

## WFO AUTUMN 2008 NEWSLETTER & 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting Update

We are hoping to see many of you in San Mateo Oct. 9 – 12 for Western Field Ornithologist's 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting. You may register for the meeting at the last minute by showing up at the San Mateo Marriott 1770 South Amphlett Blvd. A wonderful conference has been planned. Robbie Fischer and Joe Morlan (California), our on site planners, plus Debbie VanDooremolen (Nevada), Ed Pandolfino (California) and Jay Withgott (Oregon) have put together a wonderful mixture of science, field skills workshops, and field trips. A preliminary schedule, abstracts, bios of meeting faculty and a description of activities are posted on the website, [www.westernfieldornithologists.org](http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org). Highlights of the meeting will include:

- A **keynote address by Dr. Carla Cicero** describing the modern day transects of the historic work of Grinnell will highlight our annual dinner Saturday, October 11.
- **The kick-off reception** for the first book in WFO's monograph series, **Bird Species of Special Concern**, will be held Friday, October 10. Come and meet the people who made this book possible!
- **A book signing** by many of the West's most noted authors on subjects relating to birds will be held during Friday's reception. This is a great opportunity to have your book(s) signed by Elisabeth Ammon (**Atlas of the Birds of Nevada**), Graham Chisholm (**Atlas of the Birds of Nevada**), Jon Dunn (**National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, Birding Essentials, Warblers**), Richard Erickson (**Rare Birds of California, Status and Distribution of the Birds of the Baja Peninsula**), Ted Floyd (**Atlas of the Birds of Nevada, Smithsonian Field Guide to the Birds of North America**), Kimball Garrett (**Warblers**), Daniel Gibson (**Birds of the Aleutian Islands**), Steve Howell (**Gulls of the Americas, A Guide to the Birds of Mexico**), Alvaro Jaramillo (**Birds of Chile**), John Muir Laws (**The Laws Field Guide to the Sierra Nevada**), Peter Pyle (**Identification Guide to the Birds of North America, Part II**), Dave Shuford (**Bird Species of Special Concern**), Philip Unitt (**Birds of the Salton Sea, San Diego Bird Atlas**).
- **A silent auction** featuring donated books will be held during the reception and book signing on Friday, October 10. You may donate a book to this auction by turning it in at the registration desk by 5 p.m. Friday, October 10. Thank you to each of the donors who thought to give us a book to auction!
- **Expert visual and sound identification panels** will be held Friday evening and Saturday afternoon. Moderated by Ed Harper (California) for the visual portion and Nathan Pieplow (Colorado) for the sounds, these panels are popular, educational and lots of fun. Plan to be there.
- **Optics, books, and more** will be exhibited and available at this meeting thanks to Bruce Webb (California) of Swarovski Optik who volunteered to work on the meeting committee plus plan the exhibits. Thank you, Bruce!
- **The Annual Meeting Election** will be held on October 11. There are a number of items the membership will be voting on, including election of president and vice president (one year terms) and recording secretary and treasurer (one year terms). Candidates are Catherine Waters, California, president; Daniel Gibson, Alaska, vice president; Robbie Fischer, treasurer; Jean Brandt, recording secretary. There will also be a vote on whether to create a membership directory specifically for WFO members only (with the option of having members decline to include their contact information); a by-laws change deleting wording from the WFO By-Laws; and other WFO business as required.
- **Birding Magazine. ABA, & WFO!!!** The September/October issue of Birding magazine, the excellent publication of the American Birding Association, features seven different members of Western Field Ornithologists! Especially exciting will be a fourteen page article featuring the research of Bob Gill of the USGS and the WFO Board. One can only hope Bob or one of his Marbled Godwits are the featured centerfold. If you are an ABA member, you receive Birding as a benefit of membership. If you want to keep track of Bob's amazing long distance avian migrant research and the rest of the WFO gang, this issue is for you. For those of you attending the WFO meeting in San Mateo, the ABA has provided each meeting registrant with a copy of this issue. Thank you, ABA!

### Western Field Ornithologists Update

**Sage Brush Summit.** In August, Dave Krueper (New Mexico), WFO President, and Cat Waters (California), WFO VP, met in Albuquerque to discuss the transition between WFO's changes in leadership. One thing obvious to both were the possibilities for a larger role for the past-president. Who better to continue projects than the person who has generously donated their time to making an organization run as well as WFO has these past years? And, who better to take on special projects than a vice president who will then get to see the fruition of their planning when they move into the presidency? The entire organization should benefit from this model of continuity. That's the theory, at least. Dave, Cat and Dan look forward to the practice.

**Saying good-bye.** When WFO decided to rotate their board component and presidency by using term limits, it opened us up to many possibilities. It also created these moments when we say good-bye to some amazing people who will rotate off the board. Kimball Garrett's wit, incisive thinking, and generosity of spirit are an important part of Western Field Ornithologists. Robert Gill, our hockey playing wordsmith Alaskan frontier ornithologist, who delights us yearly with his amazing research, will be rotating off the board, too. And, Dave Krueper, our most diplomatic and engaged leader, will

step down as WFO's president. I know that all of us look forward to seeing each of these men rotate back onto the board in the near future. At this time, though, WFO owes these wonderful men a debt of gratitude for their service to WFO. Their presence on our board greatly enhanced our organization. They will be missed.

