

# The Cardinal



FEBRUARY MARCH 2022

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## February and March Presentations Offer a Break from Winter!

Saint Paul Audubon Society monthly meetings, open to all, feature presentations on a range of topics relating to birds and their habitats. The meetings, held the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m., will take place online via Zoom. *Go to the website, [saintpaulaudubon.org](http://saintpaulaudubon.org)*, for links to the presentations and for up-to-date announcements of any changes.

**February 10, "Birding in Ecuador,"** with birders and photographers Thomas Amble and Terry Scheller. Tom and Terry have had the great fortune to go birding in Ecuador three times, most recently this past October 2021. They will talk about the birds seen in the various biomes and about the different adventures they have had. They also hope that they can help those who want to visit but don't know where to start. Ecuador is a small country and is recognized as megadiverse, according to Conservation International. It has the most biodiversity per square kilometer of any nation, including more than 1600 birds.

Tom and Terry both come from careers in museums. Tom, now retired, worked at the Bell Museum of Natural History during the museum's move and managed the diorama moves to the new Bell. Terry has worked with the Minnesota Historical Society for more than 27 years as an exhibit designer.

**March 10, "How a Botanic Garden (and You) Can Contribute to Saving Our Rare Native Plants,"** with botanist David Remucal, Ph.D. Many people think of botanic gardens as only a place to look at pretty plants or a place to get ideas for home gardens. Some people are also aware that "botanical research" happens there. But it can be a surprise to many that botanic gardens can also be very involved in native and rare plant conservation, including the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. Dr. Remucal will talk about what the Arboretum has been doing to save rare plants and give you ideas about how you can contribute, too.

Dr. Remucal is Curator of Endangered Plants at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, where he manages the Plant Conservation Program. His research interests include rare plant and native orchid propagation, seed storage, and restoration and translocation. An ecologist/evolutionary biologist by training, he did his graduate work at the University of Colorado. He has worked with the Denver Botanic Gardens, focusing on horticultural and exhibit interpretation; the Navajo Natural Heritage Program, focusing on plant community survey and demographic work; and the USDA-Agricultural Research Service, focusing on plant reproduction ecology and research data collection techniques. This rounded background led him to the Arboretum, where he has been building a program for the conservation of rare and native plants.

**See calendar on page 6 for more Monthly chapter meeting dates.**

### Continuing COVID Precautions

One of the lessons we all have learned from COVID-19 is that our plans are subject to change. We hope the activities announced here in the Cardinal can occur as planned but we will follow the guidance of the Minnesota Department of Health. That means that some aspects of these activities may change or require additional protective measures. As we get closer to each event, please check [saintpaulaudubon.org](http://saintpaulaudubon.org) for up-to-date information.



*Ocellated Tapaculo*

**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.

**SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY**

- President** 612-735-4085  
Donn Waage
- Vice President** 651-636-4009  
Jane Braun
- Vice President,  
Communications** 651-366-2345  
Martha Douglas
- Treasurer** 651-645-7017  
James Stout
- Secretary** 651-331-9560  
Kiki Sonnen
- Conservat'n Co-Chr** 651-247-1718  
Nancy Uppgren
- Conservat'n Co-Chr** 651-246-5522  
Monica Bryand
- Field Trips Chair** 651-636-6475  
Cathy Croghan
- Graphic Designer**  
Laurie Wachter

**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. Copy is due 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.

**Next issue: April / May 2022**

**Welcome to New Board Members**

The St. Paul Audubon Society Board is happy to welcome two new members, Debbie Brown and Craig Cox.

Debbie Brown describes herself as an "Army brat" who continued moving around as an adult. She has lived in multiple places on both coasts, in Texas, Germany, and southwest Africa, and in St. Paul for the past 11 years. "I am not an expert birder, but I do have strong interests in nature, conservation, birds, and all animals. Observing and admiring birds are favorite pastimes when I travel and spend time outdoors." Professionally, Debbie is a certified industrial hygienist and certified safety professional. She was employed by government and then industry for 25 years before starting her own consultancy five years ago. Among other volunteer activities, she has been a member of our Conservation Committee for the past year.

Craig Cox grew up in Saint Paul and has spent 40-plus years working to protect natural resources with a particular emphasis on water and wetlands. He started his career with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in 1979 helping protect and repair habitat in State Parks. After 10 great years, he headed to Washington DC and spent the next 30 years working at the

intersection of agricultural and environmental policy in various positions including the National Academy of Sciences, Senate Agriculture Committee, U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Soil and Water Conservation Society and is now stepping down as Senior VP and Midwest Director at the Environmental Working Group. He was hooked on birding when watching Cedar Waxwings feeding in a meadow on the North Shore. Now binoculars are always with him, including in his fishing vest when he's pursuing his other passion - flyfishing for trout. He recently returned to Saint Paul after many years gone and is thrilled to be engaging with Audubon once again.



