

The Alberta Wildlifer

Official Newsletter of the Alberta Chapter, The Wildlife Society
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Editor: Lisa Wilkinson

President's Message

Hello Everyone,

There have been a number of exciting happenings over the last few months.

First and foremost, the Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society is now active and lead by former President of the Alberta Chapter, Arlen Todd. This should be very welcome news for all wildlife students and professionals in Canada. The Section will not only increase the relevancy of The Wildlife Society to Canadians, but will also continue to foster cross-border conservation and wildlife management initiatives. The Executive Board of the Section has recently formed and has one conference call to date, with a second planned in late October. Please contact me if you have any items you would like brought to the Section's attention. To read more about the Canadian Section, please see Arlen's article within this newsletter.

The Conservation Committee of the Alberta Chapter has also been busy over the last 18 months. The Committee has provided input into a diverse array of topics, including the grizzly bear recovery plan, the Multi-stakeholder Committee on Oil Sands Development and EnCana's infill drilling in the National Wildlife Area within CFB Suffield; to name but a few. There are also possible opportunities for involvement in programs such as the Water-for-Life Strategy and Alberta Land and Wildlife Stewardship Initiative. The Committee is now discussing the benefits of collaborating with other "Eco" groups and is developing a document on the ACTWS role in enhancing environmental education.

The Executive of the ACTWS has discussed setting aside funds to help support travel and other costs associated with the ACTWS's advocacy role. The intent is that members of the Chapter would provide brief proposals to the Executive, outlining how the funds will be spent and the benefits to the Chapter. The Executive would then review the proposals and allocate funds accordingly, based on pre-defined criteria. This is still in the preliminary stages, but has received general agreement from the Executive. Over the next month,

we'll better define this process so that opportunities to apply for funds are made available soon.

The Executive has also been discussing the next ACTWS conference and meeting. Brad Taylor, President-Elect, has been diligently working on conference preparations. It appears that the conference will take place February 28-March 2, 2008 at the Red Deer Lodge. It should be a lot of fun.

We'll continue to keep you informed on the conference and other topics through the newsletter and the website. And yes, the website is finally back up and running! Special thanks to Layla Neufeld and Dave Poole whose heroic efforts made this possible.

Your input is as always welcome.

Cheers, Anne Hubbs (anne.hubbs@gov.ab.ca)

Editor's Note

I'd like to begin by thanking the people who made contributions to this issue. In this issue you will find an interesting field account about a pack of wolves, a request for Canadian toad observations, a note about the Order of the Bighorn award, and an article on the role of wildlife biologists in environmental conservation, which was written in response to a question posed to a panel at our last annual meeting (there will be another article on the same theme in the winter issue). Under 'Chapter News' (page 7) there is an article about the new Canadian Section of the Wildlife Society, recent publications, and other updates.

Just a reminder that the newsletter is published four times a year and submissions can be made to me anytime throughout the year. The newsletter is the primary mode of communication for the Wildlife Society membership (in concert with the website), and as such is an excellent forum to share ideas and information.

Lisa Wilkinson (lisa.wilkinson@gov.ab.ca)

THE ROLE OF WILDLIFE BIOLOGISTS IN ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, PART I

A Personal Perspective By *Hugh Wollis*

At the 2007 conference of the Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society a panel discussion was held to address concern with the state of the environment and the role of the wildlife professional in addressing this concern. A young woman who was about to graduate said she worried that when she begins work in the wildlife profession she might be forced to compromise her principles in order to keep her job. What kind of job could she get where she could make an impact for the good of the environment but not be forced to compromise her principles by her employer? The panel members gave her a perfunctory answer, I thought, and I was disappointed that question did not elicit more discussion. It got me thinking about my career. Had I make an impact? Did I ever feel that I was asked to compromise my principles and if so, how did I deal with it?

