

WSO Annual Member Meeting – 2023

- Review 2022 Member Meeting Minutes
- Board Report with updates from:
 - President
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 - Governance
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- Operations Report
- Conservation Report
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- Introduction of Board

2022 Member Meeting Minutes

Saturday, May 28

Present: Mary Korkor, Sunil Gopalan, Carl Shroeder, Quentin Yoerger, Lynn Barber, Mary Murrell, Nancy, Nabak, Rebecca Gilman, Steve Holzman, Jennifer Lazewski, Jennifer Wenzel, Greg Bisbee, Davor Grgic, Dar Tiede, Jeff Baughman, Wendy Schultz, Tom Schultz, Donna Miller

Not present: Carl Schwartz

Review of annual report that was previously sent to members.

2021 Year in Review

Outgoing WSO President, Mary Korkor, and Executive Director Jennifer Lazewski presented a review of 2021. Following is a summary.

Due to Covid-19 there was no convention in 2022.

The board worked with a consultant to solidify a needs and development assessment

The needs assessment resulted in rebuilding board governance structure/meetings; establishing board standing committees; develop updated strategic plan, and hiring staff. In 2021, WSO hired Rebecca Gilman as the new administrative assistant, and Jennifer Lazewski as executive director. Gilman stepped down from her position in November and in the spring of 2022, WSO was pleased to hire Donna Miller as the new administrative assistant.

To support the new hires and our new strategic planning, WSO launched the Flight Forward Campaign with a stated fundraising goal of \$150,000 by the end of March 2022. Over 80% of that goal was met by the end of 2021.

Started the Regional Coordinator Program

Honey Creek Preserve fundraising: 2021 fundraising raised \$23,330.50 for Honey Creek. Funding goes to support land management at Honey Creek, including invasive management and property maintenance.

Awards: Tom Schultz and Jeff Baughman received the Samuel D. Robbins Lifetime Achievement Award; Clarie Luthin and Dick Nikolai received the Noel J. Cutright Award; Aaron Stutz received the Bronze Passenger Pigeon.

Grants: WSO awarded \$3000 in 2021 to multiple projects; Jack Coulter is the new grants chair.

Membership review: 10 year review; membership levels are maintaining over this time frame. There was an increase noted between 2020 and 2021 in the number of members, the renewal rate and new members.

Field trips transitioned to the use of registration and covid waivers.

Records committee; 706 records submitted, 70% acceptance rate; new species Lesser Goldfinch, Sprague's Pipit, and Allen's Hummingbird

Conservation committee: In 2021, WSO took a position opposing Sandhill Crane hunting; WSO supported a renewal of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship fund, which was signed into law July 8 at \$33.25 million; WSO supports the Wetland Restoration Act; WSO joined the Wisconsin RAWA Coalition (Recovering America's Wildlife Act); continuing efforts on other issues (i.e. window collisions, keeping cats indoors, use of non-lead ammunition)

WSO Bookstore-sold out of Haunts (5th ed) BB Atlas in WI, and original logo caps

Publications: WSO produced 11 issues of "The Badger Birder" and one of *The Passenger Pigeon* (vol 82.3-83.1)

HELP IS NEEDED! "The Badger Birder" editors (Carl Schwartz and Barbara Schwartz) are stepping down. *The Passenger Pigeon* also needs editors and contributors. There was a suggestion to elicit advertisements for *The Passenger Pigeon*.

Financials

Membership dues policy to be reviewed

Unrestricted and restricted funds: WSO is in good financial shape. We currently have \$160,525 in unrestricted income in our reserves and \$84,751 restricted funds.

Restricted funds include funds earmarked for the Honey Creek property (including the Honey Creek fund and the Dischler land purchase.) Other restricted funds include the conservation and youth funds.

2022 budget includes staff expenses, publications, administration and consulting, membership and fundraising, programs and outreach. Total expenditures are estimated at \$145,500.

A question was raised about additional Dischler funds—will they be applied to what's needed at Honey Creek? We're in the process of developing a new management plan. The idea of planting oaks was brought up as a suggestion.

WSO Big Birding Bash - May 14th, 2022

Jack Coulter presented an overview of the first annual WSO Big Birding Bash.

244 species were recorded state-wide; 606 checklists (490 complete) were submitted on eBird; 82 users have shared data on eBird; members totalled 417 hours of birding

Kudos and thank you's to all who participated and to Jack Coulter for tallying the results. It was suggested that the Big Birding Bash become an annual event.

