



COMPASS

Navigating the world of birds and nature

VOLUME 15, ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2001

Creating a Culture of Conservation

Chicago Audubon Honors Four Leaders

— by Gail Goldberg

Reserve a space now for our annual awards dinner to be held on Friday, March 9, 2001. The Chicago Audubon Society is again proud to present awards to four individuals for their outstanding contributions to the environment. We enthusiastically ask you to join us in extending our appreciation to these leaders who move the cause of conservation forward in Chicago.

The four award winners this year are:



Protector of the Environment/Vocation

Laurene von Klan

Laurene, who calls herself an Urban Ecologist, is the Executive Director of Friends of the Chicago River (FOCR). Friends of the Chicago River is a group of 1400 members dedicated to improving the river for people, plants and animals. They have negotiated development of new river trails, and wetland and river corridor restoration projects. Under Laurene's direction, FOCR has increased its membership 40%, and expanded its budget and Board of Directors.

While Laurene has been Executive Director, the river has experienced many improvements. New parks have been added along the river, more wildlife habitat has been created, an appreciation festival is planned for next fall, and the river has received increased publicity about its importance to the commerce and culture of Chicago.

Laurene provided Chicago Audubon with information about the river for the Breeding Bird Atlas, and has involved our members in bird walks along the river. A founding member of the Coalition to Restore Urban Waters, she also serves on its national Board of Directors.

Protector of the Environment/Avocation

Charlotte A. Newfeld

Charlotte is the Chair of the Lakeview Citizens Council, a grassroots community organization founded in 1952. She has also served the Council as President, Vice President and Executive Director.

The Lakeview Citizens Council was responsible for getting a viewing platform in the Migratory Bird Sanctuary at the foot of Addison Street in Lincoln Park. Charlotte was on the Montrose Point Task Force (Magic Hedge) and Co-Chair of the Lakefront Revetment Project. A member of the Fort Dearborn Chapter of Illinois Audubon, she has lived in Lakeview for 32 years. She is also a Designer and co-owner of Studio 23 on Lincoln Avenue.



Service to Chicago Area Birders/Avocation

Geoff Williamson

Currently the President of the Illinois and Chicago Ornithological Societies, Geoff has been interested in birds since 1971, when he lived in New Jersey. As President of COS, Geoff writes for the newsletter, and includes seasonal reports and tips on where to bird and how to identify species. For the IOS, Geoff has led field trips and organized statewide birdathons to raise money.

He is the compiler for the Lisle/Arboretum Christmas Bird Count, has transcribed the Chicago Audubon Rare Bird Alerts for many years, and posted rare bird alerts on IBET and national birding lists. He has encouraged the COS to work with CAS on field trips, the Bird of Elections, and BCN. Geoff helps cover areas for the Breeding Bird Atlas, summer census, and spring count.

On a personal level, he helps birders find and identify birds, and encourages beginning and advanced birders to share their sightings.

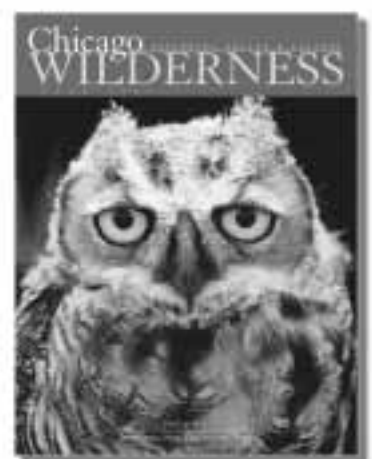
Excellence in Environmental Reporting/Journalism

Debra Shore

Debra has been the Editor of *Chicago WILDERNESS* magazine since its inception in November of 1997. The first magazine to focus on the natural communities of northeastern Illinois, it has attracted 8,500 subscribers in just three years.

Chicago WILDERNESS celebrates the natural heritage of this region and tells inspiring stories of people and organizations working to heal and protect nature. Many of the Chicago Wilderness member organizations have their own newsletters and publications, but none transcend institutional and geographic boundaries to focus on the entire region.

