



Minnesota BIRDING

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When Life Gives You Crumbs, Feed the Birds

by Susan Barnes Elliott

Many birders are introverts. We love birds, but almost as much, we love the peace and solitude that a day in the field can bring. So what would you do if a rarity showed up in your yard? Would you invite in the birding world or would you just say no? Luckily for us, Mary Lou Ysen-Freyholtz of the Sax-Zim Bog welcomes the world of birders quite literally: birders from all over the nation (and beyond) have visited Mary Lou's yard to see the boreal birds that come to her feeders. We all know Mary Lou's name, we've all been to Mary Lou's home, and we've probably all visited that awesome heated Porta-Potty that she provides for her visitors, but how many of us have actually met Mary Lou or know much about her?

Mary Lou, age 65, has been feeding birds for her entire life. She and her seven siblings grew up on a farm in the Red River Valley with no plumbing or running water. Even though her parents struggled to make ends meet, her mother always kept bird feeders, and made sure that her kids learned about birds. Mary Lou credits her mother with instilling in Mary Lou a life-long love of birds, and she has passed that passion on to her two daughters, both of whom have degrees in the fish and wildlife area, and both of whom maintain their own feeding stations (one in Duluth and one in North Dakota).

Mary Lou has lived in the Sax-Zim Bog area for 27 years and works full-time cleaning homes. After work and on weekends, Mary Lou maintains her feeding stations: she buys seed (200 pounds of black oil sunflower seeds a week during the winter months), fills and repairs the feeders, and constantly thinks about ways to improve and expand her feeding stations and the bird walk that she has created on her property. She is currently looking into whether she can



Mary Lou Ysen-Freyholtz, by Julie Winter Zempel

expand on-site parking to accommodate the buses that often visit her home during the winter months.

Mary Lou first learned that people were interested in her feeders about five years ago. She had just arrived home from work. Looking out her window, she saw a big truck parked in her driveway, and noticed other tire tracks and footprints in the snow in her yard. She had no idea who had been to her home, why they had been there, or who was in the truck. As she went to pick up her mail, she asked the truck's driver what he was doing in her yard. He responded "I'm just enjoying your birds." Upon further discussion with the driver, Mary Lou learned that her feeders had been "discovered"



One of Mary Lou's feeders, by Kevin Smith

and that her address had been posted on Facebook. She admits to being “a little pissed off” (who wouldn’t be!), but after she had some time to think about it, she really liked the idea of sharing her birds with others. Mary Lou got in touch with Sparky Stensaas of the Friends of Sax-Zim Bog group (Sparky, by the way, is not the person who posted Mary Lou’s address on Facebook), and the rest is Sax-Zim birding history. With Mary Lou’s permission and encouragement, her home is now on the Sax-Zim map, and she enthusiastically welcomes countless birders to her property each winter.

One of the many things that Mary Lou loves about her feeding stations is that she gets to educate visitors from all over the country (and, so far, from seven foreign countries) about her birds. She is considering making signs with different facts about the birds that visit her feeders, and posting them along her bird walk. Did you know, for instance, that a single Evening Grosbeak can consume almost 100 sunflower seeds in five minutes? No wonder she goes through so much seed! Mary Lou’s work schedule prevents her from meeting all of her visitors, but she enjoys meeting birders when she is at home, describing it as “Facebook Friends Live.”

Mary Lou feeds her birds year round. The four months of the Sax-Zim birding season are of course the busiest, and during that time she gets seed donations from visiting birders. She also applies for and receives grants from Friends of Sax-Zim Bog. The donations and grants cover some of her expenses, but she still spends a lot of her own money to keep her feeders full on a year-round basis, to fix or replace feeders, and to keep her property birder friendly (for example, Mary Lou purchased that awesome heated porta-potty with her own money because, as she says, “Do you realize how far it is to the next available bathroom?”). Mary Lou says that she doesn’t mind the out-of-pocket expense because she’d fill the feeders even if people didn’t visit them; still—and this comes from the author of this article, not Mary Lou—those of us who visit Mary Lou’s feeders on an annual basis might want to think about increasing our donations.

Mary Lou doesn’t really have a favorite bird. She loves

them all. She enjoys the Evening Grosbeaks—her best-known winter specialty—and she especially loves how noisily and joyfully they sing. One of her visitors described Evening Grosbeaks as “Northern Parrots,” and Mary Lou concurs. While most of the Evening Grosbeaks migrate north for the summer, she has three or four pairs that nest on or near her property in the summer. She also has nesting Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Tree and Barn Swallows, bluebirds, various thrushes, and warblers.

The most unusual bird Mary Lou has ever seen on her property is a Red-headed Woodpecker that appeared for several days in mid-May a year or so ago. When she noticed the woodpecker at her feeders, she immediately called Sparky. A number of people quickly showed up to see the bird, but it had (of course) flown. Luckily, it reappeared for an appreciative audience about an hour later (the wait seemed much longer than an hour to Mary Lou, who didn’t want people to think she’d “made up” the sighting).

The Sax-Zim Bog has become a “must-visit” birding destination for serious birders nation-wide, and with fame has come some pain for the Bog’s year-round residents. Mary Lou urges visitors to use common sense. When you’ve spotted a bird, or want to listen or scan for birds, pull off to the side of the road. Do not stop in the middle of the road, and do not block the road. At destinations like the Admiral Road feeders and Mary Lou’s home, birders should make every effort to all park on same side of road. Before making a quick stop, signal before you slam on the brakes. Be respectful of residents. Mary Lou hopes that these easy-to-follow guidelines will ease tensions in the Bog (including for Mary Lou’s neighbors, some of whom make clear that they are not “birder-friendly”).

Mary Lou is passionate about her birds, but there are drawbacks to maintaining bird feeders. She constantly battles hungry deer, raccoons, and worst of all, bears. Once hibernation is over, Mary Lou must take her feeders down every night, store them in her garage, and rehang them each morning. Yet, the pros of bird feeding clearly outweigh the cons.

Mary Lou says that the best thing about her feeders is that she truly enjoys doing a favor for her visitors by helping them see boreal specialties that can be difficult to find in the lower 48 states (a boreal bird is a bird species that breeds in, migrates through, or otherwise relies on North America’s boreal forest region during its life cycle).

A visitor once told Mary Lou, and she believes it: “If you take care of the birds, you start to take care of bigger problems in the world.” But Mary Lou’s philosophy is perhaps best summed up by the sign prominently displayed on her deck: “When life gives you crumbs, feed the birds.” A big thank you to Mary Lou for doing just that!

Susan Barnes Elliott, aka Honeywarbler, is an avid bird nerd, singer with the Grainbelters band, and Recording Secretary for the MOU.

Message from the President

The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union includes the conservation of birds as part of its mission. In the previous issue of this newsletter, Jan Green did an excellent job of highlighting the history of bird conservation in the United States and actions that we all can take to benefit birds in light of 2018 being "Year of the Bird." It's thus important that we, as an organization of birders, understand how the MOU contributes to this same conservation ethic. So what, exactly, does the MOU do that actually helps birds? Let's return to our mission statement.

We publish and share information. Both *The Loon* and *Minnesota Birding* have been informing people about birds for many decades. One need only look back at older issues of *The Loon* (and, before that, *The Flicker*) to see that this journal was the premier publication for disseminating research, observations, and other reports on birds in Minnesota. In an increasingly digital world these publications now compete with many other ways of communicating this same information, but their roles in doing so and the value of their information to the conservation of birds in Minnesota remain largely unchanged.

We serve as a repository for records. We are privileged to house over a century's worth of Minnesota bird records from thousands of observers. This vast database provides a particularly powerful historical context of birds in our state and establishes the foundation for assessing changes in Minnesota's avifauna over time. These data are open source and freely available to anyone wishing to use them, and are frequently referenced by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and other organizations for purposes of research, land management, and other conservation efforts and studies.

We conduct field trips. Having personal experiences with Minnesota's birds and their habitats is integral to fostering care for them. And relationships with our birds are best made when we go birding. Offering guided field trips to see various birds and where they live is an excellent way to provide these experiences to others so that they may have the opportunity to form their own personal conservation ethics and see firsthand why conservation matters.

We award grants for research and support programs that educate members and the public about birds. There is, unfortunately, not enough money being spent on our natural resources, including birds. Through our Savaloja grants (see Steve Wilson's report elsewhere in this issue), the MOU is able to provide over \$10,000 in funds annually to projects dedicated to the study and conservation of Minnesota's birds and other educational pursuits. In addition, we are fortunate to have a very skilled membership that volunteers countless hours each year to educate people

about birds in Minnesota. From youth mentors providing the next generation with their first bird experiences to state fair booth volunteers explaining to landowners the value of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land to grassland birds in western Minnesota, the MOU greatly benefits conservation efforts by providing the public with its expertise on birds in our state.

