



Abbey Holden

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Winter 2024

Carpenter St. Croix Valley Nature Center

Minnesota Campus
12805 St. Croix Trail South
Hastings, Minnesota 55033

Wisconsin Campus
279 South Cove Road
Hudson, Wisconsin 54016

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www.carpenternaturecenter.org

*"The mission of
Carpenter St. Croix Valley
Nature Center is fostering a
lifelong appreciation of the
natural world through
environmental education,
habitat conservation, and
outdoor experiences."*

IN THIS ISSUE:

Field Notes.....	1
Programs & Events	2-3
Phenology Calendar.....	4-5
People Profiles.....	6
Support CNC.....	7
Locations & Hours.....	8

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Field Notes By Jen Vieth

The New Year brings fresh snow, bright sunshine, and a clean slate. We've survived the longest nights of winter, and in a few short months, we'll be hearing the whistling calls of Tundra Swans migrating back to their Arctic breeding grounds. These swan flocks, some numbering as large as one hundred or more birds, are composed of family groups that migrate together. Tundra Swans mate for life and form a pair bond that lasts throughout the year, including migrations. While some may consider this family behavior to be the most "traditional," bird families are incredibly diverse.

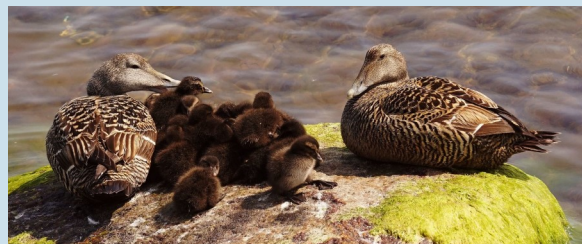
For example, while an Osprey pair will mate for life, returning to the same nest site year after year, the male and female take separate winter vacations. The male, female, and offspring all take different routes on their way south and overwinter in separate locations. Prairie Chickens and Sage Grouse use a lek system to form families. Males arrive and stake out territories on a "dance floor" with good visibility on which to perform their fancy footwork. Then, females show up and select a male based on his dance moves! Tundra Swans, Osprey, Prairie Chickens, and Sage Grouse all produce only one family per year, but many bird species, including Eastern Meadowlarks, can produce two or more broods per season with multiple partners. One of my favorite animal family structures belongs to Common Eiders; a beautiful, large, northern duck species known for their "aunties." Non-breeding females assist mothers by gathering around fresh hatchlings and protecting them from predators on their way to the water. These aunts and their adopted families group up with other family units to form crèches of up to 150 ducklings. These crèches will often stay together throughout the rearing period.

Like the Common Eiders, our human family units often involve aunts and uncles, who may, or may not, be related to us genetically. These aunts and uncles can have a huge positive influence on youngsters. In our human systems, families come in all shapes and sizes. From large, extended families, to nuclear families, and multi-friend units that act as families. At CNC we often refer to our Friends of CNC as a family. Gathering together at the summer solstice picnic with our Friends of CNC does feel like a huge family reunion. Like migrating swans, CNC's extended family is made up of many smaller volunteer family units. Each has its own personality and meeting cadence. From the large and gregarious bird banding family, to the quiet but hard-working habitat team, our CNC friends and family are making the St. Croix Valley a better place for all of us.

To quote a dear friend of CNC, "We wish you humor, love, and kindness in 2024."



Banding, telemetry, and other scientific methods have helped humans understand animal family systems in order to better inform conservation practices, which is especially important for species in decline like the Eastern Meadowlark. To help raise awareness about this species, we've chosen the Meadowlark as the mascot for our 2024 Year-End Giving Campaign. Follow "Max the Meadowlark" through the pages of this newsletter, as well as on our website and social media pages for fundraising updates, nature news, and more!



Two female Common Eiders (Somateria mollissima), a mother and an "auntie," care for a mixed group of chicks.



