



Minnesota BIRDING

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My Favorite Home Patch Cottonwood County's Rock Ridge

by Brad Bolduan

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

I was an active birder when I moved to Windom in 1999, so I needed to find nearby locations to bird. I had several locations, each of which seemed to have its own specialties (fall sparrows in weedy patches at Timber Lake WPA, large flocks of spring geese at Talcot Lake WMA, shorebirds at Heron Lake, etc.).

Another one of my favorite locations in the 2000s was the rock outcrop-and-prairie complex in northern Cottonwood County, which is now primarily comprised of The Nature Conservancy's Red Rock Prairie, the Minnesota Historical Society's Jeffers Petroglyphs, Rock Ridge Scientific and Natural Area, and Rock Ridge Wildlife Management Area. Together, these four sites form a four-mile-long interrupted band of publicly accessible grassland that runs mostly northwest to southeast across a high ridge. There are additional public areas nearby, including a Mound Creek County Park in Brown County (only open in summer) and Red Rock Falls County Park in Cottonwood County. I would be remiss if I didn't mention that both

of the county parks have waterfalls.

Generally speaking, the four sites composing this complex have open prairie, grassland habitat with little tree cover (the county parks have more tree cover). The rock outcrops and the associated areas of short or sparse vegetation are a characteristic of these sites, which significantly adds to their appeal for both people and birds. From the spine of the ridge on which these sites are located you can see for miles. This location is also near the headwaters for several rivers and has long been culturally significant to native populations.

Rock Ridge SNA is a 203-acre preserve on the west end of this complex. The site has rock outcrops, prairie, and prairie restorations. For the past several years, portions of this SNA have been hayed, resulting in a somewhat unique habitat for public land. The site has no trails but is open to public access.

Jeffers Petroglyphs is kitty-corner across Cottonwood County Road 2 to the southeast of the SNA. Jeffers Petroglyphs covers 160 acres of



Smith's Longspur at Red Rock Prairie, by Brad Bolduan

rock outcrop, prairie, and prairie restoration. The site has two trails and a visitor center. It has limited hours. Visitor information is available on their website: www.mnhs.org/jefferspetroglyphs/activities. If you have not yet visited Jeffers Petroglyphs, you may want to plan your visit for a time when the visitor center is open. If you have the opportunity, I would recommend a tour of the petroglyphs led by historical society staff.

At 601 acres, and about a mile east of the Petroglyphs, The Nature Conservancy's Red Rock Prairie is the largest and most easterly of the four sites being highlighted here. It is also my favorite site to visit. On these dry ridges some of your best views of ground-dwelling birds may come when they seek water: there is an old man-made wetland near the east end of this property, which (if it isn't dry) can be a good place to get acceptable looks of skittish birds. The wetland is small and seasonal, but I believe this is the most significant wetland on the four core sites. The ephemeral rock outcrop pools at this site also seem to hold water longer than similar pools at the other sites, providing additional opportunities to observe prairie birds in areas with little cover. This site has outcrops and vegetation similar to the prior two sites and, like the SNA, it also has no trails. This site is also open to the public.

Rock Ridge WMA is a new addition to the complex. It consists of 160 acres of local genotype prairie restoration with corn and small grain food plots. It is located immediately south of Red Rock Prairie. The WMA is so new that I have only viewed the property from the road. The grass appears to be well established, but like many grasslands, it is already seeing considerable invasion by trees.

Visitors to the Petroglyphs will be expected to remain in the parking area or on the trails, while visitors to the SNA, TNC preserve, or WMA will need to find their own path

through the grasses, which generally vary from one to four feet high. Smooth brome invasion is significant on many of the properties described, resulting in a more uniform vegetative structure than may have historically occurred. While the petroglyphs site may—at times—have many visitors, you will most likely be alone if you visit the other properties. Of these properties, only the WMA is open to hunting.

The true specialties of this complex seem to be migrant species that utilize short grass prairie. This area is one of the most dependable areas in the state for Smith's Longspurs: in years when I specifically searched for this species, I managed to find it every fall. Smith's Longspur peak migration for spring is in April and for fall is in October. According to MOU records, Sprague's Pipit has been recorded in the complex twice (10-11 Oct. 2004 and 18-19 Oct. 2013). I have had seen birds that I believed to be Sprague's Pipit over the years, but I was never confident enough to submit a report.

For those visiting the area, it is my impression that Smith's Longspurs and Sprague's Pipits are best searched for in areas of short or sparse grass. One of the Sprague's Pipits was found in a hayed section of Rock Ridge SNA.

Other unexpected finds that I recall include a Rough-legged Hawk in July of 2004 and a Mountain Bluebird in the spring of 2001. In more recent years, Henslow's Sparrows are expected summer residents in some areas with taller vegetation, and the two largest concentrations of Bobolinks I have ever seen occurred on this complex during fall migration. By far, the biggest Bobolink flock I have encountered was quite recent: on August 14, 2022 there were hundreds of Bobolinks visible along the south side of Rock Ridge Prairie SNA. Flocks of 50-100 could occasionally be seen flying around inside the SNA before they dropped down into the grass, and scattered birds were continuously visible, with about 40 flushing just from the south road right-of-way. Their behavior was at times more reminiscent of a flock of Snow Buntings than Bobolinks. Most of the birds seemed to be actively searching for food.

Aside from rarities, a variety of grassland birds can be seen here year-round, whether it be meadowlarks in summer, sparrows migrating south in fall, raptors hunting in winter, or sparrows (yes, sparrows again) returning in spring.

In addition to birds, other interesting animals, including Coyote, White-tailed Jackrabbits, and Regal Fritillaries, have at times been regular in the area. As my interests have changed over the years, I have continued to visit these sites, since they hold features of interest to anyone looking to expand their knowledge of plants and invertebrates. Some are rare or have a limited distribution.