Finally, why does conservation matter, and why should the MOU care about it? Conservation efforts help preserve, mitigate losses to, and potentially increase bird populations so that we don't continue to lose what we have as a result of things like habitat loss, development, and climate change. I'm assuming that if you're reading this article you have at least some interest in birds, and that you would agree that having fewer birds is a bad thing. In that light, if you're a birder, you're automatically a conservationist. Likewise the MOU, as an organization comprising birders, is a conservation organization.

Bob Dunlap



Nashville Warbler, by Richard Gotz

Conservation Column

A Life on the Wing: The Perks and Perils of Bird Migration

by *Andy Forbes*

Despite having an interest in birding since I was very young and conducting research on, and working with, birds for more than two decades, I still find myself equally thrilled and amazed every spring when the birds return to Minnesota from their southern winter habitats. It is simultaneously one of the most exciting and frustrating times of year—exciting because I get to witness the spectacle that is migration, and frustrating because I feel like I never have enough time to be everywhere that I want to be. Even while I sleep, I know that there are rivers of birds flying over my house as I dream of chasing them with my binoculars and spotting scope.

The annual cycle of bird migration is one of nature's most incredible displays. The fact that a Golden-winged Warbler traverses thousands of miles every year back and forth, north and south, and still ends up on the same summer and winter territories at the “ends” of its migratory path, year after year, is amazing. Yes, thanks to the hard work of scientists across the world, we now know a lot more about how birds are able to accomplish this feat—through a combination of unparalleled physical endurance, reading and taking advantage of atmospheric conditions, and the ability to navigate using the night sky, the earth's magnetic field, and geographical features along with other cues. Still, when I think about a tiny Ruby-throated Hummingbird flying across the Gulf of Mexico, without stopping, it seems incredible.

Migration patterns vary a great deal between (and sometimes within) bird species. The most common pattern of migration, known as “partial migration,” is where most, but not all, members of a certain species leave their summer range after breeding is completed. Some linger behind, and there is often considerable overlap in breeding and nonbreeding ranges. Dark-eyed Juncos and Red-tailed Hawks are good examples of this in our part of the world.

“Complete migration,” where the breeding and wintering ranges for a species are distinct and often widely separated, is a common pattern seen with many vireos, warblers, hummingbirds, shorebirds, and thrushes, among others. Complete migration is mostly limited to species that breed in the northern part of the northern hemisphere, largely due to the fact that, at latitudes a similar distance from the equator in the southern hemisphere, land masses are much more limited. Migrants that exhibit this pattern often showcase incredible feats of endurance. The oft-crowned champion of migration, the Arctic Tern, can migrate well over 22,000 miles each year, from the Arctic to the Antarctic. Hudsonian Godwits lift off from their staging areas at James Bay during fall migration and fly non-stop over 3,000 miles to South America. Even the Blackpoll Warbler, which we only see for a fleeting few weeks in the spring and fall in Minnesota as they pass through our state, regularly undertake an 1,800-mile non-stop trip over the Atlantic Ocean in the fall, a marathon that can require more than three days of continuous flight.

The third major migratory pattern is known as “irruptive” migration. Crossbills, Pine Siskins, and other “winter finches,” along with many northern-breeding owls, exhibit this pattern. In some years, these species may not migrate very much at all, whereas in other years large portions of the species populations will move outside of their normal range. This pattern is unpredictable, the subject of great debate, and needs more study. While we birders often think of irruptions as being “good” years, oftentimes the birds exhibiting irruptive behavior are under considerable physical stress. Emaciated owl carcasses can often be found in numbers along Minnesota roadsides during winter invasions.

So why do birds undertake this risky strategy of migrating, at times covering huge distances? The short answer is: Food. Flight has given birds the ability to quickly move great distances, which enables them to take advantage of sometimes short-lived super abundances of food. For a good example of this, one need look no further than the swarms of insects that we see during the summer months. While a nuisance to us, these insects provide a bonanza of food for many birds that are feeding ravenous, rapidly growing young. Additionally, researchers found that American Redstarts that wintered in higher quality mangrove habitat (and likely left earlier in the spring in better body condition, due at least partly to better food resources) were able to arrive on the breeding grounds faster and were predicted to have greater reproductive success than those that overwintered in low-quality scrub habitat. Exploiting abundant food and finding the best habitats when they are available is key for many species of birds to thrive.

While food resources are often abundant in the tropics, so are competitors. Tropical habitats often contain a lot more species per capita than temperate habitats, which results in a lot more competition for food and space. Predators of all shapes and sizes are also generally far more abundant than they are in our part of the world. Thus, a bird that is able to make the journey north and breed in the northern summer where food is abundant and there are fewer competitors



Canada Geese, by Thomas Benjamin Hertzell

and predators is likely to have a better chance of fledging more young than it would dodging predators and squabbling for space and resources in the tropics with the multitude of other species.

The migration strategy is not without risk, and migration is the period of a birds' annual cycle where the most mortality usually occurs. The physical strain of migration is immense, and a poorly timed storm event can result in massive mortality of already exhausted birds as they struggle to reach land over water. Predators key in on distracted, tired migrants, especially at concentration points. Early-arriving migrants are subject to cold weather and a scarcity of food. For birds like Purple Martins, this can result in large die-offs that can take populations years to recover from.

Sadly, anthropogenic (human-caused) bird mortality is also on the rise. Free-ranging house cats kill millions of birds annually, and tired migrants are particularly vulnerable to cats, just as they are to native predators. Night-migrating birds drawn into the light of urban areas collide with glass (residential and commercial buildings alike), and individual buildings can sometimes kill hundreds of birds in a single evening during the "right" conditions. Birds also collide with communication towers and other tall man-made structures, as well as automobiles. Every year, with more

roads, more cars, and more towers, comes more collisions. All of these concerns are amplified in the face of bird populations that are often rapidly declining.

Fortunately, the migration period is gaining recognition as something that we need to do a better job understanding and working within. Researchers have discovered that simply changing lights on communication towers from constant burning to blinking can massively reduce collisions (and save on electrical bills), and tower operators are making the switch across the country by the thousands (visit songbirdsaver.org to learn more about these efforts). "Lights Out" campaigns in cities are often similarly successful and are popping up more and more in urban areas. Conservation agencies have recognized the need to conserve habitat across the full annual cycle for birds, including migration stopover sites, and are making great strides in collaborating across states, countries, and even continents to work together to conserve birds. The need couldn't be more urgent. Let's hope that these efforts allow future generations to marvel at the same annual spectacle of migrating birds as we do for years to come.

Andy Forbes is the coordinator for the Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes Region Joint Venture. He is currently a member of the MOU Records Committee.

Greater Prairie-Chickens in Minnesota

by Greg Hoch

Greater Prairie-Chickens (*Tympanuchus cupido*), or more correctly Pinnated Grouse, are most visible during the spring as they gather at leks. A lek is any location where males of a species gather to display and that attracts females for the males to mate with. Many species lek, although the prairie grouse (Greater and Lesser Prairie-Chickens, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Greater Sage-Grouse) are some of the most well-known lekking species. More specifically, prairie-chicken leks are called booming grounds.

Males come together each spring, usually on a hilltop, heavily grazed area, or today on soybean stubble near grass. Males inflate and deflate large orange sacs on the sides of their necks, making the characteristic booming sound. They also erect feathers at the base of the skull called *pinnae*. Last, they raise their tail feathers, revealing bright white feathers on their rumps. They conduct stylized dances and regularly confront and challenge each other.

An average booming ground in Minnesota has about eleven males. Females come to the booming ground, compare males side by side, and select the male they wish to mate with. The actual mating takes only a split second. Interestingly, the two dominant males in the center get almost 90% of the matings. Which raises the question of what all those other males are doing there.



