



COMPASS

Navigating the world of birds and nature

VOLUME 16, ISSUE 4

APRIL 2002



by Joe Lill
Birdathon Coordinator

As I write this, there's still snow on the ground, but birders are already shifting their binoculars from jaegers and snowy owls to red-winged blackbirds and American woodcocks. Birdathon! 2002 can't be far behind.

The winners of Birdathon! 2001, the BudBirders team led by Jill Anderson and Walter Marcisz (and named for Bud Wyman, former CAS President) captured the coveted Beecher Cup, and yes, bragging rights, by identifying 133 species in a single day!

Following close behind were the official CAS team and Village People (named for their favorite birding haunt, North Park Village). The three teams raised over \$5,000 for Chicago Audubon programs.

Again this year, all funds raised through Birdathon pledges will go towards CAS programs. With cuts in funding from National Audubon, it has become more important than ever that each local chapter raise more of its operating expenses. Our programs in

education, preservation, restoration and advocacy have been well received, and we'd like to continue our work, with your help.

To raise funds for this endeavor, Birdathon teams will be going out during the week of May 15-21. As in the past, you may pledge a fixed amount or base your pledge on the number of species counted by your favorite team.

We would love to add more teams this year, and get more birders involved. If you have your own group of birders who like to compete, great! If you're a stray cat who'd like to join a team, we can help with that, too. Not very experienced? Don't worry, we'll find a team for you. Many birders have added species to their life lists on Birdathon day!

In a new twist, for the first time, there will be no CAS team. We're going to split up in order to add more teams to the contest, and all teams will be eligible to win, so the competition should be hotter than ever!

You'll soon be receiving pledge forms in the mail, and you'll have a number of pledging options. You can

pledge a flat amount, pledge an amount per species identified by your favorite team, or pledge an amount based on the total species count of all teams, which, last year, was about 145 species. If you pledge this way, based on the species count, it will make us all more motivated! In other words, if you pledge a dime per species, we'd raise \$14.50; a quarter per species, \$36.25; \$1.00 per species, \$145. The more species we count, the more money we raise! Either way, we welcome your pledge.

As a reminder, Dr. William Beecher is the Director Emeritus of the Chicago Academy of Sciences, and one of the pioneering birders in the Chicago area. The CAS Board of Directors is thrilled that he lent his name to this contest.

Here are the rules:

Each team must have three to six members (Junior Teams may have more);

Birding is confined to any one day between May 15 and May 21, 2002;

All birds must be seen or heard by at least two team members;

All birds must be seen or heard in Cook County, IL;

Your team must bring in at least \$100 in pledges (This is not required for Junior Teams);

The team that gets the most species will win the coveted Beecher Cup.

Prospective teams should contact me at (773) 631-3154 or trptjoe@aol.com before May 10th.

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. To sign up: contact Joe Lill.

Bird Monitors and Census Takers Needed for Chicago's City Parks

Help the public learn about birds!

Last summer, the Chicago Audubon Society and other members of the Bird Conservation Network started a pilot program with the Chicago Park District to help collect information on birds. Volunteer monitors visited assigned parks eight times (twice during the nesting period—June 1-25) and made surveys of the birds they found there.

This year, we'd like to expand the project into more parks, and use the information volunteers collect in a new way. You will be able to e-mail (or fax) the park(s) you survey the species list of birds you sight on your monitoring walk. Species lists would go to your park's field house supervisor, who

would then post the information at an educational kiosk at your park.

Besides these lists, other nature and bird-related materials would be made available at your park. We hope more park users will become interested in watching birds, going on bird walks, and participating in stewardship activities such as habitat restoration projects.

This is a great opportunity to become involved in something new. Most parks are fairly small, and only an hour or so a month will be needed to survey the birds there.

Listed below are the parks that need monitors. Please contact CAS Research Committee Chairman



Yellow-shafted flicker at Lincoln Park. Photo by Kanae Hirabayashi.

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Bird Monitors

continued from page 1

Alan Anderson, at 847-390-7437 or by e-mail at casresearch@home.com, to sign up for a park. Additional information and instructions will then be sent to you.

We are hoping to get a number of volunteer monitors in place for the main part of spring migration (by late April or May), so if you are interested, please let us know as soon as possible.

