

Western Field Ornithologists Newsletter Spring/Summer 2016

Edited by Catherine Waters

The Season in the Field

The spring migration from the southern California perspective was somewhat slow. Throughout the west, there were few outstanding vagrants/migrants to keep up the excitement of discovery. There are few things sadder than a nearly empty spring dance card for an avid field birder regardless of where he is located. You have to ask yourself, does the excitement of a single Golden-winged Warbler in Lamar, Colorado make up for the lack of annually expected, multiple Western Wood Peewees and Swainson's Thrushes in Downey, California? Where did they go? Do dozens of nest-building Bullock's and Orchard Orioles at Scott's Lake State Park in 100th meridian Kansas make up for a paltry showing of Western Tanagers in Los Angeles? What has changed? As field ornithologists, many of us have records and notes going back decades and have planned for years to finally analyze and write up some aspect of our observations. We may talk about this year's slow migration, unusual nesting activity or a year being irruptive, but why not finally write up your significant notes for scientific publication so that all of us can learn from your field research? Printed right there on the contents page of *Western Birds*, are these welcoming words: ***Western Birds solicits papers that are both useful to and understandable by amateur field ornithologists and also contribute significantly to scientific literature. Particularly desired are reports of studies done in or bearing on North American west of the 100th meridian, including Alaska and Hawaii, northwestern Mexico and the northeastern Pacific Ocean.***

Western Birds' web page goes on to remind that:

The journal welcomes contributions from both professionals and amateur field ornithologists. Appropriate topics include distribution, migration, status, identification, geographic variation, conservation, behavior, ecology, population dynamics, habitat requirements, the effects of pollution, and techniques for censusing, sound recording, and photographing birds in the field.

Don't be shy. Reread and analyze the field notes and observational data that you have hoarded in notebooks over your career in the field, and publish your field ornithology findings. All of us should be responsible for making sure our lifetimes of collected observations and analysis do not end up unacknowledged and unread because they went unpublished and unstudied. Phil Unitt and Dan Gibson are looking forward to you finally taking advantage of the journal your membership helps to publish by becoming a contributor. We all look forward to reading what you have to say. Going into the future, WFO hopes to offer workshop(s) devoted to framing your ornithological data and research for publication. Stay tuned.

O Fortuna!

Our annual conference, to be held September 28 – October 2, 2016 in Fortuna, California, is fully planned. The WFO meetings committee, led by Tom Blackman, has done a remarkable job coordinating this conference in one of California's most beautiful locations, with access to the coast, wooded interiors, riparian areas and coastal foothills. The schedule is available on the WFO website, registration is now open, and we hope to see all of you there. Amazing people have volunteered their time, talents and energy to make this conference happen, including hard working meeting registrar Susan Kelly and membership chair Suzanne Carota. In order to accommodate as many people as possible the field trip committee did double time to adjust the schedule. Take a look at those workshops! There are a few things to remember:

- Remember to pack (or mail) a book or books of ornithological interest to donate to the annual silent auction. Dan Gibson and Cat Waters are anxiously awaiting any questions you might

have. Contact Dan, avesalaska@gmail.com, or Cat, cpannellwaters@gmail.com, with any questions.

- Bring any books you might want signed by the authors who will be in attendance at the conference (read the entire registration info on the WFO website). There will be a book signing.
- Potential vendors should sign up now by notifying Frances Oliver, hummer52@sbcglobal.net, and Cat Waters, cpannellwaters@gmail.com. Tables in the vendor area are free but we do ask for the vendor to register for the conference.
- Let Dave Quady, davequady@att.net, know if you want to attend Thursday's annual meeting of the WFO Board of Directors so that a seat can be arranged for you (space is limited).
- And, if you would like to nominate someone to potentially serve on our Board, this year or in the future, don't keep it a secret. Tell Tom Blackman, obeach@cox.net, or any member of the nominating committee or any other WFO Board member. We want your input.

Living in the Digital World

As some of you may be aware, WFO asked in a past newsletter for copies of *The Euphonia*, a quarterly journal of Mexican Avifauna that was edited by Kurt Radamaker and published from 1992 through 1994. *The Euphonia* was a completely volunteer-driven publication that was supported by Western Field Ornithologists, and we hoped to add a complete set of it to the WFO archive at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology. Kurt Radamaker, mexicobirding.com, who remains a long-standing friend to WFO, generously sent a box of the complete volumes he held. And Bruce Elliott, a long-time member of WFO, provided two key issues that allow us to make a complete set for WFO's archive at the WFVZ and digitally scan the other complete set so that the journal can be made available on the WFO website, too. Do I hear applause in the background?

The Big Picture

Dave Quady, Ed Pandolfino, erpfromca@aol.com, and Cat Waters continue their efforts to build an archive of past presidents, vice presidents and board members of WFO for the website. We want to begin the project with photographs from the time of our past presidents' "presidential" tenure. Is there a chance you have such a photo in your personal archive? If so, contact one or all of the three. All hard copy photos will be returned.

Further Afield In the West

Elisabeth Ammon of Great Basin Bird Observatory (GBBO) announces there will be a Great Basin Bird Conference in Reno, Nevada, May 17 – 21, 2017 to coincide with the 20th anniversary of GBBO. Mark your calendars now. GBBO is a wonderful host and this conference will be an opportunity for all of us to bring ourselves up to date on what's happening in the Great Basin.

Colorado Field Ornithologists' annual conference in La Mar, Colorado, May 5 – 9, was outstanding. Being out there on the edge of the Great Plains makes you feel like you are standing at the edge of the world. The generosity to birders from the people of Lamar was appreciated, especially that of the Tempel family and Stupp Farms. They, among many others, opened their farms and ranches to long lines of birders daily. A few hundred people walked the Cottonwood lined riparian area of the Melody Tempel Grove searching for migrants. And, Jane and John Stupp, after their beautiful garden attracted a Golden-winged Warbler, generously allowed planned and unplanned field trips to side track to their personal home and garden to see this bird. Everyone was warmly greeted, no one was hurried.

Thanks to Daniel Gibson, Dave Quady and Kimball Garrett for their insights on this newsletter.