Honoring of Board Members

Mary Korkor was thanked for her tireless service to the WSO as President of the Board. During her tenure, the WSO not only weathered the Covid19 Pandemic, it grew and is celebrating the hiring of its first Executive Director.

Mary Murrell stepped down from the board. Mary was thanked for her meticulous oversight of both the Membership Committee and the Governance Committee. Her dedication to the WSO is much appreciated and she will be missed.

Jennifer Wenzel is stepping down from the board. Jenny served as Secretary for 10 years and everyone was deeply grateful to her for her service to the WSO.

WSO Board Election Results

Election results: Most members voted online. 21 paper votes. There were 197 yes votes for the new slate for the Executive Board; 2 no votes.

The newly elected Executive Board is:

President – Sunil Gopalan,

Vice-President – Lynn Barber,

Secretary – Rebecca Gilman,

Appointed Treasurer – Dani Baumann.

Respectfully submitted, Jenny Wenzel, WSO Secretary (edited by Rebecca Gilman)

President's Letter

This spring marks the end of the first year of my term as the President of the WSO. We came into the start of my term with the prior few years having been mostly defined by the pandemic and the hardships it posed on everyone. We were particularly impacted as a membership organization because we were limited in the ways in which we could engage with you all. But those years were also highlighted by the support you all provided to WSO's mission in spite of those limitations. And I want to thank every one of you who has prioritized what we stand for.

As you also know, in the midst of all these challenges we forged a path towards sustainability for the organization and its mission. The WSO's first executive director has been working this past year to streamline our operations and coordinate our efforts with other likeminded organizations across the state. The board has taken steps to formalize its duties as a governance and oversight body. This takes the form of Governance, Finance and Planning Committees – each of which has been busy laying the groundwork for their key oversight roles.

In my introductory letter last year, I indicated that we intend to be a home for everyone with an interest in birds to help shape the bridge from enjoyment to study to conservation. The Planning Committee is laying the foundation for this bridge by getting our Strategic Plan off the ground this year. And we will certainly need your feedback – on what we are doing, what you think we should be doing, and how we can go about doing those things.

We'll have a new way to engage with all of you in the form of an "unconvention" in the late fall. Details are still being planned, but this will be a primarily indoor event intended to provide us all with an opportunity to learn about field work, academic research and other fun topics that are being tackled across the state and to connect with all the people involved in this important work.

Thank you as always for all you have done and continue to do for our birds.

Sunil Gopalan

President, Wisconsin Society for Ornithology

Secretary's Report for 2022

Among my primary duties is the taking of the minutes of the quarterly meetings of the Board of Directors, and the monthly meetings of the Executive Committee. Much of what is discussed at the Executive Committee meetings is later presented to the full board at the quarterly meetings. Below, please find some of the highlights of these quarterly meetings.

January 2022

- The newly formed Governance Committee recommends the board establish a Planning Committee as a new board standing committee. This committee will be responsible for setting the WSO strategic planning process in motion. When the strategic plan is complete, the Planning Committee will be responsible for building consensus around it, making sure it is implemented and, over time, regularly evaluating how well the plan is being implemented and if the plan needs modification. The motion is approved.
- The Conservation Committee reports that the City of Madison's Bird-Safe Glass Ordinance is being challenged in court. The committee proposes that the WSO, along with Madison Audubon Society and the American Bird Conservancy, jointly file an amicus (friend of the court) brief defending the ordinance. The motion is approved.
- The 2022 WSO Convention is discussed. Given the ongoing Covid pandemic, the majority of the board is uncomfortable with holding an in-person convention. In its place, the board decides to hold a WSO Big Birding Bash which consisting of a statewide big birding day.
- The Grants Committee reports that the grants program needs to be redefined and that there needs to be more accountability and follow-up in the grant-making process. A task force will be formed to recommend changes to the process. The board decides that WSO should not accept new grant applications for 2022.
- WSO is pleased to distribute its \$5,000 pledge to the Lake Michigan Bird Observatory's Motus Wildlife Tracking project. An additional \$5,000 is coming from the observatory's Motus Matching Fund. WSO will be officially recognized as a sponsor.

