

The Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology is a non-profit research and education institution. Its mission is to manage its ornithological collections for researchers, educators, students, and the general public in a way that contributes to the conservation of the world's wild bird species.



WESTERN FOUNDATION OF VERTEBRATE ZOOLOGY

A Bird's Eye View FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Linnea S. Hall, Ph.D.

Hi! Welcome to another edition of the WFVZ Newsletter. We're in our 7th year of producing these summaries of our activities – have you read them all? If not, check out the "Newsletter" page on our website (<http://www.wfvz.org>)!

Recent notable occurrences at the WFVZ have included our "Introduction to the Birds of Southern California" class, held on weekends in February and March 2011. In this class I review the Orders and Families of the birds of the region, discussing characteristics, behavior, habitat affinities, and other information useful for the ID of the more than 450 species that live some part of their life in this part of the state. For example, did you know that in Ventura County alone we have bird species in 19 of the approximately 30 currently recognized orders of birds in the world? The diversity of species found in this county is tremendous, so it is great fun to review all of this info with interested students!



Spring 2011 Bird ID Class participants at Rancho Sierra Vista in the Santa Monica Mountains.

The class has been offered in various forms over the past 4 years: as an 8- to 18-week classic Ornithology course, and as a 3-day to 3-weekend general bird survey course. Two questions I have for our Members and the public are: what length of course would YOU like? And, would you like to have 1-evening or 1-day courses on particular topics in ornithology? I would love to hear from you about these points, and especially what kind of bird information you are hungry for. Please send me your comments at linnea@wfvz.org.

In the meantime, I hope that you enjoy this new newsletter, and that if you have any questions or comments, you'll feel free to contact my staff (René Corado, Mike Kuehn, Adam Searcy, or Jennifer Watson) or me at any time!

Happy springtime birdwatching!

Linnea
linnea@wfvz.org

Welcome New Members!

Thank you for your support and welcome to our flock!

- Brown Pelicans \$100+:** Michael Craven, Gretchen Jacobson M.D., Dexter Kelly, Craig Rudolph & Jennifer Matos, Mary E. Vanderlaan, Janine Mansell & Brian Mattson
- American Kestrels \$50+:** Kammy & Joey Algiers, Connie and Brian Batsow
- Loggerhead Shrikes \$25+:** Luke Butler, Gary Evans, Robert Evans, David Gallup, Rhodean & Robert Glen, Janet Hamber, Daniel Singer, Jo Ann Van Reenan, Marie & David Vester

WESTERN FOUNDATION OF VERTEBRATE ZOOLOGY	
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	SCIENTIFIC PANEL
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News from the Collections

First, I want to say thank you to all of the WFVZ members, volunteers, and friends who in one way or another expressed their best wishes during my 25th anniversary celebration last fall!!

Now, here we are again with more exciting WFVZ news. As you know, it is not new news that we are always busy here, but in the last six months a great thing happened: we got more help, more collections, and more visitors!

New volunteers include enthusiastic students from Ventura College: Elizabeth Price, Michael Berry, Jessica Selby, and Janet Garcia, all of whom are currently helping to enter egg data. New volunteers who are also members include Dexter Kelly, who is helping to enter study skin data, and Connie Bastow, who is helping to enter egg data. Arthur Robertson helped clean our garden, caulk windows, and repair a floor!

Volunteer Peg Stevens has been entering Guatemala point count data, organizing California Bird Record Committee files, and entering BNA data. Bill Anderson, Heather Medvitz, and Linda Reynolds have been entering study skin data. Lloyd Lustina has been helping organize the pesticide egg collection and relabel egg card drawers. Kitty Frallic and Linda Reynolds have been helping with a project to display the distribution of our mounted birds, and Isabel Rice has been assisting with library reorganization and with maintaining curation supplies. During the first week of March 2011, Peggy Ellis completed the data entry for the library reorganization project. Way to go Peggy, and all of the rest of our volunteers!



