

# The



# Cardinal

JUNE - JULY 2023 • WWW.SAINTPAULAUDUBON.ORG • SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

## Major Victory at Pig's Eye Regional Park

After working many years to stop the St. Paul Regional Water Department's dumping of contaminated soil on public park land, the Friends of Pig's Eye are delighted to announce that the dumping has been stopped!

"The Water Department has been dumping contaminated soil on Pig's Eye public park lands for years and the soil pile has grown to three or four stories tall," says Kiki Sonnen, a Friends member and Saint Paul Audubon vice president. "According to their lease, the Water Department was supposed to remove the soil each year. But not one truck load has ever been removed in the two years park advocates have been watching and recording," she says.

In 2021, the Water Department's solution was to create a new dump site on an additional eight acres of

public park land north of the existing site - even though this new site is on historical wetlands. They planned to move the existing soil pile to the new location and begin dumping more soil there.

Two years ago, Pig's Eye Friends contacted the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to find out what the process of environmental review, agency study, and community engagement entails in a New Dump permitting process. "Just because the dumper and the property owner agree to a new dump, doesn't make it legal, does it?" asks Kiki. "We never heard back from the MPCA and I, for one, gave up hope."

But on May 12, City Councilmember Jane Prince learned that because of MPCA concerns, the Water Department will vacate their existing site within 6 months, and they will not pursue dumping on the wetland site. Councilmember Prince is pursuing funds for Pig's Eye Park directional signage, park entry road, trail entry amenities, and a small parking lot for park visitors, which are all improvements that Pig's Eye Friends have been advocating for in recent years.

"Thank you for everyone's support over the years," says Kiki. "And just remember: You always lose until, suddenly, you win!"



*Thirty-two people enjoyed a wide variety of birds at a Saint Paul Audubon field trip to Pig's Eye Regional Park on May 14 last year. They saw geese, ducks, turkeys, cormorants, herons, pigeons, doves, woodpeckers, flycatchers, vireos, warblers, crows, swallows, nuthatches, kinglets, blackbirds, orioles, and sparrows.*

## Calendar

**Field trips and birding walks** make up most of the scheduled events for the next two months. See pages 5-8.

**Landscape Revival** expos and markets are June 3 in Oakdale and June 10 in Shoreview.

**Butterfly Count 2023** is July 8. See page 3.

**Birds and Beers St. Paul**, 6-9 pm on June 27, July 27, August 23. Sweeney's Saloon, St. Paul. See page 10.

Check <https://www.saintpaulaudubon.org/upcoming-events/> for complete information on all events and last-minute changes throughout the season.

## SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

### 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 **welcomes everyone** to become a member or participate in activities as a non-member regardless of their race, color, national origin, religion, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status or age.

### Get Involved

Your time and financial support are always needed to keep our organization strong. Please consider getting involved with birding walks, conservation efforts, or other activities. And if you are able, consider donating your dollars to help with the educational and conservation activities Saint Paul Audubon supports. You can donate online here: <https://www.saintpaulaudubon.org/get-involved/donate/>

### About our chapter

Founded in 1945 as the St. Paul Bird Club with 12 members, our chapter now serves the entire East Metro region of the Twin Cities and has around 2500 members. **Monthly chapter meetings** are held the second Thursday of the month, September-May, and are open to the public.

For more **information**, please visit [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org) or contact the board members listed here.

### 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, October, and December. Martha Douglas is the editor and Laurie Wachter is the graphic designer. The *Cardinal* is available for everyone to view on our website. If you would like to receive an email when it is available, go to [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org), scroll down and click on "Join our email list." Copy is due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding publication. Inquiries to the editor or

suggestions for articles can be made through the "Contact Us" form on the website, at <https://www.saintpaulaudubon.org/contact/> and the editor will follow up with you.

### President

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### Secretary

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Debbie Brown  
Monica Bryand  
Neil Carlson  
Rebecca Flood  
Kathy McGill

**Next issue: August / September 2023**



### Chip Notes

Thank you to all who have and are volunteering to make our organization what it is today. Because of your efforts, we are positively impacting birds and the habitats they (and we) need to thrive. And a special thanks to our newly elected and re-elected board of directors. Their knowledge, experience, and tireless work are inspirational and support our desire for Saint Paul Audubon to grow and have a bright and impactful future.

