



Zumbro Valley Audubon



CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE

Vol. 39 No. 2 Rochester, MN

Nov/Dec 2014

Upcoming Audubon Programs Tuesdays at Quarry Hill Nature Center

Nov 25th - International Owl Center



Karla Bloem, a.k.a. "The Owl Lady," is the Executive Director of the International Owl Center in Houston, MN. She lives and

works with Alice, a permanently disabled Great Horned Owl who forever changed her life when she came to live with Karla.

The close relationship between Karla and Alice has led to an in-depth vocal study on Great Horned Owls, an annual International Festival of Owls, and the development of an International Owl Center in Houston, MN.

Karla's owl adventures have taken her to testify before the Minnesota House and Senate environment committees to gain protection for Great Horned Owls, to the Netherlands, Germany, Argentina, and Italy to present her research, and won her a Bush Leadership Fellowship. She has also assisted the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, author Stan Tekiela and British filmmaker Fergus Beeley with various owl projects.

Karla will bring along one or more of her feathered co-workers to talk about the International Owl Center and how they plan to fulfill their mission of making the world a better place for owls through education and research.

Christmas Bird Count!

Join us Saturday December 20 for the annual Rochester Christmas Bird Count. Zumbro Valley Audubon members work in teams to scout Rochester and the surrounding area for early winter birds. You do not need to be a bird expert. Actually, it's a great way to learn about new birds. Counting is done from the warmth of cars or on short hikes.

We typically find over 50 species and frequently turn up an unusual bird or two! We need and appreciate feeder reports as well as field participants. Our numbers are reported to National Audubon and added to a CBC database that has been collected annually for over 100 years!

We will meet 7:15 a.m. at the west Silver Lake parking lot, near the fire station. Lunch and a mid-day tally will be held at Quarry Hill Nature Center from noon to 1 p.m. Bring your own lunch. A light meal and final tally will be held at Quarry Hill Nature Center at 4:45 p.m. Hot soup is provided; bring something to share.

To submit a feeder report, download a report form from the ZVAS web site, www.zumbrovalleyaudubon.org, or call Clifford Hansen at 281-0249 to have a paper form mailed to you. Thank you for your participation!

For even more bird counting fun, Whitewater State Park will hold its annual CBC on Jan 1st from 8 AM to noon. They moved their count circle south this year to include the city of St. Charles and Carley State Park. Feeder reports are also needed. For more information call Whitewater park at 507-932-3007.

ZVAS Officers

President Joel Dunnette
 V.Pres.. Sandy Hokanson
 Secretary Cliff Hansen
 Treasurer Joyce Grier

Board Members

Bill Bruins
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 Dave Moehnke
 Carrie Nelson
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 Lance Vrieze
 Ruthann Yaeger

Minnesota Birding Information:

www.birding-minnesota.com

About Our Organization

ZVAS meets at Quarry Hill Nature Center every 4th Tuesday of the month. Socializing starts at 6:45 pm followed by a program at 7:00. Everyone is welcome.

This Newsletter is published from Sept through May. Copy deadline is the 1st Tuesday of the month of publication. All submissions are subject to editing or revision.

Send as documents to yegrnaturenut@gmail.com. or typed to: Ruthann Yaeger, c/o ZVAS, PO Box 6244, Rochester, MN 55903-6244

Please do not send items in PDF format

CALENDAR OF EVENTS**Nov 22, Sat - Tundra Swan Trip**

Meet at the east side parking lot of the Heintz Center in Rochester at 8 AM to car pool. Travel thru La Crescent and down the Mississippi to Brownsville to see THOUSANDS of Tundra Swans and other waterfowl. Trip will return early afternoon. Bring your own lunch or eat at a Subway sandwich shop before returning to Rochester. Trip leaders are Terry & Joyce Grier.

Nov 25, Tues – Karla Bloem, The Owl Lady

Update on International Owl Center, Alice the owl, and much more. See pg. 1

Dec 6, Sat – The Nuthatch Bird Walk

Quarry Hill Nature Center 9 AM Led by Terry & Joyce Grier

Dec 20, Sat – Christmas Bird Count - Counters needed! See front page**Jan 3, Sat – The Cardinal Bird Walk**

Quarry Hill Nature Center 9 AM, Led by Terry & Joyce Grier

Jan 17, Sat 2015 – Golden Eagle Survey

The Wintering Golden Eagle Survey of the Bluffs and Coulee Region of the Upper Mississippi River Watershed, the National Eagle Center will be Saturday, January 17th. The National Eagle Center will hold several golden eagle training sessions before the count to help people gain ID skills for the count. People who have questions on the count, want to participate in the count or want to find out more about the field trips can contact Scott Mehus. E-mail - scott@nationaleaglecenter.org or visit the web site at nationaleaglecenter.org

Jan 27, Tues - The Latest on Prairie Restoration

Quarry Hill Nature Center, 7 PM

Scott Leddy of Meadowlark Restorations, a non-profit organization working to restore, document, educate, and preserve the last remaining natural areas in Southeast Minnesota's Paleozoic Plateau will discuss their efforts to restore our last natural areas to their pre-European settlement conditions.