Brad Bolduan is a lifelong resident of southern Minnesota and currently serves as manager of SNAs in the southwest quarter of the state. He has a fondness for birds of the far north and has been an MOU member since 1989.

Message from the President

It is hard to believe fall migration is already upon us. Last evening, I watched a Common Nighthawk heading south. It gave its distinctive “peent” call as it passed— the sound of warm summer evenings disappearing over the horizon bound for South America. It is truly amazing what birds accomplish in the short window of the breeding season, and the literal extreme lengths that some, like the Common Nighthawk, undertake. From grasslands, wetlands, and lakes to boreal forest and bogs, Minnesota’s diverse habitat plays a vital role in this annual cycle. Habitat conservation and protection is an imperative goal made further difficult by the challenges of invasive species and climate change. All efforts, no matter how small, from planting native species in your yard to informed consumer choices, are steps in the right direction. I would like to highlight a few of the steps the MOU has recently undertaken.

In late 2021, the MOU partnered with Pheasants Forever to add more than 80 acres of wetland and grassland habitat to the Rush Wildlife Management Area in Mahnom County. A two-year restoration process began this summer with wetland revitalization and prairie seeding will be undertaken this fall. We look forward to seeing this area provide future habitat for grassland and prairie birds and will let the membership know when it is made accessible.

At the August meeting of the MOU Board of Directors, the Board voted to endorse and support as an organization the establishment of the Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initiative (MRRRI). The proposed legislation, introduced by Representative Betty McCollum, would improve water quality, restore habitat, reduce runoff pollution, and fight the spread of aquatic invasive species along this significant migratory flyway. For more information about the MRRRI: <https://mccollum.house.gov/MRRRI>.

The MOU also continues to support efforts to reduce lead pollution in our environment. As birders, we have repeatedly witnessed the detrimental effects that stray lead has on Bald Eagles, Trumpeter Swans, Common Loons, and many other species of upland, forest, and wetland wildlife. Through our membership in the Minnesota Environmental Partnership (MEP), we continue to support “Get the Lead Out” legislation at the state level. It is a welcome change to Minnesota’s hunting regulations for 2022 that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) now requires the use of non-toxic ammunition for special and disease management hunts in state parks and Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA) and for any regular hunt allowed in an SNA. We applaud this step but continue to advocate for wider bans of lead ammunition and fishing tackle.

On that note, the MOU, through the Conservation Committee and MEP, also provided comment to the U.S. Fish



Merlin, by Tom Gilde

and Wildlife Service (FWS) in support of proposed rule-making that would phase out the use of toxic ammunition and fishing tackle on selected Mid-Atlantic National Wildlife Refuges, while advocating that the U.S. FWS require the use of nontoxic ammunition and tackle on all National Wildlife Refuge lands and waters nationwide.

While these are steps that the organization has taken, I hope that each of you, as members of the MOU, will continue to be vocal about these issues as well and make efforts where you can to not only conserve, but improve, bird habitat.

In closing, I would like to share one last reminder to take in the Bell Museum’s 150th anniversary *Seeing Birds* exhibit before it closes on October 2. I also hope that I will have the opportunity to visit with many of you during the Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory’s 50th anniversary celebration and Hawk Weekend Festival (September 22-25). And if you are at the state fair, be sure to say “hello” to the volunteers staffing our booth at the DNR Building!

Happy Birding!
Michelle Terrell

Conservation Column

Midwest U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Facilities Take Steps to Reduce Bird Collisions

by Andy Forbes

As mentioned in previous articles in this newsletter, an estimated one billion birds die each year due to collisions with structures across North America. While this is a huge number and a daunting challenge to undertake, the good news is that there are lots of solutions available at a low cost to minimize if not eliminate collisions with one of the most frequent culprits: windows.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has recently started an internal effort to begin retrofitting our facilities to make them more bird friendly. Various USFWS facilities and offices submit application for grants to cover the costs each year, and the regional office awards as many as it is able. We're very pleased to have projects at eight facilities in the Midwest now underway or completed:

- Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge will treat 950 square feet of windows at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, which is located near the south shore of Lake Superior near Ashland, Wisconsin. Whittlesey Creek NWR is part of a large coastal wetland complex that was established in 1999 to protect, restore, and manage coastal wetland and spring-fed stream habitat. Over 200 species of birds have been documented in the area around the Visitor Center.
- Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge will treat 653 square feet of windows at the Bloomington Visitor Center. The project provides an excellent outreach opportunity for introducing bird-strike reduction to those who may not be aware of the issue. Refuge Manager Sarena Selbo noted, "This is a thriving urban refuge that connects our communities to wildlife in many ways, including through environmental education. This grant meets our goals of protecting migratory birds and modeling a conservation ethic to our visitors."
- The Missouri Ecological Services Field Office, the Columbia Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, and the Missouri Partners for Wildlife Office, are all housed in a single leased facility in Columbia, Missouri, and they obtained permission from the building owners to install bird-friendly window treatments to the large windows of their entire building.
- Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge in Jasper County,



USFWS intern Jessica with Bird Safe window at Ottawa NWR in Ohio, by Wendy Loya

Iowa, is a repeat winner of the challenge and will use this year's grant to treat an additional 260 square feet of windows, in addition to a similar amount treated last year. Project Leader Scott Gilje said, "With the sharp decline in grassland bird species, we had to do our part to minimize the decline and to educate the public at the same time." He added that visitors are always asking about the "dots" on the windows, which provides a perfect opportunity to talk about conservation. Scott hopes there will be a third year of the program, since they still have more than 200 windows to cover.

