Wild Birds and Birding in Minnesota

MEDIA GUIDE



Basic information about birds in Minnesota and the 1.8 million Minnesotans who spend over \$360 million each year watching them.

PLUS the names and telephone numbers of birders throughout the state who can answer your birding questions.

The 1994-95 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment

The 1994-95 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment is the latest in a series of National Recreation Surveys conducted by the Federal Government since the first one was done for the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission in 1960. This latest National Survey was an interagency and private sector partnership. Sponsors were the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, Economic Research Service, the National Park Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Comparability in activity participation, favorite activities, constraints and demographics were maintained for comparison with earlier surveys done in 1960, 1965 and 1982-83. Approximately 17,000 individuals 16 years and older were surveyed in quarterly samples between January 1994 and April 1995.

You will see from the figures below that bird watching grew at a much faster rate during this 12-year period than any other listed recreational activity. Fishing and hunting participants declined, as did participants for golf, sailing, ice skating, and horseback riding. **Bird watching increased by 155 percent, growing from 21.2 million participants in 1982-83 to just over 54 million in 1994-95.** The only other actitivity to realize a gain anywhere near bird watching was hiking, participants for which increased by 93.5 percent.

Table 7: Number and percent change of persons 16 years and older participating in outdoor recreation by activity, comparing 1982-83 NRS and 1994-95 NSRE estimates

	Participants	Percent	Participants	Percent
	in millions	participating	in millions	change
Activity	1982-83		1994-95	
Bicycling	56.5	28.7 %	57.4	UP 1.6%
Horseback Riding	15.9	7.1%	14.3	down 10.1%
Golf	30.0	10.0%	21.2	down 29.3%
Outdoor Tm Spts	42.4	26.4%	53.0	UP 25.0%
Boating	49.5	29.0%	58.1	UP 17.4%
Sailing	10.6	4.8%	9.6	down 9.4%
Motorboating	33.6	23.5%	47.0	UP 39.9%
Water Skiing	15.9	8.9%	17.9	UP 12.6%
Swim/pool	76.0	44.2%	88.5	UP 16.4%
Swim/river/lake/ocean	56.5	39.0%	78.1,	UP 38.2%
Fishing	60.1	28.9%	57.8	down 3.8%
Hunting	21.2	9.3%	18.6	down 12.3%
Hiking	24.7	23.8%	47.8	UP 93.5%
Walking	93.6	66.7%	133.7	UP 42.8%
Running/ Jogging	45.9	26.2%	52.5	UP 14.4%
Bird Watching	21.2	27.0%	54.1	UP 155.2%
Picnicking	84.8	49.1%	98.3	UP 15.9%
Sightseeing	81.3	56.6%	113.4	UP 39.5%
Off-Road Driving	19.4	13.9%	27.9	UP 43.8%
Ice Skating	10.6	5.2%	10.5	down 0.9%
Downhill Skiing	10.6	8.4%	16.8	UP 58.5%
Cross-Country Skiing	5.3	3.3%	6.5	UP 22.6%
Snow-mobiling	5.3	3.5%	7.1	UP 34.0%
Sledding	17.7	10.2%	20.5	UP 15.8%
Camping (overall)	42.4	26.3%	52.8	UP 24.5%
Developed Area	30.0	20.7%	41.5	UP 38.3%
Primitive Area	17.7	14.0%	28.0	UP 58.2%
Backpacking	8.8	7.6 %	15.2	UP 72.7%
Attend Sports Event	70.7	47.5%	95.2	UP 34.7%
Outdoor Concert/Play	44.2	34.2 %	68.4	UP 54.7%

Percent change is calculated by dividing the difference in number of participants, between the 82-83 and 94-95 surveys, by the number of participants in 1982-83.

Note: Between the 1982-83 NRS and the 1994-95 NSRE, the population 16 and over grew by 13.4% from an estimated 176,653,000 in 1982 to 200,335,000 in 1995

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The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union thanks The Question Club of Minneapolis, All Seasons Wild Bird Stores, National Camera and Video Exchange, and American Agco for their generous support of this project.

Birds are big business.

Wild birds are big business in Minnesota. How big? Well over \$360 million a year spent by almost two million people interested in birds.

According to a 1991 survey by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1,953,000 persons in Minnesota participated in wildlife activities. Of that 1.9 million, 95 percent (1.81 million) wanted to see birds. **That means there are more birders in Minnesota than there are hunters and fishermen combined.**

Money spent birding included \$180 million on food, lodging, and transportation, and another \$180 million on gear and equipment. Please note that these 1991 numbers have grown significantly in the past six years with the growth in popularity of birding. Allowing for a 10 percent annual growth rate in this industry, it is safe to say that birding and other non-consumptive wildlife activities account for more than \$500 million in annual expenditures in Minnesota. **Half a billion dollars is big business.**

Minnesota residents spent \$100 million in 1995 for wild-bird feed. Wild-bird feed sales here are increasing at a rate of eight to 10 percent per year. Birding is second only to gardening as the most rapidly growing leisure interest in the country. The number of bird-watchers grew by 155 percent from 1983 to 1995, according to the most recent government survey. Ellen Graham of the Wall Street Journal recently quoted Sharper Image founder and chairman Richard Thalheimer as saying, "My marketers tell me that bird-watching is the single biggest spectator sport in America."

Birding enthusiasts nationally spent \$5.2 billion in 1991 on bird observation, photography, and feeding, according to a study by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. Census Bureau. Bird hunters spent only \$1.3 billion.

In 1992 it was estimated by USFWS that U.S. citizens spent about \$2 billion per year for wild-bird food and another \$470 million for bird feeders and nest boxes. Since this figure is growing at a rate of eight to 10 percent per year, this year, 1997, national expenditures could come close to \$3.9 billion for feed and feeders alone.

Some facts about Minnesota outdoor activities

- Number of bird-watchers 1,810,000
- Number of fishermen 1,109,000
- Number of hunters 452,000
- Money spent by bird-watchers 1991 \$345,333,000
- Money spent by hunters 1991 \$289,690,000
- Money spent by fishermen 1991 \$846,246,000
- Number of retail stores in Minnesota that focus sales strictly on wild-bird feed and bird-related merchandise — 28.
- Jobs provided in Minnesota by bird-related businesses: 2,910. (Birding supported 234,000 jobs across the nation in 1991.)

