

Western Field Ornithologists Newsletter for Fall/Winter 2011

Edited by Catherine Waters, contact@westernfieldornithologists.org

Seasons of Change

This last of 2011 WFO newsletter is being written as the final days of autumn fade and Christmas Bird Counts become part of the conversation. For those of us who are lucky enough to live near where birds come to winter, this season represents the absolute splendor and glory of observing birds in the field (and on the water) throughout the west. The sounds and displays of gathering flocks of waterfowl, Sandhill Cranes, White-faced Ibis and Bald Eagles that congregate in the west are simply amazing to behold. Do yourself a favor and do not let winter pass by without visiting places like Malheur in Oregon, Bosque del Apache in New Mexico, California's Central and San Joaquin Valley Refuges, Oklahoma's Washita National Wildlife Refuge, California's and Oregon's shared Klamath Refuges, or the Imperial Valley of southern California bordering Baja California. Be a witness to a natural wonder of the world. And, don't forget to bring your Duck Stamp!

36th Annual Conference, Sierra Vista, Arizona

Our annual conference, held in August in Sierra Vista, Arizona was great! The meeting committee with Ed Pandolfino (California) as Chair, Robbie Fischer (California) as Registrar, Kurt Leuschner (California) as field trip chair, Ken Able (California) as workshop chair, Debbie Van Dooremolen (Nevada) and Dave Quady (California) as science sessions co-chair did a remarkable job, as did Jay Withgott (Oregon) who managed transportation. Thank yous are in order for a host of people. Our plenary session openers, author Dan Fisher (Arizona) and Troy Corman, president of Arizona Field Ornithologists, gave us wonderful background on the people and birds of the region. Our workshop presenters: Homer Hansen, Heather Swanson, Heath Wakelee, Kimball Garrett, Dan Gibson, Kathy Molina did an outstanding job. Peter Pyle graced us with a keynote address centered on molt. The scientific portion of the meeting was excellent and each presenter did a marvelous job. Speaking of outstanding jobs, Nathan Pieplow and Ed Harper, our expert sounds and visual identification panel moderators and their experts did an excellent job of walking us through the steps of identifying a bird visually and aurally. The field trip leaders donated their time and energy to show off Arizona birding and a full list of them is on the WFO website. And, Dan Gibson and Carol Beardmore did an excellent job raising money to further fund the coffers for the Pasadena Audubon Youth Scholarship Fund that honors Mike San Miguel by offering scholarships to youth to attend our meetings. Thank you all!

Start studying birds in flight and forming your sounds team for our 37th annual conference in Petaluma, California September 26-30, 2012. Watch the WFO website, www.westernfieldornithologists.org for information as the Meeting Committee shifts into gear.

Board News

At the Sierra Vista Conference, WFO welcomed two new members to the Board of directors. Frances Oliver of Lodi, California joined us for a three year term. Her experience at working wonderfully with people is legendary and we were lucky to have her accept the nomination. Long time *Western Birds* associate editor and WFO publications committee Chair, Dan Gibson of Ester, Alaska was also elected for a three year term. Returning board members, Dave Quady (California) and Osvel Hinojosa-Huerta (Sonora Mexico) were elected to second three year terms and will provide us with continuity. At the same time, we said a sad, and hopefully temporary, farewell to two marvelous board members who are staying on as members of our youth scholarship committee, Jay Withgott (Oregon) and Tom Ryan (California). Both men began their careers as young birders. Tom and Jay were a pleasure to work with and contributed mightily during their tenure and they will be missed by us. The entire executive portion of the WFO Board of Directors, Dave Shuford (California), president; Ed Pandolfino (California), vice-president; Robbie Fischer (California), treasurer; and Liga Auzins (California), Secretary were elected to new one-year terms.

Membership

Please keep in mind that **you**, too, can nominate members for the WFO Board of Directors. We will have positions for two three-year first time terms coming up in September 2012. We are always on the look out for talented people from throughout the west to further strengthen the organization as volunteers for projects and committees, too. We are also a working Board and everyone volunteers. Potential candidates for the Board must be WFO members in good standing and have a vested interest in the organization. Send your nominations to Catherine Waters, cpannellwaters@yahoo.com and Dave Quady, davequady@att.net. If you would like to volunteer to sit on a committee or help on a project use the same contacts. We are eagerly awaiting your reply! Our board meetings are open to membership. Notify Dave Shuford, dshuford@prbo.org if you would like to attend. Is there anyone out there with newsletter experience who can work with me on formatting this little newsletter? If so, please call or email Catherine Waters (cpannellwaters@gmail.com). Don't be shy.

