

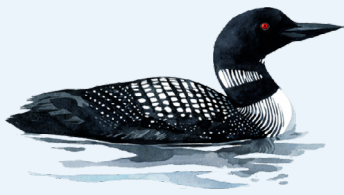


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Message from the President

by Michelle Terrell

It was good to see many members at the MOU Paper Session held on December 3. This year's program included papers exploring the relationship between species, their habitat, and environmental change; an update on HPAI in Minnesota; and an afternoon session devoted to raptor research. We appreciate the time that our speakers put into preparing their presentations and for sharing their research with us. If you were unable to attend the meeting, or would like to share the presentations with others, recordings of the papers will be hosted on the MOU's YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@minnesotaornithologist-suni2513/playlists>).

During the business meeting held at the Paper Session, I shared some of the activities of the MOU from the past year, and I would like to share those summary remarks here. As pandemic restrictions lifted, we began to see our calendar of activities return to a semblance of its normal cycle and as a result the MOU and its committees had an active year. The MOU has 14 standing committees, the chairs of which, together with the five elected officers, journal and newsletter editors, and Past President make up the Board.

During 2022, we also had one

ad hoc committee, chaired by Justin Watts, that was devoted to revitalizing our affiliate bird club membership program. The MOU is founded on the idea of collaboration between member organizations for shared benefit. In April of 1938, three of the state's bird clubs joined forces to form the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union, and in time other bird clubs and similar organizations from across the state became affiliated with the MOU. The number of associated organizations peaked at just over 20 in the late 1990s, but over the past two decades the number of affiliated clubs has dwindled. This year the Board chose to reinvigorate the program by creating an affiliate club membership level and by defining the benefits of affiliated membership. The benefits outlined by the *ad hoc* committee were approved at the December 1 meeting of the Board. If you are a member of a local birding organization or Audubon chapter that may be interested in becoming an affiliate member, we would love to hear from you. As our state's birds and their environment face increasing challenges, more than ever we need to be a statewide union of not only individuals but organizations working in partnership.

In fact, reflecting on 2022, part-

nership was a major theme for the MOU. Partnering with other non-profits allows us to share information and expertise, assist one another with programming, and to advocate together for our commonly held missions and goals. One of our organizations longstanding partners is, of course, the University of Minnesota's Bell Museum, which this year celebrated its 150th anniversary. The MOU is pleased to have been a supporting sponsor of the exhibit "Seeing Birds," which was created by the Bell to be the centerpiece of the museum's yearlong anniversary celebration. The exhibit, which focused on the exploration of birds, their environments, and their evolution, ran from January through October and had over 60,000 visitors.

We also partner with the Bell Museum to hold monthly bird walks led by MOU volunteers. After a COVID hiatus, walks resumed this year and were held from May through November. These walks, which take place on the University of Minnesota campus adjacent to the museum, are free and open to the public. On May 21st the MOU also participated in the museum's Spotlight on Science event, which had more than 325 visitors.

We also joined another long-term partner this year in the celebration of a milestone. Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory celebrated the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, to which the MOU and its members contributed in 1972. The MOU was a sponsor of the anniversary event held September 22-25 and was represented throughout the weekend's events. It was a great opportunity to meet Hawk Ridge staff, visit with student researchers who have received Savaloja Grants, and introduce visitors to the MOU.

That same September weekend, the MOU also joined with the Carpenter Nature Center to co-host the annual Fall Hawk Count, which documents the migration through the St. Croix-Mississippi Rivers confluence area. This year, 53 species were observed and more than 65 visitors attended the gathering. Earlier in the year, the MOU also partnered with Carpenter Nature Center in the Hastings Area Earth Day Birding Celebration held on April 23, which includes an annual Youth Birding Competition. This year teams had the option of being backyard birders within sight of their home or in-person birding within a count circle. A total of 25 teams registered for the event. I had the pleasure of being the volunteer judge for this year's competition, and it was a joy to witness the enthusiasm of young birders like team "Super Sandpipers," who recorded 67 species on the day. The MOU recognized the achievement of these young birders and others by providing free memberships to teams in each age category.

While working with partners ties in with our mission of reaching a wider audience of birders so that we can share the science, conservation, and enjoyment of Minnesota's birds with a broader cross-section of Minnesotans, so too does the work of several of our committees. In late March,



Nashville Warbler, by Betsy Beneke

the Education Committee organized the Spring Primer, co-sponsored by Carpenter Nature Center. Once again in 2022, this event was held online which allowed over 150 birders to listen to an excellent line-up of speakers from the comfort of home. If you missed the it, or want to rewatch any of the presentations, the entire program of the 2022 Spring Primer is available on the MOU's YouTube channel at the link shared above. We have heard from out-state members, and those for whom in-person attendance is difficult, how grateful they are for the increased accessibility of remote viewing opportunities. We will continue to look for ways to make our events accessible to a wider audience.

The Social Media Committee advances this mission through the MOU's Facebook and Instagram accounts. Besides sharing updates on MOU activities, many posts are developed by the team with new birders in mind, including the "Bird Word" series and posts that provide tips for identification. Over the past year the MOU continued to broaden its social media audience, averaging a 25% increase across both platforms.

Also shared via social media are reports from our Savaloja Grant awardees. Each year, the MOU seeks grant

applications from individuals or organizations undertaking projects in Minnesota that increase our understanding of birds, promote preservation of birds and their natural habitats, or increase public interest in birds, including among groups currently underrepresented in Minnesota's birding community. In 2022, only three grant proposals were received, doubtless due to pandemic-related disruptions and planning challenges. All three projects were funded in full, including one supported in part by an anonymous contribution in memory of Bob Russell. Just under \$8,000 in grants were awarded. Please note that applications for the next round of grants are due on January 20, 2023.

There is perhaps no place, though, that the MOU interacts with a wider cross-section of Minnesotans and non-birders, than at the Minnesota State Fair, and with attendance numbers back up, our cadre of 84 volunteers were kept busy handing out a record number of MOU bookmarks, checklists, and brochures, and fielding a wide variety of bird-related questions under our "ASK US ABOUT BIRDS" banner.

I would be remiss if I did not mention another popular MOU publication, the Daily Birding Planner, which in-

cludes a wealth of birding information including migration dates, checklists, and maps, among other useful information on Minnesota's birds. The 2023 planner is available to order through lulu.com (search "MOU").

The planner and all the work of the MOU would not be possible without the contributions of volunteers. I would like to thank everyone who volunteered their time to the MOU during 2022. Each year more than a hundred people give of their time and resources to the MOU, whether as committee members, bird walk leaders, speakers, State Fair booth staffers, writers of articles, donors, or in a multitude of other capacities big and small. The MOU truly runs on the commitment of volunteers to Minnesota's birds.

We have been incredibly fortunate to have many devoted volunteers. Among them, David Cahlander has largely created and maintained the MOU website single-handedly for decades. David would now like to transition the site to a new website manager or a website team. If you are a website developer or programmer or know someone who may be interested, please reach out to me (mterrell.mou@gmail.com) or David (david.cahlander@gmail.com). Or if you are interested in learning more about volunteering for the MOU in another capacity, you can find the contact information for committee chairs on the MOU website; or feel free to email me, and I can put you in contact with them.

Wishing you all a good birding year in 2023!

