

The Alberta Wildlifer

Official Newsletter of the Alberta Chapter, The Wildlife Society
Winter 2002, Vol. 13, No. 4
Editors: Sue Cotterill and Matt Besko

President's Message

How many "committees" do you participate on? How many committee, board or working group meetings do you attend each week, each month, as part of your day job or as a volunteer in a professional or social organization? Many of us would probably answer "too darn many"! I believe that if trends continue, wildlife professionals will be spending more of their time participating on committees or working groups. "So get comfortable with it"!

Webster defines committee as "*a body of persons delegated to consider, investigate, take action on or report on some matter*". In today's world, like it or not, most of the presenting, discussing, debating, negotiating, collaborating, planning, steering and

decision making takes place within a committee based process. No matter what organization, agency or company you work in, you are expected to contribute to a whole range of committees from health and safety to executive management.

If you work in the resource management or research and planning areas, it's common practice to develop and implement your plans and projects within a collaborative process. This process may include colleagues, partners, clients and/or participants representing other agencies, special interest groups or even the general public. Wildlife professionals are often requested to contribute to committees as a resource person or as an expert advisor. Our members have filled this wildlife expert role in the past and continue to represent wildlife interests on provincial committees on behalf of the Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society.

As a professional group, few of us have received formal training in working in a collaborative process. Some of the more experienced Wildlifers have developed these skills on the job. This would be a good training topic for a workshop at a future ACTWS annual meeting and conference - "*How to work effectively in the collaborative process*".

In conclusion, to successfully represent wildlife interests in today's arena, Wildlifers must develop the interpersonal and communication skills needed to function effectively in a collaborative process, especially when many individuals are required to spend up to one third of their time participating on committees.

Best wishes,

Jack Nolan

President, ACTWS

INSIDE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.....	1
CHAPTER NEWS.....	2
MEMBERSHIP DRIVE.....	2
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING UPDATE.....	3, 12-14
ACTWS AUCTION: AUCTION ITEMS NEEDED!.....	3
2003 STUDENT AWARDS.....	3
SERVICE AWARDS.....	4
PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS OF ACTWS AWARDS.....	5
REPORT ON TWS CONFERENCE IN BISMARCK, AND UPDATE ON 2004 CONFERENCE PLANNING IN CALGARY.....	5
NORTHWEST SECTION NEWS.....	6
UPCOMING COURSES.....	7
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT FIELD COURSES.....	7
FEATURE ARTICLE.....	7
CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE: AN ALBERTA PERSPECTIVE IN THE FALL OF 2002.....	7
RECENTLY PUBLISHED.....	11
UPCOMING EVENTS.....	11

**Alberta Chapter of
The Wildlife Society**
Box 4990, Edmonton,
Alberta, T6E 5G8
www.albertadirectory.net/actws/

President

Jack Nolan, 780-632-8525
jack_nolan@transcanada.com

Past-President

Arlen Todd, 403-297-7349
arlen.todd@gov.ab.ca

President-Elect

Mark Boyce, 780-492-0081
boyce@ualberta.ca

Secretary-Treasurer

Chris Shank, 403-932-2388 ext.
222; chris.shank@gov.ab.ca

Director

Anne Hubbs, 780-675-2419
anne.hubbs@gov.ab.ca

Director

Blair Rippin, 780-464-1626
rippin@shaw.ca

Director

Ron Bennett, 780-951-8673
ron.bennett@ec.gc.ca

Director

Mike Norton, 780-951-8687
mike.norton@ec.gc.ca

Newsletter Editors

Sue Cotterill, 780-422-3400
sue.cotterill@gov.ab.ca

Matt Besko, 780-415-1331
matt.besko@gov.ab.ca

Webmaster

Troy Sorensen, 780-778-7116
troy.sorensen@gov.ab.ca

Chapter News

Membership Drive

I'd like to encourage all Chapter members to do their part by bringing in new members to our organization. Our annual membership dues are cheap! Students \$5 and regular members \$10. Our newsletter alone is worth the fee at twice the cost! See below for more information, and have the prospective member complete the application and send it to: **Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society, Box 4990, Edmonton, Alberta, T6E 5G8**. You can also pay Alberta Chapter dues when you renew The Wildlife Society membership.

Jack Nolan

President, ACTWS

Participate in the 2003 Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society Membership Drive and Win Big!

The Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society (ACTWS) is a group of professionals and students in the field of wildlife biology/management dedicated to providing excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. The Society needs your help at a time when Alberta faces some of its greatest challenges from rapid land use change and continued development. Help recruit members to the Society and become eligible for one of 2 great prizes!

1. Contact prospective members:

- Talk to professionals and friends and encourage them to visit the ACTWS website: <http://www.albertadirectory.net/actws/> to find out more about the Chapter and for a membership application.
- Send postcards to prospective members informing them of the benefits to chapter members. Post cards are provided in your Annual General Meeting conference packets from the Membership Chair.
- Target presentations to interested groups and sign-up new members.
- Locate past members not currently enrolled and sign them up.

2. When new members sign-up, have them list you as their sponsor on the membership application to receive sponsorship credit.

3. The two ACTWS members who have sponsored the most new members during our membership drive will be awarded one of the two prizes listed below at the next ACTWS Annual General Meeting.

