

The Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology is a 501(c)(3), tax-exempt, non-profit research institution whose mission is to obtain, protect, and manage ornithological collections in a manner that ensures their continued survival and accessibility to the international research community, educators, and students.



# WESTERN FOUNDATION OF VERTEBRATE ZOOLOGY



Linnea S. Hall, Ph.D.

## *A Bird's Eye View* FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the Fall 2008 Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology newsletter! In this issue, you'll see highlights of the projects we've been working on over the summer, including the

finishing of the painting of our 180 donated specimen cabinets; a project to survey Loggerhead Shrikes (*Lanius ludovicianus anthonyi*) on Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz islands in the California Channel; our continuing Guatemala project; our new website; and the release of a new book on the WFVZ's collections, entitled *EGG and NEST*.

The Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology continues to play an important role in the provision of data and specimens for important bird research studies going on all over the world. In 2007, we supplied information from our collections to at least 200 such projects, and in 2008, we have already supplied information to more than 100 different projects. Recent publications based on our data were published in national and international peer-reviewed journals, including *Alauda*, *Animal Behaviour*, *Boletín Sociedad Antioqueña de Ornitología*, *Condor*, *Ecography*, *Evolution*, *Journal of Field Ornithology*, and *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution*.

All natural history museums play a critical role in understanding and conserving the world's birds. Museum collections are not only repositories of specimens, but of history. For example, the value of a bird egg, nest, skin, skeleton, song recording, or tissue that was collected at

a known locale on a known day in the 1800s gives us a snapshot of what the conditions were like for birds at that time — what the vegetation, weather, food resources, and even causes of death were at that particular spot at that particular moment. This information has allowed researchers to determine that the environment has changed **a lot** over the past 200 years: weather patterns have altered enough that many bird species are now breeding weeks earlier each year, migration timing has been disrupted, and distributions of birds are shifting northward. The continued availability of historic bird specimens is thus crucial to identifying specific changes that occur over time.

The Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology is a unique repository of history in the U.S. The size of our egg and nest collections (the largest in the world!) allows researchers to survey bird breeding records covering wide geographic areas and long spans of time. More uses for these materials are being found each year — for example, DNA can now be extracted and identified from old eggshells; pollen grains and plant parts can be reliably identified from old nests; and isotopes of carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen (as well as contaminants such as lead) can be isolated from old feathers and old bones. It's one of the main reasons why the staff of the WFVZ love working here: our collections hold real significance for today's environmental issues, and it makes us proud to contribute!

As always, if you want to contact us, feel free to call (805/388-9944) or visit our website ([www.wfvz.org](http://www.wfvz.org))!

*Best wishes, Linnea*

### Welcome New Members

Thank you for your support and welcome to our flock!

Peregrine Falcons \$250+:	Edward & Susie Beall
Brown Pelicans \$100+:	Carolyn Green, Kay Register
American Kestrels \$50+:	Mrs. John E. Boething
Loggerhead Shrikes \$25+:	Brian & Angela Southern

### Upcoming Events

See page 6 for details about these events!

WFVZ Open House:	October 18
WFVZ Public Tours:	Oct. 31, Nov. 28, Dec. 19
Conejo Valley Audubon:	Oct. 6, Nov. 3, Dec. 1

## News from the Collections

Saludos! Thanks to the generous assistance of **William Langford**, Board Member, and **Willard (Bill) Anderson**, Volunteer, all of the 180 cabinets that the WFVZ received from the California Academy of Sciences in January 2008 are now painted and sporting hardware! Volunteers **Mary Holmes** and **Jennifer Carlson**, and Collections Assistant **Jenny Kobernik**, have also been helping me shift eggs into the new cabinets so that we can create more space in our main collection and in our teaching collection.

Data entry on both the egg and nest collections and the study skin collection continues... In a mere three months Jenny and I have entered hundreds of records, which puts us up to nearly 34% of the records computerized! Volunteers **Dixie and Bill Anderson** continue to enter the remaining data for our skin records, and are now on their last row in the collections.

**Eddie Corado**, my son, continued to prepare study skin specimens for us this summer, preparing at least 150 skins, and keeping me very busy cataloging them into the computer!

Volunteer **Peggy Ellis** continues to work with our library, assisted by Volunteer **Peg Stevens**. Having finished reorganizing our serials, Peggy has now moved on to reorganizing the books, and entering all of the volumes into our library database. She and Peg are about 33% of the way through the book library.



