

## **FINAL MINUTES**

### **Bird Conservation Network Meeting January 18, 2020 Heller Nature Center, Highland Park, IL**

**Attendees:** Mary Bernat (Individual), Sonny Cohen (Lake-Cook), Steve Constantelos (CAS), Donnie Dann (TNC), Emma England (LCA), Bob Fisher (IAS), Glenn Gabanski (DBC), Vera Leopold (TWI), Tom Mulcahy (DBC), Charlotte Pavelka (LCA), Judy Pollock (CAS), Annette Prince (CBCM), Diane Rosenberg (LCA), Terry Schilling (Individual), Eric Secker (KCA), Dave Taliaferro (Lake-Cook), Lee Witkowski (WCA)

**Guests:** None

## **ANNUAL MEETING**

### **Administration**

The meeting was brought to order by President Terry Schilling at 12:47 pm and a quorum was established.

Introductions around the room.

### **President's remarks – Schilling**

Schilling thanked the organization for allowing to serve as its president for the last two years, and gratefully acknowledged Emma England's contributions to the BCN survey and ExCom as she prepares to return to the UK (See her announcement below following the membership report. )

### **2020 Officer Nominations/Election – Rosenberg**

Motion: Bird Conservation Network approves the following slate of officers for 2020 as proposed by the Nominating Committee:

President – Sonny Cohen

Vice President – Matt Igleski

Treasurer – Charlotte Pavelka

Secretary – Steve Constantelos

Moved: Rosenberg

Second: Bernat

Action: Passed

Pavelka, Constantelos, and Cohen gave short bird-related bios of themselves, and Cohen read this from Igleski:

A relative newcomer to Chicago, my wife and I moved here May 2013. Shortly after moving, I became a Chicago Public Schools high school environmental science teacher. We are originally from Grand Rapids, MI where I grew up just two blocks from John Ball Zoo—of which I was a frequent visitor and a volunteer. As an undergraduate, I decided to study zoology at Northern Michigan University and I continued with graduate work in conservation biology at Central Michigan University. Even though I had always been more of a herpetologist, I took my first ornithology class in graduate school which fast tracked my bird ID skills...I have been birding ever since! Currently, I work at Lincoln Park Zoo as the student and teachers programs developer and I've been there for about 4 and a half years. My career pursuits have always involved conservation and/or education, exhibited by my previous work as a research technician for the University of Notre Dame Environmental Research Center and as a zookeeper at both John Ball Zoo and Potter Park Zoo. Besides spending time and money on birding trips and related gear, I also spend a fair amount of my spare time playing guitar which has been a pastime of mine for more than twenty years.

## **QUARTERLY MEETING**

### **Administration**

#### **Approval of October 5, 2019 BCN meeting minutes**

Motion: Bird Conservation Network approves the October 5, 2019 meeting minutes.

Moved: Fisher

Second: Rosenberg

Action: Passed

#### **Treasurer's Report – Pavelka (documents on file)**

##### **Payments & Administration:**

- Annual report notice sent to Secretary of State with \$10 filing fee.
- Illinois Charitable Organization Annual report filed with Attorney General.
- Federal tax filing for organization exempt from income tax filed.
- Dues paid to Bird Conservation Alliance (12/2019, \$125), Illinois Environmental Council (1/2020, \$150) and Chicago Wilderness (1/2020, \$50)
- Proposed 2020 budget created.

##### **Final Report for 2019:**

2019 Income:	<b>Final</b>	
Dues:	\$2070.00	
Donations:	\$ 313.52	No new donations in Q3 or Q4.
Total:	\$2383.52	Budget: \$2570 (lower donations than prior years)
2019 Expenses:		
State fees:	\$ 10.00	
Dues to other organizations:	325.00	CW \$50/IL Env. Council \$150/Bird Conservation Alliance \$125
Printing:	15.00	
Postage:		
Conference calls:	38.36	
Awards/Prizes/Donations		

Monitor Brunch	418.50	
BCN Webmaster Retainer	400.00	
Web Hosting Fee	155.88	
Trend Analysis Reserve	500.00	
Total:	\$1862.74	Budget: \$2235 (lower on administrative expenses)
Net Income for 2019 YTD:	\$ 520.78	
Checkbook balance on 12/30/19:	\$9480.40	
Funds Balance on 12/30/19:	\$6980.40	This is the BCN balance after subtracting the Trends Analysis Reserve Fund Balance of \$2,500.

