

**Western Field Ornithologists
Board of Directors
Teleconference
Wednesday, March 25, 2020 1-2:30pm**
Special Meeting to make adjustments for *corona* virus pandemic

Minutes prepared by Liga L. Auzins-Wurster, *Rec. Sec'y.*

Board Members present: Kurt M. Leuschner, *Pres.*; Thomas O. Blackman, *past President*; Jonathan L. Dunn, *Vice Pres.*; Suzanne M. Carota, *Treas./Membership Sec'y.*; Liga L. Auzins-Wurster, *Rec. Sec'y.*; Phil Unitt, *Editor, Western Birds (WB)*; Kenneth P. Able, Matthew Baumann, Wendy L. Beers, Kimball L. Garrett, Homer M. Hansen, John H. Harris, Karen A. Havlena, Ed Pandolfino, Bryce W. Robinson, Diane E. Rose, Stephen C. Rottenborn, Christopher W. Swarth.

Board member absent: Matthew Baumann

MINUTES

1:02pm Meeting called to order, welcome, and roll. This meeting will last, 1-2 hours.

1:03pm **Future WFO Tours: (Kurt):** There's a Cuba trip scheduled for November, but I am going to suggest postponing all WFO Tours from now until we know what is going on with the pandemic. The Cuba trip is, surprisingly, pretty much filled. We can give those people who signed up first priority when the trip runs in the future. I'll keep the list of those people. Board agrees. We had also scheduled a weekend in October in Coachella Valley, a fundraiser, which we will postpone or cancel. We will reserve that weekend, October 16-18, 2020, in case we need it for an impromptu Board meeting/retreat to elect officers or something of that nature

Jon: Has anyone researched the bylaws to see if we need to do anything legally?

Kurt: Ed has been researching this and he will have a recommendation for the Board at the next meeting in May. We want to stay within the Bylaws as best we can. Maybe Jon, Ed, John Harris and Suzanne and I might form a subcommittee to make those recommendations. This also regards the election of officers in the Fall.

Action Item: Kurt forms subcommittee as stated in above paragraph.

1:10pm **HOW TO KEEP MEMBERSHIP ENGAGED: (Kurt):** This pertains to the website, the newsletter, the youth, *WB*, etc.

Newsletter:

Jon: I will run through some ideas. There's a consensus that we do more newsletters this year so as to keep in touch with the membership. Another element is to do outreach and get an expanded youth contribution and working with Lena and Susan Gilliland to develop this. There are youths like Fiona, Justina, and Auburn and maybe others with whom we should get in touch. I would like the Newsletter to be multi-faceted. Getting contributions and artwork, etc., is one of the things that inspires us regarding WFO. Phil, I assume you are closest to Alyssa Yang, maybe she could

contribute in some capacity. I would be happy to contact Paul Lehmann and ask him to do a column on summarizing events from last year, i.e., significant records from the various states in our region; what were the 'mover and shaker' birds from last year; etc. as part of the Newsletter. This would be a trial run. Suzanne mentioned that we could include pictures of the Board members with and a short biography.

ACTION ITEM: All: Let's all throw out ideas and then see if we can synthesize something. Chris wants to make sure that we all participate in getting material. If the Board has any ideas, please funnel them to Chris.

Phil: We would certainly like to encourage everyone (now that we are confined to our homes), to crunch their data and use it as an opportunity for writing and contributing to **WB**.

Kurt: Is there an impact on **WB** that we should talk about?

Phil: I don't see it yet. We don't have but 10 manuscripts submitted so far this year which is a decent pace. Some of them are pretty meaty so the stuff I am working on putting it in 51(3) rather than 51(2). The most recent contributions are from Ralph Browning. **Remember, we never want to be complacent.**

Chris: The deadline for the first Newsletter was today. Our idea is to put out a newsletter in April. We have not told anyone including our members that there is a deadline, but we do want to have a newsletter in April. I am happy to give everyone time parameters.

Action Item: All: If you have something for the newsletter write it up and send it to me ASAP. If you have an idea that you personally are not going to write about, that I or someone else could help with, now is the time to do it.

Jon: I gave 3 ideas earlier, one of them by Suzanne, short bios and photos of Board members. Perhaps, Wendy you could talk about your animals or something similar.

