

The Alberta Wildlifer

Official Newsletter of the Alberta Chapter, The Wildlife Society
Fall 2005, Vol. 16, No.2
Editor: Dave Hobson

President's Message

Hello everyone, I hope all of you are having a great summer!

The Executive have been quite busy in the period following the March 2005 Conference with Conference Call meetings in May and June, before taking a bit of a hiatus for July and August and scheduling the next meeting for late September.

Further to discussions at the business meeting in March, where members left the decision with the Executive on how to further sponsor the book project, *Fur Fish and Feathers*, a hundred years of fish and wildlife management in Alberta, the Executive in consultations with the book society group, agreed to provide a cash donation of \$2,500 and a pre-purchase of 100 books (estimated at \$25 per copy wholesale), for a total of \$5,000. The Chapter can then use the books for speaker gifts, etc. or sell them with profits going to the Chapter.

We now have Chairs (leads) in place for all the major Chapter committees, including:

- 2006 Annual Conference – Terry Kowalchuk
- Conservation Committee – Brett Calverley
- Awards Committee – Dave Scobie
- Scholarships Committee – Jim Allen
- Nominations and Elections – Kirby Smith
- Newsletter Liaison – Kirby Smith
- Endangered Species Conservation Committee – Doug Collister

If members have any issues, concerns or suggestions please contact the appropriate Committee Chair with your comments or if you can add some expertise to the

above committees your help is always welcomed and appreciated.

Planning has already started for the 2006 ACTWS Conference to be held in Lethbridge, March 9-12, 2006, watch for more information in upcoming newsletters.

Other ongoing issues that have been under discussion by the Executive include: letter to the Ombudsman regarding the land swap in southern Alberta, access management, wind turbines, and bison fencing on public lands.

The low point of the summer has to be the CN train derailment and oil spill that impacted wildlife and fish habitats on Lake Wabamun. I'm sure we will hear more about this issue as it unfolds.

Ernie Ewaschuk

President

Editors Note

Once again I'd like to thank those who took the time to provide some very excellent feature articles for this issue. Without their effort this would be a very short and dull newsletter indeed.

Chapter News

Announcement of the 16th Alberta Chapter-TWS Annual Meeting

March 9, 10 & 11, 2006 in Lethbridge, Alberta

Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details.

Alberta will be hosting 2 international conferences this coming year. ACTWS chapter members are organizing both conferences. Kirby Smith (780-723-8248) is the lead for the 11th North American Caribou Workshop in Jasper on April 23rd to 26th, 2006 and Jon Jorgenson (403-678-5508 ext. 291) is the lead for the 15th Northern Wild Sheep and Goat Council Conference in Kananaskis on April 2nd to 6th, 2006. My guess is that they will be looking for volunteers. I've included announcements and call for papers for these conferences at the back of this newsletter.

Northwest Section Awards

The Arthur S. Einarsen Award was established in 1966 to recognize outstanding service to the wildlife profession by individuals residing in the area encompassed by the Northwest Section of The Wildlife Society. The Wildlife Administrator Award was designed to recognize and reward excellence in the areas of wildlife program development and administration. The Awards Committee encourages nominations from the membership of the Section by 3 January 2006 for both awards. Nominations benefit from supporting documentation so please contact Lowell Suring for more details if you have deserving candidates in mind. Awards will be presented at the annual meeting scheduled for 8-10 March 2006 in Boise, Idaho (see the following website as details are posted: <http://www.ictws.org/>) **Lowell Suring, Forestry Sciences Laboratory, 316 East Myrtle Street; Boise, Idaho 83702; voice: 208.373.4351, FAX: 208.373.4391, e-mail: lsuring@fs.fed.us.**

Alberta Forest Product Association Survey

Chapter member Rick Bonar has provided the following request from the AFPA:

The Alberta Forest Products Association, a non-profit association representing the forest products industry in Alberta, is sponsoring an independent survey which will help the forest industry better understand public values, perceptions and priorities regarding the development and maintenance of Alberta's forestlands.

Using Nobel Prize winning market-research technology, The Alberta Forest Usage Survey is now online and will be available until November 30th. The AFPA is encouraging as many people as possible to take part in this unique opportunity.