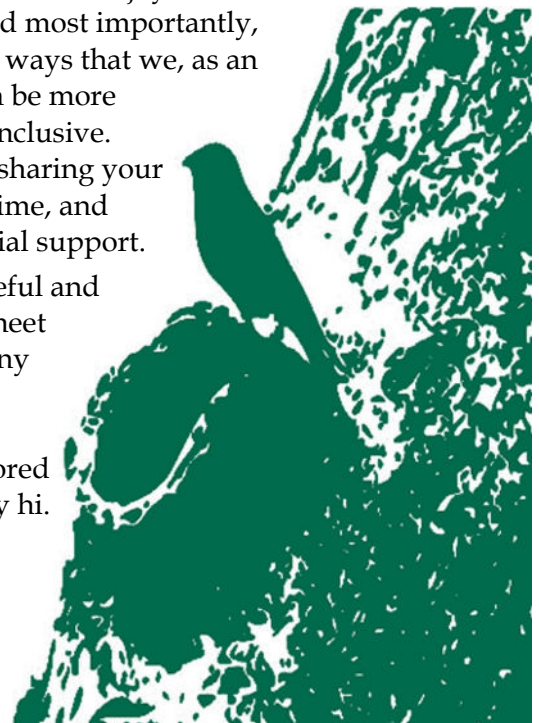
Our mission's long-term success relies on building an organization that actively promotes equity, diversity, and inclusion, resulting in an environment that welcomes all members of our community. To that end, the board and committees continue to infuse diversity and inclusion goals into the organization.

What does that mean? How can we encourage diversity and inclusion? There are no easy answers, and we humbly admit we are only beginning our journey. We've started by asking our program committee to engage speakers who can give us a variety of cultural perspectives on birding and conservation.

We continue to be involved and partner with organizations to provide more opportunities for our BIPOC, LBGTQ, and mobility-challenged community members to enjoy birds and the outdoors. And most importantly, we are exploring ways that we, as an organization, can be more welcoming and inclusive. You can help by sharing your ideas, donating time, and providing financial support.

Please be careful and kind, and if we meet on one of the many field trips or at other Saint Paul Audubon-sponsored events, please say hi.

*Greg Burnes*  
President,  
Saint Paul  
Audubon Society



## Annual Butterfly Count Returns on July 8

By Bob Dunlap

Saint Paul Audubon's annual butterfly count will take place on Saturday, July 8, from 9:45 AM to 2:00 PM at Arden Hills Army Training Site (AHATS). This year, I'm happy to be taking over from Dorothy Waltz as count coordinator, a role which she dutifully served for the past 17 years. Many thanks Dorothy! Although I'm perhaps better known as a birding expert in Minnesota, I have also developed an expertise in our state's butterflies and am eager to show participants the diversity found at AHATS, as well as help participants sort through challenges presented by the more difficult-to-identify species.

**DURING THE COUNT** We will carpool to the various sites. Mary Lee, the Environmental Protection Specialist for the National Guard, will again be our great host and tour leader.

### USEFUL INFORMATION TO HELP YOU PREPARE

[www.naba.org](http://www.naba.org) The official website of the North American Butterfly Association. Find everything to do with these beloved insects: membership options, magazine PDFs, gardening information, checklists, regional information, beautiful photos. A great source of information about butterflies.

[www.wisconsinbutterflies.org](http://www.wisconsinbutterflies.org) An excellent site with species accounts and range maps of all butterflies encountered in Wisconsin; the vast majority of these species are also found in Minnesota.



*The Coral Hairstreak (left) is a species found flying in grasslands in July and is often seen nectaring on the flowers of milkweed species. The Great Spangled Fritillary (right) flies from June through August and is found in a variety of open and edge habitats where its hostplants, violets, are found. Both species can be found at AHATS and are fairly common in the right habitat in Minnesota.*

**REGISTRATION** Follow this link: [AHATS Butterfly Count Registration 2023](https://www.aahats.org/butterfly-count-registration-2023). Registration will remain open through **Wednesday, July 5**. A map and other information will be emailed to participants in the days prior to the count. Registrants will be contacted if weather causes a last-minute change of plans.

