

Western Field Ornithologists' Board of Directors

Sierra Vista, Arizona, Meeting

Thursday, August 19, 11am – 4pm

Minutes prepared by Liga Auzins, *Rec. Sec'y.*

Board Members present: W. David Shuford, *Pres.*, Edward R. Pandolfino, *Vice Pres.*, Robbie Fischer, *Treas.*, *Membership Sec'y.*, Liga Auzins, *Rec. Sec'y.*, Kenneth Able, Carol Beardmore, Jon L. Dunn, Kimball L. Garrett, Robert E. Gill, Kurt Leuschner, David Quady, Thomas P. Ryan, Debbie Van Dooremolen, Jay Withgott. Board Member Absent: Osvel Hinojosa-Huerta, Brian Sullivan. Guests: Alan Craig, Dan Gibson, Philip Unitt, *Editor, Western Birds*, Catherine Waters, *Past Pres.*

SYNOPSIS

Action Item Summary --1

Publications Committee--2

Dickerman Volume--2

Rare Birds of California (RBC)--2

Western Birds (WB)--2

Field Trips and Expeditions Committee--2

Sonora--2

Other trips--3

Annual Conference Committee--3

Sierra Vista--3

Petaluma 2012--3

Options for 2013--3

Outreach at a Conference--3

Outreach Committee--4

Youth Scholarships Committee--4

Awards Committee--4

Harry S. Swarth Award--4

Service Award--4

San Miguel Fund (SMF)--5

Finance and Membership Committee--5

External Audit/Financial Review--6

Insurance--6

Investments to Counter Inflation--6

Nominating Committee--6

WFO's Future--7

New Society for Ornithology--7

ACTION ITEM SUMMARY

Action Item 1: Dickerman Volume by Dan

Action Item 2: Digital version *RBC* by Cat and Phil

Action Item 3: Closing *RBC* credit account by Robbie

Action Item 4: Central Sonora Trip by Carol

Action Item 5: Cuba Trip by Kurt

Action Item 6: northern Sierra Trip 2013 by Jon and Ken

Action Item 7: Advertise Tejon Purple Martin Trip in *WB* by Phil

Action Item 8: Pricing policy for trips by Kurt

Action Item 9: Choice of 2012 keynote speaker by ALL

Action Item 10: Petaluma and Washington Conferences by Ed

Action Item 11: Conference outreach ideas by ALL

Action Item 12: Subcommittee for outreach policies by Robbie, et al.

Action Item 13: Recruit non-Cal BOD members by ALL

Action Item 14: Omit 'descriptive' term from Harry S. Swarth Award definition by DaveQ

Action Item 15: New SMPF fund announcement in *WB* by Phil

Action Item 16: Contemplate WFO Mission and Vision Statement by ALL

Action Item 17: Website Enhancement by Brian

MINUTES

11:00 a.m. Meeting called to order, roll call, welcome.

Acceptance of minutes from May 2011 Board of Directors Conference Call Meeting.

Motion (by Debbie, seconded by Ed) made to approve minutes as they stand. All approve.

11:07 am **PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE (Dan)**

Publications Committee and the Dickerman Volume

Update: A dozen papers are lined up.

- Review process will be done by the end of calendar year.
- When we reach a critical mass, submissions will close.

11:15am **Digital version of *Rare Birds of California (RBC)* on WFO website**

Update: Website can accommodate *RBC* with color for \$96/yr.

- We will add 150 GB, allowing us to add any books we want.
- The digital form from Allen Press can be put on the website.
- The CBRC site would automatically link to the WFO site for the *RBC*.
- The WFO site would automatically link to the CBRC site for updates on *RBC*.
- Appropriate "non-California" based books would be considered for the site.
- Publications Committee could provide links to other books that fall within our purview.
- Talk to Troy Corman regarding publishing other books that pertain to other states.
- The *RBC* is broken into many sections, which helps with downloading, especially when color is involved.
- Permission is not needed to list links on a website, although it is considered good manners to do so.
- Additional costs may be brought by indexing and breaking into sections we prefer, i.e., by species accounts.
- Allen Press is down to 40 hard copies and WFO is down to 60.
- Robbie is taking over the distribution of the remaining copies of *RBC* and closing the associated credit account.

