

edented interest in preserving habitat for migrant and nesting birds. Because of the work of the BCN and individual birders and bird clubs, Chicago is now the second city in the U.S. to sign the International Migratory Bird Treaty and a multi-year program of habitat improvements and public education is planned.

So even as the world of physical gadgets and modes of travel and communication changes almost daily, nothing about the psychological aspects of birding will ever really change.

As Alexander Wilson is quoted by Welker in "Birds & Men" from papers at the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard in the early 19th century: "It is only through

personal intimacy, that we can truly ascertain the character of either (men or birds), more particularly that of the feathered race; noting their particular haunts, modes of constructing their nests, manner of flight, seasons of migration, favourite foods, and numberless other minutiae, which can only be obtained by frequent excursions in the woods and fields, along lakes, shores, and rivers, and requires a degree of patience and perseverance, which nothing but an enthusiastic fondness for the pursuit can inspire."

That desire for intimacy with birds will always characterize birders. All the trappings of the new millennium merely make that quest for closeness easier and more comfortable. A deeply important part of this quest is preservation of birds and like the earliest chroniclers of North American birds, 21st century birders have formidable frontiers to conquer. To change public attitudes and public policy about birds and their habitats globally is no small feat. But the idea of the extinction of even a single species in Illinois is enough to spur



*Monk Parakeets were added to the state checklist in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. What new species will be added in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Photo taken in Chicago by Jason South in the 1990s.*

many individuals to take extraordinary action.

But the past does inform the present, even on this score. In "Birds & Men," Welker himself said: "Although the history of bird conservation in the nineteenth century culminates in concerted actions by powerful and dedicated groups, it begins with separate acts of protest by individuals."

You have only to look at the efforts of Illinois birders like – Walter Marcisz and Jim Landing on behalf of the Lake Calumet region or of Marianne Hahn on behalf of Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie or Rhonda Monroe and Tracy Treacy on behalf of the Shawnee National Forest, or of Marilyn Campbell, executive director of the Illinois Audubon Society in Danville, which purchases bird habitat, or of Steven D. Bailey and Rhetta Jack of the Illinois Natural History Survey in Champaign, who are gathering data on breeding birds and habitat loss statewide or of Donald Dann who influences state and na-

tional funding programs on behalf of bird protection – to know that the ethos of conservation is still very much alive. Individual birders will have much to say and to do with the future of birds in the 21st century through their efforts today and 100 years from now.

**Editor's Note:** *The list above of active birders helping to conserve habitat represents just a small number of Illinois residents working to protect our avian resources. We are sorry we could not list them all. If you have any conservation efforts on behalf of birds you wish to promote, please contact me at: sdevore@voyager.net*

*Your information could be published in either Meadowlark or our newsletter, Wings Over the Prairie. Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to protecting birds and their habitat in Illinois. Please let us know what you are doing.*

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