

AFO Afield



Vol. 19, No. 2 March 2015

Interview with Matt Shumar

Matt Shumar, AFO's new Web master and a member of the Council's Class of 2016, has been working hard to transform AFO's website. We hope all AFO members have had a chance to peruse the new site, which became active this January. Matt, who is based in Columbus, Ohio, received his BSc from Penn State University, and MSc from West Virginia University where his research focused on landscape ecology and anthropogenic effects on migrant songbirds. Matt is currently the project coordinator for the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas II and does graphic and web design in his spare time.

What are the overall goals for the new website?

The overarching goal for the new website is to create a more modern,

interactive experience for our members. The old website did a good job of archiving material and serving out some basic information, but it didn't really engage current or potential members and invite them to visit frequently. The new website will do just that.

What steps have you taken to make the website user-friendly?

We're currently working on a better multi-language integration for the website. One of the things AFO has been so proud of in the past was that we were one of the first societies to offer a full website in both English and Spanish. The new website will make it easy for visitors to

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AFO's new user-friendly website provides a modern, interactive experience for our members and potential members



Association of Field Ornithologists



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Student Travel Awards

The AFO provides a number of student travel awards to help defray costs necessary for students to attend and present an oral paper or poster at an annual meeting.



Red-headed Woodpecker
Reed Bowman

Who We Are

Founded in 1922 as the New England Bird Banding Association, The Association of Field Ornithologists (AFO) is one of the world's major societies of professional and amateur ornithologists dedicated to the scientific study and dissemination of information about birds in their natural habitats. AFO encourages the participation of amateurs in research, and emphasizes the conservation biology of birds.

[Become a member of AFO today!](#)

Journal of Field Ornithology

The AFO publishes the [Journal of Field Ornithology](#) and prides itself as serving as a bridge between the professional and the amateur ornithologist. The organization's membership and governing council consist of both amateur and professional ornithologists, in recognition of the contributions that both make to ornithology.

News Headlines

- AFO launches new website!!
- Read the latest [blog posts](#)
- Applications for student travel awards due 15 February
- Learn about our [Neotropical Sponsorship](#) program
- New [virtual issue](#) released
- [AFO article featured in BBC](#)

Interview with Matt Shumar

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seamlessly switch between English, Spanish, and Portuguese via the click of a button. The website will also be flexible to a wide array of devices including tablets and smartphones. We also hope to integrate the application process for various research and travel funding directly into the website. No more downloading and emailing clunky documents!

How will the new website engage with current and potential members of the AFO?

The new website is integrated with social media that will help attract and engage users, particularly the younger ornithologists who are entering the field. In addition to the AFO Facebook page, we will be adding Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn functionalities to the new website. To engage members further, the new website will provide some of our members with contributor access so that a steady stream of new information will be available to our audience.

What new content can we expect to find on the new website?

Users will be able to learn about the history of the AFO, find out about our current council members, get information on funding opportunities, get details about past and upcoming meetings, and purchase research supplies. Compared to the old website, information will be much easier to find on the new website, and the amount of information will be much more detailed.

What are the future plans for the website?

We're working on ways to make the website much more interactive for our members. The first phase is to roll out the new design. From there we will be adding new features that should make the website

ASSOCIATION OF FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS AVIAN RESEARCH SUPPLIES

**Selling high-quality mist nets, net poles,
banding pliers and other equipment for
ornithologists**

**Proceeds support
research grants for
students, amateurs,
and Latin American
ornithologists**

**Members receive a
10% discount**

**Your purchase makes a lasting
contribution to the ornithological
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more of a community experience and not just an information repository. We'll be adding a blog that will feature research highlights from current members, and particularly young ornithologists. Our aim is that the website will function like a portal to the community!

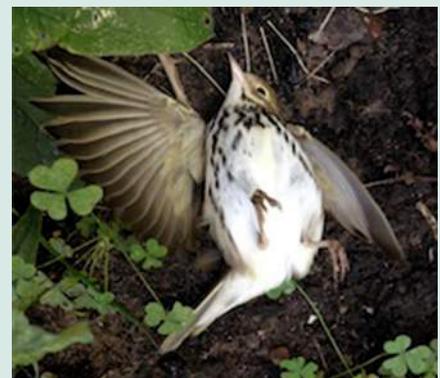
Bird Window Collisions

Birds face many threats when they come into contact with urban populations. One of the leading causes of avian mortality in cities is window collisions. In Canada an estimated 25 million birds are killed each year as a result of bird window collisions. In the United States, this number surpasses 365 million. Most studies on window collisions have focused on tall skyscrapers; however, houses likely represent 90% of the mortality. More work is needed; only four studies in the past have focused on bird window collision mortality at houses.

