

Dec.16, 2018

Annual Reports of OFNC Committees for October 2017 - September 2018

Awards Committee

The Awards Committee manages the process to annually recognize those OFNC members and other qualified persons who, by virtue of their efforts and talents, are deserving of special recognition. In late 2017, nominations were received and evaluated (see awards criteria at <http://www.ofnc.ca/awards.php>), resulting in nominees for four awards being recommended to the Board of Directors for approval. Biographies were written for each award recipient for inclusion in the Club's publications and posting on the website. The awards were presented at the annual Awards Night in April 2018. The recipients' names, type of award and rationale for recognition follow below.

- Annie Bélair - Member of the Year for redesigning *Trail & Landscape* as a communication venue for local members.
- Julia Cipriani - George McGee Service Award for dedicated service on Events Committee and other areas of Club activity.
- David Seburn - Conservation Award for a Member for advocacy efforts influencing the decision to ban hunting of Snapping Turtles in Ontario.
- The Teachers of Regina Street Alternative School - Mary Stuart Education Award for connecting their students with nature at Mud Lake.

President Diane Lepage selected Greg Lutick and Adrienne Jex as the recipients of the 2017 President's Prize for improving service of refreshments at monthly meetings.

The Awards Committee thanks Mark Brenchley for helping with awards certificate design and printing.

Eleanor Zurbrigg, Chair

Awards Committee: Irwin Brodo, Julia Cipriani, Christine Hanrahan, Karen McLachlan Hamilton

Birds Committee

Birds Committee (11 members, 1 ex officio and 1 observer), Bird Records Sub-committee (11 members) and Bird Feeders Sub-committee (1 member and 5 volunteers) coordinated OFNC

bird related activities and directed and encouraged interest in birds within and outside the OFNC area.

Two committee members administered OFNC's Facebook group (2161 members October 2018) which provides a place for club members and prospective members to discuss ideas and exchange information related to all aspects of natural history, club outings and club initiatives.

A committee member provided weekly provincial (Ontbirds) reports of OFNC area (Ottawa-Gatineau) bird sightings which with photos by local photographers was also provided on OFNC Facebook and the OFNC web site. This same member authored a four-part, four issue, Trail & Landscape article "How to find 250 Bird Species in the OFNC Study Area in a Single Year".

Our committee participated in the Ottawa River Watershed Study and the creation of the Lac Deschênes-Ottawa River Important Bird Area (IBA). We liaised with the Innis Point Bird Observatory and recommended financial support for their Osprey web cam and bander-in-charge. We coordinated updates to DND's Shirley's Bay causeway access list which currently contains 385 OFNC members.

Birds Committee collaborated with other OFNC committees throughout the year. Our committee members led field trips and participated in Conservation Committee activities such as supporting the Friends of the Carp Hills with their survey and planning for the conservation and public use of Torbolton Ridge land owned by the City of Ottawa. We provided a significant role in OFNC's efforts to introduce new Canadians to OFNC area natural history by partnering with Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization to organize and help lead a field trip at the Mer Bleue boardwalk and area.

Birds Committee and the Club des Ornithologues de L'Outaouais organized the 2017 Christmas Bird Count with 133 field observers and 28 feeder watchers finding 60 bird species. The 2018 Seedathon "Big Day" event was held in early fall to raise funds for purchasing seeds for the 5 OFNC bird feeders. 130 bird species were found and \$790 (as of August 1st) was raised.

Although the OFNC Falcon watch is no longer required because the Heron Road nest site is in a safe location several members keep an informal watch on the nest. Four more Peregrines successfully fledged from this location this year.

Bob Cermak
Chair, Birds Committee

Conservation Committee

A major accomplishment of the OFNC Conservation Committee in 2018 was successfully documenting Red Spruce (*Picea rubens*) at many sites in eastern Ontario. This tree species is considered a key component of climax forests of eastern Canada and yet was apparently largely "missed" in the forest surveys of eastern Ontario to date. Members of the committee and

other interested individuals collaborated to:

1. confirm the presence of Red Spruce is much more abundant and widespread south of the Mer Bleue bog (centred at approximately Anderson Rd/Leitrim Rd/Highway 417) than was previously known.
2. confirm the presence of Red Spruce at several locations outside of the Ottawa district where it was apparently not previously documented: Hawkesbury, Alfred, near Alfred Bog, Rose Lake, and Vennachar Junction-Denbigh.

