



# WbS Vision 2020

## *Strategic Plan Initiative*

These are exciting times to be a Waterbird Society member. Our flagship journal, *Waterbirds*, continues to attract and publish scientific articles of the highest quality. We have increased our visibility and representation in South America, Asia, and Europe with recent meetings in Brazil, Taiwan, and Spain. Our membership has continued to increase while other ornithological societies have experienced declines. Our endowment has grown to the point where we can now draw from it to fund important initiatives of interest to our membership. My sincerest thanks to all of you who have helped to get us where we are today.

Although a pat on the back is well deserved, now is not the time to rest on our past accomplishments. There is much work to be done in the years ahead if we wish to continue to improve our global reputation as the premier organization dedicated to the scientific study and conservation of aquatic birds. As an important first step, I am pleased to announce the launch of **WbS Vision 2020**, the first-ever strategic planning initiative our society has undertaken. WbS Vision 2020 is an ambitious project that will gather ideas from our membership about issues important to our society, develop and refine those ideas, and combine them into one document that will serve as a set of guiding principles for the decisions our society will make over the next 10-12 years. The goal is to have a document ready for discussion and ratification by the WbS Executive Council at our next annual meeting in Texas.

As your new president, I have already received many thoughtful suggestions about ways to improve the stature of our society. Some of these suggestions pertain to increasing membership and improving lines of communication among our members, moving toward electronic submission of manuscripts to our journal, increasing our international visibility, serving our student members, increasing our involvement in critical conservation issues such as global warming, habitat destruction, and avian diseases, and managing effectively our endowment funds and spending them wisely (now that we are able to do so). We welcome input from all members about how best to meet these objectives and to suggest others.

I also am pleased to announce that **Mike Erwin** has agreed to chair the WbS Vision 2020 committee. As you well know, Mike is both a past President of the WbS and a past Editor of our journal. He therefore has the broad-based perspective and long-term dedication to lead this initiative; he also has the people skills necessary to encourage cooperation among our members as we strive to define our common goals and to convert those goals into action. Mike and I will be working closely together over the next few weeks to solicit volunteers to work on various aspects of this plan and to get things rolling. We are seeking assistance from our entire membership—students included—to contribute new ideas and to help with drafting this strategic plan.

If you have any questions or comments about the WbS Vision 2020 initiative, or if you would like to participate in some way, please do not hesitate to contact Mike or me.

Yours sincerely,

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