

The



Cardinal

DECEMBER 2023 - JANUARY 2024 • WWW.SAINTPAULAUDUBON.ORG • SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

December Chapter Meeting In-Person, January Meeting Zoom Only

The December and January chapter meetings are coming up soon, at 7:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month as usual, but each in a different format. Here are the details.

December 14, 7:00 p.m.: Kara G. Snow, recent master’s graduate from UMD, will present “The Breeding Ecology of Boreal Chickadees.” Kara will share with us her research and findings related to Boreal Chickadees. The MN DNR lists Boreal Chickadees as a Species in Greatest Conservation Need, with declines attributed to habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation. However, the specific impacts of fragmentation on this species are unknown, and there are critical knowledge gaps in their life history related explicitly to nestling ecology. Kara examined the effects of fragmentation on Boreal Chickadee food availability, nestling growth rates, nestling body condition, and provisioning rates. She also modeled nest survival concerning landscape, patch, and nest site scale metrics of fragmentation. Kara found evidence that fragmentation negatively impacts nest survival, nestling growth rates, and food availability.

Kara works at the Avian Ecology Lab at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. She has an undergraduate degree in Wildlife Biology from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and a Master’s Degree from the University of Minnesota-Duluth.



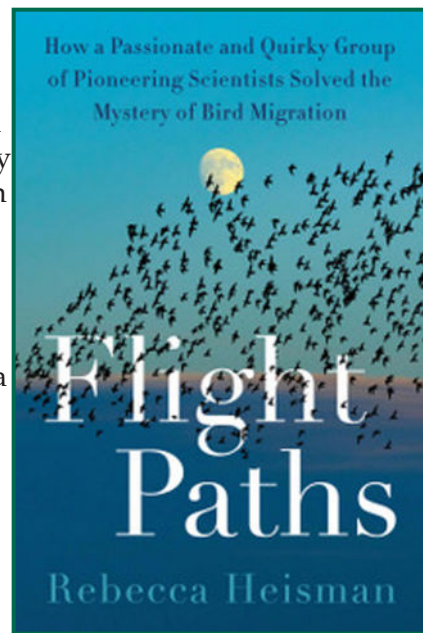
Kara Snow with bird.

Location: Please plan to join us on **Thursday, Dec. 14** in our usual meeting place, room 207 of the Anpétu Téca Education Center at 1910 County Road B West, Roseville. The meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. but come early to enjoy holiday refreshments and to socialize. The presentation will also be available via [Zoom](#).

January 11, 2024, 7:00 p.m. on Zoom only: Science writer Rebecca Heisman will present “Wild Stories from the History of Bird Migration Research.” We’ve all heard amazing facts about bird migration—the long distances that birds travel, the ways that they navigate, etc. But did you ever wonder how we figured all of this out? While working for the American Ornithological Society, Rebecca Heisman became fascinated with the varied and creative techniques that scientists have used to study bird migration, and this eventually became the basis for her book *Flight Paths: How a Passionate and Quirky Group of Pioneering Scientists Solved the Mystery of Bird Migration*. In her talk, she’ll share some surprising stories from the history of bird migration research and discuss why understanding migration is so crucial for bird conservation.

Rebecca Heisman is a freelance science writer who lives in Walla Walla, Washington, and has worked with organizations including the Audubon Society, the American Bird Conservancy, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and the American Ornithological Society. *Flight Paths* is her first book.

Visit [this page](#) for the Zoom link for Rebecca’s presentation.



- Complete information, zoom links and last-minute updates about monthly chapter meetings can be found at <https://saintpaulaudubon.org/upcoming-events>.
- Past presentations are also available for viewing on YouTube at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w65pqtbpKP60>

SAINT PAUL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Welcome!

To the Saint Paul Audubon Society. We're a chapter of the National Audubon Society. **Our mission** is to engage a diverse community in enjoying, understanding, and protecting birds and the habitats they need to survive.

The Saint Paul Audubon Society **welcomes everyone** to become a member or participate in activities as a non-member regardless of their race, color, national origin, religion, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status or age.

Get Involved

We are a volunteer organization that relies on people willing to donate their time to our shared mission. Please consider getting involved with volunteer opportunities involved with birding walks, conservation efforts, or other activities. Visit <https://www.saintpaulaudubon.org/volunteer/> for a full list of committees and committee chairs, or get in touch with us on our contact page at <https://www.saintpaulaudubon.org/contact/>.

Become a Chapter Member

You are invited to become a Saint Paul Audubon Chapter Member by making a gift of \$25 or more. Your donation goes directly to our chapter's local efforts to educate about, advocate for, and protect our birds. Make a gift online at <https://www.saintpaulaudubon.org/get-involved/donate/>.

