



# KINGFISHER



November 2006

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 55 No. 7

Representing the National Audubon Society in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

## A Note from the President

Migration is here. Fall colors are in full force (I would say that fall is my favorite season, but I love them all.) This year is the first in a long time that Pamela and I were unable to make our annual pilgrimage to Hawk Ridge in September (we might still make it up before November, but for the moment it looks like we might not). Visiting Hawk Ridge is like a visit to catch up with old friends; Homecoming, if you will (is that why schools have the Homecoming Dance in the fall?) Being there on the day that the broad-winged hawks fly through en mass, listening to Frank identify an immature bald eagle from what seems like a distance of ten miles, or adopting the Sharpie that found the bander's net. All of these experiences make up our memories of Hawk Ridge and the migration.

Hawk Ridge is not the only place that we enjoy the migration. Other locations abound. Driving along the Mississippi to see the bald eagles, visiting Reick's Lake in Alma, Wisconsin to visit with the tundra swans, or going all the way to Brownsville to observe Pool 8 and even more tundra swans are great places for the migration.

Almost anywhere can be a good place to witness the spectacle. Even our own backyards can be important birding areas. Landscaping with native plants and adding feeders can bring the migration home. Just by changing the yard eco-scape from the "traditional" "lollipop trees and poodle bushes" to a more natural blend of plants and shrubs, you can provide an oasis for our feathered friends.

Crex Meadows, Taylor's Falls, Black Dog Lake on the Minnesota River near the power plant, Louisville Swamp and a host of other locations all are great observation points for this wondrous annual event. The list is long and the time to enjoy them all is short.

Birds are not the only migrators: Monarch butterflies also fly south for the winter. From Minnesota to Mexico, these seemingly fragile butterflies make the annual journey to central Mexico where they gather by the hundreds of thousands. This migration location has become a tourist destination. Most amazing about the Monarch migration is that they do not learn the route from their parents the way birds do. Several generations hatch from eggs, transform from caterpillars to butterflies and only the fall generation flies south. And the generation that flies south is not the same one that returns the next summer!

Some species of dragonflies also migrate (my passion is dragonflies, so go figure that I would get on this topic!)

*Continued on page four...*

## November Program

### FORTY-ONE YEARS WITH MARTINS AND COUNTING

Ron Seekamp of Fridley is one of the state's leading experts on purple martins. He is retired after thirty-six years working as a tool and die designer and engineer at Honeywell Corporation. Ron has spent much of his life learning how to attract, protect, and fledge *Progne subis*, the largest member of the swallow species. He notes that 2006 was, for him, an average year for martins. His houses hosted 17 nesting pairs, 16 of which produced young. Sixty of those fledged. His best year was 1998 when 81 juveniles flew.

In his presentation, Ron will offer everything you want and need to know about purple martins. He will explain how he acquired his passion for the insect-eating acrobat. He will discuss how to manage a colony of martins successfully and offer a handout on the topic. He will describe the banding of martins and show a 6-minute DVD on the topic, followed by information about martin migration, defenses against the bird's enemies, martin house and post design, and purple martin organizations. He'll conclude with another brief DVD showing photos taken near Upper Skunk Lake north of St. Cloud in late August of this year, where thousands of martins gathered for a pre-migration roost. Following his presentation he'll respond to questions and comments from the audience.



**Join us for coffee and cookies before the meeting.  
Tuesday, November 14 at 7:00 p.m.  
Mayflower Church**

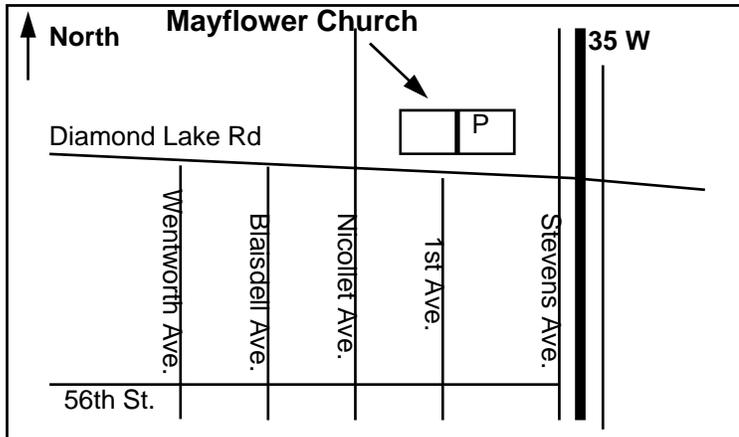
## Come to Our Next Program!

