

# THE ALBERTA WILDLIFER

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## ACTWS President's Report

Larry Roy

An old Chinese curse "May You Live in Interesting Times" seems to be upon us. First the weather brings us a message of changing climate with balmy late October early November temperatures and the now, most powerful man on earth, tell us that climate change is not man induced and full steam ahead with development and the pursuit of riches with blatant disregard for the environment. Me-thinks we have our job cut out for us ahead. Hopefully, with the help of the international community, we can mitigate some of the negative effects on our wildlife resources.

On a lighter note, your executive continues with planning for the Lac La Biche conference. The TWS conference in Raleigh NC has concluded and we can focus more of our attention locally. We could use some extra help. We need a conference organizer as our president elect was forced to resign her position, a program chair and a plenary moderator. If you can help in any of these areas, please drop me an email at [president@actws.ca](mailto:president@actws.ca). The call for nominations for ACTWS 2016-17 awards is out. It is critically important to recognize the accomplishments of our peers so please participate. You surely know someone who is deserving of special recognition or you have read a technical or popular article that has stimulated your thinking. Let us in on your thoughts. Also, this year, there will be a new annual award in honour of Larry Norman Comin for the photo that best represents enjoyment of wildlife. The winner will get their name immortalized on a plaque and receive a prize of \$250. Look for more details on our upcoming conference that will be posted on our website shortly.

As they say in "The Game of Thrones", winter is coming and it is expected to be a long one, so bundle up and keep the hearth warm and the spirits high and be prepared for battle.





Art Rodgers

## Canadian Section Representative's Report

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

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

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

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

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

The search for a new TWS Director of Publishing and Communications was carried out in September and we had more than 100 applications. We narrowed the list to four candidates who were invited for followup in-depth interviews during the first week of October. Any one of the four could have served capably but in the end the position was offered and accepted by Dr. Nancy Sasavage. Nancy has extensive training in science and the scientific method, and many years ex-

perience in scientific editing and magazine production for both a scientific and non-scientific readership. Her training, background and experience make her a very good fit for the position. We look forward to meeting Nancy at the TWS Council meeting and Annual Conference in Pittsburgh and working with her in the years to come.

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

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

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



Photo by Larry Roy

## Conservation Affairs Committee

Committee attention has been focused on the following subjects.

### Service to the Community

**Alberta Game Policy Advisory Committee** – ACTWS reps: Larry Roy & Evie Merrill – status of committee and outcomes are unknown and unreported. So much for science transparency.

**Alberta Endangered Species Conservation Committee** – ACTWS reps: Doug Collister – Kirby Smith – <http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/species-at-risk/default.aspx> As reported in the second last newsletter, the Committee last met in March 2015. Promises made of pending meeting, however nothing definitive. The previously mentioned Government wide review of committees, Boards, Commissions as well as Delegated Administrative Organizations (Alberta Conservation Association) etc. remains an enigma. Much scurry and little outcome to formally report. . Provincial Species at Risk programs continue, albeit without the benefit of the public advisory groups charged to provide objective-impartial advice to the Government. . Nothing to report on the public on-line survey concerning the release of the draft *2016-2021 Alberta Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan* (<http://aep.alberta.ca/files/GrizzlyBearRecoveryPlanDraft-Jun01-2016.pdf>).

**Alberta Pacific Local Advisory Committee** – ACTWS rep -\_Kristie Derksen – no report.

**Alberta Fisheries Management Round Table** – ACTWS rep – Ken Crutchfield – (<http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/fisheries-management/alberta-fisheries-management-roundtable.aspx>)

The Round Table last met on May 7<sup>th</sup> in Edmonton. The fall meeting has been postponed due to AEP staff involvement in addressing the identification of “whirling disease” in salmonid fish stocks resident in Banff National Park and adjoining streams tributary to the Bow River. An ancillary activity prompted by the dissatisfaction participants were having with the Round Table was a September 7<sup>th</sup> public meeting organized by Ray Makowecki in Bellevue, Alberta. The meeting was attended by an estimated 350 anglers and focused on concerns over the management of fisheries in a number of northeastern Alberta waters and the lack of opportunity for anglers to harvest fish for consumption. A subsequent meeting with provincial officials on November 3<sup>rd</sup> produced regrettably few answers yet many commitments to get back with more information.

### Committee Members

**Ken Crutchfield  
(Chair)**

**Mark Boyce  
Kristie Derksen  
Lorne Fitch  
Matthew Pyper  
Larry Roy**

**North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance** (<https://www.nswa.ab.ca/>)– ACTWS rep – Ken Crutchfield –good progress is being made by NSWA in partnering with lake stewardship groups and municipalities in advancing work on expanding watershed knowledge and formulation of water management recommendations. Additionally, NSWA has been successful in securing grants under the Canada National Watershed Conservation and EcoAction funds as well as Alberta’s Watershed Restoration and Resiliency Program. Check out the NSWA website for more detail.

