



Minnesota BIRDING

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Blackburnian Warbler
Allan Meadows

Conservation Column Lead Ammo in Deer Hunting

by Carrol Henderson, Chair, MOU Conservation Committee

On behalf of the MOU, I express sincere appreciation to the DNR for its announcement that nontoxic ammunition will be required for youth deer hunts this fall on state parks and SNAs. This is a long-overdue acknowledgment of the need for beginning a transition from the use of toxic lead ammunition on state lands to nontoxic ammunition. This will eliminate the potential for lead poisoning of raptors, including Bald Eagles, and the continuing cumulative deposition of toxic spent lead ammo and bullet fragments on state-owned lands. It will also help improve the image of hunters as conservationists and not as polluters who are still spreading toxic bullet fragments across the landscape.

I note, however, that there are seven state parks in the identified shotgun zone where the 95 youths selected to participate will be allowed to use toxic lead ammunition for deer hunting because some nontoxic shotgun ammo is perceived to be in short supply: Afton, Blue Mounds, Camden, Kilen Woods, Lake Shetek, Minneopa, and Sibley. Successful hunters in those parks will be required to remove the gut piles from where deer are taken and turn them in at the state parks so that raptors and scavengers will not be exposed to lead poisoning.

As much as I appreciate the courageous step forward in advocacy for nontoxic ammo on the part of the DNR, there is still one more “lead elephant in the room” for the DNR to deal with. Any deer taken with lead slugs by a youth in those state park deer hunts will have toxic lead fragments in the venison. Youths who take home those deer will be feeding their family with lead-tainted venison!

There is no level of lead consumption considered safe by the World Health Organization. It is a neurological toxin. Young children especially are vulnerable to lead poisoning. It affects the development of the brain and nervous system and can reduce IQ. Pregnant women can experience miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth, and low birth weight. A young deer hunter should not be put in a position in which their lead-tainted venison affects their brothers, sisters, and parents.

The online site for ammunition [MidwayUSA](#) already has advertised that it has 20-gauge copper shotgun slugs by Federal Cartridge available. State park staff should inform young hunters about this risk as soon as they are selected for the hunt so they and their family can immediately explore the availability of nontoxic ammo for their shotguns.

How can MOU members become more engaged in this issue if they are not deer hunters? If you own property where deer hunting is allowed, require that any hunters must use nontoxic ammunition unless they are bowhunters. If you are offered venison from successful deer hunters, ask how the deer was killed. If by archery, no problem. If by gun, ask if it was taken with copper or nontoxic ammo. If it wasn't, don't accept it or eat it! It is also important that the MOU and its members contact their state legislators to express their concern that hunters should not be allowed to use lead ammunition for hunting on public lands like state parks, wildlife management areas, and state forests. Use of lead shot results in long-term cumulative poisoning of our public lands. Nontoxic ammo alternatives are increasingly available and not cost prohibitive. A nontoxic copper

bullet for deer hunting costs about \$3 and most skilled deer hunters will not use more than five bullets in a deer hunting season. That's only about \$15 per year. Considering that the average deer hunter spends around \$700 to \$800 per year — and probably more — on hunting, this is nothing.

Once again, I express my sincere appreciation to DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen and State Parks director Ann Pierce for their vision and courage in moving forward with requirements for nontoxic ammunition for deer hunting in our state parks and scientific and natural areas. It is the right thing to do on behalf of our wildlife, our citizens, and especially the spouses, brothers, and sisters of young hunters who could potentially be consuming lead-tainted venison.

Message from the President

by Michelle Terrell, MOU President

“We want YOU for the MOU!” If there has been a common theme through my “Message from the President” columns, it is the fundamental role that volunteers play in advancing the MOU’s mission. If you have been considering increasing your involvement in the MOU, we welcome members interested in serving on committees or the Board of Directors. I would like to use my column in this newsletter to highlight three upcoming opportunities in particular to serve on the Board. If you are interested in any of these positions and would like to learn more, or if you would like to nominate someone for consideration, please contact Nominations Committee chair, Dick King (richardallenking@gmail.com) or myself (mterrell.mou@gmail.com).

Vice-President

It is that time in the MOU’s organizational cycle that we are seeking an incoming Vice President for 2024. The custom of the MOU is that the Vice President, after serving in that capacity for two years, moves into the office of President for next two years (subject to election), and then continues to serve on the Board as immediate Past President and chair of the Nominations and Governance Committee for the following two years. The role of the Vice President is to support the President and to fill in for them as necessary, while learning about the MOU and its activities in anticipation of leading the organization and championing its mission.

