

# The Cardinal

DECEMBER 2020 JANUARY 2021

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## Online Speaker Series for 2020-2021 Continues

This year's series of monthly online presentations continues to present a wide range of guest speakers with fascinating information relating to birds and their habitats, with 83 people signing in to watch in November. The presentations begin at 7 p.m. on the dates listed below. To sign in, go to [saintpaulaudubon.com](http://saintpaulaudubon.com) and click on the current meeting's Zoom link.

### December 10: "For Love of a River" featuring Darby and Geri Nelson, and John Hickman

*For Love of a River: The Minnesota* is a holistic biography of our state's namesake river, written by Darby Nelson with assistance from his wife, Geri, and editor John Hickman. Published in 2019, it was a finalist for the Midwest Book Publishers Award in the Nature category. Darby and Geri paddled the Minnesota River all the way from its source near the South Dakota border to its confluence with the Mississippi in St. Paul. Along the way, they examined the unique geological history of the river basin, admired the diverse flora and fauna, explored some of the basin's many lakes, learned about the Dakota-U.S. War and subsequent transformation of the landscape to agriculture, and encountered numerous people who share Darby's passion for this special place and his dedication to addressing the river's pollution problems. The program will feature photographs from Darby and Geri's paddling adventures and readings from the book, which is available on Amazon in soft cover and e-book formats. For more information, see [www.darbynelson.com](http://www.darbynelson.com).

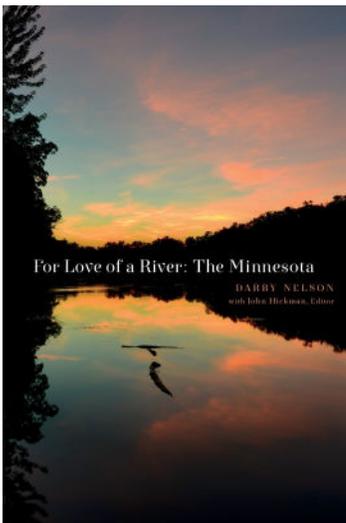
Darby Nelson fell in love with the Minnesota River as a boy growing up in the river town of Morton. He is an aquatic ecologist and biology professor emeritus at Anoka-Ramsey Community College. Darby has been a tireless advocate for the environment, serving on boards for Conservation Minnesota, the Freshwater Society, and the Nature Conservancy, and he



was a charter member of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. He has received the Sigurd Olson Award from the Izaak Walton League, Environmentalist of the Year from the North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club, Willard Munger Award from the Minnesota DFL, Steve Chapman Environment Award from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and several teaching awards.

Geri Nelson has a B.S. in biology and secondary education from the University of Minnesota and an M.S. in gifted and talented education from St. Thomas. She taught physical science for 25 years in the Anoka-Hennepin School District, coaching science fair students and advising National Honor Society and the Girls' Science and Math Retreat. She is proud to be Darby's typist, first reader, events coordinator and, now that Darby is experiencing the effects of dementia, his spokesperson.

John Hickman assisted in the writing of *For Love of a River: The Minnesota*. John is a writer and documentary film producer and a longtime advocate for the Minnesota River. From 1992-94, he served on Governor Arne Carlson's Minnesota River Citizens' Advisory Committee and wrote the recommendations for the committee's influential final report, *Working Together: A Plan to Restore the Minnesota River*. In 2011, he was executive producer of the film *River Revival: Working Together to Save the Minnesota River*, which premiered in prime time on the Twin Cities' NBC affiliate.



Speaker events continued on page 3...

## SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

PO Box 7275, St Paul, MN 55107-7275

Welcome...  
To the Saint Paul Audubon Society.

### Next issue: February/March 2021

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, sex, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, age, or gender identity.

### President's Message

### Take Action for Birds in 2021

For Audubon in Saint Paul, 2020 was a year of preparation and 2021 will be a year of action. In the new year, we will continue updating our communications with an increased focus on social media through our newly formed Communications Committee. We will advocate for birds and conservation in our cities, counties, and state government with our new Advocacy Committee. We hope to launch a Young Birders program through our Education Committee. We are planning to restore a section of Como Park in Saint Paul by removing invasive species and restoring native plants. We will also continue our River Journey programs, as well as our Conservation Committee work building kestrel boxes. And we will continue our support of successful programs such as the Urban Bird Collective, Landscape Revival, Warbler Weekend, field trips, international migration research, speaker series and the annual Butterfly Count. To accomplish all these activities, we will seek contributions through our annual Fund Drive.

