

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club 2011-2012 Annual Reports

Awards Committee

Eleanor Zurbrigg, Chair

The Awards Committee met in February 2012 to select deserving recipients for the Club's awards for the year 2011. Committee members evaluated nominations received against the criteria for each of the awards (see <http://www.ofnc.ca/awards.php>) and then selected the nominees who best fit the criteria; in all, five nominations were presented to and approval by Council. Awards Committee members prepared the citations for each award recipient which outlined the many ways in which the person had distinguished herself or himself by accomplishments in the field of natural history and conservation, or by extraordinary activity within the Club. The awards were presented at the Club's annual Soiree in April.

Birds Committee

Chris Traynor, Chair

The Birds Committee organized the Fall Bird Count and along with the Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais participated in the 2011 Christmas Bird Count. The annual Peregrine Falcon Watch had an interesting year. Although the downtown nest was a failure for the 3rd year in a row, another nest was found on a government office building in Ottawa south. The Falcon Watch group was on site and two chicks fledged successfully. The building management is in discussion with the Falcon Watch and the Ministry of Natural Resources about erecting some type of nest box for next season. The Bird Record Subcommittee met during the year to review rare bird reports and is working on a new checklist for Ottawa. The committee also has a liaison with Bird Life International for their upcoming conference in 2013 and with Nature Canada for the Lac Deschênes Important Bird Area (IBA).

Conservation Committee

Ann MacKenzie

For most of 2011/12 there was no formal conservation committee because the previous chair, Ken Young, had moved to the position of Treasurer. In October 2012 Owen Clarkin agreed to chair the committee. However, during the year there was a Google Group of members interested in conservation issues and they considered various issues that arose. The activity of this group prompted the club to join other naturalist clubs in Ontario in urging the Ontario government to ban the hunting of snapping turtles. As usual there were a number of articles in Trail & Landscape throughout the year on conservation related topics. On October 3rd there was a discussion at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden on the Ottawa Forests and Greenspace Advisory Committee. In November, the newly re-constituted Conservation Committee sought the support of Council to oppose the extension of cottage leases in Algonquin Park. A letter was sent to the Minister along these lines.

Education & Publicity Committee

Fenja Brodo, Chair

We have eight members on this committee, Ann Prescott, Jeewa Mendis, Susan Barker, Suzanne Deschêne, Gillian Marston, Lynn Ovendon, Mark Brenchley and Fenja Brodo. Two are relatively new members (Lynn and Mark) and two (Gillian and Suzanne) are only here part of the year but give substantial assistance when they are in town.

This committee staffs our monthly table with saleable items, responds to requests for walks and talks by groups outside our Club and represents our Club at various natural history events in the Ottawa region having anything to do with natural history. Ann Prescott ably staffs our sales table. We have recently added Club lanyards (designed by Mark Brenchley) with hand lenses attached that have been selling well. Mark also designed and made a colourful Club banner that can be used for both indoor and outdoor display areas.

The Science Fair was ably staffed once again by Jeff Skevington and Carolyn Callaghan.

We had our Club display set up at the following venues: Jack Pine Trail, 21 May, on our own initiative to advertise our Club; Sept 29 as participants at the Larose Forest Day; 3 November, at Mud Lake, advertising the Lac Deschênes IBA.

We filled the following requests for leaders as detailed below:

- Jane's Walk at Browns Inlet with an emphasis on water and air quality, Sunday May 6th, with lichenologist Irwin Brodo and phycologist Paul Hamilton.
- Urban Walks: Flutterings: Night Moths and other Insects, Sat. evening June 2nd, with Diane Lepage and Fenja Brodo. (Cancelled due to bad weather).
- Day Camp, Dempsey Community Centre, Thursday July 12th. A program on insects with Miriam Tepper and Fenja Brodo
- AJA 50 + Nature walk, Gatineau Park Friday, August 10th, Irwin & Fenja Brodo (Cancelled due to bad weather).

This year there was no Wildlife Festival for us to participate in.

