

The Habitat HERALD

January 2005

Volume 6, Issue 1

Acting Locally: Plants of Concern & Loyola Park Beach

By Mary Cannon

Plants of Concern enters year 5 in 2005!

Plants of Concern (POC) has completed four busy years of monitoring endangered, threatened and rare plants in Northeast Illinois. More than 150 volunteers have participated in this powerful initiative now tracing population trends of more than 120 species. POC works closely with more than 50 landowners and has partnered with the Habitat Project since its beginning. The program, coordinated through the Chicago Botanic Garden by Susanne Masi, is growing, and we are always looking for dedicated volunteers who are passionate about plants and their habitats. Training for the 2005 season will take place in April, in various places throughout the region, and will consist of whole-day workshops that includes field exercises. For more information on Plants of Concern or to get on the mailing list for the training announcement, contact Susanne Masi, 847-835-8269 (smasi@chicagobotanic.org) or Becky Mann, POC intern, 847-835-6856 (rmann@chicagobotanic.org).

Plants of Concern is funded by Chicago Wilderness, the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund and CorLands.

Ann Whelan started volunteering for Plants of Concern (POC) about four years ago. "I was working in Lake County and spending a lot of time in the car, so I asked Susanne Masi, Coordinator for the POC Project, if I could work closer to home." Ann, who has lived in the neighborhood of Loyola since the 80's, was delighted to learn that there were significant plants in Loyola Park Beach.

During her first year she counted 200 to 300 native plants but worried about their future. "For years the Chicago Park District (CPD) had no money, so the beach wasn't groomed and started to re-vegetate and make small dunes. Then, with a bigger budget, they started conditioning (picking up debris and machine-grooming) the sand. I knew that would destroy my plants, so I called Mary Van Haften, Natural Areas Manager (CPD), and asked her to have cleaning crews skip that part of the beach."



Photo: Ann Whelan

Ann Whelan surveys the dunes in her "backyard" that she is helping to save, while she monitors their rare plants (not named here because of POC policy not to reveal the location of rare plants)."

"There are so few intact beaches in Illinois, that even small pockets are important"

Eventually Ann and Don Gordon, a member of Alderman Joe Moore's Parks and Beaches Committee, asked that the area be fenced to allow for dune build-up and re-vegetation.

Angela Sturdevant, Volunteer Stewardship Coordinator (CPD), met with Ann and Don and agreed to fencing and some weeding and seeding of the area. She also agreed to signage explaining the plan to the community. "We've done other projects like this at Montrose Beach, Rainbow Beach, and the South Shore Nature Sanctuary. There are so few intact beaches in Illinois that even small pockets are important. We want to create a string of natural habitats along the lakefront with

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



Excellence by the Acre

By Elizabeth Plonka

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

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Photo: Scott Kobal

Knowing the precise location of every tree in this one-acre plot is helping Scott Kobal and his colleagues at the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County learn more about oak reproduction and regeneration.

Good work deserves recognition. In 2004, the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials gave a Certificate of Excellence Environmental Award to the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County for their one-acre plots monitoring program. Scott Kobal, District Plant Ecologist, talks about this long-term project as a way to inform the

management of the natural areas. "One of the big goals of this project was to aid our management," Kobal says. "We want to see what we're doing that's right and to push us in the right direction." The project started in 1979 under the leadership of Wayne Lampa, the district's ecologist at the time, and Gerould Wilhelm then of the Morton Arboretum. They began by "taking a snapshot" of different representative woodlands in the county by monitoring one-acre plots within them. The protocol called for counting and measuring trees and cataloging ground flora. Over time, as technologies developed, district ecologists have added to the protocol. As it stands now, the one-acre plots project covers 35 plots and maps or monitors tree species, tree size and location (via a global positioning system), and also ground flora, shrub and sapling composition, as well as light levels under the tree canopy. "The protocols which we started out with in the beginning we pretty much stuck to," comments Lampa, "but we just added in quadrats, and then later on we added in light monitoring, and then we added in this GPSing thing, all to help us get a better understanding."