On October 4<sup>th</sup> NSWA held another free public education forum, looking into the Future of Our Water Supply in the North Saskatchewan River Watershed. Presentations are available for viewing at the following link: <http://www.nswa.ab.ca/content/nswa-water-supply-forum>

### **Still Stirring in the Background**

**SIMMERING - Suffield Elk Management** –ACTWS letter to Ministers of Defence (Canada) and Environment- Parks (Alberta) only elicited a federal acknowledgement. A follow-up discussion with AEP Manager Kim Morton and Area Wildlife Biologist Joel Nicolson revealed the following: AEP continues to work with the Suffield Military personnel on a working group devoted to following through on the plan outlined in the attached document.

There is no opportunity for outside interests to yet become actively involved in the working group.

The provincial elk management plan is nearing completion and it is anticipated that the Suffield Elk will be managed similarly once the herd is reduced in size.

From AEP’s perspective, many users involved with the hunt have expectations of a quality hunt when the emphasis is on herd reduction.

Casual views of the military overseeing the hunt is that there are fewer wounded animals being observed during the hunts exclusive to First Nations peoples.

**COLD - Alberta Environment and Parks intention to update the 1982 Fish and Wildlife Policy for Alberta does not appear to be moving anywhere fast** –key contact: Sue Cotterill – 1780-422-9535. AEP have an internal team working on the initiative and are seeking approval to engage. Nothing substantive to report to ACTWS at this time The following link provides a terrible scanned copy of the policy. Contact the CAC chair should you wish to get a better scanned copy.

<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/e36f8db2-899a-4791-90a3-8f855448a122/resource/5451a6c0-2d66-4da4-9495-8fec5cee582c/download/1982-FishWildlifePolicyAlberta-1982A.pdf>

**BACK BURNER - Alberta Grazing Leases no changes in status** (<http://www.oag.ab.ca/webfiles/reports/OAG%20March%202015%20Report.pdf>) . members are encouraged to review a more recent 2015 review of the matter available through the Alberta Land Institute - <http://www.albertalandinstitute.ca/research/research-projects/project/grazing-leases>

### GETTING UNDERWAY - Bison Transfer into Banff National Park –November 30<sup>th</sup> deadline for public input.

The public has been invited to provide comments on the Detailed Environmental Impact Analysis (DEIA) for the proposal from **October 27 – November 30, 2016**. To date, no ACTWS member has stepped forward to undertake a review on behalf of the Chapter and possible recommendation for a response. More information on the plan can be found at the following link: <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/ab/banff/plan/gestion-management/bison.aspx>

Members are encouraged to get involved, if not on behalf of the Chapter then at least from a professional standpoint.

### PERCOLATING – POLICIES UNDER REVIEW- Canada Species at Risk Act –

Kirby Smith has undertaken to review and draft for ACTWS Executive signature seven draft policies by a **November 18<sup>th</sup> deadline**. They include:

1. Policy on Critical Habitat Protection on Non-federal Lands  
[http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default\\_e.cfm?documentID=2987](http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=2987)
2. Policy on Protecting Critical Habitat with Conservation Agreements under Section 11 of the *Species at Risk Act*  
[http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default\\_e.cfm?documentID=2986](http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=2986)
3. Policy on Survival and Recovery  
[http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default\\_e.cfm?documentID=2985](http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=2985)
4. Policy Regarding the Identification of Anthropogenic Structures as Critical Habitat under the *Species at Risk Act*  
[http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default\\_e.cfm?documentID=2989](http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=2989)
5. Approach to the Identification of Critical Habitat under the *Species at Risk Act* when Habitat Loss is Not Believed to be a Significant Threat to the Survival or Recovery of the Species  
[http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default\\_e.cfm?documentID=2988](http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=2988)
6. *Species at Risk Act* Permitting Policy  
[http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default\\_e.cfm?documentID=2983](http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=2983)
7. Listing policy for Terrestrial Species at Risk  
[http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default\\_e.cfm?documentID=2984](http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=2984)

Members are encouraged to take the initiative to consider submission of

their personal view points to the SAR Registry

[http://www.registrelp-sararegistry.gc.ca/involved/consultation/default\\_e.cfm](http://www.registrelp-sararegistry.gc.ca/involved/consultation/default_e.cfm)

**The following policies were also recently released:**

Range Plan Guidance for Woodland Caribou, Boreal Population (Final) [http://www.registrelp-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default\\_e.cfm?documentID=2993](http://www.registrelp-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=2993)

The *Species at Risk Act* Policy Principles (Final) [https://www.registrelp-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default\\_e.cfm?documentID=2990](https://www.registrelp-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=2990)

**PERCOLATING CONFUSION - Alberta Wetland Policy** –much confusion surrounds the certification, training and regulatory oversight to implement and deliver on the policy. Following is a link to the latest July 4<sup>th</sup> update:

<http://aep.alberta.ca/water/programs-and-services/wetlands/alberta-wetland-policy-implementation.aspx>

**Worthy of interest and follow-up:**

**Reminder** – members are encouraged to visit the TWS website for information on the **TWS Conservation Affairs Network** - check out the latest news from other Chapters and Sections -

<http://wildlife.org/policy-2/conservation-affairs-network/>

**Do not underestimate the value of your input into wildlife conservation matters. Introduce yourself to your local elected officials and offer your insight. Professionalism is not confined to working hours.**

## Obituary Bob SCAMMELL, Thursday, November 24 2016

Bob Scammell, a well known and respected outdoor, fish and wildlife writer in Alberta has passed away. His obituary can be found at: <http://bit.ly/2gtoWjP>

A biography can be found at the Alberta Sports Hall of Fame and Museum site at:

<http://ashfm.ca/hall-of-fame-honoured-members/in-memory/scammell-bob>

Provided by  
Margo Pybus

# Alberta Bovine Tuberculosis in southeastern Alberta

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency, (CFIA) recently determined that a case of bovine tuberculosis (bTB) in a beef cow was linked to a premises northwest of Medicine Hat, Alberta. The agency immediately began a rigorous disease investigation consistent with the National Bovine Tuberculosis Eradication Program.

