



# KINGFISHER



Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Vol. 49 No. 5

Representing the National Audubon Society  
in Greater Minneapolis and Hennepin County

July/Aug 2000

## Come to the Fair!

We will buy your admission ticket if you can help us out! We also offer an interesting experience meeting, greeting, and providing Audubon information to visitors to our Minnesota Audubon fair booth. Our past volunteers always report enjoying the range of interaction at our booth.

The dates that our chapter is responsible for staffing the booth are: **Sunday, August 27; Tuesday, August 29; Wednesday August 30; and Friday September 1.** The shift times for each day are: 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.; 12:00-3:00 p.m.; and 6:00-9:00 p.m. Two people are needed for each shift.

If you cannot volunteer for our assigned days or times, you can also help out on another fair day. State Fair dates this year are Thursday, August 24 through Monday, September 4 (Labor Day). The shift times are the same as above.

New volunteers (and past volunteers who have never attended,) should come to the volunteer training session held at the State Office, 25 East Exchange Street, St. Paul. The meeting will be held one evening in August, date to be determined.

Don't miss this opportunity to help spread the Audubon message and to see all of the Minnesota State Fair, considered to be one of the best in the country. Please call me soon (763-561-1761) to ensure getting your first choice of day and time.

—Mary Ellen Vetter

## In Memory

Dick Peterson, the legendary designer of the Peterson Bluebird Nestbox, died May 4, 2000, at 81 years of age. Among many other things, Dick was one of the founders of the Bluebird Recovery Program of Minnesota, one of the oldest and largest state bluebird organizations in the U.S.. This was started by the Minneapolis Chapter of National Audubon, and is the chapter's largest and most active committee. The Peterson box has been vindicated by thousands of bluebirders all over the U.S., and in many research projects. Over 12,000 people have received full-scale plans for the box; over 60,000 Peterson kits or completed boxes have been shipped by Ahlgren Construction, besides the myriad of people who have purchased the authentic box or its imitation elsewhere.

The Bluebird Recovery Program is establishing a Dick Peterson Memorial Fund. One of its purposes, besides research and preservation of his photography, will be the publication of a small book of reminiscences from people who knew Dick, had met him, or been influenced by him.

Anyone who would like to send a tribute to Dick in this way, please write them to the Bluebird Recovery Program, P.O. Box 3801, Mpls, MN 55403.

—Dorene Scriven

## Are you a writer? Educator? Birder? Artist?

Minnesota Audubon is the state office serving all Audubon chapters with members in Minnesota. The eight staff and many volunteers of Minnesota Audubon are working on a variety of advocacy, education and conservation projects.

The talents of volunteers around the state are critical to the success of Audubon. If you can spare a few hours to:

- help create displays for events
- design graphics
- write newsletter articles
- serve on advisory committees (Forests, Wetlands, Education, Environmental Issues, Technology)

...your donation of time and talent would be greatly appreciated. Thanks to email and conference calls, folks around the state can easily be part of Audubon activity. Contact Suzanne at 651-225-1830 or [splass@audubon.org](mailto:splass@audubon.org) to learn more. Thanks!

—Suzanne Plass



## Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis 1999-2000 Contacts

President	Dorothy Kuether	612-926-4205
Vice President	Tom Mahan	763-588-5440
Treasurer	Kim Halek	763-427-8656
Secretary	<open>	
Board Member	Jerry Bahls	763-572-2333
Board Member	Fran Duritsa	612-822-4822
Board Member	Dorene Scriven	612-922-4586
Board Member	Tom Stinson	763-767-8736
Board Member	John Arthur	952-931-0819
Board Member	Jim Sharpsteen	612-722-9109
Board Member	Jean Kelly	763-862-1421
Board Member	Bill Sipe	763-331-1223
Board Member	Ann Leykom	612-827-2245
Birdathon Coord	<open>	
Bluebird Recovery	Dorene Scriven	612-922-4586
Camps/Hunt Hill	Marion Borell	612-866-1266
Camps/North Woods	Bob Nelson	612-933-7340
Conservation	Tom Rice	612-887-3547
Education Outreach	Mary Ellen Vetter	763-561-1761
Field Trips Chair	Terry Brashear	612-929-1976
Field Trip Leader	Don Wanschura	612-866-3276
Kingfisher Editor	Wina Mortenson	612-781-7998
Kingfisher Editor	Paul Kinzer	612-781-7998
Lending Library	Dorene Scriven	612-922-4586
Mailing	Jerry Bahls	763-572-2333
Membership	Jerry Bahls	763-572-2333
Park Feeders	David Stamps	612-374-3609
Programs	Fran Duritsa	612-822-4822
Publicity/Exhibits	Bill Sipe	763-331-1223
Sales	Tom Stinson	763-767-8736
Social	Phyllis Mahan	763-588-5440
MOU Rare Bird Alert		612-780-8890
MN Audubon Office		651-225-1830

