



The Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter

Trumpeter

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www.MRVAC.org

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Bird-a-Thon Challenge

by Walt Stull, MRVAC Treasurer

It's time to hone your birding skills for the 2020 MRVAC Bird-a-Thon Challenge. We were only \$25 short of raising \$2,200 last year. Let's see if we can reach \$2,300 this year! The event is open to all levels of birders and is a great opportunity to help fundraise for MRVAC. Not quite ready to enter the Bird-a-Thon Challenge? Seek out a participant and offer to sponsor her or him.

What: Birding to raise money for MRVAC to fund grants.

When: Any day between May 1 and May 15, 2020.

Where: Anywhere in the world (This could be an opportunity for that dreamed-about birding trip).

How: Sign up your sponsors. Choose a day. Bird any time, or all the time between 12:01 AM and 11:59 PM. Bird alone, in a group, or both. Submit all donations to Walt Stull by June 1, 2020.

Some Helpful Tips:

1) Don't be afraid to ask. Most people are reluctant to ask for donations, but it is surprising how many people are willing to help. This is especially true when they understand how the money will be used. Let potential sponsors know that they can pledge a flat rate, or to make it more of a challenge, encourage them to pledge on a per-bird basis.

2) Plan your route. Pay attention to the weather and the latest reports on MOU, eBird, and Facebook. The best results are achieved if you can visit a variety of habitats on a nice day.

3) Keep your sponsors updated. Most of your sponsors will enjoy hearing about your day, especially any highlights. Making them a part of your experience will help in asking for repeat pledges in future years.

4) Use the Bird-a-Thon Sponsor Pledge Form. This will help you to track who your donors are and how much they have pledged. Forms can be obtained online at www.MRVAC.org/?s=bird-a-thon or by contacting Walt Stull at (612) 889 3550 or mathemagicland@Q.com.

All donations that you collect should be submitted to Walt Stull by June 1. It is best to give the donations directly to Walt at the General Meeting (4th Thursday – May 28). If that is not possible, mail them to MRVAC at PO Box 20400, Bloomington, MN 55420.

Meetings & Special Presentations

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.



Thursday, March 26, 2020, 7:00 PM
MVNWR Bloomington Visitor Center



"Wolves and Cheetahs"
Rob Schultz, Audubon Minnesota

Rob, the new Executive Director of Audubon Minnesota, will talk about his research on cheetahs in Namibia. The presentation will focus on the approach to predator conservation in Africa and how this research has altered his perspective on conservation issues in Minnesota.



Thursday, April 23, 2020, 7:00 PM
MVNWR Bloomington Visitor Center



"Waterbird Use of the North Ottawa Impoundment"
Christine Herwig, Minnesota DNR

Christine Herwig, Regional Nongame Specialist for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Nongame Wildlife Program, will discuss waterbird use at the North Ottawa Impoundment located in Grant County. This impoundment was created to reduce flooding along the Red River but has a secondary benefit of providing habitat to birds. Christine will talk about the monitoring efforts and some of the rare and unusual species that have been observed.

Want more from the Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter?



A Chapter of the National Audubon Society



Chapter News

Salt Lake Birding Weekend

Saturday, April 25, 2020

by Ken Larson, Salt Lake Weekend Coordinator



Catch a glimpse of a Western Grebe in Minnesota at the Salt Lake Birding Weekend sponsored by the Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter and the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union. Photo by Jill Sweet.

If you're dreaming about spring and wanting to find migrating shorebirds and waterfowl, why not join the 45th annual Salt Lake Birding Weekend? On Saturday, April 25 volunteers will guide birders around Salt Lake, Big Stone Refuge, the lakes, wetlands and native prairies in Lac qui Parle, Yellow Medicine and Big Stone counties. This event is free and open to all who are interested. No pre-registration is necessary except for Saturday's dinner. Friday and Sunday birding is on your own. Additional information including a general map can be found online at www.MOUMN.org/saltlake/.

Last year a late snow in April and high water levels in lakes and wetlands resulted in lower numbers of shorebirds. On Saturday the 27th over 130 birders found 123 different species of birds with an additional three on Friday and three more on Sunday for a grand total of 129. This number is lower than most other years. On Friday a Black-crowned Night Heron and a Snowy Egret were found and on Saturday Sharp-tailed Grouse, Say's Phoebe, Cattle Egret, Lark Sparrow and Rough-legged Hawk were all reported. A big thank you to the Marietta American Legion Auxiliary and the Madison Sons of Norway for hosting this event. Once again, a good time was had by all.

