



COMPASS

Navigating the world of birds and nature

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JULY/AUGUST 2003

BIRDATHON! 2003 Beecher Cup Stays with the Lake Forest College Team

by Joe Lill
Birdathon Coordinator

The 4th Annual Dr. William S. Beecher Birdathon Cup Challenge welcomed a record number of teams (6) and birders (30). The object of everyone's desire, the coveted Beecher Cup, will stay in the possession of last year's winners, the Lake Forest College team, which identified 138 species in a single day. They started at midnight, and inspired by their team motto, "Bird until we run out of food, then get more food," they outpaced the runners-up, the BudBirders, by six species. The Steel Belted Kingfishers finished third, with 128.

Although the Beecher Cup is certainly a treasured reward, the real goal of the competition is to raise funds for the ongoing programs of the Chicago Audubon Society. Teams could go out on any day between May 14th and May 20th, had to stay in Cook County, and raise a minimum of \$100.00 in pledges. The total amount raised from last year's Birdathon exceeded \$9000.00, and we're hoping to top that number this year! For those of you who've misplaced the pledge form, we're including another with this issue of the Compass. You can pledge a number of different ways: by total species seen (161), by the species total of your favorite team, or just a flat amount.

We're gratified to have so many birders involved, and there would have been more but for an accident a couple of days before the competition started,



The Winning Team: From left to right, Jeff Sundberg, Kris Sundberg, Ben Goluboff, Caleb Gordon

when the leader of a seventh team broke his collarbone in a bike mishap. He assures us that he'll be all healed and ready to go next year! Some of the interesting aspects of the day: 27 species of warblers seen by the collective teams and a lack of shorebirds (other than the omnipresent Dunlin) due to the high water levels this spring. Some team highlights: Lake Forest College- Least Tern (Gilson Park), Horned Grebe (McGuinness Slough) and Sandhill Crane (Lake Calumet); BudBirders- Harris's Sparrow (Magic Hedge); Steel Belted Kingfishers- Bald Eagle (Lake Calumet); Presidential Posse- Orange-crowned Warbler; Relaxed

Village People- Mockingbird (North Park Village) and Olive-sided Flycatcher (Rosehill Cemetery); Fledglings- Hummingbird and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

As always, a number of birders were doing their first "Big Day" and found it to be both exhilarating and exhausting. Many people picked up life birds, and everyone was pleasantly surprised by unexpected sightings along the way. If you've never participated in Birdathon (or, even if you have), we'd certainly like to invite you to join us next year, and maybe your team will end up with the Beecher Cup!

Birdathon! 2003 Teams and Totals

Lake Forest College
(138 species)
Sunday May 18
Ben Goluboff, Caleb Gordon, Kris Sundberg, Jeff Sundberg

BudBirders
(132 species)
Sunday May 18
Alan Anderson, Jill Anderson, Walter Marcisz, Cary Hillemonds, Maggie Kurcz

Steel Belted Kingfishers
(128 species)
Sunday May 18
Mark Agnor, Don Darnell, Ralph Herbst, Caitlin Lill, Joe Lill, Jeff Sanders

Presidential Posse
(77 species)
Saturday May 17
Vicki Deckert, Michael Hillbruner, Barb Kratochvil, Christine Lee, Stephen Lee

Relaxed Village People
(64 species)
Sunday May 18
Karen Anderson, Linda Comes, Caryn Dupon, Jerry Garden, Gail Goldberger, Ken Sutchar, Tony Temske

Fledglings
(55 species)
Friday May 16
Kristin Dvorak, Claude Lacrasse, Christine Prah

PROTECT MIGRATORY SONGBIRDS!

Did you know that the United States Congress has an opportunity to help save threatened and endangered neotropical migratory birds, including the Kirtland's warbler, hermit thrush, black-capped vireo and Kentucky warbler?

It's true! They can do so by increasing funding for the Neo-Tropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund — a special program aimed specifically at restoring habitat for neotropical migratory birds. You'll recall, the Neo-Tropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act was signed into law three years ago — a first-of-its-kind law that directly impacts songbirds by helping to restore and conserve their wintering habitat. The law established a \$5 million fund to support partnership programs to enhance habitat in the U.S., as well as the Caribbean and Latin America, where approximately 5 billion birds of 500 species spend their

winters — including species considered the most endangered birds in North America. For the past several years, Congress has failed to secure the full \$5 million for this program — a miniscule figure far less than almost all conservation programs coordinated through the U.S. Department of the Interior

We need your help to convince both the House & Senate to secure full funding for this species saving program, thus ensuring that neotropical migratory birds return to our backyards by protecting their wintering habitat! Please contact your two U.S. Senators and U.S. Representative today, by mail or phone, and urge them to fully fund the Neo-Tropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

If you prefer to contact them via the web, you can do so by logging onto www.audubon.org and clicking on the link: Take Action.