John Arthur	jarthu@uswest.net
Jerry Bahls	bahls001@tc.umn.edu
Terry Brashear	terence.p.brashear@cdc.com
Kim Halek	khalek@mninter.net
Paul Kinzer	winapaul@earthlink.net
Dorothy Kuether	dkuether@juno.com
Tom/Phyllis Mahan	mahan-mail@worldnet.att.net
Wina Mortenson	winapaul@earthlink.net
Tom Rice	trice@mail.donaldson.com
Dorene Scriven	scriv001@tc.umn.edu
Jim Sharpsteen	jsharpsteen@mwest.dcmdc.dla.mil
Tom Stinson	thomas.r.stinson@ac.com

### 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#si](http://www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn/index.html#si)

### National Audubon Society

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

## Wanted! Conservation Committee Members

*We are looking for volunteers!* Put your interests and talents to work as a member of the Conservation Committee. This is a unique opportunity to become involved in 'grass roots' activities such as:

- Habitat preservation/restoration
- Program planning
- Project coordination
- Wildlife and plant species inventories
- Partnering with other groups and agencies

With a membership of over 2,800 individuals, the Minneapolis Chapter is the largest in the region. The knowledge and skills that reside in our membership represents an impressive, yet somewhat untapped resource. But we need your involvement to help identify specific conservation needs, and to participate in the planning and implementation of programs. So, if you have been looking for an area to apply your skills, and, have an interest in conservation issues, give me a call at (612) 866-6158, or add your name to the sign-up sheet at the next Chapter meeting.

—Tom Rice



## A Big Round of Applause for the Mailing Team



It is time to all stand and give the mailing team a big round of applause for the terrific job that they do each month in assembling the Kingfisher for all of you to enjoy. We haven't been late in delivering the Kingfisher to the Post Office in over three years. And only once did we not finish the task before 1:00 PM. The following individuals should be thanked the next time you see them for their hard work - Dorothy Brindle, Marge Cross, Fran Duritsa, Doris Grambow, Myrtle Grette, Einar Grette, Dorothy Lindeen, Darlene Olson, Don Olson, Ann Leykom, Mary Ellen Vetter, Lois Dick, Brenda Reishus and Bob Richardson. The mailing team is an excellent example of how a team can accomplish a difficult task with seemingly little effort because they all show up and work until the task is done! Thanks a million.

—Jerry Bahls



## Wandering to Good Purpose, and Not

What a spring and early summer for birding this has been for me! It started at the end of April with a trip to Bluestem Prairie to watch the Greater Prairie Chickens. For those of you that don't know how this works, you have to get up at 4:00 or 4:30 and crawl into the blind before dawn. Then you may not leave until the birds do. No coffee or it gets very uncomfortable. I watched them for almost three hours and got wonderful photographs of them fighting over territory. A little female showed up and the action was great! The most awesome part of the performance, to me, is the booming noise they make. You can hear it for a good mile.

On the way up to see the prairie chickens I also was able to see a Long-billed curlew in a flooded farm field. On the way back I drove through Fergus Falls. Much to my surprise, I stumbled upon a small lake in the middle of town that held a small island which was covered with Great Egrets. It looked like a wedding cake. A Black-crowned Night Heron flew up within about 12 feet of me and began to tear off a branch from the tree to add to his nest. Wow! There is a lot to be said for wandering.

