

Central Minnesota Audubon
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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 43

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Editor's Message by Nicki Blake-Bradley



Greetings, fellow Auduboners! We're seven months into COVID-19 with the end being nowhere in sight. Changes to the way that we gather, when we gather, and how we incorporate protective measures have had to be developed. Unfortunately, with the church being closed we cannot meet in person even if we wanted to take the chance.

With no meetings and speakers, we had to make the decision about what to do with the newsletter. It's been decided that we will produce a quarterly newsletter until such a time as we can start up meetings in person again. It's my hope that those of you who have enjoyed the newsletter in the past will still see value and possibly feel less isolated as you read this!

One thing that has changed for me, as you might have guessed, is that I'm working from home. This has definitely made me feel isolated, but it has also allowed me to be more "present" with regard to my yard since I've set up my work station where I can see some of my feeders outside the dining room window.

I have loved being able to see who is visiting the feeders and the seed that I've strewn on the ground. Bird interaction has been fun to watch as well as the squirrels' antics attempting to reach the feeders once they've emptied the big tray feeder.

I've noted that nature has not stopped or even slowed down as a result of COVID-19. Unlike other viruses (like West Nile, for example) the pandemic is evidently species specific, with our feathered (and furry) friends being able to continue to live their lives without being affected. While we need to be vigilant for our own health and safety, perhaps we can take a moment to reflect upon how nature is weathering this "storm".

Not one creature that I've watched has appeared to give up or feel sorry for themselves. Several (the blue jays and nuthatches, for example) have busily worked to "harvest" the bounty and store up for a possibly long winter. They've taken turns getting food from the feeders and helped each other when danger has been detected. They keep in touch with each other. They're all being active in nature. These are all things that we can do while staying socially distant. I was so focused on being safe and distant that I missed the lesson(s)... at least, initially.

So... I challenge you to ask yourself what lesson you can take from our natural world and put it to use. I'll be doing the same!

Calendar

Thursday, November 19, 2020

Give to the MAX Day!
see page 2 for information



Saturday, December 2, 2020
Christmas Bird Count - see page 2



Life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it. ~ Charles Swindoll

Bird Vernacular... "Preening": the act of grooming feathers with the bill or beak especially by rearranging the barbs and barbules of the feathers and by distributing oil from the uropygial gland (for waterproofing). Birds preen by running each feather through its beak from the base toward the tip, nibbling at it to straighten the vanes and "zip" them together. Birds can remove parasites (mites, ticks, fleas or flies) while preening. Birds may preen for hours per day, because feather care is so important for survival (waterfowl may preen up to 17 times).



Did you know... that remote lakes in northern Minnesota have been stocked for years with trout by the MN DNR? Normally, since the lakes are not accessible by road, airplanes have been used to drop the fish into the lakes from 100 feet in the air at an air speed of 100 miles per hour. Survival rates of the fish in that scenario has been approximately 85%.

This year, the DNR's Enforcement Division Aviation Unit (the helicopter pilots) created a system that allows them to stock the lakes more safely, efficiently, and effectively. The helicopters hover five feet over the water and drop the fish into the water thus ensuring that all the trout survive the transition! Another benefit of using the helicopters is that aquatic invasive species aren't possible to be spread because the helicopters don't land on the water.

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Silver Carp Research

Silver carp escaped from captivity in Arkansas into the Mississippi River in the 1970's and have been moving upstream ever since. They are aggressive fish that compete with native species and can harm lakes and rivers. Bighead and Grass carp are also invasive carp that have been found in the Mississippi River as far upstream as Pool 2 near the Twin Cities.

Silver carp were found in the Mississippi River near LaCrosse, Wisconsin in larger numbers this spring, likely because of the higher water levels from 2019. The MN DNR is working with the USGS, USFWS, Wisconsin DNR, and commercial fishermen to capture and study these invasive carp. The USFWS recently fitted four silver carp at one time and released them back into the river. This may seem counter-intuitive but by releasing four together, there is a greater chance of gathering valuable data about how they may act together while schooling with other fish or as individuals.

The MN DNR is very involved in efforts to prevent further movement by these invasive fish. A current study is being done at a lock and dam site in Kentucky where a sound, bubble and light deterrent is being tested because carp are sensitive to light and sound. Bubbles sent up in a curtain may help limit their movement as well.