11:20am ***Western Birds***

Update: All items (including CBRC report) except one for issue 42(3) are typeset will be printed by end of September.

- Rate of submissions this year has decreased. It is not a good time to be complacent.
- Proportion of unacceptable manuscripts seems to be especially high this year.

11:30am **FIELD TRIPS AND EXPEDITIONS COMMITTEE (Kurt)**

Update: As an ongoing reminder, we need field trip reports that Joe Morlan can put on the website, so if anyone has a report to submit please do so either to Kurt or directly to Joe.

Sonora Expeditions

Update: Carol: We postponed the trip to the **Austin Ranch** as some of their buildings burned in both Mexico and the Chiricahuas. Hopefully we can revive this trip in the future.

- The **Buenos Aires Refuge** is about the only place in the U.S. that has the Masked Bobwhite. There are several ranches in central Sonora that might still have them. We want to get some folks and walk through these pastures. We are going to try out the methodology in the Buenos Aires Refuge in the U.S. and then plan the trip to central Sonora. Singing is density dependent and when birds are at such low densities they do not sing. The best time would be Jan. 2012, before nesting season next year, as there is a mandate to release captive birds. They do covey counts during the winter season.

Other trips

- Tentative **Cuba** trip that Jon agreed to lead will be 3/21-4/2 2013.
- Sign-ups for **Tejon Purple Martin Trip** will start 4-6 months in advance.
- Write-up for the **Tejon Purple Martin Trip** will be in *WB* 42(3) from the previous year's survey.
- Put a side bar in *WB* with the Purple Martin article that we are planning another **Tejon Purple Martin Trip**.
- The **Southern Sierra Trip** (Jon and Kimball) was a huge success due in large part to Lena Hayashi, the organizer. **Recommendation:** that an organizing role becomes a functional part of future trips.
- The **Southern Sierra Trip** made a profit of over \$4,000 with 11 paying participants.
- New trip consideration: **northern Sierra Trip** with Jon and Ken.
- The **Venezuela Trip** was organized by Tom and Robbie.
- Well organized trips influence extra donations to WFO.
- Using publications from an expedition to encourage people to sign on for the next expedition is a good idea.
- Kurt and the Field Trip Committee will start the process for discussing pricing of trips.

11:55am

ANNUAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE (Ed)

Sierra Vista

Update: Ideally we should have a Board member on every field trip. We have 185 registrants.

- Many people are here in great part due to Ed's remarkable and unflagging attention to detail.

Petaluma 2012

Update: Petaluma Conference is Sept 26th-30 at Sheraton.

- Debra Shearwater agreed to several pelagic trips for us at a special price.
- We are seeking a keynote speaker.

2013 Conference

Discussion: There is a great interest in Washington State.

- Both the Olympia Audubon and the Washington Ornithological Society (WOS) are interested in collaborating.
- Late September would be an excellent time.
- Washington is a state where we have the lowest number of members given the size of the state.
- Partnering with WOS is more beneficial than with Olympia Audubon. WOS has an outreach.

12:05pm

OUTREACH AT A CONFERENCE

Discussion: We should have a very inexpensive student rate.

- We have a very low rate of submissions by graduate students.
- Students can work for fees; they need to talk to the registrar or Robbie.
- We need this information in the forefront when WFO is distributing the Call for Papers.
- We are looking to target local universities emphasizing that this is a conference where one can improve field skills and also have a hands on experience.
- We could look into providing free registration to graduate students on the day they are presenting.
- This is about developing younger face of WFO. It is most important.
- A reception geared to new or young members is expensive and basically there is no time as it now stands.
- The best outreach is to have Board members on field trips. Help at the registration desk is great also.
- Some societies have lunches where each table is centered on a specific topic led by a Board member.
- These are all good ideas and people should send them to the Outreach and Conference Committees.

