



OFO Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2020

AGM Materials

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President's Message

This has been an interesting year to say the least!

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and continued uncertainty have affected birding as they have every other facet of society. Despite the circumstances, OFO has been able to make progress on the 2020 priorities established by the Board at our annual retreat in February.

The COVID-19 pandemic challenged us to find ways to enjoy and learn about birds differently than in other years. In fact, we are seeing a much wider interest in birds, and we have found ways to connect with nature and enjoy birding despite this year's restrictions.

COVID-19 Response

We started the year with our most extensive line-up ever of field trips and young birder events ever. But then COVID-19 happened and, like every other organization, OFO had to adjust.

We cancelled our field trips and events. Then, to keep birders going, we ran the Birding at Home Challenge which was hugely successful with over 600 participants. We opened online access to our publications to non-members and we experimented with webinars and online events. We expect to restart field trips in October provided the rate of COVID-19 infection remains acceptable.

Early on, the Board decided to follow public health and government guidelines to the letter. Given the demographics of our membership, many of whom are high-risk, our approach will continue to err on the side of caution regarding the safety of our members.

Diversity and Inclusivity

The Black Lives Matter movement and Black Birder's Week during the first week of June highlighted issues of diversity and inclusivity with regards to access to, and enjoyment of, nature. The OFO Board has reflected on the barriers which may prevent access to birding and specifically to OFO's activities. As a result, we will be putting in place changes, such as adding public transit directions to field trips, adding events for beginner birders, and indicating where field trips are appropriate for people with physical challenges.

Atlas-3

Next year marks the first year of the 3rd Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. Once again, OFO is proud to join Birds Canada, Ontario Nature, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, and the Canadian Wildlife Service, as one of the five partner organizations sponsoring the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. This is an important project. The data collected about breeding birds across the province over five years informs conservation decisions and fuels research.

We encourage all OFO members, who are among the most capable birders in Ontario, to participate in this wonderful project.

Proposed By-law Change

The Board is proposing a change to the by-laws to increase the maximum size of the Board from 10 to 13 members, and quorum from five to seven. This change is necessary because OFO is engaged in more activities, such as the Northern Ontario Birding and Diversity initiatives, which require a greater range of perspectives on the Board.

2019 – 2020 Highlights

A small team of volunteers has accomplished a great deal! These are a few of this year's accomplishments.

- The Birding at Home Challenge was a huge success and gave birders a renewed appreciation of their local birds. We can now roll out future challenges more easily.
- Ontbirds was split into two Listservs – Ontbirds for provincial rarities and Birdnews for everything else.
- A Northern Ontario Birding Committee was formed to promote birding in the North for Northern and Southern Ontario birders. We have added information about Northern Ontario birding to our website, organized (but then cancelled) several new Northern Ontario field trips and are planning for a new spring festival in Sault Ste Marie in 2021.
- We started a program of webinars to educate members and others about birds and birding.
- OFO News and Ontario Birds are now available online from their inception.
- The website redesign is well underway – a prototype has been built and content development is in progress.
- The OFO News and Ontario Birds editorial teams have worked tirelessly to produce great publications with original content found nowhere else.
- Over 70 field trips and workshops were planned this year, including new events for beginner birders, and workshops on southbound shorebird ID and waterfowl identification.

- OFO became more active in providing information about conservation issues in the province. We spoke out against the Cormorant Hunt and Bill 197 (the Covid-19 Economic Recovery Act) and will continue to foster awareness about the threats to our birds.

Looking Ahead

Next year, we plan to continue working on our existing priorities and will re-evaluate them at the annual Board Retreat in the winter.

One new project we are excited about is **OFO Birding Buddies**. This initiative, spearheaded by the Northern Ontario Birding Committee, will connect OFO members across the province. When you join or renew your membership, you will be able to sign up as a Birding Buddy, to either give advice and information to other OFO Members or to take them out birding. It will be your choice. And a lot of fun.

Hopefully, the COVID-19 pandemic will end, and we will be able to meet in person at the convention at Point Pelee in September 2021.

I will repeat what I said last year. "I am proud to be part of this team of volunteers who work hard year after year to bring knowledge about birds to others and create opportunities to see birds across Ontario."

