



147<sup>th</sup> Annual Business Meeting  
of the Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club  
January 14, 2026

## Committee Annual Reports for 2025

### Awards Committee

The Awards Committee manages the annual process to recognize and thank those OFNC members and other qualified persons who, by virtue of their efforts and talents, are deserving of special recognition. In late 2024, nominations were received and evaluated (see awards criteria at <https://ofnc.ca/about-ofnc/awards>), and potential recipients were recommended to the Board of Directors for approval. The awards were announced in January 2025 on the website. Biographies were written for the award recipients for inclusion in the Club's publications and posting on the website. Certificates were presented to award recipients on April 12, 2025 at the annual awards appreciation event held at City View United Church. The recipients' names, type of award, and short rationale for recognition follow below.

- Jessica Sims – Member of the Year Award, for initiating the OFNC Book Club.
- Aaron Hywarren – George McGee Service Award, in recognition of service as the Ottawa regional coordinator for the 3rd Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas.
- Janette Niwa – Mary Stuart Education Award, for outreach and education achievements for Safe Wings Ottawa, Bird Friendly Ottawa, and the OFNC.
- Ann MacKenzie – Honorary Member, for significant contributions to the successful operation of the Club over many years, particularly in the area of governance, finances and accounting systems.

During 2024–25, three new members joined the committee – Chris Archibald, Rita Kloosterman and Bev McBride.

Eleanor Zurbrigg  
Chair, Awards Committee

### Birds Committee

#### Administrative

- The committee lost one member towards the end of the year, but we gained one member during the year. We also had two others observe some meetings and one is interested in becoming a member of the Committee. Generally, we seem to have interest in joining, but it does not always “stick”.
- We worked on updating the Terms of Reference for the committee, to update the responsibilities to match what we do, and to add a statement about ethical birding. This is still in progress though we are very close.

- Bernie Laduceur worked on updating the Birds Records Sub-Committee Terms of Reference with the reduced responsibilities, in light of the eBird application which is used by many birders. Membership of BRSC reduced to two: Bernie Laduceur and Greg Zbitnew.
- We changed the “Bird Study group” to just be Bird Committee Activities.
- We also consider the Feeder sub-committee to be an activity of the Birds Committee as opposed to a separate sub committee.

## **Activities**

- The Winter Bird Feeding program was entirely cancelled. The one feeder we could have maintained was not accessible due to the state of trees on the property (trees fell and are dangerous around the feeder).
- Derek Dunnet continued to provide the Weekly Regional Birding Report, which is posted on Facebook and on our club website. He will relinquish this role to someone else after January 2026, as Derek is leaving the Birds Committee.
- Greg Zbitnew updated the Annotated List of Rare Birds and the Annotated Checklist from 2024, and the information was updated on our website. This is an annual activity.
- Maintained the Birds section of the OFNC Website (Lorraine Elworthy).
- Maintained/updated the Finding 250 Birds in the Ottawa area information on Facebook and on the OFNC website.
- Met as a group and birded together in May 2025.
- Led bird walks in the spring at Bruce Pit (Janet McCullough), and along the Western Ottawa parkway (Sheila Craig).
- Scheduled and organized Bird Song ID course to be presented by Ken Allison. It will be a series of 5 Bird ID Zoom sessions beginning in February of 2026. This will be just in time for the Spring birding season. Thanks to Janet McCullough and Derek Dunnet for chasing this and scheduling the sessions.
- Janet McCullough continued her effort to get access to Shirley’s Bay Causeway. This has been a herculean effort, which has seen Janet write letters to different levels of government in an effort to understand who owns the causeway so we can request permission to access. This effort continues but Janet has made incredible progress. We are closer than we have been in 3 years to getting to the bottom of this.
- SHRIKE database digitization continued. It’s slow going but we have data in excel in the right format, just waiting for upload to eBird. The work is being done by University of Ottawa students who need volunteer hours. We have many hours of work for them to help with!
- Janet McCullough prepared a presentation for the West End Learning Unlimited on birding and how to bird. This was extremely well received and the material she prepared can be used for other presentations in the future.

