

## Bird Protection Quebec

### Annual Reports from Committees

March 1, 2009 to February 28, 2010

### Conservation

#### Conservation Committee

Members: Martin Bowman, Shawn Craik, Normand David, Diane Demers, Barbara Frei, Richard Gregson, Frédéric Hareau, Lance Laviolette, Barbara MacDuff, Helen Meredith, Betsy McFarlane, Rodger Titman

*Membership changes.* Normand David, Richard Gregson, and Betsy McFarlane resigned from the committee between July and November 2009. Helen Meredith joined the committee in April 2009, Barbara Frei joined in November 2009, and Frédéric Hareau joined in February 2010.

*Meetings.* The committee met on 19 March 2009 in Baie d'Urfé, and on 19 November 2009 in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue.

*Projects.* The following summarizes projects in which the committee led or was associated with:

1) *Cerulean Warbler monitoring.* Diane Demers surveyed the Philipsburg Sanctuary on 3 and 11 June 2009 for evidence of Cerulean Warblers. She confirmed three male Cerulean Warblers at two sites, and recorded vocalizations of each bird. Diane has systematically monitored Cerulean Warblers during the breeding period at Philipsburg since 2008. The committee plans to continue monitoring this species at risk at this site in upcoming years.

2) *Eastern Bluebird nest box monitoring.* Helen Meredith initiated a standardized monitoring program of the Eastern Bluebird nest boxes erected at the Mount Royal Cemetery. On 4 April 2009, volunteers examined 63 nest boxes and identified the remains of three Eastern Bluebird nests, one Tree Swallow nest, and 14 House Wren nests. On 24 October 2009, 59 nest boxes were examined; volunteers discovered five Eastern Bluebird nests, two Black-capped Chickadee nests, and 18 House Wren nests. Helen will continue to lead an annual nest box monitoring session (likely in the fall) at the cemetery, and she is developing a standardized numbering system for boxes at this site. Other BPQ participants in this project included Joel Bonin, Jane Cormack, Shawn Craik, Jeff Harrison, Chuck Kling, and Chris Murphy.

3) *Regroupment Québec Oiseaux (RQO) threatened birds project.* BPQ was once again involved in an RQO-led project to monitor species at risk and identify important breeding habitat for these species in the Montérégie region. Surveys occurred during 25 May-19 June 2009 in the Huntingdon and Godmanchester areas. Volunteers identified 19 Golden-winged Warblers, two Blue-winged Warblers, and five Brewster's Warblers. The Conservation Committee was responsible for recruiting BPQ members to participate in the surveys; Sophie Cauchon, Diane Demers, Jeremy Pausé, and André Pelletier volunteered for the project.

4) *Field trip data entry.* The committee established a database of sightings from some BPQ field trips on eBird. Richard Gregson began entering (into eBird) sightings data posted by field trip leaders on the Song Sparrow email list.

5) *Suivi de l'occupation des stations de nidification des populations d'oiseaux en péril au Québec* (SOS-POP). The Conservation Committee took over as BPQ's representative for *Regroupement QuébecOiseaux*'s SOS-POP program. Frédéric Hareau volunteered to manage this project.

6) *Proposed projects*. The committee initiated discussions relating to the possibility that BPQ become involved with Québec's Important Bird Area (IBA) program, and that the committee have a regular column in the Song Sparrow newsletter that features projects of the Conservation Committee and other bird-related conservation initiatives in Québec.

Respectfully submitted,  
Shawn Craik, Chair

### **Hawk Watch Committee**

The 2009 spring and fall hawk counts were completed successfully. The spring count ended up slightly above average overall, the highlights being a record count of Turkey Vultures, and very strong showings for both eagle species. By comparison, Sharp-shinned, Broad-winged and Red-tailed numbers were disappointing. The fall count recorded yet another new seasonal high for Turkey Vultures and, again, there were strong showings for both eagles. On the downside, the Broad-winged Hawk flight was poor and the Northern Harrier numbers were the lowest recorded since 1984.

Data from our counts continue to be entered on-line through the Hawk Migration Association of North America 'HawkCount' website. We are pleased to report that the complete set of spring and fall counts, i.e. 1980 to 2009 inclusive, have now been entered. Assistance in achieving this monumental goal was provided by HMANA for the fall 1982 to 1987 data sets and is gratefully acknowledge. Reports on the seasonal counts continue to be published yearly in *tchébec* and the HMANA Hawk Migration Studies publication.

Satellite tracking of Bald and Golden Eagles wintering in the northeastern and central states and migrating into Quebec for the summer was begun by two separate groups in 2008. The findings to date have proven to be of particular relevance to our hawk watches. The Valleyfield area has been shown to be a bottleneck for migrating eagles in the spring, with many birds travelling exactly the same route each year.