Upcoming Programs & Events

Minnesota Campus — 12805 St. Croix Trail South, Hastings, MN 55033
Wisconsin Campus—279 South Cove Road, Hudson, WI 54016



ALL PROGRAMS REQUIRE RESERVATIONS—Please call 651-437-4359

Frosty 40 Challenge January 1—March 19

Get outdoors this winter and walk, run, cross-country ski, or snowshoe **40 miles in 40 days**. Choose your own 40-day schedule. Days do not need to be consecutive, and activities can be done at any location.

Participation Options—Adult/Student Pricing

\$50/\$25 • Merchandise: Long-sleeve T-shirt
\$60/\$30 • Stocking cap + Long-sleeve T-shirt

Fees include registration, merchandise, 'Friends of CNC' benefits for one year including free snowshoe rentals, and a \$30 tax-deductible donation to CNC.

Proceeds from this fundraiser benefit environmental education and habitat conservation at CNC.

To register, visit tiny.cc/CNC-frosty-24.

Deadline February 1, 2024.

❄️ Want a fun way to accumulate Frosty 40 miles?
Attend these programs!

❄️ Minnesota Campus Trails & Ales

Jan 4 • Feb 8 • Mar 7 • 5:45—8:00 pm

Enjoy a guided hike at CNC followed by a tour and tasting at Spiral Brewery.

Look and listen for breeding owls during the January and February hikes, and enjoy a late winter sunset in March. This experience includes a beer flight for each participant. Must be 21+ to participate. Program Fee: \$25 per person.



SPIRAL BREWERY

FREE Family Ice Fishing at Lake Rebecca



Dushan Hanuska

Jan 6 & Feb 17 • 9:00—Noon

Learn to ice fish from the experts at these fun and educational catch-and-release programs. Bait, tackle, and poles provided. Programs are open to learners of all ages, and no fishing license required! Located at 415 Lock & Dam Rd in Hastings. For more info, contact Paige Marschall Bigler of Hastings Parks & Recreation at 651-480-6182. Registration at hastingsmn.gov/recregistration.



According to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, the Eastern Meadowlark population has decreased by 75% since 1970. While still considered common, Eastern Meadowlark numbers are declining steeply due to loss of their grassland habitat. Other prairie-dwelling birds are in trouble too. 720 million grasslands have been lost since 1970, an overall decline of 53%.

❄️ Bird Hikes

Minnesota Campus

Jan 6 • Feb 3 • Mar 2

9:00—11:00 am

Apr 6 • 8:00—10:00

Program Fee: \$5 or FREE for 'Friends of CNC,' SCVBC members, and high school students.

Wisconsin Campus

Jan 13 • 9:00—11:00 am

Meet at 279 South Cove Road

Feb 10 • 9:00—11:00 am

Meet at 300 East Cove Road

Mar 9 • 9:00—11:00 am

Meet at 279 South Cove Road

Apr 13 • 8:00—10:00 am

Meet at 300 East Cove Road

❄️ Snowshoe* Hikes

Join us this winter for guided snowshoe hikes with a naturalist. Warmup and rest after the hike and enjoy some hot chocolate or cider and popcorn provided. Snowshoes provided or bring your own, dress for the weather.

Saturday Morning Hikes

Program Fee: \$10 person or \$5 for 'Friends of CNC.' Free for Frosty 40 participants.

Minnesota Campus

Jan 13 & Feb 10 • 10:00 am—Noon

Wisconsin Campus

Jan 20 & Feb 3 • 10:00 am—Noon

Adult Evening Hikes

Program Fee: \$15 person or \$10 for 'Friends of CNC.' Free for Frosty 40 participants.

Minnesota Campus

Jan 26 & Feb 16 • 7:00—9:00 pm

Wisconsin Campus

Jan 27 & Feb 17 • 7:00—9:00 pm

*6+ inches of snow cover required. Programming will be modified based on the weather.

Preschool Story Time

Wisconsin Campus

Wednesdays • 10:00—11:00 am

Jan 17 • Feb 7 • Mar 13 • Apr 10

Minnesota Campus

Fridays • 10:00—11:00 am

Jan 19 • Feb 9 • Mar 15 • Apr 12

Listen to stories, spend time outdoors, make a craft, and meet live animals. Designed for ages 2-5. **Children must be accompanied by an adult.** Program Fee: \$6 per child or \$4 for 'Friends of CNC.' No charge for accompanying adult.

