



Minnesota BIRDING

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Spruce Grouse, by Allan Meadows

Conservation Column Using Technology to Understand the Ecology of the American Woodcock

by Josh Bednar

The American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*), also referred to as the “timberdoodle,” is a favorite of many wildlife enthusiasts. Its unique appearance, plump body, and long bill make it easy to recognize in flight, and its distinctive “peent,” along with the amazing breeding display of the males at dawn and dusk, is an exciting sign of spring for many bird Minnesota lovers.

The American Woodcock is distinctive in that it is one of the few migratory forest birds managed as game species. Woodcocks are found primarily in the eastern half of North America; they breed in northern forests of the U.S. and Canada and spend the winters in the southern U.S. Forests in Minnesota and across the Great Lakes region provide critical habitat for hundreds of resident and migrant bird species besides the American Woodcock as well, so forest management is critical for cultivating and conserving habitat for the species. Woodcocks use young forests during certain stages of their life cycle. Large portions of the population breed in early successional forests across the Great Lakes region, and an estimated 10% rely on Minnesota’s forests. Like many forest birds, the American Woodcock is

experiencing a significant population decline in parts of its range. The Minnesota DNR has classified it as a Species in Greatest Conservation Need. So, this provides an opportunity to combine forest management and bird conservation.

The breeding season is the only period of time in the annual cycle during which bird populations can increase in size, of course. Therefore, it is imperative for them to add as many new individuals as possible during this time. Many breeding season studies investigate only a small fraction of this critical life cycle stage. For example, point count surveys (which focus mainly on territorial males) to determine breeding habitat requirements of a species are unlikely to represent the needs of females and juvenile birds.

The period after young birds leave the nest, but before they disperse or migrate (i.e., the post-fledging period), is a vital but poorly understood stage of the life-cycle of many birds. Research suggests that for many species this is a time of high mortality during which fledglings may seek very specific habitats or microhabitats, habitats often dissimilar to those in which they hatched.

To better understand American



Banded American Woodcock, by Debbie Peterson

Woodcock ecology, the Natural Resources Research Institute (NRRI) at the University of Minnesota Duluth initiated a study focusing on the post-fledging period. In 2019 and 2020, we found and monitored nests in a managed forest study plot (~100 ha) in northern Minnesota. Over two field seasons, using hunting dogs trained to point upon the discovery of nests, we found a total of nine American Woodcock nests. Over the next several weeks, we monitored the nests and, just before the fledglings were large enough to leave the nest, we fitted and tagged 31 juveniles with VHF transmitters. We then tracked the movements of these birds and collected habitat data every other day, until the birds died or dispersed from the study area.

Preliminary analysis of hundreds of telemetry points, along with vegetation surveys from the 2019 and 2020 breeding season, suggest that American Woodcock relies heavily on a combination of different forest ages and cover types during the pre- and post-fledgling periods. One com-

mon characteristic that seems to be important for fledgling survival is a combination of adequate canopy cover and high stem density. The juvenile woodcocks also preferred areas with a significant amount leaf litter and the presence of downed logs. The connection to leaf litter is probably because it provides good habitat for earthworms, while the logs provide cover from predators. Therefore, forest management practices that increase potential for structural diversity within forest stands as they mature are important for this species. For example, encouraging foresters to leave more of downed logs after a harvest, maintaining stands with trees of different when possible, and retaining trees post-harvest in “clumps” will likely be beneficial for increasing productivity for American Woodcock.

In addition to following the post-fledgling movement of woodcocks, we also wanted to better understand where adults spend time on the breeding grounds and when and where they migrate in the fall to wintering grounds. In 2021, we placed GPS satellite transmitters on five adults: three females in the spring and two males during fall migration. The GPS transmitters recorded location data once every three days and then transmitted this information back to the research team via Argos satellites. Two of the three females tagged in the spring bred in Minnesota and are currently wintering near Shreveport, Louisiana, and the other is about 120 kilometers to the north, in Texarkana, Texas. Of the two males that were fitted with transmitters in September, one headed south shortly after being tagged and is wintering near Muskogee, Oklahoma. The other male, which made a series of unique movements, first moved northward from the banding site in Walker, Minnesota to an area near Baudette, where he stayed for over a month. We think this bird may have been prospecting for a new territory for nesting next spring. The bird then showed another unexpected movement, traveling east to Ohio before finally heading south to spend the winter in Alabama. The tags are programmed to record data through May 2022.

