

MANAGEMENT and OPERATION

Management Structure: From the Federation's creation in 1947 there have been five officers, each of whom also served as a director while in office. All officer/directors are elected to one year terms at the Annual Meeting. While the date of the Annual Meeting has varied significantly, until 1974 all officer/directors took office on the following January 1st, regardless of the date on which they were actually elected. Starting with the elections in 1975 all officer/directors have taken office when elected, and thus the "one year terms" actually became a variable, depending on when the next Annual Meeting was held. Other parts of the management structure have been the Council of Delegates, the many operational committees, and more recently the Executive Committee.

Council of Delegates: The Federation's voting members have always been the Member Clubs, and in particular the delegates that the clubs send to the Annual Meeting as their representatives. Collectively these delegates are called the Council of Delegates. Until 1972 the maximum number of delegates per club was three. A by-laws amendment then changed that to a range of one to six delegates, depending on the number of dues-paying members in the club.

Executive Committee: Until 1974 almost all of the Federation's official business was conducted by the Council of Delegates at the Annual Meeting, with only occasional interim meetings of the officer/directors to address unusual situations. But then, as the range of activities had slowly increased, the first Executive Committee was created, composed of the five officer/directors and a number of "Members at Large," appointed by the president. These have usually been people in charge of one of the Federation's committees. This new body started meeting, usually quarterly, and gradually took over many of the management duties formerly performed by the Council of Delegates. From the start of the Executive Committee, other committee chairs and key personnel have also attended the meetings in a reporting and advisory capacity.

In 1997, the Board of Directors was expanded from the original five elected officers to now include an additional six elected directors, each serving two year terms. The future role of the former Executive Committee is still evolving during this Golden Anniversary year.

Officers: A complete roster of all officers by year is in **TABLE 3**. A summary is included here to illustrate the vast number of members who have so served the Federation.

President: During our first 50 years, the 28 people who have been president have had a profound influence on our history. While elected to one year terms, by tradition all but six have served two successive terms. Our presidents have chaired

our formal meetings, recruited and appointed our committees, and have truly been our guiding lights. Perhaps the highest compliment to the vitality of the Federation over its long history is that, with only one exception, no former president has ever been called upon to serve a second time. The single exception was Dr. Gordon M. Meade of Rochester who had been instrumental in getting the Federation organized, served as president pro tem during the formative period and was then elected as our first president. Twenty-five years later, after his return from Washington, D. C. where his profession had taken him, he served again as president in 1975 and 1976.

Vice President: Perhaps not too surprising, 28 people have also served as vice president, again most frequently for two successive years. Twenty-two of them subsequently moved to the president's chair.

Recording Secretary: By coincidence, we have also had 28 people serve as recording secretary. This officer is charged with documenting the official and legal minutes of the Annual Meetings, as well as those of the usual four regular meetings each year of the Board of Directors and committee chairs.

See the **REFERENCE** section for the location of the minutes of the Annual Meetings.

Corresponding Secretary: We have had only 18 people serve as corresponding secretary, including five who served only one term; the average service of the others was nearly four years, providing a measure of consistency in the important area of communication with the membership and external agencies.

Treasurer: We have had only 16 different treasurers in our first 50 years, with all but four serving multiple successive terms. The average service of those 12 was four years. This practice has been beneficial in providing stability in our banking and investment relationships and a degree of standardization in accounting and reporting practices.

Permanent Representatives: One of the Federation's perennial challenges has been finding ways of ensuring adequate liaison with the clubs between annual meetings. Starting in about 1969, Richard Sloss, then chair of an Organization Committee as well as the By-laws Committee, started championing ways of dealing with this problem. Several approaches were tried. Regional Vice Presidents were considered. This evolved into a group of up to seven area representatives who were charged with providing the interface to clubs in their area. Perhaps related in part to the introduction in 1972 of the newsletter, *New York Birders*, this concept was short-lived. Also, as early as 1971, Sloss suggested and later, as President, implemented the idea of asking clubs to designate one of their members as a "Permanent Representative" to the Federation, to ease the problem of continuity of contact given the reality of frequently changing club officers. This

idea was quickly accepted by some clubs and then slowly spread to others. There were 20 such representatives by 1976, now increased to 30 among the 41 member clubs.

Committees: Supporting the management team over the years have been the many committees, where the ongoing work of the organization takes place. With the exception of the Auditing and Nominating Committees, whose members are elected annually, all committee chairs and members are appointed by the president. The Federation's current committees are: Archives, Audit, Awards, Bibliography, By-laws, Conservation, Field Trips, Finance, Membership Development, Nominating, Publications, Research, and Waterfowl Count. Other committees are created as needed for special projects, such as those described later as part of the information about the projects. A description of the regular committees and something of their history follows.

Archives Committee: Gordon Meade, as demonstrated by his 1960 and 1988 "Origins" publications, had kept a personal file of much of our early history. He has been our only designated Historian. When his collection of notes and files came to the Federation after his death in 1992, Phyllis Jones, our first official Archivist, used them as the core of our archives, now stored and maintained at Cornell University's Carl A. Krock Rare Book and Manuscript Library. We are indebted to Jones, a professional librarian, for bringing organization and discipline to this important activity.

