## THE OTTAWA FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

## **December 16, 2013**

Fletcher Wildlife Garden Interpretation Centre, CEF, Ottawa, 7:00 p.m.

Chair: Fenja Brodo

**Council Members Present:** Annie Bélair, Dan Brunton, Barbara Chouinard, Owen Clarkin, Barry Cottam, Ian Davidson, Diane Kitching, Diane Lepage, Ann MacKenzie, Karen McLachlan Hamilton, Lynn Ovenden, Rémy Poulin, Jeff Skevington, Henry Steger, Eleanor Zurbrigg

Council Members Absent: Carolyn Callaghan, Don Hackett, David Hobden, Ken Young

#### 1. Minutes of the November 18, 2013 Meeting

**Moved by** A. Bélair/B. Chouinard that the November 18<sup>th</sup> minutes be accepted as distributed. **Carried** 

#### 2. Business Arising from the Minutes

Dan asked the Publications Committee about including the annual reports in *Trail* & *Landscape*. The Committee agreed with the proposal that a one to two page summary of the official full-length version be prepared after the ABM, in time for the spring issue.

#### 3. Creation of FWG Fund – A. MacKenzie

Throughout discussions about the 2013-2014 budget, the FWG Committee expressed strong concerns that it made the FWG look self-funding only. Ann, Ken and Fenja therefore prepared a proposal to manage the FWG finances in a way that protects the income that the FWG raises on its own and also provides tangible club support.

**MOTION:** That a Fletcher Wildlife Garden Fund be established. Money currently in the FWG bank account would be transferred to this dedicated fund. In the future, any moneys from FWG fundraising efforts, earmarked donations, grants or other specific FWG income would be credited to this fund. Expenses related to habitat management, backyard garden and fundraising efforts would be charged to this fund. The OFNC general accounts would pay the general administration and operations of the FWG such as the Interpretation Centre, library, and publications.

Moved by A. MacKenzie/D. Brunton CARRIED

MOTION: That the FWG Committee plan annually for expenditures coming out of the FWG Fund, and report to Council.

Moved by B. Cottam/D. Brunton

CARRIED

### 4. Recognition Award from Nature Canada – lan Davidson

Ian presented Nature Canada's "Affiliate Award" to the Fenja to formally recognize the OFNC's contribution to the phenomenal success of the BirdLife International World Congress held in Ottawa in June 2013.

lan added that a party is being planned for September 29, 2014 to launch Nature Canada's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations; this will be another occasion to thank the OFNC.

# 5. Review of OFNC Constitution and Bylaws for New Regulations – Ann MacKenzie

Ann explained that a law firm has been engaged to assist with the review of the OFNC constitution and bylaws in order to be compliant with upcoming amendments to Ontario's *Not-for-Profit Corporations Act*. She also gave a brief overview of the changes we should expect to see in our constitution and bylaws; she will present this at the Annual Business Meeting on January 14, 2014.



Fenja accepts recognition award from Nature Canada on behalf of the OFNC. December 16, 2013

She added that the lawyers should provide us with a set of draft clauses for our review by the end of February.

### 6. Approval of the Treasurer's 2012-2013 Annual Report

Ken sent the Treasurer's Annual Report for 2012-2013 to Council by email prior to the meeting.

**MOTION:** That the Treasurer's Annual Report be accepted as distributed Moved by H. Steger/A. Bélair.

#### **CARRIED**

## 7. Awards – Eleanor Zurbrigg

Eleanor reminded everyone that nominations for the 2013 OFNC awards can be sent until the end of December.

#### 8. Birds Committee – Rémy Poulin

See Annex 1 for the monthly report.

Regarding the proposal for an OspreyCam at the Innis Point Bird Observatory: Rémy asked Council if all agreed with this proposal in principle, if the OFNC should participate. All said yes. It was suggested that the Laurie Consaul bequest could cover these expenses. Rémy will present a formal plan to Council when ready.

