



The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter

Trumpeter

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Josh Sweet, Trumpeter Editor
jhsweet0201@gmail.com

It's Not a Whim, Birds Like it Dim!

by Cortney Solum, Minnesota Valley NWR

The theme for this year's Migratory Bird Day on May 14th is "Dim the Lights for Birds at Night." Artificial lighting can disorient birds that migrate at night, affect feeding behaviors, impact breeding season, and may cause other disruptions or harm. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is addressing our own light pollution by asking Service buildings across the country to turn off interior and exterior lights one night a week over April 24-May 15, an important migration timespan according to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's forecasted maps from Birdcast. www.birdcast.info/

At your own home, you can reduce light pollution at night by turning off unnecessary lights, closing the blinds or curtains to keep light inside, directing outdoor lighting downward, and choosing motion-sensor lightening. You'll help the birds and see more stars!

If you'd like to learn more, the Refuge is hosting a "Night at the Refuge" on Friday, May 20. More information about this event can be found on page 4.

MRVAC Awards 2022 Grants

by Lee Ann Landstrom, MRVAC Board Member

Late this winter, the MRVAC Board of Directors reviewed a handful of grant applications. We awarded \$600 to Boy Scout Troop 9331 (Eagle Scout Candidate, Alex Moeller) for materials to build and install 10 bluebird houses in Burnsville's Lake Park and North River Hills Parks. The Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends received \$500 to buy children's nature books for the Refuge's two popular Little Free Libraries. The Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Project received \$5,000 for seasonal research staff and tracking equipment.

We anticipate more applications from Sax-Zim Bog for boardwalk and signage, Normandale Community College for anti-bird strike window treatments, MN Youth Big Club for afterschool staff, and kiosk and signage for the Hastings Public School District property near 180th Street Marsh. Many thanks to our members for their financial support which allows us to support these worthy causes.

Upcoming Member Meetings

by Steve Weston, Board Vice President
and Meeting Program Chair

The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter will be hosting virtual (Zoom) meetings in May and June. These presentations are free and open to the public. Feel free to share the link with friends. The link will be posted on MOUnet and the MRVAC website a few days before each meeting, but it is recommended that you subscribe to the Trumpeter Newsletter on the MRVAC website to have the link directly sent to your individual email address.



"A Birders Guide to Minnesota"

Kim Eckert, Author

Thursday, May 26, 2022, 7:30 PM



Kim Eckert, one of Minnesota's preeminent birders, will give a sneak preview of the fifth edition of *A Birder's Guide to Minnesota*. The publication is a county-by-county guide of 1,400+ birding locations, along with an annotated list of all 447 Minnesota species with numerous identification tips. It includes a list of references and resources, a directory of birding contacts for each county, and regular online updates with corrections and additions maintained. Kim served for over 30 years on the MOU Records Committee since its inception in the 1970s and in 1996 he initiated the Minnesota Birding Weekends and Weeks program of tours throughout Minnesota and elsewhere in the U.S. and Canada, which is now in its 37th season.



"Fishers in Minnesota"

Michael Joyce, Wildlife Ecologist

Thursday, June 23, 2022, 7:30 PM



Michael Joyce is a wildlife ecologist at the Natural Resources Research Institute at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. Michael will describe the history and current status of fishers and highlight ongoing research into fisher ecology and management in Minnesota. Fishers, a mid-sized carnivore in the weasel family, were nearly extirpated from Minnesota in the early 1990s. Since then, fishers have reestablished across the state and recently expanded their range into southern Minnesota and the Twin Cities metro.



