

Minnesota BIRDING

May / Jun
2016



Volume 53
Number 3

Inside this Issue

- 1 Conservation Column:
Dining for Birds
- 3 Phenology Corner
Bonus Birds
- 4 MOU Calendar
- 8 Birder Bio
- 9 New Members
- 10 MOU Membership
Information



Dining for Birds

by *Bob Russell*

We all know many ways to save birds through habitat preservation, purchasing a waterfowl stamp, feeding birds in harsh winters, planting fruit-bearing shrubs and native vegetation, and building nest boxes and shelters. An additional way to help is to pay a little attention to what we eat and to purchase food items that benefit birds and their habitats. One person at a time can change the world if you pass this information on and also implement some of these recommendations in your own food choices.

Wheat—Wheat fields are generally avoided by most land birds except for Rock Pigeons, Mourning Doves, and a few passerines such as Bobolinks and Sedge Wrens, both of which occasionally inhabit mature stands of winter wheat. So give up the wheat flakes and try another grain. Many of the better (i.e. healthier for you, like more fiber) dark breads incorporate smaller or no amounts of wheat and add oats, barley, flax, rye, and rice, often as a first ingredient. All of these are likely better for the birds than pure wheat bread. Most pastas are wheat based, even ones called Jerusalem Artichoke pasta which is a wheat mixture. Vegetable based pastas like spinach or tomato usually contain wheat also but in lesser quantities and are healthier in the long run than purely wheat-based ones. Gluten-free pastas incorporate potato, quinoa, or lesser known grains whose relationship to supporting birds is little known.

Corn—It provides even less habitat for breeding birds, especially since most farmers do not rotate fallow fields to corn every other year but alternate with soybeans. As with many row crops, farmers often plant right to the edge of the roads or adjoining fields leaving no permanent cover for wildlife. Vesper Sparrows may be able

to pull off early broods in young corn fields and Horned Larks can breed in wet corn fields in March and April, but recent warm March weather favors farmers plowing and not breeding birds. The huge amount of land dedicated to corn in the Midwest is an incredible net loss for birds. To be fair, corvids like American Crow, Black-billed Magpie, Blue Jay, and gamebirds like Ring-necked Pheasant, and occasional Red-bellied Woodpeckers utilize standing corn fields. Some waterfowl will use flooded corn stubble in spring and fall, but often these are the only shallow ponds around and may not provide much sustenance. Corn harvesters are increasingly efficient, leaving little spilt grain for wildlife. New corn “weed-free” varieties are even worse for birds than older strains which at least provided a modicum of weed seeds for sparrows and longspurs following harvest. If you want more crows in the world eat corn flakes, but there are better bird friendly options. Avoid corn syrup in soft drinks and hundreds of other products. The detrimental aspects of corn syrup to human health are being debated and researched extensively.

Oats—Here’s a crop that somewhat resembles the tallgrass prairie and anecdotal reports indicate these fields are more favorable to grassland sparrows, Sedge Wren, Bobolink, and longspurs than wheat fields. Most oats grow in northern Minnesota and the Dakotas, north of where Dickcissels breed, but this species will utilize oat fields when they are planted in southern and central Minnesota. Eat those toasted oats and oat flakes! But be sure to check the box labels for added corn syrups and other non-helpful products.

Wild Rice—It’s an excellent food for many species of waterfowl and a

continued on next page

continued from page one

good indicator of water quality. Both the brown colored variety harvested mainly in the wild by Native Americans and recreational harvesters as well as the black varieties grown in paddyfield situations provide great waterbird habitat. Birds utilizing these areas include not only ducks and geese, but also rails, grebes, cranes, coots, and shorebirds. The largest concentrations of migrant Ring-necked Ducks in the world occur on wild rice lakes in north central Minnesota such as Drumbeater Lake and Rice Lake.

Basmati rice, brown rice, and other rices—Most of these crops are grown in the four southern states of Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, and Arkansas. Together they provide large areas of habitat for both local and wintering waterfowl and Midwest waterbirds like Yellow Rail, King Rail, Sora, and many egrets and herons.

Flax—This is another northern Great Plains crop that benefits grassland birds more than corn or soybeans. Flax milk is available at high-end supermarkets and with added vanilla is delicious as a dairy substitute. Flax seeds sprinkled on cereals or pasta have health benefits that are well documented.