Mounted Lesser Bird of Paradise donated by Judy MacDonald.



Howard J. Severson III and his daughter next to the egg collection.



**René Corado
Collections Manager**

Adam Searcy, WFVZ Curatorial Assistant, finished cataloguing and rearranging all of the samples in the Foundation's "pesticide collection" (eggshells that were measured for their thickness during the height of the DDT era), and continued cataloguing "collection remainders" (egg sets apparently without data from large donated collections) for which I have been able to find the egg cards in our collection. Adam and I also are checking the data entered by all the volunteers to make sure that errors don't creep in. My son Eddie continues preparing study skins, and for now our freezers are empty.

Since our last newsletter (Summer 2010) we've conducted several notable tours of the collections, including our monthly public tours, a tour for the Red Hat Ladies Society, various home school groups, Dr. Angela Chapman's Ecology class from CSU Channel Islands, Kamelia Algiers' Field Biology class from Ventura College, and a tour for docents of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

Since our last newsletter we have received and processed more than 60 data requests from all around the world, including requests for Heerman's Gull tissue samples; information on trogon diets; identification of nests and eggs from photos; measurements of plover, woodpecker, caprimulgid, and magpie specimens; egg and nest card records; and information on collectors.

In July 2010 we received a donation of Peregrine Falcon eggshells via Glenn Stewart from the former Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group. In August a collection of more than 175 owl figurines was donated by Michael Christie from the collection of his mother Anne de Beixedon. In August we also received an egg collection of more than 160 sets with data from Howard Severson III, which were collected by Howard's father and grandfather in the early 1900s. In February 2011 we received 25 beautifully mounted waterfowl and upland game birds from Dr. Leroy Trnavski. We also received a lovely mounted and framed Lesser Bird of Paradise, donated by Judy MacDonald and her father.

At the WFVZ's Open House in October 2010 -- which more than 500 people attended!!-- we displayed 26 new acrylic boxes installed for the protection of our rare mounted birds. The WFVZ was able to purchase these via a generous grant from the City of Camarillo's Community Service Grant fund, and we were happy to host Councilmember Charlotte Craven, from the Camarillo City Council, during our Open House event!

Continued . . .

... News from the Collections

In November 2010 the collections were visited and used by Japanese artist, author, and friend of the WFVZ, Mamoru Suzuki, and his colleague Dr. Takuzo Yoshimura, a Japanese journalist and oologist. Dr. Yoshimura took photos and measurements of eggs to include in an upcoming book on eggs of the world that he currently is writing.

Lastly, just last week we received a pre-print copy of Sharon Beals' new book, "Nests", which is scheduled to be released soon. Sharon took photographs of nests and eggs in our collection in Dec 2008 (see Spring 2009 newsletter issue). If you would like to buy a copy of this beautiful book, please see the advertisement on the back cover of this newsletter or on our website.

Hasta la proxima! René Corado

rene@wfvz.org

Research & Collaborations

Guatemala Project

The WFVZ's last update on its Guatemala Project was in the Fall/Winter 2009 Newsletter. Why? Because we weren't able to conduct any breeding season work in the country in 2010. Our normal May/June sampling was preempted by a volcanic eruption, which closed the airports for a week because of thick ash on airport runways. The following week, a hurricane struck the country, turning ash to sludge and then closing all entry into Guatemala City and into our study area on the Motagua River.

We learned from our colleagues and René Corado's extended family members in Guatemala that our riparian study site was completely flooded, deluged by a 30 to 60 foot rise in the river. The rainy season also continued extraordinarily long, well into fall 2010, causing us to have to cancel our sampling completely.

René and Linnea were able to return to the country this January 2011, and of course were eager to see how the study area had been modified. The intensity of the flooding along the river had not only removed sapling trees and small shrubs, but had completely uprooted large, mature trees that had been in the riparian corridor for years (see before and after pictures below). Linnea and René reestablished point count stations and conducted counts, and found that bird species numbers and species were greatly reduced, and that some bird species (Turquoise-browed Motmots, in particular) were gone from the area.

