



**Ontario Field Ornithologists**  
**Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2025**  
**AGM Materials**



# 2025 AGM Materials

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# President's Message

**October 2024 – September 2025**

Welcome back to the Convention. It's great to be in a new site in Sarnia this year to explore some of the legendary Lambton County birding sites. Next year we expect to be back at Leamington for the meeting. The northern contingent of our Convention is happening for the fourth time and is meeting in Hilliardton for the second time. Thanks to Angie Williams for making this possible. Have fun if you chose to go there to explore and see some of the great birding opportunities in that area.

This has been another vibrant year for OFO with 100 field trips, several online programs, more EDI events, another successful Young Birders Camp and an expanded Young Birders Optics Program. The latter aims to distribute used optical equipment to young birders who need them. We are now offering tax receipts for donations and are considering expanding the eligibility criteria for recipients beyond young birders. Our Discord server now has nearly 2000 members (up 500 from last year). The eBird alerts on that server offer a great way to quickly learn about some of the rare birds turning up across the province and the Young Birders Platform is very active. Our WhatsApp community for sharing bird information also grew by 20% last year and offers yet another way to keep in touch with your fellow birders. These social media groups for birders owe their success to the moderators and administrators who generously volunteer their time. Our social media presence continues to grow on Facebook and Instagram, and our YouTube channel continues to allow access to recordings of live presentations for people who aren't able to attend member meetings.

Our young birder offerings continued to be strong with events in Toronto and Algonquin. The OFO summer camp had 15 participants join the four volunteer leaders this year. Five groups sponsored the camp this year. Thanks very much to Hamilton Naturalists' Club, North Durham Nature Club, Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society, Toronto Ornithological Club and the Woodstock Field Naturalists' Club for keeping the camp vibrant and affordable. If you know of a group that might like to support this initiative, please let any of the board members know!

We have three outgoing board members this year and I want to thank them here. Sarah Rupert is a long-standing board member who has served since 2016. Sarah has been the interface between OFO and our members as well as the general public throughout much of this time and it is hard to imagine how we will manage without her. She will continue to have a strong presence at OFO and likely continue to confound us at future Conventions with her bird quizzes. Marcie Jacklin graciously agreed to a second term on the board and since 2022 she has played a big role on our Conservation committee. Jack Alvo has served on the board since 2019 as Secretary and formerly as Chair of the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee. His knowledge of the organization is unparalleled and he always made sure that the President and others kept to deadlines and followed procedures. We will miss his quiet and steady guiding hand on the Board. Thanks again to all of you for your strong volunteer ethics!

Here are a few more of this year's highlights:

- **Atlas-3:** OFO continues to be active as one of the five organizations planning and running the third Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. We increased our funding to the Atlas this year due to unexpected shortfalls from funding coming from the USA. 2025 was the final year of this pivotal community science project and will provide a strong picture of

changes in our breeding avifauna over the last 20 years. Thanks to everyone who gives back to birds and conservation through this and similar projects!

- **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:** The EDI Committee continues to be very active and provides excellent suggestions to make all our programs more accessible and balanced. This year saw the continuation of Pride Walks to welcome those who identify as LGBTQ, and outings designed for those with disabilities.
- **OFO Ambassador Program:** This program has continued to evolve and has served as a model in Ontario and beyond for coordinating birder activities around rare birds to minimize negative impacts to both the community and the birds involved. I am particularly pleased that this year we required many fewer interventions from OFO as local birders are following protocols that we developed and handling things seamlessly with minimal consultation. Thanks to all who were involved including homeowners, site hosts and ambassadors.
- **OFO News:** Our Newsletter continues to thrive despite many changes in the makeup of the OFO News editorial team in the past year. We thank our departing lead editor Paul Nicholson, co-lead editors Ted Down and Evan Millar, co-editor Ankur Khurana and our consultant Mark Field for their valued contributions. Our new co-editors are Anita Aviad, Emily Burton and Angela Eady with Michelle Martin and Mike Burrell acting as Editorial Consultants.
- **Ontario Birds:** We would like to thank our departing co-editor, Dr. Evan Millar for his hard work on the journal. The current editorial team of Chip Weseloh, Pamela Martin and David Welch are looking for a fourth co-editor. Please contact them if you are interested in helping out. This year's three issues included 8 articles and spanned 76 pages. Thanks also to Barry Kent MacKay for continuing to provide amazing cover art for the journal and to Judie Shore for her work on and for the layout and design of both this publication and OFO News.
- **Conservation:** During 2024-2025 the OFO Board has been taking a more active role in advocacy.
  - OFO launched a petition to attempt to make some changes to Ontario's Bill 5 which unfortunately passed unchanged in June 2025. The Bill has serious implications for endangered bird species.
  - In August 2025, OFO sent a letter to protest the attempt by Innergex to acquire approximately 2500 acres for a solar farm on the Carden Alvar. OFO was present at the inaugural meeting for this project to voice our concerns. OFO also sent a letter in September to council for the City of Kawartha Lakes, which will soon be voting on this project.
  - In addition to advocacy, OFO continued to fund conservation projects like the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas.

Our volunteer coordinator, Perry Rutherford, has worked hard to keep positions filled so that OFO continues to operate smoothly. Thanks very much to the many volunteers that keep us going and allow us to expand and try new things. Let us know if you want to volunteer or if you have any suggestions of new things for us to consider.

Good birding!

**Jeff Skevington (he/him)**  
***OFO President***

# Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements

## **Ontario Field Ornithologists Treasurer's Report Financial Statements for the period ended December 31, 2024**

The 2024 Financial Statements are attached for your review. If you have any questions, please direct them to me through the OFO email address: [treasurer@ofo.ca](mailto:treasurer@ofo.ca).

This past year we finished up with a net income of \$7,920 vs \$10,373 in 2023. Membership dues have decreased by \$7,322. Donations were also down by \$1,254 compared to 2023. We thank all of those that have donated to help move forward the causes and programs of OFO.