When I began my career, Traditional jobs in biology were either as a researcher churning out innocuous, non-threatening information that gets reported in an obscure scientific journal or as a manager of wildlife monitoring game populations. That landscape began to change in the early 1970's when governments began to ask companies for assessments on the impact of their projects on the environment. My first full time job was with one of the first wildlife consulting companies that had sprung up to provide such assessments for proponents of these major developments. Now, research questions, results and interpretations moved onto the front page of daily newspapers. Questions such as "What is the impact of the Alaska gas pipeline on the migrating barren ground caribou herd?" or "What is the impact of a major hydroelectric dam on the Peace Athabasca delta and its wildlife and the people who depend on it?" You will not be surprised that there may be more than one opinion on the answers to such questions. With billions of dollars involved in both the construction and commodity values at stake, would there be any bias involved or any pressure to sugar coat the results of any research.

Our company had a contract to evaluate the impact of the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline on wildlife and to recommend mitigation where necessary. I tackled the task with the crusading zeal of a recent graduate. I remember asking myself the question "Am I making a difference?" At that time anybody could, and would, do

environmental assessments, including engineers who had no natural science background. (The Alberta Society of Professional Biologists was formed in the '70's to create a designation of "Professional Biologist" to address this concern). My answer to my own question was, that because my wildlife training had provided me with a grasp of how a pipeline could impact wildlife, and because my personal philosophy was that wildlife and the environment were important, I could make better recommendations than could someone else who did not have these qualities.

In 1977 I moved on to a different role - work with the Government of Alberta with what was then the Department of Energy and Natural Resources. One of my tasks was to review environmental impact assessments for the first major energy projects. One such project was the first proposal for heavy oil development at Cold Lake. The proponent wanted to use 800,000 barrels of water from Cold Lake, which was 10% of the outflow of the Cold Lake River. This water was to be heated and injected into the oil formation. It offended me that this company expected to get this clean water free, as though it were of no value to anyone, and then pollute it. I did a rough calculation of the value of this "free" resource. By valuing this clean water at one cent per gallon, over the life of the project - 25 years - the dollar value of the water used worked out to be the same value the company projected for sale of the oil. I sent my report to my boss and the next day the Deputy Minister was in my office saying, "Now, now, the companies have to walk before they run." But guess what - they never used 800,000 barrels of water - they did some recycling and stuff. So had I make an impact? Who knows? And today the water issue for the Cold Lake heavy oil projects is still very contentious.

In the mid 1980's I moved to Fish and Wildlife with the Habitat Protection Section of the Habitat Branch. Several years earlier the government of the day had signaled it viewed the Fish & Wildlife Division as a recreation management agency by placing it in the Recreation Parks and Wildlife Department. Within Fish and Wildlife was a group of biologists who were concerned with the impacts development was having on the wildlife and fish resources. They thought consideration of these effects was an important and necessary part of land use decision making. There was no land use legislation in the Wildlife Act, an act focused mainly on regulating the harvest of game. However at that time the Province administered the Federal Fisheries Act. Using the powers under this act as leverage, the Fish and Wildlife Division aligned

themselves with legislation of the Public Lands Division, the Alberta Forest Service, and Alberta Environment. They pressed for the formation, within the Fish and Wildlife Division of a Habitat Branch containing the Habitat Protection Section. While their colleagues in the Wildlife and Fisheries branches did the traditional activities such as game surveys and sampling fish populations, the field biologists in the Habitat Branch found themselves going toe to toe with oil companies, loggers, municipalities, recreationists, farmers, and others who were making significant changes in the natural landscape of the province. The Habitat Branch developed guidelines and processes to ensure the activities of these users of the land at least considered how to minimize the impact of their activities on wildlife. Needless to say these biologists were not very popular with developers who were accustomed to doing things their own way. Biologists were perceived to be impeding what was later to become known as the "Alberta Advantage." Many battles were lost but, looking back, despite these setbacks, I can see the gains that have been made to incorporate mitigation of wildlife concerns into the design of projects. Many of these can be traced to the efforts of those habitat biologists. The effectiveness of the program was underlined by its unpopularity in certain circles. Some individuals in the political and industrial sector saw habitat protection programs as an impediment to development. This view may have led to the elimination of the Habitat Branch in 1993. However, the rebranded biologists carried on the work within the traditional Wildlife and Fisheries programs. So again my answer is "Yes, the individual biologist can make a difference."