If the batteries last through spring migration, we hope to learn more about breeding site fidelity and migration patterns as the birds return to Minnesota. Together, these technologies are helping to unravel the ecology of American Woodcock and will ultimately help to inform conservation efforts.

Note: Funding for this project was provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) and the National Air and Stream Council (NCASI).

Josh Bednar is a Wildlife Ecologist at the Natural Resources Research Institute in Duluth. His primary interest is identifying and developing conservation solutions for species in greatest conservation need.

Message from the President

Although spring is yet weeks away, in our corner of Chisago County there has been a recent uptick in bird song, and the neighborhood pair of Great Horned Owls that successfully raised three owlets last year are filling the evenings with their duets. Hints of spring may be in the air, but Minnesota winters have a way of lingering. While we wait for the snow to melt and the first shoots of green to appear, consider taking in a different type of birding opportunity offered by the Bell Museum's new exhibit *Seeing Birds*.

The MOU is pleased to be a supporting sponsor of the exhibit, which was created as a centerpiece for the museum's yearlong 150th anniversary celebration. As stated on the exhibit webpage, "*Seeing Birds* integrates art, science, and nature to ignite curiosity and wonder about the beauty and biology of birds, engaging visitors in an exploration of birds, their environments, and their evolution. It focuses on critical research on birds from the University of Minnesota, reviewing advances in our understanding of birds made through careful observation of their behavior and habitat and revealing current research that advances knowledge of our changing world."

The exhibit, which runs through October 2, fills the museum's main-floor Nova Galleries. Visitors are taken through a winding gallery experience that highlights different ways that birds have been documented and studied in the past and present. One of the joys of viewing a home-grown exhibit is that you may recognize names from the annals of the MOU; current University of Minnesota researchers from their Paper Session presentations; and the inclusion of partner organizations like the Urban Bird Collective. If you like a scavenger hunt, there is a copy of the MOU Records Committee's *Checklist of the Birds of Minnesota* to be found tucked in a display. I particularly enjoyed the opportunity to view unique historical pieces from the Bell's collections that illustrated the museum's advances in showcasing birds in their natural environment, including miniature portable dioramas, early attempts at 3D views by Francis Lee Jaques, and a scale maquette of one of the dioramas still on display. Interactive displays do not overwhelm the exhibit and as a result they have greater impact. Visitors are encouraged to pick up a pencil and try their hand at bird il-



lustration in the manner of John James Audubon in an exhibit that acknowledges the artist-naturalist's mixed legacy. An animated evolutionary tree is so mesmerizing that my spouse and I were not the only visitors to watch it through more than once, while a simple push-button sound experience illustrates the need for bird conservation.

I hope you will have an opportunity to visit *Seeing Birds* and take in related events in coming months. When you go, also allow time to also visit the museum's wildlife dioramas that feature birds. Interactive checklists help new birders identify species or offer a chance for experienced ones to brush up on warblers and shorebirds before their spring arrivals. For a livelier birding experience, step through the Touch & See Lab to observe birds visiting the feeder array installed through a collaborative effort of the Bell staff, the MOU, MN Backyard Birds, Wild Birds Unlimited, and Cardinal Corner.

The Bell is open 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday. We visited before lunch on a Saturday and were pleased to see lots of families enjoying the museum's exhibits on a sub-zero wintry day. If you are seeking a quieter time to visit, staff suggest weekdays, particularly Wednesdays and Thursdays, when there are generally fewer visitors (school groups have not yet returned to the Bell). At present, masks are required for visitors aged 2 and older. For admission and more information on visiting the Bell see www.bellmuseum.umn.edu/

Happy Birding!