Compared to 2023, we experienced a modest profit on the 2024 Convention of \$4,322. Attendance was up slightly from the prior year. We held a Silent Auction that was quite successful and raised a good portion of the net profit. There have been significant increases in all food costs and venue rentals have increased as well.

Our regular publications costs saw a modest increase from 2023 to 2024, however there is still an anticipated cost increase for 2025/26 that will significantly impact these costs. As you have noticed over the past several months of 2025, we are encouraging those that are computer savvy to please change your preferences to online rather than printed versions.

We ended 2024 with a healthy cash balance of \$96,998 (including a GIC) vs \$78,291 at the end of 2023.

Our Finance Committee has been working well on reviewing our finances. The Committee consists of a number of Board members, including the Treasurer, and one non-Board member. The Committee reports to the full Board and meets about 9 times a year. The Treasurer regularly prepares financial statements and the Committee discusses OFO's financial affairs and banking with the Treasurer. The Committee also assists the Treasurer in the preparation of the annual budget.

I would like to thank the Board and especially the Finance Committee – Jeff Skeving, Gis Segler and Bob Cumming for their support during the year. I continue to learn more about this great organization in support of our natural world.



**Sue Suess (she/her)**  
***OFO Director and Treasurer,***  
***March 31, 2025***

**ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS**

**COMPARATIVE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**FOR THE PERIOD ENDING**

**DECEMBER 31, 2024**

**GIBBON'S MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING SERVICES**

BRIAN W. GIBBON, R.P.A.  
REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANT

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**NOTICE TO READER**

**TO THE MANAGEMENT OF:**

**ONTARIO FIELD ORNTHOLOGISTS**

On the basis of information provided by management I have compiled the balance sheet of Ontario Field Ornithologists as at December 31, 2024 and the statements of income and expenses and members' equity for December 31, 2024 then ended.

I have not performed an audit or a review engagement in respect of these financial statements and, accordingly, I express no assurance thereon.

**Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes**

The accompanying reports have been prepared at your request from information provided by management solely for the internal use of management and are intended for use in planning and controlling the operation of your organization.

Barrie, Ontario  
June 11, 2025

*Brian W. Gibbon*

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Brian W. Gibbon, R.P.A.  
Registered Professional Accountant

3269 DOBSON ROAD, SPRINGWATER, ON.

**ONTARIO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
COMPARATIVE BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2024**

<b>ASSETS</b>			<b>LIABILITIES &amp; MEMBERS' EQUITY</b>		
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>		<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Cash in bank	\$ 26,998	\$ 78,291	Prepaid Membership Dues	\$ 30,325	\$ 33,027
Convention Deposit	\$ 500	\$ 1,000	Accounts Payable	\$ 12,356	8,737
Accounts Receivable	\$ 2,435	\$ 900	<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$ 42,681</b>	<b>\$ 41,764</b>
HST Receivable		\$ 7,663	<b>MEMBERS' EQUITY</b>		
Inventory		\$ -	Balance beginning of Year	\$ 49,332	\$ 38,958
Investments	\$ 70,000	\$ 3,241	Net Income for Year	\$ 7,920	10,373
Equipment		\$ -	Balance end of Year	<b>\$ 57,252</b>	<b>\$ 49,331</b>
Accumulated Depreciation		\$ -	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 99,933</b>	<b>\$ 91,095</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 99,933</b>	<b>\$ 91,095</b>			

**COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF INCOME and EXPENSES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024**

<b>INCOME</b>			<b>EXPENSES</b>		
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>		<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Membership Dues	\$ 46,703	\$ 54,025	<b>Printing and Mailing</b>		
Donations	\$ 7,822	9,076	Journal, Ontario Birds	\$ 21,464	\$ 20,570
Baillie Birdathon	\$ 2,798	7,120	Newsletter, OFO News	\$ 17,242	15,540
Advertising	\$ 4,900	3,240	<b>Administration</b>		
Sale of Merchandise	\$ 533	1,511	Advertising	\$ 1,267	1,627
Young Birds (Net)	\$ (1,043)	2,539	Affinity Fees - Square Fees	\$ 2,999	3,101
Annual Convention (Net)	\$ 4,312	(8,322)	Audit	\$ -	250
HST Recovery	\$ 741	-	Awards	\$ -	500
Field Trips	\$ 75	-	Bank Charges	\$ 284	155
Interest Income	\$ (104)	-	Board & Communication	\$ 243	559
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 66,796</b>	<b>\$ 69,191</b>	Depreciation	\$ -	121
			Donations	\$ 3,000	1,500
			Fees		69
			Field trips	\$ 1,483	2,273
			Honorarium - Speaker	\$ 550	
			Inventory Adjustment	\$ -	3,553
			Liability Insurance	\$ 2,254	2,188
			Membership Expense	\$ 55	55
			Wild Apricot	\$ 6,564	5,379
			OBRC	\$ -	357
			Office	\$ 117	
			OFO Website & Ontbirds	\$ 322	330
			Program Exp - Bird of the Year	\$ 500	
			Program Exp - Optics program	\$ 36	
			Postage & Handling	\$ 432	120
			Postal Box Rental	\$ 63	296
			Purchase of Merchandise	\$ -	-
			Treasurer's Expenses		275
			<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 58,876</b>	<b>\$ 58,818</b>
			<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 66,796</b>	<b>\$ 69,191</b>
			<b>NET ANNUAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 7,920</b>	<b>\$ 10,373</b>

  
Sue Suess, Treasurer

  
Jeff Skevington, President

  
Gis Segler, Finance Committee

PREPARED WITHOUT AUDIT FOR MANAGEMENT





# Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting

**September 28, 2024 – Leamington**

The 2024 Annual General Meeting (“AGM”) was held in Leamington on Saturday, September 28, 2024, as part of the Annual Convention.