Greater Prairie-Chicken, by Gerald Hoekstra



Greater Prairie-Chickens, by Gerald Hoekstra

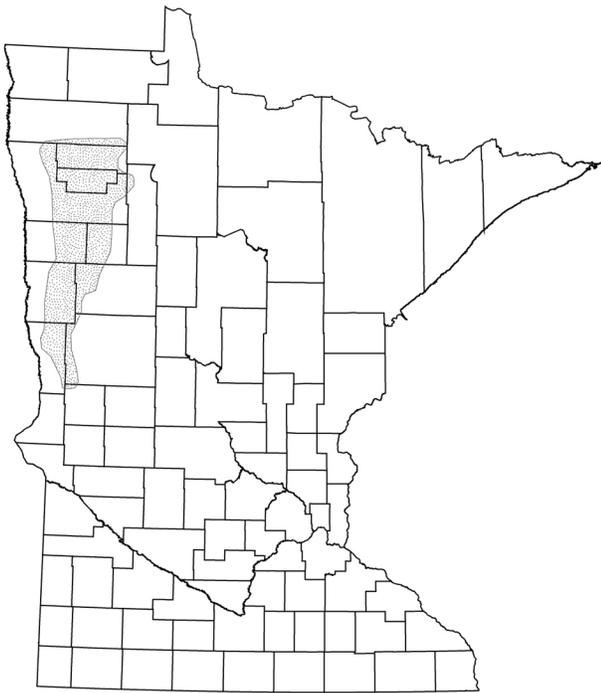
Before settlement of Euro-Americans, Greater Prairie-Chickens may not have been in Minnesota or, if they were, only in the southeast corner. We don't really know. We do know that they were recorded at Fort Snelling in 1839 and probably by Featherstonhaugh, an early explorer, along the Minnesota River in 1835. Featherstonhaugh's book *A Canoe Voyage up the Minnaw-Sotor* is one of the earliest and best descriptions of wildlife and landscapes of the Minnesota River Valley.

With settlement, the range of Greater Prairie-Chickens quickly expanded. They reached St. Cloud in 1860 and Moorhead by 1879 as they 'followed the plow' with settlement. In the Great Lakes states, they also moved northward as settlers cleared the forests. Prairie-Chickens were in Duluth in 1900 and halfway up the North Shore by 1913.

Prairie-chickens occurred in almost unbelievable abundance. After the prairies were burned off, there are reports of people gathering bushels of eggs. Some said you could not walk on the prairie without stepping on eggs.

Hunters reported bringing back wagonloads of birds. In *A Sand County Almanac* (1949), Aldo Leopold reports entire boxcars packed with prairie-chickens, bound for markets and restaurants in Chicago, New York, and even London. While many gamebirds were hunted, prairie-chickens were also heavily trapped. There are reports of families trapping 500 birds per week. More birds may have been trapped than shot.

The prairie-chicken may have been the most important animal during the settlement period. The bison were gone by then, and we're not sure about deer densities. But



Greater Prairie-Chicken range in Minnesota

some families report eating prairie-chicken three meals a day through the winter. Without chickens, they may have starved. Without selling birds to eastern markets, they may have lost their farms.

Many settlers perceived the birds as pests, damaging crops with their numbers. However, some farmers sought to protect them, since they ate vast numbers of crop-damaging insects throughout the summer.

Today, those once vast populations have shrunk and contracted to the northwest. Minnesota's Greater Prairie-Chicken population may number only a few thousand birds. Most states have lost their populations completely.

Minnesota's remaining birds are concentrated along the Lake Agassiz beach ridges stretching from Polk County down to Ottertail County. Probably the largest concentrations of birds are at Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge in Polk County, Bluestem Prairie in Clay County, and the Rothsay area in Wilkin and Ottertail Counties.

Prairie-chickens are birds of large landscapes. Greater Prairie-Chickens need at least 320 acres (half a square mile) of grass to form a booming ground. And they need many large patches in the area to support a viable population. They tend to do best when the regional landscape is about 50% grass and 50% row crops or small grains.

These birds also prefer a working landscape. They often prefer grazed or hayed grassland to the tall vegetation often characteristic of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or our wildlife areas. More importantly, they need a mix of grassland types to meet their needs throughout the year. Prairie-chickens are perfectly compatible with many types

of agriculture.

Because they need such large and diverse landscapes and habitats, prairie-chickens may act as umbrella species for grassland bird conservation. Instead of developing dozens of plans for different species of grassland birds, a plan for prairie-chickens would by default meet the habitat requirements of all other species.

However, agencies and conservation organizations are moving away from single species management in many cases. In Minnesota, we have the Prairie Conservation Plan, a regional conservation plan that identified large blocks of native prairie and restored grasslands where we can collectively concentrate our conservation efforts for the benefit of all wildlife species.

Some describe the Greater Prairie-Chicken's low frequency booming as a sad, mournful, dirge-like sound. Others think of it as one of the first signs to the end of a long Minnesota winter. Prairie-chicken booming grounds can be seen with binoculars by simply driving around and listening in areas with the right habitat. Viewing blinds can also be reserved in many places in the northwestern part of the state, including Glacial Ridge and Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuges, The Nature Conservancy's Bluestem Prairie, and DNR properties in the Rothsay area. From the blinds, the birds are often only a few feet away. There are few better ways to spend a spring morning.

Greg Hoch is Prairie Habitat Team Supervisor for the Minnesota DNR, working out of the DNR St. Paul Central Office. Before that he taught for seven years and spent two years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. His book Booming from the Mists of Nowhere: The Story of the Greater Prairie-Chicken was published in 2015.

New MOU Members

- Thomas Brandt, *Minneapolis, MN*
- Jennifer Doty, *Rochester, MN*
- Michael Evenson, *Minneapolis, MN*
- Allen Giles, *Minneapolis, MN*
- John Hess, *Argyle, MN*
- Kay Kieval, *Hamel, MN*
- Susan & Leon Kramer, *St. Paul, MN*
- Alyssa Kruzel, *Roseville, MN*
- Jeremy Lane, *Minneapolis, MN*
- James Lau & Sandra Greenway, *Wayzata, MN*
- James Nelson, *Minneapolis, MN*
- Jim Palmer, *Northfield, MN*
- Susan Schaffer, *St. Paul, MN*
- Victoria Sokolowski, *Ladysmith, WI*
- Stephanie Summers, *St. Paul, MN*
- Jean Elton Turbes, *Duluth, MN*

2018 Savaloja Grant Awards

by Steve Wilson, Chair, MOU Savaloja Committee

At its meeting on March 11 the MOU board approved the Savaloja Committee's recommendation to support eight diverse educational, research, and monitoring projects during 2018. Savaloja grants further MOU's mission by supporting projects that increase our understanding of birds, promote preservation of birds and their natural habitats, or increase public interest in birds. The board awarded \$14,600 in grants this year, an amount second only to last year's, thanks to the ongoing generosity of you, MOU's members and donors, including those who made donations in memory of Steve Blanich, a long-time Savaloja Committee member and beloved Minnesota birder. Projects supported in Steve's memory were selected by a subcommittee of Brainerd-area birders and are noted in the following list of supported projects:

- Two education projects in NW Minnesota were selected as Steve Blanich Memorial Projects. Thief River Falls Rotary Club received \$2000, so that bird watching, monitoring, and study can be included as program activities for all 180 seventh graders in Thief River Falls. Marshall County Central High School received \$2480 to incorporate these same activities into their existing outdoor education program for their seventh graders. Both projects share the necessary ingredients for success: competent and available mentors (Agassiz Audubon and Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge staff), skilled and enthusiastic teachers, ongoing bird instruction, citizen science involvement, and the support of their school and community. These projects were inspired by last year's nearby Warren Alvarado Oslo Elementary School project. Because these projects are within about 20 miles of each other, they are more likely to result in the critical mass of young birders necessary to sustain that initial spark of excitement about birding and lead to the creation of clubs, social-media groups, and the type of peer support that can result in birding becoming a community norm and life-long activity. All this in a part of the state with little in the way of an existing birding community or MOU members. It doesn't get much better than this!

- St. Paul Audubon was awarded \$3100 for a project led by Monica Bryand and Joanna Eckles to train five to ten community "lay leaders" in conducting spring and fall public bird hikes in 2018 (and beyond). A resource tool kit developed from the training sessions will be available to guide future training sessions. These community lay leaders will be able to reach community members, especially in the targeted minority communities, who would otherwise be



Eastern Phoebe, by Jean Brisance

difficult to engage through the traditional approach of transporting potential birders to the birds. Young people seeing leaders who they know and look like them will more likely follow in their footsteps, as one of our committee members with experience in this area has observed. As another member put it, "Grass roots at its best."

- Brainerd Lakes Area Audubon Society received \$520 for another Steve Blanich Memorial Project: Twice-weekly bird hikes at the Northland Arboretum for five weeks in spring 2018. These hikes have a proven track record of at-

tracting novice birders to an interesting natural area, with the bonus of training Audubon members, local bird club members, and Master Naturalists in becoming more accomplished and knowledgeable leaders.

- Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory was awarded \$2000 to do public outreach and education during their spring raptor monitoring in Duluth. This project will allow Hawk Ridge to reach more people, in a different area of the city than during their fall count, increasing visitors' appreciation, understanding, and enthusiasm for migration and birds.

- Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center received \$2000 to construct nesting/roosting towers for chimney swifts at Wolf Ridge ELC in Finland and William Kelly School in Silver Bay. It's hoped the migrating swifts currently using the Silver Bay School's chimney, which is in disrepair and likely to be torn down, will adapt to this new tower, providing an educational opportunity for the school's teachers and students. Wolf Ridge ELC's tower will offer a teachable moment about this declining species to the thousands of students, teachers, and families visiting there every year.