Townsend's Solitaire, by Bridget Jantscher

New MOU Members

Welcome to the MOU!

Please notify MOU at membership@moumn.org of any email or address changes so you can continue receiving our two publications *The Loon* and *Minnesota Birding Newsletter*. We would also appreciate learning when a MOU member passes.

Kathleen Carroll, *Bonner Springs, KS*
Jordan Chinburg, *Farmington, MN*
John Clouse, *Shoreview, MN*
John Foley, *Libertyville, IL*
Mary Getchell, *Duluth, MN*
Eleanor Gray, *St. Paul, MN*
Jodi Henricks, *Friendswood TX*
Steven Hogg, *Clear Lake, MN*
Alfred Kauth, *St. Paul, MN*
Jordan Lutter, *Minneapolis, MN*
John O'Toole, *St. Paul, MN*
Tate Putman, *Lakeville, MN*
James Strong, *St. Paul, MN*
Elena West, *Minneapolis, MN*
Dave Worrell, *Lakeville, MN*



Pheasants Forever as a Conservation Partner: A Modest Proposal for the M.O.U.

by Carrol Henderson, Chair, MOU Conservation Committee



Ring-necked Pheasant, by Richard Gotz

At my invitation, Mark Johnson, Executive Director of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC), made a presentation to the MOU Board regarding potential benefits for the MOU in partnering with other organizations on projects to receive grants. After the meeting, I called Mark to discuss how the MOU might contribute to grassland habitat conservation efforts without the need for major financial commitments. It seems to me that the MOU should be much more aggressive in embracing conservation for birdlife habitat, and especially that we should contribute to efforts to improve habitat for bird species that are seriously declining. That is what conservation is all about.

Last year, when we were debating the importance for the Rush WMA in Mahnomon County and other Pheasants Forever (PF) prospective projects, I realized that while these sites had information on some species present, such as Sandhill Crane, Greater Prairie Chicken, Sharp-tailed Grouse, and perhaps Marbled Godwit, there was little or no information on other less prominent grassland birds. PF provided a list of some of the areas they were planning to acquire for grassland development with LSOHC funding last year and where MOU birders might collect such information. There was some response, but it was not extensive. It seems to me that the MOU has the expertise that could provide the data necessary for assessing birdlife on those restored areas.

I knew that LSOHC funds could only be used for direct habitat benefits like acquisition and development. Use of the funds for education or wildlife surveys is not allowed. However, I felt there was a missing link in this process. There was no feedback to inform PF habitat managers of the suc-

cess in their habitat restoration efforts as they would relate to creating benefits for grassland birds. (The same could be said for information on pollinators). The restoration efforts of PF could benefit from an evaluation process embedded within their LSOHC habitat restoration efforts.

I discussed this idea with Mark Johnson. He agreed, and he liked the idea of bringing it before the LSOHC Board. I also discussed it with MOU President, Michelle Terrell, and she will be following up with Mark.

How could this be done? Our brainstorming that morning resulted in the following idea: Suppose the MOU could take on the responsibility of managing an “evaluation” process for PF as part of their restoration efforts on the land parcels they acquire and develop as prairie sites for future designation as DNR Wildlife Management Areas or USFWS Waterfowl Production Areas. If so, the MOU could potentially receive an LSOHC grant to manage the evaluation of the PF parcels (before and then after development). This would provide an invaluable service for PF in helping them understand the most successful techniques for prairie/grassland restoration and management, especially as it relates to grassland birds. This could be done on a pilot basis, perhaps for two or three sites. The MOU evaluation manager would develop procedures and standards for birdlife assessments and recruit MOU volunteers to carry out those assessments following that protocol. The documented time and efforts of the volunteers would qualify as donations from MOU that would match the use of LSOHC funds on these sites, so no use of MOU funds would be necessary.

Mark commented that “knowledge is powerful, and the potential songbird insights from this type of evaluation could be extremely confirming or possibly lead to exciting changes in the way r/e work is done.”

If successful, this partnership could affect how grassland restoration is performed and evaluated not just on Pheasants Forever and Outdoor Heritage Fund projects, but on a larger scale: the information that we collect might potentially also set new standards for grassland restoration in Minnesota and throughout the entire upper Midwest. The data could be published in MOU publications. An additional benefit of this partnership for the MOU might be its appeal to birders who are not currently members.

Please understand that this is just an idea at this point, but I think it has legs! it would be an important step for the MOU in addressing the need to be more proactive in conservation of Minnesota’s birdlife. Stay tuned.

2022 Thomas S. Roberts Memorial Award: Francesca Cuthbert

Written by Sushma Reddy and Todd Arnold, presented by Sushma Reddy

We are pleased to present the 2022 Thomas S. Roberts Memorial Award to Francesca Cuthbert. Dr. Cuthbert began her career in ornithology as a graduate student at the University of Minnesota's Bell Museum working on Caspian Terns; she recently retired from the University of Minnesota as a full professor with a productive career spanning more than four decades. She is an outstanding example of an ornithologist who has devoted her life's work to the conservation of waterbirds, including her key work on the recovery of the endangered Great Lakes Piping Plover population, as well as management and conservation issues surrounding several waterbird populations across North America and Asia.

Over the last 30-plus years, Dr. Cuthbert has focused much of her research on conservation efforts of several species across the upper Midwest. Most notable is her pivotal role in the restoration efforts of the Great Lakes Piping Plovers. Even before their listing as endangered, Dr. Cuthbert was involved in monitoring the diminishing population of these small birds. This includes efforts to maintain breeding of the population in Lake of the Woods, Minnesota. With steady efforts, Dr. Cuthbert was central to the creation of concerted team efforts towards restoration of this population, including activities to monitor, protect, captive-rear, and study Piping Plovers. In the last three decades, their efforts have succeeded in increasing the population from less than a dozen pairs to currently more than 70 pairs.

Dr. Cuthbert has the central figure in all these efforts—hiring and training the numerous nest monitors at different sites (most are short-term summer interns from the UMN and beyond and many go on to fruitful careers in biology), constructing enclosures to protect nests, banding of chicks and nesting adults, transporting eggs and chicks to and from the captive-rearing sites, and all the while recording and analyzing demographic data. Through the course of these efforts, Dr. Cuthbert has also trained dozens of undergraduate and graduate students. Their work has led to tremendous advances in our understanding of threats and assessments of effective management techniques for these waterbirds. Dr. Cuthbert's work has been recognized not just by other scientists but also highlighted in the popular and news media. Her outreach efforts are especially important now as these birds expand their ranges to nest closer to human occupied beaches; survival alongside humans is critical to maintaining sustainable populations. In all her efforts, Dr. Cuthbert strives to communicate the plight of the Piping Plover as a

learning opportunity for conservation and continues to build on this enormous body of work. If Piping Plovers ever return to Minnesota as a breeding species, Dr. Cuthbert's work will have been instrumental in making it happen.

In addition to her seminal work on Piping Plovers, Dr. Cuthbert has been actively involved in research and management of other waterbird species across the Midwest and in parts of Asia. These include addressing conflicts between the fishing industry and Double-Crested Cormorants, demographics of several terns, gulls, and other colonial nesting seabirds, as well as studying the possibilities of disease transmissions across migratory waterbirds.