*Cedar Waxwing; photo by Patrice Bouchard*

## Enjoy Spring Migration at Warbler Weekend 2022!

Details are coming together for Saint Paul Audubon Society's 51st annual Warbler Weekend, May 6-8 (Mother's Day weekend) at Hok-Si-La Park in Lake City, MN. The fifth year at this site, the Hok-Si-La Park Dining Hall will be the hub for the weekend's gathering, socializing, eating, recording, dispersing, and more. Visit [www.hoksilapark.org](http://www.hoksilapark.org) to learn more about the location.

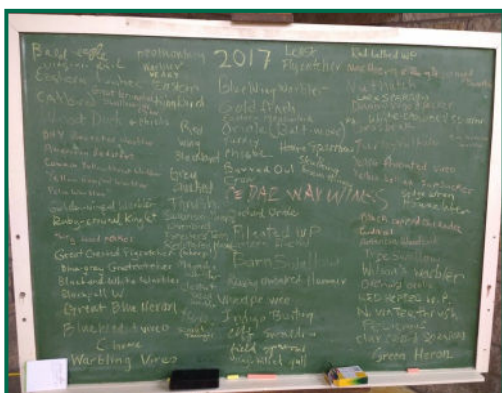
All levels of birders are welcome and encouraged to join in the fun and discovery! Warbler Weekend is a wonderful opportunity for new birders to learn from others and get inspired, and for all birders to discover something new. Walks on Saturday might focus on a particular habitat, basic birding skills, bird songs, or a favorite place in the area.

All sites offer opportunities for birders, as the migrants travel the Mississippi Flyway north to their breeding grounds. Every year since 1972, we have kept a record of the species sighted during Warbler Weekend, documenting important information on the spring bird migration along this particular stretch of bluff lands and lowlands of the Wells Creek area of the Mississippi River. The "Essentials" article provides more details, with the weekend structured in the traditional Warbler Weekend style.

Volunteers are still needed for on-site help and for leading "birding by ear" and "birding by car" trips on Saturday afternoon. Please contact Ed Davies, Warbler Weekend coordinator, at [eddavies60@gmail.com](mailto:eddavies60@gmail.com).

Watch for a registration form and instructions coming soon via email, on our website, [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org), and in the next issue of the *Cardinal*. Registration will be required for the weekend and will be limited to 150 people. The deadline for registration will be April 20.

We hope to see you there!



Warbler Weekend 2017 Species List

## Warbler Weekend Essentials

Here are the details to date for Warbler Weekend 2022. We will send out more information as it becomes available, via email, on [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org) and in the next issue of the *Cardinal*.

**Registration:** Registration for the weekend and reservations for all meals, including requests for gluten-free or vegetarian meals, are required in advance. Watch for further instructions. The registration deadline is April 20.

**Accommodations:** Birders staying overnight need to make their own reservations. Lake City and Red Wing are closest.

**Location:** Dining Hall, Hok-Si-La Park, Lake City, MN

**On-site Information:** The usual Bird Board, Schedule, and Notices will be posted on information boards in prominent places. Special sightings, identification of Saturday leaders, and places to bird will be on a handout available Friday evening and Saturday, with changes announced during meals. The Warbler Weekend count will be tallied after the Saturday supper.

### Schedule

#### Friday May 6

6:30 p.m. Coffee, cookies and socializing  
7:00 p.m. Presentation

#### Saturday May 7

Meals will be prepared and served by Lake City Kiwanis in the Dining Hall

8:00-8:30 a.m. Breakfast. Announcements at 8:45 a.m.  
12:00-12:30 p.m. Lunch. Announcements at 12:45 p.m.  
6:00-6:30 p.m. Dinner. Tally and announcements

#### Saturday Birding Walks

Morning: 6:15 a.m.-8:00 a.m. and 9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.  
Afternoon: 1:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Gather on the grass at the parking lot around appropriate signs for each scheduled walk. Trips depart promptly, so please be on time. Likely spots and topics are:

- Frontenac State Park: Prairie walk, Sand Point trail, and overlook
- Hok-Si-La north and south
- Old Methodist Camp area
- Frontenac Town Cemetery and town walk
- Villa Maria grounds
- Beginning birder walk
- Birding by car
- Birding by ear

#### Sunday May 8

No meals or activities are planned for this day. Enjoy birding on your own!

**Evaluation forms:** We want your input! All birders will be asked to fill out an evaluation form so that we can continue to improve Warbler Weekend.



## Volunteers Needed for Wild River Journey

We are delighted to announce that the Saint Paul Audubon Society will be a part of the Wild River Journey on the St. Croix River in May! This field trip is an opportunity for 4th graders in the Stillwater school district to ride on a large paddlewheel river boat and learn about the flora and fauna of the river.

