

**THE NEW YORK STATE ORNITHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION'S 60TH ANNUAL MEETING.
BATAVIA, NY, 6 OCTOBER 2007**

The 60th Annual Meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association, Inc. (NYSOA), hosted by Buffalo Ornithological Society, was called to order at 9:44 a.m. Roll call of member clubs revealed there were 45 delegates from 30 clubs, and a quorum was present. Valerie Freer made a motion to approve the minutes from the 2006 Annual Meeting and Jane Graves seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

President's Report by Andy Mason:

Andy reviewed some of our organization's activities over the past year, which included electronically preserving the records of the New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC), updating the *Checklist of the Birds of New York State*, beginning discussions regarding wind power, and sponsoring a statewide Whip-poor-will survey.

Reports and Elections:

Brenda Best reported that we currently have 561 annual members and 54 life members. Three clubs did not renew their membership, which gives us 45 member clubs. Since 2003, both the number of individual members and the number of member clubs has declined. Delegates gave several suggestions for improving this.

The Treasurer's Report dated December 31, 2006, was issued. Bill Reeves pointed out that only two issues of *The Kingbird* were published in 2006, there were eight Kingbird Club memberships, and that the member club grants fund continues to go unused. The Auditing Committee Report was presented and clearly states that our statements fairly present our financial condition.

Valerie Freer pointed out to delegates that a poster on the Atlas was set up in the meeting room. The Atlas publication was submitted to the publisher on 9/6/07, and is now being copy-edited and reviewed. We hope to have the book out next fall. It will be a hard cover book with color on every page, will be 8 ½ x 11 and about 600 pages. Special thanks go to Jane Graves for checking all citations. An index prepared by Don Windsor is expected next spring. Beginning next fall, there will be a 6-month exhibit at the State Museum of the whole Atlas project. Volunteers are available to give programs about the book.

Shai Mitra, editor of *The Kingbird*, continues to work on the publication backlog and explained the various problems that have been encountered. Tim Baird, editor of our newsletter, *New York Birders*, advises this publication shows the human side of birding and will accept anecdotes, artistic articles, and poetry. With thanks for Carena Pooth and Barbara Butler, a new 2007 edition of the *Checklist of the Birds of New York State* showing 467 species is available and

now includes our name change. It has a blue cover, is printed on recycled paper, and is on our website.

Carena Pooth reported there were no major projects regarding our website this year, but coming soon will be a more visible emphasis on conservation.

John Confer reported the activities of the Conservation committee included letters of support to four State Wildlife Grant requests, and several letters to New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) to comment on various issues. Jerry Lazarczyk volunteered to serve on the Conservation committee.

The ad hoc committee on wind power presented a resolution to the delegates. A motion was made to approve the resolution by Gail Kirch, and was seconded by Bob Mauceli. John Confer explained the background and much discussion ensued. The item of most concern was the setback from lake and ocean edges. Onondaga Audubon Society presented an amendment to change the proposed 2-mile setback to 5 miles. Bob Long made a motion to accept the amendment and Len DeFrancisco seconded. Motion failed with 11 ayes and 17 nays. A vote was then called for the original proposed resolution, and that motion passed with 20 ayes, 6 nays, and 2 abstentions. Len DeFrancisco then made a motion to include Chautauqua Lake with the 2-mile setback, with second by John Ruska. Motion passed with 25 ayes and 3 nays.

Final Resolution – Wind Power

To minimize damage to wildlife and address these broad concerns, NYSOA recommends the following.

- A full, draft assessment of the impact on wildlife, including especially birds and bats must be prepared and submitted by the proposer for review by the appropriate agencies.
- The full, draft assessment must provide an analysis of the cumulative environmental impact due to existing, proposed and reasonably foreseeable energy-related proposals for an area or migratory pathway.
- The review agency must be given the authority to reject an individual proposal if the cumulative effects of several facilities in an ecologically connected area are viewed as too severe.
- The assessment should determine the presence or absence of state or federally listed threatened or endangered species or species of special conservation concern that reside at or near the site for an appreciable portion of the year and determine how those species would be affected by the proposed project.
- The assessment must include thorough surveys of nesting birds, with particular emphasis on at risk species, and those species utilizing flight displays and patterns that may increase the likelihood of collisions. Surveys of wintering birds must be conducted to assess use of the area by raptors, which may hunt in open areas near wind turbines.
- Ridges and shorelines, which are closely followed by some species during migration, are frequently also considered for wind power

development. The risks to birds from wind projects at these locations are so high that they should be avoided completely unless it is demonstrated conclusively that minimal concentration of birds exists at proposed sites. In those locations where there is good reason to suspect there may be a seasonal concentrations of birds, no less than three years of full-time surveys through spring and fall migrations, with appropriate peer review, should be considered adequate to document the absence or low frequency of such concentrations. These locations include: areas within 2 miles of the shorelines of Lakes Erie, Ontario, Champlain, and Chautauqua; barrier beaches and other shoreline areas on Long Island; offshore areas within 2 miles of land in Long Island Sound and the Atlantic Ocean; known migratory routes along ridges and valleys including the lower Hudson River Valley, the Susquehanna River Valley, the St. Lawrence River Valley, the Finger Lakes, Chautauqua Lake, and the Shawangunk Ridge. Other areas may also be identified as similarly crucial to bird movement, and should likewise be avoided.

- The agency must have the authority to reject the assessment on the basis of insufficient or inadequate data.
- The draft, full assessment should be provided to the public in such a time and manner that the public has sufficient time to submit an external review to the appropriate agency or agencies prior to the approval by the agency.
- At a minimum, any project's approval should be contingent on the developer and operator following the most current version of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's recommendations for reducing risk and avoiding bird collisions with towers.
- The agency must certify that the data are sufficient and collected in an appropriate manner.
- Post-construction studies of aerial movement of wildlife and mortality rates must be continued and the results be readily accessible in the public domain. Approved wind power facilities must provide financial support sufficient to fund several efforts to develop predictive models of mortality using the collective data from all wind power sites.