Funding for the 2009 counts and beyond is now being provided by the Ministère des Ressources Naturelles et de la Faunes, Quebec; the exact amounts being subject to end-of-year budget considerations. The MRNF continues in the preparation of a map of Quebec showing "hot zones" for raptor migration within which no wind farm development will be allowed.

No formal Committee meeting was held. Members are Mabel McIntosh, Chair, Bob Barnhurst, Jeff Harrison and Barbara MacDuff.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bob Barnhurst, per Mabel McIntosh

## **Montreal Christmas Bird Count**

Members: Jean Demers, Clémence Soulard, Virginia Elliott, Jeff Harrison

The final tally from the 74th Montreal Christmas Bird Count held on Saturday December 19, 2009 was 68 species. Two additional species were recorded during count week but not on count day. This brought the overall total to 70.

No new birds were recorded on count day this year. A single Wild Turkey, seen along Autoroute 30 in Kahnawake during count week, was a new bird for the overall count period.

Jean Demers continues as Assistant Compiler in charge of developing our feeder watcher program. In total we had ten feeder watchers this year scattered widely around the count area. This year feeder-watchers found three birds within count areas that were not recorded by field teams. As the years pass we hope to attract a small army of feeder-watchers to assist in providing a more accurate record of the variety of birds and their total populations within the count area

A total of 17,118 birds were recorded this year. This was slightly greater than the previous five year average of 16,173. The highest number of birds recorded on a count in recent years was 18,384 in 2005

This year we had a record number of field participants (70) in 16 teams. Up-to-date historical results, including 2009 data, will soon be found on our website.

The after-count compilation was held at the Montreal West Curling Club. The relaxed and cosy atmosphere turned out to be ideal venue for an event such as ours. The new compilation format, which consisted of inputting sector counts for each bird, displayed on a large screen, also seemed to be well received. About 45 people attended which is considerably better than in recent years.

Due to careful monitoring of participant fees, overseen by Virginia Elliott, we managed to reduce the deficiency to \$70.00. It seems unlikely that this can be reduced much lower.

Special thanks to Jean Demers, Clémence Soulard and Virginia for organizing the smooth running of the compilation. Given the favourable comments this year we expect to repeat the compilation in the same location next year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeff Harrison  
Compiler

## **Hudson Christmas Bird Count**

On Sunday January 3<sup>rd</sup> 41 brave birders headed out into the biting winds and blowing snow to count birds for the Hudson Christmas Bird Count. The count covers an area based on a 24 km diameter circle centred on St-Lazare.

The 16 field parties and 10 feeder watchers found a total of 5357 individual birds representing 46 species. Another two species were observed during the count week. There was one possible rarity on the count, a Brewer's Blackbird, normally a more western species. A detailed record of its sighting has been sent to the regional bird count editors for analysis and eventual acceptance or rejection.

Birds were generally low on the ground, possibly due to the fact that the period of prolonged fine weather in November did not encourage southward migration of northern species and then the sudden cold snap

prompted the departure of many birds that were here. Furthermore the driving snow and cold winds on the count day itself severely limited visibility. Very few hawks were spotted, no shrikes, and watchers on the river were unable to find many ducks or gulls. Most feeder watchers reported less than usual numbers of birds and some were dismayed not to have even a single visitor to their feeders!

Thanks go to everyone who helped out on the count either in the field or by manning their feeder and special thanks go to Gillian Kinsman who not only got out to count birds but hosted the post-count get together.

Respectfully submitted,  
Alison Bentley  
Compiler

### **Research Committee**

Members: Barbara Frei, Marcel Gahhauer, Richard Gregson, D. Jackson, Peter Tarassoff, Rodger Titman

During the past year, the BPQ Research Committee considered a smaller than usual number of applications and made awards to the following projects, the recipients of which have been requested to submit a summary of their progress that can be published in the forthcoming annual report of the society (*tchébec*).

- Nicola Fleming (McGill) for an undergraduate project concerning the breeding status of certain species in the Stoneycroft pond site adjacent to the Arboretum.
- Francois Rousseau (Sherbrooke) for a postgraduate project employing the use of transponders to monitor the activities, and interactions, of a population of hummingbirds.
- Pascal Coté (Tadoussac banding station) for a project investigating reasons why Common Nighthawks are in serious decline. This pilot-project aimed to establish a baseline for a segment of the population breeding in a well-defined ecosystem (boreal forest), differentiated from urban/city populations.

The Research Committee gives grants of up to \$3,000 per annum to qualifying projects concerning Quebec birds. That is a quite broad category and we do not restrict from whence applications will be received. We have always been prepared to consider private applications from knowledgeable individuals on exactly the same footing as we do those from the most prestigious academic departments. Despite this wide catchment, and despite the increased competition for any grant funding that these recessionary times are imposing on project managers, we have noticed a gradual falling off in the number of applications received in recent years. Some of this may be a result of changes in faculty at Quebec universities resulting in less students being pushed in our direction but in equal measure it is also a result of the low visibility that BPQ enjoys in so many fields – long established, well respected but not widely known about. This committee is not the only one to have noticed this trend.

