

Minnesota BIRDING

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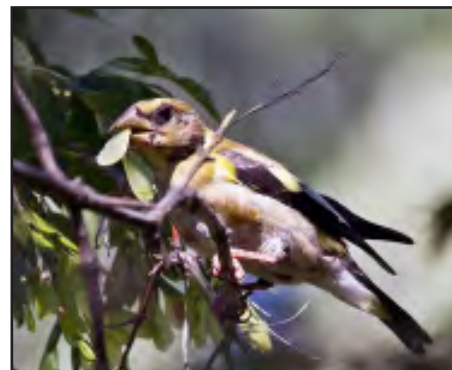
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Whatever Happened to Evening Grosbeaks?

by Laura Erickson

Long-time Minnesota birders who birded in the northern part of the state in the 1970s or 1980s cannot help but have noticed the dramatic decline of the Evening Grosbeak. During my first decade living in Duluth, beginning in 1981, this beautiful species was one of the most abundant and reliable of my feeder birds, present virtually year-round. Now when one or two visit a feeder, even at the Sax-Zim Bog, it makes the hotline.

Some people have questioned whether we are really seeing a long-term drop now or whether high grosbeak numbers in earlier decades in the eastern half of the continent were the aberration. I reject that claim. There was an Ojibwe name for them, as transcribed by Henry Schoolcraft in 1823 -- Paushkundamo, which was derived from the Ojibwe word for breaking something such as a cherry or berry, referring to the grosbeak's style of eating. Schoolcraft also provided the first record ornithologists have of the existence of the species, a grosbeak shot with an arrow by a child in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, on April 7, 1823, when the bird could have been either a resident or a migrant. This and the fact that local native people had a word for it don't prove that the species was regularly found as far east as Michigan through earlier times, but it is definitely consistent with that probability. A comprehensive study of the species, published in 1940 by James Baillie, mapped 82 summer records which formed an almost continuous belt in the United States and Canada from southeastern Manitoba through eastern Ontario, concentrated mainly in the Great Lakes. Later expansion east of that band was attributed to



plantings of box elder, the seeds of which are one of the grosbeak's preferred food sources.

Evening Grosbeaks are a genuinely irruptive species, with unpredictable but huge "invasion years" and a dramatic biennial rhythm within both the big years and smaller ones. It's possible that the consistently huge numbers in Minnesota in the 1960s through the 1980s were due to some unknown but fairly long-lasting factor, such as an outbreak of spruce budworm, one of the foods they exploit during the nesting season. But we have little solid evidence that the species was ever as uncommon in northern Minnesota historically as it's become in the past two decades.

In *The Birds of Minnesota* (Second Edition, 1936), T.S. Roberts writes about the regular appearance in winter of Evening Grosbeaks in the southern half of the state. "It usually makes its appearance in the southern part of the state during November or December. In the spring it frequently, if not generally, remains until after the middle of May."

Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data for the continent, the U.S., and

continued on next page

each state show a very strong biennial rhythm to grosbeak numbers. The CBC in Minnesota extends back to 1912. In the beginning it had far fewer northern than southern count circles, especially in the first years, yet it showed grosbeaks in varying numbers present throughout the state from the start, peaking in the 1960s (Figure 1).

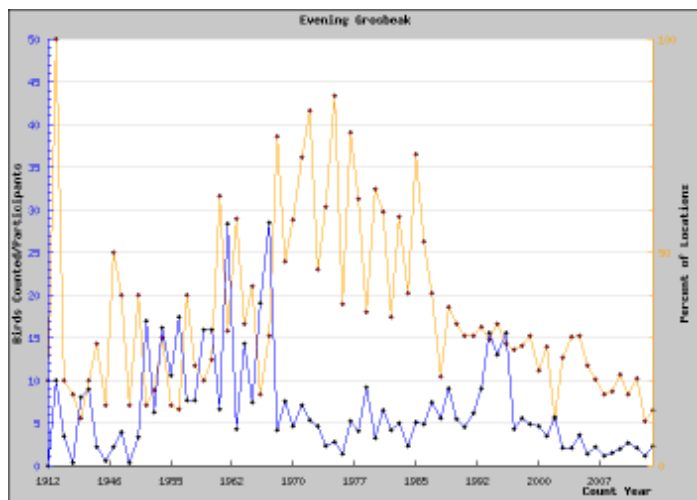


Figure 1

Grosbeaks first staged a winter “invasion” in the eastern states all the way to New England during the winter of 1889-90. It was a dramatic event for the nation’s ornithologists, many centered in the East. No one knows what caused it, along with the regular appearances of Evening Grosbeaks in the East afterwards, though most speculation involves the spread of box elders, hackberries, and other trees the grosbeaks favored. But they were definitely present in Minnesota in good numbers before then, at least during many years. Roberts wrote:

Dr. Hvoslef writes that “after having been common at Lanesboro throughout the winter of 1883-84, the Evening Grosbeaks assembled in the valley of the Root River during April and early May in such great numbers that they were sometimes among the most abundant birds in the timber below the village, making the spring woods resound with their noisy notes.” Some years it is entirely absent or very rare, or appears only in certain places for a short time, wandering over the country in an erratic manner. Other winters it is abundant and is to be found almost everywhere in considerable flocks.

