



COMPASS

Navigating the world of birds and nature

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Whoopers Come Full Circle

by Karen Furnweger

The whooping cranes have come home. The five birds that left their wintering grounds at Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge in Florida on April 9 arrived safely—if not together or at the same time—at their summer home 1,200 miles north in Wisconsin's Necedah National Wildlife Refuge.

Last fall the birds were led by ultralight aircraft in the first migration of whooping cranes through eastern North America in more than a century. Their return, which proved the captive-reared cranes' ability to navigate, select safe roosts and find food on their own, is an exhilarating first success in the effort by the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership to restore a migratory flock to the species' historic eastern range.

Four of the birds spent two nights at a Cook County forest preserve during their 11-day journey. Although they flew over the Chicago area in the middle of rush hour on April 16, only one person reported sighting them. Steve Kiecker, an avid birder, likened the brief experience to seeing a shooting star as the huge white birds glided

about 200 feet over his Berwyn backyard. "I always thought about (the possibility of) checking that box off in the back of my bird book and joked that it was never going to happen," he said.

Kiecker called the Rare Bird Alert hotline, run by Richard Biss. Although Biss has received erroneous reports of

whoopers, he believed this one. "We were expecting them," he said.

The fifth bird, a female that split off in Tennessee from the more dominant birds, flew west around Chicago, nearly retracing the route the ultralights took south. All five crossed into Wisconsin on April 18, and the group of four sailed into the wildlife refuge

late the next day. The solo female lingered in southern Wisconsin, roosting in wetlands with sandhill cranes. Although biologists were checking her location daily by radiotelemetry, her arrival at the refuge the evening of May 3 was a pleasant surprise.

Biologists will continue to monitor the birds through the summer and as they migrate again in the fall. Meanwhile, at least eight of the 18 chicks slated for the 2002 introduction have hatched at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland, and are already learning to follow ultralights around their exercise pen. The goal of the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership, which is a consortium of U.S. and Canadian conservation organizations and government agencies, is to establish a self-sustaining migratory flock of whooping cranes with at least 25 breeding pairs. Ultralight-led migrations will continue through 2005. As the flock grows and matures, juveniles will be integrated directly in with the adults.

Updates on the cranes and links to related sites are available at www.bringbackthecranes.org. Learn about the class of 2002 at www.pwrc.usgs.gov/whoopers.



Photo courtesy of Operation Migration.

Willow Springs Development Poses Threat to 300 Acres of Public Land

Tom Walsh, president of Heritage Renaissance Partners, added a third development to his blueprint for transforming Willow Springs into an upscale waterfront community. His newest proposal contains plans for 666 housing units, a marina with 250 boat slips, a yacht club, 40,000 square feet of retail space, a hotel and conference center, and a 3000-seat bandshell.

The problem with this proposal is that the development will gobble up 300 acres of land leased to the Cook County Forest Preserve District for public recreation. The land is located between the Illinois and Michigan Canal and Sanitary and Ship Canal, and is one of the few large tracts of forest remaining in the area.

The potential loss of open space and habitat for wildlife is critical. The Cook County Forest Preserve District has few opportunities to acquire large parcels of undeveloped land. Concerned residents living in the vicinity of this development are beginning to meet to discuss their options. If you would like to join them, or want more information, contact Chicago Audubon Board Member, Joe Lukascyk at hobbit@aol.com.

Personal Essay

Great Blue Style

by Carol Nelson
CAS Board Member

From an iron-black bench overlooking a quiet section of Fox River backwater, I watched the great blue walk out to the middle of the pond. The heron stopped in a large, tangled area of water lilies, his long legs completely under water, the fragrant lily petals reaching to the tips of his feathers. There the great blue paused and watched stone still.

With a precise, single stabbing motion, the bird thrust its bill into the water. Then the heron slowly and carefully lifted its neck into a graceful curve. Held sideways in its bill was a beautiful golden sunfish.

The great blue remained that way for a minute or so, stern and still, firmly holding its glistening yellow catch, the disturbed mass of green leaves and white lilies waving against its body, patiently waiting for the tensions of the hunt still racing through the water and the sunfish to subdue before flying to the other bank.

Pushing away in three giant wing beats, the heron landed full stature on a log resting along the water's edge. Amidst cool gray shadows, the great bird tossed and turned the fish until it could be swallowed headfirst. With a self-satisfied shake of its feathers, the skillful blue disappeared downstream. The waving crescendo dissipated with its flight. Without the majestic great blue heron and his singular style, the scene returned to a quiet lily pond.



