

# che dipper \*

VOL. 45 NO. 12 DECEMBER 2015

### **EVERGREEN AUDUBON NEWSLETTER**

www.EvergreenAudubon.org

### NEXT 3RD SATURDAY WALK WILL BE JAN. 16

Due to the Evergreen Christmas Bird Count being held on Dec. 20, there will be no Third Saturday Bird Walk in December.

Dig out your mukluks, though, because we will be getting out again on Jan. 16. - Chuck Aid Director of Bird Monitoring

### LAST CHANCE FOR HOLIDAY WREATHS

Although Holiday Wreath orders closed Oct. 30, Marilyn Rhodes ordered about 25 extra wreaths.

Those who want a wreath but missed the order cutoff may contact her at cloverlane@ aol.com or 303-674-9895.

She'll accommodate folks on a first-come, first-served basis.

- Marilyn Rhodes

### **CHANCE TO HELP EA**

Colorado Gives Day is Dec. 8 this year.

See President's Message on page 2 for more info.

### MEMBER RENEWAL DATE APPROACHES

It will soon be time to renew your membership for 2016.

EvergreenAudubon.org has all the information and details perks of being a member of Evergreen Audubon.

Please help us reach 300 members in 2016.

- Ann Dodson Director of Development

### **Countdown to Christmas Count**

This year's Evergreen-Idaho Springs Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, Dec. 20.

To prepare us for the event, the Dec. 3 Evergreen Audubon Chapter Meeting will focus on the procedures for that day, and provide practice identifying some of our winter bird species

Chuck Aid, EA director of Bird Monitoring, will review our count day agenda and provide an overview of our count circle.

Leaders for the various sections within our circle will be introduced, and the protocol for conducting the count will be explained.

The fun part of the evening will fol-



Sandhill Crane in flight.

low, as Chuck reviews, and tests us on, the identification of some of our winter birds. I hope there will be many "aha" moments, as we sharpen our observation skills.

The intention here will be, not only to provide a review for the Christmas Bird Count, but to help increase our enjoyment of our winter birds.

Don't miss this informative program on the Christmas Bird Count to be held Thursday, Dec. 3, at 7 p.m. at Church of the Hills, 28628 Buffalo Park Road.

The annual EA board of directors election also will be held at this meeting (see page 3).

- Chuck Aid, Director of Bird Monitoring



Sandhill Crane foraging.



Sandhill Cranes made a big splash in the area last month. This is what a small flock looks like in flight. You can usually ID them by their silhouette alone. If you're lucky enough to hear them call, they are unmistakable. See page 4. *Photos by Marilyn Rhodes* 

### **EVERGREEN AUDUBON** www.EvergreenAudubon.org

2015 OFFICERS						
President	Brad Andres 303-670-0101 president@evergreenaudubon.or					
Vice President		TBD				
Secretary	Lisa Wald secretary@everg	303-810-5083 reenaudubon.org				
Treasurer	Rachel Hutchison 301-768-352 treasurer@evergreenaudubon.c					
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Webmaster	Kathy Madison communications@everg	303-670-0209 reenaudubon.org

Meetings first Thursday, 7 p.m., Church of the Hills, 28628 Buffalo Park Road, Evergreen, except January. Meetings in June, July and August are held at Evergreen Nature Center.

### **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** BRAD ANDRES

Wow! This year we will hold the 47th consecutive Idaho Springs-Evergreen Christmas Bird Count. Chuck Aid has done a great job lining up leaders for this year's count. Please see the story on page 1 for more information on the count.

As has become a tradition, we will hold the Tally Rally at the Wald home. Thanks to David and Lisa for their continued generosity. Hopefully we can keep our vehicles on the road this year! (See story on page 7.)

In keeping with my theme of holiday season get-togethers, Evergreen Audubon's annual banquet will be held at Mount Vernon Country Club on Friday, Jan. 15. Please make your reservations by early January so we can provide an accurate head count.

Based on the survey we sent members last year, we will focus banquet events on awards and socializing, rather than providing a speaker. In lieu of the silent auction, we will raffle off a few items .(I need to take advantage of my games manager license.)

Please plan on starting out the New Year with your friends in the Evergreen Audubon community.

