



Wild River Audubon Current

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President's Column

Minnesota's birds have completed another breeding season and some are already winging their way south. How quickly the time flies!

I was at the cabin a week ago and was amazed at how quiet the woods were. The warblers that had sung lustily in June were silent. But I soon noticed that the forest was, nonetheless, filled with birds. I could hear the whirl of small wings wherever I went, and when I called to them, half a dozen warblers—redstarts, Nashvilles, chestnut-sideds and others—were suddenly perched overhead, curious about the new sound.

All these birds need to eat something, and with so much "wild" land being converted to lawns and golf courses, roads and parking lots, there is less and less for them to eat. This is where Auduboners come in. We can lay a banquet in our own yards for the birds which bring us so much pleasure.

In our woods, service berries were ripe. I watched chickadee parents feeding the purple berries to a trio of fledglings, and Nashville warblers chowing down. Cedar Waxwings, jays, and robins were also feasting.

Come to our September meetings and see how you, too, can plant food for birds!

Sue



Upcoming Events

September 8 – Fall plantings to enhance your yard and attract birds and other wildlife.

October 13- Curt Mead- Dragonflies

October 24th – Bird Seed Sale in Lindstrom at the stoplight near the Holiday Station 9a.m.-noon

November 10– Peggy Callahan- Wildlife Science Center

December 8- Jeremy Kalin and Rick Olseen- Upcoming legislation and how is the new sales tax money dedicated to the environment going to be spent.

December 19th- Christmas Bird Count Meet at Chisago Lake Lutheran Church 7:30 a.m. to set up teams and areas.

**All programs are free and open to the public
Refreshments usually provided**



Important meeting for Lent Township residents

There will be a public hearing at 7:30 p.m. September 9th at the Lent Town Hall at 33155 Hemingway Avenue, Stacy, MN 55079 to review the Lent Township land use regulations. They will be making recommendations regarding zoning the power plant land to industrial. There is a chance this could make a huge difference to the Lent Township government.

This meeting is an absolutely must to go to if you live in Lent Township.



Hawk Weekend— September 11-13

The Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve in Duluth, Minnesota is one of North America's best places to experience the spectacle of the fall raptor migration. Migrating birds, including raptors and passerines, concentrate in impressive numbers at the western tip of Lake Superior. Some travel from as far away as the Arctic and pass through Duluth on their way to their wintering areas to the south. Reluctant to cross a large body of water, migrants funnel down the North Shore along the ridges that overlook the city. On a good day, visitors may see hundreds—even thousands—of birds flying by!

There are a variety of field trips, activities, and speakers all through the weekend. Check their web site www.hawkridge.org for more details.



Wild River Audubon Society

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Help count Chimney Swifts – A declining species

Volunteers throughout the state are needed to participate in Audubon Minnesota's Chimney Swift Sit for about an hour on any day September 11-13, 2009 to help us get a better idea of the distribution of Chimney Swifts in Minnesota.

Information provided by volunteers will help us identify structures used by chimney swifts and the number of birds using those structures so we can work to preserve those roosting sites. The Sit will also serve to raise awareness of the plight of these birds. Volunteers will be automatically entered in our drawing for great prizes.

Here's how it works:

- Volunteers are asked to watch for areas where swifts are feeding at dusk a few days prior to conducting the counts. (Look for a chimney, a tall shaft, or similar structure to locate where Chimney Swifts roost in your area.)
- On one of the evenings of the Swift Sit (September 11-13) observe the roost about a half hour before dusk and count or estimate the number of swifts that enter the structure.

Complete the Chimney Swift Sit form (go to the Audubon Minnesota web site for the form) and email, mail, or fax it to Ron Windingstad by September 27, 2009.

email: rwindingstad@audubon.org
by fax: 651-731-1330
by mail: Audubon Minnesota, 2357 Ventura Drive, Suite 106, St. Paul, MN 55125

- Findings will be forwarded to the Driftwood Wildlife Association to be included in their [National Swift Night Out](#). This event also gives you an opportunity to introduce folks to a wonderful spectacle during migration.

If you are unable to participate in the Sit but know where Chimney Swifts might be roosting in your area, we would appreciate that information as well. Please e-mail Ron Windingstad if you know of any active roost sites.

Tips on counting:

To count swifts it is sometimes necessary to count them in groups of five, or maybe even in groups of ten, especially when there may be 100s or even a 1,000

or more entering a single chimney in a short period of time. A hand counter is also useful in this case with each click representing five (or ten) swifts entering. An advance visit to the site a couple of days before the count will give you an idea of what to expect.

Local places where Chimney Swifts have been seen in the past are the Taylors Falls Elementary School and Chisago Lake Lutheran Church.

Information adapted from Audubon Minnesota web site



Early Bird

**Oh, if you're a bird, be an early bird
And catch the worm for your breakfast plate.
If you're a bird, be an early bird-
But if you're a worm, sleep late.**

by Shel Silverstein

Serving Up Service Berries

The plant genus *Amelanchier* contains a number of different shrub species, all producing red to purple berries that are delectable to birds. Common names include June Berry, Shad-bush, Saskatoon Berry and Service Berry. The genus is wide-spread in eastern North America, and native to Minnesota and Wisconsin, where it comprises part of the understory of shrubs in the deciduous or mixed woods.

The delicate white flowers of the service berry appear in the spring, often before leaves come out. The fruit follows; the June Berry is so-named because its fruit is ripe in early summer, but other species ripen later, through August. Some *Amelanchiers* grow to 15 to 20 feet; others, like the June Berry, are only one to ten feet tall. Most can grow in partial shade.

The *Amelanchier* shrubs support a wide-range of birds, including Evening Grosbeaks, Hairy Woodpeckers, Blue Jays, Northern Flickers, American Robins, Eastern Bluebirds, Brown Thrashers and Scarlet Tanagers. Carroll Henderson, in *Wild About Birds*, claims that 58 species dine off the service berry—making it a shrub that gets a lot of “bang for the buck.”

Fall is a great time to plant woody shrubs. Service berries can be bought at these local businesses: Landscape Alternatives near Marine on the St. Croix, Prairie Restorations in Scandia, and Outback Nursery south of Afton. Check their websites for more information.



www.wildriveraudubon.org

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