

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

P.O. Box 193
Bemidji, MN 56619
headwatersaudubon@gmail.com

We're on the Web!
www.spearheadMHAS.org

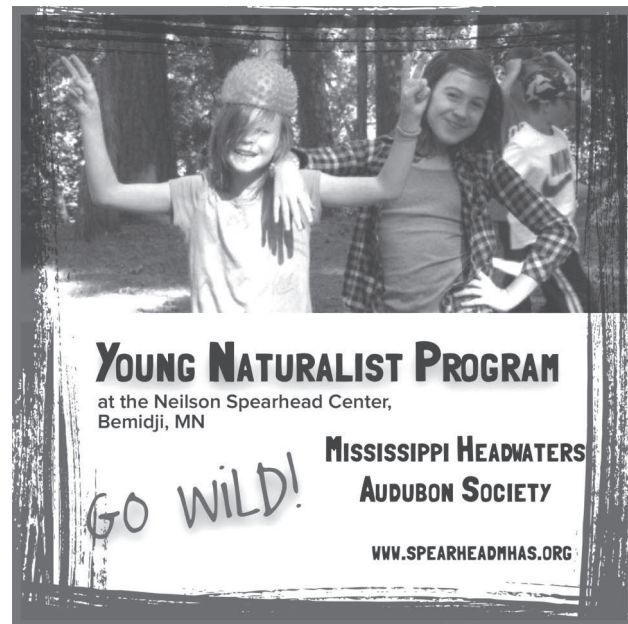
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Your resource for environmental education and resource protection in Northern Minnesota

The Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society's mission is to foster personal connections to and stewardship of our natural world.

Parents and Kids!



For details, look inside on page 3.

Bemidji Urban Birding!

Your local Audubon Chapter is excited to offer monthly bird watching trips in the City of Bemidji May through September to promote wellness and active learning on bird identification and the importance of protecting natural landscapes in urban areas. All observations are reported to eBird!

Don your bike helmet or your walking shoes, or both, and help us to learn more about the 'feathered citizens' of urban Bemidji, including where they can be found and why we find them where they are. An Audubon representative will be your guide sharing lots of birding tidbits and other tips on finding and identifying our feathered friends. To register, call or text Brick at 218-407-7025. Events held during fair weather only.

Biking for Birds - Friday June 19th at 5pm-7pm
Meet at 5 P.M. at Harmony Natural Foods Co-Op, 302 Irvine Ave, Bemidji. Bring your own bike and helmet or for a small fee rent a bright orange NiceRide Bemidji bicycle through Harmony Natural Foods Co-Op. Public parking is available in the Lot 6 parking lot adjacent to Harmony Natural Foods Co-op.

Walking for Birds - Saturday June 20th, 8am-10pm
Meet at 8am at Diamond Point Park, 1700 Birchmont Dr NE, Bemidji. Stop by if you're riding your bike as a participant of the 'Loop the Lake' Festival!



www.spearheadmhas.org

Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society

The Source

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MHAS Elections

Are you interested in joining an organization that demonstrates a passion for education and environmental advocacy? MHAS invites its membership and non-members to consider seeking a board position or joining a committee.

(More details on Page 2)

The Plight of Monarchs: A Canary in the Coal Mine

It's hard to imagine summer without the arrival of the migratory Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus plexippus*). These colorful butterflies are renowned for their amazing migration from as far north as Canada to the forests of Mexico. Monarch caterpillars are often raised and adults released by individuals and nature centers as part of educating the public, including policy-makers and land owners, about the wonders of Monarch biology and the importance of protecting pollinator habitat for Monarch conservation.

The crash of Monarch populations is a relatively recent and alarming trend considered by scientists and conservationists as a symptom of a much larger problem impacting natural landscapes all across North America. There are likely numerous causes to the Monarch's crisis, such as the extensive use of pesticides and herbicides in agriculture, along transportation and utility corridors, and in home landscapes. Another, and perhaps the stressor with the greatest impact is the

rapid loss and degradation of both feeding and breeding habitats through conversion to agriculture, road and utility corridors, and urban development.

