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New York State Ornithological Association, Inc.
64th Annual Meeting
Hopewell Junction, New York
September 24, 2011

The 64th Annual Meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association, Inc (NYSOA), hosted by the Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club, was held at the Circle Lodge on Sylvan Lake, Hopewell Junction, NY on September 24, 2011. The meeting was called to order at 9:14 a.m. Roll call of member clubs revealed 33 delegates from 22 clubs were in attendance and that a quorum was present. Barbara Butler made a motion to approve the October 23, 2010 Annual Meeting minutes as published on the NYSOA website. Bill Reeves seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

President's Report by Carena Pooth:

As my second term draws to a close, I'd like to thank NYSOA and the Council of Delegates for allowing me to serve the organization as President – it has meant a lot to me.

NYSOA continues to be a recognized leader among ornithological societies across the United States. Membership numbers are **up** 5% after dropping steadily for 8 years and then finally leveling off last year. However, we still face an uphill climb, not only because of the extended economic downturn - but even more because of the growing number and variety of free internet-based communities and resources that compete for the time and attention of New York State birders. Hand in hand with that, today's birders, like everyone else, seek instant gratification in the form of immediate availability and dissemination of information. No one wants to wait.

Before we get into the various reports today, I'd like to talk about the ways that NYSOA has kept itself not only viable but vibrant as we've been transitioning into this new era.

Like any other organization wanting to survive in today's world, we have had to embrace change rather than fight it. NYSOA demonstrated its willingness to do this long before I became president. More than 10 years ago, the first NYSOA website was launched. Today we know that the internet has become the medium of choice for most younger birders (as well as many older ones). At the same time, NYSOA continues to promote and celebrate face-to-face communications and offline communities such as local bird clubs, and real live gatherings of real live people – that's why we continue to run special projects like the Atlas and the young birders club, and why we've brought the field trips program back to life. We are also very careful not to abandon those who simply don't like using computers (and I know some 20-somethings in that category!).

But technology has been a key element of NYSOA's position and stature in recent years.

NYSARC was one of the first avian records committees to offer online report submission capability, way back in 2003, and even today, many similar organizations do not offer this. On the NYSOA website, anyone can browse a database listing all sightings ever reported to NYSARC, with details on location and date for each. In addition, all NYSARC annual reports have been available online for many years.

NYSOA's paper publications have not only maintained a very high standard of quality but also have started going electronic. The searchable online archive of *The Kingbird*, launched last year, is a tremendous and heavily used resource for ornithologists, students, and birders.

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This summer we got the County Listing project back on track, allowing report submission either by paper form, as in the past, or via an online form. Automated data collection will enable us to include the 2010 County List report in this October's newsletter, less than 2 months after the submission deadline.

NYSOA is also making greater use of technology to improve its own operations. Teleconferencing was established several years ago as an option for board meeting participants who can't be there in person. In addition, an online internal document repository was set up two years ago for the board and committee chairs. That year we also established paperless online payment capability for memberships, merchandise, and donations.

So why do I feel so good about all this? Not because I love technology – technology is only a tool. I feel so good about all this because it shows that NYSOA refuses to be set in its ways when those ways threaten to become a handicap, and this forward-looking organizational mindset positions NYSOA to continue to evolve and carry out its important mission as the world continues to change.

NYSOA's greatest strength lies in the hundreds of people who have volunteered their time and services over the past 64 years. This is an all-volunteer organization, and the people who work for it do so only because they are deeply committed to its mission.

I'm thankful for all those hundreds of volunteers, and in particular I'd like to thank those who have served on the board and committees over the past two years, as well as all the people in NYSOA's member clubs who have helped make my job as president a pleasant one and have contributed to our progress in many areas.

Treasurer's Report by Andy Mason:

Andy provided the following documents for the year ending December 31, 2010: Balance Sheet and Detailed Statement of General Operating Fund Activity. Andy also provided a Detailed Statement of General Operating Fund Activity for January 1, 2011 to September 22, 2011. He encouraged members to renew at a higher level, since most income comes from memberships.

