

# The Canadian Field-Naturalist

## Annual Reports of OFNC Committees for October 2020–September 2021

### Awards Committee

The Awards Committee manages the process to annually recognize and thank those Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club (OFNC) members and other qualified persons who, by virtue of their efforts and talents, are deserving of special recognition. In late 2020, nominations were received and evaluated (see awards criteria at <http://ofnc.ca/about-ofnc/awards>), and recommended to the Board of Directors for approval. Biographies were written for each award recipient for inclusion in the Club's publications and posting on the website. The awards were announced in December 2020 and presented virtually (by Zoom) in November 2021. Each recipient's name, type of award, and short rationale for recognition follow below.

- Joan Heyding and Ian Gough—Member of the Year Award. For fostering the development of amateur mycology in the Club.
- Daniel Buckles and Debra Huron—Conservation Award for a Non-member. For their long dedication to the historic Bur Oak trees in the Champlain Park neighbourhood of Ottawa.
- Jeffery E. Harrison—Honorary Member. For his significant role in the founding and development of the Fletcher Wildlife Garden and long-time service to the Club.
- Frederick Schueler and Aleta Karstad—Honorary Member. For lifetime natural history and conservation efforts in eastern Ontario and Canada.
- Robert G. Forsyth—Honorary Member. For outstanding contributions to Canadian malacology.

ELEANOR ZURBRIGG, Chair

### Birds Committee

Birds Committee (10 members), Bird Records Subcommittee (12 members including alternate voting members), and Bird Feeders Sub-committee (Chair coordinates and fills in when needed and five volunteers) coordinated OFNC bird-related activities and directed and encouraged interest in birds within and outside the OFNC area.

A committee member, Nina Stavlund, administered the OFNC's Facebook group (2402 members on

7 December 2021) which is a place for OFNC members and non-members to discuss ideas and exchange information relating to all aspects of natural history, club outings, and club initiatives, as well as for prospective members to get a feel for what the OFNC is about. Current member age and gender demographics are:

Age range	Women		Men		Custom gender	
	no.	%	no.	%	no	%
13–17	0	0	0	0	0	0
18–24	26	1.1	16	0.7	4	0.2
25–34	233	10.2	104	4.6	4	0.2
35–44	311	13.7	125	5.5	5	0.2
45–54	320	14	132	5.8	7	0.3
55–64	326	14.3	170	7.5	6	0.3
65+	307	13.5	179	7.9	3	0.1
Total	1523		726		29	

A committee member, Derek Dunnett, provided weekly provincial (Birdnews) reports of OFNC area (Ottawa–Gatineau) bird sightings which, with photos by local photographers, was also provided on OFNC Facebook and the OFNC website. OFNC Facebook posts, comments, and reactions are most frequent on Fridays when this report is posted.

Committee members provided articles on a variety of subjects in *Trail & Landscape*, led OFNC field trips, participated in the OFNC Website Working Group, improved Birds content on the website, and responded to bird related enquires from members and the public.

OFNC Birds Committee and the Club des ornithologues de l'Outaouais (COO) organized the 102nd Ottawa–Gatineau Christmas Bird Count on 20 December 2020. Temperatures ranged from –4 to 0°C, with persistent snow and then drizzle over much of the count circle. 164 field observers plus 35 feeder watchers found 76 species. Highlights included one each of Field Sparrow, Cackling Goose, Double-crested Cormorant, and Short-eared Owl; a record four Red-bellied Woodpeckers; and 10 Hoary Redpolls, including one *hornemanni*. Record highs were also set for Wood Duck (11), Wild Turkey (274), White-breasted

Nuthatch (632), Bohemian Waxwing (5136), and Northern Cardinal (741); and eight Barred Owl tied a record high. American Crow was easily the most abundant species with a roost estimated at 20 000. Good numbers were recorded for Common Raven (144), Red-breasted Nuthatch (165), Hermit Thrush (five), Cedar Waxwing (223), and Common Redpoll (1966). Other winter finches recorded included Evening Grosbeak (106), Pine Grosbeak (115), White-winged Crossbill (40), and Pine Siskin (28).

The “OFNC Rare Bird Data Project”, led by Jeff Skevington, which will enter documentation of historically important OFNC rare bird sightings into eBird, was started. This project will provide a permanent record of OFNC rare bird sightings on eBird for worldwide birders, science, and conservation.

