

# The Habitat HERALD

April 2005

Volume 6, Issue 2

## Wild Things Conference a Huge Success, Naturally!

By Elizabeth Plonka

**W**ild Things: A Chicago Wilderness Conference for People and Nature was held on February 26 at Northeastern Illinois University. The gathering drew 760 people – all enthusiastically pursuing their interest in the natural world. People left feeling motivated, recharged, and ready to change the world.

Here are a few of the many new ideas that sprang from Wild Things. Might you want to help make one of them happen? If you need help getting started, call Rebecca Blazer at 847-965-1150. Or go to our new online forum at [www.habitatproject.org](http://www.habitatproject.org) to hook up with other people who want to make a difference.



- **Organize** a stewardship group of twenty-somethings and thirty-somethings who want to combine a love of nature with a fun social scene.
- **Join** a “Friends of...” group and help out with, or start a project. Or **start a new** “Friends of...” group, or a local appreciation group to enjoy and teach others about local natural areas and their living treasures.
- **Restore** your own backyard natural area, and **invite** your neighbors to enjoy it, learn about it, and perhaps restore their own property.
- **Work** within Sierra and Audubon chapters and other grassroots groups to organize Chicago Wilderness initiatives.
- **Organize** the Chicago Wilderness Grassroots Team. It would concern itself with the kinds of things listed here and would be a regionwide force for making a difference.
- **Plan** a county (or watershed) conference next year – a local version of Wild Things.
- **Establish** a monitoring program to track progress at the natural area of which you are a steward or advocate. Have experts teach beginners to identify plants, birds, butterflies, or other organisms, and train a dozen new experts in five years.
- **Organize** a regional Wild Seeds Gardeners initiative. Recruit 1,000 households over five years.
- **Mentor** a group of teenage Chicago Wilderness Rangers – the youth stewardship program for people older than the Mighty Acorns but younger than college age.
- **Save** a grassland, woods, or wetland remnant that isn’t yet protected. If the bulldozer is imminent, **organize** a remnant rescue initiative to remove the rare plants, animals, and soil biota to nearby restoration projects.

Wild Things was possible only through the cooperation of many local organizations and hard working volunteers. Thanks to everyone for making this day a smashing success – the world will be a better place for it.

— Please see the back cover of this issue for some special thanks and words from a few participants.

# 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

### ***Dragonfly Monitoring Network.***

Gareth Blakesley 773-755-5100 x3032

### ***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.*

*To learn more, contact Mary  
Cannon at 847-375-8301 or  
[mjkcannon@hotmail.com](mailto:mjkcannon@hotmail.com)*

# Join us for The 2005 Chicago Wilderness Grassland Audit

Join the team of plant monitors, birders, and butterfly monitors who will canvass our prairies and grasslands this summer.

We'll assess their condition – how many healthy acres do we have? How many need our management attention? And we'll learn better how to restore prairies for birds and butterflies, as well as plants.

### **We Need:**

***Plant Monitors in July.***

***Bird Monitors in June.***

***Butterfly Monitors all season.***

Bird and butterfly monitoring will follow regular BCN and IBMN protocols. Vegetation monitoring protocols will be taught at June workshops. Two additional workshops will provide instruction in the identification of prairie grasses and sedges, both native and exotic species. Attendance at the protocol workshop is required; the identification workshops are optional. Please RSVP. Rain or shine. Please see [www.habitatproject.org](http://www.habitatproject.org) for directions to workshop locations.

**Vegetation Protocol Workshops:** Led by Karen Glennemeier.

**Northwest:** Thursday, June 2—6:30-8:30pm, at Lake in the Hills Fen.

**Central:** Wednesday, June 8—6:30-8:30pm, at Ted Stone Forest Preserve.

**West:** Saturday, June 11—10am-12 noon, at Springbrook Prairie.

**Southeast:** Saturday, June 4—10am-12 noon, at Orland Grassland.

**Earlier Graminoids Workshops:**

**Northwest:** Thursday, June 16—6:30-8:30pm, at Lake in the Hills Fen.

Led by Barbara Wilson and David Schwaegler.

**Central:** Saturday, June 25—10am-12 noon, at Ted Stone Forest Preserve.

Led by Barbara Birmingham.

**West:** Wednesday, June 22—6:30-8:30pm, at Springbrook Prairie.

Led by Paul Bollinger.

**Southeast:** Saturday, June 18—10am-12 noon, at Gensburg Markham Prairie. Led by Andy Neill and Keith Nowakowski.

**Later Graminoids Workshops:**

**Northwest:** Saturday, July 2—1-3pm, at Lake in the Hills Fen.

Led by Barbara Wilson and David Schwaegler.

