

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

A Bird's Eye View FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

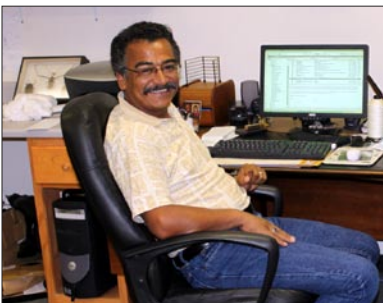


Linnea S. Hall, Ph.D.

Greetings! You have in your hands the WFVZ's most recent newsletter, which contains information on some of the projects and events we've completed or initiated over the past 6 months: our fall Open House, a spring birdwatching trip to Costa Rica, the second year of our Island Loggerhead Shrike project, and numerous items we've accomplished in the bird and library collections. I hope you enjoy reading about these!

What I would like to bring to your attention in this column is the fact that this year marks the 25th year employment anniversary of one of our key staff members, **Mr. René Corado**. René started with the WFVZ in 1986, not long after he immigrated to the U.S. to escape political persecution in his native country of Guatemala. He moved his wife and young daughter to Los Angeles in 1982 and was able to find employment tending birds in the private aviary of **Donald Bleitz**, the photographer who founded The Bleitz Wildlife Foundation. Upon Don's death in 1985, René was hired by the WFVZ's founder, **Ed Harrison**. Ed took a liking to René, and assisted him and his family in many ways; René has always felt that Ed was his "North American Father".

René started out as a Curatorial Assistant at the WFVZ learning to prepare research study skins and traveling to Ecuador and around California to collect bird materials for the WFVZ. He worked in Ecuador for months at a time from 1988 to 1992, often being dropped by helicopter with limited supplies and having to forage from the land with colleague **Manuel Marin** once the food ran out. He also worked in Costa Rica with Manuel between 1994 and 1997, studying the nesting ecology of waterfall-nesting swifts in rugged canyons throughout the country.



René Corado

By the late 1980s, **Lloyd Kiff**, former director of the WFVZ, was teaching René how to handle and curate eggs in the collections. This training provided the background for René to become Collections Manager of the WFVZ in 1997. In the last 13 years as Collections Manager, he has made significant contributions to the WFVZ: he began the computerization of all of our egg and nest specimens; catalogued more than 13,000 egg sets donated to the WFVZ; supervised and trained nearly 50 interns, volunteers, and staff members in curation of our materials; started the WFVZ's bird inventorying project in Guatemala; and along with me, has conducted hundreds of scientifically valuable projects over the past 8 years since I've been director, including co-authoring a book about the eggs and nests of the WFVZ.

René's professional achievements on behalf of the WFVZ are notable and important. But just as important are his significant personal achievements. He has become a fluent English speaker and writer since he first came to the U.S, and he has raised 4 beautiful children and has 3 lovely grandchildren (with another on the way). He recently received a degree in Addiction Disorder Studies, and he donates his time to the community of Ventura County to educate people about the impacts of alcoholism.

René also has taught me a lot about museum work, tropical fieldwork, and life in general. I am proud that he is working with us here at the WFVZ, and truly value his honesty, integrity, commitment, and, very importantly, sense of humor. It has been a great experience working with him.

Thus, given all of René's notable personal and professional achievements, I hope you will join me in wishing him a very happy 25th anniversary year. Congratulations!

Sincerely, Linnea
linnea@wfvz.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

See page 6 for details about these and other events!

WFVZ Public Tours: July 30, August 27, September 24

Conejo Valley Audubon Meetings: Starting September 13

WFVZ Annual Open House: October 9

News from the Collections

HOLA DE NUEVO! As usual, it has been busy this past six months in the collections of the WFVZ. The most obvious change in the collections was the addition of two new staff people in February: **Dr. Michael Kuehn**, Research and Collections Assistant, and **Adam Searcy**, Curatorial Assistant. Curatorial Assistant **Lisa Winfrey** left us in mid-May to pursue other career options; we hope she has fun in sunny Bakersfield!

New volunteers **Lloyd Lustina** and **Kitty Frallic** joined us in 2009 and have been conducting weekly "bug checks" in the skin collection ever since along with volunteers **Isabel Rice** and **Danielle Glenn**. **Heather Medvitz** joined us as a new volunteer in spring 2010, and has been conducting study skin data entry, along with volunteers **Bill and Dixie Anderson** and **Linda Reynolds**, on a weekly basis. Volunteers **Peggy Ellis** and **Peg Stevens** continued to work in the library with the book reorganization and computerization project, and as of the end of June, have only one library row to complete!

