

## **FINAL MINUTES**

### **Bird Conservation Network Meeting January 23, 2021 Online Video Conference**

**Attendees:** Pat Andersen (TCA), Bobbi Asher (CAS), Tim Balassie (KCA), Stephanie Beilke (GLA), Suzanne Checchia (ENSBC), Sonny Cohen (Lake-Cook), Steve Constantelos (DBC), Donnie Dann (TNC), Bob Fisher (IAS), Glenn Gabanski (DBC), Diane Hicks (TCA), Libby Hill (ENSBC), Matt Igleski (IOS), Tamima Itani (IOS), Vera Leopold (TWI), Mark Luscombe (FDA), Mary Lou Mellon (CBCM), Tom Mulcahy (DBC), Charlotte Pavelka (LCA), Judy Pollock (CAS), Annette Prince (CBCM), Rita Renwick (WCA), Diane Rosenberg (LCA), Eric Secker (KCA), Dave Taliaferro (Lake-Cook), Nancy Tikalsky (Lake-Cook), Jenny Vogt (AGL), Christine Williamson (COS), Lee Witkowski (WCA)

**Guests:** None

## **ANNUAL MEETING**

### **Administration**

The meeting was brought to order by President Sonny Cohen at 1:07 pm and a quorum was established. Introductions around the room were made.

### **President's remarks – Cohen**

Cohen thanked the outgoing officers, executive committee, and other DBC committee chairs individually for their great contributions to BCN over the challenge of 2020. We achieved a great deal, accomplishing the trends analysis and fundraising. We had a successful survey in June/July and got better documentation of our land managers and monitors. Virtual meetings went smoothly. Advocacy was carried forward by Dann and Fisher, especially, along with Action Alerts we broadcasted.

### **2021 Officer Nominations/Election – Cohen**

Cohen informed reps that he opted to forego the officer nominations committee and to act on his own in nominating officers, in contravention of the bylaws and no one voiced objections.

Open nominations were entertained; none were made.

Motion: Close nominations for 2021 Officers.

Moved: Fisher

Second: Dann

Action: Approved

Motion: Bird Conservation Network approves the following slate of officers for 2021 as proposed:

President – Sonny Cohen  
Vice President – Diane Hicks  
Treasurer – Charlotte Pavelka  
Secretary – Rita Renwick

Moved: Balassie  
Second: Igleski  
Action: Approved

Annual Meeting Adjourned 1:26 p.m.

*Bio from Diane Hicks*

I am a BCN rep for Thorn Creek Audubon, which serves southern Cook County and eastern Will County. I started birding casually about 40 years ago, then became a more serious birder 15 years ago.

I moved to the Chicago area 3 years ago from Texas and have also lived in Missouri and Washington State. While living in the Pacific Northwest, I volunteered for two years at the Portland, Oregon Audubon Society's wildlife rehabilitation center; I was also a docent at the Kansas City Zoo when I lived in Missouri.

Chicago area birding is great. I especially like the interesting rarities that show up and watching the thousands of Sandhill Cranes fly overhead as they migrate in the spring and fall.

*Bio from Rita Renwick*

I grew up close to the confluence of the Vermilion and Illinois Rivers in LaSalle County, IL, in the town of Oglesby. I often walked with my father to the end of our street and descended into the woods to the banks of the Vermilion River. My dad introduced me to the names of wildflowers and trees and I clearly remember seeing my first Baltimore Oriole in oak trees as we emerged from a hike on our way home one day. I went mushroom hunting with my parents and Italian grandparents and tent camped and traveled with my family throughout the U.S. Much of my youth was spent outdoors. While at the U. of Illinois I took an ornithology class with Dr. Charles Kendeigh spending Saturday mornings on field trips or in a classroom at the Vivarium. I have lived in Joliet for the past 45 years and taught Jr. High Science and substitute taught for 10 years in the Joliet Public Schools. I have been involved with the Will County Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society for 38 years, currently its Conservation Chair. I was part of a group of members who worked to get Lake Renwick acquired as part of the Will Co. Forest Preserve District in 1990 and serve as a volunteer coordinator at the site. I was on the Board of IAS for 30 years and was part of the Prairie Parklands Partnership advocating for the creation of Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie 25 years ago, and also volunteer there. Even though conservation challenges abound, I am intent on birdwatching more and sitting in front of a computer less. I

have been taking more birding trips (pre-Covid) and hope to continue that practice soon. In 2020, while spending more time at home than ever before, I was amazed at the number of species visiting my yard and garden with its small pond and waterfalls. Birding brings joy even in these tumultuous times.