Soon after we publish this issue of *The Dipper*, you will be getting a postcard describing a year-end giving opportunity through Colorado Gives Day. We have been participating in Colorado Gives Day since 2010, and last year you helped us more than ever.

Colorado Gives Day is a movement designed to inspire and unite Coloradans in supporting local nonprofits through online giving, which is sponsored by Community First Foundation and FirstBank.

In 2014, Colorado donors once again demonstrated unprecedented generosity by giving \$26.2 million to 1,677 nonprofits in just 24 hours, which surpassed the previous record total \$20.5 million total.

This year's event will be on Tuesday, Dec. 8. Out of town? No problem. You can schedule a donation ahead of time to take advantage of the incentive provided on by FirstBank on Dec. 8.

Please go to www.ColoradoGives.org and type "Evergreen Audubon"



needs for end-of-theyear giving, this is an excellent way to support Evergreen Audubon. Let's make 2015 another record-breaking year! I am also

pleased to

report that

we received a

\$2.000 check

from Team

in the search box. If you have any tax

EA member Larry White and an American Dipper shared a gorgeous autumn day on the Mandall Lakes Trail in Flat Tops Wilderness Area, Routt National Forest, Colorado. Photo by Larry White

Evergreen for our help with the Triple Bypass bike ride. Thanks to Dick Prickett for organizing the volunteers for the stations.

Happy Holidays and I hope to see you on the Christmas Count.

## **Election at Dec. 3 chapter meeting**

The annual election of Evergreen Audubon Board Members will be held at the Thursday, Dec. 3, Evergreen Audubon Chapter meeting at Church of the Hills.

There are a number of positions up for election to the EA board of directors and a little board shuffling to be done. Newly elected board members and directors will be inducted at the Annual Banquet on Jan. 15.

The slate of nominees reflects term limits established in our bylaws that were revised in 2010. If you will not be at the Dec. 3 chapter meeting, we encourage you to vote by email or to assign your written proxy to someone who will be at the meeting. This will help meet our required quorum for a valid election (approximately 25 members).

You may email your proxy to president@EvergreenAudubon.org or, if you approve the slate of nominees (or any in particular) presented below, you may send an email saying, "I vote yes to elect the slate of nominees (or nominee) for the Evergreen Audubon board of directors positions outlined in *The Dipper*."

Each Individual local or National Audubon Society member is entitled to cast one vote, and family memberships are entitled to two votes. Family members should use two separate ballots.

Please bring this ballot to the meeting. - Brad Andres, EA President

### 2016 Evergreen Audubon Officers and Directors Ballot

### Officer

President – Kathy Madison
Vice President – Brad Andres
Secretary – Lisa Wald
Directors
Communications – Mandhi Au

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🗆 Social – Peg Linn	
🛛 🗆 At-Large – Melissa Lesia	1
Write-in Candidates	
(please note name and position)	
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# 2016 EA banquet will feature socializing, awards

Evergreen Audubon's Annual Banquet will be Friday, Jan. 15, at Mt. Vernon Country Club.

This year there will be no speaker; instead the banquet will feature socializing and award presentations.

Arrival is at 5:30 p.m., when two bartenders will be behind the cash bar and cheese and fruit will be available. The dinner buffet will open at 6:30.

The \$35 buffet menu will feature Medallions of Steak with Brandied Peppercorn Sauce, Boneless Breast of Chicken with Orange Chipotle Sauce and Tri-Colored Pasta with Chardonnay Creme Sauce.

Accompaniments will include au gratin potatoes, rice pilaf, julienned

vegetable medley with snap peas, and an ice cream sundae for dessert..

**Reservations** must be in by Friday, Jan. 8!

Register at EvergreenAudubon. org or send payment and a completed form (below) to Evergreen Audubon, P.O. Box 523, Evergreen CO 80437.

<b>2016 EA Annual Banquet Reservati</b> Friday, Jan. 15, Mt. Vernon Country Club	on Form
Number in your party Contact name and phone number	
Mount Vernon Country Club will plate meals for any guests who prefer to be	served at their table.
For name tags, clearly print first and last names of each guest attending.	Check box for table service.
Cost is \$35 per person. Make check payable to Evergreen Audubon and v line. Payment must be included with your reservation. Enclosed is my ch	
Reservations must be received by Friday, Jan. 8, 20 Mail to Evergreen Audubon, P.O. Box 523, Evergreen, CO 8	

# Haunting calls of Sandhill Cranes soar over area

The Mysterious White Hawk Else Van Erp followed up with me on Oct. 29 about the white Red-tailed Hawk she'd seen last month in Aspen Park and the photo I shared in last month's column of the white hawk seen in Kittredge.

