

Bird Conservation Network Quarterly Meeting
Saturday, October 25, 2014
Crabtree Nature Center

Present: Joan Bruchman (IOS), Suzanne Checchia (ENSBC), Donnie Dann (TNC), Lloyd Davidson (ENSBC), Dean Engel (Lake-Cook), Emma England (Lake-Cook), Bob Fisher (DBC), Glenn Gabanski (DBC), Libby Hill (ENSBC), Mary Lou Mellon (CBCM), Steve Mitten (Loyola IES), Debra Nord (McHenry Cty), Annette Prince (CBCM), Terri Radke (CBCM), Lee Ramsey (NAS-CR), Diane Rosenberg (Lake Cty), Rebeccah Sanders (NAS-CR), Jean Sodemann (Lake-Cook), Eric Secker (Kane Cty), Nancy Tikalsky (COS), Chris Van Wassenhove (CAS), Jenny Vogt (NAS-CR), Dave Willard (CAS)

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m.

Introductions—Mary Lou Mellon

New reps: Rebeccah Sanders, Audubon Chicago Region; Dean Engel, Lake-Cook Audubon; Emma England, Lake County Audubon.

ADMINISTRATION

Consideration of July Minutes

The minutes for the quarterly meeting, 19 July, 2014, were considered and approved.

Treasurer's Report—Glenn Gabanski

Prior to the meeting a financial spreadsheet was distributed.

Income this year is \$2,720 and expenses are \$2,560.47. Current balance in the checkbook is \$5,630.26.

Expenses since the July meeting were \$73.66 for conference calls, \$50 Chicago Wilderness dues, \$5 filing fee to the Secretary of State to report the new address for our Registered Office (required by the Secretary of State's office for corporations in Illinois), and \$79.93 to purchase new checks and deposit slips displaying our new mailing address.

Membership Report—Mellon

Vera Leopold of The Wetlands Initiative has sent a letter of application to join BCN. As per our bylaws, the application will be vetted by ExCom at its next meeting and if approved, TWI will be presented to be discussed and voted on by the membership at the January 2015 meeting.

WIND ENERGY SPEAKERS

1. Jonathan Nieuwsma and Nicolai Schousboe of Citizens' Greener Evanston gave a presentation on their project to attempt to reduce Evanston's carbon footprint, involving the possible use of wind energy.

2. Wind Power in the Great Lakes: Where Do We Stand?--Bob Fisher

Lake Michigan Offshore Wind Energy Advisory Council – Chronology HB 2753

- February 2013 – introduced by Rep. Gabel
- 2 subsequent amendments; both adopted.
- House Amendment 1 (Gabel); extend time for IDNR to develop siting matrix; eliminate provision allowing permits/leases before completion of siting matrix.
- Senate Amendment 1 (Biss); State to be guided by the final report of the LMOWEAC.
- Amended bill became law – August 2013; BCN integral to adopting the 2 key amendments.

BCN, Sierra Club & Offshore Wind

- Rauber article on Conflict Avoidance *Sierra* magazine, March/April 2013.
- Article understates risks to birds and bats from offshore turbines in the Great Lakes; ignores potential effects on wintering waterfowl, especially avoidance.
- BCN (Dann and Fisher) challenge both the tone and content, leading to an 18 month 'journey' and a continuing dialog with Sierra Club.

THE KEY ISSUES

- Sierra Club's Beyond Coal website wind pages – over-promotion, ignoring wildlife problems.
- Cautionary policies and information 'buried' on SC website.
- Some SC Chapters overzealous advocacy for wind, indifference to wildlife issues.
- Western Lake Erie as a major migration corridor for birds.
- Continuing lack of information on how wintering waterfowl use the Great Lakes

THE KEY PLAYERS

- National Sierra Club Board Member Chuck Frank; SC's National Beyond Coal senior leadership – Sarah Friedman, Nathan Landers; Michigan Beyond Coal Campaign coordinator Tiffany Hartung
- American Bird Conservancy – Michael Hutchins
- Black Swamp Bird Observatory – the Kaufmans
- The Nature Conservancy – Dave Ewert
- National Audubon Society's IBA Program

STATUS – SC/BCN DIALOG

- SC installed major revisions to Beyond Coal website wind pages, both content and organization/layout. Specific emphasis placed on Great Lakes offshore wind.
- SC Policy Guidelines on offshore wind now readily accessible documents.
- SC's Friedman to make presentations to Great Lakes State Chapters and Groups on the updates during upcoming SC Conference.
- SC became a player in the wind in Lake Erie situation.

