

New York State Ornithological Association, Inc.
69th Annual Meeting, Elmira New York
September 10, 2016

The 69th Annual Meeting of the New York State Ornithological Association, Inc. (NYSOA) was held at the Riverview Holiday Inn, 760 East Water Street, Elmira, New York on September 10, 2016. President Joan Collins called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Roll call of member clubs revealed 24 delegates from 17 clubs were in attendance and that a quorum was present. Michael Bochnik made a motion to approve the October 3, 2015 Annual Meeting minutes as published in the *The Kingbird*, vol. 65, No. 4. Mike DeSha seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

President's Report presented by Joan Collins: Joan presented her written report, which she made available to the delegates. Joan highlighted many activities over the past year beginning with the 2015 Annual Meeting. The October 2015 Annual Meeting, hosted by the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and co-chaired by Kathy Schneider and Jory Langer, was a great success and a memorable weekend that was enjoyed by 165 participants. The NYSOA Archive continues to be maintained by Linda Clark Benedict and is housed at the Cornell University Library. The Awards Committee, chaired by Bill Ostrander, presented the Lillian Stoner award to Joseph Hernandez and the Emanuel Levine Memorial Award was given for the year's best journal article in *The Kingbird*. The Conservation Committee, chaired by Andy Mason, continues to be one of NYSOA's strengths, by advocating for birds, their habitats and with regard to other conservation issues facing NYS. Once again, Carena Pooth did an excellent job compiling the annual County and State Bird List Report, which can be found on the NYSOA website. The NYSOA hat giveaway at the 2015 Annual Meeting, spearheaded by Tim Baird, was well received. The 2015 winter field trip in the central Adirondacks was well attended. NYSOA will soon begin work on moving its membership process to an online management system. The New York State Young Birders Club, chaired by Carena Pooth, continues to grow in membership and many young birders have gone on to study ornithology in college.

The newly formed Publications Committee, chaired by Seth Ausubel, held regular conference calls with editors and committee members. The 2016 *Checklist of the Birds of New York State*, produced by Carena Pooth, included 6 new species accepted by NYSOA's, New York State Avian Records Committee, and 2 American Ornithologists' Union changes. Carena also created a trifold field version of the checklist that can be downloaded from the NYSOA website. Greg Lawrence of the Research Committee (chair Kevin Griffith), announced the formation of a grant program that plans to offer grants for ornithology research. Joan reminded everyone to visit the always up-to-date NYSOA website to learn all the latest information and news about NYSOA and thanked Carena Pooth for her commitment to the website. Joan also reminded everyone that with all the challenges facing our world, NYSOA continues to play an ever more important role in documenting the ornithology of NYS.

Treasurer's Report by Andy Mason:

Andy provided the following documents: the Balance Sheet and Statement of Fund Activity and Balances through June 30, 2016, and December 31, 2015; and the Detailed Statement of General Operating Fund Activity through December 31, 2015. Andy reported that production and

distribution of *The Kingbird* is the largest expense in the budget and encouraged members to renew at a higher level.

Audit Report by Andy Mason: John Cairns, Irving Cantor and Steven Chang examined the financial statements submitted by the treasurer. The final report, dated December 31, 2015, found the documents present fairly the financial condition of the association. Andy noted Irving Cantor will be retiring from the Auditing Committee in 2016. NYSOA is grateful to Irving for his dedicated service to the organization for over 30 years.

NYSOA Committee Reports:

Bill Ostrander gave the **Awards Committee Report**. The following awards were to be presented at the banquet: Certificates of Appreciation to John and Marilyn Paarlberg for hosting the Harris's Sparrow and Richard Guthrie, who provided guidance to birders for visiting that property; the Prospect Park Alliance and Rob Bate for hosting and guiding birders who viewed the Painted Bunting; and, Laurie LaFond, who has been avidly raising funds to help protect the IBA in Washington County, which is often home to numerous Short-Eared Owls and Northern Harriers during the winter. Other awards would be announced at the annual dinner in the evening.

Andy Mason gave the **Conservation Committee Report**. Andy introduced the Committee members and provided a written report of some of the highlights of the year's activities. The Committee continues to be involved with the following: Participation in the Plum Island coalition to ensure Plum Island, located off Long Island, is protected rather than developed; continued involvement with the Enterprise Park at Calverton (EPCAL) coalition, which monitors development proposals for this large grassland habitat in eastern Long Island; submission of comments on the Environmental Assessment for restoration of the West Pond at the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; and submission of a letter of support to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for the proposed Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge, a large area of non-contiguous parcels including lands in NYS. The refuge provides habitat for the New England cottontail rabbit, whose population has declined 86% since 1960. The Committee has plans to meet with the new Deputy Commissioner at DEC, Kathy Moser, to discuss the dangers posed by lead ammunition and submit some ideas on how to eventually eliminate it from the environment. Andy Mason's article about lead poisoning from ammunition and its effects on Bald Eagles and other wildlife was published in *NY Birders*, July 2016.

