

Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club – Board of Directors Meeting
Monday, September 15, 2025 – 7:00 p.m. at Fletcher Wildlife Garden
Minutes

Chair: Owen Clarkin

Present: Ann MacKenzie, Annie Belair, Elizabeth Moore, Ted Farnworth, Janette Niwa, Jakob Mueller, Lisa Chamney, Ken Young, Gordon Robertson, Bev McBride, Katriina Ilves,

Absent: Emilia Michaud, Jessica Sims, Susan Lehmann

1. Approval of the Agenda – the agenda was approved as circulated with the addition of:
 - 4 d) Large donations and use of funds
 - 6 g) Nominations Committee
2. Acceptance of Minutes from the June 16, 2025 Board of Directors meeting and the August 26, 2025 special Board of Directors meeting.

Moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Ted Farnworth, that the Minutes of the June 16, 2025 Board of Directors meeting be accepted. **CARRIED**

Moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Gord Robertson, that the Minutes of the August 26, 2025 Special Board of Directors meeting be accepted. **CARRIED**

3. Business arising from the minutes
 - a. Aird Creek Property - Owen thanked those Board Members who had attended the two special meetings over the summer. He noted that the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust (MMLT) had been successful in obtaining the funds required to purchase the land for the proposed Aird Creek Nature Reserve.
 - b. Policies and Updated Handbook – Ann noted that the only policy outstanding is the Policy on Remuneration of Directors which has been referred to our lawyer from whom Ann has not yet heard back.
 - c. Dymon Storage Locker – the new building is not yet finished. Owen expressed concern about refusing all offers of books when members no longer want them as some could contain irreplaceable material and he wondered whether we should store some of them. Janette advised that there is some storage space left but not a great deal. A larger locker could be rented but somebody would be required to handle such donations.
 - d. Large donations and use of funds - deferred
4. Communications – Ken: nil to report
5. Treasurer's Report – Ken had circulated the following report:

“Current Financial Processing

Our fiscal year end, September 30, is coming up soon. It would be a great help if expense claims for reimbursements are submitted as soon as possible. It will help enormously with our year-end bookkeeping.

Please pass this request along to any volunteers that might have outstanding expenses.

Year-End Financial Processing

The annual process to prepare the Club's financial statements has begun. So far, a schedule has been agreed with Plus Advisors (our bookkeeper) and Welch LLP (our accountant).

The Board plays an important role in the process.

First, the budget for the fiscal year just ending was approved by the Board last October. A comparison of the actual revenues and expenses with the budget is an important reference document for the accountant.

Second, when the accountant provides us with draft Financial Statements in early December, they will be circulated to the Board and then discussed at the December meeting. The Board will vote on whether to distribute them to members for members' approval (or not) at the Club's Annual Business Meeting on January 14, 2026.

Chart of Accounts

The Chart of Accounts is the set of accounts that we use to categorize our revenues and expenses. It is used in everyday financial processing, such as the processing of expense claims. As well, it is the framework for our budget and our financial statements.

The set of accounts will be revised, with effect on October 1. The changes are minor and mainly serve to simplify the chart by reducing the number of accounts. It will be circulated to directors on October 1.

Fund Accounting

A proposal has been circulated to directors concerning our accounting procedures. The intent is to establish rules for how we handle our funds. The proposal is discussed in the document "OFNC Fund Accounting – Proposed Changes", dated 2025-08-26.

A summary of the proposal is:

When we receive a donation that is directed to a particular activity, such as Safe Wings or the Fletcher Wildlife Garden, what happens? Our current practice is ad-hoc. The proposal is a way to create consistency.

Adoption of the proposal would result in the creation of a fund for Safe Wings.

The proposal needs to be approved by the Board of Directors at the September meeting of the Board of Directors to be effective for our next fiscal year.

I will move the following motion at the September Board meeting:

Moved by Ken Young, seconded by Lisa Chamney, that the OFNC determine when to create or dissolve an internally restricted fund as follows:

Restricted revenues and expenditures will be represented in the financial statements as follows:

- 1) Distinguish activities which receive restricted revenues by whether they are continuing or temporary.
- 2) Establish an internally restricted fund for each continuing activity that accepts restricted donations or grants.
- 3) For temporary projects that accept restricted donations or grants:
 - a) If the project falls into the purview of an existing restricted fund, account for it in that fund:
 - b) Otherwise, account for it in the General Fund using the deferral method.

