



Minnesota BIRDING

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Social Birding in Times of Social Distancing

by Ben Douglas

Like many birders, I'm up early on weekends. On this Saturday, in early April, the sun is just giving a hint of the day to come as I pull on my lightweight base layers. It will be a typically chilly spring morning with a comfortable afternoon in central Minnesota. I'm on my way out to go birding like so many times before. In fact, I'm planning on being at it for 12 to 14 hours.

I'm barely out the door when the crisp morning air is broken by the peents of an American Woodcock, my first of the year. Shortly after that I hear the bird's wonderful twittering flight display. Then it settles back down unseen in the long grass and fires off another volley of buzzy greetings. This crepuscular denizen of woodlands and open fields is a first for me at this location. In truth, I never really thought to try for American Woodcock here, since I have so many other preferred haunts where I can reel in this long-billed, large-eyed dumpling of a bird. The world quickly starts to come alive with bird sounds. I hear Northern Cardinals in some spruce trees to the east, followed by the liquid *cheer-i-o*, *cheer-i-ee* of an American Robin. Song Sparrows fill in the gaps with their multifaceted stuttering songs.

Dawn light slowly creeps across the sky. My eyes adjust, and I can now begin to see just beyond the sidewalk and street lamps. A Ring-necked Pheasant belts out a loud call, and I hear his wingflaps less than 50 yards away. A Mallard flies past in the darkness—most likely a drake in hot pursuit of a hen as they move from one retention ponds in the neighborhood to another.

It's going to be a beautiful day! I can smell spring in the air, and the intoxicating thought of an entire day of birding fills me with anticipation. I make a left turn out of my driveway, but not in my car. That sits idle in the same spot where it's been parked for the entire week. I'm birding from home today, or at least within sight of my home.

When the world quickly moved into lockdown mode, I, like everyone else, saw my plans quickly dashed and replaced with this other reality. A new normal that feels foreign and strange has set in. It casts everything in doubt and arouses fear and anxiety.

Determined to persevere, though, I began to think about how I could do something to create connections with others and strengthen friendships during this time. I already had an audience on social media with a group I



Eastern Bluebird, by Ben Douglas

had created in order to plan big watch events and big hike events for 2020, so I decided to take a shot at virtually gathering everyone that I could for a homebound event focused on social interaction, camaraderie, and common interest—a group Big Day of home-area birding.

The plan was this: For one entire day each person would contribute birds to an aggregate team list, sharing new birds for their own day list. Although some birders live in areas that allow for extensive yard lists year after year, others have only limited habitat, or even only the shared greenspace of an apartment complex. But one can find birds anywhere, and being part of a group effort makes home-area birding more fun. Ise Varghese Mac, for instance, shared with a chat that his home in Minneapolis has limited sightlines. His focused effort throughout the day, though, allowed him to record some wonderful lifetime adds to his home list.

The first message hit the group chat around 6:25 a.m. while I was a quarter mile from my back yard scanning a retention pond. Matthew Thompson, a high school student in Dakota County, reported that he had just gotten a Song Sparrow. A few minutes later my friend Jennifer Veith, Executive Director of Carpenter Nature Center, recorded a Ring-necked Pheasant. Erik Collins, a grade-school teacher and the man that got me my first ever Long-Eared and Northern Saw-whet Owls, chimed in with Sandhill Crane. I joined in, adding my American Woodcock to the list. In rapid fire came my best-travelling-friend-in-all-of-birding and DNR employee Liz Harper over in Ramsey County with Brown Creeper. Dedrick Benz, longtime county lister, bass player, and one of the nicest people you could ever meet, punched in a Wood Duck down in Winona County for the list.

For the first two hours the Messenger group was absolute bedlam, as birders covering at least a dozen different counties got up with a cup of coffee, slippers, a blanket, or indeed even hiking boots to count birds from their homes or within the vicinity. I returned home and combed the mes-

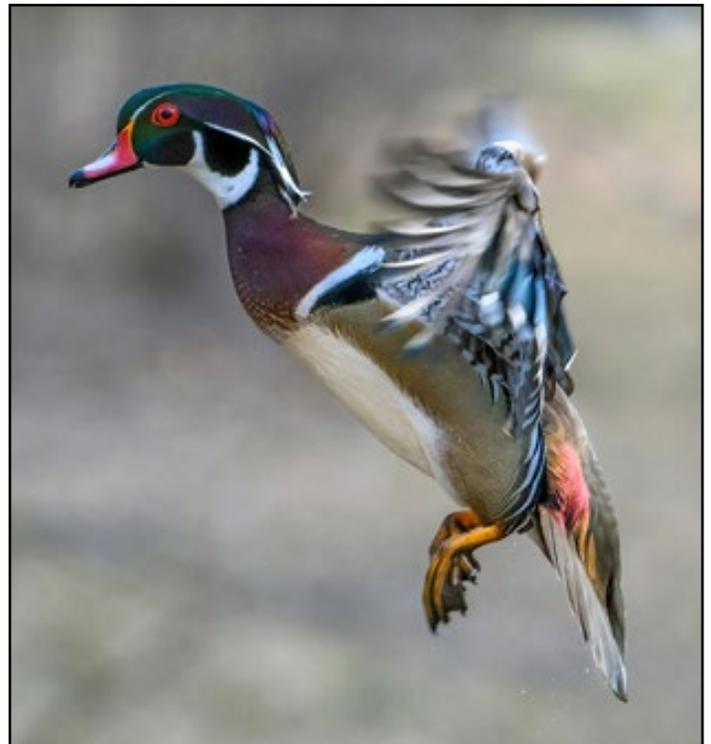
sage list to check off birds for the aggregate list. How high could we possibly push a list of birds only sourced from our homes and neighborhoods? Would it be 50? 75? More?

At my kitchen table, with the patio door cracked open a bit, I finished up the first aggregate list and then slung my jacket over my shoulders, eager to get back out and walk the edges of the weedy lot across the street to check the dry cattails edging the retention ponds. As I swung around to face the patio door, a pair of Eastern Bluebirds planted themselves on top of a spruce tree on the edge of our lawn. I smiled. They were looking for the house from my friend Greg Jahner that we had put out for the past few years. I quickly got the materials and set up the pole and house. Less than two minutes later, as I was laying the mallet and other tools down on the patio, I turned to see them both inspecting the house. I messaged the group that I may have broken the speed record for getting Eastern Bluebirds into a newly installed house.

