



The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter

# Trumpeter

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

November - December 2022

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## CHAPTER NEWS & NOTES

### A Note From Our President

*by Rob Daves, Board President*

Do you remember your gateway bird, or, like me, you've just always been interested in birds and it gradually escalated into this wonderful semi-obsession?

Do you remember your first contact with MRVAC? I don't recall that, either. Maybe it was a field trip. Maybe one of the great monthly programs. I do recall running into Steve Weston a whole lot in the field. And I recall when he asked me to be a board member. That was in 2018; I was surprised. I'm not an expert birder. I just love wandering around in the woods and gawking at nature. Who'd want me, a market researcher, former pollster and former journalist, to be on an Audubon board?

As you can figure out, the board welcomed me and I took up its secretarial duties, added website responsibilities and last spring it asked me to lead the board as president. I appreciate and am awed by that trust. I've come to realize that MRVAC's most important resource is its members and other folk of like minds.

That's especially true now at election time.

With all the polarization, rural-urban divide, economic troubles, media clutter and even the global tensions, it's incumbent on us to keep focused on things we can do to help the environment, habitat and the birds that depend on them. So here's my request of you.

Go to the Minnesota Secretary of State's website and find your sample ballot here: <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/whats-on-my-ballot>

Even if you think you know some of the candidates in your district, it's important to do the due diligence this year as redistricting has changed many voting district boundaries, including state legislative districts. For example, I learned that my State House district has changed, and I didn't know one of the candidates. Find the candidates that will

be on your ballot. Serious candidates in competitive races will have a website you can use to compare their important issues with our commitment of conservation and habitat.

I find it useful to print out the ballot and take some notes. You can take your notes into the voting booth with you. That makes it quicker and easier. Better yet, vote before Election Day and not have to stand in line as this year as turnout – despite it being a non-presidential election year – is expected to be heavy.

You'll have done yourself and the birds a favor.

### Results of the Minnesota River Valley Birding Weekend

*by Bob Williams*

This year's event was a great success. Although there were only two submitted eBird checklists, we raised \$1,293.60 which I believe is a new record. Matt Holberg reported the most species and Dan Ahlman reported several interesting species, including Sandhill Cranes, six species of shorebird, Common Loon and Neotropical Cormorant. The highlight of my day occurred at the end when I arrived at Murphy-Hanrehan Park in Scott County. I got a great look at a Hooded Warbler and heard a Barred Owl hooting in the woods.



*Barred Owl by Phil Sinn*

Thank you all for participating in this fun event!



## CHAPTER NEWS & NOTES

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Upcoming Chapter Events

**November 17:** Give to the Max Day and MRVAC Fundraising Campaign | Virtual at [www.MRVAC.org](http://www.MRVAC.org)

**December 14- January 5:** Christmas Bird Counts, sponsored by MRVAC | Bloomington, Excelsior, and Cedar Creek Bog

*\*For MRVAC sponsored field trips, please see the next page*

#### MOU Paper Session

The 2022 Minnesota Ornithologists Union (MOU) Paper Session will be held on Saturday, December 3, 2022 at 8 a.m. at the University of Minnesota St. Paul Campus, Student Center, North Star Ballroom. Registration information and program schedule will soon be posted soon on the MOU website, [www.moumn.org](http://www.moumn.org)

We are looking for volunteers! MRVAC will be providing coffee and refreshments at this event. Please find Rita Baden at the paper session if you would like to help.

#### MRVAC Slide Collection

We are about to retire and dispose of MRVAC's collection of approximately 750 slides of birds. These were traditionally used for presentations and the images are licensed for presentations. If you have a use for these slides and would like to save them from the trash, contact [Steve Weston at \[sweston2g@gmail.com\]\(mailto:Steve.Weston@gmail.com\)](mailto:Steve.Weston@gmail.com)

#### Christmas Bird Counts

Participate in the country's longest running bird count this year! The 123rd Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will be held in over 85 locations in Minnesota, from December 14th to January 5th. Experienced or not, we need your eyes and ears!

