

The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club Awards for 2014, presented April 2015

ELEANOR ZURBRIGG, IRWIN BRODO, JULIA CIPRIANI, CHRISTINE HANRAHAN, ANN MACKENZIE and
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On April 18th, 2015 members and friends of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club gathered for the Club's Awards Night at St. Basil's Church in Ottawa to celebrate the presentation of awards for achievements in the previous year. Awards are given to members or non-members who have distinguished themselves by accomplishments in the field of natural history and conservation or by extraordinary activity within the Club. Six Club awards were presented for 2014, for: (1) furthering the knowledge of butterflies, (2) promoting the

Club and engaging members, (3) long time service as Copy Editor for one of the Club's publications, (4) rescuing birds, (5) protecting ecologically valuable land, and (6) raising ecological awareness in the Ottawa area.

As well, the President's Prize was presented to two recipients in recognition of unusual support of the Club through development of a commemorative fern garden and raising the Club's profile through a birding conference.

Honorary Member: Ross Layberry

This award is presented in recognition of outstanding contributions by a member or non-member to Canadian natural history or to the successful operation of the Club. Usually people awarded an honorary membership have made extensive contributions over many years.

Ross Layberry's name is synonymous with the study of butterflies in the Ottawa region. However, his contributions extend far beyond our local boundaries, and he is recognized and respected by lepidopterists across the country for his expertise and wide knowledge of Canadian butterflies.

When he was awarded the Anne Hanes Natural History Award in 2008, it was noted that Ross is "*a keen field observer, meticulous collector of data, discriminating collector of specimens, and even a careful rearer of immatures. This has enabled him to fill in many gaps in our knowledge of the butterflies and, more importantly, to make that information available to all through his lucid writing.*"

Ross's contributions to our knowledge and understanding of butterflies are manifold. He is certainly well-known as one of the authors of the seminal work on Canadian butterflies, *The Butterflies of Canada*, published in 1998 by the University of Toronto Press. In 1982, he, along with Peter Hall and Don Lafontaine, published an important article in *Trail & Landscape*, on the status and distribution of butterflies in the Ottawa District, the first such compilation for our area. Years later, in 2007, Ross prepared a significantly updated summary, delineating changes in status and additions to the butterfly fauna of the Ottawa region.

Ross's enthusiasm and his desire to help others learn more about butterflies is greatly appreciated, as is his ready willingness to answer any and all questions concerning butterflies. He is an indefatigable contributor to the local online butterfly group, where he shares photos and observations, discusses the results of his larvae

rearing, and posts butterfly-related articles both scholarly and popular. He poses interesting questions to the group and engages in discussions about the many aspects of butterfly ecology.

Under the auspices of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Ottawa, he helped to create and maintain the Canadian Biodiversity Information Facility database which contains thousands of butterfly records. In fact, Ross is considered to be a database pioneer in the field of Lepidoptera.

He was the Ontario and Quebec compiler for the Lepidopterists' Society's annual report. In more recent years he compiles and coordinates Ontario and Quebec records submitted to *eButterfly*, and vets them for accuracy.

Ross also works closely with the Toronto Entomologists' Association on their *Ontario Butterfly Atlas Online*, and is one of the three editors responsible for this vast collection of records. Furthermore, Ross is lead editor and compiler for the Association's *Ontario Lepidoptera*, an annual summary of Ontario records. A prolific writer, many of Ross's articles can be found in this annual publication. He is particularly interested in the rearing of larvae and has written on the rearing of Giant Swallowtails, Mourning Cloaks, and Pearl Crescents, amongst other topics.

In recognition of his long-standing work on Canadian Lepidoptera Ross, in 2001, was given the Norman Cridle Award by the Entomological Society of Canada. This award "*recognizes the contribution of an outstanding non-professional entomologist to the furtherance of entomology in Canada*".

The OFNC is proud and privileged to recognize Ross Layberry for his significant contribution over many decades to furthering our knowledge of Canadian butterflies, by naming him an Honorary Member.

(Prepared by Christine Hanrahan)

Member of the Year: Natalie Sopinka

The OFNC's Member of the Year award recognizes a member judged to have contributed the most to the Club in the previous year.

We are recognizing Natalie Sopinka because she exemplifies the impulse to share one's appreciation and knowledge of nature with others. When she joined the Club, Natalie was a PhD candidate from the University of British Columbia, completing her research in a University of Ottawa laboratory.

Natalie asked to join the Education and Publicity Committee upon her arrival in Ottawa in Fall 2013, before she had attended an OFNC event. As a member of the committee, she was reliable, generous, cheerful, and optimistic. Her contributions to the Club and the committee have been considerable. They include supporting the Education and Publicity Committee, promoting a wide range of Club activities, capturing highlights of Club events and publishing her descriptions on the website.

