



Ontario Field Ornithologists
Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2022

AGM Materials



2022 AGM Materials

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President's Message

October 2021 – September 2022

Despite the pandemic continuing, we are learning to live with it and work within its constraints. As a result, it was a pleasure to resume hikes and in person events this year after a long break. Dave Milsom has continued to do an amazing job finding leaders and organizing an impressive array of outings. The hike size limitations have been a frustration for some but a boon for the participants who manage to get a more personalized experience. We will continue to add more hikes to try to deal with the increasing demand.

This is of course one of the great things about the pandemic – it has resulted in an unprecedented number of new birders. More birders means more challenges, but it also means more awareness and more environmental engagement.

We have met some of the challenges of this surging interest in our hobby with our ambassador program. The two most successful ambassador events so far were the vagrant Marsh Sandpiper and the breeding Kirtland's Warblers. We owe thanks to James Holdsworth for finding the Marsh Sandpiper and coordinating quickly with us to help find a way to access the site. The mayor of Lambton Shores, Bill Weber, was extremely receptive to our request for access to Thedford lagoons and we were granted access the day after James found the bird until it left. Many volunteers stepped forward to make this possible, but I want to single out Annie Goulden who took the lead. Mike Burrell coordinated the Kirtland's Warbler visitation, an amazing experience that highlighted Peter Burke's leadership to build habitat for this rare species. All money donated during visits to this bird will go into future habitat management for the species.

We are back in business for our annual convention this year as well! Sue and Dan Suess are organizing this event in Leamington, and we are all looking forward to a chance to meet in person and get out for some autumn birding in the Pelee area. This will be our first chance to share our event with our northern Ontario birding friends. It is too far for most of them to travel to Leamington, so Angie Williams has spearheaded a northern satellite meeting. Talks happening in Leamington will be shared remotely and the group will have their own banquet and hikes.

Here are a few more of this year's highlights:

- The **OFO camp** ran again this year for the fourth time. Fourteen campers joined six leaders in Algonquin Park. Park staff and Wildlife Research Station staff offered some amazing opportunities for the campers, and we managed to pull off a very fun camping trip to the East side of Algonquin for the first time since the camp started.
- **Atlas-3:** OFO continues to be active as one of the five organizations planning and running the third Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. This is arguably the most important citizen science project running in the province at the moment and will provide a strong picture of changes in our breeding avifauna over the last 20 years. This is saying something as there are some phenomenally successful citizen science projects focused on birds. eBird, the Great Lakes Loon survey, Project Feederwatch, Breeding Bird Surveys – there are so many amazing projects documenting changes in our bird populations that are largely thanks to all of us who

eagerly participate in them. Thanks to everyone who gives back to birds and conservation through these projects!

- **Webinars:** We have continued our successful webinar program, which was started during Covid, and started a YouTube library of video presentations. Sarah Rupert was instrumental in making this happen.
- **Challenges:** We ran successful Winter Birding and Birding at Home challenges again this year.
- **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:** The EDI Committee continued to be very active and is providing excellent suggestions to make all of our programs more accessible and balanced. This is an ongoing process and although it sometimes feels like we take two steps forward and then one back, we are making excellent progress.
- **Affiliations and Partnerships:** OFO is teaming up with other great organizations that promote birding. In the past year, OFO contributed to: Birds Canada's Toronto Bird Celebration, The Birds on the Niagara Festival, the Festival of Birds at Point Pelee National Park, and the Great Lakes Hawkwatch.
- Our **Enabled Birding project** is off to a great start under the hands of Leona Mattice, who has been instrumental in working on accessibility so that all birders, regardless of their disabilities, can enjoy birding

Before signing off, I need to mention a few things about our past President. Lynne Freeman served as President for 7.5 years and is an absolute dynamo. She is still working hard to guide me and do many things that need to be done by the Board. During her tenure Lynne accomplished so much. Here are just a few of the things that she did and still does:

- Started the young birders programme and camp
- Instigated our EDI journey
- Recruited a terrific Board
- Is full of amazing ideas, and equally good at execution. A rare combination.
- Participated in many meetings to help move things forward (e.g. OFO News, finance committee, one-on-one meetings with Board members and others)
- Documented a lot of procedures so OFO is not entirely reliant on her
- Updated guidance for OFO trip leaders and for trip descriptions (e.g. accessibility, information on washrooms, ease of trails, benches, etc.)
- Developed a broad swath of contacts in the birding community outside OFO
- Represented OFO on the Atlas project
- Personally responded to many emails to OFO and even to enquiries from the press
- Increased the OFO presence in Northern Ontario resulting in the Sault-Ste. Marie Birding Festival in 2020, more northern Ontario birding trips and increased participation from Northern Ontario birders

Of course, in mentioning people's names above, I run the risk of leaving people out. Everyone on the Board and the many committees of OFO has dedicated an immense amount of time to making everything work. For me as a new President, this is what has amazed me the most about our organization. So much is going on and so many people diligently play their parts. It really is a remarkable organization. Having said this, I have noticed that we need more redundancy. Right now,

there are many things happening in OFO that would collapse if a single person stepped away. If you have a bit of time and would like to help keep things moving along, please let anyone on the Board know. We will find a place for you.

Good birding!

Jeff Skevington

OFO President and Director

TREASURER'S REPORT

The 2021 Financial Statements have been circulated for your review if you have any questions please direct them to me through the OFO e-mail address.