Prizes: Hand carved from basswood and hand painted, full-sized decorative decoy of an Alberta waterfowl species. Donated by *Blair Rippin*. Also, a beautiful and functional hunting knife made of 440C stainless steel with a brass bolster and select hardwood handle. Custom made and donated by *Elston Dzus* of Eco Edge Knives.



Knife in photo has a wenge
& bird's eye maple handle.

Membership Competition Rules:

Drive begins 31 March 2002 and ends 1 week prior to the 2003 Annual ACTWS meeting.

Winners must be current members of ACTWS at the time of sponsorship.

Multiple year enrollments are added up separately.

Recruitment of past members includes those not registered since 2000.

Member with the most sponsorships will get his/her choice of the 2 donated prizes.

Annual General Meeting Update

The AGM information bulletin and registration form have been updated – please see pages 12-14.

ACTWS Auction: Auction Items Needed!

The Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society will hold a silent/live auction to raise funds for our student scholarship. Members attending the conference are asked to bring along a “Wildlife-Related” item to be auctioned. This can be done several ways:

- Stop by your local “Wildlife-Related” stores and ask if they would be interested in donating an auction item to our student scholarship fund. Also mention that we publicize the names of companies that donate to the ACTWS and that we are a non-profit organization.
- Create a one and only masterpiece.
- Auction items don't need to be new, look around the house for an item you no longer use or want and let's see who really wants it.

- Maybe you have a special skill you would like to share with someone, for example a day birding at Elk Island Park or maybe you know of some neat wildlife sightings.

Let's start thinking what we can bring to the auction - it will be fun!

Those intending to bring an auction item are asked to contact Stephen, Janet, or Tammy as soon as possible.

Contact Information:

Stephen Taerum (staerum@ualberta.ca, home #: (780) 435-9069), Janet Ng (jwn@ualberta.ca) or Tammy Macmillan (tammac@telusplanet.net)

Please contact one of us for more information.

2003 Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society Student Awards

The Alberta Chapter annually presents academic student awards to promote interest and reward excellence in the field of wildlife conservation. Applicants must have a demonstrated interest in wildlife management. Student submissions for each award category are reviewed by ACTWS member committees and awards will be presented to successful candidates at the ACTWS annual conference in Red Deer in March 2003.

Send applications for *all student awards* to the Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society, Box 4990 Edmonton, AB T6E 5G8, Attn: Scholarship Committee.

Applications must be received by **January 15, 2003**.

For further information, contact Ron Bennett, Awards Committee Chair at (780) 951-8673 or ron.bennett@ec.gc.ca

Robert (Bob) K. Goddard Memorial Scholarship

Amount- \$1000

Eligibility

This award is open to students that are presently enrolled in a technical program in the Province of Alberta, focusing on wildlife biology or management. Program examples include, but are not limited to: Renewable Resource Option (NAIT), Fish and Wildlife Major (Lakeland), Renewable Resource Management Diploma or Fish and Wildlife Technology Certificate (LCC).

Please note that programs in conservation enforcement are not eligible for this award.

Submission Requirements

- Transcript of marks for courses taken and a list of courses planned for remainder of program, if any.
- Summary of volunteer or work experience in the wildlife field.
- Letter of reference from a faculty member or other professional biologist.
- Typed essay (300 words or fewer) outlining career goals and relevance to this award.

Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society Undergraduate Award

Amount- \$1000

Eligibility

This award is open to students planning a career in wildlife management and preparing to enter the final year of a 4-year Alberta university program in Biological Sciences, Forest Science, Animal Sciences, Zoology, or related field of study, in September 2003. The award funds will be disbursed upon confirmation of registration for the next year of full-time enrollment.

Submission Requirements

- Transcript of marks for courses taken, and a list of courses planned for their final year.
- Summary of volunteer or work experience in the wildlife field.
- Letter of reference from a faculty member or other professional biologist.
- Typed essay (300 words or fewer) outlining career goals and relevance to this award.

Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society Post-Graduate Award

Amount- \$1000

Eligibility

This award is open to students planning a career in wildlife management and accepted into a full-time post-graduate degree program at an Alberta university in

Biological Sciences, Forest Science, Animal Sciences, Zoology, or related field of study.

Submission Requirements

- Transcript of marks for undergraduate and graduate courses.
- Outline of proposed thesis work.
- Summary of volunteer or work experience in the wildlife field.
- Letter of reference from a faculty member or other professional biologist.
- Typed essay (300 words or fewer) outlining career goals and relevance to this award.

