



The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter

# Trumpeter

Volume 56 – Issue 2  
[www.MRVAC.org](http://www.MRVAC.org)

September – October 2022

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

## Seeking Individuals for Board of Directors

by Steve Weston, Board Vice President

The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter (MRVAC) still has a couple of openings on the Board of Directors. A commitment to the future of MRVAC is the only necessary qualification for interested individuals. Directors are then expected to attend a one-hour long board meeting nine or ten times each year.

We are specifically looking for individuals who can help us with technology. The present challenge we face is offering our in-person meetings live over Zoom simultaneously. We would also like to find individuals who would really like to make a difference in the environment through chapter conservation efforts. We have opportunities to amplify your voice with many similar-minded, motivated members plus ways to reach legislators with those concerns.

Interested? Want to know more? Contact Rob Daves, Board President, or Steve Weston, Board Vice President using the contact information available on our website at [www.mrvac.org](http://www.mrvac.org).

## Thank You, Readers

by Josh Sweet, Trumpeter Editor 2019-2022

It has truly been an honor to serve as the editor of *The Trumpeter* over the past few years. Thank you to all of the readers and the entire MRVAC community for making my role something that I looked forward to each issue.

I appreciate that you have taken the time to read about pressing conservation issues and I am proud of the efforts that our chapter takes to make the world a better place. In the new year, I will be taking on a new challenge in a volunteer role at Deep Portage Learning Center, an environmental learning center in northern Minnesota who achieved net zero carbon emissions in 2016 and continues to be a leader in renewable energy education.

However, this is not a goodbye. I look forward to seeing everyone soon at future MRVAC events and while out birding around the state. You should also keep an eye out for a MRVAC birding trek at Deep Portage in 2023.

Please help me in welcoming your new editor, Sam Warren, whom you can read more about on page 3.

## Upcoming Member Meetings

by Steve Weston, Board Vice President  
and Meeting Program Chair

Beginning in September, we will once again be meeting in person at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (MVNWR) Visitor Center in Bloomington. We will continue to host virtual meetings during the winter months so that we can book speakers like Scott Weisendahl who we would be unable to have attend in person.

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 after a short walk from the METRO Blue Line (Hiawatha Light Rail) at American Blvd.



### “Understanding the Secret Lives of Wolves in the Northwoods”



Thomas Gable, The Voyageurs Wolf Project

Thursday, September 22, 2022, 7:00 PM  
MVNWR Bloomington Visitor Center

The Voyageurs Wolf Project addresses a big gap in understanding wolf ecology: what do wolves do during summer in forested ecosystems? This question has remained elusive despite decades of research. With the help of advanced GPS-tracking technology and remote video cameras, the project has been able to get an unprecedented look at the summer ecology of wolves. This research has revealed new wolf hunting behavior and shown just how variable wolf summer diets are. Come learn about the complex and fascinating lives of these elusive wolves in the Northwoods.

### “Research on Minnesota’s Red-tailed Hawks”

Alexandra Pesano, University of Minnesota, Duluth

Thursday, October 27, 2022, 7:00 PM

MVNWR Bloomington Visitor Center



Duluth has been a hot spot for diverse, but not well-studied types of Red-tailed Hawks. Utilizing microsatellite markers and satellite transmitters, we’ve been able to increase the understanding of the geographical origins and subspecies classification of dark-morph plumaged birds and the *B.j.abieticola* subspecies.



## Chapter News

### MRVAC Awards Grant Funding

by Walt Stull, Treasurer

Each year, MRVAC awards grants to organizations that support our mission of providing leadership in promoting environmental awareness, education and advocacy action, especially relating to the wildlife and habitats of the Minnesota River Valley. In fiscal year 2022, which ended May 31, MRVAC awarded a total of \$14,100.00 in grants. They ranged from \$500.00 to \$5000.00 and were awarded to supply books for little libraries and an Eagle Scout project to build bluebird houses to a project to promote the recovery of Red-headed Woodpeckers. Here is a brief description of each of the projects.