- The Michigan Ecological Services Field Office complex will treat 500 square feet of windows on its two-story facility. The work done this year will also provide a visual demonstration to building managers in hopes of treating even more window space in years to come at the complex, which houses other agencies as well as some private businesses.
- Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge in Ohio treated 1,140 square feet of window surface, spanning three floors. The architectural design of the building was intended to allow for an unobstructed view of Lake Erie from the third-floor observation deck on the north side of the building and to maximize natural light, but this has also made the building a hazard to birds. This project was a high priority for completion, given the refuge's location in a major migratory stopover site, as anyone who has attended the "Biggest Week in Birding" can attest. The Refuge Friends group co-sponsored the treatments, which are mix of dot grids and some beautiful bird-themed artwork.
- The Upper Mississippi River National Fish and Wildlife Refuge La Crosse District installed window treatments to 54 windows spanning 480 square feet. Refuge staff noted that window decals and bird tape were installed on the 2,000 square foot Visitor Center when it opened in 2012, but few of those designs meet the recommended two-by-four inch best practices for spacing, and some of the original treatments have peeled with age. These new treatments will replace the non-functional old ones, and provide educational opportunities to visitors.
- Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin added window treatments to 16 windows with a surface area covering about 200 square feet at their Visitor Center. The Refuge bird list boasts over 200 species on its list, most of which have been detected near the Visitor Center. Staff also created social media posts and highlighted building updates at the World Migratory Bird Day Festival to share ways people can help birds.

If you visit any of these facilities, make sure to visit and check out these retrofits for yourself. Many of these treatments are similar to those that can be applied in your home if you are interested in addressing bird collisions. You can also visit the American Bird Conservancy Glass Collisions website at <https://abcbirds.org/glass-collisions/stop-birds-hitting-windows/> to learn more as well.

Andy Forbes is Acting Assistant Regional Director for the Midwest Migratory Bird Program with USFWS and is a former member of the MOU Records Committee.



Bird Safe glass at Minnesota Valley NWR, by Wendy Loya

Savaloja Grant Report

Friends of Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge

by Donna Crider and Mark Jacobs, Friends of RLNWR

The Friends of Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge was the fortunate recipient of a 2020 Savaloja Grant to help create a self-guided birding trail in the refuge. The refuge is in Aitkin County, and because of a high concentration of migratory birds it has been designated as a Globally Important Bird Area. Our Twin Lakes Trail was chosen as the location for the self-guided tour, because its first quarter mile is ADA-accessible, and the remaining 3/4 mile passes through a variety of habitats that draw diverse bird populations throughout the year. The trail is available for hiking during spring, summer, and fall. The Rice Lake Birding Trail is intended for the novice/beginner birder. Signs will be posted at 13 habitat stops along the trail. Each stop will illustrate a bird that you might find in the habitat.

Unique to this project is the inclusion of the Ojibwe names for the chosen birds. This added an additional level of complexity to the project, but our group felt local tribal inclusion was a critical piece of the project, since this important piece of our history is in danger of being lost. The

Ojibwe have a long history at this location, and the local tribe continues to use the refuge for recreation and ricing. Language recovery and preservation is important to them, and the Friends of Rice Lake NWR hopes to help raise awareness of this through the project.

Like much of normal life, our project ground to a halt when COVID-19 hit. When we were finally able to begin moving forward again, our graphic designer was no longer available, new quotes for the project needed to be obtained, and a tribal archeological observer needed to be found. Thanks goes out to MOU for being understanding of the delays and helping us along the way.

We are in the final stages of creating signage with the help of Kollath Graphic Design of Duluth; the examples included here illustrate draft versions. We look forward to completion of the project in the fall of 2022 and celebrating a grand opening in the spring of 2023.

Thank you so very much to MOU for helping to make this project possible!

Chestnut Sided Warbler *Majiitaagozid*

Habitat – Young Upland Forest



Breeding male
Chestnut-sided
Warbler

Habitat: They are highly associated with young upland forests, resulting from logging, forest fires, or wind events. They nest in lower branches of trees/shrubs.

Prey: Their food consists of insects gleaned from foliage.

Habitat Characteristics

- **Common Trees:** densely growing Aspen, Paper Birch, Balsam Fir
- **Common Shrubs/Forbs:** Bunchberry, Beaked Hazel, Canada Mayflower

Other bird species: (associated with this habitat)

- Least Flycatcher *Wiiwiish*
- Veery *Niigaan negamod*

Scarlet Tanager *Ishkode-Bineshiinh*

Habitat – Mature Upland Hardwood Forest



Adult male
Scarlet Tanager

Habitat: Their primary habitat is large patches of mature, closed canopy hardwoods such as maples and oaks. They feed and nest high in the forest canopy.

Diet: Their food consists of insects, such as caterpillars, moths, beetles, and they will occasionally eat fruits and berries.

Habitat characteristics:

- **Common Trees:** Sugar Maple, Basswood, Red Oak
- **Common Shrubs:** Leatherwood and Large Flowered Trillium.

Other bird species (associated with this habitat)

- Ovenbird *Majjitaagozid*
- White Breasted Nuthatch *Ajidaakomeshiinh*

FRIENDS OF RICE LAKE  NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Seeking Nominations for the 2022 MOU Awards

by Susan Elliott-Barnes, Chair, Nominating Committee

If you added a rare bird to your life or state list this year, consider nominating the person who first found that bird for the Brother Theodore Voelker Award. If you know someone who has devoted many volunteer hours to help birds or birders this year, consider nominating that person for the Volunteer of the Year Award. Do you know a young birder whose involvement in birding and bird-related organizations stands out? Consider nominating that person for the Young Birder Award. How about the birder who you've admired for years, who perhaps mentored you, who has made a name for themselves in bird-related endeavors? Consider nominating that person for the Thomas S. Roberts Award. **NOW** is the time to recognize your birding hero/mentor/inspiration by nominating her/they/him for an MOU Award, to be presented at this year's MOU Paper Session in December.

You will find descriptions of the MOU awards and the names of all previous award recipients on the MOU website at <http://moumn.org/awards.html> (presentation speech-

es for the awards are also available online from 2010 and forward). Making a nomination is simple. Just provide the MOU Awards Committee with a description of the qualifications and contributions that you believe makes your nominee a worthy recipient of an award. Your written description typically forms the basis for the award presentation, and we encourage you to present the award should your nominee win. We know that not all folks like to write—or speak publicly—so please contact us if you would like assistance in either regard.