St. Paul Audubon will host a "bird station" where we will teach the students about birds in the river valley. We provide binoculars for each student, so that they have a first-hand experience of birdwatching on the St. Croix.

**Volunteers are needed to be instructors**, with training provided prior to the event. Here are details:

Dates: May 17, 18, 19, 24, and 25

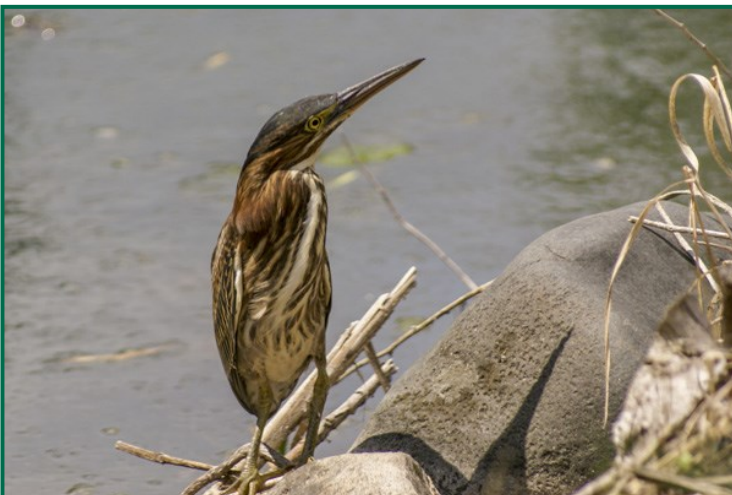
Location: St. Croix Packet Company, in Stillwater where the big paddlewheels dock

Time: Event is from 9:30 -11:30 a.m. Volunteers are asked to check in at 9:00 a.m..

Interested? Have questions? Please call one of the following for more information:

Chase Davies 651-633-1663

Barb Lindeke 651-489-0318



National Park Service photos. Top: An Osprey on a tree near Lakeside Road Landing by Jean Van Tatenhove; Bottom: Green heron sits at the edge of the St. Croix River Visitor Center pond by Alyssa Rupp.



## Celebrate Birding for Everyone During the Big Year of Birds

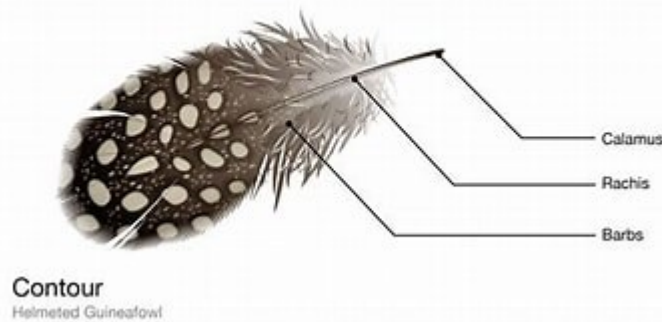
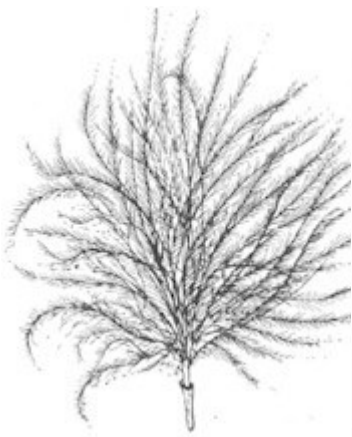
The Saint Paul Audubon Society is happy to join in on a full year of celebrating birds through special activities arranged by the Three Rivers Park District as part of the Big Year of Birds. The Three Rivers Park District covers 27,000 acres of parks and trails at 26 different parks, many with multiple visitor features. While these diverse sites fall mainly in the west metro, Silverwood Park is in Ramsey County. In fact, that's the location for the Big Year of Birds Speakers Series, taking place on select Sundays from 3-4 p.m.

Other special events include the World Migratory Bird Day Festival at Eastman Nature Center on May 14 and special bird counting activities throughout the park district the entire year.

Visit <https://www.threeriversparks.org/page/big-year-birds> for the complete schedule.

## Welcome to Graphic Designer Laurie Wachter

We are happy to announce that our call for a new graphic designer for the *Cardinal* was answered by Laurie Wachter, a long-time member of St. Paul Audubon who was looking for a way to help. Laurie has worked professionally as a graphic designer and is also an artist and yoga teacher. Most of her birding is watching the birds in her backyard, or while out walking her dog, especially on the trail along the river in Lilydale. We look forward to Laurie's help in getting all the news about Saint Paul Audubon Society out to members and friends.



*Down, Contour and Flight Feathers*

## Seasonal notes – Winter Bird Survival

A common question this time of year is What do Minnesota winter birds have or do to offset frigid temperatures, wind and precipitation? I've learned some parts of the answer, which I'm happy to share.

