

# The



# Cardinal

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2023 • WWW.SAINTPAULAUDUBON.ORG • SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

## Changes in Fall Chapter Meetings

Please note that the monthly chapter meetings in October and November have some important changes from the usual pattern, due to conflicts with our meeting venue.

The meeting will take place in October on a **Wednesday** rather than Thursday, our usual meeting day. Please plan to join us on **Wednesday, October 11** in room 207 of the Anpétu Téča Education Center at 1910 County Road B West, Roseville. The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. but come early to enjoy refreshments and socialize. On **November 9**, the meeting will be zoom only, with no in-person option.

The featured speakers and presentations are:

**Oct. 11, 7:00 p.m.: Wildlife Ecologist Michael Joyce will present “Distribution and Ecology of Fishers in Southern Minnesota.”** Fishers are cryptic forest carnivores in the weasel family native to Minnesota. They have expanded their range in Minnesota over the last two decades, moving into southern Minnesota, including the greater Twin Cities Metro area. Michael will discuss a general history of fishers in Minnesota, summarize recent sightings, and discuss preliminary results from a new study to learn about fisher ecology and population status in southern Minnesota.

Michael Joyce is a wildlife ecologist at the Natural Resources Research Institute in Duluth. He has been studying wildlife in northern Minnesota over the last 12 years. His research focuses broadly on wildlife ecology, conservation, and management, emphasizing under-

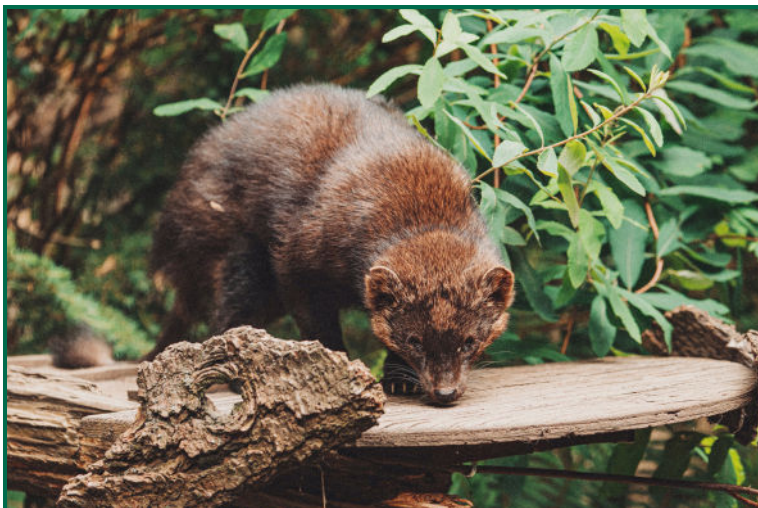


Photo by Alex Kramarevsky

standing human activities’ effects on wildlife populations and communities.



Karla Bloem banding an owlet.

**November 9, 7:00 p.m.: International Owl Center Founder Karla Bloem will present “Real Life Great Horned Owl Soap Opera.”** A real-life soap opera has played itself out over the past 19 years between more than 25 captive and wild Great Horned Owls, forming the basis of an in-depth vocal study on the species. In this presentation you will

experience owl dating, divorce, territorial defense, and more as you learn about the owls’ various vocalizations and their meaning.

Karla Bloem is the founder and executive director of the International Owl Center in Houston, Minnesota. She acquired Alice the Great Horned Owl for educational programs in 1998 and began studying Great Horned Owl vocalizations in 2004. Karla is now the world authority on their vocalizations and has given presentations in The Netherlands, Germany, Argentina, Italy, Portugal and South Africa. Alice’s popularity led Karla to create the International Festival of Owls, the first full-weekend, all-owl event in North America that has inspired similar festivals in Italy, Nepal and India. Karla and Alice

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• Complete information, zoom links and last-minute updates about monthly chapter meetings can be found at <https://saintpaulaudubon.org/upcoming-events>.

• Past presentations are also available for viewing on YouTube at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w65pqtKP60>

## 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

We are a volunteer organization that relies on people willing to donate their time to our shared mission. Please consider getting involved with volunteer opportunities involved with birding walks, conservation efforts, or other activities. Visit <https://www.saintpaulaudubon.org/volunteer/> for a full list of committees and committee chairs, or get in touch with us on our contact page at <https://www.saintpaulaudubon.org/contact/>.