(These numbers come from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.)

In the last 10 years in Minnesota, over two dozen wild-bird specialty stores have opened. Many garden centers, hardware stores, supermarkets, country elevators, and farm-supply stores also have created wild-bird sections to supply an ever-increasing demand for field guides, bird feeders, bird food, bird baths, and related equipment.

Surveys find about 60 percent of birders are male, 40 percent female. For comparison, 92 percent of hunters and 69 percent of fishing fans are male.

Birding as an economic factor in tourism

The chambers of commerce in Thief River Falls and Winona advertise local birding opportunities in a variety of national birding magazines. And Minnesota has a number of people who earn their living guiding birders on trips to many parts of the state. Birders come here from throughout the United States and from foreign countries to see our special birds, even during the heart of our worst winters.

But generally, Minnesota birding tourism is in its infancy. Little has been done to advertise the full extent of wildlife tourism opportunities in Minnesota. The huge Minnesota resort industry is just beginning to recognize the potential that bird-watchers offer. For many years, Duluth has hosted a birding festival — Hawk Weekend — centered at the Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve on Skyline Drive. Hundreds of people attend this event each year, and hundreds more come to Hawk Ridge from late August through November to watch migrating raptors. The state's second full-fledged birding festival is planned for Detroit Lakes in May 1997, centering around Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge.

What is the economic potential for birders and eco-tourism? At the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge in Kansas 17,000 visiting birders spent \$1 million locally in 1995. At Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in Texas, the annual

expenditure by visitors the same year was more than \$14 million. Birders were worth from \$25 to \$160 per visit to communities near these refuges.

In 1992, the Houston Audubon Society determined that the economic contribution to the local economy by birders visiting its High Island Sanctuary exceeded \$2.5 million. Of this, \$2.4 million came from non-local birders. If you apply an economic multiplier to calculate the rollover effect from these tourism dollars, the impact grows to between \$4 million and \$6 million per year. And the season for birding tourists at High Island lasts only two months!

Birds as an economic factor in state forests

Healthy forests are important to the Minnesota economy. Forestry and forest products provide over 54,000 jobs here and \$2.2 billion in personal income. Forest birds are important to this sector of our economy. For example, forest birds, mostly warblers, help control populations of spruce budworm and may lengthen the time between destructive budworm outbreaks. Duluth author Jan Green in her 1995 book "Birds and Forests: A Management and Conservation Guide," wrote, "In the only study that put a dollar amount on the value of songbird predation on insects, the calculation showed a positive economic benefit: \$1,820 per year per square kilometer (\$4,720 per year per square mile) for predation by birds on the western spruce budworm." If one were to play a small numbers game you could generate the following statistic: Minnesota has approximately 16.7 million acres of forest, 14.7 million acres classified as commercial timberland. The are 640 acres in a square mile. That gives us 22,969 square miles of Minnesota forest. Forest birds, then, contribute over \$108 million each year toward the health of our forest industries.

Why is Minnesota such a good birding state?

Minnesota is located where western prairies meet boreal forest and southeastern river-valley ecology. These three major habitat types give Minnesota a significant and highly varied bird population: 421 different species of birds have been recorded here, about half of those recorded for all of North America.

Northern and east-central Minnesota lie in a narrow forest belt (that stretches from the New England states across the Great Lakes) that supports a higher diversity of breeding songbirds than anywhere else in the United States and southern Canada. Minnesota's extensive forest region is considered by leading ornithologists as one of only four remaining areas in the United States where the long-term conservation of forest birds can be accomplished. (The other three areas are the extensive forests of Maine, the Great Smoky mountains, and the Adirondacks.)

The American Birding Association asked its members to list the species of North American birds they most wanted to see. Of the top 12 species listed, six can be found in Minnesota: Boreal Owl, Great Gray Owl, Connecticut Warbler, Northern Hawk-Owl, Yellow Rail, Snowy Owl. Gyrfalcon, another highly sought bird, also can be found in Minnesota most winters.

The official list of bird species recorded in Minnesota stands at 421. Of that number, 305 species can be found in the state on a regular, annual basis. About 260 species nest here. For a list of bird species regulary seen in Minnesota, see page 21.

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Events and dates

March • Eagle watch, first weekend, Winona (annual).

May • Detroit Lakes Festival of Birds, May 16-18, 1997, Detroit Lakes and Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge (annual).

August 1997 • American Ornithologists' Union annual meeting, Aug. 12-16, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis campus.

September • Hawk Weekend: The middle weekend of September, Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, Duluth (annual).

November • Tundra Swan Watch, first weekend of November, Winona, sponsored by Winona Visitors and Convention Bureau (annual).

December • Christmas Bird Counts: Usually mid-month Saturday. Many of these are held each year throughout the state as part of a historic national bird census.

December • Minnesota Ornithologists' Union Paper Session and Annual Meeting: The first Saturday of December, Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis campus (annual).

Month-by-month birding in Minnesota

January • All birders return to "go." This is the month for true Minnesota species, but interesting visitors occur: Snowy and Great Gray owls, Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, Redpolls, and Tree Sparrows, among others.

February • Beginning of spring migration. Horned Larks are first returnees. Great Horned Owls are incubating eggs.

March • Waterfowl begin to return to the state. Bald Eagles follow open water north.

April • Early in month, shorebird migration. Late in month, the first of Minnesota's summer birds are arriving.

May • The huge push north of migrants and Minnesota nesters. This is the

busiest month on a birder's calendar, the month for "big days"* and birdathons.

June • Majority of resident nesters on territory and courting.

July • Beginning of fall migration, first shorebirds moving south.

August • More shorebirds and some raptors begin moving south.

September • Serious fall migration of our nesting species. Movement of swallows and nighthawks. Peak migration for smaller raptors.

October • Larger raptors moving south. First winter finches arrive. The single best month for finding rare and unusual birds here.

November • Last of ducks moving out of state. Swans gathering on Mississippi River near Winona are at peak numbers. Bald Eagles numbers peaking in migration.