Roberts wrote, again in 1936, “Locally, as at Brainerd, it is present in considerable numbers every winter.”

That long-term regular presence has definitely changed now. Jodie Provost, DNR Private Land Habitat Coordinator, wrote in *My Minnesota Woods*, a publication by the University of Minnesota Forest Resources Extension (www.myminnesotawoods.umn.edu/2014/11/evening-grosbeaks/):

In northwest Minnesota, Evening Grosbeaks were once considered a common to uncommon year-around resident at Red Lake WMA and Hayes Lake State Park. Now, they are considered rare based on data from Minnesota’s Breeding Bird Atlas, Breeding Bird Surveys, and Christmas Bird Counts (CBC). The trend in percent of locations reporting evening grosbeaks in the Minnesota CBC has been downward since the mid-1970s.

Since Kim Eckert started compiling Duluth’s CBC and drawing in many more participants in 1979, there was never a year with zero Evening Grosbeaks in his count circle until 2002. In the three-year stretch from 2009 to 2011 not one was found on the Duluth CBC.

The decline of wintering Evening Grosbeaks has been distressing for many of us, but those of us who got to enjoy their family groups in our yards miss them even more in summer. The precipitous drop in numbers in recent years is shockingly dramatic in Minnesota’s Breeding Bird Survey data (Figure 2), but equally dramatic in Breeding Bird Survey data from throughout Canada (Figure 3) and Survey-wide (Figure 4).

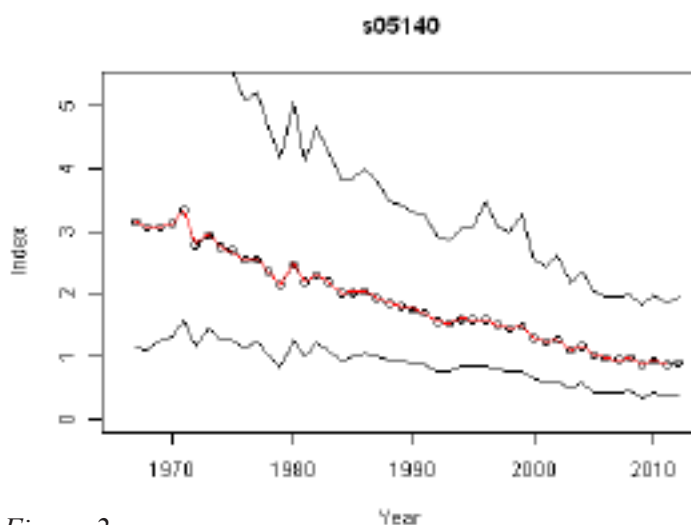


Figure 2

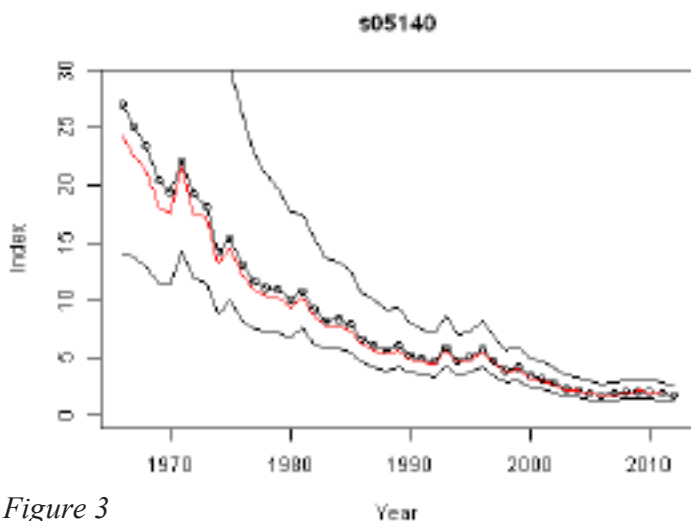


Figure 3

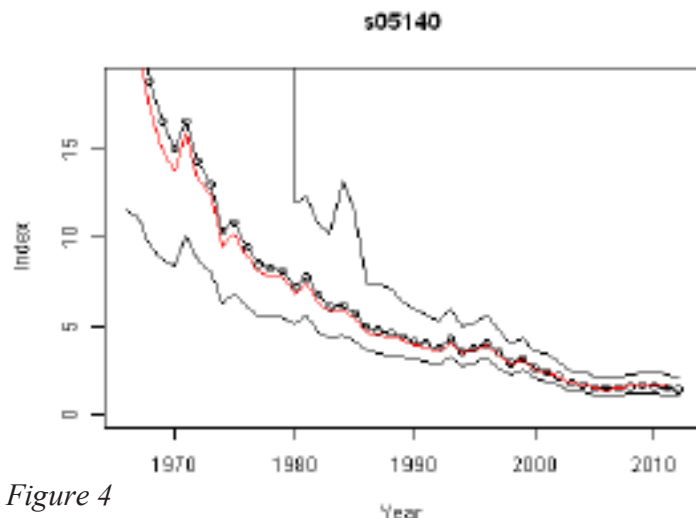


Figure 4

Unfortunately, we have no data from before 1966 when that survey began, but we know numbers were strong before then. Roberts wrote, again in 1936:

