

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT FOR THE YEAR 2006-2007

Following tradition I will highlight activities and accomplishments of the Society over the last year based principally on committee reports.

The Membership Services Committee, chaired by Eve Marshall, has worked hard to make members feel welcome and active. At the end of February there were 426 members of our Society. Membership Services arranged a well-subscribed bus trip to Cap Tourmente in September and a winter birding course, concentrating on intermediate bird identification. The committee has planned celebrations for the Society's 90th Anniversary, with Barbara Szabo in charge of the Big Year of Birding and Gay McDougall-Gruner organizing the banquet for the fall of 2007. With the closing of the Fraser-Hickson Library the committee began the search for an alternative venue for our monthly meetings.

Our Communications Committee is responsible for keeping members informed. Several means are used to convey this information. Gay McDougall has done a great job editing *The Song Sparrow*. Six issues reached members and approximately 40 birding clubs and libraries. An electronic version was available to anyone who asked for it. The website edited by Richard Gregson provides quick information access for members and visitors. It attracts 50-100 daily visitors, depending on the season. Currently it is the hub for information about the Big Year of Birding. A monthly electronic newsletter was launched this year. Averill Craig moderates an email group of around 200 participants which has been useful for exchanging information about interesting sightings. The 2005-2006 edition of *tchébec*, edited by Jean Bacon, was published in December 2006 with a new layout, a colour cover, four interesting articles and superb photographs in addition to regular features on rare birds in Quebec (Pierre Bannon), hawkwatch reports (Bob Barnhurst and Mabel McIntosh), research reports and the financial statements.

The Marketing Committee, chaired by Sheldon Harvey, continued its efforts to introduce the operational name and new logo into everyday use. The committee is creating a Bird Protection Quebec bilingual information brochure. With its completion the Committee will then put together and distribute a BPQ virtual press kit. Throughout the year BPQ events were publicized. Efforts to inform the media of our involvement in the Montreal Christmas Bird Count resulted in a series of articles in January in the *Montreal Gazette* dealing with citizen science projects, and the effects of the mild winter on nature in the region.

Jeff Harrison, responsible for our monthly meetings, invited speakers who talked about avian conservation issues, bird identification and different research activities. Interest appeared to be keen and attendance ranged between 50 and 85. Thirty-nine formal field trips organized by Wayne Grubert and Martin Bowman visited 27 different areas and involved 12 volunteer leaders. Kyra Emo led six Tuesday morning Jim Houghton Spring Warbler Walks on Westmount Summit and for the third consecutive year Sheldon Harvey organized a series of summer birding outings. Christmas Bird Counts for Montreal and Hudson were coordinated by Jeff Harrison and Alison Bentley, respectively.

The Nature Adventure Centre, most recently located in Bishop Whelan Elementary School, Lachine, has been a core area for our educational outreach. For years its identity has been associated with Albert McArdle and his keen corps of volunteers. From March 27 through April 12, 2006, 22 groups of pre-schoolers, kindergarten students and Scouts visited the centre for talks on nature and the building of bird houses. Later in April, May and June another 15 groups

visited the school. The NAC was also used for BPQ Board meetings, to sort through the archive materials, to organize the library and by several other committees for their meetings. Unfortunately the school was closed on June 30, 2006 and the Nature Adventure Centre is currently without a home. Meanwhile BPQ is most grateful to Albert McArdle, David Mulholland, Barbara MacDuff, Chris Murphy, Kyra Emo and others for their educational efforts through the NAC on our behalf. Members of the Education Committee, chaired by Barbara MacDuff, led field trips and spoke to Girl Guides, Cubs, a women's group and several school classes. They conducted a survey of the birds at the Royal Montreal Golf Club. Donations assisted several workshops and training sessions as well as the provision of seed to the Morgan Arboretum. Sponsored groups were able to build a J-trap for the McGill Bird Observatory and nest boxes for Eastern Bluebirds and Wood Ducks. Helen Meredith and the Archives Committee established a system and began catalogued storage of documents dating back to the origins of our Society.

The Conservation Committee, led by Betsy McFarlane and Gay MacDougall-Gruner, organized breeding bird surveys in the Philipsburg Migratory Bird Sanctuary. Last year was spent finding breeding evidence for nearly 90 species. Planning was made for the 2007 surveys which will fill in data gaps and use point counts to estimate population densities. A listing and photo contest (Counting for the Boreal) helped celebrate International Bird Migration Day 2006, the theme of which was protecting boreal birds. Barbara MacDuff organized informal bird surveys in the l'Anse-à-l'Orme area to help preserve that land from development. Our Sanctuaries Committee was resurrected this year to coordinate stewardship of the land we own and hold for conservation. A first step in this process has involved compiling an inventory of information about each of our sanctuaries. The Philipsburg Sanctuary Committee is preparing a new trail map which will soon be available. At the Montgomery Sanctuary neglect by beavers of their dam at the outlet stream from Streit's Pond has allowed water levels to abate sufficiently to permit use of the boardwalk which had previously been inaccessible due to high water levels.

The Research Committee, chaired by Lance Laviolette, provides support to promote better understanding of birds and their behaviour and hence better enables BPQ to aid in their protection. For 2006-2007 BPQ provided funding to three applicants. Awards to Marie-Anne Hudson, Barbara Frei and Rudolph Balej supported their studies of breeding birds on Montreal-area golf courses, Bobolinks in farmed landscapes in southern Quebec, and the importance of parks and protected areas to Eastern Screech-Owls in Quebec, respectively. The Support Grants Committee, initially coordinated by Alison Bentley, is revising its terms of reference to decide upon process and what kind of projects it will support. During 2006-2007 funds were provided to Le Nichoir for employees to attend a rehabilitation conference and to an Audubon sponsored conservation project in Belize.

An occurrence of major consequence for us in 2006 was the transfer of the Alfred Kelly bequest to our complete control 25 years after Mr. Kelly's death. During this time this legacy has been held in trust for us and generated revenue that has enhanced our operations. The Board, upon recommendation by the Finance Committee, and after considerable deliberation and careful consideration, decided that the funds would be managed for us by Guardian Ethical Management. It was deemed a priority to ensure growth of this "endowment" to generate sufficient future income to allow the Society to continue its projects and activities at least at the current level. In November, Ken Thorpe formally resigned as Treasurer and Jean Harwood Gregson agreed to take over the office. We are most grateful to Ken for his long and dedicated service to the Society and his most important advice concerning financial matters.

Another major event for us not entirely completed during the last fiscal year was the purchase of more than 100 acres of important mature, deciduous forest from *Les Frères de l'instruction*

*chrétienne* to add to the George H. Montgomery Bird Sanctuary at Philipsburg. This addition will help to protect one of Quebec's rarest breeding birds, the Cerulean Warbler, a bird that is found most frequently in the tops of the tall trees that mark old-growth deciduous forests. It will also add a number of rare plant species to those already found within the boundaries of the sanctuary. This purchase is an example of BPQ's continuing efforts to protect important bird habitat throughout Quebec as well as its strong partnership with *Conservation de la nature Québec* and the Quebec government to accomplish this goal. BPQ is also one of the few organizations in Quebec certified to accept ecological gifts as part of Environment Canada's Ecological Gifts Program.

We rely on you, our members, to function. Many individuals volunteer their time to bring our activities to fruition – a few have been acknowledged in my remarks above but many more are recognized in the committee reports. However, without naming everyone involved, let me express my gratitude to you for making the organization work. This effort gives a lot of pleasure to our members and very importantly preserves some birds and wildlife habitat in the process.

Rodger Titman