Alberta Chapter
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

THE ALBERTA WILDLIFER

VOLUME 27 ISSUE 1 FEBRUARY 2016

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE
- POLAR BEARS
- BATS

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ACTWS President's Report

Jason T Fisher

The *State of the Society* Address

When red squirrels lured me west to the wild boreal forests of Alberta, I was a young and headstrong graduate student with (in retrospect) a shockingly vague notion of how the world actually worked. In my first days, I met a large cadre of equally eager and naïve students who shared the same unlikely passion for squirrels, or butterflies, or other wild animals that fired imaginations. In the next years I met a mixed bag of characters who had – through feats of endurance, skill, and guile – managed to nurture their passions into paying careers. I was astounded that such an exploit was achievable. The ACTWS was my first exposure to this remarkable collection of intriguing individuals.

With oversized glasses and Elvis

Now in its 26th year, the ACTWS continues to inspire and nurture a new generation. Through the hard work and careful planning of many Executives before us, we hold a large stockpile of resources. A substantial legacy contribution from Mr. Larry Comin will more than double our trove. We find ourselves in the enviable position of deciding how to spend this money to advance our vision. We have a Strategic Plan to guide us, spearheaded by former President Dee Patriquin, which highlights four principal services: the *Conservation Affairs Committee*, and *Student Engagement and Support*, our *Annual Conference*, and *Professional Recognition*, all supported by operations including Education and Outreach, Fundraising, Membership Services, and Social Media Communications. We have recently revamped our webpage and moved to a fully online registration system. We have Facebook page and Twitter and Instagram profiles where we post the latest news, wildlife photos, and provide a forum for discussion and interaction among members. Communication among members, especially students, is a growing strength.

The *Conservation Affairs Committee* has been extremely active, sitting on numerous boards and committees. They stay abreast of the latest emerging issues, draft public resolutions and position statements, and contribute the collective wisdom of wildlife biologists to key decisions around the province. Less than a dozen volunteers are doing this monumentally important job. The ACTWS Executive supports their travel, but personpower remains a jaggedly prominent shortfall. Wildlife conservation is a wonderful undertaking and a collective responsibility, and we need your help. First, if you are already active in wildlife conservation, connect with us. Tell us about

Ron Bjorge Retires

By Margo Pybus

On January 29 2016 Ron Bjorge turned off the lights and went home satisfied that he had successfully completed a career that, in his own words… *"spanned 3 governing political parties, 9 Department name changes, at least 10 reorganizations, and 21 different Ministers responsible for wildlife."*

Ron is the epitome of a good wildlifer. His work career began in 1971 as a summer student with Alberta Forest Service in Nojack, Alberta. The Social Credit Party held the political helm of Alberta at the time.

Between 1971 and 2016 Ron tackled just about every aspect of wildlife and wildlife habitat, biology, and management over a broad range of species and natural areas. In 1973 he completed a BSc at the University of Alberta and turned down a government job offer so he could work on skunks in a Masters program with Bill Samuel. When his MSc was finished he accepted a government job offer and spent 5 years studying wolf-cattle conflicts in the Peace River area, 4 years as a Wildlife Habitat Biologist in Grande Prairie, 2 years as a Regional Habitat Biologist in Peace River, 16 years as the Regional then Area Wildlife Biologist in Red Deer, 4 years as the Wildlife Manager in Red Deer, 7 years as Director of Wildlife, and 3 years as Director of Special Initiatives.

During his career Ron was involved in 16 peer-reviewed publications, a foundational achievement that he brought to the breadth of tasks, issues, and problems he dealt with over the years. He always insisted that science and fact be the basis for management decisions whenever and as much as possible. There was always a good wildlife biologist at the core of the good wildlife manager.

Ron has many roles and achievements beyond his government record. He is a strong supporter and leader in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan where he spoke on behalf of wild birds at national and continental tables. He is a strong supporter of The Wildlife Society and his contributions to ACTWS include: Director 1992-93, Student Awards Chair 1997 to 99, Vice President 1995-96, President 1996-97, Past President 1997-98, and ACTWS Dedicated Service recipient 2000. While VP he successfully orchestrated the 1996 joint conference in Banff between the Chapter and The Northwest Section TWS.

