

# The Cardinal



OCTOBER NOVEMBER 2021

WWW.SAINTPAULAUDUBON.ORG • SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

## Volunteers Needed for Audubon Woods Restoration

An opportunity for Saint Paul Audubon Society members and friends to help restore the Audubon Woods in Como Park has been scheduled for Saturday morning, October 23. The job for this work day is to drag and stack invasive buckthorn from the Como Woodland Outdoor Classroom, which is adjacent to the ten-acre site dedicated to the Audubon Society.

“Prior buckthorn removal has occurred in the classroom area and it has been replanted with native species,” said Board Member Rebecca Flood, who has been working on arrangements for the day.

“However, the buckthorn is starting to regrow. City staff recommend working in that area to prevent buckthorn from reseeding in the Audubon Woods once removal has occurred there.”

The Audubon Woods was dedicated to the Saint Paul Audubon Society as a bird habitat in 1952 but later was unmanaged and overrun. The effort to restore and revive this space for birds in coordination with Saint Paul Parks – Natural Resources is being led by Flood, along with Board Vice President Jane Braun. For more background on the history of the site, see the April/May 2021 issue of [The Cardinal](#).

The work area is somewhat hilly and the work will be physically demanding, but we welcome volunteers for a variety of jobs. Location: Como Woodland Outdoor Classroom, at 1221 Wynne Ave., St. Paul.

Saturday, October 23, 9-11 a.m. Please arrive before 9 to complete sign-in.



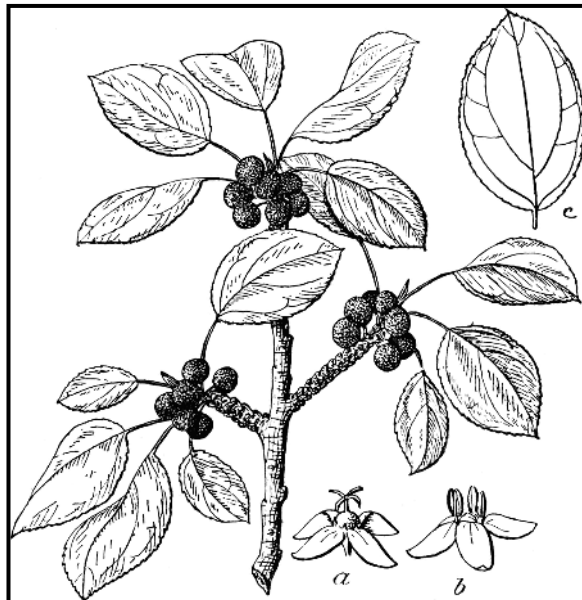
*Volunteers at work on buckthorn removal at Como Park. Photo by Hans Mouritzen*

Volunteers for the project will be limited to 22 and will be required to wear masks and practice social distancing, in accordance with the City of St. Paul’s

COVID protocol plan. In addition, our Audubon chapter requires participants to be vaccinated for COVID-19. Closed-toed shoes are required. Long sleeves and pants, work gloves, and insect repellent are recommended, although some gloves and safety glasses will be available to borrow. Participants will need to sign a City waiver.

To register (required): Please visit <https://cerv.is/m?0177g6xBYDD>

This work day is a pilot project for Saint Paul Audubon, and we hope to offer a number of opportunities for people with a variety of abilities in the future.



## SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

PO Box 7275, St Paul, MN 55107-7275

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.

You will automatically become a member of the Saint Paul Audubon Society if you make a gift of \$30 or more to the National Audubon Society and reside in Saint Paul, Ramsey and Washington counties, and surrounding areas.

The Saint Paul Audubon Society welcomes 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 gender identity.

**Next issue: December 2021/  
January 2022**

## Thank You to Our Volunteers

The Saint Paul Audubon Society values its volunteers, who run almost the entire organization without paid staff. We have about 2,000 members and 60-70 people volunteer to help with field trips, Warbler Weekend, advocacy for birds and birding, small grants to support bird projects, and habitat restoration projects. Other volunteers manage the communications such as this *Cardinal*, member mailing lists, and the records and finances that underlie all these efforts. Just a few months before COVID hit, our chapter started a program to recognize its volunteers. We designed and purchased a set of pins to recognize years of service and we developed criteria for a special award for individuals who have made exceptional contributions. However, the program is somewhat on hold right now because an important element of the recognition was to make the presentations in person. Our volunteers continue to provide incredible service and as soon as we can meet in person again, we will recognize their contributions. Meanwhile, we welcome more volunteers. There is always a need and all skills are welcome. You do not need to have great birding skills to be a volunteer—I can testify to that. We are proud of our accom-

### SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

<b>President</b> Donn Waage	612-735-4085
<b>Vice President</b> Jane Braun	651-636-4009
<b>Vice President, Communications</b> Martha Douglas	651-366-2345
<b>Treasurer</b> James Stout	651-645-7017
<b>Secretary</b> Kiki Sonnen	651-331-9560
<b>Conservat'n Co-Chr</b> Nancy Uppgren	651-247-1718
<b>Conservat'n Co-Chr</b> Monica Bryand	651-246-5522
<b>Field Trips Chair</b> Cathy Croghan	651-636-6475
<b>Education Chair</b> David Kuhlmann	507-514-2110
<b>Assistant Editor</b> Jackie Bussjaeger	651-295-3967 cardinalstpaul@gmail.com

### 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](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org)

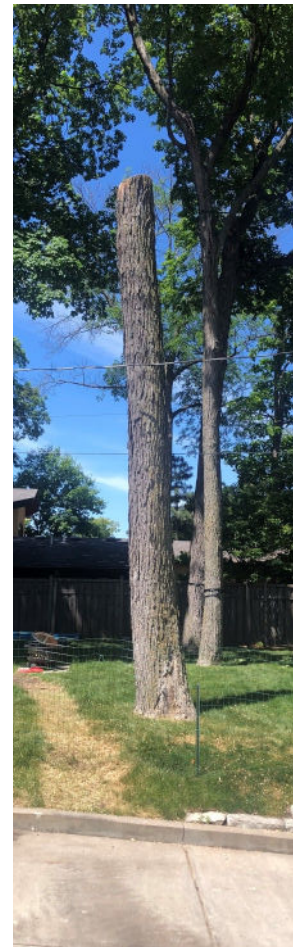
**ABOUT THE CARDINAL** The Cardinal is published 6 times a year and posted on [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org) at the beginning of February, April, June, August, and October. For information contact Martha Douglas, editor, or Jackie Bussjaeger, assistant editor. Copy is due to the editor on the 15th of the month preceding publication.

The *Cardinal* is available free to everyone on our website. If you would like to receive a notice when new issues are ready, go to [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org) and go to the "Newsletter" tab to subscribe with your email address. Our Webmaster is Ben Wilson, [ben@simpledesigns.biz](mailto:ben@simpledesigns.biz) or 651-332-1362.

plishments but our invaluable and resilient volunteers could use more help and we could undertake more activities with more volunteers. If you would like to get involved, please see the information on page 3 about some specific opportunities or call Barbara Lindeke, our volunteer coordinator, at 651-247-1718.

One final note on a different subject: in the August/September *Cardinal* I wrote a short story about my "snag tree." This is a dead tree left standing in the forest. Snag trees are hosts to insects and also provide many homes for wildlife. When one of my sugar maples died, I left a portion of the trunk standing as a snag tree. Here is what my snag tree looks like now.

*Donn Waage, President, Saint Paul Audubon Society*



## Help Wanted!

Saint Paul Audubon members and friends are involved in a wide range of activities promoting the enjoyment, understanding, and protection of birds and their habitats. For an all-volunteer organization, we get a lot of work done! Current opportunities for which we need immediate help are listed below along with contact information for following up.

### *Warbler Weekend Coordinator*

We are looking for someone to fill the central volunteer position for this annual May event and coordinate the activities of other committee members who take care of the many details. The coordinator calls planning meetings as needed, makes sure everything stays on track, and communicates with the board. This event is an annual highlight of Saint Paul Audubon birding and the data collected on bird sightings continues a half-century of valuable record-keeping! Being at the center of this important activity is an exciting opportunity to help it all come together. Please contact Jim Stout at 651-645-7017 or [jstout@umn.edu](mailto:jstout@umn.edu).

### *Membership Coordinator*

The Society's board has recommended creating this new volunteer role to help manage the process through which people become members, keep track of membership lists and addresses, coordinate membership records with the National Audubon Society, and other related matters. Please contact Barbara Lindeke at 651-489-0318.

### *Board Member*

The number of people serving on the Saint Paul Audubon Society board is currently lower than we'd like. The board meets monthly except for July and August and members are encouraged to lead or serve on a committee or a major activity. Members serve for two-year terms. If you are interested or would like to suggest someone else, please contact Donn Waage at 612-735-4085 or [donnw@yahoo.com](mailto:donnw@yahoo.com).

