

The Cardinal

JUNE JULY 2020

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President's Message

A Mother's Day to Remember

I went to see my mom in Minnetonka on Mother's Day. It was the first Mother's Day in at least 15 years that I haven't taken my mom out to breakfast, or even hugged her. About a mile from her house near Ridgedale I saw a mother mallard with five ducklings in the road. I shooed them off and then went on to my mom's. Coming back, I saw the mother duck with only one duckling near a storm drain. Oh, oh. I stopped and looked in the drain and sure enough, there were the missing ducklings. My wife called the Minnetonka Police and in a few minutes a policeman and fire chief showed up. They called in a fire truck and the four fire fighters and a police officer brought out a net and pulled off the storm drain cover. Four big firefighters and police lay on the street fishing in the drain and after about ten minutes recovered two of the missing ducklings.

I started the day a little down thinking of the restrictions we are under. But I soon found that people haven't lost their goodwill. When two firetrucks and a police car with four professionals turn out to help a mother duck, that's a great Mother's Day.

-Donn Waage, SPAS President

Increased Interest in the Natural World

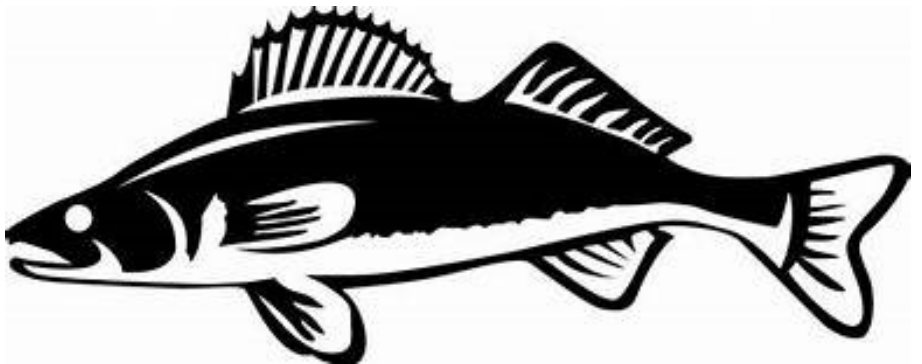
The COVID-19 virus has upset our lives in so many ways. One positive change is that many of us have increased our appreciation of nature. The State of Minnesota has already sold 110,000 more fishing licenses this year than last, to their highest level in 20 years. (See "Big Walleye Stamp Sales Aid Stocking," *Star Tribune* May 22, 2020.) The DNR is funded largely by license income so that means millions of dollars in additional income for conservation. Optional walleye stamp sales are also up — by 60% from last year.

It isn't just fishing that has seen a surge in interest; birding has too. The Associated Press reports that downloads of the National Audubon Society's bird app doubled in March and April versus the year before and unique visits to its website are up

by half a million. Cornell's Merlin bird ID app has seen downloads increase by 102 percent over the March-April period and uploads of bird calls on eBird have increased 84 percent. (See *Star Tribune* May 20, 2020, "Birdwatching soars amid pandemic as Americans head outdoors.")

This surge in interest in nature is good news. In 2015, the book *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv shook up the environmental community, exposing great declines in the number of children involved with nature. We hope the resurgence in interest in the outdoors is sustained past the pandemic. One of our Society's objectives for the year ahead should be to foster this renewed interest as much as possible.

-Donn Waage, SPAS President



**In-person membership meetings canceled for the moment;
Check www.saintpaulaudubon.org for information and upcoming events.**

SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

PO Box 7275, St Paul, MN 55107-7275

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Next issue: August/September 2020

Welcome...

To the Saint Paul Audubon Society.

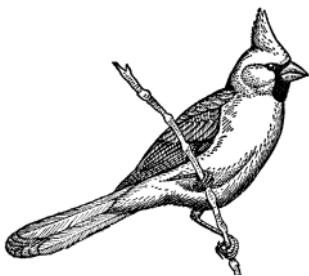
We're a chapter of the
National Audubon Society.