Kurt: We had also talked about putting this on the website.

Bryce: I think it's a good idea to do both.

Jon: Wendy could talk about her work with animals. It can be informal and just a way of keeping in touch some sort of worth coming across. It might be the right opportunity to counteract the cut and dried information on the website.

Chris: I like all those ideas. I would take up both Jon's and Homer's suggestions to write up something, it doesn't have to be 'wordsmithed' very carefully. We could have a little thing on what each of us has done over the last couple of weeks with *coronavirus* hanging over our heads; maybe someone had a good sighting in their backyard; a walk or a birding trip; something that says how you responded to the *coronavirus* in a way that could involve birds or natural history.

Jon: I would like to go through each of these topics and send to them to Chris. Who can put it in something like "Board Officer Corner" How about trying to involve youth? Maybe Susan and Lena can drum up some offerings from our outstanding youth. There is a consensus of the Board.

Homer: A youth source could be essays they submit for the Scholarship Programs. We briefly talked about this in the scholarship committee. We will re-announce some of these things and promote things like Chris's essay contest, and Jon's working on the Scholarship Program.

ACTION ITEM: Jon will contact Susan and Lena first before going ahead with the youth. If Phil is willing to contact Alyssa Yang he could ask if she would be willing to assist with input for the Newsletter.

Phil: The central question is, “How are you managing to pursue ornithology during the *corona virus* crisis?”

Jon: Maybe Fiona can talk about her recent trips and include some of her art work? Fiona and her mother put up this potential workshop up in the Sierra and she has done some work with John Muir Laws up there. Teodalina or Justina might have something separate to say.

Homer: We could open this to all youths which could lead to a backlog which could be spread over the next 12 month or so.

Wendy: If you ask people to submit stuff and not use it that’s not right.

Homer: If we get too many we just turn around and create a newsletter for the youth and just put it out to them.

Jon: Wendy, since you’re not working right now, maybe you could get in touch with Susan and Lena and come up with a plan of action.

ACTION ITEM: Wendy volunteers to get in contact with Lena regard youth submittals.

Chris: April’s new Newsletter submission deadline is April 5th.

Kurt: We will probably have another newsletter in a couple of months.

Chris: Initially we were thinking twice a year, but let’s just do this first one and then decide when to do the next one. There is no benefit in setting a schedule right now.

ACTION ITEM: Jon will contact Paul Lehmann regarding on an article as to what has happened in the last year ornithologically.

Kurt: Our next Board meeting is May 21st so the next deadline could be the first week of June.

Bryce: Other organizations like the AOS is putting out newsletters more frequently now so I don’t see any problem with that. As to the bios, I think we ought to have some kind of minimum/maximum word limits, as some people have a two sentence bios and others are much longer than that.

Jon: On the newsletter the bios will probably vary in length and that’s all right.

ACTION ITEM: All: We will have April 5th as the first deadline for the newsletter and June 5th for the next deadline.

Jon: I have two other ideas for the Newsletter. Tom Benson might supply CBRC news. If that is too California centric we can invite other states to contribute their BRC news.

ACTION ITEM: Jon will contact Tom Benson, but who should contact the other state BRC’s?

ACTION ITEM: Phil can contact everyone who has contributed, Alaska , Washington, Nevada, Arizona, and Hawaii.

Chris: So Phil can you tell me what you are going to say to those folks in terms of what they should submit?

Phil: How about one paragraph (250-300 words) of interesting news from that state emerging from the committee.

Ken: I don't think there will be too much overlap as Paul will be talking about current things and more than just rare birds, i.e., a major movement of something, etc., whereas the committees are always a bit behind timewise (inherent in the nature of the process).

Kurt: Jon go ahead and contact Paul.

AI: Jon: Ken and I will work out Paul's task to that he has a clear idea as to what is expected.

Website: Bryce is waiting to hear from Todd (webmaster) regarding the website. Things are in progress. As you know he has been asking for photos and bios for a WFO Board Page so as to have a clearer view of who is involved in the organization. We'll get the scaffolding up of the website before we ask content related things.

Kurt: Bryce is there anything you need from us now?

Bryce: AI There are a number of people who have not sent in their photos or bios.

