

**Western Field Ornithologists Board of Directors  
Board of Directors Conference Call  
Wednesday, December 7, 2016 1pm – 3:30pm**

Minutes prepared by Liga Auzins Wurster, *Rec. Sec'y*.

**Board Members present:** Tom Blackman, *Pres.*; Kurt Leuschner, *Vice Pres.*; Suzanne Carota, *Treas./Membership Sec'y*; Liga Auzins Wurster, *Rec. Sec'y*; Dave Quady, *Past Pres.*; Jon Dunn, John Garrett, Kimball Garrett, Daniel D. Gibson, Homer Hansen, Karen Havlena, Susan Kelly, Larry Modesitt, Frances Oliver, Diane Rose, Steve Rottenborn, Dave Shuford

**Board Member absent:** Phil Unitt, *Editor, Western Birds, WB*

**MINUTES**

**1:00pm** Meeting called to order, welcome, roll.

**1:05pm** **Minutes from 20 July 2016 Conference Call accepted unanimously via motion to approve by Kimball, seconded by Diane.**

Subsequent Board Conference Calls will be February 8, 2017 and May 3, 2017. Our Annual Board Meeting in Pueblo, CO will be on Thursday, August 17, 2017 from 11:00am to 4pm in the Marriott Hotel Board Room.

**1:08pm** **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Budget: Report: 2016 Year to Date Financials**

The financial reports have been sent to everyone. As of November 30<sup>th</sup> our total cash is \$238,000. Less our fund balances, we have \$147,000. As for income, we have \$19,000 profit which is great. Most of the variance to budget is driven by the Fortuna Conference which was significantly better than the budget. We had budgeted for 220 attendees and we had sent out the complete spreadsheet with income and expenses. We have two small amounts left to pay, so our profit for the Fortuna Conference should be right around \$19,000.

Suzanne starts with the 2016 forecast as it leads into the 2017 budget. For the 2016 forecast we are at about \$19,000 as of the end of November. December is a break even month so at the end of 2016 we will wind up with about \$20,000 for the year. The forecast is based on how it looks today, but it changes because we had a lot of renewals come through recently. Our goal was to break even for 2016, but we are going to break \$20,000 in 2016. We are also going to be favorable to budget because the projected \$10,000 for the Avifaunal Change (**AC**) publication did not occur in 2016. We are also favorable in smaller amounts in donations, scholarship income, and scholarship expenses as we had only 7 scholars instead of 8. The biggest place where we are unfavorable is membership income. The budget is \$40,000, but we are not going to come near that because membership actually brought in \$30,000. This offsets the other favorable areas, but Suzanne still thinks we are going to be favorable to budget by \$20,000.

**Budget for 2017:**

**Report:** You all have seen the 2017 budget. It looks as if we would have a loss of almost \$33,000 for the year. Much of that is due to the fact that there are no trips or workshops planned except for a

short 3-day trip to Coachella Valley which drives very little income, and that we are assuming the Pueblo Conference in August will break even. We are budgeting some significant fund expenses from the Publications Committee. What I would say about these 3 items: We can't expect to have trips and workshops every year. Sometimes it falls in the same year as we are going to have a break even conference. To the extent that the conference does better as it did this year, then we have some upside. The other thing is the fund expenses, i.e., the Publications Committee expenses and the Scholarship Committee expenses. We have significant balances in those funds to cover what we want to do plus more. We can look at this in a couple of ways. We can look at it in the sense that it is going to be a bad year or we can say we have \$240,000 cash in the bank and this is the year that we are going to spend some of it. It will show as a loss for the year but it is money that we have raised in previous years. The book sales for **AC**, the \$5900 in the budget, is 5% in 2016 and 25% in 2017. I would like to hear from the Publications Committee because they are the ones that are having **AC** and other publications coming out which would be out of the San Miguel Publications fund.

**1:21pm Membership:**

**Report:** We made some corrections and added an extra line to encourage donations to the renewal form. We also are asking each Board member to give out 3 gift memberships. We should try to get people from faraway places, i.e. South Dakota.

