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TEXAS CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

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EDITOR, JOHN M. TOMECEK

Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society Newsletter is electronically published in January, April, July, and October. Contributions on any topic pertaining to wildlife, announcements of interest to members, or Chapter business are welcome and should be submitted to the Editor (John M. Tomecek; tomecek@tamu.edu) by the 15th of the preceding month. Change of e-mail address should be submitted online through the Address Change Form or directly to the Treasurer. Membership in the Chapter is \$15/yr for students and \$25/yr for regular members, payable to the Treasurer (Terry Blankenship).

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



As I pause to gather my thoughts for the newsletter, my briefly quiet office is filled with sounds of spring, namely white-eyed vireo, eastern phoebe, and painted bunting. Around the state, birds are singing, wildflowers are vivid, butterflies are abundant and turkeys are strutting – all reminders of why we do what we do.

I would be remiss to not first take a moment to reflect on the very successful 2017 Annual Meeting. Compliments to the efforts of Randy DeYoung, Tyler Campbell, Eric Grahmann, and all the Committee Chairs and members that put on a great meeting. The meeting provided four workshops, an engaging plenary, student competitions, 19 technical sessions, close to 100 posters and great networking opportunities.

Meanwhile, your new Executive Board and Committee Chairs and members are busy at work. Following the Annual Meeting, a number of items were approved by the Executive Board and have recently been brought to you for consideration via ballot. These include a Resolution in Support of the Work of the Blue Ribbon Panel, a Resolution in Opposition of a Border Wall that Restricts Free Movement for Wildlife, a Standing Policy on Workforce Diversity and a couple of minor Bylaw revisions. Thank you for your participation.

As you likely know, the Legislature is in session, thus many are working to ensure that the appropriate members of the House and Senate are informed of the Chapter's views on a number of things. Our Executive Director, Don Steinbach, has met with the Culture, Recreation and Tourism Committee, the staff of the Speaker of the House, Senator Perry and will continue to have a presence at the Capital. Additionally, the Chapter has hired Katy Johnson of the Garcia Group to advocate our needs through the session. Further, the Chapter has been represented at the Texas Land Conservation Conference, Conservation Legacy Committee and Texas Outdoor Partner meetings. Lastly, the Conservation Affairs Committee Chairs are keeping their committee and the Executive Board informed of current and upcoming issues that the Chapter needs

to be aware of and potentially act on.

On other fronts, Andy James and his team are preparing for this year's Wildlife Conservation camp. The camp will be held at the Welder Wildlife Foundation the week of July 16th. For those that have not had the opportunity to see the camp in action, it is an impressive event, with the committee working tirelessly to educate youth on all things wildlife conservation related. Additionally, the Program Committee Chairs are working on the theme and agenda for the 2018 meeting. On that note, please put the date of our next Annual Meeting on your calendar – February 8-10, 2018 at the Sheraton Dallas.

Further, Cristy Burch and John Tomecek are working behind the scenes on ballots, providing needed information, maintaining our Facebook page and crafting the newsletter. As you can see, the Chapter benefits from many members that selflessly use their time and abilities to further our mission. There are many others chairing and working on our 24 committees, each with their own tasks and needs. I encourage you to engage and volunteer. Activity and committee information can be found on our website - <http://tctws.org/>.

Lastly, I want you to know that it is a privilege to work alongside each of you for the benefit of the Chapter. Please let me know what you need from me and the Chapter. Thank you.

Corey Mason, President

NOMINATION NOTIFICATION

Honorary Life Membership Committee Seeking Nominees

The Honorary Life Membership Committee is seeking nominees for this honor. Certainly, the Texas Chapter is blessed with numerous members who have made outstanding contributions to wildlife conservation on a state, national and/or international scale. These individuals deserve the recognition of their peers for their outstanding long-term service to our wildlife resources.

To be eligible a nominee should have been (1) active for 20 or more years in the wildlife profession as an employee of a natural resource agency, academia, or a private organization as a wildlife biologist or consultant; or an effective non-professional activist. (2) They should have made significant contributions to the Chapter and/or the Profession and/or the conservation of the natural resources of Texas.

To act on a nomination the Committee needs:

1. A reasonably complete vitae for the nominee which should contain his/her full name (present position, organizational affiliation, address, phone number), and a reasonably complete history of professional accomplishments.
2. One or more letters of nomination from close friends or associates.

