



Minnesota BIRDING

July
August
2024
Volume 61
Number 4

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Golden-winged Warbler
by Lon Baumgardt

My Favorite Local Patch: Kutzky Park

by Lance Vrieze

Kutzky Park in Rochester, Minnesota, is my favorite local patch for birding. The draw for me is not that there are a large number of species that are possible to see: the hotspot list on eBird shows only a modest 156 species, many of them flyovers. Nor is it a favorite because it has a wide variety of pristine or unique habitats: the park is just twelve acres, and the area not taken up by tennis courts, parking lot, or playground is largely mowed grass and messy ignored scrub. Kutz-

ky Park is certainly not a remote wilderness location where one might go to get away from civilization. It's on the downtown edge of the state's third largest city, a half mile from the main campus of the state's largest employer.

What does make Kutzky my favorite local patch? For a couple of weeks each year in May it almost magically attracts a large numbers of warblers and other neotropical migrants into a small, accessible area and regularly provides stellar views of these often

Birders at Kutzky Park, by Lance Vrieze



hard-to-see birds. In addition, Kutzky Park personally holds a spot in my heart as a place I uncovered as a hotspot and the place where I rediscovered the joy of birding.

In the spring of 2005 I was pushing my toddler by stroller almost daily the couple of blocks to our neighborhood playground in Kutzky Park. I was noticing more and more birds flitting about on our walk along the creek. Eventually I made a point of bringing my binoculars along to try and see what they were. I had been a casual bird watcher since my teens in the 1980s, but for various reasons hadn't upped my skills for a decade. The birds at Kutzky Park were unusually cooperative, however, and allowed me to study them as they hopped about on the open lawn, sat on a branch overhanging the path, or worked their way along the stream banks. It is here that I figured out Clay-colored and Lincoln's Sparrows, sorted out the *Catharus* thrushes, and scratched my head for a while over a female Blackpoll Warbler. I was loving it, and it seemed like a noteworthy location to this novice, but was it really anything special? I never encountered anyone else there with binoculars, and Bob Ekblad's excellent and extensive website covering birding locations in Olmsted County made no mention of Kutzky Park. I shared my sightings on the listserv and eventually convinced John Hockema and Chuck Krulus to join me there one morning. Luckily, it was a good migration day, and I felt some pride that these highly-skilled birders that I looked up to were impressed by "my" location.

Word of the birds in Kutzky Park started to spread, and by May 2007 I was asked to lead my first ever bird walk for Zumbro Valley Audubon Society (ZVAS) there. Around the same time, my personal location on eBird was changed to an eBird hotspot, and the checklists started accumulating at an accelerating rate. This past May, ZVAS sponsored five Kutzky bird walks, and the hotspot now has over 1400 checklists submitted by 176 different eBirders. Without planning, I can almost always randomly run into one or more birding friends there, sharing the FOYs and other notable birds that have arrived overnight. There have been 30 warbler species documented, with Black-throated Blue the only warbler missing from the regular species list. Six vireos and fifteen sparrow species have also now been reported. The only true rarity to turn up so far was a beautiful male Painted Bunting in May of 2020. It was cooperative over two days, allowing 49 eBirders (and additional non-eBirders) to document it, many with photos.

I can't say with any authority what makes Kutzky so good for both birds and birders. Part of it is that it is an oasis, a strip of green along flowing water in the middle of an urban area. It may also be because of the limited nature of the habitat. For birds that find themselves dropping in after a night of migration, there is a relatively small area for them to go. The park is mostly a linear strip straddling Cascade Creek for the length of five city blocks, and a two-to three-block stretch east from the playground is always the most productive. While some of this streamside vegetation is dense, it is only a thin strip, so if a bird is there, you



Painted Bunting at Kutzky Park, by Jerry Pruett

have a high probability of seeing it. The openness makes it a popular location for photographers hoping to get shots of the often hard-to-capture birds. And because there is an above average chance of getting members of a group onto the bird, it is a great spot to lead bird walks. The location makes it extremely convenient to visit: it is one stoplight off the freeway through the center of town, and it is 100 feet from the parking lot to the creek. With a ten-minute stroll along the creek, one can get a good sense of how birdy it is on a particular day and whether it is worth spending more time there. With a low investment of time and energy, one can potentially find a lot of migrating birds.

