

# The Alberta Wildlifer

## President's Message

In these times of intensive human disturbances on the landscape it is very important that wildlife professionals stay connected with sources of information and support that help them with their career and jobs. The Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society traditionally supports student chapters and wildlife students through scholarships and awards and the annual general meeting. We will continue to support this important segment of people as they enter the field of wildlife management, but we also need to support the adult members through education and networking opportunities. Starting in September the Alberta Chapter will be hosting a series of monthly presentations in Lethbridge as a means to encourage education and networking. The events will be available live to student and chapter members in that area and we are exploring ways to have them available via internet to others that may be interested. Stay tuned for details and thank you to board member Richard

Quinlan for taking the lead in organizing this series called "Wildlife in the Wind".

If you are a member of the Canadian Section you would have had the opportunity participate in the first CSTWS Electronic Education Series on April 5, a presentation by Dr. Lee Foote on "Sustainable Use of North American Wildlife, What Can Africa Teach Us". This was an excellent presentation and the CSTWS is planning another one in October or November. These presentations are free to CSTWS members and I would encourage you to join (annual membership is only \$10) to take part in these. The CSTWS annual general meeting is in Thunder Bay, September 25 and 26, 2011. If you are interested in details on this or the education series check out the website at: <http://joomla.wildlife.org/Canada/>

If you are a member of The Wildlife Society you receive The Wildlife Professional, an excellent publication that is requesting

more Canadian Content in future issues. Each issue is centered on a particular theme(s) (e.g., the spring issue highlighted wetlands and wildlife and the impacts of free-roaming cats). Upcoming issues will highlight the role of zoos in wildlife conservation/management (Winter 2011), wildlife diseases (spring 2012), invasive species management (summer 2012), 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary issue (fall 2012), and endangered species (winter 2012). If you are interested in providing an article on one of these topics or can recommend someone who has expertise in any of these areas from a Canadian perspective, please let me know - I will make recommendations to the editorial board to see if they can contribute.

I encourage you all to be members of these parent organizations as well as the Alberta Chapter to take full advantage of what the Wildlife Society has to offer to support is as wildlife professionals.

Jim Allen

Official Newsletter of  
the Alberta Chapter,  
The Wildlife Society

Volume 22, Issue 2

June 17, 2011

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### Special points of interest:

- ☉ Photos from the ACTWS Annual Meeting
- ☉ Fisheries job posting
- ☉ Upcoming events
- ☉ Mystery egg photo

### Inside this issue:

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# 'Baydack's Banter' - Canadian Section Representative's Report

Water, Water Everywhere.....And What to do with it All! That seems to be the common sentiment in Manitoba this spring as levels in our two major river systems and their many tributaries appear to be exceeding the limits of our knowledge base in terms of flood management. This leads me to recall the famous quotation from ecologist Frank Egler..... *Nature isn't more complex than we think, it's more complex than we can think.* I am sure many of us have often thought that to be the case as we struggle with the best ways to manage and conserve features of our environment, particularly with respect

to wildlife resources and their various needs.

The Wildlife Society of course can provide the support and foundation for us to make the right decisions in the right ways for the right reasons as we strive to achieve *Excellence in Wildlife Stewardship Through Science and Education.* And I continue to be encouraged by the great strides that Canadians have been making in moving our Society forward in so many important ways. Hopefully you realize we now have provincial Chapters in 5 prov-



inces and Student Chapters at 6 Universities/Colleges. Discussions among wildlife biologists and managers are taking place in the remaining provinces and territories and at other academic institutions as we attempt to further expand the sphere of influence of TWS in Canada. Since the local level and its associated knowledge base are so critical to the effective functioning of

## "... *The Wildlife Society Bulletin* resumed publication..."

The Wildlife Society, I find it gratifying to see so many Canadians stepping forward to make things happen. Kudos to all who have been and will be involved!

In terms of recent TWS activities, I trust that you are aware that *The Wildlife Society Bulletin* resumed publication in March 2011. Editor-In-Chief Warren Ballard notes in his Editor's Letter entitled *The Road Back for The Wildlife Society Bulletin* that... *The Bulletin is a journal for wildlife practitioners that effectively integrates cutting-edge science with management and conservation, and also covers important policy issues. The Bulletin will include articles on contemporary wildlife management and conservation, education, administration, law enforcement, and review articles on the philosophy and history*

*of wildlife management and conservation.... The stage has been set to bring back the Bulletin.*

*The Wildlife Society Council and many TWS members have done their part to bring back the Bulletin. Now you must do your part by subscribing. At \$35 per year, you will be hard-pressed to find a better value.*

*Thanks for your support.....* I think that Warren's words speak volumes about the importance of this publication to so many field biologists and wildlife managers. I encourage each of you to take advantage of this opportunity to not only subscribe to this publication but also to submit articles with Canadian content so that our knowledge is effectively disseminated to our TWS colleagues.