The young lady's question mentioned earlier was "how to deal with a difficult situation where the employer does not want to accept the biologist's data or opinion regarding the impacts of a project, or wants the biologist to change or soften their recommendations. On one occasion, my Public Lands colleague asked me to make a recommendation on whether a particular request for a grazing lease should be accommodated. After a field inspection I outlined my recommendations as to why the request should be denied due to wildlife considerations. After the applicant was informed that his application was denied, I received a call from the local MLA stating that his constituent was interested in grazing and could I have "another look at it." Very cagy. He didn't directly threaten or even ask me to change my recommendation. So I "had another look at it" but of course nothing on the landscape had changed. I forwarded a more firm recommendation. However, the Public Lands colleague

had received the same call, and his boss smelled political pressure and decided to make some sort of mollifying compromise. He asked me whether we could give the applicant half the area, thereby satisfying the MLA with a favorable outcome. I told him that my recommendation stood and it was up to him to make a decision. I said, "if you make a decision that goes against the recommendation I made and give the applicant some or all of the land, then you can come back to me with your second question" which is "how can we mitigate the negative impact of grazing on the land in question". That is a very important distinction. It may seem like splitting hares (a wildlife pun) but it is important to recognize the difference.

So, for the young lady with the insightful question, this is the essence of the answer to your question. In the government the process works as follows, (but in the private consulting world it is not dissimilar). The field biologist, the lowest link in the bureaucratic food chain, makes a recommendation that is unfavorable to the proponent. Anybody higher in the reporting line, from his supervisor to the Minister and ultimately the Premier can change the recommendation. As a field biologist you live with it. There may be legitimate reasons that your recommendation cannot be incorporated, such as a trade off with another resource. Also a Minister might want to make a decision for political reasons, which is his prerogative. But here is the catch: if somebody higher makes the decision, that person takes the credit... and the blame if the decision becomes controversial. They know this so they will try to distance themselves by trying to force the decision back to you. Don't let them make you the fall guy! You have to retain your professionalism and if they want to change your recommendation, they, not you, must do it.

There are ways that this "passing the buck" can occur, some of which can be subtle. A direct suggestion can be made through your supervisor. This is where it is important to understand the decision making process. You firmly state that you have no problem with your supervisor or someone higher making a different recommendation – only they have to make that recommendation, not you. Some people, often ambitious junior managers, think they "know" what the Minister wants so expect you to tailor your response to conform to this perceived position. One minister used this propensity to let it be known informally that he wanted a certain result. Our response as field biologists to this bending of the rules again is to point out that we do not know what the Minister thinks nor is it our job to anticipate his desires. Our job is to provide the best

professional recommendation we can. If the minister wants to provide us with guidance on an issue he will do so by issuing a general Policy or make a ruling directly on an issue. End of discussion!

The second part of the process was illustrated in the earlier example of the grazing lease. If the decision is made to overturn your recommendation and to allow development, the land management agency may then ask you to work out measures to mitigate the impacts on wildlife. This is reasonable. The important thing to remember is that for you this a two-part process – first the management agency requests your recommendation which you make. Then, after that agency makes a decision, it then can make a request for mitigation. It is too easy to slip into the mindset that “they approved these activities before so they will likely approve this one, so here are my suggestions for mitigation.” A colleague found himself in a bind after falling into this trap. He rightly assumed that his recommendations would not stop the project so moved directly to a thoughtful suite of mitigation recommendations. When the project received public flak, and became political, guess where the finger pointed? So don’t omit the first stage because “they” will always want to make you the fall guy if the project becomes unpopular.

In conclusion, I suggest biologists can have an impact without compromising their professionalism or alienating their employers. I do see a potential role for the Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society in the above process. The Chapter could offer support perhaps as a watchdog or receiver of complaints from biologists who are pressured to recant unfavorable data, or who face reprimands from reporting their data.

