

Western Field Ornithologists - Spring 2010 Newsletter

By Catherine Waters, President

The sounds of the birds that migrate through the southland of California have been evident in the mornings for a few weeks now. The missing (in Downey, California) over-wintering White-crowned Sparrows have shown up, at long last, and this normally common bird raises our hopes for more to come. Our first observed Wilson's Warbler of the season was spotted early today (April 1). It is easy to believe that it bears the prettiest shade of yellow there is until the next yellow-plumaged bird appears and makes us reconsider. Small flocks of Canada Geese have been winging their way north and recently in the late afternoons you can hear them joyfully honking, momentarily louder than the urban buzz, as they fly in formation for wherever they are bound. Yesterday a flock of White-faced Ibis passed overhead and became a newly recorded addition to the yard list! Wherever each of us is in the West, the sure signs of spring are appearing, and for those of us devoted to birds in the field it is the season to walk out the door, bins in hand, and rejoice at what we observe around us.

A note from the President

My years of association with Western Field Ornithologists as a member, Board Member, Vice President, and President have been pleasurable and enriching. The one thing that stands out more than any other is the generous and fine people I have been lucky to come to know. Their knowledge, passion, devotion, and generosity have inspired me. Many of you may remember that under the excellent guidance of Gjon Hazard (California), WFO's membership voted to change the bylaws to better accommodate the responsibilities of the presidency with broader support and provide the organization with a longer-reaching institutional memory. Gjon's committee (Jean Brandt, Tom Ryan, and Cat Waters) and the WFO Board also wanted to ensure that WFO's Board of Directors would remain representative of the West. With that in mind, you voted to approve bylaws changes that altered the WFO presidency and vice presidency to two one-year terms, WFO Board membership to two three-year terms, and formalized a role for the immediate past president. I am the first WFO president to benefit. Dan Gibson (Alaska) as Vice President and Dave Krueper (New Mexico) as Past President have shared the responsibilities for WFO every step of the way since my election. No one could ask for better partners.

Currently, the three of us have joined to begin a fundraising effort to endow our flagship publication *Western Birds*. Already we are ten years into a new century and we can only offer conjecture about how publications that we have been used to in one format in the past will change in the future. Our goal, over the next three years, will be to raise an endowment for *Western Birds* that will help allow us to continue publishing an excellent journal that includes color (see Volume 41:1) while holding steady, as long as feasible, the cost of WFO membership. Recently, WFO's Board Members, all expert birders, volunteered to coordinate and lead seasonal fund-raising field trips to places of interest throughout the West, and farther afield, to assure that our annual budget -- including publication of *Western Birds* -- will remain balanced. Last year many of our Life Members generously added to their initial Life time donation. The president of WFO is actively seeking sponsorships and grants to further WFO's future publications. We truly hope you will consider becoming a donor and partner in this campaign. If you have any questions you can reach us at president@westernfieldornithologists.org. You can donate on our web-site (<https://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/support.php>) or send a check payable to WFO, c/o 1359 Solano Dr., Pacifica, CA 94044 and note on it *for Western Birds*. Feel free to call Catherine Waters at 562-869-6718 with any suggestions, leads, or comments.

Field Trips. Western Field Ornithologists has a number of upcoming field trips requiring membership and varying degrees of energy, skills, and expenditure. Please refer to the WFO website www.westernfieldornithologists.org for specific information, costs, and contacts for each trip, or you may email Tom Ryan, our field trip chair at tryanbio@gmail.com. (Field Trips continued on other side)

June 25 – July 4, 2010: The Sonoran Joint Venture (SJV) and Western Field Ornithologists (WFO) are jointly coordinating a bird-monitoring expedition to the Área de Protección de Flora y Fauna Sierra de Alamos y Río Cuchujaqui Biosphere Reserve, in southern Sonora, Mexico.

The objective of this expedition is to use the collective expertise of WFO members and SJV participants to collect and record natural history information and baseline monitoring data on birds of conservation interest in the Biosphere Reserve. Please carefully read the expedition description.

Late October 2010 to 8 November 2010: Cuba with Jon Dunn. Details will be posted on the WFO website by April 15, 2010.

Winter 2010-2011: Middle Rio Grande mid-Winter Tour with Dave Krueper. Plans for a mid-winter tour to the middle Rio Grande (3-4 days) in the winter of 2010 – 2011 are being consolidated by Dave Krueper. Sites will include Bosque del Apache NWR, Elephant Butte and Caballo reservoirs, and the Sandia Mountains for all three rosy-finches. Details TBA

February 2011: Sacramento, Klamath, and Gray Lodge Refuges. This field trip will be a self-driven caravan to explore the grandeur of California's and Oregon's winter waterfowl, wading birds, and raptors. It will travel country roads in search of passerines and raptors, visit refuges, and enjoy local sites and sounds in a relaxed trip that is a journey through portions of the Great Central Valley and Modoc Plateau. There will be a small per person charge to cover the leader's expenses. Leader and exact dates TBA. Send an email of interest to

president@westernfieldornithologists.org.

June 2011: Eastern Sierra trip with Jon Dunn and Kimball Garrett and Lena Hayashi. This will be a fundraising field trip. Details TBA.

Membership News

35th Annual Meeting of Western Field Ornithologists – Palm Desert, California. Our annual meeting and conference will take place at the Embassy Suites Hotel-Palm Desert, October 13–17, 2010. Ed Pandolfino hopes to go live with registration on April 15. A description of the meeting, science sessions, preliminary schedule, workshop titles, and field trip destinations will be posted on the WFO website by April 15. The hotel is a higher rate than we have paid in the past but the rooms accommodate three adults, have refrigerators and microwaves, and include breakfast. All meeting activities will take place on site. This is a resort destination and the hotel is appropriate for a family vacation, complete with tennis courts, pool, and nearby activities, not to mention great field science, great birding, and great weather. Mark the date on your calendar and plan to attend.

Publications. It is here! Doug Faulkner's *Birds of Wyoming* is now available! This long anticipated volume will be released to the public on April 15 and can be ordered directly from the publisher or other sources. Many of us have long anticipated this book's arrival. Still in the wings is the *Birds of Montana* project led by Jeff Marks. This book is anticipated for late 2011. You can get advance information on this worthy project from <http://mtaudubon.org/birds/book.html>. Dave Krueper, Jon Dunn, and Cat Waters have challenged the WFO Board to match their donations as contributors to the future publication of *Birds of New Mexico*. This is a huge project, and if the prospect of being involved in seeing it in print is interesting to you, send Dave Krueper, WFO's liaison to the New Mexico Ornithological Society, an email, dave.krueper@fws.gov, to find out how you can help.

Can you help? Do you have experience with on-line publishing? If so, Cat Waters would love hear what you have to say about the topic. She is seeking direction and answers to her questions about electronic publishing/publications programs and formats. She can be reached at president@westernfieldornithologists.org and thanks you in advance for answering her call for help.