Recording Secretary

After four years serving as Recording Secretary, Kathrynne Baumtrog would like to transition the role to another

member. The Recording Secretary is an annually elected position responsible for keeping a record of the proceedings of all meetings of the Board and of the Annual Meeting; distribution and maintenance of the minutes; providing summaries of meeting decisions to MOU publications; and handling of correspondence beyond that which is the responsibility of committee chairs or other officers.

Social Media Committee Chair

Having led the Social Media Committee (SMC) since its founding in 2016, Peter Nichols is ready to pass the committee’s leadership to a new chair. The chair manages the SMC team and oversees the MOU’s social media presence — especially the MOU’s Facebook and Instagram pages, as well as the MOU’s YouTube channel. The SMC chair serves on the MOU Board. If you would like to learn more about the activities of the SMC and the role of its chair, please contact Peter Nichols at petenich76@gmail.com.

Speaking of volunteers, on behalf of the Board I would like to thank everyone who has signed up to staff the “Ask Us About Birds” booth at the Minnesota State Fair. There is no other place where the MOU interacts with a wider cross-section of Minnesotans and non-birders, and we appreciate you being ambassadors for the birds. If you are at the State Fair, be sure to say “hello” to the volunteers staffing our booth at the DNR Building!

Happy Birding!

My Favorite Home Patch

Armstrong Wetland Restoration

by *Ricky Roman*

Note from the editor: Do you have a favorite local spot for birding? I'd like to hear about it, and I'm sure other birders would too. Please send me a note at newsletter@moumn.org if you would like to write about your favorite local patch for this column. GRH

As summer ends and fall migration begins, the frenzy of spotting warblers, shorebirds, and other birds heading to their wintering grounds starts to electrify bird lovers all over the state. And while I love the migration action and salivate at the anticipation of possibly capturing a rare bird in the sky as they make their way south, this is the time of year I start getting excited about the upcoming winter birding season. About two and half years ago, it was early winter when I found my favorite birding spot, my passion for birds in flight, and one of the main reasons the winter season brings out the giddy little five-year-old in me.

Deep in the winter, during some of the coldest days, one of my favorite birding spots, the Armstrong Wetland Restoration in Steele County, warms up my soul with aerial shows of a feathered hunter that creates pure aerial poetry in motion while seeking out its meal. These shows are put on by the Short-eared Owls that often grace the skies above the wetland in winter and into early spring with their extraordinary flying agility. But while Short-eared Owls — often called “Shorties” — may attract the most attention at Armstrong, they are not the only birds you will see in this species-rich spot. Over the last two and half years, I have had the pleasure of pointing my lens at birds I never thought I would see in the Owatonna area. They include White-faced ibis, American Avocet, Cattle Egret, Snowy Owl, Snow Goose, Wilson’s Phalarope, Black-necked Stilt, Northern Goshawk, and Black Tern, but also more common species like Northern Harrier, Ruddy Duck, American Kestrel, and Belted Kingfisher.

Although the wetland itself is quite large, it is along the half-mile strip of 84th Avenue running through it that the birding occurs. People often drive slowly or walk up and down the stretch. When unusual birds are spotted and news of their presence makes it through the birding echo chamber or onto eBird, people come from all over the state.

Leading into winter and into early spring, Short-eared Owls quickly become the desired target of binoculars, scopes, and lenses at Armstrong. Since these hunters fly in the sky before dark, it provides enough daylight for possible owl-watching enjoyment. There are days when they appear for only a few minutes, and then there are days when they are out hunting for hours. What brings me the most joy is knowing that these owls, like the rest of our feathered friends, are not guaranteed to appear. And if they do appear,



Ricky Roman, by Bryce Guadian

they may be far off in the distance for just a few minutes. If your timing is right and the owls are hungry that day, it could be a recipe for up close and personal moments with these fierce hunters.

Last year was a relatively slow season for Shorties at Armstrong. Though sparse appearances often disappointed people who drove hours to spend time with these showstoppers, I continued my ritualistic checks at the end of every day in hopes of getting to experience some intimate moments with them. These daily check-ins paid off on an extremely frigid December day.

Last year in late December, we were climbing out of a delightful cold snap and winter storm. The winds were blowing at 15 to 20 miles per hour, making for a painful-

ly low wind chill. Even though I am a fan of Minnesota winters, the end of this December challenged my love for the cold. On December 24, I was making my usual passes through Armstrong, but for the first time I had to contend with snow drifts that put my Subaru to the test and extreme weather that put my body to the test. Just the same, I drove up and down the road, found a spot to park, and geared up. Gearing up in this weather means severe cold weather impact boots, extreme cold weather pants, and more layers under my winter coat than I ever thought possible.

