

Central Minnesota Audubon  
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# Green-Backed Gazette

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## NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL MINNESOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

### Volume 46

April/May 2024

#### President's Note, by Dan Kneip



I recall an occurrence at our one-room schoolhouse many years ago. The new teacher had given all the younger children a sheet of paper and asked them to draw a picture of their favorite activity during their summer vacation. Some children drew a picture of a picnic, others of a softball game and others of fishing or driving tractor in the field, but a striking feature that was greatly questioned by the teacher was that in the blue sky along with a few clouds, most of the children had drawn a dark shape like a cursive "m" but representing a large bird. Further discussion determined that the children were depicting a Blue Heron in flight. You see, it happens that the school was located about one mile from the Blue Heron colony on the Sauk River near Cold Spring, and all the children were very accustomed to seeing Blue Herons flying at any time that you looked up in the sky.

The one room school has closed, and the Blue Herons have moved up-river, but I am certain that all the children (and teachers) will recognize a Blue Heron in flight all their lives.

CMAS activities, its promotion of Lawns to Legumes and other turf alternatives and its sponsorship of Audubon Adventures classroom kits is all in the hopes that our children and grandchildren will always be including birds in their drawings of their favorite activities.

During this past year, our speaker program has brought you information on birding opportunities in Mongolia and Ecuador. We have learned about the Peregrine Falcon Recovery Project, about on-going projects at Sax-Zim Bog, St Johns Arboretum and Powdermill Avian Research Center in Pennsylvania. We joined with other organizations to sponsor the Peregrine Falcon speaker and are supporting the St Cloud Flower and Garden Club as well as other groups sponsoring Stan Tekiela presenting on Minnesota wildflowers as the April speaker at the Sartell Community Center.

CMAS is promoting several outings this Spring including the traditional Woodcock outing at Sand Prairie WMA on April 12th and the Albany WTP in early May. Jim Millard (CMAS member and volunteer) is offering beginning birding outings at Avon Hills Folk School on May 4th, 11th and 25th. You can find additional details at the Folk school website: <https://avonhillsfolkschool.org/experiences>.

We are leading a bird outing at Bethlehem Lutheran prairie on May 17th at 8 am. Additional CMAS volunteers are welcome for both the Avon Hills Folk School and the Bethlehem Lutheran outings.

CMAS supports other Birding opportunities such as St. John's Spring Birding Day on May 18th and Lake Osakis Grebe viewing. All are Welcome to the annual picnic at the Peck Farm on Sunday May 26th.

Following a suggestion from our last meeting, I am organizing a bike and birding ride for Saturday Jun 1st 7-7:30 am at Avon. We will bike to Albany and back. If there is interest, we will repeat on July 13th from HW10 to Bowlus. Children are welcome! If interested, provide an e-mail or cell phone for coordination to [centralmnaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:centralmnaudubon@gmail.com)

The CMAS annual meeting will be on April 24th at 7pm at the UUF. I know it is difficult to ask you to meet twice in the same month, but the Annual meeting is a requirement of our bylaws. To entice you to give up a second evening, we will be offering pizza for all at this meeting.

Central Minnesota Audubon Society was founded in February 1981. The present set of bylaws was adopted in Sept 1985. This past year the CMAS board, spearheaded by our power couple Hank and Lisa Schreifels, has been working on a revision of the bylaws to make it more streamlined and relevant to the present day. In our April Annual meeting we plan to present the new bylaws adopted by the CMAS board. Come and vote for our board officers for the coming year, verify our financial situation and discuss CMAS activities.

*In the end, we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught. ~ Baba Dioum*



Location: Sand Prairie WMA (see page 2 for details)

#### Calendar Friday, April 12, 2024

6:30 p.m.

Woodcock Field Trip



#### Tuesday, April 16, 2024

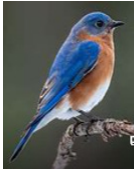
6:30 p.m. Speaker: Stan Tekeila

Topic: Wildflowers



Location: Sartell Community Center  
850 19th ST S, Sartell MN 56377

CMAS will be joining the St Cloud Flower & Garden Club and several other area groups in supporting this presentation.



#### Saturday, April 20, 2024

2024 Bluebird Expo 9 am - 4 pm

Location: Redwood Falls Community Center

901 E. Cook Street, Redwood Falls, MN

To register and find more information go to: [bbrp.org](http://bbrp.org)



#### Wednesday, April 24, 2024

7pm - CMAS Annual Meeting

Location: Unitarian Universalist Church

CMAS annual meeting with election of officers, presentation of accounts, and discussion of bylaws revisions.