We saw the amazing diversity of the places we live playing out one message at a time. Kevin Manley, in Dakota County, turned up the only Winter Wren and Tufted Titmouse of the day. Meanwhile, up in Duluth, Kristina and Clinton Dexter-Nienhaus began working sightlines from a street corner nearby to snag a view of Lake Superior. From this vantage point Clinton was able to relay singular day-birds for the list: Iceland (Thayer's) Gull, Glaucous Gull, and even Northern Goshawk.

Our group chat was an amazing chorus of shared experience and teamwork. I merged our sightings into a single checklist and reported back where we stood as a group. Par-

Wood Duck, by Richard Gotz





Northern Shrike, by Kevin Manley

icipation ebbed and flowed during the day as people took time for personal business, lunch, and family activities. Some friends, like Bob and Christine Metzger, jumped in with messages sharing results from their walks around their neighborhoods. Former ultra-marathon runners, Bob and Christine had put in what for them was a light day, just under ten miles (and visiting a nearby Red-shouldered Hawk nest in the process). Chisago County resident Michelle Terrell, whom I was to introduce at the MOU Spring Primer this year for her program on wildlife photography, headed out on her property for a hike to see what could be found there. Meanwhile, on the group event page on Facebook, Kris Moulton up in Pine County reported our day's only Ruffed Grouse and Barred Owl sightings.

It was a day that kept me from focusing on the challenges we will all continue to face in these uncertain times and instead to revel in the friendships that flow from a shared hobby like birdwatching. Kevin Manley humorously sent out the bird code FCOC to the group, pausing a minute or two before clarifying that it was his First Cup of Coffee for the day. What ensued was a series of photos from others having their cup of coffee—like Liz with her Darth Vader mug, me and my double-insulated stainless-steel iced tea mug, and Jen sitting on a freshly built deck with her black and green Cable Natural History Museum mug.

We got to know each other better—our sense of humor,

how seriously we take any opportunity to compete, and how we all enjoyed collaborating. By 9:00 a.m. we had tallied 63 species, and it felt as though the sky was the limit, given how much space we had collectively covered. We even kept on Dedrick Benz to find an elevated perch down in Winona where he could still see his roof and scope out Lake Winona, which the night before had hosted a Surf Scoter. To our great joy he made the arduous trek to the top of Garvin Heights with scope in hand and rung up the scoter for the list, as well as a Ruddy Duck!

Spontaneously a non-avian vertebrate list kicked up during the day as well. We tacked on three color-morphs of Eastern Gray Squirrel and Peter Nichols' awesome mink that lives in his yard and steals goldfish from the pond his father built many years ago.

In between yard adds I started sending questions out for everyone to answer, like their best-ever yard bird, most coveted bird they haven't seen from their yard, and others. Brad Nelson of Meeker County offered that Eurasian Tree Sparrow was his best yard bird chased by others to add to their own county lists.

I suppose it would be a bit coy of me to wrap this article up without revealing the final tally of species from our day. The hours ticked by, and we approached our cutoff time of 8:00 p.m. stuck firmly at 99 species. Former MOU president Bob Dunlap had joined in the afternoon and, like many others, sat down with a beverage looking to ease into the night before starting another week of work in atypical conditions. Most had quit for the day. Then, at the zero hour, Joshua Bjorklund Sweet dropped screen captures from his home count in Carver County, which included the addition of an American Coot. We had started the day with the most omnipresent urban singer, the Song Sparrow, and finished it with the drab unassuming American Coot, for bird species total of 100.

It was for me the first time in many days that I didn't spend several hours worrying about family and friends. Instead I spent the day enjoying their company. It was an amazing collective experience that I hope others will try for themselves. I encourage all of you to reach out to friends in Minnesota that you normally go birding with, and even those beyond. Set up a chance to use the technology of our age to bridge the gap in space as we all distance ourselves for the benefit of society. You may just find an amazing way to connect and interact that you hadn't considered before.

Stay safe. Good luck with your yard lists and finding ways to stay social while remaining distant.

Ben Douglas is a member of the MOU Social Media Committee and MOU Awards Committee and is an MOU Field Trip guide. As this article was going to press, Ben was leading another socially-distanced birding event, one in which each participant was limited to a circle with a five-mile radius around their house.

Message from the President

What an amazing time. Life has changed in the last two months in ways that we could not have imagined. Following the “Stay at Home” direction from the governor, we work from home—at least those of us who still have jobs and are able to do so. Our children meet their teachers on the computer screen and do their work on the table in the next room. We go to grocery stores on infrequent trips covered with a mask as if we are outlaws. Some of us are developing cabin fever and feeling stressed. We want this all to end soon so our lives can go back to normal. Unfortunately, that will not happen anytime soon.

In spite of all that is happening around us, the emerging spring is a delight for us birders. We record the arrival of first returning Canada Geese (at least the ones that don't migrate), the call of the first Red-winged Blackbird in the marsh, and the song of the first Eastern Bluebird perched on our nest box, as well as the emergence of spring beauty, bloodroot, Dutchman's breeches, blue-eyed grass, and other spring flowers. We marvel as the dull gray American Goldfinch changes into the beautiful yellow and black of its summer plumage. These things remind us that nature continues on largely unaffected by the disruptions in our lives.

There are many wonderful things around us that can help reduce our stress. It is not always easy, but it helps to spend a little time focusing on the amazing changes occurring in the world around us. Consider the wonder of migration itself,

that birds weighing less than a computer mouse are able to navigate great distances and with pinpoint accuracy every spring. Birds fly north from their often-crowded southern spaces to spread out and nest up here. They naturally socially distance themselves to claim territory and raise their young, and they entertain us this way every year, not just during a pandemic. Many human actions may affect this process—habitat disruption and climate change being the most critical—but in spite of this, the birds are once again returning.

How can we help ourselves and the birds? For the birds, keep your feeders clean and well filled. For ourselves, maintain social distancing. That is critical for reducing the rapid spread of Covid-19 and helping keep us all alive. Be kind to your neighbors and friends, stay in contact with others, send a note to friends you cannot visit, and, if you are a photographer, include a photo to cheer them up.

This pandemic will eventually pass or be controlled, though it is frustrating that we do not know the timeline. As I noted in my column in the last issue, birders are generally happy people. We can help others reduce their stress by encouraging them to observe the wonder of birds. Be kind and show the same consideration to others as we show to the birds. And please stay safe and healthy. We can all get through this together.

– *Richard King*

March MOU Board Meeting

Kathrynne Baumtrog, Recording Secretary

The March 22, 2020 MOU Board meeting was cancelled in compliance with Shelter-in-Place recommendations. However, the Board still awarded Savajola Grants, and thanks to a few last-minute generous donations, we stayed in budget. Steve Wilson notified recipients and submitted a report for the records. As always, there is a need for more donations to support these projects. Please contact Steve with funding ideas and potential endowments.