12:21pm

OUTREACH COMMITTEE (Cat)

Discussion: Jon and Jay plan to travel to WA to talk to WOS in late November.

- The Finance Committee agreed to do a membership exchange with WOS where a member could join the other for \$10. This was discussed in the Finance Committee meetings.
- Some WOS members might be interested in publishing in *WB*, but we need approval in advance.
- We need a subcommittee to generate a list of things we can offer. Robbie volunteers.
- There is no better way of getting new members than having a Board member in that state who knows the local people, and is willing to do some outreach, to talk to people, go to meetings, etc.
- Do we want to have a person designated as a liaison to each state?

1:05pm YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS COMMITTEE (Robbie)

Scholarships awarded in 2011:

- We offered scholarships to John Garrett, Joyce Realegeno, Raymond VanBuskirk and Cole Wolf.
- Jay Withgott covered one of the 3 scholarships.

Plans for coming year:

- We will offer scholarships on the northern Sierra Trip next year.
- It was judged that an international trip is not the right venue to send someone on.
- We will also have a student rate for the meetings.
- Jay and Tom, even though they will no longer be Board members, agreed to stay on the committee.
- Joe Morlan did a great job in getting the scholarship forms on the website.

1:10pm AWARDS COMMITTEE (DaveQ)

Harry S. Swarth Award

Announcement: The Harry S. Swarth Award in Western Field Ornithology, the award is so named as Harry S. Swarth's body of work is an exemplar. It is hoped that the stature of the nominee's body of work approaches that of Harry S. Swarth's. The draft announcement has an outline of Swarth's contributions to Western field ornithology. It is hoped that the Board will leave eligibility issues to the discretion of the Award Committee. The award would consist of a print of a specially commissioned painting by Tom Schultz. We should make an announcement of the award in *WB* so any member can nominate, along with a list of the nominee's accomplishments. The Awards Committee is responsible for eliciting nominations, reviewing them, and making a possible recommendation to the Board. The award will be presented periodically and infrequently and aimed at honoring living individuals both professional and non-professional, but not excluding a group or a recently departed individual.

- Tom Schultz can store the 25 prints if perhaps we offer him something like a life membership.
- If we do not own the artwork, we should have restrictions on the artist's ability to make additional prints.
- Ken proposed that we get rid of the term 'descriptive' from the statement where the award pertains to descriptive ornithology describing the award as 'descriptive field ornithology'. This may restrict us in ways we may not want to be restricted.

Motion (by Ed, seconded by Kimball) to take into account the dropping of the word 'descriptive' in describing the award and to then accept the recommendations set forth by DaveQ in his memo.

Motion passed unanimously.

1:34pm Service Award

Discussion: We do not have an award for service to the organization other than the Alan Craig Award for exceptional service. What do we do for volunteers who have provided distinguished and meritorious service for a period of years to WFO? Some guidelines would be to give the award to a member but not to a director, an officer, or a person who is being currently compensated.

Motion: (by Jay, seconded by Tom) to establish the service award with the guidelines set forth by the Awards Committee.

Motion passed.

1:40pm SAN MIGUEL FUND (SMF) (Kimball)

Discussion: At our last meeting we decided to use the San Miguel Fund for publications. DaveS asked me to form an *ad hoc* committee to put forth a more specific motion as to what the San Miguel Fund (SMF) would be used for. My recommendation was to merge the SMF and the publications fund and call it the San Miguel Publication Fund (SMPF) honoring Mike.

Extensive discussion ensued as to the pros and cons of merging the two funds.