**Central:** Wednesday, July 6—6:30-8:30pm, at Ted Stone Forest Preserve. Led by Barbara Birmingham.

**West:** Saturday, July 9—10am-12 noon, at Springbrook Prairie. Led by Paul Bollinger.

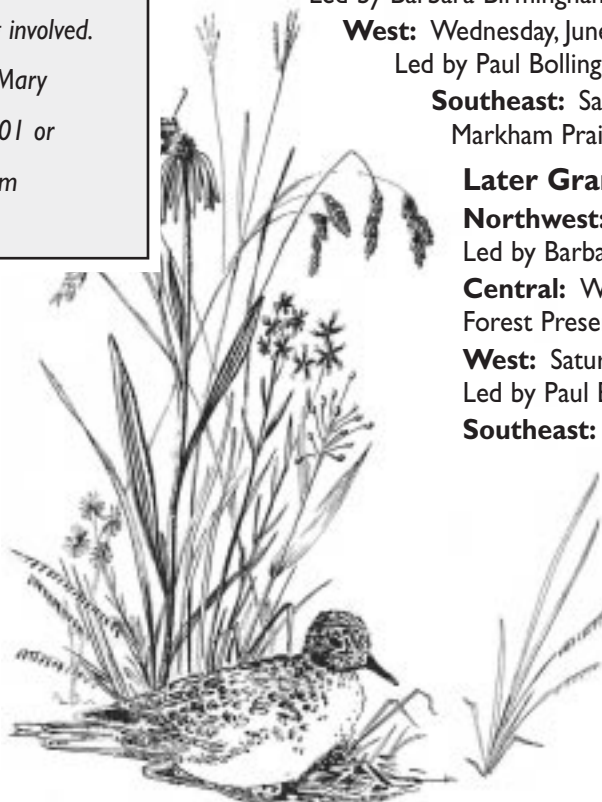
**Southeast:** Thursday, June 30—6:30-8:30pm, at Orland Grassland. Led by Andy Neill and Keith Nowakowski.

**To monitor plants, contact Karen Glennemeier, [kglennemeier@audubon.org](mailto:kglennemeier@audubon.org); 847-724-5226.**

**To monitor birds, contact Judy Pollock, [jpollock@audubon.org](mailto:jpollock@audubon.org); 847-965-1150.**

**To monitor butterflies, contact Mel Manner, [manner@foxvalley.net](mailto:manner@foxvalley.net); 847-464-4426.**

Illustration: Kathleen Garness



# For the Birds: BCN Ambassadors

By Mary Cannon

**Q**uestion: “Why Monitor Birds?” Answer: “Monitoring provides a profile of past and current bird populations that lets researchers see which species are expanding, which are remaining and which are declining. This gives us a basis for intelligent choices about habitat preservation and management.” Thus begins the new recruiting flyer developed by the Bird Conservation Network (BCN).

“BCN is trying a new approach,” says Lee Ramsey. “We’re developing a more flexible schedule so we can cooperate with Forest Preserve Districts (FPDs) and land managers in Cook, Lake, Kane, McHenry, DuPage, and Will Counties, and we’re advertising on our website.” In addition, BCN is focusing on individual birding groups - hoping to recruit experienced birders who know that monitoring involves getting up before dawn and sometimes facing unpleasant weather. “We want to build a group of good birding people who are consistently monitoring sites for long-term conservation,” he adds.

But Lee and Judy can’t make all the contacts alone. Enter the BCN ambassadors, those volunteers who serve as contacts and motivators in their individual areas.

Dick Riner was happy to help. “Lee asked if anyone would go out and find people in Will County. I work with Thorn Creek Audubon, so I went to the meeting, took some site maps, asked for volunteers. I got five and have since picked up a sixth.” Dick also called the Will County Audubon and recruited monitors at their March meeting. “I thought I’d have to corner people, but they’re happy to help out. And I get personal satisfaction from knowing we can cover more sites if we have more people.”

Arnie Bock, President of the Lake Cook Chapter of Audubon agrees with Dick about the importance of more monitoring. “Because of the changing environment in Northeastern Illinois, we see a decline in nature areas. We need to educate the public and the legislature, but I’m a bit depressed about the on-going development. We’re sometimes like salmon trying to swim upstream.” He adds, “It’s imperative we take measurements now so we have comparables as more land is being developed.”

Ann Haverstock, on the other hand, is feeling optimistic. “I’m happy to be working with a new Forest Preserve District Restoration Ecologist, Chris Hauser. He and I want to put together 10 new routes and find monitors for all of them.” She adds, “I know a lot of birders, and I’m sending e-mails as well as going to Kane County Audubon meetings and local workshops. I’ve gotten positive feedback and seven names so far. We’re talking eternal hope!”

Here’s a listing of current BCN Ambassadors. If you, too, are hopeful and can help, contact them. You won’t even need your passport.

