

FINAL
New York State Ornithological Association, Inc.
63rd Annual Meeting
Savannah, New York
October 23, 2010

The 63rd Annual Meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association, Inc (NYSOA), co-hosted by the Montezuma Audubon Center and Onondaga Audubon Society, was held at the Montezuma Audubon Center, Savannah, NY on October 23, 2010. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. Roll call of member clubs revealed 35 delegates from 21 clubs were in attendance and that a quorum was present. John Confer made a motion to approve the September 26, 2009 Annual Meeting minutes as published in *The Kingbird* Vol. 59 No. 4. Kathy Schneider seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

President's Report by Carena Pooth:

This is a summary of the President's Report. The full text is available upon request.

NYSOA continues to be a strong organization and a leader among similar groups throughout the US. NYSOA owes its success and its fine reputation to a veritable army of people who have volunteered their services over the 62 years since its inception. I'd like to thank the board and all the committee chairs and committee members who have worked so hard over the past year to help NYSOA carry out its mission.

NYSOA continues to work hard to educate the public as well as government agencies and lawmakers in order to encourage responsible decision making on conservation matters. NYSOA's printed publications set a standard to which most other organizations can only aspire. Online media play an increasing role in our communications and education efforts. In January 2010, a searchable archive of 57 years of *The Kingbird* was launched on the NYSOA web site, free to the public.

NYSARC completed both the 2007 and 2008 reports and expects to publish the 2009 report very soon. This sets the stage for annual reports to be published in a timely manner going forward.

The two year old New York State Young Birders Club (NYSYBC) conducted monthly field trips sponsored by Partner Clubs and awarded 6 scholarships to help fund young birders' attendance at birding camps, special birding trips, and educational programs.

NYSOA is working cooperatively with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to encourage the use of eBird for routine sightings while pushing for improved data extraction capabilities for club compilers as well as *Kingbird* editors.

A new Publicity and Marketing Committee was established in November 2009. The committee's mission is to raise awareness of NYSOA and to implement promotional programs and materials to increase membership.

Treasurer's Report by Andy Mason:

Andy provided the following documents for the year ending December 31, 2009: Balance Sheet, Statement of Fund Activity and Balances, and the Detailed Statement of General Operating Fund Activity. Andy also provided an itemized Funds Report and NYS Young Birders Club Fund through October 21, 2010. He thanked the previous Treasurer, Bill Reeves, for his assistance in

FINAL

compiling the 2009 financial statements. Andy pointed out that six *Kingbird* issues were printed in 2009, instead of the normal four issues. PayPal capability, for new/renewal online memberships, was added in the past year. For the first ¾ of the year, PayPal memberships accounted for \$4,000 out of the \$26,000 total to date. Andy encouraged members to consider increasing their level of support when renewing their membership.

No Audit Committee Report.

DEC Report: As always, the DEC was invited to attend and report at the Annual Meeting. Due to other obligations, the DEC Report was given first. Gordon Batcheller, Chief of the Bureau of Wildlife for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), discussed highlights of the 13-page DEC Report, which we will provide to any NYSOA member who requests it. The DEC has faced workforce reductions of 22% since 2008; with hundreds more job losses coming through retirement and layoffs at the end of 2010. Fish hatcheries may close and many programs are in jeopardy. The outlook for 2011 looks bleak. Gordon outlined some of the DEC priorities for 2011: The Endangered Species list will be updated. Incidental take permits for endangered species will only be issued if the habitat is benefitted in the process. The DEC will also focus on youth with a youth deer season, and they plan to lower the hunting age to 12. Gordon pointed out the common interests of hunters and birders, adding that hunting/fishing/trapping licenses bring in millions of dollars for NYSDEC, with most of that revenue coming from deer hunters. Gordon commented on the lead ammunition issue and said the DEC is vigorously enforcing the law to use lead-free ammunition in waterfowl hunting. He also plans to give hunters non-toxic ammunition to try out and report on to the DEC. (A similar program was used successfully in Arizona.) Several NYSOA members brought up the Double-crested Cormorant control program and asked Gordon to reevaluate the killing given the new data showing that this species is eating invasive fish. Another member brought up the State Forest Management Plan – praising the majority of the plan but raising serious concern about the section that would allow for Natural Gas hydrofracking in State Forests.

NYSOA Committee Reports and Elections:

Carena Pooth gave the **Archives Report** for Brenda Best. She reported that Brenda has transitioned everything she needs from Phyllis Jones, the former archivist.

Barbara Butler gave the **Membership Report** for Berna Lincoln. She provided a detailed Membership Report in a handout for members. There are currently 523 members plus 51 life members. There are 41 member clubs. (Last year, there were 525 members and 45 member clubs.) Chita McKinney made a motion to approve Southern Adirondack Audubon as a new member club. Gerry Smith seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Kathy Schneider gave the **Publicity Report**. She reported that the committee printed a new postcard to publicize NYSOA. The primary goal of the committee is to increase both individual and club memberships. With the help of NYSOA member clubs, a field trip program will be re-instituted in 2011. A raffle fund-raiser was held with prizes awarded at the Annual Meeting. A door prize for free membership was given to an attendee who was not already an individual member of NYSOA.

