

New York State Ornithological Association, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting
November 5, 2016

The Board of Directors of the New York State Ornithological Association, Inc. (NYSOA) met at Olana State Historic Site, 5720 Route 9G, Hudson, NY 12534. The meeting was called to order by President **Joan Collins** at 9:31 AM. Present were **Joan Collins, Shirley Shaw, Bob Spahn, Dawn O’Neal, Kathy Schneider, Carena Pooth, Rich Guthrie**, John Kent, Tim Baird, and Michael DeSha. **Greg Lawrence**, Shai Mitra, Berna Lincoln, and **Seth Ausubel** were present via teleconference, and Andy Mason and **Peter Capainolo** joined via teleconference later.

Summary of Action Items:

- Approved amended minutes for July 16, 2016 board meeting
- Provisionally approved amended minutes for 2016 Annual Meeting
- Approved \$1,000 loan to Buffalo Ornithological Society for 2017 Annual Meeting
- Approved reappointment of Jim Pawlicki to NYSARC
- Agreed to license content of *The Kingbird* for inclusion in the Biodiversity Heritage Library
- Elected new NYSOA Executive Committee

Secretary’s Report – John Kent

- After discussion and amendments, Kathy Schneider made a motion to approve the July 16, 2016 minutes as amended. Carena Pooth seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- Discussion was held regarding the draft minutes of the Annual Meeting of September 10, 2016. Some minor amendments were agreed upon. Bob Spahn made a motion to approve provisionally the Annual Meeting minutes as amended. Kathy Schneider seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

President’s Report – Joan Collins

Joan reported that she spent a lot of time working on the 2016 Annual Meeting, including organizing, preparation and presentation of awards, etc. Since then she has been working with the Buffalo Ornithological Society (BOS) on arrangements for the 2017 Annual Meeting, which will be held in Niagara Falls November 10-12 (Veteran’s Day weekend).

Committee Reports:

Annual Meeting -

- David Suggs (Chair) and Dwayne Wood of BOS will be primary organizers of the 2017 Annual Meeting. Kathy Schneider volunteered to be the primary NYSOA contact for BOS regarding preparations for the meeting. Joan read a note that was sent to NYSOA by Chemung Valley Audubon stating that they greatly enjoyed hosting the 2016 meeting and the opportunity to show off the Elmira area to birders from around the state. After the 2015 NYSOA Annual Meeting, Jory Langner of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club (HMBC) prepared a report summarizing HMBC’s experience in hosting the 2015 meeting, with advice for future host clubs. That report and other helpful information is included in the Annual Meeting Kit that Carena Pooth has provided to Dwayne Wood, and will also be made available to the Rochester

clubs that will be hosting the 2018 meeting. Dwayne Wood asked Joan about getting the customary \$1,000 loan from NYSOA to cover the lodging deposit for the 2017 Annual Meeting. Kathy Schneider made a motion to approve the issuance of a promissory note for \$1,000 to the Buffalo Ornithological Society for this purpose. Shirley Shaw seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. The terms of repayment will be specified in the wording of the promissory note.

- Joan mentioned that attendance at the 2016 meeting was significantly lower than at the 2015 meeting, and that we need to do as much as possible to promote and publicize the 2017 meeting to encourage attendance. Seth mentioned that western New York in November offers exciting birding, particularly for birders from southeastern New York. That aspect should be emphasized in publicity materials. Rich Guthrie recommended that publicity materials for the meeting include a reminder for attendees to be sure their passports are up to date so that they can bird on the Canadian side of the border if they wish. The meeting website should link to current information from a government site specifying current ID requirements for crossing the Canadian border.

Archive -

No report.

Auditing Committee -

No report.

Awards -

No report.

Bylaws -

No report.

County Listing – Carena Pooth

The 2016 county list submission form is online and will be printed in the October newsletter.

Finance – Mike DeSha

If committee chairs need budget allocations for the coming year they must send their requests to Mike. If money is unused from the past year there is no automatic carryover, but it may be reallocated for next year at the Finance Committee's discretion.

Marketing and Publicity – Tim Baird

- A new chairperson is needed for this committee, ideally someone who has background and experience in publicity. No volunteers have come forward.
- Some NYSOA hats and water bottles are left over. Carena Pooth will take some of the water bottles and hand them out to the Young Birders at that club's annual kickoff conference.
- The board needs to define the duties of the marketing/publicity chair more clearly. One major goal of publicity should be to increase membership.
- Berna Lincoln suggested that the committee write small articles every couple of months promoting NYSOA and send them to the local clubs for inclusion in their newsletters. We may

also want to send a quarterly email about NYSOA activities to the NYSOA membership email list, with the aim of retaining members.

