



Photo by Maureen Frank

TEXAS CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

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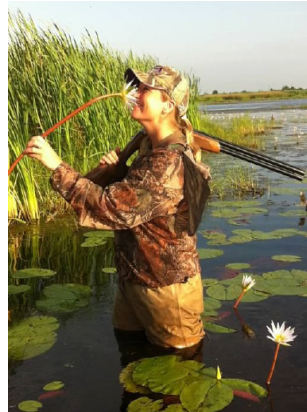
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EDITORS, ANDREA WILEY AND MAUREEN FRANK

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 Editors (Andrea Wiley; awiley@quantaenv.com or Maureen Frank; mgfrank@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 stand at my desk putting these remarks together today for our TCTWS membership, I am counting down the minutes until my brother's arrival for our annual hunting trip for the elusive American alligator. A number of years ago one of the local rice farmers I routinely work with had mentioned in passing that they had a particular dislike for this species. After a little probing I found out why. Alligators had been denning around his pumps for a number of years and he regularly had to make repairs to his pump and canal systems due to damages from alligators. It was in that moment I was able to secure just a handful of tags to hunt alligators.

It was a species I had only had the chance to hunt one time in my past when I was drawn for an archery tag at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Mad Island Wildlife Management Area. Now each year I gleefully pick up tags at our local TPWD office and patiently await the arrival of my brother, family, and friends for what is sure to be great memories. I look forward to this time each year, the adventures we will have, and stories to be told later. Alligator hunting season, while only around 2 weeks long, is always my personal indicator for the arrival of fall for us here on the coast. It marks the end of the dreaded hot and humid summer weather and the arrival of much appreciated cool fronts from the icy north. It is my favorite time of year. Early fall ushers in the arrival of thousands of shorebirds to the Gulf Coast, soon to be followed by millions of waterfowl. This month I have seen several small groups of blue-winged teal flitting around rice fields and marshes while out preparing for the arrival of this year's alligator hunt season. I also saw a small group of northern pintail, which were early arrivers to the Gulf Coast. This sight brought back wonderful memories of my time spent at Texas Tech University working on this species for my Master of Science degree.

These memories make me reflect on my background and appreciate my many memories afield hunting with my family and friends. Many of my memories include serving as a

Texas Wildlife Association Huntmaster for the Texas Youth Hunting Program and being an active participant and leader on youth hunts in the past. Whether I was sitting with a child on their first hunt or flipping pancakes back in camp waiting to see who was able to get a deer that morning, I found both tasks equally rewarding. I made some life-long friends during these events, and I still regularly speak to many of my fellow Huntmasters even though I am in a totally different part of Texas now. I am proud that TCTWS will be actively working with the Texas Wildlife Association to host a Huntmaster workshop at this year's coming meeting February 20-23 rd in Conroe, Texas. This workshop will be open to hunters and non-hunters alike and we encourage all to attend. Whether you are a student or professional, avid hunter or want to learn more about our hunting culture I highly encourage you to sign up for this workshop. My life would be far less rich without the many memories I have spending time in wild places with others who love those places and wildlife as much as I do.

The TCTWS Executive Board has been heavily engaged on issues related to hunting in the recent months and I wanted to provide a few updates to the membership on these issues. We have engaged on proposed changes to Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certification Program Standards, assembled a working group to evaluate TCTWS's position on predator hunting contests in Texas, signed in support of an Amicus Brief to support TPWD rule making on Chronic Wasting Disease, and recently voted to partner with Texas Wildlife Association and their 'Boots on the Ground' campaign that will take place in February. The TCTWS Executive Board has no doubt had a busy spring and summer, but I am thankful that we have the ability to engage on these issues and that I have such a wonderful group of individuals serving on the Board with me this year. Thanks to the membership, fellow officers, and our Executive Director for a delightful year so far.

In parting, don't forget to smell the roses (or water lilies) this fall. I wish all of you a successful season and safe return home on hunting trips. Remember to share your passion for the outdoors during these precious times and take a kid hunting with you. The future of our hunting heritage depends on it!

Jena Moon, President

Recovering America's Wildlife Act: Funding for the Future

by Kyle Brunson, Forrest Cobb, Karrie Kolesar, Olivia Schmidt

“A bold vision,” “a critically important solution,” “a game changer.”

