



# Minnesota BIRDING

Jan / Feb  
2017

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## Savaloja Grant Applications Sought

*by Steve Wilson, Chair, MOU Savaloja Committee*

MOU is seeking proposals for bird-related projects to be funded from the Savaloja Memorial Fund. Grants can be awarded for projects that increase our understanding of birds, promote preservation of birds and their natural habitats, or increase public interest in birds. Proposals that involve populations which are currently under-represented in Minnesota's birding community are welcome as a means of broadening public support for birds and their habitat.

Awards typically range from a few hundred dollars up to as much as \$4,000. In 2016, six grants, totaling nearly \$10,000, were awarded by MOU for education, research,

and habitat management (further details on these and past projects can be found at <http://moumn.org/grants.html>). However, \$5,000 in available funds was not awarded because of a lack of qualifying proposals. So if your organization has an idea for a great project, please consider applying!

Application information may be obtained at the link given in the previous paragraph. The deadline for receipt of grant applications is January 31, 2017. Grant recipients will be notified by April 1, 2017.

*Sharp-tailed Grouse*  
*by Earl Orf*



# MOU Calendar

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## January / February 2017

### AUDUBON CHAPTER OF MINNEAPOLIS

#### February 7: The Language of Birds

*Details:* The Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis' February program meeting will feature Jonathan Poppele on "The Language of Birds." Birds and other animals share a common language (such as calls of alarm and danger) that our ancestors were able to learn to help them survive. We've lost the ability to hear that language, but Jonathan Poppele will show us there are ways to learn it again. The program begins at 7:00 pm at Beth El Synagogue, 5225 Barry St. West, St. Louis Park, 54416. All program meetings are free and open to the public.

### MAPLEWOOD NATURE CENTER

#### January 14: Winter Open House, Snowshoes & Tracks

*Details:* From 10:00 am - 3:00 pm, discover how to walk, run, and turn around on snowshoes, and learn about animal tracks and signs from self-guided activities. A naturalist will answer questions and orient you to the nature center trails. Try wood or metal snowshoes (note that wood snowshoes will require 6+ inches of snow). Sleds will be available for pulling young kids. Dress in layers and wear winter boots. Hot chocolate will be available for all attendees! This drop-in program is free to attend, with snowshoes available for rent for ages 4 to adult for \$5 per pair.

#### January 28: Fur Trade Heritage

*Details:* Assume the persona of a voyageur from the historical fur trade era! Examine replicas of fur trade items, made a spark from flint and steel, and drill a hole with a pump drill. Try on a capote and moustache and practice your French accent! Ooh la la, c'est fun! Small scout groups are welcome. Snowshoe rental available afterward. The event is from 1:30 - 2:30 pm and costs \$5 per family; prepay by January 26. Best for adults and children ages 6 and up. To register, go to [www.maplewoodnaturecenter.com](http://www.maplewoodnaturecenter.com) and click on the Register Online Go button. Call 651-249-2170 if you need help registering.

#### February 4: Self-Guided Snowshoe Rental

*Details:* Explore Maplewood Nature Center by snowshoe from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm. View the pond from a new perspective, find winter tracks and animal signs. Check for ice safety and other tips with the naturalist before snowshoeing on the pond. If snow is thin, hike our trails for free! Best ages 4 and up accompanied by an adult. Rent snowshoes for \$5 a pair.

#### February 11: Snowshoe Hike

*Details:* Learn about snowshoes, strap on a pair, and walk with a naturalist through our winter wonderland from 10:00 am - noon. Instruction and snowshoes provided. Wear sturdy winter boots and bring your own mug for hot cocoa. If snow is scarce, we will hike to search for animal tracks. Fee is \$5 per person, prepaid by February 12. Best for ages 4 and up accompanied by an adult. To register, go to [www.maplewoodnaturecenter.com](http://www.maplewoodnaturecenter.com) and click on the Register Online Go button. Call 651-249-2170 if you need help registering.

#### February 25: New Volunteer Orientation

*Details:* It's fun to volunteer at the nature center and neighborhood preserves! From 2:00 - 3:00 pm, come find out what it takes to be a regular volunteer, and learn about all of the cool opportunities available, such as: trail guide, program aide, receptionist, citizen science monitor (open spaces, frogs, pollinators), and gardener (nature center's native gardens and community vegetable gardens). Youth and family opportunities are also available. If you can't make it in February, no worries—orientations will also be held on March 1st from 10:00 - 11:00 am and March 31st from 1:00 - 2:00 pm. Register online at [www.maplewoodmn.gov/nc](http://www.maplewoodmn.gov/nc) for a specific program date, or call 651-249-2173 to reserve a spot.