Bovine TB is a federal reportable disease and CFIA leads the investigation in order to find the extent of infection in livestock, implement humane destruction of any infected herds, and manage the risk to livestock markets. Later on, the risk to wildlife will be assessed in conjunction with Alberta Environment and Parks.

The risk of bovine TB infection in wildlife in Canada is low.

The risk of bTB infection in wildlife in Canada is low and there has never been a documented case in Alberta. Documented cases occur only in free-ranging elk and white-tailed deer in and around Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba, and in free-ranging bison in and around Wood Buffalo National Park in Alberta /Northwest Territories. Both situations involve spillover of the disease into wildlife from infected cattle herds many decades ago.

In the vicinity of infected livestock, CFIA and provincial wildlife agencies work cooperatively to develop a plan for bTB surveillance of wildlife.

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In BC, infected cattle herds were found in 2007, 2008, and 2011. Wildlife surveillance was implemented in 2014, 2015, and 2016. No cases in wildlife were detected to date. Bovine TB can sustain infections in wild populations under specific conditions. Ongoing surveillance in livestock, early detection, and aggressive response is the primary means of limiting exposure and potential for spillover into wildlife populations. Once established, bTB in wildlife is difficult, but not impossible, to eradicate. The program in Manitoba is making good progress in reducing the disease in free-ranging cervids.

#### TB Risk in Alberta

- the risk of bTB occurring in local wildlife is very low

- concerns have been raised about the possibility of bTB in the large population of elk associated with Canadian Forces Base Suffield (CFB Suffield)

- original elk on CFB Suffield were translocated from Elk Island National Park (EINP) in the late 1990s

- all animals relocated from EINP are tested for bTB, and have been for many years.

- bTB has not been detected in EINP since the early 1980s (a wood bison that came to EINP from Wood Buffalo National Park in the mid 1960s).

## bTB in southeastern Alberta

### Government Actions

- We will hold a public meeting with area hunters to hear their concerns and provide answers to questions.
- We will have staff on site every day of the hunt.
- As part of the daily pre-hunt briefing, hunters will be instructed on what to look for as they are dressing their game.
- If they find any problems, staff will be available to inspect the game.
- If suspicious samples are found, they will be sent to the CFIA for testing.
- As part of our Chronic Wasting Disease surveillance program, if staff find samples consistent with possible TB, we will send samples to the CFIA.
- In addition, all hunters with elk tags or deer tags in the immediate vicinity of CFB Suffield will be emailed a link to a brochure on Bovine Tuberculosis explaining what it is and how hunters can ensure their safety.

\* Abscessed mesenteric lymph node

### Bovine TB and Hunters

Bovine TB does not readily transfer to humans.

#### PRECAUTIONS

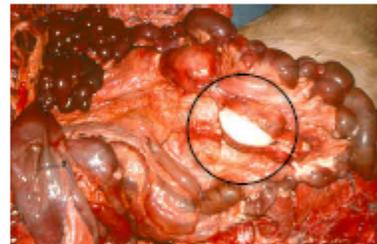
Wear waterproof gloves whenever you handle the internal tissues of your harvested animal.

Wash your hands, knives, and clothes in warm soapy water.

Cook meat well, until the juices run clear.

Smoking, freezing, or drying meat will NOT destroy the bacteria. Cook meat well.

Learn about bovine TB and if you see any suspicious abscess in the lymph nodes, lungs, or chest cavity of your harvested animal, contact a Fish and Wildlife office.



#### Additional Information

Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Bovine Tuberculosis:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/tb>

Government of Alberta, Bovine Tuberculosis in wildlife

[aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife-diseases/documents/BovineTuberculosis-Mar-2004.pdf](http://aep.alberta.ca/fish-wildlife/wildlife-diseases/documents/BovineTuberculosis-Mar-2004.pdf)

Government of Manitoba, Bovine Tuberculosis in Elk

[www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/wildlife/disease/bovine.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/wildlife/disease/bovine.html)

Lorne Fitch

P. Biol.

“Remember the  
silent majority”

### In every crowd there is....

At least one person who is miffed they didn't get a spot on the podium to expound at length on their take of the subject (they will tend to dominate the question period to make their points).

At least two people who will want to argue over the data, how it was collected, its quality, the relevance of it, the analysis, the interpretation and, of course, the perception of bias on the part of the collector, analyst and presenter.

Multiple individuals who would have done it differently, better, more efficiently, with better results and for less money. They will painstakingly detail all of this for the rest of the audience.

