

Finding Aid to the Audubon Society of Fargo-Moorhead Records

Audubon Society of Fargo-Moorhead

Audubon Society of Fargo-Moorhead records, 1970-2006

2.5 linear ft.

Collection number: Mss 328

[History](#)

[Scope and Content](#)

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OVERVIEW

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HISTORY

The Audubon Society of Fargo-Moorhead was organized on April 15, 1970, for the purpose of studying, appreciating, and promoting conservation and environmental concerns, with a particular emphasis on bird life. Article II, Section 1, of the Constitution states that “The purpose and objectives of this Society shall be to engage in any such educational, scientific, investigative, literary, historical, philanthropic and charitable pursuits as may be part of the stated purposes of the National Audubon Society, of which this Society shall function as a Chapter.” These purposes are framed in similar words under the heading of “A Statement of Audubon Philosophy,” as “The purpose and objectives of the Audubon Society of Fargo-Moorhead shall be to help advance public understanding of the value and need for conservation of our wildlife, its habitat, all natural resources, and the relationship of such wide use and intelligent treatment to

human progress as may be part of the stated purposes of the National Audubon Society, of which the Fargo-Moorhead Society shall function as a branch.

Membership was open to anyone interested in the purposes of the society at a nominal annual dues fee. The society held board meetings at 7:00 p.m. the last Thursday of each month, followed by a general meeting at 8:00 p.m., September through May, omitting December, usually at one of the area college or university venues.

The society featured programs presented by area people or narrated films from National Audubon, also field trips, and for a few years, Study groups. To facilitate these activities, in addition to the usual organizational officers, the Constitution established these committees: membership, program, conservation and education, field trip, publicity, finance, study group, film (including tickets, publicity, and hospitality), mailings. The programs varied greatly, but most of the field trips were to well-known wildlife reserves in or not far from the Red River Valley and most of the trips recurred to these same places at about the same time each year.

Over the years the society had over 300 members at any one time, though often only a tenth of them present at programs. The information in this collection does not indicate a formal date of dissolution, but many activities had ceased by the spring of 2004, and the final board meeting appears to have been May 1, 2006. Reasons given included too few people attending and doing all the work. The popular narrated Audubon films were presented several times each year from the beginning until 1983. After that, perhaps the variety of high quality nature and wildlife films available on television crowded out the films, and their passing deprived the society of one of its best public offerings. Decline may also have resulted simply from the inevitable cycles of interest.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Audubon Society of Fargo-Moorhead records have several topical segments, some of which are fairly complete over the life of the society, others of which have gaps. The best sources of information about the ongoing activities of the society are to be found in the meeting minutes, the newsletter, and the annual membership and program booklets. Of these the latter are the most complete. The society published a booklet for each season beginning with 1970-1971, listing the current officers and committee personnel, the schedules for films, other programs, field trips, and study groups, followed by a directory of the general membership, and a calendar of events. These booklets are contained in this collection from the beginning in 1970 without break through 1983. From that point the membership directory was apparently not published annually, there being included here only one for 1985 and one for 1990. The list of programs and field trips, which had been included in the annual booklets along with the membership lists, continued as a separate publication from the 1983-1984 season through the 2003-2004 season, at which time the organization was apparently becoming less active. Of this series of program and field trip brochures from 1983 to 2004, two years are missing: 1984-1985 and 1990-1991.

There are a number of files dealing with the operation of the organization itself, including annual presidential and committee reports, each organized chronologically. As noted under "history" above, the

Audubon films were an important part of the organization's annual programming from the early 1970s until 1983. This activity was important in attracting and educating audiences of members and non-members, and its importance is indicated by the fact that the Society dedicated four distinct committees to the film operation. There was a general film committee to arrange for the films and speakers who came with them, a publicity committee to see that the events were widely publicized around the Fargo-Moorhead area, a hospitality committee to take care of accommodations and meals for visiting speakers, and a film tickets committee to provide the tickets, disseminate them or sell them at the event, and report and remit the proceeds to the society.