President Jeff Skevington called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m. The first item of business:

**Moved by Jeff, seconded by Colleen Reilly, to accept the Minutes from the 2023 AGM held Sept. 23, 2023. No discussion. All in favour, no abstentions. Motion carried.**

## **Review of the year:**

Next, Jeff reviewed highlights from the past year including: webinars, trips, social media activities, membership, Equity Diversity and Inclusion, OFO’s publications, fundraising, Ambassador program, Young Birders activities, and OBRC.

## **Financial Report:**

OFO recorded a profit of \$10,373 for 2023, aided by an increase in donations. Another contribution came from the Great Canadian Birdathon which, unfortunately, will not be available in future years owing to a change in policy by Birds Canada. The 2023 OFO Convention generated a loss of \$8,322 owing to unanticipated cost increases. The Finance Committee regularly reviews OFO’s financial statements.

**Moved by Jeff, seconded by Jack Alvo, to accept the Treasurer’s Report. No discussion. All in favour, no abstentions. Motion carried.**

## **Publication Costs:**

Jeff then announced a change regarding Publication Costs:

- In a continuing effort to encourage members to read OFO publications online, starting in 2025, members will be charged \$10/year if they opt to receive OFO News in paper format, and \$10/year for Ontario Birds.
- This move was prompted by rising printing and paper costs, recognition that publication costs are OFO’s largest expense, and the loss of revenue from Birdathons.
- We also want the flexibility to support conservation efforts and projects.

## **New By-law and Articles of Amendment:**

New Ontario legislation required OFO to establish a new By-law to govern our activities. There are no significant differences in the way OFO will operate. The new By-law has been approved by the Board and is recommended for approval by Members.

**Moved by Jeff, seconded by Jack Alvo, to approve the proposed new By-law No. 1 of Ontario Field Ornithologists, which was sent to Members on August 21, 2024 and will replace the existing By-laws. No discussion. All in favour, no abstentions. Motion carried.**

Also required by legislation is the filing of Articles of Amendment, which replace the Letters Patent of 1986 under which OFO was incorporated. Importantly, there are no changes of substance as the name and objects of OFO are unchanged.

**Moved by Jeff, seconded by Jack, to approve the 2024 Articles of Amendment for Ontario Field Ornithologists. No discussion. All in favour, no abstentions. Motion carried.**

### **Board and Committee Reports**

These reports are included in the AGM Materials Package which was sent to members on September 24 and which is available on the OFO website.

**Moved by Jeff, seconded by Kiah Jasper, to accept the 2024 Board and Committee reports. No discussion. All in favour, no abstentions. Motion carried.**

### **Board of Directors:**

Jeff thanked two members who are retiring as Directors: Susan Nagy, who led our fundraising and was active in the Finance Committee, and Lynne Freeman, who served for 15 years, half of that time as President. Lynne received a standing ovation. Going forward, Lynne plans to attend Board meeting as a non-voting member.

The terms of four other Directors end in September 2024 and all four stated that they would like to be re-elected to another 3-year term. No other nominations were received to fill these positions.

**Moved by Jeff, seconded by Dave Milsom, to approve the re-election of Kiah Jasper to the Board of Directors. No discussion. All in favour, no abstentions. Motion carried.**

**Moved by Jeff, seconded by Sarah Rupert, to approve the re-election of Gis Segler to the Board of Directors. No discussion. All in favour, no abstentions. Motion carried.**

**Moved by Jeff, seconded by Mike Burrell, to approve the re-election of Angie Williams to the Board of Directors. No discussion. All in favour, no abstentions. Motion carried.**

**Moved by Jack, seconded by Marcie Jacklin, to approve the re-election of Jeff Skevington to the Board of Directors. No discussion. All in favour, no abstentions. Motion carried.**

To fill the Board positions that became available with the retirement from the Board of Lynne Freeman and Susan Nagy, the Board has nominated Mark Peck and Andrea Kingsley. No other nominations were received.

**Moved by Jeff, seconded by Gis Segler, to approve the election of Andrea Kingsley to the Board of Directors. No discussion. All in favour, no abstentions. Motion carried.**

**Moved by Jeff, seconded by Jack, to approve the election of Mark Peck to the Board of Directors. No discussion. All in favour, no abstentions. Motion carried.**

### **Priorities for the upcoming year**

Jeff listed a number of priorities including growing our conservation agenda, increasing the number and exposure of Pride and Disability events, expanding the Young Birders program, and rolling out the optics program for young birders.

### **Motion to adjourn**

**Moved by Jeff, seconded by Kai Milliard, to adjourn the meeting. No discussion. All in favour, no abstentions. Motion carried.**

The meeting ended at 7:39.

**Jack Alvo** (he/him), *Secretary*

# The 2025-2026 Board of Directors

## By-law

The By-law of the Ontario Field Ornithologists stipulates that you, the Members, are entitled to elect new Directors at each Annual General Meeting (“AGM”). The Board of Directors may also, at any time, elect a new Director should there be a vacancy on the Board.

The By-law states that the total number of Directors is to be not more than 13, more than half of which are required for quorum.

The term of a Director is 3 years, however, Directors may choose to resign before a term is completed. OFO does not have a limit on the number of terms a Director may serve. Directors wishing to seek another term must be voted to the Board, the same as any candidate.

## Changes to the Board

There have been no changes to the Board since the 2024 AGM.

## The Current Board

The terms of the following Directors are not expiring this year and they are planning to stay on the Board:

Name	Expected Role in 2025-26	Director Since	Term ends
Mark Peck	President – see note	2024	2027
Jeff Skevington	Past President – see note	2021	2027
Andrea Kingsley	Advertising & Fundraising	2024	2027
Angie Williams	Membership	2021	2027
Sue Suess	Treasurer	2023	2026
Gis Segler	Conservation	2021	2027
Kiah Jasper	Young Birders	2021	2027
Mike Burrell	Director at Large	2020	2026

*Note: Following the AGM, and as has previously been discussed by the Board, a vote will be required by the Board to formally appoint Mark Peck as President to succeed Jeff Skevington, who will continue to serve on the Board.*

The terms of five directors come to an end this year. Three of the five are not planning to stay on the Board, while the other two are standing for re-election.