Another significant TWS advance in recent months has been our application for "Contributing Member"

status in the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), which would allow TWS leadership or appropriate members to serve and vote on AFWA committees. The application required a letter of support from a state director, which was provided by Scott Talbot, Director of Wyoming Game and Fish Department. TWS should hear the results of our application after the next AFWA Executive Board Meeting. AFWA represents the interests of all provincial and state wildlife agencies across North America, so having TWS at the table should once again enhance our sphere of influence in terms of achieving TWS goals and objectives.

## Baydack's Banter continued...

And finally, The Wildlife Society 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference scheduled for November 5-10, 2011 in Waikoloa, Hawaii needs to be on your radar screen. I was astonished to find that air fares from Winnipeg through Denver to Kona, Hawaii were in the CDN \$500 return range for that time of year, and have booked my flights accordingly. Similarly, the hotel rates are reasonable at \$155 per night in the Hilton, with lower rates likely available in nearby properties. So my advice is if you are considering attending, book early to take advantage of what seem to be excellent offers. The Wildlife Society has provided an

'Annual Conference Justification Toolkit' to assist members in making their case for support from employers and other potential supporters. Hopefully that will be of use to you as you make your plans.

And I hope to see all of you in September 2011 at the TWS Canadian Section Annual Meeting in Thunder Bay. I am sure that our colleagues in Northwestern Ontario will put together an outstanding event.....

Mark your Calendar.....

**TWS Canadian Section  
Annual Meeting**

**Thunder Bay, ON**

**September 4-6, 2011**

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

## ACTWS Annual Meeting, March 10-13, 2011

The annual meeting in Camrose was a success, with a mix of old and new faces. Lots of great posters and papers, good food and entertainment, and excellent opportunities to talk to colleagues. The snowtracking workshop was full—look for other workshops at future meetings.



Wibke Peters and Kirby Smith



Blair Rippin and Bill Samuel



Tobias Tan, student award winner—presented by Tammy MacMillan



Delinda Ryerson and Lorne Fitch



Award winners—ACA



Brad Stelfox, award winner - presented by John Nuishi

**William Rowan  
Distinguished  
Service Award:  
Dr. Brad Stelfox**

**ACTWS Dedicated  
Service Award:  
Dr. Evie Merell**



Margo Pybus, Nate Webb, Evie Merell (with Lili Webb), Jim Allen, Shevenell Webb



# Rumpledpotatoskin- Spinning Gold into Straw

Submitted by Lorne Fitch, P. Biol.

Aren't we clever? We take a perfectly good food item, the potato, and subject it to a variety of "value added" processing steps. Those transform the potato into artery-clogging, heart-busting snack items devoid of much of the potatoes original goodness and nutrition. The "food" product then goes to stuff an increasingly fat world, not a hungry one. But, it is a lucrative thing to do and that seems to be the test applied to such endeavors.

Aren't we clever? We take a piece of native prairie grassland, tested and perfected over 10,000 years in the crucible of time and plow it up to grow potatoes. The grassland is self sustaining, drought resistant, requires no fertilizer and is home to a host of native wildlife. Many of the plant and animal species are at risk because the grasslands of Alberta have been diminished by about 75% over the last hundred years. E. O. Wilson observed "the one process now going on that will take millions of years to correct is the loss of species and genetic diversity by the destruction of natural habitats. This is the folly our descendants are least likely to forgive us." It's a tough assignment to recreate a prairie where lightning ignited fires, drought tested plants and millions of bison grazed.

Aren't we clever? After having successfully turned another piece of perfectly good prairie into potatoes but suffering much criticism the Potato King discovers a less public, more political route for additional public land purchase. When the Alberta government is caught in its own web of secrecy, cronyism and denial it makes a brave face and disingenuously calls its process "open and transparent". The equivalency would be to call a stove lid a picture window.

**"By plowing up the native grassland we think we can spark an even greater economic return..."**

Aren't we clever? The Alberta government, who it seems never met a buck they didn't like, is working diligently behind the scenes to sell off 100 more quarter sections of native grassland, to allow potatoes to flourish even more. This is public land; the public has clearly articulated, on every occasion, its wish that such land be retained by the province. One can only stand in awe of this cross-pollination of politics and potatoes. Potatoes trump prairie in the ideological world where business is paramount. How rich will Albertans be when we have converted all our forests, all our soil, all our water resources and all our minerals into cash?

Aren't we clever? By plowing up the native grassland we think we can spark an even greater economic return from this apparent barren desert. We can not only make the desert bloom we can add wealth to the potato grower, the agro-chemical industry, the machinery business, the processor and the other businesses along the way. You can just sense the gleeful rubbing together of hands waiting for the money to flow. Mind you it will take more water from an already stressed Bow River and all the chemical additions will influence downstream water quality. All we have to do is sell off a piece of our heritage which can never be restored to its original form. It follows a great Canadian tradition- private wealth at public expense.

