations to restore protections for three national monuments—Northeast Canyons and Seamounts off the coast of New England, as well as Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante in Utah.

“This is a victory, not just for seabirds like Atlantic Puffins, but also for many coastal communities in New England that depend on a healthy ocean,” said Dr. Donald Lyons, director of conservation science for Audubon’s Seabird Institute. “Northeast Canyons and Seamounts is a critical place that allows seabirds to rest and stock up on fish during the harsh winter. The unique habitats there also support abundant populations of fish, whales, and other marine life that are vital to our coastal economy.”

President Trump signed a proclamation last year to open the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument to commercial fishing. This rollback increased the risk of seabirds getting hooked on a fishing line or caught in a net and reduced the amount of fish available for them to eat. Audubon’s Seabird Institute was instrumental in uncovering that Maine’s recently restored populations of Atlantic Puffins rely on this monument to stock up on fish in winter months.

Today’s decision follows a report from Interior Secretary Deb Haaland with recommendations on whether to restore the boundaries and protections of each monument. The Trump Administration downsized Bears Ears by 85 percent and Grand Staircase-Escalante by nearly 50 percent.

Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments are sacred places and the traditional lands of Native American tribal nations. These monuments are also public lands, home to several climate-threatened birds like the Golden Eagle, Pinyon Jay, Hairy Woodpecker, and Mountain Bluebird. Restoring national monument status protects sacred places for birds and people.

“President Biden is reestablishing a longstanding national commitment to protect our most special places and acknowledging the leadership of tribal nations who steward these lands,” said Christopher Simmons, senior manager of public lands policy for National Audubon Society. “In addition to their important role in our ongoing history and collective culture, these protected spaces provide hundreds of bird species and other wildlife with relief from threats like habitat loss and climate change.”





## Regional Events of Interest



Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge  
Bloomington, Minnesota

### Skull Scavenger Hunt

**Old Cedar Avenue Trailhead**

Friday, October 29, 7:00 – 8:00 PM

Do skulls send a shiver down your spine or do they spark your inner detective? Looking closely at a skull can reveal many clues to the identity of the animal that it came from. Join Refuge Rangers as we learn more about identifying skulls of common Minnesota wildlife on a skull scavenger hunt with flashlights at Old Cedar Avenue. Flashlights will be provided. Registration required online at [www.bit.ly/2Zfivsy](http://www.bit.ly/2Zfivsy)

### Confluence Virtual Art Gallery:

**“A Common Thread” by Naomi Hart**

Available online until November 5, 2021

Artist Naomi Hart’s work will be on display virtually in the Confluence Gallery with the collection, “A Common Thread.” Hart tethers the natural world to her life story and pulls forth a source of strength, healing, and inspiration. She shares these stories, where memories and elusive interactions collide and meld creating dream-like “now”, through her ethereal artwork. Full of mystery, and surreal metamorphosis, Hart’s etchings and drawings layered with beeswax, infuse uniquely human attributes with symbols from the natural world creating a common thread that connects us all. Visit the gallery online at [www.artistrymn.org/confluence-gallery](http://www.artistrymn.org/confluence-gallery).

### Confluence Virtual Art Gallery:

**“As long as the River Shall Run”**

**by Ellen Sandbeck**

Available online November 15 – December 31, 2021

More information about this virtual exhibit will be available on the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge website soon. [www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota\\_valley/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota_valley/)



Lowry Nature Center  
Victoria, Minnesota

### Lowry Photography Club Open House

Sunday, November 7, 9:00 – 11:30 AM

Borrow a camera, try a photo scavenger hunt and practice your skills with some photo exercises. The Lowry Photography Club is for those interested in nature and photography. Share your latest photos, and learn and discuss photography techniques with other enthusiasts. All ages and experience levels. Free. Find the club on **Facebook**.



Three Rivers Young Birder’s Club  
Metro-wide

### Bird Feeders & Bird Foods

**Eastman Nature Center, Dayton, MN**

Saturday, November 13, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Build a bird feeder to take home and learn about what types of seeds are good to feed to birds. Discover how placement of feeders can help you attract different birds. Three Rivers Young Birder’s Club is for ages 9-12, helping you discover the wonder of birds and meet other kids interested in them, too. Free for Young Birder Club members. \$5 for non-members. Reservations required at [www.threeriversparks.org](http://www.threeriversparks.org).