Carena Pooth gave the **County Listing Report**. Carena reported that 17 participants submitted sightings from the recently added Pelagic Zone. The completed 2015 County Listing Report, dated April 2016, is now on the website and the deadline for submission of 2016 data is March 1, 2017. The form will be in the October issue of *NY Birders* as well as on the website.

Tim Baird gave the **Marketing & Publicity Committee Report**. Tim reported the registrants for the 2016 annual meeting were receiving a stainless steel water bottle with the NYSOA logo on it. Tim distributed a press release to media contacts titled "New York State's Bird List Approaches 500," announcing that the **New York State Avian Records Committee** added 6 new species to the list of birds in the new *Checklist of the Birds of New York State*. Mary Beth

Warburton reported locations and leaders for 2017 Winter and Spring field trips are being researched. 2016 field trips included a winter weekend in the Adirondacks in January and Derby Hill/Montezuma in April.

Greg Lawrence gave the **Facebook Report**. The NYSOA Facebook page is reaching a wider audience and advertising programs and services provided by NYSOA.

Joan Collins gave the **Membership Committee Report** that was submitted by Berna Lincoln and Pat Aitken. Membership has decreased slightly during 2016, with 497 individual members and 42 club and organization memberships.

Joan Collins gave the **NYSARC Committee Report** for Angus Wilson. Angus submitted a written report that stated, due to heavy travel schedules of several members, the Committee has not been especially active and has fallen behind with the publication of the Annual Report. NYSARC Secretary Gary Chapin continues to archive reports and respond to inquiries concerning past decisions. The prompt review of potential new additions (first state records) remains a priority. Angus has worked closely with Carena Pooth to enable her to keep all instances (several online and paper versions) of the *NYS Checklist* current. Angus wrote an article called "A New York Perspective on the AOU's 2016 Checklist Updates," which was been posted on the NYSOA website. The NYSARC Committee is striving to find new ways to accelerate the review process of submitted documentation and develop mechanisms to integrate better with eBird in the future.

Carena Pooth gave the **NYS Young Birders Club Report**. The total of all NYSYBC scholarships awarded since 2010 is expected to top \$23,000.00 in 2016. There was no World Series of Birding team in 2016, but 9 young birders participated in their own Big Day fundraising events that were very successful. Carena thanked the clubs that are NYSYBC partners for their support and assistance with field trips, and said that she was looking for a club to host the NYSYBC kickoff event on January 15, 2017.

Publications Committee Report. Seth Ausubel gave the **Publications Committee Report**. The Committee had two conference calls this year and is working to ensure *The Kingbird* is published on time. Shai Mitra, Pat Lindsay, Carena Pooth and Joan Collins were thanked for their outstanding work on NYSOA publications. Regional editors of *The Kingbird* gathered together the previous evening to discuss ways to streamline the reporting process and help attract new editors. Bill Ostrander has helped develop a process of extracting information from eBird that has benefitted the regional editors. An electronic option for receiving *The Kingbird* is being discussed for the future.

Shai Mitra gave *The Kingbird* report. Shai reported that the time between issues of *The Kingbird* has been reduced and he thanked the Publications Committee and Pat Lindsay, Production Manager, for keeping things on track.

Joan Collins gave the **New York Birders Report**. The October issue will feature highlights from the annual weekend and information from Ron Pittaway's Winter Finch Forecast. The "Profile of

a NYSOA volunteer” column has been well received and will continue to be included in each issue. Joan encouraged all to submit articles and photos for *New York Birders*.

Carena Pooth gave the **Checklist of the Birds of New York State Report** that stated the 2017 iteration of the **Checklist** will contain the AOU re-sequencing and updates from the 57th Supplement (July 2016) to the **Check-list of North American Birds** and will be printed in the Fall of 2016.

Greg Lawrence gave the **Research Committee Report**. The Research Committee is moving forward with creating a grant program that will help supplement funding for appropriate research projects. Sources for funding and ideas from other agencies regarding projects are being explored. Recipients of a NYSOA grant will be required to present their work at the paper session during NYSOA's Annual Meetings.

Bill Ostrander gave the **NYS Waterfowl Count Report**. The dates for the 2017 Waterfowl Count are January 14 – January 22, with a target date of January 15.

Joan Collins gave the **Breeding Bird Atlas Report**. The BBIII committee had two meetings in 2016 and stated that eBird will serve as the main portal for data collection during the upcoming atlas project. Wisconsin is the first state using eBird for its atlas project, which should provide valuable information for New York's BBIII. DEC is applying for a Federal Aid and Restoration grant to help fund the BBIII project. The BBIII begins in 2020.

Carena Pooth gave the **Website and Information Services Report**. Carena submitted a written report based on research using Google Analytics, showing which topics and pages received the most usage. The NYSOA home page received the most and the second most popular item was the NYS Checklist. Overall, there is more activity this year than last on both the NYSOA and NYSYBC (NYS Young Birders Club) websites.