We have also noticed a small, but regular, number of tentative applications from projects that are more survey/census than “research” in nature and which fall into an ill-defined gap between the remit of this committee and that of the parallel Support Grants committee which is where they usually end up. This is unfortunate.

Richard Gregson  
Chair

## **Sanctuaries Committee**

Members: Lance Laviolette, Jeff Harrison, Richard Gregson, Marie-Anne Hudson, Barbara MacDuff, Ron Mudd

2009 was a fairly quiet year for the Sanctuaries committee with no formal visits scheduled to our properties.

A number of signs depicting our logo and contact information were erected at strategic points around the Ghost Hill Farm property at Breckenridge in eastern Quebec. We had become aware that the only signage present was that of the Nature Conservancy, who jointly own the sanctuary with BPQ. This has helped raise our profile for visitors and to remind officialdom and the NCC that we are to be consulted..

The society was served with papers concerning a court order requiring a neighbour to one of our two properties in the Alderbrooke Marsh conservation area to make good various earthworks he had performed on his land to the detriment of the local habitat, including our site. We are required to allow necessary access while restoration is being performed. However, the history of this neighbour indicates that he is somewhat intransigent and we await actual developments with interest; meanwhile we have requested the government department overseeing the procedure (MDDEP) to keep us informed of progress and they have acknowledged our request with contact details etc.

In the new year, we were in contact with a representative of the QLF based in Blanc Sablon concerning Ile-aux-Perroquets. A project is in hand to install webcams on the island to monitor breeding birds and we have hopes of being able to access the feed from these once available and display it on our website. There is some concern about sub-surface fishing nets strung by locals between our island and the shore which could impact diving seabirds, as well as circumstantial evidence that “egging” is still practiced in the region. This island is far away and we need to rely on local informants for our knowledge. While we intend to monitor the situation, in practice there is probably little that we can do to change things as in the minds of some officials traditional practices may sometimes trump conservation. Nevertheless, we were heartened to learn that the breeding bird colonies on our island are seemingly in good condition.

Respectfully submitted,  
Richard Gregson  
Marie-Anne Hudson  
Co-Chairs

## **Ad hoc Bylaws Revision Committee**

Membership: Marie-Hélène Gauthier, Martin Bowman, Jean Bacon, Jean Harwood Gregson, Jeff Harrison, Richard Gregson

The committee met from summer of 2009 to February of 2010 and produced a draft revision of the society’s bylaws that will be presented, with board approval, to the membership for adoption at a special general meeting to be held immediately prior to the AGM in late May.

The process was lengthy but surprisingly stimulating and the members of the committee thank the board for entrusting them with this opportunity to modernize and improve our procedures for the years ahead.

Respectfully submitted,  
Richard Gregson  
Chair

### **Property Acquisition Committee**

Members: Lance Laviolette, Richard Gregson, Joel Bonin, Marie-Hélène Gauthier, Eve Marshall, Jeff Harrison

The committee met on December 8, 2009 to discuss our priorities and possible acquisitions. BPQ did not acquire any properties during the year although we are monitoring a number of properties that the NCC is interested in acquiring that are of interest to us.

Our initial prime interest this year was in the possible acquisition with NCC of the Audette property at Philipsburg. As it developed this proved unfeasible when Rhéal Audette bought out the interests of his wife. NCC is also interested in acquiring an island in the St. Lawrence River near our properties of Ile-Verte and Ile-aux-Canards.

During late 2009 and early 2010 NCC Quebec was negotiating to purchase about 1,000 acres in the Piedmont area. This large tract abuts one of our Kelly properties, the one which did not contain the Kelly cottage. The tract includes the area beyond the farm, a section of cliffs and river frontage.

Should NCC succeed they hope to promote the acquisition of the property and the adjoining BPQ Kelly lands. NCC hopes to complete the acquisition before the end of 2010. They feel that a successful purchase would be an ideal opportunity for BPQ to promote our interest and involvement in land acquisition and the Kelly legacy. At this stage NCC would like these negotiations to be kept confidential within BPQ.

The Property Acquisition Committee has determined that with our limited resources we should concentrate future acquisitions around current sanctuaries. High on our list is our largest sanctuary at Philipsburg. NCC owns a beachfront property on Lake Champlain near our Philipsburg Sanctuary. In future they would like to carry out restoration and hopefully eliminate hunting. NCC would like to encourage BPQ to use the property as part of field trip activities at Philipsburg, and perhaps take some involvement with activities associated with this parcel of land.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeff Harrison  
Chair

### **Support Grants Committee**

Members: Jean Demers, Alain Goulet, David Mulholland, Helen Meredith, Rodger Titman

The Support Grants Committee met in early April 2009 to evaluate the requests for grants.