On Saturday, April 25, 2020 at 7:00 AM meet at the Marietta American Legion which is located one block west of the intersection of County Road 7 and State Highway 40, 11 miles west of Madison, Minnesota. Coffee, sweet rolls, juice and milk will be available for purchase. Guided

car caravans will leave between 7:00 and 8:00 AM. At noon, stop back at the Legion for barbecue sandwiches (available at a modest cost) to compare notes and continue afternoon birding. A Saturday night chicken dinner will be served at 7:30 PM at the Sons of Norway Hall on Highway 75 in Madison. **Reservations and a pre-payment of \$12 per dinner should be mailed to Camey Maland at 2570 280th Street, Madison, MN 56256.** Payment at the door will be \$15 per dinner and last minute reservations can be sent to oelmal@farmerstel.net. After dinner there will be a short program and then the species count for the day will be recorded out loud.

Local lodging is available at Lou's Lodge in Madison (320) 598 7518, the Vali Vu Motel in Ortonville (320) 839 2558, Prairie Waters Inn in Appleton (320) 289 2500, and the Country Inn by Carlson in Montevideo (320) 269 8000. Free camping is available at Prairie Marsh Farm located at 1770 151st Avenue in Marietta, 7 miles west of US 75 and 1.5 miles south of Highway 212. Contact Ken Larson for more information or to reserve a camping site. Ken can be reached at (612) 210 8486 or by sending an email to priaiemarshfarm@comcast.net.

Christmas Bird Count Recaps

Bloomington

by Greg Burnes, MRVAC Membership Chair

"It was a quiet day" was the most used description of this year's Christmas Bird Count in Bloomington. 72 volunteers drove 561 miles and walked over 97 miles. They counted 50 species (down from 59 in 2018). However, we did have some great finds this year including a Northern Goshawk in Burnsville, a Glaucous Gull on the river, and the Northern Waterthrush that was hanging out at Fort Snelling.

The potluck dinner was held at the Refuge this year and it was a great success. Wonderful food, great stories and even some live music. Thanks to everyone that participated in this important project.

Cedar Creek

by Steve Weston, Board Member

The largely unspectacular count was hindered by the below zero weather, but even more by the deep snow that had fallen around Thanksgiving. The record 98 Red-headed Woodpeckers was an undercount since several were missed due to the difficulty of reaching them in deep snow. Other noteworthy finds included a Green-winged Teal and a Belted Kingfisher. Thirteen Common Ravens were reported, just below the record two years ago and show that they are well established in the northern Anoka and southern Isanti area. Finches were few and far between.



Environmental Editorials

Matthew's Musings

by Matthew Schaut, Board President

The gates to Dante's Hell say something like "Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter."

How did Dante get to such a rosy place?

It helps to know some up-to-date cognitive science to make sense of people, for instance the Fundamental Attribution Error (FAE). The FAE says that each of us is able to account for her own actions in a way that justifies them, yet we assume the worst of others. This is an unavoidable operation each of our brains performs. Unless we counter it with prefrontal cortex rational examination of our knee-jerk assessments, the FAE will determine our judgement of other people and their intentions. This makes sense in contexts where any other is probably dangerous (predators, or from a different tribe), but it wreaks havoc when mere survival is not at stake.

Why do I bring this up?

Have you ever wondered why religions go so quickly from "God is Love" to predestination and eternal damnation of the vast number of beings so quickly and consistently? If you haven't studied the history of religions, it is a shock to see how normative and persistent this gambit is. This is the FAE on steroids – a theologian's knee-jerk fear-based assessment of another is *projected* as religious dogma upon the whole of creation!

We are now all pre-damned before we're even born. We are beneath consideration. Abandon all hope when you enter.

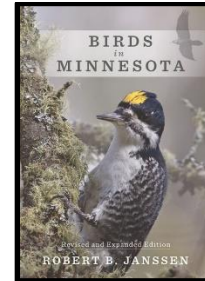
The consequences are severe. The non-reflective FAE practitioner now has sanction to blow up everything and everyone in sight – because the other has been assessed as dangerous (which is easily transformed into worthless which is easily transformed into ripe for exploitation) we see the picture all the time. The perpetrator of this exploitation however, continues to be able to justify their own behavior no matter how despicable. We see examples of this everywhere we look. The FAE-blinded person has justified themselves – to be greedy, to destroy the environment, to enslave others, to commit genocide and ecocide... The litany of historical atrocities committed by FAE-blinded irrational humans is endless. It seems to be culminating in the present time in the snowballing anthropogenic extinction event, and runaway climate change that may soon leave our planet unable to sustain carbon-based life.

