

New York State Ornithological Association, Inc.
72nd Annual Meeting, Kingston, New York
September 14, 2019

The 72nd Annual Meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association, Inc. (NYSOA) was held on September 14, 2019, at the Best Western Plus Kingston Hotel and Conference Center in Kingston, New York. President Michael DeSha called the meeting to order at 9:32 AM. Roll call of member clubs revealed that 29 delegates from 17 clubs were in attendance and that a quorum was present. Shirley Shaw made a motion to approve the draft minutes from the 2018 annual meeting, which had been circulated previously. Brian Dugan seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

President's Report – Michael DeSha (full text)

This report is a summary of NYSOA activities over the past year beginning with the 2018 Annual Meeting. Highlights of the year include a highly successful 71st Annual Meeting jointly hosted by the Rochester Birding Association and the Burroughs Audubon Nature Club, and continuing intensive planning for the third New York State Breeding Bird Atlas effort.

The October 2018 **71st Annual Meeting** in Henrietta, NY was hosted by both the Rochester Birding Association and the Burroughs Audubon Nature Club. The event was a total success even though rain dampened the initial field trips. There were 187 registrants. The attendees at the Saturday-night banquet enjoyed an entertaining talk by Greg Miller, one of the participants in a birding big-year three-way contest whose story is recounted in the book and subsequent movie, *The Big Year*.

The **Awards Committee** chaired by Bill Ostrander presented Stoner Awards to several outstanding young birders. The Gordon Meade Award, given to those individuals who have provided significant service to NYSOA, was presented to Tom Burke, *in absentia*, for his outstanding work as a long-standing NYSARC Committee member. The President's Award was presented to Carena Pooth for her long service in support of the Young Birders. Certificates of Appreciation were also awarded to the host clubs.

The **Bylaws Committee** chaired by Robert Spahn and ably assisted by Shirley Shaw and Tim Baird produced further proposed changes to our Bylaws to conform them to meet New York State regulations on meeting notifications. The resulting changes were approved by the Board of Directors in regular session, for presentation and adoption at this annual meeting. Member Organizations were notified by E-mail prior to this Annual Meeting in accordance with the Bylaws.

The **Conservation Committee**, chaired by Andy Mason and including Joan Collins and Brian Dugan took on a variety of issues. Of particular note is NYSOA's endorsement of the American Bird Conservancy's letter to the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Customs and Border Security in opposition to the building of a border wall. An ongoing issue is developing with respect to e-bird posting of sites of nesting species, particularly owls and other raptors, and subsequent harassment by large numbers of people who are alerted to the location. The Committee is also working to develop a stance with respect to large-scale solar farms.

Carena Pooth compiles the **County and State Bird Listing Report** for those who are interested in keeping and comparing a list of species seen throughout the state and in the various counties. The results are published in the April issue of *New York Birders* and are available on line at the NYSOA website.

The **Marketing, Publicity, and Field Trip Committee** is really the group that promotes NYSOA. It has historically been without a Chair, but now Brian Dugan has responded and volunteered to head this important committee. We appreciate his volunteering. Mary Beth Warburton organized a wonderful field trip to the 1000 Islands area for NYSOA members. In an important new initiative, based upon the

suggestion of Carena Pooth for increasing publicity, NYSOA Board members and others are providing NYSOA-related articles to our member organizations for inclusion in their newsletters

Our **Membership Manager**, Joan Collins, has continued to provide the focus for interactions with the members and receiving membership renewals and applications. Joan and Pat Aitken, our **Circulation Manager**, along with Carena Pooth work to make sure our publications reach the membership. Thanks to them for their help and particularly for Joan's taking over as Membership Manager. We really appreciate it.

The Kingbird, under editorship of Shai Mitra, is getting back to schedule, with the likelihood of the publication of five issues in 2019. A significant change is the appointment of Pat Lindsay as Editor for the Regional Reports, replacing Bob Spahn, who served in this capacity for many years. I particularly want to thank him for these years of service to NYSOA and **The Kingbird**. Joan Collins is on track to produce four outstanding issues of **New York Birders** and Carena Pooth keeps the print version of the **New York State Checklist** updated as changes are made by the AOS. Sales of the printed checklist are solid. Thanks to Carena up-to-date additions, splits and lumps, and name changes are accommodated in the on-line version of the checklist almost as soon as they occur.

The **New York State Young Birders Club** thrived under the careful mentorship of Carena Pooth in the eleven years since its inception in 2008. It is almost impossible to imagine this organization without her, and it was clearly a labor of love on her part. We are grateful that 5 parents and another adult have stepped in to take over most of the functions formerly undertaken by Carena.

