

Prairie Rapids Audubon Society

General Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2026

The membership of the Prairie Rapids Audubon Society was eager to leave their homes as 58 people were in attendance for the March 10, 2026 meeting. Another 10 individuals on 7 devices were present as President Tom Schilke called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Although it remains two months away, Tom urged us to reserve Saturday, May 9, 2026, World Migratory Bird Day, for a field trip at Sweet Marsh near Tripoli. This has traditionally been the beginning of our Birdathon fundraiser but we are looking for newer ways to update our membership fundraising. Stay posted for developments.

Just a reminder. National Audubon memberships get sent to them annually during the month you joined. Local PRAS memberships are paid to our treasurer in January.

According to treasurer, Francis Moore, our combined accounts currently stand at \$40,835.18. The bird feed fund contains \$1,114.33. As always contributions are gladly accepted.

The board is on a mission to clean up our email list. Some of you have indicated you do not receive PRAS emails. Please check your trash or junk files to make sure that they have not landed in there. Notify Candace Havelly if you've had a change of email address. Some individuals we have not heard from in months or longer so we'd like to make our membership roles more current. Thanks for your attention to this matter.

Our board elections will be taking place in May. President Tom is stepping down and Darrin Siefkin is running to take his place. The position of secretary is also open. All officer posts are for one-year terms. Board members are elected for two years with half of them being up for election each year. If you'd like to run or be considered for a board term by all means let a current board member know. And by all means show Tom and Candace your appreciation for their dedication and many years of hard work given to Prairie Rapids Audubon.

We have a terrific looking newsletter, The Red Tail, that is available at our web site gopras.org. Connie Svoboda designs our newsletter each month after having done a similar job editing The Oak for Black Hawk County Conservation while employed as a naturalist at Hartman Reserve. Our statistics show that only 30% of our membership reads our newsletter. Do we need to beg? While you're at it view Connie's TED Talk about forest bathing recorded at UNI and available on YOU Tube.

Pres. Tom informed the group that the board of directors had voted to contribute \$100 to the Alaska Wilderness League, an organization we had supported in the past. This area is currently under threat from the Trump administration to begin exploiting Alaska's wildlands and waters.

The silent auction will return in April. Auction manager, Ken Heiar, reports that we have had some wonderful items contributed in the past. However, we are in need of some new books and related nature items to add to this month's offerings. If you have appropriate objects with which you are willing to part bring them to the April meeting. And thanks.

Last year we enjoyed the photos and stories from several of our gifted photographers. That being said PRAS is blessed with many talented photographers leading to tonight's program, "Three More Journeys". Our local members, Bob Frenchick, Ken Heiar and Tom Moon introduced us to their personal adventures through a few of their thousands of photos.

In an effort to shorten our newsletter I will summarize their presentations. Bob began by telling us that he was having some difficulty with our computer set up. He did advise us that now is the time to visit Pintail and Legacy marshes in Hardin County where he resides. There is a great deal of migrating waterfowl to be seen there. His tip is to patient and "just wait and they will come to you". To be continued...

Ken Heiar has been practicing his passion since he was a young man and could afford his first camera. Titled, "Exploring the Unexpected or Sometimes I'm Lucky". He likes to photograph all kinds of living creatures. Among his avian species were a group of leucistic birds. However, his favorite bird photo is a very feisty ruby-crowned kinglet. He also has a long-term relationship with a barred owl that has lasted numerous years.

Tom Moon's journey began in 2007 as a way to recover from a broken back. Needing to get some exercise to encourage healing his therapy might now be called an addiction. Now three hard drives contain what averages 40-45,000 photos a year. He especially likes to photograph raptors including owls, hawks, eagles and ospreys. One set of photos included a set of winter birds with some striking cardinal shots. Wednesday Morning Birding was included where Tom is usually in attendance. To round out the collection were colorful images of pollinators.

We very much appreciate the generosity of our members to share their illustrated stories with us. Their presentations were thoroughly enjoyable and can be viewed at [**gopras.org**](http://gopras.org)