The birding magic of Kutzky Park is fleeting, though, and come the third week of May it reverts to the expected run-of-the-mill small urban park taken over by grackles and starlings. I have never had much luck there during fall migration. Winter highlights have been both crossbills (good for the county), overwintering white-crowned sparrows in some years, and, important for us day-listers, a pair of Wood Ducks that seem to be content there.

I know that not everyone from around the state will have the opportunity to experience one of those great May days in Kutzky Park, but I encourage all to get out and discover their own local patch that might exceed expectation above first impression. The recent first state records of both Abert's Towhee, at Murphy Hill in Grand Rapids, and Swainson's Warbler, at Arden Park in Edina, demonstrate the importance of small areas of habitat in small urban parks for both birds and birders.

Lance Vrieze is a native of Southeast Minnesota and was fortunate to be mentored in his youth by Dr. Alden Risser, a charter member of the MOU. After completing a PhD at the University of Minnesota, he became a full-time stay-at-home dad, giving him plenty of opportunities to check out the birds at various playgrounds around Rochester.

Conservation Column

Whither Minnesota's Grassland Birds?

by Todd Arnold

Grassland birds have declined by a larger percentage than any other group of North American birds. When the “Decline of the North American avifauna” article was published by Rosenberg and colleagues in 2019, which estimated the loss of almost three billion birds since 1970, the authors highlighted grassland birds as the single bird group suffering the worst declines. Total losses averaged 53% across all grassland birds combined, with 75% of grassland species showing negative trends. Sadly, Minnesota is no exception to these trends.

The best tool for keeping track of long-term bird populations in North America is the Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), a volunteer-based survey performed annually throughout the U.S. and southern Canada. There are 83 BBS routes in Minnesota. Surveys have been conducted annually since 1967 along secondary roads, with observers stopping every half mile along a 25-mile-long route and counting all the birds they see or hear during three-minute stops. According to BBS data for Minnesota, of 15 grassland birds with enough data for statistical analysis, all species except Sedge Wren and Lark Sparrow have exhibited declining populations, with Grasshopper Sparrow and Western Meadowlark declining by more than 90% since the survey began. (Note: I followed Rosenberg’s categorization of which species were grassland birds, but some species on this list resist pigeonholing. See Greg Hoch’s article in the March/April edition of Minnesota Birding, “What is a Prairie Bird?”)

Species	Annual trend (%)	45-year-trend (%)
Sedge Wren	0.3	14.5
Lark Sparrow	0.3	14.5
LeConte's Sparrow	-0.1	-4.4
Horned Lark	-0.2	-8.6
Eastern Kingbird	-0.8	-30.2
Clay-colored Sparrow	-1.1	-39.0
Upland Sandpiper	-1.3	-44.3
Vesper Sparrow	-1.6	-51.3
Bobolink	-1.6	-51.3
Henslow's Sparrow	-1.7	-53.5
Eastern Meadowlark	-2.1	-61.1
Dickcissel	-2.2	-62.8
Savannah Sparrow	-2.6	-69.0
Grasshopper Sparrow	-6.0	-93.3
Western Meadowlark	-7.0	-95.7



Western Meadowlark, by Gerald Hoekstra

The losses of Western Meadowlarks are simply staggering. When the BBS survey began in 1967, surveyors recorded an average of 250 birds per survey route, or about five per stop. In recent years, a BBS surveyor in Minnesota needed to complete two or three complete surveys to be reasonably sure of detecting a Western Meadowlark. As a data analyst, I wonder how many Western Meadowlarks were misidentified as Eastern Meadowlarks, and vice versa, but Eastern Meadowlarks have fared only somewhat better, so it’s a moot point from my perspective. As a kid growing up in the 1960s and 1970s, I can remember when meadowlarks were one of the most frequently observed birds perching along roadside powerlines, but now I have to make a concerted effort to add an Eastern Meadowlark to my yearly Washington County bird list, because there are only a few restored prairies or large pastures where they can be reliably found, and Western Meadowlarks constitute a rare bird sighting.