Unusual birds have abounded this season. On my own I stumbled upon a Northern Mockingbird at Carlos Avery State Wildlife Management Area. Then with three trips for each, I found the Little Blue Heron in Lakeville and the Tri-colored Heron in Hastings. On an organized birding trip to Houston County I finally, after many years, got Henslow's Sparrow and Louisiana Waterthrush. It took being out in cloudy and rainy weather to do it, but I was thrilled.

Not everything was wonderful this spring, however. Warbler migration was a one day wonder. If you blinked, you missed it. I had faithfully been going to Rice Creek every morning for a week or so. There were warblers-one at a time. Then on the big day, I was working from dawn to dusk and I missed the opportunity to see over twenty species from the little foot bridge. Ask Terry Brashear about that. I cannot complain too much though. I got my lifer Cerulean Warbler at a County park close to Lake Maria State Park and my lifer Hooded Warbler at Murphy-Hanrehan.

Don't you just love the spring and early summer? Wherever you go there is something wonderful to find. And if you stay home, you still can enjoy the birds. I wake up every morning listening to the neighborhood birds defending their territories. They include American

*(continued in next column)*

Robin, Northern Cardinal, House Wren, Warbling Vireo. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, House Finch, American Redstart and Common Grackle.

Finally, for those of you that have told me that you enjoy following my adventures, I did actually learn about 80% of the warbler songs this spring. I love your comments about the column. Thanks!

—Vija Kelly

If you would like to learn more about what Audubon is doing around Minnesota, sign up to receive the AUDUBON AGENDA, our quarterly newsletter. To subscribe call 651-225-1830 or send an email with your name and mailing address to [splash@audubon.org](mailto:splash@audubon.org).

## Upper Mississippi River Regional Conference

Come and celebrate the river, it's wildlife and people September 15-17 at Sinsinawa, Wisconsin (across from Dubuque). Audubon's Upper Mississippi River Campaign is sponsoring the conference for educators, activists, and wildlife watchers throughout the Upper Mississippi watershed. For more information or to register call Jessie Meschievitz at the UMRC office, 651-290-1695.

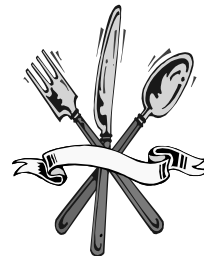
—Suzanne Plass

## Potluck Supper! Tuesday, September 5 at 6 p.m.

Come one, come all to the annual potluck supper to kick off the new season of chapter meetings and events! Join your fellow Audubon members in some good food and conversation.

Bring along a food item to share: salads, hot dishes, bread, cheese & cold cuts, dessert....

Beverages will be provided by the chapter - coffee, tea, and lemonade.



Following the potluck supper is our first program of the year. We look forward to seeing you there!





# Scholarships for Summer Youth Camps

## Audubon center of the North Woods



### Audubon Center of the North Woods (Sandstone, MN)

Our Audubon chapter has \$500 to award for scholarships to local area students to help defray the cost of a week of summer camp at the Audubon Center of the North Woods .

The Audubon Center of the North Woods is located on the shores of Grindstone Lake - ninety miles north of the Twin Cities. Old growth white and red pines, a beaver stream, forest, fields, and wetlands provide the on-site resources. The Center features comfortable accommodations with private baths, and a variety of unique study sites, including a raptor and wildlife complex. A ropes course, initiative games, and a climbing wall provide for exercise and challenge. Staff includes resident and international instructors who bring years of experience and skill in environmental and outdoor education.

For more information on North Woods adventures, or to apply for a scholarship, please contact Bob Nelson at (612) 933-7340.

#### Level I Wildlife: Ecology of North Woods Wildlife

Ages 10-12

July 8-15 \$310

July 22-29 \$310

Cool breezes off Grindstone Lake drift through ancient white and red pines, while 535 acres of Audubon sanctuary hold surprises and ecological diversity for campers to discover and enjoy. This camp is about wildlife with a touch of adventure. Visit raptors and wolves and discover how they are ambassadors for their kind; learn how to track; take a bog-walk; participate in a songbird banding program; study wild aquatic creatures; and learn camping skills. Discover flora and fauna as you canoe a wild river. Finish up with an overnight camp trip on-site and the high ropes challenge course.