Ron has personal strengths that have been passed on to a generation of young wildlifers, both within government and beyond. His calm steady approach regardless of the level of anxiety or conflict in others served him well in every position he held. And we all know that wildlife management is no cake-walk when discussing topics ranging from grizzly bears to zoo standards. Perhaps his early work with wolves help develop his facility to facilitate.

In closing out an outstanding career in wildlife biology and wildlife management, Ron Bjorge is moving on to other pursuits like skiing and cycling, and oh yes, a seat on the board of the Canadian Wildlife Federation. This is typical of Ron and his ongoing willingness to share his biological knowledge and proven successful skills in people management and problem solving.

President's Message continued

the issues you are working on, the boards you advise, and actions you are taking. We will spread the word and, where needed and possible, provide support. Second, if you want to get more involved in wildlife issues but aren't sure how – or are unwilling to act alone – let us help. Contact us. Our Society was formed to provide a strong, unified voice for Alberta wildlife professionals, but it only works through the voices of our individual members.

Our second pillar – *Student Support* – has never been stronger. As the Society seeks to provide support for wildlife education, we annually offer $1500 scholarships to one technical, one undergraduate, and one graduate student. Perhaps more importantly, we encourage wildlife biology students to come together, to connect and share with professionals. Our third pillar – the *Annual Conference* – is where the spark of wildlife passion can be flamed into a lifelong career. In 2016 we designated $13,000 in student travel awards to the Drumheller Conference, where presenting students will compete for $3750 in prizes, including travel support to the main TWS conference. Our very active Student Committee has reached out to most educational institutions in Alberta, establishing liaisons that advertise the Society and encourage students to join. Their student engagement program has been a great success; the 2015 Edmonton conference had a massive student turnout and 2016 promises to be equally impressive. The Drumheller Conference will be attended by students from several institutions coming to us for the first time, as well as students from long-time supporting institutions. Over 40 posters and presentations will be delivered by students. We plan to continue our strong student support program, to ensure that a new generation of wildlife professionals can take up the torch from our hands.

Finally, our fourth pillar – *Professional Recognition* – continues to attest to the hard work of Alberta wildlife professionals, who do very impressive jobs despite often difficult political circumstances. Unsung heroes abound under the Alberta sun, and we'd like to sing their praises. Nominate a well-deserved colleague for these awards, and give us a chance to celebrate the great work that we individually do for the collective benefit of Alberta wildlife.

Our Society has many opportunities ahead of us. We also have many challenges that must be met. As a fully volunteer organization, your dues, sponsorship, conference fees, and donations go directly toward our four main pillars. However, a volunteer's time is very limited, and we are always short of dedicated people. We need students from Alberta institutions to join the student committee and act as liaisons to connect their comrades to ACTWS. We need help from professionals to help us recruit and maintain members, growing the strength of our voice and our arms. We need people to help build a fundraising program, and turn new ideas like the Field Biology Skills Exchange Program into helpful services.

Read about 1st prize presentation

I admit I was little intimidated, all those years ago, by those adept and colourful characters from the early Society. I'm glad I grew out of it. Serving the ACTWS, and getting to know the really excellent people here, has been heartily rewarding. I have learned so much about Alberta wildlife, and about the people who work to understand and protect it. Moreso, I have learned the value of volunteerism and becoming part of the greater community of mankind. I encourage you to take this journey; there are many beautiful wild things – human and otherwise – to see along the way.

C

How we used citizen science to study bird-window collisions

By

Justine Kummer

I recently completed my MSc and I almost made it through without experiencing a bird-window collision first hand. Unfortunately, I was sitting at home a few months back, typing away when I heard that all too familiar thunk. I rushed to the window but there was nothing to be done. The poor bird had died instantly.

Before I started the Birds and Windows Project I was surprised by the magnitude of bird-window collisions. Just in Canada, an estimated 25 million birds are killed from collisions with windows, and it is estimated 90% of this is occurring at our houses. This all led to my work on the Birds and Windows Project. This was designed as a citizen science project where homeowners actively searched for bird-window collision evidence around their home.

The Birds and Windows Project ran from September 2013 to May 2015 and in that time 1315 homeowners registered with the project. While the majority of participants were from Edmonton and the surrounding area I was amazed to see how far the project reached. There were homeowners from the US, UK, various European countries and even homeowners from Australia and India. Since the launch of the project there have been 34114 observations entered from homeowners in Alberta. Of these there were 930 collisions and 102 fatalities.