The Spring Primer at Carpenter Nature Center was also cancelled due to isolation protocol. Ben Douglas posted an email for MOU members regarding his tutorial on YouTube for uploading data into the eBird database. (This system is compatible with the MOU database, for all of you listers.) He also requests information for future YouTube tutorials. What would MOU members like to learn? Discuss? Please contact Ben Douglas with suggestions.

The Membership Report was submitted by Cindy

Smith. She reported 15 new members since December. Welcome to the MOU! Please note MOU's effort to develop more members and young birders. The position of chair of the MOU Young Birders Committee is still vacant. If interested in this position or in helping with the program please contact the MOU.

Common Loon, by Richard Gotz



Conservation Column:

The Avian Ecology Lab at NRRI: A Reintroduction

by Steve Kolbe

When I tell someone that I work at the Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI), the most common responses I get are: “Where? What do you do there? You do *bird* research there?” My hope is that this article will provide an introduction (or reintroduction) to, and information about, NRRI’s Avian Ecology Lab and our research to those who are interested in birds and bird conservation and management in Minnesota and beyond.

Let’s get the boring particulars out of the way first. NRRI is part of the University of Minnesota – Duluth but is not located on campus; NRRI is located along Highway 53 adjacent to the Duluth International Airport. NRRI’s mission is to “deliver research solutions to balance our economy, resources, and environment for resilient communities.” One of the interesting and unique aspects of working at NRRI is that we are charged with conducting applied research. This type of research, as opposed to basic research, can always be directly used to inform policy, change operational procedures, or in other ways help with boots-on-the-ground decision making and conservation.

I’ll provide a few examples of what this looks like in the world of bird research: our lab monitors how restoration efforts change bird communities, we predict how forestry practices will affect single species or bird communities, and we give recommendations to land managers about how best to increase biodiversity on the landscape. In short, we are scientific advocates for the conservation of birds and other wildlife.

The Avian Ecology Lab at NRRI was developed and led by Dr. Jerry Niemi for the past three decades prior to his recent retirement. Dr. Alexis Grinde has since taken over as head of the lab. The lab currently employs six full-time research scientists, along with many seasonal field technicians each spring and summer. One of the common threads that runs throughout the research that our lab conducts is targeting information gaps and addressing places and times when bird populations are especially vulnerable throughout the annual cycle.

One of these vulnerable periods is the post-fledging period—the first few weeks after a bird leaves the nest. This is a time of extremely high mortality, but beyond that little is known about what happens during this period. Two of our current projects, one focusing on Golden-winged Warbler, Veery, and American Woodcock, and the other focusing on Boreal Chickadee and Connecticut Warbler, use new technologies to track fledglings during this period. Previous studies demonstrated that fledglings use different habitats

(or very specific microhabitats) on different scales than previously thought, and this new information is valuable to land managers concerned with conserving these threatened species.

Migration is another vulnerable time in a bird’s annual cycle with high levels of mortality. We established remote monitoring (Motus) stations along the north and south shore of Lake Superior that will contribute to our understanding of how birds interact with Lake Superior during migration. These stations are part of a continental-scale project that provides investigators with a framework to look into how small songbirds migrate across long distances. Closer to home, with funding provided by a Savaloja Grant from the MOU, we obtained important baseline data on Rusty Blackbird stopover use in the St. Louis River Estuary (see Savaloja Grant Report in this issue).

Another focus of the Avian Ecology Lab is to document and attempt to reduce anthropogenic effects on wildlife populations. For example, we have worked to understand wildlife responses to the impending spread of the invasive emerald ash borer into northern Minnesota and its vast tracts of black ash forests. We also have investigated wildlife responses to varying levels of retained trees in harvested forest stands. For both of these projects, we are able to provide actionable and scientifically sound recommendations to land managers.

In addition to the short-term projects described above, our lab is also involved in multiple long-term monitoring projects. These projects help us keep our finger on the pulse of regional bird populations and trends and highlight areas where additional targeted research is needed. One such project is our long-running National Forest Bird Monitoring Program. Since the mid-90s, we have annually conducted approximately 1,000 off-road point count surveys throughout the Superior and Chippewa National Forests. Using these data, we have developed regional population trends for over 75 forest-breeding species which can serve as early warning signals for newly-declining species.

From 2009-2013, in collaboration with Audubon Minnesota, NRRI led the state’s first Breeding Bird Atlas in an effort to document the distribution and general habitat needs of every species that breeds in Minnesota (mnbirdatlas.org). The effort included data collection through a combination of systematic field surveys and hundreds of volunteer citizen scientists. We are already looking towards the future to start the second atlas effort in 2029. This work is critical because it gives us a rare glimpse in the detailed changes

in our breeding birds and provides valuable information for prioritizing future conservation efforts.

The lab undertakes additional long-term monitoring during the breeding and migratory seasons each year. Along with the Minnesota and Wisconsin DNRs, our lab has been involved with the monitoring and restoration of Common Tern colonies in Duluth and Ashland, Wisconsin. Since 2008, each August we conduct daily evening counts of migrating Common Nighthawks along the north shore of Lake Superior. We annually assist in a large project that monitors amphibian and bird communities of Great Lakes coastal wetlands. Long-term datasets such as these are increasingly important, as they serve to document changes in our rapidly-changing world and point us to other areas of urgent study.

Members of the Avian Ecology Lab have a range of interests that is reflected in the variety of projects we undertake. We all can easily agree on one thing, however: we love birds! We are more aware than ever that bird populations are showing alarming declines and we take this very seriously. We recognize that the region in which we live and work is extremely important to hundreds of bird species and our responsibility is to protect the birds and their habitats. The north and south shores of Lake Superior provide important stopover and migratory habitat for hundreds of thousands of birds each spring and fall. The forests of northern Minnesota provide nesting habitat to an astounding diversity of

birds—and this is the only period in the annual cycle during which individuals are added to the population. Bird conservation is a multi-faceted problem with few easy solutions, but we view each new prospective project through a similar lens: Is this an area of critical need for bird conservation, and will this project provide insight into making a positive change for bird populations? There has never been a more important time to work tirelessly and passionately for the understanding and conservation of birds.

We know our lab is far from alone in our love and passion for birds. We are always looking to connect and work with passionate individuals who value birds and their conservation. One of the most rewarding parts of our jobs is that we get to work with a variety of people—from government agencies to nonprofits to private citizens. If you are interested in learning more about the work our lab does, have questions, ideas, or even would like to talk about providing funding for a specific project, we would love to hear from you. If you are a student looking to get experience in ornithology or field research, please get in touch. Please do not hesitate to contact us; we are all on the same team when it comes to conserving birds. For more information about NRRI's Avian Ecology Lab, please visit our website: www.z.umn.edu/nrribirdlab.

