



The Alberta Wildlifer

Official Newsletter of the Alberta Chapter, The Wildlife Society
Spring 2004, Vol. 15, No.1
Editor: Dave Hobson

President's Message

What a great time of year! A different species of bird seems to arrive in west central Alberta every day. The lakes have opened up a good two weeks earlier than normal. Having spent an enjoyable weekend in Jasper National Park, I'm still amazed at how quickly bull elk can drop their antlers and then begin growing a new set almost instantly.

Your executive continues to hold monthly conference calls in order to keep up with the business of the Alberta Chapter. The Conservation Committee is finalizing a position paper on the effects of access on wildlife that is to be presented to different departments within the Alberta Government. We anticipate posting it on our website for review. In addition, the saga of the Alberta Chapter's FOIP request regarding the "swap" of high value native prairie (to be converted into a potato farm) for undisclosed properties continues to be a focus for the executive.

Scholarship applications were down this year. In particular, it was disappointing not to receive any applications for the Ian Ross Undergraduate Scholarship. I would ask ACTWS members to make an extra effort in encouraging students to apply for all three scholarships in the future.

As you are all aware, we did not have our annual chapter meeting this spring, but instead will be convening at the Annual TWS Meeting in September. Our business meeting is scheduled during the conference from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. Tuesday, September 21st. Even though our annual meeting is later in the year, I should remind everyone that our very affordable annual membership fees are due at the start of each calendar year.

In closing, I would like to ask each member to convey the wildlife conservation message to the public at every opportunity. An informed public will be better positioned to make positive decisions for wildlife. I'm reminded of a story told by Dr. Jack Ward Thomas, who at one time was the head of the U.S. Forest Service. Apparently, as a "boy wildlife biologist" in Texas, he attended a funeral for a well-known, but not very decent

soul in the small town where he was employed by the Game and Fish Department. When the Minister asked anyone if they would like to say a few final words for the individual, there was silence. (Apparently there were few that could think of anything nice to say). The Minister asked a second time and to his embarrassment, again silence. Following the Ministers third plea, Jack stepped forward and said "I actually didn't know the deceased, but if you're interested, I'm involved in a white-tailed deer study north of town and I would like to take a bit of your time to explain what it's all about". The audience was extremely relieved to find a way out of their difficult situation and Jack had a captive audience for the remainder of the afternoon. Don't pass up an opportunity.

Have a great summer and I hope to see most of you at the TWS Conference in Calgary.

Sincerely

Kirby Smith

ACTWS 2004 Annual General Meeting and TWS Conference

We invite you to The Wildlife Society's 11th Annual Conference in Calgary, Alberta this September. This will be the first time the Wildlife Society Conference has been held in Canada! Calgary is a vibrant, stimulating city, situated on the edge of the prairies, with the Rocky Mountains providing a panoramic view to the west. We encourage you to come visit, learn, explore, and relax. The area offers a wide variety of urban and other attractions, including Banff National Park and scenic Lake Louise, less than two hours car-travel to the west. The badlands of the Red Deer River and the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology at Drumheller provide other significant attractions (to the northeast, one and one-half hours distant by car).

The technical program for Calgary consists of 8 workshops and 13 symposia. There will also be a broad range of contributed papers and posters. The plenary session, entitled "Energy, Wildlife and People", will interest everyone! As usual, there will be a series of

special events offered for students, including the student-professional mixer, and the ever-popular student quiz bowl. Interesting and enjoyable field trips are planned, as well, including trips to Banff National Park and adjoining Kananaskis Country, and to an endangered species breeding facility of the Calgary Zoo, which is a world-class facility, itself. Fall weather in southern Alberta is usually sunny and mild, but do bring layered clothing.

The interesting and informative program and the great setting and attractions all promise that this year's conference will be a great success, and a memorable experience! So, please put the dates of September 18-22 on your calendar NOW, and plan to come and see us in Calgary this fall.

