

# BIRD CONSERVATION NETWORK

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[www.bcnbirds.org](http://www.bcnbirds.org)

## November 2004 Meeting

Nov. 6, 2004

Highland Park

### Attendees:

|                           |                                 |                            |                                    |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Don Darnell<br>CAS        | Randi Doeker<br>COS             | Donnie Dann<br>TNC         | John Hockman<br>Lake-Cook          |
| Jerry Garden<br>CAS       | Christine Williamson<br>COS     | Dick Riner<br>Thorn Creek  | Terry Schilling<br>At Large        |
| Eric Secker<br>DBC        | George Sullivan<br>Ft. Dearborn | Mary Lou Mellon<br>CBCM    | Leslie Borns<br>At Large           |
| Bob Fisher<br>DBC         | Mary Anne Harrison<br>IAS       | Robbie Hunsinger<br>CBCM   | Melinda Born Chapman<br>CBCM Guest |
| Suzanne Checchia<br>ENSBC | Judy Pollock<br>NAS-CW          | Glenn Gabanski<br>CBO      | Jeff Chapman<br>CBCM Guest         |
| Jeffrey Sanders<br>ENSBC  | Lee Ramsey<br>NAS-CW            | Ann Haverstock<br>Kane Co. |                                    |

President Donald Dann called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. The minutes of the July 2004 meeting were accepted without changes.

### ADMINISTRATIVE

#### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Glenn Gabanski distributed the current financial statement along with a list of BCN member clubs and their payment status. All members have paid, the account balance is \$2956, and a \$5500 grant from Chicago Wilderness has yet to be received.

The treasurer now has a copy of the group's official incorporation papers.

There was a short discussion about the dollar level that it is appropriate for BCN to carry as a balance and the continuation of the current dues level.

#### Nominating Committee

Jerry Garden submitted the recommendations of the nominating committee for the 2005 officers, on behalf of the committee chair, Libby Hill:

- ú President – Donald Dann
- ú V.P. – Lee Ramsey
- ú Treasurer – Glenn Gabanski
- ú Secretary – Randi Doeker

The election is at the January meeting; other nominations may be accepted at that time.

### PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Recruiting New Monitors – Lee Ramsey

A new recruitment advertisement is being developed. The plan is to identify a liaison within each bird club to identify and recruit new monitors. Workshops will be held as necessary to train new monitors.

Members of the BCN Monitoring Committee have met with officials from Cook, Lake and DuPage County FPDs and have established varying types and degrees of cooperation. The BCN Census will continue to meet and work with all the land managing agencies in any way possible.

It was noted that Cornell University used the BCN protocols as a model for their program.

#### 2005 Grassland Bird Audit Plan – Judy Pollock

The 2005 program will focus on grassland birds and their habitat. The big challenge will be finding monitors who can identify both birds and vegetation.

#### Birding Trail Map - Randi Doeker

Randi explained that the Chicago Dept of the Environment now expects to have maps printed by the spring of 2005 initially using a \$15,000 grant from Chicago Wilderness.

#### Website - Eric Secker

Text for birding trail map added.

#### Birds & Buildings Conference – Randi Doeker

Randi is organizing a conference on behalf of COS and in partnership with the City of Chicago to educate architects about the design problems killing about 1 billion birds in the US each year.

#### Cooperation with the Wisc. Bird Conservation Initiative – Bob Fisher

Bob Fisher and Randi Doeker attended a WBCI in October to discuss urban bird issues. They have previously talked to Robbie Hunsinger about monitoring, which appears to be their main interest.

Donnie Dann described the work of the national North American Bird Conservation Alliance, which discusses policy issues. Donnie has also discussed with IDNR Deputy Dir. Leslie Sgro the value of having a statewide bird conservation group. Besides Wisconsin, Missouri has such a group. Given the nature of such an organization, a state agency probably would have to provide the basic support.

### **CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES**

#### Lake Calumet – Bob Fisher on behalf of Walter Marcisz

See a statement from Walter following these minutes, which was read by Bob Fisher. The proposal to have another landfill in the Lake Cal area prompted much discussion. The members voted to delay further consideration until January because there are so many unanswered questions.

#### Chicago Bird Collision Monitors – Mary Lou Mellon & Robbie Hunsinger

Mary Lou's statement to the group follows these minutes. Robbie added that this has been a record season for bird collisions and that Fox Valley has been taking the birds for rehabilitation.