Chapter News

2021 Bloomington CBC Results

by Rick Magee, Bloomington CBC Coordinator

The morning of Saturday, December 18th dawned overcast and cold. There were some flurries in the morning, but by afternoon the sky had cleared. Despite recent unseasonably warm weather, winter had arrived resulting in frozen ponds, lakes, and partially frozen smaller streams. Fortunately the Minnesota River was still open to attract waterfowl. Many birders reported that it was a quiet day in their area, however a total of 53 species were reported that day. Alas, the numbers of several species were low this year. For instance, only one individual was reported for Cooper's Hawk, Herring Gull, Northern Shrike, Horned Lark, Winter Wren, and only 3 White-throated Sparrows.

The Bloomington Circle is centered on a point near the intersections of Highways 13 and 77, just south of the river. It is divided into 20 sectors. This year there were a total of 48 people who participated in this long-running citizen science project sponsored by National Audubon and locally by the Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter.

Despite it being a slow day for many, several unusual species were reported in the Bloomington Circle including a diminutive Chipping Sparrow reported in Mendota Heights that had neglected to fly to warmer weather. Not far away, an American Pipit, only the fifth winter record in Minnesota, was observed foraging under the I-494 Bridge. A Townsend's Solitaire was also recorded in Bloomington near Pond Park. Near the Richardson Nature Center, a juvenile Broad-winged Hawk was observed. It was not included in the final tally as it was so rare that it required a photograph, but a rare Harlan's Hawk, an Alaskan subspecies of Red-tailed Hawk was photographed nearby.

There were also a couple northern species that had arrived. White-winged Crossbills had been reported in the general area before the day of the Count and one was reported in Savage, the southwest corner of our territory. Several Snowy Owls had been at the MSP airport the week prior to the count and fortunately for our tally, there were still two observed there on the 18th.

Thank you to all who participated in the 2021 Bloomington Christmas Bird Count. The Christmas Bird Count is a great opportunity each year to participate in a bird survey that gives us insight to trends species are presenting, and also gives us an idea of individual numbers of birds. In the past it was also a social event for humans to get out and be with other birders. Unfortunately, this was "Year of the Plague - Part 2" and there were Covid protocols in place that limited the opportunities for people to work together.

This year there were sectors that did not have enough people to adequately search for birds, and one sector was not surveyed at all. Let us hope that the 2022 Count will be a better year and we can flock together again. You may participate by birding an area on foot and/or from a vehicle, by reporting what you see at your feeders that day, or by taking on the task of compiling the reports and reporting the numbers to the National Audubon Society.

Avian Influenza

by Rob Daves, MRVAC Board Member

Avian influenza – AKA the "bird flu" – has been detected in domestic poultry and wild birds in Minnesota (Blue Earth, Hennepin, Anoka counties). But what does that mean to those of us who maintain backyard feeders?

Recommendations are mixed. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), for example, says it doesn't have a record of songbirds being infected with AI right now, and recommends "taking down and cleaning your bird feeders during spring." Oh, and be sure and report any sick or dead birds to the DNR at 888-646-6367, the Minnesota Raptor Center helpline at 612-624-4745 (if the sick bird is a raptor), or the Board of Animal Health Avian Influenza hotline at 833-454-0156.

On the other hand, the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis's blog recommends taking down feeders during the spring migration to avoid birds clustering together and increasing the virus' spread.

One MRVAC member, Liz Stanley, has a specific program she's put in place: reducing the number of her feeders, using the types that don't allow birds to congregate, putting less food out at a time and cleaning between refills, sweeping underneath and removing bird baths. Laura Erickson, our MRVAC friend in Duluth, has a great discussion on her blog noting how important feeding birds is for human mental health, and has recommendations for a targeted approach such as Liz's.

Listed below are a number of website with additional information. Click on each link or type them into your internet browser.

www.minneapolisaudubon.org/blog

www.blog.lauraerickson.com/2022/04/to-feed-or-not-to-feed.html

www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/avian-influenza/hpai-2022/2022-hpai-wild-birds

www.dnr.state.mn.us/ai



The Green Scene



Summer Fireflies

by Anne Hanley



I love fireflies and would like to see more of them this summer, so I've been doing a bit of reading about what they like. The first thing to know is that the flying beetle that you see in the summer is the adult/reproductive phase, which only lasts 2-4 weeks. From a habitat perspective, the adult beetle fireflies need (1) somewhere to hang out and hide - so native trees and taller grasses or forbs are good for them. Recommended plants include native trees, asters, goldenrod and native grasses. You can even just leave an uncut section of lawn. After mating, they lay eggs in the leaf litter. (2) They also need darkness, so turn off any unnecessary lights especially in the summer.

