



COMPASS

Navigating the world of birds and nature

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SEPTEMBER 2003

BIRD SEED SALE

Saturday, October 25

Beat the deadline (October 10) and place your order now for Chicago Audubon Society's Annual Bird Seed Sale. Seed prices are **lower** than last year, so you can afford to buy more and stock up for the whole year!

You can phone your order in (773) 539-6793 using Visa or Master Card. Or you can complete the order form (to the right) and mail it in, with your check payable to Chicago Audubon Society. **All orders must be received by Thursday, October 10th.**

Forty percent (40%) of your purchase is tax deductible. The proceeds finance the work of the Audubon Society, work ranging from bird walks to educational programs to habitat restoration projects.

We will be distributing seed at the same Hines Lumber stores as last year: 7820 West Madison Avenue in River Forest, IL and 1513 Church Street in Evanston, IL. **Be sure to specify your pick-up location on the order form.**

We are selling premium and regular wild bird seed mixes. The **premium mix** is a mix of Black Oil Sunflower, Safflower, Peanut Hearts, White Millet and Cracked Corn. The **regular mix** consists of Black Oil Sunflower, White and Red Millet, Wheat seed, Cracked Corn and Milo.

Thanks to all the volunteers who have helped in the past. We could not conduct the sale without your contribution of time and energy! If anyone would like to volunteer this year, please contact Karen in the office and let her know **at which location** and **how many hours** you can volunteer. **Volunteers need to be at the pick-up site at 8:00 am.**

We would also like to thank all of our customers, past, present and future who help Chicago Audubon by purchasing this bird seed. And the birds would like to thank you, too. Looking forward to seeing everyone on Bird Seed Sale Day!

WETLANDS PROTECTION BILL UP FOR VOTE IN ILLINOIS SENATE

by David Cohen

A major political struggle is forming in Springfield, one that pits Illinois conservationists against a formidable coalition of business and labor interests. The issue is a wetlands protection bill scheduled for a Senate vote in November that was passed by the lower chamber in the spring. Observers call the contest the most significant environmental debate to come before the legislature in years.

"The bill is probably the most important wildlife habitat vote in decades," says Jack Darin, state chapter director of the Sierra Club. "The narrow victory in the House in May was due to tremendous pressure from conservation supporters on Representatives, and we need to repeat that performance for Senators."

"We are very anxious to have the legislation pass," echoes Richard Acker, a land use planner with the Openlands Project in Chicago. "If I had to guess, I'd say it has a fifty-fifty chance of passage. We're facing very serious opposition."

On May 30th, the last day of the legislative session, the House passed HB 422, which extends the protection to wetlands that was lost in January, 2001. The U.S. Supreme Court in a landmark case ruled then against the Army Corps of Engineers, a sharp rebuff that conservationists now hope to reverse. The plaintiffs, a coalition of 25 small municipalities in Northeastern Illinois,

won a decision restricting the Army Corps' authority to protect wetlands. Previously extended to any waterway, the Army Corps' purview was now confined to larger wetlands connected to streams and lakes crossing state lines. Smaller "isolated wetlands" were left exposed to developers and road builders.

The state, according to the Illinois Natural History Survey, has already lost 90% of its wetlands. Among the remaining 900,000 acres, about 150,000 are categorized as "isolated" or "non-navigable." HB 422, formally known as the Wetland Protection Act, would restore to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources the authority taken away from the Army Corps to protect smaller lagoons.

"Most navigable waters do not have good, high-quality marshy components," notes Jerry Garden, a member of the Chicago Audubon board. After decades of human modification, often by the Army Corps itself, larger wetlands "have become little more than straightened channels. The smaller wetlands support plants that provide nesting and foraging opportunities to the marsh birds."

Garden identified Beck Lake and Axehead Lake in the northern part of Cook County, both non-navigable, as some the best birding sites in the area. These two wetlands are among the dozen or so "tollway lakes" created when the Federal government built the Edens Expressway and Interstate 294.

