

Student Activities Committee of the Waterbird Society

2012 Annual Report

Membership: Gail Fraser (chair, gsfraser@yorku.ca); & Linda Wires. This committee welcomes new members; please contact the chair if interested in serving.

2012-2013 Committee Activities:

NAOC 2012: The WBS participated in the NAOC, including student travel and conference presentation awards. Fraser was the representative on both of those committees.

Student Travel awards – There was a total of \$43,750 for student travel awards for all students participating in the NAOC. After some discussion, the WBS put \$1500 into a collective pot with no stipulations attached that a certain percentage go to WBS students. The WBS also contributed \$1500 to the Latin American student travel award.

The Committee received 189 applications, (Undergraduate 13; Masters 95; PhD 81). Fraser reviewed and ranked 27 applications (out of 189) for a travel award. Felipe Chavez-Ramirez assisted with the Latin American student travel awards. Undergraduate: 9 out of 13 were funded; MSc 66 out of 95 were funded; PhD 56 out of 81 were funded. Students received between \$200 to \$500.

Student Presentations – The WBS allocated \$300 for best paper and \$300 for best poster. Awards from all of the societies were \$300 in value. One hundred and forty students applied for the student presentation award. The applications were evaluated to create a short list. Students that made the short list (47 talks and 16 posters) were evaluated during the conference. There were 20 judges and each presentation/poster was evaluated by 3 judges; Fraser attended 18 student presentations. We used the NAOC scoring sheet (Appendix 1, 2).

There were only two posters with waterbird content, subsequently we did not select a best poster. The best oral presentation for the WBS went to: Sarah Trefry, University of New Brunswick “Wing marker woes: a case study and meta-analysis of the impacts of wing and patagial tags”. Sarah’s PhD research is on frigatebirds.

The information on the best presentation is posted on the WBS website under student awards.

It was also requested that Student Activities Committee review/implement action items in strategic plan Vision 2020. The section which most applies to the Student Activities is under “Membership”. Under Membership the following recommendations were made:

(1) The committee should develop ideas to enhance the benefits of membership in the Society, especially to students.

(2) The committee needs to coordinate with other committees (student awards, future meetings) in researching productive localities for future meetings that might increase membership and bring new opportunities for Society activities.

(3) The committee should consult with membership chairpersons of other scientific societies to glean ideas for energizing membership.

(4) Society members who are graduate advisors should strongly encourage their students to join the Society and, if able, help defray expenses for travel to meetings and/or membership.

(5) The Membership Committee should explore means to mentor undergraduate and graduate students regarding career and school opportunities, and in so doing, enhance and retain membership. Such mentoring could take place either at the annual meeting or through online communities.

From the Council meeting at the NAOC it was suggested that more could be done to promote student mentoring at conferences. One idea was to match students with non-students and sponsor a meeting event.

2012-2013 Proposed Work of the Committee: To work with the local committee of the Oct 2013 meeting to administer student travel awards and student presentation evaluations. We will accept student applications from the International Wader Study Group in addition to students who are members of the WBS. As always, the committee will require volunteers for evaluation of student presentation awards. Additional assistance would be needed to facilitate a mentoring event. A request was placed Feb 4 to Patty and Nellie to update the student travel info on the website. In consultation with Peter Becker, we identified May 31, 2013 as the deadline for student travel applications. This will allow us to inform students prior to the early bird abstract deadline (June 30, 2013) and registration (June 15, 2013).

Requests for Council Action:

- Find someone to help with student mentoring.

2013 Actions Approved by Council:

- review/implement action items in strategic plan Vision 2020

Appendix 1 Oral judging form

Student

name: _____ (Last, First) **Day-session-slot:**

Overall Score (scale of 3 to 30, summed across the 3 components listed below)

Rate each component listed below on a scale of 1-10, using the criteria described as a general guideline. Recommended scale: 10 = Outstanding, 8 = Excellent, 6 = Average, 4 = Below average, 2 = Poor. Please avoid "grade inflation": scores averaging ≈ 6 and spanning a wide range across all presentations will help us construct informative final rankings.

Suitable for Specific Awards (check any that apply)?

AOU Conservation Waterbirds Bird Studies Canada

Originality

Was the study original/creative or did it duplicate previous studies?

Did the student demonstrate thorough knowledge of what was previously known (supported with reference to published work) as well as questions remaining to be resolved?

Did the study use novel approaches, either in general or in terms of their application to the particular research problem/system?

Did you learn anything new?

Notes

Scientific Merit

Did the student effectively place their work in a larger context, with background information and research rationale presented in a compelling and accessible way?

Did the student test appropriate hypotheses (if applicable)?

Was the sampling scheme appropriate? Were sample sizes sufficient?

Did the study employ rigorous and appropriate methods of analysis?

Were the conclusions and interpretations justified based on the data gathered?

Does the study have important general implications that extend beyond the study system?

Notes

Quality of Presentation

Was the presentation organized and logical?

Did the presentation make effective use of the available time, while leaving adequate time for questions?

Was the presentation well balanced with respect to background, goals, methods, results, and conclusions?

Was the presentation delivered in a clear, smooth, and understandable way?

Were the visual aids effective, with appropriate consideration of slide simplicity and legibility (including, e.g., use of appropriately large fonts and use of a color scheme that relied on contrast in light/dark elements as opposed to hue, to accommodate viewers with impaired color vision)?

Did the student demonstrate sound and thorough understanding of all aspects of the study?

Notes

Appendix 2 Poster judging form

Student

name: _____ (Last, First) **Poster number:**

Overall Score (scale of 3 to 30, summed across the 3 components listed below)

Rate each component listed below on a scale of 1-10, using the criteria described as a general guideline. Recommended scale: 10 = Outstanding, 8 = Excellent, 6 = Average, 4 = Below average, 2 = Poor. Please avoid "grade inflation": scores averaging ≈ 6 and spanning a wide range across all presentations will help us construct informative final rankings.

Suitable for Specific Awards (check any that apply)?

AOU Conservation Waterbirds Bird Studies Canada

Originality

Was the study original/creative or did it duplicate previous studies?

Did the student demonstrate thorough knowledge of what was previously known (supported with reference to published work) as well as questions remaining to be resolved?

Did the study use novel approaches, either in general or in terms of their application to the particular research problem/system?

Did you learn anything new?

Notes

Scientific Merit



Did the student effectively place their work in a larger context, with background information and research rationale presented in a compelling and accessible way?

Did the student test appropriate hypotheses (if applicable)?

Was the sampling scheme appropriate? Were sample sizes sufficient?

Did the study employ rigorous and appropriate methods of analysis?

Were the conclusions and interpretations justified based on the data gathered?

Does the study have important general implications that extend beyond the study system?

Notes

Quality of Presentation



Was the poster well organized and logical?

Did the poster effectively communicate the scientific substance of the study, through thoughtful and creative overall presentation?

Was the poster well balanced with respect to background, goals, methods, results, and conclusions?

Were the visual elements effective, with appropriate consideration of graphical simplicity and legibility (including, e.g., use of appropriately large fonts and use of a color scheme that relied on contrast in light/dark elements as opposed to hue, to accommodate viewers with impaired color vision)?

Did the student demonstrate sound and thorough understanding of all aspects of the study, through both construction of the poster and oral explanation of its content?

Notes

