

34th Annual Meeting of the Western Field Ornithologists
Boise, Idaho • 10–13 September 2009

Conference Schedule
Oxford Suites Hotel

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

2:00 - 4:30PM – Informal Birding along the Boise River for early arrivals. Meet Dan Gibson (WFO vice-president) and Cat Waters (WFO president) to explore the Boise River Walk. **Meet in Hotel Lobby**

5:00 - 8:00PM – Early registration is open in **Hotel Lobby**

6:00 - 8:00PM – Meet in the **Lobby Lounge** for no-host drinks and snacks provided by WFO

Thursday, September 10, 2009

5:00 - 7:30AM – Registration is open in **Hotel Lobby**

5:30AM – For those registered at the Oxford Suites, breakfast is available. **Lobby Lounge**

6:00AM – Assemble in **Hotel Lobby** for full day field trip departures. Trips will leave promptly at 6:30AM. Trips by vanpool/carpool. *Please use the WFO-provided vans if at all possible to reduce the number of vehicles.*

- Snake River Canyon (full descriptions of all trips attached)
- Lucky Peak Banding Station (**requires 4WD/high clearance vehicle**)
- Desert and Waterbirds

7:30AM – Assemble in **Hotel Lobby** for full and half day river rafting trips: 7:45AM departure. Full day trip returns around 5:30PM and Half day trip returns at around 2:00PM.

Noon - 9:00PM – Exhibitors may set up in **West Room**

1:00 - 5:00PM – WFO Board Meeting. **Cimarron Room**

6:00 - 8:00PM – Registration open. **West Room**

6:00 - 8:00PM – Opening Reception/Drinks and light snacks **West Room**

Friday, September 11, 2009

5:00 - 7:30AM – Registration is open in **Hotel Lobby**

5:30AM – For those registered at the Oxford Suites, breakfast is available. **Lobby Lounge**

6:00AM – Assemble in **Hotel Lobby** for half day field trip departures. Trips will leave promptly at 6:30AM. Return at 10:00AM. Trips by vanpool/carpool. *Please use the WFO-provided vans if at all possible to reduce the number of vehicles.*

- Boise River Walk
- Lucky Peak Banding Station (**requires 4WD/high clearance vehicle**)
- Desert and Waterbirds

7:00AM – Assemble in **Hotel Lobby** for Introduction to Skin Preparation Workshop @ Boise State University. Transportation is by carpool. Return at 10:00AM.

6:15AM – Digiscoping w/the optics experts - **East Room**. Transportation is by carpool.

10:00AM – Coffee and water available in **West Room**

10:00 - 10:30AM – Registration Open. **East Room**

10:30AM - noon – 34th Annual Meeting of Western Field Ornithologists/Science Sessions. **East Room**

Noon - 1:00PM – Lunch break. Lunch on own

1:00 - 3:30PM – Science Sessions continue

4:00 - 5:30PM – Photo ID panel. **East Room**

5:30 - 7:00PM - Dinner Break – dinner on own

6:30 - 7:30PM – Registration Open – **West Room**

7:00 PM - 9:00PM WFO 40th Anniversary Reception and program – **West Room**

Saturday, September 12

5:00 - 6:30AM – Registration is open in **Hotel Lobby**

5:30AM – For those registered at the Oxford Suites, breakfast is available. **Lobby Lounge**

6:00AM – Assemble in **Hotel Lobby** for half day field trip departures. Trips will leave promptly at 6:30AM. Return at 10:45AM. Trips by vanpool/carpool. *Please use the WFO-provided vans if at all possible to reduce the number of vehicles.*

- Boise River Walk
- Lucky Peak Banding Station (**requires 4WD/high clearance vehicle**)
- Desert and Waterbirds

7:45 - 10:45AM – Scientific Journal Writing workshop. **Cimmaron Room**

7:45 - 10:45AM – Sounds identification and listening workshop. **East Room**

11:00AM – Coffee and water will be available in **West Room**

11:15 AM - 12:15PM Lunch Break. Lunch on own.