## **QUARTERLY MEETING**

### **Administration**

#### **Approval of October 17, 2020 BCN meeting minutes**

Motion: Bird Conservation Network approves the October 17, 2020 meeting minutes.

Moved: Balassie

Second: Fisher

Action: Approved

#### **Treasurer's Report – Pavelka (see addendum to these minutes; documents on file)**

Final Report for 2020; Proposed Budget for 2021;  
Trends Analysis and other Donations for 2020-2021

Notes:

Final report for 2020 / 2020 was a year of low expenditure.

Trends Analysis and Donations for 2020-2021 / Pavelka was thrilled by the number of organizations and individuals that have donated to support the trends analysis. Secker praised the fundraising efforts of Cohen and Pavelka on behalf of the reps and monitors. We have met our target for donations.

Proposed budget for 2021 / Pavelka helpfully broke this into our general fund and our trends analysis fund, which includes broadcasting the results and updating our website.

Motion: Approve the proposed budget for 2021.

Moved: Dann

Second: Checchia

Action: Approved, with Secker abstaining

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 outstanding for Prairie Woods Audubon for 2020. Many organizations have already renewed for 2021. Pavelka and Cohen will reach out to Prairie Woods.

## **Projects & Initiatives**

### **BCN Survey update – Pollock, Balassie**

Balassie spent 2020 focused on getting to know our monitors, monitoring sites and the land managers and building relationships with them, including the Chicago Park District. For 2021, onward he views the survey process as having three components: maintaining current sites, recruiting new monitors/compensating for turnover, and seeing if we can expand the survey into higher-quality sites. The county coordinators and Pollock will be instrumental in this. BCN rep Glenn Perricone will be coordinator for DuPage County. Balassie asked members to contact him [bcnsurvey@gmail.com](mailto:bcnsurvey@gmail.com) with issues or recommendations.

Pollock praised the presentation Fisher set up with the IL Natural History Survey's Mike Ward for our monitors. It's now on Facebook and shows how our data was used. Link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bcnbirds/permalink/3476530135904546/>.

Pavelka suggested revisiting our top-level strategy; are there possibilities beyond our breeding birds survey for data we can provide to land managers? Reevaluating our mission with a broader vision for the next five years might include winter and spring bird counts, e-bird data, defining appropriate habitat for migrating birds. Pollock expressed support for the idea as did Hicks, who is looking forward to working on processes and procedures for the survey.

Williamson added that further formalizing our advocacy arm would also be helpful—a set number of action alerts to shoot for, ways to volunteer to help.

### **BCN Trends Analysis**

#### **Update – Igleski**

Igleski reviewed the trends analysis up to this point, pointing out the various people involved, including the analysis itself plus the species of concern list/brochure. Monitor Chris Monaghan has been helping us with the data on the technical side of data management/mining. Others involved as scientific advisors were listed: Stephanie Beilke, Judy Pollock, Doug Stotz, Trixie Martin, Eric Secker, Jim Herkert, and Gary Casper.

The data will be sent to Valerie Steen soon and she can turn it around within a few months.

#### **Funding and Rollout – Cohen**

Williamson volunteered to help with PR and other efforts to get the coverage we need and should get. Cohen acknowledged that we have a lot of work to do in this regard and

is focused on getting the project completed. Once we have results, we can move into a different mode of communication. We want to influence land managers to help birds.

Balassie added that on a Chicago Wilderness level, these results will spur initiatives for bird conservation well beyond the land managers we're working with.

## **BCN Outreach**

### **Monitor Zoom Program 1/21/21**

Cohen praised the presentation Fisher set up with the IL Natural History Survey's Mike Ward and Todd Jones for our monitors. It's now on Facebook and shows how our data was used. Forty attended and it can be put on the website at some point. Link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bcnbirds/permalink/3476530135904546/>. Cohen added that about 150 of the 200 or so monitors invited opened the email. Fisher wants to be sure we expedite putting it on the BCN website and shared with the monitors.

### **Cook County Forest Preserve Citizen Science Open House 1/29/21**

Virtual, Cohen and Balassie will cover it. We may be able to recruit monitors.

### **Wild Things: Trends Analysis Update - February**

Cohen and Fisher will work on this; contact Sonny at [president@bcnbirds.org](mailto:president@bcnbirds.org) to help.