Steve Kolbe is an Avian Ecologist with NRRI-UMD. His specific area of interest in bird migration and movement.

My Favorite Home Patch: Lake Rebecca Park Reserve

by Robin LaFortune

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. GH

When first asked to write for this column, I thought, hmmm.... Should I write about Sherburne National Wildlife Reserve? Crow Hassan Park Reserve? The North Shore? Baker Park? I don't think I really know these areas better than a lot other people, though, and some of them aren't really all that local for me. So it makes more sense to write about the place I do know well and where I do a LOT of birding: Lake Rebecca Park Reserve, which is only 2.5 miles from my house in Rockford.

Lake Rebecca Park Reserve sits mostly in Hennepin County, with a sliver extending into Wright County along the Crow River. Although there is much good to say about

this park—which I will soon get to—the main reason I spend so much time there is that it is close—so close that I can run over there almost every day. I hike or “birk” (bird-biking) or kayak there almost daily in spring, summer, and fall, and cross-country ski in winter. When I first started birding, I used to think you had to drive to one of the “hotspots” in Minnesota to find good birds. Not true. Find a nearby place with good habitat and you'll always find something. Frequent visits make a big difference in how well you know an area and how many good birds you will see. And sometime you might hit the jackpot. Most of the time I get at least one good “reward” sighting when I go to Lake Rebecca.



Lake Rebecca Park Reserve is part of the Three Rivers Park District, which has a policy of 80/20—that is, 20% for active use and 80% restored and retained for natural use. It boasts some of the largest tracts of hardwood forest in the Three Rivers family. Although chiefly a big woods remnant that is managed for woodlands, it has plenty of open or mixed habitat too. There are some open fields around Kasma Marsh that are more prairie-like and are burned periodically. Besides Lake Rebecca itself, there are a couple of other small lakes, several wetlands, a nice marsh, and the Crow River. It has natural beauty all year round. And lots of trails—26 miles of them, including horse, bike, and fast-track bike trails, of which eight are paved and 18 unpaved. Canoe and paddle-boat rentals are available, and since motorized boats are not allowed on the lake, it's nice and quiet. There is a (very!) minimum maintenance gravel road that runs through the park, but it often floods and can be in bad shape. As of this writing, the road is closed because of spring flooding and muddy ruts.

The birdlife is as varied as the habitat. All of the typical woods birds are there: Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, Barred Owl, American Woodcock, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-winged Warbler, Ovenbird, Yellow-billed and Black-billed Cuckoos, Downy, Hairy, Pileated and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, and Wild Turkey. Red-shouldered Hawks, noisy in the spring, nest in the park and are easy to find. In the mixed habitat areas one can find Sedge and Marsh Wrens, Indigo Buntings, Clay-colored and Field Sparrows, Willow Flycatchers, Great Horned Owls, and Baltimore and Orchard Orioles. And the lakes and marshes host plenty of herons, egrets, and other water birds. Sandhill Cranes nest in the park occasionally: I've watched some defend their nests against marauding raccoons.

Of course, there is much more to find during migration, and although this park is not really near a major flyway, it still gets a good variety of birds coming through both in

spring and fall. It's a great place for migrating warblers; I'm typically able find most of the regular species. My favorite spots for warblers are along the bike trail on the south side of the lake and among the big trees on the north side by the swimming areas. One spring I was pleased to hear a Louisiana Waterthrush singing near a flooded streamlet and I found him walking around on some mudflats. A Hooded Warbler chipped at me one day during a walk but didn't stay around for more than a day. I have seen and heard Cerulean Warblers in the park too, but I doubt they stay to breed; it's rare to see them there. Blue-winged Warblers are reliable breeders in the park, though.

Sadly, I can't report that I have seen any mega-rarities, but I have seen quite a few "good" birds for the area: Acadian Flycatchers during several summers, Western Grebes on the lake one spring, Bell's Vireo in a weedy tangle by Sarah Creek camping area, and during several winters there was a reliable Townsend Solitaire by Roy Lake in the spruce and evergreen trees. This area is usually good for Purple Finch, Pine Siskin, both crossbills, and redpolls as well during irruption years. One winter I was lucky to find a Long-eared Owl roosting nearby. Common Ravens have been showing up more and more frequently during the last few years. The park aerates the lake most winters, and this allows Trumpeter Swans to stay all winter and waterfowl to arrive here earlier in the spring than in other lakes nearby. Common Goldeneyes, Common Mergansers, and Ring-necked Ducks are among the early arrivals; sometimes one can also find White-fronted Geese, Red-breasted Mergansers, and Horned Grebes, and once I saw a Ross's Goose.

Every year is different. Sometimes during wet years Black Terns nest in the wetlands along County Line Road. During dry years Kasma Marsh may dry up and attract a lot of shorebirds—so far nothing usual, but I'm still looking. Sparrows are good in the park too, especially during fall along the gravel roads and in woodpiles, and I have had migrating LeConte's Sparrows in spring in the open areas along Kasma Marsh.

Lake Rebecca Park Reserve is not an unusual or outstanding "hotspot" but it does have high quality habitat, and lots of it, with tons of natural beauty. Plenty of mammal species can be seen there too. I've seen beaver, mink, coyote, fox, muskrat, and river otter. As is true of most places, the more you bird, the more you see. This park is certainly worth a visit.

Robin LaFortune is a semi-retired pharmacist who lives in Delano, MN. She began birding in 2005, when the Great Gray Owl irruption sparked her interest in all things birdy. She is a Minnesota Master Naturalist and has spent several years as a bluebird monitor at Lake Rebecca Park Reserve, assisted in the Trumpeter Swan re-introduction program, and did yearly routes in the park's bird surveys, as well with five years of Breeding Bird Atlas surveys.

2020 Savaloja Grant Awards

by Steve Wilson, Chair, MOU Savaloja Committee

Savaloja grants will go to eight organizations this year. Each project will in some way further MOU's mission by increasing our understanding of, or public interest in, birds, or promoting preservation of birds and their natural habitats. At last winter's board meeting, \$13,500 was allocated for this year's grants. However, when the board saw the quality of the proposals and the benefits to birds they offered, the hat was passed and an additional \$1225 was raised, which allowed full funding of five of the projects that had been approved for partial funding and \$150 left over to be deposited back into the Savaloja fund.

The eight proposals receiving grants for 2020:

- The International Owl Center (Houston) received \$1633 for purchase of passive acoustic monitoring equipment and analysis software to detect Barn Owls in various locations in Minnesota. The equipment is intended to be used in an ongoing survey lasting multiple years.

