

The Alberta Wildlifer

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Official Newsletter of the Alberta Chapter, The Wildlife Society
Spring 2008, Vol 19 No.1,
Editor: Kristie Derkson

President's Message

Greetings,

First and foremost, thank you to all those involved in the conference planning, preparation, and delivery. We would not have been able to deliver if it were not for the volunteers and sponsors. Even though the number of oral presentations was down, the conference was successful in drawing in approximately 150 registrants and raising \$4000 for the scholarship fund. This is a good springboard for 2008-2009.

If you have a quick look at the Executive List, you will notice that we still have two key executive positions that are as of yet unfilled: President-Elect and Secretary/Treasurer. The primary responsibility of the President-Elect is to coordinate the annual general meeting and conference. Shane Roersma is currently acting as Secretary/Treasurer after very successfully completing his two year term. However, chapter bylaws indicate two year terms for this position, so unless Shane wants it for another two years, we need to find another candidate. This will part of our discussion at our upcoming executive meeting, but if you are interested or know of someone who would be a great candidate, please pass along the information to one of the executive.

Spring is well upon us and many folks are getting prepared to head out into the field. As you are heading out there, keep in mind that we are always on the lookout for updates and articles as to what is happening across the province. Please contact Kristie if you have any information that you would like to pass along via the newsletter and please start preparing those abstracts for submission for the 2008-2009 ACTWS AGM and conference.

If you have any questions or comments about the ACTWS or our activities, please feel free to contact one of the executive.

Brad Taylor

Editors Note

I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you to those of you who provided some excellent, interesting pieces for this issue. This is my first issue as editor and I'm in debt to Dave Hobson for helping me! Thank you to Arlen Todd and Rick Baydack for their contributions and continued updates on the Canadian section. Don't miss the great articles on toads by Gavin Berg (ASRD) as well!

Please be aware that anyone can submit articles, photos or any updates to me anytime throughout the year, and I can place them in upcoming newsletters! This newsletter is a great way to share information and communicate with other members!

Thank You!

Kristie Derkson

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SAD? Go Toading!

By Gavin Berg (ASRD)

Have the long dark winter months found you hibernating under a blanket in your home? Did you spend the winter avoiding the nip and bite of Jack Frost? In December or January, did you fall asleep at night, longing for the call of the boreal chorus frog? If so, you MAY be a sufferer of SAD (Spring Amphibian Dependency). Luckily for you, Canadian toads (*Bufo hemiophrys*) provide the perfect opportunity to turn your SAD into HAPPY (*Hemiophrys*, Amphibians, People, Ponds and You)!

Spring is here and for a toad that means that the ground is warming up and after hibernating in the soil below the frost line for almost 8 months, body functions are starting to return to normal. As the spring progresses toads will emerge and congregate in and around wetlands where the males will start a cacophonous chorus of calls to attract the females. This is your ticket to a world of vitamin D that will change your SAD to HAPPY!

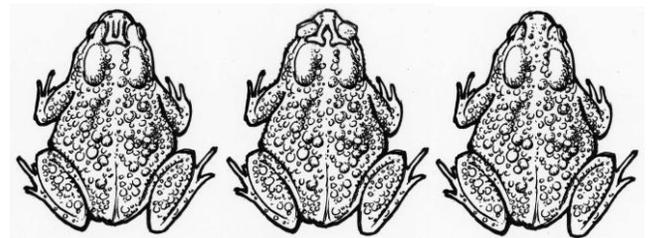
Along with four frog species and two salamander species, Alberta is home to four species of toads: the plains spadefoot (*Scaphiopus bombifrons*) the Great Plains toad (*Bufo cognatus*), the boreal (western) toad (*Bufo boreas*) and the Canadian toad. The general status of the Great Plains toad and the plains spadefoot is considered to be *May be at Risk*, while the boreal toad is considered *Sensitive* in Alberta. Unfortunately, very little information is known about the Canadian toad, and therefore it is difficult to assign a status to this species.