Departing from the Board are Sarah Rupert, who has served on the Board since 2016, responsible for Publicity and Communication; Marcie Jacklin, in her second tenure on the Board since 2022 in the role of Conservation; and Jack Alvo, who has served since 2019 as Secretary and formerly as Chair of the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDI). The Board thanks them for their years of service.

### **Standing for re-election**

The following directors are standing for re-election to another 3-year term:

**Dave Milsom:** Dave is an OFO life member who has served on the OFO Board since 1999 and is responsible for organizing OFO's field trips and special events, this year alone at over 100. This includes field trips for the OFO Annual Convention and its Gull Celebration Week-end, and shorebird viewing in May at Hillman Marsh. Dave is an active trip leader, both for OFO and internationally, and his life list has surpassed 6,000 species. Dave has been involved in the OFO's Young Birders and Enabled Birding committees. Presently he is very actively trying to gain OFO access to Ontario sewage lagoons as part of his role on the OFO Lagoon Committee, which is working to make Ontario lagoons more accessible for all birders. He has worked extensively with several Ontario indigenous groups and successfully incorporated Land Acknowledgements into all fieldtrip descriptions throughout the province.

**Colleen Reilly:** Colleen has been an OFO Board member since 2022, and feels so honoured to be able to contribute to the birding community of Ontario. She has been actively involved with OFO's EDI efforts, Field Trip Planning, and Convention Planning. Recently, she has been transitioning into the Board's Secretary role and is hoping to formally take on that role after the AGM. Colleen started and continues to run a birding group in the Halton/Hamilton area called The Pipits ([thepipits.com](http://thepipits.com)). The group began in 2019 and has a strong core group of members. Colleen has participated in a number of Christmas Bird Counts and Birdathons, and regularly contributes to Citizen Science in the naturalist area.

### **Nominations to the Board**

The Board has received a number of nominations for director positions on the Board. The nominations have been reviewed by the Board's Nominations Committee, and the Board is recommending that Members vote in favour of the following nominations:

**Carly Davenport:** Carly has been involved in Nature Canada's Bird Friendly Cities Program since 2021, founding two teams and currently a member of three. She was also a recipient of Nature Canada's Volunteer of the Year award for 2023, and FLAP Canada's Volunteer of the Year award for 2024. She currently sits on the Board of FLAP Canada, the Ontario Eastern Bluebird Society and North Durham Nature. Carly has a particular interest in raptors and grassland birds. She is a researcher on the Southern Ontario American Kestrel Study and enjoys participating in migration monitoring at Tommy Thompson Park Bird Research Station, as well as contributing to the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, Nocturnal Owl Surveys, and SwiftWatch projects. She has contributed as a guest author to Nature Canada and Ontario Nature Blogs and presented for a number of naturalist/environmental groups on the topic of bird conservation.

**Angela Eady:** Angela is a retired medical writer living in Hamilton. She discovered her passion for birds later in life, an interest that has been nurtured through memberships in the Hamilton Naturalists' Club and the Pipits Birding Group. She currently serves as an editor for OFO News.

**Doug Berry:** Doug is a more recent addition to the birding community, having joined The Pipits birding club several years ago and now blending his passion for travel with his drive to learn more about the natural world around him. Having found a community of like-minded individuals who have a deep appreciation for nature and birding, Doug would like to give back to the community that has given him so much. His recent community involvement has included being on the Canadian planning committee for the 2025 Birds on the Niagara International Birding Festival, and assuming responsibilities related to OFO's Certificates of Appreciation. Doug looks forward to leveraging his strong communication and organizational skills, along with his event planning experience, to help the OFO continue to achieve its goals.

**Jack Alvo** (he/him)

***OFO Director & Secretary***

# OFO Committee and Director Reports for 2024-25

## Bird reporting community tools from OFO

OFO's bird reporting community tools continue to grow. Each tool covered here serves a slightly different but often overlapping group of users. The OFO Board is excited to provide this varied "landscape" so that people can interact, share sightings and discuss Ontario birds in whichever format they feel most comfortable.

### OFO WhatsApp Community

The OFO WhatsApp Community was launched in April of 2024. WhatsApp communities are a way to "combine" groups. Each group functions on its own, but any member of the community can see a list of all the groups and request to join any they like.

The OFO WhatsApp Community is for anything related to birds in Ontario. Most groups focus on regional bird reports (e.g. regional Rare Bird Alerts or RBAs for short) but there's room for other more casual or topic-based groups to be added. If the number of groups becomes too large OFO will prioritize groups that share birding information.

There are currently 660 members (up 130 from last year) within the OFO WhatsApp community, which includes eleven groups. Groups are run and managed by individuals and not directly affiliated with OFO – the community is just a way to connect people and groups together, making it easy for people to find each other. OFO reserves the right to remove individuals or groups from the community. The OFO Code of Conduct is a central piece of this.

If you already have a WhatsApp group that you would like to add to the Community or would like to create a new one, please contact one of the Community Admins or email [WhatsApp@ofoc.ca](mailto:WhatsApp@ofoc.ca). Any individual can invite another individual to the community.

Want to join the community? Use this link: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/K7wYn5U6ZkkHoFQA6SgfEK>

### OFO Discord Server

The OFO Discord Server continues to grow over the past year. There are now 1,932 members of the server (up about 500 from last year) with new people joining regularly. Some of the top features that people use are regional chats, identification questions, non-bird natural history, eBird alert service (which filters the traditional email-based eBird alerts), and the young birders area. The young birders area is particularly active as a great place for young birders to connect. The server has an OFO members' area which includes a buy and sell channel among others that we have not promoted much to date but which has a lot of potential.