To participate in the CBC, all you need to do is help count birds in a given "circle" radius. To join a count, visit [moumn.org/CBC/locations\\_map.php](http://moumn.org/CBC/locations_map.php) and contact the count compiler for more details. Stay tuned for the dates of individual counts, as the compilers begin planning. New counts this year include Ortonville, West Hennepin County, and West Minneapolis (a BIPOC count). MRVAC sponsored counts include Bloomington and Excelsior counts on December 17th and Cedar Creek Bog on December 18th. A pot-luck gathering is being planned after the Bloomington count and participants will receive more information soon.

#### Give to the Max on November 17

*by Bob Williams*

This has been another difficult year for everyone. It has also been difficult for MRVAC to achieve some of its traditional fundraising goals for the year. Once again we will not be able to have our annual holiday auction. While this has been a large source of income for our chapter in the past, we ultimately did not feel comfortable hosting a large in-person event at this time.

Instead, MRVAC has decided to have a special fundraising campaign in conjunction with Give to the Max Day on November 17. Our hope is that you, our members, will help promote this day of giving to help replace funds normally raised by the auction. You can visit our website to see photographs and stories of some of the events that MRVAC helps support with these funds.

To donate, please visit the chapter website at [www.MRVAC.org](http://www.MRVAC.org) and look for the big green "Donate" button at the top. Your donation is tax deductible, too, as the chapter is a 501(c)(3) organization.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact **Bob Williams at [drbop6789@gmail.com](mailto:drbop6789@gmail.com)**. Thank you for your consideration and stay safe and healthy.

#### The Future Name of the National Audubon Society

*by Steve Weston*

John Audubon was an artist famous for his paintings of birds. While we have grown to know and love the name, Audubon himself was a Southern slave owner. In light of this information, the National Audubon Society (NAS) is wondering if they should be associated with the name of a person who goes against the organization's morals. They are currently discussing rebranding the organization. If this happens, though, what should they be called?

By extension, if this name change occurs, what should the Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter become? Will the chapter be forced to rebrand under the new national organization's name? Audubon members across the counn

Audubon members across the country have mixed feelings on the proposed name change. The NAS hopes to decide by February and our chapter will welcome input on this possible change before a decision is officially made.

## 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

November 19 (Saturday) - Bass Ponds Trailhead

November 27 (Sunday) - Wilkie Unit Trailhead

December 10 (Saturday) - Bass Ponds Trailhead

December 11 (Sunday) - Wilkie Unit Trailhead

*\*Each walk runs from 8:00-10:30 a.m.*

Explore some of the best Refuge units for bird watching in the Winter Season. We will spend time on these walks searching for birds that over winter on the refuge or are late migrants. We will study the different species of birds and learn about some other local locations to search for birds during the Winter Season. Birders of all skill levels are welcome to attend these walks. Bring along your binoculars, favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather.

### Refuge Beginning Bird Walks

November 12 (Saturday)- Old Cedar Avenue Bridge

December 4 (Sunday)- Old Cedar Avenue Bridge

*\*Each walk runs from 8:00-10:00 a.m.*

Join us on a beginning bird walk at the Old Cedar Avenue bridge. You'll have an opportunity to learn about using and choosing optics and field guides for bird watching and about some of the better locations to search for birds at the refuge and other locations around the Twin Cities. Afterwards we will take a walk and search for some of the birds that migrate to the refuge during the Winter season. Birders of all ages are welcome on this walk, bring along your binoculars, favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather.



### Carver County Birding Day

Thursday, November 10 | 7:00 a.m.

*Craig Mandel - 952-240-7647*

Lake Waconia, Goose Lake, Lippert Lake and Swede Lake are a few of the lakes we will check for Waterfowl. We should also have some time to bird at Carver Park reserve, Baylor County Park and maybe a stop at the Rapids Lake Unit of the MVNWR. Please contact Craig to register or for more information on this trip.

### Washington County Birding Day

Thursday, December 8 | 7:30 a.m.