Mike Wasilco gave the annual **DEC Report**. Mike is the Regional Wildlife Manager for Region 8. Mike presented information on the following subjects. NYS has finalized the Bald Eagle Conservation Plan; a copy can be found on the DEC website. Lead bullets that fragment and contaminate carcasses that are discarded and then consumed by scavenging animals may be the main source of lead poisoning that has affected Bald Eagles and other wildlife in NYS. DEC is encouraging the use of non-lead ammunition and is spreading the message mostly through hunter education. This issue needs to be addressed in an ongoing manner and NYSOA will continue to be a leader in monitoring the progress of the non-lead ammunition program. No cormorants were managed in New York in 2016. The Spruce Grouse reintroduction program continued this year which relocated a total of 60 birds from Maine and Ontario to NYS. The Grassland Bird Conservation Strategy is researching a new approach for increasing habitat and developing core conservation areas that will create a landscape more conducive to maintaining a viable population of grassland birds. The Migratory Game Bird team at DEC is devising a plan to refresh and gather new data on wintering waterfowl concentration areas. The team plans to apply for a Federal aid grant in 2017 that would assist with the program. The plan will identify where the largest concentrations of wintering waterfowl exist and how to help safeguard those areas in the future; aerial surveys may be needed to assist with monitoring these areas. The goal

of Young Forest Initiative (YFI) program is to convert and maintain up to 10% of forested lands in selected WMA's to young forest. Young forest habitat has declined in NYS and is required by several species, such as Ruffed Grouse, New England Cottontail, Golden-winged Warbler and American Woodcock. The YFI program has hired staff and has received approval to begin clearing and cutting at 8 Wildlife Management Areas. More details on the YFI can be found on the DEC website.

Election of Officers: Bob Adamo presented the **Nominating Committee Report**. The committee nominated the following 2016-2017 slate of Officers/Directors:

Joan Collins - President
Seth Ausubel -Vice President
John Kent - Recording Secretary
Andy Mason - Treasurer

Greg Lawrence - Director (2018)
Richard Guthrie - Director (2018)
Doug Futuyma - Director (2018)
Shirley Shaw - Director (2018)
Mary Beth Warburton - Director (2018)

Mike Bochnik made a motion to elect the slate of Officers and Directors. Shai Mitra seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Mary Beth Warburton resigned as a Director.

The Nominating Committee nominated Bob Spahn to fill the position vacated by Mary Beth's resignation, resulting in an amended slate of Officers and Directors including:

Bob Spahn – Director (2018)

Andy Mason made a motion to accept the amended slate of Officers and Directors. Kevin Griffith seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Election of Nominating Committee: Joan Collins, on behalf of the NYSOA Board of Directors, presented the following names for election to the 2016-2017 **Nominating Committee:** Bob Adamo (Chair), Janet Allison, and Dominic Sherony. Andy Mason made a motion to elect the Nominating Committee as proposed. Shai Mitra seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Election of Auditing Committee: Joan Collins, on behalf of the NYSOA Board of Directors, presented the following names for election to the 2016-2017 **Auditing Committee:** Stephen Chang (Chair), John Cairns and Tom Burke. Kevin Griffith made a motion to elect the Auditing Committee as proposed. Bob Adamo seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Old Business: None

New Business: The location for the 2017 Annual Meeting is not known at this time. The Rochester Birding Association will host the 2018 Annual Meeting.

Mike DeSha made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Greg Lawrence seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

Addendum: Awards presented during the Saturday evening banquet:

Certificates of appreciation were presented to:

- **John and Marilyn Paarlberg** for welcoming and assisting the birders who came to enjoy the Harris's Sparrow at their home in November 2015.
- **Richard Guthrie** for arranging access for birders to see the Harris's Sparrow in Loudonville in November 2015.
- **Prospect Park Alliance** for welcoming the birders who came to enjoy the Painted Bunting in Prospect Park in December 2015.
- **Rob Bate** for his constant communication with both the Prospect Park Alliance and the birding community to ensure birders' enjoyment of the Painted Bunting with minimal impact to the park, in December 2015.
- **Laurie LaFond** for her strong and effective advocacy of the Washington County Grasslands IBA.
- **Chemung Valley Audubon Society** for organizing and hosting the 2016 NYSOA Annual Meeting / NYS Birders Conference.

The **Emanuel Levine Memorial Award**, which recognizes the best *Kingbird* article each year, went to Kathryn Schneider for "The case for adding Carolina Parakeet (*Conuropsis carolinensis*) to the *Checklist of the Birds of New York State*," published in *The Kingbird*, Vol. 65, No. 3, September 2015.

The **Lillian C. Stoner Award** was presented to Kai Victor, a high school senior from New York City (nominated by the New York State Young Birders Club).

The **President's Award** was given to Irving Cantor to recognize his more than 30 years of outstanding service on NYSOA/FNYSBC's Auditing Committee. His sage advice will be greatly missed.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Beth Warburton
Recording Secretary