

Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club – Board of Directors Meeting
Monday March 17, 2025 – 7:00 p.m. on Zoom
Minutes

Chair: Owen Clarkin

Present: Ann MacKenzie, Annie Belair, Elizabeth Moore, Ted Farnworth, Jessica Sims, Susan Lehmann, Janette Niwa, Jakob Mueller, Deborah Doherty (representing Education & Publicity), Ken Young, Catherine Hessian, Bev McBride, Emilia Michaud

Absent: Gordon Robertson, Lisa Chamney, Katriina Ilves,

1. Approval of the Agenda – the Agenda was approved as circulated.
2. Acceptance of Minutes from February 24, 2025
Moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Ann MacKenzie, that the Minutes of the February 24, 2025 meeting be approved. **CARRIED**

CARRIED

3. Business arising from the minutes
 - a) Bird (Owl) harassment update – Owen had confirmed with local birders that owl harassment and baiting, a yearly issue, has been worse than usual this year and that there has been some hostility noted when these practices have been challenged. Diane Lepage had noted great grey owls being baited over the weekend at Mer Bleue and had reported this to NCC. Photos of a dead grey owl locally had surfaced on the internet and may reflect harassment. Emilia noted that this is an irruption year for great grey owls so there are more in the area. Owen is keen to maintain attention on this problem. It is difficult to deal with. Organisations similar to ours report the same problem. It is suggested that some paid tour operators are baiting owls on private land and that the landowners are also being paid. FWG has received emails asking why they are not doing anything about the problem. Ted has communicated with AAFC who say this is not something their security staff is trained to deal with. They suggest contacting by-law which experience suggests is unlikely to be helpful. The various levels of government do not have enough conservation officers to deal with such a problem. There is little helpful legislation. It was noted that, although harassment is illegal, the province considers that baiting does not constitute harassment. There was some suggestion that signs at FWG may have helped. Janette had suggested putting up fencing but that could also draw attention to areas in which owls are present. Ted will discuss this with FWG. Catherine was of the opinion that some people will never choose to follow birding etiquette and warned against confrontation. She felt that we can only be expected to be responsible for our own space i.e. FWG. It was noted that the problem of harassment was not confined to owls. For instance, a varied thrush has been spotted in the east end and the number of photos that have appeared of it suggests that it is probably being harassed.

Jess suggested that we should perhaps look at the opportunity to educate the population and focus on promoting appreciation of all of our birds, the common ones as well as the rarities, rather than just the negative aspects of this issue. This could perhaps be achieved through e.g. blog posts, T&L, social media, bookmarks, storyboards, QR codes, making connections with photographers etc. Jess, Emilia, Bev, Janette and Deb offered to start considering such an initiative.

- b) Pinhey Forest Derecho cleanup update – Owen had been at Pinhey Forest over the weekend. He was pleased to report that the bulldozing of the area by the NCC, following widespread damage by the derecho, had, as recommended, largely avoided the conifers. The forest is the only location in the City of Ottawa and its greenbelt that has red spruce.
 - c) Research Grants (Deferred to April meeting)
- 4. Communications – Ken had sent out by email a report of a card and a donation directed to FWG in response to the obituary of Roland Leigh Jeffreys which mentioned OFNC. Ted noted that, when he learns about donations relating to FWG volunteers, he tries to thank donors on behalf of FWG also.
 - 5. Treasurer's Report – Ken had circulated the following report by email:

“Current Financial Processing

No issues. Thank you, Ann, for covering for me during February.

T4A Forms

The OFNC issues T4A statements to certain individuals, covering payments made to them during the tax (calendar) year. T4A statements are prepared for individuals (not companies) who receive OFNC research grants and payments for contract services.

For these people, we are required by the Canada Revenue Agency to prepare T4A forms that show the total payment that the OFNC paid to such people during the calendar year. Copies go to CRA and to the individuals concerned.

This year they were sent on January 28; the deadline is the end of February.”

6. Issues for Discussion

- a) Nominating Committee Policy – Ann reported that the Finance Committee is considering what policies we need as a result of the new By-Laws and is also reviewing existing policies. She had circulated a proposal for updating the Policy for Nomination of Directors. In order to ensure that the nomination process is transparent and inclusive, allowing members to have a say in the leadership of the organization, the Nominating Committee would advertise in T&L and through email, asking for interest in being a Member of the Board.

- b) Awards Night Planning (April 12) – Bev had circulated the following report by email:

“Preparations continue leading up Awards Night: getting certificates framed and name plaques engraved for the trophies. We are preparing somewhat abbreviated citations for Owen to read aloud when presenting the awards. These shorter citations will be emailed to Owen around April 4th (a week before Awards Night).”