Good birding,

Lynne Freeman, *OFO President*



Proposed By-Law Amendment

The Board of Directors are proposing an amendment to the By-Law relating to the number of directors and quorum at a Board Meeting. *Please refer to the President's Message for the rationale for this.* The proposed amendment will be put to a vote at the Annual General Meeting scheduled for September 28, 2020.

The present wording is as follows:

3.01 Number of Directors and Quorum at Board Meeting

The affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by its Board of Directors. Until changed in accordance with the Act, the number of Directors shall be at least 8 and not more than 10, of whom 5 shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Notwithstanding vacancies the remaining Directors may act if constituting a quorum.

The proposed wording is as follows:

3.01 Number of Directors and Quorum at Board Meeting

The affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by its Board of Directors. Until changed in accordance with the Act, the number of Directors shall be at least 8 and not more than 13, of whom 7 shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Notwithstanding vacancies the remaining Directors may act if constituting a quorum.



Treasurer's Report

The 2019 Financial Statements will be made available at a later date, well before the Annual General Meeting. If you have any questions please direct them to me at treasurer@ofo.ca.

In the mean-time, I can report that the deficit for 2019 was quite large (\$19,662 vs. \$3,936 for 2018) but again, the receipt of prepaid dues and HST rebates have helped to maintain a positive cash flow. The Board has taken several steps to eliminate those areas that have contributed to operating deficits.

The increase in membership dues, from \$40 to \$45 starting in 2020, will go a long way to putting us back in the black.

We are seeking outside sponsorships to help defray costs for the annual convention and the Young Birders' camp.

We have adopted a policy that all activities must be conducted on a cost-recovery basis or show a profit, though there may be the odd exception.

Internally new methods have been found to operate at a more efficient level and at lower costs.

The result of much work on the part of several Board and non-board members regarding the electronic publication of the Newsletter has proven successful. A large number of members subscribing to the on-line version will have a real positive effect on the reduction of printing expenses

I would again like to close by thanking the Board, Chairs, and the members of various committees, and especially the editors for working so diligently to keep our costs in line. Their efforts have helped make my job a success.

Brian W. Gibbon RPA
Treasurer.

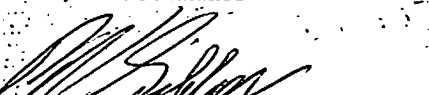
**ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
COMPARATIVE BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2019**

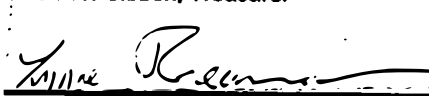
<u>ASSETS</u>			<u>LIABILITIES & MEMBERS' EQUITY</u>		
	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>		<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
Cash in Bank	\$ 20,508	\$ 38,320	Prepaid Membership Dues	\$ 28,685	\$ 20,415
Convention Deposit	1,000	1,000	Accounts payable	-	1,328
Accounts Receivable	-	1,350	TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 28,685	\$ 21,743
GST Receivable	7,965	2,495	MEMBERS EQUITY		
Inventory	2,659	2,428	Balance beginning of Year	\$ 24,145	\$ 28,131
Equipment	577	577	Net Income for Year	(19,662)	(3,936)
Accumulated depreciation	(341)	(282)	Less Prior year adjustment	(530)	(50)
TOTAL	\$ 32,368	\$ 45,888	Balance end of Year	\$ 3,953	24,145
			TOTAL	\$ 32,638	\$ 45,888

**COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF INCOME and EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2019**

<u>INCOME</u>			<u>EXPENSES</u>		
	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>		<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
Membership Dues	\$ 34,570	\$ 46,651	<u>Printing and Mailing</u>		
US \$ Exchange	13	32	- Journal, Ontario Birds	\$ 23,259	\$ 25,206
Donations	2,951	4,287	- Newsletter, OFO News	18,065	18,301
Baillie Birdathon	602	-	<u>Administration</u>		
Advertising	100	5,000	Advertising	422	1,083
Sale of Merchandise	1,157	1,685	AffiniPay fees - Membership	772	-
Interest	-	150	Audit	250	250
Gull Weekend	1,530	-	Awards	153	-
Annual Convention (Net)	(1,249)	1,721	Bank charges & Exchange	278	151
	\$ 39,674	\$ 59,526	Birdathon	983	-
Inventory adjustment	232	336	Board expenses	894	1,588
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 39,906	\$ 59,862	Checklists	-	1,759
			Depreciation	59	74
			Digitizing	-	200
			Donation	-	2,000
			Fees	375	350
			Field Trips	2,289	1,317
			Gull weekend	688	78
			Liability Insurance	2,015	1,975
			Membership expenses	1,086	140
			OBRC expense	32	109
			OFO Website and Ontbirds	3,041	3,097
			Postal box rental	246	239
			Purchase of Merchandise	1,164	528
			Treasurer's expense	125	398
			Young Birder's expense	3,372	4,955
			TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 59,568	\$ 63,798
			TOTAL INCOME	39,906	\$ 59,862
			NET ANNUAL INCOME (LOSS)	\$ (19,662)	\$ (3,936)