## FIELD TRIPS

### Pelican Migration at Pig's Eye Lake

2165 Pig's Eye Lake Rd, St. Paul

Saturday, October 16, 9-11 a.m.



Join us for birding at Pig's Eye Regional Park – North Unit. Each fall flocks of American White Pelicans gather in migration at the north end of Pig's Eye Lake. Here they rest up and refuel on minnows. Come wish them bon voyage as they travel to their wintering grounds in the Gulf of Mexico. Did you know? Pelican groups are called squadrons. We may also see grassland and woodland songbirds, swallows, Wild Turkeys, Bald Eagles, and more. If the timing is right, we may be able to watch the Corps of Engineers build dredge spoil islands in the lake.

**DIRECTIONS** Meet in the public parking lot off Shepard Road at Chestnut Street in St Paul. There is a Caribou Coffee, 230 Spring Street, adjacent to the lot. We will car caravan from there to Pig's Eye. The Pig's Eye site is difficult to find the first time so car caravans can help us all get there safely. There are port-a-potties at the park. Better facilities can be used at Caribou Coffee where we first rendezvous.

**DIFFICULTY** We will be walking on unpaved field trails with gentle slopes. There are spots of uneven ground and ruts. We will walk at a leisurely pace, birding along the way. In about 20 minutes we will arrive at our observation point.

**SUGGESTIONS** We will still be quite a distance from the Pelicans, so we will use scopes to get closer views. Bring a scope if you can. But even with binoculars, we may be able to witness Pelican group maneuvers of herding fish into the shallows for the harvest.

**LEADERS** Kiki Sonnen 651-331-9560, [Kikisonnen@gmail.com](mailto:Kikisonnen@gmail.com) and Chase Davies. Please contact Kiki if you intend to come to the pelican event.

### Guidelines for group birding

Please follow these guidelines for all Saint Paul Audubon Society outdoor events:

- Participants must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19
- Maintain social distancing and limit carpooling to one household per vehicle
- Masks are optional but welcome
- Attendees will provide their names and contact information at the start of each walk

## Sandhill Cranes at Crex Meadows SWA 102 E. Crex Ave., Grantsburg, WI Tuesday, October 19, 4 – 8:15 p.m.

Since historic times, Greater Sandhill Cranes have congregated by the thousands every autumn evening in the marshes and ponds now called Crex Meadows, located on the north side of Grantsburg, WI. People likewise gather to witness the sight of seemingly never-ending strands and haunting sounds as the birds seek and settle into shelter for the night. Perhaps this is your year to experience anew this enduring ritual. Meet at 4 p.m. in the parking lot of the Visitor Center at Crex Meadow State Wildlife Area in Grantsburg WI. We will talk briefly about the cranes and Crex, and leave in our own cars to caravan from the center about 4:30, returning about 8:15 to the same parking lot.

**DIRECTIONS** Take I-35 North to the Rock Creek/Grantsburg Exit (Highway 70), approximately 34 miles from Forest Lake. Take exit and turn right (EAST) on Highway 70. Follow for 15 miles (into Wisconsin) to the stop light in Grantsburg. Turn left (NORTH) onto Pine Street. Follow the goose signs through town to the Visitor Center, located on the NE corner of the junction of County Road D and County Road F. Meet in the parking lot.

**INSTRUCTIONS** Dress for cooling temperatures during the evening. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. Stay by your car at the Visitor Center parking lot and wait for introductory remarks from the trip leaders. We will caravan from the parking lot.

**REGISTRATION** Register with Louise Eidsmoe 651-231-0453 [eidsmoel@comcast.net](mailto:eidsmoel@comcast.net)

**DIFFICULTY** Easy. We stay close to the cars so as not to spook the cranes.

**LEADERS** Louise Eidsmoe 651-231-0453 [eidsmoel@comcast.net](mailto:eidsmoel@comcast.net) and Chase Davies 651-246-9754 [RockyBirder@gmail.com](mailto:RockyBirder@gmail.com)

## Swans and Other Waterfowl Brownsville, MN Saturday, November 13, 2–3 p.m. & 4–5 p.m.

Swans galore are the norm just south of Brownsville, MN. Fall migration offers birders an opportunity to decide: trumpeter or tundra swan? Swans and dabbling ducks can be seen from one overlook; less than one mile away is a deep water overlook with diving waterfowl. This is a staging area for one species and is used year around for the other. From 2-3 p.m. and again from 4-5 p.m. on November 13, Chase and Ed Davies will be at the Brownsville Overlook to talk about what swans and dabbling ducks are in sight, the life histories of the swans, and management challenges of the constantly changing river. Sundown is at 4:41 p.m.; the sight of swans returning from feeding areas to congregate overnight in Pool



8 is an unforgettable experience and the reason for this late-day meeting. From 3-4 p.m., Chase and Ed will be at the Hwy 26 overlook, a mile south of the Brownsville Overlook. Diving ducks feed in this part of Pool 8, possibly including canvasbacks and mergansers. Plan ahead and enjoy a “Day Along the Mighty Mississippi River,” and post your photos and comments afterwards on Saint Paul Audubon’s Facebook page.