On that day, in the brutally cold weather, the Short-eared Owls spent an uninterrupted hour putting on one of the best shows of my birding life. For that one hour, the world stood still, my heart skipped many beats, and I was frequently left breathless. These owls graced me with one-on-one moments that will forever be etched in my mind and soul. These moments are what I live for, capturing birds in flight, being in the elements, and having my lens-tracking skills challenged.

Short-eared Owls zipped feverishly within feet of me as they repeatedly dove for a meal. Their “barking,” the sounds of their calls, filled my ears and the sky. While I have had many great moments at Armstrong with Shorties, this time was different. This time I was alone, in brutal cold, being warmed up by a bird in flight that challenged my passion and dedication for birding, bird photography, and photographing birds in flight. At the end of this magical hour, I walked back to my car and sat stunned, completely still, and wholly satisfied. After I regained the feeling in my hands and fingers, I did a quick camera check to make sure that what I had just experienced was captured on the memory cards. As I drove away from Armstrong that day, I was so thankful and overwhelmed with joy.

Shorties can provide some exciting, soul-warming birding if you are willing to brave negative temperatures and a brutal wind chill that howls unobstructed up and down the road. To get a glimpse of my favorite bird at my favorite birding spot, I routinely stand and walk on that snow-covered gravel road in southern Minnesota.

For those who prefer a warmer experience, Shorties do make appearances in early spring as well. There is no way to know if these owls will be hunting on the day you are there, so keep your eyes peeled for other species. Finding the owls becomes exponentially easier for those of us who live in Owatonna. I am truly grateful for that.

If you go there, you will find it to be a quiet, low-key, away-from-everything spot where you can enjoy a wide variety of bird species. But this short gravel road has also afforded me the opportunity to meet some passionate birders, talented bird photographers, and dedicated people who have also become wonderful friends. The combination of excellent birding and a space where you can have good conversations with fellow birders is another aspect of Armstrong that makes it so appealing.

If you find your way to Armstrong Wetland Restoration, remember that this is a very small road surrounded by active



Short-eared Owl, by Ricky Roman

farms and local rural traffic. Parking and birding in a way that allows for safe passage on the road is important.

Living so close to Armstrong has made it a place that is truly special to me. Most days, Armstrong is a quiet place where I go to unwind after work and meet up with a “lens-friend” or two. On weekends, it is where I often end my birding day. The year-round sunsets, cool breezes in the fall, and frigid wind chills in the winter all create a unique birding spot that is quiet, easily walkable, accessible by car, and peaceful.

No matter what bird or location makes the list as your favorite, I hope that birding brings out the best of who you are and creates opportunities for you to share the magic of nature, birding, and beauty with those around you. Birding with a lens is a way of life for me, and I yearn for the bird-in-flight moments that make me feel like a giddy schoolboy. Whether it’s a way of life, a hobby, or a fun activity with friends, I wish great birding moments for you that help you feel giddy with joy. Minnesota is a fantastic place to call home and an extraordinary state for birding opportunities. I hope that these opportunities bring you the moments that are meant for your lens, your eyes, and your journey.

Ricky Roman is an Army Veteran and Attorney who left law practice in Massachusetts to fulfill a dream of driving a semi-truck across the country. He now lives in Owatonna and works in the Human Resources office at St. Olaf College in Northfield.

Seeking Nominations For the 2023 MOU Awards

by Liz Harper, Chair, Nominating Committee

It is that time of year again! We are asking for your nominations for the [awards](#) that we give out annually.

If you added a rare bird to your life or state list this year or learned something from a new journal article or research project, consider writing a nomination for the **Brother Theodore Voelker Award**. If you know someone who has devoted many volunteer hours to help birds or birders this year, consider nominating that person for the **Volunteer of the Year Award**. Do you know a young birder whose involvement in birding and bird-related organizations stands out? Consider nominating that person for the **Young Birder Award**. How about the birder who you've admired for years, who perhaps mentored you, who has made a name for themselves in bird-related endeavors? Consider nominating that person for the **Thomas S. Roberts Award**. Now is the time to recognize your birding hero/mentor/inspiration by nominating them for an MOU Award, to be presented at this year's MOU Paper Session in December.