As the project has continued, the district ecologists have been able to look at and quantify the changes occurring in the county's woodlands. Leslie Burns, the Natural Resources Supervisor at the district, places great importance on these records. "It's always great to have information and data so that we're making informed decisions about our management," she states. "When you can look at the data and start to tell

how these ecosystems have changed over time and you can compare some areas that have been managed and some that haven't, it's really informative and it helps propel the system, the management, and the science forward." One of the most significant changes illuminated by the study is the decline of oaks in the county's woodlands. Not only is the number of oaks declining, but there is little oak regeneration. It is projects such as the One-acre Plots study that may hold the key to finding out how to keep woodlands healthy, but Kobal knows you need more than just information. You can use the information to make a plan, but you still need support. He hopes this study can "show the importance of these areas to the people of the county because if they don't appreciate these areas they're not going to support our work. They need to know why we're doing it and what the implications are, what we can lose if we don't act. Unfortunately, a lot of people take these big oaks for granted, like they're going to be there forever; and we all know they're not."

As Scott Kobal and his colleagues continue working on this project, we can reap the benefits. The results of this study may tell us not only how to grow healthy oaks and woodlands but how to grow a healthy, productive protocol.

ties to the migratory bird sanctuaries. Loyola Beach will be on the agenda for our restoration plan this winter," she says.

However, Mary Van Haften reminds us of the grim realities. "Right now my budget doesn't cover restoration, only maintenance. What we need is a grant to do the work and increase the diversity of dune plants that could act as a backbone and would then do their own colonizing. It takes about 10 years to have something great, but we'll do what we can with the help of neighborhood volunteers."

Ann Whelan, who has become the neighborhood steward for the beach, says, "The community is delighted to watch and see what's happening." Ann will also continue to watch and work. "This area is so grown up with buildings that bringing some

untamed nature into the city is exciting," she says. "This year we had 7,000 plants. If we can get vegetation down to the water, some wetlands can form, giving fish a place to spawn and improving the health of the lake. I don't see it going backwards now that we have momentum." Ann, who works for the EPA, adds, "This POC program, working in conjunction with the Chicago Park District, taps into deep interests and inspires enthusiasm in the community—which leads to positive actions. I believe in the motto: 'Think globally; act locally.' This is my bit for acting locally."

Because of Ann and people like her, Mary Van Haften says, "Someday people in the heart of the city will be saying, 'Wow, this is dune habitat!'"



Photo: Carol Freeman

Nature photographer Carol Freeman is working with the Plants of Concern project to photograph every threatened and endangered species in Illinois. The sales from her 2005 calendar, *In Beauty I Walk*, will go toward this photography project, so if you'd like to help out while staying organized and inspired, contact Carol at 847-404-8508 or go to www.carolfreeman.com.



Photo: Lake Michigan Federation

Congratulations to Butterfly Monitors on a Fine Season

The 2004 season was a smashing success for our butterfly monitors. There were 117 routes monitored, out of 133 routes expected, for an impressive 88% retention rate. And 84% of monitors turned in their data on time (by October 15). No more nagging! This is by far the highest on-time record in at least 10 years, according to BMN coordinator Mel Manner. "The success is due to IBMN webmaster Jim Peterson. He's been of phenomenal help." Of their on-time record, Mel adds, "This is a huge boost for us, allowing us to start processing the data and generating annual reports immediately. Last year, we were still getting data in December." And Mel gives a special thanks to those non-computer owners who trekked to the library to enter their data online. Special dedication, indeed.

Check out the results of this and previous years' monitoring at the IBMN website: www.bfly.org.



Photo: Jim Peterson

Jim Peterson has made it easy for butterfly monitors to get their data in quickly.

Bird Monitoring Informs Restoration

By Lee Ramsey



Photo: Lee Ramsey

Conrad Fialkowski and Ron Klingensmith have been pointing out interesting birds and sharing their data with the Spears Woods site steward for fourteen years.

In 1990 natural areas restoration in the Palos area kicked off with a public event hosted at Spears Woods by Stephen Packard and Tribune columnist John Husar; 250 people attended, among them Conrad Fialkowski and Ron Klingensmith, who decided to get involved by monitoring the birds. Restoration, led by volunteer steward Steve Bubulka, got underway at Spears Woods, and so did Conrad and Ron's bird monitoring. Now, more than 14 years later, the restoration continues under current steward Joe Neumann, and the bird

“This site has native shrubland communities and shrubland birds, which might have been overlooked without the bird monitoring work.”

monitoring has never faltered. Conrad and Ron are now beginning their 15th year of surveys, never having missed a month. In fact there have been only a few times in their 150-plus monthly visits when one of them was unable to go and the other had to walk the route alone.