Onondaga Audubon Society presented a Spruce Grouse resolution, which was explained by Bernie Carr. Some changes to wording were made, and a statement to urge funding for post-management monitoring was added. Bernie Carr made a motion to approve the revised resolution, seconded by Jane Graves. Approved unanimously.

Final Resolution – Spruce Grouse

The Spruce Grouse is an endangered species in New York State. Based on the recent research conducted on Spruce Grouse in New York State by Angelena Ross at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and

Forestry (SUNY ESF) and Dr. Glenn Johnson from SUNY Potsdam immediate action to protect this species and its habitat is needed.

The research of Ross and Johnson, along with over 25 years of previous Spruce Grouse research conducted by Dr. Robert Chambers and graduate students R.S. Fritz, P.B. Gradoni, and R.P. Bouta at SUNY ESF clearly illustrates a continued decline in Spruce Grouse numbers in New York. It is time for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) to make Spruce Grouse a priority for increased management and conservation.

NYSOA urges the NYSDEC to allocate sufficient funds to finalize and implement the recovery plan for Spruce Grouse in NYS, and to provide funds for monitoring of recovery efforts. NYSOA further urges that biologists from the Endangered Species Unit and at the Regional level be assigned to work on the recovery efforts in cooperation with leading Spruce Grouse researchers, landowners, and conservation organizations such as The Nature Conservancy.

NYSOA recognizes that NYSDEC is not able to actively manage for Spruce Grouse on state lands because of constitutional restrictions. However, with the recent acquisitions of large conservation easements on timber company lands by the State of New York, the opportunity exists for active habitat management to support the survival of the Spruce Grouse in New York State.

NYSOA urges NYSDEC to consider active habitat management techniques on timber company lands with conservation easements to help ensure that Spruce Grouse persists in New York State.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) owns much Spruce Grouse habitat on lands it owns north of Tupper Lake and has recently acquired other potential Spruce Grouse habitat. TNC has not pursued active management strategies regarding Spruce Grouse on its lands to date. NYSOA urges that active management techniques be considered to ensure that the Spruce Grouse persist on TNC owned lands.

Jeanne Skelly reports that all NYSARC records, 20,000 sheets of paper since 1977, have been scanned and are now in electronic form. In the last two years, 98% of reports have been electronic.

Bill Ostrander reports that the Stoner award, the Elliott award, and the Eaton award along with two certificates of appreciation will be given this year.

The summary of the first year of the Whip-poor-will monitoring project will be published in *New York Birders*.

The Nominating Committee, consisting of Tim Baird, Gail Kirch, and Bill Lee, presented the slate for 2008/09. Officers nominated are President – William Ostrander; Vice President – Carena Pooth; Corresponding Secretary – Timothy H. Baird; Recording Secretary – Brenda Best; and Treasurer – William B. Reeves. Nominated for two-year terms as Directors for the 2009 class are Andrew Mason, Robert Mauceli, and Robert Adamo. John Confer was

nominated to fill the unexpired term ending 2008 vacated by Carena Pooth. There were no nominations from the floor. Dorothy Crumb made a motion that the secretary cast one vote for the entire slate as read, and Tom O'Donnell seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

Phyllis Jones continues to collect papers for our archive.

The 2008 Annual Meeting will be hosted by the Rochester Birding Association and Burroughs Audubon Nature Club and is scheduled for September 19-21 at the Rochester Airport Marriott. We still have no host for 2009.

The Nominating Committee for 2008 consisting of Bill Cook, Tom Sarro, and Kathy Schneider (chair) was elected unanimously. The Auditing Committee for 2008 consisting of Irving Cantor, Peter Capainolo, and Isaac Grant was elected unanimously.

John Ozard, the NYSDEC representative, presented a handout showing the status of projects for the last year. There is a new administration at DEC, including a new director for the Division of Fish, Wildlife, and Marine Resources.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

The Board of Directors has been asked to sponsor a New York State Young Birders Club. We would help with their newsletter and with field trips. Young birders aged 12-18 would be involved. More information will be presented at the November board meeting.

Motion to adjourn was made by everyone, seconded by everyone, and approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 12:53 p.m.

The President's Award was given to Jeanne Skelly during the Delegate's Meeting because she was unable to attend the banquet. Jeanne was honored for her work in archiving digitally all the NYSARC records, including text, photos, and video.

Awards presented during the Saturday evening banquet:

Certificates of Appreciation were presented to John and Muriel Stahl who welcomed observers of a Western Tanager and to Norman Klein who hosted a *Selasphorus* sp. hummingbird. Len DeFrancisco was recognized for his efforts regarding the proper placement of wind power generators especially near the Ripley Hawk Watch corridor in Chautauqua County.

John J. Elliott Award, given for the best article contributed to *The Kingbird*

each year, was awarded to Yigal Gelb and Nicole Delacretaz for their article "Avian Window Strike Mortality At An Urban Office Building" which appeared in *The Kingbird* Vol. 56 No. 3.

The Eaton Birding Society's Elon Howard Eaton Memorial Award for contributions to New York State ornithology was presented to Willie D'Anna.

The Lillian Stoner Award was given to Theresa Rush, a recent graduate of SUNY Cobleskill, who was nominated by Kevin Berner, a faculty member at SUNY Cobleskill and Director/Research Chair of the New York State Bluebird Society.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Best
Recording Secretary