The committee awarded the following grants:

- \$1,500 to Bird Studies Canada for the expansion of Bird Studies Canada's Québec nocturnal owl survey;
- \$1,000 to the McGill Bird Observatory for the continuation of their work at the banding station;

- \$1,000 to Le Nichoir to send volunteers and student-staff to a class at the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Association held in March in Chicago.

Having dispensed with its duties, the committee has not meet again during the year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jean Demers  
Chair

## Education

### Education Committee

Committee members: Christine Burt, Marie-Helene Gauthier, Sarah-Jane Hills, Barbara MacDuff, Gay McDougall, Lynn Miller, David Mulholland, Christine Murphy, Albert McArdle

École St. Remi: Gay McDougall and David Mulholland prepared a power point presentation on birds that could be seen at Bois-de-L'Ile-Bizard Nature Park. In April it was presented to the grade 3-4 students at École St. Remi in Beaconsfield by Marie-Helene Gauthier. The students also learned about conservation and the goals of Bird Protection Quebec. The Education Committee paid for a bus trip to Ile Bizard in May as follow up to the classroom work but unfortunately the trip was cancelled due to rainy weather. The students went to the Ecomuseum instead.

Baie du Febvre: Committee members accompanied Girl Guides to Baie-du-Febvre in April. The girls and their parents were thrilled with the spectacle of thousands of Snow Geese against the blue sky. Thanks to David Mulholland, Mark Brenchley, Chris Murphy, Gay McDougall, and Barbara MacDuff for helping out and t Gay and Mark for preparing a checklist of the birds at Baie-du-Febvre for the Girl Guides to use.

Wood duck boxes: Albert McArdle built 3 to be placed in Angell Woods.

L'Anse a L'Orme: Doris Miller, chair of Environmental Studies at John Abbott College, requested birders to accompany her students to the woods on L'Anse a L'Orme in Ste. Anne de Bellevue to observe "edge birds". This was in preparation for the year 2010 that has been declared the year of biodiversity by the UN Secretariat on Biodiversity. Three trips were held in the spring and three in the fall.

Thanks to Jean Demers, David Fletcher, Gay McDougall, Chris Murphy, Clémence Soulard, Felix Hilton, Barbara MacDuff, and David Mulholland for their help on the field trips.

St. John Fisher School: Education paid for a bus to transport students to Bois-de-Ile-Bizard Nature Park in June. It was perfect morning for birding and many of the enthusiastic students were thrilled to see some of the birds that they had researched in the classroom.

Thanks to Chris Murphy, David Mulholland, Gay McDougall, Jean Demers, Audrey Speck, Marlene Hornstein, Audrey Speck, Cliff Ford, Eve Marshall, Clémence Soulard, Sylvia Wees and Barbara MacDuff for their help.

Bird of the Month: Information on local species was available on BPQ's website. Thanks to Gay McDougall and others that contributed their expertise for this project.

Royal Montreal Golf Course: A bird survey of the course was done in May. Thanks to Chris Murphy, Felix Hilton, Ross Murphy, Ann and Peter Tarasoff and Barbara MacDuff for their help.

BPQ Labels: Gay McDougall prepared some Bird Protection Quebec labels that have our web site address. They will be used for publicity.

Camp Tamaracouta: \$1200.00 was donated to the camp for an animator for their Ecology Centre in the summer.

Morgan Arboretum: \$210.00 was used to purchase food for the feeders at Morgan Arboretum. Thanks to Bill Webster for picking up the seed and for filling the feeders all winter long.

Passenger Pigeon: The stuffed Passenger Pigeon that has been stored at the Bird and Nature Centre was donated to McGill University by David Bird during Home Coming Week.

Telescope: Thanks to a grant from Nature Canada a sturdy telescope was purchased to accompany children on their bird walks.

Thank you to Alain Goulet for his help in recommending a scope. His generosity enabled us to purchase a wonderful piece of equipment that the children will benefit from in the future.

Thanks to Kyra Emo for leading and reporting on the Jim Houghton Warbler walks held at the Summit every Tuesday morning during late April and throughout the month of May. Thanks also to Chris Murphy and Gay McDougall for their help.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara MacDuff  
Chair  
Education Committee

### **Monthly Meetings Committee**

Members: Gail Desnoyers

Finding speakers of interest to members is challenging and enlightening. By talking to specialists in the field of ornithology one learns what the current issues are and where the research is heading. I am interested in finding ornithologists working in all the universities in the province and locating new contacts.

