

# American Ornithological Society Officers and Elective Councilors

*Classes of 2021, 2022 and 2023*

## Executive Committee

### *Officers*

**Michael S. Webster, Incoming President (2020-2022)**

**Colleen Handel, President-Elect (2020-2022)**

**Andrew W. Jones, Secretary (2014 - )**

**Rebecca T. Kimball, Treasurer (2015 - )**

***Executive Director***

**Melinda Pruett-Jones**



## **MICHAEL WEBSTER**

Title: Robert G. Engel Professor of Ornithology.  
Department of Neurobiology and Behavior, Cornell  
University, Ithaca, NY

BIO: Robert G. Engel Professor of Ornithology. Department of Neurobiology and Behavior, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY; and Director, Macaulay Library, Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Ph.D. Cornell (1991). Editorial Board for *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology* (2000-2004), *Evolution* (2004-2010), *Emu* (2007-2020), and *Animal Behaviour* (2011-2015). Over 100 publications in ornithological (*Auk*, *Condor*, *Emu*, *Journal of Avian Biology*,) and other journals (e.g., *Animal Behaviour*, *American Naturalist*, *Behavioral Ecology*, *Biology Letters*, *Evolution*, *Molecular Ecology*, *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, *Trends Ecology & Evolution*). Edited volume *The Extended Specimen: Emerging Frontiers in Collections-based Ornithological Research (Studies in Avian Biology, no. 50)*. Elective Member (2008) and Fellow (2009) of AOU/AOS. Elected Fellow of the Animal Behavior Society (2015). AOU Council 2010-2012; AOS Council 2017-2020. Committee Service: COS Student Research Awards (2004); AOU Student Presentation and Travel Awards (2005-2008, chaired 2007-2008); Joint Publications Taskforce (2012-2014); AOS Public Responsibility Committee (2019-present); Co-Chair of AOS Meetings Coordination Committee (2017-present).

In addition to being Director of the Macaulay Library, I am a faculty member that teaches courses in animal behavior and evolution, and I am proud of my role as mentor for a number of students and postdocs. My research centers primarily on the social and reproductive behavior of birds, particularly the evolutionary causes and consequences of variation in sexual signals, behavioral plasticity in the face of a variable social and ecological environment, and connectivity across populations of migratory birds. I also have developed and promoted the concept of the

“Extended Specimen”, which promotes a broader definition of biological specimens and expanded use of research collections for basic and applied research.

STATEMENT: A central pillar of our society’s mission is to grow, enrich, and diversify ornithology throughout the hemisphere. That mission has never been more important than it is now, as we move into a world that will be dramatically different from the one that our society was first born into: COVID will bring dramatic changes to research and education for all of us, whether we work in academia or in state and federal agencies; dramatic and horrific events have brought into sharp focus the critical need for diversity in science; and the recent recognition that over a quarter of our birds have disappeared emphatically demonstrates the need for high quality ornithological research, education, and outreach. I feel strongly that AOS can and should work to make the post-COVID world a better place for birds and the people who study them. This can be done best by taking a number of critical steps now. First, we can and must foster the training and development of those AOS members in early stages of their careers, those from biodiversity critical regions, and those from groups that have been traditionally under-represented among the ranks of ornithologists. Second, as our society grows, we must develop strategies and partnerships to support and amplify the voices of groups that are focused on birds in key regions of the hemisphere, and also to facilitate the ability of our members to do their work. Third, we must embrace newly developed technologies for communication, not to replace in-person conferences, but to enhance and facilitate our ability to deliver science and scientific training more broadly. By taking these steps now, our society can transform the ways that we study and conserve the birds we love.



**COLLEEN M. HANDEL**

Title: Research Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Geological Survey, Alaska Science Center, Anchorage, Alaska

BIO: Research Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Geological Survey, Alaska Science Center, Anchorage, Alaska. Ph.D., University of California, Davis. Member of AOS (AOU/COS) since 1978; Elective Member (2006); Fellow (2013); AOS Council (2014–2016). Co-Chair of North American Ornithological Conference (2020); Co-Chair (and Local Chair) of AOS Annual Meeting (2019, Anchorage). Member of Committee for Nomination of Fellows and Elective Members (2014–present). Deputy Editor for *The Condor* (2016–present); Associate Editor for *The Auk* (2003–2016). Published in *The Auk*, *The Condor*, *Animal Behaviour*, *Birds of North America*, *Canadian Journal of Zoology*, *Climatic Change*, *Ecography*, *Ecological Applications*, *Environmental Toxicology & Chemistry*, *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*, *Ibis*, *Integrative and Comparative Biology*, *Journal of Morphology*, *Journal of Virology*, *Journal of Wildlife Diseases*, *Journal of Wildlife Management*, *Parasites & Vectors*, *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, and others. I have published chapters in books and recently co-edited a volume on avifaunal change in western North America. My research interests include population ecology of landbirds and shorebirds,

monitoring techniques, and avian disease. My current field projects focus on the dynamics and evolutionary impacts of emerging diseases and on the response of terrestrial bird populations to climate-mediated changes in Arctic and boreal ecosystems. I have mentored students at all levels, from middle school to Ph.D.