As a population ecologist who works primarily on birds, I’m intensely interested in why grassland bird populations have declined so precipitously. The most common explanation I hear is “habitat loss,” and I’m sure that explanation was important historically, but it leaves me skeptical about the last several decades. Minnesota lost more than 90% of its native prairies more than 60 years ago, so for me, a more likely explanation for declining populations of grassland birds has something to do with agricultural intensification: things like loss of pastures and hay fields, loss of crop diversity, and increased use of herbicides and pesticides. But there is little solid data to confirm these suspicions.

As for what we can do to help grassland birds, in Minnesota and beyond, I know from personal observations that prairie restoration can provide them with attractive habitat. But it's also important that these areas be managed effectively to prevent encroachment by invasive woody vegetation and other undesirable plant species, and grassland managers have their hands full simply maintaining the prairies we currently have. Working agricultural areas can also provide attractive habitat for grassland birds, and many grassland birds actually prefer grasslands that are being responsibly grazed. So if you are an omnivore, supporting environmentally-minded dairy or meat producers who utilize responsible grazing could also benefit grassland birds.

Todd Arnold is a Professor in the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology, University of MN.



Dickcissel, by Gerald Hoekstra

Savaloja Grant Report: Springbrook Nature Center

by Cody Rosetti, Springbrook Nature Center Naturalist

On a warmer-than-average afternoon in May, Springbrook naturalists watch as two buses containing 50 kindergarten students swing into the bus parking area and open their doors. I can feel the excitement radiating from the open bus doors as students wave while waiting to unload. The kindergartners are at Springbrook to explore the signs of spring. During this program, they will find flowers, sweep for insects, and spy birds in the forest. Like many before them, each of these students will use tools to help them investigate the natural world, unlike those past students this round of kindergartners will have high-quality tools that fit their bodies.

Of course, students do not need tools beyond those that come naturally equipped to explore the natural world, however, tools like binoculars, sweep nets, and magnifiers can enhance and focus that exploration in unique ways. Finding scientific tools for children, young children especially, is difficult as many of those tools are designed for adults or are designed as toys. Ill-fitting or poor-quality tools tend to get in the way more than they help. Nearly every bird hike ends with chaperones looking like binocular trees as children have little tolerance for the hindrance of a heavy pair of binoculars that show a blurry view of the world. Their experience is different when you give them a pair of binoculars that are lightweight, fit their face and hands, and have a wide field of view.

Springbrook Nature Center applied for and was awarded funding from the Minnesota Ornithologists Union Savaloja Grants program to purchase binoculars that fit the

bill. The kindergartners that arrived at Springbrook in May were the first group to use the new Vortex Bantam binoculars. Students learned how to use their binoculars and looked for bird silhouettes set up in our oak forest. Each of the three classes of students was delighted with their experience. One student exclaimed "It is so close, I could touch it!" while another was convinced that they could "See Canada from here!" They were eager to share their observations about the bird silhouettes and details glimpsed through their binoculars. Of course, there were plenty of students exploring the ins and outs of these new devices by using them "incorrectly." One popular explorative technique was looking through them backwards and remarking how small everything looks! Among all the "oohs" and "ahhs," students were learning concrete skills: how to identify bird classes by shape, building their observational skills by noticing features and colors, and finetuning hand-eye coordination. I can't say that the kindergartners we taught left Springbrook as master birders but they did leave with a positive experience in nature, which is one step along that path.

Since their inaugural use, Springbrook's binoculars have been used on several field trips at Springbrook, in off-site programs at schools, and in Fridley Recreation's Environmental Fun Fair event. In total, over 200 people have used the binoculars to date and many more will have the opportunity over the summer during Springbrook's Summer Camp programming. They have been a great fit, not only for our students but also for our mission to cultivate connections between people and nature.