Conference participants are encouraged to register early to take advantage of substantial discounts. Early registration also greatly facilitates conference planning. **The deadline for early registration discounts is Friday, August 20.** Registration after this date is at regular prices. Payment must accompany all registration forms. The last day for registrations to be accepted by mail, fax, or Internet is Friday, September 3. After then, please wait and register on site. Both full and daily registration options are available.

On-site registration will be held in the Telus Convention Centre's North Building Exhibition Hall Lobby during the following times:

Registration Schedule

Saturday September 18	Sunday September 19	Monday September 20	Tuesday September 21	Wednesday September 22
7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.	7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.	7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.	7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.	7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The main venues for The Wildlife Society's 11th Annual Conference are the Hyatt Regency Calgary and the Telus Convention Centre (North Building). These two properties are adjacent to one another and connected by an interior corridor (called a "Plus 15"). The Calgary Marriott Hotel, which is located one block from the main venues, is also an official conference hotel and will be the site for some meetings.

The Wildlife Society has negotiated special discounted room rates at the Hyatt Regency Calgary and Calgary Marriott Hotel. Be sure to request the group rate for The Wildlife Society when making your hotel reservation. **Rooms will be held only through Friday, August 27.**

For reservations, please call (800) 233-1234 or visit the hotel's website at www.calgary.hyatt.com. You must identify that you are with The Wildlife Society Group. If booking your hotel reservation online, please enter "G-TWLS" in the group code. All reservations must be guaranteed with a credit card or a deposit of one night's room and tax at the time of booking. Failure to cancel a reservation 24 hours prior to arrival will result in a charge of one night's room and tax to the credit card or forfeit of the deposit. No show reservations will be billed one night's room and tax.

Call for Nominations

This is a reminder that there will be 4 positions vacant on the ACTWS Executive following the Calgary TWS Conference in September. They include President – Elect, Secretary/Treasurer and 2 Directors. If you are willing or know someone that is, contact Nominations Director, Dale Eslinger at Dale.Eslinger@gov.ab.ca or call him at 403 528-5205 in Medicine Hat. Please participate actively!

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The Wildlife Society**

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2004 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 one or more Chapter members 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 in the form of a letter of support from one or more Chapter members.

Nominations

Please submit your nominations for both these awards by **April 15, 2004**, to:

Harry Stelfox
Policy & Planning

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

ATTENTION WILDLIFERS!

Just a note to encourage further membership of those who support wildlife interests in Alberta. Please "spread the word" about the ACTWS and the advantages of belonging to the Society, including access to wildlife conferences, exchange of information, and heads-up about activities related to wildlife in Alberta. Please encourage those you know to join!

Chapter News

Be Apart Of The ...

11th Annual Conference of the Wildlife Society

Calgary, Alberta

September 18-22, 2004

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

The volunteer subcommittee is looking for enthusiastic wildlife students, wildlife professionals and TWS members willing to volunteer for the 2004 TWS conference in Calgary. We are in need of approximately 80 participants willing to aid in the registration desk and at each paper session to ensure the conference is a success!

What benefits will you receive as a volunteer?

- Volunteer reimbursements
- Student Chapter Fundraiser(s)
- Volunteer Mixer

Please sign up today by contacting Jim Allen at (403) 845-8237 or James.Allen@gov.ab.ca

Feature Articles

Breakaway Snare Study

The Alberta Research Council Inc. (ARC) conducted a study during 2003-04 on the use of breakaway snares to capture coyotes and release deer. The study was funded by the Alberta Conservation Association, the ARC and the Fur Institute of Canada. A literature search and trapper interviews were conducted to determine the most widely used breakaway devices. Laboratory breaking tests were then conducted on different types of breakaway devices. Based on the literature and the laboratory testing, the most suitable breakaway snare was selected and field-tested to evaluate its performance in holding coyotes and releasing deer.