April 2022

- The board welcomes three new members: Lynn Barber, Rebecca Gilman, and Steve Holzman. Lynn Barber is nominated to serve as Vice-President and Rebecca Gilman as Secretary, pending membership approval.
- Jennifer Lazewski, Executive Director, reports that WSO's first virtual programs are a big success. These included presentations on the status of the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II by DNR Conservation Biologist, Ryan Brady; and on Project SOAR (Snowy Owl Airport Rescue).
- The Flight Forward fundraising campaign exceeded its goal of \$150,000.
- A Honey Creek Management Team has formed and will conduct surveys of WSO's Honey Creek Preserve in Sauk County in order to put together a new management plan for the property. Mike Mossman (retired DNR ornithologist and conservationist) and DNR ecologist Amy Staffen will head up the team.

May 2022 (WSO Annual Meeting)

See Minutes Above

July, 2022

- The Honey Creek Birdathon/Bandathon was highly successful. There were 30 visitors for the event. \$22,000 has been raised so far, which sets another record over the previous year and over the goal.
- The Cox House at Honey Creek continues to deteriorate and is a safety hazard. Jennifer Lazewski reports that WSO has received an offer for about \$4,000 from a local contractor to buy the structure in order to repurpose the original logs that are beneath the siding. WSO has also received an estimate to bury the rest of the building materials in the basement excavation at a cost of \$4,000. Therefore, at a net cost of close to \$0, the house can be removed. A discussion ensues in which the historical significance of the house is debated. A motion is made to accept the offer to remove the house and to delegate to the Executive Committee the decision of how to dispose of the remaining debris. The motion passes with nine “yes” votes, three “no” votes, and one abstention.
- Lynn Barber reports that initial planning for the May 2023 convention has begun. There is interest in holding the convention in Waukesha. There is also interest in holding a second event in November of 2023, the focus of which will be lectures and panel discussions on ornithology.

October, 2022

- The results of a member survey on *The Badger Birder*, which was conducted in order to help clarify the what the newsletter might look like under a new editor, are presented by Lazewski. While our members have a highly positive view of *The Badger Birder*. However, the survey not did not produce as much information as was hoped.
- Lazewski is working on a joint conservation conference with the Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory and the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Partnership for the end of March 2023. The conference will address the steep decline in bird populations over the past 30 years and will possibly be held in Oshkosh.
- The Membership Dues Review Group reports that changes need to be made to WSO’s dues structure. Historically, WSO has used a transactional membership approach which is no longer feasible for the organization. Specific proposals will be made in the coming months and will be presented to members at the 2023 convention for approval.
- The Finance Committee reports that WSO needs to strengthen its financial controls and oversight. It will be necessary to take a hard look at our current accounting system and possibly change to QuickBooks, which is used by other organizations and can be used by multiple individuals. Authorization for opening and closing accounts needs to be updated, as well as our investment policies.
- The Planning Committee held its first meeting in September and will begin the strategic planning process soon.
- The 2023 convention will be the third weekend of May 2023, 19-21, in Waukesha County. Christine Reel has graciously agreed to co-chair the committee along with Lynn Barber. Members of the Benjamin F. Goss Bird Club will help with the convention.
- A WSO Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) statement which provides guidance for WSO is presented. The statement supports efforts of organizations such as the BIPOC Birding Club and Feminist Bird Club and clarifies that WSO’s promotion of their events is intentional. The statement will be published in *The Badger Birder*. The board votes to approve the DEI statement.

Governance Report

The Governance Committee was chaired by Mary Murrell (first half) and Lynn Barber (second half) over the 2022 calendar year.

In the first half of the year, it worked on:

- The approval of a committee charter;
- Establishment of a conflict of interest policy; and
- Establishment of a Board Manual to contain information necessary for Board Members.

In the second half of the year, it worked on the preparation of a document for advertising for new WSO board members, stressing the desire for increased board diversity and the need for potential board members to have prior nonprofit board experience. This document was to be included in the January 2023 Badger Birder, with a deadline of February 28, 2023 for receiving applications from potential board members. The committee also began the process of reviewing and consolidating WSO officer job descriptions as found in the bylaws and other WSO documents.

Planning Report

The Planning Committee was formed in fall of 2022 and chaired by Sunil Gopalan. The primary objective in this first year was the initiation of an organization-wide strategic planning process to better inform the WSO's operations.

Over the year, it worked on:

- The approval of a committee charter;
- Education on the Strategic Planning process; and
- Assessment of options to engage with an external consulting firm on Strategic Planning for the WSO in 2023.