- University of Connecticut grad student Lauren Albert received \$1500 to study the effect of temperature on host resistance to parasitic nest flies in resistant (Tree Swallow) and non-resistant (Eastern Bluebird) species. This well-designed study near Itasca State Park could establish a baseline for how temperature and climate change might affect the relationship between nest parasites and their host birds.

- Friends of Mississippi River was awarded \$1000 to conduct breeding bird surveys in 2018 on up to six restored grasslands in Dakota and Washington Counties. Grasslands provide habitat for a number of declining species, and these surveys will help establish which species use restored grasslands.

As this list demonstrates, your donations allow MOU to be Minnesota's lead organization in promoting education, research, and monitoring projects designed to benefit birds. If you want to see MOU continue supporting projects at the high level of recent years, please consider making a donation by going to MOU's home page (<http://moumn.org/>), clicking on the "Donate" button at the top of the page, and contributing whatever you can. (Under "Add special instructions to the seller," enter "Savaloja donation.")

Appreciation is also due to Savaloja Committee members Ann Kessen, Pam Perry, Chuck Neil, Sue Keator, and Dave Zumeta for vetting the ten proposals received this year and working together to develop our recommendation to the board.

2018 Hastings Birding Festival

by Kevin Smith

The 6th annual Hastings Birding Festival and Earth Day Celebration on April 21 was a huge success. The weather even cooperated by warming up a bit after the endless winter. This event is held annually to promote birding in the Hastings area and involves a number of field trips and presentations throughout the day. The keynote speaker this year was Bob Dunlap, President of the MOU, who spoke to over 100 people on the topic, "Minnesota Birding: The Next Generation."

In fact, getting youth involved in birding is, and has been, a major focus of our festival, and to that end we have a Youth Big Day Birding Competition. It was great to see how enthusiastic these young people are about birds. The winners this year were:

16 years and up – Edina Birders (77 species)

Frank Fabbro and Avery Blumenthal

11-15 years – The Perfect Peregrines (11 species)

Ian Ferguson and Vincent Vieth

10 and under – Team Potter-Hunter (34 species)

Tim Potter, Daniel Potter, Slylar Hunter-Hanson,
Avery Hunter-Hanson

A new element for 2018 was an invitation for wheelchair participants to take part. Special field trips were arranged at Carpenter Nature Center and Spring Lake Park Reserve Schaar's Bluff to accommodate them. Other new presentations included the panel discussion on "Greening-up" your birding and the "Optics Hour," which explored tools for birding.



Book Review

Michael Edmonds, *Taking Flight: A History of Birds and People in the Heart of America*

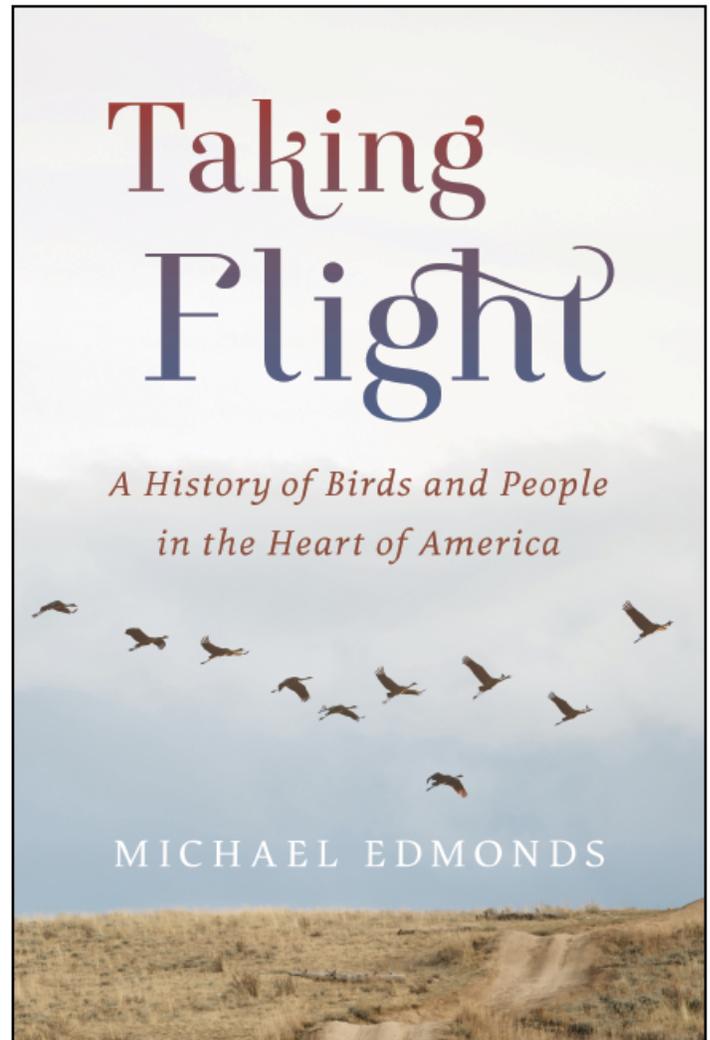
by James Palmer

We birders love to get out into the field, learn about what's out there, and just soak it all in. Some of us like to get to know everything about our patch, while others of us strike out on adventures across great distances. We engage in our common pursuit from our own unique vantages, with our own individual experiences shaping every aspect of our encounters with nature. If you're like me, a large part of your appreciation for birds is the feeling of comfort that comes with their predictable returns each year and their ability to remain largely "the same." Looking at birds is like looking back in time: they have lived in roughly the same places and behaved in largely the same ways for millions of years.

Of course, the same cannot be said for people, nor for our connection with birds. Michael Edmonds delves deeply into this connection in *Taking Flight*. Edmonds builds a chronological narrative from source material on nature, consciousness, and culture from the folklore, literature, and correspondences of peoples of the American Midwest over the past 12000 years. Opening with his own trip to the Radatz Rockshelter—a 12000-year-old American Indian shelter in modern Wisconsin—Edmonds offers an ethnological history of the relationships between humans and birds in America's heartland: "the Great Lakes and the watersheds of Ohio, upper Mississippi, and lower Missouri Rivers."

Throughout its 227 pages, *Taking Flight* offers a lively balance of fun facts, in-depth research, detailed maps and images, and relatable personal adventures, all of which allow his reader to place herself in the Midwest in various periods. *Taking Flight* is well-paced for the casual reader and well-sourced (with 462 footnotes and a comprehensive index) for those wanting to dig deeper.

Edmonds forges an effective and productive discussion of the religious beliefs and scientific innovations of diverse populations in the Midwest, maintaining a balance between American Indians, European settlers, and African American slaves (or former slaves) in each of his chronological snapshots. He is careful not to infer too much about a given culture's worldview from ancient archeological evidence, but neither is he afraid to provide such insights when there is sufficient support. Edmonds is also keenly aware of contrasts and similarities between cultures, especially between white European settlers and American Indian peoples, while remaining conscious of the manner of their various encoun-



ters. For example, he is quick to point out that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European judgment on the beliefs of the "savages" and their "foolish ideas" is highly ironic, considering how Jesuit priests (believing in divine intervention) would walk through wheat fields with incense and chants to keep blackbirds from raiding it.

Edmonds first teaches us what birds meant to peoples in the Midwest thousands of years ago (chapters 2–4). We learn about the "atlatl," for example: a brilliant weapon used by early Plains Indians to launch 4-foot, 100-mile-an-hour(!) darts at their pray. We learn about surviving thousand-year-old bird-shaped mounds built into the earth in

various places in the Mississippi Valley (it's easy to get to some of these on a day trip). We read about the thousand-year-old images, many depicting birds, etched in the rocks of the Jeffers Petroglyphs, a place well-known to Minnesota birders. Later we learn about how ideas shifted as religion encountered science in Europe's Renaissance and missionaries and explorers wrote about birds (chapters 5–7), before hearing rich lore from the typically underrepresented voices of “illiterate slaves, uneducated homesteaders, immigrant laborers, and provincial hunters” (chapters 8–9).

While conservation is a theme throughout the book, Edmonds saves his appeal for the last two chapters (10–11), where we learn how the transition from flintlocks (more like handheld cannons than rifles) to shotguns wreaked havoc on Midwestern birds as market hunters and plume hunters took up the trade and urbanization, immigration, railroads, and farming destroyed habitats. At Heron Lake (Jackson County) a group of seven hunters typically killed around 14,000 birds in a single fall.

