



# The Alberta Wildlifer

Official Newsletter of the Alberta Chapter, The Wildlife Society  
Fall 2001, Vol. 12, No. 3  
Editors: Sue Cotterill and Matt Besko

## President's Message

Over the summer I have been reflecting on the roles and benefits of The Wildlife Society as a professional organization. My thoughts were prompted, in part, by travelling between Saskatchewan and Montana, and comparing and contrasting those jurisdictions to the province of Alberta. In that context, I am pleased to volunteer a few thoughts on The Wildlife Society at the parent-society level, the regional (Northwest Section)-level, and the Alberta Chapter (ACTWS) level.

To begin with remarks at the parent-society level, I am sometimes struck by the differences and the similarities between Canada and the United States of America (USA). The two countries commonly share many wildlife species and populations. Factors that limit wildlife populations in one country may well apply, at times, to populations in the adjoining country. Likewise,

land use issues do not respect international borders. Many issues are the same, yet the relative importance of the various land use issues no doubt differs between the USA and Canada. Yet, land use can change very quickly and dramatically in a spatial sense. This spring, for example, I was struck by the dramatic difference in land use at the border between Montana and Alberta as evidenced by satellite imagery. At the regional scale for the prairie ecosystem, cultivation intensified and fragmentation of habitats increased dramatically as one moved south from the border. Yet, in my travels this summer in the International Peace Park composed of Waterton Lakes National Park and Glacier National Park (Montana), it was obvious that landscapes were quite similar; the main difference was in the intensity of human use.

Where our two countries clearly differ is in respect to governments and legal systems. From my perspective, at the parent-society level, a chief function that TWS fills from its headquarters in Bethesda, Maryland, is advocacy on US government initiatives. Indeed, statements about the parent society, when made by Americans, often incorrectly refer to it as the "national" organization (i.e., one nation). To contrast, there is no parallel involvement with advocacy in the Canadian Parliament in Ottawa. Yet at the parent-society level, TWS members, be they Canadian or American, have several wonderful benefits; these include access to high-quality professional publications, opportunities for professional development, accreditation, membership in a broad, professional network, and opportunities to serve.

Some of these benefits and disadvantages apply, at varying degrees, to the Northwest Section level of TWS. The region is vast and diverse, stretching from Oregon to the Northwest Territories. The represented jurisdictions lie in two different nations, and on the Canadian side, include some that are not covered by chapter organizations. From my point of view, one of the key functions served by the NW Section is providing regional representation to the parent society in Bethesda, Maryland. While that supports the function of advocacy

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to USA-government initiatives and issues, again there is no parallel benefit for Canadian members. Probably the greatest benefit that I can see to membership in the Northwest Section at this time is the value added from hosting the section's annual conference (ranging from once every five to nine years). The papers and posters from the broader geographic area add greatly to the appeal and interest of members within our chapter, as well as sparking greater life in the chapter.

At the ACTWS level, membership promotes communication among wildlife professionals at events such as the annual conference, and through media such as the newsletter and website. Moreover, the chapter does its best to promote sound wildlife management in Alberta, through submission of position papers such as the one on game farming, and through communication with the public at forums and other events. From my point of view, though, professional development and peer support are probably the two functions that ACTWS is presently doing the best. These functions are being done substantially, but not exclusively, through the annual conference. We also, quite rightfully, take pride in assisting the emerging generation of wildlife professionals in measures such as the provision of scholarships and attendant fundraising. After thirteen years of existence, though, perhaps it's time to ask the question "Is this primarily what you want from the ACTWS?" By the way, I'm not necessarily agitating for change here; it truly is okay to respond "Yes, ACTWS is delivering what I want." I would very much appreciate feedback to this question and this "President's Message" in a broader sense (e-mail: [arlen.todd@gov.ab.ca](mailto:arlen.todd@gov.ab.ca)).

The bottom line to me is that TWS is a valued and worthwhile professional organization at all levels. Involvement in all three levels has certainly provided me with opportunities for stimulation, growth, and fulfilment over the course of my career. I am also certain that ACTWS materially strengthens wildlife management in Alberta, both directly and indirectly. The stronger our chapter is, the greater that strengthening will be. For that reason, I am personally very pleased that ACTWS, along with the Manitoba chapter, has submitted a bid to host the parent society's annual conference in the fall of 2004 (kudos to Elston Dzus for his capable leadership on that bid). I believe that hosting the conference would be very good for our chapter as well as for our profile in the parent society, and genuinely hope that the bid will be successful. Hosting that conference, though, would almost certainly divert attention from other areas. As President-elect Jack Nolan is learning, organizing a chapter-level conference is a large and complex undertaking. TWS advises against having a chapter-level conference in the same year that the parent society conference is hosted. Advocacy on conservation issues, administering the annual scholarships, reviewing and renewing memberships, keeping the books, finding an annual roster of candidates for the executive, preparing the "Alberta Wildlifer", maintaining the ACTWS website, seeking and selecting award winners, updating the "Executive Guide", and problem-solving are many of the ongoing duties that require time, attention and skill on behalf of volunteers for the Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society. If you are, or have been one of those volunteers, you have my personal "Thank You"! If you haven't been a volunteer so far, please consider getting involved. Either way, thanks for being a member and supporting your professional society in that way.

