



The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

2012 Honorary Member - J. Bruce Falls

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The ideal Honorary Membership reflects the three elements of the OFNC's mandate, the investigation of natural history, documentation of original research, and the appreciation and protection of important Canadian natural landscapes. The achievements of Dr. Bruce Falls fully embody all of these important characteristics.

Bruce Falls is a lifelong southern Ontario naturalist and eminent zoologist who has conducted and directed ground-breaking research into a variety of fields (notably breeding bird biology) during a lengthy tenure at the University of Toronto. This achievement is reflected in the establishment of the J. Bruce

Falls Scholarship in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. The [web page information on that scholarship](#) summarizes his academic achievements:

besides undergraduate teaching he supervised the research of 36 graduate students and five post-doctoral fellows. He was an author of over 100 scientific publications. Much of his research took place at the Wildlife Research Station in Algonquin Park, and some at the Delta Field Station of the University of Manitoba. Helped by his wife Ann, also a biology graduate of U of T, he conducted a 36-year study of small mammal populations in the Park. Fluctuations in abundance were strongly influenced by weather and tree seed crops and in turn affected the numbers of predators.

Dr Falls' main interest was in bird research. He was a pioneer in the study of bird song and its relation to territorial behaviour, basing his findings on field experiments.... Dr. Falls is a member or fellow of several scientific societies and a past-president of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists".

Always a keen naturalist and especially active as a birder in the Toronto area, Bruce Falls became involved in conservation organizations at an early age. He was heavily involved in the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (now Ontario Nature), initiating the FON's nature reserve program as a Director and serving as President in 1962-1963.

He applied the experience gained in development of the FON's reserve system to the national scene, being instrumental in the establishment of the Nature Conservancy of Canada, which had secured the protection of over 1 million ha of natural lands in Canada to

the end of 2012, a year which also marked its 50th anniversary. (See [J. Bruce Falls](#), Nature Conservancy Canada.)

A summary of his extraordinary breadth of conservation activities is included in the [biographical material in his file](#) at the University of Toronto Archives:

membership in the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (director, 1946-1974; president 1962-1964; and chairman of Nature Reserves Committee, 1965); scientific advisor to the Ontario Waterfowl Research Foundation, 1960-1968; trustee (from 1962) and chairman (1971-1974) of the Nature Conservancy of Canada; member of the Conservation Council of Ontario (from 1962), Canadian committee of the International Biological Programme (conservation sub-committee member and co-chair of the Ontario panel, 1968-1974), member from 1969 at various dates of the advisory committees of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources on nature reserves, Minesing Swamp and the Backus Tract; honorary director from 1970 and director in 1989 of the Long Point Observatory, director from 1975 of the Owl Rehabilitation Research Foundation, member from 1981 of the Canadian Council on Ecological Areas, member of the management committee (1981-1987) and chair (1983-1987) of the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario, and member of the Ontario Rare Breeding Program (chair of management committee, 1989).

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The Club is proud to offer Honorary Membership to Bruce Falls to recognize his immense contribution to the investigation, documentation and protection of natural features and landscapes in Ontario and throughout Canada.

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