

**FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS, INC.**  
**ANNUAL MEETING**  
**Syracuse, New York**  
**20-22 September 1991**

President Chad Covey called the 44th Annual Meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc. to order at the Quality Inn North in North Syracuse at 2:10 PM on Friday, 20 September 1991. The roll call eventually totaled 24 member clubs, including the host club, the Onondaga Audubon Society. The minutes of the 43rd Annual Meeting were read by Don Windsor as published in *The Kingbird* 41(2):89-92; 1991) and were accepted as such. Dick Sloss and Barbara Butler were appointed to the Committee on Resolutions.

Myrna Hemmerick, Membership Chair, reported that the Federation now has 716 members, 128 of whom are new. We also have a new member club, the Schuyler County Bird Club, bringing the membership to 42 clubs.

Stan Lincoln, Membership Promotion Chair, reported that of the 2300 solicitations sent out, there were 92 responses. Stan expressed his concern over the membership drop off after a promotion. He will be trying to get some help from our member clubs, who represent some 20,000 birders.

Chad announced that the 1992 Annual Meeting will be held on 25-27 September at the SUNY Oneonta campus. Roger Tory Peterson is expected to be the banquet speaker.

In a departure from a more normal agenda, the situation at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge was addressed. Some strong, very well organized opposition to its expansion plans has been launched by the New York State Farm Bureau. Barry Christenson, Assistant Manager at the Refuge, implored us to express our support for the proposed expansion to Congressman Frank Horton. A formal resolution was drafted to be sent to Mr. Horton. As part of an individual "grass roots" response, Shirley Cameron, from the Genesee Ornithological Society, organized a petition which was sent out that very evening.

Barry also announced that the Eaton Birding Society was planning a memorial to Gordon Meade. Polly Keating is the contact for the project.

Ray Perry reported on the recent activities of New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. The Commissioner's Bird Life Advisory Committee has expanded to include habitat and education as related to birds. Bob Connor noted that the original name of this committee

was "Birding", not "Bird Life", corresponding to activities such as biking and hiking. Checklists are now available for Jones Beach, Clay Pit Ponds, Hamlin Beach, and Bear Mountain State Parks. Allegany and Letchworth are next. A landfill is being closed in Saratoga Spa State Park with native vegetation being utilized. An expansion of a boat landing site at Selkirk Shores State Park and its impact on birds was discussed. The all-terrain vehicle situation at Castleton Island was described. At the Allan Treman Marina in Ithaca, a road originally destined to cut through a grassland will now go around it. Ray emphasized that bird clubs can act as the "eyes and ears" of The Parks Department and can assist in achieving some balance between recreation and birding.

Berna Lincoln, Treasurer, made her Treasurer's Report available so that it could be read before her formal report the next day. She also provided an updated list of member clubs. Chad announced that copies of the Federation Executive Committee meeting minutes for 1990-1991 were also available for inspection.

Charlie Smith, Research Committee Chair, presented a draft of a resolution of support for the Neotropical Migratory Birds project. Nine government agencies are cooperating on this important undertaking.

Bob Connor announced that a Federal Bill (HR2541 - S1218) now under consideration would preempt New York State's Wild (exotic) Bird Act. New Jersey, whose law is patterned after New York's, is the only other state to have such a law, so Federal legislation is certainly needed. Two Federal bills are up; HR2540 - S1219 is the one we should support. This bill would prohibit the importation of captive wild birds into the United States. A resolution will be drafted and sent to our Senators and Representatives.

Harriet Marsi, Nominating Committee Chair, announced the slate of officer candidates running for election. Chad reported that no other nominations had been submitted. The election was held and all candidates were elected.

President: Stanley Lincoln

Vice-President: William Lee

Recording Secretary: Valerie Freer

Corresponding Secretary: Mary Ann Sunderlin

Treasurer: Berna Lincoln

Stan Lincoln expressed how honored he was to serve in this capacity and to carry on this tradition. He had the rest of the newly elected officers stand up and be recognized.

Stan then adjourned the meeting at 4:20 PM.