Of those collisions that could be identified, there were collisions from 53 different species. The most common were Black-capped chickadees, American robins, Dark-eyed juncos, Bohemian waxwings, Cedar waxwings, and Black-billed magpies. These birds are common backyard birds and it was not surprising they were the ones most frequently colliding with the windows of our houses.

One of the main objectives of the project was to identify the factors having the largest effect on collision risk at residential houses. The three factors we identified as having the largest effect were:

- Whether the house was in an urban or rural location, with rural homes more likely to have a collision
- The height of vegetation in the front yard of a house, where houses with vegetation 2 storeys or higher experienced a greater risk of a collision
- Whether or not there was a bird feeder present within 10 m of the house, with collision risk increasing when a bird feeder is present

In looking at the factors affecting bird-window collision risk at houses our results are comparable to other studies. Those factors associated with vegetation and increas-

Continued on next page

Bird-Window collisions continued

ing bird abundance are having the largest effect on collision risk. However, in my experience homeowners are not wanting to reduce vegetation cover and abundance in their yard. The people I met throughout this study love their yards and love having birds in them. The next step is determining how we can protect these birds.

The Birds and Windows Project did not look at the large number of bird-window collision deterrents that are available but as a result of this study I suggest the focus of future studies should shift towards learning how to reduce and eventually eliminate these collisions from occurring at our houses.

Birds and Windows
credit: Steve Hager

Birds and Windows
credit: Annette Gratton

Annual Meeting at a Glance

Drumheller, March 4-6

Friday, 4 March:

Conference Registration: Desk open 2 PM and continues until Saturday morning.

09:00 – 12:00 Field Trip: Bus tour of the Handhills area followed by visit to the Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology. (Bus pickup at the Ramada Inn at 9 AM sharp)

14:00 – 17:00 Session 1a, Room 3

Bat House Building Workshop

Bat ecology presentation followed by hands on building of the perfect bat house.

Presented by: The Alberta Community Bat Program (albertbats.ca)

Facilitator: Cory Olson and Micheal Kelly

14:00 – 17:00 Session 1b, Room 2

Wildlife Diseases Workshop

Learn all about the diseases prevalent in Alberta.

Facilitators: Dr. Margo Pybus and Dr. Bill Samuel.

17:00 – 17:30 Quick dinner on your own.

17:30 – 19:30 Annual General Meeting (Room 3)

19:30 – 21:30 Student Conclave (Room 2)

19:30 – 23:00 Student Mixer/Cash Bar (Room 1)

Continued on next page

Annual Meeting at a Glance Continued....

Saturday 5 March

8:30 – 8:45 Conference Welcome (Dr. Jason Fisher)

8:45 – 12:00 Plenary Session: Evolution in a Rapidly Changing Environment

13:00 – 14:00 **Keynote Speaker: Dr..J. Moore**: *Wild Spaces and Urban Places: making the habitat conservation connection.*

14:00—16:30 Sessions

16:30 – 16:30 Poster Session and Cash Bar

17:30 – 18:30 Banquet Dinner, Silent Auction

18:30 – 20:00 Live Auction, Scholarships, Awards

20:00 – 24:00 Dancing and jamming to the music of DJ Luke England

Sunday 6 March

8:30—12:00 Concurrent sessions

13:00—15:00 Concurrent sessions

Student Presentation and Poster Awards, Closing Remarks

Report from Churchill: A Journey to the Great White North

By
Anjolene Hunt

My adventure began with a trip back to my hometown of Winnipeg, Manitoba, where my fascination with wildlife began 20-some-odd years ago. This time, I was here among over 1500 fellow wildlife professionals from across North America for The Wildlife Society's annual conference. A common theme discussed was the importance of personal experiences in shaping our relationship with wildlife and our environment, and the need to engage others in these experiences.

