

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

Friday, April 24, 2009
Cockroach Bay ELAPP Preserve
Ruskin, FL

CALL TO ORDER

The Spring 2009 meeting of the Board of Directors of the Florida Ornithological Society (*FOS*) was held at the Cockroach Bay ELAPP Preserve in Ruskin, FL. President Jackson called the meeting to order at 2:15 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
Dave Goodwin, Director
Adam Kent, Director
Ann Paul, Director
Steve Bankert, Web Site Editor

David Stock, Finance Committee
Andy Kratter, Records Committee
Todd Engstrom, Conservation
Committee
John Ogden
Elizabeth Hailman
Erik Haney
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 Fall Board Meeting held on Friday, October 3, 2008, in St. Augustine were distributed with the meeting packet. Treasurer Merritt moved that the minutes be accepted, and the motion passed unanimously.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Jackson distributed a report at the meeting. President Jackson was side-lined for several weeks as a result of urgent surgery, but, since recovery, he has signed on Jim Rodgers as *Special Publications Editor* and signed a contract with *Audubon of Florida* for publication of Bill Pranty's *Important Bird Areas* manuscript. President Jackson also noted the great efforts of web editor Steve Bankert in posting articles from the *Florida Field Naturalist* online and revising the FOS web site.

President Jackson also reviewed some of the on-going discussions he has had regarding a new breeding bird atlas project for Florida. The on-line version of the atlas project is

useful but has many limitations. President Jackson noted the important contributions new technologies might provide the project (i.e., photo documentation using digital cameras and global positioning systems). President asked 2-3 FOS members to volunteer to (a) continue to pursue atlas update possibilities, (b) serve as liaisons to other potential partners (such as *The Wildlife Society*) in such an endeavor, and (c) keep FOS in the forefront relative to credible ornithological science as pursued by amateurs and professionals through atlas efforts.

President Jackson was interested in efforts to expand the paper sessions at FOS meetings proposed by Director Miller. Miller suggest the session could be expanded through earlier announcements, enhanced publicity, and more involvement of graduate students. Director Miller and Secretary Cox planned to address some of these issues at the Fall 2009 meeting, while President Jackson also commended Vice President Hodgson on preparations for the Spring meeting.

Dr. Peter Frederick contacted President Jackson regarding the 2011 meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union in Jacksonville, FL. FOS has been asked to co-host the meeting, but there were concerns about the cost of registration (ca. \$370), lodging expenses, and the fate of other FOS meetings scheduled for 2011. President Jackson believes FOS should be involved, and perhaps lower registration can be negotiated for those who help with the meeting (e.g., by leading field trips). All thought the meeting could be great venue for distributing the backlog of FOS journals and special publications.

President Jackson closed by thanking fellow board members for fostering the enjoyment of birding in the state. President Jackson also offered sincere gratitude for out-going Vice President, Ann Hodgson, and board members Charlie Ewell and Julie Wraithmell.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Vice President Hodgson reported that approximately 70 people had registered for the Spring meeting. She thanked Director Dave Goodwin for distributing a note about the meeting on different list-serves and also the Cockroach Bay ELAPP Preserve for help with facilities and logistics. The meeting had been advertised for nearly 4 months, and the early notice appeared to help increase registration. Field trips included visits to Ft. DeSoto and other hotspots in the area.

President Jackson noted the Caribbean Ornithological Society would like to meet jointly with FOS at some future date. Previous attempts had been made to host a joint meeting, but more specifics were deemed necessary.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Secretary Cox submitted a written report. Secretary Cox prepared minutes for the Fall 2008 meeting and distributed them with the meeting packet prior to the meeting. Minutes of the Spring 2008 approved in Fall 2008 were sent to Steve Bankert for posting on the

web page. Cox also worked with President Jackson to secure the services of Dr. Jim Rodgers as the Editor of Special Publications.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Merritt submitted a written report prior to the meeting. FOS account balances as of December 31, 2008 were:

Account	Balance
Fidelity Account	\$102,680.50
PayPal Account	\$140.03
Total Assets	\$102,820.53

FOS fund balances as of December 31, 2008:

Fund	Balance
General Operating Fund	\$19,772.81
Special Publications Fund	\$21,623.90
Grants and Awards Fund (Cruickshank)	\$30,983.14
Grants and Awards Fund (Robertson)	\$9,253.30
Endowment Fund	\$15,774.10
Friends of FFN Fund	\$616.23
Life Membership Fund	\$3,585.20
Deferred Items (2009 Dues)	\$1,211.85
Total Assets	\$102,820.53

