

Executive Council of the Waterbird Society
Annual meeting minutes
12 October 2005; Jekyll Is, Georgia, USA

In attendance: Betty Anne Schreiber (President), Francie Cuthbert (Vice-President), Chip Weseloh (Councilor and Chair, Future Meetings Committee), Susan Elbin (Councilor and Councilor-elect), Francine Buckley (Councilor), Chris Custer (Treasurer), John Coulson (Editor), Malcolm Coulter (Chair, International Awards Committee), Ken Morgan (observer), Clay Green (Councilor and Chair, Publications Committee), Emil Urban (Chair, Finance Committee and Councilor-elect), Kathy Parsons (Acting Secretary and Chair, Conservation Committee), Brian Harrington (Councilor), Peter Frederick (past President), Jeff Spendelow (Councilor and Chair, Nominating Committee), Jennifer Arnold (Councilor); Dave Shealer (Vice-President-elect and Chair, Distinguished Service Committee); Tommy King (observer); Billy Brooks (Chair, Local Committee). Bruce Peterjohn (Chair, Bylaws Committee) joined in the afternoon. Absent: John Chardine (Councilor), Cheri Gratto-Trevor (Councilor).

The meeting was called to order by the President at 0925.

Old Business

1. **Agenda**—Betty Anne outlined the agenda (*handout*). Francine moved to adopt as presented; Peter seconded the motion. All approved.
2. **Minutes from 2004 Executive Council**—Several members identified questions and suggestions for improving the minutes which were provided to council members prior to the meeting. Suggestions included correcting typographical errors, supplying omitted material on Student Awards, and separating out the reports of the International and Distinguished Awards committees. It was suggested that Kathy receive comments and suggestions from Council for revisions, identify and incorporate substantive changes, and re-distribute to Council and committee chairs. Jeff moved to set a time limit (mid-November) for Council members to send corrections; Chip seconded the motion. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.
3. **Council election results**—Jeff distributed an updated Nominating Committee report (*handout*) and outlined a complicated elections year with resignations and various vacancies. The Nominating Committee recommended a course of action utilizing a strong slate of candidates. Five of six candidates were elected by the membership or appointed by Council to fill vacant seats. Susan Elbin, Garry Donaldson, and Emil Urban were elected to Council (2006-2008). Clay Green was appointed to Council (2006) to fill vacancy created by Kathy Parsons assuming office of Acting Secretary. Scott Hall was appointed to fill the remainder of Rob Bennett's term (2006). Dave Shealer was elected Vice-President and Chris Custer was re-elected Treasurer. The results for Secretary were voided as a result of Bob Colburn's resignation. Jeff commented on a somewhat better than average return of ballots but noted ballot problems for some of the membership. Various approaches to improving election participation

were discussed including altering the presentation of mailed ballots, the possibility of adopting an email system for voting in the future, adjusting the timing of the ballot mailing to avoid field season conflicts, and contracting a service to manage electronic voting.

New Business

4. **2005 meeting update**—Peter and Billy provided an update of the 2005 meeting and reported that approximately 60 oral papers and 30 posters (including the WOST symposium) comprised the scientific program. All are to be presented in single sessions except Saturday (two workshops and 1 session). As of Wed morning, 126 registrants. The size of the meeting is about average for WBS when not meeting with another society. In addition, the WBS scheduled three meetings for the 2005 calendar year which might also be expected to impact attendance.
5. **Finance Committee**—Emil summarized information contained in the Finance Committee's report to Council. The endowment stands at slightly less than \$92,000. Our policy is to make interest available for expenditures once the endowment has reached a five-year average of more than \$100,000. The committee has solicited outside advice on the composition of investments. We currently hold 70% in stocks and 30% in bonds. Councilors discussed various aspects of investment strategy including protection of capital, flexibility of policies, the adoption of near-term versus long-term goals for the endowment, and the role of the Finance Committee in directing the investments of the Society. It was noted that the UK's assessment of the US financial situation is "not as rosy" as is the US assessment. Growth of the endowment results from meeting surpluses, gifts, and life memberships. In July the Finance Committee reported the following balances (includes expenditures): WBS endowment \$110,249; Kushlan Fund \$189,566; Nisbet Fund \$25,630. Deposits to the WBS endowment were \$5-6,000 in July. It was recommended that a "job description" for the Finance Committee be drafted to clarify the roles of the Finance Committee and Executive Council in directing investments and endowment management.
6. **Treasurer's Report**—Chris circulated the most current report (as of Oct 7, 2005) to the council (*handout*). In the 2005 operating budget, income totaled \$66,211.65 with additional revenues due to page charges from Volume 28 (3) still expected (estimated at \$1,000-\$5,000). Expenses totaled \$63,019.23 with an additional charge of approximately \$2,000 still expected from Allen Press for the mailing of back issues. A general discussion of revenue and expenses followed. Specific questions arose concerning BioOne charges versus printing charges, the efficacy of credit card payments, and the transition from Allen Press to the Schneider Group. Councilors considered possible investments of the modest (\$3,000-\$4,000) surplus expected from the current year's operating budget. These included travel for International Award recipient, officers' discretionary account, electronic credit card terminal, student travel, The WBS's commitment (voted) at the last annual meeting to fund the travel expenses of an International