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*Arlen Todd, President*

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## Chapter News

### Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society – Minutes of Annual Business Meeting – March 4, 2001, Banff Park Lodge

Minutes submitted by: David McKinnon  
(Secretary/Treasurer)

- *Meeting called to order by President – Elston Dzus at 10:28 a.m.*
- 43 people in attendance.
- Agenda was approved.
- Conference contributors were acknowledged.
- Motion to adopt minutes of 2000 Annual Business meeting. I. Ross/ E. Bruns. Carried.
- Dave McKinnon presented the financial statement for 1999 with the report of the special audit committee. Motion to accept. J. Nolan/A. Todd. Carried.
- Dave McKinnon presented the audited statement for 2000. Motion to accept with correction to date on audit statement. M. Dorrance/L. Roy. Carried.
- Arlen Todd gave a brief review of the 2001 conference. Early estimates indicated a financial success as well, in large part to the generous grant by AENV. The quality of presentations was very high and there was an excellent student presence and participation.
- The written reports of Executive and Committee chairs were accepted with the following discussion.
- Scholarships: Bill Glasgow suggested our return on investment would be better in a money market fund rather than GICs. It was noted by more than one in attendance that this would require a change to our bylaws.
- Unwritten Reports were presented.
- Communications: Elston commended Troy Sorenson and Dave Hobson for their contributions. Troy is stepping down as editor to focus on webmaster duties. The search for a new editor is on.
- Membership: 243 members in 2000. Noted was the addition of new members including several from Canmore and Banff.
- Awards: Eldon is seeking a successor as Chair. He also urged members to nominate Rowan and Dedicated Service candidates early.
- Motion to accept all reports. L. Roy/B. Glasgow. Carried.
- *10:50 New Business*
- Request for bid for 2004 TWS Conference.
- Elston Dzus gave a presentation followed by NWS representative to the TWS, Dan Edge, giving a review of considerations and timelines. The following discussion took place with Dan and Elston answering questions.
- D. Prescott: what are the expected gains of the TWS? A: Parent society tries to break even. There is a 4 FTE staff commitment from Bethesda. J. Nolan: The \$10,000 US honorarium doesn't go into our account it will likely be spent. A: Up to chapter how it will spend this money. I. Ross: Is this a volunteer effort or can we hire someone? A: Voluntary but requires commitment and experience. D. Prescott: Why 2004? AB Centenary in 2005 may be a better year. A: Vermont in 2003, TWS was soliciting NWS and SES for 2004. M. Pybus: From a fundraising standpoint centenary money may be available for 2005. A: For a 5-day conference the fundraising experience has been \$70-120K US by state, federal and industry. Follow-up M. Pybus: What section support? A: None. Solely a chapter project.
- A. Todd spoke in favor of submitting a bid. A wonderful potential opportunity, delighted to be part of organizing group. Noted that putting in a bid may be strategic and that it may take time to be accepted.
- Motion to put in bid for 2004 TWS Conference. A. Todd/R. Bjorge. Discussion:
- Are other chapters submitting a bid? A: AK and ID will be discussing at their AGMs. MT lacks large enough facilities.
- Possibility for joint AB/MT bid? A: Go in with eyes open for sharing responsibilities with a joint committee. E. Dzus: Possibility of an AB/MB Chapter all-Canadian bid.
- K. Crutchfield: Is there possibility of hiring contractor? E.Dzus: Dollars required to do that. Dan Edge: TWS provides a 'cookbook' with each subcommittee task outlined. TWS has discussed contracting the conference because there are really only 10 or 20 Chapters that are strong enough to put

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it on. A. Todd: Strong organizational support will be required but this is doable by our chapter. E. Dzus: M. Barrett is supportive of bringing conference to AB. E. Merrill: At a future point in the bid we may want to consider joint hosting. E. Dzus: Conversations with MB folks to this point were based on an 80/20 split in duties. A. Todd: MB is in a different section. Logistically MT may be a better pairing? B. Glasgow: Caution. We should canvas membership to see if enough people are willing to serve. E. Dzus: A core of 14 subcommittee chairs is required. Onsite commitment is less and easier to get.

- A show of hands was asked for those willing to stand for the core committee. There were 14.
- Question was called. Motion carried with 1 opposed. ACTION: Those interested in committee will submit names to the executive.
- *11:30 Executive Manual* – compiled by Margo Pybus and Beth MacCallum will be posted to web site. Beth described the process that went into completing this useful reference. It will facilitate continuity and avoid repetition by successive executive boards. Beth thanked contributors.
- *ACTWS Program Direction*. Elston continued with a presentation on future direction for the ACTWS which included increasing provincial involvement with other groups and student chapters and taking a greater role in section and parent society. Asked if there were any areas membership would like to see addressed? From floor: Should we publish proceedings of meetings? From an academic standpoint this was not favourable. Publish abstracts? Possible with disclaimers. W. Bessie: Suggested involvement with standards and certification and training programs. Dan Edge interjected at this point that the ACTWS seems to be reaching the Strategic Plan stage of development and offered that the TWS can assist chapters in this area. Elston requested a motion to build a strategic plan. M.Dorrance/I. Ross. Carried. ACTION: Elston Dzus to continue work on plan.
- *11:45 Election Results* (newly elected in bold)
- Past-president: Elston Dzus
- President: Arlen Todd
- President-elect: Jack Nolan
- Secretary/treasurer: Dave McKinnon

- Directors: Anne Hubbs, Blair Rippin, Dave Prescott, Evelyn Merrill
- Motion to destroy ballots. L. Roy/B. Glasgow. Carried.
- Closing Remarks. Mike Dorrance led thanks to Arlen for outstanding organization.

*11:47 Meeting adjourned*

## **The Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society is seeking Nominations for the following two awards:**

### ***William Rowan Distinguished Service Award***

The William Rowan Distinguished Service Award is presented to an Alberta wildlife biologist who has made outstanding contributions to the management and conservation of wildlife and their habitats. These contributions might involve excellence in research, teaching, public allocation (hunting, non-consumptive use), habitat protection and development, land use planning, impact assessment, endangered species management, work in professional associations or any other area of the wildlife management profession.

The awards committee is asking for nominations from the membership for this prestigious award. A nomination involves a letter of support from a Chapter member along with the candidate's curriculum vitae/resume. The letter should explain the value of the nominee's contributions in the areas outlined above.

### ***Dedicated Service Award***

The Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society Dedicated Service Award is granted to an ACTWS member in recognition of exceptional individual dedication to the Chapter and Chapter activities. The awards committee is asking for nominations for this award.

