

## Summary of the Ornithological Congress of the Americas

In August 2017, the AFO held its annual meeting in Puerto Iguazú, Argentina as part of the first-ever Ornithological Congress of the Americas and the first joint meeting of the AFO, Aves Argentinas, and the Sociedade Brasileira de Ornitologia. The congress was attended by over 540 ornithologists from 14 countries of which approximately 300 were students! The event was widely considered an overwhelming success with its importance recognized not only by the societies and attendees, but also by the broader community—in recognition of the congress, Iguazú National Park ran a

Black-fronted Piping Guan, Iguazú National Park, Argentina

ing local bird species, and the congress was covered by the local TV network. It was a historic meeting for the AFO and only the third time that our society has co-organized a meeting in Latin America.

concurrent photography exhibit showcas-

The four-day meeting was packed with exciting events, stimulating science, and plenty of opportunities for making new friends and catching up with old ones! We were incredibly fortunate to host seven renowned ornithologists, who gave plenaries covering a wide range of fascinating subjects:

- ♦ Patricia Brennan (Mount Holyoke College, USA)—Genital evolution in birds: losing the penis and winning the battle
- ♦ Scott Edwards (Harvard University, USA)—Genomic drivers of evolutionary change: micro- and macroevolutionary examples across the avian tree of life
- ♦ John Fitzpatrick (Cornell University, USA)—Emerging roles for citizen science in understanding bird distributions and in conservation
- ♦ Sergio Lambertucci (CONICET-Universidad Nacional del Comahue)—Sharing the air with wildlife: patterns, processes and conservation in 3D
- Miguel Marini (Universidade de Brasília, Brazil)—Climate change and Neotropical birds: current knowledge and gaps
- ♦ Thomas Martin (University of Montana, USA)—On the importance of studying natural history while thinking about evolutionary ecology theory and physiology principles to advance understanding of life history variation
- Cristina Miyaki (Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil)—Phylogeography of birds: revealing the biogeographical history of the Atlantic Forest

The congress agenda included a full schedule of symposia spanning a variety of topics, including 'Movement ecology of South American birds: causes and consequences', 'The utility

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Attendees of the Ornithological Congress of the Americas in Puerto Iguazú, Argentina

Tania Molina, lastrafotografica.blogspot.com



## Message from the President

Torth American ornithological societies are experiencing a period of rapid change. To continue to serve the science of Ornithology and our diverse membership, AFO has worked to create a more organized and financially stable society that is adaptable and more likely to succeed. We have adopted a business model that incorporates increased revenue to support AFO activities and relies less on membership income. This involved the bold decision by AFO to purchase Avinet of Dryden, New York, in late 2016. Through most of 2017, with a 'heavy lift' from our partners at the Biodiversity Research Institute (who manage AFO's Avian Research Supplies) we moved Avinet operations to Portland, Maine. AFO has been committed to providing mist nets and banding equipment to ornithologists for decades, but 2017 marked a significant expansion of our activities, with the result that Avian Research Supplies is now the sole producer of mist nets in the Americas! It was a challenging year for sure and we are now working closely with Biodiversity Research Institute to develop a more finely tuned business plan.

AFO's priority is to stay relevant to its diverse membership and we expect that Avian Research Supplies income will allow us to increase member services while adding to our endowment. We aim to increase grants and travel awards to students, amateur biologists, and early-career professionals working in both the U.S./Canada and Latin America. To enhance our support of bird banders, we will work

more closely with the North American Banding Council to support bander training, both here in North America and in Latin America. Finally, we will strengthen AFO's connections to Latin American ornithologists and become a more international society. We made important steps in that direction in 2017 when we cohosted our annual meeting with Aves Argentina and Sociedade Brasileira de Ornitologia at Puerto Iguazú, Argentina, last August. It was a memorable and very successful meeting which highlighted the idea that AFO can make important contributions to Latin American ornithology by supporting the organization of future scientific meetings in Latin America.

As I near the end of my term as AFO President, I am grateful for the hard work and camaraderie of AFO officers, councilors and committees, AFO members, and the certainly staff at ARS/Biodiversity Research Institute. I feel especially fortunate for Editor Gary Ritchison and Associate Editors of the *Journal of Field Ornithology*, which continues to be an excellent venue for avian research, and now ranks 5th in impact factor among 24 ornithological journals worldwide. Our cumulative efforts have brought great change to AFO in recent years and have helped to position us well for the future.