- The Urban Bird Collective (St. Paul) was awarded \$2696. They will build on last year's effort by expanding their core group of community birding leaders from 8 to 16 individuals representing Native Americans and communities of color. These leaders will serve as guides in this year's First Annual Urban Bird Collective Gathering, May 16-17 at the MN River Valley National Wildlife Refuge and participate in other group birding activities throughout the year.

- Staring Lake Outdoor Center (Eden Prairie) was awarded \$600 to provide onsite owl programs to 120 Oak Point Elementary School third graders.

- Jessica Gutierrez (University of Connecticut) received \$1496 to build on the work done at the U of M Itasca Biological Station by another Savaloja-funded UConn student in 2018. The goal of Jessica's study is to determine if genetic diversity within Eastern Bluebird nestlings affects their resistance to nest parasites. Ms. Gutierrez is a first-generation Mexican-American who will be mentoring a high school student from the White Earth Reservation. These two individuals will represent role models for their respective communities, which are grossly underrepresented in ornithological research.

- Emily Pavlovic, U of M-Duluth, was awarded \$3716 to determine the breeding origin and migratory patterns of raptors by using stable hydrogen isotope analysis of feathers collected during fall migration at Hawk Ridge. This pilot project will focus on Northern Saw-whet Owls and Sharpshinned Hawks passing through Duluth.

- Life Prep School (St. Paul) received \$2040. They will

introduce 40 inner-city fourth graders with little outdoor experience to birds and birding, using an innovative combination of bird study, journaling, visual arts, and poetry. Students will engage in classroom study before moving to field studies in Lake Phalen Regional Park, followed by a field trip to Afton State Park, and culminating in presentations by the students at a pep rally for the student body and their families. How could we not fund a pep rally for birds!

- Friends of Rice Lake Refuge (McGregor) will receive \$1035 to design, purchase, and install interpretive signs for self-guided birding trails at Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge. The signs will include habitat descriptions, color photos of bird species associated with the habitat, and information on where they nest and feed.

- Alexandra Pesano, U of M-Duluth, was awarded \$1359 for a study at Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory to investigate the occurrence of dark-morph Red-tailed Hawks in the eastern subspecies' range. By analyzing genetic material and plumage coloration of birds moving through Duluth, she hopes to understand if the dark-morph trait is restricted to western subspecies, as currently thought.

Your donations make these grants possible. You can support future grants that promote education, research, and monitoring projects designed to benefit birds by upgrading your membership or making a donation. Simply go to MOU's home page (<http://moumn.org/>), click on the "Donate" button at the top of the page, and contribute whatever you can. (Under "Add a note," please enter "Savaloja donation.")

Savaloja Committee members Ann Kessen, Pam Perry, Chuck Neil, Sue Keator, Mike North, and Ezra Hosch waded through thirteen proposals this year, successfully whittling them down to the eight we recommended to the board. Kudos to them for their dedication and hard work.

New MOU Members

Christine Bremer, *Stillwater, MN*
David Livdahl, *Wayzata, MN*
Todd Mestad, *Marine on St. Croix, MN*
Barbara Morgan, *Woodbury, MN*
Jeff Weitzel, *Willmar, MN*

Savaloja Grant Report

Rusty Blackbird Stopover Use in the St. Louis River Estuary

by Steve Kolbe, M.S., Avian Ecologist, NRRI – UMD

If you ever have the great fortune of finding yourself watching migration along the north shore of Lake Superior on a mid-October morning with strong northwesterly winds, you will discover that this region is a great place to see concentrations of migrating Rusty Blackbirds each fall. In fact, few locations in North America see larger numbers of migrating Rusty Blackbirds. Beyond this, however, our knowledge of how this species uses the region remains limited. Do Rusty Blackbirds stopover in the area in these same large concentrations? If so, where and for how long? Do they roost in the area? These were the questions that we set out to answer in the fall of 2019 with funding provided by a Savaloja grant from the MOU.

Rusty Blackbirds are one of the least-studied and most rapidly-declining songbirds in North America, and the reasons for this decline remain elusive. One possibility is that their specific habitat requirements are contributing to their decline. Rusty Blackbirds utilize similar habitats throughout their annual cycle: boreal swamps during the breeding season, bottomland forests during the nonbreeding season, and a variety of forested wetlands during migratory stopover. Most researchers have focused on the breeding or nonbreeding grounds, but recent research on Rusty Blackbirds reveals that stopover locations are used for much longer than previously thought and therefore have a heightened importance. Lack of quality migratory stopover habitat could be contributing to the decline of Rusty Blackbirds.

For these reasons, it is important to understand the nature of Rusty Blackbird stopover in the region. From previous surveys, members of the Avian Ecology Lab at the Natural Resources Research Institute suspected that significant numbers of Rusty Blackbirds use the St. Louis River Estuary (SLRE) as stopover habitat. In the fall of 2019, we investigated Rusty Blackbird stopover use in the SLRE using two methods: in-person surveys and passive acoustic monitoring. Evening surveys were done weekly throughout

October via boat or car to document Rusty Blackbird use in the SLRE. Autonomous Recording Units were placed in eight locations ranging from Southworth Marsh along Minnesota Point in the east to Chamber's Grove in the west. These units passively record audio during prescribed times each day. Recordings are then analyzed via software and screened by observers in the lab to detect target (i.e. Rusty Blackbird) vocalizations.

While they were detected throughout the SLRE, both in-person and ARU surveys showed Rusty Blackbirds strongly preferred the upper (more westerly) portions of the estuary both as stopover and roosting sites. These results suggest that continued restoration of the lower SLRE would provide additional stopover habitat and that the upper estuary should be preserved as important stopover habitat for Rusty Blackbirds.

Our hope is that we can use these baseline findings to develop a larger study that examines Rusty Blackbird stopover in the SLRE and beyond. More detailed work is needed to examine interannual and seasonal variation in stopover use.



@MOU_BIRDS

THE MOU IS ON INSTAGRAM!



The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union
MOUMN.org

Shorebird Spots

Chisago and Isanti Counties

by *Erik Collins*

One sunny May afternoon I was birding near Shafer and turned down a gravel road for no particular reason. Up ahead were bison, milling around the muddy edge of a farm pond. As I got closer, something much smaller caught my eye: shorebirds. I stopped, got the scope out of my trunk, and set up. A thin wire fence ran along the ditch, and I wondered if its jolt would be enough to keep a determined bison from charging at me. At the time I knew enough about Chisago County to realize that finding a bunch of shorebirds was uncommon, and, to be fair, the bison looked tame, so I started scoping. On the pond were Wilson's Phalaropes, Dunlin, a Semipalmated Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, and many others. It was a wonderful afternoon.

