

## **FINAL MINUTES**

### **Bird Conservation Network Meeting January 26, 2019 Heller Nature Center, Highland Park, IL**

**Attendees:** Bobbi Asher (CAS), Jeff Aufmann (MCA), Stephanie Beilke (AGL), Suzanne Checchia (ENSBC), Sonny Cohen (Lake-Cook), Steve Constantelos (CAS), Emma England (LCA), Bob Fisher (IAS), Glenn Gabanski (DBC), Diane Hicks (TCA), Libby Hill (ENSBC), Matt Igleski (IOS), Jon Keasling (PWA), Lisa Maier (MCA), Mary Lou Mellon (CBCM), Tom Mulcahy (DBC), Charlotte Pavelka (LCA), Glenn Perricone (DBC), Annette Prince (CBCM), Terry Schilling (Individual), Eric Secker (KCA), Gary Sullivan (TWI), Dave Taliaferro (Lake-Cook), Nancy Tikalsky (COS), Chris VanWassenhove (CAS), Jenny Vogt (AGL), Christine Williamson (COS), Ted Wolff (IOS) **Guests:** Alyse Burman + spouse (PWA)

## **ANNUAL MEETING**

Introductions around the room.

### **Administration**

The meeting was brought to order by President Terry Schilling at 1:05 pm and a quorum was established.

**President's remarks – Schilling** mentioned that BCN is now, amazingly enough, 22 years old and thanked BCN representatives and officers for their hard work on behalf of the organization.

### **2019 Officer Nominations/Election – Tikalsky**

Motion: Bird Conservation Network approves the following slate of officers for 2019 as proposed by the Nominating Committee:

President – Terry Schilling

Vice President – Sonny Cohen

Treasurer – Charlotte Pavelka

Secretary – Steve Constantelos

Moved: Wolff

Second: Fisher

Action: Passed

## **QUARTERLY MEETING**

### **Administration**

### **Approval of October 13, 2018 BCN meeting minutes**

Motion: Bird Conservation Network approves the October 13, 2018 meeting minutes.

Moved: Tikalsky

Second: Checchia

Action: Passed

### **Treasurer's Report – Gabanski**

#### 2018 Income:

Dues:	\$2,070.00	
Donations:	\$620.88	\$500 given by Jeff and Arlene Koziol; rest from three on-line donations and a check from Donate Well.
Total:	<u>\$2,690.88</u>	

#### 2018 Expenses:

State fees:	\$10.00
Dues to other organizations:	\$325.00
New checks:	\$49.85
Postage:	\$14.05
Conference calls:	\$48.17
Awards/Prizes/Donations:	\$50.00
Monitor Brunch:	\$155.93
BCN Webmaster Retainer:	\$400.00
Web Hosting Fee:	\$155.93
Total:	<u>\$1,208.88</u>

Net Income for 2018: \$1,482.00

Checkbook balance on 12/31/18: \$8,459.62

Funds Balance on 12/31/18: \$6,459.62. This is the BCN balance after subtracting the Trends Analysis Reserve Fund Balance of \$2,000.

Checkbook balance as of 1/26/19 is \$9,314.62 as a result of nine 2019 dues checks already received and deposited, a donation of \$25 from Bird Monitor Marilyn Schmidling, and an expense of \$5 to the Secretary of State to submit our change of Registered Agent to Charlotte Pavelka.

### **Membership Report – Gabanski**

Dues renewal invoices were sent out to all members by 1/8/19. Membership remains at 21 organizations and two individual memberships. Eight organizations and one individual have already paid their 2019 dues, and another paid at the meeting.

### **Proposed 2019 Budget – Gabanski**

Total income: \$2,570 (\$2,070 from dues, \$500 in estimated donations)

Total expenses: \$2,235 (\$335 for fees and dues; \$250 for Monitor Brunch; \$600 for web hosting and webmaster retainer; \$500 for Trends Analysis Reserve Fund; \$550 for miscellaneous expenses in several categories).

Note: Many expenses are token estimates as expenses for many line items are highly variable. The budget shows a net gain, but this could change depending on unexpected donations or expenses. \$500 is transferred to the Trends Analysis Reserve Fund but remains in the checkbook. That would raise the Fund balance to \$2,500.

Motion: Bird Conservation Network accepts the proposed budget for 2019.