Nominations are due by October 19, and should be sent to Awards Committee Chair Susan Elliott at honeywarbler@gmail.com. Nominees do not have to be members of the MOU. Current MOU officers and/or Board members are not eligible for Awards.

The MOU, the Awards Committee, and your birding heroes, mentors, and role models all thank you in advance for your interest and input in these Awards.

Birder Bio: Thomas Burns

Tell us about yourself.

I was born and raised in St. Paul. I am married to Kathleen Burns, my spouse of 37 years and my best friend. We live in Minnetonka.

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

Birds captured my imagination as a young teen, when I saw my first Great Horned Owl land in a nearby tree. I had never seen such a large bird in person.

How did your interest expand after that first experience?

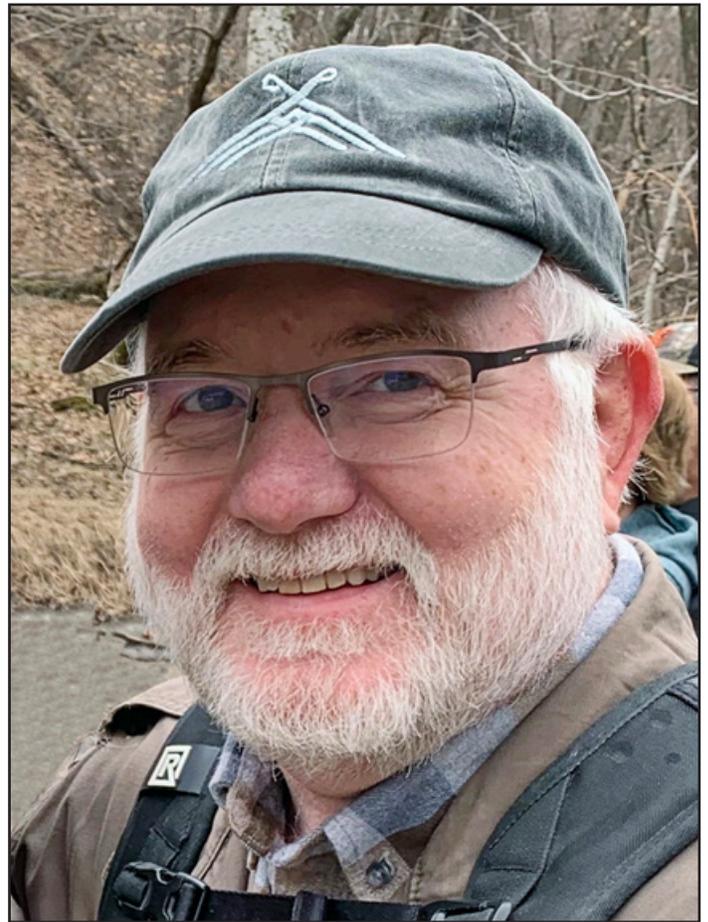
I joined the Minnesota Falconry Association as an apprentice in my twenties, but I was unable to pursue that interest due to job travel. Some years ago on a whim, Kathy and I went attended Early Birders, a weekly guided bird walk at the Eloise Butler Bird Sanctuary—and we were hooked.

What is the main attraction of birding for you?

What's not to like? Birding allows us (Kathy and I) to engage in an activity together. It also affords me give an opportunity to pursue one of my other loves, photography.

How did you originally become acquainted with the MOU?

I first became aware of the MOU from the website, and subsequently as I learned more about the organization



from birding friends.

Favorite places to bird inside or outside Minnesota?

In spring, Warbler Weekend at Hok-Si-La Municipal Park in Lake City and Frontenac State Park is a favorite birding event. Hawk Ridge is a favorite fall destination. Locally we enjoy birding at Westwood Hills Nature Center.

Favorite birding style (i.e., by yourself, with others, etc.)?

As an amateur bird photographer, I'm generally not satisfied with simply seeing a new bird, I really want to capture an image of the bird. This makes for slow travel, i.e., about a mile per hour over easy terrain.

Any advice on how to be a better birder?

Attempting to identify the birds in my photos has proven to be both challenging and rewarding.

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

I enjoy woodworking.

What new bird would you most like to see most?

The Elegant Trogon is on my Arizona wish list.



Northern Flicker, by Thomas Burns

MOU Calendar

September / October 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				SEPTEMBER 1	2	3 CNC: MN Campus Bird Hike ZVA: Quarry Hill Nature Center
4	5	6	7 SPAC: Sucker Lake: Bird Up!	8	9	10 CNC: WI Campus Bird Hike MRVAC: Birding Rapids Lake MVWR SPAC: Battle Creek Park East Migrants TRPD: Big Day at Three Rivers
11 MRVAC: Birding the Bass Ponds	12	13	14	15 MRVAC: Freeborn County Birding Days	16 MRVAC: Freeborn County Birding Days	17 BELL MUSEUM: Bird Walk with MOU IOC: Owl Prowl SPAC: William O'Brien State Park: Bird Up! MRVAC: Lebanon Hills
18 MRVAC: Birding Old Cedar Ave.	19	20	21	22	23 CNC: Bird Banding	24 SPAC: Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park: Bike & Bird ZVA: Kalmar Reservoir: Fall Sparrows
25 CNC Raptor Count & Hawk Watch	26	27 MRVAC: Red-tailed Hawk Research	28	29	30	OCTOBER 1 CNC: MN Campus Bird Hike MRVAC: Birding Rapids Lake MVWR SPAC: Carlos Avery WMA: Bike & Bird ZVA: Quarry Hill NC
2	3	4	5 ZVA: Root River Park Field Trip	6 CNC: MN Campus Owl Banding	7	8 CNC: WI Campus Bird Hike IOC: Owl Prowl MRVAC: Birding Old Cedar Ave. SPAC: Swede Hollow Park: Bird Up!
9	10	11	12	13 MRVAC: Kanabec/Pine County Birding days	14 MRVAC: Kanabec/Pine County Birding days	15 LNC: Young Birder's Club: Waterfowl Watch
16 MRVAC: Birding the Bass Ponds	17	18	19	20	21	22 MRVAC: Birding Old Cedar Ave.
23 CNC: Bird Banding	24	25 SPAC: Crex Meadows: Sandhill Cranes	26	27	28	29
30	31					



