

The Cardinal



DECEMBER 2017 JANUARY 2018 WWW.SAINTPAULAUDUBON.ORG • SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

DECEMBER MEMBER MEETING

"Owls to Orchids: Magic and Mystery in the Sax-Zim Bog"

with **Sparky Stensaas**
Thursday, December 14, 2017



The Sax-Zim Bog has long been known to birders and photographers from around the world and across the country as THE place to find some of our most secretive boreal birds including the mythic Great Gray Owl. Through HD video and still images we'll explore these black spruce and tamarack bogs...without getting our feet wet or frozen! Meet the bird that grows snowshoes, the devious orchid that outsmarts bumblebees, and the death-defying frog. And of course, the stars of the show will be some cooperative Great Gray

Owls and Northern Hawk Owl families caught on HD video.

Sparky Stensaas is an author, naturalist, photographer, publisher, writer (i.e. "no full-time



real job") based in Wrenshall, Minnesota (over by Jay Cooke State Park). Sparky's latest venture is Friends of Sax-Zim Bog (www.SaxZim.org) a nonprofit aimed at educating the public about the natural history of bogs and dedicated to preserving pristine bog habitat. To date 383 acres of habitat have been preserved by donations. You can see more of Sparky's photography at www.ThePhotoNaturalist.com.

Arrive at 6:45 for social time or 7:00 for the program;
held at Fairview Community Center, 1910 Cty Rd B, Roseville.

Free and open to the public.

No meeting in January; see you February 8!

Golden Eagle Field Trips

The National Eagle Center (NEC) in Wabasha has a great field trip to learn about and see Golden Eagles that come to the bluff lands from Canada to hunt in the winter. Louise Eidsmoe will organize a carpool to this event on Saturday, January 27 for those who would like to go together. Advance registration and payment to the Eagle Center is required; cost is \$30 for members and \$40 for non-members. Other dates for those going on their own are February 10 and 24. More info and online registration is available at www.nationaleaglecenter.org/golden-eagle-project/golden-eagle-field-trips/.

Interested in car pooling on January 27? Email Louise Eidsmoe at eidsmoel@comcast.net

Big River Journey

In 2017, six St. Paul Audubon Society members shared their love of birds and birding with thousands of Twin Cities children for 3 weeks in the spring and 2 weeks in the fall. On board the *Anson Northrup* of the Padelford Packet Boat Company, we took part in the Big River Journey Program organized by the National Park Service along with project partners from the DNR and the Science Museum of Minnesota. Most of the students are 4th graders and, with their teachers and chaperones, they rotate through several learning stations. At the River Birds station, we give them a short lesson on bird adaptations and reasons the Mississippi River is such a good place for some birds to live. We pass out binoculars with an introduction to using them, and then see what we can see. The last few years, the most reliable sighting has been the bald eagles. Hard to imagine 20 years ago!

When the weather is good, traveling on the river with enthusiastic young Minnesotans and the beauties of the season makes for a wonderful day. (Not so much in the sleet or wind-blown cold rain). If any of you would care to get involved or want to know more, feel free to talk to any one of us: Dick or Gloria Wachtler, Cheri Steinmueller, Jeanne Parrozzo-Carroll, Lynn Swift or me, Barbara Lindeke. Brian Goodspeed knows all about it, too, in his role as a National Park Ranger. Good experiences with nature will encourage young Minnesotans to value and look after it into the future. Come aboard and share your love of nature with the next generation.



BOARD MEETINGS

The Chapter's Board Meetings are held the first Monday of most months 6:30-8:00 PM at the Ramsey Washington Metro Watershed Office, 2665 Noel Drive, Little Canada.

Upcoming: **Monday, December 4**



The Cardinal wants your stories!

Seen a rare bird, have a humorous story from the field, or advice to share with other birders who are just beginning their journey? Share it with The Cardinal at: cardinalstpaul@gmail.com.

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ABOUT OUR CHAPTER

Founded in 1945 as the 'St. Paul Bird Club' with twelve members, the Saint Paul Audubon Society now serves the entire East Metro region of the Twin Cities, and has around 2,800 members. Our Member Meetings are held from Sept.-Dec. & Feb.-May on the second Thursday of the month. For more info please contact leaders at left, or visit www.saintpaulaudubon.org

ABOUT THE CARDINAL Published 6 times a year; articles are due on the 5TH of January, March, May, July, Sept, and Nov. Submissions may be edited. Send to cardinalstpaul@gmail.com.

Members may also receive the newsletter by downloading PDF's from our website.

ADDRESS CHANGES Call 1-800-274-4201 or NAS website at www.audubon.org to notify the National Audubon Society of a change of address, to continue to receive *Audubon Magazine* and *The Cardinal*.