These are just a few of the phrases used to describe H.R. 4647: Recovering America's Wildlife Act, or RAWA. Thanks to the dedicated work of many individuals and organizations, it is no surprise that “the greatest opportunity since 1937 to advance natural resource conservation in the U.S.”¹ is currently moving through the legislature.



As of September 10, H.R. 4647 (RAWA) has 87 co-sponsors nationally, including seven from Texas: Reps. Michael Burgess, Henry Cueller, Kay Granger, Gene Green, Beto O'Rourke, Pete Sessions, and Filemon Vela.

RAWA is a bipartisan bill in the U.S. Congress that would bring roughly \$64 million to Texas, and \$1.3 billion nationwide, for wildlife conservation every year, without raising or creating new taxes.

Why is this bill important?

State Fish and Wildlife agencies develop Conservation Action Plans that identify Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and make recommendations on how to protect, conserve, and restore those wildlife populations in a world with an increasing number of challenges. Currently, states do not receive enough funding to properly implement these plans (only about five percent of what is needed).

Texas alone is home to over 1,300 SGCN, such as the pronghorn antelope and the Texas horned lizard. The majority of these species are declining or rare. They are in serious need of attention in order to prevent their listing under the Endangered Species Act. More funds are needed to conserve and recover these species than are currently supplied from taxes on hunters and anglers through the Dingell-Johnson and Pittman-Robertson Acts.

H.R. 4647 would guarantee dedicated funding annually to habitat management and restoration, conservation easements, research, and education and would be available to universities, municipalities, NGOs, private landowners as well as state and federal agencies to conserve and recover SGCN populations. This “preventative maintenance,” approach to the conservation of species under RAWA is one of the reasons it has the support of conservation organizations as well as representatives from industry such as Shell Americas and Toyota. By implementing proactive science-based management and restoration to prevent the decline of species, RAWA would both help to conserve species as well as promote regulatory certainty.

Funding for RAWA would come from existing royalties from energy and mineral production on federal lands and waters. Currently these royalties produce around \$13 billion annually, making the \$1.3 billion ask by RAWA only 10% of the available funds. Furthermore, the 10% would come from funds not currently designated to other programs. While the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) also receives funding from these royalties, the asks are non-competing. Together the two would only be 15% of the available funds.

Good for wildlife, good for the economy, and good for the public.

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WILDLIFE POLICY NEWS

So why hasn't it passed already?

The obstacle for bills like RAWA, which does not have any organized opposition, is traction. Bills get stalled along the way, and support tends to dwindle during re-election periods. The bill must continue to cross legislator's radar without getting interrupted by more controversial bills or dropped by Committees. Despite this, RAWA has been making steps forward every year, and support for the bill has continued to build.

In 2017, the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society (TCTWS) issued a resolution supporting RAWA's approach to conservation funding and has since created a letter of support for H.R. 4647. By doing so, TCTWS joined many other organizations in Texas supporting this bill. While traction is gaining for this crucially important bill, help is still needed to bring RAWA to the attention of legislators and other members of the natural resources and wildlife communities. To learn more about H.R. 4647: Recovering America's Wildlife Act and to see what you can do to support it, please visit the Texas Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife Action Toolkit page here: <http://www.txwildlifealliance.org/get-involved/toolkit.html>.

RAWA Update from James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute

As you may have read in the July Newsletter, one of the TCTWS Early Professional cohort groups of the JGTCLI is working on supporting H.R. 4647 Recovering America's Wildlife Act or RAWA. We have been busy working to support RAWA in a number of ways. We are currently creating an ArcGIS StoryMap, which explains the legislation, where H.R. 4647 is in the legislative process, and steps that you can take to support it. We have created a TCTWS letter of support with input and approval from the Executive Board and are currently sending those letters of support to legislators. We have met with and encouraged other natural resources and conservation organizations to join the Texas Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife or to send letters of support to legislators. We have scheduled a meeting at a representative's local offices, and plan to schedule more, to directly inform legislators of the benefits of H.R. 4647. We have created an engagement package for the TCTWS student chapters and are currently coordinating with those student chapters to assist them in implement projects supporting RAWA. Several of those student chapters have begun their own letter-writing efforts or have plans to present to their student body or conservation organizations. Most of all, we have been contacting you the TCTWS membership, from students, to our senior leadership, and continue to be impressed and humbled by the support, the enthusiasm, and the passion for wildlife conservation we see in our fellow society members. Thank you for helping us move the needle forward on conservation!

