



## NEWS AND NOTES

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## NEWS AND NOTES

### REPORT OF THE SEVENTY-SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The Cooper Ornithological Society held its 72nd annual meeting in conjunction with The American Ornithologists' Union, the Society of Canadian Ornithologists, the Raptor Research Foundation, the Sección Mexicana del Consejo Internacional para la Preservación de las Aves (CIPAMEX), and the Society of Caribbean Ornithology, at the Hotel Intercontinental in New Orleans, Louisiana, 24–28 September 2002. Tom Sherry and Kim Smith co-chaired the Local Committee. Phil Stouffer was chair of the Scientific Program Committee and Peter Lowther was the Scientific Program Coordinator. There were close to 1400 registrants. The program included 418 papers, 328 posters, 140 talks in 15 symposia, and 9 workshops.

The Society's award for lifetime achievement in ornithological research, the Loye and Alden Miller Award, was presented to Richard T. Holmes. Terry Rich, the President of the Cooper Ornithological Society, read the full citation. Dr. Holmes graciously accepted the award and recognized the role of his colleagues in his research endeavors.

Walter Koenig was recognized with Honorary Membership to the Cooper Ornithological Society for his service to the society. Dr. Koenig's past service to the society includes being the editor of this journal from 1996 through 2000, serving as a board member, serving on the publications committee and local committee for an annual meeting, and chairing the board nominating committee.

Mewaldt-King Student Research Awards were presented to David Des Rochers, College of William and Mary, for "Avian responses to created tidal wetlands," Scott Shlossberg, University of Illinois, "Effects of livestock grazing on birds: a new approach," Gina Zimmerman, Georgia Southern University, "Cuba's role as a stopover site during the fall migration of Swallow-tailed Kites (*Elanoides forficatus*)," Pat Heglund and Katie Dugger assisted Jon Faaborg, the Mewaldt-King Award committee chairperson, with the student research award selections.

Grinnell Student Research Awards were presented to Mark Haussmann, Iowa State University, "How do long-lived birds delay senescence—development of appropriate models and techniques," and James Rivers, University of California-Santa Barbara, "An investigation of the proximate factors that influence begging behavior in the Brown-headed Cowbird."

The Cooper Ornithological Society presented four awards for outstanding student papers: the Brazier Howell Award, the Frances F. Roberts Award, and two Board of Directors awards. Recipients of the 2002 student paper awards were Daniel Ardia, Cornell University, "Individual quality and experimental increases in reproductive effort affects primary and acquired immunity in Tree Swallows;" Laura Nagy, Dartmouth University, "Factors affecting double brooding in Black-throated Blue Warblers;" Chris Olson, Iowa

State University, "Effects of incubation behavior on embryo metabolism;" and Santiago Claramunt, Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, Montevideo, Uruguay, "Osteological perspectives on the phylogeny of recent and fossil furnarioids." Student paper award recipients received cash awards and five-year memberships to the Cooper Ornithological Society.

Through the annual balloting by all members of the Society, Teresa Bucher, Kathryn Purcell, and Blair Wolf were elected to three-year terms on the Board of Directors. In the Board of Directors meetings, the following were elected to assume or continue in office: Terrell Rich, President; Bonnie Bowen, President-Elect; Eileen Kirsch, Secretary; Carol Beardmore, Assistant Secretary; Kimberly Sullivan, Treasurer; James Dinsmore, Assistant Treasurer, David Dobkin, Editor of *The Condor*, and John Rotenberry, Editor of *Studies in Avian Biology*.

The next annual meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Society will be held at the du Bois Conference Center on the University of Northern Arizona campus in Flagstaff, Arizona, from 30 April–3 May 2003. Mark Sogge is chair of the Local Committee, and Charles van Riper III is chair of the Scientific Program Committee.