Michelle Terrell

Owls display, by Michelle Terrell



My Favorite Home Patch

Acacia Park Cemetery

by Douglas Kieser

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



Merlin at Acacia Park Cemetery, by Doug Kieser

Early in the evening of April 28, 2003, Jim Otto and I were standing in the parking area of Acacia Park Cemetery in Mendota Heights lamenting the slow birding that day. We had gone there with hopes for finding Pine Warblers in the cemetery's many conifers but had seen few migrants other than Ruby-crowned Kinglets. As we stepped to our cars, I noticed a small brown bird hopping along the sandstone wall ahead of us. To our amazement, the bird proved to be a Rock Wren, a new state bird for both of us – definitely making up for the slow birding earlier! Many people got to enjoy this bird, as it remained for two more days.

Acacia Park Cemetery covers 75 acres on Oheyawahi-Pilot Knob hill, overlooking the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. The site is a sacred place to the Dakota people, and was used by them as a gathering place and burial site prior to European settlement. A marker in the cemetery commemorates the signing of the 1851 Treaty of Mendota between the Dakota and the United States federal government.

Located not far from the east end of the Mendota Bridge

near the junction of Minnesota highways 13, 55, and 62, the cemetery is easily accessed. The entrance and parking area are at the north end of Pilot Knob Road, west of its intersection with Acacia Boulevard.

Situated near the junction of two migration pathways, the cemetery is a consistent, although rarely outstanding, site for migrants. The many native and exotic conifers provide a fairly unique environment, especially in comparison to the nearby river bottomland forest. The many paved cemetery roads allow easy access for birding all areas of the cemetery, either by walking or by car. The elevation change from the western edge of the cemetery near Sibley Memorial Highway to the parking area and entrance on the eastern edge is enough to guarantee a good workout!

My first visit to Acacia was on a cold March day in 2001. Tom Tustison had found a Townsend's Solitaire near the entrance buildings, and although I rarely ventured outside my Wood Lake/Bass Ponds/Old Cedar comfort zone in those days, I thought this life bird would warrant a trip across the Minnesota River and into Dakota County. The solitaire was easily found as it drank meltwater from roofs of the buildings at the entrance, and I got to meet several people who previously had only been names on the MOU listserv.

Hooded Merganser, by Heidi Hermes



On June 11, 2001, Jim Mattson discovered a singing male Yellow-throated Warbler here, which was later found to be part of a mated pair. The birds found the coniferous habitat here suitable for nesting, and the cemetery became the site of the first confirmed nesting of this species in Minnesota (nesting was previously suspected, but never confirmed, at Sibley State Park in Kandiyohi County).

Numerous other rarities have been found in the cemetery, including a Black-backed Woodpecker found by Drew Smith in October of 2008, and a Summer Tanager found by Bruce Fall in May of 2019.

While the possibility of finding a rarity is always a draw here, the migrants and visitants here are what keeps me coming back. Finding Pine Warblers in Minnesota outside of their breeding areas is always a challenge, and I have found them here in spring migration on numerous occasions. Other “coniferous” warbler species can also be found here on a more consistent basis than many of the other Twin Cities migration hotspots. On dry fall migration days, the warblers will sometimes visit the dripping water faucets scattered around the cemetery. It is really a treat to see Cape May, Blackburnian and Black-throated Green Warblers splashing in the tiny puddles below the faucets!

In winter, the pines and spruces here have attracted both species of crossbills, as well as Purple Finches and Common Redpolls, which are sometimes very abundant in the adjacent oak savannah being restored to the north and east

Northern Flicker, by Thomas Burns



of the cemetery proper. Red-breasted Nuthatches are present most winters, and are occasionally present year-round. Owls can be found roosting in the exotic junipers and other shrubs, I have found Northern Saw-whet Owls on a few occasions and Long-eared Owls have also been observed here. Cedar Waxwings and American Robins visit the junipers. Hopefully someday a Bohemian Waxwing will join them!

Acacia Park Cemetery was one of the first Twin Cities metro locations to host nesting Merlins, and many people enjoyed watching them hunt the area as they raised their broods. Although Merlins have not nested here for several years now, they are still occasionally seen from perches high atop the spruces. The location high on a bluff is excellent for viewing other raptors as well. Peregrine Falcons from the nearby Mendota Bridge are often seen. Soaring Bald Eagles and Red-tailed Hawks can be abundant.

