

The Habitat HERALD

October 2004

Volume 5, Issue 3

Our Words: Our Workshops

By Elizabeth Plonka

Notes from the Habitat Clinics:

Jean Sellar, biologist and conservationist, Army Corps of Engineers: "Up here in the woods is where we find the solution to the marsh's problems. We want infiltration of water, not run-off. Water that flows underground will be cooler and have more magnesium and calcium (and, of course, none of the silt that the reed canary grass thrives on) when it reaches the marsh."

— Spring Creek Valley Clinic

Cathy Berry, volunteer: "Preservation efforts on a stand by stand or parcel by parcel basis are not going to be very effective. We need to consider a bigger picture and coordinate plans. For me, the clinics offer the practical hands on component missing from my formal classwork in environmental science."

— Spears Woods Clinic

From several participants: "Often the staff and contractors best focus on major work that can be done quickly, even with machines. The volunteers excel on work that requires painstaking attention over a long period of time. It's critical that the volunteers are part of the planning and decision-making processes that are central to their parts of the work."

— Spring Creek Valley Clinic

Notes- continue on page 4

Do you remember the last questionnaire you filled out? Most of us fill them out, if we have the time, just to be helpful and then forget about them. Is your grocery store well-lit and well-organized? (Sure, and no, not really.) We turn in a sheet of paper and don't really expect to see changes. We never learn what is being done with all that information.

Well, when we filled out the Conservation Questionnaire last spring, we really started something. That questionnaire was the beginning of a process that has inspired a series of on-the-ground Habitat Clinics and begun the planning for a wintertime volunteer conference.

The inspiration came from us, the volunteers of the conservation community. As Audubon's Rebecca Blazer explains it, "There are all these great people working in the region, who are driven and smart and have great success stories. They want to share their skills and learn to be better stewards, monitors and educators." While we all have different needs, personal knowledge, and resources available to us, we are all working toward the same goal of protecting and restoring the biodiversity of the region. This project is really about strengthening the community from within.

"The inspiration came from us,
the conservation community."

Nine Habitat Clinics were planned for this season; and each covers slightly different issues depending on the site and the participants' own interests. Since these are volunteer-inspired events, they are heavy in volunteer participation and also include the experts the volunteers most want to hear. Everyone who attends has the chance to engage in discussion with other volunteers and the designated facilitators for each site. Questions are tackled by anyone with pertinent

Our Words- continue on page 4



Photo: Carol Freeman

At Flint Creek Savanna in Lake County, IL, we asked steward Tom Vanderpoel about the concentric rings of wetland plants surrounding the water – planted or natural? The answer: both.

The Habitat Project serves the Chicago Wilderness conservation community

Monitors

Volunteers and staff monitor plants and animals to document current distributions, abundance, and health— and to track trends in these numbers over time.

Stewards

Volunteers and staff remove invasive trees and brush, pull weeds, collect and plant native seeds, conduct controlled burns, and shepherd our most treasured natural areas back to good health.

Advocates

Volunteers and staff use data and field expertise to advocate for sound public policy to fund and facilitate habitat restoration and quality of life for plants and animals (including people).

The future of nature depends on the thousands of volunteers and staff who conduct the controlled burns, combat the invasive species, fend off the off-road-vehicles, monitor the plants and animals, and generally work for the wellness of wild animals and habitat. The Habitat Project is a network of thousands of volunteer and staff scientists, monitors, land managers and advocates who work side by side to assure the holistic and effective conservation of Chicago Wilderness— a regional nature reserve.

Monitoring Opportunities

Breeding Bird Census of the Bird Conservation Network
Lee Ramsey 847-501-4683

Bird Blitzes to cover grasslands, woodlands, shrublands, or wetlands
Karen Glennemeier 847-965-1150

Chicago Wilderness Calling Frog Survey
Rebecca Blazer 847-965-1150 ext.10

Butterfly Monitoring
Melanie Manner 847-464-4426

Plant Community Audits of woods, prairies, or wetlands
Karen Glennemeier 847-965-1150

Plants of Concern rare plant monitoring
Susanne Masi 847-835-8269



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*We welcome to our newsletter
team new writers, editors, stamp
lickers, photographers, graphic
artists, staplers, and anyone else
who would enjoy getting involved.*

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To Serve & Protect: Monitoring for Life

Mary Cannon

“Modern society seems somewhat disconnected from the natural world. I do what I do because I find the natural world interesting and exciting and want to share that with other people.”