ILLINOIS

- Illinois' legislation a model for other Great Lakes states, most have few/no detailed regulations in place.
- IDNR as the oversight agency for HB 2753 is good news; staffing is definitely a concern.
- BCN continues 'at the table' as IDNR ramps up its drafting of the siting matrix and needed regulations, per the agency's responsibility under HB 2753.

Western Lake Erie

- SC working with ABC, BSBO, TNC, and others, critiquing potential wind projects in Lake Erie.
- The question of how best to protect the major migration corridor that is western Lake Erie is now on 'the radar' (no pun intended).
- Part of the far western Lake Erie basin is an Audubon IBA; a broader, more comprehensive IBA designation is being sought.

Lake Erie's Canadian waters are essentially *terra incognita*, presently.

Unanswered Questions

- Wintering waterfowl survey data incomplete; polar vortex (if it becomes a pattern) effects unknown.
- How to assess avoidance by waterfowl, and the impact on fitness, etc., is a big question.
- How to monitor collision mortality over water still unknown, and obviously very difficult. The LEEDCo project off of Cleveland may be a test case.
- Bats fly far out over water –who knew? What are the implications for offshore turbines?

Nancy Tikalsky added an announcement of the COS/Sierra Club Wind and Wildlife: a panel discussion educational program taking place on Dec. 8 at 2:30 pm; including speakers:

Jeff Gosse, Regional Energy Coordinator for the upper Midwest, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;

Michael Hutchins, National Coordinator for the American Bird Conservancy's Bird Smart Wind Energy Campaign;

Keith M. Shank, natural resources manager and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources main wind power liaison.

CONSERVATION ISSUES

1. Advocacy—Donnie Dann

7-19-14 to 10-25-14

- Letter to President Obama requesting 2014 be declared Year of the Passenger Pigeon.
- Letter opposing the new Minnesota Vikings stadium design.
- Submitted written statement opposing Illiana Tollway, and appeared in person to offer testimony before CMAP.
- Wrote both IL Senators opposing HR 4315, which would hamstring the EPA in declaring areas of critical habitat for T&E species.
- Opposed change to 30 year eagle take rule.
- Joined ABC in ask to Interior to establish nat'l policy on feral and free-roaming cats.
- Requested stronger Greater Sage-Grouse habitat protection.
- Opposed the lakefront glass wall memorial to Daniel Burnham.
- Working to influence design of Lucas Museum on the lakefront to be bird-friendly.
- Extensive time with Bob Fisher to influence Sierra Club's offshore wind energy policies and practices.

2. Burnham View—Mellon

The last stop on the planned View Chicago tour, designed by Chicago architect David Woodhouse: Burnham View will feature a "monumental pair of glass walls—angled to reflect the city and shoreline that border Grant Park." Needless to say, we oppose the "monumental pair of glass walls." Mellon has written to Jim Law, manager of the Burnham View project and had a phone conversation with him. Law said this was a good time

to raise this issue as they need to turn in final plans around January 1. We put him in touch with Chris Sheppard at American Bird Conservancy, who provided two copies of their 60-page *Bird Friendly Building Designs* book. Also wrote to Bob O'Neill of Grant Park Conservancy who was very receptive. Said he's very sensitive to bird issues and has worked a lot on these things before.

3. George Lucas Museum on Lakefront—Willard & Dann

Based on a report from Jeannie Gang, the landscape architect for the museum who will have a lot of influence, we don't have to worry about the building not being bird-friendly. Friends of the Parks is fighting to have it moved away from the lakefront, but we won't be joining them in that battle.

Debby Moskovits, a Field Museum vice president, has been approached with our concerns and was going to convey them to Lucas himself if possible, and otherwise to people intimately involved in the new museum project.

4. Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary Master Plan—Mellon

Montrose: The holdup on the Montrose Master Plan is supposed to be over, and there is supposed to be a meeting in November per Jason Steger.