Service Awards

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 by **January 3, 2003**, to:

Harry Stelfox
Policy and Planning Division
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
9th Floor, South Petroleum Plaza
9915-108th St., Edmonton, AB T5K 2G8
Phone: (780) 427-2044, Fax: (780) 422-5136
E-mail: harry.stelfox@gov.ab.ca

Previous Recipients of ACTWS Awards

<i>William Rowan Award for Distinguished Service</i>	
2002	Lu Carbyn
2001	Don Thomas
2000	Valerius Geist
1999	Ian Stirling
1998	Bill Samuel
1997	Ernie Kuyt
1996	Dave Boag
1995	Morley Barrett
1994	Ed Telfer
1993	Bill Wishart
1992	John Stelfox
1991	William Fuller

<i>Dedicated Service Award</i>	
2002	Jack Nolan
2001	Kirby Smith
2000	Ron Bjorge
1999	Jon Jorgensen
1998	Blair Rippin
1997	Brad Stelfox
1996	Bill Glasgow
1995	Mike Dorrance
1994	Margo Pybus

Report on TWS Conference in Bismarck, and Update on 2004 Conference Planning in Calgary

By Arlen Todd

It was both a pleasure and a privilege for me to attend the 9th Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society (TWS) in Bismarck, North Dakota during September of 2002. It was the first Annual Conference of TWS that I had ever attended. My chief objective for attending was to get familiar with the conference, as an aid to effectively organizing the Arrangements for the 2004 Conference, which will be here in Calgary during September 18-22, 2004 (please put those dates into your consciousness, and onto your calendar!).

The Conference in Bismarck was a fine success. I understand that it was less well attended than some other TWS conferences (about 1,450 attendees, versus a maximum of 2,400 at the Portland Conference some years ago), perhaps partly because of indirect connections to Bismarck for jet-setters. For those who did attend, though, it was truly a quality event. The North Dakotans were wonderful hosts. It was extremely valuable to me, personally, to experience the Bismarck Conference first hand, and I acknowledge and thank the Alberta Chapter of TWS for paying most of my travel expenses there. The Chapter also supported Terry Kowalchuk's travel to the Conference. Terry has agreed to serve as co-chair for the Arrangements Committee for the 2004 Conference.

While in Bismarck, we made many wonderful connections, including some with prospective collaborators from the Manitoba Chapter, who remain enthusiastic about co-hosting the Calgary Conference, and who may also have key involvement in the Program Committee. With respect to the Arrangements Committee, we are exploring having Manitobans on a handful of subcommittees, which might include Associated Meetings, Fundraising, Merchandise, Student Activities, and Volunteers. We have also discussed having co-chairs from Manitoba on several subcommittees. I will be talking further with the President of the Manitoba Chapter, Don Sexton, over the coming months. While in Bismarck, I also had several very positive and enjoyable connections with Wildlifers from Vermont, who will be handing off the "Olympic Torch" to us next fall. Our colleagues in New England and North Dakota are very much committed to helping us learn from their experiences with the Conferences, so that the Conference in Calgary can be a great success. I

already have the post-conference report from Bismarck on hand. It is a very useful reference for us.

The initial organizing for the 2004 Conference is proceeding well. As of this update (15 Nov., 2002), we have individuals pencilled in to lead or co-lead the Arrangements Committee itself (Terry Kowalchuk and myself), as well as most subcommittees. It is just a little early to identify all the subcommittee chairs and/or co-chairs at this point, for two reasons. First, some confirmations are still required. Second, the overall structure of the Arrangements Committee is not yet finalized. You will recall from my last update that TWS is hiring a Conference Planner for the Vermont Conference in 2003, and likely will do the same for succeeding conferences as well. That's not bad news; it's just that some roles, such as those of the Associated Meetings and Signs Subcommittees, may be completely assumed by the Conference Planner. Nonetheless, if you are interested in volunteering for either of those subcommittees, in the event that they are needed (or any other subcommittees, for that matter), please feel free to contact me (phone: (403) 297-7349; e-mail: arlen.todd@gov.ab.ca).

I also appreciate and acknowledge the various individuals who have already volunteered to be members of subcommittees of the Arrangements Committee. Thank you! My first priority at this time is to get the subcommittee chairs and/or co-chairs in place, and then to have an inaugural conference call meeting of the Arrangements Committee. I hope to have that inaugural meeting in December of 2002 or January of 2003 (availability and schedules permitting). If you volunteered to be a member of a subcommittee, but haven't yet been contacted to explore or affirm that, you likely will be in the next two months or so. In the meantime, you are more than welcome to contact me at any time (see contact information in preceding paragraph).

As reported in the last "Alberta Wildlifer", one of the first official things that we have to do is develop a conference logo. As Chair of the Merchandise Subcommittee, Linda Cerney will be overseeing the logo development. If you have ideas, or either are or know an artist that might be interested in competing in the logo contest, please contact Linda Cerney with the Alberta Conservation Association in Lethbridge (phone: (403) 382-4360; e-mail: linda.cerney@gov.ab.ca). The conference logo is needed for June 1, 2003, so please get your creative juices flowing sooner, rather than later, and get in touch with Linda! Also, Linda would really like

to have some subcommittee members either in or very near Calgary. If you are interested, and fit that bill, please contact her directly.

I already know that helping to organize the 2004 Conference is going to be a very enjoyable and fulfilling experience for me. Thank you again for putting your confidence in me, and thank you, in advance, for your involvement in the 2004 conference. Enjoy!

