



# KINGFISHER



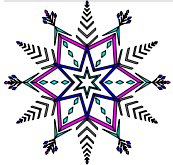
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 50 No. 1

Representing the National Audubon Society  
in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

February 2001

## President's Message



Here it is a new year, another chance for us to enjoy and help the birds and other creatures of our shared earth. How much they add to our lives. What was the first bird YOU saw this year? --a crow (the bird that has adapted to urban life so well that many consider it a nuisance)? Sometimes I remember Lindbergh's comment in WE about the clouds of birds he saw from the air. As a child, there were only occasional sightings of crows in the city; they were "country" birds. There were flocks of "blackbirds" though; so many roosting in trees in our yard that my father got permission to get rid of them "so they wouldn't keep my daughter awake".

As conditions for the birds change, so do we and the organizations we belong to. So it is for National Audubon; this year National has made changes in the financial arrangements to chapters. We will receive a bigger percentage of the dues from National for a short period, then much less. We have needed only the Birdathon for extra income. We may need to do more in the years ahead. What do you think would be good choices?

This lovely snow creates much beauty, but it also covers the winter birds' food. If you can put out food for the birds, a regular, reliable source of food is much appreciated. A bag like oranges come in, with suet inside, hanging for the woodpeckers is an easy thing to arrange. A bird store will be glad to help you get seed for the kind of bird you want to attract. Our chapter provides food at several spots in city parks. Could we do more? What ?

When I say "how much they add to our lives", I'm repeating a friend's words. In saying this, she was referring not only to learning about the birds, their habits, and the joy of bird watching; but to the special friends she's made and how that has enriched her life. Her spring time activities are often planned around birding hikes and trips. Yes, the beauty and wonderful calls of birds add so much to life's enjoyment. -- And we should take the opportunities to remind the community how much birders contribute to the community--in service, in beauty, and yes, in dollars spent on this "hobby".

So Happy New Year to us all. I'll look for you at the February meeting.  
—Dorothy Kuether

## Upcoming Program

Tuesday, February 6

### Wildlife of the Minnesota River Valley

Over the River and Through the Dale - That's where Scott Sharkey, M.D. has gone photographing the beauty and wildlife in the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge is a 12,000 acre treasure which protects miles of the lower Minnesota River Valley. Dr. Sharkey and other in Friends of the Minnesota Valley work to protect and restore the river and its watershed.

This area was recognized by Theodore Wirth in his 1934 *Metropolitan Park Plan*. Governor Floyd Olson used that plan to propose a 42,000 acre forest park and recreational area between Fort Snelling and Shakopee. World War II and lack of money derailed that effort.

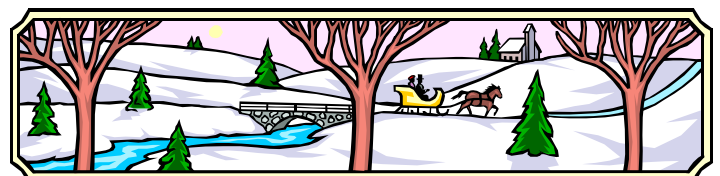
However, by the early 1970's pressure to expand development into the flood plain intensified. Environmental activism and political organization culminated in the passage of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Act of 1976 which called for preserving the natural resources, developing recreational opportunities and establishing an Interpretation and Educational Center.

And along came Scott Sharkey and the Friends of the Minnesota Valley, documenting field and fauna. Dr. Sharkey took binoculars, notebook and camera to catch on film the resident wildlife and diverse habitat. He has in his private collection over 10,000 slides of the land, the river, and the many birds and animals living there.

From Dr. Sharkey's private slide collection eleven were chosen for publication in the Refuge's new brochure which was entered in the National Association for Interpretation Media Contest. That brochure won first prize.

