

Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club – Board of Directors Meeting
Monday, February 24, 2025 – 7:00 p.m. on Zoom
Minutes

Chair: Owen Clarkin

Present: Ann MacKenzie, Annie Belair, Elizabeth Moore, Ted Farnworth (until 8.30 p.m.), Lisa Chamney, Jessica Sims, Susan Lehmann, Katriina Ilves, Janette Niwa, Jakob Mueller, Deborah Doherty (representing Education & Publicity)

Absent: Gordon Robertson, Catherine Hessian, Emilia Michaud, Ken Young, Bev McBride

1. Approval of the Agenda – the Agenda was approved as circulated.
2. Acceptance of Minutes from January 20, 2025
Moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Lisa Chamney, that the Minutes of the January 20, 2025 meeting be approved. **CARRIED**
3. Business arising from the minutes

- a) Errors and Omissions Insurance - Ann had sent directors a report of the Finance Committee (attached) on their consideration of adding additional insurance to cover any risks associated with publications, media or Safe Wings advisory contracts. The Finance Committee recommended that no additional insurance be purchased.
Moved by Ann MacKenzie, seconded by Katriina Ilves, that the Board accept the Finance Committee recommendation that the OFNC not purchase any additional insurance.
CARRIED

Following this decision, it was suggested that the Board should review some of the Club's safeguards. One area that was felt to warrant attention was the security of the Club's membership database. Action: **Katriina** will look into this with input from Lisa.

- b) Research Grants – Owen advised that John Prescott is eager to move the reintroduction of the programme forward and has provided an updated Calls for Proposals criteria document for evaluation of applications. There is currently no budget for the programme so it will take two Board meetings to approve a budget.
Moved by Jakob Mueller, seconded by Janette Niwa, that OFNC allocate \$12,000 to re-establish the Research Grants Programme.

There followed considerable discussion. Some directors expressed concern that, during the last round of grant applications in 2023, the Board had rejected a number of applications that had been recommended for approval by the Research Grants Committee. Owen was of the view that the previous grant criteria were appropriate but that, over time, the criteria had been less rigorously applied and some conflicts of interest had developed. Jakob emphasised the duty of the Board to oversee the workings of the

Club. Although the Board should have confidence in its review committee, there could be exceptional instances in which a project recommended by the committee needed to be rejected by the Board. Directors requested that a rigorous rubric for applications be provided along with a clear outline of the process and the roles of the Board and Research Grant Committee. The motion will be reviewed in March.

4. Communications – Ken had circulated a number of communications earlier this month. Ann advised that there had been nil of note since
5. Treasurer's Report – Ann, as acting Treasurer while Ken is away, reported that the Charity return, T3010 has been completed and filed.
6. Issues for Discussion
 - a) Ian Whyte – It was reported that Ian Whyte had passed away recently. Owen noted that he had been a key member of the Conservation Committee for as long as Owen has been a member. He was a dedicated naturalist and very committed to ecological causes in which he believed. **Action: Owen** will organise a letter of condolence.
 - b) Committee Rosters
Moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Jakob Mueller, that the 2025 Committee Rosters be approved as circulated. **CARRIED**
 - c) Bird (Owl) harassment – Owen noted that there have been reports of snowy owl baiting this winter in local rural areas. This has also been a problem with respect to other species of owl at FWG. When AAFC has been contacted about baiting at FWG, they suggest phoning the police or by-law. Jakob advised that on Greenbelt land NCC Conservation Officers have jurisdiction and that they have been active with respect to owls. Incidents have been well documented but the officers do not have a great deal of experience in this area. On other federal land MNR conservation officers are responsible. Jess suggested that some people may not understand the harm that can result from this activity and may respond to public attempts to dissuade them. She also suggested that the Club could consider publishing a message if this is becoming an increasing issue.
 - d) Awards Night (April 12)
Moved by Jakob Mueller, seconded by Lisa Chamney, that the Awards Citations prepared by the Awards committee and circulated by Bev McBride be approved. **CARRIED**
Consideration of associated ideas and activities for the event was deferred.
 - e) Communication within BOD, & non-BOD contacts – deferred
 - f) Greeters at monthly meetings – Bev McBride had suggested that it would be nice to have greeters at monthly meetings. **Action: Owen** will follow up.