The Board of Directors passed the following six resolutions. If you know of individuals or organizations that should receive official copies of one or more of these resolutions, contact Mark Sogge, chair of the Conservation Resolutions Committee, or David Blockstein and Ellen Paul, who carried the resolutions to all participating Ornithological Societies at the meeting.

#### SUPPORT OF FULL SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CUBA

Whereas, the third North American Ornithological Conference was held in New Orleans, Louisiana, in September 2002; and

Whereas, five Cuban ornithologists had been invited to attend and to give talks at this conference; and

Whereas, the government of Cuba issued exit visas to these scientists; and

Whereas, the five scientists promptly applied to obtain visas to enter the United States and provided all documentation and information required of them to the U.S. Consulate in Cuba in order to obtain visas to enter the United States; and

Whereas, the U.S. Consulate and the U.S. State Department did not process the applications in a timely manner; and

Whereas, as a result the five Cuban scientists were unable to attend the North American Ornithological Conference; and

Whereas, United States law provides for scientific exchange between the United States and Cuba; and

Whereas, scientific exchange between ornithologists of Cuba and of the United States has been of benefit to both countries for many decades; and

Whereas, scientific exchange between ornithologists of Cuba and of the United States continues to be of benefit to both countries for the proper management and conservation of birds and other natural resources;

Therefore be it resolved that the Cooper Ornithological Society urges the United States Department of State and the U.S. Consulate in Havana to process visa applications and to take all other measures that are necessary, consistent with United States law, to permit and promote scientific exchange between the United States and Cuba to the maximum extent permitted by United States law.

#### SCIENCE AND THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Whereas, the United States and the planet are suffering a biodiversity crisis and an extinction crisis that is unprecedented, and is getting worse; and

Whereas, the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (as amended) is critical for preventing extinction and for recovering endangered and threatened species; and

Whereas, the professional ornithological societies of North America have been consistent supporters of a strong Endangered Species Act; and

Whereas, the Endangered Species Act requires decisions to be made "solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available;" and

Whereas, there have been various legislative attempts in 2002 to modify the Endangered Species Act, including with the stated intention of strengthening the role of science in endangered species protection;

Therefore be it resolved that the Cooper Ornithological Society reaffirms its support for a strong and effective Endangered Species Act; and

Be it further resolved that attempts to strengthen the role of science in endangered species protection must be consistent with the following principles:

1. Scientific practices must be determined by scientists and the scientific method, rather than dictated by legislation.

2. Sufficient resources should be provided to support science and the use of science in endangered species management.

3. Peer review can be effectively integrated into the procedures and processes under the Act, and should not be imposed as an additional step at the end of the process that will delay protection.

4. To be truly independent and effective, the peer review processes must be controlled by scientists, rather than political or regulatory personnel who have no scientific expertise.

#### LEAD EXPOSURE TO BIRDS FROM AMMUNITION AND TACKLE

Whereas, lead is the primary material used in ammunition and weighted fishing tackle; and

Whereas, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has determined that lead exposure from ammunition and tackle can be lethal to dozens of avian species, including Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*),

Golden Eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*), California Condors (*Gymnogyps californianus*), Common Loons (*Gavia immer*), and Trumpeter Swans (*Cygnus buccinator*); and

Whereas, nonlethal lead exposure can increase susceptibility in wildlife to trauma, starvation, or disease; and

Whereas, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service banned the use of lead shot for waterfowl hunting in 1991 to reduce lead poisoning of waterfowl and Bald Eagles; and

Whereas, Maine, New Hampshire, and New York have banned the sale and/or use of certain sizes of lead fishing sinkers to protect loons; and

Whereas, toxic contamination from lead ammunition at some shooting ranges has resulted in range closures to eliminate the possibility of those ranges being designated toxic waste sites; and

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Defense, the largest single user of ammunition in the U.S., has recognized the toxic danger of lead ammunition and as a result has worked to develop lead-free alternatives through the "Green Bullet Program;" and