### **Nominations**

Please submit your nominations for both these awards to:

Harry Stelfox

Fish and Wildlife Division

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development

2nd Fl. 9920-108<sup>th</sup> St., Edmonton

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Phone: (780)427-2044, Fax (780)422-9557

E-mail: [harry.stelfox@gov.ab.ca](mailto:harry.stelfox@gov.ab.ca)

**The Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society Annual Meeting - Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel - March 7, 8, 9, 2002**

**Date:** March 7-9, 2002 (Thursday evening, Friday, Saturday).

**Location:** Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel, 10155 - 105 Street, Edmonton, AB, T5J 1E2, Phone: (780) 423-4811.

**Accommodation:** Special Conference Room Rates at the Coast Edmonton Plaza are: Student rooms - \$78, Superior rooms - \$88, Premium rooms - \$98, single or double occupancy, additional person add \$10. Student ID must be presented to acquire \$78 student room rate. Deadline for reserving rooms is: February 1, 2002. Coast Edmonton Plaza central toll-free number for room reservations: 1-800-663-1144.

We have reserved a block of rooms for the meeting, so when you call to reserve rooms, please tell the reservation clerk at the Coast Edmonton Plaza that you are part of the Wildlife Society meeting group. This will assure you of the special group room rate.

**Plenary session:** Friday morning – “Challenges and Opportunities for Managing Alberta's Riparian-Wetland Systems”.

**Registration:** at the Conference, Thursday night and Friday.

**Auction:** Contact Len Peleshok, Email: [Len@arc.ab.ca](mailto:Len@arc.ab.ca), Phone 780/632-8312

**Banquet:** No Banquet, Lunch provided on Friday, included in registration fee.

**Alberta Chapter Awards Luncheon:** Saturday, included in registration fee:

**Call for Contributed Papers and Poster Papers:** Contact Jim Schieck, Program Chair, Alberta Research Council, PO Box 4000, Vegreville, AB, T9C 1T4, E-mail: [Jims@arc.ab.ca](mailto:Jims@arc.ab.ca), Phone (780) 632-8306.

**Wildlife Photo Contest:** Contact Troy Sorensen, E-mail: [Troy.Sorensen@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Troy.Sorensen@gov.ab.ca), Phone (780) 778-7116.

**Corporate Donations:** Contact Bob Wynes, E-mail: [bwynes@telusplanet.net](mailto:bwynes@telusplanet.net), Phone (780) 453-4109.

## Call For Papers

**2002 Annual Conference and Meeting  
Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society  
March 7-9, 2002, Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel,  
10155 – 105 Street, Edmonton, AB**

You are invited to submit abstracts for presentation at any of the contributed papers sessions at the 2002 meeting to be held in Edmonton, Alberta during March 7-9, 2002.

Presentations will be fifteen minutes in length, plus five minutes for questions and discussion (total of twenty minutes). You are also invited to submit abstracts for poster presentations. Abstracts will be printed in the program booklet as they are received.

Please include the following in your submission:

1. Abstract Submittal Form (see end of newsletter, or available at: <http://www.albertadirectory.net/actws/>).
2. Digital and hard copy of biosketch of presenter.
3. Lead author name, affiliation, mailing address, phone numbers, and e-mail address.
4. Names and affiliations of additional authors.
5. Digital and hard copy of abstract. You must use the following guidelines; an example is provided.

Submit abstract and associated information (e-mail preferred) by January 11, 2002 to:

Jim Schieck

Forest Resources,

Alberta Research Council

Vegreville, Alberta T9C 1T4

Phone: (780) 632-8306

Fax: (780) 632-8379

E-mail: [jims@arc.ab.ca](mailto:jims@arc.ab.ca)

Abstracts will be acknowledged within one week, and authors will be advised of the final decision on their abstract (and the session in which it will be given) by February 15, 2002.

Please Note: The abstract that you submit will be the FINAL that is printed for the paper session—changes will not be possible.

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## Abstract Guidelines

- Use Microsoft Word 97 or WordPerfect (former strongly preferred).
- Hard copies of abstracts must be typed single-spaced within a 10 X 16 cm space. Use a one-line space between the title and the text block.
- No hard returns within a paragraph.
- E-mail Access (preferred): Submit the abstract, other required information, and abstract submittal form by e-mail. You will be notified of the receipt of your abstract within one week.
- Abstract should be a distillation of the purpose, methods, results and conclusions, and should not exceed 250 words.
- Geographical location of the work should appear in the abstract or title.

### Format example (measures 10 X 16 cm)

Foruew, E. Z. and U.R. Krasey. A NEW WAY TO CONDUCT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT IN THE BOREAL FORESTS OF ALBERTA. Wildlife Science Group, Alberta Fish and Wildlife Division, #625 Ivory Towers, Edmonton, AB T6J 1E9 and Department of Regional Perspectives, Athabasca University, Athabasca, AB T4T 7K3.

Begin text here. This is where you tell us what you are going to tell us.....

## Membership Notice

It's time again for the annual reminder to renew your membership in the Alberta Chapter. At the close of 2000 we had 240 members in good standing. At the mid-point of 2001 we have less than 170 members in good standing.

Remember that memberships are up for renewal January 1. If you receive a hardcopy of this newsletter by courier or Canada Post you will see a renewal date on the bottom of your mailing label. This is the year your renewal is due. For example, 2002 means you are in good standing until January 2002. If you see 2001, your membership is past due and a renewal form has been included with your newsletter. Members not in good standing when the next newsletter comes out will be dropped from the mailing list.

For those of you who receive electronic notification that the newsletter is posted on the web site, within a few

days you will receive an e-mail reminder to renew. If you do not receive a notice you are in good standing.

Several regular members have found it practical for them to renew for up to five years.

If you would like to know when your membership expires, or if you have any other questions, you can contact the secretary/treasurer at the address below.