As is true of many birding locations, summer can be a slow season. The local Wild Turkey flock keeps things interesting year-round. And breeding Eastern Bluebirds and Indigo Buntings liven up the hottest summer days.

When your visit to Acacia Park Cemetery is complete, there are several excellent birding locations within a short distance. Augusta Lake is just to the east, across Highway 55, and can be viewed from Centrepont Drive on its north end. In late summer and early fall, hundreds of Double-crested Cormorants roost here in the evenings. One lucky night in 2021, I was able to pick out a Neotropic Cormorant from the mass. Resurrection Cemetery, which is to the east of Augusta Lake, offers very birding very much like that of Acacia Park Cemetery; it is probably worthy of its own article!

New MOU Members

NB: Please remember to notify the MOU Membership Secretary (membership@moumn.org) when you change your address or email. If you are renewing for more than one year, please indicate that on your check.

James E. Johnson, *Golden Valley, MN*
Judith Luetkemeyer, *Gatlinburg, TN*
John Morris, *Afton, MN*
Steve Pelton, *Osseo, MN*
Jeniffer Ponce, *Minneapolis, MN*
Thomas Ries, *Alexandria, MN*
Amber Taylor, *St. Louis Park, MN*
JeanMari Thompson, *St. Anthony, MN*
Ben Vang-Johnson, *Minnetonka, MN*
Tom Vonsternberg, *Minneapolis, MN*
Trey Weaver, *Mound, MN*

Birder Bio: Monica Bryand

Tell us about yourself.

I was born and raised in Saint Paul and have been on the West Side of Saint Paul for the last 40 years. I started my career as an accountant and then spent over 25 years working in philanthropy. I'm currently serving as the co-executive director at Voices for Racial Justice and the founder of the Urban Bird Collective (The Urban Bird Collective supports primarily BIPOC and LGBT communities to build skills as bird watchers while creating safe spaces and promoting the benefits of being out in the natural environment.) As a birder who identifies as Latinx, I want to support other BIPOC birders getting out and reaping the benefits of being out in nature.

In my volunteer time I'm a co-chair for the Audubon Saint Paul Conservation Committee, Board member of Hawk Ridge, volunteer with my local District Council (West Side Community Organization) and board member of the Great River Passage organization.

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

I started birding over 20 years ago or so. I went out with some friends who were birders, and when they showed me the Cedar Waxwing, I was amazed and hooked. I just couldn't believe what had been in front of me but I didn't see it. Now everyday is a treat, seeing and hearing everything around me.

How did your interest expand after that first experience?

I was hooked after my first experience and continued to go on walks and got connected to Audubon Saint Paul. Since I was now hooked I wanted to share this with friends and family. A little over twelve years ago I incorporated photography into my birding. I'm a birder first, photographer second. I have loved being able to see the birds in such different ways through photography and I get to share that with others to get them excited about going out and birding.

What is the main attraction of birding for you?

For me, the main attraction is being surprised every time I go out. Maybe I'm looking for a particular bird; sometimes I find it, sometimes I don't, whatever I find is perfect. The other attraction is being out in nature and getting exercise. I love the walks, add biking into my birding, and really enjoy kayaking and birding.

How did you originally become acquainted with the MOU?

I got connected to MOU through the various trips they offered. It's always good going out with experienced guides, especially the first time in Greater Minnesota. On behalf of

the Urban Bird Collective, I have applied for and have been fortunate to receive grants from the MOU Savaloja Fund.

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

In the Twin Cities, we're so lucky to have access to so many amazing places to bird. I call myself an urban birder and bird mostly in Minnesota. I have so many favorite Twin Cities parks, but tops would be Crosby, Old Cedar Ave Bridge, Roberts Bird Sanctuary, and Bass Ponds. In Greater Minnesota, again so many amazing spots, but Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, Sax-Zim Bog, Hawk Ridge, and various state parks along the North Shore.