## Proposed Budget for 2020:

### 2020 Proposed Budget for Bird Conservation Network

INCOME	Budgeted	
Membership Dues	\$ 2,070	Assumes 20 Organization (excludes Midewin) and 2 Individual memberships.
Donations To BCN	\$ 150	Estimated based on a downward trend over past few years.
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 2,220</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<i>Program Expenses</i>		
Trends Analysis	\$ 500	\$500 yearly transfer to Trends Analysis Reserve Fund.
Monitor Training & Recognition	\$ 700	
BCN Web Site	\$ 600	Web Hosting fee\$2 00; Webmaster Retainer fee \$400; Add. update not included
<i>Dues/Fees to other organizations</i>	\$ 200	Chicago Wilderness \$50; Illinois Environmental Council \$150.
<i>Administrative Expenses</i>		
Bank Charges (new cks, etc.)	\$ -	
Postage and Supplies	\$ 50	Misc. expenses.
Printing and Copying	\$ 50	Misc. expenses.
Conference Calls	\$ 50	
Licenses, Permits, CPA Fees	\$ 10	\$10 Annual fee with Sec. of State
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 2,160</b>	Many expenses are rough estimates as they are highly variable.
<b>NET TOTAL INCOME (INCOME - EXPENSES)</b>	<b>\$ 60</b>	Budget shows income and expenses relatively in balance, but this could change depending on unexpected donations or expenses.

Checkbook Balance as of 12/31/19	\$9,480.40
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Trends Analysis Reserve Fund	\$ 3,000	Assumes completion and \$ spent in 2020. Uncertain \$ requirement.
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Projected YE 2020 Balance	\$ 6,480
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Motion: Accept the budget for 2020.

Moved: Mulcahy

Second: Gabanski

Action: Passed

## Membership Report – Pavelka

Dues invoices were sent to all members on 1/3/2020 by email. So far, about half of member groups have sent their dues and none have said they will be leaving BCN.

## Announcement – England

England made this announcement: “I will be stepping down from all my BCN duties this year as I will be moving back to the UK. My husband lost his job at the end of the year and we have decided to move back closer to family. It was a tough decision and I will miss all my Audubon work. I am hoping to find a job in bird conservation in the UK when I move back. I'm not sure when we will be leaving, but this will likely be my last meeting.” She added that she will really miss everyone here and plans on keeping in touch with BCN’s work and the bird conservation scene in general.

Motion: BCN expresses a collective “thank you” to Schilling for his service as president and England for her extensive BCN work.

Moved: Fisher

Second: Rosenberg

Action: Passed

## **BCN Vision & Priorities**

## Planning and goal setting exercise – Pavelka (documents on file)

Attendees broke into four small groups to discuss three action items for 2020 and two ideas for BCN meetings, with Pavelka, Cohen, Constantelos, and Leopold facilitating. After a half-hour's discussion, each small group shared its ideas with the whole group.

A full report on the results of these discussions is forthcoming from Pavelka.

Motion: BCN thanks Pavelka for organizing and leading BCN's vision and priorities activities.

Moved: Fisher

Second: Rosenberg

Action: Passed

## **Projects & Initiatives**

### **BCN Survey process and update + Grassland Bird Task Force – Cohen (for Balassie) (documents on file)**

Cohen urged attendees and all BCN reps to carefully read over two documents shared by BCN Survey Coordinator, Tim Balassie: an overview of what BCN Survey coordinators are doing, and detailed notes from a Chicago Wilderness Grassland Bird Task Force meeting where the survey and data it could offer were discussed extensively. The task force promotes the viability of grassland bird species in the six county area.

These documents have previously been shared with all reps, and will be sent again soon, along with some explanatory notes from Balassie.

Pollock asked that she, Balassie, Mulcahy, and others involved with the BCN Survey be engaged by ExCom about survey issues. Cohen agreed and added he hopes to have a BCN Survey leader on ExCom.

## **Advocacy/Conservation Issues**

### **Report from Advocacy Chair Donnie Dann**

Since the previous meeting, October 2019, BCN has advocated the following.

- Currently and most regrettably we're having to re-fight the battle to keep wind turbines out of Lake Michigan. Bob Fisher will provide an update on the Wind Energy Task Force and the current state of the battle.
- The Trump administration continues its attack on NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act, one of our strongest environmental laws by re-writing its regulations. Wrote our legislators to oppose.
- Joined a coalition to save the Sage Grouse as oil and gas interests lobby furiously to have its protections denied.
- ExCom recently agreed to oppose the large tower that is part of the planned Obama Presidential Library in Jackson Park.
- Wrote to support the Clean Energy Economy Act.
- I continue to lobby my Lake County Board rep to initiate county-wide bird-friendly building legislation.
- Re the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, we continue to advocate for the immediate appointment of a new Executive Director, a position that has been

vacant for over 4 years, to the detriment of our state's nature preserves and land and water reserves, and of course the birds that utilize these natural areas.

