



ARBORETUM BIRD DAY

April 25, 2026 | 6 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Organization & Instructor Bios:

Saint Paul Bird Alliance



The Saint Paul Bird Alliance’s mission is to engage a diverse community in enjoying, understanding and protecting birds and the habitats all living beings need to thrive. Founded in 1945, the alliance is a chapter of the National Audubon Society and has 2,300 friends, supporters and partners that are passionate about improving the world for birds and the habitats they need.

MYBirdClub



Since 2014, MYBirdClub, a 501(c)(3), has built a strong track record of creating a fun, welcoming club environment while teaching kids and adults about birds, their habitats, natural history and conservation. The program gets kids outdoors and connects them with nature and peers, experiences shown to reduce stress, boost mood and even support academic success. MYBirdClub also benefits birds by inspiring the next generation of birders and conservationists. It fosters a lasting commitment to care for birds and empowers participants to take practical conservation actions in everyday life, from community science projects to bird-friendly coffee choices and planting native species.

Birdability



Birding is for everyone, but it’s not always easy. Through education, outreach and advocacy, Birdability works to ensure the birding community and the outdoors are welcoming, inclusive, safe and accessible for everybody. We focus on people with mobility challenges, blindness or low vision, chronic illness, intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental illness and those who are neurodivergent, deaf or hard of hearing or who have other health concerns. In addition to current birders, we strive to introduce birding to people with disabilities and other health concerns who are not yet birders so they too can experience the joys of birding.

The Bell Museum



The Bell Museum is Minnesota’s state natural history museum, founded in 1872. Their scientific collections contain over one million specimens, representing every county in Minnesota and various locales around the globe. The museum is part of the University of Minnesota’s College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences.

Urban Bird Collective



The Urban Bird Collective was founded in 2018 to support birdwatchers of all different skill levels in leading walks in our own neighborhoods. They are working to create a welcoming and inclusive space for all communities to come out and explore birding and the outdoors. These communities include Black, Indigenous, People of Color and the LGBTQ Communities and more. Urban Collective wants all communities to feel the benefits of being out in natural green spaces in our various Twin City neighborhoods and beyond. They are passionate about birdwatching and the protection of the environment and are here to support others in developing their birding skills while they continue to improve their own.

The Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota



The Raptor Center's mission is to ensure the health of raptors and the world we share. Their specialized hospital admits around 1,000 birds of prey each year — with the goal to rehabilitate and release them back to the wild. They also train future generations of veterinarians and wildlife rehabilitators, conduct ground-breaking research on raptors and the environment, and educate and inspire thousands of people each year through our unique educational programming.

Guides & Presenters:

Heather Boschke



Heather Boschke is a Minnesota author, artist and birder! Her love of birds began in childhood, when her grandpa nicknamed her Heather Feather. She created the Little Birdie Buddies book series and has drawn more than 150 bird illustrations — each one inviting kids of all ages to enjoy nature, find little birdie buddies in the wild and celebrate what makes every bird (and every person) special.

Julie Brophy



Julie and Amy Dean Simso teamed up to launch MYBirdClub in 2014. Julie has engaged thousands of students and teachers in learning about the seasonal migration of birds and other species in her work at with Journey North, an online education program. A passionate local birder and Naturalist herself, Julie has also been a co-leader of bird and nature walks with Matt Schuth at the Arboretum for 10+ years.

Monica Bryland



Monica has been birding for almost 25 years and always wanted more BIPOC folks and LGBT folks in the birding world, joining her on walks and building a more diverse, inclusive birding community. Monica loves sharing her passion for birding with others. The cedar waxwing is Monica's favorite bird: before she started birding she didn't know it existed and then the world just opened up to the amazing birds we have in Minnesota and right here in the Twin Cities.

Neil Carlson



Neil Carlson serves as a board member and treasurer for the St. Paul Bird Alliance with a focus on bird-safe building design. He enjoys participating and leading bird walks. He enjoys nature photography as a member of the infocus camera club. He serves as a pollinator ambassador for the Bee lab and volunteers as a Certified Master Naturalist with UMN Extension.

Amy Collins



Dr. Amy Collins joined the University of Minnesota Rochester faculty in 2022, and teaches academic and personal success courses. She is a serious birdwatcher and Minnesota Master Naturalist.

Dudley Edmonson



Dudley Edmondson is an author, public speaker and photographer specializing in nature and the outdoors. He is an avid outdoorsman and passionate about getting everyone outside — for birding, photography, hiking or more! He is the author of, "Black and Brown Faces in America's Wild Places.". His wildlife photography career spans three decades and his work has been featured in galleries and in nearly 100 publications around the world.

Mark Paller



Mark is a retired physician and former Executive Vice Dean of the University of Minnesota Medical School. An avid outdoorsman, he discovered birding later in life when muscular dystrophy eroded his pursuits of canoeing and backpacking. With a fully charged battery on his electric wheelchair, he can go 15 miles on a bird-watching trail.

Dr. Sushma Reddy



Dr. Reddy is an Associate Professor at the University of Minnesota, and the Breckenridge Chair of Ornithology. Her lab's research covers topics in evolutionary biology including phylogenetics, biogeography, molecular evolution, and conservation. They focus on the evolution of birds using DNA, morphology, and geography, and strive to improve knowledge of biodiversity across the avian tree of life.

Kim Russell



As a child, my life in an isolated suburban environment was sterile and disconnected. As an adult, my discovery of nature opened up a whole new world for me, and led me to grow and discover parts of myself that I didn't even know existed.

I have created sculptural work for installations in national wildlife refuges, libraries, schools, and hospitals, including an installation of 34 life-sized flying bird sculptures for the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN. I particularly enjoy the close relationships I have with botanical gardens, national wildlife refuges, and sanctuaries that sell my reproductions through their gift shops.

Matt Schuth



Matt is an experienced naturalist with decades of familiarity with the Arboretum's flora and fauna. This is the time of year for bluebells, Minnesota dwarf trout lily and mayapple; the early time frame provides the best chance to catch the sights and sounds of yellow rumped warblers, kinglets, thrushes, waterfowl and a variety of sparrows, and to learn about their nesting and mating habits.

Amy Simso Dean



Founder of MYBirdClub (Minnesota Youth Bird Club), Amy is a birder and parent passionate about connecting with kids' natural curiosity about birds and nature. MYBirdClub is an after school club that engages elementary students in birding.

Stan Tekiela



Naturalist, wildlife photographer and writer Stan Tekiela is the originator of the popular state-specific field guides such as Birds of (state name) Field Guide, Wildflowers of (state name), and Trees of (state name). Over the past three decades Stan has authored more than 130 field guides, nature appreciation books and wildlife audio CDs for nearly every state in the nation, presenting many species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, trees, wildflowers and cacti.

Don Tredinnick



Don is a professional photographer who started Frozen Hiker Photography in late 2012 with the goal of providing classes and workshops for people wanting to improve their photographic skills. His goal remains the same and is having just as much fun now as he did back when he started. Don offers a number of different learning opportunities designed to meet different needs and budgets.