FINAL

Andy Mason gave the **Conservation Report**. Andy provided a detailed summary of the prior year's activities in a handout for members. He summarized the conservation issues the committee has worked on, letters that were written, and articles provided for the conservation column in *New York Birders*. John Confer brought up the State Forest Management Plan – praising 234 pages of the plan to manage forests, but concerned by 10 pages that discussed natural gas development in State Forests. The process used, hydrofracking, is a huge threat to the environment – polluting aquifers, producing pollutants and acres of waste water, and the development of roads to transport millions of gallons of water used in the process. Natural gas development threatens wildlife and ecosystems. John encouraged people to send comments to the DEC asking that natural gas drilling not be allowed on State lands. Gerry Smith reported that Onondaga Audubon had already commented on this issue, and he encouraged members to also call Andrew Cuomo with comments. Audubon NY is also working on this issue. Cayuga Bird Club also wrote comments, and they asked that NYSOA also send a letter. Bill Lee reported that hydrofracking in NYS will be regulated in May 2011.

Carena Pooth gave the **New York State Young Birders Club (NYSYBC) Report**. She reported that NYSYBC marked its 2nd anniversary this fall. There are currently 22 youth members, 20 supporting adults, and 17 partner clubs. In addition to Carena, five adults are doing communications, administrative, publicity, and coordination work. More chaperones for field trips are needed throughout the state to attend one or two local trips each year; Carena asked that volunteers contact her. The students competed in the World Series of Birding as the “Razorbills” and did well raising money for the new Education Fund, which also benefited from contributions sent in by several NYSOA member clubs. A new scholarship program was established and a total of \$1870 was awarded to 6 young birders to help fund birding camps, pelagic trips, and other educational programs. Carena asked NYSOA member clubs who are not NYSYBC partners to join and show their support. Individuals can also join as Supporting Adult members.

Shai Mitra gave **The Kingbird Report**. The publication schedule is back on track. Shai asked members to please send him articles.

Tim Baird gave the **New York Birders Report**. Tim reminded members that the newsletter is the birders' publication. He would like contributions – poetry, prose, observations, etc. from members. The newsletter also highlights field trips from around the state and summarizes board meetings. Tim will soon be retiring from editing *New York Birders* and is actively looking for a replacement. Gerry Smith reported that 15% of Onondaga Audubon members choose to receive an electronic version of their newsletter, and wondered if NYSOA had considered this option. He also mentioned that a Kingston, ON bird club sends an email announcement to members when their publication is ready for a download (no paper copies sent). Tim also reported that the **Checklist of the Birds of New York State** was updated with the latest AOU and NYSARC changes. There are 476 species listed with notations for NYSARC species. The booklet is \$2 or you can purchase 10 booklets for \$15.

Carena Pooth gave the **Website and Information Services Report**. Carena implemented the searchable online archive of *The Kingbird*. The work included installation and configuration of the search engine needed to perform the indexing of the individual article files. The searchable data base went live in January 2010; it includes all articles published from 1950 through 2007. Four issues of *The Kingbird* will be added to the archive each year. In December 2009, Carena also implemented online purchase capability (using PayPal) for NYSOA and NYSYBC memberships

FINAL

(new/renew/gift) as well as checklist and decal purchases. Eighty-seven memberships (26 new) came through PayPal. PayPal charges 2.2% on each purchase plus a flat 30 cent charge per transaction. Carena also enabled Google Analytics which provides statistical analysis of website usage. During the past 6 months, 50% of traffic to the NYSOA website came from search engines and 20% came from links on other websites. 24% of page hits were for the NYSOA home page, 20% were for the NYSARC section, 4% were for the *Kingbird* archive, and 3% were for the Member Clubs page.

Bob Spahn gave the **eBird Report**. There was some discussion regarding the need for the separate NY eBird webpage and whether it was worth the trouble to update that page. Bob explained that the regional data published in *The Kingbird* are not in a database, whereas eBird serves as a database and could serve that function for NYSOA. Bob will encourage clubs to get members to enter their data in eBird first and then paste the eBird report of their sightings into postings to their local listserv rather than to just publish a note on the listserv without entering the data into eBird. Gerry Smith recommended that clubs publish directions for their members on how to use eBird. Bob also told the group that there are various filters that flag records as “exceptional,” giving the observer a chance to decide whether the entry may be an error. Such records are then reviewed by a screener. In NY, the screener is often the local *Kingbird* Regional Editor. Questionable records are not added to the public database until they are validated by a screener, although they remain a part of the observer’s database.

Shai Mitra gave the **New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) Report**. The 2009 NYSARC Report will be in the December 2010 or March 2011 issue of *The Kingbird*. The 2008 Report is in the September 2010 issue. In the future, each December issue will contain the previous year’s NYSARC report.