\$500.00 was awarded to the Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends. It was used to supply books to Little Free Libraries in two locations, both located at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center in Bloomington.

Alex Moeller from Boy Scout Troop 9331 as an Eagle Scout project was awarded \$600.00 and worked with the City of Burnsville to build and place ten bluebird houses. He led a group of scouts in the construction and installation of the houses. The grant was used to purchase tools, materials and supplies for the project.

Bloomington Kennedy High School Green Club, an extracurricular student organization dedicated to the restoration, preservation, and protection of our ever-in-danger ecosystem, requested \$2000.00 to build and plant a native pollinator-friendly rain garden on a section of unused lawn on the school property. The grant was used for plants, soil and compost, mulch, and educational signage.

Hastings Public Schools was awarded \$3000.00 to help fund an interpretive kiosk for what is known as the "180th Street Marsh". It is a birding hotspot for eBird (Cornell Lab of Ornithology). The kiosk will integrate four main themes: 1) history of the land and how it was protected, 2) tribute to Tecia Karpen, the benefactor who acquired the land and conveyed it to the Hastings Public Schools at no cost, 3) general natural history, and 4) rich bird diversity (more than 200 species).

In 2021 Normandale Community College added window treatment to windows and doors to help prevent birds from hitting the glass. It greatly reduced bird mortality, but the school determined there were additional windows that needed to be treated. MRVAC awarded the school \$3000.00 to help with that project.

Our largest grant of \$5000.00 was awarded to the Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Project/Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis. The purpose of the Recovery Project is to reverse the decline and promote the recovery of red-headed woodpeckers in Minnesota. The funds are used for equipment field supplies, salaries for researchers, and housing costs. MRVAC has been supporting this project for several years.

For more information on the criteria for awarding grants and a Grant Request Form please visit [www.mrvac.org/grants/](http://www.mrvac.org/grants/).

### Tribute to Karol Gresser

by Diane Rowse, MRVAC Member

Karol Ann Gresser, who passed away peacefully on August 5, was a person who lived her values. She was active in protecting the environment, volunteering in ESL (English as a Second Language) classes, donating to causes she cared deeply about, and networking with many friends. I was lucky to be a friend of Karol's. Here are a few of my memories of Karol to share.



She advocated to keep Terrace Oaks Park in Burnsville a natural park, not once, but twice, saving it from being turned into a golf course. She also mentored my two daughters, encouraging them in the annual Audubon Bird-a-thon fundraiser events. They are both adults now and great supporters of bird conservation.

Karol co-led the annual Spring Bird Identification classes in the 1990's with naturalist Kathy Heidel at Richardson Nature Center. These were co-sponsored by the Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter and Three Rivers Park District. Birders like me eagerly flocked to these classes to practice skills for the spring migration.

Karol was well-known in the birding community. She is ranked #52 in the statewide Minnesota Ornithologists' Union for the number of bird species she observed in Minnesota: 380 species. 380! How many kinds of birds can you identify? That's O.K.- Karol delighted in taking people under her wing and sharing her passion for birds.

In more recent years, Karol and I enjoyed the Keyboard Conversations Concert Series at Hamline University, birding trips to the 180th Street Marsh and Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve, and meetings of the Minneapolis Audubon Society and MRVAC. We also walked many a lap together at the indoor YMCA track in Burnsville.

We shared our love of dark chocolate, birds, live music, and lefse among other things. She will be missed by many of us.

Condolences: [whitefuneralhomes.com](http://whitefuneralhomes.com)

Memorials preferred to:  
Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter  
[www.mrvac.org](http://www.mrvac.org)

Joseph's Coat  
[www.josephscoatmn.org](http://www.josephscoatmn.org)

Mary, Mother of the Church  
[www.mmotc.org](http://www.mmotc.org)



### Meet Your New Editor

by Sam Warren, 2023 Trumpeter Editor

Hi! I'm Sam Warren and I will be the new editor of *The Trumpeter*, starting in November. I am very excited to have the opportunity to work with such a great, conservation minded organization with some awesome members!