1. Birds are smart and learn to seek shelter, downwind of a tree trunk or in a building corner; in evergreen trees under a dense "roof" of the next-higher clump of needles; or in a crevice or hole, even better with additional birds to share warmth.

2. In the last molt before winter birds add many down and contour feathers. Together, these act similarly to how we humans add appropriate layers. Every feather has a muscle that raises and lowers it at the bird's will. Raising the contours enlarges the envelope of air. Being waterproof and arranged similar to shingles, these feathers trap the air in place. Down and downy feathers add structure to that area and slow air movement. Down feathers compress and release countless times without losing flexibility and strength.

3. Some birds, most familiar being the Black-capped Chickadee, lower their body temperature and slow down their heartbeat and breathing, entering what is called "torpor" to conserve energy. Upon awakening they use a complex mechanism to shiver, using just their breast muscles to hasten the warm-up.

4. Evolutionary adaptations include having arterial blood vessels and venous vessels positioned close to each other, or sometimes entwined, to exchange and thereby conserve heat going out to and returning from featherless feet. The outflowing arterial blood is cooled and the incoming cold blood is warmed. Leg and foot temperatures need only stay a bit above freezing but it's important not to shock the body with returning super-cold blood. Furthermore, the blood can be shunted away from toes to further conserve heat.

5. Another aspect of heat conservation is body size. The same species of northern birds tend to be larger than their southern counterparts, thus losing less heat than the smaller birds with greater surface to volume area. For example, male House Sparrows tend to survive a lengthy storm more often than the smaller female House Sparrows.

6. Available food is often the cause of bird migration from or to Minnesota. Birds need to maintain energy reserves, from fat, which is used up during the night and needs replacing nearly every day. Some winter residents cache food, usually near their roost sites, for ingestion during storms, and will keep watch in hopes of "sharing" their neighbors' cache. Visitors may be found in company with permanent residents as they learn where food, shelter and water are found in their temporary home range. If you have bird feeders, you may have noticed birds stocking up for a couple days before a storm. And you can help them by maintaining a regular feeder routine: Birds need to know where reliable food is available before the storms arrive!



*Black-capped Chickadee at winter feeder;*  
*photo by Laurie Wachter.*

*By Chase Davies*

## Pig's Eye Cleanup Making Progress

The Saint Paul Audubon Society has submitted letters to the Saint Paul City Council and the MN State Legislature, asking for their support in directing funds from the State surplus and/or the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to clean up waste at Pig's Eye Regional Park. Led by board secretary Kiki Sonnen, the Society's efforts on behalf of Pig's Eye have received a positive response from the City Council, an important step forward.

Kiki has been actively promoting Pig's Eye cleanup since the 1970s and she speaks passionately about the natural, historic, cultural and recreational character of the park. "Pig's Eye is home to the Pig's Eye Heron and Egret Rookery and Sanctuary, one of the largest mixed colonial bird nesting sites in the Upper Midwest," she says. "The 1200-acre tract is also home to at least five active Bald Eagle nests. In addition, the area hosts grassland, forest, wetland, and aquatic birds throughout the year."

St. Paul Audubon will continue to work with legislators to make the case for restoring Pig's Eye Lake and surrounding areas, a unique and extraordinary opportunity for Minnesota.



*Kiki Sonnen and Chase Davies led a bird walk at Pig's Eye in October.*

## Thank You!!

Thank you to everyone who made gifts so far as part of the 2021-2022 Annual Fund Drive. As of January 14, 2022, gifts totaling \$10,728 have been received.

"We are so grateful to everyone who is supporting this year's campaign," said Donn Waage, Saint Paul Audubon Society President. "Our goal is to be accountable to our donors by showing, through our Annual Report and other communications, how we use your contributions. We depend upon your continued support as we work for birds and their habitats in our region."

Thank you to Kenyon Sayler, who is managing the fund drive this year.



## Calendar

February 7, 4:00 p.m.: Board meeting.

February 10, 7:00 pm.: Monthly chapter meeting.

See page 1.

March 7, 4:00 p.m.: Board meeting.

March 10, 7:00 p.m.: Monthly chapter meeting. See page 1.

April 4, 4:00 p.m.: Board meeting.

April 14, 7:00 p.m.: Monthly chapter meeting; "Belwin, Bison and Birds" with Lynette Anderson

May 2, 4:00 p.m.: Board meeting.

May 6-8: Warbler Weekend. See page 3.

May 12, 7:00 p.m.: Monthly chapter meeting; "Bird Brain Evolution" with Catherine Early

**Board meetings** are held the first Monday of the month at 4:00 p.m., via Zoom.

**Monthly chapter meetings** are held the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m., online via Zoom until further notice. Visit [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org) for up-to-date information.