NINETY SECONDS INSIDE A WOLF PACK

By Matthew Pyper, with contributions from Wallis Johnson

After yet another exciting summer field season I am sure we can all reflect back on some rejuvenating and inspiring experiences. Top that off with successful collection of data and it makes for some great memories. This summer my assistant and I had an experience which was so rare and intriguing that I thought I should share it with the membership. Our experience consisted of finding ourselves fully surrounded by a wolf pack and the corresponding excitement which ensued. This experience from inside a wolf pack was like no other and I knew that the wolf biologists out there would like to

hear the details. My hope in writing this article is to receive feedback from any of you who might have ideas about what might have invoked this encounter.

The adventure which I call “Ninety seconds inside a wolf pack” was an experience, and a feeling of helplessness, like no other. Our morning started off like all the others over the summer. A long cold quad ride into the boreal forest of the Peace River area. The landscape we were in was moderately fragmented by oil and gas activity combined with a few recent cut-blocks over the past years. We had left our quads in one of these cut-blocks and headed into a retention patch which we had visited a total of five times throughout the summer beginning in early May. It was now the end of August and we were at the site for the last time to collect stand structure variables to go along with the biodiversity data we had collected over the summer. As we entered the patch I gave the old familiar “Hey Bear!!!” to clear out any curious wildlife (or so I thought). About two minutes following this vocalization my assistant and I heard a pack of wolves begin to howl and yip in unison no more than 600 metres to the north of us. My assistant and I looked at each other and smiled at the fortune we had of hearing wolves so close. Feeling little need for concern, yet still intrigued about the pack’s intention, we began our data collection and ensured that we were yelling loud and often to let the wolves know we were not their typical prey.

About two minutes after the extended howling by the pack we heard a small yip approximately 500 metres to the east of us. It was nothing more than a short whimper which looking back was an obvious form of communication between the pack. There were no other vocalizations which we detected from this point on. I then heard a series of loud crashes as several branches snapped to the west of us. I looked over and three wolves were staring straight at us. The closest two were only about 15-20 metres away from us and were noticeably smaller in size than the wolf behind them. These two individuals were low to the ground as if in a stalking position. At this time we were surrounded on multiple sides by the pack.

As we rounded up our equipment we began to head towards our quads which were about 500 metres away from us. I initially had to move towards the three wolves to get in the direction of our quads. This movement led the two closest wolves to turn and move away from us. They moved about 5 metres away and then looked back over their shoulder at us. The larger individual behind these two smaller wolves did not move

and stared directly at us the whole time. All three of these wolves were mottled grey in color and had no obvious characteristics. It was evident that the pack had wanted us to look in their direction first as these individuals were the only ones we heard outside of the previous communication.

We continued to move out towards our quads, ensuring we didn't run, and kept a close distance to each other. While still in the patch a wolf circled in behind us and came within 2 metres of my assistant. She made a loud noise directed straight at the wolf and she saw no sign of fear by the wolf as it stood its ground. At this point my assistant noted two wolves parallel to us, one on either side. She commented that she felt like they were trying to split her off as they appeared to be waiting to intersect us. Again she did not recall any obvious markings on the individual but commented that it was larger in size.

We made it into the cut-block and were heading towards our quads when I looked back and saw what in any other situation would have been a picturesque sight. A huge wolf, by far the largest I had seen in the pack, was standing on a knoll and peering over us. It stood still and had a noticeably broad white chest. The size and distinct markings led me to believe this was the alpha male of the pack. At this point we were uncertain of the location of other individuals but had the sensation that they were again regrouping around us. As we started our quads I looked back again and could no longer see the alpha male, and heard a single howl from his direction. We left the site and the event was over almost as quickly as it had begun.

