

THE ALBERTA WILDLIFER

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ACTWS President's Report Kashif M. Sheikh

To follow up implementation of the ACTWS Strategic Plan; a strategic review and brainstorming session was held at Alberta Innovates at the end of September. Strategic Plan was developed in 2013 and approved by the chapter membership in 2014. Detailed discussions were held regarding student's engagements, volunteer's role, funding, outreach, and relationships with the Canadian and Parent sections of the TWS. It appears we are making progress under all key service areas identified in this plan; however, based on the voluntary nature of executive and committees; the progress has been reasonable while we continue to strive for more. If you may have comments or views especially regarding membership services, awards, external relations and student development or the strategic plan; please let us know.



I hope you have had a chance to review the letter we received back from the Minister of ESRD regarding chapter's concerns on new Alberta wetland policy. While certain areas still needs to be resolved; the response does provide some intro into how this new policy envision management of wetlands in Alberta. Of particular interest is how relative wetland value is being perceived as a tool in sustainable management of these precarious ecosystems of our beautiful landscape. Letter suggested that further tools will be made available between September 2014 and April 2015 including merged wetland inventory and a relative wetland value map.

Planning activities are underway for the annual ACTWS 2015 conference to be held in Edmonton from March 20-22. This conference is a special one due to 25 years celebration of the chapter's achievements in

the province. Conference is gearing to focus on the critical topic of Conservation Advocacy and plans to bring some great minds to the stage with immense experience of testing and trying this major aspect of conservation. Watch out for this conference, as there is planning underway to offer special prizes, travel grants, reduced fees for students and young professionals. More information on the abstracts and papers should be out soon. If you may have any ideas how to make this event even more productive and fun-loving, please email Jason Fisher (jason.fisher@albertainnovates.ca) or myself conswild@gmail.com

Student should feel encouraged with the ACTWS while we are trying to create more opportunities for their successful participation in the ACTWS led activities and events. In this regard; our newly recruited student director Kerri Krawchuk is doing a great job with all sorts of things related to student engagements and communications. For student engagement/ advancement send your thoughts to Kerri at kkrwachu@ualberta.ca

The topic of Wolf bounties has been active since the Jasper conference in last March and there have had been some interests on this one. You may have seen an written article from Lu Carbon and Mark Boyce on the subject. This topic requires more discussion and views from the membership.

After consultation with the membership; it seems obvious that chapter's based promotional/ marketing items is an area of interest. We are looking into this and may have some new stuff for you to consider at the upcoming March conference in Edmonton. If you may still have some new ideas, please let us know.

Please also note that ACTWS website may not be completely functional these days. The parent TWS has made few serious changes to the way website is hosted and the content is managed. Layla Neufeld our web designer and leader on this front has been in touch with the TWS and changes may be coming to the actws website as well as its access.

Have a wonderful fall.



**BEST
DAM
CONFERENCE
IN
ALBERTA.**

**March 20-22nd, 2015
Edmonton, Alberta @
Delta Edmonton Centre.**

Scholarships – Grants – Wildlife Talks – Job Contacts – Feast – Dance

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THE ALBERTA CHAPTER - THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**



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The call for papers and posters will go out soon. Please consider submitting your work for presentation at the Alberta Chapter's Annual Conference and AGM in March.

World's Biggest Market Crashes and You Didn't Even Know It

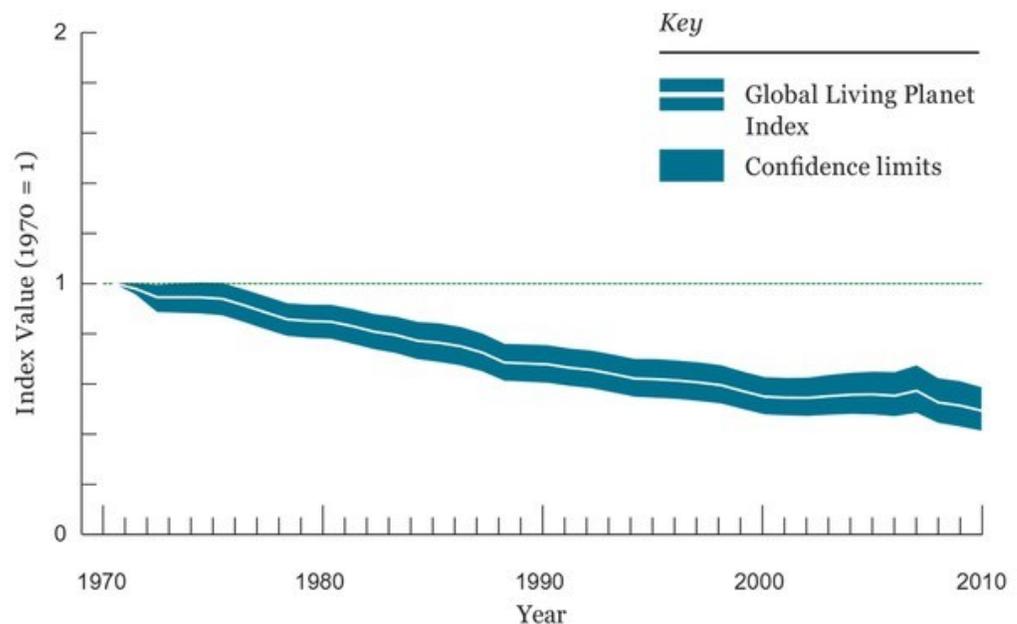
By Tom Randall
September 30, 2014

“life on Earth is not a bull market”

