



# TIMBERLINES

W. J. Breckenridge Chapter  
Izaak Walton League  
November-December 2020

[www.breckenridgeikes.org](http://www.breckenridgeikes.org)



## Champlin Park High School Buckthorn removal project

Matthew Hendrickson, the Outdoor Adventure teacher at Champlin Park High School, has many times brought his students to the Breckenridge Chapter for gun safety classes and to help us pull buckthorn. Last month he asked if some of our Chapter members could help with some especially large buckthorn in the area that he and his students had been working on (near the pond on the east end of the school grounds). These large, tree like buckthorn needed chain saws to cut and a chemical treatment of the stumps to keep them from resprouting. Chapter member Tom Reid (Reid's Lawn and Tree Service) donated the chemicals and the City of Brooklyn Park agreed to haul away the large brush piles. Dean Halonen, Tim Johnson, Barb Franklin and Jim Arnold met Matt after school on

October 21 to cut and poison the invasive plants. We added our cuttings to the many piles already cut by the Outdoor Adventure students. Some buckthorn still remains. Matt hopes he and his students will finish the removal next spring or fall and then add native plants around the pond.

*Jim Arnold*



## Remembering Bill Stein

"A longtime member of the Izaak Walton League, Bill had a deep commitment to the environment. He also devoted his time and talent to the Champlin community and the First Congregational United Church of Christ, the Masons, VFW, American Legion, and Toastmasters International. And through it all, Bill never stopped drawing. In fact, he was working on a Hamm's Bear illustration up until his death. He is remembered as a loving father by his family; and as a good friend to virtually everyone he met. A memorial service is planned for Spring, 2021. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the Animal Humane Society, [animalhumanesociety.org](http://animalhumanesociety.org); or Children's Home Society of Minnesota at [chlss.org](http://chlss.org), or the Minnesota Izaak Walton League at: [minnesotaikes.org](http://minnesotaikes.org)" *Minneapolis Star Tribune*



## **Condensed Minutes - Breckenridge Chapter IWLA BOD meeting November 11, 2020**

Members present on Zoom call: Steve Schaust, Tim Johnson, Barb Franklin, Dick Brown, Wendy Steele, Jerry Steele, Karen Ostenso, Jim Arnold, Joe Klohs.

With many conservation organizations deserving of money, a motion was passed to donate \$200 to the Ike's MN 2020 Clean Water Annual Appeal. Joe proposed forming a subcommittee to identify and budget a target amount to give to conservation causes. 2021 Budget Committee volunteers: Karen, Joe and Jim.

Steve cautioned that it will be months before we can resume normal activities due to COVID-19 and we all need to continue to follow Stay Safe MN guidelines.

Rentals for the holiday season have been cancelled for the most part. Any future renters will be asked to sign an acknowledgement of Stay Safe MN guidelines in place the day of their event.

Jim will contact our snow plower from last year to inform him we will call him on an as needed basis due to the low volume of use. Joe will plow the drive with his tractor if needed for smaller snowfalls. He encourages anyone to drive through periodically to pack down the snow in the interim as well.

MN Ikes Division and others are providing virtual programs on Zoom. They will be advertised on our Facebook page and via our email list. Members are encouraged to attend. Any suggestions for future speakers can be submitted to board members or to our voicemail number 763-561-5364.

Mary Ellen reported that 23 members have renewed for 2021 at this time. A permanent treasurer is still needed. Currently we have Tim Johnson and Jim Arnold serving as acting Treasurers in this role.

Joe gave brief Banfill Island deer hunting update (taking more bucks than antlerless deer). He met with Jody Yungers, City of Brooklyn Park's Director of Parks and Recreation. He proposed to have a sub-committee to work with her to share information. Subcommittee volunteers: Joe Klohs, Dennis Leslie and Steve Schaust. Bow Hunter Assn would provide weekly updates.

