



BIRD CONSERVATION NETWORK

www.bcnbirds.org

BCN Quarterly Meeting Minutes
Saturday, January 22, 2011, 12:45pm-3:45PM
Crabtree Nature Center, Barrington

Attendees: Bobbi Asher, CAS; Mary Lou Mellon, Teri Radke, CBCM; Christine Williamson, Nancy Tikalsky, COS; Glenn Gabanski, Bob Fisher, Eric Secker, DBC; Joan Bruchman, IOS; Valerie Lewis, Jean Sodemann, Lake-Cook; Judy Pollock, Lee Ramsey, NAS-CR; Joe Van Wassenhove, Peoria AS; Brigitte Schmidt, Louis Vassmer, Prairie Woods; Jane Balaban, TNC; Terry Schilling, Individual. Guest: Dawn Smith.

President Joan Bruchman called the meeting to order at 1:50pm. A quorum was established with 17 representatives from 10 member organizations and one individual member present. A welcome was extended to guest Dawn Smith. Introductions were made.

Administrative:

1. The minutes of the October 23, 2010, meeting were approved as written. They are posted on the BCN website at [www. BCNbirds.org](http://www.BCNbirds.org), as are the minutes of the 1/11/11 Executive Committee conference call meeting.
2. Treasurer's report: Glenn Gabanski. In 2010 BCN had income of \$1,450 from dues, \$675 in donations, and \$12.67 in interest for a total of \$2,137.67. Expenses totaled \$2,156.05. Over \$1,100 was spent on supporting our monitoring program and about \$900 was spent on supporting other programs. In 2010 we spent \$925.95 on the IWPF Grant but this was refunded to us when we received the \$1,200 check from the IDNR. These numbers give us a net loss of \$18.38. The checkbook balance on 12/31/10 and on 1/22/11 was \$3,955.05. The report was approved

A proposed budget for 2011 was distributed. It plans for \$1,375 in dues and \$100 in donations. BCN has been fortunate to receive larger donations in recent years but this can't be assumed for 2011. All \$1,475 of the income is budgeted for expenses with the bulk again to support our monitoring programs and other programs of our choosing.

After discussion the proposed budget was voted on and accepted.

3. BCN, Taxes and Proposed 501(c)(3) status issue: Glenn. Our recent fiscal practice has been to spend all our yearly income to avoid paying income tax. However, this means our funds balance either stays the same or slowly decreases over the years. It will never increase. This could limit our activities in the future if we plan for or need to spend a large sum of money for a major project.

There are two alternatives: pay corporate tax to increase our funds or apply for 501(c)(3) non-profit status. The former allows us to continue playing a supporting role in politics, which we don't really do, while the latter would not. Nonprofit status does not prevent us from supporting environmental issues.

Disadvantages to applying for nonprofit status are the restriction on supporting candidates in elections, completing the 30-page application, the many-month process involved in applying, and the \$400 application fee. (As a comparison, at the 15% corporate tax rate BCN could have income of \$2,666.67 before paying \$400 in taxes.) Advantages are enabling donations to BCN to be tax deductible to the donor, not losing any income to taxes, and simpler tax filing each year.

The disadvantage to paying taxes is losing 15% of our net income, but the advantage would be keeping 85% of our net income to allow our funds balance to grow.

At the 1/11/11 ExCom meeting we decided we should simply drop the practice of always spending all our income and start paying tax as needed. However, we also felt the question of whether BCN should apply for nonprofit status should be raised at the January meeting to see if our representatives feel that this is a direction BCN should take.

After discussion the consensus was that obtaining 501(c)(3) status would facilitate fundraising, which is needed specifically to pay for the next analysis of the BCN monitoring data. A motion was made by Chris Williamson and seconded by Bobbi Asher to apply for 501(c)(3) status and was passed by roll-call vote, with all present voting in favor of the motion. Glenn will be responsible for completing and submitting the application.

