

# The



# Cardinal

AUGUST SEPTEMBER 2012 • WWW.SAINTPAULAUDUBON.ORG • SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY



Hog Island Audubon Camp

## A Summer Adventure Off the Rocky Coast of Maine

It's late afternoon on a Sunday in early June as we gaze across Maine's Muscongus Bay at a small, rocky island a quarter of a mile offshore. This will be home for the next five days, a time filled with fascinating presentations by world-class instructors, hands-on conservation projects, shoreline clean-up, bird colony censuses and behind-the-scenes looks at on-the-ground species restoration work.

Two friends and I had signed up for Audubon Camp at Hog Island—330 acres of pine woods and historic buildings three hours north of Boston, the epicenter of a major seabird restoration effort headed up by National Audubon's Stephen Kress. We joined 25 other adults who'd signed up for Seabird Biology and Conservation, offered thru Audubon and the Road Scholar organization.

Eager as we were to attend this camp, absorb information and visit this iconic Audubon property, we had our own agenda, hinted at by the moniker we used among ourselves: Puffin Camp. We were avid to see Atlantic puffins, engaging, tuxedoed birds with large orange beaks, called 'sea parrots' by some. Puffins, we learned, are the no. hemisphere counterparts of penguins, better at swimming underwater than flying in the air.

Puffins are not an endangered species, in fact, they're abundant elsewhere in the northern Atlantic, but they'd been extirpated for more than 100 years from the few Maine islands where they'd historically bred. That just seemed wrong to Kress, Audubon's vice president for bird conservation.

### Bringing them back

Puffin restoration presented a number of Catch-22s: as colonial birds, they nest only around other

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SEPTEMBER MEMBER MEETING

## Emperor Penguins: How Do We Love You? Let Us Count The Ways!

With **Michelle LaRue**, Research Fellow, Polar Geospatial Center, University of Minnesota

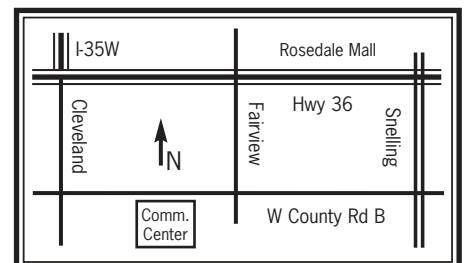
**September 13, 2012**

From Chilly Willy to the movies "Happy Feet" and "March of the Penguins," penguins have been one of the most beloved animals (birds) of our childhood. They are cute and look so cuddly. What child didn't at some time in their life fantasize about having a pet penguin of their very own?

Emperor penguins are the world's most iconic penguin species, and a symbol of Antarctica. However, little is actually known about the global population because of the harsh, remote nature of our southern-most continent. Michelle LaRue will introduce Antarctica and the emperor penguin, and discuss a novel approach to estimating the first-ever census of a species from space. She will also explain the importance of sea ice, the Southern Ocean, and the implications of a changing climate on emperor penguins.

For more information, visit the following website:  
[www.plosone.org/article/info:doi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0033751](http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0033751)

Our meetings begin at 6:45 with social time, 7:00 PM for the program, at the Fairview Community Center, 1910 W. County Road B, in Roseville. Free and open to the public. Free parking available. *Bring a friend!*



## Monthly "Birds & Blooms" Nature Walks

Join Chase on these monthly walks. No reservations necessary. Dress for the weather, bring drink, snack, and bug repellent. 10x loupes available for up-close views.

Chase Davies ccdavies@aol.com  
651-633-1663

## Tamarack Nature Center

August 14, 7:00 - 9:00 AM

Located near Bald Eagle and Otter Lakes, on Otter Lake Rd. just south of Cty Rd H-2.

## Rachel Lilly Preserve

August 15, 7:00 - 9:00 AM

Located on MN Hwy 110, between Dodd Rd. and Delaware Ave. in Mendota Hts. Enter by church driveway, go straight ahead up-hill, park by red barn. Meet in that parking area. For information about the preserve: [www.co.dakota.mn.us/CountyGovernment/Projects/FarmlandNaturalArea](http://www.co.dakota.mn.us/CountyGovernment/Projects/FarmlandNaturalArea)

NOTE: There will be no walks in September. Check the website for upcoming walks.