Hopefully only one certified, chrome-plated wing nut who is mad at something that is completely unrelated to the topic of discussion and will derail the best of intentions and productive dialogue.

A mixed bag of name callers, name droppers, fear mongers, xenophobes, agency haters, haters of anyone not part of the community, individuals distrustful of science, scientists, biologists and anyone who has “book-learning”.

A variable number of people with an agenda that cannot be overcome with facts, reason, common sense and common decency.

A few people so chronically, perhaps congenitally narrow minded, with limited perspective and lacking a sense of the greater society who tend to believe the world circulates around them exclusively.

An unknown and largely silent group of reasonable people who are supporters.

In natural resource management the last great blood sport for many people is the “Public meeting” where they get to jab sharp, pointed sticks (mostly metaphorical ones) into the side of some biologist who labours under political, budgetary and professional constraints. Remember the silent majority of supporters.

# Call for 2017 ACTWS Award Nominations

**Recognize someone for their special contribution.  
Consider nominating a colleague today.**

**Nominations can be made by any ACTWS member.**

**Nominees are normally residents of Alberta or have made a significant contribution in Alberta.**

**Awards will be presented at the 2016 ACTWS conference.**

**Nominations are valid for up to 3 years.**

## Outreach Award

This award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to Alberta's fish and wildlife through effective and excellent communication to the public.

## Publication Award

These awards recognize wildlife professionals for outstanding written contributions in **technical** or **popular** publications.

## Kristina Norstrom Dedicated Service Award

Presented to an Alberta Chapter member who actively and unselfishly contributes their time and resources to further the aims and objectives of the Chapter. This award acknowledges members whose contributions far exceed the expectations of being a member and capture the spirit and essence of dedication to the Chapter.

## William Rowan Distinguished Service Award

This most prestigious chapter award is presented to an Alberta wildlife biologist who has made outstanding cumulative contributions to the management and conservation of wildlife and their habitats.

Please submit an award nomination letter via email including:

**Nomination Award category (e.g. Outreach or Rowan)**

**Candidates name and title**

**Justification for the award**

**C.V. /resume of the nominee**

**Submit nominations to Glynnis Hood - [ghood@ualberta.ca](mailto:ghood@ualberta.ca)**

**Deadline Monday February 1, 2017**



**2017 CONFERENCE & ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
ALBERTA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**

**17-19 March 2017**

**Lac La Biche, Alberta, Canada**

**The Bold Centre and Portage College**

**The Good, the Bad and the Ugly:  
Effects of Fire on our Landscapes and Wildlife**

*How has fire shaped Alberta's landscapes and wildlife?*

*How are wildlife species adapted to fire?*

*How well is forest management emulating fire?*

*How might climate change influence fire and wildlife in the future?*

**Keynote Speaker: Dr. Tom Nudds**

**Emeritus Professor, Department of Integrative Biology**

**University of Guelph**

**'Predator Control and Food web Dynamics'**

**Draft Meeting Schedule**

**Friday, 17 March 2017**

**0830 - 2100**

Field Trips

Workshops

Student Conclave

Annual General Meeting

Open Mixer

**Saturday, 18 March 2017**

**0830-2400**

Plenary Session

Keynote Address

Predator Control Symposium

Banquet & Dancing

Awards and Auction

**Sunday, 19 March 2017**

**0830-1600**

Concurrent Sessions

Poster Sessions

Closing Remarks

**Early registration deadline: 15 January 2017**



## FIRST Call for Papers and Posters

**Deadline: 15 January 2017**

You are invited to submit titles and abstracts for oral and poster presentations at the 2016 ACTWS Conference and Annual General Meeting. Presentation on all aspects of wildlife are welcome; from plants to animals and ecosystems, including management, research, monitoring, species biology, and new techniques.

Presentations will be **12 minutes** in length (plus 3 minutes for questions). Guidelines for oral and poster presentations will be posted on the website ([actws.ca](http://actws.ca)).

**STUDENTS:** ACTWS gives away > \$10,000 each year in scholarships, travel grants, and presentation awards. **Submit your travel grant application with your abstract!** (details will be posted at [www.actws.ca/conference](http://www.actws.ca/conference)).

**Abstracts must be submitted online** at: [www.actws.ca/conference/conference-presentations](http://www.actws.ca/conference/conference-presentations). The following information should be provided:

1. Lead author name, affiliation, mailing address, phone number(s), and e-mail address.
2. Names and affiliations of additional authors
3. Title of abstract
4. ABSTRACT: Distillation of the purpose, methods, results and conclusions, **250 words max.** (Please note that *all abstracts are printed in the program booklet*—the abstract you will submit will be the final that is printed in the program booklet).

**Please note:** An automated **confirmation email** should be received upon submission of the abstract. If you do not receive confirmation, or have other questions, please email [abstracts@actws.ca](mailto:abstracts@actws.ca) or contact Jason Fisher at [Jason.Fisher@innotechalberta.ca](mailto:Jason.Fisher@innotechalberta.ca).

