

Spring 2010  
Volume 21  
Number 1

Editor:  
Kristie Derkson

# The Alberta Wildlifer Official Newsletter of The Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society

## The President's Message

The Annual Meeting in Red Deer this year is just around the corner – hard to believe a full year has gone by! Because this is our twentieth Annual Meeting we have emphasized taking a look back and a look forward. We have extended a special invitation to past presidents and Rowan Award winners to join us this year and I hope you will take the time to meet those you do not know to learn where their lives have taken them. There will be posters and photos of the times the Chapter members have shared to reminisce. We will carry on traditions by contemplating wildlife diseases and their habitat in our Plenary Session, listening to happenings across Alberta in the open paper sessions, learning about the educational networks emerging for promoting wildlife in the public eye, continuing to recognize our outstanding colleagues and burgeoning students, and enjoying ourselves to Celtic tunes this year. We also harbor in the new...like our commitment to Student Conclaves, our new membership brochure, the first web-based survey of the membership, and our first ever Alberta Wildlife

Publication Award. There also are a number of important issues to discuss at the business meeting this year and I encourage you to attend. In particular, the Executive has made head way on options for considering an Executive Director position for the Chapter. This is an important potential direction for the Chapter and we need to chart our course carefully. Finally, the action does not stop in Red Deer. This summer we are teaming up with the Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society in Edmonton. On 3 July there will be a Canadian Section noon-time barbeque and afternoon business meeting where Section business and directions will be discussed including how to foster linkages for Canadian Conservation groups. On 4 July the Canadian Section with their partners will be sponsoring two special symposia on sustainable use and caribou at the International Congress of Conservation Biology (see details here in). I invite all of the Alberta Chapter to attend both meetings.

So as we move into our 21th year of being a Chapter, I hope you will take the challenge put to you in this newsletter seriously ...

either bring one or more new members to the Annual Meeting in Red Deer (and win an amazing photo safari) or take home 5 membership brochures to hand deliver to your colleagues. Our motto in the next 20 years is not just to “keep on going” but to “keep on growing”. The wildlife resources of Alberta are incredible and deserve our full pledged attention.

Evie Merrill  
ACTWS President

### Message from the Editor

Please watch for information on the upcoming 20th anniversary conference in Red Deer- NOTE: We are still accepting donations for the auction and all proceeds go towards student scholarships so please keep this in mind and donate generously! Find a special award for Beth MacCallum and a great article from Adam Martinson... As usual, please email me with any suggestions, comments or concerns!

Kristie Derkson

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Red Deer Lodge,  
Red Deer Alberta  
March 12-13, 2010

# Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society Conference 2010

## Alberta Chapter

### of The Wildlife Society

20<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Conference

Red Deer Lodge

4311 – 49th Avenue Red Deer, Alberta, Canada

403-346-8841 or 800-661-1657 or [www.reddeerlodge.ca](http://www.reddeerlodge.ca)

March 12-13, 2010

**If you haven't pre-registered yet – it's not too late!**

Please do so on our website <http://joomla.wildlife.org/Alberta>



“20 years and  
going  
strong...”

#### Friday, March 12

0700 - 1700 Registration – Waskasoo Foyer and  
Poster set up

0815 – 0830 Welcome Address – Waskasoo C

0830 – 1010 **Plenary Session “Chronic  
Wasting Disease and other Disease Agents  
Threatening Wildlife and Their Habitats”** –  
Waskasoo C

1010 - 1040 Refreshment Break – Sponsored by  
*HAB-TECH Environmental* and Poster Session  
– Waskasoo A

1040 - 1200 **Plenary Session – cont'd** -  
Waskasoo C

1200 - 1300 Lunch on your own

1300 – 1505 **Session 1 – Game and Non Game  
Management** - Waskasoo C

1505 – 1530 Refreshment Break and Poster  
Session – Waskasoo A

1530 – 1620 **Session 1 – cont'd** - Waskasoo C

1620 – 1750 **Session 2 - Wildlife Parasitism  
and Disease** - Waskasoo C

1750 – 1930 Supper on your own

1930 - 0100 **Social, Mentoring and Photo  
Contest** - Waskasoo A

#### Saturday, March 13

0730 – 1200 Registration – Waskasoo Foyer

0800 - 1000 **ACTWS Business Meeting** - Waskasoo  
C 1000 – 1030 Refreshment Break and Poster Session  
– Waskasoo A

