



KINGFISHER



Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 48 No. 9

Representing the National Audubon Society in Greater
Minneapolis and Hennepin County

Dec 1999/Jan 2000

Letter from the President

Hi Everyone,

There was a packed house greeting author and radio talk show host Laura Erickson when she came to the Twin Cities on October 28. Greeting her were members of all three metro Audubon chapters. Her talk informed us of many uncommon facts about some of the birds we see every day. It was interesting to learn that the first state bird was not the loon but goldfinch, and the loon's yodel cry so often heard as background sound on commercials and other media is actually a distress call. There have been band returns for Sharp-shinned Hawks from every Central American country and some South American countries. Juvenile Sawhet Owls have white feathers forming a v-shape to direct the parents with food items toward the juvenile's mouth.

Prior to Laura Erickson's talk there was a joint meeting of the Conservation Committees of the three Audubon chapters. One major discussion topic included construction of two 19,000-seat amphitheaters adjacent to Louisville Swamp in the Minnesota River Valley National Wildlife Refuge. This would directly impact one of the prime spots in the metro area for wildlife. Also discussed was the one million dollars from a settlement against the Koch refinery which has been put aside for conservation initiatives, and prioritizing issues which we would like the Minnesota state Audubon office to pursue during the 2000 legislative session.

Sadly missing from this conservation meeting was a conservation committee from this chapter. I was the only one in attendance. Our chapter does not have a conservation committee, nor does it have a fully staffed Board of Directors. The work of the chapter has fallen on the shoulders of a few people. In many of the past *Kingfishers* a plea has been made for more volunteers, but there has been no response. In the meantime, we have lost the help of several talented people. There is much work to be done to keep the chapter going. We cannot ask the dwindling few active members to do the work for everyone else. I ask you again to please consider helping out your chapter. Your time and effort is needed now to staff committees, help with fundraising, help out on the Board, and fill the positions on page two of this newsletter which are vacant. Please contact me with any comments, suggestions, and offers to help. Thank you.

- Tom Mahan

December 7 Meeting: Wood Ducks of Kandiyohi County

In 1956, Roger Strand, M.D., placed his first Wood Duck nest on acreage in Northern Kandiyohi County where he and his wife live. The woods, hills, wetlands, and small kettle lakes have allowed Dr. Strand, now retired, to devote time to his hobby of wildlife and—in particular—waterfowl management.

He has developed some very definite ideas about Wood Duck management and supports those ideas with documentation gathered from careful monitoring. He will tell us the pros and cons of various box types and the methods of mounting them. Should the boxes be pole-mounted; how high off the ground should the hole be; how do you protect from predators; and who are the predators?

There are no ugly ducklings in Dr. Strand's 27-minute video, only mergansers, Wood Ducks, and some "downy puff balls" plopping down into the water for their first swim.

Come Tuesday, December 7, to Mayflower Church for the holiday potluck. It will start at 6:00 p.m. The meeting follows at 7:30 p.m. Map and directions are on page 2. If you come by bus, get off at Diamond Lake Road and Nicollet and walk one block east to the church. Enter through parking lot door.



Volunteers Needed for Chapter Positions

Our chapter needs the assistance of our members to continue to do its important work. Many of the positions open have a direct impact on the workings of the Minneapolis chapter and the environment around us. Please consider the choices below to see where your specific talents could be of use. Even if you have no prior experience, many of the positions could still use your help.

The positions are: **Secretary, Board member/ Conservation Chair, Birdathon/Big Day Coordinator, and Kingfisher Editor.**

If you would like to volunteer for any of these positions or would like further information, call Tom Mahan at 612-588-5440.

Come to our next program!