Nominations should be kept confidential, especially from the nominee. Many people have a vitae that they use for various purposes. Surreptitiously obtain one. If there isn't one available, patch something together, with the help of friends, associates and spouses. From those nominations that we receive the committee can select one or more recipients to be honored at the 2018 annual meeting. Please take a moment right now and consider who among your coworkers qualifies and deserves this honor. Set some time aside on your calendar to gather the data to support his or her nomination.

Past recipients of this honor are listed under Historical Information at <http://tctws.org/about-us-2/history/>

Send nomination materials to:
Chip Ruthven--Committee Chair
chip.ruthven@tpwd.texas.gov
806-492-3405

NOMINATION NOTIFICATION

Publication Awards Call for Nominations

This is the first call for nominations of publications that include a Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society member as one of the first three authors, and that were published within the last 3 years (2015-2017). Please indicate the individuals (chapter member(s)) that should receive the award if selected. At least 3 publications within a category are required in order to offer the award. The deadline for submission is 15 November 2017.

Categories include:

Books

Electronic Media (i.e. websites, CDs, DVDs, listservs, or similar)

Peer-reviewed Scientific Articles (journal or peer-reviewed proceedings)

Popular Articles (published in magazines, newspapers, newsletters, or similar)

Technical Publications (reports, factsheets, or similar)

To nominate a publication, please submit: 1) a cover letter stating why the publication is being nominated, and 2) six (6) hard copies or a digital pdf to the Publication Awards Committee Chair: Bill Johnson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, PO Box 277 Canyon, TX 79015; e-mail: bill_johnson@fws.gov ; phone: 806-681-0260.

TWS-SW SECTION NEWS

Southwest Section Tracks

Spring-Summer Issue 2017

By Fidel Hernandez, Southwest Section Representative

Hello Fellow Chapter and SW Section Members of TWS,

The Texas mountain laurels (*Sophora secundiflora*) are a bit late blooming this year. In most years in southern Texas, it's mid-February when the first breezes that carry the fragrant blooms of mountain laurels first arrive. It is one of my favorite times of year—the blooms are colorful, and their fragrance is one of a kind. This year, however, it's mid-March, and the blooms have yet to come. Rains were generous in early spring, but I guess Mother Nature is simply taking her time. What are a few more weeks? In any case, I await with much anticipation the mountain laurel blooms and smelling their unique fragrance.



The soon-to-be blooming mountain laurels means spring is here, and thus it also means a gathering of TWS Council. I recently returned from our TWS Council meetings (4–7 March 2017) being held during the 82nd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Spokane, Washington. As always, there was much to cover in the 2 days of meetings. Below are brief highlights of these Council meetings as well as general news from the Section.

TWS News: Every Council meeting begins with a status of the society—our status of membership and financial condition. I am happy to report that the positive trajectory that began for TWS about 4 years ago continues to the present. Executive Director Ken Williams reported that TWS has recorded 3 consecutive years in which the approved budget included a surplus (i.e., positive net income) and, for 3 consecutive years, those budgeted surplus amounts were met or exceeded. As of the end of January 2017, TWS assets were about \$2.8 million, and liabilities were about \$1.1 million, resulting in an equity position of \$1.75 million. And the future looks good for this year's budget. It is anticipated that TWS will meet the surplus goal by the end of the fiscal year on June 30.

Where does this surplus go? Part of it was used to stabilize TWS finances that had been shaky prior to the turn-around. Some monies go toward a rainy day fund to help ensure that TWS has a surplus to cover at least 6 months of operation costs should an unanticipated, catastrophic event

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occur. This “rainy-day fund” is a standard best accounting practice that is part of many businesses but only in recent years has been implemented in TWS. Another portion of the annual surplus goes toward operational costs or paying for member services such as the recent member benefit of free journal access. In any event, the positive financial turn-around and growth that TWS has experienced is exciting and in a large part due to Director Williams’ leadership, in conjunction with the invaluable contribution of the entire TWS staff and Council.

Regarding membership, Director Williams reported that the long-awaited rebound in membership seems at last to have begun in earnest. There have been consistent year-on-year increases in membership. TWS has initiated many new efforts to attract and retain members, including an aggressive effort to reach out to the states and provinces and their biologists; expanding the content and frequency of *The Wildlife Professional* and access by members to TWS journals; and the new Give-Back program. As a result of these dedicated efforts, membership as of January 2017 was 9,527 members (compared to 8,649 in January 2016)—an increase of 878 members (+10.1%).