I grew up in the St. Cloud area and graduated from Bemidji State with a degree in Wildlife Biology. From there, I went on to get my Master's at UW-Madison in Agroecology (sustainable agriculture) where I studied the effects of grazing public lands on grassland birds and Greater Prairie Chickens. I realized though, that my passion was not in research, but in *sharing* that research with others and connecting them to nature. I then lived in Iowa for a bit, working as a 4-H coordinator before moving to Indiana.

I hooked up with Indiana Audubon and became their Communications & Outreach Manager, which basically translates to "I connect people to birds!". It's really an incredible job and I am lucky enough to continue working for them remotely, after I moved back to St. Cloud in late 2021.

How did I get connected with MRVAC, then? My husband and I recently moved to Becker, about 5 minutes from the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. Being a birder, I was very excited to start my new eBird yard list on our 20 acres in the woods and we happened to have Sandhill Cranes visiting nearly every day. One day, I get a call on the Indiana Audubon phone line from someone asking to speak to me and wondering if I live in Sherburne County. Of course, I was very thrown off by how someone from Indiana would know this! It turned out to be Steve Weston, who saw my eBird checklists, Google'd my name, and found my staff profile. He was asking if I would help with the annual ICF Crane surveys. Of course I signed right up!

The birding community really is incredible, and oftentimes, much smaller than you think! I am very excited to continue meeting new folks in Minnesota, now that I've settled down here. By the time this is published, my husband and I will have had our first child over Labor Day weekend and we are extremely excited to share the outdoors with him or her.

When I'm not out in nature, you can usually find me reading a mystery or sci-fi novel, cooking new recipes, planning my next travel adventure, or coaching hockey. When asked what my favorite bird is, my answer is always Kingfishers because they are magnificent, feisty creatures that have superb fishing abilities and are fun to band.

I look forward to connecting with you all via *The Trumpeter* and hopefully, an in-person event in the future! If you ever need to reach me, feel free to email anytime at [swarren.mn@gmail.com](mailto:swarren.mn@gmail.com). Happy birding!

## 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!**







## The Green Scene: Nature News



### Opossums and Ticks

by Steve Weston, Board Vice President



A post, complete with photo, came over the neighborhood social media, “What is this?” Others explained that it is a possum. Somebody exclaimed that they are nasty animals that carried disease. I explained that they are gentle, non-aggressive, beneficial, and don’t carry disease. (It will not bite you, even if you pick it up. But... don’t!) And, they are well-known for feasting on ticks. Somebody responded, “No, they don’t eat ticks! That is an old wives’ tale. You should get educated!” So, thank you. I did. And, this is what I found.

The conclusion that Opossums were significant consumers of ticks was the surprising result of a well-designed experiment reported in 2009 in a well-respected scientific journal: F. Kessing, et al. “Hosts as ecological traps for the vector of Lyme Disease” Proceedings of the Royal Society, 276:1675, August, 2009. The researchers took several wild trapped animals of six species, and after holding them for a few days so they could shed any ticks they may have come in with, they were infested with 100 larval black-legged ticks (deer ticks). They were immobilized briefly so they could not attack the ticks and then held for four days in cages with wire floors, more than adequate time for the ticks to feed and drop off below.

The test subjects were then freed back at their origins and the ticks were then collected, counted, and studied. Missing ticks were considered consumed. Only three ticks were left for each of the opossums, so 97% were considered consumed. Knowing the tick loads of wild caught opossums, they concluded that each opossum was consuming about 5500 ticks per season. These tick-eradicators could have a significant impact on the ticks and the spread of Lyme Disease.

In 2021, Cecilia Hennesey and Kaitlyn Hild published “Are Virginia opossums really ecological traps for ticks? Groundtruthing laboratory observations” Ticks and Tick-borne Diseases, 12:5, September 2021. Thinking the 5500 consumed ticks unlikely, they studied the stomach contents of 32 opossums, collected, already dead mostly from road kill. They detailed their procedures and findings, documented the presence of ticks in the geographic area, and found no ticks at all in the stomachs. A detailed search of the published literature revealed no one else reporting ticks in the diet of opossums. What happened to the ticks in the first study? Perhaps the opossums were not kept long enough to allow the ticks time to feed. Or, the grooming of the opossums (unreported as observed by Kessing, et al.) might have been unnatural behavior resulting from captivity.

