



Green-Backed Gazette

NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTRAL MINNESOTA AUDUBON SOCIETY

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President’s Note, by Dan Kneip

The last years have been tough for everyone who prioritizes conservation and the environment. It seems like our only option has been to sign letters of support and ask that environmental protection not be stripped from existing laws. This can seem like a very ineffective and unseen process and one that rarely shows results. It was therefore very encouraging to read ABC’s (American Bird Conservancy) report that the Department of Interior has halted changes to the rule governing wetland easements in the prairie potholes region. This decision comes in response to the number of comments from hunters and others interested in conservation from across the country asking that present rules not be altered and protections for waterfowl and wetland ecosystems be maintained.

The CMAS board has adopted a policy to determine when to co-sign petitions and letters of support for conservation initiatives proposed by National and Regional Audubon offices as well as supporting local conservation initiatives. If you have any conservation issues that you think would be a good fit for CMAS to support or believe needs to become a priority, let us know. Keep putting your name on those petitions, step by step we can still make a difference!

Fall migration season is here. Shore birds have been passing through for the last month already. Swallows, martins, and swifts are all gathering for their southward migration. One of the most enjoyable birds to observe as it prepares for migration is our little Ruby-throated hummingbird. They become very possessive of their favored feeder or flowers and will protect them and drive away intruders. If you put out hummingbird feeders, keep them clean and change the nectar at least every 3 days. Keeping feeders out will not alter their migration date, which is determined by day length and sun angle.

Calendar

September 16, 2026 - 7 p.m. UUF (3226 Maine Prairie Road, St. Cloud, MN) CMAS meeting (in person presentation)
Speaker: Jessica Heim Subject: Cultural Astronomy
Jessica is a local woman who has participated in international forums on dark skies and cultural astronomy.



September 19, 2026 - Great Outdoor Fair - Sturges Park (505 2nd Ave S, Buffalo, MN) Come visit the CMAS booth and enjoy teh activities (more details to follow)

September 26, 2026 - 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. 31st Annual Wildlife Festival - Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge (SNWR)

October 21, 2026 - 7 p.m. UUF (3226 Maine Prairie Road, St. Cloud, MN) CMAS meeting (zoom presentation)
Speaker: Russel Groves - UW Madison Subject: Groundwater contamination(s) associated with the uses of neonicotinoids.

November 18, 2026 - 7 p.m. UUF (3226 Maine Prairie Road, St. Cloud, MN) CMAS meeting (in person presentation, but zoom will be available also)
Speaker: Sarah Hewitt, Senior Conservation Manager for Audubon Upper Mississippi Regional Office.
Subject: Audubon Conservation Ranching Program

President’s Note Continued...
Let’s have a competition and see who can record the latest date that they observed a Ruby-throated hummingbird in the CMAS area. Keep your observation notes and document them with photos if possible. Send your last observation date to connect@centralmnaudubon.org . CMAS board will determine the winner of the contest at the October meeting.

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Free Jeffers Petroglyphs Lichen Walk

Tanner Barnharst, will lead a lichen walk from 1:15 to 3:15 on Saturday, October 17 from the visitors center at Jeffers Petroglyphs. Come early to enjoy an interactive lichen workshop hosted by the Bell Museum and Tanner!
<https://www.mnhs.org/events/59730799251>
27160 Co Rd 2, Comfrey, MN 56019

Tanner also has a new podcast where he discusses sunburst lichens. He worked with Jennifer McLaughlin of Our Wild Backyard to complete the 20 minute podcast. Find more about her Midwest-nature-centric podcast at her website - <https://www.ourwildbackyard.org/> Available on Spotify, Apple Podcast, and YouTube

Did you know... that native prairie vegetation along roadsides can stop or delay freezing of moisture on pavement? A healthy native prairie roadside can also reduce the costs associated with snow management by trapping snow that may otherwise drift onto the pavement. Besides being a living snow fence, native prairie plants have many other ecological benefits.



Citizen Science - Chimney Swift Study

There is an on-going Chimney Swift study sponsored by a group headed by DNR non-game, US Fish & Wildlife and Urban Bird Collective, as well as others. Interested people can participate by signing up for monitoring. Although the study is concentrated in the Metro area and Duluth, we have been able to include the Wenner Hardware Store site in Cold Spring in the study, contact Dan Kneip if interested in participating in the Cold Spring monitoring..

The study group is also interested in identifying additional communal roost sites in Minnesota. If you know of any and can confirm that the location is in use, please advise. Communal roosts can be identified by watching a location from 30 minutes prior to sunset to 30 minutes after sunset. Communal roosts are utilized from May through August with heaviest traffic during migration in May and August. Training and registration is required for participation.

We held a Swift sit in Cold Spring on the evening of **August 13, 2026 at dusk**. A nighthawk kept us entertained while we waited for the swifts to enter the chimney of the Wenner building. We enjoyed their antics as they swooped and circled around before the first birds dove into the chimney. After several rounds of swooping and diving, a torrent of birds poured into the chimney for the night. Our total count was approximately 123 plus or minus something like 30. We were happy to have Monica Bryand of the Urban Bird Collective join us. She is one of the coordinators of the Chimney Swift Roost Monitoring Project in Minnesota. She shared that Swifts fly all day until they roost in the evening. They cannot stand up as their legs are too weak. There is a lot that we still don't know about their life cycle, hence the study.

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. Membership is \$15 annually.

Gracias, Merci, Danke, Grazie... in other words THANK YOU SO MUCH!!

Thanks go out to Mavis W., Mark C., Michael W., Sherry K., Jill W., and Ann B. for donations to our general fund! Special thanks goes out to Karl Krueger for your amazing gift toward neonics curtailment! We SO appreciate all of our wonderful members and supporters!



Buckthorn Bustin' Time!



Join us from 1 - 3:30 p.m. at Rockville County Park (11503 Glacier Road, Rockville) at the picnic shelter on Saturday, October 10th for buckthorn removal. The backup date will be Oct 17th if the weather doesn't cooperate on the 10th.

This event is in honor of all the conservation work that John and Linda Peck have done over the years!

There is a symbolic as well as actual beauty in the migration of the birds... There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature - the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter. ~Rachel Carson



A Bird by Another Name...



If you go "across the pond" to England, prepare to hear our common birds called by another name. For example, Common Loons are called Great Northern Divers. Horned Grebes are known as Slavonian Grebes while Eared Grebes are called Black-necked Grebes. Oldsquaws are referred to as a Long-tailed Duck. Goosander is their name for a Common Merganser. Common Gallinules are known as Moorhens. Horned Larks are called Shore Larks there. Barn Swallows are simply referred to as Swallows, but Bank Swallows are called Sand Martins. Chickadees are known as Tits (for most Parus species).



Looking for ways to make a difference?

Donations are welcome for our fund to assist with continuing to operate the website, 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:



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