Spring Projects (Extend invitation to all members to participate)

- Yard light solution for parking lot.
- Deer enclosure: 7' fence to protect from over browsing by deer.
- Steve has new geocache logs in progress, waiting for them to dry out and should be ready to be installed by spring.
- Jerry will be working on a small "birdhouse" type holder for brochures, membership applications, etc.
- Bathroom floor problems are being worked on under the supervision of Jerry. Joe repaired the coffee pot cord.
- Invasive Garlic mustard pull

Memorial for Wes Hendrickson: Dick, Joe, Jerry and Jim will look at bench in Doris Kemp Park and bring back recommendations next meeting.

Thanks to:

- Karen for sorting through and organizing a bunch of old IWL documentation.
- Joe for blowing out leaves on entire driveway.
- Tim for pulling lots of buckthorn on the property.

### **Ann Vetter Seidenkranz**

Our condolences to Mary Ellen Vetter (our Membership Director), whose daughter, Ann, died October 24 in Florida. According to her obituary, she was a great lover of nature, gardens, animals, British television shows and opera.

## Diversified couples – and friends

Within our mini-woods and prairie nestled next to the lower Champlin Mill Pond, we have opportunities to view many natural oddities that most people never experience.

First it was noticing Wood Ducks a few years ago using our handrails to the dock as self-propelled escalators to reach the feeding area in our driveway. This practice started over 20 years ago. In fall about 25-50 Wood Ducks come for a free corn feed which supplements the Aug/Sep acorn feast. Some fly in, some walk up the bank and considerable numbers “walk the rails” to access the area. In spring return we can always tell the “old timers” as they use the rails as they did in preceding years. Many of the newcomers soon catch on. For some reason, this fall started out with very few fall feeders until extremely late September, but by October first there seemed to be as many as usual, varying from 25-50 most days.

About 10 years ago we started seeing a half dozen Hooded Mergansers hanging around the pond in early spring. For 3 years we observed a male Merganser courting a female Wood Duck. When the ducks came up to feed, he followed. We never noticed him eating corn, but always pursued a female Woody. He would even fight a male Woody in order to herd the female to “his corner”. This lasted for about a week for 3 years before he gave up.

Two years ago a flock of 7-8 Turkeys came to our place in the Fall. They stayed around for several weeks perching occasionally on top of our woodshed. They roosted at night in our tallest trees, but they changed location about every 2 or 3 days. One day they all disappeared, except one. This one is a hen, and she has been with us since then. Now that the leaves are off the trees, we can see where she roosts some nights. We call her “Turkalena” and wrote a story about her for our 2 great grandkids (5 and 10 years) last year.

This Spring 2 adult doe Deer showed up with 3 spotted fawns. They came and went several times over 3 weeks. They also like corn and licked bird feed from our feeders. About September first a young doe started coming to our feeding grounds

several times a day. She does a lot of comical frolicking, especially in the morning. About the third week in October we noticed she was often in the presence of Turkalena. In the last week of October we now notice the Deer following Turkey, seemingly to make friends or from curiosity. Turkalena for the most part ignores the Deer and slowly meanders away. Sometimes if the Deer gets too close, she will flap her wings a couple of times as if to say, “don’t get so familiar.” The Deer seems only moderately surprised. They both seem like lonesome folks and could benefit from being an “odd couple”.

We have noticed when the Woodies come up to feed, they shy away somewhat from both Deer and Turkey. We feel truly fortunate to have lived here for 75 years and to have seen such odd phenomena. We are afraid that when our time is up in this place of natural beauty, it will not bode well for the wildlife friends we have made in our private Suburban Refuge. Nature always takes it in the rear when the public takes over. In the future a smaller percentage of people will be able to live our experiences because of increasing population.

Last night (10/27/20) the lower pond froze over except the northern tip. Many geese stayed there overnight, but left about 9:30 a.m. A few geese are left standing on the ice. I think the Woodies have left for the South. We still have Turkalena, many grey squirrels, one black squirrel and one white squirrel which we call Blackie and Whitey. Maybe the Deer will stay. We have many feeder birds. We will not be alone for the winter!