Dr. Cuthbert is internationally renowned and has been invited to several parts of Asia to help guide conservation efforts. Her work has resulted in more than 100 peer-reviewed publications, a substantial portion of which are the result of training graduate students. She has given hundreds of presentations at conferences and seminar series, many of which were invited lectures.

Dr. Cuthbert has been tremendously successful in obtaining funding for her projects from a range of state and federal agencies as well as private foundations. These include grants from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, US Geological Survey, US Environmental Protection Agency, Minnesota Sea Grant, US Forest Service, University of Minnesota, Minnesota Forest Resources Council, Minnesota Public Radio, and IUCN, to name just a few. These funds, totaling almost \$6 million, have gone towards supporting the research and restoration of several species as well as the training of hundreds of students.

Dr. Cuthbert is an active member of the scientific community. She has spent most of her career as a faculty member at the University of Minnesota, working through the ranks to Professor, and for several years served as department head and director of graduate studies in the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology. She is also a visiting professor/investigator at the University of Michigan Biological Station, which serves as her summer base for her Piping Plover work. Dr. Cuthbert is an active member of the MOU and has given several presentations at the Annual Paper Sessions. She is also active in other bird-related organizations; she is a Fellow of the American Ornithological Society, member of Minnesota Nature Conservancy Advisory Board, member of Minnesota Audubon Advisory Commit-

tee, and Past President of The Waterbird Society.

In addition to all of this, Dr. Cuthbert is a passionate teacher, as is evidenced by several teaching awards, and she is a perennial favorite of the undergraduates at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Cuthbert has taught hundreds (thousands?) of students at University of Minnesota (both Duluth and Twin Cities campuses) and at the University of Michigan Biological Station in various subjects related to ornithology and conservation. She has advised over 50 graduate students (40 MS and 14 PhD) and has mentored hundreds of undergraduate researchers. As her students will attest, Dr. Cuthbert is an active and highly supportive mentor that goes out of her way to help her students.

Finally, an important part of Dr. Cuthbert is her collaborative nature. It is clear from her list of publications and

grants that Dr. Cuthbert seeks out and is successful in building connections with other scientists and across many different organizations. Her desire is not to achieve something for herself but to help others (especially early career scientists) on their path to success. Collaborations are hard to build and time-consuming to maintain, and the high degree to which Dr. Cuthbert strives to make them productive is admirable. The varied array of co-authors and co-investigators on her projects shows that she believes that working together with people from diverse perspectives is a valuable aspect of science. She is a model of how one can have a fruitful career in science by building a collaborative, supportive, and encouraging program.

Congratulations to Dr. Francesca Cuthbert, our 2022 Thomas S. Roberts Memorial Award Winner!

2022 David A. Cahlander Volunteer of the Year Award: Bruce Fall

Written by Liz Harper; presented by Bob Dunlap

As a member of this volunteer-run organization, and a member of our volunteer-supported sport, I am thrilled that we have two recipients of our David Cahlander Volunteer of the Year Award this year. I am not someone to use a lot of words, but I don't want that to minimize this recipient's extensive volunteer efforts.

This year's recipient is someone you all likely know, and someone whose volunteer efforts we have all benefited from. And, if you use eBird, you most likely have heard from him directly! I have known this person since moving to Minnesota in the '90s; I worked with him as a teaching assistant at the University of Minnesota before he retired. Writing this nomination, I remembered that he nominated me for an award back in the day. How things come full circle!

Since his retirement, Bruce Fall has spent about as many hours volunteering as he did before retirement working. OK, that may be an exaggeration, but it would not surprise me. Among Bruce Fall's many volunteer efforts, he has been an eBird reviewer longer than most people have been using eBird. He started as a volunteer reviewer for Minnesota in 2007 and he did all the reviewing by himself for ten years. While his hours go unreported, he volunteers daily, accumulating hundreds of volunteer hours every year.

There are many duties that come with being an eBird reviewer, and Bruce regularly goes the extra mile. Most eBird users are aware that Bruce sees and reviews reports of rare birds or high counts of birds for most of the counties in Minnesota. This alone leads to hundreds of emails being sent

to users every year, and the back-and-forth communications can take substantial amount of Bruce's time. In addition, though, Bruce follows up on issues brought to his attention by other eBird users, spends time reviewing images of rare and common species submitted to eBird to ensure proper ID, manually goes through thousands of checklists to look for errors, such as start-time or mileage issues, and continually refines filters across the state, editing them for species and subspecies high counts, arrival and departure dates, and seasonal fluctuations of abundance. All eBird lists go through these filters, and the filters trigger flagged records, so they are very important to get correct. I recently asked Bruce how much time he spends on eBird reviewing, and, while he didn't know, he did say that every filter takes 40-50 hours of work to create, plus additional hours to clean up the newly flagged records that updating these filters creates.

In addition to all that, he will take time to assist users if they have questions about ID or eBird best practices.

The review work Bruce does for eBird greatly improves the quality of the data that are uploaded from eBird to the MOU database. The eBird records make up the majority of new records in the MOU database, and those records form the basis for things like the quarterly Seasonal Reports. Speaking of seasonal reports—Bruce also spends many hours on the winter seasonal report.

It is my great pleasure to have the opportunity to present our Volunteer of the Year Award to Bruce Fall in recognition of his many hours of volunteer service!

2022 Brother Theodore Voelker Award: Kara Snow and Steve Kolbe

Presented by Alexis Grinde

I am pleased to present The Brother Theodore Voelker Award for Special Achievement in Field Ornithology to Steve Kolbe and Kara Snow.

For the past four years, Kara Snow and Steve Kolbe have worked in the Avian Ecology Laboratory at the Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) at the University of Minnesota Duluth. They have been dedicated and instrumental in a research study focused on understanding the ecology of Minnesota's peatlands. Specifically, Kara and Steve have conducted field work in Minnesota's lowland conifer forests from 2018-2022 studying two birds classified as Species in Greatest Conservation Need: Boreal Chickadee and Connecticut Warbler. These imperiled bird species have long been under-studied, both because of their low densities and because they breed in hard-to-access habitats. Kara and Steve have lived in the most remote areas of Minnesota from May to August for the past four years, working in some of the harshest habitats in the state. Nest-searching and telemetry is difficult under most circumstances; add in hiking through peat bogs, dealing with unbelievable amounts of mosquitoes, flooded roads, downed trees, frustration, and the sadness of documenting predated nests and the mortality of juvenile birds. Well, there are not two humans that are more deserving of an award for their efforts. The data Kara and Steve have collected have helped us to better understand the breeding ecology of these species and is being used by managers to improve habitat and forest management practices. I cannot overstate the importance of the data that Steve and Kara collected for informing conservation efforts for these birds in Minnesota and throughout their range. Their passion to do the hard work for bird conservation is admirable and inspiring. We are in the process of submitting the results of the study to several peer-reviewed journals. (Note: This study is part of a larger study that is led by Marcella Windmuller-Campione at the University of Minnesota and me, and has been funded by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. I have provided a summary of the outcomes of the research projects below.)

Connecticut Warblers and Boreal Chickadees are listed as Species in Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in Minnesota. Preserving and restoring quality breeding habitat is critical for conservation of these species, but there is a significant knowledge gap associated with basic breeding ecology and breeding and post-fledging habitat requirements for both species. To develop effective conservation, additional infor-

mation about their basic ecological needs is necessary to help identify forest and habitat characteristics that influence full life cycle events, such as nest success, juvenile survival, and habitat needs of post-fledgling birds.

