

Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society: Brief Overview of First 24 Years

The Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society sprang to life with its charter proclamation in Banff Alberta in April 1989. Even then, the chapter showed strong promise of the collective effort, dedication, and enthusiasm that would serve members well for the years to come. In April 1989 the founding committee members not only navigated the bureaucracy of establishing the Alberta Chapter, they also organized and hosted the Annual Meeting of the Northwest Section TWS in Banff, and drew 61 charter members into the fold. Quite a feat for any neonatal organization. The inaugural success was soon followed with the first issue of the chapter newsletter, the *Alberta Wildlifer*, in November 1989. Thus the stage was set: ACTWS Bylaws, an elected Executive committee, and an ongoing newsletter provided a firm foundation and strong roots from which to grow. The Alberta Chapter is coming up on its 25th anniversary, has strength in numbers, and can boast a bounty of accomplishments. Chapter achievements to date were capped off in 2013/14 with guidance from a comprehensive Strategic Plan that will serve as a renewed foundation on which to build even stronger relationships among wildlife professionals in Alberta and beyond.

The Alberta Chapter remains the glue that binds wildlife professionals together across the broad expanses of the province. Chapter members represent a cross-section of professionals (research scientists, biologists, technicians, managers, policy makers) and students. Members are associated with universities, government agencies, consultants, various private organizations, and industry. Professionals dealing with both terrestrial and aquatic systems are represented. Students remain a primary focus as the chapter offers strength and opportunities to fledgling wildlifers. One of the major chapter achievements was to establish and provide ongoing support for student scholarships. Currently the Chapter has three annual student scholarships funded largely by auction proceeds generated at annual meetings. Additional student incentives are provided through travel grants to institutions that provide mass transit for students to attend annual ACTWS meetings, and student competitions for best oral and best poster presentation at ACTWS conferences.

Recognition of wildlife professionals and their activities also is a mainstay of the chapter. Ongoing awards for Distinguished Service to the profession and Dedicated Service to the Chapter began in 1991 and 1994, respectively. These honours were extended to include recognition for outstanding achievement awards for technical publication, popular publication, and information/outreach activities.

The Alberta Chapter remains strong as it enters its 25th year of life. It is well-founded in science, technology, outreach, and communication. It nourishes the wildlife profession and supports new generations of wildlifers. The age structure, profile, population base, and cumulative accomplishments indicate a viable trajectory for the coming years.

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