It's not too late to contribute to Birdathon! 2003. Please use the pledge form below to sustain educational programs at Chicago Audubon.

_____ My tax-deductible gift of \$ _____ is enclosed.

_____ I'm happy to pledge \$ _____ per species.

Team I'm sponsoring (optional) _____.

Make check payable to: Chicago Audubon Society
5801-C N. Pulaski
Chicago, IL 60646

Credit card: _____ Master Card _____ VISA

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Signature on Card: _____

From: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

CAS member _____ Yes _____ No

_____ My contribution will be matched by my employer

Employers name _____

Wintering Florida Whoopers Return to the Midwest

by David Cohen

An ambitious five-year project to protect the country's diminishing whooping crane population is paying dividends. Twenty-one cranes, more than double the original number, made the flight this spring from the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge in Florida to the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in central Wisconsin and other locations in the midwest. Only eight were involved in the maiden migration in the fall of 2001.

A team of wildlife planners and pilots is currently training another 18 chicks in Wisconsin. If they all survive, 39 whoopers will make the fall migration to Florida this October. Planners at Operation Migration, the International Crane Foundation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service hope to have 25 pairs migrating between the two states by the end of the project.

"We encourage the public to come up to Necedah and use the observation tower," commented Joan Garland, an official with the International Crane Foundation (ICF) in Baraboo,

Wisconsin. "The refuge itself is not open to the public. But in the fall, people will be able to see the cranes train with the gliders, once they've fledged."

Not all 21 cranes that returned to the midwest in the April migration have roosted in Necedah. One has found refuge in a Northern Illinois wetland, and others are scattered around east and southwest Wisconsin.

Auduboners are welcome to look for them, but the ICF is asking people not to post locations on the Internet. The initial group of cranes who survived training, migrations and winters in Florida have been put in the wild, and planners want nothing to impair the transition, least of all contact with humans.

"We want people to observe the cranes at a distance, as they do with most birds," says Garland. "We want to keep these birds as wild as possible."

Cranes were among the very first birds put on the endangered species list when Federal legislation was passed in the seventies. Eleven of the fifteen species--including whoopers--are still on the list. The population of whoopers

in North America comes to about 400.

"Cranes are an indicator species, like frogs," adds Garland, "When their population is hurting, other plant and animal species are hurting, too."

Officials in the public and private sector launched the project at Necedah in 1999. Habitat loss and unregulated hunting had severely cut into the crane population, and few dependable refuges were left in North America. A non-migratory population of whoopers settled into the Kissimmee Prairie in Florida, and another group migrates annually between Woods Buffalo National Park in Canada and the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge on the Gulf Coast of Texas.

But either flock, warns Shawn Gillette of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, could be destroyed by a natural or man-made disaster, including a severe storm or an oil spill. "The point of the program," says Gillette, who works at the Chassahowitzka preserve, "is to stabilize the bird population by establishing a second migratory pathway between Florida and the midwest."

::: CAS BIRDATHON – TOTAL SPECIES :::

May 16 through May 18, 2003

6 teams, 30 birders
SPECIES (161 total)

Pied-billed Grebe
Horned Grebe
Double-crested Cormorant
Great Blue Heron
Great Egret
Little Blue Heron
Green Heron
Black-crowned Night Heron
Mute Swan
Canada Goose
Wood Duck
Green-winged Teal
American Black Duck
Mallard
Blue-winged Teal
Northern Shoveler
Gadwall
Ruddy Duck
Turkey Vulture
Osprey
Bald Eagle
Cooper's Hawk
Broad-winged Hawk
Red-tailed Hawk
American Kestrel
Peregrine Falcon
Ring-necked Pheasant
Common Moorhen
American Coot
Sandhill Crane
Black-bellied Plover
Semipalmated Plover
Killdeer
Spotted Sandpiper
Semipalmated Sandpiper
Least Sandpiper
Dunlin
American Woodcock
Bonaparte's Gull
Ring-billed Gull
Herring Gull
Lesser Black-backed Gull
Caspian Tern
Common Tern
Forster's Tern
Least Tern
Black Tern
Rock Dove
Mourning Dove
Monk Parakeet
Black-billed Cuckoo
Great Horned Owl