Moved: Williamson

Second: Mellon

Action: Passed

### **Checking account names – Gabanski**

With the election of a new treasurer an update is needed to the three names that are on the BCN checking account. The bank requires that the minutes of the meeting mention these changes. Of the three current names, Mary Lou Mellon and Bob Fisher have agreed to go off the account and Glenn Gabanski will stay on. Charlotte Pavelka and Diane Rosenberg will be added to the account.

### **Proposed amendments to BCN bylaws: Discussion and Voting – Schilling**

After some discussion of amendment and such, proposed amendments to Articles II, IV, and V were withdrawn by Schilling.

Instead, Schilling proposed creation of a committee to go over the bylaws with a “fine-toothed comb” to look for inconsistencies and room for improvement.

\*\*Schilling, Secker, Fisher, and Constantelos volunteered to be on the committee.

Others interested in participating should email [secretary@bcnbirds.org](mailto:secretary@bcnbirds.org).

### **Advocacy/Conservation Issues**

#### **Report from Advocacy Chair Donnie Dann – Constantelos (for Donnie Dann)**

Remember, we all must be advocates, whenever possible, signing petitions, contacting legislators, and otherwise speaking up for birds. Most importantly, meet face to face with your State Rep, your State Senator and your Congressman/person and get to know him/her. If possible, I'll be happy to accompany you.

Since the previous meeting, Oct 13, 2018, BCN has advocated the following:

- Added BCN to the list of those endorsing NRDC's recommended changes on guidelines regarding mercury pollution.
- Again expressed support for Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act, re-introduced in both the House and Senate — H.R. 2542 and S. 1920
- Shared the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) video, “Surviving the Wild: Cats and Birds.” (thanks Steve). View videos here: <https://abcbirds.org/program/cats-indoors/learn-more/> and here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PGb1dE9AN0>.
- Signed on to ABC's letter opposing construction of the Border Wall, as it would bifurcate the Santa Ana Wildlife Refuge and other birding hotspots.
- Joined ABC and 8 other states in their fight against abruptly eliminating longstanding protections for birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
- Opposed the administration's proposed budget that would drastically diminish protections for birds and their habitats, especially on public lands and their attacks on the Endangered Species Act.

- Made bird-friendly suggested changes to the draft top issues the Illinois Environmental Council (IEC) will be presenting to the Chicago mayoral candidates.
- With Bob Fisher's help, urged changes to IEC's 2019 legislative agenda (see next item below for text).
- Succeeded in getting TNC as a sign-on to Bird Friendly Chicago's bird-friendly ordinance for the city. Link: <https://birdfriendlychicago.org/partners/>
- Continued efforts for a bird-friendly building ordinance for Lake County, and with a new county government am cautiously optimistic.

Respectfully,  
 Donnie Dann  
 Past President and Advocacy Chair  
 Bird Conservation Network [www.bcnbirds.org](http://www.bcnbirds.org)  
[donniebird@me.com](mailto:donniebird@me.com)

### **Illinois Environmental Council update – Fisher, Dann**

Dann and Fisher represent the BCN on this body, which advises Springfield about environmental issues. We're small potatoes, but we make a lot of noise. We recently advocated for three things—1) allocating more money for land acquisition; it's now on the agenda; 2) a control mechanism for neonicotinoid pesticides; also added to the agenda; and 3) opposition to feral cat colonies; IEC will not be addressing this.

BCN is also part of a preliminary review on wind energy development in Lake Michigan.

Here is a submitted letter, with bird-friendly suggested changes to the draft top issues the Illinois Environmental Council (IEC) will be presenting to the Chicago mayoral candidates:

Colleen [Smith, Legislative Director for IEC]], from our perspective, what's missing from the 2019 IEC legislative agenda is a stronger focus on wildlife and habitat conservation goals. The IEC website has a very clear vision on this issue:

IEC's Vision for Habitat Conservation in Illinois

Indigenous Illinois species must be protected and, concurrently, protections against invasive species should be tightened.

We suggest that the topic is a core value for IEC, deserving of its own bullet points, not a merge into open space and food production. Here are 3 legislative goals we would propose:

- Though certainly not easy to achieve, legislation aimed at reducing the Illinois feral cat population, TNR colonies, etc. (an invasive species doing great harm to our native wildlife). At a minimum, legislation requiring licensing (and ownership/responsibility) for TNR colonies, plus recordkeeping on their location, numbers, etc., should be a goal.
- Another needed legislative target: bird friendly building codes. The mortality numbers are staggering, and there is no doubt they can be reduced dramatically by appropriate building design and construction requirements. As a powerful visual reinforcement, we would readily walk the legislative halls with trays filled with window killed birds. That might be a better method of messaging, with the statistics as a back up to the visual.