A) LAKEFRONT PARKS:

- 1) Grant Park
- 2) Rainbow Park and Dune Habitat— 3111 E. 77th St. 60649

B) LAGOONS and adjacent areas:

- 1) Auburn Park (406 W. Winnebago Pkwy @ 7800 S)
- 2) Douglas Park (1401 S. Sacramento Ave @ 3999 W)
- 3) Indian Boundary Park (2500 W. Lunt Ave @ 7000 N)
- 4) Jackson Park (6401 S. Stoney Island Ave @ 1600 E)
 - A) Paul Douglas Sanctuary/Wooded Island
 - B) Bob-o-link Meadow
- 5) Lincoln Park - North Pond (N. of Fullerton and the Notebaert Museum)
- 6) Lincoln Park - South Pond (east of Farm-in-the-Zoo)
- 7) Lincoln Park – Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool (the former zoo rookery, directly north of Lincoln Park Zoo)
- 8) Marquette Park (6734 S. Kedzie Ave. @ 3200 W)
- 9) McKinley Park (2210 W. Pershing Road @ 3900 S)
- 10) Sherman Park (1301 W. 52nd St.)
- 11) Washington Park (5531 S. King Drive @ 400 E)

C) CHICAGO RIVER/North Shore Channel Parks

- 1) California Park (3843 N. California @ 2800 W)
- 2) Canal Origins Park (2701 S. Ashland Ave.)
- 3) Canal River Walk (33rd & Ashland)
- 4) Clark Park (3400 N. Rockwell @ 2600 W)
- 5) Eugene Field Park (5100 N.



Mute swans in Lincoln Park. Photo by Kanae Hirabayashi.

- Ridgeway Ave @ 3732 W)
- 6) Legion Park (W. Peterson/6000N to W. Foster along North Shore Channel)
- 7) River Park (5100 N. Francisco Av @ 2900 W)
- 8) Ronan Park (2900-2928 W. Lawrence Av @ 4800 N)

OTHER NATURAL AREAS:

- 1) Bessemer Park Nature Garden (8930 S. Muskegon Ave @ 2838 E.)
- 2) Burnham Park - 47th Street Nature Area (47th St. and Lake Shore Drive)
- 3) Hurley Park - savanna (1901 W. 100th St.)
- 4) Ogden Park Nature Garden (6500 S. Racine Ave @ 1200 W.)
- 5) Prospect Gardens Nature Garden (10940-11000 S. Prospect Ave. @ 1826 W)
- 6) Quinn Park - woodland (6239 N. McClellan @ ~5600 W.) adjacent to Edgebrook Woods and Golf Course, Cook County Forest Preserve District
- 8) Rutherford Sayre Nature Garden (6871 W. Belden Ave @ 2300 N.)
- 9) Nichol's park (wildflower garden) (1300 E. 55th St)

Want to do more?

If you can, we'd also like you to do monitoring for the Bird Conservation Network. This involves a little more time at the park of your choice. You can do timed observations - similar to the spring or Christmas bird counts—or perform more scientific surveys - transects or point counts. No training is needed to do the timed observations, although if you prefer to do the transects or point counts and are unfamiliar with those methods, you may need further training.

If you're interested in doing this as well, you'll need to contact Lee Ramsey of BCN at LeeRamsey@aol.com before you can get started. He can provide further details.

Or would you prefer the short version?

If you would prefer to make only two visits in June to census nesting birds in Cook County, contact Alan Anderson at (847) 390-7437 or casresearch@attbi.com. For more information about the census, check out the website at www.fmnh.org/birdcensus.

This will help our city parks!

In addition to surveying birds, the park district will welcome your feedback and suggestions for improving our city parks. Watch upcoming issues of the COMPASS for details on how to do this.

COMPASS

Chicago Audubon Society
North Park Village
5801-C N. Pulaski Road
Chicago, IL 60646-6057



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Layout Artist: Noël Maguigad

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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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BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS TO BE SURVEYED IN COOK AND LAKE COUNTIES

Your help is needed in an important study being conducted this year by the Illinois Natural History Survey. The study will examine the nesting ecology and contaminant exposure of the state endangered black-crowned night heron. Research will include a population survey, nest monitoring and the collection of fish and other prey species for contaminants analysis. The project is slated to begin in April, 2002 and continue through the breeding season.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Night herons forage extensively throughout Cook County in Illinois and Lake County in Indiana, including lakefront locations. These birds forage mostly in the evening and twilight hours. Volunteers are needed to record the location, number, age, date and times of birds seen. Anecdotal information would be helpful (i.e. behavior, direction of travel, species foraged, etc). It will also be important to note areas of seemingly suitable habitat (ponds, lakes, rivers, swamps, marshes) where night herons are not seen.

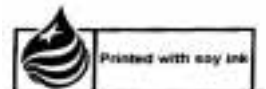
Data is needed from April through August 2002, with the most critical period being mid-May through mid-July. Evening hours are most valuable, but observations from all times of day are welcome, whenever you can participate.



Black-crowned night heron (Hawaii) courtesy of Roy Slovenko.

WHAT TO DO:

Contact Walter Marcisz at WJMarsisz@aol.com. He will provide you with standardized forms, updates and further instructions as the study unfolds.



