

Central Minnesota Audubon  
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# Green-Backed Gazette

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## NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL MINNESOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

### Volume 47

September 2024



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

Like most of you, we have had an active summer of birding activities and now are ready for the cooler weather and looking forward to the fall migration activities. CMAS programmed several summer outings with two "Bike and Bird" events, one of which we did in the rain. In August we had a Chimney Swift count that was well attended by members and thankfully by the Swifts. In mid-August we were invited to a St Cloud Flower and Garden Club outing to the Dick & Jana Doll residence to learn about Purple Martins. The CMAS members that attended said that they were pleased with the outing.

CMAS has been active this summer. Hank Schreifels has been busy lining up speakers for our Fall sessions. Hank Schreifels has done a lot of work to organize speakers from: Pheasants Forever - presenting on the organization's local conservation efforts; Sherburne Wildlife Refuge - presenting about Sandhill Cranes; and the Minnesota Zoo - presenting on Minnesota Turtle Conservation. The first two will be in-person presentations only, the November presentation will be via Zoom.

Jim Millard and I attended the Minnesota Audubon Chapters' meeting in early August. It was very enjoyable to learn what activities the other Minnesota Chapters engage in and learn about the priorities of the Audubon Upper Mississippi Regional office. All the chapters are searching for ways to program activities that benefit and involve members as well as promote bird conservation and enjoyment. One project that was mentioned by several different chapters was providing birding backpack kits for children and making them available at the local public library for check out for a specified time to interested children.

We also learned about the Conservation priorities of the regional office including restoring bottomland forests in southeastern Minnesota and establishing the Audubon Conservation Ranching program for restoring grasslands. See more information at the regional web page: <https://umr.audubon.org/>

One relevant issue that was discussed at the chapter meeting was the importance of getting out the vote for the fall ballot measure, when Minnesota voters will decide if proceeds from the MN lottery will continue to be dedicated to Minnesota's environment. A "YES" vote means that you support continuing dedicating funding from the MN lottery to environmental programs. A "NO" vote or "NOT CHOOSING AN OPTION" on the ballot means you do not support this constitutionally dedicated funding to Minnesota environmental programs. The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund was originally passed by Minnesota voters in 1988. The fund has provided more than \$1 billion in project funding since its inception. The renewal will also have some beneficial changes allowing community grants to a variety of groups including Audubon chapters.

(continued on page 2)

#### Calendar

##### September 18, 2024

CMAS Meeting 7 p.m.

Location: Unitarian Universalist Church

Speaker: Sabin Adams, Pheasants Forever

Sabin will discuss the group's conservation efforts in Central Minnesota

##### October 16, 2024

CMAS Meeting 7 p.m.

Location: Unitarian Universalist Church

Speaker: Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Staff

Topic: Sandhill Cranes

##### November 20, 2024

CMAS Meeting 7 p.m.

Location: Unitarian Universalist Church

Speaker: Minnesota Zoo

Topic: Minnesota Turtle Conservation

To be Verified: December 21, 2024

Christmas Bird Count

Watch for details to come...



#### Infested Waters Update

Grove Lake, in Pope County, was listed as infested for zebra mussels in July, 2024. The North Fork Crow River flows out of Grove Lake and meanders through Stearns County (and several lakes) on its way to the main stem of the Crow River. As a result of the infestation in Grove Lake, Rice Lake (DOW #73-196) will also be listed because it is a downstream water body (connected to the North Fork Crow River). No zebra mussels have been found yet in Rice Lake but may become infested from veliger movement with the flowing river water. Decontamination measures will be necessary before taking boats, lifts, or docks to an uninfested water.

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 e-mail 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

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President’s Note (continued from page one)

We are re-establishing our CMAS web page. If anyone is interested in helping us develop a welcoming and informative webpage, please call one of the board members or send us an email. Our Newsletter is printed and mailed to all National and local members in the CMAS area. Printing and mailing the Newsletter is the largest cost to our chapter.

Most chapters no longer print newsletters, sending them only via email. Help us to reduce this cost by providing an e-mail address and signing up for paperless delivery. Send your email information to [centralmnaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:centralmnaudubon@gmail.com) .

Thank you.

*Did you know... six species of grebes... Red-necked, Pied-billed, Western, Eared, Horned, and Clark's Grebes live in Minnesota! Grebes are waterfowl that, like loons, have legs positioned farther back on their bodies so that diving and swimming underwater are easier. They eat a variety of foods including aquatic invertebrates, fish, tadpoles, salamanders, dragonfly larvae and leeches.*



**Thank you, Merle Sykora, for your generous donation to Central MN Audubon Society! We appreciate you!!**

Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant. ~Robert Louis Stevenson

**Recent Disaster Information**

**FEMA Swift Current Grant Funds:**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) committed \$300 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law on June 1, 2024 to be available to help property owners across the nation become more resilient to flooding through the Swift Current Gant Fund (Swift Current). Minnesota qualified for \$10 million in funding from the Swift Current due to disaster claims from events that happened between June 16 and July 4, 2024.