David McKinnon

Alberta Research Council

Bag 4000

Vegreville, AB T9C 1T4

E-mail: [dave@arc.ab.ca](mailto:dave@arc.ab.ca)

Ph: (780) 632-8311

## Einarson Award Recipient

*(presented at ACTWS 2001 Annual General Meeting)*

The recipient of the 2001 Arthur S. Einarsen Award, Dr. John A. Crawford, has been a very active member of The Wildlife Society, a productive researcher, and a distinguished educator in the field of Wildlife Ecology in the Pacific Northwest for over 25 years.

He has been involved with The Wildlife Society since 1972. During this time, his service to the Society has been varied and extensive for the Oregon State University Preprofessional Chapter, the Oregon Chapter, and the national organization. He served as advisor to the OSU Preprofessional Chapter for 5 years. For the Oregon Chapter, he has served as a session chair at numerous meetings, chaired or was the member of 3 committees, served on the Chapter Board, and has been Secretary/Treasurer, President-Elect and President. He has served on National committees, reviewed numerous submissions to TWS publications, was the Index Editor for The Wildlife Society Bulletin, and was an Associate Editor for The Journal of Wildlife Management.

Dr. Crawford has built an upland game bird research program that has engendered the respect and admiration of agency, academic, and private industry biologists throughout the western United States. He has made significant contributions to our understanding of the ecology and management of numerous upland species with the publication of over 80 manuscripts in refereed journals, numerous major reports and other publications, and over 40 papers presented at scientific meetings. His

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work on sage grouse spans over a decade and has resulted in the publication of 14 papers in refereed publications, and the completion of 10 Master's theses and 1 Doctoral thesis as of July 2000. This research deals with habitat ecology and management applicable to vast tracts of western rangeland and may well provide a basis for the recovery of sage grouse populations throughout the west. The importance of his work is widely recognized as evidenced by his recent selection to the Board of Directors of the North American Grouse Partnership. A recent "Award of Excellence" from the Order of the Antelope further acknowledged his contributions.

As an educator, Dr. Crawford has inspired thousands of undergraduates, as well as directing the programs of 37 Masters and 7 PhD candidates during his tenure at Oregon State University. He has received superior reviews from students taking his courses and has a reputation (both within and outside the Department) for having high quality standards and a strong code of ethics. These standards have provided inspiration and a strong sense of accomplishment to many students. He challenges students to learn the limits of their capabilities and to develop mental discipline. Dr. Crawford teaches his students more than wildlife biology, he teaches them how to be successful.

The Einarsen Award is the Northwest Section's highest award and is to be awarded to an outstanding individual in the wildlife profession. Dr. John Crawford certainly meets that criterion.



*Dan Edge (left) accepts the Einarsen Award from John Connelly, past-president of the NW section, on behalf of Dr. John Crawford*

## **Conservation Issues**

### **Meridian Dam Proposal**

The one billion dollar Meridian Dam is proposed to be constructed at the Alberta-Saskatchewan border on the South Saskatchewan River. Alberta's Environment Minister, the Hon. Lorne Taylor, is pushing forward with a feasibility study. Canadian Wildlife Service biologist Gary Trottier says the dam would be a disaster for wildlife. The 100 km long reservoir area would destroy some of the most important wildlife habitat in southeastern Alberta, including key portions of a National Wildlife Area and an Ecological Reserve.

### **Background**

The South Saskatchewan River valley is a nationally significant wildlife area, home to several species of rare or endangered fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals and plants, important wintering habitat for deer, nesting areas for several birds of prey, and overwintering snake dens. It contains one of the deepest canyons on the Canadian prairies. Local irrigation farmers want to use the dam to irrigate up to 160,000 hectares in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Downstream residents are concerned about the negative effect on the availability of water in Lake Diefenbaker. Alberta's new Minister of the Environment has publicly expressed support for the dam.

### **What you can do:**

Please call or write Alberta's Premier and ask that feasibility studies be stopped. Tell him that the area is too important for wildlife to even consider constructing an on-stream dam. Express concern that the Minister responsible for protecting the environment is proposing to destroy a National Wildlife Area with this dam. Only the Environment Minister is publicly supporting the dam - it does not have Cabinet backing. Letters and phone calls will alert the Premier to the public concern and convince Cabinet not to proceed any further with this highly damaging project.

**Tactics:** who you should contact with your concerns

Hon. Ralph Klein

Premier, Province of Alberta

Legislature Office, #307, 10800 - 97 Avenue

Edmonton AB T5K 2B6 Canada

Web Site: <http://www.gov.ab.ca/premier>

E-mail: [premier@gov.ab.ca](mailto:premier@gov.ab.ca)

Phone: (780) 427-1349

Fax: (780) 420-6952

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(see ACTWS letter to Premier Klein regarding the project in the Letters to the Editor Section)

## Letters to Editor

### ACTWS Letter to Premier Klein regarding the Meridian Dam Project Proposal

Hon. Ralph Klein  
Premier, Province of Alberta  
Legislature Office  
#307, 10800 - 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Mr. Klein:

The Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society is a non-profit organization of professionals and students in the field of wildlife biology and management. ACTWS is dedicated to wise stewardship of natural resources. Where possible, the Chapter will advise Albertans, the government and industry about the value of wildlife and ecosystems and the various land use practices that affect our natural heritage.

As you are aware, there is a proposal to construct a major dam on the South Saskatchewan River. If completed, the Meridian Dam would create a 100 km long reservoir, extending from the Saskatchewan border to near Medicine Hat. The specific purpose of this project has not been made clear, but we understand that it could be used for irrigation, power generation or recreation. Regardless of the project's purpose, we wish to voice our strong concern that this initiative will have devastating and irreversible effects on the wildlife resources of the region.