When the committee decided to update the Club's display posters, Natalie taught herself the MS Publisher layout software and created files for attractive posters describing how to join OFNC, OFNC publications, the Macoun Club, and the Fletcher Wildlife Garden. During her presentation to members of the Macoun Club they learned about threats to Pacific salmon and how the salmon are being studied. She re-activated the OFNC's Twitter account, tweeted frequently about OFNC activities, and attracted 329 followers. She staffed OFNC displays at Nature Canada's Bird Day,

Agriculture Canada's Bug Day, and the Ontario Field Ornithologists conference, generating interest in the Club by engaging participants with energy and humour. On Bird Day she collected "nesting" materials and joined kids in building human-scale birds' nests on the grounds at Andrew Haydon Park. To further support youth she assisted in selecting two young naturalists for OFNC's sponsorship to the fifth Ontario Nature Youth Summit and judged projects at the Ottawa Regional Science Fair for the OFNC's special awards.

Natalie is particularly skillful at popularizing scientific work. She created the OFNC blog, "Field Notes", in November 2013. Over the time she was in Ottawa, about half of the stories on the blog were written by her and she contributed to all the rest. In total we can thank her for over 50 posts summarizing monthly meetings and events, writing profiles of OFNC members, and accounts of others' work on ecological concerns of the region. Twenty other members were also encouraged by her to contribute to the blog. She managed the blog website and coordinated the work of its small editorial team. Before her departure, she supervised an Ottawa University student volunteer who was reporting on OFNC's Fall 2014 events.

It is for her many contributions to engage others and for promoting the Club that we want to recognize Natalie as Member of the Year.

(Prepared by Julia Cipriani, based on notes from Lynn Ovenden)

George McGee Service Award: Elizabeth Morton

The George McGee Service Award is given in recognition of a member who has contributed significantly to the smooth running of the Club over several years.

Elizabeth Morton joined the OFNC in 1985 and almost immediately began helping with *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* (CFN) by responding to a request for volunteers. At that time her English literature training made her ideal as Editorial Assistant. She continued in that position until 1989. It was also around that same time when she joined the Publications Committee.

Liz served as Editor of *Trail & Landscape* for the 1990 volume, covering many general Club and birding activities, as well as environmental concerns such as the Albion Road Wetlands and the Spring Hill bog.

In 2002, Liz officially became Copy Editor of CFN. In this role, she was responsible for the proof-reading and editing of manuscripts on a huge variety of subject matter from authors of diverse backgrounds. With her keen eye, attention to detail, and knowledge of natural history, she performed her job with extraordinary skill and patience and provided reliable help to the Associate Editors and the Editor-in-Chief. The majority of her editorial comments were incorporated into the manuscripts.

Liz is a well-organized collaborator, an important quality in helping to keep the Editor on schedule. She remained as Copy Editor until CFN's transition from print-only to print-and-electronic versions making her "the constant" during the editorial and committee change-over. She retired only when the transition was complete. During her tenure as Copy Editor, she reviewed, on average, 74 articles (representing about 575 pages) annually. All this was done while maintaining her day job.

Liz served on the Publications Committee for 28 years, offering advice and giving insights into the production of CFN. More recently, she participated in the Publications Committee's *ad hoc* sub-committee investigating the feasibility of CFN becoming electronic. This three member sub-committee looked at various publication systems available, assessed the suitability of each with respect to CFN, and submitted recommendations to the Publications Committee and Council.

The OFNC is pleased to present Elizabeth Morton the George McGee Service Award for her many years of dedicated work on *The Canadian Field-Naturalist* and within the Publications Committee.

(Prepared by Karen McLachlan Hamilton, with information from Francis Cook and Sandra Garland)

Conservation Award – Member: Anouk Hoedeman

The Conservation Award – Member is given in recognition of an outstanding contribution by a member to the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley, with particular emphasis on activities within the Ottawa District.

For 2014 we are recognizing the work of Anouk Hoedeman for establishing the FLAP program in Ottawa as well as her ongoing work on the Birds Committee and her contribution to the Falcon Watch Program.

FLAP stands for the Fatal Light Awareness Program. This program was founded in 1993 in Toronto to address the issue of bird collisions with human-built structures. Across North America it is estimated that the number of birds killed annually in collisions with buildings ranges from 100 million to one billion.