Chicago Audubon Society – Joe Lill

DuPage Birding Club – Joe Suchecki

Dunes-Calumet Audubon Society – Donna Gonzalez

Kane County Audubon Society – Ann Haverstock

Lake-Cook Audubon Society – Arnie Bock

Prairie Woods Audubon Society – Lowell Smith

Chicago Ornithological Society – Christine Williamson

Evanston North Shore Bird Club – Suzanne Checchia

Fort Dearborn Audubon Society – George Sullivan

Lake County Audubon Society – We haven’t found anyone here yet.

McHenry County Audubon Society – Randy Schietzelt

Thorn Creek Audubon Society – Dick Riner



Photos: Cooper's hawk by Chris Cudworth, Bobolink by Rob Curtis, Flycatcher by Jim Schultz of Chicago Zoological Society.

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## West Nile Virus Study

The University of Illinois, Audubon Chicago Region and the Bird Conservation Network are conducting a 3-year study to determine why West Nile Virus spread so quickly in 2002, to understand the role birds play in disease transmission and to predict what may happen in future years. Birders are needed during the nesting season to count birds along routes in key neighborhoods in Cook County, including Chicago. Knowledge of the calls of breeding birds of local neighborhoods and parks is essential for all routes, and some require familiarity with birds of other habitats. **A training workshop will be held at Northerly Island on Saturday, April 9 from 2pm to 4pm with Jeff Brawn and other researchers from the U of I.** For more information, please contact Judy Pollock, [jpollock@audubon.org](mailto:jpollock@audubon.org); 847-965-1150.



# Illinois Butterfly Monitoring Network: Leaders Encouraging Leadership

By Mary Cannon

“**S**he’s a leader who’s taken on Morton Arboretum, establishing four routes and enlisting three new monitors.” says Mel Manner, IBMN administrator. Mel is talking about Judy Grey, who’s now working with Kurt Dreisilker, the new Natural Areas Manager at Morton. “We want to establish even more routes to see what effect spraying for gypsy moths has on butterflies,” she says. Why does she spend so much time and energy? “It’s important to learn about wild creatures, and volunteers are an integral part of that learning. Besides, it’s fun.”

Jim Peterson also has fun. “He’s doing a fantastic job as our webmaster, while creating the on-line data entry form, and monitoring at Cuba Marsh in Lake County,” say Mel. Jim says, “I like working the website because it’s helpful for anyone interested in finding information. Creating the on-line butterfly galleries was also fun since the pictures were taken by our monitors. I get quite a bit of satisfaction in my work because I know it saves time for our volunteers as well as for Doug Taron, IBMN Director, and Mel Manner.”

Jim’s brother, Tom Peterson, agrees. “I’ve always been a butterfly person,” he says. Tom acts as regional coordinator in Kane County and Fermilab. He runs training workshops, monitors at Dick Young Forest Preserve, and represents IBMN at conferences. “I enjoy helping new volunteers get started—making people aware and contributing to nature’s on-going health.”

Marla Garrison is regional coordinator in McHenry County, while her co-worker, Janice Young, is the regional coordinator in Lake County. Both teachers at McHenry Community College, they help run training workshops and monitor Boone Creek Fen (Marla), Wingate Prairie, and Sterne’s Fen (Janice). “Lately, we’ve



been working with Doug Taron on an exciting project to translocate the Silver Bordered Fritillary to Glacial Park, where it’s been extirpated,” says Marla. “When we complete this project in the summer of 2005, we’ll train a volunteer to monitor our success.”

Like Marla and Janice, John Ayres and Gary Clinkman are working together to handle site assignments and help new monitors in the Palos area. John has been in the network over ten years, monitoring at Dan McMahon Forest Preserve in Cook County. Gary joined the network more recently,

first monitoring at Cap Sauers and now at Orland Grasslands in Cook County. Gary says, “One of my favorite things is seeing butterflies I don’t see in my back yard. I also like to keep track of the habitat – like if certain flowers are disappearing and need to be replaced.

But I really like to help train new volunteers. Guess you could say I’m a butterfly person.”

Judy Grey adds, “This monitoring program is so well-run – with interesting meetings, good feedback, and such good leaders – it’s very satisfying to be part of it.”

If you, too, are a butterfly person and can volunteer, contact Mel Manner at [ibmn@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ibmn@sbcglobal.net) or 847-464-4426, or one of the leaders below.