TWS Executive Director Update: As many of you know, Director Ken Williams is retiring at the end of this fiscal year (30 June). Thus, TWS has been involved in a search for an executive director since last October. TWS received about 30 applicants, from which 5 were selected for on-site interviews after intensive review of applications and phone interviews. These 5 in-person interviews were conducted in conjunction with our March Council meeting. Based on these interviews, the search committee made recommendations to the President Bruce Thompson. As of the time of this writing, a formal announcement of the new executive director has not been made. However, it is anticipated that the new executive director will be announced in the near future. So stay tuned for news from TWS.

Give Back Program: As I mentioned above, one of the new recruiting efforts of TWS is to offer current members the ability to share a free 6-month membership to a colleague of their choosing. That is, when a current member renews his-her membership, they have the opportunity to “Give Back” to the wildlife profession by gifting a six-month complimentary TWS membership to a wildlife professional who presently is not a member but can benefit from the many services that TWS has to offer. This 6-month membership is free, with no obligation of the recipient to join TWS. There appeared to be some confusion that the membership was for one year, with 6 months of the membership being free but with the recipient paying the remaining 6 months. This is incorrect. The membership is free for 6 months with no obligation to join (i.e., pay for the additional 6 months). For nominees accepting their 6-month gift membership, they will enjoy the following benefits:

- The *Wildlife Professional* bimonthly magazine
- Free online access to all TWS publications (*The Journal of Wildlife Management*, *Wildlife Monographs* and *Wildlife Society Bulletin*)
- Weekly editions of the *eWildlifer* newsletter, including featured TWS Talks presentations
- Networking through the TWS Online Member Directory
- Ability to join any and all working groups
- Ability to pursue certification opportunities

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- A variety of members-only discounts, including \$200 off TWS Annual Conference registration. So, as you renew your membership this year, be sure to nominate a deserving wildlife professional for this great opportunity. It is easy, free, and best of all, beneficial to a fellow wildlifer.

Call for TWS Award Nominations: It is that time of year again. This is a friendly reminder that the deadline for nominations for several TWS awards is in the horizon (1 May 2017). Here is a brief description of these awards:

- Aldo Leopold Memorial Award: This is the highest honor bestowed by TWS for distinguished service to wildlife conservation. The basic selection criterion is the significance of an individual's contribution to the wildlife field.
- Caesar Kleberg Award For Excellence in Applied Wildlife Research: The Caesar Kleberg Award recognizes those who have distinguished themselves in applied wildlife research and is focused on those whose body of work, in both inquiry and discovery, has resulted in application of management and conservation "on the ground".
- Chapter of the Year Award: Active state chapters are needed to achieve TWS goals, many of which are best addressed at the state, provincial, or local level. The State Chapter of the Year awards pays tribute to these chapters and recognizes exceptional achievement.
- Conservation Education Award: Conservation education covers a wide diversity of activity. It encompasses particular works of great merit and also programs representing sustained effort that can achieve great significance over the years. The Conservation Education Award is given in each one of the following categories on a four-year-rotation basis: writing, audio-visual works, media, and programs.
- Distinguished Service Awards: The Wildlife Society Distinguished Service Award recognizes TWS members who have made a long-term commitment to the Society based on at least 20 years of membership and their actions to further the mission of the Society. The member is someone who is/was "always there" and could be counted on to serve the chapter, section, or parent organization.
- Diversity Award: The Diversity Award recognizes an individual or organization for outstanding efforts in promoting ethnic and gender diversity in the natural resource professions, especially wildlife conservation and education. Recognized activities may focus on encouraging ethnic and gender diversity in the workforce, academic enrollment, or organizational membership.
- Donald H. Rusch Memorial Game Bird Research Scholarship: This scholarship was established to honor the memory of Don Rusch and to continue his legacy by contributing to studies of game-bird biology. The award is presented annually to a graduate student studying any aspect of upland game bird or waterfowl biology and management.
- Excellence in Wildlife Education Award: This award celebrates exemplary teaching and

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contributes to the improvement of wildlife education by honoring individual faculty members. Eligible faculty should be actively engaged in undergraduate and/or graduate wildlife-related education with outstanding performance in at least one of the following categories: teaching, advising, research, academic program development, or educational leadership.