This annual event is part of the July 4<sup>th</sup> Butterfly Count coordinated by the North American Butterfly Association (NABA: <https://www.naba.org/>). Saint Paul Audubon pays the NABA count fees, so the count at AHATS is free to all participants.

**DIRECTIONS** Registered participants will meet in the parking lot at the AHATS Arden Hills Readiness Center, 4761 Hamline Avenue North, just north of Highway 96. Drive through the AHATS gate to the Readiness Center, the first building on the left after you enter the training site. Restrooms are available in the Readiness Center.

[www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org) A community science hub for submitting and exploring observations of organisms throughout the world. Over 30,000 observations of butterflies in Minnesota have been submitted to iNaturalist!

**WHAT TO BRING AND WEAR** Be sure to bring plenty of cool drinks, snacks, and a bag lunch. A wide-brimmed hat, lightweight long pants, long-sleeved shirt (for protection from ticks, sun, and sharp grasses), sunscreen, high socks, old sneakers or rubber boots for bog-tromping, and insect repellent are recommended. Binoculars, a camera, and a butterfly field guide are recommended but not required.

### RECOMMENDED BUTTERFLY FIELD GUIDES

- *Butterflies through Binoculars: The East, A Field Guide to the Butterflies of Eastern North America* by Jeffrey Glassberg
- *Kaufman Field Guide to Butterflies of North America*, by Jim P. Brock and Kenn Kaufman

## Dorothy and Fred Waltz Receive Special Recognition Award

Well-deserved recognition and thanks were extended to Dorothy and Fred Waltz at the May 11 meeting, where they were presented with the Saint Paul Audubon Society's Special Recognition Award for their decades of outstanding service. From the days of meeting at the College Club on Summit Avenue through the years at Falcon Heights City Hall and the old Fairview Community Center to our new home today, they gave many years of loyal service in many roles with the Audubon community, locally and state-wide.

Dorothy served on the State Audubon Office Board of Directors, including as chair, and on the State Audubon Office Education Committee in the 1990s. There she heroically wrestled with a newly created grant process to allow 50 teachers to attend a multi-day environmental education workshop at the then-named Audubon Center of the North Woods.

Fred's service as our Field Trip Chair and coordinator of the Christmas Bird Count for many years, and Dorothy's serving as coordinator of the Butterfly Count for 17 years, were critical in furthering scientific and social goals. Dorothy served on the Saint



*Barbara Lindeke presented the Saint Paul Audubon Society's Special Recognition Award to Dorothy and Fred Waltz at the May meeting*

Paul Audubon Society Board of Directors, including as President; and on our Education Committee, during which she and Fred took a leadership role in creating "The Birding Boat" with Charlie Maguire and teachers from the St. Paul Schools. This was the origin of the Big River Journey and the Wild River Journey, which continue their legacy today. In 1996 they worked with Don Luce in planning the 50th Saint Paul Audubon anniversary seminar and dinner at the Bell Museum.

"Thank you for your long and loyal service to birds, their habitats, birders, and the Saint Paul Audubon Society," said Board Member Barbara Lindeke in presenting the award. "You have left your mark and we are grateful."

## MYBirdClub Expanding to Ramsey County

Thanks to a grant from the Saint Paul Audubon Society, the youth-centered birding organization called MYBirdClub is now expanding its activities to locations in Ramsey County, beginning with Crosby Park in June.

MYBirdClub uses a club approach in which kids can have fun birding together with other kids. It gives them a safe space to build peer friendships and explore and nurture an interest in birds and nature. The grant support pays for professional guides and leaders, with no cost to participants. All ability levels are welcome and binoculars and field guides are provided at no charge.

Anyone interested in upcoming MYBirdClub events can sign up using the links below. Participants will be asked to complete a liability waiver.

[June 10, 8:30-10:00 am @ Crosby Farm](#)

[June 17, 8:30-10 am @ Wood Lake Nature Center](#)

[June 20, 5:30-7:00 @ Crosby Farm](#)

[July 6, 5:30-7:00 @ Swede Hollow Park](#)

[July 17, 5:30-7:00 @ Swede Hollow Park](#)

[July 29, 9:00-10:30 @ Wood Lake](#)



Please feel free to share these SignUps with your friends and families. Help us build the next generation of birders!