**Urban Kubat** (right) impressed **René** and Urban's nephew **Mike Clancy** with his keen memory about egg sets he collected in the early 1900s.



From left: **René** with researchers **Bill McGiver** and **Harry Carter**, preparing Ashy Storm-Petrel eggs for analysis.

We received a number of Ashy Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma homochroa*) egg specimens this summer as part of a contaminants-monitoring project with biologists **Harry Carter**, **Bill McGiver**, and **Laurie Harvey**, made possible by a grant from the Montrose settlement. Analyses of the egg contents will determine the extent to which Ashy Storm-Petrels continue to be affected by DDT and DDE, both of which are still present in ocean waters off the California coast.

I also continue to work on matching the data cards with the eggs in the collection of H. Arden Edwards from southern California (late 1800s–early 1900s). I am approximately 75% of the way through this project; and although it is slow and time-consuming, it is extremely rewarding to see these specimens reunited with their information so that they can be used by researchers.

We had a wonderful visit from 92-year-old collector **Urban Kubat**, from Oregon, whose egg collection was acquired in the 1970s by Ed Harrison, the founder of the WFVZ. Urban,

who never thought he would see his 1,000 sets of eggs again, was delighted to visit them, and he surprised Dr. Hall and me by recognizing all of them! Not only did he recognize all of his sets, but he also remembered precise details about every set — down to the particulars of the weather on the days they were collected back in the early 1900s. He was a delight to have at the museum, and we sincerely hope that he will visit us again!

Lastly, we had two donations of lovely mounted specimens over the past few months: a full-size Greater Rhea (*Rhea americana*), donated by **Edward Carson Beall**, A.I.A., from his private collection in Torrance; and a Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*), donated by **Mel Hixson**, the son of **Alton Hixson**, who mounted the bird after finding it in San Francisco Bay.

If you want to find out more about what's happening in the collections of the WFVZ, feel free to write or call me!



*René Corado*  
Collections Manager



*Mount of an adult Greater Rhea, recently donated to the Foundation.*





Can you find the man in this photo?  
 Look hard (in the center top area) to find WFVZ volunteer **William Langford** kneeling on top of one of the 180 donated specimen cabinets that he and others painted and equipped for the Foundation's use.



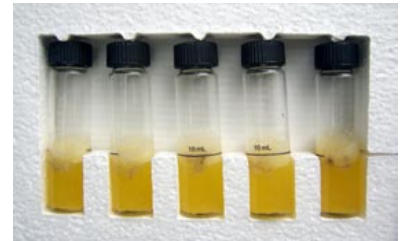
## *Research & Collaborations*

### Guatemala Project

The WFVZ returned to Guatemala in May–June 2008 for its bird monitoring project in the Rio Motagua Valley in central Guatemala (see map).



A new aspect of the Foundation's work this summer was to collect water quality data for the Rio Motagua, such as the amount of dissolved oxygen (a measure of how much oxygen is available to fish) and the amount of bacterial contamination (such as by *E. coli* fecal bacteria). We found that the water was even more highly contaminated than we anticipated, which led us to discuss the seriousness of the problem with the Director of CONAP (Consejo de Areas Protegidas; Department of Protected Areas), the main resource agency in Guatemala. CONAP Director **Jorge Ruiz** said that he would work with the WFVZ to bring the high degree of river pollution to the attention of the Guatemalan Ministers of the Environment and Agriculture. A meeting with all of these officials at our field site along the polluted Rio Motagua is now scheduled for January during our next visit.



*Vials of highly contaminated water (yellow indicating presence of *E. coli* bacteria) from the Rio Motagua.*

In addition to raising the Guatemalan government's awareness about the seriousness of the pollution problem to its inhabitants (wildlife and people), the WFVZ also hopes to bring the issue to the attention of U.S. experts in water and wastewater treatment, and pollution abatement. Dr. Hall is now working on contacting such experts in the hope that they will want to assist with the problem.



If you are interested in helping the WFVZ with the Guatemala project, or in learning more about it, feel free to contact Dr. Hall.

