

Bird Conservation Network

BCN Quarterly Meeting—Minutes
Camp Sagawau, Lemont IL
Saturday, April 19, 2008

Attendees: Chris Van Wassenhove, **CAS**; Annette Prince, **CBCM**; Mary Lou Mellon, **CBCM**; Teri Radke, **CBCM**; Bob Fisher, **DBC**; Eric Secker, **DBC**; Suzanne Checchia, **ENSBC**; Philip Hampel, **Flint Creek**; Joan Bruchman, **IOS**; Nancy Greenlee, **Lake-Cook**; Jean Sodemann, **Lake-Cook**; Diane Rosenberg, **Lake County Audubon**; Kim Ramirez, **Midewin**; Donnie Dann, **TNC**; Judy Pollock, **ACR**; Dennis DeCoursey, Chicagoland Bird Observatory, guest.

Acting President Joan Bruchman called the meeting to order at 1:05pm. A quorum was established with 15 representatives from 11 member organizations and 1 guest present.

- 1. Election:** Suzanne Checchia of the nominating committee announced that former BCN president Bob Fisher has accepted the nomination for president to finish the present calendar year. Bob was elected unanimously by voice vote. Much appreciation was expressed to Bob for being willing to step in. Bob presided over the remainder of the meeting.
- 2. Minutes:** The minutes from the January 19, 2008, Quarterly Meeting were circulated by email and have been posted on the BCN website (bcnbirds.org). No additions or corrections were made. The minutes were approved as written.
- 3. Treasurer's Report:** Joan read the report for absent Treasurer Glenn Gabanski. Two organizations and two individuals have not yet paid their dues. They were sent reminders on March 31st. Taking into account expected income and known unpaid expenses, BCN has an estimated \$310 to spend to bring its net taxable income to zero by the end of 2008. Suzanne pointed out that the Monitors Luncheon will likely utilize most of the \$310.
- 4. Rollins Savanna Update:** Donnie Dann. At a meeting of the Lake County Forest Preserve District Board, the number of people supporting snowmobiling at Rollins was about equal to the number of people who oppose it. Donnie spoke in opposition. He noted that Jim Anderson, natural resources manager for the Lake County Forest Preserve, seems to be positive toward prohibiting snowmobiling on this restored 1225 acres. ComEd, which has right of ways on the property, absolutely refuses any snowmobiling on its land.
- 5. BCN Census Analysis:** Eric Secker. The Trends Analysis is completed including 2007 additions and updates. Data from 1997-98 have been dropped from the results as they were sketchy and caused problems. Habitat information has been added. A final report is being prepared by Dr. John Yunger. The new PowerPoint presentation is nearly completed.
- 6. BCN Workshops:** Mary Lou Mellon read the report for absent Lee Ramsey. Lee Ramsey and Judy Pollock announced that between March 1 and April 5, BCN conducted five workshops for prospective bird monitors. These workshops were in collaboration with 9 forest preserve districts and land managers. About 30 experienced monitors, stewards and representatives of land managers attended and helped with the presentations. The workshops attracted nearly 120 folks interested in learning about monitoring. It's hoped that nearly 40 new monitors may be added to the four-county area. Another goal of the workshops was to forge connections between monitors, stewards and land managers.

7. Illinois Steward Magazine: Judy Pollock. BCN has donated \$350 to this statewide magazine's "all bird" issue to help with the publishing costs. Audubon Chicago Region has also contributed funds to help get this magazine printed. In return, BCN will receive 250 copies of the magazine to distribute to monitors, representatives and clubs. The issue will be available very soon.

8. Adding Members to the Executive Committee: Judy. The nominating committee (Lee Ramsey, Suzanne Checchia, Bob Fisher and Judy) recommends that the Executive Committee be expanded to provide a broader pool of experienced future leadership for BCN. The present Executive Committee is comprised of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and the immediate Past President. The recommended additions to ExCom are Donnie Dann, Chris Van Wassenhove and Sigrid Schmidt.