1030 - 1200 **“Reaching out for outreach - a new  
role for the ACTWS”** - Waskasoo C

1200 - 1300 Lunch on your own

1300 – 1505 **Session 3 – Carnivores** - Waskasoo C

1505 – 1530 Refreshment Break and Poster Session –  
Waskasoo A

1530 - 1725 **Session 4 - Habitat Restoration,  
Reclamation, and Conservation** - Waskasoo C

1730 - 1900 **Cash bar and Awards Banquet –  
“Honouring our History”** – Waskasoo A & B

1900 - 2000 **Awards and Scholarships Presentation**  
– Waskasoo A & B

2000 - 2100 Silent and Live Auction -- Waskasoo A  
& B

2100 - 2300 Music and Dancing to the sounds of  
**Celtara** – Waskasoo A & B

**DONATIONS  
NEEDED FOR  
Auction- proceeds  
to towards  
SUPPORTING  
SCHOLARSHIPS -  
new/slightly worn  
books, outdoor  
gear, etc... all  
welcome!**

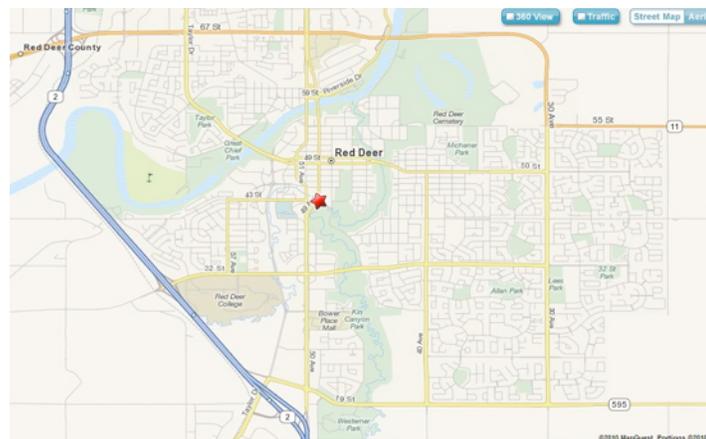
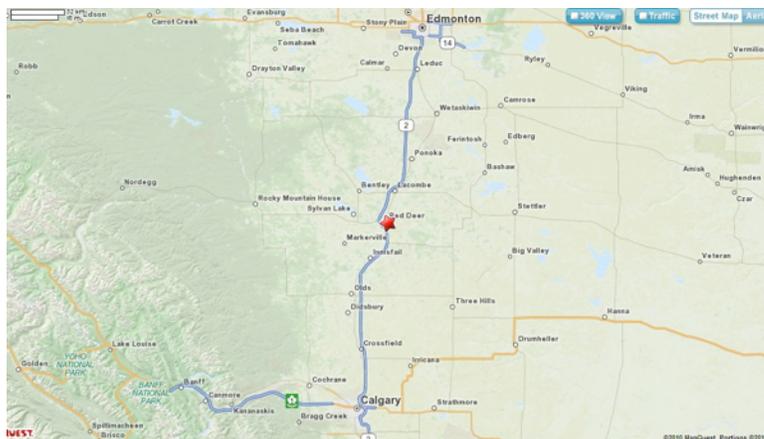
**Plenary Session –  
“Disease Agents  
Threatening Alberta  
Wildlife and Their  
Habitats”.**

The session will  
focus on Chronic  
Wasting Disease  
research and other  
vectors.

Red Deer Lodge,  
Red Deer Alberta  
March 12-13, 2010

# Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society Conference 2010

The Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society's 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference with the theme "20 years and going strong..." is being held at the Red Deer Lodge (see map) in Red Deer Alberta (see map), from March 12 - 13, 2010.



As part of our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary we are acknowledging and honouring our Past Presidents and Rowan Award recipients. We encourage all members and students to seek out these honourees (they will be easily identifiable by their special name tags) and persuade them to impart some of their experiences and wisdom.