We still would like to expand the useful features and turn management of the server over to volunteers. If you're interested in helping run it, please get in touch with a board member or start a conversation on the server! If you haven't checked it out yet, head to <http://www.ofoc.ca/content/discord>

### Ontbirds and Birdnews Listservs

Ontbirds and Birdnews continued to operate as email-based Listservs for Ontario birders. Ontbirds is reserved for provincially rare bird reports and Birdnews is for everything else. All messages are moderated by the moderator team (Mike Burrell, Carter Dorscht, Kiah Jasper, and Jeff Skevington). Ivor Williams contributes a significant amount of time “behind the scenes”.

Instructions for joining both listservs are available on the OFO website and (along with the archives) at [ontbirds.ca](http://ontbirds.ca).

We continue to look into alternatives to ensure we have an effective email-based tool for Ontario birders to share information about birds and birding, to complement the many other platforms that exist on this landscape.

Ontbirds membership stayed steady at nearly 4,000 subscribers (up slightly from 3,886 last year to 3,890). Being restricted to the rarest birds in Ontario, email traffic is low on this listserv, with just 22 messages since last year’s AGM (down from 31 last year). This is in line with the goals when the two lists were split, so people have a way to just receive news on the rarest birds if they choose. We are looking for a volunteer (or volunteers) to share news to Ontbirds of any rare birds that don’t make it here “on their own” – if you’re someone that’s plugged into the various sources of rare bird news in Ontario and you’d like to help ensure as many people in the province hear about these birds as possible, please contact [ontbirds@ofo.ca](mailto:ontbirds@ofo.ca).

Birdnews membership is down slightly with 3,012 subscribers (from 3,108 last year). Messages are much more frequent on Birdnews, with regular weekly reports from different areas and daily hawk watch reports (spring and fall) and migration reports (spring) from some areas. As a result, 532 messages (up from 470 last year) came in since last year’s AGM.

If you’re interested in being a volunteer content moderator (approving messages before they go out to everyone) for either or both listserves, please contact [ontbirds@ofo.ca](mailto:ontbirds@ofo.ca).

**Mike Burrell (he/him)**  
***OFO Director***



## Conservation

During 2024-2025 the OFO Board has been taking a more active role in advocacy.

OFO launched a petition to attempt to make some changes to Ontario's Bill 5. Unfortunately, this bill passed unchanged in June 2025. The Bill opens the door to multiple serious impacts for the environment and in particular endangered bird species. To get more information on this issue, please visit Ontario Nature <https://ontarionature.org/campaigns/bill-5/>

In August 2025, OFO sent a letter to multiple organizations involved in the attempt by Innergex to acquire approximately 2500 acres for a solar farm on the Carden Alvar. OFO was present at the inaugural meeting for this project to voice our concerns around its proposed location. The Carden Alvar is a significant wildlife area that many OFO members have been involved with for decades. We also sent a letter to the City of Kawartha Lakes, which will soon be voting on this proposal, and we will continue to push for a less ecologically unique and sensitive area to be used for this project. Couchiching Conservancy is coordinating a community response and information for this project. Please contact Courtney Baker at [courtney@couchconservancy.ca](mailto:courtney@couchconservancy.ca) to help out.

OFO also continued to fund conservation projects like the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. If you have a non-partisan conservation project you would like to highlight with a short article in OFO News or receive funding for, please contact [conservation@OFO.ca](mailto:conservation@OFO.ca).

**Gis Segler (he/him)**

**Marcie Jacklin (she/her)**

***OFO Directors – Conservation***

# Equity Diversity and Inclusion (“EDI”) Committee

In 2025, OFO's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee continued to meet and work towards the goal of making birding a more welcoming space for all Ontarians.

A major highlight was the return of the annual Pride walks. This past May, Jeremy Hatt was critical in organizing the Birding With Pride event during the Point Pelee Festival of Birds. This popular event continues to expand each year as participants travel from across the province to take part. Importantly, this event raised over \$700 for Trans Wellness Ontario. This organization works to protect the rights and welfare of Transgender people across the province at a time when this community is increasingly under attack. Thank you to Jeremy and all the walk leaders who made this amazing event possible.

John Nishikawa and May Matchim co-led the annual Pride Month Birding Walk at Tommy Thompson Park in Toronto, a joint event between OFO and the Toronto Field Ornithologists (TOC). Also, Jeremy Hatt and Jennifer Nantais co-led an annual Pride Month outing at Ojibway Park near Windsor in collaboration with Essex County Field Naturalists. Both of these outings have been running since 2022.

Also in conjunction with TOC, we had two outings specifically geared toward people with disabilities: one at Rosetta McClain Gardens in Toronto's east end, and one which was also a collaboration with Downsview Park and held there.

Beyond this, the EDI Committee met several times throughout the year to discuss ways of addressing financial barriers in birding, ways of making the annual convention more accessible, and brainstorming about new partnerships with outside organizations. Congratulations on another fantastic year.

**May Matchem** (she/her)

***Chair – Equity Diversity & Inclusion Committee***

# Field Trips

We have once again been fortunate this year to be able to provide 100 fieldtrips, webinars and workshops for our members and guests.

We are continuing to offer our members free field trips to birding locations throughout this huge province, from southern Ontario's top locations to Rainy River and Thunder Bay in the west, to Cochrane and Timmins in the north, and to Ottawa and Kingston in the east. Many of the field trips in 2025 have again been fully subscribed and upcoming ones are mainly full already, with a waitlist which will automatically enroll the top entry when a registered person cancels. Because so many members wish to participate in field trips at some of the best birding sites in Ontario, it is very important and only fair that registered applicants who decide not to attend please ensure they **cancel online** to give others the opportunity. We ask members to do this rather than failing to show up on the day of the trip. Unfortunately this continues to be a problem. We are extremely lucky as an organization that we can count on so many experienced and willing leaders to lead our fieldtrips. These individuals freely volunteer their time to often guide large groups of birders with differing experiences and needs. Please remember to thank them for their willingness to lead. Remember that they do this purely on a volunteer no-fee basis.