Aren't we clever? The Alberta government is acting like a farmer who maintains his high standard of living by selling off another piece of the farm every spring. A clearance sale on public land using a fire sale mentality where short term dollars in someone's bank account are more important than the health of Alberta's ecological account. It's not clear if the government is giving the business to the environment, or giving the environment to business.

Either way, our account at the bank of the environment is close to overdrawn.

Aren't we clever? Of course the argument to plow up native prairie hinges on economics; it just doesn't mean it's the right thing to do. E.F. Schumaker wisely said, "Call a thing immoral or ugly, soul destroying or degradation of man, a peril to the peace of the world or to the well-being of future generations; as long as you have not shown it to be 'uneconomic' you have not questioned its right to exist, grow and prosper." I wonder, if one stripped away the generous land deal, the effect of stressing the Bow River even more, water quality issues, the hidden agricultural subsidies, the inevitable rise of disease pathogens and the effect of climate change on potato production and compared the native grassland's ability to produce without any of these, would the endeavor still be "economical"?

Aren't we clever? Life imitates the Brothers Grimm fairy tale, Rumpelstilkskin. You might remember it from your childhood. In the tale the miller's daughter is imprisoned to spin straw into gold, to make good on her father's boast. Today's made in Alberta tale (Rumpedpotatoskin) is about the spinning of grass (native) into gold (Yukon gold potatoes perhaps). In the fairy tale the dwarf magically transforms straw into gold. The role of dwarf in today's docu-drama is a dual one, performed by the Alberta government and the Potato King; sadly, the magic is missing. Villains rarely prosper in fairy tales. The dwarf Rumpelstilkskin, thwarted in his endeavor, is so enraged he drives his foot so far into the ground he creates a chasm into which he tumbles. One can only hope, in the Alberta version that the dwarves also fall into a pit of their own making. If politics and economics continue to trump prairie conservation the Alberta story will not have a fairy tale ending.

Aren't we clever? Some might think this is the perfect alchemy, transforming grassland with low economic return into something useful like French fries and potato chips. To me it's spinning gold into straw, an Alberta variant of an old fairy tale.

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## Did you know that....

- 49% of Albertans strongly agree that prime agricultural lands should be permanently protected from development  
~ Edmonton and Area Land trust, <http://www.ealt.ca/>
- Almost 30% of bird populations on the continent are facing significant declines  
~ National Audubon Society
- Bull trout ("Species of Special Concern") take 5-7 years to reach reproductive maturity
- Insectivorous bats can live to be over 30 years old

Do you know which species produced these eggs? Answer on back page.



# Event Report: Wildlife Society Western Student Conclave Trip

A sincere thank you to the ACTWS from The U of A's 2011 Student Conclave team: Angela Rideout, Tanja Zerulla, Josephine Wong and Caitlin Mader.

On March 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011, four members of the University of Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society represented the University of Alberta at the Wildlife Society's Western Student Conclave. This year, Humboldt State University in Arcata, California served as the gracious hosts. We spent four busy days learning, testing our wildlife skills meeting other biology students from across the United States, and generally having an amaz-

ing time amidst the towering redwoods.

In the 47 year history of TWS' Western Student Conclave, no Canadian university had attended. Our team was honoured to make the University of Alberta the institution to break this trend. Our hosts and the other attendees were thrilled to have us there, as our presence made their conclave into an international event. The team was met with enthusiasm throughout the weekend, as well as thunderous applause from the quiz bowl audience when we were introduced as the first Canadian team ever to attend the event. Of course, we

took care to be gracious and friendly ambassadors of the Canadian section!

A full day was spent attending field trips, during which the delegates learned an incredible amount about the local ecosystems. Delegates were guided through old growth redwood forests, local wetland, stream and lagoon ecosystems, all of which are located within short drives from the HSU campus. Those who attended the all day birding field trip traveled to the coast, into the redwoods, and through marshes to see over 100 different species of bird. Half day elk

## "In the 47 year history...no Canadian university had attended."

viewing and 'herping' field trips introduced the other delegates to the local wild elk herds and local amphibians and reptiles, including several species of frogs, salamanders, toads snakes and lizards.

Our team put our wildlife knowledge to the test in the Quiz Bowl competition, and although we were sadly eliminated early on, we still

learned a tremendous amount from watching the remainder of the competition. Luckily, we were able to put forth a better showing in the field skills triathlon and animal behaviour skit competitions.