Anyone catching an invasive carp in Minnesota (or Wisconsin) must report the capture immediately by calling 651-587-2781 or e-mailing invasivecarp.dnr@state.mn.us. They must not be released! They can be brought to the nearest DNR Fisheries office or could be picked up by a DNR employee (Conservation Officer or Fisheries staff).



Give to the MAX Day... Thursday, Nov. 19th

Give to the Max Day doesn't take place until Thursday, November 19, but you may make your donation early to count on Minnesota's giving holiday!

Simply visit GiveMN.org to search for the causes that mean the most to you and make your gifts... we hope CMAS will be one of them! All donations made from now through November 19th will count toward Give to the Max Day totals.

Funds received through Give to the Max Day will be used for a variety of costs associated with running our chapter or bringing quality speakers. Thank you in advance to those who participate and support CMAS! You ROCK!



Wolves DELISTED!

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service delisted wolves from the federal threatened species list on October 29, 2020. As a result, the MN DNR has extended the public input period for residents to offer their opinions on wolf management until **November 20th**. DNR Fish and Wildlife Division director, Dave Olfelt, promised to consider all the public input as revisions to the wolf management plan are considered. The DNR solicited interested individuals to be part of the process to update the wolf management plan since November, 2019. Public input has been sought since late, September 2020.

The wolf management plan in Minnesota concerns population management and monitoring, public safety, depredation controls and guidance for how the state manages wolves. The draft plan is expected to be available early in 2021. More information on the plan and the DNR's response to the federal delisting can be found on the DNR website at <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/wolves/index.html>.

Aigrettes: Filmy feathers that adorn birds' heads in a tuft or plume during mating season (for example, Herons and Great Egrets)



There is a pleasure in the pathless woods, there is a rapture in the lonely shore, there is society where none intrudes, by the deep sea, and music in its roar; I love not Man the less, but Nature more. ~ Lord Byron

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.



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!!



New Specially Regulated Species Listing

Norway Maple has been added to the Specially Regulated Species list by the Department of Agriculture this year. It joins Amur Maple, which was added in 2016. Specially Regulated Species have the potential to cause harm in areas that aren't controlled (for example, natural areas) so measures need to be taken to minimize the harm they may cause.

As non-native trees and shrubs with airborne seeds, it is easy for these trees to get out of control. Companies and organizations that sell these trees and shrubs must advise the purchaser to plant at least 300 feet away from natural areas and only plant them where the seedlings will be controlled (by mowing or other methods).

Norway Maples have leaves that look like our native Sugar Maples but have green or purple leaves in the summer and do not turn the brilliant colors of the natives. A way to tell if the green leaf is from a Norway Maple is to break a leaf off from the branch. It's a Norway Maple if it has a milky, white sap. Natives aren't sappy!

Christmas Bird Count, Saturday December ?



Christmas Bird Counts run from December 14th to January 5th. Our count can occur at any time during that window. At the time of this printing, it's not known whether an organized event will occur. If it does, please join fellow citizen scientists and participate in the St. Cloud Area Christmas Bird Count. If you plan on participating, we will be meeting at the Unitarian Fellowship at 7 a.m. We will be dividing up our count territory at this time. If you are a novice bird watcher, we will partner you with a more experienced birder, but it may be necessary to drive separately.

Our objective is to count the birds in our territory by both species and number of each species. Bring clothing appropriate for the weather, birding optics, bird guides, pencil and paper, and a cheerful attitude despite the weather. A map of the count area will be supplied. We spend most of our time traveling by vehicle but also do some walking. Our count area is a circle with a radius of 7.5 miles. The center of the count is located west of Mills Fleet Farm. We usually meet in St. Joseph at about 1 p.m. to have some lunch and compile our count numbers. This may change due to COVID-19. If you wish to count birds at your feeder you can also do this if your feeder(s) is/are located in the count circle. Call Brian at 320-469-0876 if you have any questions.



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". Linda has retired from rehabbing animals. She still has educational raptors and needs your trapped (not poisoned) mice and road kill rabbits and squirrels or window killed birds. A huge **THANK YOU** goes out to Linda for all her work and dedication over the years to those who cannot verbally express their thanks!