50th Annual Conference of the Western Field Ornithologists

In Collaboration with Klamath Bird Observatory and the Oregon Birding Association

September 17–20, 2026 • Ashland, Oregon

Hotel, Travel & Know Before You Go

We are thrilled to gather with you in Ashland, Oregon, for WFO's 50th Annual Conference. This guide is designed to help you arrive prepared, comfortable, and ready to make the most of every moment. Please read it carefully before you travel.

AT A GLANCE: KEY CONFERENCE DETAILS

Conference	50th Annual Conference of the Western Field Ornithologists
Collaboration	Klamath Bird Observatory & Oregon Birding Association
Dates	September 17–20, 2026 (Early arrival September 16; Late departure September 21)
Venue/Hotel	Ashland Hills Hotel & Suites, 2525 Ashland St, Ashland, OR 97520
Phone	(541) 482-8310
Hotel Group Rate	$164/night — book early, rooms are limited!
Direct Booking Link	be.synxis.com/?hotel=40192&group=WESTERNFIELD&arrive=2026-09-16&depart=2026-09-20
Registration Opens	May 20, 2026
Registration Cost	$350 member rate/$75 student rate includes field trips, workshops, sessions & events.
Banquet Add-On	$75/person for the 50th Conference Banquet & Keynote
Questions	conference@westernfieldornithologists.org

REGISTRATION

- Registration opens May 20, 2026 at 9:00 AM PT on the WFO conference website. (Early registration for Life and Patron Members opens May 18, 2026)
- Review field trip options in advance and rank your preferences — popular trips fill quickly.
- Your registration is not complete until payment is submitted. Spots are not held without payment. (**Pro Tip**: Register for the trips you want and check out immediately. Return to registration to select add-on's like t-shirts, grab-and-go meals, etc.)
- Registration fees are non-refundable. Please review the cancellation policy before registering.

HOST HOTEL: ASHLAND HILLS HOTEL & SUITES

We are delighted to welcome you to our host property for WFO's 50th Annual Conference.

Ashland Hills Hotel & Suites

2525 Ashland St, Ashland, OR 97520

Phone: (541) 482-8310

Website: ashlandhillshotel.com

Nestled on 14 scenic acres in the foothills of the Cascade and Siskiyou Mountains, the Ashland Hills Hotel & Suites offers a distinctive 1970s retro-modern atmosphere with panoramic mountain views. The property features spacious guest rooms and suites, an on-site restaurant (Luna Café), outdoor seasonal pool and jacuzzi, fitness center, tennis and pickleball courts, bicycle rentals, a Waterstone Spa Studio, free Wi-Fi, free parking, electric car chargers, and a pet-friendly dog park. It is an ideal setting for our conference community.

RESERVATIONS

Rooms fill quickly for our annual conference. We strongly encourage you to book your room as soon as possible to secure the WFO group rate.

WFO Group Rate: $164/night

Conference Dates: September 17–20, 2026 (arrive as early as September 16; depart by September 21)

Check-In: 4:00 PM **Check-Out:** 11:00 AM

How to Book

1. Online: Visit be.synxis.com/?hotel=40192&group=WESTERNFIELD&arrive=2026-09-16&depart=2026-09-20
2. By Phone: Call (541) 482-8310 and mention the Western Field Ornithologists group rate.

Important: The group rate is available while rooms last. Book early to ensure availability at the conference hotel.

Camping Option

For those looking for an alternative option to lodging during the 2026 Conference, Emigrant Lake Campground offers a beautiful setting overlooking Emigrant Lake. Just 4.2 miles from the Ashland Hills Hotel & Conference Center, reservations for this campground can be made Online or by Phone (541) 774-8183, up to 9 months in advance and a minimum of 15 days in advance of your desired arrival date. Less than 15 days of your arrival date is first come first serve. Learn more on the Jackson County website (insert link): https://www.jacksoncountyor.gov/departments/parks/camping/emigrant_lake/index.php

GETTING TO THE CONFERENCE

Ashland, Oregon, is centrally located halfway between Portland, Oregon, and San Francisco, California, along Interstate 5, making it an accessible destination whether you are traveling by air, car, or bus.

By Air — Rogue Valley International – Medford Airport (MFR)

The nearest commercial airport is Rogue Valley International – Medford Airport (MFR), located approximately 15–18 miles north of Ashland (roughly a 20–25 minute drive). MFR is served by Alaska Airlines, Allegiant Air, American Airlines, Delta, United, and United Express with non-stop flights from San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, Los Angeles, Denver, Phoenix, Las Vegas, and Salt Lake City.

Airport to Hotel: Ground Transportation Options

Taxi/Shuttle

- Travel time: Approximately 20–25 minutes | Estimated cost: $50–$65
- Crater Lake Taxi: (541) 333-3333
- Cascade Shuttle: (541) 488-1998 | info@cascadeshuttle.com
- Rogue Valley Shuttle: roguevalleyshuttle.com (advance reservations recommended)

Rideshare (Uber/Lyft)

- Both Uber and Lyft are available from the Medford Airport. Travel time: approximately 20–25 minutes.

Rental Car

- Rental car agencies are available at MFR. A rental car is highly recommended if you plan to participate in field trips, as all trips operate via carpooling.

Bus

- Amtrak Thruway and Southwest POINT bus services operate between Medford Airport and Ashland. Journey time: approximately 1 hour 10 minutes. Fares: approximately $3–$12. Visit oregon-point.com for schedules.

