

FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS, INC.
50TH ANNUAL MEETING
LAKE PLACID, NY 12 – 14 SEPTEMBER 1997

Scott J. Stoner
6 Knob Hill Rd, Loudonville NY 12211

At 9:04 AM, Saturday 13 September 1997, President Bob Budliger called to order the meeting of the Council of Delegates at the 50th Annual Meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, hosted by the High Peaks Audubon Society in Lake Placid.

A roll call of member clubs conducted by the Recording Secretary showed that 34 out of a possible 124 authorized delegates were present; an additional 37 were represented by proxy. This exceeded the minimum and thus constituted a quorum. A total of 30 out of 40 member clubs were represented.

The minutes of the 49th Annual Meeting were published in *The Kingbird* [1997 Jun;47(2):102-109]. A motion to accept the minutes was made by William Reeves, seconded by Gail Seamons, and approved.

Barbara Butler agreed to craft resolutions to be read at the evening banquet.

Bob Budliger submitted the following President's Report:

PRESIDENT'S REPORT, 1997

As I complete my term of office as your President, I take this opportunity to reflect upon the experience. First, it has been an honor and privilege to serve the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs and be associated with the many fine, dedicated volunteers that work tirelessly for birds, birders, and birding in this state. I admire greatly the work you do to promote bird conservation through awareness, education, and habitat protection.

We have made great progress in several areas this past year, but there are some challenges yet ahead.

A few of our accomplishments:

The completed manuscript of *Bull's Birds of New York State* has been submitted to Cornell University Press. Thanks to all the contributors and the enormously time consuming work of Manny Levine, Stan and Berna Lincoln, and the sage advice of Dick Sloss.

A comprehensive schedule of field trips was conducted with a variety of member clubs hosting. The Federation-dominated Technical Committee of the Important Bird Areas program met twice and recommended a couple of dozen sites for designation.

The Conservation Committee is operating and has commented on several important bird conservation issues such as Galeville airport and Delaware Bay horseshoe crab harvest.

The Federation was named as one of the members of an advisory committee required in newly passed state legislation that establishes Bird Conservation Areas. The Federation is now recognized by the state legislature as an important and credible organization.

A great deal of useful and productive dialogue resulted in amendments to our bylaws that will clarify governance and bring us into compliance with state law. An expanded Board of Directors will offer more opportunity for service and participation.

A few challenges ahead:

An Awards Committee needs to be reconstituted and awards must be better defined, promoted, and administered.

We will begin a revision of the Breeding Bird Atlas which will need volunteers and money.

An expanded Board of Directors, while broadening representation, brings with it the challenge of recruiting dedicated volunteers from all our member clubs and among our individual members. I urge each of you to seriously consider serving in this rewarding activity.

We need to expand our membership base and provide more member services.

NYSARC needs review and probably modification to make it more "user-friendly".

TREASURER'S REPORT

Berna Lincoln then presented the Treasurer's Report, distributing a detailed 1996 Annual Financial Report to each club, noting that the major expenses were the Federation's two publications, *The Kingbird* and *New York Birders*.

As of 31 December 1996, total assets of the Federation were \$88,920.54 and total liabilities were \$3,565.65.

Specific fund balances were:

Award Funds

John J. Elliott	\$1,327.83
Lillian C. Stoner	\$2,429.31
Member Clubs	\$5,000.00
General Memorial Fund	\$29,478.07
Atlas 2000 Fund	\$4,282.05
<i>Bull's Birds of NYS</i> Book Fund	\$5,778.96
Life Member Fund	\$18,189.50
General Operating Fund	\$17,870.17
TOTAL FUND BALANCES	\$85,354.89

In the General Operating Fund, income was \$20,422.14 and expenses \$18,234.43, with an excess of income over expenses of \$2,187.71.

A motion was made by Charlie Smith to accept the report; it was seconded by Jane Graves, and approved.