To better understand the breeding ecology of Connecticut Warblers, we studied their nesting and post-fledging habitat use and survival in northern Minnesota at two study sites in 2019 (Sax Zim Bog) and 2020 (Red Lake Peatlands). We mapped territories of 49 singing males, located and monitored 11 nests, and tracked the post-fledging movements of individuals from five broods. Results for 13 individuals tracked 0-7 days post fledging had a mean daily distance from nests of 35.5 m and a maximum range of dispersal of 104 m during that time period. Connecticut Warblers were not observed making movements of greater than 55 m/day until day 8 or movements of 100 m/day until day 19 post-fledge. Our findings indicate that micro-site areas with high stem density were important features for post-fledgling birds and that the same habitats were used for breeding and the post-fledging time period. Results from this study can be used by land managers to develop and promote conservation strategies that will provide critical habitat to support this species.

Boreal Chickadees are cavity-nesting species and readily use nest boxes for breeding. Therefore, we deployed nest box arrays in two study areas located in the Sax Zim Bog (2019) and the Red Lake Peatlands (2020–2022). Nest boxes allowed us to control for potential differences in cavity availability between study areas and sites within the study areas. Study sites had similar forest cover types (predominantly mature black spruce) but were different ages and have varying degrees of fragmentation in the surrounding landscape. To quantify differences in habitat quality between sites, we documented nest density, parental provisioning rates, and nestling body condition and growth rates, as well as post-fledging movement and juvenile survival.

During the 2020, 2021, and 2022 breeding seasons we documented outcomes of 33 nests, tagged 58 fledglings from 24 broods, and collected data at 1,274 habitat vegetation points. The overall nest success (one or more individuals fledged) has been high (80%), with Red Squirrel and Pine Marten predation as the leading cause of nest failure (20%). The highest risk of post-fledge mortality is within the first three days after leaving the box. During this time period survival is 58%; we estimated that 66% of mortality was caused

by predation and the remaining 33% due to exposure to the elements (e.g., strong storms the night after fledging). Very few mortality events occurred after four days post fledging. Through our tracking of juveniles, we have learned a lot about their behaviors during the post-fledging period. For example, the broods typically stay with both parents and move around together for the first 21 days post fledging. Daily movement distance averaged 100 m (328 feet) during the first 10 days after leaving the nest and increased to 200 m (656 feet) as the juveniles grew and became more proficient fliers. In general, the broods remain relatively close to the home range of the parents and would avoid large openings and hard-edged transitional areas of the black spruce forest. Once the juveniles reached approximately 21 days post fledging, the broods split from the parents and began to make longer movements of, on average, 300 m from the “core” post-fledging area and tended to join up with mixed-species flocks consisting of ju-

venile Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Dark-eyed Juncos and Nashville and Yellow-rumped Warblers. We also frequently were able to document juvenile Boreal Chickadees from multiple broods joining a single mixed-species flock. Much longer daily movements of up to 1.7 km (a little over 1 mile) also occurred during this period, presumably as Boreal Chickadees sought suitable available (i.e., unoccupied) habitat. Around 40 days after fledging, the Boreal Chickadee juveniles typically settled into a regular area and started to make less frequent large movements (approximately 200 m average daily movement) across the landscape. These data are being used to provide breeding cycle habitat recommendations for managing forested landscapes to maximize productivity and prioritize conservation efforts.

Congratulations to Kara Snow and Steve Kolbe, 2022 recipients of the Brother Theodore Voelker Award, in recognition of their outstanding contributions in field ornithology!

2022 Young Birder Award: Nolan Meyer

Written by Garrett Wee and Ezra Hosch; presented by Clinton Dexter-Nienhaus

Many of you remember Ben Douglas’s impressive year of recording over 10,000 tics in Minnesota in 2019, a feat that involved countless hours of birding in pursuit of this goal. Ben had some help along the way, and this year’s Young Birder Award winner was actually the first to spot Ben’s 10,000th tic, a Ruby-throated Hummingbird at the top of a tree. Impressing Ben and others that morning with his sharp eyes and ears, our winner would continue to solidify this impression when he rediscovered the famous Painted Redstart in St. Paul a year later, in 2020.

In addition to having sharp field skills, our winner also has one of the most important abilities for being a good birder—dedication to being a careful field observer. He is cautious but knowledgeable with his identifications, taking care not to shoot from the hip or ID a bird based on what he needs for his list; rather, he tries to be as accurate as possible. He regularly submits documentation to the Minnesota Ornithologists’ Union Records Committee, whether it is for a rare bird that he found (such as a Mississippi Kite in Lyon County in 2021) or for rarities found others that he chased. In addition to contributing records to the MOU and eBird, our winner is also the compiler for the Marshall Christmas Bird Count in Lyon County; yet he remains one of the humblest young birders in the state. He also has an impressive willingness to pass on his knowledge and passion to the next generation of birders. That is exemplified by a trip this past

summer in which he took a boy scout to Marshall to see a Black-throated Sparrow, an accidental species in Minnesota. In recognition of his dedication to documenting birds, careful field birding, and willingness to share his knowledge with others, we are pleased to present Nolan Meyer with the 2022 Young Birder Award!

Evening Grosbeak, by Lon Baumgardt



2022 David A. Cahlander Volunteer of the Year Award: Jack Hauser

Presented by Jim Egge

About 50 years ago the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis founded the Bluebird Recovery Program. At that time, bluebirds were nearly extirpated from the state. Twenty-six years ago, a man named Jack Hauser decided he wanted, as the song said, to have a bluebird singing on his window sill. So he started with the Peterson Box and, using his engineering training, felt he could make some improvements.

Now, an eager birdhouse builder could spend a great deal of time to build, say, 50 houses, including posts and clamps, and then find promising sites to install them. But Jack kept making improvements, and soon had built house number 100, mostly out of recycled materials. About four years ago he built bluebird house number 1000

Today you'll find bluebird houses on most of the golf courses, and many parks, in the Twin Cities area. Bluebird-

ers have only to drop off a birdhouse needing repairs on Jack's porch, and it is ready for pick up within a week.

Jack's passion soon expanded to include other cavity nesters; his next project was the Prothonotary Warbler. He found several good sites and built houses to promote their survival in Minnesota. Wood Ducks also benefitted from his ambition.

The last few years, Jack has taken an interest in declining kestrel populations. He has built 24 kestrel houses, which you may have seen displayed at the MOU booth at the State Fair. He is currently seeking additional sites and monitors that would benefit kestrel families.

Congratulations to Jack Hauser, recipient of the 2022 Volunteer of the Year Award!

Sushma Reddy and Francesca Cuthbert



Steve Kolbe and Kara Snow



Clinton Dexter-Nienhaus and Nolan Meyer

Savaloja Grant Report

Factors Affecting American Kestrel Populations in the Upper Midwest

by Halle Lambeau

American Kestrels (*Falco sparverius*) are a widespread but declining raptor. Trends from migration sites and annual bird counts track kestrel show kestrel population declining since the 1960s. Decades of research have not succeeded in illuminating the primary causes of kestrel population decline throughout their range.

