



COMPASS

Navigating the world of birds and nature

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2005

SAVE THE DATE — SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 2005

THE CAS ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS BANQUET

by Alan Anderson

On Saturday, April 16, 2005, the Chicago Audubon Society will hold its Biennial Environmental Awards Banquet to honor those who have made contributions to conservation and birding in the Chicagoland area.

We are asking our members, as well as others, to submit nominations for this year's awards.

If you have nominees in any of the categories below, please let us know, via the form included in this issue, or by e-mailing the same information to Alan Anderson at casresearch@comcast.net. **Nominations must be received by Tuesday, February 15, 2005.**

The categories are:

- Excellence in Environmental Reporting
- Protector of the Environment - Educator
- Protector of the Environment - Political Service
- Protector of the Environment - Single Act (Individual)
- Protector of the Environment - Single Act (Group)
- Protector of the Environment - Avocation
- Protector of the Environment - Vocation
- Service to Chicago Area Birders

We try not to nominate the same person twice, so to see who received awards in the past (since 1977), please go to our website—www.chicagoaudubon.org.

We hope our members join us at the banquet. This year's will be held on April 16th at the Silver Stallion Restaurant, 1275 Lee Street (aka Mannheim Road), Des Plaines IL. 1275 Lee Street is located just south of Algonquin Road, and easily accessible from the Kennedy Expressway, I-190 and I-294.

By signing up early you can save a few dollars. *Cost this year is \$24 per person if you sign up before March 20, and \$27 after March 20th.* Dinner choices include chicken, fish or vegetarian (eggplant parmesan). Sign up by contacting Alan Anderson, 1633 Howard Ave., Des Plaines, IL 60018 or (e-mail: casresearch@comcast.net); let me know how many are coming and which food choice you prefer. *Please forward your check to Alan by Saturday, April 9, and make it payable to Chicago Audubon Society.*

Our featured speakers this year will be Sheryl De Vore and Steve Bailey, authors of *Birds of Illinois*. Their topic will be: "The Wide, Wide World of Illinois Birds: Things We Knew and Things We Didn't Know About the Avian Species of the Prairie State." They will autograph copies of their book.

Banquet details:

- Reception and Cash Bar - 5:30pm
- Dinner - 6:30pm
- Presentation of Awards
- Program (Sheryl De Vore and Steve Bailey)
- Events should conclude before 9:00pm.

CAS Environmental Awards Nomination Form

Thank you for taking the time to nominate someone for our Biennial Awards. At the bottom of this page is a list of award categories. Awards will be presented only to those who have been officially nominated. To nominate your candidate, please fill out the form below and return by February 15, 2005 to:

Chicago Audubon Society Biennial Awards Nomination
Alan Anderson, Awards Committee
1633 Howard Ave., Des Plaines IL. 60018
(or e-mail the information to casresearch@comcast.net)

Your Name: _____

Your Address : _____

Your Phone: _____

Your Email: _____

Award Category*: _____

Name of Candidate: _____

Candidate's Title: _____

Candidate's Address: _____

Candidate's Phone: _____

Candidate's Email: _____

On a separate sheet of paper, explain why this candidate deserves to win the award, citing specific examples of his or her work this past year that relates to the award category.

Please include names and phone numbers or e-mails of other people who can attest to this candidate's qualifications for receiving an award.

***Award Categories:**

- Excellence in Environmental Reporting
- Protector of the Environment - Political Service
- Protector of the Environment - Single Act (Individual)
- Protector of the Environment - Single Act (Group)
- Protector of the Environment - Avocation
- Protector of the Environment - Vocation
- Service to Chicago Area Birders

Eagle Optics Day Kicks Off Program Series — Saturday, March 12, 2005

by Marci Buettgen

Calling all birding "gearheads." If you're in the market for your first set of binoculars, itching to upgrade, or if there's a spotting scope you're yearning to try out, stop in during Binoculars and Scopes Demo Day with Eagle Optics, Saturday, March 12, at North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 N. Pulaski Rd, Chicago.

Experts from Eagle Optics will be on hand all day, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. to answer all your questions, and demonstrate a wide range of equipment from most major manufacturers of birding optics.

Ben Lizas of Eagle Optics will conduct a workshop on Selecting Binoculars and Scopes for Birding from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Eagle Optics is the largest independent sports optics dealer in the United States. They supply equipment from leaders in the field such as Bushnell, Canon, Fujinon, Kahles, Kowa, Leica, Minox, Nikon, Pentax, Steiner, Swarovski, Swift and Zeiss. One of their divisions distributes binoculars to dealers across the country, including the line of optics licensed by the National Audubon Society.