To come into effect for the 2025-26 fiscal year, beginning October 1, 2025. **CARRIED**

Moved by Ken Young, seconded by Ted Farnworth, that the OFNC will only accept restricted donations directed to the following activities of the Club:

the Canadian Field-Naturalist journal

the Fletcher Wildlife Garden

the Macoun Field Club

Safe Wings Ottawa

Changes to this list require the approval of the Board of Directors.

To come into effect for the 2025-26 fiscal year, beginning October 1, 2025. **CARRIED**

6. Issues for Discussion

- a. Budget – Ann: The Finance Committee had prepared a draft 2025-26 budget for consideration by the Board. Each committee described what they intended to do in the next year and how the money would be spent. The only change from the draft budget was a \$600 increase to the FWG Centre to fund a possible internet hub. The draft budget is open for modifications until the next Board meeting in October when it will be presented for approval.
- b. OFNC Membership Survey – a Membership Committee survey of members' engagement with the Club had been proposed. It transpired, however, that Education & Publicity had already organised a questionnaire soliciting volunteers with various expertise. Gord circulated this by email.
- c. Policies II: (OFNC events: “safety”) (Owen) – deferred
- d. OFNC Expense Claims – (see Item 5 above)
- e. Monthly Events Email (Newsletter?) – deferred
- f. Nominations Committee – Ann: the Policy on Nomination of Directors was approved by the Board at the April 14 meeting. According to that policy the Board needs to create an Ad Hoc Nominating Committee. Jakob Mueller agreed to Chair the Committee and Ann MacKenzie will be a member. They will consider adding a third member.

Moved by Ann MacKenzie, seconded by Gord Robertson, that a Nominating Committee be created to determine the nominees for the Board for 2026, chaired by Jakob Mueller. **CARRIED**

7. Committee Updates

- a. Awards - Bev reported that the Committee had prepared the call for nominations for the upcoming awards selection process and have submitted it to T&L.
- b. Birds – Emilia had circulated the following report by email:
 - we've had three people show interest in joining the committee, with one person having observed a couple of meetings and is now ready to be a full committee member. This is great news as we have some projects we would like to start and we need people to coordinate them.

- We continue to work on getting access to the Shirley's bay causeway. We wanted to have that access for this fall, so we can observe shorebirds who use that area but we've not been able to make too much progress over the summer. We have some ideas we will pursue in the next few months.

- We have updated the Terms of Reference for the Birds Committee and I plan to present that to the BoD in the October meeting. I believe you have to approve these if I remember correctly.

- I am still waiting for an updated Terms of Reference for the Bird Records Subcommittee (Bernie is working on that), so I hope to have that ready for the October meeting as well.

- Two team members are working on a Bird song identification workshop/course.

- One team member will be working on updating the Accessible Birding information to post on the club website.

- We are currently brainstorming projects we want to work on - hence the need for committee members who can coordinate. We have not yet made any decisions but examples are:

- Work on an Ottawa Official Bird project (probably coordinate with other organizations in Ottawa)
- Walk and Talks - Talks online and followed by walks in person
- Movie Night
- Swap Shop
- Museum of Nature Tour
- Ottawa Lac Deschenes IBA Caretaker (in partnership with other Ottawa Org)
- etc - we brainstormed in our last meeting and we will talk more about this at our next meeting.

c. Conservation – Jakob had circulated the following report by email:

“Committee trip to Westmeath Provincial Park

Several members of the Conservation Committee joined an exploratory trip of riverine coastal habitats in Westmeath Provincial Park. Despite near-drought conditions that likely suppressed many species, we found new regional records for numerous plant species which are widely separated from the nearest known occurrences, and in some cases represent considerable extensions to the known range. These include (but are by no means limited to):

Peachleaf Willow (*Salix amygdaloides*)

Hillside Blueberry (*Vaccinium pallidum*)

Three-toothed Cinquefoil (*Sibbaldiopsis tridentata*)

Small Skullcap (*Scutellaria parvula*)

Also worth mentioning is the extensive presence of Beach Heather (*Hudsonia tomentosa*), which was a unique component of the original Constance Bay Sand Hills, presumed extirpated locally until it was rediscovered last year.

The Westmeath site is not only botanically rich, it also represents several extant plant communities which are rare to find intact, and high-quality natural features such as old-growth oaks and pines on the beach itself. Further surveys are expected to fill out our knowledge and improve documentation, as well as to follow up on some potentially significant faunal occurrences.

