

News and Notes

Source: The Condor, 111(4) : 767-769

Published By: American Ornithological Society

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1525/cond.2009.notes>

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NEWS AND NOTES

The Condor 111(4):767–772
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REPORT OF THE SEVENTY-NINTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Cooper Ornithological Society held its 79th annual meeting at Tucson Doubletree Inn, Tucson, Arizona, 16–18 April 2009. JOSEPH FONTAINE chaired the Local Committee. VICKI SAAB chaired the Scientific Program Committee. DAN BARTON chaired the Student Activities Committee. BONNIE BOWEN chaired the Management and Finances Committee.

There were 192 registrants, including 58 students. The program included 35 posters and 110 oral presentations. There were three plenary sessions, with talks presented by ALEXANDER BADYAEV, “New perspectives in evolutionary ornithology,” and FRANCES JAMES, “Are some maniraptorans birds rather than dinosaurs?” The third plenary session was shared by the finalists of the inaugural Young Professional Award.

The program also included five symposia: YVETTE ORTEGA organized “Biological invasions: consequences for native birds in a changing world,” JOHN W. FITZPATRICK organized “Conservation biology and evolutionary genetics of *Aphelocoma* jays,” KAREN BAGNE and DEBORAH FINCH organized “Climate change: consequences for birds,” ELISABETH AMMON organized “Current conservation issues for birds of semi-arid regions,” and SUSAN WETHINGTON, DIANA L. CRAIG, and CHERYL CARROTHERS organized the “Hummingbird Conservation Symposium and Western Hummingbird Project Workshop.”

The students designed a workshop for students addressing key issues in writing competitive grant applications, and the discussion was led by COS member FRANK MOORE.

The Loye and Alden Miller Award, the Society’s award for lifetime achievement in ornithological research, was presented to FRANCES C. JAMES, who spoke at one of the plenary sessions.

The Painton Award is presented in odd years to the author(s) of an outstanding paper published in the *Condor* during the preceding four years (volume 107 [2005]–volume 110 [2008]). The Painton Award Committee recommended, and the COS Board was pleased to concur, that the paper by L. A. FREED, R. L. CANN, M. L. GOFF, W. A. KUNTZ, and G. R. BODNER (2005) titled “Increase in avian malaria at upper elevation in Hawai’i” (*Condor* 107:753–764) be named the recipient of the 2009 Painton Award.

There were three finalists for the new Young Professional Award. The winner was JAMIE CORNELIUS (C. W. BREUNER and T. P. HAHN, co-authors) for “Interplay between seasonal changes in stress physiology, environmental cues, and migratory behavior in an irruptive nomad, the Red Crossbill”. The other two finalists were KARI DECKER, for “Seasonal decline in avian clutch size: a test of four alternative hypotheses” and EBEN PAXTON, for “Where should we place the northern boundary of the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher?”

Mewaldt–King Student Research Awards were presented to SARAH ROCKWELL, University of Maryland, for “Carry-over

effects of the nonbreeding season on spring arrival, reproductive success, and annual survival in the endangered Kirtland’s Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*),” LEAH CULP, University of Maine, for “Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow (*Ammodramus caudatus*) habitat selection and habitat quality in tidally restricted marshes,” and NICK VAN LANEN, Colorado State University, for “Out with the old and in with the new? Investigating competition between Barred Owls (*Strix varia*) and Northern Spotted Owls (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) using a playback experiment.” CECILIA LEUMAS, Louisiana State University, received an Honorable Mention for “Understanding colony formation of terns and skimmers on Gulf Coast barrier islands: an experimental approach.”

Grinnell Student Research Awards were presented to JUDITH UNGVARI-MARTIN, University of Florida, for “Bird communities along a tropical soil productivity gradient: bottom-up effects examined by integrating ecology, behavior, and genetics” and MATTHEW WILKINS, University of Colorado, for “Multimodal signaling and the evolution of reproductive isolation in two sympatric subspecies of the Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*.”

Two awards were presented for outstanding student papers. The Frances F. Roberts Award was presented to KATHI BORGMANN (C. J. CONWAY, co-author) for “Comparative analysis uncovers the true effects of nest concealment on avian nesting success.” A Board of Directors Student Paper Award was presented to ROBERT ALDRIDGE for “Revisiting the evolution of cooperative breeding in *Aphelocoma* jays.”