Driving to Ashland

Ashland is located on Interstate 5. The Ashland Hills Hotel & Suites is at 2525 Ashland St, Ashland, OR 97520, approximately 3 miles from downtown Ashland. Free parking is available on-site.

From	Approx. Drive Time	Approx. Mileage
Portland, OR	4.5 hours	280 miles
Sacramento, CA	4.5 hours	295 miles
San Francisco Bay Area, CA	5.5 hours	370 miles
Eugene, OR	2.5 hours	175 miles
Redding, CA	1.5 hours	100 miles

GETTING AROUND ASHLAND

Ashland is a charming, walkable city with multiple transportation options for you to explore the area.

- Rideshare: Uber and Lyft operate throughout the Ashland/Medford area.
- Taxi: Crater Lake Taxi (541) 333-3333 | Cascade Shuttle (541) 488-1998
- Public Transit: Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) provides bus service Monday–Saturday throughout Ashland and the Rogue Valley. Visit rvtd.org for routes and schedules.
- Bicycle Rentals: Available at the Ashland Hills Hotel & Suites — a great option for local birding and exploring Lithia Park.
- Walking: Downtown Ashland is approximately 3 miles from the hotel and is highly walkable once you arrive.

WHAT TO PACK

Birding Essentials

- Binoculars, and spotting scope, if desired
- Field guide(s) for Pacific Northwest/western North America birds or Merlin Bird ID app
- eBird app or notebook for record-keeping
- Camera and extra batteries/memory cards

Clothing & Gear

September in southern Oregon brings warm days and cool evenings. Morning field trips can be quite cool, especially at higher elevations or near wetlands. Layers are key.

- Moisture-wicking and layerable clothing (lows in the 40s–50s°F in the Rogue Valley)
- Light rain jacket or windbreaker
- Sturdy, comfortable, broken-in walking shoes or boots (especially for field trips on uneven terrain)
- Hat with a brim for sun protection — afternoons can be warm (highs in the 70s–80s°F)
- Sunscreen and insect repellent

Field Trip Supplies

- Water bottle (at least 1 liter recommended; bring more for longer or exposed trips)
- Snacks/lunch (Grab-and-Go meals are available for purchase on the registration website)
- Small day-pack or backpack
- Any personal medications, first aid items, or accessibility aids you may need
- Two-way radios are strongly recommended for vehicle-to-vehicle communication on multi-car carpools

If You Are Driving on Field Trips

- Ensure your vehicle has sufficient fuel before departing; gas stations may not be available near all birding sites.
- All field trips involve carpooling; riders are asked to contribute gas money to drivers.

FIELD TRIP PROTOCOLS

- All field trips depart from the Ashland Hills Hotel & Suites. Please arrive at the meeting point at least 15 minutes before your trip's departure time.
- Trip leaders will have signs with the trip name to help you identify your group.
- Review the field trip descriptions and difficulty ratings carefully before signing up.
- Check the conference website regularly for updates to trip descriptions, leaders, and any itinerary changes.
- Observe all posted rules, tread lightly, and follow Leave No Trace principles at all birding locations.
- Some field trip locations require a recreation pass (America the Beautiful, Federal Land Pass, etc.). Check your trip description in advance.

CODE OF CONDUCT

WFO is committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive, and respectful conference experience for everyone. All participants — attendees, presenters, volunteers, and staff — are expected to treat one another with courtesy and professionalism throughout all conference events, both on and off site.

- Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.
- Respect private property, wildlife, and other visitors at all field trip locations.
- Minimize noise disturbance to wildlife, especially near sensitive nesting areas.
- Follow your trip leader's guidance regarding playback, eBird checklists, and birding etiquette.

HEALTH & SAFETY

- Participants are responsible for their own health and safety during field trips and conference activities.
- Carry any personal medications (antihistamines, EpiPen, inhaler, etc.) with you at all times.
- In an emergency, call 911. The nearest hospital to the conference hotel is Asante Ashland Community Hospital, 280 Maple St, Ashland, OR 97520 | (541) 201-4000.
- Stay hydrated, especially on warm afternoon field trips. Southern Oregon can experience high UV levels in September.
- Watch for uneven terrain, poison oak, and ticks on outdoor field trips. Check yourself after any trip through brushy or wooded areas.

EXPLORING ASHLAND & SOUTHERN OREGON

Ashland is celebrated for the world-renowned Oregon Shakespeare Festival, vibrant dining scene, local wineries, and stunning natural landscapes. Take advantage of nearby attractions before or after the conference.

- Lithia Park – 93 acres of forested canyonland with trails, duck ponds, and picnic areas in the heart of downtown Ashland
- Oregon Shakespeare Festival – World-class theatre in a beautiful outdoor and indoor setting
- Crater Lake National Park – One of America's most iconic natural wonders, approximately 75 miles east
- Rogue River and Klamath River Basins – Outstanding birding opportunities, rafting, and fishing
- Ashland Vineyards and Local Wineries – Southern Oregon wine country is within easy reach
- Siskiyou and Cascade Mountain Ranges – Hiking, scenic drives, and peak fall migration birding

STAYING INFORMED

- Visit the conference website often for updated schedules, field trip lists, and late-breaking announcements: westernfieldornithologists.org
- Watch your email for important pre-conference communications from the WFO team.
- For last-minute questions or issues during the conference, visit the WFO Registration & Help Desk near the hotel lobby.

We look forward to celebrating 50 years of WFO conferences with you in Ashland!

Questions? conference@westernfieldornithologists.org | westernfieldornithologists.org