This project was the topic of the October OFNC monthly meeting, and will be summarized in a forthcoming article currently in preparation. Records are being uploaded to iNaturalist as time permits. We anticipate that we will continue to work on this project at a more relaxed pace in 2019 to further resolve uncertainties regarding Red Spruce in Ontario.

It was another busy year for OFNC-Conservation regarding public outreach and active conservation work in the great outdoors. Members of our committee lent their expertise to lead numerous conservation events, including many guided public Nature tours, public lectures, bio-inventories, and attendance/contribution at conservation-related meetings. Our committee members continued to enthusiastically document wildlife near Ottawa and further afield with thousands of observations entered into iNaturalist and other conservation databases.

As in previous years, we met regularly to discuss and plan actions regarding species of conservation concern (both threatened indigenous species, and emerging potentially invasive exotics), habitat conservation/restoration projects, and engaging both naturalists and the general public alike in conserving Canada's natural wildlife heritage. We were pleased to collaborate on conservation work with a number of external organizations and several other OFNC committees throughout the year.

We were pleased to welcome Greg Lutick to the committee this year.

Owen J. Clarkin, Chair
Conservation Committee

Education and Publicity Committee

Storyboards for display at 8 sites around the FWG continue to be developed. We now have 24 bilingual stories, 8 per season. They are now all laminated so that they can be reused for years. The previous ones on photopaper were unusable after one season.

We held a second Open House at the Resource Centre in collaboration with Jane's Walks. Several members hosted about 100 visitors with drinks, cookies, and tours of the garden. This was approximately double from the previous year.

This year we had two applications for sponsorship to the Youth Summit of Ontario Nature. Both candidates were judged worthy to attend and have done so. Lucy Patterson and Kathy Conlan were again judges at the annual Ottawa Regional Science Fair. They presented three OFNC awards (\$100 each) and 1-year club memberships to the winning students.

We hosted numerous group tours of the FWG this year including 3 tours by home schoolers, 7 tours by Scouts/Beavers/Brownies, and 2 school groups. We also developed seasonal Visual/Audio Scavenger Hunts for use with these groups and one for a tour of Mer Bleue for new immigrants. A flyer was also made for Petrie Island but was never used due to closing of its causeway until 2019. There were also several presentations at a seniors' home, to the DND, and to the CPAWS.

Bug Day was again a success this year with 100s of attendees visiting our microscope tables to view insect specimens provide by Fenja Brodo. A callout for volunteers yielded 16 enthusiastic OFNC members who assisted with identifying insects and observing specimens under the microscopes.

Finally, we had one new member confirmed by the Board, Alexandra Brett, with three more possible in the near future. Thanks are extended for the contributions of Mark Brenchley who has stepped down from the committee.

Gordon Robertson, Chair
Education and Publicity Committee

Events Committee

In 2018, the Events Committee (consisting of Julia Cipriani, Owen Clarkin, Hume Douglas, Bev McBride, Elizabeth Robson-Gordon, and Jakob Mueller) planned or organized field trips, workshops, and presentations for monthly meetings, as well as a Bioblitz-style species inventory. The committee is grateful for the help it received from leaders, volunteers, and experts too numerous to list.

Nine of the club's ten monthly meetings included presentations (the exception was the ABM). Topics ranged from faraway locations (Uganda, Iceland, and Mars), to conservation challenges (freshwater ecosystems, cod stocks, turtles, and Red Spruce), ecology (the importance and role of night), and profiles of taxonomic groups (lichen). The December meeting had 135 people in attendance, the highest for a monthly meeting since the venue moved to the Neatby building several years ago. Of the 48 trips or workshops, primary focuses included birds or birding (19), botany (11), herpetology (3), insects (2), and mushrooms (1), with the remaining 12 trips devoted to general natural history and miscellaneous topics. The annual Members' Photography Night continued, but was postponed to April and held in a new venue due to some logistical challenges in January. In addition, the committee lent their expertise to the coordination of a species inventory for the Nature Conservancy of Canada's property that forms

part of the Kenauk Nature reserve north of Montebello, Quebec. Over two days in July, OFNC members and associated scientists recorded 454 species at the property and revealed opportunities for further study.