**DATE:** Tuesday, November 14, 2006

“Forty-one Years with Martins” by Ron Seekamp

**TIME:** Program at 7:00 p.m.

**AT:** Mayflower Church, 35W & Diamond Lake Road—map below



## Field Trip Chair Still Needed

The chapter needs someone to help set up the trips that helped launch the organization over 70 years ago. This is an opportunity to go to the birding spots *you* want to visit!

The Field Trip Chair need not be a birding expert, but is responsible for setting up the trips and contacting leaders to guide them. The Chair also arranges the publicity for the trip by writing brief descriptions of the trips for the Kingfisher and any other publication that is appropriate. Finally, the Chair reviews the trips with the leader after they are held.

Please let John Arthur know that you would like to become our new Field Trip Chair.

## Electronic Kingfisher

SUBSCRIBE TO THE KINGFISHER  
ELECTRONICALLY!

Contact Jerry Bahls at [bahls001@tc.umn.edu](mailto:bahls001@tc.umn.edu)

## Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis - 2006-2007 Contacts

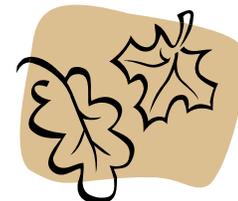
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Audubon Minnesota	<a href="http://www.audubon.org/chapter/mn">www.audubon.org/chapter/mn</a>		
National Audubon Society	<a href="http://www.audubon.org">www.audubon.org</a>		

## A TRIBUTE TO JANE SPENCE

Audubon lost a wonderful long-time active member and supporter when Jane Spence died on Sept. 9, 2006.

Jane, along with her brother John, became involved at the very beginning of the Minneapolis Chapter. She especially enjoyed the local and nationwide summer field trips.

Jane was instrumental in the establishment of the Audubon Center of the North Woods in Sandstone and served on the board for over thirty years. She played a major role in North Woods' development as a premier Audubon Environmental Education Center. She was awarded the Mary Borell Award for her achievements for the Center.



# Minnesota River Valley

## Field Trips

**Nov 4** 2:00 pm. Beginning Bird Watching Workshop, Visitor Center, MVNWR. George Skinner 952-936-0811

**Nov 11** 9:00 am. Swans on the Mississippi, Weaver Bottoms. Mark Lystig 651-452-1133

**Nov 13** 7:00 am. Sherburne County Birding Day, Minnetonka. Craig Mandel 952-546-3407

**Nov 18** 2:00 pm. Beginning Bird Watching Workshop, Chaska. George Skinner 952-939-0811

**Dec 2** 9:00-4:00 Minnesota Ornithologists Union Paper Session

**Dec 4** 7:00 a.m. Meeker/Wright Counties Birding Day Craig Mandel 952-546-3407

**Dec 10** 2:00 p.m. Winter Birds at Black Dog Lake Craig Mandel 952-546-3407

*Please contact the trip leader for further information*

## **Audubon Adventures Available**

Audubon Adventures is an environmental education program for children in grades 3 to 6. Developed by professional environmental educators, Audubon Adventures presents basic, scientifically-accurate facts about birds, wildlife, and their habitats. It comes packaged as a Classroom Kit (serving 32 students) or an Individual Kit (serving 1 student). The program is used by classroom teachers, after-school program coordinators, special education instructors, language arts teachers, and home-schoolers.

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis has a limited number of available for interested educators. Please contact Jim Egge at 612-827-7629 or Jerry Bahls at 763-572-2333 or e-mail bahls001@tc.umn.edu.

*An estimated 1 billion birds die each year from crashing into windows. Decorate the outside surface of your windows to make the glass visible to birds, or install screens as a barrier to keep them at a distance.*

## **BOOKS FOR SALE**

Did you know Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis sells books and other merchandise at its program meetings?

We offer many of the most popular field guides for sale!

We have bluebird recovery items for sale!

We offer Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis patches and pins, as well as National Audubon Society pins.

