

Zumbro Valley Audubon

CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH NATURE

Vol. 38 No. 2 Rochester, MN Oct/Nov 2013

Upcoming Audubon Programs at Quarry Hill Nature Center, 7 PM

Oct 22, Tues – Animals of Antarctica



Photo credit unavailable

Michelle LaRue – Research Fellow at the Polar Geospatial Center with the U. of MN, will discuss her research involving the use of high-resolution satellite imagery to study Antarctic marine mammal and bird populations, and how changes in sea ice may affect their populations. She currently uses GIS and remote sensing to monitor population status and abundance of Emperor Penguins and Weddell seals.

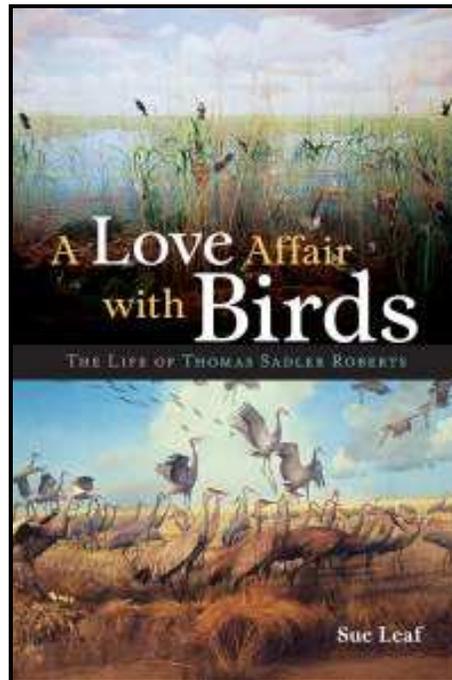
As a research fellow at PGC, her responsibilities range widely from analyzing remotely-sensed imagery, to supporting logistics, operations, and planners, to mentoring students, and collaborating with Antarctic researchers worldwide. She is also PGC's team lead in the field, so is responsible for planning, organizing, and conducting field work in the Dry Valleys every year.

This topic is especially relevant with the rapid melting of our sea ice worldwide. Check out the web-site <http://www.agic.umn.edu/>.

Nov 26, Tues - Love Affair with Birds

A Love Affair with Birds is the first full biography of Thomas Sadler Roberts. Bird enthusiast, doctor, author, curator, educator, conservationist: every chapter in Roberts's life is also a chapter in the state's history, and in his story acclaimed author Sue Leaf—an avid bird enthusiast and nature lover herself—captures a true Minnesota character and his time.

Carrol Henderson, Nongame Wildlife Program supervisor of the Minnesota DNR states: "For those of us who spend a lifetime helping preserve and encourage the conservation of birdlife, one of the greatest gifts we can receive



is the chance to enter the 'conservation time machine' provided by books like Sue Leaf's *A Love Affair with Birds*."

Join us to hear Sue speak about how she came to write this important book and give us more insights into this man's life.

Please see Clifford Hansen's review of this book on pg. 3.

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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

Oct 22, Tues – Antarctica, the Animals who Live There Quarry Hill Nature Center 7 PM See front page.

Nov 2, Sat – The Kinglet Bird Walk, Quarry Hill Nature Center 9 AM led by Terry & Joyce Grier

Nov 23, Sat - Tundra Swan Trip - Meet at the east side parking lot of the Heintz Center in Rochester at 8am to car pool. We will 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 26, Tues - Quarry Hill Nature Center 7 PM – A Love Affair with Birds See front page.

Dec 7, Sat – The Nuthatch Bird Walk, Quarry Hill Nature Center 9 AM led by Terry & Joyce Grier

Dec 14, Sat -Christmas Bird Count—Be a Citizen Scientist and join us for the 114th Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count.

With Gratitude and Condolences

Many sincere thanks to the family of W. Eugene Miller for their very generous donations to Zumbro Valley Audubon. Mr. Miller was a lover of birds, kept a run of bluebird houses and claimed that he spent more money on bird food than on his own food. He passed away on July 23rd, 2013.

