

# The Canadian Field-Naturalist

## Minutes of the 142nd Annual Business Meeting (ABM) of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, 12 January 2021

Held by Zoom meeting during COVID-19 pandemic.

Chairperson: Diane Lepage, President

The Zoom meeting was attended by 65 participants. The minutes of the previous ABM, the financial statements, Treasurer's Report, and Annual Reports of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club (OFNC) Committees for 2019–2020 had previously been available on the Club's website. During the meeting, relevant documents were projected on the screen for the audience's reference.

Diane Lepage called the meeting to order at 7:35 pm and welcomed the participants.

The Zoom host, Ken Young, explained how the Zoom meeting and voting would work.

### 1. Approval of the Agenda

It was moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Jakob Mueller, that the Agenda be accepted as distributed.

**Carried**

It was noted that, for the report following the conclusion of the business meeting on rare birds seen in the Ottawa area in the past year, Michelle Martin would replace Bruce Di Labio as joint presenter with Bernie Ladouceur.

### 2. Minutes of the Previous Annual Business Meeting

It was moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Ted Farnworth, that the minutes of the 141st ABM be accepted as distributed and published in *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* (CFN).

**Carried**

### 3. Business Arising from the Minutes

#### a) Colacem L'Original Cement Plant

Gord Robertson had drawn the attention of the last ABM to the approval by the Ontario Municipal Board of the construction of a cement plant by Colacem Canada Inc. in L'Original, Ontario. The site is 2 km from the Ottawa River and 9 km from the Alfred Bog. The Vankleek Hill and District Nature Society (VKHDNS) were very concerned about emissions from the plant and had requested assistance from OFNC in opposing the necessary zoning change. OFNC had donated \$1000 to employ an expert to calculate likely emissions. Diane Lepage reported that she had attended a virtual hearing in December 2020 where it was shown that the emissions projected by

Colacem were substantially underestimated. The case is awaiting judgement.

#### b) Burnt Lands Alvar

Diane Lepage had reported at the last ABM that the Mississippi Valley Field-Naturalists' Club (MVFNC) had sought assistance in promoting protection of the Alvar. OFNC had donated \$800 towards the development of a website to promote understanding of the importance of the Alvar. Diane reported that MVFNC had advised that, due to COVID restrictions, they had been unable to make much progress with the website which they felt required face-to-face planning. OFNC will continue to monitor this initiative.

### 4. Treasurer's Report by Ann Mackenzie

Ann MacKenzie, Treasurer, presented the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 September 2020 as prepared and reviewed by the accounting firm Welch LLP. The complete statements as well as the Treasurer's Report for 2019–2020 were available to members on the Club website in advance of the meeting.

There were four key observations relative to the financial statements. The Club had a surplus of \$22 000 in the year but this is not seen as indicative of a trend, but rather specific circumstances. Revenues were higher than the previous year, 2018–2019, as a result of higher donation levels and greater income from author's charges. Expenses were only slightly lower because of decreased activity. The necessary cancellation of the Fletcher Wildlife Garden Plant Sale meant that little revenue was received from plants.

Looking back over the last 10 years showed the spike in revenues and surpluses in 2014 and 2015 as

a result of the Czasak bequest. As programs and projects were implemented as a consequence of this bequest the next couple of years had marked losses. It appears as if revenues and expenses are becoming more balanced as they had been before the bequest with just the normal annual variations.

A question was raised about whether the Club had ethical guidelines for investments. Investments are primarily in provincial bonds which does not pose ethical issues. However it was acknowledged that guidelines might be prudent, regardless.

It was moved by Ann MacKenzie, seconded by Ken Young, that the Financial Statements be accepted as a fair representation of the financial position of the Club as of 30 September 2020.

**Carried**

### 5. Nomination of the Accounting Firm

It was moved by Ann MacKenzie, seconded by Ken Young, that the accounting firm of Welch LLP be contracted to conduct a review of the OFNC's accounts for the fiscal year ending 30 September 2021.

**Carried**

### 6. Committee Annual Reports

It was moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Gordon Robertson, that the Committee Annual Reports be accepted as distributed.

**Carried**

### Highlights from 2020

#### a) Fletcher Wildlife Garden (FWG)

Ted Farnworth discussed some of the challenges and some of the successes experienced during the year. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) had blocked off access to FWG, delaying the start of the volunteer year. The annual plant sale had to be cancelled. Some plants were sold through other channels but there was substantially reduced revenue. Once volunteer activity was able to start, with appropriate COVID precautions, a large number of new volunteers turned out, many having learned about FWG through Volunteer Ottawa. The new volunteers included a significant number of young people which is a very welcome development.