My son **Eddie Corado** prepared hundreds of study skins over the last year from birds that were donated by various entities and individuals including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Pt. Mugu Naval Weapons Station. Recently I prepared eggs from endangered bird species in the captive breeding program at the Keauhou Bird Conservation Center, and I just received eggs of Burrowing Owls (*Athene cunicularia*) from a project through Oregon State University. We also regularly receive unhatched eggs from breeding Snowy Plovers (*Charadrius alexandrinus*) and Least Terns (*Sterna antillarum*) in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. In fall 2009, from Pomona College, we received a historic California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) live-mount (from 1904) and study skins of birds from Belize collected in the early 1900s. In May we received the last shipment of Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*) study skins from **Dr. Bertin Anderson** of Blythe, California, bringing our total number of geese from his collection to nearly 1500 specimens.

We received and processed more than 160 requests for data from the collections in 2009, and have received nearly 75 such requests this year so far. In addition, **Dr. Linnea Hall** and I have given more than a dozen tours of the collection since January 2010, to groups including the friends and Board of the New West Symphony (see below), Topa Topa Middle School in Ojai, and the "Library Class" at California State University Channel Islands.



René Corado
Collections Manager



Since February, Adam, Michael, and I have cataloged hundreds of raptor eggs collected for pesticide analyses, and I finished cataloging all of the John Gould egg sets collected by **John Gilbert** in Australia between 1838 and 1845 (see the Fall 2009 issue of the *WFVZ Newsletter*). I am currently working on the cataloging of approximately 400 sets of White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) eggs collected from northern California in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

In fall 2009 Dr. Linnea Hall had volunteer Dixie Anderson and assistants Lisa Winfrey and Adam Searcy start an egg set inventory so that we would know exactly how many sets, by species and locality, we have already cataloged. Adam finished this list just this May (for a total of nearly 180,000 sets of more than 4,300 species). We are now using this list for a project with Cornell's Laboratory of Ornithology: to determine how many egg sets and/or nests of the thousands of breeding birds of Mexico, Central America, and South America we have in our collection, so that we can take pictures of them for Cornell's new website, <http://neotropical.birds.cornell.edu>. In addition, we will use the list to determine how many egg specimens we have from Ecuador, in particular, for a collaborative project with **Dr. Harold Greeney**, Director of Research at the Yanayacu Biological Station and Center for Creative Studies in Ecuador.

Continued . . .



Recent WFVZ tour with supporters of the New West Symphony.

... News from the Collections

Notable visitors to the collections of the WFVZ this past 6 months include Dr. Greeney, **Julie DeJong** from South Dakota State University, and **Dr. Steve Beissinger** of U.C. Berkeley with several of his graduate students. Photographer-Artist **Laszlo Layton**, of *Dinosaur Mountain Studio* in Arizona, visited us again at the end of June to create more of his beautiful mounted bird art pieces (see pictures and website address on this page). **Gibbe Parsons**, grand-nephew of **Rollo H. Beck**, a famous naturalist who collected bird eggs and other natural history materials all over the world, also visited the WFVZ to see Beck's egg sets in our collections.

Finally, in March Linnea obtained a grant from the City of Camarillo for new exhibit boxes for some of the display mounts of the WFVZ. These will be purchased and put out on display in time for our upcoming Open House on October 9. We hope that you will join us that day so that you can see all the changes in the WFVZ collections for yourself!

Saludos, René Corado
rene@wfvz.org



Photographer *Laszlo Layton* during his recent visit to the WFVZ (above), and two of his beautiful images: *Little Blue Heron* (below left) and *Roseate Spoonbill* (below right). Images copyright *Laszlo Layton*. For more information see www.laszlolayton.com.



Research & Collaborations



Rugged survey area on Santa Rosa Island (above) and Island Loggerhead Shrike on Santa Cruz Island (left).

Island Loggerhead Shrike Project: Season 2

In the spring of 2010 the WFVZ — in collaboration with biologists from the National Park Service California Mediterranean Research Learning Center, Channel Islands National Park, and the U.S. Geological Survey — completed the second and final season of a survey designed to provide a rigorous and unbiased estimate of Island Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus anthonyi*) populations on Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands in the Santa Barbara Channel. WFVZ staff Linnea Hall and René Corado worked with staff of partner organizations, as well as 4 groups of about 20 experienced volunteers each, to conduct foot surveys for shrikes over rugged terrain and very (!) windy conditions on Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands during April and May. Michael Kuehn headed one of the search teams on Santa Cruz Island in May.