- **Cons:** Concern that people who have donated money for publications for other purposes but not to the San Miguel Fund (SMF) may not want their money to become part of the San Miguel Fund. Judgment is that it is essential to maintain a discrete fund so as to have some flexibility in utilizing funds, i.e., web publishing, etc. The most important consideration is that we want to explicitly honor MSM and to have that explicit message appearing with some frequency in our publication; if the two funds are merged then everything we do is funded by MSF. It loses its special nature if it supports all of our publications rather than being a specially designated fund for some specific thing, i.e., a color signature.
- **Pros:** Having two separate funds is confusing and there is no feedback that the family objected to merging the funds. Probably more than half the money in the publications fund was raised directly by Mike San Miguel. Is there anything stopping us from putting money from the publications fund into the SMF?
- After some discussion of pros and cons, Kimball presented second recommendation drafted as the following motion: ***'The SMF shall be dedicated expressly to the advancement of WFO's publications and in particular our flagship publication, WB, and it is anticipated that the discrete feature that enhances the content of WB shall be funded annually by the SMF with appropriate acknowledgement in each issue.'*** An example of a discrete content enhancement would be an additional color signature with costs of about \$350/per issue (\$1400/yr). Without additional augmentation, that would be about ten years funding. Suggestion was made to set a cap of \$1200 /yr and augment it with other funds or use the shortfall to do fundraising. Some amount would be used in every issue. Additional suggestion was made to find a 3% investment for this fund, one yielding the cost of one color signature a year. In terms of depleting the fund in 10yrs, color signature for a hard copy publication may not apply any more.

Clarification: There are two issues here: 1) Do we merge the funds and 2) how do we specify how to use the money. Additional discussion ensued on these issues and how to give credit to the inside cover of *WB*. Ed made an initial motion to merge the two funds, the San Miguel Fund (SMF) and the publication fund, and call it the San Miguel Publications Fund (SMPF), but only if we get the permission from the San Miguel Family, and providing that anything the Publication Committee decides to spend the money on is okay with them. More discussion ensued, which led to the following motion by Ken (seconded by Kimball).

The motion is to merge the existing SMF and the existing publications fund and rename the one fund the San Miguel Publications Fund (SMPF) and designate up to \$1200 per year from the SMPF, devoted to specific enhancements to WFO publications, i.e., *WB*, and to acknowledge funds contributed in memory of Mike San Miguel.

The motion passed and will be announced at the banquet Saturday night and also in *WB*.

2:40pm FINANCE AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE (Robbie)

Update: We are almost out of copies of *Rare Birds of California*. At the end of this year we will have \$75,000 in operating capital, not including money that has been donated for other purposes.

External Audit/Financial Review

Discussion: The Finance Committee would like to have permission from the Board to have our finances reviewed. This is to ensure that we are on track with the Federal and State mandates, i.e., 501(c)(3). This would be done at Robbie's convenience. The cost would be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$2,000-3,000. That seems to be the standard.

- Kimball: Is there any way you we could authorize the money and then if it can be done for less we could take advantage of that?
- DaveQ: We need someone who is versed in doing financial reviews and audits specifically with 501(c)(3)s. An audit requires that external contracts and expenditures be examined, a financial review does not seek information outside the organization. I will be there one day with the reviewer and Robbie and hopefully be able to interpret for all of you and then there is the preparation of the report by the reviewer.
- Cat: This will give WFO a planning instrument and where we stand financially. It would be valid for years.
- Robbie: There is no guarantee that this will make any difference in our insurance rates.

Motion (by Ken, seconded by Debbie) as follows: The motion is that we endorse and approve up to \$3,000 for a financial review.

Motioned carried unanimously.

Insurance (Cat)

Update: Our current insurance is exactly what we need for our international trips. This could be lowered only if we did national trips exclusively, therefore I recommend that we let our current coverage stand.

2:45pm Investments to Counter Inflation (DaveS)

Update: With about \$75,000 currently in operating capital that is not needed to meet ongoing expenses, it would be valuable to investigate potential ways to invest some or all of this in ways that help us to offset inflation.

