

Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club – Board of Directors Meeting
Monday, April 20, 2026 – 7:00 p.m. on Zoom
Minutes

Chair: Owen Clarkin

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

Absent: Gord Robertson, Bob Bergquist

1. Approval of the Agenda – the agenda was approved as circulated with the addition of:
 - 6b SwiftWatch
 - 6c Storage Locker
 - 6d Website
 - 6e FWG Finance
 - 6f Macoun Volunteer opportunities
 - 6g Frank Pope's books
2. Acceptance of Minutes from March 16, 2026 BOD meeting
Moved by Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Jessica Simms, that the Minutes of the March 16, 2026 Board of Directors meeting be approved. **CARRIED**
3. Business arising from the minutes - none
4. Communications – Ken: nil to report
5. Treasurer's Report – Ken had circulated the following report by email:

“Current Financial Processing

No issues

Six-Month Financial review

I have reviewed the financial records for the first half of our fiscal year (October 2025 through March 2026). The actual revenues and expenditures over this period can be compared to the same period the previous year, and to one-half of the current year's budget.

These data are in the attached spreadsheet. The data are as expected:

1. The largest year-over-year discrepancies simply reflect timing issues (CFN, T&L). In one year, expenses for an item are paid in March, in the next in April.
2. This year we are running the Pelee Trip. In the first half we received the revenues, but most of the expenses will be booked in the second half of the year.

3. There is a similar situation with the plant sale – plant sale revenues are always earned in May.
4. Our accounting fees are all paid in the first half of the year, so that has a similar effect on 5710 Professional Fees.

Pelee Trip

The financial aspects of the Pelee Trip are in hand. The convenor, Martha Farkas, has everything under control.

Governmental Reporting

I filed our annual report with the Ontario Government.

Website

Our webmaster, Sandy Garland, discovered quite by accident that our web host is going out of business. So she is making arrangements to transfer our website to a new host.

At the same time, the email service has been investigated. Nui Esser, who has organized the Safe Wings system, has set up a similar system on a trial basis for the main OFNC website. I've participated in the trial and Nui's solution works well. However, Sandy is also exploring what our new hosting company can do.

One way or another, it appears that we will get an upgraded email system, and a new web host."

Although Ken suggested that any decisions about the new website and email system were up to Sandy, Jakob felt that the Board should see the options before any decisions were made.

Decisions need to be made about the actual email addresses that are necessary.

Ken emphasised the importance of monitoring the new emails as they will not be going to personal inboxes any longer.

The possibility of having a members' only portal on the new website was raised. The difficulty of doing this was discussed as we do not have membership cards/numbers.

6. Issues for Discussion

- a) Awards Night Follow-up – Owen congratulated and thanked everyone involved, suggesting it was the best Awards Night he had attended. Some issues had, however, arisen which were attributed to the larger than usual number of attendees and the very early arrival of many of the attendees. There were more presentations than usual from the Macoun Club and Michael Runtz was likely a draw.

Judie Garbo and Shawna Lucey had put the evening together with input from Diane Lepage who has led it recently. The event is nominally the responsibility of the Events Committee. Bev had requested that a more structured approach be developed with Board oversight. The Board

discussed what should be done in this regard. There is at present no formal written plan for the event. The balance between the event being an awards event and a social event was discussed. The event is now of such a size that it shouldn't fall to only one or two people to organise it. The possibility of a sub-committee was raised. Jess offered to be the Board contact and suggested that she meet with people involved to further explore the matter.

- b) SwiftWatch – Janette had obtained further details. Birds Canada is looking for partners to promote SwiftWatch and provide volunteers to attend the counts. Safe Wings and Birds Committee have expressed interest. It was pointed out that Chimney Swifts are one of the two birds that make Ottawa an Important Bird Area.

Moved by Janette Niwa, seconded by Jessica Sims, that OFNC support SwiftWatch through promotion and support from members. **CARRIED**

- c) Storage Locker – Ann reported that the storage locker has been moved to the Dymon facility at Baseline and Clyde. The new locker is slightly larger (10' x 6½' as opposed to 10' x 5') but not significantly more expensive.