Spears Woods is a large site, mostly woods but interrupted by ponds and small prairie openings, which is what captivated Conrad when he first visited the area prior to 1990. “The prairies are what brought me here,” he says. One of the contributions of the monitoring is steward Joe Neumann's decision to manage a modest-sized open area as a shrubland rather than grassland after Ron and Conrad's data suggested that shrubland birds were declining and that grassland birds had little interest in the area. Says Joe, “This site has native shrubland communities and shrubland birds, which might have been overlooked without the bird monitoring work.”

The two of them were actually pioneers in Chicago-area monitoring, laying out their own route—two routes actually, monitored on alternate years—using bridle paths and foot trails to take advantage of the abundant edge habitat offered by the site. They established points along the two routes for use during the breeding season, and preserved sightings on a tape recorder, with Ron transferring them later to computer disks. Results are passed along to the site steward and, in recent years, entered on the BCN/Cornell eBird database.

Over the years they have recorded 141 species of birds at Spears Woods, with the nesting species being the most important for restoration planning. In recent years, a number of bird species of open woods or savanna – including orchard orioles, gnatcatchers, and eastern bluebirds -- have started to nest and produce young. Owls (great horned and screech) and woodcock breed here every year. Less regular breeders include wood ducks, blue-winged teal, and (one year) yellow-billed cuckoo. The most recent addition to the Spears Woods list is three monk parakeets that presumably wandered in from a reported nest site in LaGrange. Sandhill cranes, ospreys, and northern shrikes also turn up from time to time, depending on the season. The nest of the great horned owls was pointed out by a herp monitor, who brought Conrad and Ron an owl pellet containing a leg band. Conrad tracked it down and found that it was from a male mallard banded by Peter Dring, naturalist at the nearby Little Red Schoolhouse.

On a bright, crisp day in early November 2004 the route offered no owls or even owl pellets. But, while patiently answering this reporter's questions, in one area Conrad and Ron did find a number of turtle eggs and somewhat further on a late-season catbird. Surprisingly, there are no blue jays, their numbers having been drastically reduced by West Nile virus. There are a few chickadees and one crow, and there is a wealth of knowledge and dedication in the two people who are faithfully monitoring their return.

Ah... Spring! 2005 Frog Workshops

These workshops are for both beginning and experienced monitors. We'll teach and review the calls of our 13 species of frogs and toads, help new monitors find survey sites, and discuss the monitoring protocol. Experienced monitors are encouraged to attend, in order to learn any protocol changes, obtain data sheets, review frog calls, and share lessons learned from last year.

DuPage County: Wednesday, January 19, 6:30-8:30 pm, The Grounds and Resources Complex at 29 W 220 Mack Road in West Chicago, within Blackwell Forest Preserve. From Route 59, travel east on Mack Road for 0.6 miles. Turn north into the Grounds and Resources Complex. Pass through the chain link gate and gas tank area. Park in front of the center building. Please pre-register with Tracey Smith at 630-933-7681.

Will County: Saturday, February 5, 10:00 am-Noon, Sugar Creek Administrative Building of the Forest Preserve District. At 17540 W. Laraway Road in Joliet. Take Rte 80 to Briggs, head south on Briggs (turns into 52-S), then west on Laraway Road, and look to the north side of the street after about a half mile.

Lake County, IL: Wednesday, February 9, 6:30-8:00 pm, Ryerson Conservation Area Visitors Center. Located about a mile south of Half Day Road, between I-94 and Hwy 45. Head west on Half Day road from I-94, then turn south on Riverwoods Road and look for the entrance on your right.

Kane County: Saturday, February 12, 9:00 am-Noon, Pottawatomie Park, St. Charles. Coming west on Route 64 (called Main St. in St. Charles), turn north at 2nd Ave., two blocks before the river. Second Ave. ends at Pottawatomie Park - head west and go to the large building down by the river.

Cook County & Chicago: Wednesday, February 16, 6:30-8:00 pm, Edgebrook Community Center. Located at 6100 N. Central on Chicago's northwest side. This workshop is co-sponsored by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and the Chicago Park District.