Jim Peterson: 847-359-4030; [jimandpatches@earthlink.net](mailto:jimandpatches@earthlink.net)

Tom Peterson: 630-443-8604; [gladpeterson@earthlink.net](mailto:gladpeterson@earthlink.net)

Marla Garrison: 815-479-7627; [mgarriso@mchenry.cc.il.us](mailto:mgarriso@mchenry.cc.il.us)

Janice Young: 815-455-8723; [jyoung@mchenry.cc.il.us](mailto:jyoung@mchenry.cc.il.us)

Judy Grey: 630-858-2156; [judy.grey@attglobal.net](mailto:judy.grey@attglobal.net)

John Ayres: 708-246-3497; [jayres@afmetals.com](mailto:jayres@afmetals.com)

Gary Clinkman: 708-424-2940

## Butterfly Training Workshops

### Beginner's Training Workshop:

Attend one of these three workshops if you are new to the program or would like to join. The workshop provides an orientation covering all the details on how to monitor, plus beginning identification skills. Three dates and places:

**Saturday, April 9—10am**, at Fermilab, near West Chicago, 1 North, Wilson Hall. Take the Pine Street entrance from Kirk Road. Workshop presented by Tom Peterson.

**Wednesday, April 13—6:30pm**, at McHenry Community College, 8900 U.S. Highway 14 in Crystal Lake. Building B, Faculty/Staff Dining Room. Workshop presented by Mel Manner.

**Saturday, April 23—1pm**, at Ryerson Woods, near Deerfield, on Riverwoods Road. Workshop presented by Mel Manner.

### Intermediate's Training Workshop:

For monitors with some identification and monitoring experience. Learn to improve your data and data entry methods, and learn the identification marks of 32 species of butterflies. Some species of swallowtails, sulphurs, coppers, hairstreaks, checkerspots, fritillaries, and skippers will be covered. One workshop:

**Saturday, May 7—12:30pm**, at Fermilab, near West Chicago, Lederman Science Education Center. Enter the West entrance at Pine Street off of Kirk Road. Presented by Mel Manner.

All workshops require registration. Contact Mel Manner at 847-464-4426 or [ibmn@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ibmn@sbcglobal.net).

## Focus on Invasives

Stewards and advocates spend much of their time working with, and talking about, invasive species. A recent symposium at the Chicago Botanic Garden focused on the science and strategies of invasives control. And now there is a way for monitors to get involved too – check out the information from Karen Billo to find out how you can be on the front lines against invasives.



*With a little luck, some hard work, and a lot of eyes, we can keep the next round of invaders at bay. Too bad we can't say the same for teasel.*

# The ABCs of Invasives Control

*By Maggie Ingalls*

**I**nvasive plants threaten many endangered plants and seriously disrupt local ecosystems, making them a matter of serious concern to the plant conservation community. At the October Janet Meakin Poor Research Symposium at the Chicago Botanic Garden, Dr. Sarah Reichard discussed methods for dealing with invasive plants. There is a need for effective partnerships between ecologists, horticulturists and the public on this issue, since about 65% of invasive plants (80% of invasive woody plants) were originally introduced for landscaping and horticultural purposes. In December of 2001 nursery professionals, botanical gardens, Garden Clubs of America, landscape architects and government bodies came up with a voluntary Code of Conduct to help reduce the introduction and spread of invasive plants.

They outlined several specific steps we can take to save our ecosystems from the threat of invasive plants:

- a) Educate the public.
- b) Identify and develop suitable alternatives to desirable but invasive plants.
- c) Perform risk assessments for species before they are introduced.
- d) Set up a system for early detection.
- e) Organize efforts to remove invasive plants already present in our environment.

As to that last one, we've got hundreds of stewardship groups and land agencies doing exactly this, practically every weekend of the year. You can help by attending a restoration workday.

And read on to learn about a new system for early detection in the Chicago Wilderness region. Help combat the next generation of would-be invasives!

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## Attention Plant Enthusiasts! 2005 Plants of Concern Monitoring Workshops

**Sunday, April 10 — Blackwell Forest Preserve, Warrenville, DuPage County**

**Sunday, April 17 — Sand Ridge Nature Center, South Holland, IL**

**Sunday, May 1 — Glacial Park, Ringwood, McHenry County**

*An April 2nd workshop at Ryerson Woods was held prior to this issue's printing.*

All sessions begin at 9:30am and end at 3pm. This workshop will introduce the Plants of Concern program, provide opportunities for learning monitoring skills, and help monitors select a monitoring assignment. Returning monitors are welcome and can refresh their skills for the new season!

Bring a lunch. Morning refreshments will be served. Registration is required. A confirmation and directions will be sent after registration. Please contact Emily Hudson, POC program assistant: [ehudson@chicagobotanic.org](mailto:ehudson@chicagobotanic.org); (847) 835-6873.

2005 is the fifth season of Plants of Concern rare plant monitoring. Coordinated through the Chicago Botanic Garden by Research Botanist Susanne Masi, POC has worked with land-owners and a dedicated corps of 200 volunteers. Trained volunteers have used standardized protocols to gather invaluable data on 364 locations of rare plants over the past four years. Susanne Masi: [smasi@chicagobotanic.org](mailto:smasi@chicagobotanic.org); 847-835-8269. Check out [www.plantsofconcern.org](http://www.plantsofconcern.org).

