



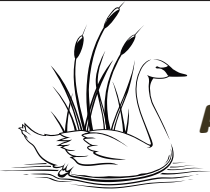
The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter

# Trumpeter

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

May - June 2023

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Upcoming Chapter Programs

**May 25:** Social beginning at 7 p.m. and chapter meeting at 7:30 p.m. with guest speaker Brett Howland

**June 22:** Social beginning at 7 p.m. and chapter meeting at 7:30 p.m. with guest speaker Dr. Peter Sorensen

*\*For MRVAC sponsored field trips, please see page 4*

### Global Big Day: May 13

Make plans to get out and bird on May 13, 2023. Global Big Day is an annual celebration of birds, run by Cornell Lab of Ornithology. No matter where you are located, you can log your observations on eBird all day long and be a citizen scientist. You'll be helping researchers better understand bird populations and make the best management decisions. Learn more about Global Big Day at [www.ebird.org/globalbigday](http://www.ebird.org/globalbigday)

### Trumpeter Subscription & Local Membership

Please help support MRVAC in promoting environmental awareness, education and advocacy action, especially relating to the wildlife and habitats of the Minnesota River Valley! To do this, you can become a local member of MRVAC for \$15 per year. This is not the same as the National Audubon Society membership. Becoming a local member helps the chapter continue to fund crucial environmental projects and cover costs associated with outreach and advocacy, such as printing this Trumpeter newsletter.

### Follow MRVAC On Facebook!

Stay up to date with events, news, and other bird-related content on our Facebook page. Follow us now at [www.facebook.com/MRVAC.MN](http://www.facebook.com/MRVAC.MN)

### MRVAC Program Information

The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter meets most months on the fourth Thursday. Meetings are held either in-person at the refuge and/or virtually via Zoom. Virtual meeting links will be posted about one week in advance on our website. The refuge visitor center is located at 3815 American Boulevard East in Bloomington and is accessible after a short walk from the METRO blue line. All meetings are free and open to the public.

### May 25, 2023 - Virtual & In-person Program

Social gathering at 7 p.m. with presentation at 7:30 p.m.  
**Brett Howland:** Master's student at University of Minnesota- Duluth

### *The Conservation of Golden-winged Warblers: Nesting and Fledgling Behavior and Habitat*

Golden-winged Warblers have the smallest breeding population of any non-protected bird in the United States. Their decline has been attributed to many causes such as breeding habitat loss, competition with the Blue-winged Warbler, and invasion of the Brown-headed Cowbird. In Minnesota, they breed in early successional and shrubby wetland habitat. Because these birds experience high rates of nest failure and fledgling mortality, it is important to understand how habitat influences nest survival and fledgling survival.



### June 22, 2023 - Virtual & In-person Program

Social gathering at 7 p.m. with presentation at 7:30 p.m.  
**Dr. Peter Sorensen:** Biology Department, University of Minnesota

### *The Natural and Unnatural History of Carp: Implications for Minnesota's Aquatic Ecosystems and Fisheries*

Dr. Sorensen will address the history of invasive fish control and management in Minnesota. He will speak about the fascinating biology of silver carp, how this fish threatens our ecosystem, the potential to control the carp, and actions presently being considered.

## CHAPTER NEWS & NOTES

### A Note From Our President

by Rob Daves, Board President

In March the National Audubon Society's board, after much deliberation and public input, decided to keep its long-held name and rejected dropping or changing "Audubon." The decision caught some by surprise – many, in fact, didn't even know the organization was considering a name change. Others were hoping that the organization would sever the association with John James Audubon. Why was a change considered?

The National Audubon Society's own description of the man doesn't varnish it: While his seminal collection of 435 life-size prints of North America's birds became the standard against which others were (and are) still judged, he was "a complex and troubling character who did despicable things even by the standards of the day." It asserts that he was an academic fraudster and plagiarist, stole human remains and "enslaved Black people and wrote critically about emancipation."

However, the national board said the decision positions the organization to focus on equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging, as well as conservation work. The Audubon name has come to represent the broader love of birds and nature and a non-partisan approach to conservation.

Outside Minnesota, some Audubon chapters are taking the opposite direction, going through the process to change their names to eschew the Audubon association. Seattle Audubon has put a slash through the Audubon name on its website while looking for a new name. Portland, Chicago, Madison and other chapters will drop the name but haven't decided on a new one. The D.C. chapter now is called "Nature Forward," complete with a newly-named website.

In Minnesota, the Duluth chapter seems to be farthest along trying to find another name. Its board tabled a recent motion to change its name after the national organization announced it wasn't changing, but will take it up again, the state's chapter leaders were told. Other Minnesota chapters say it's on future meeting agendas but haven't discussed it yet. I related that MRVAC's board had opinions on both sides, but discussions have just begun.