Rye—This northern crop which has decreased over the years. Too bad, for this is another prairie grass look-alike which many species of sparrows, meadowlarks, and Bobolinks find attractive. Rye bread is good and to some rye whiskey is better. The picture of a Minnesota Birding Weekend group passed out in the back of the vans from trying to drink bird habitat back to the state would make a great cartoon but please drink responsibly!

Barley—Here's another local crop in Minnesota (especially the northwest) and North Dakota that provides some habitat for grassland birds like Sedge Wren, Bobolink, and even the occasional foraging Northern Harrier. Barley is most popular in beef barley soup and malted as a major component for beer. Since microbeers



Dickcissel by Alyssa DeRubeis

incorporate up to four times the barley as national beers do, drink local brews and help the birds!

Alfalfa—While it's best eaten by your horse, stands aged 1–3 years old can be favorite breeding sites for both Sedge Wrens and Bobolinks and I've even seen foraging Marbled Godwits in them. Alfalfa honey is hard to find nowadays (great smell!), but is often incorporated into wildflower honey which also supports many field-breeding birds like kingbirds and meadowlarks. Artificial honey (pollen removed and some sugars like corn syrup added) is common in discount stores (China and India sourced) so best to visit the local farmer's market and know your apiary. If your honey is sticky, it has added sugar or artificial sweetener in it. Natural honey is not sticky.

Grass-fed Beef—We once ate nothing but this beef source. It may take getting used to again but the sweetness in most beef is the corn they are fattened up on. Grass-fed beef preserves a meadow grazing system that provides great habitat for insects and insect-eating birds like kingbirds, Sedge Wrens, Bobolinks, and many species of sparrows. There is also milk

sourced from grass-fed cows which accomplishes the same thing, preservation of meadows, fields, and even prairies where birds can survive in sustainable numbers. Grass-fed beef is one of the most important food choices you can make for birds.

Cranberries—These are mostly grown in the Midwest in Wisconsin. Cranberry beds during the growing season harbor both Red-necked and Pied-billed Grebes and a fair number of wading birds like frog-foraging Great Blue Herons and resting waterfowl during migration.

Other Tips—Avoid palm oil at all cost. Southeastern Asian rainforests are being decimated by this crop which is planted after the rainforests are clearcut. Support rainforest coffee and bird friendly coffee labels. A future article will deal with our eating effects on the world's birds and go into more detail on these and other crops.

Bob Russell is a somewhat retired biologist from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service still working on a couple of soon to be completed projects including searching for Ivory-billed Woodpeckers and Eskimo Curlews in remote portions of North America.

Phenology Corner: Bonus Birds

by Bob Dunlap

For the most part, this phenology column has highlighted birds and avian phenomenon that can be expected each year, with the intent to educate you or perhaps reinforce what you already know. Well, it's May, when just about anything is possible, and I think you deserve a bonus. So let's discuss some rare, exciting, fist-pump birds that you're looking to add to your Minnesota state list or even your life list.

Piping Plovers, which used to nest on the sandy beaches around Park Point in Duluth and on a couple islands in Lake of the Woods, are now almost exclusively migrants in Minnesota. Each year, one or two birds still stop by Park Point in the third or fourth week of May, probably as overshoots from nearby nesting areas in the Apostle Islands of Wisconsin (many of these federally-threatened birds are banded). In some years, they can be found throughout the month among large concentrations of shorebirds elsewhere in the state as they migrate to their breeding grounds in the Dakotas and the Canadian Prairie Provinces. **Whimbrels** and **Red Knots** are also best looked for on the beaches of Park Point in the third and fourth week of May; in addition, Whimbrels can be found at several other locations along the North Shore during this time.

Patient scrutiny is required to pick out a **Little Gull** among a flock of Bonaparte's Gulls, as this diminutive gull is almost always found in large flocks of Bonaparte's in May. Again, Park Point is probably the most reliable location to find one, but there are records from other parts of the state as well (most recently Lake Byllesby in Dakota County). If you happen upon a flock of Common Terns standing on the beach, see if you can find one that looks a little bit smaller, with a shorter all-red bill, shorter legs, lighter primaries, and a more extensive black cap...



Western Tanager by Bob Dunlap

this may be your lifer **Arctic Tern**.