Despite the pandemic we have been able to end the year with a profit. Due to the curtailed activities we did not incur some of our usual expenses and revenues. Membership dues were up by \$7,543.00. Donations are down year over year by \$2,133.00. A special *Thank You* to all of our generous members without whose generosity the finances would look a lot different. The Board continues its efforts to eliminate expenses that had contributed to our prior deficits. We will finally see results in 2022 of the effort to obtain sponsorships for some of our key events as businesses try to recover from the past several years and reach back out into the community. In 2021 we have started to see the financial impact of the membership switching to receiving electronic publications as opposed to printed copies; this has become more urgent in 2022 as printing costs have been hit by the inflation spiral. The Journal costs have dropped by \$5,186.00 and the Newsletter by \$3,003.00

I would again like to close by thanking the Board, Chairs, and the members of various committees, as well as the Finance Committee 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, 2021**

<u>ASSETS</u>			<u>LIABILITIES & MEMBERS' EQUITY</u>		
	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>		<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
Cash in Bank	\$ 51,853	\$ 41,483	Prepaid Membership Dues	\$ 34,400	\$ 38,910
Convention Deposit	1,000	1,000	Accounts payable	-	-
Accounts Receivable	1,650	-	TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>\$ 34,400</u>	<u>\$ 38,910</u>
HST Receivable	3,397	2,293	MEMBERS EQUITY		
Inventory	2,587	2,554	Balance beginning of Year	\$ 8,609	\$ 3,953
Investments	1,181	-	Net Income for Year	18,810	4,502
Equipment	577	577	Less Prior year adjustment	-	154
Accumulated depreciator	(426)	(388)	Balance end of Year	<u>\$ 27,419</u>	<u>8,609</u>
TOTAL	<u><u>\$ 61,819</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 47,519</u></u>	TOTAL	<u><u>\$ 61,819</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 47,519</u></u>

**COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF INCOME and EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021**

<u>INCOME</u>			<u>EXPENSES</u>		
	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>		<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
Membership Dues	\$ 53,660	\$ 46,117	<u>Printing and Mailing</u>		
US \$ Exchange	25	50	- Journal, Ontario Birds	\$ 18,256	\$ 23,442
Donations	8,411	10,544	- Newsletter, OFO News	15,498	18,501
Baillie Birdathon	8,445	445	<u>Administration</u>		
Advertising	1,650	-	Advertising	1,978	73
Sale of Merchandise	403	252	AffiniPay fees - Membership	1,708	2,158
Field Trips	-	75	Audit	250	250
Gull Weekend	-	-	Awards	212	189
HST	-	3,758	Bank charges	207	208
Annual Convention (Net)	45	(1,528)	Board & Communication	621	498
	<u>\$ 72,639</u>	<u>\$ 59,713</u>	Depreciation	38	47
Inventory adjustment	33	(105)	Digitizing	-	389
TOTAL INCOME	<u><u>\$ 72,672</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 59,608</u></u>	Donation	7,133	-
			Fees	355	205
			Field Trips	276	741
			Liability Insurance	2,063	2,063
			Membership expenses	-	400
			Wild Apricot	4,205	3,915
			OFO Website and Ontbirds	516	393
			Postal box rental	251	526
			Purchase of Merchandise	113	-
			Treasurer's expense	182	418
			Young Birder's expense	-	690
			TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$ 53,862</u>	<u>\$ 55,106</u>
			TOTAL INCOME	<u>72,672</u>	<u>\$ 59,608</u>
			NET ANNUAL INCOME (LOSS)	<u><u>\$ 18,810</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 4,502</u></u>


Phyllis Wilson, RPA
Chair, Audit Committee


Brian W. Gibbon, Treasurer


Lynne Freeman, President



Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting

By Zoom – September 29, 2021

The Annual General Meeting (“AGM”) was preceded by a Welcome Meeting (6:30-7:00 p.m.) in order to introduce new members to OFO. This was led by President, Lynne Freeman, who described OFO’s activities and offerings. As well, each of the directors introduced themselves. Members were encouraged to read the AGM Package which was made available before the meeting.

At 7:02 p.m., Lynne called OFO’s 39th AGM to order.

The first part was devoted to the Certificates of Appreciation (“C of A’s”) so Dan Chronowic, who coordinates the C of A’s, “took the floor”. Dan announced the names of each of the recipients and described their contributions. Many of them were in attendance and took a moment to express thanks. The recipients who spoke included Brian Jeffery, Colleen Reilly, Marlie Whittle on behalf of Ecojustice, Tim Gray for Environmental Defence, Marcie Jacklin for The Community Voices of Fort Erie, and Sarah Hedges for Ontario Nature.

The formal part of the AGM began at 7:32. Lynne called the meeting to order, described how the meeting will run, reviewed the agenda, and stated that the meeting would be recorded. In total, 99 members registered for the meeting (most of whom attended). Additionally, some non-members attended (e.g. C of A recipients).

The first order of business: **Moved by Lynne, seconded by Sarah Rupert, to approve the minutes from the 2020 AGM** that were included in the AGM package. Votes: 53 in favour, 9 abstained, 0 opposed. Motion carried.

Lynne then reviewed the year. Notable items includes the impact of COVID, the growth in membership, OFO’s involvement in Atlas 3, the increased use of webinars and challenges, the cautious resumption of field trips, the launch of Birding Buddies, and the first Sault Ste. Marie Birding Festival.

Next, our Treasurer, Brian Gibbon, spoke to OFO’s financial situation. After a few consecutive years of financial losses, OFO recorded an operating profit in 2020 of \$4,080, an improvement of \$24,282 over 2019. Major contributors to this improvement were:

- an \$11,547 increase in membership dues, as our membership grew in spite of the pandemic;
- a \$7,593 increase in donations; and
- a \$4,560 reduction in expenses.

