

THE ALBERTA WILDLIFER

VOLUME 27 ISSUE 3

SEPTEMBER 2016

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ◆ ACTWS annual meeting
- ◆ ACTWS job posting

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ACTWS President's Report Larry Roy

The dog days of summer have come to a close as we await nature's fall colour spectacle. Vacation time with the kids is over as they return to school and the wildlifers, after a slight time-off reprieve, get back to a busy schedule of field work, data organizing, reports, meetings, and planning.

Your executive have followed a similar pattern as the planning for our 2017 Conference and AGM in Lac La Biche is again in full swing. Additionally, we have focused on future financial planning in light of the donation from the Larry Norman Comin estate. He was a welder by trade and an outdoor enthusiast who enjoyed fishing and bird watching. Not having any living family left, he donated a large portion of his estate to support his love for wildlife. Based on this windfall, we are proceeding with hiring a half-time Executive Director whose main responsibilities will be advocacy and fund raising. We have also developed a draft 5-year financial plan that will be presented to and discussed with the membership at our 2017 AGM.

The injection of youth into your executive this year has proven both interesting and rewarding to our organization. In the past the ACTWS has dealt with advocacy only on a scientific basis. Your executive are now asking: What do you mean by only science-based? What about the social aspects? Do we only deal with the proven biological facts? As an organization, do we defend against the demise of our biodiversity using only science or engage a little more

actively by adding what we think might a better solution space that incorporates both social and scientific aspects? How do our committee members and our new Executive Director advocate on our behalf? Something to think about and further discuss at our upcoming AGM. Happy hunting this fall may it be for game, for love, for happiness or for peace of mind.



Mark
your
calendars

ACTWS Conference 2017

March 17-19, 2017 at the Bold Centre in Lac La Biche.

Plenary: "The good, the bad and the ugly effects of fire on our landscape".

Students: Don't forget to apply for scholarships. This meeting is a great place to present your first talk or poster.

All Members: Consider nominating a colleague for an ACTWS award.

Visit the website for details.

Fund-raising Auction 2017: What's your special donation item?

Hello fellow wildlifersit's not too early to be thinking about the fund-raising auction at our upcoming 2017 Alberta Chapter conference (March 17-19, Lac La Biche). Over the years we have raised many thousands of dollars in support of our various scholarship programs. At the heart of this auction is the spectrum of items that are donated by both sponsors and members.

So as you're going through your office, home or garage consider donating that piece of art, book or other items that you no longer need but that other wildlifers could enjoy. New or used we'll accept all donations J.

Now for the real challenge!!!! I know that many of our fellow biologists have special talents and pastimes that would generate wonderful auction items. We've been enjoying the bird carving talents of Blair Rippin for many years; my wife and I thoroughly enjoy the beautiful Rippin Wood Duck that we acquired at the 2012 ACTWS auction. It's been an honour for me to contribute Dzus custom knives ... I like to think that a piece of me accompanies each knife as it travels the world on hunting and fishing trips. In the past we've had wonderful trips donated for horseback riding trips, Sage Grouse research, and other adventures. Members have contributed salsa, honey, wine and a variety of hand-crafted art pieces of all shapes and sizes. **What's your special talent?** Would you like to donate a fishing, hiking, hunting or photography trip? I know from personal experience that we really treasure auction items that have that personal touch!!!!

There's lots of time to prepare a special item for contributing to our fundraising auction. Please give consideration to donating ... **contact Elston Dzus (780-689-8708 or ecdzus@mcsnet.ca)** if you would like to donate or bring your donation directly to the conference. And of course come with a full wallet to make a 'donation' and become the successful bidder of a special donation.

Alberta Environment and Parks * *Bits and Bites*

Aerial Ungulate Surveys From Matt Besko, Head of Wildlife Management Policy

I am pleased to say that 23 reports for aerial ungulate surveys are posted. Although, it is certainly not a complete list at this time, we are working on populating it more and more. We will also get historical reports posted in addition to new ones. Special thanks to the Regional Wildlife Biologists who spearheaded this initiative.

<http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/fishing-hunting-trapping/aerial-wildlife-survey-reports.aspx>



Species at Risk News:

Visit the AEP– species at risk web page to find out if there are plans posted for public review. Currently, input is being sought for:

- Draft Caribou Range Plan Survey – Little Smoky and A La Peche
- Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan

<http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/species-at-risk/default.aspx>

The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affair's Network

August 2016, Volume 2, Issue 4

Take Action!