Although many records are from the fall season, more **Scissor-tailed Flycatchers** have been seen in May than in any other month. And for some reason, **Northern Mockingbirds** tend to show up in good numbers each May, but they rarely stick around to nest. Anywhere along the North Shore is a good place to find either species, as is any park with open habitat and scattered trees elsewhere in the state.

Worm-eating Warbler records are not nearly as frequent as they used to be, but you should still keep an eye out for this species as you walk through the woods picking through warblers (Worm-eating tends to be found in vegetation at or below eye-level). Be especially alert if you hear a Chipping Sparrow in the middle of the forest, as these two species sound nearly identical. At least one **Kentucky Warbler** could be found on territory at Williams Nature Center near Mankato for just over a decade, but that bird was last present in May 2011 and hasn't been back since. However, one or two individuals are found annually in other locations in southern Minnesota, usually in places where migrant warbler waves

are to be expected. **Yellow-throated Warblers** and **Prairie Warblers** are found about every other year or so in the same situations.

A few **Western** and **Summer Tanagers** frequent bird feeders in May each year. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, these two species are most easily found by paying attention to MOU-net or the Minnesota Birding and Minnesota Rare Bird Alert Facebook groups; homeowners eager to share news of these colorful migrants are often very welcoming to binocular-clad visitors. And if the online birding community is especially lucky, one of these reports might pertain to **Lazuli** or **Painted Bunting** (Lazuli is nearly annual), or perhaps even a **Bullock's Oriole**—there are May records of all these species in the past three years.

Of course, finding any of these birds involves quite a bit of good fortune, but as Louis Pasteur said, fortune favors the prepared mind. Therefore you certainly shouldn't expect to see these birds as you embark on your usual May birding escapades, but it might behoove you to keep them on your radar. Because sooner or later, you're bound to get that bonus.

MOU Calendar



May / June 2016

STATEWIDE

Rusty Blackbird Spring Migration Blitz

Deadline: May 31

Details: Please enter your spring observations of Rusty Blackbird on eBird.org by the deadline to be included in the International Rusty Blackbird Working Group's data analysis. Use the "Rusty Blackbird Spring Migration Blitz" protocol. For more information, visit rustyblackbird.org or contact Alyssa DeRubeis at alderubeis@gmail.com.

ANOKA COUNTY PARKS

May 13: Whip-poor-wills and Woodcocks

Details: Meet in Pavilion 1 parking lot of Bunker Hills Regional Park at 7pm. Program runs through 8:30pm. All ages welcome, but children must be accompanied by an adult. Cost is \$5/person plus tax.

AUDUBON CHAPTER OF MINNEAPOLIS

May 3: Birds of Nicaragua & Minnesota

Details: 7pm at Beth El Synagogue. Nicaraguan coffee and vegetable farmer Francisco Jose Muñoz will talk about his bilingual book, *Guide to the Birds of Nicaragua*. Free.

June 28: General Meeting

Details: 7:30pm at the Breckenridge Chapter House in Brooklyn Park. Free.

BRAINERD LAKES AREA AUDUBON CHAPTER

For questions contact Pam Perry at pkperry@brainerd.net.

May 5-26: Thursday Bird Hikes

Details: 7am at Northland Arboretum in Brainerd. Free and open to all levels of experience.

May 7-28: Saturday Bird Hikes

Details: 8am at Northland Arboretum in Brainerd. Free and open to all levels of experience.

CARPENTER ST. CROIX VALLEY NATURE CENTER

For calendar of events, visit carpenternaturecenter.org/special_events_and_public_programs/category/main/

DETROIT LAKES AREA

May 19-22: 19th Annual Detroit Lakes Festival of Birds

Details: Headquartered at Detroit Mountain Recreation Area. Along with field trips, workshops, exhibitors, and socials, guest speaker presentations range from shorebird identification and Trumpeter Swan restoration to duck stamp art history and tracking waterfowl migration. Register online at visitdetroitlakes.com/events/festival-of-birds.

DULUTH AUDUBON SOCIETY

May 3-26 (Tuesdays & Thursdays): Spring Warbler Walks

Details: 6:30am-9am. Meet behind Munger Inn to hike at Indian Point on Tuesdays, and meet at Sky Harbor Airport to hike at Park Point on Thursdays. Rain will postpone hikes. Free. For more information, contact Jane Cleave at janedas@q.com or Clinton Nienhaus at neinh009@d.umn.edu.