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.

The Saint Paul Audubon Society wel-
comes everyone to become a member
or participate in activities as a non-
member regardless of their race, color,
national origin, sex, disability, sexual
orientation, marital status, age, or gen-
der identity.

The Cardinal is available free to every-
one on our website.

If you would like to receive a notice
when new issues are ready, go to
www.saintpaulaudubon.org and go to
the "Newsletter" tab to subscribe with
your email address. Our Webmaster is
Ben Wilson, ben@simpledesigns.biz or
651-332-1362.



BOARD MEETINGS

The Chapter's Board Meetings are
held the first Monday of most months
6:00-8:00 PM at the Ramsey Washing-
ton Metro Watershed Office, 2665
Noel Drive, Little Canada.

Upcoming: **Monday, Sept. 14**

SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

President Donn Waage	612-735-4085
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ABOUT OUR CHAPTER

Founded in 1945 as the 'St. Paul Bird
Club' with twelve members, the Saint Paul
Audubon Society now serves the entire
East Metro region of the Twin Cities, and
has around 2,800 members. Our Member
Meetings are held from Sept.-Dec. & Feb.-
May on the second Thursday of the month.
For more info please contact leaders at
left, or visit www.saintpaulaudubon.org

ABOUT THE CARDINAL The Cardi-
nal is published 6 times a year and posted
on www.saintpaulaudubon.org at the begin-
ning of February, April, June, August, and
October. For information contact Martha
Douglas, editor, or Jackie Bussjaeger, assis-
tant editor. Copy is due to the editor on the
10th of the month preceding publication.

New board officers, directors elected

Thank you to all who voted in our
first online board election for the
Saint Paul Audubon Society. The
new slate of officers and directors
was accepted with 150 votes, a rec-
ord number for the annual elec-
tion. Board members now serving
June 2020 - May 2021 include:

Officers

Donn Waage, President
Jane Braun, Vice President
Martha Douglas, Vice President for
Communications
Jim Stout, Treasurer
Kiki Sonnen, Secretary

Directors

Louise Eidsmoe
Rebecca Flood
David Kuhlmann
Barbara Lindeke
Rick Pankow
Nancy Uppgren

Background on board members
can be found on the website,
www.saintpaulaudubon.org.

Board meetings, held the first
Monday of most months, have
been conducted via phone confer-
ence or Zoom since March. The
next meeting will be Sept. 14 at
6:00 p.m., with the location to be
announced later.



Saint Paul Audubon Society's International Migration Project: An Exciting New Opportunity!