About our chapter

Founded in 1945 as the St. Paul Bird Club with 12 members, our chapter now serves the entire East Metro region of the Twin Cities. **Monthly chapter meetings** are held the second Thursday of the month, September-May, and are open to the public.

About the Cardinal

The *Cardinal* is published 6 times a year and posted on www.saintpaulaudubon.org at the beginning of February, April, June, August, October, and December. Martha Douglas is the editor and Laurie Wachter is the graphic designer. If you would like to receive an email when it is available, go to www.saintpaulaudubon.org, scroll down and click on "Join our email list."

Contact Us

If you have a comment or question for a board member or the Cardinal editor, please use the contact form on the website at <https://www.saintpaulaudubon.org/contact/>. Your message will be forwarded promptly to the appropriate person.

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Next issue: February / March 2024

Donors Recognized in Online Annual Report

We are happy once again to recognize and thank everyone who made a gift to the Saint Paul Audubon Society. Gifts to our Saint Paul chapter directly support our local efforts to educate about, advocate for, and protect birds through our programs and field trips, advocacy and conservation efforts, and grants to local nonprofits that share our goals. People who give \$25 or more are now also registered as Saint Paul Audubon Chapter Members, a change that the board recently made in our bylaws (see Greg Burnes' Chip Notes on page 3).

The 2022-23 Annual Report also provides an overview of our finances for the fiscal year and highlights of activities in the calendar year. See the complete Annual Report and donor list [here](#).

2023 Saint Paul Christmas Bird Count

Saint Paul Audubon's Christmas Bird Count is Saturday, December 16, 2023. Gregg Severson will organize and compile the count, with help from Kiki Sonnen, as follows:

1. Each area in our CBC Circle will be assigned to a leader. Past leaders are encouraged to continue in their previous roles.
2. The assigned Area Leader will decide how to best survey their given area, splitting it into sub-areas for smaller groups to bird, or to all meet and bird together.
3. Area leaders will fill their groups as they see fit.

New participants who contact Gregg or Kiki will be assigned to areas as area leaders request participants.

4. Anyone who lives within the count circle who wishes to participate as a feeder watcher may do so by contacting Gregg or Kiki.

5. Gregg will tally the overall count from area counts submitted by area leaders.

A post-count potluck party will take place at 6 p.m. at the residence of Bill Stjern - 6490 Glen Road, Woodbury, 55129. Glen Road is a busy street exiting south of 494 off Hwy 61. Please park in the driveway, which is a long uphill driveway that ends at the garage, with the house off to the side. This is a pot luck dinner, so bring a dish to share and a beverage for yourself to drink.

Contact Gregg Severson at gregg.severson@gmail.com or 612-568-5272; or Kiki Sonnen at 651-331-9560.





Chip Notes

Chapter Membership -- One of the most common questions we get online and at meetings is, "How do I become a member of Saint Paul Audubon?" This summer, the board reviewed the organization's bylaws and discovered that the only way to become an official member was to join National Audubon and live in Ramsey or Washington County. Following these guidelines, nearly 400 people who donated directly to Saint Paul Audubon could not call themselves members. So, in October, we created and enshrined a Chapter Membership designation into the bylaws. You are now a Chapter Member if you donate \$25 or more annually to Saint Paul Audubon. To find out more, visit <https://saintpaulaudubon.org/get-involved/donate/>

What's in a Name? -- The American Ornithological Society will no longer name bird species in the US and Canada after people. As a result, in the next year, they will be renaming nearly 80 bird species. "There is power in a name, and some English bird names have associations with the past that continue to be exclusionary and harmful today," the organization's president, Colleen Handel, said in a statement. "Everyone who loves and cares about birds should be able to enjoy and study them freely."

As a chapter, we are faced with a similar challenge. Susan Bell, the chair of the National Audubon Society's Board of Directors, stated, "The name Audubon has come to represent so much more than the work of a single person." True, yet the name Audubon also presents a formidable barrier to engaging a vital part of our local community who are needed to help us meet our chap-

ter's mission. Yet simply changing the organization's name without considering how our current offerings and outreach impact those who now feel excluded would be a change without real substance. So, where do we start?

The first step in any successful change process is building awareness. We as a board need to explore our "blind spots" related to how we think about and structure our chapter's offerings, along with how our current name positively and negatively impacts our ability to meet our mission. Once we start this process, we will communicate what we find and have a plan to reach out to our members for your insights and involvement in our path forward.

I return to Ms. Handel's statement, "Everyone who loves and cares about birds should be able to enjoy and study them freely." How do we create a more welcoming community where everyone in our community feels safe and excited about engaging with Saint Paul Audubon? If you have insights or comments you would like to share, please get in touch with us at general@saintpaulaudubon.org.