9. Cats Indoors: Donnie. In on ongoing effort to effect damage control over the issue of TNR (Trap, Neuter and Release), which has been approved for Cook County areas outside the city of Chicago, Donnie, Judy and Steve Packard met with Cook County Commissioner Mike Quigley, who was one of the sponsors of the new law. The present legislation says that feral colonies cannot exist in proximity to nature preserves, but there is no limitation as to proximity. Quigley asked for a list of places that feral cat colonies can't be near. He also asked for examples of where outdoor feral cat enclosures exist. They are run by volunteers. He would consider whether to provide land in Cook County for this purpose. It was also suggested that independent monitoring of the colonies be allowed.

10. ABA Award to Mayor Daley: Donnie. The American Birding Association has announced that Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley is the Chandler Robbins Education and Conservation Award winner for his innovative and far-reaching agenda in Chicago to create and promote a bird-friendly environment in an urban area. Mayor Daley hopes to go to the ABA meeting in Sunbird, Utah, in June to receive the award. It is hoped that a number of Chicago bird people will be there to see the award presented. Bob Fisher suggested that BCN hold some sort of ceremony with the mayor in Chicago to commemorate this award in Chicago, regardless of whether he attends the ABA meeting in person. We can use this as a publicity event for BCN and to give BCN an opportunity to thank Mayor Daley personally for his efforts on behalf of bird conservation.

11. BCN PowerPoint presentation: Eric. A sampling of the new 1999-2007 Trends Analysis for birds by species and habitat was presented. The presentation will be completed shortly.

12. Wild Things Conference: Judy. This biennial conference will occur in February or March of 2009. BCN will sponsor the bird thread. The theme "The Good News about Birds" was suggested. The newly appointed members of the Executive Committee will help with planning and organizing this project.

13. USDA environmental assessment on wildlife damage management in Illinois (Department of Agriculture). Bob. This is a 140-page document on protocols for wildlife damage management. Issues are gulls along the lake shore and blackbird management. The comment period on this is open. Bob thinks that the assessment is well done.

14. Bird Issues: Donnie.

A. State: iSpace, or Illinois Special Places Acquisition, Conservation and Enhancement Program includes \$100,000,000 yearly to buy open lands. We need to encourage our State Representatives and State Senators to include funding for this program in the final capital budget. Member clubs are encouraged to write to their respective legislators.

B. National:

- The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, which provides funds for conservation project in Central and North America needs to be reauthorized. Clubs are encouraged to send letters.
- The EPA is under pressure to keep the highly toxic insecticide Carbofuran on the market. Clubs are encouraged to send letters to ask the EPA not to allow this dangerous chemical back on the market.

- The Farm Bill is a powerful conservation tool that strengthens existing programs that protect natural resources. Clubs are encouraged to contact their legislators and urge them to support the reauthorization of this bill, which has serious implications for birds.
- The Rio Grand Valley and the Border Wall. Clubs are encouraged to contact their congressmen/women and ask them to consider calling for a moratorium until the issues surrounding this undertaking can be more thoroughly vetted.

C. Local:

- BTK spraying in Lake Forest to control gypsy moths will kill all moths and butterflies.
- Temple Farms in Wadsworth to host equestrian events if the 2016 Olympics are held in Chicago, versus being located on Forest Preserve land.

Donnie will email information to club representatives to help them educate themselves and their clubs on these important issues affecting birds.

15. Other--Judy:

- BCN's Lost Mound Work Day/ Field Trip: Judy. This was a success! About 25 people participated in lopping the invasive cedars from a large sand prairie area. Eastern and Western Meadowlarks sang while participants worked. After the work period, a tasty lunch was provided followed by a tour into the part of the refuge that is not yet open to the public. Bald Eagles put on a nice show.
- Expansion of Bartel Grasslands: Judy. This proposal passed without opposition, so the reserve will nearly double in size. The letters that BCN and member clubs sent were instrumental.

Bob:

- IOS and DuPage Birding Club have endowed 5 \$500 awards under IOS's scientific grant program to support ornithological research. BCN and member clubs could do similarly next year.
- The Shrubland Bird Blitz will be June 13 to 23, 2008.
- The next BCN Meeting is July 19th at the South Shore Cultural Center. (Note: subsequent to the meeting it was discovered that SSCC isn't a good location for BCN, so the location is still undecided.)
- Donnie Dann has graciously offered to host the fall meeting on November 1st at his newly reconstructed home.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Lou Mellon
Secretary