BOB CERMAK, Chair

### Conservation Committee

The year started with us producing the final report for our 2020 survey of Voyageur Provincial Park for the vulnerable (S3) tree species Red Spruce. We found three populations of the species at the park during our survey, and sent our final report to Ontario Parks.

Our multi-year survey for Red Spruce in eastern Ontario (Ottawa, and east) is effectively over, with our committee discovering a population of the species at Pinhey Forest in February 2021 via targeted “appropriate habitat” searching. No other populations have been found since then in eastern Ontario at Ottawa or east, during a busy year in which we visited many locations. This is a long stretch of no new results for our group, and suggestive that we are “done” with our main push of searching for Red Spruce at Ottawa and east in Ontario. A final report of our findings is in preparation.

A lengthy provincial COVID-related stay-at-home order caused us to essentially miss the spring 2021 season, with commencement of growing season field-work activities only starting in June.

An incidental finding of Two-lined Salamander at Voyageur Provincial Park in 2020 led to our committee also applying for and receiving permission to conduct a survey for salamanders at Voyageur Provincial Park (Principle Investigator Jakob Mueller): this survey is in progress and will be ongoing throughout 2022.

A major project this year by our group was an extensive survey for a new insect to North America: Elm Zigzag Sawfly (EZS). Elm Zigzag Sawfly is a potential new threat to the already endangered (IUCN) American Elm (and our other two elms) and was discovered near Montreal in summer 2020. Elm Zigzag Sawfly was incidentally found in photos we took at Voyageur Provincial Park in September 2020. We casually checked for EZS at Cooper Marsh

Conservation Area in July 2021 and found its unmistakable feeding tracks on the first elm we inspected! This caused us to search for EZS throughout eastern Ontario from July to October, and we found it to be continuously present from the eastern tip of the province to as far west as Dunrobin Shore, Carleton Place, and Mallorytown. We reported our findings to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, collected samples of the insect for the Canadian Forest Service, and alerted contacts to be on the lookout for EZS in upstate New York, where it is likely present but not documented, and Vermont. This was a rare chance to document the spread of a rapidly moving exotic insect invasion, and while we were hoping to “not find” this potential new pest as much as we did, we are glad that OFNC was able to provide leadership and show the already widespread extent of its spread shortly after its discovery on the continent. See the map below: OFNC members are responsible for all of the data points west of Vaudreuil-Soulanges, Quebec. A final report of our findings is in preparation.

We continued two long-term biodiversity monitoring projects at Lavigne Natural Park and at the Carp Hills, and found interesting new species records at both locations in 2021.

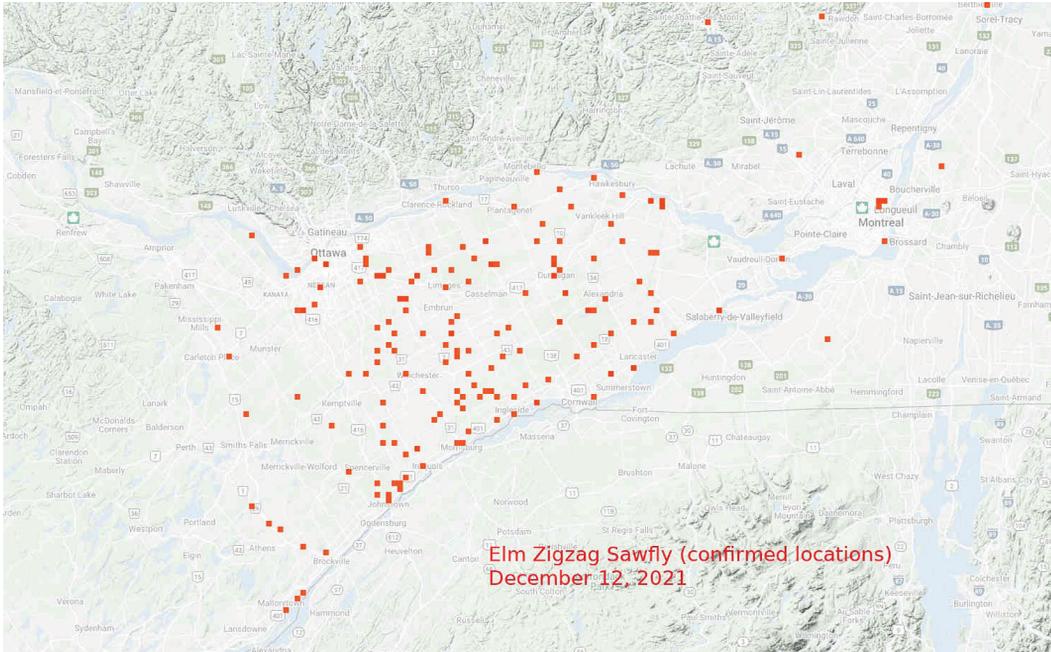
Our group (led by Henry Robertson) explored alvar-like habitat across the Ottawa River (e.g., Aylmer Quebec) and in Ontario (e.g., Dunrobin Shore) to help establish biodiversity baseline data, and provide community outreach regarding stewardship of these threatened habitats.

