

Central Minnesota Audubon
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St. Cloud, MN 56301

Green-Backed Gazette

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Newsletter of the Central Minnesota Audubon Society

*** All Meetings held at the St. Cloud Unitarian Fellowship Hall**

Volume 42

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April/May, 2020



Editors note... by Nicki Blake-Bradley

Nature Can Be Brutal

That was the title of a message that I received from the DNR Nongame Wildlife Staff when they announced that the third eaglet, nicknamed E3 had died overnight. It was alive on the evening of Easter Sunday but gone by Monday morning. Two were left. One third... or 33% of that family's young gone... poof.

COVID 19 is a reminder of how brutal nature can be, but I think that nature really gets a bad wrap. To get through this challenging time, I think we need to **think positive** and think globally but act locally. Let's change that narrative... how about: Nature is/can be beautiful; nature is bountiful; nature is a teacher; nature is honest; or nature can be **bodacious!** :o)

Yes, one of three baby eagles died, but the good news is that the other two have an even better chance of fledging stronger as a result. It's okay to be sad for the baby eagle, but if food continued to be scarce the chance of all three eaglets living to adulthood would be lessened.

The scramble and competition for goods (like toilet paper) has seemed silly to me. If we just exercise common sense and conservation of our resources, we will survive just fine. Just like the eagles, we have the potential to come out of this situation stronger and smarter! We can do this people!

Social distancing doesn't need to mean complete isolation. There are telephones, e-mail options on smart phones, fancy technology apps for visual chatting, and even the old standby of doing a "drive by" visit. It's time to think outside the box.

**Whether you think you can or think
you can't, you're right.
~ Henry Ford**

Calendar

*** Please Note:** The following dates are all tentative and subject to change. If social distancing is still necessary, or gathering in groups is not recommended, we will make efforts to communicate that via our September, 2020 newsletter. We'd like to keep our speakers lined up as listed, but that may need to change as well. In uncertain times, we make tentative plans... be safe, everyone!



6:30 p.m. Friday, April 17, 2020
Woodcock Outing
Sand Prairie WMA
(see page 2 for details)



Date... to be determined in the Fall(?)
Noon - whenever
Audubon Picnic at the Pecks' Farm
(see page 2)



7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2020
Audubon Meeting, Unitarian Fellowship Hall*
Speaker: Troy Freihammer
Topic: The Household Hazardous
Waste Facility



7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2020
Audubon Meeting, Unitarian Fellowship Hall*
Speaker: Steve Saupe
Topic: **Nuts of Central MN**



Bird Vernacular: Anting - A process that birds may use for reducing parasites. A bird will rub acid producing ants on their plumage to discourage parasites. They will use just about anything that burns... including burning cigarettes in some instances!

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Did you know... Indigo Buntings sing from May to August throughout the day... later than nearly any other song bird in North America!

With a total of 22,197 songs given in one day, the world record for the number of utterances goes to... (drumroll please)... the red-eyed vireo!

Who sings at night? Not just owls, that's for sure. Woodcock, nighthawks, whip-poor-wills, ovenbirds, yellowthroats, and mockingbirds can all be heard singing from dusk onward (without a hoot)!

Ever wonder why a woodpecker chooses to bang out their beat on a metal chimney hood or other non-wood item? It's a communication tool used for claiming territory.

Woodcock, ruffed grouse, and snipe use their feathers to help make whistling, drumming, or beating sounds as part of courtship or territorial displays. Woodcock have a complex display that includes twirling and whistling sounds as air vibrates over their feathers. Ruffed grouse brace their tails against a log, create a tripod and then beat out a rapidly descending "drum" sound on their breasts. Snipe have little hooks that connect their stiff outer tail feathers to the central ones which then vibrate and cause a beating or whooshing sound when the birds dive at a 45 degree angle.

Air sacs in birds can be used to create amazing sights and sounds. Sharp-tailed grouse and Prairie Chickens (both greater and lesser) inflate air sacs in their necks during courtship dancing displays. The air sacs expand (on inhale) showing flashy bare skin patches on the birds' necks and then release the air (during exhale) creating a booming noise that can be heard up to a mile away.

Pigeons coo by inflating their esophagus with air. Many songbirds have 20 or more calls for communication with members of a flock, mates, young, threat calls as signs of aggression (toward other birds or predators), to beg for food, or to signal to each other that danger is near.

Song sparrows can have up to 900 different "dialects" depending upon where they grow up!

Mockingbirds have been known to mimic up to 55 different species in one hour! Catbirds and yellow-breasted chats are copycats too!

