

# Western Field Ornithologists Newsletter

Winter/Spring 2014

Edited by Catherine Waters

## The Season

The west, like the east, has been a wild and crazy place to live this past winter. Climate wise, many of us have basked in unprecedented warmth and sunshine while others have undergone unseasonable (and possibly unreasonable) cold, wet weather. The truth is, if it is – and was - happening to us, our vagrant, migratory and resident bird populations were experiencing it, too. As the thaws and longer days materialize, take a long look at the birds in your own vicinity and neighborhoods in addition to hitting the field. Many migrants over-wintered finding the climate just fine where they landed in their autumn passage rather than continuing their journeys. And, as of this writing (mid-March) many are still happily basking in local, albeit it, unlikely places.

## San Diego here we come (right back where we started from) October 8 to 12!

Do we have a great 2014 conference planned for San Diego? You bet. Ed Pandolfino and his hard working committee, led on the ground by Tom Blackman (San Diego logistics) and Joyce Meyer (workshops) have planned another exceptional conference.

Western Field Ornithologists will be returning to San Diego – back where it all began for us. Our 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference will be October 8 – 12 in San Diego and registration will begin in mid-June. There will be an e-announcement when registration opens plus it will be posted on our website, so sign up for email announcements on our website, read your WFO emails and track our website, [www.westernfieldornithologists.org](http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org).

Highlights will be an *Avifaunal Change Symposium*. Thanks to Robert Gill, Dave Shuford, and Dave Quady our two afternoons of science sessions will include a symposium on avifaunal change in the West that will subsequently be published in our *Studies of Western Birds* series.

The San Diego Conference will also include a two-day Salton Sea/Imperial Valley trip led by Guy McCaskie and Jon Dunn, two pelagics, San Diego region wide birding, a pre-conference reception at the exceptional San Diego Natural History Museum in Balboa Park and a history of 44 years of Western Field Ornithologists. Workshops will include: Field identification of Warblers with Kimball Garrett and Jon Dunn; Vireo identification with Peter Pyle; Sparrow identification with Homer Hansen, and Molt with Peter Pyle. Nathan Pieplow and WFO Board Member, Ed Harper, will lead the annual sight and sound sessions.

Remember to bring your donated books for our annual silent auction to benefit youth scholarships. FYI, WFO makes a point of making our annual conferences available for free for all interested junior and senior high school students at no charge as well as offering full scholarships for the annual conference. Details are available from Robbie Fischer, [robbie22@pacbell.net](mailto:robbie22@pacbell.net).

## WFO Publications

Our long promised and hard worked for digital (first edition) of *Rare Birds of California*, a work by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC) and edited by Robert A. Hamilton, Richard A. Erickson and Michael A. Patten is here! Right up to the very last minute we were holding our breath. The digital publication is web accessible on your computer screen, iPad, iPhone, Android, etc. You've no idea how exciting it was to be able to look up a record in the field! There are portals to the book on the WFO website, [westernfieldornithologists.org](http://westernfieldornithologists.org) and CBRC website, [californiabirds.org](http://californiabirds.org). From paper to screen, it was not an easy transition and the process was made possible by donations in memory of Mike San Miguel and the work of the WFO Publications Committee, support of the WFO Board and interested volunteers. WFO would like to thank our "digital print readers" – with a special thank you to Don Sterba (California) and Kathanne Lynch (Colorado) for volunteering to help with the process and Joe Morlan for his assistance in solving a next-to-the-last minute problem that arose. From the beginning, the digital format of the book, a word for word duplicate of the hard copy, was conceived of as a benefit of WFO membership and a lasting way to thank the volunteers who so generously contributed to the hard copy publication. We hope you enjoy it!

There will be more to come! The WFO publications committee is working on a number of projects. E publication of *Western Birds* in addition to hard copy is coming in 2014/15. You, the member, will have the option(s) of one or both within the framework of your dues!

Look for *California Bird Species of Special Concern*, edited by Dave Shuford and Tom Gardali and sponsored by (among others) the California Department of Fish and Game and Audubon California, to be available soon through the WFO website.