Treasurer Merritt noted that all money received by FOS in 2008 was deposited in the Fidelity Cash Reserves fund, and all payments by FOS in 2008 were withdrawn from the Fidelity Cash Reserves fund. On December 31, 2008, the Fidelity cash account had a balance of \$15,463.98 (corrected for \$2,359.29 in checks that had not cleared) with a 7-day yield of 1.94%. The non-cash portion of FOS assets is distributed among 9 mutual funds that are selected based periodic portfolio review reports provided by Fidelity. The portfolio was rebalanced on March 11, 2009 following Fidelity's recommendations provided on March 10, 2009. The FOS has specified that the target asset allocation for the account be defined as "Growth." The report indicates that the growth asset mix has experienced an average annual return of about 9.23%, with a range of -52.93% to 109.54% from 1926 to 2007. The asset value of the non-cash portion of the Fidelity account declined from \$131,712.73 on December 31, 2007 to \$87,216.52 on December 31, 2008. This represents a decline of 33.8% in 2008. During the same period, the Standard and Poor's S&P 500 Index declined 38.5%.

As of March 31, 2009, the Fidelity account had a balance of \$103,099.99. This balance included \$21,788.54 in the Fidelity Cash Reserves fund with a 7-day yield of 0.92%, and \$77,429.96 in non-cash mutual funds. The non-cash portion of the Fidelity account declined 6.8% in 2009. During the same period, the Standard and Poor's S&P 500 Index

declined 11.7%.

The FOS fund balances provide separate accounting of assets allocated to funds designated for General Operations, Special Publications, Grants and Awards, and Endowment. In recent years a separate accounting was also added for the Cruickshank and Robertson portions of the Grants and Awards fund. Also, the Friends of FFN fund was added in 2008, and the Life Membership fund is a new fund created in 2009. At the end of each year, the annual interest received from interest-bearing accounts, plus the change in asset value in brokerage accounts are added together and distributed proportionately among the funds using a standard protocol.

Price-Campbell Foundation Grant

The Price-Campbell Foundation Grant of \$15,000 was awarded to FOS several years ago to enhance FOS presence on the Internet. As of December 31, 2007, \$6,940.73 had been spent out of the original grant, leaving a balance of \$8,059.27. In 2008, a total of \$7,934.15 was charged to the grant for scanning back issues of the Florida Field Naturalist to create PDF files for the web site (\$7,816.00) and web hosting charges (\$118.15). The remaining balance of the Price-Campbell Foundation Grant is \$125.12. The balance of this grant will be applied to web hosting charges in 2009.

Membership

FOS membership as of April 2, 2009 is summarized in the right column of the following table:

Membership Type	4/16/2007	10/3/2007	4/2/2008	9/5/2008	4/2/2009
Individual	226	260	216	243	210
Individual Life	0	0	4	4	6
Family	61	75	62	65	45
Family Life	0	0	4	4	4
Contributing	27	32	22	24	20
Student	5	8	7	8	5
Institutional	33	39	32	33	32
Exchange*	17	16	16	16	16
Honorary*	2	2	1	1	1
Gift*	1	1	0	0	0
Total	372	433	364	398	339

* Non-paying

Nineteen new members joined FOS in 2009. The first membership renewal request was sent on December 29, 2008. The second membership renewal request was sent on February 6, 2009. The total number of memberships is down 6.8% from last spring and down 14.8% from last fall. Updated membership information will be provided at the FOS board meeting on April 24, 2009.

Web Editor Bankert asked how members were notified about expiration of their memberships. Treasurer Merritt said a notice was sent at the end of each year and a second letter followed early the next year. Editor Bankert suggested use of email might save some money, but Treasurer Merritt suggested past experience with emails have proven to be less effective than direct mail. Director Kent suggested a preliminary round of emails followed up with snail mail distributions, and President Jackson suggested members could pay dues at the annual Fall meeting and save on mailing expenses. Treasurer Merritt said he would try this approach with the Fall 2009 meetings.

