



Minnesota BIRDING

November
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LeConte's Sparrow
by Michael Oetken

Conservation Column Introducing Myself as the New MOU Conservation Committee Chair

by Clinton Dexter-Nienhaus

I am excited to take on the role of chairing the MOU Conservation Committee, after one of my personal role models in conservation, Carrol Henderson, recently decided to step down as chair. Carrol's role in bird conservation in our state (and beyond) has been impactful for many. Since many members of the MOU may not know me or may be unaware of my interest in conservation, I thought I would use this Conservation Column in this issue to introduce myself.

Since my childhood, I have been passionate about conservation of non-game species and their habitats. My introduction into the natural world came with my interest in fish, especially those species not often sought after and much maligned by other anglers. During my undergraduate years at St. Mary's University in Winona I became more interested in birds, thanks to my professor, Dr. Raymond Faber, and his love of Henslow's Sparrows and Herring Gulls, creatures with decidedly different conservation needs. I completed my Master's at the University of Minnesota Duluth, with a focus on participation of young adults in conservation organizations. My hope was to better understand how and why young adults choose — or do not



Clinton with kestrel nest box
by John Hatcher

choose — to participate in conservation organizations and whether those choices mesh with assumptions made by organizations themselves.

Presently, I am Head Naturalist with the Friends of Sax-Zim Bog, a position nearing its tenth year. My position allows me to increase the knowledge and understanding of bogs

and the boreal forest of others through field trips, large events, and outreach. As a land preservation organization, the Friends of Sax-Zim Bog works to maintain and preserve habitat in the greater Sax-Zim Bog ecosystem, whether that might be peatlands or mature mixed riparian forest. In the Bog, I direct and co-lead with Frank Nicoletti our American Kestrel Nest Box program, complete Winter Raptor Surveys and Rare Owl Surveys with my wife and field companion Kristina (who also chairs the Savaloja Grant Committee for the MOU), and hope to better understand this amazing ecosystem through documentation of the biodiversity within.

I have been directly involved with conservation since before my undergraduate years and have continued to pursue my interests in this area by working with The Prairie Enthusiasts, serving on the boards of conservation-focused organizations, and participating in a variety of conservation organizations. In taking on this new responsibility as chair of the MOU Conservation Committee, I will be able to continue to share my love of conservation of wetlands and prairies,

the boreal forest, and specific species that need our help.

The mission of the Conservation Committee is three-fold:

- 1) To encourage informed advocacy for the conservation of birds.
- 2) To recommend to the MOU Board of Directors official positions on various conservation issues.
- 3) To provide a presence by the MOU when engaging or working with other groups on issues or efforts that are related to birds.

I look forward to undertaking these responsibilities, and I am fortunate to be surrounded by a committee full of folks also interested in, or working directly on, conservation in Minnesota. I am excited to see what we can share with you all in the coming years!

Clinton is the Head Naturalist for the Friends of Sax-Zim Bog and currently lives in Duluth, MN.

Seeking Savaloja Grant Applications and Donations

Kristina Dexter-Nienhaus, Chair, MOU Savaloja Committee

Do you or someone you know have a bird-related project in Minnesota that could benefit from grant funds? MOU will award grants for bird-related projects to be funded from the Savaloja Memorial Fund in 2025. Projects that increase our understanding of birds, promote preservation of birds and their natural habitats, or increase public interest in birds may be considered for grants. Proposals that include or benefit underrepresented people within our birding community (BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, disabled folks, etc.) are especially encouraged, as we hope to support opportunities that diversify this community in order to better serve Minnesota's birds and birders. All are encouraged to apply!

Further details on past projects and application information can be found at <https://moumn.org/grants.php>. Awards typically range from a few hundred dollars up to as much as \$4000. In 2025, we anticipate that at least \$12,000 will be available for grants. The deadline for receipt of grant applications is **January 20, 2025**. Grant recipients will be notified by April 1, 2025. If your organization has an idea for a great project, please consider applying!

With support from generous member donations, MOU has helped fund a diverse array of worthy projects over the years. Donations specifically made to the Savaloja Fund help us offer grant funding to more worthy projects and sup-

port positive change and important research in Minnesota. You can help MOU make sure worthy projects receive the support they need by upgrading your membership next time you renew. **Donate now** by following the "Donate button" at the top of MOU's homepage, and be sure to note "Savaloja Fund" in the instructions. Your support today makes a world of difference to the future of our beloved birds.