OFO’s cash position at the end of 2020 was a much improved \$41,567 vs. \$20,508 the prior year. Overall, OFO’s financial situation is strong. Going forward, OFO will continue to encourage members to opt for electronic rather than printed versions of our publications, *OFO News* and *Ontario Birds*. This will allow OFO’s printing and mailing costs (the largest expense categories) to substantially fall.

Kevin Shackleton asked about the contribution to OFO from his team’s 2020 Birdathon. Brian explained that this was received in 2021 and would therefore be included in the 2021 financial

statements. Kevin then pointed out that his team's 2019 Birdathon contribution should therefore have been included in the 2020 financial statements. Brian said he will follow up with Birds Canada.

Moved by Lynne, seconded by Jack Alvo, to accept the Treasurer's Report. Votes: 61 in favour, 3 abstained, 0 opposed. Motion carried.

Next, Lynne reminded members that the AGM package includes Board and Committee reports. **Moved by Lynne, seconded by Angie Williams, to accept the Board and Committee Reports.** Votes: 54 in favour, 3 abstained, 0 opposed. Motion carried.

Lynne then thanked the five directors who are leaving the Board for all their dedication and contributions: Amanda Guercio, Charmaine Anderson, Reuven Martin, Ian Shanahan and Carter Dorscht.

Lynne then welcomed the new Board members: Jeff Skevington, Susan Nagy, Angie Williams, Gisbert Segler, Kiah Jasper and Mike Burrell. **Moved by Lynne, seconded by Sarah Rupert, to accept the election of these six members.** Votes: 60 in favour, 1 abstained, 0 opposed. Motion carried.

Two Board members stood for re-election to another 3-year term, resulting in the following motions:

- **Moved by Jack Alvo, seconded by Sarah Rupert, to accept the re-election of Lynne Freeman.** Votes: 60 in favour, 0 abstained, 0 opposed. Motion carried.
- **Moved by Jack Alvo, seconded by Sarah Rupert, to accept the re-election of Brian Gibbon.** Votes: 61 in favour, 0 abstained, 0 opposed. Motion carried.

Jack Alvo, Chair of the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee ("EDI") then gave an overview of the EDI Committee's activities since its formation, in November 2020. The main purpose of this initiative is to help OFO's membership to become more diverse by attracting birders of different backgrounds. The Committee is an advisory body, meaning that its recommendations require Board approval. As a result of its work:

- OFO's Statement on EDI and its Mission Statement have both been updated
- OFO will be offering Free First Year Membership to birders who have faced barriers
- A Welcoming Committee has been established for new members
- A Disability Working Group plans to evaluate birding sites for accessibility and is promoting field trips for birders with disabilities
- Trip descriptions will offer additional information, such as washrooms and accessibility
- Guidance for trip leaders is being updated
- OFO is exploring ways to reach out to other nature groups
- A Code of Conduct has been adopted to make clear that discrimination and harassment are not acceptable. A Complaint Form has also been created so that incidents may be reported to the Board.
- A Land Acknowledgement has been adopted to acknowledge the traditional territories of Ontario's Indigenous peoples.

John Foster asked whether the code covers “*negative behaviour by a birder toward another birder who has been called out for unscrupulous behaviour regarding photographing birds too closely e.g. owls?*” Jack responded that it does. The Board recognizes that sensitive issues such as this may arise in the field, and encourages members to treat each other with respect at all times.

Another member (Geoff) asked: “*Am I correct in presuming that the code of conduct is only applicable during OFO sanctioned events, not generally for birding in Ontario outside the OFO umbrella?*” Jack confirmed that this is correct, and that the Board had carefully considered this question.

John Foster asked: “*Have you thought of inviting an indigenous member to be a part of the OFO Board?*” . Jack answered that there is one open spot on the Board and that we would welcome the nomination of an Indigenous birder either in attendance at this meeting or that someone would like to nominate.

Glenda Jones asked: “*What strategy is in place for communicating these new codes both within and outside OFO?*” Lynne answered that the code would be communicated through OFO’s website, its social media (e.g. Facebook), and by a “Call Notes” email to members.

Fiona McKay asked: “*Does the code outline consequences?*”. Jack confirmed that it does and that in the most extreme situation, legal authorities could be contacted and/or a member could be expelled from OFO. He added that this is considered highly unlikely.

Robert Spaul asked: “*What is OFO doing to step outside of it's existing social networks to foster and promote diversity from new members?*” Lynne answered that we are partnering with other organizations to do events, are inviting people outside of OFO to participate in our committees, and have an Outreach Committee which is identifying groups with which to connect.

Lynne then presented a list of possible priorities for OFO over the next year and asked members to vote. This poll allowed members to select as many priorities as they wish, and out of 54 members who voted, the following summarizes how many votes each item received:

Priority	Votes
Other	3
Social media community	17
Website redesign	17
Outreach	21
Accessible birding	29
Trip leader mentor program	31
Young Birders events	31
Foster inclusion and diversity	33
Birding buddies - add option to help new birders	34
Atlas-3 promotion and field activities	35

Lynne then moved, seconded by Jack, to adjourn the AGM. Votes: 59 in favour, 1 opposed, 0 abstained. Motion carried.

Before signing off, three names of members still present in the meeting were randomly selected to receive door prizes (a choice of an OFO hat or OFO toque). The lucky winners were Justin Peter, Thomas O'Donnell, and Neil Gray.

