

Bird Conservation Network Meeting
April 16, 2016
Donnie Dann residence, Highland Park, IL

Present: Jeff Aufmann, McHenry Cty Aud; Suzanne Checchia, ENSBC; Donnie Dann, TNC; Emma England, Lake Cty Aud; Dean Engel, Lake-Cook Aud; Bob Fisher, DBC; Glenn Gabanski, DBC; Vera Leopold, TWI; Lisa Maier, McHenry Aud; Mary Lou Mellon, CBCM; Nat Miller, NAS-CR; Tom Mulcahy, DBC; Judy Pollock, IOS; Lee Ramsey, NAS-CR; Diane Rosenberg, Lake Cty Aud; Terry Schilling, independent; Dave Taliaferro, Lake-Cook Aud; Dave Willard, CAS; Christine Williamson, COS; Lee Witkowski, Will Cty Aud.

Introductions

Administration

- Approval of minutes of January 23, 2016 meeting at Oak Park Public Library

Motion: The Bird Conservation Network approves minutes of the January 23, 2016 meeting.

Moved: Dann

Second: Pollock

Action: Passed

- **Treasurer's Report – Glenn Gabanski**

2016 Income & Expenses 2016

Income YTD: \$1,670

Expenses YTD: \$394.66

Net Income YTD: \$1,275

Account Balances as of 4-16-16:

Checkbook: \$22,835.46

Funds Balance: \$5,029.46

Trends Analysis Reserve Fund: \$1,000

Federal tax forms for BCN's 2015 tax year were completed and mailed to the IRS in February.

- **Wireless PA system for meetings – Glenn Gabanski**
Due to difficult audio conditions during some BCN meetings, ExCom approved the purchase of a portable wireless PA system for \$124. In live-testing during the meeting, the cordless microphone worked well.
- **Membership – Glenn Gabanski**
As of 4/16/16, dues have been paid by all but 4 organizations: NAS-CR, Lake-Cook Aud, Prairie Woods Aud, and Thorn Creek Aud. Several reminders have been sent via email to the representatives of the organizations. Lake-Cook has indicated that a check is on its way. Membership is 21 organizations and 2 individuals.
- **Proposed BCN Bylaws change – Dave Willard**
Proposed Amendment to BCN Bylaws: To add “or such other amount as BCN may from time

to time establish” to the last sentence in Section 1, Paragraph B.

Rationale: To bring similar language for Individual Member dues as is found for Organizational Member dues (see highlighted text below) so that future changes in individual dues won't require amending the bylaws each time the dues are changed. For historical reasons BCN should keep the original amounts of \$75 and \$25 instead of changing them every time the dues are raised.

ARTICLE II -- BCN MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Composition

The membership of BCN shall consist of Organizational Affiliates and Individual Members.

A. Organizational Affiliates are those organizations in the Chicago region or elsewhere in Illinois that support the goals of BCN and pay at least \$75.00 annually in dues **or such other amount as BCN may from time to time establish.**

B. Individual Members are those persons who support the goals of BCN and are willing to donate their time and effort to realizing the goals of BCN. Individual Members shall be nominated by existing members, and shall be accepted by a consensus of the current members attending the next regular meeting. Individual Member dues are \$25.00 per year **or such other amount as BCN may from time to time establish.**

Motion: The Bird Conservation Network approves proposed changes to its Bylaws, Article II, Section 1, Paragraph B. as presented

Moved: Williamson

Second: Schilling

Action: Passed

Conservation Issues:

- **Advocacy Report – Donnie Dann**
 - 1-20-16, sign-on to the Presidential Memorandum promoting appropriate mitigation to protect our natural resources.
 - 1-29-16, sign-on to the effort to oppose the Shawnee Parkway in southern Illinois.
 - 2-6-16, sign-on to the bill to protect imperiled seabirds.
 - 2-8-16, signed proclamation from Governor Rauner establishing October 2016 as OAKtober Oak-Awareness Month.
 - 2-15-16, joined IEC in supporting Environment Illinois in their campaign taking on corporate agribusiness, with a focus on how their practices pollute our waterways.
 - 2-26-16, wrote to the USF&WS in support of their plan to add a non-game species to the Federal Duck Stamp.
 - 2-29-16, began an ongoing and extensive effort by many to oppose HB 4671, involving meetings, conference calls and educational efforts to oppose HB 4671 further legitimizing TNR in IL. Call House and Senate legislators and ask them to oppose the bill when/if it comes to a floor vote.
 - Lake County Forest Preserve District has expressed interest in assuming responsibility for the easement of the contaminated Johns Manville site in Waukegan. The site contains asbestos, which has been capped; nesting birds, such as Grasshopper Sparrows, already are using the site
 - 2-29-16, advised the IDNR of our opposition to the permit for the coal refuse slurry impoundment disposal facility in the city of Elkhart, IL to protect Elkhart Hill, a migratory hotspot.