Dave Schwaegler, naturalist, photographer, and computer professional, does his sharing at the Lake in the Hills Fen. With Dan Buckley, he monitors birds and provides data to land stewards who manage the area. He’s seen “a dramatic rise in the number and variety of grassland birds as a direct result of brush clearance.” He also developed and maintains the website, www.lithfen.org, which includes the steward’s reports, lists guided tours and volunteer opportunities, and displays his photographs. He says, “A lot of people enjoy the images on the internet; and, hopefully, they’ll get excited enough to come see what we’re all about.” When they do come, Dave further inspires by leading walks through the area. “In person I can give them a greater appreciation for the beauty and fragility of nature so they understand it needs protection.”

Retired science teacher, Dick Riner, couldn’t agree more. Volunteering at Bartel Grassland, Dick monitors birds and is particularly fond of bobolinks:

“This is the most concentrated nesting area in the region. You can go out on a given day and see two dozen per acre —you’re overwhelmed by bobolinks!”

In an effort to share his wonder, and using a grant from Thorn Creek Audubon in Park Forest, Dick has developed a brochure to be distributed to schools, libraries, and local government offices. “We’re trying to get people interested in Bartel, trying to recruit volunteers for monitoring, for seed distribution and for clean up - of both invasive plants and human garbage.” The human garbage is particularly irksome. “Here we have nature in the middle of the city. It’s fantastic that it’s there at all, but people need to protect it. I’m doing some of the protecting so it’ll be here in the future.”

Lauren Schumacher is a part of that future. As a Stevenson High School sophomore, she read “Horizons,” a Lake County Forest Preserve publication, and went to a meeting for monitors. “I got information on frogs in the area and took home CDs of calls so I could practice.” Before long, Lauren was assigned to a monitoring team and spent several nights in Wright Woods gathering data. Eventually she became team leader, impressing Tom Smith of the Lake County FPD with her excellence in coordinating the monitors and submission of outstanding reports. She plans to continue in her junior year and is encouraging friends to join her in monitoring.

Like Dave and Dick, Lauren Schumacher appreciates nature and wants to protect it:

***“It’s so peaceful out in the Forest Preserve at night, but civilization is breaking in. I want to do something to help before it’s too late.”
She adds, “Because of monitoring, I feel more involved and alive.”***

Clearly, young or old, volunteers monitor for life - to give it and to receive it.



Dick Riner monitors birds, recruits volunteers, plants seeds, and removes invasives – both vegetation and garbage – at Bartel Grassland in southern Cook County.

Photo: Dick Riner

Notes from the Habitat Clinics— continued from page 1

Steve Phillips, volunteer and birder: “Highlights at Springbrook Prairie included a Northern Harrier flyover, a group of over 50 bobolinks, a clay-colored sparrow, and a Henslow’s Sparrow. Give credit to the habitat, which includes a nodding wild onion (the first the site steward, Joe Suchecki, has ever seen here), many mounds of prairie dropseed, and many other prairie natives. Also, give credit to stewards, without whom burning, selective cutting, seed collection and distribution, and monitoring would never happen.”

— Springbrook Prairie Clinic

Susan Harney, Dundee Township Supervisor: “In Dundee Township, our sampling clearly shows that most people don’t want destructive uses of the forests and prairies. People who care about the environment have to get on government boards and bring majorities with them, so that they can make decisions.”

— Spring Creek Valley Clinic

Brad Semel, Illinois Department of Natural Resources: “You have to plan for the long haul. And for that reason, you must have community support.”