Excursions and Lectures Committee

Jeff Skevington, Chair

Over the course of 2012, the excursions and lectures committee coordinated 42 hikes, four workshops, eight monthly meetings and the annual business meeting. The hikes and workshops covered a wide breadth of topics, including: general natural history (14), birds (13), insects (6), plants (5), amphibians (3), geology (2), mammals (1), fish (1) and fungi (1). In addition to bringing back many tried and true events and leaders, several new events were tried. New events included a Cranberry Crawl, a canoe trip to Ottawa River Duck Islands, an insect photography workshop, a larval dragonfly and damselfly outing, and eBird and insect identification workshops. Fenja Brodo coordinated our popular Pelee and Rondeau trip that was once again well attended and produced some great birding highlights. Monthly meetings continued to be held in the Museum of Nature and included talks on birds (4), insects (1), plants (1) and ecology (2). Committee members included

Rob Alvo, Holly Bickerton, Fenja Brodo, Julia Cipriani, Hume Douglas and Jeff Skevington (chair). If you have any new ideas for events or would like to be a leader, please contact Jeff (jhskevington@gmail.com) or other members of the committee.

Finance Committee

Barbara Chouinard, Chair

As a result of the major financial changes in the previous fiscal period, the Finance Committee now sees the benefits to the club: in improved account reporting; timely financial reports such as quarterly statements; and specific reports on request, such the CFN information by issue. This is very helpful to the Council and committees.

The Finance Committee met several times during this fiscal year to discuss several issues that were brought forward. Topics discussed were: the Chart of Accounts where accounts were modified for better reporting; a possible CFN endowment fund campaign; and the financial reporting in respect of CFN. The reporting of CFN in the financial statements was on an ongoing issue over the period with discussions at the Finance Committee meetings and with council. The OFNC consulted with its auditor on the possible solution and the club will proceed with the auditor's advice. For the next fiscal period, the direct CFN revenues will be included with the other Club revenues. CFN expenses will be shown in total with the other committee's expenses with more detail provided in a note.

The club is continuing to run a deficit. However the long term goal in respect of finances for the club is a balanced budget and the financial information for this year indicates that the OFNC has improved marginally on its financial situation. While there is a net surplus for fiscal 2011/12 some of this relates to the subscription revenue for Vol.126 having been received while the expenses are not yet incurred since only Vol. 126(1) had been issued by fiscal year-end.

Fiscal Responsibility continues to be the objective for the Finance Committee's. With an improving financial situation, the club will be able to look toward other objectives beyond the club's normal operations. For example, the use of the club's legacy funds to undertake new projects as per the OFNC objectives to promote, conserve and appreciate Canada's natural heritage.

Fletcher Wildlife Garden

David Hobden, Member of the Fletcher Wildlife Garden Committee

The Fletcher Wildlife Garden has had a successful, although unusual year with much more of our effort devoted to areas other than the Backyard Garden. The Backyard Garden continued to be maintained and developed by our Friday morning volunteer group. It now has a second bench as well as a new picnic table. We were able to use the watering system during the summer so the drought had little effect there. We also purchased a new mower and a new shed to keep it and the garden tools in.

On Saturday, June 2, the annual native plant sale, featuring plants we grow ourselves and donations, raised over \$4500 despite poor weather on the day.

Control of invasive species has increased, thanks to efforts by our invasive species group as well as work by some members of the Friday morning volunteers and the Butterfly Meadow group. We

were able to completely remove some larger trees and replace them with native trees and shrubs. We have put a lot of work into Dog-strangling vine (DSV) control with limited success. We are hoping the FWG might become a test site for a new biocontrol agent — a moth from the Ukraine.

In 2010, the FWG submitted a proposal to the Evergreen Foundation to turn the site into a monarch butterfly waystation and to create a smaller model waystation in the Butterfly Meadow. The proposal won second place in a competition to fund environmental improvement projects that Evergreen ran for the Fido phone company. We received the prize late in 2011 and prepared plans over the winter.

Over 3000 plants, which we grew ourselves, purchased or had grown by Budd Gardens from seeds we supplied, were planted and maintained through the summer. We have purchased a bulletin board and leaflet box for public education. It will be erected next year. An OFNC monthly meeting on monarch butterfly biology was sponsored using our waystation funds.

