

BCN Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Saturday, January 18, 2014
North Park Village, Chicago

Attendees: Jessica Johnson, Chris Van Wassenhove, Dave Willard, CAS; Mary Lou Mellon, Annette Prince, Teri Radke, CBCM; Luis Munoz, Christine Williamson, COS; Bob Fisher, Glenn Gabanski, Linda Padera, DBC; Suzanne Checchia, Lloyd Davidson, Libby Hill, ENSBC; Joan Bruchman, IOS; Valerie Lewis, Jean Sodemann, Lake-Cook; Judy Pollock, Lee Ramsey, NAS-CR; Bob Harrison, Thorn Creek; Lee Witkowski, WCA; Terry Schilling, individual member.

Guests: Steve Mitten, Loyola IES; Debra Nord, McHenry Co. Audubon

President Mary Lou Mellon brought the meeting to order at 12:35 pm. A quorum was established with 22 representatives from 10 member organizations and one individual member present.

Annual Meeting

1. The minutes of the October 19, 2013, Quarterly Meeting at Donnie Dann's home in Highland Park were approved as posted on the website.
2. Officer Nominations: Joan Bruchman presented a slate of officer nominations for 2014: President, Mary Lou Mellon; Vice-president, Bobbie Asher; Treasurer, Glenn Gabanski; Secretary, Lee Ramsey. Mary Lou asked if there were any more nominees. There were no further nominee suggestions. A vote was taken and the slate presented was passed unanimously.

Quarterly Meeting

1. Words and Appointments from the President: Mary Lou commented that BCN's Executive Committee is comprised of the president, the immediate past president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and such at large members as are appointed by the president. The Executive Committee or ExCom is charged with administration, fund-raising, planning and development. Much of the work happens between the quarterly meetings via emails and conference calls. The 2013 ExCom members were thanked for their help during the past year: Bobbi Asher, Joan Bruchman, Suzanne Checchia, Glenn Gabanski, Nancy Tikalsky and Chris Van Wassenhove. Particular thanks were extended to Chris, who is stepping down from ExCom after four years of outstanding service.

Two new representatives were named to ExCom for 2014: Dave Willard of CAS and Bob Harrison of Thorn Creek Audubon. Continuing on ExCom at large are Suzanne Checchia and Nancy Tikalsky.

Eric Secker, BCN's webmaster, was appointed to the new position of Communications/Technology Chair.

Bob Fisher was recognized for his generous and valuable assistance to the president in 2013.

2. Treasurer's Report—Glenn Gabanski

Prior to the meeting a financial spreadsheet, membership spreadsheet, and a proposed 2014 budget were distributed to the representatives.

BCN finished 2013 with income of \$2,963.60 and expenses of \$8,765.71. Our larger than usual income/expense was mostly due to donations to the Redstart Connection Campaign and the \$3750 payment BCN made to cloud forest reforestation in Guatemala as its share in the Redstart Campaign. In addition, in October Heather Secker was paid \$3,699 for her statistical work on the Trends Analysis. Money for this also came from Redstart donations in both 2012 and 2013.

At the end of 2013 BCN had a checkbook balance of \$5,470.73.

It was moved and seconded to accept the treasurer's report. After a brief discussion the motion passed by voice vote.

The proposed 2014 budget assumes dues from 19 paying organizations and 3 individual memberships. This includes two new organizations expected to join at the meeting. Items of note in the budget are the income and expenses for the IWPF grant, \$1,000 to be paid to Eric Secker for his work on the Trends Analysis website, and allocation of the \$500 received in 2013 from the Koziols. Several expenses (fees, dues to other organizations, and retainers) are itemized on the budget spreadsheet.

It was moved and seconded to accept the 2014 budget as proposed. After a brief discussion the motion passed by voice vote.

3. Membership Report—Glenn. At the end of 2013 BCN had 18 Organization Members and 3 Individual Members. Renewal notices were sent by 1/4/14 to all reps by either email or postal mail. Two new organization members applying for admission will be voted on at this meeting. Dues remain at \$75 for organizations and \$25 for individuals. BCN dues have not been changed since BCN was formed in 1999.
4. Introduction of Potential New Member Organizations—Mary Lou. McHenry County Audubon, represented by Conservation Chair Debra Nord, and Loyola University Chicago Institute of Environmental Sustainability, represented by Fr. Steve Mitten, have submitted applications for membership in BCN to the Executive Committee and have been determined by ExCom to meet the qualifications for membership under the bylaws. Steve and Debra both spoke briefly about their enthusiasm for becoming affiliated with BCN.

Both organizations were unanimously elected to membership by acclamation. An enthusiastic welcome to both organizations!

ADVOCACY

Mary Lou presented the advocacy report for Donnie Dann.