— Spring Creek Valley Clinic

Greg Rajskey, volunteer: “At Flint Creek Savanna, you immediately see how native wetland plants occupy concentric zones encircling the bit of open water at the center of the marsh. Was this by design, or a matter of plant ecology? Both, according to site steward Tom Vanderpoel, who says that rhizomatous plants were selected for introduction so that they would ‘move’ according to hydrological ‘preference.’”

— Flint Creek Savanna Clinic

Meredith Tucker, Citizens for Conservation volunteer: “As restoration has become more a part of the local culture, the Riding Club members increasingly understand and are sensitive to the ecosystem.”

— Spring Creek Valley Clinic

Tom Vanderpoel, Citizens for Conservation ecologist: “Here’s our basic template at Flint Creek Savanna: Break and remove drain tiles to help restore hydraulic patterns. Get the right plants into the right places while keeping the wrong plants out. Stop the exotic weeds in the first year. Keep the adventive native plants at bay until the more conservative species can get established. Plant forbs from seed and install sedges as plugs.”

— Flint Creek Savanna Clinic

Our Words: Our Workshops— continued from page 1

experience. While the subjects are somewhat dictated by the site, i.e. hydrological issues at a dolomite prairie or fen, or managing for grassland birds at large grasslands, some topics are common to many sites. For instance, most of the clinics discuss how best to converse with the general public about conservation issues as a first step to engaging neighbors in the restoration of a site, or how to keep lines of communication open between monitors and stewards. Always in attendance are some Chicago Wilderness resources: People with important experience and expertise, and people intimate with the site who can share their unique perspective.

By attending these clinics, which cover the whole Chicago Region, we come in contact with people whose perspectives differ from our own. This contact can be a powerful way to stir up our creativity or overcome problems we encounter in our conservation activities. When we all walk and talk together, we become a stronger force to the benefit of our communities and natural areas.

At Spears Woods in southern Cook County, we considered a small savanna that steward Joe Neumann is managing for shrubland birds and other inhabitants that don’t rely on large tracts of habitat.



Butterfly Network’s Online Data Entry Highly Successful

By Melanie Manner

The Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network has over 150 monitors in the field, covering more than 120 sites throughout northeastern and central Illinois. And the plan is to expand to cover the entire state. Each monitor turns in at least 6 field forms a year, often more. This means a huge amount of data annually that has to be entered into the IBMN database. In the past, the monitors submitted their data by mail, and the director and the administrator did all the data entry. This simply wouldn’t be possible with the volume now generated.

In 2003, the IBMN unveiled its first attempt at online data entry for monitors. It was a large step in the right direction, but it was very cumbersome to use.

IBMN webmaster Jim Peterson went to work to find a better, faster, and easier way. He developed a website version of the IBMN Census Route Field Form. Since it is almost identical to the paper version of the field form, it’s very easy for monitors to simply copy their data onto the website form and submit. And since it’s just a form, not part of the IBMN online database, you don’t have the lengthy delays waiting for pages to load. This encourages monitors to enter their data each time they monitor, instead of waiting until the end of the season. So the possibility of misplacing forms is greatly reduced. An important benefit is that the director and administrator can follow the data throughout the season, notifying the monitors of any trends to watch out for, such as the increase of Cloudless Sulphurs this year.

“We can now follow the data throughout the season.”

The online database has been very successful, with over 200 field forms entered as of August 1, out of the expected 800 or so, and more data pouring in daily. Many monitors have remarked on the ease of entry and are quite satisfied with the method. And the webmaster continues to work to improve the form, just recently adding a feature that allows the monitor to set defaults for their site, thereby reducing the typing of information that is repeated from form to form, such as site name, monitor name, habitat types, and species which are often seen. All in all, the online data entry has enormously improved the handling of the data, and will help the network improve its annual reporting, even through more expansion. If you would like to see this form, the IBMN website address is www.bfly.org and look under “Enter Data.” There is also a direct link on the homepage to the webmaster if you have any questions.