**Discussion:** If people really wanted to give a gift membership you could give as many as you want; it's in the minutes a few years back. We lose money on it. Suzanne monitors those accounts and we have a 50% or less renewal rate. When people go to the conferences and they are a member for just that one year, they really have no interest. If they are a member, they will be a member regardless of the cost. If there is only a 50% renewal rate, then that is better than nothing. Historically there are not that many gift memberships given by the total Board. When a Board member gives a gift membership to somebody, what do they hear from the Membership Chair? The e-mail says, "Welcome to WFO, you have received a gift membership for one-year, courtesy of (Board member's name) starting on this date." They need to know immediately how to access *Western Birds* (**WB**) online and if they would like to opt out of a hard copy. If one gives a gift membership at the end of the year and that recipient did not receive a hard copy of **WB** in the past, for 3 months, the whole idea of the gift is dropped through the holes. It is important that when we give a gift that this person be pointed straight to the website so they can see that this is **WB** right now. Suzanne will send the standard letter and then let, Cat, Karen, or Tom know and they will send a written note to the new member. We want to be open-ended and we are not just looking for members but real contributors to the organization. In these memberships we ask the person, 'Look, I am going to give you a gift membership but you have to promise me if you like the organization, that they would stick with the membership. There is no limit to gift memberships, with the caveat that we don't want to be wasting our money either.

Patron Membership, (what it means to be a Patron) is tabled until the next Board meeting.

Action Item: Suzanne will adjust the gift membership letter and Cat, Tom, or Karen will send a second note.

Action Item: Dave Q. will discuss what it means to be a Patron with the Finance Committee.

**1:33pm PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

***Western Birds* (WB)**

**Report:** *WB* 47(4) (see note distributed by Phil) is on its way to the printer and will be ready for mailing on the 12<sup>th</sup>. He has two manuscripts accepted for 48(1). His overall concern is getting more manuscripts to review. There are several manuscripts that are headed back to the authors after review so 48(1) should be filled. We have talked to a number of people over the last year with this concern and there are some people working on papers but how quickly they will be ready to submit them we don't know. 47(4) will be posted on the website, so we will check with Tim as to when.

**Action Item:** Everyone please encourage your colleagues to contribute to *WB*.

### 1:35pm **Avifaunal Change volume**

**Background:** A few conferences ago in San Diego, we held a symposium on Avifaunal Change in which we had a large number of people who presented papers. The idea was to publish a monograph of those collected papers. We also had a number of manuscripts submitted that were not presented at that conference. Currently we have 26 manuscripts submitted. Five of those are still in revision but we are pretty confident that by the end of January we will have the revised manuscripts ready for editing. We have a number of manuscripts that we could start copy editing. Phil Unitt is slated to do that. Given Phil's other obligations, he felt that it would take a few months to do the copy editing. Tim Brittain who does the layout design for *WB*, and who did the first layout for *Studies in Western Birds*, is going to do the layout and design for this volume too. So we are talking about publication in the middle of 2017. There is a wide range in papers, some of them cover topics for the entire West, and others range from AK to CO to CA. They are a good representation of things that are happening throughout the West.

**Report:** The overall budget we estimated to be about \$22,000. Layout and design is about \$5,000, which is basically Tim Brittain looking at all these manuscripts. Most of that time will be consumed in laying out tables as that is a large portion of this manuscript. Tim asked for \$4,000-\$5,000 so we put in the larger figure. Artwork is \$500. The copyediting is \$5,000, based on current rates. The printing cost for about 300 copies is about \$5,500. It is going to be laser printed and we plan to go with a printer in Santa Cruz. They have done work for Dave S. before and we have great confidence in them. Other items are postage, fulfillment and shipping. That's the budget. We estimated that at a minimum we could raise about \$12,000 from sales depending on the price. We thought \$30 was a good figure. There are some similar volumes that are charging \$120 for something like this. If we keep it high, we will get a lot less copies sold. In terms of fund raising Dave S. and Cat will make an effort. We have to decide who to fund raise from and what we might offer them in return, i.e., logos, mentioning an acknowledgment, etc. The cost estimate is based on 250 pages and it is going to be the same size as *Bird Species of Special Concern*, the first monograph volume. We added one or two manuscripts so we won't know for a while exactly how many pages and therefore what the cost it will be. If one looks at our budget, the projected revenue from book sales is \$6900. If we print 300 it is going to be a little bit higher. There will be a number of *gratis* copies, i.e., 2 to each paper and if we have it reviewed by other editors in other publications, we will have to send them copies. The authors will get a pdf of the paper they contributed.