All items are at DISCOUNT prices.  
This month's featured book is:

*A Bluebird's First Summer*  
by Helena Craven

## **Kingfisher Mailing Team Volunteers Needed**



From time to time members of our mailing team for some reason or other can no longer help with mailing the *Kingfisher* newsletter. We are again at that point where the critical number of potential volunteers has fallen below the number we need to have available to conveniently mail the *Kingfisher* to our membership.

We meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month (except December, May, June and July) at about 9:00 am at Jerry Bahls' house in Fridley. Coffee and cookies are served. Also available is great conversation! If interested please call Jerry Bahls at 763-572-2333 or e-mail at bahls001@tc.umn.edu.

## **Audubon Adventures Placements**

Last year's Fall Appeal funds were designated to be used for education and partially for financing the placement of Audubon Adventures in Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis' schools. Because of the timing of the Appeal, it was difficult to get them placed in the schools last year as teachers had already established their curriculum.

This year, under the leadership of Jim Egge, we started earlier and have already placed six in schools and three are in process of being placed; we also have two to three more prospects which will bring us close to our annual goal. We again thank those who contributed to our Fall Appeal last year to help make this possible.

continued from page one...

In a recent study, scientists actually attached tiny radio transmitters to some Green Darners and tracked their flights down the East Coast. Amazingly, they found that the dragonflies followed the coast of New Jersey to Cape May (the southernmost tip of New Jersey at the mouth of Delaware Bay). They then flew a short distance out over the bay and flew back and followed the west shore of the bay until it was narrow enough to cross.

After crossing, they continued south to their wintering grounds. The wintering grounds for dragonflies is a wetland where eggs are laid to produce next spring's generation, which will return north. That same behavior has also been observed in kestrels. A question comes to mind: "Did the kestrels learn this from dragonflies?"

Is visiting migration locations every year part of *your* annual migration? I would love to hear your stories of migrations or nature stories in general. Write to me via e-mail either through the web site "contact us" section or directly to: jarthur@visi.com

We will publish some of the stories with permission.

—John Arthur

## BEES AND POLLINATION



Most of the bees that pollinate native plants do not live together in hives. Many of these native solitary bees are declining, but you may be able to help them by building a bee box. Simply drill small holes into an untreated block of wood, or tie a bundle of stems together and place them outdoors. Solitary bees will lay their eggs in the holes, which then serve as a nursery. For more information on how to help these beneficial insects, visit [www.audubonathome.org/solitarybees](http://www.audubonathome.org/solitarybees).

Reprinted from "An Invitation to a Healthy Neighborhood." These will be available at the November meeting.

**Bird of the Month: Dick Eide will present the Hudsonian Godwit at the November program— betcha haven't heard of THAT one! ☺**

## Audubon Minnesota Fall Members Meeting, Saturday, November 11 Guest Speaker: Author Michael Frome

Audubon Minnesota's annual Fall Membership Meeting will be at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Bloomington, Minnesota again this year. So, join us on Saturday, November 11. Lunch provided!

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, Bloomington, MN  
Audubon Members Only \$12.00

- 7:30 Bird watching with Audubon's Bird Conservation Director, Mark Martell at Bass Ponds (86th and Old Shakopee Road)
- 9:00 Coffee and scones
- 9:30 Issue Information Presentations
- 10:00 Issue Debate
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:30 Guest Speaker Michael Frome
- 1:30 Issues Selection Voting
- 2:15 Resolutions
- 3:00 Bird watching with Ron Windingstad, Partnership Coordinator of Bird Conservation Minnesota

To register for the dinner, please send a check to Audubon Minnesota, 2357 Ventura Drive, #106, St. Paul, MN 55125 or call Susan Solterman at 651-260-7040 or e-mail [ssolterman@audubon.org](mailto:ssolterman@audubon.org) and you can pay at the door.

Michael Frome, Audubon's guest speaker at the 2007 Fall Members meeting, has been a featured columnist in *Field & Stream*, *Los Angeles Times*, *American Forests* and *Defenders of Wildlife*. He has written eighteen books, including *GreenSpeak*, *Green Ink*, *Battle for the Wilderness*, *Regreening the National Parks*, *Chronicling the West*, *Conscience of a Conservationist* and *Strangers in High Places*. After years as a journalist and professor, Frome retired in 1995 from the faculty of Western Washington University where he directed a pioneering program in environmental journalism and writing. He now lives at Port Washington, Wisconsin, with his wife, June Eastvold, a poet and retired Lutheran pastor.