With these thoughts in mind, I headed out to have an awe-inspiring experience of my own: exploring the northern reaches of Manitoba where boreal forest, tundra, and coastline meet in Churchill. Growing up in an urban centre in the Manitoban prairies, it was hard for me to imagine that a subarctic wilderness existed in this very same province until I saw it with my own eyes. Late October was the perfect time to make the trip. In the height of "polar bear season" the bears were congregating along the coast of Hudson's Bay waiting for the formation of sea ice, which they use to hunt their main prey: seals. Over our four day stay at the Churchill Northern Studies Centre, we saw over 20 polar bears including mothers and cubs, subadults, and large adult males. Giant tundra buggies transported us across Wapusk National Park, where we were able to safely get up close and personal with a lot of sleepy polar bears. The bears were unfazed by the tourist-filled buggies as they contentedly lounged and played with sticks, reminiscent of oversized dogs. Although polar bears were the main attraction, the birders of the group were also thrilled to see snow buntings, willow ptarmigans, a snowy owl, and a white-rumped sandpiper.

Report from Churchill continued...

Helicopter tours offered us a unique landscape-level view of the tundra: a mosaic of coastal ponds, short conifers, and rocky coastline. In addition to the polar bears dotting the coastline, this birds-eye-view allowed us to see some of the less conspicuous animals including an arctic fox bounding past a group of polar bears, and a large bull moose somehow hidden within small patches of boreal forest.

On our last two days we got an unexpected insider's view into the practical side of polar bear conservation. Two polar bear cubs had been orphaned, their mother tragically killed by an accidental cracker shell wound. The cubs, still too young and inexperienced to survive alone in the wild, were swiftly captured by Manitoba conservation officers and taken to the polar bear holding facility. We had the special privilege of touring this facility, where "problem bears" are held temporarily to prevent further negative human-bear interactions, and we learned about other strategies of the Polar Bear Alert program to protect people and polar bears in the Churchill region. We were all relieved when the officers broke the news of the cubs' fate. They would be sent the very next day to their new home: the Leatherdale International Polar Bear Conservation Centre in Winnipeg (see the cubs' story here).

Seeing these unique animals and landscapes, and witnessing conservation in action was more than enough to re-ignite the excitement that can sometimes be dampened by long hours of toiling over a Master's thesis. I returned from Churchill with renewed inspiration and a sense of responsibility to reach out, advocate, and ensure that others get to experience their own memorable moments with wildlife.

Acknowledgements

A big thank you to the Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society for awarding me with funds to attend The Wildlife Society's post-conference field trip to Churchill; and the Churchill Northern Studies Centre for organizing the perfect subarctic adventure.

Anjolene enjoys an unbeatable view of the subarctic tundra from the cockpit of a helicopter

Looking for Feral Boars

By

Ruth Kost

r.kost@usask.ca

Good day,

I am a graduate student at the University of Saskatchewan, working on the distribution and habitat mapping of feral wild boar across Canada. Our research project involves mapping all known locations of feral wild boar in Canada, collected through individual's observations and trail camera photos. I have attached an information sheet regarding my research and a poster with my contact information. Can you please post this information in your office, send it out in your newsletter, or distribute it as you see fit? Any information that individuals may have regarding feral boar observations, kills, or sign is helpful and much appreciated.

The results of the study will be published in peer-reviewed journals and we will be sharing the summary results of this study through email and on our facebook page: www.facebook.com/WildHogWatch

This study has been reviewed by, and received approval through, the Research Ethics Office, University of Saskatchewan.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ruth Kost

M.Sc. Candidate

Department of Animal and Poultry Science & Indigenous Land Management Institute

College of Agriculture, University of Saskatchewan

Distribution and Habitat Mapping of Feral Boar Across Canada

Feral Boar in Canada – Research Needs

The University of Saskatchewan has initiated new research regarding feral boar in Canada. Feral boar are a highly invasive species in North America. Numerous threats and concerns are associated with the presence of feral boar including, but not limited to;

crop, livestock, and structural damage

disease transmission to wildlife, livestock, and humans

environmental degradation

competition with and predation of native wildlife

and threats to human safety

Currently in Canada feral boar distribution and density is unknown. Few management or control strategies exist, and aside from this research, no monitoring or research is being conducted regarding feral boar in Canada.

Project Summary

The main objectives of the study are to:

1) Map feral boar distribution across Canada

2) Map probability of habitat use by feral boar across Canada

Surveys will be designed for, and conducted to, different target populations, such as professionals in the field, insurance corporations, producers, stakeholders, and the general public. With the information collected from these surveys a novel database and base-line map of feral boar distribution in Canada will be produced.