To engage more volunteers, we organized Sunday morning work groups, primarily to remove DSV. This attracted several students looking to fulfill community service requirements. We were also helped by several corporate groups who planted trees and shrubs in the ravine and perennials in the Butterfly Meadow and helped with DSV removal. These groups often provide funds to support the project they work on, so we derived significant income from that source. Late in the season, an environment class from Carleton U helped clear invasives and replant a birch grove.

FWG is online with a web site connected with the OFNC site, providing information on wildlife gardening and the animals and plants at the FWG. We also produced eight newsletters this year and maintained photo galleries and a blog, thanks to many volunteers.

Macoun Field Club Committee

Robert E. Lee, Chair

The Committee planned the month-to-month program by telephone and e-mail, and maintained an up-to-date schedule on its website (macounfieldclub.ca). Committee members supervised or gave presentations at 19 indoor meetings and led 17 field trips during the school year. Indoor sessions were held in the Fletcher Wildlife Garden building. Most field trips took place either at the Club's nature-study area in Ottawa's Greenbelt or on private properties in Lanark County; two were held jointly with the OFNC. The Committee presented its current Field Trip Policy and outline of field-trip practices to OFNC Council for approval, and published them in Issue no. 66 of *The Little Bear*. A 350-page compilation of all *Little Bear* articles on the Macoun Club's nature-study area was prepared and bound in hard-cover, to bring all observations, inventories, and studies across the past 42 years together in one place.

Membership Committee

Henry Steger, Chair

The distribution of the membership for 2012 on September 30, 2012 is shown in the table below, with the corresponding numbers for 2011 shown in brackets. "Others" represent, for the greatest part, affiliate organizations that receive complimentary copies of the Club's publications. The decrease in total membership of 1 is a result of new memberships essentially balancing non-

renewing members. Local membership (within 50 km of Parliament Hill) increased to 633 from 621 in 2012 and 2011, respectively. in keeping with the continuing trend in decreasing membership outside the 50 km Ottawa area.

	Canadian		U.S.A		Other		Total	
Individual	351	(361)	13	(13)	0	(0)	364	(374)
Family	285	(282)	1	(1)	1	(1)	287	(284)
Student*	10		0		0		10	
T and L	3	(2)	0	(0)	0	(0)	2	(2)
Honorary	21	(24)	0	(0)	0	(0)	21	(24)
Life	47	(48)	3	(4)	1	(1)	51	(54)
Other	23	(23)	0	(0)	1	(1)	24	(24)
TOTAL	740	(740)	17	(18)	3	(3)	760	(761)

*Student membership was initiated in 2012 and is intended to encourage interest in natural history among high school and university students.

Publications Committee

Daniel F. Brunton, Chair

The Publications Committee, consisting of Carolyn Callaghan, Paul Catling, Jay Fitzsimmons, Sandra Garland, Tony Gaston, Karen McLachlan Hamilton, Elizabeth Morton, Frank Pope and Jeff Saarela (and Dan Brunton, Chair), met formally three times through the year to discuss a wide variety of issues and to provide advice and information to both the OFNC Council and to the editorial teams who actually do the majority of this work. One of these meetings was held at the west Quebec home of Canadian Field-Naturalist Editor-in-Chief Callaghan. Business was conducted only after we'd enjoyed a hearty meal and a productive ramble in woodlands and fields that turned up several rare natural history observations. We are all naturalists, after all. Other issues were dealt with periodically through individual conversations or by electronic communications.



Canadian Field-Naturalist Editor in Chief Carolyn Callaghan (pointing), Journal Business Manager Jay Fitzsimmons (with his son Reed) and other members and friends of the Publications Committee afield in west Quebec (October 2012)

If the biggest publication challenges for 2011 were to survive the transition of The Canadian Field-Naturalist to a predominantly digital format and getting closer to a regular release schedule, the

main challenges for 2012 were to sustain that momentum and to make plans for the long-term security of the journal. A great deal has been achieved towards satisfying those goals.