As a part of this effort, I would like to ask you to not only take this survey yourself, but to pass this message to your colleagues, to your friends, and to organizations you may be involved with or in.

By informing as many people as we can, we can help ensure every Albertan has the opportunity to provide their views on how the province's forested lands should be used, managed, preserved and conserved.

To take part in the survey, please click on the link below:

http://www.cambridgestrategiessurvey.com/cgi-bin/ciwweb.pl?hid_bypass=FOR1,,9681N56

The AFPA has hired the independent consulting firm Cambridge Strategies Inc. to create, coordinate and manage the survey. For further information, please contact Stacey Sankey at stacey@cambridgestrategies.com.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certification benefits Wildlife in Alberta

Chapter member Simon Dyer has provided this announcement.

On September 12, 2005, Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries (Al-Pac) achieved Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification of their Forest Management Agreement Area in northeastern Alberta

FSC certification is a voluntary and market-based conservation tool whereby products that originate from a well-managed forest can be tracked from the forest to the store shelf. The idea behind FSC certification is that consumers concerned about conservation and environmental protection will prefer to buy products from well-managed forests. FSC was founded in 1993 by representatives from environmental groups, the timber industry, the forestry profession, indigenous peoples' organizations, community forestry groups and forest product certification organizations.

FSC certification requires that forest management practices are economically viable, socially responsible and environmentally sound. FSC certification of the Al-Pac FMA required the implementation of ecosystem-based forestry practices that have numerous benefits to wildlife, including:

- Harvest planning based on approximating natural disturbance patterns
- Retention of 5% of merchantable trees within all cutblocks as wildlife habitat
- Thresholds to maintain old forests of all merchantable strata

- Voluntary deferral of over 200,000 hectares of FMA lands to act as ecological benchmarks to compare to harvested areas
- Identification and special management of High Conservation Value Forests
- Requirements to develop specific and measurable management strategies to conserve woodland caribou habitat

Al-Pac is the first forest company in Alberta, and the first in the boreal forest of western Canada to achieve FSC certification. A public summary of the assessment report is available at www.smartwood.org or on the Al-Pac website at www.alpac.ca.

For more information please contact Simon Dyer, Forest Ecologist at 780 525 8049 or dyersi@alpac.ca.

Stick Nest Surveys in the Foothills of West-Central Alberta

Lindsay Barnes, Undergraduate, University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George.

Christopher Spytz, Hinton Wood Products, a division of West Fraser Mills Ltd. (chris.spytz@westfraser.com)

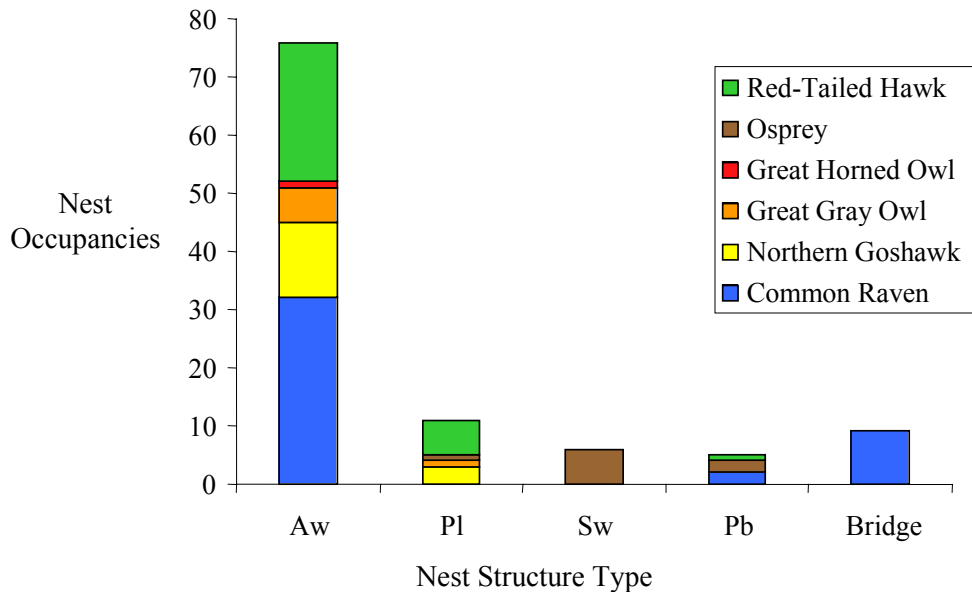
Many raptor species nest in large, platform-like structures built of small interwoven sticks and twigs. Hinton Wood Products (HWP), began to inventory large stick nests during the winter of 1999. The following spring, annual occupation surveys began and have continued during the nesting season. The study area was located in the vicinity of Hinton, situated in west-central Alberta and centralized within the HWP Forest Management Area, occupying the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