Finance Report

In 2022 the Finance Committee had its first full year of operation. We addressed a number of financial administration and planning items including:

- Regular Committee review/analysis of financials before presentation to the full Board;
- Establishment of an annual financial plan/budget process that engages and incorporates input from all committees of the Board;
- Establishment of document retention and investment policies; and
- Development of plans to transition to a standard accounting system from a very rudimentary and difficult-to-administer personal finance system that is more suitable for individuals rather than small non-profit organizations. This transition is scheduled for mid-year 2023.

Treasurer's Report

1. Your generous support of WSO continues, and donations from members, friends, and supporting groups during 2022 amounted to just over \$113,000. Of that amount, over \$62,000 came in as unrestricted donations to help increase operational capacity, staff and program development. In addition, over \$33,000 supported the continued management of our Honey Creek property in Sauk County and over \$13,000 supported the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II project. It is owing to your generosity that WSO can continue to undertake amazing projects for the good of our birds now and in the future. THANK YOU!
2. WSO has a long history of supporting individuals by administering grant funds to help finance ornithological research and other non-budget projects. These amounts do not appear in the financial summary below because they are financed for the most part by sources outside of WSO. Current non-budget projects include the following:
 - Sam Robbins Shorebird Endowment Fund. SRSEF, which was established in 2000, is managed by its own board to provide support for education and habitat preservation to benefit shorebirds. An endowed fund, the earnings are to be used in a way that honors Sam Robbins's bird conservation legacy.
 - Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative. WSO serves as treasurer for WBCI's annual meeting.
3. Of the total assets as of 31 December 2022 (\$1,168,568 – see **II. WSO Balance Sheet as of 31 December**), the amount available to cover general operating expenses is \$186,054; the remainder is restricted. All of the amounts listed as received in **Restricted Revenue** in Part I, as well as for grants and other non-budget projects administered by WSO, must be reserved for their intended use.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

I. WSO Statement of Revenue and Expenses, 2019–2022

	2022	2021	2020	2019
Unrestricted Revenue*				
Birder Adv/Back Issues	400	354	130	518
Donations-Unrestricted	62,632	9,971	11,788	12,664
Flight Forward Campaign	0	115,989	12500	0
Interest/Dividends	377	74	133.39	155
Membership Dues	51,310	40,665	39,975	38,701
Pigeon-Subscr/Back Issues	625	510	572	125
WSO Pubs/Bookstore	1,728	1,963	182.96	539
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0
Total Unrestricted Revenue	117,072	169,525	65,281	52,702

	2022	2021	2020	2019
Expenses (Unrestricted)				
Administration	11,934	25,015	8,931	6,201
Awards	351	294	646	592.32
Birder	8,035	7,547	7,124	5,955
Communications	700	400	464	514
Development	1,688	1,688	0	0
Membership	4,890	3,857	4,217	4,206
Brochure	345	431	618	315
Payroll Expenses	78,437	29,074	0	0
Pigeon	13,947	12,806	16,301	10,961
Schol/Grants	1,500	3,000	1,000	2,500
Website	750	0	0	0
WSO Pubs/Bookstore	1,535	394	195	1,278
Miscellaneous*	295	245	0	2,500
Total Expenses (Unrestricted)	124,406	84,751	39,495	35,022

* Miscellaneous unrestricted expenses during 2022: Field Trip Expenses

	2022	2021	2020	2019
Restricted Revenue				
Atlas II	13,254	15,822	32,515	101,222
Conservation Projects	4,620	3,650	2,775	2,545
Convention	0	0	0	11,728
Duck Stamps	900	775	1,325	638
Endowment-Donations	0	0	0	0
Interest/Div/Cap Gains	11,566	12,408	9,055	5,931
Life/Patron Memberships	0	0	0	150

	2022	2021	2020	2019
Field Trips	0	30	10,263	38,000
Honey Creek-Donations	33,081	29,701	20,703	15,349
Mems/Bequests (unallocated)	0	0	0	10000
Schol/Grants-Donations	0	0	0	0
Interest/Dividends	4	8	22	22.57
Youth Fund Dons	0	1,200	0	20
WSO Pubs-Haunts Sales	0	450	480	688.44
Miscellaneous	0	100	0	0
Total Restricted Revenue	63,425	64,144	77,138	186,294

