

NEW YORK STATE ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.
67TH ANNUAL MEETING, ITHACA, NY
SEPTEMBER 19-20, 2014

The 67th Annual Meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association, Inc. (NYSOA) was held at the Ramada Ithaca Hotel and Conference Center in Ithaca, NY, on September 20, 2014. The meeting was called to order at 9:15am. Roll call of member clubs showed 27 delegates from 19 clubs in attendance and a quorum present. Kathy Schneider made a motion to approve the November 2, 2013, 66th Annual Meeting minutes as published in *The Kingbird*, Vol. 63, No. 4, and modified per corrigendum in Vol. 64, No. 1. Carena Pooth seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

President's Report by Kathy Schneider:

Last November NYSOA held its annual meeting in the New York City area for the first time in many years. Hosted by the Queens County Bird Club, roughly 200 people attended. To help host clubs continue this tradition, we have documented procedures and collected data on our most recent conferences as a planning tool for future meetings.

NYSOA continued to sponsor the New York State Young Birders Club, which supports budding ornithologists by taking them on monthly field trips. Our Lillian C. Stoner Award, with newly revised award guidelines this year, provides financial support for the most passionate among them to attend our annual meeting.

New officers, directors, and committee chairs have benefited from the continuing development of our organizational handbook, which documents various NYSOA jobs and procedures. We began to explore ways to raise money through our website. Our archivist created an online finding tool for our organizational records, which are housed at Cornell, and we now have cloud based backups for NYSOA membership, financial, and website data. About a third of our membership receives our newsletter electronically, which saves resources and money, and our website has become one of our most important communication tools.

One hundred twelve people submitted their bird lists for the county listing competition that was compiled and published in the April issue of *NY Birders*. We organized a field trip to the Bashakill Wildlife Management Area and next week we have a trip on Long Island. Birders from all over New York State attend these outings.

Our Conservation Committee wrote letters to support the restoration of West Pond at Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge, to oppose federal plans to issue 30-year take permits for Bald Eagles at wind farms, and to support the listing of Red Knot on the federal Endangered Species list. They also commented on the state's Mute Swan and Black Skimmer management plans and a wind farm proposed for Amherst Island, Ontario. One of our most active committees, its members published thoroughly researched articles in *NY Birders* every quarter to help us stay on top of bird conservation issues.

Our Research Committee compiled and published waterfowl data from across New York State and has gathered historical records from past counts formerly held by the DEC. Our quarterly journal, *The Kingbird*, published scholarly papers and regional reports and the New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) continued to review new records.

A thank you goes to the places that provided free meeting space for our quarterly board meetings: Hudson Valley Community College, Montezuma Audubon Center, Clarence Fahnestock State Park, and Beaver Lake Nature Center. Their generosity made it possible to move our meetings around the state and reduce our travel.

This year we lost some members who made huge commitments to NYSOA. Bill Reeves was our treasurer for 8 years, J.R. Siphron was a life member, Diane Teta and Jerry Lazarczyk were active county listers and Jerry served on the Conservation and Nominating committees. Ed Treacy was *Kingbird* editor for Region 9 and wrote 100 regional reports over 25 years, and Manny Levine was *Kingbird* editor for many years as well as editor for *Bull's Birds of New York State*. Manny left much of his extensive library to Colgate University where it will be available to all birders. We are grateful for their service to NYSOA and to the individuals and families who named NYSOA in their wills or as the beneficiary of memorial donations.

NYSOA needs more individual members to continue these activities and you are urged to join, to get someone else to join, or to renew at a higher level. In the next year we plan to begin laying the groundwork for the next New York State Breeding Bird Atlas and to engage the eBird team at a New York eBird summit. Be a part of NYSOA's future and work with us to support the birds and birders of New York State.

Treasurer's Report by Andy Mason:

Andy provided Balance Sheets, Statements of Fund Activity and Balances, and Detailed Statements of General Operating Fund Activity for December 31, 2013, and June 30, 2014. He reported a deficit at the end of 2013 of about \$2100, which was better than expected. The report ending June 30 shows the same trend. An audit report will be in *NY Birders*.

Vote to accept Audubon Society of the Capital Region as a member of NYSOA: Bill Lee made a motion to accept ASCR as a member of NYSOA. Andy Mason seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Committee Reports:

Archives: Kathy Schneider gave the report. The NYSOA archives are in the Cornell Libraries and new documents will be deposited every two years in future. Archivist Linda Clark Benedict created an online finding tool for searching the archives and there are procedures on the NYSOA website for accessing them.

