

AUDUBON SOCIETY – MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS CHAPTER
PO BOX 193
BEMIDJI, MN 56619

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

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MHAS's mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats.



Fostering environmental education and resource protection in Northern Minnesota

MHAS Spring Banquet & Annual Meeting

Join us for our spring social and annual meeting! Questions? Call Jaime 225-810-5591 or George-Ann 218-586-3414 or visit our website.

When & Where: May 4th, 5:00 - 9:00 at Headwaters Science Center (upstairs)

Schedule: Tony Kennedy, DNR Large Lake Specialist, will talk about the amazing *Return of the Red Lake Walleye*. He will discuss the extraordinary effort of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians—working together with the State of Minnesota and the federal government—to bring back the culturally vital walleye from the brink of extinction and restore it to health in Red Lake. **The presentation will begin at 5:30pm. Join us afterwards for food and social with silent auctions.**

Price: \$15 for adults and \$5 for children under 16, available at www.spearheadMHAS.org under “Events” or mail the registration below. We keep our prices low so more people can attend. Please consider an additional donation with your purchase. RSVP by May 1, 2013.

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ City/Zip _____

Number attending _____ Total included _____

Send registration and payment to the Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society, P.O. Box 193, Bemidji, MN 56619. Checks should be made out to **Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society**.



Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society

The Source

Volume 37, Issue 1

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MHAS Board

President - Jaime Thibodeaux
225-810-5591

Vice President - John Eggers
Treasurer - George-Ann Maxson
218-586-3414

Secretary - Trista Little
Board Members -
Michele Walker, Becky Marty,
Annette Drewes, Brick Fevold

Neilson Spearhead Center
Caretakers - Lee & Julie Patten
218-444-8672

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Suggestions for the newsletter? Contact headwatersaudubon@gmail.com

Planning Ongoing for Einerson Memorial Bridge!



MHAS is accepting donations to help pay for the Einerson Memorial Bridge. We plan to place a 60 ft long bridge with a plaque to memorialize Amos Einerson (30 Oct 1921-22 Oct 2012), who was an Audubon board member and an enthusiastic promoter of Neilson Spearhead Center. Send donations to the Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society, P.O. Box 193, Bemidji, MN 56619. Checks should be made out to **MHAS**. Call George-Ann 218-586-3414 for more information.



Board members evaluating bridge locations

MHAS Challenge—We Need You!

Enjoy the programming at Spearhead? Would you like to see more Audubon programs? We need your help! Maintaining Neilson Spearhead Center (NSC) trails and facilities, organizing events, advertising activities, managing expenses and income, building a web presence and writing these newsletters are all done by a small, and growing smaller, volunteer group. These members serve on our board and committees. We have **3 vacancies** coming up at our **annual meeting May 4th**, and our committees are slim. Consider joining us in providing opportunities for youth and adults to explore, observe and learn about our natural world! Consider one of the areas listed below. Join us at the annual meeting, or send a short email to headwatersaudubon@gmail.com.
Short term/occasional commitments: (6 months or less): Provide support to YNP, plan and advertise special events, MHAS annual banquet, trail clean-up, repairs at NSC, newsletter development, web / social media
Long term commitment: (1-3 years): Committee to strategize a paid position at NSC, maintain financial records, direct programs, manage NSC as a board member.

BALLOT—No change to accept just mail/email in, write in if changes desired

President: Write in _____ **Vice President:** Jaime Thibodeaux _____

Treasurer: George-Ann Maxson _____ **Secretary:** Trista Little _____

BOARD (4 members): Michele Walker _____ Brick Fevold _____

Write in _____ Write in _____

Mail ballot to (MHAS P.O. Box 193, Bemidji, MN 56619) or emailed (headwatersaudubon@gmail.com) or you may vote in person at the spring social/annual meeting (see pg 4). All ballots must be received by May 1, 2013.

Bird in Focus: Varied Thrush

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*), which arguably looks like a more attractive cousin of the American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), is not normally found in Minnesota. This bird is a west coast/Rocky Mountain species, but they are considered a "rare but regular species in the Upper Midwest and the Northeast," and indeed each winter, a few of these birds are observed in Minnesota. Males are 8 to 10 inches long and have a slate gray back and a burnt-orange belly with an orange eye stripe and a gray necklace; the wings are primarily gray with two orange wing bars. The female is a muted version of the male. Similar to robins, these birds are often seen on the ground foraging for insects, but they also feed on seeds and berries.



Varied Thrush
(Photo: Wikipedia)

Varied Thrush breed in western North America from Alaska to northern California along the coast and in parts of Montana and Idaho. These birds breed in dense coniferous forests. Females lay 2 to 5 eggs in a cup nest made of grasses, leaves, twigs, and mosses. The nests are often ~10 ft above ground, near the trunk of a tree, and are typically found in conifers.

Populations of Varied Thrush appear to be doing well for the moment. They rely on large tracts (>40 acres) of old growth forest, thus there is concern as the west continues to be developed and as the climate changes, that the habitat preferred by these birds may decline. They also seem to be particularly vulnerable to window strikes and predation by cats.

I have encountered a number of people throughout north-central Minnesota that have had these birds visit their feeder. In winter, they appear to prefer suet, fruit, or nuts and are less often seen taking seeds. Want to attract these and other fruit eating birds like robins, waxwings, and more? Plant native fruiting shrubs like pin cherry, elderberry, highbush cranberry, and wild plum, to name a few! - **Christine Herwig**

Want to know more?