We can see Dr. Sharkey's slide presentation on Tuesday, February 6. The meeting starts at 7:30 preceded by an EIC meeting at 6:00 and coffee and cookies at 7:00. We meet at Mayflower Church located immediately west of the Hwy 35W and Diamond Lake Road

—Fran Duritsa



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### Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

[www.geocities.com/audubon.geo/](http://www.geocities.com/audubon.geo/)

### MN Audubon Council

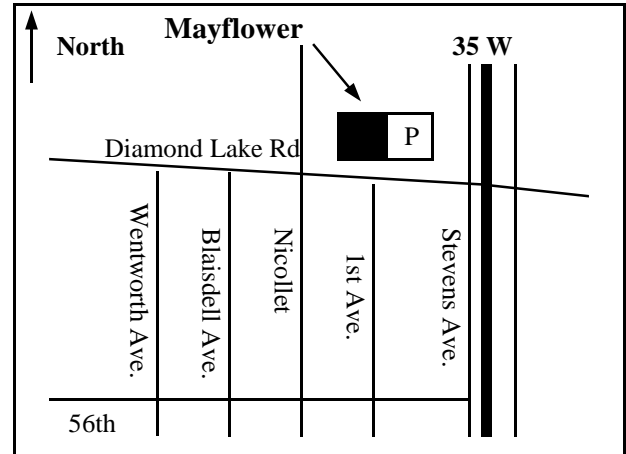
[www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn/index.html-ssi](http://www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn/index.html-ssi)

### National Audubon Society

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

## Come to Our Next Program!

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 6, 2001  
**TIME:** 7:00 Cookie Social — bring some to share!  
 7:30 p.m. **"Wildlife of the MN River Valley"**  
**AT:** Mayflower Church (Lower Level)  
 109 E. Diamond Lake Road, Minneapolis



## Memorials

This month, our Audubon chapter has received memorials in remembrance of chapter members.

To date, they are:

"In memory of Marjorie Cross" from Nick and Virginia Puzak

"In memory of Solly Fingerman" from Joseph and Christine Lupo

## Electronic Kingfisher

SAVE A TREE! SAVE US SOME MONEY!

SUBSCRIBE TO THE KINGFISHER  
ELECTRONICALLY.

Contact Jerry Bahls at bahls001@tc.umn.edu today!



## The Many Colors of Winter

We have had a real winter this year. A lot of my friends have been complaining vociferously since the beginning of December. I have not had the heart to complain because this winter has brought so many sights and sounds that were missed over the last three mild winters.

First of all, it has been an owl winter. Reports of boreal owls came early—in September or October, although many of the first ones were found dead. Then came the Northern Hawk Owls and the Great Gray Owls. The Great Gray Owls blend beautifully into the grays and browns of bare trees. The sight of one calmly staring at you from its perch is awesome. The Northern Hawk Owls favor the tops of snags from which they launch to hunt their prey. Their colors, too, blend in with bare branches of the winter trees. Reports of Snowy Owls have been fewer—but talk of blending into their environment! It is very difficult to pick out a Snowy Owl from the broken ice in Duluth harbor.

Secondly, it has been a snowy winter. All of those winter photographs that have been hard to find in recent years have been everywhere around us this year. In Minnesota the colors of the winter woods are the greens of spruce and fir covered with white snow, or the gray of bare aspen trees against a pale blue sky, or the white on white of paper birch against the snow. Around feeders, the whites have been enlivened by Blue Jays and red Northern Cardinals in the south, golden Evening Grosbeaks and pink Pine Grosbeaks in the north.

I traveled west in mid-December to the Badlands and Black Hills of South Dakota. The colors of winter were very different there. In the Badlands I photographed a full moon over pink and gray, jagged peaks covered with snow. I was able to discover first hand why Pronghorn are the colors that they are. The tawny gold of their backs matches perfectly the gold of winter grasses just as their white bellies reflects the snow. They blend perfectly into the colors of winter in the grasslands. Blending perfectly into the grassland environment with their tawny colors were Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs, and Snow Buntings. I also found that the salmon color of the Red-shafted Flicker's wings blends beautifully with the orange-colored rocks of the Black Hills. The colors of the hills in winter were black, white and orange. Would it surprise you that the Black-billed Magpies blended right in on the woodland edges with their black, white and dark greenish/bluish feathering?