I was honored with a National Leadership Award by *Partners in Flight* in 2008 and with the Isleib Award in Avian Conservation in 2019 for outstanding contributions to avian conservation in Alaska.

STATEMENT: Resilience. When a system, or a society, suffers a major disturbance, there are key characteristics that will enable it to recover to a stable state and maintain its important functions and services. Adaptability, diversity, and connectivity immediately spring to mind. We live in challenging times, both socially and scientifically, and it is imperative that we maintain resilience in the AOS in the face of rapid and sometimes abrupt change. I served on the Council during the recent merger of the AOU and COS, during which we strove to respect the history of these venerable societies while building towards the challenges of the future. One of our most thoughtful discussions was about what to name our 'new' organization. 'American' and 'Ornithological' were straightforward descriptors. To me, however, our choice of 'Society' spoke deeply about who we truly are and should always endeavor to be. 'Society' translates readily to community, camaraderie, commonality, companionship, and culture. As the largest organization of professional ornithologists in the world, the AOS has an incredible capacity to accomplish our shared mission—to advance the scientific study and conservation of birds. As a long-term editor and current co-chair of annual meetings during this era of rapid change, I have helped guide the adaptation of two excellent, essential services of our society—our scientific journals and our conferences. I understand the utmost importance of communicating, mentoring, training, and networking among our diverse members. If elected, I pledge to lead our society in its continued quest for resilience and to strengthen and broaden these essential services.



## **ANDREW W. JONES**

Title: William A. and Nancy R. Klamm Chair and Curator of Ornithology, Cleveland Museum of Natural History

BIO: William A. and Nancy R. Klamm Chair of Ornithology and Curator of Ornithology, Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Adjunct Faculty, Cleveland State University, Case Western Reserve University, Kent State University. Ph.D. 2006, University of Minnesota, Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior. Published in *Auk*, *Condor*, *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*, *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution*, *BioScience*, *Cotinga*. AOU Member 1997, Elective Member 2009, Fellow 2017. My research concerns geographic variation in birds, primarily using molecular markers for comparative phylogeography and resolving evolutionary relationships among species in diverse genera.

STATEMENT: I first volunteered as Recording Secretary for the AOU in 2009, and served in that role for five years. I was then elected to the AOU Secretary position in 2014. As Secretary, I play an active role in the governance of the AOS, working with the elected officers and councilors as well as our Executive Director and staff. I manage communication among these groups as well as with the general membership. With ongoing efforts such as professionalizing the society and expanding our society's online communications, it is an exciting time for the AOS, and I am honored to serve in this position.



**REBECCA T. KIMBALL**

Title: Professor, University of Florida, Department of Biology

BIO: Professor of Biology, University of Florida, Gainesville FL; affiliate positions with Florida Museum of Natural History; School of Natural Resources and the Environment; UF Genetics Institute; UF/FSU Center for Smell and Taste. Ph.D. 1995, University of New Mexico. AOU Council Member (2013-2015); Chair, AOU Student Travel and Awards Committee (2009-2013; served as committee member previously). Also editor for *Ibis* (2013-present), SSE Education Committee Member (2008-present), SSB Council Member (2008-2010). Published over 70 papers, including in *Auk*, *Wilson Bulletin*, *Ibis*, *Journal of Avian Biology*, as well as *PNAS* and *Science*. My research includes phylogenetics, population genetics, and the evolution of behaviors and traits (particularly plumage and secondary sexual traits) in birds.

STATEMENT: This is an important time in the AOS. There have been many changes undertaken recently in the administration to strengthen the society and improve its ability to serve the membership. As Treasurer and former AOU Council member, I have worked to help to ensure the AOS continues to advance the scientific understanding of birds while maintaining itself as a strong society that serves the needs of current and future ornithologists. To do this requires continued improvement and new initiatives to keep pace with the changing needs of professionals. I will work towards keeping the AOS fiscally sound while also ensuring that the AOS invests in long-range planning activities that will ensure its long-term success.



## **MELINDA PRUETT-JONES**

Title: Executive Director, American Ornithological Society

BIO: Executive Director, American Ornithological Society. MS. 1981, Brigham Young University, Department of Zoology. Published in *Auk*, *Evolution*, *Animal Behavior*, *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*, *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*. While my current area of inquiry involves organizational life cycles and network governance, my research background is in social behavior, ecology, and population biology of birds and mammals. I currently serve or have served on several boards, including Audubon Chicago Region; Network for Large Landscape Conservation; Urban Advisory Committee, National Park Service; Loyola University Institute for Environmental Sustainability; and, University of Illinois at Chicago Institute for Environmental Science and Policy.

STATEMENT: I joined the AOU as its first executive director in 2014, and oversaw the merger process of the AOU and COS to launch the new AOS. I bring to the society executive and fundraising experience, over 30 years of organizational leadership, and an essential understanding of the relevance of ornithology in a rapidly changing world. My role in the AOS is to advance its bold vision, professionalize the organization, provide strategic direction, cultivate and guide cooperative partnerships, and secure funding to help sustain and grow the AOS. Having led organizations through periods of substantial growth and change, I am focusing on fostering an organizational culture that drives excellence and innovation to best position the AOS to adapt and lead.