Blue Ribbon Panel Legislation - The "Recovering America's Wildlife Act of 2016" (H.R. 5650) was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives on July 6. This legislation would dedicate \$1.3 billion annually in existing energy development royalties to state conservation programs, following recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources that were released in March. *Staff Contact: Keith Norris*

- Who should act: U.S. Members
- Action to Take: Use TWS' Action Center to contact your Representative and urge them to support this legislation. Enter your zip code to locate your Representative.
- Deadline for Action: December 2016
- Resources: TWS News Article

CAC Activities

TWS helps lead Congressional briefing on horses and burros - The National Horse and Burro Rangeland Management Coalition, chaired by TWS, hosted a congressional briefing on July 6 to discuss wild horse and burro management with staff on Capitol Hill. Coalition members discussed the effects of horse and burro overpopulation, possible solutions to effectively manage these populations, and stressed the need for science-based policy decisions regarding this issue. Nearly 70 individuals attended, leaving standing room only. TWS Government Affairs and Partnership staff have been conducting follow-up meetings with congressional offices to continue the discussion. *Staff Contact: Keith Norris*

TWS headquarters welcomes new policy interns - TWS' Government Affairs & Partnerships program welcomed two new Wildlife Policy Interns, Jennifer Bear and Emily Ronis. As interns from July to December, they will assist the Government Affairs & Partnerships team with article writing, policy briefs, coalition activities, and congressional meetings. Jennifer graduated with a B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife Science from Oregon State University. Emily graduated with a B.S.

Conservation Affairs Network

continued....

in Wildlife Conservation from Virginia Tech. *Staff Contact: Keith Norris*

VA Chapter Submits Comments on Rocky Forge Wind Project - The Virginia Chapter of TWS expressed concerns about a proposed wind energy project in Botetourt County, VA. The Chapter is concerned with mortality of birds and bats that may collide with wind turbines. The potential for forest habitat fragmentation and water quality impacts are also concerns. VATWS gave recommendations for minimizing bird and bat mortality, including minimal or zero operation of turbines during peak migration, and urged the development company to be transparent with any mortality data collected.. *CAC Contact: Nelson Lafon Increasing the Society's effectiveness through communication and collaboration*

Mystery Photo

Can you identify this species?



The State of North American Birds

Ottawa, Canada, and Washington, D.C. May 18, 2016 — The North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) published today [*The State of North America's Birds 2016*](#), the first comprehensive report assessing the conservation status of all bird species that occur in Canada, the continental United States, and Mexico. The report was released by NABCI partners at the Museum of Nature in Ottawa, Canada, on behalf of all three countries, with a simultaneous event at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, DC, in partnership with International Migratory Bird Day. NABCI was created by Canada, the United States and Mexico as a tri-national commitment to protect birds and their habitats.



“This report will allow us to base conservation actions on the best available science on the status of birds and their habitats in North America,” said Environment and Climate Change Canada Minister Catherine McKenna. “It is an unprecedented continental analysis, drawing on the efforts of tens of thousands of citizen-scientists from Canada, the U.S., and Mexico.”

This report shows that more than one third of all North American bird species need urgent conservation action and calls for a renewed, continent-wide commitment to saving our shared birds and their habitats. One example of urgent conservation action taking place is in temperate forests, where the Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture is planning for a mix of forest types from New York to Alabama. By integrating bird conservation objectives into forest management plans, it will diversify habitats across the eastern U.S.

Healthy environments for birds also provide benefits to other wildlife and people, such as clean air and water, flood and erosion control, and coastal resilience. When bird populations struggle, our natural resources are stressed.

Birds in ocean and tropical forest habitats are in crisis. More than half of the bird species in these ecosystems are on the Watch List, which designates species that are most at risk of extinction without significant action. Small and declining populations, small ranges, and severe threats to their habitats threaten species in these two habitats; for example, ocean pollution and invasive species on islands are problematic for ocean birds, while deforestation is a major challenge for tropical forest birds. Steep population declines also threaten birds in coastal, aridland, and grassland habitats. In particular, long-distance migratory shorebirds and species that migrate from the Great Plains of Canada and the U.S. to Mexico’s Chihuahua grasslands have lost, on average, almost 70 per cent of

North American Birds continued....

their continental populations since 1970.