The raptors of the winter scene were very interesting. I found Bald Eagles at Custer State Park, but Golden Eagles in the Badlands and the Buffalo Gap Grasslands. Instead of Red-tailed Hawks, Rough-legged Hawks (and Golden Eagles) patrolled the roadsides. I also saw Short-eared and Screech Owls.

On the way home I drove through fog and hoarfrost all the way from the Badlands to Albert Lea. I started before dawn, driving through cotton candy with visibility limited to about five feet in front of the car. Then the most wonderful thing happened. As the sun began to rise the fog turned pink, then lavender, then lilac, then gold before turning back to gray, white and then burning off. When the visibility improved with the sun's rising, the world lay around me fringed in a cold white lace as



delicate as any my grandmother ever made. I had Chopin Nocturnes on my CD player, and as I drove through the changing colors I reveled in the beauty of a winter my friends were just complaining about.

—Vija Kelly

## Marge Cross 1925-2000

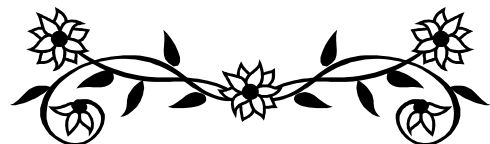
As we reach "seniority", we birders come to accept that some of us are going to encounter health problems and perhaps restricted activity. And slowly our numbers diminish. But it is a terrific shock when one of the most active of us, bursting in good health, vitality, and perpetual jumping-in-whenever-needed, suddenly is taken. We are still reeling from the sudden loss of Marjorie Cross, active member of our Kingfisher and Bluebird News mailing crews, and particularly in more recent years, of the Minneapolis Hiking Club. For decades Marge was the unofficial greeter of everyone who came to our Chapter (originally the Minneapolis Bird Club) meetings. And for those many years, despite a chronic back ailment, she carried in books, T-shirts, emblems, chapter and National Audubon merchandise to our sales table.

She retired from Honeywell, Inc. after 40 years, but even before retirement engaged in many activities, with friends in numerous organizations. For years she arranged and led birding field trips and outings to North Minnesota, Duluth, and North Woods Audubon. She was the life of the bus trips, as she was everywhere. She loved books, music, art and anything out-of-doors. She had numerous collections of diverse interest.

She lived all her life in Hopkins and in Minneapolis, but loved trips to other areas in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Madeline Island, where she never tired of swimming, rowing, sailing, hiking, birding, dancing and camping.

Marge was found November 9 in her condominium, in a coma from a massive and sudden stroke. She died the next day, having never regained consciousness. Many of her friends - from Audubon, Honeywell, the Hiking Club - and members of her brothers' families gathered November 15 at Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church to commemorate her life.

--- Dorene Scriven



## Conservation Projects Where do you fit in?

Often, when talking to Chapter members and conservation managers, I'm asked to define a typical project. Well, I don't know if there is a *typical* project—they're all unique—but there are certain elements that are frequently encountered. And when you start breaking a project down into its component parts, you can more clearly see the need for a wide range of skills and interests.

Let's design a hypothetical project consisting of a newly acquired parcel of land with a small stream and a goal to restore it to a condition approximating pre-European settlement. Now, at the risk of being accused of gross oversimplification, here are some common threads:

**Initial Assessment**—What do we have and, what needs to be done? At this stage we need to do a census or inventory of not only the wildlife, but also the soil, plant and stream biology to gauge the area's overall health and diversity. It's a great opportunity for our expert birders to get involved along with those interested in soil science, geology, plant biology and entomology. There are several more "-ologies" that could be listed but you get the idea.

