

OFO Annual General Meeting 2025

September 20, 2025





Welcome



Tonight's Agenda

- Annual General Meeting
- Distinguished Ornithologist presentation
- Keynote presentation



OFO 2025 Annual General Meeting

American White Pelican, Jeff Skevington

AGM Checklist

1. Call to Order
2. Minutes of the 2024 AGM
3. The Year in Review
4. Financial Report
5. Board and Committee Reports
6. Board of Directors Election
7. Priorities for Next Year – Member's Discussion
8. AGM Adjournment



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Jeff Skevington



Call to Order

Let's get this meeting started!

Minutes of the 2024 AGM (28 September)

- Motion to accept the 2024 AGM Minutes – Jeff Skevington
- Seconder – Colleen Reilly
- Discussion
- Vote by Members
 - In favour
 - Opposed
 - Abstain



The Year in Review

- Membership is up by 290 to 2,088 active members
- Online members meetings continued monthly from Sept. to April; posted on our Youtube channel – thanks Angie Williams
- Ontbirds membership stable (3890 subscribers), Birdnews is down slightly (3012 members), OFO Discord use up by over 500 (1932 members); What's App community up 130 members (660 members) – thanks to Mike Burrell and our Discord moderators



Red-headed Woodpecker, Jeff Skevington

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee

- Committee formed in fall 2020 with the mission to make OFO an equitable and inclusive organization
- Work in an advisory capacity, making recommendations to OFO's Board
- A major highlight was the return of the annual Pride walks – thanks to Jeremy Hatt (Pelee), Jeremy and Jennifer Nantais (Ojibway) and John Nishikawa and May Matchim (Toronto)
- We had two outings specifically geared toward people with disabilities: one at Rosetta McClain Gardens in Toronto's east end, and one at Downsview Park
- Free first year membership program continues to reduce economic barriers
- Questions? Email diversity@ofoc.ca



The Year in Review

- OFO News (published Feb., June and Oct.)
 - We thank our departing lead editor Paul Nicholson, co-lead editors Ted Down and Evan Millar, co-editor Ankur Khurana and our editorial consultant Mark Field for their contributions
 - Our new co-editors are Anita Aviad, Emily Burton and Angela Eady
 - Mike Burrell has joined Michelle Martin as a new Editorial Consultant



The Year in Review

- Ontario Birds
- 3 issues annually in April, Aug. and Dec.; for the AGM, we report on the most recent three issues: Dec. of last year and April and Aug. of this year
 - These issues included 176 pages with 8 articles and short notes and one letter to the editor
 - Cover artwork continues to be donated by Barry Kent MacKay
 - Layout and design of this and the newsletter done by Judie Shore
 - Thanks to our departing co-editor, Dr. Evan Millar; looking for a fourth co-editor to join the team



White-winged Crossbill, Jeff Skevington

The Year in Review

- Fundraising

- Thanks again this year to Gentec, Pelee Wings, and Vortex for their sponsorships and generous donations of binoculars for our raffle
- We also thank Justin Peters of Quest Nature Tours for the travel gift certificates; and the Huron Fringe Birding Festival, Canada National Parks, Essex Field Naturalists, and Essex Conservation Authority for their annual passes and memberships. A special thanks to Andrea Kingsley and Sarah Rupert for sharing their beautiful artwork with us
- Thanks to Ellowyn Stovel, a 14 year-old artist whose remarkable watercolour greeting cards are both generous and inspiring
- To strengthen OFO's future, we've launched a new tiered sponsorship program, with each level named after an Ontario Species-at-Risk bird – if you know businesses, organizations, or individuals who might be interested in supporting OFO, please let us know



Ontario Field Ornithology Sponsorship Packages

There are countless meaningful ways to help Ontario's inclusive community for bird enthusiasts across the province.

With your support, we can raise awareness of Ontario's bird life and ensure everyone feels inspired and included in the world of birding.

By becoming a sponsor, you're making a real difference.

Your contribution directly supports youth education, the wonder of birds and nature. It also fuels programs that spark curiosity, and build a lifelong passion for birding.

Together, we're building a future where everyone can enjoy the outdoors.

That's something truly worth celebrating.