Despite the many challenges faced by North American birds, this report also shows that conservation works. Waterfowl and other waterbirds are doing well, thanks in part to effective investment in conservation of wetlands through programs like the Duck Stamp, which allows hunters and other wildlife enthusiasts to contribute funding to purchase and protect wetland habitat, and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, a tri-country initiative to coordinate waterfowl protection efforts. Continued investment in wetlands conservation is needed to ensure that waterbirds will continue to thrive- and ensure that clean water exists for all species, including humans.

The report evaluates the conservation status of all native North American bird species across all major habitats —nine key ecosystems. It is based on the first-ever conservation vulnerability assessment for all 1,154 native bird species that occur in Canada, the continental U.S., and Mexico, and reflects a collaboration between experts from all three countries. The overall conservation status of each species takes into account its population trend, population size, extent of breeding and nonbreeding ranges, and severity of threats to populations. Methodology information, the complete assessment database, animated maps and other resources are available at stateofthebirds.org.

“This report is a superb demonstration of the power of birds, and the growing power of citizen science. Tens of thousands of Canadians, Americans, and Mexicans contributed bird sightings to help produce an unprecedented continent-wide assessment of North America’s birds,” added Dr. John W. Fitzpatrick, Executive Director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. “Because birds are sensitive barometers of environmental health, I encourage leaders across our three nations, in both government and industry, to consider the findings in this report, which is based on the best available science about our bird populations. Across the continent, it is the will of the people that these species and their habitats be conserved for the future.”

The State of North America’s Birds Report is being released during the Centennial year of the Migratory Bird Treaty, an agreement between the United States and Canada that promised collaborative conservation to protect the migratory birds of North America. In 1936, twenty years after the signing of the Migratory Bird Treaty, Mexico and the U.S. committed to a similar treaty, connecting all of North America in its efforts to protect our shared species. This report reflects a groundbreaking collaboration to evaluate bird populations across the continent. It calls for a renewed commitment to continental bird conservation agreements to keep our shared birds safe and healthy for the next 100 years.

For more information and to read the full report, visit www.stateofthebirds.org.

Learn more about the Migratory Bird Treaty Centennial celebration at www.fws.gov/birds/MBTreaty100.

For more ideas about how you can support bird conservation, visit www.stateofthebirds.org/change .

Canadian Section Report



Art Rodgers,
Ontario Ministry of
Natural Resources
and Forestry
(art.rodgers@ontario.ca)

Hope everyone has had a great summer so far – sure has been hot in a lot of places! Our AGM that was held in conjunction with the CSEE back in early July now seems so long ago. Many thanks to Dee Patriquin and Eric Vander Wal for making all the arrangements to hold the meeting at the Memorial University grad pub – the food was great and the Screech “weren’t bad”. Special thanks to all of our members who came out to support the Section and the many new potential members who came to find out more – hope you have since signed up! For me it was personally rewarding to meet so many of our grad student members, including two from Lakehead! Was also great to hear of two new potential Student Chapters at Memorial and Simon Fraser – let me know if there is anything I can do to help get you started. Of course the CSEE program was loaded with great papers and posters, including numerous presentations from CSTWS members – thanks to Evie Merrill for putting together an excellent symposium that featured many of our Canadian Section members. Congratulations to Kathy Martin, this year’s recipient of the Ian McTaggart-Cowan Award – super presentation and so great to see you receive the recognition you deserve with so many of your peers and former students in attendance. The venue in St. John’s was fabulous and we had the best and the worst of their summer weather. For those who ventured downtown (George Street) I trust you made it home safely! For those who toured the island afterward, I hope you had a great trip!

As you may have heard, three proposed changes to TWS bylaws were approved by the membership during the July elections. These changes provide Council with flexibility in determining the amount charged for Student and New Professional dues (they can now be less than 50% of Regular Member dues), while maintaining current cap levels. The other proposed change re-establishes a Life Member option that was previously available, but discontinued in 1965. Those elected to Council were Vice-President, Darren Miller (formerly Southeast Section Rep) and new Section Representative John Moriarty for the North Central Section. Cynthia Perrine (Western Section) and Harriet Allen (Northwestern Section) were both re-elected to a second term on Council. Welcome back Darren, Cynthia and Harriet, and many thanks to David Andersen for all of his contributions over the last three years, especially as Chair of the TWS Publications Subcommittee – you accomplished a great deal David, for which we are all very grateful. The newly-elected members of Council will take office during the Annual Conference, taking place October 15-19 at the Raleigh Convention Center in North Carolina.