Common Nighthawk
Whip-poor-will
Chimney Swift
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher
Red-headed Woodpecker
Red-bellied Woodpecker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
Downy Woodpecker
Hairy Woodpecker
Northern Flicker
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Eastern Wood-Pewee
Willow Flycatcher
Least Flycatcher
Eastern Phoebe
Great Crested Flycatcher
Eastern Kingbird
Purple Martin
Tree Swallow
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Bank Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Barn Swallow
Blue Jay
American Crow
Black-capped Chickadee
Tufted Titmouse
White-breasted Nuthatch
Carolina Wren
House Wren
Sedge Wren
Marsh Wren
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
Eastern Bluebird
Veery
Gray-cheeked Thrush
Swainson's Thrush
Wood Thrush
American Robin
Gray Catbird
Northern Mockingbird
Brown Thrasher
American Pipit
Cedar Waxwing
European Starling
White-eyed Vireo
Blue-headed Vireo
Yellow-throated Vireo
Warbling Vireo
Philadelphia Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Blue-winged Warbler
Golden-winged Warbler

Tennessee Warbler
Orange-crowned Warbler
Nashville Warbler
Northern Parula
Yellow Warbler
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Magnolia Warbler
Cape May Warbler
Black-throated Blue Warbler
Yellow-rumped Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler
Blackburnian Warbler
Palm Warbler
Bay-breasted Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler
Black-and-white Warbler
American Redstart
Ovenbird
Northern Waterthrush
Louisiana Waterthrush
Mourning Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
Hooded Warbler
Wilson's Warbler
Canada Warbler
Scarlet Tanager
Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting
Eastern Towhee
Chipping Sparrow
Clay-colored Sparrow
Field Sparrow
Vesper Sparrow
Savannah Sparrow
Grasshopper Sparrow
Henslow's Sparrow
Song Sparrow
Lincoln's Sparrow
Swamp Sparrow
White-throated Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Harris's Sparrow
Bobolink
Red-winged Blackbird
Eastern Meadowlark
Yellow-headed Blackbird
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
Orchard Oriole
Baltimore Oriole
House Finch
American Goldfinch
House Sparrow

COMPASS

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Cook County Spring Bird Count Totals — 2003