BPQ has a wealth of knowledgeable, educated, long-time bird observers, many with experience throughout the province if not worldwide. Speakers often mention the huge benefits to the field of ornithology through "citizen scientists" whose eyes and ears greatly enhance the accumulated records and evolution of the field. Monthly meetings are a chance to motivate, educate and promote this sharing of information.

Our speakers and topics for the 2009- 2010 season were as follows

March 2, 2009: Jay Vander Gaast, tour leader with Field Guides Inc, gave a presentation entitled: "Madagascar: the Eighth Continent". Physically separated from continental Africa for more than 160 million years, the island nation of Madagascar has developed some of the most unique and fascinating life forms on earth including many interesting and unique bird species..

April 6, 2009: Nature photographer and teacher Christopher Dodds spoke on the topic entitled: "Bird Photography – Pure & Simple". Using his world-class photographs Christopher shared with us many useful tips, tricks and techniques he uses to secure his images.

October 5, 2009 : Dr. André Cyr was scheduled to speak on "Changes in Bird Behaviour " however he took ill and Shawn Craik, now with a Ph.D. in avian biology from McGill spoke on "How Well Do You Know the Ducks of Eastern Canada ? " Shawn gave an interactive presentation with Q & As, only stumping us with the molts. A very popular, enthusiastic speaker. We appreciated his coming with very little advance notice.

November 2, 2009: Denis Hamel, a speaker with an unusual background in both music and ornithology from Laval University, spoke on "The Song of Birds as a Source of Inspiration for the Great Composers". This was a multimedia presentation with pictures of birds, music notation and song all integrated in one lecture.. A great chance to try to put it all together and try to remember the sounds .We left with Vivaldi, Beethoven and Messiaen dancing in our heads with tanagers, thrushes and wrens.

December 7, 2009: Marie-Anne Hudson, also with a new PhD. from McGill in Wildlife Biology, and Barbara Frei, an MA student at McGill specializing in Bobolinks ( who filled in for Marcel Gahbauer who was called away), spoke about the history of the McGill Bird Observatory under the heading "From a Ramshackle Shed to Partnering with a National Organization : McGill Bird Observatory turns five Years Old." A truly remarkable endeavour from banding Saw-whet Owls to documenting the migrations of boreal songbirds and now to include public education and species specific research projects. Bravo! Many members participate in this work.

January 11, 2010:: Dr.Rodger Titman, retired professor from McGill and past President of BPQ, with Dr. David Bird, McGill professor

Both speakers are Wildlife Biology profs and old friends of BPQ who have taken students to Africa for many years. They spoke on " The Birds of East Africa " Their funny, enthusiastic presentation showed us some amazing habits and secrets of the most exotic birds imaginable. Their lectures are always well attended.

February 1., 2010: Dr. Louis Lefebvre, Professor of Biology at McGill with a Ph.D. in Psychology from the Université de Montréal with a focus on animals and the non-genetic means by which new behaviours originate. His original work with nine avian species in the Barbados and pigeons in Montreal has uncovered many surprises in animal intelligence. His topic was " Feeding Behaviour - A Window on Avian Intelligence "

The meetings are advertised through our website, the Song Sparrow Newsletter and the Songsparrow email group. Thanks to Richard Gregson, Averill Craig and Marie-Anne Hudson. The meetings also appear once a month in the Tip Sheet of *The Gazette* and on the *Ornithologie Québec* listserv. Thanks to Sheldon Harvey. Participation at most meetings varied between 40 and 60 people .

Speakers are given an honorarium of up to \$ 200. Some return the money to the BPQ and receive a tax credit. They are not offered travel or lodging expenses if they come from out of town. Thanks to Jean Harwood Gregson for issuing the cheques. Thanks to those people who introduced our speakers: Eve Marshall, Lance Laviolette, Chuck Kling, David Bird, Mark Brenchley, Jeff Harrison and others. A word of appreciation to Jean Demers and Clémence Soulard for the social aspect of the meetings as well as running the "Bird Sightings ."

Thanks to everyone who suggested names and helped me ease into the steps left by Jeff.

respectfully submitted,  
Gail Desnoyers

### **Membership Services Committee**

Members: Sophie Cauchon, Averill Craig (Chair), Jean Demers, Gay McDougall-Gruner, David Mulholland, André Pelletier, Clémence Soulard, Audrey Speck (Co-Chair), Sharon Veysey.

Gail Desnoyers, who had been Chair of Membership Services, stood down from the Committee after the 2009 AGM. Averill Craig, who had been Co-Chair, took over as Chair and Audrey Speck became Co-Chair.

The Membership Services Committee continued trying to make new members feel welcome and in May 2009 it again organized the annual post-AGM party. At the party, members were able to enjoy good food and drinks, and another mind-bending quiz set by Martin Bowman. Sheldon Harvey was the Master of Ceremonies.