The program for the annual conference in Raleigh is coming together and features;

- 4 Plenary/Keynote Sessions
- 10 workshops and 10 field trips
- 25 Symposia and 43 Contributed Paper Sessions
- 17 Working Group meetings
- 4 Major Student Events plus 2 Major Networking Events
- the ever-popular Quiz Bowl
- and of course, the TWS Canadian Section reception!!

Canadian Section Report continued.....

Find out more at <http://www.twsconference.org/schedule/>. Hope to see you there!

In addition to planning for the annual conference, the folks at headquarters have been;

Marketing the free online journals access as a new member benefit – that’s right, coming in January 2017, all members of the parent TWS will have free access to all TWS journals!

Developing the TWS Online Network Member Directory – the launch will be scheduled once 5,000 members have updated their profiles – if you haven’t updated your profile yet, please do it as soon as you can so we can all benefit from this useful service.

Launched the new student benefit that provides free membership in the Student Development Working Group and the new benefit for new professionals that provides free membership in the Early Career Professional Working Group.

Created the new customized eWildlifer with tips for students and new professionals as a new member benefit for those groups.

Continued to promote Automatic Renewal on the Member Portal.

And, so much more.

The fall meeting in Raleigh will also mark the end of Rick Baydack’s time on TWS Council. I don’t think any of us can find the words or say enough about the many tremendous contributions Rick has made to the wildlife profession across the U.S. and Canada, and his tireless promotion of Canada and our many wildlifera from coast to coast to coast. THANK YOU RICK!!!!



Cape May Warbler

NEW
Position!

ACTWS Executive Director - Job Posting

The Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society (ACTWS) has a 26-year history of fostering wildlife conservation and management in the province. The Chapter is a non-profit, volunteer based organization dedicated to wise stewardship of natural resources and to sound management practices of wildlife populations and habitats. The Chapter has some 250 members representing a broad cross-section of professionals from private business, government, academia and non-government organizations.

We are in search of a new position to assist us to become more active in conservation issues in Alberta. The Executive Director is responsible for the successful management of advocacy and fundraising for the Chapter. The Executive Director will provide leadership in identifying and actioning conservation issues the Chapter should be involved in. Advocacy duties include regularly soliciting input from the Executive Board and membership and reporting back to them.

The successful candidate will also be responsible for soliciting funding for self-financing and to raise sponsorship funds.

This is a one-year part-time (20 hours per week) contract position. Continuation on the position is based on effectiveness and successful funding development and could result in a full-time position. Use of a home-based office is required.

Responsibilities And Accountabilities:

Allocation of 70% of time effort to actively participate in the development of, and assume responsibility for, our obligation to the Alberta public to offer our combined scientific expertise to decision makers so that management of land and wildlife is conducted in a sound, sustainable fashion. Advocating for sound, science-based wildlife conservation and management in Alberta and the supporting duties associated with maintaining such a role. These duties may include but are not limited to:

- Follow wildlife issues within the province by attending relevant meetings and upholding memberships in various external committees.
- Attend Executive Board meetings and provide updates to Executive Board.
- Communicate with the membership on wildlife issues through the Central Communications Committee
- Solicit information and expertise from members of ACTWS for advocacy in selected wildlife issues.
- Solicit input from ACTWS membership via web-based surveys on major wildlife issues.
- Act as a liaison and coordinate advocacy efforts with the Canadian Section and Parent Society of TWS on wildlife issues.
- Attend the ACTWS Annual Conference to liaise with Executive, volunteers, members, and attendees.
- Provide monthly written progress reports to the Executive.

Allocation of 25% of time effort to solicit funding to support the position and expand it into a full time position and solicit additional funds for sponsorship and special projects.

Executive Director

continued.....

Allocation of 5% of time effort to assist various committees, and help organize our annual conference, training workshops for professionals, and outreach programs.