### FRIENDS OF ROBERTS BIRD SANCTUARY

#### February 14: Love Birds in the Sanctuary

*Details:* Thomas Sadler Roberts, founding member of the American Ornithologist's Union, author of *Birds of Minnesota*, and namesake of Roberts Bird Sanctuary, was born on February 16, 1858. Friends of Roberts Bird Sanctuary will celebrate Dr. Roberts' birthday with a Valentine's Day event in the Sanctuary from 5:00 - 6:00 pm. Munch on heart-shaped cookies and sip on hot cocoa while strolling through the Sanctuary, appreciating the beauty and love in this wonderful, undeveloped natural area reserved for birds and other wildlife. Walk and listen for the calls of owls! This free event is for singles, couples, and families who want to celebrate their love for birds and nature. Be prepared for winter trail conditions—wear boots and bring a flashlight! Please also bring your own cup for hot cocoa. For further information, visit Friends of Roberts Bird Sanctuary on Facebook, or at [www.friendsofrobarts.org](http://www.friendsofrobarts.org).

## FRIENDS OF SAX-ZIM BOG

### January 22: Northern Owls Evening Program

*Details:* Most often, visitors to the Sax-Zim Bog are looking for owls, but do you really know “hoo” owls are? Come and learn about some of the owls that can be found in the Bog and surrounding area. Following a short talk from 3:00 - 4:00 pm at the welcome center, we will caravan to look for owls at dusk until 7:00 pm. Please RSVP to [naturalist@saxzim.org](mailto:naturalist@saxzim.org), as space in the program will be limited to 25.

### February 5: Winter Raptors Field Trip

*Details:* Colorful winter finches often get lots of attention from visitors to the Bog in the winter months, but finches are not the only winter visitors to see! From 8:00 am - 12:00 pm, this field trip will search the open ag-land and roadsides for birds of prey and others. The Sax-Zim Bog offers habitat to visitors from the Arctic, such as Rough-legged Hawks, Northern Shrikes, Northern Hawk Owls, and more! Meet at the welcome center.

### February 24: Winter Bog Exploration Field Trip

*Details:* The Sax-Zim Bog does a BioBlitz in the spring and summer, but what about a BioBlitz in the winter? This field trip will be a BioBlitz of sorts, but on a much smaller scale. From 9:00 am - 2:00 pm, join head naturalist Clinton on a search for species that may be familiar, or could be entirely new. Plan for a mix of hiking, snowshoeing, driving, and searching for new species for the Sax-Zim Bog species list! Meet at the welcome center.

### February 26: Bog Ecology

*Details:* A bog is a very particular ecosystem, with water systems being important to many of the species that inhabit a bog. However, during the winter, much of that liquid water is locked up. Join us from 10:00 am - 11:30 am for a program investigating a bog through the seasons: determining summer characteristics and observing winter characteristics of a bog. Plan on a short hike around the welcome center.

### February 26: Tracking and Animal Sign

*Details:* Often, when traversing the Sax-Zim Bog, people encounter tracks. But how do you know if you are looking at dog or wolf tracks? What is the difference between a hole made by a Downy Woodpecker and a Black-backed Woodpecker? We will investigate the critter activity in the Sax-Zim Bog through an investigation of the area around the welcome center. Meet up at noon to be done by 2:00 pm.

## SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

### February 9: Backyard Gardening for Nature

*Details:* Over a three-year period Michelle Kalantari converted her Richfield yard of mostly sod to a vibrant land-

scape with 70% native plants and no more grass to mow. She will take us on a photographic journey of the changes made and the resulting biodiversity that found its way into her garden—including more songbirds. Inspired by her work at The Nature Conservancy, she decided to extend their mission into her own backyard. This general meeting is free and open to the public and runs from 6:45 - 8:00 pm, with refreshments before the presentation begins at 7:00 pm. The event is located at the Fairview Community Center. If you are not available to attend, watch a mini version of Michelle’s work on YouTube under the Nature Conservancy Get Wild, Go Native program link.