Always place nest boxes so that they are facing away from prevailing winds. To reduce the risk of making the nestlings cold by rain getting into the box, tilt the box slightly forward/downward. This will also help to keep pesky predators from being able to reach in.



*Source book: Bird Songs - How to Attract Them and Identify Their Songs, by Noble Proctor, PhD

We are what we repeatedly do; excellence, then, is not an act but a habit. ~ Aristotle



Looking for Ways to Make a Difference?

Donations are welcome for our fund to assist with continuing to bring quality speakers to the meetings. Any donation amount would be most welcome and appreciated! If you choose to help out, please make out a check to Central MN Audubon Society (CMAS), and either deliver to our Treasurer, Kathy Doyle or bring to a meeting. THANK YOU SO MUCH!!

Technology savvy people take note... a new Facebook group has been created called "MN Heartland Birding+" which you can join and note sightings in the area as well as possibly post a picture or two!

Local Membership Available: Some CMAS members may wish to only belong to and support our local Audubon Society, without belonging to National Audubon and receiving Audubon magazine. This option is available at only \$20 per year and local members **do** receive our Green-Backed Gazette.



Woodcock Outing, Sand Prairie WMA

Join fellow Auduboners on April 17th for a bird outing to Sand Prairie Wildlife Management Area (WMA). (south of St. Cloud on Hwy 10). Plan on meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the entrance kiosk at Sand Prairie WMA. From the kiosk, we will hike to a wetland with an observation deck where we will observe waterfowl and other early migrants. On the hike to the wetland, we will try to observe some prairie birds like Eastern Meadowlarks. For those who wish to wait until dark, we will try to observe the American Woodcock doing their territorial display. This occurs at dusk.

Prepare for this outing by bringing binoculars, field guides, and maybe a flashlight. A spotting scope will be supplied. Be prepared to wear warm clothing. The exposed observation deck can be quite cold this time of year. I have some spare binoculars for people to use. It is about a half mile hike to the wetland.

Sand Prairie WMA is located south of St. Cloud on Hwy 10. The entrance is located on the east side of the highway near the St. Cloud Reformatory. Look for the dark brown sign. If you have any questions, call Brian at 320-469-0876

**Adopt the pace of nature: her secret is patience.
~ Ralph Waldo Emerson**

CMAS Picnic, May 24th at the Pecks POSTPONED

At this time, we have to say that the picnic is postponed until the Universalist Unitarians determine a date. When we know, you'll know (via the newsletter). All else remains the same:

We'll eat at noon but please come a little earlier. Bring something edible to share. Coffee and juice will be provided. Please bring your own plates, cups and utensils. Lawn chairs might be helpful. After lunch activities could include hay wagon rides to and from Eagle park, prairie walks, eagle nest viewing, river dipping, swinging in the hayloft, etc.

Rockville County Park and Nature Preserve has several miles of trails, educational signs, a high overlook into Eagle Park and a board walk into the tamarack bog. As in the past we'll share this picnic with members of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

Directions from St. Cloud/Waite Park: Travel west on Hwy 23 for four miles past the I-94 Intersection. Look for a green sign "Downtown Rockville" and turn right onto Broadway Street proceeding into Rockville. At Rockville Gas and Bait turn right (north) on County Rd. 139. Cross the Sauk River and then STAY LEFT onto Sauk River Rd. Pecks are at 12299 Sauk River Road, about one mile west of the bridge.



Raptor Food is Needed Again!!

Linda Peck has been a licensed wildlife rehabber for many years and has rehabilitated injured creatures or raised young animals and birds to the point of being able to be released as "adults". She still has educational birds and needs your trapped (not poisoned) mice and road kill rabbits and squirrels or window killed birds. She has three raptors that are very hungry! A huge ***THANK YOU*** goes out to Linda for all her work and dedication to those who cannot verbally express their thanks!

• • • • • "Quarantine" Project Idea... Build a Bird Box!

Here are some Bird box Dimensions:
Flycatcher: 6x6x10, 2" hole. Place over 6' high in a tree.
Tree Swallow: 5x5x6, 1.5" hole. Place under eaves of a building or high on a tree.
Chickadee/Titmouise: 4x4x8, 1 1/8" to 1 1/4" hole. Place above 8' (although chickadees will use just about any height over 5')
Wren: 4x4x8, 1" hole. Place 5 - 10' high near a garden (so they will eat pesky insects)
Bluebird: 5x5x8, 1.5" hole. Place 5 - 10' facing large open areas.
House Finch: 6x6x6, 2" hole. Place 8 - 10' high. Enjoy!!

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