Job Qualifications:

In addition to fulfilling the job description, the following qualifications are desired from the successful candidate:

- Commitment to the philosophical perspectives of The Wildlife Society;
- A demonstrated knowledge of Alberta's wildlife and the conservation and management issues affecting it;
- Experience with political and government organizations in wildlife management and conservation in Alberta;
- Possess a post-secondary degree/diploma in a wildlife program;
- Self-motivated with the ability to work with minimal or no supervision;
- Organizational and fund-raising skills;
- Excellent project and time management, verbal, written and presentation, and computer skills;
- Available on weekends and evenings, as necessary;
- Must be a member of the ACTWS for duration of contract;
- Must provide proof of WCB and insurance coverage;
- Valid class 5 driver's license and access to a reliable vehicle;
- Criminal Record check cleared with no criminal activity;



Additional Information

- Salary plus expenses is based on \$40,000 per year for a one-year contract of 20 hours per week;
- Position may move to a full time based on fund raising success;
- Position will be in a home-based environment;
- Interviews will be held by phone and in person.

Candidates are invited to indicate their interest in this position by sending a resume and cover letter:

c/o:

Laurence (Larry) Roy
President, Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society

President@actws.ca

We thank all applicants for their interest in this position, both only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

Natasha
Annich



The Toads Are Calling: How we Monitor Cryptic Toads with Bioacoustics

Populations of Canadian toads, *Anaxyrus hemiophrys*, in central and southern Alberta have been in decline since the mid-1980s. Agricultural and industrial development over the past 30 years are thought to have been partially responsible for the assumed decrease in the species' range and numbers. However, Canadian toads have the legal status of 'data deficient' in Alberta, indicating a lack of knowledge surrounding this cryptic species. Wetland assemblages in northern Alberta in particular are poorly studied and efforts for amphibian monitoring are minimal. With the growth of the energy sector in northeastern Alberta, there is a greater demand for evaluating rare species, including the Canadian toad.

Linear features, such as roads, cutlines and seismic lines, dominate northern Alberta, connecting many areas of development and dividing the landscape into a large checkerboard of anthropogenic activity. Previous studies have shown that habitat fragmentation in the form of roads have limited dispersal movements and led to increased amphibian fatalities while traveling to and from breeding sites. The threat of road mortality has been associated with wide, paved roads and this effect may not be as large in the north as it has been in southern Alberta. Currently the main threat to the Canadian toad in northeastern Alberta is habitat loss as a result of human activity related to the oil and gas industry.

In recent years, bioacoustics has become a popular way to survey the landscape for target species and has proven to be effective for detecting rare or cryptic species. Automated recording units (ARUs) were deployed from March-July (2012-present) to monitor species of interest including owls, wetland birds, songbirds and amphibians. Over the years, Canadian toads, along with many other vocalizing animals, have been detected across the northeastern corner of Alberta. Acoustic data collected by ARUs are processed through manual human listening and also with the use of computer-automated recognition. We use recognizers built within the Song Scope software framework of Wildlife Acoustics Inc., to identify the typical vocalization made by male breeding Canadian toads from raw field data collected. To date, over 150 Canadian toad locations have been identified, with the majority coming from detections made with the constructed automated recognizer.

Bioacoustics have proven extremely valuable for monitoring species such as the Canadian toad. By using this technology, we were able to detect toad activity at all hours over several days. As the project progressed, we were able to monitor known breeding locations across multiple years, while expanding our sample area to find additional Canadian toad locations. Most of our detections of the species have come from edges of large water bodies with adjacent sandy upland next to fens. Habitat models demonstrate the need for both wetland and upland, indicating that while the Canadian toad is the most aquatic of the bufonids, upland habitats are important for the species.