Jack Alvo (he/him)
OFO Director and Secretary

OFO Committee and Director Reports for 2021-22

The 2022-2023 Board of Directors

By-laws

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.

Presently, the By-laws state that the total number of Directors is to be not more than 13, with seven Directors required for quorum.

The term of a Director is three years, however, directors may choose to resign before a term is completed. OFO does not have a limit on the number of terms a Director may serve. Directors wishing to seek another term must be elected to the Board, the same as other candidates.

Changes to the Board

Since the September 2021 AGM, there have been some changes to the Board of Directors.

In April, 2022, **Lynne Freeman** stepped down as President and **Jeff Skevington** assumed that role. Jeff had joined the Board in August, 2021 as Vice-President with the intention of replacing Lynne as President. The two of them decided to make this change in April, 2022, and this was approved by the Board. Lynne had served as President for 7-1/2 years and remains on the Board as a Director-at-large. She and Jeff continue to work closely together resulting in a very smooth transition. The Board thanks Lynne for her outstanding service since joining the Board in 2009 and is very pleased that she will continue to serve on the Board in her new role.

In March, 2022, **Bob Cermak** retired from the Board after eight years of dedicated service in a variety of roles. The Board sincerely thanks Bob for his tremendous effort during his tenure.

Two additions to the Board brought the total number of directors to the maximum of 13, with the election of **Colleen Reilly** in March 2022 and **Marcie Jacklin** in June 2022. The Board wholeheartedly welcomes Colleen and Marcie.

The Current Board

The following Directors are staying on the Board as none of their terms are expiring:

Name	Present Role	Director Since	Term ends
Jeff Skevington	President	2021	2024
Angie Williams	Membership	2021	2024
Colleen Reilly	Director-at-large	2022	2025
Brian Gibbon	Treasurer	2009	2024
Marcie Jacklin	Advocacy	2022 (her 2 nd tenure)	2025
Lynne Freeman	Director-at-large	2009	2024
Mike Burrell	Director-at-large	2020	2023
Kiah Jasper	Director-at-large	2021	2024
Susan Nagy	Fund Development	2021	2024
Gisbert Segler	Conservation	2021	2024

Standing for re-election to the OFO Board of Directors

Dave Milsom: Dave has served on the OFO Board since 1999 and is responsible for organizing OFO's field trips. This includes field trips for the OFO Annual Convention and its Gull Celebration Weekend. Dave is an active trip leader, both for OFO and internationally, and his life list is approaching 6,000 species. Dave has been involved in the OFO's Young Birders Committee and is presently very active in Enabled Birding, which is working to make Ontario birding more accessible for people with disabilities.

Jack Alvo: Jack has served on the OFO Board since 2019 as Secretary. Since fall, 2020, he has also played a lead role in OFO's efforts on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. A chief aim of these efforts is to make OFO more inviting and welcoming for birders of all backgrounds. Jack is a volunteer field naturalist at Tommy Thompson Park in Toronto, where he monitors breeding birds and records wildlife observations year-round. He is a retired investment professional and accountant.

Sarah Rupert: Sarah has served on the OFO Board since 2016 and is currently responsible for publicity and communications. Sarah lives Leamington ON where she current works as the Promotion Officer for Point Pelee National Park. She is one of the lead planners for the annual Festival of Birds and coordinates efforts between OFO, Essex Regional Conservation Authority and other partners during the annual event. She served at the Regional Editor for Ontario's Christmas Bird Counts for more than 18 years, has participated in all three Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas projects and is one of the administrators of the Ontario Birds Facebook group. She is a life-long naturalist, with a keen passion for birds, which also inspires her art and passion for teaching others about nature.

Nominations

If you would like to submit a nomination for the Board, please email the President at president@ofoc.ca.

Board members serve three-year terms. They must be at least 18 years old and a member of OFO. Directors are expected to participate in a minimum of 75% of Board Meetings (6-8 times / year and an annual 1-day retreat) and spend an additional 40 hours (estimate) per year serving OFO in their chosen capacity.

Jack Alvo (he/him)
OFO Director and Secretary

Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee

In fall 2020, an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (“**EDI**”) was formed. Its purpose is helping to make OFO welcoming and inviting for all Ontario birders, as well as improving the experience of existing members. Our updated [Mission Statement](#) states that we aim to be “an equitable and inclusive organization”.

The EDI Committee is currently comprised of 14 volunteers, mostly non-Board members, who have a shared passion for making OFO more inclusive. This group comes from diverse backgrounds and brings diverse perspectives.

A related group called “**Enabled Birding**” includes members of OFO, Toronto Ornithological Club (“**TOC**”) and Birds Canada. Its purpose is to help make birding more accessible for people with disabilities, the current focus being mobility challenges.

Both groups work in an advisory capacity, making recommendations to OFO’s Board for its approval. The Board is fully supportive of our EDI activities and most initiatives have involved some combination of EDI Committee members, Board members, and co-editors of our publications.