Numerous site visits with biodiversity surveys and community outreach occurred in 2021, at locations such as Orleans (Lalande Conservation Park), Kanata (near Kizell Pond Natural Reserve), southeast rural Ottawa (Tewin area), Rockcliffe Park (Kichi Sibi Trails), Gananoque Lake (Ontario Nature Bioblitz), and many more.

Our group participated in advocacy work, with a focus on the well-known large bogs of eastern Ontario: Mer Bleue and Alfred Bog. Club president Jakob Mueller outlined how a proposed road expansion threatened the Mer Bleue bog: <https://ofnc.ca/conservation-2/proposed-new-road-threatens-mer-bleue-wetland>.

Jakob was also interviewed (not yet published) by NBC News regarding environmental issues related to bogs and human activities associated with bogs (peat extraction, etc.). Alfred Bog was cited as an example of a partially conserved bog, which is subject to mining and conversion of habitat to agriculture at its privately-owned edges.

Our committee also released a statement, advocating for postponement of an immediate decision regarding including the proposed Tewin development (rural southeast Ottawa) into Ottawa’s urban



boundary, to allow for adequate biodiversity surveying of the location (<https://ofnc.ca/conservation-2/ofnc-urges-deferring-the-inclusion-of-tewin-in-ottawas-urban-boundary-expansion>).

OWEN CLARKIN, Chair

### Education and Publicity Committee

Coronavirus disease 2019 created a series of cancellations that again severely limited the work of the Education and Publicity Committee. No in-person meetings were held but a few Zoom meetings helped keep us focussed. Fortunately, the Committee welcomed three new members: Sheilagh Stacey, Joceline Beaulieu, and Robyn Molnar.

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board's Science Fair was also held online. Fenja Brodo, Lloyd Mayeda, and I judged the four applicants for the OFNC nature prizes. All four were deemed excellent and were awarded \$100 and a certificate of recognition.

Dean Beeby continues as our Twitter administrator. He gave a presentation to the Board to encourage members to submit newsworthy items to add to the account. Jakob Mueller added a YouTube page for the OFNC—look for it at: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHryjAyoDoz7qnanrVaTJ\\_w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHryjAyoDoz7qnanrVaTJ_w) or search YouTube for “OFNC Video”.

Sandy Garland continues to keep our Friends of the Fletcher Wildlife Garden (FWG) Facebook page up to date. Thanks to Nina Stavlund, our OFNC Facebook page is well-run and active.

Lorraine Elworthy, Annie Bélair, Sandy Garland, and Gord Robertson keep our webpages informative and well maintained.

Gord Robertson has made three new wildlife quests for the Richmond Conservation Area, Pinhey Dunes and Forest, and Andrew Hayden Park. More are planned for next year. Find them at <https://ofnc.ca/quests>.

This summer “News Flashes” have been posted around the FWG to highlight recent wildlife occurrences. For example, occurrences such as a juvenile Wood Duck perched on a branch overlooking the Amphibian Pond, the invasion by LDD (Gypsy) Moths, the arrival of Plum Pocket fungus and Butternut Canker, and the emergence of cicadas were posted, among others.

Groups of Beavers and Cubs came to the FWG on 26 and 27 September. Eighteen children showed up from both groups. They were divided into two sections and shown the Backyard Garden and Amphibian Pond. Masks were worn by all. Fenja Brodo, Robyn Molnar, and Lloyd Mayeda led the tours.