That was several years ago. The bison are still there, but the pond has been overrun by cattails. Since then, I've found other shorebird spots in Chisago County and its neighbor to the west, Isanti. These counties will never be able to compete with shorebird magnets elsewhere in the state, but if you enjoy birding closer to home, keep county lists, or just want to check out some new territory, here are some places to go.

Chisago County

Two of the better shorebird spots in the county are along Olinda Trail, one north and one south of 260th Street, and both less than five miles south of Lindstrom. The cattle pond on the west side of Olinda often has a muddy shore and over the past few years has had Hudsonian Godwit, Willet, Short-billed Dowitcher, and other species. Its water level fluctuates, and when it is high you're better off just to drive by and keep going. When it's low during migration, though, you should have some luck.

The other pond on Olinda Trail is more of a wetland, with muddy areas here and there. If its water is too high for shorebirds, you'll still find waterfowl and possibly wading birds. The road's shoulder is wide enough for a car. A decent amount of traffic goes past, so be safe.

After a day or two of rain, the fields south of Rush City on Forest Boulevard will hold water and attract shorebirds. It won't last long, so get up there as soon as possible. I have found Black-bellied Plovers two of the last five springs, as well as an American Golden-Plover and other species last year. The road is busy, but the shoulder is very wide, and I've felt okay pulling over and scanning. The water in the fields will be gone within a couple of days after it rains, and birds will be back on their journey to the nesting grounds.

In fall, the sod fields east of Harris and North Branch are worth checking. It seems every year more of the fields

are planted with corn, but there are still plenty that have sod. Wet or dry, they can get shorebirds. Rain or a good dowsing from an irrigation rig helps. Keystone Avenue and 420th Street consistently have sod from year to year, and like other sod farms, they might have Buff-breasted Sandpipers and American Golden-Plovers. The last Buff-breasted Sandpiper sighting goes all the way back to 2014, but that might have to do with lighter birding there compared to sod farms in Anoka and Dakota Counties.

Isanti County

Searching for shorebirds in Isanti County builds character. Anything besides a Killdeer is a good find. It's the only county in the state without a Red-necked Phalarope record and one of four counties without a Willet. It is undoubtedly underbirded, and the lack of habitat doesn't help either.

However, there are spots worth visiting. One of my new favorites is a wetland northwest of Dalbo, where County Roads 16 and 58 meet. It's the best-looking habitat around. When its water level is low, small islands with mudflats emerge, and the shorebirds are close enough for good looks with a scope. You will also see waterfowl and wading birds, and I keep hoping for the day a Cattle Egret will appear. There is a parking area right across the road at Dalbo WMA and traffic is light.

Driving around the countryside after spring rains and looking for wet areas in plowed fields is a good strategy in Isanti County. The stretch of County Road 4 between Day and Highway 65 has fields that hold water for a day or two. And if you find wet fields on County 4, check the roads north and south of it, too. I realize that "drive around" might not seem like the insight you were hoping for, but in a county like Isanti that otherwise has very little natural habitat, it is surprising how shorebirds can appear overnight in a new wet area in a dirt field.

The city of Isanti has a water treatment plant that is easy to bird. You just park by the soccer fields and walk up to the fence. Actually, finding shorebirds there is the tricky part. Do you have a place you go over and over again because it seems like it should produce lots of birds but rarely does? That's Isanti WTP for me. However, what it has lacked in shorebirds, it makes up for in migrating geese, terns, and gulls. And I'm not giving up on it for shorebirds, either.

If you visit any of these locations, let me know how you do. Good luck. Happy spring, and happy shorebirding!

Erik Collins is an elementary teacher living in Hugo.



— MOU Calendar —

May / June 2020

Note: *All events should be considered tentative depending on the status of the governor's Shelter in Place order. Readers are advised to check the web sites of the respective organizations before going.*

CARPENTER NATURE CENTER

Minnesota Campus: 12805 St. Croix Trail S.,
Hastings, MN

Wisconsin Campus: 300 East Cove Road, Hudson, WI

May 22: Bird Banding

Details: 8 am–12 pm. Bird Banding records help us learn how long birds live, where they travel, when they migrate and many other interesting facts. CNC has been banding birds for over 30 years. Our bird banders welcome you to see songbirds up close and learn about the birds who share our ecosystem. Banding runs continuously but visitors may come and go at any time. Donations of bird seed or suet will be greatly appreciated in lieu of a program fee. Location: Minnesota Campus

June 6: MN Campus Bird Hike

Details: 8–10 am. Join bird expert Kevin Smith on a morning hike around the nature center. Learn to identify birds by sight and sound. Field guides and binoculars available to use or bring your own. Program fee: \$6 or free for “Friends of CNC”, Hastings Environmental Protectors and St. Croix Valley Bird Club members. Please RSVP at 651–437–4359. Location: Minnesota Campus



Red-winged Blackbird, by Jean Bris lance

June 13: WI Campus Bird Hike

Details: 8–10 am. Join the St. Croix Valley Bird Club on a morning hike on our beautiful WI campus. Learn to identify birds by sight and sound. Program fee: \$6 or free for “Friends of CNC”, Hastings Environmental Protectors, Hastings High School students, and St. Croix Valley Bird Club members. Please RSVP at 651–437–4359 and let us know you are coming. Location: Wisconsin Campus

June 26: Bird Banding

Details: 8 am–12 pm. Bird Banding records help us learn how long birds live, where they travel, when they migrate and many other interesting facts. CNC has been banding birds for over 30 years. Our bird banders welcome you to see songbirds up close and learn about the birds who share our ecosystem. Banding runs continuously but visitors may come and go at any time. Donations of bird seed or suet will be greatly appreciated in lieu of a program fee. Minnesota Campus

DNR

(See www.dnr.state.mn.us for directions to locations)

State Parks and Trails

June 6: Take Flight! Spotting Spring Birds

Details: 8–10 am. Discover the songs and sights of Minnesota's spring migratory birds! Join birder and instructor Ron Miller MD for a birding walk to discover recently arrived breeding birds as well as species passing through on their northward migration. For more Information, call 218–699–7251. Location: Itasca State Park–South entrance

June 20: Owls of MN & WI

Details: 2–3 pm. Get an in-depth look at owls with Chris Cold, retired Wisconsin DNR educator and wildlife technician. His knowledge and stories will take you through their evolution, biology, ecology and management on a global and local context. Find out the twelve species of owls that reside in Minnesota and Wisconsin as permanent and seasonal visitors and perhaps you'll get to meet one. Contact Mike Dunker at 651–583–2125 x227. Location: Wild River State Park