So, I asked Richard Ostfeld, a former co-director of the Tick Project with F. Kessing, and a co-author of the original paper, what he thought of the Hennesey and Hild article. He responded, “Nothing in the ... study... challenges a single one of our findings... [Their] approach lacks a positive control, i.e. any demonstration that they could have detected [anything as small as] larval ticks or remnants of larval ticks using their methods.” The literature review that they cite, was out of date

or otherwise compromised. I would add, that while Hennesey and Hild carefully used reagents that would not compromise a DNA study of the the stomach contents, they did not do a DNA analysis.

Hennesey and Hild conclude, “Our study demonstrates that scientists must be vigilant not only in regards to groundtruthing [whatever that means] original research, but also in the peer-review process... Our hope is that...the public can still appreciate opossums for the roles they play in our ecosystems, even if that does not include eliminating ticks.” When Kessing, Ostfeld, et al. tried to submit a formal rebuttal, they discovered that the journal does not publish rebuttals – so much for peer-review.

In conclusion, the 2009 experiment provides strong evidence that opossums eat ticks. The Hennesey and Hild paper does not support that conclusion, but resolves nothing. There is definitely a need for further research. In any case, I would welcome opossums into my yard, whatever their diet.

### Wildlife Watch: Iconic Fall Birds



#### Pose for Fans on the Flyway



by Tanner Wileman, MVNWR Park Ranger

As the chill of autumn breezes descend upon us, we can expect some relief from the beating August sun and look forward to a cozy fall. In preparation for this colder weather, many birds are getting ready to depart for their wintering grounds further south. This period of fall migration is a great time to look for birds on the refuge.

Minnesota Valley functions as an Airbnb to thousands of migrating birds each year who use the refuge as a resting spot before continuing their way. For the paparazzi (birders), this is an annual opportunity to see all the stars up close. These include several duck species such as the Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked ducks, as well as shorebirds like the Wilson’s Snipe, and some new songbirds including the Philadelphia Vireo and the Nashville Warbler.

To make the most of your opportunities to spot birds during the fall, it can be useful to understand migratory patterns and behaviors. Most birds migrate when the weather is ideal, or when temperatures are warmer, the skies are clear and free of precipitation, and when they can get a light to moderate tailwind. When these conditions are not met, birds tend to pause on their journeys. If you can tolerate birding in the cold or rain, you may have the opportunity to find large groups of birds clumping together in small geographical areas. Online research can often tell you where to find these clumps.

Another easy way to improve your odds of finding specific bird species is to keep track of data provided on ebird.org. Many birders across the area will provide a list of what they see to this website. By exploring hotspots, you can search for Minnesota Valley or anywhere else you want to watch for birds to find out what birds have been seen there recently. Or simply visit the refuge visitor centers Thursdays-Sundays to check recently updated bird reports. Best of luck with your fall birding adventures!

## Climate Change Forum at Deep Portage Learning Center

by Jack Fitzgerald, Deep Portage Learning Center



One of the most pressing problems facing northern Minnesota residents, and the natural environment we cherish, will be discussed at the Deep Portage Learning Center in Hackensack, Minnesota on October 8, 2022. The day-long forum, entitled The Challenge of Climate Change in Northern Minnesota, will feature a morning keynote address by Jessica Hellmann, Ph.D., a nationally recognized scholar and leader in climate change and climate change adaptation research. This type of research focuses on the adjustments societies can make to limit or adapt to the negative effects of climate change.

