

# BIRD PROTECTION QUEBEC COMMITTEE REPORTS 2008-2009

## Education

### Education Committee

**Members:** Alison Bentley, Marie-Hélène Gauthier, Sarah-Jane Hills, Barbara MacDuff, Gay McDougall, Lynn Miller, David Mulholland, Chris Murphy, Albert McArdle

In April, 37 Scouts and Girl Guides visited Baie-du-Febvre to see migrating Snow Geese. Bus transportation was paid by Bird Protection Quebec. The group observed 1000's of Snow Geese as well as a Bald Eagle and a Peregrine Falcon. Alison Bentley reported that she received many thanks from those who attended. Thank you to Chris Murphy, Gay McDougall, Alison and Stewart Bentley, Mark Brenchley, and David Mulholland for their help.

Gay and David created a more simple bilingual bird list that can be used by children at Baie-du-Febvre in 2009. Translation was done by Marie-Hélène Gauthier.

Education committee members continued to provide information on a bird of the month on BPQ's website. It is hoped that this information will be helpful to school children.

Gay McDougall, with help from Lynn Miller, prepared a bilingual pamphlet for public distribution, describing the goals of BPQ's education committee. Thanks to Marie-Hélène Gauthier for translating it.

The Morgan Arboretum thanked the education committee of Bird Protection Quebec in their newsletter for providing seed for the feeders there. BPQ thanks the Arboretum's volunteers for keeping the feeders full.

In May a bird survey was made at the Royal Montreal Golf Course. Thanks to Chris and Ross Murphy, Barbara MacDuff, Felix Hilton and Ann and Peter Tarasoff for their help. The golf course has approximately 75 boxes with several pairs of nesting Bluebirds. Other birds using the boxes are Tree Swallows, House Wrens and Black-capped Chickadees.

The bird walk to Ile Bizard Nature Park in May with 26 grade four students from St John Fisher School was a success. BPQ's education fund paid \$289.19 for the bus transportation. This was a follow up to bird projects that Mrs. Claire Borelli's students had worked on in the classroom. David Mulholland gave a slide presentation to the students before the trip. Highlights were the Black Tern, Tree swallow, Mallard, Belted kingfisher and Great-blue heron. Thank you to Jean Demers, Felix Hilton, Marlene Hornstein, David Mulholland, Chris Murphy, Gay McDougall, Barbara MacDuff, and Clemence Soulard for helping out.

In June \$1,000.00 was sent to Camp Tamaracouta in the Laurentians to pay for a camp animator in the Ecology Centre.

The education committee paid transportation costs for Jeremy Pause to attend the week long Doug Tarry's Young Ornithologist's Workshop at Long Point in Ontario. Jeremy sent a thank you to BPQ reporting that he thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

The materials from the Nature Adventure Centre are still being housed at Lakeside Academy. Access to the materials is difficult at this time.

Lynn Miller reported that Le Nichoir is planning an expansion with the help of the Town of Hudson. It is hoped that BPQ's Education Committee will be involved in educational work there in the future.

Marie-Hélène Gauthier reported that some teachers at École St.-Remi are interested in doing bird projects with their students. It is hoped that the education committee will do a classroom presentation there and finish with a trip to the boardwalk at Ile Bizard.

In September BPQ paid for ten of Brendan Hines' Scouts to attend a banding demonstration at the McGill Bird Observatory.

Gay McDougall, David Mulholland and Barbara MacDuff prepared a power point presentation on winter birds in November. This was given at the Beaconsfield Library and was well received.

David Mulholnd volunteered to fill the feeder throughout the winter at the Beaconsfield Library.

The idea of having field trips for beginners was discussed and it was decided that it would be preferable to have a designated person on field trips to help new birders. It would be hoped that the enthusiasm of the experienced birder would encourage new birders to continue with this new interest.

Peter Mitchell was encouraged to offer his course for beginner birders at John Abbott College. Committee members agreed to help him with this endeavor and posters were prepared to advertise the event.