Debra's leadership and editorial vision have contributed to the success of this excellent publication. The magazine is widely praised for diversity of subject matter, coverage of issues and people, and sheer beauty of presentation. Prior to working for the magazine, Debra was a staff writer and editor for university publications, and independent writer for magazines. She is also an active volunteer in the habitat restoration efforts in Cook County forest preserves.



Awards Dinner (continued)

A program on the recent improvements to the Paul H. Douglas Nature Sanctuary (Wooded Island) south of the Museum of Science and Industry will be presented by Doug Anderson. *Please make your reservations by Friday, March 2, 2001.*

Call the Mullens at 708-456-5300. Dinner is at the Homestead Restaurant, 8305 W. North Avenue, Melrose Park, IL. Prix fixe \$25. Dinner and program start at 6:00 p.m.

Migratory Bird Tree Preference Study

This spring volunteers will fan out across parks and forest preserves in northeastern Illinois as part of a study to determine the foraging preferences of migrant songbirds. The goal of the study is to ascertain which trees these birds prefer for feeding. This is more than an academic inquiry, as we hope the results will yield practical information that city planners, landscape architects, and others can use to plant those trees that attract the greatest variety of migrant songbirds.

Participants will be working in pairs along predetermined routes, one person locating and identifying birds, the other person recording the trees the birds are using. The timeframe of the study will be from April 15 to the end of May, and participants will be asked to census their areas at least 3 times. The National

Audubon Society is organizing the study in partnership with the Chicago Department of the Environment, the Field Museum, TreeKeepers, and Bird Conservation Network.

Training sessions are available for those interested in helping. For information call the National Audubon Society monitoring hotline in Skokie at 847-965-9239. The success of this study is dependent on volunteers. If you can identify the birds or the trees of our area, and would enjoy an in-depth look at local ecology, please join us.

Dormant Tree ID (Tree Keepers)

Horner Park — Feb 3, 9:30-12:30
2741 W Montrose, Chicago

Washington Park — Feb 24, 9:30-12:30
5531 S. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive,
Chicago

Sessions by George Ware and Suzanne Malec. Call for more information 312-427-4265 x232

Migratory Bird Study Meeting

National Audubon Office - March 7th,
7:30-8:30 pm
5225 Old Orchard Road, Skokie, IL
Contact Judy Pollock - 847-965-1150

Bird Monitors Training

Humboldt Park Field House — March
17, 12:30-3:30
1440 N. Sacramento, Chicago

Part of this session will be devoted to determining tree preferences of migrating birds. Contact Judy Pollack 847-965-1150 or Jerry Garden 773-545-4632.

Jump Onboard! Spring 2001 CHICAGO WILDERNESS Calling Frog Survey

This spring join us in the Calling Frog Survey and learn to identify the twelve (that's right, just 12) species of frogs and toads found in our area.

Last year's program exceeded expectations, but there are still hundreds of lakes, streams, and other wetlands not yet monitored. Monitoring will require three evenings of your time this spring. If you attend one of the workshops, you will hear the calls on tape, see slides of the different species, learn the monitoring procedure, and be offered a site to monitor if you don't already have one in mind.

Monitoring is important work, easy, and according to last year's volunteers, lots of fun. For a preview of the frogs and monitoring procedures, visit the Survey's website at www.habitatproject.org.

Workshop dates:

DuPage County — February 8th, 7 to 9pm The Grounds and Resources Complex at Blackwell Forest Preserve, 29 W. 220 Mack Road in West Chicago
Please pre-register with Cindy Hedges at (630) 876-5929 by January 31.

Lake County — February 17th, 9am to noon Lake County Forest Preserve District Headquarters 2000 N. Milwaukee Ave., Libertyville
Contact Russ Hendricks: (847) 782-5922

Kane County — March 3rd, 9am to noon Pottawatomie Community Center, St. Charles
To register or for directions call Mary Ochsenschlager at (630) 513-3338

McHenry County — February 3rd, 9am to noon Prairie View Education Center 2112 Behan Road, Crystal Lake
Contact Sarah Denham (815) 728-8307



ENJOY TROPICAL COSTA RICA: 11 DAYS/10 NIGHTS DURING SPRING BREAK!

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Reservations are limited. Cost is \$1975 which includes roundtrip airfare on Continental Airlines from O'Hare.

