

## WFO Scholars: The Future of Field Ornithology

As any of you who attend our annual conferences have seen, WFO's Youth Scholarship program has been a tremendous success, with more and more recipients each year. The fact that so many of our past scholarship recipients return year after year is particularly gratifying, and that certainly skews our demographics toward the younger side!

Over the past decade WFO has given 45 up-and-coming young ornithologists opportunities to attend one of our conferences or participate in one of our field expeditions. Our hope is that, by exposing them to our organization and the people within it, we will foster and encourage their love of birds and their desire to learn more about birds. Also important is the chance for them to meet other like-minded young people and to see that they are not the *only* ones obsessed with feathered creatures. The ultimate goal is to see some (or all!) of them go on to a lifetime of studying birds and making contributions to our knowledge. And that seems to be exactly what is happening:

- some of the past recipients have already published important papers in peer-reviewed journals,
- several have presented papers at the science sessions of WFO conferences,
- two have gone on to be named Young Birders of the Year by the American Birding Association,
- many have either graduated with biology degrees or are currently attending college, studying in the field (including two at Cornell University),
- nearly all are active in their local bird-related organizations (e.g., serving as board members of Audubon chapters),
- some have founded organizations to encourage other young birders,
- some have apprenticed in museums, learning techniques such as specimen preparation and analysis of data from specimens,
- two have served on the California Bird Records Committee,
- and three have been WFO board members (with one on the current board).

All this is possible only through the generous donations from organizations such as Pasadena Audubon and from our members. If you want to see us continue and even expand the program, please consider making a donation to the WFO Scholarship Fund at [www.westernfieldornithologists.org/support.php](http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/support.php).

*The WFO Scholarship Committee*