



# KINGFISHER



December 2007

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 56 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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### Middle of Year's End

It's December and for most of us, the end of the year is close. But for the chapter, the year is only half over. Our fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. This puts December squarely in the middle. We schedule eight meetings per year. After the December meeting, we have four meetings left.

Why am I writing this? I have been on the board for many years and my second year as President. This is also the middle of my last year as chapter President.

As I move out of the position, I would like to look at the incoming board and have a good feel for the future of the chapter. We have four open positions on the board. Consider this an opportunity to give something back. During the next few regular meetings, current board members will be speaking and asking for people to help out.

We have an opening for Field Trip Chair. We need help in just leading trips as well as someone to coordinate the trip leaders. In the last year, we have had to point members to the Minnesota River Valley chapter for their trips. They have fewer members and yet lead 50-60 trips per year. In the past, this chapter organized bird-watching bus trips. We have the potential to bring the chapter back to those days.

Being a board member is not as scary as it sounds. As board members, we plan meetings, discuss possible topics for meetings and plan for future activities.

Writing for the newsletter is another function that anyone can participate in. Not only board members are allowed to submit articles—anyone can submit articles about birding, restoring habitat or anything that might be of interest to the membership.

Fund-raising is another important activity the board engages in. The Fall Appeal is a major part of that.

**This chapter is the largest in the region.** We have the potential to do great things; let's make a go of it. Please consider giving some time back to the chapter.

—John Arthur

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## December Program

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### On the Wings of a Dove

by Dennis Kuhn

Peace. Love. Fidelity, the Holy Spirit. One bird symbolizes all four—the white dove. Or, more accurately, the albino racing pigeon. At the Minneapolis Audubon Chapter's December program, you'll have the opportunity to learn all about this bird loved around the world since time immemorial, and be able to get up close and personal with several of them.

Presenter Dennis Kuhn of Belle Plaine has been breeding, showing, and racing pigeons for twenty years. He first becoming captivated by them as kid in grade school upon viewing a film by Walt Disney, "The Miracle of the Pigeon."

Today he owns six hundred birds, and when not training and racing them—the best of them can return home from as far as 600 miles in a single day, traveling at up to 40 miles per hour—he makes part of his living attending gatherings, such as weddings and funerals, and releasing a few of his white homing pigeons.

Dennis will show a video about "racing homers," as they are called, and talk about his experiences in racing and showing birds. He will also bring along some of his racers, and examples of other favorite pigeon breeds, for all of us to coo over.



Tuesday, December 4  
at 7:00 p.m.  
Mayflower Church  
Minneapolis

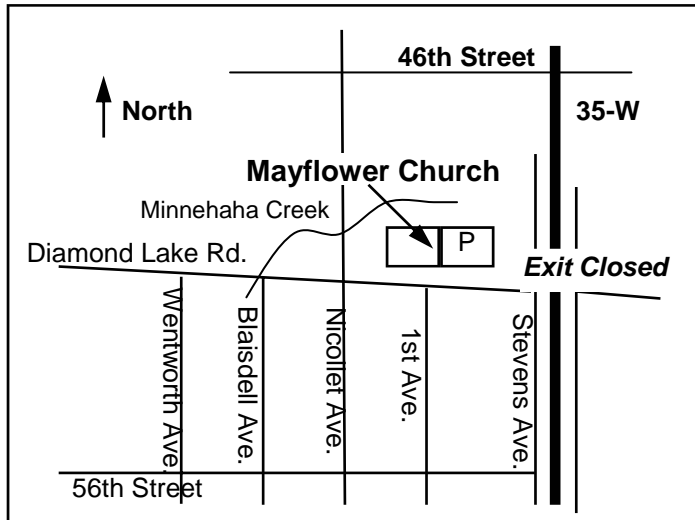
## Come to Our Next Program!