We are also acquainted with numerous famous figures. We hear about Benjamin Franklin's strong position against adopting the Bald Eagle as the national bird, which was, in his words, “a Bird of bad moral Character,” while the Wild Turkey “is in Comparison a much more respectable Bird... He is besides, though a little vain & silly, a Bird of Courage, and would not hesitate to attack a Grenadier of the British Guards.” We learn about tensions between Audubon and Alexander Wilson (phalarope, warbler, etc.), and how Thomas Nuttall (woodpecker) was apparently referred to as “le fou” (“the crazy”) by the Canadians in his expedition because of his penchant for being distracted by birds and flowers to the point of nearly getting himself killed. And who among us doesn't see a little of our own unpredictable lives and our attempts to go birding in Thure Kumlien's (gull) journal?

May 27, Planted 7 small pails of potatoes.
Fixed four bird skins for an Englishman.

July 4, America's high festival day. In afternoon to store with five pounds butter. Shot one duck . . .

Nov. 6, Cleaned manure out of the stable. Rain and cold with thick weather and strong storm. Wrote and sent Friday (yesterday)'s letter to J.G. Bell, New York, about birds.

Dec. 11, Butchered a pig in forenoon, went after an eagle in the afternoon.

We also join in the adventures of Lewis (woodpecker) and Clark (grebe), Thomas Say (phoebe), and Charles-Lucien Bonaparte (gull), who was not only Napoleon's exiled nephew, but also coined the term “nomenclature.”

And speaking of nomenclature, one could be forgiven for skipping right to chapter 8, “Ahonques, Timber-Doo-

dles, and Shitquicks,” for an epistemological (and scatological) journey through colloquial naming: you won't hear a Canada Goose (Huron: *ahonque*), or a Common Nighthawk (Pennsylvania German: *luft-fatzel* or “air farter”), or look at a Great Blue Heron (“shite-poke,” from “shit” and “bag”) the same way again!

In the first pages of *Taking Flight*, Edmonds states his desire to share “astonishing ways that people in the American heartland thought about birds, to explain how those thoughts prompted them to act, and to see what light their ideas and behavior may shed on our own.” The next time I head out to Heron Lake, I know I'll observe the birds I find with a lot more awareness of how they, the region, and its people have changed. As I soak up the sun, bird song, and feed the mosquitoes, I'll be a little more aware of how I fit in, and perhaps I'll connect even more closely with the birds in my corner of the Midwest.

James Palmer recently moved to Northfield, where he teaches music theory at St. Olaf College. Having lived previously in British Columbia, he is looking forward to birding Minnesota during spring migration.



Indigo Bunting, by Jean Brislance

MAY / JUNE

Sun	Mon	Tues MAY 1	Wed 2	Thur 3	Fri 4	Sat 5
		"Update on the New Bell Museum," Aud. Chap. of Mpls, Kingisher Div.		Lunch with the Birds at Kutzky Pk, ZVAS		MN Campus Bird Hike, Carpenter Nat. Ctr. Warbler Walk, DNR, Wild River SP Brown's Creek Trail Bird Walk, DNR "Spring Migration," Kathio SP, DNR Bird Walk, Quarry Hill Nat. Ctr., ZVAS ZVAS Big Birding Day
6 Bird Banding, Whitewater SP, DNR	7 MVNWR Birding Trek at MRVAC Vis. Ctr	8 Lunch with the Birds at Kutzky Pk, ZVAS	9 Kutzky Pk Field Trip, ZVAS	10 Kirtland's Warbler Project begins	11 Urban Birding Festival (May 11-20) begins Night Life at Carpenter Nat. Ctr.	12 W. Minn. Shorebirds Trip, MOU Warbler Walk, Frontenac SP, MOU Gateway Trail Bird Walk, DNR Warbler Walk, Wolsfeld Woods SNA, DNR Bird Bonanza 10, St. Croix SP, DNR Live Bird Program, St. Croix SP, DNR Intl. Migratory Bird Day, Eastman Nat. Ctr., 3RPD Plummer House Field Trip, ZVAS Warbler Walk, Hok-Si-La Park, MRVAC WI Campus Bird Hike, Carpenter Nat. Ctr.
13 Bird Banding, Whitewater SP, DNR Bird Bonanza 10, St. Croix SP, DNR Birding Trek at Rapids Lake, MVNWR Hok-Si-La Park Field Trip, ZVAS W. Minn. Shorebirds Trip, MOU	14 Birding Walk, Carver Pk Res., MRVAC	15	16 Detroit Lakes Festival of Birds (May 16-19) begins Birding on Luce Line State Trail, DNR	17	18	19 Gateway Trail Little Sit Bird Watch, DNR Bird Banding, Elm Creek Park Reserve, 3RPD Bird Banding, Carver Park Reserve, Lowry Nat. Ctr, 3RPD
20 Bird Banding, Whitewater SP, DNR Bird Walk, Ritter Farm Pk, MRVAC	21 MVNWR Birding Trek at Bass Ponds	22	23	24	25 Bird Banding, Carpenter Nat. Ctr.	26 Owl Prowl, Whitewater SP, DNR
27 Koochiching Co. Big Day Challenge, MOU Live Peregrine Falcon, Whitewater SP & Frontenac SP, DNR Bird Banding, Whitewater SP, DNR	28	29	30	31	JUNE 1	2 Birding Boat Tour, MOU MN Bird Language, MVNWR MVNWR Birding Trek at Bass Ponds Bird Walk, Quarry Hill Nat. Ctr, ZVAS MN Campus Bird Hike, Carpenter Nat. Ctr.
3 Dakota County Prairie Birds, MRVAC	4 Birding Walk, Murphy-Hanrahan Pk, MRVAC	5	6	7	8	9 WI Campus Bird Hike, Carpenter Nat. Ctr. "Owls of MN & WI", Whitewater SP, DNR
10 Birding Walk, Cannon River Bottoms, MRVAC	11 MVNWR Birding Trek at Bass Ponds	12	13	14	15	16 Bird Banding, Carver Park Reserve, Lowry Nat. Ctr., 3RPD Touring Two New SNAs, MOU
17	18	19	20	21	22 Fish Creek Bioblitz, Maplewood Nat. Ctr.	23 MVNWR Birding Trek at Bass Ponds
24	25 MVNWR Birding Trek at Bass Ponds	26	27	28 Potluck & Red-Headed WP presentation, MRVAC	29	30



MOU Calendar

May / June 2018

Note: In addition to these events, see the descriptions of the new MOU Field Trips on page 15

BIRDING FESTIVALS IN MINNESOTA

May 11–20: Urban Birding Festival of the Twin Cities

The Urban Birding Festival of the Twin Cities is an opportunity for novice birders and experienced birders alike to explore and learn! Festival activities are held at a variety of locations across the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Contact: Emma Wise, urbanbirdingfestival@gmail.com.

May 16–19: 21st Annual Detroit Lakes Festival of Birds

Migration celebration in Minnesota's unique transition zone of tallgrass prairie, hardwood and conifer forests, and wetlands. Presentations, socials, and morning field trips. Friday night keynote Carrol Henderson, Saturday night keynote Noah Strycker. Wednesday evening show For the Birds at Holmes Theatre. Thursday social at Hub 41 and bird by pontoon. Online program/registration at <https://www.visitdetroitlakes.com/events/festival-of-birds>. Contact: Detroit Lakes Regional Chamber of Commerce, 218-847-9202, dlchamber@VisitDetroitLakes.com.

AUDUBON CHAPTER OF MINNEAPOLIS KINGFISHER DIVISION

May 1: Update on the New Bell Museum – Don Luce

Details: 7 pm. Don Luce, Curator of Exhibits at the Bell Museum of Natural History, has produced over 30 original temporary and permanent exhibitions. He also curates the museum's collection of art, which includes many works by Francis Lee Jaques, who painted the museum's dioramas, a complete set of Audubon's original *Birds of America* folio, and many other historical and contemporary works of wildlife art. Don is the author of the book *Francis Lee Jaques: Artist–Naturalist* and recently curated the exhibition "Audubon and the Art of Birds." Beth El Synagogue, 5225 Barry St. W, St. Louis Park.