McHenry County: Wednesday, February 23, 7:00-9:00 pm, at Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake. At 2112 Behan Road, just south of Hwy 176, between Hwy 31 and the Fox River. Heading NE from -Crystal Lake on Hwy 176, turn right on Behan Rd after passing Valley View/Silver Lake Rd, and take another right at the end of the road. Please pre-register with Sara Denham, at sdenham@mccdDistrict.org; 815-728-8307.

Indiana, Porter County: Thursday, February 17, 7:00-8:30 pm, at the Valparaiso branch of the Porter County Public Library, 103 Jefferson Street in Valparaiso, IN. Workshop will be in Meeting Room A. For location details, see: <http://www.pcpls.lib.in.us/>. Contact Alan Resetar with questions, 219-465-7231.

Indiana, Jasper County: Tuesday, February 22, 6:30-8:00 pm, at St. Joseph College, Renssalaer, IN. On Hwy 231 South, just off of Interstate 65. Meet in Courtney Auditorium in the Core Building. Contact Bob Brodman to RSVP, 219-866-6215.



Illustration: Lynda Wallis

Frogger Needed!

Ted Stone Forest Preserve in south suburban Hodgkins is full of intriguing peeps and croaks in the spring, coming from its several ponds—but they aren't being monitored. We need a knowledgeable frog monitor! Contact site steward Barbara Birmingham at 708-356-0579, or Rebecca Blazer at 847-965-1150 if you'd like to help.



Check us out on the web!

Gary Davis and Marilyn Schweitzer have been working hard (and having a lot of fun, we hear) redesigning the Habitat Project website. At www.habitatproject.org, you can learn how your monitoring, stewardship, or advocacy contributes to regionwide conservation of our precious natural areas. Find workshop and training dates and learn about new opportunities. And connect to the network of 700 people who join you in this great work. Check it out!

Status Report on the Cricket Frog

*Adapted from a report by Dr. Michael Lannoo,
Coordinator of the U.S. Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force.*

In the Midwestern United States, Blanchard's Cricket Frogs (*Acris crepitans blanchardi*) are declining along the northern and western borders of their distribution and constitute the only mysterious amphibian decline in the region. To address this issue, 52 experts from the U.S. and Canada met at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore in September of 2003 for the U.S. Northern Cricket Frog Symposium.

From the meeting, the experts were able to implicate several factors in cricket frog population declines: habitat loss and alteration, pesticide contamination, acidified ecosystems, and disease. They also developed a hypothesis about how the biogeography of northern cricket frogs might explain the unusual pattern (northern and western extremes) of their declines. The genus *Acris* appears to have arisen in the southeast United States, and genetic evidence suggests that *Acris crepitans blanchardi* underwent a recent and rapid expansion to the north and the west – into the areas now experiencing severe declines.



The northern cricket frog's overwintering habits make it especially susceptible to dry, cold weather, which may help explain its decline in our region.

Research shows that, unlike other amphibians in our region, the northern cricket frog does not overwinter by burrowing, submerging, or producing antifreeze. Instead of such hibernation, they just “get by.” Cricket frogs overwinter in shallow wet areas along the margins of wetlands, where a combination of physical and chemical factors keep temperatures above freezing; as long as it's wet, northern cricket frogs can withstand cold. As you might expect, the largest population extirpations have occurred during droughts in combination with severely cold winters. More so than other

species of Midwestern amphibians, northern cricket frogs appear to be sensitive not only to environmental quality, but also to climate change.

To help us more effectively protect the northern cricket frog in our region, the meeting's experts developed a program to document and map all known populations of cricket frogs. The Habitat Project will be sending the U.S. Geological Survey all of our cricket frog data from the Calling Frog Survey. So be sure to let us know right away if you think you've found one.

Our Data at Work



BCN Census data is making a big difference in the study of West Nile Virus and its effects on crows, chickadees, and people.

Local and national scientists are using data from the Habitat Project's bird monitors to study West Nile Virus. Findings of the BCN Census from 2000 to 2007 will be analyzed by epidemiologists and ornithologists from the University of Illinois and included in a model that attempts to explain and predict the spread of this disease.

BCN Census monitors volunteered for a special census of crows and chickadees in 2002, when monitors gave anecdotal reports that bird species other than crows were dying. The resulting study received coast-to-coast publicity as the first of its kind.

