



# COMPASS

*Navigating the world of birds and nature*

VOLUME 16, ISSUE 5

MAY 2002

MAY 11

## The International Migratory Bird Day 2002 Theme — CELEBRATING SPECIAL PLACES FOR BIRDS

International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD), held annually on the second Saturday in May, is an invitation to celebrate and support migratory bird conservation. Like any day of recognition, IMBD exists to focus attention on a valuable resource—the nearly 350 species of migratory birds that travel between nesting habitats in North America and non-breeding grounds in South and Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean.

### Special recognition

Because of the type, number of variety of birds that use them, some places are especially important to protect. Habitats critical to rare or threatened species must be preserved if the species are to be preserved. An important place for birds might also be one that has a significant role in conservation awareness, education or research.

Special places for birds deserve recognition, and programs have been designed to identify, designate and safeguard them. The Important Bird Areas program, the Ramsar treaty, the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network and local habitat certification programs are examples. Each of these programs is non-regulatory; that is, they rely on volunteers: public and private landowners, local citizens, communities, organizations and agencies. The

site designations or certifications provided by these programs not only help set priorities, they stimulate additional advocacy and stewardship for these special places.

### Important Bird Areas

IBAs are areas that support: threatened and endangered species; species that are vulnerable because they are found only in limited areas or because they require one particular type of habitat; or very large congregations of birds. Hierarchical criteria determine a site's importance at a global, continental, national and local level.

The IBA program was initiated by BirdLife International in Europe in the 1980s, and has expanded to Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas. There are nearly 600 IBAs in Canada, the American Bird Conservancy and National Audubon Society have established IBA programs in the U.S., and Mexico has 230 IBAs. Information about IBAs in the Americas can be found at

[www.birdlife.net/sites/index.cfm](http://www.birdlife.net/sites/index.cfm), in Canada at

[www.ibacanada.com/index.cfm](http://www.ibacanada.com/index.cfm), in the U.S. at

[www.abcbirds.org/iba/aboutiba.htm](http://www.abcbirds.org/iba/aboutiba.htm) and [www.audubon.org/bird/iba](http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba), in Mexico at

[www.iztacala.unam.mc/cipamex/aicas.html](http://www.iztacala.unam.mc/cipamex/aicas.html).

### Ramsar Sites

Named after the town in Iran where it was signed in 1971, this intergovernmental treaty was developed to stem the

loss of wetlands and ensure their conservation worldwide. Sites are designated as Wetlands of International Importance based on criteria for uniqueness, value for rare and endangered plants and animals, large numbers of waterbirds, or importance for fish.

Most Ramsar sites meet the criteria for numbers of waterbirds, a term which includes loons, grebes, herons, bitterns, storks, swans, geese, ducks, terns, bulls, shorebirds and other aquatic species. To qualify, the site must host 20,000 or more birds, or one percent of the population of a species. There are now about 1,030 Ramsar sites identified in the 122+ participating nations, with new sites added regularly.

Visit [www.ramsar.org](http://www.ramsar.org) for more information.

### Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN)

WHSRN was created to protect important areas for shorebirds. Shorebirds include plovers, oystercatchers, avocets, stilts and sandpipers, and inhabit open areas of grasslands, wetlands, and tundra, as well as beaches. Migratory shorebirds tend to concentrate in great numbers in their breeding and migrating and wintering habitats, and disturbances at these areas could have devastating effects on entire populations. WHSRN sites are those which host a minimum of 20,000 shorebirds a year (some host 500,000 or more).

Launched in 1986, WHSRN is administered by the Manomet Center

for Conservation Sciences and includes 200+ partner organizations. The network of sites now includes 20 million acres of habitat. Information on WHSRN can be found at [www.manomet.org/WHSRN.htm](http://www.manomet.org/WHSRN.htm)

### Certified Habitats

Some places are most important at the local level. A site can have a tremendous effect on public interest, education and support, even if it cannot be said to provide habitat critical to the survival of a species. A variety of conservation organizations offer certification to homeowners, schools, corporations and communities who provide habitat on their own properties.

The Backyard, Schoolyard and Community Habitats programs of the National and Canadian Wildlife Federations are described on [www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org) and [www.cwf-fcf.org](http://www.cwf-fcf.org). The Wildlife Habitat Council's certification programs for corporations and other large land owners are described at [www.whc.org](http://www.whc.org).

For information on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Schoolyard Habitat Program, visit [www.fws.gov/r5cbfo/schoolyard.htm](http://www.fws.gov/r5cbfo/schoolyard.htm).