## Councilors – Terms ending 2024

W. Alice Boyle  
Carlos Daniel Cadena  
Courtney J. Conway  
Morgan W. Tingley



### **W. ALICE BOYLE**

Title: Associate Professor, Division of Biology, Kansas State University

BIO: Associate Professor, Division of Biology, Kansas State University. Ph.D. 2006, University of Arizona. Published in *The Auk*, *American Naturalist*, *Animal Behavior*, *Biology Letters*, *Biological Conservation*, *Biological Reviews*, *Canadian J. Zoology*, *Ecology*, *Evolutionary Ecology*, *Functional Ecology*, *J. Avian Biology*, *J. Applied Ecology*, *J. Tropical Ecology*, *Landscape Ecology*, *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London*. AOU Elective Member, 2013; AOS Fellow, 2017. Associate Editor with *Ecosphere*, 2013-2020; COS Board 2013-2016; AOU/AOS Publications Advisory Committee co-chair 2014-2016 then chair 2016-2019; COS Student Presentations Award Committee 2014-2015; Search Committee Chair for the Editor-in-Chief position of *The Auk* 2017-2018.

My research has sought to identify the ultimate ecological causes of inter- and intra-specific variation in migratory behavior, the dispersal and abundance of threatened grassland songbirds, and the behavioral ecology of tropical frugivorous birds. Current research in my lab seeks to understand the patterns and mechanistic basis of avian responses to temporal variation in rainfall in both wet tropical forests and temperate grasslands. While all my work addresses basic questions relevant to behavioral, physiological, and evolutionary ecology, I try to simultaneously fill gaps in scientific knowledge that are important to inform conservation. I have mentored and trained 3 PhD students, 4 MSc students, and over 20 undergraduate students. I believe that developing strong communication skills to a wide variety of audiences is central to our role in an era of climate emergencies and distrust of science.

STATEMENT: I am standing for election to council because I believe in the value of the AOS, and know that for societies to thrive, we must all share in service. My association with the AOS began 18 years ago; I have been an active member and attended most conferences since then. I have benefited enormously from the AOS in tangible ways (student research funds, young professional award) and in many less tangible ways. These of course include the fantastic science presented at meetings and published in our journals, but also the professional networks, opportunities to develop leadership skills, and the personal friendships I have developed. If elected, I hope to make sure that the next generation of scientists feels as welcomed as I did as a junior graduate student. I will continue to advocate for enhanced representation of under-represented groups in

science among leadership, and promote policies that remove barriers to being successful for the less privileged among us. I believe that societies will only persist if they remain relevant and valuable to the breadth of our membership and they have a role to play in public advocacy. I will work to help develop and promote initiatives that make our science accessible to the public and relevant to professionals outside of academia.



## **CARLOS DANIEL CADENA**

Title: Professor, Departamento de Ciencias Biológicas, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia

BIO: Professor, Departamento de Ciencias Biológicas, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia. Ph.D. 2006, University of Missouri-St. Louis. Published in *The Auk*, *The Condor*, *American Naturalist*, *Current Biology*, *Ecological Monographs*, *Evolution*, *Journal of Biogeography*, *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London*, *Nature*, *Systematic Biology*. AOU Elective Member, 2008; AOS Fellow, 2016. Associate Editor with *The Auk: Ornithological Advances*, 2013-2019; Reviewing Editor with *The Condor*, 2008-2013; Member of the AOU-AOS South American Classification Committee, 2006-2019; Member of the search committee for the editor of *The Auk: Ornithological Advances*, 2018; Member of AOS Committee for Nomination of Fellows and Honorary Members, 2018-present; Spanish abstract translator for *The Auk*, *The Condor* and other North American ornithology journals, 2001-2016.

I am interested in ecology and evolutionary biology of birds and other vertebrates. I have worked on a broad range of topics, from genomics, physiology, migration and behavior all the way up to diversification and broad-scale patterns of diversity, with a little bit of everything in between. I am most interested in questions in biogeography and speciation, being especially intrigued about the causes of high tropical diversity at various levels, from genes to clades and ecosystems. I like to pursue my interests in tropical diversity from a wide variety of perspectives combining field, lab, museum, and computational work, and have an increasing interest in outreach activities promoting the importance and value of birds, natural history collections, and science in general to society. I have supervised 3 Ph.D. students (4 currently), 21 masters students (3 currently), and numerous undergraduates.

STATEMENT: I first became a member of the AOU and the Cooper Ornithological Society when I was an undergraduate student in the late 1990s, and have since felt a strong connection with the societies initially through their journals but later thanks to their scientific meetings and the various activities in which I have been honored to serve as my career has progressed. I would like to work with the AOS to help continue its tradition advancing the scientific study and conservation of birds, with a particular focus on expanding the society's scope and reach beyond North America and on strengthening its means to support students and early-career professionals in collaboration with local and regional ornithological societies in Latin America. Being able to attend AOU meetings with society support as a graduate student helped me develop important skills and build personal networks which have been of tremendous value for me until today, and receiving student presentation awards from the society was a tremendous

honor and substantial motivation which boosted my career in many ways. I would very much like that many more students from developing countries may have similar opportunities. With widespread access to the internet and social media, increasing connectivity and interaction among members of the society across continents, career stages and social backgrounds should move us towards becoming a more inclusive and diverse group, with greater impacts on ornithological science, the conservation of birds, and society at large.



