

Fletcher Wildlife Garden 2020

2020 has been a challenging year for the Fletcher Wildlife Garden group. All work, access, and activity at the Fletcher were carried out under Covid restrictions and protocols. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of our volunteers, the Fletcher property was maintained and open to visitors in spite of a late start for our work teams. We welcomed more visitors than usual, as people, many for the first time, took advantage of the outdoor experience, and the peace and beauty offered at the Fletcher. Many visitors with children were particularly pleased with the story boards that have been put up around the property that provide information about the flora and fauna found at the Fletcher throughout the year.

To protect volunteers who continued to work as visitors toured the property, signage was put up reminding people about social distancing.

At the beginning of the year Sandy Garland and her team started the labour-intensive work to grow, pot, and repot plants for the FWG annual plant sale. However, restrictions imposed by the pandemic meant that the annual plant sale did not happen.

A new team comprising Chris Mark, Pam Johnston and Barbara Riley have taken over running the Backyard Garden after Isabel Nicol stepped down. The pandemic delayed maintenance work, but the gardens have been well cared for thanks to the volunteers, including several high school students. Significant progress was made on the north bank of the ravine, and it has become a popular spot to stop, sit, and enjoy the view. A plan is being developed to slowly phase out non-native plants from the Back Yard Garden, and throughout the property.

The battle with invasive species continues in all parts of the property. Replanting White Snakeroot along the path to the baseball diamond has shown that Dog Strangling Vine can be discouraged from regrowing. Several volunteers in the Tuesday group have taken up the battle against Buckthorn after our long-time Buckthorn expert Tony Denton decided it was time to slow down. Good progress was made eliminating Flowering Rush from the amphibian pond. Purple Comfrey along the entrance road and in the western part of the property was the target of several work parties, but it continues to spread. Following several years of work, DSV abundance has been reduced throughout the Butterfly Meadow, though continued vigilance is required. This has allowed increased focus in on removal of other problem plants, notably honeysuckle, tansy and comfrey, as well as increased attention to keeping high-value trees and shrubs free from encroaching vines and ground cover.

Using pandemic restrictions and guidelines, we were able to host small volunteer groups from the Canadian Wildlife Federation, Ottawa Police, and Health Canada.

Agriculture Canada and the City of Ottawa have now agreed that by-law enforcement, dogs on leash in particular, is the responsibility of the City of Ottawa.

Our Facebook page continues to be filled with spectacular photos of the wide variety of flora and fauna that call the Fletcher Wildlife Garden home.

Prepared by: Ted Farnworth, FWG representative on the OFNC Board

OFNC Finance Committee Annual Report 2020

This report covers financial matters during fiscal year 2019–20, which extended from October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the finances of the OFNC. Fundraising activities such as the Fletcher Wildlife Garden plant sale had to be cancelled. On the other hand, our expenses continue much as before. However, compared with many other small charities, we are fortunate. We have a sizeable reserve that enables us to continue our activities even though revenues are down, and to purchase things such as a Zoom licence to help us cope with the pandemic.

The Finance Committee monitors legislation that might affect the Club. The Club is incorporated in Ontario, so it is subject to Ontario's laws governing incorporated organizations. In 2010, the Government of Ontario passed legislation to update the governance of incorporated charities. The update is badly needed. Unfortunately, successive governments have failed to implement the new law and related regulations. Recently, the government postponed implementation for yet another year. The Finance Committee is currently examining what the Club can do to update our governance, without running afoul of either the existing law, or the new law, since it may someday be enacted.

The primary task of the Finance Committee is to prepare a draft budget for consideration by the Board of Directors. The committee receives suggestions, and estimates of committee revenues and expenses, from directors and committee chairs. Our process is that the Finance Committee presents a draft budget for discussion at the September meeting of the Board of Directors. After amendment, it is adopted at the October meeting.