- Lorraine organized the bird skins tour at the Museum of Nature in the fall. This was very well attended and very much liked by everyone who attended. We expect we will organize this again.
- BC members participated in WMBD in May 2025. This was a great event, with many organizations participating. The bird walks at Mud Lake were very successful, and many people who had not been exposed to bird watching attended. This supported Bird Friendly Ottawa in their effort to get Bird Friendly Certification for Ottawa. Thanks to Pilar Bryson, Lorraine Elworthy and Janet McCullough for their work during this event.
- We planned more activities for 2026:
  - Walk at Stratcone Park with members of the *Club des ornithologues de l'Outaouais* on January 17, 2026
  - Plan to have a birding travel presentation from OFNC members who have travelled to exciting places for birding
  - Warbler walk in Spring 2026
  - Woodcock walk in Spring 2026.
  - OFNC Birds website review and update/modernization

Emilia Michaud  
Chair, Birds Committee

## Conservation Committee

Through 2025, members of the Conservation Committee participated in monitoring initiatives and biodiversity surveys, launched or continued studies and research projects, and monitored events and threats affecting local natural areas. Collectively, these activities served to further the understanding and documentation of biodiversity in the region. Below are some highlights and noteworthy events.

### Support for KFN Bioblitz

The Conservation Committee arranged a delegation of naturalists to participate in a BioBlitz (an intense 24-hour biodiversity survey) organized by the Kingston Field Naturalists, studying a property near Picadilly, Ontario on the Frontenac Arch. Collaborating on the KFN's annual bioblitz is becoming an annual event for the Committee, as is making the largest singular contribution to the species list. This year, the first, second, and third largest species lists collected by the KFN were each documented by OFNC Conservation Committee members.

### 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 drought conditions that likely suppressed many

species, the survey 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 Peachleaf Willow (*Salix amygdaloides*), Hillside Blueberry (*Vaccinium pallidum*), Three-toothed Cinquefoil (*Sibbaldiopsis tridentata*), and Small Skullcap (*Scutellaria parvula*).

Also noteworthy was 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 by Conservation Committee members last year.

The Westmeath site is botanically rich with 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. As part of the Ottawa River system, it is very informative in terms of understanding the natural history of the region.

### **Macskimming Outdoor Education Centre Survey**

The Conservation Committee received permission to visit the Macskimming Outdoor Education Centre in September on a day not open to the public. The survey reinforced that this site is highly biodiverse, which was apparent despite drought conditions. Highlights included the uncommon plant American Water-Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle americana*), the provincially rare Blunt-lobed Grapefern (*Sceptridium oneidense*), a species of fingernail clam in a (dry-in-September) vernal pool (potentially *Sphaerium occidentale*), the provincially rare Lemon Cuckoo Bumblebee (*Bombus citrinus*), and new records for four of the six species of salamanders known from the site.

### **Western Quebec Calcareous Fens**

Committee member Henry Robertson has been scouting and surveying locations of calcareous fens in the Outaouais (Western Quebec). Calcareous fens are a fairly rare and obscure habitat which have received very little attention in the region; Henry took inspiration from an article published in *Trail & Landscape* in 1979 by former Conservation Committee member Joyce Reddoch. Several sites with extant habitat have been identified and three surveys have been conducted to date. This has led to several regionally and provincially significant botanical records, including the first Outaouais records of Autumn Willow (*Salix serissima*), Downy Willowherb (*Epilobium densum*), Few-flowered Sedge (*Carex pauciflora*), and Rannoch-rush (*Scheuchzeria palustris*). Further surveys are planned for future years.

### **High Falls Conservation Area Surveys**

Committee member Erik Pohanka conducted a baseline botanical inventory of High Falls Conservation Area, on the South Nation River in Casselman. This popular public site is located

on an intriguing section of a major watershed, where substantial sections are difficult to access and survey due to private land ownership. Erik's effort involved several surveys over the course of the year. Erik also set up an *iNaturalist* project to help consolidate and document biodiversity data from the conservation area. Further visits are planned for next season.

### **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 in the Greenbelt, where Anderson Road bisects the Mer Bleue wetland complex. The National Capital Commission has been monitoring road mortality in the greenbelt, including on Anderson Road, and presented research on the subject to an OFNC monthly meeting a few years ago. This has been supplemented by road mortality data collected by private individuals, including members of the Conservation Committee. This data has been shared directly with the NCC, and to the *Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas* and *iNaturalist*.