This year's plenary session will present a state of the Province perspective on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), an overview of the Alberta Prion Research Institute that recently became part of Alberta Connects – Bio Solutions and the latest research being undertaken on CWD. There will also be presentations on the Pine Beetle in Alberta and the fungus White-Nose Syndrome that threatens bat populations in Western North America.

**Speakers and Students:** If you are speaking at the conference - please follow the guidelines posted on the website. The date and time of your session will be posted on the website. Cash prizes are awarded to the best Student Presentation and Poster

**The Annual General Meeting** of ACTWS will be held in Red Deer on Saturday, 13 March 2010 at 8:00-10:00. The following important issues and votes will be taken:

- \* Approval of Bylaw Amendments for changing the ACTWS to be included in the Canadian Section rather than the Northwest Section.
- \* Approval of financial reports
- \* Discussions:
  - o annual dues increase from \$20 to \$30.
  - o criteria for listing sponsors on web site
  - o Executive Director Position

**ACTWS Auction at the Conference:** The annual ACTWS Live and Silent Auctions will be held again this year. All funds raised go towards scholarships for undergraduate and graduate student members of the Society. Soliciting items or encouraging your company, professor, family or local wildlife oriented business to donate an appropriate item is heartily encouraged. Please advise Robin Gutsell ([robin.gutsell@gov.ab.ca](mailto:robin.gutsell@gov.ab.ca)) of your donation. **Last minute auction items will be graciously received as well.**

**ACTWS Photography Contest:** ACTWS is seeking photo entries from amateur photographers. Any registered delegate of the 2009 annual conference can submit one photo per category (Wildlife and Alberta Landscapes). Prizes will be awarded for best photograph in each category. To submit photos download and complete the photo submission form from the ACTWS website and email it to Kristie Derkson ([kderkson@teraenv.com](mailto:kderkson@teraenv.com)) prior to the conference. Please bring your 8X10 prints and submission fee to the Registration Desk at the Conference on the afternoon of Friday, March 12 so photos can be on display for the Friday Night Social. Photo submissions will be accepted no later than noon Saturday, March 13. For further details see the ACTWS website or email Kristie.

**Friday Night Social:** The fun begins at 1930 on Friday March 12. Entries in the photo contest and posters will be on display. Mentors and protégés will be matched-up for some exciting activities! Come-on out to meet new friends, renew acquaintances and help start the conference with a bang!

Red Deer Lodge,  
Red Deer Alberta  
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# Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society Conference 2010

## Saturday Night Entertainment

We are very excited to have the Celtic band “CELTARA” (pronounced Kell tah’ ra). Five accomplished musicians with a love for the beauty of acoustic Celtic music. Their handcrafted arrangements are brought to life with a lustrous blend of instruments - harp, fiddle, flute, guitar, accordion, percussion, piano, and exquisite multi-part vocal harmony. The band’s repertoire includes richly textured versions of Celtic influenced traditional music from Ireland, Scotland, Canada, Scandinavia and France, as well as original music crafted in both traditional, and not so traditional, styles by members of Celtara. They have released their debut CD “Until The Morning Light” that is getting airplay on CKUA and CBC radio. Check out [www.myspace.com/celtaramusic](http://www.myspace.com/celtaramusic) and [www.celtara.com](http://www.celtara.com) for a sample of the “joyous”, “inspiring”, “enchanting” and “awesome, beautiful, toe-tapping music” that will grace the atmosphere following the Banquet and concurrent with the lively auction!



## Other Conference Highlights

### Awards

Every year the ACTWS honours outstanding contributions and this year we have added an additional category. The Publications Award now complements our Dedicated Service and William Rowan Distinguished Service Awards. Please see the website for more complete descriptions of these awards. These awards will be presented during the Banquet on Saturday March 13.

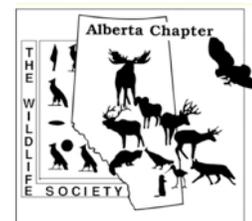
### Scholarships

Three (3) \$1500 student scholarships are also presented during the Banquet in the categories of Technical, Undergraduate, Post-graduate.