Publications

We have some fun news on this front. There are a very few copies of *Rare Birds of California* remaining. They are a real bargain and can be purchased directly through the WFO website or by contacting Robbie Fischer at contact@westernfieldornithologists.org.

- At our 34th annual meeting in Idaho the Board voted to electronically publish *Rare Birds...* and reaffirmed this intention at the recent meeting. WFO has engaged the talented electronic publishing wizard, Tim Brittain, to begin the process of turning a book meant for hard copy publication into a searchable electronic publication. The process is slow and it has not been without some real surprises, but it is exciting. *Rare Birds* represented a massive volunteer effort on the parts of the editors, Robb Hamilton, Richard Erickson and Michael Patten and dozens of people from the California Bird Record Committee (CBRC), the WFO Board and the general membership of WFO contributed their assistance to further the publication, too, spending hundreds of hours assisting the effort. Electronic publication offers a permanent way to see all that amazing effort and energy continue. The WFO Board has voted \$3,000.00 or 75% of the cost toward electronic publication and we are hoping to raise the rest of the cost of adapting the book (remember those "surprises?") and developing it on our website for you! Donate today - your effort will be appreciated and recognized on the electronic publication site. Donations towards the book can be done directly from our website or by mailing a check made out to Western Field Ornithologists C/O Robbie Fischer, 1359 Solano Drive, Pacifica, CA 94044, contact@westernfieldornithologists.org. If you have direct questions about the electronic publication process of *Rare Birds*, contact Catherine Waters at the same electronic address as Robbie.
- John Sterling (California) has stepped into the role of Featured Photo editor for *Western Birds*. You can submit your photography for *Western Birds* using the guidelines outlined on our website. Welcome, John.
- At this time, we are waving farewell to two wonderful *Western Birds (WB)* editors. All of WFO should offer to Joe Morlan (California) a huge thank you for his years spent as Featured Photo Editor (FPE) for *Western Birds*. Joe, also WFO's webmaster and website photo editor, has been an amazing help to Western Field Ornithologists and WFO's CBRC, too. Besides serving as FPE for *WB*, he maintains the corrigenda for *Rare Birds* and serves on the CBRC. Many thanks, Joe. And, recently, *Western Birds'* excellent book review editor, Alan Contreras, announced that he would be

leaving that position in 2012. Alan, an author and poet and social commentator, brought his special talents and contacts to *Western Birds* and we will always be proud that he offered to share his time and energy and opinions with us. Though we are sad to see him go, we wish Alan well in his new adventures.

Announcements

WFO welcomes the opportunity to announce your newly published book or book in the works, pertinent event announcements, and projects of interest to field ornithologists in the west. From time to time we also find reason to make announcements of general interest.

For those of you who missed our meeting in Sierra Vista in 2011, we would like to remind you that many of the fine people who made that meeting such a wonderful success volunteered for us from their main effort - the **Southwest Wings Birding and Nature Festival**. This coming 2012 the Festival will be held at the Cochise College in Sierra Vista Arizona, August 1-4. Their website is www.swwings.org and online registration begins in March of 2012.

You also have an opportunity to visit the San Francisco Bay Area and attend the 3rd annual **Pt. Reyes Birding and Nature Festival** in spring and experience some of the locations in that season that you may visit in fall when WFO meets in Petaluma, CA in September 2012. Some of the same wonderful field trip leaders that will make the WFO meeting in September possible will be the leaders for this spring event. Registration for the 2012 Festival will begin in late February. You can visit www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org for information.

The 6th edition of the *National Geographic Guide to the Birds of North America* is now available and substantially changed. If you are still using edition 4 or 5, now is the time to make the change!

Starr Ranch, located in Orange County, has a bird observatory that is offering banding courses beginning in January 2012. Details are available at their website, www.starranch.org, 949-858-0309.

Sea and Sage Audubon is offering two sounds identification workshops for winter/spring 2012. Taught by Sylvia Gallagher these intense courses are designed for California bird identification and are excellent tools for field ornithologists. For those who cannot relocate, the learning cd's associated with the workshops are available through the S/S bookstore for mail order, 949-261-7963. All details for workshops and cd's are on their website, www.seaandsageaudubon.org.

And, don't forget that Western Field Ornithologists is holding their annual conference in Petaluma, California September 26 - 30, 2012. Put it on your calendar and we'll see you there!