What is your favorite birding style?

Because I'm often trying to sneak in birding before work or whenever I have some free time, it's often by myself. As a leader in the Urban Bird Collective, I love taking others out and sharing my love of birds with them. I get to work with the other amazing leaders of the Collective, and the people we connect with are awesome.

What is your favorite bird or bird family?

Warblers are my favorite birds. I love the spring migration and follow them at the various parks here in the Twin Cities and then I go visit them at their various breeding spots up north. The variety of colors and calls make them extra special.

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

It's all about practice and getting out. It helps to go out with people who can help with identification, and there are a lot of groups offering guided walks. The other thing that I do is practice learning calls and constantly work to master a few new ones every year.

Have you ever had an unusual experience while birding?

I've been blessed with so many great experiences, not sure which ones might be unusual.

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

I'm a big biker and try to bike to work as often as possible (year-round). I love to bird while biking and also by kayak. I play racquetball three times a week and also juggle as much as possible. As I mentioned, I'm into photography and use it to document what I've seen and share it with others.

What new bird would you most like to see?

There are a couple of longspurs I'd like to see — Chestnut collared and Smith's.

MOU Calendar

March / April 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		MARCH 1 Bell Museum: Through October 2: Seeing Birds Exhibition	2 Bell Museum: Birds through Dakota Eyes	3	4	5 CNC: MN Campus Bird Hike MRVAC Refuge Birding: Old Cedar Ave. ZVAS: Bird Walk
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 CNC: WI Campus Bird Hike
13 TRPD/SP: Bird Photography	14	15	16	17	18	19 TRPD/LNC: Bird Banding
20 MRVAC Refuge Birding: Bass Ponds	21	22 ZVAS: Tracking Great Blue Herons	23	24 MRVAC: Bird Song: 10 Lessons in Listening	25	26
27 TRPD/SP: Birds of Costa Rica	28 MRVAC Refuge Birding: Old Cedar Ave.	29	30	31	APRIL 1	2 CNC: MN Campus Bird Hike RBNC: Peregrine Falcon Research ZVAS: Bird Walk
3 MRVAC Refuge Birding: Bass Ponds	4	5	6	7	8	9 CNC: WI Campus Bird Hike
10	11	12	13	14 SPAS - Belwin, Bison & Birds MRVAC: Ramsey County Birding Day ZVAS: Woodcock Walk	15	16 MRVAC Refuge Birding: Old Cedar Ave. ZVAS: Root River Co. Park Walk
17	18	19 MGB – Birding Thailand	20	21 MRVAC: Chisago County Birding Days	22 CNC WI campus: Woodcock Walk MRVAC: Chisago County Birding Days	23 MRVAC Refuge Birding: Rapids Lake Ed. Center TRPD/LNC: Bird Banding ZVAS: Rochester Reservoirs
24 ZVAS: Armstrong Wetlands/Rice Lake State Park	25	26	27	28 MRVAC: Report on Ornithology Research at UMD	29	30 IOC: International Festival of Owls (including May 1)



— MOU Calendar

March / April 2022

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

BELL MUSEUM

www.bellmuseum.umn.edu

Now through–Oct. 2: “Seeing Birds” Exhibit

The exhibition “Seeing Birds” integrates art, science, and nature to ignite curiosity and wonder about the beauty and biology of birds, engaging visitors in an exploration of birds, their environments, and their evolution. This special exhibition is generously supported by Dellwood Foundation and Minnesota Ornithologists’ Union.

March 2: “Birds Through Dakota Eyes”

7–8 pm. Did you ever wonder how the Wood Duck got its red eyes? Çante Máza (Neil McKay), UMN senior Dakota language specialist, will explain this and more in a talk about birds in Dakota language and culture.