4. Officer Nominations--Judy Pollock. The slate presented was Joan Bruchman, president; Mary Lou Mellon, vice president; and Glenn Gabanski, treasurer. At present there is no candidate for secretary (though it is believed that there will be one soon). The nominees were elected by unanimous voice vote.

Some discussion ensued re the possibility of using electronic voting (email) for votes that we might wish to have during the periods between meetings. It was determined that to do this, the BCN bylaws will need to be rewritten. Christine Williamson and Nancy Tikalsky volunteered to rewrite the bylaws.

5. Membership--Glenn. As of 1/10/11 invoices for 2011 membership dues were sent to all BCN reps. Dues remain at \$75 for organizations and \$25 for individuals and are due by March 31. Save the Dunes has informed us that they will not be able to renew their membership this year due to financial constraints. They hope to renew in 2012. This leaves BCN with 18 organizations and 4 individual members if all other organizations and all individuals renew.

Lee Ramsey nominated Dawn Smith for individual membership in BCN. Dawn spoke about herself and her dedication to bird conservation. Her membership application will be voted on at the next meeting.

Advocacy

1. Great Lakes Common Terns-- Joan for Donnie. Joan recapped the background of the Great Lakes Naval Training Center (GLNTC)'s Common Tern colony. This is the only nesting colony of Common Terns in Illinois. Brad Semel, of IDNR, and Donnie Dann have monitored and nursed the colony through floods, predator attacks and severe habitat deterioration. In 2009 a small barge made by Brad was anchored in the harbor to substitute for the then-flooded nesting area. Joan passed photos of the barge which was filled with terns and nests with eggs!
2. The Navy has now taken the tern colony on as a project. To deter predators, a new, stronger, electrified fence has been installed surrounding the tern nesting area. Sand will be added to raise the island to protect it from flooding. Due to the heavy work involved in the restoration of the island habitat, the proposed Give Back to Bird Day at GLNTC has been canceled.
3. Highland Park Is for the Birds--Judy for Donnie, Joan. Joan distributed copies of, and read excerpts from, a 12/28/10 *Trib Local* article titled "Highland Park is for the Birds," in which Donnie Dann was quoted and BCN was mentioned. The article stated that the Highland Park city council will soon consider bird-friendly construction for all new city buildings. Eric will post a copy of the article on the BCN web site.

Projects and Initiatives

1. Bird Agenda Meeting Summary--Glenn. Please see Glenn's full report on the City of Chicago 1/12/11 Bird Agenda meeting in **Appendix A**
2. IWPF Grant Update--Glenn. During 2009 and 2010 BCN spent \$1,885.86 (\$1,200 of which will be reimbursed by the grant) on GPS units, creating habitat assessment forms, printing and mailing materials to monitors, burning CDs, and creating and printing the Birds of Concern brochure. National Audubon – Chicago Region contributed \$201.60 in project coordinator

support. Last June I submitted all the materials needed to complete the grant and receive our \$1,200 reimbursement check. However, later I discovered the person in Yorkville to whom I was instructed to send it never forwarded the packet to Springfield and I was unsuccessful in either contacting the Yorkville individual or locating the documents. So in October I had to recreate the packet and resubmit it, this time directly to Springfield. In early December we finally received the \$1,200 check for the IWPF Grant and on 12/6/10 it was deposited in the BCN checking account. This completes the IWPF Grant and no other grants are planned to date.