The Education Committee purchased 400 more badges with BPQ's logo to distribute to children.

Gay McDougall organized BPQ's presence at Beaconsfield's Winterfest in February, 2009. This successful outdoor event was well attended and many young families expressed interest in BPQ's display. The children were able to make feeders to take home and adults as well as children were able to observe birds through telescopes that had been set up on the grounds. A bilingual pamphlet describing BPQ's educational activities was distributed to many of the approximately 200 people who attended. Thanks to Gay and Peter Gruner, Jean Demers, David Mulholland, Chris Murphy, Averill Craig, Judy collinge, Mark Brenchley, Clemence Soulard, Sophie Cauchon and André Pelletier

Thanks to Kyra Emo for organizing the Jim Houghton Warbler Walks at the summit every Tuesday morning from April until the end of May and Chris Murphy for her help. Peter Mitchell deserves thanks as well for his Tuesday evening walks in April and May to various birding "hot spots" in Montreal. Both activities attract experienced and novice birders alike.

Barbara MacDuff, Chair

### **Membership Services Committee**

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

On the instructions of the BPQ Board, the Committee developed a new membership fee structure based on an average annual increase of \$5 per member, to reflect the rise in the cost of living and in BPQ expenses since the previous fee increase in 1999. The new structure came into effect in September 2008.

The Membership Services Committee continued trying to make new members feel welcome and to offer activities not provided by other committees. As usual it organized the annual post-AGM party. At the party members were able to enjoy good food and drinks, and a mind-bending quiz set by Martin Bowman.

The Winter Lecture Series was once again attended by about 25 people a lecture at the MacKay Hall of the Knox Crescent, Kensington and First Presbyterian Church, NDG. Participants were not obliged to register and pay in advance for the series so the numbers varied at the lectures. This adjustment, begun last year was a welcome innovation for those working irregular hours and unable to plan in advance. The later time of 7:30 also was desirable.

The price of \$15 a lecture for members and \$20 for non-members was instigated this year and seemed to encourage participants to become members. As in 2008, we made a profit of about \$750 on the series. The four lectures offered at two week intervals from February 11 to March 25 were given by our popular speakers:

Rodger Titman: "Waterfowl of North America - Natural History and Identity Tips"

Lance Laviolette: "LBJs ...Good Things Come in Small Packages", ... identifying sparrows and others"  
 Betsy McFarlane "Remember That Tune"... borrowing from music appreciation to learn bird songs"  
 Michel Bertrand "Limicoles - Birds of Shorelines and other Habitats"

Our appreciation to these speakers for sharing their expertise, time and enthusiasm with us. Thanks also to Audrey Speck for the introductions, Jean Demers and Clémence Soulard for the goodies and to Averill Craig for seeing that all was in order. A request has been made for feedback, critiques and suggestions for the 2010 series.

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 405 annual and life memberships, 21 fewer than at the same time last year. We gained 19 new memberships, four returning memberships, but 42 memberships were not renewed, usually for very understandable reasons. We also lost two life members. Sharon would like to thank the following people for their help and support throughout the year: Sheila Arthur, Jean Bacon, Averill Craig, Jean Demers, Jean Gregson, Tom Long, Karen Sherman, Clémence Soulard, Sylvia Wees.

Membership Services continued to offer various items for sale at monthly meetings and via the website. A BPQ 2009 wall calendar, featuring winning bird photographs from the "Big Year" competition held in 2007 and a cover designed by Jean De Marre, was a sell-out item in the fall. The bird-friendly, shade-grown, organic, fair-trade (and delicious) coffee that we offer continued to sell steadily to our members, and this year became the coffee served by Jean Demers and Clémence Soulard at the refreshment table at monthly meetings together with a greater selection of teas and cookies. Many thanks to Mary Ellen Graham and Sylvia Wees for their help at the Membership Services table.

During the course of the year Sheila Arthur and Barbara Szabo stood down from the committee; we thank them both for their valuable contributions to its work.