*> Photos taken at our study site along the Rio Motagua, showing the normal amounts of trash in the vegetation along the river. Note the height of trash in lower photo.*



## Our 2008 MEMBERS

### Bald Eagles

\$1,000 +



Thomas E. Caestecker  
Eunice & Douglas Goodan  
Cele & Don Hall  
Betty Harrison

### California Condors

\$500 – \$999



Russ & Linda Charvonia  
Dr. Linnea S. Hall  
Kathleen Killelea

### Peregrine Falcons

\$250 – \$499



Bill & Dixie Anderson  
Ron Barnes, D.V.M.  
Natasha Bartley  
Edward & Susie Beall  
Michael Kelly, D.V.M.  
Carol & Bill Langford  
Suzanne N. & Bryce Neff  
Therese Pulich-LeRoy  
Gwen & David Sivertsen

### Brown Pelicans

\$100 – \$249



Dixie & Bill Anderson  
Lance Benner  
Thomas & Victoria Cloonan  
Raymond Connor  
Don Cunningham  
Jeff Davis  
Robert G. Dickson  
Marcia Edwards  
Jon C. Fisher  
Jill Forman  
Tom Gallardo,  
Gallardo & Associates  
Murray Goldstein  
Carolyn Green  
Robb & Anita Hamilton  
E. A. Hankins III, M.D.  
Jean & Bill Hulberg  
Pete & Sharon Irish  
Eric V. & Christine R. Johnson  
Susan Kaveggia

More Brown Pelicans ...

## Island Loggerhead Shrike Project

In July, **Dr. Hall** sailed to Santa Rosa Island — several miles off the coast from the Ventura marina, in the Santa Barbara Channel — to create a strategy to determine the number of uncommon Island Loggerhead Shrikes on Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz islands in 2009 and 2010. For three days Linnea and a team of biologists traveled and flew over Santa Rosa Island to discuss the logistical — and statistical — issues involved in the development of a thorough and sound population estimation survey for this subspecies, which occupies canyons with rough, and sometimes inaccessible, terrain. The team then flew to Santa Cruz Island, where they discussed similar logistical and sampling design considerations for two days.

Since the fieldtrips the team has been discussing the best ways to sample the populations on the two islands, and they think they have designed a rigorous sampling protocol. The next step is to recruit experienced, field-savvy volunteers who are willing to work in rough conditions on the islands for at least one full tour (four days) in April and/or May 2009. Dr. Hall is in charge of coordinating volunteers for this project, so if you are interested in being a shrike surveyor, contact her no later than February 1, 2009.



*Flying High: Team members enjoyed spectacular views of Santa Rosa (shown) and Santa Cruz islands during their four-day strategic planning trip.*



*Team members at the Loggerhead Shrike project planning meeting on Santa Rosa Island (from left): **Susan Teele**, National Park Service, California Mediterranean Research Learning Center Director; **Melissa Booker**, U.S. Navy Biologist; **Kevin Schallert**, NPS CMRLC Intern; **Linda Dye**, NPS Researcher; **Dr. Tom Stanley**, U.S. Geological Survey Population Ecologist. (**Dr. Linnea Hall** not shown.)*

## Education

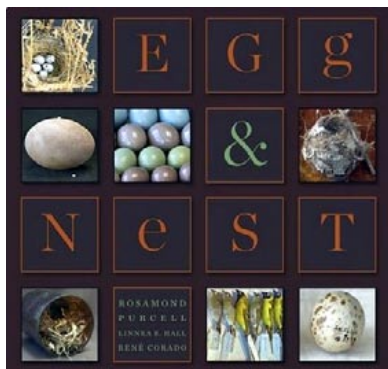


The Foundation's Fall 2008 Ornithology ("study of birds") class is underway. Held each fall, from late August through mid-December, the class covers all of the "classic" ornithology subjects, and is open to interested students who have some ecology background or experience.

***Dr. Linnea Hall** displays study skins to students at the Foundation's Ornithology class.*



## New Publication



**EGG and NEST**, by Rosamond Purcell, Linnea S. Hall, and René Corado, published by Harvard University Press, October 2008. (Hardback, 224 pp., \$39.95 each plus CA sales tax (\$2.90) + S&H).

Just published by Harvard University Press, the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology proudly announces its beautiful new book, **EGG and NEST**, celebrating the ornithological collections of the WFVZ.