- **Honorary Membership:** Honorary Memberships recognize continuous outstanding service to any area of concern of TWS by a TWS member who is a practicing or retired wildlife professional.
- **Jay N. “Ding” Darling Award for Wildlife Stewardship Through Art:** This award is intended to be a lasting recognition of the heritage established by Jay N. “Ding” Darling to promote wildlife and habitat conservation through art. His legacy of artwork and associated conservation messages were instrumental in achieving significant wildlife conservation measures. Among them were the creation of the Federal Duck Stamp Program, National Wildlife Federation, Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Program, the groundwork for today’s system of National Wildlife Refuges, and many broadly recognized cartoons advocating land and water conservation.
- **Jim McDonough Award:** This award is presented to a TWS member who is a Certified Wildlife Biologist and a member of the section and chapter where the individual resides. The recipient is recognized for making a significant contribution to the wildlife profession by being an active member/participant of TWS, especially at local levels and through program implementation and development of new techniques or approaches in an area, state, or province. Additionally, the recipient is the kind of person recognized by his/her fellow workers as a solid contributor and a “true professional,” but who has gone without major awards, citations, or prominent recognitions.
- **Special Recognition Service Award:** This award honors a person or group who has made an outstanding contribution over the short or long term to one or more of the following areas: the wildlife profession; general areas of wildlife conservation, management, or science; or a specific area of endeavor, species, community, ecosystem, region, etc.
- **Student Chapter Advisor of the Year:** This award recognizes exceptional annual mentorship by a TWS student chapter advisor.
- **Student Chapter of the Year Award:** Active student chapters are needed to achieve TWS goals, many of which are best addressed at the state, provincial, or local level. Chapters also strengthen the Society’s membership recruitment and retention efforts by providing opportunities for member involvement in Society activities. The Student Chapter of the Year award pays tribute to and recognizes exceptional achievement.

We have many outstanding people in the Southwest Section who contribute considerably to TWS at various capacities. Be sure to nominate a deserving colleague. Visit the TWS Award

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website (<http://wildlife.org/engage/awards/>) to get more details, learn of past honorees, and download nomination applications.

Section News: One of the main issues the Southwest Section has struggled with over the years is how to be relevant to members who are part of a section that is comprised of 3 very strong and active state chapters. Many different ideas have been proposed and tested over the years to attract and better serve section members, but the reality is that most of the services that are valuable to section members such as networking, dissemination research, etc. are provided at the state level. So, during the recent Southwest Section Executive Board meeting in San Antonio, a brainstorming session led to the idea that instead of attempting to offer services that were so adeptly provided by state chapters, a better approach could be to provide 1 or 2 relevant services to section members. One idea was to sponsor a workshop of interest to the membership during each annual conference of the respective state chapters. Naturally, such approach would require close collaboration with the respective executive boards of the state chapters as well as workshop ideas from the membership. If you have any ideas on potential workshop topics or on how the Southwest Section can better serve our membership, please contact me or any officer of the Executive Board of the Section.

Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society

Just a reminder that the 24th Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico during 23-27 September 2017. Ginny Seamster from the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, along with the local committee, has been busy assisting the parent society with fundraising, planning, and local arrangements. There is plenty of work to do, so if you are interested in helping with any of these activities, please contact Ginny (Virginia.Seamster@state.nm.us). I am sure she would welcome your help. Also, if you are interested in submitting an abstract for a poster or presentation, the deadline for submission is 10 April 2017 at 11:59 pm CST. You may find more information about the submission process at <http://wildlife.org/tws-24th-annual-conference/>.

Well, that's all for now. I think the Texas mountain laurel blooms are opening!

Until next time,

Fidel Hernández
Southwest Section Representative of TWS



STUDENT CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT

Tarleton State University Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society

Tarleton State University is located in Stephenville Texas approximately 90 miles southwest of Fort Worth on highway 281. The wildlife program, being categorized under the Animal Science department since its start, gained enough interest among students and faculty to create the Department of Wildlife, Sustainability, and Ecosystem Sciences in 2014. This departmental change prompted a restructuring of courses to follow the Certified Wildlife Biologist requirements by The Wildlife Society. The department currently offers WSES majors to select an emphasis in Wildlife Science, Fisheries Management, Plant Ecology, Pre-Veterinary Medicine, Soil Science, and more. The WSES department includes courses that allow students to gain hands on experience with certain wildlife field methods, along with data collection, analyzation, and scientific manuscript writing skills. The department and the Tarleton Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society work closely to offer extra opportunities to students.



