

**OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
OF THE FLORIDA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.**

Friday, October 3, 2008

*CALL TO ORDER*

The Fall 2008 meeting of the Board of Directors of the Florida Ornithological Society (*FOS*) was held Friday, Friday, October 3, at the Holiday Inn Hotel, 1302 Ponce De Leon Blvd., St. Augustine, FL. President Jackson called the meeting to order at 2:05 PM after determining that a quorum was present. The following people attended the meeting or a portion of the meeting:

Jerry Jackson, President  
Ann Hodgson, Vice President  
Jim Cox, Secretary  
Peter Merritt, Treasurer  
Jack Hailman, Past-President  
Charlie Ewell, Director  
David Freeland, Director  
Dave Goodwin, Director  
Adam Kent, Director  
Joyce King, Director  
Karl Miller, Director

Ann Paul, Director  
Julie Wraithmell, Director  
Steve Bankert, Web Site Editor  
Tom Palmer, Newsletter Editor  
Scott Robinson, *FFN* Editor  
David Stock, Finance Committee  
Erik Haney  
Wes Biggs  
Rick West  
Elena Sachs

*AGENDA*

The agenda and meeting packet were mailed electronically to board members prior to the meeting. The agenda provided in the packet was approved without additions.

*MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS*

The minutes of the Spring Board Meeting held on Friday, April 11, 2008 at the Plantation Golf and Resort Spa, Crystal River, Florida were distributed with the meeting packet. Treasurer Merritt moved that the minutes be accepted, and the motion passed unanimously.

*PRESIDENT'S REPORT*

President Jackson provided a written report distributed prior to the meeting. He was pleased to report that Volumes 18-33 (1990-2005) of the *Florida Field Naturalist (FFN)* were now available on the *FOS* website. He thanked Bill Pranty for his work on this project and Steve Bankert for getting the web-based system up and running smoothly. President Jackson noted that Volumes 1-17 should be available soon.

President Jackson distributed a draft agreement submitted by Audubon of Florida regarding publication of Bill Pranty's *Important Bird Areas* manuscript. The contract was discussed under *Continuing Business* (see below). President Jackson also sought advice on the problem of storing back copies of *FFN* and *FOS* Special Publications. Renting storage space was deemed too costly, but the concept of a publications manager was suggested as a possible solution that might alleviate a problem FOS editors have faced for years. There was no consensus on how to address the problem.

President Jackson received an extensive set of bird observations compiled by Bob Goebel for Glade and Hendry counties. Director Ann Paul said she would look through the notes to help determine their value. The President Jackson concluded his report by thanking board members, editors, and the other support personnel that make *FOS* run smoothly.

*VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT*

Vice President Hodgson reported that approximately 60 people had registered for the meeting. She thanked St. Augustine Audubon for the assistance with the meeting, especially the help provided by Ned Schuler in organizing field trips and meeting logistics. The Saturday afternoon paper session was organized by Karl Miller, and John Himes, a biologist with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, agreed to provide the banquet presentation.

*SECRETARY'S REPORT*

Secretary Cox submitted a written report. Cox prepared minutes for the Fall 2008 meeting and distributed them with the meeting packet prior to the meeting. Minutes from the Spring 2008 meeting were to Steve Bankert for posting on the web page, and Cox provided some edits on the draft web page.

*TREASURER'S REPORT*

Treasurer Merritt submitted a written report. As of September 5, 2008, FOS account balances were:

<b>Account</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Fidelity Brokerage Account	\$131,268.09
Paypal Account	\$0.20
Cash (checks to be deposited)	\$25.00
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$131,293.29</b>

These balances represent a 13.72% decrease compared balances of the previous year (\$152,178.11) and primarily reflect the change in investment value of the Fidelity Brokerage Account. The asset value of the non-cash portion of this account declined by more than 12% from from December 31, 2007 (\$131,712.73) to September 5, 2008 (\$115,795.59)..

The Fidelity Brokerage Account portfolio was rebalanced on August 12, 2008 following recommendations provided by Fidelity. The rebalanced portfolio consisted of 10 mutual funds, including the Fidelity Cash Reserves fund, which functions as a money market fund and checking account. On September 5, 2008 the Fidelity Cash Reserves fund had a balance of \$15,472.50 (corrected for \$1,872.00 in checks that have not cleared) and provided a yield of 2.46%.