#### Lights Out - Judy Pollock

This year the dates were extended and the program specifications included dimming lobby lights. A website is planned, probably under the National Audubon website.

#### Northerly Island - Randi Doeker

The Chicago Park District has announced its plan for planning the development of the island: 8 public hearings followed by work with a steering committee and professional park architecture firm. The first hearing is supposed to be November 13<sup>th</sup>. Anyone can participate in the steering committee work. The park district needs \$800,000 to complete this process in 2005; an RFP is being advertised for ideas.

Terry Schilling encouraged birders to attend the hearings to help counter the expected calls for recreational activities.

Plum Island – Mary Ann Harrison

The cleanup was very successful although trash by the fishermen is a big problem.

Midewin – Marianne Hahn

Since June there has been a phased opening of 6,000 acres. Through December 12<sup>th</sup> there is a hunting season for deer, a very necessary program.

Important Bird Areas – Judy Pollock

The program was formally announced in Illinois at a gathering at the Harborside Golf Course. IBA's are a good way to gain attention for the conservation and stewardship of an area.

Chicago Wilderness Habitat Conference – Judy Pollock

February 26, 2005 at Northeastern IL University  
Theme: Wild Things

The organizers are currently looking for speakers and session ideas. Dick Riner is the "ambassador" to BCN members. Registration materials should be available in December.

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 pm. The next meeting will be at the Northerly Island field house on January 15, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,  
Randi Doeker  
Secretary

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**Statement by Mary Lou Mellon - Chicago Bird Collision Monitors**  
BCN Meeting, November 6, 2004, 60 Ravinoaks Way, Highland Park

Since the Chicago Bird Collision Monitors organization has now been a member of the BCN for about a year we would like you to know a little about what we do and how we do it. Our program was founded in Fall 2002 by Robbie Hunsinger. Thanks to her dedication and untold hours of hard work our organization has come a very long way in a short time. We presently have about 30 volunteers who serve in a variety of ways.

As you probably know, our goal is to rescue migratory birds that have injured themselves by striking buildings. Many migrators fly at night and come to ground in the predawn to rest and feed. If they are over the city when they decide to come down, it is a recipe for disaster. Our efforts to help them are three- pronged.

Firstly we have teams that go into Chicago every morning during spring and fall migration, arriving pre-dawn to search for and rescue migrants. The teams follow an established route. They collect the birds and notate the

rescues and casualties on the form that I've passed around. We start early because it's critical to get to the dazed birds before the predators (primarily gulls and crows) do. Also because at an early hour it's possible to get around the city with some facility.

The second prong of our approach is to attempt to alleviate the damage that the buildings do. The Lights Out program is a wonderful program supported by Mayor Daley that tells the buildings that migration season is beginning and that it is time to turn their lights out. We have found that the buildings need to be reminded—and reminded and reminded. As monitors drive into the city predawn they note buildings that are not compliant and report that to Robbie. The buildings are notified and usually by the next night the problem has gone away. We work with the building managers in a positive way, using a win-win approach and we have had great success with this. If there is a night where several buildings are not dark that coincides with a big migration day, the results can be and have been horrifying. The facts are that when the buildings are all dark the strikes are greatly reduced and the number of rescues goes up. Additionally we attempt to pinpoint places where we repeatedly find birds and try to determine how to prevent the strikes. We have been allowed to put stickers on plate glass where birds have been hitting. Other times we have gotten buildings to lower their lobby lights until daylight, particularly if they have indoor trees near the large glass windows. Or we've tried to get them to move the trees away from the windows. As we all know, birds don't perceive glass.

The third prong of our approach is to solicit assistance from the people who are there in the city daily: the doormen, custodians, security people, sweepers. We introduce ourselves, pass out our business cards with the hotline number and even give them a supply of paper bags with paper towels in them to use if they are able to catch an injured bird. These guys are the front line and they love to help! This approach is starting to change attitudes downtown about injured birds. Instead of dumping injured birds into a trash can they call the Hotline. That's when the cell phones start ringing. When I'm monitoring, I'll get a call from whomever is manning the hotline (usually Robbie) and I'll hear, "Mary Lou, there's a reported Ovenbird next to the SE corner at Lake and Wacker. Can you get over there pronto?" And though we're en route the Art Institute, we pull a U turn and dash over there. Or "A lady at Harbor Point has a white-throated sparrow. She's waiting in the lobby. How soon can you pick it up?" Or even more commonly "Chris Williamson has three rescues and two casualties. Meet her at 333 N. Michigan to free up her hands so she can continue to ride her bicycle." Incidentally Chris rides a bicycle into the city daily and does a fabulous job of saving birds! Her dedication to the birds is amazing and greatly appreciated!

