

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For those of you who attended the Western Field Ornithologists' annual meeting in Kernville in July, I don't need to tell you how successful it was and how much all the participants enjoyed themselves. Bob Barnes and his team of volunteers from Kern County really showed us how to organize a meeting that appealed to every one of the 130 or so members who attended. Bob and the Kern crew deserve our unending gratitude. He set a friendly and casual tone at the onset and it continued that way for the entire meeting. In many respects the meeting was more like a large family reunion. I can't remember a better set of papers and presentations during the three afternoon sessions nor could they have been better attended. The evening plenary sessions were equally informative and enjoyable. If there was a theme for the meeting it was to celebrate and focus our attention on riparian and wetland birds, with the Kern River Preserve providing us with the perfect setting. Excellent papers by top-notch ornithologists and citizen scientists on everything from innovative approaches to gull molt to parrots, nuthatches, gnatcatchers, the accumulation of trash in the North Pacific Gyre, to lepp psyllids rounded out the broad and fascinating topics of discussion.

Celebrating our 30th anniversary, especially with Guy McCaskie's presentation at the banquet about our past history, reminded us again of the purpose of Western Field Ornithologists. From its origin 30 years ago as California Field Ornithologists and evolving shortly thereafter to WFO, our roots are deeply planted in the traditions of field ornithology with a solid link and close cooperation with the professional ornithologists who constitute a significant portion of our membership. That formula has worked very well for 30 years and at the directors meeting your board reiterated its commitment to continue with that mission.

For 14 years Phil Unitt has been our outstanding editor, and the ever-improving quality of *Western Birds* is a direct reflection of his commitment and dedication. Our membership currently stands at about 1000 individuals and institutions, and while it reflects a steady growth over the years we hope to increase that number significantly in the near future. A special effort to tap into states not well represented in our membership will be initiated. We also intend to explore possible links with and recruit new members from Mexico and western Canada. I asked everyone attending the meeting to make a commitment to recruit more members to the WFO family, and I extend that request to all members. Thanks to our hard-working treasurer, Dori Myers, WFO is financially sound, but to keep it that way the board moved to increase dues by \$2.00 for each membership class and raise life membership from \$350 to \$400. A regular membership will be \$22.00. These changes will not be effective until 2001 or the first issue of volume 32 of *Western Birds*. Given the quality of the journal that is still a bargain. Plans are well under way for the next WFO meeting to be held in Reno, Nevada, 27-30 September 2001. Situated where the Great Basin meets the Sierra Nevada, the Reno/Truckee Meadows area offers birders the chance to explore a rich variety of bird life. From the extraordinary drama of Lake Tahoe to its terminus at Pyramid Lake, the Truckee River reveals dramatic changes of habitat. Nearby Stillwater Wildlife Refuge and the Carson Lake wetlands attract large numbers of shorebirds and waterbirds, while the Sierra Nevada offers a spectacular variety of montane species including the Blue Grouse, Clark's Nutcracker, and Pine Grosbeak. Late September is also an excellent time for unusual birds to occur in that part of Nevada. Early commitments for a broad variety of stimulating topics by some of the best ornithologists in the west promises to highlight another terrific meeting. Even though it's a year away, make your plans now to attend. For more information please contact Lucie Clark at luclark@sierra.net. In the near future also look for more information about Reno 2001 on our website, www.wfo-cbrc.org.