7. Committee Updates

- a) Awards - see 6d) above.
- b) Birds – Emilia was attending a Birds Committee meeting and had circulated the following report by email:

“BRSC Roster for 2025

We still need to confirm the Birds Records Subcommittee roster. This Subcommittee has not met for a few years and I asked them to let me know if they are still a valid committee (basically eBird and other applications have mostly made the work obsolete, though not completely). Bernie has followed up with the subcommittee membership and had a proposal for what and who will be involved in the future. We will be reviewing that during our BC call.

COO letter to the NCC re: Bird Feeders

Jean-Marc Emery, the president of the COO (Le Club des ornithologues de l'Outaouais) wrote a very potent letter to the NCC requesting a meeting with them with regards to the decision they made to remove the bird feeders. The letter was very well written and pointed out science organizations which are all for Bird Feeders and which don't agree with the NCC. The outcome of that letter is that Stephane Wojciechowski, Sr. Manager, Natural Resources and Land management at NCC has offered to meet with the COO. I was on CC for the letter and I continue to be on cc for their communication and I would like us to attend that meeting (I am not fully bilingual but we have some BC members who are). I would also like to hear what the NCC has to say about their decision.

Snow Bunting banding

After the initial contact, Oliver Love from Windsor university has not returned my emails for clarification on process, duration, start, etc - or how we might be able to help in this project. I have reached out and am still waiting for a response.

Bird ID workshop in early spring

We want to host a bird ID workshop in early spring, before Spring migration. This would cover the correct use of eBird (and why that's important). We'll be discussing details during the BC meeting.”

- c) Conservation – Jakob reported the following:
 - 1. He has noticed that the Conservation Committee web page contains some inaccuracies about the history of the committee that he plans to address.
 - 2. A brief survey around a tributary in the South Nation watershed, where some trees had been thought to be swamp white oaks, determined that they were not but the Committee plans to keep looking for this species to fully understand its distribution in our area.
 - 3. On a recent Club outing at Mer Bleu a Canada jay was spotted, the first ever posted to iNaturalist in this area. Some other birders found the bird again later and it is thought that it may be a male trying to establish territory.

Owen, whilst easing out of Conservation Committee activities, has engaged with the NCC in work at Pinhey Forest. Red spruce is naturally occurring there. The area was severely damaged during the derecho. It was originally suggested that the area was not going to be bulldozed but this has now taken place.

- d) Education & Publicity – Deb reported that Gord has given two talks to seniors' homes. A meeting at FWG with "For our Kids Ottawa", a community of families who have come together to tackle the climate emergency by participating in family-friendly activism, had to be postponed because of a snowstorm but will be rescheduled. The Committee is registered to give four prizes at the Regional Science Fair. They need to find judges. They are looking to revitalize committee membership because it has dropped off. Owen suggested advertising at monthly meetings and sending out an email to the membership seeking volunteers.
- e) Events – the Committee will meet in March to prepare for the upcoming season. They have speakers organised for upcoming monthly meetings.
- f) Finance – Ann reported that the Committee will meet March 5 and report back to the Board.
- g) Fletcher Wildlife Garden – no report
- h) Macoun Club – Susan: nil to report
- i) Membership – Lisa: nil to report
- j) Ontario Nature – Jakob reported that the next regional meeting will be on April 13 at Elbow Lake and will be hosted by the Kingston Field Naturalists.
- k) Publications – Jess had circulated the following report by email:
 - "The Publications Committee **met on February 3**; it was a very productive meeting with key issues discussed including **a recap of the CFN Associate Editors Meeting and how to get CFN caught up**
 - Associate Editors Meeting Recap:
 - The goal of this meeting was to try and identify issues that could be slowing down the editorial process (with the ultimate goal of getting CFN caught up)
 - Decision to draft a new list of instructions for AEs to help streamline editorial process and reduce inefficiencies
 - Getting CFN Caught Up:

- To get issue 138(2) out faster and meet page counts, more Book Reviews and a longer New Titles list was added

CFN Financial Update and Subscription Trends:

- Subscription numbers have dropped, with eight fewer institutional subscribers and four fewer individual subscribers compared to the previous year
- The decline may be due to recent rate increases, but there is also a sense that CFN being behind schedule may deter new subscriptions
- Additionally, the Manning Fund, which supports publication costs, is being depleted faster than anticipated. Previous estimates suggested it would last until 2030, but with current spending levels, the fund may run out sooner

Liability Question (from Ann) in regards to CFN:

- Dwayne, Amanda, Bill and Jeff have been working on a response
- Changes to CFN documentation will include additions to AU order forms, BR copyright forms, inside front cover, and OFNC copyright notices

Dan Brunton's Vascular Flora Checklist:

- Dan Brunton has recently completed a significant project: a complete vascular flora checklist of the Ottawa area
- He emailed Annie suggesting that *Trail & Landscape* publish it; the committee believes CFN would be a better fit
- Discussions are ongoing with Dan. Editorial concerns (i.e., extra workload of a special issue) and financial concerns (i.e., CFN would have to subsidize page charges, plus potential cost of Open Access and colour printing)
- Next Publications Committee meeting: April 1, 2025

CFN in the News!

- Dwayne contacted a local reporter in Alberta to write an article about the recent study in CFN on the declining population of Harlequin Duck on the Bow River (Alberta). Link to article: <https://www.rmoutlook.com/lake-louise/harlequin-duck-population-on-bow-river-in-banff-declined-over-past-25-years-10126602>

Dwayne had circulated the following report by email:

“138(1)

- 116 pp. fully posted online 17 January 2025
- print galleys couriered back to Gilmore 31 January, with 3 pages requiring corrections
- corrected online version posted 31 January

- uncertain if it has been printed and sent for mailing
- Editor's synopsis and free open access Feature Article sent to others last Friday (21 Feb)

138(2) April–June 2024

- 86 pages at the galley stage, so issue is complete (only need a minimum of 80 journal pages for the spine thickness, not 88 as earlier thought)
- 7 manuscripts (ms) and galleys produced, 3 at author (AU) order form stage (transfer of copyright, order form), 1 returned from AU review, changes made, and ready for AU order form, 2 at AU proof stage (1 returned today with 1 correction required), 1 nearly ready to send for AU proofing
- had to update the OFCN copyright notice because of the name change and AU order forms so that caused a slight delay in sending the AU order forms
- will also need to update the inside front cover because of the name change
- 21 pages of 10 book reviews and New Titles
- will be some colour printing
- on target to get a least published online by the end of March

138(3) July–October 2024

- 2 ms returned from AU review of formal copyediting and will be sent for layout soon
- 1 ms has returned from formal copyediting and will be sent for AU review soon
- 1 ms at formal copyediting
- 1 ms nearly ready for formal copyediting once some clarification on methodology received from AU

Other manuscripts in the process

- 9 revisions of ms have been received with 3 of those being recommended for acceptance by the assigned Associate Editor (AE) after they have reviewed the revisions
- another revision returned and Dwayne sent it for AE's opinion some time ago, but still no response
- 32 manuscripts are undergoing revision after the initial Editor-in-Chief (EiC) or AE decision was made; 13 of which are from earlier than 2021
- peer-review and AE's recommendation completed on 5 manuscripts and are awaiting EiC initial decision (2 require major revision), plus 2 reviews rcvd on another ms for which I am AE (minor revision)
- 4 ms under initial review by the reviewers requested by the assigned AE

- 4 ms received so far in 2025, similar to 2024, AE's have been assigned to 3, 1 review already completed (major revision, accounted for above)"

OFNC Book Club Update – Jess had circulated the following report by email:

- "New blog posted on OFNC website: <https://ofnc.ca/uncategorized/ofnc-book-club-next-pick>
- Currently reading: *The End of Eden: Wild Nature in the Age of Climate Breakdown* (2023) by Adam Welz
- Next meeting: Tuesday, March 18 at 7 p.m. (on Zoom)
- Guest speaker booked for meeting: Researcher, data scientist, and passionate environmentalist **Dr. Alessandro Filazzola**. Dr. Filazzola was the lead author of a study last March that predicted the number of non-human animal species living in Ottawa's urban boundary could double by the year 2100!
- Current number of subscribers to Book Club mailing list: 93"