CHICAGO AUDUBON SOCIETY BIRD SEED SALE ORDER FORM

QTY	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	TOTAL
_____	20 lb. Regular Wild Bird Feed	\$4.75	_____
_____	40 lb. Regular Wild Bird Feed	\$8.25	_____
_____	20 lb. Premium Wild Bird Feed	\$6.25	_____
_____	40 lb. Premium Wild Bird Feed	\$11.25	_____
_____	20 lb. Black Oil Sunflower Seed	\$5.50	_____
_____	40 lb. Black Oil Sunflower Seed	\$10.25	_____
_____	25 lb. Sunflower Hearts	\$15.25	_____
_____	25 lb. White Millet	\$6.25	_____
_____	25 lb. Safflower	\$12.25	_____
_____	25 lb. Cracked Corn	\$4.25	_____
_____	10 lb. Peanut Bits	\$7.75	_____
_____	10 lb. Thistle	\$8.75	_____
_____	25 lb. Thistle	\$20.75	_____
_____	13 oz. High Energy Suet Cake	\$1.25	_____
_____	15 oz. Fruit and Nut Bell Treats	\$2.75	_____
	TOTAL		_____

I will PICK UP my order between **9 A.M. and NOON** on **Saturday, Oct. 25th**, at

1613 Church, Evanston **7820 Madison, River Forest**

Please find my check for \$_____ enclosed or charge my credit card

Credit Card Type: Master Card VISA

Credit Card number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE (_____) _____

I will be able to **help** on BIRD SEED SALE DAY between the hours of _____ and _____.

Mail your order to:
Chicago Audubon Society, 5801-C N. Pulaski Road,
Chicago, IL 60646
(773) 539-6793

Orders Must be Received by October 10th.
Remember, 40 % of your purchase is tax deductible.

Other similar wetlands can be found further north in Lake County.

Garden has seen numerous rare species in these areas, including yellow and king rail, least and American bittern, black terns, song sparrows and warblers. Failure to pass the wetland bill in the Senate, says Garden, "would result in a tremendous loss in the number and diversity of birds in the area."

South Side birders are exposed to a similar danger. The Lake Calumet region is home to the largest rookery of black-crowned night herons in the Midwest. By the railroad tracks west of Torrance Ave. between 103rd and 130th Streets, birders have counted 450 nests.

Great egrets and little blue herons are nesting in the wetlands too. Land parcels there are in private hands, but Auduboners have been able to spot the birds by staying close to the railroad tracks. "That area is vital to preserve, because that's where those species breed," comments Wes Serafin, a birder from Orland Park who knows the area well.

Karen Glennemeier, science coordinator for Audubon-Chicago Region, says isolated marshes are also essential for protecting amphibians and reptiles. "Connected wetlands have a less favorable habitat. For breeding, foraging and

Buying Plum Island Would Be Plum Deal for State

by Dale Bowman

Plum Island is the stuff of wild dreams.

Even at 45, I think about pulling a Huck Finn every time I pass it. That's the problem.

For years, developers have envisioned turning the wild-island dreams of folks like me into buckets of cash.

That pipe dream needs to end right here, right now.

The state should buy Plum Island before the price gets any higher. It should have happened years ago.

The 55-acre island is located below the Starved Rock Lock and Dam on the Illinois River, directly across from Starved Rock State Park. More than 2 million people a year come to Starved Rock, making it the second-most visited state park.

I know as well as anyone the pull of Plum Island. I was married on Starved Rock overlooking the island.

I've caught sauger and walleye by the island with Big Knobs and Buster Culjan. Big Knobs and I caught plenty of channel catfish upstream of the island. White bass, drum, crappie, largemouth and smallmouth bass, bowfin and shad are around the island. Big Knobs and I anchored on the upstream end and pulled out fat channel catfish.

My first inkling of the resurgence of eagles on the Illinois came when dozens passed on an early-winter sauger outing some years ago. In the last five years, pelicans have begun migrating through.

I've never set foot on Plum Island,

but it holds a sacred place in my heart. I'm certainly not alone in that. Thousands descend on the area to view the eagles in winter, turning eagle-watching into a multimillion-dollar business.

We need such wild places to maintain our humanity. We don't even have to be able to reach or use those wild places; they just must exist. Plum Island is one of those places.