In the future, we will publish our San Diego Conference symposium on *Western Avifaunal Change*. It is not too late to submit an abstract for the volume, the symposium or both to [dshuford@pointblue.org](mailto:dshuford@pointblue.org), [robert\\_gill@usgs.gov](mailto:robert_gill@usgs.gov), and [davequady@att.net](mailto:davequady@att.net). If you would like to volunteer to work on these, or any WFO project, just pull aside any member of the WFO Board or send an email to Cat Waters ([cpannellwaters@gmail.com](mailto:cpannellwaters@gmail.com)) and Dan Gibson ([avesalaska@gmail.com](mailto:avesalaska@gmail.com)).

### **What is happening in the West?**

There are a number of field ornithology related changes, events, employment opportunities, and projects taking place in the west this spring and summer. Here are a few that the reader might find interesting.

The Idaho Bird Observatory of Boise State University, so ably managed by Greg Kaltenecker and Jay Carlisle, announces a name change to **The Intermountain Bird Observatory** to bring it in line with Boise State's growing area of influence. During migration their Lucky Peak field station is open July 16 to October 31. Dedicated and seasonal volunteers and part-time position seekers are welcome to apply for all seasons, <http://ibo.boisestate.edu/>.

**Portland Audubon**, [www.portlandaudubon.org](http://www.portlandaudubon.org), is offering a series of bird song and sound identification programs this spring. The largest Audubon chapter in the west, they have a full complement of offerings for sharpening and learning new field skills.

**Great Basin Bird Observatory**, <http://gbbo.org>, has short term (spring/summer) field survey positions available. Information is posted on their website. GBBO makes all their publications, including *The Nevada Comprehensive Bird Conservation Plan* (NCBCP) available on their website. Their NCBCP is an important asset to bird conservation throughout the West.

**Tucson Audubon**, [www.tucsonaudubon.org](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org), has a full time outreach position available. Details and job description are on their website. And, Aug. 13-17 they are hosting the **Tucson Bird and Wildlife Festival** featuring long time WFO member Steve Howell.

Jon Dunn, a WFO Board member, will be guest speaker at the **Colorado Field Ornithologists** annual conference in Sterling, Colorado August 28 to September 1, 2014. Information on their annual conference is on their website, [www.cfobirds.org](http://www.cfobirds.org).

**Klamath Bird Observatory**, [www.klamathbirds.org](http://www.klamathbirds.org), a life member of WFO, is sponsoring the first Mountain Bird Festival, May 30 – June 1, 2014 in Ashland Oregon. The event is to highlight the conservation of mountain birds through citizens and science.

**New Mexico Ornithological Society**, [www.nmbirds.org](http://www.nmbirds.org), is having their annual conference April 26, 2014 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Brian Millsap will be speaking on his research on urban Cooper's Hawks – a topic germane to all of us urbanite field ornithologists.

**Washington Ornithological Society** (WOS), [www.wos.org](http://www.wos.org), is holding their annual conference in Yakima June 12 -16, 2014. The keynote speaker, Jon Gano, will speak on citizen science monitoring projects and specifically address Lewis's Woodpeckers, Bobolinks and European Starlings.

### **A bit of WFO history**

We frequently get asked questions on how or why we do certain things so over the next few newsletters we thought we would review for you how some of our traditions evolved. In 2002 at the WFO meeting in Orange County, we held our first workshops. The idea behind the workshops was to offer courses that enhanced the field skills of field ornithologists and that gave a quality opportunity to those conference participants that might not have the wherewithal to participate in a full or half day field trip. The workshops were meant to complement our annual conference. The WFO Board reviews the workshops and workshop scheduling each year. As an organization of volunteers we cannot expect people to have the flexibility of spending more days at our conferences, so we do our best to schedule within our defined time frame. If you have any other questions about how or why things evolved the way they did, send a note to Ed and Cat, [erpfromca@aol.com](mailto:erpfromca@aol.com) and [cpannellwaters@gmail.com](mailto:cpannellwaters@gmail.com).

### **Of interest**

If you are interested in attending the annual WFO Board meeting or volunteering to help out at our annual conference send Ed Pandolfino a note or contact any WFO Board member. Seating is limited at our Board meetings so you need to reserve in advance. If you would like to suggest potential candidates for nomination to the Board of Directors of WFO, contact Dave Quady, [davequady@att.net](mailto:davequady@att.net). We'd love to hear from you!

Special thanks to Robbie Fischer and Ed Pandolfino for their comments and help in preparing this newsletter.