With the need clearly well-established, construction on turtle exclusion fencing commenced in the summer of 2025. Two of the "wetland causeway" sections of Anderson's transit of Mer Bleue will subsequently have protection. The selections of the sections were data-driven; the NCC explained to the Conservation Chair 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, and the value of documentation that follows Conservation Committee activities.

### **Re-launched *iNaturalist* Herp Monitoring Project**

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 September monthly meeting.

### **Severe Drought Across Region**

Throughout the summer, our region received less than 40% of normal precipitation, which was exacerbated by a much higher-than-normal number of days with above average temperatures, including more than double the normal number of days with temperatures above 30° C. This meant that low rainfall was compounded by high evaporative loss. According to Agriculture Canada, a swath between Kingston and Ottawa was classified as "Extreme Drought" with the

rest of the region classified as "Severe Drought". Water levels were very low in most places. The dryness of course increases fire risk, and some fires occurred in regional natural areas, including one in Alvin Runnals forest (a.k.a. The Ninth bog), and one between Lavant and Ompah (in north Frontenac County).

Ecologically, many plants sought early dormancy to avoid dying outright, and fruit crops (including nuts and seeds) were aborted or reduced, affecting winter food stores for many animals. Most deciduous trees and herbaceous plants should be able to bounce back from one dry year, but would be under stress and vulnerable if next year has a similar pattern. Water depth is important for many overwintering animals to avoid freezing, so the degree to which water bodies "recharge" through the fall and early winter may affect winter mortality. These are factors to which attention must be paid in the 2026 field season.

Jakob Mueller  
Chair, Conservation Committee

## Education and Publicity Committee

The Committee has had many new members added this year. They are Min Ku, Nora Lee, Stephanie Valade, Fred Scaini, Michèle Michichiuc, and Cheryl Soulière.

The OCDSB's Science Fair was again held live this year. Judges from the Science Fair selected four projects from a much larger group than 2024. Each were awarded \$100. Thanks to Deb Doherty, Michèle Michichiuc, Ryan Wong, and Deb Doherty who helped as judges.

Sandy Garland keeps our Friends of the Fletcher Wildlife Gardens Facebook page up-to-date ([facebook.com/groups/48901132335/](https://facebook.com/groups/48901132335/)). Thanks to Nina Stavlund for our OFNC Facebook page ([facebook.com/groups/379992938552/](https://facebook.com/groups/379992938552/)).

Gord Robertson continues to update our Instagram page for the Fletcher Wildlife Garden/OFNC at: <https://www.instagram.com/fletcher.wildlife.garden/>. Gord is adding posts and reels (videos) regularly. The page has over 580 followers with 285 posts as of December 2025.

Our *iNaturalist* page continues to grow having exceeded over 1000 species, over 4000 observations, and 243 contributors. It is found at: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/fletcher-wildlife-garden>.

Gord presented to seniors at the Riverpath Retirement Ottawa and Timberwalk Retirement Home seniors' residences.

Our stories at the FWG were changed four times for each season. Several new stories were added.

We hosted one school tour, 3 scout/embers/guides tours, 2 Jane's Walks, an indigenous group called Willow's Program, Active Jewish Adults 50+, and Canadian Association for Girls in Science.

We participated in **World Migratory Bird Day**, a birding event at Petrie Island, and **Pollinator Appreciation Day** at the FWG.

We assisted at the **Junior Explorers' Day** at Billings Bridge Estate with 5 new biographies of Canadian field naturalists and biologists and a new quest.

Cheryl Souliere with the help of Lisa Chamley created and circulated a survey for the members to volunteer for various club activities.

We continue to support **Bird-Friendly Ottawa** at their events and presentations with display equipment and OFNC educational and promotional materials.

Gordon Robertson, PhD  
Chair, Education and Publicity Committee

## Events Committee

From October 2024 through September 2025, the committee coordinated 58 events, including field trips, workshops, presentations for monthly meetings, and digital events. Three events that had been planned were cancelled (poor weather, etc.). The overall number of events was down slightly compared to the year prior (65 in 2023-2024). General interest and overall biodiversity (13) was the most common subject or focus, followed by birding (12), botany (11), conservation (9), entomology (5), mycology (3), herpetology (3), and mammals (2).

