

2019 Waterbird Society Council Meeting Minutes 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting, Salisbury, MD  
Wednesday, November 6, 2019

Minutes approved with amendments by Council on December 5, 2020 (Council meeting, Zoom)

Councilors in attendance: Dave Moore [VP], Patty Szczys [Secretary, Recognition], Chris Custer [Treasurer, Bylaws], Erica Nol [Past President, Publications], Susan Elbin [Nominating, Ornithological Council, Diversity], Andy Kasner [*Waterbirds* Editor], Sara Schweitzer, Kate Sheehan, Dan Catlin, Danielle D’Auria, Kate Shlepr [Student Council Rep, Archives], Sean Murphy

Phone-in: Dale Gawlik, Eric Mellink, Clay Green [President]

Committee Chairs in attendance: Chip Weseloh [Future Meetings], Ricardo Zambrano [Finance], John Anderson [Archives], Juliet Lamb [Student Activities], Jeff Spendelow [Bylaws, Ornithological Council]

8:40am Patty Szczys meeting call to order

**2019 Agenda approval**: Dan Catlin/Danielle D’Auria motion passed unanimously

### **2018 Council Minutes Review**

Amend:

1. Add Kate Shlepr to attendance list
2. Ducks Unlimited offered to contribute [during the “New Business” time slot to give an update on the Waterbird Coordinator / Waterbird Council / Waterbirds of the Americas Conservation Initiative?]
3. Future Meeting typo: correct spelling “pelee”

**Motion** to approval Chris/Chip Motion passed unanimously

**Moment of Silence**: Remembrance of Tom Custer

**Secretary Report**: Discussed sharing documents with an eye toward ease of use but also for security of documents. John Anderson suggests Google docs should not be the only location (it is not). Sara Schweitzer shared information about viral ransom situations in her agency. Susan Elbin and Erica Nol suggest all business be done on OE. Discussion about the challenges to OE. John Anderson points out that email conversations should be archived, but that only happens when the Archivist is included on the emails. It is suggested that a Google Email account to be included on all correspondence. **Action Item: is there a platform that would make this easier? Email lists could be created to avoid leaving someone out; then always include the Archivist email on business communications. Need a small group (Kate Shlepr and Patty Szczys) to figure this out.**

**Nominating Report**:

\*Correct Catherine Poli to ‘Caroline’ in the Nominating Report.

Slate of Candidates for 2019 Election, to take office on 1 January 2020:

For Councilor (vote for 3) – John Anderson, Gail Fraser, Alison Kocek, and Terry Master

For Student member of Council (vote for 1) – Paige Byerly, Caroline Poli

For Vice President (vote for 1) – Jonathan Cohen, Patricia Szczys

#### Voting Results

- 371 election emails were sent via email. 10 bounced; 205 (55%) were opened; 96 (25.8%) were clicked, which means that the email was opened but with no further action.
- A follow up reminder was sent to those members who had not voted. 45.7% of these were opened; 17.3% were clicked.
- 91 total electronic ballots were cast; no hard copy ballots were requested.
  - 90 were cast for VP
  - 91 were cast for Student Rep with one write-in and one abstention
  - 82 were cast for Councilor with one abstention.

Because Patty will take the VP position starting January 1, 2020, Council must appoint someone to complete the remainder of that calendar year of the secretary's term. Kate Shlepr volunteered and has the support of Council. **Motion to appoint Kate Shlepr as Secretary to complete the term. Patty/Erica passed unanimously!**

#### Action Items:

- a. **Bylaws Committee recommends appointing co-chairs to Nominating Committee who are not past Officers of the Society so that the Nominating Committee can operate independently and not given the opportunity to become ruled by a club of former officers.**
  - a. **Nominating Committee will consider further whether the Past-presidents should be the co-chairs of the nominating committee. Perhaps the student council rep should be a member to cast the net more widely.**
- b. **Nominating Committee wants to discuss the possibility of allowing Past-President's to run for council. Discussion ensued and the committee will work on a policy statement**