The area to be affected by the Meridian Dam is one of the largest, relatively pristine areas of mixed-grass prairie left in Alberta. The exceptional value of this area to wildlife has been well documented in biophysical inventories conducted by the Canadian Wildlife Service at Canadian Forces Bases Suffield, an area that will be directly impacted by the development. From this work, and other studies in the area, it is well known that the region supports many species of wildlife (including plants) that are endangered, threatened or otherwise at risk in Alberta. Many of these species rely on riparian habitats along the river. Although these habitats comprise less than 1% of the uplands in the area, they are known to contain about 80% of the local avian

diversity. Furthermore, riparian habitats are critical wintering and denning sites for a wide range of wildlife. The area supports one of the highest concentrations of Prairie Rattlesnakes in Canada, and the entire local population winters in hibernacula along the river. The existing riparian areas would be completely eradicated by the water impoundment, resulting in an irreversible loss of much of the provincial population of this imperilled species.

Calculations by the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Canadian military show that the lake behind the Meridian Dam will consume up to 50 km<sup>2</sup> of upland habitat on Canadian Forces Base Suffield, and up to 13 km<sup>2</sup> of a proposed National Wildlife Area. Large expanses of upland will also be lost both upstream and downstream of the Suffield block. However, the impacts of the Meridian project extend well beyond the area flooded by the new reservoir. There will be extensive destruction of cottonwood forests downstream from the dam, due to alteration of hydrological regimes. These habitats are relatively rare in southern Alberta, and support an extraordinary diversity of organisms. If the impoundment is used for irrigation, up to 160,000 hectares of native upland could be converted to non-native vegetation. The cumulative impacts of upland and riparian alteration on local flora and fauna will be devastating and irreversible, and cannot be justified based on the questionable benefit of the Meridian dam to Albertans.

The Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society appeals directly to you and your government to recognize the enormous natural values of the area that will be irreversibly destroyed if the project proceeds. We ask you to assure our membership that the current feasibility study will be terminated, and any plans to proceed with the Meridian Dam project are withdrawn.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely yours,

*David R. C. Prescott, Ph.D.*

*Conservation Committee Chairman*

cc: Mike Cardinal  
Lorne Taylor  
Arlen Todd  
Dave McKinnon

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## Thank-You from Don Thomas

I was pleased, honored, and humbled to receive the *William Rowan Distinguished Service Award* in 2001. My wife and I were in Arizona during a winter trip around the southern US when I received word about the award via 'hot mail.' It was the very day that it was presented by Jack Nolan and received on my behalf by Awards Chairman Eldon Bruns. I thank them, the Awards Committee, and all chapter members for the award. It is special because it comes from peers in the wildlife profession. It is an attractive award and one that I will proudly hang on the wall along with the paintings of caribou, deer, and some token ducks and loons.

A downside to adopting the habits of snowbirds and peregrine falcons is missing the annual meetings of the Alberta Chapter. I can only hope that the timing of the meetings can be advanced to the last week of March. I have fond memories of my association with the Alberta Chapter and the Northwest Section as President in 1980/81. In 1988, a few Albertans attending a Northwest Section meeting in Spokane entertained the idea of an Alberta Chapter. Then Bill Glasgow, Bill Samuel, Morley Barrett, and Mike Dorrance started the ball rolling and the first meeting of the Alberta Chapter was held in 1990 in Red Deer. The annual meetings have been a fine way to meet other wildlifers in the province and to learn about results of their studies.

The vitality of the wildlife profession in Alberta is considerably abetted by the work of the Alberta Chapter. Keep the chapter strong with your active participation!

Sincerely,

*Don Thomas*

## Chronic Wasting Disease - An Open Letter to All Deer and Elk Hunters

For the past few years, hunters in Alberta have been asked to voluntarily submit the heads of adult elk, mule deer, and white-tailed deer killed during the fall seasons. This program continues and you are asked to yet again drop off the heads of hunter-killed adult deer and elk at any office of the Alberta Fish and Wildlife Division. We are using these heads, or rather brain samples from these heads, to look for evidence of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). To date we have looked at nearly 1000 heads of wild deer and elk and have not found CWD. This short article provides an update of recent events as well as a brief overview of the disease and the management concerns associated with it. Additional information is available on the Fish and Wildlife *hunting*

website at [www.gov.ab.ca/env/fw/hunting/index.html](http://www.gov.ab.ca/env/fw/hunting/index.html) or at any Fish and Wildlife office.

Chronic Wasting Disease is a prion disease that can affect some members of the deer family (Cervidae). Prions are abnormal proteins that, in the case of CWD, are associated with changes in the brain tissue that result in damage to nerve cells, changes in behaviour, loss of weight, and eventually death of infected animals. Although no one knows exactly how CWD passes from one individual to another, we do know that it can be transferred to other cervids by direct contact with an infected individual or by contact with contaminated surfaces. Fortunately CWD is not known to infect humans or livestock. In the wild, CWD does not appear to be highly infectious and affected populations do not show detectable declines over the short term. However, theoretical models based on information gathered in Colorado suggest that over the long term (40-50 years), localized mule deer populations may decrease.

To date, CWD has been identified in free-ranging mule deer, whitetails, and elk in a small area where Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska butt up against each other. It is more common in mule deer. Unfortunately, animals from this area were introduced onto game farms in the U.S. in the 1980s. It is now apparent that CWD also was introduced and was later unknowingly transferred to other farms. The disease has been identified in captive elk on game farms in a number of states as well as in Saskatchewan. Alberta has been monitoring farmed elk and deer since 1996 and has not found any evidence of CWD in the >1500 heads examined.

You may have heard that CWD was recently confirmed in two wild mule deer shot in Saskatchewan but close to the Alberta/Saskatchewan border. This causes us great concern in Alberta. In order to improve our surveillance data from the border region and to provide a basis on which we could design future management programs for the area, Alberta Fish and Wildlife actively collected mule deer and whitetails in a corridor from the North Saskatchewan River south to Provost. The program focused on adults; however, a few short yearlings also were collected. Unfortunately we had no choice but to do this in the spring when deer were still accessible and before spring farming activities were underway. Using Fish and Wildlife staff, we shot 241 deer and, in cooperation with Alberta Agriculture, Food, and Rural Development, tested the brains of all of the adults. *All of the 190 heads were negative.* We also gathered important forensic and reproductive information that will be applied to other on-going wildlife management programs.

