

Western Field Ornithologists Newsletter – Autumn/Winter 2013/14

Edited by Catherine Waters

In the Field

Throughout the West, the onset of autumn has brought surprises in birds and weather. While those of us in Southern California are entertaining ourselves with Blue-footed Boobies, our friends to the north are watching autumn passerine migration begin to wind down. Hawk watches are in full swing along the various western flyways. Water fowl are departing from the places where they bred and spent their summer and appearing in places they disappeared from in late spring. For those of us in the northern latitudes, snow has arrived. And, for the rest of us, the shortening days and nip in the air herald the coming winter season.

WFO in Olympia, WA

August found WFO and Washington Field Ornithologists in Olympia, Washington for our 38th annual conference hosted by Washington's Black Hills Audubon Society. From our own perspective, somehow Ed Pandolfino, WFO president AND meeting committee chair, managed to arrange for the best hotel in the best location and the rest is history. We had the largest turnout ever for an out-of-California meeting. The programs were excellent and the field trips were rewarding and great fun and Olympia welcomed us with open arms.

We had it all: science sessions, experts' ID challenges, social activities, field trips (a special thanks to Joyce Meyers), workshops, and great speakers for our plenary session and banquet. Instrumental in the meeting's success were a long list of wonderful people and the two Washington based organizations who shared their time, energy and expertise to make the conference a success. There's always the risk that someone will get forgotten in these heartfelt thanks and the list of people who make these meetings happen is substantial. A full list can be had by going to http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/docs/2013/WFO_Conference_2013_Detailsv.15.pdf A description of our plenary session opened by Dennis Paulson and our keynote address by John Marzluff can be found on the WFO website by clicking on Full Conference Details. You will notice that every member of the WFO board volunteered to work on the conference from assisting at the registration table to leading field trips to conducting workshops.

Special appreciation goes to Ali Sheehy for her incredible job of coordinating every aspect of our onsite conference van transportation. It's a really big, big job that sometimes goes unnoticed. Thank you Ali!

Board News

Every member of the WFO Board of Directors is a valued member. They give their time and energy and do it in a wonderful, varied fashion. This year we said good bye to three: Osvel Hinojosa-Huerta of Pronatura, Brian Sullivan of Cornell University and eBird fame, and Debbie Van Dooremolen, environmental biologist for the Southern Nevada Water Authority (and science session moderator par excellence). The newly elected board members are Tom Blackman, Jon Dunn and Catherine Waters. You can see all of us - we've a new "Board" photograph posted - and our contact information by going to <http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/who.php>.

We decided in Olympia that we will continue under the steady leadership of our current executive committee for another year. Ed Pandolfino was re-elected as president, Dave Quady as vice president, Robbie Fischer as Treasurer and Membership Chair, and Liga Auzins as recording secretary. If you are of the mood, you can stop what you are doing right now and stand up and give them a hand. They are, simply, wonderful.

Minutes of the Olympia board meeting will be available on our website as soon as they are approved at the November conference call. All members are welcome to attend our board meetings, just let either Ed Pandolfino or Dave Quady know in advance so they can make the arrangements. Space is limited. Questions for the WFO leadership should be directed to contact@westernfieldornithologists.org

Volunteer Awards

In Olympia this year WFO honored two marvelous people, Lena Hayashi and Heath Wakelee. Lena, of Huntington Beach, California, has co-lead and coordinated our western field trips. She is a skilled field trip leader and master at planning. Heath has been instrumental in coordinating logistics and giving workshops. A “first-responder” he has shared his unique expertise in field first aid by giving workshops for WFO meetings that have been incredibly informative and empowering for those who attend.

Publications

At our annual Board meeting we discussed a variety of topics. Of note to members is that we are resolved to digitally publish *Western Birds* as a benefit of membership in WFO **IN ADDITION TO** our hard copy print publication. Keep your eyes open for the announcement anticipated for 2014.

Ken Able and Dave Shuford are leading the way to planning a symposium that will be presented and then published in conjunction with our 39th annual conference in 2014 in San Diego, California. It will be the second publication in our series on Studies on Western Birds; the first was California Bird Species of Special Concern. Details and contact information are on the website. Once there, click on Publications.

The digital publication of *Rare Birds of California* has been a real adventure. We are nearing the end of preparing it but we are not yet ready to go live. Still to be done are checks for artifacts, stabilizing the maps, and the cover art. When done, the volume will be accessed through both the WFO and the California Bird Record Committee's independent site, www.californiabirds.org. Tim Brittain and Cat Waters were hoping for a September 2013 “opening” and missed their deadline. On the bright side, they have not stopped working toward their goal of providing the book, which has no more hard copies available, as an “e” based publication. Stay tuned. If you would like to work on the last parts by checking sections for artifacts, typos, alignment, etc. let the WFO publications committee know by sending a note to contact@westernfieldornithologists.org and putting Rare Birds on the subject line.

WFO on the Road

In 2014, Western Field Ornithologists will be offering a western U. S. field trip, an international field trip, and a California workshop (with an opportunity for an Orange County pelagic) as well as an annual conference in San Diego. The Field Trip Committee, under the aegis of Kurt Leuschner, Committee Chair, has two great trips in the final planning stages, Montana, being coordinated and led by Ed Harper, and New Zealand, being coordinated by Kurt. Jon Dunn & Company are planning a full day gull workshop for January in Dana Point, California that will include field, classroom and social time. The details of these trips will be posted and announced shortly, so pay attention to the Website that Joe Morlan so capably maintains for us, for the details. First notice of these events will go out through a WFO news email so be sure you are on our email list. Current members are automatically on the list so please email Robbie Fischer at contact@westernfieldornithologists.org if your current email has changed.

Special Thanks

Isn't *Western Birds* a beautiful jewel when it comes out of the envelope? The people who work so hard to put it together are a varied and dedicated lot. The authors, the editors, the contributing photographers, the reviewers, and the donors make it possible. They do a tremendous job. On the part of WFO, we would especially like to thank our editorial, photographic and graphics editors and contributors for their amazing work, year in and year out:

Phil Unitt, Dan Gibson, Ken Able, Doug Faulkner, Thomas Gardali, Robert Gill, Paul E. Lehman, Ron LeValley, Kathy Molina, Dan Reinking, Virginia Johnson, Peter La Tourette, John Sterling and Lauren Harter. Hooray!