CARPENTER NATURE CENTER

Minnesota Campus: 12805 St. Croix Trail S.,
Hastings, MN

Wisconsin Campus: 300 East Cove Road, Hudson, WI

May 5: MN Campus Bird Hike

Details: 8 am–10 am. Join bird expert Kevin Smith on a morning hike around the nature center. Learn to identify

birds by sight and sound. Field guides and binoculars available to use or bring your own. Program fee: \$6.00 or free for "Friends of CNC," Hastings Environmental Protectors and St. Croix Valley Bird Club members. RSVP at 651-437-4359 and let us know you are coming. Location: Minnesota Campus

May 11: Night Life at CNC

Details: 7 pm–9 pm. Experience the sights and sounds of the nature center after hours in a naturalist-led night hike of the Minnesota campus. Program fee: \$6.00 per person or \$4.00 for "Friends of CNC". RSVP at 651-437-4359 to register. Location: Minnesota Campus

May 12: WI Campus Bird Hike

Details: 8 am–10 am. Join the St. Croix Valley Bird Club on a morning hike on our beautiful WI campus. Learn to identify birds by sight and sound. Program fee: \$6.00 or free for "Friends of CNC," Hastings Environmental Protectors, Hastings High School students, and St. Croix Valley Bird Club members. RSVP at 651-437-4359 and let us know you are coming. Location: Wisconsin Campus

May 25: Bird Banding

Details: 8:30 am–12 pm. Bird Banding records help us learn how long birds live, where they travel, when they migrate, etc. CNC has been banding birds for over 30 years. Our bird banders welcome you to see songbirds up close and learn about the birds who share our ecosystem. Banding runs continuously for the full 3½ hours but visitors may come and go at any time. Please call ahead so we know you are coming. Donations of bird seed or suet will be greatly appreciated in lieu of a program fee. Location: Minnesota Campus

June 2: MN Campus Bird Hike

Details: 8 am–10 am. See description for May 5. Location: Minnesota Campus

June 9: WI Campus Bird Hike

Details: 8 am–10 am. See description for May 12. Location: Wisconsin Campus

DNR

(See www.dnr.state.mn.us for directions to locations)

May 5: Warbler Watch and Walk, Wild River State Park

Details: 9 am–10 am. This beginner's introduction to which warblers can be found in the park also includes a short walk. Meet at the Visitor Center.

May 5 & 9: Brown's Creek Trail Bird Walk

Details: 7 am–8 am at Brown's Creek Nature Reserve, Neal Ave, Stillwater, MN. We will leave the Nature Reserve parking area (Neal Avenue crossing) at 7 a.m. and return to the starting point at 8 a.m. We will identify as many species as we can by sight and sound. Drizzle or light rain is OK, but the walk will be cancelled if it is very windy or significant precipitation is likely.

May 5: "Spring Bird Migration"

Details: 1 pm at Mille Lacs Kathio State Park. This talk and slideshow about spring migration will include a lesson on the use of binoculars and tips on how to attract birds to your own backyard. Meet at the Interpretive Center. (45 minutes)

May 6, 13, 20 & 27: Bird Banding Demonstration

Details: 12:30 pm– 2 pm at Whitewater State Park. Join Master Bird Bander Greg Munson at the Visitor Center bird feeders for close-up experiences with birds. Program participants will have the opportunity to handle and release birds after they have been caught in nets, studied, observed and banded with an aluminum tag. In the event of rain, the program will be cancelled.

May 12: Gateway Trail Bird Walk

Details: 7 am–8 am at Gateway Trail / Hwy 96 crossing. We will leave the parking lot at 7 a.m. and return to the starting point at 8 a.m. We will identify as many species as we can by sight and sound. Bring binoculars if you have them. Drizzle or light rain is OK, but the walk will be cancelled if it's very windy or significant precipitation is likely.

May 12: Warbler Walk–Wolsfeld Woods SNA

Details: 7:30 am. Warblers are often plentiful during spring migration. Bring binoculars and bird books. This event will be led by Bill and Esther Marengo and the Friends of Wolsfeld Woods. See the [Wolsfeld Woods SNA](#) web page for a map and description of the site.

May 12–13: Bird Bonanza 10

Details: Share your passion for birding at St. Croix State Park's 10th annual birding festival. Enjoy birding in Minnesota's largest state park, observe bird banding and take part in many engaging activities. Location: St. Croix State Park. Information: 320-384-6591



Eastern Bluebird by Michelle Hed

May 12: Live Bird Program–St. Croix State Park

Details: 5 pm–6 pm. Meet inside the St. Croix Lodge to see a live bird program by the Audubon Center of the North Woods.

May 12: Bird Banding Demonstration

Details: 8 am–11:30 am at St. Croix State Park. Participate in an interactive bird banding session with special presenter Jim Bryce. Stop by any time between 8 and 11:30 a.m. Follow the signs along the road to the wildlife pond by the park office. Park along the road.

May 16: Birds along the Luce Line State Trail

Details: 7 am–8 am along the Luce Line State Trail. Join the naturalist for a birding stroll and learn about the basic techniques of bird identification during spring migration. Binoculars and bird guides will be available. Meet at the Vicksburg Lane parking area in Plymouth.

May 19: Gateway Trail Little Sit Bird Watch

Details: 7 am–8 am at Gateway Trail at Myeron Rd. N. (U.S. 61). Adjacent wetlands make this one of the best places to view migrant and resident birds along the trail. We will sit or stand here from 7 to 8 a.m. (no walking) and identify as many species as we can by sight and sound. Bring binoculars and a chair (optional) if you have them. Watchers with limited mobility are welcome.

May 26: Owl Prowl–Whitewater State Park

Details: 8 pm–9:30 pm. Learn how to identify owls by their calls as well as by their appearance and habitat needs. After a presentation, we'll go call to the owls.

**May 27: Live Falcon Presentation
Whitewater State Park**

Details: 2 pm–3 pm. The Peregrine Falcon has long fascinated people across the globe. Although the species has recovered beyond pre-DDT population numbers, there is still a lot of work to be done to gain a better understanding of Peregrine Falcons. Jackie Fallon, with the Midwest Peregrine Society, will present this program, with a live Peregrine Falcon, to help us understand the past, present and future of this species in Whitewater and the Midwest.

May 27: Live Falcon Presentation—Frontenac State Park

Details: Time TBD (afternoon). See description above.

June 9: “Owls of Minnesota and Wisconsin”

Details: 2 pm–3 pm at Whitewater State Park. This presentation provides a comprehensive, in-depth look at owl evolution, biology, ecology and management on a global and local context. Gives a basic account on the life histories of the twelve species of owls which reside in Minnesota and Wisconsin as permanent and seasonal visitors.

FRIENDS OF MAPLEWOOD NATURE

June 22: First Fish Creek Bioblitz – Expert sessions

Details: **Birds 1:** 7 am–9 am; **Birds 2:** 8:30 pm–10:30 pm. Work with other experts at our first Fish Creek Bioblitz. Help us identify, record and generate a species list. Fee: Free! Register online by Friday, June 15 at www.maplewoodnaturecenter.com or call 651-249-2170 for more details and location.

KIRTLAND’S WARBLER PROJECT

May 10 through June 16: Kirtland’s Warbler Project

Details: Sunrise to 10 am. Needed: Birders to participate in a survey of Pine County for Kirtland’s Warbler. Come prepared to volunteer your experience to make a big difference and contribute to this project. All interested birders are invited. Come if you can, leave when you must. Tools required: cell phone with bird guide app, GPS, notebook, binoculars. Contact: Jack Hauser (jgshauser@gmail.com).

**MINNESOTA VALLEY
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE**

May 7: Birding Trek at MRVWR Visitor Center

Details: 8 am–10 am. Join volunteer refuge naturalist Craig Mandel for a bird walk at the Bass Ponds Trailhead to learn about the birds that migrate to and through the wildlife refuge. During these walks Craig will help you search for migrating waterfowl and raptors. The group may also see some early spring migrants with a mix of sparrows and the first Yellow-rumped Warblers of the season. Birders of all skill levels are welcome on these walks. Bring your binoculars, favorite field guide and dress appropriately.

Location: MRVWR Visitor Center, 3815 American Blvd E, Bloomington, MN

May 21: Birding Trek at the Bass Ponds

Details: 8 am–10 am. See description above. Location: Bass Ponds Trailhead, 2501 86th St. E., Bloomington, MN

May 13: Birding Trek at Rapids Lake

Details: 8 am–10 am. See description above. Location: Rapids Lake Education Center, 15865 Rapids Lake Road, Carver, MN

June 2: “Bird Language”

Details: 9 am–1 pm. Join us as we gather on the slopes of the Minnesota River Valley to explore what the birds are telling us about our surroundings. We will split the time between the classroom and outdoors. Bring a notebook, pencils, and something to sit on outdoors. Led by Jonathon Poppele and Donnie Phyllaier, Volunteer Refuge Naturalists. To register, visit www.mntracking.org/. Location: MVNWR Visitor Center (Classroom A), 3815 American Blvd. E, Bloomington, MN

June 2, 11, 23, 25: Birding Trek at the Bass Ponds

Details: 8 am–10 am. See description above. Location: Bass Ponds Trailhead, 2501 86th St. E., Bloomington, MN

**MINNESOTA RIVER VALLEY
AUDUBON CHAPTER**

May 12: Hok-Si-La Warbler Watching

Details: 7:30 am. Led by Steve Weston. Join us for this annual field trip (30+ years). Meet at Hok-Si-Lah Park north of Lake City. Bring a lunch if you want to stay for the afternoon. No reservations needed.