Monarch Butterfly populations depend on the availability of preferred habitat along their migratory route in order to fulfill their life-cycle needs. Several generations of butterflies are required to make the northward spring migration from their winter roosts in Mexico and Baja California to across most of the U.S. and lower Canada. At the end of summer, the year's last generation of adults migrate south in a single generation to roost till spring, and then they start the cyclic process all over again. Losses in breeding adults when in their roosts and along migration are reflected at the population level through each breeding cycle.

Like a canary in the coal mine, Monarchs may be an indicator of an unhealthy environment.

(Continued on Page 2....)

2015 Annual Membership Meeting

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, July 25th** to join MHAS members and friends from 4 P.M. to 6 P.M. to attend the annual 'grill-n-potluck' membership meeting of the Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society held at the Neilson Spearhead Center, 48851 County 29, Bemidji, MN 56601. (just 20 minutes south of Bemidji!)

◆ **The 'Bog Walk' !!** A guided hike of a unique natural community. (2-4 P.M.)

This year's theme: **Spearhead Reflections**, is open to the public and is in celebration of 38 years since the Chapter was established. **Laddie Elwell** and **John Mathisen**, early founders of MHAS, will be guest speakers and will share the early history of the Neilson Spearhead Center, the Young Naturalist Program, and the founding of the Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society.

(Continued on Page 2....)

The Plight of Monarchs: Ways We Can Help

Pollinators of all varieties are facing troubling times whether due to stressors of habitat loss or the extensive use of pesticides, or a combination of multiple stressors including climate change and invasive species introductions. What does this mean to our own species' health? Is there a lesson to learn through the plight of the Monarch?

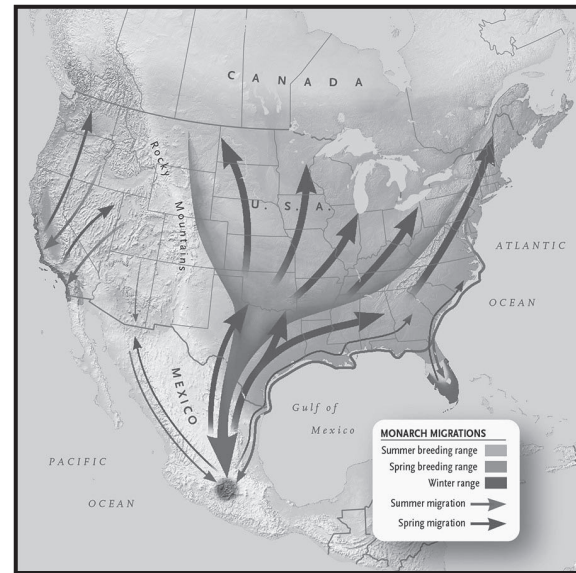
Thankfully, there are plenty of things that we can do to help our Monarchs and the other wildlife and plants that they live alongside.

One way to help Monarchs and other pollinators is by planting native plants to create a pollinator-friendly habitat. By choosing native plants over non-native varieties, you can offer proven food sources that have benefits on a whole-habitat scale. The key plant to helping Monarchs is Milkweed. Their caterpillars feed only on Milkweed plants, and the flowers are rich nectar sources for the adults and other nectar-feeders. It is always best to choose Milkweed varieties that are local to your region. You can also plant other native plants such as Meadow Blazing Star, Joe-Pye Weed, Purple Coneflower and Showy Goldenrod among other native wildflower species.

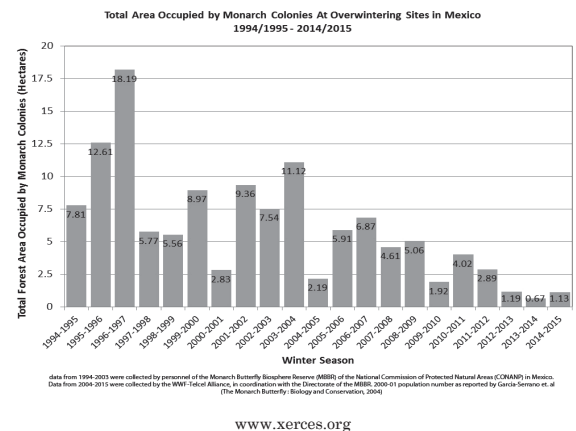
Another way to help is to monitor Monarch populations. There are some great volunteer opportunities in counting caterpillars and adults, marking adults for tracking and keeping track of the interaction of Monarchs and the weather during migration. Monarch caterpillars and chrysalises can be rescued from at-risk situations and reared by hand to ensure their success.