## **COURTNEY J. CONWAY**

Title: Professor and Unit Leader, USGS Idaho Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit, Department of Fish and Wildlife Sciences, University of Idaho

BIO: Professor and Unit Leader, USGS Idaho Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit, Department of Fish and Wildlife Sciences, University of Idaho. Ph.D. 1998, University of Montana. Published in *The Auk*, *The Condor*, *Wilson Journal of Ornithology*, *Studies in Avian Biology*, *Journal of Field Ornithology*, *Ibis*, and many other ecology, behavior, and evolution journals. Member of AOU and COS since 1987; AOU Elective Member, 2006; AOS Fellow, 2015. Chair of the Scientific Committee for 3 years (NAOC 2016, AOS 2018, AOS 2019); AOS Conference Coordination Committee (2016-2019); COS Miller Award Committee (2008-2010); Associate Editor for *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, 2019-present; Associate Editor for *Wetlands*, 2011-2015.

My research includes behavioral ecology, migration, life history evolution, conservation, and effects of management actions. Current questions include causes of bird migration, causes of environmental gradients in life history traits and species richness, causes of declines in rare species, and effectiveness of population recovery actions for endangered birds. I have supervised and mentored 16 M.S. students, 7 Ph.D. students, 5 postdocs, and many dozens of undergraduate students. My students and I have given >400 presentations, including 40 talks at AOU/AOS conferences. I have been given several workshops on Early Professional development and Scientific Writing.

STATEMENT: The AOS has been my “home” scientific society for the past 30 years. I gave my first scientific talk at an AOU meeting in San Francisco in 1987 and immediately became a member and have attended the annual AOU/AOS meetings ever since. I typically bring students and staff to the annual conference each year, and I often have a ‘reunion’ during the annual conference for all of my past and current grad student cohorts to get together, meet each other, and socialize. New generations of ornithologists seem to place less and less importance on membership in a professional society and so I think it is vital as a society that we keep mid- and late-career ornithologists coming to the annual conferences and use them to help bring new generations to the meetings and form the bridge to long-term society engagement for younger ornithologists. Involving our younger members in annual conferences is critical, and including more activities that are fun, creative, and engaging (but still professional and educational) will help ensure that AOS grows and remains strong. During my 3 years as AOS Science Program Committee Chair and 5 years on the AOS Scientific Planning Team, I was involved with many efforts (and lead several of those efforts) to re-think how our annual AOS conferences could better engage with younger



members (and potential future members) and attendees who often don't know many folks at the conference. Most of those efforts were successful and have been adopted annually at the conferences. Our profession is much stronger if we are all engaged and unified via our professional society, and our annual conference plays a key role in the strength of our society and in recruiting new members. As such, we need to keep innovating and improving the experience at our annual conferences so that first-time attendees look forward to each year's meeting and tell their peers how enjoyable each AOS meeting was. I would be honored to further expand my service to the AOS as an Elective Councilor.



## **MORGAN W. TINGLEY**

Title: Associate Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of California – Los Angeles

BIO: Associate Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of California – Los Angeles. Ph.D. 2011, University of California – Berkeley. Published in *The Auk*, *The Condor*, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, *Nature Climate Change*, *Ecology*, *Journal of Animal Ecology*, *Journal of Applied Ecology*, *Conservation Biology*, *Avian Ecology and Conservation*, and *Western Birds*, among others. AOU Elective Member, 2014; AOS Fellow, 2018. Editorial Board with *Studies in Avian Biology*, 2013–2020; Subject Editor with *Ecography*, 2013–present; Board of Governors for Cooper Ornithological Society, 2015–2017; Transition Board for Cooper Ornithological Society, 2016–2017; Co-Chair of AOS Student Travel and Presentation Awards Committee, 2017–present; Co-Chair of NAOC Student Travel and Presentation Awards Committee, 2020.

My research examines how species and communities of birds respond to anthropogenic environmental change, focusing primarily on how montane birds of temperate forests respond to climate change and shifting fire regimes. My research also centers on developing statistical and modeling methods to quantify these effects. I have supervised 3 M.S. and 4 Ph.D. students, and 3 postdoctoral fellows. Across multiple societies and universities, I have been active in building institutional support and representation for LGBTQIA+ scientists. I am currently the Treasurer of the “Rainbow Lorikeets,” the ornithological caucus of the National Organization of Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Technical Professionals (NOGLSTP).

STATEMENT: My very first professional conference was a joint AOU-COS meeting over a decade ago, and as my career has progressed, AOS has unquestionably become my home society. I first had the honor of participating in society governance when I was elected to the COS Board of Governors in 2015, during which I had the unique perspective of helping broker the historic merger between the two societies – an important move that I strongly believed was for the betterment of ornithology. For two years, I then sat on Cooper’s “Transitional Committee,” participating in AOS council meetings as a non-voting member. The last four years, I have become deeply involved in the organization of AOS’s annual conferences through my position as co-chair of the Student Travel and Presentation Awards committee. In this position, I have worked to increase transparency and objectivity of both awards processes, and had the honor of advocating strongly to AOS leadership for increased access for students to AOS conferences.