Northwest Section News

2003 Joint Annual Meeting

Oregon Chapter and Northwest Section of The Wildlife Society

10-14 February 2003

Remembering why we are here: Joys of being a wildlife biologist

The roots of our passion for wildlife are diverse, but our drive for conserving this precious resource is undeniable. Come join the Oregon Chapter and the Northwest Section as we host the joint annual meeting in Eugene, Oregon. You won't want to miss it, so send in your registration by **17 JANUARY** to get the early meeting registration rates, and make your lodging reservations by **21 JANUARY**. The Eugene Hilton has reserved a block of rooms for our meeting until **21 JANUARY** at the special rate of \$62.00 US/night single, or \$77.00 US/night double occupancy plus tax. Call The Hilton at 1-800-837-6660 (<http://www.eugene.hilton.com>), and be sure to say you will be attending the meeting of the Oregon Chapter of TWS to receive the special rate. For the latest agenda and registration form visit our web page at <http://fw.oregonstate.edu/tws>. If you have registration questions or special requests, please contact the Oregon Chapter TWS (Kat Beal (541) 937-2131).

A symposium, "BIRD CONSERVATION AND NATURAL HISTORY: A NORTHWEST PERSPECTIVE," will be held 10-11 February (chapter or section member \$110 US / \$174 Canadian; non-member \$130 US / \$206 Canadian). Concurrent paper sessions and poster presentations will be held 12-14 February, along with an evening social, banquet with speaker, a photo contest, and chapter and section meetings (included in meeting registration fee; chapter or section member \$90 US / \$143 Canadian; non-member \$120 US / \$190 Canadian; student \$35 US / \$55

Canadian). The Plenary Session will feature Art Wolfe, world-renowned wildlife photographer.

You are invited to submit abstracts (contact: Lori Hennings, lhennin@easystreet.com) or posters (contact: Bruce Campbell, Bruce.h.campbell@state.or.us). The deadline is **29 NOVEMBER**. We ask both paper and poster presenters to register.

Upcoming Courses

Wildlife Management Field Courses

EcoLife Expeditions, South Africa

International Universities Program

28 DECEMBER 2002 - 12 JANUARY 2003

This 16 day Wildlife Management Course is for people interested in African wildlife conservation. The course includes lectures, classes, and hands-on projects taught by instructors from the University of Pretoria's Centre for Wildlife Management while traveling through conservation areas.

Cost - \$1300 (US dollars); 4 credits from the University of Pretoria.

16 MAY - 14 JUNE 2003, OR 20 JUNE - 19 JULY 2003

These 30 day Wildlife Management Courses are for students and professionals interested in African conservation. The course includes lectures, classes and hands-on projects taught by instructors from the University of Pretoria's Centre for Wildlife Management. Course topics include: Wildlife Management Techniques, Sustainable Resource Utilization, Ecosystem and Biodiversity Conservation, Reserve and Resort Management, African Local Community Cultures and Conservation Perspectives, and Africa Tourism Principles and Historical Sites.

Cost - \$2600 (US dollars); 8 credits from the University of Pretoria

Contact by email: Education@ecolife.co.za, Ecolife Expeditions, 976 Duncan Street, Brooklyn, Pretoria, 0181, South Africa. Phone: +27 12 460 5430, Fax: +27 12 460 9707, www.ecolife.co.za

Feature Article

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE: AN ALBERTA PERSPECTIVE in the fall of 2002

MJ Pybus, PhD, Wildlife Disease Specialist, Fish and Wildlife Division, Edmonton

There is no question that chronic wasting disease (CWD) is the topic of the day among a wide range of folks who manage, use, and/or appreciate big game cervids (primarily deer and elk) all across North America. However, this disease is not a new topic in Alberta. As early as July 1996, the Fish and Wildlife Division began looking for ways to survey wild deer and elk in the coming hunting seasons to see if CWD was present in Alberta. The survey seemed even more appropriate when Saskatchewan found the first case of CWD in a game farm elk in October 1996. Since then, Alberta has been a leader in assessing risks associated with this disease, designing surveillance programs in wild and farmed cervids, and encouraging other jurisdictions to take CWD seriously.

There is considerable misinformation circulating about CWD and readers should always scrutinize closely anything they read about this disease. If you have access to the internet, wildlife agency webpages are often the most reliable sources of trustworthy information. Similarly the webpages of the recently formed CWD Alliance (<http://www.cwd-info.org/>) provide responsible and accurate communications with the best interests of wildlife and the hunting public in mind. Armed with the facts, you can at least make informed decisions and develop credible opinions. Close to home, the Fish and Wildlife Division of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, as well as Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, each have CWD information available on the web or from their public offices. Thus, there is good background information available about CWD so I will not cover the basics of the disease in this article.

What I do provide is an overview of the programs in place for the current hunting seasons, the thinking behind these programs, and a review of some recent concerns. The focus is on a science-based assessment of the risks that CWD poses in Alberta.

PREVIOUS CWD PROGRAMS in Alberta

During the last four hunting seasons, the Fish and Wildlife Division asked some hunters to provide the heads of hunter-killed deer and elk in Alberta. The request was designed to limit the number of heads to a scientifically credible sample size over a broad geographic range from which we could draw valid conclusions about the presence or absence of CWD. Starting in the 2000 season, we also tailored the request to focus on management units along the Alberta/Saskatchewan border between Lloydminster and Provost. This targeting was done initially in response to the finding of CWD in various game farms in westcentral Saskatchewan and later (2001), in two wild mule deer on the Saskatchewan side of the border. This need to assess risks along the border was further reinforced with the finding in 2002 of a third case in a wild mule deer from the same vicinity as the previous two.