One of the most intriguing factors of this whole event was the patience and persistence of the wolf pack. During the experience it felt like no individual was going to make a move which would spoil a chance at an attack. In addition to this the communication and skill of the pack was simply unrivalled in anything I have experienced before. In total we think there were about 6 to 7 wolves in the pack.

As you could probably tell, I believe that we were being hunted by this pack of wolves. I don't mean to make any assumptions but this was the sensation we felt and looking back on the behaviour of the wolves it seems justified. But yet it seems bizarre that they would attempt a hunt on humans since no wolves were noticeably lean. As I mentioned, there were moderate amounts of oil and gas activity with approximately 5-10 wells being regularly checked by individuals on quads. Maybe the wolves were becoming habituated to the

presence of humans, or maybe there was some other motive on the part of the wolves.

Whatever the reality of the event was, I am intrigued to learn more, and this is why I wrote this article. Anyone who has insights into what might have been going on, or who has stories of similar occurrences please email me so we can discuss further (mpyper@ualberta.ca). Looking back it was simply an incredible experience which in a way took me back to a pure sensation of being fully a part of the natural functioning of an ecosystem. In addition, we now have an incredible story to tell. All I can say is that those variables we were collecting better explain a lot of variance in my data to justify the risk we faced!

WHERE HAVE ALL THE TOADS GONE?

By Connie Browne

University of Alberta researcher Connie Browne and Lisa Wilkinson from Alberta Fish and Wildlife are updating the status evaluation for the Canadian toad in Alberta. However, the task is proving to be very difficult because there are not enough records to accurately determine their historical or current distribution within Alberta. Although the number of Canadian toad observations reported this past decade is greater than the number from the decade before, many people who have searched for amphibians in Alberta seem to have the impression that Canadian toads are becoming increasingly more rare and have disappeared completely from some areas. The increased number of records may just be a result of more people in the province searching for toads and reporting their records. Therefore, it's difficult to say whether Canadian toad populations are currently stable, increasing, or decreasing.

Part of the difficulty in assessing the status of Canadian toads is knowing whether areas without recent observations are because no one has looked in these areas or because there are no or few toads present. We are asking for assistance with this project from anyone who works in the field or who spends much time outdoors. You can help by reporting observations of toads and also by reporting areas you have searched for amphibians but not found toads.

Three species of true toads (family Bufonidae) are found in Alberta: the Canadian toad (*Bufo hemiophrys*), western toad (*B. boreas*), and Great Plains toad (*B. cognatus*). Toads can be distinguished from frogs by

their bumpy or warty skin. The three species can be distinguished from each other by the presence/absence or shape of the bony plates on their head (called a boss). Western toads do not have a boss. Canadian toads have a solid boss in the interorbital region that may be flat, convex, or slightly furrowed. Great Plains toads have cranial crests that form an “L” around each eye and fuse anteriorly to form a boss. Young of the year toads may be tricky to identify because the boss may not be clearly visible.

Western toads are most common in the western half of Alberta, but do occur as far east as Fort McMurray, Cold Lake, and Elk Island National Park. Canadian toads occur primarily in the eastern half of Alberta, but may be found as far west as the foothills. Canadian toads do not occur in the extreme southern parts of Alberta. Great Plains toads only occur in the extreme southeastern corner of the province. The distribution of the Canadian toad overlaps with the western toad and Great Plains toad in some areas.

Please report your toad observations and areas you have searched for amphibians but not found toads to the Alberta Amphibian Monitoring Program using the form found at this link: <http://www.ab-conservation.com/projects/datasheet.pdf>. If possible, please send a photo of all toad observations. Thanks in advance for your help!

- Kim Allan, creator of the Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Edmonton;
- Andy Russell, wildlife author and outdoorsman; and
- Ducks Unlimited Canada, conservation organization.

