

The Cardinal

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2023 • WWW.SAINTPAULAUDUBON.ORG • SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Whooping Cranes and Grassland Birds Featured at February and March Meetings In-person and Zoom options now available for all meetings

It has been wonderful to see many of you at the Anpétu Téča Education Center for our December and January meetings but we know that not everyone is comfortable meeting indoors. Mastering the technology to provide a Zoom option along with the on-site setup has been challenging but we are ready now to make all Saint Paul Audubon Society monthly meetings *hybrid events*, which means you can attend in person at the Anpétu Téča Education Center in Roseville OR watch remotely via Zoom.

Monthly chapter meetings are held the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in room 207 of the Education Center, 1910 County Road B West, Roseville. Come early to socialize and enjoy refreshments. When you arrive, drive around to the back of the building for parking and the main entrance.

February 9: Stephanie Schmidt, Whooping Crane Outreach Coordinator for the International Crane Foundation, presents “Whooping Cranes in the Eastern Migratory Population.” In the 1940s, Whooping Cranes, once native to Minnesota, faced near extinction as a result of increased threats from habitat loss, hunting, and more. It wasn’t until 2001 that Whooping Cranes returned to the eastern U.S. following a collaborative reintroduction program led by the International Crane Foundation (ICF). Today



Stephanie Schmidt carrying a Whooping Crane

around 76 Whooping Cranes make up this population, and a few individuals have made their way into Minnesota each year. Stephanie will talk about what the ICF and crane conservation partners are doing to safeguard their future. Following her presentation, you will be able to identify Whooping Cranes by sight and sound, understand the historic threats towards Whooping Cranes that led to their decline, know the ins and outs of the reintroduction program and the current work crane conservation partners are doing to protect cranes in Minnesota and throughout their flyways, and find out how you can be an ambassador for cranes in Minnesota.

Stephanie Schmidt, our February speaker, will join us via Zoom from the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, Wisconsin. We will welcome her on the big screen at the Education Center so those attending in person can watch and interact with her together. Those watching remotely will tune into the Zoom meeting the usual way. Our Zoom license allows up to 100 people per meeting to tune in.



Flying Whooping Crane, photo by Michael Sloat

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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.

Membership

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 Ramsey or Washington counties and surrounding areas.

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 or contact the board members and committee members listed here.

About the Cardinal

The *Cardinal* is published 6 times a year and posted on www.saintpaulaudubon.org at the beginning of February, April, June, August, October, and December. Copy is due on the 15th of the month preceding publication. 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, scroll down and click on "Join our email list."

President

Greg Burnes, 612-205-3071

Vice President

Kiki Sonnen, 651-331-9560

Vice President, Communications

Martha Douglas, 651-366-2345

Treasurer

James Stout, 651-645-7017

Secretary

Craig Cox, 515-231-6329

Conservation Co-Chairs

Nancy Uppgren, 651-247-1718

Monica Bryand, 651-246-5522

Field Trips Chair

Cathy Croghan, 651-636-6475

Next issue: April / May 2023



Chip Notes

Happy 2023! I'm Greg Burnes, the new president of Saint Paul Audubon. In December the board elected me as president, Kiki Sonnen as vice president, and Craig Cox as secretary. Donn Waage and Jane Braun served as president and vice president for close to six years and will remain on the board until May when they hit their term limit. We thank them for their wonderful leadership.

I am new to the Saint Paul chapter but not to Audubon. I recently served six years on the board of the Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter, with three years president. I also have served on the board of Minnesota Audubon. In 2019 my wife and I moved from Bloomington to Stillwater. We've fallen in love the St. Croix Valley and its wonderful green space (aka birding hotspots) and continue to explore the area and all it has to offer.

I am still learning about St. Paul Audubon and the wonderful people who make it work. Our focus this year will be on expanding our outreach so more peo-

ple can participate in our incredible educational activities, exploring new avenues for providing impactful grants that address environmental and diversity issues, and working to reengage our members and friends.

Your involvement is always needed and welcome. We will have multiple openings on our board this spring, which gives you an opportunity to influence the direction of our organization and numerous programs. We will also have volunteer opportunities in May to support the Big River Journey and Wild River Journey. These events mentor around 2000 students, helping them better understand the river's ecosystems and the birds that populate it. And of course, your financial donations are always needed to support the many programs and grants we fund each year.

In 2023, please join me in celebrating birds and conserving their environment so they continue to bring joy and connections for us, and for the many generations to come.

Greg Burnes
President, Saint Paul Audubon Society

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Stephanie grew up in the Kettle Moraine area in southeastern Wisconsin, a region known for its many Sandhill Cranes, which ignited her early love for birds, wetlands, and nature. She earned her bachelor's degree in Zoology and Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and her master's degree in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.