- d) Website - (see Item 4 above – Treasurer's Report)

- e) FWG Finance – Ted asked that some items that are not in the budget be considered:

- i. FWG would like to host Pollinator Appreciation Day again on June 20. Sandy would like to be able to pay an honorarium to 8 proposed hosts. They also want to prepare a photo display and there will be other miscellaneous costs. There will be an OFNC booth.

Moved by Ted Farnworth, seconded by Emilia Michaud, that OFNC budget up to \$1480 to support Pollinator Appreciation Day.

Ted will finalise this proposal before it is voted on in May.

- ii. Ted would like to update the site map digitally in collaboration with an FWG volunteer. They would need technical assistance. Algonquin graduates offer such a service for \$800. They have not yet explored the printing of the map. Jakob noted that Ontario Nature has an individual who offers trail map preparation at a good member rate. He will explore this and contact Ted. Lisa was in favour of using a student or recent graduate because of current employment difficulties.

Moved by Ted Farnworth, seconded by Ann MacKenzie, that OFNC budget up to \$800 to pay for development of a new FWG site map.

- iii. FWG is no longer able to use the Red Barn for storage. Ted advised that they will probably be asking for funds for a new storage shed later in the year. Ken pointed out that a proposal would have to be made in May in order to vote on it in June. Otherwise, it would have to go into next year's budget. Jess wondered whether pods for temporary storage would be an alternative strategy as some of the space issues are related to the plant sale which occupies space for a limited time. Ted will bring this back to the plant sale committee.

- f) Macoun Volunteer opportunities – Susan noted that Macoun Club youth are looking for high school volunteer hours opportunities. Owen wondered whether they could be involved in running a walk, e.g. in a downtown urban park. Deb thought they could

possibly use them during e.g. Brownies and Cubs walks. Deb can share dates of these walks. They could perhaps help at e.g. Bug Day and Pollinator Appreciation Day. Conservation might be able to use youth who are able to assist with biodiversity surveys.

- g) Frank Pope's books – Bev noted that these are no longer available.

7. Committee Updates

- a) Awards – Bev had circulated the following report by email:

“- Huge thanks to all who pulled off a fantastic Awards Night!
- Bethany Armstrong, who resigned from the committee this winter, has asked to return, having been re-inspired
- I have provided the citations to the CFN editor
- I am preparing short versions for T&L
- I still need to have the committee review the ToR”.

Moved by Bev McBride, seconded by Lisa Chamney, that Bethany Armstrong be approved as a member of the Awards Committee. **CARRIED**

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

- “Completed the Bird Song ID course which was a great success
- Organized "Intro to Birding at Point Pelee" session - hosted by Derek Dunnett over Zoom. Also a great success.
 - All of the Zoom sessions were recorded and Jakob helped us post them onto the OFNC YouTube channel.
- Organized a Woodcock Whirl - watching/listening to Woodcocks in the evening, in collaboration with the McNamara Field Naturalists. Great success.
 - All of the above events were initiated and organized by **Janet McCullough**.
- Started working on improvements to the Birds section of the OFNC website with the help of Amy VanTorre. She is an OFNC member who has developed websites for non-profit organizations in the past - it's her way of volunteering, since she knows what she's doing when it comes to websites. She is amazing and she's put together wireframes for us so we can see what the changes will be before we go ahead with them. We hope to complete the changes in the next month. **Lorraine Elworthy** has been spearheading this initiative.
- Supported the Safe Wings display at the Museum of Nature.
- Responded to some interesting queries and picked up two boxes of bird books from an Anglophone COO member. Not sure what we will do with them but they are not that old, and in excellent shape.
- We have another OFNC member interested in being in the Birds Committee so she will observe our next call.

Upcoming:

- Warbler Walk around the Rideau River (May 9)
- Jane's Walk - organized by Bird Friendly Ottawa (May 2)
- Swift Watch event - May 25 (organized by Nature Canada and Birds Canada)
- Birds Committee Birding outing - planning for June timeframe”

Emilia wondered whether Amy VanTorre might be of help in the general updating of the web site and will circulate her bio.

c) Conservation

Moved by Jakob Mueller, seconded by Katriina Ilves, that Colin Champman-Lam, be approved as a member of the Conservation Committee. **CARRIED**

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

“March/ April Activities

Judging at the Ottawa Regional Science Fair – March 27-28

4 awards were presented

Returning judges – Deborah Doherty, Michele Michichiuc

New judges - Fred Scaini, Emma Fleming-Pijuan, Sarrina Roy

Materials for the Ontario Youth Summit have been posted on the OFNC website. Committee will be recruiting for applications.