12:30 - 1:00PM – Registration is open at entrance to **East Room**

12:30 - 3:30PM – Science sessions **East Room**

4:00 - 5:30PM – Bird Sounds ID panel. **East Room**

5:30 - 6:30PM – Registration Open – **West Room**

6:30 - 10:00PM – Reception, banquet, and keynote – **West Room**

Sunday, September 13

5:15AM – South Hills Crossbill field trip. Assemble in **Hotel Lobby** for 5:30AM departure. Return around 7:00PM

5:30AM – For those registered at the Oxford Suites, breakfast is available. **Lobby Lounge**

6:00AM – Assemble in **Hotel Lobby** for the other full day field trip departures. Trips will leave promptly at 6:30AM. Trips by vanpool/carpool. *Please use the WFO-provided vans if at all possible to reduce the number of vehicles.*

- Snake River Canyon
- Lucky Peak Banding Station (**requires 4WD/high clearance vehicle**)
- Desert and Waterbirds

7:30AM – Assemble in **Hotel Lobby** for full day River rafting trips: 7:45AM departure. Full day trip returns around 5:30PM

Noon – Assemble in **Hotel Lobby** for afternoon half day River rafting trips: 12:15PM departure. Half day trip returns around 5:30PM

6:00PM – Meet in **Hotel Lounge** for recap of meeting. Meeting adjourned.

TRIP DESCRIPTIONS

Full Day Field Trips

- Snake River Canyon (Thursday and Sunday)
 - o Idaho's magnificent Snake River cuts through a deep, scenic canyon, flowing within a few short miles of Boise. Designated the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area, the canyon hosts the densest breeding population of Prairie Falcons in North America. Golden Eagles, Northern Harriers, Ferruginous Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, and many other species of raptors breed and winter in this unique and beautiful area. Plagued with recent extensive wildfires and exotic invasive grasses and forbs, a trip to this area is a quick lesson in shrubsteppe ecology and the challenges to this fast-vanishing ecosystem. This full-day trip will visit scenic overlooks, Native American historic sites, and will include a walk along the river. During mid-September, many common western migrants should be seen within the river's riparian corridor. Be prepared for hot or cold temperatures with appropriate clothing and footwear. Moderate physical exertion on unimproved trails over mostly level ground will be involved during the Snake River bird walk. Local Golden Eagle Audubon President Bruce Ackerman will lead this informative trip.

- Lucky Peak Banding Station (Thursday and Sunday)
 - o Full-day field trips to Lucky Peak will be spent banding passerines in the morning and participating in a standardized hawk migration count and raptor banding in the afternoon. Over 60 species of songbirds are routinely banded each fall, while raptors observed and captured at that time should include Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, and Red-tailed hawks, American Kestrels, Prairie and Peregrine falcons, Merlins, and others. This field trip is in an unimproved mountainous area, please wear appropriate clothing and footwear such as a fleece jacket or sweater, field pants, and hiking boots. Steep and rough trails to mist nets and banding stations require moderate physical exertion. Idaho Bird Observatory's Director Greg Kaltenecker and Research Director Dr. Jay Carlisle will lead these fun field trips. **REQUIRES 4WD/HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLE.**

- Desert and Waterbirds (Thursday and Sunday)
 - o Fall in southwest Idaho is hot and dry. If the timing is right, wherever there is water, shorebirds, waterfowl, and other migrants can be found in large numbers. An all-day trip will visit several wetlands within a short driving distance of Boise. Get a taste of southwest Idaho's desert! Be prepared for hot or cold temperatures with appropriate clothing and footwear. Some minor physical exertion on level ground will be involved to access viewing areas close to improved roads. Local Golden Eagle Audubon Society's David Hazelton will lead this interesting field trip.

- South Hills Crossbill Trip (Sunday ONLY)
 - o The South Hills is a unique and beautiful mountain range located in southern Idaho, south of the city of Twin Falls, approximately a 3 ½ hour drive from Boise. The South Hills Crossbill has recently been proposed as a separate species, and the bird resides in the area year-round. A spectacular mosaic of rolling sagebrush hills, aspen-filled draws and basins, and dense lodgepole pine stands, the mountain range is anything but typical. A haven for dozens of bird species and teaming with other wildlife, this full-day field trip will certainly not disappoint you. Trip will be led by nationally renowned expert on the new species and WFO conference Keynote Speaker Dr. Craig Benkman. Be prepared for a long but worthwhile day seeing much of southwest Idaho. A long drive and short walks over mostly even terrain will require only minor to moderate physical exertion.