**Future Meetings Report:** Ricardo is planning to organize the 2021 meeting in South Florida! Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach are all options. All provide easy access to major airports that and are connected by trains and shuttles. Seeking beach locations. Florida shorebird alliance would be a good partner; other partners will be sought. Anticipating a November meeting time; after the hurricane season, but before the busy and expensive winter season. Jim Fraser notes that Florida has a high concentration of members, so this should be a priority as discussed over the past several council meetings. Clay notes it is the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary meeting. Council encourages Ricardo to produce a full proposal. Ideas for partners like the Flamingo working group or FL Audubon, the heron group, Cuban colleagues should be sought through symposia etc.

Woody Woodrow: Intention was to hold the meeting in Galveston, Texas, at the Galveston Island Convention Center. Tuesday to Saturday, 10-14 November 2020. Local committee is being formed. Last minute complications with the convention center has them now looking alternatives: Univ of Houston at Clear Lake (halfway between Galveston and Houston) may be a good option. This may also lower costs compared to Galveston. Galveston Hilton is about 50k for the facility, with Univ of Houston costs can be quite a bit lower. Recently (June) hosted the North American Prairie conference >400 participants. Will need to work around class sessions during the semester. Many attractions locally and the Univ local is closer to the airport. Much opportunity for regional participation. Council noted the logistical issues of meeting sessions away from accommodations. The local committee wishes to produce a revised proposal to distribute before Thanksgiving. Council endorses the revision of the proposal.

Chip Weseloh reports an eager response to inquiries for hosting the 2022 meeting in the Great Lakes region, Buffalo and Detroit. Chris Custer recommends that Toledo also be considered. Niagara Falls could also be considered. Airfare should be considered.

**Scientific Program (Current Meeting):** Dave reports Joint Meeting with the AMBC Atlantic bird Cooperative. 126 talks 50 posters 5 symposia [*Pelicans of the World; Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets: their biology, conservation and management...and is there a need for a Working Group?; Avian Interactions with Offshore Energy Development; Black Rail ecology and conservation; Ecology and management of gulls in urban landscapes*] tagging of large wading birds workshop. 16 countries presenting. 30% of presentations are being made by students We have 3 concurrent sessions along with the extensive Diversity Day programming.

**Editor's Report:** Andy Kasner appreciates the opportunity to serve as Editor. Sarah van der Leek working as the Associate Editor. Steep learning curve. EO Painter still the company. Reporting since June 30, 2018 which was Stephanie's last report. Challenge to learn the timing for getting materials to Painter. Now happening electronically rather than snail mail. Lower than normal submissions but perhaps a new pulse of submissions at the end of the year may bring us to last year's level. Slow to get reviews in and make decisions. Improved the received to decision time. 25% rejection rate is slightly lower than last year's stats. Will include rejection rates by country for next year's report. Discussion about the received to publication time of 206 days: how can we get preprints to Authors so that papers aren't waiting around for nearly 7 months. Major bottleneck to these stats has been the Editor's time; steps have been taken to remediate this and it will be better in the future. Lag time between print to Painter and publication is nearly 3 months. These things will be addressed with Painter in early 2020.

**Archives Report:** Transcription of Interviews from 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary meeting is now complete by one of John's students; Interviewees will get a digital copy for 'approval' prior to publication. Jenna Shlener did the transcriptions and she is attending this meeting. Digitizing the archives requires an important commitment. Special Project funding may be required to support the work at the Smithsonian Archives.

**OC:** Change Ellen to Jeff and Susan as co-chairs of this committee and they are the representatives to the OC on our behalf [done]. OC has been significantly impacted by the formation of AOS. That organization may be changing the way in which they use the services of the AOS which may jeopardize the future of OC. Susan Elbin is asking for a significant one-time contribution to OC from the potential revenue from the current meeting. This will be further discussed with the Treasurers Report. If AOS is replacing the services of OC then we need to know that before making a final decision.