Rob Schultz, the head of Audubon Minnesota, told chapter leaders that no chapter is obligated to change its name and Audubon Minnesota will fully support chapters' decisions either way. A chapter absolutely can be an official Audubon chapter without having "Audubon" in its name, he said. Should MRVAC drop the reference to Audubon in its name to disassociate itself with this "troubling character who did despicable things"? If no, that may create a barrier to growth, as our birder population is aging and younger birders and birders of color may not want the association "Audubon" brings. If yes, what should the new name be?

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Should we try to keep the MRVAC.org name, as some want? What happens now?

There are many, many issues other than those listed above that the board will consider about the name change in future meetings. Now is the time for member input. The board would like to hear your opinion. Go to the bottom of MRVAC.org to the "contact us" button. Let us hear from you with a note about your thoughts.

### Lights Out, Minnesota!

by Dale Gentry, Director of Conservation at  
Audubon- Minnesota Iowa Missouri

The days are growing long, the snow is melting, and the birds are singing. That signals our instincts to plan spring birding trips and it should also remind us to turn off our lights at night. While many birders are familiar with the Lights Out campaigns that roll out at the start of every spring and fall migration season, fewer of us could explain why extinguishing our nighttime lights is good for birds. Actually, none of us can explain it in perfect detail because scientists don't have a clear understanding of the mechanism that draws birds to artificial light. We know that nocturnal migrants, which includes most migrants except raptors and waterfowl, cue off the moon and stars as they migrate. But, that doesn't tell us why they fly toward artificial light. They aren't flying TO the moon and stars, but using them to orient. So, why nocturnal migrants fly toward, and get disorientated by, artificial lighting is not perfectly clear. We do, however, have good evidence showing that comprehensive lights out campaigns can be effective in reducing window collision mortality. One study of Lights Out Chicago showed a 60 percent decline in dead birds in large buildings participating in Lights Out. We also know that building collisions have population-level effects. Estimates put annual mortality from collisions with buildings (including daytime collisions which have different causes) at hundreds of million birds.



Despite our imperfect understanding of why birds are attracted to our artificial lights, we know it happens and we know that turning off lights at night can prevent many of those collision events. So, make sure you add dimming your nighttime lights to your list of bird-friendly practices to ensure there are plenty of birds to see on your next trip.

Learn more about the simple things you can do to help reduce bird window collisions at <https://mn.audubon.org/conservation/lights-out-program>

## BEGINNING BIRDER SERIES

### Identification Tips: Spring Warblers

by Sam Warren



As the tree tops start to bud and the Red-winged Blackbirds start to sing again, birders everywhere start to feel the twitch. The warblers are coming! These small, active little birds come in a variety of colors but the most prominent is yellow. If you see a tiny, twitchy little bird high up in the treetops with some bright yellow, you're more than likely

looking at a warbler. The common yellow color, active lifestyle, relatively small size, and their tendency to perch high above your head can make identification difficult. Don't fret! It's one of spring migration's greatest and most-welcome challenge for birders! In this first article of a larger beginning birder series, I want to help any new birders enjoy the springtime warblers. Here are a few tips to help narrow down your species options.

#### COLORS & MARKINGS

This one seems obvious, but is the first step in identifying any bird species. Notice which colors are on the bird and where. With warblers, the easiest question to ask is whether or not they have yellow on them. If so, where? If not, what colors are present? After coloring, notice how and where the different colors are located. Many species have black and yellow colors, but the Canada Warbler specifically has black markings on its chest that looks like a necklace. The Prothonotary Warbler on the other hand, has a very bright yellow color on the head, neck, and belly, with a slate gray color on the wings and back.

#### HABITAT

Not all warbler species occupy the same habitat. Some prefer wetlands, like the Common Yellowthroat, while others, like the Cerulean Warbler, stay in dense forests. Familiarize yourself with these habitats in your field guide or online. Some species even have specific vegetation that they like, such as the Yellow-throated Warbler which is commonly referred to as the Sycamore Warbler for its preference toward sycamore trees. You won't find many in Minnesota because of this!



#### BEHAVIORS

Not only should you look at what type of habitat you're in, but also where the bird is found within the habitat itself. Is the bird on the ground or is it way up high in the treetops? Does it have a tendency to stay in bushes down low or does it stay hidden entirely with

only sound to give it away? These are all indicators of different species traits. For example, Blackpoll and Black-and-white warblers both have similar colors. However, the Blackpoll Warbler is often found higher in the trees while the Black-and-white tends to be more mid- or bottom-level dwellers. Some warblers, like the Palm Warbler, prefer the ground over the treetops, despite our assumption that warblers are always in the treetops.