A new type event we tried this year was "mini-bioblitzes" at a couple of interesting sites that we figured could use more serious naturalist attention (Lavigne Natural Park, and Carlington Woods). These events proved successful in the main mandate of gathering useful new data regarding the biodiversity of these sites, in addition to being fun and a good opportunity for the attendees to meet and interact with "experts" in the field.

Another focus we continue to work on is finding "new" interesting sites which might be relatively obscure for club events, and to effectively put these locations on our members' radar as places worth visiting. Two notable examples from this year are the Ma-te-way Recreational Trails at Renfrew, and Moose Creek's "Menzies McRae and Family" Recreation Trail.

Owen Clarkin  
Chair, Events Committee

## Finance Committee

The committee met in person March 17, 2025, and on Zoom on April 2, May 1 and August 26. Most of the discussions were through an exchange of emails.

**Budget** The budget that had been developed for the fiscal year 2024–25 was approved by the Board on October 21, 2024. In August 2025, the chairs of each committee provided their budget estimates for 2025–26. The Finance Committee then developed a draft for consideration at the September 15, 2025, Board meeting. Each chair described their plans for the coming fiscal year. The budget was modified slightly and approved by the Board on October 20, 2025.

**Insurance** The Finance Committee also reviewed a couple of insurance related issues. In January 2025, Safe Wings required a Business Procurement Number in order to get building assessment contracts with the federal government. We were advised by the insurance broker that our existing insurance policy would not cover any liability related to selling services. The cost of Errors and Omissions insurance was investigated along with the potential risks. At the same time, the possibility of getting Media Liability insurance for our publications was raised. In the report of the Finance Committee to the Board dated Feb 19, 2025, we described our investigation and our recommendation that extra insurance in either case was not warranted. Later in the year another insurance question was raised with respect to non-members on out-of-town trips. Again, the committee examined the issue and advised the Board that our existing coverage relates to any claims against the club regardless of whether the complainant is a member or not.

**Policies** A considerable amount of committee time was devoted to reviewing, updating and, where necessary, creating policies. With the coming into force of ONCA (*Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act*) and the subsequent adoption of the new OFNC By-Laws the previous year, it was considered advisable to ensure that policies were compatible, up-to-date and complete.

From April to June the Board agreed to the following changes to Policies

- Policy on Bequests – terminated
- Policy on Conduct – revised
- Policy on Membership – revised
- Policy on Standing Committees – new
- Policy on Nominations of Directors – New
- Policy on Funding Requests outside the Budget – revised
- Policy on Financing Out-of-Town Trips
- Policy on Investments – revised
- Policy on Publications – revised

- Policy on Privacy – revised
- Policy on Remuneration - new

The committee is still working on the Policy on Payments to Directors.

The Finance Committee is also working on a document to help members consider the vote at annual meetings regarding a financial review versus a financial audit.

Ann MacKenzie  
Chair, Finance Committee

## Fletcher Wildlife Garden Committee

This year we had seven volunteer work groups that continued our work battling invasive plants, planting native plants, and maintaining gardens, pathways and our pond. We were excited to announce that the Fletcher *iNaturalist* project recorded our one thousandth species that has been identified at the Garden.

The biggest challenge to our volunteers this summer was how to cope with our hot dry weather. In spite of many high heat and humidity days, volunteers were able to maintain and protect new plants even when it meant hauling water to various parts of the property.

The Fletcher Wildlife Garden received an unusually large number of visitors early in the New Year after word got out that owls were seen on the property. The behaviour of some birders and/or photographers raised concerns.

The Plant Sale group worked throughout the winter and into the spring. Over 80 species went on sale in May/June using an online order, prepay, schedule pickup format. This year's total sales were the highest ever, indicating an increasing interest in native plants in Ottawa's gardens.

As a way of adding more efficient tools to our tool shed and at the same time being more environmentally friendly, we purchased battery powered hedge clippers, a saw, a whipper snipper, and a lawnmower.

This past year we participated in several activities with Carleton University. For the second year, volunteers provided expertise on an environmental issue for a class in Community Engagement. This year, the focus was invasive plants. Community Associations for Environmental Sustainability (CAFES) recruits community associations to work with a team of students to raise awareness among their neighbours. Several Fletcher volunteers also participated in a survey by geography students who were interested in how these volunteers see their role in the community.