## BIRDING WALKS AND FIELD TRIPS

### Birds, Bogs and Bantams

15280 Pilar Rd,  
Scandia, MN 55073  
Saturday, June 3,  
7:30-10:30 AM

This private 20-acre homestead located just north of Scandia includes a terrific variety of habitat (hardwood, prairie, wetland, open water, bog) as well as bird feeders that are bound to run up the day's bird count. For those who are interested, our hosts will top off the field trip with a demonstration of their hobby beekeeping and bantam chicken operations. It should be a fun and productive morning.

**SUGGESTIONS** Wear comfortable closed-toe shoes for hiking and comfortable clothing and layers appropriate for the weather. Bring water bottle, sun protection, insect repellent, field guide and binoculars.

**DIRECTIONS** Drive time from Rosedale Shopping Center is 45 minutes at the speed limit. Drive north on I-35 to exit 129 for MN97. Follow MN97 through Forest Lake. Continue east on MN97 to Scandia (approximately 11 miles from I-35). Turn left (north) onto Olinda Trail N. Travel 1.9 miles to Pilar Rd. N. Turn right. Travel 0.2 miles. Driveway on left (this is the first house on the left (north) side of the street). Turn around in the driveway and park along the north side of Pilar Rd. Short walk along the driveway to the house.

**DIFFICULTY** Easy to moderate; walking sticks welcome; lots of benches along the pathway.

**LEADERS** Curt and Pat Hadland, 651-433-4314, curthadland@gmail.com (email or call only if you need additional information).

### Nesting Areas and related happenings at the Arden Hills Army Training Site (AHATS)

Saturday, June 10, 7:30-10 AM

June begins summer birding when territories generally are all set and families are busily growing. In contrast to migration-style bird watching, we move to different habitats where the breeding terri-



tories are located. A walk on the hard-surfaced, one-mile path around Sunfish Lake will be followed by birding in a guided car caravan, stopping at choice locations. The site has lots of prairie and wooded edges for us to explore for their birding potential.

**DIRECTIONS** Meet at the Sunfish Gate parking area on Hamline Ave extension just north of MN Hwy 96.

**INFORMATION** The site has restricted access. All vehicles will enter and exit the property together. Outdoor restrooms are widely spaced when available.

**REGISTRATION** Required registration. Attendance is limited to six cars or 20 adults on a first reply, first served basis. Email Chase Davies your mobile phone number with the total number in your vehicle. **PLEASE** report any changes in numbers as soon as learned so Wait Listed hopefuls can enjoy these opportunities.

**DIFFICULTY** Easy

**LEADERS** Mary Lee, AHATS Envir. Protection Specialist and Chase Davies, 651-246- 9754 Rocky-Birder@gmail.com

### Beginning Birding at Battle Creek Park

2350 Upper Afton Rd, Maplewood, MN 55119  
Sunday June 11, 8:30 – 10:30 AM

Saint Paul Audubon is collaborating with the St. Paul Library <https://sppl.org/> and the Urban Bird Collective <https://urbanbirdcollective.org/> to offer a beginning birding field trip. Come and learn about birding, including how to use binoculars and a field guide.

**DIRECTIONS** From McKnight Rd turn east onto Upper Afton Rd., drive 0.2 mi, turn right, destination will be on the right. Meet at the parking lot next to the off-leash dog park.

**INFORMATION** Dress for the weather and wear closed-toe shoes. Bring a brimmed hat, water, sunblock and a field guide with maps or a smart phone with an app already installed. Indicate at registration if you would like to use a pair of loaner binoculars.

**REGISTRATION** Required registration and limited to 15 participants. (Registration link available at [saintpaulaudubon.org/events](http://saintpaulaudubon.org/events) after June 1)

**DIFFICULTY** Easy

**LEADER** Monica Bryand, 651-246-5522, mjbryand@gmail.com

Be sure to check [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org) for field trip changes throughout the season

## Carpenter Nature Center

12805 St. Croix Trail S., Hastings, MN 55003

Sunday, June 18, 8-10 AM

Carpenter is a beautiful nature park on a bluff overlooking the St. Croix River. We will explore a variety of habitats looking for late migratory warblers and summer residents, and adapt our route based on conditions and what is being seen in the park.