Birding with Bob

Editor's note: Bob Janssen touched the lives of many birders around the state, whether they had the privilege of actually birding with him or simply met him in the field, and I'm sure many of you have stories and memories of birding with Bob. I thought it might be fun to record some of them, so I'm running a "Birding with Bob" column over the few issues in which members can share those stories, memories, or other thoughts about Bob's impact on them or on Minnesota birding. Individual contributions can be short — a paragraph or two — and my intention is to include a few in each issue. Please contact me or send stories and reminiscences to me at newsletter@moumn.org. GRH



Bob Janssen, by Andy Nyhus

When thinking about my birding experiences with Bob Janssen, I recall the time in November 2021 when we went to see a Ross's Gull at Point Douglas. That, in turn, triggered the memory of an earlier trip to see the same species. The memory from 2021 was of Mark Junghans pulling, and me pushing, Bob up a steep trail to see the gull. While observing the bird, Bob said he wished it would fly south just a little so that he would have 300 species for Dakota County.

On that occasion, Bob and I reminisced about a six-hour drive to Marshall County that we took on April 18, 1984 to see a Ross's Gull at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge. I believe it was Dick Olenschlager who drove. Ray Glassel and Bill Litkey were also in the car. We watched the gull on the edge of the ice for a few minutes, occasionally flying around and feeding. It was a lifer for all of us. Then we jumped back in the car and started the six-hour drive back home.

Bob and Ray — like one word. Bob and Ray were inseparable. Bob's memories almost always included references to Ray, especially if the listener knew them both. One of the last things Bob told me (during the last six months of his life) was that Ray's final words to him were, "Sorry, I can't go birding with you anymore."

— *Gary Swanson, Buffalo*

Bob had his bird lists. He kept track of the birds seen in Minnesota, but he needed more of a challenge, so he and Ray Glassel started to keep lists of birds seen in each of the 87 counties. By 2000, Bob, Ray Glassel, and Ken LaFond each had more than 200 species seen in all the counties.

Bob kept track of the species seen by other birders and also had lists that gave the occurrence of each species in each county in each of the four seasons. Bob shared this information, and it is the basis for the county checklists on the moumn.org website.

I was able to bird with Bob for several years. He was always thinking of ways to improve what was available on the web site. We talked continuously about birds while we went across the state to find one more elusive bird.

Bob liked to travel on roads that are on the county line. Then if he would see a bird, it might fly across the road and he could count it for both counties. Once when we were birding in the northwest corner of the state, we saw a Ring-necked Pheasant on the road between Polk and Red Lake Counties. He had seen this bird in Polk before but "needed" it for Red Lake. He tried to go into the woods to encourage the bird to go across the road. That didn't happen. On another trip, we were on the same road and we saw a Ring-necked Pheasant go across the road!

— *David Cahlander, Oakdale*

My first memory of meeting Bob Janssen was on January 1, 1999. We were both in our cars at the Blue Lake Sewage Pond in Shakopee. Of course, this was before 9/11, when it was still possible to drive in. We were both looking at the same bird, a Tufted Duck. Eventually this bird was determined to be an escapee. Fortunately, I was able to take Bob to Goodhue County in January of 2018 to see the Tufted Duck that appeared at Colvill Park. I also remember taking him to Becker County in 2015 to see the Vermillion Flycatcher. And I was able to take him to a private residence in Cook County in February of 2016 to see a Gray-Crowned Rosy Finch.

One of my favorite memories was when we found two Black-Bellied Whistling-Ducks at Eggert Lake in Le Sueur County in May of 2016. In September of 2016 we raced back from southwest Minnesota in time to see the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper found by Pete Hoeger in Carver County.

But there's one that we missed out on that still bothers me. Garrett Wee found a Curlew Sandpiper in Lyon County

in May of 2018. Bob and I set out the next morning but then got a report that it wasn't being seen. We made the mistake of stopping at a park in Chippewa County. Much to our dismay, the bird was briefly re-found, but we didn't get there in time. That was a hard lesson to learn.