### Donate

Please consider donating financially to help with the educational and conservation activities Saint Paul Audubon supports. You can make a gift online at <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.

### 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 15th 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

Greg Burnes, 612-205-3071

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

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festivals in Italy, Nepal and India. Karla and Alice testified before the Minnesota House and Senate environment committees to successfully gain protection for Great Horned Owls in 2005. Karla received the Brother Theodore Voelker Award from the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union in 2001, a Bush Leadership Fellowship in 2008, and a World Owl Hall of Fame Special Achievement Award in 2021. She has assisted several authors (including Jennifer Ackerman for her book "What an Owl Knows") and filmmakers and has appeared on Animal Planet and the CBC's "The Secret Life of Owls."



Photo by Jorgina Lee

## Calendar

**Swede Hollow BirdUp:** October 7, 9:00 a.m., Page 4.

**October chapter meeting:** October 11, 7:00 p.m. Page 1.

**Crex Meadows field trip:** October 17, 4:00 p.m. Page 4.

**Birds and Beers St. Paul:** 6-9 p.m. on October 24 and November 29. Sweeney's Saloon, 96 N Dale St., St. Paul. Page 5.

**November chapter meeting:** November 9, 7:00 p.m. Zoom only. Page 1.

**Christmas bird count:** December 16. Details in next issue.

See page 5 for a complete list of chapter meeting presentations.



## Chip Notes

One of the most critical parts of Saint Paul Audubon's mission is to advocate for birds and the habitats they need to thrive. Left unchecked, humanity favors short-term action (bigger, better, faster) over long-term strategies that balance the health of birds, people, and the planet. We have all seen reports showing the loss of 30% of our bird population since 1970, and this trend will continue if we choose not to act.

To counter this trend, Saint Paul Audubon advocates by supporting local, state, and national legislative action; and by leading our chapter's advocacy initiatives in Ramsey and Washington County.

This year's state legislative session had many environmental wins. Audubon Minnesota reported they were able to help pass 12 of their 14 key legislative initiatives. In addition to providing voters the opportunity to renew a constitutional amendment that gives 40% of lottery profits to the state's environment and natural resource fund, the session yielded a powerful ban on PFAS (forever chemicals), passed the "Lawns to Legumes" program, and provided our regional Audubon office with over \$1.6 million to map migratory bird pitstops and begin restoration of the Important Birding Area in the St. Croix River Valley. There is much more. This [link](#) provides details.

Our chapter's advocacy efforts also cover a wide range of issues. Led by Kiki Sonnen, Pig's Eye Park has had several environmental wins ([Aug - Sept Cardinal](#)). We submitted a letter of support for a Pig's Eye Park STAR grant ([click here to read](#)) to improve infrastructure and make the park more accessible, and hope to hear the results in October. We continue to monitor the status of the [Battle Creek Grassland](#).

Recently, we have become involved in two additional issues. A chapter member informed us of an incident at a store of a sizeable retail chain based in Minnesota. The store appears to have pressure-hosed several swallow nests, leaving ten chicks lying on the sidewalk. The

chicks were taken to the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Roseville. The USFWS was alerted and started a law enforcement action, and we contacted both the store and the company's corporate headquarters. We heard from the company that they have begun implementing a training program for employees and vendors regarding bird nests. We plan to follow up to create and implement a more extensive awareness campaign.

The second issue concerns a new sports arena St. Thomas University is proposing for the Summit Ave. area. Our former president, Donn Waage, brought this issue to our attention. This large complex would be less than a quarter mile from the Mississippi River flyway and potentially impact the 350 + million birds that migrate through the area. St. Thomas University was asked to prepare an [Environmental Assessment Worksheet](#). In our opinion, their response did not adequately consider the impact this project would have on its effects on birds and wildlife. Our chapter and Audubon MN submitted a strong response in July ([read our response](#)). The issue is now in front of the St. Paul City Council. We have connected with neighborhood groups and will provide updates.

