



COMPASS

Navigating the world of birds and nature

VOLUME 16, ISSUE 3

MARCH 2002

The 23rd Annual Meeting and Awards Dinner

On Saturday, April 6, the Chicago Audubon Society will host its Annual Meeting and present awards in five categories to six individuals. All members of Chicago Audubon are welcome and encouraged to attend. Our award winners this year are:

PROGRAM

The members of Chicago Audubon Society will elect Board Officers for two-year terms, and six Board members for three-year terms.

After the awards are presented, Mary Hennen from the Ornithological Department of the Field Museum and CAS Board Member, will talk about area bluebirds, with an emphasis on nesting, competition from other species and research she and Vickie Byre conducted in DuPage County.

DINNER DETAILS

Reception and Cash Bar—5:30 p.m.

Dinner—6:30 p.m.

Program should conclude by 9:00 p.m.

DINNER RESERVATIONS

Please make your reservations by Saturday, March 30th. All full dinners are \$25. Make check payable to Chicago Audubon Society and mail to Alan Anderson, 1633 Howard Avenue, Des Plaines, IL 60018-3023. Include your choice of entrée: chicken in white wine, tilapia, or vegetarian plate.

DIRECTIONS TO THE RESTAURANT

The Homestead Restaurant is at 8305 W. North Avenue in Melrose Park.

From the South and West: Take I-290 to 1st Avenue north. Go north about 3 miles to North Avenue (1600 N.) and turn right. The Homestead is on your right, less than a 1/4 mile.

From the North and Northwest: Take I-294 to Irving Park Road and go east, 1 mile, to River Road. Turn right on River Road and continue until it meets with Cumberland/First Avenue. Continue south and turn left on North Avenue, go 1/4 mile to restaurant (on south side of the street).

From Chicago: Take either Cumberland Avenue south, which turns into First Avenue, and follow the above directions, or take North Avenue west to the restaurant (a short distance past Thatcher Ave.).

If you need additional information or have any questions, please contact Alan Anderson (casresearch@atbi.com) or Sheryl DeVore (sdevore@voyager.net).



Bill Wengelewski
Service to Chicago Area Birders

For the last two years, Bill Wengelewski has helped scores of Chicago area birders see the federally endangered red-cockaded woodpecker and the nationally watch-listed brown-headed nuthatch. Neither bird is native to Illinois, but both appeared at Illinois Beach State Park where Wengelewski works as Natural Resources Coordinator. Since part of the park is a protected preserve harboring rare plants, Bill arranged special small tours with guides so that birders could see the birds and not harm sensitive areas. Prior to working at Illinois Beach State Park, Bill worked at the Chicago Botanic Garden in children's education, and also as an intern at Volo Bog.

After spending a summer in the Smoky Mountains, Bill decided to change his career from human services to environmental science. "Illinois Beach State Park is a good fit for me because of my interest in preserving the diversity of life. From birds to plants, and insects to herpetiles, Illinois Beach is a haven for an incredible mix of living things. Meeting enthusiastic groups of birders has helped me continue my own enthusiasm for birds."



George Rabb
Protector of the Environment, Continuing Vocation

Dr. George Rabb has served as Brookfield Zoo Director and President of the Chicago Zoological Society since 1976. He directs the zoo's local, national, and international efforts to enhance appreciation and maintenance of the earth's biological heritage through conservation, education, and research. The Zoo's most recent development, the Hamill Family Play Zoo, underscores the zoo's mission as a conservation center by helping children develop a caring relationship with the natural world.

Rabb is a respected spokesman on wildlife conservation issues. He is past chairman of the Species Survival Commission of IUCN – World Conservation Union, the largest volunteer species conservation network in the world.

Rabb serves as vice-chair of the Chicago Council on Biodiversity, which guides the development of the Chicago Wilderness initiative, a multi-organizational effort to maintain the biological diversity of our metropolitan region. He also serves as President of *Chicago Wilderness* magazine.

Rabb grew up bird-watching and served as editorial assistant for the book *South Carolina Bird Life* by Alexander Sprunt, Jr. and E. Burnham Chamberlain.