1. Signed on to ABC's petition vehemently opposing the wind energy facility at Camp Perry, Lake Erie, Ohio.
2. Wrote a letter to Dona Ana County Commissioners opposing Trap Neuter and Release/Return

3. Wrote to IDNR objecting to the recently published draft tracking regulations that weaken the high volume fracturing rules contained in the enabling legislation .
4. Signed on to ABC's statement supporting the inclusion of pollinator protection provisions as an amendment to the Farm Bill, an important opportunity to protect bees, birds, bats and other wildlife.

Bob Fisher described his and Donnie's efforts to get Sierra Club to update their policy on wind energy, as that policy conflicts with Sierra's wildlife policy. Discussion followed, with Christine Williamson offering comments on Sierra Club's and her own positions on this issue.

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

1. Trends Analysis Update—Judy Pollock. Eric Secker has completed the trends analysis and is putting it onto the web. He is waiting for the Birds of Concern list to complete the website.
2. Birds of Concern Brochure—Judy. A committee consisting of Bob Fisher, Eric Secker, Bobbi Asher, Nancy Tikalsky and Judy Pollock, with the kind help and advice of Doug Stotz of the Field Museum, is using the new Partners in Flight species prioritization lists to update the Birds of Concern list. They are just finishing up the breeding birds and will start on a list of migrants and winter birds, which will be a new feature for BCN.
3. Promotion of the completed Trends Analysis—Mary Lou. When the Trends Analysis is completed we would like to promote it with presentations to the various stewards, land managers and monitors in managed areas that have monitors. The data will be enhanced by success stories of how restoration has improved the bird life in give areas. Lee Ramsey has prepared a list of such areas and we will be selecting sites for the presentations in the near future.
4. ABC bird-window collision flyers for distribution—Bob Fisher and Mary Lou. Bob bought a box of 3500 flyers and has given some of them to the DuPage FPD for distribution. Mary Lou also got a box of the flyers. Suzanne Checchia designed a label to be applied to the flyer that refers folks to CBCM for more information. The labels were printed and applied to 2000 of the flyers by Suzanne, Joan Bruchman, Jean Sodemann and Mary Lou. Reps were asked to take as many packets of 50 with them as they wish and distribute to their clubs, bird seed stores and nature centers.
5. Bird Monitors Brunch 2014. Joan Bruchman and Lee Ramsey updated the plans for the 2014 brunch. The brunch will take place on Saturday, 5/3/14. Lee has reserved a shelter in Bemis Woods. A bird walk will start at 7:00am followed by the brunch at about 10:00am. Hopefully the Bemis Woods bird monitors will be available to lead the walk. An invitation will be sent to the BCN Monitors list serve in early March. Those planning to attend will be asked to RSVP to Joan at pjbruchman@yahoo.com.
6. Bird Monitoring Update—Lee R. All indications are that the Monitor Monthly, which replaced our annual informational letter to BCN monitors, is a success. The Monthly, emailed at the beginning of each month, currently goes to 210 subscribers, including all the BCN monitors and a number of land managers.
7. Woodcock study—Lee R and Suzanne. Information on participation in a University of Arkansas study of woodcock and their habitat in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri and Arkansas will be sent to BCN

monitors. The study runs from February to May 2014. Directions and reporting forms are available by request at bcnsurvey@gmail.com.

8. Suggested donation to the Chicago Peregrine Project—Mary Lou. BCN received a generous donation in 2013 from Arlene and Jeff Koziol. Mary Lou recommended to ExCom that BCN donate \$300 of those funds to Chicago Peregrine Project, a local project that has contributed to the recovery of the peregrine falcon in Chicago. This species is a real success story: it has gone from extirpation in Illinois in 1951 to 22 territories in the Chicago area in 2012. There was a great deal of discussion and dissension. Eventually it was moved, seconded and approved that \$300 be donated to the Chicago Peregrine Project. The consensus of those present: There is a need to set a procedure for handling such donations in the future.
9. Libby Hill reported on the Bird/Window collision project at Northeastern Illinois University. She circulated a database of information collected by students and a map based on the data, showing the collision hotspots on campus. A pre-proposal for remediation is in the works to this week's University Green Fee Committee (students are assessed a "fee" for "green projects" such as solar panels for heating the swimming pool.) This money might be applied to bird-safe windows. Some of the identified windows might also be on a Facilities Management capital improvements list directed at reducing heat loss, and so might be appropriate to be replaced with bird-safe glass. Libby noted a need to be certain money is not spent on materials that are available from CollidEscape that we are warned will not reduce bird strikes. Libby thanked Annette Prince for her help, and Judy commented that Annette is a National Treasure!
10. Chicago Wilderness Grassland Bird Working Group and Grassland Birds Blitz—Judy. This group includes land managers from county landowning agencies as well as representatives from the Army Corps, four different researchers from local non-profits and a contract biologist. It is led by Judy Pollock and Jim Herkert. Justin Schuetz, Audubon's Director of Conservation Science, is working on a remote sensing process to map grassland bird habitat, using county habitat layers and BCN point count data to train the process. The resulting layer will be used to set realistic goals for Chicago Wilderness for growth in grassland bird populations. This layer should be ready at the end of the winter. Next summer's blitz will be used to ground-truth areas that appear on the map for which we do not have data.
11. Bird-friendly Building Ordinance in Evanston. Judy Pollock and Donnie Dann are working with a Northwestern University law student and a local Evanston advocate along with city of Evanston staff to develop and pass an ordinance based on the San Francisco ordinance. They have had a number of informative conversations and meetings with contractors, architects and city staff and have developed a case study of dead birds collected in Evanston with the help of reps Dave Willard, Annette Prince, Suzanne Checchia, Libby Hill and Peggy MacNamara. Contact Judy if you would like a copy. The ordinance and research is fairly complete and the next step is to get it passed.
12. Red-headed Woodpecker blitzes 2012 & 2013—Judy. A group of GIS students from NEIU are preparing a report on the Red-headed Woodpecker Blitz that will include maps and analysis. This will be completed at the end of the semester in May.