Our work was also referenced in an article from the scientific journal *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, entitled “Dead Crow Reports and Location of Human West Nile Virus Cases, Chicago, 2002.” Locally, the Chicago Department of Public Health now has the entire BCN database and is using it to refine its response to the disease.

Scientists and public health officials have been impressed with the geographic scope of our data and with the consistency of its collection, year after year. They just can't get this kind of bird data anywhere else, and they are grateful for the BCN Census and its dedicated and skilled monitors. Congratulations to the BCN and to all of the bird monitors whose work has made such an important difference.

Important Bird Areas

By Dick Riner

What is all this IBA business? How is it going to affect my bird watching? Is it some kind of big deal? These are some questions you might have heard or even thought yourself.

It is a big deal. The Important Bird Areas (IBA) program is an international effort to identify, conserve, and monitor a network of sites that provide essential habitat for bird populations. The Illinois IBA program began in December 2002 with the goals of identifying the state's most important bird areas and the threats to them, and forming conservation teams that can implement needed actions. These actions involve restoration, management, monitoring, advocacy, and anything else that will improve bird habitat in the designated IBAs. Forty-eight Illinois Important Bird Areas were announced on October 6, 2004, including several in Northeast Illinois (see map below).

Donnie Dann, President of BCN (the Bird Conservation Network), spoke with me about his experiences with the Common Tern, a state endangered species at Great Lakes Station in the Waukegan area, one of our IBAs. There had been no confirmed young terns in Illinois since 1983, but in 1999 common tern eggshells were found on a small island near the Midwest Generation power plant. Cooperation was secured from the Navy and with much clearing of invasives and the installation of a fence to keep out predators and other invaders, a successful nesting season occurred in 2002. After a coyote jumped the fence and destroyed the colony's 26 new nests, the fence was electrified. In 2003, 34 Common Tern chicks fledged. This year, 2004, 31 to 32 fledged but were wiped out by high water.

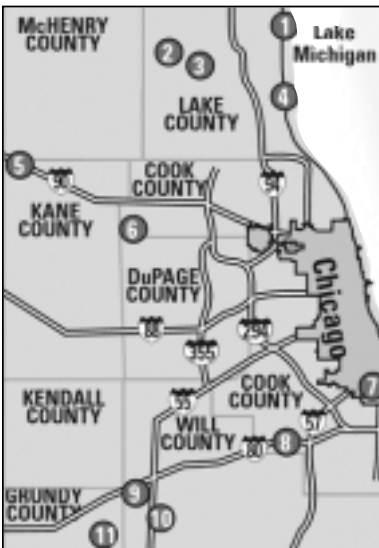


Photo: Dick Riner

The Bartel Volunteers celebrated the dedication of Bartel Grassland as an Important Bird Area by cutting some brush and making some more bird habitat.

In Will County, the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie has been recognized as an IBA. Some of the state's highest numbers of nesting Upland Sandpipers, Willow Flycatchers, Sedge Wrens, Loggerhead Shrikes, Bell's Vireos, Grasshopper Sparrows, and Bobolinks have earned Midewin this designation. Jane Jones of Channahon, a volunteer at Midewin, is pleased with the IBA title for this large area where she is one of many monitors. "It draws people in, especially with the east side opening up to the public. Midewin is a good example of the way things used to be." Used to be, of course, before it was an army ammunition plant. Logan Lee, a Prairie Supervisor for two years at Midewin, speaks glowingly about the unique size and diversity of the prairie at Midewin. The IBA designation will bring a higher profile to the restoration efforts and more public recognition. "Come and see

Important Birding Areas- continues on page 9



CHICAGOLAND IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

1. Illinois Beach State Park – Raptors
2. Lake-McHenry Wetlands Complex – Pied-billed grebe, least bittern, sandhill crane, common moorhead, Forster's tern, willow flycatcher, yellow-headed blackbird
3. Rollins Savanna – Yellow-headed blackbird
4. Great Lakes Naval Training Center – Common tern
5. Kane-McHenry Swainson's Hawk Habitat – Swainson's hawk
6. Pratt's Wayne Woods – Sandhill crane, yellow-headed blackbird
7. Lake Calumet Area – Black-crowned night heron, common moorhen, willow flycatcher
8. Bartel Grassland – Bobolink
9. Des Plaines State Conservation Area – Orchard oriole
10. Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie – Upland sandpiper, willow flycatcher, sedge wren, loggerhead shrike, Bell's vireo, grasshopper sparrow, bobolink
11. Goose Lake Prairie State Park – American bittern, king rail, Wilson's snipe, sedge wren, Henslow's sparrow