We would like to thank the Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society for lending its generous support to our team. We feel we have all grown as

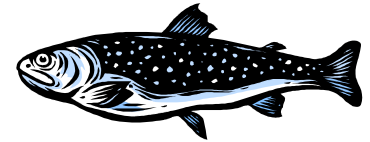
future wildlife professionals, and this amazing experience would not have been possible without the ACTWS.

Submitted by Angela Rideout, Tanja Zerulla, Josephine Wong and Caitlin Mader.

## Conclave Photos



# Job Opportunity — Senior Fisheries Technician



## Position

**Senior Fisheries Technician** with **Golder Associates**, a global company providing consulting, design, and construction services in areas of earth, environment, and the related areas of energy

## Responsibilities:

Due to expanding operations and increased workload of our Canadian operation, there is a requirement for additional staff in our Calgary, Alberta office. As a Senior Fisheries Technician, the candidate will be expected to:

- Supervise, train and mentor junior technical staff; Crew leader for complex field jobs; Conduct fish and fish habitat field assessments for various types of developments including power, mines, forestry, oil and gas facilities and pipelines; Responsible for successful completion of field jobs; Ensure quality control of data collection; Safety planning; Responsible for safety of all crew members; Data entry and limited data analysis; Basic reporting of results.

## Qualifications:

Golder Associates Ltd. is a strong advocate of the team approach to undertaking projects and problem solving. Accordingly, the candidate will be expected to interface with and work in multi-disciplinary teams in which the contribution of each member is equally valued. The successful candidate will possess:

- A minimum requirement of a technical Diploma in Fish and Wildlife Technologies or equivalent from an accredited college or university; A minimum of 5 years experience with experience as a crew leader; Competent with all basic fish and fish habitat sampling techniques for rivers and lakes; Experience operating backpack and boat electro fishers, large river sampling experience is an asset; Valid driver's licence; Experience operating quads, snowmobiles, and boats; Experience collecting water quality and benthic samples; Good outdoor and survival skills and experience working in remote areas; Strong working knowledge of aquatic ecosystems within Canada.

Interested applicants are encouraged to apply on-line at [www.golder.com](http://www.golder.com) in the Career/Canada section. No phone calls please, only those candidates whose background closely matches the opportunity will be contacted for an interview. Competition will close when a suitable candidate is found. Thank you for your interest in Golder Associates.

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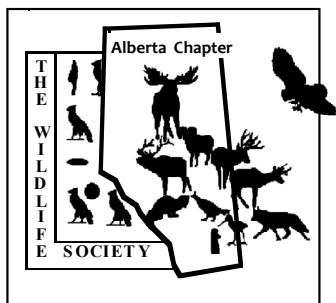
## Update: White-Nose Syndrome

White-nose syndrome (WNS), a fungus that is responsible for killing over one million bats in eastern North America, continues to spread. From its initial discovery in a cave in New York in 2006, WNS has now been confirmed in 16 states and 4 provinces. Last year, the government of Alberta closed two bat hibernacula (caves) to the public in an effort to minimize the chances of fungal spores being introduced to Alberta on clothing or equipment from people who had been in infected caves out east. Despite considerable research, scientists have yet to find ways to combat or prevent the fungus. Several states have applied to have a once common species - the little brown bat - listed as endangered. It may only be a matter of time before WNS arrives in the west....we'll know in the next few years.



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## Upcoming Events

### Society of Canadian Ornithologists

Aug 4-6, 2011, Moncton, NB

<http://www.sco-soc.ca>

### TWS Canadian Section Annual Meeting

Sept 25-26, 2011, Thunder Bay, ON

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

### Wildlife Society—18th Annual Meeting

Nov 5-10, 2011, Waikoloa, Hawaii

<http://wildlifesociety.org/>

### Society for Conservation Biology

Dec 5-9, 2011, Auckland, New Zealand

<http://www.conbio.org/Activities/Meetings/2011/>

## Footnotes from the Editor

Outreach is an increasingly important activity in which all wildlifers can participate. Biologists recognize the need for outreach, but most don't have the time or resources to get involved. The ACTWS is trying to help: check out the ACTWS website for an easy way to volunteer with the Alberta Science Literacy Association.

In the meantime, here are some websites to give you inspiration:

- <http://www.gettoknow.ca/ca/>
- <http://www.childnature.ca/>
- <http://www.cwf-fcf.org/en/educate/>
- <http://www.earthrangers.com/>

Check out this video about Richard Louv's new book, *The Nature Principle*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPLOsklo4I>

Do you have any outreach suggestions or success stories?

Do you have any new research that you would like to share with the ACTWS?

Do you have any events or jobs to advertise?

Please send them to me for posting in the newsletter. Photos are welcome. Anything in particular that you would like to see in your ACTWS newsletter? Let me know!

Answer from page 4:  
**Boreal (western) toad**



- Found in parts of north, central and western Alberta
- Call is a repeated chirping or peeping
- Status in AB: "Sensitive"