## More Migrations Thoughts

I've been to many places this time of year, and I've found there's nothing like fall in Minnesota. It starts with spectacular bird migrations in August. Join a field trip in late August or early September, especially if you would like help with identification. Or take Minneapolis' bird class and learn the birds for yourself. Late September is the time to hit Hawk Ridge in Duluth. If you've never been there, you've missed seeing 5000+ hawks in one day migrating along the North Shore. And, of course, colors are fabulous through October. Rare bird sightings are made regularly on Park Point.

—Jim Egge

## Which Is Better, Paper or Plastic?

This is a great question, but the answer is not simple. There are pros and cons of using each. For instance, paper is more readily recyclable, but any non-recycled content in paper means trees were cut down. Bleached paper involves the release of the carcinogen dioxin. Plastic, however, is not always recyclable and involves many toxins in manufacturing. Yet plastic does last a lot longer than paper. So which is best?

The basic advice for environmental consumer choices is to consider the hierarchy:

**Reduce**  
**Reuse**  
**Recycle**



When making the decision to acquire something, first consider: can I **reduce** my overall acquisition of new items? For example, is there a way to avoid getting new bags every time I buy groceries or other items? This could reduce the toxins and environmental damage caused by the constant new production of either paper or plastic bags, in addition to the amount of trash going to landfills.

If I do acquire something new, I ask myself: Is this item **reusable**? For example, instead of getting a new paper or plastic bag every time I shop, I can carry a sturdy reusable bag of some kind. An item that lasts and lasts and doesn't need to be frequently replaced is a good choice.

And third, can this item I am acquiring be **recycled** when I can no longer use it? Paper is generally recyclable, but only some types of plastic are. Future *Ask Audubon* features will address these and other issues more thoroughly. But in the meantime, use the three 'R's as your guide, in that order, when making purchasing decisions.

— From *Ask Audubon*

## Fall Mumlbers

Muffled  
mumble,  
just inside  
the forest edge.  
White-throated sparrows  
must be  
passing through.  
Then,  
almost  
reluctantly,  
came a  
full,  
clear  
whistled,  
signature sound.  
Just once.  
Then,  
back to mumbling.  
Saving  
the best  
for  
spring.  
—Clem Nagel



## Environmental Ideas

One reminder about fall yard work—be careful about letting grass clippings and leaves blow out into the street. They often get into storm sewers and runoff channels before they can be picked up. They can end up in area ponds and lakes and leach nutrients into water systems. Better yet, start a compost heap and create your own garden fertilizer.

Have you ever considered a bat house in your yard or up at the cabin? This can help control insects and possibly insect-borne diseases such as West Nile virus. For info check out [www.audubonathome.org/bats](http://www.audubonathome.org/bats).

For butterflies, you may want to add purple liatris to your coneflowers and snapdragons. They are simply butterfly magnets, and bloom for weeks.

—Jim Egge

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis  
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KINGFISHER  
NOVEMBER 2006



**National Audubon Society**  
Chapter Membership Application

*Yes, I'd like to join!* Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and my local chapter at the special introductory rate of \$20! Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.

*Yes, I'd like to join!* As a senior citizen or student, I am able to join for only \$15!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**Send this application and make check payable to:**

National Audubon Society  
Chapter Membership Data Center  
PO Box 51001  
Boulder, CO 80322-1001



**LOCAL CHAPTER**  
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis  
PO BOX 3801  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
Chapter Code: **M02**  
**7XCHA**

**Calendar of Events**

**OCTOBER**

21 MRV Field Trip

**NOVEMBER**

4 MRV Field Trip

11 MRV Field Trip

11 Audubon Minnesota Fall Meeting  
with Michael Frome

14 Chapter Meeting with Ron Seekamp

18 MRV Field Trip

Board meetings are held every month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 7:15 pm at the Lund's store on Lake Street just west of Hennepin (except in July).

All are welcome to programs, trips and board meetings. Call John Arthur or Jerry Bahls for details!