#### 9. Conservation Committee – Owen Clarkin

Because the Conservation Committee has been evaluating the benefits of BioBlitzes, Owen asked Council for their feedback. Jeff recommended an "all-year" inventory, led by professional or amateur experts and done over many years in order to build a meaningful database. He added that the public could be invited to a special event once a year to see what is being done. Owen is interested in having the Conservation Committee organize a local BioBlitz at the end of May, in conjunction with the ON Nature initiative to involve other clubs in eastern Ontario.

#### **10. Education and Publicity** – Lynn Ovenden

See Annex 2 for the monthly report.

Council supports the branding exercise the committee has proposed.

Council pointed out that all OFNC brand items should be available in an English-only version, a French-only version and a bilingual version.

#### **11. Excursions and Lectures** – Jeff Skevington

Jeff said that the committee has decided to change its approach regarding the announcements of some events in T&L. He explained that in some cases, some events are more successful if a date is picked at the last minute because of the weather or the abundance of a focus species. In these cases, the events will not be announced in T&L; the short notice will rather be sent by email and posted on the website, the OFNC Facebook page and on Twitter once the best date and location is picked. An announcement with a 'to-be-determined' date could, in some cases, be published in T&L.

### **12. Fletcher Wildlife Garden** – Barry Cottam

Barry announced that the Council meeting in February 2014 will be dedicated to the FWG. FWG volunteers have been invited to attend and the document *The Future Direction of the FWG* will be discussed. This is a document that Ann wrote based on discussions with a small subcommittee. It's been presented to the FWG management committee for comments, due by January 6<sup>th</sup>. Ann will revised this draft paper based on the comments then circulate it more widely prior to the February meeting.

## **13. Macoun Field Club** – Diane Kitching

See Annex 3 for the monthly report.

#### 14. Publications Committee – Dan Brunton

See Annex 4 for the monthly report.

### 15. Changes to Council in 2014

Ann presented the nominations for the 2014 OFNC Council as prepared by the Nominating Committee. This will be formally presented and accepted by vote at the ABM on January 14, 2014.

The upcoming amendments to Ontario's *Not-for-Profit Corporations Act* require us to make some changes. Those on Council will no longer be referred to as "Council members" because that implies another membership category. The suggestion is to use "directors", "board of directors" and "directors' meeting".

The Nominating Committee announced that Julie Cipriani will join as chair of the Excursions and Lectures Committee (which will be called the Events Committee starting in 2014.) Barry will now be the FWG rep on the board of directors; David Hobden, Diane Lepage and Jeff Skevington will be stepping down.

Fenja seized the opportunity to thank David, Diane and Jeff for their work on Council and promised them each two OFNC lens wipes as a token of appreciation.

#### 16. Forward Agenda

Council to discuss the new position of volunteer coordinator for the OFNC.

## 17. Motion to adjourn:

**Moved by** L. Ovenden/D. Lepage that the meeting be adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

## **CARRIED**

The meeting was followed by a holiday potluck.

Recording Secretary: A. Bélair

Meetings in 2014:

January 14: Annual Business Meeting

January 20: Board of Directors (formerly known as Council!)

## Birds Committee (BC) Report to OFNC Council – December 2013 By Rémy Poulin

- 1. *Trail and Landscape*: Bob Cermak of the BC submitted "in memoriam" articles on Gordon Pringle and Bob Bracken. Gillian Mastromatteo of the BC has volunteered to draft a seasonal summary of bird sightings for submission to T&L.
- 2. 2014 Ontario Field Ornithologists (OFO) Conference: Bob Cermak provided the OFO with information on possible venues, meals and estimated costs in support of their convention scheduled for 26 to 28 September in the Ottawa area.
- 3. Bird Study Group: A session was held on Monday, December 9th, with about 15 participants in attendance, in preparation for the upcoming local count scheduled for Sunday, December 15th. BC members Bev McBride and Bernie Ladouceur gave a presentation entitled "Everything you wanted to know about the Christmas Bird Count but were afraid to ask".
- 4. Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP): As previously reported to Council, Anouk Hoedeman of the BC has taken the initiative to examine the potential for setting up something similar to FLAP here in Ottawa. She provided the following update:

Thirteen people attended a meeting on Dec. 3 at Fletcher Wildlife Garden to explore the possibility of launching an Ottawa version of the Fatal Light Awareness Program to prevent bird fatalities. The meeting was an opportunity to share ideas and discuss how we should proceed, with the aim of officially launching this initiative in time for spring migration. We discussed our goals, organizational and material requirements, potential partners, protocols, and strategy, among other things. Two representatives from Nature Canada were among the attendees. We are currently setting up some planning documents and laying the groundwork to start assessing problematic buildings, and we plan to meet again in mid-January.