*Dick Brown*



*Hooded Merganser*



*Dell Eriksson came across the article below from the Conservation Volunteer from 1967 and Dick Brown thought it was apropos for today. Less than five years later, calls were made to stop U.S. population growth.*

*Have you observed the birds Breck writes about observing in our State Parks over 50 years ago?*

## ISLANDS OF REFUGE

WALTER J. BRECKENRIDGE

Originally published in the  
*Minnesota Conservation Volunteer*

May/June 1967

*The noted Minnesota ornithologist, Dr. Walter J. Breckenridge, expresses his deep concern over the loss of our natural environment. Dr. Breckenridge is director, Museum of Natural History, University of Minnesota.*

With my intense concern over the survival of our native plants and animals, I often find myself thinking of our State Parks as fast becoming islands of refuge for our harassed wildlife in a sea of unfriendly environment — an environment undergoing a very major face-lifting for the sole purpose of supporting an already overcrowded but ever-increasing world population of human beings. This, of course, is not exactly true now but with present trends it may well prove to be the case within a few short years.

Whether or not man's bulldozing tactics do result in bringing about such large scale elimination of our natural life and landscape may well depend on the vigor with which our dedicated, farseeing conservationists act within the next few years. With all the pressures for exploitation of our land, encouragement does come occasionally with the realization that scattered among the hordes of exploiters are at least a few energetic young people who have a genuinely dedicated concern about preserving native wilderness and are willing to "fight rather than switch" into the exploiters' ranks.

For the wild-lifer interested in learning about the natural life of our State Parks, getting familiar with the "Schedule of Events" is like checking over the athletic calendar of a college. There one knows that football games will enliven the fall period;

basketball and hockey, the winter season; and baseball and track, the spring. But exactly what the details will be in each event is what makes following the sports events exciting.

In our parks, outdoorsmen know that blooming flowers, returning birds, arousing hibernators, and spawning fish mark the spring; that seed production, nesting birds and the growth of everything living characterizes the summer; and that ripening fruits, coloring foliage, and southward migrating birds go with fall.

The unpredictable details of these events are the finding of choice, rare species, or the probing into and the discovery involved in answering the hows, whys and wheres of all this life's struggle to survive— a struggle that, for the most part, goes on unobserved. The answers to all these hows, whys and wheres for all of this varied wildlife from viruses, bacteria, molds, and algae to deer, bears, and timber wolves really make up the field of ecology. No wonder this is considered a most complicated and challenging science!

For our purposes here, I am narrowing the subject from "wildlife" to "birds", with particular attention to answering a few of the ornithological neophyte's questions of where and when we should visit which State Park to find this or that bird. To begin with, a large proportion of our birdlife is migratory. Our present total list of bird species occurring in Minnesota is about 362. Of this large group, only about 45 are considered "permanent residents." All the remaining 317 species are migratory. Since this means, then, that all these birds must move about more or less extensively sometime during the year, it follows that they must have suitable places to move to, or through, for feeding and resting in order to survive.

Not all migrants, of course, will consider any one area as favorable habitat. In other words, different areas meet the needs of different species. Everyone knows that ducks and geese like water and woodpeckers require trees. But the hair-splitting distinctions made by some birds in their habitat preferences actually goes far beyond what the average observer might suspect.

For instance, the Long-billed Marsh Wren lives in marshes, but only among coarse marsh plants, such as cattails and quill reeds, while the very similar Short-billed Marsh Wren, although living also in marshes, will nest only in the less coarse, marsh grasses and sedges. The Ruddy Duck nests among bulrushes in marshy ponds and shuns areas of very similar cattails or quill reeds. On the other hand, I have found the adaptable Chipping Sparrow living from low lying sphagnum and tamarack bogs to almost treeless mountain tops. These unpredictable characteristics of many wildlife species adds much to the interest of getting acquainted with them.