## CARPENTER ST. CROIX VALLEY NATURE CENTER

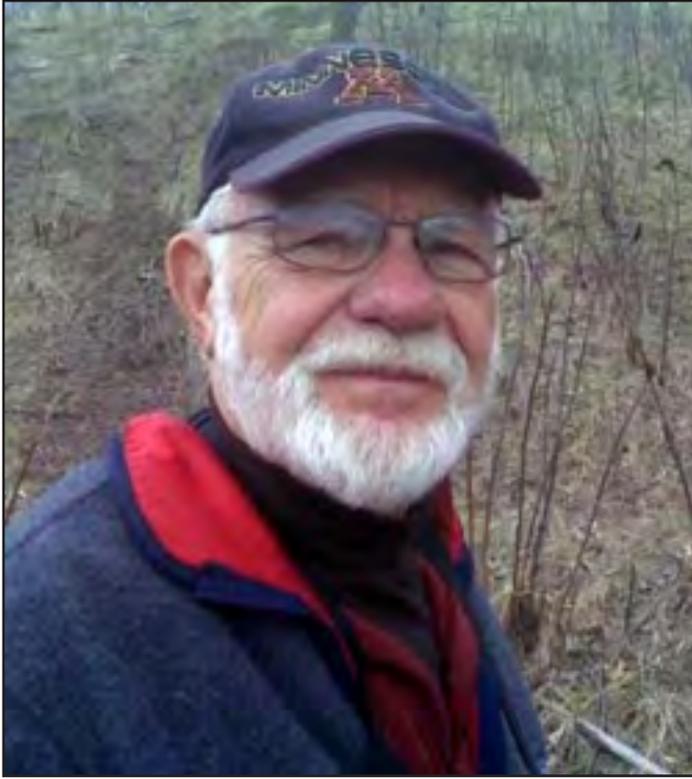
### February 25 & 26: Masters of the Sky

*Details:* The World Bird Sanctuary staff from St. Louis, Missouri, will be coming to CNC to present a captivating program about birds of prey. Visitors will learn about raptors from around the world and how to protect their habitats. Experience live hawks, eagles, owls, falcons and vultures up close and in free-flight at 11:00 am, 1:00 pm, and 3:00 pm. Event Fee is \$10 or \$7 for “Friends of CNC.” RSVP and non-refundable payment required.

# New MOU Members

David Adair, *Minneapolis, MN*  
Christopher Ahlbrecht, *Miltona, MN*  
Gavin Anderson, *St. Louis Park, MN*  
Jacqui Baker, *Isanti, MN*  
Carla Bates, *Minneapolis, MN*  
Paula Carter, *Plummer, MN*  
Marie Culhane, *St. Paul, MN*  
Marshall Deters, *North Branch, MN*  
Charles Draper, *Mankato, MN*  
Kristen Hall, *Stillwater, MN*  
Jocelyn Kuo, *St. Paul, MN*  
Janet Larson, *Superior, WI*  
Ann Laughlin, *Minneapolis, MN*  
Yan Li, *Lino Lakes, MN*  
Michael Moen, *Brooklyn Park, MN*  
Mary Anne O’Malley, *Deephaven, MN*  
Patrick Peters, *Crystal, MN*  
Jim Platt, *Apple Valley, MN*  
Richard Schroeder, *Minneapolis, MN*  
John Vassilopoulos, *Burnsville, MN*  
Aaron Wall, *Warren, MN*  
Lawrence Wiesner, *Minneapolis, MN*  
Julie Zempel, *Waconia, MN*

# Minnesota Birder Bio: Bob Janssen



## When did you start birding?

I started birding under some very interesting circumstances. About 80 years ago, when I was 4 or 5 years old, I was learning to ride a bike around where I lived. I got a couple blocks away into new, wide-open territory in the heart of Minneapolis, and as I drove by a swampy grassland that hadn't been developed yet a meadowlark flushed right into my face. It must have been sitting in the grass right along the sidewalk. And I got so excited I turned the bike around, went home, and said to my mother, "I just saw a meadowlark!" The point of the story is this: How did I know it was a meadowlark? I had no bird books. Did I see a photo somewhere? I have always wondered throughout my life how I identified that bird. It started my birding and I've been fascinated by birds ever since.

## How did your interest in birds expand beyond that first experience?

My father took me for rides out to where the shopping centers are now—but then it was a huge marsh where we'd see Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Red-winged Blackbirds and redstarts and things like that. My first real birding trip was when I was 13 or 14. I had joined the Minnesota Bird Club, which met in downtown Minneapolis. I'd just met some people and bought the only copy left of Roberts' *Birds*

*of Minnesota*. I had an unforgettable experience with warblers, when Magnolias and Black-throated Greens were sitting on the same picnic tables as we were. At 15, I bought a car for a hundred bucks and laid out a birding route in the Minnesota River Valley that I did every weekend after school. I kept track of the birds I saw spring, summer, and winter. That went on all through the time I was in high school and college until I got married and had kids. My birding kept up more intensely as the years went by.