The budget for FY2019–20 was approved at the Board of Directors meeting of October, 2019. The draft budget for FY2020–21 was presented to the Board's September 2020 meeting and a revised version was approved at the October 2020 Board meeting. The budget forecasts revenues of \$133,600 and expenses of \$156,480, for a deficit of \$22,880. A copy of the budget, as approved, is included as an appendix to the minutes of the October, 2020 Board of Directors meeting. These minutes are posted on the OFNC website.

The question arises from time to time whether our spending is appropriate. Members have two concerns. On the one hand, will we exhaust our investment fund prematurely? Our current budgeted deficits are in the range of \$20,000 to \$25,000. We are currently earning interest of 2.5% to 3% on our investments. If we continue in this manner, our investment fund will be maintained for almost three decades. Even if our earned interest rate drops to 1% it would be two decades. Based on this, the Board feels that our deficits are reasonable.

The other concern is that we are not spending enough. The Board of Directors reviews proposals for spending, during the budget process and on an ad hoc basis during the year. Proposals are evaluated based on the Club's objectives, for example natural history education, and our policies, for example a focus on Eastern Ontario and the Ottawa Valley. The Board is responsive to proposals, but also prudent.

The committee examined our accounting standards during the year. We consulted with our accountants concerning an accounting issue, how to match revenues and expenses in our financial statements. In the end we decided that we could not improve on the existing accounting standard that we use. We have

made a change to the timing of sending invoices to authors of articles in the *Canadian Field-Naturalist*. It should have the effect of improving the matching, without changing the accounting standard.

The Treasurer continued her work to improve our systems for bookkeeping, donations and payments.

For the past three years, Tanja Schueler has helped the Club with financial matters, in particular by keeping track of our PayPal account. Now she is returning home to Australia. I thank her for her help, and wish her well among the fascinating world of Australian flora and fauna.

Ken Young

Chair, Finance Committee

OFNC Publications Committee Annual Report (1 October 2019 – 30 September 2020)

The Publications Committee manages publication of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* (CFN),

Trail & Landscape, and Special Publications. The committee also advises OFNC with respect to issues relating to research, including managing the research grants program.

Trail & Landscape

Four issues of *Trail & Landscape* were published: 54(1–4). In collaboration with the Canadian Museum of Nature, the project to image and upload *Trail & Landscape* back issue content to the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) was completed. This content is available under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/115961#/summary>. *Trail & Landscape* back issues, from Vol. 51 (2017) onwards, are also available on the OFNC website, where the content is displayed in high resolution using a viewing tool that was installed during the last year.

The Canadian Field-Naturalist

Six issues of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* were published: 133(1–4) and 134(1–2). Two papers published in the last year received media coverage, reflecting not only the important contributions to science published in the journal but also the importance and relevance of the

journals content to broader society in Canada. The paper on the spiders of Prince Edward Island (<https://doi.org/10.22621/cfn.v132i4.2017>) that was the co-winner of the James Fletcher Award for the best paper of the year in the 2018 volume was reported on by CBC News (25 November 2019) and The Guardian [P.E.I.] (22 November 2019). A paper on the use of salmon by Brown Bears in and around Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Alaska (<https://doi.org/10.22621/cfn.v133i2.2114>) was reported on by Hatch Magazine, a publication about fly fishing (17 August 2020).

Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club Research Grants

This was the sixth 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 application deadline was 15 January 2019. A subcommittee convened and chaired by Dan Brunton reviewed all proposals and submitted funding recommendations to the OFNC Board of Directors. A list of recipients of 2020 Research Grants was published in *Trail & Landscape* 54(3): 112. The research grant program was reported on by the Ottawa Citizen (8 May 2020).

Jeffery M. Saarela, Chair

Awards Committee Annual Report for 2019-2020

The Awards Committee manages the process to annually recognize and thank those OFNC members and other qualified persons who, by virtue of their efforts and talents, are deserving of special recognition. In late 2019, nominations were received and evaluated (see awards criteria at <http://ofnc.ca/about-ofnc/awards>), resulting in nominees for four awards being recommended to the Board of Directors for approval. Biographies were written for each award recipient for

inclusion in the Club's publications and posting on the website. The awards were presented at the annual Awards Night in February 2020. The recipients' names, type of award and short rationale for recognition follow below.