*Ruddy Ducks*

Since different species tend to prefer different conditions, the park naturalists, in preparing bird lists of the various parks, indicates the types of places where the various species are most apt to be found. For instance, the 134 species of birds listed as found in Gooseberry State Park along the North Shore of Lake Superior have their habitats divided into:

(1) Open fields, (2) Birch-Poplar, (3) Cedar-Balsam, (4) Lake Shores, (5) Banks and Stream bed of Gooseberry River, (6) Wet Meadows, (7) Alder and Hazel-brush and (8) Unclassified. The less complex, more level, habitats of Helmer-Myre State Park near Albert Lea are classed simply as (1) Woodlands, (2) Lake and Lake Shores and (3) Grasslands.

The birds of Itasca State Park have come under closer, more continuous observation than those of any other state park due to the presence of the University Biological Station and because this is the only park having two summer resident park naturalists. The published checklist for this park lists 166 species as occurring in seven different habitats. Like the list for Gooseberry this also indicates whether a species is common or rare, and whether it nests in the park or is a migrant through the area. Similar lists are being compiled for visitor use in all the parks where naturalists are provided.

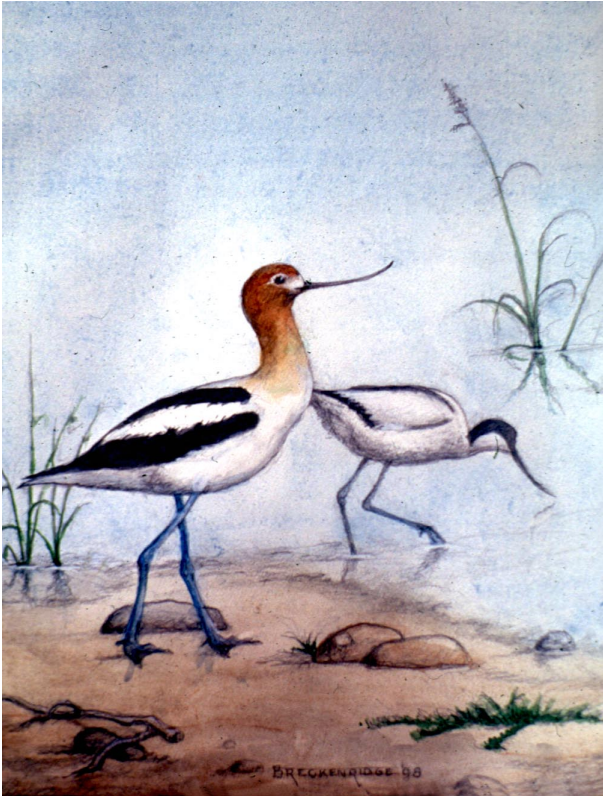
To further complicate getting to know our park birds, the species vary from region to region, as well as between habitats within each region. The prairies typified by some of our western parks, such as Blue Mounds and Buffalo River, still harbor a few Marbled Godwits and Upland Plover. On rare occasions here, a few pairs of the colorful Chestnut-collared Longspurs are found, as well as the buffy little Baird's Sparrow with its bright tinkling song. Other rare birds in these Minnesota prairie parks include scattered remnants of our once vast population of Pinnated Grouse (or Prairie Chickens) and rarely, on some isolated pond, a colony of little Eared Grebes giving their "whetting" flickerlike calls may be located by those who are "in the know" about where to look and what to listen for.



*Prairie Chickens*



Strongly alkaline prairie ponds induce the gorgeously beautiful Avocet to nest occasionally. Only on the prairies can one hope to find these exciting species, and it is my hope that some much larger samples of virgin prairies may soon be added to our State Park System since present prairie preserves are much too small.