Keep an eye out for more articles, resources, and social media posts about what RAWA is all about and how you can stay involved in the process.

Remember, get the word out! Talk to your network, friends, and family about the potential of this bill and the importance of funding wildlife conservation. We will have resources available soon, but you can always check the toolkit out of the Texas Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife.

Are you a member of a student chapter? Check in with your Chapter President or Advisor for more info about getting involved with the RAWA effort.

Thanks to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife for content.

1 Quote by Richard Heilbrun Conservation Outreach Program Lead at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE NEWS

Introducing the Conservation Affairs Committee of Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society

The Wildlife Society previously established the Conservation Affairs Network (CAN) with the purpose of coordinating the efforts of section and state Chapters while engaging the membership in wildlife management issues throughout federal, regional, state, and local levels. The CAN is built upon a nested framework where each Chapter's Conservation Affairs Committee (CAC) Chair serves as a member on the corresponding Section CAC promoting communication and perspective across state lines. At the Section level, a chair is elected among the committee members and serves as the primary liaison with the top of the Network, The Wildlife Society's Governmental Affairs and Partnerships Director. This framework encourages both top down and bottom up coordination, collaboration, and communication on policy issues, position statements, and advocacy.

During the 2018 Annual Conference, the Chapter's Executive Committee identified two priority focuses for the CAC:

1. Affirming the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation
2. Supporting Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA)

Currently, the Texas CAC is composed of more than 20 members and is chaired by Romey Swanson and Executive Director Don Steinbach. Members represent a broad array of professions, expertise, geographic regions, and interests.

So, what does this mean for the Texas Chapter and its members?

CAC members will be responsible for regularly reviewing timely wildlife management issues and policy at all levels. The CAC will review all issues presented by TCTWS membership in consideration for action by the Texas Chapter and work directly with the Executive Committee during review. In some circumstances, the CAC will develop position statements or resolutions for review by the Executive Committee and vote to adopt by the membership. Additionally, the CAC will communicate with the membership through regular articles within the TCTWS newsletter.

The Texas CAC encourages the TCTWS membership to inform and engage the CAC in matters of wildlife management policy on any level. Please feel free to forward any relevant information and/or news to the committee chair.

Romey Swanson, CWB (romeyswanson@gmail.com)

Conservation Affairs News and Notes - following is a brief update of the issues the CAC are currently reviewing/considering:

- *Predator Hunting Contest* – Over the summer, the Chapter was solicited by partner organizations to consider forming a position on predator hunting contests within the state. The Committee is currently seeking relevant science and guidance on the observed and potential effects of large-scale apex and meso-predator removal from landscapes to help inform discussions and any potential position taken by the Chapter. **Members interested in contributing can contact Romey.**

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CONSERVATION COMMITTEE NEWS

- *Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA)* – Working with the Teer Conservation Leadership Institute, the CAC has served in both a facilitating and consulting role with partner organizations across the state while actively advocating for the passage of this landmark wildlife conservation funding. Highest priority is being given to the coordinated effort to increase the number of co-sponsors for RAWA (H.R. 4647) which currently sits at 93. The Teer fellows have led the charge on TCTWS efforts by taking several actions to promote this legislation and creating an engagement package for use by student chapters. For more on the Teer fellows efforts, see the “Recovering America’s Wildlife Act: Funding for the Future” article within this newsletter.
- *Position Statement on Captive-bred Deer ID* – Continuing on the above theme, the CAC is currently considering the Position Statement on Captive-bred Deer ID that was also prepared by Teer fellows. After review and approval, the position statement would be provided for consideration and vote for adoption by the Chapter membership.
- *Amicus Brief on Deer Ownership in Texas* – The Texas Chapter has signed on, together with several partner organizations, as *Amici Curiae* (friend of the court) in support of TPWD in a lawsuit about by deer breeders (Ken Bailey and Bradley Peterson v. Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, et. al.). The suit questions the authority of TPWD to regulate captive-bred deer, specifically because captive-bred deer are “their personal property”. This idea undermines the pillar of Public Trust Doctrine within the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. Further, Texas law prohibits private ownership through statute (Wildlife Code) and within Texas Constitution. Updates from the lawsuit will be provided as available.

