

FINAL MINUTES

Bird Conservation Network Meeting October 17, 2020 Online Video Conference

Attendees: Pat Andersen (TCA), Tim Balassie (KCA), Stephanie Beilke (AGL), Mary Bernat (Individual), Sonny Cohen (Lake-Cook), Steve Constantelos (DBC), Donnie Dann (TNC), Bob Fisher (IAS), Diane Hicks (TCA), Libby Hill (ENSBC), Matt Igleski (IOS), Mary Lou Mellon (CBCM), Charlotte Pavelka (LCA), Judy Pollock (CAS), Annette Prince (CBCM), Rita Renwick (WCA), Jenny Vogt (AGL), Lee Witkowski (WCA)

Guests: None

The meeting was brought to order by President Sonny Cohen at 1:03 pm and a quorum was established.

Administration

Approval of July 18, 2020 BCN meeting minutes

Motion: Bird Conservation Network approves the July 18, 2020 meeting minutes.

Moved: Dann

Second: Balassie

Action: Approved

Treasurer's Report – Pavelka (document on file)

2020 YTD Income:

Dues: \$1,767.50

Donations Q1 and Q2: \$165.36

Donations Q3: \$858.38

[General donation of \$60 from Thomas Lang. Special trends analysis donations from Anonymous \$500, Lake County Audubon \$300.]

Total: \$2,791.24

2020 YTD Expenses:

Dues to Other organizations \$200.00

[Illinois Env. Council \$150, Chicago Wilderness \$50]

Printing \$96.23

[Bird monitor recruiting tabletop]

Secretary of State – Annual	\$10.00
Total	\$ 306.23
Net Income for 2020 YTD:	\$2,485.01
Checkbook balance on 9/30/20:	\$12,065.41
Trends Analysis Reserve:	\$3,800.00
[Includes special donations of \$800.]	

General Funds Balance on 9/30/20: \$8,265.41
[This is the BCN balance after subtracting the Trends Analysis Reserve.]

Tax-exempt status: Bird Conservation Network is a tax-exempt organization. If you are planning to have any future expenses which will be taxed, please contact the treasurer in advance and I will send you the tax-exempt letter which you can provide to your vendor.

Membership Report – Pavelka

Dues paid by 18 out of 20 paying organizations. Dues outstanding by Fort Dearborn Audubon and Prairie Woods Audubon. Cohen will reach out to them.

Projects & Initiatives

BCN Survey update – Pollock, Balassie

Cohen acknowledged Balassie's great contributions to the survey through his newsletter, development of a recruiting presentation, and advocacy with land managers.

Balassie has reestablished contact with the Chicago Park District to see if we can start monitoring more of their properties using our trends analysis protocols.

Pollock and Balassie will be making more of a push on monitor recruitment and will be rolling something out to member organizations. It could be a Zoom meeting, outreach by County Coordinators, and/or recruiting by BCN reps. Hicks said having specific sites that need to be monitored to share with member groups would help get a better response. Pollock said we can work to map out our monitors and locations to make it easier to identify opportunities. Balassie will put together and share talking points that reps can use with their member organizations.

Pavelka mentioned that Lake County monitors did not like the app that their forest preserve had them use. DuPage's forest preserve district also has their own bird monitoring program, using eBird for data entry. Other counties and properties are using eBird and we extract from there. Still, we are getting the data we need from Lake and

DuPage. There are also protocol differences; Pollock said we are still trying to understand how well Lake and DuPage data will fit into our trends analysis, but we will know soon since that is about to be underway.

Is now a good time to reestablish what properties should be priorities for being monitored? Now that the trends analysis is getting done, Pavelka thinks it is. Fisher pointed out that *breeding* birds are a priority, and sites were selected with that in mind, so that is important to keep in mind. Dann noted that Waukegan Beach, for example, has Least Bitterns, which alone make that a valuable site. Vogt pointed out that we need to find matches for these sites, so identifying sites is only half the battle. Balassie is all for identifying and vetting new monitoring sites and that we often need forest preserve approval/coordination to monitor certain sites; Fisher echoed this.

BCN Trends Analysis

Update – Igleski

We have a finalized contract with Valerie Steen (<https://valeriesteen.wixsite.com/valeriesteen>). We are now pulling the data together for her. It should be a two-month project once she gets the data, which will be soon. By the January meeting we'll be close to having the trends analysis done. Steen is getting \$7,200 for the work, with an added \$1,000 estimated needed for rollout and promotion.

Rollout and Funding – Cohen

Wild Things is February 2021, and Fisher and Igleski submitted an abstract for a talk at that event, just so we have a place secured for sharing trends analysis or, if necessary, another topic. Fisher will follow up to be sure our submission was accepted.

Once the trends analysis is done, there is a presentation component we'll contract out for the website and subsequent outreach.