Although the data collected during the spring are encouraging, we are still concerned about CWD being transferred from Saskatchewan. Our neighbours to the east, in conjunction with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, are working hard to identify and eliminate CWD in wild deer and captive elk. However, we need to remain vigilant that it does not cross the border into Alberta. One way to do this is to closely monitor what is happening in deer and elk along the border.

*We encourage any hunter who kills an adult deer or elk in WMUs 234, 236, or 256 to collect the head and submit it to a Fish and Wildlife office. Preferably the heads should be bagged in plastic and frozen as soon as possible. In order to use the head we must receive information identifying the species, sex, date of kill, WMU, and specific location of the kill. Also, please include your WIN number! Further information is available from any Fish and Wildlife office.*

Thanks again to all those who have submitted heads in the past and may do so in the future.

*M.J. Pybus, PhD*

*Wildlife Disease Specialist*

*Alberta Fish and Wildlife Division*

## Conservation Project Requests

### Do you know of any active Great Horned Owl nests and roosts?

**Alberta Fish and Wildlife and the Alberta Conservation Association are seeking your assistance.**

One of the projects being undertaken this year by the Alberta Fish and Wildlife and the Alberta Conservation Association is a study of the distribution of rare small mammals in southern and central Alberta. The approach used is to find the nests and the roosts of Great Horned Owls and collect pellets that have been coughed up by the birds.

Great Horned Owls nest in trees and usually roost in old buildings. Pellets are the indigestible bones and fur that remain after the owl has consumed its prey. Because Great Horned Owls are major predators of small mammals, the analysis of their pellets provides information of the distribution of these species in Alberta.

An excellent sample of pellets was collected in the Prairie and Bow Regions last year. This year, efforts are concentrated on the Parkland Region (mainly east of

Highway 2). However, the Parkland Region is far more challenging and we could use your help. If you know of any active Great Horned Owl nests, or are aware of any old buildings where they have been roosting, please contact either:

Lance Engley (Alberta Conservation Association, Edmonton)

Ph: (780) 427-1248; E-mail: [lance.engley@gov.ab.ca](mailto:lance.engley@gov.ab.ca)

OR

Dave Prescott (Alberta Fish and Wildlife Division, Red Deer)

Ph: (403) 340-4309; E-mail: [dave.prescott@gov.ab.ca](mailto:dave.prescott@gov.ab.ca)

## Help Survey Alberta's Odonates (Dragonflies and Damselflies)

### Why odonates, you ask?

Although the word "dragonfly" conjures up images of an acrobatic flying insect, odonates are primarily aquatic rather than terrestrial invertebrates. Depending on the species, odonates live under the water surface as aquatic larvae for months to years, while they exist as the familiar flying adults for only a matter of weeks. As aquatic larvae, odonates are among the top predators in a wetland system, as well as an important prey item for other wetland obligates (i.e. waterfowl, shorebirds, fish, amphibians). This trophic position, in addition to their longevity, abundance, and well-known taxonomy, makes odonates an excellent candidate as a surrogate species for conservation managers.



*Leucorrhinia borealis (Boreal Whiteface)*

*Photo taken by Christine Rice*

The basic idea is this: although odonates are important to survey for their own right, information on the odonate

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fauna may also provide insight into the aquatic invertebrate community and habitat quality of a wetland.

Survey efforts for odonates throughout the province have primarily been scattered and inconsistent. Multi-year surveys are needed from the same area in order to detect trends in population, as well as more surveys from the boreal and extreme southern regions of Alberta in order to better delineate species' distributions and inventory our provincial odonate fauna.

No provincial repository exists for general odonate data, however, the Alberta Natural Heritage and Information Centre (ANHIC) is interested in records for any of their 25 tracked odonate species (see website below). If you are surveying within a protected area then park staff or naturalists (i.e. "Friends of..." clubs) may be interested lists. In addition, I am personally interested in any annual species lists from different locations throughout the province. Please do not hesitate to contact me regarding your odonate records, or for further information on beginning your own odonate survey.

#### **Contact Information:**

Christine Rice, M.Sc. Candidate

Department of Renewable Resources

University of Alberta

751 General Services Building

Edmonton, AB, T6G 2H1

Ph: (780) 492-9084

E-mail: [vermivorus@hotmail.com](mailto:vermivorus@hotmail.com)

Website:

<http://www.ualberta.ca/~jhornung/dragonfly.htm>

ANHIC's tracked odonate species:

<http://www.gov.ab.ca/env/parks/anhic/odotrak.html>

#### **Survey Guidelines**

##### **Timetable:**

Odonate diversity and abundance are highest in Alberta from mid-July to mid-August. If surveys can only be conducted for a limited time over the summer, it is recommended that they occur during this time. However, the species composition of the odonate fauna changes over the summer, and surveys that occur in June and into September also provide valuable occurrence records.

#### **Equipment:**

You will need an aerial insect net, a 10 to 20-power hand lens, and some information on how to identify what you have caught. A provincial checklist and very general key is available from my website above. Species level identifications are required in order to make any scientific inferences, however information must be drawn from taxonomic references dealing with all of North America as no provincial guide yet exists (please contact me for further info).

#### **Survey Protocol:**

Since odonates are aquatic obligates the easiest place to find them is at the waters edge, be it a wetland, lake, stream, or river. Surveys should occur on warm (i.e. >15 C), low wind (i.e. <Beaufort 4) days. Choose *a priori* if you are going to sample an entire wetland site or only a portion of it. Surveying odonates in a repeatable, measurable way involves walking a transect line ( $\geq 200$  m) every time a census is done. The transect will likely be a serpentine shape that runs parallel to the shoreline and zigzags its way through the different bands of vegetation within the aquatic/terrestrial interface. For example, if you have decided on a 200 m section of shoreline then begin by walking 200 m at the waters edge, then turn around and walk the same 200 m but this time in the emergent vegetation just behind the open water, and so on until you have surveyed the dry upland vegetation zone.