To register for this online event, go to www.eventbrite.com/e/birds-through-dakota-eyes-tickets-228579997927

CARPENTER NATURE CENTER

<https://carpenternaturecenter.org/events>

Minnesota Campus:

12805 St. Croix Trail S., Hastings, MN

Wisconsin Campus:

300 East Cove Road, Hudson, WI

March 5 & April 2: Minnesota Campus Bird Hike

8–10 am. Join an expert birder on a morning hike around the Nature Center. Learn to identify birds by sight and sound. Field guides and binoculars are available. Face-masks are requested during check-in and when participants are closer than six feet. Program fee: \$5.00 or free for “Friends of CNC,” Hastings Environmental Protectors, Hastings High School students, and St. Croix Valley Bird Club members. Space is limited and registration is required. To reserve, please call 651-437-4359.

March 12 & April 9: Wisconsin Campus Bird Hike

8–10 am. Hike various trails on our Wisconsin campus and learn to identify birds with local experts from the St. Croix Valley Bird Club. Facemasks are requested during check-in and when participants are closer than six feet. Program fee: \$5 per participant or free for SCVBC members and ‘Friends of CNC.’ Space is limited and registration is required. Please call 651-437-4359 to reserve your spot.

April 22: Woodcock Walk, Wisconsin Campus

8–9 pm. Learn about the world of the American Woodcock. CNC Executive Director Jennifer Vieth, along with St. Croix Valley Bird Club Vice President Cathy Olyphant, will share fascinating details about the lifestyle and conservation outlook of these bizarre long-billed birds. The program will begin with an indoor presentation, followed by a walk through the darkening prairie trails to observe the acrobatic mating displays of male woodcock. Program fee: \$6 per person or \$4 for ‘Friends of CNC.’ Space is limited and registration is required. To reserve, please call 651-437-4359.



Bohemian Waxwing, by Jean Brisance



Eastern Screech-Owl, by Tom Gilde

INTERNATIONAL OWL CENTER

April 30–May 1: International Festival of Owls

Houston, MN. Contact: karla@internationalowlcenter.org or call 507-896-6957.

Our International Festival of Owls is undergoing a revamp to make it safer health-wise. We are moving it from early March to late April so we can do it outdoors. Plans are still in limbo as we adjust what we will do and where we will do it. Activities on Saturday, April 30 are: live owl programs, nest box building, pellet dissection, and owl photo sessions. Sunday, May 1 will include pre-registration only events: birding and natural history guided trip and outdoor owl photo sessions. Watch for details as they evolve at www.festivalofowls.com.

MINNESOTA GLOBAL BIRDERS

Minnesota Global Birders is an informal group of Minnesotans interested in the world's birds. The group has monthly virtual gatherings. Details on registering for the Zoom sessions are provided via MOU-NET and on the Minnesota Global Birders Facebook page a few weeks before each session.

April. 19: “Birding Thailand”

7–9 pm. This Zoom session will include a presentation by Michael Hurben on birding during his lengthy stays in Thailand.

MINNESOTA RIVER VALLEY AUDUBON CHAPTER

March 24: “Bird Song: Ten Lessons in Listening”

7:30 pm. A virtual program. We are honored and fortunate to be able to welcome Donald Kroodsma, the well-known American author and ornithologist, one of the world's leading experts on the science of bird song and a retired biology professor from the University of Massachusetts. Kroodsma has researched and written on innate and learned songs, the functions, evolution, and ecology of bird songs. To receive a link to this free and open virtual meeting, contact Steve Weston at sweston2g@gmail.com.

April 28: Report on Ornithology Research at UMD

7:30 pm. A virtual program, the latest research today in ornithology. Kara Snow and Emily Pavlovic report on their Master's research at the University of Minnesota Duluth. Kara's research on Boreal Chickadees in collaboration with the Natural Resources Research Institute includes breeding ecology, nestling diet, and post-fledging movement and habitat use. Emily's research in collaboration with the Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory analyzes stable isotopes in feathers to reveal where raptors are migrating from and band recovery data for improving our knowledge of migratory connectivity. To receive a link to this free and open virtual meeting, contact Steve Weston at sweston2g@gmail.com.

Bird Watching Treks at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Birding Days:

NOTE: There is a **new registration process:** Beginning with the March 5th walk, you will be required to preregister for the following MVNWR walks. The walks will be limited to 25 participants, so register early. The registration procedure is a work in progress, check the MVNWR website at: https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Minnesota_Valley/ or contact Craig at 952-240-7647.