### Memorabilia

T-shirts (\$20) and coffee mugs (\$8) emblazoned with the ACTWS logo and our Conference theme “20 years and going strong...” will be available for purchase at the Registration desk.

“20 years and going  
strong...”



Red Deer Lodge,  
Red Deer Alberta  
March 12-13, 2010

# Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society Conference 2010

## Membership Drive and Contest

Here is some more information on the membership drive. We are encouraging all members to get involved in an effort to increase membership and draw in folks from new parts of the profession. Here is how the Membership Drive Contest will work. The basic premise is that the member who can encourage the most new people to join the chapter before or during the 2010 conference will win a prize. The winner can choose either a photograph of their choice by well-known photographer and biologist Gordon Court OR the chance to spend time with the man himself in the field where he will give you pointers on how to take your own awesome photographs! The executive is asking new members to self-identify at the conference registration desk, and the name of the member who encouraged the new person to join will be entered into a draw box. If the new person is not able to attend the conference, please notify our secretary/treasurer Karl Zimmer [kzimm14@yahoo.com](mailto:kzimm14@yahoo.com) in advance of the conference so the member's name can be entered for the draw. The winner will be drawn during the conference. Please try to participate!

## Auction Notice – Donations Needed!

If you haven't already done so, it is time to consider donating this year to the live and silent auction that is held every year to raise money for the student awards. We are accepting donations of art, books, outdoor gear, items created by hand by members, time spent in recreational pursuits and any other item or service, large or small, that someone else might want to pay \$\$ for. Be creative!! Some items will be identified for student auction only, giving students a chance to participate without having to compete with the big spenders! Every year, this auction is both a fun time (Chapter Auctioneer Hugh Wollis is always entertaining, isn't he?) and a great way to raise funds for a relevant cause. Please bring items with you to the conference – all items donated must indicate who they were donated by so we can keep track and thank the donor. If you are donating a service, please bring an enticing description of the service. You can hand items in at the registration booth or find either Hugh Wollis or Robin Gutsell (Robin won't be there until Saturday). If you can't attend but still want to donate to this excellent cause, please ask another member to bring the item or you can contact Robin ([Robin.Gutsell@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Robin.Gutsell@gov.ab.ca)) or Hugh ([Hugh.Wollis@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Hugh.Wollis@gov.ab.ca)) to make another arrangement. Thanks everyone – we're counting on you!



By Adam  
Martinson

# Road Mortality

In recent decades the study of road ecology has emerged as a scientific field of considerable attention, and with good reason. The ecological effects of roads are diverse, with an estimated 15 to 20% of the area of United States directly affected by roads. Wildlife mortality from vehicle strikes is one of many ecological effects of roads. In the past, the impacts of roads and vehicles on wildlife were rarely considered however, during the second half of the 20th century roads with vehicles overtook hunting as the leading direct human cause of vertebrate mortality on land. Recent studies have also estimated that one million vertebrates are killed on roads every day in the US, and five million reptiles and amphibians are killed on roads each year in Australia! With impacts like these, the effects of roads on wildlife are hard to ignore.

The situation is no different in southeastern Alberta where prairie rattlesnakes and bullsnakes are commonly killed on roads. Although we do not fully understand the impacts of road mortality on prairie rattlesnake and bullsnake populations in the province, there is every reason to believe that the impacts are significant. Even low levels of mortality could threaten populations because of the shortened active season and therefore reduced reproductive ability of the snakes.

As a graduate student, I studied road mortality of prairie rattlesnakes and bullsnakes in Alberta. My research focussed on quantifying the magnitude of snake road mortality in southeastern Alberta, and more importantly, developing strategies to minimize the number of snakes killed on roads. Part of my research was estimating the probability of a prairie rattlesnake or bullsnake being killed when crossing a road. I had some shocking results. For example, I found that a prairie rattlesnake had an 18% chance of being killed when crossing a road that averaged just 353 vehicles per day! Since prairie rattlesnakes are known to be quite mobile during the active season (one individual in Alberta was tracked moving 24 km away from its hibernaculum), the cumulative risk of crossing numerous roads can be substantial.