Harris's Sparrow, by Britt Dalbec

Savaloja Grant Report: Pierz Elementary School

by Tom Otte

In September, Pioneer Elementary School in Pierz welcomed the University of Minnesota Raptor Center for four programs to educate and entertain approximately 650 children in kindergarten through seventh grade. These programs were supported with a generous Savaloja grant through the Minnesota Ornithologists Union.

On a glorious, sunshine-filled afternoon at the Pierz Healy High School football field, the Raptor Center presented programs explaining the finer points of the survival, habitats, and identification features of Red-tailed Hawks, Bald Eagles, Kestrels, and Great Horned Owls with a live representative of each. The children were highly engaged with their attention and asked thoughtful questions as they learned about the niches of these amazing birds of prey.

Pierz students learned how eyes, feathers, and feet all play a role in how each raptor is specifically adapted to sur-

vive and thrive in their environment. Eye placement on the head of the bird, feather designs for specific differences in flight patterns, and, of course, those amazing talons were all on full display as part of the presentation to grow appreciation for some of the kings and queens of our Minnesota landscapes. Additionally, students learned that some of these birds are with the Raptor Center because they became reliant on humans after people tried to “rescue” them when they were young and thought to be abandoned. The message of the presentation was clear: Appreciate these beautiful birds, but leave them alone to be the wild animals they are.

The presenters from the University of Minnesota Raptor Center were outstanding with their presentation as they adapted instruction and interaction with children as young as 5 and as old as 13. Kudos to the Raptor Center on their masterful planning for this event.



Raptor Center Bald Eagle shows off her majestic side as Pioneer Littles are mesmerized. Photo by Heidi Thielen

2024 MOU Certificates of Appreciation

The MOU gives Certificates of Appreciation to people with a “rare” bird on their property who provide access for visiting birders. Any MOU member may nominate a bird host/hostess at any time of the year by simply emailing the Awards Committee and including the name(s), address, shared rare bird, and a general description of the circumstances. A complimentary MOU membership is included with each Certificate for non-MOU members. We give heartfelt thanks to the following people who shared their birds with MOU members and others in 2024:



Rick Schmid
Bullock's Oriole, Washington County
photo by Rick Schmid



Ryan Hainfield
Spotted Towhee, Ramsey County
photo by Liz Harper



Paula Perdoni
Eurasian Tree Sparrow, Grant County
photo by Liz Harper

MOU Calendar

November / December 2024

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------------------------------|--|
| | | | | | NOVEMBER 1 | 2 CNC: MN Campus Bird Hike RBNC: Bagels & Birds RBNC: Story time – Turkeys ZVAS: Quarry Hill |
| 3 NEMNBA/DAS: Superior Entry Gull Watch | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 CNC: WI Campus Bird Hike MGRP: Young Birders Club MRVAC: Bass Ponds |
| 10 NEMNBA/DAS: Superior Entry Gull Watch MRVAC: Old Cedar Ave. Bridge MOU: West Metro Sea Duck Run | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 IOC: Owl Prowl MRVAC: Wilkie Unit Trailhead |
| 17 LNC: Raptors Up Close NEMNBA/DAS: Superior Entry Gull Watch MOU: Medicine Lake | 18 | 19 LLBA/ACM: Let's Talk Turkey | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 MRVAC: Old Cedar Ave. Bridge ZVAS: Brownville Tundra Swans |
| 24 NEMNBA/DAS: Superior Entry Gull Watch | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 CNC: MN Campus Bird Banding | 30 |
| DECEMBER 1 MRVAC: Bass Ponds | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 MOU Paper Session CNC: MN Campus Bird Hike RBNC: Bagels & Birds ZVAS: Quarry Hill |
| 8 MRVAC: Old Cedar Ave. Bridge | 9 | 10 Event | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 CNC: WI Campus Bird Hike IOC: Owl Prowl MOU: Bass Ponds ZVAS: Christmas Bird Count |
| 15 | 16 MRVAC: Wilkie Unit Trailhead | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 CNC: MN Campus Bird Banding | 28 FOSZB: Winter Birding Trip |
| 29 FOSZB: Winter Birding Trip | 30 | 31 | | | | |

MOU Calendar

November / December 2024

CARPENTER NATURE CENTER

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

Nov. & Dec: Big Year Birding Challenge

Join us in 2024 for a brand-new program series and citizen science opportunity. Hosted in partnership with renowned bird expert Ben Douglas, the Big Year Birding Challenge is designed to encourage everyone to learn more about birds and see how many different species they can identify at Carpenter Nature Center in a single year. This is a great opportunity for newcomers to get into birding, for experienced birders to work on their life list and for Carpenter to identify the different species that come through the Nature Center. For further information go [here](#). Questions? Contact Jennifer Vieth at 651-437-4359 ext. 108 or jennifer@carpenternaturecenter.org.