### International Migratory Bird Day

#### Ways to Celebrate

- Take notice of the birds around you
- Point out these birds to someone else

continued on page 4

## See the Wonder of Migration

**Magee Marsh Wildlife Area & Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge — A Chicago Audubon Society & Field Museum Trip  
May 17-19, 2002**

Journey with us to one of the premier birding areas of the Midwest. Once known as the Lake Erie Marsh Region, rivaled only by the Great Kankakee Marsh, Ohio's shoreline is the southernmost, warmest and shallowest of the great lake basins.

With more than 2,000 acres of prime habitats and more than 300 species sighted in the past, Magee Marsh is an American birding "hot



From left to right: tree swallow, golden-winged warbler and Canada warbler. All photos by Roy Slovenko.

spot," and one of the ten most important concentration points for neotropical migrants. Because the birds are reluctant to cross the great lake, they pile in on the forested beach ridges fringing the basin to feed and rest. When the birds have regained energy, they fly west around the lake or island hop to Point Pelee.

Being a major stopover point, the birding here is nothing less than phenomenal. Many species of warblers can be seen including yellow-rumped, magnolia, chestnut-sided, yellow, black and white, Wilson's, mourning, bay-breasted and Tennessee. This is

the only place in the country to see the Kirtland's warbler.

Just west of Magee Marsh is the 8,316-acre Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, with nine miles of hiking trails that wind through grasslands, forested wetlands and mudflats. Two years ago, bald eagles, mute swans, dunlin, killdeer, yellowlegs and ruddy turnstones were seen here. Other birds that can be viewed along the shores and at Crane Creek State Park are blue herons, great egrets, vireos, waterthrushes, flycatchers, orioles, tanagers and grosbeaks.

Last year, according to Mark Shieldcastle of the Black Swamp Bird

Observatory (BSBO), one-quarter million shorebirds were sighted in the region. The trip this year will again take in the banding station at BSBO, where warblers are weighed, measured, banded and released. Don't miss this chance for an up-close and personal view of these amazing migrants.

Those lucky enough to sign up in time will pay a modest \$170 for touring, lodging and transportation, or \$185 if not a member of CAS or the Field Museum. Call (312) 665-7400 today to sign up. Reservations are mandatory.

—Gail Goldberger

## Restoring Grasslands at Bartel and Orland Forest Preserves is of Global Importance

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, grassland birds have shown steeper, more consistent and more geographically widespread declines than any other ecological or behavioral grouping of birds.

Chicago-area forest preserves contain the last vestiges of prairie grasslands that used to dominate our landscape. There you will find the bobolink, sedge wren and grasshopper sparrow. A few of these preserves now support birds on the state's endangered species list—the short-eared owl, upland sandpiper and Henslow's sparrow.

Restoring our few remaining grasslands so they can thrive and sustain these important populations of birds, in decline in the traditional heart of their breeding range, is one of the highest conservation priorities in our region.

Due to a legal settlement with Material Service Corporation for ruining a local wetland, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and CorLands received \$8 million for restoration work. This settlement is funding the restoration of Bartel and Orland Grasslands.

Bartel Grassland Forest Preserve, located at Vollmer and Central Roads in southern Cook County, is one mile square, and contains 375 acres of grassland. An important requirement for suc-

## THE THISTLE, THE NETTLE

The thistle, the nettle, the burdock, the belladonna  
Have a future. Theirs are wastelands  
And rusty railroad tracks, the sky, silence.

Who shall I be for men many generations later?  
When, after the noise of languages, the award goes to silence?

I was to be redeemed by the gift of arranging words  
But must be prepared for an earth without grammar,

For the thistle, the nettle, the burdock, the belladonna,  
And a small wind above them, a sleepy cloud, silence.

— Czeslaw Milosz

(Translated, from the Polish, by the author and Robert Hass.)

cessful grassland restoration is size. A long and skinny parcel won't do. But it is hard to find parcels of size anywhere to re-establish. Although Bartel is workable, it is small relative to what is a recommended 1000+ acreage for birds to thrive.

Nevertheless, the restoration at Bartel is well underway, and hope is high. Drain tiles are being disabled in order to restore hydration to the parcel, and seeding of native prairie plants has begun. An ecological restoration firm has removed nine miles of fencerow trees that once divided the grassland into nine pieces. The trees provided habitat for bird predators—squirrels and raccoons. By taking them down, the area should be more hospitable for birds. A similar project for nearby Orland Grassland is in the planning stage.

— Gail Goldberger

## Whooping Cranes Head Back to Wisconsin



The experimental flock of five endangered whoopers that wintered in Florida began their migration north on Tuesday, April 9. "They were really active last night (Monday), so perhaps that was their way of saying they were ready to go," said Anne Lacy, International Crane Foundation biologist and one of the two trackers. "They left the pen several times and appeared to be trying to spiral (on the air currents), but then would just circle and return to the pen. We also heard them calling one another much more frequently than in previous weeks."