NYSOA Committee Reports and Elections:

Membership Committee Report was given by Berna Lincoln. Memberships are sent to Berna and Barbara Butler maintains the database. Barbara Butler presented a document with the membership numbers. Membership increased 5% over the prior year.

Andy Mason made a motion to approve Bedford Audubon Society as a new member club. Berna Lincoln seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Kathy Schneider gave the **Marketing/Publicity/Field Trips Committee Report**. The committee works to identify likely new members. Non-members who attended last year's Annual Meeting or who donated to the Raffle were identified as potential new members. The committee increased NYSOA's visibility with publicity postcards. Gift memberships were made available online. Information about NYSOA activities, such as field trips, was communicated to member clubs via email. Clubs were also sent NYSOA articles for their newsletters. NYSOA activities are posted to birding list serves around the state. The committee plans to utilize press releases this coming year.

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Quarterly field trips are held around the state. The typical format is a workshop followed by a field trip. Workshops are open to the public and the field trips are for members only. Three workshops/field trips have been held this year: a pelagic trip with Angus Wilson off Long Island, a spring warbler trip with Joan Collins in the Adirondacks, and a shorebirds trip with Kevin McGowan at Montezuma. A gull trip with Willie D'Anna is scheduled for winter.

Andy Mason gave the **Conservation Report**. He introduced committee members including what part of the state they represented. Andy reported it would be beneficial if the committee had a member from the Long Island/downstate area. Andy's written report summarized the past year's activities.

Letters were written to: the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) regarding proposed staff cuts; the Environmental Protection Agency supporting new pending regulations for limited mercury emissions; and to the NYS DEC commenting on the State Forest Plan and asking that natural gas drilling not be permitted on state lands.

Andy highlighted the committee's continued involvement in: the Enterprise Park at Calverton coalition, monitoring development proposals for this large grassland habitat in eastern Long Island; participation in the Plum Island coalition and efforts to ensure that Plum Island, off Long Island, is protected rather than developed; and monitoring the regulation of hydro-fracking natural gas in NY State and the potential impacts on birds. The comment period on hydro-fracking ends in December. Bob McGuire, of Cayuga Bird Club, feels that bird clubs from around the state should join in commenting on hydro-fracking.

Committee members supplied articles for the Conservation Column in *New York Birders* on the topics of: Climate Change, Plum Island sale issue, and Mercury Impacts on birds.

Carena Pooth gave the **New York State Young Birders Club (NYSYBC) Report**. The club celebrated its third anniversary this year. There are currently 37 youth members, 23 supporting adults, and 18 partner clubs. The students competed in the World Series of Birding with two teams: the "Razorbills" (who came in first in the youth division this year – their 3rd annual competition) and the "Vagrants" (new this year) and did well raising money for the Education Fund. Several NYSOA member clubs that had teams in the World Series of Birding contributed their winnings to the NYSYBC's Education Fund, and others sponsored the NYSYBC teams directly. Young birders who attend the Annual Meeting receive will a \$90 stipend this year. The scholarship program is expected to award a total of about \$2400 to 6 young birders this year. Carena showed a pie graph of where members live and it mirrored the population demographic of NYS. The age range for young birder membership is 10 to 19 years. Adults can join as supporting members and attend the young birders' field trips.

Michael DeSha gave the **New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) Report** for Angus Wilson. The NYSARC Committee held their all-day meeting during the Annual Meeting with the following topics on the agenda: definition of the boundaries for New York State pelagic waters, changes to the review list, ways to improve report submission rates, and future recruitments to the committee.

Three new species were added to the New York State Checklist: Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Common Ground-Dove, and Hermit Warbler. Review of two additional species, Hooded Crow and Gray-hooded Gull, has begun.

The 2009 NYSARC Annual Report was published in the March 2011 issue of *The Kingbird*, and the 2010 Annual Report will be published in the March 2012 issue.