**DATE:** Tuesday, December 4, 2007

“On the Wings of a Dove”

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

**AT:** Mayflower Church, Minneapolis  
35W & Diamond Lake (road map below)



## Mayflower Church Exit Closed

Diamond Lake Road Exit from 35W to Diamond Lake Road will be closed for the next year. Consequently most of us who usually take that exit to get to the Mayflower Church for our Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis programs will need to take an alternate exit this year. For those of us coming from the north of Mayflower Church, a convenient exit will be the 46<sup>th</sup> Street Exit. Go west to Nicollet, then south to Diamond Lake Road and east to the Church. This may actually be a convenient exit for some of you coming from the south also. Exiting on Lyndale Avenue and going north to Diamond Lake Road may also work.. Those coming from the east will need to cross 35W at either 46<sup>th</sup> or 60<sup>th</sup> Street to get to Nicollet and then proceed either north or south to Diamond Lake Road. Those coming from the west will not be affected. We hope the exit closing does not deter you from attending our fine schedule of programs.

### Electronic Kingfisher

SUBSCRIBE TO THE KINGFISHER  
ELECTRONICALLY!

Contact Jerry Bahls at [jobaud@comcast.net](mailto:jobaud@comcast.net)

## 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	<open>		
Board Member	Martha Allen		
Board Member	Amy Carlson		
Board Member/Conservation	Jerry Bahls	763-572-2333	<a href="mailto:jobaud@comcast.net">jobaud@comcast.net</a>
Board Member	<open>		
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@visi.com">rkroese@visi.com</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:marciamarshall@comcast.net">marciamarshall@comcast.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>		

DECEMBER  
BIRD OF THE  
MONTH

THE PELICAN

PRESENTED

BY  
JOHN  
ARTHUR



## Minnesota River Valley Field Trips

### December 3

7:00 am. "Metro Birding." Call for details.  
Craig Mandel, 952-546-3407

### December 9

2:00 pm. "Winter Birds" at Black Dog Lake MVNWR.  
Craig Mandel, 952-546-3407

### December 15

Christmas Bird Counts  
George Skinner, 952-936-0811  
Mark Ochs, 952-681-9207  
Craig Mandel, 952-546-3407



### December 16

Christmas Bird Count  
Steve Weston, 612-978-3993

### January 20-22

6:00 pm. "Southeastern MN Birds," Caledonia.  
Craig Mandel, 952-546-3407

### January 26

7:30 am. "Winter Birds," MVNWR Visitors Center.  
George Skinner, 952-936-0811

**Please contact the trip leader for further information.**

## **GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT**

### Mark your calendars

for the Eleventh Annual Great Backyard Bird Count,  
February 15-18, 2008.

It's fun and helps everyone learn more about birds.

## Red-Headed Woodpecker Recovery

The Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis launched the program with their newsletter "*The REDHEADS*" in January 2007. The initial issue was mailed with the *Kingfisher*. Jerry Bahls convened the first meeting on March 22, 2007. In August, Chet Meyers became the RhWR Chair. Another milestone occurred recently when the RhWR launched its website ([www.Redheadrecovery.org](http://www.Redheadrecovery.org)). Check it out and help by joining.

### **Bird Banding at Springbrook Nature Center**

One of the best ways to see birds up close is to attend a bird banding event. Springbrook Nature Center continues to have bird banding scheduled for every month on Sunday mornings on the following dates: December 9, January 6, February 3 and March 2 beginning at 7:30 am. Show up at any time during the morning and enjoy the bird show!

## MOU Paper Session Servers

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, the Minnesota Ornithologists Union will hold its annual paper session at the Bell Museum on the University of Minnesota campus in Minneapolis.

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis will be arranging for the refreshments and is in need of servers to help ensure there are adequate cookies, cups of coffee and cheerful smiles to make this the enjoyable event that it is.

This responsibility is rotated among the metro Audubon Chapters and this year it is our turn.

If you are attending the session (if not, you *should* because it is a great opportunity to learn more about birds), please contact Jerry Bahls at 763-572-2333 or email at:

[jobaud@comcast.net](mailto:jobaud@comcast.net) to offer your services.