Gail Desnoyers, Chair  
 Averill Craig, Co-Chair

## Monthly Meetings

The meeting hall at the Knox Presbyterian Church in NDG is firmly established as an excellent venue for presentations. All our speakers used their lap tops with our power point projector. The overall quality of the presentations continued to be very high. The numerous follow-up questions showed strong interest by our members in many of the talks. This year our attendance ranged between 60 and 75.

As in previous years, speakers and topics were selected with a view to offering a variety of scientific, quasi-scientific and popular topics. A hearty thanks to those who suggested topics and speakers for our meetings.

The following is a brief summary of this year's speakers, their topics, and attendance details:

*March 3, 2008:* Bogdan Karasek spoke on bird photography as part of our presentation of photographic winners for our 90th Big Year Awards. Attendance: 70 Official thanks : Richard Gregson

*April 7, 2008:* Barbara Frei, McGill Master student, spoke about the plight of bobolinks and other field birds. Attendance: 70 Official thanks: Gay MacDougall?

*October 6, 2008:* Sarah Martinson, McGill PhD candidate, spoke about her research on toxic chemical impacts on the ecology of American Kestrels. Attendance: 60 Official thanks: David Mulholland

*November 3, 2008:* Kathleen Blanchard spoke about her work in environmental education in Atlantic Canada and Gregor Beck presented an overview of the results from the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas  
Attendance : 75 Official thanks: Sheila Arthur and Normand David

*December 1, 2008:* Benoit Jobin presented his research into the history of the breeding status of the Least Bittern in Quebec. Attendance: 60 Official Thanks: Martin Bowman

*January 7, 2009:* Dr. David Bird and Dr. Rodger Titman provided a lively and informative quiz on many aspects of bird identification and ecology. Attendance 75 Official thanks: Gay MacDougall

*February 2, 2009:* Richard Gregson brought our membership up-to-date and the location, recent activities and current status of our many sanctuaries. which extend from Ile-aux-Perroquets near Blanc Sablon to Ghost Hill Farm west of Gatineau. Attendance: 60 Official thanks: Sheldon Harvey

I wish to thank all our speakers for a job well done, and those who offered the Society's official thanks. A special mention also to *Song Sparrow* editor, Marie-Anne Hudson, and to webmaster Richard Gregson for their continued strong behind-the-scenes assistance with the work of the committee-of-one.

Jeff Harrison  
Chair

### **Research Committee**

**Members:** Sarah Jane Hills, Marcel Gahbauer, **Richard Gregson (Chair)**, Doug Jackson, Peter Tarassoff

The Research Committee never meets face to face but conducts its tasks at arms' length via email in the period from close of applications on February 16 each year to our finally reaching a decision some six or so weeks later after which we are let off to go birding for the rest of the year.

At the time of writing we are conducting the selection process on the applicants for 2009 awards. At the time of the final application date we had received three application forms – one from an undergraduate at McGill, one from a postgraduate at Sherbrooke and one from an independent research organisation. Each has considerable merit and the selection task will be hard.

The recipients of research grants from last year were, due to a misunderstanding and the fact that we had decided upon them ahead of the date of submission of our previous report, already been described and so we refer interested parties to the last edition of *tchébec* for more information.

Our committee has a sum of \$6000 available for disbursement each year although some years ago the committee had a budget closer to \$12000. We are of the opinion that for a meaningful contribution, the current amount should be increased when the financial conditions permit us to make a request to the board for more funds. At the same time, we have noticed a fall-off in the number of applications received in recent years and are somewhat perplexed as to why this might be – the website gives explicit information to anyone interested and academic departments should be aware of us. Could it be that fewer students are working in ornithological research these days?

Richard Gregson

### **Support Grants Committee**

**Members:** Jean Demers (Chair): Alain Goulet, Helen Meredith, David Mulholland and Rodger Titman

The committee has been in hiatus for the past year and no grants were issued for the year 2008-2009. We are happy to say that it has now been reactivated and the first grants for the year 2009-10 year have been given out and will be reported at next year's AGM.