Golden Eagle - \$10,000

- Sponsors two young birders to camp - the experience of a lifetime
- sponsors the OFO annual convention which includes funds to help students to afford to attend the convention, guest speaker costs, audio visual fees and assorted other costs
- Feature your logo on multiple opportunities at OFO Events/Included in donation
- Full page advertising in Ontario birds published three times a year
- Half page advertising in OFO news published three times a year

Prothonotary Warbler- \$7,000

- sponsors the OFO annual convention which includes funds to help students to afford to attend the convention, guest speaker costs, audio visual fees and assorted other costs
- OFO logo and sponsor logo on multiple opportunities at OFO Events/Included in donation
- Full page advertising in Ontario birds published three times a year
- Half page advertising in OFO news published three times a year



Love Birds?

Join Ontario Field Ornithologists!



A group for all birders,
from beginners to experts

Why join OFO?

- Ability to go on the guided walks that occur all year across the province at birding hotspots.
- Receive the informative and beautiful **Ontario Birds** and **OFO News** publications
- Support young birders camp
- Support the Ontario Rare Birds Committee (ORBC)
- Participate in the annual convention

www.OFO.ca



The Year in Review

- Tiered Sponsorship Breaking News
 - Pelee Wings contacted us on Thursday (2 days ago) and confirmed that they have sponsored us at the top level (Golden Eagle)
 - \$10,000 will cover 2 young birders at camp (\$3000), full page ads in all Ontario Birds publications (\$1980), half page adds in OFO News (\$1425) and over \$3000 to help with the next convention



The Year in Review

- Optics Program

- Optics Program continues to grow and support up-and-coming Ontario birders with new gear, with 4 recipients receiving new binoculars, scopes and cameras in 2025
- Taxable donation receipts given to donors!
- Support for Optics Program from Birds Canada, High Park Nature Centre, Point Pelee National Park, and Wild Birds Unlimited in Kanata, Ottawa, Barrie, Newmarket and London – the Wild Birds locations are all paying for shipping as well!
- This started as a young birders initiative and has been expanded to include anyone with economic challenges – watch for changes including a move on the website (currently under the Young Birders tab)
- Minimum standard for binoculars – roof prism type design (waterproof and shock resistant)
- Remember that this program includes scopes and cameras



Black-backed Woodpecker, Roderick Hornby

The Year in Review

- Young Birders
 - OFO Camp in Algonquin – 15 participants
 - Thanks to Gis Segler, Lynne Freeman, Angela and Jeff Skevington for coordinating and leading the camp
 - Thanks to Hamilton Naturalists' Club, North Durham Nature Club, Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society, Toronto Ornithological Club and the Woodstock Field Naturalists' Club for financial support



Young Birders Camp, Angela Skevington



The Year in Review

- Young Birders iNaturalist BioBlitz
 - 469 species recorded on 15 August 2025 in Algonquin Park
 - 175 insect species; 171 plants; 71 birds; 29 fungi; 14 arachnids; 5 amphibians; 5 mammals; 4 mollusks; 3 fish; 1 reptile; 1 leech; 1 woodlouse
 - <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/ofo-biodiversity-big-day-bioblitz>
 - Highlights: *Zodion nanellum* (new for iNaturalist!), *Villa nigricauda* (new for iNaturalist!), *Villa nigropecta* (new for Algonquin), Four-barred Knapweed Gall Fly (new for Algonquin), *Notocelia culminana* (new for Algonquin), *Polypedilum ontario* (new for Algonquin), *Lygus vanduzeei* (new for Algonquin), Showy Tick-Trefoil (2nd location for Algonquin), Band-winged Bee Fly (2nd record for Algonquin), Slender Smoothtail (2nd record for Algonquin), Black-horned Tree Cricket (2nd record for Algonquin), Striped Ground Cricket (2nd record for Algonquin), *Alydus eurinus* (3rd record for Algonquin), Black-headed Melyrid (3rd record for Algonquin)



Bald Eagle, Jeff Skevington

The Year in Review

- Young Birders iNaturalist BioBlitz
 - Thanks to those who played along and guessed at our total species:
 - Angela Skevington - 1298
 - Andrew Keaveney – 1250
 - Dawn Sherman – 1015
 - Gis Segler – 654
 - Gina Turone – 650
 - Landon Dorlandt – 555
 - Jeff Skevington – 550
 - Bishop Nickle – 500
 - **Nick Moreno Tanaka – 480**
 - Lynne Freeman – 403
 - Anna D'Attilio – 277
 - Doug Paton – 230
 - Henry Vosters – 225
 - Roderick Hornby – 135
- Of those who guessed, Nick is closest to the 469 species recorded (11 above!)
- Gets a copy of the last Breeding Bird Atlas and a Great Gray Owl art print from Sarah Rupert



Young Birders Camp, Jeff Skevington

The Year in Review

- Field trips
 - 100 field trips, webinars and workshops this year; most fully subscribed
 - Please cancel online if you cannot attend so that someone from the waitlist can come in your place
 - 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.
 - Thanks to Dave Milsom for coordinating the trips and the huge contingent of volunteers who lead the trips!