**Notification:** Authors will be advised of the final decision on their abstract by 1 February 2017.

Curtis Stambaugh  
Senior Wildlife Biologist,  
Alberta Environment and Parks

“I fulfilled a childhood dream of capturing and releasing a wild and beautiful top-predator of North America”

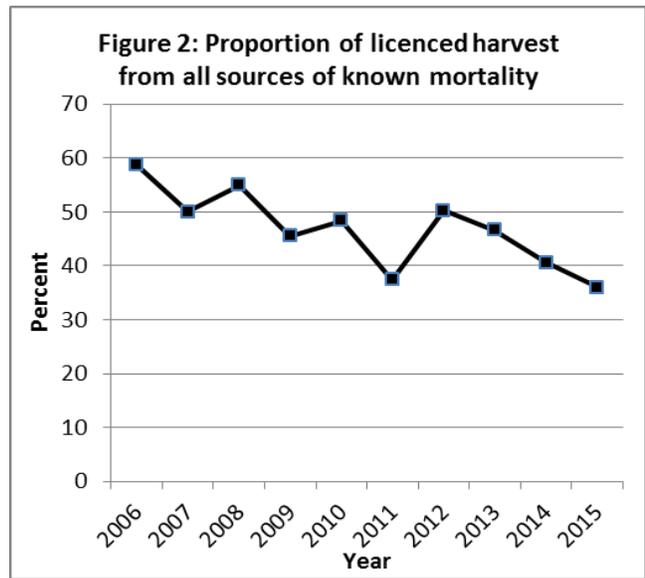
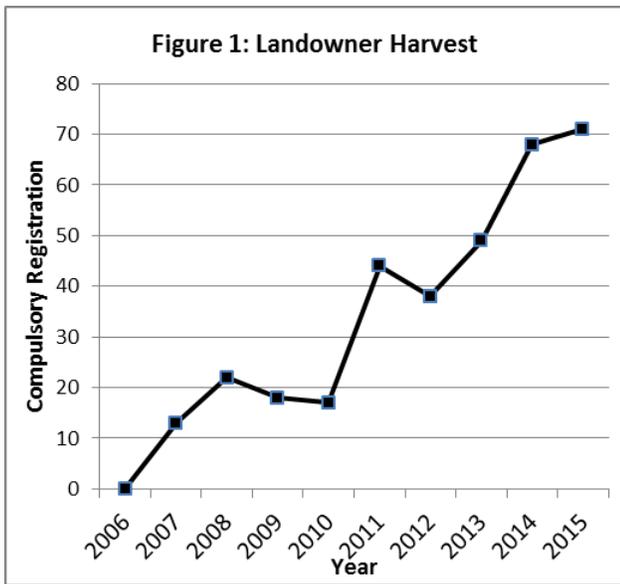
## Alberta Cougar Adaptive Management Project

I often sit back some nights and reflect on the truly brilliant aspects of being a wildlife biologist. Granted, as I'm now firmly in the mid-term of my career, paper cuts are slowly beginning to outweigh the blisters when it comes to work related wear-and-tear. On a personal level, I am extremely grateful for the opportunity through my work, to actively manage a bounty of species. I've been extremely fortunate to have surveyed and/or handled every big game animal in Alberta except for one, perhaps the most elusive and secretive species of them all; *Puma concolor*. That all changed on March 7, 2016. I fulfilled a childhood dream of capturing and releasing a wild and beautiful top-predator of North America, as part of a new adaptive management project to help Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) better understand and manage a species that has begun to illicit a growing public anxiety.

About a year ago myself, Alberta's provincial carnivore specialist and fellow wildlife biologists along the foothills region began discussing the need for increased understanding of Alberta's cougar population dynamics to better inform management decisions. There is no denying that cougars have expanded their distribution throughout Alberta over the last two decades from their primary stronghold along Alberta's eastern slopes to now north-easterly regions of the province. This expansion of their range – not surprisingly – mimics the very productive and northerly expanding white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). Ample prey availability and vast expanses of boreal forest provide a welcome mat for cougar habitation.

As a result of this current landscape, we began discussing revisions to Alberta's cougar management plan as well as updates to harvest regimes to account for new and emerging research, expanding populations, and increasing human-cougar conflicts. Two streams of thought have emerged with respect to human-cougar conflict. First, that overharvest contributes to skewed age/sex (increased immigration of young males) and disruption of spatial organization (increased home range size) within cougar populations (Cooley et al. 2009, Beausoleil et al. 2013, Maletzke et al. 2014, Robinson et al. 2014). Second and conversely, that underharvest (not overharvest) contributes to increased likelihood of human-cougar conflict through high cougar populations, leading to increased social intolerance. This dichotomy is an over simplification of very complex concepts but in essence, to manage cougar populations sustainably and minimize human-cougar conflict, we either need to harvest more cougars or harvest less cougars. In Alberta we have not fully embraced one practice or the other. We continue to get external pressure to “shoot more cougars” when conflicts occur but we do not have a solid rationale, based on existing science, to do so when this action may actually exacerbate the problem.