The transect should take no more than two hours to walk (at a very slow pace), and should coincide with places that odonates frequent. High density odonate locations are primarily at the aquatic/terrestrial interface, but other ecotypes should be included to a lesser degree. Also make certain that the areas you select for transects have enough room for you to swing a net. Open lanes in a wooded habitat are good.

Small wetlands (i.e. sites that are completely surrounded by drift fence) should be sampled by a transect that includes the whole wetland. If you have decided to sample a portion of a wetland make certain to mark the area. Also try to have your transect representative of the micro-habitats present at the wetland or in your area. For example, if you have sedges, cattail, and eroding banks at site then include all of these types of micro-habitats in your transect, or if you have open areas like clear cuts or meadows dominating the landscape – sample those too.

The final words on choosing a transect: don't be too critical. Choose a nice 'stroll'. Dragonflies are mobile beasts and can come to you to a certain extent – just get

close enough. Also, make your transect manageable. A short odonate transect will entice you to complete it. If you want to do extra, there is room for that, just make sure the transect is sampled.

#### Data

Record the area you have surveyed, the time at the start and end of your survey, and the odonates you captured (preferably identified to species) or spotted (identified to the lowest taxa level possible). Voucher specimens will be necessary in order to confirm identifications, range extensions, or new provincial records.

#### Specifics:

- try to visit the transect at least once a week.
- record: date, time start and time stop, observer, species, teneral/adult, breeding evidence (tandem, wheel, ovipositing, just presence absence data, with any type of breeding information).
- make sure to record time spent looking so comparisons can be made (e.g., species found).

#### Collecting Protocol:

- put into glassine envelope.
- record: date, location, species (or closest taxa), and collectors name.
- snip corner of envelope (to allow drainage) and submerge glassine envelope with ode inside in jar of acetone for 8-12 hours (preserves colouration, but if left too long the sample will become very brittle).
- remove envelope and allow to dry on paper towel.
- place into Tupperware container.



*Anax junius* - the Green Darner, largest provincial odonate.  
Photo taken by Christine Rice

## Parent Society News

### 2002 Annual Northwest Section and Washington Chapter Meeting and Workshops

**Hosted by:** The Washington Chapter of The Wildlife Society

**Date:** April 16-19, 2002 (see schedule below)

**Location:** Spokane, WA

#### "Adapting to a Changing Society: The Future of Wildlife Research and Management"

The 2002 meeting will be held at the Doubletree Hotel Spokane Valley, in beautiful Spokane, WA. Mark it on your calendar and make room reservations now!!

**Theme:** This year's session will focus on the future of wildlife management and research in two primary areas:

1. How is our changing society affecting the future of our profession? What can we do to adapt to those changes and even to take advantage of them to improve wildlife management and research?
2. What are the latest tools for research and management? What do we see as the future of those tools as well as some of our old ones?

Changes in societal values, demographics and wealth are dramatically affecting how the public views and uses wildlife, and how they view wildlife management and managers. How the profession adapts (or fails to adapt) to those changes will largely determine the future of the profession. This session promises to focus on innovative ways to respond to changes now and in the future. In addition to the usual topics reporting on the latest research and management, the 2002 session will focus on:

- tapping into increasing societal wealth for funding;
- communication skills and tools;
- working with "opposition" groups to avoid ballot initiatives and other actions that may adversely affect wildlife management and research;
- understanding what our publics want and being responsive to them;

- the latest in management and research tools and their future;
- the future of older tools in light of changing societal values;
- approaches to working with the public to preserve those older tools.

**Workshops** are yet to be finalized but likely topics include:

- Use of DNA in wildlife research and management;
- Managing Human/Wildlife Conflicts: an emphasis on non-lethal methods of animal damage control;
- Communication skills and tools for wildlife biologists.

Watch the Washington Chapter website (below) for more details as they're finalized.

**Schedule** is tentatively as follows:

Tuesday	April 16	PM	Workshops
Wednesday	April 17	AM	Workshops
			General Registration
		PM	Plenary Session
		eve	Social
Thursday	April 18	AM	Concurrent Sessions
		PM	Concurrent Sessions
		eve	Banquet
Friday	April 19	AM	Concurrent Sessions
		PM	Field Trips

**Lodging.** The Doubletree Hotel Spokane Valley has reserved a block of rooms at the very special rate of \$65/night U.S. (single or double occupancy), \$75/night U.S. (triple or quad.). Reservations can be made at **1-800-222-TREE** (1-800-222-8733). Be sure to request the group rate for The Wildlife Society. Make reservations early to assure that rate.

If you have suggestions for topics or speakers, or would like to volunteer to help with the event, please contact Don Utzinger (WA Chapter president-elect) at [utzinger@fidalgo.net](mailto:utzinger@fidalgo.net) or 360-853-7806. A detailed announcement and call for papers will be printed in the next newsletter, as well as on the WA Chapter website at [www.washingtonwildlifesoc.org](http://www.washingtonwildlifesoc.org). We're looking forward to seeing you there.

## Upcoming Events

### 21st Century: A Wasteless Fantasy? Recycling Council of Alberta Fall Conference

When: September 19-21, 2001

Where: Edmonton, AB

For more info: <http://www.recycle.ab.ca/events.htm>

### Conserving Nature in the Edmonton Region Conference

When: September 21-23, 2001

Where: Edmonton, AB; Shaw Theatre, NAIT campus

For more info: [www.enhc.com](http://www.enhc.com)

### 11th International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species

When: October 1-4, 2001

Where: Alexandria, Virginia, USA

For more info: <http://www.aquatic-invasive-species-conference.org/>

### 22nd Tall Timbers Fire Ecology Conference: Fire in Temperate, Boreal and Montane Ecosystems

When: October 15-18, 2001

Where: Kananaskis Village, AB

For more info:

<http://www.talltimbers.org/22conf/index.html>

### Old-Growth Forests in Canada: a science perspective

When: October 15-19, 2001

Where: Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

For more info: <http://ulern.on.ca/oldgrowthforest/>

### 7th Annual National Climate Change Conference

When: October 18, 2001

Where: Calgary, AB

For more information:

<http://www.areacanada.com/whatsnew.htm>

### Transitions in the Conservation Landscape; 63rd Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference

When - December 9-12, 2001

Where: Des Moines, Iowa

For more info: [www.sate.ia.us/midwest2001](http://www.sate.ia.us/midwest2001)

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## Recently Published

Coté, S.D., Festa-Bianchet, M., Smith, K.G. 2001. Compensatory reproduction in harvested mountain goat populations: A word of caution. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 29(2): 726-730.