In order to fill in the current data gaps, Alberta Fish and Wildlife and the Alberta Conservation Association are kick starting a program to identify important breeding habitats for the Canadian toad across its historical range in Alberta. In the spring and summer of 2008, project researchers will be conducting surveys at select ponds where populations of the toads currently exist according to historical records. The goal of this initial phase is to

develop effective and efficient survey methods that can be applied to a province-wide census that is planned for the spring and summer of 2009.

One of the main survey techniques to be tested will be call surveys. This involves listening for Canadian toad calls around wetlands from dusk to 1 or 2 in the morning when amphibians are most actively calling. Techniques investigated will explore how far away calls can be detected, what weather conditions allow for the greatest detection, and what time of the day provides the most effective results. As well, call playback techniques are going to be attempted to determine their effectiveness in stimulating non-calling toads to vocalize. The call of the Canadian toad is a harsh and high-pitched trill of short duration.

Additionally, visual surveys will be conducted to identify Canadian toads in their habitat. This will involve surveys in the spring for strings of eggs that can be compared to the similar eggs of the boreal toad (which in some areas of the province has an overlapping range) and the Great Plains toad (which also has an overlapping range in some areas of the province). Visual surveys will also be conducted in the summer to determine the presence of tadpoles and young-of-the-year leaving the pond. Identifying the eggs and young of the year has proven difficult in the past, so this will be explored further. Adult Canadian toads can be distinguished from boreal and Great Plains toads by their cranial crests (a bony plate on the top of their head). The cranial crest of a Canadian toad is a set of two parallel ridges on the top of its head, and sometimes forms a complete bump between its eyes. In comparison, the crest of the Great Plains toad has ridges that form a 'V' between the eyes, while the boreal toad does not have a cranial crest at all.



Left to right: Canadian toad, Great Plains toad, and boreal toad; note cranial crests (Line Drawings by Brian Huffman).

Here is your chance to get HAPPY! We are currently looking for assistance from individuals who spend time in or around wetlands, or are just outdoor enthusiasts. In order to increase our knowledge we ask that any observations of Canadian toads in Alberta be provided to the Alberta Volunteer Amphibian Monitoring Program (AVAMP).

(<http://www.ab-conservation.com/frog/monitoring>). Additional information regarding AVAMP can be found using the toll free number 1-877-777-FROG or contacting Kris Kendell at Kris.Kendell@ab-conservation.com. Additionally, any volunteers that would like to go in the field to test the survey protocols mentioned above are welcome to contact Gavin Berg at Gavin.Berg@gov.ab.ca.

By getting outside and exploring our provincial wetlands, while assisting us in our quest to gain more information on the Canadian toad, you will definitely become HAPPY! Thank you!



Canadian Toad. (photo by Lynn Hallson)

Chapter News

Congratulations are due to the following recipients of awards presented at the 2008 Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society Conference in Red Deer, Alberta (February 28- March 2, 2008):

Dedicated Service Award: Jan Ficht

Distinguished Service Award: Mark Boyce



Jan Ficht being awarded by Kirby Smith

Mark Boyce being awarded by Simon Dyer

Photos courtesy of Dave Hobson.

UPDATE ON CANADIAN SECTION

Arlen Todd, President, Canadian Section of TWS

Calgary, Alberta

Bonjour, mes amis (*good day, my friends*). Preparing these remarks provides a periodic opportunity to review progress and fine-tune priorities for the coming months. In a few words, the past few months have been a blur! The Canadian Section has been working both productively and effectively on the following key priorities since being launched in mid-August of 2007:

- (1) **Establishing positive relationships** with TWS, existing adjoining sections in the USA, and chapters and student chapters of TWS within Canada.
- (2) **Building new relationships** with existing wildlife management agencies (e.g., mid-winter contact with Canadian Wildlife Directors) and other conservation organizations in Canada, while seeking to establish the Section as a **new, national partner in wildlife management and conservation**.
- (3) **Informing and establishing effective dialogue with existing (charter) members** of the Section, through the newsletter and other communication mediums, while **laying the groundwork for increasing membership within the Section**. Please contact either myself or secretary-treasurer, Jon Jorgenson (Canmore), if you would like membership information, or an application form.
- (4) **Facilitating and supporting the establishment of additional jurisdictional, student and potentially regional chapters** of TWS in Canada. To elaborate, this priority is incredibly important for the long-term because new chapters are the infrastructure for variously meeting needs of actual and potential members, growing the membership, and improving our perceived relevance as we continue seeking to position the Section as a national partner in wildlife conservation and management. To that end, **I am pleased to report that our student chapters have recently grown, with the formation of a new student chapter at the University of Northern British Columbia! Welcome to UNBC!** We now have 'sub-units' (chapters, student chapters) of TWS in **four** different provinces of Canada, as compared to only **two** provinces about a year ago. **Clearly the Canadian Section is growing!** Also, there is enormous potential and great merit in forming more sub-units in the Section. To that end, I am truly encouraged by currently existing momentum to form new sub-units; there seems to be great interest in forming additional chapters in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec (*la belle province*). Please contact me if you want additional information on these initiatives. The Executive Board of the Section stands poised to assist, as do members of TWS staff in Bethesda, Maryland. There is also great potential for further student chapters in *Alberta*.
- (5) **Promoting improved cooperation and enhanced communication between existing sub-units** within the Section.
- (6) Effectively **engaging the Section's membership** through a variety of initiatives, including establishment of the Conservation Affairs Committee.
- (7) Various **priority initiatives to get the new Section operational**, such as establishing a bank account; preparing and continually updating membership lists; the never-ending, always important search for prospective leadership candidates and other volunteers; and planning and organizing the upcoming annual conference and business meeting at Gimli, Manitoba, during **August 14-17th** (with the Manitoba Chapter and the Central Mountains and Plains Section).

I would like to comment briefly on the last point, about our collaborative efforts to plan, organize and deliver the upcoming meeting and annual conference. As many members realize, **these initiatives can take a huge amount of effort on behalf of a section or a constituent chapter, or both**. The prevailing approach to such annual

conferences, in Sections of TWS that I am familiar with, seems to be to have a highly technical annual conference, with the conference rotating through chapters in the Section. It is also my understanding that many established chapters of TWS have a highly technical annual conference, just as the Alberta Chapter does. It is not my intention to decry such technical conferences, or to denigrate their worth—they are incredibly valuable! However, I do point out that the current model (annual technical conferences, with the section conference rotating through chapters) was formulated quite some time ago, before TWS itself held its own annual conference. Accordingly, it may be time to pose a few, perhaps provocative questions on behalf of the Canadian Section, as follows:

- Do **all** Sections and Chapters truly ‘need’ to have a highly technical conference **each** year?
- Is the prevailing model (as I have described it), the best one to perpetuate in the Canadian Section, over the next few years? With only two provincial chapters (at present), we could soon run out of willing hosts!
- As sub-units of TWS, should we be promoting and **seeking to maximize attendance at the international conference of TWS**, rather than offering a series of local or regional conferences which ‘compete’ with the international conference, intentionally or otherwise?
- Is there value in having a less technical, less presentation-based annual conference from time to time?
- Is there merit in partnering with other professional organizations, or conservation organizations, to deliver a joint annual conference?
- What is the best way forward for the Canadian Section over the next handful of years?

I would be very pleased to receive feedback on any or all of these questions, as well as on related or even unrelated topics (Phone: 403-297-7349; e-mail: arlen.todd@gov.ab.ca).

Thanks for the continuing pleasure and privilege of serving as President of the Canadian Section. Thank you, as well, for the opportunity to provide this update, and to pose some questions. I hope to hear from you! I also hope to see you in Gimli, in August. It will be a very worthwhile event!

Merci beaucoup!

CANADIAN WILDLIFE SOCIETY SECTION REP'S REPORT

Rick Baydack, University of Manitoba

April 2008

Spring is on the way on the Canadian prairies, but the snowpack continues to linger a little while longer than most of us might hope. My sensitivities are especially honed as I have just returned from the 73rd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference that was held in Phoenix, Arizona from March 24-29. The Conference and associated meetings of The Wildlife Society and Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies were as usual filled with lots of enthusiasm, and provided excellent opportunities for information-sharing, networking, and getting together with wildlifers from across North America. The venue also provided the setting for 2½ days of mid-year meetings of The Wildlife Society Council, supplemented by the typical 4-inch (oops – 10 cm) binder filled with background reading materials!