Anthony Hauck

March 9: Anthony Hauck, Communications Manager for Audubon Conservation Ranching, will present "Birds, Beef, and a Better Climate."

Traditional conservation approaches have failed to stem the continued loss of native grasslands and the precipitous decline of grassland birds, now estimated to be a 53% population decline since the first Earth Day. Nearly 70% of grassland species are vulnerable to extinction due to climate change. Audubon Conservation Ranching, the National Audubon Society's novel, market-based approach to grassland bird conservation, is working at the intersection of wildlife, food, people, and climate to slow these trends. Anthony will talk about the Audubon Conservation Ranching's certification program, which yields on-the-ground habitat results as well as the *Audubon Certified* bird-friendly seal that helps consumers recognize beef and bison products that

originated on lands managed for birds and biodiversity. Grasslands also keep more carbon in the ground and capture it in plants, reducing carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. The bottom line: What's good for grassland birds is also good for climate change mitigation.

Anthony has dedicated his career to conservation communications. Before joining Audubon he served at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and prior to that, Pheasants Forever. He's proud to call the prairie home, with grassland and agricultural roots along the Minnesota and South Dakota border. His love for birds took flight at Salt Lake, a historic prairie basin and birding destination bordered by both states.

It's Time Now to Apply for a Grant!

The Saint Paul Audubon Society financially supports organizations whose work aligns with our mission of promoting the enjoyment, understanding, and protection of birds and other wildlife by engaging people of the East Metro in birding, education, and conservation. This happens through our Grants Program, in which organizations submit applications and the Board of Directors decides which programs to fund. Applications are reviewed twice a year and the deadline for the current round is **February 15**. Visit www.saintpaulaudubon.org/grants for complete information and the application form.

Grants are typically for \$500-\$2000, supporting efforts that further our focus areas of education, conservation, and policy/advocacy. Preference is given to activities in Ramsey and Washington Counties. Multi-year grant applications are welcome for ongoing projects.

Recipients in 2021-22 included the Urban Bird Collective, Frogtown Green, Carpenter Nature Center, Osprey Wilds, Red-headed Woodpecker Project, Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas, and Friends of Sax-Zim Bog.

New applications, due February 15, will be reviewed at the March 6 board meeting. Applications for the next round are due August 15 and will be reviewed at the September board meeting.

We encourage you to apply!





Yellow-Rumped Warbler, photo by Patrice Bouchard

Enjoy Spring Migration at Warbler Weekend 2023!

Details are coming together for Saint Paul Audubon Society's 52nd annual Warbler Weekend, May 12-14 (Mother's Day weekend) at Hok-Si-La Park in Lake City, MN. The 7th 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 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 at right provides more details.

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.

Watch for a registration form and instructions coming soon. Registration will be required and will be limited to 150 people. The deadline for registration is April 20.

We hope to see you there!

Warbler Weekend 2023 Essentials

Here are the details to date for Warbler Weekend 2023. We will send out more information as it becomes available on 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: Hok-Si-La Park Dining Hall is the hub for all activities.

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 Saturday supper.

Schedule

Friday May 12

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

Saturday May 13

Birding Walks

Morning: 6:45-8:00 a.m. and 9:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m.
Afternoon: 1:45-3:15 p.m. and 3:45-5:00 p.m.

Likely spots include Frontenac State Park's Sand Point Trail and Overlook, Old Methodist Camp area, Frontenac Town Cemetery & Town Walk, Villa Maria Grounds, Beginning Birder walk, and Hok-Si-Lah North and South. Birding by ear will be offered if we are able to line up aurally talented individuals who know our avian denizens and migrants well. Birding by car on your own is always an option as well.

Gather on the grass at the parking lot around appropriate signs to form groups for each scheduled walk. Trips depart at the times listed, so please be on time.

Meals

8:00-9:00 a.m. Breakfast. Announcements at 9:15.
12:15-12:45 p.m. Lunch. Announcements at 1:00.
6:00-6:30 p.m. Dinner. Tally and announcements.

Sunday May 14

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.

Calendar

February 6 – Board meeting
 February 9 – Chapter meeting (page 1)
 February 15 – Grant application deadline (page 3)
 March 6 – Board meeting
 March 9 – Chapter meeting (page 3)
 May 12-14 – Warbler Weekend 2023 (page 4)

Special Recognition Awarded to Richard Newmark

The spotlight was on Richard Newmark at the December 8 chapter meeting, where he was recognized for 12 years of service as Treasurer, a position vital to the mission of the Society that he took over beginning in 2004. He was awarded the Special Recognition Award for his years maintaining the Society's financial stability, as well as his volunteer work organizing the registration and finances of the annual Warbler Weekend. Jim Stout, our current Treasurer, presented a certificate to Richard at the meeting.