Richard Sloss reported for the Auditing Committee, which was comprised of Irving Cantor, Norm Stotz, and Richard Sloss. The Committee's report stated: "We have examined the financial statements of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc. for the year ended 31 December 1996, and we report that they are presented fairly in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles."

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

David Junkin, Committee Chair, encouraged people to spread the word about Federation membership by word of mouth and by distribution of membership brochures, and asked clubs to share their membership lists.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE.

Regarding *The Kingbird*, editor Don Windsor sought feedback, particularly on the Regional reports. Both he and Regional reports editor, Bob Spahn, would be available to receive comments throughout the entire meeting.

Phyllis Jones, editor of *New York Birders*, reported that the October issue is in preparation and should be sent to the printer during the third week in September. She explained that the four issues produced annually include features such as the County List form followed by the List Report compiled and edited by Stan and Berna Lincoln, and a regular column entitled "With Birds and Birders" by Maxwell C. Wheat, Jr. Features also include announcements of Federation Field Trips organized by Valerie Freer, and an occasional column "Places to Watch" by John Askildsen, that highlights important birding sites across the state. Newsletters of member clubs are an important source of articles for the newsletter. She encouraged the submission of articles on members, member clubs and birds in NY State.

Committee chair Manny Levine thanked Phyllis and Don for their fine work, and noted that Don has only one year remaining as editor. *The Kingbird* Regional reports will change from running text to a single species per line format and will switch to the new classification as per the AOU 41st Supplement.

Manny reported that the book, *Bull's Birds of New York State*, has been copy edited and he thanked all who participated.

Bob Budliger added that two years ago, when he became president, he faced a situation where neither *The Kingbird* nor *New York Birders* had an editor. Both of these gaps were ably solved by Manny, who found good people to replace the good people who had preceded them. Manny, and Stan and Berna Lincoln all put in long hours for the book and are to be commended for their efforts.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

In her report, Committee Chair Mary Alice Koeneké noted the following action had been conducted:

-- Represented the Federation at the dedication of Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge as the first Important Bird Area (IBA) for NYS in October 1996 and at the dedication of Derby Hill as an IBA in May 1997.

-- Sent memo of support by Bob Budliger on behalf of the Federation for the state Important Bird Areas bill introduced by Assemblyman Engelbright; the bill is now law.

-- Sent letters on behalf of the Federation regarding:

- support of the moratorium and proposed regulations for horseshoe crab harvest proposed in NJ.

- Galeville Airport.

- Support of concern over seabird mortality in fishing nets and lines.

- Support of Hunter Mountain open space preservations.

- A mailing to member clubs to enlist support as coalition members for the Teaming With Wildlife (TWW) Initiative. Encouraged letter writing by members to Governor Pataki to support TWW in NY.

-- Reported in *New York Birders* on a variety of issues.

Current issues include the monitoring of the Double-crested Cormorant issue for Lake Ontario and Oneida Lake, continued monitoring of TWW and monitoring of Representative Miller's proposed Endangered Species Act bill (HR 2351).

Mary Alice pointed out that all member clubs can take advantage of support from the Federation on bird related conservation issues.

FIELD TRIP COMMITTEE

Field Trip Committee Chair Valerie Freer noted that this has been a new initiative, and that Bill Lee will be taking it on for the next two years.

Federation Field Trips

The first Federation trip in 1997 was on 25 Jan to Montauk Point followed by an 8 Feb trip to Fort Edward. We had an outing in conjunction with the Lake Ontario Migratory Bird Festival on 3-4 May, and two trips on the weekend of June 7-8: a Saturday trip to Whiteface Mountain to see and hear Bicknell's Thrush, and a Sunday excursion to Saratoga National Historical Park. An August trip for shorebirds visited Jamaica Bay, and in late fall we are scheduled to visit the hawkwatch at Franklin Mountain and Long Island for wintering waterfowl, making a total of 7 trips in 1997.

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Chair Charles R. Smith reported that the primary activity of the Research Committee is monitoring of the state's breeding bird populations through the

statewide Breeding Bird Survey (BBS), which is coordinated by the Chair of the committee, with assistance from over 80 volunteers. The BBS now is under the authority of the Inventory and Monitoring Section of the Biological Resources Division of the U. S. Geological Survey. There are 112 BBS Routes randomly distributed across New York State.

