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New York State Ornithological Association, Inc.
April 2, 2011 Board Meeting Minutes
Nuthatch Hollow in Vestal, NY

The Board of Directors of the New York State Ornithological Association, Inc. (NYSOA) met at Nuthatch Hollow in Vestal, NY on April 2, 2011. The meeting was called to order by President Carena Pooth at 9:35 a.m.

Present were, **Michael DeSha, Gail Kirch, Victor Lamoureux**, Berna Lincoln, **Andy Mason, Shai Mitra, Carena Pooth**, Kathy Schneider, and **Bob Spahn. Bob Adamo, Joan Collins, and Jeremy Kirchman** attended via teleconference.

Summary of Action Items:

- Approved February 5, 2011 Board meeting minutes. (Item 1)
- Approved \$1000 loan to Waterman Bird Club for Annual Meeting to be repaid by 12/31/11. (Item 3)
- Approved provisional club membership for Bedford Audubon, pending receipt of their formal application. (Item 4)
- Approved Operating Budget for 2010-2011. (Item 4)
- Approved proposed Bylaw changes. (Item 4)
- Approved purchase of Adobe Acrobat by Shai Mitra, Editor of *The Kingbird*. (Item 4)
- Creation of new Organization Handbook Committee and appointment of Mike DeSha as its chair (Item 7)

1. **Approval of Minutes** – Andy Mason made a motion to accept the Feb. 5, 2011 meeting minutes. Victor Lamoureux seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.
2. **President's Report** – Carena Pooth sends thank you letters for Kingbird Club level memberships. Carena responds to many emails, and brings important issues to the board. She recently responded to a letter on international publicity.
3. **Treasurer's Report** – Andy Mason gave the Treasurer's Report. He included 3/31/10 figures for a comparison to 3/31/11. Berna Lincoln noted that most of this year's dues are in earlier than last year which may account for the higher figures this year. The Auditing Committee's report was completed with no issues identified. Andy Mason made a motion to loan the Waterman Bird Club \$1000 per their request, as host of the 2011 Annual Meeting, to be repaid by 12/31/11. Bob Spahn seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

4. Committee Reports

Publicity – Kathy Schneider gave the report. The committee had a conference call on March 31, 2011. The committee was split on whether to do another raffle. Only 22 people who were not NYSOA members donated money for raffle tickets last year. Although it won't be a significant way to recruit new members, another reason to hold a raffle was to raise money and add excitement to the Annual Meeting. Last year's raffle profit was ~2200 dollars, but Kathy said the cost could be reduced by using bulk mail in the future. A decision on whether to run the raffle this year will be made by April 15th. Future raffles could be held to benefit a specific NYSOA fund.

Angus Wilson and Kathy will work on putting out a press release to announce new bird species for NYS.

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The committee needs quarterly newsletter articles for clubs. Carena Pooth recently sent out an article on young birders to clubs. Kathy suggested we send an article to member clubs regarding upcoming NYSOA field trips.

A discussion was held regarding NYSOA membership for Big Day teams. In particular, Montezuma Muckrace participants should be members of NYSOA if we sponsor the team. NYSOA pays the entrance fee. NYSOA should have a report back from the team sponsored. Historically, "NYSOA" is printed on the back of their T-shirts (along with all other Muckrace sponsors) – which is usually under a jacket that no one sees. Proceeds go to Montezuma which is worthwhile. Requirements of the Muckrace team sponsored by NYSOA should be: Article for *New York Birders* written specifically by and about the NYSOA-sponsored team, individual membership in NYSOA by team members, and distribution of materials about NYSOA at the event. The Friends of Montezuma organization views this as a fund raiser.

The committee would like to conduct a questionnaire about NYSOA membership: why are you a member, what is your highest priority benefit, and is it important to your profession, etc. Kathy would like it to be electronic.

NYSOA mugs will be offered for gifts and for sale. The design will have an Eastern Kingbird. There will be discounts for NYSOA members on the mugs.

Field Trips – Carena Pooth gave the report in Bard's absence. Joan Collins talked about the upcoming Massawepie Mire trip. A discussion was held on the upper limit for participants. Forty-six people attended the pelagic trip held in March (up from 36 for the first, canceled trip). If we only allow a first time activity for a non-member on field trips, it needs to be tracked. Some folks joined or renewed to go on the trip. To bring a spouse, family membership will be required. Kathy Schneider would like a policy on how to handle discounts related to field trips (such as the participant's cost for the pelagic). We discussed allowing non-members to attend one members-only trip to encourage them to join. Bard Prentiss provided a written report outlining the 3 trips scheduled for 2011.

Young Birders Club– Carena Pooth gave the report. The Young Birders Club has a new high of 27 members. The club has 18 supporting adults, and 13 partner organizations. Youth officer elections were held in February. One of the young birders wrote a summary of 2010 NYSYBC field trips and this was sent to all NYSOA member clubs for publication in their newsletters.

Membership – Berna Lincoln gave the report. There are a total of 508 individual members; 456 renewed or paid this year. Fifty due in January did not renew yet (10% loss – about what we lose each year). There are 51 life members. Since about 50% of new members do not renew for a second year, approximately 100 new members are needed each year to maintain a stable membership. Bob Spahn suggested holding a new member gathering at the Annual Meeting to cultivate a sense of connection to the organization. It was suggested that names of new members be published in *New York Birders* to make them feel welcome. A discounted 3-year membership was suggested. There are currently 44 member clubs (Queens County Bird Club renewed – paid 2010 & 2011). The Audubon Society of the Capital Region did not renew. Chestnut Ridge Hawkwatch has not renewed and Bedford Audubon Society (its parent organization) will likely become a member organization in its place. Kathy Schneider moved to provisionally make Bedford Audubon a member club, pending receipt of their formal application. Shai Mitra seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

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Berna reported that an abbreviated member list (omitting specific addresses and other sensitive information) will be provided for posting in the password-protected area of the website. This will give NYSOA board members and committee chairs the access they have requested. The information on the list is not to be shared with anyone outside the board or committee chairs.

