

Membership Committee of the Waterbird Society

2012 Annual Report

Membership:

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2011-2012 Committee Activities:

The committee sent out emails to 180 lapsed members, those who were members in 2011 but not in spring 2012. These emails served two purposes: 1) To remind those who may simply have forgotten to renew. 2) To get helpful feedback on why individuals don't renew.

Typical responses to the letters were answers like: I forgot to renew/plan on renewing soon, or decided not to renew because of money. One individual did mention that she supported the merger of the ornithological societies, so that she could attend fewer meetings and subscribe to fewer journals while still staying up to date on ornithology.

Data on membership trends were collected from OSNA and compared to previous years (see below)

Provided contact information of members in British Columbia to assist local organizers of the NAOC. Also sent the full membership list to David Shealer, chair of the Nominations Committee.

Surveyed membership to get an estimated headcount for the society lunch at the NAOC.

In preparation for discussion on the potential formation of the Society for Ornithology, Brian Palestis (Membership Committee chair) and Susan Elbin (past chair) are working on a more detailed analysis of membership trends than what is presented here.

2012-2013 Proposed Work of the Committee:

Continue contacting lapsed members: send out email letters in spring 2013.

Continue tracking and providing data on membership.

Society Membership Numbers and Trends

Total members, 2012: 649

Membership data is available from OSNA going back to 2006, and the 2012 total is the lowest in this time period (see Figure 1). The difference between 2012 and 2011 may in part be due to time of year when the numbers were produced: final 2011 membership list vs. June 2012. However, it is clear that membership numbers have been declining over the last few years, after the high numbers following the Barcelona meeting.

International members comprise 29% of our 2012 membership, very similar to 2010 (30%) and 2011 (27%). This is down from a high of 39% following the Barcelona meeting.

Online-only journal access continues to increase in popularity among our members, with the number of online-only members increasing despite the overall decrease in membership. This year 37% of our members are online-only, compared to 21% in 2007.

Requests for Council Action: issues to be discussed and/or voted at Council meeting

If the mergers among ornithological societies do occur, the more members we have the better we will be able to maintain our independence.

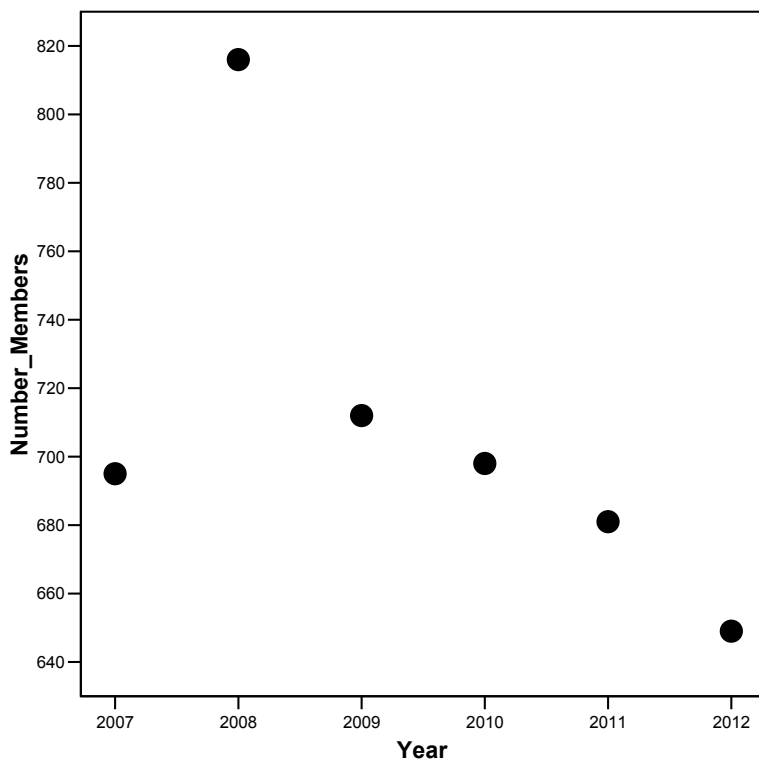
Ideas that were discussed at the 2011 council meeting related to membership include:

There may be some people who are interested in waterbirds and would like to contribute to the society and keep informed, but who are not practicing scientists. Perhaps a nonparticipating/supporting member category could be added. In addition, the society webpage and/or Ornithology Exchange could be used to maintain a list of volunteer opportunities related to waterbirds research and conservation.

Perhaps there should be a larger discount for online-only membership. The difference in membership fees is only slightly reduced for online-only membership (\$60 for print & online, \$55 for print only, \$50 for online only). The difference seems small, given costs of printing and mailing. Online membership also indirectly brings in revenue above the membership fee through hits on the BioOne site. Students do get a bigger discount (\$60 print & online, \$45 print only, \$30 online only).

Last year there was discussion among the council and committee chairs about ways to encourage retired members to attend the annual meetings. This topic should be addressed again.

Figure 1: Membership numbers since 2007. The peak in 2008 represents the increase in membership with the Barcelona meeting (fall 2007).



2013 Actions Approved by Council:

- Review the Strategic Plan for tasks specific to the Membership Committee.