We also need volunteers, old and new, to put these plans into action, and we welcome everyone who is interested in birds and conservation. Some of our work will be with committees, some out in the community, and some as field work. Some projects will engage people for short bursts of time and others over longer periods. Saint Paul Audubon has volunteer opportunities to fit everyone's interests. But given all these options, it may be difficult to choose and to understand where your interests and talents may fit the best. One of our long-serving volunteers, board member and coordinator of Great River Journey, Barbara Lindeke, has volunteered to help. If you are interested in assisting birds and conservation you can email or call her and she will help you find the best place for your interests and help you settle in. Below are additional details for contacting committee chairs and coordinators if you would like to participate in any of these activities.

#### 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.

Barbara Lindeke, Volunteer Coordinator, [bclindeke@gmail.com](mailto:bclindeke@gmail.com)  
612-558-2277

Stewart Corn, Chair, Program Committee. Seeking volunteers to help identify and recruit speakers for our monthly programs.  
[shcorn@mmm.com](mailto:shcorn@mmm.com) 651-698-1829

Dean Doering, Chair, Audubon Fund Drive. Seeking volunteers to assist with the Annual Fund Drive [dean.doering@usbank.com](mailto:dean.doering@usbank.com)  
651-962-1963

Martha Douglas, Chair, Communications Committee. Seeking volunteers for a variety of communications activities but especially social media.

David Kuhlmann, Chair, Education Committee. Seeking volunteers to help start a Young Birders group. [dmkuhlmann@gmail.com](mailto:dmkuhlmann@gmail.com)

Nancy Uppgren and Monica Bryand, Co Chairs, Conservation Committee. [Nancy.uppgren@icloud.com](mailto:Nancy.uppgren@icloud.com) 651-247-1718; [Mjbryand@gmail.com](mailto:Mjbryand@gmail.com) 651-246-5522. Seeking volunteers to support on-the-ground conservation projects.

Please remember, these are ways you can help birds and conservation, and many will allow you to participate outdoors. The value of being outdoors has been reinforced in 2021. Let's use our outdoor time to improve the environment. When habitat for birds improves, we all benefit.

-Donn Waage, Saint Paul Audubon Society President

## Speaker Series, continued from page 1

**January 14:** Dr. Sarah Hobbie, Distinguished McKnight University Professor in the Dept of Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior. Her research addresses the influence of changes in atmospheric composition, climate, land use, and plant species composition on communities and ecosystems, and the effects of urbanization on biodiversity and water quality.

In this talk Dr. Hobbie will describe her research on quantifying the sources of nutrient pollution to urban watersheds. This is one of her many research areas and that of her lab of graduate students and post-docs. She will address how nutrients enter the watersheds of the Mississippi River and how they move from urban residential landscapes into streets, then stormwater, and ultimately into streams, lakes, and rivers. She will also discuss approaches to reducing nutrient pollution of our urban waters, including ongoing work in partnership with the MN Pollution Control Agency. We are fortunate that Dr. Hobbie has agreed to speak to SPAS about this long-term problem --- bringing the findings of her university research to us, the citizens who can help address water quality through our own practices.

Dr. Hobbie's research focuses on the influence of changes in atmospheric composition, climate, and land use on communities and ecosystems, and on the effects of urbanization on biodiversity and water quality. She currently serves as co-leader of the Cedar Creek Long-Term Ecological Research program. She is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and an American Academy of Arts and Sciences Fellow. She serves on the Advisory Board of the Earth Leadership Program and on several editorial boards. More information about her research is available at [www.cbs.umn.edu/labs/shobbie/](http://www.cbs.umn.edu/labs/shobbie/)

**February 11:** Phil Hartley, photographer and naturalist, will present "Hidden Gems of the North Shore." Phil will use photography to highlight nearly two dozen great birding spots along the North Shore that are somewhat off the beaten path and used more by locals than tourists.

**March 11:** Marcie and Mike O'Connor will present "Prairie Haven - Prairie and Savanna Restoration on an Old



Wisconsin Farm." The O'Connors bought the farm in 2000 and decided to restore the land back to the way it was before it was farmed. Marcie will talk about the restoration and Mike will talk about his project of collecting recordings of birds and animals.

**April 8:** Lynette Anderson, Interpretive Naturalist and Restoration Assistant at Belwin Conservancy, will present "Belwin, Bison, and Birds." She will talk about the wide variety of habitats at Belwin, most notably prairie and oak savanna, and about the introduction of a bison herd onto their land. Belwin was founded in 1971 and launched Belwin Outdoor Science, a collaboration with Saint Paul Public Schools. Belwin has served more than 400,000 students since then and continues to serve over 10,000 a year, currently through virtual field trips.