On Wednesday, April 10, Lacy and

biologist Richard Urbanek reported that the birds spent the night in Georgia, 220 miles north of Crystal River, Florida after having flown for more than six hours.

To aid in tracking, each whooper has a radio transmitter and two are also outfitted with satellite transmitters. The transmitters should allow biologists to monitor them and determine their return path, as well as the type and location of their roosting areas.

Even now, humans do not completely understand migration. There are many theories of what factors contribute to the timing of it, such as length of daylight, but no one is really sure. No one knows how long their flight will take, if they will head straight back to Necedah, WI, or if they will wander and take their time.

Joe Duff, cofounder of Operation

Migration, notes that the uncertainty of the migration north calls for patience. "Just as wild birds do, our birds learned the migration route on a one-way trip. They followed us south as they would follow their parents to the wintering grounds where they separate from them as they mature and become more independent. It is then up to us as surrogate parents to remain calm and patiently wait for their return," Duff said.

The plan this year is to add 18-20 more whooping cranes to the ultralight training in Wisconsin. The ultimate goal is to reintroduce enough cranes to the flyway to establish a self-sustaining flock containing at least 25 breeding pairs.


To follow the five flyers as they head north, log onto [www.bringbackthecranes.org](http://www.bringbackthecranes.org) or [www.operationmigration.org](http://www.operationmigration.org).

### CORRECTIONS TO THE APRIL COMPASS

In the notice about bird monitors and census takers needed for the parks, the correct e-mail address for Alan Anderson is [casresearch@attbi.com](mailto:casresearch@attbi.com)

In the notice about the black-crowned night heron survey, the correct e-mail address for Walter Marcisz is [wjmarcisz@aol.com](mailto:wjmarcisz@aol.com).

With apologies for any inconveniences these errors caused.



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## COMPASS

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North Park Village  
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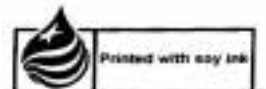
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# CHICAGO'S MIGRATORY HOT SPOTS

Here are some of the parks, preserves and sanctuaries where you can see migration in Chicago.

## Jackson Park's Wooded Island

(In back of the Museum of Science and Industry)

Wooded Island on Chicago's south side is one of the region's best migrant traps in the spring. With its combination of tall trees, lush vegetation and proximity to water—a lagoon and Lake Michigan—Wooded Island is a migrant's paradise. Bobolink Meadow is great for sparrows and grassland birds and the island itself is great for warblers, tanagers, thrushes, orioles, wrens and more. A 20-warbler species day in May is very likely.

## South Shore Cultural Center Nature Sanctuary

7059 South Shore Drive

## Grant Park

Early May is a good time to bird Grant Park. Expect sparrows, thrushes and warblers.

## Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary/Magic Hedge

(Montrose and Lake Michigan)

The restored Montrose Point, with new plantings, long grasses, tall trees

and a cottonwood grove are sure attractions for passing migrants. The new limestone waterfall and seep is sure to attract thirsty passerines. This area should be good from mid-April through early June. You will be able to see shorebirds and waterfowl here, as well as land migrants.

## Lincoln Park Bird Sanctuary at Addison Street

(Addison St. and Lake Michigan)

## Neighborhood Parks

Humboldt—1440 N. Sacramento

Gompers—4222 W. Foster

Indian Boundary—2500 W. Lunt

Garfield—100 N. Central Park

## Parks Along the Chicago River

Horner—2741 W. Montrose

River—5100 N. Francisco

California—3843 N. California

## The Cook County Forest Preserves in the Palos area including Swallow Cliff and McClaughry Springs.

The diverse mix of habitats here from woodlands to grasslands make this area a joy for spring birding. Swallow Cliff and McClaughry Springs are both good places to see warblers.

—Gail Goldberger



Common yellowthroat. Photo by Carol Freeman.



Magnolia warbler. Photo by Carol Freeman.



Lesser yellowlegs. Photo by Carol Freeman.



Wilson's warbler. Photo by Carol Freeman.

## Birding Highlights

### Eagle Sighting Trip in February

Forty-one trippers couldn't ask for better winter weather to view eagles along the Mississippi River. A total of 155 eagles were tallied for the day, including 92 adults, 54 immatures and 9 unknowns.

At the (future) Lost Mound National Wildlife Refuge (formerly the Savanna Army Depot), we saw 131 eagles. One highlight for us was an adult swallowing a fish at very close range. Many red-tailed hawks, a few red-headed woodpeckers, and a flicker were among the other birds observed.

In and around the town of Savanna, we observed three eagles. An eagle nest at Lost Mound, that Ed Anderson showed us, and the one at Sabula, Iowa (Rte. 52), were not yet occupied.

At Lock and Dam #13 (north of Fulton), we observed 21 eagles, all on the ice north of the dam. Most of the water areas that we could observe were iced up, so waterfowl was not abundant. We did also see Canada geese, mallards and common mergansers.