If animals were stocks, the market would be crashing. The chart below shows the performance of an index that tracks global animal populations over time, much like the S&P 500 tracks shares of the biggest U.S. companies. The Global Living Planet Index, updated today by the World Wildlife Fund, tracks representative populations of 3,038 species of reptiles, birds, mammals, amphibians and fish.

To say the index of animals is underperforming humans is an understatement. More than half of the world's vertebrates have disappeared between 1970 and 2010. (In the same period, the human population nearly doubled.) The chart starts at 1, which represents the planet's level of vertebrate life as of 1970.

Global Living Planet Index Drops 52%



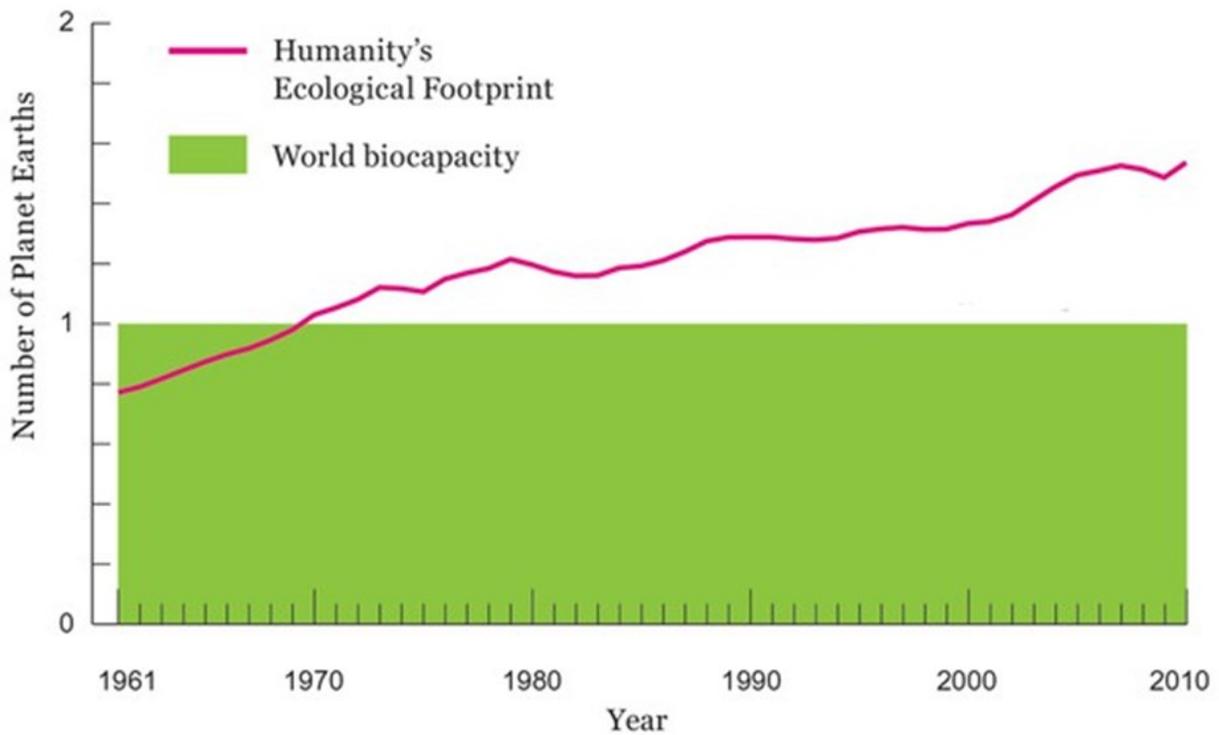
It makes sense that the WWF is framing of biodiversity loss as an index that may look more familiar to financial analysts than environmentalists. The research group's message is as much economic as environmental: Not only do animal populations represent valuable natural systems that economies rely on, in many cases they are actual tradable goods, like stocks of wild fish.

"In less than two human generations, population sizes of vertebrate species have dropped by half," writes WWF Director General Marco Lambertini. "We ignore their decline at our own peril."

Humans are currently drawing more from natural resources than the Earth is able to provide. It would take about 1.5 planet Earths to meet the present-day demands that humanity currently makes on nature, according to the WWF. If all the people of the world had the same lifestyle as the typical American, 3.9 planet Earths would be needed to keep up with demand.

