

**Western Field Ornithologists Board of Directors**  
**Board of Directors Conference Call**  
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Draft 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, Diane Rose, Steve Rottenborn, Dave Shuford

**Guests:** Phil Unitt, *Editor, Western Birds*, **WB** Catherine Waters, *Co-Chair, Publications Committee*

**Board Member absent:** Frances Oliver

**MINUTES**

**1:02pm** Meeting called to order, welcome, roll.

**Minutes from 7 December 2016 Conference Call accepted unanimously via motion to approve by Jon, seconded by Diane.**

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

**1:05pm** **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Budget Report:**

The financial reports have been sent to everyone. As of December 31, 2015 total cash in checking and savings was \$219,452. Total revenue as of December 31, 2016 was \$142,296 and expenses were \$120,207. This results in profitability of \$22,089 bringing the total cash in checking and savings by year end to \$241,541. The income was primarily due to membership income of \$32,000; Fortuna Conference of \$22,000; trips \$17,000; and various donations totaling \$7,000. All of this was offset by **WB** publication of \$35,000; operating expenses of \$15,000 and various donations and awards of \$6,000. Net income was favorable to budget by \$22,000.

Total fund balances included in the \$241,541: \$93,442, Publication Fund balance: \$74,918 (increase of \$17K in 2016); Scholarship Fund balance: \$18,524 (increase of \$4K in 2016). Birds of New Mexico Fund has been incorporated into the Publications Fund.

Variance to Budget: Net income was favorable to budget by \$22K. The major budget variances were: Fortuna conference profit (\$13K favorable), Publications project delays (\$10K favorable) offset by unfavorable membership revenue (\$8K).

A report was sent out that detailed and analyzed income "profitability" of our conferences over the past four years and projecting into this year's conference. This was combined into a year-end report.

**Membership:** We currently have 1,177 domestic members, which is a net decrease of approximately 13 since 12/31/15. We have 5 patrons and 204 life members. We mail 25 issues of **Western Birds** to foreign countries, 5 are exchanges for other scientific journals.

We are equal to last year at this time in non-renewals based on a membership report that Suzanne ran. At this time there are 303 non-renewals versus 300 non-renewals the year before. Suzanne has recently sent out snail notices to the currently non-renewing members to let them know their subscription of **WB** was at an end. As previously discussed in the September board meeting, Suzanne will cut off those non-renewing members from the courtesy copy of the **WB** issue 1 (which they were formerly sent), who have not renewed by then.

**Action Item:** Cat will put the membership renewals issue prominently in her Newsletter.

**Finance Committee Recommendations for Science Presenters:** In Fortuna at our annual Board of Directors Meeting, a majority of the Board approved a motion to charge science session presenters less than the current registration schedule, the exact amount yet to be decided. After discussion in Committee, a majority favored *not* establishing a reduced registration fee for science session presenters. Further discussion ensued and it was decided to *not* give discounts to paper presenters at our conferences.

**Motion: Made by Kimball, seconded and passed unanimously that we do not reduce registration for science session presenters.**

**Fundraising for upcoming two monographs:** The Committee adopted two recommendations: 1) to begin a fundraising effort to support WFO's special publications and monographs edited by Ken Able; 2) to proceed with publication of *Avifaunal Change (AC)* volume in an orderly manner, without tying this endeavor to the pace of fundraising results. The Committee recommends establishing an *ad hoc* fund-raising subcommittee co-chaired by Karen Havlena (from the Finance Committee) and Cat Waters (from the Publications Committee). Others on the subcommittee are Suzanne Carota, Dave Shuford, and Liga Auzins Wurster. The subcommittee will develop recommendations regarding setting a specific fund-raising target and the duration of this campaign. The campaign will have at least two arms: a general appeal to the WFO membership, and targeted approaches to agencies, businesses and other entities. Significant donations will be recognized within the publications as their schedules permit. A fund-raising proposal submitted by Cat Waters, co-chair of the WFO Publications Committee, was acknowledged, which she had sent out in advance. The Board tacitly agreed to allow the project to go forward.

**Patron Level of Membership:** The current charge for what it costs to become a Patron of WFO depends on whether the individual is a regular member or a life member. A small minority of the Committee feel that "Patron" should *not* be viewed as a membership category, but rather as something apart, more similar to being a "super-donor." In that case, the amount we charge to become a Patron would not depend upon the applicant's current membership level. However, a majority of the Committee view "Patron" as a separate membership level and recommend that the cost to become a Patron be set at twice the cost of becoming a life member. Individuals who 'upgrade' from regular membership status to Patron would also receive the benefits of the life membership, e.g., **WB** subscription and same early access to conference and field trip registration that life members enjoy. Individuals who 'upgrade' from life membership to Patron would receive no added benefits. The Committee did not discuss what other benefits we might provide to Patrons. The Committee also suggested that the *ad hoc* fund-raising subcommittee consider a general appeal to members to become Patrons.

**Discussion:** Many opinions and commentaries varied widely regarding things like the cost of being a Patron, what will WFO “give” them, if anything, etc. This was tabled for further discussion.