Martha Farkas -- Member of the Year Award. For outstanding coordination of the Point Pelee bus excursion.

Barry Cottam -- George McGee Service Award. For contributions in many areas of the Club including *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* and Fletcher Wildlife Garden.

Owen J. Clarkin -- Conservation Award for a Member. For revitalizing the Conservation Committee and promoting the appreciation and conservation of regional forests.

Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust -- Conservation Award for a Non-member. For their land preservation initiatives.

Eleanor Zurbrigg
Chair, Awards Committee

Safe Wings Ottawa Annual Report 2020

Highlights

In 2019-20, Safe Wings Ottawa (SWO) volunteers:

- Documented more than 3,000 window collisions (exact number not yet available), a small decrease from the previous year due to volunteer availability/effort.
- Provided care to 1,336 live birds representing 127 species (not including domestics), up 46% from the previous year. Of these, 853 (64%) were window collision victims. We admitted a record 45 live birds (all but one were window collision victims) on Sept. 11. Our previous one-day record, on May 21, 2019, was 26 live birds.
- Answered an estimated 5,000 phone calls, up 40% from the previous year. We have recruited and trained more volunteers to answer the phone.
- Added 8 new species to our list of collision victims, bringing our cumulative total to 140, including 15 Species at Risk. The cumulative total of species that have been in our care is 141.

COVID-19

The pandemic had a major impact on our operations. Our annual display and the official launch of the Ottawa Bird Strategy was to be held at the Canadian Museum of Nature in late March. The event was cancelled, as were a major fundraiser and all other events in which we planned to participate. Instead, the Ottawa Bird Strategy was released online in the spring, and the specimens that would have been displayed remain in storage.

After consulting with the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative, we decided to allow existing volunteers to patrol if they agreed to take precautions such as physical distancing. We did not train new volunteers for the spring season, but developed online orientation and training sessions for fall, and hosted several online events, including workshops and a Jane's Walk.

The Wild Bird Care Centre suspended its use of volunteers to assist with many tasks, which we felt might reduce the level of care that could be provided. Due to this change, Safe Wings began keeping window collision victims in its care for longer periods than in the past, and also transferred some high-needs birds directly to other rehabilitation facilities for care.

Also as a result of the pandemic, many more people became aware of bird collisions at residences. We received fewer calls about collisions at office buildings, but more calls from people working from home.

Outreach

An advocacy subcommittee was created to better oversee and organize outreach efforts to encourage bird-friendly measures. Outreach efforts yielded the following results:

- An advocacy subcommittee was created to better oversee and organize outreach efforts to encourage bird-friendly measures. This includes contacting the property owners/managers of existing buildings to recommend corrective measures; reviewing development applications and encouraging members of the public to submit comments to project planners; and initiating discussions with government stakeholders (primarily federal but also municipal) about bird-safe initiatives.
- The City of Ottawa and National Capital Commission both released draft bird-safe building design guidelines, which are expected to be adopted by the end of 2020. Both agencies have begun specifying bird-friendly design for at least some of their projects. The NCC installed visual markers on the Gatineau Park Visitors Centre on Scott Rd, and launched an initiative to assess all its buildings for collision risk.
- Communications Security Establishment Canada, which last year agreed to apply visual markers to a test area as a pilot project, unexpectedly promised to retrofit the entire building in stages over several years. CSE headquarters is currently estimated to kill thousands of birds per year, and is among the most lethal buildings in the region.
- OC Transpo's pilot project to gauge public reaction to visual markers on three bus shelters, originally planned for 2019, finally moved forward this past spring. The ultimate goal is to make all future bus shelters bird-safe. Separately, Safe Wings launched a formal study of bird collisions at existing LRT stations in order to build a case for retrofitting some of these structures, and for the adoption of bird-safe design for the stage 2 LRT stations.