3. Forest Preserve Fishing Line Containers--Judy. No report on this issue because Judy has been unable to reach the man in charge of these containers, which have been known to fatally attract Tree Swallows because the fishing line is apparently good stuff for nests. The birds become entangled in the line and have been found dead in the PVC pipes. The retrofitted lids for the containers to solve the problem have been broken off by vandals in some cases.
4. Give Back to the Birds Day, Spring 2011--Judy, Joan. Since GBBD at GLNTC has been canceled, Joan and Judy asked for suggestions for a spring 2011 GBBD. At the close of the meeting a spring 2011 location had not been decided. Since then, a GBBD on 4/30/11 at Nachusa Grasslands, in Franklin Grove, has been confirmed. Details will follow. Christine Williamson suggested a spring Montrose Beach Sweep but due to other conflicts, it was decided to join the fall Montrose Beach Sweep on 9/17/11 as a BCN GBBD. Christine will get back to Joan/Judy with details, but a bird walk with Geoff Williamson from 6:30 to 9am before the work portion and a catered lunch afterward are under consideration.
5. BCN Bird Monitors Brunch--Lee Ramsey. The annual Monitors' Brunch will be held at Schaumburg Road Grasslands in northwestern Cook County on Saturday, July 9. This is the southwest section of Poplar Creek Forest Preserve. A morning of birding at the grasslands will be followed by a picnic or a lunch at a nearby restaurant. All BCN monitors are invited. There will be no charge for the meal, but reservations are required. Further details, when confirmed, will be announced on the BCN website and on BCN eBird. Save the date!
6. Important Bird Areas Field Trips--Judy, Joan. At the present time no IBA field trips are planned. A new committee of Bob Fisher, Chris Williamson, Eric Secker and Joe Van Wassenhove (with Judy Pollock as a resource) has been formed to plan future trips, which are expected to raise funds for BCN.
7. Fund Raising--Bob, Joan. Planning for fund-raising projects is on hold till the BCN 501(c)(3) status is confirmed. It was suggested to charge a donation for future field trips to IBAs. We will also need funds to reprint the Birds of Concern and the BCN brochures to reflect our new status as a 501(c)(3) in 2011 or 2012.

Since Joan has access to GLNTC, which is closed to the public, she suggested a series of fund-raising field trips to the Common Tern colony at GLNTC.

Another project for which funds might be needed is a second Architects Conference, to discuss and promote bird-friendly building design. Attendees would be architects and building planners. Randi Doecker did a superb job of putting on the first conference of this type several years ago. Chris Williamson will see if Randi might be willing to get behind another in 2012.

8. BCN Bird Survey--Lee. There will be three monitor workshops this year. These are primarily for new and prospective monitors, but some experienced monitors and land managers will be in attendance at each workshop. The dates and places are: Sat., March 19, 1:00-3:30 pm, Will County, IL (Joliet); Sat., March 26, 1:30-3:30 pm, Lake County, IL (Riverwoods); Sat., April 2, 2:00-4:30, Lake County, IN (Hammond). Full details about the workshops are posted on the BCN website.
9. Bird Blitz--Lee. There will be one single-site bird blitz this year in June, at a date or dates to be announced later. It will be held at the 4,000-acre Spring Creek Forest Preserve in northwestern Cook County. Planning is currently under way.
10. Wild Things Conference--Judy. The 4th biennial Wild Things Conference will be Saturday, March 5, at University of Illinois at Chicago from 8am to 4:45pm. Early registration (\$28) closes on Sunday, January 30th. Presently about 300 people are registered. More than 1200 folks are expected to attend the conference, which features 9 nature tracks with numerous speakers in each track. Reps are encouraged to promote this exciting conference event to their organizations.

Other

1. Jean Sodemann announced that Lake-Cook is planning to put up barn owl boxes. More information to come.
2. Bob Fisher mentioned the possibility of a search for nesting American Kestrels within the city and close-in suburbs, modeled after New York City's program. A separate program to erect and monitor kestrel nest boxes (in cooperation with local falconers) is also being considered.
3. Louis Vassmer mentioned that Prairie Woods is sponsoring an Open House at Spring Valley Nature Center on Thursday, February 17th, from 7-9pm. All are invited.

Next Meeting

BCN's spring Quarterly Meeting will be Saturday, April 16th at Camp Sagawau, Lemont, IL, from 1-4pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Lou Mellon
Vice President, Acting Secretary

Appendix A
City of Chicago Bird Agenda – Summary of 1/12/11 Meeting

1) Incorporating backyard diversity into My Action Plan (MAP). The DOE has been awarded an Urban and Community Forestry Program grant from the USDA Forest Service to initiate a comprehensive incentive program to engage its residents in green infrastructure and to serve as a model for municipalities in the Great Lakes Basin. Some features of this program will be: to distribute over 7,000 rebates for trees, rain gardens, native plants, and rain barrels to Chicago residents within the first two years of the program; to improve assumptions used in calculating environmental metrics by collecting and analyzing installation and usage rates and other tracking measure; and quantify and promote the important ecosystem services that are provided by green infrastructure, including improved air and water quality, energy conservation, carbon and urban heat island mitigation, and wildlife habitat.