Intended to please both the layperson and the expert alike, it features more than 175 spectacular photographs by **Rosamond Purcell**. Each plate is captioned by WFVZ staff members **Dr. Linnea S. Hall** and **Mr. René Corado** with collection data and background information about bird anatomy, conservation, ecology, and physiology, as well as historical information on the pictured specimens. A preface is provided by **Bernd Heinrich**, followed by an introduction to the WFVZ by Linnea and René. The introduction includes a history of the Foundation and of its founder, Ed N. Harrison, as well as a brief history of the practice of oology.

To order autographed copies of the book, contact the WFVZ directly (805/388-9944) or visit the new **Gift Store** on the WFVZ website ([www.wfvz.org](http://www.wfvz.org)) to purchase with a credit card.

## New Website Takes Flight!

With the wonderful assistance of website developer **Frank Nilsen** of EfnWeb.com ([efn@efnweb.com](mailto:efn@efnweb.com), 866/207-2548), the WFVZ developed and launched an updated website ([www.wfvz.org](http://www.wfvz.org)) this summer. **René Corado** oversaw the project of migrating the text from the old site, as well as updating the pictures and completing the new **Gift Store** on the new site. Be sure to visit the site and let us know what you think!



## Our 2008 MEMBERS

### More Brown Pelicans ...

Karl & Trudy Letsch  
John Lobel  
Nobuko McClure  
Michael Morrison  
Kay Regester  
Marian & Steve Rothstein  
Dina Scheel  
William L. Shilley  
Dr. Donald & Millie Seidman  
Christa Stiernef  
Robert Tallyn & Betsy Bachman  
Janet Tholen & Allen Alsbrook  
Mrs. Stewart G. Tuttle  
Janet Wall  
Catherine & Robert Waters  
David Weeshoff  
Don & Cheryl Williamson  
Erika Wilson

### American Kestrels

\$50 – \$99



Douglas & Maren Bell  
Peter H. Bloom  
Mrs. John E. Boething  
Ken Butler  
Donald D. & Margery Coler  
Charles T. & Patricia Collins  
René Corado  
Johanna Dawes  
Richard A. Erickson  
Pat & Richard Farris  
Kathryn & Robert Field  
Kimball Garrett & Kathy Molina  
Bill Hammaker  
Dr. Johan Ingles  
Jim Jennings  
Brenda Kanno  
Chrystal & Don Klabunde  
Alexander Lawrence  
Linda & Lionel Melancon  
Anna Milliken  
Riley & Valerie Neel  
Kristie Nelson  
Katherine Owens  
Michael Patten  
Thomas & Barbara Roland  
Judith Rothman  
Walt Sakai  
Larry Sansone  
Clifford E. & Julie Schackelford  
Nancy Schorsch  
Margaret E. Stevens

More Members ...

Our 2008  
MEMBERS

Loggerhead  
Shrikes

\$25 – \$49



- Dr. Marilyn J. Becker  
Manny Beltran  
Bonnie Bowen & Rolf Koford  
Jean D. Brandt  
Elizabeth Buchanan  
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Butler  
Harry Carter  
Lois S. Clements  
Eddie Corado  
Hon. Stanley J. Daily, Mayor Emeritus, City of Camarillo  
Jon L. Dunn  
Peggy Ellis  
Ilene & Robert Fenn  
Dana Gardner  
Yannis Grammatidis  
Bridget Greuel  
Ynez Haase  
Gwendolyn M. Hall  
Jennifer Counter Friedrichsen  
Gjon Hazard  
Kathy & Jeff Lawrence  
Chuck & Helen Loffland  
Sylvia Marcin  
Guy McCaskie  
Margaret Inez Owings  
Jeep Pagel  
Bruce Palmer  
Susan Part  
John & Fran Pavelko  
Warren Pulich  
C.J. & Carol Ralph  
Nancy Reichenbach  
Linda Reynolds  
William & Shirley Seaver  
Brain & Angela Southern  
Ed Tarvyd  
Don & Jacky Wallace

THANKS  
TO ALL OUR  
MEMBERS  
FOR THEIR  
SUPPORT!

