



Minnesota BIRDING

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White-throated Sparrow
by Jean Brisance

A Comprehensive New Volume on Minnesota's Birds

by Lee A. Pfannmuller, Gerald J. Niemi, and Janet C. Green

Our new and long-awaited publication on Minnesota's breeding birds is currently in press. Titled *The Breeding Birds of Minnesota: Their History, Ecology, and Conservation*, this book is built on the monumental field efforts of hundreds of Minnesota's best bird watchers and volunteers. Its publication was supported by major contributions from the University of Minnesota Press, generous individual supporters, and grants from the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, St. Paul Audubon Society, Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, Minnesota Arts and Cultural Fund, and the MOU's Savaloja Grants Program. The result is a beautifully illustrated compendium on the history, distribution, abundance, and conservation of 250 birds that were documented breeding in the state from 2009-2013 and 19 species that formerly bred in the state or are incidental breeding species. Over 600 pages in length, the volume contains more than 1,000 figures and includes superb images by some of Minnesota's best wildlife photographers.

The book highlights the foundational work of Minnesota's first breeding bird atlas. Minnesota was behind most of the United States and Canada in not having an atlas for its breeding

avifauna. Iowa, Michigan, Ontario, South Dakota, and Wisconsin have already completed two atlases, while Manitoba and North Dakota have completed one. Fortunately, substantial state appropriations from the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources, enabled Minnesota to address this dire need and place the results in the context of Minnesota's ornithological history. Additional support also was provided by Audubon Minnesota, the Natural Resources Research Institute of the University of Minnesota-Duluth, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the MOU.

The state's rich ornithological history includes the most treasured resource on Minnesota birds, Thomas S. Roberts's 1932 and 1936 editions of his two-volume treatise, *The Birds of Minnesota*. Filled with Roberts's personal field observations and those of over 160 colleagues and collaborators across the state, the book provides a unique and exceptional insight into the state's avifauna from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s. Roberts's work has been followed by, for example, Green



The Breeding Birds of Minnesota

THEIR HISTORY, ECOLOGY, AND CONSERVATION

Lee A. Pfannmuller, Gerald J. Niemi, and Janet C. Green

Foreword by Francesca J. Cuthbert



and Janssen in 1975 and by Janssen in 1987 and 2019 on phenology and seasonal distribution of Minnesota birds, as well as the remarkable book by Eckert (2022) on over 1400 breeding locations across the state. Drawing upon these resources, the new *Breeding Birds of Minnesota* provides an essential link for the nearly 100 years that span these publications, bringing readers to the present day and the exceptional challenges our breeding birds now face. As one pre-publication reviewer wrote: This new publication “is the very first comprehensive account of the status and distribution of species that breed in Minnesota since the second edition of Roberts’s *Birds of Minnesota* in 1936, with both up-to-date information and well-researched details regarding the history of their presence in the state since the 1800s. The value of this book is exceptional. I’ve already cleared out space on my bulging bookcases for my copy.” Indeed, a complementary foreword to the book by Dr. Francesca Cuthbert helps to set the context of the book’s historical significance.

We, the authors, have each spent more than 50 years on management, research, and conservation of Minnesota’s birds. These years included significant involvement with a key component of the book, Minnesota’s Breeding Bird Atlas, which has been available online (<https://mnbirdatlas.org>). From initially exploring the idea of conducting a state-wide atlas to ultimately being engaged in its design, its execution, and the analysis and presentation of its results, our involvement spans more than two decades. Once field work for the atlas was completed, we dedicated ourselves to making the data available on the web. Following considerable work and amazing assistance from research scientists Ed Zlonis and Nick Walton, our technical editor, Kim Rewinkel, and web designer, Jane Reed, the interactive website was launched in November 2017.

Then, with strong encouragement from the University of Minnesota Press, we began work on a book soon afterwards. Because so much text had already been prepared for the website, it seemed as though a book might be a breeze. Sometimes, it helps to be a little naive!

