

**Minutes of the  
American Birding Association General Membership Meeting  
Friday, October 28, 2016**

ABA Headquarters  
93 Clinton Street, Delaware City, DE 19706

The annual general meeting of the American Birding Association (ABA) was held on Friday, October 28, at ABA Headquarters, 93 Clinton St., Delaware City, DE 19706. 40-50 people were in attendance, both members and non-members. Of the total in attendance, 36 were identified as ABA members, 12 of whom had not returned proxies to ABA and who were therefore eligible to vote at this meeting.

In attendance from the Board of Directors – Lou Morrell (Chair), D. H. Michael Bowen, Julie Davis, Scott Fraser, Bill Sain, Arnella Trent (Ms. Trent was elected during this meeting)

In attendance from the ABA Staff: Jeffrey Gordon (President), John Lowry, Bill Stewart, Liz Gordon, Lisa Slocum, LeAnn Pilger, Ted Floyd

Board Chair Morrell called the meeting to order at 4:23 p.m., explaining that the meeting had to be delayed due to road congestion in Northern Delaware, preventing some attendees from arriving in time for the advertised 4:00 p.m. start.

Chair Morrell explained that proxy ballots had been mailed to all ABA members at their addresses of record in August 2016. However, because of an error at the mailing house, many members received their ballots in an envelope addressed to someone else. ABA subsequently re-mailed the ballots with correctly matching envelopes, the mailing house (not the ABA) picking up the additional cost. Evidence of the two mailings were presented at the meeting. Morrell said that the Notice and Proxy had also been posted on the Associations website. He also said that ballots for the election of directors and the bylaws change were available at the meeting.

Bill Stewart and Mike Bowen, as attorneys and agents for the members represented by proxy, reported that 2221 valid proxies had been received at ABA headquarters. By a show of hands and signatures on a sign-in sheet, it was determined that among those present at this meeting there were 12 ABA members who had not sent in their proxies for the election of Directors to be held later and 24 who had returned their proxies. Therefore, 2233 members were present either in person or by proxy. The Chair declared that the annual meeting was valid for conducting business since more than the required 100 members eligible to vote were present or represented at the meeting.

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Membership Meeting held in Columbus, Ohio, on October 2, 2015.

On a motion from the floor, the members voted to dispense with the reading of the minutes, and on a subsequent motion the members present approved unanimously to accept the minutes as presented.

2. Election of Directors

The Chair, acting for Bill Sain, Chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the Nominating Committee report. The Chair announced that in accordance with the ABA's bylaws, the Committee had presented a slate of individuals to be nominated to be Directors of the ABA and that the ABA Board. At its Board Meeting of July 28, 2016, had voted to present the recommended slate to the membership for consideration at this meeting.

The following people were nominated for a first full three-year term: Julie Davis (Westerville, Ohio), Magill Weber (Phoenix, Arizona), and Arnella Trent (Cambridge, Maryland) [Note: Ms. Davis had been appointed by the Board on July 28, 2016, to the unexpired balance of the term of the late John Benzon and was eligible for election to a full 3-year term.]

The following Directors were nominated for a second full three-year term: Scott Fraser (Collegeville, PA), Terrell D. Rich (Boise, ID), and Lili Taylor (New York, NY)

Biographies of all candidates had been provided to members with the proxy material mailed to them.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the slate of directors as presented to the members. Members present at the meeting were then asked to vote on the slate as a whole rather separately for each nominee. The 12 members present and voting approved.

The attorneys and agents were asked to report on the number of votes cast for, against and abstain for each nominee. The members present were then asked to vote. The number of votes for each candidate was as follows:

Julie Davis 2072 (2060 returned ballots plus 12 at this meeting)

Arnell Trent 2070 (2058 returned ballots plus 12 at this meeting)

Magill Weber 2068 (2056 returned ballots plus 12 at this meeting)

Terrell Rich 2068 (2056 returned ballots plus 12 at this meeting)

Scott Fraser 2062 (2050 returned ballots plus 12 at this meeting)

Lili Taylor 2033 (2021 returned ballots plus 12 at this meeting)

The Chair said that as a result on which each candidate received greater than 91% of votes for, that all six candidates had been elected to the Board of Directors for their respective terms. Details of the voting are available at the ABA Headquarters.