Westmeath is ~100 km WNW of Ottawa and takes about 2 hours to drive to. While outside of the traditional "Ottawa District" and the municipal boundaries of Ottawa/Gatineau, it is part of the Ottawa River system and is very informative in terms of understanding the natural history of the region. This is an example of the need and value in considering "Ottawa" in a wider regional and ecological context.

Anderson Road turtle exclusion fencing

Road mortality remains a conservation concern for all terrestrial wildlife, but has very serious sustainability implications for some species, including reptiles and amphibians, and especially turtles. The City of Ottawa has several road mortality "hotspots"; the worst one is likely the combination of Roger Stevens Drive and Dwyer Hill Road in Marlborough Forest, which receives active attention from the Canadian Wildlife Federation. The worst "hotspot" inside Ottawa's urban boundary is naturally in the Greenbelt, where Anderson Road bisects the Mer Bleue wetland complex. The National Capital Commission has been doing some monitoring of road mortality in the greenbelt, including on Anderson Road; they presented research on the subject to an OFNC monthly meeting a couple of years ago. As one of my own contributions to Conservation Committee initiatives, I have been collecting data, and I have been sharing information directly with the NCC on road mortality in general and on two SAR reptiles (Blanding's Turtle and Eastern Milksnake), as well as via the ORAA and iNaturalist for other agencies. A few other people have also been contributing road mortality data via iNaturalist.

The need for fencing or wildlife passages on Anderson has been well established, but a barrier has been funding (of course). Constructed this summer and just recently completed, the NCC has now installed turtle exclusion fencing on one of three "wetland causeway" sections of Anderson's transit of Mer Bleue. The section selected was data-driven as it is the portion of the hotspot with the highest number and diversity of species impacted. The NCC explained to me that this is intended to get the most impact from the limited budget available, and that citizen science data supported the NCC's own data in the process.

This is impactful progress and illustrates the value of citizen science, taking individual observations and documentation and collaborating through iNaturalist. More initiatives to encourage more members to contribute to iNaturalist would be worthwhile.

Re-launched iNaturalist Herp Monitoring Project

Building on the last point, a new version of the iNaturalist project tracking reptiles and amphibians in Ottawa / Eastern Ontario has been launched, taking advantage of some improved functionality in iNaturalist projects and making contributions easier. This was formally announced at the monthly meeting last week.

- d. Education & Publicity – Gord: the Committee met last week and now likely has nine members. Gord had circulated the following report by email:

“Seniors talk at Riverpath Seniors Home.

FWG tours for Willow's Program, Active Jewish Adults 50+, Canadian Federation of University Women's Environmental Action Group.

Attended Hunt Club Community's FallFest with Bird Friendly Ottawa.

Storyboards for summer had been posted at FWG.

Plans for Junior Explorers Day at Billings Estate on 20 September are progressing.”

- e. Events – Owen: the Committee will be meeting in the next couple of weeks to plan fall programming. They are also planning for the Pelee trip
- f. Finance – Ann had circulated the following report by email:

“The Finance Committee met by Zoom on Monday, Aug 26, 2025. The draft budget for 2025-26 was discussed and slightly modified to send to the board for the September meeting. Ken presented some changes to the Chart of Accounts and the Finance Committee agreed with his suggested changes. There was further discussion on the question of an audit or review of our financials. We will give that topic more thought and get back to it shortly. We would like to be prepared for the January annual meeting. In advance of our meeting, Ken had distributed a discussion paper on rules for establishing funds and ideas for how the financials could be presented. The Finance committee agreed on establishing a separate fund for Safe Wings but was concerned about a fund for the small amount for Bird Seed. It would be better to stop accepting directed donations for seed. There was strong support for a summary of funds table in the financial statements.”

- g. Fletcher Wildlife Garden – Ted reported that work groups are winding down for the season.

- h. Macoun Club – Susan had circulated the following report by email:

“Activities are resuming on September 13th with a field trip. A number of speakers have already been booked for indoor meetings throughout the fall. If anyone would like to give a 1 hour presentation at some point please let me know or reach out to Rob Lee directly (macoun@ofnc.ca) for scheduling purposes.”

- i. Membership – Lisa: (see Item 6 b) nil else to report

j. Ontario Nature – Jakob had circulated the following report by email:

“New Executive Director

I had an opportunity to meet Ontario Nature's executive director, Andrés Jimenéz Monge, in late August. We discussed many things, including how to improve collaboration between organizations and connections to individual members. I also was able to sit in on a meeting with Cameron Smith and Emily Conger of the A2A collaborative, which had a very detailed focus below. I look forward to new energy and initiatives coming from our Nature Network connection.