Topics

Jan — Winter Fun

Feb — Mitten Time

Mar — Syrup Season

Apr — Earth Day Hooray



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ALL PROGRAMS REQUIRE RESERVATIONS—Please call 651-437-4359

Minnesota Campus Public Bird Banding

Fridays • 8:30 am—Noon
Jan 26 • Feb 23 • Mar 29 • Apr 26

Watch CNC's expert bird banders as they catch, band, and release songbirds. Banding runs continuously, so visitors may come and go any time. Program Fee: FREE.

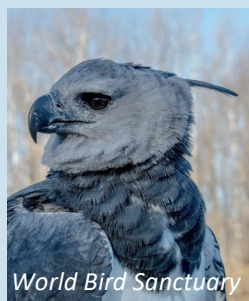
Minnesota Campus Masters of the Sky

Presented by the World Bird Sanctuary

February 24 & 25
11:00 am • 1:00 pm • 3:00 pm

The World Bird Sanctuary staff from St. Louis, Missouri, will be coming to CNC to present a captivating program about birds of prey. Learn about raptors from around the world and have the chance to experience live hawks, eagles, owls, falcons, and vultures in free-flight.

Non-refundable pre-payments are required. Purchase tickets online at tiny.cc/CNC-MOTS-24. Event Fee: \$15 or \$10 for 'Friends of CNC.'



Minnesota Campus Maple Syruping

Mar 16 & 23 • 1:00—3:00 pm

Welcome spring by joining the CNC staff in making maple syrup. Hike to the "sugarbush" to learn about the structure and function of trees, tap maple trees, watch the process of turning sap into syrup, and sample the final product. The program starts indoors, but be ready for spring snow and mud. Program Fee: \$8 per person or \$5 for 'Friends of CNC.'

Minnesota Campus SAWW Chainsaw Certification Training

Level 1 • Apr 3 • 8:00 am—4:30 pm
Level 2 • Apr 4 • 8:00 am—4:30 pm

SAWW Training is an umbrella organization that promotes safe and efficient chainsaw use, both professionally and recreationally. Classes will be taught by Nathan Stanford of Forest Safety Instruction. Register for one or both sessions. Must be Level 1 certified to participate in Level 2 training. Program Fee: \$120 per participant per session. Convenient online registration at tiny.cc/CNC-SAWW-24.



Eastern Meadowlarks are particularly vulnerable to population loss because they are ground nesting birds. Some of the ways CNC protects these birds include timing habitat management (such as prairie burning and mowing) to avoid breeding season, refraining from the use of pesticides that would decrease their food source, employing leash policies for all pets on trails to decrease instances of predation, and more!

Spring Birding Primer April 6 • 8:00 am

In partnership with the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

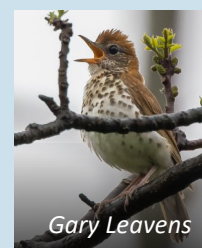
The annual Spring Primer is co-hosted by CNC and the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union. Each spring we focus on brushing up on bird I.D., learning migration, habitat, bird conservation, and more. This event is held via ZOOM, and participation is free, but donations to both non-profit organizations are welcomed. **Pre-registration is required to receive the ZOOM link.** Sign up at tiny.cc/primer-24. Registration also available by contacting Jennifer at 651-437-4359 ext. 108 or jennifer@carpenternaturecenter.org, or email Susan at honeywarbler@gmail.com.

Hastings Area Birding Festival

In partnership with the Hastings Environmental Protectors

April 20 • 8:00 am

Celebrate birds and conservation at the CNC MN Campus. Attend classes that introduce you to raptors, birding, bird banding, and go on guided bird trips through the Hastings area. Register at tiny.cc/bird-fest-24.



