



## *Bird Conservation Network*

BCN Quarterly Meeting Minutes  
Saturday, January 9, 2010, 1-4pm  
Chicago Center for Green Technology

Attendees: Chris Van Wassenhove, CAS; Annette Prince, Mary Lou Mellon, CBCM; Jill Niland, Nancy Tikalski, COS; Glenn Gabanski, Bob Fisher, Eric Secker, DBC; Brian Herriott, ENSBC; Mary Ann Harrison, IAS; Joan Bruchman, IOS; Jean Sodemann, Lake-Cook; Diane Rosenberg, Lake County; Judy Pollock, Lee Ramsey, NAS-CW; Pat Prichard, Brigitte Schmidt, Louis Vassmer, Prairie Woods; Dick Riner, Thorn Creek; Jane Balaban, TNC; Terry Schilling, Individual. Guests: Matthew Cvetas.

The meeting was called to order at 1:03pm. A quorum was established with 20 representatives from 13 member organizations and one Individual member present. A welcome was extended to the two new representatives from Prairie Woods Audubon, Brigitte Schmidt and Louis Vassmer, and to Jane Balaban, new from TNC. Introductions were made.

### **Administrative:**

1. The **minutes** of the Saturday, October 31, 2009, quarterly meeting were accepted as written. They are posted on the website at [www.BCNbirds.org](http://www.BCNbirds.org).
2. **Treasurer's report:** Glenn Gabanski. As of 1/9/2010 the checkbook balance is \$701.28; adding the \$3,000 CD, BCN has a funds balance of \$3701.28. We closed the 2009 books with a net loss of \$2.81. Two donations were made by BCN in December '09
  - \$300 to the Oak Forest High School Ecology Club for field guides and binoculars; the club has been active in restoration work at both the Tinley Park Woodlands and Bartel Grassland.
  - \$300 to the North Branch Restoration project, to support work on restoring bird habitat along the North Branch of the Chicago River

A proposed budget for 2010 was distributed, based on an estimated \$1540 in income, primarily from dues. The Treasurer's Report and 2010 budget were approved by unanimous voice vote.

BCN Membership remains at 19 Organizations and 3 Individual Memberships. Notices regarding 2010 dues have been mailed to all members.

3. **Election of Officers.** Bob Fisher on behalf of the Nominating Committee placed into nomination a slate of officers for 2010 consisting of Joan Bruchman, President – Mary Lou Mellon, Vice President – Glenn Gabanski, Treasurer. This slate was approved by unanimous voice vote. The position of Secretary remains temporarily unfilled, pending confirmation of a candidate by the Nominating Committee. Per the BCN bylaws, an email vote for the candidate proposed by the Nominating Committee will be conducted.

Outgoing President Judy Pollock then turned over the gavel to Joan Bruchman; Joan's first action was to thank Judy for her superb service to BCN, and to thank Donnie Dann and Bob Fisher for their past exemplary service to BCN, as they both step off the Executive Committee. Joan's second action was the appointment of two at large members to the Executive Committee for 2010 – Chris Van Wassenhove and Diane Rosenberg.

4. **Membership.** Matthew Cvetas attended the meeting as a visitor and submitted an application for Individual membership. Matthew briefly described his background and reasons for wanting to join. His application will be acted on at the April meeting.

5. **Green Papers.** The Editorial Committee (Ramsey, Mellon and Fisher) proposed adding **Restoring Large Prairies in the Chicago Region** (a December 2009 publication of Audubon Chicago Region which is currently posted on the Habitat Project website) to the BCN website. This proposal was unanimously accepted. Judy Pollock, the principal author of this excellent state-of-the-art report, was congratulated by all present for her work in creating it. Posting the document on the BCN website should increase the number of people who access it, because of their direct or indirect interest in the role of habitat management in bird conservation.

6. **BCN Brochure.** Eric Secker presented the newly redesigned BCN tri-fold brochure, and received accolades for his fine work and the result. A print run of 2500 was made. There was a brief discussion of how best to distribute the brochure. Many representatives present left with quantities of the new brochures for distribution to their own organizations. Contact Judy Pollock or Eric Secker for additional copies.

## **Projects/Initiatives**

1. **Bartel Grasslands Expansion project**—Judy Pollock and Dick Riner presented a series of aerial photos showing the extensive progress made at this site. Work by contractors receiving funding from the O'Hare Mitigation and Modernization Account, via the Army Corps of Engineers and Corlands, coupled with the extensive work carried out by Dick Riner and his crew of volunteers, doubled the size of this grassland by removing introduced trees, disabling drain tiles, etc. Going forward, wetland management will require continuous effort to control/remove reed canary grass and cattails. Volunteers also carry out an intensive program of invasive plant monitoring in the original 600 acre grassland at the south end of Bartel.

