



# KINGFISHER



February 2007

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 56 No. 1

Representing the National Audubon Society in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

---

## A Note from the President

---

### **Birding in the New Year**

Roman God Janus (for which January is named) was two-faced, looking forward and back at the same time. I find myself doing the same at this time of year. Birding was good in 2006 and promises to be better in 2007. Christmas Bird Count is recently past and spring migration is just around the corner. Annual traditions like visiting with the Tundra Swans on the Mississippi and making a pilgrimage to Hawk Ridge are both past and future. Will 2007 be the year that they find the Ivory-billed Woodpecker?

We had some great programs in the last season and from what Ron Kroese has come up with so far, we can look forward to an excellent spring. (Thank you Ron) Jim Egge is working on some outstanding ideas for outreach involving the next generation of birders. (Thank you Jim) I also want to thank the retiring board members for their service. (Thank you Fran and Susanne) Of course, going forward, with their absence, we need new board members to fill their shoes. Think of this as an opportunity to give something back to the chapter. If you are interested, let one of the chapter officers or board members know. (And thank you in advance for volunteering!)

Speaking of Fran, she has been our Program Chair, providing the chapter with excellent programs for several years, even returning to the job when others departed. Her selection of programs ran the gamut from live parrots to the more common slide shows of a trip to some exotic location. Her help will be missed.

One request that we as a chapter have been hearing in the past is, "We would like more field trips." But in order to have more field trips, we need field trip leaders. Again, consider it an opportunity to give back to the chapter. Field trip leaders need not be "expert" birders. Knowledge of the area is more important than knowledge of the local birds.

I look back at the beginning of my Presidency of this chapter. I had served as Vice President for so long that I thought it was about my turn to step up. I was also a little intimidated by the Presidents that I had served under. How could I live up to the examples set by those before? I now feel as though I am settling into the job and look forward to the future of the chapter.

We are looking for more birding stories like Paul Fusco's in this issue. (Thank you Paul)

But enough of this looking forward and back, I'm getting a crick in my neck..

---

## February Program

---

### **It's "Lights Out" for Birds**

It's estimated that as many as 100 million birds are killed each year in the United States from collisions with windows and buildings. Many of those birds are killed at night during migration when the brightly lit buildings along their routes disorient them, and they fly into them. A growing movement across the U.S. and Canada, known as "Lights Out," aims to reduce urban light levels at night and reduce the number of migratory bird casualties.

February's featured speaker, Joanna Eckles, who now works as a writer and editor for the World Parrot Trust, became interested in the issue of bird mortality due to human structures several years ago. During the fall of 2006, she began monitoring some buildings in the Twin Cities. That led to a working group with Audubon, DNR, University of Minnesota, and the Wildlife Rehab Center to look further at the problem of bird collisions locally and to develop and implement solutions. Ms Eckles will detail the working group's initial plans to be put in place this spring.

First, they will develop procedures for monitoring buildings and collecting fallen birds. Concurrently, they will be working to develop a "Lights Out" program to reduce unnecessary lighting in our urban cores during migration. Such programs in other cities have been proven to dramatically reduce the number of birds that are trapped, injured or killed by collisions with downtown buildings. Both of these initiatives will likely lead to further education and research on the issue of bird collisions in general.

Ms. Eckles grew up in upstate New York and attended Cornell University, where she worked on a number of projects studying wild birds. After Cornell she moved to Minnesota to work as a bird trainer for the Bird Show at the Minnesota Zoo. For 11 years she trained a variety of birds including hawks, owls, eagles, vultures, parrots, a hornbill, and even a condor, and presented programs for the Zoo. In 1999 she received her Master's Degree in Conservation Biology at the University of Minnesota, left the Zoo to raise her son and began working for the World Parrot Trust, an international parrot conservation organization.