December • Christmas Bird Counts. The final migrants leave. If northern owls invade the state, this is one of the months when they will be in evidence (also November and January).

*See page 19-21 for an explanation of what a "big day" is and for a list of "big-day" records in Minnesota.

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17 good places to look for birds in Minnesota

Here is a short list of 17 places in Minnesota where birding can be very exciting and rewarding. This is not meant to be a complete list by any definition. It is but a beginning. The most popular guide book to Minnesota birding, "A Birder's Guide to Minnesota," lists over 800 individual locations.

1. Roseau Bog (Roseau County)

This area, and the Lost River State Forest just to the east, are good birding spots for species such as nesting Wilson's Phalarope and Sharp-tailed Sparrow. In winter look for a possible Gyrfalcon, Northern Hawk Owl, Snowy Owl and winter finches. Resident birds include Great Gray Owl, Black-backed Woodpecker, Gray Jay, and Boreal Chickadee.

2. Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge (Marshall County)

A large, expansive refuge good at all times of the year, this is one of north-western Minnesota's most interesting birding areas. Look for Yellow Rail, Sand-hill Crane, Franklin's Gull, Sedge Wren, and Mourning Warbler. Agassiz is also an excellent place to bird during migration, especially for shorebirds.

3. Felton Prairie (Clay County)

Famous for its nesting Chestnut-collared Longspurs, Felton is also a good spot to look for prairie birds such as Swainson's Hawk, Upland Sandpiper, Marbled

Godwit, Sedge Wren, Loggerhead Shrike, and numerous sparrows. Several tracts owned by the Nature Conservancy are located in this general area as well.

4. Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge (Becker County)

Here is an interesting area in the northwest to look for woodland and boreal species. Great Gray Owl, Ruffed Grouse, Golden-winged Warbler, and Mourning Warbler are species that can be found here.

5. Itasca State Park (Clearwater and Hubbard counties)

While this park is not noted for having specific Minnesota specialties, it is nonetheless a park with a great variety of northern species, and therefore good birding in general. Look for Common Loon, Northern Goshawk, Alder Flycatcher, Winter Wren, warblers, and, in winter, finches.

6. Sax-Zim Bog (St. Louis County)

Some say this is *the* place to bird in Minnesota. Indeed, species difficult to find elsewhere are often much easier in "the bog." Upland Sandpiper, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Great Gray Owl, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Boreal Chickadee, Gray Jay, Connecticut Warbler, and LeConte's Sparrow nest here. In winter look for Snowy Owl, Northern Hawk Owl, Northern Shrike, Snow Bunting, crossbills, and redpolls.

7. Gunflint Trail (Cook County)

Nowhere else are Black-backed Woodpecker or Boreal Owl found more often. The trail is actually a road — County Road 12 — which wanders north from Lake Superior for about 50 miles. Other species to watch for include Spruce Grouse, Northern Saw-whet Owl, and Boreal Chickadee.

8. Aitkin County Road 18 (Aitkin County)

One of the better roads for finding specialties such as Sharp-tailed Grouse, Great Gray Owl, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, and Boreal Chickadee. Also a good drive in winter for Snow Buntings and winter finches.

9. McGregor Marsh (Aitkin County)

This is the best known spot in Minnesota for nesting Yellow Rails and Sharptailed Sparrows. Arrive well after dark and listen for each of their distinctive calls — the rail's clicking sounds and the sparrow's dry wheezing. Look and listen especially on the east side of Minnesota Highway 65.

10. Rothsay Wildlife Management Area (Wilkin County)

Greater Prairie-Chickens nest here, and nowhere in the state are they easier to find. Also look for Marbled Godwit, Prairie Falcon, and, in migration, flocks of Sandhill Crane and Smith's and Lapland Longspurs. Also an excellent place to find migrating Short-eared Owl.

11. Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge (Sherburne County)

Sherburne has a varied habitat and therefore a variety of possible species. In summer, look for Sandhill Crane, Eastern Screech-Owl, Whip-poor-will, and Golden-winged Warbler. In winter Barred Owls, Snow Buntings, White-winged and Red Crossbills, and Common Redpolls are likely.

12. Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area (Anoka/Chisago counties)

Over 2,000 acres of marshland, lakes and swamp convenient to the Twin Cities, Carlos Avery is best visited in migration when the shorebirds come through, usually in large numbers. Species typically found in summer include Sandhill Crane, Sedge Wren, and Golden-winged Warbler.

13. Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge (Big Stone/Lac Qui Parle counties)

Big Stone has lakes, pools, meadows, fields, woods, and marshes. Take the auto tour road (best by bicycle) to find water birds, prairie birds, and woodland birds. This is a park that is best visited in migration or early summer. Western vagrants are always a good possibility, and there are many good nesting species here as well. Watch also for Cattle Egret, Swainson's Hawk, Marbled Godwit, Sedge Wrens, and many sparrows.

14. Salt Lake (Lac Qui Parle County)

Every spring as many as 300 birders from around the state make the trip to Salt Lake for a long birding weekend. A good place in high water times for migrating grebes and ducks; in low water years it can be exceptional for shorebirds.

15. Blue Mounds State Park (Rock County)

A habitat most unlike the rest of Minnesota, the park has cactus, a herd of buffalo, and a feel to it more like states found farther west. So it is not surprising that Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Western Kingbird, Say's Phoebe, and Mountain Bluebird have been seen here. And nowhere in the state is the Blue Grosbeak easier to find.

16. Whitewater Wildlife Management Area (Winona County)

Simply a beautiful area with steep ravine walls, groves of eastern red cedar, and a winding gravel road, Whitewater is promising any time of year. In winter one can usually find a soaring Golden Eagle overhead or a Red-shouldered Hawk in the nearby trees.

17. Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve (St. Loius County)

Located in east Duluth, Hawk Ridge provides some of North America's best autumn hawk watching. From August until December, counters are at the ridge from morning until night recording every raptor passing by. During the fall, migrating hawks concentrate in impressive numbers at the western tip of Lake Superior. Reluctant to cross a large body of water, the hawks, migrating from as far away as the Arctic, heading for wintering areas as distant as South America, funnel down the North Shore along the bluffs at Duluth. Here the

Books about Minnesota birds and birding

Minnesota is fortunate to have a rich and valuable birding literature. Here are summaries of books which would form the basis for a good Minnesota birding library.