Jean Demers  
Chair

## **Conservation**

### **Christmas Bird Count (CBC) Committee**

**Montreal:** The final tally from the 73rd Montreal CBC held on Saturday December 20, 2008 was 67 species. Four additional species were recorded during Count week but not on Count day. This brought the overall total to 71. Sixty seven is slightly below the ten year average of 68 species. Two new birds were recorded on the Count this year: Red-shouldered Hawk and Eastern Phoebe. This brings the total of species recorded on all Montreal Christmas Bird Counts to 152. We had a record number of field participants (68) in 16 teams. Jean Demers, as Assistant Compiler, managed our new feeder watcher program which attracted twelve additional participants.

A total of 15,920 birds were recorded this year. This was slightly greater than the 15,202 recorded last year. A record total of 5,116 American Crows were recorded. They were also the most abundant species on the Count.

The after-count compilation was held at Sheila Arthur's house was attended by about 30 people. They enjoyed a variety of hot and finger food. This was followed by a brief meeting where the day's highlight were discussed.

Jeff Harrison  
Compiler

**Hudson:** On December 27th, 56 birders from the Hudson area and from as far away as Quebec City counted birds in a 24 km wide circle centred roughly in St-Lazare. A further 15 feeder watchers reported birds visiting their feeders on the count day. Additional species observed in the area during the count period stretching three days either side of the count were also noted. All this gave an accurate snapshot of the winter distribution and status of birds in our area.

As can be seen from the data below the 17 field parties and 15 feeder watchers found a total of 6011 individual birds in our area representing 53 species. Another species was observed during the count period. Freezing rain and heavy fog in the afternoon created less than ideal conditions. Hawks were almost non-existent, field species such as Horned Lark and Snow Bunting were reported only in small numbers, and watchers on the river were unable to find many ducks or gulls.

Thanks go to everyone who helped out on the count either in the field or by manning their feeder. Observations from the Christmas counts are amassed into a huge database reflecting the distribution and numbers of winter birds over time. This in turn is used to pinpoint areas of concern where habitat destruction or contamination has impacted bird populations and to identify threatened species.

Below is a list of species that were seen on the count and tallied chez Bentley where everyone came to enjoy post-count goodies. See everybody the next time!

Alison Bentley

### **Conservation Committee**

**Members:** Martin Bowman, Shawn Craik (chair), Normand David, Diane Demers, Richard Gregson, Lance Laviolette, Barbara MacDuff, Betsy McFarlane, Rodger Titman

The Conservation Committee met on 16 October 2008, when Shawn Craik agreed to chair the committee.

The Terms of Reference was revised so that the committee may focus on up to four projects annually. The Board of Directors approved the new Terms of Reference in November 2008. Over the last year, the committee was involved with three projects, all of which will continue through the next year.

1. *Bluebird trails* – Nest boxes were monitored and cleaned-out at the Mount Royal Cemetery, Le Nichoir, Morgan Arboretum, and Royal Montreal Golf Club. The committee is implementing a standardized protocol for nest box monitoring at these sites.

2. *Cerulean Warbler monitoring* – In May and June 2008, the Philipsburg Sanctuary was surveyed for evidence of breeding Cerulean Warblers. The project was led by Diane Demers, who confirmed the presence of three males at the site. The information was submitted to SOS-POP.

3. *Regroupement QuébecOiseaux (RQO) threatened birds projects* – In spring and summer 2008, Bird Protection Québec worked with RQO and several other regional conservation groups to survey various sites in the Montérégie region for evidence of breeding Golden-winged Warblers, Cerulean Warblers, and Grasshopper Sparrows, and to identify suitable habitat for each species. BPQ members were involved with field data collection and logistics (e.g., contacting landowners, document translation).

Finally, the committee put forward a proposal to the Fieldtrip Committee for facilitating data collection by submitting BPQ's field trip bird sightings to eBird or ÉPOQ. This database would help in the long-term monitoring of some of the most visited sites.