You will find descriptions of the MOU awards and the names of all previous award recipients on the MOU website at moumn.org/awards (presentation speeches for the awards are also available online from 2010 on). Making a nomination is simple. Just provide the MOU Awards Committee with a description of the qualifications and contributions that you believe makes your nominee a worthy recipient of an award. Your written description typically forms the basis for the award presentation, and we encourage you to present the award should your nominee win. We know that not all folks like to write a presentation or speak publicly, so please contact us if you would like assistance in either regard.

Nominations are due by October 23 and should be

sent to Awards Committee Chair Liz Harper at awards@moumn.org.

Nominees do not have to be members of the MOU. Current MOU officers and/or Board members are not eligible for Awards.

The MOU and the Awards Committee thank you in advance for your interest and input in these Awards. Without your nominations, we are not able to give recognition to the great achievements of our fellow birders.

We accept nominations for Certificates of Appreciation year-round. So please send them to the committee if you have someone who meets the criteria for this certificate.

Save the Date! MOU Paper Session

Saturday, December 2, 2023
North Star Ballroom, University of Minnesota
St. Paul Student Center

Watch for additional information and announcements on the MOU website via social media, and in the next issue of *Minnesota Birding*.

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.

Jonathon Amborn, *Hutchinson, MN*
Aaron Dossett, *Minneapolis, MN*
Bonnie Heineke, *Prior Lake, MN*
Stephen Metzger, *Bloomington, MN*
Ivan Munkres, *St. Paul, MN*
Lana Svien, *Vermillion, SD*



Least Sandpiper, by Matt Hoberg

MOU Calendar

September / October 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					September 1	2 SPAS: Oakdale Nature Center ZVAS: Quarry Hill Bird Walk CNC: MN Campus Bird Hike
3	4	5	6 MOU: Carver Park	7 MRVAC: Mower County Birding Days	8 MRVAC: Mower County Birding Days	9 MRVAC: Birding the Bass Ponds SPAS: Battle Creek Park CNC: WI Campus Bird Hike
10 MRVAC: Birding Old Cedar Ave. Bridge	11 LNC: Mondays are for the Birds	12	13 MOU: Hyland Lake MGB: Dominican Republic	14	15	16 Bell Museum: Open Birding ACM: Drawing Birds LNC: Bird Banding SPAS: Pilot Knob
17 LNC: Raptors Up Close	18	19	20 MOU: Carver Park Reserve	21	22	23 MRVAC: Birding the Bass Ponds MOU: Lowry Nature Center SPAS: Swede Hollow CNC: Raptor Release
24	25 LNC: Mondays are for the Birds	26	27 MOU: Wood Lake Nature Center	28 MRVAC: Forage for Mushrooms	29	30 IOC: Owl Prowl SPAS: William O'Brien State Park
October 1 MOU: Carver Park Reserve	2	3	4	5	6	7 MOU: Crow Hassan Sparrow Walk ZVAS: Quarry Hill Bird Walk CNC: MN Campus Bird Hike
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 MRVAC: Birding Old Cedar Ave. Bridge LNC: Raptors Up Close	16	17 SPAS: Sandhill Cranes at Crex Meadows	18	19	20	21 Bell Museum: Open Birding MRVAC: Birding the Bass Ponds MOU: East Metro Sea Duck Run LNC: Bird Banding
22	23 IOC: World Owl Conference	24 IOC: World Owl Conference	25 IOC: World Owl Conference	26 IOC: World Owl Conference MRVAC: Conservation in New Zealand	27 IOC: World Owl Conference IOC: What an Owl Knows	28
29	30	31				



MOU Calendar

September / October 2023

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

AUDUBON CHAPTER OF MINNEAPOLIS

www.minneapolisaudubon.org/events

Sept. 16: Introduction to Drawing Birds

2:30–5:30 pm. A three-hour, beginner-friendly art workshop led by natural science illustrator [Liz Clayton Fuller](#) to help you get comfortable (and inspired!) to start drawing birds and nature. Liz will guide you through several drawing and observation techniques and exercises that are designed to help you build confidence in fundamental drawing techniques, heighten your observational skills, and see the world with an artist's eyes. Location: MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, 3815 American Blvd. E., Bloomington. For a full description of the event, registration, and supplies needed, go to the ACM [website](#).

BELL MUSEUM

2088 Larpenteur Ave. W., St Paul.
www.bellmuseum.umn.edu

Sept. 16 & Oct. 21: Open Birding

10–11 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. No registration is required for open birding; you can drop in any time during the session. Free, but Bell Museum admission is not included.

CARPENTER NATURE CENTER

126 E Cedar St., Houston
www.internationalowlcenter.org

Sept. 2 & Oct. 7: MN Campus Bird Hike

8–10 am. Join expert birder on 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. CNC Minnesota Campus, 12805 St. Croix Trail South, Hastings.