**DIRECTIONS** The time and travel distance are nearly the same whether you travel to Rochester, then use I-90, or if you travel along the river on US 61 in MN or partly in WI to I-90. North of LaCrescent MN, I-90 crosses the river between MN and WI. Take US 61 and/or I-90 to MN 16 South; about 3 miles south of LaCrescent, on a curve stay left at junction with MN 26. Stay on MN 26 to the Brownsville Overlook, which is 3 miles south of Brownsville. The Hwy 26 Overlook is another 1.5 miles south of the Brownsville Overlook.

**INSTRUCTIONS** Dress for cool temperatures and probable winds on the riverbank, including a warm hat and gloves.

**SAFE BIRDING GUIDELINES** Wear a face mask and observe social distancing. Sharing equipment is not safe, but bring a spotting scope for your own use, binoculars, field guide, or a camera with telescopic lens.

**DIFFICULTY** Overlooks are curbside to parking and are handicap accessible.

**AMENITIES** In the past, Brownsville Overlook had a handicap-accessible portable outhouse.

**REGISTRATION** Please sign in at the sites. LEADERS Chase and Ed Davies, 651 246-9754, [rockybirder@gmail.com](mailto:rockybirder@gmail.com)

**TIPS** Swans are dispersed during the day but depending on wind a bunch may be seen feeding along US 61 within sight of the Minneiska Cemetery in MN just south of where the Whitewater River enters the Mississippi River; a roost site can be seen from a viewing platform in a park north of the Buffalo River, just north of Alma, WI.

**OTHER THINGS TO DO** The Eagle Center in Wabasha <https://www.nationaleaglecenter.org/> MN Marine Art Museum in Winona <https://www.mmam.org/> Riecks Lake Park, just north of Alma, WI, Colvill Park, Red Wing, MN. Check out some of the pullouts along Lake Pepin.

### Would you like more field trips?

Please consider selecting a familiar birding place and volunteering to lead there. Contact Cathy Croghan for details [crogh001@umn.edu](mailto:crogh001@umn.edu)

## Upcoming Monthly Meeting Speakers

Saint Paul Audubon Society monthly membership meetings, open to all, feature presentations by speakers on a range of topics relating to birds and their habitats. The meetings, held the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m., will continue to take place via Zoom for the foreseeable future. Check the website, [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org), for up-to-date details and Zoom links. Here's the lineup of speakers through May 2022.

**October 14:** "A Walk in the Woodson," featuring a tour of the renowned museum of bird art in Wausau, WI. Woodson Art Museum assistant director Matt Foss and curator of education Catie Anderson will share artworks, insights, and stories during a virtual visit to the 2021 *Birds in Art* exhibition, the 46<sup>th</sup> edition of this acclaimed exhibition. Setting the standard for avian art, the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum's *Birds in Art* exhibition celebrates international artists and artworks with more than 100 contemporary paintings, sculptures, and graphics. The museum offers diverse and ever-changing exhibitions year-round, a fully accessible sculpture garden, dedicated interactive learning gallery, and dynamic programs for all ages and life stages. Admission to the museum is free.

**November 11:** John Sammler, education manager at the U of M's Raptor Center, will give an update on plans for the Center.

**December 9:** Charles Grolla, a member of the Bois Forte band of Ojibwe, will give a presentation based on his book *Ojibwe Bird Stories*.

**January 13:** Speakers from the University of Belize migratory bird monitoring project will give an update on their work, which is supported with a grant from the Saint Paul Audubon Society.

**February 10:** Birders and photographers Thomas Amble and Terry Scheller will present "Birds of Peru."

**March 10:** David Remucal, curator of endangered plants at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, will present "Endangered Plants of Minnesota."

**April 14:** Lynette Anderson, Interpretive Naturalist and Restoration Assistant at Belwin Conservancy, will present "Belwin, Bison, and Birds."

**May 12:** Catherine Early, scientist with the MN Science Museum, will talk about her research into bird brain evolution.