- 3-17-16, signed on to ABC's ongoing effort to protect open pipes and mining claim markers to reduce bird deaths.
 - Will County road expansions.
 - Highland Park's Bird-friendly Buildings Task Force. Will meet on April 18 for the first time. Dann is chair of the task force.
- **Cats at Work - Dave Willard**
Press coverage about feral cat colonies has been disappointing. Christine Williamson suggested meetings with the editorial boards of the Chicago Tribune and Chicago Sun-Times to provide a more balanced view of the feral cat-rat control proposals in Chicago.
 - **House Bill 4671 – Bob Fisher**
Fisher described the bill's details relating to feral cats and Trap Neuter Release funding. The impact of the bill on birds according to the American Bird Conservancy is that "the bill inappropriately commandeers public funding intended to assist low-income pet owners and promote responsible pet ownership in order to maintain unwanted feral animals in parks and neighborhoods across the state. In addition to raising serious concerns regarding the effective use of public funding, this bill also endangers public health and threatens wildlife". Terry Schilling suggested that he and Judy Pollock bring up the issue of feral cat colonies at the next meeting of the City of Chicago's Nature & Wildlife Committee.
 - **Adoption of Chicago Wilderness Position Statement on Feral and Unattended Domestic Cats Outdoors – Bob Fisher**
Williamson, Willard, Schilling and Engel will form a task force to draft a BCN-specific feral cat position that will replace the Chicago Wilderness position in print and on BCN's website once it has been approved.

Motion: The Bird Conservation Network adopts Chicago Wilderness Position Statement on Feral and Unattended Domestic Cats Outdoors, will put it on its website and a task force will be established to draft a specific BCN position on feral cats and TNR to be presented at the July 2016 BCN meeting.

Moved: Pollock

Second: Dann

Action: Passed (3 opposing votes)

- **Urban Bird Treaty Grant update – Judy Pollock**
Migration monitoring protocols have been established and advertisements for monitors to conduct surveys at LaBagh Woods and Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary.

International Migratory Bird Day Celebration

May 14, 2016, 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Burnham Wildlife Corridor

47th and Cornell, Chicago

Details are available the BCN Facebook page.

- **Bird conservation success stories and trips – Tom Mulcahy and Judy Pollock**
This year and next, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Forest Preserves of Cook County, and the Bird Conservation Network are teaming up to highlight some of the bird conservation success stories in the Forest Preserves of Cook County. Creative collaborations

between government and nonprofit agencies, and volunteer monitors and stewards are improving habitat and increasing bird populations in grasslands, wetlands, woodlands and shrublands. We'll visit some of the best and on each trip representatives responsible for restoration will be present to tell the stories and bird monitors will point out the birds:

Paul Douglas Forest Preserve Saturday, March 26, 2:00 p.m.

A wetland restoration resulted in impressive numbers of migratory waterfowl and nesting wetland birds.

Killdeer Wetlands Thursday, April 21, 9:30 a.m.

Fifteen years of work have turned four hayfields into a diverse native grassland/wetland complex and outstanding bird habitat.

Eggers Woods May 21

Bergman Slough & Cap Sauer Woodlands Saturday, June 11, 7:30 a.m.

A row-crop farm field, interspersed with degraded sections of remnant prairie savanna in 2001 has been since restored to high quality native prairie, wetland, and savanna of award-winning regional importance, where bird species of conservation concern now breed.

Orland Grasslands Saturday, July 16, 7:30 a.m.

This 960-acre preserve, once a degraded farmland, is now one of the largest grassland habitat restoration projects in Cook County. Hear the story of how the years were rolled back to a time when this area sparkled with prairie, ponds and streams and teemed with bird life.

Powderhorn Prairie and Marsh Saturday, August 13, 8:30 a.m.