Please join us in Chattanooga, Tennessee for our 2018 annual meeting, to be held jointly with the Wilson Ornithological Society—it promises to be a great meeting. Thank you for supporting the AFO!

Paul Rodewald, AFO President

## Summary of the Ornithological Congress of the Americas

Continued from page 1

of citizen science data for bird conservation across the Americas', and 'Applied statistics for ornithological studies: current developments and insights'. It also provided numerous workshops including 'warbleR: a package for streamlined bioacoustic analyses in R', 'How to talk about Science with non-scientists?', and 'Introduction to GIS and Ecological Niche Modeling for use of Bird Databases'.

AFO undergraduate student oral presentation awards were given to Thays Vernoica Prestes (Behavioral responses of urban birds to anthropogenic ania Molina, lastrafotografica. blogspot.com

AFO Council Members at the Ornithological Congress of the Americas in Puerto Iguazú, Argentina

disturbance in green areas in Curtiba, Paraná, Brazil), Waleska E. dos Santos Barbosa (Molecular systematic and biogeography of the *Synallaxis rutilans* species complex), Paulo Sergio Pereira de Amorim (Experimental influence of a non-vocal signal on the vigilance of the Scaled Dove), and undergraduate poster awards were given to Bruno Riovitti (Lower begging efficiency can constrain host use in the

specialist Screaming Cowbird), Florencia E. Curzel (Wooded street use by birds in Buenos Aires city: the role of local characteristics and urban parks connectivity), and Facundo Fermandez-Duque (Plumage ornamentation as a potential driver of behavioral differences in a dichromatic passerine).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



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AFO graduate student oral presentation awards were given to Young Ha Suh (Potential mechanisms that influence first-breeding site selection and quality), Pedro Diniz (Duetting, extra-pair paternity and reproductive success in the Rufous Hornero), and Laura Maria Schaedler (Singing in unison: duets and choruses in Blue Manakins), while graduate poster awards were given to Cecília Licarião Luna (Body condition and abundance of endemic passerines of Fernando de Norohna, Brazil), Juan Manuel Rojas Ripari (Response to nest predation risk in a cooperative breeder the Grayish Baywing), and Luiz Henrique Varzinczak (Assessing nestedness for insular bird assemblages: contrasting island area and isolation for multiple dimensions of biodiversity)—congratulations to all award winners!!

Evenings were a great time to experience local cuisine, cultural traditions, and special events including 'Jacana Jacana', a tradition of the Sociedade Brasileira de Ornitologia in which teams act out the behavior of their chosen bird species. This year's event was won by a team from the Laboratorio de Biología de Aves, IADIZA-CCT-Conicet



Toco Toucan

Mendoza for their rendition of courting flamingos! The congress also marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Aves Argentinas who hosted a centenary party to celebrate.

Iguazú Falls above, Jardin de los Picaflores, Puerto Iguazú, below



Congress attendees were treated to plentiful birding opportunities with a wide range of species seen during the morning bird walks alone! Local birding sites in Puerto Iguazú, including Jardin de los Picaflores, provided exceptional views of hummingbirds, euphonias, and tanagers, amongst other species. The surrounding area offered unique opportunities to experience local flora and fauna—the spectacular Iguazú National Park was a highlight with breathtaking views of Iguazu Falls, one of the world's Seven Natural Wonders and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Here, attendees saw a diversity of species including Great Dusky Swift, Toco Toucan, Blond-crested Woodpecker, Eared Pygmy-Tyrant, Plush-crested Jay, and the endangered Black-fronted Piping-Guan. Combined with the events of the Congress, the birds and scenic attractions made for a particularly memorable meeting.

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### Welcome New AFO Councilors!

At AFO's annual business meeting held at the Ornithological Congress of the Americas, the following AFO Councilors were elected: David Aborn, Mary Garvin, and Sarah Sargent. Here is more information about our three newly elected councilors.