In 2007, we implemented a new regulation meant to mitigate conflict that would allow landowners to harvest cougars on their private property at any time without a license. The number of cougars killed by landowners under this regulation has been increasing markedly over time (Figure 1). This high unregulated harvest has further complicated EAPs ability to manage total harvest. Currently, our total non-licensed mortality (landowner kills, accidental trappings, self-defence, and problem wildlife), outstrips our regulated licensed harvest (quotas) when compared to the overall annual cougar mortality rate (obtained through mandatory registrations). This fact presents itself as one of the primary drivers for initiating this adaptive management project.



AEP is trying to determine the optimal regulated harvest levels to achieve (1) stable age/sex structure within source and stable cougar management areas (CMA) and (2) minimized human-cougar conflicts and unregulated sources of mortality. The project calls for a traditional Before-After-Control-Impact (BACI) study that would monitor radio collared cougars for 2-years pre-impact and 2-years post-impact. CMA 21 (7557 km<sup>2</sup>) will be established as a “harvest sink” while both CMA 11 and surrounding stable CMAs will be monitored for potential “disruption” due to the creation of a harvest sink (i.e., the impact). Under this theoretical scenario, surrounding CMAs will provide “immigration sources” for CMA 21 (Robinson et al. 2008, Robinson and DeSimone 2011). CMAs 11 and 12 combined (8021 km<sup>2</sup>) will be monitored as a control (status quo) for reference which will allow us to infer changes documented in CMA 21 are a result of the management manipulation.

AEP proposes to increase harvest quotas within CMA 21 dramatically from the current 3-male/3-female quota, starting December 1, 2018. Based on the historical level of harvest (licenced and non-licenced) over the 4-year period between 2011-2014, a total of 25 cougars were killed within CMA 21 each year. This is approximately 22% of the population estimate of 2011 (based on Knopff 2010) which far exceeds the 14% threshold from existing literature to maintain social stability (See Beausoleil et al. 2013). However, only approximately 9% (10 cougars) of the harvest is from registered licenced hunters which represents a substantial “take” from other sources (landowner, self-defence, problem wildlife, and accidental traps). The proposed quota increase plans for 18-male/7-female cougars. These numbers represent an equal amount of total mortality historically registered per year as well as a decrease in the proportion of females harvested (45% currently to approximately 30% of population estimate).

The result of this work should improve our understanding of whether the increased harvest compensates the unregulated harvest or whether the increase is additive at the CMA scale. In layman’s terms, we can answer the question and age old tradition, of whether we can “shoot ourselves” out of the problem of increased human-predator conflict?

An academic partnership has been arranged with Drs. Andrew Derocher and Mark Edwards of the University of Alberta to provide additional scientific rigour to the project delivery. Currently, Corey Smereka (MSc candidate) from the Derocher lab is gearing up for his first field season on the project. Due to the scale and scope of the project, there are plans to have additional graduate students involved as the project matures. Stay tuned for progress and updates as we begin to reign in the data.

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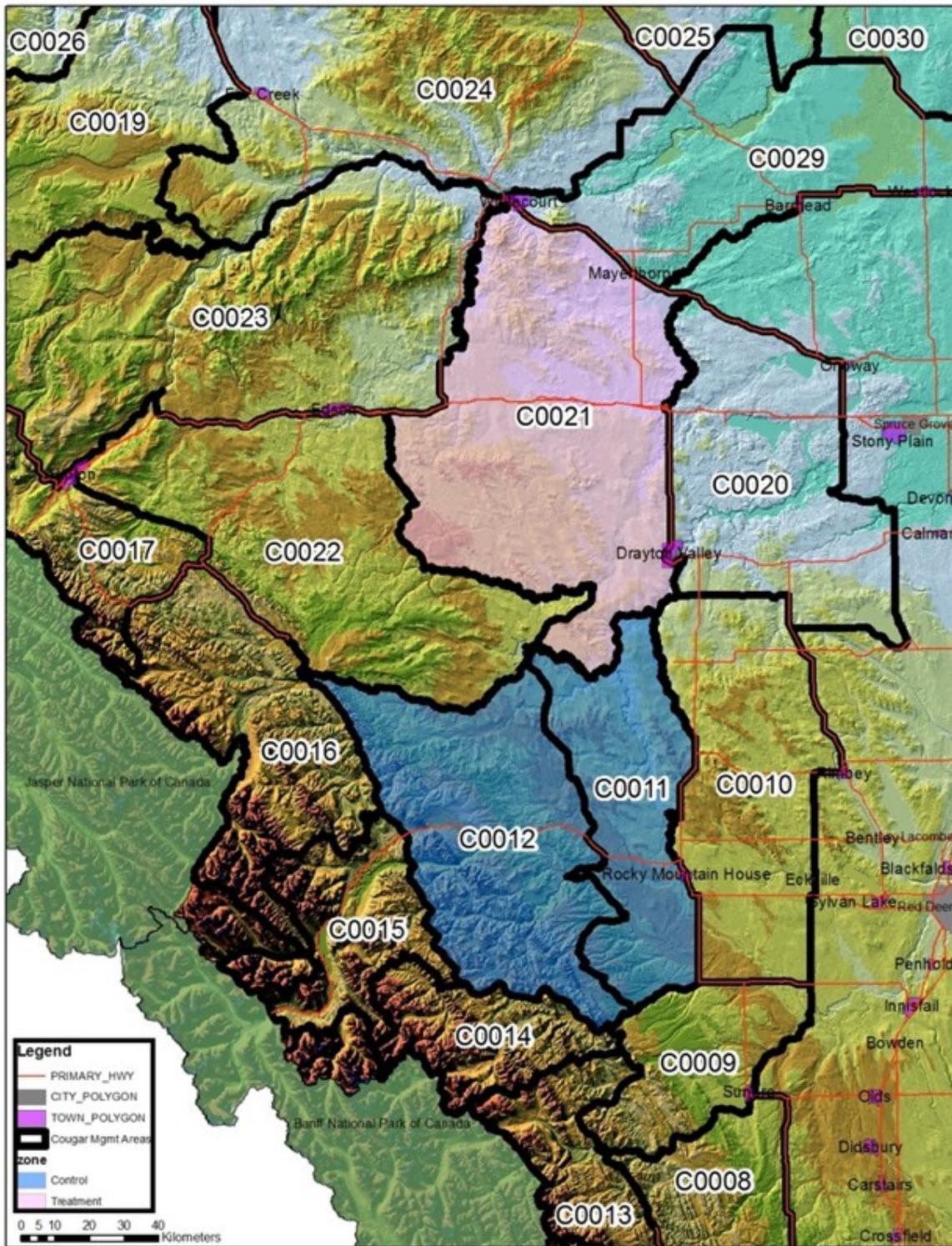
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Alberta Cougar Adaptive Management Project study area