*Craig Mandel - 952-240-7647*

Carpenter Nature Center, Grey Cloud Dunes, St. Croix Bluffs Regional & Point Douglas Parks are a few of the locations we may have time to check on this trip to Washington County. We'll be searching for Waterfowl and Winter Finches. In addition to the regular species of birds that over winter in the area. Please contact Craig to register or for more information on this trip.

### Northern Minnesota Sax/Zim Bog Birding Days

Thursday- Friday, January 12-13, 2023 | 7:00 a.m.

*Craig Mandel - 952-240-7647*

We will search for any over wintering Owls in the area and spend a day at some of the feeding stations in the Sax Zim Bog. This will give your 2023 birding checklist a good start with a fair number of Northern specialties. Please contact Craig to register for this field trip. *Cost: \$35/non-MRVAC members; \$25/MRVAC members*

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

Wilkie Unit Trailhead

7701 County Road 101 E, Shakopee, MN, 55379

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**



## THE GREEN SCENE: NATURE NEWS

### New Islands Mean New Birding Opportunities in St. Paul

by Bob Brereton

There is new land being created in Saint Paul's east side! It's not a volcano spewing out lava into the sea as in Hawai'i. It's an Army Corp of Engineers project on Pigs Eye Lake creating multiple islands in this 628-acre lake.

There one can see a huge pipe disgorging a slurry of dredge sand and water being molded into an ever-increasing new island by bulldozers and other heavy equipment. These planned seven new islands will stabilize shorelines, help restore wetlands, and improve wildlife habitat. Signs at the launch site list the work is being done by Brennan: Marine Professionals since 1919. They are employing drag-lines to fill barges with dredged sand from further south on Pigs Eye Lake's channel to the Mississippi River. The loaded barges are then pushed to an awaiting moored platform barge with a huge clam shell excavator. It takes giant



"Battle Creek Regional Park" by TBoard is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

bites of said sand and dumps it into a hopper where it is mixed with river water. That feeds it into a powerful pump to begin a long sinuous route to the north end of the lake.

Pigs Eye Lake is part of Saint Paul's Battle Creek Regional Park. If you are a careful driver, you can motor all the way into Pigs Eye Regional Park park off Child's Road but be wary. The road is poorly maintained and heavily rutted in places. Three weeks ago, I drove there, and the entire road was overgrown with plants. Even from the park's southern shore on Pigs Eye Lake, the island work is a long way off and binoculars really help.

From the crude boat launch into the lake from the south shore, I needed my spotting scope to discern any details at all.

For a better view go to US-61 and Lower Afton Road, turning south on Point Douglas Road. Within a short distance you will find safe spots to pull over and take in the project.

I bird around there frequently and a week ago was pleased to see around 800 Ring-billed gulls strung out in a long line-up on the island's growing shoreline along with Double-crested Cormorants and scattered Canada geese. A modest number of Barn swallows are always flitting over the lake in their aerial acrobatics, catching insects both

in the air and on the water's surface. The occasional Bald Eagle and Great Blue Heron also grace this lake. The herons have a lively rookery on the lake's far southern reaches. Their rookery is on a 100-acre island and also hosts Great egrets. Come migration seasons this lake fills up with a plethora of waterfowl, warblers, and scattered shorebirds. When the project ends in fall, 2025 it will be a sight to behold.

### October Big Day 2022: A Global Birding Achievement

by Team eBird, republished from eBird.org

On 8 October, people in 185 countries around the world joined together to celebrate birds for October Big Day. More than 34,670 contributors reported an incredible 7,453 species on 80,000 checklists, setting THREE new records for the single biggest day in October birding history!

An extra warm welcome to the 2,800 contributors around the world who eBirded for the first time on October Big Day. This year's global team featured an astounding 2,000 more participants than last year, including 600 participants in Africa, 2,160 in Asia, 2,960 in Europe, and 5,460 in Central and South America.

October Big Day wouldn't be a global phenomenon without YOU, the global birding community. We're grateful to work with so many amazing partner groups around the world, including the eBird portal collaborator network, who inspire and motivate birders on October Big Day and every day. Huge thanks also to Carl Zeiss Sports Optics for their sponsorship of eBirder of the Month challenge, including an opportunity to win new Zeiss SFL binoculars by participating in October Big Day.