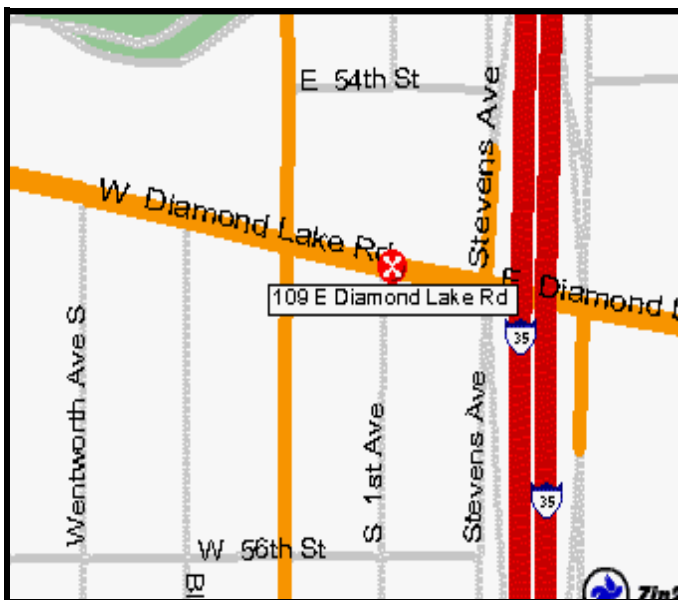
DATE: Tuesday, December 7, 1999
TIME: 6:00 p.m. **Annual Potluck Dinner** followed at 7:30 p.m. by Dr. Roger Strand who will present: **"Wood Ducks of Kandiyohi County"**

AT: Mayflower Church
 109 East Diamond Lake Road, Minneapolis

PARK: In church lot

ROOM: Big room downstairs

Mayflower Church is located immediately west of Hwy 35W at the Diamond Lake Road exit. Enter the main floor through parking lot door and go downstairs to the big room.



Electronic Kingfisher is now available

To subscribe or request information send an e-mail to bahls001@tc.umn.edu.



Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (ACM) 1999-2000 Contacts

President.....	Tom Mahan.....	588-5440
Vice President.....	Phyllis Mahan.....	588-5440
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Secretary.....	<open>.....	
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Board/Sales Chair.....	Jim Sharpsteen.....	722-9109
Board.....	Bill Sipe.....	331-1223
Birdathon/Big Day Coord..	<open>.....	
Camperships/Hunt Hill.....	Marion Borell.....	866-1266
Camperships/North Woods..	Bob Nelson.....	933-7340
Education Chair.....	Mary Ellen Vetter...	561-1761
Field Trips Chair.....	Terry Brashear.....	929-1976
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Publicity Committee.....	Bill Sipe.....	331-1223
Social Committee.....	Phyllis Mahan.....	588-5440
MN Audubon Office.....	651 225-1830
MOU Rare Bird Alert.....	780-8890

ACM's Internet Address: www.geocities.com/RainForest/5835

Board of Directors meet at Anwatin School, Minneapolis.

All are welcome! Call the president for details.



THE MUSIC OF THE NIGHT

There is an extraordinary birding experience awaiting those who are willing to venture out as the sun begins to set. It takes no special talent or tools. All you have to bring is your ears and a jacket and, depending on the location and time of year, some bug spray. I recommend several times of the year and the best locations are wetlands.

This fall I camped out one night at Crex Meadows Wildlife Area outside of Granstburg, Wisconsin. As the sun sank lower in the sky, hundreds of Sandhill Cranes came into the shallow lakes to roost. They were followed by large vees of Canada Geese that splashed their way to landings among the Mallards and Green-winged Teal already bobbing gently in the wine-colored water. When it grew too dark to see, I just sat by my campfire and listened, and continued to listen throughout most of the night. The geese gabbled back and forth almost the whole night through. Their conversations were accompanied by the raucous quacks of the Mallards and the sneezy whisperings of the Green-winged Teal. Every once in a while a crane would sound off with a trumpeted *garroo*. Then other cranes would join in. Soon all would settle down for a while and then it would begin all over again.