Bird conservationists are identifying the threats to these Chicago region Important Bird Areas and forming conservation teams to address the threats.

the broad array of species," says Logan. There are 6,400 acres open to the public right now, and the Army is still holding 3,800 acres of land. The projected finish date is 2008-09.

Brad Semel, biologist for the IDNR, stresses the that IBA designation is important in getting public awareness of conservation, "not looking at isolated areas as we have traditionally, but using a larger, landscape perspective." This is bird conservation from a holistic approach, at a larger scale. It will help the public to recognize how local areas fit into the larger, regional landscape and to see the global conservation implications of our work.

So, what is all this IBA business? The birding community now has a chance to join in the effort to identify our most important

bird areas and join the conservation teams that will take the necessary actions to protect them. Since most IBAs are already publicly owned, protecting them means doing the stewardship, monitoring, and advocacy that will improve and increase habitat for birds. The second round of Illinois IBA nominations is now being sought. Sites that shelter high concentrations of migrant landbirds and rare and unique habitat types will be also reviewed in the second round. A list of "Most Wanted Sites" and information about the new Illinois IBAs can be found at www.habitatproject.org. For additional information: Judy Pollock, jpollock@audubon.org or 847-965-1150.

Yes, Those Dragonflies Are Stuck Together

By Gareth Blakesley

Many of us have seen it: what appears to be a physical impossibility, two dragonflies hanging on to each other while flying. I can't even hold hands and walk without tripping! Here's what's going on with these flying acrobats.

On summer days, at many ponds and marshes around the Chicago region, you can see adult male dragonflies flying back and forth, giving chase and ardently defending their territories against other male dragonflies. A male dragonfly's aim is to mate with as many females as possible. The process of setting up a territory and defending it from other males increases the chances of mating with any female that comes into that territorial area. Male dragonflies and damselflies have claspers at the end of their abdomens that they use to grab hold of a female behind her head. This position is called the 'tandem position'. Prior to 'tandem', males will have passed a sperm packet from underneath the eighth segment of their abdomen to the second segment of their abdomen. The male will try and persuade the female to bring her genitalia (also underneath the eighth segment) into contact with his, by swinging her until the female curls her abdomen underneath and brings both male and female openings into contact with each other. This position is known as the 'wheel position' and dragonflies and damselflies are the only insects found to do this, due to the unusual presence of the male's second genitalia.

After mating takes place, sometimes the female breaks away from the male and lays her now fertilized eggs with the male guarding closely by, or the female will lay her eggs while still in tandem with the male. Dragonflies and damselflies are peculiar in that they can scoop out previously deposited sperm from other males, so it is in the best interest of male dragonflies to stick around after mating to ensure his sperm isn't replaced by someone else's before egg-laying (which is the time when the eggs are fertilized). The male will then go off and defend his territory, again chasing rival males and trying to garner passing females.



Photo: Carol Freeman

Dragonflies and damselflies are the only insects that use this tandem/wheel position.

If you are interested in monitoring dragonflies, or are just interested in knowing a little more about them, please join us for one of the following workshops:

Beginners' Workshop

(For first year monitors or those with a casual interest)

Saturday, February 19th, 10am to 12pm

Wednesday, February 23rd, 7pm to 9pm

Wednesday, March the 9th, 7pm to 9pm

Advanced Workshops

(For second or third year monitors or those with a good prior knowledge)

Wednesday, March 16th, 7pm to 9pm

Saturday, March 26th, 10am to 12pm

Workshops are held at the Notebaert Nature Museum in Chicago.

Please RSVP to Gareth Blakesley gblakesley@naturemuseum.org (773) 755-5100 x3032

The 2005 Grassland Audit

Data will help inform and fund land stewardship.