### Raptors Up Close

**Lowry Nature Center, Victoria, MN**

Sunday, November 21, 3:00 – 4:30 PM

Meet captive raptors and learn about these amazing birds of prey. Three Rivers Young Birder’s Club is for ages 9-12, helping you discover the wonder of birds and meet other kids interested in them, too. Free. Drop in anytime. More information at [www.threeriversparks.org](http://www.threeriversparks.org).

### Classifying Birds

**Mississippi Gateway Regional Park, Brooklyn Park, MN**

Saturday, December 18, 9:00 – 11:00 AM

A crow is a black bird, is a blackbird a crow? Learn to use a dichotomous key like a scientist to see if a nighthawk is a hawk or is a pigeon a dove? Then let’s get out on the trails to see birds by the river or the marsh. Three Rivers Young Birder’s Club is for ages 9-12, helping you discover the wonder of birds and meet other kids interested in them, too. Free for Young Birder Club members. Reservations required at [www.threeriversparks.org](http://www.threeriversparks.org).



International Owl Center  
Houston, Minnesota

### Expert-led Owl Prowl

Saturday, December 18, 4:00 – 8:00 PM

Join us this fall to experience wild owls after dark. Spend time indoors learning how to identify owl sounds and the ethics of calling owls. Then everyone will drive their own vehicle, following staff to rural locations in Houston to call in wild owls. \$10/member or \$15/nonmember. Register online at [www.internationalowlcenter.org](http://www.internationalowlcenter.org).



## MRVAC Field Trips & Refuge Information

Please do your part to stop the spread and adhere to the current recommendations from the Minnesota CDC in regards to COVID-19. This includes respecting the distance between you and those from other households, practicing proper hygiene, and wearing a mask when it is recommended.

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

All trips are free unless otherwise noted. Beginning birders are always welcome.



### Refuge Bird Watching Treks (Nov. – Dec.)

*Saturday, Nov. 20 (9:00-10:30 AM) Old Cedar Ave.*

*Sunday, Nov. 21 (8:00-10:30 AM) Bass Ponds*

*Monday, Nov. 29 (8:00-10:30 AM) Wilkie Unit*

*Sunday, Dec. 5 (8:00-10:30 AM) Wilkie Unit*

*Saturday, Dec. 11 (8:00-10:30 AM) Bass Ponds*

*Sunday, Dec. 12 (9:00-10:30 AM) Old Cedar Ave.*

Explore some of the best Refuge units for bird watching during the fall season. We will spend time on these walks searching for birds only seen on the Refuge during migration. We will study the different species of birds and learn about some other locations to search for birds during fall migration. 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. Reservations are not required for Refuge Bird Walking Treks above.

### Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Field Trip Locations & Addresses

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

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

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

Old Cedar Avenue Trailhead  
9551 Old Cedar Ave. S., Bloomington, MN



Minnesota River at the Rapids Lake Unit. Photo: J. Sweet

### Visitor Center Updates

Indoor visitation, exhibits, and offices are temporarily closed. The walk-up information desk is open. Please stop by the open-air, walk-up information desk at our visitor centers to learn about the refuge. Staff and volunteers will be available at the entrance doors to each visitor center. Outdoor restrooms are available at each location. Outdoor exploration equipment is available for free check-out, including family activity packs and binoculars.

#### *Bloomington Visitor Center*

3815 American Boulevard. E., Bloomington, MN  
Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays 12:00-4:00 PM  
Closed Federal Holidays

#### *Rapids Lake Visitor Center*

15865 Rapids Lake Rd. Carver, MN  
Fridays and Saturdays 12:00-4:00 PM  
Closed Federal Holidays

### Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Unit Trail Maps

Click the text below to view each unit trail map. Save these PDFs to your phone or take a screenshot for offline viewing when you are out on the trail.

**Long Meadow Lake and Black Dog Units**

**Bloomington Ferry and Wilkie Units**

**Rapids Lake, Louisville Swamp, and Chaska Units**



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 a check, made payable to MRVAC, for at least \$15 to:

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

You can also join MRVAC online at [www.mrvac.org](http://www.mrvac.org).

**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!**