

Western Society of Naturalists

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~ 2023 ~

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Pat Krug, CSU Los Angeles (Chair)

Melodie Grubbs, Morro Bay NEP

Sarah Romero, Scripps Inst. Oceanogr.

Christina Vasquez, Loyola Marymount

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Student Committee

Billie Beckley, UC Santa Barbara

Ben Walker, UC Santa Cruz

Ariadne Reynolds, UC Los Angeles

Angelina Zuelow, Oregon State U

Leanne De Leon, CSU Fullerton

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Nikita Sridhar, UC Santa Cruz

104TH ANNUAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 9 – 12, 2023

MONTEREY CA, CALIFORNIA

MEETING INFORMATION

We are pleased to announce that the **104th Annual Meeting of the Western Society of Naturalists** will be held in person from **Thursday November 9 – Sunday November 12, 2023**, at the **Hyatt Regency Hotel & Resort** in **Monterey, California**. Our local hosts will be **Alison Haupt (CSUMB)** and **Amanda Kahn (MLML)**.

We expect the meeting will follow a similar format and schedule as last year ([2022 Program](#)). Thursday evening will kick off with a student-organized workshop and student mixer. Friday morning will include the Student Symposium, Lifetime Achievement and Naturalist of the Year Award Presentations, and the Student Symposium. Friday afternoon will feature the poster sessions, followed by the Attitude Adjustment Hour (AAH) Friday evening. Saturday morning will start with plenary talks organized by **President Bonnie Becker**, followed by contributed talk sessions. Saturday night will start with the Presidential address, followed by the auction and entertainment sponsored by the student committee. Sunday morning will feature more contributed talk sessions, wrapping up early Sunday afternoon with a special plenary speaker. As the date approaches, more scheduling details will be available on the [WSN website](#).

All events will be held in the meeting rooms of the hotel in Monterey. We urge everyone to stay in the meeting hotel, and to **make your hotel reservations as early as possible, well before the meeting**. In recent years, the reserved block of rooms has sold very quickly, and we anticipate that this meeting will be well attended. To reserve your hotel room, [use this link](#) or call (831) 372-1234, and use the group code “G-WSN”. NOTE: the default is Thurs-Sunday; you CAN change your arrival and departure dates after clicking this link. For more information on the hotel, including directions, visit the [hotel website](#).

The WSN website can be found at <http://www.wsn-online.org/>. Later in the summer, the webpage will have links to online registration and abstract submission for the meeting through Cvent. In addition, we maintain a **WSN Twitter account** (Twitter Handle: @WSN_Secretariat), and a **WSN Facebook page** (<https://www.facebook.com/WesternSocietyOfNaturalists/>), where you can find information about the Society and our annual meeting, and connect with your colleagues. If you have an opportunity that would be appropriate for distribution via the WSN social media accounts (fellowships, small grants, student opportunities, etc.), please send the details to the student committee via the WSN Facebook or Twitter pages.

CALL FOR PAPERS, POSTERS, AND SPECIAL SESSION TOPICS

Once again, the annual meeting will feature Special Sessions that will be of interest to WSN members. If you have a proposed topic for a Special Session, please email a title, short description, and list of potential speakers to the Secretariat by **June 30th, 2023**.

We aim to open the WSN website for online registration and the submission of abstracts for contributed papers and posters in August. Registration for attendees will remain open up to and including the days that the meeting is held, although late registration fees will apply. **However, abstract submissions will only be accepted through Monday September 29th, 2023**, and as in past years, will be first come, first accepted. **Late abstracts will not be accepted.**

The size of the annual meeting often challenges the available meeting space, and we expect this year to be especially well-attended. To accommodate a large number of oral presentations, we will continue to include some slots for 5 minute lightning talks and traditional 15 minute slots. Please be aware that both 5 minute and 15 minute slots are intended for the presentation of findings from projects that are in their later stages or are completed. We urge you to present a poster instead of an oral presentation if you only have preliminary data. **WSN strongly requests that major advisors continue to review and approve all student abstracts, talks, and posters** to assure the appropriateness and high quality of the work presented.

COVID-19

We anticipate that the COVID-19 restrictions will continue to ease by November, but no one knows for sure – it is possible that conditions on the ground will necessitate changes. Stay tuned. More COVID- information is available from the [CDC](#) and [Monterey County](#).

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

WSN maintains a strong commitment to foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community that embraces all races, ethnicities, nationalities, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, religions, languages, ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, and career stages. DEIC members include students, postdocs, faculty, and other professionals who serve 3-year terms. Thus, there will be some turnover in committee membership every year. Its current members are listed in the

header at the top of this Newsletter. If you are interested in joining the DEIC, please contact deic@wsn-online.org.