In total, we have examined over 2600 heads of wild deer and elk from Alberta. **CWD WAS NOT FOUND IN ANY OF THE WILDLIFE HEADS.** From these data we conclude that CWD does not occur as a widespread natural occurrence in wild deer or elk in the province. This finding allows us to shift our programs for fall 2002 into two areas of concern, rather than the entire province.

2002 FALL CWD PROGRAMS

Alberta/Saskatchewan Border

The presence of multiple cases of CWD on multiple farms as well as in a few wild mule deer in the Manito Sand Hills area continues to raise concerns along the border, despite significant control programs implemented in Saskatchewan in 2001/02. **Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) 234, 236, 256, and 500** are of particular concern. However, our previous data and current risk assessment indicate that the risk remains low and we can continue to rely on voluntary submission of heads of hunter-killed deer and elk. We facilitate the drop-off during the hunting seasons by placing freezers with 24-hr access at local businesses in some of the border communities. The freezers also contain bags, tags, and pencils as well as helpful instructions for labeling the heads. We continue the policy of notifying hunters only in the unlikely event that the deer or elk was positive for CWD.

The most recent cases of CWD in two wild mule deer in southern Saskatchewan (north of Swift Current) are

considered too far away to pose significant threat and until further information is available, do not warrant specific surveillance in Alberta. We will continue to monitor closely the information coming out of Saskatchewan and are prepared to implement appropriate programs.

Central Alberta

Most of you will know that CWD was found in central Alberta in one game farm elk (March 2002) and a farmed white-tailed deer (Nov 2002). Both cases were identified as a result of the province's routine CWD surveillance of farmed cervids. Chronic wasting disease is a federal reportable disease in Canada and once any case is found, the national CWD control and eradication programs kick in. As part of the federal program, all potentially-exposed cervids on the affected premises and all traceout animals linked to the premises within the previous three years are destroyed and tested for CWD. In the case of the farmed elk, no further cases of CWD were found. The investigation, destruction, and testing of animals relating to the infected white-tail are still underway.

Fortunately CWD is not a wildly infectious disease in free-ranging cervid populations; thus, there is no urgency to immediately examine wildlife adjacent to the affected farms (both affected farms are northwest of Edmonton). However, it is necessary to improve the surveillance sample of wild deer and elk from the general area. Therefore, for the current hunting seasons, we encouraged hunters to voluntarily submit the heads of mature deer and elk killed in four management units in central Alberta (WMUs – northern part of 248 [north of Edmonton], 250, 507, 508). We propose to assess this population for the next three years and, depending on the results, adjust the program accordingly.

OTHER ISSUES FOR HUNTERS

HEALTH RISKS ??

Alberta's CWD programs are based on scientific evaluation of risks posed to the health of wildlife, game farm cervids, traditional livestock, and humans. All of the evidence indicates that the risk of CWD occurring in the province is extremely low. We have looked for CWD in farmed and wild deer and elk, and we have looked hard (well over 7000 heads in total). Yet we have found it in only two farmed animals. There is no evidence that it occurs naturally in wild cervids in

Alberta and we have had a moratorium on importation of farmed or captive cervids since October 1988. We have never allowed importation of deer into Alberta and most of the imported farmed elk that arrived prior to the moratorium were killed in the early 1990s as part of the federal bovine tuberculosis eradication programs. Imported elk that were not killed, have been given particular attention and they do not show any signs of either TB or CWD.

Further to this, all of the scientific data to date, including experimental research with cattle, genetic manipulation with mice, and retrospective review of human cases of naturally-occurring prion diseases indicates that CWD does not readily infect anything other than members of the cervid family. Researchers did not find any link between CWD and human disease.

US Centers for Disease Control conclude: the risk of CWD to humans, if any exists, is extremely low. When we apply this conclusion to Alberta, with its limited opportunity for CWD to enter the province and where we have searched diligently for CWD in the wild and have not found it, Alberta Health and Wellness concludes that the human health risk from consuming wild game collected in Alberta is 'near-zero'.

Similarly the World Health Organization states that there is no known CWD risk from eating wild cervids. However, to err on the side of caution in areas where CWD is known to occur in a significant proportion of wild deer and elk (that is, adjacent portions of Colorado, Wyoming, and Nebraska, as well as perhaps parts of Wisconsin), health officials advise hunters to voluntarily wear gloves when cleaning their kill, bone out the carcass, and avoid eating the brain, spinal cord, spleen, eyes, tonsils, or lymph nodes.

INDIVIDUAL TEST RESULTS ??

As indicated above, the risk of CWD occurring in free-ranging deer and elk in Alberta is considered extremely low. As such, testing of individual hunter-killed heads, beyond those requested for surveillance programs is not available at the government diagnostic labs. In addition, within the surveillance areas, in the unlikely event that the deer or elk is found to have CWD, the hunter will be notified directly by the Fish and Wildlife Division. Those who submit negative heads are not notified.

Nor are we aware of any private lab in Alberta that is certified to provide CWD results. Apparently some labs

in the US may offer quick and inexpensive test results; however, these tests and many of the labs have not been validated nor approved. Whitetails Unlimited, a major national hunting organization in the US cautions hunters against buying unproven test results offered on a fee-for-service basis.