Having benefited from both travel and presentation awards myself, I know how critical student participation and retention is for the continuity and vibrant life of a society. Since merging, AOS has begun many exciting new initiatives, particularly with regards to communication, publications, diversity, and student support. Moving forward, I see maintaining and strengthening these initiatives as key to our society's continued success, particularly during a time of global uncertainty.

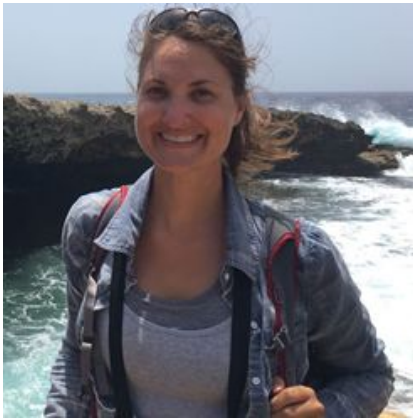
## Councilors – Terms ending 2022

Sara Kaiser

Erica Nol

Lauryn Benedict

Kristen Ruegg



### **SARA KAISER**

Title: Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute's Center for Conservation Genomics

BIO: Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Center for Conservation Genomics, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute. Ph.D. 2013, Cornell University. M.S. 2004, Michigan State University. Published in *Animal Behaviour*, *Animal Conservation*, *Behavioral Ecology*, *BMC Research Notes*, *Condor*, *General and Comparative Endocrinology*, *Journal of Evolutionary Biology*, *Journal of Wildlife Management*, *Molecular Ecology Resources*, *PLoS ONE*, *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London*, *The American Naturalist*, *The Auk: Ornithological Advances*, *The Birds of North America*, *Wilson Journal of Ornithology*. AOS Member, 2001-present; AOS Elective Member, 2017. Chair, Early Professionals Committee, 2017-present; Early Professionals Committee, 2013-present; Meetings Coordination Committee, 2018-present; Membership Committee, 2016-2017; Early Professionals Mini-talk Symposium, 2013-present; Diversity in Ornithology Symposium, 2017; Presentation Judge, 2014-2017. My research focuses on an integrative understanding of how the environment shapes the evolution of complex social behavior, especially reproductive strategies and cooperation. I am particularly interested in the role of social behavior in population and evolutionary dynamics involving sexual selection, population differentiation, and adaptation to environmental change. My research has included behavioral and demographic studies of warbler, sparrow, babbler, and thrush populations in North America, the Caribbean Islands, and Borneo, and comparisons of life histories and reproductive strategies of temperate and tropical birds. I have a strong record of mentorship and promotion of diversity in research. I have trained and supervised 90 undergraduates and recent graduates in the field and lab and have served as a research mentor for 17 undergraduates. I am committed to encouraging and expanding opportunities and participation in research for undergraduates from underrepresented backgrounds and to support their development as scholars.

STATEMENT: AOS is my home society. I attended my first meeting in 2001 to present my undergraduate research. The experience was transformational. Even at that early stage, I was welcomed into the community and immediately felt a sense of belonging. AOS continued to support me as a graduate student through travel, research, and presentation awards and as a professional working in multiple sectors — NGO, government, and academic. AOS meetings have become reunions bringing together colleagues from different chapters of my life — a chance to

catch up with friends and their science — and I rarely miss a meeting. My service to the society has focused on identifying the challenges and concerns facing early professionals and on working towards solutions to meet the emerging needs of their membership. As an AOS council member, I will 1) support professional development programs that are inclusive of diverse career paths, 2) provide service and leadership opportunities to support a diverse and inclusive ornithological community, 3) promote engagement of undergraduate members, 4) support membership incentives that provide access to meeting workshops to members unable to attend and to professional development programs throughout the year, and 5) support travel, research, and presentation awards for members from Latin America. My service to the society as Chair of the Early Professionals Committee, member of the Membership and Meetings Coordination Committee, and co-organizer of events with the Student Affairs Committee and Diversity and Inclusion Committee demonstrate my commitment to these goals.



## **ERICA NOL**

Title: Professor of Biology, Trent University

BIO: Professor of Biology, Department of Biology, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada. Ph.D. University of Toronto, M.Sc. University of Guelph. Published in *Auk*, *Condor*, *Wilson J. of Ornithology*, *J. Field Ornithology*, *Ibis*, *J. Avian Biology*, *Waterbirds*, as well as *Nature*, *Movement Ecology*, *Landscape Ecology*, and many others. AOU/AOS Elective Member 1991 and Fellow 2001. Past member of the Council of the American Ornithologists Union, past councilor and President of both the Society of Canadian Ornithologists (SCO-SOC) and the Waterbird Society, as well as subject editor of several journals, including *The Condor*. Current member of the Equity and Diversity group of the Waterbird Society. Founding member of the American Oystercatcher Working Group. I have served on many society committees over the years. I have supervised over 50 graduate students in their studies on avian ecology and conservation. Effective mentorship of students, regardless of their level of study or their academic ambitions, is a goal that I hope I've achieved. I conducted my Ph.D. research on the ecology of oystercatchers. Since then I have, with my graduate students, conducted research on breeding, migrating and wintering populations of Semipalmated Plovers, and the ecology of many other species, including songbirds and woodpeckers in southern Ontario. I have authored over 130 scientific publications on behavior, conservation and ecology of birds, and am the co-author on two *Birds of North America* accounts.