Shawn Craik

### **Hawk Count Committee Report – 2008**

**Members:** Mabel McIntosh (Chair), Bob Barnhurst, Jeff Harrison and Barbara MacDuff

The 2008 spring and fall hawk counts were completed successfully. Despite a slow start due to bad weather throughout March and early April the spring count ended up well above average, while the fall count reached average numbers overall, with the exceptions being a new high Bald Eagle count and a Turkey Vulture count once again very close to three hundred. Unfortunately, the fall American Kestrel count was one of the lowest on record, in-line with a continent-wide decline of the species.

We continue to receive interest from various bodies, most recently SNC-Lavalin, in using our data for environmental impact studies of proposed wind farms. Interestingly, a wind farm has recently been constructed directly south of Valleyfield/St. Stanislas de Kostka, just over the border in New York State, and which can be seen easily from our spring site. It remains to be seen as to what impact, if any, the farm will have on our count numbers in the future.

Data from our counts continue to be entered on-line through the Hawk Migration Association of North America 'HawkCount' website and into the EPOQ provincial database. The complete set of spring counts from 1980 to 2008 have now been entered into HawkCount, while only fall data for the years 1980 to 1987 remain to be processed. HMANA personnel are currently helping us to complete this important work. The complete set of data will then be analysed using the recently developed, Raptor Population Index analog. Unfortunately, we had to temporarily block public access to all of our data on HawkCount, as well as in EPOQ, due to misuse by certain individuals and companies. Two other hawksites in Quebec

have had to do likewise. Reports on the seasonal counts are published yearly in *tchébec* and the HMANA Hawk Migration Studies publication.

Bob Barnhurst was very pleased to, once again, receive a modest grant from the Society as a part of our continuing efforts. The Society has kindly provided such funding yearly for the past seven years. Funding for the 2009 counts and beyond is expected from the Ministère des Ressources Naturelles et de la Faune, the exact amount being subject to end-of-year budget considerations. The MRNF is currently preparing 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.

Bob Barnhurst, per Mabel McIntosh

### **Philipsburg/George Montgomery Sanctuary Committee**

**Members:** Sheila Arthur, Joel Bonin, Felix Hilton, Gordon Renny, Gaelies Renny (chair), Gilles Landry, Jean Pierre Matton, Eve Marshall, Lucille Messier, Sandy Montgomery, Rodger Titman

In welcoming new members Jean Pierre Matton, Lucille Messier & Gilles Landry, we have succeeded in enrolling members from the area who are familiar with, and who care about, the sanctuary.

This year there have been many discussions for improvements and maintenance of existing structures. We would like to repair the boardwalk since replacing it is too expensive. This will have to be undertaken in the early Spring before the reeds grow up. It will be no easy task, but it is an essential structure as it is our only means of getting across the pond, so we really have to find a solution.

We have plans to build an observation tower below the highway, north of the Motel, however this has been postponed since our full budget was not approved.

The map continues to be worked on, but so far no results.

As in the past we had two field trips, Spring & Fall, and Gordon and Gaelies Renny and Sandy and Susan Montgomery continue to escort individuals and groups who make previous arrangements.

A gate will be installed in the Spring of 2009 at the road from the customs onto our newly acquired property.

Gaelies Renny

### **Property Acquisition Committee**

**Members:** Joël Bonin, Richard Gregson, Marie-Hélène Gauthier, Eve Marshall, Lance Laviolette and Jeff Harrison.

The Committee met in December 2008, to discuss updating our Property Acquisitions Policy which was presented to the Board in January. We also discussed the committee's Terms of Reference which was also revised and also presented to the Board in January.

The discussion of our acquisition's policy led to a better understanding of the conservation methods available to us in preserving lands. The evolution of our acquisition's policy has reaffirmed that Phillipsburg is our priority acquisition for any future purchases. The committee also felt that BPQ should be more proactive rather than reactive to future land purchases. In this regard we will examine in future possible land acquisitions in the greater Montreal region, especially in southwest Quebec.

