

**MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS
AUDUBON SOCIETY**
A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 193
Bemidji, MN 56619
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We're on the Web!

www.spearheadMHAS.org

Non-profit organization
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Bemidji, MN 56601
Permit #28



Your resource for environmental education and
resource protection in Northern Minnesota

*The Mississippi Headwaters Audubon
Society's mission is to foster person-
al connections to and stewardship
of our natural world.*

A Message from the President

Your chapter is updating its charter bylaws to be more current with the times, including improved guidance on non-profit governance and chapter procedures. The MHAS board invites membership input regarding how the chapter may improve meeting its mission: "To foster personal connections to and stewardship of our natural world."

To participate in this process, please contact the board via email at headwatersaudubon@gmail.com, by attending a general board meeting, or by sending in your ideas by post to: MHAS, P.O. Box 193, Bemidji, MN 56619

The Audubon MN, Chapter Leaders Meeting was held in St. Paul on November 14th. This is an annual meeting to bring the State's chapter leaders together in order to discuss Audubon strategies, and as importantly, to provide the essential face-time for chapter-chapter dialogue concerning environmental conservation and education needs in Minnesota. Youth education remains a focal theme by the majority of Minnesota's chapters. The MHAS Chapter, thanks to the leadership of its Education Committee, delivers the Young Naturalist Program, a unique youth camp immersion experience among

the State's chapters. Go to: <http://mn.audubon.org/audubon-locations> to learn more about the amazing work that chapters do to engage youth and adults alike in a variety of nature-based activities and the values of environmental stewardship.

Finally, MHAS recently submitted its Annual Chapter Report to the National Audubon Society. In this report, we reported on the achievements of the previous year and set 3 general goals for the next: (1) expand the chapter's Young Naturalist Program to provide inner-city programming, (2) update chapter governance documents, and (3) work with local partnerships to expand the chapter's adult educational programming.

The vitality of each of these goals is largely dependent upon support by its membership and the regional community. Chapter and community members are invited to join in the discussion, planning and implementation of each of these goals, and can do so by email (headwatersaudubon@gmail.com) or by contacting a board officer (see front page), or by attending a chapter board or committee meeting. This is your chapter, and your voice and ideas will help it to better meet its mission to foster personal connections to and stewardship of our natural world.



Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society

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headwatersaudubon@gmail.com

DECEMBER 2015

MHAS Needs You!

Please consider serving on the board of directors or on a committee in support of your Chapter's mission. Send email to: headwatersaudubon@gmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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218-407-7025

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218-444-8672

Board meetings are held at 5:30—7:00 P.M. on the second Tuesday of each month Sep–May located at the Headwaters Science Center, 413 Beltrami Ave NW, Bemidji, MN 56601 (call 218-444-4472 if doors locked); and Jun–Aug at the Neilson Spearhead Center, 48851 County 29, Bemidji, MN 56601

The Christmas Bird Count

A Free Event!

The Bemidji Count is just around the corner on Saturday, December 19th! Join others as we come together for the 116th Audubon Christmas Bird Count.

All skill-levels are welcome and encouraged to participate to help with bird conservation locally and nationally. Participants work in teams to cover designated routes and areas, and you can drive, walk, snowshoe or ski while counting. Bring a friend, invite a neighbor, or introduce a young person to the CBC this year!

This is the 38th Annual Bemidji Count. Participants will meet at 7 a.m. at the Minnesota Nice Cafe (315 Irvine Avenue) to share in a quick breakfast before forming teams to cover the 15-mile diameter count circle.

If you prefer staying inside where it's warm, you can still participate in the Bemidji CBC Count provided you have an active bird feeder at your home and are located within the count circle.

To confirm your location within the

Bemidji count circle and to register, visit the Minnesota CBC count circle map information managed by the Minnesota Ornithological Union on their website at: <http://www.moumn.org/CBC/locations.php?cid=34>.

Registration can also be done in person at Minnesota Nice Café on the day of the count. Contact Doug Johnson, the count compiler, at 218-751-4162 to register and if you have any rare or unusual bird sightings during the 'count week' (Dec. 16th-22nd).

See you on Count Day, December 19th!



Black-capped Chickadee
Photo By: Monte Draper, Jan 23, 2015

Snow Sparkles

Parents and guardians are invited to bring kids (2nd grade up) to join Naturalist Dan Bera at the Neilson Spearhead Center for a very special post-Christmas treat on Tuesday, December 29 from Noon to 5:00 pm. Enjoy a toasty bonfire, hot chocolate and s'mores plus learn how snowflakes are made, what are snow "snakes", does snow really have fleas?, and how to identify animal tracks—and trek on the frozen waters of Spearhead Lake.

Dress warmly; bring an extra pair of snow pants, hat and mittens (and any leftover cookies to share). Limited to 15 participants! Entry cost is \$10 per person. Special rate: \$15 for two friends / siblings. Register by emailing headwatersaudubon@gmail.com by December 26. Call Becky at 218-467-3584 with any questions.



Pondering Where Birds Sleep

By Brick Fevold

Have you ever wondered where our resident songbirds sleep during a cold winter's night? Except for the occasional owl, it would seem that our song birds vanish at night only to magically reappear again just at sunrise. The answer, for many bird species, is that they head 'indoors' - into a tree cavity that is.

Several years ago, I pondered this topic while in the woods just after dusk—just after witnessing a downy woodpecker evict a red-breasted nuthatch from its winter roost in a tree cavity. I sympathized with the poor nuthatch knowing that if it were to survive the night, it would have to know where to find another tree cavity and soon.