STATEMENT: The American Ornithological Society can make a significant contribution to the study and conservation of birds by fostering communications between scientists worldwide who are struggling to maintain natural habitats while continuing to conduct ornithological research.

AOS can accomplish this through effective communication, its scientific journals, strategically-located annual meetings, continued excellent support for student and young professional travel awards and ongoing outreach to our international partners. I believe in promoting and nurturing diversity in our society and hope that we can use our finances effectively to engage and assist scientists around the world in their work. I will be happy to serve the AOS as a councilor for the next three years.



## **LAURYN BENEDICT**

Title: Associate Professor in the School of Biological Sciences,  
University of Northern Colorado

BIO: Associate Professor, School of Biological Sciences, University of Northern Colorado. Ph.D. 2007, University of California, Berkeley. Published in *Animal Behaviour*, *The Auk: Ornithological Advances*, *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*, *Biology Letters*, *The Condor*, *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*, *Ibis*, *Journal of Avian Biology*, *Journal of Zoology*, *PLOS One*, and more. AOU Elective Member 2014. Associate Editor for *The Auk: Ornithological Advances*, 2013-present - Editorial Board Member *Studies in Avian Biology*, 2015-2018 - AOU/COS Meeting Local Host Committee 2014 - Student Presentation awards judge 2014, 2016, 2018 - Meetings Symposium and Roundtable Organizer 2016, 2018- AOS Meetings Scientific Program Committees 2018, 2019. My primary research interests are in avian communication and behavior. I study a range of avian vocalizations, with an emphasis on the ecological and evolutionary forces that shape signal form and function among male and female birds. I teach courses in the areas of General Biology, Ornithology, and Animal Behavior, and I curate the University of Northern Colorado's Zoology Museum. I have supervised six M.S. students, two Ph.D. students, and more than 60 Undergraduate students in research, museum curation, and student teaching. I conduct outreach to general audiences through public talks, educational programs in my community, and national outlets including *Birding Magazine*, and the *Science Journal for Kids*.

STATEMENT: I have been a member of AOS (then the AOU and the COS) since 2001, when I was a beginning graduate student. The Society has offered me valuable resources and an active professional network; I welcome the opportunity to further improve its offerings and culture. I believe that the ornithological community is strengthened by the participation of diverse stakeholders with a range of research interests, goals, and perspectives. I am committed to AOS's mission to advance ornithology as a science, to improve avian conservation efforts, and to promote the professional success of its members. We can best achieve this mission by welcoming researchers at all career stages, by establishing connections across the Americas, by supporting excellent science, by translating that science into actionable initiatives, and by making all of these outcomes widely visible. To further these goals, I have served as an editor for two AOS

publications. I support the Society's move towards open access publishing and would work to help our journals publish high quality, widely accessible research. I believe that creating a welcoming community for students will build a stronger society, and I am invested in supporting early career scientists. I have helped to plan multiple meetings, including organizing Undergraduate Symposia that foster student involvement. In an effort to retain early career researchers within the field, I worked with the AOS Diversity and Inclusion and Executive committees in 2018 to draft a best-practices document for creating family-friendly policies at annual meetings. This resulted in caregiver grants implemented for 2019 and expanded accommodations for conference attendees. I look forward to growing and improving these resources and others in the years to come.



## **KRISTEN RUEGG**

Title: Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, Colorado State University

BIO: Assistant Professor, Department of Biology, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO. Ph.D. 2007, University of California, Berkeley. Published in *Ecology Letters*, *Science*, *Nature Ecology and Evolution*, *IBIS*, *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, *Methods in Ecology Evolution*, *Molecular Ecology*, *Evolution*, *Ornithological Monographs*, *Journal of Parasitology*, *Journal of Biogeography*, *Ecological Applications*, *Zeledonia: Boletín de la Asociación Ornitológica de Costa Rica*, and *Conservation Genetics*. AOS Elective member, 2017, Associate Editor at *The Auk: Ornithological Advances* 2015 – present, Editorial Board Member at *Ecology Letters*, 2015 – present, AOS Student Presentation awards judge 2014. My research is focused on conservation and evolutionary genetics of migratory birds. I co-direct the Bird Genoscape Project, which brings together hundreds of volunteers from NGOs, government agencies, and academic institutions in an effort to map the population specific migratory flyways for North American Birds. I have also focused on the role of migration in the process of avian diversification and spent my early career developing the Swainson's thrush as a model system. I teach courses in General Biology and Conservation Genomics at Colorado State University and teach a short course in the Ecology of Animal Migration as part of the CanMove graduate workshop at Lund University in Sweden. I have supervised 1 M.S. student, 3 Ph.D. students, 3 Post-doctoral Researchers, and over 20 undergraduate researchers in avian research. I am a National

Geographic Research Explorer and regularly give presentations to general audiences in my community as well as at the National Audubon Society and as part of the National Geographic Explorer Classroom webcast series.