Sufficient information has now accumulated to show conclusively that the Evening Grosbeak is present throughout the year in the evergreen forests of Minnesota, most commonly and apparently regularly from Itasca and Koochiching counties eastward into Lake and Cook Counties. The most southern localities are Aitkin County and a possible record at Brainerd, in Crow Wing County, July, 1927. It is by no means evenly distributed throughout the area, occurring, usually a number together, at widely separated localities.

We don't know with any certainty what has caused this dramatic decline, but contributing factors may include:

- Evening Grosbeaks feed their nestlings insects, including (possibly preferentially in some places) spruce budworm. Controlling spruce budworm has been an important forestry goal for many decades with heavy use of pesticides over enormous swaths of northern forest. One of the pesticides currently used is *Bacillus thuringiensis* which isn't known to harm birds, but indiscriminately kills moth and butterfly larvae, their primary prey during the nesting season.

- Adult and young Evening Grosbeaks feed heavily on maple and, especially, box elder seeds. In recent decades, forest management in huge swaths of northern forests has focused on fast-growing softwood trees for paper and wood products rather than on slower-growing hardwoods such as maple and box elder. This may have reduced another important food source.
- Exploitation of tar sands has also been implicated in the loss of huge swaths of Canadian forest habitat.
- Large numbers of Evening Grosbeaks have been killed by cars during winter when they are drawn to roads to pick up road salt and grit. In a single incident reported in 1981, over 2,000 Evening Grosbeaks were killed

along a 16-km stretch of a British Columbia road, with many more dead birds seen off the road that weren't counted. (Smith, W. G. 1981. "Observations on a large highway kill of Evening Grosbeaks in British Columbia." *Syesis* 14:163.)

- Evening Grosbeaks have been killed in much larger than average numbers at windows. Klem in 1989 listed them as the tenth-most frequently reported species killed by collision with building windows.

What can we do to help? Box elder trees do seem to provide food when grosbeaks are flying over. A flock of 16 adults and young turned up in my yard in August 2011 and remained for about 6 weeks. They visited my feeders now and then, but spent far more time in my box elders and my birdbath. Planting one in your yard may be helpful for grosbeaks in the long run.

Reporting seasonal data to Minnesota Ornithologists' Union is very useful for understanding the presence and whereabouts of grosbeaks in the state. Reporting your birding checklists into eBird as well provides valuable data useful for ornithologists and conservationists throughout the continent trying to track the presence and movements of this wide-ranging wanderer, whose conservation obviously depends on the cooperation of many states and provinces.

When grosbeaks do visit feeders, they are very vulnerable to window collisions. When feeders are just 3 feet from the window, a grosbeak suddenly taking off is already going high speeds when it hits the glass. They're much safer when the feeders are directly against the window or very far from the glass.



Laura Erickson has been birding in northern Minnesota since she moved to Duluth in 1981. Since 1986, she's been producing a radio program about birds that airs on several public and community stations in the state. In 2014, the American Birding Association made her recipient of their highest honor, the Roger Tory Peterson Award. www.lauraerickson.com

MOU Calendar



Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

<http://audubonchapterofminneapolis.org/programs>

November 10

Birding about the Metro and Herons in Minneapolis

Presented by Cher Curry, wildlife photographer. 7 p.m.
Beth El Synagogue, 5224 W. 26th Street, St. Louis Park.

December 1

North American Bird Migration

Presented by Jim Egge. 7 p.m. Brookdale Library, 6125
Shingle Creek Parkway, Minneapolis.

Bell Museum of Natural History

October 3-January 3

Peregrine Falcon: From Endangered Species to Urban Bird

After hours Gallery Presentation, November 4, 5:30 p.m.
After hours Sketch Night, December 2, 6:30 p.m.
Information: Martin Moen at mmoen@umn.edu
or 612-624-0793.

Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center

www.CarpenterNatureCenter.org

November 27 and December 18

Public Bird Banding

8:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Donations of birdseed or suet are greatly
appreciated.

Minneapolis Audubon Society

November 13

Birding in Cuba

Presented by Donna and Jerry Bahls. 1 p.m. Bryant Square
Park Building, corner of Bryant Avenue South and 31st
Street, Minneapolis.

December 11

Kazakhstan Birding

Presented by Sharon Stiteler. 1 p.m. Bryant Square Park
Building, corner of Bryant Avenue South and 31st Street,
Minneapolis.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

November 14

BOW – Tundra Swan Migration

9 a.m.-3 p.m. Bus tour open to the general public. Location

-- Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge, Winona.
Cost: \$25. For information and registration, call 507-494-
6238; deadline is November 7, 2015.