**Discussion:** We should start fund raising now, but we need something tangible to sell. How hard would it be to get to get a cover and Table of Contents? The cover might take a little bit, and we were planning to get some art done but it hasn't happened yet. We have a word file of the abstracts for all these papers available now which is better than just a Table of Contents. We have the e-mail account and we generally send it out to folks for *WB* and our conferences, etc. We could actually send something out on that if we could put all our abstracts on that WFO page. People could refer

to that, they could be aware of this, and they could get excited about it. We could also have a PayPal button on that and it would go directly to the publication. So people could be aware of the publication not only for buying but also for donating to this project. There was some concern about listing all the abstracts. You could get a potential donors' attention with just the Table of Contents. We need to keep our membership better informed of things that we are working on. This information has been in our newsletter that goes out to members. An index would be great for corporate sponsors. We could take action if Dave S. could send us a Table of Contents and give it to Frances to broadcast out to the members with a paragraph talking about this effort and the timelines. We could put the abstracts on the WFO website and Francis can work with Tim on that.

In the context of potential future *Studies in Western Birds* we have the LeConte's Thrasher monograph coming up. Will we be fund raising for each separately or will we fund raise for both in the series, which have to be handled differently than doing one at a time. We should concentrate on **AC**. The cover is not a crucial thing. Potential donors will get excited about the topic and the papers that are in it. We can start right away and Cat does have a list of 50 potential donors.

**Action Item:** Dave will work work with Cat on contacting potential donors. The Newsletter will notify our members.

**2:00pm** ***Studies of Western Birds* LeConte's Thrasher monograph:**

**Report:** According to Ken Able, our Special Publications Editor, Jay Shepard's LeConte's Thrasher manuscript is out to the two reviewers and the assumption is that they will recommend publication for the manuscript and will return it to the author for revisions. This process will take one to three months. Copy editing will start as soon as possible. It might be ready to go to publication in 2017.

**Discussion:** We might be almost simultaneously publishing two monographs. We have to be careful how many times we ask people for support. It is almost better to ask for support for the series rather than each one individually.

**Action Item:** Dave S., Kimball and Frances should get together and decide which way they think is best to do this and write a paragraph that best describes this as a fund raiser and report back.

**Motion made by Jon that the the \$3500 currently allocated to the publication of *Birds of New Mexico*(*BNM*) be returned back to the Mike San Miguel Publications Fund, seconded by Dan and passed unanimously.**

Since the motion was approved we will see the line item **BNM** disappear from Suzanne's reports and the \$3500 in that fund will be moved to the Mike San Miguel Publications fund. Should we decide to do the **BNM**, the monies for that will come out of the Publications fund. There should be a draft of a short note that we waited for years for this and we now have an urgent project, **AC**, that we want to divert the funds to.

**Action Item:** Tom and Dan will compose a short note regarding the monies for **BNM**.

**2:12pm** **California State List:**

**Report:** This will be discussed in the January CBRC meeting. Possibly it may look like the old ten column lists with scientific names and all the symbols. Maybe that is something that Steve can bring up as an Action Item at the CBRC meeting, report back to the Board, and then jointly they can make a decision. If the cost goes up to \$2500 they can fund raise within the committee. We do not

want to get delayed into another year because we can't decide on the format. One thing we discussed was having something we could print off of the website which makes it easier and a lot more cost effective, particularly if you could change it more frequently. With the current rate of change in the order and that kind of thing, it can go out of print pretty quickly. We could have print on demand and only print 100 or so at a time. Some people can get the hard copy at the time but we should have it on the website so it could be updated. Steve agrees to doing both.