The **Research Committee**, Chaired by Greg Lawrence, oversees many of the projects relating to field birding. Bill Ostrander compiles the Waterfowl Count, on which the DEC relies for its waterfowl assessments. The NY Breeding Bird Atlas III will continue to be the focus of research for the next six or seven years. While the previous two Atlases were directly under the control of NYSOA, this Atlas project is being administered by a collection of entities, among them NYSOA, Cornell Lab, New York Audubon, and ESF, which will be operating under DEC and receiving Federal Grant money for the project. As reported last year, NYSOA will not be able to control this project as it has the previous Atlases. Nevertheless, the NYSOA Board has committed to working on this next iteration and things seem to be progressing well. NYSOA Atlas objectives are being accommodated. Kathy Schneider, appointed by NYSOA, continues as co-chair of the Atlas Steering Committee. Since I will be ending my term of office, I will no longer be a part of the Steering Committee because I view my participation as being in a NYSOA executive capacity. Robert Spahn, Joan Collins, and Greg Lawrence are continuing as members of the Steering Committee, so NYSOA is well represented. Julie Hart has been appointed Project Coordinator. Most Regional Coordinator positions have also been filled.

Carena Pooth, **Website and Information Committee** Chair, keeps the website up-to-date with the latest NYSOA information and news.

Doug Gochfeld was appointed to another term on the **NYSARC Committee**. Derek Rogers and Jay McGowan were also appointed.

Again this year, I sincerely want to note that it has been my pleasure to work with this Board, the officers and Committee Chairs. Thank you for your service.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. DeSha, President

Treasurer's Report – Andy Mason

Andy presented written reports including a balance sheet, a statement of general operating fund activity, and a statement of the activities and balances in other funds. Andy mentioned that the NY BBA III fund was established during 2019, so it will show up on next year's report. Donations to that fund are welcome. Andy also reported on the board's recent actions to invest a portion of NYSOA's

assets in stock and bond funds, and to begin publishing *The Kingbird* electronically, with associated changes to the dues structure. Andy is finishing his tenth and final year as treasurer.

NYSOA Committee Reports

Audit Committee – Stephen Chang

Mike DeSha delivered the audit committee's report. The committee reported in August 2019 that it had examined the 2018 financial reports and found no problems.

Bylaws – Bob Spahn

Bob presented the two minor changes to the bylaws that were necessitated by changes to New York state laws. The proposed changes, which concern the timing of notification of meetings, had been circulated in advance to the member organizations. Mike Birmingham moved to accept the proposed changes. Chita McKinney seconded, and the proposed change was unanimously adopted.

Awards Committee – Bill Ostrander

Bill reported on the awards to be presented at the evening banquet. They included three Lillian B. Stoner Awards, three President's Awards, and an Emanuel Levine Memorial Award.

Conservation Committee – Andy Mason

Andy provided a summary of the committee's activities over the past year. Issues covered included the proposed border wall in Texas, proposed development at the EPCAL site in Suffolk County, and a wind power project near Lake Ontario. The committee is also researching the effects of large-scale solar power development on bird habitat. Andy reported that involvement of local birders is needed to address the issue at Doodletown in Bear Mountain State Park, where last year a road race prevented birder access on a May weekend. Julie Hart reported that the NY BBA III committees are working with eBird on a policy to hide information on nesting locations of sensitive species. Julie also reported that the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation has issued a proposed update to the list of threatened and endangered species, and is taking comments on it. Rich Guthrie brought up the issue of the rising recreational use of hovercraft in sensitive wetlands, particularly the tidal marshes of the Hudson River Estuary. He urged the committee to petition state agencies to regulate the use of these craft in sensitive areas.

County and State Listing Project – Carena Pooth

Carena reported that interest in county listing remains strong, with 129 reports submitted for 2018. The detailed report is available on the NYSOA website, and it includes some of the comments from the participants. The submission form for 2019 is available on the website, and reports can be submitted online.

Marketing, Publicity, and Field Trips Committee –

Mike DeSha reported that Joan Collins plans to work with Mary Beth Warburton to plan a winter field trip in the Adirondacks, where there is currently an irruption of Red Crossbills being observed.

Membership and Circulation – Joan Collins, Pat Aitken

Joan and Pat were unable to attend, but submitted a written report of membership statistics. The report shows that overall membership levels remain stable, with an upward trend in the number renewing at the “Contributing” level.

New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) – Willie D’Anna

No report.

New York State Young Birders Club (NYSYBC) – Carena Pooth

Carena reported that she has turned over leadership of NYSYBC to the new adult leaders:

Co-chairs: Emily Van Gelder and Rosanne Vinson

Treasurer: Moto Yoshimura

Membership: Lauren Scott

Field Trips: Susan Joseph (continuing since 2017)

Scholarships: Emily Wein

Carena Pooth continues to run the website, and to serve the club in an advisory role. She reports that there is a need for an additional adult volunteer to assist Susan with coordination of field trips. Carena also presented a written report summarizing membership statistics, field trips, scholarships, and partner organizations. NYSYBC has awarded more than \$36,000 since the scholarship program began in 2010. The scholarships facilitate attendance by young birders at birding camps and conservation-oriented programs. The club’s 2020 kickoff event will be hosted by Saw Mill River Audubon.