Pollock says the trends analysis committee has met and is formulating an updated Birds of Concern list. That list will be ready soon. Should we print a pamphlet for this list? Mellon and Vogt agree that it is valuable for new birders and monitors especially. Cohen confirmed that once we have the budget, we'll be able to get this done.

Rollout will continue to develop organically and input is welcome.

Funding. The funds we've been setting aside for the trends analysis will be used, but we will need an additional \$4K-\$5K. Some donations have come in already, and now we will request that BCN member organizations contribute voluntarily as best they can. Reps could also be asked. Orgs could also set aside funds and ask that org members match them. Bernat alerted Cohen that Thorn Creek Audubon has a grant application for \$500 and Cohen has completed that.

Dann called for an explicit statement from BCN of what benefits donations will have for birds.

Advocacy/Conservation Issues

Report from Advocacy Chair Donnie Dann

Since the previous meeting, July 2020, BCN has continued its advocacy, with all communications electronic. Since the last meeting we have advocated as follows:

- Signed on to the Plastic Pollution Prevention working group, a multi-state coalition of organizations and individuals convened by the Illinois Environmental Council.
- Expressed concern to ABC regarding their response to the “paint a blade” very limited [Norwegian study](#). Fisher noted that various newsfeeds (including Smithsonian) picked up the study, ignored the study authors’ cautionary statements, and headlined that a way had been found to make wind turbines “bird safe.” The press interpreting this as “all our problems are solved” exaggerates a very small, limited study of one bird species and eight turbines. Neither ABC nor BCN oppose the concept, when/if proven to be valid by future, more extensive studies. There is no evidence from the study of any “reduction in collision mortality benefit” to passerine birds, migrants, waterfowl, bats, etc. ABC made this broad statement in response to the media activity:
<https://abcbirds.org/article/statement-on-painting-wind-turbine-blades/>.
- Signed on to supporting a bill known as the “Protect Children, Farm Workers, and Birds from Pesticides.”
- Signed on to a bill opposing new regulations weakening critical habitat protections.
- Update on MBTA (Migratory Bird Treaty Act). The act has been affirmed by a federal judge vs. the current administration’s attempts to strip it.
- Update on GAOA (Great American Outdoors Act). A huge piece of conservation legislation: the Land and Water Conservation Fund is authorized and the funds appropriated.

Respectfully,
Donnie Dann
Past President and Advocacy Chair
Bird Conservation Network www.bcnbirds.org
donniebird@me.com

Expressed concern to ABC regarding their response to the “paint a blade” very limited [Norwegian study](#). Various “science” newsfeeds (including Smithsonian) picked up the study, ignored the study authors’ cautionary statements, and headlined, without evidence, that a way had been found to make wind turbines “bird safe.” (Fisher noted that the press interpreting this as “all our problems are solved” is bad journalism, exaggerating a very small, limited study of one bird species and eight turbines.) Neither ABC nor BCN oppose the concept, when/if proven to be valid by future, more extensive studies. There is no evidence from the Norwegian study of any “reduction in collision mortality benefit” to passerine birds, migrants, waterfowl, bats, etc. ABC made this very broad statement in response to the media activity:
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Other Advocacy Notes – Cohen

Dann has also been communicating with the Lake County Board commissioners, and recently the Public Works, Planning and Transportation Committee, regarding incorporating bird-friendly design concepts into county statutes. Staff have been directed to move forward with bird-friendly proposals, either guidelines or mandates.

Cohen suggests that the above could be shared as a process to other counties and municipalities in our area so we can leverage successful practices for bird-friendly design; these kinds of ideas are moving forward nationwide about all kinds of buildings/properties.

Dann noted that ABC is leading a broad campaign for bird-friendly buildings via a website and listserv and pre-made toolkits for use anywhere—from local municipalities to state governments. Here is one link: <https://abcbirds.org/program/glass-collisions/bird-friendly-design/>.

Prince added that in March, the Chicago proposal moved to the sustainability department and it is being reviewed; Bird Friendly Chicago is helping move this forward by providing a checklist of suggestions for the department.

Old Business

New Business

Nominating Committee for 2021 officers – Cohen

Diane Rosenberg came up with some detailed thoughts on nominating procedures, having spent the last two years serving on the committee. Cohen can share these with this year's members.

Does anyone want to volunteer to be chair of this committee? You will not be alone; another person or two will help you. Cohen will touch base with existing officers about their intentions for 2021 and help prep for the January 2021 meeting where these officers will be elected. Contact Cohen if you are interested in helping with this effort: president@bcnbirds.org.

Announcements

Next Meeting

Tentatively scheduled for January 23, 2021, online via Zoom. This will likely be the case for at least half of 2021—luckily, virtual meetings have some definite virtues.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:51 pm.