Audit Committee: This is an elected committee of two or three members charged with performing an annual audit of the financial books of the Corporation and submitting a written report of its findings to the Annual Meeting. Over the years 25 people have served on the committee. Irving Cantor, a member of the Federation who is a CPA, was first elected to the committee in 1974 and has served this way for a total of 17 years. He has been joined on the committee the last 13 years by Richard Sloss, and for the last seven years by Norman Stotz as well.

Awards Committee: Under the direction of several different committees, the Federation has long given a variety of awards, some annually, some less frequently. They are described later under a separate heading. We should note here that since 1997 the concept of a single committee to bring oversight to the entire awards program has been under consideration by a new Awards Committee under its first chair, Mary Alice Koeneke.

By-laws Committee: The records suggest that we have seldom had a formally appointed By-laws Committee. Of the four recorded chairs, only Richard Sloss, who served for five years in the 1960s and another nine years from 1986 to 1995, is shown to have served for more than a single year. In the early years, our founders

created the necessary constitution and by-laws by which the unincorporated Federation operated until it decided to incorporate in 1956. At that time Samuel Madison, a charter member who was an attorney, chaired our first Constitution and By-laws Committee, appointed to accomplish the actual incorporation. The required, sworn subscribers to the Certificate of Incorporation were Guy Bartlett, Esly Hallenbeck, Byron T. Hipple Jr., James K. Merritt, and Lillian C. Stoner.

Conservation Committee: Being an advocate for conservation has always been a key Federation focus. While 12 people have chaired this committee over the years, three clearly stand out. Maxwell C. Wheat Jr. served as chair for 12 years, Harriet Marsi for eight, and Karen Slotnick for seven years. The work of the committee has found expression most often through our newsletter, *New York Birders*, and also frequently through widely distributed formal resolutions adopted by the Annual Meeting of the Council of Delegates.

Clearly, accolades must go to Wheat, who, in addition to his work on the Conservation Committee, produced an early publication, *Conservation Now*, and then edited *New York Birders* for nearly a quarter century. This rare combination must be viewed as fundamental to the success of our conservation focus.

Bibliography Committee: First created in 1955, with Allen H. Benton as chair, this committee has regularly compiled, and published in *The Kingbird*, a bibliography of material published elsewhere that concerns birds and birding in New York State. Benton served in this role a total of 14 years, divided into two separate periods. Others who served with him included John Belknap, Kenneth Parkes, and later committee chairs Stephen W. Eaton, Sally Hoyt Spofford, and Phyllis Jones, the current chair. A forerunner to this committee's work was the earlier work of Eaton and Benton who published a mimeographed bibliography of New York State ornithology for the period 1910–1952. It and the later publications in *The Kingbird* represent a complete documentation of the state's ornithological writings from the time of Elon Howard Eaton's work to the present.

Field Trip Committee: Starting anew in 1996, the Federation reinstated an earlier activity of scheduling and leading field trips to some of the major birding sites in the state. Under the initial chairmanship of Valerie Freer, and now William Lee, this has again become a popular part of our program. Earlier, from 1976 to 1983, Federation-sponsored pelagic trips, usually three or four a year, with Steve Dempsey and Barbara Spencer, among others, serving as organizers, had been a popular activity. Mary Ann Sunderlin and John M. C. Peterson also started leading spring trips to the Adirondacks and adjacent areas in about 1976.

Finance Committee: This committee is responsible for providing general financial condition oversight, and making recommendations concerning non-routine expenditures. Its mission also includes budgeting. The treasurer has always been on

the committee, often as its chair. At other times, such as since 1997, with William Reeves as chair, someone other than the treasurer has led the Committee. Other recent chairs have included Kenneth Niven, William Vaughan, and Dorothy McIlroy.

Membership Development Committee: This committee has had nine chairs over the years, with Myrna Hemmerick's service in that capacity from 1973 to 1996 representing nearly half of our history. For many years, applications for membership, either as a Member Club or as an individual member, had to be approved by the Council of Delegates. For individual membership, the approval was delegated to the Membership Committee starting in 1974, and while the committee was also given provisional approval authority for Member Club applications, final approval of them still resides with the Council of Delegates. In recent years, with computerized membership files relieving the Membership Committee from most of its former file maintenance duties, the focus of the committee has become primarily membership development and promotion.

Nominating Committee: At each Annual Meeting, a committee of three is elected to submit a slate of nominees for the following year's officer and, since 1997, director positions.