Sept. 9 & Oct. 14: WI Campus Bird Hike

8–10 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. CNC Wisconsin Campus, 300 East Cove Road, Hudson WI.

Sept. 23: Raptor Release

Join Carpenter Nature Center and the University of Minnesota's Raptor Center as we release rehabilitated raptors at CNC. CNC Minnesota Campus, 12805 St. Croix Trail South, Hastings. More information can be found on our [event webpage](#).

INTERNATIONAL OWL CENTER

126 E Cedar St., Houston
www.internationalowlcenter.org

Sept. 30: Owl Prowl

6–9 pm. Owls live all around us but are very good at evading detection. Come learn how to identify our local owls by size, shape, silhouette, and sound. Following the indoor portion of the program, participants will drive their vehicles following staff to 3-4 known owl territories in and around Houston to call and listen for Eastern Screech-Owls, Barred Owls, and Great Horned Owls. Meet at the International Owl Center no later than the listed time (the Center will open 30 minutes prior to the program start time.) Plan to spend the first 30-45 minutes indoors learning to identify owls by sound before going outdoors. Dress for the weather and try to wear clothes that don't make noise. Calling will be done from the side of the road, so very little walking is required.

For more information and registration: [owlprowl](#)

Oct. 23–27: World Owl Conference

This is the first time a world owl conference has been held in the USA, and these conferences are held very infrequently. It will consist of 20-minute scientific presentations from researchers around the world, scientific posters, pre-conference workshops and post-conference field trips. Proceedings will be published as an occasional paper of the MOU. In person and virtual; Stoney Creek Hotel, Onalaska, WI. For further information and to register go to www.worldowlconference.com.



Eastern Phoebe, by Richard Gotz

Oct. 27: What an Owl Knows

2 pm. New York Times best-selling author Jennifer Ackerman wrote the book the world has needed about owls: a functionally peer-reviewed book highlighting the latest research and correcting all kinds of old misconceptions and overgeneralizations. She visited researchers around the world plus conducted virtual interviews with many more, then packaged the information in an engaging narrative so it is anything but dry and boring. Members: \$10, non-members: \$15. In person only at the International Owl Center, Houston. Space is limited and pre-registration required: [signup here](#).

THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT: LOWRY NATURE CENTER

Lowry Nature Center, 7025 Victoria Dr., Victoria.

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

Sept. 11 & 25: Mondays are for the Birds

7–9 am. Join naturalist Kirk to look for birds. All levels of birders welcome. Beginners will learn a lot from more experienced birders on the hike and everyone will learn along the way. If you need binoculars, you will be able to borrow a pair from the nature center. We will try to cover a different trail and habitat area for each session. Participants ages 11 years and younger must be accompanied by an adult.

Sept. 16 and Oct. 21: Bird Banding

9–12:00 pm. See wild songbirds safely trapped, studied, and banded. Discuss what scientists learn from these banded birds. Drop in anytime. All ages. Free.

Sept. 17 & Oct. 15: Raptors Up Close

3–4:30 pm. Raptors have been a part of education at Lowry for many of our 50 years. Meet the current captive raptors, learn about these amazing birds of prey and how they help teach. This program is entirely outdoors. 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.

Sept. 13: Dominican Republic

7–9 pm. Gerry Hoekstra will give a presentation on his birding trip to the Dominican Republic. The island of Hispaniola has the greatest geological diversity of all the Caribbean islands, and thus offers a wide variety of habitats. Besides its 32 endemics, the DR hosts a number of other permanent residents and serves as the wintering grounds for many North American migrants.

MINNESOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

<https://moumn.org/>

For questions, please contact Trey Weaver, MOU Field Trip Chair: fieldtrips@moumn.org

Sept. 6, 13, 20 & 27: Afternoon Warbler Walks

4 pm. Join Trey Weaver for afternoon warbler walks at various locations in the Twin Cities, held Wednesdays throughout September. Limit of ten participants for each event, signup is required via Signup Genius event page. More details about each event and registration:

Sept. 6: Carver Park Reserve: [Details & registration](#)

Sept. 13: Hyland Lake: [Details & registration](#)

Sept. 20: Carver Park Reserve: [Details & registration](#)

Sept. 27: Wood Lake Nature Center: [Details & registration](#)

Sept. 23: Lowry Nature Center

7:30 am. Join Trey Weaver for a morning bird hike at Lowry Nature Center. We will specifically target Nelson's Sparrow along the marshy/grassy trails, but the group can expect to see other more common sparrow species, as well as warblers. Limit of ten participants for this event. Sign up [here](#).