That Friday evening, four workshops were held. They were chaired by Gerald Smith, who also presented one on "Buteos and Large Birds of Prey". Paul DeBenedictis demonstrated the difficulties associated with "Fall Warbler Identification". Cynthia Page conducted a session on "Wildlife Art" and Phil Clarke reviewed ideas on "Natural Plantings to Attract Wildlife".

The following morning, President Stan Lincoln reconvened the Delegates' meeting at 9:35 AM.

Don Windsor called the roll of member clubs; eventually, 28 were present. Most clubs (23) were represented on both Friday afternoon and on Saturday morning. Just one was present only on Friday and four were present only on Saturday.

Paul DeBenedictis, Editor of *The Kingbird*, announced that Region 1 Editor, Steve Eaton, was retiring and Gerald Rising would be replacing him. Region 9 Editor, Helen Manson, was also retiring and John Askildsen would be replacing her. Paul expressed his thanks to the outgoing editors.

Maxwell Wheat, Editor of *New York Birders*, reported on the status of his publication.

Paul DeBenedictis reported that the New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC), as per Bob Andrie, Chair, had 15 reports for 1989 and the 1990 reports are in their final stages. Paul encourages the reporting of rare bird sightings to NYSARC even if they might not be accepted. He stressed that the most common cause of rejection was insufficient evidence. But, even the rejections serve a valuable purpose in that they document a possible sighting and may provide background support for additional possible sightings. These measures of activity might eventually contribute to mounting evidence for a rare species. Stan asked for some instructions on the best way to report. Paul agreed to look into this. John Ruscica (Moriches Bay Audubon Society) suggested compiling a list of those species which birders should report.

Berna Lincoln, Treasurer, gave her formal report. Essentially, in 1990 our General Operating Fund had an income of \$15,319.71 and an outgo of \$13,570.42, for a net gain of \$1749.29. The report detailed the activities of each of the funds (Elliott, Stoner, Memorial, Atlas 2000, and Life Member), the publications (*The Kingbird*, *New York Birders*), book promotions, and our assets. Berna reported that we received the second half of the Clement's estate in 1991 and she placed it in the Memorial Fund. She reckoned we could hold at the current dues for one more year. She illustrated how an

increase in membership meant an increase in income. She acknowledged receipt of a bequest of \$1000.00 from the estate of the late Dr. Gordon M. Meade. The report was approved by the Delegates.

The Audit Committee, Dick Sloss and Irv Cantor, met with Berna on 16 September, examined her records, and issued a formal approval.

Stan then presided over the election of a new Auditing Committee. Dick Sloss, Irv Cantor, and Norm Stotz (New York City Audubon Society) were elected.

Stan next presided over the election of a new Nominating Committee. Chad Covey, Harriet Marsi, and Charlie Smith were elected. Chad will be the Chair.

Stan then introduced the awarding of grants to member clubs, crediting the idea to Dick Sloss, years ago. Charlie Smith, Chair of the Research Committee, announced the awards. Both were for bird banding projects, going to the Genesee Ornithological Society and to the High Peaks Audubon Society, \$100.00 each. Berna explained that the awards are derived from interest (7-8%) on the fund principle of \$5000.00. Ellie Long inquired whether money could be added to this Grant Fund. Stan affirmed. Berna explained that this Club Awards Fund was established in January 1991 and, consequently, does not appear on her Treasurer's Report for 1990.

Mary Ann Sunderlin inquired as to how we stand in 1991 to date. Berna replied that we are not substantially different from last year.

Jeff Gerencser and Suzanne Crandall received the Lillian C. Stoner Awards from John Confer, Chair of the Stoner Committee. Both Jeff and Suzanne were submitted as candidates by the Onondaga Audubon Society. Each is a Bachelor in Zoology and will be working in the newly established Wildlife Division of the Peace Corps. Both have worked as preserve site interns with The Nature Conservancy. John Confer made a plea for more submissions from member clubs. Dorothy Crumb, organizer of this Annual Meeting, requested that the names of the winners be announced earlier. Some discussion followed. In response to a question as to where to send donations, John said to send them to the Treasurer. Steve Eaton asked whether a list of former Stoner Award recipients could be compiled to see what happened to them in later life. In the ensuing discussion, John revealed that only a few clubs have produced recipients and reiterated his plea for more clubs to submit candidates. Charlie Smith recalled that Peter Hunt went on to Dartmouth and Donald Smith was working with goshawks. Chad suggested a "where are they now?" article. John recalled that the

famous Duck Stamp artist Wilhelm Goebel (of the Frame House Gallery) received the Award the last time the Federation met in Syracuse in 1981. Adam Byrne, last year's awardee, is now studying Bobolinks.