#### SOUNDS

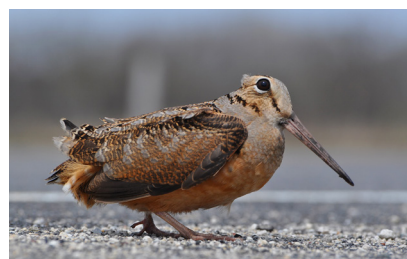
Once you've narrowed it down with these steps, try listening to their sounds next. While this is often one of the easiest indicators of species, it's also one of the most difficult for new birders. The Warbler Guide app is an extremely handy tool to use in the field. This app gives you multiple calls, information, and even 360 degree views of all the warbler species. You can get the Warbler Guide in hard copy, too! Play a few calls before you head out into the field to familiarize yourself with some warblers you may see. Then, when you find a bird, take your time and watch it for a while. If you can see it sing and hear the song, it will help you remember for next time. Mnemonics are also a great tool when remembering songs, too. Some common mnemonics for warblers are "sweet, sweet, you're so sweet" (Yellow Warbler) and "trees, trees, murmuring trees" (Black-throated Green Warbler). As you start hearing the songs more often, you'll be able to easily identify warblers by sound alone!



If you're still stumped, look specifically at feet and beak color, along with the number of wingbars or other less obvious markings on the bird. If all else fails, try to get a photo and ask another birder. Whether you're a beginning birder or an expert, make sure to enjoy the many warbler species visiting Minnesota this spring!

### BIRD TRIVIA

The answer to the bird trivia from the previous edition of the Trumpeter is the...



**American Woodcock**

## MRVAC & REFUGE BIRDING TRIPS

### Refuge Bird Watching Treks

- May 7 (Sunday) - Bass Ponds Trailhead
- May 14 (Sunday) - Bass Ponds Trailhead
- June 10 (Saturday) - Bass Ponds Trailhead
- June 18 (Sunday) - Louisville Swamp Unit Trailhead
- June 24 (Saturday) - Bass Ponds Trailhead
- \*Each walk runs from 8 a.m.-10:30 a.m.*

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 and nesting birds. Birders of all skill levels are welcome on these walks. Craig Mandel, a volunteer refuge naturalist, will lead the treks. For weather cancellations or other questions about these walks, please contact Craig at 952-240-7647

Registration for refuge walks is available on the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge website. 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 Field Trip Locations & Addresses

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

Louisville Swamp Unit Trailhead  
3801 W 145th St, Shakopee, MN 55379

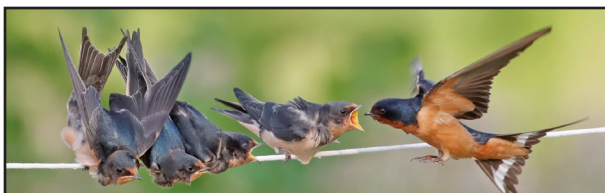
**Click here for refuge trail maps** or visit [www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota-valley/visit-us](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/minnesota-valley/visit-us)

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### Hok-Si-La Warbler Watching

Saturday, May 13, 7:30 a.m.  
Steve Weston – 612-978-3993  
Field trip is free and open to the public

Join us for this traditional field trip that we've been taking for over 30 years! We never know what we will find. We will meet at Hok-Si-La Park (2500 U.S. Hwy 61, Lake City, MN), located just north of Lake City. Bring a lunch if you want to stay for some afternoon birding. This trip requires moderate effort, with some walking on trails. No reservations are required.



### Wilkin & Otter Tail Counties Birding Days

Thursday-Friday, May 18-19, 6:30 a.m.  
Craig Mandel - 952-240-7647  
\$35/non-MRVAC members; \$25/MRVAC members

On this trip we will be spending time birding in Wilkin and Otter Tail counties. Some of the locations we may explore include the Breckenridge Sewage Ponds, Riverside Cemetery, and Richels County Park. On Friday, we'll check out some locations in Otter Tail county. These may include Maplewood or Glendalough State Parks, Grotto Lake and the Orwell area. We'll be searching for warblers and other migrant song birds on this trip. With luck we may also find a spot or two to serach for shorebirds. Please contact Craig to register for this trip.

### Dakota County Prairie Birds - Schaar's Bluff

Sunday, June 4, 7 a.m.  
Steve Weston – 612-978-3993  
Field trip is free and open to the public

Let's do some summer birding on the prairie! 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. This trip will require little physical effort and we'll be birding mainly at roadside stops. No reservations are needed.