The Events Committee continues to face the perennial yet pressing challenge of recruiting and developing new leaders for field trips. If you have ideas for events or are willing to share your interests or expertise, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Jakob Mueller
Chair, Events Committee

Finance Committee

This report covers financial matters during fiscal year 2018, which extended from October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018. Many of these matters go directly to the Board of Directors for resolution. However, they are mentioned here to give OFNC members a sense of the financial issues that occur.

The budget for FY2019 was prepared by the Finance Committee, based on input from the Board of Directors and analysis by the Finance Committee. It was presented to the Board in September 2018, and approved at the October 2018 Board meeting. The budget forecasts revenues of \$146,000, expenses of \$195,775, for a deficit of \$49,775.

During the 2018 fiscal year, the Board dealt with several financial issues that were not foreseen when the budget for FY2018 was prepared. These were:

- a request by the Innis Point Bird Observatory for \$4,500, to pay a Head Bander. This was approved;
- a request by a local bird sanctuary to support its new educational programs. This was declined;
- a request by a group sponsoring a clean-up at Mud Lake, for \$400 for a barbecue lunch for volunteers. This was declined.

A financial issue which comes up from time to time is whether a particular type of volunteer work should be recognized by granting an honorarium. During FY2018, this arose at the Board in the context of Facebook administrators. The Board decided not to grant honoraria for this activity.

The Treasurer continued her work to improve our systems for bookkeeping, donations and payments.

Ken Young
Chair, Finance Committee

Fletcher Wildlife Garden

Volunteers

The Fletcher Wildlife Garden had a productive season in spite of periods of low rainfall and high temperatures. Volunteers working through the summer were joined by several corporate work groups, and students from Carleton University and Ottawa U to carry out work throughout the property. Habitat preservation and rehabilitation took up the majority of our time, with good progress made on combating a growing list of invasive and noxious plants. AAFC was particularly helpful in this respect. In 2018, our volunteers put in over five thousand hours of time maintaining and improving the property.

Our annual native plant sale was a great success. The sale is a source of revenue, but most important, it promotes the use of native plants in local gardens. In 2018, we also donated native plants to at least 10 school, community, church, and other demonstration pollinator gardens.

Wildlife

This summer saw an unexpected rise in the number of Monarchs and other butterflies at the FWG. Several volunteers collected and reared eggs and caterpillars and released over 150 mature Monarchs. The release events were witnessed by many volunteers and visitors to the FWG, creating opportunities to chat about conservation issues. In conjunction with Wild Pollinator Partners, we also held two workshops in April to make our highly successful Mason Bee boxes and another in fall to look at the pupae in the boxes (128) before storing them for winter. Jessica Forrest of Ottawa U gave a workshop on bees and was on hand at the latter workshop to identify wasp and bee pupae. Three Snapping Turtle nests were identified at the FWG this year, and we had help from the Canadian Wildlife Federation in rescuing eggs from a washed-out nest from the Arboretum.

Pond work

The south bank of the pond is now covered with a variety of native plants, much used by Giant and Black Swallowtail butterflies and Goldfinches. Two benches were installed along the trail to allow visitors observation points. Erosion damage to the path around the pond was repaired early in the season as a safety measure. In October, a contractor was hired to install a drainage trench to prevent future problems. We continued to remove flowering rush from the pond.

Backyard Garden

The BYG continues to be a popular area, and the hard work of our Friday morning volunteer group is much appreciated by visitors. Many photographers and artists visited the BYG to take advantage of the colourful variety of flowers and birds. Last fall, several trees were removed to maintain favourable sun/shade conditions of the garden.