This trip is popular so book early to ensure a spot!

Call Dennis DuBois: (503) 429-8029

www.CostaRicaAdventure.com

COMPASS

Chicago Audubon Society
North Park Village
5801-C N. Pulaski Road
Chicago, IL 60646-6057



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Rare bird alert: (847) 265-2118
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Web page:
www.audubon.org/chapter/il/chicago/
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Printed with soy ink

BIRD FEEDING Do's and Don'ts

Although bird feeding is fun, and provides some additional nutrition for area birds in the winter, people who provide bird feeders need to make sure their feeders are kept clean, so they don't inadvertently spread disease.

Tips for a Healthy Feeding Station

- Give your seed feeders (especially thistle and tube feeders) a shake before you refill them, to dislodge any compacted seed. Dump out any wet clumps of old seed.
- Clean all hulls off platform feeders and out of seed trays daily.
- Disinfect feeders by scrubbing with a weak bleach solution (1/4 cup of bleach to 2 gallons of warm water) every few weeks, oftener in summer or rainy periods. Rinse and allow feeders to dry before refilling.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after filling or cleaning your feeders.
- Move your feeding station when the ground beneath it becomes covered with seed hulls and droppings. Rake the old site to remove hulls and to give the grass a chance to recover.
- Store your seed in a clean, dry, airtight container, such as a metal or plastic garbage can.
- Don't allow large amounts of seed to become wet, as on platform feeders. Instead, when it's wet outside, feed primarily from covered feeders that will keep seed dry, or put out only a handful of seed at a time on platforms.
- Don't put hulled sunflower hearts (or bits) out where wet weather can cause them to spoil. Offer them in a tube or hopper feeder.
- Don't put out any more seed than can be eaten by the birds by nightfall, especially where raccoons, opossums, bears, deer, or rodents are a problem.
- If you see a sick or dead bird at your feeders, halt your feeding for a few weeks to allow the healthy birds to disperse. Report sick birds to your local wildlife officials.
- Though birds may not be entirely dependent on your feeder, it's best not to leave them totally without food if you plan to be away from home in mid-winter. Purchase an oversized feeder with a large seed capacity, or ask a willing neighbor to continue feeding your birds.
- Don't discontinue feeding as soon as the grass greens and the weather warms

in spring. Many birds will continue coming to your feeders all summer long.

- Don't use grease, oil, petroleum jelly or similar substances on your feeder poles or wires to thwart squirrels, ants or other feeder-raiding creatures. If these substances come into contact with bird feathers they are hard for the bird to preen or wash out. Goopy feathers impede flight and insulation, putting birds at risk to predators, extreme weather and disease. For squirrels and other mammals, use a pole-mounted baffle (sold commercially). For ants, use an ant guard that prevents ants from reaching the feeder.

"On Sunday I picked up an 8 oz. bottle of Birdola from PetSmart (the only local carrier). The price was \$3.99. I found it incredibly easy to use. It has a pleasant odor and wasn't irritating to the hands (like bleach). The manufacturer (Metz Farms in Grand Rapids, Michigan) recommends that it be used once a month in order to decontaminate feeders and birdbaths from E. coli, avian pox, salmonella and house finch disease. I liked the "brainless" aspect: I took my feeders down, brushed away the old seed, sprayed Birdola all over the feeders, let them sit for a minute, thoroughly rinsed them with a hose, and put them back up. After they had dried for an hour, I filled them with new seed and back came the birds."

—Joe Lill

What do I do if I see a sick bird?

Only veterinarians or licensed wildlife rehabilitators can legally treat wild birds. If you find a sick bird, report it to your state or local wildlife agency (US Fish and Wildlife Service 847-381-2253; Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources

217-333-5773). If you are advised to take the bird in for an exam, try to catch the bird by throwing a light towel over it and placing it in a box with airholes punched in the top cover. If you find a dead bird, place it in a double plastic bag and into the garbage (wear gloves and discard or disinfect the gloves after use).

If you see a sick bird at your feeder, clean your feeder and feeder area thoroughly. If you see several diseased birds, take down all your feeders for at least a week to give the birds a chance to disperse. Keep the feeders down until you no longer see diseased individuals.