#### Level I Wildlife: Ropes, Rocks and Rapids

Ages 12-14

July 8-15 \$310

July 22-29 \$310

Join us for a week of wild adventure as you experience our high ropes course and climbing wall. Apply those skills on a wild site exploring the Kettle River gorge. Learn to navigate the wilderness with a compass and by canoe to navigate the rapids. Experience the fur trade history of Minnesota and learn survival skills. Learn minimum impact techniques and practice them during an overnight canoe camping trip on a historic fur trade route. You'll meet other young people from around the country, making new friends with each other as you explore the natural world.

## North Woods Adventures for Returning Students

Where do you go after Level I classes at the Audubon Center of the North Woods? There are 3 exciting camps being held this summer for returning students only. Please note that these classes are not eligible for chapter funded scholarships. If you are interested in any of these camps, contact the center by phone, mail or email:

#### Audubon Center of the North Woods

Box 530 Sandstone, MN 55072

Phone: (320) 245-2648

Email: audubon1@ecenet.com.

#### Level II: AQUAVENTURES – Aquatic Science Camp

Prerequisite: Any Level I camp

Ages 12-15 June 24 – July 1 \$370

This camp is a great time to learn some practical science skills to study our most important resource – WATER! You'll learn and do practical research on water chemistry and aquatic creatures, survey wetlands for reptiles and amphibians, study the chemistry of a bog, choose a small research project, and take a two day canoe trip to collect river samples.

#### Level III: Boundary Waters Canoe Trip

Prerequisite: Any Level I camp and Level II camp

Ages 13-16 August 5 – 12 \$370

One of the all-time favorite trips, we'll head into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA) for a week long trip in the land of lakes, loons, moose, wolves and bear. This is a wilderness trip in small groups of nine.

#### Level IV: Isle Royale Backpacking Trip

Prerequisite: Any Level I camp and Level II & III camps

Ages 14 + August 12 – 19 \$545

Isle Royale is a true wilderness island of world ecological significance. It is the largest member of an archipelago of basalt and conglomerate islands that are isolated by the cold waters of Lake Superior. This is a physically challenging trip so you must get prior permission from Camp Director Craig Prudhomme. Our main emphasis will be on understanding the predator prey interactions between wolves and moose and the effects of climate which define the North Woods.



## Releasing a Former Patient is a Joyful Experience

In mid-September of 1999, I had the opportunity to release my first "patient" from the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. I was excited — after all the effort, caring and learning that I had experienced in the previous 16 months as a volunteer, it was time to see a rehabilitated animal go back to the wild. This is the reason places like the Center exist. But I had no idea what to expect.

The small female mallard that was ready to go that Sunday had come to the Center virtually paralyzed, suffering from botulism. With proper treatment, she was able to recover from this often-fatal infection.

We had a long ride from the St. Paul campus to the Old Cedar Ave. Bridge in Bloomington, Minn. Wanting to share the experience, I had called a friend to accompany us. The duck was a perfect passenger, sitting quietly in the pet carrier, seeming very calm about the journey, looking around with interest as I drove.

After locating an area with other mallards and no humans, we walked to the edge of a peaceful pond. I placed the carrier on the ground and opened the door. It took a few seconds for the mallard to react, then she literally "blasted" her way out. She swam only a few feet and began surveying the area. This continued for about five minutes: She quietly paddled, dipping her head to nibble at duckweed.

I just had to know she would join up with others of her own kind before leaving, so I mentally coaxed: "See, over there are other ducks, you need to go."

She seemed so tentative about leaving right away. Then, for some unknown reason, the little duck began paddling toward shore and actually stood in the water inches from the pet carrier door. She looked at us and slowly turned away, letting out a loud "QUACK." Then she flew straight toward the other mallards on the opposite shore.

I was speechless, and so was my friend. It was almost as if she'd meant to say, "Thank you and good-bye."