This was but the latest of my encounters with the music of the night. I remember my first experience on a trip to a marsh in the North Dakota prairies looking for Yellow Rails. The rails were there making their clicking calls, much like stones rhythmically being rapped together. An American Bittern was singing his pump handle song, *oonk ka chunk, oonk ka chunk*. The Marsh Wrens were calling. It was truly awesome. In this small marsh, there was a whole world I had never encountered before.

The experience that I best remember happened on Memorial Day Weekend about three years ago. Again it was a marshland, this time in northwestern Minnesota. Standing in one spot I, and the birders I was with, listened to Yellow Rail, Whip-poor-will, Common Snipe, Barred Owl, and American Woodcock all making their individual music together in a wildlife symphony. Among the birders there was no conversation, no shuffling of feet, only stillness. The encounter with the natural world on its own terms, through senses often neglected, brought forth a reverie that one may only call spiritual.

You do not have to stray far from home, however, to listen to the music of the night. Trying to recover from Lyme's disease this summer, I spent many a dusk on my back patio. Beginning in August there were wonderful serenades as the sun went down. Flocks of American Robins chirped to each other as they flew off to their night roosts. Wood Ducks whistled and Mallards quacked as they flew by seeking their beds. The Canada Geese called loudly as they flew over, their big vees still unpracticed and ragged. Chimney Swifts chattered on their way to roost and the little songbirds, finches, chickadees, and wrens, settled down with abbreviated versions of their songs. The Northern Cardinals,

though unwilling to be seen, sang their full songs wishing good cheer to all who stopped to listen. I counted each as a blessing for even though each bone in my body ached, the world was still a beautiful place and I was still here to enjoy it.

-Vija Kelly



The **Minnesota Valley Wildlife Refuge (MVWR)**, one of the few urban national wildlife refuges, is located in the Twin Cities stretching 34 miles from Jordan to Bloomington and encompassing 10,500 acres of wildlife habitat ranging from bottomland hardwood forest to a rare calcareous fen community. Although there are actually eight management units in the MVWR, only three of them are easily accessible. The very first Hot Spot column visited one of these on the **Long Meadow Lake** area, the Bass Ponds. Adjacent to the Bass Ponds is the **Old Cedar Avenue Bridge**. Being very easily accessible, I highly recommend this area. A drive down Old Cedar Avenue from Shakapee Road will bring you to the bridge which is now open only to pedestrians and bicyclists. The bridge, spanning Long Meadow Lake, allows you to get into the thick of the area without getting your feet wet. Many ponds and paths in the area lead to great birding, too. **Black Dog Preserve SNA**, portions of which remain open all year due to the adjacent power plant, contains the calcareous fen. The open water in winter draws Oldsquaws, Barrow's Goldeneyes, rare gulls on occasion, and Bald Eagles. **Louisville Swamp** is a good place to find bitterns, herons, egrets, muskrats, beavers, mink, and many turtles. On higher ground surrounding the marsh, the prairie, oak savanna, oak woodlands, and old fields are home to coyotes, wild turkeys, white-tailed deer, and meadowlarks. The **MVWR Headquarters and Visitor Center** is only a 10-minute drive from the Twin Cities Airport. Stop here to pick up a map of the entire refuge. A short but enjoyable trail leads from the visitor center down to the river and back. It is excellent for springtime warblers and waterfowl. Don't ignore the small prairie outside the center or the trees in the parking lot for some fun birding.

Directions to the Visitor Center: Take I494 to Bloomington, exit on 34th Ave. Go south to E 80th St. Turn left and follow the road around to the headquarters. No fee. Water and restrooms are available when the visitor center is open.

- Pam Rhoads



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KINGFISHER
Dec/Jan 99-00



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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.
- As a senior citizen or student, I am able to join for only \$15!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

Send this application and check 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: CM02 9M99

Calendar of Events

December

- 7 Annual Chapter Potluck, 6:00 p.m.
Chapter Program Meeting, 7:30 p.m.
"Wood Ducks of Kandiyohi County"
- 14 Chapter Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

January

- No monthly program is scheduled
- 11 Chapter Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

**Birders of all ages and skill levels are
welcome on all field trips.**