#### Saturday, May 4 and 11, 2024

10 am - Birding Outings

Location: Albany Wastewater Treatment Ponds  
(see page 2 for details)



#### Sunday, May 26, 2024

11:30 a.m. - CMAS Annual Picnic

Location: John and Linda Peck's Home  
12299 Sauk River Road, St. Cloud, MN

(Bring something to share, plates, and silverware and prepare to enjoy some great company! The picnic is held with UUC fellowship members.)

Our newsletter is published eight times a year. Seven editions are sent by USPS and by email. The summer edition is only sent by email to those who have provided their address either to CMAS directly or to the National Audubon Society. Providing your email address helps us to have a backup form of communication for the newsletter and allows us to communicate schedules or changes in activities in a prompt and efficient manner. Please help us by providing your email to [centralmnaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:centralmnaudubon@gmail.com)

#### Central MN Audubon Society Officers

Dan Kneip, President  
Brian Jungels, Treasurer  
Linda Peck, Secretary  
Nicki Blake-Bradley, Newsletter

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Powdermill Nature Reserve, Carnegie Museum of Natural History

Luke DeGroote, theAvian Conservation Scientist for the Powdermill Nature Reserve, attended the monthly meeting virtually from Pennsylvania. He started his presentation by noting that bird banding has been around for a long time. King Henry VIII had a peregrine falcon that was banded and went as far as Malta. Bird observatories began in the early 1900's. Paul Bartsch started banding in 1902 due to the lack of knowledge about birds. Luke noted that most observatories are located along geographic barriers where birds become concentrated during migration (location, location, location).

Powdermill Nature Reserve is located on the west side of the Appalachian Mountains on 25 acres of mixed, early success, forest with edges and wetlands. They see a great variety of birds. The researchers use mist nets to capture birds using the same techniques as the original banders. Nets are checked every 40 minutes. Birds are carefully extracted and put into cloth bags to be taken to the office. They use 65 - 69 nets to trap for 6 days per week, 6 hours per day, starting at one half hour before sunrise in the Spring and Fall. In the Summer and Winter they trap 2 - 3 days per week.

For banding, they use metal bands made of aluminum. Each band has a nine digit number that is not repeated. It is a free moving ring that looks like a bracelet on the bird's foot.

They collect demographic information such as gender (when the birds are sexually dimorphic), gender, age (using wing feathers), and give the birds a fat score between 0 - 7 (a visual estimate of the area by the wishbone). Luke noted that they can tell if a bird has hatched within the last year. He added that birds don't usually carry a lot of fat unless they are getting ready to migrate. They also collect wing chord length and weight (mass). Powdermill Nature Reserve has seen 190 species of birds!

The Powdermill Avian Research Center has produced 56 publications, 11 within the last five years. They have noted that diets are shifting due to climate change. Birds are migrating earlier in warmer years. There has been a 0.2 degree Celsius increase per year for average springtime temps. A one degree Celsius increase equals one day earlier and bud burst three days earlier.

Wood thrushes arrive from Central America five days earlier than they did in the 1960's and eat, mate, and nest 22 days earlier than in the 1960's. With regard to mating earlier, 75% are doing better, 25% are not. Luke noted that a lot of birds are declining. He noted that grassland birds are in the steepest decline.

Luke discussed a radiotelemetry tracking system they are using that incorporates a digitally coded tag that sends a pulse out which is read by computers. A network of receiving stations collects movement data. Ninety inland stations have been established over the last five years from Maine to Maryland. 8-10,000 birds are caught annually, and 3-4,000 have already been banded. The data is helping track the birds and inform the scientists. They are partnering with multiple organizations to increase the network.

Luke related window collision statistics and noted that they have some success stories of birds that have survived and successfully migrated. Approximately 600 million birds die each year from collisions alone though. He discussed patterned glass with UV markings that birds can see but humans cannot. Most products sold must be outside the window for birds to see them.

Lights Out March 15 - May 31

Please consider turning off exterior decorative lighting (or any lighting that brightens your area) between the hours of midnight and dawn during migration to help over 250 bird species that travel through MN each spring and fall. YES, in case you're wondering, it matters! Many birds migrate at night and can become disoriented or drawn off course by lit buildings. Studies have found that birds have collisions with buildings or can become so confused they fly around in circles until they drop from exhaustion. One study done regarding shutting off lights in a high-rise building found they reduced bird strike deaths of migrators by 83%!