### 3. Change to Bylaw 8(b) – addition of Hawaii to the ABA area

President Jeff Gordon gave extensive background and explained why the change to Bylaw 8(b), which describes the duties of the Checklist Committee and the geographical definition of the area covered by the official ABA checklist, was being put before the members at this time. The ABA had proceeded slowly and carefully on this issue, being aware that adding Hawaii to the official description on "North America" was worrying to some members who had lists of "Birds in the ABA area" going back for many years. However, the non-binding straw vote that was conducted in 2012 had demonstrated definite member interest in adding Hawaii – but not some other plausible additions such as Bermuda, Greenland, or The Bahamas. In the end, Gordon said, the

purpose of the change was largely to create a general awareness of bird conservation situation and avifauna in Hawaii, thereby creating an incentive for birders to visit and support bird conservation efforts in the state, whose endemic bird population has been negatively impacted by many man-made changes. Conservation of Hawaii's birds is ABA's paramount interest, he said. Mike Parr, Vice President of the American Bird Conservancy, was present at the meeting and urged ABA members to vote for the proposed change. ABC has active bird conservation programs in Hawaii.

The change in the bylaw received the following numbers of votes:

YES: 1763 (1751 returned ballots plus 12 at this meeting)

NO: 422 (422 returned ballots plus zero at this meeting)

ABSTAIN: 48 (48 returned ballots plus zero at this meeting)

The Bylaw change therefore passed. The earlier wording and the newly approved wording of the Bylaw are reproduced below, for the record.

Here is the wording of the old Section 8(b):

*8(b) Checklist Committee. The Checklist committee shall assemble for publication, a master checklist of the birds of North America. For purposes of the checklist, "North America" shall be defined as the continental United States (including the District of Columbia), Canada, St. Pierre and Miquelon, and adjacent waters to a distance of 200 miles from land or half the distance to a neighboring country, whichever is less. In the western Gulf of Mexico, the latitude of the Mexican border at the coast shall be taken as the southern limit offshore. The checklist shall be revised from time to time by the committee, and shall serve as the basis for all North American Life lists and other types of lists recognized by the Association for areas that include, or are included by, North America as delineated herein. The committee shall consist of five or more members and shall file its report annually with the board of directors.*

Here is the wording of Bylaw 8(b) as a result of the membership vote reported above:

**8(b) Checklist Committee. The Checklist committee shall assemble for publication, a master checklist of the birds of the ABA Area. For purposes of the checklist, the "ABA Area" shall be defined as the continental United States (including the District of Columbia), Hawaii, Canada, St. Pierre and Miquelon, and adjacent waters to a distance of 200 miles from land or half the distance to a neighboring country, whichever is less. In the western Gulf of Mexico, the latitude of the Mexican border at the coast shall be taken as the southern limit offshore. The checklist shall be revised from time to time by the committee, and shall serve as the basis for all ABA Area Life lists and other types of lists recognized by the Association for areas that include, or are included by the ABA Area as delineated herein. The committee shall consist of five or more members and shall file its report annually with the board of directors.**

#### 4. President's Report

Jeffrey Gordon noted his pleasure at the result of the Bylaw change just reported and applauded the hard work of the Recording Standards and Ethics Committee, chaired by Director Matt Fraker. That committee had done the hard work leading up to the vote. Gordon also announced that the Chair of the Checklist Committee in 2017 would be Peter Pyle, a noted authority on the birds of Hawaii.

#### 5. Chairman's Remarks

Lou Morrell noted that he is now in the ninth and final year of his term as a Director and in the seventh year of working with President Gordon. He observed with pleasure that the ABA is not only in better financial condition than it had been then, but a much more respected presence in the world of nature-oriented organizations. In this last year as Chair, Morrell said that he would concentrate on matters related to structure and governance, which had become especially important because of the association relocating from Colorado to Delaware.

#### 6. Financial report

ABA Accountant Lisa Slocum briefly summarized the ABA's financial position, which is improved, with small positive contributions expected both in 2016 and 2017. Chairman Morrell stressed that 50% of ABA's revenues come from membership dues and member contributions, and pointed out that much of ABA's expenses are related to projects such as Young Birder camps that do not directly benefit members, but are in areas such as conservation and education that members vocally support and from which nonmembers benefit. Morrell and Slocum urged members to enroll other birders as ABA members.

#### 7. Committee reports

Michael Bowen (Chair, Awards Committee) gave a brief account of ABA Awards and asked members to consider making nominations for one or more awards for 2017, for which the nominations deadline is December 31, 2016.

There being no further discussion or questions from the floor, the meeting was adjourned at 5:23 p.m.