Updating of our display materials – thanks to everyone for submitting content and feedback on the three panels.

Earth day celebrations in Hunt Club were held on April 18th

Our display with stuffed animals was a hit with the kids on the “Scavenger Hunt”. Gord Robertson led the family / youth Nature walk

Chris Dennison and Deb Doherty led the adult Nature walk

Thanks to the OFNC volunteers who assisted with the display (Bernie Muncester, Louisa Coates)

Spring Story-boards have been posted at FWG

Provided two volunteers for the Bio-blitz at with the Macoun Club and Ottawa Stewardship Council from the volunteer list.

Up-coming April / May activities

Jane’s Walk – FWG – May 2nd – 2:00 – 3:30

Pollinator Day (June 20th) – nature walk and display

On-going requests from Beavers, Guides, For our Kids, Seniors to visit FWG for guided tours.”

e) Events – Owen reported that they are ramping up for the busiest time of the year. The Committee will meet next week.

f) Finance – Ann: nil to report

g) Fletcher Wildlife Garden – (see also Item 5e above) Ted reported that the volunteer groups will be starting up in a couple of weeks. The Plant Sale is in hand. Jane’s walks are being

organised. Discussions are continuing with AAFC about defining the boundary of FWG especially with respect to *Canadensis*. A map has been found and the boundary lines are clear.

- h) Macoun Club – Susan noted that the Club had the largest number of displays in some time at Awards Night. Of particular note was the artwork of Samwath. Katriina is organising a fish identification event for the Club.
- i) Membership – Lisa: nil to report
- j) Ontario Nature – Jakob reported that the Ontario East Regional Meeting had been held on April 18 in Newburgh and had been productive. The region now has the largest number of member groups with some very active groups. They are doing a more detailed member survey. Times are challenging with the loss of the provincial *Endangered Species Act*. Many endangered species, especially migratory birds, now only have federal protection. The new provincial *Species Conservation Act* protects endangered organisms and the immediate places in which they live but their surrounding habitat is not protected. ON is working very hard to advocate for nature in our region and to better achieve their mandate.
- k) Publications – Jess had circulated the following report by email:

“- Trail & Landscape April–June 2026 is out (it arrived in my mailbox last week!). Beautiful Black and White Warbler on the cover + notes from 2026 ABM, 2026 Committee rosters, Frank Pope obit, Don Lafontaine obit, and Profiles of Canadian Naturalists from Ed. and Pubs. Committee!!

- Canadian Field-Naturalist 139(1) has also arrived in mailboxes. Check out Dwayne’s editor’s synopsis on the OFNC blog: <https://ofnc.ca/research/editors-synopsis-of-cfn-1391-four-toed-salamanders> As always, there is a free feature article as part of the issue—all about four-toed salamanders in New Brunswick: <https://www.canadianfieldnaturalist.ca/index.php/cfn/article/view/3403>

- For Canadian Field-Naturalist subscriptions, no new changes (still at about 20 institutions as part of EBSCO that have not renewed yet for volume 139).”

Dwayne had circulated the following report by email:

“139(1) January–March 2026

- full posting was delayed (ready 16 March, last BoD meeting) until 23 March because of a communication misunderstanding
- print proofs arrived by courier from Gilmore 26 March, no changes required; printing approved 30 March, same day Editor’s synopsis sent for posting
- mailing date 9 April