MINNESOTA RIVER VALLEY AUDUBON CHAPTER

MRVAC Bird Watching Treks

See additional field trips and updates at MRVAC.org/trips-events/

MN Valley Nat'l Wildlife Refuge Bird Watching
Join us for a bird walk on one of the Refuge's many units. Learn which species of birds use the Refuge as a migratory stop and those that call the Refuge home for the summer nesting season. Birders of all skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars, your favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather. Craig Mandel, Volunteer Refuge Naturalist, 952-240-7647

Locations:

Bass Ponds Trailhead, 2501 86th St. E., Bloomington
Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center, 15865 Rapids Lake Rd, Carver
Bloomington Visitor Center, 3815 American Blvd. E., Bloomington

Refuge Bird Watching Treks: May–June
Sunday, May 10, 8:00–10:30 am, Bass Ponds
Sunday, May 17, 8:00–10:30 am, Bass Ponds
Monday, June 1, 8:00–10:30 am, Bass Ponds
Monday, June 22, 8:00–10:30 am, Bass Ponds
Sunday, June 28, 8:00–10:30 am, Bass Ponds

MRVAC Field Trips

May 11: Carver Park Reserve

Details: Meet 7:00 am. Carver Park reserve is an excellent birding location, with a nice variety of habitats. Join us for this early morning walk at the peak of spring migration. On past spring trips to Carver Park reserve, we have observed over 140 species of birds, including 14 species of sparrows and 23 species of warblers. Each year is a little different, so join us to find out what surprises are in store this year. Contact Craig to register for this trip. Craig Mandel: 952-240-7647

May 14–15: Southern Minnesota Birding Days

Details: Meet at 6:00 am. Some of the locations we will likely bird on this tour include the Hormel Nature Center, Lake Louise State Park, Tollefson Woods and a number of WMAs and Water Treatment Plants. These locations should give us a variety of habitats to search in Dodge and Mower counties. \$25/MRVAC members; \$35/non-MRVAC members. Please contact Craig Mandel to register for this trip: 952-240-7647.

June 18–19: Northern Minnesota Birding Days

Details: Meet at 6:00 am. On this trip we will spend time birding in Hubbard County and the Clearwater County portion of Itasca State Park. In addition to a number of trails in Itasca State Park, we should also be able to check out the Lake Alice Bog and portions of the Paul Bunyan State Forest plus lots of backroads and a couple Water Treatment Plants. \$25/MRVAC members; \$35/non-MRVAC members. Please contact Craig Mandel to register for this trip: 952-240-7647.

THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT

May 7: Spring Bird Hike

Details: 7:30–9 am. Discover which birds have returned and learn tips on how to find them. Reservations required. Fee: \$5. Location: Silverwood Park, 2500 County Rd E, St. Anthony.

May 7: Woodcock Stalks: Dusk Sky Dancers

Details: 7:30–9:30 pm. Learn the natural history of woodcocks. Rush off-trail for position at dusk as the male swoops and twitters in a high aerial dance, then hope he lands nearby. Rain date is May 8. Reservations required by seven days prior. Fee: \$10. Location: Eastman Nature Center, 13341 Elm Creek Rd, Osseo

May 9: International Migratory Bird Day: Early Birders

Details: 7:30–9 am. Search for migrating warblers and other birds. Bring your own binoculars or borrow ours. Reservations recommended. Free. Location: Eastman Nature Center, 13341 Elm Creek Rd, Osseo

May 14: Spring Bird Hike

Details: 7:30–9 am. Discover which birds have returned and learn tips on how to find them. Reservations required. Fee: \$5 Location: Silverwood Park, 2500 County Rd E, St. Anthony

May 16: Bird Banding

Details: 9 am–12 pm. See wild songbirds safely trapped, studied and tagged with numbered rings. Drop in anytime. Free. Location: Eastman Nature Center, 13341 Elm Creek Rd, Osseo

May 16: Bird Banding

Details: 9 am–12 pm. See wild songbirds safely trapped, studied, and tagged with numbered rings. Drop in anytime. Free. Location: Carver Park Reserve–Lowry Nature Center, 7025 Victoria Dr, Victoria.



Red-shouldered Hawk, by Richard Gotz

ZUMBRO VALLEY AUDUBON

May 9: ZVAS 3rd Annual Global Birding Big Day

Tentative

Details: 6:30 am–late afternoon. Join us as we spend the day birding at numerous locations throughout the Rochester area. Our goal will be to count and tally as many species as we can find while also enjoying the beauty of our local parks. Come to one, two or all of the hikes. Be prepared for the weather and bring binoculars. Participants should be able to walk on uneven ground. This event takes place in light rain but will be cancelled if severe weather or lightning is present. This event is not suitable for young children. For a printable map and schedule, see: https://zumbrovalleyaudubon.org/uploads/9/8/5/0/98502830/bbd_info_map2020.pdf

May 10: Hok-Si-La

Tentative

Details: 8 am–mid afternoon. Leaders: Terry & Joyce Grier. Meet at 8 am at the east parking lot of the Heintz Center to car pool 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. This park has nice walking trails and good diverse habitat for a wide variety of birds. See <http://hoksilapark.org/> for more information on the area.

May 17: Miesville Ravine

Tentative

Details: 7 am–early afternoon. Leaders: Terry & Joyce Grier. Meet in the Hy-Vee Barlow's south parking lot near the DAV drop box at 7 am to car pool to the Miesville ravine (about a 60 minute drive). Dress for the weather, bring your own binoculars, lunch, snacks, bug spray and water. Trails are generally good but be prepared for uneven ground and muddy/wet areas. Some trails are steep. We should a good variety of warblers and woodland birds here.

Jun 6: ZVAS Monthly Bird Walk

Details: 9–10 am. Join Terry and Joyce Grier on a casual walk through Quarry Hill Park. Free and open to the public—no registration required. Location: Quarry Hill Nature Center, Rochester



Red-breasted Nuthatch, by Jean Brisance

The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

2020 Photography Challenge

Welcome to a new collective social media birding experience. The MOU is sponsoring a photography challenge for birders with cameras that wish to collaborate on seeing and photographing as many bird species as possible over the span of ten days from May 1st to May 10th and then sharing your results with fellow birders.

How it works: From the moment the clock turns to Friday, May 1 until 8 p.m. on May 10 you can attempt one or several of the challenges listed below. Track your own progress during the 10-day event but share favorite photos with our Facebook page. We will have daily photo challenge sharing posts up for you to directly share photos, progress, and more.