Some key developments during the past year:

- In December, 2021, OFO launched its **Free First Year Membership programme**. This allows people who’ve faced barriers to join for free for their first year. These barriers may relate to factors including (but limited to) Financial; Gender; Language; Religion; Race; Being a Newcomer to Canada; Sexual Orientation; and Disability. So far, 66 new members have joined under this offer.
- A **Welcoming Committee** organizes online meetings especially for new members in order for members to feel that they’re part of a community. Virtual meetings and webinars allow members from across the province to attend. In addition, a members’ section has been introduced to *OFO News*.
- At the suggestion of **Enabled Birding**, a well-attended webinar was held in April as an introduction to hawk watching.
- A **Land Acknowledgement** now exists on the “[upcoming trips](#)” page of OFO’s website to recognize the Indigenous peoples who have nurtured this land of Ontario for thousands of years. Site-specific Land Acknowledgements are now given for many of our field trips.
- We’ve added fuller descriptions for **Field Trips** including information on accessibility, washroom availability, and public transportation options to trip destinations. Where possible, loaner binoculars are available for these outings.
- **Guidelines for field trip leaders** have been updated to help leaders intentionally deliver welcoming and inclusive outings.

- A number of new **field trips** have been organized that cater to all, including those with **disabilities**.
- OFO's first ever **Pride Month** programming took place this June with two walks, both of which were joint events with local clubs. Look for more programming in future for the **LGBTQ2S+ community**.

Some current initiatives:

- A key project from Enabled Birding is a joint initiative with TOC and Birds Canada to thoroughly evaluate 12 birding locations for accessibility and to make that information available on an interactive map. So far, the sights have been selected, ranging from Presqu'Île in the east, to Pelee in the southwest, to Sault Ste. Marie in the north. There will be a call out to members for volunteers, likely in the spring, to participate in training for site assessment and to visit the selected sights. The pertinent data about trails will be recorded on survey apps that are currently being developed.
- The co-editors of our publications, *OFO News* and *Ontario Birds*, are continuing efforts to source articles and photographs by or about women and other under-represented groups from the birding community.
 - We hope to have one or two members of OFO's EDI Committee join the *OFO News* team to lend an additional perspective.
- A survey will be going out shortly to learn more about the diversity within our membership, and to help source contributions for our publications that better represent that diversity.
- We are seeking opportunities to form working relationships with Indigenous groups. If you have suggestions or contacts, please let us know!
- The Annual Convention being held at Point Pelee in September will feature a diverse roster of speakers.
- As well, the OFO Birdathon next year will have a different look to it.

A note about gender equity:

This topic has come up in some of the feedback we've received. We note that women are well represented in our leadership, especially on OFO's Board and its EDI Committee. However, when we think of gender equity, we believe this discussion needs to include not just men and women, but also trans, non-binary, and other gender identities. As well, when we speak of better reflecting the diversity of our membership in our activities, gender balance is only one aspect of diversity.

In closing, we always welcome constructive feedback. We most appreciate direct feedback via email or phone, and contact information is available [here](#).

The Board is endeavoring to bring an EDI lens to **all** aspects of OFO. EDI is an ongoing initiative and we are all learning as we go along. We welcome and invite your involvement because it is only through the ongoing efforts of volunteers that OFO can continue to improve.

In the meantime, good birding!

Jack Alvo (he/him)

OFO Director - Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Field Trips

We have been blessed this year with the ability to provide many suitable fieldtrips for our members despite some continuing covid-related restrictions and other factors. We are now able to offer our members many free fieldtrips to birding locations throughout this huge province, from southern Ontario's top locations to Rainy River and Thunder Bay in the west, to Cochrane and Moosonee in the north, and to Ottawa and Kingston in the east.

Most of the field trips in 2022 have again been fully subscribed and upcoming ones are mainly full already, with a waitlist which will automatically enroll the top entry when a registered person cancels. Because so many members wish to participate in field trips at some of the best birding sites in Ontario, it is very important and only fair that registered applicants who decide not to attend ensure they cancel online to give others the opportunity. We ask members to do this rather than failing to show up on the day of the trip.

We are extremely lucky as an organization that we can count on so many experienced and willing leaders to lead our fieldtrips. These individuals freely volunteer their time to guide sometimes large groups of birders with differing experiences and needs. Please remember to thank them for their willingness to lead. Remember that they do this purely on a volunteer no-fee basis.

As part of our efforts to attract new birders including those with disabilities, we have devised some new field trips which cater to all. No-one should feel that they are not welcome on any trip. Novices and experienced birders are all welcome.

We are always looking for new birding sites and will offer some very exciting new destinations in 2023. Keep an eye on our website : www.ofo.ca

OFO has developed a Land Acknowledgement to recognize the Indigenous peoples who have inhabited Ontario over thousands of years. We encourage trip leaders who feel comfortable with their own expression of a suitable Land Acknowledgement to pay tribute to the Indigenous groups who inhabit the area in which their particular field trip takes place.

Events upcoming in 2023 include the OFO annual Convention in Peterborough, possible conferences in Sault Ste Marie and Kingston, and several webinars and workshops. Our EDI committee is organizing an interactive birding map featuring some great Ontario birding locations that will help those with disabilities or mobility issues by providing details on site accessibility. We have established an OFO Lagoon Committee to work with municipalities; and our Ambassador Program will continue its great work begun this year in monitoring and organizing rare bird viewing at specific locations when rarities occur.

Looking forward to 2023 and beyond.

Happy birding!

Dave Milsom

OFO Director - Fieldtrip Coordinator

Fundraising

As things continue to open up in Ontario, OFO has been reconnecting with existing advertisers and starting to seek out new ones.

We welcome Pelee Wings as a major sponsor for the 2022 OFO Convention, and want to thank Vortex Canada for their continuing support of OFO News and Ontario Birds.

The OFO Celebrity Birders were back in person at Point Pelee this year after a two year hiatus. The Birdathon continues to be a major fundraiser for OFO as teams participating in this Birds Canada event can choose to direct a portion of funds raised toward OFO. All funds received through the Birdathon have been dedicated to the Young Birders Program.