Purplish copper (*Lycaena helloides*)
An easy search of the IBMN database reveals that the monitors have found this species at just one site this year.

Photo: Tom Peterson

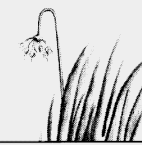
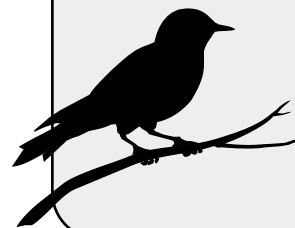
Mark Your Calendars for the Chicago Wilderness Habitat Conference

From prairies to parklands, wetlands to woodlands, and butterflies to bobolinks – everyday citizens are saving nature. Come hone your craft, meet great people and get inspired.

Saturday, February 26, 2005 — Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago

First alert! A call for concurrent session presentations will go out near the end of September. Anyone working on conservation issues in the region who has a topic, discovery, success story or workshop that they would like to present is invited to make a submission. Please contact Rebecca Blazer for submission guidelines at 847-965-1150 or rblazer@audubon.org.

Stay tuned for more details in the *January Habitat Herald*.



CHICAGO WILDERNESS™

A Regional Nature Reserve

Stalwart Monitors Provide Critical Data



Photo: John Denk

Regular monitoring of a particular site is the best way to detect trends over time, especially for elusive species like the wood frog.

The Chicago Wilderness Calling Frog Survey has just completed its fifth year of tracking the region's frogs and toads. The best way to use this impressive data set to track trends over time is to collect data from the same spot, year after year. The more sites we have with regular monitoring, the stronger and more reliable our regionwide data set will be. With the spirited dedication we find in our frog monitors, the Calling Frog Survey will continue to increase the number of sites being monitored on an ongoing basis.

Congratulations to all of the monitors listed below who have collected data from their sites for at least three years (as of data received August 1 of this year) and thus strengthened our ability to use the Calling Frog data for science and conservation.

- | | |
|---|--|
| Barrington Bog — Neil Timlin | Hidden Lake — Jeff Chapman and Tom Koz |
| Bauer Farm — Chuck Bauer | Jelke Creek Watershed — Judy Boehmer |
| Blackberry Maples Forest — Burt Walker | Johnson Mound — Mary Ochsenschlager |
| Bliss Woods — Mary Ochsenschlager | Lockport Prairie — Don & Espie Nelson and Efty Kelly |
| Burnidge Forest Preserve SW — Joe & Mary Masonick | Mayslake — Deirdre Humfleet |
| Campton Hills Park — Jan Stark | Moraine Hills State Park — Barb Meding |
| Carson Slough — Sandra Bauer | Nelson Lake Marsh — Chuck Bauer |
| Coral Woods — Paul Smith | North Branch — Diane Aoki |
| Deerwood Farm — Peg & Bill Jensen | Otter Creek Bend — Jay White |
| Elgin NW — Judy Boehmer | Pratts Wayne Woods — Jennifer Johnson |
| Evanswood Ln and Pheasant Run — Diana Fischer-Woods | Royal Fox — Patty Ruback |
| Fullersburg Woods — Deirdre Humfleet | Silver Creek — Mike Bouska |
| Fullerton Park — Kathy Kozacky | St. Charles West — Julie Long |
| Flint Creek Savanna — Neil Timlin | Timber Ridge — Leslie Yoshitani and Mary Watters |
| Fox River Grove — Bob Griem | Wagner Fen — Neil Timlin |
| Garfield Farm — Dorothy Allen | Waterfall Glen — Bruce Haberichter |
| Gompers Park — Mike Sinner and Jim MacDonald | Waterfall Glen 2 — Kathryn Kubik and Sandy Fejt |
| Great Western Trail — Renae Frigo | West Chicago Prairie — Robyn & Charlie Poole and Kathy DiMonti |
| Greene Valley — Sally Owen-Still | West Elgin — Tom Becvar |
| Herrick Lake — Jerry & Jody Zamirowski | Wonder Lake — Sara Denham |
| Herrick Lake 2 — Jennifer Bell and Linda Malaway | |



Photo by Bob Meyer

A riot of the threatened small sundrops delighted Victor Casidly at the undisclosed site where he monitors.