Awardee was not expended in 2005. Chris recommended incorporating that expense (\$1,500) in the 2006 budget to apply to Veracruz meeting. Brian moved to purchase an electronic credit card terminal (estimated at ~\$800); the motion was seconded by John. After discussion, Brian moved to amend the original motion to purchase the terminal on the availability of surplus funds from the 2005 operating budget after \$1,500 was carried over to the 2006 budget to fund travel for an International Awardee. Jennifer seconded the motion and all approved. Upon adding the \$1,500 travel expense to the 2005 budget, Brian moved to accept the 2005 budget and Peter seconded the motion. All approved. Councilors next discussed the proposed 2006 budget. Income was estimated at \$61,285.00 and expenses at \$60,116.00. Chris explained that the \$1,500 included in but not expended in the 2005 budget would carry over on the balance sheet. Other discussion included re-establishing a president's fund and a treasurer's fund. Brian moved to establish each fund at \$400; Francine seconded the motion. All approved. A brief discussion on support of charitable organizations was tabled, but Jeff said that it was inappropriate to consider the Ornithological Council as a "charitable organization" as the OC is a coalition of 11 professional ornithological organizations that that our Society had agreed to support. Brian moved to accept the revised 2006 budget; Clay seconded the motion and all approved.

7. **Editor's report**—John reviewed the main points of the Editor's report provided to councilors prior to the meeting. A general discussion followed which included manuscript submission rate (10% increase), rejection rate, trends in country of origin (more from China, fewer from northern Europe), journal advertisements, and journal size. These patterns, which reflect growing interest in our journal, often necessitate increased effort on the part of the editorial staff. Councilors also discussed the benefits and challenges of issuing special publications. It was agreed that additional editorial capacity is required to manage the publication of special volumes, and John generously offered to serve according to the new editor's need. John also raised the concern that the current Executive Council of the society is comprised entirely of North Americans, but this discussion was curtailed in order to consider the issue under membership concerns. Peter moved to accept the Editor's report. The motion was seconded by Jeff and all approved. We then took a lunch break, resuming at 1235 with committee reports.
8. **Publications**—Clay referred to a report provided to councilors prior to the meeting. Discussion focused on efforts by the committee to ascertain membership interest in, and implementation of, a strategy to provide electronic access to the journal. Savings to the society were estimated at \$4.65 per member if 25% of membership switched to electronic access. Savings would be greater if new membership categories, providing increased revenues, are adopted. Proposed new rate structure provides incentive to members to switch; print only rates are generally increased by \$5 from current rates. A computer-based survey of membership indicated that 44% were interested in electronic access. Chris moved to go on-line and propose to membership at Business meeting that new rate structure go into effect in 2007 with Allen Marketing and

BioOne, but leave subscriptions as print only. Jeff seconded the motion and all approved. Chip led a discussion on journal advertising which considered the potential for revenue (possibly \$1,000 per issue) and the management needs for realizing these revenues. Chip recommended that a member of the Publications Committee volunteer to lead the society's effort to secure advertisements. Clay was asked to identify a committee member that might be able to dedicate time to this. Final discussion identified the need to secure a society representative to attend BioOne meetings in the Washington, DC area, the need to include the Editor on the Publications Committee, and the need to coordinate analyses of publication trends between the committee and the editor.

9. **Membership**—BA led discussion of the Membership Committee report that was provided to councilors prior to the meeting. Wing Goodale was unable to attend and is stepping down as chair of the committee. The report shows that institutional memberships are down as are life memberships. The loss of 10 life memberships was questioned and BA volunteered to investigate this with Wing. Councilors discussed strategies for increasing membership including updating an informational brochure, manning booths at meetings, and targeting marketing to prioritized constituencies. Discussion also included the pros and cons of establishing chapters outside North America; this will be a topic of discussion at the upcoming Taiwan meeting.
10. **Conservation Committee**—Kathy identified key points of the Conservation Committee report provided to councilors prior to the meeting. During the past 9 months, members have joined the re-activated committee and developed a prospectus for operation. The committee facilitated the inclusion of a scientific session on marshbird conservation in the program of the current meeting, as well as two conservation workshops. Prioritized up-coming tasks include developing a policy for support (advocacy) letters and promoting conservation science sessions at future meetings. Members of the committee were asked to meet over lunch the next day.
11. **Distinguished Service Award**—Dave reported on the activities of the committee (contained in a report provided to councilors prior to the meeting) over the past year which included identifying a recipient for the award to be given at the banquet of the current meeting.
12. **International Awards Committee**—Malcolm proposed for Council's consideration, a number of rules changes developed to increase the effectiveness of the committee. These changes were described in a report of the committee provided to councilors prior to the meeting. Discussion focused on the appropriateness of the proposed timeline for nominating an award recipient and the length of time nominees should remain active for evaluation by the committee. Kathy proposed that the committee should be renamed the Lifetime Achievement Award Committee. The Council advised the committee to continue work on rules and principles for reconsideration by Council in 2006.
13. **Student Awards**—BA reported on the committee's activity on behalf of Linda Wires who had submitted a report to councilors prior to the meeting. Discussion focused on strategies for supporting student travel and retaining flexibility to

make multiple awards (graduate, undergraduate) as funds allowed and as warranted.