TOTAL SPECIES	29	Hairy Woodpecker	7	Mourning Warbler
1 Common Loon	147	Northern Flicker	602	Common Yellowthroat
13 Pied-billed Grebe	1	Olive-sided Flycatcher	5	Hooded Warbler
2152 Double-crested Cormorant	24	Eastern Wood-Pewee	42	Wilson's Warbler
2 American Bittern	9	Willow Flycatcher	15	Canada Warbler
175 Great Blue Heron	88	Least Flycatcher	4	Yellow-breasted Chat
243 Great Egret	16	Eastern Phoebe	177	Scarlet Tanager
2 Little Blue Heron	85	Great Crested Flycatcher	65	Eastern Towhee
1 Cattle Egret	116	Eastern Kingbird	188	Chipping Sparrow
87 Green Heron	2	White-eyed Vireo	85	Field Sparrow
707 Black-crowned Night-Heron	36	Yellow-throated Vireo	2	Vesper Sparrow
3 Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	72	Blue-headed Vireo	106	Savannah Sparrow
29 Turkey Vulture	78	Warbling Vireo	31	Grasshopper Sparrow
1443 Canada Goose	5	Philadelphia Vireo	9	Henslow's Sparrow **
35 Mute Swan	65	Red-eyed Vireo	337	Song Sparrow
146 Wood Duck	612	Blue Jay	258	Lincoln's Sparrow
6 Gadwall	248	American Crow	299	Swamp Sparrow
1 American Black Duck *	2	Horned Lark	1542	White-throated Sparrow
808 Mallard	40	Purple Martin	1663	White-crowned Sparrow
75 Blue-winged Teal	292	Tree Swallow	517	Northern Cardinal
4 Northern Shoveler	273	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	344	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
1 Green-winged Teal	98	Bank Swallow	245	Indigo Bunting
11 Hooded Merganser	47	Cliff Swallow	3	Dickcissel
34 Red-breasted Merganser	500	Barn Swallow	102	Bobolink
49 Ruddy Duck	175	Black-capped Chickadee	1958	Red-winged Blackbird
5 Osprey	20	Tufted Titmouse	55	Eastern Meadowlark
4 Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	10	Yellow-headed Blackbird **
27 Cooper's Hawk	60	White-breasted Nuthatch	1295	Common Grackle
3 Red-shouldered Hawk	4	Brown Creeper	473	Brown-headed Cowbird
14 Broad-winged Hawk	10	Carolina Wren	18	Orchard Oriole
45 Red-tailed Hawk	112	House Wren	405	Baltimore Oriole
26 American Kestrel	13	Sedge Wren	170	House Finch
6 Ring-necked Pheasant	22	Marsh Wren	679	American Goldfinch
1 Wild Turkey	164	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	1603	House Sparrow
1 King Rail	166	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	4	Peregrine Falcon */**
3 Virginia Rail	25	Eastern Bluebird	14	Sanderling */**
24 Sora	105	Veery	1	Lesser Black-backed Gull */**
5 Common Moorhen	33	Gray-cheeked Thrush	1	Winter Wren */**
57 American Coot	132	Swainson's Thrush	1	Golden-crowned Kinglet */**
4 Sandhill Crane	30	Hermit Thrush	3	Connecticut Warbler */**
1 Black-bellied Plover	99	Wood Thrush	12	American Tree Sparrow */**
57 Killdeer	1146	American Robin	17	Clay-colored Sparrow */**
7 Greater Yellowlegs	709	Gray Catbird	2	Harris' Sparrow */**
59 Lesser Yellowlegs	3	Northern Mockingbird	2	"Peep (Calidris), sp. */**"
26 Solitary Sandpiper	59	Brown Thrasher	2	"Empidonax, sp. */**"
5 Willet	1677	European Starling	1	"Trail's Flycatcher" */**
63 Spotted Sandpiper	19	American Pipit	1	"Brewster's" Warbler"
17 Least Sandpiper	139	Cedar Waxwing		
7 Dunlin	56	Blue-winged Warbler		
1 Wilson's Snipe	83	Golden-winged Warbler	196	Species count (computer)
10 American Woodcock	157	Tennessee Warbler	192	Species count (corrected)
1 Wilson's Phalarope	27	Orange-crowned Warbler		
94 Bonaparte's Gull	290	Nashville Warbler	51259	Number of individual birds
14752 Ring-billed Gull	39	Northern Parula		
187 Herring Gull	399	Yellow Warbler	4:10am	Earliest Birding Time
445 Caspian Tern	196	Chestnut-sided Warbler	8:25pm	Latest Birding Time
692 Common Tern	233	Magnolia Warbler		
73 Forster's Tern	49	Cape May Warbler	307.09	Daylight Party Hours Walked
4 Black Tern	10	Black-throated Blue Warbler **	33.67	Daylight Party Hours Driven
889 Rock Dove	943	Yellow-rumped Warbler	3.00	Other Party Hours (Golf Cart)
2 Eurasian Collared-Dove **	196	Black-throated Green Warbler	1.00	Other Party Hours (Kayak)
452 Mourning Dove	100	Blackburnian Warbler	344.76	Total Party Hours
65 Monk Parakeet **	7	Pine Warbler		
3 Black-billed Cuckoo	1187	Palm Warbler	190.9	Daylight Party Miles Walked
2 Eastern Screech-Owl	67	Bay-breasted Warbler	471.0	Daylight Party Miles Driven
5 Great Horned Owl	35	Blackpoll Warbler	3.0	Other Party Miles (Golf Cart)
1 Barred Owl	2	Cerulean Warbler	3.0	Other Party Miles (Kayak)
26 Common Nighthawk	214	Black-and-white Warbler	667.9	Total Party Miles
357 Chimney Swift	186	American Redstart		
27 Ruby-throated Hummingbird	1	Prothonotary Warbler	51	Parties
10 Belted Kingfisher	3	Worm-eating Warbler		
46 Red-headed Woodpecker	304	Ovenbird	4:10-5:09am	Owling Hours
162 Red-bellied Woodpecker	299	Northern Waterthrush	1.33	Total Owling Hours
12 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	3	Louisiana Waterthrush		
175 Downy Woodpecker	2	Kentucky Warbler		

Compiled by Duane Heaton

IBA FAQs

continued from page 4

easements; cooperating with land managers to design and implement management plans; public education and outreach; research and monitoring and local ecotourism.

