



# KINGFISHER



December 2006

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 55 No. 8

Representing the National Audubon Society in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

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## A Note from the President

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### Sharing Bird Stories

Last month's article dealt with bird stories and a request for the same. This month, I would like to share some stories with you.

On a recent trip to the North Shore, we had the pleasure of observing some Ring-billed Gulls landing in a Mountain Ash and eating the berries. This is behavior that we had never seen before: how could a bird with webbed feet land in a tree? Beyond that, it was a very windy day and the branches were in constant motion. Unusual behavior, backed up by a photo (*below*).



On that same trip, we also had an encounter with some red squirrels. We were walking along a trail when several red squirrels started chattering around us. At first we thought they were telling us something, but then a chase started. More chatter, followed by more chasing. When a squirrel almost ran over my foot, it dawned on us that the extended conversations between the little critters had very little to do with us.

Sharing stories with others—in most cases—gains a return story or so. We shared the above two stories with a friend of ours and in return we heard about his encounter with two Pileated Woodpeckers. He spotted one on a dead tree and then another flew into a hole on the same tree. As it disappeared into a hole, the other flew off and our friend waited. The hole bird didn't reappear.

*continued on page four...*

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## December Program

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### THE DAY THE CONDOR CAME TO TOWN

Dr. Julia Ponder is not only a lover of raptors, she's also a person they can turn to for help. A doctor of veterinary medicine, she is responsible for operations of the University of Minnesota's world-renowned Raptor Center. In that role she oversees the medical and surgical clinic that treats more than 800 raptors each year. She has served at the Center since 1998, moving here from Texas. There she had a private practice in small animal medicine, having earned her veterinary degree from Texas A&M University in 1984.

In her presentation, she will describe how she and Center staff nursed a one-year-old California condor back to health. One of only four condors hatched in the wild, it had somehow broken a wing. It was flown to the Center last November from its home in the Grand Canyon. Dr. Ponder and her staff were successful in healing the big bird and in January it was released back to the wild. It carries a radio transmitter and, at last report, continues to thrive. Dr. Ponder will describe the challenges of working with the youngster with his nine-and-a-half foot wingspan. Her presentation will include a short video highlighting the effort, which attracted interest around the planet.

As noted on the Raptor Center's website, the California condor is North America's largest land bird. A highly endangered species, its population reached a low of 22 in 1982 due to lead poisoning and habitat degradation. Since then, captive breeding programs have been established at the World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise, Idaho, the San Diego Wild Animal Park, the Los Angeles Zoo, and the Oregon Zoo. Release efforts by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have resulted in a slow recovery for condors. There are currently 274 California condors in the world, 127 in the wild in Arizona and California.

***Join us for coffee and cookies***

***before the meeting***

***Tuesday, December 5***

***at 7:00 p.m.***

***Mayflower Church***

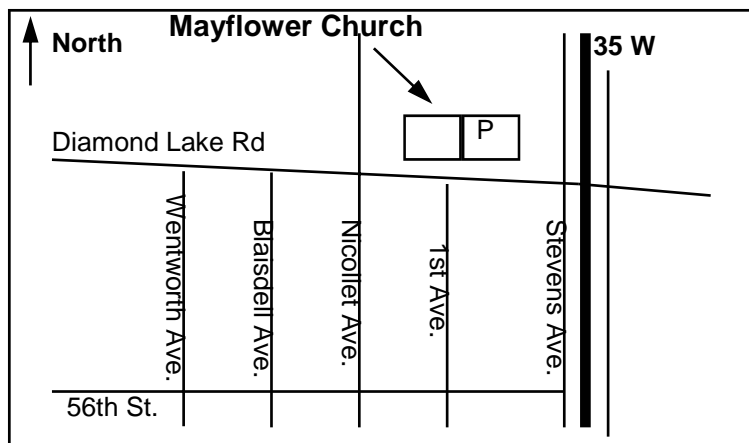
## Come to Our Next Program!

**DATE:** Tuesday, December 5, 2006

"Condors" by Dr. Julia Ponder

**TIME:** Program at 7:00 p.m.

**AT:** Mayflower Church, 35W & Diamond Lake Road—map below



## Field Trip Chair Still Needed

The chapter needs someone to help set up the trips that helped launch the organization over 70 years ago. This is an opportunity to go to the birding spots *you* want to visit!

The Field Trip Chair need not be a birding expert, but is responsible for setting up the trips and contacting leaders to guide them. The Chair also arranges the publicity for the trip by writing brief descriptions of the trips for the Kingfisher and any other publication that is appropriate. Finally, the Chair reviews the trips with the leader after they are held.