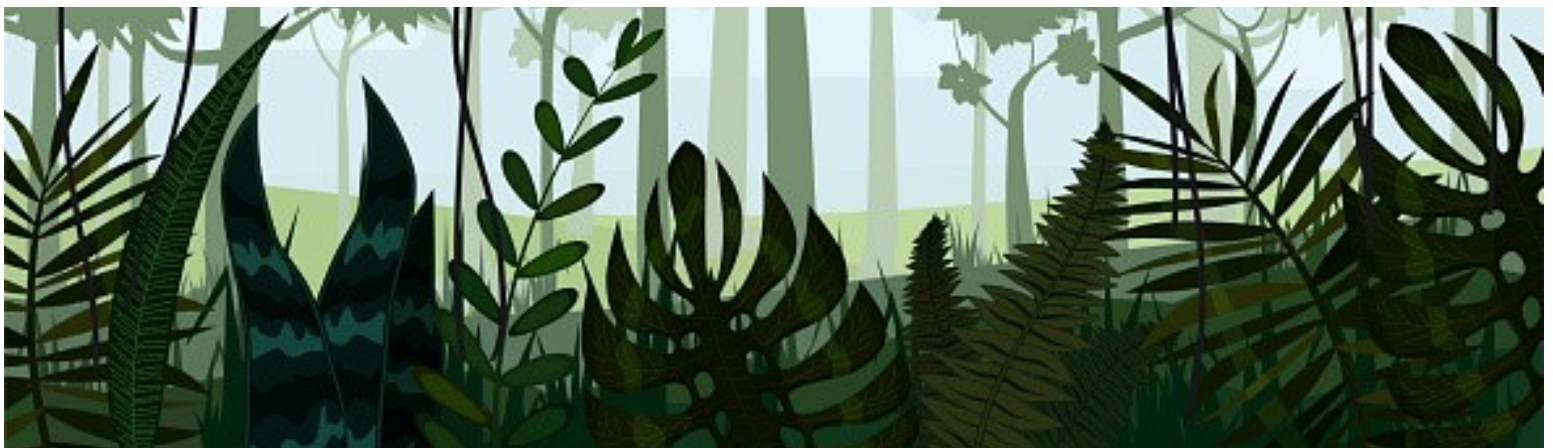
Bird migration should be thought of as one of the most remarkable wonders of the world. It is simply amazing that some species, even tiny wrens, find their way from Canada to Central or South America and back every year, notwithstanding the weather, human-made obstacles, and the need to stop and rest and eat at crucial locations that may have changed. In addition, young birds have to figure out how to do this on their own. How do they accomplish this amazing feat of geolocation? It is really not well understood, and certainly underappreciated. In Minnesota, we are exceptionally fortunate: we get the benefit of many species visiting us for their summer breeding season and even some species from Canada wintering in balmy northern Minnesota.

But conservation efforts we undertake in Minnesota may not be fully effective if we do not consider the full life cycle of birds. For example, how effective is it if we protect birds in Minnesota but there is nothing for them to eat along the way?

Without knowledge and recognition of their needs, it is difficult to know what drives or limits bird populations and when or where to direct conservation efforts. To increase knowledge of neotropical migrants, the Saint Paul Audubon Society Board has decided to spend \$2,500 to sponsor a Monitoring Overwinter Survival Station (MoSI) in Belize, Central America. The MoSI Collaborative is an international network of bird monitoring stations in Central and South America. MoSI is managed by the Bird Populations Institute, a nonprofit based in California <https://www.birdpop.org/>.

The MoSI Collaborative uses standard protocols to band birds and seeks to measure population trends, site persistence and adult survival rates. The MoSI program is expanding our understanding of the movements and habitat needs of neotropical migrant birds across the full annual cycle, which is critical for understanding and predicting the effects of climate change and habitat degradation on bird populations. The MoSI station we are supporting, Runaway Creek Nature Reserve <https://runawaycreekbelize.org/>, is a small jungle research station. The University of Belize coordinates the MoSI stations in Belize and is hosting numerous projects towards the goal of understanding bird population trends. We hope that as our relationship with Runaway Creek Nature Reserve develops, we will be able to provide more information on its specific research projects and the results they are seeing.

With this step, the Saint Paul Audubon Society is undertaking an important new aspect in its efforts to protect the birds we all see and love, especially those migrators who make birding so exciting in our state!



