



## 2019 Member of the Year: Martha Farkas



Each year, the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club recognizes a Club member whose exceptional accomplishments during the past 12 months stand out from the crowd. For 2019, that would surely be Martha Farkas, in recognition of her leadership on the remarkable May birding trip to Point Pelee National Park and Rondeau Provincial Park.

Why was the 2019 trip remarkable? Every other year for many decades, the OFNC has been organizing and running trips to Point Pelee in Essex County, Ontario, for observing the spring bird migration over a long weekend in May. This past year was special since there had been a three-year rather than two-year hiatus and the number of participants rose to close to 40, with the need for three birding leaders instead of two. In addition, the trip was to be a five-day event instead of the usual four days (including travel time). Finding an administrative leader who is not only willing to put in the large amount of time and effort required to make such a trip happen, but with the skills required to make the trip a success, is not always easy. The Club found just such a person for the 2019 trip, Martha Farkas, who had already learned some of the ropes by leading the previous Pelee trip.

Martha looked after all the administrative details for the excursion, starting two years before the event by reserving rooms for the entire group at a motel in Leamington, close to the park. Martha also arranged for the bus and driver months in advance. All the payments and purchases were also dealt with by Martha, looking after last-minute changes, fees, non-payments and inevitable questions. Taking care of the financial issues is something not all Pelee trip organizers have had to do. After the all-day bus trip, and after the participants were settled at the motel, she organized the shopping for picnic lunches and later devised a way for people to put the picnic lunches together and do the required clean-up. Needless to say, she had to constantly keep track of over 35 excited and preoccupied birders both in the field and back at the home base. Always attentive to important details, Martha also brought a generous number of snacking options and water for the bus rides and was very aware of the necessity of mini-breaks on a bus with one washroom!

As one participant noted, “Martha is the consummate diplomat dealing with people. She ensured that everything ran smoothly over the three days [in the field]. She was very good at managing the movement of the participants. She stayed calm, kept order with ease while managing the schedule.”

It is therefore our pleasure to recognize Martha Farkas as our Member of the Year for 2019.

*Prepared by Irwin M. Brodo and Julia Cipriani*