The Year in Review

- Ambassador Program
 - This program has continued to evolve and has served as a model in Ontario and beyond for coordinating birder activities around rare birds to minimize negative impacts to both the community and the birds involved
 - This year we required many fewer interventions from OFO as local birders are following protocols that we developed and handling things seamlessly with minimal consultation
 - Thanks to all who were involved including homeowners, site hosts and ambassadors



The Year in Review

- Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC)
 - The 2024 OBRC reviewed 87 records of which 83% were accepted
 - Two new birds bring the Ontario list to 511 (Short-tailed Shearwater and White-tailed Kite)
 - Members of the 2024 Committee were Gerard J. Phillips (chair), Cameron K. Chevalier, Amanda C. Guercio, Kiah R. Jasper, Michelle A. Martin, Jon P. Ruddy, and David E. Szmyr; Mike V.A. Burrell was the archivist and N. Anthony Kaduck served as the non-voting secretary
 - 3-year terms for Amanda Guercio and Michelle Martin have ended, and the committee elected Sarah Lamond to begin 3-year term starting in 2024; Anthony Kaduck's term as secretary ended, and Michelle Martin has stepped in as the new Secretary; Ezra Campanell will take up a new position of Assistant to the Secretary

Short-tailed Shearwater
Lev Frid



Vermillion Flycatcher
Marilyn White



Tropical Kingbird
Pegg and Mark Campbell



White-tailed Kite
Rowan Keunen

The Year in Review

- Conservation
 - OFO launched a petition to make changes to Ontario's Bill 5. Unfortunately, this bill passed unchanged in June 2025. The Bill opens the door to multiple serious impacts for the environment and in particular endangered bird species. To get more information on this issue, please visit Ontario Nature <https://ontarionature.org/campaigns/bill-5/>
 - In August 2025, OFO sent a letter to multiple organizations involved in the attempt by Innergex to acquire approximately 2500 acres for a solar farm on the Carden Alvar. OFO was present at the inaugural meeting for this project to voice our concerns around its proposed location. We also sent a letter to the City of Kawartha Lakes, which will soon be voting on this proposal, and we will continue to push for a less ecologically unique and sensitive area to be used for this project. Couchiching Conservancy is coordinating a community response and information for this project. Please contact Courtney Baker at courtney@couchconservancy.ca to help out.
 - OFO also continued to fund conservation projects like the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. If you have a non-partisan conservation project you would like to highlight with a short article in OFO News or receive funding for, please contact conservation@OFO.ca



Financial Report for 2024 – Sue Suess, Treasurer

- Ended the year with a profit of \$7,920
- Membership dues down by \$7,322
- Donations down slightly by \$1,254 – Thank you to all who donated!!!
- Advertising revenue up \$1,720 to \$4,960
- Journal costs up by \$2,596 and a further cost increase is anticipated in 2025 – please consider electronic publications if that works for you
- Pelee convention profit of \$4,322; most of this thanks to Silent Auction
- We ended 2024 with a cash balance of \$96,998 vs \$78,291 at the end of 2023
- Finance Committee reviews books regularly (Sue Suess, Bob Cumming, Jeff Skevington and Gis Segler)



Bay-breasted Warbler, Jeff Skevington

Financial Report Motion

- Motion to accept the Financial Report for 2024 – Jeff Skevington
- Seconder – Gis Segler
- Discussion
- Vote by Members
 - In favour
 - Opposed
 - Abstain



Blue-headed Vireo, Jeff Skevington

Board and Committee Reports

- Motion to accept the Sept. 2024 Board and Committee Reports – Jeff Skevington
- Secunder – Kiah Jasper
- Discussion
- Vote by Members
 - In favour
 - Opposed
 - Abstain



Prairie Warbler, Jeff Skevington

Board of Directors 2025-2026



Wood Duck, Jeff Skevington

Changes to the Board

- Departing from the Board are:
- Sarah Rupert, who has served on the Board since 2016, responsible for Publicity and Communication
- Marcie Jacklin, in her second tenure on the Board since 2022, in the role of Conservation
- Jack Alvo, who has served since 2019 as Secretary and formerly as Chair of the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDI)
- We thank them for their years of service