	2022	2021	2020	2019
Expenses (Restricted)				
Atlas II	7,987	9,544	12,030	157,877
Conservation Projects	5,000	5,000	2,500	5000
Convention	1,600	0	19	10,944
Duck Stamps	916	784	1,330	634.08
Field Trips	0	0	34,571	12,268
Haunts Update	5,000	5,000	0	0
Honey Creek	14,556	24,364	50,056	12,253
Website Redesign	3,410	3,410	0	0
Youth Fund	0	0	250	2,230
Miscellaneous*	110	93	99	89.19
Total Expenses (Restricted)	38,579	48,195	100,855	201,296

* Miscellaneous restricted expenses during 2022: Sales tax paid in 2022 for sales during 2021

II. WSO Balance Sheet as of 31 December

	2022	2021	2020	2019
Cash	403,740	398,611	311,546	320,914
Inventory for Sale	1,066	1,065	2,896	5,138
Land*	557,884	557,884	557,884	522,901
Mutual Fund Investments	153,086	173,954	152,157	138,695
Assets Held by Another Org**	52,792	66,951	56,971	51,826
Total	1,168,568	1,198,465	1,081,454	1,039,473

* Land carried at cost:

- Prairie-chicken land, 60 acres in Portage County, \$1,491 (leased in 1962 to WDNR for 99 years)
- Honey Creek property in Sauk County:
 - 264 acres purchased 1960-1973, \$20,791
 - 61 acres purchased 2016 (“Dischler”), \$288,018 (includes DNR Stewardship program interest)
 - 44 acres purchased 2017 (“Dischler”), \$213,455 (includes DNR Stewardship program interest)
 - Cox House and land purchased 2020, \$34,983
- Honey Creek nature center and outbuilding:
 - Upon recommendation from our accounting firm, the buildings on the original Honey Creek property were fully depreciated in 2016; in prior years they were valued at \$8,928, and in 2016 they were valued at \$0

** Assets held by another organization:

- Important Bird Areas Fund, an endowed fund held by the Natural Resources Foundation since 2007, \$12,722
- Sam Robbins Shorebird Endowment Fund, an endowed fund held by the Natural Resources Foundation since 2013, \$40,069

Executive Director

It has been an eventful first year for WSO's first Executive Director. WSO has a long, rich, and complicated history. It has been taking longer than expected to understand each longstanding activity, WSO's governance and volunteer structure, the impact of recent changes, and how to prioritize all that has been going on and all that needs to happen in the future.

The goal is to create a vibrant and growing organization that fulfills the needs of the birding community and bird conservation in Wisconsin. As with any major transition involving change management, some things may seem to happen too quickly and some things too slowly from each person's perspective. WSO has some wonderful members that are already here. We need you to engage with WSO, to offer your skills and talents when possible, and to support our fundraising to reach WSO's goal of providing statewide leadership in the enjoyment, study, and conservation of Wisconsin's birds.

My duties include the day-to-day management of the organization and its activities. In general, managing the sixteen or more WSO programs, publications and committees now falls under staff (rather than the Board) while the Board focuses on the bigger picture. Volunteers, however, are still an integral part of WSO and its program. WSO holds some unique responsibilities and obligations for the Wisconsin birding community that require expert birders and avian academics. Also staff members cannot take on all the responsibilities of those program committee chairs and editors while also engaging in new endeavors and new collaborations. It will take the best possible efforts from staff and volunteers at all levels to move WSO forward with meaningful contributions to Wisconsin birding and bird conservation.

Summaries of these various WSO programs, committees, publications and activities follow.

Awards

Despite the tenacity of the pandemic, there are still people who do good things for birds, and the year (crazy as it was) yielded a number of exceptional nominations. It was with great pleasure that we presented the 2022 WSO Passenger Pigeon Awards to the following recipients:

- Gold Passenger Pigeon – Laura Erickson
- Silver Certificate of Appreciation – Carl Schwartz
- Silver Passenger Pigeon – Anna Pidgeon
- Bronze Passenger Pigeon – Marc and Gayl Zuelsdorf
- Noel J. Cutright Award – Janet and Amber Eschenbauch
- Hospitality – Tom Schnaderbeck, Doreen Streblow, and Stephanie Nagel

The Awards Committee personally delivered all but one of the six 2022 Passenger Pigeon Awards over the summer, enjoying extended visits with these devoted bird-centric awardees hailing from Duluth, Mazomanie and Amherst. Only one of the awards was mailed, and Carl Schwartz's award was delivered at a summer WSO board meeting.