Whereas, nontoxic alternatives to lead ammunition exist which have ballistic and killing characteristics similar to lead and are sometimes within the price range of lead; and

Whereas, affordable suitable alternatives exist for lead fishing tackle; and

Whereas, the threat of lead poisoning of birds has been recognized in other areas of the world and has resulted in bans on lead ammunition and tackle in northern Japan, Great Britain, and parts of Europe;

Therefore be it resolved that the Cooper Ornithological Society encourage efforts to educate hunters, shooters, and anglers about the dangers of lead to wildlife; encourage them to use suitable nontoxic alternatives; promote manufacturers' efforts to develop and market alternatives; and create a coalition of concerned organizations to strengthen outreach; and

Be it further resolved that the Cooper Ornithological Society encourage programs and policies aimed at reducing the threat of lead poisoning in raptors, loons, and other birds.

#### PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF SAGEBRUSH HABITATS

Whereas, sagebrush ecosystems are among the most endangered ecosystems in North America because of rapid degradation, fragmentation, and extensive loss of habitats; and

Whereas, almost all lands covered by sagebrush are owned publicly and managed by state or federal land and wildlife management agencies; and

Whereas, the alteration and loss of sagebrush habitats are largely the result of past and current land use practices on public lands; and

Whereas, sagebrush ecosystems and their associated wildlife represent a unique component of the nation's biodiversity; and

Whereas, Gunnison Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus minimus*) and Western Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus phaios*) have been listed as candidate species for the list of threatened and endangered species, and a petition has been filed to list the Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*); and

Whereas, population trends of other bird species obligate to sagebrush ecosystems also are in decline and most grouse species have been given special conservation status in one or more of the western states;

Therefore be it resolved, that the Cooper Ornithological Society urges federal agencies that manage sagebrush ecosystems to adhere to the letter and spirit of Executive Order 13186, and begin a program of consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to support the conservation intent of the migratory bird conventions by:

1. Integrating bird conservation principles, measures, and practices into agency activities; and
2. Avoiding or minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse impacts on migratory bird resources when conducting agency actions; and
3. Restoring or enhancing the habitat of migratory birds, as practicable; and
4. Preventing or abating the detrimental alteration of the environment for the benefit of migratory birds, as practicable; and
5. Designing migratory bird habitat and population conservation principles, measures, and practices into agency plans and planning processes; and
6. Developing and using principles, standards, and practices that minimize the unintentional take of migratory birds as a result of agency actions;

Be it further resolved that the Cooper Ornithological Society encourages state and federal agencies to recognize the impact of management policies such as livestock grazing, prescribed fire (fuel treatments), use of herbicides for thinning, planting of non-native vegetation, on sagebrush ecosystems and dependent avifauna; and

Be it further resolved that the Cooper Ornithological Society encourages the Department of Interior and other state and federal agencies, universities, and nongovernmental organizations to initiate a coordinated research program designed to identify the key mechanisms by which bird populations respond to the spatial and temporal components of sagebrush habitats; and

Be it further resolved that the Cooper Ornithological Society encourages the state and federal governments to acquire, whenever possible, additional lands for conservation of sagebrush habitat and to redesignate federal lands comprising sagebrush habitat as wilderness study areas, wilderness areas, or other protected status.

#### FUNDING FOR EXPANDED WEST NILE VIRUS RESEARCH

Whereas, the recently introduced West Nile Virus has been documented in over 50 species of birds native to North America; and

Whereas, by September 2002 West Nile Virus had been documented in all but a few western areas of the contiguous United States and Canada; and

Whereas, research conducted at or funded by the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control focuses on the human health effects of West Nile Virus; and

Whereas, research conducted or funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture focuses primarily on mosquito biology and control; and

Whereas, research conducted at the U.S. Geological Survey's National Wildlife Health Center focuses primarily on tracking the geographic extent of West Nile Virus, to understand how it moves between birds, mosquitoes, and humans, and to predict future movements of the virus; and