*Avocet*

In the pine-spruce-balsam forests of the north, such parks as Scenic, Itasca, and McCarthy Beach are striving to preserve for posterity some of the characteristic northern woodland birds as the forests gradually shrink from around them under the pressures of human population intrusions. Here we may see the quiet, confiding, Spruce Grouse or Fool Hen with its mysterious, seldom-seen courtship dance, and the splendid Goshawk. Destructive? Yes! But one of nature's balancing agents and a thrilling species to have the rare privilege of encountering. The Gray or Canada Jay, the Boreal Chickadee, and the Raven are all hardy Northerners seldom if ever encountered south of these northern forest lands at any season.

Turning to the southeast, we have Whitewater and Beaver Valley State Parks, still encompassing good examples of the once beautiful wooded valleys, now again protected from erosion by the re-established

forests covering the slopes and at least some of the uplands.

In this corner of Minnesota, park visitors have a good chance of finding some of the unusual southern birds which have pushed their ranges northward to reach their northern limits within southern Minnesota ... An occasional Carolina Wren gives its almost Cardinal-like song. The Yellow-crowned Night Heron and little Snowy Egret may rarely be found about wooded pond margins. Whitewater Park itself may well be a last stronghold for the Bob-white Quail, which is having such a difficult time surviving in southern Minnesota. Bell's Vireo, the Red-bellied Woodpecker, Louisiana Waterthrush and Bewick's Wren are also southerners to be ferreted out here in southeastern Minnesota.



*Spruce Grouse*

Still another important variable affecting our birdlife is the factor of extreme seasonal changes occurring here in the midcontinent. A number of hardy finches, the Evening and Pine Grosbeaks, Redpolls, Snow Buntings and Lapland Longspurs all move south in numbers in winter. The Great Gray Hawk, Snowy Owls, Bohemian Waxwings and Northern Shrikes, vary greatly in numbers from year to year, with some winter seasons seeing what can rightly be called "invasions" of unusual numbers of these species.

Around Lake Superior, a few hardy arctic waterbirds appear only in winter: Glaucous and Iceland Gulls, Long-tailed and Parasitic Jaegers, Red-throated Loons, Old Squaw Ducks and several of the Scoters, and on occasion, an Eider among the ducks. While the Bald Eagle nests sparingly in northern Minnesota, a few Golden Eagles appear here only as winter visitors from the western mountains. A unique visitor, the arctic Gyrfalcon is reported in winter, mainly in the

open country which most closely resembles its treeless arctic tundra nesting grounds.

Then there is a group of transient species, seen here only during short periods in spring and fall as they pass through Minnesota to and from their nesting in the far north. This group contains many of the rarer species — ones that make red-letter days for the ardent field observer. Among these transients are many smaller song birds, not usually thought of as strong fliers, which nest in the Canadian forests or even up beyond the tree limit on the arctic tundras. They pass through Minnesota when they move south for the winter.

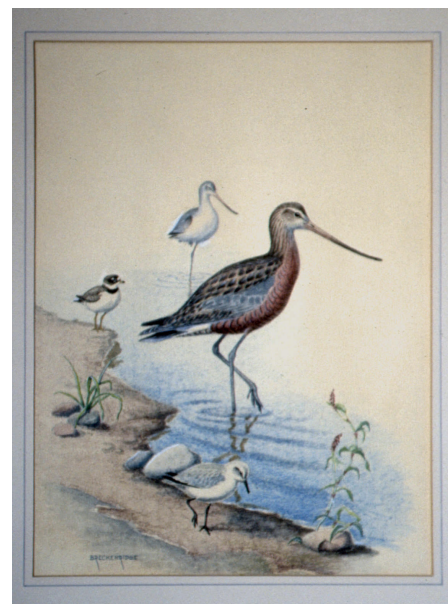
The Rusty Blackbird, Harris's, White-crowned, Gambel's and Fox Sparrows, several races of Horned Larks, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and many of the bright Warblers, are seen here in Minnesota only for short periods in spring and again, in their less brilliant plumages, in fall. Among the larger species, all the geese, (except a few large Canada geese, and a majority of the ducks, are transients here. The huge Whistling Swan, large, spectacular flocks of which migrate westward from Chesapeake Bay on the Atlantic coast in spring, may drop in at Fort Snelling, Lake Shetek and Frontenac State Parks.