Nov. 2 & Dec. 7: MN Campus Bird Hike

9–11 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. Pre-registration required – Call 651-437-4359. Fee: \$5 per person or FREE for Friends of CNC, SCVBC and students.

Nov. 9: WI Campus Bird Hike

9–11 am. Al & Laurie Hein Visitor Center, 279 South Cove Road, Hudson, WI. Learn to identify birds with local experts. Field guides and binoculars are available to use or bring your own. Pre-registration required – Call 651-437-4359. Program Fee: \$5 per person or FREE for Friends of CNC, SCVBC, and students.

Nov. 29 & Dec. 27: MN Campus Bird Banding

8:30–noon. 12805 St. Croix Trail S., Hastings, back patio of the Administration Building. See birds up close and watch the experts band birds at CNC. Banding runs continuously, so come and go as you please. Free. Donations of bird seed and suet are appreciated in place of a program fee. In case of inclement weather such as heavy rain or snow banding may be canceled. All banding, marking, and sampling is being conducted under a federally authorized Bird Banding Permit issued by the U.S. Geological Survey's BBL.

Dec. 14: WI Campus Bird Hike

9–11 am. North End – 300 East Cove Road, Hudson, WI. Learn to identify birds with local experts. Field guides and binoculars are available to use or bring your own. Pre-registration required – Call 651-437-4359. Fee: \$5 per person or FREE for Friends of CNC, SCVBC and students.

FRIENDS OF SAX-ZIM BOG

<https://saxzim.org/>

Dec. 28 & 29: Winter Birding Field Trips

8 am–2 pm. Meet in the Lois King Education Center at the Welcome Center. Join us this winter for a couple of winter birding field trips. The intention of these field trips is to give you an introduction on how to approach birding in the Sax-Zim Bog in the winter months. We will not be specifically targeting owls but will take a look at any we come across. This is a good field trip to attend, especially if you hope to learn more about how to approach winter birding in the vast Sax-Zim Bog. Register for these field trips [here](#). Questions: Head Naturalist Clinton at naturalist@saxzim.org

INTERNATIONAL OWL CENTER

126 E Cedar St., Houston

<https://www.internationalowlcenter.org/>

Nov. 16 & Dec. 14: Expert-led Owl Prowls

Nov. 16 at 4:30 pm; Dec. 14 at 4:00 pm. Join expert owl caller Jo Severson for an indoor session to learn owl calls and owl prowl etiquette, then drive your vehicle following Jo to 3–4 rural stops to call for wild owls. Owls are usually heard but not seen. Pre-registration is required and is \$10 for Owl Center members and \$15 for non-members. For more information or to register go to www.InternationalOwlCenter.org/owlprowls. Registration opens up for each owl prowl the day after the prior month's prowl.

Dark-eyed Junco ("Oregon"), by Jean Brisance



LAND OF LAKES BIRD ALLIANCE

Note: Formerly Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis.

<https://landoflakesbirdalliance.org/events-list>

Note: For full information on the following events, please go to the LLBA website above.

Nov. 19: Let's Talk Turkey

7–8:15 pm. Turkeys are an adaptable and resilient species. These traits have enabled them to recover from a time of overexploitation and habitat loss to the point that not only are most populations healthy, but turkeys have moved into many urban areas and are considered to be overabundant and a nuisance. Professor David Drake will share the ecology, life history, and management of one of America's most recognizable and fascinating birds. David Drake is a Professor and Extension Wildlife Specialist in the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology at the U of W, Madison. His research and extension programs primarily focus on wildlife and wildlife damage management in human-dominated landscapes. Registration for this free webinar is required [here](#).

LOWRY NATURE CENTER THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT

<https://www.threeriversparks.org/>

Nov. 17: Raptors Up Close

2:30–4 pm. Lowry Nature Center, 7025 Victoria Dr., Victoria. Meet captive raptors, learn about these amazing birds of prey and how they help teach. Drop in anytime. All ages. Free.