#### Dr. David Aborn

David Aborn is an Associate Professor in the Department of Biology, Geology, and Environmental Science at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC). His primary research projects involve examining the suitability of urban greenspaces as stopover sites for migrating songbirds, monitoring Tree Swallow populations breeding in southeastern Tennessee, and studying the wintering biology of Sandhill Cranes in southeast Tennessee. His graduate students have conducted research on such topics as the effect of kudzu on

bird diversity, nest predation at an urban Audubon sanctuary, the relationship between pedestrian activity and migrant body condition,

Dr. Mary Garvin



Dr. David Aborn

population genetics of Northern Saw-whet Owls, and waterfowl foraging in agricultural vs. natural wetlands. He teaches a variety of lower-level, upper-level, and graduate-level classes in biology and environmental science, has served as coordinator of the Master's Program in Environmental Science at UTC, and was Local Committee Chair for the 2008 Soci-

ety of Conservation Biology meeting and the 2017 North American Crane Workshop.



Mary Garvin is Professor of Biology at Oberlin College where she studies the ecology of avian parasites and disease. Her current focus is the role of volatile and

semi-volatile preen gland secretions in interactions between birds and arthropod vectors of disease. She is specifically interested in understanding the influence of these chemical cues on the feeding preferences of mosquito vectors of West Nile virus, for which birds serve as reservoir hosts. She conducts field studies to describe intra- and interspecific variation in the components of the secretions and laboratory bioassays to test for their effects on mosquito choice. Related past work includes the ecology of arboviral infections in the Florida Scrub-Jay and Blue Jay and the involvement of the Gray Catbird in West Nile virus overwintering. She also has worked on protozoan blood parasite transmission dynamics, physiological cost, and demographic effects in both migratory and resident passerines. At Oberlin College she teaches courses in Genetics, Evolution, and Ecology; Disease Ecology; Invertebrate Biology; and the Natural History of the Vermilion River Watershed. She also mentors undergraduate research students and is especially interested in mentoring students from underserved and disadvantaged populations. Mary



Dr. Sarah Sargent

completed her undergraduate (B.A. Biology and Education) at Hiram College, M.Sc. (Zoology) and Louisiana State University, and Ph.D. (Infectious Disease) at the University of Florida.

#### Dr. Sarah Sargent

Sarah Sargent spent over 10 years with Audubon Pennsylvania (a state office of National Audubon Society) developing and implementing bird conservation programs primarily in northwestern Pennsylvania. She runs a banding station at Presque Isle State Park, on the southern shore of Lake Erie, and has partnered with the park and others to help return the extirpated Great Lakes Piping Plover to this site. Her work included overseeing and revising the Important Bird Area program in Pennsylvania and developing materials for forest landowners on the habitat needs of forest breeding birds. She has previously conducted research on frugivory and seed dispersal by birds in South Carolina and Costa Rica. Sarah completed her undergraduate (Biology) at Swarthmore College, and both her M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Cornell University.

# Skutch Medal awarded at the Ornithological Congress of the Americas

During the closing banquet at the Ornithological Congress of the Americas in Puerto Iguazú, Argentina, the AFO presented the Alexander F. Skutch Medal to Dr. Juan Carlos Reboreda, Dean and Professor in the Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences, University of

Buenos Aires, and Senior Researcher in Argentina's National Council for Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET).

The Skutch Medal recognizes career accomplishments, particularly in research relating to life history studies of Neotropical birds. Awardees are often recognized for their commitment to mentoring students (particularly those from Latin America), and making research accessible to the public. Its primary purpose is to recognize individuals whose careers will stand as models of excellence in Neotropical ornithology.

Juan Carlos received a M.Sc. in Biological Sciences in 1981 and a Ph.D. in Biological Sciences at the University of Buenos Aires in

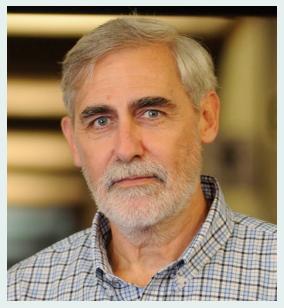
## Skutch Medal awarded at the Ornithological Congress of the Americas

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

1987. He conducted postdoctoral studies at the University of Cambridge and Oxford University, United Kingdom. Throughout his career, Juan Carlos has served as an advisor to numerous graduate and undergraduate students, published over 130 research articles, and has provided notable service to the academic and scientific community. He has served as Secretary of the Argentine Society of Biology, has been Vice President and Secretary of the Argentine Association of Ecology, and has served as Vice President and President of Aves Argentinas, the host society for the Ornithological Congress of the Americas. He served as Associate Editor of The Auk, Bird Conservation International, Ardeola, and Emu-Austral Ornithology, and has served on the Editorial Committee of Ecología Austral, and the Hornero.