It seems likely that kestrels are experiencing different kinds of threats in different areas. One potential threat is loss of nesting habitat. Although there are widespread nest box programs and efforts to increase habitat in the Upper Midwest, no one has undertaken an extensive study of nest box production. Collecting data on drivers behind nest success and failure locally is a priority for future kestrel research and is critical for the implementation of kestrel conservation plans. The primary objective of my study is to learn about differences in occupancy, productivity, and nestling condition at kestrel nest boxes in Minnesota and Wisconsin, information that might be used to influence future management and conservation practices for this declining species.

This project involves monitoring over 400 American Kestrel nest boxes in Minnesota and Wisconsin during 2022 and 2023. For each nest box, in each year, I am recording occupancy, number of nesting attempts, eggs laid, nestlings fledged, nestling survival, and dates of these events. I am banding kestrel chicks in each of the occupied nest boxes and recording morphometric data from each chick to learn more about differences in growth and body condition.

In April 2022, with the help of Frank Nicoletti (Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory) and volunteers, I installed 82 kestrel nest boxes in northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin. Many of these boxes were generously donated by Steve Meinel and Brian Scott, and others were constructed by Frank Nicoletti, Ralph Larson, and Dave Carmen.

During spring and summer 2021, volunteers and I monitored these and other nest boxes—a total of 445, of which 207 were occupied by kestrels (136 were occupied by other species, such as European Starlings, Tree Swallows, and Eastern Bluebirds). The average nest had 4-5 eggs; 177 nest boxes produced at least one successful kestrel chick., and 717 chicks were banded in total.

The next step is analysis of the feathers for isotopic data in order to learn more about possible differences in the diet of chicks at different nest boxes and sites. I already

sent one batch of feathers to the Central Appalachians Stable Isotope Facility (CASIF) at the University of Maryland for stable isotope analysis.

I look forward to a second field season of data collection in 2023. After that, I plan to analyze all the data gathered throughout the project and interpret the results in my master's thesis at the University of Minnesota Duluth. I look forward to sharing the full results then with the MOU and the wider ornithological community.

This study is supported in part by the following sources: including Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, Friends of Sax-Zim Bog, the MN DNR Nongame Wildlife Program, Minnesota Army National Guard AHATS (Arden Hills Army Training Site), Beaver Creek Nature Center, Central Wisconsin Kestrel Research, Madison Audubon Society, and Cedar Grove Ornithological Research Station. Many of these groups contribute data from their own nest box programs, and I am grateful for their contributions. The generous Savaloja Grant from the MOU will help fund the feather isotope analysis.

Halle Lambeau is a second-year Master's student in the Integrated Biosciences program at the University of Minnesota Duluth. Halle's primary interest is wildlife conservation, and she has spent many field seasons participating in avian research around the country.

Website Manager Volunteers Needed

The MOU is seeking assistance with our website, as David Cahlander looks to retire after decades of maintaining moumn.org. Help is needed with regular monthly, quarterly, and seasonal operations, as well as periodic updates to pages. The website uses programming languages HTML, PHP, CSS, PDF, JavaScript, and PERL and also makes heavy use of a MySQL database. David is willing to mentor a new website manager or team. Web design volunteers are also needed.

If you are interested in helping with the website, please contact David (david.cahlander@gmail.com) or Michelle Terrell (mterrell.mou@gmail.com).

MOU Calendar

January / February 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
JANUARY 1 TRPD:LNC: First birds of the Year	2	3 ACM: Sax-Zim Bog Webinar	4	5	6	7 CNC: MN Campus Bird Hike RBNC: Bagels & Birds ZVAS: Quarry Hill NC Birding
8	9	10 TRPD:LNC: Lowry at night: Barred Owls	11	12 MRVAC: Sax-Zim Birding Days	13 MRVAC: Sax-Zim Birding Days	14 CNC: Wi Campus Bird Hike TRPD:LNC: Owl Search
15 MRVAC: Bass Ponds Birding TRPD:LNC: Raptors Up Close	16	17	18	19 FOSZB: Zoom Presentation on Boreal Chickadees	20	21 Golden Eagle Survey TRPD:LNC: Bird Banding TRPD:ENC: Bird Banding
22	23 MN Global Birders: Birding NE India	24	25	26 MRVAC: Forest Management for Bird Conservation	27	28 MRVAC: Beginning Bird Walk at Cedar Ave.
29 MRVAC: Birding the Wilkie Unit	30	31	FEBRUARY 1	2	3	4 CNC: MN Campus Bird Hike RBNC: Bagels & Birds MRVAC: Bass Ponds Birding ZVAS: Quarry Hill NC Birding
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 CNC: Wi Campus Bird Hike
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 TRPD:ENC: Every Body Can Bird	21	22	23 MRVAC: Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds	24	25 CNC: Masters of the Sky - The World of Raptors MRVAC: Birding the Wilkie Unit
26 CNC: Masters of the Sky - The World of Raptors MRVAC: Beginning Bird Walk at Cedar Ave.	27	28	MARCH 1	2	3 IOC: International Festival of Owls	4 IOC: International Festival of Owls
5 IOC: International Festival of Owls						



— MOU Calendar

January / February 2023

Note: Readers are advised to check the web sites of the respective organizations before going.

AUDUBON CHAPTER OF MINNEAPOLIS

<https://www.minneapolisaudubon.org/events?category=Upcoming%20Events>

Jan. 3: Sax-Zim Bog and the Biodiversity of Boreal Ecosystems

7–8:30 pm. Webinar with Clinton Dexter-Nienhaus, Head Naturalist for Friends of Sax-Zim Bog. Clinton will discuss the evolutionary adaptations of some of the boreal bird species in Sax-Zim, boreal ecosystems, the importance of winter, and will review some of the awesome birds and critters that call this place home through the coldest winter weather and warmest summer sun. Advance registration required at this link: [Webinar](#).

CARPENTER NATURE CENTER

<https://carpenternaturecenter.org/events/>

Minnesota Campus:

12805 St. Croix Trail S., Hastings, MN

Wisconsin Campus:

300 East Cove Road, Hudson, WI



Brown Creeper, by Trey Weaver

Jan. 7 & Feb. 4: Minnesota Campus Bird Hike

9–11:00 am. Learn to identify birds with local experts. Binoculars and field guides are available if needed. Program fee \$5.00 or free for “Friends of CNC,” St. Croix Valley Bird Club members, and students. Space is limited and reservations are required. Call 651-437-4359 for any questions and to RSVP.

Jan. 14 & Feb. 11: WI Campus Bird Hike

8–10:00 am. Learn to identify birds with local experts. Binoculars and field guides are available if needed. Program fee \$5.00 or free for “Friends of CNC,” St. Croix Valley Bird Club members, and students. Space is limited and reservations are required. Call 651-437-4359 for any questions and to RSVP.

Feb. 25 & 26: MN Campus: Masters of the Sky The Fascinating World of Raptors

Times, program fee, and registration information provided on the CNC events [webpage](#). Learn about the fascinating world of raptors, how owls hunt at night, why the Barn Owl is sometimes called the ghost owl, and how falcons attain such astounding speed. See live hawks, eagles, owls, falcons, and vultures from around the globe up close! Call 651-437-4359 for any questions and to RSVP. Space is limited and registrations are required.