## How did you originally get involved with MOU?

It's a bit hazy—I graduated in 1954 with a degree in Geography, met people at the Bell Museum, and just walked in to look at the dioramas when I heard about the Minnesota Ornithologist's Union. I was in the service in the Korean War for two years after I graduated, but I met a number of people who told me, "You have to come to MOU meetings!" and in 1957 when I got out of the service I attended my first one. I got to know people very well during that period. One of my first experiences was the MOU paper session, and in 1959, they asked me to become editor of *The Flicker*, and I stayed in that position for 38 years. I was also president for a number of years, and was awarded the MOU lifetime achievement award a few weeks ago.

## Favorite place to bird inside or outside Minnesota?

I'm a very provincial Minnesotan — I've been that ever since I was a kid There was a statement Dr. Roberts made in some book where he said, "Pass into Wisconsin or Iowa and the birds lose their glow," and when he returned to Minnesota the glow came back. As a kid reading Roberts, that really influenced me. But I've birded in Florida and Texas and California—my favorite place outside of Minnesota I've been was Costa Rica. We were there once for two weeks, and we saw 474 species in 13 days. It was magnificent and I'd like to go back before I die. And this is kind of a goofy answer, but I'll follow up by saying that since I got that car when I was 15, to right now, I have figured out very generally that I've covered 3 million miles in Minnesota looking for birds. I love places, and I've been to just about every named place in Minnesota, but I can't say I have a favorite place. The part of Minnesota by Grand Portage State Park intrigues me. It's not necessarily the best in Minnesota—every county has so many—but I'm a compulsive county lister and each county has its special birding class. That's why during my working career I had a chance to move to Michigan, Georgia, California, but I turned them down because I wanted to write about birds in Minnesota. I guess I'm as provincial as you get.

### Any advice on how to be a better birder?

I'm kind of an old-fashioned guy being the age that I am, and as I grew up learning birds the only thing I had to learn with was a Peterson field guide and a pair of binoculars. I didn't have the fancy stuff like recordings people have—I had to go out, and it took me two or three years to understand what a Field Sparrow sounded like. I had to figure it out by using books that explained the song. I know birdsong very well because I learned it from the birds themselves, not a recording. As far as advice is concerned, go out and enjoy the birds—enjoy them and do everything to conserve them. I've seen birds decline tremendously in Minnesota, so preserve habitat for them so they'll be around for ourselves, our kids, our grandkids, whoever. I've had the privilege of seeing birds that are harder to find now than when I was a teenager. I used to go out in the 60s and 70s and you'd see waves of warblers and they'd be like insects in the trees, and you don't see that anymore. You'll see those species in one, two, three rather than 10, 20, 30. It's kind of depressing, but with humans so pervasive it's still wonderful to think there're as many as there are. You have to think positively.

### Ever had an unusual experience while birding?

I think I've discovered three or four species that were first state records, like a Black-throated Sparrow or a kite. That kite was one of the most unusual experiences. I'd been doing bird surveys in the state parks, and one day the boss at the DNR called and said he'd like to get a higher-up from the parks and himself along on a trip to see how I did the surveys. He really just wanted to see if he was being had. I met him early at Afton State Park and we birded around the park and went down into this little valley and I showed him Great Crested Flycatchers and a lot of typical birds for May and migration. We were going back to our cars and climbing the hill when I noticed way down in the grass on a dead tree something I thought was a raptor, and I put up my binoculars and it turned out to be a kite. It was extremely exciting for me—and it impressed my associates. A very unusual experience, finding a record bird while trying to substantiate to your boss you were legitimate.

*Great Gray Owl  
by Clay Christensen*





# Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

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

**Minnesota Ornithologists' Union**  
Carpenter Nature Center  
12805 Saint Croix Trail South  
Hastings, MN 55033  
Email: [mou@moumn.org](mailto: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:** [newsletter@moumn.org](mailto:newsletter@moumn.org)  
**President:** [president@moumn.org](mailto:president@moumn.org)  
**Vice President:** [vicepresident@moumn.org](mailto:vicepresident@moumn.org)  
**Membership Secretary:** [membership@moumn.org](mailto:membership@moumn.org)  
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**The Loon editor:** [editor@moumn.org](mailto:editor@moumn.org)  
**Web site:** <http://moumn.org>  
**CBC compiler:** [cbc@moumn.org](mailto:cbc@moumn.org)  
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- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth (under 18)           | \$15.00      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual                 | \$25.00      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign (including Canada) | U.S. \$35.00 |
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| <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: \$ \_\_\_\_\_