In Illinois, we don't have great stretches of public wilderness, like they do in the Western states or Alaska. What we have are pockets of wilderness. Those pockets of wilderness shouldn't be lining the pockets of developers.

The earliest evidence of human settlement on Plum Island was nearly 1,000 years ago. In 1930, archaeologists from the University of Illinois found at least eight burial sites and possible evidence of a massacre on the island.

On Nov. 15, 1938, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers won permanent easement rights on the island. The corps is usually the bad guy in rivers, but not this time. It steadfastly has refused to give up easement rights.

That is the crux of what is happening.

The developers can't develop. Not only won't the corps give up easement rights, but the Illinois Department of Natural Resources neither will build a bridge from the state park nor issue permits.

LaSalle County has assessed the island at \$110,000 on a market value of \$330,000. The current owners,

American Land Companies/Starved Rock Estates and Marina, bought the island for \$465,000 in September 2000. The previous owners bought it for \$350,000 in August 1998.

On Sunday, Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn launched an online petition drive (www.saveoureagles.org) to save eagle habitats such as Plum Island, saying the island should belong "to the people of Illinois."

Quinn said the vehicles to buy the island should be the IDNR and the Open Lands Trust initiative. Gov. Rod Blagojevich has \$5 million allocated for the Open Lands Trust.

I suspect the developers are trying to drive up the value of the island with their various schemes, which have ranged from a luxury hotel to condos. Part of me wants to stick them with the island or have the state buy it at market value.

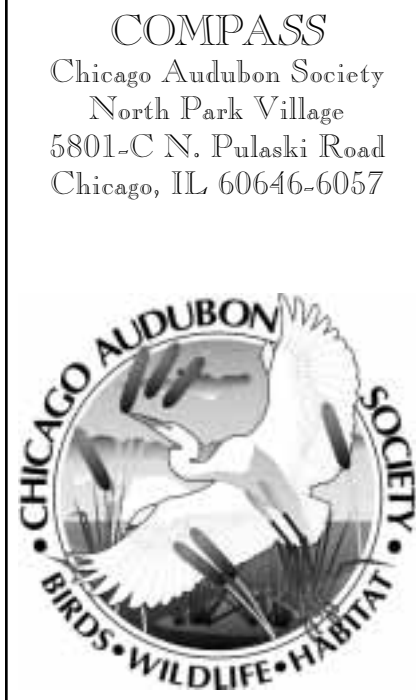
But my practical side says, "Enough already." Pay the developers \$500,000 or \$600,000. They walk away with a small profit, and Illinois finally owns the island.

Former Gov. George Ryan kicked off his innovative Open Lands Trust with the purchase of the 1,600-acre Mazonia South Unit. Blagojevich could make just as bold a statement by buying Plum Island.

Better yet, buy both Plum Island and the property on the north bank of the Illinois across from the island. That would protect Plum Island on all sides.

I dream, too.

Reprinted with permission of Dale Bowman and the Chicago Sun Times, July 9, 2003.



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Rare bird alert: (847) 265-2118
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Web page: www.chicagoaudubon.org
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Where is Plum Island?

Plum Island is a fifty-five acre uninhabited island in the Illinois River located just downstream from the Starved Rock dam. It is clearly visible from the bluffs at Starved Rock State Park.

Why is it Important?

The wintering Bald Eagle population of the Illinois River Valley uses Plum Island as one of its strongholds. In January 2003, a high of 51 eagles were counted. The island offers a safe haven, but surprisingly there is no legal protection for winter eagle habitat in Illinois.

The island is an important historic location, well-known for its Native American village and burial site. Midwest SOARRING Foundation is

Six Reasons to Preserve Plum Island

1. To ensure the survival of wintering Bald Eagles.
2. To protect the prehistoric Native American village sites on the island.
3. To safeguard the scenic view at Starved Rock State Park.
4. To provide the local economy with ongoing eagle-related tourism revenues.
5. To minimize disturbance to local fisheries from boats and jet skis.
6. To avoid the many risks associated with development – the lack of ready access, the natural instability of the island, its location in a floodplain, and more. The chances of successfully building on Plum Island are small. However, the damage will be done whether the development ultimately succeeds or fails.

an important partner in the preservation effort. President Joseph Standing Bear said, "There may be no headstones, but this is sacred ground for American Indians."