Learning to See

By Victor M. Cassidy

You can drive by mountains at 70 mph and exclaim about how beautiful they are. Don't try this with a prairie. All you'll see is a weedy blur.

To see a prairie, proceed slowly and look down at the ground. If you do this often enough and with sufficient attention, the jumble of vegetation that you encounter on your first visits will resolve itself into a mosaic of plant communities.

Some prairie species grow almost everywhere and in association with many other plants. We don't worry about them. Other plants thrive only in small areas and with very few associates. These are rarities that could disappear if the few habitats they find acceptable are destroyed. These are the Plants of Concern.

“Because I had trained my eyes in the field, I knew exactly where and how to look...”

During my first year as a POC Monitor, the site Steward and I monitored small sundrops (*Oenothera perennis*), a low, inconspicuous primrose with yellow flowers. As we worked, we talked about how small sundrops grows: it likes low, wet places and seems to thrive on disturbance. A power company truck once did a three-point turn in the middle of that prairie preserve. Small sundrops grows in the ruts the tires made.

We returned this year to find an absolute riot of small sundrops—at least 200 stems—more than double what we'd seen before! Delighted, we examined where the plants were growing to determine whether they spread in a pattern. We saw many stems in standing water (those ruts again) and concluded that wind probably spread the seed, which germinated and grew in small patches. Nobody at that prairie had collected seed or spread it. Nature did all the work.

This year I monitored small sundrops at two more prairies. In one, we found the plants in standing water, encircling a clone of Gray Dogwood. In another preserve, I looked for 90 minutes along the fringes of a wetland but found nothing. The flowering season was over, which made it almost impossible to distinguish the sundrops from other vegetation. Because I had trained my eyes in the field, I knew exactly where and how to look for small sundrops. I had photographed their habitat in my mind and drew on those mental pictures during my hunts. Without really planning to, I became a better monitor by learning to see.

Plants of Concern, a rare plant monitoring program for Chicago Wilderness, is coordinated by the Chicago Botanic Garden and has close ties with the Habitat Project. Now in its fourth year, POC has involved more than 150 volunteers in monitoring in the six county region of Northeast Illinois. POC works closely with Forest Preserve Districts and other agencies and landowners to assign volunteers to sites and species. Training sessions are held in April each year, but if you are interested in becoming involved now, please contact us: Susanne Masi, coordinator, smasi@chicagobotanic.org; Becky Mann, POC intern, rmann@chicagobotanic.org. Or, visit our website: www.plantsofconcern.org.

CARE-ing About a Hawk

By Bob Fisher

Photo: George Robertson, from the Friends of the Swainson's Hawk website.



Residents of rural Kane County are fighting to save habitat for themselves and the Swainson's Hawk.

On a Sunday afternoon in late June, my wife Karen and I stood in a parking lot near the town of Huntley in Kane County. We scanned the skies, hoping to get a look at one of the small number of Swainson's Hawks that have nested in this area for many years. Vic Berardi (Vic, a dedicated raptorophile, runs the hawkwatch at Illinois Beach State Park) and his wife Ann were also scanning. Vic suddenly announced, "There's one!" and we all were treated to a distant but diagnostic look at a Swainson's. We watched as the bird soared effortlessly across the sky, its wings in a slight dihedral. It performed a series of 'dip-soar' maneuvers, a flight technique characteristic of the species. Just when we thought it was going out of sight, the bird reversed course, eventually soaring directly over us and giving us wonderful views of this *buteo's* dark hood, white throat, dark upper breast, barred tail and white inner linings on the underwing. We watched as the bird turned its head and examined us; perhaps speculating on what these large ground dwellers might be doing (perhaps pitying us for our lack of wings, though I doubt if hawks ever feel pity!).