Through the annual balloting by all members of the Society, BONNIE BOWEN, SIEVERT ROHWER, and SUSAN SKAGEN were elected to three-year terms on the Board of Directors.

In the Board of Directors’ meetings, the following were elected to, or to continue in, office: MERCEDES FOSTER, President; KIMBERLY A. SULLIVAN, President-elect; ABBY POWELL, Secretary; BETH HAHN, Assistant Secretary; KATIE DUGGER, Treasurer; MARGARET PETERSEN, Assistant Treasurer; MICHAEL PATTEN, Editor of the *Condor*; and CARL MARTI, Editor of *Studies in Avian Biology*. TOM MARTIN became Past-president.

The next annual meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Society will be held jointly with the American Ornithologists’ Union and the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, 8–11 February 2010, at the Town & Country Resort Hotel and Convention Center in San Diego, California. BARBARA KUS is chair of the local committee, and JOHN ROTENBERRY is chair of the scientific program committee.

The Cooper Ornithological Society remains a vibrant society with active and committed members. Nevertheless, along with other North American ornithological societies, it is facing some financial challenges and membership declines in this uncertain global economy. The society is actively monitoring its investments and hopes to initiate a fund-raising campaign later this year. The society is also taking steps to increase publication efficiency and visibility of the *Condor* and *Studies in Avian Biology*.

It has implemented a new editorial model for publication of the *Condor* under the new editor, MICHAEL PATTEN. The Society has established a Student Participation Committee with the goals of increasing membership retention and involvement of students and young professionals. The officers and Directors seek further input as we plan for the future of the Cooper Ornithological Society. Contact President MERCEDES FOSTER (fosterm@si.edu) if you have ideas, would like to serve on a committee, or would like to be involved in strategic planning for improving and expanding the society.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINATIONS

2009 Nominations Committee: Janis Dickinson (chair), Steve Beissinger, Pat Kennedy.

The following six people (in alphabetical order) have agreed to be nominated for the Cooper Ornithological Society (COS) Board of Directors to serve from 2010 to 2013. The election will be held via e-mail in November 2009.

Craig Benkman is Professor and Robert B. Berry Distinguished Chair in Ecology in the Department of Zoology and Physiology, University of Wyoming. He became a member of COS while an undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley, then completed his M.S. with Russell Balda, Northern Arizona University, his Ph.D. with Ronald Pulliam, State University of New York at Albany, and postdoctoral fellowships with Peter Grant, Princeton University, and Dolph Schluter, University of British Columbia. Craig has published about 65 papers, with a recent focus on coevolution between crossbills and conifers and ecological speciation in crossbills. He has not served on the COS Board but would bring his enthusiasm for COS and ornithological societies in general. Relevant recent experiences include serving on the editorial boards of *Evolution*, the *American Naturalist*, and *Functional Ecology*, hosting and organizing the 2007 AOU meeting, and serving as President of the New Mexico Ornithological Society.

Thomas Gardali is Associate Director of the Terrestrial Ecology Division of PRBO Conservation Science (founded as the Point Reyes Bird Observatory). For over 15 years, Tom has worked on avian research and conservation with this major nonprofit organization. His research focuses on the long-term dynamics of bird populations in relation to natural and human-caused changes in the environment, including weather/climate, vegetation succession, and habitat restoration. Tom leads the research at PRBO's Palomarin Field Station, where monitoring has continued year round since 1966 and hundreds of young ornithologists from around the world have been trained. Tom has published widely on a diversity of topics including an article on managing field crews and, most recently, a monograph he co-edited on California's birds most at risk—*California Bird Species of Special Concern*. Tom is actively involved in bridging the gap between research and management: he is an active participant in California Partners in Flight, and works on several Joint Ventures. He is currently an Associate Editor for *Western Birds* and co-edits the Breeding Bird Census reports for *Bird Populations*. Tom is a nontraditional candidate for the COS board in that he does not possess an advanced degree and does not work within academia. It is his nontraditional background that will benefit the COS by providing the society with a perspective from the non-profit world. With this perspective, Tom is in a unique position to provide leadership to help COS pursue creative fund-raising opportunities and build stronger relationships with the conservation and management communities. Perhaps most importantly, Tom is enthusiastic about the opportunity to serve on the COS board and looks forward to tackling the challenges facing the society.