The island is also an Illinois Natural Inventory site and the waters surrounding it are a prime spawning area for walleye and sauger. The majestic views from the bluffs are one of the prime attractions of Starved Rock State Park and draw over 1.7 million visitors annually.

Is it in Danger?

Most of Plum Island is privately owned. It does not have any legal protection as a nature preserve. A succession of owners have discussed a variety of projects. In June of 2003, Starved Rock Island, LLC began advertising lots for sale and hosted an "open house" for potential buyers. The fifty lots are one-half acre in size and range in price from \$125,000 to \$210,000.

Before bulldozers can start clearing the island, the developers need zon-

ing approval. Plans are in the works to approach the nearby Village of Utica about annexing Plum Island to the village so the development falls under its jurisdiction. Friends of Plum Island believes that convincing the Village of Utica to deny the annexation will buy time for the eagles.

How Can I Help?

- Send a letter, available for download at www.chicagoaudubon.org to the Utica Planning Commission. Feel free to add your own comments at the bottom.
- Get involved with the Friends of Plum Island. Contact Don Goerne, Starved Rock Audubon Society, at 815-672-3569 for details on upcoming events or join the Friends of Plum Island mailing list by sending dgoerne@yahoo.com an e-mail.
- Visit Lt. Governor Pat Quinn's www.saveoureagles.org web site and sign the online petition to save Plum Island. At the June Illinois River Coordinating Council meeting, the Lt. Governor stepped forward as an advocate for the Plum Island eagles. He is exploring ways to "as a state acquire Plum Island and keep it in the possession of the people of Illinois."



Carol Browner, Former Head of EPA, Elected National Audubon Society Chair

Carol M. Browner, the longest serving administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, has been elected chair of the National Audubon Society Board of Directors. Browner will be the first woman to chair Audubon, and is one of few women to hold such a position at a major conservation organization.

"It is truly a privilege to help lead such a distinguished organization," Browner said at the announcement of her election. "Audubon has been at the forefront of environmental issues since the turn of the century when two determined women founded the first Audubon Chapter. Today, it is again leading the way, educating a whole new generation of Americans about the need to protect bird and wildlife habitat and to fight for clean water and clean air."

Browner will replace Donal C. O'Brien when he retires this fall after having served 12 years as Audubon Chair. Browner joined the Audubon Board in 2001 and currently oversees its Public Policy Committee.

Browner served as EPA Administrator from 1993 to 2001. Throughout her tenure at the EPA, Browner was guided by the philosophy that safeguarding the environment meant protecting where people live and how they live. She partnered with business leaders, community advocates, and all levels of government to promote common sense, cost-effective solutions to the nation's most pressing environmental and public health problems.

Browner's efforts to protect and restore our environment range from the health of our children to wildlife habitats. Some of her many accomplishments include the strongest public health-based clean air standards ever for soot and smog; tough new emission standards for cars, SUVs, diesel trucks, and buses; greatly expanded public right-to-know efforts; as well as significantly increased funding and strengthened standards for clean water and polluted runoff.

She accelerated the clean-up of hazardous waste sites, which resulted in more than three times the number of Superfund clean-ups than in the entire

history of the program; she created the successful Brownfields program to reclaim and redevelop abandoned, contaminated urban properties; and she worked closely with Congress to pass two pivotal environmental laws — the landmark Food Quality Protection Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act. Browner also created the EPA's first Office of Children's Health Protection, the new Office of Environmental Information, the American Indian Environmental Office, the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, and the Office of Reinvention.

"I grew up near the Everglades, where I learned to love birds and wildlife," Browner said. "I developed a passion for protecting this incredible natural resource and very early on learned of Audubon's many decades of experience in fighting for Everglades conservation. In a sense, I feel I have come full circle and look forward to helping lead this organization as it addresses the many environmental challenges of the 21st century." Browner's history of working with community and grassroots leaders will strengthen Audubon's Chapter and volunteer efforts, while building new constituencies

Prior to leading the EPA, she was head of the Department of Environmental Regulation in Florida. Browner had also served on the staffs of Senators Albert Gore, Jr. and Lawton Chiles. She is currently a principle at The Albright Group, global strategy firm, and is a senior fellow at the Aspen Institute's Program on Energy, the Environment and the Economy.