Join us for a spring walk on one of the many refuge units that offer a chance to observe birds during their spring migration. The early spring walks will feature waterfowl, and the later walks will see the first of the migrant sparrows and warblers. Bring your binoculars, favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather. Walks are led by Craig Mandel, Volunteer Refuge Naturalist. For questions, please contact Craig at 952-240-7647. For the safety of staff and participants, outdoor programming will be cancelled in the event local areas are under an active advisory (winter, windchill, or lake effect snow) or an active warning (blizzard, winter storm, ice storm, windchill). Programming will also be cancelled if temperature is at or below 0° F. Participants will be notified of cancellation via SignUp message.

March 20 & April 3

8–10:30 am. Bass Ponds Trailhead
2501 86th St. E., Bloomington

March 5, March 28 & April 16

8–10:30 am. Old Cedar Avenue Trailhead,
9551 Old Cedar Ave. S., Bloomington

April 23

8–10:30 am. Rapids Lake Education and Visitor Center
15865 Rapids Lake Rd, Carver, MN

April 14: Ramsey County Birding Day

7 am. In our search for spring migrants in Ramsey County, we may have time to bird at Long Lake, Vadnais/Snail Lakes Regional Parks, Tamarack Nature Center, and Reservoir Woods Park, plus, other locations in the Northern portion of the county. With luck we will observe a mix of waterfowl and some early spring migrant songbirds. For more information or to register for this field trip, please contact Craig at 952-240-7647.

April 21 & 22: Chisago County Birding Days

7 am. With two days to cover Chisago County, we should have plenty of time to spend at most of the county's hotspots. We may have time to include Wild River, Interstate State Parks, Carlos Avery WMA, and Allemansratt Wilderness Park. With luck, we'll find a nice mix of waterfowl, herons, and early spring migrant songbirds. Contact Craig at 952-240-7647 to register. \$35/non-MRVAC members; \$25/MRVAC members.

RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER

1000 Rustad Road, Faribault, MN
<https://rbnc.org/>

April 2: Peregrine Falcon Research

Session 1: 11:00 am-12:00 noon

Session 2: 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm:

Come and learn more about the peregrine story, what is being done right here in Minnesota to help the species, and what we have discovered about them after 40 years of research. Jackie Fallon, wild-life biologist, master falconer, and educator for over 30 years, will be our presenter. She is currently the VP of Field Operations for the Midwest Peregrine Society and MN state coordinator for peregrine monitoring and currently manages all aspects of research at over 50 peregrine falcon territories in Minnesota and Wisconsin. For all ages: all ages, \$5/kids 12+under, \$10/adults. To register for the session you would like, go to: <https://riverbend.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/riverbend/eventRegistration.jsp?event=6825&>

THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT: LOWRY NATURE CENTER

Lowry Nature Center, 7025 Victoria Dr., Victoria, MN

March 19 & April 23

9–12 pm. See wild songbirds safely trapped, studied, and banded with numbered rings. Discuss what scientists learn from these banded birds. Participants ages 13 years and younger must be accompanied by an adult. This program is entirely outdoors. Reservations required by two days prior. Ages 5+. Free. To register go to www.threeriversparks.org/location/lowry-nature-center, or call 763-559-6700 with questions.

THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT: SILVERWOOD PARK

Silverwood Park, 2500 County Road E, St Anthony, MN

Big Year of Birds: Speaker Series

Happening all year across the Park District! Join us for a twice-monthly speaker series featuring some of Minnesota's most prominent bird experts as they present on a range of interesting topics all about birds. Registration is strongly encouraged if you plan to attend in-person. Those who prefer to join us virtually may sign up to receive an online Zoom webinar link, or access the virtual session via livestream on Silverwood's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/silverwoodparktrpd. Registration opens the third Wednesday of each month for the following month's programs. Register now for upcoming sessions.

March 13: "Bird Photography"

2–3 pm. Speaker: Siah St. Clair, photographer.