**Saying hello.** The ranks of WFO grew in the last quarter with the addition of two new members. Joining WFO on his father's shirrtails, Andrew Cooper will forever change the face of Cooper Biological. Now three months old Andrew can be seen in his father's, Dan's, company keeping track of migrants and vagrants as they arrive in L. A. Joining Andrew in expanding WFO's membership horizon is Dylan Hamilton. Dylan, at three weeks of age, is the youngest member of WFO and the most recent addition to the Robb Hamilton Clan. Dylan and older brother Grant ensure that Robb will never again go wanting for a field partner.

## **Publications**

**Bird Species of Special Concern** and **Rare Birds of California**, WFO's two recent publications, are available for purchase through the WFO website, [www.westernfieldornithologists.org](http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org).

If you want a preview of **Rare Birds**, Condor, the flagship journal of the Cooper Ornithological Society [www.cooper.org](http://www.cooper.org), recently published a review of **RB** by Alexander Koonce that offers a potential purchaser numerous reasons to buy a big, thick book full of excellent references, facts, and wonderful photographs documenting birds rare to California.

And, if you are a California or bordering states field ornithologist, biological consultant, avian surveyor, assessor of land for conservation usages, or planner **Bird Species of Special Concern** is an essential tool and should be sitting front and center on your desk. This book was underwritten by the California Department of Fish and Game, WFO, and generous consulting companies, organizations, and individuals. Literally hundreds of volunteers contributed hours to it, too.

Alan Contreras (Oregon), Western Birds' book review editor, has completed a memoir of his career in the field. It is being published by the University of Oregon Press in early 2009. Ordering information will be on the WFO website.

**Birds of Wyoming** update. Doug Faulkner (Colorado), Western Birds Associate Editor, announces that *Birds of Wyoming* is finished. The book is in the final stages of preparation for publication and we can expect it sometime in the autumn of 2009. We'll keep you posted as publication nears.

Ted Floyd's (Colorado) photographic field and sound guide – **Smithsonian Guide to the Birds of North America** – is now available. The book comes with 600 birds calls/songs that are downloadable to your Ipod. What a deal.

Peter Pyle (California) announces his new book **Identification Guide to the Birds of North America** is available.

**Egg and Nest**, a book by Linnea Hall of the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology is now available at [www.wfvz.org](http://www.wfvz.org). The book details the Foundations extensive western egg and nest collection.

## **Field Skills/Opportunities**

A few of the current offerings around the west to enhance your field skills, in no particular order, are listed here:

**Wanted! Copies of your field notes.** In Los Angeles County, Daniel Cooper and Kimball Garrett are requesting that you report your bird sightings in the County for their ambitious project to profile the species of special concern. If you keep a bird list or journal of your outings/sightings consider copying your notebooks and sharing your data for the common good. A complete list of what Dan and Kimball need from you plus what they are hoping to do with this information; what they are hoping to accomplish with it; and why you should be involved can be found at <http://cooperecological.com/LACoReporting.htm>. This is a wonderful chance to have your record keeping count.

**Workshops.** Many organizations continue to educate field ornithologists and birders by sponsoring excellent skills enhancing workshops. In Orange Co., Calif. an introduction to the birds of southern California begins in November 2008. In Jan. 2009 a bird sounds ID course taught by Sylvia Gallagher will begin. These workshops meet weekly. Plus, winter 2009 brings two Raptor ID weekends with Bill Clark. Beginning, intermediate, and advanced classroom and field courses will be offered. See [www.seaandsageaudubon.org](http://www.seaandsageaudubon.org) or call 949-261-7963 for details. Portland Audubon is offering Albatrosses of the North Pacific Ocean Oct. 17 – 19. Contact [www.audubonportland.org](http://www.audubonportland.org) or Steve Engel, [tracktiles@gmail.com](mailto:tracktiles@gmail.com) for more information.

**Colorado night migration.** In spring of 2009 Ted Floyd will be conducting a field trip/field workshop for members of WFO and CFO in listening for the sounds of night migration. This will be a single evening limited to 8 people and take place late at night in a location of Ted's choosing in or near Boulder, Colorado. Date to be announced. Send an email of interest to [tfloyd@aba.org](mailto:tfloyd@aba.org) and be patient about a reply.

**In the works** are WFO sponsored field skills courses for 2009. October 2009 will be feather identification in the field with John Schmitt held in Kern County, Calif. Night migration, skin preparation, journal keeping and photographic documentation are being planned, too. These will be field courses held throughout the west so keep an eye on the website, [www.westernfieldornithologists.org](http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org) for dates and descriptions.

*This newsletter is compiled for the benefit of WFO members. [Perceived] omissions and errors are to be ignored. Comments/ potential inclusions for future newsletters should go to [contact@westernfieldornithologists.org](mailto:contact@westernfieldornithologists.org). Thank you, Editor*