MINNESOTA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

<https://moumn.org/>

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

Nov. 10: West Metro Sea Duck Run

9 am. Join Trey Weaver on a caravan through the West Metro, Hennepin, Wright and Carver counties in search of ducks, especially sea ducks such as Long-tailed Duck, Black, White-Winged, and Surf Scoters. A spotting scope is highly recommended, but not required. Meet at East Medicine Lake Park, Plymouth. Registration required and limited to 10 people. Information and registration [here](#).

Nov. 17: Medicine Lake - Duck, Duck, Gray Duck

8 am. Join Matt Hoberg for a field trip focused on duck identification at Medicine Lake in Plymouth. During this time of year, a variety of migrating ducks might be encountered including all three scoters and Long-tailed Duck among the common migrants such as grebes, Common/Red-breasted Mergansers, Common Goldeneye, Greater/Lesser Scaup, Redheads, Ring-necked Ducks. It is also possible for uncommon gull species to be encountered, such as Iceland, Glaucous, and Great/Lesser Black-Backed. Limited to 10 people. Registration required [here](#).

Dec. 7: 2024 MOU Paper Session

8am–3:30pm. North Star Ballroom, St. Paul Student Center, 2017 Buford Avenue, Saint Paul. Register [here](#).

Dec. 14: Bass Ponds – Bird by Bird

9 am. Join Trey Weaver for a field trip at one of the Twin Cities' best winter birding sites. This low-key field trip will be great for beginner birders, or those just looking for a casual bird hike where resident over-wintering species will be encountered. Limited to 10 people. Registration required [here](#).

Sandhill Cranes, by David C. Keyes



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

Nov. 9 & Dec. 1: Bass Ponds

8–10:30 am. Meet at 2501 E 86th., Bloomington. Explore some of the best Refuge units for bird watching in the winter season. We will spend time on these walks searching for birds that over-winter on the refuge or are late migrants. We will study the different species of birds and learn about some other local locations to search for birds during the winter season. Birders of all skill levels are welcome to attend these walks. Bring along your binoculars, favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather. Registration required [here](#).

Nov. 10, 23 & Dec. 8: Old Cedar Ave. Bridge

8–10:30 am. Meet at 9551 Old Cedar Ave. S., Bloomington. Explore some of the best Refuge units for bird watching in the winter season. We will spend time on these walks searching for birds that over-winter on the refuge or are late migrants. We will study the different species of birds and learn about some other local locations to search for birds during the winter season. Birders of all skill levels are welcome to attend these walks. Bring along your binoculars, favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather. Registration required [here](#).

New MOU Members

Welcome to the MOU! (To all members: please remember to notify the MOU Membership Secretary (membership@moumn.org) when you change your address or email. If you are renewing for more than one year, please indicate that on your check.)

Gabby Hjelmstad, *Rosemount*
William Hutchison, *Shoreview, MN*
Peter Kleugel, *White Bear Lake*
Cheryl Krueger, *Nowthen*
Laura Lorenzen (family), *St Petersburg, FL*
Isadora (Izzie) Myers, *St. Paul*
Shane Rustin, *New Ulm*
Tonia Theroux, *Eagan*

Dec. 16: Wilkie Unit Trailhead

8–10:30 am. Meet at 7701 County Road 101 E., Shakopee. Explore one of the best Refuge units for bird watching in the winter season. We will spend time on this walk searching for birds that over-winter on the refuge or are late migrants. We will study the different species of birds and learn about some other local locations to search for birds during the winter season. Birders of all skill levels are welcome to attend these walks. Bring along your binoculars, favorite field guide and dress appropriately for the weather. Registration required [here](#).

MISSISSIPPI GATEWAY REG. PARK THREE RIVERS PARK DISTRICT

<https://www.threeriversparks.org/location/mississippi-gateway-regional-park>

Nov. 9: Young Birders Club: Crows and Other Corvids

9–11 am. Minnesota is home to five members of the Corvid family. Learn about these highly intelligent birds, their problem-solving abilities and family structure. Walk the park trails in search of these beautiful birds. All equipment provided. Feel free to bring your own binoculars. Free for Young Birders Club members (discount applied at checkout). Reservations required by two days prior [here](#).