- In Kanata North, one of the worst areas for collisions, the property manager at 1001 Farrar Rd accepted Safe Wings' offer to install visual markers on a smoking shelter for free. They are considering applying similar measures to the main building. KRP, which owns most properties in the Kanata Research Park, rejected our offer to apply visual markers to a smoking shelter at 2500 Solandt Dr, then hired a third party to do the job.
- Safe Wings Ottawa gave presentations to staff from NRCan and BGIS (property management company for most federal buildings). Since then, BGIS applied visual markers to a glass railings at NRCan HQ at 580 Booth St, and is considering assessments and retrofit projects at other lethal buildings.
- After reaching out to Safe Wings for advice, Via Rail applied visual markers on one façade of the Ottawa train station, and plans to treat other façades as budgets allow. The project manager hopes this pilot project will serve as an example to retrofit other train stations across Canada.
- There has been enormous public support for bird-safe design for the new library on LeBreton Flats. While collision deterrent measures were promised early on, we were not satisfied with the lack of specific information, especially because the architecture firm is the same one that designed the National Arts Centre retrofit with ineffective bird-friendly measures. We have kept up the pressure and, with the help of the Glebe Community Association, continue to discuss improvements with the city design team.

Anouk Hoedeman
Chair, Safe Wings Ottawa Committee

Membership Committee

Club membership is divided into two groups. The first, defined as the "Membership", consists of those who pay Club fees, are "Honorary" members or participate in the "Macoun Club". The other consists as the membership aggregate "Other" which represents mostly designated individuals and affiliate organizations that receive complimentary copies of the T&L. This group, together with "T&L Subscriber", are reported separately.

The distribution of Club membership for 2020 on September 30, 2020 and on September 30, 2019 is shown below. There was a notable decrease in Membership of 64 for 2020. The Club did not hold monthly meetings or field events starting mid-March 2020 because of Covid-19 and this likely was a discouragement for members to renew or for new members to join. For example the renewal of memberships for July to September 2020 was about 33 % less than in each of the previous six 3-month renewal periods. Also new memberships were about 30% lower than in the previous two years.

Members within 50 km of Ottawa comprised 695 of the total membership of 795.

	2019	2018
Individual	377	402
Family	309	339
Student	16	30
Honorary	23	24
Life	39	39
Macoun Club	209	15
U.S.A.	10	7
International	1	1
TOTAL	795	859

The distribution of “Other” for 2019 on September 30, 2020 and on September 30, 2019 is shown below. The slight increase in “Other” was due to a re-assignment of one type of membership to “Other”.

	2019	2018
T&L Subscriber	3	3
Other	26	<u>23</u>
TOTAL	29	26

Henry Steger

Membership Committee

September 30, 2020

Annual Report for 2020 of the Education and Publicity Committee

COVID-19 created a series of cancellations that severely limited the work of the Education and Publicity Committee. We did participate in the February Ottawa Wildlife Speaker Series. Sandy Garland, Catherine Shearer, Lynn Ovenden, and Gordon Robertson took a display to the event, which attracted a lot of interest. The presentation by the invited speaker on coyotes was very informative and well attended.

The Committee has three new members: Dean Beeby, Lloyd Mayeda, and Sarah Wray. Emily Shearer also joined but later withdrew due to work demands. Dean Beeby has taken over the Twitter account and Gord added its link to the webpages. Gord was added as an Administrator for the webpages.

The OCDSB's Science Fair was cancelled just as we were selecting judges. Kathy Conlan who judged at the Fair for many years asked to be replaced. We thanked her for her many contributions to this event.

Lynn Ovenden registered the OFNC for a Jane's Walk on Sunday 3 May to coincide with our annual Open House. Both events had to be cancelled.

Mark Brenchley constructed 3 more storyboard holders. Three posts were purchased and the holders installed at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden (FWG). Michelle St-Germain selected images of flowers for two of the storyboards. The third was placed in the new habitat called the Gully.

Gord has made five new wildlife quests for Strathcona Park, Riverain Park, the Bog Trail, the MacLaren Cemetery Trails in Wakefield, and a general one for Ottawa-Gatineau. More are to be planned and produced. Other quests were updated to include sections where unlisted wildlife may be added. These wildlife quests (formerly called hunts) are intended to assist parents taking their children on nature walks (see them at ofnc.ca/quests).