Browner was the recipient of the American Lung Association's prestigious President's Award in 2000. She has also been honored with the Mother of the Year Award from the National Mother's Day Committee, the Advocate for Children Award from the Ambulatory Pediatric Association, and Glamour magazine's Woman of the Year honor. In 1998, Audubon of Florida gave Ms. Browner the Guy M. Bradley Lifetime Achievement Award for her work on restoration of the Everglades.

WETLANDS PROTECTION BILL

continued from page 1

protection from predators, the non-connected wetlands are best. These smaller wetlands are shallower and warmer and have lots of the nutrients the animals feed on. They're more productive systems for the growth of the primary food chain, such as algae."

During the eighties and nineties, the six counties of Northeastern Illinois--Cook, Kane, Lake, DuPage, Will and McHenry--passed ordinances protecting area wetlands. HB422 would extend that protection to wetlands throughout the state. The county restrictions would remain in place. "We had four months of intense negotiations with our opponents," says Acker of Openlands, ticking off entrenched interests that include the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, the Illinois Farm Bureau, the Chemical Industry Council and numerous other lobbies. Talks broke down, he says, when they insisted that the House wetlands bill supercede the tougher county protections in effect in Northeastern Illinois.

Other conservation items fared reasonably well in the capital last spring.

Governor Blagoyevich set aside \$28 million for key lands acquisition programs, including the Natural Areas Acquisition fund and the Open Space and Land Acquisition Development fund.

More critical than the figures, say conservationists, was the Governor's willingness to retain unchanged the formula used for exploiting the real estate transfer tax to support land acquisition. The Open Land Trust, a fund created by former Governor Ryan, saw a sharp decline in appropriations, to just \$5 million a year from \$40 million. In a tight spending environment, though, conservationists were content the program survived at all.

"If the OLT had dropped completely out of the budget, it would have been hard to get it back in," says Wendy Butler of the Illinois Environmental Council. "At least we got enough money to keep it going."

Auduboners can contact Richard Acker (racker@openlands.org) to identify their state senator. Readers can also consult the State of Illinois Web page.

Whimbrels Sighted at Montrose Beach Shorebird Protection Area

Jerry Kumery, tipped off by the posting on IBET, rushed out to Montrose Beach the morning of July 27th from the suburb of Brookfield to see a rarity. Luckily, Kanae Hirabayashi was on the beach by the birds, and they were quickly sighted by Jerry. Although Jerry has seen them there before, whimbrels are somewhat uncommon away from the coasts. There is speculation that storms from the South are blowing the birds inland to feed. He watched as a male and female pecked for insects along the shore.

— GG



Photos courtesy of Jerry Kumery



Take A Bird Walk During Migration With Audubon Guides



During spring migration 2003, new birders, young and old, enjoyed their first bird walks.



Inset: A sighting of a delightful male goldfinch in full splendor during the spring season.

Birders of all skill levels are welcome at bird walks held at North Park Village Nature Center. Held every Saturday during migration, they are led by Audubon guides.

Photos by Bob Palmieri

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Stewardship Workdays

At the Skokie Lagoons:
September 13 and October 11 at 10:00 a.m.

Chicago Audubon conducts regular monthly workdays at the Skokie Lagoons on the second Saturday of every month. Activities include buckthorn cutting, planting, animal and plant monitoring, cleanup and debris removal, and other management activities. Meet at the Tower Road parking lot, east of the lagoon bridge. If you arrive late, look for a CAS sign near the parking lot directing you to the work site.

For further information call Jerry Garden at (773)545-4632, or e-mail him at jerrygarden@sprynet.com

Programs

At North Park Village Nature Center
7:00 pm-Refreshments
7:30 pm-Program

Friday, September 19th

Hear Jerry Garden talk about stewardship at the Skokie Lagoons.

Friday, October 17th

Carol Nelson presents "A Visit to Bunker Hill" talk and slide show.

Friday, November 14th

Libby Hill presents "The Chicago River."

