

WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS

WFO 2019 Conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico

21 – 25 August, 2019

Youth Scholarship Recipients



The WFO Student Scholarships are made possible by individual contributions from our membership, including a generous \$10,000 anonymous donation matched by WFO members, and by contributions from the Pasadena Audubon Society and other Audubon societies.

Will

Age: 11

Grade: 6th

From: Fort Collins, Colorado

About Me: I LOVE birds. I live in Colorado and I see some awesome birds. I can't wait to attend my first WFO conference! I know I am going to learn a lot.

Essay Excerpt: Birding is really fun and a big part of my life. I really like learning about birds, and there is so much to learn! My journey began right in my own backyard. One day we noticed there was a nest in one of my dad's old shoes. He had not worn them for years, and they were simply sitting there. The birds moved right in! My mom loves birds, so we immediately tried to figure out what type of bird this was. She also wanted to keep them safe. About 3 days later we noticed 5 eggs in the nest. I watched and identified that they were Bewick's Wrens. I used our copy of The Sibley Field Guide to identify them.



Cedric

Age: 17

Grade: 11th

From: Bellingham, Washington

About Me: When I was in second grade, Fanter Lane, a 2016 WFO Scholarship Recipient, took our class on a bird walk. "That experience opened my eyes to the diversity of bird(s) that lived in Bellingham and I wanted to learn more."

Essay Excerpt: After this first experience bird watching, I was hooked....I remember spending hours in my room flipping through my bird book looking at all the different species, where they lived and their characteristics....My parents like to travel to California, so depending on where we were going, I would study which birds were found in that general area so I could prepare to see them....My parents have never been into birding, but they always set aside time on these trips to stop at preserves, parks and other areas where I can look for birds....I would love to get involved the way Fanter was and help younger students learn about the birds here in the Pacific Northwest. Bird watching created new passions of mine like photography and stamp making and I hope it creates new passions for others.



Reed

Age: 16

Grade: 11th

From: Lakewood, Colorado

About Me: I enjoy helping with our local bird banding programs and Audubon summer camps and I'm currently in first place in our local county Big Year.

Essay Excerpt: Helping with bird banding has been an excellent way for me to get hands-on experience with birds and I'm looking forward to doing it again this spring with the Audubon Society of Greater Denver. I have also monitored nest boxes for Jeffco Open space for the past 3 years and have worked on Jane Goodall Roots and Shoots service-learning projects annually for the past 5 years. All of these projects contributed directly or indirectly, to a better urban environment for birds in Lakewood. Four of the projects received Lakewood Sustainability Awards.



Keith

Age: 16

Grade: 10th

From: Kodiak, Alaska

About Me: I was born, raised, and educated on Kodiak Island, and have been active in the Alaska birding community for several years. Current interests include mountaineering, philosophy and of course bird watching.

Essay Excerpt: My scientific curiosity in birds has manifested itself in my participation in the mist netting surveys sponsored by Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, and in the various bird counts the local Audubon Chapter in the community holds. The mist netting surveys are opportunities for citizen scientists to volunteer, and not only allowed me to contribute to a growing data base on nesting birds in Kodiak, but also gave me the opportunity to learn more about the morphology, and seasonal attributes of many of Kodiak's small passerines (particularly warblers like Wilson's, and Yellow).



Ezra

Age: 14

Grade: 8th

From: Portland, Oregon



About Me: Portland Waldorf School, which I attend, discourages use of screens like computers and phones. Because of this I spend a lot of time outside hiking, camping and, of course, birding. I also enjoy basketball and math.

Essay Excerpt: At my school, every 8th grader completes a project and writes a research paper on a subject that interests them. For my project I designed and completed a shorebird monitoring project in Oaks Bottom. I studied and wrote about How Citizen Science and Technology has Impacted Birding and the Birding Community, in my research paper. For the shorebird monitoring, I designed a protocol that included water level, temperature and predator disturbance along with the abundance of Least Sandpipers and Killdeer. The project began in mid-August and lasted for three months. I made graphs showing how the abundance of these birds changed in relation to water level and temperature.

Julia

Age: 16

Grade: 10th

From: Newport Beach, California

About Me: I love spending time in nature and have been to national parks all across the US. I have been a bird enthusiast for as long as I can remember!

Essay Excerpt: My favorite habitat for bird watching is anywhere in close proximity to water. Not only does water attract a plethora of species you wouldn't see otherwise, but it makes for a beautiful environment to be in as well. Since the Sea and Sage Audubon Society is located at the San Joaquin Wildlife Reserve, I am most accustomed to birding in Southern Californian wetland and chaparral. I enjoy birding most in the early morning before the harsh sunlight of mid-day drives many birds away, and dusk when nocturnal species begin to appear. In addition, I have visited birding hotspots around the US and enjoy collecting "Blue Goose" stamps at locations such as the Assateague Island Wildlife Refuge in Virginia, Klamath Basin Wildlife Refuge in Oregon, and Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge in Maryland.



Dorian

Age: 17

Grade: 11th

From: Tucson, Arizona



About Me: I am passionate about birds, nature, and photography; I love studying birds and sketching them. My goal is to be an international bird tour leader - to teach people how important birds are, as well as their habitats.

Essay Excerpt: I am in my second year of the Junior Docent program at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. I am an active member of the Tucson Audubon Society, and am currently volunteering at the Northwest Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Tucson. I love photography and sketching birds. I draw birds from all over the world, all different types, and my style is more illustrative than artistic. I use field guides as starting point, then add my own touches. I mainly use .05 graphite mechanical pencil and high polymer eraser. My photos and artwork have been sold at the Tucson Audubon Society gift shop. I have also won local and national awards for both.

John

Age: 17

Grade: 11th

From: Taylor, Arizona

About Me: I love birding, and aspire to become a Paleontologist, which is handy because birds are just little modern dinosaurs. I'm currently watching a Bald Eagle nest as a volunteer for the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Essay Excerpt: Being someone who loved exploring the outdoors, I was always aware of birds. I had just never paid close attention to them. That all changed when I read a book called The Big Year. My mom and I started off by just counting whatever we could find at our bird feeders and around our home in Navajo County, Arizona. I think our first year we counted less than a hundred species. Our second year, we broke the hundred-species mark. Our third year, we got around 160 species. This year, we're on 126 species and shooting for 200. I've really grown to love birding. For me, it's another excuse to be out exploring nature with my mom, dad, and sister. It's a treasure hunt that never ends. It's about the most peaceful and relaxing challenge I can think of, and it's even helped me towards the future.



Max

Age: 20

Grade: Undergraduate, Junior, University of Arizona

From: San Diego, California



About Me: I love nature and animals, and yes, I'm a bird nerd! I try never to leave the house without my camera in hand.

Essay Excerpt: I got a better pair of binoculars, joined San Diego Audubon, and started reading field guides to learn detailed information on bird species, characteristics and habitats. I started to explore the different San Diego ecosystems and enjoyed identifying the birds that lived there. This is when I began to develop an awareness of the environment that I didn't have before. To keep track of and learn more about bird species, I joined eBird, added a camera to my binoculars, and started photographing the birds I saw. By developing my photography skills, I began to feel that I was honoring the beauty of the species that I saw. Further, by spending time with the birding community, I was learning the importance of wildlife and habitats and developing a sense of our responsibility in taking care of them.