The Birds and Windows Project was developed to use citizen science and active participation to continue to identify the factors that affect collision risk at residential

homes. This project was developed to better understand what can be done to reduce bird window collisions at your home and to actively involve YOU in data collection. We are asking you to think about bird window collisions you have observed in the past and would like you to regularly search around your residence for evidence of bird window collisions in the future. This project is seeking participants across Canada and the United States and will be running throughout 2015.

To get involved in the Birds and Windows Project, visit: **birdswindows.biology.ualberta.ca**. You can also follow us on Twitter and like us on Facebook (@birdsandwindows and Birds and Windows).



Steve Hager

Many bird species are at risk from window collisions, including ovenbirds

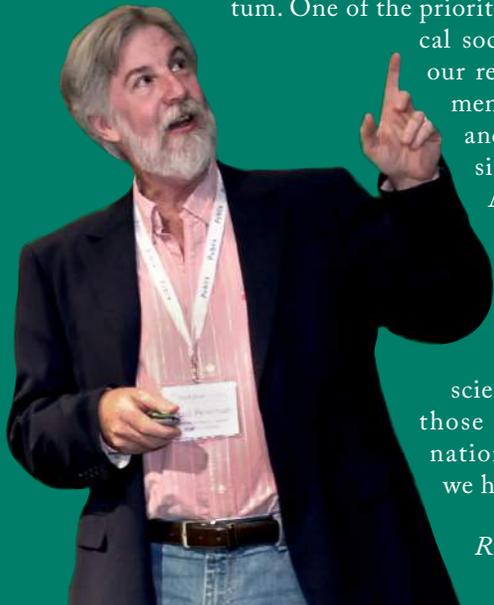
Message from the President

Over the last 8 years the AFO has been led by two visionary Presidents, Scott Johnson and Kathryn Purcell, both of whom worked to reshape AFO into a society that can persist and succeed into the future. During those years, the AFO has been a whirlwind of activity and change. I was privileged to be part of it and I hope I can maintain the momentum. One of the priorities of all ornithological societies is to maintain our relevance to all of our members—students, early and mid-career professionals, and amateurs. As both society and ornithology have changed, so have the needs of our members. Today, concerns about birds and the science that can address those concerns transcend national boundaries, and we hope that membership

in the AFO will follow. All of this means we need to develop services and products relevant to the diversity of our membership. Our new website expands on new communication venues offered by social media. We are offering new grants and awards that help early-career professionals because competition for academic positions is so fierce that many stay in post-docs, with little support for travel, for many years. We are trying to support bird banding, a heirloom function of the AFO, by working with the North America Banding Council to train banders both here and in Latin America. We are exploring models for ensuring that papers appearing in our journal are quickly and easily available, while also representing the best science. We want all ornithologists to think of JFO as a great venue for their best work. Finally, we are exploring new business models, with revenues supporting some of our activities that are less dependent on the vagaries of membership. I want to keep the momentum going. Every time I attend an AFO meeting, I recall the benefits and joy of being a member in a smaller society. My goal is to keep the AFO flourishing through my tenure as President and ensure that the next President comes in with the momentum I was able to enjoy. Thanks.

Reed Bowman

Reed Bowman, AFO President



Scott Taylor

Avian Research Supplies: For Ornithologists and For the Birds

By Patrick Keenan

Our Avian Research Supplies (ARS) business has had an eventful year. On October 1, 2014, the management of ARS changed hands from Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences in Manomet, MA to Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) in Portland, ME. AFO is deeply

thankful for the long-standing contributions of Jennie Robbins at Manomet and Brian Harrington at AFO. For the past 40 years they have ensured that researchers have the supplies they need, when they need them. Thank you Brian and Jennie! We look forward to our partnership with BRI and our shared goals to help meet the needs of researchers and extend our reach into the ornithological community.