As it turned out, considerable work remained. There were items that we wished to add or change to the website’s original content. For example, we wanted to provide more background materials, especially a chapter on the biogeography of Minnesota birds. An introduction also was added to each species account to describe a bird’s curious habits, its plumage and vocalizations, and some of the qualities that ornithologists had ascribed to it. We delved into the writings of early ornithologists such as John James Audubon, Alexander Wilson, Edward Forbush, Arthur C. Bent, and T.S. Roberts. These field biologists often lacked today’s illustrated field guides, recordings of vocalizations, or cameras to document their observations. Instead, their eloquent words, based on hours of focused observation, painted a perfect image. For example, describing the Brown Creeper, Bent (1948) compared it to “a fragment of detached bark that is defying the law of gravitation,” while Brewster (1902) described the American Bittern’s delivery of its pump-er-lunk call as a performance that includes “abrupt contortions of the head and neck unpleasantly suggestive of those of a person afflicted by nausea.” Their early observations also helped to illustrate how much has changed over the years. Hatch (1892), for example, symbolically described the cruel treatment of Bald Eagles by noting that “many a cabin in the solitudes of the deep, dark forests, has its young eagle chained to its gable, or the convenient out-house.” Roberts (1932) reflected on the “myriads of restless, twittering little” Yellow-rumped Warblers he witnessed in Minneapolis when he was just 16 years old in April 1874.

Ensuring that we were presenting the most up-to-date scientific information in the book was especially important. Since the MNBBA website was launched in 2017 there has been an abundance of updated information that it was essential to include: In 2019, the federal Breeding Bird Survey had updated the population trends for all North American birds; the North American Waterfowl Population and Habitat Survey had provided updated information for most waterfowl species; Partners in Flight had re-evaluated the conservation priorities of all birds with new global population estimates; and new trend data were provided for forest songbirds in the Chippewa and Superior National Forests through 2021. Also in 2021, the American Ornithological Society published the 62nd supplement of the Check-list of North American Birds, which revised the taxonomic order for many bird families and changed the scientific and common names for several species.

Addressing one of the most critical conservation issues facing Minnesota’s avifauna — climate change — was one of the most significant changes in the book. The MNBBA

website included preliminary models developed by the National Audubon Society in 2014 to predict the impacts of climate change on hundreds of North American species. Five years later (2019) they had developed more elaborate models based on more than 70 data sources and 140 million bird records; these data provided greater confidence and higher spatial resolution in their predictions. Given the concerns of climate change in Minnesota, it was critical to include this updated information. Indeed, as alarming as it seems, 27 of Minnesota's species, including many of its most iconic northern forest species, were predicted to be extirpated by 2050!

Incorporating these and many other changes was important. Nonetheless, the heart of each species account remained largely unchanged — the history of its breeding distribution in Minnesota. Since this was the first Breeding Bird Atlas, it was essential to provide an appropriate context of the results. We summarized what was known for each species in published accounts going back to the late 1800s and often even earlier. The website gave us the freedom to be carefree about the length of these accounts, especially the history of their breeding distribution. The book, on the other hand, required us to be as concise as possible to keep its size reasonable. Most accounts were limited to approximately 1,500 words. Reducing their length to fit this format was often an agonizing process. Fortunately, we were able to prepare longer accounts for several species of special significance in the state, including state and/or federally listed species, several game species, and iconic species such as the Common Loon, which has been one of the most searched species on the website. By the summer of 2020, the text was in good shape and was sent out for peer review, a process that spanned nearly eight months.

Finally, publishing a bird book necessitated including outstanding photography. We are so grateful to the wonderful Minnesota-based photographers who donated their amazing images to the publication. In addition to donating his own photographs, Jean Brisance donated hundreds of photographs by his late father, David Brisance, for us to peruse through for inclusion in the book. Other contributors included Mike Lentz, Michael Furtman, Laura Erickson, Rebecca Field, Gerald Hoekstra, Sparky Stensaas, and many others. We also travelled across Minnesota for several summers to take photographs of what we felt represented ideal breeding habitat for each species. Once this work was completed, we spent months working with Erik Anderson at the University of Minnesota Press to make the final selections. In the end, the book became a substantially updated, condensed, and much improved version of the Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas that is available on line.