Eagle Optics also manufactures its own brand of optics and has become remarkably successful in developing new and innovative products. For example, the Eagle Optics "Ranger" is one of the most popular birding binoculars on the market.

Eagle Optics was established in 1986 when Dan and Margie Hamilton left careers in the health profession, moved from Indiana to Wisconsin and opened a wild bird supply store. Once they realized their customers needed more information on birding optics, they developed a mail order service and a comprehensive optics buying guide. With the advent of the internet, they brought their catalog online with www.eagleoptics.com.

The Hamiltons are very proud of Eagle Optics and pledge to provide their customers with the best products, the best service and best price. They understand the passion people have for enjoying birds and wildlife, and are committed to making sure they get the most enjoyment possible out of their optical equipment.

The CAS March program is free and open to CAS members and non-members. Pre-registration is not required. Refreshments will be served. A portion of the proceeds from sales will go to the Chicago Audubon Society for support of Early Birds, a project assisting new birders.

Additional CAS programs will be offered in April, May, June, September, October and December. For dates and topics, see the CAS Calendar for 2005, inserted in this issue, or contact CAS Program Chair, Marci Buettgen at (773) 878-4421.

Mark Your Calendars Now for Eagle Optics Day--Saturday, March 12, 2005!

Birds of Illinois

Authors to be featured at Awards Banquet, April 16th —
Book Signing and Discussion to Follow

By Jerry Garden

Birds of Illinois was written by Sheryl DeVore, Steven D. Bailey and Gregory Kennedy, and published by Lone Pine Publishing. While *Birds of Chicago*, Lone Pine's first foray into local bird guides, was clearly aimed at beginning birders, the new book was designed for both experienced and beginning birders. The introductory section is an easy read containing a plethora of interesting information about birds and birding, and reference to several better birding spots in the state.

Listing 319 species of birds that frequent Illinois, and some birds that occasionally venture into our state (such as the painted bunting and glossy ibis), the book is nicely comprehensive. Birds are grouped into families as in many other guides and the groups are ordered by evolutionary antecedent, an order familiar to most birders and used by the American Ornithological Union in their official listings.

Colored page stripes are used to ease finding these groups. The back cover contains these colored stripes with page numbers, as does a front reference section. This the first time I've seen a back cover used as a guide to inside material, enhancing efficient use.

The illustrations are very similar to the Lone Pine's *Birds of Chicago*, and although very well done, in a few instances they lack the technical detail of field marks critical to identification. The large illustrations in a one-bird-per-page format limits somewhat the value of the book for field identification due to the difficulty of visual comparisons, and could have used call-outs for quick field mark reference. The text, however, does a good job of explaining ID field marks, behavior and voice, and includes such important incidentals as conservation status.

The maps on each page are expertly done and are probably derived from a combination of Steve Bailey's experience with the CTAP project and the records of the Illinois Ornithological Records Committee. Another nice educational feature is the description of bio-regions, a subject of interest to birders for factors that explain geological and weather limitations that keep birds from locating in some areas. This feature is of reference value as it helps us understand certain species propensities to inhabit certain habitat types. I wonder if the weight or size of the book



might have been reduced if the authors had saved that topic for another text that could have served as a car-seat or desktop reference.

One obvious oversight in the introductory section is the omission of a reference to our own organization, Chicago Audubon Society, as well as to various downstate organizations of note. Another is the lack of reference to the book *Birding the Chicago Region* by Carpenter and Greenberg that is so valuable for finding birds in northeastern Illinois as well as the adjacent areas surrounding the southern tip of Lake Michigan.

As mentioned, *Birds of Illinois* is a bit large and heavy for a field guide, though by comparison to the original Sibley guide, it is a featherweight. It does seem that the trend these days is toward larger, heavier guides. The book appears ruggedly built although endurance has yet to be tested as the book is new and birders are notoriously rough on their guides. Although possibly a bit overpriced for the beginning birder at \$20, the book is a good value in any stage of birding development.

Also new in 2004 are Lone Pine's *Birds of Ohio* and *Birds of New England*. Log onto www.lonepinepublishing.com for more information or to order.

AUDUBON 'STATE OF THE BIRDS' REPORT REVEALS AMERICA'S BIRDS ARE IN TROUBLE

Nearly 30 Percent of North America's Birds are in Significant Decline, Signaling Degraded Environmental Conditions

The National Audubon Society has released the first national "The State of the Birds" report documenting the health and abundance of North America's birds. Appearing in the October 2004 issue of Audubon Magazine, "The State of the Birds" paints a disturbing picture. Almost 30 percent of North America's bird species are in "significant decline."

