

**Western Field Ornithologists
Board of Directors
Videoconference
Wednesday, January 26, 2022, 1-4pm PST
(continued coronavirus pandemic)**

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

Board Members present: Jonathan L. Dunn, *President*; Kurt M. Leuschner, *Past President*; John H. Harris, *Vice President*; Shaun F. Wilde, *Treasurer/Membership Secretary*; Liga L. Auzins Wurster, *Recording Secretary*; Wendy L. Beers, Kimball L. Garrett, Daniel D. Gibson, Robert Gill, Susan S. Gilliland, Karen A. Havlena, Andrew Mauro, Diane E. Rose.

Board Members absent: Matthew Baumann, Robin Leong, Don Marsh, Kristie Nelson.

Guests: Philip Unitt, *Editor, Western Birds (WB).*

MINUTES

1:03pm Meeting called to order, welcome and roll.

Jon: Approval of Minutes from 11/03/21 and 12/08/21:

Motion to approve 11/03/21 and 12/08/21 minutes by Andy, seconded by Karen, and passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Shaun

Everyone should be very proud of themselves and the organization from an income perspective for 2021. We had a stronger income due to 3 factors: the conference income, the Birdathon income, and the surprise matching Mallory Grant that happened at the end of the year. We had almost \$10K in donations to the Mallory Matching Grant as of the end of December.

When we went to change signatures on all the accounts (Bank of America) we only had problems with Capital One in our need to add and remove signers. My recommendation is that we close that account and move the money into Bank of America so that we have signature authority.

Motion to ask Suzanne Carota, Past Treasurer, and a signer on the account, to get a cashier's check from our Capital One account in total and deposit it

into our Bank of America account, where we have signature authority, made by Andy, seconded by Kurt, and passes unanimously.

The money that will be deposited into the Bank of America account

Tax Reporting and Tax Advisor: The 1099s have gone out. We need to consult for our Form 990. I reviewed 5 people. The one I am leaning toward works with about 100 non-profits doing the 990 which is the California form and is in the approximate dollar range that we were considering, \$700-1000. We must have this in by May, so in the interest time I will go ahead with the documents. If anyone wants to have a discussion with this person, I can arrange that.

ACTION ITEM: I will send out an email with the recommendation for the tax advisor.

Jon: Is there anyone on the Board opposed to what Shaun has outlined about moving forward? Hearing no objections, Shaun will move ahead with her plan.

There have been ongoing discussions with Ron Mallory. I think his current thinking is that we have raised over \$10,000, and it is hard to know where we will be in May; an estimate might be about \$15,000 and the matching grant would be another \$15,000, so we will have raised a total of \$30,000. I am hoping to talk to Ron further on this as to plans after May 15th, when it will become a 6-month matching grant. I am hoping Ron would be open to other ideas with the remaining \$35,000. Maybe we could put out another blast and announce when the check will be due and when do you want to donate to the 'Grant for Publications.' Currently we are still in Ron's thoughts regarding the distribution of money to worthy causes. I think his thinking now is that he will call whatever it is on May 15th, and he will match that amount in May, but he will look for other ways to support WFO, may be in a new endeavor. We want to accommodate his wishes on that. I will stay in touch with Ron and be as transparent as possible with the full Board. He is loyal, a Patron, and a strong supporter of WFO.

Membership: Update: Shaun: We now get more renewals through Paypal than checks. I feel we are on target. For the last bit of those who did not respond by email, I used snail mail to encourage them to donate to WFO when they renew. This will go out early in February after everything is printed. In addition, we always managed the Life membership installments and the Life Members. I do have several Life Members that I reached out to encourage them to pay their final installment.

ACTION ITEM: At the next Board meeting Shaun will give you the numbers details on the 'lapsed' Life Memberships.

ACTION ITEM: These 'lapsed' people probably are devoted to WFO and we may know them so some of the Board could reach out.

I have gotten a lot of questions from the CBRC regarding handling their funds, i.e., who donated, etc. I must think about how to set it up so that we can track that adequately. I don't think there is anything in the Bylaws that talks about that, and I feel there should be, from a financial perspective.