Remodeled Lake Renwick Heronry Offers Improved Habitat for Wetland Birds



First breeding season post-construction, with brush boxes in foreground.
All photos courtesy of David Robson, Forest Preserve District of Will County.

by Gail Goldberger
COMPASS Editor

Another rookery in our great metropolitan area has been rebuilt. The Lake Renwick Heronry in Plainfield, Illinois underwent restoration in 2001, and now awaits its second breeding season.

Lake Renwick, just 40 minutes south and west of Chicago, is the second largest rookery in Illinois. (The largest rookery in the state is located in East St. Louis.) Two groups of islands provide breeding grounds for our migrating wetland birds: great blue herons, great egrets, black-crowned night herons (state endangered) and double-crested cormorants. Throughout the 1990's, this rookery consistently supported between 800-1000 nesting pairs of all four species of birds.

The west group of islands remained dense with vegetation over the years, but the east group did not, stimulating restoration plans here, as at Baker's Lake in Barrington. A 1999 Will County referendum approved expenditures for capital improvements, and by March of 2001, Landscape Resources Inc. had completed rookery-remodeling work in time to greet returning birds.

Like other deteriorated island rookeries, nesting opportunities had declined here due to soil erosion and wind, wave and beaver damage. Will County Forest Preserve staff and Will County Audubon volunteers have worked over the years to stabilize the island's ecology. These efforts maintained the islands, but did not provide a long-term solution.

Last year, the remediation project was completed on the east islands. The goals of the project were to stabilize and protect island shorelines and to replace nesting site opportunities. The design of this rookery was intended to replicate the habitat that once existed, thereby allowing the natural ecology of the rookery to re-develop. The hierarchies were stacked bottom up, so that the lowest structures (brush boxes bordered with logs) would attract 35% of the nesting birds, mid-range structures 30%, upper structures 20% and apex structures 15%. This smart installation lined the shores with rip-rap (rocks) to prevent soil erosion, and bordered the brush boxes with logs to protect against wave action.

It was hoped that birds would build a total of 500 nests on the new nesting sites (the east islands alone). In 2001, the nest count came to 605. The aim this year is to get the nest count up to 725. The total nest count for both east and west islands in 2001 totaled 944. This count falls in the range of nesting totals for the 1990's; the restoration is therefore considered a success.

David Robson, from the Resource Management Section of the Forest Preserve District of Will County, is so protective of these birds that he does his counting (up to five times a season) in a blind, so that they don't know he's there. "Forty-five minutes off the eggs can affect their viability," he said, "and the sight of humans can frighten them off their nests." He is also conservative in his count estimates. Particularly on the west islands, which are dense with vegetation, he feels he can never sight all the nests.

This rookery restricts public access to the preserve, but encourages the public to view the restoration and returning birds on Wednesday mornings, 10 a.m.-12 a.m. and Saturday mornings, 8 a.m.-12 a.m. from May 1-August 15, 2002. Migratory bird walks are also offered at these times from March 1-April 30, 2002.

These walks are an excellent opportunity to view the second rookery restoration in our metropolitan area. The island groupings can be viewed from the east and west, and visitors are

encouraged to take in the rookery from both sides. This heronry is quite different from Baker's Lake, and is worth the trip for comparison.

If you would like to volunteer to lead walks at this rookery, the Forest Preserve is offering two training sessions from 9 a.m.-11:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 20th and Wednesday, April 24th. For more information, call Renee at (708) 479-2255.



East islands seen from public viewing area on the first day of construction.



First breeding season post-construction with new artificial nesting structures.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monthly Workdays

At the Skokie Lagoons: April 6 and May 11.

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.

Gardening for Birds and Butterflies Friday, April 12, 7:30-9pm (7-7:30 refreshments)

Spring is here and it is time to think about gardening. Join Marian Thill, Master Gardener and Certified Naturalist, for a slide presentation highlighting shrubs, perennials and annuals that attract birds and butterflies. Marian's yard is certified through the National Wildlife Federation's backyard habitat program. In ten years of specialized gardening she has documented 71 species of birds and 19 species of butterflies. Drop by for inspiration to create your own backyard habitat.

Beginning Bird Identification Skills Friday, May 10, 7:30-9pm (7-7:30 refreshments)

Judy Pollock from the Bird Conservation Network (BCN) will go over basic bird identification techniques. Judy will show slides, and then take us outside for practice. BCN coordinates volunteer bird monitors as part of their Census work. This skill session will introduce you to being a bird monitor. Try it out and see if you like it! Bring binoculars and a field guide; the Nature Center has extras if you don't.

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.

Field Trips

Black Swamp, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Magee Marsh and Crane Creek State Park in Ohio. Friday, May 17-Sunday, May 19.

