

Audubon MINNESOTA

FALL / WINTER 2016



Dear friends,

Audubon Minnesota is focusing our work on the biggest threats to birds: polluted water; habitat loss, climate change, and hazards in urban environments. I see it as ensuring that all birds flying through Minnesota make it safely to their destinations.

Our work this year restored precious acres of floodplain forest, reduced light pollution in urban areas, and engaged our network of supporters like you to pass clean energy policies at the Legislature.

You make it possible to protect birds and their habitat and to provide education and recreational opportunities for the millions of Minnesotans who care about birds. Thank you for your support, and I look forward to working with you!



Molly Pederson
Executive Director
Audubon Minnesota



You are what hope looks like to a bird

Audubon Minnesota is dedicated to protecting Minnesota's birds and the habitat that supports them. Through science, advocacy, outreach, and on-the-ground engagement, we work to inspire people to value and protect the natural world that sustains us all.

You can help build a shared future for birds and people! Your tax-deductible gift will strengthen our conservation efforts, help Minnesota birds thrive, and protect valuable habitat. Donate online at mn.audubon.org. Thank you!

Audubon Minnesota is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and has earned a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator.

AUDUBON MINNESOTA

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BIRD-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES



Bird-Friendly Communities protect birds and their habitats, introduce people to the wonder of birds, and build community resolve to protect birds and their habitat. Many migratory songbirds you may see on the prairie or in the woods make pit stops in cities and towns. Birds like the Black-and-white Warbler need our help to make urban areas a safer place for them.

Our Lights Out program encourages building managers to reduce light pollution, especially during migration. Most songbirds migrate at night and can be confused by building lights, which can disrupt migration and lead to bird-window collisions.

Also, this past year, St. Paul and Hastings were recognized as the first participants in our **Bird City Minnesota** program. These cities are taking steps to make their communities a great spot for birds to rest, feed, and nest.



THIS YEAR

-  66 Lights Out buildings
-  2 new Bird City Minnesota designations

CLIMATE ACTION

THIS YEAR



300+ community leaders support climate policies



1,208 new people engaged

Audubon Minnesota has a strong statewide, bipartisan action network. The actions that you took this year are helping to reduce energy consumption and carbon pollution. We are working with community leaders to make Minnesota a climate stronghold for climate-threatened birds, like Common Loons and American White Pelicans.

During the past year, we have reached thousands of people with the message that climate-threatened birds need us to act on climate change. We have spoken to more than 1,200 individuals, through presentations and in-person activities, about climate-related policies that help birds.

Last spring, Audubon Minnesota advocated for a bill setting standards for native plant habitat at solar energy facilities. The bill passed with nearly unanimous support in both houses. With about 4,500 acres of new solar installations planned over the next year, this could make a big difference for birds. As we prepare for the 2017 legislative session, the people we have reached will be critical for acting on behalf of birds.

Many new people will also be participating in Audubon's Christmas Bird Count and other monitoring efforts. These events bring the community together around birds, and results from events have been used in reports such as *The Audubon Birds & Climate Change Report* and the *State of the Birds Report* by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Funding for Audubon Minnesota's climate program is provided by The McKnight Foundation.



Katie Burns, Outreach Coordinator, and Brad Johnson, volunteer and retired Conservation Officer, participated in the 2015 Christmas Bird Count.

WATER FOR BIRDS & PEOPLE



Funding for Audubon Minnesota's clean water program is provided by Aveda, The McKnight Foundation, the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR), and the Outdoor Heritage Fund as recommended by the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC).



This summer, teens designed a mural with imagery that tells the story of living in a "River City" within the Mississippi Flyway.

THIS YEAR



130 acres of floodplain forest restored



1,123 volunteer hours

Minnesota is defined by our relationship with water.

We encourage communities to prevent water pollution and we help them clean up polluted waters by protecting and restoring critical wetlands, river systems, and floodplain forests. Clean water means healthy birds and healthy people.

Every year, Audubon Minnesota volunteers generously spend their time and energy implementing successful clean water-focused projects that benefit birds.

Results from the **Minnesota Marshbird Survey** - collected mostly from skilled volunteers - will help target wetland restoration efforts.

Other volunteers restore floodplain forests by **planting trees and pulling invasive plants in Important Bird Areas**, which creates healthy habitat and improves water quality.



LEAD-FREE PUBLIC LANDS AND WATERS



As conservationists, we all need to work to remove lead from the environment to protect birds from lead poisoning. Scientific research has shown the devastating results when birds accidentally ingest toxic lead shot. If a duck, raptor, goose, or swan swallows just one or two pellets of lead, it can be lethal.

Last year, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) proposed a rule change that would stop the deposit of lead onto the majority of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). We support the rule change because it would protect many WMAs within Important Bird Areas and WMAs that include or are adjacent to wetlands.

As a result of Audubon Minnesota action alerts and your willingness to speak out, more than 1,000 messages were sent directly to DNR officials and legislators in support of lead-free public lands and waters.

Then, earlier this year, legislation was introduced that could have halted progress on this issue. Again, we asked for your help and your voice made a difference, allowing the rulemaking process to move forward.

As the DNR works to finalize the rule change next year, we'll need you to advocate for the use of nontoxic ammunition on WMAs.

If you hunt or if you have family and friends who hunt, ask them to use nontoxic shot to reduce unnecessary bird deaths. Learn more about this issue by visiting mn.audubon.org or watching for updates in Audubon Minnesota eNews.

Photo above: Tundra Swans benefit from lead-free public lands and waters.

PLANTS FOR BIRDS

The biggest threats to birds include impaired waters, disappearing habitat, a changing climate, and hazards in urban environments. Fortunately, planting native plants can address all of those issues. Native plants require less long-term maintenance, reducing the need for fertilizer and pesticides. Native plants also help conserve and filter water while beautifying our yards. Finally, these plants serve as natural bird feeders, even in the winter.

We have engaged more than a thousand local students in native plant activities such as seed collection and prairie planting. We are working with partners to identify and grow even more opportunities to educate and engage people in native plant projects that help birds thrive.



MIDWINTER MASTERPIECE

Photo and Text by Rebecca Field

Pine Grosbeaks can usually be seen in the Sax-Zim Bog in January, as can a number of other boreal species. On this particular frigid January day in 2014, I found a flock of Pine Siskins in a berry-laden tree in the friendly little town of Meadowlands on the southern edge of Sax-Zim.



I have always loved being out in nature, and bird photography allows me the combination of enjoying nature – birds in particular – and being interactive with it. As fellow bird-watchers and photographers well know, birds rarely sit still. Bird photography often requires fast thinking, fast shutter speeds, and a good working knowledge of the subject species as well as one's camera equipment. Birds accommodate anyone in an endless pursuit of knowledge, and bird photography is a challenging endeavor that keeps one humble.