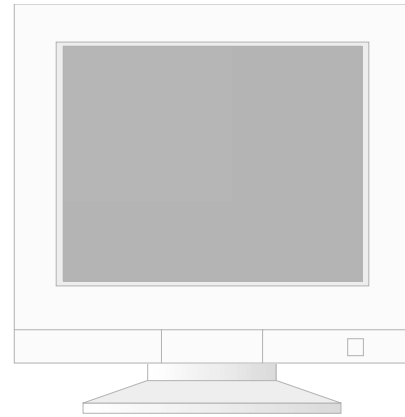
—Cheryl McGuire



## Minnesota Audubon on the Web

Want to know the latest on Audubon activities around Minnesota? Check our new Events page on the Minnesota Audubon web site at [www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn/](http://www.audubon.org/chapter/mn/mn/). Our statewide newsletter, AUDUBON AGENDA, is now also available at our website. Take a look!

—Suzanne Plass



## Electronic Kingfisher

A little over a year ago we launched the electronic Kingfisher for those of you who are online. We have 30 Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis members who have opted to receive the Kingfisher electronically rather than receive the paper version, and 5 others who either were members and transferred, or are members of another chapter that wanted to receive the Kingfisher. That is a modest savings in postage for the year of about \$30. The goal by the end of the year is to have 100 members signed up. If you are online but are apprehensive about signing up, you can try it out by going to the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis website. The internet address is [www.geocities.com/audubon.geo/](http://www.geocities.com/audubon.geo/). You will need Adobe Reader to open the Kingfisher. Nearly all computers have this already installed, but if you don't have it, or if you have a very old version, you can download it free from Adobe at <http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html>. Once at the Chapter site, simply click on the banner for obtaining the Kingfisher, and either read it, or download it for later reading and printing if you so desire. After you've tried it and are comfortable with it, send an e-mail to [bahls001@tc.umn.edu](mailto:bahls001@tc.umn.edu) and say you want to sign up, or if you would like more information. Help us reach our goal of 100 and save a little money on postage and even some trees.



## Audubon Meeting Review—May 2, 2000

The May meeting marked the end of President Tom Mahan's term, and he has our sincere thanks for a job well done over the past biennium. The cookie social highlighted the pre-meeting gathering and this year's event was noteworthy in the variety of delights available to the attendees.

The announcement of a large number of field trips is a sure sign that spring is upon us here in Minnesota. The migrants will be returning to our area and many of us will be out there to greet them.

The business meeting preceded the program. Changes to the chapter bylaws that were published in the April *Kingfisher* were passed and Kim Halek's treasures report for 1999 was accepted. The new chapter board members were also introduced. They are Jean Kelly, Jim Sharpsteen, and Bill Sipe. The new chapter president, Dorothy Kuether, was also introduced. The chapter continues to be in good hands.

Ann Kessen presented the evening's program. Kessen holds an undergraduate degree in communication and, in addition to her many other qualifications, is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior at the University of Minnesota. She uses her program, entitled "Fox Sparrows: Is One Species Enough?" as a vehicle to help the audience understand how ornithologists make determinations about whether to lump a group of similar birds into a single species or to further split up an existing species.

The decision to either lump or split bird species is made by the American Ornithological Union (AOU) and is based on a bird's appearance, voice, natural history, breeding biology and, most recently, DNA analysis. Generally, the AOU needs multiple reasons before they decide whether to lump or split. Additionally, decisions made by the AOU are not etched in stone and new information can result in reversals in past pronouncements.

Once there were three Rosy Finch species that looked different, but the AOU decided to lump them into one species. The reason they were lumped was that they were observed interbreeding and producing offspring. Further investigation found that the offspring of the hybridization were sterile. This resulted in the AOU reversing its decision and split the group into the three species known today.

Vocalizations are inherited characteristics. Birds do not learn the calls of other species no matter how much they may listen to them. The Willow and Alder Flycatchers look alike but their song clearly distinguishes them as different species.

Natural history can also supply evidence for lumping or splitting groups. Two Sharp-tailed Sparrows, Nelson's and Salt Marsh, are similar in morphology but are separated by their respective habitats. The American Golden Plover and Pacific Golden Plover exhibit differences in their nesting habitat preferences. Even when their ranges overlap, they do not interbreed.