With the addition of three new storyboards (now at 13) some members of the committee (Sheilagh Stacey, Sarah Wray, Fenja Bordo, and myself) have created new stories for the various seasons. Thanks to Dr. Jean-Michel Weber and Diane Lepage for checking the French translations. Find copies at <https://ofnc.ca/stories>.

There were no applicants for the Youth Summit this year that was to be online. Macoun Club members

were contacted but none responded. Greater outreach is necessary for this event to be successful.

GORDON ROBERTSON, Ph.D., Chair

### Events Committee

The Events process continued to be unusual in 2021, due to the persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Monthly meetings were held virtually on Zoom for the duration of the year, and several other virtual events were held as well. For the second year in a row, in-person field trips were not held during the normally busy spring season due to the pandemic's "third wave" and the resulting restrictions of public health measures. Restrictions eased as vaccination rates increased, allowing a resumption of in-person field trips in August.

In total, the committee coordinated 40 events, including field trips, workshops, presentations for monthly meetings, and digital events. Topics included birding (nine), mycology (nine), botany (six), herpetology (three), entomology (three), and conservation (two), with the remainder being general interest (eight).

As always, the committee extends its sincere gratitude to all individuals who led, presented, or assisted with events.

JAKOB MUELLER, Chair

### Finance Committee

This report covers financial matters during fiscal year 2020–2021, which extended from 1 October 2020 through 30 September 2021.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic lessened compared to the previous year. In particular, the Fletcher Wildlife Garden plant sale resumed, with orders taken online. It was very successful, netting about \$6600. Compared with many other small charities, we are fortunate. We have a sizeable reserve that enables us to continue our activities even though revenues are down, and to purchase things such as a Zoom licence to help us cope with the pandemic.

The primary task of the Finance Committee is to prepare a draft budget for consideration by the Board of Directors. The committee receives suggestions, and estimates of committee revenues and expenses, from directors and committee chairs. Our process is that the Finance Committee presents a draft budget for discussion at the September meeting of the Board of Directors. After amendment, it is adopted at the October meeting.

The budget for FY2020–2021 was approved at the Board of Directors meeting of October 2020. The draft budget for FY2021–2022 was presented to the Board's September 2021 meeting and after revision, was approved at the October 2021 Board meeting. The budget forecasts revenues of \$164 900 and

expenses of \$185 350, for a deficit of \$20 450. A copy of the budget, as approved, is included as an appendix to the minutes of the October 2021 Board of Directors meeting. These minutes are posted on the OFNC website (<https://ofnc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/OFNC-BoD-Meeting-October-18-2021-Minutes.pdf>).

The committee developed a policy titled "Applying for a Grant". It provides a procedure for committees to follow when applying for grants from third parties. The policy was adopted by the Board of Directors on 15 March 2021.

The Board asked the committee to consider whether the OFNC should amend its investment policy to include a statement on ethical investing. The committee's recommendation, which was accepted by the Board, was to leave the choice of securities to the Investment Manager, who can take into account ethical investing considerations.

The committee reviewed the Club's insurance coverage, specifically whether additional types of risks should be added. The additional types discussed were Accident Compensation Coverage, Publisher's Errors & Omissions Liability, and Cyber insurance. The committee does not consider that any of these would add significant protection, and they are expensive. The Club will continue with its existing coverage (General Liability - Bodily or Mental Injury & Property Damage, and Nonprofit Organizations Directors' & Officers' Liability).

The question arises from time to time whether our spending is appropriate. Members have two concerns. On the one hand, will we exhaust our investment fund prematurely? Our current budgeted deficits are in the range of \$20 000 to \$25 000. We are currently earning interest of 2.5% to 3% on our investments. If we continue in this manner, our investment fund will be maintained for almost three decades. Even if our earned interest rate drops to 1% it would be two decades. Based on this, the Board feels that our deficits are reasonable.

The other concern is that we are not spending enough. The Board of Directors reviews proposals for spending, during the budget process and on an *ad hoc* basis during the year. Proposals are evaluated based on the Club's objectives, for example natural history education, and our policies, for example a focus on eastern Ontario and the Ottawa Valley. The Board is responsive to proposals, but also prudent.