# Volunteers on the Front Lines: Finding the Next New Exotic, Invasive Species

By Karen Billo, VSN Coordinator, The Nature Conservancy

## New Invaders Watch List

### Forbs

Baby's breath – *Gypsophila* spp.  
Spotted knapweed – *Centaurea maculosa*  
Leafy Spurge – *Euphorbia esula*  
Sericea Lespedeza, Chinese Lespedeza –  
*Lespedeza cuneata*  
Giant Hogweed – *Heracleum mantegazzianum*  
Japanese knotweed, Japanese bamboo –  
*Polygonum cuspidatum*

### Grasses

Annual Stilt Grass, Japanese Grass –  
*Microstegium vimineum*  
Silver Grass – *Miscanthus* spp.

### Vines

Oriental Bittersweet – *Celastrus orbiculatus*  
Chinese Yam, Air potato – *Dioscorea*  
*oppositifolia*  
Japanese Hops – *Humulus japonicus*  
Mile-a-minute weed – *Polygonum perfoliatum*  
Kudzu – *Pueraria lobata*

### Trees

Bradford Pear, Korean Pear, Callory Pear –  
*Pyrus calleryana*  
Sawtooth Oak – *Quercus acutissima*

### Insects

Asian Longhorned Beetle –  
*Anoplophora glabripennis*  
Emerald Ash Borer – *Agrilus planipennis*

Just imagine, if you had been able to identify Purple Loosestrife early on before it spread and became established in your natural area. We can only work on controlling this species now, but the time is coming where you will soon have access to information and tools to begin looking for the next exotic, invasive species. Volunteers in the Chicago region are invited to participate in the “New Invaders Watch List – Early Detection and Rapid Response Network” program. Funded by Chicago Wilderness and Bp, this program will help volunteers and land managers to identify and report Illinois’ next potential exotic, invasive species. The program will initially focus on 15 terrestrial plant species and 2 high-profile insect species (see “New Invader Watch List” to the left).

The Rapid Response program includes a web site that will serve as a gateway for current knowledge (distributions, management practices, educational materials) for the target species. The web site will also house information about how to participate and will provide a place to report sightings. A web-based database will capture new records of occurrences in the region and will provide an electronic early warning system to warn regional professionals of new occurrences. The web site, currently under development, can be viewed at <http://ctap.inhs.uiuc.edu/newinvaders/home.aspx>. Species identification cards are also being developed to help volunteers and land managers recognize these new invaders in the field.

Training for the Rapid Response program will be provided within many existing volunteer programs throughout the region and will be advertised on the web site. The program is scheduled to be launched in the Chicago region in the summer of 2005. For more information or to volunteer for the project, please contact Karen Billo, Volunteer Stewardship Coordinator for The Nature Conservancy, at 866-VSN-LINE or [kbillo@tnc.org](mailto:kbillo@tnc.org).

## Learn the Basics of Sedge Identification at Lake in the Hills Fen

May 29 and June 26—2pm, Barbara Key Park

Barbara Wilson will take us to her favorite places to see and learn to identify a wide selection of sedges, using a light-hearted, hands-on approach.

Materials will be provided: no need to bring a book. But do bring a X10 magnifying lens, as well as water, bug spray, and sunscreen as needed.

See the site and many of its plants at [www.LITHFen.org](http://www.LITHFen.org). Registration preferred but walk-ins welcome. Call 847-658-0024

## Learn to Identify the Flowers at Lake in the Hills Fen Botany for Beginners, led by Barbara Wilson

May 7 at Ryder Park

May 22 at Barbara Key Park

June 18 at Barbara Key Park

July 28 at Barbara Key Park

August 21 at Barbara Key Park

September 18 at Ryder Park

All classes begin at 2pm. Bring (as appropriate): a wildflower field guide, a X10 magnifying lens, water, bug spray, and sunscreen. Registration preferred but walk-ins welcome. Call 847-658-0024.

# Searching for Herps: Canvassing Amphibians and Reptiles of Chicago Wilderness Savannas

*By Bob Brodman, Mary Cannon, and Karen Glennemeier*

It's spring, and the herp searchers are out and about. They're hunting for reptiles and amphibians—hoping to find healthy populations. Of particular concern are species that use savanna habitats. Much of what remains of savanna habitat in the Chicago region has not been surveyed to determine the distribution and status of reptiles and amphibians (“herps”). To develop a scientific baseline for ecological management and to evaluate the success of that management in improving herp biodiversity, a group of monitors set out to collect rigorous population data throughout the region.