Rick McAndless
Protector of the Environment, Continuing Avocation

Since 1989, Rick McAndless has marshaled a remarkable restoration of Poplar Creek, 600 acres of Cook County Forest Preserve. With McAndless in the lead, the Poplar Creek Prairie Stewards have returned Poplar Creek to its native woodlands, wetlands and grasslands—as it was before the settlers arrived. McAndless organizes workdays, testifies about restoration to the Cook County Board, and raises funds for restoration efforts. He recruits volunteers, including students from Harper College and local high schools, and works hard to instill in others respect for the restoration process.

According to McAndless, the friendships people make while volunteering are an integral part of the project's success. "People are so generous, sharing their ideas and resources," he said. McAndless, who works for the Soil and Water Conservation District of Cook County, thinks that the work of the Prairie Stewards is critical to saving grasslands, one of our most endangered habitats. McAndless, a graduate of Northern Illinois University, lives in Barrington, and enjoys fishing and sports.



Alison Brown
Excellence in Environmental Reporting

Alison Brown is an inspiring example of following one's passions and converting them into one's profession. Brown started out helping *Chicago Wilderness* magazine as a volunteer and became, through dedication, commitment and eagerness to take on more responsibilities, editor of the news and "Into the Wild" sections. Most of the pieces in the news section are written by volunteers, and it is Brown's job to motivate them with encouraging words, gentle reminders and genuine praise. Her enthusiasm for the many wonderful environmental organizations and natural lands in our region is infectious.

"There are so many great things happening, and we want people to know about them," she said. Last year, she signed on to become a frog monitor for the Habitat Project, and is also pursuing a naturalist certificate from the Morton Arboretum.



James A. Vroman and Steven M. Siros, Jenner & Block
Protector of the Environment, Single Act

Jim Vroman, partner and co-chair of Jenner & Block's Environmental, Energy and Natural Resources Practice group, and Steve Siros, associate and member of the practice group are this year's Single Act award winners. They filed a lawsuit against the Village of Glenview for failing to write a legally required report on how the village would protect a rare tallgrass prairie in an

industrial park surrounding the Glenview Naval Air Station. The prairie fell under the purview of the Illinois Natural Areas Inventory, which mandates that a report be submitted to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The Department then writes its own detailed biological opinion used to provide guidance to properties being developed around natural areas. Vroman and Siros provided pro bono service to the Glenview Prairie Restoration Project and six village residents concerned about protecting the 31-acre prairie, home to numerous species of grassland birds. After more than a year in court, the judge ruled against the village of Glenview, forcing them to comply with the law.

Audubon Birdathon! 2002 Dr. William Beecher Cup Challenge

Get out your checklists! Birdathon! Week will be Wednesday, May 15-Tuesday, May 21.

Teams of 3-6 people can go out any day during this period. The team that counts the most species will win the coveted Beecher Cup (and bragging rights). The defending champs (BudBirders-2001) will be back, along with the winners from year 2000 (the Lake Forest College team).

Birders who want to form teams (or join an existing one) should contact Joe Lill at trptjoe@aol.com.

Funds raised will benefit the programs of Chicago Audubon.

BIRDATHON! MAILING PARTY

There can't be a Birdathon! without a mailing party. Last year, Birdathon! raised over \$1 million across our nation towards Audubon's mission to protect birds, other wildlife and their habitats. So join the fun (refreshments all day) on Saturday, April 13 at 9:00 a.m. Place: The Administration Building, 5801 N. Pulaski Rd, Chicago.

BIRD MONITORS NEEDED!

The BCN Census is a study of bird life in our region's preserves. This year, the Census has been honored to become the first regional project of BirdSource, a national citizen science database maintained by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. This is the same database that houses the Christmas Count, the Great Backyard Bird Count, Project FeederWatch, and other projects. Data collected is available on the web at www.fmnh.org/birdcensus, and is sent to land managers for use in decision making.

We have many important sites that still need monitors. Please join us for one of our spring workshops.

Introductory Workshops

These workshop are for people new to survey procedures who have some skill identifying birds. (People new to bird identification can call (847) 965-9239 x 41 for a list of classes and field trips that help polish ID skills.)

