Thunder Bay Audubon Society (TBAS)

Minutes October 19, 2023

Annual Meeting Nowicki’s Sausage Shop

Members Present:

Ned Charlton, Jan Charter, Jerry Charter, Barb Cole, Bob D’Benedetto, Lynn Field, Betsy Hale, Dana Howard, Judy Kalmanek, Brenda Kelley, Elizabeth Littler, Arnie Pokorzynski, Deb Pokorzynski, Chuck Tetzlaff, and Karen Tetzlaff.

Call to order:

The meeting was called to order by President Karen Tetzlaff at 11:10 am. Introductions were made since some new members were present.

Bird Sightings and Avian Tidbits:

Brenda found a dead bald eagle which the State determined died from lead poisoning; it also had a fractured wing and was about a year old. Betsy also reported a dead bird (unknown species), which she buried because no one came to deal with it. Jerry passed around a Smithsonian magazine with interesting pictures of birds; he also mentioned two Virginia Rails seen at the Paxton Quarry, and a seemingly uninjured dead gull he found in his yard. A friend of Barb’s had a nesting Green Heron with three chicks, which has been there three years in a row. Judy reported a pair of Trumpeter Swans with a cygnet, and, on a trip to Drummond Island, she saw 37 Red-breasted Mergansers and 27 Loons. Lynn saw a Harris’s Sparrow in Iowa. Jan saw eight loons together on Grand Lake, four of which were Common Loons and four Red-throated. Ned has been hearing Sandhill Cranes, some of which landed near his home; the juvenile Bald Eagles he has been seeing are finally adults; and at one point, he saw 250 Blackbirds in his yard, along with some Juncos. Arnie has seen a White-crowned Sparrow and Juncos. Judy saw a Yellow-throated Vireo. Karen mentioned that, in addition to the Virginia Rails at Paxton Quarry, she also saw Cedar Waxwings; perhaps Paxton Quarry would be a good outing for TBAS. She also asked if we should revise our bird checklist; looking at other examples, the Huron Pines checklist looks like a good format, so we will check with them to see if we can use it with some editing. We will ask Bill Grigg, Brenda Kelly, and Andrew Wolfgang review it.

Secretary’s Minutes from January 24, 2023, were accepted as submitted.

Officer and Committee Reports:

President’s Report:

The Au Sable Valley Audubon Society has asked whether we would be willing to purchase a bench to be put at the harbor in Harrisville, at a cost of $1400. During the discussion of possible donations, the membership was not in favor of doing this.

Karen passed around a brochure describing Project FeederWatch, which takes place from November to April. See <https://feederwatch.org> if you are interested in participating.

Julie Rubsam of Headwaters Land Conservancy sent an update on Blackbird Marsh progress, including that Headwaters received a grant to pay for a survey of the property and to purchase boundary signage.

Vice President’s Report:

Lynn reported that we had a good turnout on September 23 at the Duck Park/lunch/North Point Preserve joint event with the Petoskey Regional Audubon Society. Many birds were spotted at Duck Park, but fewer at North Point Preserve.

Treasurers’ Report:

Dana reported that our CD will come due in February 2024.

He also reported that we have considerably less income this year than last year because far less is coming from Riverside Energy.

After discussion, it was decided that, because 2022 was an extraordinary year for TBAS, income-wise, and thus our 2023 donations increased, it was decided that we need to scale back our donations in 2024. Looking at our donation amounts from 2022, eliminating a few organizations and adding a few new, we decided on the following donations: $50 to Au Sable Valley Audubon, $50 to the Alpena County Library (contingent on use of its facility for an event), $200 to Great Lakes Stewardship, $100 to Huron Pines, $50 to Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch, $500 to the River Center, $100 to Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, $100 to Wildlife Recovery Association, $100 to Headwaters Land Conservancy, $100 to Great Lakes Great Responsibility, and $100 to ABC Alpena’s Bird Center. Lynn Field moved that we accept these donation amounts, seconded by Judy Kalmanek. The motion was approved unanimously.

Unfinished Business:

There was discussion about whether TBAS should change its name, in line with some Audubon organizations that have changed or will be changing their names to eliminate references to “Audubon.” It was decided to keep our name as is, and go ahead with ordering new shirts. Barb Cole moved that we order new shirts, keeping the TBAS name and logo, seconded by Betsy Hale. The motion was approved unanimously. Betsy will proceed with ordering.

New Business:

Besser Museum Christmas Tree Decorating: Barb has a new idea for decorating our Christmas tree at the Besser Museum, using Beanie Baby birds. She will propose a decoration date in the near future.

Adopt-a-Highway: Dana reported on the possibility of TBAS adopting a highway for litter clean-up. Because the membership expressed some interest in this, Dana will investigate further. We will hear more from Dana on this at the next meeting.

Event Committee: Betsy, Judy, and Barb have agreed to be the Event Committee for 2024.

Fletcher Pond: Karen reported that Headwaters Land Conservancy may be interested in taking over TBAS’s ownership of the Fletcher Pond bottomland. There was discussion about wanting to continue to maintain the Osprey platforms and wanting to continue receiving revenue from Riverside Energy associated with Fletcher Pond. Barb Cole moved to explore considering this as a partnership with Headwaters, with an easement for the osprey platforms and preservation of mineral rights, seconded by Judy Kalmanek. The motion was approved unanimously.

Election of Officers:

The current officers have agreed to continue for one more year:

Karen Tetzlaff, President

Lynn Field, Vice-President

Jan Charter, Secretary

Dana Howard, Treasurer

Judy Kalmanek moved to accept the slate of officers, seconded by Betsy Hale. The motion was approved unanimously.

The next meeting will be held on November 14, at 11:30 am, tentatively at The 19th Hole.

Karen reminded us that the Christmas Bird Count will cover Hubbard Lake on December 14 and Alpena on December 16.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Charter

Secretary

October 20, 2023