Jeffrey F. Kelly is an Associate Professor at the University of Oklahoma, where he is jointly appointed to the Oklahoma Biological Survey and the Department of Zoology. He teaches courses in Conservation Biology and Population Ecology. Jeff earned his B.S. in Wildlife Management from the University of Maine. He studied Red-cockaded Woodpeckers with David (Chip) Leslie for his M.S. in Zoology at Oklahoma State University and Belted Kingfishers with Bea Van Horne for his Ph.D. in Zoology at Colorado State University. While a post-doc with Deborah Finch at the Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station in Albuquerque, Jeff began working on connectivity of migratory populations, which continues to be his primary research focus. His recent research uses stable-isotope ratios in bird tissues to quantify migratory patterns. He has published 35 peer-reviewed papers, six in the *Condor*, four in the *Auk*, and two in *Journal of Field Ornithology*. Since 2006, Jeff has served as the lead investigator for the NSF-funded MIGRATE research-coordination network (www.migrate.ou.edu). Over the last 20 years, he has been active as a member of the COS and other professional ornithological and conservation societies. He helped plan the 2000 annual COS meeting in Albuquerque, has served on conservation committees of both the AOU and the Southwestern Association of Naturalists, was an associate editor for the *Journal of Wildlife Management*, and is a co-editor of the *Oklahoma Ornithological Society Bulletin*. An elected member of the AOU, Jeff has as his primary interest the interface of science, conservation, and education. He thinks that ornithology, and the COS in particular, can play a leading role in transferring scientific knowledge into education and policy.

Eileen Kirsch is a research wildlife biologist with the U.S. Geological Survey's Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center in La Crosse, Wisconsin. She holds B.S. and M.A. degrees in Biology from the University of Nebraska, Omaha, and a Ph.D. in Zoology from University of Montana. She has worked on and published papers about a wide variety of birds and research issues in riparian ecosystems of the Midwest from Least Terns and Piping Plovers on the Platte River in Nebraska to Double-crested Cormorants, herons, and songbirds on the upper Mississippi River. She has been very active in the Cooper Ornithological Society for the past 10 years or so and was awarded an Honorary Membership in 2006 for her service as secretary (1997–2008), student awards chair (1996), and annual meeting chairperson (2004), as well as participation in various committees through the years. She would like to continue working for COS as a member of the Board of Directors. Among the issues facing the COS, declining membership and financial health in the economic recession may be of top consideration. The advent of electronic publishing and downturn in employment opportunities for ornithologists have helped create challenges in maintaining memberships. Maintaining adequate financial resources (derived primarily from memberships and the investment fund) is necessary for the services that the COS provides to members and the scientific and conservation communities at large. The Board will need to plan and implement creative ways to (1) attract and sustain members, (2) maintain a very high-quality journal and further increase its prestige in the changing climate of electronic publishing, (3) increase contributions to the investment fund, and (4) market the society's meetings, for they are of high quality in terms of science presented and opportunities to interact with other professionals in a stimulating yet casual setting. Eileen would encourage greater participation from wildlife professionals that work in resource management and amateur ornithologists through education and outreach. The COS Board of Directors is known for being innovative, flexible, nimble, and yet thoughtful.

The COS often leads the way in new directions and other societies follow. Eileen's past experience working with the board and officers and her historical perspective of the issues and options facing the COS (and all ornithological societies) will be a valuable asset as the board tackles present and future challenges.

Carol Vleck is a Professor in the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Organismal Biology, Iowa State University. She received her undergraduate degree from Pomona College in Claremont, California, a Master's degree from the University of California, Los Angeles, working with Nicholas Collias and her Ph.D. degree from UCLA under the direction of George Bartholomew and Tom Howell. She did postdoctoral training with Hermann Rahn, Don Farner, and Roger Seymour. She has published 65 articles in scientific journals, including the *Condor*, on topics ranging from embryonic metabolism and incubation behavior to hormonal control of cooperative breeding behavior. She has worked on a variety of species including Harris' Hawk, Adélie Penguin, Mexican Jay, Zebra Finch, Leach's Storm-Petrel, and currently is working on the biology of aging in the Tree Swallow. She has served as chair of the COS Harry R. Painton Award Committee and the Joseph Grinnell Student Research Award Committee and was on the COS Board of Directors (1991–1994), as well as the AOU Council (1997–2000). She served on the AOU Brewster and Coues Award Committee and Wetmore and Van Tyne Student Research Awards Committee. She is a member of the Scientific Program Committee for the 2010 International Ornithological Congress and was on the International Committee for the International Society for

