

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As another year end we can take stock of some of the accomplishments and challenges of our organization. The Colorado Field Ornithologists put on a great meeting last June in Estes Park, which WFO was honored to have co-hosted. Our thanks go to Steve Bouricius and the other hard-working CFO members who put together a gathering full of figurative and literal high points. From the art of ptarmigan-noosing to the fine points of geographical variation in western Marsh Wrens, the field trips and presented papers had something for everybody. The WFO Board of Directors met in Estes Park, and among the many issues that emerged was a desire to place greater emphasis on the scientific program at future meetings. Toward this end, we've scheduled our 1997 meeting where we're assured a captive audience in our air-conditioned lecture rooms: the Imperial Valley in August! After early morning birding on Friday and Saturday 23-23 August, we're planning a full afternoon indoor program emphasizing the ornithology of the Salton Sea and adjacent desert regions of the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico. We'll also hold a workshop on California's breeding-bird atlases, as well as our annual identification panel and related presentations on the fine points of field identification. Then it's back in the field on Sunday, 24 August. Please plan to join us at Imperial's Airporter Inn for our biggest and most ambitious meeting ever.

Our biggest challenge remains increasing our membership; every one of you must know a number of active field ornithologists or serious birders who should become members of WFO. Please show them the journal, give a gift membership, and encourage them to join us in the Imperial Valley in August.

This is an appropriate occasion to recognize the contributions and hard work of Michael Patten, who has served as secretary of the California Bird Records Committee since 1991 and will relinquish that role at the next CBRC meeting. Michael, like his predecessors Don Roberson, Mike Parmeter, John Luther, and Jon Winter, has maintained the highest standards for the committee and made it a model throughout North America. Changes in committee membership and by-laws due at the committee's January 1997 meeting will be reported in this journal. Work continues on a book summarizing the CBRC's decisions through detailed species accounts. We thank the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology for archiving the CBRC records and for hosting several recent committee meetings.

We hope to have a WFO/CBRC home page up and running on the World Wide Web sometime during the first half of 1997; visitors to this site will be able to keep current with CBRC decisions, the table of contents of *Western Birds*, news of upcoming WFO meetings and events, and many other items relating to field ornithology in western North America and the eastern Pacific Ocean.

I would like to conclude this message with a special thanks to three people who hold this organization together. Phil Unitt and Ginger Johnson continue to do a masterful job with *Western Birds*, not only ably editing the journal, but overseeing a hard-working team to produce it. Please get your friends, colleague, and libraries to subscribe to this enlightening journal of field ornithology. And when they do subscribe, all of the work on the financial and circulation side is the domain of Dorothy Myers, our dynamic treasurer, circulation director, and membership secretary. Thank you Phil, Ginger, and Dori!

Please don't hesitate to contact me about our organization. Write, or send an e-mail message to garrett@bcf.usc.edu.

Kimball L. Garrett

Wing Your Way to . . .

Western Field Ornithologists'

22nd Annual Meeting

IMPERIAL VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

21-24 August 1997

at the Airporter Inn in Imperial, adjacent to the Imperial County airport, 3 miles north of El Centro, and near the south end of the Salton Sea.

Field trip destinations on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday mornings include many sites around the Salton Sea and throughout the Imperial Valley. Air-conditioned minivans will be available!

Target species include the Wood Stork, Fulvous Whistling Duck, Yellow-footed Gull, Laughing Gull, Gull-billed Tern, Black Skimmer, Stilt Sandpiper, and many others. The meeting takes place at the peak of waterbird migration, when tens of thousands of shorebirds, Black Terns, and more converge on the Salton Sea. Plus, the timing maximizes our chance of finding frigatebirds, boobies, or other wanderers for which the Salton Sea region is famed.

Because of the high summer temperatures in Imperial County, our field trips will take place in the morning only, and our meetings and scientific presentations will be spread over two afternoons and evenings, Friday and Saturday. In addition, Friday evening features a workshop on bird atlases and the notorious identification panel, Saturday our evening banquet.

Our scientific presentations will focus on the ornithology, biology, and conservation of the Salton Sea area and nearby desert regions. Several well-known field ornithologists have already committed to speak, but we welcome additional speakers. If you would like to present at the meeting, please contact Philip Unitt (San Diego Natural History Museum, P. O. Box 1390, San Diego, CA 92112) or Kimball Garrett (Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, 900 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90007).

Address for registration and correspondence concerning other aspects of the meeting: WFO conference, IVC Desert Museum, P. O. Box 430, Ocotillo, CA 92259.