

Annual Reports of OFNC Committees and the Treasurer for 2017

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 2016, nominations were received and evaluated (see awards criteria at <http://www.ofnc.ca/awards.php>), resulting in nominees for five awards being recommended to the Board of Directors for approval. Biographies were written for each award winner for publication in the Club's journals and posting on the website. The awards were presented at the annual Awards Night in April 2017. The recipients' names, type of award (in brackets) and rationale for recognition follow below.

- Dr. John McNeill (Honorary Member) – In recognition of lifetime contributions to Canadian botany and botanical nomenclature.
- Gordon Robertson (Member of the Year) – For enthusiastic support of many activities of the Club.
- Sandra Garland (George McGee Service) – For long and dedicated service to the Club and Fletcher Wildlife Garden projects.
- Richard Waters (Conservation – Member) – For engaging students in designing and building nest boxes and installing them in appropriate habitat.
- The City of Ottawa (Conservation – Non-member) – For modifying habitat to aid hatchling Snapping Turtles at the Britannia Conservation Area.

President Diane Lepage selected Carolyn Callaghan as the recipient of the 2016 President's Prize for her achievements in leading delivery of the CFN online with an innovative presence.

The committee thanks Mark Brenchley for helping with awards certificate design and printing. We thank Sandra Garland for technical support to the awards section of the club's website.

Eleanor Zurbrigg, Chair

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

Birds Committee

The Birds Committee and the Club des Ornithologues de l'Outaouais organized another successful Ottawa Christmas Bird Count in December, 2016. Though the official OFNC Falcon

Watch is defunct at the moment, several members continue to keep an informal watch on the Heron Road nest site. Three more young Peregrines successfully fledged from this location this season. Safe Wings Ottawa has left the Birds Committee to become a standing committee of the club. This past summer saw the renewal of the Club's agreement with the Department of National Defence for access to the causeway at the Shirley's Bay. New rules of access were put in place to ensure that club members will continue to enjoy this special privilege.

Chris Traynor
Chair, Birds Committee

Conservation Committee

The signature accomplishment of the OFNC Conservation Committee in 2017 was successfully spearheading a campaign, along with Ontario Nature, the David Suzuki Foundation, and other organizations, to end the Snapping Turtle hunt in Ontario. The province had proposed limiting the hunt due to long-term, increased pressure on the snapping turtle population from habitat loss, road mortality, and hunting/poaching. Eliminating the hunt altogether is a simpler and more effective measure to help stabilize the declining Snapping Turtle population.

Members of OFNC-Conservation offer public outreach and active conservation work in the field. We led numerous conservation events this year, including: 25 guided public nature tours, 6 public lectures, 6 bio-inventories, and attendance/contribution to at least 10 conservation-related meetings. Our committee members continued to enthusiastically document wildlife near Ottawa and further afield with over 9000 observations entered into iNaturalist alone, and hundreds of records into other databases; many of these observations were of species of significant conservation interest.

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) and habitat conservation/restoration projects. We collaborated on conservation work with a number of external organizations and other OFNC committees throughout the year.

Our committee gained two members this year: we were pleased to welcome Susan Gallinger, and Jakob Mueller (chair of OFNC-Events).

Owen Clarkin
Chair, Conservation Committee

Education and Publicity Committee

Several new projects were undertaken this year. One involved the installation of "storyboards" in eight locations around the Fletcher Wildlife Garden (FWG). The storyboards, designed by Mark Brenchley, were mounted on cedar posts; each can hold two removeable 8.5x10" posters (one in English, one in French) showing seasonal wildlife that may be seen near that post.

Spring, summer, fall and winter posters have been displayed in turn. Gord also developed a flyer with a scavenger-hunt-like list of animals and plants at FWG that visiting families can use when they visit.

Another new event this year was a springtime open house at the Interpretation Centre. Several members hosted about 40 visitors with drinks, cookies, and tours of the garden. The event was well publicized with an excellent radio interview by CBC's Giacomo Panico on the morning of the event.

This year we had only one application for sponsorship to the Youth Summit of Ontario Nature. She attended the event and gave an informative and illustrated presentation at Neatby of her stay. Lucy Patterson and Kathy Conlan were again judges at the annual Ottawa Regional Science Fair. They presented three awards (\$100 each) to the winning students.