Highlights of the mid-year Council meeting and various TWS activities in which I have been involved since my December Report follow, but let me lead off by saying that I am increasingly impressed by the very strong effort that The Wildlife Society is taking to fully include Canadian perspectives in its affairs. I have been welcomed and made to

feel like a true contributor by TWS staff and Council members. ‘Canadianizing’ the day-to-day business of TWS is no small task, but increasingly language such as ‘provincial/state,’ ‘federal,’ and ‘international’ is becoming the standard. This is great to see after so many years of attempts that did not seem to make a difference.

Council accepted the **Mid-year Report from Executive Director** Michael Hutchins who indicated that TWS finances and memberships were in good shape. Support for TWS activities has been received from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, and the Disney Corporation, with the Canadian Wildlife Service investigating a sponsorship role for publications. Michael also advised that options for moving TWS HQ in Bethesda, Maryland are under consideration, and that TWS was ensuring that hunting, trapping, and fishing considerations were not being lost in the shuffle with the various changes taking place at HQ. In fact, the next issue of *The Wildlife Professional* will contain an article from Council members that describes our various experiences with hunting and other outdoor pursuits, and shows the importance that TWS leaders place on our hunting heritage.

Publications and Information Technology Director Phillipa Benson described the multitude of updates that have taken place to our website, www.wildlife.org. The website is now supported by additional servers with greater capacity and band width so that delays in information processing should be minimized. As well, new IT staff have been improving various software features with the intent that past problems will be eliminated. BUT, please let us know if you are experiencing any difficulties with the on-line system. TWS cannot fix things if they don’t know that they are broke, so please let me (baydack@cc.umanitoba.ca) or Lisa Moll (lisa@wildlife.org) know the instant that you experience any problems with the website. We really are there to help! As well, Council accepted the recommendation from the Publications Committee that Dr. Nova Silvy, Texas A&M University, be the Science Editor for the 7th edition of the ‘Techniques’ Manual.

I would like to encourage each and every one of you to consider submitting an article to *The Wildlife Professional*, our new information magazine that is designed to offer members the opportunity to express viewpoints, describe their wildlife activities, offer opinions, suggest innovations, and share anything else that might be of interest. *The Wildlife Professional* also reserves space for Chapter and Student Chapter reports, and I encourage officers of those entities to get their message out - Canada and Canadian wildlifers have a lot to contribute!

Materials about the 15th **TWS Annual Conference** being planned for Miami, Florida from **November 8-12, 2008** will be available in early June. The later date offering is in the hopes of avoiding the hurricane season in south Florida – interesting what needs to be considered in organizing these conferences! Be sure to register early so that you don’t miss getting a room at the conference hotel. Note that future conferences will be held in Monterey, California in 2009, Snowbird, Utah in 2010, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 2011. And now for some great news..... Since conferences are rotated among Sections, Council has added the **Canadian Section** into the rotation for either **2012 or 2013!** Now we need to decide on a location. Manitoba makes some sense for either year since the local Chapter has been active for 30+ years, waterfowl and grouse hunting along with walleye and catfish fishing would be considered a draw, and a bid could be developed quickly by Chapter members. Alternately, a 2012 bid from BC was suggested for its scenic venue and northwesterly location, or a 2013 bid from Ottawa as our Nation’s capital in the northeast of the continent. But other possibilities are likely available, so please let me know if you have any ideas and/or an interest in getting involved! The Canadian Section Executive will no doubt be debating this issue over the next several months.