DISPOSAL ??

Recent international business decisions by rendering companies across North America made disposal of bones and scraps of big game animals more difficult and some hunters had to change their normal routine. Currently there are five legal means of disposal of cervid parts in Alberta. This information was circulated to butchers, processors, and primary wildlife stakeholder groups. In a nutshell, hunters can bury non-edible parts of big game kills on private land with landowner permission, take them to a Class I or Class II landfill, or leave the parts on private land with landowner permission for natural disposal by scavengers and decomposers. Other options include commercial incinerators or commercial composters; however, these opportunities are limited for disposal of hunter-killed critters.

Note that it is an offence under the *Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* to dispose of dead animal parts on Crown lands, including roadside ditches.

Some butchers or processors continue to conduct business as they have in the past. Others chose to accept wild big game carcasses but return the bones and scraps (along with the meat) to the hunter. Still others chose not to accept big game carcasses any more. Each individual business makes its own decision. Through the hunting seasons, the website of Hunting for Tomorrow (<http://www.huntingfortomorrow.com/>) has provided information about meat processors.

SCENT LURES ??

There have been comments and written concerns regarding the CWD risk that may be posed by hunters using commercial scent lures and attractants during hunting activities. This issue has swirled in the US for quite some time and recently entered the Canadian discussion of CWD. There is indeed an unknown risk that CWD could occur in urine or faeces of infected deer or elk. However, let's look at the level of risk.

No one has been able to find altered proteins (=prions) in urine or faeces of animals infected with CWD; although, there has been minimal effort directed to such a search. We also do not know how long or during what phase of the infection an infected animal excretes prions (if they are excreted at all). However, it is reasonable to assume that this is not the primary means of transmission of this disease, otherwise we should have some evidence of this from the CWD investigation and research to date.

The risk assessment does not stop there. Assuming that the prion was present in the initial excretion; it would have to survive the procedures associated with processing, preserving, packaging, and transporting the product, as well as survive the time and conditions during distribution, sale, and storage of the product before and after it gets into the hunter's possession. Then the hunter takes it out into the field and applies it to boots, trees, etc. So again the prion must survive long enough and in sufficient amounts to establish an infection in enough local deer or elk to sustain a viable population of CWD that would lead to a new focus of infection in the wild. Thus, there is a cascade of risks that may well start out quite small and be reduced at each step of the cascade. It is difficult to see how scent lures pose a significant risk to wildlife in Alberta.

ALBERTA PERSPECTIVE ??

How can we be confident that Alberta is not like Colorado? Or Wisconsin? Or even Saskatchewan? There are numerous factors that set us apart:

Unlike many jurisdictions, we have had surveillance of farmed and wild cervids for four full years plus the early samples in 1996 and 1997. We have detected no CWD in the wild and only two infected farmed animals.

A moratorium on the importation of game farm cervids began in October 1988 and a rigorous assessment of all disease risks associated with importing farmed cervids was completed by technical specialists from the Fish and Wildlife Division and Alberta Agriculture. The review included a wide range of potential risks to the health of livestock, wildlife, farmed cervids, and humans. Since 1988, only a limited number of farmed elk were imported and they only came after extensive review of the risks posed by each shipment. [Imports were approved only from the Yukon.]

Current data indicate that CWD is most often introduced to new areas in farmed elk or deer that have links to animals imported from the US. Most of the US game

farm cervids that were legally imported to Alberta in 1985-1987 (the only years when it was legal) were depopulated in 1991-1993 during federal programs aimed at eradicating bovine tuberculosis. Remaining US animals have been watched ever since, without any signs of TB or CWD.

We responded immediately to the finding of CWD in a wild deer in Saskatchewan and subsequently did not find any evidence of the disease in adjacent deer in Alberta. We will continue to monitor this population for at least five years.

We are implementing enhanced surveillance of wild deer and elk in the general area of the two known cases on farms in Alberta. We propose to continue this enhanced surveillance for at least three years and will adjust the program accordingly if necessary.

All CWD programs in Alberta are based on the best and most up-to-date scientific information regarding this disease. The programs are strengthened by a high level of cooperation between the government departments that manage wildlife and agriculture as well as the general support from a wide range of diverse stakeholders.

SUMMARY:

Chronic wasting disease is a concern for wildlife managers, agricultural managers, and all those who enjoy wildlife for a wide range of reasons. Alberta has adopted a policy of prevention and eradication of CWD. We have designed our programs to provide security for farmed and wild cervids and in response to the level of risks posed within the province. We have realistic programs aimed at preventing direct introduction of CWD into the province as well as suitable programs to find and eliminate CWD once it is identified. Fortunately this disease is not highly infectious in wild populations. With any new situation, we have time to gather information and develop programs that are appropriate to the risk. We have done so since 1996 and will continue to do so.

Want to learn more about CWD ?? Attend the upcoming conference !!
http://www.acru.rr.ualberta.ca/CWD_Conference/Program.htm

Recently Published

Charles J. Krebs, Todd N. Zimmerling, Claire Jardine, Kim A. Trostel, Alice, J. Kenney, Scott Gilbert, and Elizabeth J. Hofer. 2002. Cyclic dynamics of snowshoe hares on a small island in the Yukon. *Can. J. Zool.* 80(8): 1442-1450.