Once the rounds for a morning are finished, it's time to get the rescued birds some help, so they must be driven out to Robbie's house where they may receive a dex shot and be released at a forest preserve or someplace away from the city after a little rest. The seriously injured birds must go to a rehabber. Fox Valley is about a 3-hour drive round trip, so many of our volunteers who love birds but don't have the stomach for picking up injured or dead birds (or don't like to get up at 3:45am), are our drivers. The casualties are usually taken to the Field Museum to be used for their research.

The monitors now go home and enter the day's results into our online data base. Then they put out a report on our CBCM private listserve of how the day went, so that the next day's monitors know what they may encounter. Communication between monitors who may never meet is encouraged, because

that's how we learn where the problem areas are.

CBCM has a superb animated website, that I would encourage you all to look at. The animation (done by Robbie) is extremely clever and the site has a lot of valuable information. We also have a Power Point presentation about bird/building collisions that Robbie has given successfully to a variety of organizations such as the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, the Grant Park Conservancy and Chicago Audubon's National Audubon Liaison Committee. Our science advisor is Dr. Daniel Klem, international expert on bird/window collisions, and Ellen Grimes is our architectural consultant.

Everything CBCM does is done by volunteers who spend their own money for their supplies and gas, and who donate everything from nametags, car cards, magnetic car signs and business cards. All we have is a love of birds and a strong desire to help them. We've been fortunate to find Fox Valley rehabbers who are willing to take our injured birds and treat them at no cost to us. We plan to have a fund-raiser to get some money for Fox Valley, because we need them desperately, as there is no rehabber in the city.

I'll now turn this over to Robbie who'll give you an idea of the kinds of birds we've been saving. I must tell you that this fall's highlight for me was saving a Northern Parula.

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## **LAKE CALUMET CAMPAIGN REPORT/ABSTRACT**

From: Walter Marcisz, 21 October 2004

**IL INTERNATIONAL PORT DISTRICT:** Denise Casalino, Commissioner of the Chicago Dept. of Planning & Development, has been working on a proposed Intergovernmental Agreement with the Planning Dept. of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County (FPDCC) regarding the possibility of the FPDCC assuming ownership of the western shore of Lake Calumet (the western shore of L. Calumet is currently under the jurisdiction of the IL International Port District).

In regard to the proposed Intergovernmental Agreement, representatives of the Lake Calumet Vision Committee met with Steve Bylina, General Superintendent of FPDCC on September 16, 2004. At the meeting, Superintendent Bylina was very favorable for the FPDCC receiving the western shore of L. Calumet. The Intergovernmental Agreement is still being negotiated among the FPDCC, the IL International Port District, and the City of Chicago. Bylina suggested that the Vision Committee meet with Senator Trotter to talk about a request for land transfer. The Calumet Vision Committee plans to follow up on Bylina's suggestion.

All good news.

**BIRD STUDIES:** In regard to the Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) Calumet Black-crowned Night-Heron study, I have finally completed my paper on population trends, but researchers Jeff Levensgood and Allison Klement are currently still working on their papers (nesting ecology and foraging ecology, respectively). The three papers are intended for publication together in *Transacts of the Illinois Academy of Sciences*. Analyses of Calumet Black-crowned Night-Heron exposure to toxic contaminants are still under way.

During the 2004 breeding season, the U.S. Forest Service launched a separate study examining how nesting Black-crowned Night-Herons in the Calumet region react to human disturbance. No definite conclusions just yet -the Forest Service researchers are still analyzing mountains of data. An article on these two studies (written by Environment Reporter Gary Wisby) was published in the July 12, 2004 issue of the Chicago Sun-Times.

## **WASTE MANAGEMENT:**

1) Waste Management has asked to dump 6 million additional tons of trash on Chicago's southeast side. In return for this opportunity, Waste Management has promised to donate half of its estimated \$16 million profit to the community, and to donate Big Marsh.