The surveys in 2010 mostly covered different areas on each island than in 2009, but this year's preliminary results are consistent with those of 2009 — namely that shrike populations are relatively low on Santa Cruz Island, with no more than 25 individuals detected in approximately 30,000 acres surveyed (compared to 20 birds in 9,700 acres in 2009); while numbers are higher on Santa Rosa Island, with approximately 100 birds detected in about 15,000 surveyed acres.



Hedrick Ranch Nature Area

Hedrick Ranch Nature Area Bird Surveys

This spring WFVZ began conducting annual bird surveys at the Hedrick Ranch Nature Area (HRNA). This 220-acre reserve on the south side of the Santa Clara River near Santa Paula, California, is owned by the State Coastal Conservancy and the Friends of the Santa Clara River. A primary mission of the HRNA is to restore native riparian and grassland vegetation on the property to increase the complexity of habitat available for wildlife. Restoration efforts have been underway at HRNA since 1999 and at least two federally listed bird species, the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) and the Least Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) have been recorded nesting on the property. We are conducting point count surveys for all bird species during the spring and summer breeding season to monitor changes in bird diversity and abundance as restoration efforts proceed on the property.

Volunteer Perspectives

In this issue of our newsletter we are kicking off a new column in which volunteers provide first-hand accounts of their experiences at the WFVZ. The first half of a two-part essay from long-time volunteer Peg Stevens appears below; the second half will appear in our next issue.

Volunteerism — Part 1

You are retired. What will you do with all those days that used to be filled with tasks demanded by your job? It took me about three months to realize I needed something that would be fun, as well as challenging, to occupy my time. In September of 1993 the answer came; Lloyd Kiff, the executive director of WFVZ at the time, invited Ventura Audubon to visit the WFVZ to see and hear what it was all about. He said "We need volunteers to help us with the work we do and to keep this place running in good order. If you have the time and would like to help, let me know."

I started working here as a volunteer in September of 1993 and have done a very large variety of tasks along the way in the last 17 years. The Foundation was very new to Camarillo, having just moved up here from Westwood the previous year, so many of my assigned tasks were of the "straighten out and get it organized" variety.

The first thing I did was to record egg data for the *Birds of North America* project with **Sam Sumida**, recording the numbers as he measured. I also typed labels and organized the filing of all of Kiff's South American research, species-by-species. **Jon Fisher** became my

"creator of tasks." Under Jon's direction, I began to learn a lot about computer programs and how to enter data. I worked on entering sales invoices for the publications we were handling: Cooper Society journal exchanges, *Studies in Avian Biology*, *Occasional Papers of the WFVZ*, and the *Proceedings of the Foundation*. In those days, we were in our infancy with computers, and used programs such as Data Base IV and Word Perfect — somewhat primitive by today's standards. The job I got really good at in the early years was photocopy work. I also did occasional copy work and some filing for the bookkeeper. I shelved journals and books in the library. I also typed library cards for new acquisitions and filed the cards in the card catalogue. I remember being given large stacks of cards to alphabetize and file at some point in those early years; the same thing with many boxes of journals that still had to be shelved. Every day I came in to work, there was a new and different job!

During my time here I have done just about every job available to be done, with a couple of exceptions. I've never been introduced to the job of checking the specimen cabinets for bugs; nor



By Peg Stevens

have I learned how to blow eggs or prepare skins — probably because I was always too busy doing other things at the times those jobs were needed. I've made inventories of practically every class of items Mr. Harrison ever had in his varied collections. If you are a researcher and want a photograph of Ed Harrison's father or his childhood home, I could find it in the 30-40 family photo albums stored upstairs in the "reading room." If someone wanted a copy of an article to help with his/her research, I did that. If the authors of the BNA species' accounts needed a lot of egg measurements from the bird in their designated species, I photocopied the stacks of egg data cards. I remember being asked to organize numerous drawers full of tropical bird study skins in taxonomic order and making a list of same. Ed Harrison had many, many books not related to ornithology, all needing to be separated, cataloged, and shelved. I did that and also made the hand typed the inventory for each category.

Changes in Faces at the WFVZ

Will be Missed



Lisa Winfrey Curatorial Assistant

Lisa (shown here on right; Linnea Hall on left) worked for the WFVZ from November 2008 to May 2010, when she graduated with her B.S. in Environmental Science and Resource Management from California State University Channel Islands, in Camarillo. She has since gone to work full time with McCormick Biological Inc., and we wish her all the best!