**Treasurer's Report:** revenue continues to exceed expenses; any narrowing of the gap last year is likely do to overlap of editors and IOC meeting expenses; not permanent. Dues structure means that as people opt for electronic versions revenue from dues goes down; but it seems to increase the BioOne and JStor revenues. While page charges remain voluntary, we bring in > 25K. We will eliminate the 'airmail' option for mailing the journal. Special project this year was supporting the Pelican Symposium (\$3000) for international participants. Recurring cost of \$3000 to support student travel- this comes from meeting profits rather than them being deposited into the endowment. *\$5000 Professional Travel Award this year is made by Chris Custer in remembrance of Tom.* She intends to continue this each year. **Action Item: Council will work with Chris to build the description of the Professional Travel Award and to highlight recipients.** We are about 30,000 in the black for the year. Print and mail for 30 yrs to Life members for \$1000- turns out this is actually a net cost for our budget. Council should discuss this further. Thank you, Chris, for 20 years of service!

**Motion to approve the budget report Erica Nol/Susan Elbin passed unanimously.**

**Strategic Plan:** Failure to launch. Clay will be taking the lead on this as he becomes Past-President.

**Bylaws:** Chair of the nominating committee- how is this position chosen? Founders wanted the nominating committee to be independent rather than the way in which it appears to currently function. Chairs should be chosen in similar way to the other committee chairs: by the President in consultation with the Council. **Action Item: The nominating committee will continue to discuss (see above nominating committee) but right now no bylaws change is required.**

**Publications Committee:** Should be thinking about invited review papers- this increases the profile of the Journal. Online submission system requires an extra step on the part of the editor so the email submission type feels like it works for *Waterbirds*. It also provides a lot of opportunity for interacting with the authors- keeps the community aspect of our society and journal. Discussion of the pros/cons of submitting online v. email. The idea of submitting through the website was floated as an option worth investigation. Much discussion about this issue- how important is the online submission issue? **ACTION ITEM: Kate Sheehan will join the committee to help investigate the website submission form.** *Waterbirds* is ranked 9 of 21 in ornithological journals impact factor 0.86. Social media should be leveraged to highlight papers

in the journal. Consider an open access option for individual papers. Discussion of Open Access options. **Committee will discuss the issue of Open Access further!**

**Local Committee:** Ellen and Bill (no written report at time of meeting) no final figures and no actual contracts for buildings in place. Running total (excepting rooms at univ and banquet) \$33,000, very unlikely that we will get close to 40k and estimated revenue is near 60K. 209 name tags (a proxy for registrants). 111 students; 17 exhibitors for Diversity Day! Silent Auction will occur in the multipurpose room from 12-4 then to be relocated to the hotel for banquet (volunteers needed to move items) also Chris will need some assistance taking payments. **NO ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY HAS EVER MET AT AN HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE BEFORE NOW.** NSF FUNDED Diversity Day.

Lunch 12:30-1:30

**Membership Report:** As of 9/24, 395 members from 31 countries. 60 reg members, 19 students from this meeting, 83 US/CA 17% of membership is students. Similar proportions as the greater membership. Low on students if we wish to have an increasing 'population'. WHSG raised 100,000 to support travel to Panama; how can we up our grant-writing and sponsor-seeking to support travel? Presented several recommended pathways to increase membership. Auto-renewal was floated but holding credit card numbers poses a bigger problem of database management and security. Circling back to the 'human dimensions' action item from last year. What is it that brings people back and keeps them coming back to our meetings? We seek to understand what variables are driving our trends. **Action Item: Dave Moore volunteered to clean up the database to move the modeling forward.** Advertising workshops better so that people can seek additional funding sources (professional development) might be a good strategy. A funding gap for early career folks with travel funding could be helpful. Target professionals not only students. Loss of members in 2018-19 is likely due to Vancouver attendees that did not become members with registration. Council Minutes do not include details of numbers when people are doing investigations also details from e.g. Dave Moore's diversity talk last year). [Committee Reports include the detailed numbers compiled by all committees]