Oct. 1: Carver Park Reserve

7:30 am. Join Trey Weaver for a sparrow walk, looking especially for Le Conte's and Nelson's sparrows. Limit of ten participants for this event. Sign up [here](#).

Oct. 7: Crow Hassan Sparrow Walk

8 am. Join William Marengo for a hike during the peak sparrow migration. Most of Minnesota's common migratory species will be expected; Le Conte's Sparrows may be encountered. Limit of ten participants for this event. Sign up [here](#).

Oct. 21: East Metro Sea Duck Run

9:00 am. Join Ben Douglas on a caravan through Chisago, Washington, Anoka, and Ramsey counties in search of Scoters and other sea ducks. The group will meet at Big Marine Park Reserve beach and caravan from there on Ben's route. Limit of ten participants for this event. Sign up [here](#).



Sedge Wren, by Trey Weaver

MN RIVER VALLEY AUDUBON CHAPTER

www.mrvac.org

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

Sept. 9 & 23, Oct. 21: Birding the Bass Ponds

8–10:30 am. On these walks we will search for and learn about the birds that visit the Refuge during their Fall migration. Bring binoculars and a field guide. Registration required. Sign up [here](#). Information is available on the MVNWR website. Meet at Bass Ponds Trailhead, 2501 E. 86th St., Bloomington.

Sept. 10 & Oct. 15: Birding Old Cedar Ave. Bridge

8–10:30 am. On these walks we will search for and learn about the birds that visit the Refuge during their Fall migration. Bring binoculars and a field guide. Registration required, Sign up [here](#). Information is available on the MVNWR website. Meet at Old Cedar Avenue Bridge Trailhead, 9551 Old Cedar Ave S., Bloomington.

Sept. 7 & 8: Mower County Birding Days

On this trip we will be spending time birding in Mower County. Some of the locations we may explore include Hormel Nature Center, Wildwood Park, Ault and Penkava Marsh, Adams Park, and Lake Louise State Park. This trip should be timed well for fall migrants, with a chance to see a number of warblers and shorebirds. Please contact Craig to register for this trip: 952-240-7647.

Sept. 28: Forage for Mushrooms

7–9 pm. A presentation by Stan Tekiela, Minnesota naturalist and best-selling author on a fun and enjoyable way to learn how to forage for wild mushrooms and not kill yourself. Stan's new program makes this serious topic fun and interesting. You too can safely get out and collect wild edible mushrooms without fear. Learn the safe seven mushrooms and how to safely collect, cook and store. Meet at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, 3801 American Blvd. E., Bloomington. Contact Steve Weston sweston2g@gmail.com

Oct. 26: Conservation in New Zealand

7–9 pm. Jordana Whyte will talk about her work in protecting the birds and animals of New Zealand, home to some of the world's most unique and endangered wildlife. She will be reporting on her work at the Dunedin Wildlife Hospital and her summer in the New Zealand subarctic islands with the Takaraka, the rare, Yellow-eyed Penguin and the Whakahao, the New Zealand Sea Lion. Meet at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, 3801 American Blvd. E., Bloomington.

ST. PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

www.saintpaulaudubon.org/upcoming-events

For full details on these birding events, go to the St. Paul Audubon website.

Sept. 2: Oakdale Nature Center. 444 Hadley Ave. N., Oakdale.

9–10:30 am. This family-friendly walk is in one of the most beautiful urban parks in Washington County. Meet at the Visitors Center. We will check the bird feeders, walk the winding paved trails and make our way out to a lake where we might see swans, ducks, and eagles. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them. A limited number of binoculars will be available on a first come first served basis. Dress for the weather and wear comfortable walking shoes. Leader: Greg Burnes gburnes@comcast.net 612-205-3071.

Sept. 9: Battle Creek Park. 2301 Lower Afton Rd., Maplewood.

9–11 am. The first hour is an easy one-mile hike to and along the western edge of the grassland community. The second hour is a moderate difficulty hike to the northeastern part of the grassland, where we hope to hear and see migrating fall warblers, sparrows, and hawks, along with the early fall colors of the grassland. Meet in the South Battle Creek parking lot. From McKnight Rd, turn east onto Lower Afton, drive 0.2 mile, turn left into South Battle Creek parking. Leader: John Zakelj jzakelj@yahoo.com

Sept. 16: Pilot Knob/Oheyawahe Open Space. 2100 Pilot Knob Rd., Mendota Heights

6–7:45 pm. Lots of history, views, and birds. Autumnal falling temperatures with shortening days bring preparations for big changes to the local bird-life web. Sunset 7:22 pm. From I-494, take Pilot Knob Rd. exit, then drive north until the road ends. Park on road near intersection of Acadia Blvd. and Pilot Knob Rd. Oheyawahe is a place of cultural importance to the Dakota Community. Leader: Chase Davies 651-246-9754 RockyBirder@gmail.com

Sept. 23: Swede Hollow. 622 Beaumont St., St. Paul.