Jon: This is an important topic. It's not just the CBRC but making sure that other rarities reports are published in **WB**. We might monitor the amount of money that is donated to publish that report. Dan always seems to know the total. We need to decide whether it needs to be a Bylaw or just an understood policy. We want to get most of the page costs back, (that's why people donate to the CBRC), so that when we publish the reports it's not costing the organization per se. We have only received 10% of the page costs. BRCs often raise money within their own state to pay for page costs. We need to figure out a system with Shaun, Dan, Phil, and Kimball and have it clear so that Shaun knows what is going on.

Dan: I pay attention to all BRCs and their page costs. It involves splitting the cost among the authors or the Committee members. My activism was prompted by the UBRC report a few years ago where not a penny was collected. I do remind authors by email about page costs. Most of them don't mind being reminded.

Kimball: The California Bird Records Committee (CBRC) and the Hawaiian Bird Records Committee (HBRC) are actually committees of WFO whereas the reports submitted from other state Bird Records Committees (BRC) are not directly affiliated with WFO. We might need to do more accounting for HBRC and other committees where it is simply a matter of coming up with the money internally for the page charges. We need to keep tabs on that to know if they are costing us money.

Dan: I understand what you are saying but I've expected the same thing from every BRC. The BRCs in CA and HA are completely familiar with the process and how they reimburse themselves if necessary. It is not a concern.

Shaun: If they are an official committee of WFO, then like all other committees, they should be submitting a budget as they fall under our whole purview.

Jon: We have always asked what does it mean to be a committee of WFO? What's the advantage? There has never been a good answer on that. We just happen to be committees of WFO. The CBRC was joined at the hip 52 years ago with WFO as a committee. I would suggest since this sort of thing comes under publications as much as anything, Kimball, could you schedule a meeting to

discuss this? If nothing else, we can improve our communications so that states like Utah need to know upfront that they are expected to contribute. Set the guidelines a little firmer.

ACTION ITEM: Kimball will talk to Dan, Phil and Shaun and Jon about the issue of page charges and recouping them from various committees.

Kimball: The recouping of page charges is a totally different issue from what it means for the CBRC to be a committee of WFO in terms of finances, budgets, etc. That is not a Pubs Committee issue, but an overall issue and needs to be resolved.

ACTION ITEM: What it means for the CBRC to be a committee of WFO in terms of finances, budgets, etc., needs to be resolved.

Dan: Jon, some time ago you asked me 'Why the Alaska Committee doesn't want to be a WFO committee.' I went digging and found that every member of the Alaska committee is a member of WFO. We do not want to be a formal committee of the organization because the Bylaws require an annual report, and we didn't think we had enough business to warrant a report.

ACTION ITEM: Jon: Maybe Dan, Shaun, and Tom Benson, the Secretary of CBRC, also Justyn Stahl, the Chairperson, should get together.

ACTION ITEM: Shaun: First is discovery so I would like to have a conversation with Phil and Kimball just to understand, and then figure out where to go from there.

1:45pm **Committee Reports:**

Finance Committee: Kurt

Report: The Finance Committee will meet right after this meeting to discuss the Legacy project and where we stand with that. Shaun has been doing homework on that.

Shaun: I have a contact at National Audubon in the National Audubon Giving Office. They have been very forthcoming with materials around both giving policies and Legacy Funds. They sent me 6 documents on how to set this up. It is a program they have developed for their chapters.

ACTION ITEM: Shaun has materials from the National Audubon Giving Office that she will share with Kurt and the Committee in order to plan setting something up.

Jon: Kurt, if possible, we would like to see something established by the middle of May which would lead to having a program in place. The language we should use is: 'The Investment Fund', and 'Legacy Society' They are 2 different entities. Obviously, they are going to be linked, but just think of it as an investment fund that is different from the Legacy Society.

Shaun: We should look at it as an investment policy strategy. It's how we manage our money in general. I don't know that it is well articulated. One of the audit findings was that we didn't have a clear policy on how we should manage our money. There is this Legacy giving and what it means in a Legacy Society. I think we are talking about 2 different processes, but they are linked together. There is investment management of the WFO money and then there is the Legacy giving.

Kurt: I think the average long-term investor in WFO who wants to leave their legacy to us isn't going to mind that we invest their funds, so I am thinking that that is going to be the default unless somebody specifically doesn't want their funds to be invested.