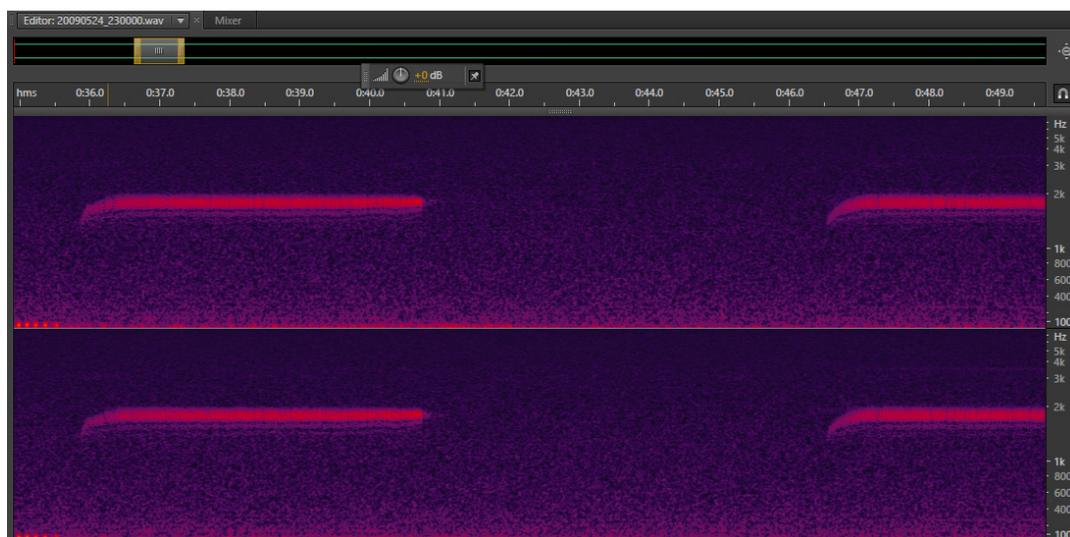
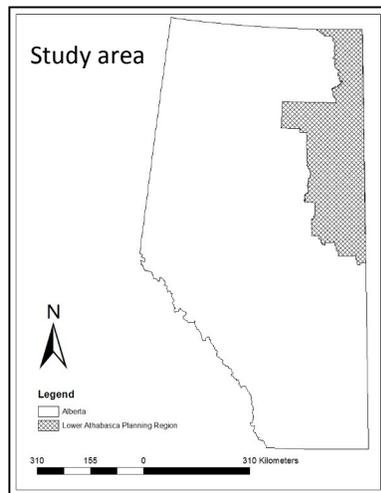


Recording unit

Toads and bioacoustics

continued.....

Our data has not only improved our knowledge concerning the distribution of the Canadian toad, but has also provided insight for a cryptic species into breeding habitat requirements at a landscape scale, and responses to the growth of human activity. Conservation of this species, and other amphibian species, needs a basic understanding of population trends and what landscape characteristics are vital for the species of interest. Survey efforts for Canadian toads can be maximized with bioacoustic technology, yet more information on population and abundance at identified localities are necessary to optimize conservation of the species.



Spectrogram of male Canadian toad breeding call

Alberta Community Bat Program



Check out the website of this great new program: www.albertabats.ca.

The purpose of the program is to :

- Raise awareness about bats and their conservation
- Provide advice to people with bats in buildings
- Encourage the public to report bat roosts and hibernacula

A poster for the ACTWS 2017 Conference. The background is a photograph of a beaver in a natural setting. The text on the poster includes:

**BEST
DAM
CONFERENCE
IN
ALBERTA.**

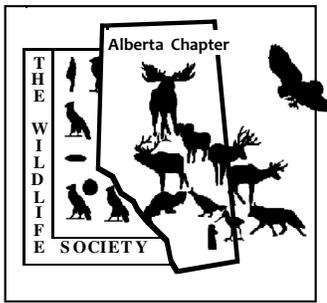
ACTWS 2017 CONFERENCE
March 17-19th, 2017
Lac La Biche, Alberta @ Bold
Center

Scholarships – Grants – Wildlife Talks – Job Contacts – Feast – Dance
2017 CONFERENCE & ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
THE ALBERTA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Register today!
www.actws.ca

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Alberta Chapter



Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society

The Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society
P.O. Box 4990
Edmonton, AB T6E 5G8

President
Larry Roy

Newsletter Editors

Lisa Wilkinson— lisa.wilkinson@gov.ab.ca
Dave Hobson— dave.hobson@gov.ab.ca



Don't forget we are also
on Facebook

Upcoming Events

The Wildlife Society:

The 23rd Annual Conference will be held in Raleigh, North Carolina on October 15-19, 2016.

The 24th Annual Conference will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico on September 23-27, 2017.

International Mountain Day 2016

Theme 'Mountain Cultures: Celebrating Diversity and Strengthening Identity'.

date: 11 December 2016 **location:** worldwide

contact: FAO Forestry **www:** <http://www.mountainpartnership.org/news/news-detail/en/c/384...>

The Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology

Arcata, California on Feb27-Mar 3, 2017

<http://thesnvb.org/annual-meeting/>

Footnotes from the Editor



Happy Fall!

You may have noticed that this issue is a little smaller than usual; few articles were submitted. I hope that is because members are busily preparing articles for the next newsletter! This newsletter reaches many wildlife professionals and students, so please remember to share your stories. We're all in this together. LW

Mystery photo:

Bay-breasted warbler

Species of special concern