— MOU Calendar

September / October 2022

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

BELL MUSEUM

<https://www.bellmuseum.umn.edu/events/>

Now through Oct. 2, 2022: “Seeing Birds”

10 am–4 pm. Open Wednesdays–Sundays. Visit the Bell Museum and explore the beauty of birds in the Bell Museum original exhibition [Seeing Birds](#). The exhibition integrates art, science, and nature to ignite curiosity and wonder about the biology of birds, engaging visitors in an exploration of birds, their environments, and their evolution. Learn more about the world of research at the University of Minnesota and the impact of collections-based research on our world. Seeing Birds highlights the ways that we learn from and connect with nature and the environment with birds as an entry point, while also recognizing the Bell Museum’s past and present contributions to the field of ornithological research, and to habitat and bird conservation efforts. Get tickets [here](#). “Seeing Birds” special exhibition is generously supported by the Dellwood Foundation and Minnesota Ornithologists’ Union. Feel free to peruse our [general events calendar](#) where we continue to add more birding related events.



Mourning Warbler, by Todd Mitchell

Sept. 17: Guided Birding Walk with the MOU

2088 Larpenteur Ave. W, St Paul.

9 am. Meet at the main entrance of the Bell Museum.

Dress for the weather and be prepared for challenging terrain. Bring a water bottle and snack if desired. Binoculars are available for those who do not have them, but participants are encouraged to bring their own. Walks are capped at 15 participants. Registration is on a first come basis, and closes Wednesday, Sept. 14, or when full. Note: Bell Museum admission is not included.

Register [here](#):

CARPENTER NATURE CENTER

<https://carpenternaturecenter.org/events/>

Sept. 3 & Oct. 1: Minnesota Campus Bird Hike

12805 St. Croix Trail S., Hastings.

8–10 am. Learn to identify birds with local experts. Field guides and binoculars are available. Program fee: \$5.00 or free for “Friends of CNC,” Hastings High School students, and St. Croix Valley Bird Club members. 651-437-4359 for any questions.

Sept. 10 & Oct. 8: Wisconsin Campus Bird Hike

279 South Cove Road, Hudson WI.

8–10 am. Learn to identify birds with local experts. Field guides and binoculars are available. Program fee: \$5.00 or free for “Friends of CNC,” Hastings High School students, and St. Croix Valley Bird Club members. 651-437-4359 for any questions.

Sept. 23 & Oct. 23: Bird Banding

12805 St. Croix Trail S., Hastings.

8:30 am–12 pm. Donations of bird seed and suet are appreciated in lieu of a program fee. Programs outdoors and weather dependent. 651-437-4359 for any questions.

Sept. 25: Raptor Count & Hawk Watch

12805 St. Croix Trail S., Hastings.

Time TBD: check website above for updates. Learn to identify birds with local experts. Join our team of spotters to count migrants including raptors, songbirds, gulls, and other southbound birds. Come ask questions, check the count totals, or participate in the count. Binoculars will be available upon request. Free. 651-437-4359 for questions.

Oct. 6: Minnesota Campus Owl Banding

12805 St. Croix Trail S., Hastings, MN.

8–10 pm. Learn about the migration patterns of Saw-whet Owls. Join our naturalists as they venture out to band these mysterious birds. Program is weather-dependent. Program fee: FREE. 651-437-4359 for any questions.

INTERNATIONAL OWL CENTER

126 E Cedar St., Houston, MN

www.InternationalOwlCenter.org

Sept. 17: Expert-led Owl Prowls

6:30 pm-9:30 pm. Learn to identify owl calls and owl prowl etiquette during a 30–45-minute presentation before going outdoors to call for owls. Drive your vehicle, following the Owlmobile, to about 3 different locations within 10 miles of Houston to call for wild owls from the side of the road. **FEE:** \$10/member, \$15/non-member. **Max:** 30 people per program. Pre-registration required:

<https://www.internationalowlcenter.org/owlprowls.html>.

Oct. 8: Expert-led Owl Prowls

5:30-8:30 pm. Learn to identify owl calls and owl prowl etiquette during 30–45-minute presentation before going outdoors to call for owls. Drive your vehicle, following the Owlmobile, to about 3 different locations within 10 miles of Houston to call for wild owls from the side of the road. **FEE:** \$10/member, \$15/non-member. **Max:** 30 people per program. Pre-registration required:

<https://www.internationalowlcenter.org/owlprowls.html>

LOWRY NATURE CENTER

7025 Victoria Drive, Victoria, MN

<https://www.threeriversparks.org/>

Oct. 15: Young Birder's Club Waterfowl Watch

2-4 pm. Meet at the Lowry Nature Center. Join the Three Rivers Young Birder's Club as we search for migrating waterfowl near the Lowry Nature Center and Carver Park Reserve. The group will be led by naturalist Kirk Mona. Target species include Ring-necked Duck, Blue-winged Teal, and Common Mergansers. Bring your own binoculars or borrow a pair from the nature center. Reservations required. Free for club members. Register for this individual program or for the Young Birder's Club [here](#).

MN RIVER VALLEY AUDUBON CHAPTER

<https://mrvac.org/trips-events/>

NOTE: Registration required for all Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge trips [here](#).