***Tuesday, February 6  
at 7:00 p.m.***

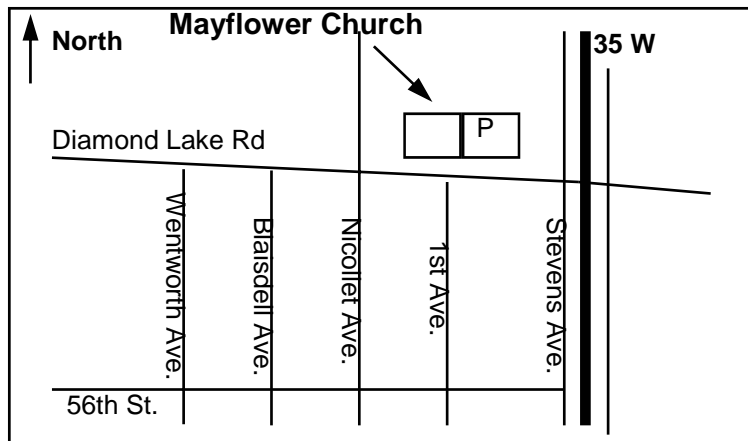
## Come to Our Next Program!

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 6, 2007

It's "Light's Out" for Birds by Joanna Eckles

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

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



## Upcoming Programs *Mark your calendars*

**March 6** – Jim Williams, well-known bird authority and Star Tribune columnist, will provide "A Birding Tour of Minnesota" in words and photos

**April 3** – Cynde Randall, Minneapolis artist and artistic director for the innovative bird-inspired art exhibit known as "Bird by Bird," will describe in words and pictures the ongoing arts program

**May 1** – Siah St. Claire, Director of Springbrook Nature Center, will inspire **us all to take better care of**

## 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: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>		

## **LOBBY DAY**

**Wednesday  
February 21, 2007**

Folks, this next session is going to be a doozy. You will not want to miss the show.

PLEASE, make sure you have the Audubon/Minnesota Environmental Partnership's Lobby Day marked on your calendar.

We'll meet at the Lakes and Plains Regional Council of Carpenters and Joiners Union Hall,  
700 Olive Street, St. Paul.

From there, shuttle buses will take participants to the State Capitol for a rally in the rotunda, followed by meetings with your legislators. Contact Audubon Minnesota for more information

## Minnesota River Valley Field Trips

- Jan. 20** 7:30 a.m. Winter Birds MVNWR Visitors Center  
George Skinner 952-936-0811
- Feb. 19** 6:00 a.m. Southeastern Minnesota, Bloomington  
Craig Mandel 952-546-3407
- Feb. 26-27** 6:30 a.m. Duluth Birding Tour  
Craig Mandel 952-546-3407
- Mar. 3** 3:00 p.m. Waterfowl ID. MVNWR Visitors Center  
Craig Mandel 952-546-3407
- Mar. 3** 7:00 p.m. Winter Owls, Dakota County, TBA  
Steve Weston 612-978-3993
- Mar. 6** 7:00 a.m. Wright County Birding Day, Minnetonka  
Craig Mandel 92-546-3407
- Mar. 10** 2:00 p.m. Beginning Bird Watching, Chaska C C  
George Skinner 952-936-0811
- Mar. 17** 2:00 p.m. Beginning Bird Watching, MVNWR  
Visitors Center. George Skinner 952-936-0811  
Please contact the trip leader for further information

## Great Backyard Bird Count

On February 16-19, Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology is having their 10th annual Great Backyard Bird Count. Make this a great nationwide event. You don't need to do anything to advance register. Just select a site (probably your backyard) and count the number of birds you see. Note each species and the largest number you see at any one time. Then at the end of the day report your results via the internet at the GBBC website.

For more information, go to the GBBC website <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/> for detailed information on participation. We will report results if you don't have access to the internet. Call the phone number below for details.

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis is planning on having a couple of ways you can participate. *On Saturday, February 17, we have four choices for you! From 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 at the Springbrook Nature Center in Fridley, from Noon to 1:00 p.m. at the Westwood Hills Nature Center in St. Louis Park or from 10:00 to 11:00 at Wood Lake Nature Center in Richfield and from 10 – 11 at Eastman Nature Center in Dayton. There will be Audubon members there to help with I.D. Come, learn, have fun, and bring friends. Host a party for the birds! For more information call Jerry Bahls at 763-572-2333 or any Board member.*

## Valentine's Day Osprey Style

by Paul Fusco

Biologists are learning that in the bird world, even in those birds that are monogamous, the couples seem to be more bonded to their nest site than to one another. What follows is observations of a pair of osprey that have been coming back to the Twin Cities for the last 5 years now. I have observed them for two of those years and a third year which would require a follow-up to this story....

Osprey nest in northern territories of the Northern hemisphere. Every fall the adult male stays as long as he can to defend his nesting territory as other osprey pass through. The adult female starts south early, basically to spend the winter without him! In the spring the male starts his way back to once again defend his territory against other males passing by.