2) In a July 24th statement, Mayor Richard Daley said he would abide by the community's decision regarding this proposal.

3) Representatives of fifteen community organizations have signed a statement in opposition to Waste Management's proposal.

4) A new organization, the New Calumet Study Committee (NCSC), has invited me to attend a meeting to review the NCSC proposal for the use of funds that would be generated by Waste Management's proposed activity in Southeast Chicago. The invitation was signed by Jim Landing, Victor Crivello, and Michael L. Boos. The meeting will be held at 7:00 pm on October 26, 2004 at the Zone at 117th & Avenue O.

I will attend.

This is clearly a controversial, "hot-button" issue.

#### SITE PLANNING:

1) On May 6, 2004, the Chicago Dept. of Environment (CDOE) held a public meeting for site planning for the 138 acre Van Vlissingen Prairie/Marian R. Byrnes Natural Area. Discussions included appropriate recreational uses, protection of critical habitat, management of invasive species, stewardship, etc.

2) On August 24, 2004, the CDOE, in cooperation with the IL Dept. of Natural Resources (IDNR) held a public meeting for site planning at 128 acre Hegewisch Marsh. I attended the meeting, as did Doug Stotz of FMNH, Maggie Cole of IDNR, and many community residents. The consultants handling Hegewisch Marsh responded positively to our suggestions regarding control of water levels and maintenance of a "deep marsh" ecosystem at Hegewisch Marsh.

All good news.

3) On October 7th, 2004, I attended a CDOE-sponsored Calumet Collaborative Computer Modeling Project meeting for Indian Ridge Marsh. The intrinsic nature of computer modeling seems to inevitably render it a highly speculative business. But I do find that when the modeling is based upon assumptions that are grounded in solid data and research, the modeling appears to work well.

I consider this to be a work in progress.

#### IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS DESIGNATION/CELEBRATION:

On October 6th, 2004, the City of Chicago, the National Audubon Society, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service met at Lake Calumet's Harborside International Golf Course to announce the identification and recognition of 51 Illinois Important Bird Areas (IBAs). Featured speakers included Greg Butcher of National Audubon Society, Leslie Sgro of IDNR, David Thomas of INHS, Marcia Jimenez of CDOE, and John Rogner of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Started in Europe in the late 1980s by BirdLife International, the Important Bird Areas program has been a powerful conservation tool, protecting millions of acres of habitat. The IBA program is currently underway in 30 states, and more than 1,200 IBAs have been identified in the United States alone.

Really good news!

President Donald Dann called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. A short discussion was held until a quorum was present. The minutes of the April 2004 meeting were accepted without changes.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE

##### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Glenn Gabanski distributed the current financial statement along with a list of BCN member clubs and their payment status. All clubs have paid; one individual membership is outstanding.

There was a short discussion about the dollar level that it is appropriate for BCN to carry as a balance. The Excom will discuss THIS (new projects that could use the funds) at its next meeting.

#### PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

#### Dog Friendly Areas in Cook County FP - Randi Doeker

Randi explained that the one-year pilot for the Beck Lake dog area has been completed. The official report has been sent to the FP Real Estate Committee. There is no reason to believe that any specific action will be taken.

A group called West Cook Dog has announced that they want the FP to build a dog area at a location that has been used to store rocks from the Deep Tunnel project. Steve Packard pointed out that the FP has many greater problems than a small dog park and we should evaluate where we want to spend our influence and energy.

#### Cook County Land Use Policy - Randi Doeker

Commissioner Mike Quigley has submitted a proposal for a new land use policy that requires an open process when requests from 3rd parties are considered by the FP. Donnie Dann represented BCN at the press conference. The proposal is in the Real Estate Committee, the head of which opposes any changes.

The Village of River Forest has officially requested that it be given a sliver of land for Dominican University's new driveway. This proposal was sent to the FP's Citizen Advisory Committee, a group that has not met in years; virtually nothing is known about who they are or how they operate.

#### Bird Monitoring - Judy Pollock

The data entry of the breeding bird survey information into the Cornell database is now complete. The Cornell contract is complete. Data has been sent to the interested land owners. The plan is to send this data in the fall of each year.

The monitoring team has been meeting with county officials, most recently Cook County, to discuss coordination and cooperation. The team agreed that birders should work with the County restoration staff to expand their understanding of the needs of grassland birds.