1:52pm Part-time administrative position: John Harris

In December we approved creating a new part-time administrative assistant position on a trial basis for \$3,000, assuming a payrate of \$25/hour for about 10 hours per month. Shaun and I put together a list of tasks for this person to be involved with. Much of this was developed by the work that Shaun did with Suzanne during the Treasurer transition in defining what were the key functions of the Treasurer and those that were not. I sent everyone a simple one paragraph description of what this position would entail. Shaun and I will work to identify candidates. Jen Hajj has done quite a bit for us in the last year working with the conference, the Birdathon, and Diane on C-Vent, etc. She would be a person who might be interested in this position, and she is familiar with our inner workings, which would be a plus.

Jon: Jen has been fantastic to work with. As to whatever employment she has, there was a memo that that it would be coming to an end. She was looking forward to getting potentially involved with WFO activities. I think her personality is ideal to work with. I am all in favor of Jen if she is interested and if she feels it fits her abilities.

ACTION ITEM: John H. and Shaun will discuss how the training for this position will impact Shaun's schedule.

1:57pm Publications Committee: Kimball

Let me briefly mention the *Studies in Western Birds*, the newsletter, and then Phil's **WB** report which will lead into the web Search Engine Optimization (SEO) issues. I don't think we need to go over the potential monographs right now. The *Inyo* report: Thanks to a lot of work from Ken Able, Jon Dunn and now Matt Heindel. The book is making major progress with the possibility of being published by the end of this year. As to the newsletter, Judith, the Editor, couldn't be here but you saw her first newsletter which is excellent. She is still working on the modernization of the presentation of the newsletter on the web.

ACTION ITEM: Everybody please give Judith feedback and consider contributing to the newsletter which is necessary for it to function as such.

Jon: I contacted Richard Erickson, who has published and done a lot of work in Baja. He agreed to do a monograph on birds of Baja.

ACTION ITEM: Jon will contact Bob Gill regarding a monograph on the birds of Baja with Richard Erickson.

Phil: This concept has been pursued in the past with Richard Erickson.

Western Birds (WB): We did very well for 2021. You all got my message about Ginger Johnson's stroke. Any encouragement you can give her will be much appreciated. I can pick up her tasks. You could also mail her a warm card as her address is on the Board Directory List.

Jon: Ginger is one of our founders along with Pierre Devillers, Jean Terschuren, Alan Craig, Guy McCaskie and Cliff Lyons who is no longer with us. Ginger is so vital to the history of the WFO.

Phil: We are close to being on track for publication on the 1st of February. In issue 1 we typically include a list of our financial contributors in the past year. Our donations and fundraising this last year were considerably different than in the past. We want to say something about contributors to the Birdathon and contributors to Ron Mallory's Matching Grant in some succinct way to tailor this to the unique circumstances of this past year.

ACTION ITEM: Shaun: There were over 300 contributors just for the Birdathon. For the Mallory Matching Grant, I can quickly go look. **Phil:** You will see this information when I circulate the final proof by this Friday.

2:00pm Phil: The supply chain agony has hit our printer, Barry Blackwood, hard. Again, we had issues with the paper supply which could delay printing. We should still be

able to go ahead and publish electronically on the 1st of February. With respect to the 'perfect binding,' I asked Barry, "If a customer came to you with the same size and shape as **WB**, would you recommend 'perfect binding' or saddle stapling?" Barry's answer was 'perfect binding.' So, I said let's go for it but that entails a printing cost increase of 20%.

Tim Brittain has been making progress on the packaging of the articles electronically the way Google Scholar would like to have them, with a separate page that has an abstract and then a link to the .pdf. This has been fine all along, and he went back from today into history. Then Google Scholar started inserting abstracts. We don't have abstracts for the first 30 years of **WB**. The ideal solution is that all those papers should have an abstract. So, I would have to write an abstract for the first 30 years of **WB**.

Bob: That would be a Herculean task. Could you parcel it out to the editorial staff or is it something you would like to keep some continuity to it?

Phil: We need to hear from Todd Benton before starting on the abstracts. However, getting us onto Google Scholar is a super-high priority, even vital. If we could ask each person on our team to do 4 yrs. worth, then that would make it much more digestible and then I could edit the ones that I didn't do.