December 19

Annual Winter Bird Survey, Bemidji State Park

10 a.m.-12 p.m. Open to all birding abilities. Meet at the
Visitor Center. For Information contact John Fylpaa at
218-308-2300 or John.Fylpaa@state.mn.us.

December 20

21st Annual Itasca State Park Winter Bird Count

8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Meet at the Jacob V. Brower Visitor Cen-
ter Lobby between 7:30 and 8 a.m. for information, call
218-699-7251 or email itasca.statepark@state.mn.us

Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

November 14

Raptor Photography: Exclusive Camera Access

10 a.m.-3 p.m. Carlyn Iverson, instructor, University of
Minnesota Raptor Center. Participants will learn how to
control the camera for images from distances of 5-20 feet
away (in class) as well as longer distances (in the field).
Recommended: 90 mm and higher focal-length lenses.
Cost: \$114 members; \$134 non-members; includes Arbo-
retum admission. A portion of the class fees go to benefit
the Raptor Center. Information: [www.arboretum.umn.edu/](http://www.arboretum.umn.edu/photographyclasses.aspx)
photographyclasses.aspx.

Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter

November 13

Isanti County Birding Day

7 a.m. Craig Mandel, leader. Information: 952-240-7647

November 14

Swans on Mississippi River/Weaver Bottoms Field Trip

Mark Lystig, leader. Call 651-452-1133 for details

November 16

Rapids Lake Unit, MVNWR Field Trip

8 a.m. Craig Mandel, leader. Information: 952-240-7647

November 21

Bass Ponds, MVNWR Field Trip

8 a.m. Craig Mandel, leader. Information: 952-240-7647



December 3

McLeod County Birding Day

8 a.m. Craig Mandel, leader. Information: 952-240-7647

December 5

Bass Ponds, MVNWR Field Trip

8 a.m. Craig Mandel, leader. Information: 952-240-7647

December 7

Rapids Lake Unit, MVNWR Field Trip

8 a.m. Craig Mandel, leader. Information: 952-240-7647

December 19

Christmas Bird Count, Bloomington Area

Call Bart Anderson at 612-719-6103

December 19

Winter Potluck Dinner/Christmas Bird Report

5:30 p.m. Diamond Lake Church

December 20

Christmas Bird Count, Cedar Creek Bog, Anoka County

7 a.m. Call Steve Weston, 612-978-3993 for information

Saint Paul Audubon Society

Information: Contact Linda Goodspeed at 651-647-1452

November 12

Nesting Ecology of Red-headed Woodpeckers

Presented by Brittney Yohannes, Master's candidate in the Conservation Biology Program, University of MN. 7 p.m. Fairview Community Center, 1910 West County Road B, Roseville.



Prairie Chicken, photo by Earl Orf

December 10

Wildlife of the Masai Mara

Presented by Ben Wilson. 7 p.m. Fairview Community Center, 1910 West County Road B, Roseville

Three Rivers Parks

www.threeriversparks.org

November 7

Bird Banding

9 a.m.-12 p.m. Eastman Nature Center, 13351 Elm Creek Road, Dayton, MN

November 17

Bird Banding

9 a.m.-12 p.m. Lowry Nature Center, 7025 Victoria Drive, Victoria, MN

Zumbro Valley Audubon Society

Unless otherwise noted, events start at Quarry Hill Nature Center, 701 Silver Creek Road NE, Rochester, MN.

www.zumbrovalleyaudubon.org/programs.html

November 7

Kinglet Bird Walk

9 a.m.

November 14

Tundra Swan Trip

Meet at 8 a.m., east side of Heintz Center in Rochester to carpool. Trip will return early afternoon

November 17

Owls to Orchids: Magic & Mystery in our Northern Bogs

Presented by Sparky Stensaas at 7 p.m.

December 5

Nuthatch Bird Walk

9 a.m.

December 19

Christmas Bird Count

7:15 a.m. Meet at West Silver Lake Parking Lot to form teams. Lunch break and count tallies at Quarry Hill Nature Center

MINNESOTA BIRDING WEEKENDS & WEEKS

[MBWbirds.com](http://mbwbirds.com)

APRIL 2016 - FEBRUARY 2017 • OUR 31st SEASON



Minnesota Birding Weekends and Weeks (MBW) soon enters its **31st season** offering unique and *modestly priced* birding trips **in association with the MOU**. (Note that we originated in 1986 as MOU Birding Weekends, and MBW participants are still expected to be members of MOU, which receives a portion of MBW receipts in return for including these updates on the mou-net listserv and in the MOU newsletter.)

There have now been a total of 375 MBWeekends, 90+ MBWeeks, more than 8,200 registrations, a composite list of 362 species on MBWeekends alone – and a grand total of 700 species (!) including MBWeeks. In addition to MBWeekends, note this season's selection of out-of-state MBWeeks (be advised some may fill up on the first day of registration) and their inexpensive cost – *typically less than half the cost of similar tours operated by others*.