### 2008 Budget Analysis

The overall *FOS* budget (2008 Budget Report provided below) lists current assets distributed among 4 funding categories (listed in bold in the left column). The second column represents the adopted 2008 budget while the third column shows the actual dollar amounts spent as of August 12, 2008. Interest received from the PayPal account in 2008, plus the decrease in asset value in the Fidelity Brokerage Account, were added and distributed proportionately among the *FOS* fund categories using standard *FOS* protocols. The 2008 Budget Report shows a net loss of \$7,675.63 versus a projected income of \$3,455.00.

Treasurer Merritt noted that significant expenses still remain for 2008, including Fall meeting expenses, educational grant, and costs of printing *FFN* and newsletters. Other noteworthy activities included:

- a) \$13,637.01 received in dues included \$3,585.20 for 8 new life memberships. This money will be assigned to a separate category in future budget reports.
- b) *FFN* expenses of \$2,768.96 reflected the cost of printing Volumes 36(1) and 36(2).
- c) Newsletter printing expenses (\$256.01) for Volume 34(2-3).
- d) Payment of \$7,816.00 to scan *FFN* articles and \$118.15 for website hosting charges, which were not reflected in the budget. These expenses were charged to the Price-Campbell Foundation grant following previous direction from the Board of Directors.

### Proposed 2009 Budget

Treasurer Merritt provided a proposed 2009 budget (see below) that was based on expenditures during recent years. The 2009 proposed budget included two new categories: (1) the "Friends of the *FFN* Fund" and (2) "Life Membership Fund." The Interest Income/Asset Appreciation values in the proposed 2009 budget reflect a projected 5% annual increase for fund balances. Although funds currently are declining in value, the *FOS* portfolio is expected to have an average annual increase  $\geq 5\%$  over several years. Therefore, the proposed budget is consistent with a conservative prediction of future growth. The proposed 2009 budget projects a net income of \$4,356.

### Price-Campbell Foundation Grant

The Price-Campbell Foundation Grant (\$15,000) was awarded several years ago to

enhance *FOS* presence on the Internet. As of December 31, 2007, \$6,940.73 had been spent, leaving a balance of \$8,059.27. In 2008, *FOS* paid \$3,500.00 to E. O. Painter and \$4,316.00 to Bill Pranty to scan back issues of the *FFN* for the website. *FOS* also paid \$118.15 for web hosting charges. This brings the remaining balance of the Price-Campbell Foundation Grant to \$125.12.

Membership

*FOS* had 398 members as of September 5, 2008. Twenty-one members joined in 2008, but membership was down about 8.08% compared to October 2007. Recent changes in *FOS* membership are summarized in the following table:

<b>Membership Type</b>	<b>4/16/2007</b>	<b>10/3/2007</b>	<b>4/2/2008</b>	<b>9/5/2008</b>
Individual	226	260	216	243
Individual Life	0	0	4	4
Family	61	75	62	65
Family Life	0	0	4	4
Contributing	27	32	22	24
Student	5	8	7	8
Institutional	33	39	32	33
Exchange*	17	16	16	16
Honorary*	2	2	1	1
Gift*	1	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>398</b>

\* Non-paying

Director Wraithmell asked whether any progress had been made separating the functions of *FOS* money manager and *FOS* membership manager that currently are assigned to the Treasurer. Treasurer Merritt reported it was probably not worth the effort at this point with a membership of only 400 members. Treasurer Merritt also found an accountant who will prepare tax returns for significantly less than the accountant used in recent years.

