

WFO 2006

31st Annual Western Field Ornithologists Meeting

**Boulder, Colorado
21–24 September 2006**

Join Western Field Ornithologists for field trips, ornithology workshops, scientific paper sessions, and expert panels—plus great camaraderie, beautiful scenery, and superb birding.

The 2006 meeting will be based out of Boulder, Colorado, at a time of year that should be excellent for a fascinating mix of western and eastern birds—migrants, residents, and vagrants. Field trips include the Eastern Plains, mountains and foothills, and several notable vagrant traps. Shorebird diversity will still be high in late September, and the time of year is superb for passerine migrants—rarities and regionally common species alike. Nearly all montane specialties of the eastern Rockies will be present and findable. Field trips include half-day and all-day options, nearby and faraway, strenuous mountain hikes or relaxed strolls through productive migrant traps.

As usual, the meeting will feature a wide variety of workshops, panels, and paper sessions. Our diverse scientific paper sessions will be moderated by WFO board member Jay Withgott, and keynote speaker Dr. Jessica Young will describe her recent and ongoing research on the Gunnison Sage-Grouse. Our ever-popular and edifying slide ID panel will be moderated by WFO stalwart Joe Morlan. Our sound ID panel will be moderated by Nathan Pieplow, a Boulder-based recordist and expert on bird vocalizations. A new offering this year is a panel of members of bird records committees (BRCs) from western states.

We will be lodging at the Best Western Boulder Inn, just a ten-minute drive from spectacular (and ever-birdy) Gregory Canyon. Numerous restaurants and galleries are within walking distance of the Boulder Inn, and the University of Colorado is directly across the street.

Information about Workshops

- **Birding by Ear—Visually.** *Workshop leader: Arch McCallum.* Friday, 22 September, 8:00–11:00 a.m. Birders can improve their ear-birding proficiency by visualizing sound with spectrograms. Participants will learn how spectrograms and other "sound pictures" represent qualities such as "harsh", "pure", and "nasal", how songs are constructed from notes and phrases, and how simple acoustic mechanisms have made otherwise similar bird sounds easy to tell apart.

- **Mastering Digital Photography of Birds.** *Workshop leader: Bill Schmoker.* Saturday, 23 September, 8:00–11:00 a.m. Photographers of any experience level (including people who are "just curious") are invited to learn and share tips and techniques for digiscoping, digital SLRs, "power" point-and-shoot cameras, and basic digital darkroom workflow. An opportunity to troubleshoot rigs and exchange experiences and ideas will wrap up the session.
- **Empidonax Demystified.** *Workshop leader: Arch McCallum.* Sunday, 24 September, 8:00–11:00 a.m. This difficult genus of landbirds is less intimidating if one assigns an unknown to one of four phylogenetically distinctive groups, and then uses the alternation of phrases in song to identify the species. Most calls are also diagnostic if viewed spectrographically. However, the Western Flycatcher complex remains complex, and vocal intermediates are found in a vast swath north of 40° N.

Workshops will be held in the **Flatirons Conference Room** immediately south of the hotel lobby. Just walk across the carriage entrance and you are there.

Information about the Scientific Paper Sessions

There will be two afternoon paper sessions. Both sessions will be held at **Mountain View Methodist Church, 355 Ponca Place**. The site is less than ten minutes by car from the Best Western Boulder Inn. Both scientific paper sessions begin promptly at 1:00 p.m. The Friday session will be followed immediately by the **Sound ID Panel**, and the Saturday session will be followed immediately by the **BRC Panel**.

Topics covered in the scientific paper sessions range across a wide terrain of ecology, evolution, behavior, taxonomy, population status, management and conservation, and identification. The presentations are suitable for all persons with an interest in western field ornithology, and we welcome questions from all attendees during the question-and-answer session that follows each presentation.

A [preliminary schedule of presentations](#) is now available, as are the [abstracts](#). The abstracts and author information will also be included as print copy in each conference registrant's registration packet.

Information about Panels

- **Expert Panel: Slides.** *Friday, 22 September. 7:00–9:00 p.m.* In this popular staple of WFO meetings, a panel of identification experts is confronted with photographs of "mystery birds". The experts analyze each photograph and discuss relevant identification issues. Panel moderator is Joe Morlan. If you have slides or digital images that you would like for the panel to ponder, please see Joe the day prior to the panel.
- **Expert Panel: Sounds.** *Friday, 22 September, 4:30–5:30 p.m.* A successful offering of recent WFO conferences has been the sound ID panel. This year's moderator is Nathan Pieplow, a sound recordist and birding expert in Boulder. Nathan's expert panel will try to make sense of nocturnal flight calls, begging

juveniles, various non-vocal sounds, and maybe even a song or two.

- **BRC Panel.** *Saturday, 23 September, 4:30–5:30 p.m.* Members of bird records committees will answer questions about and provide insight into the practical and philosophical workings of BRCs. The panel will include representatives of the California, Colorado, Kansas, and New Mexico BRCs. WFO has long championed the hard and vital work of BRCs, and this panel provides a superb opportunity to learn more about BRCs.

Information About the Keynote Address

Love at the Lek: Can too much sex cause extinction?

Saturday, 23 September. Immediately following the Banquet.

Dr. Jessica Young of Western State College of Colorado will present her research and conservation experiences with the Gunnison Sage-Grouse. Dr. Young researched the behavioral biology and genetics of the Gunnison Sage-Grouse in the late 1980s and 1990s. In 2000, the Gunnison Sage-Grouse was recognized as a distinct species by the American Ornithologists' Union, based on research conducted by Dr. Young and others. Her presentation will focus on how behavior may influence speciation, extinction processes, and persistence of this remarkable bird. In addition, she will discuss current controversies about its conservation status.

Colorado Field Ornithologists

Western Field Ornithologists extends its gratitude to Colorado Field Ornithologists (CFO) for assistance with various logistical aspects of the conference. Although much of CFO's assistance has taken place behind the scenes, it has nonetheless been vital to the smooth operation of the conference. **Please support** CFO in the following ways:

- By checking out the [CFO website](#) and familiarizing yourself with CFO's diverse and excellent projects and initiatives. In particular, be sure to check out the [Colorado County Birding](#) link, with extensive information on WFO field trip destinations.
- By becoming a **member of CFO**. All CFO members receive the superb quarterly journal *Colorado Birds* and are eligible to participate in all activities of CFO.
- By visiting the **CFO table at the convention**, where you can pick up free literature about CFO and speak with a CFO representative.

To learn more about CFO, check out the CFO website or contact CFO President Norm Lewis.