AI A bio from each Board member would be nice. You can go to some other organization's website to see nice examples of some professional looking short bios.

AI: Bryce will send the Board a sample so we can look at that.

Bryce: I am of the opinion of not having a bio for every Board member in order to keep it plain and simple. We could hear about who you are and what you do for the Board. Right now we need a photo, what you do, and where you live and your term. I can send you a format just to be thorough I can send you a variety of ways you that can include a bio and very scant information on the way I think it should go.

Jon: We need clear directions in whatever you send out.

Kurt: If someone didn't want to put their photo in there can they insert their favorite bird?

Jon: No.

Kurt: I think Bryce should send us that sample he was talking about and then we will put a deadline when you want all this information and get after those people not complying. Mine will have to wait as I am locked out of my office for a month and a half.

AI Kimball to supply something for the newsletter regarding interesting issues in taxonomy.

Kimball: I am happy to do that, but I am more interested in news on the AOS committee and Phil who is a premier practicing taxonomist, might do that aspect. If something is interesting I can certainly write it up and run it by Jon and Phil.

Kurt: It doesn't have to be long, in fact it shouldn't be long.

Reno Conference: We have postponed Reno to 2021 so we are well ahead in planning.

Ed: The contract is signed and I contacted all the 30+ field trip leaders and they have agreed to do their trips next year. Jon has contacted the workshop folks.

Kurt: Thank you Ed and others who helped to get that switched.

Kimball: Speaking of Reno, two of the most popular things that happen at our meetings are the sound workshop that Nathan Pieplow does and Ed Harper's slide quiz. I am wondering if they could do something interactive for the website for this year. Just give people a dose of that, a website quiz.

AI: Ed: Nathan has his ear birding blog which so he has the technology to do that even if it was just a link from our site directly to his blog. I will talk to both Nathan and Ed about doing something like that in the next few months.

Jon: What about Ed Harper putting something in the newsletter and website regarding photos and bird quizzes.

AI: Chris: I could send out a note and ask Ed Harper if he might want to do have a photo bird quiz on the website.

Kurt: Ed Harper should be able to attend the 2021 conference.

Jon: If you are going to follow up on the newsletter issues, you might want to assign specific tasks to the appropriate Board member.

Kurt: Remember, we have the April 5th deadline for the April newsletter, but also there is the June 5th deadline for the next newsletter.

Research Grant: Report: (John Harris) We approved a small research group program. It's under Student Programs and it's something that would provide a small grant to two students. Our application deadline is March 31st, 6 days from now. This is a grant for students doing fieldwork, and not something that is tied to the conference. I hope everyone agrees that we can go forward with that. The two applicants sent in material only in the last few days, so presumably they have concluded to themselves that they were going to be able to complete their fieldwork. We will be making a decision in early April so we could put something in the June newsletter. One of the applicants is a Masters student from Cal Poly and the other one is a PhD. Student from South Dakota in Vermillion. I have several friends that went there as I attended high school in SD. The man who is supervising the latter student has worked on Virginia's warbler in the Black Hills, and he also has students working on the Missouri River and conservation issues with birds.

Jon: Do we have a requirement that the research needs to be conducted in the West?

John: Yes. I think it will be either on the Missouri River or the Black Hills.

Jon: Maybe it would be nice if we start giving money to students that are near the edge of the 100th meridian as or maybe the applicants can to tell the grant advisors about our organization and encourage contributions to WB from that area. That could be a by-product if we are going to go out to the edge. (100th meridian)

Phil: We had an article in WB about Virginia's warbler, maybe 4 years ago.

Jon: In 1997 Virginia's warbler was unrecorded for SD so we left it out of the book. They breed on the SW side of the Black Hills.

John: To reach as many people as possible, Ed sent out an e-mail blast to our entire membership. Then I sent e-mails to about 30-40 academics across the area. I am not sure how the professor at SD got the information, maybe he is a member of WFO, or maybe Nathan Pieplow had something to do with it.

Jon: Diane, you had a person you wanted to nominate.

Diane: I have a possible candidate but if they do not send in the stuff they will miss the deadline.

John: Are you talking about Ben? I know one of the people I contacted was his faculty advisor so he should know about it. It was also on our website.