Work continued on invasive aquatic plants in the amphibian pond, replanting of the southern bank of the pond, and the gully. Over 200 species can now be found in the gully. Encouraging

progress is being made in the battle against dog-strangling vine, as several native plants including Snakeroot, Virginia Creeper, goldenrods and Jewelweed, have moved into parts of the garden that have been cleared of DSV. Purple Comfrey, which has been very aggressive in many parts of the property including along the road into the Fletcher, was the target of many volunteers.

The FWG hosted a Jane's Walk again in early May. Other tours were given to such groups as the Canadian Federation of University Women, cubs and sparks, and several school classes. Our Medicine Garden (shkagamik) was a popular stop for many of our visitors.

Our lease with Agriculture and Agri-food Canada was renewed for a five-year period.

Edward (Ted) Farnworth  
FWG Committee Representative to the Board

### Macoun Club Committee

The Macoun Field Club is for children and young people (ages 8 to 19). Activities all took place on Saturdays during the school year, with 2-hour-long indoor meetings one week alternating with 4- or 5-hour-long field trips the next.

Committee members led 14 field trips to places long familiar to leaders and members (the Club's nature study area in the western Greenbelt, a fossil locality near the Macoun Marsh at Beechwood Cemetery, and extensive private and Crown lands in Lanark County), and conducted 14 indoor meetings with a wide range of presentations and workshops at the Fletcher Wildlife Garden's resource centre. A field trip directed by experts from the Ottawa Mycology group in the Club's study area was especially popular and spurred new interest in fungi among several Macoun members.

Membership increased to 30, from 25 last year. An account of events was regularly posted on the Macoun Club's home page.

At the end of the Macoun Club year, Issue No. 77 of *The Little Bear* was produced.

Robert E. Lee  
Chair, Macoun Club Committee

### Membership Committee

This report describes club membership as of Sept 30th, 2025. Club participation is divided into two groups. "Members" consists of those who pay club fees, are 'Honorary' members, or participate in Macoun Club. This group could be considered people who might participate in events. The other group, "Associates", consists of those who receive T&L only: "T&L

Subscribers” and an aggregate called “Other” which represents individuals and organizations who receive complimentary copies of T&L.

The total number of members has stayed stable in the mid-800s range for the past several years. In 2025 the number of Family memberships is slightly down while the number of Individual is up. This seems to be due to some families switching to individual and to a number of new individuals joining. Members within 50 km of Ottawa comprised 737 (88%) of the Canadian membership of 836.

**Table 1: Summary of Membership Count, displayed by membership type**

	Type	2025	2024
Canadian Members	Individual	441	401
	Family	312	327
	Student	11	17
	Life	34	34
	Honorary	23	23
	Macoun Club	15	23
<b>Total Canadian Members</b>		<b>836</b>	<b>825</b>
US	(All 6 types)	8	8
International	(All 6 types)	1	3
<b>Total Members</b>		<b>845</b>	<b>836</b>
	T&L Subscriber	1	3
	Other	25	24
<b>Total Associates</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>

**About the method:**

The Membership Report is created using a membership database current as of midnight, September 30 (including, if applicable, cheques dated before this but received shortly after this). Macoun Club counts the number of households participating (which may include >1 child), as of the previous October.

Member counts in this report will differ from payment counts in the annual liability report, as there is a lag between a member’s non-payment and deactivation.

## Membership distribution

The club currently has members in all provinces and territories except for New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Nunavut (Table 2). The vast majority are in Ontario and within 50 km of Ottawa, but quite a few are outside that range in Ontario.

**Table 2: Summary of Member Count, displayed by location. Includes the 6 Member types.**

<b>Location</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
Ontario (< 50 km)	708	704
Quebec (< 50 km)	29	27
Alberta	9	8
British Columbia	12	11
Manitoba	2	1
New Brunswick	0	2
Newfoundland	0	0
North West Territories	1	1
Nova Scotia	3	3
Nunavut	0	0
Ontario (> 50 km)	61	56
Prince Edward Island	2	1
Quebec (> 50 km)	6	8
Saskatchewan	1	1
Yukon	2	2
United States	8	8
Other Countries	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>836</b>

Lisa Chamney  
Chair, Membership Committee

## Publications Committee

The Publications Committee manages publication of *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* (CFN), *Trail & Landscape* (T&L), and Special Publications. We published four issues of T&L (58(4) and 59(1–3)) and four issues of CFN: 137(4) (published on 23 October 2024), 138(1) (17 January 2025), 138(2) (26 March 2025), and 138(3) (29 May 2025). Addressing the financial sustainability and other operational challenges of CFN was a major focus of the committee in 2025.