We brought the OFNC display to a number of public events, including: City of Ottawa's Wildlife Speaker Series at Centrepoinette and City Hall, Migratory Bird Day at Brewer Park, Bug Day at the Neatby Building, Gatineau Park Bioblitz, Earth Day at Hunt-Club Riverside Park Community Centre. Bug Day was especially successful this year with 100s of attendees visiting our microscope tables. A callout for volunteers yielded 12 enthusiastic OFNC members who assisted with identifying insects and observing specimens under the microscopes.

Gordon Robertson, Chair
Education & Publicity Committee

Events Committee

The Events Committee planned, coordinated or supported:

- 44 outings
- 9 monthly meetings, including the annual business meeting. (This is normally 10; however, the March meeting was postponed, and later cancelled.)
- 5 other presentations or workshops
- 2016 Awards celebration at St. Basil's Church, held on February 25.

The focus of outings, workshops and monthly meetings included birds (18), general natural history (13), botany (7), insects (6), amphibians and reptiles (5), conservation (2), geology (2), photography (2), snails (1), lichens (1) and astronomy (1).

Unusually poor spring weather, including record-breaking precipitation and high, prolonged flooding of the Ottawa River, led to a number of postponements and cancellations. At least 6 events were rescheduled between March and June. A herpetological expedition to Morris Island and a mothing night in Larose Forest were among the cancellations.

Monthly meetings continue to be held in Salons A & B of the Neatby Building. Ensuring the availability of the venue has been an issue, causing the sudden postponements of the March and April meetings. The January business meeting was held at the Fletcher Interpretation Centre.

Committee members in 2017: Holly Bickerton, Julia Cipriani, Owen Clarkin, Hume Douglas, Margaret Hart, Bev McBride, and Jakob Mueller.

If you have ideas for events or would like to lead an outing or event, please contact Jakob Mueller (jm890_7 AT hotmail.com) or any other member of the committee.

Jakob Mueller, Chair
Events Committee

Finance Committee Annual Report 2017

Ann MacKenzie assumed the duties of Treasurer this year, and Rémy Poulin took over from her as Investment Manager. Work continued to have the bookkeeper take on additional functions and to take full advantage of technology.

The budget for 2017-18 was prepared and presented to the Board in September for approval in October. While a shortfall of revenues over expenses of \$84 thousand is estimated, recent history suggests that the actual deficit will be less. Regardless, such a shortfall is considered manageable given the Club's overall strong financial position with investments totalling almost \$1.525 million at the end of September 2017.

The Club's accounting framework includes internally restricted funds that, over time, grew to eight in number. This is unnecessarily complex and, with the increasing use of separate account codes to track specific expenditures, provides little practical benefit. Consequently, in September, the Finance Committee proposed to the Board that the system be streamlined by reducing the number of these funds to three. The Board voted to approve this change starting in October 2017.

Rémy Poulin
Chair, Finance Committee

Fletcher Wildlife Garden

This year has been a very productive one at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden in spite of the very wet and cool start to the outdoor season. We recruited a large number of new volunteers and several new corporate and student groups helped with more physical tasks. Our work groups and individuals overseeing designated areas of the FWG, called nodes, combined to make a

workforce that had a noticeable impact on the garden's appearance. In several areas, our work to remove invasive species (Dog Strangling Vine, Comfrey, Buckthorn) is particularly evident. Over 5500 hours of volunteer time was spent maintaining the various parts of the Fletcher Wildlife Garden.

Visitors

The number of visitors, local, national, and international, has increased, and volunteers have received many positive comments about the garden. The Fletcher Wildlife Garden is part of the Ottawa Garden Council and the Garden Promenade, which increased our visibility to the public and encouraged more visitors. High praise was received from the Ontario Environment Commissioner who toured the Fletcher Wildlife Garden early in the spring. Our Sunday afternoon open Resource Centre, the Back Yard Garden, the Butterfly Meadow and the Amphibian Pond are popular points of interest. The addition of several information posts has helped visitors understand the wide variety of flora and fauna that can be found at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden.