I often think of that nuthatch's need for an alternate winter's night roost, especially when I'm cutting firewood from my own woods. When I have my eye on a standing tree as future firewood it has to first pass several filters before I allow myself the permission to fell it; including whether or not it has any existing cavities that may be spoken for to shelter my feathered friends. Often, I end up leaving many a tree to become snags. Standing dead and rotting trees are not wasted wood, but rather a valuable resource to a host of wildlife species, including birds, mammals, amphibians, and insects.

What follows, is an excerpt from a wonderful book titled: "The Birdman of Lauderdale" (Levins Pub.) authored by Clay Christensen, a Minnesota author and an active chapter member of the St. Paul Audu-

bon Society. Apparently he, too, ponders where birds sleep at night. This piece is taken from his essay titled "Taking the Dread out of Winter."

"Up there on that limbless tree, [a downy woodpecker] was perched just below a perfectly round hole. He sat still for a bit and then darted headfirst into the hole until just the tip of his tail poked out. It turned out he was working on this hole. After a moment or two, he backed himself out. What was he up to, I wondered? Fall wasn't the right time of the year for nest building. This probably was going to be a roost hole with the entrance facing away from the chilly north wind."

"As I watched this little guy, I felt he was teaching me something. Preparing for winter and for what he knew would be cold nights ahead made him too busy to worry about dreading it. That industrious little downy was teaching me not to waste time and energy dreading the inevitable. Even though I could ponder mortality and he couldn't, I wasn't that different from the woodpecker. Pondering mortality didn't give me special coping skills. When confronted with the inevitable, I decided there's only one thing I can do: Prepare for it as best I'm able and then face it squarely. As I thought more about it, my dread lifted. In its place, I made a resolution to prepare, plan and face winter head-on."

- Clay Christensen



Red-breasted Nuthatch
www.coniferousforest.com

PolyMet in The News

St. Louis River: New Threat from PolyMet

- includes a proposed transfer of 6,650 acres of U.S. public land to a foreign mining company.
- includes nearly 1,000 acres of wetlands and over 6,000 acres of adjoining wetlands
- the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission's (GLIFWC) analysis of PolyMet's water modeling ... showed that ground water seepage at mine closure would flow north into the Rainy River watershed (Boundary Waters)"

Source: Sierra Club-North Star Chapter
<http://www.sierraclub.org/minnesota/blog/2015/11/st-louis-river-new-threat-polymet>

PolyMet Mine Proposal

" PolyMet is a junior mining company headquartered in Vancouver, Canada. The company has never operated a mine before, and is backed financially by the Swiss company Glencore.

- the Chairman of the Glencore board of directors is former BP CEO who was in charge when the Deepwater Horizon oil rig caused the largest oil spill in history in the Gulf of Mexico."

Source: Mining Truth: Know the Truth, Make Your Choice
<http://www.miningtruth.org/sulfide-mining-minnesota/polymet-mine-proposal/#.V13m23arSU1>

PolyMet clears a hurdle with Minnesota regulators, though battle isn't over

"...an attorney with the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, said ... the entire review, including predictions about how much polluted water could escape the site, relies on data and analysis provided by PolyMet..."

Source: Star Tribune: Josephine Marcotty
<http://www.startribune.com/10-year-environmental-review-of-polymet-mine-proposal-being-released/341647621/>

Engage! You can review the Polymet Final EIS at:
<http://dnr.state.mn.us/input/environmentalreview/polymet/>.

The Great Backyard Bird Count

If you're not inside an Audubon Christmas Bird Count circle, you can still contribute to bird conservation at your own (or a friend's) home by helping with The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) held during February 12-15th, 2016.

Register on-line at: www.birds.audubon.org/great-backyard-bird-count.

About the GBBC >>>>>>>>

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time.

Since then, more than 100,000 people of all ages and walks of life have joined the four-day count each February to create an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds.

We invite you to participate! Simply tally the numbers and kinds of birds you see for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, February 12-15, 2016. You can count from any location, anywhere in the world!

If you're new to the count, first register online then enter your checklist. If you have already participated in another Cornell Lab citizen-science project, you can use your existing login.

Join others across the world in Cornell's GBBC Photo Contest. For more information, go to <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/photo-contest-rules/>.

[Source: <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/about/>]



Michele Black, Ohio



Joselyn Leonhar, Scandia, MN

Examples from the 2015 GBBC photo contest

2015 Donors to MHAS—THANK YOU!

MAPE Local 1501	Greg Roberts
K Foundation	Erika Bailey-Johnson
Bemidji Brewing	Pete & Durayne Mitby
Brick Fevold	
Carla Norris-Raynbird	

Protect Birds and People from Lead Poisoning

By Audubon MN

In October 2015, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources proposed a rule to require hunters to use only nontoxic shot on wildlife management areas (WMAs) within the farmland zone beginning in 2018. The DNR is taking public comments until Dec. 11, 2015. Tell the Minnesota DNR: Lead is Poison!

Audubon has worked for decades with a wide range of conservationists, including hunters and wildlife advocates, to ensure the health of birds and ecosystems. We have a vested interest in healthy hunting. Audubon supports the proposed DNR rule change because lead is poison and as conservationists, we should all be working to remove lead from the environment.

- ⇒ Lead is toxic to both birds and people.
- ⇒ Millions of birds are poisoned every year by lead shot.
- ⇒ The establishment of nontoxic shot zones has been shown, by scientific research, to radically reduce the number of bird deaths from lead poisoning.



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To learn more and to participate in the rule-change process, go to: <http://mn.audubon.org/protect-birds-and-people-lead-poisoning>.