Thanks to the extensive work of Anouk over the past few years we now have a chapter of FLAP in Ottawa. For her it began with reports of a number of Cedar Waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) dying when they hit the glass connecting the old and new City Hall buildings. Anouk started asking what was being done and found out that no one was doing anything. She took it upon herself to rectify that situation.

Anouk contacted FLAP in Toronto and went through the necessary training to establish a chapter in Ottawa. There are a lot of details and bureaucracy starting up any program. Of particular importance were the working relationships she established with the Wild Bird Care Centre, Nature Canada, and downtown property managers. When you start patrolling around big downtown office towers early every morning you want to make sure the security officers and maintenance workers do not see you as a threat. It is even better if they

are helping you in your quest to retrieve the dead birds and hopefully find some live injured ones. The fact that Anouk patrols by bike might make her seem less threatening or maybe just a bit more peculiar.

Along with her group of volunteers she saves the lives of some stunned birds by either sheltering them until they have recovered from their window strike or taking them to the Wild Bird Care Centre for convalescence. Her inventory of species and number of birds both killed and saved provides an interesting record of bird movements through the city with some surprising findings such as a Boreal Chickadee (*Poecile hudsonicus*) and a Black-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*).

Raising awareness of the issue is extremely important if there is to be any reduction in the fatality of birds from window strikes. Anouk has used the media to get the message out with newspaper articles and interviews. The OFNC website, social media, and public speaking are all part of her arsenal of outreach tools. Her enthusiasm is a natural draw to get others engaged.

Anouk's contribution to bird conservation in Ottawa did not start with FLAP. The Falcon Watch program has also benefited from her abilities to arrange logistics with building managers and to recruit volunteers to keep watch on the fledglings that may need rescuing. In recent years the falcons downtown were not successful at producing chicks. However, in 2013 the Heron Road site was spotted and that has been successful for the last couple of years. Anouk coordinates it all while keeping the website up to date with chatty daily postings and pictures.

We are pleased to recognize the work of Anouk Hoedeman with this Conservation Award.

(Prepared by Ann MacKenzie)

Conservation Award – Non-Member: Paul and Cathy Keddy

This award is given in recognition of an outstanding contribution by a non-member to the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley, with particular emphasis on activities within the Ottawa District.

This year the award goes to long-time Ottawa Valley naturalists Paul and Cathy Keddy in recognition of their outstanding contribution to land conservation in Lanark County. In 2014, they donated a portion of their 250-hectare property to a local land trust and entered into a formal 999-year agreement to protect the remainder in perpetuity. Called the Keddy Nature Sanctuary, it is a magnificent forest and wetland landscape on the Canadian Shield, located approximately 45 kilometres west of Ottawa.

Over the past four decades, Paul and Cathy have put their money where their hearts and minds were, incrementally buying tracts of this richly diverse land to protect it in a natural state for all the wild species that

live there. They purchased their first parcel of forest in the 1970s while they were students at Dalhousie University, then added to it as properties became available, amassing a tract of ecologically valuable land. There is a wide variety of representative and rare features including both regionally and nationally rare species. Nearly 60 hectares of the property has been designated as a Provincially Significant Wetland Complex.

The Keddys were determined that their "square mile of forest and swamp" remain in a natural state in perpetuity, that future owners not be able to log the 120-year-old oaks or develop the land. They partnered with the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust, donating a portion of their property, and protecting the rest through a long-term conservation easement that restricts any future development. While the Keddys will continue to live on their property, when it eventually passes to future owners the easement will continue to protect the property and the Land Trust will monitor this. In this way, Paul

and Cathy have ensured the permanent protection of that landscape and the ecological functions which sustain it.

This is only the most recent in a long list of ecologically-based undertakings in and about the Ottawa Valley initiated by the Keddys. During lengthy careers as prominent professional biologists, they have conducted numerous investigations that have clarified, explored and documented important natural landscapes and features. These have led to significant conservation achievements both locally and beyond.

Mary Stuart Education Award: Tom Spears

The Mary Stuart Education Award is given in recognition of outstanding achievements in the field of natural history education in the Ottawa Region. In most years, the awards are made to schoolroom teachers or those associated with the local Boards of Education, but this year, we have cast our net more broadly.

Newspaper reports on scientific discoveries and environmental issues are notorious for errors, half-truths, and exaggerations. Too often, scientists and environmentalists avoid interviews with the local media due to the fear of being misquoted or misunderstood. Not so in Ottawa, where the *Ottawa Citizen* has Tom Spears looking after these topics. His clear and illustrative reporting of often complex and seemingly academic issues that are nonetheless important for both the invested and general public to understand, has been remarkable. Tom has dealt with topics ranging from exposing the antics of pirate scientific journals, reporting important conservation achievements, tracing the redevelopment of forests after fires, wolf studies in Gatineau Park, and the discovery of rare and ecologically critical species, to unravelling unwieldy and environmentally counter-productive bureaucratic processes.