Badger Birder Newsletter

In 2022, the newsletter had its usual eleven issues with regular features and an array of WSO, birding, and conservation news. All members with an email address can access the newsletter in full-color digital format on the members-only section of the WSO website, and staff reminded members of this access several times. An average of just over 400 members (over 1/3 of membership) received black and white paper copies at an additional \$10 charge.

WSO conducted a survey on the content of the newsletter. 213 responses were received and 189 of them (89%) were from members aged 51 and older (90 aged 70 and older). Over 80 percent read all or most of it, and ratings and comments were nearly all positive about all aspects of the newsletter and its content. Bird conservation and sighting news for Wisconsin were the most popular topics.

Carl and Barbara Schwartz intended to retire in May 2022, but graciously served as editors for an extra year as staff joined WSO. We thank them for their incredible work on a comprehensive newsletter done by professional journalists for the past eight years. With no volunteers responding to recruitment efforts, in 2023 staff will need to take over the newsletter for a while.

Big Birding Bash

WSO conducted a new statewide birding event on May 21-22, 2022. WSO members and other birders were encouraged to go out on those days and submit their eBird checklists to create a statewide spring "Big Weekend". About 328 observers saw 244 species in 59 counties. Participants did everything from backyard viewing to multi-county trips and generated 635 eBird checklists. It was a wonderful way to celebrate spring migration and participate in Wisconsin bird study and enjoyment even if we could not be together in person.

Field Trips

WSO returned to a full field trip schedule with the usual eleven trips, but also had a few offerings from regional coordinators. WSO visited fourteen counties in the state with car caravan and walking field trips designed for bird observations at prime times. Pre-registration and waivers continued for health conditions and managing trip size.

Although Tom Schultz and Jeff Baughman announced their retirement after over 30 years of leading these trips, the new field trip leader did not work out and no others volunteered to chair the program. Tom and Jeff have returned to running these trips with the help of a field trip committee.

Grants

WSO awarded \$500 grants each to:

- WSO Award – Project SOAR program dedicated to the safe removal of Snowy Owls and other birds of prey overwintering at airports.
- WSO Award - NEW Audubon Society bird monitoring efforts on restored Oneida Nation lands.
- Steenbock Award - "Tracking the Phantoms: A Red-shouldered Hawk Telemetry Study." This project works to shed more light on the life history and ecology of Red-shouldered Hawks breeding in Wisconsin.

Honey Creek Preserve

A land management volunteer group (including current and former DNR employees) has surveyed all parts of the Honey Creek Preserve to better understand the current status of its birds, plants, and wildlife. They are developing a map of the natural communities on the property and drafting a land management plan that includes the Dischler property as well. The plan is expected in later 2023 to early 2024 (DNR review is necessary since the property is in the Baraboo Hills State Natural Area).

WSO continued its usual invasive plant prevention efforts for garlic mustard and knotweed. Trails continued to be cleared and the nature center maintained by volunteers, led by Dan Pickarts. Fencing work continues in two areas.

The Cox House became uninhabitable and hazardous, so it was removed in 2022. WSO sold the log cabin section of the house and covered the expenses to remove/bury the remaining parts of the house.

Passenger Pigeon Journal

During 2022, WSO published the summer and fall editions of the 83rd volume in a consolidated issue during spring of 2022. The winter edition of the 83rd volume was then published in late 2022. The spring and summer editions of the 84th edition to be printed and delivered in May 2023.

The journal is about a year behind schedule with no additional volunteers willing to assume the main editorial responsibilities. A process review committee worked with the editor on possible solutions, but Tim Hahn will be retiring from this role in May 2023. The Board and Executive Director continue to work on how to get the journal functioning and back on schedule with the help of volunteer advisors and possibly paid assistance.

The *Passenger Pigeon* journal continues to be available to all members in digital format on the WSO website, and staff reminded members of this access several times. An average of about 870 members received paper copies of the journal in 2022.