Nominations must be received by November 1, 2007. A committee that includes Members of the Order of the Bighorn will review nominations and choose those Albertans who have made significant contributions to fish and wildlife conservation in Alberta. Nomination forms are available:

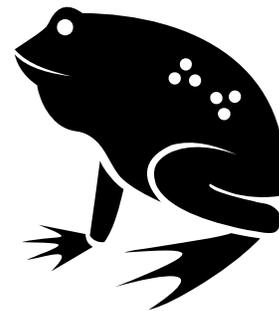
- online at www.srd.gov.ab.ca/fishwildlife/livingwith/orderbig_hornaward/,
- Fish and Wildlife - Sustainable Resource Development offices throughout Alberta, and
- Sue Cotterill, Program Manager
Fish and Wildlife Division
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
11th Floor, Petroleum Plaza, South Tower
9915 – 108 St., Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 2G8
Phone: (780) 427-6749 Fax: (780) 427-8884

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE ORDER OF THE BIGHORN

By Sue Cotterill

The Order of the Bighorn Awards is presented biannually and is Alberta’s most prestigious wildlife conservation award. Nominations for the Order of the Bighorn are now being accepted to recognize and honour the extraordinary efforts of Albertans to conserve provincial fish and wildlife resources. The 2008 ceremony will be held on March 7 in Edmonton.

The Alberta government established the Order of the Bighorn in 1982 to recognize individuals, organizations and corporations for their exceptional efforts to promote wise use of our fisheries and wildlife resources. In total, 99 individuals or groups have been inducted into the Order since it was established in 1982. Traditionally, recipients have demonstrated a commitment to conservation over many years. Some past recipients include:



Chapter News

UPDATE ON CANADIAN SECTION OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

By Arlen Todd

It is an honor and a pleasure for me to provide an update on the recently formed Canadian Section of TWS. As TWS members know from updates in recent publications, Canadian members of TWS voted overwhelmingly in favor of creation of the Section, and the draft bylaws that were circulated for balloting last spring (98% of completed, returned ballots were in favor of the bylaws!). TWS Council immediately approved the formation of the Canadian Section and directed the ad hoc working group that had been in place (Shane Mahoney's lead) to proceed with finalizing and submit a slate of candidates for election. That slate of officer candidates and section representatives was assembled by a team of Canadians and finalized to initiate the electoral process, which was handled by TWS itself. Ballots were sent out to all Canadian members of TWS this summer, for that election of officers, and election results were announced in late August. To make a longer story short, I have been elected as the first president for the newly formed Canadian Section, and am preparing this update accordingly. Additional news about the Canadian Section can be found on the TWS website (www.wildlife.org), including the final bylaws (look under "Canadian Section" for the bylaws).

I personally regard formation of the Canadian Section of TWS as a truly exciting step towards strengthening wildlife conservation and management in the country! Benefits to wildlife professionals and wildlife populations in Canada will both be very substantive. The Canadian Section of TWS will provide a strong unified voice for wildlife professionals, while remaining strongly affiliated with the highly successful organization in the United States. We share a common border with the US, have many wildlife habitats (and populations) in common--often contiguous, and have many common challenges, issues and opportunities. Shared challenges range from highly specific ones, like Chronic Wasting Disease, to incredibly huge, non-specific ones, like global climate change.

Within the Section, my perception of key objectives are: to maintain and strengthen existing partnerships, while building successful new ones; to grow and engage the membership, in ways that are well-balanced in terms of both geographic and political considerations; to increase the direct relevance of TWS to wildlife professionals,

organizations and constituents in Canada. TWS, and an effective, vibrant Canadian Section will help wildlife professionals deal with myriad demands, both traditional and emerging, in fast-changing ecological, technological, social and political climates. Benefits to wildlife conservation and management will also be myriad. Wildlife advocacy will be very important to our long-term effectiveness. However, it will be equally important to build positive relationships and affirm positive approaches, consistent with the best wildlife science available, of course.

