

# Wild River Audubon *Current*

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## President's Column

There's much rejoicing among Wild River Audubon members these days. Our October seed sale raised a whopping \$600 dollars! We will be a good position to bring live raptor demonstrations to several schools in the Chisago Lakes, Taylors Falls and North Branch areas. And of course, this means our local feeder birds will be provided for in the coming cold weather.

We also celebrate the passage of the Clean Water, Land and Legacy amendment by a huge margin—passing by more votes than Obama received over McCain in the high-profile presidential race. The fact that Minnesotans voted to raise the sales tax in the midst of an economic recession surely shows how highly we value the woods and waters that comprise our quality of life.

Auduboners should take a moment to be joyful, for all around us, the environmental situations are daunting—climate change threatens to undo all the environmental protection we've managed to enact; invasive species accumulate in our native landscapes and waters; and the exploding human population continues to stress the earth's resources.

But these two events—the local seed sale and the state-wide amendment—show that many people love and care for nature. Now is the time to gather our collective determination and see to it that our legislators craft legislation that put our imperiled planet and all its creatures on a healing course. Now is the time for each one of us to take

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## Christmas Bird Count Dec 20

Join us (Wild River Auduboners) for our annual Christmas Bird Count. Here is how it works. All chapters count birds within a circle with a 15 mile radius. There are about 70 counting circles in Minnesota. The center of our circle is in Center City. We meet at 7:30 a.m. in the Chisago Lake Lutheran Church. Here the wedges of the circle are assigned to groups. We welcome all levels of bird watchers. Novice birders are paired with veteran birders. Mark Peterson, executive director of Audubon Minnesota, says "Think of it as Birding 101 with no tuition costs".

Some groups drive around their assigned territory counting birds in yards, fields and ditches. Others include some hiking, snow shoeing, and/or skiing depending on the conditions. Often we have regular stops at favorite feeder sites. Some groups are even invited in for coffee and cookies. Some count all day and others for just a morning.

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## Christmas Bird Count *continued from page 1*

At 5:00 p.m. everyone meets back at the church with a potluck dish and their day's tally. There is lots of chatter about the days events and some spirited competition among groups for the most unusual sighting. Finally, all the birds are totaled and year to year comparisons are discussed.

For less than the cost of a gallon of gas, you can spend a day out in the fresh air with your family and friends, assist in the longest running wildlife census in the country and go home with a full stomach and good memories.

## Tis the Season

Looking for the perfect gift for a birdwatcher on your list? Here's our list of good reads:

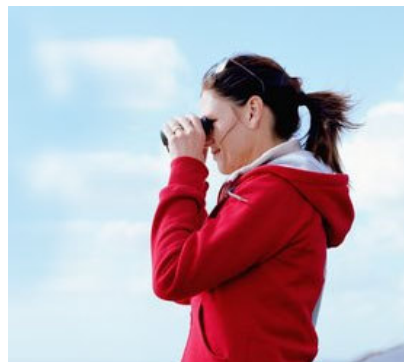
*101 Ways to Help Birds* by Laura Erickson. (Stackpole Books, 2006)

Former Duluth-resident Laura Erickson offers practical, achievable suggestions to aiding our feathered friends. Not much is new here: recycling, avoiding pesticide use, etc are mentioned; but its chief value is that it all gathered together between two covers, making it a valuable resource if you want to run an inventory on your household—what you already do and what you could improve on. She has a section on feeding birds and on landscaping, on being a responsible birder and on serving as an ambassador for birds. There's little Erickson doesn't touch on. A valuable addition to a bird library.

*Of a Feather: a Brief History of American Birding* by Scott Wiedensaul. (Harcourt, Inc. 2007)

Famous for his book on migration, *Living on the Wind*, Wiedensaul has written an account of the roots of bird watching in North America. He begins with the early explorers, some of whom were charged with describing the vast, abundant bird life in the New World. He mentions the contributions of Alexander Wilson and John James Audubon, of course, but also introduces the lesser-known birders, those for whom species were

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[www.wildriveraudubon.org](http://www.wildriveraudubon.org)

## Preserve Ojiketa

Hi Sue -

It is hard to believe that it is now 3 years since Camp Fire USA - Minnesota decided to sell Camp Ojiketa in Chisago City. We talked a few times at the very beginning of our effort and you expressed an interest in the preservation of the land on Green Lake. We have had many ups and downs since then but finally, we are looking at a successful end to this project.

We are now trying to raise the last \$150,000 so that The Trust for Public Land will be able to close the deal with Camp Fire in mid December. We are asking Chisago area businesses and environmentally interested groups (like yours) to help us with this final push.

Your local Audubon Society may not be able to help us financially but you may have members that would be interested in giving a tax deductible donation to this project which soon will become Ojiketa Regional Park. These 70 acres of lake shore will provide many outdoor activities to the local residents - some of which belong to your group.

We would appreciate any help that you can give us with this final push. No donation is too small to help! Check out our web site [www.ojiketa.com](http://www.ojiketa.com) for more information.

Thank you - Judy Montgomery - Ojiketa Preservation Society 715-376-4499



## Tis the Season continued from page 2

named, like Spencer Fullerton Baird (of sandpiper fame) of the Smithsonian Museum, and John Kirk Townsend, who is immortalized in the western warbler. If you've ever wondered who were LeConte, Harlan or Henslow—this book's for you.

*A Guide to the Birds of East Africa: a novel* by Nicholas Drayson (Houghton Mifflin, 2008)

This is NOT a fieldguide, but a quirky little novel set in Kenya. Birdwatching does play a role and anyone who has taken a trip to east Africa will enjoy the African birds that are described in the course of the story. A contest involving bird lists, and birding hotspots centers in the narration, but at its heart, this is a romance pitting a well-lived, honorable life against the glitz of big money.



## President's Message

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on new lifestyles that lessen our impact on the earth.

There is a continuing need for good information about the state of earth's ecosystems, and you can play a real role in gathering that information by taking part in the Christmas Bird Count. Our chapter will hold its annual CBC on December 20<sup>th</sup> and everyone is welcome. Hope to see you there!

Sue

## Breaking Records

Can we break last years record? Forty seven species were tallied on the 2007 Christmas Bird Count. More counters will help us do just that. Wild Turkeys and Ring-necked Pheasants were seen in record numbers in 2007. Most years we see less than 50 pheasants. Last year 187 were counted and Wild turkeys numbered 223. Who knows what will surprise us this year.

Perhaps we are seeing the effects of climate change. Gregory Butcher, Audubon's national director, announced that Audubon analysis accounts from decades past shows that 208 of 305 species across the nation have moved north by about 40 miles, or about a mile a year over the past 40 years. Birds now found farther north in Minnesota include: Tundra Swan, Cardinal, Red-headed Woodpecker, Bald Eagle, Wild Turkey, Merganser, Cooper's Hawk, and Gadwall.

Our 2007 species tally included Trumpeter Swan, Canada Goose, Mallard, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Bald Eagle, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough -legged Hawk, American Kestrel, Ring-necked Pheasant, Ruffed Grouse, Wild Turkey, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, Barred Owl, Great Horned Owl, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downey Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Horned Lark, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Red-breasted Nuthatch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, American Robin, Cedar Waxwing, Northern Shrike, European Starling, Northern Cardinal, American Tree Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Snow Bunting, Purple Finch, House Finch, Common Redpoll, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow. If we are lucky and persistent perhaps we can have another record-breaking year.

[www.wildriveraudubon.org](http://www.wildriveraudubon.org)

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