Robert Brodman of St. Joseph College in Indiana spearheaded the project. He was joined by Thomas Anton, Paula Seth, David Didion, Amy Luksus, and scores of frog monitors-turned herp searchers. They began conducting their in-depth surveys at 15 sites in Will and Lake Counties in Illinois, and Jasper, Newton, and Lake Counties in Indiana.

They visited the sites 209 times, spending more than 1,000 hours surveying them between April and October, 2004. Fifty-nine citizen scientists contributed 500 hours of field assistance while learning about local amphibian and reptile biodiversity. The teams observed more than 5,700 amphibians and reptiles



*Tom Anton, David Didion, and many others canvassed 15 savannas and found 30 species of herps, including this Kirtland Snake.*

and found 46 amphibian breeding ponds. They found 30 species, the most common being chorus frogs, green frogs, blue-spotted salamanders, tiger salamanders, eastern garter snakes, and six-lined racerunners.

They gave each species a score based on its conservation value, and used these scores to assess the quality of herp communities at a site. Nine of 15 sites scored very high overall herp conservation values; only one scored in the poor category. These results suggest that savanna habitat is

important for herp biodiversity in the Chicago Wilderness region.

One goal of the study was to find several indicator species whose presence at a site could be used to assess the health of the savanna ecosystem. They found that nine species may serve as good indicators of healthy savanna habitat: western fox snakes, eastern gray treefrogs, Fowler's toads, tiger salamanders, blue-spotted salamanders, bullsnakes, slender glass lizards, eastern garter snakes, and green frogs.

Starting in 2006, the team hopes to be out again, studying more savannas in additional counties. If you'd like to help, contact Bob Brodman at 219-866-6215; [bobb@saintjoe.edu](mailto:bobb@saintjoe.edu).

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## Join us for a One-Day Herp Search in Kane County!

It's a newly protected site, and the Forest Preserve District needs our help to find out what species of reptiles and amphibians live there. Come to Helm Woods Forest Preserve near Barrington Hills to do some searching with leader Mike Redmer. Sunday May 15, 10am till noon or later.

From N-NW take Algonquin Rd. (Rt. 62) to Rt. 25. Go south for 1.3 miles to Helm Rd. Turn left (east). Continue approximately 0.7 miles. Entrance to parking area will be on right (south) side.

From S or E take Higgins Rd (Rt. 72) to Rt. 25. Go north for 2.8 miles to Helm Rd. Turn right (east). Continue approximately 0.7 miles. Entrance to parking area will be on right (south) side.



Photo: Diane Aoki



Photo: Steve Spitzer



# The HH Classifieds

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### **Capturing Monitoring in Action:** Can you visualize it?

A shot of a butterfly monitor, a birder, a frogger in action. It may not be the 100-yard dash, but it still qualifies as action, though it takes a little more photographic creativity to convey it. If you are a monitor, or you have monitors for friends or family, and you like to take pictures, we'd love to have more photos of people studying nature, for the newsletter and other venues. Contact Karen Glennemeier at [kglennemeier@audubon.org](mailto:kglennemeier@audubon.org) or 847-724-5226.

**Spreading the Word:** Would you like to design a fun, visual display about the Habitat Project and then take turns bringing it to festivals, fairs, conferences, Earth Day celebrations, and other events? Help recruit and spread the word about the great work we're all doing!



## Summer Dragonfly Walks

Gareth Blakesley, coordinator of the Dragonfly Monitoring Network, will help us get up close and personal with many of our region's dragonflies and damselflies.

**Saturday, June 18th at Spring Brook Nature Center from 11am to 2pm**

**Saturday, June 25th at Jackson Park from 11am to 2pm**

**Saturday, July 9th at Bluff Spring Fen from 11am to 2pm**

Please contact Gareth Blakesley [gblakesley@naturemuseum.org](mailto:gblakesley@naturemuseum.org) (773) 755-5100 x3032, for more information. RSVP required.

## And the Winner Is...

*By Ron Humbert*

No recount was required. There were 75,196 votes cast for the two positions, with a nearly 2 to 1 margin of victory for the first post, and a substantial margin for the second. The early front-runners held their leads through the entire election period.

The proposed state amphibian, the Eastern Tiger Salamander, was the winner over second place Gray Tree Frog, 19,217 to 10,591. The American toad received only 8,140 votes. So much for good looks.

The first place reptile was the Painted Turtle, with 16,742 votes. We have two forms of painted turtles in Illinois so we get two for one. Unless, of course, you subscribe to the recent accounts of Starkey, Iverson, et al, which suggests we have only one. Whatever!

Anyway, it beat the Garter Snake's 11,925 votes and the Eastern Box Turtle's 8,581. (My candidate never even made the final cut).

So, on to Springfield! The legislative committee has written a bill which has passed the House and will now be presented to the Senate. Then our herpetological representatives can get to work inspiring, educating, and entertaining us in an official capacity.