As part of our efforts to attract new birders including those with disabilities, we have devised some new field trips which cater to all. No-one should feel that they are not welcome on any trip. Novices and experienced birders are all welcome.

We are always looking for new birding sites and will offer some very exciting new destinations in 2025-26. Keep an eye on our website : [www.ofo.ca](http://www.ofo.ca).

OFO has developed a Land Acknowledgement to recognize the Indigenous peoples who have inhabited Ontario over thousands of years. We encourage trip leaders who feel comfortable with their own expression of a suitable Land Acknowledgement to pay tribute to the Indigenous groups who inhabit the area in which their particular field trip takes place. We try to post reports from field trips where available as well trip photos on Facebook and Instagram.

Events upcoming in 2026 include the OFO annual Convention in Point Pelee in Fall, plus a northern Ontario Convention held at the same time, and several webinars and workshops throughout the year.

We have established an OFO Lagoon Committee to work with municipalities, and we are gaining headway with this endeavour.; and our Ambassador Program will continue its great work begun three years ago in monitoring and organizing rare bird viewing at specific locations when rarities occur.

**Dave Milsom**  
**OFO Director, Trips**

# Fundraising

Thank you to our sponsors, donors, and friends who've helped make all that we do in OFO possible. OFO is completely run by volunteers, so we really depend on the generosity of people and organizations who believe in what we do.

There are three businesses we know we can always count on: Gentec, Pelee Wings, and Vortex. Their steady support through continued advertising in our publications and through donations year after year makes a tremendous difference. This year, we're especially grateful for their sponsorships and generous donations of binoculars for our raffle.

We also thank Justin Peters of Quest Nature Tours for the travel gift certificates; and the Huron Fringe Birding Festival, Canada National Parks, Essex Field Naturalists, and Essex Conservation Authority for their annual passes and memberships. And a special thank you to Andrea Kingsley and Sarah Rupert for sharing their beautiful artwork with us.

OFO is always working to bring in new advertisers and sponsors. That support helps us keep costs down for the Young Birders Camp and makes it easier for people to attend our annual conference.

To strengthen OFO's future, we've launched a new tiered sponsorship program, with each level named after an Ontario Species-at-Risk bird. But here's where we really need your help – **if you know businesses, organizations, or individuals who might be interested in supporting OFO, please let us know. A simple suggestion or connection from you could make all the difference.**

To help increase awareness of OFO and **grow** membership, information postcards have been created and will be distributed to various areas frequented by birders.

It's not only our long-standing partners who make an impact — every contribution matters. This year, we are especially delighted to recognize ElLOWYN Stovel, a 14 year-old artist whose remarkable watercolour greeting cards are both generous and inspiring.

It's contributions like these — from businesses, organizations, artists, and individuals—that allow OFO to thrive. Thank you.

**Andrea Kingsley (she/her)**  
**OFO Director - Fundraising**

# Membership and Outreach

As of August 24, 2025 there were **2,088 active memberships**, which is 290 more than at this time last year. OFO continues to extend free membership to those who cannot afford to pay. Those members who can pay a lesser amount are encouraged to offer it as a donation to OFO.

**Online Members Meetings** were held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month from September through April of 2025. Members Meetings include bird- and birding-related presentations, over Zoom, in order to be accessible to birders from across Ontario and beyond. The 2025-26 season began on September 3. Details can be found in the Events section at [ofo.ca](https://ofo.ca).

**As part of our efforts to be inclusive**, OFO endeavours to organize a number of trips specifically tailored for birders who face barriers that might otherwise limit their participation. Examples are: those with mobility difficulties; new Canadians; LGBTQ+.

Since OFO is a volunteer-run organization, **we are continually recruiting volunteers** for a wide variety of roles. If you are interested in helping out from time to time, email [membership@ofo.ca](mailto:membership@ofo.ca) and we will help steer you towards an area of need.

**Your Board of Directors wishes to express appreciation to all our volunteers, as well as our Founding and Lifetime members!** We are hoping to be more intentional in the coming months in recognizing those who contribute so much to OFO. One of the initiatives to that end is to highlight some of these members in OFO News. If you wish to nominate a prominent OFO member for recognition in the OFO News, please contact [membership@ofo.ca](mailto:membership@ofo.ca).

**Annual OFO renewals are due in January.** We encourage members to renew online, if possible, at [ofo.ca](https://ofo.ca), since online renewals are activated instantly and help us save paper and time. An OFO membership makes a great gift!

Also, **please consider a donation** to OFO, as membership dues do not cover all of OFO's expenses. Your donation is vital! Donations to the General Fund support OFO's field trips and workshops, publications and events, and donations to conservation efforts. A donation to the Young Birders Program supports the annual Alan Wormington Memorial Camp and several other unique experiences OFO provides to young birders. All donations of \$10.00 or more qualify for a tax receipt.

**Angie Williams (she/her)**  
**OFO Director - Membership**

# Ontario Bird Records Committee (OBRC)

The 2024 OBRC reviewed 87 records of which 72 (83%) were accepted. Two records were held back pending further investigation.

The members of the 2024 Committee were Gerard J. Phillips (chair), Cameron K. Chevalier, Amanda C. Guercio, Kiah R. Jasper, Michelle A. Martin, Jon P. Ruddy, and David E. Szmyr. Mike V.A. Burrell was the archivist and N. Anthony Kaduck served as the non-voting secretary.

Two new species were added to the Ontario list: Short-tailed Shearwater (*Ardenna tenuirostris*), and White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*). The total Ontario species list stands at 511. A further two species have been added owing to splits in the taxonomy, with the formerly monotypic Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*) and Barn Owl (*Tito alba*) being replaced in the Western Hemisphere with Western Cattle-Egret (*Ardea ibis*) and American Barn Owl (*Tyto furcata*). These changes do not affect the Ontario list total.

No new species were added to the Lowlands Review List; the total number recorded in this review zone remains at 334.

No new species were added to the Central Review List; the total number of species recorded in this review zone remains at 389.