KEN YOUNG, Chair

### Fletcher Wildlife Garden Committee

The Fletcher Wildlife Garden was able to accommodate the many challenges that COVID-19 brought due to the dedication of its volunteers and their ability to adjust and adapt. Throughout the year, the

safety of our volunteers and our many visitors was the most important factor that affected how we did things. The FWG is a tenant of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), and so many of the changes that occurred this year were implemented following discussions with them.

An unexpected consequence of the COVID-19 restrictions was the very large increase in the number of visitors to the FWG. This in turn resulted in the inability to accommodate all the extra vehicles looking for parking spaces on the property. Following a review by AAFC, several traditional parking places were eliminated because they hindered emergency vehicle access; parking in front of the Resource Centre (Building 138) was limited to Fletcher volunteers; additional parking spaces were created as part of the baseball diamond parking lot; cement curbs were added to better indicate where parking was not allowed; additional signage was added to more clearly indicate where parking was or was not allowed. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada also increased enforcement of the parking regulations on the property using warnings and fines. To accommodate FWG volunteers, monthly parking passes have been issued to a limited number of volunteers. To increase security at the Resource Centre, photo id/door unlock swipe cards have been issued to a limited number of FWG and OFNC members.

The increased number of visitors also has led to an increased number of dogs off-leash on the property. Ottawa city by-law now includes the Fletcher as part of its jurisdiction. Cases of dogs off-leash are to be reported to the city via its 3-1-1 complaint phone number. Increased signage has been put up, and city by-law officers have made unannounced visits to the Garden. Dogs off-leash continue to be a problem.

Coronavirus disease 2019 restrictions postponed the opening of our volunteer season and did restrict activities such as indoor coffee breaks. The size of volunteer work parties was kept small, and social distancing was emphasized to increase volunteer safety. The Resource Centre was closed to the public all year.

Our annual plant sale did happen but with a pre-order, pre-pay, curbside pick-up format. A small group of dedicated volunteers was able to meet regularly to carry out the planting, growing, and potting of plants for the sale. E-mail messages and e-transfer of money were used to carry out the sale in a safe way. When the two-week pick-up period was over, this year's profit had exceeded all previous plant sales!

A "big year" was declared at the start of 2021 as a challenge to the many birders that regularly visit the Fletcher, and to get an answer to the question "How many different kinds of birds visit the Fletcher each year?" As of November, 65 different bird species have

been identified and reported. Most of the reports of sightings were posted on the Friends of the Fletcher Wildlife Garden Facebook group page, accompanied by spectacular photographs.

There were many challenges this year. The many compliments and the expressions of thanks by our visitors are true indicators of how valued the FWG is to the Ottawa community and beyond.

TED FARNWORTH, Chair

### **Macoun Club Committee**

The Macoun Field Club, which is for kids aged eight to 18, is in its 73rd year. The Club normally runs during the school year, offering a weekly program of indoor meetings alternating with outdoor field trips. During this second year of disruption by the COVID-19 pandemic, the meetings had to be abandoned, but for eight of the 12 months outdoor activities were permissible under public health regulations.

On 1 September 2020, the OFNC Board of Directors voted to permit the resumption of field trips after a six-month suspension. The Macoun Club was ready to go with immediate demand from families, a well-informed leadership, and an effective COVID-19 protocol. In the year that followed, Committee members led 22 field trips and two overnight camping trips. Half of our trips were to the Macoun Club Nature Study Area in Ottawa's western Greenbelt, and half into Lanark County. The camping trips were conducted in remote locations. An account of each activity was promptly posted on the Macoun Club's home page on the OFNC website.

Early in the autumn of 2020, Ontario's limit on the size of outdoor gatherings was reduced from 100 to 25 people, which was still sufficient for our groups. Soon after New Year's Day, 2021, however, not even two people were permitted to be together unless they were from the same household. During four of the next five months (the provincial stay-at-home orders of January/February and April/May) field trips were therefore not possible. Trips resumed in June and continued into August.

Pandemic conditions significantly altered the character of our field trips. This Club, which is centred on the child, became more of a family-oriented organization. Instead of dropping their children off for the day, parents, grandparents, and even aunts and uncles came out with us. One result was that adults outnumbered the children and physically dominated the groups. Another was that the children interacted with each other far less than previously, not getting to know each other, even by name.