The 2010 Winter Bird Course organized by the Committee was attended by an average of 25 people a lecture. The price of \$15 a lecture for members and \$20 for non-members was instigated last year and encouraged some participants to become members. The society made a profit of about \$800 on the series. The four lectures were offered at two-week intervals in February and March; all were supported with excellent audio-visuals, and enthusiastically received:

Kristen Keyes:	“What a Hoot – Owling 101”
Marcel Gahbauer:	“Raptor ID? No Need to Despair!”
Lance Laviolette:	“Breeding Bird Atlas Techniques and their Application to Day-to-day Birding”
Richard & Jean Gregson:	“Gardening for Birds – or How to Lengthen your Life-list in Comfort”

Sharon Veysey continued as our Membership Secretary, with Sylvia Wees looking after Life Members. Sharon sent renewal notices out at the end of August and several reminders after that. At the end of the fiscal year there were 372 annual and life memberships, 33 fewer than at the same time last year. We gained 15 new memberships, five returning memberships, but 53 memberships were not renewed, some for very understandable and others for unknown reasons. Sharon would like to thank the following people for their help and support throughout the year: Sheila Arthur, Jean Bacon, Averill Craig, Jean Demers, Alain Goulet, Jean Gregson, Tom Long, Karen Sherman, Clémence Soulard, Sylvia Wees and Fran Wright.

Membership Services continued to offer various items for sale at monthly meetings and via the website, including bird-friendly, fair-trade, organic coffee. Jean Demers and Clémence Soulard who look after the refreshment table at monthly meetings began offering coffee, tea and cookies before rather than after the meeting, which has encouraged more socializing amongst members attending. Many thanks to Mary-

Ellen Graham, Sylvia Wees and Mark Brenchley for their help with the Membership Services table throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Averill Craig, Chair  
Audrey Speck Co-Chair

## **Observation**

### **Field Trip Committee**

Members: Martin Bowman, Wayne Grubert, Sheldon Harvey, Alison Bentley, Darlene Harvey, Felix Hilton, David Mulholland

For the March 2009 to February 2010 time period members of BPQ again had the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of field trips to many birding locales in the immediate Montreal area as well as western Quebec and eastern Ontario. Several of these sites were new for our group.

A total of 43 full and half day formal weekend outings were organized for the spring, autumn and winter seasons. A cumulative total of approximately 569 birders took part in trips giving an average of 13 participants per trip. Seventeen different leaders and co-leaders volunteered their time to guide these excursions to 33 different areas. One weekday evening trip to Hudson was also held with 6 participants.

For the sixth year in a row Sheldon Harvey organized a slate of trips known as the “Summer Series of Birding” on weekends from mid-June to mid-August. Nine outings were held averaging 10 birders per trip.

The annual “Jim Houghton Memorial Spring Warbler Walks” at Summit Park in Westmount took place on Tuesday mornings during the peak spring migration period from late April to late May. Coordinator Kyra Emo reported an average of 17 participants for each of the six outings.

The Field Trip Committee once again was able to reserve camping sites at Point Pelee National Park for the annual spring migration in May. Ten members took advantage of this opportunity and enjoyed four days of birding at this world famous area. They observed, as a group, a total of 168 species.

Accommodations were also organized by Alison Bentley for a May weekend trip to Presqu’île Provincial Park in Ontario. Ten birders stayed at the park campground, local cottages or motels over two nights and spotted approximately 120 species.

On behalf of BPQ Jean Demers and Clémence Soulard organized a late May weekend trip to Île Verte where ten birders saw a total of 100 species.

Once again, on behalf of Bird Protection Quebec, the Field Trip Committee would like to thank all our leaders and organizers who volunteer their time to lead and co-lead our trips. Their efforts, enthusiasm and expertise are greatly appreciated by all involved.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne Grubert and Martin Bowman  
Co-Chairs

## **Marketing Committee Report**

Committee members: Patrick Asch, Christine Burt, Jane Cormack, Jean Demers, Alain Goulet, Sheldon Harvey.

Much of the Marketing Committee's work has focused on the design, layout and content of the new BPQ publicity brochure. We are pleased to report that the text and presentation have been approved by the Board and we are in the final stages of obtaining quotations for the printing of the document. We wish to thank Jean De Marre for his exceptional work and artistic talents in helping us out with the brochure.

Discussions within the Committee have been held to determine the most effective method of distribution of the brochures throughout the community, with the ultimate goal of raising the public awareness of BPQ and its activities with the hope of attracting new members to the organization.

The Committee continues to publicize several Bird Protection Quebec events including the monthly meetings, the Christmas counts and the birding lecture series, as well as various citizen science projects such as Project Feeder Watch, the Great Backyard Bird Count and the Baillie Birdathon, through various media outlets.