*Greg Burnes
President,
Saint Paul
Audubon Society*



American Kestrel Nest Box Project Reaches 119 Fledglings

By Julian Sellers

We are happy to report the 2023 results of our American Kestrel Nest Box Project, with Kestrel pairs raising 19 young this year in four of our eight nest boxes. The occupied boxes were in Afton State Park, The Belwin Conservancy (two boxes), and in the new box in Glacial Valley Park, Woodbury. This year's crop brings the total since our project began, in 2012, to 119 young kestrels fledged.

Thank you, again, volunteer nest box monitors Lynn & Mike Swift, Gerry Fuller, Janet Kortuem, Elizabeth Wolf, Tammy Swick, Val Cunningham, and Kathy Siddles. And thanks to Gus Koutsouvas, who does all of the heavy lifting and ladder work every fall, when we clean the boxes, or add, remove, or move a box.

And special thanks to Ed Davies, who has volunteered to manage this project now that I have retired. (You'll still see me out there monitoring those amazing kestrels.)

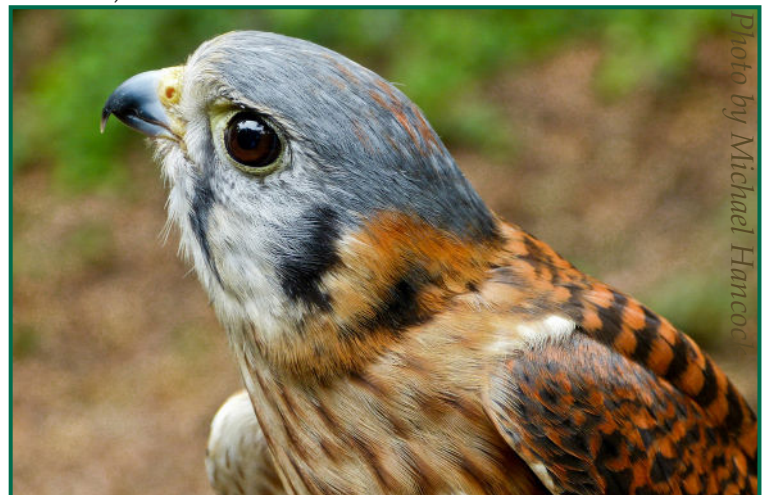


Photo by Michael Hancock

FIELD TRIPS

Announcing a New Field Trip Series for Beginning Birders and Everyone Else!

Birding through the Months at Silverwood Park

Silverwood Park is a beautiful urban park on the shores of Silver Lake. The variety of habitats in the park--oak forest, marsh, grassland, and lakefront--make it a great birding destination, with over 180 different species sighted in the park.

In this new series, we will bird in the park over several months, providing a great way to get into birding. During this series of four field trips, participants will get to know the park and watch for different birds each month as the seasons change. In addition to getting to know the birds of Silverwood, participants will also be introduced to basic birding techniques and tools, including digital resources. Participants are encouraged to bring their own binoculars, although a few extra pairs will be available.

LOCATION Silverwood Park, 2500 County Road E, Saint Anthony, MN 55421

DIRECTIONS Meet at the doors leading into the Visitor Center from the parking lot.

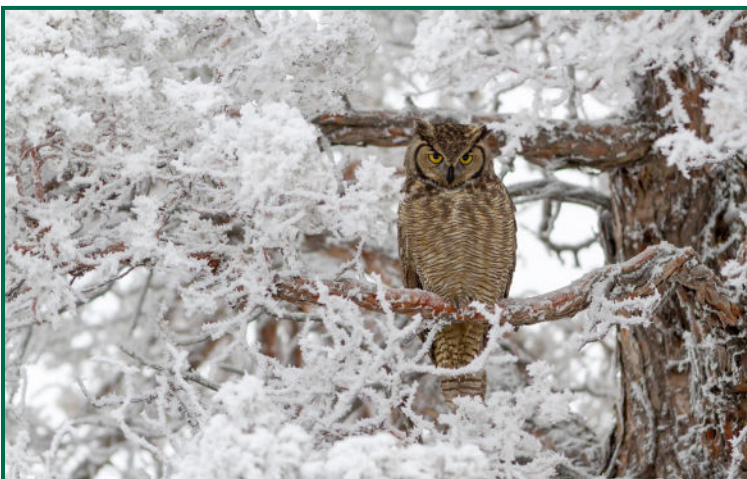
REGISTRATION No registration necessary. Come for any of the sessions--attending all is not required.

DIFFICULTY Most paths are paved, but may be icy in the winter. Walks will range from 1-1.5 miles.

LEADERS Jen Miller birdingjen@gmail.com and Liz Richards

Wednesday, February 21: 2-4 PM

Birding in the winter is a great way to get comfortable with the species who live in the park year-round--plus, there are no leaves on the trees to get in the way of seeing birds! This month, we'll look for common Minnesota winter birds like chickadees and nuthatches, along with several different woodpecker species. We might even get lucky and see the park's resident great horned owls as they start nesting.