FRIENDS OF SAX-ZIM BOG

<https://saxzim.org/events/>

Jan. 19: Nestling Diet, Factors Influencing Nestling Condition, Post-Fledging Survival & Dispersal in Boreal Chickadees

6:30–8:00 pm. Zoom presentation by Kara Snow, graduate student, U of MN Duluth. Kara will present four years of work on Boreal Chickadees in northern Minnesota, including the Sax-Zim Bog. Kara’s research utilizes DNA metabarcoding technology to reveal the diet of nestling boreal chickadees but also features a component of radio telemetry to track the movements of boreal chickadees after they leave the nest. Learn more about the biology of these charismatic northern birds! Registration required at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_j52RJo3sRruK-clz1nIKTg

NATIONAL EAGLE CENTER

Jan. 21: Golden Eagle Survey

The annual Golden Eagle Survey will be held across southeast Minnesota, western Wisconsin, eastern Iowa, and northwest Illinois. The survey area is expanding, and new routes are being created.

For those interested in joining or in refreshing their skills, there are three virtual training sessions being offered on these dates and times: 1/8/2023 at 2:00 pm: 1/10/2023 at 6:30 pm and 1/16/2023 at 2:00 pm.

If you are interested in joining one of the sessions, send your name, where you live, and the training date and time that works for you, to golden@nationaleaglecenter.org. If you have previously done a training session, have had a route, and are able to help again, please send an email to that effect.

INTERNATIONAL OWL CENTER

126 E Cedar St., Houston

<https://www.festivalofowls.com>

March 3, 4 & 5: International Festival of Owls

For full program details, go to the Festival website. Note especially that on March 5 at 7:00 p.m. researcher Milan Ruzic from Serbia will be talking about the largest concentrations of owls in the world: the wintering roosts of Long-eared Owls in Kikinda, where there can be up to 700 LEOWs in the city square. He personally has counted 2,500 owls in a single day. In addition, Sumio Yamamoto of Hokkaido, Japan may attend with footage of Blakiston's Fish Owls. Registration required.

MINNESOTA GLOBAL BIRDERS

NOTE: Details on registering for these Zoom events provided when available via MOU-NET and on the Minnesota Global Birders Facebook page a few weeks prior to the session:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/152831202070564>

Jan. 23: Birding Northeast India

7–9:00pm. Tom Will presents birding in a range of altitudes that contributes to the great biodiversity of this region. Free. Registration required. After you register, you will receive instructions on connecting to Zoom.

MN RIVER VALLEY AUDUBON CHAPTER

www.mrvac.org

NOTE: For information about birding events contact Craig Mandel at 952-240-7647. To register for the virtual zoom programs, go to the website: www.mrvac.org.

Jan. 15 & Feb. 4: Bird Watching at Bass Ponds

8–10:30 am. Search for birds that spend the winter season at the Refuge. Bring binoculars and a field guide. Registration required at <https://signup.com/go/rLmKfrK>. Bass Pond Trailhead, 2501 E. 86th, Bloomington.

Jan. 26: Collaborative Approaches in Forest Management for Bird Conservation

7:30 pm. Virtual Zoom program with Linnea Rowse, Great Lakes Private Lands Director for the American Bird Conservancy. The dramatic loss of 2.9 billion birds in 50 years drives natural resource workers to meet the critical conservation needs of birds. To address conservation needs, land managers and private landowners must collaborate to restore, maintain, and improve habitat quality and availability.

Feb. 23: A World on the Wing:

The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds

7:30 pm. Virtual Zoom program with Scott Weidensaul, the author of more than two dozen books on natural history and a contributing editor for Audubon. Even as scientists make astounding discoveries about the navigational and physiological feats that enable migratory birds to cross immense oceans or fly above the highest mountains, humans have brought many migrants to the brink. Based on his bestselling new book “A World on the Wing,” Scott takes you around the globe to learn how people are fighting to understand and save the world's great bird migrations.



Red-bellied Wood-pecker, by Thomas Burns

Jan. 28 & Feb. 26: Beginning Bird Walk at Old Cedar Ave.

8–10:30 a.m. Learn some basic bird watching skills on this walk. Bring binoculars and a field guide. Registration required at <https://signup.com/go/rLmKfrK>. Old Cedar Ave. Trailhead, 9551 Old Cedar Ave. S., Bloomington.

Jan. 29 & Feb. 25: Bird-Watching at Wilkie Unit

8–10:30 am. Search for birds that spend the winter season at the Refuge. Bring binoculars and a field guide. Registration required at <https://signup.com/go/rLmKfrK>. Wilkie Unit Trailhead, 7701 County Road 101 E., Shakopee.

Jan. 12 & 13: Sax-Zim Bog Birding Days

7:00 am. We will search for any over-wintering owls in the area and spend a day at some of the feeding stations in the Sax-Zim Bog. This will give your 2023 birding checklist a good start with a fair number of northern specialties. \$35/non-MRVAC members; \$25/MRVAC members. Please contact Craig Mandel at 952-240-7647 to register for this field trip.

RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER

1000 Rustad Road, Faribault

<https://rbnc.org/>

Jan. 7 & Feb. 4: Bagels and Birds

10–11:00 am. Join a River Bend Naturalist for bagels and coffee or tea while watching birds through the “windows on the wild” viewing area inside the interpretive center. All ages. Free program. Preregistration not required.

**THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT:
EASTMAN NATURE CENTER**

13351 Elm Creek Rd., Maple Grove

NOTE: For more information on these events, go to the [Eastman Nature Center website](#).

Jan. 21: Bird Banding

9–12:00 pm. See wild songbirds safely trapped, studied, and banded with numbered rings. Find out what scientists learn from these banded birds. Participants ages 11 years and younger must be accompanied by an adult. No fee.

Feb. 20: Every Body Can Bird

9–10:00 am. Accessible and inclusive birding for Every Body! Borrow binoculars. Practice birding by ear. Enjoy the company of other birders. Go birding with a naturalist on the sidewalk around the nature center and move inside to the Observation Room where birds visit the feeders right outside the windows. All ages and skill levels welcome. For more detailed accessibility information find our site on the [Birdability](#) map. Participants ages 11 years and younger must be accompanied by an adult.

**THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT:
LOWRY NATURE CENTER**

Lowry Nature Center, 7025 Victoria Dr., Victoria

NOTE: For more information on these events please go to the [Three Rivers Park District website](#).

Jan. 1: First Birds of the Year

12:30–1:30 pm. Walk with a naturalist to find the first birds of the year. Practice bird identification while hiking on trails. Start your 2023 bird list. Bring your own binoculars or borrow a pair of ours. All ages. Free.

Jan. 10: Lowry at Night: Barred Owls

7–8:00 pm. The nature center is open late! Come learn about the amazing habits, behaviors, and adaptations of Barred Owls. Includes meeting Lowry’s Barred Owl. All ages. Free.

Jan. 14: Owl Search

1–2:30 pm. Owls are built for winter. Learn about the adaptations that make them so successful, even during the cold, dark months of winter. Head out on a hike in search of owls and meet Lowry’s resident owl. All ages. Free.

Jan. 15: Raptors Up Close

3–4:30 pm. Meet captive raptors, learn about these amazing birds of prey, and discover how they help teach. Drop in anytime. All ages. Free.