The report reads like one of the "alarm bells" U.S. President Barack Obama referenced in his climate change speech last week. Unfortunately, according to the WWF, the effects of climate change are only starting to be felt; most of the degradation of the past four decades has other causes. The biggest drivers are exploitation (think overfishing) responsible for 37 percent of animal population decline, habitat degradation at 31 percent, and habitat loss at 13 percent. Global warming is responsible for 7.1 percent of the current declines in animal populations, primarily among climate-sensitive species such as tropical amphibians. Latin American biodiversity dropped 83 percent, the most of any region. But the toll from climate change is on the rise, the WWF says, and the other threats to animal populations aren't relenting. For social and economic development to continue, humans need to take better account of our resources. Because right now, life on Earth is not a bull market.

Humanity Takes More Than Earth Can Provide



Reprinted from : <http://mobile.Bloomberg.com/news>

Interview with a Biologist:

Jan Ficht

- **where did you go to school**

I attended McMaster University in Hamilton Ontario. I received a general BSc (basically a pre-med course)

- **brief overview of career**

After graduation I worked as a research technician in the Botany Department of McMaster University, conducting research on the lichen beach ridge systems of Hudson Bay. Then 7 years with the Canadian Wildlife Service as a technician and biologist working on caribou and muskoxen range studies. The majority of my career was spent with Alberta Fish and Wildlife initially as a caribou research biologist and eventually as a wildlife biologist in Edson, retiring in 2009.

- **highlights of career**

The best parts of my career were the field studies in many parts of arctic Canada from the Hudson Bay lowlands, through the eastern arctic to the High Arctic Islands. I spent many months (primarily in summer) working from tent camps (large and small).

As well, the many years studying and

developing management plans for Alberta's mountain and woodland caribou populations was a unique opportunity and a challenge.

- **biggest change(s) observed during career**

Changing from a field biologist to a desk and meeting room biologist.

- predictions for challenges and/or rewards in the future

Sorry I have no idea what's coming down the tube. As Kirby said "predictions are for gypsies" – he was quoting someone else – maybe Will Rogers. I guess what I believe is that we find our own rewards – no one else can find them for us.

- **advice to students and young biologists**

Wildlife management is all about people management and politics will be a constant stumbling block. Keep good science as your guide. (yah and who doesn't know that?)

"Wildlife management is all about people management and politics will be a constant stumbling block."

- **who were your mentors or "famous" people you admire**

Don Thomas was a solid field biologist and taught me so much about collecting and assessing the data. Bill Wishart encouraged me when I had my doubts and brought the older knowledge forward for this 'young know-it-all' to learn.

- **if retired - current pursuits**

Gardening, cooking, sewing, natural history, reading, watching the bird feeder.

- **favourite place(s) to visit in Alberta**

Jasper National Park

Jan and Shevenell Webb during an ungulate survey.



Mystery Photo

Name the species.

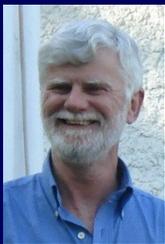
Rats!! Too fast!



Photo: Dave Hobson

Canadian Section Representative's Report

Art Rodgers, Ontario Ministry
of Natural Resources
art.rodgers@ontario.ca



Canadian Section Update

Over this past summer there were numerous staff changes at TWS headquarters. Katie Edwards, TWS Professional Development Coordinator, started a new position as the Wildlife Management Specialist with the Fairfax County Police Department in Virginia beginning in mid-August. Katie will continue to handle Professional Certification and Development duties for TWS on a contractual basis. At the end of August, Mariah Simmons started in the role of Wildlife Programs Coordinator as the liaison between TWS headquarters and subunits. Many thanks to Katie for all she has done to help our members in the Canadian Section and best of luck as you pursue new opportunities. And a big welcome to Mariah! We look forward to working with you.

Government Affairs Director Laura Bies began an extended maternity leave in August. Before beginning her leave, Laura worked with Assistant Director of Government Affairs & Partnerships Keith Norris to complete a draft Policy Toolkit for the Conservation Affairs Network (CAN). The toolkit was created to assist with the ongoing implementation of the Network and provides information on policy processes and guidance on how Conservation Affairs Committees (CAC) and other TWS members can engage in policy issues. Notably, the toolkit includes listings of Canadian Federal Policy Publications and Canadian Federal Land Management and Natural Resources Conservation Agencies, as well as a section on the Canadian Legislative Process. The Canadian Section Conservation Affairs Committee has been asked to review the material before the toolkit is finalized – if you are interested in helping with that review let me know and I'll be happy to share it with you.

At the end of August, we had another big surprise when Lisa Moore, TWS Director of Publishing and Communications and Editor-in-Chief of *The Wildlife Professional*, announced that she will be taking a new job at the National Wildlife Federation in September as Editorial Director/Editor-in-Chief of their *National Wildlife* magazine. Lisa will be sorely missed, to say the least. She managed the TWS Publishing and Communications Department through some very difficult times, yet she elevated *The Wildlife Professional* to one of our premier membership benefits. Thank you ever so much Lisa. It's been fantastic working with you and I have no idea how we will ever find someone to replace you! Take great care and best of luck.