A big challenge is to get birders to enter their trip lists into eBird. It is believed that the biggest deterrent is the fact that double entry is required by those birders who already use a standard software package. Judy believes that Cornell may be working on a tool to solve that problem.

The Audubon office is using the database to evaluate the status of grassland birds in the area. A new user of the eBird data is Chicago Wilderness. They are working on a 5-year report card for ChiWild and the group looking at birds is using the database.

Judy reported that the Audubon office could use a volunteer to be the liaison with the bird monitors - someone to keep in contact with them. This person should probably be located near the Skokie office.

Steve Packard praised the work of the monitors, describing the great results that Marianne Hahn has gotten at the Bartel Grasslands and Wes Serafin at the Orland Grasslands. Marianne was able to determine that birds were declining at Bartel because of the growth of trees. Working the FP staff the situation was remedied and the number of birds started increasing. This fall there will be a new area in northwest Cook County, Spring Creek, which will be the focus of restoration efforts.

#### Birding Trail Map - Randi Doeker

Randi explained that the Chicago Dept of the Environment now expects to have maps printed by the spring of 2005 using a \$15,000 grant from Chicago Wilderness.

#### Important Birding Areas - Judy Pollock

The big kick-off Judy hoped would happen has not yet been scheduled. They are now trying for a fall date.

#### Swainson's Hawk efforts - Bob Fisher

The development in Hampshire has been delayed but not stopped. We are supporting the local residents in any way we can, including donating \$70 to a school program for birding-related supplies.

Meeting with Steve Bylina, CC FP Superintendent - Donnie Dann & Steve Packard

Donnie described a meeting that the Cook County FP Superintendent held with public groups to update everyone on the efforts being made to upgrade the FP for all visitors. Steve commented that the FP staff seems to sincerely want to know what citizens have to say, a big change from previous administrations.

Website Changes - Eric Secker

A new page design will be launched soon. "News" will be more prominently displayed.

Bird Collision Conference - Randi Doeker

COS and Chicago DOE are working on a conference designed to explain to architects the problems that are causing bird deaths through window collisions. The tentative date is March 11, 2005.

**CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES**

Midewin - Jane Jones

Significant sections of the east side of Midewin were opened in June.

Donnie Dann advised that the Sierra Club's legal challenge to the Indeck coal plant has been successful and a temporary injunction was granted.

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Lights Out - Judy Pollock

The Audubon office has received a small grant from USFWS to do a website to export the Lights Out program to other cities.

Judy is working with the McCormick Place staff regarding their continuing problem; they indicate a willingness to try various solutions.

Northerly Island - Randi Doeker

The island should be open soon. The public meetings that will discuss what happens next are TBD.

There is a concern that the group called a Committee for a Better Chicago, which has adopted the Miegs Field proposal, will cause the public process to be delayed. It appears that their real intention is to embarrass Mayor Daley and Miegs is just a convenient tool.

Lake Michigan Eco-Partnership - Donnie Dann

Donnie announced that an eco partnership has been formed for Lake Michigan. Members will be both government and NGOs. The Lake Michigan Federation seems to be taking the lead on organizing the volunteer board.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

IDNR Budget Cuts - Donnie Dann

BCN is part of a group called Partners for Parks and Wildlife that has a professional lobbyist at work in Springfield.

Taxes on Woodlands - Bob Fisher

Rhonda Rothrock from Southern IL has asked BCN for help with what appears to be an effort to raise taxes on woodland lots. Excom members have offered Rhonda advice on how to pursue action.



Bird Conservation Alliance - Donnie Dann

A national coalition of birding-related groups has been formed. BCN is an automatic member by virtue of our connection to ABC. A listserv is available for all individuals to join.

Habitat Project - Judy Pollock

The Habitat Project and the Volunteer Stewardship Network have joined to produce workshops this summer and a conference next February. Suggestions for topics and speakers are welcomed.

Timber Trails - Christine Lee

CAS has received a letter from Lt. Gov. Quinn asking for help fighting the sale of the Timber Trails golf course (in southwest Cook County) to private development. Randi Doeker advised that the "Save the Timber" group has addressed the Cook County FP Commissioners asking for the county to help.

Donnie Dann asked that CAS take the lead on following up.

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 pm. The next meeting will be November 6th at Donnie Dann's house in Highland Park.

Respectfully submitted,  
Randi Doeker  
Secretary