—Alan Anderson

### Some Enchanted Evening

Bird watching is usually an early morning event. Most bird trips start at

7 or 8 a.m. But watching male woodcocks do their high-flying courtship displays is good birding for those of you who don't want to get up early.

Our CAS woodcock birding trips are always at sunset, and this year we again went to Wolf Road Prairie. On Saturday, March 23, 20 people came to see these acrobats of the air. We had two displays, although half-heartedly. It seemed an ideal night—no wind, and not too cold, but maybe the next day's inclement weather affected their performance.

On Wednesday, March 26, the woodcocks redeemed their reputation. Twelve people viewed a fantastic display. If it had been an Olympic event it would have received "tens" from the judges. We had five woodcocks in the air at once, some quite close by, two of whom "dueled" right above our heads. Quite extraordinary.

Our group had to call it a tie between the dueling woodcocks. They displayed for about half an hour, which was great, because for one of our birders, the woodcock was also a life bird. With the moon in the eastern part of the sky and the woodcocks displaying in the west, it surely was an "enchanted evening."

—Christine Lee



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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## Monthly Workdays

*At the Skokie Lagoons: May 11, 9:30 a.m.*

*Note change of time.*

Today we team up with Friends of the Chicago River on their annual "River Rescue" day. We'll have canoes available, on a first-come-first-seat basis, so the lagoon can be cleaned from the canoes. Those of us who don't make it into the canoes will be cleaning up the shoreline.

Meet at the Tower Road boat launch. Enter the parking area on the south side of Tower Road, just west of the bridge.

For more information, call Jerry Garden at (773) 545-4632.

## Member Programs

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

### *Beginning Bird Identification Skills*

*Friday, May 10, 7:30-9pm (7-7:30 refreshments)*

Judy Pollock from the Bird Conservation Network (BCN) and Alan Anderson from CAS will go over basic bird identification techniques. They will show slides, and then take us outside for practice. The BCN coordinates volunteer bird monitors as part of its 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 Trip

*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:*

*Wednesdays in May & June at 7:00 a.m.*

*Saturdays in May & June 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: Saturdays in May & June 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.

*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.

*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, yellow-headed 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 yellowstart@yahoo.com.

## Other Important Events

*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

*Saturday, May 11—International Migratory Bird Day*

*Wednesday, May 15- Tuesday, May 21*

### Birdathon! 2002

Call Joe Lill to find a team or sign up your team. (773) 631-3154.

### 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).

## CELEBRATING SPECIAL PLACES FOR BIRDS

continued from page 1

- Create or improve bird habitat near your home
- Build and maintain a bird feeder near your home
- Keep your cat indoors
- Reduce your use of pesticides in yard and garden
- Drink bird-friendly, shade-grown coffee
- Contribute to a wildlife preservation group or fund
- Join a preservation group
- Volunteer at a refuge or a park
- Participate in a bird count or study
- Donate your binoculars to a budding bird watcher
- Lead or go on a bird walk
- Take a class on migratory birds

**What to do on IMBD weekend: May 11-12**

IMBD events will take place at

Lincoln Park and Brookfield Zoos. Log onto their websites for details: www.lpzoo.org and www.brookfield-zoo.org.

Join USFWS and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County at Crabtree Nature Center in Barrington for a Mother's Day Bird Walk on Sunday, May 12. Call Cyndi Duda at (847) 381-2253 for details. Crabtree is a great place to see migratory birds.

### Buy Shade-Grown Coffee from Chicago Audubon

Purchase bird-friendly organic coffee from the Audubon office at \$10 per 12 oz. bag. We carry whole bean Costa Rican regular, Nicaraguan regular, and Decaffeinated. For an extra \$2, we'll mail it out to you. Call (773) 539-6793 and place your order now.

-Gail Goldberger

## MONITORS NEEDED FOR "LIGHTS OUT" PROGRAM

For the last few years, the Bird Conservation Network has worked with the City of Chicago to set up a "Lights Out" program during spring and fall migration. During specified times of the year, managers of tall buildings in the Loop are asked to dim their lights late in the evening and through the early morning. Birds are attracted to the lights of tall buildings, and often fly into their windows, stunning, injuring and killing themselves.

Ken Wysocki is starting a preliminary study to monitor the impact of this program. Chicago Audubon research committee asks that you take part in this if you can. We need volunteers to do two kinds of monitoring: of the buildings to see if their lights are out; and of the number and species of birds being killed or injured at specific building sites.

Michael Measure from the Fatal Lights Awareness Program (FLAP) in Toronto will lead a training session sometime around May 20. FLAP will also make available a searchable database for the study so accurate records can be kept. Please contact Ken Wysocki at kwysocki@ix.netcom.com for more information.