Nest locations were located incidentally and reported to HWP primarily by forest workers, researchers and the general public. The confirmed nest sites were inventoried, which involved collecting information specific to the nest and the habitat surrounding the site. The nests were visited once annually during the nesting season, beginning in April to the end of July, to determine nest occupancy. Each nest was visited so long as it remained intact. During visits, every effort was made to minimize disruption to any nests or birds. Visual observations were made at a distance and vegetation sampling was conducted during fall or winter when the nest was vacant.



Northern goshawk nest south of Hinton, Alberta

A total of 132 nests have been documented to date. Northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentiles*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), common raven (*Corvus corax*), great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*), and great gray owl (*Strix nebulosa*) were observed to be occupying nests. Typically, stick nests were situated within 100 m of a waterbody and within 50 m of an opening. The majority of nests were found in hardwood tree species; 81% in trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) and 3% in balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*). 11% of nests were observed in lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), and 1% in white spruce (*Picea glauca*). 4% of nests were constructed on or beneath bridges.



The number of occupancies for bird species by nest structure type (Aw = trembling aspen, Pl = lodgepole pine, Sw = white spruce, Pb = balsam poplar). N = 107.

Nest heights varied over a wide range. For example, common ravens and red-tailed hawks nested at tree heights from 10 to 25 m. Common ravens regularly built nests attached to bridge sites at a height of 5 to 8 m above ground (and water). The nest height of Northern goshawks, great gray owls and ospreys ranged from 13 m to 20 m. Average stem diameter of nest trees was 39 cm. All osprey nests were located in snags and included the largest diameter trees. The minimum nest-tree diameter identified was a Northern goshawk nest in a 16 cm lodgepole pine. Apart from this nest, Northern goshawks nested in trees of 23 cm to 43 cm in diameter. Red-tailed hawk and common raven nest trees ranged in diameter from 25 cm to 50 cm.

Since the project onset, 471 visits have been conducted, resulting in 107 nest occupation discoveries. Ospreys were generally observed to reoccupy nests, year after year. Great gray owls, were observed on seven visits, however, five of those occurred during the 2002 nesting season.

The project contributes valuable information regarding birds that use large stick nests and their nesting habitat, which allows HWP to make more informed planning decisions and protect nest site locations. In 2005, we began to increase survey effort in conifer stands to help examine the significant difference in the amount of nests located in hardwood versus conifer tree species. It is anticipated that continued monitoring and more detailed analysis will reveal further patterns related to raptor nesting habitat preferences in the forest management area.

Acknowledgements

HWP would like to thank all of the individuals who contributed locations of nest sites. Warren Schaffer identified potential locations for several nests early in the project. Vegetation measurements were completed by Joanne Mann and Lindsay Barnes.

Upcoming Events

[3rd Integrated Water Resources Management \(IWRM\) Workshop: Watershed Stewardship: Management Instruments for Success](#)
January 25-26, 2006 / Regina, Saskatchewan

[59th Annual Meeting of the Society for Range Management: Rangelands to RainForests](#)
February 11-17, 2006 / Vancouver, British Columbia

[2006 Annual Conference and AGM of the Alberta Society of Professional Biologists - Water: Science and Politics](#)
March 25-28, 2006 / Calgary, Alberta