The same is true of the Sandhill Crane, trumpeting flocks of which may be heard passing high overhead, or alighting briefly in or near some of the western prairie parks such as, Blue Mound, Buffalo River and Lake Bronson. Some of these birds have wintered in Texas or New Mexico, and are known to pass on over Canada and Alaska crossing the Bering Strait to nest in eastern Siberia.

One of the most exciting groups of these transients is made up of the shorebirds—those champion long distance fliers, many of which winter in South America and nest in the Arctic. The muddy lake and pond shores in such parks as Blue Mound, Lake Shetek, and Helmer Myre are favorite resting and feeding places for Dowitchers, Stilt Sandpipers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Black-bellied Plover and Hudsonian Godwits — all enroute to or from their nesting in the far arctic regions. Salt Lake just south of Big Stone State Park is an outstanding stopover for many of these travelers. This small but choice area is slated to be preserved by the bird watching fraternity of the state as soon as certain local opposition to the move subsides.

A hiker walking the sandy beaches bordering the Mississippi River at Frontenac State Park often encounters active little Sanderlings and strikingly marked Ruddy Turnstones — two of the greatest travelers in the world. Nesting in the arctic, these two stronged-winged fliers may turn up on extensive sandy beaches anywhere in the world even to Cape of Good Hope at the south tip of Africa or about sunny Australian shores. The realization that the tiny, Robin-sized waders in front of you may have only recently scampered ahead of rolling breakers on the beaches of Tierra del Fuego at the south tip of South America makes for a hard- to-express feeling of awe and respect for their tremendous travel abilities.

After this brief review of the rather confusing, shuttling movements of our state bird populations, it becomes obvious that our State Parks can play an increasingly vital role in providing suitable places of refuge for perpetuating these populations. It further becomes obvious that this is truly an international conservation problem. Our natural environment in which all these varied forms of life evolved is being more and more rapidly eroded away as our means of transportation become more efficient. Even our remotest areas are succumbing to the auto, the airplane, the helicopter, the motor boat, and most recently, the snowmobile. We must become thoroughly awakened to the importance of acquiring park areas strategically distributed to include good samples of our differing habitats— before exploitation disturbs, or completely eliminates, their usefulness to a priceless resource, our wildlife.



*Hudsonian Godwit*

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**If you would like to submit an article for the Timberlines, please  
send it to**

**Barbara Franklin at: [bbfrankli@gmail.com](mailto:bbfrankli@gmail.com)**

**Deadline is the last day of each month.**

All articles in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the position of the Breckenridge Board of Directors. The Editor reserves the right to edit material as necessary.

## **Dick Brown remembers Bill Stein**

On Sunday, November 8, 2020 the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* printed the obituary of Bill Stein, age 97, who died on November 2. He was a member and honorary member of the W. J. Breckenridge Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America. Bill was a past member of the chapter B.O.D., often a Board member to the MN Division, IWLA, and a delegate to the Divisions Convention, and at one time the Division's Parliamentarian.

As an artist, Bill drew the images on posters we carried at the "Save the Wetlands" rally at the State Capitol. He drew a different poster for each of the three years we rallied. Bill was also well known nationwide as the artist of the Hamm's Beer Bear caricature for many years. Bill was a member of the Champlin "Ancient Oak Savanna Preservation Committee" and the Champlin American Legion Post 600.

I got to know Bill and Betty Stein quite well when we did extensive remodeling on their Champlin home. There were many inconveniences for them at the time, but they kept their composure quite well. I should mention that Betty Stein was Secretary for our chapter and Secretary of the Minnesota Division. Betty passed away in 2011.

Bill and Betty Stein were wonderful people and members that knew them during those years feel a great loss.

*Dick Brown*