WSN also maintains a meeting [Code of Conduct](#), which formalizes WSN's commitment to creating an environment in which all attendees can participate without harassment, discrimination, or violence of any type.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR WSN AWARDS

WSN invites nominations for the **Naturalist of the Year Award** and the **Lifetime Achievement Award**. All members (including students!) are welcome to submit nominations, and we especially encourage members to consider nominating scientists who represent and enhance the diversity of our field. For details regarding these awards, past winners, and how to nominate candidates, please follow these links:

Naturalist of the Year Award (<http://www.wsn-online.org/about-wsn/naturalist-of-the-year/>)

Lifetime Achievement Award (<http://www.wsn-online.org/about-wsn/lifetime-achievement-award/>)

Please submit your nominations no later than **June 30, 2023** (happy Canada Day).

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE NEXT WSN SECRETARIAT

The current Secretariat will serve until just after this meeting in November 2023. To ease the transition to the next Secretariat, Casey TerHorst (CSUN) has agreed to join the Secretariat (thank you!), and we seek willing WSN members at one of our contributing institutions now to serve in this important role. This will allow the incoming Secretariat to take on an observer's role during the current Secretariat's final year, which should go a long way toward demystifying the process before they assume their active duties in 2024. The President (Bonnie Becker) is formally charged with striking a nomination committee, but self-nominations are encouraged! This is an opportunity for members to play a leading role in fostering the future of WSN. Nominations for the next Secretariat will be discussed at the 2023 business meeting in Monterey.

WSN 2023 LOGO CONTEST

Submit an Original Entry for the **104th Meeting** of the Western Society of Naturalists!

Designs should:

- Reflect the research and values of the Society
- Contain the words "Western Society of Naturalists," "2023," and "Monterey, CA."
- Be **black and/or white**. Additionally, please suggest **shirt colors** for your design for a unisex T-shirt, a fitted v-neck T-shirt, and a sweatshirt.
- **Not be overly intricate** – details do not print well to clothing.
- Be submitted at the intended **size/dimensions**.

For the t-shirt/hoodie, you may submit a **small front logo** and/or **larger image for the back** or a **"wrap-around design."** Other designs may also be considered, but we recommend keeping it simple. Please keep in mind a diversity of body types and what will be flattering to most.

Please look [here](#) for examples of past winning logos.

Submission:

- Email your design as an attachment to Angelina Zuelow (zuelowa@oregonstate.edu).
- File type should be .jpg, .png, .tiff, .gif (can be drawn by hand, but must be cleaned up on a computer)

- File size should be less than 10MB
- Resolution should be at least 150ppi (pixels per inch)
- Deadline for submission is **June 16, 2023 18:00 PDT**. Late submissions will be given the lowest priority. Submissions will be voted on by the WSN student committee, and the student committee will select only one logo. The artist of the chosen design will be notified by July 1, 2023.

WSN 2023 SILENT AUCTION DONATION

As usual, the WSN Student Committee is seeking items to include in this year's silent and live auctions. Money raised from these events will be used to fund student travel. Previously donated items have included books, artwork, clothing, items of historical interest from prominent WSN members, unique outings or experiences, wine, and other spirits. If you have items that you would like to donate, please email Leeza-Marie Rodriguez, Auction and Gala Coordinator (leeza-marie@ucsb.edu). If you have any other questions for the WSN Student Committee in general, please email Billie Beckley (billiebeckley@ucsb.edu) or Ben Walker (benwalker@ucsc.edu).

WSN 2023: JOIN THE STUDENT COMMITTEE

We are looking for members of WSN who would like to join the WSN student committee for 2023 and 2024 to help our meetings continue to thrive. To be eligible for consideration, you must have attended at least one previous WSN meeting, be a current student, and be able to serve for two years. Applications will be accepted starting in August; please stay tuned for more details.

RECAP OF THE 2022 ANNUAL MEETING IN OXNARD, CA

The 103rd meeting of the Western Society of Naturalists was held November 10-13, 2022 in Oxnard, CA. The meeting was a success, with **630 registrants**. In total, there were **168 contributed papers (121 5-minute talks and 47 15-minute talks) and 210 posters**. The presentations highlighted a broad range of top-notch science.