Richard became involved in the Saint Paul Audubon Society through his wife, Joan, who he says is more of a birder. "I'm mostly a conservationist," he says, and he was initially involved with the Conservation Committee. Richard and Joan have traveled and birded extensively, including two Safaris in Africa, the Galapagos, Patagonia, the Amazon, and Costa Rica.

Congratulations and thank you to Richard.



Richard Newmark and Jim Stout, photo by Kiki Sonnen



Photo by John Voules

Field trip opportunities expanding!

In 2022, 580 people attended 33 trips at 28 sites led by 19 field trip leaders!

This is believed to be a new record. Highlights included: return of a full-blown Warbler Weekend, 5 new field trip sites, return of the Bird-Bike experience after a 12-year hiatus, and building collaborations with local community organizations (Friends of Swede Hollow, St. Paul Public Library, Pigs Eye Park Friends). The season also marked the debut of a new, less formal field trip event called the Bird-Up, in which birders meet at an appointed time and place for casual birding.

And there's more to come in 2023! Goals include offering more field trips with additional leaders, expanding offerings in Washington County, and continued collaboration with urban community organizations. Many of the latter are specifically designed to welcome new birders. Watch for announcements of upcoming field trips in the April *Cardinal*.

The Saint Paul Audubon field trip season's success is directly tied to an outstanding team of **19 volunteer field trip leaders**. They are our lifeblood. Without them there would be no season. They carve out time on their calendars to share their expertise and enthusiasm. In 2022 the leaders* included:

Jane Braun	Monica Bryand
Greg Burnes	Cathy Croghan
Chase Davies	Ed Davies
Louise Eidsmoe	Sherry Gray
Curt Hadland	Pat Hadland
Kathy Robbins	Kathy Sidles
Kiki Sonnen	Paul Spreitzer
Bill Stjern	Terri Walls
Dorothy Waltz	Linda Whyte
John Zakelj	

*This list does not include the many folks who volunteered "on the spot" to lead trips at the 2022 Warbler Weekend. See page 4 for information about Warbler Weekend 2023, May 12-14.

Cathy Croghan
 Field Trip Committee Chair



Swede Hollow Team

St. Paul Christmas Bird Count Highlights

Fifteen teams of birders and feeder watchers covered the St Paul Audubon Christmas Bird Count Circle on December 17, 2022. Data and stats are still being reviewed and entered but here are some highlights:

The Pig's Eye Area had 8 people in 2 teams coming up with 34 species and around 2,686 individual birds. Photos of a possible 1,000 or more Mallards at the sewage plant outfall are still being reviewed to get an accurate count. Other interesting birds seen in this territory were a Peregrine Falcon, Northern Shrike, and 3 Belted Kingfishers.

Several other teams reported Kingfishers too, so this may be a record high count of these great birds.

The Como Park area team reported finding a Saw-whet Owl nestled in fir trees.

Five people on the Phalen Park team came up with 29 species and 604 individuals. Highlights were Trumpeter Swans, 12 Bald Eagles, 5 Pileated Woodpeckers, and 8 Eastern Bluebirds.

Many of the birders joined up later for a potluck dinner, where sightings and adventures were shared. Thanks to Brian Goodspeed for hosting the party.

Mark your calendars - next year's Christmas Bird Count will be Saturday, December 16, 2023.



Pigs Eye Team. Photos by Kiki Sonnen

Thank You for Your Support

Last year was my first year as the Annual Fund Drive Chairman. I have to tell you how overwhelmed I was with the enthusiastic response of our members, with more than 200 people making a donation. This response tells me three things.

First, we have extremely generous members. Second, those members value the programs and field trips that Saint Paul Audubon provides. Finally, our members deeply care about the decline in bird populations and want to help support the research and projects that Saint Paul Audubon funds.

We only ask for your support once a year. Now is that time. Any donation that you make will help us in our mission to provide education and halt the decline of our avian friends.

The Board of Directors, the birds, and I thank you for your continued support!

Kenyon Sayler

Annual Fund Drive Chair



How to Make a Gift

There are several ways to make a gift to the Saint Paul Audubon Society:

- Donate online at www.saintpaulaudubon.org/get-involved/donate.
- Send a check, made out to Saint Paul Audubon Society, to Kenyon Sayler, 2366 Tophill Circle, Roseville, MN 55113. Please provide your name as you would like to be recognized, your mailing and email addresses, and any other pertinent information about your gift.
- Watch for the FY22 Annual Report, coming your way soon. It will include a convenient gift form and gift envelope addressed to Kenyon.

Thank you.