**May 13:** Rob Schultz, Audubon Minnesota executive director and conservation team leader.



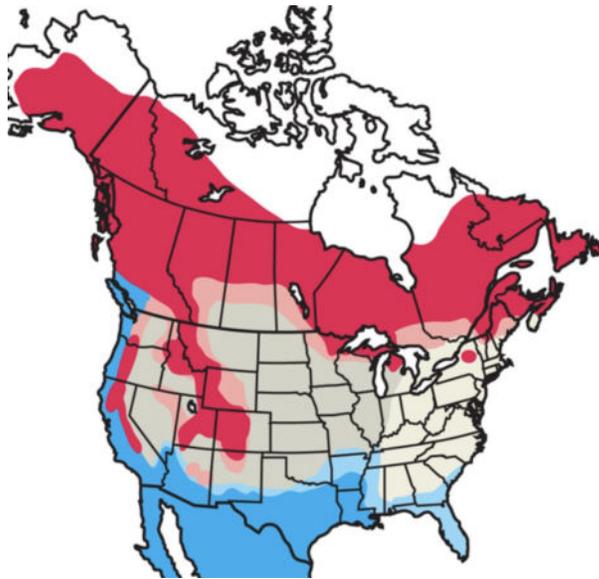
## The Christmas Bird Count — Pandemic Style

By Gregg Severson, CBC Compiler

The Saint Paul Audubon Society's **Christmas Bird Count** will take place on **Saturday, December 19, 2020**. This year's count will be modified to conform to guidelines set by the National Audubon Society for conducting a COVID-19 safe and socially-distanced count. Those guidelines and a few additional modifications will help ensure the safety of participants while still providing an opportunity to get outside and observe birds. While the number of species and bird counts may be low this year, there is real scientific value in establishing changes in the RANGE MAPS for the various species, and we can contribute to that even if we see fewer birds than usual during the count. The National Audubon Society guidelines are as follows: (1) activities must comply with all current state and municipal COVID-19 guidelines; (2) in-person gatherings must be cancelled; (3) social distancing and masking are required at all times in the field; and (4) carpooling may occur only within existing family or social pod groups. Our rules for safety:

1. Each Area in our CBC Circle will be assigned to just one leader. (For example: Robert Waltz will continue as the leader for Area 7.) We hope many of our previous leaders will participate again.
2. If the assigned Area Leader wishes to allow other volunteers to participate within that Area, that Leader must assign each volunteer a **separate sub-area** and require that those volunteers allow only members of their own household to join them while birding. *Note:* All counts within an Area will be added together and submitted as **one Area Count**.

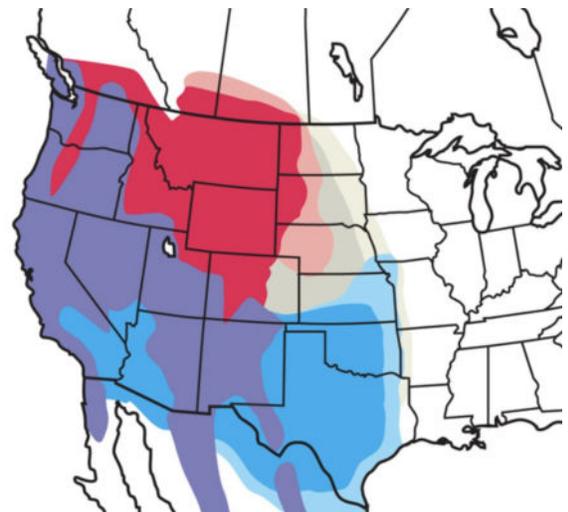
*A Spotted Towhee, normally found in the Western states, put in an appearance in last year's Christmas Bird Count. Photograph by Steve Tanamachi; range map from Audubon.org.*



*A Lincoln's Sparrow observed in last year's Christmas Bird Count, photographed by Adam Herman. The bird was well outside its usual winter range, shown in blue on this map from Audubon.org.*

The count is subject to cancellation up until count day if (1) there is insufficient interest; (2) the National Audubon Society cancels the entire event; (3) another government mandate requires cancellation; or (4) the count cannot be conducted safely. The annual potluck dinner and tally party are cancelled. This year, Dorothy Waltz will organize field volunteers by email or telephone. On count day, field volunteers will proceed directly to their assigned areas and complete their surveys. Gregg Severson will tally the species and counts from the checklists submitted by our volunteers.

