

**FEDERATION OF NEW YORK STATE BIRD CLUBS, INC.
TO BECOME
NEW YORK STATE ORNITHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

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At the Annual Meeting of the Federation of New York State Bird Clubs, Inc. on 1 November 2003, at the Chautauqua Institution, Chautauqua, NY, the Council of Delegates approved the proposal to change the name of the organization to New York State Ornithological Association, Inc. It will continue to operate temporarily under the original name until all the legal requirements have been met.

For some time there had been discussions about whether the organization would benefit from a new name that better describes what it is and does. At the 2002 Annual Meeting in Owego, the question was formally presented and discussed by the Council of Delegates. Though no decisions could be made then, there was general feeling that a name change should be pursued.

During the ensuing six months, the Board of Directors asked for input from the Member Clubs on possible names, along with their preferences from a number of names under consideration. After many discussions and debates, the Board recommended the name be changed to New York State Ornithological Association, Inc., and advised the membership of the proposal.

Following an open and extensive discussion of the matter at the 2003 Annual Meeting, the Council of Delegates approved the change by a vote of 69 percent; it then unanimously approved the required change to the By-Laws to reflect this decision. Some Member Clubs had negative or conflicting opinions on the wisdom of making this change, the most common objection relating to the perceived "professional" implications of the word ornithological.

In considering the new name, it is helpful to turn to the purpose of the organization as stated in the By-Laws: "The purposes of this Corporation are to further the study of birds, bird life and lore; to foster, inculcate and disseminate knowledge and appreciation thereof; to preserve and protect birds and other wildlife and their environment; and to educate the public in the need for conserving natural areas and resources. To achieve these purposes, the Corporation shall be empowered to conduct educational programs; publish and distribute documents and other printed matter; cooperate with governmental agencies and other educational and charitable organizations with similar objectives; and to document the ornithology of the state, and maintain the official Checklist of the Birds of New York State."

The primary reason for making the change is to better describe what the organization is and what it does. It is also intended to send a clearer message that membership is open to all who have an interest, individuals as well as clubs, and by so doing to potentially attract a wider membership to support expanded and improved operations.

The unique activities of the organization, all ornithological, include:

- Publication of *The Kingbird*, New York's journal of ornithology, now in its 53rd year of uninterrupted quarterly publication.
- Appointment, direction and sanction of the New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC), which evaluates ornithological records.
- Publication of the official *Checklist of Birds of New York State*, based on NYSARC decisions.
- A formidable history of initiating, and with others as necessary, coordinating the preparation and publication of books documenting the ornithology of the state.

These include:

Birds of New York by J. Bull (1974)

The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State

edited by R. Andrie and J. Carroll (1988)

Birds of New York State edited by E. Levine (1998)

The Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State, a major update underway and planned for publication in about 2006.

While not a reason itself for the choice of name, it is certainly noteworthy that there are at least 35 other states with bird-related organizations having missions and programs similar to ours here in New York and 27 of them have names which include "ornithological" or variations thereof. Examples include: Connecticut Ornithological Association and Pennsylvania Society for Ornithology.

Perhaps also of interest here is that two of our Charter Member Clubs, both being continuous in their membership and support, are the Buffalo Ornithological Society and the Genesee Ornithological Society. Those two groups jointly hosted the first organizing meeting, and the Genesee Ornithological Society was the host of the first formal Annual Meeting at the Rochester Museum of Arts and Science in 1948.

For a history of the formation of the organization and its first 50 years of operations and activities, readers are referred to the Golden Anniversary Issue of *The Kingbird*, Vol. 48, Supplement 1, September 1988, by S. Lincoln.

It is important to point out that this name change is not intended to, and does not, in any way change the purposes, activities or structure of the organization. The 52 Member Clubs continue to be, through their appointments to the Council of Delegates, the voting body of the newly named New York State Ornithological Association. And birding activities by the state's birders continue to be recognized and encouraged as the indispensable basis and support of the mission of the association.