We will track the posts and responses to build an aggregate species list of all species photographed by you the photographers that are shared with our social media pages. We will also spotlight photographs on our Instagram and Facebook pages during the week while sharing the aggregate species lists to help bring your beautiful photos to the masses so everyone can enjoy the results as well.

Rules/Guidelines:

We wish to respect shelter in place guidance from the state and are asking birders/photographers to stay within 5 miles of your home or at least within your own county/community. Keeping within social distancing guidelines and minimizing contact with other communities will help limit risk for everyone.

Photographs must be taken during the challenge period and should not be from prior birding efforts..

Challenge Categories:

Species count challenge:

In this ladder challenge, photographers attempt to photograph as many different species as possible during the challenge period.

Complete the Zen photographer level by getting a photo of any 1-19 bird species.

Complete the Enthusiast photographer level by getting a photo of any 20-29 bird species.

Complete the Master photographer level by getting a photo of any 30-49 bird species.

Complete the Legendary photographer level by photographing 50-74 species.

Complete the Mythic challenge level by photographing 75 or more species.

Complete the Impossible challenge level by photographing 100 or more species.

Species group challenges:

In this separate challenge photographers are tasked to find and photograph at least one species from each of 10 bird groups. (See lists below for which birds reside in each group.)

Group 1: One bird from the Waterfowl, Loons & Grebe group.

Group 2: One bird from the Sparrows.

Group 3: One bird from the Raptors and Nightjars.

Group 4: One from the Warblers, Kinglets, Vireos, Flycatchers, Hummingbirds.

Group 5: One from the Thrush, Mimid, Gamebird, and Cuckoo families.

Group 6: One from the Corvid, Swallow, and Dove families.

Group 7: One from the Blackbird, Chickadee, Grosbeak and Finch families.

Group 8: One from the Kingfisher, Heron, Egret, Bittern, Pelican, and Cormorant families.

Group 9: One from the Woodpecker, Nuthatch, and Wren families.

Group 10: One from the Shorebird, Rail, Gull and Tern families.

Non-photographer Challenge:

Don't have a camera? No problem. Just go out bird watching as often as you can during the challenge and take a selfie with your birding gear, a park sign, or whatever strikes your fancy. Share your selfies with the daily Facebook selfie posts just like the bird photos.

You can also share photos from Instagram using the hashtag #MOU2020PhotoChallenge on your posts to your own account so anyone can search for them and see them.

*All photographers retain full rights to their shared photographs. If you choose to post your photos to our Facebook page, we may reshare those photos with credit given on our Instagram and main Facebook page for a broader audience to appreciate. Feel free to watermark your photos as you see fit.

Challenge Groups for Species

Group 1:

Waterfowl, Loons & Grebes

Snow Goose, Ross's Goose, Greater White-fronted Goose, Cackling Goose, Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Trumpeter Swan, Tundra Swan, Wood Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, American Black Duck, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Harlequin Duck, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Black Scoter, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Barrow's Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, Clark's Grebe, Red-throated Loon, Pacific Loon, Common Loon

Group 2:

Sparrows

Grasshopper Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Field Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-crowned Sparrow, Harris's Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, LeConte's Sparrow, Nelson's Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Spotted Towhee, Eastern Towhee, House Sparrow



Northern Harrier
by Kevin Manley

Group 3:

Raptors and Nightjars

Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Golden Eagle, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Northern Goshawk, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, Snowy Owl, Northern Hawk Owl, Barred Owl, Great Gray Owl, Long-eared Owl, Short-eared Owl, Boreal Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, American Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, Prairie Falcon, Common Nighthawk, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Loggerhead Shrike, Northern Shrike

Group 4:

Warblers, Kinglets, Vireos, Flycatchers, Hummingbirds

Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Northern Waterthrush, Golden-winged Warbler, Blue-winged Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Orange-crowned Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Connecticut Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Hooded Warbler, American Redstart, Cape May Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Northern Parula, Magnolia Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Palm Warbler, Pine Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Canada Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Bell's Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Great Crested Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Eastern Kingbird, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Acadian Flycatcher, Alder Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Least Flycatcher, Eastern Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, Ruby-throated Hummingbird



Golden-crowned Kinglet, by Allan Meadows

Group 5:

Thrushes, Mimids, Gamebirds, and Cuckoos

Eastern Bluebird, Mountain Bluebird, Townsend's Solitaire, Veery, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Wood Thrush, American Robin, Varied Thrush, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Black-billed Cuckoo, Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Yellow-breasted Chat, Gray Partridge, Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Spruce Grouse, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Greater Prairie-Chicken, Wild Turkey

Group 6:

Corvids, Swallows, and Doves

Chimney Swift, Bank Swallow, Tree Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Purple Martin, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, Canada Jay, Blue Jay, Black-billed Magpie, American Crow, Common Raven

Group 7:

Blackbirds, Chickadees, Grosbeaks, and Finches

Yellow-headed Blackbird, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Western Meadowlark, Orchard Oriole, Baltimore Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, Rusty Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Common Grackle, Great-tailed Grackle, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Western Tanager, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Dickcissel, Bohemian Waxwing, Cedar Waxwing, American Pipit, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Grosbeak, House Finch, Purple Finch, Common Redpoll, Hoary Redpoll, Red Crossbill, White-winged Crossbill, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Lapland Longspur, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Smith's Longspur, Snow Bunting, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Boreal Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse

Black-capped Chickadee, by Jean Brisance



Group 8:

Kingfisher, Herons, Egrets, Bitterns, Pelicans, and Cormorant

Belted Kingfisher, American Bittern, Least Bittern, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Little Blue Heron, Cattle Egret, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican

Group 9:

Woodpeckers, Nuthatches, and Wrens

Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Black-backed Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, House Wren, Winter Wren, Sedge Wren, Marsh Wren, Carolina Wren, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper

Group 10:

Shorebirds, Rails, Gulls, and Terns

Sandhill Crane, Yellow Rail, Virginia Rail, Sora, Common Gallinule, American Coot, White-faced Ibis, American Avocet, Black-bellied Plover, American Golden-Plover, Killdeer, Semipalmated Plover, Piping Plover, Upland Sandpiper, Whimbrel, Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Stilt Sandpiper, Sanderling, Dunlin, Baird's Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Long-billed Dowitcher, American Woodcock, Wilson's Snipe, Spotted Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Willet, Greater Yellowlegs, Wilson's Phalarope, Red-necked Phalarope, Sabine's Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Little Gull, Franklin's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Iceland Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Glaucous Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Caspian Tern, Black Tern, Common Tern, Forster's Tern

Gadwall, by Richard Gotz





Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

Carpenter Nature Center
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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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