Please let John Arthur know that you would like to become our new Field Trip Chair.

## Electronic Kingfisher

SUBSCRIBE TO THE KINGFISHER  
ELECTRONICALLY!

Contact Jerry Bahls at [bahls001@tc.umn.edu](mailto:bahls001@tc.umn.edu)

## Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis - 2006-2007 Contacts

President	John Arthur	952-931-0819	<a href="mailto:jarthur@visi.com">jarthur@visi.com</a>
Vice President	Jim Egge	612-827-7629	<a href="mailto:aubullet2@yahoo.com">aubullet2@yahoo.com</a>
Treasurer	Ernie Gunderson	612-721-9103	
Secretary	Susan Hoffman		
Board Member	Martha Allen		
Board Member	Amy Carlson		
Board Member/Conservation	Jerry Bahls	763-572-2333	<a href="mailto:bahls001@tc.umn.edu">bahls001@tc.umn.edu</a>
Board Member	Fran Duritsa	612-822-4822	<a href="mailto:fduritsa@usfamily.net">fduritsa@usfamily.net</a>
Board Member/Publicity	Paul Fusco		<a href="mailto:iamps2001@yahoo.com">iamps2001@yahoo.com</a>
Board Member	Ron Kroese	651-646-0088	<a href="mailto:rkroese@mcknight.org">rkroese@mcknight.org</a>
Board Member	Marianna Tiller	612-935-2756	
Board Member	2 open positions		
Bluebird Recovery, Lending Library	Dorene Scriven	612-922-4586	<a href="mailto:scriv001@tc.umn.edu">scriv001@tc.umn.edu</a>
Field Trips Chair	<open>	Membership	<open>
Field Trips Leader/Park Feeders	Tom Mahan	763-588-5440	<a href="mailto:mahan-mail@att.net">mahan-mail@att.net</a>
<i>Kingfisher</i> Editor	Marcia Marshall	612-871-6611	<a href="mailto:marciamarshall2comcast.net">marciamarshall2comcast.net</a>
<i>Kingfisher</i> Editor	Kim Halek	763-427-8656	<a href="mailto:mnvogelfrau05@visi.com">mnvogelfrau05@visi.com</a>
Sales	Jean Kelley	763-862-1421	
Social	Helen Weides	612-824-6268	
Audubon Chapter Minneapolis	<a href="http://www.geocities.com/audubon.geo">www.geocities.com/audubon.geo</a>		MOU Rare Bird Alert: 763-780-8890
Audubon Minnesota	<a href="http://www.audubon.org/chapter/mn">www.audubon.org/chapter/mn</a>		
National Audubon Society	<a href="http://www.audubon.org">www.audubon.org</a>		

## *Great Backyard Bird Count*

Mark your calendars for the tenth  
annual Great Backyard Bird Count,  
February 16-19, 2007.

We'd like to make this the best  
GBBC ever and could use your help  
in spreading word about this event.  
It's fun and helps everyone learn  
more about birds.

If you represent an Audubon chap-  
ter and want to promote GBBC,  
send an email to [aeng-lish@audubon.org](mailto:aeng-lish@audubon.org).

If you'd like to spread the word  
about the Great Backyard Bird  
Count more generally, consider  
joining us as a Great Backyard Bird  
Count  
Ambassador.

# Minnesota River Valley

## Field Trips

**Dec 2** 9:00-4:00 Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Paper Session

**Dec 4** 7:00 am Meeker/Wright Counties Birding Day, Craig Mandel 952-546-3407

**Dec 10** 2:00 pm Winter Birds at Black Dog Lake, Craig Mandel 952-546-3407

**Dec 16** 7:30 am Christmas Bird Count, Chaska/Victoria, George Skinner 952-936-0811

**Dec 16** 6:00 pm Winter Potluck Dinner/Christmas Bird Rpt. Diamond Lake Church. Craig Mandel 952-546-3407

**Dec 17** 7:30 am Bird banding, Springbrook Nature Center, Fridley

**Dec 17** 7:00 am Christmas Bird Count, Cedar Creek NHA. Hwy 65/Crosstown Blvd. Steve Weston 612-978-3993

**Jan 14-16** 6:00 pm SE Minnesota Birding, Caledonia. \$15/\$25. Craig Mandel 952-546 3407

*Please contact the trip leader for further information.*



## **Audubon Adventures**

Audubon Adventures is an environmental education program for children in grades 3 to 6. Developed by professional environmental educators, Audubon Adventures presents basic, scientifically-accurate facts about birds, wildlife, and their habitats. It comes packaged as a Classroom Kit (serving 32 students) or an Individual Kit (serving 1 student). The program is used by classroom teachers, after-school program coordinators, special education instructors, language arts teachers, and home-schoolers.