Break out the binoculars for an exciting weekend of hiking and bird-watching in Ohio. Near the shores of Lake Erie, the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge has over 8,000 acres of marshland, grasslands and forests. This ecosystem is home to hundreds of wetland birds, shorebirds, ducks, herons, hawks, warblers and nesting bald eagles. A special highlight is the bird-banding demonstration by staff and volunteers of the Black Swamp Bird Observatory, where you can see many warblers and migrants "up close and personal."

Co-sponsored by the Field Museum and CAS. Cost is \$170 for members; \$185 for non-members. Includes bus transportation and lodging. Pre-registration required. Call the Field Museum at (312) 665-7400.

Bird Walks

Wooded Island: 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 and May at 8:00 a.m.

Meet in front of the Nature Center at 5801 N. Pulaski Rd. Bring binoculars and field guides. Walks are led by Audubon guides. For more info, call Don Klimovich at (773) 878-4421.

Woodcock Courting Flights at Sunset: 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

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

Lyman Woods is located at the intersection of 31st Street and Highland Ave in Downer's Grove. The entrance is located on the east side of Highland just south of the intersection with 31st. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. For further information, call Stephen or Christine Lee (708) 485-8197, or email us at stephenc@interaccess.com.

Saturday, May 4: 8:00-10:00 a.m. Rosehill Cemetery—5800 N. Ravenswood, Chicago.

Join Joe Lill and Carol Nelson for a morning of warblers, woodpeckers and ducks. Meet at the main entrance at Ravenswood and Rosehill Avenues. For info call Carol Nelson at (773) 583-8616.

Sunday, May 12: Thatcher Woods Mother's Day Bird Walk—8-10:00 a.m.

The DesPlaines River Valley is where you can see spring migrants. Meet at the Trailside Museum parking lot, west of the intersection of Thatcher Rd. and Chicago Ave (south side) in River Forest. Any questions? Call Christine or Stephen Lee at (708) 485-8197.

Saturday, May 18: Skokie Lagoons Bird Walk, 8:00 a.m.

We will be birding the wooded area along the lagoons. This is usually an excellent area for spring migrants, as well as our returning summer residents. Take Edens Expressway (I-94) north to Willow Road; exit east on Willow. We'll meet in the parking lot on the north side of Willow, just east of the Expressway. For further information, call Doris Johanson at (847) 299-3505.

Annual Awards Dinner

Saturday, April 6 at 5:30 p.m. Join us for our annual awards dinner to be held at the Homestead Restaurant in Melrose Park. Reservations required. Call the office at (773) 539-6793 or Alan Anderson (847) 390-7437.

Other Important Events

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

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.

Saturday, April 20, 9:30-4:00 Chicago Earth Day Festival in Lincoln Park

Earth Day brings people together to have fun and celebrate our natural heritage, learn more about nature and the environment, and find new ways to help protect our natural resources.

Saturday, May 4, All Day Illinois Spring Bird Count

Call area compilers to register:
Cook County—Duane Heaton: (847) 358-5856 or dheaton@xnet.com
DuPage County—Bob Fisher: (630) 985-2956 or BFisher928@aol.com
Kane County—Bob Montgomery: (847) 428-6331 or Rmontey@aol.com
Lake County—Danny Diaz: Ddzhawkeye@aol.com
McHenry County—David A. Frey: (815) 338-4866 or dafcjf@hotmail.com
Will County—Joy Alwan (815) 723-9775

Wednesday, May 15- Tuesday, May 21 Birdathon! 2002. See page 1 for details.

Join IBET-Illinois Birders Exchanging Thoughts, an Internet discussion group that promotes the joy of birding and keeps you updated on the bird happenings around Illinois. To subscribe send email to majordomo@lists.enter-act.com with the following as a single line in the body of your message: *subscribe ibet*
Subscription confirmation and directions on posting will be sent back to you.

YOU CAN GET IT HERE!

The brand new Peterson Field Guide, "Hummingbirds of North America," is available at our office. The ones we have for sale have been signed by author Sheri Williamson, co-founder of the Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory. Buy it in the office for \$22, or order over the phone (773) 539-6793 and we'll send to you (for an extra \$3 shipping & handling).

Election of Board Members

Chicago Audubon will have its annual election at the Awards dinner on April 6. Nominated for the executive committee is Christine Lee (President) and Sholom Gliksman (Vice-President). The offices of Secretary and Treasurer are still open. Nominated to fill three-year terms on the Board of Directors are: Barbara Kratochvil and Judy Pollock.

One year term nominations are Al Rothenbach and Don Darnell. One other one-year term is still open. If any Audubon member wishes to nominate a candidate for this Board opening please get in touch with Christine Lee at 708-485-8197.

JEWEL/OSCO SHOP AND SHARE UPDATE

Many thanks to everyone who went out and shopped between December 17-19. We were remarkably consistent in our behavior. In December 2000, we raised \$140 and in December 2001, \$141. This reflects over \$2,800 worth of groceries purchased by Chicago Audubon supporters during designated shopping days.