At the site that I am watching the female has returned within 1 to 3 days of the male's arrival. She flies straight to her nesting platform. When she arrives the male knows what he must do. He flies off and gets a fresh fish,. Then he flies really high above the nesting platform, falling and rising while all the time chirping. He makes a complete circle high above, displaying the fish the whole time. After completing this great circle, he tucks his wings in a speedy stoop, landing back in on the nesting platform. He hands the female the fresh fish he has caught. She accepts and the nesting season begins again. Not what we humans may consider a perfect Valentines' Day gift, but ospreys consider it better than roses!

What does all of this have to do with Valentine's Day you may ask? Well I estimate that the osprey start their return journey from Central and South America, during the second half of February.

## Bird of the Month

### A Bird Quiz

Presented by  
Jim Egge

## Annual Wetlands Summit

Normandale Community College,  
Bloomington, Minnesota

8 am to 5:30 pm, Saturday, February 3, 2007

There will be a registration fee of \$25.00 per person, with a reduced fee of \$15.00 for certified students. Call 651-221-0215 or [ikes@minnesotaikes.org](mailto:ikes@minnesotaikes.org) to register. Pre-registration is advised.

Co-chairs for the Wetlands Summit II: Bill Henke, IWLA: 218-847-4004 or [wchenke@dam.com](mailto:wchenke@dam.com) and Harvey Nelson, MWA, MOHA, 952-831-8333 or [harvnel@msn.com](mailto:harvnel@msn.com)

## AUDUBON GRANT YIELDS RESULTS TO BE PROUD OF

Last spring, the Minneapolis Chapter of National Audubon received a \$15,000 Chapter Collaborative Project Grant, administered through the Minnesota State Office. The Bluebird Recovery Program, under Chair Lance Krog, applied for funding a "Bluebird Visibility Grant" to establish model bluebird trails in public places where Minnesotans could be educated about the needs and proper care of bluebirds and other native cavity nesters. BBRP was able to update and repair some badly neglected or badly mounted nestbox trails in eight Minnesota State Parks, and create a new trail in a ninth state park. Trails in five state parks (Upper Sioux Agency, Lac Que Parle, Blue Mound, Split Rock, and Fort Ridgley) produced bluebirds for the first time in many years; Camden State Park alone had produced bluebirds previously. Hill Annex State Park and Jay Cooke State Park trails were refurbished too late for the nesting season, along with a brand new trail at Scenic State Park. BBRP already had trails in Nerstrand Big Woods State Park and Lake Maria State Park.

Sixteen members of BBRP volunteered over 260 hours of work. Thanks to their efforts and the Audubon grant, with some additional funds provided by BBRP, over 239 bluebirds fledged from 118 paired nestboxes. (Paired boxes provide sites for both bluebirds and tree swallows, and sometimes other native cavity nesters.) In all the parks, volunteer trail monitors were recruited for weekly checking and record keeping.

Next spring look for "Gems of Blue" in these parks!

## Audubon Gleanings

Audubon members are invited to participate in ebird, an on-line program that accepts bird sighting counts year-round. These counts are used by scientists, conservationists, and bird watchers at [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org). Also a great source of information is available at the Great Backyard Bird Count web site, [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc). If you have not seen Audubon's Puffin Cam, this site allows you to view nesting Atlantic Puffins, mid-May – August.

Now the site offers Murre Cam, March - July at [www.projectpuffin.org/common-murre.html](http://www.projectpuffin.org/common-murre.html). Teachers and parents of elementary students might make particular use of this site, although I guarantee any wildlife enthusiast will have a tough time clicking off.

How would you like to have an Eastern Screech Owl in your yard? Blueprints for owl boxes are available at [www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse). You need to have a wooded space next to your yard as hunting territory of 10-20 acres. The box is placed on the north trunk of a large tree, 10-20 feet up. It should be in a relatively secluded, shady area with dense cover nearby.

## Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Program Formed

With the help of the National Audubon Society's Chapter Grant Program, Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis is forming a Red-headed Woodpecker Recovery Program (RhWRP). Using the \$400 grant received from NAS, the RhWRP will be modeled after the highly successful Bluebird Recovery Program. The initial grant will be used as the seed funds to set up the Program. It is expected that future revenues will be obtained from a modest membership fee and donations.