COVID restrictions left many families trying to find local areas to explore and FWG saw a considerable increase in the number of visitors, many coming for the first time. The FWG Facebook Group has also experienced a significant increase in followers. Although the increased interest is welcome, the large number of visitors resulted in some issues with social distancing. Appropriate signs were erected in the garden. Increased problems with dogs off-leash were also

noted with some unpleasant confrontations resulting. Ted warned that AAFC is now enforcing parking restrictions.

In closing, Ted brought the attention of the meeting to the two extensive developments that are planned adjacent to FWG. To the east, the new hospital is expected to be "the largest medical campus in Canada" and to the south, the planned botanical garden expects to draw "hundreds of thousands of visitors" a year. These developments will undoubtedly have a significant impact on FWG.

#### b) Conservation

Owen Clarkin summarized the work of the committee with accompanying photographs.

The committee has been involved in a Multi-Year Red Spruce Project. In February, in partnership with Janet Mason from the Ottawa Stewardship Council, they met with Norbert Lussier, a career technician partner of Alan Gordon (the discoverer of Red Spruce in Ontario circa 1950). They discussed what is, and isn't, known about the species in the province. Following this meeting, in the winter and spring they performed extensive surveys and Google Street View searching for the species and approximately doubled the known populations in Ontario east of Ottawa, including a large population at the edge of Voyageur Provincial Park (PP). They subsequently proposed a survey of Voyageur PP and turned up three new populations of Red Spruce in the Park from July to December 2020, in addition to a number of other new plant and animal records.

Other notable activities included:

- i) Establishing new amphibian records for local areas such as Spotted Salamander near Vars and Two-lined Salamander at Voyageur PP.
- ii) Finding a population of critically endangered Greater Purple Fringed Orchid near Vars.
- iii) Confirmation, via flowers, of the presence of *Euonymus nanus* at Gillies Grove, the first provincial record and second in North America.
- iv) (Late 2019) Finding a population of American Hazelnut at Torbolton Forest, an apparently isolated northern population of the species.
- v) (Late 2019) Finding a probable new population of Southern Arrowwood near Vars, near or at its northern limit, a species considered absent from Quebec north of the Ottawa River.

### 7. Report of the Nominating Committee by Fenja Brodo (Chair)

Fenja advised that the Board is very stable with only a few changes. The most notable change is that Diane Lepage is stepping down from the position

of President and will become Past President. Jakob Mueller has accepted the nomination for President.

### **Relevant Excerpts from the OFNC Constitution (revised February 2000)**

Article 8 – The Council shall consist of the officers of the Club and up to eighteen additional members, all members of the Club.

Article 12 – The officers of the Club and other members of the Council shall be elected annually at the Annual Business Meeting. The nomination of sufficient persons for election to the various offices and membership of the Council shall be the responsibility of the Nominating Committee, which shall act in the manner prescribed in the By-Laws.

The Council shall, at the earliest possible date, appoint chairs and members of Standing and ad hoc committees and Editor and Business Managers, as required for club publications.

#### **Nominated Officers**

Jakob Mueller  
Owen Clarkin  
(vacant)  
Elizabeth Moore  
Ann MacKenzie  
Diane Lepage

#### **Official Duty**

President  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
Recording Secretary  
Treasurer  
Past President

#### **Nominated Members of the Board of Directors (alphabetical order)**

Robert Cermak	Janette Niwa
Edward Farnworth	Gordon Robertson
Catherin Hessian	Jeff Saarela
Diane Kitching	Henry Steger
Diane Lepage	Ken Young
Ann MacKenzie	Eleanor Zurbrigg

It was moved by Fenja Brodo, seconded by Bev McBride, that this slate of nominees for Officers and other Members of the Board of Directors of the OFNC for 2021 be accepted.

**Carried**

#### **Nominating Committee suggestions to the Board Members for Chairs of Committees and other positions in the OFNC**

Awards Committee	Eleanor Zurbrigg
Birds Committee	Robert Cermak
Conservation Committee	Owen Clarkin
Education & Publicity Committee	Gordon Robertson
Events Committee	Jakob Mueller
Fletcher Wildlife	Edward Farnworth, Representative
Finance Committee	Ann MacKenzie
Investment Manager	Catherine Hessian

Macoun Field Club	Diane Kitching, Representative
Membership Committee	Henry Steger
Publications Committee	Annie Bélair, Representative
Editor, <i>Canadian Field-Naturalist</i>	Dwayne Lepitzki
Editor, <i>Trail &amp; Landscape</i>	Annie Bélair

#### **Chairs not on the Board of Directors**

Macoun Field Club	Rob Lee
Safe Wings Ottawa	Anouk Hoedeman
Webmaster	Sandra Garland
Ontario Nature Representative	Diane Holmes

Fenja advised that several of the Committees need more members and appealed to attendees to consider volunteering as committee members. The Education and Publicity Committee and the Events Committee are in particular need of new members.