The Gully

The area between the west end of the pond and Prince of Wales Drive was a focus of much work this summer. Thanks to students from the Algonquin horticulture program and the initiative and hard work of FWG volunteers, masses of Dog-strangling Vine and Comfrey were

replaced with native plants, such as Swamp Milkweed and Joe-Pye Weed. The transformation of this part of the FWG was inspiring to all involved and rewarding to those of us who saw the many Monarchs and other insects there this summer.

The Ravine

Intensive removal of invasive species on the north side of the ravine in 2017 was followed by planting of Bush Honeysuckle this summer. The addition of a bench overlooking the ravine has created a popular vantage point for photographers and birders.

Tours / Visitors

During this summer, the FWG provided tours to a number of youth groups. A series of questionnaires about plants, animals, birds, and insects that can be found at the FWG were used for the first time this summer by young visitors to look for as they walk along the trails. Storyboards have been placed around the property with seasonally appropriate photos to emphasize the diversity of flora and fauna at the FWG. Visitors the Resource Centre now enjoy new stand up displays that include actual wildlife specimens.

Ted Farnworth
Fletcher Wildlife Garden Committee

Macoun Club

Macoun Field Club activities take place almost every Saturday from September through June, except for public holidays. During 2017-18, Committee members organized and supervised 17 indoor meetings, at which the children and young people (ages 8 to 17) gathered for presentations on mainly zoological and ecological topics. Committee members also planned and led 18 field trips, mostly to either the Club's long-term nature-study area in Ottawa's western greenbelt, or to Gerry Lee's wild lands in the Pakenham Hills of Lanark County (from 1967-2002 known to Macoun Club members as Mary Stuart's property). Part of one field-trip involved a joint outing with the OFNC, at Brewer Park Pond, and one special astronomy trip was held at night. Additionally, there was one overnight camping trip to Gerry Lee's land.

Committee and Macoun Club members hosted the annual nature quiz at the OFNC Awards Night.

The Macoun Club quietly celebrated its 70th year. Committee members maintained an up-to-date, illustrated record of all events on the Club's website, now hosted by the OFNC, and produced the monthly newsletter and issue No. 72 of the Club's annual magazine, *The Little Bear*.

Robert E. Lee, Chair
Macoun Club Committee

Membership Committee

The distribution of Club membership for 2018 on September 30, 2018 is shown in the table below, with the corresponding numbers shown in brackets for September 30, 2017. "Other" represent, mostly affiliate organizations that receive complimentary copies of the Club's publications. There was a slight decrease in membership in 2017. Members within 50 km of Ottawa comprised 713 of the Canadian membership of 827. Families of children in the Macoun Club are given complimentary membership to encourage interest in the Club in the longer term.

	Canadian		U.S.A		Other		Total	
Individual	385	(399)	7	(6)	0	(0)	392	(405)
Family	314	(316)	0	(0)	1	(0)	315	(316)
Student	23	(24)	0	(0)	0	(0)	23	(24)
T and L	2	(2)	0	(0)	0	(0)	2	(2)
Honorary	24	(25)	0	(0)	0	(1)	24	(26)
Life	40	(41)	3	(3)	1	(1)	44	(44)
Other	24	(24)	0	(0)	1	(1)	25	(25)
Macoun Club	15	(19)					15	(19)
TOTAL	827	(848)	10	(9)	3	(3)	840	(860)

Henry Steger
Membership Committee, September 30, 2018

Publications Committee

The Publications Committee manages publication of the Club's scientific journal *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* (CFN), the Club's regional publication *Trail & Landscape*, and Special Publications. Committee members were Annie Bélair (Editor, *Trail & Landscape*), Dan Brunton, Carolyn Callaghan, Paul Catling, Barry Cottam (Book Review Editor, CFN), William Halliday (Online Journal Manager, CFN), Karen McLachlan Hamilton, Diane Kitching, Dwayne Lepitzki (Editor-in-Chief, CFN), Amanda Martin (Assistant Editor, CFN), Jeff Saarela (Chair), David Seburn,

Ken Young and Eleanor Zurbrigg. Frank Pope resigned from the committee in December 2017, after many years of committee participation.