The Thursday night workshop, "Increasing the Impact of your Science" kicked off the meeting. The Student Symposium on Friday morning featured, "Underrepresented voices in the environmental justice movement." Also on Friday morning, the **Naturalist of the Year** award was presented by Jenn Caselle to **Paul Barber** and **Peggy Fong** for their incredible work developing and running The Diversity Project. Friday morning concluded with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Symposium, "Cutting the strings: beyond parachute science." Contributed papers and Affinity group mixers filled the rest of the day, and, to help celebrate the Society's 102nd meeting, an online **TRIVIA** and **AAH** was held on Friday evening. It was great to "see" you all!

On Saturday morning, **Christine Whitcraft** presided over the **Presidential Symposium**, which explored "Translational Ecology: Integrative science to elevate science." She also gave her Presidential Address on Saturday evening. Well done, President Christine! Thanks to **Ben Ruttenberg** and **Sean Anderson** for being enthusiastic auctioneers at the WSN auction, also on Saturday evening.

Poster sessions and the Business Meeting were held Saturday afternoon, and Contributed papers were held Sunday morning, followed by an exciting Meeting Adjournment by the WSN Governance Committee.

Big Thanks to the Student Committee, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, and the continuing Treasurer (**Andy Brooks**) for their hard work with the meeting. We are also grateful to the many student volunteers who assisted during the meeting. Finally, a special extra big thanks to **Cassandra Konecny**, who worked with the previous Secretariat (at UBC) and graciously continued to contribute to WSN by assisting the current Secretariat with the annual meeting. We could not have done it without you! The efforts and enthusiasm of all of these students and people made the meeting a memorable success!

ELECTIONS, NOMINATIONS, AND OTHER SOCIETY BUSINESS

Several decisions were made at the 2021 business meeting. Highlights included:

- **Corey Garza** (CSU Monterey Bay) was nominated and unanimously elected President-Elect.
- **The 105th Annual Meeting** was planned for the Willamette Valley, OR in November 2024. Drs. **Sarah Henkel and Will White** at the Oregon State have graciously volunteered to serve as local hosts.
- The new co-chairs of the WSN 2023 Student Committee are **Billie Beckley** (UCSB) and **Ben Walker** (UCSC). The other members of the hard-working student committee are **Angelina Zuelow** (Oregon State), **Ariadne Reynolds** (UCLA) **Leanne De Leon** (CSU Fullerton), **Leeza-Marie Rodriguez** (UCSB), and **Nikita Sridhar** (UCSC).

STUDENT PAPER AND POSTER AWARDS

From the student papers presented at the last Annual Meeting, awards for Best Student Paper were given in five categories: (1) 15-minute talk, (2) Applied Ecology, (3) Community and Ecosystem Ecology, (4) Observational Ecology, and (5) Organismal and Population Biology. The category of Observational Ecology was established in 2015 as a best paper award presented in memory of Rafe Sagarin (<http://www.wsn-online.org/sagarin-award/>). The Applied Ecology award is also called the Mia Tegner Award in her honor. For posters, WSN presented a Best Graduate Student Poster Award and a Best Undergraduate Student Poster Award.

Many thanks to the WSN judging committee (**Alison Haupt, Jayson Smith, Tonya Huff**) for doing an outstanding job of organizing the judging, helping to evaluate the presentations, and tallying up the scores of so many oral presentations and posters! Also big thanks to all of the judges for their hard work and timely participation, which made this competition a success! It is always a challenging task to select winners from the huge number of excellent papers and posters. Here are the winners and those receiving honorable mention in each category:

BEST STUDENT PAPERS

5-MINUTE TALK

Winner: Sam Walkes, “EXPLORING THE DYNAMICS OF AN ONGOING RANGE SHIFT”

Honorable Mention: Gifty Rhodalyn Tetteh, “MICROPLASTIC PRODUCTION AND RETENTION IN PURPLE SEA URCHIN (STRONGYLOCENTROTUS PURPURATUS)”

APPLIED ECOLOGY (Mia Tegner Award)

Winner: Molly Murphy, “MOM, IS THAT YOU? A NORTHERN ELEPHANT SEAL PUP’S ABILITY TO VOCALLY RECOGNIZE ITS MOTHER”

Honorable Mention: Jeremie Bauer, “POSITIVE EFFECTS OF COMMUNITY-LED MARINE RESERVES ON THE GREEN ABALONE”

COMMUNITY ECOLOGY

Winner: Sydney McDermott, “COLONIZATION AND SUCCESSION ON EXPERIMENTAL NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL SUBSTRATES IN THE DEEP SEA”

Honorable Mention: Melissa Gutterman, “THE INFLUENCE OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS ON THE DIETARY NICHES OF CALIFORNIA REEF FISHES”