May 14: Boulder Birding Big Day

Details: 6:30am at Boulder Lake Environmental Learning Center. All levels of experience are welcome. Hiking and canoeing options are available. Breakfast and lunch included. Cost is \$15/person. For more information, contact John Geissler at jdgeissl@d.umn.edu or 218-721-3731.

May 15: Jay Cooke State Park Field Trip

Details: 6:45am-9am at the visitor center. Free. For more information, contact Clinton Nienhaus at neinh009@d.umn.edu.

FRIENDS OF SAX-ZIM BOG (FOSZB)

May 6: Wildlife at Night Field Trip

Details: Optional dinner at Wildbert Cafe in Cotton from 4pm-5pm. Official field trip meets at Sax-Zim Bog Welcome Center at 5:30pm and trip will end around 10pm. Free for FOSZB members, \$20 for non-members. Cost includes membership. Please RSVP for event at naturalist@saxzim.org.

May 11-25: Warbler Wednesdays

Details: 5:45am at Sax-Zim Bog Welcome Center. Hikes will end around 11am and take place on May 11, 18, and 25 (Wednesdays only). For questions contact naturalist@saxzim.org.



HAWK RIDGE BIRD OBSERVATORY

May 11: Birds of Nicaragua and Minnesota

Details: 7pm at Hartley Nature Center. Nicaraguan coffee and vegetable farmer Francisco Jose Muñoz will talk about his bilingual book, *Guide to the Birds of Nicaragua*. Free. Books will be available for purchase.

May 21-22: Hawk Ridge Birdathon

Details: May 21st is the birdathon starting at 12am (midnight), and May 22nd is the compilation brunch starting at 9am. Register at <http://www.hawkridge.org/event/birdathon-may-21>. For further questions, contact Janelle Long at [jlong@hawkridge.org](mailto: jlong@hawkridge.org).

May 28-29: Warbler Workshop at Sugarloaf Cove Scientific Natural Area

Details: 7am-3pm both days. Meet at nature center to explore areas along the North Shore. One day will be banding and the other will be a field trip. For more information contact Margie Menzies at [mmenzies731@gmail.com](mailto: mmenzies731@gmail.com).

May 30: Peregrine Watch Launch

Details: Starts at 10am on Lake Place Park above the “corner” of the Lakewalk in downtown Duluth. Consists of educational programs and informal interpretation of the city’s Peregrine Falcon family. Spotting scopes and binoculars available to borrow. Free.

June 25-26: Boreal Birds Workshop

Details: Times and meeting places to be determined. One day will be spent in Sax-Zim Bog and the other will be in Superior National Forest. Visit saxzim.org and/or hawkridge.org for upcoming details and registration.

MINNESOTA RIVER VALLEY AUDUBON CHAPTER

May 2: Lebanon Hills

Details: 8am at Jensen Lake Trailhead parking lot. Focus of ~1.5 mile hike is on songbirds. Led by Dianne Rowse (952-303-1175). No reservations needed. Free.

May 2-23: Beginning Bird Class (Hopkins Comm. Ed)

Details: First class runs from 6:30pm-8:30pm. Led by George Skinner and Anne Hanley. Increase your observation skills and knowledge of birds. Indoor sessions are followed by three local field trips. If needed, binoculars and field guides will be provided for class use. Class will meet outdoors on May 9, 16, and 23. Children ages 12 and

up are welcome, if accompanied by an adult. Fee includes Audubon membership and access to more free local field trips throughout the year. \$27 course fee is per family. You must pre-register — class space is limited: hopkins.thatscommunityed.com/course/winter-spring-adult-2014/beginning-bird-watching. For questions call 952-936-0811.

May 7: Hok-Si-La Warbler Watching

Details: 7:30am at Hok-Si-La Park north of Lake City. Led by Steve Weston. Bring a lunch if staying the whole day. Free. No reservations required. For questions, contact Steve at 612-978-3993.

May 10: Carver Park Reserve

Details: 7am. Led by Craig Mandel. Free. Focus is on songbirds during the peak of spring migration (14 sparrow spp., 23 warbler spp., and more). Contact Craig to register at 952-240-7647.