Whereas, the current research agenda focuses primarily on crows and other corvid species; and

Whereas, there is currently minimal research effort to determine the impact of West Nile Virus on wild bird populations; and

Whereas, baseline information from regions where the virus is not present or has only recently emerged is needed to assess the impact of West Nile Virus once it is present and spreads; and

Whereas, without an understanding of the relative impact of West Nile Virus compared to the impact of mosquito control, management decisions weighing the relative benefits and risks of mosquito control methods cannot be made; and

Whereas, vaccine research is underway but there is a need to develop methods to deliver the vaccine to wild birds; and

Whereas, it is likely that the disease will soon be found in Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, with unknown ecological effects on the avian fauna;

Therefore be it resolved that the Cooper Ornithological Society urges the federal research and research funding agencies of the countries of the Western Hemisphere to provide:

1. Immediate funding for the establishment of baseline population information in regions where the virus is not present or is not yet widespread; and
2. Funding for the study of the impact of West Nile Virus on wild bird populations of all species throughout the Western Hemisphere; and
3. Funding for the development of vaccine for birds, and for an effective delivery method to wild birds.

#### 2002 NORTH AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONFERENCE MEETING COMMENDATION

Whereas, the 2002 North American Ornithological Conference was held in New Orleans, Louisiana; and was organized by the American Ornithologists' Union, Society of Canadian Ornithologists/La Societe des Ornithologistes du Canada, Cooper Ornithological Society, Raptor Research Foundation, Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds, and the Sección Mexicana del Consejo Internacional para la Preservación de las Aves (CIPAMEX); and

Whereas, the meeting was hosted and sponsored by Tulane University and the Audubon Nature Institute, and co-hosted and sponsored by

Audubon Nature Institute, Aquarium of the Americas  
Audubon Nature Institute, Zoological Park (Bird Department)

Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program

Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology

The Coypu Foundation

Gulf Coast Bird Observatory

Louisiana Ornithological Society

Louisiana State University Baton Rouge

Louisiana State University Shreveport

Mobil Oil Corporation (Robert and Nancy Brown Family)

National Wetlands Research Center

Orleans Audubon Society

Our Lady of Holy Cross College

Southeast Louisiana University

The Reed Foundation

Tulane University, Office of the President

University of Arkansas

University of Southern Mississippi

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of International Conservation

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Louisiana Refuges

Weyerhaeuser Corporation

Whereas, scientifically stimulating and effectively executed joint meetings provide important opportunities

for members to interact professionally and socially, especially among participating societies, encouraging the exchange of information and ideas critical to the persistence and vigor of the science of ornithology and member societies; and

Recognizing that the Program Coordinator, Peter Lowther, skillfully led and directed the overall meeting planning and execution; and

Recognizing that the Committee on Local Arrangements, assisted by an energetic and dedicated group of volunteers under the talented direction of Thomas Sherry and Kimberly Smith, provided us with a diverse and enjoyable assemblage of exhibits, special events, field trips, and evening social events; and

Recognizing that the Committee on the Scientific Program, also under capable direction of Phil Stouffer and Frank Moore, arranged outstanding and stimulating scientific lecture sessions, workshops, and poster sessions; and

Whereas, all those who have attended and participated in this meeting have been enriched by it;

Therefore be it resolved that the American Ornithologists' Union, the Society of Canadian Ornithologists/La Societe des Ornithologistes du Canada, the Cooper Ornithological Society, the Raptor Research Foundation, and the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds commend the Committee on Local Arrangements, the Committee on the Scientific Program, and the other conference organizers for their efforts toward this successful 2002 meeting; and

Be it further resolved that these above societies and foundations, and the Sección Mexicana del Consejo Internacional para la Preservación de las Aves (CI-PAMEX), thank the numerous hosts and sponsors for their generosity and participation in the conference.