Jeremy Kirchman gave the **Research Committee Report**. Jeremy wrote an article clarifying the laws on salvaging dead birds, which will appear in the December 2010 issue of *The Kingbird*. The Ornithological Council is lobbying to have the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 amended to allow individuals to salvage dead birds and offer them to a person holding a salvage permit. Jeremy also reported that Ewald and Sherony’s monograph on the Hamlin Beach Lakewatch is now available on the NYSOA website.

Gail Kirch gave the **Awards Report**. Gail reported that awards would be given out at the banquet. Four Lillian C. Stoner Awards were given this year. She reminded members that NYSOA offers Member Club grants of up to \$100 for special projects. This year, Bedford Audubon received \$75. This organization runs the Chestnut Ridge Hawk Watch in Bedford, NY. In an effort to increase awareness and appreciation of raptors, they give free workshops on raptor identification. To further their goal, the requested money will be used to purchase copies of Paul Carrier’s *A Guide for Hawks Seen in the Northeast* for distribution to workshop participants.

Bob Spahn gave the **Bylaws Report**. Proposals to change or update the bylaws will be discussed at the next board meeting. Some of the possible changes include term limits for Officers and changing the number of Directors.

Tim Baird gave the **Nominating Committee Report**. Tim reported that the committee used geographic considerations to make sure that Officers and Directors came from all parts of NYS. He also explained that the Officer positions are one-year terms and that the President and Vice-

FINAL

President have a term limit of two consecutive 1-year terms. Director position terms are 2 years and there is a term limit of two consecutive 2-year terms. Tim nominated the following 2010-2011 slate of Officers/Directors for election:

Carena Pooth – President
Gail Kirch – Vice President
Andy Mason – Treasurer
Michael DeSha – Corresponding Secretary
Joan Collins – Recording Secretary

Victor Lamoureux – Director (2012)
Shai Mitra – Director (2012)
Bob Spahn – Director (2012)

Kathy Schneider made a motion to have the Secretary cast a ballot to elect the slate of Officers and Directors. Jeremy Kirchman seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Carena Pooth announced the following names for election to the 2010-2011 **Auditing Committee**: John Cairns, Irving Cantor, and Peter Capainolo. John Confer made a motion to elect the Auditing Committee. Gerry Smith seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Carena Pooth announced the following names for election to the 2010-2011 **Nominating Committee**: Valerie Freer (Chair), Jerry Lazarczyk, and Berna Lincoln. Andy Mason made a motion to elect the Nominating Committee. Gail Kirch seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

Carena Pooth announced that the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club will host the 2011 Annual Meeting. It will be held on September 24, 2011 in Dutchess County. She encouraged member clubs to plan ahead and volunteer now to host a future meeting.

Andy Mason led the discussion of the Lead Ammunition Resolution (attached) that he had presented for adoption. He gave some background on the problems with using lead ammunition. Two years ago, at a conference of the Peregrine Fund, it was shown that lead ammunition has a detrimental effect on birds and other wildlife. The NYS pathologist documented 300 cases of lead poisoning in birds (Common Loons, Bald Eagles, Osprey, etc.) over 20 years. These were cases where the bird was obtained by the DEC and autopsied, so it is the only the tip of the iceberg. The NYSOA resolution was written to ask the DEC and state to take action. The EPA was going to act, but did not have jurisdiction in the states. NYSOA feels that the DEC should do more to educate people about alternatives to lead ammunition. After some discussion among members, the phrase “after a reasonable period of time” was removed from the last paragraph. Andy Mason made a motion to approve the Lead Ammunition Resolution as amended. Kathy Schneider seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

FINAL

Gerry Smith introduced a new resolution to call attention to the fact that staff loss at the DEC is impacting the ability of the department to get its job done and to condemn the firing of the DEC Commissioner. Gerry Smith moved to approve the resolution. Bard Prentiss seconded the motion. More discussion ensued with some who felt that the resolution should focus on budget issues only. Gerry withdrew the resolution as currently written.

Andy Mason made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jeremy Kirchman seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved at 12:04 p.m.

The following awards were given out during the Saturday evening banquet:

Lillian C. Stoner Award:

Hope Batcheller – nominated by the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and NYSYBC

Jacob Drucker – nominated by the Linnaean Society of NY

Carolyn Sedgwick – nominated by the Cayuga Bird Club

Benjamin Van Doren – nominated by the NYSYBC

John J. Elliott Award:

For the best *Kingbird* article of the year: Shai Mitra for "Regular Inshore Occurrence of Non-Breeding Arctic Terns (*Sterna paradisaea*)", *The Kingbird*, Vol. 59, No. 1, March 2009.

Gordon M. Meade Distinguished Service Award:

The award goes to Tim Baird for his many years of outstanding dedication to NYSOA in serving as a Director, Vice-President, President, Corresponding Secretary, and Editor of *New York Birders*.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Collins
Recording Secretary