The Youth Birding Competition is a highlight of the festival. Young birders are encouraged to team up and count all the bird species they find. Register teams at tiny.cc/birding-comp-24.

Visit our website for more info!

Wisconsin Campus Planting Party

April 27 • 10:00 am—2:00 pm

Celebrate Arbor day by planting a tree! We will be planting 250 native trees and shrubs as a part of our ongoing habitat restoration projects. All ages are welcome! Shovels and gloves available, or bring your own. Come dressed for the weather and with sturdy footwear and a water bottle. No registration required. Stay for the whole day or drop in when you can.

Minnesota Campus Summer Camps



REGISTRATION OPENS JANUARY 2, 2024



Visit carpenternaturecenter.org/summercamp for more info including camp topics, dates, and fees.

People Profiles

On behalf of the staff at CNC, we would like to take time to express our gratitude for the contributions of those who help us serve the communities on both sides of the beautiful St. Croix River.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Grace Johnston · Marty Lynch
Erin and Ella Mahnke · Alan Maloney
Aaron McGuire · Tess Zahradka
Sammi Weigel

Meet our Interns



Alyssa Spreckels—Education Intern

Alyssa is a senior at the University of Wisconsin River Falls majoring in Social Work and minoring in Psychology. This has been a new partnership between UWRF and CNC, which is helping expand social work knowledge in the field of environmental social work as well as bringing a new perspective into our facilities. This was the perfect internship for Alyssa as she loves new challenges and strongly values our natural environment. So far, she has enjoyed learning more about nature, caring for our animal ambassadors, and participating in environmental education. In her spare time, she enjoys hobbies such as rock picking, reading, writing, and exploring new places.



Joseph Hulet—Education Intern

Joe is a recent graduate from the University of Minnesota Duluth with a Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Environmental and Outdoor Education. He enjoys being outdoors in all capacities, from canoe camping to bird watching to tracking animals in the snow. During his internship, he has enjoyed assisting with on-site and outreach programs, as well as working with the animal ambassadors; specifically the wood turtle and Red-tailed Hawk. With the experience and knowledge that he has gained at CNC, Joe hopes to continue instilling a love and appreciation for the natural world in all people, including himself.

Donor Spotlight

The Armbruster Family

The Armbrusters have lived on the border of CNC's Wisconsin Campus for nearly 14 years and have volunteered in many ways during that time. They help to pick up trash around the Wisconsin Campus in the Spring and assist with events such as the Art Festival. They began officially volunteering to do animal care in 2019 at the Minnesota Campus and now take care of the animals at the Wisconsin Campus every week. The kids, Afton and Evia, enjoy interacting with all the critters, seeing them each week and caring for them with skill beyond their years.



In addition to contributing to CNC by volunteering, Ryan and Sarah are also active 'Friends of CNC.' As a family, they enjoy hiking and exploring, skating, and spending time on the St. Croix River boating and fishing. Thank you, Ryan, Sara, Afton, and Evia for your dedication and enthusiasm for protecting the natural world. We are deeply appreciative of all you do to support our mission!



When families like the Armbrusters donate to CNC, their generosity funds educational programming, habitat conservation, and wildlife research that not only benefits the environment, but also our human communities. Human health is directly linked to the health of our planet, both physically, and mentally.

Help Support CNC

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, Carpenter Nature Center heavily relies on the support of dedicated volunteers, hardworking interns, a passionate Board of Directors, and generous donors.

Volunteer Spotlight

Wenda Bowe

In this issue, we are proud to shine the Volunteer Spotlight on Wenda Bowe. Wenda started volunteering in 2014 and has well over 150 hours. She has helped with many special events from the Apple Blossom Races, Masters of the Sky, the Fall Raptor Release, and Apple Fest. She has been a Greeter at our MN Campus but now a days you'll most likely find her as a Visitor Greeter at our WI Campus Visitor Center. Thanks, Wenda, for sharing your time, talent, and smiling face with the staff and visitors to CNC. You are a delightful Volunteer and we are happy to have you as a member of our Volunteer Corps.