Nancy Tikalsky added that the site steward at Montrose Point has resigned, and Steger is now organizing the stewards. Luis Munoz is working on security issues. Maintenance work going on now is not part of the Master Plan.

5. DuPage County FPD changes in leadership—Fisher

DuPage County has replaced its executive director, causing turmoil. Other leadership positions will also be replaced.

6. Gillson Park Master Plan—Mellon

Gillson Park, Wilmette, Lakefront Master Plan looks to include new and renovated buildings with clear and reflective glass right on the lakefront. Mellon has prepared a letter to the Wilmette Park District Board but is waiting to talk to BCN monitor Karen Glennemeier before mailing. This is a work in progress. Hope to get them to require bird friendly glass in all new construction.

7. Land acquisition—Tikalsky

Chris Williamson reports that the Chicago Park District has acquired 283 acres on the western shore of Lake Calumet for natural areas restoration.

PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

1. BCN's New Address—Gabanski

BCN's New Mailing Address: With the closing of the Audubon Chicago Region office in Evanston BCN needed to find a new mailing address that wasn't a PO box. The Secretary of State's office does not accept PO boxes for the address of the Registered Office for a corporation. Since the Treasurer gets most of the important mail, it made sense to find a location convenient to our treasurer. Dave Willard graciously offered to let BCN use the Field Museum address since the treasurer is a volunteer there. The new mailing address is:

Bird Conservation Network
c/o Bird Division
1400 Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, IL 60605

Mail sent to the old address will be forwarded to the new address for one year and the Treasurer is contacting various organizations to report the change of address.

2. BCN Survey News—Ramsey

The BCN Survey is an ongoing, year-round monitoring of bird populations in the Chicago Wilderness area, intended to inform conservation and restoration managers' and stewards' efforts in the area's natural lands. Its volunteer monitors work independently but in accordance with two professionally designed protocols:

point (stationary) counts and transect (traveling) counts. Results are reported to the eBird database, and eBird sends the relevant information annually to the BCN so that it can then be passed on to land managers, stewards, and the general public.

Judy Pollock and Lee Ramsey administer the BCN Survey, and will be sharing decision-making and responsibility with a newly-appointed BCN Survey Council. Its newly appointed members are:

Eric Gyllenhaal (Chicago)
Tom Mulcahy (southern Cook Co.)
Melissa Foster (northern Cook Co.)
Vicky Sroczynski (DuPage Co.)
Tim Balassie (Kane Co.)
Jeff Rugg (Kendall Co.)
Emma England (Lake Co. IL)
Jeff Aufmann (McHenry Co.)
Lee Witkowski (Will Co.)

Main Council responsibilities:

Review Survey policies and protocols
Maintain contact with land managers
Promote conservation action

3. Birds of Concern Brochure—Eric Secker & Fisher

2500 copies of the brochure are forthcoming. BCN members should make an effort to get it displayed in nature centers and bird food stores.

4. Revised BCN Brochure & Koziol Presentation—Mellon

Text is nearly complete for the revised brochure. Obviously this is not going anywhere until Eric is finished with the Birds of Concern brochure.

The Koziols were presented with a BCN resolution thanking them for their generosity on behalf of the birds and a copy of *Illinois Birds, A Century of Change*, by Jeff Walk, et al. (published IL Natural History Survey). Circulated the copy of the resolution and book.

5. Loyola Institute of Environmental Sustainability—Mitten

1) Last spring a new course, Bird Conservation and Ecology, was offered at Loyola with 13 students enrolled.
2) A three week intensive summer Field Ornithology course was offered at the Loyola University Retreat and Ecology Campus (LUREC) at Woodstock. Nine Students enrolled and were involved in the Breeding Bird Monitoring Program at Boone Creek McHenry County Conservation District and worked on individual research projects on campus. They also planted a plot of birdhouse guards on the LUREC garden. 3) SOAR (Student Operation for Avian Relief) under the direction of Dr. Reuben Keller continues to assist the Chicago Bird Collision Monitors (CBCM) and work with Loyola facilities managers to make buildings bird-safe during migratory season. While there have been great strides in reducing the number of bird collisions on campus, a new building that has just opened this fall has become a building of concern. Students are working with facilities to minimize future strikes.