The application period for Minnesota is open from August 28th - December 13, 2024. To be eligible, buildings must be insured through the National Insurance Flood Program (NFIP) and would have to have been listed as a Substantially Damaged, Repetitive Loss, or Severe Repetitive Loss property.

Funds could be used to acquire property and demolish or relocate structures, elevate structures, provide dry floodproofing of historic residential structures or non-residential structures, and retrofit existing structures. Property owners have to work with an eligible local government unit. More information is available on [Grants.gov](https://www.fema.gov/grants)

**Public Assistance (PA) and Individual Assistance (IA) Declarations:**

President Biden declared 22 Minnesota Counties available for PA on June 28, 2024 and followed that by declaring 19 of them eligible for IA funds as well on July 29th as a result of the damages done by storms and flooding during the period of June 16 - July 4, 2024.

PA funds allow local governments to be reimbursed from disaster related activities such as debris removal, emergency response, and repairs to local infrastructure of public buildings, roads and bridges, or utilities. IA funds help individual homes and businesses.

The counties that received PA disaster declaration were Blue Earth, Carver, Cass, Cook, Cottonwood, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Jackson, Lake, LeSueur, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Rice, Rock, St. Louis, Steele, Wabasha, and Watonwan. Carver, Cass, and Fillmore were not included in the IA disaster declaration.

IA is not declared in Minnesota often. IA funds are primarily made available through Small Business Administration (SBA) loans, but some grants are available for temporary housing, limited repairs, and related assistance. FEMA has an Individual Assistance page on their website for more details, but they also have a mobile app (for cell phones) and a telephone helpline.

**Groundwater Alas Program (GAP) Continues**

The DNR's Groundwater Atlas Program expands upon the County Geologic Atlases produced by the Minnesota Geological Survey. The GAP creates detailed reports, geographic information system files and maps to help staff in making informed decisions regarding groundwater, the earth's largest source of fresh water. The decisions can include locating potential viable sources of groundwater, water supply management in relation to pollution sensitivity, or sustainable use.

The funding for a project may come from grants from the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund awarded through thr Legislative Citizen Commssion on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). For example, the groundwater atlas of Hubbard County (located in north-central Minnesota near the top of the Mississippi River watershed) was funded through such a grant and as a result, recently released.

Initial "high-level" findings include that 93% of well owners in Hubbard County get their water from the upper level (sandy) aquifer system. Groundwater recharged since the 1950's was found in aquifers up to 150 feet deep. Tritium in groundwater is indicative of "recent" groundwater recharge from the surface. Tritium became a component of rain water following atomic bomb testing (and detonation). At depths up to 150 feet, this indicates that groundwater is more sensitive to surface activities. Deeper aquifers held older water. One sample was 4,500 years old!

Groundwater flow in Hubbard County is consistent with surface water flow from topographic high points toward lakes, rivers/streams, and wetlands. Groundwater samples were obtained to test for water quality parameters or contaminants. Arsenic, an emerging contaminant of concern for the Minnesota Department of Health, was present in more than half of 114 samples collected, but thankfully only three exceeded health risk limits. Manganese was more common and had a higher percentage of samples over the health based guidelines (55 out of 104). Chloride and nitrates were found in primarily in wells less than 100 feet deep in the southern half of Hubbard County where agricultural crops are grown more commonly. Higher chloride was also found closer to highways.



Did you know... Currently 40% of net proceeds from the Minnesota State Lottery are dedicated to growing the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to ensure benefits for our environment and natural resources?



**Door Prizes**

Door prizes at the meetings may be books, puzzles, bird feeders, food items, or "other". Participation is voluntary, but winners must be present to win! Thank you to Dick and Annette Schoenberger for donating the first door prize of the season (A bird jigsaw puzzle!)



***Looking for ways to make a difference?***

***Donations are welcome for our fund to assist with continuing to print the newsletter and bring 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!!***

CMAS is now also registered to receive donations via GiveMN: <https://www.givemn.org/>



**GiveMN**  
<https://imagecdn.mightycause.com/f621d9d7-9e87-452c-b561-a13fbd7cbd53/-/crop/2048x1070/0,148/-/resize/1200x627/www.givemn.org>

To find us, type in - Central Minnesota Audubon Society  
***Thank you for your support!!***

**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.