Jeffery M. Saarela  
Chair, Publications Committee

## Safe Wings Ottawa

Safe Wings Ottawa continues its work monitoring bird-glass collision, rehabilitating the injured birds, educating the public about the issue and filling the gaps in Ottawa for rescuing injured birds and caring for injured and orphaned Mallard ducklings and Canada Goose goslings.

### Patrolling and Rehabilitation

At the time of reporting, our volunteers have documented nearly 1,800 window collisions and we expect this number will be close to 2,000 when all data entry is completed and confirmed for the calendar year 2025. Our estimates are that we only find 1% of bird collisions in Ottawa due to volunteer availability and the number of buildings we can monitor. We are thankful to have so much support from the public who follow us on social media and spread the word.

Species at risk recorded by SWO in 2025 include (window collision deaths and rehab):

- Barn Swallow 1 specimen
- Wood Thrush 3 specimens
- Rusty Blackbird 1 specimen

Safe Wings has bird species and/or counts that may surprise people, which as of reporting time in 2025 includes:

- Brown Creeper 43 specimens
- Ruby-throated Hummingbird 29 specimens
- Ovenbird 22 specimens
- Indigo Bunting 6 specimens (currently 4,338 eBird Ottawa observations)
- Ruffed Grouse 4 specimens
- Black-billed Cuckoo 4 specimens
- American Woodcock 3 specimens (currently 2,158 eBird Ottawa observations)
- Winter Wren 2 specimens
- Barred Owl 2 specimens

- Black-backed Woodpecker 1 specimen (currently only 616 eBird Ottawa observations)
- Northern Shrike 1 specimen
- Cooper’s Hawk 1 specimen
- Broad-winged Hawk 1 specimen (currently 3,501 eBird Ottawa observations)
- Merlin 1 specimen

Not all individual birds in the area are sighted and entered into eBird by birders and some enthusiasts only enter rare or uncommon birds. To offer a comparison for the numbers above, on eBird for Ottawa, the Black-capped Chickadee has over 17.1 million observations!



Photo of a Black-backed Woodpecker who died in 2025 after colliding with a window in Ottawa.

While photos like this upset some individuals, it is important to share the reality of the impact our built environment has on wildlife and, for Safe Wings, specifically birds. Seeing the outcome of highly reflective and/or transparent glass has a strong impact and educational value.

*Photo taken by a Safe Wings volunteer monitoring buildings*

The highest glass collision species in 2025 are (numbers to be confirmed for January reporting as required for permits):

- Dark-eyed Junco 125 specimens
- Black-capped Chickadee 111 specimens
- Tennessee Warbler 108 specimens
- White-throated Sparrow 107 specimens
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 58 specimens

Our rehabilitation centre was busy, admitting 279 birds this year. Of those, 147 were window impacts, 14 impacts with other objects such as cars, and 34 nest-falls or orphaned baby birds (excluding the Mallard ducklings). This is down from 2024 due to a need to close our volunteer-run rehab for several months over the summer. The top four species were:

- |                             |          |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| 1. Dark-eyed Junco          | 17 birds |
| 2. Tennessee Warbler        | 16 birds |
| 3. Black-capped Chickadee   | 11 birds |
| 4. Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | 9 birds  |

Our rehab also saw high numbers of European Starling hatchlings and nestlings and Rock Pigeon babies and adults with string foot (string or garbage wrapped around their leg).

Safe Wings successfully rehabilitated a **Rusty Blackbird** – stunning up close! This species has been identified by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as of being of “Special Concern” as a Species at Risk. Safe Wings successfully rehabilitated and released this beautiful bird after 7 days!

*Photo by Safe Wings Ottawa*



A nestling **Barn Swallow** rescued and brought to Safe Wings. It was treated for worms and after 8 days, we arranged a ride to a specialized nesting rehabber with other Barn Swallows in care. This swallow was successfully raised and released!