You can always donate to ZVAS at:



Visit us at:

www.zumbrovalleyaudubon.org or Like us on Facebook!

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Amazing Bird Facts

Compiled by Cornell Lab of Ornithology & Simon Perkins

- ◆ The largest bird in the world is the Ostrich, 8-9 feet tall and weighing as much as 350 pounds. This African species is flightless, but can run at speeds of 40 mph. Their eggs can weigh 3 pounds.
- ◆ The fastest flying bird, and one we have nesting here in Rochester, is the Peregrine Falcon that can attain an air speed of 200 mph as it makes its dive to capture its avian prey. The White-throated swift claims that title if you count only actual flight and not diving.
- ◆ The Emperor Penguin performs the deepest underwater dives - down 900 feet in the seas off of Antarctica.
- ◆ While most of our small song birds have short life spans, the longest living species recorded by the USGS is a Laysan Albatross at sixty years old as of 2011.
- ◆ Researchers have discovered that the Sooty Shearwater travels about 40,000 miles every year, twice as far as the estimated journey for an Arctic Tern, often said to have the longest migration of any bird (24,000 miles round trip Arctic to the Antarctic).
- ◆ A Bar-tailed Godwit was tracked as the longest known non-stop migration. She had flown for 8 days—nonstop—covering approximately 7,250 miles at an average speed of nearly 35 miles per hour.
- ◆ The highest documented bird flight was a group of Bar-headed geese seen and heard crossing the Himalayas at 29,000 ft.

A Love Affair With Birds *by Clifford Hansen*

Sue Leaf's book [A Love Affair With Birds](#) (University of Minnesota Press, 2013) is a biography of the life of Thomas Sadler Roberts. Roberts lived from 1858 to 1946 and is best known as the author of the two-volume work [The Birds of Minnesota](#) (1932, revised 1936) and as director of what eventually became the Bell Museum of Natural History.

Roberts moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota as a boy with his family in 1867. Minnesota was a frontier state, and its bird life was rich. Family circumstances were such that Roberts was able to develop a strong interest in birds, which in that era included collecting specimens with a shotgun and preserving their skins.

Roberts pursued a medical career, serving as physician and becoming the trusted friend of many wealthy families in Minneapolis. In 1915, after 29 years of full-time practice, he retired and accepted an unpaid position at the University of Minnesota as professor of ornithology and associate curator of the zoology museum. But about 25 families retained him as their physician, and he continued to make patient visits for much of the rest of his life.

It's not clear when Roberts first decided to write the definitive book on the birds of Minnesota. Sue Leaf's book mentions a letter from Henry Nachtrieb (Roberts's future boss at the University) in 1893 that refers to the project. The actual writing took place from 1925 to 1932, years later. [The Birds of Minnesota](#) describes 327 species and is noted for its beautiful color illustrations created by six wildlife artists, including Walter Breckenridge, whom Roberts hired as a museum taxidermist in 1926.

Roberts oversaw the construction of the current Bell Museum building from 1938 to 1940. James Ford Bell was the son of James Stroud Bell, CEO of the Washburn-Crosby Company (predecessor to General Mills) and one of Dr. Roberts's patients. Roberts accompanied the Bell family on a three-month cruise off Florida in 1914, when the elder Bell was in ill-health. James Ford Bell donated \$150,000 of the \$272,000 cost of the

Cont'd on pg 4

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National Audubon Society

Chapter Membership Application
(Not for renewal)

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Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250

Zumbro Valley Audubon Society's
chapter code: COZM140Z

A Love Affair with Birds, *cont'd*

building and was actively involved in planning the dioramas.

Sue Leaf's biography goes into many other details of Roberts's long and rich life. Former ZVAS member Dr. Alden Risser is briefly mentioned as a student in Roberts's 1930 ornithology class. She discusses Roberts's dismay over the decline in Minnesota bird life he observed during his life-time as the state became settled. One can only guess how he would react to the conditions of our own time.

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