Will Co./ IN – April 13th— 9 a.m. to Noon
Pilcher Park Nature Center, Joliet

McHenry Co. – March 9th— 9 to 11:30 a.m.
Prairie View Education Center
2112 Behan Road, Crystal Lake

DuPage Co – April 13th— 9 a.m. to Noon
The Grounds and Resources Complex at Blackwell Forest Preserve.
29 W 220 Mack Road in West Chicago
Please pre-register with Cindy Hedges at (630) 876-5929

Current Monitors' Workshops

For monitors already participating in the BCN Census, or who have done similar census work in the past, these workshops will feature:

- Panel discussions with bird monitors, land managers and stewards focusing on how you can get more involved with the planning at your site;
- Answers to your questions about ecology issues and monitoring protocols;
- Optional hands-on session on the new BCN data entry website. (All workshops are held in facilities with computer labs.) This is a great opportunity to enter any old data you may have – bring it to the workshop!

Lake/McHenry—March 30th—11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Lake County Discovery Museum, Wauconda
Rte. 176 Just E. of Wauconda

Cook Co. – March 23rd
Chicago Agricultural High School
3857 W 111th St, Chicago

DuPage, Kane Co. – March 9th— 9 a.m.-Noon
Sixth Street School
210 S. Sixth Street, Geneva

For updated information contact the Habitat Project hotline at 847-965-2939, or visit our website at www.habitat-project.org

We wholeheartedly believe that America's invincible spirit is even stronger in the birding community. Therefore, we are continuing to offer tours in 2002 to our favorite tropical destinations. A portion of the proceeds of each trip will be donated to the Sept. 11th Fund in the name of all trip participants.

JAMAICA March 12 - 21

10 day tour will visit every major birding area for all local and Caribbean endemics and wintering migrants. At Marshall's Pen in central Jamaica, we will meet the co-author of Jamaica's field guide at his great birding lodge in Mandeville. A copy of the beautiful "coffee-table" book on *The Birds of Jamaica* by Frank Bernal, O.D., will be given away by drawing on each tour.



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO March 4 - 14

11 day tour for the rare Piping Guan (no one else searches for this species) and many more exciting neotropical species. Highlights include boat trips into Trinidad's Caroni Bird Sanctuary for the grand spectacle of the Scarlet Ibis and to beautiful Little Tobago Island for Red-billed Tropicbirds and other seabirds. Other dates are available for independent travelers at very competitive rates.

- ☛ Tours to both areas will be led by expert birding guides from each country.
- ☛ Tours of small groups, limited to 10, will not be cancelled if tour limit is not met.

TROPICAL BIRDING TOURS

Telephone/Fax: 773-777-2923; 800-462-2473

e-mail: scarletibis2000@earthlink.net

COMPASS

Chicago Audubon Society
North Park Village
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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.

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Leading Whoopers' Comeback

by Karen Furnweger
CAS secretary

"We have this incredible opportunity to save an endangered species. It's something people have been trying to work at for years and years and years. And because we have this technique, we have the privilege of doing it."

— Joe Duff

The endangered species is the whooping crane, the technique is ultralight-aircraft-led migration, and Joe Duff is a photographer, ultralight pilot, cofounder of Operation Migration and bird handler who last fall led captive-bred whoopers from Wisconsin more than 1,200 miles to Florida behind his fabric-winged, go-cart-sized aircraft powered by a 50-horsepower engine.

But the heroic effort to reintroduce whooping cranes to their eastern migratory range after a century-long absence involved more than those intrepid figures in the sky. It is the ongoing work of the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership, which, besides Canada-based Operation Migration, includes the International Whooping Crane Recovery Team, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, the International Crane Foundation, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Wisconsin

National Resources Foundation and many local partners.

In addition to Duff and the seven birds that completed the journey, the "flock" consisted of ultralight pilots Bill Lishman and Deke Clark, who are the other principles of Operation Migration, two volunteer pilots flying top cover in a Cessna 182 and a ground crew of more than a dozen biologists, wildlife officials, veterinarians, mechanics and assistants. Other critical participants were the approximately 50 landowners between Wisconsin and Florida who provided the cranes and their entourage with secured stopovers.

One of the keys to successfully reintroducing the birds was to keep them from ever seeing or hearing the many people involved with their care and training. Whoopers' identity – and future social and sexual behavior – is fixed at birth when they imprint on their caregivers, ordinarily their parents. Imprinting also creates a bond between the chicks and the figures that will feed and protect them. At the Patuxent, Maryland, facility, where the birds were bred, exposure to their species began even before they

hatched. A recorded soundscape of the whooper brood call and marsh sounds – along with a humming ultralight engine – was piped into the incubator. During their first, impressionable days, they saw adult whoopers from their nursery pens. They learned to eat and drink from a hand puppet shaped like a whooper's head. And everyone who had contact with the chicks was disguised in a baggy white head-to-knee costume.