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

Upcoming Events

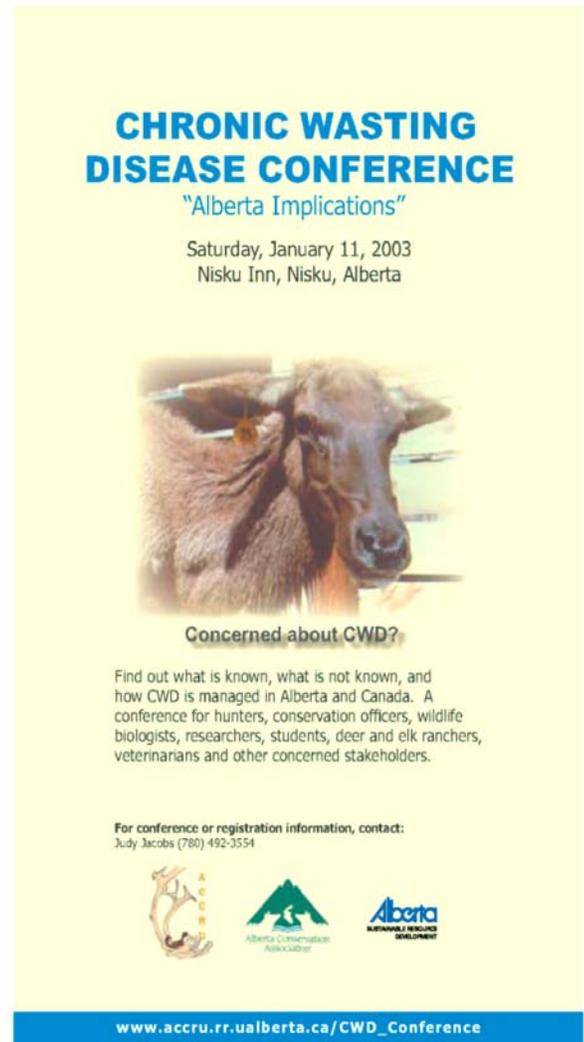
Chronic Wasting Disease Conference "Alberta Implications"

January 11, 2003 / Edmonton, AB
See poster (opposite) for more information.

Western Range Science Seminar

January 19-21, 2003 / Medicine Hat, Alberta
For more information visit:

http://www.env.gov.ab.ca/web/announcements/WRSS_brochure_Jan_19-21_03.pdf



CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE CONFERENCE
"Alberta Implications"

Saturday, January 11, 2003
Nisku Inn, Nisku, Alberta



Concerned about CWD?

Find out what is known, what is not known, and how CWD is managed in Alberta and Canada. A conference for hunters, conservation officers, wildlife biologists, researchers, students, deer and elk ranchers, veterinarians and other concerned stakeholders.

For conference or registration information, contact:
Judy Jacobs (780) 492-3554



www.acru.rr.ualberta.ca/CWD_Conference

Next Issue

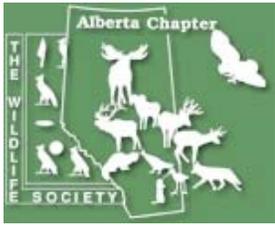
Expect the next newsletter in your mailbox February 1, 2003. You are encouraged to submit any type of article (letter to editor, research, stories, humor, poetry, conservation issues, etc.) for the next newsletter by e-mailing it to sue.cotterill@gov.ab.ca by January 15, 2003.

2003 ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND MEETING, ALBERTA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

February 28 - March 1, 2003; Red Deer Lodge, Red Deer, Alberta

Co-hosted by:

The Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society,
University of Alberta Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society,
and Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Fish & Wildlife Division



INTEGRATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, IMPLICATIONS FOR WILDLIFE is the focus of the plenary session, which will open the conference (starting early morning on February 28). Dr. Brad Stelfox, a well-known wildlife ecologist and author of program ALCES, is a confirmed plenary speaker. Other high-profile speakers are invited, including Ian Dyson (confirmed), Al Sanderson (confirmed) and Dr. Stan Boutin (confirmed). The eventful two days will be filled with contributed papers on a wide range of topics in wildlife research and management. Guiding principles for planning the conference are to provide attendees with the highest quality and most current information possible, at an affordable price. So, please join us in Red Deer for an exceptional event and two days of camaraderie!

Location and Transportation

The Red Deer Lodge (4311 49 Avenue Red Deer, Alberta) is centrally located in the city of Red Deer. The hotel is on the south edge of town center, and just a short walking distance to shopping, restaurants, pubs, and other points of interest. For more information on Red Deer Lodge go to: <http://www.greatcanadianhotels.com/reddeer.html>.

Red Deer is located in central Alberta, about 150 km south of Edmonton, on Highway 2. Calgary International Airport is only a ninety minute drive from the town of Red Deer. All major car rental companies are available at the Calgary International Airport, and regular bus service operates directly from the airport to Red Deer as well. For more information on Red Deer go to: <http://www.city.red-deer.ab.ca/default.htm>.

