MINUTES

Society of Canadian Ornithologists / Société des ornithologistes du Canada

Annual General Meeting / Réunion du Conseil

October 5, 2026, 4:30-5:30 PM EST

In attendance: Too many to count😊 (~45)

Teams meeting link: Microsoft Teams Meeting

1. **Welcome | Mot de Bienvenue** **Danielle Ethier**
   A preliminary thank you to conference sponsors (Birds Canada/Oiseaux Canada; Resilience Alliance/Avian Conservation & Ecology Journal; Western Centre for Animals on the Move; Wildlife Acoustics; Zeiss)

   Theme of the 2026 conference is "Spreading Our Wings", in which we celebrate accessibility, connection, the joy of shared discovery within our research community, and engaging with members to explore new ways to learn and collaborate together.

2. **Review of Agenda | Révision de l'agenda** **Danielle Ethier**
3. **Adoption of Minutes | Acceptation des minutes** **Danielle Ethier**
   Approved by Sunny Tseng, Steffi LaZerte
   Approval of last year's minutes (2025 AGM): Leanne Grieves, Steffi LaZerte
4. **President's Report | Rapport du Président**
   This AGM is the last one with Danielle Ethier as President. Danielle welcomed the SCO/SOC's new president Ann McKellar. **Danielle Ethier**

   Danielle also thanked Matt Reudink, who is also retiring from the SCO/SOC committee.

   Danielle highlighted updates to the SCO/SOC website and stabilization of Zeffy; earnings for the SCO/SOC from the standalone conference in 2025 @ University of Saskatchewan (~55 K revenue); the renaming (and funds for) the Early Career Research Award in honour of Keith Hobson (2k for 5yrs); the renaming of the Doris Huestis Speirs Award as the Doris Huestis Speirs Lifetime Achievement Award; the creation of a new Student Committee for increasing student participation in the organization; and thanked the committee responsible for organizing our Virtual Conference in 2026: Nikeet Pradhan, Erica Alex, Sachin Anand, Ann McKellar, Mercy Harris, Elizabeth Gow, Steffi LaZerte, Sunny Tseng, Elizabeth Porter, Mark Duchene, Kyle Horner, Carrie Branch, and Maggie MacPherson. This committee put together a conference with 225 registrations, 6 workshops, 34 regular 10-minute student presentations, 13 3-minute speed talks, 16 professional lab showcases, an early career plenary, and both virtual and in-person social events.

5. **Treasurer's Report | Rapport du Trésorier** **Lisha Berzins (Presented by Danielle Ethier)**

From September 9, 2026 committee meeting: Lisha Berzins met with accountants. *It was a good meeting. 1: we are not "exempt from anything" (Lisha's words); 2. Table of expenses and earnings from 2025 conference adjusted and presented to accountants, who recommended redesigning table to show when and where different expenses come out and earnings come in. Danielle, Lisha and Ann met to discuss updating the tables showing our finances. Next year's financial report should probably include a comparison of old vs. new table format*. *Basically, this year's taxes are all done*.

2025 Annual Financial Report was prepared by ON Business Chartered Professional Accountants Inc., then presented at the 2026 AGM. Highlights: **2025** revenues = $122,331, expenditures = $60,817; **2024** revenues = 6,583, expenditures = 12,922; Net earnings: **2025** = $61,514, **2024** = $6,339, **2023** = $4,328; Net assets (revenues – expenditures) have increased from $82,048 in 2024 to $143,762 in 2025.

More details in financial report online.

6. **Membership Secretary's Report | Rapport du secrétariat au sujet des adhesions** **Francis van Oordt**

Yearly trends: from a dip down to 250 members in 2024, memberships increased in 2025 and in 2026 are expected to reach 400 members. Most continuing members (adhesions) and most members in 2025 were Students or Regular members, but there were 61 Life members and 56 Free Memberships in 2025. By country, most members are Canadian but we have a few members in the United States (6) and elsewhere.

Full year of new registrations through Zeffy only, but we still need to use the old tracking system for life members and multiyear-paid members.

Memberships are now tracked by the Zeffy system, with new membership adhesions in 2025 being those made between January 1 and December 31, 2025.

7. **Committee Reports | Rapport des comités**

New elected members of council President-elect Dr. Jennifer Foote, Member of Council Dr. Drew Rendall, Member of Council Dr. Catherine Dale

8. **Student Research Awards Committee** **Leanne Grieves**

2026 Committee Members Sarah Gutowsky (Chair), Oliver Love, Colin Garroway, and Leanne Grieves. This year's award recipients are:

- Sonya Pastran (Avian Conservation Award) for her study "Linking Marine Prey Landscapes, Movement, and Nesting in a Threatened Seabird".
- Jamie Quinn (Discovery Award) for her study "Variation in egg shape of an insectivorous songbird: proximate drivers and ultimate consequences".
- Janine Mombourquette (Taverner Award) for her study "Assessing the effects of long-term ambient temperature change on a wild Nova Scotian breeding population of European Starlings"

- Jax Nasimok (Taverner Award) for his study “Investigation of Blackpoll Warbler Migration Ecology”
- Madison Bygrove (Fred Cooke Award) for her study “Nocturnal flight call behaviour in migratory birds: Insights from a Canada-wide acoustic monitoring network”
- Jolyne Surette (Fred Cooke Award) for her study “Loudness and Landscape: Habitat-Dependent Variation in Avian Song Amplitudes”

The Student Awards Committee is seeking new members. Dr. Maggie MacPherson is the new Chair of this committee, and Dr. Oliver Love and Dr. Leanne Grieves are continuing members. Dr. Colin Garroway is retiring from the committee, thus there is at least one opening right now. The new member will assist with evaluating award applications, announcements and outreach.