**COSEWIC**

Committee on the  
Status of Endangered  
Wildlife in Canada

**COSEWIC**

Comité sur la  
situation des espèces  
en péril au Canada

# Call for Bids

for

The preparation of a COSEWIC Status Report or a  
COSEWIC Designatable Unit Report.

**October 26 to December 7, 2016**  
*(until 3:00pm Eastern time)*

For more information, please consult the COSEWIC website:

**[www.cosewic.gc.ca](http://www.cosewic.gc.ca)**



**COSEWIC**  
Committee on the  
Status of Endangered  
Wildlife in Canada

**COSEPAC**  
Comité sur la  
situation des espèces  
en péril au Canada

# Appel d'offres

pour

La rédaction d'un rapport de situation du COSEPAC ou  
un rapport du COSEPAC sur les unités designables

**du 26 octobre au 7 décembre 2016**  
*(jusqu'à 15 heures, heure de l'est)*

Pour obtenir de plus amples renseignements, veuillez  
consulter le site Web du COSEPAC à l'adresse

**[www.cosepac.gc.ca](http://www.cosepac.gc.ca)**

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# Wildlife Immobilization Course

Canadian Association of Zoological and Wildlife Veterinarians (CAZWV)

January 5 – 7, 2017

University of Alberta

The Canadian Association of Zoo and Wildlife Veterinarians (CAZWV) chemical immobilization course is a lecture and lab based course designed to familiarize participants with the capture and handling of free-ranging wildlife. This 3-day course is considered the national standard for continuing education training for biologists and wildlife conservation personnel involved with chemical immobilization of wildlife.

A number of general topics will be covered including:

- Anatomy and physiology
- Pharmacology
- Human safety
- Capture Procedures
- Chemical vs. Physical restraint
- Dealing with complications
- Supportive care
- Equipment

The lab based portion will focus on dart delivery systems, dart loading procedures, monitoring equipment and supportive care.

The course will focus on the capture and handling of Canadian species. Participants are encouraged to actively engage in the course to discuss their species of interest.

Assessment will be based on a multiple choice exam delivered at the end of the course.

**COST: \$445 per person (+5% GST for participants from outside the University of Alberta). Includes 3 day course (9am-4pm) and manual (\$75 value).**

#### Registrations:

Cut and paste link into browser or click to browse to:

<https://docs.google.com/a/uofalberta.ca/forms/d/1pfH7ZqQixEmiRiw7Cxr4NsFs4ohDuqk-0Q6I4FFPQ8>

Mail cheques to:

Research Ethics Office, 308 Campus Tower, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 1K8

**Information:** Kathy Strawson, Phone: 780-492-0459 Email: [reoffice@ualberta.ca](mailto:reoffice@ualberta.ca)

#### **Dr. Nigel Caulkett, DVM, MVetSc, Diplomate ACVA**

Dr. Caulkett completed his DVM at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in 1989. Soon after graduation he worked on a project in the Northwest Territories, performing semen analysis on wood bison. Dr. Caulkett spent a year in mixed practice in St Paul, Alberta and returned to WCV in 1990 to start a residency in veterinary anesthesiology. Dr. Caulkett's MVetSc research focused on xylazine epidural analgesia in cattle. After completion of his residency Dr. Caulkett remained at WCV in a clinical position for 1 year. Dr. Caulkett started on faculty at WCV in 1994 and received board certification in the same year. Much of Dr. Caulkett's research has focused on the development of safe capture and handling techniques in free ranging wildlife, and the development and evaluation of analgesic techniques in farm animals.