**Recognition Awards:** **Action Item: John Anderson and Patty Szczys will work on getting this committee working and advertising for submitting nominations from the membership. Email solicitation should go out quickly. Form committee.**

**Student Activities:** In Vancouver, judged 21 student oral presentations: 2 travel awards to (IOC). For the current meeting (2019): awarded 14 applicants at total of \$3499; 30 oral presentations, 10 posters, 10 judges. New award from conservation committee- new form and award for students; this will be implemented at 2020 meeting. Mentor lunch tomorrow: 50+ signed up. Marissa Martinez is a new member who organized a student social for Friday.

**Outreach and Communications:** Again, soliciting members and especially students who can take Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and the website. Danielle D’Auria will work with Facebook. This will be an important part of the strategic plan so we will seek advice. Perhaps a social media policy is required to ensure good content. **Action Item: Juliet Lamb will provide an example of a policy for social media posting.** World Seabird Twitter Conference could be a great opportunity for outreach. **Action Item: We may need to consider a policy on live tweeting from the talks.** What are the rules for sharing a paper in twitter? **ACTION ITEM: Juliet work on policy with committee.**

**Grants Report: 15** In 2019, we received 15 proposals for the Kushlan Award, 8 proposals for the Nisbet Award, and 17 proposals for the WbS award. The deadline for submission and the deadline for decision is perhaps too close, the committee needs additional time.

**Motion to modify the dates: Jan 15 March 15. Erica Nol / Kate Sheehan Passed unanimously.**

Funding level is held steady for 3 years and then reevaluated; Chris will check, believes levels should be retained for next year too.

How to resolve disparate rankings by committee members. Basic monitoring v. question-driven when reviewed by many people. The endowment documents should drive this review. What is the priority for funding as set forth by the donors? Following up with awardees- these could be posted on the website. Perhaps presentation of the results at a WbS meeting or other meeting would be expected.

Nisbet Grant, Mateusz Ledwoń, Migration in species with female desertion: the case of Whiskered Tern \$4,000.00 (for research)

Nisbet Grant, Sarah Bolinger, Examining bias in predation estimates for multi-fate nest survival models of Least Terns in Southeast Louisiana \$720.00 (for conservation)

Kushlan Grant, Anastasia Rahlin, Using environmental DNA sampling to determine heron and bittern occupancy in western Michigan: a metagenomics approach \$5,300.00

Kushlan Grant, Kate Shlepr, Evaluating potential genetic adaptation and increased population resilience in the federally-listed Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*) \$3,500.00

Waterbirds Grant, Lindsey Tiegs, Use of Rails as Indicators of Hydrologic Change and Subsequent Wetland Quality in the St. Louis River Estuary \$4,927

**Conservation:** Fourth recipient of the “Publication Award for Outstanding Contribution to Conservation.” Chawaka, S. N., S. T. Mereta, P. L. M. Goethels, L. Lens, and P. Boets. 2017. Effect of human-induced environmental changes on bird diversity and abundance in natural

wetlands of southwest Ethiopia. Waterbirds 40:129-143. Awardee is Ethiopian and couldn't travel to this meeting; award will be sent.

Student award is new this year- conservation impact of the oral presentation.

Soliciting issues that the committee can address. Sara Schweitzer: Albatross and Petrel Conservation act- H rule 1305 House committee on natural resources Hearing Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> 2019 will now be voted upon so the committee could write a statement. Dave Moore: Cormorant hunt in Ontario, past public consultation period but law has not gone into effect. Sara Schweitzer: Recovering Americas Wildlife Act Rule 3742 within the House committee on natural resources. Scientist sign-on letter is already out. 1.3 billion to states for wildlife action plans, tribal nation funding. Alliance for fish and wildlife has really good outreach materials. We are a 501c3, so we are advocacy. Written position statements signed on to letters not directly lobbying congress people. Considering what is most impactful- member alerts v. position statement. Any statements come first to Council for approval on our behalf.