When we turned over the manuscript to the University Press in February 2021, we thought the hard work was over. But, as we have learned at each stage during this process, more work lay ahead. Indeed, upon reading the introduc-

tory materials, Erik had excellent comments and suggestions that led to some major reorganization and the writing of new text. In the coming year we also worked on many of the finer details including writing captions for hundreds of images, working with our technical editor, Kim Rewinkel, to ensure that the nearly 2,000 literature citations were accurate, securing additional photos for species that were especially challenging, and assisting the Press as they worked to secure funding. The generous funding from many supporters and the donation of photographs have enabled the Press to keep the costs of the book very affordable. We are especially pleased that the MOU Savaloja Grant will allow the Press to share copies of the book with Indigenous libraries and community centers around the state, as a tribute to these communities' significant contributions to local bird knowledge, and to provide inspiration to Native bird watchers in Minnesota.

Finally, in March 2022, the revamped manuscript and images were sent to Wilsted and Taylor, a production and design firm in California that would complete the final copyediting and design work for the book. For nearly a year we reviewed and responded to their copyedits on over 1,600 pages of text. Work on the book's design also began. Wilsted and Taylor was selected by the University of Minnesota Press because of their reputation and award-winning work. We are pleased to say that *The Breeding Birds of Minnesota* has delivered on that reputation. Now nearing the end, the book is slated to be available late in 2023.

Publishing a new, comprehensive history of Minnesota's breeding avifauna, the first in nearly a century, has been a long journey. And, like so many big endeavors, it would not have been possible without the contributions of literally

Ruffed Grouse, by David Brisance



hundreds of people, from the volunteers in the field to graduate students, photographers, copy editors, book designers, financial supporters, and others too numerous to mention here. We hope their collective efforts have produced an invaluable resource that deepens our understanding of Minnesota's avifauna, helps guide our continued conservation efforts, and entralls nature lovers with its beautiful imagery.

At the end of our journey, ten years of considerable work had passed since the MNBBA was completed in 2013. Throughout those years, T.S. Roberts was our constant companion as we spent countless hours reading and re-reading his original bird "biographies." Reflecting on our own efforts, we found ourselves drawn to Sue Leaf's book, *A Love of Affair with Birds*, and her account of Roberts's work to write and publish *The Birds of Minnesota*. How long did it take him to write two volumes that included a comprehensive key to Minnesota birds, accounts of over 300 breeding birds, migrants, and winter visitants, and detailed introductory materials, including a "Review of Ornithology in Minnesota," an overview of Minnesota's geography, and "A Synopsis of the Bird-Life of Minnesota"? In a far more

challenging time, Roberts and his full-time assistant, Mable Densmore, appear to have spent seven years focused almost entirely on his "magnum opus." To this day we stand in awe at his accomplishment and are thankful that he established such a foundation for our endeavor.

We wish to end this piece with a quote directly from the first page of *The Breeding Birds of Minnesota: Their History, Ecology, and Conservation*:

This book is for the long-term survival and conservation of Minnesota birds and for anyone with a desire to know something about them. It is dedicated to the hundreds of atlas participants, partners, and contributors whose outstanding efforts made Minnesota's first breeding bird atlas a success and made this book possible. Their work, coupled with the dedication of thousands of bird watchers, ornithologists, nature enthusiasts, resource managers, and conservationists who have made past and present contributions to our knowledge of Minnesota birds, serves as the very foundation of all efforts to conserve our remarkable avifauna.

Thank you, MOU for all your support and for helping to make this possible!

Yellow-rumped Warbler, by Rebecca Field



New MOU Members

Note to members: Please notify the Membership Chair (membership@moumn.org) of any email or address changes so you can continue receiving the MOU's two publications. We would also appreciate notification when a MOU member dies.

Diane Anderson, *Rochester, MN*
 Margaret Bezanson, *Crystal, MN*
 Maureen Burkle, *Rochester, MN*
 Jonathan Burns, *Stillwater, MN*
 Armand Cohen, *Afton, MN*
 Thomas Eggen, *Plymouth, MN*
 Kristyn Hewitt, *Mound, MN*
 Katherine Janis, *Oakdale, MN*
 Alex Knopick, *Edina, MN*
 Lilah Magnuson, *Farmington, MN*
 Margie Nelson, *Duluth, MN*
 Anne Gilbertson Seeling, *Minneapolis, MN*
 Mark and Mary Spoden, *Cohasset, MN*
 Jonah Tamez, *Minneapolis, MN*
 Azra Thakur, *Woodbury, MN*
 Amanda Thompson, *St. Joseph, MN*
 Jennifer Widmer, *North Mankato, MN*
 Jennifer Willis-Rivera, *River Falls, WI*
 Elizabeth Wortman, *Long Lake, MN*
 Dustin Wrolstad, *Cottage Grove, MN*

