



The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter

# Trumpeter

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

July – August 2022

Josh Sweet, Trumpeter Editor  
[jhsweet0201@gmail.com](mailto:jhsweet0201@gmail.com)

## 2022 Great Minnesota River

### Birding Day

*by Bob Williams, Board Member*

It is once again time for the annual Minnesota River Valley Birding Weekend. We hope that all of you will plan to participate either by going birding on August 27 or August 28, and/or by making a donation to MRVAC. As in the past, we will recognize the birder who finds the highest number of species and the birder who finds the most unusual bird.

We ask that birders donate and/or raise at least \$25. Checks can be mailed to MRVAC at PO Box 20400, Bloomington, MN 55420. Donations can also be made on our website at [www.MRVAC.org](http://www.MRVAC.org). Results will be published in an upcoming edition of *The Trumpeter* newsletter. If you have any questions you can reach me by sending an email to [drbop6789@gmail.com](mailto:drbop6789@gmail.com) or by phone at (612) 991-0727.

Late August can be a good time to find migrants on their way back south, but identification can be more challenging than in the spring. I hope you will make time to go birding and help MRVAC continue its efforts to promote awareness, education and advocacy for wildlife and habitats in the Minnesota River Valley.

## Meeting and Presentations Pause in July and August

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

As in previous years, we will be taking a short summer break from scheduled MRVAC member meetings in July and August. Stay tuned for more information regarding the upcoming meetings and presentations that will take place this fall in September and October.



## Board and Officer Elections

*by Rob Daves, Board President*

The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter (MRVAC) Board elected a new slate of officers and directors for the 2022-2023 year at its May 26 video meeting. The Board elected Rob Daves, president; Steve Weston, vice president; Matthew Schaut, secretary; and Walt Stull, treasurer. They join a slate of directors that include Lee Ann Landstrom, Doug Mayo, Ken Oulman and Bob Williams.

MRVAC continues to seek additional board members who are interested in helping carry out its mission of providing leadership in promoting environmental awareness, education and advocacy action, especially relating to the wildlife and habitats of the Minnesota River Valley. If you are interested in working on the board, on MRVAC's committees, or helping in any other way, contact Rob Daves or any of the board members, whose contact information is on [MRVAC.org/about/leadership](http://MRVAC.org/about/leadership).

Board meetings will continue to be online until the complete reopening of the visitor's center at the Minnesota River Valley National Wildlife Refuge's headquarters in Bloomington.

## Avian Influenza Update

*Dale Gentry, Audubon Minnesota Conservation Manager*

Now that the peak of this spring's Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) epidemic is behind us, it is helpful to reflect on what we learned from the experience. First, let's review a few details. Avian Influenza is a viral infection that is naturally present in wild bird communities. It is spread through direct contact with infected birds or surfaces that have been contaminated with the virus (potentially bird feeders and baths).

Like most viral pathogens (e.g. cold, flu, COVID) it is prone to mutations that cause new strains. The strain that emerged this spring was unusual in that it had a higher mortality rate for wild birds, especially birds of prey and even a few species of songbirds (mostly Corvids).

**CONTINUE READING ON PAGE 2**



## The Green Scene

### MRVAC Awards Grant Funding

by Lee Ann Landstrom, MRVAC Board Member



The Board ended the fiscal year by awarding more grants. Kennedy High School in Bloomington (pictured) received \$2,000 to purchase 600 native plants for a new pollinator-friendly rain garden. It was planted by 40 volunteers on May 14. They hope to add an informative sign, perhaps a rain barrel, and further projects to support wildlife on school grounds. Stop by and check it out.

Normandale Community College received an additional \$3,000 to install additional anti-bird strike window treatments beyond their original project scope. Staff reported reduced bird fatalities because of the dotted film that covers most of the building's north-facing wall of windows.

The Hastings School District asked for \$3,000 to add with other funding sources to create and fabricate a large, four-panel kiosk on their property at the "180<sup>th</sup> Street March". Students as well as the general public use this popular conservation land.

These organizations are so thankful for their MRVAC funding, which comes from the generosity of our members.