Interaction was further stifled by adherence to public health guidance. Unless people were in a common family or social "bubble", they had to maintain

a 2-m distance from each other. Best friends could not walk or eat or play together. Without the buzz of excitement that arises from the discovery of a snake or salamander, children could not communicate their healthy attitudes and advanced knowledge about reptiles and amphibians to their more fearful fellow members. Similarly, leaders could not just pull out a hand lens and bring the sub-visible world of insects, lichens, and mosses into view for the children. We left our hand lenses at home.

Despite the impairment of its normal functioning, the Macoun Club remained much in demand, and not only from its existing membership. New families found us through our website and phoned or e-mailed, “desperate” to get their children outdoors. Some of these children turned out to have no interest at all in nature; we were thanked for providing “video-game detox” and exercise. But others now number among our most devoted members.

We do not know when indoor meetings may resume, but experience now tells us that they are the backbone of the Macoun Club. Meetings are typically better attended than field trips, and provide greater cohesiveness and continuity. Yet during the pandemic, field trips proved to be far more important to the lives of the members. Only one young person ever suggested online meetings, whereas families were enquiring about field trips every week.

Demand for field trips finally slackened in the summer of 2021, when the relaxation of public health restrictions opened up old opportunities. Families admitted that they were choosing to do other things, which had been denied them for a year.

Still, with no more promotional effort than a single-line entry on our schedule page: “Field Trip, call Rob”, we had taken 38 children out into the safety of the natural world, and 32 adults, many of them repeatedly. (Club membership in the last pre-pandemic year had been 19.) The burden of doing this every possible weekend fell disproportionately on one or two members of the Macoun Club Committee. It was felt, though, that the stresses on kids and families under pandemic restrictions were so great that these Macoun Club volunteers held to their commitment to “Connect the Child with the Wild”.

ROBERT E. LEE, Chair

**Membership Committee**

Club participation includes (1) “Membership” which consists of those who pay Club fees, are “Honorary” members, or participate in the “Macoun Club”, (2) “T&L (*Trail & Landscape*) Subscribers”, and (3) an aggregate called “Other” which represents individuals and organizations that receive complimentary copies of T&L. The groups are reported separately.

The distribution of Club membership on 30 September 2021 and on 30 September 2020 is shown below. There was a notable increase in Membership of 76 for 2021, much of which occurred in the last six months of the fiscal year. This increase is consistent with the volatility in membership that the Club experiences from year to year.

Members within 50 km of Ottawa comprised 766 of the total membership of 871.

	2021	2020
Individual	415	377
Family	340	309
Student	19	16
Honorary	24	23
Life	38	39
Macoun Club	23	20
USA	11	10
International	1	1
Total	871	795

The number of “T&L Subscribers” and “Other” on 30 September 2021 and on 30 September 2020 is shown below. The numbers do not vary greatly on a year-to-year basis.

	2021	2020
T&L Subscriber	2	3
Other	25	23
Total	27	26

HENRY STEGER, Chair

**Publications Committee**

The Publications Committee manages publication of CFN, T&L, and Special Publications. The committee also advises OFNC with respect to issues relating to research, including managing the research grants program. We published four issues of T&L (54[4] and 55[1–3]), and we sold advertising space in T&L to two clients, which generated \$255 of revenue. We published four issues of CFN (134[2–4] and 135[1]).

Daniel Brunton and David Seburn, both longstanding committee members, stepped down this year. Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the committee conducted its meetings virtually; this meeting mode worked well for the committee because some committee members reside outside of the National Capital Region in Prince Edward Island, Alberta, and British Columbia.

This was the seventh year of the OFNC Research Grants program. Research grants support field-based research activities that reflect and promote the Club’s objectives within eastern Ontario and/or western Quebec, focussed particularly upon the Club’s

study area. A total of \$15 000 is available each year to fund research. The application deadline was 15 January 2020. A subcommittee comprising Jeff Saarela (chair), Paul Catling, and Carolyn Callaghan reviewed all proposals and submitted funding recommendations to the OFNC Board of Directors. The list of recipients of 2021 Research Grants was published in T&L 55(3): 119–120 (<https://ofnc.ca/publications/trail-landscape/tlpdfs>).