Phyllis Wilson, RPA
Chair, Audit Committee


Brian W. Gibbon, Treasurer


Lynne Freeman, President



Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting

Sept 28, 2019, Hamilton, Ontario

Lynne Freeman welcomed everyone at 8:03 pm to the 37th OFO Annual General Meeting celebrating Ontario birding and birders. Lynne reminded the attendees that OFO is their organization, and that the Board exists to represent their interests and concerns. She also reminded them that all OFO members can vote on the motions brought forward in the meeting. **Lynne moved, seconded by Charmaine Anderson, to accept the minutes of 2018 AGM. The motion was carried unanimously.**

Lynne reviewed the OFO mission: to promote and increase the appreciation and knowledge of Ontario's avifauna and its conservation. OFO includes all people with an interest in birds and birding, regardless of their expertise. The Board's priorities are to improve services for OFO members e.g. expanding the OFO Facebook community, expanding specialized workshops and field trips in the north, promoting birding through outreach to new groups and to become involved in certain conservation initiatives. As well, we have continued our core services: field trips, ONTBirds ListServ, OFO News and Ontario Birds, the OBRC, the Gull Workshop and Shorebird Nights, the OFO website and of course the Convention, and we also held the 3rd Alan Wormington Memorial Camp for young birders in Algonquin Park. Our membership stands at approximately 1,200 people.

Lynne also noted the reports from all the OFO committees that were included in the 2019 AGM package. These committees are all run by volunteers. **Lynne moved, seconded by Jeremy Hatt, to accept these committee reports. The motion was carried unanimously.**

The Treasurer's Report and Financial statement were prepared by OFO Treasurer Brian Gibbon and reviewed by Phyllis J. Wilson and her audit committee. In 2018, we again had a small deficit (\$3,936 vs. \$7,289 in 2017) because of increased costs and reduced revenue due to lower advertising and donations. As a result, we are taking steps to reduce administration costs and increase revenue through a small increase in our membership fees. **Lynne moved, seconded by Sarah Rupert, to accept the Treasurer's report and Financial Statement. The motion was carried unanimously.**

The Bylaws of the Ontario Field Ornithologists stipulate that the Members are entitled to elect new Directors at each Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Board of Directors may also, at any time, elect a new Director should there be a vacancy on the Board. The term of these Directors is three years, and the total number of Directors required is not less than 8 and not more than 10.

This year we were very sad about the passing of one of our directors, **Doug Woods**. Additional vacancies arose with the resignation of **Jeremy Hatt, Kevin Seymour** and **Mark Cranford**. We are grateful to all four of them for their contributions to OFO.

Bob Cermak, Sarah Rupert and **Dave Milsom** completed the 3rd year of their terms and stood for re-election. **Lynne moved, seconded by Brian Gibbon, to re-elect these three members to the Board. The motion was carried unanimously.**

Two members were newly nominated to the Board, namely **Ian Shanahan** and **Jack Alvo**. **Lynne Freeman moved, seconded by Brian Gibbon, to elect these members to the Board. The motion was carried unanimously.**

Finally, Lynne thanked the multitude of OFO volunteers, including the Board, the Big Sitters, trip leaders and camp counsellors, OFO News and Ontario Birds writers and editors, artists, photographers, IT and website....the list goes on! In particular she thanked the Convention Committee led by **Bob Cermak** and which included **Brian Gibbon, Jeremy Hatt, Rob Porter, the Hamilton Field Naturalist Board** and members, and all of the trip leaders.

Adjournment: The AGM was adjourned at approximately 8:38 PM.