9. Student Committee **Liz Porter/Mark Duchene**

The purpose of this new committee is to foster student engagement, professional development, and communication within the society, and serve as a bridge between students, early-career professionals, research institutions, and established members of the SCO-SOC.

Members: Eleonore Lebeuf-Taylor (University of Guelph), Charlotte Toner (McGill University), Erica Alex (University of Alberta), Elizabeth Porter (University of Guelph), Mark Duchene (Trent University), Jamie Quinn (University of Northern BC), Tori Redman (University of Saskatchewan), Anna Doran (University of New Brunswick), and Natalie Houde (Carleton University).

Current initiatives include: A *Picoides* Special Edition; Origins Stories: Documenting the history of the SCO through conversations & intergenerational connections; and planning seminar and workshop series.

10. Social Media Committee

Presented by Leanne Grieves

1.5 K followers on Instagram and growing, 3.5 K followers on Facebook and growing; X account discontinued in 2024.

11 new posts this year, on track to achieve the 2023-2025 average of 17 posts/year

Third year of using SCO/SOC Design Guidelines to achieve a consistent signature look to the posts.

There will be a call later this year for new Social Media Committee volunteers to replace retiring volunteers (current: Kayla Martin, Meghan Oliver; past: Sarah Madeley, Leanne Grieves, Taylor Brown).

11. Doris Huestis Speirs Award **Presented by Danielle Ethier**

Matt transferring oversight of this award to Danielle Ethier. This year’s recipient is Dr. Charles Francis. Danielle will confirm that Matt has invited Charles to the conference.

12. Jamie Smith Mentoring Award **Matt Reudink**

This year's recipient is Dr. Gail Davoren (University of Manitoba).

13. Early Career Research Award (renamed in honour of Dr. Keith Hobson) Danielle Ethier

Steve Van Wilgenburg will chair this award in the future. Current ECRA Committee members besides Steve include Tony Diamond and Elizabeth Gow. Fundraising Campaign 8.5K of 10K Goal

2K for 5 yrs for winner to travel to the SCO annual conference to give a plenary. This year's ECRA recipient (Dr. Alison Patterson) will give a plenary at the virtual conference on Wednesday, October 7 ("From wingbeats to the twilight zone: how biologging has changed our perspective in marine ornithology"). Ad for next award hosted in *Picoides* goes out October 15. Nominations for next year are due January 31, 2027.

14. Avian Conservation & Ecology Journal Committee Lionel Leston presenting on behalf of Kara Lefevre

No changes in personnel (Editor-in-Chief Dr. Jennifer Lavers, 3 reps from SCO-SOC [Lionel Leston, Junior Tremblay, Kara Lefevre - Chair], 3 reps from Bird Studies Canada [D Bradley, M Fuirst, Remi Torrenta – Co-Chair])

Finances are good, with a recent increase in base article-charge from $1100 USD to $1300 USD

Agreement to continue publishing journal for 10 years was renewed with Resilience Alliance in May 2026

Acceptance rate of 46% of submissions in 2025, close to rates from past years
Impact factor back up to 1.4 from 1.1 last year (9/29 in ornithology journals)
Two special issues under construction: Partners in Flight, Conservation Support Tools
Journal policy on AI use is being developed based on guidelines from Resilience Alliance (journal's parent publishing organization)

15. Picoides Editor's Report | Rapport de l'Éditeur de Picoides Rob Warnock (Presented by D Ethier)

Submissions Due: Feb 15, May 15, Oct 15
We are looking for more submissions from SCO-SOC members, students and bird labs. A special thanks to Jessika Lamarre, Laurence Boulerice and Jelany Duali for their help in English to French translation help.

16. SCO/SOC EDI Committee Elizabeth Gow

Initiated or supports activities such as a free membership program, the mentorship program, 2SLGBTQIA+ meetups, membership survey.

Current goals to further EDI in 2026/2027:

- Draft EDI resources pamphlet for council and committees
- Draft content on EDI and field safety for members
- Conduct membership survey and summarize findings for council and members

17. Mentorship Program **Steffi LaZerte**

Wrapped up 2025/2026 cohort, 2026/2027 Mentorship Program now open, announcement sent out in September. 10 mentor/mentee pairs, both returning mentors and mentees and new ones.

18. Website Committee **Leanne Grives**

Members: Leanne Grieves (Chair), Steffi Lazerte, Sunny Tseng, Elizabeth Porter, Alexandre Terrigeol (French translation), Jenn Foote (Webmaster)

Changes to website:

- Full refresh with updated font (accessible, sans serif), language, content, and images.
- Goal: Streamline, modernize and ensure website looks active and engaging
- Value added: Updated information on society benefits and activities
- Attempted to minimize need for updates (goal = annual)
- Updated and embedded Land Acknowledgment on Home page
- Added photos and short bio of all Executive Council members and short description of each Committee and its current membership

19. Conference in 2027

Ornithological Congress of the Americas, Chile 2027 -Assuming that we help to run this conference, the Annual General Meeting for our organization will still be virtual as many members may be unable to physically attend this conference in person.

20. Adjournment | Ajournement