- 70 % of grassland species are in statistically significant declines
- 36 % of shrubland bird species are declining significantly
- 25 % of forest bird species are declining significantly
- 13 % of wetland bird species are declining significantly
- 23 % of bird species in urban areas are declining significantly

According to the "State of the Birds," these declines are abnormal. Not part of the natural cyclical rise and fall in bird populations, "statistically significant declines" are due to outside factors such as loss of native grasslands, overgrazing of grassland and shrubland, development of wetlands, bad forest management, invasive species, pollution, and poor

land use decisions.

"Like the canary in the coal mine warning the miner of danger ahead, birds are an indicator of environmental and human health," said Audubon President John Flicker. "Birds signal that we are at risk next." Flicker went on to say, "People created these problems and people can solve them if we act now."

Compiled by Audubon Scientist Greg Butcher, the "State of the Birds" analysis makes the case for private and public action, especially in strengthening, not weakening, existing environmental protections and more rigorously supervising their enforcement. Based on the report's findings, Audubon is advocating for improved grassland, forest, and wetland protection, stronger pollution controls, partnerships with private landowners, and backyard habitat programs for homeowners.

Birds not only serve as reliable indicators of environmental conditions, they also contribute greatly to the U.S. economy. Keeping birds – and their home habitats – in good condition is not only a good conservation policy, it is also good business.

According to the U.S. Forest

Service, 69 million Americans – one-third of all adults in this country – call themselves birdwatchers. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service notes that they contribute at least \$32 billion in retail sales, \$85 billion in overall economic output, and \$13 billion in state and federal taxes, creating 863,406 jobs. An analysis of expenditures is available on a state-by-state breakdown.

"Birds also contribute to the bottom line in more subtle ways, providing free pest and weed control, distributing seeds, and pollinating flowers and crops," continued Flicker. "We simply cannot afford to ignore the state of the birds."

Audubon's "State of the Birds" summarizes the status of nearly 700 birds species native to the continental United States, focusing on the condition of species in each of five habitat types: grasslands, shrublands, forests, wetlands, and urban areas (the fastest growing habitat type in the U.S.).

A digest of the report was published in the October 2004 issue of Audubon magazine. Further analysis is available on the Audubon website, <http://www.audubon.org/bird/stateofthebirds>.

COMPASS

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Rare bird alert: (847) 265-2118

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Printed with soy ink

Illinois' first IBA areas designated! More nominations sought by February 15, 2005

The first round of Illinois' Important Bird Areas were announced in October 2004 by the National Audubon Society, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the City's Department of Environment.

IBA's are selected because they provide essential habitat for one or more species of birds. Begun in Europe in the late 1980s by BirdLife International, the IBA Program has been a powerful conservation tool, designating over 1,200 sites in 30 states in the U.S.

You can find a complete list of Illinois' IBAs at www.bcnbirds.org. Click on "Pressing News." Some areas well-known to metro-Chicago birders are Illinois Beach State Park, Great Lakes Naval Training Center, the Calumet Area, Rollins Savanna, Pratt's Wayne Woods, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, Lost Mound Unit—Savanna District of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, and Bartel Grasslands.

Thanks to all who have already nominated a site. It's not too late to nominate a site. The second round of Illinois IBA nominations are now being sought—Deadline: February 15, 2005.

Act now to confer special protection to those areas you know and love.

The following list contains sites that the IBA technical committee identified as potentially meeting the state IBA criteria. The committee will also welcome nominations for other sites that you believe may meet the criteria. Nomination forms, criteria, instructions, and helpful information is available from www.habitatproject.org, or by contacting the Illinois IBA coordinator, Judy Pollock at jpollock@audubon.org.