Publications Committee: During these first 50 years, much of our energy has been devoted to documenting the ornithology of New York State in print. This work has fallen into two quite different areas. The first is the Federation's two regular publications, *The Kingbird* and *New York Birders*. The second has been our several major book projects. This work, while involving literally hundreds of individuals, has always come under the purview and general direction of the Publications Committee (earlier called the Publications and Research Committee.) The original combined committee had six chairs prior to 1988 when the separation into separate Publications and Research committees took place. Of the six, the last, Robert S. Arbib Jr. who held that position for 18 years, had by far the greatest influence on our publications. None of the others served for more than six years. Since the two committees were separated in 1988, Emanuel Levine has held the position of Publications chair with great distinction and energy.

The specific publications and book projects and the countless volunteers who have contributed to their success are described later.

Research Committee: Established in 1988, when it was separated from Publications, this committee has been chaired for these 10 years by Dr. Charles R. Smith of Cornell University. While the committee has continued to be an active supporter of our major book publication projects, which have always been viewed as part of our overall research activities, Smith in his new role has been instrumental in organizing and providing direction for a number of new research-oriented

activities. A major function is now coordinating the annual Breeding Bird Survey of 112 routes in New York State. This program, started in 1966 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is now under the authority of the Inventory and Monitoring Section of the Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey. The committee also oversees the Federation's annual grants to Member Clubs for local projects, has conducted special "birding forays" into unique habitats where special censusing is needed, and has represented the Federation on such state committees as the State Parks Checklist and Birdlife Advisory Committee. Earlier, it had been actively involved in the three-year Project BirdWatch that ended in 1989, and at its peak in 1987 had some 400 participants.

From 1974 to 1980 the Federation sponsored a Spring Migration Survey, which by its nature was a research activity. It was organized and reported on in *The Kingbird* by Cheryl Boise and Gordon Meade. The report for 1979 indicated that 31 birding groups participated in the survey, involving over 600 people, who listed 269 species. The six year cumulative species count was 319. The following year their report showed that over 700 birders representing 32 clubs found 274 species. The high count was 284 species in 1976.

Waterfowl Count: In 1955, Gerald Rising organized and coordinated the compilation of the Federation's first winter census of the state's waterfowl. Under seven different coordinators, this practice has continued ever since, with our current chair, Walton Sabin, having coordinated and compiled the count for the last 23 years. These counts have been used by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to supplement its aerial surveys, and help establish the annual waterfowl hunting rules and limits.

New York State Avian Records Committee: NYSARC differs from the Federation's other committees in that its members are appointed by the president to serve five year terms. The first members had staggered terms so that thereafter one member's term expires annually. NYSARC was established by the Council of Delegates at the 1977 Annual Meeting. Its mission is to formalize the reporting and evaluation of documentation of birds occurring within New York State.

Paul DeBenedictis proposed the creation this committee to the Council of Delegates in 1975, where it was tabled for study by the Executive Committee. It then took another two years of committee work, chaired first by William Vaughan and subsequently by Edgar Reilly, to bring a formal proposal, along with detailed committee by-laws, for approval at the 1977 meeting. Other committee members during this period included DeBenedictis, Morgan Jones, Robert Andriele, Allen Benton, John Farrand Jr., and Robert Spahn.

New York was one of the first states to establish such a group. Today they are common. There have been only 12 people who have served on NYSARC, four of them as chair.

Present members are Kenneth P. Able, Robert F. Andrie, Thomas W. Burke, Robert O. Paxton, and Charles R. Smith. Past members have been Paul DeBenedictis, Thomas H. Davis Jr., Fritz G. Scheider, Stephen C. Sibley, Barbara Spencer, Robert W. Smart, and William Vaughan. Chairs have included Andrie (currently), DeBenedictis, Scheider, and Vaughan. Secretaries to NYSARC, who are not committee members, have been John Confer, Todd Culver, Richard Evans, James Lowe (currently), Stephen Sibley, and Charles R. Smith.

An annual report of NYSARC's evaluations and decisions is published in *The Kingbird*. See the **REFERENCE** section for the location of each NYSARC report.

Circulation Manager: While never considered to be a committee, someone has always had to maintain the official mailing list. This essential, though usually behind-the-scenes, person has usually been referred to as the Circulation Manager, but in earlier days was sometimes called the Business Manager. The work has always required close working relationships with both the Treasurer and the Membership Committee. The function of this key volunteer has been more than ensuring that mailings reach the member at the right address, and dealing with routine changes and followups. The Circulation Manager also orders and maintains an inventory of back issues of our publications, and responds to requests for either individual or bulk quantities of old issues from new members, researchers, libraries, and other agencies. Another key function has been ensuring that our records of the ever-changing rosters of the officers of our Member Clubs are current, so that the distributions of materials such as notices of annual meetings, reports of the Nominating and By-laws committees, and proxy procedures are distributed correctly.

There have been only seven people who have performed these vital functions over our 50 years: H. Everest Clements and Helen Foster through the early 1950s, Allan S. Klonick from 1956 to 1963, Walter L. Gillespie starting in 1965, Frederick C. Dittrich from 1971 to 1979, Constance Wilkins from 1980 until her death in 1988, and Berna B. Lincoln since then. To all, we owe a vote of appreciation for their dedicated and vital service.