As birders and as conservationists, we were thrilled at the sight. The small northeastern Illinois population (at most a half dozen pairs) is an 'outlier', far removed and isolated from the main populations of this plains specialist. But they've persisted here in our part of the country, coming back from their wintering grounds in South America each spring

for many years, nesting, raising young and then going back south in the fall. Why: because the habitat of the area is ideal; a checkerboard of open fields and grassy meadows interspersed with small stands of oaks and other native deciduous trees as nesting sites. Rodents, grasshoppers and other prey species of the Swainson's are plentiful, so generation after generation have graced us with their presence. Even though the Swainson's are declining throughout their range, the ability of this small population to maintain itself has been a source of both joy and hope to those who care about birds, both for themselves, and as indicators of the health of the ecosystem they inhabit.

But this optimism is tempered with concern. Massive developments are planned or proposed for large chunks of this open country. Hayfields and grassy meadows would be replaced with suburban tract housing.

“When they began this fight, many of the members of CARE were unaware of the existence of the Swainson's Hawks. But they soon realized that the environment the hawks need is exactly what CARE is fighting to preserve.”

But it may not happen! Residents of this area near Huntley, in rural Kane County, banded together to fight these unplanned mega subdivisions, to preserve their quality of life and the rural, open environment where they live. Their group, Citizens Advocating Responsible Expansion (CARE), took the message to the media, politicians, and fellow citizens, urging that the rural nature of the region be saved.

When they began this fight, many of the members of CARE were unaware of the existence of the Swainson's Hawks. But they soon realized that the environment the hawks need to survive and raise their young is exactly what CARE is fighting to preserve, so they adopted the Swainson's as a symbol of their cause. When you drive through the town of Hampshire, placards showing the hawk are everywhere. Local school children have drawn or painted numerous images of the Swainson's and written essays describing the hawk's ecosystem needs and how those needs dovetail with the quality of life the area's human residents now enjoy. Many, both within and outside the community, have pledged to aid CARE in their battle against suburban sprawl. The hawks are 'voting' too, hunting the open fields for prey to raise their young once again this year. We hope and trust that the soaring Swainson's will be a fixture over rural Kane County for generations to come.

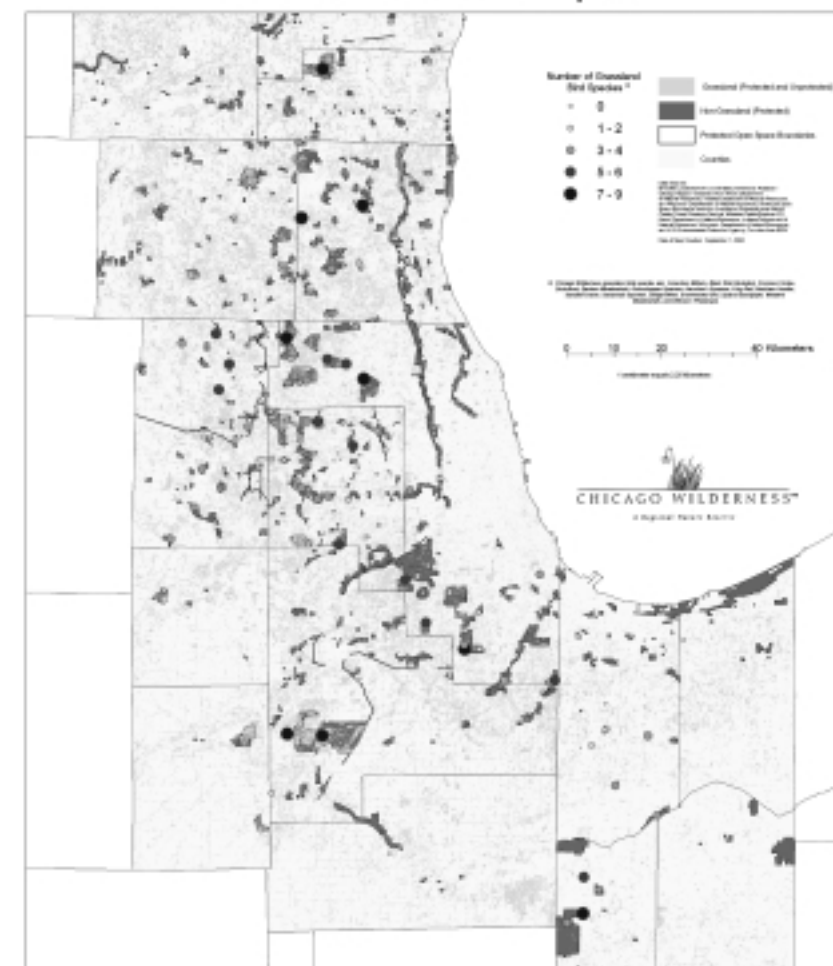
For more information about CARE, contact Barbara Burton at carehampshire.org or 847-683-3752.