5. OspreyCam: Council was previously advised of the Innis Point Bird Observatory (IPBO) plan to install a webcam on their Osprey platform. After meeting with an IPBO representative on November 17th, a report was prepared (see below) and subsequently tabled at the BC meeting on November 25th (copy attached). After discussing the report:

The Birds Committee proposes to Council that the OFNC participate in the OspreyCam initiative and that the arrangement between the OFNC, IPBO, and Nature Canada be formalized in writing.

#### OSPREYCAM - REPORT TO OFNC BIRDS COMMITTEE

21 November 2013 (subsequently modified based on feedback received at the 25 Nov., 2013 Birds Committee meeting and from Nature Canada on 11 Dec. 2013)

Prepared by: Rémy Poulin

- 1. As I indicated at our September meeting, the OFNC was approached by the Innis Point Bird Observatory (IPBO) to explore the potential for collaboration on the installation and operation of a webcam with a view of an osprey nest platform that they constructed near their site in the Shirley's Bay area. I subsequently arranged to meet with the IPBO rep, Bill Petrie, on Sunday, 17 Nov 13 at their location to discuss the project further.
- 2. Background. The osprey nest in question is located approximately 1.2 km west (as the osprey flies) from the IPBO banding station. The arrangement consists of 30-metre tall steel tower that is bolted and embedded in a base composed of about 500 lbs of poured concrete. The platform itself is arranged such that it can be easily winched up and down the tower thereby simplifying access to the nest for bird banding etc. The tower was constructed in 2009 and the ospreys started showing signs of nest building in 2012. The first full nest was built in the spring of 2013 and one chick was fledged (see photo).
- 3. Long Term Vision. The intent of this project is to install a high definition, all-weather camera to the tower with a view looking down and to the side of the nest. The set-up would be remotely controllable, via online commands, to change the camera's viewpoint and zoom. Such an arrangement would lend itself to year round use. While the "focus" would be on the osprey nest during the breeding season, the camera could also be used to view other birds including a number of wood duck nest boxes in the surrounding marsh as well as great egrets that have been observed feeding in the area. Views of other wildlife, especially in the winter, are also possible. The footage would be recorded and also streamed "live" online with a pool of knowledgeable volunteers responsible for controlling the camera, answering questions received by the public via e-mail and participating in online discussion forums.
- 4. Proposed Approach. The nest's somewhat remote and austere location will present some technical challenges particularly with respect to electrical power and wireless connectivity. Consequently, Bill Petrie proposes a gradual approach. First, procure the camera and other key pieces of the installation and then conduct tests and experiments to determine the optimum configuration and way forward. Bill's training as an electrical engineer will be particularly helpful in this effort. Given that ospreys can be expected to return in the mid-to-late April time frame, it is doubtful that the full capability can be up and running in time for the 2014 breeding season. However, a basic set-up is a possibility using car batteries for power and motion-activated recording without real time streaming. The resultant footage could then be retrieved, edited and uploaded to the web. We could then aim to implement the complete "long term vision" in time for the 2015 season. I have been advised that the total estimated cost for the 2014 season is \$5K. The cost for subsequent years should be less as the major items would have already been procured.
- 5. OFNC Roles. Clearly, the IPBO is best positioned to take the lead role in developing, testing, installing and maintaining the OspreyCam system. I see the OFNC's contributing to this initiative in three areas:
  - a. Financial The IPBO is a small organization with a small annual budget; consequently, the most important contribution that the OFNC could make would be in

the way of funding. As the nest would be located within the Lac Deschênes Important Bird Area, I took the liberty of discussing this project with Nature Canada and received positive feedback. I am therefore reasonably optimistic that they would be willing to jointly fund the effort with the OFNC, though this arrangement needs to be confirmed. {On 11 Dec 13, Nature Canada advised that they could contribute \$500 to this effort.}