*Photo by Safe Wings Ottawa*

A **Bald Eagle** was found in the Calabogie area on the ground and unable to fly. Safe Wings connect with the public via social media, and a rescuer brought the raptor in for emergency rehab prior to transport to The Owl Foundation for x-rays and assessment. Unfortunately, the eagle, named Charlie by the rescuer's son, had too much damage with broken and splintered bones for rehabilitation to be possible. A team of wonderful people gave this magnificent bird the best shot possible, but sometimes that is not enough to save a feathered life.

*Photo by Safe Wings Ottawa*



This one is a rare admission for Safe Wings! Our last one was March 2022. Early in 2025 a **Ruffed Grouse** was seen colliding into a window by one of our volunteers. They were able to rescue the bird immediately and get it into care. eBird calls them a “well-camouflaged chickenlike bird. Intricately patterned plumage varies from cold gray to rich reddish-brown”. Many people have not seen one in person and the size and markings often make them confused as raptors of some type.

*Photo by Safe Wings Ottawa*

Another unusual rescue that made it into Safe Wings was this male **Common Merganser**. While it was a collision victim, the accident was with Ottawa’s light rail train, the O-train. A rescuer was found and brought the bird into Safe Wings for some immediate care. Then we found a ride for this amazing bird to get it specialized care



*Photo by Safe Wings Ottawa*



This **Yellow Warbler** was our first warbler needing rehab in the fall season this year. You can see the distinctive closed eye found in many, if not most window collision victims. In addition to bruising and possible broken bones, most birds that fly into glass end up with a concussion.

*Photo by Safe Wings Ottawa*

We had our second over-wintering bird this year – an Ovenbird was admitted October 10, 2024, and was not well enough into to be released for the fall migration. The bird was kept for 208 days and then released in Ottawa May 5, 2025, when other Ovenbirds were again in the city.

Our window collision recovery rates continue to surpass reported averages, and we continue to refine our protocols through ongoing collaboration with rehabilitation facilities across North America. While we hope that one day specialized rehab centers like SWO will no longer be needed, we take pride in knowing we are making a real difference for the birds affected by window collisions!

## **Rescue**

As you can see from the examples above, Safe Wings rescues and treats more than window collision victims, though they are our raison d’être. With volunteers and the public willing to rescue and drive birds, along with our after-hours availability, we are a go-to resource in Ottawa, even while being

**entirely volunteer run!** The Bald Eagle, Charlie, shows just how important our community is. Some people contacted Safe Wings for help, we reached out to and mobilized the public via social media, a local contact volunteered to rescue and capture the eagle (their first eagle ever!) and they and another party drove the injured bird to Safe Wings in Orleans. Then Safe Wings cared for the bird while trying to arrange a flight with Canadian Wings of Rescue – however the weather did not support these efforts. A volunteer drove the bird to The Owl Foundation near Niagara Falls for the final assessment. We also have some skilled kayakers willing to brave sometimes cold water to help with goose and duck rescues! No one can do this alone – so we thank all our volunteers, fellow rehabbers and organizations, and the caring public.

Safe Wings volunteers rescue many injured geese and ducks – whether after being hit by a car or bike, shot, or incapacitated by an injury, wires or fishing line. It has been a very busy year for these types of calls. Since the end of July, we have responded to well over 100 calls directed to us from the OVWBCC and our volunteers followed up on at least 80 of those calls. Below are two we rescued from fishing line and hooks at Mooney’s Bay: *(Photos by Safe Wings Ottawa)*





Got your attention with this cute fluff, didn't we? For the fourth year in a row, Safe Wings Ottawa has continued helping orphaned geese and ducklings in the Ottawa region. The OVWBCC continues to take in Wood and other ducklings again in 2025, so we again stepped in to rescue and raise in the range of 65 to 75 orphaned Mallard ducklings and around 20 Canada Geese. We partnered again this year with an incredible foster who provided the ideal environment for these young birds throughout their stay with us. While we look forward to the OVWBCC potentially taking on Mallards in the future, we will continue to fill this vital gap as long as our resources allow.