**Action Item: Steve will work with the CBRC on a California State List**

## **2:16pm ANNUAL CONFERENCES**

### **41<sup>st</sup> Annual WFO Conference, Fortuna CA, September 28 to October 2, 2016**

**Report:** A Summary by Dave Q. has been sent out to the Board and we will start our discussion with the review and summary of the conference. Tom would like to discuss field trips. Dave Q. hopes everyone read the survey results along with the comments. Those working on the Pueblo Conference should find it very helpful. The registration process got 88% excellent or good responses but that is understandable because no one likes putting out money. Things that impressed Dave Q. were significant advances made in the registration process, i.e. one person being able to register two people with one session on Regonline was a big improvement. The other thing that struck him is that no one complained about getting breakfasts especially since there were no surrounding restaurants. The next thing was the number of favorable comments about the number of youth that were present and what they were engaged in, including the two talks during the science sessions. Jon said it's the best conference he has ever been at and wanted to thank everybody involved. Susan took Regonline and went beyond anything we had ever done before and we congratulate her. Also to be congratulated is the rest of the registration team, Frances and Karen.

Having the grandson, Christopher Swarth attend and give the talk, was one of the poignant moments of the conference. Having Christopher involved with us was a real privilege. You also have to give Dave Q. credit for writing up the awards and the Harry Swarth speech. It's all on the website. Dave communicated to Christopher Swarth about the wonderful comments we received on his speech. He was pleased to hear that.

**Board goes into executive session.**

**Board returns from executive session.**

## **2:52pm 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual WFO Conference, Pueblo, Colorado, August 16 to August 20, 2017**

**Report:** The next Board meeting for CFO is Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> which is before our board meeting. They have asked Larry to attend so they can go over anything that we need to discuss. Larry has communicated with all the people on the various committees and he is really happy that everyone has agreed to be on board and is enthusiastically ready to accept what comes. CFO also discussed updating the partnership comments on the website which they will take care of and we also need to update the WFO website.

**Action Item: Update the CFO partnership comments on the WFO website**

Larry contacted Lisa Edwards who did the CFO T-shirts and gave that information to Kurt. We had 58 field trips in Fortuna. CFO has done it with less as they accept up to 20 people on a field trip.

Obviously with vans that number is limited to 12. If we need that many leaders it may be more difficult. 12 seems to be the maximum and we want to consider the quality and not the quantity for people on field trips. As far as field trip leaders go, we probably need 30 in total because you have 12 trips on each day and not everyone is going to do 4 trips. We haven't explored the van situation fully yet. It still has to be worked on and we might not be able to do vans in Pueblo. We may not need as many field trips, as we don't expect as many people as in a CA conference. Jon would be willing to go 15 or 16 if you have two leaders. 20 is too many but we might go above 12. CFO has had two leaders and they divide the group in two. Bill Kaempfer will be the Field Trip Chairman. He has done the field trip leading for CFO for about 4 years. Starting in January we basically have 3 months to put the conference together because we have to start publicizing it and then go live with Regonline, sometime around April; by March 19<sup>th</sup> the Board will test this edition of Regonline.

Larry will put something out to the CFO Board to ask about what bird to choose for the T-shirt, Lark Bunting is the state bird and one that is unfamiliar to many people. Another bird could be the American three-toed woodpecker.

Next is the reception sponsorship. Forrest and Rockjumpers seems to be willing to do another sponsorship so we will chat with them as to chipping in some funds for the reception. They chipped in \$1,000 for the Fortuna conference. They were very happy to have been involved and they are looking for further involvement in Pueblo.

**Youth Scholarship and Scope of Recipients Report:** This past year we had expanded the age limit on a 1-year experimental basis to age 21. So we need to decide on the number of youth scholarships, which last year was 8, and the age range, whether we want to go back to the 12 -18 range and not have the older youth involved.

**Discussion:** John Garrett prefers older youth, primarily because they are closer in age where they will be going to college and perhaps doing ornithological fieldwork. The younger youth less so. A lot of people don't discover their interest in birds until a bit later. He would continue to support older students up to 21years of age. We had one very well qualified applicant in the 18-21 category. Perhaps for people 18-21 we should offer them something like a reduced rate. At that age they should be responsible. Maybe they can work the registration desk, possibly helping on a field trip, i.e., put them in some position of responsibility and that they are contributing in some reasonable way as part of the compensation for the reduced rate, besides it may interest them in getting involved with WFO. It gives them a chance to find out what WFO is all about. We can discuss this further at the next Board meeting.