Feral Boar Management

Current feral boar numbers in the United States are estimated at 4-6 million. The annual amount of damage resulting from feral boar is $1.5 billion, with half of that cost resulting directly from crop and livestock damage. Current population distribution and density, as well as economic loss resulting from feral boar in Canada is unknown. This research will provide the critical information required to aid in the development and implementation of long-term management and control strategies both at the federal and provincial level.

How you can help:

Report any information you have regarding feral boar sightings, damage, tracks, or trail cam photos. Information will be used for research purposes only and will be kept confidential.

Report information to:

Ruth Kost – M.Sc. Student, University of Saskatchewan

Phone: (306) 227-0998

Email: r.kost@usask.ca

Conservation Affairs Committee

By

Ken Crutchfield

Committee members include: Mark Boyce, Ken Crutchfield (Chair), Kristie Derkson, Lorne Fitch, Matthew Pyper, Larry Roy

Chairman's Rant – in the November newsletter I offered the following opinion: "... a wildlife professional has a citizenship duty to represent and address wildlife management interests....". Since writing that column piece I have had further reflections on the matter. Three areas stand out as a result of what I and other members of the Conservation Affairs Committee have experienced as a result of representing ACTWS on various external committees. Those areas include: how to become an active representative of the wildlife profession in your community, standing up for open and transparent wildlife management consultation processes, recognizing that decision making processes are value laden and not solely dependent on science and facts.

Represent the wildlife profession – where to begin? Why not ***letters of introduction***. This might appear to be a throwback to other generations, but why not consider sending a letter or better yet visit, elected decision makers at the federal-provincial-municipal levels, to introduce yourself as a wildlife professional and the organization you represent. Offer up your willingness to provide advice and/or ability to link them with people who may be able to help on a wildlife related matter. Strange as these "cold calls" may appear, they have the potential to open doors and enlarge your professional pedigree.

Open and transparent Consultation Practices – While many people are involved in wildlife management activities, it is a legislated fact that the "management" of wildlife rests with the Alberta government. An important element of delivering a management program that affects Alberta residents is the consultation process. The depth and scope of those consultations come and go like a buffeting wind. Regrettably, there is an emerging tendency for the Alberta Government fisheries and wildlife consultation processes to be openly antagonistic to open and transparent consultation practices. No longer is Roberts Rules of Order a template for these consultations, but a new order, the Chatham House Rules is coming into play.

"*When a meeting or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are not free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker, nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.*"(https://www.chathamhouse.org/about/chatham-house-rule)

This is done to supposedly to provide anonymity to the speakers and encourage openness and sharing of information. Unfortunately, from my perspective it runs counter to everything I have understood in my scientific upbringing, i.e., present your case and invite feedback from identified parties. There may be instances where such rules have a place, however, I believe they have no place in the consultation processes ACTWS members are invited to address fisheries and wildlife legislation, policy and program.

Science in decision making processes and providing accountability – Human decision making is value laden. Decisions, more often than not, rely on more than facts. On this overly

Conservation Committee continued

simplistic description a point is to be made for wildlife professionals to recognize their role and the onus of accountability that comes with it. There are countless examples of persons making decisions that do not follow logic and facts. Wildlife professionals are constantly reminded of this when they provide input and learn that science is not the determinant in the decision. This situation challenges the logic of wildlife professionals and others who deliver scientific advice, e.g., doctor, engineer, forester, agrologist, etc. Ultimately decision making and consultation processes involve this combining of scientific practitioners with lay persons who bring a host of non-scientific elements into the process. It has the potential of contributing to protracted discussion and debate that can be very unsettling for all involved. However, open and transparent consultation and decision making practices can also be shown as an important mechanism in delivering on outcomes. Conversely, the options of suppressing divergent opinions, as Canadians recently experienced with the former federal government muzzling scientists, or stepping away and arbitrarily rendering decisions without considering divergent options is troublesome, especially for wildlife management programs. Instead of wildlife professionals being offended or angry that their advice is not always taken, it should be seen as an opportunity for more persuasive accountability. I had the good fortune of working with and reporting to Dr. Peter Larkin when he was Chair to the Science Advisory Committee to the Northern River Basins Study. In particular, I marvelled at his ability to grasp a wide range of scientific subjects and render the emphatic pleadings of the scientific practitioners to heed their advice with a simple question, "So What?". At the end of the day the challenge presented to the wildlife practitioner is to present a case built on science that bridges the lay world with a response to the "So What". To that end, I believe ACTWS and its membership can play a key role in advancing science in open and transparent processes that value discourse and debate versus supporting approaches that appear to make the scientific fact the predominant determinate of what is right. Wildlife management at its best involves managing peoples' expectations that are value laden. Pick a subject matter, e.g., species at risk, predator management, etc. and ACTWS has to be an active advocate for open and transparent processes that better enable all to consider the facts and values being brought to the table.