OBSERVATIONAL ECOLOGY (Rafe Sagarin Award)

Winner: Katherine Cavanaugh, “QUANTIFYING THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF KELP CANOPY TRAITS WITH AIRBORNE IMAGING SPECTROSCOPY”

Honorable Mention: Kiran Reed, “MODEL APEX PREDATOR (GIANT SEA BASS) MODIFIES BEHAVIOR OF MESOPREDATORY FISHES AROUND SANTA CATALINA ISLAND, CA”

ORGANISMAL BIOLOGY

Winner: Madison Heard, “THE EFFECT OF FLUCTUATING TEMPERATURE AND DIET ON THE CARDIAC THERMAL PERFORMANCE OF CALIFORNIA KILLIFISH (FUNDULUS PARVIPINNIS)”

Honorable Mention: Maya Munstermann, “SYNERGISTIC EFFECTS OF TEMPERATURE AND FOOD AVAILABILITY ON PURPLE SEA URCHIN LARVAL DEVELOPMENT AND SURVIVAL”

BEST GRADUATE STUDENT POSTER

Winner: Maggie Dillon, “THE EFFECT OF TEMPERATURE ON METABOLIC RATE AND BODY CONDITION OF INVASIVE BLUE CATFISH”

Honorable Mention: Keenan Guillas, “THE BIGGER THEY ARE, THE HARDER THEY SNEEZE: CONTRACTION BEHAVIOURS IN THE TEMPERATE DEMOSPONGE TETHYA CALIFORNIANA”

BEST UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT POSTER

Winner: Jessica Whitney, “WITH A LITTLE KELP FROM OUR FRIENDS: EXAMINATION OF UNDERSTORY ALGAE COMMUNITIES AND ASSOCIATED FISHES IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA”

Honorable Mention: Ky Friedman, “BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES OF PACIFIC HERRING (CLUPEA PALLASII) TO POTENTIAL DETERRENCE STIMULI”

Congratulations again to all of our winners!

TRAVEL AWARDS

The beginning 2022 balance of the Student Travel Fund was \$19,989. The WSN Student Travel Fund received \$1,735 in 2022 donations from the membership. The 2022 WSN Live and Silent Auction raised \$2,122 for Student Travel. This year \$6,000 was awarded to students to attend the 2022 Meeting. The current balance in the WSN Student Travel Fund is \$17,846.

In 2022, we changed the format for Student Travel Awards, awarding 10 awards of \$500 each.

Importantly, the deadline for Student Travel Award applications will be earlier in the fall, planned for Sept 1, before the meeting registration and abstract submission window closes. This will allow us to confirm awards for students before abstract submission closes so they can plan accordingly. Be on the lookout for emails from WSN for the Student Travel Award application! Thank you for bearing with us as we work to improve the student travel award process.

RAFE SAGARIN FUND FOR INNOVATIVE ECOLOGY

A fund was established in 2016 to honor the legacy of Dr. Rafe Sagarin, a vibrant member of the WSN community who is greatly missed. We hope that this fund will build on Rafe's legacy by supporting WSN students and post-docs who, like Rafe, are addressing ecological and/or societal questions through observational approaches applied in novel, bold and creative ways.

Congratulations to **Anai Novoa** (Scripps Institution of Oceanography), the latest awardee, for "Investigating the interplay between parasitism and host biogeography: Do range expanding species have fewer parasites?" Anai is a PhD candidate working under the mentorship of Dr. Ryan Hechinger at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego. Her thesis focuses on how parasite community structure varies throughout the geographic ranges of over 20 invertebrate and 4 fish host species from three coastal habitats (estuary, rocky shore, sandy beach) along the West coast of North America.

The Sagarin research award gives out \$1,500-3,000 annually to one or two early-career scientists (advanced undergraduates, graduate students and post-docs worldwide) to support creative, bold research in ecology. Proposals are due December 1st every year. We will advertise the awards during the annual meeting and review the next round of applications in February 2024. Next year's selection committee will be: **Eric Sanford, Danielle Zacherl, and Ben Miner**.

Donations are needed to support future fellowship awards. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation. All donations (large or small) are welcome! For more information about the fund (including instructions on how to submit an application and how to donate to the fund), please visit the website for the Rafe Sagarin Fund for Innovative Ecology at:

<http://www.rafeinnovativeecologyfund.org>.

THAT'S A WRAP!

Thank you for supporting WSN and we hope to see you at the meeting later this year in Monterey!



Logo credit: Andrea Dingeldein