Waterfowl:

Clear Lake
Senachwine
Goose Lake - Illinois River
Newton Lake
Carlyle Lake
Rend Lake
Lake Clinton
Lake Shelbyville
Sangchris Lake
Wabash River junction with Embarras
East Fork Lake
Vandalia Lake
Keck's Marsh
Campbell Pond
Burning Star Mine
Ten-Mile Creek SFWA

Wading Birds:

Alorton
Lake Renwick
Bakers Lake
Horseshoe Lake

Shorebirds:

Lake Shelbyville
Carlyle Lake
Rend Lake

Paul Douglas
Black-crowned Night-heron
McGuinness Slough
Alorton
Little Blue Heron
Alorton
Snowy Egret
Alorton
Least Tern
South Jackson County near Ohio River
Area Below Lake Girardeau
Horseshoe Lake
Osprey
Ohio River at Metropolis
Carlyle Lake
Palos Forest Preserves
Mississippi Kite
Thebes Area
Chuck Will's Widow
Ferne Clyffe
Lake Murphysboro
Red-headed Woodpecker
Pembroke Township
Savannas

Willow Flycatcher

Green River
Bewick's Wren:
Siloam Springs
Bell's Vireo
Lake Shelbyville
Prairie Warbler
Penet Bar Ranch
Bobolink
Green River
Richardson
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Tony's Pond
Paul Douglas
Data Needed on Best Nesting Areas:
Hooded Merganser
American Woodcock
Mississippi Kite
White-eyed Vireo
Yellow-throated Vireo
Louisiana Waterthrush
Yellow-breasted Chat

Chicago Bird Migration: Opportunities for Conservation Presented by Doug Stotz, Conservation Ecologist/Ornithologist, Field Museum of Natural History

by Roger Shamley

Doug has been living and working in the Chicago area for 20 years. He has been very involved in most of the studies and surveys relating to bird conservation and ecology. His presentation highlighted a number of points, foremost of which was that habitat loss due to urban development has been extensive during this period of time.

The greatest needs of migrating birds are for food and suitable habitat. Food replenishes energy lost during migration, and suitable habitat offers a resting place and protection from predators when tired birds are most vulnerable. Doug further noted that areas dominated by oak trees attract a greater variety of birds than other trees, such as maples.

Doug suggested that birders be more diligent in their record keeping, recommending that they submit observations to E-Bird. (Go to the BCN website www.bcnbirds.org.) Recognizing that not everyone would avail themselves of that option, he

proposed, as an alternative, that birders keep detailed records to serve the same purpose for the individual birder, that is, to track changes in bird numbers and dates of sightings.

Doug noted that much improvement in habitat is taking place along the lakefront, and made particular mention of landscaping improvements at Magic Hedge, Northerly Island, 47th Street and the lakefront, and Wooded Isle.

The meeting was well attended with intelligent and enthusiastic participation by those in attendance. Of particular interest to a number of those present was how local involvement in habitat restoration, even in one's backyard, is often the beginning of involvement in matters relating to ecology, conservation, and bird watching.

Suggestions for backyard planting:

Making your yard attractive to wildlife is primarily a matter of providing shelter, water, and food, and avoiding the use of pesticides. Emphasize native plants. Tall trees provide shelter, food (seeds or fruit), nesting places, and protection from

strong winds.

If your plans for a bird-friendly yard include trees that will not drop fruit you should consider:

- Flowering plum
 - Spirea
 - Redbud
 - Lilac
 - Dogwood
 - Mock orange
- Other plants (not trees) to consider:
- Forsythia
 - Honeysuckle
 - Jasmine
 - Trumpet vine

There are other amenities and additions that are good for birds. They include:

Birdbaths—to provide some protection from cats and other predators, place in an open area; a location 10-20 feet from shrubs or bushes offers a safety zone. In freezing weather, thaw water with boiling water or use a birdbath heater.

Brushpiles—instead of hauling away or shredding tree prunings and brush, make piles to shelter birds and other wildlife, but be sure to keep the piles

away from the house.

Bird houses—install them away from the activity around bird feeders and facing away from the prevailing wind. Mount on metal poles to discourage predators.

Meadows—plant native grasses, wildflowers, and low shrubs for food, shelter, and nest building materials

Vines—flowering vines offer shelter, nesting sites, and nectar; many also bear berries and foliage that are sources of food for birds and butterfly larvae.

Bird feeders—locate feeders near trees or shrubs so birds can fly to cover; keep them off the ground to protect the birds from cats. Set up feeders in the fall and maintain them through winter when natural foods are scarce

Suggested reading: *The National Audubon Society Bird Garden* by Stephen W. Kress. Also, try the National Audubon Society website: www.audubon.org. Click the link to "Audubon at Home" on the toolbar, and then go to "Plants for Birds and Wildlife" for additional information.

Effort Underway to Establish Bird Rehabilitation Facility at Northerly Island

Your support is needed!