Once a continuous mix of prairie, sedge meadow, savanna and wetland in the Calumet region that existed before the Industrial Age, and today, with the benefit of ongoing ecological restoration and management, this remnant has become a haven for native plants and birds and the only state-dedicated nature preserve within Chicago city limits.

McGinnis Slough Saturday, September 10, 7:00 a.m.

Learn about the Slough's origin, history, and observe and understand why shorebirds (such as plovers and sandpipers) migrating south from their Arctic nesting grounds to their winter grounds in Central and South America are attracted to the mudflats exposed by the yearly drawdown of water in July.

LaBagh Woods October

Projects & Initiatives:

- **The Messenger documentary, theatrical screening:**
Tuesday, May 10, 2016, 7:00 p.m.
Music Box Theater, 3733 N. Southport Ave., Chicago.

BCN and the Field Museum are cosponsoring a screening of *The Messenger*, a highly acclaimed documentary about birds and the state of our planet. Dr. Peter Marra, head of the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, and Doug Stotz will join us for discussion after the film.

Individual BCN member groups can cosponsor the event provided they agree to promote

the event to their members. There will be tables where BCN members can provide literature.

Tickets are \$11.00 and are available either in advance through the theater or at the door. Details can be checked out at <http://www.musicboxtheatre.com/collections/field-trips-cinema-science-with-the-field-museum>

- **The Messenger documentary, non-theatrical screening opportunities – Bob Fisher**
Bird and environmental groups around Illinois may screen the movie in a non-theatrical setting. Bob Fisher has contact information.
- **Red-headed Woodpecker Blitz results – Mary Lou Mellon and Bob Fisher**
BCN conducted a survey in 2012 and 2013 to determine the nesting success of Red-headed Woodpeckers. Using established scientific protocols, 56 volunteers scoured Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties for RHWOs and their nests.

In 2012, 46 monitors found 47 nest sites and 108 individual RHWOs, including 30 fledged juveniles and 32 nesting pairs. In 2013, 17 monitors found 22 new nest sites, confirmed 15 nesting pairs and 13 fledged juveniles and a total of 45 birds. Total survey results over the two years were 69 nesting sites; 47 confirmed nesting pairs; 43 fledged juveniles; and 153 individual birds.

Bob Fisher will be sending survey results to bird clubs and scientific organizations. An article with distribution maps and statistical information is available at www.bcnbirds.org

- **BCN Survey – Emma England and Judy Pollock**
The BCN Survey Council had a meeting in March. The main items on the agenda that were discussed were as follows:
 - Joel Craig has taken over from Lee Witkowski as the BCNSC rep for Will County.
 - England has been updating the BCN eBird home page. The list of priority monitoring sites on the website has not been updated for a few years. Council members were asked to contact the land managers in their county to ask which sites that are currently not monitored would be priorities for them to find monitors for. England will then further update the website.
 - Recruitment and training of monitors: Tom Mulcahy and Judy will try to recruit new monitors at the "Bird the Preserves" conservation walks taking place in Cook County. England will try to recruit at Lake County Audubon Society bird walks and have written an article on monitoring for their newsletter.
 - Once the priority sites are updated, England will write a post on monitoring for the Chicago Wilderness Blog. Monitor training will be held next year.
 - CW Grassland Bird Task Force: The BCNSC will have representation on the task force from Vicky Sroczynski and Melissa Foster.
 - The next meeting of the BCN Survey Council will be in the fall and will discuss the different ways that the BCN Survey data is used and brainstorm how it could be used more. More information is available at <http://bcnbirds.org/birdpreservestrips.html>
 - Chris Monahan is taking over data management from Eric Secker.
 - Volunteers will be sought for grassland monitoring, one of Nat Miller's projects that seeks to gauge abundance of grassland birding with an eye toward better habitat management for species of concern.