In order to implement and track the green infrastructure incentive program, the City of Chicago will develop a new web-based outreach and engagement program called My Action Plan (MAP). MAP will provide residents with site-specific recommendations, detailed information on implementing each action, a list of available federal, state, and local incentives, a list of local vendors and service providers, and visual tools for monitoring their economic and carbon footprints. Target date is late summer.

2) Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds Challenge Grant. The DOE, with help from NAS-Chicago Region, presented a plan for proposing a Migratory Bird Reserve or Alliance program to the USFWS as part of their Migratory Bird Treaty City grant program (\$10,000 is available). The plan embraces three goals:

Goal 1: Engage new landowner and outreach partners in improving or protecting migratory bird habitat.

Goal 2: Develop a branded program that describes the habitat protections and improvements of Chicago's partners on a website so that partner efforts can be recognized and other cities can emulate these efforts. (Like Lights Out!)

Goal 3: Publicize the project within Chicago and nationally.

They are looking for a catchy name for the lands that have bird habitat. Working title is "Chicago Migratory Bird Reserve." Can anyone suggest a better name?

3) Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) Ecosystem Adaption Working Group. The group is in the planning stage. Goal is to help Chicago adapt to climate change and to help birds. Group admits it is tough to measure success in adapting to climate change.

4. Banning Lead Fishing Tackle. CAS and the DOE have been meeting with Alderman Smith on an initiative to ban or reduce use of lead fishing tackle. This is an uphill fight. Lead is still considered best by the fisherman. Steel is not heavy enough and more costly and with availability of lead tackle in the suburbs there is little incentive to issue a city ban. Some city groups are promoting the alternatives.

5. Bird-Safe Glass update. DOE invited Ornilux to present their bird-safe glass to architects, planners, designers and conservationists. DOE shared the invitation far and wide in these communities; attendees came from the City of Chicago, Chicago Park District and Studio Gang, among other institutions. The American Bird Conservancy is conducting ongoing tests regarding the efficacy of the Ornilux products, the findings of which should inform future product releases.

Ornilux Bird Protection Glass is being marketed under the name Mikado, which is the German name for the game “pick-a-stick.” It refers to the image birds see which looks like the pile of sticks in the game. Others have called it a spider web. This is architecture glass, which means it is not designed for home use.

The Bird Agenda is still encouraging the city to adopt bird-safe building practices and codes. Toronto and San Francisco have already done so. Locally, as a result of Donnie Dann’s efforts, Highland Park has adopted bird-safe design for public buildings. Donnie has also talking to other communities and Barrington has passed a bird-safe building resolution.

6. Other updates and announcements.

Chicago Park District is adding 20 new acres of short grass prairie to the Burnham Centennial Prairie. CPD has decided that the southern half of Washington Park will be designated a natural area. CPD will convert land between Lake Shore Drive and the railroad tracks to short-grass prairie.

Calumet area lands update: DOE is working through the Army Corps to continue restoration at Indian Ridge Marsh. Hegewisch Marsh restoration and trail building is ongoing (feel free to visit, but you still have to park on the roadside). Work is beginning on the Big Marsh water control structures. Watch for CDOT work at the 130th/Torrence intersection this year.

Tweet Home Chicago birdhouses will be on exhibit at Peggy Notebaert from March 18 to August 6th.

Gull Project (egg depredation) and “Do not feed the birds” campaign on beaches will continue. Contact Sarah Abu-Absi at DOE if you are interested in helping. Phone: (312) 744-3634. Email: sarah.abu-absi@cityofchicago.org

