

Winter 2009 Newsletter and Western Field Ornithologists End of Year Report

by Cat Waters and Dan Gibson

The leaves have turned yellow and red and are actively falling, even in Los Angeles, as this end-of-year newsletter and report is being written. Migrants have mostly moved through and overwintering birds, as evidenced by the Fox Sparrows in the leaf litter in the front yard, are here to stay for the winter's duration. Our annual meeting is over and WFO has plans for another year and beyond.

Thank yous. Before 2010 arrives, WFO would like to thank our 2009 sponsors and our meeting sponsors. **Swarovski Optik of North America** makes those wonderful color covers for *Western Birds* possible and their sponsorship is greatly appreciated. **Boise State University** (Go Broncos!) and the **Department of Biology at Boise State University** and **Idaho Bird Observatory** made their transportation, personnel and banding station at Lucky Peak available every day of our 34th annual meeting. **H. Lee Jones** (California, Belize) provided WFO with the book silent auction items for our youth scholarship fund. The **American Birding Association**, **Jim Danzenbaker** (Washington) of **Kowa Optimed**, **Great Basin Bird Observatory** (Nevada), **Oxford Inn and Suites Boise**, **Clay Taylor** (Texas) of **Swarovski Optik**, the **U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service**, and **Robert Waters** (California) materially contributed to our 34th Annual Meeting. Generous people and organizations from Alaska made it possible for WFO to publish a special edition of *Western Birds*, **Vol. 40:2, Birds of the Ketchikan area, southeast Alaska**. With the donation of expertise, patience and time on the part of Paul Lehman (California), Guy McCaskie (California) and Dave Shuford (California), WFO published an update of the *Field List of California Birds* in July 2009. And, thanks also go to our Membership who contributed to WFO throughout the year. We thank each and every one of you for your generosity, continuing support, and loyal membership.

Membership. Membership in Western Field Ornithologists has benefits! Four hard copy issues of *Western Birds*, color sponsored by Swarovski, arrive in your mailbox each year. Our annual meeting offers an array of opportunities that include scientific sessions, field trips, field skills workshops and social opportunities that make it possible for each attending member to have direct access to their contemporaries and the leading field ornithology experts in the West. Each WFO member has bragging rights to the organization's continuing outreach in making each of their meetings financially accessible to serious youth field ornithologists. Membership in WFO also includes:

- Eligibility to participate in WFO's regional and international field trips and expeditions
- Print and electronic newsletters
- A website and access to WFO's Board and regional experts for field related questions
- Opportunities to display your original photography and drawings in *Western Birds*.
- Opportunities to have your photography shown on www.westernfieldornithologists.org
- Electronic updates of events, meeting information, receptions

Donations. While writing of donors and sponsors and benefits of membership, we mention that as a non-profit organization WFO is never without a need for funds. Potential donors can select from a number of specific areas to which their largesse can be directed – publications, youth scholarships, the general fund. Western Field Ornithologists will join the New Mexico Ornithological Society in support of an all-new *Birds of New Mexico* currently being written/edited by Sartor O. Williams III.

You can send a much-needed donation check payable to Western Field Ornithologists C/O Robbie Fischer, 1359 Solano Drive, Pacifica, CA 94044 or use our website, www.westernfieldornithologists.org and designate which fund you wish your donation to benefit. Any questions can be directed to Robbie, Cat Waters or Dan Gibson by sending an email to contact@westernfieldornithologists.org. Keep in mind that if your donation is \$100.00 or more you are eligible for a genuine and very sincere handwritten note of thanks from Cat or Dan. A donation of \$200.00 or more will bring you a note and a WFO cap to proudly wear in the field.

Wrap up of the 34th Annual Meeting of Western Field Ornithologists. By all accounts our meeting in Boise, Idaho, September 10 – 13, hosted by the Idaho Bird Observatory of Boise State University, was a success. Greg Kaltenecker and Jay Carlisle of Boise State and the Idaho Bird Observatory were instrumental in the meeting's success as were the wonderful meeting registrants, presenters, panelists, moderators, speakers, field trip leaders and volunteers. Thank you all. Please see the WFO website, www.westernfieldornithologists.org and look under "conference" for more details.

Board News. Two board members, Jon Feenstra (California), the Chair of our "e" Communications Committee and Dave Shuford (California) the Chair of our Publications Committee rotated off the Board in 2009. Both have generously agreed to continue in their committee roles. While writing of continuity, Catherine Waters was elected president, Dan Gibson as Vice President, Robbie Fischer as Treasurer, and Jean Brandt as Secretary. Dave Krueper remains Immediate Past President. Kimball Garrett (California) and Robert Gill (Alaska) were elected to the Board of WFO for three year terms.

35th Annual Meeting of Western Field Ornithologists – Coachella Valley. Kurt Leuschner of College of the Desert will co-host our 35th annual meeting to take place at the Embassy Suites Hotel-Palm Desert, October 13 – 17, 2010. Mark the date on your calendar, plan to attend and check on the website for planning, registration, workshops, field trips, and updates as they become available.

Field Trips and Skills Workshop Opportunities. You may find the following offerings of interest.

- Dave Shuford of Point Reyes Bird Observatory will be leading a WFO **field trip to the Klamath Refuges** area February 26-28, 2010 for 12 WFO participants. Targets will be raptors and waterfowl that winter in this unique region of California/Oregon. E-mail your intent, questions, and contact info to dshuford@prbo.org and cc to cpannellwaters@yahoo.com.
- A **sounds identification workshop** led by Sylvia Gallagher is being offered in Huntington Beach, CA, in February/March of 2010, www.seaandsageaudubon.org click on courses/classes.
- Starr Ranch's ongoing field education program is offering two **banding workshops** in southern California led by Jessica Griffiths. Jessica has conducted banding and feather workshops with Peter Pyle. The courses are scheduled for March 6/7 and March 13/14, 2010. See www.starranch.org.

Publications. The *Field List of California Birds* is now fully updated and available through the WFO website, www.westernfieldornithologists.org. Buy one today! WFO has lowered the price of *Rare Birds of California* to \$49.00 incl. shipping, handling and tax. *California Bird Species of Special Concern*, a must for every California field biologist and ornithologist, remains a very reasonable \$12.00 incl. shipping, handling and tax. You can order the Field List and both books on the WFO website or call Allen Press, 800-627-0326 to order the books only.

Happy New Year!