Message from the President

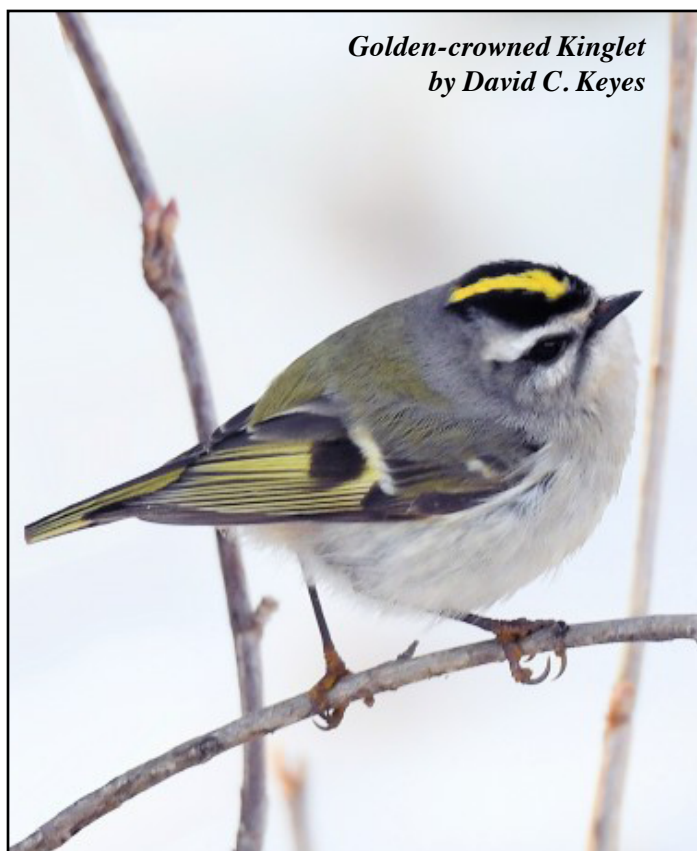
by Michelle Terrell, MOU President

In the Message from the President in the May/June issue of the newsletter, I shared that the MOU Board had authorized a proposal to the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) for a grant from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) to allow the MOU to contract with a website development vendor to modernize our website so that we can continue to provide open-source access to an online database of more than 19 million statewide avian records. I promised to share an update on the status of the proposal in this newsletter and unfortunately that news is disappointing.

If you are familiar with the ENRTF grant program, you are aware that this is a very sought after and competitive funding source for environmental and natural resource projects. The LCCMR received 218 proposals requesting \$174 million in funds. Approximately \$79 million is available to fund recommended proposals. Of the initial applicants, only 102 proposals were selected to receive further consideration for funding. The MOU's proposal, "Ensuring Continued Access to Minnesota's Ornithological Records," was not among those selected. We are welcome to apply again in future grant cycles.

In the absence of this potential funding source, the MOU must find an alternative means to maintain for the future the incredible resource that mounm.org has become. As noted in the last newsletter, despite David Cahlander's willingness to mentor a new website manager or team, it has been difficult to find volunteers from within the membership. It has become increasingly apparent that it will be necessary to hire an outside vendor with the capability to modernize and maintain a complex and custom website. The MOU Board will take up this topic at our next board meeting on August 5.