While we are not accepting new **field** volunteers this year, new volunteers may participate as backyard feeder watchers. If you have previously participated or would like to join the count as a feeder watcher, or if you have questions, please contact Dorothy Waltz at [waltz.ds@yahoo.com](mailto:waltz.ds@yahoo.com) or 651-917-0930.





## Meet Saint Paul Audubon Society Volunteers

In the absence of group events, we are making connections through this series of profiles of field trip leaders and other volunteers.



### Barbara Lindeke

Barbara Lindeke is someone who shows up for things she cares about, whether it's a meeting, a field trip, or standing at the State Capitol holding a sign. "When Don Arnosti [a well-known environmental activist] puts out a call for help with something, I'm there," says Barbara. In addition to holding signs, she has made remarks to legislators, written postcards, or whatever else is needed to advocate for protecting birds and our environment. "Now we are working on encouraging the City of Saint Paul to adopt bird-safe design in their planning," she says.

Barbara's involvement in birding took off in the '80s after meeting and then marrying her late husband Jerry Wagner, who Barbara describes as a "gifted naturalist who was interested in everything in nature." They were both teaching at Anoka High School then, Jerry teaching biology and Barbara world history. Their honeymoon trip, in March 1988, was to the Platte River in Nebraska, where they returned many times over the years. "Birders understand why this was so special," says Barbara. "In addition to the crane migration there are thousands of Snow Geese flying in, and the combined sound of these birds is just magical."

Barbara and her husband began going to Warbler Weekends in the '80s and they met Fred and Dorothy Walz, who got them more involved in Society activities. Barbara served on the Education Committee, on the board, and as president beginning in 2014. One project she is particularly proud of is recruiting Society volunteers to teach on the Big River Journey field trip for St. Paul schoolchildren for the past ten years. This program, run by the National Park Service in spring and fall, has enrolled nearly 5,000 students annually and the Saint Paul Audubon Society is the only entity involved that participates purely on a volunteer basis.

Barbara's volunteer work has often involved teaching, including classes for St. Paul Parks and Recreation summer day camps. She has been actively involved in several environmental organizations besides the Saint Paul Audubon Society and she knows almost every active birder you can name in the metro area and beyond.



*A recent birding adventure for Barbara was a trip to Frank Taylor's banding station near Two Harbors in September, where she released four raptors. Here she is with Frank and a merlin she released.*

"I've met so many wonderful people," she says, "but we need to get more youth involved and reach out to a broader range of people. Our environment is in danger and birds are literally the canary in the coal mine. We need to take care of them. Their colors and vibrancy bring joy beyond measure."



## Action Alert

The city of Maplewood is planning to develop 77-acre county-owned tract of (mostly) grassland adjacent to Battle Creek Regional Park

southeastern Ramsey County. During recent nesting seasons, birders have documented a number of species on this property that are in steep decline in Minnesota and North America. Many people who are opposed to the development think that the county should adjust the park boundary to include this tract instead of selling it for development. For more information, and to take action, go to [tinyurl.com/77acres](http://tinyurl.com/77acres).

## Grant supports educational signage at Sax-Zim

New interpretive signs will be installed at Sax-Zim Bog's Whiteface River parcel thanks to a grant of \$750 from the Saint Paul Audubon Society. This recently acquired 41-acre parcel attracts breeding birds that are at the northern edge of their range in Sax-Zim, including Great Crested Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, and Yellow-throated Vireo. The

## BOARD MEETINGS

The Chapter's Board Meetings, held the first Monday of most months, have been conducted via phone conference or Zoom. The next meetings will be December 7 and January 4 at 6 p.m.

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interpretive signs will highlight the unique bird and plant communities of the river floodplain, and raise awareness of the need to protect unique habitats for overwintering and migratory birds.

"The Society has recently provided grants to worthwhile organizations that help protect habitat on both ends of the migratory journey for birds we enjoy in the east metro," said Saint Paul Audubon Vice President Jane Braun. "We are forging new partnerships with others who work to support 'our' birds along their entire paths."

## Annual Fund Drive request sent with Annual Report

This year's Annual Fund Drive request has been sent in a new format – tucked inside the Society's first Annual Report – and mailed to people who are members as a result of their gifts to the national Audubon organization. Many members also give directly to our Saint Paul Audubon Society chapter and they are recognized in the new publication. The Annual Report is also available for viewing on our website, [saintpaulaudubon.org](http://saintpaulaudubon.org) and you can also make a gift online.

Thank you to all our members and donors. You make it possible for us to do so many things on behalf of birds and the environment.

*Sax-Zim Bog in winter. Photo by Jackie Bussjaeger.*