## 2008 BUDGET REPORT

OPERATING FUND	PROPOSED 2008 BUDGET	ACTUAL 2008 AS OF 09-05-08
INCOME		
Dues	10,000.00	13,637.01
Unrestricted Gifts	700.00	605.00
Interest Income	1,225.00	(2,733.67)
Page Charges	1,250.00	625.00
Meeting Income	6,100.00	2,240.00
Friends of the FFN Group	200.00	300.00
Back Issue Sales	10.00	-
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 19,485.00</b>	<b>\$ 14,673.34</b>
EXPENSES		
FFN Printing	8,500.00	2,768.96
Newsletter Printing	800.00	256.01
Postage & Shipping	1,000.00	903.24
Operating Expenses	1,550.00	702.83
Meeting Expenses	6,100.00	2,812.53
Records Committee	1,500.00	984.69
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 19,450.00</b>	<b>\$ 8,428.26</b>
<b>PROJECTED SURPLUS</b>	<b>\$ 35.00</b>	<b>\$ 6,245.08</b>
<b>SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS FUND</b>		
INCOME		
Sales	600.00	793.43
Interest Income	1,350.00	(3,020.17)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 1,950.00</b>	<b>\$ (2,226.74)</b>
EXPENSES		
Postage & Shipping	100.00	
Sales Tax	10.00	-
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 110.00</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>PROJECTED SURPLUS</b>	<b>\$ 1,840.00</b>	<b>\$ (2,226.74)</b>
<b>GRANTS &amp; AWARDS FUND</b>		
INCOME		
Interest Income	3,650.00	(7,468.32)
Gifts	300.00	395.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 3,950.00</b>	<b>\$ (7,073.32)</b>
EXPENSES		
Research Award	2,000.00	2,500.00
Robertson Award	1,000.00	-
Education Grant	500.00	-
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$ 3,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,500.00</b>
<b>PROJECTED SURPLUS</b>	<b>\$ 450.00</b>	<b>\$ (9,573.32)</b>
<b>ENDOWMENT FUND</b>		
Interest Income	1,050.00	(2,280.65)
Gifts	80.00	160.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 1,130.00</b>	<b>\$ (2,120.65)</b>
<b>PROJECTED SURPLUS</b>	<b>\$ 1,130.00</b>	<b>\$ (2,120.65)</b>
<b>NET INCOME (LOSS)</b>	<b>\$ 3,455.00</b>	<b>\$ (7,675.63)</b>

**PROPOSED 2009 BUDGET**

**OPERATING FUND**

<b>INCOME</b>	
Dues	10,000.00
Unrestricted Gifts	700.00
Interest Income/Asset Appreciation	1,308.00
Page Charges	1,250.00
Meeting Income	6,100.00
Back Issue Sales	10.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 19,368.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
FFN Printing	8,500.00
Newsletter Printing	800.00
Postage & Shipping	1,000.00
Operating Expenses	1,550.00
Meeting Expenses	6,100.00
Records Committee	1,500.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 19,450.00</b>
<b>PROJECTED SURPLUS</b>	<b>\$ (82.00)</b>

**SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS FUND**

<b>INCOME</b>	
Sales	600.00
Interest Income/Asset Appreciation	1,462.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 2,062.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Postage & Shipping	100.00
Sales Tax	16.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 116.00</b>
<b>PROJECTED SURPLUS</b>	<b>\$ 1,946.00</b>

**GRANTS & AWARDS FUND**

<b>INCOME</b>	
Interest Income/Asset Appreciation	3,614.00
Gifts	300.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 3,914.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Research Award	2,000.00
Robertson Award	1,000.00
Education Grant	500.00
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$ 3,500.00</b>
<b>PROJECTED SURPLUS</b>	<b>\$ 414.00</b>

**ENDOWMENT FUND**

Interest Income/Asset Appreciation	1,104.00
Gifts	80.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 1,184.00</b>
<b>PROJECTED SURPLUS</b>	<b>\$ 1,184.00</b>

**FRIENDS OF FFN FUND**

Interest Income/Asset Appreciation	15.00
Gifts	200.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 215.00</b>
<b>PROJECTED SURPLUS</b>	<b>\$ 215.00</b>

**LIFE MEMBERSHIP FUND**

Interest Income/Asset Appreciation	179.00
Dues	500.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 679.00</b>
<b>PROJECTED SURPLUS</b>	<b>\$ 679.00</b>

<b>NET INCOME (LOSS)</b>	<b>\$ 4,356.00</b>
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## *EDITORS' REPORTS*

### *a. Florida Field Naturalist*

Editor Scott Robinson reported that publication of the *FFN* was nearly back on schedule thanks to the help of Tom Webber. He noted that submission rates were low and keeping just ahead of publication of the journal and asked for any ideas that might help increase the number of submissions. Board members suggested a special history section and a special issue on exotics. Other suggestions included detailed field trip reports and popular articles, but these were deemed more appropriate for the newsletter (see below). Treasurer Merritt noted the purpose of *FFN* is to provide technical, peer-reviewed articles. Editor Robinson said he was willing to work with anyone who had data but little experience writing technical articles and asked the Board to encourage new submissions.