Most of the time on these trips we talked about birding, but sometimes we talked about life. This was usually on the way home. We didn't always agree on everything, but he always treated me with respect. He was a good mentor and a good friend.

– *Bob Williams, Bloomington*

In April of 2019 I saw an article in the StarTribune about a group of birders organizing a trip to help Bob Janssen get his last county, Rock, to 225 ticks. They wanted to find a way to give back to a man who gave so much to the Minnesota birding community. He ultimately did achieve his goal of getting Rock County to 225 ticks on that trip!

I wished that I could make that trip but I couldn't get out of work. Over the next few months, I thought about how I could help Bob, someone who really inspired me to be a county lister. I want to build my county totals, but since I got a late start in that game, 225 in every county is probably a bit out of reach for me.

An area of county listing where I think I have a chance to make my mark, though, is in Species Seen in All 87 Counties, a.k.a. the "sack" list. I was looking at Bob's sack list on MOU and realized he was sitting at 146! When I looked over his "Coloring Book" I noticed that he was missing only a few birds in some of the north central counties. So I devised a plan to help him hit those counties for the birds he needed. I called him up and told him about my plan. I said I would pick him up and do all the driving. He was very excited and surprised that I would do that for him.

In the third week of August 2019 we headed north. Our targets for potential sack birds: Red-headed Woodpecker in Koochiching, Virginia Rail in Lake of the Woods and Koochiching, and Canada Warbler in Lake of the Woods. Although Bob didn't get any of his target birds on the trip, we had a great time! I did manage to get my 78th sack on the trip. Not bad, but a far cry from Bob's 146!

On that trip I asked Bob who started the whole county listing thing. He said it was "invented" by Bill Pieper. Bob told me that they were on a birding adventure many years back and that Bill had pulled out a big folder with checklists for all of Minnesota's 87 counties. Bob asked him, "What are you going to do with those?" Bill said, "I'm going to keep track of all the birds I see for every county." Bob's response: "Why the hell would you want to do that?" I guess we all have an answer to that question!

Bob and I had such a great time in 2019 that we decided to try the trip again. We loaded up in August of 2020 and headed north again. This trip did not disappoint. In July of

2020, Bob got his 147th sack with a Black-billed Cuckoo in Pipestone County. This was great news. Now he only needed only three sacks to get him to a total of 150. On August 16, we got him a Red-headed Woodpecker in Koochiching. It was climbing up a telephone pole in an agricultural area in Pinetop Township. Sack #148! Later that day we found him a Virginia Rail in Koochiching and, finally, one that was grunting in a marsh along Krull Trail south of Williams in Lake of the Woods. Sack #149!

Most of the next morning and afternoon were spent looking for his 150th sack, the beautiful Canada Warbler. But no luck. Bob told me this was his favorite warbler. The time we spent together on these two trips will always be special to me.

The next summer Bob got his 150th sack when he got a Dickcissel in Lake of the Woods in July of 2021. I wished that I had been with him but was still happy he got number 150.

Over lunch one day we talked about me surpassing his sack total of 150. He encouraged me to go for it. Since then, I took over third place in the sack race by getting to 126. Only Bob at 150 and Ray Glassel at 137 are ahead of me. I will always be grateful to Bob for inspiring me and I often think about him when I am out birding.

I was always proud to call Bob my friend. He will be dearly missed.