Half Day Field Trips

- Boise River Walk (Friday and Saturday)
 - o A short drive from the conference hotel will find you walking the city's award-winning Greenbelt system in Ada County's Barber Park. Winding through the river's riparian corridor, the park's trail system is a great way to get some fresh air and exercise during a busy couple of days. In addition to waterfowl and other resident species, mid-September should be a good time to see migrants using this desert oasis. Moderate physical exertion on paved or improved trails will be necessary to complete the walk. These morning walks will be led by Idaho Bird Observatory's Research Director, Dr. Jay Carlisle.

- Lucky Peak Banding Station (Friday and Saturday)
 - o Half-day field trips to Lucky Peak will be spent banding passerines in the morning, and participants will arrive shortly after the first net run. Good species diversity and an average daily capture of 50-100 birds can be expected during mid-September. Participate in the first few net runs of the morning then be back to the hotel by the start of the scientific sessions. This field trip is in an unimproved mountainous area; please wear appropriate clothing and footwear such as a fleece jacket or sweater, field pants, and hiking boots. Steep and rough trails to mist nets and banding stations require moderate physical exertion. Field trip led by Idaho Bird Observatory's Director Greg Kaltenecker. **REQUIRES 4WD/HIGH CLEARANCE VEHICLE.**

- Desert and Waterbirds (Friday and Saturday)
 - o Fall in southwest Idaho is hot and dry. If the timing is right, wherever there is water, shorebirds, waterfowl, and other migrants can be found in large numbers. These half-day trips will visit two key wetlands closest to Boise: Black's Creek and Indian Creek Reservoirs, both within a short driving distance of Boise. Get a taste of southwest Idaho's desert! Be prepared for hot or cold temperatures with appropriate clothing and footwear. Some minor physical exertion on level ground will be involved to access viewing areas close to improved roads. Local Golden Eagle Audubon Society's David Hazelton will lead this interesting field trip.

River Rafting Trips

- Full Day River Trip "The Escape" (Thursday and Sunday)
 - o Full Day North Fork Cabarton. Spectacular scenery with glimpses of Idaho's abundant wildlife highlight this full-day trip as you glide through eleven miles of dense, remote forest. Relax in the warm water, enjoy your delicious riverside lunch on this Class II-III section, and let the river wash the world away. Trip includes lunch.

- Half Day River Trip "The Splash" (AM trip on Thursday; PM trip on Sunday)
 - o Spend a half day on the Main Payette River. This three-hour getaway has playful rapids, perfect for everyone-especially families, first timers, groups, and tours. Young and old, beginners and veterans alike enjoy splashing, sunning, and whitewater fun on this friendly Class II-III river trip. Trip is open to all those who feel comfortable on the water and for those with limitations who do not mind being assisted. No paddling is necessary. Trip includes lunch.

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

- Skins Preparation Workshop (Friday)
 - o This demonstration and workshop will illuminate the importance of avian collections for field ornithologists. Designed to give the attendee background information on the reasons these collections are important for scientists in the field as well as those who work in a lab, this workshop seeks to teach skin preparation and the purposes for this art. Authors, artists, scientists, students, birders, and field ornithologists are among the groups who find museums collections to be of importance to their chosen field. The hands-on demonstration of materials and techniques used for preparing a collection skin will be illustrated by two masters of that field, Dan Gibson (Alaska) and Robert Dickerman (New Mexico).
 - **Daniel Gibson**, well-known Alaska naturalist, WFO vice-president, author and special consultant to the AOU has studied the natural history of Alaska's birds for more than forty years as an ornithologist in the field and the manager of the bird collection at the University of Alaska Museum.
 - **Robert Dickerman** is Curator Emeritus of the avian collections at the University of New Mexico's Museum of Southwest Biology. See: http://www.msb.unm.edu/birds/publications/Failures_IWRC_Conf.pdf to read about the importance of collecting avian skins and the art of recycling.