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Thank you!

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The Good Old Days? *By Joel Dunnette*



Photo credit: wildobs.com

I came south for the winter for THIS?!? – what one Junco said to the other.

Last winter's exceptional cold tests human's ability to stay warm. But there are birds who come to our area in winter to escape the worse cold and lack of food in the far north. Juncos, Tree Sparrows, Snow Buntings and others show up in our area only in late fall and disappear north by spring. What do they find when they come to SE MN?

Usually they find somewhat milder weather. In years past, they probably found the prairies, scrublands, savanna and marshes much more to their liking than they do in 2014. Now they find bare cropland over most of the area. Brushy, weedy, seed-filled areas are few and far between. Hundreds of years ago, but just a blink in the grand scheme of things, they found wild land over 20 to 100 times as many acres. Even if their breeding territory is intact (which it is not), their wintering area cannot support any where near the populations that must have been here historically.

I wonder if Juncos tell tales of yesteryear – the good old days.

When a House is not a Home

By Joel Dunnette

We humans often consider our house to be the same as our home. But that is not at all true for birds. While a few birds do use enclosed structures for a part of their life, even those generally move to another 'home' at least annually. The vast majority of birds spend only a tiny part of each year at a temporary nest. And all birds spend nearly all their waking hours out and about, mostly finding food, but also socializing, hiding from predators and moving to new places.

To make it through a year, birds need a lot more than a place to sleep. With few exceptions, they have no refrigerator or pantry from which to get their next meal. They must go out into potentially dangerous areas to find, catch and consume what food they need. Birds must depend on their instincts and training to know what to eat, and how to eat it, with no food labels, no cookbooks, and no 'best by' dates!

Birds have no toilets or washing facilities in their houses. They have to find places 'in the neighborhood'. And while there, they cannot rely on police or custom to keep them safe. They have to be on the lookout for other creatures that consider them edible.

When it gets bitterly cold, we stay indoors, put on more clothes or blankets, and rely on fossil fuel for heat. What can birds do when the polar vortex brings the arctic to MN?

So, does the neighborhood you and your fellow humans provide a decent home for birds? You may provide food in winter, but how about baby bird food (insects)? Do you provide water and shelter of various kinds for the wide range of birds?

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Stop in and check out all our new items!
Saving the world, one backyard at a time



Blackburnian warbler photo credit: GETTY images

If we want to be good neighbors to birds, we should consider *all* of the many needs of their lives.

ZUMBRO VALLEY AUDUBON SOCIETY
PO Box 6244
ROCHESTER, MN 55903-6244

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U.S. Postage
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Permit Number 306

Our Mission

To bring environmental awareness, appreciation and advocacy to the community by:

- supporting environmental education of our youth.
- developing an appreciation and awareness by the public of the natural world.
- advocating efforts of individuals and community leaders to pursue environmentally positive activities and policies.
- encouraging members to participate in decision-making processes concerning environmental issues.

ZUMBRO VALLEY AUDUBON

4

NOV/DEC 2014

National Audubon Society

Chapter Membership Application
(Not for renewal)

Yes, I'd like to join!

My check for \$20 is enclosed. Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and Zumbro Valley Audubon Society. Please send Audubon Magazine, the ZVAS Newsletter, and my membership card right away to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

C/S/Z: _____

Make checks payable to National Audubon Society.

Send to:

National Audubon Society
PO Box 422250
Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250

Zumbro Valley Audubon Society's
chapter code: COZM140Z

Be Part of an Important History!

Want to learn where the winter birds can be found in Rochester? Join us for the annual Christmas Bird Count - a National Audubon tradition that goes back 115 years.

Counting is done from the warmth of cars or on very short walks. New half-day and full-day participants are welcome. Expertise is not necessary.

Don't want to go outside? Count birds you see at your feeder and send us the list. For additional information, see page 1.

Collins Feed & Seed Center

Time to stock up for winter. Birds are busy fattening up for migration and winter. They need lots of energy and we have just the right food for your birds.

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