PLEASE NOTE: November 16, 2015 will be the first day that registrations will be accepted for the 2016-17 MBW season (*the confirmation of any registrations postmarked before November 16 will be delayed*). Complete descriptions of all MBWs, summaries of previous MBWs, registration information, cost estimates of MBWeeks, and more will be posted on the MBWbirds website (<http://mbwbirds.com>) on November 14 – please read this information before registering.

MINNESOTA BIRDING WEEKENDS / WEEKS REGISTRATION

~ Please photocopy this form as needed; MBW registrations may not be postmarked until NOVEMBER 16, 2015 ~

NAME(s) _____

E-MAIL _____ (E-mail address required on all registrations)

U.S. mail address _____

Telephone(s) _____ (home) _____ (cell)

(Address and telephone not needed if you previously registered for a MBW and contact information has not changed)

• WEEKEND/WEEK _____ \$ _____ fee/deposit x _____ person(s) = \$ _____

Other person(s) included in this registration: _____

• WEEKEND/WEEK _____ \$ _____ fee/deposit x _____ person(s) = \$ _____

Other person(s) included in this registration: _____

• WEEKEND/WEEK _____ \$ _____ fee/deposit x _____ person(s) = \$ _____

Other person(s) included in this registration: _____

Please make checks payable to **M.B.W.**, and mail to: **MBW,**
c/o Kim R Eckert, 1921 West Kent Rd, Duluth, MN 55812

Total \$ _____

~ 2016-2017 MBWEEKENDS ~

As of November 14, see MBWbirds.com/mbweekends for additional information on each MBWeekend.
Note that future changes in this schedule are possible, and updates on these will appear on MBWbirds.com.

- March 25 pre-MBW ~ Yellow Medicine County ~ \$30 (Base Montevideo)
- March 26 - 27, 2016 ~ Lac Qui Parle ~ \$45 (Base Montevideo)
- May 14 - 15, 2016 ~ Minnesota River Valley ~ \$45 (Base Mankato)
- May 27 pre-MBW ~ Nobles County ~ \$30 (Base Worthington)
- May 28 - 29 - 30, 2016 ~ Southwestern Minnesota ~ \$75 (Base Luverne)
- June 10 pre-MBW ~ Sax-Zim Bog ~ \$30 (Base Eveleth)
- June 11 - 12, 2016 ~ Lake County ~ \$45 (Base Silver Bay)
- June 25 - 26, 2016 ~ Polk County ~ \$45 (Base Crookston)
- July 15 pre-MBW ~ Pope County ~ \$30 (Leader Craig Mandel / Base Glenwood)
- July 16 - 17, 2016 ~ Douglas County ~ \$45 (Leader Craig Mandel / Base Alexandria)
- August 12 pre-MBW ~ Traverse & Grant Counties ~ \$30 (Base Morris)
- August 13 - 14, 2016 ~ Stevens & Big Stone Counties ~ \$45 (Base Morris)
- September 2 pre-MBW ~ Pennington & Red Lake Counties ~ \$30 (Base Thief River Falls)
- September 3 - 4 - 5, 2016 ~ Northwestern Minnesota ~ \$75 (Base Thief River Falls)
- October 14 pre-MBW ~ North Shore I ~ \$30 (Base Duluth)
- October 15 - 16, 2016 ~ Fall Duluth ~ \$45 (Base Duluth)
- November 3 - 4, 2016 ~ North Shore II ~ \$45 (Leader Craig Mandel / Base Duluth & Grand Marais)
- November 5 - 6, 2016 ~ North Shore III ~ \$45 (Base Duluth & Grand Marais)
- January 7 - 8, 2017 ~ Winter Duluth I ~ \$45 (Base Duluth)
- January 14 - 15, 2017 ~ Winter Duluth II ~ \$45 (Leader Craig Mandel / Base Duluth)

~ 2016-2017 MBWEEKS ~

As of November 14, see MBWbirds.com/mbweeks for additional information on each MBWeek.
Note that future changes in this schedule are possible, and updates on these will appear on MBWbirds.com:
e.g., dates may have to be adjusted for some MBWeeks due to limited lodging availability,
or to coincide with the schedules of flights, ferries, pelagic trips, etc.

- APRIL 2 - 10, 2016 ~ COLORADO GROUSE ~ \$50 deposit
- APRIL 17 - 27, 2016 ~ SOUTH FLORIDA (Leader Craig Mandel)
\$50 deposit
- APRIL 23 - MAY 1, 2016 ~ HIGH ISLAND & HILL COUNTRY, TEXAS
\$50 deposit
- JULY 16 - 24, 2016 ~ BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK ~ \$50 deposit
- SEPTEMBER 10 - 18, 2016 ~ WASHINGTON & BRITISH COLUMBIA
(pre-MBWeek option September 8 - 9 ~ Mount Rainier)
\$50 deposit
- JANUARY 14 - 22, 2017 ~ SOUTHEAST ARIZONA ~ \$50 deposit
- FEBRUARY 11 - 19, 2017 ~ SOUTH TEXAS ~ \$50 deposit



Award Nominations Due October 30

by Kim R. Eckert

It's again that time of year when the MOU Awards & Recognitions Committee is considering nominees to be recognized for their contributions to the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union. This annual tradition of recognition takes the form of presenting the Thomas S. Roberts, Brother Theodore Voelker, and Young Birder awards at the MOU Papers Session on December 5, 2015.