Five issues of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* were published in 2012 (125(2) through to 126(2)), with a sixth issue, 126(3) being virtually ready to go by the end of the year. This gratifying rate of production is a credit to Carolyn Callaghan and her production team and has largely eliminated the lag in the publication schedule that we have been battling aggressively. This more current status is also positively reflected by a 20% increase in submitted manuscripts in 2012, by papers with increasingly contemporary subject matter, and by the reduced time span between the receipt and approval of manuscripts. The more frequent use of colour images continues to enhance the appearance of journal contributions.

A clearer understanding of the impact of digital publication on circulation patterns is emerging. A substantial majority of individual and institutional subscribers, 70% of the 460 subscribers, paid the additional cost to receive hard copies of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* in 2012. Approximately 15% of the 700 OFNC members chose to do likewise, a large majority apparently satisfied to receive *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* in digital form only. While the financial benefits of digital publication are still difficult to quantify as we continue to bring the publication back up to a regular schedule, improvements are evident. The allocation required to balance the 2012 operational deficit, for example, amounted to 24% of 2011-12 membership income. That is considerable less than the 40% of membership fee income traditionally (1972-2007) allocated as *Canadian Field-Naturalist* income. And it is hugely less than the 78% of 2010-11 membership income allocated to balance *Canadian Field-Naturalist* costs that year. Even allowing for the greater number of issues published in 2010-11, it is clear that significant progress is being made in improving the financial balance of the journal.

Editor Karen McLachlan Hamilton and her team produced the usual four issues of *Trail & Landscape* in a timely and efficient manner this year. This constitutes another in their continuing series of remarkably problem free contributions to both our knowledge of the local landscape and to our enjoyment of it. An initiative to scan and post the back issues of *Trail & Landscape* on-line was begun in 2012.

The publications team enters 2013 with optimism gained from the successes of the past year. Both editorial teams are intact and stable. *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* will be completely back on schedule in the coming year. Financial benefits should be even clearer. Journal Manager Jay Fitzsimmons has done a masterful job ensuring that the complicated gears of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* production and distribution machinery are turning smoothly. We also expect to be announcing firm ideas for a *Canadian Field Naturalist* endowment fund and perhaps news of upcoming Special Issues.

We encourage members and subscribers to continue to support the OFNC's remarkable publications program into its 134th year. Individuals can do this through their readership of the publications and, very importantly, through the submission of original material. Our thanks to all those who contributed to the success of this past year.

Treasurer
Ken Young

I assumed the duty of Treasurer at the January, 2012 Annual Business meeting. My predecessor, Frank Pope, provided and continues to provide invaluable advice and support. I would also like to thank Yi Zhang, who also greatly eased my learning curve as Treasurer's Assistant until June 2012.

There were some new initiatives this year.

1. The desirability of obtaining Directors' and Officers' Insurance was investigated. Council decided to apply for this additional coverage for 2013. The cost is estimated at about \$660 plus tax.
2. The classification of revenues and expenses in our financial records has been reviewed in order to improve Council's ability to manage the financial affairs of the Club, and member's knowledge of Club finances. This is an ongoing task. For example,
 - a. Telephones used for the Bird Hotline and the Fletcher Wildlife Garden volunteers are now charged against the budgets of the Birds and FWG Committees;
 - b. Activities such as the Pelee trip whose revenues and expenses were previously reported on a net basis in the Operating Statement now show revenues and expenses separately.
3. Expense authorization procedures were adjusted to reflect the actual practices of the Club.

Most of the Treasurer's duties continue from one year to the next. They include:

- Filing the Charities Information Report with the Canada Revenue Agency;
- Preparing T4A returns for people receiving honoraria or contract fees from the Club;
- Obtaining Proof of Insurance certificates for Club events;
- Updating the Club's information with our bank, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, our investment advisor, BMO Burns Nesbitt, and our online payments processor, PayPal;
- Updating the Chart of Accounts; and
- Depositing cheques received and writing cheques to pay expenses.

Ultimately, the Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that the annual financial statements of the Club are available for the Annual Business Meeting. Fortunately, I did not have to do this by myself.

I would like to thank the President, Ann MacKenzie who ensured that our investments were correctly represented, and in general that the financial statements were coherent. Our reviewers, Mark Patry and Eric Liebmann of Welch LLP were very patient and thorough in their work. I sincerely thank Ann, Mark and Eric for easing the transition of a new Treasurer.