2017 Annual Fund Drive Donors

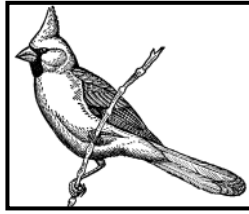
Bluebird: Bonnie J. Anderson, Ann Bucheck, Eugene Carroll, Arta Cheney, Susan Jane Cheney & David Arbeit (via a Fidelity Charitable grant), Mark Citsay, Ron & Jackie Dexter (In memory of Cathy Small), Jane Dickerson, Micheal Dunford, Susan C. Gilbertson, Howard Guthmann, Nancy Hasse, Judy Helgen, Sheau-Ping Hu, Sharon Kauth, Martha Kennedy (Lois Schwob Trust), Jan Leite, Francis Loeffler, Julie Marcus, Tim Metcalf (In memory of Carolyn Metcalf), Stan & Susanne Meyer, Carol Mizuno, Susanne Nevin, Richard Newmark, Carole Nimlos, Cathy Olyphant (In honor of Val Cunningham), Dale & Linda Otteson, James Pearson, Patricia G. Pelto (In Honor of Dorothy Berger), Leslie Pilgrim & Ned Rukavina (In memory of Robert Pilgrim), David Piskorski, Molly Redmond & Steve Ring, Kathryn Rusch, George A. J. Sarner, Lee & Jerry Shannon, Robert Sherman, Sharon & Tom Simpson, Paul Spreitzer, Jim & Ann Stout (In memory

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SPAS Annual Fund Drive

Hello again! Time for the annual fund drive! This is the one and only time of year that we seek your support for the great work done by the Saint Paul Audubon Society. You will not receive a phone call or a postal mail solicitation. And you will NOT receive another request for a donation with your Thank You note. All you need to do is submit a check for your contribution in the remittance envelope provided with this issue of The Cardinal. (If there is no envelope, you may use the box on this page.) If you prefer, you may also donate online at www.saintpaulaudubon.org.



SPAS is an all-volunteer organization. None of the board members, field trip leaders, or committee members are paid, but there are still expenses that must be covered and this Annual Fund Drive is our largest source of income. Our expenses include producing and mailing The Cardinal newsletter, speaker honoraria, and meeting space rental fees.

We maintain a website and a dedicated phone line to help answer your questions. There are also expenses related to an array of educational programs for people of all ages.

SPAS has also provided grants to organizations which support our mission, such as purchasing binoculars for field trips at nature centers, wood for birdhouses, education programs for youth, and restoration of natural areas including, buckthorn removal. Our Conservation Committee is active in restoration activities at Como Park, educational presentations, environmental initiatives, and the installation of kestrel nesting boxes. St. Paul Audubon sponsors numerous birding trips in the metro area.

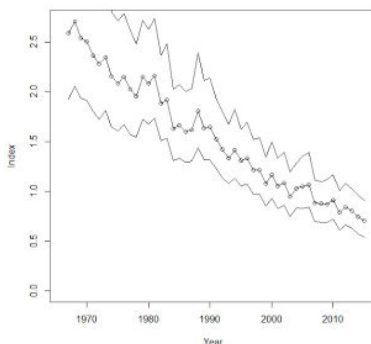
Our mission is to keep common birds common, and to protect species that are in decline. That mission is especially important in an era when development regularly destroys bird habitat and climate change threatens unknowable consequences. When you consider what Saint Paul Audubon has done this year to promote our mission I am confident that you will pledge your support for our continuing effort in the year to come.

Donors (unless they wish to remain anonymous) are recognized annually in an issue of the Cardinal at the Egret (under \$50), Bluebird (\$50-\$99), or Cardinal (\$100 and above) levels.

On behalf of the Board of Directors I sincerely thank you for your support. THANK YOU once again.

-Annual Fund Drive Chair Dean Doering

503600 MIN



To the left is a graph of the decline in American Kestrel numbers in Minnesota from 1966 to 2015. This data was gathered from the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service's Breeding Bird Survey. See the back page to learn more about how SPAS helps conserve the American Kestrel population.

Saint Paul Audubon Society

Annual Fund Drive Donation

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution to the Saint Paul Audubon Society, to be used for:

\$ _____ Annual Operating Fund

\$ _____ Endowment Fund

\$ _____ Habitat Protection

\$ _____ Wherever Needed

This gift is given:

_____ in memory of _____

_____ in honor of _____

Thank You Very Much for Your Support

Donor Name _____

Address _____

Phone/Email _____

If your contribution is given in memory of or in honor of someone, we will gladly send an acknowledgement card:

Name _____

Address _____

PLEASE SEND YOUR CHECK TO: Dean Doering, 1901 North Victoria Street, Roseville, MN 55113, or, you may go to the SPAS Website at www.saintpaulaudubon.org > "Support Us"

Christmas Bird Count December 16

You are invited to participate in the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC), December 16: a long-standing program of the National Audubon Society, with over 100 years of citizen science involvement.