Dan: The abstracts are for every paper of 5 or more pages so with the existing index of all 50 yrs. of **WB**, you can easily see how many papers are going to demand that. I suspect there are a lot of short papers. We should see just how many papers we are talking about.

Phil: It still will be over one hundred over 30 years, from before the year 2000.

Jon: Did the *Auk* have to do this? Although the best person to write an abstract is the author, but anyone who quickly goes through a paper and puts it into an abstract, the author then, if he is still alive, could say, "Who put that in?" This opens a Pandora's box of unpleasanties, not to mention the individual effort required.

ACTION ITEM: Could someone write to see if this situation existed with other ornithological journals? See when abstracts appeared and see if they are on Google Scholar without new abstracts being created.

Dan: Why don't you send an email letter to the Editors of the kind of journals you were talking about.

Jon: You could go through some ornithological journal from the '70's and see if they are on Google Scholar. If the paper is there without an abstract, you have to find out why. Why are we being required when others got a pass.

Bob: This day when papers are released online, they ask you to prepare a small summary paragraph which is different than the abstract which goes into the paper itself. So, what are we talking about here?

Phil: Typically, Google Scholar recognizes a scientific paper because it has an abstract. Google Scholar does not have a Help Desk. Like everybody else confronting this problem, there is no clear path to finding the answers. That's why we need someone like Todd Benton.

Dan: If we are allowed to provide a summary in lieu of an abstract that didn't exist with the paper that certainly takes the heat off anybody other than what the writer had to say about it.

Kimball: I don't understand if we supplied an abstract, how would it get inserted into the paper?

Phil: It would be on a separate web page. It is an intermediate step before the.pdf of the paper. That's what Google Scholar likes. If it can be circumvented in some way, that is what we want to do.

ACTION ITEM: Phil will talk with Tim and Todd and try to find out what other journals have done with respect to abstracts and summaries.

In addition, a more important issue than Google Scholar, is the coding, the meta tags within. I mentioned this to Tim, but he is focused on other tasks.

ACTION ITEM: We really need to find someone to go into all the files for all the articles and put in this little bit of extra coding. We are going to have to pay for it and we are going to have to find someone to do it. We need to find someone who knows what he is doing and can do it, maybe Todd Benton could refer someone.

Jon: So, Phil, on that last issue, and since we are asking for an extra administrative person to help, is that something we could put in our newsletter or a flash/blast to our membership? Is this the sort of thing that we could put out and pay a graduate student?

Action item: Kimball: We need to make sure the Board is okay with going forward in investigating this, getting an estimate, and then approving it. The number of articles will be on the order of 400 or so over the 30

years. If you take a full-length article in 1 volume with 4 issues, it might not be more than 20 or so per year.

2:25pm Meetings Committee: John Harris:

Report: 2022 Reno Conference : Ed P. Had a full schedule of 52 field trips. It looks like 80-90% of those who were willing to lead field trips before will be willing to do so again. There may be some trips that need to be rerouted due to last year's fires. I have been in touch with people from the Lahontan Audubon Society who offered to do scouting, help find alternate leaders, etc. I think the field trips will be in pretty good shape. The plenary speaker will be Elisabeth Ammon, the Executive Director of the Great Basin Bird Observatory(GBBO). This is the GBBO's 25th anniversary. I am going to work with her to see if we can do some special things around that. Rodney Siegel who is Director of the Institute for Bird Populations(IBP) is confirmed as the keynote speaker at the banquet. Kimball has agreed to chair the science sessions, and we are working on getting help with the A/V. We already have in place an A/V contract. Don Marsh has offered to help. He was the key A/V person for the Central Valley Bird Club Symposium. Jon D. has talked about having a student help and I may even look for a third person. I have several workshops confirmed from people who had agreed to do them before. I'll probably work on a couple of others. I confirmed Nathan Pieplow and Ed Harper to do the sound quiz and photo I.D. panel respectively. Tom Blackman is going to do a photo contest again online before the conference. At the in-person conference, we will recognize the winning photograph or two. I am likely to make a site visit to the hotel within the next few weeks so I can see it in person for the first time and work further on hotel arrangement details. We will also meet with Elisabeth. Karen has offered to help too. I don't think we will have many vendors, but I think we will want to have some space for both the GBBO and Lahontan Audubon for some display material. Many field trips leaders are coming from those two organizations.