Questions: call Craig Mandel at 952-240-7647



Blackburnian Warbler, by Trey Weaver

Sept. 11 & Oct. 16: Birding the Bass Ponds

8–10:30 am. Meet at Bass Ponds Trailhead, 2501 E. 86th, Bloomington. Explore some of the best Refuge units for bird watching in the fall season. We will spend time on these walks searching for birds only seen on the Refuge during migration. We will study the different species of birds and learn about some other locations during the Fall migration. Birders of all skill levels are welcome to attend these walks. Bring along your binoculars, favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather.

Sept. 18, Oct. 8 & 22: Birding Old Cedar Ave.

8–10:30 am. Meet Cedar Ave. Trailhead, 9551 Old Cedar Ave. S., Bloomington. Description: Explore some of the best Refuge units for bird watching in the Fall Season. We will spend time on these walks searching for birds only seen on the Refuge during migration. We will study the different species of birds and learn about some other locations to search for birds during the Fall migration. Birders of all skill levels are welcome to attend these walks. Bring along your binoculars, favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather.

Sept. 10 & Oct. 1: Birding Rapids Lake

8–10:30 am. Meet at Rapids Lake Trailhead, 15865 Rapids Lake Rd., Carver. Description: Explore some of the best Refuge units for bird watching in the Fall Season. We will spend time on these walks searching for birds only seen on the Refuge during migration. We will study the different species of birds and learn about some other locations to search for birds during the Fall migration. Birders of all skill levels are welcome to attend these walks. Bring along your binoculars, favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather.



Northern Harrier, by Richard Gotz

Sept. 15 & 16: Freeborn County Birding Days

Meet at 7 am. With two days of birding in Freeborn County, we will have plenty of time to bird many of the key locations in the county: Myre Big Island State Park, Wildwoods, Arrowhead and Saint Nicholas County Parks, plus a few WMAs and wastewater treatment plants. Contact Craig Mandel to register for this field trip: 952-240-7647.

Sept. 17: Birding Lebanon Hills Regional Park

8 am. Meet at Jensen Lake picnic area, 1350 Carriage Hills Dr. just off Pilot Knob Road, Eagan. We will search for fall migrants on some of the back trails. Moderate effort. No reservations needed. Contact: Steve Weston sweston2g@gmail.com

Sept. 27: “Research on Minnesota’s Red-tailed Hawks,” Alexandra Pesano, University of Minnesota Duluth

7 pm. Note: *Starting in September, monthly meetings will be held in person again at the MM Valley National Wildlife Refuge. We will continue to have virtual meetings during the winter months, so that we can book speakers who would be unable to present in person.* Meet at the MVNWR Bloomington Visitor Center, at 3815 American Blvd. E., Bloomington. Accessible after a short walk from the METRO Blue Line (Hiawatha Light Rail) at American Blvd. A brief business meeting is followed by the featured presentation. Details: Duluth has been a hot spot for diverse but not well-studied types of Red-tailed Hawks. Utilizing microsatellite markers and satellite transmitters, we’ve been able to increase the understanding of the geographical origins and subspecies classification of dark-morph plumaged birds and the *B. j. abieticola* subspecies. Contact: Steve Weston sweston2g@gmail.com

Oct. 13 & 14: Kanabec & Pine County Birding Days

Meet at 7 am. On this two-day trip, we will explore both Kanabec and Pine counties. We will check area lakes in both counties and a couple wastewater treatment plants in Pine County. With luck we will turn up some unusual waterfowl and, in the parks, and WMAs, we will search sparrows and other late migrants. Contact Craig Mandel to register for this field trip: 952-240-7647.

ST PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

NOTE: Be sure to look for further information on these birding trips [here](#).

Sept. 7: Sucker Lake: Bird Up!

7:30 am -9:30 am. See [Bird Up!](#) for more information on Saint Paul Audubon’s new more informal version of birding events, Bird Up! in which everyone will be responsible for finding and identifying the birds. Convener: Jane Braun jane@promotional.com. Meet by the picnic shelters at the parking lot on the north end of Sucker Lake, 4500 Rice Street, Vadnais Heights. The entrance is on the east side of Rice St. about 50 yards south of Hwy 96. Go right/south at the circle in the parking lot. Difficulty level: Easy; approximately 1.7 miles on level ground.

Sept. 10: Battle Creek Park East: Fall Migrants & Grassland Goldenrod

9-11 am. **Description:** Bird the western edge of the grassland to hear and see migrating fall warblers, sparrows, and hawks, along with the early fall colors of the grassland. **Meet** in the parking lot of Battle Creek Park, 2301 Lower Afton Rd., Maplewood. From McKnight Rd. turn east onto Lower Afton Rd., drive 0.2 mi, turn left into South Battle Creek Park parking lot. Leader: John Zakelj 651-239-4119 jzakelj@yahoo.com

Sept. 17: William O’Brien State Park: Bird Up!

8:30-10:30 am. Meet at the park Visitor Center, 16821 O’Brien Trail N., Marine on St Croix. **NOTE** – Annual or Daily MN State Park Pass required. Convener: Greg Burnes gburnes@comcast.net 612-205-3071. Difficulty: Moderate, wood chip and sand trails, some ups and downs. About 2.5 – 3 miles. Restrooms at Visitor Center and also about halfway at campgrounds. See description on SPAS here [Bird Up!](#)

Sept. 24: Vadnais-Snail Lakes Regional Park: Bike & Bird

8 am-12 pm. Discover the fun of birding from a bicycle on several miles of mostly level, paved, multi-use trails that connect two lakes in Shoreview: Grass, and Snail, both of which are prime birding locations for Ramsey County. Landscape here is varied and includes lakes, woods, wetlands, and open grassland. **Meet** in the beach/boat launch parking lot at Snail Lake, 4191 Snail Lake Blvd., Shoreview. [Map](#) Bring bicycle, helmet, binoculars, snacks, and water. Registration limited to 8 participants. Contact Leader: Sherry Gray sherrygray@yahoo.com



Oct. 1: Carlos Avery WMA: Bike & Bird

8:30 am-12:30 pm. Discover the fun of birding from a bicycle on several miles of level gravel roads that connect varied habitat in this large WMA near Wyoming. Carlos Avery is a prime birding location for Anoka and Chisago counties. Landscape includes lakes, small woods, wetlands, and open grasslands. Meet in the Carlos Avery North Loop Parking Area where 205th Ave. NE meets Wyoming Rd., 9067-7801 205th Ave. NE, Wyoming. To Bring: bicycle, helmet, binoculars, snacks, lunch, and water. Recommended: *A bike that handles gravel roads, or a mountain bike*. Limited to 8 participants. Contact Leader: Sherry Gray sherrygray@yahoo.com to register.