Thank you to all involved in these and other efforts to protect our birds and the habitat they need to thrive. How can you get involved? Please [donate](#) to Saint Paul Audubon. Your dollars will help us support these efforts. [Volunteer](#) your time on one of our many committees to help with the outreach efforts needed to make these initiatives work. If you see an issue we should consider, please [email](#) us and be willing to get involved.

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*



*A beginning birding walk at Oakdale Nature Center on September 2 had 18 participants, with 6 new birders. Greg Burnes led the walk.*

## More Beginning Birding Walks Coming

While all Saint Paul Audubon birding walks welcome birders of all experience levels, the Field Trip Committee has been scheduling more walks focused on helping beginning birders develop their skills. Leaders offer help using binoculars and field guides, and using online resources for identifying birds and their calls. Watch for more beginning birding events next year, with a goal of engaging people of all ages, interests, and abilities to enjoy and care for birds and their habitats.

## BIRDING WALKS AND FIELD TRIPS

### Swede Hollow Park – Birding in the Heart of St. Paul

622 Beaumont St., St. Paul, MN 55130

Saturday, October 7, 9:00 - 11:00 AM

This is a **BirdUp**, Saint Paul Audubon's new more informal version of birding. Meet up at the site; everyone will be responsible for finding and identifying the birds. There will be a convener who is familiar with the park, knows which areas to visit, and will make sure everyone finds their way back to the parking lot. Birders of all levels are welcome. Keep an eye on <https://saintpaulaudubon.org/upcoming-events/> as we hope to add a few more Bird Ups throughout autumn.

**DIRECTIONS** Meet at the entrance to Drewry Tunnel at Swede Hollow Park across from 622 Beaumont St. East, St. Paul. Park on the street or off-street parking is available at the Hope Community Academy (located in the old Hamm's Brewery Building) at 720 Payne Ave, St. Paul.

**DIFFICULTY** Easy to moderate, approximately 1.5 miles. Includes both uphill and downhill paved pathways.

**CONVENER** Kathy Sidles 651-233-6804, kesid@aol.com Contact Kathy if you would like to borrow her extra pair of binoculars.

**NOTE** [Friends of Swede Hollow](#) joins us in offering this program.

### Sandhill Cranes at Crex Meadows SWA

102 E. Crex Ave., Grantsburg, WI

Tuesday, October 17, 4:00 ~ 8:15 PM

Since historical times, Greater Sandhill Cranes have congregated by the thousands every autumn evening in the marshes and ponds now called Crex Meadows SWA, located north 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 or again this enduring ritual. Introductory remarks and instructions will begin at 4 p.m. in the Visitor Center parking lot at Crex Meadow State Wildlife Area in Grantsburg WI. Destination(s) chosen will depend on CMSWA staff information, recent main roost areas, numbers of cars in the caravan, and current weather. Most likely either roost sites in Crex Meadows or at Fish Lake will be the general area.

- Be sure to check <https://saintpaulaudubon.org/upcoming-events/> for more details and field trip changes throughout the season.