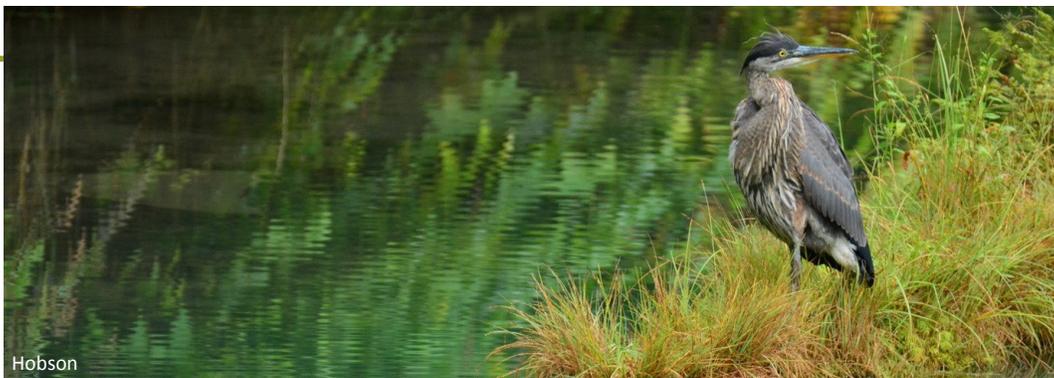
Before Lisa announced her departure, she was able to work with Executive Director Ken Williams to reach a final agreement with Wiley for the publication of TWS journals that will commence at the completion of our current contract in 2015 and continue for 7 years. The new agreement will provide stability to our TWS publications but also recognizes our need for flexibility in how we publish our journals in the future (e.g., online, open-access), allowing us to make changes when we feel they are appropriate.

The search for a new TWS Director of Publishing and Communications was carried out in September and we had more than 100 applications. We narrowed the list to four candidates who were invited for followup in-depth interviews during the first week of October. Any one of the four could have served capably but in the end the position was offered and accepted by Dr. Nancy Sasavage. Nancy has extensive training in science and the scientific method, and many years experience in scientific editing and magazine production for both a scientific and non-scientific readership. Her training, background and experience make her a very good fit for the position. We look forward to meeting Nancy at the TWS Council meeting and Annual Conference in Pittsburgh and working with her in the years to come.

With all of the pending changes at head office and internal resources shifted to fundraising and conference activities, work on the redesign of the TWS website has slowed down. Chief of Operations Ed Thompson estimates roughly 30 hours of work are needed to complete it – hopefully before the Annual Conference in late October.

The Annual Conference is also the time we welcome new Council members. We all look forward to working with the newly-elected Vice-President, Bruce Thompson (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife), and new Section Representatives Bob Lanka (Central Mountains and Plains) and Paul Johansen (Northeast Section). Of course we will deeply miss those retiring from Council; Gary White, John McDonald, and especially our very own Immediate Past-President Wini Kessler. Many, many thanks for your years of dedication and hard work on behalf of wildlife professionals across the U.S. and Canada.

I hope you were able to get to the Annual Conference, but if not you could start planning to attend the Canadian Section Annual General Meeting, March 13-15, 2015. If you didn't get to Pittsburgh then we sure hope to see you in Saskatoon (it's a lot closer!). Watch for updates on the Canadian Section website - <http://wildlife.org/Canada/>.



Hobson

Conservation Committee Update



By
Ken Crutchfield

“good wild-
life science
is integral to
better deci-
sion making
and sharing
that
knowledge
is important

Committee members include: Mark Boyce, Ken Crutchfield (Chair), Kristie Derkson, Lorne Fitch, Matthew Pyper, Larry Roy

Committee attention has been focused on the following subjects.

TWS Conservation Affairs Network – work is underway to modify ACTWS By-laws to recognize the March ACTWS AGM decision to re-align the Conservation Committee as the Conservation Affairs Committee. This change will better align ACTWS with TWS efforts to establish effective working linkages of TWS, Section and Chapter Conservation Affairs committees. A copy of the proposal approved at the AGM is available on the ACTWS website (<http://wildlife.org/alberta/>). Expectation is to have the draft document available for ACTWS Executive by late November.