**Remediation and Habitat Improvement**—This is the time when you hands-on types are really needed. Those who enjoy all aspects of planting and landscaping can literally dig into the project. But there's a softer side as well, involving research and identification of native plant species, and locating sources of cuttings and seed.

**Maintenance**—A chance for us to become stewards—to protect, preserve and promote the advancement of natural process. Measure our achievements against our objectives. Short term and long term. What's working? What did we learn? How will we proceed next time?

Watch for details of future projects in upcoming issues of *The Kingfisher*. Remember, there's something for everyone. If you're interested in taking a more active role as a member of the Conservation Committee, please contact me at (612) 866-6158.

— Tom Rice  
*Conservation Chair*

## Armchair Activists Wanted



**ARMCHAIR QUARTERBACKS!  
BECOME ACTIVE,  
BECOME AN  
ARMCHAIR ACTIVIST!  
HELP THE ENVIRONMENT!**

For more information contact Jerry Bahls by writing him at Audubon

Chapter of Minneapolis, PO Box 3801, Minneapolis, MN 55403; or call 763 572-2333. You can also send an email to bahls001@tc.umn.edu.

## Brunch With the Bald Eagles

### VIEW AND LEARN ABOUT THE COMEBACK OF BALD EAGLES ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

During *Soar with the Eagles Week* in Wabasha, Minnesota

### Sunday, March 11 at the Boat Works in Wabasha Minnesota

Sponsored by the National Eagle Center,  
National Audubon and

The Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota

#### 9:00 AM BUS DEPARTS THE RAPTOR CENTER

Ride in comfort by coach tour bus, which departs from the Raptor Center and will arrive at The Boat Works in Wabasha, Minnesota.

#### 10:30 AM - 1:30 PM

We start with a scrumptious brunch selection while viewing eagles on the Mississippi River at the Boat Works in Wabasha. Then Raptor Center Biologist Matt Solensky will give a presentation about the on-going research of tracking eagles by satellite on their migration on the Mississippi River. Meet the National Eagle Center's Live Bald Eagles and learn about the National Eagle Center.

#### 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Tour the National Eagle Center's temporary facility and learn about the final home building project. Then head to the observation deck for more Wabasha eagle viewing, and then depart to Read's Landing where eagle experts take you to observe eagles in one of the premier eagle feeding sites along the river.

#### 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

The tour's next stop is Covill Park in Red Wing, Minnesota, where eagle frequently feed and hunt along the river next to the Marina.

#### 5:00 PM

Bus returns to The Raptor Center



#### COST:

Bus Transport — Includes Bus transportation, brunch, eagle presentation and guided tour: \$65.00 Raptor Center and Audubon members; \$75.00 non-members. Bus reservations: call the Raptor Center 651-624-2756.

Travel by own Car — Includes brunch, eagle presentation, and guided tour. You provide your own transportation \$25.00 Raptor Center and Audubon members, \$35.00 for adults, \$15.00 for children. Call National Eagle Center for reservations at 651-565-4989.



## Great Backyard Bird Count

Birdwatchers of all ages, regardless of your skill level, are needed by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count. The data that you collect on the birds in your backyard will help scientists document the status and health of winter bird populations.

The process has never been easier: during the period of **February 18-21, 2000**, count the birds that you see in your backyard, parks or other areas, then enter your data online at BirdSource (<http://birdsource.org>). Participants are to tally the highest number of each species seen at one time (so as not to count the same birds more than once). You may spend as much time as you want recording the numbers and kinds of birds seen or heard on any or all days of the count. Participants will see within hours how their data combine with data from around the continent. Researchers will then have the ability to determine the value of backyards as habitat and evaluate the species dependent on them.

If you do not have computer access at home you may use the online services at a library, school, or ask a friend. You may also contact Tom Mahan, 612-588-5440. The user friendly BirdSource website was developed by the Cornell Lab and Audubon. Wild Birds Unlimited is a major sponsor of this count. For more information go to the BirdSource website: <http://birdsource.org>.