NORTHEASTERN MINNESOTA BIRD ALLIANCE

Note: Formerly known as Duluth Audubon Society
<https://duluthaudubon.org/>

Nov. 3, 10 17, & 24: Superior Entry Gull Watches

10 am. Join obsessive gull watcher and Northeastern Minnesota Bird Alliance (formerly Duluth Audubon Society) VP Clinton Dexter-Nienhaus for this season's Superior Entry Gull Watches. Meet at Superior Entry Breakwall (very end of Wisconsin Point) These field trips are intended to view and learn about gull identification in the field. Gulls can be a difficult group of birds to identify, and this field trip experience will work to help attendees better understand the more frequently observed gulls in Minnesota. Gulling will last between 2-4 hours. Please bring cameras, binoculars, spotting scopes, and one or more loaves of bread. Questions: Clinton Dexter-Nienhaus at xanthomn@gmail.com

RIVER BEND NATURE CENTER

www.rbnc.org

Nov. 2 & Dec. 7: Bagels & Birds

10–11 am. 1000 Rustad Rd., Faribault. 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. Bagels provided by The Inn at Shattuck.

Nov. 2: Storytime with a Naturalist: Turkey Time

11–noon. Turkey time! Listen to stories about turkeys and other birds during this story time with a Naturalist.

ZUMBRO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

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

Nov. 2 & Dec. 7: Quarry Hill Nature Center

9–10:30 am. Join leaders Terry & Joyce Grier Leaders on a casual walk around [Quarry Hill Park](#). Meet by the Nature Center entrance. Bring binoculars if you have them. Dress for the weather. Stay for any length of time. Walks usually last 60 - 90 minutes. Free and open to the public - no registration required.

Nov. 23: Tundra Swans in Brownsville

8 am through mid-afternoon. Leaders: Brendan Lanpher, Terry & Joyce Grier. Meet at the east side parking lot of the [Heintz Center](#), 1936 Collegeview Rd. E., Rochester to carpool. We'll travel thru La Crescent and down the Mississippi to Brownsville to see hopefully thousands of Tundra Swans and other waterfowl. Trip will return early afternoon. Bring your own lunch or choose to eat at a local restaurant before returning to Rochester. Free and open to the public - no registration required.

Barred Owl, by Thomas Burns



Dec. 14: ZVAS Christmas Bird Count

7:15am – all day. Leader: Clifford Hanson. Each year teams of interested birdwatchers search designated sections of the Rochester area to see what birds can be found. We'll meet at 7:15am at the west Silver Lake parking lot (near the former fire station), then take a break from noon to 1 pm at [Quarry Hill Nature Center](#) for a quick lunch and tally. More counting is done in the afternoon with a final tally and potluck held at 4:45 at Quarry Hill. You're invited to participate with one of our teams for part, or all of the day's count. Novices will be assigned to teams with expert leaders. Be prepared for the weather, bring your own binoculars, lunch and beverages. For preregistration and information contact Clifford Hansen at 507-281-0249 or clhroch@yahoo.com.

MOU Book Sale

If you have bird books that you no longer use, please consider donating them to the MOU for the annual MOU Book Sale. The sale will be held at the Paper Session on December 7. All proceeds from the Book Sale go toward the MOU's Savaloja Grants Program, which provides funding to bird research, conservation, and education in Minnesota.

To donate, you may either bring your books directly to the Paper Session or email Alex Sundvall (asgreenplanet4077@gmail.com) to schedule a pickup prior to the event.

NB: Due to quantity, we are only accepting books about birds. We cannot accept journals or magazines.



★ ★ ★ Save the Date ★ ★ ★

Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Paper Session

December 7, 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
University of Minnesota, St. Paul Student Center

The theme of this year's event is "Birds of the State: State of the Birds." Join us for a day of presentations on long term monitoring projects in the state, highlights on species of conservation, and current student research. Register online [here](#).