– *Andy Nyhus, Chaska*



Blue-winged Warbler, by Ricky Bonilla

MOU Calendar

July / August 2024

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

	July 1	2	3	4	5 MRVAC: Bass Ponds Trailhead	6 CNC: MN Campus Bird Hike ZVAS: Quarry Hill Nature Center
7	8	9	10	11	12	13 CNC: WI Campus Bird Hike SPAS: Langton Lake Park MOU: Crow Hassan
14 MRVAC: Old Cedar Ave. Bridge SPAS: Vadnais-Snail Lakes & Grass Lake	15	16	17	18	19	20 LNC: Bird Banding BELL MUSEUM: Open Birding
21 LNC: Raptors Up Close	22	23	24	25	26 CNC: Mn Campus Bird Banding CNC: MN Campus BioBlitz	27 CNC: MN Campus BioBlitz MRVAC: Bass Ponds Trailhead
28	29	30 MGB: Birding Cuba	31	AUGUST 1	2	3 CNC: MN Campus Bird Hike MRVAC: Old Cedar Ave. Bridge RBNC: Birds & Bagels ZVAS: Quarry Hill Nature Center MOU: SNA Bio Blitz
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 CNC: WI Campus Bird Hike
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 MOU: Shorebird Watch
18 MRVAC: Bass Ponds Trailhead MRVAC: Miesville Ravine	19	20	21	22	23	24 FOSZB: Annual BioBlitz MRVAC: Rapids Lake Unit MNWR
25	26	27	28 ACP: Birding by Boat-Rice Creek Chain of Lakes	29	30	31

MOU Calendar

July / August 2024

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

ANOKA COUNTY PARKS

<https://www.anokacountyparks.com/classes-camps>

Aug. 28: Birding by Boat

Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Regional Park

9 am–12 pm. Not just birding but birding by boat. We'll get in canoes/kayaks and head out on the water for a slow paddle to look for birds. Being on the water provides for open viewing and a chance to observe a variety of bird species. Meet at Rice Creek Pavilion 1, 7373 Main Street, Lino Lakes. Pre-registration required. For more information and to register please visit the [website here](#). Program fee: \$10.

BELL MUSEUM

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

July 20: Open Birding

10–11 am. All visitors can join the birding fun on the Bell Museum's Learning Landscape. This drop-in guided experience welcomes all experience levels, especially those who are new to birding. Binoculars are available and the group will remain on the flat, paved sidewalk just outside of the museum. No registration is required for open birding; you can drop in any time during the session. Note: Bell Museum admission is not included.

CARPENTER NATURE CENTER

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

July 6 & Aug. 3: MN Campus Bird Hike

8–10 am. 12805 St. Croix Trail S., Hastings. Learn to identify birds with local experts. Field guides and binoculars are available to use or bring your own. Program fee: \$5.00 or free for "Friends of CNC", SCVBC members and students. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. Please call CNC at 651-437-4359.

July 13: WI Campus Bird Hike

8–10 am. 279 S. Cove Rd., Hudson, WI. Learn to identify birds with local experts. Binoculars and field guides available or bring your own. Program fee: Some fees may apply to activities. Space is limited and reservations are required. Go [here](#) for details.

July 26: MN Campus Bird Banding

8:30 am–12 pm. 12805 St. Croix Trail S., Hastings. See birds up close and watch the experts band birds at CNC. Banding runs continuously, so come and go as you please. Donations of bird seed and suet are appreciated in lieu of a program fee. All banding, marking, and sampling are being conducted under a federally authorized Bird Banding Permit issued by the U.S. Geological Survey. [More information](#).

July 26 & 27: MN Campus BioBlitz

3 pm Friday to noon Saturday. 12805 St. Croix Trail S., Hastings. Learn from bird, reptile, amphibian, invertebrate, and plant experts in a fun day of citizen science. Join us at the Minnesota Campus and help inventory teams in restored prairies, riparian habitats, and wooded bluff lands to discover and document plant and animal species. All ages are welcome at this free program.

Aug. 10: WI Campus Bird Hike

8–10 am. 300 E. Cove Rd., Hudson, WI. Learn to identify birds with local experts. Binoculars and field guides available or bring your own. Program fee: \$5.00 or free for "Friends of CNC," SCVBC members and students. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. Please call CNC at 651-437-4359.



Yellow Warbler, by Jerry Pruett

FRIENDS OF SAX-ZIM BOG

<https://saxzim.org/>

Aug. 24: Annual Sax-Zim Bog BioBlitz

9–2 pm. In its 12th year, the BioBlitz continues to grow with the addition of new field trips and experts, documentation of species in new areas of the Bog, and increased attendance by naturalists and curious outdoors folks alike. Field Trips Leaders, the schedule for the day, and other important notes, head over to our website: saxzim.org/events. Registration is not required for this event but is encouraged.