Since 1963, the Thomas S. Roberts Award has traditionally been our lifetime achievement award: "For Outstanding Contributions to Minnesota Ornithology and Birding", as stated on the plaque. Previous recipients have contributed to the MOU in many different ways, which were sometimes not directly related to ornithology or birding. (Also note that our unofficial policy has been that a person would only receive the Roberts Award once, so please check the link

below to see if the person you have in mind is a previous recipient.)

The Bro. Theodore Voelker Award is "For Special Achievement in Field Ornithology" during the past year, which would be from November 2014 through October 2015. The original intent in 1988 was that this recipient's achievement would be related to field ornithology in one of three categories: significant bird sighting(s), something written (e.g., journal article, book, or technical paper), or a field research project. (In some years, involvements in special events, conservation, mentoring, and education have also been included in the criteria for this award, and note that a person can receive the Voelker Award more than once.)

The Young Birder Award is for someone under 25 years old contributing to knowledge of Minnesota birds or to the MOU; as it reads on the plaque: "For Contributions to Bird-

ing in Minnesota". This is our newest award, presented for the first time in 2005.

The names of all previous recipients of these awards can be found on the MOU website: <http://moumn.org/awards.html>. Accordingly, please contact me if you have someone in mind for any of these awards, and include his or her qualifications and contributions which you feel would make your nominee a worthy recipient. I would like to receive all nominations no later than October 30, and the committee thanks you in advance for your interest and input in these awards.

Kim R Eckert, Chairman
MOU Awards and
Recognition Committee
eckertkr@gmail.com
1921 W Kent Rd
Duluth MN 55812
(218) 349 5953



Pictured is South Minneapolis's Burroughs Birders birding club that MRVAC and MOU grants helped kick-start. Creator and leader Amy Simso Dean reports that it is still going strong, with a total of 24 students enrolled.

New MOU Members

Marilyn Anderson,
Brainerd, MN

Josephine Egge,
Park Rapids, MN

Stephanie Hover,
New Hope, MN

James McBride,
St. Paul, MN

Linda McCandless,
Boca Raton, FL

Garrett Wee,
Cottonwood, MN

Minnesota Birder Bio: Peter Nichols



Born: St. Paul, MN, 1976

Currently living: Cottage Grove, MN

Occupation: Adjunct Professor of Philosophy at the University of St. Thomas

Serious about birding since: 2008

Favorite bird or bird family: Warblers

Favorite places to bird in Minnesota: My local “patch” in southern Washington County, which includes Afton State Park, Grey Cloud Dunes Scientific Natural Area, Carpenter Nature Center, and my yard. One of the fun challenges of patch birding is to look for little-known places to see what they may be concealing. I also take some birding trips and chase some rare birds, but the majority of my birding is in my local patch.

Favorite place to bird outside of Minnesota: San Diego County, CA and Dane County, WI.

Birding style (i.e. by yourself, with others, etc): I love to go birding with friends, but birding alone can also be very rewarding. I rely heavily on my ear and often will just sit in one place and listen.

Best advice on how to be a better birder: Learn the vocalizations and hone your listening skills.

The main attraction or joy of birding for you: Listing is fun, feeder-watching is relaxing, learning about behavior and migration patterns is interesting, improving my identification skills is a good challenge...there are many attractions. Perhaps the most basic attraction of all is simply that birds are beautiful.

Interests/hobbies when you're not birding: philosophy, psychology, music, history, physics, cosmology, evolutionary biology, Buddhism, and many others. Ccamping, hiking, playing piano and guitar, singing, reading, and meditation. My favorite pursuit of all is my livelihood: teaching.

What new bird you would like to see the most: Short-eared Owl

Alumni Partnership with Raptor Center

by Allan Meadows

Alumni from the Murray High School Class of 1965 recognized their 50th class reunion with a gift of \$10,000 to the University of Minnesota Raptor Center.

This gift, matched with an additional \$10,000 by the St. Anthony Park Community Foundation, will support Murray Middle School's partnership with the Raptor Center. The money will be used to bring the Raptor Center's programming into

Murray's seventh grade life science curriculum each year for the next six years. Alumnus Myrna Meadows, who works with nonprofits through Bremer Bank in International Falls, worked with the foundation on the 50-year reunion gift.

The alumni raised an additional \$1,000, also matched by the foundation, to be used for a “teacher wish list fund.”