The Executive Board of the Canadian Section includes the elected officers, the appointed Secretary-Treasurer, and Chapter representatives from the Alberta and Manitoba Chapters (presidents or their designates). We are also working closely with the elected representative to TWS Council for the Section (Rick Baydack, from University of Manitoba). The Executive Board now includes

Evelyn ('Evie') Merrill (University of Alberta, as past president), Jack Dubois (Manitoba Government, as president-elect), Martyn ('Marty') Obbard (Ontario Government, as vice president), Jon Jorgenson (appointed as secretary-treasurer), Anne Hubbs (president of Alberta Chapter), Derek Kroeker (president of Manitoba Chapter) and myself (section president). Candidate profiles for the elected officers (and Rick Baydack) can still be found on the TWS website, in a news item entitled "TWS announces election results for the Canadian Section".

We have had one conference call of the elected officers and the section representative (Rick), and have a full teleconference of the Executive Board scheduled for later in October. Also, an informal session for Canadian Section members to meet and liaise with themselves and others will be held in Tucson, at the International Conference of TWS (session on Sept. 24/07, 5:00-7:00PM, in the Sagewood Room of one of the conference venues).

We have much to do. We now have the basic executive team in place, and it is a fine one! Additional basic organizing is underway, with committee structure being scoped out, and discussions beginning to occur with key individuals. I am very thankful to have Jon Jorgenson in place as secretary-treasurer, with his long-standing experience with the Alberta chapter in that role, and his other skills and strengths. Additionally, Marty Obbard is beginning to scope out our newsletter and newsletter

schedule, and Evie is already beginning to think about Nominations and Elections for next year. My best single piece of advice to her on that was "Start early!" We are also considering an informal proposal from the Manitoba Chapter for them to co-host (with us) a joint meeting of the Canadian Section and the Central Mountains and Plains Section later next August. If that proposal is accepted by the Executive Board (and the Manitoba Chapter, of course), the joint meeting would be at Gimli, Manitoba during the dates of August 14-17, 2008. Key discussions will occur on that during our next teleconference, which is scheduled for Oct. 22/07.

All Canadian members of TWS have automatically become charter members of the Canadian Section for 2007. For **2008**, interested persons can join in one of two ways:

- **If you are a becoming a member of TWS or are renewing your TWS membership for 2008**, simply check off membership in the Canadian Section, too, on the renewal/membership application form, and include the \$10 (Canadian, US) fee for the Canadian Section membership (isn't that a bargain!?!?!?);
- **If you are not a TWS member, but want to join the Canadian Section**, I suggest that you print a membership application form from the TWS website (www.wildlife.org), complete the full contact information and mail directly to the Canadian Section, along with the \$10 membership fee (students and all others pay the same fee, including associate members who reside out of the Section). Mailing address in that eventuality is: Jon Jorgenson, Secretary-Treasurer, Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Fish and Wildlife Division, Suite 201, 800 Railway Avenue, Canmore, Alberta, Canada T1W 1P1.

If you would like additional information on the Canadian Section, or have an interest in helping out with committees, I would very much appreciate hearing from you (Phone: 403-297-7349; e-mail: arlen.todd@gov.ab.ca). If you might consider running for elected office next year (president-elect, vice president), I encourage you to talk with Evie Merrill (Phone: 780-492-2842; e-mail: emerrill@ualberta.ca).

If you wish, other officers and key individuals can be contacted by e-mail, as follows: Jon Jorgenson (jon.jorgenson@gov.ab.ca); Jack Dubois (jack.dubois@gov.mb.ca); Marty Obbard (martyn.obbard@ontario.ca); Rick Baydack (baydack@cc.umanitoba.ca). The chapter representatives can be reached through the Manitoba and Alberta chapters, of course (Derek.kroeker@gov.mb.ca; anne.hubbs@gov.ab.ca).

Thanks everyone. I look forward to working with you in the exciting, challenging capacity of President of the Canadian Section of TWS during the Section's inaugural year. Many of the most fulfilling things that I have done in a lengthy career have involved TWS, and it is both a pleasure and an honor to be serving in this capacity.

Recent Publications

Collister, D.M. and S. Wilson. 2007. **Territory size and foraging habitat of Loggerhead Shrikes (*Lanius ludovicianus*) in southeastern Alberta**. Journal of Raptor Research 41(2):130-138.