- **Spanish Bird Guide – Dave Willard**
The Spanish Pocket Guide to birds of the Cook County Forest Preserves has been published. The guide was developed by Chicago Audubon Society in collaboration with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. Copies were distributed at the meeting and additional copies are available from the FPDCC. The artwork is already set up, so groups could have the brochure reprinted to reflect their location or Illinois County.
- **Birding the Preserves – Judy Pollock**
A new Cook County bird checklist was distributed and is available online at fpdcc.com
- **Wilmette bird sanctuary – Judy Pollock**
A bird sanctuary is planned for Gilson Park.
- **Friends of Cal-Sag Trail – Dave Willard**
BCN was asked to develop a bird guide for the Cal Sag Trail by Friends of the Cal-Sag Trail in October. The Cook County Forest Preserve recently published a new bird checklist. The team working on the request (Glenn Gabanski, Mary Lou Mellon and Dave Willard) compared eBird records from hotspots along the Cal-Sag Trail with the CCFPD checklist and decided it would suffice. Friends of the Cal Sag Trail accepted the recommendation.
- **Give Back to Birds Work Day – Christine Williamson**

Give Back to Birds Work Day – Rainbow Beach

Saturday, August 27

7:00 a.m. Bird Walk with Geoffrey & Christine Williamson

9:00 a.m. Rainbow Beach Habitat Restoration (primarily seed collection) and trash pick up

Cosponsored by Bird Conservation Network, Chicago Ornithological Society and Sierra Chicago Group.

Chicago's South Side is home to some great birding hotspots, but Rainbow Beach is one of the least visited. The bird walk will show birders what they've been missing during spring and fall migration. Rainbow Beach is large with a natural area that often hosts large numbers of birds, especially fall sparrows (think Nelson's Sparrow). Migrant birds also heavily use the rest of the park.

We'll break for coffee and snacks at 9:00 a.m. and join an established group of habitat stewards who need help with seed collection in the dunes and a trash sweep before winter. If migration is strong, Geoff and Chris likely will keep birding South Side hotspots and participants are welcome to join.

If you plan to stay for afternoon birding, be sure to pack a lunch and beverages since restaurants are uncommon close to the south lake front. Contact Christine Williamson at birdchris@aol.com with questions. Christine's cell phone number is 773/415-5217 if you need to contact her on the trip day.

Directions: Meet in the southernmost pay parking lot at Rainbow Beach (the 1st lot you will encounter on Farragut Road which runs north into the park) south of the field house at 7:00

a.m. for the bird walk and at 9:00 a.m. for the workday. The parking ticket machines take quarters and credit cards. Dress for the weather, bring water and a scope if you want to look for birds on Lake Michigan. A map and information about Rainbow Beach are available here: <http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/parks/rainbow-beach-park/>

Other issues

- **DuPage Forest Preserve District update – Bob Fisher**
DFPD will install American Kestrel nest boxes and will start a monitoring project for them.
- **IOS Grants Program appeal for donations – Bob Fisher**
Thirteen grant proposals were received for the 2016 grant funding program. IOS can fund three and donations are sought to fund the remaining 10 proposals.
- **Lake County Audubon – Diane Rosenberg**
 - LCAS received a grant and is constructing a Chimney Swift Tower at Bonner Heritage Farm in Lindenhurst.
 - The winning pictures of “Moments in Nature,” an LCAS photography competition, were on display at Ryerson Woods in January and February.
 - LCAS has received grants and donations totaling as much as \$16,000 for birdscaping in 2016 at Liberty Prairie Reserve. Fall planting days are planned.
 - LCAS members are working with four classrooms of first and second graders at Prairie Crossing Charter School in Audubon’s “Birds in My Neighborhood” program.
- **Bird Monitor’s Outing and Brunch Update – Mary Lou Mellon**
The 2016 Bird Monitors Outing will be held on Saturday, May 21st, at Orland Grasslands. All BCN monitors are invited and the event is free. This is BCN’s annual thank you to its monitors. Bird walks will start at the grasslands at 7am; walks will be led by Wes Serafin and Mike McNamee. Afterward, the group will move to Tampier Lake West for brunch, a lot of lively conversation and an opportunity to recognize and honor BCN’s most long-term monitors.

About 22 monitors are signed up at present, but a special invitation will be mailed at the end of this month and we are hoping for more attendees. Lee Ramsey is organizing this event as his last hurrah (after having resigned from the BCN Survey last January 1st). Dave Willard is taking charge of the brunch. And Orland Grasslands steward Pat Hayes is helping to put it all together. RSVPs are due by May 16th.

Next Meeting – Dave Willard

July 16. Possible location - Camp Sagawau. Check www.bcnbirds.org for updates.

Adjourn

Motion: The Bird Conservation Network approved meeting adjournment.

Moved: Fisher

Second: Aufmann

Action: Passed