### Latino Conservation Week

by Cortney Solum, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge

This year, Latino Conservation Week (LCW) is July 16 through July 24, 2022. LCW or *Disfrutando y Conservando Nuestra Tierra* is an initiative of the Hispanic Access Foundation (HAF). LCW was created to support the Latino community getting into the outdoors and participating in activities to protect our natural resources. To celebrate this week, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge will share daily Spanish Facebook posts on different trails and sites to visit and explore on the refuge, @MNvalleyNWR.

### Avian Influenza Update

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While the avian flu did cause a few rare songbird deaths, they were uncommon enough to create conflicting recommendations about the safety of bird feeders from experts in veterinary epidemiology. Most notably in Minnesota, the Raptor Center took a more conservative approach and recommended feeders come down, while the Minnesota DNR did not restrict the use of bird feeders.

The good news is that rates have declined with the warmer weather and end of migration, and we can all rehang our bird feeders without concern about HPAI. However, big questions remain. Will this strain persist and pop up again this fall or next year? Were bird feeders posing a real risk to the birds using them or in the spread of the disease? Did the deaths of raptors and other birds have population-level effects?

Time may cast light on these and related questions. For now, this experience has highlighted the value of planting native plants as a viable way to attract birds to your yard without inviting birds to congregate. Thank you for your concern for birds and for your willingness to take precautions to decrease the spread of avian diseases.

### Summer Birdwatching

by Cortney Solum, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge

Birdwatching in the summer is a great time to learn about your resident and breeding bird species. You'll notice nesting parents, hear the chirps of baby birds and watch as fledglings morph through their growing stages.

As July is the warmest month of the year, be prepared for biting insects to allow for an enjoyable birding trip. Wear loose clothing that covers your skin and keeps you cool, apply insect repellent and be observant for hitchhikers!

While summer has just begun, there is a chance you will witness species migrating south in July. By the end of the month, shorebird migration begins for some species including sandpipers and dowitchers. Be prepared and happy summer birding!

### Native Plant Market Update

by Caleb Ashling, City of Burnsville

Update from the May-June edition of *The Trumpeter*

The 2022 Burnsville Native Plant Market was a big success, with the second highest attendance ever (almost 1,200 people attended) and more than 13,000 native plants were sent out in the community. Thanks to all who helped support native plants and all the wildlife that depends on them by attending or promoting this event.



## National Audubon Spotlight

### Audubon Scientists Develop New Method to Improve Mapping of Bird Migrations

*republished from the National Audubon Society*

**Four dozen co-authors from leading bird and wildlife organizations use novel approach to better identify the places migratory birds need along their perilous journeys.**

**NEW YORK**—More than forty scientists from the National Audubon Society and other leading bird and wildlife research and conservation groups published a new study modeling a novel approach to mapping seasonal migration pathways for birds. The study, published recently in *Ecological Applications*, combines some of the best-available forms of migration data for 12 species of migratory birds that represented different families, migratory strategies, breeding ranges, and available dataset sizes. This new method is a powerful advancement for migratory bird conservation at a time when many species are dramatically declining.

“Migratory birds complete some of the most impressive journeys on earth, and this new method of mapping their migrations gives us a clearer picture of the places these birds travel,” said Dr. Tim Meehan, quantitative ecologist for the National Audubon Society and primary author of the study.

The migration data used in this study can be categorized broadly into three types: occurrence and abundance models, represented by eBird Status products from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology; band re-encounter data, provided by the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory; and tracking datasets provided by researchers from across the globe and made available on Movebank. The researchers integrated these types of migratory data for 12 focal species, leveraging the strengths of each, to create a comprehensive – and accurate – map of migratory bird movements. The models give researchers a unique picture of avian migration, especially for species with over-water migrations or migrations that take place across isolated geographies.

“Birds tell us about the health of our environment, and better mapping of their migration pathways shows us where we should focus conservation efforts,” said Dr. Jill Deppe, senior director of Audubon’s Migratory Bird Initiative and a co-author of the study. “These new maps will help communities all across the hemisphere protect migratory birds and the places they need.”