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis has a limited number of available for interested educators. Please contact Jim Egge at 612-827-7629 or Jerry Bahls at 763-572-2333 or e-mail bahls001@tc.umn.edu.



## **FOR SALE: BOOKS and other holiday Gifts**

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis offers books and other merchandise for sale at its Program meetings in time for Christmas

We offer many of the most popular Field Guides for sale!

We offer Bluebird Recovery items for sale!

We offer Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis patches and pins as well as National Audubon Society pins.

All items are offered at *discount* prices.

This month's featured book is –

### **Carroll Henderson's *Wild About Birds Feeding Guide***

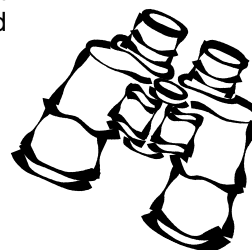
## **Audubon Adventures Placements**

Last year's Fall Appeal funds were designated to be used for education and partially for financing the placement of Audubon Adventures in Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis' schools. Because of the timing of the Appeal it was difficult to get them placed in the schools last year. Teachers had already established their curriculum. This year, under the leadership of Jim Egge, we started earlier and have already placed six in schools and three are in process of being placed. We also have two to three additional prospects; this will bring us close to our annual goal. We again thank those who contributed to our Fall Appeal last year to help make this possible.

## **PLAN A FIELD TRIP**

Chapter Field Trip Leader Don Wanschura would like to arrange field trips for individuals or for small groups. You can choose your own trip location or let Don suggest a 'hot spot.' Don has all-around identification expertise: birds, wildflowers, or edible wild plants. Just contact him to discuss date, time, and location.

Don Wanschura 612-866-3276  
djw1@tcinternet.net



continued from page one...

An inspection of the other side of the tree revealed that the hole went through the trunk and came out the other side, as had the bird.

Others have shared experiences with crows and ravens that demonstrate the birds' above-average intelligence. Legends are written about crows and ravens and the Pacific Northwest folklore is filled with them. Our December "Bird(s) of the Month" are crows and ravens, and Amy Carlson should have a few stories to share about them.

Some of the crow and raven stories are more personal. Another friend of ours shared a story about watching ravens leading wolves to a downed deer. I was at a lecture by Jim Brandenburg where he talked about the "symbiosis" between wolves and ravens, how the ravens follow the wolves to a kill and also act as a warning of approaching danger to the wolves. Amazing, adaptable birds.

Not all stories are about birds, although with other Audubon members, birds are a frequent topic.

We often use stories to explain how we arrived where we are today or to demonstrate a state of mind. I give great credit to a Harris' Sparrow for my introduction to digital photography. One visited our yard for a few days a little over five years ago. I was unfamiliar with that species, but Pamela had identified it. And, being in the yard, we wanted to record the event. The camera had no film, and I didn't want to go out and buy any. A digital camera was the answer. So, within a few days of the sighting we had a digital camera, but the bird didn't return. That is, until this fall. We had a Harris' Sparrow in the yard along with some White-throated Sparrows. They stayed for a few days but never posed for a good photo (out-of-focus, not-worthy-of-printing photos, YES, but nothing worth sharing). We hope they had a good stay while visiting our small suburban yard on their way south.

So share your stories with others; the return stories may be a pleasant surprise. If you have stories that you would like to share, send them via e-mail or talk with us at a meeting. Sharing could even include presenting a "Bird of the Month" at a meeting.

—John Arthur

More about Crows for you and your youngsters:

## Crows

A Carolrhoda Nature Watch

Book

by

Sylvia A. Johnson

A member of Audubon Chapter of  
Minneapolis

Look for it at your local library  
or buy it on Amazon.com



# Bird of the Month

Presented by -

## Amy Carlson

The December  
Birds of the Month  
will be  
Crows and  
Ravens!

Learn about these  
clever birds at our  
meeting  
December 5th



(photo by Laura

Erickson)

## National Audubon Society's 107<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Bird Count

Our Chapter will participate in National Audubon Society's 107<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Bird Count. There were 2,060 Christmas Bird Counts conducted in 2005 with a total of 61,579,401 birds counted! Be part of the largest citizens' science project around

Newcomers are MOST welcome and will be assigned to a team with a seasoned birder.