He is an internationally recognized

ornithologist, previously being named a Fellow of the International Ornithological Union (2006), and an Elective Member (2009) and



Dr Juan Carlos, recipient of the Skutch Medal

Fellow (2011) of the American Ornithological Society.

Most notably perhaps is Juan Carlos' leadership in establishing the field of Behavioral Ecology in Argentina. He is the founder of the Behavioral Ecology Lab at the University of Buenos Aires (server.ege.fcen.uba.ar/leyca/index.php/en/), which, in particular, has made significant advances in our understanding of the behavioral ecology of avian brood parasites. Numerous people who have passed through Juan Carlos' lab have established their own research programs in various parts of Argentina and abroad.

This year's Skutch Medal committee was formed by AFO Councilor Alex Jahn, AFO President Paul Rodewald, AFO Vice President Dan Ardia, two past AFO Presidents, Reed Bowman and Kathryn Purcell, and the Chair of the Organizing

Committee of the Ornithological Congress of the America, and AFO Councilor, Valentina Ferretti.



## Your Source for Quality Field Supplies and Equipment Since 1952







Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) is the agent for the AFO's supply company **Avian Research Supplies**. We provide the highest quality mist nets, and bird banding tools and supplies to field ornithologists.

Proceeds support research grants for students, amateurs, and Latin American researchers.



www.avianresearchsupplies.org www.avinet.com





Participants at the banding station.

## AFO-sponsored workshop introduces Latin American ornithologists to bird banding

An important part of AFO's mission is to support bird banding and training opportunities for bird banders. Following the Ornithological Congress of the Americas that was held 8–11 August 2017 in Puerto Iguazú, Argentina, AFO partnered with the North American Banding Council (NABC) to organize a 5-day banding workshop in advanced bird banding skills and molt interpretation. AFO was excited to sponsor this event, which provided training experience for

ornithologists from Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Ecuador, and the United States. This was the first workshop of its kind ever held in Argentina and was a huge success!

The workshop was instructed by certified Trainers from NABC and based on NABC's rigorous curricula and ethical standards. Instructors were Erik Johnson (National Audubon), Luke DeGroote (Powdermill Avian Research Center), Luciano Lima (Butantan Bird

Observatory), Carolina Miño (Instituto de Biología Subtropical), and Ian Ausprey and Felicity Newell (University of Florida). The 15 participants spent the 5 days immersed in the finer details of molt theory and analysis, bird banding procedures and ethics, and applications of banding for ornithology and conservation. Participants included: Fernando López, Maria Emilia, Paula S. Garrido Coria, David Aborn, Melanie Browne, Pablo Andrés Fracas, Pablo

G. Fernández, Eliana Montenegro, Eamon Corbett, Paulo Meirelles,

Ariane Ferreira, Juan Klavins, Marcelo Cavicchia, Facundo Luque, and Luis Fernando Foletto. Based in the beautiful Atlantic rainforest of Iguazú National Park, Argentina, participants practiced using mist nets to capture birds, collecting demographical and morphological data, and applying advanced molt interpretation techniques. Everyone was particularly excited to catch the glamor bird of the week, a gorgeous adult male Band-tailed Manakin!

Given that a primary goal of the course was to increase the capacity of South American ornithologists, AFO was especially excited

> to have the participation of several park rangers, field technicians and employees from the Iguazú National Park, Center for Subtropical Ecology (CIES), Instituto de Biología Subtropical,

and Argentina's national research organization, CONICET.

An important outgrowth of the course was the creation of a public Facebook page dedicated to sharing photos of molt for South American bird species. Anyone is

Instructors Luke DeGroote and Erik Johnson discussing bird molt with Fernando Foletto, technician with the Instituto de Biología Subtropical.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

## AFO-sponsored workshop introduces Latin American ornithologists to bird banding

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6



welcome to participate simply by searching for the group name: "Mudas, penas, y plumas".