Diane: ED P. had set up a discount for the Lahontans and where they would pay whatever the WFO members paid whether they were a member of WFO or not. After working with them for some time, they decided that they didn't need that. They would help us nevertheless.

Report: 2023 Conference:

Jon: We have two possible venues. One was Grand Junction, in the mountains of SW Colorado in early August and the other was San Diego in the September. We haven't done anything beyond that. Tom Blackman, if not owning the conference was willing to help in San Diego. Whichever one we did not do in 2023 would

potentially be done in 2024. The San Diego Birding Convention (Festival) has a hotel that works well. I assume Jen Hajj could help on that.

2:35pm Student Programs: Wendy

Report: We need to send out notifications to apply for scholarships now that it looks like the in-person conference is going to happen. John H. has contact with some past recipients.

John H.: Over the past 2 years we have had a total of 6 grant recipients, which included a high school student. Basically, when the grants were awarded, we asked them for either a written report or that they report on their work at one of our conferences. Two of the recipients gave presentations at our virtual conference which can still be reviewed on our YouTube channel. The other 4 have all submitted reports. That information will hopefully be in the next newsletter.

Jon: A brief update on Daniel Wait, grant recipient: He did not find spotted towhees in places he expected, and he is returning for another field season. He didn't ask for more money, he just asked for locations for spotted towhees. The study is ongoing, and Carla Cicero is helping him.

John H.: It is almost that time of year to send out the announcement on next year's grants.

ACTION ITEM: When we put out the call for papers for the conference, we will contact all the grant recipients.

Andy: Are these grants for students who have a specific project ongoing or is it also for students who are applying to grad school in ornithology and need a little help for tuition, etc.?

John H.: No, it is for specific projects, so they must submit a project description, a budget, and a support letter from their advisor.

Jon: There is a student, Nicholas Earnhart, whose mother put out a plea that if anyone has extra issues of **WB** and is looking to get rid of them, he would love them. You can send the issues to me, and I will forward them to Lake Forest, where he lives. He is hoping to come to Reno. He is 13/14 years old.

Website Committee: Don Marsh (report related by Jon)

Report: Don is out of town and has a meeting scheduled on February 16th. He and Judith, our newsletter Editor, are working diligently on our e-mail blasts, etc.

2:42pm Outreach/Fundraising Committee:

Birdathon: Andy: I sent out the After-Action Report (AAR). We raised \$35,000 and had 300 donors. Our expenses were \$5,000. We are pleased with the outcome of the Birdathon. The committee met via Zoom and came up with 6 recommendations that we would like the Board to consider and hopefully move on.

1. Retain Jen Hajj as the contract administrator for the Birdathon. She did a great job. She understood the issues of our organization.
2. We plan to have our next Birdathon in Spring 2023.
John H.: The Spring Birdathon spreads out our fundraising throughout the year, i.e., conference and year end fundraising.
Andy: We need to make an adjustment in the budget.
Kurt: We could alternate between Spring and Fall. Doing it every 1-1/2 years.
Andy: Dave Shuford is a strong supporter of the Birdathon and is a very important member of the committee.
3. The administrative platform that we utilized was C-vent which is not designed for a birdathon. The committee would like to have Jen investigate utilizing the system that Point Blue uses with some price quotes, learn their system, and see if it would solve our issues. An alternative program is something called SkyBlue. We are also talking to C-vent to see if they might accommodate certain fixes that might make C-vent work better for the Birdathon. Hopefully that will allow us to decide in May on which way we are going to go. Also, there may be a possibility that this program would help our current membership system.
4. The pileated woodpecker worked well for our first Birdathon as a signature species. We should choose a theme each year that focuses on the WFO mission that we can call special attention to, and then pick a signature bird that might help reflect an aspect of our mission. The question was raised, how are we going to help a threatened species because of this Birdathon? We might have information in our new Birdathon webpage that elucidates this.
5. Dedicate the net proceeds from the next Birdathon to the new WFO Legacy Fund, something which will be discussed in the upcoming Board meetings.
Shaun: Let's see the Legacy Society created and then let's see how the Birdathon Committee can work with that.
6. The Committee to refine some of the minor details that are required to put together the next Birdathon.