The larval stage lasts a year or two, so their habitat needs are important. The larvae, who also glow, live in damp areas but not in water - so not mosquito habitat. They like to be under damp leaf litter and on damp ground where they can find tasty treats like slugs, snails, worms and ground-dwelling organisms. To encourage firefly larvae, leave the leaves, especially in low spots that stay damp most of the time. You could dig a small depression near a downspout and add a few native plants.

The firefly larvae are very vulnerable to pesticides and lawn fertilizer, so if you like to watch fireflies, don't use lawn chemicals. For more information about gardening for fireflies visit www.savvygardening.com/facinating-fireflies/ or www.firefly.org/.

Effectiveness of Plastics Recycling

republished from *Choose to Reuse, Hennepin County*
submitted by Anne Hanley

You may have seen news stories painting a negative picture about recycling. Fortunately, recycling programs in Minnesota have remained more stable than others across the United States because of strong local infrastructure. Minnesota state law prohibits materials collected for recycling from being trashed. This means that the items you put in your recycling bin have a place to go, and most often, that place is right here in Minnesota. The story isn't entirely rosy, however. Plastic markets still go up and down, and plastic is mainly recycled into different products that cannot be recycled again.

Because of the challenges with plastic recycling, the best thing you can do is to look for ways to minimize your use of plastics. Hennepin County has a lot of helpful suggestions on their website for ways to use less plastic. Visit the following link for more information. www.hennepin.us/choose-to-reuse/tips/2022-tips-to-use-less-plastic

A Natural Curiosity: The Story of the Bell Museum Virtual Book Launch

University of Minnesota Press Release, March 25, 2022
submitted by Heather Skinner, University of Minnesota

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA — The University of Minnesota's Bell Museum in St. Paul will host a virtual book launch event for the new book *A Natural Curiosity: The Story of the Bell Museum* (University of Minnesota Press, April 2022) by Lansing Shepard, Don Luce, Barbara Coffin, and Gwen Schagrin on Wednesday, April 20 at 7:00 PM CT. Hosted by the Bell Museum's Science Director Dr. George Weiblen, the event will feature brief presentations by coauthors Don Luce and Barbara Coffin and a moderated discussion focused on the museum's leadership and innovation in public education throughout its long history. Fellow coauthors Lansing Shepard and Gwen Schagrin will join the event during the Q&A portion of the event.

Since its humble start in 1872 as a one-room cabinet of curiosities, the University of Minnesota's Bell Museum of natural history has become one of the state's most important cultural institutions. From its conception as part of a state-mandated geological and natural history survey, to its most recent ventures into technology, environmental science, and DNA sequencing, the Bell Museum has informed, explained, and expanded our relationship to the natural world. Drawing on a wealth of materials unearthed during the museum's recent move, the gorgeously illustrated book, *A Natural Curiosity*, chronicles the remarkable discoveries and personalities that have made the Bell Museum what it is today. The Bell Museum's story, engagingly told in *A Natural Curiosity*, reveals and explores the profound changes undergone by society, science, and the natural landscape over the museum's lifetime.

Beginning this past January, the Bell Museum celebrates 150 years. The book launch for *A Natural Curiosity* is part of the yearlong celebration that will feature different experiences that showcase the rich and varied history of the museum.