Diane Lepage is organising the evening. Bev asked the Board to encourage all their contacts to attend.

- c) Pelee Trip Planning – the next Pelee Trip will take place during May 6-10, 2026. Owen will be getting around to early planning (Bus, Hotel, etc.) soon and may reach out to others e.g. Jakob. Ann reminded the Board that, after the 2019 trip, they had decided to make the trip a fund raiser. She emphasised the need to develop policies about e.g. refunds early during the planning.
- d) Committee Rosters – A number of additional Committee Members had been proposed. (see 7 c) Conservation and 7 d) Education & Publicity below)

7. Committee Updates

- a) Awards – (see 6 b) above)

- b) Birds – Emilia had circulated the following report by email:

i. Working on a Bird Song ID course

ii. Bird Records SubCommittee Terms of Reference - we are going to review the new proposed TOR for the BRSC and then bring that to the BOD.

iii. Birds Committee Terms of Reference review - we have some updates we want to make to these, so we will review those and again bring them to the BOD.

iv. Land Access Permit for Shirley's bay causeway

v. Staying in touch with the COO as they met with the NCC with regards to the NCC requesting they remove the Bird Feeders at Lac Lemy (the way they asked us to remove our feeders). I can give an update from the COO-NCC meeting.

vi. We have some ideas for some guided bird walks we will be discussing. The team is keen to support such activities

vii. Received emails from three different people interested in volunteering with the birds committee - following up.

viii. Received a request for a 6 part presentation on "Wonderful world of birds" from the West End Learning Unlimited group. Presentations would be September – November in the mornings at the Legion hall in Kanata.

ix. Started the process to get the SHRIKE database bird record data into eBird - we are going to have university students from University of Ottawa help out with the manual input of data into templates and then upload that to eBird. This has been on the "to do" list for a few years (as I understand it).

x. Fielded bird queries and published the weekly bird sightings report."

Emilia suggested that the Committee may be acquiring some new members.

c) Conservation

Moved by Jakob Mueller, seconded by Bev McBride, that Greg Lutick and Nathan Stevens-Cocco be approved as members of the Conservation Committee. **CARRIED**

Jakob will be updating the Conservation details on the website.

d) Education & Publicity – Deb Doherty had circulated the following report by email:

"We have two new committee members and potentially a third.

We'll be meeting in person in early April.

We have 4 judges for the Ottawa District Science Fair scheduled for 4-5 April at Carleton University.

Our first big event of the year will be World Migratory Bird Day with Bird Friendly Ottawa on May 10th."

Moved by Jakob Mueller, seconded by Emilia Michaud, that Cheryl Soulliere and Min Ku be approved as members of the Education & Publicity committee. **CARRIED**

e) Events – Owen reported that they are gearing up for spring. A number of events will be finalised this week including some joint events. The next meeting of the committee will take place before the end of March.

f) Finance – Ann had circulated the following report by email:

"The Finance Committee met in person on March 5.

A. Financial Statements - We reviewed the financial statements for 2024 and again noted that we will be in a deficit if four CFN issues are issued in a year, and the grant program gets rolling. At the same time, we should continue to be on the watch for ways to invest our bequest funds to further our objectives. We might experiment with doing matching funds with our membership for something like land conservation if there is time. As well as raising money, it would help to engage the membership. Future financial statements should show a summary statement of all funds combined since many people just focus on the General Fund.

B. Audit versus Review - There was considerable discussion about how to best inform the membership about how we manage our finances and what is involved in an audit. We

decided that the most effective approach would be to prepare a paper to be included in the ABM package which addresses this subject. That would make it timely with respect to the vote at the ABM and only those interested in the topic need to read it. Then we would be ready with a short Power Point if needed during the discussion at the ABM. Once the discussion or background paper and the concise PowerPoint presentation have been developed, they can be utilized or made available in subsequent years.

For any paper or presentation, it is important to start with what issue or concern we are trying to address with an audit. We cannot just state that an audit is a lot of work and expense, and we don't want to do one. We need to stress our internal controls, the number of volunteers involved, and the use of various outside professionals (bookkeeper, accountant, investment advisor). Then we can conclude that an audit is not necessary.