Susan Nagy (she/her)

OFO Director - Fundraising

Membership and Outreach

As of August 31, 2022 there were 1,893 active memberships, consisting of 1,185 annual, 479 multi-year, 123 Life, 29 Junior, 11 exchange (libraries, museums, etc.), and 66 “Free First Year” memberships. That is an increase of 174 memberships, or 10%, over last year.

The Board introduced the Free First Year program as a way to reach out to potential members who faced barriers that prevented them from joining OFO. These barriers may relate to factors including but not limited to: financial, gender, language, religion, race, being a newcomer to Canada, sexual orientation, and disability. The people who joined OFO under this program represent approximately 38% of new memberships, a very strong indicator of its popularity. Our hope is that all new members will enjoy being part of OFO, and continue their membership beyond their first year.

During the pandemic, OFO began offering online webinars and meetings, to provide opportunities for birders to interact and learn together. Now that in-person events and trips are once again taking place, OFO has continued to host regular online meetings, as well as occasional online New Members’ meetings during which new members can meet other birders and learn about the many aspects of OFO. This use of technology has been a great way for OFO members from across Ontario, and beyond, to build connections with each other.

We continue to ask that members use the online renewal option when possible, as this helps us save time and paper by reducing the amount of work required by volunteers. All annual memberships expire on 31 December and members can renew as early as October 1st. We also encourage members to choose to receive digital instead of mailed paper subscriptions to our OFO News and Ontario Birds publications. The increasing costs of paper, printing, and mailing of paper subscriptions are very significant and eventually we may have to charge for paper subscriptions.

Note that OFO memberships are household memberships. The OFO 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!

Please consider a donation to OFO. Membership dues do not cover all of OFO's expenses. Your donation is vital! Donations to the General Fund support OFO's field trips and workshops, publications and events, and donations to conservation efforts. A donation to the Young Birders Program supports the annual Alan Wormington Memorial Camp and other unique experiences OFO provides to young birders. All donations of \$10.00 or more qualify for a tax receipt.

Angie Williams

OFO Director - Membership

Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC)

The 2021 Ontario Bird Records Committee (“OBRC”) reviewed 176 records of species on the provincial Review Lists, of which 87% were accepted. Our spring AGM was once again held virtually. Yellow-browed Warbler and MacGillivray’s Warbler were added to the Ontario list. With the splitting of “Mew Gull” into Common Gull (*Larus canus*) and Short-billed Gull (*Larus brachyrhynchus*), the total Ontario species list stands at 506. The 2022 committee is currently reviewing Ontario records of “Mew Gull” and will be providing an update in due course.

Beginning with the 2014 report (M. Burrell and Charlton 2015), the OBRC split the province into three review zones (South, Central and Lowlands). See Holden (2014) for more details. No new species were added to the Lowlands Review List, leaving the total number of species recorded in this review zone at 331. Beginning in 2022, reports of Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*) in the Central Review Zone are no longer requested. Reports prior to 2022 are still requested for review. No new species were added to the Central Review List, leaving the total number of species recorded in this review zone at 387. The addition of Common Gull, Yellow-browed Warbler and MacGillivray’s Warbler brings the total number of species recorded in the South Review Zone to 497. No changes were made to the sub-species review list.

The full Annual Report is available in the August edition of Ontario Birds.

The members of the 2021 Committee were Mark D. Read (chair), Mike V.A. Burrell (non-voting secretary and archivist), Alvan D. Buckley, Kenneth G.D. Burrell, Dan J. MacNeal, Reuven D. Martin, Nicole M. Richardson and Adam P. Timpf. J. Brett Fried acted as non-voting secretary for the first part of the term with assistants Barbara N. Charlton and Erika K. Hentsch. Mark K. Peck acted as the ROM liaison for the OBRC. The 3-year terms as voting OBRC members for Ken Burrell and Reuven Martin ended following the conclusion of this year’s annual meeting. The OBRC elected Amanda Guercio and Michelle Martin for 3-year voting terms moving forward, and Anthony Kaduck was elected to the position of secretary. Mike Burrell will continue as the non-voting archivist. Nicole Richardson has been elected to the position of Chair.

Mark Read (he/him)

Chair of OBRC 2021

OFO News

OFO News, the newsletter of the Ontario Field Ornithologists, is published three times a year: in February, June, and October. In the past few years, issues have gone from being 16 pages in length to 24 pages in length.

OFO News carries articles on three main subjects: birds, birders, and birding. Within those three areas, the scope for individual subjects ranges from bird identification and conservation, to recommendations on photography equipment and techniques, as well as analyses of places to bird.

A continuing focus of the OFO News editorial team is to recruit contributors of articles and photographs to better reflect the diversity of OFO's membership. Efforts are bearing fruit, though there is still work to do.

The editorial team is always happy to receive unsolicited ideas for articles, and is even happier to receive unsolicited articles and photographs. Our recent issues have been strongly improved from members asking, in effect, "I've written something; might you be interested in printing it?"

Feedback on articles is also greatly appreciated; it helps us improve.

There have been some changes in the OFO News editorial team in the past year. Long-time Editorial Consultants Jean Iron and Geoff Carpentier have stepped away from their roles. Jean and Geoff made OFO News better over many years in their roles, using their expertise, knowledge, and perspective to improve every issue in some way. The OFO News team thanks them sincerely for all they have done, and wishes them excellent birding in the future.

Joining the OFO News team as Editorial Consultants are Michelle Martin and Mark Field, and the co-editors look forward to working with them.