Suzanne: John you said that Ed sent a blast to all WFO members but was it just members or everybody on your e-mail list? Members are approximately 1,000 and Ed's list is about 2,000.

Ed: It went to everybody on the list, members and non-members.

Jon: Can they supply a picture with their application package?

John: I will ask. It would be nice to have a photo and a description of what exactly their project will be in the June newsletter.

Awards Committee: Report: Jon: There is a consensus of the Awards Committee not to give out awards this year. If there were any we would postpone them.

Nominations: Report: Jon: Regarding nominations to the Board, there are 3 slots available and we have 5 folks so far. Wendy is up for re-nomination, Dan Gibson has sent in his CV, Susan Gilliland, Andy Morro and Kristy Nelson have sent in their CVs. This is going to be a competitive election and I am not looking for other nominees.

Financial(Budget): Report Suzanne: In looking at the budget due to the conference and trips delay, I wanted to ask what other things might change due to the *coronavirus* and how it would impact the budget. One of the big things in our budget is the publication of the *Inyo* book (\$17,000).

Ken: The manuscript is still in the hands of the authors who are doing revisions. I can easily imagine spending some money on it, i.e., copyediting, if we get the manuscript in hand. Everything might very well pass over into next year.

AI: If Jon can check up on this we may have more clarity by the May Board meeting.

Suzanne: Homer, do you think that the donations that you budgeted for 2020 will be impacted due to the postponing of trips?

Homer: I cannot predict it.

Suzanne: For the 2020 budget I am taking out the trips, the conference, the \$5,000 deposit for the Utah conference, the scholarship costs, the scholarship reception, 50th anniversary merchandise other than the water flasks (which we already ordered), and the donor reception. One thing that might increase is the C-vent as we said we would supply a certain number of registrations leading to additional expenditures to C-vent.

Diane: I know what the contract says. I need somebody with some clout to talk to Cvent, like Kurt and Tom because they have to be the negotiators. I am the planner. We need to know how much we are going to be penalized for not having a conference this year. We are supposed to have a minimum of 275 registrants. We still have to pay that \$11,000.

Suzanne: According to the contract we will have to pay out the \$11,000 (275 minimum registrants). I am figuring what kind of impact this will have. I should have something by the next Board meeting in May.

AI: ALL: If anyone else can think of anything that is going to change in the budget, please let me know.

Phil: With each proof I send to a contributor for WB, along with our page charge form, I say that WFO is entering this crisis in a strong financial position but our budget is still going to take a big hit because of the cancellation of the annual conference, therefore, your cooperation with the page charges is appreciated even more than usual.

Suzanne: Do we have any guarantee that the mailing house and the printer are going to be in business and able to serve us appropriately?

AI: Suzanne can check in with the new mailing house and Phil can check with Barry, from our printers.

AI:Jon: I have a question for Diane. The Board wants to congratulate both Steve and you on the Nevada Bird Atlas. It's gorgeous. Would you like to run a blurb (with a photo) to Chris about how to obtain the Nevada Bird Atlas? Wendy, I am thinking of Phil's insatiable need for articles for WB, can you send Fernandina's flicker video(that you have) to Phil? That will be an article that the two of us will do with Luiz. It's not a long article.

Phil: So is this going to be a video we are going to put on the website to accompany the article. We have done that a few times.

AI: Jon: Ken Able has an article on a breeding red-necked grebe that should go in.

Bryce: Todd Benson who is working on our website upgrade, has been asking me about redesigning the WFO logo to make it look more modern.

Jon: We have been using Ginger Johnson's logo since the beginning of the organization.

Kurt: Leave it alone for now, it's not a priority.

Jon: On donations, at this time of crisis, I am reluctant to push any of that forward. I would just rather have people make up their minds on their own about making a contribution.

Ed: Both our keynote speaker and Elisabeth Ammon who will give her talk at the beginning of the plenary session, have agreed to participate next year, Aug 25-29 ,2021.

Kurt: Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 21st at 1pm. Thanks everybody for participating in this special meeting. Diane, let me know when I should call C-vent. Don't forget April 5th for Chris's deadline for the newsletter. Thanks for taking on the newsletter Chris.

2:30pm Meeting adjourned.