"That hawk was not the same one we saw," she said. "Ours was pure white with black eyes. Maybe mine is the one from Westminster.

"Neat to know there is another lightcolored one. Been on the lookout for it but haven't seen it since."

My friend and area resident Larry Schmidt took a photo of the famous Westminster **leucistic Red-tailed Hawk**. This hawk has been reported in the same area for the last 15 years or so.

It's unnerving, to say the least, to see and is often mistaken for a Gyrfalcon!

If you see this bird in our area, PLEASE report it on EvergreenBirders or to me.

### Yard Birds

**Sandhill Cranes** stole the show this fall. We had a flurry of sightings in October, beginning on Oct. 11 with this report from Ed Furlong of North Turkey Creek:

"Saturday at about 4:30 p.m. I had an overflight of **Sandhill Cranes**, 20 or more."

The next morning he heard his first **Townsend's Solitaire** staking a claim to the juniper next door.

"Sure signs that our fall migrations are ending and our winter birds will soon be with us," he said. "Gets me excited for the Christmas Count!"

Else Van Erp emailed that on Oct. 16 her husband, Tom, had a flock of **Sandhill Cranes** fly over the house in Conifer.

The next day Tim Stechert posted, "We saw **Sandhill Cranes** flying over all day today. Wave after wave was heading southwest over Evergreen Park Estates. What a delight to hear their calls as they passed over quite high above!" Karel Buckley echoed, "I heard them at Herzman Mesa as well–wonderful."

The same day JoAnn and Bill Hackos posted to EvergreenBirders, "We saw about 100 (**Sandhill Cranes**) fly over today at Barr Lake. The best part is their calling."

The next day, Larry White "saw and heard three separate 'waves' of them flying high over Upper Bear Creek in the afternoon."

He also saw the first **Oregon junco** of the season at his feeder.

Mark Meremonte and Margaret Mc-Dole, Upper Bear Creek, shared similar sightings Oct. 18. "Margaret and I saw/ heard the waves as well while working outside the home.

"Definitely at least two major waves though from our observations. Margaret saw a wave last week while hiking Bergen Peak."

Susan Harper reported Oct. 18 from a little farther south, "We heard them over our home in southwest Littleton yesterday too! Also saw my first **slate junco** at the water dish yesterday!"

A little farther north that day, Susan Blanset chimed in, "I was out of town but my husband, Mark, witnessed them flying over our home in Golden on Thursday (about 200 total in three groups).

On Friday he heard and saw upwards of 600 birds split among five groupings."

### Keep Looking Up ...

Tim Stechert summed up the **Sandhill Crane** spectacle best:

"It has been really wonderful to hear from you all who have been looking up to witness this awe-inspiring migration.

"To see these huge creatures following their instincts, calling and flying in formation so high above, strikes a chord deep in the soul. Thanks to you all for sharing your observations!"

### Basic Plumage-a Need-to-know Term

For many species, non-breeding plumage is the basic plumage the birds display for the majority of the year.

It may be more camouflaged with duller colors and less distinct markings than during the breeding season.

In dimorphic (occurring in two distinct forms with visual differences between genders) species, both genders

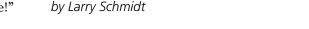
may resemble females in basic plumage.

This is also called non-breeding plumage or winter plumage.

In some species, particularly ducks, it is called eclipse plumage because of the short time males' breeding plumage is "eclipsed" by this bland coloration.

### More Yard Birds

Barbara Klaus had some interesting activity at her Sun Creek feeder Nov. 3. **"Western Scrub Jay** hanging Continued on page 5





The famous Westminster leucistic Red-tailed Hawk. Photo

### BIRD BUSINESS MARILYN RHODES, ASGD MASTER BIRDER



Spotted Sandpiper in basic plumage. Photby Marilyn Rhodes

#### Continued from page 4

around here," she said. "In fact, hanging on my sunflower seed feeder for the past week. Seems to be in cahoots with a **Steller's Jay**, as they often show up together.