Please contact Dorothy Waltz to participate in this year's CBC. (651-917-0930 or waltz.ds@yahoo.com). All are welcome to join a team and count the east metro birds. Young or old, new to the program, experienced here or elsewhere, you can add facts to show trends and realities of our wintering feathered friends.

SPAS' 15 mile diameter circle was determined long ago by the National Audubon Society. SPAS divided it into 15 areas and teams are formed to census one area each. Many of the counters enjoy the potluck supper that follows their efforts and to tell and hear stories of the day and, most importantly, to tally all the birds counted. If your home is within the boundaries of the SPAS CBC circle, then you could stay at home and report the birds that visit your feeder on December 16 as long as you have made prior arrangements with Dorothy. For more detailed information about the CBC go to www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count.

SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

PO Box 7275, St Paul, MN 55107-7275

WWW.SAINTPAULAUDUBON.ORG

February March 2018

Next Deadline 1/5/2018

Welcome...

To the Saint Paul Audubon Society.

We're a chapter of the
National Audubon Society.

Our mission is to conserve and restore
natural eco systems, focusing on birds,
other wildlife, and their habitats
for the benefit of humanity and
Earth's biological diversity.

*Please check our website
for calendar updates!*

CALENDAR

December

MOU Paper Session 2
General Meeting: Sparky Stensaas 14
Christmas Bird Count 16

January

Golden Eagle Viewing Field Trip 27

February

Golden Eagle Viewing 10
Golden Eagle Viewing 24

Non-profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit # 3795
Twin Cities, Minnesota

The Kestrel Nest Box Project

Members of the Conservation Committee began placing nest boxes for American Kestrels, our smallest falcons, in 2012. The steep decline of the kestrel population in Minnesota has been documented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Breeding Bird Survey from 1966 to 2015. The Conservation Committee saw a nest box project as a way to help kestrels since they typically nest in tree cavities, which are in short supply.

Installing nest boxes and poles

We have placed six kestrel nest boxes in Ramsey and Washington Counties, with three more expected this fall. The boxes are made of cedar, which lasts longer than pine, and we add a bed of aspen chips. Without the chips, the female kestrel will lay eggs on the bare wood floor, and they will probably not hatch because the kestrels cannot keep the eggs warm and together.

American Kestrels prefer a nesting territory of at least 50 acres of short vegetation with some trees, utility poles, wires, or other places to perch. Their main food during the nesting season is small mammals (voles, mice), large insects, and small reptiles.

To mount a box, we ask the host site to provide a pole that extends at least 15 feet above ground. We attach the box with its entrance facing southeast. To deter predators from climbing the pole, we wrap one or two pieces of 30" x 40" aluminum around the pole.

Monitoring

We recruit volunteers to monitor each nest box. Monitors observe boxes at least once a week during the nesting season to determine whether kestrels, or other species, appear to be nesting.

European Starlings sometimes nest in kestrel boxes. If we see starlings using a box, we remove the starling nest and eggs. (An alien species, European Starlings are not protected.) If a native species uses a box, we do not interfere. Starlings have the nasty habit of removing the aspen chips. That happened without our detection at one of our boxes in 2014. Kestrels came along and laid four eggs, which did not hatch.

Kestrel eggs hatch after about four weeks of incubation, and the young fledge about a month later. If it appears that kestrels are incubating eggs, we inspect the contents of the box with a pole-mounted camera connected to a laptop computer. This does not require a ladder, and it causes minimal disturbance to the birds. If a full clutch of four or five eggs is present, we return about a month later to check for kestrel chicks. We estimate the age of the chicks, and try to have the monitor observe the box (from a distance) at about the expected time of fledging. We may also arrange for the chicks to be banded at the age of about 20 days.

In the days leading up to fledging, the young kestrels can often be seen looking out of the box. After fledging, the young remain in the area for about two weeks, sometimes perching on the box, while the parents continue to capture food for them.

In the fall, we check each box and, if necessary, clean it out and replace the aspen chips.

Reporting to the American Kestrel Partnership

Our nest box project contributes data to a continent-wide research program conducted by the American Kestrel Partnership, which is a creation of The Peregrine Fund. We enter our nesting data on the web site of the Partnership.

Results thus far

Counting each nest box that was available during a nesting season as one nest-box-season, our 19 nest-box-seasons (through 2017) have had five successful broods that have produced 24 young kestrels.

Volunteers are needed!

As we add nest boxes, we need more volunteers to help with the installation, maintenance, and monitoring of nest boxes. If you would like to be a part of our effort to help these beautiful falcons, please contact Julian Sellers at JulianSellers@msn.com.