## **Advocacy/Conservation Issues**

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

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

- Supported Audubon Alaska's opposition to seismic oil exploration on the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge, one of the most important nesting grounds for birds on the planet.
- Fully supported Leslie Borns' efforts to protect a portion of Montrose Beach for endangered piping plovers and the bank swallow colony. Bob Fisher asked the Illinois Environmental Council to join our request.
- Signed on to CBD's (Center for Biological Diversity) letter urging emergency funding for critically endangered right whales.
- Added BCN's voice to ABC's request to Congress for additional funding for programs like the Neotropical Bird Conservation Act, Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, and others for bird protection.
- Supported the Northwest Forest Plan limiting logging in old growth forests in Washington and Oregon, thus helping the Marbled Murrelet and the Northern Spotted Owl. Reversed by the Trump Administration.
- Urged the Biden transition team to prioritize and advocate programs and that will create jobs throughout the country while benefiting wildlife and restoring public lands.

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)

We might be doing less advocating in the future with the change in the administration. With lawsuits and the new administration, the MBTA changes attempted by the previous administration should be foiled.

## **Other Advocacy Notes – Cohen, Williamson, Fisher**

### Chicago History Museum Black-Crowned Night-Heron habitat – Williamson

On Jan. 12, 2021 members of Chicago Ornithological Society, Chicago Audubon Society and Chicago Bird Collision Monitors, Lincoln Park neighbors and Lincoln Park Zoo staff joined officials from the Chicago History Museum (CHM) to learn more about the museum's plans to repair the plaza on the east side of the building; build a paved History Trail; and enhance the habitat in 4.5 acres of Lincoln Park adjacent to the museum.

The meeting was organized because the stakeholders are concerned about the impact of construction and landscaping activities on a Black-Crowned Night-Heron nesting colony (45 nests in 2020) present in a grove north of the museum reconstruction site.

The Black-crowned Night-Heron (BCNH) is an endangered species in Illinois, primarily due to habitat loss.

Museum officials said planning for the plaza project has been ongoing for five years. The plaza needs to be replaced because a museum storage area beneath it experiences periodic seepage.

In addition to reconstructing and waterproofing the plaza, a paved pathway will be created to wind through the parkland around the museum and will include eight interpretative history stations. The interpretive trail will not run through the park near the heron nesting area.

Also included in the project is a habitat enhancement project throughout the 4.5-acre parcel, including the planting of approximately 150 new trees and substantial beds of native plants attractive to birds and other pollinators. About 40 diseased or damaged trees will be removed.

The timeline for the project is from late winter through fall 2021.

Museum officials, landscape architects and the head of the building construction team said that protection of the BCNH nesting colony was identified as a goal from the start of the project.

Work on the ground below the BCNH nesting colony will be limited to landscaping and repair of existing paths to limit the impact on the birds and their habitat.

Lincoln Park Zoo employees who monitor the park's BCNH nesting activities said during the meeting that the Lincoln Park herons have nested in the urban environment in Lincoln Park for years are fairly tolerant of human activity and noise near their nesting colonies.

Because of the BCNH's state endangered-species status, CHM was required to get a permit from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) before construction begins. IDNR approved the permit request because biologists there said they did not expect there to be significant disruption to nesting BCNH. The herons migrate back to Illinois in April and lay their eggs in May and June high in deciduous trees.

Museum officials said the neighboring Black-crowned Night-Herons "have been a concern since we started the project and remain a concern" and pledged to remain vigilant about their safety.

**Chicago Bird Collision Monitors will continue to respond to calls regarding Black-crowned Night-Herons in need of help. 773-988-1867.**

**Great Lakes Wind-Wildlife Coalition (GLWWC) / Midwest Migration Network (MMN) – Fisher**

BCN is part of GLWWC which in itself is part of the Midwest Migration Network. Fisher and Dann represent BCN in GLWWC, with Fisher the chair of the Best Management Practices subcommittee.

**Midwest Migration Network** Strategic 1-year Plan, 2021 (draft)

**Great Lakes Wind-Wildlife Coalition: Develop resources for minimizing impacts of offshore wind energy development in the Great Lakes**

- Prepare a document identifying known current best management practices for offshore wind development in the Great Lakes (draft by October 1, final by end of 2021)
- Organize the underlying science (first rendition by end of 2021)
- Compile a list of information needs for offshore wind energy planning in the Great Lakes and work with other MMN initiatives to identify or refine opportunities to collect this data (first draft by end of 2021)
- Develop resources that offer data and other guidance on most and least favorable locations for minimal-impact wind energy development in the Great Lakes (mid-2021)
- Using the identified list of information needs, secure outside funding for projects that will address those needs
- Investigate and implement Motus and Radar as part of informing wind facility placement and wind pre-construction surveys

**Engage strategically with other groups to maximize the initiative's impact**

- Share resources developed by the initiative with decision-makers and others involved in offshore wind energy development planning
- Formalize means of communications with other wind energy-focused groups