2. **Schaumburg Road Grassland**—Lee Ramsey reported on the removal of hedgerows to enhance grassland bird habitat at this unit of Poplar Creek FP.

**3. Almond Marsh rookery artificial nest platform expansion**—Diane Rosenberg reported that as a result of the Great Blue Heron breeding success on the single trial platform erected in '09, and the very positive public response, the Lake County Forest Preserve has agreed to allow 11 more platforms to be installed at the Marsh this winter, using volunteer help. A BCN and Lake County Audubon sponsored volunteer opportunity is being planned to provide that needed help. When the date is set, it will be publicized through the BCNnet, IBET and Volunteer Stewards Network listservs, and other public channels.

**4. Chicago Bird Collision Monitors year-end report**—Annette Prince briefed the group about CBCM's activities last year. 100+ volunteers rescued more than 2200 birds from among downtown Chicago buildings, providing 7 day a week coverage, taking these traumatized birds for rehab to Willowbrook Wildlife Center in Glen Ellyn. An additional 3000+ birds were salvaged after fatal collisions. The latter specimens are now being used in a wide variety of important scientific studies as they enter the Field Museum's collection of specimens. The rescue/collection program is increasingly successful as public outreach and education on the dangers to birds of building collisions, because of the visibility of the CBCM volunteers as they do their work. CBCM's program model is spreading to other major North American cities. CBCM is planning to publish an annual report on the organization's activities and accomplishments during 2009.

**5. Together Green**—Dick Riner described progress on 3 separate Together Green grants in the aggregate amount of \$15000. The grants were made by Toyota/National Audubon. Two of the three focused on recruiting, training and retaining monitoring and restoration work volunteers; one of those two grants is still ongoing and aims at outreach and recruitment at the area historical society and local places of worship. The 3<sup>rd</sup> involved volunteers in a nest predation study at Midewin.

## **Advocacy**

**1. Cook County FPD Restoration Moratorium History**—Jane Balaban briefed the group on the 15+ year history of how a small group of antis managed to stop important restoration work from proceeding in Cook County and the city, and how best to combat their tactics. It was noted that the anti-restoration, anti-deer culling movement continues to be vocal in the region, though perhaps with slightly less effect than in the 90's.

**2. Palatine Prairie and Golf Nation**—Louis Vassmer provided a humorous but ultimately distressing account of how the adjacent Golf Nation driving range encroached and damaged the 7 acre prairie managed by Prairie Woods Audubon – the latest damage is contamination from thousands of golf balls.

**3. Quentin Road Expansion**—Louis Vassmer reported the Cook County DOT continues to press for expanding Quentin to 5 lanes through Deer Grove FP; Prairie Woods Audubon and many other conservation groups are against this project, proposing instead that the expansion be limited to 3 lanes.

**4. Spin off of the Cook County FPD from the County Board**—Glenn Gabanski provided an update. At our previous meeting in October, BCN unanimously agreed to advocate for this legislation (HB 4559) as it progresses through the IL General Assembly. We also agreed to follow the lead of FOTFP. Benjamin Cox of FOTFP has provided a list of 8 key members of the IL House to be contacted by us. They are as follows:

The Honorable Susana Mendoza	District 1	200-1S Stratton Building	Springfield,	IL	62706	rependoza@aol.com	(773) 277-7711
The Honorable William D. Burns	District 26	233-E Stratton Building	Springfield,	IL	62706	repwillburns@att.net	(773) 924-2600
The Honorable David E. Miller	District 29	278-S Stratton Building	Springfield,	IL	62706	repdavidmiller@aol.com	(708) 201-8000
The Honorable William Davis	District 30	246-W Stratton Building	Springfield,	IL	62706	tawnysmith@sbcglobal.net	(708) 799-7300
The Honorable Keith Farnham	District 43	244-W Stratton Building	Springfield,	IL	62706	krfarnham@comcast.net	(847) 841-7130
The Honorable Fred Crespo	District 44	250-W Stratton Building	Springfield,	IL	62706	repfredcrespo@um.att.com	(630) 372-3340
The Honorable Sidney Mathias	District 53	200-1N Stratton Building	Springfield,	IL	62706	sidneymath@email.msn.com	(847) 222-0061
The Honorable Mark L. Walker	District 66	266-S Stratton Building	Springfield,	IL	62706	repmarkwalker@gmail.com	(847) 640-8645

BCN will be formally writing and phoning all eight legislators shortly after the February 2 Primary election, expressing our support for the separation legislation in HB 4559. We encourage member organizations to do the same, and to urge their own membership to also write, phone and email after the February 2 primary. Further information and content for the letters will be compiled and circulated shortly, for use by coalition members.

**5. Feral Cats and TNR**—Judy Pollock reported for Donnie Dann. Chicago Wilderness will be discussing feral cat management in the area, particularly as it relates to TNR. Donnie has offered BCN’s support and will also pass along contact information relating to the American Bird Conservancy’s TNR policies and position.