How can I be involved?

IBA is an opportunity for those who care about an important site to make a tremendous difference for the birds

there. If there is an area in your part of the state that is important for the conservation of birds, your involvement can be critical in ensuring that the site is nominated and receives the benefits of IBA designation. Many people can find a place in the IBA process. "Movers and shakers" can marshal the forces necessary to complete an authoritative IBA nomination for the site, and begin to form a conservation team. Club field trip leaders can lead trips to potential IBA's to collect additional data. Birders

can contribute past data. Others can help to plan events that publicize the IBA when it is designated, or serve on a conservation team, or recruit the best people to do so. Once conservation plans are developed, there will be a new set of opportunities to advocate, improve habitat, educate, engage, etc.

How do birds benefit from the IBA program?

IBA programs in other states have yielded wonderful results for birds. Land acquisition and protection or

improved management are the most common benefits. Several funding agencies give higher priorities to sites with the IBA designation, as do some land trusts. In New York, a law was passed establishing Bird Conservation Areas. Increased public awareness of the need to protect our birds and their habitats is another important benefit.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Stewardship Workdays

At the Skokie Lagoons: July 12 and August 9 at 10:00 a.m.

Chicago Audubon conducts regular monthly workdays at the Skokie Lagoons on the second Saturday of every month. Activities include buckthorn cutting, animal and plant monitoring, cleanup and debris removal, and other management activities. Meet at the Tower Road parking lot, east of the lagoon bridge. If you arrive late, look for a CAS sign near the parking lot directing you to the work site.

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

Bird Walks

Wooded Island

Every Wednesday in July & Aug - 7:00 a.m.

Every Saturday in July & Aug - 8:00 a.m.

Bring binoculars and field guides. Dress for the weather. Meet at the Darrow Bridge, just south of the Museum of Science and Industry. **Note:** All the usual routes into the parking lot are closed. If you come from the North, you must swing around the Museum at 57th St, continuing south on

Cornell Ave. until you reach Hayes Drive (6300 South). At Hayes, turn left and get back on the Outer Drive going north. At 5800 South, turn left, and follow the road into the parking lot, proceed to where you are just north of the Darrow Bridge. If this isn't clear, please call Doug Anderson (773) 493-7058.

Sunday, August 24, 8:00 a.m. Lake Calumet Shorebirds

Walter Marcisz's annual shorebird trip has been a favorite of Chicago Audubon for many years. Since conditions change every year, the locations for this year's trip will be determined in August. Call the leader, Walter Marcisz at (773) 646-3034 or wjmarcisz@aol.com.

Directions: Meet at O'Brien Lock & Dam. Take I-94 to 130th St. Exit east on 130th and turn right just before the steel bridge into the drive for O'Brien Lock & Dam. Turn left after the railroad underpass and proceed along the river to the car park.

Other Events

Stroller Strut: Nature for Urban Infants (and their parents)

Sponsored by the Chicago Park District, this free program, geared to children ages three and under, is

designed to have parents and their babies learning about nature together and foster an appreciation of nature for families living in an urban environment.

Limited to 20 adults and their children, pre-registration is required. Call (312) 742-4907 or email tawseb@chicagoparkdistrict.com

Saturday, July 19, 10:00 a.m.

Explore the Secret Shore: The New Nature Sanctuary at South Shore Cultural Center.

Discover dune formation, native plants that attract birds and butterflies, and shore birds.

Thursday, August 14, 10:00 a.m.

Where the Wild Things Are: A Wetland Romp at Gompers Park

Little ones get to see the monarch butterfly, water lilies blooming on the pond and turtles basking in the sun. The walk will loop around the park, letting tots enjoy prairie grasses, woodland plants and special trees.

There is ample free parking at both sites, and both are CTA accessible. Please dress appropriately. Long sleeves, sun hats and sunscreen are recommended.

Midwest Birding Symposium September 11-14, 2003 in Green Bay WI

See a huge number of migrating birds... Meet big names in the birding community... Learn from experts... View winning photos from the Birder's World Photo Contest... And most important, have a whole lot of fun.

Choose from 17 fun birding trips!

Green Bay is surrounded by habitat that varies from Lake Michigan shoreline to cattail marsh and sedge meadow. The area lies along major pathways for fall migrants. We found 168 species on our field trips in 2001. You can help us find even more this year!