- It's now increasingly clear that bats (even more than birds), including various migratory bat species can be the main wildlife victims of poorly sited wind turbines. Is IEC and its member organizations in sync with the latest mortality studies? We suspect current state regulations do not account for this issue; legislation directing IDNR to require best available technology to monitor proposed turbine farms before construction permits are granted. State authority should supersede county or municipality permitting (these smaller units of government often lack the knowhow and access to information to make sound judgements on location, etc.)

We also note that the increasing and compelling body of evidence on the harm being done to many native wildlife species (like Monarchs) by neonic pesticides (including the secondary effects as they enter our groundwater). This should be a lead goal, especially as to their [use and its impacts on pollinators](#).

### **Update on BCN email alert tool – Cohen**

As an experience email marketer and website builder, as well as new Vice President of the BCN, Sonny Cohen has taken up both projects for the BCN.

BCN Alerts were proposed and detailed by Fisher and others a year ago and Cohen Created Mailchimp account for the purpose and sent out a successful test message on January 10, 2019. 39 of the 59 it was sent to opened it, with a total of 141 opening it due to forwarding; nobody unsubscribed.

Mailchimp is cost-free for up to 2,000 email addresses, and if we get more subscribers than that, that's a good problem to have and worth paying for.

Many questions and tasks now face us as we work to implement action alerts: How will we build our email list? What content will be sent out and who will make this determination? Who will create the emails (content and artistically)? And more.

Some discussion ensued, the group largely agreeing that BCN-Net is out of date and will be abandoned and that we have a variety of ways to generate subscriptions through the website, alerts themselves, and member organizations informing their members about the opportunity to receive the alerts.

Cohen will continue to test the alerts for the next 3 months, sending them only to BCN reps and invites comments from all. We are looking for a committee of 3 or so people to develop the alerts and maintain the system once established, fielding requests, deciding what gets sent, production, etc.

**\*\*Those interested in participating in developing the BCN Action Alerts should email Sonny at [sonny1@gmail.com](mailto:sonny1@gmail.com).**

### **Update on BCN website – Cohen**

Using Google Analytics, Cohen monitored our website's traffic for 2.5 weeks, allowing him insights into which pages people visited, device used to access the website, duration of visit, etc. About a third of visitors accessed via mobile, and they stayed for less time, possibly because many of our pages do not have responsive design, which

adjusts their appearance for cellphones. Only 11 out of 76 pages are responsive at this point, and our homepage alone has 46 links from it, meaning we are not channeling people's experiences effectively.

We have a pending website tune-up proposal from Secker, but what we really need is a more holistic re-design. The process involves creating a committee that works to decide what we want the website to do and going through it page by page, re-arranging it, creating new pages, revising content, etc. In addition, we need to consider how it might generate some revenue, through ads, donations, and other means.

Schilling added that making the page home to a web application where we can put survey data in and get analysis out is also important.

Williamson commented that there is a survey data side of BCN and a conservation advocacy side of BCN, and that we need to catalog our campaigns, measure our success, and talk about it—e.g., bird friendly buildings—on an active front page.

A quarter of our budget goes to website. It is estimated that it would take \$6,000 to \$10,000 to re-design our website. Lake-Cook Audubon re-designed theirs for \$3,000, Illinois Audubon Society for \$20,000:

<https://www.lakecookaudubon.org/>

<https://illinoisaudubon.org/>

Schilling added that we have to spend some money to make some money, and that the BCN website is our base and face to the public. The website should be used to elicit donations, and add to our presence and caché to support grant applications.

\*\*Cohen, Schilling, Secker, Williamson, and Constantelos volunteered to be on the committee. Others interested in participating should email [secretary@bcnbirds.org](mailto:secretary@bcnbirds.org).

### **Noise pollution threat in Paul Douglass FPD – Constantelos (documents on file)**

BCN received an email from Janet Agnoletti, Executive Director of the Barrington Area Council of Governments, with concerns about prospective rifle noise disturbance from a proposed columbarium in the NW suburbs, including several Cook/Lake County forest preserves, including Paul Douglass. She was particularly concerned about the Henslow's Sparrows present there.