The possible future purchase of the 25-acre Audette property is under discussion with Nature Conservancy and Pierette Audette.

Jeff Harrison

### **Sanctuaries Committee**

**Members:** Marcel Gahbauer, Richard Gregson (Chair), Doug Jackson, Peter Tarrasoff and Sarah Jane Weeks

The Sanctuaries Committee this year completed our visits to the sites for which we are responsible with an over-the-water trip to the two islands in the Varennes archipelago which we own and where we had the opportunity to add some not very common shorebirds to our personal year lists and to discover that these seldom visited islands are of considerably greater value than we had been led to believe.

Our task in 2009 will be to return to our original mandate and use the knowledge we have gained in our visits of the last two years to develop strategies for the better management of the various sites in the future. We are at least confident that they are all in good condition and full of good birds.

Richard Gregson

## **Observation**

### **Field Trips Committee**

**Members:** Alison Bentley, Martin Bowman (Co-chair), Wayne Grubert (Co-chair), Darlene Harvey, Sheldon Harvey, Felix Hilton, David Mulholland

For the March 2008 to February 2009 time period members of the PQSPB (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. Heavy rain caused two of these to be cancelled. A cumulative total of 583 birders took part in the other 41 trips giving an average of 14 participants per trip. Nineteen different leaders and co-leaders volunteered their time to guide these excursions to 28 different areas. A number of members led trips for the first time and we are pleased to have these new recruits. One weekday evening trip to Hudson was also held with 8 participants.

For the fifth 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. Six outings were held averaging 9 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 14 participants for each of the six outings.

The Field Trip Committee, with special help from Gillian Horgan, was once again able to reserve camping sites at Point Pelee National Park for the annual spring migration in May. Thirteen 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 183 species.

Accommodations were also organized by Alison Bentley for a May weekend trip to Presqu'île Provincial Park in Ontario. Twelve birders stayed at the park campground, local cottages or motels over two nights and spotted 104 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.

Wayne Grubert  
Martin Bowman

## General/Administrative

### Archives Committee

**Members:** K. Emo, S. J.Hills, H. Meredith (Chair), C. Murphy, S. Arthur (ex officio)

October 20, 2008 marked the culmination of the work of the Archives Committee, when we transferred 18 banker's boxes of material to the McCord Museum of Canadian History for it to consider formally acquiring. In March 2009, the Museum's Acquisitions Committee did agree to acquire this collection and the process of legal transfer will form the bulk of our 2010 annual report.

The Province of Quebec Society for the Protection of Birds (PQSPB) *fonds* that the Museum has accepted, had been stored in Sheila Arthur's basement since the summer of 2006, when it had been organized and processed by our archivist, Nathalie Blanchard. From 2006 to 2008 the Committee researched the possible public recipients (considering both McGill University and the McCord Museum) of the *fonds* and worked to finalize its cataloguing and organization.

By the autumn of 2008, we realized that we needed help to finish the task and we were relieved, grateful and delighted to learn that Nathalie Blanchard was available to help us out for the last sprint. Nathalie sprang in to action and indexed the last of the unprocessed material in time for us to deliver the material to the Museum on October 20. Nathalie has written a "finding aid" for our material as well as an index for each box, using excel spreadsheets. These two tools will help future researchers find their way around the material.

In November, Sheila Arthur hosted Eve Marshall, Chris Murphy, Nathalie Blanchard and me as we went through roughly six boxes of material that had been deemed as being duplicate copies or not closely enough aligned with PQSPB to be included in the Society's Archives. Much was recycled, though we did distribute duplicate copies of annual reports (*tchebecs*) to the Museum of Nature, McGill, Bird Studies Canada and Regroupement QuébecOiseaux, as well as distributing other documents to appropriate recipients.