The migration also hinged on the birds faithfully following the ultralight, at first around their exercise pen and later into the air. From the ultralights, the cranes would learn their migration route, carefully plotted by Lishman, and fly it themselves in the spring.

Each of the three tiny aircraft has been customized with Global Positioning System navigation, a sound system that broadcasts digitally recorded whooper calls for communicating with the birds, a radio for communicating with the Cessna pilots (who have contact with the ground crew), a quiet three-blade rear propeller enclosed in a guard to protect the birds and a wing that allows the craft to fly as slow as 35 mph – crane speed.

Dan Sprague, a biologist and the chicks' trainer at Patuxent, conditioned the birds to follow the ultralight with the help of Robo-Crane, a large crane-faced puppet with a trigger mechanism that dispenses mealworms, corn, or other treats from its mouth. Soon the costume-clad Sprague was taxiing, birds in tow, to a pond where the cranes learned to catch dragonflies, grasshoppers and snails.

In July, before they fledged, the birds were transferred to Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, in central Wisconsin. Once again they were at a critical imprinting point – their first flight. Their crane's-eye-view of the land below would enable them to recognize the place to return to each

spring to breed.

As the birds' flying skills increased, they learned to ride the air rolling off the ultralight's wing to save wingbeats and energy. They also started to fly in the chevron formation.

On Oct. 17, eight birds took off from Necedah behind the ultralights. One bird died en route, another made the migration by van because he wouldn't stay with the flock, and six flew into Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge, on Florida's Gulf coast, on Dec. 3 – 48 days, 25 stops and 1,224 miles after they left Necedah.

In what is called a "soft release," biologists are monitoring the birds all winter. The cranes move about freely, foraging morning and evening in the salt marshes and often roosting in shallow water at night. They also have access to an 8-foot-high mesh pen, which is surrounded by a low electric fence. Despite their good instincts and the biologists' precautions, two birds have been killed by one or more bobcats. Wildlife officials acknowledge that losses, including from predators, are a reality in any reintroduction program as animals hone their survival skills. But they also try to minimize known threats, and one bobcat has been live-trapped and relocated.

If all goes well, the birds will head north in April, possibly flocking with sandhill cranes. Meanwhile, the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership will be coordinating the fall migration with another brood of whoopers – one of four more annual ultralight-led migrations. The goal is a flock of 125 whooping cranes, including 25 breeding pairs, in Wisconsin by 2020.

For more information about the migration and updates on the birds, go to www.operationmigration.org and www.bringbackthecranes.org.



Joe Duff of Operation Migration puts on the last part of the white costume, his flying helmet, before leading six whooping cranes out of Kankakee County on the next leg of their migration south. Photo by Karen Furnweger.



Kelly Maguire, an aviculturist from the International Crane Foundation, demonstrates Robo-Crane. Photo by Karen Furnweger.



Two trainers in costume, left and right, exercise the juvenile cranes at Necedah National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Karen Furnweger.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monthly Workdays

At the Skokie Lagoons: March 9 and April 13.

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.

Field Trips

Wings Over Savanna: Eagle Sighting Field Days

During the winter, more bald eagles can be seen along the Mississippi River in Illinois than anywhere south of Alaska. Hundreds of bald eagles spend the winter feeding around the locks and dams and other open water areas of the Mississippi River, and roosting in the bluff areas around the river.

Dress for the weather (layered clothes are best for the warmer bus or colder outdoor temperatures) and bring a lunch, beverage, snacks,

binoculars, field guide and spotting scope if you have one. The trip to Savanna is just over 3 hours; we will be traveling by coach bus.

Saturday, March 9, 6:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Field Museum of Natural History/CAS trip (bus leaves from Field Museum in Chicago) call: (312) 665-7400.

Cost: \$50 for Field Museum and CAS members; Non-members, \$60.

Bird Walks

Wooded Island: Tuesday, March 26 at 8:00 a.m. and Saturday, March 30 at 8:00 a.m.

Every Wednesday in April at 7:00 a.m.