- b. Web hosting The whole idea here is to broadcast the footage live on the internet. The IPBO's web presence is limited compared to the OFNC; therefore, we should consider hosting the webcam on our club website. This would be a great way to increase the traffic on our website and potentially attract new members. The technical elements of hosting a live webcam should be taken into consideration as part of the recent decision to revamp and modernize our website.
- c. Educational I would expect that a number of our knowledgeable members would be very interested in being part of the volunteer pool responsible to control the camera and respond to online questions and discussions.
- 6. Conclusions. The stated objectives of the OFNC include promoting the appreciation of Canada's natural heritage and cooperating with, and supporting, organizations with similar aims. Participating in this project falls right in line with these goals and is an opportunity to showcase nature right in the OFNC's backyard. It can also support our efforts to enhance the public's knowledge of our club and its activities, which in turn, could positively impact our membership numbers.
- 7. Recommendations. It is recommended that the Birds Committee propose to Council that the OFNC participate in this initiative. It is further recommended that the arrangement between the OFNC, IPBO and Nature Canada be formalized in writing.

# Education & Publicity Committee Report to OFNC Council – December 2013 By Lynn Ovenden

The committee met on Nov.20. We welcomed three new members: Jonathan Vanamburg, Natalie Sopinka, and Sandy Garland. We discussed the following projects and new initiatives.

#### 1. OFNC Website

We are sharing ideas on desirable features of websites for natural history organizations, the current OFNC website, and how we might guide development of a better website. We are considering some general advice on how an organization can assess what sort of website design will best meet its needs. We will need representatives from OFNC committees to help with this.

### 2. Publicity

Jonathan wants to generate publicity of various types, e.g. announcements of upcoming events in T&L, Our Town, web-based event calendars and blogs (apt613.ca). He will also encourage leaders of club events to report highlights of club events. We'll need to work at this because few club members think to prepare and publicize the stories, observations, and accomplishments of the club.

Natalie offered to create a WordPress-based OFNC blog for reports of monthly meetings and events, as well as local nature-related information. The blog "Field Notes" http://ofnc.wordpress.com went live on Nov.22. Sandy soon linked it to www.ofnc.ca. So far, 7 articles have been posted (welcome, Nov and Dec monthly meetings, FLAP, Bill Halliday (snake research), noise pollution, Bug Day). Henry distributed an email to club members, inviting them to contribute to the blog. The message will be repeated in the January T&L. Sandy, Natalie, Jonathan and Lynn are monitoring draft posts.

#### 3. Using social media for education and publicity

Sandy submitted an article on OFNC Facebook to the January T&L. OFNC Facebook has a big following - more people than Henry's email distribution list. Natalie is monitoring an updated Twitter account, adapted from an existing Excursions & Lectures twitter account. The Twitter account is linked it to the Field Notes blog.

## 4. Guidance on use of logo/brand

Our goal is to gently improve OFNC's logo (upright owl + text) and encourage its use across the entire club spectrum. We would like to find a graphic person in the club who can help clean up the various presentations of the logo we now have, or, if that's not possible, to talk to the graphic artist who created a strong visual identity for Bird protection Qc. Once we have a comprehensive graphic package, the E&P Committee could create a set of guidelines for the club to follow.

We would like to confirm that council supports this initiative in principle. Financial support may be required for the graphic package, maybe \$500-1000, just a guess at this point.

Another issue for early decision by council is how the club should appear 'linguistically'... mostly English, always English with French attached sometimes, always bilingually, sometimes French only... because this can affect the type of logos we create and use.