Awards: Bill Ostrander reported on certificates of appreciation to be awarded for those who hosted birders on their property to view unusual species, a municipality involved in habitat restoration, and for service to NYSOA. Kevin Griffith noted the revised guidelines developed for the Stoner Award and announced this year's recipient, Marc Katz. Shai Mitra announced the Elliott award winner, Kyle Wright, for his article in *The Kingbird* on Red-tailed Hawks.

Conservation: Andy Mason gave the report. The committee held a conference call with NYSDEC wildlife staff that included discussion on cormorant management and changes to the upland game bird hunting seasons. Andy submitted comments to the NYSDEC on a number of issues including the Mute Swan Management Plan (presently being revised), the Black Skimmer Management Plan, and the proposed China City project near the Bashakill in Sullivan County. He also submitted comments to the U.S. Interior Department opposing 30-year take permits for eagles at wind farms and to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service supporting threatened species status for the Red Knot subspecies "rufa."

The committee had continuing involvement in the Enterprise Park at Calverton (EPCAL) coalition monitoring development proposals for this large grassland habitat in eastern Long Island; continuing participation in the Plum Island coalition to ensure that Plum Island is

protected rather than developed; and continued involvement in future management plans for the Gateway National Recreation Area. That involvement included a letter of support regarding restoration of Jamaica Bay NWR West Pond presented at a meeting with the Gateway NRA superintendent and comments submitted to the National Park Service supporting West Pond restoration. Comments were also submitted on environmental assessment for the Fire Island Stabilization Project. On a new issue, they have been approached by the potential developer of two golf courses in Queens about protecting birds in a buffer wetland around the courses.

Four *NY Birders* articles were developed by the committee on “Wind Development on Amherst Island, Ontario”; “Snowy Owls under the Gun”; “Jamaica Bay West Pond Restoration”; and a book review of *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*.

County Lists: Carena Pooth gave the report. 112 reports were submitted for 2013, up from 97 in 2012 and the highest ever since the project began in 1992. The online form was used for submission by 79% of listers, which makes compiling easier. Broken this year were five regional and 26 county records. Thirteen participants reported from all 62 counties with Jerry Lazarczyk reporting at least 75 species in every county. Eight people reported at least 100 species in all ten regions. Three listers were under 18 and active members of NYSOA’s Young Birders Club. Carena noted that these county lists are life lists, unlike eBird, where the “top 100” are year lists. NYSOA state and county list reports are archived on the NYSOA website.

eBird: Kathy Schneider gave the report. Kathy, Bob Spahn, and Angus Wilson have been interacting with Chris Wood at the Cornell Lab to find better ways to use and get access to information in a form we need. An eBird summit is being planned for this winter to discuss uses and future developments, consider use of eBird in the upcoming Atlas, and plan pilot projects in New York to test usage of the system.

Finance: Kathy Schneider gave the report. There will be a dues increase effective January 2015. The \$28 individual membership will become \$30; the \$30 family membership will become \$35; and the \$15 student membership will become \$17. The supporting membership category is being eliminated. The cost of publications continues to be the biggest expense and is not fully covered by the current dues structure. The anticipated \$1000-\$1500 additional revenue will not completely offset the current deficit but will help, as will the move to an e-version of *NY Birders*. Kathy noted that there has not been a dues increase since 2008.

Marketing, Publicity, and Field Trips: Seth Ausubel gave the report. We need to increase revenue and are exploring possibilities such as putting advertising on our website or in the newsletter that would focus on things of interest to birders, such as optics. We need to increase membership and need to get the word out about the value of NYSOA as a statewide birding organization. A field trip is scheduled for the last weekend in September to Long Island birding hotspots.

Membership and Circulation: Barbara Butler gave the report. She noted that individual memberships have been trending downward since 2003 and that the annual membership is currently 497 members. The number of clubs is also declining, as smaller clubs can be harder to maintain. She asked delegates to encourage their club members to join NYSOA to be part of a statewide effort to support birds and that, as an example, they can get help from NYSOA on local conservation issues in their area.

Kathy Schneider thanked Barbara for her long and important service to NYSOA in membership and circulation. She announced that the new circulation manager would be Pat Aitken.

NYSARC: There was no report.