May 14: Birding Walk at Carver Park Reserve

Details: 7 am. Join us for an early morning walk at the peak of spring migration. On past spring trips we have observed over 140 species of birds, including 14 species of sparrows and 23 species of warblers. Contact Craig Mandel to register: 952-240-7647.

May 20: Bird Walk at Ritter Farm Park

Details: 8:30 am. On the shore of Lake Marion, this park has mixed habitat and is a good location for spring migrants. Call Cheri Fox for details: 612-590-1261. Location: Ritter Farm Pk, 19300 Ritter Trail, Lakeville, MN

June 3: Dakota County Prairie Birds

Details: 7 am. We will drive the prairies of Dakota County in search of grassland and other species. Led by Steve Weston. No reservations needed. Meet at Schaar’s Bluff. Bring a lunch if you want to continue in the afternoon.

June 4: Birding Walk at Murphy-Hanrahan Park Reserve

Details: 7 am. Early June is a prime time to bird at Murphy-Hanrahan Park Reserve. Bobolinks, Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows can be found on the trails that run through the prairies. Wood Thrush, Acadian Flycatcher and Hooded, Cerulean and Blue-winged Warblers can be found along the wooded trails. Contact Craig Mandel to register: 952-240-7647.

June 10: Birding Walk at Cannon River Bottoms

Details: 7:30 am. We will explore a little-known, but very productive, trail near Red Wing in search of a variety of birds. Targets include Cerulean Warbler, Acadian Flycatcher, Scarlet Tanager, Wood Thrush. Please call Steve Weston for details: 612-978-3993.

June 28: Potluck & Red-headed Woodpecker Presentation

Details: 5:30 pm bird walk; 6:15 potluck; 7 pm presentation. Bring binoculars, some food to share, and your own plate, utensils, and glass or cup; MRVAC will supply drinks and cake. Presentation will be by Elena Wood, lead scientist for the Red-headed Woodpecker study at Cedar Creek. Open to everyone. MRVWR Visitor Center, 3815 American Blvd E, Bloomington, MN

THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT

May 12: Int'l Migratory Bird Day: Citizen Science Hike

Details: 7 am–9:30 am. Search for migrating warblers and waterfowl on a guided hike and post findings on the eBird app. Reservations required. Fee: \$5. Location: Elm Creek Park Reserve, Eastman Nature Center, 13351 Elm Creek Rd., Osseo, MN

May 19: Bird Banding

Details: 9 am–12 pm. See wild songbirds safely trapped, studied and tagged with numbered rings. Groups of 10 or more, please call 763-694-7700 to reserve a time slot. Bring a camera. Drop in anytime. Free. Location: Elm Creek Park Reserve, Eastman Nature Center, 13351 Elm Creek Rd., Osseo, MN

May 19 & June 16: Bird Banding

Details: 9 am–12 pm. See wild songbirds safely trapped, studied and tagged with numbered rings. Groups of 10 or more, please call 763-694-7700 to reserve a time slot. Bring a camera. Drop in anytime. Free. Location: Carver Park Reserve, Lowry Nature Center, 7025 Victoria Dr, Victoria, MN

ZUMBRO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

May 3 and May 8: Lunch with the Birds at Kutzky Park

Details: 12 pm–1:15 pm. Kutzky Park comes alive with migrating warblers, vireos, orioles, and more every May. Join us for a casual noon-time walk at the peak of migration. Arrive and leave as your schedule requires. We will start at the picnic shelter at 12:00. Later arrivals can locate the group along the creek between 11th and 16th Ave NW. Location: Kutzky Park, 213 13th Ave NW, Rochester, MN

May 5: ZVAS Monthly Bird Walk

Details: 9 am–10 am. Join Terry and Joyce Grier on a casual walk through Quarry Hill Park. Free and open to the public—no registration required. Location: Quarry Hill Nature Center, Rochester, MN

May 5: ZVAS Big Birding Day – A Year of the Bird Event

Details: 7 am–4:30 pm. Join us as we spend the day birding at numerous locations throughout the Rochester area. Our goal will be to count and tally as many species as we can find while also enjoying the beauty of our local parks. Come to one, two or all of the sessions listed. Participants should be able to walk on uneven ground. This event takes place rain or shine. Location: Start at Quarry Hill Parking lot (see full schedule on Zumbro Valley Audubon website)

May 9: Kutzky Park Field Trip

Details: 6:30 am. Join Brendan Lanpher for an early morning walk. Arrive and leave as your schedule requires. We will start at the picnic shelter at 6:30 am. Later arrivals can locate the group along the creek between 11th and 16th Ave NW. Location: Kutzky Park, 213 13th Ave NW, Rochester.

May 12: Plummer House Field Trip

Details: 7 am. Join Brendan Lanpher as we tour the gardens looking for warblers. Location: Plummer House, Visitor Parking lot, 1091 Plummer Lane, Rochester, MN

May 13: Hok-Si-La Park Field Trip

Details: 8 am–mid-afternoon. Leaders: Terry and Joyce Grier. Located along the Mississippi River, Hok-Si-La is a magnet for migrating birds. Bring a snack or a bag lunch. We will return mid-afternoon. Location: Hok-Si-La Park (meet at 8 am in the east parking lot of Heintz Center in Rochester to carpool to Lake City)

June 2: ZVAS Monthly Bird Walk

Details: 9–10 am. Join Terry and Joyce Grier on a casual walk through Quarry Hill Park. Free and open to the public; no registration required. Location: Quarry Hill Nature Center, Rochester, MN

MOU Field Trips

May Field Trips

May 12-13: Western Minnesota Shorebirds Trip

Led by Garrett Wee

Participants may well see 20+ species of shorebirds on this one- or two-day option trip led by one of the area's top birders. We will explore public and private land around Cottonwood, MN in an effort to see as many shorebirds and marsh birds as possible. Whether you bird one day or two, bring your own provisions and plan to spend the full day afield with Garrett. Meet Garrett each morning at the Cenex at 8:00 a.m. Participants are encouraged to bring mud boots of some kind. Accommodations can be made for the physically handicapped (for more information please email fieldtrips@moumn.org).

May 12: Warbler Walk at Frontenac State Park

Led by Ben Douglas

Be a part of Ben Douglas's State Park Big Year by joining him to look for warblers and other migrant passerines at one of the best state parks for spring migration. Interested participants should meet Ben at the main lot at the end of Park Road at 7 a.m. and plan on a roughly a 4-hour walk.

May 27: Koochiching County Big Day Challenge

Led by Frank Gosiak

This friendly competition set near the Canadian border is an annual event in which participants will try to list as many species as possible in Koochiching County in a single day. Teams will work to unseat current record holders Shawn Conrad, Dedrick Benz, and Earl Orf who sit atop at 141 species back in 2009. The competition begins at the Shining Light Cafe in Northome at 6:00 a.m. and ends at 8:00 p.m. at the same location. There is a meal planned for breakfast and one at the end of the competition at the Shining Light Cafe with the cost incurred by the participants. A trophy will be passed to the winning group to hold for the next year. More information regarding maps, hotels, and rules can be found in the Minnesota Heartland Birders Facebook group, the Shining Light Cafe's Facebook page, or by contacting Frank directly at fgosiak@gmail.com or 320-267-1667.

June Field Trips

June 2: Birding Boat Tour through Marsh Lake and Lac qui Parle WMA

Led by Garrett Wee

Participants will explore this wild area in a way that only intrepid birders can—by canoe! This area is restricted to non-motorized boats, so participants will paddle their way through the WMA in an effort to see large counts of

waterfowl, shorebirds, waders, and other marsh birds. Space is limited on this excursion, so email fieldtrips@moumn.org to reserve your spot. If you have your own canoe and are willing to bring it, please mention that in the email. Exact meet-up time, location, and other trip details will be determined once the participant list is finalized.

June 16: Touring Two “New” SNAs: Crystal Spring SNA (Washington County) and Lawrence Creek SNA (Chisago County)

Led by Liz Harper and Alex Sundvall

Target species for this trip will include Louisiana Waterthrush, Acadian Flycatcher, and Cerulean Warbler. This trip is capped at 10 people/2 cars due to parking limitations. Email fieldtrips@moumn.org to reserve your spot. This trip will likely start at dawn, but the exact time, meeting location, and carpooling details will be determined after the participant list is finalized. Please note that most of the hiking will be off trail on some steep, slippery terrain and in and around stream beds. Also, there is poison ivy, the potential for wood and deer ticks, and there are no bathroom facilities (though Scandia is nearby). Please come prepared for hiking in these conditions. Bring snacks and water and plan to spend 4-6 hours afield.