The John J. Elliott Award, for the best paper published in *The Kingbird* the previous year, was not awarded. Paul DeBenedictis, Chair of the Elliott Award Committee, disclosed that the 1990 articles were all of such uniformly high quality that no single paper stood out among them. The Committee decided not to present an Elliott Award under this circumstance.

The Saint Lawrence Adirondack Audubon Society, with 60 members, was approved for membership in the Federation, bringing the number of member clubs to 43.

Stan reviewed the work of the Resolutions Committee at this meeting. Four resolutions were considered: Montezuma, Host Club, Wild (exotic) Bird, and Neotropical Migratory.

Charlie Smith passed out drafts of two resolutions: Support for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Program and the Northern Montezuma Wetlands.

Harriet Marsi, Chair of the Conservation Committee, began her report by naming her Committee: Bob Connor (Rockland Audubon Society), Chad Covey (Chenango Bird Club), Andy Mason (Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society), and Mike Peterson (High Peaks Audubon Society). She sent a letter urging the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to exert a greater effort to extend environmental education to minorities and to the underprivileged. She sent a letter to Governor Cuomo stating that his Committee on the Adirondacks in the 21st Century was a good first step in an ongoing process. Norm Stotz brought up the informational network that Eric Siy is trying to set up on Adirondack issues. He warned that legislative action will occur next year and that letters favoring the preservation of the Adirondacks are needed. Harriet stressed that Adirondack people do indeed have some very real concerns and that this is not just a one-sided issue. How to reimburse for land taken for conservation is a concern.

Harriet then explained the Castleton Island situation. The New York State Parks Department, with the very helpful efforts of Ray Perry, took action on every one of our recommendations.

Andy Mason reported on the Quebec Hydropower situation at James Bay. Last year the Federation wrote a resolution calling for an environmental impact statement. No action has been taken by New York State or by Quebec. However, public awareness is growing. In fact, Andy

appeared on Syracuse television just two nights before. Andy solicited support from the individual bird clubs, but concluded that no formal action by the Federation was needed at this time. Harriet revealed that Andy had written ten letters to various government officials.

Next, Harriet reported that the Jay Coalition wants to acquire all of the land of the John Jay homestead. Westchester County condemned the land. Out interest is a salt marsh impacted by the property - the one which accommodated a Wood Sandpiper the previous Fall.

Gap analysis (a process of identifying unprotected species by superimposing maps of vegetation types, animal distributions, and protected areas and then looking for gaps) was another project we supported. A proposed \$3 million add-on to grants provided by the Department of the Interior Fish & Wildlife Service would go toward correlating various environmental measurements with species distributions. Harriet sent letters to Senators D'Amato and Moynihan and Congressman Matt McHugh.

The Montezuma Refuge expansion was supported earlier this year, before the current crisis. Last year we favored "Option 4" (return to the original contours and buy land in the headwaters of the feeding streams). However, "Option 2" (just return to the original contours) was finally accepted. Since we also agreed with this option, it being our second choice, Harriet sent a letter supporting it.

The DEC had proposed a management plan for the Long Pond Forest in Chenango County. Chad Covey, in his role as a Forester with the DEC, conducted a public meeting in April which Harriet and Don Windsor attended. The value of our attendance at such meetings was explained and encouraged by Harriet.

Harriet then announced that John Confer resigned from the Forest Management Plan subcommittee and that Andy Mason will take over.

Mongaup Valley in Sullivan County was originally selected by the DEC because of its habitat for the wintering of Bald Eagles. Some of these birds are now staying there all year. An open house was held by Glenn Cole, the Regional Wildlife Manager. Valerie Freer attended and offered our support.