The Birds of Minnesota, 1932, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Thomas S. Roberts. The original and still definitive work on Minnesota's birds. This large, two-volume work includes 820 pages of authoritative text, 92 color plates by Alan Brooks, George Miksch Sutton, Walter A. Weber, Francis Lee Jaques, Walter Breckenridge, and Louis Agassiz Fuertes, plus over 600 black-and-white photographs and line drawings. All species found in Minnesota receive extensive treatment, discussing their general range, range in Minnesota, migration dates, nesting dates and nesting descriptions, food, field marks, as well as more general information. It is an informative and interesting work that has stood out as one of the finest state monographs ever published. Out of print for many years, still often available at larger used book stores.

Where to Find Birds in Minnesota, 1950, Itasca Press: The Webb Publishing Company, St. Paul, Minnesota. Kenneth D. Morrison and Josephine Daneman Herz. The first guide to bird finding in the United States, it is said this was the inspiration for Olin Sewall Pettingill's later works on bird finding in the U.S. This is a guide to 62 birding places in Minnesota, contributed by 49 different people (including Pettingill). The book divides the state into four regions: the southeast (30 locations), southwest (9 locations), northwest (12 locations) and northeast (11 locations). Sites can be as specific as a marsh on Twenty-fourth Avenue in Minneapolis, or as vague as Eastern Kittson County. One location is even in North Dakota. While certainly interesting and informative, more recent publications have made this booklet obsolete.

Birds in Minnesota, 1987, The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Robert B. Janssen. Published as both a hardbound and soft cover, this book deals with the status of Minnesota's birds, and was intended as an update to Janssen and Jan Green's original 1975 "Minnesota Birds: When, Where and How Many." This work is intended to keep the official record of Minnesota's birds up to date and to provide a continuous stream of data from T. S. Roberts' day to the present. Expected to be revised in the near future.

A Birder's Guide to Minnesota, Third Edition 1994, Williams Publications Inc., Plymouth, Minnesota. Kim R. Eckert. Issued as both a softcover and special edition hard cover, this is *the* book on bird finding in the state. This third, expanded edition follows the format of the previous editions (first plublished in 1974), but increases the number of specific locations referenced to over 800. Its 256 pages of informative text and over 200 accompanying maps make this most recent guide indispensable for anyone looking to increase his knowledge of Minnesota's birding places.

Birding Minnesota, 1996, Falcon Press Publishing Co. Inc., Helena, Montana. Jay Michael Strangis. Currently available only in soft cover, this is the latest book devoted to birding in Minnesota. The majority of the book offers information on 37 specific birding areas around the state, giving general and sometimes specific directions to the more sought-after species. Each of these locations is given a map, all of which are well done and easy to follow. A separate chapter has range maps to 122 of Minnesota's "choice species." Included in the back of the book is a checklist separated into Regular, Casual, and Accidental species. In print but not easy to find.

Periodicals

Minnesota has two periodicals which deal with birds and birding activities in the state. **The Loon** reports the state's ornithological data, and has kept such a record, uninterrupted, since 1929, when it was known as The Flicker. The first issue to be called The Loon was March 1964, not long after the Common Loon had become the official State bird. In each issue, The Loon publishes articles, short notes of interest and a seasonal report of the status, distribution, nesting, abundance, and occurrence of birds in the state, as recorded and reported by many contributors around Minnesota. The Loon is issued four times a year to all Minnesota Ornithologists' Union members. Anthony Hertzel is editor. **Minnesota Birding** (originally called The Newsletter, then the MOUthpiece) is issued bi-monthly to all MOU members. It is the official newsletter of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union. Jim and Jude Williams are coeditors.

Telephone hot lines for bird reports

The Minnesota Ornithologists' Union maintains two telephone hot lines which can be called 24 hours a day for reports on bird activity and sightings of rare or unusual birds. Each hot line has an editor. Reports are updated weekly or more often if needed. The Twin Cities hot line covers the entire state. It can be reached by calling (612) 780-8890. Anthony Hertzel is editor. The Duluth hot line covers Duluth and the North Shore. It can be reached by calling (218) 525-5952. Kim Eckert is editor.

Who to call for answers to birding questions

Statewide

Robert Janssen (612) 546-4220

President of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union. Author of two books on distribution of birds in Minnesota. Expert on seasonal presence of birds throughout state. The best source for general and specific bird and bird-related information.

Kim Eckert (218) 525-6930

Professional birding guide who lives in Duluth. Editor of the Duluth birding hot line. Author of "A Birder's Guide to Minnesota," the definitive guidebook to birding here and the most complete book of its kind in North America. Expert on northern owls and birding in northeastern Minnesota, particularly along Lake Superior, and in northern Canada, southeastern Arizona, and southern Texas. A sound general source of information for Minnesota.

Anthony X. Hertzel (612) 780-7149

Edits the Twin Cities birding telephone hot line and the MOU quarterly journal The Loon. Can answer questions about the presence throughout the state of unusual birds, about migration status, about general birding activity. A sound source of general information on Minnesota birds and birding.

Carrol Henderson (612) 296-0700 (office)

Supervisor of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Nongame Wildlife Program since 1977. Author of three books on attracting wildlife: Woodworking for Wildlife, Landscaping for Wildlife, and Wild about Birds — the DNR Bird-feeding Guide. Involved with management and restoration of Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, Trumpeter Swans, and Eastern Bluebirds. Has ecotourism experience based on leading 20 birding tours to Latin American since 1987.

Dr. Scott Lanyon, Twin Cities (612) 624-7217 or 624-2013

Director of the Bell Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis campus.

Dr. Robert Zink, University of Minnesota

(612) 624-7207

Holder of Breckenridge Chair of Ornithology at University of Minnesota; associate professor of ecology, evolution, and behavior; curator of the bird skin collection at the Bell Museum of Natural History. Excellent source of information on bird biology and migration.

Dr. Harrison Tordoff, St. Paul

(612) 624-6787 (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.)

(612) 483-2187 (evenings)

Technical questions about birds (anatomy, behavior, etc.). Peregrine Falcons and Peregrine Falcon restoration program in Upper Midwest.