Finance – Berna Lincoln gave the report and presented the 2011 Operating Budget. Following discussion and some minor changes, Gail Kirch moved to approve the budget as amended. Shai Mitra seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Research – Jeremy Kirchman gave the report. Jeremy was approached by two different birders regarding research projects. He forwarded this information to Tim Baird for *New York Birders*. Matt Hayes is conducting Sandhill Crane genetic work, and needs help finding nest sites so he can band and get blood samples from birds. The Nature Conservancy is holding two birdathons in early June on their property in the Tug Hill area. They are looking for competent birders to help out. Carena Pooth will put information about both requests on the website.

Archives – Carena Pooth gave the report. A new archivist is needed to replace Brenda Best. The archivist stores communications, publications, documents, etc., and makes a yearly trip to Cornell. Carena will put together a list of tasks done by the archivist.

Awards – Gail Kirch gave the report. The committee wrote a letter for clubs with a call for Lillian Stoner award nominations. They also created a form for sponsors, and a form for nominated students. The letter and forms were sent to all NYSOA member clubs via email on March 7th.

Certificates of Appreciation are given to those who allow the general public access to an interesting, rare species. It will inspire others to get the word out earlier when they see acknowledgement of people who receive this certificate.

The Gordon Meade Award was discussed.

Bylaws – Bob Spahn gave the report. Bob incorporated changes discussed at the last board meeting. A paragraph was added for term limits, Treasurer and Secretary positions will no longer be members of the board, and the Corresponding Secretary position was eliminated. The option to allow participation in board meetings via conference call was added. Changes in the Bylaws to either the composition of the Board or its members' terms (if approved by the Council of Delegates this September) will guide the creation of the 2012 Nominating Committee's proposed slate and do not actually take effect until the close of the fall 2012 Annual Meeting. Marketing and Publicity was added as a special committee. A blurb should go in the April issue of *New York Birders* to announce the proposed new bylaws will be sent to the member clubs via email. Andy Mason made a motion to approve the proposed Bylaws changes. Victor Lamoureux seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Conservation – Andy Mason gave the report. An anonymous email from the Niagara region expressed concern about fireworks at Niagara Falls having an adverse effect on nesting gulls. Joan Collins suggested reviewing the NYSOA's 2007 wind power resolution for possible changes. The committee will discuss this and report back to the board.

eBird – Bob Spahn gave the report. Bob revised the letter he wrote for list serves around NY about reporting their data in eBird and why it is important. The importance of reporting rare birds to

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NYSARC was also noted in the letter. Bob asked for people to post this article on local list serves around the state. Berna Lincoln suggested it be published in *New York Birders* also. Shai Mitra would like an article in *The Kingbird* on the importance of reporting sightings. Carena Pooth mentioned that the hosting club plans to have a person from Cornell come to the Annual Meeting to do a workshop on eBird.

Nominating Committee – Berna Lincoln reported for Valerie Freer. The slate is taking shape and will be published in the July issue of *New York Birders*.

NYSARC – No report. Carena Pooth mentioned the 2009 NYSARC report is now on the website. Publicity articles on new bird species for NYS are needed.

Publications - Shai Mitra gave *The Kingbird* report. He plans to begin using a different printing company beginning with the June issue.

Shai requested that NYSOA pay the expense for him to purchase Adobe Acrobat for use in laying out and enabling pre-publication peer review of, and comment on, *The Kingbird*. Jeremy Kirchman made a motion to authorize up to \$119 for Shai Mitra to buy Adobe Acrobat. Bob Spahn seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Carena Pooth said we should take steps toward sending *New York Birders* out via email to save money and reduce paper consumption. The other advantage is color photos in email additions.

Tim Baird will put the April issue of *New York Birders* together in the next couple weeks. A new editor for *New York Birders* is still needed. Shai said we should look at new members as an additional source of volunteers.

Website – Carena Pooth gave the report. She provided a list of website updates.

5. DEC Report – No report. Shai Mitra mentioned he has not received a Waterfowl Count report in a couple years. Brian Swift, DEC, is looking for a volunteer replacement to head up the Waterfowl Count.

6. Old Business:

Inventory clearance of hard copies of *The Kingbird*: Andy Mason will send a message to list serves about back issues. New scans of 5 *Kingbird* issues by Jim Moomaw for addition to the online archive are not yet done.

Annual Meeting 2011: Scheduled for September 24, 2011 and hosted by the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club. The meeting will be at a rustic camp called Circle Lodge on Sylvan Lake in Dutchess County. Other lodging facilities are available for those who do not want to stay at a rustic camp. Scott Weidensaul is the banquet speaker. Call for papers went out in the January issue of *New York Birders* with an abstract due date of July 15th. The flyer and registration material will be published in the April issue of *New York Birders* and on the NYSOA website

7. New Business:

Organization Handbook: Mike DeSha volunteered to collect the information from officers, directors, and committee chairs. Carena Pooth appointed him to chair a new committee for this

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project. Mike would like everyone to consider what info they would have liked when they were new. Send information to Mike two weeks before the July 9th board meeting. The handbook is intended to become a helpful guide for new board members and serve as a depository for the “institutional knowledge” that is often lost over the years because it is not written down.

8. **Adjournment:** – Victor Lamoureux made a motion to adjourn at 2:13 p.m. Gail Kirch seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Collins
Recording Secretary