Andy: Those are the recommendations for the Birdathon. Also included is a recommendation for some type of conservation program that encourages WFO members to become volunteers on behalf of WFO. We could even tie it into our

conference site. In the Reno conference where we are getting together with the Great Basic Birds Observatory, maybe they have some project that might benefit from WFO volunteers, getting involved with during the time frame of the conference. Something that we could do positively and directly for conservation in the name of WFO. The second concept was 'What do we do with the proceeds of the Birdathon?' We already talked about the idea of dedicating that money to the Legacy Society. Also maybe setting aside a small specific amount of money (i.e., \$5,000) that could be used to provide a grant to a specific conservation project that is already out there. It could be at the conference site, i.e., one of the local nonprofit conservation groups, resource agencies that could use a little bit of extra money to help support a project they are working on. These are all ideas we could all be thinking about. At this point we are not asking for any action on these ideas, but the Birdathon Committee has been discussing them recently.

Jon: At the risk of being a contrarian, since the condor has gotten so much coverage, I started thinking about little-known projects. We could expose something that is important, so I thought of the *brooksi* subspecies of the northern saw-whet owl in Haida Gwaii (formerly Queen Charlotte Islands), BC. which have a distinctive plumage, or maybe the coastal subspecies of the Vesper Sparrow that is highly threatened, or maybe the ashy storm petrel where Kristie detailed all the problems with the house mice on the Farallons. That would have a direct impact on conservation and bring awareness to our membership. There's a reason why they are a member of WFO, and even if they didn't know the material, they are always thrilled to learn something they didn't know and they are glad to be part of the club. This is indicated by how generous they are to our overall mission. We can query the Board and see what they think.

Kimball: I like the idea of choosing a bird that hasn't gotten all the attention it deserves. I thought of ashy petrel too, gray vireo, and other birds that are in dire straits and aren't getting much funding as is the case for the condor. In going through the long list of recommendations by the Birdathon Committee, I think we should approve Point 1, approving Jen Hajj, and Point 2, setting the dates. Maybe the Committee can vote on a way forward and then report back to the Board in May.

Motion to retain Jen Hajj as the contract administrator for the Birdathon, and to have Spring 2023 as our next Birdathon date, made by Kimball, seconded by Wendy, and passed unanimously.

3:19pm Awards Committee: Karen Havlena

I have had communication with both Jon and Cat Waters. Cat has volunteered to help gather material for our nomination for our Craig Award.

Jon: For the commitment, I would have it done by the 15th of March, before I go to Cuba. Kristie is not here, so we will forgo the **Conservation/Science Policy Committee Report**.

3:21pm Field Trip Committee: Kurt Leuschner

Jon and I have set aside the Nov. 3-6, 2022, for our Coachella Valley, Salton Sea weekend. It may be a youth retreat or Board retreat.

Jon: It will be with the new President, John Harris. The Cuba trip is on for *Wings*, so it should also be on for WFO.

Kurt: Our Cuba trip is still scheduled but I haven't heard from Gary Markowski in a long time even though I keep e-mailing.

ACTION ITEM: Kurt will phone Gary for an update on our Cuba trip.

All other trips are on hold right now, until the world settles down. If you want to lead a trip, let me know and I will help arrange it.

Nominations Committee: John Harris

We do have 1 candidate, Daniel Ruthrauff who has been working with **WB** for quite some time and has agreed to stand for election to the Board. We still need a couple more candidates for our other two positions that Karen and Kimball will be vacating.

ACTION ITEM: Our Committee needs to meet soon and talk about nominations. The Board is welcome to send suggestions of people to enquire of to John H. A potential candidate can advocate for themselves and contact John H. for further information.

New Business:

Updating Bylaws: Jon: Our Bylaws are old and need updating. I have asked Karen, Shaun, and John H. to go over the Bylaws and come up with potential changes. It is a one-time subcommittee examining the Bylaws and reporting potential and suggested changes by the Spring Board meeting.

3:27pm Motion to adjourn made by Andy, seconded by Diane, and passed unanimously.