Jan. 21: Bird Banding

9–12:00 pm. See wild songbirds safely trapped, studied, and banded with numbered rings. Find out what scientists learn from these banded birds. Participants ages 11 years and younger must be accompanied by an adult. Free.

ZUMBRO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

<https://zumbrovalleyaudubon.org/calendar.html>

Jan. 7 & Feb. 4: Monthly Bird Walk

Quarry Hill Nature Center

9–10:30 am. Leaders: Terry and Joyce Grier. Join us on a casual walk around Quarry Hill Park. Meet by the Nature Center entrance. Bring binoculars if you have them. Dress for the weather. Stay for any length of time. Walks usually last about 60-90 minutes. Free and open to the public; no registration required.



~ MINNESOTA BIRDING WEEKENDS & WEEKS ~
APRIL 2023 - FEBRUARY 2024 • <http://www.mbwbirds.com> • OUR 38th SEASON !

*Complete descriptions of all MBWs, summaries of previous MBWs, registration information, and more will be posted on the **MBWbirds website** ([mbwbirds.com](http://www.mbwbirds.com)) on **DECEMBER 31, 2022.***

PLEASE NOTE – The opening of registrations for 2023-24 will be at **NOON** on **JANUARY 2, 2023.**

APRIL 2023 - JANUARY 2024 MBWEEKENDS

See mbwbirds.com/mbweekends.html for more information on each MBWeekend – and note that some will take place on weekdays. Changes in this schedule are possible – including some that may be canceled or added – and these will be updated on mbwbirds.com. All MBW fees are \$20/day.

- April 13 - 14 ~ Rothsay WMA, Wilkin County
- April 27 ~ Martin County
- April 28 ~ Faribault County
- April 29 ~ Freeborn County
- April 30 ~ Mower County

- May 11 pre-MBW ~ Sherburne County
- May 12 pre-MBW ~ Benton County
- May 13 - 14 ~ Stearns County

- May 26 pre-MBW ~ Wabasha County
- May 27 - 28 - 29 ~ Southeastern Minnesota

- June 22 - 23 - 24 ~ Beltrami County

- September 1 pre-MBW ~ Pennington County
- September 2 - 3 - 4 ~ Kittson County

- September 28 pre-MBW ~ Swift County
- September 29 pre-MBW ~ Chippewa County
- September 30 - October 1 ~ Kandiyohi County

- October 23 - 24 ~ Tofte & North Shore I
- October 25 - 26 ~ Tofte & North Shore II

- November 4 - 5 ~ Grand Marais & North Shore

- January 4 - 5, 2024 ~ Lake County
- January 6 - 7, 2024 ~ Cook County



Darcy Pinotti photo

- Registrations only accepted by e-mail
- Limit one MBWeekend (including pre-MBW) or one MBWeek registration per day
- Limit one person (plus others at the same address) per registration
- Registration opens on JANUARY 2, 2023 beginning at NOON

Questions? Contact Kim R Eckert
eckertkr@gmail.com • 218 349 5953

APRIL 2023 - FEBRUARY 2024 MBWEEKS

See mbwbirds.com/mbweeks.html for information on each MBWeek, including the estimated shared trip expenses. Changes in this schedule are possible (some dates may have to be adjusted), and updates on these will also be posted on mbwbirds.com.

- April 18 - 27, 2023 ~ High Island & Texas Hill Country
- June 3 - 11, 2023 ~ Black Hills & western Dakotas
- July 22 - 30, 2023 ~ Southeast Arizona
- January 13 - 21, 2024 ~ Southern California
- February 8 - 16, 2024 ~ South Texas



Roy Zimmerman photo

Birder Bio: Matthew Thompson

Tell us about yourself:

I live in Rosemount, Minnesota, I was born here and have lived here for all my life (18 yrs).

When did you start birding, and what first sparked your interest?

I started birding in 2016 after MOU member Kevin Manley recruited me to start using eBird while I was out looking for nature with my dad. I have loved nature ever since I was a kid. I got many nature books from the library, trying to learn all that I could. I went to a bird educational event at the Minnesota Valley NWR, where they taught me many species I hadn't known before. I got the Sibley bird guide for Christmas and paged through all the miraculous birds trying to memorize them. I've always been interested in identifying all the species that surround me while I am out in the field.

How did your interest expand after that first experience?

While out in the field I found myself learning about which locations in the area were bird rich and which places I would want to visit to find birds. After a couple years of going on guided walks with experienced birders and learning the common species around the Minnesota Valley and Dakota County, I started to learn about rare bird alerts and chasing. I can still remember my first time going to see the Snowy Owls at MSP and shortly that by my chase to locate a Carolina Wren at Fort Snelling State Park. During the beginning of Covid I found myself taking more walks, especially for warblers, and trying to learn their plumage and songs. I love reading about new birds in books I have at home to learn everything I can about their nature, habits, and facts about them.

What is the main attraction of birding for you?

Learning about different species of birds and drawing them has always been one of my favorite things. The connections I have made and rare birds I have seen will stick with me for my lifetime. As much as I enjoy chasing. I experience a thrill just in taking hikes with binoculars and not knowing what will be around every tree. The magic of unexpected finds makes the hobby all the more enticing to participate in.

Where are your favorite places to bird inside or outside Minnesota?

East Community Park in Lakeville holds a place in my heart, because it is so close to where I live and so full of wonderful warblers and other songbird species. The Min-



nesota Valley NWR is where I got into birding, and it has so many different areas to check out as well.

What is your favorite birding style (i.e., by yourself, with others, etc.)?

Being alone in a place I visit often (like East Lake) is one of my favorite ways to bird, but I enjoy the company of a few other people too, especially on longer trips to see birds. I am also happy showing a friend around a local patch and explaining what areas I like to hit for different bird diversity.

What is your favorite bird or bird family?

My favorite is the Greater Roadrunner. I know it is not a bird we have in the Minnesota, but I just think they are so neat!

Do you have any advice on how to be a better birder?

Go out as much as you can and take things one step at a time. Birding has a lot of information to take in, and the longer you pursue it, the more you will learn. Always have binoculars available, because you never know when you might need them, especially during times of migration. For me, the way I learned bird songs best was to hear them first hand in the field. I believe that being in the field and birding can give you more knowledge than any books can, because you'll pick up so much just by being curious about all that you see.

Any other interests or hobbies when you're not birding?

I like to use iNaturalist and learn about all the other flora and fauna wherever I am. There is so much wildlife all around us, and to put a name to it all feels good. I like to seek out reptiles, butterflies, Tiger Beetles and dragonflies as well whenever I can. I like hanging out with friends, disc golfing, bowling and any form of art whether bird related or not.

What new bird would you most like to see?

Common Eider!



Merlin, by Tom Gilde



Winter Wren, by Allan Meadows

Second Call Savaloja Grant Applications

Steve Wilson, Chair, MOU Savaloja Committee

MOU will award grants for bird-related projects to be funded from the Savaloja Memorial Fund in 2023. Grants can be awarded for projects that increase our understanding of birds, promote preservation of birds and their natural habitats, or increase public interest in birds. Proposals that include those currently underrepresented in Minnesota's birding community are welcome as a means of broadening public support for birds and their habitat.