**6. Northerly Island Redevelopment** —Mary Lou Mellon reported on The Chicago Park District presentation of four proposals for the future of Northerly Island at a meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 10. Several BCN reps attended and provided extensive input to the Park District. The future of all these conceptual proposals is unclear, but more meetings are planned by the Park District. Joan Bruchman, Mary Lou Mellon, Jill Niland and Judy Pollock were appointed to a BCN committee to draft a formal commentary on the planning, emphasizing the need to preserve, enhance and expand bird habitat as a core principle in any redevelopment planning.

## Monitoring and Volunteer Opportunities

**1. Grants Update**—Glenn Gabanski advised that to carry out the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund (IWPF) grant, BCN has purchased 8 GPS units and spare batteries for

\$713.70, using \$500 of BCN matching money. Next, BCN will print and send 4 documents to each monitor:

- the list of Birds of Concern (also to be posted on the BCN website)
- a newly created Habitat Information Form
- the BCN Habitat Categories guide (also to be posted on the BCN website)
- a map for each monitoring point

By completing the Habitat Information Form, monitors will be providing information on the kind of habitat found at each point and how the point was selected. This information will then be entered into the BCN database, which will enhance the statistical robustness of the data used for future analyses. Eric Secker (as an independent contractor) will handle any technical work involving the database and the incoming data. The newly printed Birds of Concern might be useful for people other than monitors, e.g., casual birders looking to focus on local birds, land managers, land stewards, etc. The latter two groups might also find the BCN Habitat Categories handout useful. There was a general discussion of the best distribution options for this list.

**2. Monitoring Workshops in 2010**—Lee Ramsey reported that only one training workshop is planned, for beginning monitors from throughout the region. The date for this event has not yet been set. Given strong interest, local workshops are still an option.

In response to suggestions by 2009 Wild Things Conference attendees, the Habitat Project will be hosting an off-year workshop at the Danada Atrium in Wheaton on Sunday Feb. 7 from 1-4 PM to address questions on stewardship and monitoring. It is aimed at experienced stewards, monitors, and land management professionals. Two one-hour plus sessions are planned; the format will be roundtable discussion. Session 1 will focus on habitat – prairies and savannas, woodlands, shrublands and wetlands. Session 2 is aimed at management – herbicides and invasives, monitoring, seeding (why, when and how), and public outreach (officials, neighbors, landowners, volunteers field experts, etc.) Space is limited; RSVP: Karen Glennemeier 847 256 2608, [kglennemeier@audubon.org](mailto:kglennemeier@audubon.org)

**3. Expanding our Reach**—Lee and Judy Pollock have a meeting scheduled with the McHenry County Conservation District, to plan for cooperation on bird monitoring between BCN and the District in 2010 and beyond. A similar approach is in the works for Will County, but so far has not been successful in reaching out to a decision maker in the Will County FPD.

**4. Monitoring Data Accessibility**—Judy Pollock advised that, thanks to BCN's skilled data management and analysis volunteers, monitors will be able to access and examine their own results. Plus, a report will be issued on the 2009 bird monitoring results and conclusions, region wide.

**5. Monitors Lunch**—Joan Bruchman announced that the monitors' annual recognition event will be Saturday, February 6, 2010. It will begin with a bird walk at Northerly

Island, followed by a tour of the bird collection at the Field Museum and the Ornithology labs. Honorees include past Birding Blitz leaders; all monitors will be invited. An announcement with details is scheduled for release shortly.

**6. 2010 Regional Breeding Bird Blitz**—Judy Pollock announced that this year’s blitz will once again be at a specific series of sites in early to mid June. Because of inclement weather during the ’09 blitz season, some sites on the blitz list last year may be repeated in 2010.

**7. Give Back to the Birds Workdays**—Joan Bruchman. The spring 2010 GBBD will be at Bartel Grassland, where we will plant wetland plugs on April 24, 2010. Hopefully there will be many shorebirds present to enhance the experience for all. RSVPs should be sent to Joan at 847 687 3108 or by email at [pjbruchman@yahoo.com](mailto:pjbruchman@yahoo.com). See also under Almond Marsh (above) some details about another volunteer workday opportunity for birders.

**8. International Migratory Bird Day 2010**—Judy Pollock. IMBD’s theme this year is The Power of Partnerships in Bird Conservation. IMBD is usually celebrated in the Chicago metro area during the months of April and May, avoiding a schedule conflict with the statewide Spring Bird Count, which takes place in 2010 on May 8. The IMBD program’s national organizers are not rigid about the date of IMBD celebration events. BCN member organizations and individuals are encouraged to seek out local partners (wildlife centers, park districts, etc.) in planning and promoting local IMBD activities.

The meeting was adjourned at 4pm.

The next meeting will be Saturday, April 10, 2010, at a location to be announced.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Fisher,

Acting Secretary