STATEMENT: My career has followed a non-linear path for a variety of personal and professional reasons, but the one thing that has always remained constant is the support I have felt from the American Ornithological Society. As a graduate student, I felt this support through travel grants, research awards, and the opportunity to participate in student-mentor lunches. As a postdoctoral researcher, I felt this support through the leadership and encouragement of several senior members of the society who offered sage advice during uncertain times in my career. As a mid-career scientist, I have enjoyed the opportunity to give back to the society and develop my leadership skills as an Associate Editor at *The Auk: Ornithological Advances* and a committee member for a variety of meeting related events. As an Elective Councilor for the American Ornithological Society, I welcome the opportunity to participate in the long-range planning for the society going forward. In particular, I welcome the chance to offer my expertise in fundraising to help secure financial support for ornithological research and my experience in networking with scientists from across the Americas (as part of my work with the Bird Genoscape Project) to help foster the Society's diverse and vibrant community of researchers. As someone who did not have a direct path through academia, I also believe I would be particularly well suited to help continue to develop programs that foster professional development for scientist in early and transitional career stages. Overall, as an Elective Councilor it will be my pleasure to work with other Society members to continue to build an inclusive, supportive community grounded in integrity, collaboration, and the desire to produce high-quality research.

## Councilors – Terms ending 2021

Peter O. Dunn  
Sharon A. Gill  
Sara R. Morris  
Christopher C. Witt



### **PETER O. DUNN**

Title: Distinguished Professor, Dept. of Biological Sciences, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

BIO: Distinguished Professor, Dept. of Biological Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM, 2016-present). PhD. 1989, University of Alberta. Post-Doctoral Fellow Queen's University 1990-92, Australian National University 1992-94, Louisiana State University 1994-96. External Scientific Fellow, Univ. of Lodz, Poland 2017-2019. My research focuses on avian ecology and evolution, especially reproductive behavior and sexual selection. I also conduct applied work on the conservation genetics of greater prairie-chickens and the effects of climate change on birds (e.g., I am co-editing a second edition of the book *Effects of Climate Change on Birds*, Oxford Univ. Press). My papers (>110) have appeared in journals such as *Auk*, *Condor*, *Animal Behaviour*, *Ecology*, *Evolution*, *Molecular Ecology* and *PNAS*. AOU/AOS member since 1982. AOU Elective Member 1998, AOU Fellow 2006. Member of AOU Student Awards Committee 2000-03. Speaker at student grant writing workshops at NAOC, Veracruz 2006 and AOU, Chicago 2013. I have served as an Associate Editor for *Evolution* (2001-03) and *Animal Behaviour* (2008-11) and am co-organizing the 2018 Animal Behavior Society meeting at UWM. I also serve on the Conservation Cmte of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (2015-present).

STATEMENT: I have been an active member of the AOU/AOS my entire professional career, and I welcome the opportunity to serve at a higher level on the AOS Council. My service on the AOU Student Awards Committee and participation in grant-writing workshops reflects my interest in promoting the careers of young ornithologists. In today's highly-competitive environment one of the main goals of the AOS should be to support students and post-docs with financial support for their research, travel to meetings and professional development, such as the highly successful student-professional mixers and workshops that help to develop new skills (e.g., using R or genomics) and collaborations. To be successful, the AOS needs to provide the best available opportunities for ornithologists at all career stages to present their work and develop professional connections and skills. We do this at meetings, but I think it would also be beneficial to expand our online communications with more frequent email newsletters and social media, as some other professional societies are doing. Greater electronic communication will also make our research more accessible to scientists and the general public throughout the Americas. I believe the new AOS can provide a stronger voice for ornithology and conservation, and I would work toward this goal on the council.





## **SHARON A. GILL**

Title: Associate Professor, Biological Science, Western Michigan University

BIO: Associate Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, Western Michigan University. Ph.D. 2003, York University. Published in *The Auk*, *Behavioral Ecology*, *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*, *Ethology*, *Hormones and Behavior*, *Journal of Avian Biology*, *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, *PLoS ONE*, *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London*, *Science of the Total Environment*. AOU Elective Member, 2014; AOS Fellow, 2017. Associate Editor with *The Auk: Ornithological Advances*, 2012-present; AOU/AOS Graduate Student Research Award Committee, 2013-present; Scientific Program Chair, AOS-SCO joint meeting, 2017; The Auk Best Paper Award Committee, 2018. My research examines the behavioral responses of birds to environmental change, focusing on the influences of artificial light and anthropogenic noise on communication by birds and the overall sound environment more broadly. I have also studied alarm calls and dueting, and hormones and behavior in temperate and tropical birds. I have supervised 6 M.S. and 3 Ph.D. students, and more than 30 undergraduates and high school students. I'm interested in public engagement with science, and give talks to local nature organizations and lead sound walks at nature preserves. I also have an ongoing collaboration with a landscape and portrait photographer and we've held two exhibits exploring the declines of grassland bird species in North America.