LOWRY NATURE CENTER THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT

Lowry Nature Center, 7025 Victoria Dr., Victoria.

Note: For more information on these events go [here](#).

July 20: Bird Banding

9 am–noon. See wild songbirds safely trapped, studied, and banded with numbered rings. Find out what scientists learn from these banded birds. Participants ages 11 years and younger must be accompanied by an adult.

July 21: Raptors Up Close

2:30–4 pm. Raptors have been a part of education at Lowry for many of our 50 years. Meet the current captive raptors, learn about these amazing birds of prey and how they help teach. Drop in anytime. Participants ages 11 years and younger must be accompanied by an adult.

MINNESOTA GLOBAL BIRDERS

Note: This informal group of people interested in birding throughout the world has monthly online gatherings now online. Details on the events, and on how to register for the Zoom sessions, will be provided via MOU-Net and also on the Minnesota Global Birders and Minnesota Birding pages in Facebook a few weeks before each session.

July 30: Birding Cuba

7–9 pm. Jennie McNicoll – a Wildlife Biologist for the US Fish & Wildlife Service, based in Minnesota – will give the presentation on a trip to Cuba that she organized. Cuba has an interesting avifauna, with a number of Caribbean and Cuba-only endemic species.

Date TBD: Birding in northern Colombia

Paul Budde and Howard Towle will discuss and show photos from their recent birding trip to the north of Colombia. Colombia has more bird species than any other country, and the mountain ranges in the north have a number of species found nowhere else.

MINNESOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

<https://moumn.org/>

For questions, please contact Trey Weaver, MOU Field MOU Field Trips Chair email: fieldtrips@moumn.org

July 13: Crow Hassan Park Reserve

6:30 am. Join us for a hike through grasslands, deciduous woods, and the savannah that adjoins them. This location is a known for Blue-winged Warbler, Ovenbird, Wood Thrush, Eastern Towhee, Henslow's, Grasshopper, Vesper, Lark, Clay-colored and Field Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlarks, Orchard Oriole, Barred Owl, both Cuckoos, Common Raven have also taken up residence at Crow-Hassan and nearby locations. This park is rich in wildlife viewing opportunities other than avifauna as well. Participant limit will be ten people, registration via Signup Genius event page is required. Please [see this link](#).

Aug. 3: Bonanza Prairie SNA Bio Blitz

8 am. Or you may come and go as you please. In partnership with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, we will be surveying for avifauna alongside the DNR and other local naturalists at Bonanza Prairie SNA (24 miles Northwest of Ortonville in Big Stone County). Our goal will be to count and report as many species as we can. There is no participant limit, but your registration for a head count will be appreciated. Please [see this link](#) for registration.

Aug. 17: Shorebird Watch

Note: unknown time and location. Given the difficulty of determining shorebird habitat ahead of time, we will be announcing a site in as few as a week or two before this date. We will attempt to plan for somewhere within a one-hour drive from the Twin Cities metro area (such as Purgatory Creek in Eden Prairie or Indian Lake WMA north of Winthrop), but may go as far as Long Lake WPA in Cottonwood County. Participant limit will be 10 people, registration via Signup Genius event page is required. Please [see this link](#) for registration.

MN RIVER VALLEY AUDUBON CHAPTER

www.mrvac.org

Note: Registration process for MVNWR Field Trips is available on the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge website. Registration for some dates will remain locked for about a month prior to the date of the walk. Please indicate in your registration if you would like to receive a birding summary and species list from the walk. Registration is required online [here](#). For information about MRVAC birding events contact Craig Mandel at 952-240-7647 or EgretCMan@msn.com.

July 5, 27 & Aug. 18: Bass Ponds Trailhead

8–10:30 am. Meet at 2501 E 86th., Bloomington. Join refuge naturalist Craig Mandel for a bird walk to learn about the birds that nest on the refuge. Learn about the different types of habitats at the refuge that support over 100 species of nesting birds. Some of the species we may see include trumpeter swan, bald eagle, wood duck, willow flycatcher and yellow warbler. Bring your binoculars and a field guide and dress appropriately for the weather. Registration is required online [here](#).