At the beginning of 1997, there were 22 BBS Routes unassigned. Thirteen unassigned routes were accepted by volunteer observers during 1997, leaving only 9 routes currently unassigned for 1998. During 1997, Gerald Rising was especially helpful in finding volunteers to help with coverage for western NY. With 92% of routes assigned, we now have potential for the best coverage of our NY BBS Routes since 1990. The locations of those routes currently unassigned for 1998 were shown on the map printed on the back of the handout. Charlie discussed the qualifications and asked volunteers to contact him at: Charles R. Smith, Department of Natural Resources, Fernow Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853-3001 (phone: 607-255-3219 or e-mail: crs6@cornell.edu).

Excellent summaries of BBS information, including color range maps for breeding bird species, can be found at: <http://www.im.nbs.gov/bbs/bbsnew.html>.

An evaluation of long-term BBS population trends from 1966 through 1996 reveals the following patterns for the breeding birds of New York State:

Declines for all 128 breeding bird species surveyed adequately by BBS methods within New York State are less (31.2%) than would be expected by chance alone (33%), when compared with increasing species and species for which no change can be detected.

Most breeding bird species populations in New York State (68.8%) either are not changing detectably or are increasing in abundance.

More breeding bird species that use successional habitats (meadows and shrublands) are declining (45%) than are species that use mature forests and woodlands (32.5%) – reflective of national trends.

Among "neotropical migrants" (56 species), most species either are showing no detectable changes in populations or are increasing (71.5%) – also reflective of national trends.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Bob Budliger reported on plans for upcoming Annual Meetings. Bill Lee is serving as liaison for future meetings. The 1998 meeting is in the Rochester area, 25-27 September, at the Airport Marriott in Greece. For 1999, he has a letter from Chemung Valley offering to host the meeting in Elmira. The year 2000 will be hosted by the Eaton Birding Society in Geneva. In 2001 it will be hosted by Onondaga Audubon at a site to be determined.

Scott Stoner announced the availability of a set of guidelines on hosting a Federation Annual meeting, prepared by the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club.

ELECTIONS

As published in *NY Birders*, the following candidates were presented by the Nominating Committee:

President: Valerie Freer

Vice President: Mary Alice Koenekke

Treasurer: Berna B. Lincoln

Recording Secretary: Linda Parr

Corresponding Secretary: William B. Reeves

All the above persons were elected to their specified office for the 1997 - 1998 term.

GRANTS

Charlie Smith announced grants awarded to member clubs. An award of \$50.00 was made to the Chemung Valley Audubon Society for printing expenses for a "Checklist of Birds of the Chemung Valley." An award of \$100.00 was made to the High Peaks Audubon Society for the recruitment and training of birders for avian research. Specifically, they plan to conduct an introductory birding workshop to train people to identify and appreciate birds, consisting of five classroom and three field sessions. The newly trained birders would be encouraged to participate in field research including the next Atlas project, breeding bird surveys, and Christmas Counts, etc.

AWARDS

Bob Budliger highlighted the continued need for a single, combined Awards Committee. John Confer noted that there has been a drop in the number of candidates for the Lillian C. Stoner Award. There used to be three to five nominations each year; only twice in the past 10 years has there been more than one. He is concerned about the lack of participation in the Federation by high school and college students. There was only one nominee this year, who is totally deserving.

Charlie Rouse reported that the Elon Howard Eaton Award is going to Paul DeBenedictis, he will receive a certificate plus \$300.00. Regarding the John J. Elliott Award, Don Windsor stressed the readability of the article and the integration of new and old information. Bob Budliger announced that the Gordon M. Meade Award would not be presented this year.