STATEMENT: The AOS has been the scientific society to which I feel the strongest connection and the one which has provided me with strong support. I felt this way from my graduate student days when I received research awards from the society and support to travel to and present at conferences; the early sense of belonging framed my sense of this society. I'd like to work with the AOS to see it continue to be a society that is welcoming, diverse and inclusive, and one that supports early-career researchers in career paths both within and outside of academia. AOS can emerge as a leader among scientific societies both in terms of the science it supports through grants and high-quality journals and publications, as well as as an organization that supports all its members. My service reflects those interests as I currently serve on the AOS student research grants committee, as AE for *The Auk*, and on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee for the College of Arts and Sciences at Western Michigan University. I'd like to expand my service to these goals by working with existing AOS committees (for example, Student Affairs, Diversity and Inclusion) to promote diversity and inclusion in our society and to develop workshops at conferences and webinars aimed at early-career researchers. One of the most meaningful compliments I received as Scientific Chair about the 2017 AOS-SCO joint meeting was that it was welcoming and supportive. I would like to work to maintain that feeling going forward, which will involve understanding the needs and concerns of all members.



## **SARA R. MORRIS**

Title: Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs & Professor,  
Biology Dept, Canisius College

BIO: Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Canisius College. Ph.D. 1996, Cornell University. Assistant Professor of Biology, Canisius College, 1996-2002. Associate Professor of Biology, Canisius College, 2002-2006. Professor of Biology, Canisius College, 2006-present. Co-Chair, Biology Department, Canisius College, 2011-2015. Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Canisius College, 2015-present. Published in *Auk*, *Animal Behaviour*, *Wilson Journal of Ornithology*, *Condor*, *Journal of Field Ornithology*, *Hormones and Behavior*, *Frontiers in Zoology*, and *Vector-borne and Zoonotic Diseases*. AOU/AOS Elective Member 2004; AOU/AOS Fellow 2010; AOU Secretary 2006-2014, AOU/AOS Bylaws Committee 2014-present, Wilson Ornithological Society President 2015-2017, North American Ornithological Conference VI Steering Committee Member, North American Ornithological Conference V and VI Scientific Program Committee. My research interests focus on a passerine migration, particularly related to stopover ecology and behavior. My initial work focused on a single site, Appledore Island, Maine, and then expanded to other geographic areas and to comparative studies across migratory paths. In addition to stopover behaviors, my team has been studying the role of birds in the movement of zoonotic diseases including Lyme disease and eastern equine encephalitis. My recent work has been in the area of migrant warbler flight calling behaviors.

STATEMENT: As ornithologists, we face a variety of issues affecting our profession: environmental changes, an assault on science and scientific pursuits, and a devaluation of institutions of higher education. These issues lead me to worry about the future of ornithology, ornithologists, and birds over both the short-term and long-term. As a scientific society, we need to ensure that there are a variety of forms of mentoring at all stages of careers, opportunities and funding for basic scientific research, and quality outlets for our research results. As the AOS has been changing over the last decade, it is well positioned to ensure that these opportunities are available for ornithologists and to leverage the interests of the general public for birds to help support the science of ornithology. I believe that my background with the AOU (as secretary, on the early professionals committee, and the bylaws committee), with the Wilson Ornithological Society (as a member of Council and of the executive committee), with the North American Ornithological Conferences (as a member of two scientific committees and a steering committee), and as a college academic administrator (dealing with changes to higher education, accreditation, financial aid, specific regulations, and grant funding) will help me be an effective member of the AOS Council to help the society identify and respond to the challenges that will be affecting academia. I also bring my long-standing commitment research and in mentoring to help ensure that our focus continues to be on the science of ornithology and the training and support for ornithologists.



## **CHRISTOPHER C. WITT**

Title: Director and Curator of Birds, Museum of Southwestern Biology, Associate Professor of Biology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

BIO: Director and Curator of Birds, Museum of Southwestern Biology, Associate Professor of Biology, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. Ph.D. 2004, Louisiana State University; UC-Berkeley postdoc, 2005–2006. Published 65 peer-reviewed articles (listed here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybocrcls>). AOU/AOS member since age 17 (1992); AOU/AOS Elective Member 2009; AOU/AOS Fellow 2016; AOU Student Travel & Awards Committee member 2009–2013. I conduct specimen-based studies of avian biogeography and evolution, particularly in the Andes and New Mexico, using a range of approaches that include genetics, evolutionary comparative analyses, physiology, and parasitology. I am a strong advocate of natural history museums and collections-based science, and I interact with AOS members on social media, via @MSBbirds and @UNMornithology.

STATEMENT: I joined AOU/AOS at 17, and I have attended 16 meetings. AOS is my preferred scientific society because I am passionate about birds and I want to be part of a rigorous and vibrant community of ornithologists. Student support, meetings, and publications are current strengths of AOS that should be redoubled. I think that the most impactful investments that AOS can make are in young investigators via awards, grants, and collaborative opportunities to help them persist and thrive in ornithological careers. The AOS meeting venues and organization have generally been outstanding and the quality of science improves every year. Affordability should be a top consideration in planning future meetings, for several reasons. The new committee on Diversity and Inclusion is a welcomed step toward a progressive AOS that will forge connections across long-standing barriers. From my perspective as a museum director and curator, supporting collections infrastructure and the policy and lobbying functions of the Ornithological Council are critically important functions of AOS. The recent successful merger and the improved online presence of AOS are evidence of good leadership and a healthy, adaptable society. Amidst a rapidly changing world for scientists and birds alike, AOS' mission is only becoming more important and I am optimistic that the society will find new ways to serve its members and keep ornithology on the cutting edge.