Solon of Athens, published the antidote to the coping mechanism that serves as the antidote to FAE run amok when he admonished the citizens of Athens to "Know Thyself." Socrates added: "The unexamined life is not worth living." The consequences of the unexamined life today is the seeming intent to destroy all creation, projected as the will of God and vulture capitalism. Abandon all hope indeed.

Birds in Minnesota: Revised and Expanded Edition

Written by Robert B. Janssen

Review written by Matthew Schaut, Board President



MRVAC recently received a review copy of *Birds in Minnesota: Revised and Expanded Edition* by Robert B. Janssen. The original edition was published in 1987 when 400 species were expected as having been identified in Minnesota. That edition was, of course, an updating of TS Robert's *Birds of Minnesota*. This new edition identifies 443 species as Minnesota birds through 2017. The Introduction is by Carol Henderson and Kim Eckert.

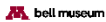
The book is a dynamic delight. Bob Janssen, who served for a time on MRVAC's Board, is well known for having been to every Minnesota township and every named locality in Minnesota. He hasn't stopped moving through space and time, and neither have Minnesota's birds. He decided at a young age that he was going to be a 'parochial Minnesota birder' and kept meticulous records and this has enabled him to track changes in species numbers and ranges over the decades of his birding career. This volume concentrates on the last two decades, continuing the labor of a lifetime.

Each species account gives maps of abundance and range for all four seasons with separate graphing of abundance in the northern and southern parts of the state. There is a single photograph of each species of very high quality. Text describes migration pattern and status in each season, and any unusual happening for a species. An example is the increase in the Golden-winged Warbler's population in Minnesota (despite a decline elsewhere). All sightings of rarities and vagrants are described, but they don't have photos. This does make you realize you probably should have rushed to see that Cassin's Finch in 2008 because it hasn't come back yet.

There is one piece of errata. In the Preface, Bob says he lost a species from his Minnesota life list (which stands at 412) when the Thayer's Gull was reclassified in 2017 as a subspecies of the Ivory Gull (p.xix); the actual lumping makes Thayer's a subspecies of the Iceland Gull. Or maybe Bob knows something we don't know... He knows Minnesota's birds as well as anyone ever has, and his public service in collating and sharing his accumulated wisdom astonishes, humbles, and edifies. It also motivates the rest of us to be better citizen scientists.



Regional Events of Interest



Bell Museum of Natural History
2088 Larpenteur Ave. W., St. Paul, MN 55113

Audubon Animated – The Exhibit

January 25 – May 31 during normal museum hours

See Audubon's *Birds of America* come to life in the multimedia exhibition! Walk into the immersive video room "The Audubon Experience" and find yourself surrounded by a virtual swamp forest where 20 of Audubon's birds are brought to life through motion and sound. Free with regular museum admission. Visit www.BellMuseum.umn.edu for museum hours and admission pricing.



International Owl Center
126 E. Cedar St., Houston, MN 55943

International Festival of Owls

Friday, March 6 through Sunday, March 8

Learn from owl experts from around the globe at the 18th Annual International Festival of Owls in Houston, Minnesota sponsored by the International Owl Center. The Illinois Raptor Center will present live owl programs (including a live Snowy Owl), there will be owl prowls as well as a daytime bus trip, over 1,000 pieces of owl art from children all over the world, speakers, vendors, face painting, nest box building, pellet dissection and much more. The banquet and bus trips require pre-registration. More information including how to register for a bus trip, speaker bios, and general pricing can be found online at www.FestivalofOwls.com.



National Eagle Center
50 Pembroke Ave. S., Wabasha, MN 55981

SOAR with the Eagles

Weekends in March

March is a great time to visit Wabasha as spring bald eagle migration is in full effect in the Upper Mississippi River Valley. Join us this March marking the 27th annual SOAR with the Eagles Festival! SOAR features a special bird of prey show, bird programs, eagle programs and events for learners of all ages to enjoy. Join us for this great time to learn about and experience eagles, raptors, and birds of all types. Each weekend hosts a different theme. Visit www.NationalEagleCenter.org for more information.



Wood Lake Nature Center
6710 Lake Shore Dr., Richfield, MN 55423

Bird House Building

Sunday, March 29, 3:00 – 4:30 PM

Help birds find a place to nest by building a recycled cedar nest box. Learn where to place it in your yard to best attract a tenant and which birds might use this box. Discover how to monitor the box to maximize bird use and your enjoyment! \$3 per person plus \$10 per house. Reservations required online at www.RichfieldMN.gov.