**DIRECTIONS** Meet at the Visitors Center.

**INFORMATION** Bring your binoculars and bird book. If you need binoculars, email Greg before the trip and he will bring an extra pair for you.

**REGISTRATION** None

**DIFFICULTY** The paths are either paved or wood chip with moderate hills.

**LEADER** Greg Burnes, 612-205-3071, gburnes@comcast.net

## Birds and Trees, Langton Lake Park, Roseville

1894 County Rd. C2 W, Roseville, MN 55113

Saturday July 15, 7:30 - 9:30 AM

Join us for a stroll at Langton Lake Park to observe and identify birds and trees, and consider their interactions.

**DIRECTIONS** Meet at the parking lot on County Road C2 at the west side of the lake.

**INFORMATION** Bring binoculars, bird guide and tree guide if you have them.

**REGISTRATION** None required

**DIFFICULTY** Paved paths, mostly level, approximately 1 mile

**LEADERS** Kathy Robbins 651-636-6475 Krobbins@umn.edu and Cathy Croghan

## Urban Trees and Birds, Frogtown Park and Farm

946 Minnehaha Ave. W., St. Paul, MN 55104

Saturday, August 5, 8:30-10 AM

Join us for a visit to this unique urban farm site to observe and identify birds and trees, and to consider their interactions. You'll learn some basic tree identification tips, the importance of our urban tree canopy and what Frogtown Green

<https://www.frogtowngreen.com/> is doing to add trees to their neighborhood.

**DIRECTIONS** Meet at the parking lot next to the greenhouse on the top of the hill.

**INFORMATION** Bring binoculars, bird guide and tree guide if you have them.

Be sure to check [www.saintpaulaudubon.org](http://www.saintpaulaudubon.org) for field trip changes throughout the season

**REGISTRATION** None required

**DIFFICULTY** Easy - Mostly paved, less than .5 mile

**LEADERS** Kathy Robbins 651-636-6475 Krobbins@umn.edu and Cathy Croghan

## Beginning Birding at Crosby Farm Regional Park

2595 Crosby Farm Rd, St. Paul, MN 55116

Saturday August 26, 8:30 - 11:00 AM

St. Paul Audubon is once again partnering with the St. Paul Library to offer a beginning birding field trip. Come and learn about birding, including how to use binoculars and a field guide. Mostly come to have some late summer fun outdoors.

**DIRECTIONS** Southwest of downtown St. Paul off Shepard Rd. Meet in the parking lot.

**INFORMATION** Dress for the weather and wear closed-toe shoes. Bring a brimmed hat, water, sunblock and a field guide with maps or a smart phone with an app already installed. Indicate at registration if you would like to use a pair of loaner binoculars.

**REGISTRATION** Required registration and limited to 15 participants. Registration link is available on our website after August 1.

**DIFFICULTY** Variety of natural surfaces, generally level terrain, approximately 2 miles

**LEADERS** Linda Whyte 651-815-7045 and Cathy Croghan

## Beginning Birding at Oakdale Nature Center

444 Hadley Ave. N., Oakdale, MN 55128

Saturday, September 2, 9-10:30 AM

This family-friendly walk is in one of the most beautiful urban parks in Washington County. We will meet at the Visitors Center, check the bird feeders and walk the winding paved trails. There are usually songbirds along the path, and we will make our way out to a lake where we might see swans, ducks, and eagles. We will also be listening to birds. If you would like, download the *Merlin* app on your phone (it's free) and we can experiment with learning bird songs together.

**DIRECTIONS** Meet at the Visitors Center - front of the building

**INFORMATION** Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them. A limited number of binoculars will be available on a first come first served basis.

## TUESDAY MORNING WALKS

*All Tuesday Walks are from 7:00 to 9:00 A.M. and easy unless noted. No registration needed. Meet at the sites. Bring water, insect repellent and field guide. Contact leaders only if you need additional information.*

### June 6: Afton State Park, 50th Street S Parking Lot, Afton, MN 55001

The Park has a rich variety of habitats and the target bird for this trip is the Dickcissel. Note: trip starts at the 50th Street Parking Lot.