Chicago Wilderness Grassland Bird Blitz

In 2003 and 2004, eighty people counted the birds at more than 120 grasslands throughout the Chicago Wilderness region. This Grassland Bird Blitz collected data that tells us the status and distribution of grassland birds on a region-wide scale. By putting a special emphasis on grasslands, we added 70 sites to the existing list of annually monitored grasslands, giving us a strong data set with which to assess the status of the birds that depend on this habitat.

Grassland birds are a top priority of Chicago Wilderness because of their global rarity and dramatic declines in the last century. Our region has some of the largest and best-protected habitats for these birds. In 2003, monitors counted 1,208 bobolinks (the most recorded species of this study), 316 Grasshopper sparrows, 151 Henslow's sparrows, and a single Northern Harrier. They found 11 grassland species (out of 18 that historically have occurred here) in ten counties. The 2004 results are currently being analyzed, and together the data are being incorporated into the Chicago Wilderness State of the Region Report Card, which will publicize the status of biodiversity for birds and other creatures.

Chicago Wilderness
2003 Grassland Bird Blitz
Number of Grassland Bird Species



Audubon CHICAGO REGION northeastern Illinois planning commission

The Grassland Bird Blitz helps us to visualize "hot spots" for grassland bird diversity, where open space planning could increase grassland bird habitat many fold.

The Birdiest Blitzer



Alan Anderson Robert Sliwinski

Alan Anderson and Robert Sliwinski duked it out this year for the title of Birdiest Blitzer, (Blitziest Birder?). Robert covered 9 sites in ten days, and Alan managed 13 sites in June, so we decided the two should share the title. Alan has this to say about the honor: "I do want an award - and it would be that many (most? ALL?) of the grasslands that I and others survey would eventually have some sort of management to help KEEP them as grasslands! Now THAT would be a proper award!"

The HH Classifieds

Ode to an Amphibian Angel

By Rebecca Blazer for frog monitor, Judy Boehmer



In the County of Kane where frogs abound,
We monitors stand listening, reveling in the sound
Of our dear 13 species, so silly, so profound.

But once all are counted and we're home, shoes all wet
We face a harsh terrain and break into a sweat –
The dreaded ravines of data entry on the Net.

Yet into this wilderness a guide appears!
An angel named Judy will ease all our fears.
She assigns us a password, explains "routes" and spreads cheer.

This year, she went beyond the calling frog duty –
She set up the logins so all would go smoothly
For all the new froggers – eight counties! – who could do it but Judy?

Thanks to this friendly, devoted frog admirer,
We can hold our flashlights a little bit higher,
Knowing she'll guide us – and the frogs – with her bright amber fire.

Frog Illustrations: Lynda Wallis



Fast Froggers Honored

Thanks to the following people for turning in their 2004 frog monitoring data by the July 31 deadline (this list as of August 1):

Dorothy Allen, Diane Aoki, Tom Becvar, Barbara Bell, Jen Berlinghof, Scott Bock, Judy Boehmer, Julie Buzinski, David Carpenter, the Cilley family, Charles Drake, Darlene Durling, Ralph Eisemann, Debbie & Clark Ganshirt, Glenn Kalin, Lance Keeley, Lynn Kunz, Peg Meyer, James O'Connor, Tom Peterson, Elizabeth Plonka, Dick Riner, Carolyn & Steve Roys, Patty Ruback, Holly Schmaling, Ken Schulein, Lauren Schumacher, Gail Seefeldt, Judy Speer, Craig Stettner, Mary Wagner, Burt Walker, and Karen & Jerry Willey.