**Diversity Report:** Susan and Liz are co-chairing. Juliet is likely to join as a third co-chair. **Action Item: clarify co-chairs (see below)** This is a very big meeting for Diversity- this has been driven by the local committee since NSF funding is supporting the programming and funded to UMES. The committee is looking for new leadership, Liz and Susan would like to step down to the membership of the committee. The committee looks forward to taking what is learned from this big diversity day and applying it to meetings going forward. Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity might be something to consider in the future for this committee. Proposal for 2020 meeting: gender equity in the society- modeling Dave Moore's talk from 2018. Focus on the location of the meeting.

**Motion: We support three student registration waivers for university students of underrepresented groups in the Houston area. Erica/Chris passed unanimously.**

**ACTION ITEM: define 'underrepresented group' for the society- this is part of the strategic plan as well.**

**ACTION ITEM: Can we change the name of the committee? Yes! New name will be incorporated into the strategic planning process.**

**Finance:** [Please see Committee Report for Details] As of September 20: \$1.3 million; rate of return 6.28%; fees 0.6% to each Parsec and Fidelity, this is about \$15,000 annually. 13% of our account is in the SRI category.

**Motion: All new donations to the WbS 2020-2023 will be invested SRI funds. Erica Nol/Kate Sheehan. Following significant discussion about the details of this type of sweeping motion; could fees be significantly higher and could the wording of the motion limit our options in the future? Passed Unanimously**

**Special Projects:** Summary of the intent of this program, past successes, future priorities. Chip gave background information about the intended **Motion: the Waterbird Society contribute \$3K to support (primarily) African researchers in attending the Pan-African**

**Ornithological Congress in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 16-20 November 2020.  
Chip Weseloh/Patty Szczys passed unanimously.**

How can we fund attendance of international council members at meetings? Travel awards: council is supportive of funding international members traveling to meetings. Could funding be more broad to include early career and council specific requests?

**Motion: to allocate up to \$3000 from the special projects fund to support travel awards to early career professionals and/or those from developing countries in 2020. Dan Catlin/Danielle D'Auria passed unanimously.**

**Action Item: Special Projects: Enhanced conferencing abilities: WebEx, Zoom, Speakers, microphone. Local Chairs should be required to find conferencing abilities with great internet connectivity. Portable equipment? **Patty and Dave will make this happen.****

**Action Item: Abstract submission software is insufficient; upgrade needed. Online App of the conference schedule. **Dave will present council with some options and costs to consider.****

2020 Budget: Recommended student travel awards increase from \$3000-\$5000 considering that we should be in the black. Return to the OC report, Do we want to make a one-time donation to OC? Much discussion about the complicated issues of making a donation in Ellen's name. Timing of the payment- normal payment could be made early in 2020 rather than mid-2020. Then we can revisit this issue after the other societies and OC iron out issues of retirement

**Motion: make a one-time \$5000 donation to the OC during the current fiscal year. Susan Elbin/John Anderson**

**Motion to Table Patty Szczys/Dave More; Motion passed with 1 abstention.**

**Move to approve 2020 budget Patty Szczys/John Anderson Motion passed unanimously**

**New Business:** Waterbirds for the Americas Initiative; Sara Schweitzer. No funding allocated for the coordinator position. Sara is on a sub-committee to reinvigorate the Waterbird Council. Identifying former council members: Francie Cuthbert, Paul Schmidt, Lisa Sorenson, Jennifer Wheeler. Also working, Melanie Steincamp & Kathy Parsons and others have agreed. Council should identify a new coordinator, examine and reupdate the Waterbirds of Americas conservation plan. **ACTION ITEM: Can someone from the society be on this council and can we write a letter in support of this effort? Dan Catlin has volunteered. Clay is willing to write a letter of support on our behalf for this initiative.** Goal is to repopulation the Waterbird Council to identify the new Coordinator

**Motion to Adjourn Clay Green/Sean Murphy unanimously passed 5:19pm**