Volunteer Corner

Is your New Year's resolution to start volunteering? CNC may be just the place for you. If you want to become a CNC Volunteer, please message Volunteer Coordinator alan@carpenternaturecenter.org and start down the road to becoming part of our team.

Featured Volunteer Opportunities

Collect Maple Sap – One sure sign of Spring is the maple sap starts running. During the month of March we will be tapping maple trees and making tasty maple syrup. If the sap runs a lot, we will need help with this process – you'll be hauling sap from the woods to the Lodge and helping to boil it down to syrup. This activity takes place at the Trailside Lodge on the MN Campus.

Wisconsin Campus Highway Cleanup—April 15 • 5:30 pm
Minnesota Campus Highway Cleanup—April 17 • 5:30 pm
CNC will supply safety vests and garbage bags, you supply enthusiasm and your favorite litter grabber/poker for helping cleanup trash along the highways that runs past CNC property. Please call 651-437-4359 to let us know you'll be joining us at either or both sites.

Did you know that 'Friends of CNC' and Volunteers receive FREE snowshoe rentals?



Not a Volunteer or 'Friend'? No problem! Snowshoe rentals are just \$5 per pair.

Rentals are two hours in length, and snowshoes must be used on CNC grounds. 6+ inches of snow cover is required. Walk-ins welcome, or call 651-437-4359 to reserve your shoes in advance! This is highly recommended for groups.

Memorials & Honorariums

We wish to express our appreciation for the following gifts:

In Memory of

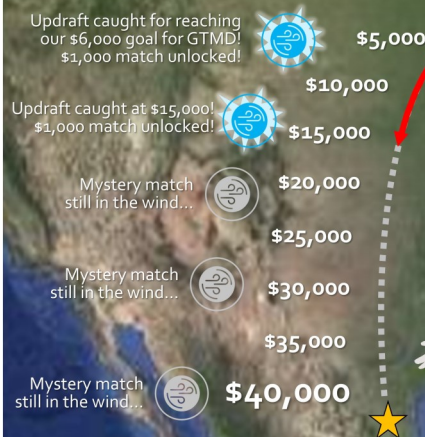
Liz Brekke from Karen Bartig,
Andrew Douglas Clare from Douglas Clare,
Ken Fagerlie from Mary Ahern,
Bruce Holcomb from Greg & Jennifer Vieth,
Kerry M. Larson from Mary Ahern,
Mrs. MacDonald from Arthur Lindquist,
Bob Olyphant from Cathy Olyphant & Bart Hoekstra,
Jeanne Nymann, and Yvonne Szatkowski
Polly Porter from Marilyn Rybowskiak
and Greg & Jennifer Vieth,
Doug Stein from Kirk Manske,



MIGRATION MARVELS

Help "Max the Meadowlark" on their international migration!
Now through January 15, contribute to Carpenter Nature Center to help us access matching funds that support wildlife research, habitat conservation, and environmental education!

MATCHING FUNDS GENEROUSLY PLEDGED BY THE CNC VOLUNTEER BOARD OF DIRECTORS!



Fundraising progress as of 12/1/23 | **\$15,105 + \$2,000 = \$17,105**
RAISED MATCHED TOTAL



Follow "Max the Meadowlark" this holiday season for fundraising updates, announcements about matching funds, information about ways to give, and much more!
Scan the code or visit tiny.cc/CNC-quick-donate to contribute!



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Locations and Hours

Carpenter Nature Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with property on both the Minnesota and Wisconsin sides of the scenic St. Croix River.

For more information about our properties, please visit www.carpenternaturecenter.org.



Minnesota Campus

12805 St. Croix Trail South
Hastings, MN 55033
(651) 437—4359

**Trails, buildings, parking lots, and front gates
open daily from 8:00am—4:30pm.**

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and Easter.



Wisconsin Campus

279 South Cove Road
Hudson, WI 54016
(651) 437—4359 ext. 114

**Visitor center, paved parking, and front gates
open daily from 8:00am—4:30pm.**

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and Easter.

Trails open year-round from sunrise to sunset.