Often as not, his writing captures quirky aspects of the subject, never getting more serious than necessary but always mindful and respectful of the important core message. Tom Spears employs only solid, verifiable, and science-based documentation before he speaks. He checks first with scientists and researchers with proven credibility concerning the issue and frequently consults scientific primary sources including our own *Canadian Field-Naturalist* for references. Tom puts the

President's Prize: Elisabeth Allison

This award is given at the President's discretion for singular contributions to our Club that do not quite fit the other Club awards categories.

Four years ago, the Fletcher Wildlife Garden needed someone with knowledge of ferns and their discrete habitats to create a fern trail in memory of Bill Cody, a fern specialist and a long-time member of our Club. Lis Allison took on this project in the Ash Woods. Now, as

This latest positive conservation action by Paul and Cathy Keddy is an inspiration to other field naturalists and conservationists.

The OFNC is honored to present Paul and Cathy Keddy with its Conservation Award for a non-member.

(Prepared by Eleanor Zurbrigg, based on material from Dan Brunton and the website of the Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust, accessed February 2015, <http://mmlt.ca/protecting-nature/our-protected-properties/keddy-nature-sanctuary/>)

needs, nature, and remarkable characteristics of the natural world front and centre in a credible, verifiable, and accessible manner that both informs and inspires his readers. In doing this Tom has contributed to a greater level of ecological awareness in and of the Ottawa Valley and beyond (his articles frequently being picked up nationally or internationally). Perhaps his greatest contribution is promoting a greater public understanding of the need for informed, fact-based decision-making in natural environment management.

Tom Spears is from the Toronto area and developed his love of the outdoors during cottage summers by Lake Huron with his parents. He and his wife now own 13 acres of forested land in the Gatineau Hills. Although Tom doesn't regard himself as a naturalist and lacks formal education in science (having majored in French and history at York University), he has a strong love of the outdoor experience and can recognize many of the birds and flowers he encounters.

Tom came to the *Ottawa Citizen* 25 years ago, after having been a reporter for the *Peterborough Examiner*, *Ottawa Journal*, *Montreal Gazette*, and *Toronto Star*. He was on night shifts at the *Toronto Star* when the environmental reporting job opened up, which would mean day shifts Monday to Friday, so he jumped at the chance. Although Tom is a "general assignment reporter", the *Ottawa Citizen* normally directs the science stories to him, for which he is very grateful, and we should be too. Tom has done an exceptional job of teaching science to the layperson, and for this, we award him this year's Mary Stuart Education Award.

(Prepared by Irwin Brodo and Dan Brunton)

most of you know, those woods have been destroyed by the Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis*). The ash trees had to be cut down and in the process the fern garden, which had become nicely established under these trees, was also destroyed.

A decision was made to recreate a fern garden at the rear of the Backyard Garden. Lis gallantly took on the task to redesign that area to make it a suitable space for

ferns. There was plenty of shade for shade-loving ferns but other habitats needed to be created. Using a pond liner and doing some heavy digging, she fashioned a small wetland for the water-loving ferns and built a lovely stone wall for the rock-dwelling ferns. Voilà, we now have a Fern Garden with about 39 of the 43 ferns

that grow in the Ottawa area. Many of these ferns came from Lis's own garden.

It is my pleasure to present the President's Prize to Elisabeth Allison with thanks from our Club.

*(Prepared by Fenja Brodo, President,
based on material from Isabelle Nicol)*

President's Prize: Robert Cermack

This award is given at the President's discretion for singular contributions to our Club that do not quite fit the other Club awards categories.

The OFNC has always been strong in birding. This is probably the most popular activity among our club members. So when Bob Cermak came to the Board requesting support for hosting the annual OFO (Ontario Federation of Ornithologists) Convention in Ottawa we were pleased to support this.

Bob had a vision and a plan. It involved getting leaders from his many birding friends, including OFNC members, but more importantly, birders from several

other sister clubs in the region. It was a cooperative event that offered an amazing total of 29 field trips led by 38 leaders, over the three-day Convention in September 2014. Participants had hard choices to make. At the beautifully organized Convention dinner I heard the enthusiasm and delight expressed by attendees, asserting this to be one of the best OFO Conventions ever. This was a tribute to Bob's organizational skills; he did our Club proud. That is why I am presenting Bob with the President's Prize.

(Prepared by Fenja Brodo, President)