Photo: Michael Redmer



Photo: Michael Redmer

# The Eyes and Ears of a County

By Lee Ramsey

It's not everyone's idea of fun. You get up before dawn – 5am or even earlier in June – and dress in long sleeves, pants, hat, water-resistant boots, sometimes even gloves despite the warm, sticky weather; you cover yourself with insect repellent and head for the forest preserve where you'll stand in one spot for 5 or 10 minutes, watching and listening so you can write down every bird that makes an appearance, sings a song, or utters a brief chip-note. Then you walk to the next spot and repeat the procedure. If this sounds like something you'd like to do, then you should become a bird monitor.

Throughout the year volunteers go out near dawn into the forest preserves, parks and other natural areas, watching and listening and recording the birds they find. Though most say they enjoy it, they aren't there primarily for pleasure but instead because they want to help in maintaining some of the great natural areas tucked away inside our rapidly expanding urban landscape. What comes of their efforts? A good way to answer that question is to talk to Cindy Hedges, Volunteer Liaison for the Natural Resource Management Program of DuPage County, one of the oldest and best supported of the many programs found in our area. "We are fortunate to have a really good corps of volunteers," Hedges says. "Because we have a minimal staff, volunteers provide the eyes and ears in the field." The pay off comes in the outpouring of data about the past and current

**“Seven years of monitoring data showed that birds responded to management.”**

state of the county's forest preserves, almost all of it gathered by volunteers – more than two dozen of them reporting just on birds in 2004.

How does the FPD use the data? Hedges says they consult the monitoring data to decide where to put new trails that won't disturb habitat for endangered species. They look at it to decide where to put special-use activities such as dog-training areas. They rely on it to tell them where to plan restoration. Field reports warn them about sweet clover and other invasives and motivate efforts at early control. The data helps guide



Photo: Forest Preserve District of DuPage County.

*Joe Suchecki's bird monitoring data told the Forest Preserve District they needed to place their new trail around the preserve perimeter, rather than cutting through Henslow's Sparrow habitat.*

schedules for prescribed burning and mowing, the latter being particularly important for grassland bird populations. Asked for examples of monitor contributions, she quickly comes up with Bob Rowland's discovery of Henslow's sparrows at McDowell Grove, a new record, and Joe Suchecki's advice on the best times to mow at Springbrook Prairie.

Bob and Karen Fisher have surveyed as a team at Waterfall Glen since the inception of the DuPage program and have noticed clear differences in what is happening at the restored and unrestored areas of their site: in the restored areas they are seeing population increases in typical woodland birds such as eastern wood-pewee, great crested flycatcher, red-eyed vireo and scarlet tanager.

Animal Ecologist Scott Meister studied seven years of the monitoring data and found increased populations of woodland and shrubland birds such as the wood-pewee (more than 200% increase), scarlet tanager, indigo bunting, white-breasted nuthatch and red-bellied woodpecker; decreases were occurring among house sparrows (400%) and grackles (200%), as well as some forest species such as ovenbirds and wood thrushes. Based on these data, he was able to reach three conclusions: birds respond to management techniques such as removal of invasives and prescribed burning; certain species may be deterred by a lack of shrub layer; and birds are avoiding areas close to the preserve boundaries. The DuPage FPD is heeding these conclusions – just one more example of how volunteer monitors are contributing to the preservation and expansion our area's natural habitats.

# Chicago Wilderness: A Natural Resource

By Mary Cannon

It started eight years ago when representatives from 34 regional groups met to answer a question: How can we work together to be more effective in protecting our natural heritage? Thus began The Chicago Wilderness (CW) consortium, whose stated goal is “to study, restore, protect and manage the precious ecosystems of the Chicago region, to contribute to the preservation of global biodiversity, and to enrich local residents’ quality of life.”

“Those first few years, we put our time and energy into projects, like land surveys, and products, like our biodiversity book and *Chicago Wilderness* magazine. These gave people a focus, a way to come together to do something important,” says Debra Shore.

“From as far away as Australia and as near as Rockford, people are turning to Chicago Wilderness as a model.”

As CW’s Director of Development and editor of the magazine, Shore has watched the consortium grow in number and success.

Today membership is over 170. “They’ve done so many good things. For instance, they set up a land management program for controlled burns; they’ve trained volunteers and have developed a manual used extensively by other organizations,” says Rebecca Blazer, Field Representative for the Habitat Project and Audubon-Chicago Region. “They’ve also worked with De Paul sociologists studying sustainable growth; and they’ve created language local communities could adopt when designing ordinances for planting, water conservation, and regional biodiversity. In addition, they’ve created educational tools for the classroom. Of course, one outstanding achievement was the completion of the *Biodiversity Recovery Plan*. It took three years of work and set up guidelines

for conservation priorities in the region.” (It also received the American Planning Association’s Outstanding Planning Award in 2001.)