Oct. 8: Swede Hollow Park: Bird Up!

9-11 am. See [Bird Up!](#) for more information on Saint Paul Audubon's new more informal version of birding events, Bird Up! in which everyone will be responsible for finding and identifying the birds. Meet at Swede Hollow, 622 Beaumont St, St. Paul. Park on street or off-street parking available at the Hope Community Academy (located in the old Hamm's Brewery Building) at 720 Payne Ave, St. Paul. Easy to moderate difficulty, approximately 1.5 miles. Includes both uphill and downhill paved pathway. Conventor: Kathy Sidles 651-233-6804 kesid@aol.com.

Oct. 25: Crex Meadows SWA: Sandhill Cranes

4 pm-8:15 pm. Since historic times, Greater Sandhill Cranes have congregated by the thousands every autumn evening in the marshes and ponds now called Crex Meadows SWA, located on the north side of Grantsburg, WI. People likewise gather to witness the sight of seemingly never-ending strands and haunting sounds as the birds seek and settle in to shelter for the night. For full details on when and where to meet for this field trip go to: [Crex Meadows](#). Bring binoculars and a scope if possible. Dress for cooling temperatures during the evening. Consider bug repellent, sunscreen, water, car supper or snack. Group will gather in the parking lot for basic information by the leaders with Q and A. Register with leaders Louise Eidsmoe 651-231-0453 eidsmoel@comcast.net and Chase Davies 651-246-9754 RockyBirder@gmail.com.

THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT

<https://www.threeriversparks.org/page/big-year-birds>

Sept. 10: Big Day at Three Rivers: All Three Rivers Parks

7 am -5 pm. Gather your birding friends and join Three Rivers Park District for the Three Rivers' Big Day! Count how many different species your team of friends can identify throughout our parks between 7 am and 5 pm. A Big Day Count is a team effort in which the primary objectives are: (1) to identify as many bird species as possible

during a single calendar day; (2) to strive to have all team members identify all species recorded and (3) to have a fun day birding and exploring in Three Rivers Parks. For more information go to: [Three Rivers Big Day](#). Go here to [Register](#).

ZUMBRO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

<https://zumbrovalleyaudubon.org/calendar.html>

Sept. 3: Quarry Hill Nature Center: Monthly Bird Walk

9-10:30 am. Meet: NOTE LOCATION CHANGE: WEST ENTRANCE of Quarry Hill Park located at 2100 9th St. NE: [see this map](#). Leaders: Terry & Joyce Grier. Description: The Oak Savanna area of Quarry Hill is full of native blooming plants and butterflies at this time of year so we're moving our walk up there for this month's walk. We also hope to see early migrating warblers and other birds like Indigo Buntings, Yellow-throated Vireos and more. Bring binoculars if you have them. Dress for the weather. Stay for any length of time. Free and open to the public; no registration required. Paths in this area are not paved; be prepared for uneven ground.

Sept. 24: Kalmar Reservoir: Fall Sparrow walk

8 am. Late September and early October are great times to look for migrating sparrows. We hope to see White-crowned, Lincoln's, White-throated, Savannah, Vesper sparrows and with a little luck we may pick up Nelson's, LeConte's and Harris's sparrows as well. Meet in the lower parking lot on the east side of the Kalmar Reservoir (East Landfill Reservoir) just off 19 St. NW and Valleyview Ct.—about 2 miles west of the Rochester Athletic Club. See this map: [Kalmar Reservoir](#). Leader: Jerry Pruett. Bring water-proof footwear as the grass will probably be quite wet.

Oct. 1: Quarry Hill Nature Center: Monthly Bird Walk

9-10:30am. Meet by the Nature Center entrance of the [Quarry Hill Nature Center](#). Leaders: Terry & Joyce Grier. Description: Join us on a casual walk thru Quarry Hill Park. Bring binoculars if you have them. Dress for the weather. Stay for any length of time. Free and open to the public; no registration required.

Oct. 5: Root River Park Field Trip

9 am-12 pm. Meet at [Root River County Park](#) just south of Rochester near Simpson. Description: Hike the 2-mile circle loop trail to look for late migrants, fall plants and more. This park has good diverse habitat for a wide variety of birds. Leader: Sandy Hokanson. Walk will be rescheduled if it's raining. Trails can be slippery if wet; good footwear is recommended.

Summary of MOU Board Meeting

August 6, 2022

by *Kathrynne Baumtrog, Recording Secretary*

These are preliminary, pending approval at the next Board meeting.

Present: Michelle Terrell, Dick King, Justin Watts, Jennifer Vieth, Susan Barnes-Elliot, Kate Kelnberger, Cindy Smith, Ann Kessen, Gerald Hoekstra, Carrol Henderson, David Cahlander, Peter Nichols, Kathrynne Baumtrog.

Absent: Anthony Hertz, Garrett Wee, Kara Snow, Liz Stanley, Mark Lystig, Bob Janssen, Tom Tustison

Minutes from March 12, 2022 meeting were approved

Reports

Treasurer's Report (Ann Kessen)

A copy of the report was distributed to the board members prior to the meeting.

Ann noted that the Operations Budget is \$7,000 less than the amount approved for FY 2022. One reason is that PayPal increased its fee for transactions. Ann will check to how this is billed, and at what frequency.