EDITORS' REPORTS

a. Florida Field Naturalist

Editor Robinson provided a written report. He reported the *Florida Field Naturalist* (FFN) was now on time, but he and assistant editor Tom Webber were hardly overwhelmed with new manuscripts. President Jackson asked the Board to consider whether it was time to move publication of FFN to the web. Treasurer Merritt noted many journals are now on-line exclusively, and the cost of publishing the hard-copy version was approximately \$7,600 per year. Director Kent and Vice President Hodgson expressed concern that an on-line-only approach might not appeal to some members, while Past-President Hailman recommended a two-pronged approach where members were allowed to choose how they received the journal. Finance Committee Chair Stock suggested FOS should try an on-line version next year to see what interest there was, and several Directors felt the move might appeal to younger members.

b. Newsletter

Editor Palmer provided a written report. Editor Palmer published the winter issue, which introduced the *Florida Bird Conservation Initiative*, but he had not received any recent submissions and so will probably combine the Spring and Summer issues and also use material from the Spring Meeting in the next issue.

c. Special Publications

Dr. James Rodgers has replaced Dr. Reed Noss as editor of Special Publications.

d. Web Site

Webmaster Bankert provided a written report. Over the past few months, he has re-structured the FOS web site with a planned move to the new server on April 23rd. The new site has more space and will allow for more interactive features. Webmaster Bankert has posted the remaining articles from FFN on the site (1973-1989). Bankert also has posted new archive and meeting pictures and linked pictures of prominent members who have passed away to the FFN memorial article.

Future goals include (1) ensure that the switchover to the new site goes smoothly, (2) update hard copy of the official state list of birds, and (3) continue to post changes and updates as they are submitted. Webmaster Bankert recommended that all Board members and Committee chairs review the site once the switchover has occurred to ensure that the content is correct. Webmaster Bankert also would like to memorial information on William Robertson, Glen Woolfenden, and any other prominent members so he can add these to the archive section. He also asked Board Members to think up new and innovative ideas for the site (e.g., quizzes, blogs, etc.). The more interactive the site, the more times it will be visited.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Archives Committee

No report provided; no issues known.

b. Conservation Committee

Chair Engstrom provided a written report. His Committee is concerned about recent raids made of the *Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund* within the *Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission* (FFWCC). The trust fund supports research on nongame birds, and funding for research grants was suspended recently. Revenue projections for the trust fund are dismal, and the moratorium for new grant awards will likely continue in FY09-10.

The Conservation Committee will continue to monitor this issue, although the state budgetary situation has grown only bleaker.

Chair Engstrom noted the FFWCC has agreed to extend support for the *Florida Bird Conservation Initiative* through 2012. A list of recent accomplishments of this initiative was provided, and Chair Engstrom planned to work with Elena Sachs, head of the program, on projects of mutual interest.

d. Editorial Advisory Board.

No report submitted; no issues known.

e. Field Observations Committee

Chair Pranty provided a written report. The Committee has published 73 consecutive seasonal bird reports and is now closely integrated with the FOS Records Committee thanks to the recent appointment of Bruce Anderson (and Pranty's appointment earlier). Andy Bankert has been added to the committee as regional compiler for the middle Atlantic coast. Chair Pranty also thanked Peggy Powell for her extraordinary dedication to the FOC: Peggy is now serving in her 21st year as compiler for the Jacksonville region.

f. Finance Committee

Chair Stock submitted a written report. FOS investments “tanked” during 2008 and early 2009. The FOS Fidelity portfolio was rebalanced in early March 2009 to an asset mix that has experienced an average annual return of approximately 9.2%, and because FOS has a long-term outlook, the organization should regain its assets as the economy improves. The budget developed for 2010 should consider expenditures that may eat into endowments.

Chair Stock noted that Treasurer Merritt has wisely put all incoming funds into our Fidelity Cash Reserves fund, which shields new income from losses and has earned a small (1-2%) interest. These funds should be capable of covering the remaining expenses for this year, and, as always, meetings should have costs balanced by registration fees.

Chair Stock recommended the Board limit grants or awards this year because it will require tapping into endowments. The committee recommends funding new grants and awards only if they are truly exceptional. In addition, the Committee emphasizes the need to address declining membership. FOS has had a net loss of 25 members in 2008 despite gaining 19 new members. FOS can not continue to function when it is losing approximately 6.8% of its membership per year. The Board needs to come up with an action plan soon.

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

Chair Sieving provided a written report. The committee received 4 proposals and ranked the proposals based on 7 criteria that included (1) clarity of question, (2) uniqueness of research, (3) importance to biology, (4) importance to conservation, (5) applicability to management, (6) feasibility, and (7) proposal quality. The committee recommended funding the proposal submitted by Travis Wilcoxon and Frances Trinagali if sufficient funds were available. If funds were not available, the proposal from Wilcoxon regarding heritability in Florida Scrub-jays should be funded in full.