Carol Camerano Bookkeeper

Carol (not pictured) worked for the WFVZ as a regular employee from late 2008 to early April 2010. She left the WFVZ to pursue other options, but we will definitely miss her!

New Arrivals & Other Employee Highlights



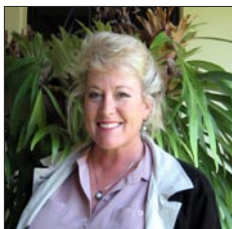
Dr. Michael Kuehn Research and Collections Assistant

Mike was raised in Michigan and earned his B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries management from Lake Superior State University in 1999 before coming to California to pursue a Ph.D. in avian Behavioral Ecology. For his dissertation research he investigated coevolutionary interactions between brood parasitic cowbirds and their hosts, with academic advisor **Dr. Stephen Rothstein** of the University of California in Santa Barbara (and member of the WFVZ and Chair of the WFVZ's Scientific Panel). Mike started working at the WFVZ in February 2010.



Adam Searcy Curatorial Assistant

Adam is a viciously enthusiastic field ornithologist. He cut his teeth pursuing dangerous vagrant songbirds in the wild lands surrounding Somis, California. He holds a B.S. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and is considering a Ph.D. in gastronomy.



Jennifer Watson Bookkeeper

Jennifer began working with the WFVZ in April 2010. She enjoys piña colodas and getting caught in the rain.



Eddie Corado Preparation Assistant

Eddie started preparing birds with his dad, René, for fun when he was 11 years old. Starting in 2007, when he was 16, he began doing preparatory work part-time for the WFVZ, and continues to do so for us each year since on an "as needed" basis.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Thank you for your support and welcome to our flock!

Brown Pelicans

\$100+

Coleen Cory
Heather Medvitz
Tracy Brown

American Kestrels

\$50+

Robert & Patricia
Springer
Lavonne Eden
Tom & Jo Heindel
Adele Fergusson
Nida Brown

Loggerhead Shrikes

\$25+

Nicholas E. Collias
Hilary & Stephen
De Cesari
Lori Griffin
Patricia Jump
John Maio
Jean Stoutenborough
Kimberly Stroud
Marie & David Vester
Anita Levine
Kitty & Jim Frallic
John & Joan Keesey

THANK YOU WFVZ VOLUNTEERS!

Your help is invaluable
to the Western Foundation!

Dixie & Bill Anderson	Devon Lang
Cathie Dunkel	Lloyd Lustina
Peggy Ellis	Heather Medvitz
Kitty Frallic	Linda Reynolds
Danielle Glenn	Isabel Rice
Jean & Bill Hulberg	Peg Stevens

Calendar

WFVZ Annual Open House

To be held Saturday, **October 9**, 10 AM – 4 PM
Check our website (www.wfvz.org) for details!

WFVZ Seminar

Friday, **November 5**, 6:30 – 8 PM

Research and Collections Assistant Dr. Michael Kuehn, of the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, will discuss his dissertation research on the evolution and maintenance of host defenses against brood parasitism. The Foundation will open at 6 PM for viewing of the collections.

Free to WFVZ Members, Volunteers, and Interns; \$5 for all others, payable at the door. Limited to 50 people; please RSVP by **November 1** if you want a space held for you.

WFVZ Classes & Workshops

Private Study Skin Preparation Lessons

Offered by WFVZ Collections Manager René Corado.
\$60 for WFVZ Members and Volunteers; \$75 for all others.
Please call the Foundation (805/388-9944) for details.

Introduction to Ornithology

September 27 through the week of November 15

Taught by Dr. Linnea Hall and Mr. René Corado.
An 8-week course on the diversity, ecology, evolution, and taxonomy of the birds of North America, with an emphasis on identifying the birds of southern California. One 1.5-hour lecture and one 3-hour museum or field lab weekly. Individual classes also may be taken; contact the WFVZ (805/388-9944) for more information and pricing.
Whole course price: \$420 for currently enrolled college students and WFVZ Volunteers; \$560 for WFVZ Members; \$750 for non-members.

WFVZ Tours

Public Tours: Fridays, 3 – 4 PM

July 30, August 27, September 24, October 29, November 19, December 17

The general public is invited to tour the Foundation's large collection of bird eggs, nests, and mounted specimens. All tours require a reservation. Public Tours are limited to 20 people. Please call us (805/388-9944) at least one day in advance to get on the waiting list.
Our fee for public tours is \$5 per person; kids age 7 and under are Free.