For more information on Monarchs, their habitat needs and biology and other ways that you can help, go to the following websites: www.monarchwatch.org or www.xerces.org for more information.

- Cassie Novak



Chris Brackley/Canadian Geographic



2015 Annual Membership Meeting

The Purpose of the Annual Membership Meeting

The annual membership meeting is a time for MHAS to celebrate membership support as well as its previous year's successes. It is a time that allows members to speak directly with the MHAS Board of Directors and other members on issues they feel passionate about.

It is also a time for organizational capacity-building by providing an open-space that invites members to participate in the general elections of officers and the appointments of directors to the MHAS Board of Directors. MHAS is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Board Elections & Appointments

Are you interested in learning more about your local Audubon Chapter? Perhaps you have ideas and talents that you want to express as an active member of the Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society.

MHAS invites its membership and non-members to consider seeking a board position or in joining a committee to increase its effectiveness in environmental advocacy and educational outreach across the Chapter's region as well as in support of state and national Audubon initiatives.

2015 NSC YOUNG NATURALIST PROGRAM

A wild time in the woods for nature-loving kids.

That's the reputation of our nature day camp. Naturalist Dan Bera leads youth campers through cattail swamps, plus trekking up the "Amazon," paddling across Spearhead Lake, sampling wild berries, and playing rousing games of "Fox and Squirrel." **We offer 11 sessions for grades 2-12, beginning June 17. Register by going to: www.spearheadMHAS.org and click on the Young Naturalist Program tab for more details and the registration form, or call [218-586-3414](tel:218-586-3414) for more information.**

Sign up your child and recruit your child's friends, too!

1. Bird Flight & Frisbees

A Birding Week for All Ages. Flying dinosaurs with feathers, otherwise known as "Birds" get the in-depth treatment at Spearhead from June 22-26. Frisbees, bones, and feathers will have you thinking "flight" by the end of the week. This special session of the Young Naturalist Program focuses on all aspects of birds. Possible early or late hours or an overnight to experience the yodeling cries of loons and hoot-hooting of owls. For grade 2 to adult.

2. Nature Photography

Three days of recording birds, bugs, wild flowers, and mini landscapes through a camera lens. Learn about composition, focus, and sneaking up on wary animals, then upload your best photos to our digital field guide at www.iNaturalist.org. Cameras provided, or use your smart phone. For budding wildlife photographers in grades 6-12.

3. Nature Mystery and Forensics

Forensics, or solving a mystery by collecting and studying clues left behind by Spearhead's wild-life. The evidence is tracks, carrion, scat, rubs, and gnaw marks - your task will be figuring out "What happened here?" You'll swim, canoe, hike and wade while gathering the evidence. For grades 4-6.

4. Trees, Tales, & Trails

An introduction to woods, waters, bugs, plants, birds, mammals, and Spearhead's legends. For grades 2-4.

5. Pines, Lakes, & Rivers

Hiking, canoeing, swimming, and an overnight on Thursday, complete with night sounds and a campfire. For grades 6-8.

6. Dan's Crew

Experienced campers perform trail maintenance and spend the rest of the day learning and practicing survival skills and woods lore. For grades 9-12.

Whether you have children or not, please consider gifting a child a unique outdoor educational experience. Call 218-586-3414 to learn more.



New Boating Regulations Increase Safety on Spearhead Lake

MHAS and Rockwood Township Board have agreed to the following limitations on Spearhead Lake:

- NO wake within 100 yards of canoes or kayaks
- NO personal watercraft (jet skis)
- NO towables (skis, inner tubes, kneeboards, etc.)

Signs will be posted by mid summer. Many thanks to Dan Bergsven, Jaime Thibodeaux and the Rockwood Township supervisors for reaching an agreement on these measures to improve safety for canoeists, kayakers and Young Naturalist Program kids that use Spearhead Lake.