If you monitored frogs in 2004 but aren't on this list, please enter your data at www.habitatproject.org or send a hard copy to Rebecca Blazer at 5225 Old Orchard Road, Suite 37, Skokie, IL, 60077. If you think you should be on this list, give Rebecca (847-965-1150) or your county coordinator a call.

Looking for a good time? Fun, friendly nature lovers in search of some who want to make a difference in the world. Us: a petite group, but with a large heart. Lots of great plans for connecting people with nature in Chicago Wilderness, but need more people like you to share the adventure with. You: friendly, caring, looking for a place where your untapped strengths and hidden talents can take flight. Possibilities: endless. First example, if you've ever wished you could put your web design or data processing skills to good use, we want to meet you. Second example: if you've been itching to give your PR savvy a workout, come make us famous! Third, if you'd like to flex your leadership muscle to help out a good cause, we'd like to help. If a laid back evening of snacks and chatting and stuffing envelopes is just your cup of tea, **CALL US!** Whatever your skills or interests – we just may have a special place in our hearts for you. Give us a call; it could be the beginning of something wonderful. Call Rebecca at 847-965-1150 or rblazer@audubon.org.

The Habitat Project is a thriving network, thanks to a lot of great people who believe in this work and who have shared their skills and energy. This year, some great new ideas are bubbling up. Might you want to help the Habitat Project catch this next wave of conservation in Chicago Wilderness?

Volunteer Opportunities

The Habitat Project website is looking for a make-over. It needs a creative person who understands the Habitat Project spirit and is also a 'techy.' If this is you, call Karen Glennemeier at 847-965-1150 or kglennemeier@audubon.org.

The Bird Conservation Network needs a good organizer who would enjoy working with birders in Lake County, IL to help them identify sites that need to be monitored, enter their data into the BCN database, and keep them informed about regional birding opportunities. Call Judy Pollock at 847-965-1150 or jpollock@audubon.org.

Let us know if you would like to receive periodic notices about envelope-stuffing parties and other work in our Skokie office. Help us communicate with the 2,000 people who support and make up the Habitat Project. Call Rebecca Blazer at 847-965-1150 or rblazer@audubon.org.

Our frog monitors are looking for some help entering data into the database, making copies of the frog calls CD, and getting new monitors signed up. A few minutes of organizational help can make a world of difference. To help, call Rebecca Blazer at 847-965-1150 or rblazer@audubon.org.

This one's perfect for you!



Words from the Field

From first-time frog monitor David Carpenter: "I've heard all six species that the naturalist told me exist at Volo Bog: Western chorus frogs, Northern leopard frog (just one), gray tree frogs, American toads, green frogs, and bullfrogs.

Why is it that green frogs can be gray and gray tree frogs can be green? I think we need some new names that celebrate sound over sight; e.g. chuckling frog, whistling toad, glugging frog. Of course, that could be my bias from hanging out with them at night when sound rules and there is no color.

It is really cool and exciting to walk around such a remote and un-peopled site at night because you get unexpected but pleasant encounters in the darkness—a beaver crossing behind me on the boardwalk, a huge crayfish walking down a soggy trail, a hawk shrieking suddenly from an overhanging tree. Freaky at first, but I have no fear as no skunk has ever been seen at Volo Bog. Also, the thousands of small bats help gobble my only predator: mosquitoes."



Illustration: Lynda Wallis

The Habitat Project is generously supported by the Illinois Conservation Foundation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Grand Victoria Foundation, CorLands, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the National Audubon Society, Boeing, the Chicago Wilderness Trust and individual supporters of Audubon-Chicago Region.