— Tom Mahan

## National Audubon Changes Reimbursement Plan

Beginning on July 1, 2001, National Audubon will change its policy on how it reimburses chapters for membership fees. Currently National Audubon reimburses chapters \$5.50 for each paid membership. The new plan will reward chapters for recruiting their own members by allowing them to keep 100% of the membership dues the first year. The following years chapters will be reimbursed at a rate that subtracts the National Audubon's recruiting costs (which includes all income and expenses associated with the Audubon magazine) per member. Current estimates put the net to be paid to chapters at about \$2.30/member. For members that are nationally recruited, this net reimbursement will be split between the state office and the chapter. Other factors will also affect the reimbursement to chapters, but these are the main two that will have the greatest impact upon Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis (ACM). A safety net has been incorporated the first three years. The first year National Audubon will guarantee that chapters receive at least 75% of the revenue that they normally would receive. The next two years this would drop to 50%.

The clear intent is to shift the responsibility for recruiting members to the chapters. This may not be a bad thing since chapter recruited members tend to be more active in the chapter both by their participation and also by their financial contributions. In the past, because of its size, ACM has been able to fund our operation comfortably from the reimbursements we received from National Audubon. In recent years, we have not undertaken any new projects that have required additional funds. However, that is not to say that something may come up in the future that ACM would want to fund, which may require funds to be raised. This new policy of National Audubon will require us to shift a sizeable portion of our budget to recruiting new members, which will take funds from other areas of the budget. In order to continue providing the same level of service that ACM is currently providing, we will need to increase our income by this increase in cost for recruiting new members plus the cost of inflation (new postal rates).

The easiest way to raise the additional revenue that ACM needs is to recruit new members, since we will get 100% of the membership dues the first year. ACM needs to tap into the sources that National Audubon has used in the past for these new members. ACM also has to generate its own sources for new members. ACM holds meetings with outstanding speakers that can be used very effectively for recruiting new members. ACM also has many field trips that can be used. Classes on birding are also held. Because ACM has these valuable sources for recruiting new members, they must be used effectively. Look for a few small changes at these functions that will attract new participants.

Finally, the best source of new members is ACM members. If each member recruited a new member, we would double our membership. The ACM member would also have a friend to share activities with. This would be beneficial for the chapter by increasing the participation in our activities and ultimately for the member and new recruit by the improvements they can effect in the environment. A first step in this can be volunteering to be on the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis Membership Committee (Call Jerry Bahls, Membership Chair, 763 572-2333 or e-mail [bahls001@tc.umn.edu](mailto:bahls001@tc.umn.edu)). Help set up a successful and fun program to obtain new members for us.

—Jerry Bahls



## December Program Review

The meeting started off with a nice variety of dishes for the potluck dinner. We then moved on to a Jeopardy-like game on bird identification, presented by John Arthur. It was a lot of fun!

The evening's speaker was Dr. John Pastor. Dr. Pastor is a professor at UMD. He has been studying the effects of global warming for many years, and he came to speak to us specifically about its impacts on upland forests.

The evidence he presented was very clear. Levels of greenhouse gasses, carbon dioxide in particular, have been steadily rising since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. These levels are much higher than any that have occurred naturally for the past couple of hundred thousand years, according to studies of air bubbles trapped in glacial ice sheets.

Careful measurements of Carbon dioxide levels have been kept for several decades, and though these levels have climbed almost without pause, there was a leveling off during the oil crisis of the late 1970s, when high prices led to a short halt in the increasing demand for fossil fuels. This is a sign of two things: first, that the rise in carbon dioxide levels is caused by human activity; and, second, that humans can control this activity to such an extent that levels might be limited.

Some people deny that, even if carbon dioxide levels have increased, there has been any clear evidence of global warming or its effects. Dr. Pastor informed us that the last four years have been the warmest on record, when considering the world as a whole; and that the warmest ten years on record have all occurred in the past fifteen years.