After lunch, a panel of local leaders will consider the future of our spectacular forests. Meredith Cornett, Ph.D., with the Duluth office of The Nature Conservancy; Keith Karnes, Forestry Director, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe; and Mark Gossman, professional forester and Cass County Land Commissioner will lead that discussion. The day's program will conclude with a tour of Deep Portage's net zero carbon campus and its many alternative energy installations including multiple styles of solar arrays, a wind turbine, and biomass heat systems. The tour will be led by Norm Moody, B.A., M.F., member of the Deep Portage Foundation Board of Directors and former Cass County Land Commissioner.

Information about the climate change related services offered by several local profit and non-profit businesses and organizations will also be on site. There will be plenty of time for those attending to join in this important conversation. Check in will take place from 9:00 AM until 10:15 AM and the forum is scheduled to conclude at 4:00 PM.

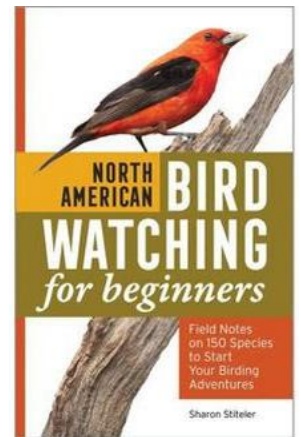
Seating is limited and reservations are required by October 1. The event fee is \$10 per adult and includes a catered lunch. Anyone under 21, or currently enrolled as a college student, can attend free of charge but will still need to make a reservation. Register over the phone by calling (218)-682-2325 or online at [www.deepportage.org/public-programs](http://www.deepportage.org/public-programs).

The forum is sponsored by the Cass County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America and Deep Portage Learning Center.

## North American Bird Watching for Beginners by Sharon Stiteler

Review written by Anne Hanley, MRVAC Member

Sharon Stiteler, aka the "Bird Chick", has written a new book: *North American Bird Watching for Beginners* and you should check it out. The first two chapters covering bird facts and how to go birding are written in a very fun and accessible way, and cover lots of helpful basics. Sharon does a great job of covering how to get started birding including what to wear, binoculars, digital resources like eBird and phone apps as well as human resources like the value of joining bird clubs.



The field guide section of the book covers 150 birds commonly seen in North America - depending on where you live, some of the birds will be out of your local range. The birds are organized by habitat, which is more intuitive than taxonomic order and less subjective than sorting by color. Thinking about birds by habitat is an important mindset for a beginner - for all birders, actually.

Anyone caught by the birding bug will find at some point that they want an additional field guide (whether physical or virtual) because there are many birds missing from this book, but *North American Bird Watching for Beginners* is a great starting place for a new birder.

## Featured Artwork: Monarch Caterpillar on Swamp Milkweed (July 28, 2022)

by Robin Kutz, Social Chair







## Regional Programs of Interest



*Project WILD  
Online Opportunity*

### Professional Development for Formal Educators

*August 15 to December 31, 2022*

Project WILD is offering free online Project WILD professional development to K-12 formal educators and college-level instructors, professors, and faculty. Courses include Climate and Wildlife, Flying WILD, Aquatic WILD, and Project WILD for Professors. All courses are self-paced. [www.fishwildlife.org/projectwild](http://www.fishwildlife.org/projectwild)



*International Owl Center  
Houston, MN*

### Owl Prowls

*Saturday, September 17, 6:30 PM*

*Saturday, October 8, 5:30 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 drive their vehicles following staff to 3-4 known owl territories in and around Houston to call and listen for Eastern Screech-Owls, Barred Owls, and Great Horned Owls. Children are welcome but must be able to stand quietly for at least 10 minutes. \$10 for members; \$15 for non-members. [www.internationalowlcenter.org](http://www.internationalowlcenter.org)



*Dodge Nature Center  
West St. Paul, Minnesota*

### Night for Nature

*Thursday, September 22, 6:00 – 8:30 PM*

Come experience a magical evening and show your support for environmental education at the annual benefit for Dodge Nature Center and Preschool. Hors d'oeuvres and drinks included. Live program, auction, nature experiences, and magical entertainment. Adults only, please. \$125 per Guest; \$250 per Advocate. [www.dodgenaturecenter.org](http://www.dodgenaturecenter.org)



*Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge  
Bloomington, Minnesota*