The co-editors can be reached at: ofonews@ofo.ca.

Michael Olsen, Bruce Kirkland, and Angie Williams

Co-editors, OFO News

Ontario Birds

The last year of Ontario Birds comprised the three issues for December 2021 and April and August 2022. These issues contained 136 pages in 12 articles and notes (52 pages and three contributions fewer than in the previous three issues). On average, the recent contributions were a little more than one page shorter than in the three previous issues. In the current three issues of *Ontario Birds*, there were five, four and three articles, respectively, whereas in the previous three issues, there were five contributions in each issue.

The contents of the last three issues of *Ontario Birds* were heavily weighted towards waterbirds with seven of the 12 contributions dealing primarily with that group of birds. Red-necked Grebes were the subject of two of the papers. One reported on a "helpers-at-the-nest" situation where a young grebe

from the adult pair's first family helped raise the second brood of the same pair of adults. The second paper was a documentation of the first nesting of Red-necked Grebes in York Region.

Predation or the defense of young was the topic of two papers. The first one dealt with the attempted predation (or at least extreme harassment) of a Red-breasted Merganser by a Great Black-backed Gull and the second one dealt with the defense of a very young Common Loon by one of its parents against a Bald Eagle, with the eagle dying as a result of an abdominal puncture wound from the adult loon's bill.

In the fifth and sixth papers, photographic evidence was presented of an apparent hybrid duck having the characteristics of both a Canvasback and a Hooded Merganser, and the 23-year history of the nesting colony of Great Egrets at Presqu'ile Provincial Park was documented. The last paper dealing with waterbirds was an extensive review of the literature and years of observation on the peculiarities of appearance and moult in the Long-tailed Duck.

Three of the 12 papers in the last three issues of *Ontario Birds* dealt with potentially all bird species. These included the traditional August report of the Ontario Bird Records Committee, where, with the addition of two newly reported birds, the Yellow-browed Warbler and the MacGillivray's Warbler, and the splitting of the Mew Gull into the Common Gull and the Short-billed Gull, they point out that Ontario's provincial bird list now stands at 506 species. In the other two papers in this category, we read about a 40-year winter bird count (which is not a Christmas Bird Count) on the grounds of the Guelph Arboretum, as well as the accumulation and preservation of a large late 19th century collection of bird specimens from the Ottawa by George and Edward White (1874-1949).

Of the two remaining papers, one is an interesting essay on the psychology of misidentifying a bird. One does not see papers like this very often and it is something we should all take time to read. The final paper of these three issues is the Memoriam for Harry G. Lumsden (1923-2022), a long time researcher, writer and artist of Ontario birds but especially Canada Geese, Trumpeter Swans and all things "grouse". He was also a long time contributor to *Ontario Birds* and a recipient of OFO's Distinguished Ornithologist Award.

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. With the acceptance of two new species for the Ontario bird checklist, we remind our members that "first finders" of a newly accepted species for the province have the first option to "put pen to paper" and submit the details of how the species was found, etc., 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 please keep those kinds of observations coming. The OFO Annual Convention is a good place to meet and chat with one of us if you have an idea for an article or note for *Ontario Birds* but feel free also to write to us editors (editors@ofoc.ca) with any ideas for articles or notes that you might have.

Finally, we would like to thank the 25 different authors who contributed articles and notes for our last three issues. We are also very appreciative for the excellent cover artwork by **Barry Kent MacKay** (Bald Eagle), **Peter S. Burke** (Long-tailed Duck) and **Harry G. Lumsden** (Prairie Chicken X Sharp-tailed Grouse hybrid) and for the design of the journal by **Judie Shore**. We would also like to thank the many photographers who have supplied photos during the last year; their photos greatly enhanced the

appearance of the journal and added to the readability of the articles. We look forward to receiving future written submissions for the journal.

Included in our final thanks, we would also like to make a special acknowledgement to Mr. Chris Risley. Chris has been one of our co-editors for the last ten years (2012-2021) and has decided it is time to enjoy his retirement a little more leisurely. He has been a long time Ontario birder starting in the 1970s with his association with the Long Point Bird Observatory in Port Rowan. He then moved on to Guelph, Toronto, Vancouver and finally Peterborough in 1986, where he was loosely associated with Trent University and employed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. He was well known among the Ontario birding community and was an endless source of who was doing what....he was an excellent resource person and knew where to look for potential authors. Chris, we will miss you dearly!!

We are sorry to have to report that the newest member of our editorial team, Dr. John Black, has had to retire after less than a year with us due to health conditions. We hope your situation improves quickly, John. Thank you.

At the same time, and as the show must go on, we are excited to welcome three new additions to our *Ontario Birds* editorial team: Becky Stewart, Brandon Edwards and Jackson Kusack. All three of these new co-editors are featured in the August issue of *Ontario Birds*. Becky is located in Ottawa and works for the Canadian Wildlife Service – Migratory Birds Conservation Branch and describes herself as a “Mom, biologist and a birder” and the order depends upon the day. Brandon is a PhD Candidate in biology at Carleton University in Ottawa. He is an Associate Statistician and his favourite bird is the American Woodcock. Jackson Kusack is also a PhD Candidate but at Western University in London. He is a graduate of Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, B.C. and is using stable isotopes to study waterfowl in the Great Lakes region.

Chip Weseloh, Becky Stewart, Brandon Edwards and Jackson Kusack
Co-Editors, Ontario Birds

Ontbirds and Birdnews

Ontbirds and Birdnews had their second full year after the COVID-19 shutdown and split in July 2020. Ontbirds is for provincially rare bird reports only (birds on the OBRC review lists) and Birdnews is for everything else (e.g. regional rarities, trip reports, announcements, etc.).