May 14: Louisville Swamp

Details: Meet at 8:30am at trailhead parking lot—address is 3801 – 145th St. W., Shakopee. Led by George Skinner and Anne Hanley. Free. Habitat here includes a nice oak savannah, a creek, a river and some marsh, which means a variety of birds can be seen. Bring a hat, water, bug repellent and snacks. Long sleeves and long pants highly recommended. For questions call 952-936-0811.

May 19-20: Western Minnesota Birding Days

Details: Meet at 6am, site to be determined. Led by Craig Mandel. Cost is \$35/non-MRVAC members; \$25/MRVAC members. We spend time birding in Norman and Clay counties. We plan on exploring Heiberg County Park, Prairie Smoke Dunes SNA, Buffalo River State Park, and Felton Prairie. Register by calling Craig at 952-240-7647.

May 22: Ritter Farm Park

Details: Meet at 8:30am at 19300 Ritter Trail, Lakeville. Led by Jay Miller. Free. Focus is on spring migrants. For more details call Jay at 612-325-3066.

May 26: The B.S. of Bites and Stings: How Invertebrates Love Us

Details: Dr. Ann McKenzie will share her knowledge of human reactions to invertebrate actions. She is familiar with many bites and stings, eliciting them to study, and even encouraging her children to keep a Bite List with attendant bragging rights. For time and location, contact Anne Hanley at [anne_hanley90@hotmail.com](mailto: anne_hanley90@hotmail.com).



June 5: Dakota County Prairie Birds

Details: Meet at 7am at Schaar's Bluff. Led by Steve Weston; contact him for more details at 612-978-3993. Free.

June 6: Murphy-Hanrehan Park Reserve

Details: 7am. Free. Diversity of grassland and forests birds can be found here. Led by Craig Mandel. To register contact him at 952-240-7647.

June 9: MRVAC Picnic

Details: 6pm at Richardson Nature Center, Bloomington, MN. Please join us for an evening of fun, conversation, and of course food.

June 9-10: Central Minnesota Birding Days

Details: Meet at 6am, site to be determined. Cost is \$35/ non-MRVAC members; \$25/MRVAC members. Led by Craig Mandel. We will explore Stearns and Benton counties including locations like Benton Beach, Bend in the River, Mississippi River and Warner Lake County Parks, a number of WMAs and water treatment plants, and St. John's University. We'll be searching for species that nest in prairie and wooded habitat. Contact Craig to register at 952-240-7647.

June 12: Cannon River Bottoms

Details: 7am. Free. Led by Steve Weston. We will explore a little known, but very productive trail near Red Wing in search of Cerulean Warbler, Acadian Flycatcher, Scarlet Tanager, Wood Thrush, and more. Please call Steve for more details at 612-978-3993.

MINNESOTA RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE (MRVNWR)

Hikes led by Craig Mandel (CM) start at 8am, and those led by George Skinner and Anne Hanley (GS & AH) start at 8:30am. Meet in the location's parking lot. Free. Visit the website for more events at fws.gov/refuge/Minnesota_Valley/Events.html.

May 7 and 15:

Bloomington Bird-watching Trek (CM)

Details: MRVNWR Visitor Center in Bloomington.

May 9:

Rapids Lake Unit Bird-watching Trek (CM)

May 14:

Louisville Swamp Unit Bird Hike (GS & AH)

May 16:

Bass Ponds Unit Bird-watching Trek (CM)

May 21: Urban Bird Festival

Details: 8am-5pm at the MRVNWR Visitor Center in Bloomington. Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day by participating in bird banding, bird hikes, bird crafts, and more. Family-friendly and free.

June 4: Rapids Lake Unit Bird Hike (GS & AH)

June 25: Bioblitz at Louisville Swamp Unit

Details: Purpose is to identify every living thing within the unit, plus interactive stations. Watch the website for more details.

ST. PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

For calendar of events, visit <http://saintpaulaudubon.org/events/calendar>.

THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT

Many more events can be found online at threeriversparks.org/events.

May 10: Morning Spring Bird Walk

Details: 7am at Lowry Nature Center. Led by Kirk Mona. Hike until 9am to find as many bird species as possible for the 2nd annual Global Big Day. Binoculars available to borrow. Intended for ages 13 and up; 17 year-olds and under must be accompanied by an adult. Fee of \$5-6/person. 20% discount for groups of four or more. Register online at <https://www.threeriversparks.org/events/M/morning-spring-bird-walk>.