Charmaine Anderson, standing in for **Jack Alvo**, *Secretary*



OFO Committee Reports for 2019-20

The 2020-2021 Board of Directors

The By-laws of the Ontario Field Ornithologists stipulate that you, the Members, are entitled to elect new Directors at each Annual General Meeting (“AGM”). The Board of Directors may also, at any time, elect a new Director should there be a vacancy on the Board. The term of these Directors is 3 years.

Presently, the By-laws state that the total number of Directors is to be not less than 8 and not more than 10. At this time there are 10 Directors. The Board is recommending a By-law amendment to increase the maximum number of Directors from 10 to 13. (*Please refer to AGM Agenda*).

The existing Directors are all staying on the Board for the upcoming year as none of their terms are expiring. They are listed below:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Present role</u>	<u>Director since</u>	<u>Term ends</u>					
<i>Lynne Freeman</i>	<i>President and Young Birders Program</i>	2009	2021					
<i>Bob Cermak</i>	<i>VP and Chair, Convention Committee</i>	2014	2022					
<i>Brian Gibbon</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>	2009	2021					
<i>Jack Alvo</i>	<i>Secretary and Volunteer Coordinator</i>	2019	2022					
<i>Charmaine Anderson</i>	<i>Membership and Outreach</i>	2018	2021					
<i>Ian Shanahan</i>	<i>Fundraising</i>	2019	2022					
<i>Amanda Guercio</i>	<i>Education</i>	2019	2022					
<i>Dave Milsom</i>	<i>Field Trips and Events</i>	1999	2022					
<i>Reuven Martin</i>	<i>Conservation Awareness</i>	2020	2023					
<i>Sarah Rupert</i>	<i>Marketing and Communications</i>	2016	2022					

Nomination for the 2020-21 Board of Directors

If you would like to submit a nomination for the Board, please email the President at president@ofo.ca. Board members serve three-year terms and must be members of OFO. Directors are expected to participate in a minimum of 75% of Board Meetings (4-5 times / year and an annual 1-day retreat).

Subject to the above-noted By-law amendment being approved by the Members at this year's AGM, the Board is nominating **Carter Dorscht** to the Board. The Board of Directors may, at a later time, elect additional Directors within the amended maximum of 13.

Jack Alvo, *OFO Secretary*

2020 OFO Great Canadian Birdathon

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic OFO Celebrity Birders **Tom Hince**, **Bruce Di Labio** and **Paul Pratt** cannot conduct their Big Sit this year.

Bob Cermak, *OFO Birdathon Coordinator*

Education

We continue working to establish a presence for OFO as a reputable source of educational material about birds and birding via our website and on social media, especially through the highly successful Birding at Home Challenge. We have also expanded our slate of educational workshops and walks. While 2020 posed a challenge regarding in-person group gatherings, we hope to feature new events in 2021 featuring subjects such as plant identification for birders, nocturnal flight calls, and more.

This year has also focused on reviewing and updating content on our website in preparation for a major website redesign. We have been collaborating with authors to update existing content as well as preparing new material such as site guides and other general information about birds and birding in Ontario.

Amanda Guercio, *OFO Director, Education*

Field Trips & Events

In 2020 our extensive slate of excellent fieldtrips was unfortunately cut short by the onset of the COVID-19 in early March.

Successful fieldtrips in January to the Peterborough area, and to Leslie Street Spit, as well as a new adventure on the Detroit River, were all well attended. In February, our annual Amherst Island trip was conducted. The second weekend of March resulted in two well attended fieldtrips to the Haldimand area and Long Point, being the last possible trips before the lockdown occurred.

Attempts to restart the program have been unsuccessful despite several leaders being willing to lead under certain strict protocols. The risks of infection to our members (and leaders) have caused the OFO Board to cancel fieldtrips until at least October.

During this lengthy COVID-19 crisis, OFO has given members several opportunities to attend fieldtrip sessions online, as in the webinar program set up by several of our bird experts, and virtual fieldtrips organized by leaders to enable individual birders to go on self-guided trips of a particular birding hotspot.

When our fieldtrip program can resume, we hope to ask leaders to continue submitting reports after their outing as well as including photos of birds and /or the group, to be posted on the OFO website, Facebook page, and Ontbirds.

In 2021, we hope to include in our fieldtrip program a special festival weekend in Sault Ste Marie from May 28 to 30, as well as a June birding weekend in Moosonee. If all is well, our Hillman Marsh Shorebird Festival will also be staged again next May. In September, the annual convention is scheduled to take place in Leamington and Point Pelee.