I am grateful to Sheila Arthur who gave a temporary home to our Archives before we transferred them to the Museum and to Chris Murphy who catalogued all the photos in our archives, according to professional archival standards. Chris was also instrumental in helping getting the collection to the McCord in her van. We would not have such professionally organized and documented records without the help of Nathalie Blanchard, BPQ's archivist and a graduate of McGill University's School of Information and Library Studies. Sarah-Jane Hills and Kyra Emo have been important members of the Archives Committee in the recent past. Finally, I, and the Archives Committee, are most grateful to PQSPB members and friends who entrusted PQSPB Archives Committee with PQSPB archival material they had held in trust. We hope they are as pleased as are we, that PQSPB archives are now safely at home in McCord.

Helen Meredith

### **Awards Committee**

**Members:** Jeff Harrison (Chair), W. Grubert

Nomination forms were placed in Song Sparrow, two reminders were put on our Listserve, and reminders were given at recent monthly meetings. This year seven Board members made twenty nominations which greatly assisted the committee's work

The nominations we did receive were excellent and contributed significantly to the selection the following winners who were approved at the Board meeting on March 26, 2009:

Member of the Year: Jean De Marre  
 Service Award: Chris Murphy  
 Education Internal: David Mulholland  
 Conservation Award Internal: Gérard Desjardins  
 Education External: André Cyr  
 Conservation Award External: Louise Gratton

In addition, the committee considered candidates for our our Long Term Service Awards. Unlike our regular awards, these awards are available to standing members who are leaving the Board.

The award winners were:

- Kyra Emo, Sara Jane Hills, Rodger Titman, Marika Ainley (posthumously)

In addition to citations, the winners will receive a newly-designed framed certificate and a letter from the President.

The Committee included Wayne Grubert and myself with the able advice and assistance of other Society members including Normand David, Barbara MacDuff, Lance Laviolette and Mabel McIntosh.

We wish to thank Gay McDougall for her valuable assistance in preparing the certificates, and Richard Gregson for making the forms available through our website.

Jeff Harrison, Chair

### **Communications Committee**

**Members:** Jean Bacon, Averill Craig (Chair), 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 took over from Gay McDougall-Gruner as editor of The Song Sparrow, producing her first issue in August 2008. Five issues of the newsletter were published between August 2008 and March 2009. As of January 2009 The Song Sparrow became primarily an electronic publication, with a limited number of printed copies still mailed to those members not able to receive the newsletter in electronic form (roughly 50 members, a number much lower than initially projected). This initiative was undertaken in the interests of economy and of significantly reducing our environmental footprint. To date, with only two e-issues under our belt, we have already saved over 12,840 sheets of paper and about \$1,500. Core articles included rare-bird listings, articles about our sanctuaries, memorial pieces, citizen-science

projects, educational programs, monthly lectures, field-trip listings, book and gadget reviews and ethical birding. Many thanks to the 39 members who contributed articles and/or photographs to the newsletter. We 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 new website design introduced last year has continued to attract a regular stream of visitors to our shop-window. Visitors arrive at between 50 and 100 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.

The BPQ email address, which is linked to the website, is monitored daily. Messages vary from "how can I contact my old friend X who used to be a birder around here?" to "I am visiting Montreal next week, where can I see really rare birds?" and "here is a large collection of really fascinating documents about a cause that you should be interested in too". 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 includes a reminder of forthcoming field trips and lectures and carried items relating to 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 260 during the reporting period. Members continued to find reports of interesting birds and their locations to be a very useful service, as well as the automated reminders about forthcoming field trips and other events.

*BPQ phone line:* After looking after the BPQ phone line for many years, Ethel Fogarty handed over responsibility to Sheldon Harvey. For those still not using email, the phone line continues to be an important means of communication with the society by members and the general public. It was particularly useful in the months leading up to the introduction of the electronic Song Sparrow as a means for members to inform us if they still needed to receive a printed copy. A number of callers sought information on what to do with an injured bird, and were referred to organizations best able to respond, such as Le Nichoir.