The preliminary plan is to get Program members who have red-headed woodpeckers in their area to do some simple studies to evaluate the red-headed woodpecker population and attempt to get them to nest in nestboxes provided by the member. The nestboxes will be of a standard design and be uniform over the study areas. It is desirable to also make the placement the same in all study areas. Thus when (if?) there is a successful nesting modifications can be made to the site location and/or the box design to try to improve its success the following year.

The second aspect of the program will be to work on habitat improvement. A literature review on red-headed woodpeckers will be made to better understand the reasons for their decline. Based on the review and information received from resources like the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the US Fish & Wildlife Service, recommendations can be made as to the best method of restoring their habitat. A program will be instituted to educate landowners about how to provide red-headed woodpecker habitat, hopefully, without disrupting how they would like to use the land.

Part of the initial grant will be used to publish a newsletter to be used as the primary method of communicating with the RhWRP membership. Look for the inaugural edition that will be included with the March Kingfisher. The Program will be administered through the Conservation Committee. If you are interested in helping get this Program started, please contact Jerry Bahls at 763 572-2333 or [bahls001@tc.umn.edu](mailto:bahls001@tc.umn.edu).

## **BLUEBIRDS AT ALL-TIME HIGH!**

With reports still coming in, over 15,000 new bluebirds are known to have fledged in Minnesota in 2006. The Annual Directory of the Bluebird Recovery Program, still being compiled from reports of BBRP members, is expected to reflect unusually high numbers this year. The program was initiated in our chapter in 1979. We've come a long way, thanks to the dedication of almost 1,000 members!

# BIRD BANDING

## A Great Field Trip

Every few weeks dedicated researchers and a dedicated group of volunteer assistants catch birds at Springbrook Nature Center and band them. Ron Refsnider and Siah St. Claire band the often caught chickadees, downy and hairy woodpeckers and white-breasted nuthatches and the not as often caught cardinals, dark-eyed juncos, blue jays and American goldfinches. Many warblers are caught during migration. Rare catches like the pileated woodpecker and northern shrike have also been banded at Springbrook.



Bird banding assistants set metal cage traps during most of the year and use mist nets in the summer and during the spring and fall, weather permitting, to catch the migrating birds. Banding is cancelled by very cold weather and by rain. The assistants retrieve the birds from the cage traps or mist nets and place them in a cloth bag, noting the trap or net location and time. The birds are brought into the Nature Center where they are weighed, measured, sexed, physical condition evaluated, banded and then, the fun part, released. Whenever a visitor is available, they are instructed on how to hold and release the bird and then to actually release it. This is often a very moving and exciting experience for many people.

Many of the banding assistants started as observers and got hooked on the joy of holding and releasing these small creatures that they soon became volunteers. What better way to really learn about a bird than actually holding one. Donna Bahls often explains to people about the size difference between a downy and hairy woodpecker by telling how they fit in her hand.



The banding at Springbrook has been done continuously since 1988. Consequently they have a large database of birds (all the data is also filed with the USGS National Bird Banding Lab) and often catch the same bird. Recently they caught a chickadee that was first banded at the Nature Center 8 years ago. The information that is gathered is very helpful and aided in having Springbrook Nature Center named as an Important Bird Area in 2005. Based on the data from repeated bird catches, Siah St. Claire notes that the catches of chickadees made in the winter were only caught previously in the winter and the same is true for those caught in the summer. They were previously only caught in the summer.

Watch for announcements about the bird banding dates or call Springbrook Nature Center (763) 572-3588 or go to [www.springbrooknaturecenter.org](http://www.springbrooknaturecenter.org). Banding is on selected Sunday mornings from 7:30 – noon. Please come at anytime during that period to watch the banding activity. Banding is also done by Ron Refsnider at Eastman Nature Center (763)

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis  
PO Box 3801  
Minneapolis MN 55403

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Minneapolis, MN  
Permit No. 280



KINGFISHER  
FEBRUARY 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**  
**7XCHA**

**Calendar of Events**  
FEBRUARY

- 3** Wetlands Summit
- 6** Chapter Meeting
- 19** MRVWR Field Trip
- 21** Lobby Day
- 26-27** Duluth Birding Tour

MARCH

- 3** MRVWR Field Trip
- 3** Winter Owls
- 6** Wright County Birding Day
- 10** Beginning Bird Watching
- 17** Beginning Bird Watching

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!