### *b. Newsletter*

Editor Tom Palmer provided a written report. Palmer has published the Spring-Summer and Fall issues, but most of his report concerned the future of the newsletter. Editor Palmer noted that much of the information published in the newsletter is now available on the web (e.g., Christmas Count information). Other information regarding news of members, upcoming meetings of interest, etc. also is now readily available on the web. Editor Palmer also has had trouble extracting information from members, and several innovative new ideas (e.g., favorite birding spots) have not been popular items.

Editor Palmer has reviewed newsletters published by other ornithological societies and suggested some features that might be useful if we choose to continue publishing. These included a message from the President in every issue as well as reports from different committees to help spread reporting responsibilities. Many newsletters also provide more advance notice on meetings so that the details (including registration forms) can be published much earlier. Some even include a short feature on the banquet speaker, which may further increase interest in attendance. Other ideas included abstracts from the paper sessions, order forms for merchandise (T-shirts, publications, etc.), and more reports of members' trips to distant birding areas.

President Jackson said these and other ideas could help the newsletter tremendously, especially if the publication moves increasingly to the web. President Jackson recommended that a smaller committee be formed to explore these issues and develop recommendations. Jack Hailman, Steve Bankert, David Goodwin, Jim Cox, and Charlie Ewell offered to help editor Palmer on these issues.

### *c. Special Publications*

Reed Noss has resigned as editor of Special Publications. A replacement is being sought.

### *d. Web Site*

Webmaster Steve Bankert provided a written report. Accomplishments over the past few months included: (1) updated contact information for Christmas Bird Counts; (2) updates on board members, committee members, and members of the Records Committee; (3) posting the latest issues of Snail Kite posted; (4) posting new pictures in the image gallery; (5) posting the announcement of the Fall 2008 meeting; (6) posting an official list of state birds; and (7) posting articles from the *FFN* (1990–2005).

Webmaster Bankert noted that FOS currently uses 90% (450Mb / 500Mb) of the allocated space on its web server. He proposed switching to a new server in April 2009 when the current contract is up for renewal. At that time, he would like to increase the storage capacity considerably and also noted the switch may require some overlap with the current service to insure that it proceeds smoothly. Bankert also would like to switch from a Linux host to a Microsoft host to improve the site further and make it more interactive. The Board agreed with these proposed changes and also made suggestion about other web info such as bird cams, bird quizzes, field observations, and links to web magazines.

### *COMMITTEE REPORTS*

#### *a. Archives Committee*

No report provided; no issues known.

#### *b. Bylaws Committee*

No report provided; no issues known.

#### *c. Conservation Committee*

Conservation Chair Todd Engstrom provided a written report. The Committee continues to work with Elena Sachs of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to develop the Florida Bird Conservation Initiative (*FBCI*). Currently, we are exploring the possibility of having a meeting to (1) develop an organizational structure for *FBCI*, (2) elect a Board, and (3) develop a Florida Breeding Bird Atlas Committee to explore the feasibility, methods, organization, and funding of another Florida Breeding Bird Atlas. *FBCI* would be a significant advance in conservation of birds in Florida once it takes off.

#### *d. Editorial Advisory Board.*

No report submitted; no issues known.

#### *e. Field Observations Committee*

No report submitted; no issues known.

#### *f. Finance Committee*

Chair David Stock submitted a written report. The Finance Committee reported that investments in mutual funds have suffered losses during the economic downturn. The asset mix used by FOS has an average long-term return rate of 9.2%, so current losses should be recouped eventually. Treasurer Merritt uses a 5% rate of return on FOS investments in the proposed 2009 budget. The Committee noted that this is a conservative figure but probably a good choice given current economic conditions. The Committee also noted that funds for Grants and Awards might be readjusted if investment income does not meet long-term averages.

The Committee highlighted an apparent 20% discrepancy between recent meeting income and meeting expenses. Treasurer Merritt suggested the discrepancy was not this large and more in the range of 10%. Vice President Hodges reported meeting income has matched or exceeded meeting expenses in other cases, and, overall, meetings have not been losing money.