Records

The WSO Records Committee evaluated the following records by season:

Season	Reviewed	Accepted	Not Accepted
Winter 20-21	247	234	13
Spring 2021	109	53	56
Summer 2021	57	40	17
Fall 2021	116	56	60
TOTAL	529	383	146

*Overall acceptance rate = 72.4%

One new species was added to the official State of Wisconsin list was the Arctic Loon. The bird was found on Lake Superior in Bayfield County. The bird lingered for about a week allowing many birders to see this species that is very rarely seen anywhere other than the Pacific coast. This new species brings the official State of Wisconsin list total to 445 species through the Fall 2021 season.

Quentin Yoerger continued as the Committee Chair with Aaron Stutz and Tom Prestby. Mark Korducki and Ted Keyel stepped down as the members of the Committee. New committee members are Jennifer Wenzel and Andrea Szymczak.

Virtual Programs

WSO started virtual programs with birding and conservation topics. There were presentations on the status of the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II, Project SOAR, (which is funded in part with WSO grant sponsorship), using eBird and its features, protecting bird habitat in the Driftless Area and saving the disappearing Connecticut Warbler in Wisconsin. Attendance was as high as 73 with some programs having up to over 300 additional views on YouTube.

WSO Convention

The WSO Convention did not go forward in 2022 due to continuing health restrictions and concerns with the COVID-19 variants. The Convention Chairperson felt it would be too difficult and the weather too unpredictable to plan outdoor alternatives for the indoor events at Two Rivers along the Lake Michigan lakefront in May.

Since Two Rivers would not be available the next year due to construction in the downtown area, WSO decided to hold the 2023 convention in Waukesha County instead. New Vice President Lynn Barber and longtime convention registration volunteer Christine Reel acted as co-chairpersons to lead these efforts with the tremendous support of the Benjamin F. Goss Bird Club.

WSO Store

Formerly known as the Bookstore, the WSO store has been selling only a limited number of items since WSO no longer has any of its own book publications available. WSO continues to produce and sell the Wisconsin bird checklists, a few current Wisconsin bird books from other sources, and some clothing options. WSO is exploring other options for items to be sold by the piece on a merchandiser site so that WSO does not need to stock inventory and mail items itself.

WSO Website

The WSO website format was refreshed under the supervision of its Web Administrator, Sunil Gopalan. WSO also added a digital interactive version of *Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts* with members-only access. It includes over 800 sites in all 72 counties written by 110 contributors.

Membership

In 2022, WSO had another modest increase in membership. The increase of 24 members comes from past members renewing again after they lapsed during the previous year or earlier. Membership applications numbered 143 and 145 memberships lapsed in 2022. Because lapsed members (who are neither new nor continuous renewals) can rejoin at any time during or after the year their membership payment is due, annual membership numbers cannot be reconciled by looking solely at new and lapsed members from year to year or during the quarters of a year.

The 2022 renewal rate for members who joined in 2021 was 67% (49 of 146 members who joined in 2021 lapsed by the end of 2022). The renewal rate for members who joined before 2021 was 93% (66 of 1011 members who joined before 2021 lapsed in 2022). The total renewal rate for 2022 was 90% (91% for 2021).

10-Year WSO Membership Comparison

Level	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Conservation Advocate	---	---	---	---	8	11	20	24	27	27
Sustaining	42	49	66	63	73	78	66	80	98	122
Household**	726	739	741	742	628	551	516	544	571	570
Senior	152	161	189	183	250	264	239	260	279	283
Student	46	43	62	47	57	19	24	22	14	14
Life***	143	142	148	147	146	143	142	141	140	136
Life-Couple***	17	18	20	21	22	23	23	22	20	20
Life Honorary	5	5	5	5	6	5	5	8	8	9
TOTAL	1131	1157	1231	1208	1190	1094	1035	1101	1157	1181
New members	109	134	174	121	140	104	119	128	146	143

*New membership category as of 2017

**Former "Single" and "Family" memberships from 2008-2016 were combined into the new "Household" category for comparison purposes

*** Life and Patron memberships at all levels were discontinued in 2017. For years 2010-2017, the Life membership numbers include Patron and in-progress Life members. This is a change from previous years, which omitted Patron and Life in-progress lines but included the numbers in the total.

Additional Note: All membership numbers have been reviewed and compared to past 4th quarter membership reports and some errors in this chart for past annual reports have been corrected.

WSO sent at least two mailed paper notices to lapsed members during 2022 since there was both a May and late November large lapsed member mailing. Members with email addresses also receive 3-4 other reminders about paying their annual dues by their lapse date. Members without emails are mailed paper reminders before the due date and after they lapse. Renewal due dates are also printed on each paper Badger Birder newsletter above the address.