- 8:00-9:00 a.m. Registration and Social Hour
- 9:00-9:15 a.m. Welcome
Clinton Dexter-Nienhaus, MEd, Head Naturalist, Friends of Sax-Zim Bog
- 9:15-10:00 a.m. "Birds of the State: State of the Birds"
Todd Arnold, Professor, University of Minnesota, Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology
- 10:00-10:30 a.m. "A Current Assessment of Trumpeter Swan Migration Patterns in the Midwest"
David Wolfson, PhD Student, Wildlife Ecology and Management, University of Minnesota
- 10:30-10:45 a.m. Break
- 10:45-11:15 a.m. "Seventeen Years of Grassland Bird Monitoring in Western Minnesota"
Daren Carlson, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- 11:15-11:45 a.m. "Using Acoustic Monitoring to Document American Barn Owl (*Tyto furcata*) Range Expansion in Southeastern Minnesota and Southwestern Wisconsin"
Karla Bloem, Executive Director, International Owl Center
- 11:45-12:45 p.m. Lunch
- 12:45-1:15 p.m. Business Meeting and Awards, Bird of the Year announcement
- 1:15-1:45 p.m. "The Boreal Chickadee: Ecology, Current Research, Conservation Status and Management Opportunities"
Kara G Snow, Avian Ecology Lab, Natural Resources Research Institution, University of Minnesota Duluth
- 1:45- 2:15 p.m. "Minnesota National Forest Breeding Bird Monitoring Program: 30 years of Population Monitoring in the Chippewa and Superior National Forests" Josh Bednar, Avian Ecology Lab, Natural Resources Research Institute, University of Minnesota Duluth
- 2:15-2:30 p.m. Break
- 2:30-3:00 p.m. "Using Banding Data to Characterize Crèching Presence and Composition for Passerines in the Midwest"
Ava Craven, Jessica Schmidt, Undergraduate Students, St. Olaf College
- 3:00-3:30 p.m. "Hoary Redpoll, We Hardly Knew Ye: Additions, Deletions, and Status Changes to Minnesota's Official State Checklist"
Bob Dunlap, MOU Records Committee
- 3:15-3:30 PM Closing Remarks

Birder Bio: Jeremy Cushman



Tell us about yourself.

Hello! I'm Jeremy Cushman, originally from New York City, and now living in Edina with my wife Natalie and son Ethan. My wife grew up in the area, and we moved here together in 2021. I have a background in physics and robotics and currently work as a software engineer for Amazon.

When did you start birding and what first sparked your interest?

I started birding around 2016, before which I could confidently identify a pigeon and not much else. My wife had enough knowledge of birds to get us started birding in earnest, and we really picked up the hobby together.

How did your interest expand after that first experience?

I was working on a physics experiment in rural Italy, living in a small town within a national park. Learning about the birds was one of the more interesting things to do there outside of work.

What is the main attraction of birding for you?

I enjoy the challenge and unpredictability of birding, and how birding brings a new dimension to everywhere I go. Birding, and paying attention to nature in general, makes every single trip to the park unique, even if it's the same park I've been to hundreds of times.

Where are your favorite places to bird inside or outside Minnesota?

Arden Park in Edina is where I go almost every day. Minnehaha Creek flows through the park, and the park is full of beautifully restored native vegetation. It's where I found Minnesota's first Swainson's Warbler and it has a great playground, so it's a hit for the whole family.

Outside of Arden Park, my top spots in Minnesota are the Old Cedar Ave Bridge and Bass Ponds for quick trips near home, the North Shore in late spring for warblers, and Sax-Zim Bog in the winter for owls and finches.

Outside of Minnesota, my favorite spot is Parker River NWR on Plum Island in Massachusetts, though I have many fond memories of different places in Massachusetts from my time living there.

What is your favorite bird or bird family?

I have always loved grackles, and I love that the mature trees in our yard host flocks of grackles in the spring and fall and nesting grackles every summer. I'm also particularly excited to find mixed flocks of sparrows and a nice spot for shorebirds during migration. The variety of species in both families is incredible.

Do you have any advice on how to be a better birder?

Listening is how you find birds. Seeing them is just a bonus.

Any other interests or hobbies when you're not birding?

I've been a violinist and violist for many years, and here in Minnesota I'm a member of the the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra.



Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

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

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12805 Saint Croix Trail South
Hastings, MN 55033
Email: mou@moumn.org
Web: <http://moumn.org>

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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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Birding Hotline

Northwest: 800-433-1888

MOU Contacts

Minnesota Birding Editor: newsletter@moumn.org

President: president@moumn.org

Vice President: vicepresident@moumn.org

Membership Secretary: membership@moumn.org

Treasurer: treasurer@moumn.org

Recording Secretary: secretary@moumn.org

The Loon Editor: editor@moumn.org

CBC Compiler: cbc@moumn.org

MOU Records Committee: mourc@moumn.org

Conservation Chair: conservation@moumn.org

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Field Trips: fieldtrips@moumn.org

All other MOU functions: mou@moumn.org

MOU web site: <http://moumn.org>

MOU Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MNornithU/>

MOU Membership: New / Renewal

Name _____

E-mail _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

County _____

Membership Categories

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth (under 18) | \$15.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign (including Canada) | U.S. \$35.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$35.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting | \$75.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate | \$100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life, single | \$500.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life, joint | \$750.00 |

Send to: Cindy Smith, MOU Membership Secretary
19885 Lillehei Avenue
Hastings MN 55033-9354

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: \$ _____