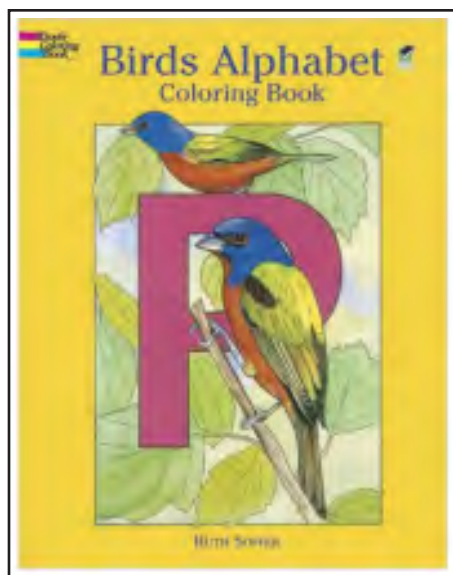
*Red-tailed Hawk
Photo by Mary Graves*

Gifts for the Next Generation of Birders

by Cindy Thury Smith

We all know we need to promote birding to the younger generation and the upcoming holiday season is a good excuse to buy some pro-birding presents. On a recent trip to the Science Museum of Minnesota's gift shop I found a wide variety of toys and games for the very young to teenage-aged range. Amazon.com also carries most of these gifts.

Coloring Books: Ruth Soffer has over a dozen coloring and sticker books (Amazing Birds Coloring Book, Bird Alphabet, Sea & Shorebirds, etc.). Ages: 3-11 year-olds
Price: Under \$5.00



Bird Bingo: There are several versions of this board game available. The cards include the birds' common and scientific names along with information on habitat, behavior, and other interesting facts.

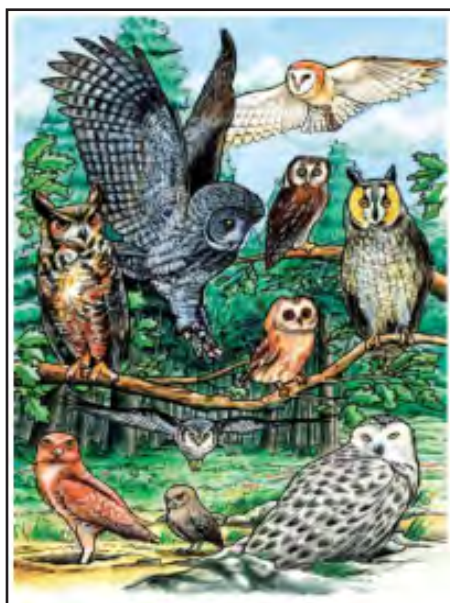
Ages: 3-12 year-olds, plus adult version.
Price: Under \$12.00 for younger version, \$20.00-\$35.00 for older version.

Tray Puzzles: Cobble Hill makes tray puzzles for children with beautiful illustrations of birds. Each puzzle

has only 35 pieces which fit into a tray to guide assembly. The back of the tray features facts about the animals and environments depicted on the front.

Ages: 4+ year-olds

Price: Under \$6.00



Kites: These are in the shape of an owl, hawk, or falcon.

Ages: older ages

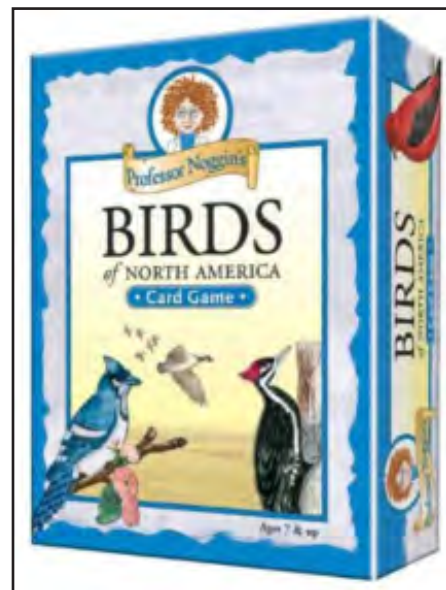
Price: Under \$20.00

Professor Noggin's Trivia Card

Games: Geared towards multiple players, these games include trivia, true or false multiple choice questions, and a three numbered die.

Ages: 7+ year-olds

Price: \$10.00-15.00



Fandex Family Field Guides: These are a cross between flash cards

and a fan. They fold up compactly to carry along on hikes. When opened out you have a color photo of the bird with information underneath. Many other environmental-related topics are available.

Ages: All ages

Price: \$10.00-15.00

Charley Harper-themed Gifts:

This famous American artist's minimalist style is easily understood by children and appreciated by adults. (Fun fact: He influenced the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker logo for the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.) His website (www.charleyharper.com) has his artwork featured on books, puzzles, Smartwool socks, cards, coasters, ornaments, posters, tiles, wrapping paper, mugs, and more.

Ages: All ages

Price: Wide range



Nature Jewelry: Lastly, I'll suggest you visit www.lovelldesigns.com to see Ken Kantro's nature-based jewelry, including the Cygnet design, Preening Loon (pictured above) and Migrating Goose. Another great source of jewelry depicting birds is Wild Bryde jewelry (www.shop.wildbryde.com) which has over a dozen categories of bird jewelry.