Calendar

WFVZ Open House

October 18, Saturday, 10 AM - 4 PM

The WFVZ will hold its sixth annual open house on Saturday, October 18th, during which members of the public are encouraged to tour the Foundation's extensive collections of birds, eggs, and nests, and to experience the ambience of a real research museum! Demonstrations of museum techniques, including "museum-style" egg blowing (see right), will be presented at 11 AM and 1 PM. A book signing will begin at 3 PM with WFVZ Director Dr. Linnea Hall and Collections Manager Mr. René Corado for their new book, **EGG and NEST** (see page 5). Raffles for natural history items will be held at 10:30 AM and 3:30 PM. Items will be available for purchase in our Gift Store, and a Silent Auction will be held all day. Entry is free — although donations are always welcome — and families are encouraged to attend!



WFVZ Public Tours

October 31, November 28, December 19, Friday, 3 PM

The general public is invited to tour the Foundation's large collection of bird eggs, nests, and mounted specimens. Tours are generally held on the last Friday of the month at 3 PM (note the December tour is the third Friday). All tours require a reservation; please call (805/388-9944) at least one day in advance to get on the waiting list. Our suggested donation for public tours is \$3 per person.

WFVZ Seminars

Coming soon!

The WFVZ holds periodic seminars on bird-related topics. Check our website ([www.wfvz.org](http://www.wfvz.org)) for upcoming seminar dates and times!

Conejo Valley Audubon Society Meetings

October 6, November 3, December 1, Monday, 7:30 PM

The Conejo Valley Audubon Society holds its meetings regularly on the first Monday of the month, September through May, from 7:30 to 9 PM. Meetings are held at the Foundation.

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Saturday 8am-noon  
Thursday 8am-7pm  
Vaccine Clinic  
Wed. 9-12  
Sat. 1-3  
6356 Bristol Road 🐾 Ventura 🐾 656-2287  
Michael has been a supporter,  
and is now a Board Member, of the WFVZ.  
We hope you'll patronize his business!

Thanks to FedEx Office

for their discounted printing of this newsletter!

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## Recent DONORS

The following people and organizations have made recent donations to the WFVZ.

### Patrons \$20,000+

Joe Kice  
Douglas & Eunice Goodan

### Contributors \$1,000 – \$20,000

Dr. Bertin Anderson  
Dr. Linnea S. Hall  
Mary Whitfield, Southern Sierra Research Station

### Sponsors \$500 – \$999

American Birding Association  
Conejo Valley Audubon Society: Annual Contribution  
Cele & Don Hall  
Betty Harrison

### Colleagues \$200 – \$499

Breakfast Rotary Club  
Conejo Valley Audubon Society: Building Fund  
Jeff Davis  
John Maio

### Associates \$50 – \$199

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Robert Awo  
Carolyn Bailey  
Andrea Eady, Christian School  
Coleen Cory  
Ted Lee Eubanks, Fermata Inc.  
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Barbara Frantz  
Nobuko McClure  
Michael Morrison, Texas A & M  
Oregon Coast N.W.R.C.  
David & Jeanette Powles  
Linda Reynolds  
Ventura County Museum of History & Art  
Cristina Vanderland & the California Conservation Corps  
Jeffrey Zimmerman

### Donations in Memory of Ed N. Harrison

Richard & Nancy Banning-Call  
Albert E. Bradbury  
Douglas & Eunice Goodan  
Kathy & Brian Killelea

### Donations to the Ed N. Harrison Memorial Scholarship Fund

Howard & Bessie Cogswell  
René Corado  
Betty Hale McLaughlin  
Michael L. Morrison



Getting ready for their close-ups: **Linnea Hall** (above) and **René Corado** (below).



▲ Film crew (from left): **Paul Wustrack** (Audio Engineer), **Arthur Drooker** (Writer/Director), and **Tom Collins** (Cameraman).

## Discovery (Channel) at WFVZ

On September 29th, a film crew from Flight 33 Productions, working on contract for the **Discovery Channel**, came to the WFVZ to film nests in the collections of the WFVZ, and to interview **Dr. Linnea Hall** and **René Corado** about nests of birds from around the world. The three-man crew put in a 9-hour day at the WFVZ, and we hope that all of our work created great footage for the Foundation's 15 minutes in the spotlight on Discovery's "Animal Engineering," to be shown in early 2009. We'll keep you posted as to when the show is officially going to air!

