

## **New Minnesota Vikings Stadium Threatens Minnesota's Birds**

### *Audubon Calls for Immediate Change of Plans*

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. (July 23, 2014) – The [new Minnesota Vikings stadium](#) may become a serious threat to Minnesota's birds without quick action by the team and the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority (MSFA) to protect animal welfare. Despite [state guidelines](#) requiring bond-funded buildings to protect birds from window collisions, the Vikings and the MSFA last week rejected calls to use safer types of glass that could help prevent birds from fatally colliding with the stadium's huge glass windows as the birds migrate along the Mississippi River corridor each year.

"We're talking about a billion dollar stadium here, and the cost to save perhaps thousands of migratory birds – and make the Vikings a global leader in green stadium design – is about one-tenth of one percent of that," said Audubon Minnesota Executive Director Matthew Anderson. "Hundreds of millions of dollars of public money is going to build this stadium, and we know the people of Minnesota do not want their money killing birds. The Vikings recently approved spending millions and millions of additional dollars to make sure the stadium is 'iconic' – surely they also want to make sure it's not a death trap. We're asking them to change their minds and do the right thing."

According to scientists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Smithsonian Institution, up to [988 million birds](#) are killed annually in the United States by collisions with buildings, especially glass windows. The new Vikings stadium will feature nearly 200,000 square feet of glass.

Audubon has worked with building owners and managers in Minnesota and nationally for many years to reduce bird collision mortality through its [BirdSafe/Lights Out program](#). As part of this program, Audubon volunteers survey downtown buildings in the Twin Cities and have found more than 125 species of native migratory birds that have fatally collided with windows.

Audubon first met with MSFA and the Vikings in May 2013 after the stadium design was unveiled to the public.

As early as December 2012, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources urged the stadium to incorporate bird-safe design into the new building. A few months later, a special committee of the Minneapolis City Council specifically recommended that the stadium adopt Audubon's suggestions to create a bird-safe structure through glazing techniques and special site lighting.

Audubon staff communicated regularly with stadium developers until April 2014, when they were told that another meeting would be scheduled before a July 15 decision on the type of glass to be used. That meeting was canceled, and Audubon staff were told on July 17 that there would be no change in the stadium glass choice to protect birds.

"We are grateful that the MSFA will be incorporating some of our recommendations regarding lighting design and operations, but lighting is just one part of the problem" said Joanna Eckles, Bird-friendly Communities Manager for Audubon Minnesota. "The huge expanses of glass, especially facing a new park, are a real cause for concern. Our request was that they meet either the state requirement or the nationally recognized LEED standard for bird safety. In the end, they did neither."

The National Audubon Society saves birds and their habitats throughout the Americas using science, advocacy, education and on-the-ground conservation. Audubon's state programs, nature centers,

chapters and partners have an unparalleled wingspan that reaches millions of people each year to inform, inspire and unite diverse communities in conservation action. Since 1905, Audubon's vision has been a world in which people and wildlife thrive. Audubon is a nonprofit conservation organization. Learn more at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org) and [@audubonsociety](https://www.instagram.com/audubonsociety).

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