**DIRECTIONS** Take 94 west from St. Paul to exit MN -95 S/Manning Ave S (exit 253). Travel south for 3.9 mi. Turn left (east) on 40th Street S. Travel 2.4 mi to Trading Post Trail S. Travel 1 mi. Turn left onto 50th Street. Travel 0.9 mi. Afton State Park parking lot on right.

**LEADER** Monica Bryand 651-246-5522  
mjbyand@gmail.com

### June 13: Bobolinks at Battle Creek Park, 2301 Lower Afton Rd., Maplewood, MN 55119

The first hour is an easy one-mile hike to and along the western edge of the grassland the community is trying to preserve. We hope to hear and see Bobolinks and Henslow's Sparrows. The second hour is a moderately difficult hike to the northeastern part of the grassland. One way to prep for this walk is to watch "[From Bobolinks to Blue Jays - Bird at Battle Creek Park!](#)"

**DIRECTIONS** From McKnight Rd turn east onto Lower Afton Rd., drive 0.2 mi, turn left into South Battle Creek Park parking lot. Meet in the parking lot.

**LEADER** John Zakelj 651-239-4119  
jzakelj@yahoo.com

### June 20, Reservoir Woods - Roseville City Park, Larpenteur Ave., 55113

**MEETS 7-9:30 AM**

Summer birding is more relaxed and presents possibilities for observing behaviors different from other times of year. Now the birds are briefly settled on Family territories and birders have opportunities for lingering identifications and group observations at a summertime relaxed pace. This slower pace is also ideal for beginning birders to learn and experience the basics to locate, describe, and identify birds.

**DIRECTIONS** Meet at the Roseville Woodview Off-Leash Dog Area, between Rice and Dale Streets on Larpenteur Ave. Park snugly in the small parking lot or street park on Mackubin St. directly across Larpenteur from the dog area parking lot.

**LEADER** Chase Davies, 651-246-9754,  
RockyBirder@gmail.com

### June 27, Maplewood Nature Center, 2659 E. 7th Street, Maplewood 55119

Wooded land and water deep within the metro area are prized by migrants and residents alike. This is an opportunity to walk the trails and see the sights and hear the sounds of Ramsey County's Maplewood Nature Center.

**DIRECTIONS** On Century Avenue, look for the Nature Center sign, and turn west onto East 7th St.

Dress for the weather and wear comfortable walking shoes.

**REGISTRATION** None

**DIFFICULTY** 0.5 to 1.0 mile on paved trails with small hills.

**LEADER** Greg Burnes gburnes@comcast.net  
612-205-3071

## Fall Migrants and Grassland Goldenrod at Battle Creek Park

**2301 Lower Afton Rd., Maplewood, MN 55119**  
**Saturday, September 9, 9-11 AM**

The first hour is an easy one-mile hike to and along the western edge of the grassland the community is trying to preserve. The second hour is a moderately difficult hike to the northeastern part of the

grassland, where we hope to hear and see migrating fall warblers, sparrows and hawks, along with the early fall colors of the grassland.

**DIRECTIONS** Meet in the South Battle Creek parking lot, 2301 Lower Afton Rd, Maplewood. From McKnight Rd, turn east onto Lower Afton, drive 0.2 mile, turn left into South Battle Creek parking.

**INFORMATION** Venue website: <https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/parks-recreation/parks-trails/find-park/battle-creek-regional-park> Warning: Battle Creek Park is quite large and this parking lot is not listed on the website.

**DIFFICULTY** Moderate (see description above)

**LEADER** John Zakelj [jzakelj@yahoo.com](mailto:jzakelj@yahoo.com)

## BIKE AND BIRD IS BACK

*Sherry Gray is the leader of all Bike and Bird field trips. Registration is required for all trips and is limited to 8 participants. Contact Sherry at sherrygray@yahoo.com to register. Participants will be asked to sign a liability release form at the start of the trip.*

### **Bike & Bird Carlos Avery WMA**

9067-7801 205th Ave NE, Wyoming, MN 55092

**Sunday, June 25, 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM**

Discover the fun of birding from a bicycle on several miles of level gravel roads that connect varied habitat in this large WMA near Wyoming, MN. Carlos Avery is a prime birding location for Anoka and Chisago counties (top hotspot on eBird for Anoka). Landscape includes lakes, small woods, wetlands, and open grassland. A hybrid or street bike that can handle gravel roads, or a mountain bike, is recommended (racing style, skinny tires probably not best here).