9–11 am. This is a BirdUp, Saint Paul Audubon's new more informal version of birding. Meet up at the site, and everyone will be responsible for finding and identifying the birds. SPAS will provide a convener/s who is familiar with the park and knows which areas to visit. Meet at the entrance to Drewry Tunnel at Swede Hollow Park across from 622 Beaumont St. East, St. Paul. Park on street or off-street parking available at the Hope Community Academy (located in the old Hamm's Brewery Building) at 720 Payne Ave, St. Paul. Convener: Kathy Sidles 651-233-6804 kesid@aol.com

Sept. 30: William O'Brien State Park. 16821 O'Brien Trail N., Marine on St. Croix.

8–10 am. This walk along the St. Croix River will explore the lower part of William O'Brien State Park searching for fall migrants and then by Alice Lake for waterfowl. Meet at the parking lot by the swimming beach. When you enter the park from Hwy. 95 follow the signs to the beach and boat launch (road passes under Hwy. 95 and down the hill). Annual or daily MN State Parks pass required. See [DNR payment options](#). Leader: Chase Davies 651-246-9754 rockybirder@gmail.com

Oct. 17: Sandhill Cranes at Crex Meadows. 102 E Crex Ave., Grantsburg, WI.

4–8:15 pm. Since historic times, Greater Sandhill Cranes have congregated by the thousands every autumn evening in the marshes and ponds now called Crex Meadows SWA, located on the north side of Grantsburg, WI. For details

on directions, instructions, and registration, please go to the St. Paul Audubon [website](#). Leaders: Louise Eidsmoel 651-231-0453 eidsmoel@comcast.net and Chase Davies 651-246-9754 RockyBirder@gmail.com

ZUMBRO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

zumbrovalleyaudubon.org/calendar

Sept. 2: Quarry Hill Bird Walk. West entrance, 2100 9th St. N.E., Rochester.

9–10:30 am. Leaders Terry & Joyce Grier. We visit the Oak Savannah on the west side of the park. The savannah has a wide range of blooming meadow plants and grasses which attracts birds we don't always see in the woodland areas. The trail here is steep and not paved so good shoes are recommended. Meet in the parking lot at the west entrance of Quarry Hill Park (see the map on the [website](#)). Bring binoculars if you have them. Dress for the weather. Free and open to the public; no registration required.

Oct. 7: Quarry Hill Bird Walk. 701 Silver Creek Rd. N.E. Rochester.

9–10:30 am. Leaders: Terry & 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. Free and open to the public; no registration required.



Eastern Wood-Pewee, by Thomas Burns

Savaloja Grant Report: The Urban Bird Collective

by *Monica Bryand*

The Urban Bird Collective (UBC) was thrilled to receive a Savaloja Grant of \$3600 (which includes a special donation of \$3000 by an MOU member for a BIPOC project) to expand our work further by developing a cohort of six new leaders. We had ten applicants and chose six BIPOC individuals to be a part of this inaugural project.

Our plan is to have a combination of one-on-one birding experiences with our current leader's group, joint outings, and special opportunities with the UBC and other partner organizations. As part of the application process, we wanted to understand any barriers the potential cohort would be facing so we could address them right in the beginning. One barrier was access to binoculars. The UBC, using some of our general operating funds, was able to purchase binoculars for those that didn't have them. The look on their face receiving binoculars that they could keep was pretty special!

After hearing we had received the grant, we went to work selecting the cohort and identifying mentors. The UBC already had a trip planned to Red Wing with a partner organization, Audubon Saint Paul. We were able to offer a subsidized trip to Red Wing for four of our six cohort members. While we have offered one-on-one walks, we have been able to invite cohort members to Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, canoeing with the staff of the Minnesota River Valley Wildlife Refuge, and a kayaking/birding event with the Mississippi Parks Connections. All three of these organizations are UBC partners.