6. Cook County FPD Centennial 2015—Mellon

FPDCC Centennial Sept. 25-27, 2015. BCN was invited to participate in the Centennial celebration. BCN has proposed to lead four bird walks from 8 to 10am: two on Saturday morning and two on Sunday. We suggested that we would do walks at Skokie Lagoons, Deer Grove East, Thatcher Woods, Sagawau (north, northwest, central and south). We can change the venues at a later date or even drop one or two. We limited the number to 20 people per walk, said participants had to dress for the weather and bring binoculars. BCN will provide juice boxes and cookies at the end of the walk. Joan B. has volunteered to lead one of the walks. We need leaders for the others. Participants expected to be beginning birders.

7. Lake County FPD/College of Lake County Bird Conservation Workshop—Ramsey

BCN representatives assisted in a CLC three-day classroom and field workshop to train and equip 12 college students to participate in the bird conservation community.

8. Purple Martin Update from Lake-Cook Audubon—Sodemann

Lake-Cook has been working with Mary Bastien, a volunteer monitor for Lake County Forest Preserve District. Three nests were made in the houses this summer. A total of 10 Purple Martins successfully fledged. Final fledging was August 16. Mary does all the final cleaning at the end of each fledging. At that time, she checks all the other boxes. Often she has had to "re-nest" the birds during the nesting period due to blowfly larvae occupying the bottom of the nest. The larvae feed on the developing birds' blood, which causes them to become anemic and thus very weak. It may cause failure to fledge. This is particularly common with Purple Martins, due to the mud they use while building their nests, and is more often seen during wet springs/summers like we had earlier this year, or boxes in wetter area. The monitor has to make an artificial nest with grass and pine straw, and place the birds in this and return them to the nest box, while discarding the original nests. She also wipes the box down with rubbing alcohol. Mary commented that this is a great success for a first year nest site! So glad Lake-Cook Audubon could be a part of this. Fisher added that Kane County has nesting boxes for kestrels and so does FermiLab.

9. Lake County Audubon Society Report—Rosenberg

ALMOND MARSH ROOKERY UPDATE:

The chapter continues to work with Almond Marsh Heron Rookery. The rookery program, run through the LCFPD, is managed by Jack Nowak, a LCAS member. In addition to helping to maintain a viable rookery environment for the GBHE and other birds, LCAS puts special effort into educating the public about birds and environmental issues.

The rookery is officially open Saturdays from 8-12, April through June. This year over 500 visitors came to view the rookery and watch the cycle from nest building through fledging of the young birds. Also this year, an additional five new tree platforms were erected. Three of these new nest sites were used by Great Blue Herons and two were used by Double-crested Cormorants. This past nesting season, 15 heron nests produced 49 young herons that successfully fledged.

BIRDSCAPING PROJECT- LIBERTY PRAIRIE RESERVE:

In the spring of 2012 Lake County Audubon worked in cooperation with Libertyville Township on another special project, a birdscaping program in the Liberty Prairie Reserve. This project involved planting seeds of high value native grasses and forbs that provide food and shelter for small animals. The plants were selected on the basis of their ability to bloom and produce food during different seasons to encourage migratory bird stopovers. Seeds were planted in both the spring and fall of 2012. By the summer of 2013, Dr. Ken Weik, LCFPD plant biologist, examined the plants/site and affirmed that the site is working and has potential as an emerging prairie. In addition, a newly opened trail from Independence Grove now connects to the project area and offers an opportunity to increase the restoration area.

On May 23, 2014, 23 volunteers from Lake County Audubon, Conserve Lake County, and neighborhood community groups, worked to plant native shrubs and trees to enhance the bird habitat. One hundred sixty trees/shrubs were planted and have continued to flourish throughout the summer of 2014.

Funding for the birdscaping program came through a combination of grant support, individual donors, and \$5000 that LCAS contributed toward plant purchases. The birdscaping will continue with tagging and getting more plants into the ground.

FARMER'S MARKET:

This year, for the first time, LCAS provided an informational booth at the Libertyville Farmer's Market held at the town square. We are assessing the number of contacts, informational requests, and time spent to determine whether we'll continue this outreach program again next year.

10. Wild Things 2015 Bird Track—England

Here is a list of the Wild Things 2015 Bird Track speakers and their presentations:

1. Josh Engel: When raptors were rare: changes in Chicago's birdlife since World War II.
2. Brian Kraskiewicz: Mist netting birds in Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve
3. Doug Stotz: Avian Rush Hour: maintaining Chicago's landbird migration.
4. Jeff Walk: Bird response to bison grazing at Nachusa.