On a more uplifting note, I recently went on a Pride Bird Walk hosted by the Urban Bird Collective at the Fish Lake Nature Trails in Anoka. If you are not familiar with the UBC, they were founded in 2018 with the goals of supporting "birdwatchers of all different skill levels in leading walks in our own neighborhoods," as well as to create safe and welcoming spaces for Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and the LGBTQ communities and others to explore birding and the outdoors (<https://urbanbirdcollective.org/>). In 2018 and 2019, the UBC received MOU Savaloja Grants to train and support leaders willing to lead birding and nature walks in their communities. From an initial cadre of eight leaders, the UBC has grown to 24 leaders guiding a variety of walks in their communities. The UBC also received Savaloja grants in 2020 and 2021 to support con-



*Golden-crowned Kinglet
by David C. Keyes*

tinued diversification of the Minnesota birding community, an outcome of which is the UBC's annual gathering held in May at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

I have seen comments in some circles questioning the need for bird walks geared at specific audiences, often accompanied by statements that most birders are friendly and encouraging of new birders if they were just willing to put themselves out there. Hopefully we can all think of experiences in which we have been mentored and encouraged by others in our birding community, and across the state many organizations are engaged in creating friendly and inclusive environments in natural spaces. Still, for a new BIPOC or LGBTQ birder, there is not always the assurance of being welcomed in a given space. On the walk I attended, several fellow birders had moved to Minnesota and in the UBC had found a space where they knew they would feel included and encouraged. It has been a joy to watch the UBC grow, to engage in partnerships with other organizations, and to create welcoming spaces within our Minnesota birding community. My recent walk with them was a perfect morning of good birds and good company.

Happy Birding!

MOU Calendar

July / August 2023

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

						July 1 MRVAC: Bass Ponds CNC: MN Campus Bird Hike ZVAS: Birding Quarry Hill Park
2	3	4	5	6	7	8 CNC: WI Campus Bird Hike
9	10	11	12 MGB: Brazil's Northeast	13 BRPM: Pin Oak Prairie SNA	14	15 LNC: Bird Banding MRVAC: Old Cedar Ave. Bridge MGRP: Young Birders Club BM: Open Birding MGRP: Herons, Cranes, & Egrets
16 LNC: Raptors up Close RNC: Raptors in the Yard SPAS: Bike & Bird Vadnais-Snail Lakes	17	18	19 MGB: Antarctica/ Tierra del Fuego	20	21 CNC: WI Campus Bioblitz CNC: MN Campus Bird Banding	22 CNC: WI Campus Bioblitz
23 MRVAC: Bass Ponds	24	25 CNC: Christmas in July Bird Count	26 BRPM: Fillmore Co. Wildlife Sanctuary	27	28	29 MGRP: Listening to Birds
30 MGRP: Listening to Birds	31	AUGUST 1	2	3	4 IOC: International Owl Awareness	5 MRVAC: Old Cedar Ave. Bridge CNC: MN Campus Bird Hike ZVAS: Birding Quarry Hill Park
6 SPAS: Bike and Bird the Mississippi River	7	8	9	10 MRVAC: Nobles/ Murray Counties Birding Days	11 MRVAC: Nobles/ Murray Counties Birding Days	12 CNC: WI Campus Bird Hike
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 BM: Open Birding
20 MRVAC: Bass Ponds	21	22	23	24	25 CNC: MN Campus Bird Banding	26 MRVAC: Bass Ponds
27	28	29	30	31		



— MOU Calendar

July / August 2023

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

BELL MUSEUM

2088 Larpenteur Avenue W., St Paul.

<https://www.bellmuseum.umn.edu/>

July 15 & Aug. 19: Open Birding

10–11:00 am. All visitors can join the birding fun on the Bell Museum’s Learning Landscape. This short, guided experience welcomes all experience levels, especially those who are new to birding. Binoculars are available for check-out, and the group will remain on the flat, paved sidewalk just outside of the museum. Registration is required for open birding; you can drop in any time during the session. Note: Free, but Bell Museum admission is not included.

BLUEBIRD RECOVERY PROGRAM of MN

<https://bbrp.org/>

July 13: Prairie Walk at Pin Oak Prairie SNA

Evening: A Prairie Walk at the Pin Oak Prairie Scientific and Natural Area in Jordan Township near Chatfield. For more information, call Tim Gossman at (507) 867-3129 or Aaren Mathison at (507) 765-3878 ext. 109.



July 26: Wildlife Sanctuary

Fillmore Co. Forestry Field Day

At the home of Bill & Mary Bailey in rural Chatfield, this event will feature the creation of a wildlife sanctuary including the establishment of a bluebird trail, the creation of wetlands, trails, and biodiversity. For more information, call Mary Bailey at (507) 867-9118 or Aaren Mathison at the Fillmore County Soil and Water Conservation District Office at (507) 765-3878 ext. 109.