For many species of migratory birds, the complete annual cycle remains relatively unknown or poorly understood. The three data types describe the annual cycle in different

ways; banding data and tracking provide detailed information on how individual birds move across the hemisphere often enabling connections between breeding and wintering populations, but they provide limited information about the movement of the entire population. The eBird Status products use information collected by community scientists to provide information about the distribution of the entire population throughout the year. By combining these two types of data, the researchers were able to generate maps that describes the pathways by which migratory birds move across the hemisphere. Migratory birds are also facing steep declines, with an estimated 2.5 billion individuals lost between 1970 and 2019. This unique information about migratory pathways will allow conservationists across the hemisphere to more effectively protect and restore the habitats that these birds depend on throughout their full annual cycle.

More types of migration data can allow for even further development of this integration, filling in knowledge gaps for species across the hemisphere.

“The more data we have and the better the tracking technology becomes, the clearer these migration pathways can get,” said Dr. Sarah Saunders, quantitative ecologist and co-author of the study. “It’s exciting to be able to work with researchers from across the globe to put these pieces together and give us the best chance at protecting migratory birds.”

In addition to Audubon, co-authors on the new study represent the following institutions and organizations: Antioch University, University of Alberta, University of Georgia, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, Arkansas State University, 1000 Herons, Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission, US Geological Survey Eastern Ecological Science Center, Wildlife Conservation Society Canada, Raptor View Research Institute, BirdsCanada, Millersville University, Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, Vermont Center for Ecostudies, Cypress Grove Research Center, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, USDA National Wildlife Research Center, Georgetown University, International Avian Research, California State Parks, University of Guelph, Utah Division Wildlife Services, Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, and University of Alberta.



# Audubon



## Regional Programs of Interest



*Friends of the Sax-Zim Bog*  
Meadowlands, Minnesota

### Introduction to Mosses Field Trip

*Saturday, July 23, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM*

Mosses are all arounds us in the Sax-Zim Bog and play an incredible role in the creation and support of bog ecosystems. However, mosses and their bryophyte relatives can be hard to identify. With a group of species that is hard to identify, it is important to start by learning the familiar and common species. Come and begin your journey into the wonderful world of mosses. Fees apply.

[www.saxzim.org/events/](http://www.saxzim.org/events/)

### Lichens Field Trip

*Sunday, July 24, 12:00 – 5:00 PM*

Northern Minnesota is home to a diverse lichen community. These species cover nearly 8% of the terrestrial surface of the earth, yet are relatively unknown to most of us. Join us on this trip to get firsthand experience in lichen identification. Unlike winter lichen field trips, we will be able to cover rock and ground based lichens, as well as the tree growing species! Fees apply.

[www.saxzim.org/events/](http://www.saxzim.org/events/)

### 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Sax-Zim Bog Bioblitz

*Saturday, August 6, 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM*

The Sax-Zim Bog Bioblitz is one our hallmark field experiences and every year we look forward to sharing this place with experts and excited field participants! Tentative field trips include Spiders, Insects, Wetland Plants, Plants and Shrubs, Butterflies and Ladybeetles, Moths and Nighttime Creatures, Galls and Non-metazoan Plant Diseases, Fish and Aquatic Insects, Dragonflies and Damselflies, and Fungi. Registration for individual field trips is done on the day of the event. Fees apply.

[www.saxzim.org/events/](http://www.saxzim.org/events/)



*Lowry Nature Center of Three Rivers Parks*  
Victoria, Minnesota

### Nature Photography 101

*Saturday, July 30, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM*

Go on a hike with a naturalist and photographer. Try photography exercises and learn tricks to help you take better photos. All experience levels welcome. Ages 11+. \$5. Reservations required. [www.threeriversparks.org](http://www.threeriversparks.org)

### Bird Banding

*Saturday, July 16, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM*

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

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



*Project Learning Tree*  
St. Mary's University – Rochester Campus

### Explore Your Environment

#### K-8 Educator's Workshop

*Wednesday, August 3, 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM*

Spend a fun morning learning standards-based, hands-on activities to engage your K-8 students in reading, math, science, and social studies – indoors and outside! PLT has developed 50 great lessons into one award-winning guide created by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Workshop attendees receive the new K-8 Activity Guide, hands-on demonstrations of activities, and 4 CEUs. \$30. Register online.