## **Ensure effective integration of wind energy initiative with other MMN initiatives**

- Interact with Banding, Telemetry and Radar initiatives for field studies and data needs
- Maintain regular communication among initiative leaders to ensure that synergies and potential conflicts are realized with sufficient time to act on them

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Lots of fancy words: a long way of saying GLWWC wants to be playing offense, not defense, most of the time. Lots of state agency biologists and scientists involved, plus other NGOs. Some big problems: no fed oversight agency, as there is in ocean offshore wind development, aka the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management; the US/Canada Great Lakes Commission doesn't want to be involved and there are so many public agency jurisdictions involved below the country level. So it's an ambitious plan! A personal observation: From a wildlife/bird perspective, a major BMP for various areas would be no offshore turbine arrays at all.

## **“Local” issues and BCN – Cohen, Pollock**

What kinds of issues can BCN get involved in considering we have no staff per se? First, does the issue have a local sponsor or point person who has the information and contacts we need to pursue this? Pollock and Itani talked about Techny Basin mowing during breeding season issue as an example of a local issue BCN could act on since mowing as an issue keeps cropping up. This could be a BCN green paper. Balassie pointed out there is a Grassland Task Force led by Audubon Great Lakes working on this too who we could work with. Beilke pointed out that this group will be re-convening in 2021.

## **Old Business**

## **New Business**

## **Agenda/Goals for 2021 – Cohen**

- ❖ Top-level goal – Improve Communications-quality & frequency.
- Produce the Trends Analysis by midyear (July meeting?).
- Communicate outcome of the TA (July-October-into 2022).
- Increase communication(e-mails) to reps from Cohen.
- Communication and presentations to the monitor community (not just social events).
- Improve website and make easier to update content (2020-2021).
- Request and assist reps to communicate with organizations about BCN info and actions.
- Create presentations-shareable information.
- Engage land managers including initiatives currently in use.
- Explore expansion of surveyed properties-creating list of options.



- Train and increase monitor community-leveraging TA & communications.
- Move annual meeting to April and have two Zoom and two in-person meetings?
- Create & publish annual report of BCN-ideally by Feb. 15 to circulate to members.

Other suggestions:

- Create and distribute (to land managers) specialized land management plans for grassland mowing sites and mapped out priority migrant sites.
- Advocate that district boards put more funding into native shrub planting when invasives are removed.
- Assist land managers with info on how to fund native shrubs possibly involving fundraising by BCN member groups.
- Use something like Google Docs for ExCom to share ideas.
- Encourage members to support natural resource/land managers by providing resources, offering assistance, and speaking publicly to influence local communities to support bird habitat.

## **Announcements**

Igleski mentioned that IOS's grant process is beginning soon and to contact him if interested in participating: [matt.igleski@gmail.com](mailto:matt.igleski@gmail.com)

IOS's *Meadowlark* newsletter contains an article about plovers by Itani. Join IOS to get a copy.

Registration is open for the Wild Things Conference- Two sessions. On Feb. 26, an interactive tool which includes marsh bird data for the Calumet Region will be demonstrated.

## **Meeting Takeaways – Representative Communication**

Survey/Trends Analysis

- Fundraising goals for the Trends Analysis were met. Thank you to contributors.
- Breeding Bird Survey monitors are always needed. Contact Tim Balassie- [bcnsurvey@gmail.com](mailto:bcnsurvey@gmail.com).

Advocacy

- 2020 Report by Donnie Dann (see above)

Habitat

- Chicago History Museum BCNH-report by Williamson (see above)
- Wind/Wildlife-report by Fisher (see above)

**Next Meeting**

April 10, 2021 – Zoom videoconference

**Adjourn**

The meeting ended at 3:39 pm.

## **Treasurer's Report - BCN Meeting – 12/30/2020**

### **1) Membership Report – 2021 membership Invoices have been sent to all members.**

*Dues outstanding for 2020 by Prairie Woods Audubon.*

### **2) Treasurer's Report - YE 2020**

#### 2020 Final Income:

Dues:	\$ 1,967.50
Donations - General:	\$ 151.24
Donations - Trends:	\$ 3,933.70
Grant - Trends:	\$ 200.00
Total:	\$ 6,252.44

#### 2020 Expenses:

Dues to Other organizations	\$200.00	IEC \$150, CW \$50
Printing	\$96.23	Bird monitor recruiting tabletop
Secretary of State – Annual	\$10.00	
Webhost & Retainer Fees	\$567.88	