Alberta – Species at Risk – Recovery Plan Updating - FEHA (Ferruginous Hawk) Recovery Plan Update - Doug Collister is the ACTWS representative on the Alberta Endangered Species Conservation Committee. Besides formal committee work the ESCC has responsibility for updating Species Recovery Plans. All this work puts an excessive demand on an individual volunteer member. ACTWS membership was solicited for their interest to become involved with a task to update the Ferruginous Hawk Recovery Plan. Based on the feedback that Doug received from interested individuals, it became apparent that the ACTWS may want to examine the possibility of providing some remuneration of travel costs a member may incur to represent ACTWS. The Conservation Affairs Committee will be submitting a proposal to ACTWS Executive on the merit and options for proceeding. **A question for the membership is would travel assistance improve the willingness of ACTWS members to volunteer their time to more actively participate in these public consultation processes on behalf of ACTWS.** Alberta

Alberta Wetland Policy (http://www.waterforlife.alberta.ca/documents/Alberta_Wetland_Policy.pdf) – released in 2013 the timetable for implementation has an effective date of September 1, 2014 for the settled area (White Area) and September 1, 2015 for the Green area. The New Alberta Wetland Policy will replace the 1993 Wetland Management in the Settled Area - An Interim Policy and Beyond Prairie Potholes - A Draft Policy for Managing Alberta's Peatland and Non-Settled Area Wetlands. Technically the Policy for the White Area is

now being implemented; however AESRD continues to work on the Implementation Guide. Consequently, any field assessments completed prior to May 31, 2015 will follow “interim guidelines”, i.e., a variation of the 2007 “no net loss” approach to a policy that now focuses on the functionality of the wetland, e.g., the economic value of a wetland will establish a benchmark for the cost to replace a wetland. Notwithstanding the slowness in implementing the policy it establishes a comprehensive policy for the entire province, including both the White and Green Areas. The goal of the Alberta Wetland Policy is to maintain wetland areas in Alberta such that the ecological, social, and economic benefits that wetlands provide are maintained, thereby helping to ensure that Albertans have healthy watershed that provide safe and secure drinking water supplies, healthy aquatic ecosystems, and reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy. In recognition of the high rates of wetland loss in some watersheds, this policy also encourages Albertans to be proactive in increasing wetland area.” (Aquality website - <http://www.wetlandpolicy.ca/alberta-wetland-policy/wetland-policy.html>) **Review in this newsletter Minister Campbell’s response to ACTWS feedback.**

Alberta Government is in early stages of updating 1982 Fish and Wildlife Policy for Alberta – (<http://esrd.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/fisheries-management/documents/FishWildlifePolicyAlberta-1982A.pdf>) – members are reminded of the GOA intent to revisit and update the 1982 policy.

As always the membership is encouraged to come forward and become involved, either serving to act as a Chapter representative on any number of consultative committees existing throughout the province and/or becoming involved in the develop of Chapter position statements. Bottom line....the intent is to show the communities we live and work in that as wildlife professionals we adhere to the notion that good wildlife science is integral to better decision making and sharing that knowledge is important to effective wildlife management.



Do you know of any conservation issues that might be relevant to the ACTWS? Let us know.

Mark S. Boyce

Conservation Affairs

Network meeting

2014 October 27

Pittsburgh

The meeting was convened by Keith Norris who is the Assistant Director for Government Affairs and Partnerships for The Wildlife Society, working for Director, Laura Blies.

The motivation for developing the Conservation Affairs Network (CAN) is to ensure stronger communication among chapters and sections of TWS. Currently there are many Conservation Affairs Committees that sometimes duplicate effort and occasionally even take positions that are in conflict with those of other sections or TWS head office. The voice of TWS on policy issues will be strengthened by having an effective CAN.

Keith noted that there must be a chair for CAN in each section to ensure that each unit (student/provincial/state) is connected and that there is a flow of information and a coordination of efforts. Obviously we should not be doing contrary position statements, and all position statements by sections or chapters need to be consistent with position statements by TWS. If necessary, TWS might need to provide travel support for the Government Affairs staff to meet with local/regional governments, although at this time there are no funds allocated for such travel.

Keith has initiated a newsletter beginning on June 1 and plans to send one every other month. The newsletter is distributed to one person in each chapter or section, usually to the conservation chair or the president of the chapter or section. The section or chapter is responsible to distributing these newsletters to members of the local conservation affairs committee.

CAN has a website on our newly revamped TWS website: see "network" or "get involved" and follow the links. All newsletters are posted on-line. In addi-

tion, Keith has developed a Conservation Affairs Toolbox that includes website links, addresses, and contacts for various agencies and government officials. TWS is a member of the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) to facilitate communicate policy in formation among conservation organizations. Working Groups on various topics usually develop position statements or comments, and these working groups can help to identify resource specialists. The toolbox includes fact sheets, technical reviews, and an index to 43 position statements by TWS, and all of this information is available on TWS's website. In the future Keith will be posting letters developed by various chapters or sections to be used as templates for letters to be written by sections and agencies.

Discussion during the meeting recommended that these newsletters and various on-line resources be indexed to facilitate finding information.

A concern was raised that government employees are sometimes unable to sign position statements by TWS if the position is contrary to the respective government. One possibility is to ensure that there is at least one academic or NGO representative who would be free to take positions potentially critical of government.

We need to ensure that Keith Norris has contact information for our section/chapter presidents and conservation affairs representatives, e.g., committee chair.