Ages: 5+ year-olds

Price: Wide range

Savaloja Grant Applications Sought

by Steve Wilson

The MOU supports bird-related projects through the Savaloja Grants. Applications are now being sought for projects beginning in 2016 that increase our understanding of birds, promote preservation of birds and their natural habitats, or increase public interest in birds, including in populations currently underrepresented in Minnesota's birding community.

The budget for 2016 grants hasn't been set yet, but this year \$12,800 was awarded through eight grants ranging from \$400 to \$2700. Projects included scholarships to Flying Wild workshops for educators working in urban low-income and minority areas, an owl-banding program at a nature

center, binoculars for two urban nature centers, a nature center's educational big birding day, a study of bird immune system defenses against nest parasites, a pilot program encouraging seniors in a low-income neighborhood to become involved in birding activities, and a program that uses birds as an integrating theme in teaching disparate subjects to elementary school students.

Application information may be obtained by going to www.moumn.org/grants.html. The deadline for receipt of grant applications is January 31, 2016. Grant recipients will be notified by April 1, 2016.



Common Redpoll, photo by Liz Stanley

Leave Dead Trees Standing for Owls

by Karla Bloem

Most people in North America like owls. But most Americans don't realize that each and every one of us is making choices in our lives that affect owls for better or for worse. One of the major goals of the International Owl Center is to give people the knowledge to make owl-friendly choices in their lives.

At some point in time most people who own property, whether a tiny lot or hundreds of acres, are faced with dead or dying trees. Your decisions about those trees will affect owls and other wildlife.

If a dead or dying tree is next to a house in a town or city, there are few options other than removing most or all of it. Sometimes a dead tree can be severely topped to remove the dangerous branches and the main trunk can be safely left in place for insects, birds, and other wildlife to use. Diseased or infested trees may legally have to be removed completely if you are in a city.

Whenever possible, leaving dead trees standing is a great thing for owls. Owls do not build nests and several species, including Barred Owls, Eastern Screech-Owls, Northern Sawwhet Owls, and Boreal Owls, require or prefer tree cavities for nesting. For some of these species, there is simply no other alternative for nesting unless they can find a nest box that someone has erected.

Besides giving owls nesting possibilities, leaving dead trees standing also saves birds that are currently nesting. The Owl Center had a Barred Owl named Timber (as in "Timberrrrrr" that is yelled when a tree is felled). He was in captivity because his nest tree was cut down when he was an owlet with his siblings inside. As the tree was cut up, the chainsaw went directly through the nest cav-

ity, killing all of his siblings. Timber survived but the top of his head was completely scalped.

With much medical attention from the Raptor Education Group in Antigo, WI, the skin regrew over his skull, but he was now imprinted on humans from all the handling necessary for his recovery. After he became an education bird with the Owl Center, his behavior took a turn for the worse and he was barely eating. He had developed bleeding in the back of his eyes and it looked like a case of shaken baby syndrome, which we can only guess was a result of his original injury. He did not improve and the only humane option

was euthanasia.

Stories of owls and other birds being injured when their nest trees are cut down are not uncommon—just ask wildlife rehabilitators.

Dead trees standing. In Austria, for example, people are paid up to 200 Euros to leave a large dead tree standing. A sign is placed on the tree stating that it is a habitat tree for wildlife and cannot be taken down.

The next time you are faced with a dead or dying tree, please choose to leave it standing if at all possible... for owls and for other wildlife. Your choice DOES make a difference.



A sign in Austria declaring that the dead tree on which the sign is posted can not be taken down. The main line reads "Tree Hotel (or Tree Bed & Breakfast), Old Tree Habitat".

MOU Paper Session Registration



Saturday, December 5th 2015 • 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota
10 Church Street SE, Minneapolis

At the corner of Church Street and University Avenue

REGISTRATION		LUNCH	DONATIONS
\$5.⁰⁰ by mail with this form \$6.⁰⁰ at the door		Add \$12.⁰⁰ for each <i>Includes sandwich, whole fruit, chips, cole slaw (vegetable wrap substitutes pasta), cookie, and soda (circle drink choice):</i> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div>Coke Sprite</div> <div>Diet Coke Root Beer</div> <div>Fresca Water</div> </div>	The MOU General Fund helps finance all MOU projects and publications The Savaloja Grants help finance bird-related research and education in Minnesota
Name		<input type="checkbox"/> None (no charge) <input type="checkbox"/> Smoked Turkey Sandwich w/ lettuce tomato, and swiss cheese on wheatberry <input type="checkbox"/> Ham Sandwich w/ lettuce, tomato, and swiss cheese on rye <input type="checkbox"/> Roast Beef Sandwich w/ lettuce, tomato, and cheddar cheese on wheat <input type="checkbox"/> Marinated Vegetable Wrap with fresh mozzarella and arugula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund \$ _____ • Savaloja Grant \$ _____ • Membership/Renewal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Life (\$500) <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting (\$75) <input type="checkbox"/> Family (\$35) <input type="checkbox"/> Individual (\$25) <input type="checkbox"/> Under 17 years (\$17)
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Make check payable to the MOU. Send this form and check by November 25th 2014 to:

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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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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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