Weekly Bird Walks

Wooded Island

Every Wednesday in Sept and Oct -7:00 a.m.
Every Saturday in Sept and Oct -8:00 a.m.

Bring binoculars and field guides. Dress for the weather. Meet at the Darrow Bridge, just south of the Museum of Science and Industry. **Note:** All the usual routes into the parking lot are closed. If you come from the North, you must swing around the Museum at 57th St, continuing south on Cornell Ave. until you reach Hayes Drive (6300 South). At Hayes, turn left and get back on the Outer Drive going north. At 5800 South, turn left, and follow the road into the parking lot, proceed to where you are just north of the Darrow Bridge. If this isn't clear, please call Doug Anderson (773) 493-7058.

North Park Village Nature Center

Every Saturday in Sept and Oct -8:00 a.m.

Meet in front of the Nature Center at 5801 N. Pulaski in Chicago. Bring binoculars and field guides. For more information call the CAS office at (773) 539-6793.

Bird Walks

Saturday, Sept. 20—8:00 to 10:00 am

Thatcher Woods

We'll look at the fall migrants along the DesPlaines River Valley. 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, Sept. 20—8:00 to 10:00 am

Rosehill Cemetery

We'll see fall migrants and resident birds in this cemetery with varied habitats. In cooperation with the Evanston North Shore Birding Club. Audubon leaders Carol Nelson and Kathleen Radcliffe. Meet at the entrance to the cemetery off of Ravenswood. For info call Carol at (773) 583-8616.

Saturday, October 18—8:00 am

The Grove/River Trails

Join us at the Grove, an 82-acre site with natural ponds and an oak-hickory forest to look for late fall migrants. We'll stop at an interpretive center with a collection of reptiles, amphibians and fish. We'll also bird at River Trails, a nature center, a few minutes down the road from the Grove.

Meet at 1421 Milwaukee Avenue, just north of Glenview Road and south of Euclid Avenue. Any questions? Call Doris Johanson at (847) 827-5930.

Other Events

North Park Village Harvest Fest Saturday and Sunday, October 25 and 26

Will include bird walks for families. Check with the Nature Center for more information (312) 744-5472.



Illustrations by Steven D'Amato



Landmark Feral Cat Policy Passed

On May 30, 2003, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission unanimously passed a policy... "to protect native wildlife from predation, disease and other impacts presented by feral and free-ranging cats." The American Bird Conservancy spearheaded support for the policy and secured more than 2,500 e-mails from BirdWire subscribers.

Other conservation groups also worked to garner support for this landmark policy.

In passing the policy, the Commission set an example for other state wildlife agencies, and took an important step in protecting migratory songbirds and shorebirds, as well as rare native mammals from stray and feral cats.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Commissioners pledged that cats would be removed from state lands in the most humane way possible, and expressed a willingness to work with all stakeholders in this issue. To read the new policy, go to www.abcbirds.org/cats/states/florida_policy.html.

— GG



NOW IS THE TIME TO JOIN CHICAGO AUDUBON

The Chicago chapter of the National Audubon Society is a leader in the conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. Established in 1971, CAS operates as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with over 4,000 members in the Chicago area.

The National Audubon Society has 600,000 members nationwide.

MEMBER ACTIVITIES AND BENEFITS:

- Program meetings (6 per year)
- Field trips year round
- Bird Walks led by trained guides
- Biennial Birding America Conference
- Bird Habitat Survey
- Birdathon
- Christmas Bird Count
- Student Scholarship Awards
- Center for New Birders (2003)
- The COMPASS (10 per year)

TO JOIN: Complete the application form here and mail it with your check (payable to "Chicago Audubon Society") to:

Chicago Audubon Society
5801-C North Pulaski Road
Chicago, IL 60646-6057

Or by Phone: (773) 539-6793 with a VISA or MASTERCARD

CHICAGO AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Please enroll me as a member of the Chicago Audubon Society. Enclosed is my check for \$20.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: (_____) _____ E-mail: _____

THERE IS ALSO A MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM ONLINE AT WWW.CHICAGOAUDUBON.ORG WHICH YOU OR YOUR FRIENDS CAN DOWNLOAD AND MAIL