Illustration by Steven D'Amato

National Recovery News

California condor

On Thursday, April 11, a California condor chick hatched and is still alive in the Los Padres National Forest in Southern California. Until now, no babies have survived for more than a few days. Both parents of the baby condor have been observed feeding and brooding their chick.

On Tuesday, May 14, another condor chick hatched in the Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge, also in California. The birth of these two chicks has renewed the hope of many that this bird can be brought back from extinction.

In 1985, in a controversial move, scientists decided to capture the two dozen condors left in the wild and breed them in zoos. In 1992, they started releasing the birds, first in remote mountainous stretches of Southern California, then in the Grand Canyon.

About \$35 million was spent in restoration efforts leading to these moments. This is the largest bird of prey in North America with a wingspan of 55" (nearly five feet). The California condor raises only one young every other year, and the immature develops slowly. At 10 months, it is still an apprentice at flying, and does not breed until 5 or 6 years old.

Trumpeter swan

This year, Chicago's Brookfield and Lincoln Park Zoos contributed six young trumpeter swans to Iowa's reintroduction program, in operation since 1995. The birds were transported to holding areas in Iowa for the winter, and in April, three were released, with birds from other sources, into restored wetlands in eastern Iowa near the Mississippi River.

Zoo animal managers and Iowa's



Ron Andrews of Iowa's Department of Natural Resources looks on at one of Brookfield Zoo's trumpeter swans that was released to the wild. Photo by Jim Schultz

Department of Natural Resources anticipate that the birds will pair bond and migrate north for the summer, then return to winter breeding grounds where it is hoped they will eventually raise young of their own. Three hundred swans have been thus released by Iowa's program since 1995.

The young trumpeters were the first successful brood for the Brookfield Zoo since 1992.

— Gail Goldberger

LIGHTS OUT

For several years, the City of Chicago and bird conservationists have worked with building managers to lessen the risk the city's skyline poses to migratory birds by decreasing lighting. The bright exterior lights of Chicago's tall buildings, such as the Hancock Center, confuse nocturnal migrants causing birds to fly directly into them. In contrast, at buildings along the edge of Lake Michigan, such as McCormick Place, it is thought that birds are killed at dawn as they fly in looking for cover and crash into windows. This year, the program

will distinguish between these two different types of buildings.

Chicago Field Museum scientists Doug Stotz and Dave Willard have been compiling bird kill data from these two locations, McCormick Place and the Hancock Center. Stotz reports that mortality of May and September migrants, particularly warblers, is highest at the Hancock Center (and presumably other tall buildings), while McCormick Place takes a higher toll on the colder-season migrants (April and October), particularly the many species of native sparrows.

Data collected have found an average of 1,500 birds killed each year by flying into McCormick Place's windows. According to Stotz, that number was reduced by about 80 percent when indoor lights were turned off - proof that the Lights Out program can save thousands of birds every year. This year, for the first time, building owners are asked to extinguish their lights for virtually the entire migration period- March 17 to June 7 and August 25 to October 25, after 11 pm.

Fermilab Welcomes Birdwalkers Back on Site

Fermilab officials have lifted some of their access restrictions. Pedestrians and bicyclists can enter through Pine Street off the Batavia Road entrance without obtaining a visitor's badge.

Visitors in cars can park at either gate and walk in. Fermilab is open from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. seven days a week. You still cannot enter a building without a pass. For more information, call the Office of Public Affairs at (630) 840-3351.

Thank goodness our members read the COMPASS!

Thanks to Phyllis Bruegel of Brookfield who wrote this kind note about the errors in the photos below.

"Am I going blind, or is the enclosed just a test of our birding abilities? Or a test of whether we read the COMPASS? Or just an editing boo-boo?"

No, to all your questions but the last. But we are glad you're paying attention.



Yellow warbler (left) and prothonotary warbler (right). Photos by Roy Slovenko.