- Kathy Schneider suggested that a good start would be a promotional blurb about the 2017 Annual Meeting, to be sent to local clubs and published on the NYSOA Facebook page. Kathy and Carena will write and distribute this piece.
- The June birding conference/festival at the Ashokan Center, sponsored by the Catskill Center in Arkville, could impact future attendance at the NYSOA Birders Conference/Annual Meeting. 2016 was the first year for the Catskills event and it was well-attended. The Catskill Center has substantial funding for regional economic development, and has plans to expand their event and increase attendance. If NYSOA is going to support their event in any way, such as being listed as a partner organization, we need to get them to reciprocate. Rich Guthrie mentioned that he thinks the Catskills event is aiming at a somewhat different audience than the NYSOA event – not so much at “hard-core” birders.
- Greg Lawrence reports that the NYSOA Facebook page has 514 “likes”. He will write a post encouraging people to join NYSOA. Greg would like anyone with ideas for other items to post on Facebook to send them to him, along with photos.

Field Trips – Joan Collins

The Field Trip Committee will schedule a conference call soon. The goal is to have the 2017 field trips planned in time to list them (including dates) in the January newsletter.

Membership/Circulation – Berna Lincoln

- A written report on membership statistics was submitted by Berna Lincoln. There have been some issues with outdated contact information being used by NYSOA for local club contacts. Berna will send a reminder with dues notices to local clubs asking them to be sure that their club contact information is current.
- Pat Aitken wishes to resign from the job of maintaining the membership database but has committed to continue in her role until a replacement has been found. Following up on Carena Pooth’s 2015 research into membership management systems and WildApricot (wildapricot.com), George Yellott has begun learning and experimenting with the Wild Apricot system, and he plans to attend the April NYSOA board meeting to demonstrate the system. Joan and George will have a discussion with Berna, and further calls will be held as needed during the free trial implementation and test phase.
- Carena Pooth will be putting an item on the website promoting gift memberships for the holidays.

Nominating Committee -

No report.

NYS Young Birders Club – Carena Pooth

A written report was submitted on the club’s activities. There are currently 58 youth members and the club continues to be very active. Carena is always looking for adults interested in leading field trips. Rich Guthrie volunteered to be involved with the club.

NYSARC – Angus Wilson

Joan Collins provided an update, since Angus Wilson was not present. Terms are expiring for Angus and for Jim Pawlicki. Jim has enthusiastically agreed to serve another term on the committee. Angus has not yet indicated whether he wishes to continue for another term, either as chair or as a member. Bob Spahn made a motion to approve Joan's reappointment of Jim Pawlicki to the committee for a new three-year term, ending December 31, 2019. Rich Guthrie seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously. It was also pointed out that one NYSARC member has not renewed his NYSOA membership, which is a requirement. Berna Lincoln will remind him once again.

Organizational Handbook – Mike DeSha

Committee chairs should look at the handbook and send recommendations for changes and additions to Mike.

Publications – Seth Ausubel

- Seth reports that discussion is ongoing among the regional editors regarding the format and content of the regional reports. All agree that these reports are a very valuable and important function of NYSOA. The committee plans to look into the possibility of making *The Kingbird* available in electronic format as an option, as this would save on printing and mailing expenses.
- Shai Mitra reports that he is finishing up the September issue of *The Kingbird* and it should be ready for proofreading and production by November 11. In order to get it finished quickly, it will be light on content other than the regional reports. When complicated articles are submitted, it takes a lot of time to review and edit them, slowing down the production schedule. Shai is on track to get the December issue ready by January. He recommends that the Publications Committee meet on a scheduled basis in order to keep things on schedule. There is no word on the latest report from NYSARC, which is overdue. Seth will schedule a committee conference call soon. He suggested that the committee seek assistant editors for *The Kingbird*, and Shai agreed that it would be a good idea.
- Joan Collins reports that she is currently working on the October issue of *New York Birders* and has received several good articles for it. She is also starting work on the January issue, which includes the speaker's bureau listing. She is sending a template to all of the speakers for them to supply their updated information. Speakers will be required to be NYSOA members in order to be listed, and the descriptions of their talks will be limited in length to 125 words.
- Carena Pooth reports that the 2017 version of the *Checklist of the Birds of New York State* is being prepared for printing and will reflect the recent changes in AOU taxonomy. The new booklets will be ready to be sent out to members who order copies when they renew their memberships. The 2016 AOU updates were incorporated in NYSOA's checklists on the NYSOA website in August.

Research – Greg Lawrence

- Greg wishes to discuss with the Research Committee the details of the new NYSOA research grant program.
- Bob Spahn initiated a discussion of the planned third Breeding Bird Atlas (BBAIII) and its relationship to eBird. There has been no action in the past year on planning BBAIII. The NYSDEC contacts have been unresponsive. If planning meetings are not taking place by early 2017, Bob feels that NYSOA will need to reassess whether it is feasible to do BBAIII. One of

the major outstanding topics is whether BBIII should include a quantitative aspect (point counts). Bob pointed out that in order to gather statistically significant quantitative data, we would need a very large amount of time commitment by a much larger number of qualified personnel than we are likely to have. If an attempt is made to gather quantitative data without adequate resources, the data will not be scientifically valid and it will be wasted effort.