Prevention is key. Clean your feeders regularly and prevent overcrowding by adding more feeders or setting up different types of feeders that allow only a few birds to visit at one time.

Typical diseases affecting birds:

House Finch Disease or conjunctivitis- Birds have red, swollen, runny or crusty eyes; in extreme cases the eyes are swollen shut or crusted over. You might see an infected bird sitting quietly in your yard, clumsily scratching an eye against its foot or a tree. To help monitor the spread of this disease, call the House Finch Disease survey at (800) 843-2473.

Avian Pox-Wart-like growths appear on featherless areas such as around the eyes, base of the beak, and on legs and feet. Or plaques may develop in mucous membranes resulting in impaired breathing and feeding. Avian pox has been reported in hawks, owls, and sparrows.

Salmonellosis-Symptoms are not always obvious, but birds may appear thin, fluffed up, and may have pasted vents and swollen eyelids. They are often lethargic and easy to approach.

Aspergillosis-Birds can appear to have difficulty walking and breathing. They may be emaciated and thirsty. Their eyes may have a discharge.

Trichomoniasis- Raised lesions in the mouth, esophagus and crop affect pigeons, doves and the raptors that feed on them. Birds appear to have trouble closing their mouths.

For more information about specific diseases, log onto Cornell University's website: <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/AboutBirdsandFeeding/DiseasedBird.shtml>

2001 Bird Monitoring Workshops

Ready for the summer nesting bird census?

Thinking about becoming a bird monitor? Whether you are an experienced monitor, a beginner, or just have birds on the brain, you are welcome to attend one of the 2001 workshops on monitoring bird populations in the Chicago metropolitan area. Bird census activities range from a simple checklist to a detailed point count, and you can apprentice for a few years if you aren't comfortable being a "full-fledged" monitor in the first year. Beginners will learn how to conduct the Census, experienced monitors can share their wisdom, and we will all brush-up on the protocols.

These workshops, sponsored by the Bird Conservation Network and Audubon's Habitat Project, are presented by local monitors and ornithologists. The BCN Census is a unique on-line database of bird distribution information used by area land managers for decision making.

In 2000, we had 160 monitors assigned to sites. That may seem like a lot, but the more monitors we have, the more information we compile, for a more accurate picture of local bird population trends. So come join the people who count in 2001!

For information, contact the coordinator for your region; the monitoring hotline at (847) 965-9239; or e-mail jpollack@audubon.org.

Will/Lake Co. IN — March 3rd, 9am to noon
Gibson Woods Nature Center
6201 Parrish Ave in Hammond, IN
Contact Judy Pollack (847) 965-1150

Central Cook — March 17th, 12:30 to 3:30
Humboldt Park Field House
Part of this session includes information on determining tree preferences of migrating birds.
1440 N. Sacramento Ave, Chicago
Contact- Jerry Garden (773) 545-4632

Kane/McHenry — March 24th, 9am to noon
Prairie View Education Center
2112 Behan Road, Crystal Lake
Contact- Brad Woodson (815) 728-8307

DuPage — March 31st, 9am to noon
The Grounds and Resources Complex at Blackwell Forest Preserve.
29 W 220 Mack Road in West Chicago
Please pre-register with Cindy Hedges at (630) 876-5929 by Friday March 23.

Lake, IL/N. Cook — April 7th, 9am to noon
Ryerson Woods
21950 N. Riverwoods Rd, Deerfield
Contact- Dennis Bohm (847) 283-9231



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FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTHLY WORKDAYS AT THE SKOKIE LAGOONS

Saturdays, February 10 and March 10, 2001 — Shoreline planting for erosion control. Meet at the Tower Road parking lot (east of the bridge). If you arrive late, look for a CAS sign near the parking lot directing you to the work site. For more information, call Jerry Garden at (773) 545-4632.

WEEKLY BIRD WALKS

Every Wednesday in March at 7:00 a.m. and every Saturday in March at 8:00 a.m.

Paul Douglas Nature Sanctuary (Wooded Island). Meet at the Darrow Bridge just south of the Museum of Science and Industry. Your guide is Doug Anderson (773) 493-7058.