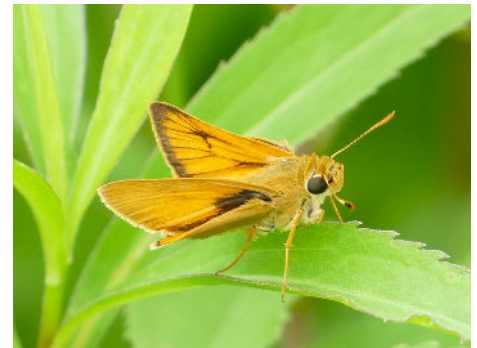


Counting Butterflies During A Pandemic

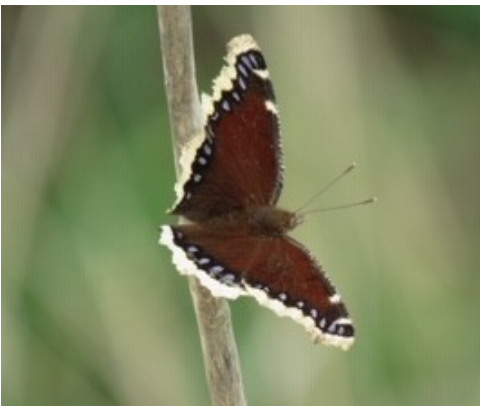
Because of the risk of exposure to COVID-19, we're making major changes to our 2020 Butterfly Count. As Jane Braun, our Society Vice-President and former Assistant Director of Emergency Preparedness and Response at the Minnesota Department of Health commented, "Since so many of our members and volunteers are in high-risk groups, we want to be very careful." Therefore, we have come up with a plan that will still meet the requirements of the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) with just a few veteran volunteers.

Since Dean Hansen, our technical expert leader, is himself in a high-risk group, he is unwilling to be exposed to a large group of people bringing butterflies up to him to be identified. Instead, he has volunteered to go with Mary Lee, the AHATS National Guard Naturalist, follow our established route, and count all of the butterflies they see at the Arden Hills Army Training Site (AHATS). Their report will enable us to fulfill our obligation for an official count at AHATS for 2020.

In addition, their butterfly report, plus a list of all the birds they see there will be sent to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the National Guard's Camp Ripley for their long-term wildlife records. We're very grateful to Dean and Mary Lee for conducting this count. We look forward to seeing our whole group, and the opportunity to welcome new volunteers, next year.



Clockwise, top left to bottom right: Baltimore checkerspot, red admiral, tiger swallowtail, monarch, Delaware skipper, little yellow sulphur, question mark, eastern tailed-blue, mourning cloak. Photos by Marcie O'Conner (upper 6) and Jackie Bussjaeger (bottom row).



COVID-19 and group events

We hope that everyone is getting outdoors to enjoy these wonderful seasons for birding. We continue to monitor the recommendations of state and local health officials on preventing the transmission of COVID-19, especially as they pertain to high-risk groups, to determine whether we can safely plan group walks and field trips. **At this time, we continue to hold off on scheduling group activities of any kind**, including walks and hikes, meetings, and special events. Please check www.saintpaulaudubon.org for updates on the status of group activities.

Birding locations to explore on your own

Members of the Field Trip Committee who would have led walks this summer have identified locations they recommend for birding. Here is information about the locations they selected, so that you can explore these on your own. **Thank you to Cathy Croghan, Field Trip Committee chair, and everyone who has volunteered to lead guided walks.**

Sunfish Lake Park, Lake Elmo 10000 Stillwater Lane North

Sunfish Lake Park is a large, hilly, mature woodland with some wetland openings. Later migrating and nesting species overlap there in June. Natural clearings that have ponds are favorable for a nice variety of water birds. Human-made clearings provide plenty of

Evening walks on the prairie

Chase Davies selected the following locations as ideal for observing numerous bird-native plant effects, while enjoying a summer evening on the prairie.

- Long Lake Prairie, New Brighton
1500 Old Highway 8
- Rachel Lilly Preserve, Mendota Heights
680 MN-110
A mid-summer blooming prairie.
- Valley View Park, Oak Park Heights
5575 Ozark Avenue North
A late-summer blooming, easily accessed, suburban goat prairie with surprising plant diversity. It has fewer visitors than many of the other birding sites in the metro area.

edge habitat favorable to many more species. The park has well-defined walking paths with some hills.

Langton Lake Park, Roseville 1894 County Road C2

A good place to observe the interaction between shallow ponds, birds and trees. Buckthorn was recently removed so the sightlines at the park are improved.

Rachel Lilly Preserve in the Dodge Nature Center 680 MN-110, Mendota Heights

This little-known preserve is mainly prairie with some shrub and tree habitats. It has frequently been called a "gem."