Help the endangered Greater Prairie-Chicken! The 2001 Symposium contributed more than \$30,000 to the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership. With your help, this year's Symposium will support the efforts of the Nature Conservancy of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to help another critically endangered species — the Greater Prairie-Chicken.

For more information and to make reservations for the 2003 Symposium: Phone: 800-533-6644

Fax: 262-796-1615

Email: customerservice@kalmbach.com

IBA Frequently Asked Questions

What is involved in nominating a site?

The most important information needed is data about bird populations at the site. The nomination process calls for data organized:

- by species
- in a given season
- in a given year.

These can be densities (so many birds per acre) or minimum and maximum numbers in a season. These data are only needed for species or congregations that are identified in the IBA criteria.

A description of the site and any threats to the quality of the habitat are other important parts of the nomination.

How will Illinois IBA sites be chosen?

A technical committee of state ornithologists reviews the applications to determine whether sites meet the criteria.

How were the criteria chosen?

The technical committee developed lists of important species in Illinois, and threshold numbers for sites that protect congregations of birds. The species were chosen based on the state endangered species list as well as current national efforts to identify birds of conservation concern in each region. For more information about the criteria and the technical committee, see the website - www.habitatproject.org.

What is the difference between the different IBA programs?

Different organizations have IBA programs which focus on the global, continental and state levels. Audubon's Illinois IBA program began in December 2002, and focuses on sites of statewide importance. It builds on the work of previous IBA efforts in the state. The goals of the Illinois program

are to quickly identify the state's most important bird areas and the threats to them, and to form conservation teams that can implement needed actions.

How are the boundaries of an IBA determined?

The boundaries of the area you nominate should make sense according to the conservation needs of the species involved. In some cases, boundaries set by the landowner would be the most sensible. In others, a group of sites may function as a complex — perhaps each provides a different function for the same species (e.g., nesting and foraging) or perhaps, when grouped, they provide a critical amount of habitat (such as forest or grassland complexes.)

How can I get information I need to fill out a nomination form?

Landowners, public land management agencies, and other birders can provide useful information for various sections of the form. Information and additional explanations can be found at www.habitatproject.org. Information from a previous national-level IBA effort exists for some sites, and is available for use in completing this form.

If you plan to submit an application or for additional information please contact the IBA coordinator: Judy Pollock, phone: (847) 965-1150; fax: (847) 965-9282; jpollock@audubon.org.

What is a conservation action plan?

After a site is nominated, conservation teams can form to write action plans to address threats at the site, if necessary. These would include the landowner, and others who have important contributions to make to the planning process, such as local conservation groups, birders, and stewards. Team strategies can include recommending privately owned sites for willing-seller, willing-buyer acquisition; negotiating conservation

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Illinois Important Bird Areas Program Accepting Nominations

Effort to Find, Protect State's Priority Habitat

Perhaps the single most important bird conservation initiative in Illinois — for many years to come — is the Illinois Important Bird Areas (IBA) program. IBA identifies significant bird habitat across Illinois based on peer-reviewed scientific criteria. This voluntary effort helps build conservation partnerships to implement best stewardship practices for bird conservation.

The Illinois nomination period is now open. Until September 30, nominations will be accepted. Organizations and individuals can submit nominations that describe the Illinois Important Bird Areas and draft the most important steps to conserve them.

To nominate a site or for further information contact Judy Pollock, IBA coordinator, (847) 965-1150; jpollock@audubon.org. A website, www.habitproject.org, contains more information about the Illinois IBA program, including nomination criteria, forms and instructions.

There are many ways individuals and groups can help to conserve our Important Bird Areas. Anyone with local bird expertise and detailed

records can contribute to the nominations of the sites they are familiar with that could benefit from IBA designation, and encourage others to do the same. Sites that are publicly or privately owned are eligible for nomination; all landowners are invited to participate. People or groups who can organize surveys, adopt an IBA, or publicize the IBA program are all encouraged to become involved.

In other states, Important Bird Areas campaigns have led to the protection of hundreds of thousands of acres of land — specifically for bird conservation. Governors have written into law sweeping bird habitat protection measures. New partnerships have been formed to carry out key habitat management and acquisition projects.

In Illinois the organizations that have contributed to the first draft state-level IBA principles include the Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, National Audubon, Illinois Audubon, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Illinois Natural History Survey, and others.



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