He went on to describe the effects that global warming could have on Northern Minnesota. Current models show that the impact will be greatest in mid-continent and near the poles. It is possible that a climate similar to that of Minneapolis could move north to near the Canadian border. This may seem acceptable, but it would mean the almost certain loss of the northern pine forests without their replacement by elms or oaks, because of soil conditions and rainfall. The most chilling thing about this scenario is that predictions show it could happen within the next fifty years. The moose will be gone, the wolf could be gone, and our identity as Minnesotans would be utterly changed.

—Paul Kinzer

## Corkscrew Swamp: Preserving Special Places

The sixty miles from Sanibel over to Corkscrew is well known to Carol and I. We first discovered the Swamp in 1985, and have been returning, more or less on an annual basis, whenever we can break away from our corporate lives for a few days. Leaving the Island and passing over the causeway we run into a



predictable, but still annoying amount of early morning Fort Myers traffic. Ramping onto I-75 south we start to make some time. We're both anxious to get there—its late October and our last visit was in June of 1999. The attraction for us is difficult to explain adequately. At one level the Swamp is ancient and unchanging, yet it has been influenced by historic events and is different for us on every visit. A paradox perhaps.

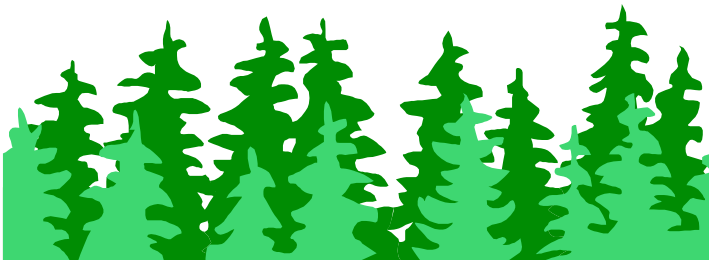
Exiting I-75 we head east on Florida State highway 846, working our way through a rush of eight a.m. commuters on their way into Naples. There didn't used to be any traffic at all along this stretch as we completed the final thirty miles of the trek.

The life list this day includes surprises as well as old friends.... Egrets, Anhinga, several Red Shouldered Hawks, Cat Bird, White Ibis, alligator, a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers, spiders, butterflies, Wood Stork, and a raccoon were spotted among the towering five-hundred year old Cyprus. It's the same prehistoric place as last year but it's always different.

Several hours, and a few rolls of film later, Carol and I are heading back toward Sanibel. We talk about the extraordinary job that Audubon has done in preserving Corkscrew Swamp. You can't help but notice, however, that the fields and pine forests that surrounded and helped to isolate the Swamp fifteen years ago, are being replaced by retirement communities, businesses, schools and golf courses all served by the newly widened highway. Development, fuelled by the anticipated retirement of thousands of us "Boomers" is already starting to show its effects. What will be the impact on Corkscrew Swamp? Hopefully it will be minimal, but we shouldn't just leave it to chance.

All of us have special places that have become part of our lives. Many of them are right here in our neighborhoods, county and state. Where's yours? When you visit it next time, will it be as you remembered? Preserving them is a matter of setting priorities, and that's our responsibility.

—Tom Rice  
*Conservation Chair*



# Christmas Bird Count

## December 23, 2000

### A Success!

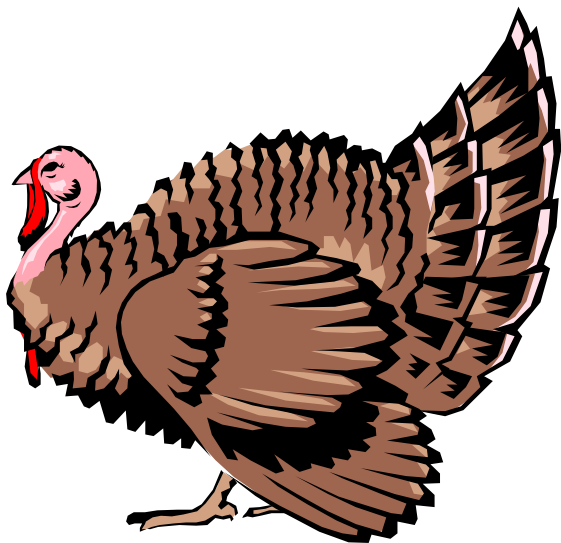
We had a nice turn out for our annual Christmas Bird Count this year. 34 participants braved the snowy weather to help gather data for the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count. Once again Siah St. Clair and the Springbrook Nature Center were gracious enough to host the event – including supplying a hot lunch for all participants. We greatly appreciate the use of their facilities, and we usually get some good birds at the nature center's feeders – this year a cooperative White-throated Sparrow.