FIELD TRIPS/OWL COUNT/EVENTS

Friday-Sunday, March 2-4, 2001, sunset to dawn. The 13th COOK COUNTY OWL COUNT

Join us once again in surveying the owls of our metropolitan area. All that's needed is a tape recording of our local screech and great horned owls and a

sense of adventure. If you have an area you'd like to cover let us know. If you want to participate but don't know how, we will match you with a potential area or with a group that is already covering an area.

We will provide Forest Preserve permits to each group. This will allow each group to be on Forest Preserve property during the late evening, night, and early morning hours. Participants from previous years will receive a mailing with details. New owlers can sign up by calling Stephen or Christine Lee at (708)485-8197. Our e-mail address is stephenc@interaccess.com

Friday, March 9, 2001. Chicago Audubon Society ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER, 6-10 p.m.

Audubon honors four environmental leaders. Make your reservations by March 2 by calling Mary or Tony Mullen at (708) 456-5300. All full dinners—\$25.

Saturday, March 10. 6am to 6 pm. Field Trip to the Savanna Army Depot

Offered by CAS and the Field Museum. In early spring more bald eagles can be seen along the Mississippi River in Illinois than anywhere south of Alaska. The vast acreage and diverse

habitats of this area provide good opportunities for seeing other species. We expect to see winter visitors, resident birds (possibly Turkey and Horned Lark) as well as early spring migrants, including a number of duck species.

Dress for the weather (layered clothes are best for the warmer bus or colder outdoor temperatures) and bring a lunch, beverage, snacks, binoculars, field guide and spotting scope, if you have one. The bus trip to Savanna is approximately 3 hours.

Cost: \$50 members (Field Museum and CAS), \$60 non-members. Call the Field Museum to register at (312) 665-7518.

Woodcock Courting Flights, Sunset —

•Wednesday, March 21 and Saturday, March 24, 2001

•Sunday, April 1 and Saturday, April 7, 2001

You don't have to go far to see the high-flying courtship of this unusual looking bird. Join us at sunset (6:30 - 7:30 depending on the date) at Wolf Road Prairie (31st St. and Wolf Rd. in Westchester). We have had very good luck in the past 7 years in seeing the woodcock flights on the Prairie. This year these trips will be co-sponsored by

Save the Prairie Society. For exact times call Stephen or Christine Lee at (708) 485-8197 a day or two before the trips. e-mail: stephenc@interaccess.com.

FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW

Chicago Audubon will again be sponsoring a booth at the Chicago Flower and Garden Show at Navy Pier from March 10-18. We need volunteers to help out at the booth, especially on the weekend and in the evenings. The purpose of the booth is to spread the word about Chicago Audubon and the environment. At the booth, we will be handing out information, offering specials on memberships, and selling a few items. If you can help out, you will receive free admission to the show (parking is not covered, however). Hours are from 10-8 every day except Sundays when the hours are 10-6.

The following time slots have been set up for volunteering: 10-1:30; 1:30-5:00; and 5-8. If you would like to help, please call the office at (773) 539-6793 with your first choice of day and time slot, and a second choice if possible. You can also e-mail your first and second choices to chicago_audubon@juno.com.

By John Viramontes

"Uncle Bob" Rodgers of the Fort Dearborn Chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society sat on a park bench in Lincoln Park's North Pond and quietly tallied the number of bird species. "Thirty-two," he said. "What I really want is thirty-five or forty species." It was Sunday morning, October 1, 2000.

I knew the uncertainty of locating more species. We had already walked for more than two hours, some birders had left, and the only area remaining to search was the western half-moon of North Pond. We began walking again. Within a short time, we found a Northern waterthrush, boosting the count to thirty-three.

As we strolled, we managed to see several small birds flitting about in the bushes not far from the pond's bank. As we pondered their identity, I suddenly spotted a large brown bird with my naked eye. "There's a bird of prey," I shouted. The raptor was flying at tree-top level at the other side of the pond, about one hundred yards away, and it disappeared behind a tree. It emerged, and with only a few precious seconds to put our binoculars on it, it wheeled against the vividly blue sky and flew away.