July 14 & Aug. 3: Old Cedar Ave. Bridge Trailhead

8–10:30 am. Meet at 9551 Old Cedar Ave. S., Bloomington. Join refuge naturalist Craig Mandel for a bird walk to learn about the birds that nest on the refuge. Learn about the different types of habitats at the refuge that support over 100 species of nesting birds. Some of the species we may see include trumpeter swan, bald eagle, wood duck, willow flycatcher and yellow warbler. Bring your binoculars and a field guide and dress appropriately for the weather. Registration is required online [here](#).

Aug. 18: Miesville Ravine

7 am. Meet in the north parking lot at 27970 Orlando Trail in Cannon Falls. We'll start out on the upper trail looking for migrating warblers, Scarlet Tanagers, Hummingbirds, Ravens, and Yellow-billed Cuckoos. We usually find cuckoos. Bring lunch if you want to stay for the afternoon when we will bird some of the less visited corners of this remote Dakota County park. This trip will be moderate effort. No reservations are needed. Leader: Steve Weston [her](#)

Aug. 24: Rapids Lake Unit Visitor Center

8–10:30 am. Meet at 15865 Rapids Lake Road, Carver.

New MOU Members

Note to members: Please notify the Membership Chair (membership@moumn.org) of any email or address changes so you can continue receiving the MOU's two publications. We would also appreciate notification when a MOU member dies.

Todd Arnold, *Scandia, MN*
Daniel Cronk, *St. Paul, MN*
James Dostal, *Brooklyn Park, MN*
Casey Finnerty, *Winona, MN*
Nicole Gaffaney, *Ramsey, MN*
Grant Gorden, *Farmington, MN*
Hunter Kasproicz, *Warren, MN*
Roberta Klar, *Palm Harbor, FL*
Elaine Larson, *New Brighton, MN*
Zoey Magner, *Argyle, MN*
Ellyn Swenson, *Minneapolis, MN*
Zoe Therese, *Mahtomedi, MN*

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RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER

1000 Rustad Rd., Faribault.

www.rbnc.org

Aug. 3: Bagels & Birds

10–11 am. Join us for bagels while watching birds through the windows on the wild viewing area. Free program for all ages on the first Saturday of the month.

ST. PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

<https://www.saintpaulaudubon.org/upcoming-events/>

Note: For full information on these birding events go the [SPAS website](#).

July 13: Langton Lake Park

7:30–9:30 am. Join us for a stroll at Langton Lake Park to observe and identify birds and trees, and consider their interactions. Meet at the parking lot on County Road C2 on the west side of the lake: 1950 Co. Rd. C2 W., Roseville. No registration needed. Leaders: Kathy Robbins 651-636-6475 Krobbins@umn.edu and Cathy Croghan.

July 14: Vadnais-Snail Lakes & Grass Lake Regional Parks

8 am–noon. Discover the fun of birding from a bicycle on more than 5 miles of mostly level, paved, multi-use trails that connect four lakes in Shoreview: Grass, Snail, Sucker, and Vadnais, all of which are prime birding locations for Ramsey County. Landscape here is varied and includes lakes, woods, wetlands, and open grassland. Meet in parking lot at Snail Lake picnic area/boat launch/beach parking lot: 4191 Snail Lake Blvd, Shoreview. Registration required and limited to 8 participants. Contact leader Sherry Gray at sherrygray@yahoo.com to register.

ZUMBRO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

For full information on these events, go to the [ZVAS website](#).

July 6 & Aug. 3: Quarry Hill Nature Center

9–10:30 am. Leaders: Terry & Joyce Grier. Join us on a casual walk around [Quarry Hill Nature Center](#). Meet by the Nature Center entrance. 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.



Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

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

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MN Birding is published bi-monthly

Editor: Gerald Hoekstra

Designer: Thomas Benjamin Hertzell

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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.

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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: \$ _____