The following abstract will be published in the Proceedings of the Fifteenth Biennial Symposium of the Northern Wild Sheep and Goat Council. The Proceedings will be available in December.

Summary of Health and Trace Mineral Testing of Bighorn Sheep at the Luscar and Gregg River Mine Sites of West-Central Alberta

Beth MacCallum, Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Calgary, 2500 University Drive NW, Calgary, AB T2N 1N4, Canada

Abstract: An important part of reducing disease related risks associated with translocation of wildlife is to understand the disease history of the source population. Bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) from the Luscar and Gregg River mines located in west-central Alberta have been translocated to several locations in the western U.S. and Alberta since 1984. I obtained test results for 282 bighorn sheep captured on the mine sites for health and trace element testing prior to translocation or for release on site. Contagious ecthyma is endemic in bighorns at both mine sites, but general body condition is good and no severe cases have been recorded. Bluetongue virus, parainfluenza-3 virus, infectious bovine rhinotracheitis, bovine viral diarrhea, and vesicular stomatitis were not detected during this study. Low antibody prevalence

against bovine respiratory syncytial virus (0.026) was detected in 1990, but not in 1995. Low antibody prevalence for ovine progressive pneumonia was detected in 1999/2000, but not in 1990 or 1995. Anaplasmosis, Johne's disease, Leptospirosis, and *Brucella ovis* were not present. A number of strains of *Mannheimia* (=Pasteurella) *haemolytica* and *Pasteurella trehalosi* were isolated from the upper respiratory tract of bighorn sheep at the Luscar Mine. At least 28 biovariants were identified, 13 of which were unique. *Pasteurella multocida* was not cultured from this population. Test results for exposure to *Toxoplasma gondii* were negative for 16 bighorn sheep captured in 1990. *Psoroptes* spp. mites were not detected on any sheep and ticks (*Dermacentor andersoni*) were uncommon. This summary presents a general health profile of a high quality bighorn sheep population that has had little, if any, contact with domestic livestock.

The following abstract appeared in the August issue of Ecology Letters (2007) 10:690-700. It is about Alberta wolves that were released in Yellowstone.

Landscape heterogeneity shapes predation in a newly restored predator-prey system

Matthew J. Kauffman, Nathan Varley, Douglas W. Smith, Daniel R. Stahler, Daniel R. MacNulty and Mark S. Boyce*

Abstract: Because some native ungulates have lived without top predators for generations, it has been uncertain whether runaway predation would occur when predators are newly restored to these systems. We show that landscape features and vegetation, which influence predator detection and capture of prey, shape large-scale patterns of predation in a newly restored predator-prey system. We analysed the spatial distribution of wolf (*Canis lupus*) predation on elk (*Cervus elaphus*) on the Northern Range of Yellowstone National Park over 10 consecutive winters. The influence of wolf distribution on kill sites diminished over the course of this study, a result that was likely caused by territorial constraints on wolf distribution. In contrast, landscape factors strongly influenced kill sites, creating distinct hunting grounds and prey refugia. Elk in this newly restored predator-prey system should be able to mediate their risk of predation by movement and habitat selection across a heterogeneous risk landscape.

Conservation Committee

Anyone with suggestions for the Conservation Committee should contact Blair Rippin, input is always welcome [rippin@shaw.ca]

Scholarships and Awards

Tammy MacMillan, a new ACTWS Director, is taking over as coordinator of scholarships and student awards. Please refer to the website or contact Tammy for information on how to apply. Scholarships and awards are presented at the ACTWS annual meeting. tmacmillan@teraenv.com (403) 265-2885.

Memberships

It may surprise you to know that some of you receiving this newsletter did not renew your membership in 2007, so please update your membership as soon as possible. See the website for details or contact Shane Roersma [shane.roersma@lethbridgecollege.ab.ca]

Thanks for supporting your local chapter!

ACTWS Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting is scheduled for February 28-March 2, 2008 at the Red Deer Lodge. Remember to check the website for updates.