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

Archivist Phyllis Jones reported that the Archive of the Federation was established at the Carl A. Kroch Library of Cornell University in 1993 and is augmented periodically with materials collected and indexed by the Archivist of the Federation. A recent shipment of documents included the papers of several recent past presidents. Papers of Winston A. Brockner, president of the Federation from 1950-1951, have greatly enhanced the collection. A recent

addition is a copy of the new *Bull's Birds of New York* on disk and the letter of transmittal to the publisher Cornell University Press.

Loma Knight is currently the curator for non-Cornell materials at the Kroch Library.

BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Phyllis Jones reported that the members are Barbara Butler, Valerie Freer, Phyllis Jones, Walton Sabin, and Donald Windsor. The committee is currently searching for citations of publications on NYS ornithology which appeared in 1996. This bibliography will be completed for publication in the December 1997 issue of *The Kingbird* [47(4): 273-281]. Phyllis asked that anyone who has access to ornithological journals and who wishes to participate in the work of this committee to contact her at: 9 Hallock Road, Pond Eddy NY 12750; 914-557-6591; email: pjonesgcompuserve.com.

BYLAWS COMMITTEE

In the report of the Bylaws Committee, Scott Stoner read the document sent out on 8 August 1997 and explained the technical correction thereto. Bob Budliger described the recent history of the issue of bylaws and the extent of discussion in the Executive Committee and input from member clubs. He said that enfranchisement of individual members was too fundamental a change to make. He had spoken with attorneys including the NYS Attorney General's Office and determined that we are an organization of organizations and that to comply with the law we need a board of directors that is duly elected. The current sticking point is that we have an executive committee with up to 10 appointed members.

The proposed bylaws changes will bring us into compliance with state law and shift the governance from the Council of Delegates to a board of directors. The Council of Delegates will represent the membership and convene to elect officers and to revise the bylaws. Bob described the proposed expansion of the board of directors to 11 and the designation of a true executive committee of three. He noted that revision of the board of directors to more than 11 would require a change in the Certificate of Incorporation.

A motion was made by Jane Graves to accept the whole package, seconded by Bob Long. The motion passed with the abstention of 2 votes from Saw Mill River Audubon and 5 votes from New York City Audubon.

NY STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Bob Miller gave the report from DEC, noting that he is now part of the Wildlife Diversity Team. Key points of the report are as follows:

- Management decisions should be made on the best data.
- Funding for Return a Gift to Wildlife may be reduced by other tax checkoffs.

- Teaming With Wildlife, a federal initiative to place an excise tax on outdoor equipment, enjoys widespread support but needs more.
- Two endangered species, Peregrine Falcon and Bald Eagle had record numbers of young this year. The peregrines had 34 territorial pairs, 30 breeding pairs and 49 young, while the eagles had 35 territorial pairs, 28 breeding pairs and 43 young.
- Black Tern work continues in DEC Region 6. Alan Benton added that a survey for this species will be done in 1998.
- The New York State endangered species list is still in the process of being promulgated. The Black Tern is proposed as an endangered species.
- The Federation's waterfowl count survey data is being used by DEC.
- DEC had distributed a brochure on its wildlife observation program. There are approximately 150 wildlife management areas in NYS. A wildlife viewing guide has gone to Falcon Press, expected publication in fall or winter [This book is now in print].
- Double-crested Cormorants have received lots of publicity. Their population has greatly increased over the last 20 years all across North America including the Great Lakes. Little Galloo Island in Lake Ontario has gone from 22 pairs in 1972 to 7500 pairs in June 1997, to be the single largest colony in North America. Changes that are blamed on the cormorants are really due to lowered productivity. DEC is keeping them off some other islands in Lake Ontario and has changed fish stocking procedures. When they conflict with endangered species, DEC is keeping the cormorant population down by destroying nests. Bob explained that it is important to get good information out to the public. Fisher persons complain that migrating birds eat fish in Oneida Lake and want DEC to do something about it. DEC is seriously considering this.
- Concerning the Laughing Gulls at John F. Kennedy International Airport, there was a shooting program this year. DEC is working for a solution to move the colony away from the runway.