The society vice president, no doubt more importantly, also had the program portfolio. The [Committee Series](#) includes documents of the program committee, headed by the vice president, planned for the year's speakers and demonstrators apart from the film events. Speakers were frequently area scientists from the colleges and universities, or sometimes government agencies, or society members who might have a slide show on a recent trip abroad, or display some skill such as photography. There was a general publicity committee which prepared posters and press releases for these, apart from the film publicity committee noted above. Other committees included one for field trips, one for education and conservation, and one for study groups. Field trips were one of the main activities of the Society, and there were several each year to area wildlife sanctuaries or other areas suitable for wildlife observation. Study groups seem to have been discontinued after a few of the earliest years.

The **General Files Series** includes the annual membership/program booklets issued by the society. There are also 'Program and Field Trips' brochures that cover from 1983/1984 to 2003/2004. The series also includes general membership lists and copies of its logo and stationery.

The [Red River Flyer Series](#) and the [Meeting Minutes Series](#) provide the greatest amount of information about the internal workings of the society, supplemented a bit by the very limited file of correspondence.

The [National, Regional and Local Organizations Series](#) contains materials which relate to the National Audubon Society and to The North Dakota Audubon Council. These help to illustrate the interconnectedness of the Audubon groups on various levels and how the national headquarters can give assistance to the local group or solicit assistance from the local group, and how the local group fulfills the requirements set by the national group for accreditation as an authorized representative of national Audubon.

The [Correspondence Series](#) is very scattered and general in nature. Most of the correspondence, directly relating to society activities, is placed at the appropriate dates in either the Activities Series File or the Subject Files Series.

The [Activities Series](#) are arranged chronologically with a separate file for each September-May season. From this annual series, materials appear to be missing for the following years: 1981-1982, 1983-1984, 1984-1985. After 1985-1986, there is a combined three year activities file for 1986-1989, followed by a five year file for 1990-1995. After that there is again a separate file for each year from 1995-1996 to 2003-2004. There is a final file containing a few undated sheets probably from 2000 to 2004 and so labeled. The missing years or the years with so little documentary material that they are combined, should

not be taken to mean that the society had no more activities during those periods, rather that the more complete documentation for them is missing from this collection. Missing materials may yet reside with former society officers or members, or have been lost or destroyed. Though there are gaps in the minutes, the newsletter, and the activity files, one can gain a good understanding of the organization's activities by sampling the periods that have fuller or more complete files.

The [Subject Files Series](#) contain materials received and used by the society as information resources, descriptions of special projects, publicity from various private and governmentally sponsored wildlife centers, advertisements for ecological vacation resorts, conservation activities, conservation controversies, and other special subjects, often dealing with matters either one time or at least not regular, recurrent society program items. There is one scrapbook that covers the activities of the society from 1970 to 1976. It includes its charter from the National Audubon Society, and its certificate of incorporation in North Dakota. The scrapbook also includes a series of photographic print from an April 26, 1970 field trip of the NDSU gardens, the West Fargo lagoon and a Harwood slough.

BOX AND FOLDER LISTING

Box/Folder	Content
1/1	Finding aid
	Legal Documents Series
1/2	Constitution
1/3	Non-profit and charitable solicitation licenses, post office permit
1/4	Insurance
	Meeting Minutes Series
1/5	Meeting minutes, 1 of 2
1/6	Meeting minutes, 2 of 2
	Financial Statements Series
1/7	Financial statements and accounts
	Committee Series
1/8	Conservation and education committees
1/9	Corresponding and recording secretary
1/10	Field trips committee
1/11	Film committee
1/12	Film publicity committee

- 1/13 Film hospitality committee
- 1/14 Film tickets committee
- 1/15 Mailings committee
- 1/16 Membership committee
- 1/17 President's report
- 1/18 Programs (Vice President)
- 1/19 Publicity committee
- 1/20 Study groups committee