Avian Research Supplies provides an essential service to the ornithological research community by offering necessary equipment and supplies to bird researchers. An additional outcome of this service is that it provides funds to our Association that support ornithology through grants from the E. Alexander Bergstrom Fund.



BRI bands many birds as part of their Songbird Program



Biodiversity Research Institute (2)

Patrick Keenan, BRI's manager of the ARS business, releases a banded bird

Indeed, Mr. Bergstrom began the business in the 1950's with the vision to supply researchers with mist nets that they rely on for field research. As we look ahead, we expect to increase product offerings to meet the full range of researcher needs.

The ARS business is managed for you and is in support of not-for-profit outcomes. Please purchase supplies from our shop at www.avianresearchsupplies.org. Our business takes care to ensure that our products do not find their way to unethical users such as those involved in the pet trade. If you have suggestions for new products please contact afonets@briloon.org.

Summary of the 2014 AFO/WOS Annual Meeting

In late May 2014, the Association of Field Ornithologists held its annual meeting jointly with the Wilson Ornithological Society at Salve Regina University in Newport, RI. Salve Regina is perched atop Newport's famed Cliff Walk, overlooking the crashing Atlantic and behind many of Newport's famous gilded mansions. Over 100 past and current AFO members, including specifically invited former Officers and Council members, attended AFO's "A Luncheon to Remember", organized by Dan Lambert, a member of AFO's Council. Dr. Jerry Jackson, a former AFO President talked about the history of our society and the ensemble discussed how we might take lessons from our history to shape our future. Dan produced a video of the luncheon that is now available from the AFO for members that were unable to attend.

The scientific program also included 60 papers organized into eight sessions, two symposia consisting of 13 papers on Ospreys in New England and on avian frugivores and their conservation, and 57 posters. Travel awards were given jointly by AFO and WOS to 33 students, including 8 undergraduates, 12 Masters and 13 PhD students. Student participation at the meeting was high with 40 of 57 posters and 38 of 71 talks being presented by students – a great indicator of the health of our societies. Among a variety of awards, the AFO Outstanding Student Oral Presentation Award was given to Sarah Goodwin, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, for her talk "Team of rivals:



Michael Lombardo

The 2014 meeting was held at Salve Regina University in Newport, RI.

with a college or university was given to Kyle Davis of Big Walnut High School, Sunbury, Ohio, for "Changes in the feather microbiota in the nest lining of Tree Swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*) during the reproductive cycle." J. David Weins of the USGS Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center in Corvallis, Oregon gave the AFO Plenary Talk entitled "Barred Owls in the Pacific Northwest: Ecological impacts on Spotted Owls." At the annual members business meeting the following AFO officers were elected: Reed Bowman, President; Paul Rodewald, Vice-President; Greg Shriver, Treasurer; Dan Ardia, Assistant Treasurer; Michael P. Lombardo, Secretary. The following were elected to the AFO Council: Christine Stracey (Class of 2015); Matthew Shumar (Class of 2016); and Valentina Ferretti, Alex Jahn, Bernie Lohr, Jessica Oswald, and Mark Woodrey (Class of 2017).

AFO supports the North American Banding Council

The Association of Field Ornithologist's (originally the New England Bird Banding Association and later the Northeastern Bird-Banding Association) was formed in 1922 in response to a rapidly growing interest in bird-banding. Even in 1986, as the Association became AFO and formerly joined the Ornithological Societies of North America (OSNA), the goals were re-articulated to match this national scope, but reiterated maintaining the strong historical ties to bird-banding and the amateur ornithological community.

In 1998, with support from many of the OSNA associations, including AFO, the North American Banding Council (NABC), was formed. The nonprofit group comprises representatives of participating ornithological

and government organizations whose members use bird-banding as a tool in ornithological research, conservation, and management. The mission of NABC is to promote sound and ethical bird-banding practices and techniques. NABC has developed educational and training materials, including manuals on general banding techniques as well as techniques manuals for specialized taxonomic groups accompanied by a three-level certification process.

The bander training and certification program sets standards of knowledge, experience and skills at levels of:

- ◆ Assistant: competence in handling and banding birds under direct supervision.
- ◆ Bander: competence in all aspects of banding, including the design and carrying out

of meaningful studies that involve the capturing, handling, identification, ageing, sexing, banding, and measuring of birds recording of data; and accurate and timely completion of banding schedules.