There are numerous wildlife management issues warranting public discourse, and members are encouraged to step forward as a duty of being citizens and wildlife professionals. ACTWS members are encouraged to ensure wildlife management science is front and center as the public weighs options related to wildlife management.

Continued on nest page

Mystery Photo

What species of bat is this?

Answer on last page

Conservation Committee continued

By

Ken

Crutchfield

Committee attention has been focused on the following subjects.

Service to the Community

Alberta Game Management Advisory Group – ACTWS reps: Larry Roy & Evie Merrill - Alberta Environment and Parks are in the midst of revamping this group and splitting its functions into two. One part would be the Alberta Game Policy Advisory Committee and a second part would deal with Game Management. Government has requested all groups to restrict distribution of the draft Terms of Reference for the Policy Committee until they are finalized. Suffice to say there was much discussion amongst the groups at a December 2nd meeting and a revised TOR is due for discussion on February 3rd. Also identified for discussion at the February 3rd meeting is the Game Management Allocation process. There are no details yet available on the proposed Alberta Game Management Group.

Alberta Endangered Species Conservation Committee – ACTWS reps: Doug Collister – Kirby Smith – http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/species-at-risk/default.aspx The Committee last met in March 2015 because the government has not identified a Committee Chair. The ESCC has been caught up in a government -wide review of committees, Boards, Commissions, Delegated Administrative Organizations etc. Fortunately this has not stopped Species at Risk programs; however it is happening without the benefit of these advisory groups. Despite web based public consultation processes continuing, not all the background information needed to facilitate this consultation prior to ESCC seeing it is being released for public review. One example of this is the proposed discussion of the *Grizzly Bear Recovery Management Plan* scheduled in Cremona, Alberta on February 10th. Information on the recovery plan was not available at the time of this writing.

Alberta Pacific Local Advisory Committee – ACTWS rep - Kristie Derksen –

"The ALPAC Land Advisory Group meets 4x a year and is running along smoothly with the new owners, Japan's Hokuetsu Kishu Paper. No large foreseeable changes in operating plans for ALPAC because of this. ABMI did a presentation on the 5 year update on biodiversity in the ALPAC Forest Management Area at the December 2015 meeting. Total human footprint in the FMA was assessed at 7.5%, forestry being the largest part of this, covering 4.8% and industry sitting at 2.1% of the footprint. Overall, biodiversity intactness within ALPAC's FMA was determined to be 94%. This document is available online at: http://abmi.ca/home/publications/401-450/416.html?mode=detail

Government of Alberta representatives gave updates on the new provincial government, its approach to the forestry industry, and upcoming changes in government structure.

I invite you to send me any questions or concerns you would like brought up at the meetings.

Thank you,"...Kristie

Alberta Fisheries Management Round Table – ACTWS rep – Ken Crutchfield – (http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/fisheries-management/alberta-fisheries-management-roundtable.aspx)

As reported in the last newsletter, the Round Table met on October 17th in Edmonton. Information on that meeting is available through the above link. The Terms of Reference for a revised *Alberta Fisheries Policy Advisory Committee* (http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/fisheries-management/documents/FisheriesPolicyComm-TermsRef-2015.pdf) garnered significant discussion. It was followed up with a survey soliciting formal feedback from Round Table participants. Suffice to say the feedback that some of the participants shared with each other was not overly complimentary on the content and approach of the new policy group. As of this writing the government has not released any summary of the feedback.

North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance – ACTWS rep – Ken Crutchfield – significant work continues and members can gain substantially more information by accessing the NSWA website (https://www.nswa.ab.ca/). On December 17th NSWA released a 304 page soft cover book, Living in the Shed, chronicling historical land use in the 12 sub-watersheds that make up the North Saskatchewan River watershed in Alberta (https://www.nswa.ab.ca/content/living-shed-25). A Headwaters Forum is planned for February 5th in Drayton Valley which is open to the public (https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/nswa-headwaters-forumtickets-14487250757).