**DATE: Saturday, December 16, 2006**

**TIME: 7:30 am—4:00 pm**

**MEET: Springbrook Nature Center**

**100- 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW, Fridley**

A fee of five dollars will be assessed by the National Audubon Society. Please bring a food item to share for our potluck luncheon that day.

Contact Siah St, Claire at  
763-572-3588 or stclairs@ci.fridley.mn.us

OR

Mary Ellen Vetter at  
763-561-761 or mevetter@minter.net

*"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he  
finds it attached to the rest of the world."*

—John Muir

## "HOW SHOULD I DISPOSE OF OTC OR RX MEDICATIONS?"

Both prescription and over-the-counter drugs should be disposed of as hazardous waste at the appropriate facilities.

The website <http://www.earth911.org> will allow you to search by zip code for nearby hazardous waste disposal centers. Some local pharmacies and hospitals have prescription medicine take-back programs, where they will collect and dispose of the medicines for you.

Throwing over-the-counter or prescription medicines into the trash or toilet can damage the environment. These substances are not filtered by sewage treatment plants and can harm the bacteria used by the treatment plants to kill hazardous microorganisms. A recent U.S. Geological Survey found pharmaceutical contaminants in U.S. lakes and streams, including nonprescription drugs in 81% of the waterbodies tested, antibiotics in 48%, and other prescription drugs in 32%.

These drugs pose a threat to birds and other wildlife that rely on these water sources, and cause risks to us as well.

—from ASK AUDUBON

## Now's the Time to Stock Up Your Winter Bird Feeder

Did you know that over 100 North American bird species supplement their natural diets with birdseed, suet, fruit, and nectar obtained from bird feeders?

Bird feeding can benefit birds and also provides great bird watching from your own backyard. The obvious time to feed birds is in the winter when natural food supplies are scarce; however, additional species visit feeders during the spring and fall migrations, and also during summer while nesting.

To keep birds coming back to your feeders in any season, provide them with the following three essential elements:

- \* a variety of quality seed
- \* fresh water for drinking and bathing
- \* ample cover, preferable provided by native plants. Native plants also provide nesting sites and a source of natural food

Keep in mind that bird feeders also present potential risks such as window collisions, predation, and exposure to disease. See the Audubon website for topics and tips for safely attracting and feeding birds.

—from Audubon.org

## Magpie

Spirited, jaunty  
confidence.  
Black-burnished,  
iridescent coat.  
Splashes of white.  
Inquisitive eye,  
poised to—  
get-away-with-  
what-ever-it-can.  
Survivor!  
—Clem Nagel

—Written while at Denali National Park. The magpie had landed near our cabin.

## A WILDERNESS WORTH SAVING

Landscape photography by Jeff Jones  
of the *Arctic National Wildlife Refuge*

LOCATION: Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota

DATES: November 4 through December 3, 2006

HOURS: T-F from 9-5, Sat. 10-5 and Sun. noon-5

"A Wilderness Worth Saving" is a unique collaboration between the Alaska Coalition and photographer, Jeff Jones.

Jeff's commitment to saving the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and his understanding of nature have enabled him to capture the grandeur, fragility and sense of place that is this beautiful gem of America's wilderness.

Photography will be for sale and a portion of the exhibit's sales will benefit the Alaska Coalition in ongoing work to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

***Come for the Gallery - Stay for a Show***



Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis  
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Minneapolis MN 55403

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KINGFISHER  
DECEMBER 2006



**National Audubon Society**  
Chapter Membership Application

*Yes, I'd like to join!* Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and my local chapter at the special introductory rate of \$20! Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.

*Yes, I'd like to join!* As a senior citizen or student, I am able to join for only \$15!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**Send this application and make check payable to:**

National Audubon Society  
Chapter Membership Data Center  
PO Box 51001  
Boulder, CO 80322-1001



**LOCAL CHAPTER**  
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis  
PO BOX 3801  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
Chapter Code: **M02**  
**7XCHA**

**Calendar of Events**

**NOVEMBER**

18 MRV Field Trip

**DECEMBER**

- 2 MOU paper session
- 4 MRV Meeker/Wright Birding
- 10 MRV winter birds
- 16 Winter Bird Count
- 17 Bird Banding at Springbook NC

Board meetings are held every month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 7:15 pm at the Lund's store on Lake Street just west of Hennepin in Minneapolis (except in July).

All are welcome to programs, trips and board meetings. Call John Arthur or Jerry Bahls for details!