- ◆ Trainer: permittees with exceptional experience, knowledge, skill, and demonstrated teaching ability. Trainers will certify banders.

Consistent with AFO's priority for supporting ornithology in Latin America, NABC formed an International Committee whose mission is to build capacity for sustained ethical bird monitoring and banding through training and education in an effort to promote science and bird conservation internationally.

AFO supports the North American Banding Council

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To achieve this mission NABC fosters close relationships with certified Latin American and Caribbean trainers and banders. They translate their educational and outreach materials in English, French, and Spanish and use these to facilitate certification of banders and trainers internationally. They ensure that ethics training is part of all NABC bander training programs.

AFO's representative to NABC for the last several years has been Ian Ausprey. Ian has an MS degree from Ohio State and was previously a research biologist for the Klamath Bird Observatory in Ashland, Oregon. He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Florida and is the Chair of NABC's Evaluation Committee which is charged with maintaining policies and materials associated with the NABC certification process. In 2013–14, NABC was extremely active in providing training and certification opportunities for banders throughout the Americas. Training workshops and certification sessions involved over 50 participants from eight countries and centered

on NABC principles and guidelines regarding the ethical use of banding as an ornithological tool. In one session, Ian and fellow trainer Feleicity Newell, taught 25 Peruvian biologists and university students NABC-based methods for operating constant-effort mist-netting stations. The 3-day workshop, convened with CORBIDI, Perú's principal ornithological NGO, was held at the Estación de Anillamiento Santa Eulalia near Lima.

Perched at 2300 meters in dry montane forest/scrub, the setting gave participants banding experience in habitats in which they work.

The AFO, through a variety of programs such as our Bergstrom Awards, our Skutch Award, and our Neotropical Sponsored



Ian Ausprey

Participants in a 3-day, NABC-sponsored banding workshop at the Estación de Anillamiento Santa Eulalia near Lima, Peru.

Memberships, is dedicated to supporting ornithology and ornithologists in Latin America and the Caribbean. NABC's work is extremely important in supporting that mission. We thank Ian and NABC for their dedication to these goals.

AFO goes to Canada for their 93rd Annual Meeting

July 16–18 at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia

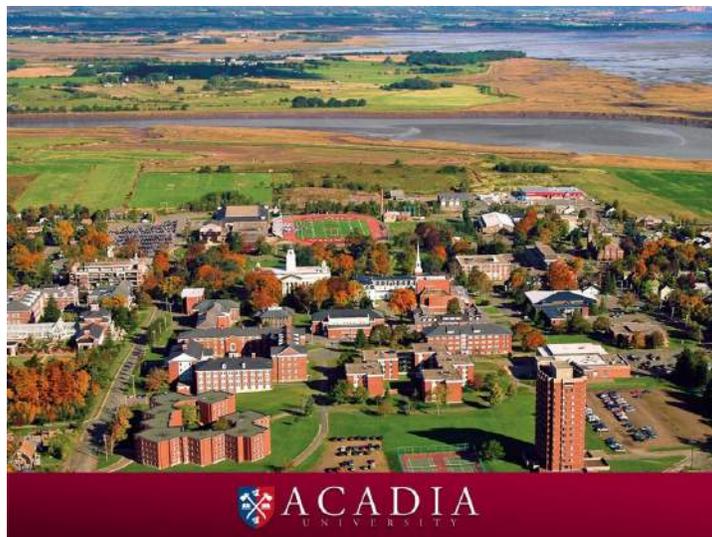
The Association of Field Ornithologists will hold its 2015 meeting jointly with the Wilson Ornithological Society and the Society of Canadian Ornithologists/Société des Ornithologistes du Canada, July 16–18 at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia (<http://personalpress.acadiau.ca/ornithmeet2015/>). The deadline for submitting abstracts will be 1 April. Wolfville is in northwestern Nova Scotia, on the shores of the Bay of Fundy, where the world's highest tides regularly fill and drain Wolfville Harbor. Occurring at the intersection of hills, valleys, rivers, and ocean, Wolfville offers spectacular hiking and cycling, great bird diversity (over 360 bird species occur in Nova Scotia), and is a great location for a summer meeting. Make this your summer family vacation!