Constantelos referred the matter to ExCom for comment as well as Tim Balassie (who provided a document on firing ranges). As data and data-based opinions were requested, Judy Pollock will be taking up the matter and Constantelos forwarded the relevant emails and documents to her.

\*\*Constantelos will inform the requestor of progress made and ask for a more specific location for the potential disturbance, and share new information with BCN reps.

### **Projects & Initiatives**

### **Chicago Bird Friendly Design Ordinance update – Wolff (documents on file)**

Wolff updated us on the introduction progress of the Bird Friendly Design Ordinance. It has been heard in committee, and remains there, subject to modification. Bird Friendly Chicago expects voting on it in March/April. The mayor appears to be somewhat interested, and this may be a legacy project for him. If passed, Chicago would be largest city to have a bird-friendly design ordinance.

Prince added that she was pleased that the city council kept a great deal of Bird Friendly Chicago's recommendations in the introduced ordinance.

Williamson stressed the need to follow up with the local press.

It was speculated that Alderman Brian Hopkins might get positive press out of this in the environmental community, offsetting some of the negative environmental reaction he's getting backing for the Lincoln Yards development.

**\*\*Now is the time to contact aldermen and other relevant parties in Chicago, and to register your individual and organizational support, if you have not already done so:**

<https://birdfriendlychicago.org/partners/>

### **Evanston bird-friendly ordinance– Hill**

The proposed Evanston bird-friendly building ordinance is stuck in staff as they are unclear about how they could enforce it. In the meantime, we are given access to developers, who seem to be happy to work with us and accommodate the needs of birds. Our most recent question is why LEED 55 pilot doesn't give credit for landscaping placement to reduce bird strikes. One alderman suggested that complying with LEED 55 pilot be incorporated into all RFPs to developers. (I am personally in the process of following up on that idea.)

How this will be enforced seems to be the key issue with Evanston city staff. Ongoing concurrent work on the Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP) is also possibly taking focus away from the bird-friendly ordinance.

Wolff and Tikalsky had some thoughts about getting the aldermen more directly involved, and explaining that the ordinance could be enforced just as any other part of the building code would be, but these arguments seem to not have worked in this case.

**\*\*If you or your organization can help ENSBC with strategic advice or action, please contact Libby at [libbyhill@comcast.net](mailto:libbyhill@comcast.net).**

### **BCN Survey training sessions and published results – Constantelos (for Judy Pollock)**

We are working on setting up two training sessions for new monitors and will send information about it to you soon for dissemination when we have the details. We will appreciate the clubs' help in publicizing and finding new monitors.

Also, the publication mapping Cook County monitoring results should be heading to printer this week and will be available at Wild Things at the CBCM/CAS table.

## **Oak Ecosystem Recovery (OER) group update – Fisher, Constantelos (for Vera Leopold) (documents on file)**

Submitted by Vera Leopold:

Over the past year, some BCN members have been participating in meetings of the very-active Chicago Wilderness Oak Ecosystem Recovery Group (OER), seeking to unite the previous Red-headed Woodpecker priority species work with their goals, since oak recovery efforts dovetail closely with efforts to benefit woodpeckers. We have been able to contribute useful input and there are now larger opportunities to join forces with Chicago-region oak ecosystem outreach and research projects. Below are updates so far about our involvement:

- The OER group is developing a priority list of native shrubs and trees to share with plant nurseries to encourage them to make these species available. Bob Fisher compiled recommendations from American Bird Conservancy on the best native shrubs and trees for birds, many of which were included in OER's final draft list. This document is not yet finalized.
- In 2018, the OER identified a focal oak complex in each county and are working to engage adjacent private landowners in taking action to improve their oak woodland. We are working to get BCN representatives (especially local groups where appropriate) plugged into these county-by-county efforts so that benefits for birds can be communicated to private landowners as another incentive to care for their oaks. The members of the OER recognize this is a strong motivator and a current gap in their messaging. Vera Leopold will act as a conduit to connect BCN members with the OER folks organizing work in that county; please let her know if you're interested in participating: [vleopold@wetlands-initiative.org](mailto: vleopold@wetlands-initiative.org).
- We are also pulling together a one- or two-pager from past RHWO research about habitat they prefer and other benefits to birds of healthy oak woodland/savanna. This could be used at private landowner outreach events.
- Steve Apfelbaum and other researchers are planning a major Midwestern study on how the savanna/oak woodland ecosystem is doing, as a 35-year follow-up to a groundbreaking study from 1985. The research aims have yet to be fully defined and the OER is working with them on that. We let them know that decades of BCN Survey data are available that could be integrated in this research to look at breeding bird population trends in savanna/forest sites.

