

WFO PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: THE FUTURE OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGY

When it comes to deciding which of the many worthy organizations we should support, the number of options seems overwhelming. None of us can afford to belong to all of them, so we try to choose those focused on the areas we care most about. While we hope WFO members appreciate direct benefits such as first option on special field trips and conference registration, we know that most of you belong to WFO because we work to promote field ornithology in a variety of ways. Among those, none is more important than fostering, encouraging, and teaching the next generation of field ornithologists.

WFO has a substantial Scholarship Fund (thanks in large part to a generous gift from Pasadena Audubon Society). This fund provides young field ornithologists the opportunity to attend our conferences and to participate in field expeditions led by top ornithologists such as Ken Able, Jon Dunn, and Kimball Garrett. We think this is an ideal way to support their growing interest and to give them models to emulate. In recent years we have provided scholarships to seven very impressive young people:

- **John Garrett**, now majoring in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of California, Santa Cruz, has been making contributions to the field since age 9, when he wrote the "Kid's Corner" feature for the Pasadena Audubon newsletter. He has served as an eBird editor for Los Angeles County.
- **Kimberlyann Harvey**, an aspiring bird artist and one of our youngest recipients at 13, won a scholarship to attend last year's conference in Petaluma. She is committed to becoming an ornithologist and recently read Proctor and Lynch's *Manual of Ornithology* (a substantial tome) cover to cover.
- **Joyce Realegeno** received a scholarship to attend our Sierra Vista conference. She has studied habitat preferences of corvids around Baldwin Hills, California.
- **Ioana Seritan** also earned a scholarship to our Petaluma conference and was voted an ABA Young Birder of the Year in 2013.
- Seventeen year-old **Marcel Such** will participate in the upcoming field expedition to northeastern California. Marcel is a co-editor of *Colorado Birds* and founded the Boulder City Teen Naturalists organization.
- **Ray VanBuskirk** began banding birds at age 12 and created and runs a project studying rosy-finch ecology in New Mexico.
- **Cole Wolf** joined the board of the Central New Mexico Audubon Society at 16 and has studied the nesting requirements of the Pinyon Jay.

All of these recipients have in common participation in hands-on field research in ornithology, involvement in local ornithology/birding organizations, a commitment to teaching other young people about birds and nature, and an abiding interest in and dedication to conservation. For anyone concerned about the future of field ornithology, these young people should give cause for optimism.

We would like to continue and even expand our scholarship offerings. If this is something you care about, you can help by encouraging young people you know to become WFO members and apply for a scholarship (www.westernfieldornithologists.org/scholarship.php). You can also donate to WFO, requesting that your donation go directly to our Scholarship Fund, or simply give a promising young person a gift membership to WFO. A student membership is only \$10!

Edward R. Pandolfino