We quickly gathered in a tight circle in order to draw on our collective memory. Don Klimovich posited, "Maybe it's a barn owl."

As we were deliberating, John Purcell rode up on bicycle and informed us that a solitary sandpiper was perched on a small branch at the water's edge. Repositioning ourselves, we saw it and inched our count up to thirty-four. We shared with John our frustration at not being able to identify the owl. He asked which direction it had flown. "Way over there," I said, pointing to a distant line of trees one-quarter mile away. He mounted his bike and sped northward. Seeing him do that, I quickly followed on foot.

I located him at the shady base of a colossal cottonwood tree. He was looking up at a sharp angle with his binoculars. I asked if he had the bird in sight. He said he didn't. After I slowly circled



Photo by John Viramontes. Barn Owl seen in Lincoln Park — October, 2000

the cottonwood, I located a shape and yelled to John, no more than 20 feet away, that I had something in sight. All I could see was the beautiful back of a relatively large bird. The color of its back had an impressive orange-brown mottling with small flecks of white throughout. A molting, immature bird came to mind. Without looking at me or removing the binoculars from his eyes John said in a matter-of-fact way, "It's a barn owl."

The barn owl was facing away from us. Its face was hidden from sight. In time, it turned its head to peer down at us and reveal its whitish- heart-shaped face. John said this was a rare sighting for Chicago.

He said, "Keep an eye on it and should it fly away, note the direction. I have to make some phone calls." Remaining in the tree's shadow, I dropped to my knees and laid down on my back, lacing the fingers of my hands behind the back of my head. The coolness of the grass and earth penetrated my clothing.

My world shrank to a sort of tunnel vision, a few square yards of framed cloudless, exquisitely blue sky, many shimmering and wind-tossed leaves, some of them backlit by golden sunshine, a tangle of cane-thick tree branches. And at the center of it all, one gorgeous owl.

Having completely lost track of time, I never saw or heard John return. Someone asked me if the owl was present. I recognized the voice as John's. Without moving any part of my body, I happily confirmed the barn owl's presence. I heard John drop down in the grass next to me. He sat cross-legged as we both enjoyed the moment.

After getting up and viewing the owl through my binoculars, I decided I had to go home and get my camera. Although my camera was far away-sixteen miles round trip-I was optimistic that the owl would still be there when I returned. I drove my car as fast as legally possible-sometimes faster.

When I returned to Lincoln Park, the blasted zoo parking lot was full. From

the street, I could see Jim Landing at the base of the tree that sheltered the owl, "sitting on the bird." After a stressful search, I found a parking space.

I feverishly unpacked and assembled the pieces of my ancient camera equipment. Suddenly, I realized I didn't have my jeweler's screwdriver. Without it, I wouldn't be able to adjust a critical adapter ring. I kicked myself. I sheepishly asked if anyone else had one handy.

On the brink of resigning myself to missing a great photographic opportunity, a generous Matthew Cook said that he would be running an errand to his nearby home and could send back a set of small screwdrivers. Soon, Veronica Cook arrived with the screwdrivers.

With luxuriant tree foliage surrounding the owl, only one angle was available to photograph the owl's face. That angle was so steep that even with the monopod extended to its maximum five-foot length, it was impossible to get either one of my eyeballs to properly marry the camera's viewfinder! I had two alternatives. One was to lie flat on my back without using the steady support of the monopod. The other was to use the monopod while kneeling on one knee. I tried the kneeling option first.

I shortened the monopod's height by partially collapsing it. I kneeled, very unsteadily, on one knee. I adjusted my body to the only available sight line and with the camera focused, had to deal with one final variable: the wind. Its velocity was so forceful that it was moving my camera setup and me, and I had to postpone my shots. And to top it off, I was getting "warbler neck."

I finally steadied myself long enough to capture six images. I even managed to rotate the camera ninety degrees to get a vertical shot. My only regret of the day was that in my excitement to get a frontal photograph of the owl, I forgot to photograph the owl's back. The coloring and pattern of its back was unlike anything I can recall.

So ended a long and rewarding morning, yielding the final sought-after number of 35 species, and a hard-won shot of a barn owl.