ZUMBRO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

All events are free and open to the public.

May 3 and 5: Lunch with the Birds at Kutzky Park

Details: 12pm-1:15pm at 213 13th Ave NW, Rochester. Join and leave hike whenever you need. Will hike along creek between 11th and 16th Avenues in search of spring migrants. Led by Lance Vrieze.



May 7: Quarry Hill Nature Center Nature Walk

Details: 9am at 701 Silver Creek Road NE, Rochester. Led by Terry and Joyce Grier.

May 8: Hok-Si-La Park Field Trip

Details: Meet at 8am at the east parking lot of the Heintz Center to carpool to Lake City. Located along the Mississippi River, Hok-Si-La is a magnet for migrating birds. Bring a snack or a bag lunch. We will return mid-afternoon. Led by Terry and Joyce Grier.

May 24: Important Bird Areas Presentation

Details: 7pm-8pm at Quarry Hill Nature Center. Kristin Hall, Conservation Manager for Audubon Minnesota, will talk to us about Minnesota's 57 Important Bird

Areas.

May 31: Hayden Prairie Field Trip

Details: 5:15pm at the NW part of the Fleet Farm parking lot, 4891 Maine Ave SE, Rochester to carpool. Will return around 9 pm. Dress for the weather and hiking through prairie vegetation. Hayden Prairie is famed for its show of flowers in early summer. We should see thousands of Shooting Stars and many other prairie wildflowers, as well as a good assortment of prairie dependent birds. Led by Joel Dunnette.

June 4: Quarry Hill Nature Center Nature Walk

Details: 9am at 701 Silver Creek Road NE, Rochester. Led by Terry and Joyce Grier.



Yellow-headed Blackbird by Dan Guynn, Jr.

Minnesota Birder Bio: Alex Sundvall

Born: May 9, 1997

Currently living:

A dorm on the University of Minnesota campus. Home for me is in St. Louis Park, MN.

Occupation:

Studying to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Wildlife Biology, with minors in Forest Ecosystem Management and Conservation and Environmental Science, Policy, and Management. I have also been an involved volunteer at Westwood Hills Nature Center and still help whenever they need an extra hand.

Serious about birding since:

The age of five. My first birding trip to another state was our family's trip to Tucson, Arizona when I was in 3rd grade. I still remember the chorus of Cactus Wrens and the awe of seeing my first male Phainopepla.

Favorite bird or bird family:

I have always loved the bowerbirds due to their quirky collecting habits.

Favorite places to bird in Minnesota:

Westwood Hills Nature Center or Afton State Park, as well as the North Shore when I have time to get up there.

Favorite place to bird outside of Minnesota:

I recently spent some time in the Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas, and I really enjoyed it. I was able to pick up 60 lifers on that trip!

Birding style (i.e. by yourself, with others, etc):