\$750.00 for shelving units to house MOU records at Carpenter Nature Center has not yet been spent.

Jennifer Vieth asked about the printing budget. Printed materials more than half of the budget is spent \$400 of \$700. The number of planners sold was fewer than last year and resulted in almost \$5,000 less than budgeted.

Ann noted that the Ameriprise account is down and is now less than \$300,000.

Acceptance of the report moved and approved.

Membership report (Cindy Smith)

A copy of the report was distributed to the board members prior to the meeting.

We have 50 new members, 29 of which came in the last few months.

Gerry Hoekstra asked about a mailing glitch that occurred with the membership database. This glitch missed approximately 125 members and of those 60 did renew their membership. Dave Cahlander stated that it was a code error.

Cindy informed the board that the postcards were not used for renewal reminders with the members. We do not have email addresses for 10% of members. Cindy does reach out but not all contact info is available. Cindy asked that we remind new members to make the membership check out to the MOU.

Kathrynne Baumtrog asked about reaching out at events that support MOU, such as MBW birding trips, and ask participants to join MOU.

Michelle reported that three memberships were sent this spring to the Bell's old mailing address. Justin noted that a potential source of this membership address is the allbirds.org website. David said he could take that site down.

Conservation Committee (Carrol Henderson)

Information regarding US Fish & Wildlife use non-toxic ammo and the Grasslands Conservation Act was distributed to board members prior to the meeting.

Susan Barnes-Elliot moved that Carrol send a statement on behalf of the MOU to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service supporting the use of non-toxic ammunition and tackle. Board members noted that MOU has hunters and anglers among its members. Carrol agreed to draft a statement. Moved, seconded, and approved.

Kathrynne Baumtrog suggested that we blast our social media accounts as well.

Education Committee (Jennifer Vieth and Kate Kelnberger)

We have 52 volunteers covering all but three shifts for the MN State Fair.

Artist John Jonas is providing three posters for the MN State Fair booth: Owls of Minnesota, Sparrows of Minnesota, and Warblers of Minnesota.

MN DNR agreed to pay for the MOU access to the State Fair tickets.

Hawk Ridge Anniversary – MOU will have an outdoor and indoor table.

The Raptor Release is cancelled in 2022 due to Bird Flu.

Spring Primer is in planning stages.

Carpenter Nature Center will hold the Raptor Count this fall TBD.

Michelle Terrell noted that Bill Tefft is working on a list of potential Youth Mentors for MOU.

Awards Committee (Susan Barnes-Elliot)

Susan informed the Board that she will be stepping down after the Paper Session. She will continue to serve on the Education Committee.

The timeline for award is the same as in the past and will be printed in the *Minnesota Birding* newsletter.

Information and Technology (presented by Michelle Terrell for Liz Stanley, who was not able to attend the meeting) Liz has asked for funding to hire help to finish the website and database redesign. This would require about \$100,000, as discussed in 2019. There will be a specific meeting of the Board in late August to discuss this matter. Ann Kessen stated that the 2019 amount was a ballpark figure, and that it would remove our budget cushion given recent investment losses.

Other Business

1. Michelle Terrell reported that Garrett Wee is stepping down at year end as Field Trip Leader.
2. A motion to support Hawk Ridge's 50th Anniversary was discussed prior to this meeting via email. The Board voted to support Hawk Ridge with a \$1000 benefit and \$500 to fund a Birding Field Trip. There

are three field trips to choose from. The Board selected the one led by Laura Erickson to Park Point, noting that she was the 2020 Roberts Award Recipient. The printed material from the MN State Fair can be used at the table for public relations.

3. Michelle Terrell asked that MOU endorse the Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initiative. Moved, seconded, and approved.
4. Affiliate Bird Club Membership Ad Hoc Committee (Justin Watts). Justin is drafting a proposal and looking for members to serve on this committee. Dick King suggested that we invite and involve birding club affiliates at the Paper Session to work on being inclusive. Justin agreed that this would give these groups a voice.

Next meeting:

The Board will continue to meet via Zoom format in order to make it easier for all members to participate. Next meeting will be Thursday, December 1, 2022, at 7–9 p.m.



Northern Parula, by Allan Meadows

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.

Soma Angelus, *Richfield, MN*
Mary Brown, *Hopkins, MN*
Matthew Hoberg, *Plymouth, MN*
Laura McCarten, *St. Paul, MN*
Mike Osmond, *Marshall, MN*
Russell Stewart, *Duluth, MN*
Sally Stout, *Knife River, MN*

Save the Date!

MOU Paper Session
Saturday, December 3, 2022

North Star Ballroom,
University of Minnesota
St. Paul Student Center
Watch for additional information
and announcements on the MOU website,
via social media, and in the
next issue of *MN Birding*.



Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

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

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Web: <http://moumn.org>

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The Mission of the M.O.U.

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

MOU Officers

Michelle Terrell, *President*
Justin Watts, *Vice President*
Kathrynne Baumtrog, *Recording Secretary*
Cindy Smith, *Membership Secretary*
Ann Kessen, *Treasurer*
Richard King, *Past President*

Editor of *MN Birding*

Gerald Hoekstra
Gene Bauer, *Calendar Editor*

Designer of *MN Birding*

Thomas Benjamin Hertzell

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Conservation Chair: conservation@moumn.org

Grants: grants@moumn.org

Youth Mentorship: mentorship@moumn.org

Field Trips: fieldtrips@moumn.org

All other MOU functions: mou@moumn.org

MOU web site: <http://moumn.org>

MOU Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MNornithU/>

MOU Membership: New/Renewal

Name _____

E-mail _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

County _____

Membership Categories

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth (under 18) | \$15.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign (including Canada) | U.S. \$35.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$35.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting | \$75.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | \$100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life, single | \$500.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life, joint | \$750.00 |

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

Please make a contribution to the Savaloja Grants

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

Amount: \$ _____