Amphibian Pond

Work on the pond started early in the spring when the company contracted to dredge the pond returned to do contouring work, finish the pathway around the pond, and spread topsoil along the south bank. A large work group then planted over 2400 plants native wildflowers on the south bank. A chain-link fence was installed around the pond to protect the new plantings and prevent dogs from entering the pond. The plentiful rains ensured a good survival rate of the new plants; however, erosion meant that the new pathway had to be repaired several times to avoid accidents to walkers. Large quantities of Flowering Rush, an aquatic invasive species, returned in abundance and was removed manually throughout the summer.

Plant Sale

The plant sale was, again, a very successful event. A large number of old and new customers pushed our sales to over \$5000. This is one of our most labour-intensive activities, involving a large number of volunteers.

Fletcher Plaque

Parks Canada has erected a plaque on the Fletcher Wildlife Garden grounds to commemorate James Fletcher, Canada's first Dominion Entomologist and Botanist appointed in 1884. He oversaw the creation of the Arboretum and of a botanic garden to bring together all the native species of plants in Canada and to test the hardiness and adaptability of shrubs and trees growing in northern climates. James Fletcher was also a founding member of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club.

Pollinator Project

With support from Friends of the Earth, Ottawa University students built and planted three

raised pollinator beds at the FWG. These will be maintained as model “pollinator gardens in a box” to show visitors what plants can be grown in a small space to help pollinators.

Ted Farnworth
Fletcher Wildlife Garden Committee

Macoun Club

The Committee organized the activities of the Macoun Field Club by telephone and e-mail. All four Committee members have been leaders with the Macoun Club for periods in the order of 10, 20, and 30 years, so matters of routine management are divided up into familiar patterns. Sixteen meetings were held indoors, with some presentations being made by outside speakers and others by Macoun Club leaders. There were 17 field trips, mostly to familiar places; one, to the Brewer Park pond, was a joint event coordinated with the OFNC.

The Club works closely with the National Capital Commission to monitor for, study, and attempt to control invasive plants in and near the Macoun Study Area in Stony Swamp. An illustrated record of all events was maintained on the Club’s website (macounfieldclub.ca). Issue no. 71 of *The Little Bear* magazine was written and illustrated by Macoun Club participants.

For the second time, Macoun Club Committee members also volunteered to provide a field program to a Carleton University environmental-science class in the Macoun Club’s Nature Study Area.

The Committee Chair, who has maintained the Macoun Club’s independent web site for years, participated in the OFNC’s Website Working Group, and kept a duplicate Macoun Club site on the new platform up-to-date throughout the year in case it should go live at any time.

Robert E. Lee, Chair
Macoun Club Committee

Membership Committee

The distribution of Club membership for 2017 on September 30, 2017 is shown in the table below, with the corresponding numbers shown in brackets for September 30, 2016. “Other” represent, mostly affiliate organizations that receive complimentary copies of the Club’s publications. There was an increase of 77 in membership in 2017 and showed a return to the upward trend in membership noted since 2013 with the exception in 2016. Members within 50 km of Ottawa comprised 738 of the membership of 848.

Families of children in the Macoun Club are given complimentary membership to encourage interest in the Club in the longer term. Macoun Club participation increased slightly in 2017.

	Canadian		U.S.A		Other		Total	
Individual	399	(358)	7	(8)	0	(0)	406	(364)
Family	316	(286)	0	(0)	1	(0)	316	(287)
Student	24	(19)	0	(1)	0	(0)	24	(20)
T and L	2	(2)	0	(0)	0	(0)	2	(2)
Honorary	25	(25)	0	(0)	0	(1)	26	(25)
Life	40	(41)	3	(3)	1	(1)	44	(45)
Other	24	(24)	0	(0)	1	(1)	25	(25)
Macoun Club	18	(16)					18	(16)
TOTAL	848	(771)	10	(12)	3	(3)	861	(784)

Henry Steger
Membership Committee
September 30, 2017

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. The committee also advises OFNC with respect to issues relating to research including research grants. Publications Committee meetings were held on 26 November 2016, 3 May 2017, and 4 October 2017. Committee members were Annie Bélair (Editor, *Trail & Landscape*), Dan Brunton, Carolyn Callaghan, Paul Catling, Barry Cottam (Book Review Editor, CFN), William Halliday (Journal Manager, CFN), Karen McLachlan Hamilton, Diane Kitching, Dwayne Lepitzki (Editor-in-Chief, CFN), Amanda Martin (Assistant Editor, CFN), Frank Pope, Jeff Saarela (Chair), David Seburn and Eleanor Zurbrigg, who newly joined the committee.