Richardson Nature Center
8737 E. Bush Lake Rd., Bloomington, MN 55438

Free Family Fun Day: Backyard Birds

Sunday, April 12, 3:00 – 4:00 PM

Explore through hands-on activities at your own pace. Drop in anytime. Free. All ages. Ages 11 years and younger must be accompanied by an adult. www.ThreeRiversParks.org



Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center
12805 St. Croix Trail S., Hastings, MN 55033

Hastings Area Birding Festival

Saturday, April 18, 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Celebrate the many birds of Minnesota at the Hastings Area Earth Day Birding Festival. This year, Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center is celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day by recruiting 50 youth birding teams to participate. \$5 per person or \$15 per person including a box lunch. Reservations required by calling (651) 437 4359. www.CarpenterNatureCenter.org



Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory
3980 E. Skyline Pkwy. Duluth, MN 55804

Spring Migration Celebration

Friday, April 24 through Sunday, April 26

Join us for a weekend to celebrate the amazing spring bird migration in Duluth. Public education programs at the West Skyline Spring Count, Spring Migration Workshop, Saturday evening presentation, and birding field trips offered. General information including pricing and the official schedule of events can be found online at www.HawkRidge.org.



MRVAC Field Trips



FIELD TRIPS – join us. All trips are free unless otherwise noted.

Beginning birders are welcome on all field trips.

All of the Refuge field trips are listed below, followed by Refuge addresses, and field trips to other locations in chronological order.

Refuge Bird Watching Treks (March - April)

Saturday, March 7, 8:00-10:30 AM, Bass Ponds
 Monday, March 9, 8:00-10:30 AM, Bass Ponds
 Sunday, March 22, 8:00-10:30 AM, Bass Ponds
 Monday, Mar. 30, 8:00-10:30 AM, Rapids Lake
 Monday, April 6, 8:00-10:30 AM, Rapids Lake
 Saturday, April 11, 8:00-10:30 AM, Rapids Lake
 Sunday, April 26, 8:00-10:30 AM, Bass Ponds

Join us for a bird walk on one of the many Refuge units. Learn which species of birds use the Refuge as a migratory stop and those that call the Refuge home for the summer nesting season. Birders of all skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars, your favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather. Led by Craig Mandel, Volunteer Refuge Naturalist. Reservations are not required for Refuge Bird Walking Treks above.

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Field Trip Locations & Addresses

MVNWR Bloomington Visitor Center
 3815 American Blvd. E., Bloomington, MN

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

Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center
 15865 Rapids Lake Rd., Carver, MN

Western Minnesota Birding Days

Thursday, March 26 – Friday, March 27
 \$25/MRVAC members; \$35/non-MRVAC members
 Craig Mandel – (952) 240 7647
 Meeting Location: Glenwood, MN

We will be exploring some of the following birding locations in Stevens and Pope Counties. Glacial Lakes State Park, Barsness & Pomme De Terre Parks, the Morris Wetland Management District and any open water or flooded fields we may find. We will be searching for migrant waterfowl, early sparrows and other early spring migrants.

Central Minnesota Birding Days

Thursday, April 16 – Friday, April 17
 \$25/MRVAC members; \$35/non-MRVAC members
 Craig Mandel – (952) 240 7647
 Meeting Location: Princeton, MN

Some of the locations we will likely bird on this tour include Mille Lacs Kathio State Park, a number of waste water treatment plants, Benton Beach County Park and a few WMAs and SNAs. With luck we will see some late waterfowl and the start of shorebird and songbird migration.

Salt Lake Birding Weekend

Saturday, April 25
 Ken Larson – (612) 210 8486
 Meeting Location: Marietta, MN
 More information on page 2.

Save the Date

Northwest Minnesota Birding Days

Thursday, June 18 – Friday, June 19
 \$25/MRVAC members; \$35/non-MRVAC members
 Craig Mandel – (952) 240 7647
 Meeting Location: TBD

International Birding Excursion

with the Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter
 Quito, Ecuador – Choco-Andes Region
 Wednesday, Nov. 4 – Friday, Nov. 13, 2020



Tour price with 7 participants: \$3,175 + airfare
 Highlight Birds: 30 species of hummingbirds and the rare Moss-backed Tanager

To learn more about a tour or to register, visit www.HolbrookTravel.com. Click on 'Join a Trip,' enter the location and dates above, and scroll to see trips that mention MRVAC in the title.

MRVAC Contact: Craig Mandel
(952) 240 7647 · egretcman@msn.com





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

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!



2020 MRVAC Grants

by Matthew Schaut, Board President

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. We are now accepting applications for the 2020 grant cycle and are especially looking for proposals pertaining to youth who are underrepresented and underserved in the outdoor and birding communities. Additional grant information, including the application to apply, can be found online at www.MRVAC.org/grants/.