CARPENTER NATURE CENTER

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

July 1 & Aug. 5: MN Campus Bird Hike:

12805 St. Croix Trail S., Hastings.

8–10:00 am. Join expert birders Shelley Bowman on July 1 or Ben Douglas on August 5 for a morning hike around the Nature Center. Learn to identify birds by sight and sound. Field guides and binoculars are available to use or bring your own. Program fee: \$5.00 or free for “Friends of CNC,” Hastings Environmental Protectors, Hastings High School students, and St. Croix Valley Bird Club members. Space is limited and reservations are required, please call CNC at 651-437-4359.

July 8 & Aug. 12: WI Campus Bird Hike:

Hein Visitor Center, 279 S. Cove Rd., Hudson.

8–10:00 am. Hike various trails on our Wisconsin Campus and learn to identify birds with local experts from the St. Croix Valley Bird Club. Program fee: \$5 per participant or free for SCVBC members and “Friends of CNC.” Space is limited and reservations are required, please call CNC at 651-437-4359.

July 21 & Aug. 25: MN Campus Public Bird Banding:

12805 St. Croix Trail S., Hastings.

8:30–noon. See birds up-close and watch the experts band birds at CNC. Banding runs continuously. Donations of birdseed appreciated in lieu of a program fee.

Sedge Wren, by Trey Weaver

July 21 & 22: WI Campus Bioblitz:

Hein Visitor Center, 279 S. Cove Rd., Hudson.
3 pm Friday–noon Saturday. Learn from bird, reptile, amphibian, invertebrate, and plant experts in a fun day of citizen science. Join us at the WI Campus and to help inventory teams in restored prairies, riparian habitats, and wooded bluff lands to discover and document plant, animal, and bird species. All ages are welcome at this free program. Full [program information](#) here.

July 25: MN Campus Christmas in July Bird Count:

12805 St. Croix Trail S., Hastings.
6–8 pm. Join us for an evening of counting birds by the feeders or hiking around the property, we'll have experienced birders to help identify birds by sight and sound. This is an open-house type event. You can come and go as you want. Bring a picnic and settle by the feeders or go on a hike. The program is free, but donations are encouraged.

INTERNATIONAL OWL CENTER

126 E Cedar St., Houston
<https://www.festivalofowls.com>

Aug. 4: International Owl Awareness

11 am–4 pm. Free open house at the Owl Center in honor of International Owl Awareness Day. Everyone can visit at no charge. 30-minute programs at 11:00, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00 and 4:00. Door prizes to help you live a more owl-friendly life. Check back for more [details](#) closer to the date.

LOWRY NATURE CENTER: THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT

Lowry Nature Center, 7025 Victoria Dr., Victoria.
Note: For more information on these events please go to the [Three Rivers Park District website](#).

July 15: Bird Banding

9 am–12 pm. See wild songbirds safely trapped, studied, and banded with numbered rings. Discuss what scientists learn from these banded birds. Drop in anytime. All ages. Free.

July 16: Raptors Up Close

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

MINNESOTA GLOBAL BIRDERS

NOTE: This informal group of people interested in birding throughout the planet has monthly online gatherings. Details on the events, and on how to register for the Zoom sessions, will be provided via MOU-Net and also on the Minnesota Global Birders and Minnesota Birding pages in Facebook a few weeks before each session.

July 12: Brazil's Northeast

7–9:00 pm. Stephen Greenfield will give a presentation on birding Brazil's northeast, a region very different from what comes to mind when we think of Brazil, with a different and remarkable birdlife.

July 19: Antarctica/Tierra del Fuego

7–9:00 pm. Michael Hurben will give a presentation about his trip to Antarctica, Tierra del Fuego, and northwest Argentina, including navigating the Drake Passage and trekking into the high-altitude *puna* biome.