General Files Series

- 1/21 Membership booklets and programs / field trip brochures, 1970/1971 – 1978/1979
- 1/21a Membership booklets and programs/field trip brochures, 1879/1980 – 2003/2004
- 1/22 Membership lists and other name directories
- 1/23 Membership lists and other name directories
- 1/24 Membership lists and other name directories
- 1/25 Logotypes, stationery, banner

Red River Flyer Series

- 1/26 Red River Flyer (club newsletter). 1 of 4
- 1/27 Red River Flyer, 2 of 4
- 1/28 Red River Flyer, 3 of 4
- 1/29 Red River Flyer, 4 of 4

National, Regional and Local Organizations Series

- 1/30 Chapter certification, 1 of 2
- 1/31 Chapter certification, 2 of 2
- 1/32 Materials, communications between national and local Audubon, 1 of 3
- 1/33 Materials, communications between national and local Audubon, 2 of 3
- 1/34 Materials, communications between national and local Audubon, 3 of 3
- 1/35 North Dakota Audubon Council

Correspondence Series

- 1/36 General correspondence

Activities Series

- 1/37 Activities 1970-1971
- 1/38 Activities 1971-1972
- 1/39 Activities 1972-1973
- 1/40 Activities 1973-1974

1/41	Activities 1974-1975
1/42	Activities 1975-1976
1/43	Activities 1976-1977
1.44	Activities 1977-1978
1/45	Activities 1978-1979
1/46	Activities 1979-1980
1/47	Activities 1980-1981
1/48	Activities 1981-1982
1/49	Activities 1982-1983
1/50	Activities 1983-1984
1/51	Activities 1984-1985
1/52	Activities 1985-1986
1/53	Activities 1986-1987
1/54	Activities 1987-1988
2/1	Activities 1988-1989
2/2	Activities 1989-1990
2/3	Activities 1990-1991
2/4	Activities 1991-1992
2/5	Activities 1992-1993
2/6	Activities 1993-1994
2/7	Activities 1994-1995
2/8	Activities 1995-1996
2/9	Activities 1996-1997
2/10	Activities 1997-1998
2/11	Activities 1998-1999
2/12	Activities 1999-2000
2/13	Activities 2000-2001
2/14	Activities 2001-2002
2/15	Activities 2002-2003
2/16	Activities 2003-2004
2/17	Miscellaneous undated activities 2000? – 2004?

Subject Files Series

2/18	Acid rain project
2/19	Alkali Lake
2/20	Audubon Adventures / Junior Audubon
2/21	Audubon Prairie (Burg Farm)
2/22	Birds and bird watching activities
2/23	Chippewa and Superior National Forests
2/24	Clear air
2/25	Custer National Forest and Little Missouri Grasslands
2/26	Earth Day
2/27	Environment (see also specific titles in this series)

2/28 Estes Park National Audubon Society Annual Conference 1998
2/29 Falconry
2/30 Felton Prairie
2/31 Foundation grants, funding, bequests
2/32 Garrison Diversion
2/33 Grand Canyon
2/34 Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve
2/35 Lawndale Farm
2/36 Long Lake Conservation Camp
2/37 Medora Airport
2/38 Northwoods Audubon Center
2/39 Periodicals from other organizations
2/40 Pesticides, pigeon kill, prairie dog Predator Project
2/41 Red River concerns and projects, incl. River Keepers (cf. also Rose Creek)
2/42 Rose Creek Conservation Park
2/43 Schilling Trust and Johnson Park, 1 of 2
2/44 Schilling Trust and Johnson Park, 2 of 2
3/1 Scrapbook, 1970-1976
2/45 Sheyenne River
2/46 Tall grass prairie
2/47 Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge
2/48 Tewaukon National Wildlife Refuge
2/49 Turkey feed lots
2/50 Wetlands
2/51 Wilderness Inquiry (Bald Eagle Outdoor Learning Center)
2/52 Wildlife management areas