### Sax-Zim Bog & Carlton County Birding Days

Thursday-Friday, June 20-21, 6:30 a.m.  
Craig Mandel - 952-240-7647  
\$35/non-MRVAC members; \$25/MRVAC members

Join us on a summer trip to the Sax-Zim Bog. We will be searching for 20 species of warblers and a mix of other boreal species that nest in the Sax Zim Bog. On Friday, we'll bird some areas near Cloquet. Some of the locations we may explore include Jay Cooke State Park, Ditchbank Road, and Moose Lake State Park. Please contact Craig to register for this trip.

### Collischan Road River Bottoms

Sunday, June 18, 7:30 a.m.  
Steve Weston – 612-978-3993  
Field trip is free and open to the public

Explore a little known trail outside Red Wing, Minnesota! Our target birds include Cerulean Warbler, Acadian Flycatcher, Scarlet Tanager, Ovenbird and Wood Thrush. Bring a lunch if you want to stay for the afternoon birding, too. This trip will require little physical effort walking mostly on level trails. It can be buggy. No reservations are needed. Meet by taking a left turn after 4220 Collischan Road in Red Wing.

## REGIONAL PROGRAMS OF INTEREST



Three Rivers Park District  
Various Locations

### Bird Banding

Eastman Nature Center in Dayton

May 20 | 9 a.m. - noon

Lowry Nature Center in Victoria

May 20 | 9 a.m. - noon

June 17 | 9 a.m. - noon

### Family Birding

Eastman Nature Center in Dayton

June 10 | 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

### Spring Birding Walk

Eastman Nature Center in Dayton

May 8 | 8 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

### Mondays Are For The Birds

Lowry Nature Center in Victoria

May 1 | 7 a.m. - 9 a.m.

May 8 | 7 a.m. - 9 a.m.

May 15 | 7 a.m. - 9 a.m.

May 22 | 7 a.m. - 9 a.m.



Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge  
Zimmerman, MN

### Bird Tour

May 6 | 8 a.m. - 10 a.m.

May 13 | 8 a.m. - 10 a.m.

### Spring Celebration

May 6 | 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

### Wildflower Tour

June 10 | 10 a.m. - noon

The Friends of the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge have some free, public events coming up this spring! Join them for a bird or wildflower tour to explore the property. Make sure to visit for the spring celebration, too! For more information on each event, including registration for the tours, please visit [bit.ly/sherburnenwrevents](http://bit.ly/sherburnenwrevents)



MYBirdClub  
Minneapolis, MN

### Youth Spring Birdwatching

Wood Lake Nature Center, Richfield

May 13 | 8:30 a.m. - 10 a.m.

June 17 | 8:30 a.m. - 10 a.m.

Veterans Park, Richfield

June 4 | 8:30 a.m. - 10 a.m.

Calling all youth birders! Join the MYBirdClub group for their spring bird walks. Every level of knowledge and all abilities are welcome. Binoculars and field guides will be available for free. Most locations offer flat gravel/dirt trails, ample parking, and a bus stop within a half mile of our starting point. Please dress for the weather, as we will only cancel for severe rain or dangerous weather conditions. These trips are sponsored by MRVAC. Find more information for each hike and sign up at [www.mrvac.org/trips-events](http://www.mrvac.org/trips-events)



Deep Portage Learning Center  
Hackensack, MN

### Birding Big Day

May 20 | 7 a.m. - midnight

Ready, set, bird! Planning is underway for the Annual Deep Portage Birding Day in Cass County. Each year, volunteers and staff members set out to record 100 or more bird species in a single day without leaving the county lines. This year the event will begin at Deep Portage at sunrise on Saturday, May 20, 2023 and will conclude that evening while listening for nocturnal bird songs before midnight. Find more information at [www.deep-portage.org](http://www.deep-portage.org)



City of Burnsville  
Burnsville, MN

### Native Plant Market

May 20 | 9 a.m. - noon

Native wildflowers, ferns and grasses will be for sale from multiple vendors. This is a farmer's market style event, with each vendor operating its own market stall. Some vendors may also offer the option to pre-order and others may only accept cash or check. The market is open rain or shine. Find more information at [www.burnsvillemn.gov/NativePlants](http://www.burnsvillemn.gov/NativePlants)



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
  - Join the Board
  - Other:

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

## SOMETIMES

I sit in my car  
and can't decide where to go  
what will be there

at the there I choose.  
Do I look for the loon  
or try to spot the hawk?

Or just sit there  
until the hawk leaves its tree  
for a taller tree

and the loon makes its last dive,  
and both just disappear  
without a wish or a way

to let me know that it doesn't matter  
what I choose.

*Poem by Warren Woessner*