Kim Risen, Minneapolis

(612) 535-2472

General information about Minnesota birds and birding. Guides birding tours in United States and Costa Rica.

Dr. Robert Holtz, St. Paul (612) 484-8832 (office)

Chairman of MOU Conservation Committee, past president of MOU.

Jan Green, Duluth

(218) 525-5654.

Information on forest birds, their management, and conservation.

Lee Pfannmuller, Minneapolis

(612) 296-0783 (office)

Information on forest song birds and endangered and threatened bird species in Minnesota.

Jim Williams

(612) 595-9090

Editor of Minnesota Birding, newsletter of the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union. A source for information about state birding activities and personalities.

Christmas Bird Count

Dennis Martin, Shorewood (612) 474-4371 (evenings)

State coordinator for Christmas Bird Counts.

Twin Cities area

Oscar Johnson, Brooklyn Park

(612) 560-3873

General information on birds and birding in northern Hennepin County.

Terry Brashear, Minneapolis

(612) 874-7661 (before 9:30 p.m.)

Member of Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis.

Ken Oulman, Bloomington

(612) 290-1980 (office)

(612) 890-3421 (evenings and weekends)

Member of Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter.

Bruce Fall, Twin Cities

(612) 625-4391 (office)

(612) 721-6366 (evenings and weekends)

Staff member, University of Minnesota. General birding questions. Particularly knowledgeable about Murphy-Hanrehan Regional Park in Scott County.

Jay Hamernick, Shoreview

(612) 482-7984

Can provide information about Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge.

Kathy Heidel, Hennepin County

(612) 472-4911 (office)

(612) 474-9604 (9 to 10:30 p.m.)

Senior interpretive naturalist for Hennepin County Regional Park District. General questions about birds, including identification over the telephone from sketchy field information. Also bird feeding and nest monitoring.

Tom Bell, St. Paul Park

(612) 459-4150

General information on birds and birding in the St. Paul area.

Southeast Minnesota

Robert Ekblad, Rochester

(507) 253-5455 (office)

(507) 775-6949 (evenings and weekends)

General information on birds and birding in southeastern Minnesota.

Carol Schumacher, Winona

(507) 452-2482

Southeastern Minnesota birds. President of local Audubon chapter. Has done field work for Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Guides birding trips in southeastern Minnesota. Also knowledgeable about state birding computer network.

Gene Bauer, Northfield

(507) 645-6810

General information on birding in Northfield and Rice County area.

William Bruins, Rochester

(507) 281-1607

General information on birding in Rochester and southeastern Minnesota.

Allen Batt, Hartland (Albert Lea)

(507) 845-2836

Fax (507) 845-2417

General information on birding in southern Minnesota.

Scott Mehus, Winona

(507) 452-0599

General information on birds and birding in southeastern Minnesota.

Fred Lesher, LaCrosse, Wisconsin

(608) 783-1149

General information on birds and birding in southeastern Minnesota.

Southwest and Central Minnesota

Lester Rupp, Mountain Lake

(507) 427-2333 (office)

(507) 427-3635 (evenings and weekends)

General information on birds and birding in southwestern Minnesota.

Ms. Nelvina DeKam, Edgerton

(505) 443-5081

General information about birds and birding in southwestern Minnesota.

Mary Jo Christopherson, Lakefield

(507) 662-5847 (evenings)

General information on birds and birding in south central Minnesota.

Ron Erpelding, Willmar (320) 235-0788

General information on birding in Kandiyohi County and central Minnesota.

Randy Frederickson, Willmar

(320) 231-1291 (home)

General information on birding in Kandiyohi County.

John Schladweiler, New Ulm

(507) 359-6031 (office); (507) 359-7606 (home)

General information on natural history and bird/habitat relationships in west-central and southwestern Minnesota, particularly relating to birds of the grasslands.

Northeast Minnesota

Dr. Gerald Niemi. Duluth

(218) 720-4270 (office); Fax (218) 720-9412; (218) 724-7589 (evenings and weekends)

Natural Resource Research Institute, University of Minnesota, Duluth. Expert on forest birds.

Warren Nelson, Aitkin

(218) 927-2185 (office); (218) 927-2458 (home)

General information on birds and birding in Aitkin County and north central Minnesota. Particularly knowledgeable about Yellow Rails and Great Gray Owls.

Laura Erickson, Duluth

(218) 525-6171

Backyard birds, biology, and natural history. Birding in Duluth and northeastern Minnesota. Author of books on birds and birding.

Steve Wilson, Tower

(218) 749-9607 (office); (218) 753-6110 (home)

General information on natural history and bird/habitat relationships in northeastern Minnesota. An excellent source for Boreal Owl information.

Northwest Minnesota

Betsy Beneke, Detroit Lakes

(218) 847-2641 (7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

(218) 847-6681 (evenings and weekends)

General information on birding in Becker County and on Tamarac and Hamden Slough national wildlife refuges.

Steve Millard, Fergus Falls (218) 739-5227 (evenings)

General information on birds and birding in west central Minnesota.

Shelley Steva, Thief River Falls

(218) 681-5289 (after 7:45 a.m. and before 9 p.m.)

General information on birds and birding in northwestern Minnesota.

Jo and Steve Blanich, Deerwood

(218) 546-5939

General information on birding in Aitkin County and north central Minnesota.

Doug Johnson, Bemidji

(218) 751-9201 (office); (218) 751-4162 (evenings and weekends)

General information on birding in Bemidji area and north central Minnesota.

Computer sites and e-mail

The e-mail address of the MOU is:

mou@biosci.cbs.umn.edu

The MOU home page can be found on the WWW at:

http://biosci.cbs.umn.edu/~mou

(The MOU home page is an excellent source of information about Minnesota birding in general. It is frequently updated with details of recent noteworthy bird sightings or activity. These postings often include photographs.)