**\*\*Contact Vera at if you would like to contribute to any of these county-based initiatives: [vleopold@wetlands-initiative.org](mailto: vleopold@wetlands-initiative.org).**

### **Other Items**

**Christmas Bird Count/Spring Bird Count coordination between BCN members to get better coverage – Tikalsky**



There is a need for more volunteers for these annual counts. If member organizations promote these counts we'll get more coverage and more birds counted! Aufmann added that some potential new volunteers have the impression that beginning birders are not welcome when, in fact, they most certainly are welcome. Bird counts are a great way to break the ice, so to speak.

## **Announcements**

### **Give Back to Birds Day event at Rainbow Beach (10/19/19) – Williamson**

BCN runs this event annually. Dave Willard and Christine Williamson led a previous workday at Rainbow Beach (75<sup>th</sup> street and Lake Michigan) that was fairly well-attended to the extent that the site stewards have asked us to come back.

With co-sponsorship with Sierra Club, BCN will lead an event on 10/19/19.

A bird walk will begin at 7 am and will cover Rainbow Beach and the surrounding park.

We'll then do a habitat workday/clean up from 9 to 11 am on the beach. Afterwards, a bird walk at nearby Steelworkers Park (87<sup>th</sup> and Lake Michigan).

### **Illinois Audubon Society Spring Gathering hosted by Lake-Cook Audubon (May 17-19) – Cohen**

Programs and field trips. Registration opens on 2/1/19.

More information + registration: <https://illinoisaudubon.org/annual-spring-gathering/>

### **Evanston North Shore Bird Club's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday! (2/26/19, etc.) – Hill**

March is ENSBC's centennial. There will be a series of speakers all year long featuring veterans and former members of the club who continue to contribute to bird conservation. The first event is 2/26/19.

More information: <http://www.ensbc.org/programs.html>

### **Craig Stettner – Prince**

Craig Stettner, CAS board member, active monitor, steward, and professor at Harper College who inspired many young people's interest in the environment with his teachings and field trips to Costa Rica, passed away tragically this December. In his memory donations are being directed to the Cook County Forest Preserve Foundation, the Chicago Audubon Society, as well as a GoFundMe account that will be directed to a foundation/scholarship; a memorial bench in Craig's honor is planned for Spring Creek FP.

More information: <https://www.gofundme.com/craig-quotcraigsgo-quot-stettner-fun>

### **Upcoming Chicago Bird Collision Monitors' presentation (2/5/19) – Prince**

February 5, 2019 7 pm. North Park Village Nature Center 5801 N. Pulaski, Chicago IL: "40 Years of Bird Collision Data: Avian Evolution in an Era of Rapid Global Change"

More information: <https://www.birdmonitors.net/Events.php>

### **Chicago Audubon Society Environmental Award Banquet (3/23/19) – Prince**

This biennial banquet and ceremony will be March 23 at the White Eagle Events & Convention Center, 6839 N. Milwaukee, Niles. Join us to honor members of the

community who have made valuable contributions to conservation. Awardees include: Dr. Sylvia Jenkins, Jerome McDonnell, Jerry Goldner, Jerry Herst and Julie Dorfman, Ted Jindrich and Alycia Klunenberg, Howard A. Learner, Pat Durkin, Greg Neise, and Oliver Burrus. You may attend the banquet (5 pm) or come for the awards and presentation by Jerome McDonnell host of WBEZ Worldview: "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Birds" (7:30 pm).

More information + registration: <http://chicagoaudubon.org/>

**Speaker series: Compelling Voices in Birding and Conservation (1/31, 3/28, 9/19) – Beilke**

COS and CAS have partnered on a speaker series being held at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, featuring women in birding and bird conservation.

More information + registration: <http://www.naturemuseum.org/programs-events-and-camps/adult-programs/compelling-voices-series>

A related article by Stephanie Beilke:

<https://www.chicagobirder.org/blog/2019/1/19/making-room-for-compelling-voices-in-birding-and-conservation>

**Next Meeting**

**April 27, 2019 – location tbd**

**Adjourn**

Motion: Bird Conservation Network approves adjournment.

Moved: Gabanski

Second: All

Action: Passed