"Saw a **warbler** again yesterday. **Yellow**? **Wilson's**? I am surprised to see them here so late in the season."

On Nov. 4, Barbara updated, "I vote for a Wilson's. He was back again today. What do you think?"

It was definitely a Wilson's.

### Soda Creek Pond

JoAnn and Bill Hackos visited their sweet spot Nov. 7 and reported, "We found an **Eared Grebe** on the Soda Creek pond last night."

#### **Prospect Park**

Mike Foster reported some nice birds from Prospect the morning of Nov. 7: one **Dipper**, one **Horned Grebe**, one **Say's Phoebe** and 22 other species.

#### **Staunton State Park**

Bart Deferme, a friend and reliable source of Chuck Aid's, reported the following birds at Staunton SP on Oct. 18:

18 (!) Golden-crowned Kinglets, 15 Brown Creepers, two Gray Jays (eBird calls them rare).

### Saturday Bird Walks by Chuck Aid

Six of us spent the morning at Bear Creek Lake Park Oct. 17.

The weather was wonderful, the fall colors glorious, and with a bit of work we were able to record 30 species of birds.

It seems as though, during migration, that on any given day one species can dominate the action, and then a few days later it can be a totally different species that seems to appear everywhere. Thus it was at Bear

Creek Lake Park this

past week. When I was there on Oct. 12 I recorded a whopping 48 Whitecrowned Sparrows and only six House Finches.

When we were there Saturday, five days later, we recorded only 17 **Whitecrowned Sparrows**, but found 42 **House Finches**.

This just goes to show that we really need to be out there almost every day if we really want to try and track what's going on with migration.

Oh, I meant to say, YOU need to be out there almost every day if you really want to try and track what's going on with migration.

Another interesting note from our outing was that we saw three **Spotted Sandpipers**.

We're reaching the end of fall shorebird migration here in Colorado, so seeing any shorebirds in the latter half of October is always special.

Besides their incessant tail bobbing, note the white "swoosh" in front of the wing on **Spotted Sandpipers**. And, oh yeah, I forgot to mention that this time of year they're not spotted-tune in next breeding season.

It goes without saying that this was a spectacular weekend for catching migrating **Sandhill Cranes**. I saw two flocks at my house southwest of Cub



Wilson's Warbler male in basic plumage. Definitely. *Photo by Barbara Klaus* 



Horned Grebe in basic plumage. *Photo by Marilyn Rhodes* 

Creek Park on Friday, and had five flocks on Saturday for a rough count of about 350 birds over the two days.

### Wild Evergreen

### **Bighorn Sheep Rut Begins**

Bighorn sheep so capture the spirit of our mountain state that they were chosen as the state animal of Colorado, as well as the symbol of Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

The males are called rams, the females are ewes and the young are lambs.

Two subspecies of bighorn live in Colorado. Most familiar to viewers, Rocky Continued on page 6

### BIRD BUSINESS MARILYN RHODES, ASGD MASTER BIRDER

#### Continued from page 5

Mountain bighorn inhabit the foothills and mountains, including Mt. Evans, Georgetown and Rocky Mountain National Park.

Smaller in size and slightly lighter-colored, desert bighorn sheep live in the canyon country of western Colorado.

Bighorn are social animals, maintaining order through a strict hierarchy. Through much of the year, the rams live in bachelor "bands" or groups.

The ewes, lambs and immature animals live in nursery bands led by a dominant ewe. During the mating season, late fall through early winter, the groups join each other on a common courtship ground.

Bighorn sheep are native to Colorado. They live on sunny mountain slopes, usually above 8,000 feet, where there is plenty of grass and a clear uphill escape route. Stocky-bodied with strong legs, bighorn sheep are well designed for bounding over mountain slopes.

Their flexible hooves are equipped with soft, spongy pads to help cling to rocks. Even newborn lambs can follow their mothers over the rugged terrain within a few days of their birth.

Most of the year, bighorn are active in the morning and late afternoon, allowing a more leisurely viewing schedule than the dawnand-dusk recommendation for other mammals and many birds.

From late November through January, both groups gather for the annual courtship season, when they are usually active throughout the day.