Awards typically range from a few hundred dollars up to as much as \$4000. In 2022 three proposals were received and awarded grants totaling \$8,000. Further details on past projects and application information can be found at <https://moumn.org/grants.php>. For 2023, we anticipate that more than \$12,000 will be available for grants. The deadline for receipt of grant applications is **January 20, 2023**. Grant recipients will be notified by April 1, 2023. If your organization has an idea for a great project, please consider applying! Thanks to you, MOU has supported a diverse array of worthy projects over the years. Last year's pandemic-related downturn in grant applications is unlikely to be replicated next year, and MOU will again be faced with difficult decisions over which important projects won't be supported because there isn't enough money to go around. You can help MOU make sure fewer worthy projects go unfunded by upgrading your membership next time you renew, or donating now by following the Donate button at the top of MOU's homepage, being sure to note "Savaloja Fund" in the instructions to the seller. Minnesota's birds will appreciate it!

MOU Board of Directors Minutes

December 1, 2022

*by Kathrynne Baumtrog, Recording Secretary,
Pending approval at the spring 2023 Board meeting*

Present: Michelle Terrell, Steve Wilson, Peter Nichols, Jennifer Vieth, Dick King, Ann Kessen, David Cahlander, Tom Tustison, Kara Snow, Anthony Hertzler, Kathrynne Baumtrog, Carrol Henderson, Gerald Hoekstra, Susan Barnes Elliot, Cindy Smith, Justin Watts, Kate Kelnberger.
Absent: Mark Lystig, Bob Janssen, Liz Stanley, Garrett Wee
Guest: Mark Johnson, Executive Director, Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

Approval of the minutes from 8/6/2022

Treasurer's Report

(Ann Kessen, treasurer)

Income and expenditures:

Membership dues were as planned, with the sales of the Daily Birding Planner 2022 slightly less than anticipated. PayPal increased its fees. MOU also made a one-time payment to Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory for its 50th anniversary celebration.

A Special Donation of \$25,000.00 was paid to Pheasants Forever in partnership for a Rush WMA land acquisition. This was paid out of the Ameriprise Funds.

Restricted money:

The current account in the report is less the Pheasants Forever donation and loss of values in U.S. stocks.

A motion was made and approved to accept the report, with corrections regarding printing and mailing costs for *The Loon*.

Budget Report

Expenses were higher than the planned budget for 2022, but the MOU is still in the black.

Michelle Terrell requested a line item for membership and event management tools to possibly include MailChimp and Eventbrite services. This would be \$900.

A motion was made and approved to accept the 2023 Operating Budget Plan.

Membership Report (Cindy Smith, chair)

We have 46 new members since August 2022, for a total of 969 to date. There are 1046 members on the mailing list. The reminder to renew membership is getting delivered.

Committee Reports

Conservation Committee

(Carol Henderson, chair)

Carrol explained why a MOU partnership with Pheasants Forever is beneficial to MOU and suggested an annual amount donated for land conservatorship, specifically for prairie and grassland habitats.

Carrol had invited Mark Johnson, the Executive Director of Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, to discuss with the Board a variety of partnership types and grant opportunities that could be used to secure funds for conservation.

Following Johnson's talk, Carrol made a motion to work with Pheasants Forever on three projects, involving Traverse County, Tiger Lake, and Lake of the Woods County. He asked for \$2,500.00. A motion was made and passed to table the issue for now.

Savaloja Grants Committee

(Steve Wilson, chair)

Steve is stepping down as chair of the Savaloja Committee and the MOU Board is looking for a new chair. Steve asked specially that the Board look at young and diverse people to build the MOU. The Board thanked Steve for his work with the MOU and specifically his service with the Savaloja Grants and Committee.

Steve submitted the report for 2022 covering 2020-2022 grants and their current status. (Note: some of the projects were interrupted by the Covid pandemic).

Education Committee

(Jennifer Vieth, chair)

Jennifer listed the events that involved the Education Committee, including the Youth Birding Day, Spring Primer, Fall Migration Count, Hawk Ridge, and the Minnesota State Fair.

Awards and Recognition Committee

(Susan Barnes Elliott, chair)

Susan noted that the plaques for past award recipients (once displayed at the Bell Museum) will go into the MOU Archives at Carpenter Nature Center. If a location for the display of the plaques is made available later, then updating them will be revisited.

Other Business

1. Proposal for Publication of the World Owl Conference Proceedings. Tony Hertzell

Tony submitted a proposal for the MOU to electronically publish the proceedings of the next scheduled conference; October 2023 in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Motion approved and accepted.

2. Announcement of new committee chairs.

Michelle Terrell

Awards and Recognition Committee: Liz Harper

Field Trips: Trey Weaver

Individually nominated and both approved unanimously.

3. Affiliate Bird Club Memberships. Justin Watts

Justin submitted a MOU Affiliate Club Membership Benefits document to accompany the Affiliate Membership level added to the by-laws last year. The MOU Vice President will currently head up the task of reaching out to affiliate clubs and developing relations.

The amount of \$25.00 for Affiliate Membership will now appear on the website.

The affiliates listed on the MOU website will also be updated as the work progresses.

Motion accepted and passed with one absence.

4. The Binocular Bob Fund. Michelle Terrell

The fund status is inactive. However, Sid Stivland contacted Michelle with the hope of reviving the program. Sid will contact Bill Tefft, Youth Mentorship Coordinator, to discuss.

5. MOU website. Michelle Terrell

The MOU Board had a Special Meeting November 11, 2022, with Liz Stanley, IT Committee Chair to present options for hiring an outside consultant to assist with development of the new MOU website and integration of membership and event management tools. Thirteen members of the Board were present. Michelle informed the Board that following that meeting Liz Stanley resigned from her position.

Michelle reminded the Board that David Cahlander would like to retire from his position of website manager. To support the continued operation of the current MOU website, the Board needs to develop a succession plan and a schedule for its implementation. Michelle asked the Board to consider how best to facilitate this transition. David expressed his desire to transfer the website's maintenance to a new person or team. In anticipation of the transition, David has begun

detailed information about the website, its operations, and key files. David will send a call for a website manager to the listserv.

Michelle noted that the Board previously approved the creation of a new website. Discussion centered on how the user interface could be improved, whether an outside consultant could be hired to assist with that portion of the website, and whether funds could be secured in support of that work. Tony Hertzell stated that the MOU is an all-volunteer organization and that volunteers should be sought. David and Tony indicated their willingness to look for volunteers within the MOU and work with others to improve the current website.

Michelle asked each member of the Board to voice their thoughts on the state of the MOU website renovation and redesign. The issue was tabled.



Northern Cardinal, by Richard Gotz



Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

Carpenter Nature Center
12805 Saint Croix Trail South
Hastings, MN 55033

Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

Carpenter Nature Center
12805 Saint Croix Trail South
Hastings, MN 55033
Email: mou@moumn.org
Web: <http://moumn.org>

MN Birding is published bi-monthly

Editor: Gerald Hoekstra

Designer: Thomas Benjamin Hertzell

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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.

MOU Officers

Michelle Terrell, *President*
Justin Watts, *Vice President*
Kathrynne Baumtrog, *Recording Secretary*
Cindy Smith, *Membership Secretary*
Ann Kessen, *Treasurer*
Richard King, *Past President*

Editor of *MN Birding*

Gerald Hoekstra
Gene Bauer, *Calendar Editor*

Designer of *MN Birding*

Thomas Benjamin Hertzell

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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.

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