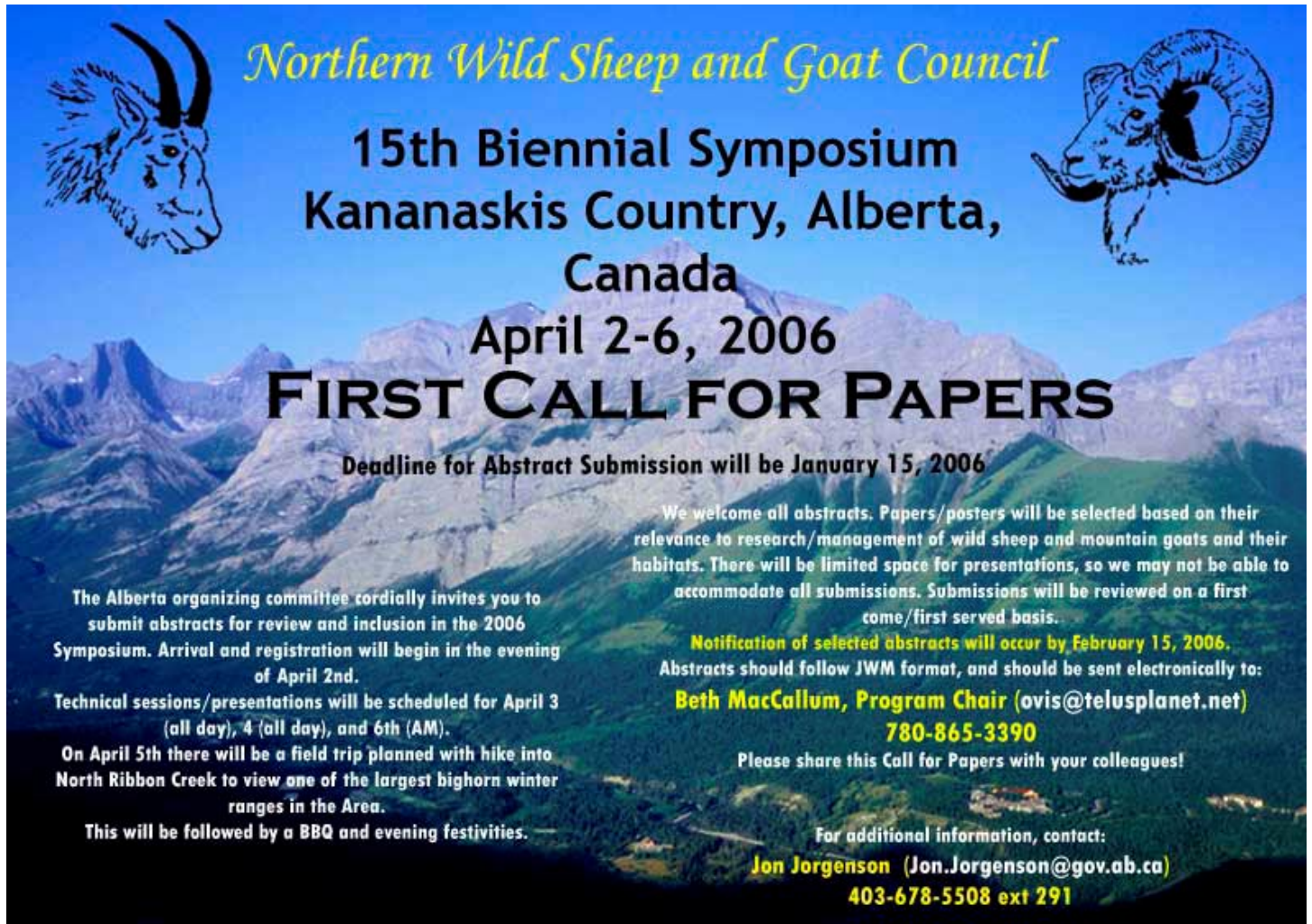
[International Conference on Hydrology and Management of Forested Wetlands](#)
April 8-12, 2006 / New Bern, North Carolina, USA

[2006 Alberta's Environment Conference](#)
May 2-5, 2006 / Edmonton, Alberta

[Boreal Conference 2006: Dynamic Forests, Dynamic Thinking](#)
October 2-5, 2006 / Cochrane, Ontario

For information on these and other conferences, check the following website.