Tufted Titmouse in Goodhue County. Photo Credit: J. Sweet



Regional Programs of Interest



Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge
Bloomington, Minnesota

Bird Language

Sunday, May 1, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Want to learn more about birds and their behavior? Wonder what they're chirping about, or why they suddenly fall silent? Join us as we gather on the slopes of the Minnesota River Valley to explore what the birds are telling us about our surroundings. Reservations required. All ages. Free. www.fws.gov/event/bird-language

Birds and the Night Sky

Friday, May 20, 7:30 – 9:30 PM

Let's put the birds to bed! We'll watch and listen for bird activity with Paul Bogard & Joanna Eckles as night falls, test our senses, and learn about night migration and light pollution in the Minnesota River Valley. All ages. Free. www.fws.gov/event/night-refuge-birds-and-night-sky



Lowry Nature Center of Three Rivers Parks
Victoria, Minnesota

Migratory Bird Day: Bird Banding

Saturday, May 14, 9:00 – 11:00 AM

See wild songbirds safely trapped, studied and banded with numbered rings. Discuss what scientists learn from these birds. Drop in anytime. All ages. Free. www.threeriversparks.org

Young Birder's Club: Warbler Walk

Saturday, May 21, 2:00 – 4:00 PM

Explore trails with a naturalist and learn how to identify colorful migrating warblers. Ages 9-12. Free for members; \$5 per non-member. www.threeriversparks.org

Big Sit Birdwatch at Lowry

Saturday, June 11, 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Take part in the first Big Sit to ever take place at LNC. Birders will bird from a designated 25-foot circle. Naturalist Kirk will be on location to share information about birds. Bring something to grill for lunch. Everyone welcome. Stay as long or as little as you like. Free. www.threeriversparks.org

Plant BioBlitz Summer Day Camp

Monday – Thursday, July 25-28, 9:30 AM – 3:00 PM

There are almost 400,000 species of plants on the planet. How many call Carver Park Reserve home? Are any of them edible? Spend the week combing the prairie, sifting through the forest and diving into the pond in search of amazing plants! Bring your bike to travel around the park. Reservations required by two weeks prior. Space is limited. Ages 11-15. \$206. www.threeriversparks.org



Friends of the Sax-Zim Bog
Meadowlands, Minnesota

Waffles and Warblers Field Trip

Saturday, May 21, 6:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Who doesn't like warblers and better yet, who doesn't like waffles!? Join us for this one of a kind field trip, where we will be searching for warblers in the morning and then enjoying waffles in the afternoon. Meet at the Welcome Center. Reservations required. Fees apply. www.saxzim.org/events/

Bog Butterflies Field Trip

Saturday, June 4, 12:00 – 5:00 PM

The Bog is home to a diverse set of plants, most of which have a particularly close relationship with butterflies or moths. We hope to find bog specialties like Bog Copper, Black Swallowtail, and Skippers and Blues. Open to casual butterfly watchers and seasoned butterfly enthusiasts. Meet at the Welcome Center. Reservations required. Fees apply. www.saxzim.org/events/

Dragonflies and Damselflies Field Trip

Saturday, June 4, 12:00 – 5:00 PM

Dragonflies and damselflies are an easily seen group of bugs and recently have become targets of cameras and nets! "Dragonflying" is becoming a popular hobby across the U.S. and northern Minnesota has incredible odonate diversity. We will focus on seeing and catching adult dragonflies and damselflies. However, since most of their life is spent underwater, we will also spend a little time looking for nymphs. Extra nets available. All ability levels welcome. Meet at the Welcome Center. Reservations required. Fees apply. www.saxzim.org/events/

Orchids of the Bog Field Trip

Saturday, June 25, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

The Bog is home to at least 14 species of orchid, including healthy populations of Pink Ladyslipper, Purple-fringed Orchid, and our state flower: Showy Ladyslipper! This trip will involve a little "bog stomping" so rubber boots are a must. Meet at the Welcome Center. Reservations required. Fees apply. www.saxzim.org/events/



City of Burnsville
Burnsville, Minnesota

Native Plant Market

Saturday, May 21, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Native wildflowers, ferns and grasses will be for sale from multiple vendors. Some vendors may offer options to pre-order, and some vendors may only accept cash or check. Open rain or shine. www.burnsville.gov/nativeplants



MRVAC Birding Treks

All of the Refuge field trips are listed below, followed by field trips to other locations. All trips are free unless otherwise noted. Beginning birders are always welcome.

