

Central Minnesota Audubon  
212 17th Ave. S  
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# Green-Backed Gazette

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## NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL MINNESOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

### Volume 47

February 2025

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



We have been hearing a lot about the need to reduce our lawns and to help bring back some biological diversity to our environment. Our recent discussions in support of lawn alternatives were based on the detrimental effects of the monoculture lawn which does not support insects, including pollinators, and therefore is not beneficial to our backyard birds.

We also need to look at more of our common practices employed in lawn culture that are extremely important. One of them is the use of commercial fertilizers. An article on Natural Lawn Care techniques from Gardeners Supply Company, cites the use of three million tons of nitrogen-based fertilizers per year to support the fertile green lawns of the USA. Unfortunately, a study by the EPA indicated that 40 to 60 percent of this nitrogen is not used by the lawn grass and ends up in our surface water or groundwater. The excess nitrogen in our surface and ground water causes many undesirable effects, such as algae blooms and eutrophication.

While the above studies looked only at nitrogen, it is well known that phosphorus usage and the nutrient imbalances created have many similar and equally detrimental effects on the environment. The prevalent use of synthetic fertilizers in agriculture, although deemed necessary to attend food production for our expanding population, needs to be questioned and alternatives need more study. The recent popularity of regenerative agriculture is a positive development in the agricultural field.

The main obstacle to changing from monoculture turf lawns to a more natural and ecologically productive landscape is the cultural aspect. Homeowners like the look of a green lawn around their homes. There is competition between neighbors, comparing who has the greenest lawn and incredibly about who spends the most on lawn care or has the biggest lawnmower or the loudest leaf blower. This needs to change and will only change when we each do our small part. Plant that patch of native prairie! Do not use herbicides to kill the dandelions! Do not bag up your fallen leaves! You may get some dirty looks, but it is more likely that you will be able to start a conversation with your neighbors and have the opportunity to show them what you are doing and what benefits you will be creating.

The speaker for our February meeting will be joining us via Zoom. Join us in person at the UUF - 3226 Maine Prairie Rd, St Cloud or by Zoom. Request your link to for Zoom to centralmnaudubon@gmail.com by noon on Wednesday Feb 19.

\*Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/centralminnaudubonchapter/> · Watch for our upcoming webpage: <https://centralmnaudubon.org/> · Email: [centralmnaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:centralmnaudubon@gmail.com)

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#### Calendar

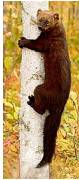


February 14-17, 2025  
Great Backyard Bird Count



Feb 15, 2025  
09- 12 noon

CMAS group outing for Great Backyard Bird Count  
Meet at the Beaver Island Trailhead/boat ramp, SCSU below the dam in St Cloud.



February 19, 2025  
CMAS Meeting 7 p.m.



Location: Unitarian Universalist Church and Zoom  
Speaker: Michael Joyce, Wildlife Ecologist - NRRI - UMD  
Subject: Bobcats and Fishers



March 19, 2025  
CMAS Meeting 6:30 p.m.



Location: St. Cloud Library, Mississippi Room  
Speaker: Todd Burlet - Starry Skies North  
Subject: Importance of dark skies to plants and animals  
*\*This is a joint presentation by CMAS, St. Cloud Flower and Garden Club, Central MN Master Naturalists, Wild Ones, and Stearns County Horticultural Club. Each group will have a table. The room will be open by 5:30 p.m.*



April 16, 2025  
CMAS Meeting 7 p.m.



Location: Unitarian Universalist Church and Zoom  
Speaker: Tom Poser - Natural Resources Technician, Stearns County Parks Department

Subject: Projects within the County Park System  
· April 2025 – date to be determined

Woodcock Outing – Sand Prairie Wildlife Management Area, St Cloud

Our newsletter has been published eight times a year, seven editions sent by USPS and by email. The summer edition was only sent by email to those who have provided their address either to CMAS directly or to the National Audubon Society. Once the website is up and running, we will be transitioning to only doing electronic newsletters, which we anticipate to be at the end of 2025, but could possibly be sooner. We will announce the final printed version. 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 ahead of the change-over. Please help us by providing your email to [centralmnaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:centralmnaudubon@gmail.com)

Biodiversity Crisis “What’s the Rush”

In the video What’s the Rush?, co-founder of Homegrown National Park, Douglas Tallamy explains how each of us can be part of solving the biodiversity crisis via a massive science-based grassroots movement. Our CMAS chapter watched and discussed this video at our January meeting. Read on to see how your small or large actions can make huge impacts.