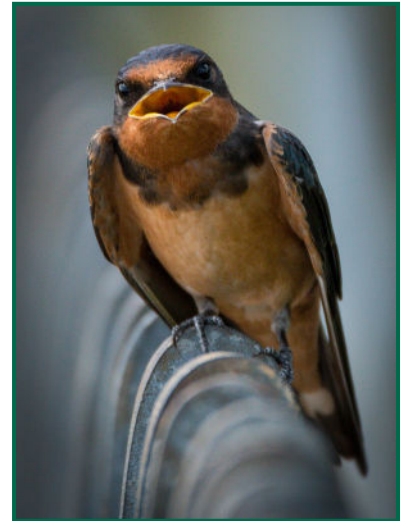


Wednesday, March 20: 2-4 PM

During March, we will start to see some early migrants returning to the park--some waterfowl, and maybe even robins and red-winged blackbirds. We'll also notice an increase in bird songs that we will learn to identify.

Wednesday, April 17: 2-4 PM

April showers melt the ice on Silver Lake, which brings more waterfowl, along with sparrows, swallows, and maybe even some early warblers or phoebes. With some luck, we might catch a glimpse of a migrating shorebird along the lakeshore, or see the fluffy head of an owlet.



Wednesday, May 15: 2-4 PM

May brings warblers, warblers, and more warblers! We'll also begin to see some of the beautiful summer residents of the park, including orioles, rose-breasted grosbeaks, and bluebirds. While the leaves returning to the trees makes seeing birds more challenging, the variety of species in the park in May makes this one of the most exciting times of year for birding.

Photos this page:

Left: Great Horned Owl. Photo by Ken Shults

Top: Wood Duck. Photo by Norman Arnett

Center: Barn Swallow. Photo by Barbara Saffir

••••• Be sure to check <https://saintpaulaudubon.org/up-coming-events/> for more details and field trip changes throughout the season. •••••



Photo by Michael Krahn

Conservation Committee Celebrates Community Engagement

By Debbie Brown, Board member and Conservation Committee Co-chair

Do you know that Saint Paul Audubon has a conservation committee? We do indeed. Its mission is to engage our community and act to protect natural ecosystems for birds and other wildlife. As the conservation committee, it's expected that we work to protect birds and their environments. But we also recognize that the community engagement aspect is essential and we are working on how to directly engage community members as we reexamine our mission and develop our 2024 work plan.

We are looking at how to involve more members of our community in increasing awareness, knowledge, and interest in birds and what our avian neighbors need. This can lead to people taking action in a broad spectrum of potential activities, such as teaching children about birds, planting native plants, advocating for birds with our elected leaders, and much more. Our collective efforts can be more powerful and transformative than projects by a few enthusiastic birders alone.

A Win for Pig's Eye Park

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has" is a favorite quote, often attributed to Margaret Mead. An example of this has occurred recently, in our own backyard, with the announcement that a \$60,000 STAR Neighborhood Grant was awarded by the Saint Paul City Council for improvements at Pig's Eye Park. This long-hoped-for action is a win for Pig's Eye Park Friends - and their predecessors - who have worked since the 1960s on conserving Pig's Eye Park and Lake and making this amazing natural resource more accessible. Through advocacy efforts by the Friends, the Saint Paul Parks Department and Councilmember Jane Prince became instrumental in supporting the grant, along with allies such as the Friends of the Mississippi River, Friends

of the Parks and Trails of St. Paul and Ramsey County, Friends of Swede Hollow, Pig's Eye Park Friends, Saint Paul Parks Conservancy, Southeast Community Organization, Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi, and several individuals, who wrote letters and spoke to their council members.

Pig's Eye Lake and Park endured years of environmental insults and assaults, but the actions of committed citizens have been instrumental in protecting the treasures there, including a heron rookery. Now, the STAR Grant money will be spent on amenities to make Pig's Eye Park more accessible to the public to enjoy and appreciate this special place. This includes directional signs to help people get there, improvements to the entry road, solar lighting, bicycle parking, a kiosk with interpretative signage, a satellite restroom facility and trash receptacles, and installation of a kestrel nest box, donated by Saint Paul Audubon and installed by Saint Paul Parks. A small parking lot for 6-7 cars will also be created. Much work remains and the conservation committee intends to include Pig's Eye Park and Lake in its 2024 work plan.

There's more to come on upcoming conservation committee activities and opportunities. As year's end draws near, we encourage you to reflect on how you engage our community with respect to birds and our natural world. Birds need the help of thoughtful, committed citizens now more than ever.



Heron Rookery. Photo by Robert Rice