March 27: "Birds of Costa Rica: Our Birds/Their Birds"

2–3 pm. Speaker: Carrol Henderson, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, retired.



Common Redpoll, by Thomas Burns

ST PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

April 14: “Belwin, Bison and Birds”

7–8:30 pm. Lynette Anderson, Interpretive Naturalist and Restoration Assistant at Belwin Conservancy, will present “Belwin, Bison, and Birds.” Free Zoom meeting online. See: <https://www.saintpaulaudubon.org/event/monthly-chapter-meeting-2022-04-14/>

ZUMBRO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

www.zumbrovalleyaudubon.org/calendar.html

March 5: Monthly Bird Walk

Quarry Hill Nature Center
9–10 am. Leader: Sandy Hokanson. Join us on a casual walk thru Quarry Hill Park. Meet by the Nature Center entrance. Bring binoculars if you have them. Dress for the weather. Stay for any length of time. Walks usually last about 60 – 90 minutes. Free and open to the public. No registration required.

April 2: Monthly Bird Walk

Quarry Hill Nature Center
9–10 am. Leaders: Terry and Joyce Grier. Join us on a casual walk thru Quarry Hill Park. Meet by the Nature Center entrance. Bring binoculars if you have them. Dress for the weather. Stay for any length of time. Walks usually last about 60–90 minutes. Free and open to the public. No registration required.

March 22: “Tracking Great Blue Herons”

7–8 pm. A program via Zoom. Danielle D’Auria is a biologist for the Maine Inland Fisheries & Wildlife department, who has been tracking Great Blue Herons and preserving rookeries for many years. Did you know the graceful Great Blue Heron can migrate over 2,000 miles, sometimes flying for days over the open ocean? Since 2016, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife has deployed lightweight GPS tracking devices on Great Blue Herons to follow their movements during nesting, migration, and wintering. D’Auria will discuss this technology and talk about her work to discover and preserve nesting colonies. Log in information for this Zoom session will be posted in mid-March.

April 14: Woodcock Walk

7:45 pm. Meet at Chester Woods Park. Leader: Jim Peterson. Every spring the Woodcock perform one of the strangest and most interesting mating rituals. Beginning at dusk, we’ll watch its flight and observe it up close. Meet in the horse corral parking lot at Chester Woods County Park (southeast of Rochester). Event will be postponed if it rains.

April 16: Root River County Park Walk

8:30 am–12 pm. Leader: Sandy Hokanson. Meet at Root River County Park, located just south of Rochester near Simpson. Root River has a nice 2-mile loop walking trail and good diverse habitat for a wide variety of birds. We should see some early migrating birds and early blooming spring ephemerals like Snow Trillium. Dress for the weather. This trip will be cancelled if it’s raining harder than a light sprinkle.

April 23: Rochester’s Reservoirs Field Trip

8 am–12 pm. Leaders: Lance Vrieze and Brendan Lanpher. Meet in the east parking lot at the Heintz Center (11936 Collegeview Road East, Rochester) to car pool. The flood control reservoirs around Rochester have created some of the best bird habitat in Olmsted County and are often where local rarities are found. We will visit several to see what we can turn up during migration. There will only be a few short walks totaling less than a mile. Bring a scope and binoculars if you have them.

April 24: Armstrong Wetlands and Rice Lake State Park

7 am – early afternoon. Leaders: Terry and Joyce Grier. Meet in the Hy-Vee Barlow’s south parking lot (nearest Civic Center Drive) at 7 a.m. to carpool (about a 45-minute drive). Dress for the weather, bring your own binoculars (and a spotting scope if you have one), lunch, snacks, and water. Trails are generally good at Rice Lake but be prepared for uneven ground and muddy/wet areas. At the Armstrong Wetlands we’ll park on the edge of a gravel road. We should see several kinds of waterfowl, shorebirds, herons, raptors, woodpeckers, early arriving warblers, and possibly Sandhill Cranes. **Notes:** Vehicles entering Rice Lake State Park must have a MN State Park sticker or purchase a day pass. This field trip will be postponed to a later date if the wetlands are still ice-covered.



Purple Finch, by Jean Brisance



Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

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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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