### **FUN FACT from the Audubon Newswire:**

As their scientific name suggests, whip-poor-wills are very vociferous. John Burroughs, famous naturalist of the Burroughs Audubon Society in Kansas City, once heard a Whip-poor-will make **1,088** vocal repetitions before pausing! Listen to its boisterous bird call at <http://stateofthebirds.audubon.org/cbid/profile.php?id=17>

# National Audubon Society's 108<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Bird Count

Our Chapter will participate in National Audubon Society's 108<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Bird Count. There were 2,052 Christmas Bird Counts conducted in 2006 with a total of 69,354,406 birds counted. Be part of the largest Citizen's Science Project.

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

**DATE: Saturday, December 15, 2007**

**TIME: 7:30 AM TO 4:00 PM**

**MEET: Springbrook Nature Center  
100 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Fridley**

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

## QUESTIONS??

Contact Siah St, Claire at  
(763) 572-3588 or [stclairs@ci.fridley.mn.us](mailto:stclairs@ci.fridley.mn.us)  
OR

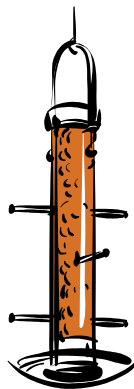
Mary Ellen Vetter at  
(763) 561-1761 or [mevetter@mninter.net](mailto:mevetter@mninter.net)

## Winter Birding

This may be a year to remember for seeing many of the northern birds that are infrequently seen in the metro area or in central Minnesota. There have been many reports of flocks of snow buntings seen in central Minnesota, so look for them in the open fields around the metro area this winter.

Look for boreal chickadees this winter in the Mille Lacs and McGregor areas as well as the North Shore. Also, check for black-backed and three-toed woodpeckers in those areas. There seems to be more reports of northern shrikes this year, too.

Keep those feeders stocked and you may see something unusual this winter!



## Early Fall Appeal Results

First we want to thank all those that have and will contribute to our Fall Appeal. The results are great! We are over two-thirds the way to our goal. These results should ensure that we won't have to do any more fund raisers this fiscal year and still have enough resources to run our programs.

Having these resources will allow us to participate in any new worthwhile activities that may be presented. Again, thank you and if you don't send us the envelope (and we hope you will), please reuse it.

## In the Company of Crows and Ravens John M. Marzluff and Tony Angell

Crows and ravens hold an important place in our culture. I searched Amazon.com books for titles containing the words crows and/or ravens and got over 178,000 hits. They have even been an Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis 'Bird of the Month.'

Why are we so fascinated with these large, dark birds? The authors of this book do an excellent job of answering that question. They describe the connections between man and crows and ravens. Early peoples probably followed crows and ravens to kills, and then had to work cooperatively to protect their food from the birds. Current day crows have learned to scavenge food from our trash—even when it doesn't look like food. (How did they discover that cheese puffs are food and not discarded bits of orange plastic?)

They discuss the intelligence of these birds, who are smarter than dogs, and as smart as some monkeys. Some jackdaws have shown an ability to count to six. They explore whether corvids can evolve culturally as well as genetically. In one example, crows in northern Japan place walnuts in front of the wheels of cars stopped at intersections. When the cars move on, the crows return to eat the meat of the cracked nut. This technique has spread from the original area, indicating cultural transmission. Incidentally, drivers of cars have started aiming for the nuts, so have people been trained by crows?

Because of their exceptional intelligence and adaptability, crows and ravens will survive when other, more specialized species struggle. Humankind will certainly continue our long relationship with these wonderful and amazing birds. This book is an interesting and informational discussion of this relationship.

—Reviewed by Donna Bahls

## Snow Bunting

They come like gusts of arctic snow,  
drifting, sweeping over fields, to find  
weed and grass seed heads rising above  
wind-swept snow fields.

Dense flocks of hundreds swirl in  
graceful evolutions, climb again,  
turn in unison, spiraling down to land.

A joyful restlessness  
graces prairie sky and ground.

The rushing sound of  
white wings, at one with winter,  
their unbroken flight-chorus  
of chirps and purring—  
sounds like laughter of  
happy children.