Publications –

Shai Mitra reported that all of the vacant regional editor positions for *The Kingbird* have been filled. Michael Dewispelaere has taken over Region 4, and John Haas has taken over Region 9. Region 10 will be split by season, with Shai continuing to edit the summer report. Doug Futuyma has taken over the winter season, and Brendan Fogarty will handle the spring and fall reports for Region 10. Patricia Lindsay has taken over from Bob Spahn as the overall editor of the regional reports. Pat is also taking over the compilation of spring arrival date tables, with guidance from Bob, who has compiled them for many years. Shai reports that the plan to get publication of *The Kingbird* back on schedule is proving effective, with steady progress being made.

Mike DeSha relayed a report on *New York Birders* from Joan Collins. The next issue is expected in October.

Carena Pooth reported on the latest updates to the *Checklist of the Birds of New York State*, which are based on the latest taxonomy changes from the American Ornithological Society.

Research – Greg Lawrence

Greg reported that there are Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes that need to be filled. He encouraged anyone interested to visit the U.S. Geological Survey’s BBS website to see the locations of the routes and sign up to cover them.

Bill Ostrander reported on the annual waterfowl count. He noted that a Region 9 coordinator is needed for the count.

Kathy Schneider presented a written report on planning for NY BBA III. The report summarizes the work of Julie Hart as Atlas Project Coordinator, and of the various subcommittees planning the atlas.

The atlas website is active and includes a store with merchandise bearing the NY BBA III logo. It also contains detailed information on how to use breeding codes and a map of the atlas blocks. An online block sign-up system will be activated when the atlas begins. The steering committee has selected regional coordinators for most regions of the state, though candidates are still being sought for the Syracuse and Rochester areas. Kathy reported that a chair is needed for the development subcommittee, which will need to engage in fundraising activities throughout the atlas period. The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology raised \$675,000 to help fund that state's second BBA, which took place over the past five years. Those funds were needed in addition to the state and federal funding help they received. NY BBA III plans to use some fundraising methods that proved successful in Wisconsin, including a "sponsor a species" program.

Julie Hart reported that flyers about NY BBA III are printed and available for distribution. She and the regional coordinators are available to do talks and 3-hour workshops on NY BBA III for bird clubs around the state.

Mike DeSha encouraged all NYSOA members to make a financial contribution to NY BBA III.

Website and Information Services – Carena Pooth

Carena presented a written report on the NYSOA website. It includes statistics on which pages on the site get the most use. She noted that the membership page, including the online dues payment system, has seen increasing usage in the past couple of years. This is likely due to the fact that renewal notices are being sent by email, with a link to renew online. Online renewals save time for the membership volunteers and money for NYSOA. The new page about NY BBA III is now in the top ten most visited pages on the site.

Election of Officers

On behalf of the nominating committee, Bob Adamo presented the following slate for election:

Officers: (one year terms)

President: Shirley Shaw

Vice President: Greg Lawrence

Recording Secretary: John Kent

Treasurer: Mary Jane Dugan

Directors: (terms ending in fall 2021)

Patricia Aitken

Brian Dugan

Brendan Fogarty

Lucretia Grosshans

Director: (term ending in fall 2020)

Gerald Thurn (replacing Shirley Shaw for the remainder of her term)

Auditing Committee: (one year term)

Stephen Chang (Chair)

Tom Burke

Peter Capainolo

Nominating Committee: (one year term)

Robert Adamo (Chair)

Michael DeSha

Lucretia Grosshans

Andy Mason moved to cast one ballot to elect the above slate of officers for the coming year and directors for the two-year term ending in fall 2021. Tim Baird seconded, and it was approved unanimously.

Shai Mitra moved to elect Gerald Thurn to fill the remainder of Shirley Shaw's term as a director. Doug Beattie seconded, and it was approved unanimously.

Bob Adamo moved to elect the auditing committee as listed above. Brian Dugan seconded, and it was approved unanimously.

Shirley Shaw moved to elect the nominating committee as listed above. Barbara Butler seconded, and it was approved unanimously.

Continuing directors: (terms ending in fall 2020)

Joe Brin

Douglas Futuyma

Richard Guthrie

Robert Spahn

New Business

Joe Brin will serve as liaison with Onondaga Audubon Society, which will be hosting the 2020 NYSOA annual meeting in the Syracuse area. Joe reports that planning for the meeting has begun.

Rich Guthrie moved to adjourn. Pat DiBenedetto seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:38 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

John Kent

Recording Secretary