MN RIVER VALLEY AUDUBON CHAPTER

www.mrvac.org

Note: For information about MRVAC birding events contact Craig Mandel at 952-240-7647 or EgretCMan@msn.com

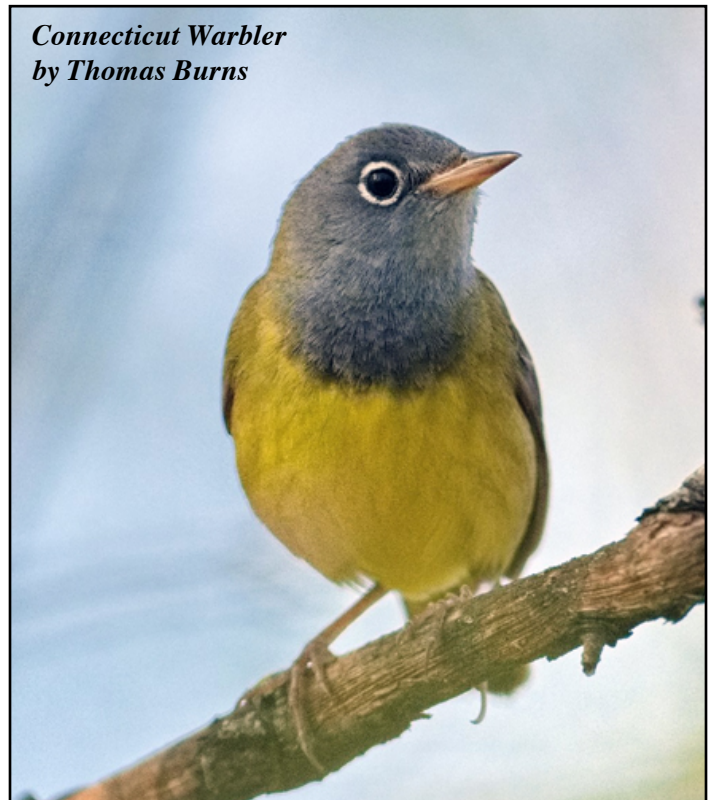
July 1, 23 & Aug. 20, 26: Birding the Bass Ponds

8–10:30 am. On these walks we will learn about the 100+ birds that nest on the Refuge. Bring binoculars and a field guide. Meet at Bass Ponds Trailhead, 2501 E. 86th., Bloomington. For registration, see MRVAC website.

July 15 & Aug. 5: Birding Old Cedar Ave. Bridge

8–10:30 am. On these walks we will learn about the 100+ birds that nest on the Refuge. Bring binoculars and a field guide. Meet at Old Cedar Ave. Bridge Trailhead, 9551 Old Cedar Ave. S., Bloomington. For registration, see MRVAC website.

*Connecticut Warbler
by Thomas Burns*



Aug. 10 & 11: Nobles & Murray Counties Birding Days
6:30 am. On this trip we will be spending time birding in Nobles and Murray counties. Locations may include the Lake Bella, Hawkeye & Maka-Oicu, and Fury's Island County parks, and a few WMAs. Friday's birding will take us up to Murray County, including Lake Shetek State Park, WMAs and WPAs. With luck we'll be able to turn up some shorebirds and a few species that nest in Southwestern Minnesota. \$35/non-MRVAC members; \$25/MRVAC members. Please contact Craig to register for this trip.

**MISSISSIPPI GATEWAY REGIONAL PARK:
THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT**

10360 W. River Rd., Brooklyn Park. *Note: For more information on these events go [here](#).*

July 15: Herons, Cranes, and Egrets

9–11 am. Learn about which of these species call the Midwest home. Discover which ones live in the park during the summer. All equipment provided. Feel free to bring your own binoculars and bird books. Free for Young Birders Club members (discount applied at checkout). [Reservations](#) required by two days prior.

July 29 & 30: Listening to Birds

8:30–9:30 am. Birds have so much to say. Create a sound map with a naturalist as we listen for alarm calls, singing, and baby birds. Learn to interpret bird sounds and patterns through your observations. Participants ages 11 years and younger must be accompanied by an adult. This program is outdoors; please dress for the weather. Binoculars provided. Questions? Call 763-694-7790. [Reservations](#) required by two days prior.

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

8737 E. Bush Lake Rd., Bloomington. *Note: For more information on these events go [here](#).*

July 16: Raptors in the Yard

1–3 pm. Richardson Nature Center's two captive raptors will be on display in their outdoor weathering yard. Get an up-close view of the birds. A naturalist will be present to answer your raptor questions. Come and learn about Broad-winged Hawks, American Kestrels, and other birds of prey. Free. Participants ages 11 years and younger must be accompanied by an adult. [Reservations](#) required by two days prior.

