



Sara Blood <saranoelblood@gmail.com>

June Currents - News from MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge

1 message

Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends <hello@minnesotavalleyrefugefriends.org>
To: Sara Blood <saranoelblood@gmail.com>

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An indigo bunting photographed at the Old Cedar Avenue Bridge in late May. Photo by Thomas Burns of Minnetonka. Used with permission. Do you have a photo or video from the Refuge you'd like to submit for possible publication? Please send it to hello@mnvalleyrefugefriends.org.

Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends Currents

Issue 11, Volume 1 | June 18, 2020

**Dear Friends:**

I am writing this letter to you following the tragic death of George Floyd and the events taking place in and around our beloved Twin Cities and the globe. We hope that you and your loved ones are healthy and safe.

We assist Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge in its efforts to be a thriving urban refuge where nature connects people and wildlife. Since day one, it has been in the DNA of Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends to help make the Refuge be a welcoming place for you and families from all communities throughout the metro area to engage with nature.

Thanks to donors like you, our Blue Goose Bus Fund covers the transportation costs so schools with low-income students can get to the Refuge for nature-based classes and recreation. Your dollars help us fund internships that open doors for young people from all backgrounds to explore careers in the conservation field. And we support Refuge programming that promotes diversity and inclusion in our greater community.

But we can and we must do better.

Everyone has the right to visit the Refuge just as they should be able to live, work and play where they wish and be treated with equality. We are aware that staff and governing boards among environmental organizations lack diversity. We pledge to look for ways to do better. We will pursue opportunities to actively listen and learn so that Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends can become a more inclusive organization and the Refuge can fully support the entire Twin Cities community. We look to you – our readers, members and donors – for your ideas on ways to take action.

Please let us know how we can do better.

Sara N. Blood
Interim Executive Director
[MN Valley Refuge Friends](#)

Self-guided refuge activity resources

While visitor centers at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge remained closed for the safety of visitors, volunteers and employees, most refuge lands and outdoor spaces have remained open for the public to enjoy. Remember to check the [Refuge website](#) for the most up to date trail conditions, to visit other Refuge units if a parking lot is full, to practice social distancing, dispose of waste properly, and keep dogs on leash.

Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Forest Loop

Check out this new [interpretive trail map](#) of the Rapids Lake Unit!

Go birding at the Refuge

Here is a list of resources to help you begin birding at the Refuge:

[Bird watching checklist](#)
[Minnesota Valley bird checklist](#)
[List of Minnesota Valley birding hotspots](#)

Kids' summer activity booklet

Download this spring/summer [Outdoor Explorer activity book](#) for kids.

Check out these apps

Explore your refuge with these smartphone [apps](#).

Photo webinar series: Photographing flowers with Don Tredinnick

Due to overwhelming demand, Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends recorded an encore presentation of Don Tredinnick's June webinar on photographing flowers. View the recording [here](#) on our YouTube channel.

New Private Facebook Group for Refuge Interns and Alumni

We have many readers who have worked at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge either as an employee or an intern. To keep this community connected, Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends has created a Private Facebook group where members can stay in touch. If you are a former employee or intern of the Refuge who is interested in joining this group, visit [this link](#) where you'll be asked to answer a couple of questions before you are accepted into the group.



Western painted turtle. USFWS file photo.

Wildlife watch: It's turtle time!

by Joel Vos, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Ranger

Despite our visitor center and office still remaining closed due to COVID-19 response, the Refuge's voicemail has still been recording calls from the intrepid visitors to the Refuge and their neighborhood park spaces. From the end of May and into the beginning of June, numerous phone calls came in asking about turtles laying eggs!

Minnesota's eight species of turtles most often lay their eggs in June, meaning females leave their wetlands and cross roads in search of higher nesting grounds. This means you might

find turtles out looking for suitable places to make a nest. Nests are usually out in the open because the warmth from the sun is important for turtle embryo development. Turtles will travel fairly long distances from water to find a suitable spot, and the calls we have taken mention the shoulders of roads, sloped banks along trails, and backyard open spaces. Unfortunately, many turtles are killed when slowly crossing country roads and busy highways.

So, what can you do when you see a turtle crossing the road? Turtles know where they are going and will turn around and march right back into traffic if you return them to the side of the road they came from. Small turtles can be easily carried across the road; large snapping turtles should be carefully carried by the rear of their shell, or with both rear legs, with the head facing away from your body. Do not pick up a turtle by the tail: this may damage vertebrae. If you're not up to the challenge of moving the turtle, you can act as a crossing guard to help the turtle stay safe from cars and cyclists.

If you find a nest, many people want to protect the eggs from predators. Because the eggs are not actively incubated by the adult turtles like what we see in birds, you should resist the urge to remove the eggs or cover the nest with anything that shades it from the warmth of the sun. Keeping the eggs covered and the area looking natural will help keep the eggs safe and deter predators such as raccoons, opossums and foxes.

Still worried about turtles or their nests? Refuge staff does not respond to stranded or injured animals, but you can call the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Roseville at 651-486-9453 for advice and help.

Sketching in nature part II: What's new on YouTube



The second part of Sketching in Nature course is now available here and on the Minnesota Valley Refuge Friends' YouTube channel. Learn all the techniques that would have been covered in the class by following along with environmental educator Eliza to hone your own nature sketching skills.



Our Contact Information

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