Another factor influencing whether birds are lumped or split is their breeding biology. Arctic and Pacific Loons look very much alike but they do not interbreed and were split. Conversely, Myrtle and Audubon's Warblers look different but freely interbreed and produce fertile offspring. They were lumped into the Yellow-rumped Warbler species. The Northern Flicker has yet another story. There were three species at one time, the Yellow-shafted, Red-shafted and the Gilded Flicker. There was considerable interbreeding and hybrid production. In fact, the hybrids interbred as well so the AOU grouped them into one species, the Northern. Further observations discovered that the Gilded Flicker did not take part in all the interbreeding and was then split out of the group.

As we enter the biotechnology age, DNA evidence has aided the AOU in determining the fate of species. The Sapsuckers were once grouped into one species, but DNA work has concluded that they are three distinct species, the Yellow-bellied, Red-naped and Red-breasted. The Baltimore and Bullock's Oriole had been lumped due to observed hybridization. Recent DNA work has led the AOU to reverse its decision and they are once again separate species.

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, ornithologists grouped Fox Sparrows into four groups based on their morphology. In 1957, the AOU lumped them into one species with 18 sub-species. New evidence has resulted in them being lumped into the original four groups, Red, Sooty, Slate-colored and Thick-billed. That's progress!

This brings us to the question of the evening, "Is four species enough?" Regarding the Fox Sparrow, Kessen remains unsure, but her work continues. In a larger sense, this work helps us to better understand nature's complex interrelationships and aids us in protecting the planet's biodiversity. By studying where species have come from, we are better able to understand what we have, and perhaps gain insight into how to protect those that remain.

—Frank De Steno



## Audubon Adventures

Audubon Adventures is the National Audubon Society's interdisciplinary environmental education curriculum for grades 3 through 6. Last year, our Birdathon proceeds provided Adventures to 20 schools in our Chapter area.

A subscription packet costs \$40.95, and includes resources and activity materials for one classroom. Six nature-study topics are covered during the year.

We invite our Chapter members to help us reach more children by funding a gift subscription. Your child or grandchild will be excited to share this gift with classmates. Do you have a teacher or school that is special to you? Or, you can let us choose a school that is on our waiting list.

Adventures is also excellent for youth groups such as Scouts or Campfire. The packet can be sent directly to a leader's home. The enrollment deadline for the coming year is August 31, 2000. For more information, please call Brenda Reishus, 763-420-2814.

YES, I would like to help our chapter support *Audubon Adventures*! Enclosed is \$40.95 to support *Adventures* in the following school. (Please copy form if you would like to support more than one classroom.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (circle one) Student Teacher School Other

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Mail to: Audubon Adventures, c/o Brenda Reishus, 9478 Minnesota Lane N., Maple Grove, MN 55369

## July Field Trip

### July 1: Cottage Grove Sand Prairie

Trip Leader Don Wanschura (612) 866-3276 - please call for directions on where and what time to meet, as well as to let us know you are attending. This trip is limited to 12 people to not impact this delicate area.

Expect to see prairie wildflowers, plants, and prairie bird species. Don will introduce you to the flora and fauna of this remnant sand prairie.



## Chapter Secretary Wanted

Would you be interested in spending 4 hours a month helping our Chapter? We are looking to fill our last remaining officer position: Secretary. The term runs from September 2000 to May 2001.

What's involved? Our Board of Directors meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month, 7-9 p.m., from September to May. Duties include documenting the meeting minutes and participating in the Chapters decision making process. The position can take as much or as little time as you would like to contribute. If you are interested, please call Dorothy Kuether at (612) 926-4205.



Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis  
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Minneapolis MN 55403

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**KINGFISHER**  
July/Aug 2000



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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 \_\_\_\_\_



LOCAL CHAPTER  
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis  
PO BOX 3801  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
Chapter Code: **CM02**  
**9M99**

**Calendar of Events**

**July**

- 1 Field Trip, Cottage Grove Sand Prairie

**August**

- 27,29 State Fair Booth volunteering

**September**

- 1 State Fair Booth volunteering
- 5 Chapter Potluck
- 5 Chapter Program
- 12 Chapter Board Meeting
- 15-17 Upper Mississippi River Regional Conference

**Happy Birding!**

Board of Directors meet at Anwatin School, Minneapolis.  
All are welcome! Call the president for details.