Robbie Hunsinger, founder of the Chicago Bird Collision Monitors (CBCM) program, and one of CCBM's newest volunteers, Maddy Fields-Gollogly, recently spoke with Bob O'Neill, President of the Grant Park Advisory Council and Grant Park Conservancy about establishing a bird rehab facility on Northerly Island. It was Gollogly's idea to build this facility.

Only a small route in the Loop is now monitored, and having a rehab facility nearby would greatly expand CBCM's ability to minister to injured birds. For the last two years, the only rehab centers that took birds were in Wisconsin, Willowbrook, Illinois and most recently, the Fox Valley Wildlife Center in Elburn, IL. Driving from the city to these suburbs was a challenge, but Robbie and other monitors made the trips, sometimes six-hours long, to save the birds.

The efforts of volunteers and far-flung rehab centers

has been heroic, but not practical or sustainable in the long run. Long travel times are also extremely stressful for wild, injured birds.

If you support the idea of a centrally located rehab facility for birds stunned and injured in the Loop and surrounding environs, please send an e-mail to boboneill@grantparkconservancy.com. After the first of the year, Mr. O'Neill will be promoting the facility. The more e-mails he has in hand, the stronger his case will be.

If you would like to be more involved in this effort, please contact Robbie at (773) 988-1867 or e-mail her at birdmonitors@earthlink.net. There are five more upcoming Park District meetings where the feasibility of establishing a rehab center on Northerly Island will be discussed. Your support is needed and welcome. For more info on the Chicago Bird Collision Monitors program, please visit www.birdmonitors.net.

NOTICE: DRAFT OF BIRDING TRAIL MAP OF THE CHICAGO REGION AVAILABLE ONLINE AT WWW.BCNBIRDS.ORG

BCN and the Chicago Department of Environment have produced a birding trail map for the Chicago area. The draft map is available at www.bcnbirds.org. Even though the map is still in production, you can use the information when planning birding trips.

Please double-check the information, including driving directions, for unfamiliar sites. And please, also, send any corrections/updates to birdingtrail@bcnbirds.org.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Stewardship Workdays

At the Skokie Lagoons: Saturdays, January 10, February 14, and March 12 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, brushpile burning and other management activities. Meet at the Tower Road parking lot, east of the lagoon bridge.

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

Member Program

*Saturday, March 12, 2005
Eagle Optics Demo Day
North Park Village Nature Center
5801 N. Pulaski, Chicago, IL
10:00-3:00
(See description on Page One.)*

Bird Walks

*Wooded Island
These walks will resume on Saturday, March 26th, the birthday of Paul Douglas, at 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. Questions? Call Doug Anderson (773) 493-7058.*

*Cook County Owl Walk
Saturday, March 12
Thatcher Woods, River Forest, IL
Contact Stephen or Christine Lee at (708)485-8197.*

Other Events

SAVE THE DATE!

*Saturday, February 19, 2005
Gull Frolic at Winthrop Harbor Yacht Club, Winthrop Harbor, IL
Call Jim Landing for more information at (773) 252-8417.*

*Saturday, April 16, 2005
Biennial Environmental Awards Dinner, 5:30 p.m.
Silver Stallion Restaurant, 1275 Lee/Mannheim Rd. (just south of Algonquin Rd.) Des Plaines, IL.
Speakers: Sheryl De Vore and Steve Bailey, authors of "Birds of Illinois."
Cost \$24 before March 20, \$27 after. See article about awards on Page .*

Field Trips

*Saturday, February 26, 2005
Bald Eagles at Lost Mound National Wildlife Refuge
Co-sponsored by Chicago Audubon and Chicago Botanic Garden via coach bus to Savanna, IL (approximately 3.5 hour trip).*

Visit Lost Mound in Savanna, IL where numerous bald eagles overwinter. We expect to see anywhere from 20 to 200 eagles along the Mississippi River and in the refuge. We should also see winter-resident

birds and early migrants (especially waterfowl). We will also visit the Fulton Dam which attracts eagles and waterfowl.

The bus will leave from the Botanic Garden in Glencoe at 6:00 a.m. and return at approximately 6:00 p.m. The cost for CAS and CBG members is \$79 (\$99 non-members). To register, call (847) 835-8261, 24 hours a day, seven days a week and press 1 after the greeting. (Mention course SPP006105-Birding Field Trip: Bald Eagle Sighting)

Dress for the weather (layered clothes) and bring lunch, spotting scope if you have one.

The leader is Alan Anderson. Contact him at casresearch@comcast.net for more information.

Friday, May 20—Sunday, May 22, 2005. Chicago Audubon birding trip to Northwest Ohio--Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Crane Creek SP, Magee Marsh, Metzger Marsh, and a bird-banding station.