### Artist Talk with Eric Olson

*Friday, September 23, 6:00 – 7:00 PM*

Join artist, Erik Olson for a live discussion on his latest exhibition, Nature Interrupted, on display at Minnesota Valley NWR's Confluence Gallery. This is a great opportunity to meet the artist, ask questions, and learn about his process and artistry. All ages. Free. [www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota-valley](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota-valley)



*Lowry Nature Center  
Victoria, Minnesota*

### Bird Sketching

*Saturday, September 24, 12:00 – 2:00 PM*

Birds are everywhere and tons of fun to watch and draw! Use lines and simple shapes to build your drawing. Try a quick "gesture sketch" to add lifelike movement to your sketches. Use these skills to create a realistic drawing. Paper and pencils (and birds!) provided, or feel free to bring your own supplies. Fun for artists at all stages. Reservations required four days in advance. Ages 12+. \$6. [www.threeriversparks.org](http://www.threeriversparks.org)



*Deep Portage Learning Center  
Hackensack, Minnesota*

### The Challenge of Climate Change in Northern Minnesota

*Saturday, October 8, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM*

A day-long forum co-sponsored by the Cass County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League and Deep Portage. For more information see the page 5 of this publication. Free for college students and anyone under 21. \$10 for everyone else. Free catered lunch included. [www.deep-portage.org](http://www.deep-portage.org)



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

### Fall Colors in the Sax-Zim Bog

*Saturday, October 15, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM*

Mid-October seems to be prime time for peak tamarack colors in the Sax-Zim Bog! This field trip will highlight the biology behind the change of color we see by trees in Minnesota as the seasons change. Depending on the timing of color change, the exact date of this field trip may be pushed back one week, and all registrants will be apprised of any changes to the field trip date. Fees apply. [www.saxzim.org/events/](http://www.saxzim.org/events/)



*Osprey Wilds  
Sandstone, Minnesota*

### Creatures of the Night

*Saturday, October 22, 3:00 – 6:00 PM*

Join us for our third annual Creatures of the Night! Follow a guide along a half-mile forested trail where you'll meet animal characters who will share their stories and perhaps dispel some myths! After your hike, warm up by the fire with a hot drink. When registering, you can select a time for your hike to begin. All ages. Ages 13+ \$10; 5–12-year-olds \$5; under 5 free. [www.ospreywilds.org](http://www.ospreywilds.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 (Sept. – October)

*Saturday, Sept. 10 (8:00-10:30 AM) Rapids Lake*  
*Sunday, Sept. 11 (8:00-10:30 AM) Bass Ponds*  
*Sunday, Sept. 18 (8:00-10:30 AM) Old Cedar Ave*  
*Saturday, October 1 (8:00-10:30 AM) Rapids Lake*  
*Saturday, October 8 (8:00-10:30 AM) Old Cedar Ave*  
*Sunday, October 16 (8:00-10:30 AM) Bass Ponds*  
*Saturday, October 22 (8:00-10:30 AM) Old Cedar Ave*

Explore some of the best Refuge units for bird watching in 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 the Fall migration. Birders of all skill levels are welcome to attend these walks. Bring along your binoculars, favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather. 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 with a SignUp message initiated by the trip leader.

### Freeborn County Birding Days

*Thursday, Sept. 15 – Friday Sept. 16, 2022, 7:00 AM*  
 Craig Mandel – [egretcman@msn.com](mailto:egretcman@msn.com)

With two days of birding in Freeborn County, we will have plenty of time to bird many of the key birding locations in Freeborn County. Some of which are: Myre Big Island State Park, Wildwoods, Arrowhead and Saint Nicholas County Parks, plus a few WMAs and wastewater treatment plants. Please contact Craig to register for this field trip.

### Lebanon Hills Regional Park – Dakota County

*Saturday, September 17, 2022, 8:00 AM*  
 Steve Weston – (612) 978-3993  
[sweston2g@gmail.com](mailto:sweston2g@gmail.com)

We will search for fall migrants on some of the back trails Lebanon Hills Regional Park in Eagan. Moderate effort. No reservations needed. Meet at Jensen Lake picnic area, 1350 Carriage Hills Dr just off of Pilot Knob Road in Eagan.