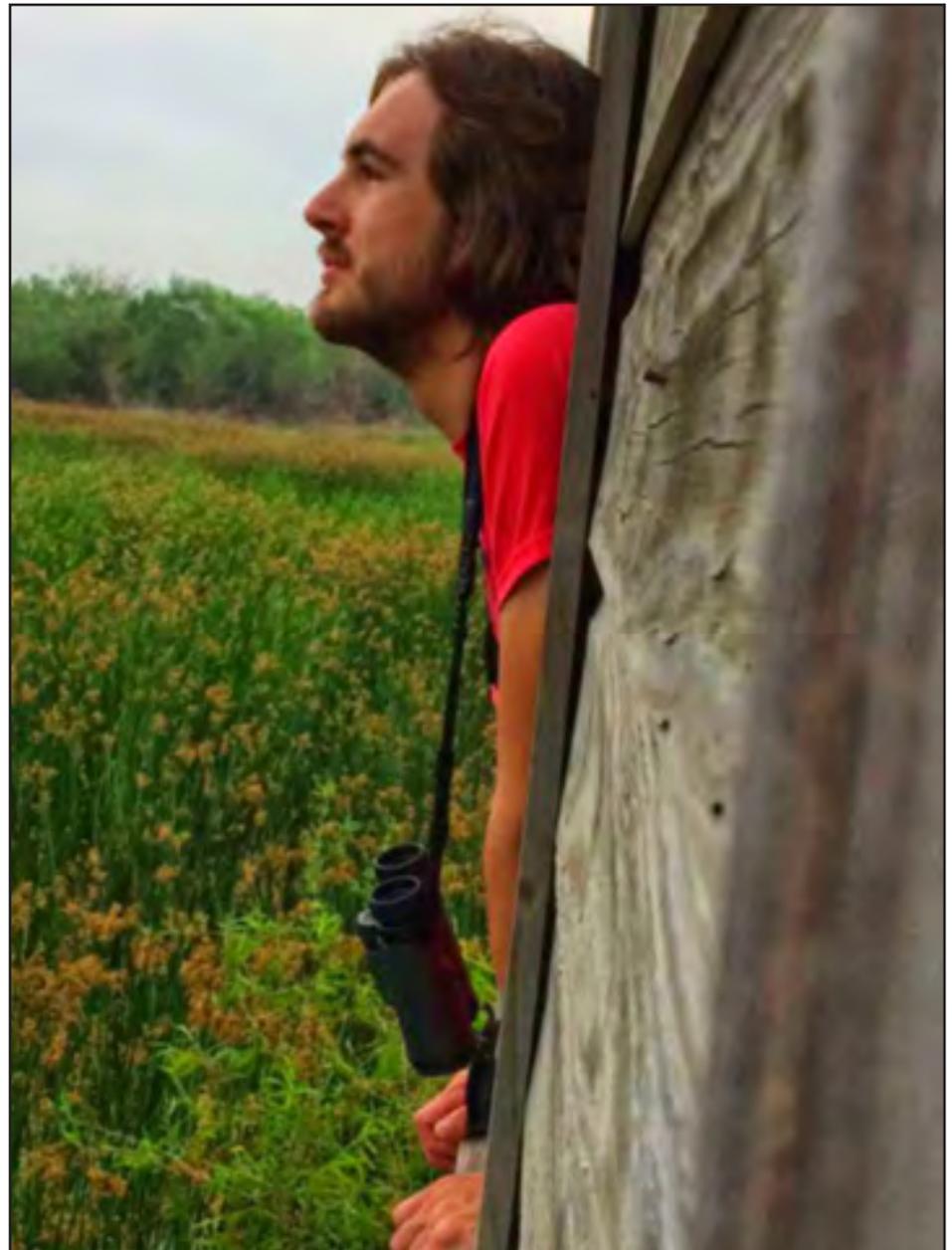
I always like birding with at least one other person. To me, birding is not only a way to enjoy nature and contribute to citizen science, it also has a certain social aspect. A lot of my friends are birders, and going out birding with new people is a great way to get to

know them. Birding with other people can help you to see more birds and to learn new things. The more eyes you have, the higher potential there is to see more birds. Also, I find that one of the best ways to advance as a birder is through experience, and there is nothing more valuable than birding with someone who knows more than you in a certain area.

Best advice on how to be a better birder:

Don't get discouraged, and don't be afraid to be wrong. I was looking back

at some of my old records from when I was about 7, and I was wrong all the time! One of my favorite mistakes looking back is that I claimed to have seen a Golden-crowned Warbler (ABA rarity code 4, shows up in southern Texas every now and again) at Westwood Hills Nature Center. The bird I saw was probably a Wilson's Warbler. So don't be afraid to be wrong. Try identifying something, and if it doesn't make sense, figure out why! Don't be afraid to ask for help either. There are many people that I turn to when I don't know something, or when I need



information on something. The internet is a beautiful place as well—use it! *All About Birds* is a great site that provides free information. I am also an active member of the *Minnesota Birding Facebook* page. I frequently see new birders get discouraged when they are wrong, get defensive when they are wrong, or just not try anything for themselves. This really makes me sad. It takes time and effort to be a better birder, and everyone has their weak spots. Currently the area that I'm focusing on is gulls, which tend to be many birders' weak points. The methods to identify different gull species are vastly different than most other bird groups. I'm also constantly brushing up on my bird songs to utilize my ears just as much as my eyes while birding. I would say that birdsong knowledge can be more useful than a pair of binoculars depending on the time of year, and is one that is often overlooked, especially among young and beginning birders. Being a better birder is using a mixture of all these techniques.