13. Lake-Cook Audubon—Jean Sodemann. The chapter has been unable to check the two barn owl boxes at IBSP because of winter weather, and they are still looking for someone in the chapter to take over this project in order to place more boxes. The purple martin house will go up at the Lakewood Forest Preserve in Wauconda in March. That house was funded by a \$1,000 donation received from a charitable foundation last year. The chapter has received an additional \$1,000 donation and would again like to use it for a physical project, preferably in Lake County. They are exploring several options and would welcome suggestions.
14. Steve Mitten briefly described the summer 2012 breeding survey and spot-mapping of bird territories that he and one of his students conducted at the Loyola University Retreat and Ecology Campus in McHenry County.
15. Birds in My Neighborhood—Judy. A number of BCN reps and other club members are embarking on the second year of this program, which is an Openlands program supported by Audubon Chicago Region. Birders are trained to engage children in birding by Wendy Paulson. They will then make visits to classrooms in the schools in which Openlands has school gardens. New volunteers were solicited at the meeting and one person volunteered.
16. The Bird Conservation Network's 2013 Accomplishments document, written by Mary Lou and edited by Bob, is posted on the website. It has been emailed to the Cook County Forest Preserves Board President Toni Preckwinkle, General Superintendent Arnold Randall and the entire Board of Commissioners with personally addressed emails. Commissioner Larry Suffredin and Commissioner Steele have responded positively. Other counties will also receive their copies of the accomplishments before the end of the month.
17. Black-crowned Night Herons of Chicago's Horner Park—Judy. The Chicago Park District and the Army Corps of Engineers are planning a restoration of the west bank of Horner Park at the Chicago River south of Montrose which involves regrading the bank and therefore losing many trees. The result will be a stabilized bank and, over the long term, better bird habitat. Short term, however, several spots will be quite bare. Neighbors and local conservationists are concerned about loss of trees for screening light, views and for bird habitat. A new development is that a number of night-heron nests may have recently been discovered in the construction zone. The Corps and the IDNR are following this issue, as is Sigrid Schmidt, bird monitor there, and Judy Pollock from Audubon.

NEW BUSINESS

Terry Schilling proposed that a committee be appointed to create a protocol for handling donations received and how distributions should be made. Terry will chair the new Donations Committee. Bob Harrison, Judy Pollock, Bob Fisher and Mary Lou will join the committee. The Committee was asked to have a recommendation ready for consideration by ExCom at least 2 weeks before the next Quarterly Meeting in April.

In response to comments about how the IOS Grants program works, Bob Fisher reported that the IOS program continues to grow, supported by donations from some BCN member groups, other bird conservation groups around Illinois, and many individuals from the state's birding community. In 2013 eleven \$1000 grants were awarded to students doing a variety of research projects on the state's birds – their status, population trends, breeding success, etc. The interest in these grants also continues to grow, with 22 applications for grants in 2013. The success of this program might inform BCN as it develops a policy about how to donate excess funds to worthwhile bird conservation causes. That might include developing an electronic application form for BCN grants/donations similar to the IOS model.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Arlene Koziol's photographic exhibition at Brushwood Center in Ryerson Woods opens Sunday, January 19, with a reception from 1 to 3. It will run through the end of February. BCN will receive 50% of the proceeds of any sales.

The IOS Gull Frolic takes place at North Point Marina, Winthrop Harbor, on Saturday, February 15. Though registrations are closed, applications for the waiting list are still being taken.

Birding America X, sponsored by Chicago Audubon Society, will be held Saturday, March 8, at North Park University.

Eagle Watch Weekend 2014 at Starved Rock—Saturday, January 2:
<http://www.starvedrocklodge.com/events/eagle-watch-weekend>

Joel Greenberg will talk about his new book, *Flight of the Passenger Pigeon*, and sign books on January 23 at the Notabaert Museum, on February 15 at the IOS Gull Frolic, and on February 20 at the Lake County FPD Cultural Center.

The next BCN Quarterly Meeting will be held on April 12, 2014, at Sagawau Environmental Learning Center, at 12:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Lee Ramsey, Secretary