- Digiscoping Workshop (Friday)
 - o Learn the art of using your spotting scope to photograph, document and identify birds in the field. In years past a person's skills as an artist and identifier of bird calls and songs were paramount to documenting rarities, unusual occurrences, out-of season sightings, or birds outside their normal range. Though these abilities remain important, the photographs of the digital age are growing in importance for achieving definitive identification and documentation of birds in the field. In this workshop a brief classroom session will be followed by active time in the field with Jim Danzenbaker (Washington) and Clay Taylor (Texas). Jim and Clay, besides showing the finer points of using your scope for enhancing your digital photography in the field, will demonstrate techniques typical to the wide range of optics available. Both keep up to date on the latest cameras and lenses and spotting scopes. They are willing to share techniques and general information and help you work with your own equipment. Bring your own spotting scope if you have one, your own digital camera if you have one, or come along with your bins and enjoy discovering what it takes to step into the digital age.
 - **Clay Taylor** is a self-described photo geek. He concentrates his photographic endeavors on digiscoping because it allows him to spend as much time in the field as possible. A long time resident of the eastern United States the "west" recently won Clay over and he now resides in Corpus Christi, Texas. Clay's skills at raptor identification are amazing and he currently contributes to the blog, The CD 1000 Project: (<http://www.birdwatchersdigest.net/cd1000/>) a photo blog documenting Clay's quest to digiscope one thousand species of birds. A long-standing member of WFO, Clay gave our first ever digital photography in-the-field workshop in 2002. Clay is employed by Swarovski Optik as their birding expert.
 - **Jim Danzenbaker**, a resident of Washington State and a WFO member of long-standing, has been a freelance world-wide birding guide and tour leader for over thirteen years. A birder and naturalist from a young age and the scion of a birding-oriented family, as a young man Jim quickly expanded beyond his home range of New Jersey to the rest of the world. Jim's knowledge of digiscoping equipment and digiscoping in combination with his teaching skills make him the perfect partner for teaching this workshop for WFO participants. Jim is currently the Kowa sporting optics sales manager.

- Bird Sounds Workshop (Saturday)
 - o With this workshop WFO continues their stellar history of bird sounds workshops that began with Sylvia Gallagher (California) and Arch McCallum (Oregon). More recently, Nathan Pieplow (Colorado), Andrew Farnsworth (New York) have carried on the tradition and conducted expert panels or night migration and sounds identification workshops for WFO. This workshop is about how to listen for birds and developing the art and sense, of what to listen for and how to recognize what you are hearing. Join Jay Withgott (Oregon) and Catherine Waters (California) in a workshop to learn the how, what, when, where, and whys of listening for birds.
 - **Jay Withgott** authors a series of college-level environmental science textbooks, and has also worn hats as a biologist, journalist, and science writer. Jay is a member of the Oregon Bird Records Committee and sits on WFO's Board of Directors. He is not all that quick on the draw visually, and so birds largely by ear.
 - **Catherine Waters** is a long-standing member of Western Field Ornithologists and currently serves as their president. An observer of birds and birding in the west, Cat has spent years hoping for or attempting to develop the talent for identifying birds by sound.

- Scientific Journal Writing Workshop (Saturday)
 - o Have you been collecting data for years? Decades? Do you have an excellent idea for a field research project? Do you want to submit an abstract to *Western Birds* or another journal? What's stopping you? Fear of rejection? Fear of organizing your data? Fear of success? Fear of the answer to – Where do I start? This is your chance to attend a workshop, led by Dave Krueper (New Mexico), which will give you the basics of writing for a field ornithology journal from outlining your abstract to peer review of your written paper.
 - **Dave Krueper** is a co-author of *Birds of the US-Mexico Borderlands* and a contributor to *Western Birds* and other field-oriented avian journals. Dave is a former WFO president and incoming president of New Mexico Field Ornithologists. He currently serves as WFO's immediate past president and chair of the nominating committee.
 - **Philip Unitt** is the editor of *Western Birds*. A successful author (*Birds of the Salton Sea*, *San Diego County Bird Atlas*), Phil is employed by the San Diego Natural History Museum as ornithology collections manager.