The WFVZ will return to monitor bird numbers and species diversity this coming June 2011, and especially to continue assessing the impact of contaminants in the river on bird reproduction. Egg contents collected from six bird species' eggs in June 2008 are currently being analyzed for pesticide, heavy metal, and other contaminant levels, and the results will be shared in our next newsletter.

If you are interested in learning more about our Guatemala project, or in supporting this work in particular, please contact us!



Our study site on the Motagua River before the flooding event of 2010 (left) and after (right)

Our 2011 MEMBERS

Bald Eagles

\$1,000 +



*Dr. Bertin W. Anderson
Thomas E. Caestecker
Eunice & Douglas Goodan
Betty Harrison*

California Condors

\$500 – \$999



*Russ & Linda Charvonia,
Renaissance Group
Don & Cele Hall
Katheen Killelea
Heather Medvitz
Arlen Ring & Joanne
Isaksen*

Peregrine Falcons

\$250 – \$499



*Dixie & Bill Anderson
Dr. Ron Barnes
Natasha and Rudolph
Bartley
Edward & Susie Beall
Dennis L. Cabral
Don Cunningham
Alicia & Ken Flesch
Carolyn Greene
Mary Lynn Josephson
Dr. Michael Kelly
Chrystal & Don Klabunde
Carol & Bill Langford
David & Gwyn Sivertsen*

Brown Pelicans

\$100 – \$249



*Lance Benner
Mary Lou Brown
Tracy Brown
Harry Carter
Thomas & Victoria
Cloonan
Coleen Cory
Michael Craven
Jeff Davis*

More Brown Pelicans ...

Our 2011
MEMBERS

...More Brown Pelicans

- Marcia Edwards
- Jon C. Fisher
- Tom Gallardo, Gallardo & Assoc.
- Murray Goldstein
- Eunice & Douglas Goodan
- Sharon Hall
- E. A. Hankins III, M.D.
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- Sharon & Pete Irish
- Dr. Gretchen H. Jacobson
- Eric V. & Christine R. Johnson
- Susan Kaveggia
- Dexter Kelly
- Karl & Trudy Letsch
- John Lobel
- Ronaele & Gary Martin
- Nobuko McClure
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- Marian & Steve Rothstein
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- Mrs. Stewart G. Tuttle
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- Janet Wall
- David Weeshoff
- Don & Cheryl Williamson
- Erika Wilson

American
Kestrels
\$50 – \$99



- Aurelio Albaisa
- Kammy & Joey Algiers
- Everard & Brooke Ashworth
- Connie & Brian Bastow
- Peter H. Bloom
- Mrs. John E. Boething
- Nida Brown
- Charles & Patricia Collins
- René Corado
- Johanna Dawes
- Robert G. Dickson
- Linda C. Dye
- Lavonne Eden
- Richard A. Erickson
- Richard & Pat Farris
- Adele Fergusson
- Kathryn & Robert Field
- Jack Gillooly
- Ynez Haase
- Robb & Anita Hamilton

More American
Kestrels ...

Island Loggerhead Shrike Project Completed!

In our previous newsletter we reported preliminary results from two years of Island Loggerhead Shrike surveys on Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands in the Santa Barbara Channel. These surveys - done in collaboration with biologists from the National Park Service California Mediterranean Research Learning Center, Channel Islands National Park, and the U.S. Geological Survey - were designed to provide a rigorous and unbiased estimate of Island Shrike populations on both islands and the final results have now been compiled and submitted for publication in a scientific journal.



An Island Loggerhead Shrike perched on a shrub near Potato Harbor on Santa Cruz Is.