## Four Projects Receive Grants

In the past few months, the Saint Paul Audubon Society Board of Directors reviewed a number of applications for grants and made awards to four projects being conducted by three organizations. These awards will go to:



Friends of Sax-Zim Bog (\$1000) for an upcoming land purchase that will significantly increase the amount of protected habitat in northern Minnesota

Frogtown Green (\$1000 per year for three years) for a pollinator-friendly garden, tree planting, and urban bird presentations to increase bird habitats in the area of St. Paul with the least tree canopy

Frogtown Green (\$1000 per year for three years) for a chimney swift tower, youth environmental education, and birding tours in a diverse local community

University of Belize Environmental Research Institute (\$2500) to support the *Improving Natural Resources Management in Belize through Bird Monitoring* project for bird banding and training of naturalists

With the grants spanning from Northern Minnesota to St. Paul to Belize, we are supporting habitat for "our" migrating birds along most of the length of their journey, as well as for birds that nest locally. The projects also aim to further educate people in all three areas about habitat conservation and restoration.

Organizations and individuals doing work that fits with the Society's Focus Areas identified in 2019 strategic planning efforts (conservation, education, and advocacy) are encouraged to apply for grants. We also specifically welcome applications for activities that further equity and inclusion in birding and habitat preservation. The process requires a brief application and brief interim/final reports. To get started, download the grant guidelines, application, and reporting form from the Society's website <https://www.saintpaulaudubon.org/grant-application/> or contact Jane Braun at [jane@promotional.com](mailto:jane@promotional.com).

## Kiki Sonnen, Painter and Activist

Spend a morning with Kiki Sonnen at Pig's Eye Lake Regional Park, walking the trails or painting the scene, and you might become inspired. A lifelong birder and sketcher, community organizer, city councilmember and environmental activist, Kiki recently led a group of 22 people in a watercolor class at Pig's Eye. The event was sponsored by the Lower Phalen Creek Project, which often partners with like-minded groups to fulfill their mission "to honor and care for our natural places and the sacred sites and cultural value within them."

The park is surrounded by heavy industry. In fact, a large wood chipper and soil dump actually sit on public park land! Battle Creek, which runs through the park, has experienced contamination from diesel fuel spills from surrounding rail yards, the most recent this past summer. Much of the northern part of the park is located on a city dump which operated from the 1940s to 1972. It is a Superfund site, but since the city never registered or licensed the dump, federal cleanup funds were not available. Most of the obvious hazardous materials, such as car and truck batteries and drum barrels of chemicals were removed, clean soil was layered on top of the land, and cover crops were planted. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency monitors wells on the land and tracks underground pollution levels.

Kiki works with a group of people to protect the park and says that they are making some inroads in getting the city to enforce the zoning code and require developers to go through a process of review and scrutiny. They are also working to protect a heron rookery and spawning fish in Pig's Eye Lake. The Army Corps of Engineers will be dumping over 400,000 cubic yards of dredge spoil into the

*Painting party artists hold up their finished artwork. Photo by Tom Dimond.*



lake in an effort to create islands. The group supports the DNR permit which restricts the work to non-breeding times.

Despite the problems and challenges Pig's Eye Regional Park faces, it remains St. Paul's largest park with the city's largest lake. Its wild beauty is unsurpassed. It is home to 500 herons and egrets, numerous Bald Eagles, and

multitudes of birds of all species. The lake provides a nursery for main channel fish such as channel catfish, sturgeon, and walleye. The Dakota call Pig's Eye Čhokán Tánka - the Big Middle. It is the middle between the Dakota's origin at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers and the homeland of Prairie Island.

Kiki's watercolors were displayed recently through the Solidarity Street Gallery. They are colorful and playful, with identification labels next to some of the flora and fauna. But Kiki doesn't let the viewer ignore the dark side. One painting is titled "Diesel Fuel Spill into Battle Creek," and another labels the encroaching dump site and other pollutants. "Through my watercolor sketches I am documenting the beauty of the place and the threats it

faces," Kiki said. "Now is the time to illustrate, record, and document the beauty of the landscape and the Relatives living there."

A Saint Paul Audubon Society field trip to Pig's Eye Park will be led by Kiki on October 16 (see page 3). Migrating pelicans rest for periods on the lake and might make a showing. "I can't guarantee that we will see pelicans," Kiki said. "But there are many other things to see, too."

*Martha Douglas, Cardinal Editor*



*"As instructor, I donned my Heron Mask to channel the spirit of the Great Blue Heron," Kiki wrote. Photo by Tom Dimond.*