It’s no wonder that Chicago Wilderness is garnering attention. Lucy Hutcherson, CW’s Director of Communications, spent time in Durban, South Africa in 2003, because the World Parks Congress asked her to speak about collaboration and outreach. “We have requests for information from around the country and around the world because we are unique as a partnership that is working in an urban area – for urban conservation. People from all over are interested in doing what we’re doing here: how we got started; how we work; how we educate and communicate.” Pennsylvania, Missouri, Texas, Hawaii and Brazil have called. Indeed, representatives from as far away as Australia and as near as Rockford are using Chicago Wilderness as a model for their coalitions.

After a 2002 meeting with CW, Rockford’s Four Rivers Environmental Coalition created a steering committee, got a grant from the state to develop an environmental vision, and published a habitat study. “We’re going to present our paper to local officials to secure their cooperation in making environmentally-sensitive land use decisions,” says Lew Crampton, the President of Burpee Museum of Natural History. CW was clearly an inspiration for this achievement. “We asked how to get ourselves organized, how to set priorities and assign tasks, and how to get public attention – and we got answers. They are an extremely positive and relevant resource.”

As Debra Shore says, “We give people a lot of practical advice; but, maybe more importantly, we give them a sense that it can be done. We give them heart and hope.” Chicago Wilderness: working for nature and becoming a “natural” resource.

For more information and resources, see the website, [www.chicagowilderness.org](http://www.chicagowilderness.org).

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## Bird Monitoring Workshops

Would you like to put your birding skills to use for a good cause? The Chicago Wilderness coalition and local Forest Preserve Districts need data on bird use in local preserves. In addition to helping land managers with their plans, this year’s monitoring data will be used by at least three major studies: The Grassland Audit, the Grassland Bird Blitz, and the West Nile Virus study.

Attend a BCN Census Bird Monitoring Workshop this spring. Spend the afternoon with kindred spirits and hear the latest updates on how the data are being used. Both new and existing monitors are invited. Birders who can identify most of our breeding birds by sight and sound are welcome.

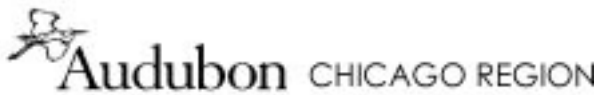
**Cook County** – An April 2nd workshop was held at Camp Sagawa prior to this printing.

**Lake County** – Sunday, April 10—2-4pm  
Ryerson Conservation Area. Call 847-968-3329.

**Kane County** – Saturday, March 19—9:30-11:30am  
Dick Young Forest Preserve. 39W115 Main St. Batavia 1/2 mile west of Nelson Lake Road, behind a cement silo. For more information call 630 232-5980.

For more information about the BCN Census, visit [www.bcnbirds.org](http://www.bcnbirds.org), or call 847-965-9239 ext. 23.

## Chicago Wilderness Habitat Project



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## Conference comments...

For More on the Wild Things Conference, see the front page..



"It's great to see what's going on in Chicago – it's really going on. *That's cool.*"  
— Katherine Beckett

"It's exciting as can be to be here, all these people, a lot of energy. I loved the talk on mosses. I'm excited to see Wayne Lampa is really going to study them and give us stewards some information on how to manage for mosses."  
— John Balaban, Harms Woods Steward

"I'm trying to grow native plants in my backyard, it's an avocation of mine. It's very inspiring to see that this many people will turn out for an event like this." — Sarah Simmons, Midwife

"I'm so excited by all of the energy here. It inspires me to get more involved." — Tom Besore, Lawyer

"I feel like it could have been a two day conference, with so many choices on the agenda. I would definitely come for two days."

— Allison Cook, Coordinator of the Upper Desplains River Ecosystem Partnership

"This day has been incredibly motivating. I live on four acres of oak woodland, and I can't wait to start working with other homeowners who want to restore their own natural areas."

— Marietta Hance, Homeowner



The following people deserve special thanks for their leadership and extraordinary efforts in making Wild Things an inspirational day for all of us. A list of all who helped out is available at [www.habitatproject.org](http://www.habitatproject.org).

The conference planning group leaders:

Greg Rajskey, Tom Peterson, and Julie Sacco: Program  
Mel Manner, Cindy Vasquez, Libby Hill: Logistics  
Lisa Nagel, Christine Esposito, Karen Billo: Publicity  
Linda Masters, Barb Birmingham, Kathy Garness: exhibits

All the speakers who donated their time and talents.

These CW partners who donated valuable services:

Chicago Wilderness Magazine – Phyllis Weir  
Chicago Botanic Garden – Denise Walsh, Wayne Becker  
DuPage FPD – Cindy Hedges