### Kanabec/Pine County Birding Days

*Thursday, Oct. 13 – Friday, Oct. 14, 2022, 7:00 AM*  
 Craig Mandel – [egretcman@msn.com](mailto:egretcman@msn.com)

On this two-day trip, we will be exploring both Kanabec and Pine Counties. We will be checking area lakes in both counties and a couple wastewater treatment plants in Pine County. With luck we will turn up some unusual Waterfowl and, in the parks, and WMAs, we will search Sparrows and other late migrants. Please contact Craig to register for this field trip.

### 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

## National Audubon Spotlight: *Introducing the Birdsong Project: What Birds Tell Us*

by Elizabeth Gray, Audubon CEO  
republished from the National Audubon Society

This summer, the hummingbird in your backyard may have returned after spending the winter on Mexico's Pacific slope, and the warbler in your neighborhood park could be visiting you from its winter retreat in the Andes Mountains.

Humans instinctively understand that birds are both musicians and messengers. Our cultures (songs, literature, parables, visual art, dance, holidays, sports mascots and idioms) rely heavily on birds and what they represent to us, from the sacredness of eagles in many Native American cultures to the poems of Toni Morrison.

That's because birds have a lot to say. Birds tell us about home and love and family. They tell us about safety and security. They tell us about joy and curiosity. They inspire us with their beauty and their flight. And, they also tell us when things are amiss in our own communities and on our planet.

Recent studies have shown that, since 1970, North America has lost nearly 3 billion birds through the destruction of their homes, the contamination of their environment and other factors. The same stressors take a toll on human lives and happiness. Air pollution is a silent killer. Storms, droughts and wildfires are increasing in frequency and intensity. Two-thirds of North America's birds are threatened by our changing climate—changes that also threaten our cities and communities from coast to coast.

Yes, birds have a lot to tell us. When Covid-19 forced so many Americans to stay home in the spring of 2020, millions of us began to listen to birds in new ways amid the often eerie silence. And that's how an extraordinary creative outpouring, "For the Birds: The Birdsong Project," was born.

Featuring recordings by more than 200 leading artists, "For the Birds: The Birdsong Project" celebrates the joy and music that birds bring into our lives. Contributors include Mark Ronson, Yo-Yo Ma, Beck, Jeff Goldblum, Elvis Costello, Regina King, Matthew McConaughey, Tilda Swinton, Karen O and many more, including Audubon board members Jane Alexander and Lili Taylor (who played a key role in connecting us at the beginning of the project). "For the Birds: The Birdsong Project" benefits the National Audubon Society and includes many other partners, including Brooklyn Botanic Garden and BirdLife International. It may be the largest charity compilation ever produced: evidence of birds' extraordinary cultural power.

The joy they bring is limitless, and it's available to all of us every day. Whether we live in the largest cities or on the smallest farms, Americans can encounter birds every day. This spring, take time to enjoy their songs, nest-building, colors and antics. Watch them go about their lives and wonder.

Birds can be a source of wisdom because they show us how to live life better. The decline or disappearance of birds is often the first sign of environmental problems—from the proverbial "canary in a coal mine" warning of polluted air underground to Rachel Carson's warning of a "silent spring" as pesticides ravaged Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons. The late scientific giant Thomas Lovejoy often said, "If you take care of the birds, you will take care of most of the world's environmental problems."

Finally, birds offer abundant hope. They journey back each spring, year after year, bright in color and song, reminding us that spring always comes again. And when we listen to their warnings, they can spring back from the edge of extinction, proving that we can make a difference when we put our minds to it. Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons have returned from the brink of disappearance when we corrected our mistakes and offered them a helping hand. Many of America's waterfowl have rebounded in number with concerted wetland restoration efforts.

Birds tell us we can build a healthier, more resilient world for them and for each of us. Let's celebrate that message and commit ourselves to action.