### FIELD TRIP

## The Sparrows of Fall

Lake Elmo Regional Park

Saturday, Sept. 22, 8:30-11:30 AM

Sparrows and other migrants will fill our binocular view as we explore the fields and woodlands of this huge park on a mix of paved, chipped, and natural trails. Meet in the large parking lot 1/2 mile or so beyond entrance station. No registration necessary. **FEE AREA:** Requires a day or annual pass to enter. **DIRECTIONS:** From I-94 east of St. Paul, take the Hwy 19/Keats Ave exit, go 1/2 mi. north, to park entrance.

**Difficulty** Easy

**Leader** Chase Davies, 651-633-1663  
ccdavies@aol.com

## President's Message

Summertime and the living is easy, fish are jumping and -- wait a minute, that's a song, I do believe. Well, I do hope that your summer is going well and easy!

Saint Paul Audubon Society is doing great; we are 2,600 members strong. There are around 464 Audubon chapters in the U.S. I am sure that some are bigger member wise than SPAS but as I always say (without bias of course), we are without a doubt the best-looking and smartest chapter.

I am honored to have been elected President for a second year and look forward to interacting with an excellent Board and a very strong leadership group which makes our work not only possible, but of high quality! Do check out the upcoming events in this issue and future issues of *The Cardinal*.

I hope that you are enjoying a summer of living easy and that I see you at some SPAS events.

*With warmest regards,  
Louis Asher*

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<b>www.mn.audubon.org</b>	

## NABA Butterfly Census Data from June 30, 2012

It appeared to be perfect weather for a count (sunny, warm/hot, and almost no wind), but the butterfly numbers and species were down this year. Speculation ran to because fewer than normal wildflowers were in bloom, or the super hot weather kept them from flying. Nevertheless, a good time was had by all, as evidenced by these wonderful photos taken by **Craig A Mullenbach**. Nice!

### 21 Species were seen, 127 butterflies were tallied

Tiger Swallowtail, Clouded Sulphur, Orange Sulphur, Eastern tailed-Blue, Great Spangled Fritillary, Aphrodite Fritillary, Question Mark, Eastern Comma, Red Admiral, Northern Pearly-Eye, Little Wood Satyr, Common Wood Nymph,



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puffins, and they return only to their natal island to breed. Since puffins had been hunted out of existence from these Maine islands, it was going to be a challenge to get them to return. A further complication is that they raise only one chick a year and don't breed until they're 4 or 5 years old.

Although he is a small, soft-spoken man, Kress isn't the kind to let obstacles stand in his way. He rolled up his sleeves, donned his ubiquitous tam-o'-shanter and went to work.

Under the aegis of Audubon's *Project Puffin*, Kress and a cadre of colleagues, interns and volunteers transferred chicks from Newfoundland's large puffin population, then fooled them with mirrors and decoys into thinking they were joining a colony. It took eight years before a chick was discovered in an underground burrow in 1981 on Eastern Egg Rock, about six miles from Hog Island. (That's where we were headed on the last day of our stay, but first we had some other things to do.)

We cleared several shorelines of plastic bottles and heavy lobster traps (there'd recently been a major storm that tossed things ashore) and built small, open-fronted wooden boxes where just-hatched terns could shelter from marauding gulls until they were strong enough to run for vegetative cover.

### Gull control

Kevin McGowan from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, told us that gulls are increasing (primarily due to inland land fills) and terns are declining: "Humans have simplified these habitats, which is good for generalists like gulls but not for specialists, like terns." Huge Great Black-backed Gulls and Herring Gulls stomp around the rocky islands, consuming seabird young.

Another day we bounced in zodiacs over to Stratton Island, where four species of terns nest (Arctic, Common, Least and Roseate) under the watchful eyes of a number of intrepid interns. Some of our crew rebuilt wooden blinds torn apart in the storm, while others did more clean up and tern counting. (Now we know why Kress always wears a hat with a large tassel on top: terns dive-bomb intruders relentlessly.)



In an evening program Kress informs us that in order for the puffins, other auks and terns to thrive on the islands, efforts to control the gulls can never relax.

One morning we follow naturalist Pete Salmansohn on a nature walk through Hog Island's interior, laughing at his goofy jokes (he teaches kids off-island) and marveling at the songs of nesting Winter Wrens, Black-throated Green Warblers and Dark-eyed Juncos. During an evening program we listen to Iain Stenhouse's lovely Scottish brogue as he discusses advances in bird tracking technology and the increases in knowledge they've brought. For instance, lightweight geolocators show that puffins may spend their non-breeding season anywhere between Labrador and Bermuda. Good-humored Sue Schubel is unflappable as she oversees our work projects and ferries campers to various islands.