Lodging

The conference and meetings will be held at the Red Deer Lodge. The lodge has reserved a block of 60 rooms at special conference rates. To receive the special rate, be sure to make reservations by **January 2, 2003** at 1-800-661-1657 (mention that you are attending The Wildlife Society meeting, Alberta Chapter). The rate is \$95 Canadian/room/night, for single or double occupancy, plus 12% tax. The rates mentioned above are extended to delegates of the conference both three days before and three days after the conference. When making reservations, you will require a valid credit card number or cheque or money order deposit. When requested, deposits will be returned if the Red Deer Lodge receives notice of cancellation at least 48 hours prior to the expected time of arrival.

A variety of other hotels and motels are located near the Red Deer Lodge. However, we have not arranged discounted rates at any of the others, so please book a room early at the Red Deer Lodge.

Registration

Please take advantage of early registration discounts by completing and returning the registration form (see following pages) with full payment (in Canadian funds only) by **February 7, 2003**. On-site registration will be available at the conference. Partial registrations will not be accepted.

Reception and Wildlife Auction Fundraiser

The welcoming reception and social (including no-host cash bar) is on Thursday evening, February 27. The fundraiser auction of wildlife-related items will occur on Friday evening, after the banquet. Proceeds go entirely to the Alberta Chapter's student scholarship fund.

The University of Alberta Student Chapter will be coordinating the fundraising auction. Both large and small-ticket items, custom-made goods, and new purchases or used items will all be gratefully appreciated. For more information contact Stephen Taerum (staerum@ualberta.ca home #: (780) 435-9069), Janet Ng (jwn@ualberta.ca) or Tammy Macmillan (tammac@telusplanet.net).

Call for Poster Papers

A poster session will run during February 28-March 1. Posters on wildlife management, research, monitoring, new techniques, and work just getting underway are always of interest. Persons who are beginning their projects are encouraged to submit posters, rather than papers for oral presentation. If you are interested in participating, please contact Mark S. Boyce, Department of Biological Sciences, Room Z 907, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB Canada T6G 2E9 (Phone (780) 489-0081; fax 780-492-9234; e-mail boyce@ualberta.ca).

Wildlife Photo Contest

Conference registrants are invited to submit their favorite original photos for a contest at the conference. Contact Troy Sorensen, if you are interested (phone (780) 778-7116; e-mail troy.sorensen@gov.ab.ca). Further details will be posted on the Alberta Chapter's website, as the conference approaches (www.albertadirectory.net/actws/).

Contributed Papers Sessions

Concurrent sessions for contributed papers (see following pages for **Call for Papers**) will run Friday afternoon (February 28) and all day on Saturday (March 1).

Banquet

The banquet is included in the registration fee and is on Friday evening, February 28 (at the Red Deer Lodge Ballroom).

Lunches and Alberta Chapter Awards

Friday and Saturday lunches are included in the registration fee. The annual awards of the Alberta Chapter, TWS, will be presented during the Saturday lunch.

Corporate Donations to Support the Conference

Corporate donations have contributed significantly to the quality and viability of TWS meetings organized in Alberta in the past. Thank you for your support and generosity! If you or your employer can make a financial donation to support the conference, please consider doing so. Donations both large and small will be gratefully appreciated. Please make cheques payable (preferably in **Canadian funds**) to **Alberta Chapter, The Wildlife Society** and mail to **ACTWS, Box 4990, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T6E 5G8**. Donations received before February 15, 2003 would be most appreciated! Donors will be recognized in the printed conference materials, and at the banquet on Friday, February 28.

REGISTRATION FORM FOR THE 2003 ANNUAL MEETING, ALBERTA CHAPTER TWS

February 28-March 1, 2003, Red Deer Lodge, Red Deer, Alberta



To simplify our paperwork please complete one form per person.

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____

City _____ Province/State _____ PC/Zip _____

Phone (Office) _____ Home _____ E-mail _____

Conference registration (no partial registrations)	Cost	Total
Friday-Sunday, February 28-March 1, 2003		
Early registration, post-marked on/before Feb. 7 th		
Regular member	\$55.00	_____
Student member	\$35.00	_____
Late registration, after Feb. 7 th (on-site, please)		
Regular member	\$70.00	_____
Student member	\$45.00	_____

Lunch

- Do you plan to attend the Friday evening banquet (please circle)? **Yes No**
- Are you bringing a guest (if so, add additional cost)? \$35.00 each _____
- Do you plan to attend the lunch on Friday (please circle)? **Yes No**
- Are you bringing a guest (if so, add additional cost)? \$22.00 each _____
- Do you plan to attend the lunch on Saturday (please circle)? **Yes No**
- Are you bringing a guest (if so, add additional cost)? \$22.00 each _____

Total Amount Paid _____

Do you have any special needs (i.e., vegetarian)? If so, please specify _____

Please make cheques payable (only in **Canadian** funds) to: **Alberta Chapter, TWS**. Purchase orders and credit cards will **not** be accepted. Please mail your registration form, with full payment, to:

Mark S. Boyce, President-elect
 Alberta Chapter TWS
 Department of Biological Sciences
 University of Alberta, Edmonton T6G 2E9

Form can be downloaded from website: www.albertadirectory.com/actws

Cancellation policy: A full refund will be provided when requested before January 15, 2003. For cancellations on or after January 15, 2003, there will be a handling fee of 25% of the total bill.