ST. PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

<https://www.saintpaulaudubon.org/upcoming-events/>
For full details on these birding events, go to the St. Paul Audubon website.



Prothonotary Warbler, by Tom Gilde

July 16: Bike & Bird the Vadnais-Snail Lakes. 4191 Snail Lake Blvd., Shoreview
8–noon. Leader Sherry Gray. Discover the fun of birding from a bicycle on more than five miles of mostly level, paved, multi-use trails in prime birding locations for Ramsey. Meet in parking lot with your bicycle at [Snail Lake picnic area/boat launch/beach parking lot](#). Required registration and limited to 8 participants. Contact sherrygray@yahoo.com to register.

Aug. 6: Bike & Bird the Mississippi River
8–noon. Leader: Sherry Gray. Discover the fun of birding from your own bicycle along a flat, paved trail along the Mississippi River on the Robert Pira Regional Trail, a prime birding location for Ramsey and Dakota Counties. For location and meeting place, go to the SPAS website above. Required registration and limited to eight participants. Contact sherrygray@yahoo.com to register.

ZUMBRO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

July 1 & Aug. 5: Quarry Hill Bird Walk

9–10:30 am. Leaders Terry & Joyce Grier. Meet at the [Quarry Hill Nature Center](#) and join us on a casual walk around Quarry Hill Park. Bring binoculars if you have them. Dress for the weather. Stay for any length of time. Free and open to the public - no registration required.

Birder Bio: Richard Gotz

Tell us about yourself.

I retired in 2010 after a career in software development working at Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland, Western Test Range at Vandenberg AFB in California, and Control Data/Siemens Energy Management & Transportation Divisions in Plymouth. We moved to Minnesota in 1982 and were fortunate to find a house in Plymouth with a pond in the front yard and a marsh in the backyard. And as a bonus, I was two miles from my office. My wife and I have lived in the same house for forty-one years. Our two children and two grandchildren also live nearby. Our yard list currently stands at 124.

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

I have always enjoyed watching birds but got serious about birding in 2014 after taking a Wildlife Photography class at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum from John Pennoyer. After John's class, I bought two blinds and set them up next to our pond and marsh, and that is when I got serious about watching and photographing birds.

How did your interest expand after that first experience?

After photographing birds in my yard for awhile, I went to a few local parks and met other birders and photographers. From them I learned about eBird, Minnesota Birding FaceBook page, iBird Pro, Merlin, and the MOU.

What is the main attraction of birding for you?

The main attraction is finding and photographing birds, whether they are common yard birds, migratory birds, or lifer birds. I also have enjoyed exploring parts of Minnesota (in search of a new bird) that I would never have otherwise visited.

How did you originally become acquainted with the MOU?

I became acquainted with the MOU from other birders that I met on the trail. As a result, I attended the paper session meeting at the old Bell Museum in 2015 and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. I've attended all the meetings since then.

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

North Ottawa Impoundment Project, Sax-Zim Bog, Duluth's Park Point, Bass Ponds/Cedar Bridge, Carver Park Reserve, Westwood Hills, Grey Cloud Sand Dunes, and William O'Brien State Park are some of my favorite places to go birding.

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

Five years ago, while birding with Vic Lewis's Bird



Walk around Westwood Hills, I met two birders, one of which as it turned out, worked with my daughter at a Plymouth school. We became good friends and now we meet every Saturday for coffee or go on birding trips. The three of us have been to the far corners of Minnesota since 2018. I also enjoy birding with my wife, as her eyes and ears are far better than mine.

What is your favorite bird or bird family?

I have many favorite birds, but perhaps the Great Grey Owl stands above the rest.

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

The best way to become a better birder is to associate with better birders, and you can do that by joining MOU and take advantage of the various free birding walks provided by my MOU members.

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

I fished for Muskies for 20 years, mostly on Leech Lake, and I have been a member of the Minnesota Woodworkers Guild for 30 years. I enjoy building furniture.

What new bird would you most like to see?

My nemesis bird is the Nelson's Sparrow.



Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

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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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