Tallamy talks about the loss of Biodiversity, what’s happening in the US and the world and what we can do about it. Converting hope to action starts with lawns.

In the United States:

- 44 million acres of lawns
- 2 million acres of golf courses
- 78% of the land is privately owned
- We have paved over an area the size of Ohio
- Every 30 seconds a football field of natural areas disappears to development
- Insect populations have taken a major decline

Globally:

- 2/3 of the earth’s wildlife is gone
- One million species face extinction in the next 20 years
- Food production now claims nearly half of the earths land surface

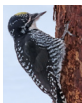
Tallamy finds hope in our reaction to these sobering statistics. He states “We need to give up the notion that humans and nature cannot coexist.” So what’s the rush? If we convert 1,000 acres of lawn per month it will take 1,200 years to restore half of the 44 million acres of lawns in the United States. The time to start letting nature thrive on your own property is today.

So what do we do? Nature can thrive where humans live.

- reduce lawn areas
- plant native plants
- remove invasives
- protect natural areas on your property
- stop using herbicides or pesticides in your yard
- use a native plant nursery, consultant or landscaper if you don’t want to tackle this yourself. The DNR maintains a list of companies specific to Central Minnesota. Search “native plant supplier MN DNR”

After viewing the video CMAS members discussed ideas. We shared what we have done as a group and as individuals. CMAS promotes participation in No Mow May, Light’s Out, and Lawns to Legumes. CMAS also provided support for a pollinator class and native planting at the St. Cloud Roosevelt Boys & Girls Club. CMAS facilitates ongoing education and networking opportunities for our members. Individual members have planted native plants on their properties, removed invasive species and volunteered for many restoration efforts.

Join your fellow Audubon members and be part of this extraordinary cooperative conservation movement. Together we can regenerate biodiversity and see the impact of our actions almost immediately. You can also watch Tallamy’s presentation. Search: What’s the Rush Tallamy. (Note 2 versions: long 49 minutes, short 25 minutes)



Did you know... North America has lost three billion birds in the last 50 years? That’s 1/3 of the bird population!

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:Muchas gracias... Merci beaucoup... Vielen Dank...  
: in other words...Thank you SO MUCH!!  
:.....

:Sincere thanks go out to John and Linda Peck, Ken and  
:Linda Marie Bachofer, and Roger and Jeanette Busch for  
:your generous donations to Central MN Audubon Society!  
:Thanks also go out to Ann Bajari for a donation through  
:GiveMN! Your donations will be put to good use and are  
:truly appreciated!  
:.....

CORRECTION: 2024 Christmas Bird Count Recap

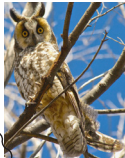


Congratulations (and thank you) to Regina Birchem for catching that the bird list was not complete in the recap! While the numbers were correct, the list was not. Birds that were missed have now been added. Here was our list:

Canada Goose 979	Trumpeter Swan 98
Wood Duck 1	Mallard 1320
Common Goldeneye 6	Cedar Waxwing 8
Common Merganser 4	Wild Turkey 109
Ring-necked Pheasant 6	Rock Pigeon 231
Bald Eagle 15	Sharp-shinned Hawk 1
Red-tailed Hawk 6	Rough-legged Hawk 1
Eastern Screech Owl 1	Great Horned Owl 3
Belted Kingfisher 1	Red-bellied Woodpecker 23
Downy Woodpecker 35	Hairy Woodpecker 15
Pileated Woodpecker 9	Northern Shrike 2
Blue Jay 71	American Crow 179
Common Raven 1	Black-capped Chickadee 194
Red-breasted Nuthatch 6	White-breasted Nuthatch 86
Brown Creeper 5	Golden-crowned Kinglet 4
European Starling 276	Northern Mockingbird 1
American Robin 118	House Sparrow 61
House Finch 72	Purple Finch 13
Redpoll 10	White-winged Crossbill 50
American Goldfinch 48	American Tree Sparrow 41
Dark-eyed Junco 234	Fox sparrow 1
White-throated Sparrow 8	Northern Cardinal 19



The two additional species during count week were a Long-eared Owl and a Northern Flicker.



Birds  
are indicators of the environment. If they are in trouble, we know we’ll soon be in trouble.

~ Roger Tory Peterson



Looking for ways to make a difference?

Donations are welcome for our fund to assist with continuing to print the newsletter, create birding backpacks and to 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 registered to receive donations via

GiveMN: <https://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.