### **8. New Business and General Discussion**

#### **Celebrating Fenja Brodo's 30 years on the OFNC Board**

On the occasion of Fenja's retirement from the Board, several members of the Board spoke to her contributions to the Club.

Eleanor Zurbrigg noted that Fenja has been a member of the Club for 54 years. During that time, she has served in various positions including:

- 10 years as Editor of *Trail & Landscape*,
- 10 years on the Education and Publicity Committee,
- 10 years on the Events Committee, and
- 10 years on the Executive Committee.

In 2001, Fenja was awarded the George McGee Service Award for her contribution as an outstanding Editor of *Trail & Landscape*.

In 2009, Fenja was elected to Honorary Membership in the Club.

Annie Bélair noted that, during her tenure as Editor of *Trail & Landscape* from 1991 to 2001, Fenja had worked on 38 issues of *Trail & Landscape*, contributing to a major part of the Club's work. Fenja was the third editor to use a computer but still worked with many paper manuscripts.

Jakob Mueller noted that Fenja had chaired the Events Committee for five of the 10 years that she was on the committee. The position involves a great deal of work, arranging field trips and speakers among other responsibilities. Fenja has also been involved in co-ordinating Awards Night and the Pelee trip over the years.

Diane Lepage noted that Fenja had served as Vice President, President, and Past President of the Club. She described Fenja as very interested in other people, very positive, and very welcoming towards new ideas. Diane remarked that Fenja will be missed on the Board and looked forward to her continued participation in the Club.

All the speakers expressed their thanks for Fenja's contributions to the Club. They also noted her remarkably persuasive talent for recruiting members into positions of responsibility within the Club which will be sorely missed.

Fenja thanked the speakers and told the meeting that she had enjoyed it all!

#### **10. Adjournment**

It was moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Eleanor Zurbrigg, that the meeting be adjourned.

**Carried**

ELIZABETH MOORE  
Recording Secretary

After the meeting was adjourned, Diane Lepage presented a multiple choice identification quiz of some of the wildlife captured in her beautiful photographs.

Bernie Ladouceur and Michelle Martin then reported on some of the rare birds seen in the Ottawa area over the past year and some of the changing trends that have been documented in recent years.

# The Canadian Field-Naturalist

## Annual Reports of OFNC Committees for October 2019–September 2020

### Awards Committee

The Awards Committee manages the process to annually recognize and thank those Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club (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

### 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 five 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 non-members 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, and 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 the Department of National Defense (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 15 December 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 30 August 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

### Conservation Committee

Intent to wrap up fieldwork on our multi-year Red Spruce survey project, we started 2020 activities via a late winter meeting with Norbert Lussier, an old colleague of Alan Gordon (the discoverer of the species in Ontario circa 1950). We met Norbert along with Janet Mason, of the Ottawa Stewardship

Council. Norbert was kind enough to discuss all he knows about Red Spruce in Ontario, including suggesting that we check the landscape north of Larose Forest in more detail. This inspired us to take several road trips in February and March and surf Google Streetview thoroughly, resulting in new populations being found near Rockland, near Plantagenet, near Alfred, in Larose Forest (first “wild” origin trees to our knowledge at Larose), and many trees found along the Highway 417 corridor bordering Voyageur Provincial Park, within 100 m west and south of the park (more on that later).

Given the challenges associated with the pandemic which emerged in March, we were initially concerned that we might be facing a “lost year” but ultimately we found ourselves to be no less busy than in a normal year, albeit with strict physical distancing from March onwards.

Our next major activity was a *Rhodora* survey at Alfred Bog during its flowering period in May. A rare (S1) eastern species, we had noted apparent habitat loss where *Rhodora* had previously been reported and that *Rhodora* had not been reported in recent years. So in collaboration with Ontario Parks and the Natural Heritage Information Centre, we surveyed and found large local populations of *Rhodora* persisting at the western edge of the bog. An interesting incidental finding was that we found the apparent culprit causing significant damage to Sheep Laurel leaves noted in previous years across eastern Ontario: *Kalmia Leaf Beetle* (*Tricholochmaea kalmiae*) was observed in high numbers consuming leaves of the evergreen Sheep Laurel.