Dyer, Simon J., O'Neill, Jack P., Wasel, Shawn M., Boutin, Stan. 2001. Avoidance of Industrial Development by Woodland Caribou. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 65(3): 531-542.

Norton, M.R., Hannon, S.J., Schmiegelow, F.K.A. 2000. Fragments are not islands: Patch vs landscape perspectives on songbird presence and abundance in a harvested boreal forest. *Ecography* 23(2): 209-223.

Schneider, R.R., Wynes, B., Wasel, S., Dzus, E., Hiltz, M. 2000. Habitat use by caribou in northern Alberta, Canada. *Rangifer* 20(1): 43-50.

Smith, K.G., Ficht, E.J., Hobson, D., Sorensen, T.C., Hervieux, D. 2000. Winter distribution of woodland caribou in relation to clear-cut logging in west-central Alberta. *Canadian Journal of Zoology* 78: 1433-1440.

Please send any references of recently published articles to [sue.cotterill@gov.ab.ca](mailto:sue.cotterill@gov.ab.ca). Articles of interest include those authored by ACTWS members on Alberta wildlife.

## Featured Article

The Sage Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) is arguably Alberta's most "at risk" species. An estimated population of 3000-6000 Sage Grouse was found in Alberta in 1968. Numbers have been dramatically reduced with an estimated population of 400-500 in 2000. Both the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and Alberta's Wildlife Act currently list Sage Grouse as an endangered species. Historical and anecdotal data suggests that the species once occupied a range of approximately 40,000 km<sup>2</sup> in Alberta. Current species' range is around 4,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The population in Saskatchewan has undergone similar declines. In the western United States, the bird's status ranges from extirpated to secure, depending on the locality.

Sage Grouse are at the northern limit of their range in Alberta. Sagebrush, in particular silver sage (*Artemisia cana*), provides most of the diet of adult birds. Their range is currently limited to the southeastern corner of the province, within the sagebrush range of the mixed grass prairie. Conversions of native prairie to

agricultural lands, oil and gas development, and over-grazing over the long-term are detrimental to Sage Grouse habitat.

Monitoring of Sage Grouse in Alberta has been somewhat sporadic since it began in 1968, however recently a more concerted effort has been made to visit all known strutting grounds each spring in order to estimate population size and trend. This involves surveying the 35 known lek sites and counting the number of displaying males at each site. To increase the accuracy of the survey, it is essential that all the sites be visited in a one or two day period. Doing this minimizes double counting of birds that move between different leks. This means importing a lot of help for the surveys, so each year about 20 people are enlisted from all over the province to help with the annual count. The 2001 count was no different, and staff from Fish and Wildlife, Parks and Protected Areas, and Land and Forests converged on the rustic Manyberries Hotel as Sage Grouse survey central. Staying in the old hotel is nearly as unique an experience as seeing the magnificent Sage Grouse strutting on their leks!

Counts this year revealed 108 males displaying, down from the previous year's 126. This small decline is not encouraging, the population continues to be alarmingly low and improvement in numbers is not occurring. This year's count would indicate the population is still hovering around approximately 400 individuals. One interesting development in the 2001 survey was that of three male grouse displaying on a lek where birds had not been observed since 1976. The keen eyes of biologist Sue Cotterill from AB Fish and Wildlife in Edmonton made this interesting observation. This activity at a lek site 25 years after it had been considered abandoned was exciting to document, and reaffirms the importance of these breeding areas.

Research is now being undertaken to identify factors affecting the Sage Grouse population and habitat. A major habitat initiative is also getting underway. Successful long-term recovery of the Sage Grouse will depend on major co-operation between wildlife agencies, researchers, industry, and landowners. Hopefully this unique dancer of the Canadian prairie will not be lost from Alberta.

*By Joel Nicholson, Non-game Biologist, Alberta SRD, Medicine Hat*



*Male sage grouse. Photo taken by Dr. Gordon Court.*

### **Next Issue**

Expect the next newsletter in your mailbox December 1, 2001. You are encouraged to submit any type of article (letter to editor, research, stories, humor, poetry, conservation issues, etc.) for the next newsletter by e-mailing it to [sue.cotterill@gov.ab.ca](mailto:sue.cotterill@gov.ab.ca) by November 15, 2001.

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## Abstract Submittal Form

2002 ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND MEETING

ALBERTA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

MARCH 7-9, 2002

COAST EDMONTON PLAZA HOTEL, 10155 – 105 STREET

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Type of presentation:      Paper \_\_\_\_\_      Poster \_\_\_\_\_  
Equipment required:      Slide projector \_\_\_\_\_      Overhead projector \_\_\_\_\_  
   PowerPoint projector \_\_\_\_\_      Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Title of abstract submitted: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of person submitting \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ PC/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name of presenter (if different from submitter) \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliated Authors \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate whether presenter is presently a student (Yes/No) \_\_\_\_\_

The time limit for contributed papers is fifteen minutes, plus five minutes for questions and discussion (total of twenty minutes).

Send original of this form, abstract, and biosketch of presenter (preferably by e-mail, or send floppy disk) to:

**Jim Schieck**

Forest Resources

Alberta Research Council

Vegreville, Alberta T9C 1T4

E-mail: [jims@arc.ab.ca](mailto:jims@arc.ab.ca)

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ABSTRACTS IS JANUARY 11, 2002**