The Minnesota Birding Network, a chat line for Minnesota birders, can be reached by contacting Carol Schumacher via e-mail at:

wncarols@linux.winona.msus.edu

Minnesota Bird Clubs

Agassiz Audubon Society. President: Gladwin Lynne, 523 Montana, Warren MN 56762

Albert Lea Audubon Society. President: Al Batt, Rt. 1, Box 56A, Hartland MN 56042

Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis. President: Terence Brashear, 2100 Garfield Ave. S., #1, Minneapolis MN 55405

Austin Audubon Chapter. President: Richard Smaby, 601 17th St. SW, Austin MN 55912

Bee-Nay-She Council. President: Hulda Lind, Rt. 2, Box 2980, Palisade MN 56469

Central Minnesota Audubon Society. President: John Peck, 12299 Sauk River Rd., St. Cloud MN 56301

Cottonwood County Bird Club. President: Ellis Gerber, Box 113, Mountain Lake MN 56159

Duluth Audubon Society. President: Susan Wittkopf, 534 E. Skyline Parkway, Duluth MN 55805

Fargo-Moorhead Audubon Society. President: Ken Huntley, 1810 16th St. S., Moorhead MN 56560

Hiawatha Valley Audubon Club. President: Gretchen Johnson, Rt. 1, Box 8M, Dakota MN 55925

Jackson County Bird Club. President: Mary Jo Christopherson, PO Box 806, Lakefield MN 56150

Lakes Area Birding Club. President: Bob Burke, Rt. 3, Box 219, Pelican Rapids MN 56572

Mankato Bird Club. President: Cathie Atchley, 532 South Ave., North Mankato MN 56003

Southwest Minnesota Warblers Birding Club. President: Jackie Meyer, $505~\mathrm{S}.$ Whitney, Marshall MN 56258.

Minneapolis Audubon Society. President: Barb Galambos, 4375 Wooddale Ave. S., Minneapolis MN 55424

Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter. President: Lois Norrgard, PO Box 20400, Bloomington MN 55455.

Minnesota Ornithologists' Union. President: Robert Janssen, 10521 Cedar Lake Road, No. 212, Minnetonka MN 55305.

Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society. President: Leon L. Johnson, 12769 Irvine Ave. NW, Bemidji MN 56601.

Roseville Bird Club. President: Margaret E. Kehn, 988 W. County Road D, St. Paul MN 55112

St. Paul Audubon Society. President: Dorothy Waltz, 2095 Delaware Ave., Mendota Heights MN 55118

Zumbro Valley Audubon Society. President: Joel Dunnette, 4526 County Road 3 SW, Byron MN 55920

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Minnesota state birding records

Highest Lifetime State List, 395, Raymond Glassel, Bloomington. **Most Species Seen in One Year**, 317, Peder Svingen, Duluth, in 1991. **Earliest Date to See 100 Species**, Jan. 26, Anthony Hertzel of Mounds View, in 1992

County Records (highest number of species recorded in a county)

Aitkin County, 271, Warren Nelson. Anoka County, 288, Ken LaFond Becker County, 244, Betsy Beneke Beltrami County, 235, Jeffrey Palmer Benton County, 225, Ken LaFond Big Stone County, 229, Raymond Glassel

Blue Earth County, 232, Raymond Glassel

Brown County, 236, Raymond Glassel Carlton County, 233, Ken LaFond

Carver County, 248, Raymond Glassel

Cass County, 220, Raymond Glassel

Chippewa County, 222, Raymond Glassel

Chisago County, 243, Raymond Glassel Clay County, 232, Raymond Glassel

Clearwater County, 250, Al Bolduc

Cook County, 244, Kim Eckert

Cottonwood County, 255, Ed Duerksen

Crow Wing County, 250, Jo Blanich

Dakota County, 282, Raymond Glassel

Dodge County, 228, Anne Marie Plunkett

Douglas County, 226, Ken LaFond

Faribault County, 223, Raymond Glassel

Fillmore County, 241, Anne Marie Plunkett

Freeborn County, 250, Scott Mehus

Goodhue County, 263, Bill Litkey

Grant County, 226, Raymond Glassel

Hennepin County, 311, Oscar Johnson

Houston County, 232, Raymond Glassel

Hubbard County, 224, Raymond Glassel

Isanti County, 232, Ken LaFond

Itasca County, 211, Ken LaFond

Jackson County, 228, Raymond Glassel

Kanabec County, 227, Ken LaFond

Kandiyohi County, 239, Randy Frederickson

Kittson County, 221, Raymond Glassel

Koochiching County, 228, Ken LaFond

Lac Qui Parle County, 240, Robert B. Janssen

Lake County, 235, Dan Versaw

Lake of the Woods County, 218, Raymond Glassel

Le Sueur County, 250, Raymond Glassel

Lincoln County, 220, Raymond Glassel

Lyon County, 263, Henry Kyllingstad

Mahnomen County, 217, Raymond Glassel and Robert B. Janssen

Marshall County, 242, Shelley Steva

Martin County, 222, Raymond Glassel

McLeod County, 231, Raymond Glassel

Meeker County, 226, Raymond Glassel

Mille Lacs County, 234, Ken LaFond

Morrison County, 227, Raymond Glassel

Mower County, 236, John Morrison

Murray County, 229, Nelvina De Kam

Nicollet County, 247, Raymond Glassel Nobles County, 219, Raymond Glassel Norman County, 217, Raymond Glassel Olmsted County, 279, Anne Marie Plunkett Otter Tail County, 273, Steve Millard Pennington County, 243, Shelley Steva Pine County, 236, Ken LaFond Pipestone County, 218, Raymond Glassel Polk County, 234, Shelley Steva Pope County, 224, Raymond Glassel Ramsey County, 272, Raymond Glassel Red Lake County, 214, Raymond Glassel Redwood County, 228, Raymond Glassel Renville County, 235, Raymond Glassel Rice County, 259, Orwin Rustad Rock County, 243, Kim Eckert Roseau County, 260, Peder Svingen Saint Louis County, 319, Kim Eckert Scott County, 259, Raymond Glassel Sherburne County, 244, Raymond Glassel Sibley County, 246, Raymond Glassel Stearns County, 274, Nestor M. Hiemenz Steele County, 242, Raymond Glassel Stevens County, 223, Raymond Glassel Swift County, 229, Raymond Glassel Todd County, 240, Ken LaFond Traverse County, 227, Raymond Glassel Wabasha County, 248, Raymond Glassel Wadena County, 216, Raymond Glassel Waseca County, 235, Raymond Glassel Washington County, 278, Raymond Glassel Watonwan County, 224, Raymond Glassel Wilkin County, 226, Raymond Glassel Winona County, 255, Carol Schumacher Wright County, 250, Raymond Glassel Yellow Medicine County, 235, Paul Egeland

Big Day, a competitive (but friendly) birding event

A "big day" is an event in which birders (one or more) attempt to see as many bird species as possible within a defined geographic area (such as a county) during a particular period of time (usually 24 consecutive hours). This is a game. It has rules. Scores are kept in the form of the records which follow.