In June our group, in cooperation with Ontario Nature, participated in a bioblitz survey at and near Gananoque Lake on a newly conserved property.

Following up on a hunch of committee member Greg Lutick, our group found a population of Greater Fringed Orchid (S1 species) near Vars during the summer.

Mid-summer, we confirmed (via observed flowers) the presence of wild-growth Dwarf Strawberry Bush (*Euonymus nanus*) at Gillies Grove making this perhaps only the second time the species has been observed to be escaped in North America.

Inspired by our late winter work finding Red Spruce, we proposed and were granted permission to conduct a six month survey (July–end of year) for Red Spruce at Voyageur Provincial Park. We ended up discovering three populations of the species at the park, making Voyageur one of a very few parks in the province with confirmed natural growth Red Spruce. Given the half-year duration of the project over repeated visits to the park, we found a number of other new species for the park and other interesting

incidental findings such as what we think may be the largest Rock Elm on public property in Ontario.

In late summer we conducted a radio interview with Carleton University’s CKCU, describing our group’s work in recent years. We also participated in a number of conservation-related physically-distant activities, notably small in-person tours with the Friends of the Farm and livestreams with Ecology Ottawa.

For the autumn academic term, we participated in the design and evaluation of a 3rd-year environmental science course at Carleton University (with Professor Susan Aitken of Carleton University and Janet Mason of the Ottawa Stewardship Council).

We had intended for 2020 to be a year focussed on reptile / amphibian surveys: to some extent our activity was reduced due to the pandemic, but led by committee member Jakob Mueller our group made significant finds such as Milk Snake at Orleands, Spotted Salamander in Cumberland Forest near Vars, and Two-lined Salamander at Voyageur Provincial Park. We intend to carry on with this focus in 2021.

Along with community partners, our group is planning biodiversity monitoring projects at Lavigne Natural Park project and Carp Barrens during 2021. Following our work at Voyageur Provincial Park and Alfred Bog in 2020, we are also planning additional work with Ontario Parks in 2021.

In addition to active work in the field, we also responded to several proposed changes to policy relevant to conservation, notably the provincial Bill 229 late in the year.

OWEN CLARKIN, Chair

## 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 Ottawa–Carleton District School Board’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 three 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](http://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](http://ofnc.ca/maps). The committee is 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 26 September. 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

## Events Committee

The 2020 Events Committee faced an incredibly challenging year. The committee had started the year well-positioned, with speakers booked for most of the year's meetings and dozens of planned field trips in the works. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, all monthly meetings and field trips after 15 March were cancelled. With restrictions and safety procedures, field trips resumed in September 2020, but few such events were scheduled as virus case counts climbed again in the "second wave".

The committee pivoted to creating digital events, primarily held on Zoom, with one digital "scavenger hunt" conducted on the OFNC Facebook group. Official monthly meetings resumed in December in an online format. Astronomer Howard Simkover presented at both the last in-person meeting and the first new digital meeting.

In total, the committee coordinated 23 events (not including those cancelled), including field trips, workshops, presentations for monthly meetings, and digital events. Topics included birding (five), mycology (five), conservation (two), astronomy (two), herpetology (one), and photography (one), with the remainder being general interest (seven).

The committee extends its sincere gratitude to all individuals who lead, presented, or assisted with events.

JAKOB MUELLER, Chair

## Finance Committee

This report covers financial matters during fiscal year 2019–2020, which extended from 1 October 2019 through 30 September 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, because 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 FY2019–2020 was approved at the Board of Directors meeting of October 2019. The draft budget for FY2020–2021 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 3.0% 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

### Fletcher Wildlife Garden

2020 has been a challenging year for the FWG group. All work, access, and activity at the Fletcher were carried out under COVID-19 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 (DSV) 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, although continued vigilance is required. This has allowed increased focus 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.

TED FARNWORTH, Committee Member

### Macoun Club

From September 2019 until 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 nine field trips.

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

A novel coronavirus had been detected in Canada in January. As the number of cases of the disease COVID-19 rose sharply in March, Ontario and Quebec went into a society-wide shutdown. The OFNC 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.

Committee members discussed the effects of extended restrictions on Macoun Club members, as reported by their parents: separation from their closest friends, confinement to their homes, physical inactivity, and being deprived of healthy experience in nature.

As OFNC approval was not given until 1 September, there were no Macoun Club field trips for the children during the last six months of the Club's 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.