## THANKS TO ALL OUR DONORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT!

### Donations to the Library

Sandy Brem: *monetary donation*  
Don Cunningham: *books and Russian journals*  
Pat Farris: *books & ornithological journals*  
Urban Kubat: *oology and collecting books*  
Nobuko McClure: *for the Elliott McClure Collection*  
Jeannette Powles: *for the Elliott McClure Collection*  
Bill Wolfe, UCLA: *"Structure and Physiology of the Avian Egg" DVD*  
Christopher W. Swarth: *H. Swarth field notebook*  
Summer Wilson: *ornithological journals & books*

### Donations to the Native Plant Relandscaping Project

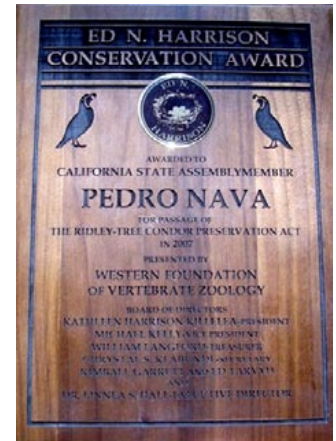
Chris Bumar: *native plants*  
Morris Brown & Susan Eley: *monetary donation*  
Linnea Hall: *monetary donation*  
David & Carrie Hare, Eco-Logics Inc.: *mulch*  
Tom Hayduke & Earlyn Mosher, Soka University Botanical Research Center & Nursery: *native plants*  
Kathy Killelea: *monetary donation*  
George Poug: *monetary donation*  
Margaret Stevens: *monetary donation*  
Native Sons Nursery: *native plants*

### Donations of Goods & Services

Amgen Inc.: *equipment & supplies*  
Trader Joe's, Camarillo Store: *food for Annual Open House*  
Dixie & Bill Anderson: *binoculars, "An Inconvenient Truth" DVD, computer desk, digital camera*  
Jennifer Brown: *office and computer supplies*  
René Corado: *typewriter*  
Peggy Ellis: *laptop computer*  
Daniel Frietas: *office furniture*  
Stephan Giovanisci, DDS: *tools for specimen preparation*  
Diane Hall: *chest freezer for specimens*  
Mark Holmgren, UCSB: *6 specimen cabinets*  
Chrystal Klabunde: *artwork for WFVZ decals & badges, 2 computers*  
Don Klabunde: *computer, monitor, & keyboard*  
Nobuko McClure: *bird banding traps & binoculars*  
Ottavio's Italian Restaurant: *gift certificate for Annual Open House raffle*  
Santa Barbara City College: *2 glass display units*  
Andrew Starrett: *banding supplies*  
Wood Ranch BBQ & Grill: *gift certificate for Annual Open House raffle*

# Ed N. Harrison Conservation Award to Pedro Nava

In early summer 2008, the WFVZ gave its first-ever **Ed N. Harrison Conservation Award** to California Assemblymember **Pedro Nava** (Santa Barbara and Oxnard districts) for his historic role in the conservation of California Condors (*Gymnogyps californianus*). Nava authored the Ridley-Tree Condor Preservation Act (AB 821), designed to remove the threat of lead ammunition from the range of the Condor. The Bill was signed by Governor Schwarzenegger in October 2007.



*"It is an honor to receive this award from the Foundation on behalf of my work to protect the California Condor," said Assemblymember Nava (right) — shown with WFVZ Executive Director Dr. Linnea S. Hall and Collections Manager René Corado.*

## WESTERN FOUNDATION OF VERTEBRATE ZOOLOGY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**Categories:**

- \$ 25: Loggerhead Shrike
- \$ 50: American Kestrel
- \$ 100: Brown Pelican
- \$ 250: Peregrine Falcon
- \$ 500: California Condor
- \$1000: Bald Eagle
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Please mark membership type: NEW\_\_\_ RENEWAL\_\_\_

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*Please make your check payable to: "Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology." We appreciate your thoughtfulness and support. Please note that your membership contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.*

*Return to: WESTERN FOUNDATION OF VERTEBRATE ZOOLOGY, 439 CALLE SAN PABLO, CAMARILLO, CA 93012*

## WESTERN FOUNDATION OF VERTEBRATE ZOOLOGY



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WFVZ News is published quarterly by the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology to keep our Members, Board of Directors, Volunteers, Associates, and the community informed of our activities, resources, and events.

We welcome comments, contributions, and advertising support of our newsletter, and will gladly acknowledge individual or corporate sponsorship in upcoming issues. Please direct correspondence and inquiries to the above address or contact us at:

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