**Action Item:** Homer will discuss with Larry about appropriate situations for older scholars.

Last year we set up in the older category for 1 male a 1 female, but we only had 1 applicant in the older group so we only had 7 scholarships but we are going to budget for 8 for 2017. We will have a better chance at getting applicants for the older group this year, so we will make no changes in the upcoming year for the Youth Scholarships.

### 3:13pm 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference 2018

We looked at Ventura and talked about Riverside. We have a lot of things going for Venture, i.e., boat trips, (Island Scrub Jay) and regular pelagics, which can accommodate a large group of people which helps out a lot. That is also one of the reasons San Diego was so successful as we had 50 people on the boat. Ventura itself has had many Fish and Wildlife conferences and other naturalist conferences. Tom contacted the Conference/Visitors office in Ventura and gave them our

specs and got back two responses, i.e. Crown Royal and the Ventura Beach Marriott which is your typical large hotel with ballroom. They gave Tom some rough figures which seem high, i.e., rooms are \$150, but it is CA. Pueblo started at \$150 too. If we get Ventura down to \$125 we would be lucky. The next thing we need to do is ask someone to Chair the conference and do some legwork up in Ventura and meet with people in these facilities and start looking around. Another advantage of this site is getting up in the Condor Country with the help of some Fish and Wildlife people who have access to special areas. Ventura looks very favorable.

**Discussion:** For field trip leaders we will have to draw from Santa Barbara and Los Angeles and WFO, which is not a problem as Ventura itself would not have the capacity. The WFVZ which is within 10 miles, not only is an instructive place for a field trip but also may be involved in other ways as well. Kimball volunteers to help finding field trip leaders. Dave Perekstra is a good boat trip leader and even has potential to be the Field Trip Coordinator. The other issue involves the gun club in Port Hueneme, where Larry Sansone has an in and he should be approached whether he is willing to at least talk to the club about a field trip that would be very well monitored. It is one of the best shorebird habitats in CA if not the West Coast. The timing of this is very important because of the duck hunters, if we do get access. It might even influence the date of the conference. The logical time to consider is mid-September. Tom is looking for someone to Chair this event. He is planning on driving up there in mid-January and meet with these facilities and coming back to the Board in the February meeting with a proposal on the venue. If anyone wants to join him, let him know. Jon, Kimball and Frances volunteer to accompany Tom. The Ventura Beach Marriott in Ventura hosted the Channel Islands Symposium which was pretty big about two months ago. The Island Scrub Jay might be a good candidate for the T-shirt design.

### 3:21pm **Institute for Bird Populations (IBP) Intern**

**Report:** Homer has been in communication with Rodney Siegel, the Executive Director, about how we envision setting up this internship. Basically, they are appreciative of our efforts and the idea. This internship and associated monies would be solely directed to past or present WFO scholarship recipients. It would assist with making sure that IBP knows who the past awardees were. From here, IBP would manage the rest of it from the selection process all the way through. As a partner, Homer discussed having recognition on any publication that might come out of the research and also continue as in Fortuna-- the youth working on the papers and giving a presentation at the following conference or maybe the next one after that. That's the concept on how that would be handled. Where we go from here is that it was tabled for discussion and then needs final approval by the Board. They are ready to start with the selection process if we have a candidate. He will be contacting past scholarship recipients in the next few days about this opportunity so they can be involved if they would like to. The amount of the internship at IBP would be \$1500.

**DISCUSSION:** It is not a scholarship. This is \$1500 towards an internship at IBP to be managed by them. It is a one-year effort. With that \$1500 they would fund a position that is involved with the the research at IBP. The intern would have to be 18 years old and be a WFO past scholar. This is a summer internship; the length depends on the specific project which could vary from 6 weeks to 3 months. This money comes out of the scholarship fund. WFO would like to see the results of this at the end of their internship in something like a written report. They would tell us what they did, what they learned and who they worked with so we can put it out in the Newsletter and the website. If the publication went to **WB** that would be a great contribution as well.

**Motion made by Diane that we support a scholar from our past or present scholars to the \$1500. IBP position for the Summer of 2017, seconded by Jon and passed unanimously.**

**3:32pm Field Trips:**

**Report:** Year 2016 was a good year for us. For 2017 we don't have much lined up. We are going to do another Sierra Trip in 2018. Cuba is getting pushed off to 2018 as well. We do have a Coachella Valley trip that we are trying to put together for 2017. Kurt is open to ideas and if anyone wants to lead a trip just let me know, but otherwise that is it for 2017.