A fourth species trail map on vines has been added for walks at the FWG. All four may be found at ofnc.ca/maps. The committee are considering labelling some of the notable trees and shrubs on these trails with their common names in English and French, the species name, and possibly QR codes with URL links to our website. Expansion of descriptions on the webpages and links to other relevant scientific sites were also being considered.

A group of Brownies came to the FWG on September 26. Only 11 girls showed up so Gord gave them a brief tour then sent them to do the Butterfly Meadow on their own. Social distancing and masks were mandatory. Rob Alvo led a tour at Mud Lake for an alternative school.

There were no applicants for the Youth Summit this year that was to be online. Macoun Club members were contacted but none responded. Greater outreach is necessary for this event to be successful.

Gord Robertson, Chair

Birds Committee

Birds Committee (11 members), Bird Records Sub-committee (12 members) and Bird Feeders Sub-committee (Chair coordinates and fills in when needed and 5 volunteers) coordinated OFNC bird related activities and directed and encouraged interest in birds within and outside the OFNC area.

A committee member, Nina Stavlund, administered the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club's Facebook group (2257 members in November 2020) which is a place for OFNC members and nonmembers to discuss ideas and exchange information relating to all aspects of natural history, club outings and club initiatives, as well as for prospective members to get a feel for what OFNC is about.

A committee member, Derek Dunnett, provided weekly provincial (Birdnews) reports of OFNC area (Ottawa-Gatineau) bird sightings which, with photos by local photographers, was also provided on OFNC Facebook and the OFNC website.

Committee members provided articles on a variety of subjects in Trail & Landscape, led OFNC field trips, participated in the OFNC Website Working Group, improved Birds content on the website, responded to bird related enquires from members and the public. The Bird Studies Group suspended workshops on topics of interest to birders such as the Chirps, Tweets & Trills workshops with the advent of COVID 19 just prior to spring birding season. Chris Traynor established policy with DND and coordinated updates to DND's Shirley's Bay causeway access list.

OFNC Birds Committee and the Club des ornithologues de l'Outaouais (COO) organized the 101st Ottawa-Gatineau Christmas Bird Count December 15th, 2019. The day featured 30 kph winds (with gusts to 50 kph) and gradually dropping temperatures throughout the day. A total of 61 species were found by 139 field observers and 26 feeder watchers. The species total was the third lowest in the last 30 years. There were no real highlights, with one spectacular exception, a Northern Fulmar that appeared mid-afternoon over and on the Ottawa River, below the Deschênes Rapids.

Birds Committee organized and participated in the 2020 Seedathon "Big Day" on August 30, 2020. There were 15 participants who submitted 39 checklists. The tally of species was 121 this year, the record Seedathon tally is 134 species found by Bob Bracken, Bernie Ladouceur and Chris Lewis in 2006

Bob Cermak

Chair, Birds Committee

Macoun Club Committee report for 2019-20

From September, 2019, until the COVID-19 shutdown in March, 2020, the Macoun Field Club held meetings and field trips for children and young people (ages 8 to 18) every Saturday, except for public holidays. Committee members organized and oversaw 12 indoor meetings at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden's resource centre, with presentations and workshops, and led 9 field trips.

For the fourth year running, the Macoun Club hosted the nature quiz at the OFNC's Awards Night event on February 22.

As the number of COVID-19 cases increased in March, the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club suspended all in-person activities, including those of the Macoun Field Club

Trails in the Macoun Club Study Area remained open.

To maintain Macoun Club members' special connection to the natural world, Club leaders began visiting the children's "Study Trees" weekly and reported on them on the Macoun Club website.

Parents who saw these reports asked to join the informal outings through the spring and summer. A supplementary COVID-Consent form was developed and put into use.

There were no official activities during the last six months of the Macoun Club year (March through August). Publication of Issue No. 74 of the Club's annual magazine, *The Little Bear*, which normally happens in June, was deferred until autumn.

Robert E. Lee,

Acting Chair,

Macoun Club Committee