Director Kent requested additional information on the proposals. He noted that it would be very helpful to have the abstracts provided. Secretary Cox noted that several evaluation criteria used in this evaluation were not clearly linked to the original intent of the award. The award is given to good avian research projects, not necessarily projects that also have management and conservation implications. Give the status of FOS endowments, Treasurer Merritt moved that the Wilcoxon proposal (Influence of heredity and food abundance on parental effort in the Florida scrub-jay) be funded in the full amount of \$1405. The motion carried unanimously.

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

Chair Ewell provided a written report. He has advertised the availability of the award more fully in recent months and hopes to have several proposals to select from next

Spring. Chair Ewell also recently contacted a previous award winner to see how they were doing with their projects and received the following responses:

Our principal is very supportive as well and allowed for a better place for the martin house to be placed when it arrives. It provides for the open space for these soaring carnivorous birds. I will send photos when we get it up but better yet will be the photos when the birds arrive. With much thanks for a gift to our students to help them learn how to give back to their community,

Mrs. Angela Grover, Woodward Elementary School, Deland

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

Director Goodwin provided an email from Chair Biggs regarding 2 proposals that had been received. One proposal submitted by S. Trefry concerned sexual dimorphism in Magnificent Frigatebird and another proposal from J. LaPergola concerned site fidelity and population genetics in the Black Catbird on Cozumel Island. The committee recommended funding for the LaPergola proposal because it was well thought out and the parameters of the study seemed feasible. The proposal also provides an excellent way to investigate the role of exotic boa constrictors as nest predators.

Finance Chair Stock raised a question about whether the application fell within the geographic bounds of the award. Treasurer Merritt noted the boundaries had been defined by the former Chair of the Committee, Fred Lohrer, and were not strictly defined in the original bequest given to FOS. Director Goodwin said the Committee had contracted members of the Robertson family. Family members and the Committee agreed that the well within the geographic guidelines provided by the family, and Director Goodwin moved support for the project from LaPergola in the amount of \$1,000. The motion carried unanimously.

h. Membership Committee

Committee Member Goodwin provided an oral update. FOS faces increased competition for attention among the birding community of Florida. The society should try to encourage more birding tours and weekend events. President Jackson stressed the need to develop more student memberships.

i. Nominating Committee

Chair Cox handed out a written report at the meeting. Elena Sachs, statewide coordinator for the *Florida Bird Conservation Initiative*, has agreed to serve as Vice President. Elena's job consists largely of coordinating bird conservation and monitoring projects with a variety of state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, non-profits, and the general public. She has developed a bird conservation list-serve and has developed ties with a broad range of groups with birding interests. These connections should serve *FOS* well as we attempt to broaden the groups attending our meetings.

Secretary Cox also has agreed to serve as Secretary for another 2-year stint, which should help to provide continuity and also give me a chance to fulfill some of my aspirations for *FOS*.

The Committee located 2 potential new Directors. Larry Manfredi, a professional birding guide who lives in Miami, has agreed to join FOS and serve as Director. Manfredi offers tours that cover the Dry Tortugas, the Bahamas, and the Caribbean, and he should help to enrich the field trips offered at future meetings. Paul Miller, a biologist at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park, has also agreed to serve as a Director. Miller currently serves on the Field Observations Committee and has ties with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, which should help expand FOS involvement with state parks and preserves.

j. Records Committee

Secretary Kratter provided a written report. The Committee met at the Florida Museum of Natural History in February 2009. Members and their year of term expiration were Bill Pranty (2009), Sally Jue (2010), Andy Kratter (2011), Bruce Anderson (2012), Mark Berney (2013), John Murphy (2014), and Jon Greenlaw (2015). At the meeting, Jon Greenlaw was back to the committee and the minutes of the August 2008 meeting at the Archbold Biological Station, were reviewed, edited, and then accepted. At this meeting, the Committee reviewed 27 reports (including some previously submitted). The Committee accepted 19 reports, did not accept 6 reports, and could not resolve 2 reports.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

None brought forth.

NEW BUSINESS

Director Kent asked about the availability of life-time awards for members with exemplary service to FOS. Treasurer Merritt noted that the honorary membership category was in place to honor such service, and honorary members were listed in the FFN.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Jim Cox
FOS Secretary