

**Western Field Ornithologists Newsletter**  
**Spring 2017**  
**Edited by Catherine Waters**

**The Season in the Field:** What constitutes the onset of spring migration? Is it the time of the year, the warming soil, the warming air? For me, it is the reports of the first Hooded Orioles crossing into southern California. These brilliantly yellow birds seem to be heralds of the ancient avian ritual of migration in the West even if the way we learn of their arrival is decidedly 21<sup>st</sup> century modern: listservs, ebird, tweets, wildlife cams, text messages, Facebook. Old timers may duly record the date, time and location in their notebooks or diaries, possibly fleshing out details in ink as they ruminate over their day in the field. The with-it tech crowd documents their first of the year sightings, via apps on their cell phones while standing in the field. All of us, throughout the West, join in the speculation and discussion of whether migration is starting earlier or beginning later this year. Enjoy the spring!

**Fit to Print:** This little newsletter will come to you with *Western Birds* 48(1). Like the newsletter, *Western Birds* and our other hard copy and digital print endeavors are volunteer-driven. Our publications are huge accomplishments on the part of reviewers, associate editors, staff, Board and Committee members, WFO members, and WFO donors. When you pick up that gem of a journal or open the WFO website to look at *Western Birds (WB)*, *Rare Birds of California (Rare Birds)*, *California Bird Species of Special Concern (BSSC)*, *The WFO Newsletter*, or *The Euphonia* you see a manifestation of the finest tradition of the West: generosity of spirit.

Our monograph series, *Studies of Western Birds*, will soon be expanded by a new publication, *Trends and Traditions: Avifaunal Change in Western North America (Avifaunal Change)*, edited by W. David Shuford, Robert E. Gill Jr., and Colleen M. Handel. This volume will continue WFO's tradition of publishing sound science that documents the reasons for changes in avian populations and support the conservation of birds in western North America. In order to produce this and other forthcoming titles in the series, we find ourselves in the position of having to fundraise to defray the costs of publication.

A WFO volunteer subcommittee is seeking the best and the gentlest way to fundraise for these publication projects. Jon Dunn and Kimball Garrett will soon send out a letter with further details. As you happily send in those checks (mail to WFO's Treasurer at 3476 Armourdale, Long Beach, CA 90808) or credit card donations (<https://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/support.php>), keep in mind that WFO has matched in volunteerism every cent you have given us over the years in an outstanding return on your generosity. Besides the digital publication of *Rare Birds* and *BSSC*, in the past decade we have made *Western Birds* digitally available on our website, on SORA (Searchable Ornithological Research Archive), and on the Biodiversity Heritage Library. Finally, we recently made *The Euphonia* digitally available on our website to ensure that this short-lived Mexican avifauna heritage project did not vanish.

Potential donors, including individuals, non-profits, corporations, etc., may send a request to [publicationprojects@westernfieldornithologists.org](mailto:publicationprojects@westernfieldornithologists.org) or link straight from our website, and we will happily send you a digital copy of the table of contents and abstracts for *Avifaunal Change* and answer sponsorship queries for it, for *Western Birds*, or for other *Studies of Western Birds* projects.

**Young at Heart:** Western Field Ornithologists continues to invest in youth through our Youth Scholarship program, led by Homer Hansen. We continue our long tradition of offering free basic conference registration to any school age student of birds. And with the support of Pasadena Audubon and other generous donors, we have been able to expand the number of conference scholarships. Scholarships are open to youths

between the ages of 12 and 22, with six scholarships for youths in grades 6 through 12, and two scholarships for collegiate youths working toward a Bachelor's degree. Please open WFO messages, read the newsletters and keep abreast of the website so that you do not miss crucial scholarship application deadlines.

**Winging It:** WFO travels to Pueblo, Colorado August 16 – 20, 2017 and our 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference. Details, dates, and activities can be found on our website. Pueblo is in a beautiful, bird rich region that is also well located for exploration of the West's modern and ancient history. Just north of Pueblo, by coincidence, our solar system has arranged for you to be in reasonable proximity to experience a rare total eclipse of the sun on August 21. However, it is not a coincidence that a wonderful conference has been planned to enrich your experience. Steve Rottenborn, [srottenborn@harveyecology.com](mailto:srottenborn@harveyecology.com), has put together stellar plenary sessions and is in the final stages of organizing the science sessions. It is not too late to contact him about submitting a paper. Larry Modesitt has worked tirelessly creating a field trip schedule that will welcome you to his part of the U. S. All of us hope to see you in Colorado. **If you have not yet done so, renew your WFO membership now because, among other things, it gives you priority (and a discount) on our conference registration, including field trips.**

**Partners and Friends:** The Great Basin Bird Observatory (GBBO) will hold the **Great Basin Bird Conference 2017** in Reno, Nevada May 17-21. Details and registration are now available at <http://www.gbbo.org/birdconference>. This conference will be devoted to the research and study of birds of the Great Basin and surrounding areas. Workshops will be varied and a number of them will cover the wide range of technology now available and how to apply it to our research. If you have never heard Ed Pandolfino present data mining, Brian Sullivan break down ebird into digestible portions, Ted Floyd and Catherine Waters bring into focus what is technologically available to enhance your field skills, this spring conference is where you should be. There will, of course, be a full array of field trips, a poster session, social activities, and wonderful people.

Plus, you can just leave Nevada, head east, and pull into the parking lot at Colorado Mountain College, Steam Boat Springs, Colorado to attend the annual **Colorado Field Ornithologists Convention**, June 1 – 5, 2017. A partner of WFO, CFO organizes wonderful conventions that celebrates field ornithology while highlighting a portion of Colorado's diverse landscape and birds. The college is offering its dorms as housing, The Nature Conservancy is opening the historic and bird rich Carpenter Ranch for the annual picnic, and the science and field trip schedule (full, half-day and local "slacker" trips) will be centric to the Routt County and Yampa River region of northwest Colorado.

**The Trailing Edge:** Field ornithologists and casual birdwatchers are in a position to enhance the scientific knowledge available to the broader conservation community by organizing and publishing their collected data. As the population in the West grows, information coming out of urban areas such as the recent *Los Angeles County Breeding Bird Atlas* that covers inner city to remote desert and mountains is of special importance. All of us at Western Birds are waiting for you to submit your life-long troves of bird-related field studies, organized into papers, for publication. Questions? Write to us at [contact@westernfieldornithologists.org](mailto:contact@westernfieldornithologists.org) and put Attn: publications committee on the subject line.

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