This year's October Big Day was also an opportunity to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day and Global Bird Weekend. Tremendous thanks to Global Birding's Tim Appleton and Penny Robinson, Birdlife International, and Swarovski Optik for making Global Bird Weekend possible, and to the World Migratory Bird Day team for their efforts.

#### October Big Day by the numbers

- 34,670 people went birding
- 80,035 checklists submitted
- 7,453 species reported (184 more species than last year)
- 45,356 photos submitted to the Macaulay Library
- 1,563 recordings submitted to the Macaulay Library
- 184,900 Merlin users saved nearly 28,300 bird identifications

For the full results, visit <https://ebird.org/news/october-big-day-2022-results>

## REGIONAL PROGRAMS OF INTEREST



*International Owl Center  
Houston, MN*

### Owl Prowls

*November 5 | 5:00 p.m*

*December 3 | 4:00 p.m*

*January 7 | 4:00 p.m*

Come learn how to identify our local owls by size, shape, silhouette and sound. Following the indoor portion of the program, participants will carvan in their own vehicles to 3-4 known owl territories. We will be in and around Houston to call and listen for Eastern Screech-Owls, Barred Owls, and Great Horned Owls. Expect to return to the Owl Center roughly 2.5 - 3 hours after program start time.

Cost: \$10 for members; \$15 for non-members. Pre-registration is required. Find more information at [www.internationalowlcenter.org](http://www.internationalowlcenter.org)



*Three Rivers Park District  
Various Locations*

### Early Morning Bird Hike

Eastman Nature Center in Dayton

*November 10 | 7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.*

*December 8 | 7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.*

Join staff on a casual, early morning hike to look for birds common in the area. Bring binoculars or borrow a pair from the nature center.

### Bird Banding

Eastman Nature Center in Dayton

*November 12 | 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m*

Lowry Nature Center in Victoria

*November 19 | 9:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m*

See wild songbirds safely trapped, studied and tagged with numbered rings. Bring a camera. Drop in anytime.

### Early Morning Bird Walk

Mississippi Gateway Regional Park in Brooklyn Park

*November 12 | 8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.*

Join us for regular bird hikes throughout 2022, the Park District's Big Year of Birds! We will enjoy a gentle walk and seek out the birds that visit the river, forests and marshes along the Mississippi. All levels of interest are welcome. Binoculars provided. Reservations required.



*Dodge Nature Center  
West St. Paul, MN*

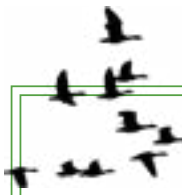
### Forest Bathing

*November 7 | 6:00 p.m*

*December 10 | 1:00 p.m*

Over the course of this walk, you will be given a series of invitations—suggested ways to connect to your surroundings. The experience will be mostly silent, honor everyone's personal space, and cover just about a mile-and-a-half over generally flat surfaces. Please consider going without your mobile cellular devices for the duration. This is not required and is solely dependent on your comfort level. At the end of each invitation exploration, the group will gather and share a few words. It's okay if you'd like to pass on sharing. The walk is guided by a Certified Guide from Silvae Spiritus Nature & Forest Therapy.

Cost is \$30 and registration is required. Registration typically closes the day before the program at 12 p.m. Register at [www.dodgenaturecenter.org](http://www.dodgenaturecenter.org)

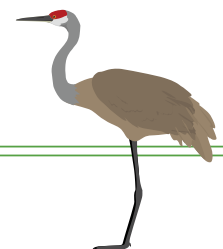


### BIRD TRIVIA

Test your knowledge with the Trumpeter's bird trivia!

Can you guess which bird species this is without using Google? Try it out and make sure to check the next Trumpeter edition for the answer!

- This species nests in cavities
- They love to spend their winters in mangrove swamps
- As of publication, there are 1,808 eBird observations of this species in Minnesota
- Moss is one of their favorite nesting materials
- They have many nicknames, one of which is the "Golden Swamp Warbler"





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!**