What can you do to help birds in migration regarding lighting? Do your part in turning out un-necessary lighting as much as possible. They can see in the dark and don't need our help. Encourage companies and friends to do the same. You'll not only be saving birds, but electricity and money as well. Who couldn't use a few more dollars in their pocket, right?

Want to make twice as much of a difference? Put it on your calendar to participate in Lights Out during the fall migration, too (August 15 - October 15) or better yet, make it all year!

Lawns to Legumes

Starting February 1, 2024, Lawns to Legumes will taking applications for cost-share grants of up to \$400 to create pollinator habitat for the Fall 2024 recipients. Apply for a grant through Blue Thumb at <https://bluethumb.org/lawns-to-legumes/about/>. The program is is funded by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and administered through the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

Local Membership: Some CMAS members may wish to only belong and support our local Chapter, without belonging to National Audubon and receiving the Audubon magazine. Local members do receive our Green-Backed Gazette. Membership cost is \$20 annual or \$15 annual if you choose to receive the newsletter electronically only (paperless). Please contact a board member if interested in this option.



Woodcock Outing, 6:30 PM Friday April 12th, 2024

Join fellow nature lovers in an outing to Sand Prairie Wildlife Management Area the evening of Friday, April 12th. Plan on meeting at 6:30 PM at the kiosk near Hwy. 10. We will walk to the observation deck overlooking the marsh. On the way to the marsh we can look for early spring migrants like meadowlarks and fox sparrows on the extensive prairie area and wood line. At the marsh we should expect to see an assortment of waterfowl (teal, widgeons, hooded mergansers, wood ducks, ring necked ducks and other marsh dwellers like sandhill cranes and northern harriers. If you wish to stay until dark we will hopefully see the courtship display of the american woodcock.

The walk to the marsh is about 1.5 miles round trip. Even if it seems warm, consider wearing layered warm clothing. The observation deck can be surprisingly cold in mid-April. Bring binoculars. If you do not own any, we will have several pair which you can borrow.

Sand Prairie WMA is located south of St. Cloud on Hwy 10 across from the Reformatory. Look for the brown signs on Hwy. 10.

VOTE!

Elections Are Coming!

Come vote on April 24th and enjoy some pizza on us! The slate (which is open to change through nominations) is currently:

President: Dan Kneip

Vice President: Hank Schreifels

Secretary: Linda Peck

Treasurer: Brian Jungels

Member at large: Jonathan Fribley

Member at Large: Jim Millard

Birding Outings to Albany wastewater treatment ponds on Saturday May 4th (10:00 AM) and Saturday May 11th (10:00 AM)

Join fellow birdwatchers as we look for shorebirds and other migrants at the Albany Wastewater Treatment Ponds (Ponds). Plan on meeting at the Ponds at 10:00 AM. Besides shorebirds we should expect to find a plethora of waterfowl, gulls, and waterbirds. We may also visit Getchell lake which is only a few minutes drive away. A few pair of binoculars will be available to borrow if you wish. A spotting scope will also be available for use.

The Albany sewage ponds are located south of I-94 near Albany. Take the Albany exit and go south. Take a left onto Hwy 41. Take a right onto the first dirt road off of Hwy. 41. This road runs right along the sewage ponds. We will scan the sewage ponds from this road.



Did you know... Bilateral Gynadromorphy is a condition whereby a creature is half male and half female. An Evening Grosbeak was caught that was red on the right half (male) and orange on the left (female). Other species that have been found have included lizards, crustaceans, spiders and butterflies!



Door Prizes

Door prizes at the meetings may be books, puzzles, feeders, food items, or "other". Participation is voluntary, but winners must be present to win! Congratulations to Karen V. for winning Birding on Borrowed Time by Phoebe Snetsinger, and Annette S. for winning Attracting Birds to Your Backyard (36 ways to make your yard and garden...) by Sally Roth! Thanks to the Heneghans and Hank Schreifels for donating this month's door prizes!



Looking for ways to make a difference?

Donations are welcome for our fund to assist with continuing to print the newsletter and quality speakers to the meetings. If you choose to help out, please make out a check to Central MN Audubon Society (CMAS) and send it to our President, Dan Kneip. THANK YOU SO MUCH!!