Annual paid memberships totaled 1,016 with membership dues income (including paper Badger Birder subscriptions) of \$51,310 in 2022. Memberships were paid online 63% of the time.

About 50% of memberships are paid in the fourth quarter of the year with another 14% paid in January. There are also still a significant group of memberships with renewal dates of December 31 as a holdover from the former calendar year membership period. This creates potential inconsistency in membership dues income from year to year. Some memberships may be paid twice in a year (renewed late from the year before and early or on time that year) or not at all during a year (paid early or on time the year before and late the current year).

Staff provided the following membership services during the past year.

- Managed membership and publications renewal activity received online and manually;
- Compiled and provided membership information to the board and members;
- Processed new memberships;
- Reviewed and revised the member brochure and bookmarks for a new printing;
- Welcomed each new member with a membership packet;
- Provided member support and communication;
- Sent individual and batch reminders of annual dues by email and in paper;
- Sent individual and batch reminders by email and in paper to lapsed members;
- Oversight of the printing and mailing of the print *Badger Birder* newsletter;
- Oversight of the *Passenger Pigeon* journal mailing lists and print orders;
- Monitored and managed the library subscriptions to the *Passenger Pigeon* journal; and
- Monitored and managed the publication exchange program.

New membership activities done by staff included:

- Trained the new administrative assistant on membership duties;
- Researched, compiled, analyzed and presented membership dues amounts and level information for the membership dues review committee;
- Reviewed and revised all renewal and lapsed automatic email messages in the system and managed their frequency;
- Sent member reminders in the newsletter and member emails about how to manage their membership accounts and passwords; and
- Financial management and reconciliation of membership dues income.

Membership Dues Resolutions

1. WSO annual membership dues will be revised as follows.

Membership Level	Current Dues	Revised Dues	Digital Publications	Paper Newsletter	Paper Journal
Conservation Champion	N/A	\$1000	Included	Included upon request	Included upon request
Conservation Defender	N/A	\$500	Included	Included upon request	Included upon request
Conservation Advocate	\$200	\$200	Included	Included upon request	Included upon request
Sustaining	\$100	\$100	Included	\$10 fee	\$15 fee
Household	\$40	\$40	Included	\$10 fee	\$15 fee
Introductory (2 year limit)	N/A	\$25	Included	\$10 fee	\$15 fee
Senior	\$25	No longer	N/A	N/A	N/A
Student	\$25	No longer	N/A	N/A	N/A

2. Donations in the amount of at least Household level dues will grant membership privileges to a donor.
3. A \$10 annual paper subscription fee must be paid to receive a paper copy of the *Badger Birder* newsletter if a membership contributes less than \$200 in annual dues or donations. This includes Life and Life-Couple members (but not Honorary Life members). The subscription date renewal will match membership renewal for non-Life memberships regardless of starting date.
4. A \$15 annual paper subscription fee must be paid to receive a paper copy of the *Passenger Pigeon* journal if a membership contributes less than \$200 in dues or donations. This includes Life and Life-Couple members (but not Honorary Life members). The subscription date renewal will match membership renewal for non-Life memberships regardless of starting date.
5. The amounts charged for paper publication subscriptions are not a part of membership dues. The Board of Directors can change amounts charged for subscription fees (including library subscriptions for the *Passenger Pigeon* journal). The Board can also change the level of members/donors that receive paper publications without a separate subscription fee.
6. Since WSO is generally increasing its efforts on bird conservation as well as other parts of the WSO mission, all levels of membership dues will go towards WSO's unrestricted rather than restricted funds. Donors may still choose to give directly to restricted funds.

Introduction of WSO Board Changes

WSO welcomes Chrissie Lindemann to the WSO board. Chrissie is a life member of WSO, with a “deep and lifelong interest in birds.” She is currently a part-time independent consultant in IT, as well as continuing on the board of the John Michael Kohler Art Center in Sheboygan.

The following WSO board members, whose terms expire in 2023, were reelected by the board to serve a new 3-year term and are thanked for their service to date: Carl Schroeder, Steve Holzman, Dar Tiede and Tom Schultz.

Carl Schwartz has decided to step down from the WSO board. WSO extends its sincere thanks to him for his many years of service to WSO on the board and for his excellent contribution in his role as editor of *The Badger Birder*.