Battle Creek Park, Maplewood 2350 Upper Afton Road

This is a sizeable, terrific late-spring birding opportunity with several entry points.

Plan Ahead - October Field Trip

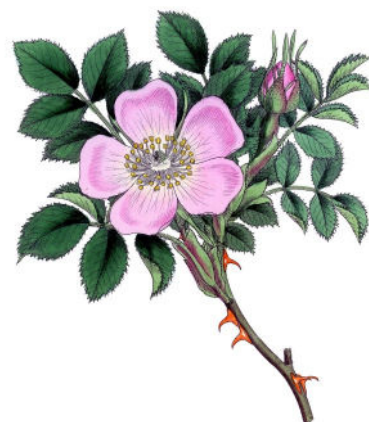
Sandhill Cranes at Crex Meadows SWA

Tuesday, October 20, 4:00-8:15 p.m.

Details to come in August-September *Cardinal*

- Fish Creek Prairie at the Fish Creek Natural Area, Maplewood
2465-2475 Carver Avenue

Many quality partners are co-managing the restoration of this bluff-top prairie that includes a long-distance view over the Mississippi River Valley.



Elements of a Successful Bird Walk

What goes into a successful bird walk? Most birders have attended many walks. In fact, this is how we often learned, and continue to learn, to bird. The Saint Paul Audubon Society encourages members to volunteer to plan and lead walks, and veteran bird walk leader Chase Davies had developed a series of on-site conversations for this summer to do some birding and reflect on the elements that make a good walk.

Unfortunately, the series needs to be canceled at this time.



If you have ever considered becoming a field trip leader, or just want to know how it all comes together, contact Chase Davies at 651-246-9754 or Rocky-Birder@gmail.com. Chase will arrange for small-group and/or individual 1 ½ hour walks to help you decide whether you too can guide people through a familiar area of your choice. The goal is to feel comfortable doing this even if you don't consider yourself an expert. The pooled experience of the group creates its own expertise!

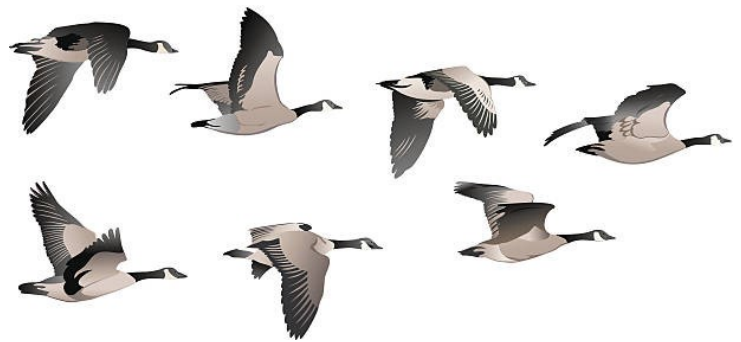
Safe birding guidelines

Whether you are birding on your own or with others, please observe these guidelines:

- Drive separately to the birding site
- Wear a face mask and stay six feet away from other birders
- Do not share equipment or field guides

In all cases, please consider your own level of risk and take the necessary safety precautions.

We want everyone to stay well until we can once again enjoy all our events together.



Would you like more field trips? Please consider selecting a familiar birding place and volunteering to lead there. Contact Cathy Croghan for details at crogh001@umn.edu

Looking forward to fall

We have lost a lot of the usual birding time together this spring and summer. But fall is still to come, another great season to get out and bird! Everything that went north will return south. There can be real joy in watching the range of bird behaviors and activities with cooling temperatures and longer nights, and many more seasonal differences. There will also be more birds that are hard to identify due to youngsters and adults in non-breeding plumage, but if we can once again get out with a group, the pooled observations of participants greatly increases identifications. Watch for fall opportunities, which will be announced in *The Cardinal* and on the website.



Be sure to check www.saintpaulaudubon.org throughout the summer for field trip additions and/or COVID-19 and weather-caused cancellations.