A2A Highway 401 Wildlife Overpasses

Habitat connectivity is key to long-term conservation of wildlife populations and ecological health. Preserving the "A2A" (Algonquin to Adirondack) corridor has been a focus of many organizations, including the bespoke A2A Collaborative, for some time, and has been part of our consideration and support in past donations to support land acquisitions with both the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Ontario Nature. From a continental point of view, this corridor is key as it is the *only option* for connectivity on the *eastern half* of the continent. Highway 401 represents a major barrier, and is slated to expand to 6 lanes by 2030, with current long-term MTO plans expecting 8 lanes by 2050. The A2A Collaborative has a "big swing" plan to get wildlife overpasses installed, ideally concurrent with highway expansion work. They have identified three sites that would be ideal (i.e. it would be best to have all three) but are focussing on one in particular. Overpasses like these have been very effective elsewhere, i.e. Banff National Park. This will likely come up more in the near future.

The Frontenac Arch is just to our southwest; it is a very biodiverse area on its own, even without its importance in this corridor. This is another example of how our organization both benefits from and contributes to regional ecology and conservation, and should not be restricted to a strictly local focus. We are interconnected to the wider system and this is right on our doorstep.

Carden Alvar solar farm proposal

You may have seen a petition circulating through other organizations/networks about this. A company (Innergex Renewable Energy Inc.) is proposing to acquire up to 2500 acres of land in the Carden alvar (between Lake Simcoe and Lindsay) for the development of a solar farm. The area is almost entirely inside the areas of interest for both the nature Conservancy of Canada and the Couchiching Conservancy, and approximately half of the 2500-acre area is identified as key habitat in a 2009 conservation plan for the Carden Plain.

This has been rightfully alarming to many people and organizations, in part because of scale. However, similar solar developments have already been a problem for the Napanee Plain grasslands and there are a few popping up in our area. This is something to monitor and is another threat to remaining habitat on limestone uplands. Most of the Burnt Lands remain in private ownership and thus could be at risk.

This is another case where regional and provincial collaboration is valuable, because what isn't in our backyard very soon could be, and vice-versa."

k. Publications – Jess had circulated the following report by email:

"Our next committee meeting will be September 16, so there will be more to report at the October Board meeting

T&L

· At the time of the Board meeting, T&L 59(4) will be at the printer. It will be 56 pages.

· The next T&L deadline for materials/articles is November 1st for the January-March issue

CFN

· - after the rapid publication of 138(1), 138(2), and 138(3) there has been limited time available by Dwayne for CFN tasks because of:

- purchase of new-to-him townhouse, sale of previously occupied for 30 years condo, and moving in to townhouse completed over the summer
- required immediate biggest renovation (mould in ceiling over ensuite bathroom from compromised vapour barrier) complete, other more-minor renovations continuing as do unpacking and organizing, organizing, and more organizing
- just returned from Newfoundland and co-chairing the Molluscs Species Specialist Subcommittee of COSEWIC meeting last Wednesday
- 3-days in the field (Friday-Sunday) and this morning's Critical Habitat check completed
- preparing to visit parents (father 95+ years old) for a few days driving this Wednesday (haven't seen them in years)
- will be delving deeply back into CFN tasks immediately upon returning from the visit

138(4) October-December 2024

- 4 galleys produced, 2 with authors (AU) filling out order / copyright transfer forms; 1 ready for AU review; 1 reviewed by both Assistant Editor (Amanda) and Dwayne and ready to be sent to layout (Robert) for revisions
- manuscripts on: fishes of the Rideau River-Canal system; grizzly predation on bison calf; prescribed fire on aspen; Stonecat catfish in Saskatchewan
- 16 galley pages of Book Reviews (BR) and New Titles (NT) produced, to be reviewed by Amanda & Dwayne
- total of 44 journal pages so far, > ½ way to minimum 80 pages
- 3 manuscripts returned from AU review of copyedit, ready to send for layout after review by Dwayne: Grouseberry habitat use by Grizzly Bears; otoliths (inner ear bone) of minnows; and horned dinosaur fossil from Saskatchewan
- in addition to manuscripts, News and Comment, Book Reviews and New Titles, this issue also will contain the Editors' Report for volume 137 and the index for volume 138