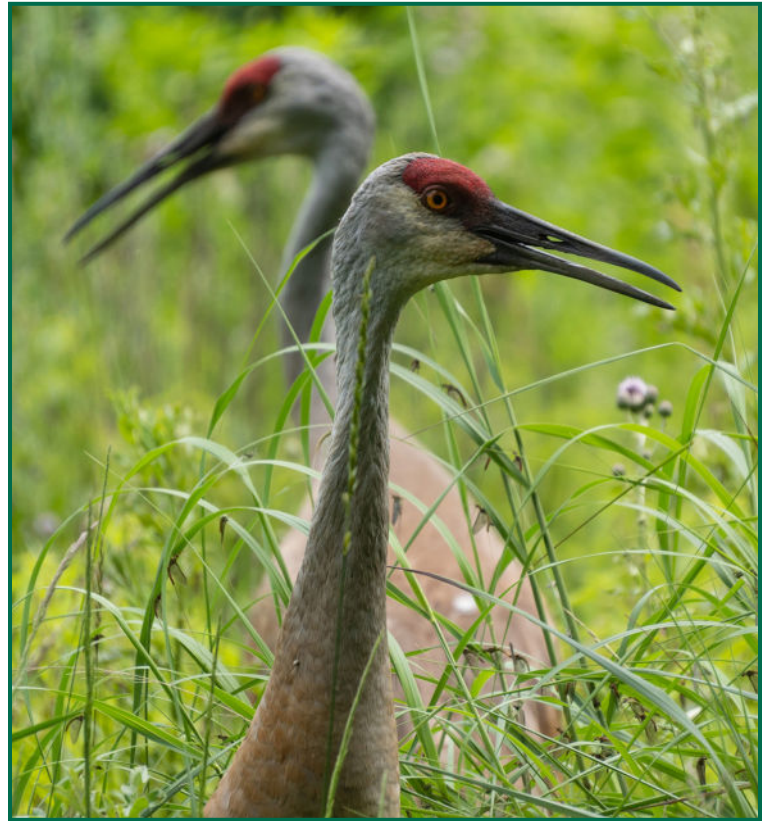


Photo by Arthur Palac

**DIRECTIONS** Take I-35 North to the Rock Creek/ Grantsburg Exit #165 (Highway 70), approximately 34 miles from Forest Lake. Take exit 165, turn right (EAST) on Highway 70, go 15 miles to the stop light in Grantsburg, WI. Turn left (NORTH) onto Pine Street. Follow the goose signs through town to the Visitor Center on the NE corner of the junction of County Road D and County Road F. Park and meet in the parking lot.

**INSTRUCTIONS** Bring binoculars and a scope if possible. Dress for cooling temperatures during the evening. Consider bug repellent, sunscreen, water, car supper or snack. Bring a spotting scope if you can. The group will gather in the parking lot for basic information by the leaders with Q and A. Departure time from the parking lot depends more on the weather than conversation. We will caravan from the parking lot and depart as one group at the end of the evening. If the destination is in Crex Meadows SWA, carpooling will be strongly encouraged; if destination is Fish Lake SWA all will drive separately. **NOTE:** Modern restrooms are located in the Visitors Center (715-463-2896), with limited hours in October.

**REGISTRATION** Register with Louise Eidsmoe 651-231-0453 eidsmoel@comcast.net

**DIFFICULTY** Easy. Viewing can be improved somewhat by walking the road slowly, staying close to the cars, so as not to spook the cranes.

**LEADERS** Louise Eidsmoe 651-231-0453 eidsmoel@comcast.net Chase Davies 651-246-9754 RockyBirder@gmail.com

## Help Wanted

### Technical Assistance for Chapter Meetings

One of the key offerings of Saint Paul Audubon is our monthly chapter meetings. A major challenge for these meetings is to have smooth-running technology that provides optimum sound and visuals for both an in-person and a simultaneous Zoom experience - hybrid meetings. We seek one or more volunteers with experience facilitating hybrid Zoom meetings, setting up and using sound equipment, and editing and posting Zoom recordings to YouTube. We can supply an orientation on the current setup and are open to suggestions on improving our attendees' experience. If interested, please contact Greg Burnes at 612-205-3071 or [gburnes@comcast.net](mailto:gburnes@comcast.net).



### Grants Committee Member

The Grants Committee is looking for one or two volunteers to serve on the committee. Saint Paul Audubon awards grants to non-profit organizations that share our passion for birds and the places they need to thrive. The Grants Committee seeks grantees that fit our mission, gathers grant requests, reviews, and presents them to the board for approval. They also stay in touch with the grantees to ensure they follow through on their commitments and report their successes. Volunteers should be interested in working with emerging environmental groups, small non-profits, environmental justice, grassroots organizing, capacity building, and diversity.

You can find more information about volunteering at <https://saintpaulaudubon.org/volunteer/>

## The Joy of Birds

Do you like to talk about birds? Do you like to hear about birds? Can't get enough about learning about birds? Well, you just might like Birds & Beers - St. Paul. We gather monthly to talk about birds.

Everyone is welcome - whether you are just getting into birds or have been a birder your whole life. We meet at 6-9 pm at Sweeney's Saloon, 96 N. Dale, St. Paul. We gather in the Ashland Room to visit over a meal & beverages. As we introduce ourselves we hear about a great bird seen, or a bird people are looking for, announcements about bird events, or upcoming trips. Mark your calendars now to join in on the fun at upcoming Birds & Beers gatherings:

- Tuesday, October 24, Sweeney's, 6 pm
- Wednesday, November 29, Sweeney's, 6 pm

Watch for 2024 Birds and Beers dates coming soon.