The final day of the Council meeting was a facilitated discussion on the **TWS Strategic Plan**. This was the first time that the draft Plan had been considered by the full Council, so many great ideas and improvements were provided

through the facilitated group discussion. It was most interesting to hear that the Plan contained 9 Goals, 33 Objectives, and 186 Strategies, and that 51% of them were already being addressed! A final draft of the Strategic Plan will next be considered by the Strategic Plan Committee of Council (of which I am a member), and then will be distributed to all members for final review and comment. Hopefully the Plan will be operational in the next short while

Finally, I would like to welcome your input into the **TWS Collegiate Wildlife Programs Committee** that I have been asked to Chair. That Committee is investigating ‘Trends In, What’s Given, and What’s Needed’ from academic institutions for future wildlife professionals. The Committee has broken our responsibilities into the following areas with the names of the individual leads of each provided:

- Inventory of University/College Wildlife Programs – Mark Wallace
- The Changing Face of University/College Wildlife Programs – John McDonald
- Drivers of the Change in Programs – Dan Edge
- The Delicate Balance Between Theory vs. Practice – Darren Miller
- Course Work vs. Experience-based Learning – Tom Hughes
- The Role of TWS Certification (Accreditation) in Defining Wildlife Program Content – EJ Williams
- The Role of Other Entities in Defining Wildlife Program Content – KC Jensen
- Identification of ‘Customers’ and Customer Needs – Dave Schad
- What should the ‘Ideal’ Wildlife Program Look Like – Dean Stauffer
- How do we Encourage Institutions to Build the ‘Ideal’ Program – Wini Kessler

If you have any opinions and/or viewpoints on these matters, or would like to become involved in this important initiative, please let me know as soon as possible.

In closing, remember that the **1st TWS Canadian Section Summer Meeting** will be held in Gimli, Manitoba from **August 14-17, 2008** in conjunction with the 53rd TWS Central Mountains and Plains Section Summer Meeting. You don’t want to miss this exciting, inaugural event for our Section. Additional details are provided elsewhere in this Newsletter. I know that ‘Friendly Manitoba’ will live up to its name, and that wonderful networking and socializing opportunities along with a exceptional technical and field programs will make this a trip to remember for years to come! See you soon.....

Upcoming Conferences

23rd Biennial Pronghorn Antelope Workshop: Pronghorn Antelope Conservation in the 21st Century: Continued Existence in a Changing Landscape
May 13-16, 2008 / Canmore, Alberta

2008 International Model Forest Network Global Forum
May 16-21, 2008 / Hinton, Alberta

35th Annual Alberta Trapping Association (ATA) Conference
June 20-22, 2008 / Grande Prairie, Alberta

14th International Interdisciplinary Conference on the Environment
June 30-July 3, 2008 / Edmonton, Alberta

2008 Annual International Conference of the Wildlife Disease Association
August 3-8, 2008 / Edmonton, Alberta

TWS Canadian Section Summer Meeting
August 14-17, 2008/ Gimli, Manitoba

138th Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society: Fisheries in Flux: How Do We Ensure Our Sustainable Future
August 17-21, 2008 / Ottawa, Ontario

2008 Annual Meeting of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
September 7-12, 2008 / Saratoga Springs, New York, USA
Ottawa, Ontario

15th Annual Conference of the Wildlife Society
November 8-12, 2008 / Miami, Florida, USA

2008 North American Lake Management Association (NALMS) Lake Louise Symposium: Lake Management in a Changing World
November 11-14, 2008 / Lake Louise, Alberta

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

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

Recently Published

Please send any references of recently published articles to kjderkson@ualberta.ca. Articles of interest include those authored by ACTWS members on Alberta wildlife.

ACTWS Executive Contact List - 2008/9

Position	Name	Work Phone #	email
President	Brad Taylor	403-562-3288	brad.taylor@ab-conservation.com
President-Elect	Unfilled		
Past-President	Anne Hubbs	403-845-8235	anne.hubbs@gov.ab.ca
Secretary	Unfilled		
Treasurer	Unfilled (Thanks to Shane Roersma for helping with this)		
Director	Robin Gutsell		Robin.Gutsell@gov.ab.ca
Director	Tammy MacMillan		tmacmillan@teraenv.com
Director	Joseph Litke		jlitke@fieraconsulting.ca
Conservation Committee	Blair Rippin		rippin@shaw.ca
Director	Jason Young		Jason.Young@gov.ab.ca

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Lethbridge Community College

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Lakehead University

Contact: Douglas Vincent (Pres.)

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Photo by Kristie Derkson 2007