The workshop was the result of a developing relationship between AFO and NABC, whose shared interests include the development of field ornithology in the Western Hemisphere. Hopefully, this is

One of the more common species captured, the Black-goggled Tanager the first of many such workshops held during AFO meetings, so keep posted for future events!



Participant Juan Klavins (Argentina) with a male Band-tailed Manakin.



Workshop participants and instructors

## E. Alexander Bergstrom Award recipients for Latin America

or 21 years, E. Alexander Bergstrom (1919–1973) was Vice-President of the Northeastern Bird-Banding Association (now AFO) and Editor of Bird-Banding (now *Journal of Field Ornithology*). These awards honor his memory and dedication to bird research. The purpose of the award is to promote field studies of birds by helping to support a specific research or analysis project. In judging among proposals of equal quality, special consideration is given to those that: 1) focus on avian life history, 2) employ banding or other marking techniques, and/ or 3) use data collected all or in part by non-professionals.

Every year the AFO gives five research awards to individuals based at Latin American institutions with the purpose of funding field research that advances our understanding of birds in their natural habitats. The award is given to undergraduate and graduate students and non-professionals based in Latin America.

Valentina Ferretti is the chair of the Bergstrom Award committee. The reviewers of the Latin American research proposals were: Renata Durães Ribeiro, Dan Brooks, Luiz dos Anjos, James Roper, Carla Suertegaray Fontana, Adrian di Giácomo, Sebastián Cabanne, Ignacio Areta, and Maria Alice dos Santos Alves.

This year AFO received applications from people in Colombia, Brazil, and Argentina. In total, AFO awarded \$7,194 to five awardees. The projects ranged in subject from conservation and agroecology, to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## E. Alexander Bergstrom Award recipients for Latin America

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

sexual selection and social behavior of birds in the Neotropics. The five Latin American awardees for 2017, in alphabetical order, are:

#### Jorge E. Avendaño

Jorge E. Avendaño (Colombia) will study the loss and maintenance of phenotypic plumage traits that can act as signals of competitive ability or quality, and affect speciation. His study will focus on species in the genus Arremon (Passerellidae) in the Colombian Andes, where he will conduct field observations and experiments to test hypotheses of novel appearances of phenotypic traits. Jorge is a Ph.D. student at the Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá.



Lia N. Kajiki

#### Lia N. Kajiki

Lia N. Kajiki (Brazil) will study the natural history and breeding biology of the Helmeted Manakin (Antilophia galeata), in the highly threatened Cerrado region in Brazil. The manakin family (Pipridae) is characterized by having a lek mating system in which males display and compete to gain access to females, and social bonds between males and females do not persist after copulation. However, previous studies suggest that Helmeted Manakins are socially monogamous, with males and females staying together for longer periods of time post-copulation, even

though males provide almost no paternal care. This study will shed light on this interesting mating system. Lia is a Ph.D. student at the Universidade de Brasília.

#### Aldana S. López

Aldana S. López (Argentina) will study relationships between individual variation in behavior and the mating system and strategies in swallows of the genus Tachycineta. She will score behavioral syndromes for breeding birds in Patagonia and relate this to their mating strategies and genetic makeup. Aldana has just finished her undergraduate degree, and this study will be part of her Ph.D. that she plans to carry out at the Universidad de Buenos Aires.



Aldana S. López

#### Paula Orozco Valor

Paula Orozco Valor (Argentina) will study the effects of the conversion of natural habitats into agricultural fields on the breeding behavior and success of the American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) in La Pampa, Argentina. In particular, she will examine how habitat alteration by humans is affecting spatial and temporal breeding patterns in this species, its diet, and breeding success. She will also look at health parameters of kestrels that might be affected by the use of agrochemicals. Paula is a Ph.D. student at the Universidad Nacional de La Pampa, Santa Rosa.



Paula Orozco Valor

#### Juan Manuel Rojas Ripari

Juan Manuel Rojas Ripari (Argentina) will study the cooperatively breeding Bay-winged Cowbird (Agelaioides badius). In this project

he will look at the genetic composition of breeding groups and their patterns of parentage. He will also analyze the withinand between-group genetic structures of the cowbird population in Magdalena, Buenos Aires. Juan Manuel will identify the direct and indirect



Juan Manuel Rojas Ripari

fitness benefits of breeding cooperatively for this species. Juan Manuel is a Ph.D. student at the Universidad de Buenos Aires.