Stirring in the Background

Bison Transfer into Banff National Park –
http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/ab/banff/plan/gestion-management/bison.aspx

Bounties –http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife-management/documents/WildlifeMgmtPlan-Wolves-Dec1991.pdf

TWS Policy and Position Statements – members are encouraged to read up on existing policy resources (http://wildlife.org/get-involved/policy/policyresources/) and position statements (http://wildlife.org/position-statements/)

Canada Species at Risk Act –
http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/involved/consultation/default_e.cfm

Alberta Wetland Policy –
http://aep.alberta.ca/water/programs-and-services/wetlands/alberta-wetland-policy-implementation.aspx

Alberta Government is in early stages of updating 1982 Fish and Wildlife Policy for Alberta –
http://esrd.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/fisheries-management/documents/FishWildlifePolicyAlberta-1982A.pdf.

Alberta Grazing Leases (http://www.oag.ab.ca/webfiles/reports/OAG%20March%202015%20Report.pdf) .

ACTWS members are encouraged to come forward and become involved in public wildlife management matters. Opportunities exist to either act as a Chapter representative on a consultative committee and/or becoming involved in the development of Chapter position statements. **Bottom line....**the intent is to demonstrate to the communities that ACTWS members live and work in, that as wildlife professionals we adhere to the notion that good wildlife science is integral to better decision making and sharing that knowledge is important to effective wildlife management.

ACTWS members are encouraged to share their experiences in advocating wildlife management issues by sharing them with the "Conservation Affairs Committee" and/ or the ACTWS newsletter, website, TWITTER, FACEBOOK.

The Alberta Community Bat Program

Bats are in trouble. Between white-nose syndrome (killing millions of bats in Eastern North America), fatalities at wind farms, habitat loss and persecution, bat needs our help.

A group of bat enthusiasts has launched the Alberta Community Bat Program (ACBP). The program is designed to work with the public to provide advice and gather data about maternity (where females raise their pups) roosts. Maternity roosts are essential to the reproductive success and survival of bats, yet we know of only a few such roosts. By reaching out to the public, we hope to engender a better understanding about bats, encourage Citizen Science, and create bat friendly habitats.

Check it out: **www.albertabats.ca**

Don't forget to 'like' us on Facebook—we need to spread the word that bats need help, and public support is the key. We also welcome volunteers!

For more information, contact:

Lisa.wilkinson@gov.ab.ca

This program is supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society,

Masters Opportunity

Masters of Science – Geography – fully funded, in marine spatial ecology and marine conservation. Consider applying on this Master's (MSc) position and get involved in the largest Canadian research network on Marine Biodiversity (CHONe). We are recruiting a student for a fully-funded two-year Masters of Science (MSc) project to conduct research on using GIS and landscape ecology methods to better support the management and monitoring of marine protected areas in Canada. The project is part of the new Canadian Healthy Oceans Network CHONe (Phase 2), allowing the student to be part of a large exciting research network and giving many educational opportunities

https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/24549612/MSc_Seascape_Ecology.pdf

Charlotte Whitney, MSc.

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http://joomla.wildlife.org/Alberta/

Don't forget we are also on Facebook

Upcoming Events

Alberta Ecotrust Environmental Gathering: "Change the Climate"
February 25-27, 2016
Calgary, Alberta
http://albertaecotrust.com/2014/first-annual-environmental-gathering/

Alberta Invasive Species Council 3rd Annual Conference and AGM
March 10, 2016
Lacombe, Alberta
https://www.abinvasives.ca/

Environmental Studies Association of Canada
May 31-March 2, 2016
Calgary, Alberta
http://esac.ca/about/

Alberta Institute of Agrologists
April 19-21, 2016
Banff, Alberta
http://www.albertaagrologists.ca/site/conference

Alberta Society of Professional Biologists
April 5-7, 2016
Calgary, Alberta
https://www.aspb.ab.ca/conference

Footnotes from the Editor

I hope lots of people are able to attend the Annual Meeting—it should be great!

Don't forget to visit www.albertabats.ca. It is a great initiative, and bats

Mystery photo:

Western small-footed bat

Species of Special Concern