Let us hope we are back-to-normal in 2021 so that we can once again offer the Ontario birding community a large number of fine birding destinations.

Dave Milsom, OFO Director, *Trips and Events*

Fundraising

In continuing the foundational work established by Sarah Rupert and Jeremy Hatt, we strove to increase OFO revenues by selling advertising space to a minimum of three individuals/organizations for each issue of *Ontario Birds (OB)* and *OFO News (ON)*. The year began with commitments from Paula's Fish Place, Travelian Tours, Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island, and Walnut Grove B&B for ON as well as Long Point Birders Cottage, Vortex Optics, and Life Interest Timeshare for OB. Due to the economic fall-out from the pandemic, advertisers are either placing their commitments on hold or are deferring to 2021.

We made it a priority to make the annual Young Birders Camp a zero-loss event by increasing the cost from \$700/pp to \$950/pp (still significantly below the price point of comparative youth birding camps in North America) and by seeking sponsors. The year began with a firm commitment for the Friends of Algonquin Park as well as strong interest from Vortex Optics, Wild Birds Unlimited, and Pelee Wings. We have also approached the Ottawa Field Naturalists, Nikon Canada, Zeiss Canada, Bushnell Canada, Stantec, and Aecon. The pandemic and then the ensuing cancellation of the camp paused our progress, but with relationships established, we remain confident that we can meet our fundraising goals once health, safety, and economic conditions improve.

Ian Shanahan, OFO Director of Fundraising

Membership and Outreach

As of the end of August there were 1535 active memberships (including single and family members), consisting of 954 annual, 449 multi-year, 124 Life and 8 exchange memberships. That is an increase of 193 memberships over last year.

The Board set a goal of increasing membership by 10% for the 2019-2020 year. As a result of expanding our presence through social media and other platforms, and engaging our membership with new initiatives such as the very successful Birding at Home Challenge, we are pleased to have exceeded our goal.

We continue to ask that members use the online renewal option when possible — this helps us save time and paper and reduces the amount of work required by volunteers. All annual memberships expire on 31 December so please renew promptly in order to ease the workload and cost of mailing. OFO memberships are household memberships. The online membership process allows households to register more than one person and email address per membership. Please identify all members of your family who are interested in birding so that we can identify them as OFO members.

An OFO membership makes a great gift!

Charmaine Anderson, OFO Director, Membership & Outreach

Northern Ontario Birding Committee

The Northern Ontario Birding Committee was formed in October 2019 to promote the fantastic birding opportunities in Northern Ontario, for people in both Northern and Southern Ontario. We have made a lot of progress in a short time and are looking forward to birding in person in 2021.

Members of the Committee represent most of the main regions in the North. Lynne Freeman and David Milsom are the committee's board contacts.

Committee Member	Region
Angie Williams	Moonbeam, near Cochrane
Bill Greaves	Thunder Bay
Brian Ratcliff	Thunder Bay
Bruce Murphy	Hilliardton Marsh / New Liskeard
Carter Dorscht	Sault Ste Marie
David Milsom	Board Rep
Lynne Freeman	Board Rep
Martin Parker	Tour Leader - Moosonee
Merle Nisly	Red Lake
Roxane Filion	South Porcupine / Timmins

Priorities and Accomplishments

The priorities for the Committee are to get information out to the birding community about Northern Ontario birding, create events and field trips for OFO members, and forge contact and connection between Northern and Southern Ontario birders.

In a short time, the Committee has:

- Added information about Northern Ontario Birding to the OFO website
- Added field trips to the schedule – sadly cancelled this year because of COVID-19
- Developed a major spring event in Sault Ste Marie for the last weekend in May, 2021
- Spearheaded the OFO Birding Buddies program which will launch in Fall 2020 to share information and create contacts between birders across the province

Next year, the Committee plans to increase the information available on the OFO website, go ahead with the amazing trips and events which have been planned, and promote Atlassing in Northern Ontario.

Lynne Freeman, *Chair, Northern Ontario Birding Committee*

OBRC

The 2019 Ontario Bird Records Committee (“OBRC”) reviewed a total of 148 records of species on the provincial Review Lists, of which 132 (89%) were accepted. A four year streak of adding species to the checklist was broken with no new species added to the Ontario list in 2019, leaving the total at 501 species.