Highest Statewide Big Day Total: 192 species on 5/21/83 by Kim Eckert, Paul Egeland, Henry Kyllingstad, Terry Savaloja (deceased).

County Big Day Records (bird species recorded, 24 hours)

Aitkin, 151 bird species, 5/15/93, Warren Nelson.

Anoka, 111, 5/16/92, Robert Holtz, John Wallner.

Beltrami, 113, 5/19/90, Doug Johnson, Tim Dawson.

Big Stone, 144, 5/18/94, Paul Hertzel, Tony Hertzel.

Carlton, 130, 5/29/95, Sue Barton, Peder Svingen..

Carver, 139, 5/15/94, Dennis Martin, Bill Marengo, Jim Williams, Mike Mulligan

Chisago, 102, 5/14/94, Robert Holtz, John Wallner, Jim Bender.

Clay, 90, 5/18/91, Terry and Cory Olson, Jean Leckner.

Clearwater, 107, 5/29/93, Doug Johnson.

Cook, 116, 5/03/95, Sue Barton, Peder Svingen.

Cottonwood, 118, 5/13/89, Henry Schmidt, Walter Harder, Ed Duerksen.

Dakota, 104, 5/13/95, Drew and Becky Smith.

Dodge, 100, 5/14/88, Bob and Steve Ekblad, Jerry Bonkoski.

Douglas, 82, 5/15/94, Kris and Kyle Wicklund.

Fillmore, 97, 5/13/89, Fillmore County Birders Club.

Freeborn, 104, 5/23/90, Anne Marie Plunkett.

Goodhue, 76, 5/15/92, Harlan Hostager.

Houston, 111, 5/11/93 Jerry Bonkoski, Tony Casucci, Bob Ekblad, Jerry Pruett, Dave Squillace.

Hubbard, 96, 5/11/91, Ralph and Jean Leckner, Cory and Terry Olson.

Isanti, 50, 5/26/93, Daphne and Meyers Peterson.

Kanabec, 96, 5/08/93, Craig Menze.

Kandiyohi, 140, 5/20/95, Randy Fredickson.

Kittson, 127, 5/25/96, Peder Svingen.

Koochiching, 135, 6/01/96, Tony Hertzel, Peder Svingen.

Lac Qui Parle, 121, 5/11/94 Bill Marengo.

Lake, 117, 5/22/95, Sue Barton, Peder Svingen.

Lake of the Woods, 146, 5/26/96, Ann and Tony Hertzel, Peder Svingen.

Le Sueur, 141, 5/13/95, Ann and Tony Hertzel, Peder Svingen.

Lincoln, 122, 5/14/88, Ray Glassel, Bob Janssen, John Schladweiler.

Lyon, 142, 5/14/88, Henry Kyllingstad, Paul Egeland.

Marshall, 114, 5/18/91, Shelly Steva, Darlene Kelley, Randi Hodny, Linda Welk.

Murray, 99, 5/15/92, Nelvina De Kam, Johanna Pals.

Nicollet, 139, 5/15/93, Paul Hertzel, Tony Hertzel.

Nobles, 91, 5/21/90, Nelvina De Kam.

Olmsted, 152, 5/13/94, Jerry Bonkoski, Bob Ekblad, Jerry Pruett, Chuck Krulas, Jeff Stephenson.

Otter Tail, 144, 5/15/91, Steve and Diane Millard.

Pipestone, 77, 5/14/88, Johanna Pals, Nelvina De Kam.

Polk, 156, 5/19/90 Dave and Sharon Lambeth, Peder Svingen.

Ramsey, 114, 5/08/93, Robert Holtz, John Wallner.

Rice, 100, 5/30/92, Rice County Bird Club.

Rock, 87, 5/12/92, Nelvina De Kam.

Roseau, 162, 5/27/95, Peder Svingen.

Sherburne, 130, 5/16/96, Paul Hertzel, Tony Hertzel.

St. Louis, 177, 5/18/96, Terry Brashear, Mike Hendrickson, Mark Ochs, Kim Risen.

Steele, 134, 5/16/92, Ken and Amanda Vail, Gary Johnson, Nels Thompson, Leanne Alt, Terry Dorsey, Darryl Hill.

Swift, 113, 5/14/94, Ray Glassel, Bob Janssen.

Wabasha, 111, 5/21/89, Alice Searles, Helen Tucker.

Wadena, 94, 5/21/88, Jerome and Karol Gresser.

Waseca, 88, 5/16/94, Ray Glassel.

Washington, 97, 5/15/93 Robert Holtz and seven students.

Winona, 116, 5/13/95, Carol Schumacher, Howard Towle.

Wright, 112, 5/16/92, Mark Stensaas and John Hockema.

Yellow Medicine, 141, 5/08/93, Karl Bardon, Peder Svingen, Parker Backstrom.