The Tarleton Student Chapter of TWS was founded in 1999 and has approximately 75 members. We have meetings bi-weekly which consist of activities, documentaries, or wildlife professionals speaking about their journey through school and eventually their careers. To get to know our members, the officers plan a camping trip to Enchanted Rock State Park. We spend a full day hiking and exploring the park while getting to know one another and enjoying the outdoors. Our members participate in field days hosted by the student chapter which focus on radio telemetry use, plant identification, or trapping methods. They also have the opportunity to travel to professionally held field days at places like the Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch. The student chapter held its first annual glow-in-the-dark golf tournament fundraiser this spring. It was a huge success and all money earned will help our members attend trips away from campus. We also attend two deer captures, giving students an opportunity to get hands on experience with deer handling and data collection in the field. We host a large community outreach event called Tarleton Outdoors that is held at the Stephenville City Park, it is free to the public, and we provide a free hotdog lunch. We have booths run by society members and many other organizations to promote wildlife conservation and management, such as Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Wildlife Association, and Texas Forest Service.

Our members also participate in the wildlife quiz bowl at the state and national levels. We won first place at the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society conference this year and competed at The Wildlife Society meetings in Winnipeg, Canada and Raleigh, NC. Our plant identification team also took home a trophy, winning third place at the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society conference this past year.

STUDENT CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT

The Tarleton Student Chapter of TWS is proud to have multiple undergraduate student researchers to represent our society. Kelton Mote completed a project over mourning doves in the Lower Rio Grande Valley and presented his research as a poster at the TWS conference in Raleigh, NC



and also orally at the Texas Chapter of TWS this spring. He will present again this fall at the TWS conference in Albuquerque, NM. Trey McClinton is currently analyzing data for his project over mottled ducks on the J.W. Murphree Wildlife Management Area in Port Arthur Texas. He presented a poster at this year Texas Chapter of TWS conference and plans to present orally in New Mexico.

Kristyn Stewart completed research over mesopredator abundance on the Matador Wildlife Management Area near Paducah, Texas. She has presented orally at the 2016 Texas Chapter conference and also in Raleigh, NC at TWS conference.

Myca Reed completed research over vegetation at Northern bobwhite nests and presented a poster at this years' Texas Chapter conference. Jordan Fisher also completed research over gossypol effects on Northern bobwhite and also presented at this past Texas Chapter conference.

As an active student society, we are excited for the growth and involvement of our members. We see the reward that comes with being involved and getting experience. We hope that the knowledge we gain at this stage in our life is given back the field of wildlife conservation and management.

CONFERENCE AWARDS

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Selma Glasscock

HONORARY LIFE MEMBER AWARD



Matt Wagner

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR



Steve Nelly

OUTSTANDING SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION



Damon Williford, Randy W. DeYoung, Rodney L. Honeycutt, Leonard A. Brennan, and Fidel Hernández

OUTSTANDING BOOK



Michelle M. Haggerty and Mary Pearl Meuth

OUTSTANDING ELECTRONIC MEDIA



Ross Anderson, Addie Engeling, Amy Grones, Roel Lopez, Brian Pierce, Kevin Skow, and Todd Snelgrove

OUTSTANDING POPULAR ARTICLE



James D. Ray, Nancy McIntyre, Mark C. Wallace, and Monty G.

1ST PLACE COTTAM



Carlos E. Gonzalez

OUTSTANDING TECHNICAL PUBLICATION



Ross Anderson, Kevin Skow, and Addie Engeling

CONFERENCE AWARDS

STUDENT CHAPTER OF THE YEAR



Texas A&M University-Kingsville

1ST PLACE PLANT ID TEAM



Texas A&M University

1ST PLACE QUIZ BOWL TEAM



Tarleton State University

JGTCLI GRADUATES



COLIN CARUTHERS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



James Cash

CHARLY MCTEE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



Alec Ritzell

DAN BOONE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



Kathryn Brautigam

CARL D. SHOEMAKER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



Trey D. McClinton III

SAM BEASOM MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



John Kinsey

CONFERENCE AWARDS

JUDGES' CHOICE WILDLIFE



Andrew Chapman

BEST OF SHOW



Isidore Jarzombek

1ST PLACE WILDLIFE



James Cash

LAND STEWARDSHIP AWARD



Rolling Plains Quail Research
Ranch

1ST PLACE PLANT ID - INDIVIDUAL



Amanda Lightsey

1ST PLACE UNDERGRADUATE POSTER



Misty Nixon

HAPPIEST MEMBER...



Randy DeYoung

TOP CAMPER-WILDLIFE CONSERVATION CAMP



Isabel Gonzalez

1ST PLACE GRADUATE POSTER



James Tolliver