Notice that generally, sheep appear to make little eye contact with each other—a behavior thought to help reduce conflict between individuals. A group lying down may be looking in several directions, making many eyes available to watch for predators.

The winter rut or courtship is the time to see the most dramatic behavior, the battle of the rams. Males follow ewes, constantly testing to see if they are ready for breeding.

Competing rams display their horns, shove and finally charge at each other, butting heads with tremendous force. The winners of such contests, usually the largest and most experienced rams, are accepted by ewes as mates.

Look for bighorn sheep in rocky terrain with good visibility



Bighorn Sheep rams taken in Rocky Mountain National Park Sept. 8. *Photo by Marilyn Rhodes* 



Ewe and lambs on Mt. Evans Sept. 3. Photo by Mairlyn Rhodes

and an uphill escape route. They tend to avoid wooded areas where their vision is limited.

Bighorn choose grassy south- and west-facing slopes, particularly in winter, where sun and wind keep snow clear from the grasses. This makes both grazing and travel easier.

- Information gathered from the CPW website

### PAID ADVERTISEMENT

### Birding With Mike in 2016

Birding 130: Ducks and Winter Residents, Feb. 11–27

Birding 101: April 21-May 8

Birding 301: Spring Songbirds, May 19–June 12

Monthly Surveys at Lair o' the Bear



For details: www.BirdingWithMike.com

# First the CBC Tally, and then we'll Rally for chili

Sounds like a British twitcher event, eh? Please save Sunday, Dec. 20, for the 116th Christmas Bird Count!

Maybe the weather will cooperate a little better than last year, although the Cassin's Finches and Evening Grosbeaks were certainly a treat!

Despite the snow, our Pygmy Nuthatch and Mountain Chickadee numbers remained high in 2014. Below is a list of count leaders for the sections we cover in our 15-mile-diameter count circle.

If you want to participate, please contact Chuck Aid (303-674-3331, caid@ ecentral.com) or Brad Andres (720-226-7614; heatherbrad1@yahoo.com).

If you want to submit your feeder counts for the day, please contact

Barbara Jean Gard at 303-674-3280 or barbjgard@aol.com.

Section leaders are as follows: Bergen Park–Bill and JoAnn Hackos; Brook Forest East–Else Van Erp; Brook Forest West–Tim and Marilyn Stechert.

Clear Creek–Dave and Elaine Mongeau/Chuck Aid; Elk Management–Rob Raker and Bart Deferme.

Evergreen East–Marilyn Rhodes; Evergreen West–Susan Harper/David Wald; Genesee–Wendy Wibbens/Karen Drozda; Idaho Springs East–Ed Furlong.

Idaho Springs West–Larry White?; Kerr Gulch–Brad Andres; Squaw Pass– Fran Enright; Upper Bear Creek–Jeff Geiger?; Vance Creek–Ann Bonnell.

After a full day of counting birds,

participants are invited to the traditional potluck supper known as the Tally Rally where counts are discussed over good food and drinks.

This year's hosts are again David and Lisa Wald, who have made their home available for the occasion (33179 Inverness Drive, Evergreen, 303-674-0417). Inverness Drive is off of Hiwan Drive and Lewis Ridge Road.

Please sign up at the Dec. 3 meeting to bring a dish or call Marge Petersen at 303-670-4310.

We will be providing chili, and there is a nominal charge to offset the chili ingredients and other expenses.

- Brad Andres Christmas Bird Count Co-coordinator

### BIRDING BOOKS BILL HACKOSVOT, EA DIRECTOR AT LARGE

Most birders have a keen interest in a bird migration. We enjoy the ebb and flow of bird sightings with the changing seasons.

In early winter, we look forward to the return of the ducks and to the wintering hawks and songbirds.

Heinrich's book is not about migration. It's about birds, mammals and other wildlife that do not migrate, even in cold climates.

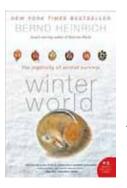
In "Winter World," he describes strategies that these animals use to survive winter conditions.

Heinrich grew up in western Maine and now teaches at the University of Vermont.

In all his writing, he enjoys bringing the reader along as if you were one of his students making discoveries as he walks through the Maine woods.