NEW REGISTRATION PROCESS

Registration for these walks is available on the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge website. Note registration for some dates will remain locked for about a month prior to the date of the walk. Please indicate in your registration if you would like to receive a birding summary and species list from the walk. Registration is required online at the following link. www.signup.com/go/rLmKfrK

Refuge Bird Watching Treks (May - June)

Sunday, May 8 (8:00-10:30 AM) Bass Ponds
Monday, May 9 (8:00-10:30 AM) Rapids Lake
Saturday, May 14 (8:00-10:30 AM) Old Cedar Ave.
Monday, May 16 (8:00-10:30 AM) Bass Ponds
Saturday, May 21 (8:00-10:30 AM) Bass Ponds
Sunday, May 22 (8:00-10:30 AM) Old Cedar Ave.
Monday, June 20 (8:00-10:30 AM) Bass Ponds
Saturday, June 25 (8:00-10:30 AM) Old Cedar Ave.
Sunday, June 26 (8:00-10:30 AM) Bass Ponds

The month of May brings us a mix of migratory songbirds, with the wood warblers being the most sought after. The June walks will feature the birds that nest on the Refuge. Join us on a walk in search of these seasonal migrants or nesting birds. Learn which species of birds use the Refuge as a migratory stop and those that migrate to the Refuge to nest. Contact Craig with questions at egretcman@msn.com.

Activity Level: Easy-active, we will walk slowly and make frequent stops.

Meet Us: Meet at the Trailhead near the parking lot. Please consider carpooling with others in your party due to limited parking at some trailheads. These programs are capped at 25 participants.

What to Bring: If you have them, bring along binoculars and a favorite field guide. These programs will be held entirely outdoors. Please dress for the weather.

Cancellations: For the safety of staff and participants, outdoor programming will be cancelled in the event local areas are under an active weather advisory or warning (lightening, thunderstorms, high winds, etc.). Participants will be notified of any cancellations via SignUp message.

Hok-Si-La Warbler Watching

Saturday, May 7, 2022, 7:30 AM
Steve Weston – (612) 978-3993
2500 U.S. Hwy 61, Lake City, MN

Join us for this traditional field trip (30+ years). We never know what we will find. Meet at Hok-Si-la Park north of Lake City. Bring a lunch if you want to stay for the afternoon's birds. Moderate effort – some walking on trails. No reservations needed.

Dakota County Prairie Birds – Schaar's Bluff

Sunday, June 5, 2022, 7:00 AM
Steve Weston – (612) 978-3993
8395 127th St. East, Hastings, MN

After a short hike at Schaar's Bluff Picnic Area, we will drive the prairies of Dakota County in search of grassland and other species. Bring a lunch if you want to stay for the afternoon's birds. Easy effort – birding at roadside stops. No reservations needed.

Miesville Ravine Dakota County Park

Sunday, June 19, 2022, 7:30 AM
Steve Weston – (612) 978-3993
27970 Orlando Trail, Cannon Falls, MN

Explore Dakota County's least known county park. Target birds include Cerulean Warbler, Acadian Flycatcher, Scarlet Tanager, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Bring a lunch if you want to stay for the afternoon's birds. Moderate effort – some walking on trails. No reservations needed.

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Field Trip Locations & Addresses

Rapids Lake Trailhead
15865 Rapids Lake Rd., Carver, MN

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

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

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



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.

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!

Featured Photo

Yellow-rumped Warbler
by Joe Allio, Three Rivers Naturalist