Our philosophy at the UBC is that we always want to include leaders of our partner organizations on the majority of our events, especially longer trips. We've extended that philosophy to our cohort members. The photo included in this article captures the family of one of our cohort members Patricia O'Leary. Patricia's family was visiting from out of town: we loved taking Patricia's mom, sister, niece, and partner out for a family walk at Eloise Butler Wildlife Sanctuary and Bird Garden. In addition to Patricia's family, the mother and aunt of Loreen Lee, one of our UBC leaders (also in the photo) were visiting and joined in the fun.

After participating with us on our Warbler Weekend in Red Wing, Patricia wrote:

When I went to Warbler Weekend, I did not know what warblers are. After warbler weekend, I saw them all the time, not just in nature, but also at work. We



Patricia O'Leary, Loreen Lee, and family members, by Monica Bryand

have a section of the Bell Museum with warbler specimens that I had never noticed. I bent over to study all the warbler specimens. I studied where they like to sit in the trees, so I could be more prepared for the next year. I've also been showing the warbler specimens to the children I work with; it is a moment to pause and observe. I can be walking with a child now and I'll stop and say, "Do you hear that? What do you think that is?"

Binoculars were provided for me, and everyone was very patient to help me find the birds they were spotting. There were a lot of trees, and our leaders spotted the small birds between branches, something I am still in awe of. I saw a Scarlet Tanager for the first time, and I never thought a bird that bright would live in Minnesota. I think it's my favorite now. I learned about a lot of incredible birds that day. I made a lot of friends and connections. When other birding groups walked by, I remember thinking, "Wow, I'm happy I found this group," because I knew I would have felt much different as the only BIPOC person in a group and I didn't have to feel that way here. That is also a big reason why I wanted to keep coming back, because UBC consistently offers a welcoming environment to learn and engage without feeling like an outsider.

We are preparing for fall migration activities, which will include a trip to Hawk Ridge and visits to many lakes and prairies in the Twin Cities.

Birder Bio: Sue Keator

Tell us about yourself.

I have lived in Minnesota since 1983, moving from the northern suburbs of Chicago. Same house for 20 years. My yard list is 134. I was in the investment business for 30+ years, retiring from Robert W. Baird in 2013. Most of my career was spent at Piper Jaffray, where I was known as the “bird rescuer,” since I kept a box and towel under my desk for things that needed a ride to the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Roseville. I began volunteering there in 1998 after a big spring storm that knocked down many nests. Channel 11 had a segment that showed birds in cages and asked for volunteers. Now 25 years have passed and I am still on the Board of Directors.

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

My folks always had bird books and binoculars on a table by the window. We grew up going to the woods and looking for tadpoles and snakes. We raised Cecropia caterpillars for a couple summers after a neighbor brought a pair to my dad.

How did your interest expand after that first experience?

When I was ten, a Canada Goose landed in the neighbor’s yard. Dad got all the kids from the block together and told us about how the sky was once black with them. I think that made me more curious about all the birds.

What is the main attraction of birding for you?

I enjoy exploring, being in nature and fresh air and learning new things. I’d much rather spend a half hour watching how a bird acts than simply check it off “the list.”

How did you originally become acquainted with the MOU?

I think it was probably at the Fair, at the “Ask me about Birds” booth. I wanted to get a checklist.

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



In town I spend the most time at Purgatory, the city lakes, and Cedar Avenue bridge. Elsewhere, a place where the birds are different. The Black Hills and Florida are two favorite spots.

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

I prefer to be with one or two others as it is easier to find things that way. My friend Lynne is very good at birding by ear.

What is your favorite bird or bird family?

The one bird that always makes me gasp is the Yellow-Headed Blackbird. I guess it is my “spark bird.” I was playing golf 20+ years ago and heard but didn’t see one. I had to find out what it was and honestly just gave up on golf in favor of watching the bird that day.

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

Ben Douglas said it best, “When you get out of the car, close the door quietly and just listen. Look around and listen. For at least five minutes.” Also, get and use and read a field guide or two. Not just apps, but a good old-fashioned book!

Have you ever had an unusual experience while birding?

Maybe everyone has this and just doesn’t discuss, but I have a list of “Lifers I have seen while answering the call of Nature.” White Throated Swift, Custer State Park.

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

I knit, volunteer with MN Boxer Rescue, and garden. Good thing I’m retired!

What new bird would you most like to see?

My nemesis is the American Dipper. I have dipped three times so far!



Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

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

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

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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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Birding Hotline

Northwest: 800-433-1888

MOU Contacts

Minnesota Birding Editor: newsletter@moumn.org

President: president@moumn.org

Vice President: vicepresident@moumn.org

Membership Secretary: membership@moumn.org

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