### A gaggle of puffins

The days pass, we get into a rhythm, but there is a constant thrum in my brain: "Thursday we get to see the puffins." And we did, indeed, clambering into the Sea Goose III, boating past rocky outcrops filled with harbor seals and nesting eiders, then drawing close to Eastern Egg Rock. And suddenly there they were: puffins swimming in the ocean, puffins flying through the air with impossibly short wings whirring, and puffins standing around on loafing rocks.

One of Eastern Egg Rock's resident interns rowed out and told us that 123 pairs of puffins had nested there in 2011, and they're hoping for many more this year. That's an amazing figure, compared to the zero puffins that nested from 1880 to 1980 or so. The techniques pioneered by Kress and his colleagues are now being used around the world to help restore other bird populations.

Hog Island is a magical place, almost mythical, and I would urge every Auduboner to visit. It makes you proud all over again to be part of Audubon: *Project Puffin's* important restoration work is based there, the educational programs are first-rate, and staff and volunteers are incredibly helpful and approachable. Roger Tory Peterson was a camp director years ago and Rachel Carson mentions Hog Island in *Silent Spring*. And the sheer beauty of the Maine coastline and bays will take your breath away.

VAL CUNNINGHAM

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### BOARD MEETINGS

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Saint Paul Audubon's Board Meetings are held at the Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed Office at 2665 Noel Drive, Little Canada. Exit 35-E at Little Canada Rd, go east to Noel. Meetings are held 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Upcoming dates are: **Sept 10, Oct 1, Nov 5, Dec 3**. Officers are: **Louis Asher, Barb Lindeke, Lisa Hartwig, Richard Newmark**. Board Members are: **Craig Andresen, Dean Doering, Mark Bearss, Ben Wilson, Monica Wiese, Laurel Stiebler, Tom McCarthy, and Deb Bachrach**.

Visit this site to learn about upcoming camp sessions:  
[www.projectpuffin.org/ornithcamps.html](http://www.projectpuffin.org/ornithcamps.html)

Visit a puffin island via puffin cams (one inside a burrow):  
[www.projectpuffin.org/PuffinCam.html](http://www.projectpuffin.org/PuffinCam.html)

Keep up with the Friends of Hog Island, a group of volunteers who have taken on the task of creating an endowment fund so Hog Island never again has to shut down, as it did for a time in 2008:  
<http://fohi.org/>



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August September 2012

October November Deadline 9/5/2012

*Welcome... To the Saint Paul Audubon Society. We're a chapter of the National Audubon Society. Our Mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and Earth's biological diversity.*

CALENDAR

AUGUST

Monthly Walk: Tamarack Nature Center . . .14  
Monthly Walk: Rachel Lily Preserve . . . . .15

SEPTEMBER

Board Meeting . . . . .10  
Monthly Member Meeting: Penguins . . . . .13  
Field Trip: Lake Elmo Reg'l Park . . . . .22

OCTOBER

Board Meeting . . . . .1

Non-profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit # 3795  
Twin Cities, Minnesota

**Time Dated Material  
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

**NABA Butterfly Census, Con't from p. 2**

Monarch, Silver-spotted Skipper, Least Skipper, European Skipper, Tawny-edged Skipper, Northern Broken-Dash, Delaware Skipper, Coral Hairstreak.

Also seen were several undetermined, of sulfur, fritillary, and skipper species.

Thank you to **Dorothy Waltz** for coordinating the census, and to **Dean Hanson** for his expertise.



**State-wide Chimney Swift Sit 2012**

Volunteers throughout the state are once again needed to participate in Audubon Minnesota's Annual **Chimney Swift Sit** for about an hour at dusk during August 31 – September 3, counting swifts as they enter a nighttime roosting place. Volunteers can count on one night or on several nights during this designated period, and also at more than one location. Bring a kid or a friend or three and introduce someone new to the wonders of Chimney Swifts...

Please use this link to report your findings:  
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/viewform?fromEmail=true&formkey=dDdoOTVENXFuNIVJW5zc0g5Y01Ha2c6MA>

For more information about Audubon Minnesota's Chimney Swift Conservation project and the Sit, check out <http://mn.audubon.org/chimney-swift-conservation-project>

If you cannot participate in the Sit but know places where Chimney Swifts might be roosting, please contact Ron Windingstad at [rwindingstad@audubon.org](mailto:rwindingstad@audubon.org).

The information collected on this 4th annual event will be posted in early September on <http://mn.audubon.org/>