The Marketing Committee is very pleased to announce the addition of two new members to our ranks. We thank Jane Cormack and Christine Burt for stepping forward this year to offer their services.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sheldon Harvey  
Chair

## **Communications Committee**

### **Members**

Jean Bacon, Averill Craig, Diane Demers, Richard Gregson, Jean Harwood-Gregson, Marie-Anne Hudson, Zofia Laubitz.

The Communications Committee is responsible for the Society's communications arms: newsletter, website, electronic newsletter, group email and telephone line which, together, keep members in touch with all the Society's activities, be they field trips, monthly meetings, courses, special events and, of course, what birds have been seen and where.

### **The Song Sparrow Newsletter**

Marie-Anne Hudson (Editor), Diane Demers (French editor)

Marie-Anne Hudson has now been editor of The Song Sparrow for two full years (or 10 issues).

The transition to electronic distribution of the newsletter has been virtually seamless thanks to the ongoing efforts of Richard Gregson, Averill Craig and Sharon Veysey. With only about 60 members or organizations receiving a printed copy, the number is much lower than initially projected. This represents significant savings to BPQ and to the environment. Core articles included rare-bird listings, trip articles, memorial pieces, citizen-science projects, educational programs, monthly lectures, field-trip listings, stories from young birders, book reviews and ethical or environmental birding. Many thanks to the 40 members who contributed articles and/or photographs to the newsletter. We truly hope you continue to submit articles and photos for upcoming issues, as we cannot continue without your participation!

**BPQ web site and email**

Richard Gregson (Website Manager)

The website has continued to attract a regular stream of visitors. Visitors arrive at between 30 and 80 a day with occasional spikes above that during seasonal high spots. Although most are from our own region, a significant number come from all over the world - often being potential visitors to Quebec seeking information about our birds and the best places to see them. New features will be added as the need arises - we always welcome input from members and visitors and will try to incorporate the best of your suggestions and requests.

Plans are well advanced to replace the website with a new version that makes use of the latest technology and will give us a really striking new style and incorporate the latest in 'social media' facilities including offering members somewhere to create their own on-line photograph galleries and engage in on-line discussions about birding topics with each other. This new site is expected to roll out sometime around mid-May. At the same time we are taking the opportunity to finally make our website fully bilingual.

The BPQ email address, which is linked to the website, is monitored daily. Messages vary from people seeking birding friends with whom they have lost touch, those who want to visit Montreal and see rare birds, to organizations trying to drum up interest in a cause. In most cases, messages are forwarded to the person or committee most able to respond. We also often get enquiries about bird identification, bird welfare and various features of our programmes of events and field trips.

**Bird Calls**

Richard Gregson (Coordinator)

Our occasional e-newsletter is now well established and provides a very useful means of rapidly conveying information to members. It can include a reminder of forthcoming field trips and lectures, items relating to upcoming conferences, appeals for volunteers and is a means to solicit information from our members. It has the benefit of immediacy and is distributed to over 75% of the membership.

**Group email (listserv)**

Averill Craig (Moderator)

Membership in BPQ's *Songsparrow* group email grew to around 290 during the reporting period. Members continued to find reports of interesting birds and their locations to be a very useful service, as well as reminders about forthcoming field trips, the winter bird course and other events.

**BPQ phone line**

Sheldon Harvey

The number of phone calls to the BPQ phone line is fairly low, presumably because more people seeking information about the society are now comfortable with contact by email. Most callers were seeking information on what to do with an injured bird, and were referred to organizations best able to respond, such as Le Nichoir.

Respectfully submitted,  
Averill Craig  
Chair

## ***TCHÉBEC***

Committee members: Jean Bacon (Editor 2009), Averill Craig, Jean De Marre, Richard Gregson, Sarah Marteinson (Editor 2010), Betsy McFarlane

The 2008-2009 edition of *tchébec* was published and distributed in October 2009. For the first time, most members received this publication electronically. The report contained the usual features: the President's annual report to the AGM; Rare Birds in the Province of Quebec in 2008 (by Pierre Bannon), the Hawkwatch reports for Spring and Fall 2008 (by Bob Barnhurst and Mabel McIntosh), Research Reports from Lina Bardo, Yannick Charette and the Tadoussac Bird Observatory (the recipients of Alfred Kelly Fund Grants), and the Financial Statements for the year ended 28 February 2009. In addition, articles were published on the Montreal and Hudson Christmas Bird Counts (by Jeff Harrison and Alison Bentley, respectively), and McGill Bird Observatory Highlights 2008-2009 (by Marie-Anne Hudson). Brief histories of their association with PQSPB/BPQ of the directors leaving in May 2009 were also included.

As usual, the beautiful photograph of a Least Flycatcher by Pierre Bannon was used on the cover. Jean De Marre designed the layout and cover. Other photographs were supplied by Jean De Marre, Mark Dennis, Richard Gregson, Chuck Kling, Eve Marshall and André Pelletier. All contributions, both written and visual, are most gratefully acknowledged.