LOCATION WMA map:

<https://webapps15.dnr.state.mn.us/wahma/attachments/7672/public?1571761180>

DIRECTIONS Meet in the Carlos Avery North Loop Parking Area. This is where 205th Ave NE meets Wyoming Road: 45.341380434033844, -93.0717141694866.

GEAR Bring a bicycle, helmet, binoculars, snacks, lunch, sunscreen, and water. Scope optional, but could be useful. Leader will bring scope and first aid kit.

DIFFICULTY Several miles. Terrain is mostly flat and area uncrowded, but roads are gravel and can be rutted or muddy. As group will hear and see many birds, riding pace is relaxed and stops frequent. Birders and bicyclists of all levels, including newbies, are most welcome to join.

### **Bike & Bird the Vadnais-Snail Lakes & Grass Lake Regional Parks**

4191 Snail Lake Blvd., Shoreview, MN 55126

**Sunday, July 16, 8:00 AM to Noon**

Discover the fun of birding from a bicycle on more than 5 miles of mostly level, paved, multi-use trails that connect four lakes in Shoreview: Grass, Snail, Sucker, and Vadnais, all of which are prime birding locations for Ramsey County (top 10 hotspots on eBird). Landscape here is varied and includes lakes, woods, wetlands, and open grassland. Optional bakery-stop midway (bring bike lock): Taste of Scandinavia Bakery is a block off the trail in North Oaks.

LOCATION Trail map:

<https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Parks%20and%20Recreation/Park%20Maps%20-%20Vadnais%20Snail%20Lakes.pdf>

DIRECTIONS Meet in parking lot at Snail Lake picnic area/boat launch/beach parking lot, 4191 Snail Lake Blvd, Shoreview, MN 55126 (2nd entrance, past Mackubin Street intersection: 45.067178, -93.123040)

GEAR Bring bicycle, helmet, binoculars, snacks, sunscreen, and water. Leader will bring a scope and first aid kit.

REGISTRATION Required (see above).

DIFFICULTY At least a 5-mile route. A few short hills, but otherwise a winding, mostly level route. As group will hear and see many birds, riding pace is relaxed. Birders and bicyclists of all levels, including newbies, are most welcome to join.

### **Bike & Bird along the Mississippi River Levee on the Robert Piram Trail**

**Sunday, August 6, 8:00 AM to Noon**

Discover the fun of birding from a bicycle along a flat, paved trail along the Mississippi River, from Harriet Island and the Saint Paul Airport past the Pig's Eye Island SNA Heron Rookery to Kaposia Landing (2.6 miles one way), the Rock Island Swing Bridge (7.8 miles, one way), and also connecting to Dakota County trails that lead to Lilydale or Thompson Parks or Simon's Ravine, all of which are prime birding locations for Ramsey and Dakota Counties. Landscape is mostly riverside, with options to visit small urban woods, a ravine, and/or riverine wetlands.

LOCATION Map:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DrPc80Yv-w4WpsSQhy9GxWkOmL6sWQBu/view>

DIRECTIONS We will start at either Harriet Island or the Saint Paul Airport (south side).

GEAR Bring bicycle, helmet, binoculars, sunscreen, snacks and water. Scope is optional, but could be useful for locating birds on Pig's Eye Island across the river. Leader will bring a scope and first aid kit.

REGISTRATION Required (see above).

DIFFICULTY Some side trails might have hills, but route is mostly river levee flat. Route to Swing Bridge might include a few blocks of on-street riding. As group will hear and see many birds, riding pace is relaxed. Birders and bicyclists of all levels, including newbies, are most welcome to join. See distance description above.



## Woodcock Skydance Report

By Chase Davies

*If you keep doing the same thing, nothing changes.*

We changed the system for setting the date for the annual Woodcock viewing event this year, with great results. That is, three consecutive dates were set as possibilities and on the day before, one was chosen, based on which would offer the best weather conditions for people and birds. This year that turned out to be Tuesday April 25 and six people came to listen and view the aerial antics of a bird with a somewhat upside-down brain, courting in deepening dusk.