As I read one of his early chapters titled "A Late Winter Walk," I could imagine myself walking with Heinrich making the same discoveries in the Evergreen pinewoods.

Animals have two vital needs in winter. They must find adequate food to maintain their metabolism, and they need to keep from freezing. I was surprised and impressed with the variety of strategies animals use.



Winter World: The Ingenuity of Animal Survival, Bernd Heinrich, Harper Collins Publishers, 2003.

Many are able to find enough food during winter. Some can stay active and warm in winter through an increase in metabolism along with extra insulation from feathers or fur.

Others hibernate, allowing their metabolism to slow so they lose less energy through heat loss, using stored fat to sustain them through the winter.

Some mammals and birds store food in places where they can retrieve it for winter use.

Jays store food by burying it and remembering thousands of storage locations.

Pikas collect grass that they store as hay for use as food during winters above the tree line.

Heinrich reports a hybrid system of

wintering by chipmunks. You have likely seen chipmunks under your bird feeders with full cheek pouches. They are carrying food to their dens for winter use.

In winter, chipmunks use the stored food to sustain themselves. When the food runs out, they can go into torpor of hibernation. The length of torpor depends on how much food they have been able to store.

As I write this in mid-November, chipmunks are still running around our property on nice days, continuing to collect winter food.

One of Heinrich's favorite examples of winter world survival is the Goldencrowned Kinglet.

Some Golden-crowned Kinglets are able to survive the winter as far north as the Canadian tree line. Yet they are primarily insect eaters.

I'll let you read the amazing story of the Golden-crowned Kinglet directly as Heinrich tells it.

Heinrich is an accomplished writer, guiding the reader to multiple adventures. He is also a scientist. He identifies every organism by its Latin name and uses Celsius for temperature throughout.

His is a good practice for all of us to remember as we also wander the winter world.

# °AJOPER °

Evergreen, CO 80437 P.O. Box 523 Evergreen Audubon

Time Dated Material

*<u>RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED</u>* 

**IN THIS ISSUE** 

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Artwork: Sylvia Brockner, Mildred Keiser

ΡΑΙΝΤΕΟ ΟΝ RECYCLED PAPER

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Plan ahead an. 15	: EA Annual Banquet	5:30 pm	Mt. Vernon CC	Ad Tot	lditional donation	\$ \$		\$ \$	
Evergree	bmit <i>Dipper</i> newsletter content by a nAudubon.org. Your submissions wil <b>ie Marshall</b> and <b>Kathy Madison</b> , EA I	l be forward	ed to both Dipper edi-	Ad Cit Pho	mily member(s) name(s) Idress ty one (optional) nail	_ State _	Zip		
Dipper e Member year for submit c submit t	45, NO. 12. Evergreen Audubon, P.O. Box 52 every month. Evergreen Audubon is a chap rs may receive an electronic copy of <i>The Di</i> a mailed hard copy (members only). Everg rriginal articles, creative nature writing or art ed has been published elsewhere requirin the right to select suitable articles for publi <b>Audubon Rockies Office, Rock</b>	oter of the Nat pper without cl green Audubon to The Dipper. Pl ng publisher's cation and to e	ional Audubon Society. harge or may pay \$15 a encourages readers to lease state if the material permission. The editor dit any articles selected.	523	(must include for elect closed is my check payable to: Ever 3, Evergreen, CO 80437. I DO NOT want solicitations from you would like to join or donate to the ectly and receive the AUDUBON M ZD090Z and call 1-800-274-4201.	<b>green A</b> National ne Natio	udubon, Audubo nal Audu	n. bon Sc	ociety

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### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Dec. 3	EA Chapter Meeting EA Board Election <i>Doors open at 6:30 for socializing</i>	7 pm	Church of the Hills
Dec. 8	Colorado Gives Day		
Dec. 10	Dipper deadline	5 pm	
Dec. 20	Christmas Bird Count		
Plan ahead: Jan. 15	EA Annual Banquet	5:30 pm	Mt. Vernon CC

#### ٦ **Evergreen Audubon Local Membership Application**

I/we would like to join the Evergreen Audubon. I/we may participate in all chapter activities, receive The Dipper

vote) on chapter issues. Dues remain locally.

newsletter electronically, and vote (two Family members may