ROBERT E. LEE, Chair

## 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 *Trail & Landscape* (T&L). This group, together with "T&L Subscriber", are reported separately.

The distribution of Club membership for 2020 on 30 September 2020 and on 30 September 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.

	2020	2019
Individual	377	402
Family	309	339
Student	16	30
Honorary	23	24
Life	39	39
Macoun Club	20	17
U.S.A.	10	7
International	1	1
TOTAL	795	859

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

	2020	2019
T&L Subscriber	3	3
Other	26	23
Total	29	26

HENRY STEGER, Chair

## Publications Committee

The Publications Committee manages publication of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* (CFN), T&L, 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 T&L were published: 54(1–4). In collaboration with the Canadian Museum of Nature, the project to image and upload T&L 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 Volume 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*

Five issues of CFN were published, based on the mailing date: 133(1–4) and 134(1). 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, focussed 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 2020. 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 *T&L* 54(3): 112. The research grant program was reported on by the *Ottawa Citizen* (8 May 2020). COVID-19 restrictions may have curtailed some field work during the summer of 2020.

JEFFERY M. SAARELA, Chair

### Safe Wings Ottawa

#### Highlights

In 2019–2020, Safe Wings Ottawa (SWO) volunteers:

- Documented more than 3000 window collisions (exact number not yet available), a small decrease from the previous year due to volunteer availability / effort.
- Provided care to 1336 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 11 September. Our previous one-day record, on 21 May 2019, was 26 live birds.
- Answered an estimated 5000 phone calls, up 40% from the previous year. We have recruited and trained more volunteers to answer the phone.
- Added eight 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 (NCC) 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 Road, and launched an initiative to assess all its buildings for collision risk.

Communications Security Establishment (CSE) 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 Road 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 Drive, then hired a third party to do the job.

Safe Wings Ottawa gave presentations to staff from National Research Canada (NRCan) and BGIS (property management company for most federal buildings). Since then, BGIS applied visual markers to a glass railings at NRCan Head Quarters at 580 Booth Street, 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.

ANOUC HOEDEMAN, Chair

## Treasurer's Report

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club continues to be on a solid financial footing. The fiscal year 2019–2020 showed a surplus of revenue over expenses of \$22035 in the General Fund. This is more related to specific circumstances rather than indicative of a trend. In the previous year (2018–2019) there had been a slight loss of about \$3000 and the year before a

larger loss of about \$42000. Looking over the past 10 years there has been year-over-year variability in the surplus or loss but no defining trend. Receipt of the Czasak bequest raised revenues significantly in 2014 and 2015. The start of programs and activities resulting from that bequest lead to apparent losses in the following years. We seem to now have settled back into more balanced revenues and expenses.

Looking more closely at 2019–2020, Total Revenue was higher by about \$25K than the previous year if you remove the Pelee trip revenue from 2019. Donations were higher overall including a large single donation (\$4K) to Safe Wings for rehabilitation equipment. Revenue from authors for publishing in the CFN were considerable higher (\$18K) because we had an extra issue of CFN published and we started to send out invoices after the issue was published online rather than after it was published in print.

Expenses were slightly lower this year because some activities were curtailed as a result of pandemic restrictions. Our usual donation of \$5000 to the Ottawa–Carleton District School Board for buses for students for outdoor education was deferred until the activity can safely resume. During the year the Club gave \$5000 to Ontario Nature to help with the purchase of more land in the Frontenac Arch. The Vanleek Hill District Nature Society was given \$1000 to conduct an emission study related to a proposed cement plant. The Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists were given \$800 for Burnt Lands Alvar web development.

The Fletcher Wildlife Garden could not hold their annual native plant sale which is their major fundraiser. Some plants were sold directly raising \$1255 compared with \$6736 the previous year from plant sales. They did receive a grant of \$5276 from the City of Ottawa for "Design your own Pollinator Garden" workshops which were held in the fall of 2020 by Elizabeth Gammell.

Looking ahead we are detecting some softening in membership and subscription renewals but it is hard to say how significant this will be financially. It may be a temporary problem resulting from decreased activities. Universities, who are our main subscribers and who pay many author's charges, are also being squeezed by the pandemic. Interest income will decrease as low interest rates continue. Fortunately we have a good cushion to enable us to keep our programs going regardless of these kind of changes.

ANN MACKENZIE, Treasurer

Approved financial statements available online at: <https://www.canadianfieldnaturalist.ca/index.php/cfn/article/view/2825/2689>