The main attraction of birding for you: I just really like birds. I distinctly remember the moment that I fell in love with birds for the first time. I was in kindergarten and I was on a field trip to Westwood Hills Nature Center with my school. They were rehabilitating a Dark-eyed Junco and released it during our trip. Before they released it, they allowed us to get close and see it better and from that moment on I was hooked. Dinosaurs were out and birds were in. Birding relaxes me and keeps me sane with my busy schedule. I also enjoy chasing vagrants. They absolutely fascinate me, and I would love to know more about the why and the how of vagrants. I recently read the Pyle et al. paper on the "Mendocino Shrike" that wandered to California last year. It was the featured vagrant in the ABA's top ten weirdest vagrants of 2015 because it turned out to be a hybrid of two species that had never occurred in the ABA region before. So for me, it's not only seeing the vagrants, it's also the science behind vagrancy. Whether

it was seeing that Ivory Gull in Canal Park, the Great Kiskadee in South Dakota, or a Blue Bunting in Texas, chasing birds is really exciting. Of course, when you travel for hours, the dips become way more disappointing as well.

Interests/hobbies when you're not birding:

I spend my Thursday evenings as a percussionist with the Encore Wind Ensemble. They are a group comprised of educators and music majors from around the Twin Cities area. I am neither of those, yet am currently the youngest member of the group. Music is another outlet for me to just relax and enjoy life. I also play piano casually after taking lessons for nine years, and still practice whenever I can.

What new bird you would like to see the most:

After reading *Kingbird Highway* in elementary school, I have been infatuated with the Ross's Gull. That little pink gull is at the top of my vagrant list of birds to see, along with Common Crane, Blue Mockingbird, Garganey, and Brambling. Black-billed Cuckoo, Prothonotary Warbler, and Blackburnian Warbler have been long-time nemesis birds on the Minnesota list. Each year I get better however, and each year I tick more off the Minnesota list. Maybe this is the year to tick them off the list.



Wood Duck by John A. Anderson

New MOU Members

Ellen Alvey, *Duluth, MN*
Cheryl Batson, *Brooklyn Center, MN*
Michael Cowles, *Duluth, MN*
Frank Forsberg, *Roseville, MN*
Mark Nissen, *Minneapolis, MN*
Laura Segala, *Plymouth, MN*
Paul Worwa, *Chanhassen, MN*



Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

University of Minnesota
Bell Museum of Natural History
10 Church Street SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Minnesota Ornithologists' Union
J. F. Bell Museum of Natural History
University of Minnesota
10 Church Street SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Email: mou@moumn.org
Web: <http://moumn.org>
MN Birding is published bi-monthly

Editor: Alyssa DeRubeis
Designer: Thomas Benjamin Hertzell
© 2016 Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

The Mission of the M.O.U.

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

MOU Officers

Bob Bossert, *President*
Bob Dunlap, *Vice President*
Tamara Holmer, *Recording Secretary*
Cindy Smith, *Membership*
Mark Lystig, *Treasurer*
Roy Zimmerman, *Past President*

Editor of *Minnesota Birding*:

Alyssa DeRubeis

Birding Hotline

Northwest: 800-433-1888

MOU Contacts

Minnesota Birding: newsletter@moumn.org
President: president@moumn.org
Vice President: vicepresident@moumn.org
Membership Secretary: membership@moumn.org
Treasurer: treasurer@moumn.org
Recording Secretary: secretary@moumn.org
The Loon editor: editor@moumn.org
Web site: <http://moumn.org>
CBC compiler: cbc@moumn.org
Statewide RBA compiler: rba@moumn.org
MOU Records Committee: mourc@moumn.org
Conservation Chair: conservation@moumn.org
Grants: grants@moumn.org
Youth Mentorship: mentorship@moumn.org
Field Trips: fieldtrips@moumn.org
All other MOU functions: mou@moumn.org

MOU Membership: New/Renewal

Name _____

E-mail address _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

County _____

Membership Categories

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth (under 18) | \$15.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign (including Canada) | U.S. \$35.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$35.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting | \$75.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | \$100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life, single | \$500.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life, joint | \$700.00 |

Send to: Cindy Smith, MOU Membership Secretary
19885 Lillehei Avenue
Hastings MN 55033-9354

Please make a contribution to the Savaloja Grants

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

Amount: \$ _____