The actual amount of Woodcock activity is always totally unpredictable--after all, these are wild, independent birds, but this year was the best we have ever experienced at the woodland-bordered field near Rush City, the site favored by my son and I, who lead the annual trip. We lost count of the number of males we heard calling while on ground and/or flying above the area, and singing! Females even were sighted and heard flying -- they do not call nor sing.

Our heads swiveled constantly as we echo-located bird after bird, nodding up, down, and around, trying to keep track of "our" individual birds. The closest male was especially entertaining with strong peents and several flights into and down from the leisurely changing sunset-colored sky. Calm air and low humidity allowed sounds to carry very far and the cool weather kept silent the frogs and toads that masked all natural sounds on last year's very warm evening.

So, YES, this event will happen again in April 2024 and we will offer to lead you on the quest. We plan to use the same process as this year: identify 3 consecutive dates from which will be chosen the one

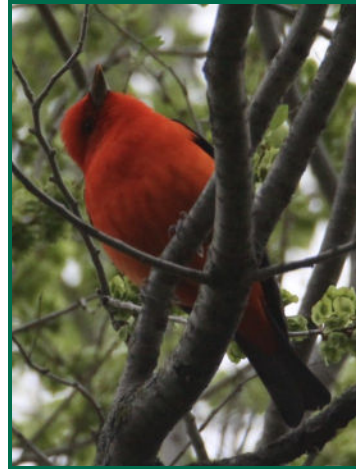


Photo by Tapani Hellman

with the best weather. Then all who registered interest will be notified of THE DATE. There is no limit to the number of people who can attend.

We ALL were blown away by the evening. We cannot predict what exactly will happen in 2024, but for sure the birds and spring will come again. Put a note on your calendar to check the April-May 2024 Cardinal for details.

## Great Birding at Warbler Weekend 2023



Many varieties of warblers showed up for everyone's enjoyment at Warbler Weekend 2023, May 12-14. The total tally, from Friday evening through Sunday noon was 24 warblers and 115 total species. This included a female Summer Tanager, which has only been seen three times in Warbler Weekend's 52 years and not since 1983.

The number of people who registered was 130, with some staying from Friday through Sunday morning and others staying for only part of the day on Saturday. As always, it was a great time to revisit favorite birding spots from Lake City to Frontenac State Park with other birders and have many keen eyes spotting special species.



Photos by Monica Bryand: Scarlet Tanager, Prothonotary Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler



## World Owl Conference in October

The first World Owl Conference to be held in the United States will take place in La Crosse, WI, October 23-27, 2023, at the Stoney Creek Hotel. Researchers from 20 countries are expected to participate. "Owl conferences are few and far between," says Karla Bloem, Executive Director of the International Owl Center in Houston, Minnesota, "so this is an opportunity not to be missed for those with any interest in owls."

Karla explained that the reason the conference is taking place in La Crosse is "because we at the International Owl Center stood up to plan it. There is no overarching organization that sponsors world owl conferences--they just happen as individuals/organizations are willing to put them on." To date they have been held in 1987 and 1997 in Winnipeg; 2000 in Australia; 2007 in The Netherlands; 2017 in Portugal; and 2019 in India.

The International Owl Center in Houston, Minnesota is the only all-owl education center in the USA, and one of very few in the world. The Scottish Owl Centre would be the most notable other owl center.

Complete information is at <https://www.worldowlconference.com/>

## Birds and Beers Returns to Saint Paul

A popular event for birders to meet and socialize, called Birds and Beers, is now returning to a location in Saint Paul! Members of the Saint Paul Audubon board have made arrangements for the gathering at Sweeney's Saloon, at 6-9 p.m. on Tuesday, June 27; Wednesday, July 27; and Wednesday, August 23. Regular Birds and Beers events have taken place in Minneapolis for many years but the Saint Paul gatherings stopped some time ago. We are excited about getting this tradition going again. Come and join in the conversation and help make Birds and Beers Saint Paul a regular thing!! All are welcome.

## Spring Birding is Underway!



*Above: Old Cedar Bridge on May 5; Below: Snail Lake on May 9; photos by Martha Douglas*



*Swede Hollow on May 21; photo by Kiki Sonnen*