For shorebirds, migrant passerines and nesting bald eagles. Sunday we visit the Black Swamp Bird Observatory banding station for up-close views of warblers and other migrants.

Drive on your own, or we'll try to arrange car/van pooling. Details to follow in next issue of COMPASS. The leader will be Alan Anderson (casresearch@comcast.net).

Upcoming Member Programs

— Save these Dates Too —

*SPRING TUNE-UP FOR BIRDERS: SHARPENING BIRD ID SKILLS
North Park Village--Saturday, April 23, 2005, 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Birdwalk, 8:00 AM-10:00 AM
Free to members, \$10 for non-members (or free with new membership)*

*BIRDWALK AND BURGERS FOR SINGLES
Saturday, May 7, 9:00 AM - 12:00 NOON
A birdwalk around North Pond in Lincoln Park, followed by a breakfast/brunch at R.J. Grunts, or some other nearby bar/restaurant.*

*EARLY BIRDS: BIRDWALKS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS
North Park Village--Saturday, May 14, May 21, May 28 (for kids), 9:00 - 11:00 AM
Birdwalks geared for new birders, starting with a 30 minute introduction to the basics of birding, including how to use binoculars. Free to all*

Feathers flying over quiet sanctuary Hammond bird Refuge Battle Brewing

by Joe Carlson

HAMMOND | An angry ruckus is stirring over a peaceful stretch of city lakefront property.

City Port Authority officials want to run a \$400,000 walking trail through a 9-acre bird sanctuary to open the woody parcel to birders and walkers who already use the trails in front of the adjacent casino and marina.

Mayor Thomas McDermott Jr. also confirmed that officials have had conceptual talks about building upscale condominiums on the skinny parking lot connected to the sanctuary's southern edge, but he refused to elaborate.

Critics like Carolyn Marsh say McDermott and Port Authority Director Robert Nelson are putting the interests of tourists and developers ahead of the migratory birds who count on the trees in their long flights over Lake Michigan.

"We do want improved trails, but we don't want the port authority to decide on the foot trails," said Marsh, an environmentalist from Whiting. "We want control of the design and management of it, with the Indiana Natural Resources Foundation."

The Indianapolis-based foundation has final say over any development of the park because it holds a 1996 conservation easement that says the foundation must ensure the city-owned

sanctuary is "retained forever in its natural vegetative condition."

Last week, Nelson presented to the foundation the port authority's plan to improve the sanctuary trail. A decision was delayed at least until the foundation's next meeting in April.

"The people here have been going through the trails on the sanctuary for generations. What's the difference?" Nelson said. "These are the trails that the birders use. What we are proposing is to enhance the trails they use, so that the birders will benefit most."

The wooded area, which is composed mostly of cottonwood "weed trees," grew atop a long pile of concrete rubble laid along the shoreline after an oil refinery explosion in the 1950s, Nelson said.

Although the site is small compared to most bird sanctuaries, it became important because of a lack of other green space along the heavily traveled Lake Michigan flyway for migratory birds, said state avian ecologist John Castrale. The site was preserved by easement as part of the overall land deal that legalized the nearby floating casino in the mid-1990s.

Now Marsh and other environmentalists who have contacted the state foundation fear the site is under assault by development pressures.

"I think we have a real war going on here," Marsh said. "(Local leaders) are

just not in touch with what is really good for the cities. They're looking for development, because development is good for a quick buck and it will give their friends jobs."

McDermott said it was Marsh who was out of touch with what people want.

"Right now, there are very few people who use that sanctuary," McDermott said. "What the port authority wants to do is invest in it, light it up, fix it up, and put some trails in there so that the public can actually use it."

If you would like to support the Hammond Bird Sanctuary, please email Eric Myers, Indiana Natural Resources Foundation, emyers@dnr.in.gov and urge the Foundation to enforce the Conservation Easement on the 9.5-acre bird sanctuary on the shoreline of Lake Michigan and reject the intrusive trail plan proposed by the Hammond Port Authority.

With thanks from Carolyn Marsh, Convener, Lake Michigan Calumet Advisory Council

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Volunteers Needed

Chicago Flower Show
March 12 - March 20
2005

Chicago Audubon Society has a table at the Flower Show at Navy Pier. We advertise our organization, sell birding books and other small items and give out our newsletter. If you are interested in helping out at the show or for more information, please call Christine or Stephen Lee at 708-485-8197 or e-mail us at: stephenchris@sbcglobal.net.