

Western Field Ornithologists Newsletter for Spring 2011

Edited by Catherine Waters, contact@westernfieldornithologists.org

Seasons of Change

Though the calendar insists it is spring, the signs around us are decidedly mixed. The Vernal Equinox brings us the gift of more daytime and, for many of us, a longer day in the field. Our western perspective takes us from the great white north to the subtropics and from the vast eastern Pacific through the Great Basin and into the Great Plains and southern prairie regions. Within this area the warming weather and longer daylight hours are the harbingers of spring and also signal the onset of migration. Wherever you are in the West and whatever spring weather you are experiencing, we hope the study of birds in the field remains part of your season.

WFO has its own seasons. Our last annual conference was in the fall (October 2010) in the Coachella Valley of California and our next will be in summer in the Huachuca Mountains of Arizona (August 2011). At the Coachella Valley conference our membership said good bye to president, Catherine Waters, vice president, Dan Gibson, Past President, Dave Krueper, Secretary, Jean Brandt and Board Members Elisabeth Ammon and Gjon Hazard and welcomed in a new era. Wonderful leaders have stepped into those roles. Dave Shuford, President, Ed Pandolfino, Vice President, Liga Auzins, Secretary, and Board members Ken Able, Kurt Leuschner, and Brian Sullivan have ably stepped forward to join the WFO Board of Directors. Of further note, the ever popular and hardworking Robbie Fischer was enthusiastically re-elected as WFO treasurer.

Membership

There is a role at WFO for you, too. Please consider submitting your original research, notes, photography and sketches to *Western Birds*. Your photographic efforts can be submitted to the WFO website, too. Your participation on our working committees is encouraged and invited. Your input on nominees for the Board of Directors is solicited and welcome. Our annual meeting of the Board of Directors is open to all members. Would you like to give or suggest a continuing education workshop for our conferences, or present your research as a paper at our annual conference? You can also submit announcements for inclusion in the WFO Newsletter. WFO welcomes announcement of your newly published book or book in the works, pertinent event announcements, and projects of interest to field ornithologists in the west. These can be submitted to contact@westernfieldornithologists.org.

Thank You

We are well into 2011 as this newsletter is being written. Our meeting in the Coachella Valley was a rousing success co-chaired by Ed Pandolfino and Catherine Waters. 190 people attended the conference. The workshops, coordinated by Elisabeth Ammon were outstanding and Nathan Pieplow, Ed Pandolfino, Jon Dunn, Kimball Garrett, Sylvia Gallagher, Kathy Molina, Dan Gibson, and Robert Dickerman are to be congratulated. The science sessions, coordinated by Debbie VanDooremolen and Dave Quady, were informative, provoked thought, and brought us up to date on the latest field research. Nathan Pieplow and Molly Malone devised another "first" for WFO and we hope you are forming your sounds ID teams for Sierra Vista. Ed Harper organized and moderated a visual identification panel that illustrated the thought processes in identifying birds in the field. Cameron Barrows, Douglas Altshuler and Paul Lehman spoke eloquently and each brought their unique insights, research and perspectives to the conference attendees. Jon Feenstra and John Garrett led the first annual Mike San Miguel Memorial Field Trip. Kurt Leuschner, the Desert Bird Club and a truly generous group of people arranged for and volunteered to lead field trips, drive on carpools and help out with registration. The Living Desert hosted us for field trips and an evening event. To all, thank you.

Western Field Ornithologists Conference: Sierra Vista, AZ August 17-21, 2011

Registration is now available for our 36th Annual Conference in Sierra Vista, Arizona. Ed Pandolfino, Robbie Fischer, Kurt Leuschner, Debbie VanDooremolen, Dave Quady, Ken Able and Carol Beardmore have been planning since last October. Ed is the conference organizer this year; Robbie the registrar; Kurt is doing field trips; Debbie and Dave Q are in charge of the science sessions; Ken is the workshops organizer; and Carol Beardmore is the coordinator for our annual silent book auction to benefit our youth scholarships program. Don't forget to bring a book or books to add to the auction!

During the meeting we will offer field trips to all the southeast Arizona hotspots looking for local specialties like Scaled and Montezuma quail, Gray, Short-tailed, and Zone-tailed hawks, a dazzling variety of hummingbirds and flycatchers, Elegant Trogon, Red-faced Warbler, and Cassin's, Botteri's, Rufous-winged, and Five-striped sparrows plus much more. To register and see full details go to <http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org> and click on the 'Annual Conference' banner in the middle of the home page. The Conference Details document can be downloaded and reviewed before you begin the registration process. Non-member registration includes a one-year membership to WFO and a subscription to our publication, *Western Birds*.

The rains that come during late summer to southeast Arizona create breeding conditions for some species and, for others, ideal conditions for molting prior to movement to the wintering grounds. This phenomenon of molt migration will be the subject of a Keynote address by Peter Pyle. As always, we'll have Science Sessions Friday and Saturday afternoons. Workshops will include flycatcher identification, bird banding, study skin preparation, and wilderness first aid. Dan Fischer, an authority on early western ornithologists will give a talk about the first naturalists to visit the southwest

Western Field Ornithologists Outreach and Scholarship Committees

At our last meeting of the Board of Directors, Western Field Ornithologists formed an outreach committee. We want to meet and get to know those of you who make up the field ornithology groups of the west. Currently we can provide networking, potential speakers for your meetings/events, space in our newsletter for pertinent announcements or publications, and ideas and planning advice. Contact Jon Dunn and/or Cat Waters through contact@westernfieldornithologists.org Attn: Jon/Cat. We look forward to working with you.

The WFO newsletter, a part of the outreach committee, is available periodically as an insert in *Western Birds*, on line, and at the WFO website, www.westernfieldornithologists.org. We would like to urge each of you to sign up to receive it electronically. The single biggest advantage is receiving updates on such things as scholarships, special field trips, meeting registration, etc. before the print copy reaches you by snail mail. It is very easy. On the home page of the WFO website click on newsletter sign up. Be sure to include your first and last name. WFO does not share their mail list.

Scholarships

Robbie Fischer is the new chair of the WFO Scholarship Committee. The Committee would like you to know that WFO is offering two full youth scholarships to the WFO meeting in Sierra Vista through the Pasadena Audubon/WFO Youth Scholarship Fund honoring Mike San Miguel. It will cover all aspects of the meeting. The requirements for applying and details on what the scholarship includes are posted on the website. The application deadline is May 1. Additionally, Western Field Ornithologists waives the \$89 registration fee for youths from 12 through high school age who are members of WFO. A membership for youths is \$10.00. If there is a financial hardship, speak privately with Robbie. Her personal email is robbie22@pacbell.net.

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