Local Chair David Shutler and his team have put together an exciting meeting agenda. Prior to the opening reception, the Wilson Ornithological Society will be offering a workshop on mentoring best practices, aimed at both

students and mentors, but open to anyone. This workshop will be held on Thursday afternoon (July 16) and will include lunch. The meeting, in addition to oral and poster sessions, will feature two plenary talks, one by former AFO President and the WOS's 2015 Margaret Morse Nice Medal recipient Erica (Ricky) Dunn entitled "Bird observatories: Diversity and opportunity" and the other by James F. Dwyer, winner

of AFOs 2013 Best Student Publication Award, entitled "Range sizes and habitats of non-breeding Crested Caracaras: Implications for the evolution of communal roosting." The SCO also will host a symposium on the movement ecology of birds in the Gulf of Maine.

There will be early morning bird walks and the shorebird migration will have just begun. For everyone with a taste for the grape, the Wolfville Magic Winery bus will provide a tasting tour to 3 or 4 different wineries within easy reach of Acadia. We expect this to be a great meeting and hope to see you there!



Acadia University

The campus of Acadia University is the site of AFO's 2015 meeting

Skutch Award

The Association of Field Ornithologist's Alexander F. Skutch Medal is awarded periodically in recognition of significant career accomplishments and research contributions, particularly in Neotropical Ornithology. The award aims to showcase individuals who have not only excelled in research, but who have also made significant contributions through, for example, teaching, student mentoring, and public outreach, particularly in Latin America. The goal of the Skutch Medal is to recognize ornithologists whose careers serve as models of excellence.

This year, the council and members of the AFO are honored to present the Skutch Medal for Excellence in Neotropical Ornithology to Dr. James W. Wiley. Dr. Wiley is recognized for his significant contributions to the scientific literature that have aided in the conservation of a

wide range of imperiled neotropical species in the Latin American-Caribbean region. He was one of the founding members of the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds (SCSCB), and served as the editor of *The Journal of Caribbean Ornithology* between 1988 and 2004.

His research efforts have not only assisted in the recovery of endangered species and management of critical habitat, but have also provided benefits to the public. For example, Dr Wiley has co-authored numerous popular books including three seminal field guides, *Birds of the West Indies*, *Birds of the Dominican Republic and Haiti*, and *The Birds of Hispaniola*. These definitive field guides have not only provided pleasure for scientists and recreational birders alike, but have also significantly contributed to the understanding of ornithology in the region.

Throughout his career, Dr. Wiley's extensive mentoring and teaching efforts have impacted a wide range of students and professionals, particularly those in the Latin American-Caribbean region. Dr. Wiley engaged students formally through supervision within Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Units



Vickie McDonald (right) presents the Skutch Medal for Excellence in Neotropical Ornithology to Dr. James W. Wiley (left)

Michael Lombardo

at Grambling University and at the University of Maryland at Eastern Shore, and informally in the field, through ornithological meetings, and personal communications. His dedication to mentoring and developing his students is legendary.

The Skutch Medal committee was chaired by Dr. Herb Raffaele, Chief, Division of International Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The committee consisted of Lisa Sorenson, Executive Director and former President of Birds Caribbean; Amiro Perez-Leroux, Director of Birdlife International for Latin America and the Caribbean; Bert Lenten, Deputy Secretary General of the Convention on Migratory Species; Richard Huber, Principal Environmental Specialist for the Department of Biological Protection and Management at the Organization of American States and Chair of Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative; Maria Rivera, Senior Advisor for the Americas in the Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance; and Nestor Herrera, Director of Wildlife and Ecosystems at El Salvador's Environmental Ministry.

AFO Afield is a publication of the Association of Field Ornithologists (AFO) and is freely available on the AFO website, www.afonet.org. Please direct comments, questions, suggestions, etc. regarding this newsletter to the editor Jennifer Smith at jsmith60@unl.edu. Send address changes to OSNA Business Office, 5400 Bosque Blvd, Suite 680, Waco, Texas 76710 USA, or send email to business@osnabirds.org. For information about membership in AFO, contact OSNA at the address above or call (254) 399-9636.

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AFO Afield

March 2015

Volume 19 • Number 2

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Editor

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Design

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