Yellow Warbler, Jeff Skevington

Standing for re-election in 2025

- Colleen Reilly
 - Director-at-large; on board since 2022
 - She has been actively involved with OFO's EDI efforts, Field Trip Planning and Convention Planning
 - Recently, she has been transitioning into the Board's Secretary role and is hoping to formally take on that role after the AGM
- Dave Milsom
 - Director-at-large; on the board since 1999!
 - Field Trip Coordinator
 - Very actively trying to gain OFO access to Ontario sewage lagoons as part of his role on the OFO Lagoon Committee; working to make Ontario lagoons accessible for birders



Re-Election Motion – Colleen Reilly

- Motion to accept the re-election of Colleen Reilly to the Board of Directors – Jeff Skevington
- Seconder – Mike Burrell
- Discussion
- Vote by Members
 - In favour
 - Opposed
 - Abstain



Tennessee Warbler, Jeff Skevington

Re-Election Motion – Dave Milsom

- Motion to accept the re-election of Dave Milsom to the Board of Directors – Jeff Skevington
- Seconder – Sue Suess
- Discussion
- Vote by Members
 - In favour
 - Opposed
 - Abstain



White-rumped Sandpiper, Jeff Skevington

Nomination to the Board of Directors

Angela Eady

- Retired medical writer living in Hamilton
- She discovered her passion for birds later in life, an interest that has been nurtured through memberships in the Hamilton Naturalists' Club and the Pipits Birding Group
- Currently serves as an editor for OFO News



Baltimore Oriole, Jeff Skevington

Election Motion – Angela Eady

- Motion to accept the election of Angela Eady to the Board of Directors – Jeff Skevington
- Secunder – Gis Segler
- Discussion
- Vote by Members
 - In favour
 - Opposed
 - Abstain



Barred Owl, Jeff Skevington

Nomination to the Board of Directors

Carly Davenport

- Involved in Nature Canada's Bird Friendly Cities Program since 2021
- Recipient of Nature Canada's Volunteer of the Year award for 2023, and FLAP Canada's Volunteer of the Year award for 2024
- Currently sits on the Board of FLAP Canada, the Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society and North Durham Nature
- Researcher on the Southern Ontario American Kestrel Study and enjoys participating in migration monitoring at Tommy Thompson Park Bird Research Station, as well as contributing to the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, Nocturnal Owl Surveys, and SwiftWatch projects
- Has contributed as a guest author to Nature Canada and Ontario Nature Blogs and presented for a number of naturalist/environmental groups on the topic of bird conservation



Election Motion – Carly Davenport

- Motion to accept the election of Carly Davenport to the Board of Directors – Jeff Skevington
- Seconder – Angie Williams
- Discussion
- Vote by Members
 - In favour
 - Opposed
 - Abstain



Bonaparte's Gull, Jeff Skevington

Nomination to the Board of Directors

Doug Berry

- Joined the Pipits birding club several years ago and now blending his passion for travel with his drive to learn more about the natural world around him
- Having found a community of like-minded individuals who have a deep appreciation for nature and birding, Doug would like to give back to the community that has given him so much
- His recent community involvement has included being on the Canadian planning committee for the 2025 Birds on the Niagara International Birding Festival, and assuming responsibilities related to OFO's Certificates of Appreciation
- Doug looks forward to leveraging his strong communication and organizational skills, along with his event planning experience, to help OFO continue to achieve its goals



American Herring Gull, Jeff Skevington

Election Motion – Doug Berry

- Motion to accept the election of Doug Berry to the Board of Directors – Jeff Skevington
- Secunder – Mark Peck
- Discussion
- Vote by Members
 - In favour
 - Opposed
 - Abstain



Mourning Warbler, Roderick Hornby

Priorities for Next Year - Discussion

- Continue to grow our conservation agenda
- Expand the optics program for young birders
- Move forward with the lagoon access project; includes hiring someone to help develop templates for approaching municipalities
- Complete redesign of website – We need new volunteers to replace Ivor Williams, who intends to step down in 2026!



White-crowned Sparrow, Jeff Skevington

Motion to adjourn the 2025 AGM

- Motion to adjourn the 2025 AGM – Jeff Skevington
- Seconder –
- Vote by Members
 - In favour
 - Opposed
 - Abstain



Kentucky Warbler, Jeff Skevington



Thanks to our members
for keeping our society
strong!

Common Goldeneye with one goldeneye juvie plus two Hooded Merganser juveniles, Jeff Skevington