- The 2017 Waterfowl Count dates are January 14-22, with a target date of Sunday, January 15. This information has been posted on the website. Shai will send the 2016 waterfowl report to Carena to put online.

Website and Information Services – Carena Pooth

Carena submitted a written report listing all of the material she has added or updated on the NYSOA and NYS Young Birders Club websites since July.

Conservation Committee – Andy Mason

- Some of the committee members, along with Tom Salo, met with the DEC in Albany last month. They had been scheduled to meet with DEC Assistant Commissioner Kathy Moser, but she failed to show up. The main topic of discussion was lead ammunition. The members urged the DEC officials who did attend to increase their educational efforts on the harmful effects of lead ammunition. A letter was sent to DEC expressing disappointment with the Assistant Commissioner's failure to attend the meeting. The committee continues its work to publicize the lead ammunition issue. Unfortunately, there is limited availability of copper ammunition at stores, and the New York SAFE Act prohibits online purchase of ammunition, making it somewhat difficult to obtain alternatives to lead ammunition.
- The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) is going through a process to classify recently-acquired lands around the Boreas Ponds. Public hearings are being held around the state, and a variety of options have been put forward for the use of the lands. The options range from complete wilderness classification to unrestricted access for motor vehicles, mountain bikes, snowmobiles, and motor boats. A coalition of conservation groups called Be Wild New York is advocating a compromise plan that would keep most of these lands classified as wilderness. When combined with adjacent wilderness areas, this would create the largest wilderness area in the eastern United States. The local towns, as well as the governor, are in favor of the least restrictive option. They view this as the most helpful to their economic development. Discussion was held about whether NYSOA should take a position and/or join the Be Wild coalition. The APA plans to make a decision on this issue early in 2017. Members of the Conservation Committee plan to attend some of the public hearings. Kathy Schneider recommended that NYSOA take a position opposing the use of motor boats and advocating the largest possible wilderness area. Joan will be speaking at one of the hearings on behalf of both NYSOA and Northern New York Audubon. Between now and then, she will be speaking with others to decide what position to take on behalf of each organization. If the positions are significantly different, NYSOA's Conservation Committee will submit written comments rather than having Joan deliver them at the hearing.
- The U. S. Coast Guard is considering a request to allow increased anchorage areas for petroleum-laden vessels in the Hudson River between Kingston and Yonkers. This raises major environmental concerns, including the increased risk of a major oil spill in the river. Significant local opposition has emerged to the plan. The board agrees that NYSOA should oppose the

plan, and the Conservation Committee will submit comments to that effect to the Coast Guard in time for the December 6 deadline.

Treasurer's Report – Andy Mason

A detailed report was submitted in writing. A few changes have been made to the format at the request of the Auditing Committee. A question was raised about whether we are still expecting to receive a contribution from Chemung Valley Audubon from Annual Meeting proceeds. Andy Mason will ask Bill Ostrander about it. Andy also submitted a copy of a letter from the Copyright Clearance Center, explaining why NYSOA has begun to receive small payments for overseas users of copyrighted material from *The Kingbird*.

DEC Report -

No report.

New Business -

- A request was received from Peg DiBenedetto of the Catskill Center for email addresses for all of the NYSOA member clubs. She will be notified that the contact information can be obtained from the NYSOA website.
- A request was received for permission to add contents of *The Kingbird* to the online resource collection of the Biodiversity Heritage Library at Harvard University. The board agrees that this should be allowed. It will require NYSOA to enter a licensing agreement. The terms of the agreement allow NYSOA to stipulate that the most recent two years of material from *The Kingbird* be withheld. If recent issues were available online it would eliminate an incentive for NYSOA membership. NYSOA would retain ownership of all rights to the material. Kathy Schneider made a motion to make NYSOA part of the Biodiversity Heritage Library and sign the agreement. Rich Guthrie seconded it, and it was approved unanimously.
- A new NYSOA Executive Committee was named, consisting of Joan Collins, Carena Pooth, and Kathy Schneider. Shirley Shaw made a motion to elect this Executive Committee. Bob Spahn seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.
- Board meeting dates for 2017 were set and are as follows: February 4 (conference call), April 8 at Montezuma NWR, July 15 at Beaver Lake Nature Center, and November 18 at Olana. The Annual Meeting will be November 10-12 in Niagara Falls.
- Bob Spahn announced that the 2018 Annual Meeting is planned for October 5-7 at the Rochester Institute of Technology Inn and Conference Center. It will be hosted by Rochester Birding Association and the Burroughs Audubon Nature Club.
- Rich Guthrie asked whether NYSOA has a brochure that could be placed in information racks at nature or travel-related sites. We have a promotional “postcard” that provides the information that might otherwise be in a brochure, but it will not physically fit into a brochure rack. Carena indicated that we could print a new batch of cards sized to fit into racks. Rich volunteered to work with the Marketing & Publicity Committee on a promotional piece (brochure or other) that could be used as he proposed.

Bob Spahn made a motion to adjourn, and Shirley Shaw seconded it. The meeting was adjourned at 2:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
John Kent
Recording Secretary