#### 5. Larose Forest booklet

We looked at 3 copies of the booklet (full draft text in booklet layout). At this stage, three reviewers are providing comments. It would be good to coincide the booklet's launch with an event or excursions to Larose Forest; it can be ready this spring.

## Macoun Field Club Report to OFNC Council – December 2013 By Diane Kitching

We have had three indoor meetings, four field trips, and one combination meeting since our last report to Council.

On November 2, a parent provided us with sterilized barn owl pellets, toothpicks and brushes, and helpful keys, and guided us through dissection of the pellets and identification of the contents. On November 16, members showed and talked about some of their favourite nature photos. November 30th found us looking at and learning about the extraordinary world of mites, thanks to Wayne Knee from Agriculture Canada. This talk was a real eye-opener for most of us, and everyone left with a new appreciation for the unseen world around us.

On October 26, we had a field trip to the Pakenham hills, our favourite destination. We walked fairly quickly and so made it to the High Pond, where we built two lunch fires for warmth and cooking. On Nov. 9th, we went to the Study Area, and on November 23rd, which was a very snowy day, we went to the Study Area via the Lime Kiln Trail. In the burnt area off the Lime Kiln trail, we remarked on the profusion of mullein, thistle, and horse weed, and the mullein and thistle being still bright green. Our final trip was to private property on Darling Road beyond Almonte. Snow on the ground usually provides good opportunities to see animal tracks, and this time we saw something we rarely see – bear tracks! Our last activity of the year was a Christmas Bird Count. We started off in the FWG building as usual, where we had a slide show of common birds we were likely to see that day. We then walked around outside, but it was so bitterly cold that no one lingered long at any one spot. When we returned to the FWG building, we had lunch and compiled our results: at least one Cardinal, a flock of Robins, three White-Breasted Nuthatches, 10 Chickadees, and different numbers of seven other species. We'll get the final tally in January.

## Publications Committee Report to Council – December 2013 By Dan Brunton

The 3rd committee meeting of the year was held in late November. The absence of both T&L and CFN editors reduced the scope of somewhat but the usual wide variety of issues was addressed, nonetheless.

CFN 127(3) was recently published and CFN 127(4) is close to that. It may well be out before the end of the month though we may wait a week or 10 days into January 2014 to avoid the Christmas traffic. Either way, this will mean that the journal is indeed back on schedule - break out the Champagne!

Assistant Editor Trina Rytwinski has be doing an excellent job while CFN Editor-in-Chief Callaghan continues her studies of large African predators (hopefully from the outside!) through this winter. While 127(3) was essentially finished before Carolyn left, 27(4) was prepared by the publication team under Trina's watch.

The recent issue contains an especially rich diversity of subjects, including the fascinating discovery of an apparently unique form of Silvery Blue Butterfly presently only known from an Ottawa Valley alvar. As mentioned in an earlier circular, that was recently written up in the Ottawa Citizen. Watch for a similar article between Xmas and New Year's regarding an article in upcoming 127(4) - the remarkable discovery of a disjunct population of the Great Plains Ladies-tresses Orchid near Almonte. The Ottawa Citizen continues to provide good publicity for key OFNC publications initiatives.

Two additional CFN Associate Editors were appointed, upon the Editor-in-Chief's recommendation, at the November meeting. Both, Martyn Obbard and Garth Mowat are mammalogists.

The transition to a faster, less expensive CFN indexing system has been completed. We have ended a long-time practice of index preparation through a commercial service in favour of a largely voluntary and software-driven approach that delivers comparable quality for substantially less cost. The index is now prepared for \$500/ volume as opposed to the \$1500 - 2500/ volume it has cost in recent years.

The process of scanning all back issues of Trail & Landscape so that it can be posted on the Biodiversity Heritage Library webpage electronically (as with CFN back issues), is underway. We are proposing they post all issues to date but that future electronic postings being held back for application to the OFNC web page, as per recent discussions of an overhaul of that site.

The Committee reviewed the Council discussion regarding publication of the Annual Report in Trail & Landscape and agreed with the proposal that a one to two page summary of the official full-length version be prepared after the ABM, in time for the spring issue.