- C. Operating Policies - With the adoption of our new By-Laws, we need policies for some items that were previously included in the old By-Laws or that are required by ONCA. At the same time, we decided to review the existing policies and update them where needed. It was felt that policies should be reviewed and updated at least every 10 years. We divided up the policies among us for writing or review/revising. We aim to present drafts to the Board for the April 14th board meeting.”
- g) Fletcher Wildlife Garden – Ted noted that, although FWG has advertised through Volunteer Ottawa for many years, it has not proved particularly useful for the last few years. Many of the respondents have been high school students who are required to complete volunteer hours and are not very motivated and whose availability does not fit well with the FWG season. They will not use Volunteer Ottawa this year. They already have 13 expressions of interest and a corporate group. Ted asked for suggestions for targeting volunteers with a genuine interest. Deb suggested the University of Ottawa Conservation and Biology students but the timing of the academic year might limit their availability also.
- h) Macoun Club – Susan reported that Club activities continue as usual although they are taking a hiatus over March Break. They will be participating in Awards Night as usual.
- i) Membership – Lisa had advised by email that there was nil to report
- j) Ontario Nature - Jakob noted that the Regional Meeting will take place on April 13. He will bring up the owl issue. Owen expressed interest in knowing what other groups in our area are doing about this problem
- k) Publications - Jess had circulated the following report by email:

“- issue 138(1) has arrived in mailboxes!

- see Dwayne's Editor's Synopsis of 138(1) on the OFNC blog:

<https://ofnc.ca/uncategorized/editors-synopsis-of-cfn-1381>

- includes the Feature Article, which is all about the discovery of a new amoeba in Mer Bleue!

- issue 138(2) is in final stages
- next meeting is on April 1st, so I'll have more to share after that"

Jess had also circulated the following report from Dwayne:

"New copyright forms required because of OFNC name change have been finalized.

Added consideration of becoming an OFNC member and/or subscribing to CFN to the Book Reviewer copyright form.

New OFNC copyright notice indicated on manuscripts where copyright has been transferred to OFNC.

Assistant Editor Amanda has noticed some issues of authors not receiving author order forms sent by Ken – she and Ken are working on solutions.

One issue that arose as Assistant Editor, Amanda, and Dwayne were updating the author order/copyright forms, which they will raise at the next Publications Committee meeting, is should we continue to ask authors if they'd like the option of us tweeting about their article on X (the former twitter), as opposed to other social media outlets, given issues with using X i.e., its owner. BlueSky might be an alternative.

Dwayne wondered if OFNC had considered a similar discussion?

138(2) April–June 2024

- total length is 88 pages, including 1 blank page
- 64 journal pages from 7 manuscripts has been paginated
- authors (AU) paying for colour in each 16-page signature meaning all articles/notes will be printed in colour
- at least 3 AU have requested invoices before the end of this federal fiscal year so they could pay = a bit of scrambling
- received last AU order/copyright form this morning
- only need to finalize covers then can begin online posting
- still on target for online posting by the end of March: Bill Halliday (online Journal Manager) just returned from vacation yesterday

138(3) July–October 2024

- 4 galleys + another rough galley for early invoice have been produced = 49 journal pages
- 2 of these 5 galleys had requests for early invoices, which have been sent, including one with a deadline of last Friday (14 March)
- both of these are open access and fully paid for colour with one also wanting 25 colour reprints because it is the first author's first publication
- 1 of these 4 galleys was sent for AU today
- another ms is at formal copyediting
- so currently 6 ms in advanced stages of publishing for 138(3)

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; Dwayne has started reviewing 1 of these 3
- another revision returned and Dwayne sent it for AE's opinion some time ago, but still no response
- 36 manuscripts are undergoing revision after the initial Editor-in-Chief (EiC) or AE decision was made; 13 of which are from earlier than 2021
- no backlog of ms that have undergone peer-review and AE's recommendation are awaiting EiC decision
- 5 ms under initial review by the reviewers requested by the assigned AE
- 4 ms received so far in 2025, 1 to be returned to AU for initial revision before being acceptable for formal peer review, another for which reviewers are yet to be requested by the assigned AE
- no backlog of ms awaiting EiC to assign an AE"

The Board discussed Dwayne's question about the use of Twitter and agreed that the Club should discontinue its use of this platform. Bluesky was considered as a suitable alternative. Deb will discuss this with Gord.

Book Club: Jess had circulated the following report by email:

- "- meeting tomorrow night to go over The End of Eden
- final meeting before summer break will be May 27"

Annie reported that the April-June T& L is at the printers and will be the maximum 80 pages.

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

"A quicker update this week because our big focus for the month has been the display, which was successfully held last Thursday at the Museum of Nature.

We also had Bird Friendly Ottawa on-site with us and Brendon Samuel, who is with FLAP and Bird Friendly London and was also representing Bird Friendly Guelph. He brought some species at risk and some species of interest from those cities that were window collisions. So our theme was more Canada wide. He also did a display on Parliament. Hill.

We only had a few media and a couple politicians attend. But the public seemed to be gaining much more knowledge about the issue and what we do.

Spring is approaching, so our patrolling will be starting within the month."

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

Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Moore

Upcoming Meeting Dates

April 14, 2025

May 12, 2025

June 16, 2025 (in person at FWG)