2015 Trumpeter Swan Continental Breeding Survey

Mark Heckbert, Fish and Wildlife Policy Manager, Alberta Fish and Wildlife Policy Division

“Planning is underway in all jurisdictions across North American in order to deliver the 2015 breeding survey for Trumpeter swans.”

Planning is underway in all jurisdictions across North American in order to deliver the 2015 breeding survey for Trumpeter swans. Completed every five years, such a large survey delivery is expensive and requires many cooperative partners. Due to the wide breeding distribution across several areas of the province and remote setting of most breeding sites, the survey is delivered entirely through aerial census. The majority of the breeding range occurs in the north western part of the province. Trumpeter swans in Alberta now form a substantial (and increasing) fraction of the Rocky Mountain population (48.5%), and an important fraction of the species' global population (10.1%). Productivity, as measured by brood size and the number of cygnets in the post-breeding population, is higher in Alberta than in any other jurisdiction within the range of the Rocky Mountain population. In Alberta, the survey is scheduled to occur between August 20-September 10, 2015.

The cooperative delivery of range-wide surveys in Alberta started back in 1985. Between 1985 and 2005 a total count census was undertaken in the province. In preparation for the 2010 survey, wildlife managers in many jurisdictions including Alberta understood that the increasing breeding range and density of Trumpeter swans necessitated a change in survey design. So, in 2010, and for the first time, a modified random stratified block survey design was implemented in Alberta for most of the breeding range. Two smaller polygons of breeding habitat, the Beaver Hills east of Edmonton and the Pincher Creek-Waterton area contained densities of breeding Trumpeter Swans that could still be censused in one day through the total count method. The survey results of Alberta Trumpeter Swans between 1985 and 2010 are shown in Table 1.

Alberta plans again to utilize a modified random stratified sampling design for the 2015 survey. We hope to be able to continually improve on the stratification design in order to deliver the most cost-effective and efficient survey yet! Interest in supporting the 2015 survey has been high, and in addition to funding and logistical contributions from the provincial and federal governments, groups like the Friends of Elk Island Society and other corporate partners see the value in contributing to the survey.

Table 1. Counts of trumpeter swans (white swans and cygnets) in Alberta, 1985-2010.

Survey Year	Total Swans Observed	% Change in Total Population from Previous Survey
1985	373	First Total Survey
1990	457	+22.5
1995	792	+73.5
2000	995	+25.5
2005	1 682	+69.0
2010	2 821	+67.5

Eastern Yellow-bellied Racer Discovery!

Sandi Robertson, ESRD, Medicine Hat

Last July I announced a new species of bird in Alberta (American-golden plover). This year I am thrilled to announce that there is a new species of snake in Alberta! The eastern yellow-bellied racer (*Coluber constrictor*) was discovered in the Lost River valley in the extreme south-eastern portion of Alberta. Yellow-bellied racers have been spotted incidentally by crews conducting surveys for other grassland species and by Onefour staff during the past 15 or so years. At long last, a team of biologists went in search of racers to attempt to confirm their occurrence in Alberta and locate their winter hibernaculum. The team was led by biologists from MultiSAR and included biologists from ESRD, as well as volunteers. During 5 days of surveys in late September, 7 individual racers were discovered! Two were found with other snake species near a hibernaculum. Alberta can now claim this fast, agile snake as one of its own!

The eastern yellow-bellied racer is a striking long, slender snake with a green back and yellow belly. It is considered a species of southern climates threatened by habitat destruction; perhaps it is headed north where the grasslands of south-eastern Alberta are relatively healthy and intact. Researchers have speculated that racers could occur south of the Milk River and east of Coutts, so they may be even more widespread in southern Alberta. Only further surveys and research will clarify their extent in Alberta. The known range of the eastern yellow-bellied racer is south-central Saskatchewan, Montana, North Dakota, Iowa, Texas, and Louisiana.

Albeit this is not the first observation of yellow-bellied racers in Alberta, nevertheless the discovery of racers during these targeted surveys was exciting. The verification of this species creates an exciting new research opportunity and adds to the list of rare, irreplaceable, and magnificent species, such as sage grouse, short-horned lizard, ferruginous hawk, burrowing owl, and swift fox, in south-eastern Alberta. Maintaining the current intact native prairie is vital to the conservation of racers and other prairie species in Alberta. The yellow-bellied racer is listed as Threatened in Canada; Alberta will assess the population and determine its status.



By Dave Hobson

“WNS has a mortality rate in bats that exceeds Ebola in humans and is more easily transmitted. “

Monitoring Bats in Alberta

As white-nose syndrome (WNS) continues to spread in North America, the need to monitor our bat populations takes on greater importance. Thankfully for Alberta, we haven't seen WNS in Canada west of Ontario yet. It probably is just a matter of time though. Manitoba has significant karst habitat and bat hibernacula in the interlakes region and this may lead to the karst geology and bat hibernacula of northern Alberta and the NWT leading in turn to the mountains. So far, our bat populations are healthy.