No changes were made to the subspecies review list.

The 2024 Bird of the Year is the Short-tailed Shearwater.

The full Annual Report is available in the August edition of Ontario Birds.

At the conclusion of this year's annual meeting, the 3-year terms for Amanda Guercio, Michelle Martin have ended, and the committee elected Sarah Lamond to begin 3-year term starting in 2024. Anthony Kaduck's term as secretary ended, and Michelle Martin has stepped in as the new Secretary. Before departing, Anthony Kaduck endorsed Ezra Campanell to take up the new position of Assistant to the Secretary.

**Gerard Phillips (he/him)**

***OBRC Chair***

# OFO News

OFO News is published three times a year: in February, June, and October. It is inaptly called the newsletter of the Ontario Field Ornithologists. Having evolved from its original purpose, it might be better served with another descriptor.

OFO News articles cover three main areas: birds, birders, and birding. The editors try to achieve a balance between all three areas, and the editorial team is particularly enthusiastic to publish pieces where these themes intersect.

We welcome unsolicited ideas for articles and we are especially happy to receive drafts of articles written by OFO members. We may not be able to publish every article that we receive, but we always appreciate the effort that goes into preparing an article for our consideration, and we are happy to work with authors to develop new ideas and drafts. If you have an idea for an OFO News article, please do contact us at [ofonews@ofocanada.ca](mailto:ofonews@ofocanada.ca) ..

In addition, we are always pleased to receive honest feedback on articles. Feedback helps us improve and we want to keep doing better.

While OFO News commends the diversity of OFO's membership and OFO's initiatives to promote inclusivity, we are not always successful in publishing content that reflects our diversity in every issue.

In the past year OFO News has introduced several new features: You Asked Us, Meet a Volunteer and Life Member Profile, the latter with the Board's valued contribution. In 2026, we will add a feature possibly titled "What are They Doing Now". This feature will follow up on the lives and careers of Alan Wormington Memorial Camp graduates. We will rotate a Life Member Profile, Meet a Volunteer and camp grad articles through the issues.

This past year we also generated an OFO News Editorial Style Guideline and an OFO News Editors' Tasks Guideline. The guidelines are intended for OFO News editors only. Historical documents from the OFO website, consultations with Judie Shore, Lynne Freeman, and Paul Nicholson, and our own experiences informed their development. The purpose of the Guidelines is to standardize procedures, ensure a smooth transition as the make up of the team turns over and reduce Judie Shore's workload.

OFO News does not find that guidelines or instructions for authors are useful. We don't want to burden and discourage authors with rules about requirements. The editors are responsible for compliance.

In the course of developing the guidelines, we found conflicting and likely outdated information in various places on the OFO website.

There have been many changes in the makeup of the OFO News editorial team in the past year. We thank our departing lead editor Paul Nicholson, co-lead editors Ted Down and Evan Millar, co-editor Ankur Khurana and our esteemed consultant Mark Field for their valued contributions. Our new co-editors are Emily Burton and Angela Eady, and Mike Burrell has graciously joined Michelle Martin as a new Editorial Consultant. The editorial team brings a range of backgrounds and experiences which continue to enrich the content of OFO News. We are looking for another co-editor although the three of us are managing well for the time being. Paul Nicholson continues to be very supportive of OFO News with regular contributions. Our editorial consultants Michelle Martin and Mike Burrell are an amazing and treasured resource of knowledge and editorial skill.

As always, the co-editors can be reached at: [ofonews@ofo.ca](mailto:ofonews@ofo.ca) . We look forward to hearing from you.

**Anita Aviad, Mike Burrell, Emily Burton, Angela Eady, Michelle Martin**  
**Co-editors, OFO News**



# Ontario Birds

***Ontario Birds*** is the scientific journal for ornithology published by the Ontario Field Ornithologists. It provides an outlet for the publication of original research and observations by amateur and professional ornithologists and its focus is the status, distribution, identification and behavior of birds in Ontario. We encourage full length articles and short notes which are reviewed by the editorial team (and outside reviewers if necessary) and considered for publication provided they meet the guidelines for content and geographical boundaries of the journal. In addition, Letters to the Editor and Reviews of books of interest to Ontario ornithologists are welcome. Each year, the Report of the Ontario Bird Records Committee and the write up of the annual recipient of the Distinguished Ornithologist Award are published.

Three issues are published annually, in April, August and December. For the report at the AGM, we report on the most recent three issues: December of last year and April and August of this year. These three issues consisted of 176 pages and included 8 articles and short notes, as well as one letter to the editor. The articles spanned a broad array of species groups including waterfowl, colonial waterbirds, shorebirds, raptors, woodpeckers and passerines. The species covered in these articles consisted of the Canvasback, Common Tern, Limpkin, Osprey, Northern Mockingbird and various passerines and woodpeckers that were attracted to winter sap. The write up for the 2024 Distinguished Ornithologist Award, received by Mark Peck, was included.

***Ontario Birds*** thanks the 13 individual authors who contributed articles and notes for our last three issues. Barry Kent has provided us with 3 pieces of stunning artwork for the covers of these issues and Judie Shore continues to do an excellent job with the layout and design. We thank the many photographers who have supplied the wonderful photos for last year's issues, contributing greatly to the appearance and enjoyment of the journal.

We would like to thank our departing co-editor, Dr. Evan Millar, for his hard work on the journal and wish him luck in future endeavours. We continue to seek a fourth co-editor to join our team.

We look forward to receiving your inquiries, ideas and drafts of future articles and notes for ***Ontario Birds***. We can be reached at [ontariobirds@ofoc.ca](mailto:ontariobirds@ofoc.ca).

**Chip Weseloh, Pamela Martin and David Welch,**  
***Co-editors, Ontario Birds***

# Publicity & Communication

Our social media presence continues to grow on Facebook and Instagram, slowly and in most part in the very popular field trip report posts. A big thank you to Dave Milson, who makes sure all these reports get up - even when Facebook isn't cooperating. We have pulled back from Twitter given the current atmosphere on the platform, though we have maintained our account and have claimed our name on BlueSky to ensure we have it when/if we decide to start posting on that platform.