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COMPASS

Chicago Audubon Society
North Park Village
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Audubon info hotline: (847) 299-3505
Report sightings to: (847) 265-2117
Rare bird alert: (847) 265-2118
Activity line: (773) 539-6793, press 1

Web page:
www.homepage.interaccess.com/~stephenc/index.html

Audubon office: Manager, Karen Andersen, (773) 539-6793, fax (773) 539-6830, chicago_audubon@juno.com. Office hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

OFFICERS

President: Christine Lee, (708) 485-8197, stephenc@interaccess.com
1st Vice President: Jill Anderson, (708) 771-3805
2nd Vice President: Sholom Glikman, (773) 728-6624, sholomg@attbi.com
Secretary: Karen Furnweger, kfurnweger@sheddaquarium.org
Treasurer: Vernon Miller, (312) 939-5248, verninchicago@juno.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Hotline: Doris Johanson, (847) 827-5930.
Awards: Alan Anderson (see Research below) and Sheryl DeVore, sdevore@voyager.net
Birdathon: Joe Lill, (773) 631-3154, trptjoe@aol.com
Bird Seed Savings Days: Al Rothenbach, (847) 816-6514, alrothenbach@yahoo.com
Conservation: Carol Nelson, (773) 583-8616, blue2wings@aol.com
Education: Jeff Sundberg, (847) 735-5139, jsundberg@hermes.lfc.edu; Joe Lukascyk, (708) 430-0779
Field Trips: Stephen Lee, (708) 485-8197, stephenc@interaccess.com; and Doris Johanson, (847) 827-5930
Illinois Audubon Council: Al Rothenbach, see above.
Illinois Environmental Council: Gene Small, (773) 434-8328
Land Stewardship: Jerry Garden, (773) 545-4632, jerrygarden@sprynet.com
Nominating: Alan Anderson, (847) 390-7437, casresearch@attbi.com
Programs: Debra Fuller, (312) 744-5472, ddustin@cityofchicago.org
Editorial/Advertising: Gail Goldberger, (773) 743-2457, gailgoldberger@earthlink.net
Noël Maguigad, (847) 563-3000 xt5259 compass@no-el.com
Publicity: Bill Schwaber, (847) 475-4986, formulae@mcs.net
Research: Alan Anderson, (847) 390-7437, casresearch@attbi.com; Judy Pollock, (847) 864-6393, bobolnk@ix.netcom.com



Chicago's Green Rooftops



by David Cohen

Inspired by the success of the rooftop garden installed at City Hall, city officials in early May extended the initiative to a second building at 445 N. Sacramento. This city-owned facility, the Chicago Center for Green Technology, not only has rooftop greenery but also solar panels, a layout officials believe will keep Chicago cooler and cleaner in the summer.

The program began two years ago, when Mayor Daley started the garden on top of City Hall. Formerly vacant and covered with tar and gravel, half the roof of the Greek-revival structure is flourishing now with grasses, flowers, vines and a pair of trees, one crabapple, the other hawthorn. The species that have been planted are native to the region. A few butterflies have been attracted by cone flowers

and asters, while seed-producing grasses, such as switch, big blue and little blue stem, might draw in some birds.

"Mayor Daley even wanted to put in oak trees, but the roof wouldn't support the root system," notes Jerry Garden, Chicago Audubon board member. Garden is monitoring the bird population there, and contributed six birdhouses he built himself in a bid to attract house finches, house wrens and blackcapped chickadees. A finch was spotted near the garden, but so far the most frequent visitors are field and song sparrows, ruby-crowned and golden-crowned kinglets, and an occasional junco.

"It's hard to know if the garden is attracting birds, or if that's happening by accident," says Garden. "There's certainly something for them to eat, because it's loaded with grasshoppers

and mayflies. That's better than a vacant, asphalt rooftop."

Beautification and habitat development, however, are not the chief incentives behind the program. The goal is to reduce the heat and pollution that build up in Chicago every summer. Sunlight bearing down on a dark, hard surface generates heat. Planners thought that if the surface were green, light would be absorbed by photosynthesis, diminishing its heat-generating capacity. Lowering ambient temperature offers several benefits—decreased use of airconditioning, tenants' utility bills drop, and pollution produced by energy generation declines.

Engineers have been encouraged by the results of the test. Because Cook County shares the building with the City, only half of the 40,000-square-foot rooftop has been greened,

permitting a clear measurement of the garden's impact. And so far, officials say, the Chicago half of the roof is 15 to 20 degrees cooler than the county's during warm weather.

The structural characteristics of the building helped enable the initiative.

"City Hall is an 11-story building, but it was designed for 12 stories," comments Jessica Rio, a spokesperson for the city. "As a result, the building has generous structural capacity." She adds that clay, soil, mulch, and vermiculite—a gardening material—have been used as "growing media." In addition, styrofoam has been deployed to contour the garden.

Sadly, the site is not on public view. The City has security concerns, and Garden reports that the edges of the rooftop are unfenced, creating a hazard during high winds.

MORE COUNTERS NEEDED !