The average forces required to release breakaway devices were similar to manufacturer's claims under straight pull testing but substantially higher (3.1 to 4.5 times) when incorporated in a loop on a steel pipe that represented the circumference of a coyote's neck. Breaking forces were highly variable. For the breakaway system we field tested, 22 of 22 coyotes (100%) were held and 14 of 15 deer (93%) were released. The only deer held and killed by a breakaway snare was a female fawn that was captured by the neck near the atlanto-occipital vertebrae joint and entangled in a small aspen sapling.

We concluded that most of the breakaway devices available on the market today have too high a breakaway force to allow all but the very large deer to escape. A breakaway snare with a breaking force of 140 ± 10 lbs (straight pull) using a short snare on a solid anchor will hold coyotes and release most deer in Alberta. We also recommended the use of a stop at 12 cm to reduce leg captures of deer. We hypothesised that a lighter breakaway device would be needed with quicker killing locks and for use in brushy areas where entanglement is more likely to occur. Trapper education on snaring is invaluable in reducing non-target captures. Coyote snare placement, loop measurements and configuration are all critical in reducing captures of deer and targeting neck captures on coyotes.

The report is posted at
<http://www.arc.ab.ca/forres/SusEcosystemBU.asp>

Colin Twitchell

Wildlife Parasite and Disease Fact Sheets

Fresh and bright and just in time for spring --- The Fish and Wildlife Division has launched a new series of fact sheets that provide information about some of the common parasites and diseases of fishes and wildlife in Alberta. The Wildlife Disease webpage <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/fw/diseases/Index.html> lists the entire series and those items that show active links lead to the completed full-colour .pdf files. Note: you will have to scan down to see the whole list. Currently we have completed and posted the Index, General Introduction, and 6 individual fact sheets. We have many more in the works and will post them in groups as they are completed.

Entitled *'What's Bugging Wild Critters?'*, the series is intended to answer many of the questions we get, with regards to these amazing animals that live in or on other critters. Hopefully the fact sheets will provide information as well as foster better understanding and perhaps even appreciation of these critters. Please feel free to direct your organization's members to this site as a source of ongoing wildlife disease information.

Margo Pybus

Upcoming Events

12th Annual Scientific Conference of the International Boreal Forest Research Association: Climate Disturbance Interactions in Boreal Forest Ecosystems.

May 3 – 7, 2004 / Fairbanks, Alaska.

For more information:

<http://www.lter.uaf.edu/ibfra/default.cfm>

International Conference on Economics of Sustainable Forest Management.

May 17 – 19, 2004 / Savannah, Georgia.

For more information:

http://www.forestry.utoronto.ca/socio_economic/icesfm/main.htm

2004 Canadian Nature Federation (CNF) Conference and Annual General Meeting.

May 27 – 30, 2004 / Madawaska, New Brunswick.

For more information:

http://www.cnf.ca/members/conf_2004.html

18th Annual Meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology: Conservation in an Urbanized World.

July 30 – August 2, 2004 / New York, NY, USA

For more information:

<http://cerc.columbia.edu/scb2004/>

International Workshop on Balancing Ecosystem Values: Innovative Experiments for Sustainable Forestry.

August 15 – 20, 2004 / Portland, Oregon, USA.

For more information:

<http://outreach.cof.orst.edu/ecosystem/>

16th International Conference on Ecological Restoration: Restoration on the Edge.

August 24 – 26, 2004 / Victoria, B.C.

For more information:

http://www.serbc.info/public/ser_seminar

Interdisciplinary Research and Management in Mountain Areas (IRMMA) Conference.

September 23 – 26, 2004 / Banff, Alberta.

For more information:

<http://www.banffcentre.ca/mountainculture/mtnconferences/irmma/>

9th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Network (CARCNet).

September 24 – 27, 2004 / Edmonton, Alberta.

For more information:

<http://www.carcnet.ca/>

Monitoring the Effectiveness of Biological Conservation.

November 1 – 5, 2004 / Vancouver, B.C.

For more information:

http://www.fcsn.bc.ca/index.cfm?fuseaction=conferences.display&conference=monitoring&CFID=1624629&CF_TOKEN=8606630

Recently Published

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