- The Trump administration's proposed revisions to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act would be disastrous. Wrote to support H.R. 5552 which would deny these changes and actually strengthen the MBTA. I urge every bird conservationist you know to do likewise!

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)

### **Other advocacy updates – Fisher**

#### *Offshore Wind Turbine Development*

There was an IEC legislative committee call on Friday, which I joined on behalf of BCN; some of the discussion was on legislative initiatives of interest to BCN. The topic was the Clean Energy Jobs Bill—our concern is that offshore wind turbine development may be added to the bill. Fisher and Dann will continue to work on this issue. Sierra is still actively pushing the idea of offshore wind development in IL waters of Lake Michigan, though the Governor has still not made any appointments to the Offshore Wind Energy Economic Development Task Force. This link can be checked for that finding:  
<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/bac/SitePages/AppointmentsDetail.aspx?BCID=726>.

#### *Big Muddy River*

A very late Thursday, time-sensitive advocacy action I unilaterally took to work to defeat a permit requested by a coal mining company (Williamson Energy) to dump huge volumes of wastewater into the Big Muddy River in far southern Illinois. For a copy of Fisher's letter to IEPA, email the BCN secretary at [secretary@bcnbirds.org](mailto:secretary@bcnbirds.org).

#### *Oak Ecosystem Recovery Project*

Leopold and Fisher attended the CW Oak Ecosystem Recovery Project meeting on Thursday at the Morton Arboretum. Some of the discussion revolved around an American Bird Conservancy initiative to obtain US DOA funding under a DOA program that was new to me. To be blunt, I'm skeptical about the concept and doubt it fits in the CW urban/suburban metropolis. Essentially, the program would be tied to the Farm Bill and ensure that landowners grow more oak trees.

If your group has connections to farming landowners who may be interested in what could be considerable grant funding, and would like to know more, contact Leopold at [vleopold@wetlands-initiative.org](mailto:vleopold@wetlands-initiative.org).

Additional notes:

1. While most land managers (Forest Preserve Districts, etc.) within the Chicago Wilderness (CW) region have been aggressive in promoting education, oak seedling plantings, etc.

(especially the DuPage FPD), there is little attention being paid to the bird component. We will work to change that.

2. The Morton Arboretum and the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) are pursuing Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) funding to engage private landowners in the CW Region in active oak habitat restoration, enhancement, and management. The RCPP program will provide funding to allow The Arboretum and ABC to hire foresters in the region to conduct outreach and assist landowners in receiving NRCS cost share funding to undertake management on their property.

First impressions: Small private landowners, aka homeowners, are not eligible, currently. This likely means the more developed counties - DuPage, Cook, Lake - will have little opportunity to take advantage. The program might be more useful to the more undeveloped counties, and places further west along the Illinois River.

ABC was previously successful with this RCPP program to bring back Golden-winged Warbler habitat in rural Wisconsin. The current proposal doesn't seem to have any specific bird conservation component - that surprises me, considering ABC's involvement.

### **Chicago Bird-Friendly Building Ordinance Update – Prince**

We are moving forward slowly, with positive feedback from various aldermen and city departments. No hearing yet, but a supportive [Chicago Tribune article](#) by noted architecture critic, Blair Kamin, should be a boost. NYC did pass a similar ordinance in December and we're hoping we've gathered the same sorts of allies that helped an ordinance pass in NYC.

### **New Business**

#### **BCN 2020 agenda – Cohen**

Cohen expressed his appreciation of Schilling's stepping up and taking the helm of BCN for 2018 and 2019. He emphasized that he's excited to lead BCN as it clarifies its role as an umbrella organization, to pick a couple of things we can really do well and nail them.

He looks forward to helping the two-way street between BCN and its member organizations flow smoothly. Monitoring and trend analysis is BCN's business, along with advocacy, but advocacy also falls to all of us as individuals, including individuals in BCN's member organizations. He hopes 2020 will be a year of enthusiasm, involvement, and accomplishment.

### **Announcements**

Witkowski announced that distinguished ornithologist and bird bander Dennis DeCoursey has passed away. He banded at Sagawau, Waterfall Glen, and other sites.

Fisher announced that he is establishing a scholarship for the University of Illinois's ornithology studies in Karen Fisher's name. Similar to the IOS scholarships, these will help fund graduate student ornithological studies. For more information, contact him at [bfisher928@aol.com](mailto:bfisher928@aol.com).

**Next Meeting**

Date, time, and location to be determined.

**Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 2:37 pm.