Shrike abundance was estimated to be 169 in 2009 and 240 in 2010 for Santa Rosa Island, and 35 in 2009 and 42 in 2010 for Santa Cruz Island. Though these estimates are higher than previously reported for the two islands, they are still low, particularly on Santa Cruz Island. Ongoing changes to vegetation on the two islands, owing to the removal of non-native grazing mammals, may have implications for the status of this subspecies and further study of their habitat use and reproductive biology is needed to ensure successful management of this island endemic.

2011 Calendar

WFVZ Annual Open House

To be held on a Saturday in October. Check our website (<http://www.wfvz.org>) for more details later this year!

WFVZ Seminar

To be held in November. Our very own Linnea Hall and René Corado will present results from 9 years of research in Guatemala. Check our website (<http://www.wfvz.org>) for details!

WFVZ Classes & Workshops Group Study Skin Preparation Workshops

Offered by WFVZ Collections Manager René Corado every other month starting in April. Free for WFVZ Members and Volunteers; \$75 for all others. Private lessons are also available. Please call the Foundation (805/388-9944) for details.

WFVZ Tours

Public Tours: Fridays, 3 – 4 PM.
March 25, April 29, May 27, June 24, July 29, August 26, September 30, October 28, November 18, December 16
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
April 4, May 2, September 5, October 3, November 7, December 5
(no June–August meetings)

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

Volunteer Perspectives

In our previous newsletter long-time WFVZ volunteer Peg Stevens shared the first half of her two-part essay describing her experiences during her time here. Below is the second part of Peg's essay.

Volunteerism — Part 2

In my second year at WFVZ I helped one of the full-time researchers, Walter Wehtje, with the California Bird Record Committee's collection of rare bird-sighting reports. This soon became my sole responsibility, and I am still keeping them up-to-date. CBRC records are stored at the Foundation, and we now have 8 cabinets of documents, videos, audio tapes, and CDs, which have been reorganized several times due to major changes in taxonomic order of the birds and are used as proof of the many rare birds seen in the state of California.



By Peg Stevens

One of my most interesting jobs of the last 17 years was going through everything Ed Harrison still had in his personal collection. As he closed his offices in Westwood and sold the building, all of his things were delivered to the new Camarillo facility. What fun it was to go through his boxes and book cases, rare book collections, personal desk, and file cabinets! I made lists of scrapbooks, shells, marbles, stone eggs made of gemstones and minerals, and more. There were collections of old branding irons, silver spurs, a coin collection, antique spectacles, shark's teeth, bird-related gifts from Ed's friends, notebooks filled with articles Ed had found interesting, awards he had received, photos of people he had worked with, Pre-Columbian artifacts, and much more.

Several months ago, I began the data entry of the hand-recorded egg measurements taken during the Birds of North America project in the 1990s. This new spreadsheet will record the data of all clutches of eggs from our collection. I have already entered more than 8,000 items so far, but have completed only about half of the data for the birds whose Latin names begin with the letter "C." That project should keep me out of trouble for at least another 10 years!

My tasks have been varied with little room for boredom. I've led tours of the collection from time-to-time and helped with open houses and special meetings. I've helped write some of the brochures and have printed and folded hundreds of them, as well as newsletters. I was here for the celebration of paying off the mortgage to the current building when Ed Harrison literally burned the hard copy at the lunch table! And, I was here when we celebrated with the Collections Manager, René Corado, after he became a citizen of the United States. I've been here through the transitions of several different directors, the coming and going of the employees from time-to-time, as well as a long list of volunteers.

You cannot work yourself out of a job in this museum! The greatest thing about my job here at WFVZ is the fun I've had over the years and the people I've met. I was already an avid birder when I started work here in 1993, but I knew very little about the scientific side of the birds. Now I am much more knowledgeable about birds and the operation of a research museum.

