

Western Field Ornithologists Newsletter  
Fall/Winter 2017  
Written by Catherine Waters

**Thank you!** Western Field Ornithologists sincerely thanks each and every one of you who so generously picked up your pens or your credit cards and sent in donations for the San Miguel Fund to assure the financial health of our publications. The matching grant generously donated by the **Paul H. Johanson Fund** for \$10,000.00 was an amazing surprise and boon. We are, of course, still actively fundraising. If you have any questions, feel free to talk to any WFO Board member or the Publications Committee chairs, Ken Able and Cat Waters. If your question is related directly to donations, Suzanne Carota, our treasurer, would love to hear from you.

**The Season in the Field:** At the height of summer we, Western Field Ornithologists, found ourselves in Pueblo, Colorado amid old and new friends for our annual conference. Among us were also “Eclipsers,” celebrants of the solar eclipse that was visible across the United States, in part or in totality, making our conference this year a double-draw. It was an excellent conference in a great hotel/conference center setting, thanks to Larry Modesitt and Tom Blackman. The locale introduced us to new territory and, for many, new birds. There is a long social history surrounding Pueblo that goes back centuries and the town reflected the steel, railroad, Native American and agricultural influences. Geographically on the edge of the Great Plains, the edge of the Sangre de Cristo mountains and the Arkansas River Valley the region around Pueblo was a rich mix of birds and landscape for us to explore.

Our partner, Colorado Field Ornithologists, shouldered responsibility for field trips and did a fantastic job. A full report with will soon be available on our website. Until then, here are some highlights worthy of detailing:

- WFO Board member Diane Rose did double duty (maybe triple duty) as coordinator of workshops and as our primary registrar for the conference with able back up and assistance from Frances Oliver, Susan Kelly, Suzanne Carota and Karen Havlena. What a job!
- The members of the California Bird Record Committee were a significant presence in Pueblo. It was great to see so many of their members at the conference. The CBRC chair, Steve Rottenborn, also coordinated the science sessions and delivered an excellent report on the Committee’s recent deliberations and decisions.
- With the generosity of Buena Vista Audubon and Sierra Foothills Audubon and longstanding support from Pasadena Audubon, Homer Hansen and fellow Scholarship Committee members brought us a dazzling array of young field ornithologists. It was so much fun to meet the future and find them such a knowledgeable, enthusiastic and, yes, charming, group. Each of them shined.
- And, you, our wonderful members, were simply generous in your participation and enthusiasm. Thank you and thank you to all who lent their energies to making this conference a success.

In September 2018, WFO will travel to Ventura, California for our 43<sup>rd</sup> annual conference. Watch our website for details, dates, and activities as the time approaches.

**Coming to You Soon** Kurt Leuschner and fellow Field Trip Committee members are planning an interesting quiver of opportunities for our membership in 2018 and beyond. Cuba, the Sierras, the Siskiyou, and a museum-based workshop are all in the offing. Dates, times, and particulars are being discussed, but one of the best ways to make sure you know what is going on is to open the emails you receive from WFO, watch our website and Facebook page, and keep up your membership (while making our Membership Chair happy!).

**Happy Trails** In Pueblo, at our meeting of the WFO Board of Directors, we said good byes to a diverse range of Board Members: Daniel Gibson, Susan Kelly and Frances Oliver. Each of them deserves a standing ovation. One way or another all of us have benefitted from their presence on our Board. At the same time, we welcomed Kenneth Able, Wendy Beers, and John Harris to the Board. On Saturday evening, at our annual membership meeting, Tom Blackman, president; Kurt Leuschner, vice-president, Liga Wurster, Recording Secretary; and Suzanne Carota, Treasurer were re-elected to one-year terms.

**Let's Talk Committees** Okay, maybe each-and-every-one of you do not have a burning interest, but our committee members and committee chairs are very hardworking and wonderful people to know. You might even want to contact them with ideas/suggestions, when questions come up, or when you get that burning desire to volunteer, donate, or offer up your skills. They want to hear from you! As happens every year, there have been some adjustments as the Board changed and here are the updates on WFO Committees and Committee Chairs:

- Awards: Ken Able, kennethable@gmail.com
- California Bird Record Committee: Steve Rottenborn, srottenborn@harveyecology.com
- Conservation and Science: Steve Rottenborn
- Field trips, programs: Kurt Leuschner, kleuschner@collegeofthedesert.edu
- Finance: Dave Quady, davequady@att.net
- Fundraising (an ad hoc committee): Cat Waters, Karen Havlena
- Hawai'i Bird Record Committee: Eric VanderWerf
- Meetings: TBD
- Membership: Suzanne Carota, smcarota@gmail.com
- Outreach: Karen Havlena, jkhavlena@yahoo.com
- Publications: Kenneth Able and Catherine Waters, cpannellwaters@gmail.com
- Scholarship/Youth: Homer Hansen, hhansen@aplomado.com
- Philip Unitt, Editor of Western Birds, punitt@sdnhm.org
- Daniel Gibson, Assistant Editor of Western Birds, avesalaska@gmail.com
- Tim Brittain, Webmaster, [contact@westernfieldornithologists.org](mailto:contact@westernfieldornithologists.org)
- Cliff Hawley fearlessly manages our Facebook page, [yellowhammerca@gmail.com](mailto:yellowhammerca@gmail.com)

**Board News** Your Board has been busy looking to the future of Western Field Ornithologists. Funding for publications, The San Miguel Fund, remains on-going and high on our list, field trip plans, conferences, and levels of membership are a few of the recent discussion and resolution points. Of interest and recently decided at our May 2017 Board meeting were two significant, thoroughly discussed, defined and voted upon topics that might be of interest to you: levels of membership and Patrons of WFO and a non-smoking policy.

- **Standing Pat** Going forward, WFO will no longer define Patron as a membership category but as a special status for those individuals who are generous benefactors to WFO or to one of its established funds while holding the same benefits as Life members. Please see the WFO donations page for a full description of and benefits of being a Patron, [www.westernfieldornithologists.org/support.php](http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/support.php). And, of course, seriously consider becoming a Patron or upgrading your membership to a life membership!
- **Up in Smoke** Though the WFO Board is unaware of any issues regarding smoking on our field trips, recent circumstances experienced at events sponsored by *other* organizations led us to discuss a non-smoking policy. After a lengthy discussion WFO decided to establish a non-smoking policy in conjunction with their sponsored events. Discussion of same can be found in the minutes for the May 2017 Board of Directors meeting. And, the policy as adopted can be found in the Terms and Conditions clause that participants accept when registering for WFO events. If you have questions or comments, please contact our president, Thomas Blackman.

**The Trailing Edge:** In case you haven't heard, in Pueblo WFO was graced with the second generation of Floyds to give papers at a WFO annual conference, Andrew Floyd. He was our youngest presenter to date, a prepared and poised speaker, and an audience favorite. Both Western Birds and our annual conferences provide field ornithologists with a platform for presenting their research. If you are interested in publishing or presenting your research do not hesitate to contact Phil Unitt, Dan Gibson or Steve Rottenborn whose emails are listed in this newsletter under "Committees."

In Pueblo Catherine Waters became the 5<sup>th</sup> recipient of WFO's Alan Craig Award. She was very surprised and especially proud. You are invited to drop by and view her award plaque that is hung on the wall above her desk.

The Editor of this newsletter would like to take up the last precious space on the pages of this little newsletter to thank Dan Gibson and Frances Oliver for the honor of working closely with them over the past years. She will miss them.