Discussion: We want to be conservative and the suggestion is that we only put money in vehicles that have no risk, i.e., FDIC insured bank accounts or CDs.

- Robbie: There are 3 factors involved here:
 1. There should be a subcommittee to make recommendations to the Board.
 2. That committee needs to **continue** to make decisions, i.e. who has access, it is hard to set up accounts.
 3. Change needs to be made judiciously and a plan made as to where to put short funds in the next six months.
- Robbie: I would like to have this statement in the minutes.

An endowment is a sum of money that is put aside and only the earnings are used.

So for example, if WB needs a few extra thousand dollars they cannot go to the endowment. It is for organizations that are above million dollars, i.e., Santa Clarita Audubon. For example, if someone gives you \$12,000 and you want to put it in an endowment, you may only utilize the earning of that and you cannot add to that.

3:05pm EXECUTIVE SESSION (no minutes)

The Board went into executive session to discuss qualifications of potential members, to vote for the current Board vacancies, and elect current officers.

3:35pm NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- WFO's Board selected the following individuals as its slate of nominees for election to the Board of Directors for three-year terms:

- Dan Gibson (first term)
- Frances Oliver (first term)
- Osvel Hinojosa-Huerta (second term)
- Dave Quady (second term)

The slate will be presented to WFO members for their approval at the Annual Meeting. (Subsequent Note: At the Annual Meeting held on August 20, 2011, WFO's members elected this slate of nominees.)

- WFO's Board re-elected the current officers (Liga Auzins, Robbie Fisher, Ed Pandolfino, W. David Shuford) to one-year terms.
- Cat requested two people to be a liaison to the nominating committee. Jay Withgott, who has excellent ties in Oregon, and, Dave Kreuper, who has the same in New Mexico. The nominating committee is Dave Quady, Carol Beadmore, Robert Gill, Jon Dunn and Cat Waters.

3:42pm WFO'S FUTURE

Website Enhancement (preliminary discussion)

- The website enhancement discussion was brought up by Brian who is not here so it was suggested that we table that until the next conference call. All agree.
- It was noted that many of Brian's suggestions, which may be great, really fall into the mission and vision statement.

Recommendation: The entire Board needs to consider our mission and vision statement. It is not a matter of wordsmithery and is a process that cannot be done quickly. All agree.

New Society for Ornithology

Announcement: Ken Able and Bob Gill have forwarded information about a new society for ornithology based on the dissolution of American Ornithologists' Union(AOU) and Cooper Ornithological Society(COS) in order to form a new and larger organization. It seemed like gigantic news, especially in terms of publications.

Discussion: Kimball noted that COS has not yet voted to do this, but they probably will; it is the unanimous recommendation of a committee in the AOU.

- There is a briefing for the council which will evaluate this option and decide on this (not the membership).
- AOU has lost over 1,000 members in the last ten years, down from 4500 to 3500. The expenses of 5-7 organizations that all publish journals are a contributing factor.
- The bottom line for WFO might be that producing a print journal through membership fees may not be a viable option sometime in the future. The more immediately an organization's publication is put online, the more their members or potential members lose incentive to be a member. Maybe that will not apply to WFO as we do other things that bring in members. It is no longer sustainable to just produce a journal that is also available free online.
- DaveS: If we go online with our journal, we may lose some membership and then we would not have enough to print the journal.
- The different models of AOU and COS are overwhelmingly dominated by academics, who are motivated by ISI ratings, so there is one major factor driving them to repackage their journals into another format.
- This may create an opportunity for WFO as we are not dominated by academics although we have a tremendously healthy input from academics and we do produce a hard copy. In many ways we are the 'heir apparent' to what COS started out as. We are a Western organization that predominantly reports field ornithology.

DaveS (seconded by Debbie) moved to adjourn. All: Agreed. Meeting adjourned at 4:00pm

Liga Auzins
Rec. Sec'y.