

# **Bird Conservation Network**

## **MINUTES**

**January 19, 2002**

**Discovery Center, Brookfield Zoo**

In attendance: Jeanette Bider (CBO), Barbara Burns (DBC), Donald Dann (TNC), Dennis DeCoursey (CBO), Bob Fisher (DBC), Jerry Garden (CAS), Mary Anne Harrison (IAS), Walter Marcisz (COS), Ruth Najacht (DBC), Judy Pollock (CAS), Lee Ramsey (at large), Jeff Sanders (ENSBC), Terry Schilling (at large), Wayne Svoboda (Ft. Dearborn), Chris Williamson (COS), Geoff Williamson (IOS); Rob Diehl (guest), Karen Glennemeier (guest), Robbie Hunsinger (guest).

Rob Diehl, a graduate student in ornithology at the University of Illinois, described an ambitious project that he is preparing, along with Rob Smith of the University of Southern Mississippi and Dave Ewert of the Great Lakes Division of TNC. The project is an attempt to discover why migrating birds occupy the habitats they do by exploring a number of habitat variables including plant types, patch size, leaf-out phenology, and insect and fruit abundance. They are seeking funding for the project now, with an intended start-up time of September 2002 or May 2003. They plan to hire 8 or so field workers in the Chicago area and are seeking BCN's suggestions for potential field workers and sites. Rob answered questions and heard suggestions from the BCN members.

### **Annual Meeting**

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For 2002 BCN officers, Walter Marcisz—for the nominating committee, which also included Alan Anderson and Carolyn Fields—presented a slate of candidates consisting of the current officers, i.e. Bob Fisher, president; Donald Dann, vice-president; Lee Ramsey, secretary; and Mary Anne Harrison, Treasurer. There were no other nominations from the floor. Re-election of this slate was moved, seconded, and passed.

Chris Williamson requested that in the future the nominating committee consult with the member clubs before determining the slate. She was promised that this would be done.

Mary Anne Harrison presented the treasurer's report. We have a current bank balance of \$5,818.66. The 2001 statement of profit and loss shows \$11,493.90 of total income, \$6,605.12 in expenses, and a net income of \$4,888.78.

The annual meeting was adjourned.

### **Quarterly Meeting**

### **Campaign Reports**

Lake Calumet (Walter Marcisz):

- The Belt Railway Co. has donated 117 acres of Van Vliissingen Prairie for inclusion in the proposed 4000-acre Calumet Open Space Reserve.

- Approximately 150 acres of prime habitat areas of Burnham Prairie have been purchased by the Cook County Forest Preserve District.
- Waste Management Inc. has agreed to enter negotiations to sell Hegewisch Marsh, one of three possible sites for the proposed Calumet Environmental Center.
- Studies for a Calumet Area Hydrologic Master Plan are currently under way, according to Suzanne Malec of the Chicago Dept of Environment.
- The City of Chicago recently held a hearing on the Calumet Area Land Use Plan. Although there are many positive aspects to the Plan document, points of contention include the possible industrial development of the Railroad Prairie, the proximity of bicycle paths to heron rookeries, and vagueness regarding both land use and ownership of the west shore of Lake Calumet.
- Lynne Westphal of the USDA Forest Service is applying for a grant to fund a Calumet-area bird checklist. Proposed sponsors are the Forest Service, the Field Museum, and COS.
- Jeff Levensgood's study of nesting ecology and contaminant exposure of Calumet-area black-crowned night herons will begin this spring. A job announcement soliciting research assistants has been posted on BCNnet.

American Bird Conservancy (Donald Dann):

Among the ABC's current projects are the promotion of bait bags to reduce the use of horseshoe crabs (important food for shorebirds) as bait, of "tory lines" that frighten seabirds away from fishing longlines, and of tags for identification of abandoned cats.

Woodlands Audit (Karen Glennemeier):

Chicago Wilderness is launching a Woodlands Audit, one of several regional conservations designs, to collect baseline data for determining what constitutes a high-quality woodland and wants birders to be involved from the beginning. If you are interested, contact Karen at the Audubon office in Skokie.

Blackbird poisoning (Robbie Hunsinger):

USDA's proposed poisoning of blackbirds in South Dakota (to protect against losses for sunflower farmers) seems to be an ineffective solution and promises to kill off many species besides the targeted red-winged blackbirds and starlings; instead, an insurance program to help affected farmers appears preferable. A story on this as well as petitions to the USDA will be distributed via the bird-club newsletters and BCNnet.

Orland Grasslands (Judy Pollock):

Goal setting and bird conservation studies are getting underway, using Material Service Corp. money given for Orland and Bartel grasslands. Bird monitors are needed; please contact Judy if you are interested.

McGinnis Slough and Montrose Point (Chris Williamson):

- The McGinnis project is now underway, and an access causeway is being constructed.
- The status of fencing at Montrose is still a subject for discussion. Chris, Leslie Borns and Jill Niland have asked for a special meeting to discuss this and other Montrose-related issues with the BCN Executive Committee. The ExComm will announce this meeting at a date before the end of February. All interested BCN members will be invited to attend.

Lincoln Park Bird Sanctuary (Terry Schilling):

There will be a grand opening of the expanded Bird Sanctuary in April 2002. Signage and a kiosk are

being worked on now. Watch for postings on BCNnet.

Stewardship at restored sites such as Montrose Point will be an issue for the Chicago Park District this spring.

#### West Nile virus (Ruth Najacht):

The DuPage County FPD has discontinued studies to detect West Nile virus, having determined that it is present in the area. Efforts are now being directed toward methods of combating its effects.

### **Bird Monitoring**

Judy Pollock reported on the remaining needs now that the monitoring website has been transferred from the Field Museum to Cornell's BirdSource: (1) move the data from previous years (before 2001) to the BirdSource database; (2) create a system for checklist (timed observation) data to be entered by persons who aren't the registered monitors for the sites; (3) develop a way to access data for areas larger than a single point. The cost of these will apparently be in the neighborhood of \$20,000, and we are applying for grants to cover this expense.

Spring monitoring workshops—with separate workshops for beginning and continuing monitors—are being organized. Dates, times and places will be available in a few days. In addition to the workshops we also want to encourage more beginners' bird walks for people who have expressed an interest in monitoring but who aren't yet prepared to do so.

### **Proposed amendments to bylaws**

The following five amendments to the BCN bylaws were discussed. Individual motions to give initial approval to all five were made, seconded and passed. (Majority vote required.) Rejected language is crossed through; new language is in boldface.

Article III, Section 5. At all meetings of the BCN (excluding committee meetings), a minimum of at least ~~five members, including one representative each from three different Organizational Affiliates,~~ **one representative from at least half minus one of the Organizational Affiliates** shall constitute a quorum for conducting the BCN's business.

Article III, Section 6. **In the event that any general meeting of the BCN fails to achieve a quorum, the President may call for a paper or e-mail ballot to be distributed on any issue judged to be sufficiently important. The Secretary will then distribute the ballots, with any necessary explanation, to all the active BCN members and set a deadline for return of the ballots two weeks after the date of distribution. On such a ballot, the quorum requirements described in Article III, Section 5, shall apply.**

Article III, ~~Section 6~~ **Section 7.** [renumbered]

Article IV, Section 4. ~~At any annual meeting, ten members of the BCN shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business.~~

Article VIII, Section 2. The fiscal year shall begin on the first day of ~~October,~~ **January** and end on the ~~thirtieth day of September~~ **thirty-first day of December.**