Plans are being hatched for conserving open space in New York State. "Open space" is the latest euphemism for land acquisition and management. The State is divided into Regions and each Region has a Citizen's Committee. Harriet noted that our member clubs are not represented on these Committees, but hoped they would try to be.

The proposed Saint Lawrence Valley National Wildlife Refuge, consisting of 49,000 acres of wetlands, was reported and briefly discussed. Hope remained that it was not completely dead, but would have a chance to be reworked.

Harriet mentioned the Great Blue Heron massacre in Chenango County last Spring. Changes in the New York State laws to make the illegal killing of all protected species a misdemeanor rather than a violation and a raising of the fine from \$250 to \$2000, where it is for game animals, will be taken up by the Executive Committee in the near future. The possibility of offering cash rewards was also discussed.

Harriet concluded that the Conservation Committee had a busy and purposeful year. She expressed her appreciation to Ray Perry of the Parks Department and to Bob Miller of DEC for their cooperation and help.

Bob Miller, DEC Wildlife Resources Center, reported that the DEC had a frustrating year, due to the budget situation. He talked about the license fee increase and lamented that the Gift to Wildlife donations have decreased, probably due to the economy. On a brighter side, Bob reported that 13 breeding pairs of Bald Eagle produced 16 young and 14 breeding pairs of Peregrine Falcon produced 28 young. However, the Essential Habitats legislation is not going anywhere so DEC is taking another tack; it will use the Endangered Species Act to protect habitat. Bob announced that there will be a review of the endangered species list and working groups are now being formed. He invited the Federation to name someone to represent it.

Norm Stotz, on behalf of David Miller, Executive Director of the Northeast Region of the National Audubon Society, reported that a full time wetlands person was hired, Elsie Bumsted. She will be conducting a series of workshops. Norm then detailed National Audubon's four high priority campaigns: Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Northwestern Ancient forests, Platte River, and wetlands. He stressed that, contrary to some rumors, National Audubon has NOT turned away from wildlife. Rather, protecting habitat will protect wildlife.

President Stan Lincoln presided over the approval of the resolution for the host club and adjourned the meeting a 12:12 pm.

Field trips throughout this meeting period were held for both delegates and non-delegates. Various local habitats were selected by Field Trip Chair Marge Rusk. Two of the best birds found were a Franklin's Gull and a Forster's Tern at Sylvan Beach. All field trips on Sunday were along Lake Ontario so that participants could attend the dedication of a new trail at

Derby Hill Bird Observatory, in memory of Dr. Fritz Scheider, long-time member of the Federation.

In the Saturday afternoon session, chaired by Mary Alice Koeneké, the following papers were presented:

Elizabeth Brooks, Allegany County Bird Club, *Movement of Black-capped Chickadees in New York State analyzed through banding reencounters.*

Michael Armstrong, Ithaca College Biology Department, *Observation of Downy Woodpecker survivorship and behavior.*

Chris Nadeski, DEC Endangered Species Unit, *Peregrine Falcons in the Big Apple.*

John Bull, American Museum of Natural History, *Dynamics in some breeding birds in New York; declining and explosive species.*

Charles Smith, Laboratory of Ornithology and Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University, *Assessing relationships of birds to land use and land cover using remotely sensed satellite imagery.*

Kevin McGowan, Section of Ecology and Systematics, Cornell University, *The complex life of the American Crow.*

To wrap up the session, as has become our tradition, Maxwell C. Wheat, Jr., Baldwin Bird Club, read poems about birds.

At the banquet Saturday evening, the 110 attendees congratulated Dick Sloss upon his receipt of the Gordon Meade Award for Distinguished Service and Chad Covey upon his receipt of the Past President's Award. Barbara Butler read the resolution thanking the host club, the Onondaga Audubon Society, for their splendid hospitality. Dorothy Crumb was recognized for her leadership in organizing this meeting, which attracted 135 registrants. The audience was then treated to a presentation entitled "Do Chickadees Come From China?" by Dr. Frank Gill, ornithologist at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. With that, another successful Annual Meeting had come to a close.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald A. Windsor  
Recording Secretary  
23 February 1992