We Habitat Project monitors have proven ourselves at gathering important data on a regional scale. Now we've been asked to tackle something bigger than ever. This year we'll be jointly looking at the plants, birds and butterflies of the region's grasslands. Chicago Wilderness has a goal of thousands more acres of restored prairie communities that provide high quality habitat for rare plants, grassland birds, and butterflies. The Grassland Audit will help determine how to restore prairies so that they meet this goal, and it will provide the critical data to convince decision-makers and funders to help us in this good work.

Habitat Project data can tell us the condition of our natural areas overall, within one or two field seasons, so we can get the answers we need to make good conservation decisions. We did this with the Bird Blitzes of 2003 and 2004. We did it with the Woods Audit of 2002 and 2003. Now it's the grasslands.

Here's what we want to find out:

What percent of Chicago Wilderness' grassland acreage is high, good, and low quality based on the plant diversity and brush cover, as well as the birds and butterflies? Are

our prairies and grasslands doing better or worse than they were in 1976, the last time such an assessment was done? And can we learn more about how to restore prairies so that they support important grassland birds and butterflies as well as rare plants?

To find out, we'll place vegetation transects randomly throughout Chicago Wilderness' grasslands. We'll supplement these random transects with extra ones in prairies where we have (or will collect) bird and butterfly data.

Chicago Wilderness has set ambitious goals for restoring and protecting grassland communities, and the Grassland Audit is our way of determining where we stand now and what our next steps should be. We hope you'll consider joining in this important adventure.

Training will begin in April. If you would like to monitor plants, birds or butterflies with the Grassland Audit, contact Karen Glennemeier at 847-724-5226 or kglennemeier@audubon.org.

2005 Indoor Butterfly Workshop

The 15th annual indoor training workshop for the Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network will be on March 5th, 2005, from 9:30 to 2:30. It will be in Elgin again, at the Gail Borden Public Library at 270 N. Grove Avenue. Registration will be required by Friday, March 4th.

This is the main meeting of the year for the IBMN, so we strongly urge all monitors and interested newcomers to attend. We will have refreshments, but remember to bring a lunch.

We have a very exciting keynote speaker coming. Paul Labus is the Southern Lake Michigan Project Director for the Indiana Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. He will be talking about their Karner Blue Butterfly habitat restoration and re-introduction efforts. IBMN Director Doug Taron is thrilled to have him speaking, as Doug hopes soon to do some Karner Blue re-introduction in Illinois himself. Further details about the March Workshop are posted on our website: www.bfly.org.



Photo: Robert Silwinski



Photo: Rob Curtis

Plant and bird monitors are teaming up in 2005 to assess the condition of our grasslands.

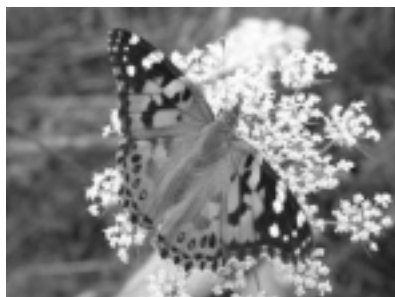


Photo: Tom Peterson

*Painted Lady butterfly
Vanessa cardui*



Photo: Lake Michigan Federation

*Viceroy butterfly
Limenitis archippus*

The HH Classifieds

Talk to Us. Do you have skills or knowledge to share? Consider presenting at the Wild Things conference. Email a brief expression of interest to quirkaceae@yahoo.com, including a paragraph about your proposed topic, and a sentence or two introducing yourself (please include name, phone number and a little bit about your background).

Conference Planning. Want to be a part of the team that's making "Wild Things" happen? Contact Rebecca Blazer at rblazer@audubon.org to find out about opportunities to help out on the planning committees.

Mapmaker, mapmaker, make me a map... Do you have expertise with Arcview or other GIS-based map-making technologies? The Habitat Project has many mapping needs, from locating sample points for monitors to illustrating the results of monitoring studies. Help us share our vision with the rest of the world. Contact Karen Glennemeier at 847-724-5226 or kglennemeier@audubon.org.