Another component of my research was capturing and tracking prairie rattlesnakes and bullsnakes and comparing their movement rates to weather. Understanding how weather impacts snake movement is important because we can predict when snakes are most likely to encounter roads. Using this information, we can develop strategies, such as temporary road closures, to ensure that the snakes safely get to the other side.

Other strategies to minimize the number of snakes killed on roads include providing sufficient buffers to road development around hibernaculum, limiting traffic densities on certain roads, installing crossing structures for the snakes (such as tunnels, culverts, or cattle guards), and significantly reducing vehicle speeds.

Although commonly used as a mitigation strategy, the use of warning signs to minimize the number of snakes killed isn't likely to have a considerable impact because positive changes to driver behaviour are often only temporary. Furthermore, when some drivers are more aware of snakes on the road, they are more likely to deliberately hit them with their vehicle!

Clearly, for any mitigation strategy to be successful, it is important that people are educated about the issue, which in turn may increase the amount they care about the snakes and other wildlife. When people care more about these animals, the likelihood of mitigation strategies, such as seasonal road closures, being implemented successfully is much greater. For more information on snake road mortality and conservation efforts in Alberta, visit:

[www.ibrakeforrattlesnakes.com](http://www.ibrakeforrattlesnakes.com).



Photo credit: Adam Martinson



Photo credit: Adam Martinson



Photo credit: Jim Knelson



Photo credit: Adam Martinson

## Special Announcement!

# Beth MacCallum honoured with a "Outstanding Achievement Award" from The Wild Sheep Foundation

The Wild Sheep Foundation Convention and International Sporting Expo, "The Sheep Show" honored a number of nationally and internationally acclaimed conservationists during the upcoming event.

One of our very own, **Beth MacCallum of Bighorn Technologies** in Alberta, Canada was recognized with the "Outstanding Achievement Award" for her research that led to the population growth of some of Alberta's bighorn sheep herds. Bighorns from these herds have also been utilized in transplant projects throughout the Western United States.

The Wild Sheep Foundation's (formerly FNAWS) Board of Directors has selected Beth to receive the prestigious "Outstanding Achievement Award" at the upcoming Wild Sheep Foundation Convention held in Reno, Nevada, February, 3 – 6, 2010.

The award was presented on Saturday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010 during the evening Banquet & Awards Program. This event usually hosts around 2,000 people; all advocates for wild sheep.

Beth was nominated by Dr. Wayne Heimer from Alaska primarily for her contribution to the study of bighorn sheep and the design of mined landscapes to benefit bighorn sheep. [By examining the biological needs of the bighorn sheep against the backdrop of an operating coal mine she was able to apply McHarg's "design with nature" concept. This approach incorporates environmental and societal values into every aspect of development, and promotes the evaluation of constraints and opportunities arising].

The Wild Sheep Foundation, formerly the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, was founded in 1977 by sheep and mountain hunting enthusiasts and conservationists. With a membership of more than 10,000 worldwide and a chapter network in North America, WSF is the premier advocate for wild sheep, wild goats, other wildlife, and their habitat. Since forming in 1977, the Wild Sheep Foundation has raised and expended more than \$74 million on conservation and education programs in North America, Europe and Asia.

Other recipients included:

**U.S. Senator Mike Crapo (Idaho)** is the recipient of the Wild Sheep Foundation's Federal Statesman Award that recognizes national policymakers who are making positive decisions for wildlife conservation.

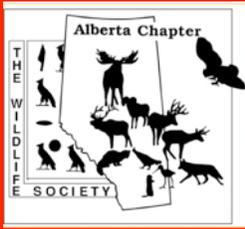
**Dr. Subramaniam Srikumaran** of Washington State University will be recognized for his work with the Scientific Achievement Award. This award recognizes those that have demonstrated noble research efforts that have or may lead to the enhancement of wild sheep populations.

**John J. Jackson, III** from the Conservation Force will be recognized with the International Statesman Award for his worldwide efforts regarding wildlife conservation.