**2:04pm PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

***Western Birds (WB)***

**Report:** **WB** 48(1) has six manuscripts, including a featured photo article accepted, plus one book review. Of these, 2 are typeset, and 1 plus the book review have been sent for typesetting. Copy editing is underway on the 3 remaining manuscripts. For 48(2), one manuscript has been accepted. There are 5 manuscripts currently in review. Four manuscripts have been returned to the author for revision within the past year; we are still waiting on the authors’ response to the review. Four manuscripts have been submitted so far in 2017 (one of these was withdrawn by the authors). The total number of manuscripts submitted in 2016 was 28, of which four were rejected. The number submitted is 80% of the average of the number in the preceding years: 2012 - 30; 2013 – 34; 2014 – 40; 2015 – 36 and 2016 -28. Thus we need to continue to talk **WB** up among prospective contributors. The current newsletter will have another section encouraging people to publish their research.

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

**2:15pm Avifaunal Change (AC) 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.

**Report:** Cat sent out in advance to this meeting the budget for **AC** and the agreed to framework for a 3-point approach for fund-raising for the Monograph Series, *Studies of Western Birds* including **AC**.

It was made clear that the LeConte’s Thrasher monograph would wait until after **AC** is in press and being distributed. A projected date for starting the process to publish it would be late Fall of 2017 or possible early 2018. The book has been reviewed but will still need copy editing, layout and design. We have a “packet” of information that we can give to potential donors for the **AC** volume that describes the book, has abstracts, and a preliminary table of contents. A timeline was discussed for copy editing, which should put the volume in the hands of Phil Unitt and then Tim Bittain for formatting and page design. The **AC** volume will be in full color and the budget is set at this time.

**2:25pm California State List:**

**Report:** Suzanne stated that there is a demand for an official, hard copy state list. She would not mind keeping copies and mailing them out, as she continues to get requests constantly for a hard copy official list. She suggested a print run of 300. Cat pointed out that for a base price of \$3.88 per copy, (paid for by the entity ordering it), Amazon will print the list as a booklet plus fulfill it too.

Steve reminds everyone that the CBRC maintains a current list of accepted birds on their website, [californiabirds.org](http://californiabirds.org) that can be downloaded.

**Motion: Made by Cat, seconded by Dan and passes unanimously to print a new California State Checklist and explore different avenues that can be used to do this.**

**2:41pm ANNUAL CONFERENCES**

**42<sup>nd</sup> Annual WFO Conference, Pueblo, Colorado, August 16 to August 20, 2017**

**Report:** Plans for the 42<sup>nd</sup> WFO Conference in Pueblo, CO are moving along on schedule. The Board should make their reservations as soon as possible as rooms at the special rate are limited.

The keynote speaker will be Lauryn Benedict on the topic of bird song. There are 5 to 6 workshops ready to go. The registration will go online near the end of March. Steve has scheduled an e-mail blast for a call for papers for the science sessions. Kurt is in charge of the t-shirt which is a lark bunting in flight. Forrest Roland and Rockjumpers will assist on various levels at the conference.

**3:08pm 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference 2018, Ventura, CA**

Tom has investigated arrangements with potential hotels in Ventura, Ca, for 2018. He has identified a hotel, the Ventura Beach Marriott, that has the amenities that we require. Tom, Karen and Frances have looked at and vetted the facilities. Larry will call a meeting of the conference committee for fine tuning the field trips, etc. Dave Perekstra has been asked to organize the field trips for the conference. Kimball will contact the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology regarding a possible reception at their facility. A trip to Santa Cruz Island for the Island Scrub Jay is in the plans. The t-shirt may be the Island Scrub Jay possibly by John Schmitt.

**3:15pm Alaska Conference 2019:**

**Report:** The Alaska 2019 Conference is off the table as per Dan Gibson and Bob Gill. This site does not allow us the opportunities necessary to conduct a proper and profitable conference at this time.

**3:20pm Scholarship Committee:**

**Report:** Homer updated the Board on the recent scholarship activities. Hopefully he will have the recipients by April 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Motion made by Jon, seconded by Karen, and passed by a 9 to 4 vote by the Board that youth scholarship recipients pay a \$10.00 membership fee upon submitting their application.**  
(Not all members were present.)

**3:30pm Institute for Bird Populations (IBP) Intern**

Homer gave an updated report on the status of the IBP intern.

**3:41pm Field Trips:**

**Report: 2017:** Kurt reported on a possible "museum day" where the WFO would sponsor a trip to various museums, i.e., the Moore Laboratory at Occidental College, for a workshop/field trip on museum collections sometime in 2017. A field trip led by Jon and Kurt to the Coachella Valley is scheduled for September 21-24, 2017.

**2018:** There may be a Rosy Finch trip to New Mexico possibly involving Raymond VanBuskirk. A possible trip to the Modoc Plateau with Dave Q. and Jon is being considered. Also a trip to Cuba November 2018 with Jon and Kurt is in the works.

**3:46pm Other Business:**

**Nominating Committee:** There were two candidates beside Ken Able that were brought up in the discussion, John Harris and Wendy Bears, for possible nominations.

**Awards Committee:** Tabled until next Board meeting.

**Motion made by Kimball, seconded by Diane and passed unanimously, that there would be no field trip lottery implemented when signing up for field trips.**

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