## Variety of Speakers and Formats Coming

Saint Paul Audubon's Program Committee, led by Stewart Corn, invites a wide range of experts to speak at our monthly chapter meetings, giving us insights into many topics relating to birding, birds and their habitats. While we especially enjoy meeting our speakers and attendees in person, our experience with Zoom during the pandemic has allowed us to expand the field of potential speakers to people outside our area and make it easier to watch programs during winter months. The technology to offer meetings in a combined in-person and Zoom format (hybrid format) has been challenging to master, but it is now improved, giving us more options for our upcoming meetings.

Here is the full list of the remaining speakers and meeting formats for this season (September-May). More information on the speakers will be provided in upcoming issues of the Cardinal and at <https://saintpaulaudubon.org/upcoming-events/>.

October 11: Michael Joyce, Fishers in Minnesota (In-person - Hybrid)

November 9: Karla Bloem, Houston Owl Center Director (Zoom Only)

December 14: Kara Snow, Boreal Chickadees (In-person - Hybrid)

January 11: Rebecca Heisman, Bird Migration (Zoom Only)

February 8: Deondre Smiles, Paul Bunyon Greenwashing (Zoom Only)

March 14: Hope Flanagan, Birds of Ojibwe Legends (In-person - Hybrid)

April 11: Tim Mitchell, Roadside Pollinators (In-person - Hybrid)

May 9: Maggie Lorenz, Wakan-tipi/Phalen Creek (In-person - Hybrid)



A recent Birds and Beers St. Paul at Sweeney's Saloon

## AHATS Butterflies: Species Richness Up, Abundance Down

By Bob Dunlap

Twelve participants met at 9:30 AM on the morning of July 8, 2023 to survey butterflies for the annual count at Arden Hills Army Training Site (AHATS) hosted by St. Paul Audubon. Although the wind picked up slightly toward the end of the count and the temperature approached 80 degrees, the weather was mostly pleasant for both butterflies and humans. We tailed a total of 68 individual butterflies comprising 20 species; this compares to 102 individuals and 13 species in 2022. So, we can say that abundance was lower but species richness was higher this year than in the previous year.

Highlights of the day included finding species in all five families of Minnesota's butterflies: Hesperidae (skippers: 5 species), Papilionidae (swallowtails: 1 species), Pieridae (whites and yellows: 2 species), Lycaenidae (coppers, blues, and hairstreaks: 3 species), and Nymphalidae (brush-foots: 9 species). Common Wood-Nymph was the most abundant species, representing over a quarter of all

individual butterflies we observed. Several in the group had the fortune of seeing and photographing a Striped Hairstreak, a rather uncommon species throughout Minnesota and the first found during the count at AHATS since 2007. Some non-butterfly highlights were several Black-and-gold Bumble Bees in the prairies, Punctured and Big Sand Tiger Beetles in the gravel pits, and a Large Yellow Underwing moth in the woodlands. The group was also serenaded by a couple Dickcissels, an irruptive grassland songbird not always present this far north in any given year.

As in previous years, these butterfly count data are submitted to the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) for inclusion in its annual July 4th Butterfly Count reports, which publish census data for locations throughout North America. In addition, these data are submitted to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to inform conservation both locally at AHATS and statewide.

Thanks again to all 2023 participants! Next year's count is scheduled for Saturday, July 6; look for registration information in the June/July issue of The Cardinal newsletter.



*Species above, left to right:*

*Striped Hairstreak photographed during the count by Jim Peterfeso*

*Eastern Tailed-Blue and Dun Skipper photographed during the count by Bob Dunlap*

### Have a Question or Want to Contact Someone?

If you have a comment or question for anyone connected with the Saint Paul Audubon Society, or want to talk to someone about volunteering, or contact someone for any other reason, please use the form on our Contact Us page: <https://saintpaulaudubon.org/contact/>. We monitor this site regularly and will make sure the appropriate person gets back to you as soon as possible.