



**SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS/ SOCIÉTÉ DES ORNITHOLOGISTES
DU CANADA**

WORKING DOCUMENTS

Contains: - Simplified working bylaws

- Endowment policy
- Policy on sale and exchange of membership list
 - Charges to officers
 - Charges to permanent committees

Updated September 2008

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WORKING DOCUMENTS

Edited from formal Constitution and expanded to reflect current practice. For use of
Officers and Councillors in conducting day-to-day business.

Revised: September 2008

Goals

The goals of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists are as follows:

- 1) To encourage and support research that aims to understand and conserve Canadian birds.
- 2) To serve as a professional society for amateur and professional Canadian ornithologists.
- 3) To represent Canadian ornithologists within professional ornithological societies in Canada, North America and worldwide.
- 4) To disseminate knowledge of Canadian birds through a newsletter and a professional journal.
- 5) To recognize excellence in research, conservation and mentorship within the Canadian ornithological community.

Policy statement

Our primary role is to encourage the study of birds, as an important first step towards preservation, conservation and public appreciation. We define "ornithologist" as anyone who is interested in serious studies of birds, regardless of age or profession, and the society is open to anyone who wishes to join. "Canadian ornithologist" encompasses Canadian citizens who study or are interested in birds as well as citizens of other countries with an interest in Canadian birds and in the state of bird study in Canada.

The Society's goal of encouraging bird study will be achieved through:

- 1) increasing communication about bird research and issues with a newsletter and meetings, including communications among amateurs, academics, conservationists, private sector and government biologists concerned with birds;
- 2) offering grants to graduate students or people with limited or no access to other funds to study birds;
- 3) recognizing and publicizing significant contributions to bird study in Canada;
- 4) publishing a journal (if economic considerations permit) with the results of studies on the conservation and ecology of birds;
- 5) encouraging the application of scientific bird studies to the field of conservation.

Membership

Any person or organization paying dues is a Member. There are four categories of membership: student, regular, sustaining and lifetime.

Annual Meeting of Members

There will be an annual meeting of members at a time and place set by the President or

Council. Notice of the time and place shall be given to members at least 10 days ahead. At this meeting, members accept the minutes of last year's annual general meeting, approve the Treasurer's annual report, hear reports from the President, the membership secretary, Picoides editor, journal committee or ACE/ECO editor, nominating committee (on results of the elections for council and vice president), and awards committees. An auditor is selected by the Treasurer which must be approved by members and council. The President reports on the state of the Society and actions taken by Council during the year. Members may bring up other business for discussion. Quorum is 10 people, at least 2 of whom must be present. The remainder may be represented by proxy or vote by mail or electronically.

Officers

Officers include a President, a Vice-President who is the President-elect, Past-President, a Treasurer, and other officers that the Council designates. Currently these include Recording Secretary, Membership Secretary, and a Newsletter Editor. Offices may be combined at the discretion of Council.

Election of Officers

Officers are nominated by the Nominating Committee and Members and are elected by Members, as outlined below. The election results are then ratified by Council. Terms as Officer are not deemed to be terms as a Councillor, so Officers may serve even if they have just completed 2 terms as Councillor. Officers serve for 2 years and may serve up to 3 consecutive terms in the same office, except that the President and Vice-President may not succeed themselves, unless approved by council. The immediate Past President automatically holds a 2-year term as a Councillor following his or her term of office, and remains thereafter as a non-voting advisor on the Council.

The Nominating Committee, which is headed by the Vice President and includes 2 other voting members, should normally attempt to find multiple candidates for Officers, in order that Members have input to leadership of the Society. However, if the Newsletter Editor, Recording Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary are willing to stay on and are performing satisfactorily, there is no need to nominate additional candidates. If it proves difficult to find more than one person at a time to run as Vice President, a single name may also be put forward for that office. Officers may be removed from office by majority vote of Council members. The ex-Officer completes his term as an ordinary Councillor. All council members and officers have a vote.

Council

Affairs of the Society are managed by the Council, which normally has 17 members (10 Councillors and 7 Officers (see above)).

Election of Councillors

Council appoints a Nominating Committee chairperson, normally the Vice-President. The chairperson recruits two additional members. The committee nominates candidates for positions of Councillor that will be open directly after the next annual meeting, and accepts further nominations that are supported in writing by two Members. The committee also makes sure

candidates are willing to stand. An attempt should be made to find candidates from all across Canada, insofar as good candidates are available. Probable attendance at meetings should be considered, but should not be a prerequisite for nomination.

Ballots are emailed to voting Members or are posted in Picoides so that election results can be determined before the annual meeting of Council. The nominees receiving the greatest number of votes cast are elected, up to the limit of positions open. At its annual meeting, the current Council ratifies the vote of Members. Councillors serve a term of 2 years, and may not serve more than 2 consecutive terms. Usually half of the Councillors are elected each year, so terms are overlapped. There is provision in the constitution for removal of Councillors from office by the Members.

Vacancies on Council

Vacancies may be filled for the remainder of the term by Members in a special election or by remaining Council members or may be left vacant as long as no position of Officer and no more than 3 positions of Councillor are left vacant at an Annual Meeting of the Council.

Annual Meeting of Council

Council members are notified of time and place of the Annual Meeting and an agenda of major items of business should be circulated at least 10 days prior to the meeting. Council normally meets before the annual general meeting. A quorum is 5 Council members. Measures are passed by majority vote as long as at least 9 Council members voted (either at the meeting or by mail or electronic ballot). If fewer than 9 vote, measures must have 5 positive votes to pass. In practice, this means that measures approved at small meetings must later be approved through mail or electronic ballot by the entire Council. Business to be conducted at this meeting includes ratification of election results, approval of council minutes from the previous meeting, hearing and accepting or modifying the reports of all officers, including the financial statement for the previous year, and other timely business.

Council business between Annual Meetings

Mail or electronic ballots may be held between meetings in order to make decisions that can't wait, or to get input of Council members who cannot attend meetings. Ratification of the Speirs Award and Jamie Smith Award recipients may be done by mail or electronically, as these do not coincide with the usual date of the Annual Meeting.

Financial

Council sets the financial year, which currently ends on 31 December. For this reason, incoming Treasurers take office on January 1. Members elect an auditor at each Annual Meeting of Members to audit the accounts of the Society for that year. The auditor must be a chartered accountant or a qualified administrator; a candidate is put forward by the Treasurer.

The Treasurer shall maintain an endowment fund according to the appended Endowment Fund Policy. Council members or committee heads sending expense claims, including receipts, to the Treasurer should do so before 31 December each year, so that reimbursements can clear the books before the end of the financial year. Donation of expenses can also be made by sending the expense account. A charitable donation receipt will then be sent.