14. **Research Awards**—BA reported on the committee’s activities for Keith Bildstein. A report was submitted prior to the meeting for council’s consideration. It was noted that interest in and application for the awards has been growing. Keith’s term as chair has expired; Mike Erwin is the incoming chair and is in the process of selecting new committee members.
15. **Website**—BA led discussion concerning the society’s website on behalf of Wing Goodale who has resigned as website manager. Biodiversity Institute is willing to continue hosting the website at no cost to the society, however we are in need of a website manager and editor. Francie noted the importance of being able to post material promptly (a description of website submission guidelines had been provided to council prior to the meeting).
16. **Contract and Financial Procedures Committee**—BA described the formation of a new committee to oversee contract and financial procedures of the society. Don McCrimmon has agreed to head this effort and will provide a prospectus to council outlining the rationale and operation of this committee. It was noted that Chris, as treasurer, should serve on this committee and she indicated she is willing to do so.
17. **OSNA**—BA led a brief discussion of the society’s relationship with OSNA and past year’s interactions (contained in a report provided to council prior to the meeting). Councilors noted that membership management through the Schneider Group has been good. A survey of OSNA members is currently underway. John reiterated the need to cross check analyses of membership patterns, noting that 10 life members have been “lost” from the rolls apparently.
18. **Bylaws Committee**—Bruce provided information to the council on the work of the bylaws committee (contained in a report provided to council prior to the meeting). He reminded council that new membership categories will necessitate changes in the bylaws. Peter recommended the council approve bylaws changes today and make available for the meeting participants to review prior to the business meeting. All proposed bylaws changes will be submitted to the membership through the 2006 annual mailing. John questioned whether approval of changes to the bylaws could be on a per article basis rather than asking membership to vote up or down on all changes. It was recommended that a policy allowing individual votes on articles be described in the procedures manual. Bruce led a discussion of all proposed changes to the bylaws. Most changes addressed the need to update and clarify the bylaws to reflect the expanding geographical reach of the society, and our transition to greater use of electronic media to disseminate information. Kathy and Bruce offered to type up changes and post immediately for meeting participants to review; Bruce will discuss at the business meeting. Peter moved to adopt changes to bylaws as recorded by Kathy and Bruce. Chip seconded the motion and all approved.
19. **Ornithological Council**—Jeff referred to a report provided to councilors prior to the meeting. Of particular interest was the OC’s success in getting the US Department of Interior to establish a Federal Advisory Committee for the USGS’s Bird Banding Lab.

20. **American Bird Conservancy**—BA reported that no report to council was forthcoming from ABC or Jim Kushlan.
21. **Future meetings**—Chip reported on plans (contained in a report provided to council prior to the meeting) for upcoming meetings including Taipei, Taiwan (Nov 2005), Veracruz, Mexico (Oct 2006), and Barcelona, Spain (Oct 2007). Discussion of the proposed Barcelona meeting focused on cost (estimated \$200-300 registration fee) and efforts to optimize participation by European scientists (John reported that scheduling the meeting in late September might facilitate attendance by faculty members). Chip noted that the 2008 meeting is not yet developed, but the committee is looking to hold the meeting at a relatively inexpensive venue in North America. Francie reminded councilors of our tradition to meet in Charlestown SC every ten years in commemoration of our founding.
22. **Other new business**—Jennifer described efforts to place ads in the journal to prompt members to consider including the society in estate planning. A half-page ad and information for the website have been developed. Jen and BA asked council members to consider joining this committee and/or identifying society members who might be willing to serve. A brief discussion identified the need to help fund the travel expenses incurred by our plenary speaker for the current meeting. Possible sources included excess funds raised to host the marshbird workshop and surplus funds from the 2005 operating budget. A final discussion concerned the draft procedures manual. It was recommended that BA circulate to appropriate chairs and officers the portions of the manual pertaining to their work to finalize a draft which will then be reviewed by the full council.

Francine moved to adjourn the meeting at 1755. Peter seconded the motion and all approved.

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Summary of email votes of Council (January-September 2005):

- 27 Feb—voted to appoint Susan Elbin to fill Rob Bennetts’s seat on Council
- 29 Mar—voted to appoint Keith Hobson as new editor of Waterbirds
- 8 Apr—voted to allow JSTOR to put old issues of journal online
- 19 Aug—voted to confer Distinguished Service Award on Chris Custer
- 9 Sep—voted to appoint Kathy Parsons as Acting Secretary
- 29 Sep—voted to appoint Clay Green and Scott Hall to vacated council seats