NYSYBC: Carena Pooth gave the report. NYSYBC marked its sixth anniversary this fall. Currently there are 43 youth members, 38 supporting adults, and 21 partner clubs, all up over the previous year. NYSYBC is getting more youth members as field trips are a big draw in which whole families can and do participate. Currently, 50% are under 15, 29% under 13, and 14% over 16 years old. Carena noted that it is harder to get good participation away from the New York metro area and that she would like to see more girls participate, currently only eight of 42 youth members. They sent one team to the World Series of Birding to do Cape May County only; they reported 140 species. NYSYBC received several large donations this year, one from Sullivan County Audubon and one from Praxair, a corporate sponsor. This year NYSYBC will award over \$3000 in scholarships to youth and have raised over \$13,000 over the six years since they began. Scholarships have been given to youth members to attend camps and birding events or take a home bird biology course from Cornell. There is a new presentation about NYSYBC that clubs can use to encourage participation.

Publications: Shai Mitra reported that the NYSARC Annual Report will be in the September issue of *The Kingbird*. He is also seeking content for future issues.

Richard and Cyndy Tkachuck are looking for a new editor for *NY Birders* as the October issue will be their last. Richard encouraged members to opt for the new e-version of the newsletter as it saves NYSOA money and allows for easier editing and for color photos.

Research: Bill Ostrander reported on the Waterfowl Count. Last winter's results are published in the June issue of *The Kingbird*. There was a four year gap in the data from NYSDEC. He has been able to get two years of back data and is working on getting the rest. Kathy Schneider urged members to get involved in citizen science projects.

DEC Report:

Dan Rosenblatt of NYSDEC gave the report. He provided a Bureau of Wildlife Summary Report covering bird conservation and management issues in the state. On Spruce Grouse recovery, there is a two-year pilot study. Birds from Ontario released in New York did not persist but in a separate release of birds from Maine, there was almost 100% survivorship. The Mute Swan management plan is being revised based on public comment and should come out in late November. It will likely include changes in the plan for downstate populations. The Black Skimmer management plan is also to be released in late November.

Dan reported that there is a big focus within the agency on habitat management for both game and non-game species. Landowner incentives for preservation of grasslands currently have enrolled 21 landowners with 2600 acres. They would like to do more. Monitoring of grasslands in the system has been able to document the presence of breeding grasslands birds, including Bobolinks, Henslow's and Grasshopper Sparrows, and Upland Sandpiper. A Young Forest Initiative has a goal of 10% of forested lands in the state to be young forest. Federal funding is available for this initiative because of the federal listing of the New England Cottontail under the Endangered Species Act; the habitat needs of the rabbit are the same as the desired "young forest." The DEC is developing a 10-year statewide action plan for species of "greatest conservation

need.” The list is to be revised this year and there will be public meetings after that. Dan encouraged review and comment from NYSOA. He reported that there is funding available for the next Breeding Bird Atlas from state wildlife grants.

Election of Officers:

Mike DeSha gave the **Nominating Committee Report**. The committee nominated the following 2014-15 slate of officers and directors for election:

One Year Terms to 2015

Kathy Schneider – President

Carena Pooth – Vice President

Celeste Morien – Recording Secretary

Andy Mason – Treasurer

Director’s Two Year Terms

Mike DeSha – Director

Kevin Griffith – Director

Greg Lawrence – Director

Bill Ostrander – Director

Derek Rogers – Director

Mike DeSha made a motion to accept the slate as nominated; the motion was seconded and it passed unanimously.

Election of the Nominating Committee:

Kathy Schneider announced the following slate for the 2014-15 Nominating Committee: Seth Ausubel (chair), Joan Collins, Jeremy Kirchman. Robert Bate made a motion to accept the slate as nominated; Mary Beth Warburton seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Election of the Auditing Committee:

Kathy Schneider announced the following slate for the 2014-15 Auditing Committee: John Cairns (chair), Irving Cantor, Peter Capainolo. Joan Collins made a motion to accept the slate as nominated; Tim Baird seconded and it passed unanimously.

Old Business:

There was no Old Business presented.

New Business:

- Regarding planning for the next NYS Breeding Bird Atlas, Kathy Schneider reported that she had written a letter to Patricia Riexinger, Director of the DEC’s Division of Fish and Wildlife, to say that we want to participate as an organization and be part of the planning process. A chair is needed for the statewide atlas project to be held in 2020-25.
- 2015 Annual Meeting will be sponsored by the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club. President Jory Langner reported that the meeting will be on the first weekend in October 2015 and will be held at the Holiday Inn (formerly the Old Turf Inn) in Albany.

Adjournment:

Mike Birmingham made a motion to adjourn; Robert Bate seconded and it passed unanimously at 10:40am.

Respectfully submitted

Janet Allison
Recording Secretary
11/11/14