Trail & Landscape

Four issues of *Trail & Landscape* were published: 51(4) (October–December 2017), 52(1) (January–March 2018), 52(2) (April–June 2018) and 52(3) (July–September 2018). Feedback from Club members on the new, all-colour format of *Trail & Landscape* (launched with vol. 51(3)) continued to be extremely positive and encouraging.

The Canadian Field-Naturalist

Three issues of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* were published: 131(2), 131(3) and 131(4). In 131(3) a new type of content was introduced in the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*. “Great Canadian Field-Naturalists” recognizes individuals who made significant contributions to our knowledge of the natural history of Canada. Criteria for recognition were established, and Great Canadian Field-Naturalist tributes were published for James Fletcher and John Macoun. Also this year, the James Fletcher Award was established. The award recognizes the best paper published in CFN in a particular volume. The first award, for CFN Volume 130 (2016), was announced in 131(3). Francis Cook, who served as Editor of CFN for more than 30 years, was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2018.

Subscription fees for institutional subscribers were increased, based on a survey of fees for journals similar to CFN, and the fact that our production costs have increased without subscription increase for a long time. Revised author guidelines for preparing manuscripts for CFN were finalized and published.

The committee completed the consolidation process of back issues of the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*. A small team convened in spring 2018 and moved the back issues, which were stored in the Red Barn on the Farm during the autumn and winter of 2017-2018, to the Fletcher Interpretive Centre, and then sorted and organized the material. Given limited demand for hard copy back issues of the journal, only a small subset of the available back issues was retained; the material is now being stored by Annie Belair. The surplus material was recycled.

Ottawa Field-Naturalists’ Club Research Grants

2018 was the fourth year of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists’ Club Research Grants program. Research grants support field-based research activities that reflect and promote the Club’s objectives within eastern Ontario and/or western Quebec, focused particularly upon the Club’s study area. A total of \$15,000 is available each year to fund research proposals. The application deadline was 15 January 2018. A subcommittee convened and chaired by Dr. Tony Gaston reviewed all proposals and submitted funding recommendations to the Board of Directors. A list of recipients of 2018 Research Grants was published in *Trail & Landscape* 52(3).

Jeffery M. Saarela, Chair
Publications Committee

Safe Wings Committee

2017-2018 was Safe Wings Ottawa's first year as a standing committee of the OFNC, after several years as a program of the Birds Committee. This committee works to address the problem of bird-window collisions through research, education and rescue.

Between Oct. 1, 2017 and Sep. 30, 2018, Safe Wings volunteers:

- regularly monitored 75+ buildings during spring and fall migration
- documented $\pm 2,300$ window collisions
- rescued 493 live birds following window collisions
- answered approximately 2,500 phone calls
- admitted 610 birds with various types of injuries to our own facility
- provided rescue assistance and transported hundreds of injured birds to Safe Wings and to the Wild Bird Care Centre

In addition, we produced a brochure on window collisions, and completed a draft Ottawa Bird Strategy. Our outreach efforts led to the adoption of bird-friendly design guidelines by Public Services and Procurement Canada, the National Capital Commission and the City of Ottawa (currently in development), as well as Carleton University and the University of Ottawa. Environment and Climate Change Canada also began working on several initiatives to address collisions.

In 2017-2018, Safe Wings volunteers' workload expanded significantly due to several factors: public awareness of bird-building collisions continued to increase; the City of Ottawa began referring calls about all injured birds to Safe Wings; the Ottawa Valley Wild Bird Care Centre further reduced its own phone hours and increased its reliance on Safe Wings to provide preliminary care to injured birds; and several high-profile, non-collision bird rescues drew media attention, namely the Great Horned Owl family on Petrie Island, a Wild Turkey in downtown Ottawa, the Bluesfest Killdeer (although we did not directly intervene), and a Northern Flicker found hung by its neck.

Safe Wings also generated media coverage for its building monitoring program, its annual bird display at City Hall, the National Art Centre's not-bird-friendly renovation, the National Gallery of Canada's failure to address collisions, PSPC's efforts to retrofit the C.D. Howe building, and Snowy Owls being hit by cars.

Anouk Hoedeman
Chair, Safe Wings Ottawa Committee