Group Tours by Appointment

Special group tours can be arranged for 10 to 40 people for school classes (4th grade and up), community groups, and other organizations. Please call us (805/388-9944) at least 2 months in advance to arrange your group's tour. Our fee for group tours is \$5 per person.

Conejo Valley Audubon Society Meetings

Mondays, 7:30 – 9 PM

September 13, October 4, November 1, December 6

(no June–August meetings)

The Conejo Valley Audubon Society holds its meetings regularly on the first Monday of the month (unless noted otherwise), September through May, from 7:30 to 9 PM. Meetings are held at the Foundation, which opens at 7 PM for viewing of the collections.



Eggciting News!

Lead Shot Banned from California State Wildlife Management Areas

In June 2010, California state assembly member Pedro Nava (D-Santa Barbara) announced the passage of Assembly Bill 2223, which will ban the use of toxic lead shot in California's 667,000-acre network of State Wildlife Management Areas. Research now shows that both wetland and upland birds will ingest spent lead shot, thereby creating the potential for devastating effects on these bird populations. "The science is increasingly clear that lead shot poses a real danger to bird populations on these lands," said Nava. "With viable alternatives to lead shot – this is just a no-brainer." The bill was authored by Nava, who was awarded the Ed N. Harrison Conservation Award by WFVZ in 2008 for drafting the Ridley-Tree Condor Preservation Act (AB 821), designed to remove the threat of lead ammunition from the range of the Condor.

— *California Newswire*

http://californianewswire.com/2010/06/03/CNW7467_221257.php

Toxic Insecticide to be Banned by EPA

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) initiated action in June to end all uses of endosulfan in the United States, after concluding that the compound (an organochlorine insecticide like DDT) poses unacceptable risks to agricultural workers and wildlife. Endosulfan has a high potential for bioaccumulation. It persists in the environment for extended periods of time, with an EPA-estimated half-life of 200 days, increasing the exposure risk of many non-target animals. It has been detected in wells and surface waters, most likely due to run-off or drift during application, and it is known to be highly toxic to birds.

— **EPA**

<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/reregistration/endosulfan/endosulfan-cancl-fs.html>



Left: October 2009 Open House, where children practiced egg blowing. The next Open House will be held October, 9, 2010. See page 6 for details!

Right and below: Fall 2009 Ornithology class, which included a live owl viewing (right) and lessons about California species (below). The next class will be held September through November 2010. See page 6 for details!

Looking Back



Below and left: Costa Rica birders on the Tarcoles River (below, Dave Pereksta in front) and in Carara National Park (bottom left), and perched Mangrove Swallows (bottom right).



Costa Rica Birding Expedition — *A participant's perspective*

In March 2010, fifteen participants were privileged to be part of Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology's first birding excursion to Costa Rica. The trip turned out to be a stimulating birding and educational experience. The itinerary was well planned with stays at interesting hotels and resorts.

Our first stop at Bougainvillea Hotel with its beautiful gardens and wealth of birds sharpened our appetites for what was to come. Other hotel highlights were Green Macaws and nesting Scarlet Macaws. We visited educational and biological facilities and were provided with knowledgeable guides who knew specific habitats and were able to seek out uncommon species.

Two planned boat trips were fun and relaxing. One of them had a swallow house attached with the Mangrove Swallow (*Tachycineta albilinea*) parents feeding their young while following the boat. On this trip we saw 5 species of Kingfishers and many, many other tropical bird species. A Sungrebe (*Heliornis fulica*) was an exciting find on our second river trip. Many birds were spotted as we traveled the countryside including the elegant flight of Swallow-tailed Kites (*Elanoides forficatus*). Impromptu roadside stops at cafes/shops with dozens of hummingbirds feeding all at once at feeders were also highlights. Our competent coach driver, Ramon, was constantly scanning the landscape, and even spotted a Spectacled Owl for us.

However, it was our own group leaders — **Dave Pereksta**, Dr. Linnea Hall, and René Corado — who worked diligently and tirelessly to make sure we all had a fabulous birding event, tallying more than 300 total species. Their combined experience and knowledge of tropical birds and birding in Central America was the catalyst that made our Costa Rica trip an overwhelming success. Many thanks to them!

— *Jean Hulberg, WFVZ Volunteer*



WESTERN FOUNDATION OF VERTEBRATE ZOOLOGY

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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

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Please note that your membership contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.*

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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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