[Trail & Landscape](#)

A major achievement this year was the launch of the re-designed *Trail & Landscape*. The first 50 volumes of the publication were printed primarily in black and white. The first two issues of

volume 51 in 2017 were printed in colour in the “old format”, and the new all-colour design appeared in volume 51(3) (July–September 2017), a Special 50th Anniversary Issue. Work on the new design was led by *Trail & Landscape* Editor Annie Belair, and involved back-and-forth consultation with the Publications Committee. Feedback on the new format from Club membership has been extremely positive and encouraging.

The Canadian Field-Naturalist

Three issues of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* were published: 130(3), 130(4), and 131(1). Beginning with 130(3), a new subheading was added to the cover page of the journal: “The Canadian Field-Naturalist: A Journal of Field Biology and Ecology”, to reflect the type of content we publish. Barry Cottam began his tenure as Book Review Editor with volume 130(2). Publication of 130(3) completed the Editor-in-Chief transition from Carolyn Callaghan to Dwayne Lepitzki. Ken Young, former chair of the Finance Committee, continued to manage CFN subscriptions, page charge invoices and budget tracking, and Eleanor Zurbrigg took over subscriptions in summer 2017. Copy editing of CFN papers was provided by Sandra Garland and Dr. John Wilmschurst of Jasper, Alberta, a new member of the team.

Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) were successfully implemented in the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*. A DOI is a unique alphanumeric identifier for a piece of content (e.g, a scientific paper) that is permanent and can be linked to on the web. DOIs have been assigned to all journal content as far back as 117(2), and beginning with 131(1), DOIs are included in the references. On the journal website, low resolution PDF files of CFN content going back to volume 125 were replaced with higher-resolution files, and all content is now posted in high resolution.

In 131(1) a new type of content was introduced in the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*. “Thematic Collections” are editor-selected compilations of previously published contributions to both *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* and *Trail & Landscape*, on a central theme with links to each article. The first Thematic Collection focused on alvars in Canada.

Several papers published this year in *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* received regional and national media coverage, reflecting not only the important contributions to science published in the journal but also the importance and relevance of the journals content — and the Club as a whole — to broader society in Canada. These papers all deal with issues related to climate change: expanded range limits of boreal birds in the Torngat Mountains, northern Labrador (<http://dx.doi.org/10.22621/cfn.v131i1.1957>), reported on by The Telegram (St. John’s); expanded range limits of Beaver into tundra habitat in Yukon and Alaska (<http://dx.doi.org/10.22621/cfn.v130i4.1927>), reported on by Radio Canada International and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC); and interactions between Belugas and Killer Whales in Hudson Bay (<http://dx.doi.org/10.22621/cfn.v130i4.1925>), reported on by the Canadian Press. Even content published over seventy years ago in CFN was mentioned in the

media: in July 2017, the Ottawa Citizen reported that the arrival in Ottawa of Ring-billed Gulls, which now are everywhere, was first reported in the *Canadian Field-Naturalist* in 1946. A 2016 *Trail & Landscape* article on long-term change in the pine grove vegetation at the Britannia Conservation Area, Ottawa, was reported upon by the Ottawa Citizen (16 August 2017), and again several weeks later following the major windstorm that damaged many trees in the area.

Back issues of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* were stored for decades in the Saunders Building, Central Experimental Farm, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, under the stewardship of W.J. Cody and, most recently, Paul Catling. In early 2017, the committee was informed that this storage space would no longer be available. Upon consolidation of the material, it was determined that these archives comprised volumes 109 to 123, with a few missing issues. In the current digital age, demand for hard copy back issues is practically nonexistent. Accordingly, a decision was made to divest the club of much of this space-consuming material. A small team of committee members convened, and subsets of available back issues were sorted and moved to the Red Barn on the Farm for temporary storage. This backlog material is freely available to anybody who wants it. The remainder of the back issues were recycled. More recent back issues (vols. 124 to present) are currently being stored by Wendy Cotie, our typographer who lays out *The Canadian Field-Naturalist*.

[Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club Research Grants](#)

2017 was the third 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 call for proposals for 2017 awards was sent around in November 2016, with an application deadline of 15 January 2017. A subcommittee convened and chaired by Dr. Tony Gaston reviewed all proposals and recommended funding all four of them. The funding recommendations were submitted to the Board of Directors, who approved all of them. One applicant subsequently declined the funding, resulting in three projects being funded:

- Paul Catling, independent researcher. Changing status of terrestrial snails in Ottawa.
- Mary Ann Perron, Ph.D. candidate, University of Ottawa. Are urban ponds good wildlife habitat?
- David Seburn, Seburn Ecological Services. Identifying breeding locations of the threatened Western Chorus Frog in eastern Ontario.

Jeffery M. Saarela, Chair
Publications Committee

Treasurer's Annual Report, 2017

By: Ann MacKenzie, Treasurer

The Financial statements for the year ended September 30, 2017 have been prepared by our accounting firm, Welch LLP based on a review they conducted of our financial records. We appreciate the considerable assistance of Mark Patry and Eric Leibmann. We do not get our books audited.

The financial statements are on an accrual basis which results in deferrals of funds received, such as membership fees, to the extent that there is a benefit owing to others after the date of the financial statements. We are continuing to fine tune our method of calculating these amounts which has resulted in greater deferrals this year than previous years. For example the CFN received subscription revenue for Volume 131 (2017) but only one issue of that volume was published by Sept 30th. As a result 75% of the subscription revenue was deferred. Furthermore, we received more grants this year than previously. Since a large portion of these grants relate to projects in the future our deferred revenue related to contributions is also higher. Note 6 of the Financial Statements provides more detail.

The last payment from the Czasak bequest was in 2015 and since then we have been incurring losses. We will be seeing expenses exceeding revenues for the next several years as we employ the bequest to further the objectives of the Club. This will also result in a decline in our investment account and interest income. The budget for 2017-18 was approved by the Board on October 16, 2017. It forecasts a shortfall of \$84,000. Our budgets tend to overstate our shortfall because many revenue sources are uncertain. The budget for 2016-17 projected a deficit of \$114,000 when, in fact it was \$43,000.

Our investments are in conservative bonds with maturities spread over future years somewhat evenly. As we continue to incur deficits more of the investments will be liquidated to provide the necessary cash. Remy Poulin has been our investment manager in 2017 and Catherine Hessian will be assuming that responsibility in 2018. They work closely with our investment advisor, Sue Anderson at BMO Nesbitt Burns and follow the investment policy approved by the Board.

This was a year of transition as the role of Treasurer changed from Ken Young to myself on January 10, 2017. At the same time it was our first full fiscal year with a new bookkeeper, Katryna Coltress at Plus Associates, and new accounting software procedures. I am working to simplify the role of the Treasurer so that it can be undertaken without a huge time commitment. Part of that process is to use technology and programs to the greatest extent possible. Some of the changes are:

- a) The number of bank accounts has been cut from three to one.
- b) All requests for payments are electronic submissions with no paper and some are on automatic payment. Individual claimants scan their receipts before forwarding for payment.
- c) Cheques are generated from our accounting software, Quick Books, to fit in window envelopes.
- d) Donation receipts are sent throughout the year rather than year end and are computer generated. We are exploring sending them electronically while still meeting the CRA requirements.
- e) Treasurer assistants are helping with deposits and donation receipts.
- f) The number of internally restricted funds is being reduced to three from eight.

We are continuing to seek out ways to simplify the financial/administrative aspects of the club including subscription management for CFN and invoicing author charges.

As I have undertaken my treasurer duties I have been thankful for the generous support I received from the previous treasurer, Ken Young, and from the Board members, the Bookkeeper and the accountants who have been very patient with my learning curve.