Annie reported that she is working on the April-June T&L which will be at the maximum 80 pages 80.

l) Safe Wings Ottawa – Janette had circulated the following report by email:

"Communication

- Working on promo material for annual display
- Posting WonderGrove ForKids on the web page soon
- Working on SM material about BF windows at the new Line 2 LRT stations & non BF bike shelters
- Reviewing potential missing records (~40) in collision report & public file
- Shared means to have a special link to a volunteers name and areas for collision entry

Annual Report/Stats

- Data cleaning in progress for 2,199 birds to date
- Reports required for rehab licenses

Volunteer Activities / Advocacy

- Annual Display will be at the Canadian Museum of Nature again - Thursday, March 13.
- Following up on reports and have been asked to evaluate all ECCC buildings for treatment priority
- Carleton U research: looking for another student to patrol and there might be a post-doc student doing some other research in 2025
- Ducklings 2025 – currently same procedure as last year
- Request for Building Assessments – connecting with Finance Committee on CanadaBuys application to obtain a Personal Business Number (PBN) for GC buildings

- o British High Commission - presented to a very interested group in December; have a “green” new building which has many windows and is very close to the Ottawa River & have noticed an increase in collisions since they opened last winter. They will explore options for mitigation provided they can find the funds
- o National Press Office - pending, once we get our PBN”

Janette advised that some related organisations, e.g. FLAP, will be coming to the annual display and will be bringing some specimens. Local dignitaries will be invited.

8. Adjournment – there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned

Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Moore

Upcoming Meeting Dates

March 17, 2025

April 14, 2025 (TBC)

May 12, 2025 (TBC)

June 16, 2025

Appendix

1. Report of the Finance Committee to the Board – Additional Insurance for OFNC

Report of the Finance Committee to the Board

FEB 19, 2025

Additional Insurance for OFNC

The OFNC currently carries \$ 5,000,000 in general liability insurance and director liability insurance. The annual cost for these two policies is \$2,109 (General - \$1149, Directors – \$804). The Directors insurance was added in March 2018.

Recently, we have been considering adding coverage for Errors and Omissions (E&O). This issue arose in the context of Safe Wings providing assessments to the government and other organizations with respect to reducing or mitigating bird strikes. At the same time, our insurance broker reminded us that they have been recommending, in their renewal memo, that we get insurance for our media and publications. These are two different kinds of E&O insurance policies.

Recommendation: The Finance Committee is recommending that we do not purchase any additional insurance. The costs are quite high, and the risks are low or manageable. The policies are not considered a prudent use of our club's financial resources.

A Safe Wings coverage

Estimated cost - \$850 plus \$68 tax = \$918 for \$1,000,000 liability on the provision of Bird Mortality professional services.

The risk is that the advice we provide might be incorrect and we might be sued. One possibility would be a building owner, after taking our advice, being charged under the Migratory Bird Act and claiming damages from us. This could be mitigated by the wording in the report submitted as part of the contract.

B Media Liability (also known as Publisher's Errors & Omissions Liability)

Estimated cost - \$2,250 plus \$180 = \$2,430 for \$250,000 liability with \$2,500 deductible covering our publications and our social media accounts.

The risk is that we will make a mistake that causes harm to someone. Examples are Defamation; Libel; Invasion of privacy; Copyright & trademark infringement; Advertising injury; Misappropriation of ideas or Plagiarism; Mental anguish or emotional distress. These kinds of risk are well known to all publishers. Editors work hard to ensure that these mistakes are not made. The Publications Committee was asked in February 2021 and again last month if they felt we should obtain this kind of insurance. They have not expressed any requirement for it.

C Other Insurance Coverage

Each year when our insurance is renewed, we receive a renewal memo. That memo usually contains recommendations for additional coverage. In 2021 we considered Cyber Insurance (\$500/yr) and decided not to proceed. This year the renewal memo suggests Accident Compensation for volunteers at \$3.50 per person

(about \$600 per year). Our general approach continues to be purchasing the insurance necessary to conduct our programs and to manage our affairs to reduce other risks.