Total \$ 874.11

Net Income for 2020 YTD: \$ 5,378.33

Checkbook balance on 12/31/20: \$ 14,258.73 Total

Trends Analysis Reserve: \$ 7,133.70 Reserve + Grant/Donations

General Funds Balance on 12/31/20: \$ 7,125.03 Balance net of Trends Analysis Reserve

### **3) State of Illinois Annual Report Submitted - 12/23/2020**

Federal e-postcard 990N filed - 1/21/2021

## 2021 Proposed Budget for Bird Conservation Network

	General Fund	Trends Analysis Fund	Total	
<b>INCOME</b>				
Membership Dues	\$ 1,970.00		\$ 1,970.00	Assumes 19 Organization (excludes Midewin) and 2 Individual memberships.
General Donations To BCN	\$ 150.00		\$ 150.00	Estimated based on a downward trend over past few years.
Transfer from General to Trends Analysis		\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	
Trends Donations - Pledged		\$ 1,744.20	\$ 1,744.20	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 2,120.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,244.20</b>	<b>\$ 4,364.20</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Program Expenses				
Trends Analysis		\$ 7,200.00	\$ 7,200.00	
Trends Distribution		\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	
Website Update		\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	
Monitor Training & Recognitic	\$ 500.00		\$ 500.00	
BCN Web Site	\$ 600.00		\$ 600.00	Web Hosting fee\$200; Webmaster Retainer fee \$400;
Dues/Fees to other organization	\$ 200.00		\$ 200.00	Chicago Wilderness \$50; Illinois Environmental Council \$150
Administrative Expenses	\$ 150.00		\$ 150.00	Printing, Postage, \$10 State Fee, Misc.
Transfer from General to Trends Analysis	\$ 500.00		\$ 500.00	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 1,950.00</b>	<b>\$ 9,700.00</b>	<b>\$ 11,650.00</b>	
<b>NET INCOME (INCOME - EXPENSES)</b>	<b>\$ 170.00</b>	<b>\$ (7,455.80)</b>	<b>\$ (7,285.80)</b>	
Beginning Balance	\$ 7,125.03	\$ 7,133.70	\$ 14,258.73	
Net Income	\$ 170.00	\$ (7,455.80)	\$ (7,285.80)	
Final Balance	\$ 7,295.03	\$ (322.10)	\$ 6,972.93	

## 2020 Donations & Grants

	Gross	Check/Paypal	Net	Receipt Sent
<b>Trend Analysis</b>				
<b>Grants</b>				
Thorn Creek Audubon	\$ 200.00	Check	\$ 200.00	x
<b>Donations - Received</b>				
Monica Blons	\$ 100.00	Paypal	\$ 97.50	x
Anonymous	\$ 500.00	Check	\$ 500.00	x
Lake County Audubon	\$ 300.00	Check	\$ 300.00	x
Kane County Audubon	\$ 200.00	Check	\$ 200.00	x
Glenn Gabanski	\$ 500.00	Check	\$ 500.00	x
Ann Haverstock	\$ 500.00	Paypal	\$ 488.70	x
Dave Taliaferro	\$ 100.00	Paypal	\$ 97.50	x
Evanston North Shore Bird	\$ 500.00	Check	\$ 500.00	x
Tim Balassie	\$ 100.00	Check	\$ 100.00	x
Lake Cook Audubon	\$ 500.00	Check	\$ 500.00	x
Donnie Dann	\$ 250.00	Check	\$ 250.00	x
IOS	\$ 300.00	Check	\$ 300.00	x
Mary Lou Mellon behalf of CBCM	\$ 100.00	Check	\$ 100.00	x
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,950.00</b>		<b>\$ 3,933.70</b>	
<b>Donations - Pledged</b>				
McHenry Audubon	\$ 250.00	Paypal	\$ 244.20	Received 1/6/2021
Will County Audubon	\$ 300.00	Check	\$ 300.00	Received 1/21/2021
Great Lakes Audubon	\$ 300.00	Check	\$ 300.00	
DuPage Birding Club	\$ 400.00	Check	\$ 400.00	
Illinois Audubon	\$ 500.00	Check	\$ 500.00	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,750.00</b>		<b>\$ 1,744.20</b>	
<b>Trends - Total</b>	<b>\$ 5,900.00</b>		<b>\$ 5,877.90</b>	
<b>General</b>				
Amber Marino	\$ 20.00	Paypal	\$ 19.26	x
Thomas Lang	\$ 60.00	Paypal	\$ 58.38	x
Bob Dolgan	\$ 50.00	Paypal	\$ 48.60	x
Russell Johnson	\$ 25.00	Check	\$ 25.00	x
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 155.00</b>		<b>\$ 151.24</b>	