Avian Endocrinology (1997–2004). She served as treasurer for the American Society of Naturalists (1993–1995) and on the editorial boards of *Oecologia* (2003–2009) and *Physiological Zoology* (1986–1989). Carol believes in being a responsible steward of COS resources while maintaining a generous spirit. She thinks that the study of birds has much to offer the entire scientific process and that the ornithological societies play an important role in supporting that study. She wants to ensure that the COS remains committed to supporting broad training in ornithology, affordable and vibrant annual meetings, and dissemination of research results.

Blair Wolf is an Associate Professor of Biology at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, New Mexico. His research interests encompass the natural history, nutritional ecology, ecophysiology, and reproductive biology of birds. He has published papers in the *Condor*, *Auk*, and *Journal of Field Ornithology* and co-authored three accounts for the *Birds of North America*. He teaches Ornithology, General Biology, Animal Physiology, and graduate courses in Ecology at UNM. He served as the chair of publications committee for the COS from 2000 to 2007 and has served one term on the Board of Directors. He is the instigator and coordinator of SORA, the Searchable Ornithological Research Archive, which continues to offer free access to electronic ornithological journal archives and now offers 14 periodicals. He is very interested in extending the influence of the COS into the lives of students and researchers in developing nations and continuing to work to maintain the COS within the ranks of the top ornithological societies globally.

AWARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

2009 LOYE AND ALDEN MILLER RESEARCH AWARD OF THE COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Miller Award Committee is pleased to honor Frances C. James as the recipient of the Loye and Alden Miller Research Award for 2009. This award is presented for lifetime achievement in ornithological research.

Throughout her career, Fran James's research has been instrumental in influencing the way we approach the study of birds, especially the relationship between birds and their habitats. One of the predominant themes that characterize James's impact on the field of ornithology is her use of quantitative approaches to study the biology of birds. Her work has been consistently ahead of the times, indicating how influential it has been on the field. Eventually others caught up to Fran.

Frances Crews James grew up in suburban Philadelphia. As a high-school student she participated in bird watching and nature activities at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, and she spent several summers working at the Woods Hole Marine Biology Laboratory (serving food to biologists). She received a bachelor's degree from Mt. Holyoke College (1952) and then went to Louisiana State University to study migration (1952–1954). She interrupted her graduate studies to marry fellow ornithologist Douglas James, move to the University of Arkansas, and raise three daughters. During her time at Arkansas she collaborated with James and others on ornithological and conservation research. In 1965 she entered graduate school at Arkansas

and received her Ph.D. in 1970. She served as a program director at NSF 1973–1977, then in 1977 she moved to Florida State University as Associate Professor and Curator of Birds and Mammals in the Department of Biological Science. She retired from FSU in 2003 and is currently Pasquale P. Graziadei Professor Emerita.

During her graduate career, James began working on two topics that she continued throughout her career: species-specific habitat relationships in birds and geographic variation in morphology and plumage. Her reciprocal-transplantation experiments in the U.S. and Mexico demonstrated, in addition to the genetic component of geographic variation in nestling development, a statistically significant nongenetic component, especially in the shape of the bill. Her early work on habitat-related ecomorphology in birds led to both a more sophisticated interpretation of the mechanistic basis of Bergman's Rule and the development of new methods for the statistical analysis of size and shape. One of James's most important conceptual contributions was her transfer of multivariate statistical techniques to represent habitat relationships of birds. It was Fran who first argued in 1971 that birds probably do not use a single "cue" to select habitat but use a combination of numerous variables that represents a "niche gestalt" to the bird. This idea has grown more recently to include the idea that birds respond not only to a variety of cues simultaneously at any spatial scale but also to cue gestalts at several spatial scales hierarchically. James herself has used this conceptual approach recently to develop experiments and methods to aid the conservation of the Red-cockaded Woodpecker in the southeast U.S.