

mails the information to member clubs. Vice President Donald Dann represents BCN on the policy council of the American Bird Conservancy, of which we are a member, and has spearheaded our efforts to support the Conservation and Reinvestment Act, legislation that would dedicate a portion of federal income from offshore oil and natural gas leases to protect wildlife habitat. BCN has also published two green papers that contain current research on management recommendations, one on lakefront bird habitat, and the other on birds of our local grasslands. Expect another on shrubland habitat soon.

We are a creation of our member clubs: their financial support, newsletter coverage, and most importantly, the talents and energies of their representatives to BCN make us what we are. Grants from Chicago Wilderness and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources have also supported our projects. Our next challenge is to widen the geographic reach of our activities, which are heavily concentrated in Cook County.

We have many opportunities for involvement. The BCN has offered active participants a chance to develop their talents including leadership skills and to feel proud of making a difference for bird conservation. Artists, writers,

publicists, organizers, spokespersons, web designers, bird lovers, dreamers, and doers — you can get involved.

The BCN office is at Harms Woods Conservation Center in Skokie, and is maintained by Chicago Wilderness Audubon, which supports citizen conservation efforts. Call (847) 965-1150 x23.

As I listened to a Chicago City Council subcommittee meeting recently called to consider adopting the Chicago Wilderness Recovery Plan, I was surprised to hear that the first two speakers, both heads of city agencies, using statistics and language straight out of our green paper. Birders are a talented, energetic, and powerful voice in our community. The Bird Conservation Network has taught many of us just how effective and far-reaching that voice can be.

— Judy Pollock, Founding President
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Editors Note: Bob Fisher is the new President of BCN.

SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS – SPRING MIGRATION 2000

Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) at Chain O' Lakes State Park

On 15 March 2000 I had begun my day birding the east edge of Lake County. I began at North Beach in Waukegan and progressed up the shore to Illinois Beach State Park, Camp Logan, and North Point Marina in Winthrop Harbor.

As a manager at a grocery chain, I am usually only fortunate enough to have one day off per week. On my day off, I usually strategically plan to cover as many areas as possible, searching for species I may need for the year.

I decided to begin 15 March along the shoreline, ride my mountain bike up the 13-mile trek on the Des Plaines River Trail from Gurnee through Wadsworth, and then, after picking up my daughter from school, head to Chain O' Lakes State Park in McHenry and Lake Counties.

My goal was to search the pine grove behind the main office building for Long-eared Owls, which we had seen there (13+) several years ago. I also wanted to search near the gigantic hopper feeder in front of the office which I had Harris' Sparrow and Rusty Blackbirds in years past.

The day was productive for me, since I added seven new birds to my 2000 Lake County list as well as got quite a workout.

After picking up my daughter from school, we headed west for the half hour ride to Chain O' Lakes State Park. The weather had been in the 40s since the day before, under mostly cloudy skies. Winds were out of the southwest at 10-15 mph, but a steady rain had developed on the way.

As we entered the park, past the guard house about 1/4 mile we began scanning the flooded fields to the east. As I looked through the rain-freckled windows at the ponds we saw several ducks feeding in the pouring rain.

Cracking the window slightly, I began to scan the pond with my binoculars. Shovelers. Gadwall. American Wigeon. And a Eurasian! (*Anas penelope*) Quickly, I grabbed my Kowa scope and window mount. A beautiful male Eurasian Wigeon, a rare vagrant in Illinois!

His rich rufous head with a buffy forehead/crown stripe stood out, even in the gloominess of the day. Even though he was in the company of eight American Wigeons, he seemed to have his own agenda, feeding in his own space, while others seemed to huddle nearby. His sides were pale gray and his breast was a shade of rufous. My daughter quickly jumped up front to get a view from the scope. Meanwhile, I grabbed my cell phone to call Richard