FINANCE COMMITTEE NEWS

You “OTTER” help us out.... donations needed for 2019 Annual Meeting

The Annual TCTWS Meeting is just around the corner and the executive board, committee chairmen and members have been out hunting up donations. BUT...we need your help!

First of all, why do we need donations? The cost to put on the annual meeting is fairly high; between site rental, food, printing, awards, competition supplies, and other needs, outside funding is vital to hosting the festivities. Any money we raise throughout the year helps offset registration costs- resulting in a lower cost for you the member! At each annual meeting we also conduct a silent auction and raffle with wildlife related prizes and trips. These fundraisers help go into the bank for the next year's meeting, to fund scholarships, our summer wildlife camp, and other sponsorships that benefit TCTWS.

So what can you do? Any and all assistance with fundraising is needed. Have a contact with a local business? Know an artist or craftsman that can donate an item (or yourself)? Contact Amanda Hackney (a.hackney@blackcatgis.com) for the donation form and more information. Also, please let us know who you've contacted so we avoid repeat asks to the same donor. All donations (cash or items) are tax deductible and TCTWS can provide a receipt for recordkeeping.

The sponsorship committee has established several mechanisms to acknowledge contributions that contribute to the success of the TCTWS Annual Meeting. For example, all of our sponsors will be recognized in the meeting program and website. At certain levels of sponsorship, we also will provide donors with a number of opportunities to highlight your organization's mission, expertise, services, products, specialties, or work in the environmental, wildlife and conservation fields and to send several individuals from your organization to participate in this conference.

The following is a list of potential sponsorship opportunities and needs:

- General Meeting Support
- Morning and afternoon Breaks
- President's Reception
- Pre-Banquet Cocktail Hour
- Awards Banquet
- Poster Sessions
- Student-Mentor Mixer
- Student Breakfast
- Past President Luncheon
- Quiz Bowl, Plant Id and Photo Contests
- Plenary Session
- Workshop & training sessions
- Audio Visual Support
- Website & Outreach Support

And stay tuned collegiate chapters....we have a special opportunity for you coming up!



CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Presented Paper and Poster Presentation Abstract submission deadline is November 30, 2018.

In addition to the Plenary session, the meeting will offer technical paper sessions, and an expanded poster presentation session for students (undergraduate or graduate) and wildlife professionals. Best poster presentation by an undergraduate and graduate will be awarded as in previous years. Papers/posters presenting the results of wildlife field investigations and analyses as well as topic reviews of interest to wildlife students and professionals in Texas are encouraged. Paper (oral) presentations should present results or outcomes and abstracts reporting preliminary or no data should be submitted as a poster. Only one poster will be judged per student presenter, though students may present more than 1 poster.

Abstracts should be submitted digitally via the abstract submission website at: <http://tctws.tamu.edu/>.

Please indicate your preference for presentation format (i.e., paper, poster, or no preference) and session (i.e., General Sessions, Clarence Cottam Award, or whether you would like to be included in the judging for the best poster presentation awards). Again, only one poster will be judged per student presenter, though students may present more than 1 poster. For those entering no preference, a decision will be made by the Program Committee and presenter notified via email. Any questions pertaining to abstract submission should be directed to Program Co-Chairs T. Wayne Schwertner or Robert Denkhaus .

Contributed papers will be scheduled at 15-minute intervals to include time (2–3 minutes) for questions and comments. All presenters will be notified of the day, time, and location of their presentations, and provided with instructions on how to prepare for the sessions. Clarence Cottam Award presentations will be judged on topic originality, scientific procedures, quality of display, accuracy of conclusions, and response to question from judges. Full Clarence Cottam Award instructions can be found [here](#).

Poster dimensions should be no larger than 4ft wide x 3 ft tall.