#### Congratulations to all recipients of this year's awards!

If you are interested in applying for an E. Alexander Bergstrom Research Award, please remember that we have two separate competitions, one for the U.S. and Canada, and one for Latin America. The deadline for the U.S./Canada competition is January 15 annually, and the deadline for the Latin American competition is July 15.

U.S./Canada awards are aimed at people beginning their research, or those with limited or no access to major funding. They are restricted to non-professionals, undergraduates, and Masters degree candidates working in the United States or Canada. Ph.D. students studying at U.S. and Canadian institutions, regardless of their nationality or geographic region of investigation, are not eligible to receive a Bergstrom Research Award.

Latin American awards are restricted to individuals based at Latin American institutions (individuals from Latin America that are studying or working at a U.S. or Canadian institution are eligible for U.S./ Canada awards only). Non-professionals, undergraduates, Masters and Ph.D. candidates are all eligible for the Latin American competition.

For more information: afonet.org/wp\_english/grants-awards/bergstrom/.

## 2018 Joint Meeting of the Association of Field Ornithologists and the Wilson Ornithological Society

The AFO and Wilson Ornithological Society (WOS) are pleased to announce that registration is open for their joint meeting to be held at the Chattanooga Convention Center in Chattanooga, Tennessee from 7–9 June 2018. AFO/WOS meetings are known for their blend of academic and government ornithologists and citizen scientists, and our meetings offer a welcoming atmosphere for graduate and undergraduate students and early professionals.

Registration information, abstract submission, travel information, and other information can be found at the conference website: www.cvent.com/d/4tqzbk. Please register now for this exciting,

convenient, and inexpensive ornithology conference.

## Location, Birding, and Accommodations

The riverfront city of Chattanooga offers a scenic venue for the meeting. Chattanooga is a family-friendly location with many activities in or near downtown and a plethora of local eateries; the conference banquet will actually be held in the River Journey of the beautiful Tennessee Aquarium, located near the city's waterfront. June is an excellent time for birding in Chattanooga, and there are many birding spots near to downtown; several free field trips are available to participants and guest. Inexpensive rooms are available for conference participants at the attached Marriot Chattanooga Downtown and the nearby Days Inn Chattanooga-Rivergate.

#### Plenary Speakers

We are excited to offer two excellent plenaries during the conference. Valentina Ferretti will speak about, "Variation in extra-pair paternity: lessons learned from studying birds in South America." Reed Bowman, who is receiving WOS's Margaret Morse Nice award that honors a lifetime of contributions to ornithology, will present "The challenges of long-term research: getting the work done and keeping it relevant."

#### Early registration and abstract submissions for papers and posters are now due 9 April

A symposium entitled "Ecology and conservation of high elevation bird species in the southern Appalachian Mountains" will be scheduled as part of the scientific program on Thursday or Friday, June 7 or 8. Saturday has been set aside for field trips and workshops, including a bird banding workshop organized by the North American Banding Council. Questions about the conference should be sent to local host David Aborn (David-Aborn@utc.edu). AFO President Paul Rodewald (pgr35@cornell.edu), or WOS President Mark Deutschlander (deutschlande@hws.edu).

We look forward to seeing you in Chattanooga!

Mark Deutschlander and Paul Rodewald

## Obituary: George Mock

eorge Mock, a great friend, keen birder, astute businessman, and long-term AFO Treasurer passed on in September of 2017. His family characterized George as a man of "excellence with competence" and "intense curiosity." AFO benefited by both attributes. George accepted the role as AFO Treasurer some 20 years ago; he brought an antiquated bookkeeping system into the 21st century, providing AFO with a more refined system of financial management and stability. Moreover, his innate curiosity,



questioning nature, strong team-player skills, unflappable temperament, and passion for birds made him a perfect member of the AFO Council. Most of all, AFO Council members who knew and worked with George appreciated his cheerful nature, competence, and superlative skills as our best-ever treasurer.

Many thanks to George's family for allowing him to share his bird passions with AFO.

Scott Sutcliffe

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