

Western Field Ornithologists Newsletter for Spring 2008

The Past: 32nd Annual Meeting. September 2007 found us in southern Nevada with the birds of the Mojave Desert, Sky Islands, and borderlands of the Great Basin. It was a wonderful meeting. Red Rock Audubon hosted us with tremendous hospitality, organization, and generosity of spirit, and we left with a real appreciation for what the Las Vegas/Henderson area of Nevada has to offer (and with a terrific new board member from the region). Read all about the meeting in Jay Withgott's summary in *Western Birds* 38:4 and on our upcoming website.

The Present: WFO publishes books. In September 2007 WFO officially became a publisher with the release of the long-anticipated *Rare Birds of California*, edited by Robb Hamilton, Michael Patten, and Richard Erickson. It has been wonderfully reviewed (see the Paul Hess book review in *Birding* 40:2 and the David Fix review in *Western Birds* 39:1). And this month, March 2008, WFO published the first volume in our new *Studies of Western Birds* monograph series: *California Bird Species of Special Concern*. This volume is edited by W. David Shuford and Thomas Gardali and authored by 48 experts. This 450-page soft-bound volume is a must-have reference on the status of California's declining and vulnerable bird species, and pinpoints the most pressing threats they face. Major support for the production and printing of this book was generously provided by the California Department of Fish and Game, Audubon California, BonTerra Consulting, EDAW, H.T. Harvey & Associates, Jones & Stokes, LSA Associates, The Nature Conservancy, PRBO Conservation Science, SWCA Environmental Consultants, and Western Field Ornithologists. Funding and donations from these and other sources have substantially lowered the cost of the book. Order both books now by calling Allen Press at 800-627-0326 or online at <http://bookstore.allenmm.com>.

The Future: WFO travels to the San Francisco Bay Area. Western Field Ornithologists will hold its 33rd Annual Meeting this fall in San Mateo, California, at the San Mateo Marriott, October 9–12, 2008. An exciting four-day program is in the final planning stages. Dr. Carla Cicero of U.C. Berkeley will give the keynote address, *The Grinnell Resurvey Project: A Century of Change in California*. Besides Dr. Cicero's address, WFO will also have two solid afternoons of scientific presentations, experts' sound and slide identification panels with Joe Morlan and Nathan Pieplow, workshops to enhance field skills, and various social events. Our 33rd annual meeting will also offer full-day and half-day field trips as well as two pelagic trips. Workshops will include use of GPS devices for field work and birding, an ecological transect of the San Mateo peninsula with Alvaro Jaramillo, a hands-on demonstration of the uses for and growing power and sophistication of eBird with Brian Sullivan, field sketching with John Muir Laws, and an overview of the ambitious Bay Area salt marsh restoration project. See *Western Birds* 39:1 for the call for papers and more announcement details. Now is not too soon to reserve your room at the San Mateo Marriott, <http://www.sanmateomarriott.com>. Use the code, WFO, when making your reservations by phone. The hotel is located close to BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) and San Francisco International Airport. There are regularly scheduled free pick up and drop off times between the airport and the hotel. Registration for the conference will begin June 15.

On the road with WFO: WFO is currently working on a number of tour possibilities for 2009, including an opportunity to see areas of northwestern Nevada that are seldom accessible to the bird-interested public. A trip to Ecuador's refuges for neotropical migrant and endemic species is in the preliminary stages. Look for details in the next newsletter. If these sound interesting to you, or if you'd like to make a suggestion, contact Tom Ryan, wtswift@aol.com.

On the road, continued We are hoping that our membership will be interested in western regional field trips led by board members and friends of WFO. We've been trying to formulate a yearly series throughout the West and are looking for someone to coordinate it. Let us know if you are interested in participating by sending an email to Cat Waters: catwaters@verizon.net.

Member and Board News:

WFO welcomes. Our youngest and newest member, Michele Gabriella Ryan, joined us in December courtesy of her parents, WFO board member Tom Ryan and his lovely wife Yelitza Ryan. Michele can already be seen in the field. Only time will tell if she, too, sets her sights on swifts.

Publications. The *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Nevada* authored by Ted Floyd, Graham Chisholm, Chris Elphick, Kevin Mack, Bob Elston, Elisabeth Ammon, and John Boone continues to garner accolades from reviewers. It is a beautiful book and the most readable of atlases. Curious? See the review in the current issue of *Western Birds*, 39:1.

Ted Floyd's pictorial field guide to the birds of North America is in press and scheduled to be published by Simon and Schuster at the end of April, so keep your eyes open for it.

Steve Howell's and Jon Dunn's newest contribution to field ornithology, *Gulls of the Americas*, is available. Don't miss the review in *Western Birds*, 39:1.

Western Birds. You will notice some name changes in *Western Birds*. Alan Contreras of Oregon has joined the editorial staff as book review editor. All of WFO welcomes him. Alan steps into the sandals of Steve Howell, who did a wonderful job for many years but like many of us began to wonder where the time was going. Thank you for your years of dedication, Steve. We also welcome Doug Faulkner, author/editor from Colorado, who has joined *Western Birds* as associate editor. Doug's book, *Birds of Wyoming*, is expected soon.

New Website. You'll soon be seeing a new website for WFO. Tim Avery of Utah, our new webmaster, stepped in to take over the reins of WFO's web presence from Peter LaTourette, who has been holding down two big WFO volunteer jobs all these years. We'll continue to see Peter's fine photo editing work in the pages of *Western Birds*. It is taking two men to fill his website shoes. WFO board member Jay Withgott is functioning as liaison, helping prepare a huge amount of information for Tim to launch for the website. Look for it soon!

What's new(s)? One of WFO's newest board members, science committee co-chair Debbie VanDooremolen, has recently joined the august ranks of the Nevada Bird Record Committee.

Thank You:

Some thank yous are in order. WFO has been fortunate this past year. Our membership, various supporters from the non-profit and consulting communities, friends, and just plain generous folk have all contributed to our coffers so that we were able to publish two new books; set up a new website; add more volumes of *Western Birds* to the online, searchable SORA database; continue publishing *Western Birds* at its high standards; and make plans for the future. All these projects require people to make them happen, and were accomplished thanks to generous donors and that most elusive bird of all, willing volunteers.

The editor of this little newsletter would like to devote some space to thank volunteer Suzanne Carota for helping when the tracking of *Rare Birds* became overwhelming; Pam Nickels of Red Rock Audubon for her amazing energy and abilities over the past 18 months; Stan Walens of San Diego Field Ornithologists for helping with *Rare Birds*; and Robbie Fischer, who deserves a big thank-you for everything she does for WFO.

Finally, last September, Ted Floyd, Dan Gibson, and Mike San Miguel rotated off the WFO Board. These fine men each made huge contributions to WFO. It was a true pleasure to work with them. Thank you, Ted, Dan, and Mike.