And, yes, I am still making lists. A museum runs on lists. If you can type, you will be asked to generate lists of some sort: books, birds, journals, eggs, skins, duplicate books, journals, or donated items of every kind. The possibilities are endless, and the "neat" thing about it all is that just when you think you've finished a task, that's when you are told the list/data needs another update! A volunteer's life is one that is never in danger of being eliminated, and there is always room for more volunteers.

**THANK YOU
WFVZ VOLUNTEERS!**

**Your help is invaluable
to the Western Foundation!**

Dixie & Bill Anderson
Connie Bastow
Michael Berry
Cathie Dunkel
Peggy Ellis
Kitty Frallic

Janet Garcia
Danielle Glenn
Jean & Bill Hulberg
Dexter Kelly
Devon Lang
Lloyd Lustina
Heather Medvitz

Shannon Murphy
Linda Reynolds
Isabel Rice
Arthur Robertson
Elizabeth Sayre
Jessica Selby
Peg Stevens

Our 2011 MEMBERS

...More American
Kestrels

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Guy McCaskie
Michael L. Morrison
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Suzanne & Bryce Neff
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Bruce K. Palmer
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Larry Sansone
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Clifford & Julie Shackelford
William L. Shilley
Robert & Patricia Springer

Loggerhead Shrikes

\$25 – \$49



Betsy Bachman
Eldora Barton
Manny Beltran
Steve Bennett
Bonnie Bowen
Elizabeth Buchanan
Donna Burr
Luke Butler
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Carol Camerano
Mary Ann Campbell
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Robert Evans
Peggy Ellis
Ilene & Robert Fenn
Kitty & Jan Frallic
Piera & Barbara Fumagalli
David Gallup
Dana Gardner

More Loggerhead
Shrikes (page 7)...

Recent Outreach Events at the WFVZ

WFVZ Seminar



In November 2010, we had a great turnout when Dr. Michael Kuehn presented results from his dissertation research on evolutionary consequences of cowbird parasitism at a WFVZ seminar.

Great turnout at WFVZ 2010 Open House!



Linnea and René field questions from some of the more than 500 attendees at our annual Open House in October 2010.



René demonstrates the art of egg-blowing to a group of open house attendees before they give it a try themselves.



René Corado's 25th Anniversary Party!

Many friends, WFVZ members, and volunteers helped make sure that René's 25th anniversary party, held in August 2010, was a great success! Congratulations and thank you again René for your years of dedication and hard work at the WFVZ! (At left, René; below left, Bill Hulberg reminiscing with René about their time in Costa Rica).



(above) Students from CSUCI measure wing and tail lengths of two hawk species as part of their in-house research project during a class visit to the WFVZ in December 2010.

(Below) Volunteers at the WFVZ enjoy a Holiday dinner party, held in honor of their unceasing efforts, at the foundation in December 2010.



WFVZ DONORS

We are grateful for donations made by the following people.

Patrons \$20,000+

Joe Kice
Douglas & Eunice Goodan

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\$1,000 – \$20,000

Dr. Bertin Anderson
CMP Foundation
Conejo Valley Audubon Society:
Annual Contribution
Linnea Hall
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Dr. Michael Kelly
Mary Whitfield, Southern Sierra
Research Station
Dr. Yoshimura

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Ventura County Museum of History & Art
Cristina Vanderland & the California
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Jeffrey Zimmerman

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Douglas & Eunice Goodan
Kathy & Brian Killelea

The Ed N. Harrison Memorial Scholarship Fund

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

Collection Materials

Michael Christie: Owl Collection from the
Anne de Beixedon Trust
Pierce College: Golden Eagle live mount
Mel Hixson: Pacific Loon live mount
Nina Karnovsky, Pomona College:
California Condor live mount & 105 study
skins from Belize
Judy MacDonald: Bird of Paradise live
mount
Ron Quigley: Photo, slide albums and field
notes
Howard Severson, III: Egg Collection 1890
to 1950
Glen Stewart, Director S.C.P.B.R.G., UC
Santa Cruz: Peregrine Flacon Eggshell
Samples (collected by Brian Latta, and
Joel Pagel)
Dr. LeRoy Trnavski: 25 live mounted birds