In 2021, both listservs were migrated to a new version of “Mailman”, the underlying software that powers them. The new system provides a new interface for managing memberships, viewing the archives, and administrative tools. To access either listserv, visit <https://ontbirds.ca/>.

Since August 2021, Ontbirds has received 57 messages while Birdnews has received 5,982. Membership is 3,859 for Ontbirds (up from 3,781 last year) and 3,406 for Birdnews (down from 3,437 last year).

All messages to both listservs are moderated and must be approved by one of the moderators. Mike

Burrell, Kiah Jasper, Jeff Skevington and Carter Dorscht have volunteered to share the duties of moderating the listservs while Ivor Williams manages the other administrative duties.

Mike Burrell (he/him)

Director - Moderator of Ontbirds and Birdnews

Publicity and Communications

As COVID-19 restrictions eased, OFO began to focus its efforts to more in person programs.

Our social media presence continues to grow on Facebook and Instagram with new quiz bird features and the very popular field trip report posts. A big thank you to Dave Milson, Monika Croydon and Lynne Freeman who have all assisted with posts over the last year.

With the return to more in person programming, only four specialized webinars were offered over the last year, featuring Raptor ID, Understanding Optics (2 sessions) and Nocturnal Flight Calls, outside of the new online members' meetings.

Our YouTube channel continues to allow access to recordings of live presentations for people who don't use Facebook. Subscribers have almost doubled in the past year to 405 and we have had 22 533 views (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCq50dMTiQtDYcREI7iZ8yBQ/featured>)

Paper promotional materials were put on the back burner until 2023 and will be revisited in 2022-23.

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

Publicity & Communications Coordinator

Young Birders

After two years of not running due to Covid, OFO brought back the young birders program strongly in 2022. So far this year there has been the Canada Jay Weekend in Algonquin (April), the big day at Tommy Thompson Park in Toronto (May), and the week long summer camp in Algonquin (July). All of these events saw good attendance, including many birders new to the community. On top of these excursions, with the launch of the new OFO discord server, there were several channels created for young birders. This should serve as an excellent meeting place for young birders in Ontario and provide them with a safe space to connect and share stories.

Kiah Jasper (he/him)

OFO Director

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 2021-2022 awards are:

- **Anthony Glenesk, *nominated by Ken MacDonald*** – For finding and sharing rare birds at his favourite patch, Lawson Line, in Simcoe County.
- **Dan Strickland, *nominated by Jim Richards*** – For the research and determined work that led to the name change of Gray Jay back to Canada Jay.
- **Tim Haan, *nominated by Mike Burrell*** – For creating a web-based tool that shows the weekly and cumulative summaries of the Winter Birding Challenge.
- **Karl Konze, *nominated by Jack Alvo*** – For discovering, identifying and facilitating viewing of a first winter Golden-crowned Sparrow at the allotment gardens next to Rosetta McClain Gardens in Toronto, Ontario.
- **Mayor of Lambton Shores, Bill Weber, and his staff, *nominated by Jeff Skevington*** – For allowing birders to access Thedford Lagoons to view a Marsh Sandpiper in Lambton County.
- **Georg Hentsch, *nominated by Susan Nagy*** – For his hospitality in allowing birders to access his yard to view a Golden-crowned Sparrow in Waterloo, Ontario.
- **John Challis, *nominated by Dave Milsom*** – For allowing birders to freely access his Washago, Ontario yard in winter of 2022 to view a long-staying Townsend's Solitaire.
- **Noam Markus and Clyde E. Robinson, *nominated by Gis Siegler*** – For facilitating the removal of the frisbee golf course at West Woodbine Beach in Toronto, Ontario to protect a seasonally flooded Dune and Meadow Habitat.
- **Mike Cadman, *nominated by Lynne Freeman*** – For the successful stewardship of the first three Ontario Breeding Bird Atlases.
- **Sonya Richmond and Sean Morton, *nominated by Angie Williams*** – For their leadership and dedication to promote bird conservation and ornithological research through their #Hike4Birds across the Trans Canada Trail.

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 (<http://www.ofo.ca/site/canominate>).

Dan Chronowic (he/him)
Volunteer, Certificates of Appreciation

Award of Special Merit

This year OFO is introducing a new category of recognition, an Award of Special Merit.

Nominated by Lynne Freeman, this award is being presented to **Barry Kent MacKay**, for the dedication and tireless amount of work he performs devoted to the welfare of birds and other wildlife. This award also recognizes Barry's continuous support of OFO through the generous donation of striking and original artwork for the covers of Ontario Birds and other deeds.

Dan Chronowic (he/him)

Volunteer, Certificates of Appreciation

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.

Erica Nol was chosen as the recipient of this award in 2020, and we are pleased to finally be gathering together at this year's convention to present the award to her in person.

Erica has been an internationally recognized ornithologist and Professor of Biology at Trent University since 1986. She has established long-term studies of shorebirds in the Arctic and forest birds in southern Canada. She has authored or co-authored more than 150 scientific articles and book chapters on a variety of species including her favourites, the plovers. She has written shorebird species accounts in *The Birds of North America* and the breeding bird atlases of both Ontario and Virginia. She has also published in both OFO publications, *Ontario Birds* and *OFO News*.

Erica has proudly educated and mentored a generation of Canada's current ornithologists, including 67 graduate students.