Our YouTube channel continues to allow access to recordings of live presentations for people who aren't able to attend member meetings. We expanded our offer to include information about enabled birding, working in partnership with Birds Canada. Subscribers and views continue to grow. (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCq50dMTiQtDYcREI7iZ8yBQ/featured>)

Two different promotional materials were created this year:

1. OFO Pride pins – lapel pins were re-printed given their popularity and were distributed at Pride events and for members to wear as a welcome to the LBGTQ2+ community.
2. OFO Join Us postcard - initially produced for the spring season, this card was so popular that we had to re-print it again before the start of the summer to be able to distribute at other birding locations in the province.

Follow along with our social media streams throughout the coming year.

You can find us here:

[Facebook.com/OntarioFieldOrnithologists](https://www.facebook.com/OntarioFieldOrnithologists)

[Instagram.com/OFOBirds](https://www.instagram.com/OFOBirds)

***Sarah Rupert (she/her)***

***OFO Director & Publicity & Communications Coordinator***

# Young Birders

2025 was an exciting year for the Young Birders Program, which was highlighted by the growth of the Optics Program and also the Young Birders Camp in Algonquin Park.

The Optics Program is continuing to grow and support up and coming Ontario birders with new gear, with 4 recipients receiving new binoculars, scopes and cameras in 2025. Additional drop off sites were also added to the Optics Program this year.

The Alan Wormington Memorial Camp at Algonquin Park continues to be a cornerstone of the Young Birders Program, providing a space for young naturalists to meet their peers and learn from some of the province's top birders.

The 2025 camp ran from August 9th – 17th and had fifteen participants. Highlights were seeing all of the northern boreal specialties, paddling on a quiet evening, watching a moose feeding, and hearing a wolf pack.

This year the young birders also did an I-Naturalist BioBlitz, recording an impressive 423 species of butterflies, dragonflies, plants, etc., plus 71 bird species during a single day!

**Kiah Jasper (he/him)**  
**OFO Director, Young Birders**

# OFO Awards for 2024-25

## Certificates of Appreciation

Each year, OFO recognizes individuals and organizations for their contribution to the birds and birding community of Ontario. The recipients of the OFO Certificates of Appreciation for 2024-2025 are:

**Bernie Ladouceur, *nominated by John Prescott***

For his outstanding contributions to the Ontario birding community, including documenting birds in the Ottawa region, mentoring new birders, and contributing to numerous citizen science initiatives.

**Paul Nicholson, *nominated by Joanne Does***

For his outstanding contributions to birding education and awareness through his numerous well-researched articles found in many publications.

**Jean and Blayne Farnum, *nominated by Nancy Smith***

For consistently tracking new birds within the Niagara Region over 20 years and taking proactive, inclusive steps to ensure birders are able to observe the birds identified.

**Bruce Murphy, Mike Werner, Mark Milton, Jacob Lachapelle, and the Hilliardton Marsh Banding Team, *nominated by Andrea Kingsley***

For excellent hospitality at last year's OFO conference at Hilliardton, including hosting bird banding activities, owl observations, and obtaining access to field trip locations.

**May Matchim, *nominated by Jack Alvo***

For her enthusiastic and thoughtful leadership of OFO's Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee, including her initiation and co-leadership of outings for the LGBTQ+ community.

**Jeremy Hatt, *nominated by Sarah Rupert***

For his ongoing dedication to welcoming the LGBTQ+ community through organizing Birding with Pride at Point Pelee's Festival of Birds and other Pride walks throughout the province.

**Stewart McLellan, *nominated by Carly Davenport***

For his dedication and volunteer activities over numerous years to monitoring American Kestrels breeding in Southern Ontario, with the goal of better understanding their continued decline.

**Jared Taman and Kari Dalziel, *nominated by Angie Williams***

For graciously hosting birders to view the Gray-crowned Rosy Finch that appeared at their home during its stay in Winter 2025.

**Billy and Peggy Issac, *nominated by Martin Parker***

For providing support and assistance for OFO Moosonee/Moose Factory trips and introducing trip participants to Moose Cree Culture.

To nominate a person or organization for an OFO Certificate of Appreciation, please submit a nomination through the OFO website (<http://www.ofo.ca/site/canominate> ).

**Doug Berry (he/him)**

**OFO Volunteer, Certificates of Appreciation**

# Distinguished Ornithologist Award

The Board of the Ontario Field Ornithologists (OFO) is happy to announce that the recipient of the 2025 Distinguished Ornithologist Award (DOA) is Doug McRae.

Doug's lifelong dedication to the observation, study and conservation of birds in the province have resulted in tremendous contributions to the field, and he is undoubtedly an excellent choice for this award.

Growing up in Peterborough, Doug was an avid birder and collector of ornithological data from a young age, running birding surveys and salvaging tower strikes as a teenager. Doug went on to conduct avian surveys throughout Ontario and later pursued a career as a guide for the birding tour company, Field Guides, where he was able to share his curiosity and knowledge about birds and bird identification with hundreds of clients on trips across the globe.

Doug has published over 40 articles in journals including Ontario Birds, American Birds, and the Canadian Field Naturalist and he wrote Birds of Presqu'ile. He made extensive contributions to the Ontario ornithological community as a longstanding member of the Ontario Bird Records Committee. He was a founding member of the OFO, a member of its Organizational Committee and its first Secretary. He continues to lead Ontario birding hikes and teaches ornithology at Fleming College, passing on his enthusiasm and knowledge of birds.

A complete account of Doug's contributions to the study of birds in Ontario will be presented at the OFO Annual Convention in Sarnia on 19-21 September and will appear in the December issue of Ontario Birds.

**Nominated by:**

**Nicole Richardson, Jean Iron, Bruce di Labio and Pam Martin**