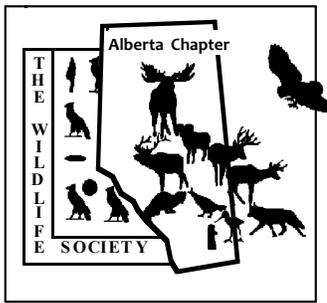
For those who may not know, WNS is a devastating fungal skin disease of bats, especially those that hibernate in cold caves. It originated in Europe where bats appear to be immune to the fungus and first showed up in North America in 2006 in a cave in New York state, where bats are clearly not immune. WNS has a mortality rate in bats that exceeds Ebola in humans and is more easily transmitted. Up to 99% mortality has been seen in hibernating populations. In eastern North America, the largest source of spread are the bats themselves. It is suspected though that human vectors have played a role.

Until recently, hibernacula counts have been the main way we've monitored bat population trends and only in a very few caves. Cadomin Cave, our largest known hibernacula, has been surveyed since the early 80's and has seen bat numbers grow since the cave was closed for winters. To a lesser degree, we've also surveyed Procrastination Pot in Jasper National Park and Wapiabi Cave near Nordegg. In the past, our main concern was human visitation in winter leading to too many arousals and energy loss in the bats. Now we also monitor for WNS. This is done in 3 ways. First, we look for unusual numbers of dead bats both in and outside the caves. WNS causes bats to arouse from hibernation and

the energy loss leads to starvation. Starving bats then leave the caves in a desperate search for insects, often dying in large numbers on the snow outside. We also check hibernating bats visually for evidence of the fungus on the faces and wings of the hibernating bats. So far we've seen none. Finally we've begun to swab the soil below hibernating bats and the bats themselves for the fungal spores. Again, nothing so far.

This last summer, Alberta has begun to participate in a North America wide survey. The continent has been divided into a matrix of survey blocks that are randomly surveyed using acoustic recorders. In Alberta, as a pilot project, we surveyed blocks in the Hinton and Medicine Hat areas. The methodology uses acoustic recorders at 4 stationary locations for a week and a mobile road transect through the survey block. We are hoping to survey in a variety of Natural Subregions next summer. The survey units chosen will depend on accessibility and people willing to participate. This is where you come in. If you have an interest in participating in this survey, please contact either Lisa Wilkinson or Dave Hobson and let us know.





Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society

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Don't forget we are also
on Facebook

Upcoming Events

ALBERTA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY ANNUAL CONFERENCE

March 20-22, 2015, Edmonton

<http://joomla.wildlife.org/Alberta/>

NORTH AMERICAN WILDLIFE AND NATURAL RESOURCES CONFERENCE

March 8-13, 2015, Omaha, Nebraska

http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=348:north-american-conference-10&catid=37:NAWNRC&Itemid=61

ECOLOGY & MANAGEMENT OF THE BOREAL WOODLAND CARIBOU HABITAT IN WESTERN CANADA

A symposium organized by Alpha Wildlife Research & Management Ltd., Sherwood Park, Alberta

May 20-22, 2015, University of Alberta, Edmonton

THE 4TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FORESTS AND WATER IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

July 6-9, 2015, Kelowna, BC

<http://www.forestandwater2015.com/>

SOCIETY FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGY

Aug 2-6, 2015, Montpellier, France

<http://iccb-eccb2015.org/>

Do you know of an event that should be advertised here?

If so, contact one of the editors.

Footnotes from the Editor



If you have wildlife and trail camera photos that you would like to share please send them to Lisa or Dave for inclusion in the newsletter.

Mystery photo:

Great Blue Heron

Camera shy!



59823

ALBERTA
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

*Office of the Minister
MLA, West Yellowhead*

August 11, 2014

Dr. Kashif Sheikh, President
Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society
PO Box 4990
Edmonton AB T6E 5G8

Dear Dr. Sheikh:

Thank you for your July 15, 2014, letter regarding the Alberta Wetland Policy. Premier Dave Hancock has reviewed your comments and asked me to respond on behalf of the Government of Alberta.

The Alberta Wetland Policy will address increased growth and development pressures across the province; balancing our unique geography and industry while providing clear and consistent guidance for wetland management.

In terms of the impacts of development on wetlands, avoidance is the preferred response, followed by minimization. Where these two options are not feasible or prove ineffective, wetland replacement is required. The Alberta Wetland Policy clearly states that all wetlands in Alberta will be subject to avoid, minimize and replace criteria, with the exception of ephemeral wetlands which will only be subject to avoidance and minimization criteria. The Alberta Wetland Policy recognizes the need for more emphasis on the avoid stage of the application process for development by enabling a number of new avoidance tools.

These tools will be made available between September 2014 and April 2015, and they include a Merged Wetland Inventory and a Relative Wetland Value Map. These instruments will enable potential *Water Act* proponents to gather important wetland data before commencing the application process, ideally avoiding wetlands of high value. In addition, the approval process includes an analysis of rationale for non-avoidance, including assessment of alternative options, and an analysis of minimization and mitigation measures for both direct and indirect wetland impacts.