**Discussion:** There are other folks who can do trips, thereby advocating which fund the money goes to. We should figure out how many trips we need to do on a sustaining basis to satisfy the budget. Then we have to figure people who are competent and can lead trips. To say we are going to lose \$32,000 next year is not the intent of the budget. The budget is to look at our expenses but we have no idea what the budget will contain next year. Publications has \$14,000. We should think about the budget in a different way; it's just a planning document of losses and gains, especially right now. So is there a possibility that we could cobble together a field trip for 2017? 2016 was a good year for field trips. 2017 is not here yet and we are hoping we can put together a trip or two. 2018 looks to be a big year for field trips. Maybe it's okay to have a lean year in between.

How about weekend workshops? Kurt already teaches 3-4 weekends a year at Zzyzx where birds are the focus, to which we could invite WFO members who are willing to drive out there from LA and then back for \$100/person. We could make a few hundred each weekend at least. It all helps.

**Action Item:** Kurt will work with Suzanne and see if they can come up with something.

Another possibility is to discuss this with James Maley and John McCormack at the Moore Lab at Occidental College for a workshop/field trip on museum collections, their utility, and field ornithology and maybe do a progressive trip from the Natural History Museum. Maybe they could talk about the genetic work they are doing too. That could give people a nice full day of immersion into museums. This same thing could be done at other places that is within our region as well. We could try it and see how it works. It doesn't need a huge amount of planning in advance.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**3:41pm** In 2015 we had an order to donate \$500 to WFVZ. We are going to address this issue every year. It was suggested that we contribute \$250 this year. If we are going to have a conference in Ventura, it would be nice to coordinate a visit to the WFVZ. We could even plan the reception there. Before we approve the budget, realize that there is another \$250 in there for the WFVZ. If we are going to meet in Ventura in 2018 and we are going to lean heavily of the WFVZ, this is not the to not give them a contribution anymore. Let's keep the \$250 in the budget.

**APPROVAL OF 2017 BUDGET:** Does everyone understand the budget is based on a break even conference, that we have 8 scholars, \$14,000 for **AC**, \$2,000 for the LeConte's Thrasher monograph, and something to start the CA Bird Checklist? Suzanne reminds everyone what they are approving.

**3:42pm** **Jon moves to accept the 2017 budget and Dan seconds the motion to approve the 2017 budget which passes unanimously.**

**3:46pm** **Central Valley Symposium:**

**Report:** Jon would like to explore the possibility of having a formal relationship with Central Valley Bird Club(CVBC). There is a lot that the two organizations share in common including having a peer reviewed journal. A number of their Board members have been officers of WFO. They have a huge conference every November. We can promote each other's organizations. There are no specifics on how this is going to unfold. They are going to have a meeting discussing the same general topic but I think it is a win-win for both organizations. We wouldn't share on conferences unless we were to have one in the Central Valley and maybe they would want to be a junior partner. It would be good for us and possibly good for them as well. Francis talked to a number of CVBC Board members including David Yee, about it. We will have a better idea after January after we officially have a meeting and we can present it to the CVBC Board as well. It is something we are having a discussion about. Jon proposed it. It is in its beginning stages so he wanted see if WFO had the same interest as CVBC did. The only question Francis had to present to the WFO Board is, "Can you think of any negatives?" CVBC is not asking for financial support nor are they asking for anything other than recognition right now as they are pretty much a standalone entity but so many of WFO members come and support CVBC as well as they come to support WFO. We should always be thinking of like-minded organizations that would be a plus for both entities to join. If any of you have comments, please direct them to Jon and Francis so they can at least address any comments you might have. It would be nice to know what the Board is thinking. Kurt could see us partnering with CVBC on a conference in 2020 so this is a good time to do this.

Larry thanks WFO for its contribution to the **Colorado Breeding Bird Atlas(COBBA)**. They had a coming out party last week. Lynn Wickersham made sure that WFO was given credit for its contribution of \$1,000. It's a beautiful book. Thanks everybody for your support.

**3:53pm**    **Motion to adjourn made by Jon, seconded by Kimball, and passed unanimously.**