139(2) April–June 2026

- 3 galleys completed, all have returned from author (AU) review so waiting to be finalized and/or return of AU transfer of copyright/order forms
- one early invoice sent so could be paid before end of federal fiscal (31 March)
- manuscripts (ms) on mussel community in Mississagi River (flows into Lake Huron); Purple-striped Jellyfish off the Pacific coast (new species to Canada); introduced terrestrial flatworm in New Brunswick
- interesting hiccup on one of these galleys – the AUs institutional email system has blocked the galley and the earlier docx from being received because of an apparently suspicious weblink which has been deemed OK by other email systems
- 24 journal pages so far
- ms on arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi in saltmarsh cordgrasses in Nova Scotia returned from AU review of copyediting last Friday (17 April)
- ms on investigating flying squirrel pilfering of red squirrel middens in BC returned from formal copyediting yesterday
- ms on amphibians in the experimental lakes area of Ontario returned to AU 14 April for some clarifications before ready for formal copyediting
- ms on plant diversity at a proposed Important Plant Area in the Roseberry Lake Biosphere in Saskatchewan close to being accepted (with AU for
- four Book Reviews and the New Titles list have been finalized by Jess after being reviewed/edited by Amanda and Dwayne
- Dwayne has 2/3 documents from the 2026 ABM (Committee Annual Reports, Club Awards for 2025 **but not the draft minutes**) expected to be published in 139(2) as is the notice for the Fletcher Award—“best” paper published in volume 138
- may be sufficient ($n = 7$ ms, same number as in 139-1) for the minimum 80 journal pages

Other manuscripts in the process (from farthest along in the process to just beginning)

- two AU revisions have been reviewed and Dwayne sent them back for further Associate Editor (AE) opinions
 - 15 AU revisions have been received, two of which the assigned AE concludes are ready to be accepted for publication; the latter two are awaiting Dwayne’s review and final decision
 - 17 being revised by AUs (since EiC decision January 2024) some of which will probably not be revised)
 - AE recommendations from initial peer review have been received on three ms and are awaiting Dwayne’s initial decision on next step (revise, resubmit, accept as submitted, decline)
 - nine manuscripts under initial peer review; one of which Dwayne is acting as AE and two peer reviews have been completed (12 April and today); four other reviewers declined his request to be reviewers
 - AEs have been assigned to two manuscripts but AEs have not yet contacted potential reviewers
 - AE assigned to one ms today
- Dwayne will be AE on another and has today asked the AU for confirmation of species identification and if vouchers are being deposited into a publicly accessible collection i.e., ROM or CMN given the response from two potential reviewers he contacted; AU responded positively so peer-review to proceed

- 10 submissions received so far in 2026, including two that were just initial inquiries as to their suitability for CFN
- by the same time last year only five had been received so submissions seem to be increasing
- thematic collection by Amanda and Dwayne still in progress: Dwayne searching for and adding DOIs or URLs for CFN & T&L articles referenced in COSEWIC status reports posted on SARA registry up to January 2025 in either the CFN online archives, or for CFN publications before 117(2) 2003 and all those in T&L, in BHL (Biodiversity Heritage Library)
- there are >1700 lines in the spreadsheet but not all are specific references to CFN or T&L articles"

Jess noted that the last Book Club meeting before the summer is on May 27 and they will be discussing "Tree Thieves: Crime and Survival in North America's Woods" by Lyndsie Bourgon.

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

“Communications

- Need photos and videos of bird rescues during spring migration
- Like help with French translation for captions

Website

- Pages updated: information on avian flu and a success story.

Advocacy

- No response on reporting of MBA despite previous communications and invitations.

Volunteer Activities

- Volunteer orientation, which is now available online through Better Impact
- Team to translation volunteer training & material

Rehab

- Not many birds yet - caring for a cardinal.

Spring Patrolling

- Reviewed process for patrolling and distributing equipment, kits available and downtown supply access via designated bin (storage for material & live bird drop-off when patroller doesn't have transportation)
- Finding takers for remaining bird specimens (2024 and 2025 birds), including arrangements with universities, museums & first nations

Annual Display wrap-up

- Good attendance and positive feedback from the museum staff and public
- Areas for improvement: a specific opening times communicated, better media coordination with RSVPs, and ensuring all materials are bilingual for future events.

Events

- Swift Watch Night Out with Birds Canada at Dalhousie Community Center Park in late May
- Cumberland Museum event Riley Brockington, city counsellor, doing an Earth day event (BFO)

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

Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Moore

Upcoming Meeting Dates

May 18, 2026

June 15, 2026 – in person

September 21, 2026 (TBC)