The Finance Committee again emphasized the issue of stagnant/declining membership. There has been a net loss of 33 members in the past year, and the organization simply cannot continue to function with such losses. Directors Adam Kent and Dave Goodwin have prepared a list of actions that might improve membership, and the Committee believes the time to act on these is now.

The Price-Campbell Fund has been a boon to FOS by allowing the organization to have a greater presence on the Web. As requested by the donor, this funding has been used to post *FFN* articles on the Web. The Finance Committee suggested the \$125 remaining in the Price-Campbell fund be used to pay for the web site during 2009. After 2009 the annual cost of hosting the Web site should be made a line item in the expense component of the *FOS* Operating Fund.

*g1. Helen G. and Allan D. Cruickshank Research Award Subcommittee*

There was no report because this award typically is granted in Spring.

*g2. Helen G. and Allan D. Cruickshank Education Award Subcommittee*

Chair Ewell submitted a written report. The committee received 4 proposals for funding this year and recommended funding for 2 of the proposals. The first recommendation was to provide \$650 to John Huft at Wewahitchka Elementary to help purchase binoculars, field guides, and other materials used in the school's bird identification program known as "Bird Brains". The second recommendation was to provide \$230 to Angela Grover of Woodward Elementary (DeLand) to purchase 16 Purple Martin gourds. Students will monitor use of the gourds, learn about the life history and migration habits of martins, and also participate in Project Martinwatch, giving the students an introduction to citizen science

*g3. William B. and Mary J. Robertson Award Subcommittee*

Treasurer Merritt has resigned from this subcommittee and a new chair has not been designated.

*h. Membership Committee*

Dave Goodwin and Adam Kent submitted ideas on improving membership in FOS. These are provided in Appendix 1. There were no specific recommendations stemming from the discussion that ensued, but their suggestions are provided in Appendix 1.

*i. Nominating Committee*

There was no report; nominations occur in Spring.

*j. Records Committee*

Secretary Andy Kratter submitted a written report prior to the meeting. The Records Committee met on 30 August 2008 at Archbold Biological Station and reviewed a total of 29 submissions and reopened two previously accepted records. The Committee accepted 23 new records, including a Townsend's Solitaire observed at Genius Drive Nature Preserve in Winter Park. The solitaire brings the official list of Florida birds to a total of 503. Previous records for Bachman's Warbler and Bicknell's Thrush were reopened because of new interpretations of these records.

*CONTINUING BUSINESS*

*Important Bird Areas Contract*

The contract distributed by President Jackson was reviewed. Vice President Hodgson noted several areas where the language might be changed for clarity and also to balance responsibilities. For example, she suggested changing the names of participants to formal titles such as "President" and "Treasurer". President Jackson suggested using the date that page proofs were received as the time when monetary contributions promised by Audubon of Florida should be delivered. Director Paul recommended securing half the pledged amount (\$8,000) up front and the remaining half when page proofs were received. Treasurer Merritt also noted that dates listed in the contract needed attention because FOS currently has no editor of Special Publications. The completion date should be set for December 2009 to provide time for a new editor to work with Bill on the manuscript.

*NEW BUSINESS*

Past-President Jack Hailman offered to create a Facebook account for FOS to be used to help distribute information on meetings and activities. He requested permission to use the FOS logo on the page, and the Board approved use of the logo unanimously. As noted in President Jackson's report, an effort is underway to initiate a second Breeding

Bird Atlas project in Florida. President Jackson asked Rick West and Elena Sachs to provide some background information on the proposal. Rick has assisted with other atlas projects and believes a second Florida atlas project could be done for minimal cost. West suggested FOS could serve as lead organization on the project and he would donate his time to see the project was completed. Elena Sachs is the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's coordinator for the Florida Bird Conservation Initiative. She said a second atlas project might be an important focus for this program and also was interested in working with Rich on the project. The Board discussed some of the history of the previous project as well as the implications of serving as a lead organization. Secretary Cox noted that computer storage and mapping capabilities available through Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission could improve the overall design of the project. These and other technical issues would be difficult for FOS to match. President Jackson suggested establishing a committee to look into the project and to present recommendations to the Board at an upcoming meeting. Members appointed to the Committee included Dave Goodwin, Karl Miller, David Stock, and Jim Cox.

*ADJOURNMENT*

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jim Cox  
FOS Secretary