<http://www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/library/conf.html>



Northern Wild Sheep and Goat Council

**15th Biennial Symposium
Kananaskis Country, Alberta,
Canada
April 2-6, 2006
FIRST CALL FOR PAPERS**

Deadline for Abstract Submission will be January 15, 2006

The Alberta organizing committee cordially invites you to submit abstracts for review and inclusion in the 2006 Symposium. Arrival and registration will begin in the evening of April 2nd.

Technical sessions/presentations will be scheduled for April 3 (all day), 4 (all day), and 6th (AM).

On April 5th there will be a field trip planned with hike into North Ribbon Creek to view one of the largest bighorn winter ranges in the Area.

This will be followed by a BBQ and evening festivities.

We welcome all abstracts. Papers/posters will be selected based on their relevance to research/management of wild sheep and mountain goats and their habitats. There will be limited space for presentations, so we may not be able to accommodate all submissions. Submissions will be reviewed on a first come/first served basis.

Notification of selected abstracts will occur by February 15, 2006.
Abstracts should follow JWM format, and should be sent electronically to:
Beth MacCallum, Program Chair (ovis@telusplanet.net)
780-865-3390

Please share this Call for Papers with your colleagues!

For additional information, contact:
Jon Jorgenson (Jon.Jorgenson@gov.ab.ca)
403-678-5508 ext 291

1st Call for Papers

for

The 11th North American Caribou Workshop

April 23 – 26th, 2006

The Sawridge Inn, Jasper, Alberta, Canada



Workshop Theme: **Managing Caribou Populations That Are At Risk**

You are invited to submit titles and abstracts for presentations at this Caribou Workshop in Jasper, Alberta. Presentations on the Workshop theme and other topics of caribou biology and management are welcome. Presentations will be 20 minutes in length, including introduction of the presenter and time for questions.

You are also invited to submit abstracts for poster presentations.

All abstracts will be printed in the program booklet.

We would like to develop a draft of the program ASAP. Consequently, we will accept **Titles** for presentations until **February 28, 2006**. **Abstracts** must be received by **March 31, 2006** in order for them to be included in the final program.

Please submit the Abstract Submittal Form (attached) with each abstract, and include the following information:

1. Lead author name, affiliation, mailing address, phone number(s) and email address
2. Names and affiliations of additional authors
3. Title of abstract
4. ABSTRACT (You must use the following guidelines and example; please note that the abstract you submit will be the final that is printed in the program booklet).
5. Biosketch

Abstract Format Guidelines

- Use Microsoft Word (**preferred**) or WordPerfect.
- 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.
- Font size should be 10 point, Arial font preferred.
- No hard returns within a paragraph.
- 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 the 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 Natural Resources Service, #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 your story.....

Biosketch Guidelines:

- Follow first four bullets of abstract format guidelines
- Include pertinent background information on presenter
- Limit to three sentences

Abstract Submission Guidelines:

- The abstract submittal form is included on the following page and can also be found at the Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society Website www.albertadirctory.net/actws
- E-mail (**preferred**): Submit the abstract, other required information and the abstract submittal form to asykes@ualberta.ca.

Or mail to:

c/o Ainsley Sykes
CW405 Biological Sciences Building
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB. T6G 2E9

- No e-mail: Submit a disk with the required information, a hard copy and the abstract submittal form.
- Clearly label all submitted information with the pertinent information (name of lead author, abstract title, and lead author contact phone number and e-mail).

Titles and Abstracts will be acknowledged within three days (unless received during the Christmas break, in which case receipt will be acknowledged by Jan 3/06), and authors will be advised of the final decision on their abstract (and the session in which it will be given) by **April 5, 2006**.

Venue

The conference will be held at the **Sawridge Inn, Jasper, Alberta, Canada**. A block of rooms will be held until **March 8, 2006**. Room rates are \$90.00 Single/\$100.00 Double and this includes a buffet breakfast. Triple and quadruple occupancy available at an additional cost of \$20.00 per person. Conference rates will be available 2 days prior and 2 days after the conference. Reservations can be made by calling **1-800-661-6427** or **1-780-852-5111**. Indicate that you will be attending the **North American Caribou Conference** and quote reservation number **300679**.

For more information contact regarding the 11th NA Caribou Conference contact:

Kirby.Smith@gov.ab.ca

780-723-8248

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.

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