Ferruginous Hawk was added to the Lowlands Review List, and Purple Gallinule and Prairie Falcon were added to the Central Review List.

Beginning in 2020, reports of Willet in the Central Review Zone are no longer requested. Reports for occurrences prior to 2020 are still requested. The committee voted to remove Arctic Tern from the South Review Zone retroactively to 2015. Reports are still requested for sightings between 1990 and 2015.

The members of the 2019 Committee were Amanda Guercio (chair), Daniel Riley (non-voting secretary), Kenneth Burrell, Mike Burrell (non-voting archivist), Barbara Charlton (voting member and assistant to the secretary), William Lamond, Blake Mann, Reuven Martin, and Donald Sutherland. Mark Peck acted as the ROM liaison. The 3-year terms as voting OBRC members ended for William Lamond, Blake Mann, and Donald Sutherland following the conclusion of this year’s annual meeting. The OBRC has elected Mike Burrell, Adam Timpf, and Mark Read to 3-year terms going forward. Amanda Guercio, Daniel Riley, Barbara Charlton, and Mike Burrell were also re-elected to their respective positions for 2020, and Reuven Martin continues as a voting member.

I would like to thank all current and former members of the OBRC for their service and dedication to the task of evaluating submitted records. On behalf of the entire Committee, I would also like to thank the many members of the Ontario birding community who took the time and effort to document rare bird sightings in Ontario for consideration by the OBRC. The OBRC would cease to exist without your support. The submission of rare bird reports, data requests, questions, comments, concerns, and all other contact with the Committee may all be done through the email address obrc@ofoc.ca.

Amanda Guercio, *2020 Chair, Ontario Bird Records Committee*

OFO News

OFO News, the newsletter of the Ontario Field Ornithologists, continues to publish three times per year: in February, June, and October. Each issue is usually 16 pages, but both October 2019 and February 2020 were 20 pages long.

Issues of OFO News cover a variety of subjects. At the same time, the editorial team has decided to have a strong focus on conservation issues and education (i.e., bird identification). On conservation issues, the OFO News co-editors - Angie Williams, Bruce Kirkland, and Michael Olsen – work to ensure that at least one article about conservation issues is in each edition. On education, the “OFO Birding Academy” was introduced in June 2020. It will become a regular part of OFO News. Using text and several photographs in each article, its aim is to educate birders on identification issues, especially between species that are easily confused.

The editorial team has also started work on revising the existing editorial guidelines for contributors, and has also done preparatory work on an OFO Style Guide – similar to the editorial guidelines, but more detailed.

OFO News benefits significantly from a close liaison to the Board through oversight by Lynne Freeman and Bob Cermak. Then, when each issue nears completion, our Editorial Consultants, Jean Iron and Geoff Carpentier, share their expertise to ensure the accuracy of the content. Meanwhile, Judie Shore continues her excellent work on layout and design, with her vast OFO experience and sharp eye helping to put the finishing touches on every issue.

Feedback on articles, ideas for possible articles, and submissions from OFO members, are welcome. The co-editors can be reached at: ofonews@ofoc.ca.

Angie Williams, Bruce Kirkland, and Michael Olsen, Co-editors, OFO News

Ontario Birds

The past year of Ontario Birds comprised the three issues for December 2019, April 2020 and August 2020. These issues contained 160 pages in 19 contributions (articles, notes, etc.). That is 16 fewer pages but the same number of contributions compared to the previous three issues in our report for 2019. On average, the recent contributions were a little more than a full page shorter than in the previous reporting. The number of contributions per issue ranged from four to eight.

One of the major features of the last three issues was the publication of five articles on the details associated with the confirmation of four new species in Ontario (White-crowned Pigeon, Thick-billed Kingbird, Great Kiskadee and Pink-footed Goose). The OBRC report for 2019 published in the August 2020 issue reported acceptance of 132 sight records for 79 different species or subspecies but, unfortunately, there were no new species confirmed for the Ontario list. This is in contrast to last year when five new species were added. There were three articles each dealing with nesting (American White Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant and Bald Eagle) and feeding (Trumpeter Swans, three species of grouse and Northern Shrikes). Other topics covered in the past year of *Ontario Birds* included a unique article (including 18 colour images) on plumage aberrations in 44 species of Ontario birds based on photos and descriptions submitted by 72 Ontario birders. Also included were articles on a status report (Little Gull) and detection of breeding (Upland Sandpiper); there was also a note on

possible courtship behavior (Blue Jay). The diversity of articles concluded with a Letter to the Editor(s), a tribute to OFO's 2019 Distinguished Ornithologist Award (Margaret Bain) and an In Memoriam (for George Peck).