With little or no open water there was a lack of expected waterfowl and gulls. Despite the lack of open water we found a Belted Kingfisher in the only open water in the count area at the Northwest end of Long Lake. Winter finches were almost non-existent with only one Common Redpoll, and a small flock of Pine Siskin seen.

A big thank you to all the participants who came out despite the snowy weather!

We found a total of 45 species. Most interesting species seen were a Wild Turkey, Eastern Towhee, Song Sparrow (2 individuals), and White-throated Sparrow (2 individuals). The species seen on this year's count are listed in the next column.

—Terry Brashear



TRUMPETER SWAN  
CANADA GOOSE  
AMERICAN BLACK DUCK  
MALLARD  
BALD EAGLE  
SHARP-SHINNED HAWK  
COOPER'S HAWK  
RED-TAILED HAWK  
ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK  
RING-NECKED PHEASANT  
WILD TURKEY  
AMERICAN COOT  
ROCK DOVE  
MOURNING DOVE  
EASTERN SCREECH OWL  
GREAT HORNED OWL  
BARRED OWL  
BELTED KINGFISHER  
RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER  
DOWNY WOODPECKER  
HAIRY WOODPECKER  
NORTHERN FLICKER  
PILEATED WOODPECKER  
BLUE JAY  
AMERICAN CROW  
BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE  
WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH  
BROWN CREEPER  
AMERICAN ROBIN  
CEDAR WAXWING  
NORTHERN SHRIKE  
EUROPEAN STARLING  
NORTHERN CARDINAL  
EASTERN TOWHEE  
AMERICAN TREE SPARROW  
SONG SPARROW  
WHITE-THROATED SPARROW  
DARK-EYED JUNCO  
COMMON GRACKLE  
PURPLE FINCH (FEMALE)  
HOUSE FINCH  
COMMON REDPOLL  
PINE SISKIN  
AMERICAN GOLDFINCH  
HOUSE SPARROW



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**KINGFISHER**  
February 2001



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**National Audubon Society**  
Chapter Membership Application

- Yes, I'd like to join!* Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and my local chapter at the special introductory rate of \$20! Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.
- As a senior citizen or student, I am able to join for only \$15!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**Send this application and make check payable to:**

National Audubon Society  
Chapter Membership Data Center  
PO Box 51001  
Boulder, CO 80322-1001



LOCAL CHAPTER  
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis  
PO BOX 3801  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
Chapter Code: **M02**  
**7XCHA**

**Calendar of Events**

**February**

- 6 Cookie Social, 7:00 p.m.  
Chapter Program, 7:30 p.m.  
"Wildlife of the Minnesota River Valley"
- 13 Chapter Board Meeting, 6:45 p.m.

**March**

- 6 Chapter Program, 7:30 p.m.  
"Birds and Flowers of Rocky Mountain National Park"
- 11 Brunch With the Bald Eagles (see page 4)
- 13 Chapter Board Meeting, 6:45 p.m.
- 17 Field Trip, Wabasha Eagle Trip

**Field trips usually begin at 7:30 a.m., call the Field Trips Chair for details.**

All are welcome to the Chapter Board Meetings!  
Board Meetings are held at North Regional Library  
1315 Lowry Ave. N. in Minneapolis  
Call the president for details.