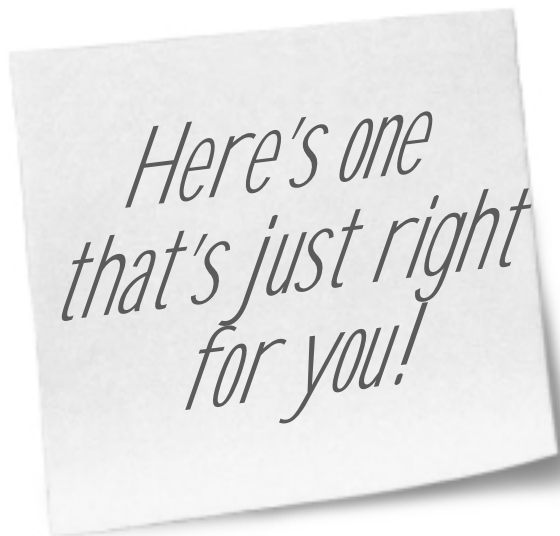
Trivial Pursuit. Like many of us, our newly designed website has a serious side and a whimsical side. If you lean toward the latter, and you also have a penchant for collecting bits of nature knowledge, maybe you'd like to contribute to our "fun facts" section of the website. Contact Gary Davis at 630-393-7812 or gdavis@heidenhain.com.

Like to talk about birds? The Habitat Project office often gets calls from people with questions about bird ID, bird feeding, etc. We're looking for a bird guru to refer these calls to. Contact Judy Pollock at 847-965-1150 or jpollock@audubon.org.

Organizer. The BCN Census has a number of people who like to make phone calls, and others who do data entry. Might you be the person who could work with this group to organize an annual phone-calling blitz – to find out who's monitoring where, gather information to update mailing lists, etc.? Contact Lee Ramsey at 847-501-4683 or leeramsy@comcast.net.

Monitor. The BCN is currently talking to forest preserve district officials and other land managers to identify priority sites for monitoring. If you're interested in becoming a bird monitor at an assigned site, contact Judy Pollock at 847-965-1150 or jpollock@audubon.org.

Get the Scoop. The Habitat Herald is looking for more "dual interest" reporters to seek out stories that show how stewards, monitors, and advocates are benefitting from each other's work – how cross-discipline teamwork is changing the world and accomplishing conservation goals. Want to try your hand?

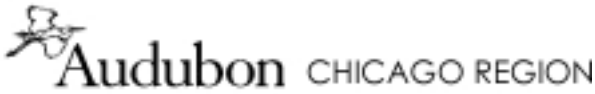


Learning and Birding in Kane County

The St. Charles Park District has a host of bird workshops and outings planned for this winter and spring, as well as lectures on topics from farmland preservation to ice-age geology. For dates, times, and more information about the following opportunities, contact Mary Ochsenschlager at 630-584-1885 x425, or go to www.st-charlesparks.org.

- Birding for Beginners
- Fox River Birding
- Hummingbirds: Acrobats of the Air
- Visions of Eagles
- Ice Age Geology, Ecosystems and Land Use in the Fox River Watershed
- Birding Dick Young Forest Preserve
- Country Roads Birding
- Waterfowl Migration at Fermilab
- Farmland Preservation on the Metropolitan Fringe
- How Well is Your Water? Groundwater Science for Private Well Owners

Chicago Wilderness Habitat Project



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Hey! Save the date...

Saturday, February 26, 2005
8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago

Save the date for a big Chicago Wilderness volunteer conference on Saturday, February 26, 2005. Hundreds of stewards, monitors, interpreters, advocates, citizen scientists, land managers, and people who love nature from all across the region will be there.

“Wild Things” will feature more than 75 workshops, speakers and seminars on wildlife, ecological restoration, outreach, advocacy, nature in your back yard, and more. Mark your calendars and spread the buzz to all your friends and colleagues who would get excited about a wild day of building skills, sharing discoveries, and getting inspired!

Stop by www.chicagowilderness.org/whathappening to learn more and obtain a registration form. Or call 847-965-9239 ext. 21.

The “Wild Things” planning team leaders are Barbara Birmingham, Libby Hill, Marianne Kozlowski, Mel Manner, Linda Masters, Lisa Nagel, Tom Peterson, and Greg Rajsky.

Co-sponsored by Audubon - Chicago Region, Northeastern Illinois University, the Volunteer Stewardship Network and more.



Saturday, February 26, 2005
8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Northeastern Illinois
University, Chicago



Photo: Lynda Wallace



Photo: Forest Preserve District of DuPage County



Photo: Forest Preserve District of DuPage County