Goods & Services

Amgen Inc.: equipment & supplies
Dixie & Bill Anderson: binoculars, Library
DVD, computer desk, digital camera
Jennifer Brown: office and computer
supplies

René Corado: typewriter
Robert Dickson: three LCD monitors
Linda Dye: monitor & printer
Peggy Ellis: laptop computer
Daniel Frietas: office furniture
Stephan Giovanisci, DDS: tools for
specimen prep
Carolyn Green: LCD monitor
Diane Hall: chest freezer for specimens
Mark Holmgren, University of California,
Santa Barbara: 6 specimen cabinets
Chrystal and Don Klabunde: WFVZ decals
& badges, computers, printer, monitors,
& keyboard
Nobuko McClure: bird banding traps &
binoculars
Ottavio's Italian Restaurant: gift certificates
for raffle
Santa Barbara City College: 2 glass display
units
Andrew Starrett: Banding supplies
Jo Ann Van Reenan: LCD monitor
Wood Ranch BBQ & Grill: gift certificates

Library Support

Sandy Brem: Monetary donation
Don Cunningham: Books and Russian
journals
Pat Farris: Books & Ornithological journals
Nobuko McClure: for the Elliott McClure
Collection
Leonard J. Peyton Jr.: Ornithological
journals
Jeannette Powles: for the Elliott McClure
Collection
Ron Quigley: Photos, slide albums and field
notes
Christopher W. Swarth: H. Swarth field
notebook
Summer Wilson: Ornithological journals

The Native Plant Relandscaping Project

Chris Bumbar: 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
Susan Van Atta & Jack Kiesel, Van Atta &
Associates: native plant landscaping
plans
Kathy Killelea: monetary donation
George Poug: monetary donation
Margaret Stevens: monetary donation
Native Sons Nursery: native plants
Santa Monica Mountains National
Recreational Area Nursery: native plants

Our 2011 MEMBERS

...More Loggerhead
Shrikes

Rhodean & Robert Glen
Bridget Greuel
Lori Griffin
Alicia K. Hall
Gwendolyn M. Hall
Janet Hamber
Gjon Hazard
Tom & JO Heindel
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Ed Tarvyd
Marie & David Vester
Don & Jacky Wallace
Robert & Catherine Waters
Shigeru Yabu

THANKS
TO ALL OUR
MEMBERS
FOR YOUR
CONTINUED
SUPPORT!

THANKS TO ALL OUR DONORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT!



New "Nests" book Available Soon!

A new book featuring the photography of Susan Beals, entitled "Fifty Nests and the Birds that Built Them", has just been released. The book includes nests of birds from around the world, drawn from the collections of the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology (including the nest in the cover photo shown at left), the California Academy of Sciences, and the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at UC Berkeley.

Through Beals's loving lens, each nest becomes both a work of art and a natural artifact, with every detail offering insight into the behavior and ingenuity of the nests' creators. From the tiny cup-shaped cocoon of the Anna's Hummingbird to the downy pillow of the Meadow Bunting, every nest offers a portrait of the bird that built it. Each photograph is accompanied by informative text and a detailed ornithological illustration.

The book is now available for pre-order through the WFVZ's on-line and in-museum Gift Store for \$29.95 + tax. Check our Gift Store page on our website (www.wfvz.org) or call 805/388-9944 for details.

A tribute to the incredible diversity and skill of nest builders far and wide, Beals' new book, "Fifty Nests and the Birds that Built Them" is a collection to be prized by everyone who is captivated by the wonders of the natural world.

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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NAME(S): _____
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 Please note that your membership contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.*

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WESTERN FOUNDATION OF VERTEBRATE ZOOLOGY



439 CALLE SAN PABLO
 CAMARILLO, CA
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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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