Material for Ontario Birds continues to arrive steadily through a combination of submissions from our members and others as well as specific solicitations by the editors. Once a given issue is sent to the printer, we often have 2-3 papers in the works for the next issue. The submission and publication of several "New to Ontario/Canada" accounts over the last two years has been very exciting. We remind all "first finders" of new accepted species for the province that they have the first option to "put pen to paper" and submit the details of how the species was found for publication in *Ontario Birds*. As always, we continue to be on the lookout for potential articles and notes. Sometimes postings to our listservs, Ontbirds and Birdnews result in a lead to a potential note or article, so keep those kinds of observations coming. We will not be able to count on the OFO Annual Convention for any leads on material this year (due to COVID-19) but feel free to write to us editors with any ideas for articles or notes that you might have.

Finally, we would like to thank the 38 different authors who contributed articles, notes, etc. for our last three issues. We are also very appreciative for the continued excellent cover artwork (Northern Goshawk, Great Kiskadee and Pink-footed Goose) and design of the journal by **Barry Kent MacKay** and **Judie Shore**, respectively. We would also like to thank the many photographers who have supplied photos during the last year; the images greatly enhanced the appearance of the journal and added to the readability of the articles. We look forward to receiving future submissions for the journal.

Chip Weseloh, Chris Risley and Ken Abraham, Co-Editors, Ontario Birds

Ontbirds and Birdnews Listservs

Ontbirds was shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic from April 22 to July 18, 2020. During the shutdown, as a result of feedback received over the past several months, the decision was made to "split" the Listserv into two lists: Ontbirds, for provincially rare bird reports; and Birdnews for everything else. The guidelines and online "infrastructure" were set up and the original Ontbirds subscriber list was cloned for Birdnews.

Since launching, eight messages were received at Ontbirds and 17 were received at Birdnews (as of August 15, 2020). Birdnews has 3657 members and Ontbirds has 3719.

A major change in how the two listservs are being run is all messages are being moderated and must be approved by one of the two moderators. Mike Burrell and Carter Dorscht have volunteered to share the duties of listserv moderators after Mark Cranford stepped down from this role following 20 years of service! A huge thanks goes out to Mark for all his hard work over the years with Ontbirds.

Carter Dorscht and Mike Burrell, Moderators of Ontbirds and Birdnews

Publicity & Communications

With the onset of COVID-19, this year has been like no other and our publicity and communications have focused on home-based activities and local birding, rather than our field trips and other programs.

Our social media presence continues to grow on Facebook. In the last year we have seen an increase of approximately 40% in both likes and people following our Facebook page. The growth started in May, linked to the incredible response to the Birding at Home Challenge, and has plateaued in the summer. We've seen no net loss in our audience since the challenge ended.

Content will continue to be planned for the rest of the year, including a membership renewal drive, promotion of memberships as a holiday gift and our fall webinar series, in addition to fun information about birds and other articles of interest to our followers.

The focus in 2020 has been on our Facebook page and as we start to return to a more normal operation in 2021, we will put additional emphasis on our other social media channels (Twitter and Instagram) and will also assist in the promotion of the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas program.

Paper promotional materials have been put on the back burner for the 2020 season, but a new rack card and additional promotional materials are in the works for the 2021 season, including a Birding Code of Ethics bookmark.

Considerable work has been done behind the scenes on the redesign of the website, to make it more user friendly and attractive. The final stages of content editing and creation are under way and the new website will be launched in the coming months.

Follow along with our social media streams throughout the coming year. You can find us here:

[Facebook.com/OntarioFieldOrnithologists](https://www.facebook.com/OntarioFieldOrnithologists)

[Twitter.com/OFOBirds](https://twitter.com/OFOBirds)

[Instagram.com/OFOBirds](https://www.instagram.com/OFOBirds)

Sarah Rupert, *OFO Publicity & Communications Coordinator*

Young Birders Committee

A survey went out to young birders in Fall 2019 to find out what young birders themselves wanted from the Young Birders program. Young birders asked for monthly events which would provide opportunities to bird, learn and meet other young birders, and the development of a social media community.