Every Saturday in April 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.

North Park Village Nature Center: Every Saturday in April at 8:00 a.m.

Meet in front of the Nature Center at 5801 N. Pulaski Rd. Bring binocu-

lars and field guides. Walks are led by Audubon guides. For more info, call the Nature Center at (773) 744-5472.

Saturday, April 27: Early spring migrants at Lyman Woods in DuPage County—8:00-10:00 a.m.

Call Stephen or Chris Lee (708) 485-8197, or email at stephenc@interaccess.com.

Woodcock Courting Flights at sunset: Saturday, March 23 and Wednesday, March 27; and Sunday, April 7 and Saturday, April 13.

You don't have to go far to see the high flying courtship of this unusual looking bird. Join us at 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Wolf Road Prairie (31st St. and Wolf Rd. in Westchester). We've had good luck in the past 8 years seeing woodcock flights on the prairie. This year, these trips will be co-sponsored by Save the Prairie Society. For exact times call Stephen or Chris Lee at (708) 485-8197 a day or two before the trip. Email stephenc@interaccess.com

Annual Awards Dinner

Saturday, April 6 at 5:30 p.m.

Join us again for our annual awards dinner to be held at the Homestead Restaurant in Melrose Park. Details on page 1.

Other

Birdathon! 2002 Mailing Party Saturday, April 13, 9:00-2:30

At the Chicago Audubon Society office at 5801 N. Pulaski. Volunteers needed! For more information, or to sign up, call Joe Lill at (773) 631-3154 or email him at: trptjoe@aol.com.

Birdathon! 2002 Wednesday, May 15- Tuesday, May 21



Join Chicago Audubon Society Today!

Membership is both for the National Audubon Society and the Chicago Audubon Society. This includes subscriptions to both AUDUBON Magazine (published by NAS), and the Compass (published by CAS). Please copy or cut out this form and mail to the NAS address below. All checks should be payable to the National Audubon Society.

National Audubon Society
Attn: K. Totaro
700 Broadway
New York, New York 10003

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and my local chapter, the Chicago Audubon Society.

G - 58, 7CAP1

Please send Audubon Magazine and the Compass to the address below:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

____ NAS Introductory Membership \$20

____ Senior Citizen (62 and Over) \$15

____ Student \$15

____ Membership Renewal \$35

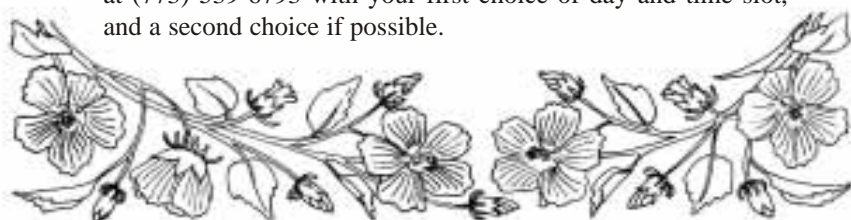


Flower and Garden Show 2002

Chicago Audubon will again be sponsoring a booth at the Chicago Flower and Garden Show at Navy Pier from March 9th through the 17th. The purpose of the booth is to spread the word about Chicago Audubon and the environment. At the booth, we'll be handing out information, offering specials on memberships and selling ecology-related items.

We need volunteers to help out at the booth, especially on the weekend and in the evenings. If you can help out, you will receive free admission to the show, but parking will not be covered. The show hours are from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. every day except Sundays, when the show ends at 6:00 p.m.

The following time slots have been set up to schedule volunteers: 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., and 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. If you would like to help, please call the office at (773) 539-6793 with your first choice of day and time slot, and a second choice if possible.



The 14th Annual Cook County Owl Count March 8-10, 2002

Join us once again in surveying the owls of our metropolitan area. All that's needed is a tape recording of our local screech and great horned owls, and a sense of adventure. If you have an area you'd like to cover, let us know. If you want to participate but don't know how, we'll match you with a group that is already covering an area. Pending Cook County Forest Preserve District approval, we'll provide Forest Preserve permits to each group. This allows you to be on Forest

Preserve property in the late evening, nighttime, and early morning hours. Participants from previous years will receive a mailing with details. New owlers can sign up by calling Stephen or Christine Lee at (708) 485-8197. Our email address is stephenc@interaccess.com