For sightings of rare birds in MN: <http://moumn.org/>
More about Varied Thrush: http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Varied_Thrush/lifehistory

Breeding Bird Atlas—Report Your Sightings

Do you have a bird that nests on your property? Do you know of a bird nest in one of the places you frequent? You can contribute to Minnesota's Breeding Bird Atlas (MN BBA). Here's how:

- 1) Go to the Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas (www.mnbba.org).
- 2) Register as a participant by clicking on "Enter Observations" and select "Register Now". You will need to create a username and password and have an email address. Don't have an email address? Contact Bonnie Sample (bsample@audubon.org), coordinator of the MN BBA for information.
- 3) Click on the "View Regions & Blocks" tab and zoom to the locations where you found a nest, and click.
- 4) Enter the date that you saw the nest, a breeding code (HINT: scroll to bottom to see options) and enter a breeding code for the species that you observed. Click Submit.
- 5) Enter any notes to verify your observation.

There is all sorts of helpful information under Materials on the main page of the website. What is a breeding bird atlas? A comprehensive survey conducted by citizen scientists (you!) of the distribution and breeding status of birds. This is the final year of this survey, so please contribute your sightings before September 1, 2013.



Minnesota
BREEDING
BIRD ATLAS



REMINDER: It is tax season, remember to consider a donation to the MN DNR's "Chickadee Checkoff". All donations support nongame wildlife. More information can be found at the DNR website: www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nongame/checkoff.html

Young Naturalist Program Information



Come to the 2013 Young Naturalist Programs for youth entering grades 2 -12. Students hike the extensive trail network, canoe the spring-fed waters of Spearhead Lake, identify plants and animals in woods and wetlands, and learn ecology by playing games, listening to stories, and crafting art. The Neilson Spearhead Center, located ~9 miles from Bemidji and just west of Lake Plantagenet, is a perfect setting for young people to experience Minnesota's Northwoods. Join **Dan Bera** and **Mary Comfort** this summer! Enrollment limited to 15 students (12 for Ecology Week) per session. We encourage carpooling and there is a 10% discount for Audubon members. Information on the programs and sessions and a registration form can be found on our website: www.spearheadMHAS.org

New at Spearhead—Fly Fishing and Tying Sessions

Interested in learning how to fly fish or tie flies? Join Daniel J. Rice for training seminars at the NSC. Dan has over 20 years of fly fishing experience catching fish in lakes, rivers, and saltwater in 4 countries. Each 1 hour session is \$10.00. All ages and experiences welcome. Bring your own equipment (fly rod and reel, waders or shorts and sandals, fly tying tools, sunglasses) if you have it, or we can supply if you don't. Dates will be set for Sunday afternoons in late May/early June. **Contact Dan with questions or registration (307-472-2906).**

Session 1: Considerations from land, basics of fly casting, equipment selection; safety for the skilled angler

Session 2: Knots, selecting flies and gear for water conditions, getting your feet wet (need valid fishing license)

Session 3: Fly tying and equipment, 4 basic fly designs, what fish see, woolly bugger - a fly for all fish

Session 4: Advanced fly tying, life cycles of insects/bait fish, match-the-hatch, tying nymph patterns, streamers, and poppers
Contact Dan Rice for [more details](#) on these sessions

Living in a Hallmark card—Caretaker's Winter Report

Winter will soon end here at Spearhead. We have been blessed with beautiful snowfalls leaving this already amazing place looking even more like a Hallmark card. Heavy snows make the driveway narrower than we would like as there is no place left for the plow to push it. (Please keep that in mind as you drive in and out.) As I look out on the lake this morning I see a couple of fish houses remaining. We have had a handful all winter along with regular visitors that use their portables several times a week. They report catching fish but not the size they caught last year. It is quiet here in winter. Our human visitors are enjoying snowshoeing; nuthatches, chickadees and woodpeckers enjoy our bird feeder; and the deer seem to like it when we snow blow paths in this very deep snow! We look forward to spring and seeing things come to life here at the NSC. **Julie & Lee Patten**

Plenty of Snow for our Snow Tracks Event

On February 18, 11 kids ages 8 to 11 had lots of energy and enthusiasm at our Snow Tracks event. Despite the weather, everyone stayed active and warm. Instead of wondering if there'd be enough snow for tracking, kids were literally swimming in deep snow. Thanks to Dan and Mary and to Lee and Julie for clearing paths, shoveling the lab roof, and making a success of the day. **From Dan:** We started with a discussion of snow tracks and identified regular toe prints to patterns that they make. Deep snow did not impede these intrepid little explorers. With bounding and leaping, we forged through waist deep snow discovering where the animals had been. There were tracks of squirrels, deer, porcupines, rabbits and even snow-bats! Snow sliding down the hill took us to the low area where we tried (unsuccessfully) swimming in snow. We had a snack and told a story. From there we headed to the circle of stumps and told the story of the Windego while listening to the wind, watching the snow pile up, and feeling our bones get colder. Next, a not so fast exploratory trip to the great ravine. This produced flips, dives, and tumbles in the snow. We also saw great examples of snow metamorphosis and potential bear dens. With snow piling up in our sleeves, we headed back up to the Lab. We ended the day with a fire, hot cocoa and snacks. A lot of good winter information and "warming" stories were shared, and everyone had a great time. Most everyone asked, "When are you going to do this again?" **Naturally - DAN**