You can find out more about the convention and awards at:  
<http://www.wildsheepfoundation.org/>





# Upcoming Events and Announcements

## From the University of Alberta Chapter

On March 26-28, the University of Alberta's Chapter of The Wildlife Society is travelling to West Lafayette, Indiana to attend the 2010 Midwest Student Conclave hosted by Purdue University. Student conclaves provide budding wildlife biologists with valuable hands-on training in wildlife management and conservation, and networking opportunities with wildlife students and professionals.

This year, workshops include bird banding, mammal trapping, radio telemetry, immobilization techniques and electrofishing. Field trips include Herping, a wolf park tour, waterfowl watching, and a constructed wetlands tour. And of course, the quiz bowl! Teams of four represent each university, competing in a Jeopardy-type wildlife competition, and the U of A plans to meet or exceed our third place finishing from last year in Michigan!

## Come One – Come All To Edmonton This Summer!

The Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society Annual Meeting supported by The Alberta Chapter of TWS and the Student Chapter of TWS at the University of Alberta will be held in conjunction with the International Congress on Conservation Biology (ICCB) on **3 July 2010 in Edmonton, Alberta**.

There will be an open barbeque 11:30-1:30 on 3 July 2010 on the University of Alberta campus followed by the Canadian Section business meeting and discussions on making linkages among conservation groups in Canada. Instead of an open paper session at this year's meeting the Canadian Section is sponsoring two special symposia at the ICCB:

1) *Sustainable Use in Wildlife Conservation*: Sustainable use is a valuable tool for promoting the conservation of biological diversity, in many instances providing incentives for conservation and restoration because of the social, cultural and economic benefits that people derive from that use. In turn, sustainable use cannot be achieved without effective politics and conservation measures. Hunting, trapping and angling are forms of sustainable use of wildlife when properly managed. In this symposium, speakers will address biological, economic, socio-cultural and political aspects of sustainable use across the globe for what the future holds.

2) *Caribou Conservation: International Perspectives on Management and Policy*: As one of the last example of remaining large ungulate migrations in the northern hemisphere, caribou and reindeer populations face a myriad of limiting factors. Given that the global population decline encompasses all subspecies of caribou and reindeer, and the immeasurable value of the species to northern cultures through subsistence hunting and herding, international dialogue on caribou and reindeer

management strategies is needed. The purpose of this symposium is to provide an overview of region-specific caribou and reindeer limiting factors and policy in order to educate both professionals and students on the conservation and management of a “threatened” species with circumpolar distribution. See details on Canadian Section: <http://joomla.wildlife.org/Canada/>

For more conference opportunities at ICCB see: <http://www.conbio.org/activities/meetings/2010/index.cfm>

## 24th International Congress for Conservation Biology July 3-7, 2010 in Edmonton, Alberta

On-line registration for earlybird pricing starts: 1 March 2010

Regular registration starts: 26 April 2010

Late registration starts: 31 May 2010

On-line registration closes: 17 June 2010

Please see <http://www.conbio.org/activities/meetings/2010/register/register.cfm> for registration and more information.

## 6th International Butterfly Conference - June 29 - July 2 U o f A

Early bird registration deadline is March 31, 2010

Deadline for Abstract submission is May 17, 2010

Please view the Conference webpage at: <http://www.biology.ualberta.ca/biobutterfly2010>

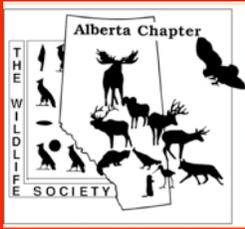
## ASPB 2010 Conference April 14 and 15, 2010 Innovations and Advancements in Biology

CONFERENCE DRAFT PROGRAM and REGISTRATION Now Available On-Line at [www.aspb.ab.ca](http://www.aspb.ab.ca)

The ASPB Conference on April 14 and 15, 2010 at the Calgary Zoo. This conference will be well attended by members of industry, government, the general public and professionals across all disciplines.

This conference will be an important event for all those interested in learning about new technology, innovations and advancements in the field of biology.

Visit the Conference Page at [www.aspb.ab.ca](http://www.aspb.ab.ca) to register and to view the Draft Program.



# Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society Contact Information

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