—Clem Nagel

## Winter Reading Selections

From Amy Carlson

### ***Going Wild* by Robert Winkler**

Armchair travelers can journey with author and naturalist Robert Winkler as he experiences amazing wildlife encounters—all within reach of his own backyard.

### ***Hawks Rest: A Season in the Remote Heart of Yellowstone* by Gary Ferguson**

Beginning with a hundred-mile hike to reach Hawks Rest, Gary Ferguson recounts his adventures in Yellowstone observing grizzly bears, tracking wolf packs, and encountering other wildlife in what is now the largest intact ecosystem in the temperate world.

### ***Soaring with Fidel* by David Gessner**

When the air in Cape Cod begins to chill, ospreys leave their summer nests in favor of warmer Venezuela. One fall, David Gessner abandons his job, family and perhaps his sanity to follow.

### ***Letters from Eden* by Julie Zickefoose**

A seasonal round of tales and illustrations from artist and naturalist Julie Zickefoose, who lives with her family on 80 acres of rolling Appalachian woodland in southern Ohio.

### ***Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future* by Bill McKibben**

Does more equal better? McKibben argues that a consumer-centric, market society of 'more' not only contributes to the planet's fragile ecology but actually makes people less happy.

## AUDUBON GLEANINGS

We live in an increasingly technical world which to many of us seems to be exciting, but also slipping away from us as we struggle to get a handle on it.

The challenge for us is to give direction to a planet that is losing touch with its origins. How do we show the importance of preserving at least a portion of our natural heritage? Audubon of Minneapolis has set as a priority to bring nature education and awareness to cultural groups that are less exposed to the wonders close around us. We need dedicated volunteers with great ideas and energy to penetrate new frontiers. It takes all of us doing what ever our abilities allow. I am constantly amazed at the quality of environmental leadership in Minnesota, and the talents and drive of thousands of dedicated people. This in a state that is second to none in wild beauty and resource treasures.

Pennsylvania is completing its second breeding bird atlas. This is a major undertaking, but critical in assessing distributions of any breeding species and their possible population changes over 20 years. The program involves 70 regional coordinators and 2600+ volunteer participants.

Every concerned citizen ought to make at least one or two personal contacts by phone or email with our legislative officials at the federal level, each session. It only takes a few minutes and can reap big rewards. This website is helpful for this: [www.sierraclub.org/legislativetracker](http://www.sierraclub.org/legislativetracker). For example, a House bill HR 2169, would prevent mountaintop removal mining from dumping tons of rock and soil into valleys and streams. It's hard to believe that this wasn't stopped long ago!

On Tuesday Nov 27, 8-4 is the Midwest Premiere Energy, Ecology, and Environment Conference at Coffman Union - 300 Washington, on the University of Minnesota campus. Focus will be on innovative technology and renewable energy. This is a high level forum, long on cutting-edge information and top governmental and industry speakers. It's called E3-2007. Pre-register at 612-624-6566, and fees are students \$15, public \$60.

Thursday, Dec 6 7:00 pm— the films "Ecological Footprint" and "Biomimicry" will be shown at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, 2501 Stevens Ave S. The topic is "How does research in the processes of nature produce advances in materials and in medicine?" [www.o2umw.org/events](http://www.o2umw.org/events)

This item is from MOU-net by Char Wenger: the National Eagle Center has just moved into a new, beautiful building in Wabasha, MN. There are large viewing windows and a second-story viewing deck overlooking the Mississippi. Visit it next time you travel down the river, or maybe it's worth a trip in itself. [www.nationaleaglecenter.org](http://www.nationaleaglecenter.org).

—Jim Egge



Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis  
PO Box 3801  
Minneapolis MN 55403

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KINGFISHER  
DECEMBER 2007



**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**  
**TXCHA**

## Calendar of Events

### DECEMBER

- 1** MOU Paper Session
- 4** Chapter meeting
- 9** Bird banding—Springbrook
- 15** Christmas Bird Count

MRV field trips are held throughout the year.  
Please check page 3 for current list

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 (except in July).

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

The *Kingfisher* is published monthly September through December, and February through May.