#### **Dr. Owen Slater, B.Sc., DVM**

Owen Slater obtained his degrees (BSc., DVM) from the University of Guelph and completed an internship at the Calgary Zoo. Currently he is an instructor at the University of Calgary, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, in addition to providing freelance wildlife veterinary expertise to various organizations and government agencies. He is the vice-president of the Canadian Association of Zoo and Wildlife Veterinarians (CAZWV), chair of the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association's Wildlife and Ecosystem Health Advisory Committee and an Associate with the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative. Owen has spent his career working with captive and free ranging wildlife and has over 15 years of chemical immobilization experience. He regularly teaches the CAZWV's chemical immobilization course throughout Alberta.

## Wildlife Handling and Chemical Immobilization for Wildlife Professionals



Lethbridge College  
Lethbridge Alberta  
April 25-27, 2017



Global Wildlife Resources (GWR) and Lethbridge College are offering a 3-day wildlife handling course April 25-27 (Tues-Thurs.) 2017 at the Lethbridge College in Lethbridge, Alberta. GWR is dedicated to supporting wildlife professionals with humane capture and handling through training & field assistance. This class is one of the most extensive chemical immobilization courses in North America and includes hand-on labs with animals. It is invaluable to provincial, federal, and tribal wildlife professionals, college students, zoo caretakers, game farms, and animal control officers.



This unique field-oriented training focuses on the needs of professionals to understand the skills and equipment associated with capture, physical restraint, and chemical immobilization for free-ranging, captive and urban wildlife. Every course also covers each aspect of animal processing such as radio-collaring, ear-tagging, weighing, sample collection and patient monitoring.

### Course content includes:

Five-step Preparation for Field Operations \* Legal Responsibilities \* Professionalism \* Drug Delivery Systems \* Immobilizing Drugs \* Patient Monitoring \* Marking \* Sampling \* Veterinary Emergencies \* Euthanasia \* Human Safety \* The Y Pole \* Honoring each animal through equipment and techniques

### HANDS-ON LABS EVERY DAY:

- **Drug Delivery Systems** - opportunity to practice the most effective darguns
- **Needle & Syringe Skills** - building safe, professional habits for human safety & accuracy
- **TPR Lab** - a practice lab with goats to learn the first layer of skills for chemical immobilization for Day 3
- **Chemical Immobilization** - participants in groups immobilize goats (which simulate deer) with a hand-injection and practice professional & humane skills of wildlife chemical immobilization

*GWR courses promote care, honor, and respect for every animal that is handled and are often profound personal and career experiences for course participants.*

**GWR courses build confidence and strengthen resumes!**

**GWR courses provide Credits for the TWS Professional Development Program and will certify professionals for all state and federal agencies.**

The course is limited to 25 participants *so register early!* It includes labs each day, course notebook, and Certificate of Training. Each day is 9am-5pm. The 3-day course fee is \$625 USD, \$510 USD for full-time college students, and \$510 USD Refresher fee (for those who have taken GWR courses before). Places reserved once payment is received.



### To Register:

Visit our website [Training Schedule](#) to register on-line

or contact

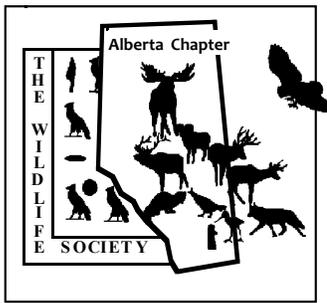
Global Wildlife Resources

Phone: (406) 363-7056 Email: [mjohnson@wildliferesources.com](mailto:mjohnson@wildliferesources.com)

### To Learn More:

See our website [Course Schedule](#) at [WildlifeResources.com](http://WildlifeResources.com) for course outlines, testimonials, and more.

([Lethbridge College](#) is at 3000 College Dr S, Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 1L6)



## Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society

The Alberta Chapter of the Wildlife Society  
P.O. Box 4990  
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Don't forget we are also  
on Facebook



## Footnotes from the Editor

# Upcoming Events

### **82nd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference.**

Spokane, Washington. 4-11 March 2017.

<https://wildlifemanagement.institute/#/conference>

### **19th International Conference on Wildlife Ecology, Rehabilitation and Conservation.**

Rome, Italy. 5-6 March 2017.

<https://www.waset.org/conference/2017/03/rome/ICWERC>

### **12th Mountain Lion Workshop.**

Estes Park, Colorado. 15-19 May 2017.

[http://www.wafwa.org/workshops/mountain\\_lion\\_workshop/](http://www.wafwa.org/workshops/mountain_lion_workshop/)

### **International Urban Wildlife Conference.**

San Diego, California. 4-7 June 2017.

<http://urbanwildlifegroup.org/>

### **19th International Conference on Wildlife Management and Conservation.**

San Francisco, California. 7-8 June 2017.

<https://www.waset.org/conference/2017/06/san-francisco/ICWMC>

### **28th International Congress for Conservation Biology.**

Cartagena, Columbia. 23-27 July 2017

<http://conbio.org/>

### **24th Annual Conference, The Wildlife Society.**

Albuquerque, New Mexico. 23-27 September 2017.

<http://wildlife.org/learn/conferences-2/>

Always looking for articles, stories, announcements, photos and anything else you would like to see in the newsletter. I know there's lots of wildlife work going on in Alberta so , please, let us hear about it.