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Submissions of rare bird documentation are down in 2011. Pleas for reports were posted on several New York State birding list serves, which helped increase submissions, but the numbers are still below expectations. Angus reported encouraging news that a number of NYSYBC members provided reports that were of a high standard.

The NYSARC committee members were listed. The terms for Tom Burke and Willie D'Anna expire at the end of this year, and these two positions will need to be filled. Jeanne Skelly, NYSARC Secretary, retired two years ago, but has agreed to remain in place until a suitable replacement has been found.

Shai Mitra gave *The Kingbird Report*. To speed up turn-around time, a new printing company was used beginning with the June 2011 issue. There was a problem printing the cover, but if this is corrected, the new company will continue to print *The Kingbird*.

Tim Baird gave the *New York Birders Report*. Tim retired a year ago and is still seeking a replacement. Tim provided a list of things he does as *New York Birders* editor for anyone considering the job. While *The Kingbird* focuses on ornithological data and articles, *New York Birders* features news about the birders of New York and their observations. In the future, an electronic version of *New York Birders* will be available.

The *Checklist of the Birds of New York State* will be updated by the end of the year. Tim credited Carena Pooth, Berna Lincoln, and Barbara Butler for their work on this publication.

Carena Pooth gave the **Website and Information Services Report**. (Please see the President's Report above.) Carena reported that 60% of county list reports came in using the online reporting option on the website.

Archives Committee Report. Carena Pooth reported that NYSOA needs an archivist.

Gail Kirch gave the **Awards Report**. No member clubs requested grants this year. The following awards will be given at the evening banquet:

The **Lillian C. Stoner Award** is given to selected students to enable them to attend the Annual Meeting. This year, three awards were given out to the following students:

Alexandra Hale, nominated by the Linnaean Society

Gregory Lawrence, nominated by the New York State Young Birders' Club

Sarah MacLean, nominated by the Cayuga Bird Club

The **John J. Elliott Award** is given for the best *Kingbird* article of the year. This year, the award goes to John Confer for his article "Avian Response to Shrubland Restoration in the Forested Landscape of Sterling Forest State Park, NY".

The **Gordon M. Meade Distinguished Service Award** goes to Phyllis Jones for the many years and multiple positions she filled, but especially for her work as Chair of NYSOA's Archives Committee.

Carena Pooth gave the **Bylaws Report** for Bob Spahn. The new bylaws were sent to member clubs, published in *New York Birders*, and listed on the NYSOA website. Carena summarized the major changes: there is an 8 year term limit for board members; the life membership category was eliminated;

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the treasurer and recording secretary officer positions were separated from the board to potentially retain individuals in these positions longer than 8 years, the corresponding secretary position was eliminated, 3 director positions were added to keep 11 total board members; a marketing and publicity committee was added, and all instances of “member club” was changed to “member organization”. Gail Kirch made a motion to accept the new bylaws. Bill Lee seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved. The new bylaws take effect at the close of the Annual Meeting.

Berna Lincoln gave the **Nominating Committee Report** on behalf of Valerie Freer. The committee nominated the following 2011-2012 slate of Officers/Directors for election:

Gail Kirch – President
Kathy Schneider – Vice President
Michael DeSha – Corresponding Secretary
Joan Collins – Recording Secretary
Andy Mason – Treasurer

Tim Baird – Director (2013)
Carena Pooth – Director (2013)
Angus Wilson – Director (2013)

Barbara Butler made a motion to elect the slate of Officers and Directors. Shirley Shaw seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Carena Pooth announced the following names for election to the 2011-2012 **Nominating Committee**: Joan Collins (Chair), Bob Adamo, and Bill Ostrander. Andy Mason made a motion to elect the Nominating Committee. Berna Lincoln seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Carena Pooth announced the following names for election to the 2011-2012 **Auditing Committee**: Irving Cantor (Chair), John Cairns, and Peter Capainolo. Victor Lamoureux made a motion to elect the Auditing Committee. Kathy Schneider seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

Carena Pooth announced that a host club is needed for the 2012 Annual Meeting.

Gail Kirch made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Victor Lamoureux seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Collins
Recording Secretary