139(1) January-March 2025

- 2 ms (scent marking in mesocarnivores; four-toed salamander) nearly ready for formal copyediting
- docx of BR (n=7) and NT rcvd from Jess 25 August (before her departure on 5 September)

Other manuscripts in the process

- 4 author revisions have been received
- 2 revisions being handled by Associate Editors

- 6 recommendations by AE received and awaiting EiC (Editor-in-Chief, Dwayne's) decision: reject, revise, resubmit, accept
- 2 sent for AE opinions after AU revisions
- 33 being revised by AU, some of which will probably not be revised by AUs
- 12 with reviews in progress and EiC awaiting recommendation by AEs
- 3 with AEs yet to be assigned
- total 27 submissions/queries received so far in 2025
- by 15 September had 20 submissions/queries in 2024

Book Club

- The mailing list now has 106 subscribers!
- Our book for September-October is *Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter* by Ben Goldfarb
- Next meeting (already scheduled on the OFNC Zoom account) will be Tuesday, October 28 at 7 p.m. to discuss *Eager*
- I have emailed the book announcement and meeting date to the book club mailing list. I have also asked Jakob to include it on the October Events email. Further promotion (i.e. website, blog) will have to wait until I'm back from my trip in October

'Meet & Greet' at October's Monthly Meeting??

- Even though our meetings are virtual, some members suggested the idea of an in-person 'meet and greet' for the book club as a one-time thing.
- I was thinking of telling book club members that if they want to meet me and other book clubbers to show up for 7 p.m. at the OFNC October monthly meeting. We have the space already rented out... and 7 p.m. is the start of the social time anyways. Maybe I'd bring some special 'book club' nametags, but otherwise, I don't foresee this being a big hassle. Any thoughts/objections?

Newsletter

- At the June Board meeting I had discussed the possibility of using an online email platform (like Mailchimp, but less expensive) to create a monthly 'newsletter' template for the OFNC
- This is still on my radar, however I'm afraid CFN took up all my OFNC-related time this summer to prepare for my month away. I haven't forgotten though! This will just be a project for later in the year/early next year. Stay tuned..."

I. Safe Wings Ottawa – Janette had circulated the following report by email:

“Rehab / Rehab / Social Media

- 34 admissions for fall since reopening, 21 in past week
- Trained a new phone volunteer and confirmed the protocol for handling overnight calls
- Social Media Mooney's Bay Goose rescue video was very popular

Bird-Friendly Buildings Tracking

- Possible to get a volunteer to photograph and enter our list of buildings into the FLAP Global Bird Mapper
- Create & promote an email address for people to submit photos of public bird-friendly buildings (can enter private, but keep confidential)

Website Security and Data Updates

- new Cloudflare tool applied to prevent bots from entering into collision database
- Need to re-add on the need to add a missing page about avian influenza to the new website

Advocacy

- No recent updates on investigations, but our submissions have had positive impacts with another building noting it will apply markers
- NAC is looking to retrofit some windows with accurate marker format
- Ongoing discussions with OC Transpo regarding LRT station collisions

Bird Transport Training/Waiver Discussion

- Social media occasional drivers who transport birds should likely complete future driving training module (not entire session)
- Option currently to post requirements on social media and at SW pick-ups, provide a slip with requirements as per volunteer waiver
- Will seek advice to determine if their current practices need modification

Ottawa Wildlife Strategy Committee Representation – needed and got 3 committee members to rotate as needed

Government Building Assessments and Volunteers

- We considered bidding, but likely will not; FLAP is bidding

Bird-Friendly Design Standards Discussion

- Meeting with Ericsson about installing a pollinator garden, noting that while it might not significantly impact window collisions, the building's contract requires treatments to be removed upon departure
- Ottawa Wildlife Strategy noted that currently, guidelines will not become standards (ON government impact)
- Toronto's green development standards could provide insights into bird-friendly design enforcement, pending a staff report response in the coming weeks.

Volunteer Updates and Event Planning

- Reminder of importance of consistent bird tagging and logging
- For social media, share photos and videos of patrols
- Global Bird Rescue Week and early bird entry during that time.
- Freezer locations for storing deceased birds (Orleans, Kanata, & 2 central)

Bird-Friendly City

- Certification progress: 2 technical briefings to city council this & next week trying for their support”

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

Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Moore

Upcoming Meeting Dates

October 20, 2025

November 17, 2025

December 15, 2025