The 2002 Grassland Bird Count

As part of a regional effort to restore grassland bird habitat, the Bird Conservation Network and the Habitat Project are launching a new initiative this summer. Simply put, we want to count every grassland bird in the region. If you can visit and monitor a grassland site twice this June, please contact Karen Glennemeier to sign up. Kglennemeier@audubon.org or (847) 965-1150.

The Woodlands Audit

The oak woodlands of Chicago Wilderness need our help. We need to learn the status of the woodland bird communities and help land managers use this information to restore oak woodlands. This summer of 2002, we need your help identifying existing woodland bird data and conducting a pilot monitoring study. In 2003, we'll need monitors. If you'd like to participate, please contact Lee Ramsey at LeeRamsey@aol.com or (847) 501-4683.

BIRDATHON MAILING THANKS

Many thanks to all who stuffed, sealed and labeled at the April 13th Birdathon Mailing Party! We started at 9:00 a.m. and were finished by 2:45 p.m. Afterwards, we adjourned to the North Park Village nature preserve. A few of our helpers proceeded to get a "lifer" field sparrow.

Pastries, pizza and a lifer—you can't beat that!

Thanks to: Karen Andersen, Mary Andersen, Joy Gerstein, Sholom Gliksman, Doris Johanson, Christine Lee, Stephen Lee, Caitlin Kreiman Lill, Jacob Kreiman Lill, Al Rothenbach, Les Szewczyk, Pat Szewczyk, John Viramontes, Toni Wujec.

—Joe Lill

Cook County Owl Census March 2002

by Christine and Stephen Lee

What wild weekends! A blizzard on March 3rd for Birding America V, and on owl count census days, March 8th–10th, a veritable windstorm. The howling wind was so bad on Saturday and Sunday that even if the owls were calling, we would not have heard them.

Furthermore, it got very cold. Because of the weather, our numbers were lower than usual. As one of our participants wrote, it's hard to hear owls when you can't tell their calls from the sound of trees creaking.

Friday evening turned out to be the best time to do the count, and there were a few success stories. Stan Stec reported from Paul Douglas Forest Preserve that he picked up a short-eared and saw-whet owl on Friday and Saturday as well as four great-horned owls.

Conrad and Carol Fialkowski's party counted six screech owls in the

western suburbs with two seen together on the same branch, beaks touching.

Although Bob Bezouska went out alone he found both great-horned and screech owls.

We'd like to thank all the participants who braved the elements to cover their territories and count owls.

Thanks go to:

Jill Anderson, Bob Bezouska, Vicki Deckert, Kelly Dougherty, Chris-Kadow Dougherty, Conrad Fialkowski, Carol Fialkowski, Andrew Fialkowski, Carolyn Fields, Jerry Garden, Ralph Herbst, Patrick Jean, Patricia Juliano, Paul Juliano, Max Klingensmith, Ron Klingensmith, Barbara Kratochvil, Walter Marcisz, Paul Quintas, Jeffrey Sanders, Mary Ann Skvara, Joe Skvara, Stan Stec, Janice Valequez, Raphael Valequez, Dan Wengler, Michelle Wengler (if we missed anyone, sorry).

COOK COUNTY OWL COUNT BY AREAS March 8-10, 2002

	S&SW	N&NW	W
SCREECH	2	8	14
GREAT HORNED	0	6	2
SHORT-EARED	0	1	0
SAW-WHET	0	1	0

Participants: 29
Parties: 8
Hours: 30



Illustration by Kirsten Munson

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monthly Workdays

At the Skokie Lagoons: June 8, 10:00 a.m.

Meet at the Tower Road parking lot (east of the bridge). If you arrive late, look for a CAS sign near the parking lot directing you to the work site. For more information, call Jerry Garden at (773) 545-4632.

Member Programs

At the North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 N. Pulaski, in Chicago.

**Birding in the Lake Calumet Area
Friday, June 14, 7:30-9pm (7-7:30 refreshments)**

Join Walter Marcisz, a lifelong resident of the Calumet area for a look at this important local birding area. Species endemic to Calumet—shorebirds, waterfowl, herons and other wetland birds—will be featured in this program. Walter is a past president of the Chicago Ornithological Society. He leads field trips, teaches bird classes for adults, and is active in conservation work.

Bird Walks

**Wooded Island:
Wednesdays in June & July at 7:00 a.m.
Saturdays in June & July at 8:00 a.m.**

Meet at the Darrow Bridge just south of the Museum of Science and Industry. Your Audubon guide is Doug Anderson (773) 493-7058.