Averill Craig

### **Finance Committee**

**Members:** Jeff Harrison, Jean Harwood Gregson (Chair), Phyllis Holtz, Eve Marshall, Helen Meredith, David Mulholland, Ron Mudd, Rodger Titman

The general decline in the financial markets over the past six months means that the market value of our managed investments has also reduced, making it difficult to estimate our likely income. In our discussions about expenditure for the coming year we concluded that the society should try to restrict expenditure to necessities until the situation is more certain; we intend to review this later in the year. Also resulting from these discussions is the need to clarify our general financial strategy so a joint meeting of the Executive and Finance Committee is planned to prepare some proposals for the Board.

Despite market conditions, our receipts from Membership fees and donations were above the percentage increase in fees introduced from September, which I think is encouraging. The larger charities are reporting reduced receipts from donations and I think we should be prepared for this in the coming year.

Good news for the year is that our committee has two new members, both of whom volunteered for special responsibilities. Phyllis Holtz, CGA kindly offered to use her investment knowledge and experience to assist the committee. Ron Mudd has been working hard since last summer to determine our most efficient method of insuring the directors and society against all types of claims to which we could be vulnerable. We were delighted when his report resulted in substantial savings for the society and he continues to monitor the situation for us. I am grateful to have such a strong committee for this fundamental part of our society.

Jean Harwood Gregson

### **Marketing Committee**

**Members:** Patrick Asch, Jean Demers, Alain Goulet, Sheldon Harvey (Chair)

The Marketing Committee's continued principal goals are to liaise with several Bird Protection Quebec committees, assisting with the promotion and publicity of various projects and activities of the organization, to raise the public awareness and image of BPQ and to solicit new members.

A heavy personal workload throughout the year, particularly on the part Chair Sheldon Harvey, resulted in much of the Committee's work being temporarily suspended. However, the Committee is pleased to acquire the services of Patrick Asch as a new member and work has begun again, in earnest, on the new Bird Protection Quebec publicity brochure.

The Committee publicized 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.

The Committee was disappointed to hear of the Montreal Gazette's decision to cancel a planned feature supplement on birdwatching, including a feature on Bird Protection Quebec.

We wish to offer special thanks to Barbara Szabo for her work on the Committee. Barbara decided to step down this year.

Upon completion of the new BPQ brochure, the Marketing Committee will be working on a new plan of action to distribute the brochure through a network of schools, community groups, commercial outlets, etc. and will complete a media press kit for distribution to media outlets throughout the province.

The Committee could certainly use a few new members. If you are interested in helping to publicize and promote BPQ, its services and activities, please contact us. We look forward to a productive and successful year, with your assistance and support.

Sheldon Harvey

### ***tchébec* Committee**

**Members:** Jean Bacon (Editor), Averill Craig, Jean De Marre, Richard Gregson, Betsy McFarlane

The 2007-2008 edition of *tchébec* was published and distributed in November 2008. The report contained the regular features on Rare Birds in the Province of Quebec in 2007 (by Pierre Bannon), the Hawkwatch report for Fall 2007 (by Bob Barnhurst and Mabel McIntosh), a Research Report from Barbara Frei (the

recipient of an Alfred Kelly Fund Grant), and the Financial Statements for the year ended 28 February 2008. In addition, articles were published on the Montreal and Hudson Christmas Bird Counts (by Jeff Harrison and Alison Bentley, respectively), the 90th Anniversary of Bird Protection Quebec, the Big Year of Birding, and McGill Bird Observatory Highlights 2007-2008 (by Marie-Anne Hudson). Brief histories of their association with PQSPB/BPQ of the directors leaving in May 2008 were also included. As usual, the beautiful photograph of a Least Flycatcher by Pierre Bannon was used on the cover which was again designed by Jean De Marre. For this edition, the cover was in black and white. Other photographs were supplied by Mark Dennis, Barbara Frei, Charles Kling and Gay McDougall. 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 who did all the layout work and the cover design.

Jean Bacon, Editor

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