ELECTION OF AUDITING AND NOMINATING COMMITTEES

A motion by Charles Smith to elect Norm Stotz, Irving Cantor, and Richard Sloss to the Auditing Committee was seconded by Jeff Ryan and approved.

For the last few years the Nominating Committee has been the three most recent past presidents of the Federation, chaired by the immediate past president. There was expression of concern about having two members from the same club. It was suggested that the committee consist of Bob Budliger as chair, Stan Lincoln, and Charles Smith. Bill Lee will chair the Field Trip Committee and serve as liaison to future annual meetings. Stan Lincoln commented that it is not always best to have only ex-presidents on the committee and declined the nomination with thanks. Dick Sloss added that the practice of having ex-presidents serve began because they are so familiar with people who could serve

as potential candidates. Valerie Freer recommended someone from either western NY or Long Island serve on the committee. Charlie Smith made a motion to have the president and two members of the Nominating Committee have the authority to select the third member; this motion was approved.

At the banquet that evening, Valerie Freer noted that Gale Seamons was selected as the third member of the committee. Bob Budliger noted that there are now 5 officers and 6 additional members of the board to nominate, and committed to balance nominations by geography, gender and large and small clubs. He encouraged people to consider serving on an expanded board of directors.

From the Resolutions Committee, a resolution to thank the host club will be presented at the banquet.

NEW PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

There being no other business, Bob Budliger then turned the floor over to newly elected President Valerie Freer for comments. She commended Berna Lincoln for her County Listing report. In 1996, 87 people participated, up from previous years. Berna encouraged participation.

Valerie thanked the Council for the confidence in her and looks forward to serving. She outlined some ideas for growth and accomplishment:

- The Federation should be of service to the member clubs.
- The county listings should be continued as a project to promote birding.
- The Federation will develop a speakers bureau.
- To get libraries to subscribe to *The Kingbird*, clubs could adopt a local college library or local nature center library and purchase a three year subscription for them for \$45.00.
- Shirley Shaw was charged with attracting young people for the next annual meeting. The critical need to make the Federation more accessible to young people was stressed.
- A Federation site on the World Wide Web will be developed by Kevin McGowan assisted by Barbara Butler. [This site is now active. <http://birds.cornell.edu/fnysbc/>]
- A Finance Committee chaired by Bill Reeves, with members Berna Lincoln, Valerie Freer, and Herb Roth will develop a budget.
- Efforts are being continued to improve NYSARC.
- Stan Lincoln will write a history of the Federation for the next annual meeting.
- It is time to once again undertake a new breeding bird Atlas. Charlie Smith will chair a committee to start organizing the Atlas procedures.

Dorothy Crumb sadly reported that Ferd LaFrance died recently; he was the finder of Ferd's Bog. A boardwalk is being built there; materials will eventually be dropped in by helicopter after a wetlands permit is obtained from DEC. There was a resolution to send the LaFrance family a letter of condolence.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 11:33 AM.

BANQUET

At the Banquet the evening of 13 September, awards were presented as follows:

Charles Smith presented **Research** Awards to the Chemung Valley Audubon Society and the High Peaks Audubon Society, as described above in the minutes of the Council of Delegates meeting.

John Confer presented the **Lillian C. Stoner** Award to Les Murray for a study of chickadee nests.

Don Windsor presented the **John J. Elliott** Award for the best paper in *The Kingbird* in 1996 to Valerie Freer and Joan Visconti for their study of population trends of 17 species of feeder birds over a period of 13 winters [*Kingbird* 1996 March;46(1):4-12].

The **Elon H. Eaton** Award was presented by Charles Rouse to Paul DeBenedictis. This award was accepted by Dorothy Crumb who updated us on his health and requested that we send cards and notes to Paul.

The featured speaker was David M. Bird, Professor at McGill University. His topic was "Technology and Birds".

Resolutions were read by Barbara Butler regarding Ferdinand LaFrance and to the host club, High Peaks Audubon.

Respectively submitted,
Scott J. Stoner, Recording Secretary

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