[www.dnr.state.mn.us/events/index.html](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/events/index.html)



*International Owl Center*  
Houston, MN

### International Owl Awareness Day

*Friday, August 5*

In honor of International Owl Awareness Day, everyone gets free admission to the International Owl Center. We will also be printing a second run of our set of 20 Ukrainian children's owl greeting cards to be sold in-person that day. Nearly \$10 from each set of cards goes directly to UNICEF earmarked to help Ukrainian children.

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

### Ukrainian Children's Owl Art

#### Online Auction

*Wednesday – Sunday, August 10-14*

Each year thousands of children from around the world enter the International Owl Center's children's owl art contest. Because so many entries are received, most of them from foreign countries, it is not possible to return them and the Owl Center has thousands of pieces of art in storage. Those from Ukraine have been pulled out to be auctioned off with proceeds going to UNICEF earmarked to help the children of Ukraine. This will be the final Ukrainian owl art auction. Find more details online at [www.internationalowlcenter.org](http://www.internationalowlcenter.org).



## 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.

### 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](http://www.signup.com/go/rLmKfrK)

### Refuge Bird Watching Treks (May - June)

*Saturday, July 9 (8:00-10:30 AM) Bass Ponds*  
*Sunday, July 17 (8:00-10:30 AM) Old Cedar Ave.*  
*Monday, July 25 (8:00-10:30 AM) Bass Ponds*  
*Saturday, August 6 (8:00-10:30 AM) Old Cedar Ave.*  
*Sunday, August 14 (8:00-10:30 AM) Bass Ponds*  
*Saturday, August 27 (8:00-10:30 AM) Rapids Lake*

Join Refuge Naturalist, Craig Mandel for a bird walk and learn about the birds that nest on the refuge. Each unit will offer different types of habitats. With over 100 species of nesting birds at each location, there will be lots of species to study. Some of the species we may see include Trumpeter Swan, Bald Eagle, Wood Duck, Willow Flycatcher, and Yellow Warbler. Contact Craig with questions at [egretcman@msn.com](mailto: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.

### Nobles County Birding Days

*Thursday, July 21 – Friday, July 22, 2022, 6:30 AM*  
Craig Mandel – (952) 240-7647

On this trip we will be spending time birding in Nobles County. Some of the locations we may explore include Hawkeye and Fury Island County Parks and Lake Bella WMA. With some luck we may find some early migrant shorebirds and we should find some of the late nesting species as well. Please contact Craig to register.

### Mille Lacs County Birding Days

*Thursday, Aug. 11 – Friday Aug. 12, 2022, 6:30 AM*  
Craig Mandel – (952) 240-7647

On this trip we will be birding in Mille Lacs County. Some of the locations we may explore include Mille Lacs Kathio and Father Hennepin State Parks, as well as Kunkel and Mille Lacs WMAs. We should also have time to visit a few parks along the Rum River. Please contact Craig to register.

### Pine County Birding Days

*Thursday, Aug. 18 – Friday, Aug. 19, 2022, 6:30 AM*  
Craig Mandel – (952) 240-7647

On this trip we will be birding in Pine County. Some of the locations we may explore include Banning and St. Croix State Parks, as well as Nemadji and Chengwatana WMAs. We should also have time to visit a couple water treatment ponds. Please contact Craig to register.

### Miesville Ravine Park – Dakota County

*Sunday, August 21, 2022, 7:30 AM*  
Steve Weston – (612) 978-3993  
[sweston2g@gmail.com](mailto:sweston2g@gmail.com)

We'll start out on the upper trail looking for early warbler migrants and cuckoos, bring lunch if you want to stay for the afternoon. Moderate effort. No reservations needed. Meet at 27970 Orlando Trail in Cannon Falls, MN (north parking lot).

### 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

**Click here to view Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Unit Trail Maps.**



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!**

### Featured Photo

*"Surprise Snapper"*  
by Josh Sweet, *Trumpeter* Editor