JEFFERY M. SAARELA, Chair

## Safe Wings Ottawa Committee

### Numbers

From 1 October 2020 to 30 November 2021, Safe Wings volunteers:

- Documented more than 3278 window collisions (final number not yet available), similar to 2019–2020.
- Provided care to 1338 injured birds representing 125 species, compared to 1336 birds of 127 species the previous year. Of these, 655 (49%) were victims of window collisions.
- Answered more than 5000 phone calls, similar to the previous year, and recruited more volunteers to help answer the high volume of calls.
- Added three new species to our list of collision victims (Great Horned Owl, Red Crossbill, Hoary Redpoll), bringing our cumulative total to 148.

### Year in review

The pandemic continued to affect Safe Wings operations and activities. The increase in calls about injured birds at homes again outnumbered calls from commercial and institutional buildings, and meetings as well as outreach activities were limited to online events.

Our annual bird display, cancelled in 2019, was held on 23 August 2020, as a virtual event at the Jack Purcell Community Centre. Only fully vaccinated and masked volunteers were allowed to participate. They created a spiral layout of all 4015 specimens collected in 2019 and 2020, then photographed and filmed the layout. The event was organized in collaboration with Fatal Light Awareness Program (FLAP) Canada and other bird collision groups, and included a short film.

The Advocacy Subcommittee created last year to better oversee and organize outreach continued to meet monthly to promote bird-safe measures for new and existing buildings. These efforts are ongoing and have led to input on the new hospital campus, the new library, and various other buildings, as well as encouraging the City of Ottawa to incorporate bird-safe design into energy-efficiency measures promoted and subsidized by the draft Better Buildings Strategy.

After several years of collecting data and trying to convince the owners of a business park to apply collision mitigation measures at their buildings, we filed an application on 7 May requesting that the Ontario Ministry of the Environment investigate the properties under the *Environmental Bill of Rights* (EBR) for offences under the *Environmental Protection Act* (EPA) and the *Endangered Species Act* (ESA). A decision under the EBR is required within 60 days; however, as of 30 September, the ministry had not rendered a decision.

We also filed an application on 25 September requesting an investigation of a different property under the federal *Species at Risk Act* (SARA).

Maurine Mikhail initiated the creation of a federal government working group dealing with the issue of bird–building collisions. Representative from various government departments are working together to add bird-safe glazing and lighting to the National Master Specifications (used for federal procurement and as the basis for provincial building codes).

Deb Doherty initiated the creation of a campus collision group at the University of Ottawa. She guided students as they assessed buildings for collision risk, monitored for birds, and reported on their findings. They applied for and received a grant to retrofit a raised walkway between Morisset Library and the Jock Turcot Centre. Vanessa Hum designed and painted a mural with the help of other students. While retrofit measures are normally applied to the exterior surface of glass in order to maximize effectiveness, in this case an exception was made to allow interior application. The university understandably would not allow students to work at height, and light conditions at the specific location of the walkway ensure the mural is highly visible from outside.

Deb also led a partnership with the Canadian Wildlife Federation Wild Outside youth program to paint a bird-safe mural at the Ottawa Public Library's Centrepoint Branch (101 Centrepointe Drive). This mural was also designed by Vanessa Hum.

Willow English presented a talk, *Windows of Opportunity: Making Our Homes Safer for Birds*, for the City of Ottawa's Wildlife Speakers Series on 31 March.

We began collaborating with the Club des ornithologues de l'Outaouais (COO) as they work towards earning Bird-Friendly City certification from Nature Canada for Gatineau.

The City of Ottawa and National Capital Commission (NCC) both finalized and adopted bird-safe building design guidelines. City planners now expect projects requiring Site Plan Approval to adhere to the municipal guidelines. The NCC requires all new buildings, major retrofits, and additions to be bird-

safe. It has also begun assessing all the properties in its real estate portfolio for collision risk, and is beginning to retrofit some buildings.

We continue to pressure OC Transpo to make current and future Light Rapid Transit (LRT) stations and other transit structures safe for birds. Stage 1 LRT stations have proved to be lethal to birds, as predicted by Safe Wings. The City promised to make Stage 2 LRT stations bird-safe, although they are not following

current guidelines.

The Ottawa Valley Wild Bird Care Centre moved to a new, temporary location in the spring. To help with the transition, the Safe Wings rehab team took on a lot of additional patients and kept them in care longer. Since then, we have tried to limit patients as much as possible to window collisions, raptors, and after-hours critical cases.

ANOUK HOEDEMAN, Chair