5. Jim Herkert: Conservation of grassland and shrubland birds.
6. Stephen Pruett-Jones: Monk Parakeets in Chicago.
7. Bob Gillespie: Greater Prairie Chickens in Illinois.
8. David Willard: Birds and glass a fatal combination; results of a 35-year study.
9. Geoff Williamson: Learning to bird by ear.
10. Bob Fisher: 4 different perspectives on the breeding birds of the Chicago Wilderness region.
11. Rich and Marion Miller: Kane County Chimney Swift Tower project.
12. Cindi Jablonski: Impacts of ecological restoration on grassland birds.
13. Joe Suchecki: Bird monitoring at Springbrook Prairie.
14. Annette Prince: Making buildings better for birds.
15. Vic Berardi: Raptor photography.

11. Forest Preserve District of DuPage County BioBlitz—Gabanski

To celebrate the 100-year anniversary of the FPDDC they are organizing a “Centennial BioBlitz” for June 26 and 27 of 2015. They will be looking for volunteers to do monitoring in many taxa. BCN volunteers who monitor birds, butterflies, frogs, plants, insects, etc. are welcome to participate. Depending on your interest and how many people volunteer, you can work alone, be part of a team, or be a team leader. The forest preserves to be monitored are Danada, Herrick Lake, St. James Farm, and Blackwell. These were chosen because they are contiguous.

In addition to the blitz there will be a public open house on Saturday, June 27, at St. James Farm, where they plan to have hands-on exhibits, field study demonstrations, lectures and programs that celebrate northeastern Illinois’ biodiversity.

Volunteers can indicate their interest by completing an on-line survey that will be available soon.

12. McHenry County Audubon’s Conservation Projects—Debra Nord

MCA recently gained 501(c)(3) status and is exploring funding opportunities that go along with that status. With increased funding we are hoping to launch more locally direct projects.

McHenry County Audubon is working hard for Bird Conservation!

McHenry County Audubon donated \$500 of shrubs to McHenry County Conservation District to be used for Blue Winged Warbler habitat restoration in Marengo Ridge Conservation area. Non-native shrubs have crowded out native shrubs from many of our woodlands. Successful management activities can remove non-native shrubs, but sometimes these woodlands are left with very few native shrub species. Supplementing and reintroducing native shrubs helps to speed up their recovery and will provide valuable resources for shrub nesting birds such as the Blue-winged Warbler. Blue-winged warblers nest on the ground or low in a bush, laying four to seven eggs in a cup nest. The females incubate the eggs for 10–11 days. The young fledge in 8–10 days.

Thank you to Brad Woodson the Natural Resource Manager and Cindi Jablonski Wildlife Ecologist for the McHenry County Conservation District, for their help making this project possible!

\$500 Donated to Illinois Audubon Society for the relocation and habitation of g??? Greater Prairie Chickens to Prairie Ridge State Natural Area!

\$100 was given to MCCD for a Live Raptor presentation to be given in December. This is a joint program to be conducted at Moraine Hills Dam and Glacial Park.

MCA along with Cindi Jablonski of MCCD plans to build a Yellow-headed Blackbird call box to be placed at the Stickney Run location and is exploring possible crowd-source funding. Cindi placed a call box at Pleasant Valley earlier this year and it was successful in attracting the blackbirds.

We are exploring hosting a bird banding weekend in spring of 2015. Location would be on Hackmatack Refuge lands. Possible organizations included: US Fish and Wildlife, IDNR, MCCD. Would BCN be interested in joining project?

13. BCN Advocacy & Editorial/PR Committees—Dann & Fisher

Donnie and Bob explained that both these committees need 2 or 3 additional members. They requested volunteers.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR 2015 OFFICERS—Bruchman & Tikalsky

The committee recommended the following for the 2015 officer slate: Mary Lou Mellon, president; Dave Willard, vice president;; Glenn Gabanski, treasurer; Lee Ramsey, secretary. No additional nominations were made.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

NEXT BCN MEETING—Mellon

January 10, 2015, 12:45, at North Park Village Nature Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Lee Ramsey, secretary