The official Minnesota bird list (annual regular species)

Red-throated Loon Common Loon Pied-billed Grebe

Horned Grebe
Red-necked Grebe

Eared Grebe Western Grebe

American White Pelican

Double-crested Cormorant American Bittern

Least Bittern
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret

Snowy Egret Little Blue Heron Cattle Egret Green Heron

Black-crowned Night-Heron Yellow-crowned Night-Heron

Tundra Swan Mute Swan Greater White-fronted Goose

Snow Goose Ross' Goose Canada Goose Wood Duck

Green-winged Teal American Black Duck

Mallard

Northern Pintail Blue-winged Teal Cinnamon Teal Northern Shoveler

Gadwall

American Wigeon Canvasback

Redhead

Ring-necked Duck Greater Scaup Lesser Scaup Harlequin Duck

Oldsquaw

Black Scoter Surf Scoter

White-winged Scoter Common Goldeneye

Bufflehead

Hooded Merganser Common Merganser Red-breasted Merganser

Ruddy Duck Turkey Vulture

Osprey Bald Eagle Northern Harrier

Sharp-shinned Hawk Cooper's Hawk

Northern Goshawk Red-shouldered Hawk Broad-winged Hawk

Swainson's Hawk Red-tailed Hawk Ferruginous Hawk Rough-legged Hawk Golden Eagle American Kestrel

Merlin

Peregrine Falcon Prairie Falcon Gray Partridge

Ring-necked Pheasant

Spruce Grouse Ruffed Grouse

Greater Prairie-Chicken Sharp-tailed Grouse Wild Turkey

Northern Bobwhite

Yellow Rail Virginia Rail Sora

Common Moorhen American Coot Sandhill Crane Black-bellied Plover

American Golden-Plover Semipalmated Plover

Piping Plover Killdeer

American Avocet Greater Yellowlegs Lesser Yellowlegs Solitary Sandpiper

Willet

Spotted Sandpiper Upland Sandpiper

Whimbrel

Hudsonian Godwit Marbled Godwit Ruddy Turnstone

Red Knot Sanderling

Semipalmated Sandpiper Least Sandpiper

Least Sandpiper White-rumped Sandpiper

Baird's Sandpiper Pectoral Sandpiper

Dunlin

Stilt Sandpiper

Buff-breasted Sandpiper Short-billed Dowitcher Long-billed Dowitcher Common Snipe American Woodcock Wilson's Phalarope Red-necked Phalarope

Parasitic Jaeger Franklin's Gull Little Gull

Eittle Gull
Bonaparte's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Thayer's Gull
Glaucous Gull
Caspian Tern
Common Tern
Forster's Tern
Black Tern

Rock Dove Mourning Dove Black-billed Cuckoo Yellow-billed Cuckoo Eastern Screech-Owl Great Horned Owl Snowy Owl

Northern Hawk Owl

Barred Owl Great Gray Owl Long-eared Owl Short-eared Owl Boreal Owl Northern Saw-whet Owl Common Nighthawk Whip-poor-will Chimney Swift

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Belted Kingfisher

Red-headed Woodpecker Red-bellied Woodpecker Yellow-bellied Sapsucker Downy Woodpecker Hairy Woodpecker Three-toed Woodpecker Black-backed Woodpecker

Northern Flicker
Pileated Woodpecker
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher

Acadian Flycatcher Alder Flycatcher Willow Flycatcher Least Flycatcher Eastern Phoebe

Great Crested Flycatcher

Western Kingbird Eastern Kingbird Horned Lark Purple Martin Tree Swallow

Northern Rough-winged Swallow

Bank Swallow Cliff Swallow Barn Swallow Gray Jay Blue Jay

Black-billed Magpie American Crow Common Raven

Black-capped Chickadee Boreal Chickadee

Tufted Titmouse

Red-breasted Nuthatch White-breasted Nuthatch

Brown Creeper Carolina Wren House Wren Winter Wren Sedge Wren Marsh Wren Golden-crowned Kinglet Ruby-crowned Kinglet Blue-gray Gnatcatcher Eastern Bluebird Mountain Bluebird

Veery

Gray-cheeked Thrush Swainson's Thrush Hermit Thrush Wood Thrush American Robin Varied Thrush Gray Catbird

Townsend's Solitaire

Northern Mockingbird Brown Thrasher American Pipit Bohemian Waxwing Cedar Waxwing Northern Shrike Loggerhead Shrike European Starling Bell's Vireo

Solitary Vireo Yellow-throated Vireo Warbling Vireo Philadelphia Vireo Red-eyed Vireo Blue-winged Warbler Golden-winged Warbler Tennessee Warbler

Orange-crowned Warbler
Nashville Warbler

Northern Parula Yellow Warbler Chestnut-sided Warbler

Magnolia Warbler
Cape May Warbler

Black-throated Blue Warbler Yellow-rumped Warbler Black-throated Green Warbler

Blackburnian Warbler

Pine Warbler Palm Warbler

Bay-breasted Warbler Blackpoll Warbler Cerulean Warbler Black-and-white Warbler

American Redstart

Prothonotary Warbler Worm-eating Warbler

Ovenbird

Northern Waterthrush Louisiana Waterthrush Kentucky Warbler Connecticut Warbler Mourning Warbler Common Yellowthroat

Hooded Warbler Wilson's Warbler Canada Warbler Yellow-breasted Chat Summer Tanager

Scarlet Tanager Northern Cardinal Rose-breasted Grosbeak

Blue Grosbeak Indigo Bunting Dickcissel

Eastern Towhee

American Tree Sparrow Chipping Sparrow Clay-colored Sparrow

Field Sparrow Vesper Sparrow Lark Sparrow Lark Bunting Savannah Sparrow

Grasshopper Sparrow Henslow's Sparrow Le Conte's Sparrow

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow

Fox Sparrow

Song Sparrow Lincoln's Sparrow Swamp Sparrow

White-throated Sparrow White-crowned Sparrow

Harris' Sparrow
Dark-eyed Junco
Lapland Longspur
Smith's Longspur

Chestnut-collared Longspur

Snow Bunting Bobolink

Red-winged Blackbird Eastern Meadowlark Western Meadowlark Yellow-headed Blackbird

Rusty Blackbird Brewer's Blackbird Common Grackle Brown-headed Cowbird

Orchard Oriole
Baltimore Oriole
Pine Grosbeak
Purple Finch
House Finch
Red Crossbill

White-winged Crossbill Common Redpoll Hoary Redpoll Pine Siskin

American Goldfinch Evening Grosbeak House Sparrow The information
in this booklet has been assembled by the
Minnesota Ornithologists' Union (MOU),
the state's largest bird club. Much of the material
comes from the MOU's World Wide Web home page.
That information was gathered and published by
Anthony X. Hertzel, editor of both the home page
and the MOU quarterly journal The Loon.
We thank Carrol Henderson of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for his assistance with this
project. Additional copies of this booklet are available from Jim Williams, 11608 Live Oak Drive,
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