Saturday, June 1: Bemis Woods Bird Walk, 7:30 a.m.

We'll be looking for and listening to nesting birds in Bemis Woods Forest Preserve along Salt Creek. In past years, this area has been really good for certain nesting species. Target birds include bluebirds, hairy woodpeckers, scarlet tanagers and blue-grey gnatcatchers.

Meet at the toboggan slide at South Bemis. The entrance to Bemis is on Ogden Avenue just west of the intersection with Wolf Road. This is in Westchester, east of the Ogden exit for the tollway (I-294). This trip is co-sponsored with the Chicago Ornithological Society. For more information, call Chris or Stephen Lee at (708) 485-8197, or email at stephenc@interaccess.com.

Sunday, June 23: McHenry Dam and Marsh on the Fox River-7:45 a.m.

We expect to see a variety of birds on this walk including gallinules, yellowheaded blackbirds and prothonotary warblers. Bring a spotting scope if you have one, binoculars and field guides.

McHenry Dam is located north of Rte. 176 on River Road, south of the town of McHenry. Meet at the big parking lot on the river at the dam. For further information, contact the trip leader, Jeff Sanders by e-mail at yellowstart5@yahoo.com.

Directions: Take Hwy. 41, 94, 12 or any major road north to Rte. 176. Go west on 176 to River Rd (on east side of Fox River). Go north on River Rd. 2-4 miles. Look for entrance on left, and go to main parking lot. Park at south end of lot.

**Sunday, August 25 at 8:00 a.m.
Lake Calumet Shorebirds**

Leader: Walter Marcisz (773) 646-3034 or wjmarcisz@aol.com.

Walter's annual August shorebird trip is one of our members' favorites. Since conditions change every year, the locations for this year's trip will be determined in August. This trip is co-sponsored with the Chicago Ornithological Society. Directions: Meet at O'Brien Lock & Dam. Take I-94 to 130th St. Exit east on 130th and turn right just before the steel bridge into the drive for O'Brien Lock & Dam. Turn left after the railroad underpass and proceed along the river to the car park.

Other Events

**Saturday & Sunday, July 27 & 28
Illinois Audubon Society's
Butterfly Garden Tour**

Enjoy more than 50 gardens in Lake, Cook, DuPage, Will, McHenry and Kane Counties.

Tickets \$15 per person and for children 10 and over. Call Kay MacNeil (815) 469-1294, or email IASgardentour@aol.com.

YOU CAN GET IT HERE!

The brand new Peterson Field Guide, "Hummingbirds of North America," is available at our office. Author Sheri Williamson, co-founder of the Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory, has signed the ones we have for sale.

You can buy them for \$22, or order over the phone (773) 539-6793 and we'll send out (for an extra \$3 shipping & handling charge).



Illustration by Kirsten Munson

Remembering Harriet



Courtesy of Mary Hennen

Harriet the peregrine falcon is dead. Nearly 17 years old, she was believed to be the oldest peregrine in the Midwest and the longest-known nesting peregrine in the wild.

Harriet graced the rarified air of downtown Chicago's concrete peaks thanks to a collaborative midwestern effort to bring her kind back from the precipice of extinction. She was released in Minneapolis in 1985 through the Midwest Peregrine Falcon Restoration Project. In 1986, she arrived in Chicago and set up house-keeping with Jingles, a recent graduate of the Chicago Peregrine Release and Restoration program.

Harriet did her part in moving peregrines off the endangered species list: She and Jingles hatched 29 chicks, including two in 1988 that were the first peregrines born in Illinois since 1951. Those chicks and 16 others fledged successfully.

Over the years, The COMPASS and local media have followed the family life of Harriet and Jingles, 34 floors above Wacker and Adams. Photos of Harriet with her chicks put a small but uncompromising face on the Endangered Species Act, and undoubtedly influenced the election of *falco peregrinus* to Chicago's official

bird in 2000.

Harriet's last years were marred by an injury and a serious illness, both of which were treated at the Raptor Center in St. Paul. After each recovery, she was released locally. She never returned to Chicago. Dr. Patrick Redig of the Raptor Center noted in an e-mail, "We saw her briefly in October (2001) when she was recovered from inside a ventilation shaft... into which she had chased a pigeon. She was in very good condition... and she was released..."

She was not seen again until her body was recovered from a snowbank in February. No cause of death was determined. Redig called Harriet "the grand lady of peregrine-dom in the Midwest. She was a well-known, highly productive bird."

— Karen Furnweger



Harriet and brood. Courtesy of Mary Hennen.