Regarding the weighting of wetland functions to obtain a relative wetland value, the Alberta Wetland Policy recognizes the multiple functions and benefits that wetlands provide to society. However, the implementation team recognizes that value systems are difficult to assess and will vary significantly throughout the province. For this reason, wetland functions will be weighted equally in the assignment of relative wetland value in the initial stages of policy implementation. This may change as more work is completed in this area.

Regarding the society's concerns about the 1:8 replacement ratio for lower valued abundant wetlands, replacement techniques currently available are generally unable to replace a high value wetland. For this reason, ratios differ on the values of the wetland being replaces and the new wetland. If you would like to discuss this in detail, please contact Thorsten Hebben, Section Head Surface Water Policy, in our Edmonton office. Mr. Hebben can be reached at 780-644-5302 or at thorsten.hebben@gov.ab.ca.

Implementation of the Alberta Wetland Policy includes the development of the wetland replacement protocols and guidelines which will address many of your concerns about replacement occurring outside of the area of initial impact. Replacement opportunities close to the site of impact will be given priority wherever possible.

It is expected that less than five per cent of replacement dollars resulting from wetland losses on the landscape will be allocated to non-replacement options such as improving Alberta's wetland mapping and inventory database. The Alberta Wetland Policy is designed in such a way that replacement dollars will almost entirely be directed to on-the-ground replacement activities.

Wetlands are a vital part of Alberta's landscape and they benefit us in immeasurable ways. Through the new policy, the government is working to ensure wetlands remain protected, now and into the future.

Sincerely,



Robin Campbell
Minister

cc: Honourable Dave Hancock, QC
Premier of Alberta
Minister, Innovation and Advanced Education

Thorsten Hebben
Environment and Sustainable Resource Development



Trans Mountain Expansion Project

✉ Email: info@transmountain.com | ☎ Phone: 1.866.514.6700 | 🌐 Website: www.transmountain.com

July 3, 2014

Jim Allen
Alberta Wildlife Society
Box 4990
Edmonton Alberta T6E 5G8

RE: Proposed Trans Mountain Expansion Project – Aquatics Offset Projects

Dear Jim Allen,

We are writing in regard to the proposed Trans Mountain Expansion Project (Project). Since we submitted the Facilities Application for the Project to the National Energy Board (NEB) on December 16, 2013, we have continued ongoing engagement and communications with Aboriginal communities, government agencies and stakeholders.

One of the areas where we are seeking feedback is regarding offset opportunities for any 'serious harm' that construction of the proposed Project may have on fish and fish habitat. 'Serious harm' is defined in the recently amended federal *Fisheries Act* as 'the death of fish or any permanent alteration to, or destruction of, fish habitat.' In the case of the Project, Trans Mountain anticipates this may only occur during the construction phase when avoidance and mitigation strategies alone may not counterbalance the potential for serious harm. In particular, we are seeking your feedback on the Project's Edmonton to Hinton Segment. In the event that potential for serious harm (as defined under the *Fisheries Act*) is identified for any watercourse crossings within the Edmonton to Hinton Segment, Trans Mountain will be required to provide a suitable offsetting plan to ensure the maintenance or improvement of the productivity of commercial, recreational or Aboriginal fisheries for consideration to the NEB (and/or Fisheries and Oceans Canada).

TERA, a CH2M Hill Company (TERA), along with GeoMarine Consulting, has been providing environmental consulting support to the Project and will be assisting Trans Mountain in developing and implementing an offsetting plan if required. TERA is currently identifying potential offsetting opportunities in the general area of the Project's Edmonton to Hinton Segment. A similar, but separate, process is also underway for the British Columbia segments.

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The identification of potential offset opportunities in Alberta is intended to include (but may not be limited to):

- the collection of potential offsetting opportunities resulting from observations made during recently completed aquatic assessments along the proposed route;
- a review of potential opportunities identified during desktop analysis;
- communications with other proponents in the area; and
- communications with various stakeholders.

Input from organizations such as yours will be key in this phase of the offset planning, as well as when we enter the plan's evaluation/prioritization and ground-truthing phases. We would very much welcome a response from Alberta Wildlife Society with any ideas of value to your organization that we could potentially incorporate into the offsetting plan.

If you have questions about the development of an offset plan or the Project or wish to meet in person to review any offsetting project ideas, please don't hesitate to contact us. If you would like more information about the proposed Project and our application to the NEB, we encourage you to visit our project website at www.transmountain.com.

If we have addressed this letter inappropriately and/or it should be sent on to others in your organization, please feel free to do so.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Greg Eisler *B.Sc., P.Biol., R.P.Bio.*

Calum Bonnington *M.Sc., P.Biol., R.P.Bio.*



Senior Aquatics Specialist

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