*Photo by Safe Wings Ottawa*

Safe Wings was contacted when a Killdeer was found nesting at a construction site out in Orleans. Our rehabber went out herself to find the bird, who is very well camouflaged in the rocks and dirt. The construction developer then set-up protection to ensure she and her eggs were safe until they hatched. Does everyone remember the BluesFest Killdeer? Same situation here—you are not allowed to disturb or destroy most active bird nests or eggs. This includes American Robins, Canada Geese and other more common birds. *Photos by Safe Wings Ottawa*



Other rescues this year include a mother duck and ducklings from Algonquin College, rescue of ducklings from backyard in-ground pools (Mallards nest in yards because it's safe and ducklings cannot get out of pools – a FrogLog or homemade ramp is needed), ducklings and goslings from the Ottawa canal locks (the babies jump in but cannot get out so they drown and die), a domestic duck our volunteer rescued via kayak and more. Safe Wings will continue to step in to these situations where and when we have capacity.



*Photo by a Safe Wings volunteer who used a kayak to rescue a domestic duck who should not have been released into the wild. A good home was found for this guy and he even has some girlfriends now!*

## Outreach

Another year, another annual display, this year with a theme of “Across Canada”, including attendance and birds from similar organizations in Toronto and London, Ontario and support from Bird Friendly Ottawa. Safe Wings’ event was again graciously hosted by the Museum of Nature on the



Thursday of spring-break week in March, again taking advantage of free evening access to the museum. We expanded the information shared with the public by including more side tables focusing on individual species. *Photos by Safe Wings Ottawa volunteer Nui Soonthornhut Esser*

Our volunteers participated in seven public engagements this year including:

- Bird Friendly Ottawa’s “World Migratory Bird Day” event at the Ron Kolbus Centre at Andrew at Britannia Park and Beach
- Earth Day Event with Councillor Riley Brockington in the River Ward
- The Cumberland Museum’s “Animal Helper Day”
- Bird Walk tours with Convent Glen and Bird Friendly Ottawa at Petrie Island
- A presentation to the Constitutions Square Management team regarding birds and glass window collisions

Safe Wings was the contact for multiple media interviews with the Ottawa Citizen, CTV, CFRA and Carleton University journalism students. Topics included our annual display, geese nesting on roofs, bird wires at Britannia Beech ensnaring birds, birding in general and the rescue of the Bald Eagle, Charlie.

### **Advocacy**

Safe Wings continued with advocacy work throughout 2025. This includes continued pushing for new buildings to be bird friendly and existing buildings to be retrofitted. It also includes working with Parks Canada to push for rafts to be placed in the locks of the Rideau Canal to save goslings and ducklings who cannot fly out on their own – Safe Wings even provided a number of rafts and ropes.

Safe Wings continues to work with similar organizations, providing data on collisions. The information is used to ensure that buildings are meeting the requirements of the Migratory Bird Regulations. Enforcement has been conducted in a few isolated situations, including one private individual fine for throwing things at a goose, as reported by the CBC: [Winnipegger's \\$300 fine for throwing things at Canada goose a rare case but a good reminder, lawyer says | CBC News](#). Given this and a couple other small-scale examples, Safe Wings and similar organizations intend to conduct stronger follow-up on this issue.

One building was successfully treated on one side in downtown Ottawa late in 2024. The building at 200 Kent Street, which houses federal government workers, had Feather Friendly treatment finished to 9 stories on its south side. When one treated window was replaced with a clear glass window, Safe Wings’ volunteers found dead birds right under that location, providing further evidence of the effectiveness of treated windows compared to the danger of those left untreated.

Unfortunately, the City of Ottawa has still not adopted the proposed High Performance Development Standards, which would include mandatory bird friendly design. We will continue to advocate for

support, despite council's delayed vote and reticence due to current provincial direction on conservation issues and construction.

Another organisation we continue to work with is Carleton University. Professor Rachel Buxton's students continued work on window collision research and carcass persistence (how long dead bird carcasses remain at a site). Their data and research on collisions in Ottawa includes support on data collation and mapping. Carlton University continues to treat building windows and campus, and a group of students created the mural below to help birds see this section of glass. We hope more students engage in bird friendly design and lead the way for the next generations.



*Window treatments at Carleton University help birds see glass and prevent window collisions.  
Photo by a Safe Wings volunteer.*

Janette Niwa,  
Chair, Safe Wings Ottawa