July Field Trips

July 14: Stearns County Birding Day

Led by Aaron Ludwig

Participants will tour Stearns County with a local expert, going through county parks and other great locales such as St. John's Arboretum and the Albany WTP. Meet Aaron in the A&W parking lot in Albany at 7:00 a.m. There will be a stop for lunch, but this will be a full day of birding. There will be a fair amount of hiking, so plan accordingly.

July 28: Hunting for Blue Grosbeaks in West-Central Minnesota

Led by Josh Wallestad

Gone are the days that Blue Grosbeaks could be found regularly in just the extreme southwest corner of the state--they now occur with regularity much farther north and east. Participants in this trip will tour historical Blue Grosbeak sites in Chippewa and Renville counties to ascertain reoccurrence at some of these sites. Additionally, this trip will visit new sites that have Blue Grosbeak potential, possibly even looking for this bird in Meeker and/or McLeod Counties.

Meet at 7:00 a.m. in the Hardee's parking lot in Granite Falls. The trip will last 4-6 hours and involves a fair amount of driving as we travel between several sites and stop for a short time at each to look/listen for Blue Grosbeaks.

Birder Bio: Becca Engdahl

Tell us about yourself.

I was born and raised in St. Paul, but moved up to the Walker area a few years ago to play in the woods and study Wildlife Biology at Bemidji State University. I love to paint, draw, and photograph wildlife and the natural world around me. I really enjoy hiking and camping, and, of course, watching birds! This summer I will be working in both the Paul Bunyan State Forest and at Norris Camp above Upper Red Lake in northern Minnesota conducting boreal bird surveys focusing mainly on nesting woodpeckers and Eastern Whip-poor-wills.

When did you start birding?

Well, long story short—I have always been passionate about birds. I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to travel with my family when I was younger, and I quickly became fascinated with birds and wildlife conservation. I have always been a lover of all things wild, but I'm pretty sure I declared birds as my favorite animal and decided I was going to become an ornithologist somewhere around age four!

Unfortunately, I also became interested in a million other things and sadly after elementary school I put the bird fascination on the back-burner for far too long. I don't know what I was thinking, but I didn't *really* pick it up again until the winter of 2015, when a brilliant male Varied Thrush landed in our Hubbard county backyard and changed my life forever.

How did your interest expand after that first experience?

I have always been a little on the shy side and not only had I never heard of the MOU, but I didn't really participate much in any kind of social media before the Varied Thrush's eleven-day visit, so I had no idea there were people out there who would've liked to come see this rare bird. Once I found out, I decided I would join the MOU and eBird and start sharing my sightings. I ended up meeting some seriously awesome birders and quickly fell off the deep end!

Favorite places to bird inside or outside Minnesota?

From Roseau, Minnesota to the Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas, I always enjoy travelling and exploring new places, but I have also found a million reasons to love my home state of Minnesota. This state has a bunch of my favorite habitats, from prairie grasslands to boreal bogs. A few of my favorite places to bird in Minnesota include the Lost



by Alex Burchard

River State Forest, Glacial Ridge NWR, and the North Ottawa Impoundment.

Favorite bird or bird family?

I absolutely *love* woodpeckers! Red-bellied and Black-backed woodpeckers are definitely my favorite Minnesota woodpeckers. I love American Golden-Plovers and Upland Sandpipers. I also have a thing for sea ducks.

What new bird would you like to see most?

That's a tough question, because there are a *lot* of birds I would like to see! Birds I could possibly see in Minnesota? I think I would most like to find a Williamson's Sapsucker or Lewis's Woodpecker. Or maybe a Smew?

Minutes of the MOU Board Meeting

March 11, 2018

by Susan Barnes Elliott, Recording Secretary

[Note: Opportunities for membership involvement appear in italics; MOU encourages your participation!]

MOU's Relationship with Bell Museum: The Board welcomed Ms. Holly Menninger of the Bell Museum, who spoke to the Board about the ongoing relationship between the Bell and the MOU and shared a power point presentation on the new building. *She also outlined upcoming volunteer opportunities that might be of interest to MOU members, such as participation in the Bell's "Saturday with Scientists" program (providing guest speakers, setting up MOU tables, bird-related demonstrations, bird walks, etc.).* The Board expressed appreciation for MOU's ongoing relationship with the Bell Museum and welcomes future collaborations.

Old Business:

a. The board approved a decision to print *The Loon* in full color. Since many MOU members may prefer to receive *The Loon* in digital format only, Dave Cahlander will look into developing method for an opting out of the hard copy.

b. The Board expressed appreciation to Gerry Hoekstra for his work on *Minnesota Birding*. Dave Cahlander has fine-tuned an automated system to send a notice to all MOU members for whom we have email addresses when a new issue is posted. (If you have not already done so, please provide your email address to Membership Secretary Cindy Smith at membership@moumn.org).

New business:

a. The Board welcomed Josh Wallestad to his position as Chairperson of the reactivated MOU Field Trips Committee. Josh has put together a schedule of field trips, which has been publicized on the MOU website and Facebook page, the Minnesota Birding Facebook page, and in the newsletter.

b. Dick King and Bob Dunlap updated the Board on planning for the 2018 Paper Session. Until now, planning has been handled by MOU's Vice-President and Treasurer. Since this is MOU's premier event and involves much time and effort, the Board believes that it would be preferable to have a committee responsible for planning. The new Paper Session Committee will consist of Bob Dunlap, Cindy Smith, Joan McKearnan, Dick King, and Dave Zumetz. *Ideas or suggestions for the 2018 Paper Session should be sent to one of these committee members.*

c. Updating the design of the MOU website: There was broad

consensus among board members that, although the website offers a goldmine of information on Minnesota birds and birding, it can be daunting for new members to navigate. *MOU is therefore looking for a website designer to restructure the website. MOU members are encouraged to think about individuals they know who might be willing to take on this task.*

Announcements:

- Dave Cahlander, Bob Dunlap, Jim Lind and Tom Tustison had a productive conversation with eBird representatives in January regarding the possibility of incorporating MOU data into the Cornell Ornithology Laboratory's eBird database. At present there are differences between the two databases that make this impracticable, but eBird is willing to explore ways to make them compatible. Dave, Bob, Jim, and Tom will continue to work with eBird on this project.

- MOU is excited to co-sponsor the Fall Hawk Count at Carpenter Nature Center again this year. It will take place on the last weekend in September. Pete Nichols reported on last year's event, which attracted 100+ participants.

- Steven Wilson provided the Board with the 2018 recommendations of the Savaloja Memorial Fund committee. The committee received ten grant proposals this year and is recommending support for eight projects, totaling \$14,600. The Board approved the grants and extended a heartfelt thanks to the Savaloja Committee (Steve Wilson, Ann Kessen, Chuck Neil, Pam Perry, Sue Keator, and Dave Zumeta) for the time and effort spent reviewing and making recommendations on grants.

- After many years of great service, Mark Lystig will be stepping down as Treasurer at the end of this year. A big thank-you to Mark for a job exceedingly well done! Ann Kessen will take over this important position. Dick King reported that Sue Leaf is interested in taking on the role of MOU Historian and will be speaking with Dick to gain an understanding of what the job entails.

- Conservation Committee. *Given that conservation is an important piece of MOU's mission, MOU is looking for an MOU member to serve as Conservation Committee Chair. Please provide names to Bob Dunlap.*

The next Board meeting will take place on July 22, 2018 at 1 p.m., location to be determined.



Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

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Hastings, MN 55033

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The Mission of the M.O.U.

We foster the study and conservation of birds by amateurs and professionals. We promote the conservation of birds and their natural habitats. We support these aims primarily by publishing and sharing information, by serving as a repository for records, by conducting field trips, by awarding grants for research, and by supporting programs that educate members and the public about birds.

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Richard King, *Vice President*
Susan E. Barnes, *Recording Secretary*
Cindy Smith, *Membership Secretary*
Mark Lystig, *Treasurer*
Bob Bossert, *Past President*

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Gerald Hoekstra
Julie Winter Zempel, *MOU Calendar*

Designer of *Minnesota Birding*

Thomas Benjamin Hertzell

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All other MOU functions: mou@moumn.org
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City/State/Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

County _____

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- | | |
|---|--------------|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign (including Canada) | U.S. \$35.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$35.00 |
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Send to: Cindy Smith, MOU Membership Secretary
19885 Lillehei Avenue
Hastings MN 55033-9354

Please make a contribution to the Savaloja Grants

The Savaloja Grants supports research and other projects selected by the MOU for special attention. Your contributions help fund a better future for birds in Minnesota. You can add a contribution to your membership check.

Amount: \$ _____