

area. The Perimeter Plantings along the east were primarily American plum, which now have grown into magnificent groves. In summer 2000 the Plum Groves hosted the first of what is hoped will be a string of Brown Thrasher nests. The debate over the revitalization of Montrose Point now entered a crucial phase: that group wishing a return to the Caldwell Plan as he presented it originally, and those, primarily birders, who were supporting no plan that called for the elimination of The Magic Hedge. Continued presentations before the public at Lincoln Park Advisory Council meetings in 1998 and 1999 bore fruit, and Ted Wolff, lead landscape architect, said he would abandon the development of the Council Ring on the Point. Following an invitational workshop sponsored by the US Forest Service, Ted agreed that the importance of The Magic Hedge as a migratory bird magnet had developed so far that any thought of eliminating it was not practical. In November, 1999, the plan was set forth to the public, once again, at the Corinthian Yacht Club and met such universal public support that the Chicago Park District announced that it would create a special committee known as the Montrose Working Group to be chaired by Mary Ellen Messner, north lakefront director, to work out any last minute details. The final plan was presented to the Lincoln Park Advisory Council at its September, 2000, meeting, and called for The Magic Hedge to be nearly doubled in size, and for the creation of a similar hedge circling the entire Point.

The Magic Hedge had become an institutionalized public feature in Chicago's Lincoln Park. Several other developments took place in the spring of 2000. Final plans were approved for the replacement of the revetment by the City, the Park District, and the Army Corps between Montrose Harbor and Wilson Avenue. The revetment consists of the large step-stone limestone blocks that protect the land base of the Point from the Lake. Work continued in the spring of 2001, and the entire area along the lake has been fenced off from the public until construction is done. The revetment has already been replaced in the Aquarium area, between 31st Street and 53rd Street, and running north from Belmont Harbor.

More importantly for birders, the Park District appropriated nearly \$400,000 for new plantings at Montrose, and set the entire planting schedule for the year 2000. In July, workers planted when a number of oaks, maples, dogwoods, birches, service-

berries, and others including the first Montrose conifers, five jack pines, mostly in the north and northeast quadrants of the Point. As planting continues, the migration activity at Montrose Point will be more spread out, and more than one Magic Hedge may surface. The migratory birds at Montrose Point are, and will continue to be, well-served and the Magic Hedge area will remain as one of the premier birding sites in Chicagoland.

Pleasant Reflections: The Birds

The Magic Hedge has now become a birding legend, not only in Chicago, but also throughout Illinois and this nation. It was the swarms of warblers that first brought attention from birders, who then noticed also swarms of sparrows, tanagers, orioles, kinglets, woodpeckers, thrushes, and all the other passerines coming through Chicago. While there, birders began paying more attention to the lakefront, and scoters, jaegers, grebes, loons, and winter hulls began to be reported more frequently. Along the grassy strip birders found that Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, American Pipits and Horned Larks were regular migrants. In those seasons when the beach at Montrose was deluged with seaweed, regular shorebird watches were established along the "fishhook" breakwater. And the beaches were combed for the few Piping Plovers and Whimbrels that graced the sands. After checking the Magic Hedge area and then the beach and lakefront, birders would then trek to Montrose Harbor looking for ducks, geese, swans, phalaropes, and water birds like



A Rock Wren visited Montrose Beach in Chicago on 8 October 1988. Joe Milosevich took this photo, which was published on the cover of Illinois Birds and Birding Vol. 4 No. 3.