Many thanks to all members of the committee who assisted with ideas, coordination with authors, editing and proofreading. Special thanks to Jean De Marre for the layout.

The editorship was taken over at the beginning of 2010 by Sarah Marteinson.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jean Bacon, Editor (2009)

### **Awards Committee**

Members: Jeff Harrison, Chair, Wayne Grubert, David Mulholland

During the 2009-10 fiscal year only two members made nominations, including one Board member. The nominations we did receive were excellent.

The committee met on March 23rd, 2010. The following individuals were selected for awards:

Member of the Year: Diane Demers  
Service Award: Sophie Cauchon & André Pelletier  
Member Education Award: Peter Mitchell  
Member Conservation Award: Rodger Titman  
Quebec Education Award: Eve Belisle  
Quebec Conservation Award: Jean Gauthier & Yves Aubry

The Long Term Service Awards are to be given to the following members:

- Sylvia Wees
- Pierre Bannon
- Betsy McFarlane
- Mabel McIntosh
- Bob Barnhurst

The Committee discussed many candidates and the nature of all BPQ awards. In this context we think the lack of criteria for the selection of Honorary Vice-Presidents is an issue. The committee suggests that the next time that an individual is nominated, the Board develop criteria for this award. We recommend that these criteria be approved by the Board before discussions take place on the worthiness of the candidate.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeff Harrison  
Chair

### **Finance Committee**

Committee members: Jeff Harrison, Jean Harwood Gregson (Chair), Helen Meredith, Phyllis Holtz, Marie-Anne Hudson, David Mulholland, Ron Mudd

Although the markets recovered somewhat during the year from the low at the end of last year, the market value of our managed investments had barely returned to their original cost by the year end. This meant that we had to withdraw more units to receive the amounts required to fund our activities, so committees were asked to keep their expenditure to a minimum during the year to avoid depleting our capital any more than necessary. As a result, there was not much financial activity during the year, apart from essential expenditure.

In April 2009 a joint meeting of the Executive and Finance Committees was held to discuss the allocation of funds and the formation of financial policies. Unfortunately I was not able to follow up on this work until later in the autumn, so the Finance Committee met in December to consider various aspects of policy and strategy. Part of our strategy for capital will be driven by the new CRA (Canada Revenue Agency) requirements for calculating our Disbursement Quota. As a registered charity, we have always been required to spend 80% of donated income on our charitable activities, but from 2009, we are also required to use 3.5% of our invested capital for charitable purposes.

Information received from both our auditors and CRA makes it plain that regulations governing charities are increasing and also that more attention is being paid to compliance. This means that we have to increase the amount of effort and effectiveness of our record keeping. This applies particularly to finance but also affects other records of the society.

In February 2010 the committee met again to review budget requests and discuss financial policy. We concluded the latter has two aspects: the basic policies under which we manage our day to day financial activities and the broader strategies regarding our capital use and investments. Documents on these two aspects are currently being prepared for the board's consideration. Jeff Harrison has been of great assistance in reaching this point and I am grateful for the help and support of all the committee.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jean Harwood Gregson  
Chair

## **Executive Committee**

Members: Marie-Anne Hudson, Helen Meredith, Jean Bacon, Eve Marshall, Jean Harwood Gregson, Jeff Harrison

The new Executive met on November 24, 2009 and a combined Executive and Board meeting was held on February 9, 2010 specifically to discuss concern about declining membership.

The November meeting discussed issues arising from our last meeting in April including:

- allocation of separate funds for property acquisition;
- requirements of NCC Quebec in the acquisition of the latest property at Philipsburg was the creation of a Land Stewardship Fund; our Treasurer presented a paper on the costs for all our properties;
- the President presented a short paper, Guide to Committee Chairs, as a way to standardize committee operations; but it was decided that such formality was unnecessary.

New business discussed included:

- the disposal plan for the BPQ Library;
- Christmas Bird Count finances and venue;
- Concern was raised about the falling attendance at monthly meetings and field trips. Possible solutions and future actions were discussed.
- the President raised the issue of what urban nature initiatives we might get involved in. This led to a discussion and general agreement that a project or projects might be the best initiative. This is an on-going matter that will be the subject of future discussions.

The meeting to discuss declining membership was well attended. There was considerable discussion of the issues and possible solutions. The group felt that the issue had two components: loss of existing members, and failure to attract new members.

The group was not short of ideas. Most people felt that declining membership was a widespread trend amongst volunteer organizations but felt we could do more for our members. It was felt that the production of our new brochure and a marketing plan to distribute it would greatly help attract new members. The President prepared a discussion paper which was circulated. This matter will be the subject of considerable discussion and action over the next few years.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeff Harrison  
Chair