As a result, OFO reached out to experts and put together an exciting program with a variety of events throughout the year. Sadly, however, all but two were cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The annual Alan Wormington Memorial Camp was cancelled as well.

Two events did go ahead. On January's ROM trip, led by Mark Peck, young birders had an opportunity to explore the collection of and how to prepare a specimen for exhibit. In February, Chris Earley treated young birders to an exploration of winter birds at the Guelph Arboretum.

We hope that we can reinstate the in-person program in 2021.

Lynne Freeman, *Chair, Young Birders Committee*



Certificates of Appreciation

Each year, OFO recognizes individuals and organizations for their contribution to the birds and birding community of Ontario.

The recipients of the 2019-2020 awards are:

- **Brendon Samuels and Dr. Leanne Grieves, *nominated by Lynne Freeman*** - In appreciation for taking action to save the Bank Swallow Colony in London, ON.
- **Brian Morin, *nominated by Bob Cermak*** - For providing on Ontbirds timely, informative and educational information about Snow Geese migration in eastern Ontario.
- **Bark Lake Leadership and Conference Centre, *nominated by Dave Milsom*** - In appreciation for allowing birders free access to view the Varied Thrush all winter of 2019-2020.
- **Schomberg Village Council, Staff and Residents, *nominated by the OFO Board*** - In appreciation for facilitating ethical viewing of Logito, the Dufferin Marsh Northern Hawk Owl at by many grateful birders and photographers during the winter of 2019-2020.
- **Dufferin Marsh Nature Connection, *nominated by the OFO Board*** - In appreciation for facilitating ethical viewing of Logito, the Dufferin Marsh Northern Hawk Owl during the winter of 2019-2020.
- **Glenn Coady, *nominated by Dave Milsom*** - For helping many grateful Ontario birders view the mega-rarity Hermit Warbler in the spring of 2019.
- **Feminist Bird Club, Toronto Chapter, *nominated by Jeremy Hatt*** - In appreciation for organizing a birding fundraiser for racial justice to raise awareness and collect \$28,312.82 in funds for the Black Legal Action Centre.
- **Jeff Skevington, *nominated by Lynne Freeman*** - For promoting and helping to implement OFO's Birding at Home Challenge.
- **Mike Burrell, *nominated by Lynne Freeman*** – For promoting and helping to implement OFO's Birding at Home Challenge.

- **Ivor Williams, nominated by Jack Alvo** - In appreciation for his continuing IT support for OFO; the re-design of OFO's web-site; preparation of electronic versions of our publications, *OFO News* and *Ontario Birds*, including past issues; and helping with the set-up of the Birding at Home Challenge under very tight timelines.
- **Norm Murr, nominated by Jim Richards** - For many years of promoting Toronto Islands as a birding hotspot through his trip reports, which include migration updates and logistical information, plus the comprehensive guide he has written which is available on the OFO web-site.
- **Dennis & Gwen Lewington, nominated by Dave Milson** – In recognition of their 35 years of maintaining and monitoring an Eastern Bluebird trail in the Bruce Peninsula, with the aim of helping to increase the population of Ontario Eastern Bluebirds.

We have a list of very worthy recipients but there is always room to make this list longer. Please, whenever you are aware of an OFO member or a member of the public providing access to a rare bird or in some other way assisting birders, send in your nomination through the OFO website.



Distinguished Ornithologist Award

Since 1997 OFO has presented the Distinguished Ornithologist Award to individuals who have made outstanding and authoritative contributions to the scientific study of birds in Ontario and Canada, who have been a resource to OFO and the Ontario birding community, and whose research on birds has resulted in new ornithological knowledge.

This year's recipient of the award is Erica Nol, an internationally recognized ornithologist and Professor of Biology at Trent University since 1986. Since we are not meeting in person this year, the award will be presented to Ms. Nol at next year's Annual Convention in Leamington. We hope you'll join us there when we will honour Erica Nol for her impressive career.

In the mean-time, for more about Erica Nol and her contributions to the birding community, please refer to the article that appeared in the June 2020 issue of *OFO News* (<http://www.ofo.ca/library/serve/on-38-2/index.html?page=3>).