Abstract Format

Abstracts should be no longer than 250 words and follow The Journal of Wildlife Management format. Abstracts should be concise and include general problem statement, brief review of methods/experimental design, results, and management implications. For needed statistical significance statements, report P-values only (no need for exact statistical test results). Please follow formatting instructions on the abstract submission website.

Sample Abstract (please note not to use scientific names in title; use only in body of abstract)

LANDSCAPE EFFECTS ON GENE FLOW AND GENETIC STRUCTURE OF NORTHERN BOBWHITE IN TEXAS AND THE GREAT PLAINS

Katherine S. Miller, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, Texas A&M University–Kingsville, Kingsville, TX, 78363, USA

Leonard A. Brennan, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, Texas A&M University–Kingsville, Kingsville, TX, 78363, USA

Randy DeYoung, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, Texas A&M University–Kingsville, Kingsville, TX, 78363, USA

Fidel Hernández, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, Texas A&M University–Kingsville, Kingsville, TX, 78363, USA

X. Ben Wu, Department of Ecosystem Science and Management, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, 77843-2138, USA

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CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Northern bobwhite have been considered poor dispersers, so biologists expect a moderate population structure and low genetic diversity in fragmented areas. Our goal was to determine how landscape affects the genetic structure of northern bobwhite in Texas and the Great Plains. We collected tissues from 641 northern bobwhites in 23 populations, and amplified 13 microsatellite loci. We determined population structure (F_{ST}) and genetic distance between populations (Dest). We used a land cover map (National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative) to develop a landscape resistance matrix. We compared Dest to geographic distance and resistance with Mantel and partial Mantel tests. Populations showed low levels of structure ($F_{ST} = 0.025$). We found moderate correlations to geographic distance ($r = 0.542$, $P < 0.001$) and landscape resistance ($r = 0.416$, $P = 0.001$). There was a significant correlation between Dest and geographic distance when we accounted for resistance ($r = 0.388$, $P < 0.001$), but no significant correlation between Dest and resistance when we accounted for geographic distance. A spatial principal component analysis for South Texas samples revealed a global structure. Low genetic structure and moderate genetic diversity may suggest that more northern bobwhite individuals are dispersing further than previously thought. Other possible explanations lie in the northern bobwhite's fall covey shuffle, their boom-and-bust population cycle, and stochastic events. Habitat is an important factor for northern bobwhite; determining how habitat affects gene flow will help biologists to manage northern bobwhite.

Clarence Cottam Award: Call for Abstracts & Requirements

Abstracts are now being accepted for consideration in the Clarence Cottam Award Session at the 2019 Annual Meeting of Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society. This session is devoted to promoting excellence in student research. The Clarence Cottam Award is given to recognize outstanding student research. Judges evaluate papers and presentations for significance, originality, creativity of research design and implementation, quality of methodology, validity of conclusions, neatness, and conformity to JWM style and format. New this year, the top prize, awarded by the Welder Wildlife Foundation, has been increased to \$1,000. Second (\$500) and third place (\$250) prizes will be awarded if more than 6 papers are accepted, and are sponsored by the Texas Chapter. Also, presenters will have 20 min for presentations and questions this year. A maximum of 8 papers will be included in the competition; excess submissions will be included in the regular sessions.

Graduate and undergraduate students are eligible to enter. Students who have graduated since the last meeting are also eligible if they are members of the Texas Chapter of TWS at the time of the annual meeting. Research projects should be nearing completion so that results and their interpretations can be included. To ensure that students present 'final' results, they are limited to 1 Cottam presentation per academic degree (M.S./Ph.D). Additionally, only students that are affiliated with a Texas college or university at the time of research OR students that have conducted field work in Texas, but are affiliated with a non-Texas based college or university, are eligible to compete.

An abbreviated abstract must be submitted via the TCTWS submission webpage and follow instructions outlined in the general call for abstract submission from the program committee. Cottam entries must also submit an extended abstract to the Chair of the Cottam Awards Committee. Extended abstracts should follow the guidelines provided in the Cottam Award Guidelines website (linked below). Deadline for receipt of the extended abstract is December 2, 2018. Extended abstracts and any questions regarding the Clarence Cottam Award should be sent to Matthew Butler at matthew_butler@fws.gov. <http://tctws.org/student-menu/scholarship-opportunities/clarence-cottam-award/>

NOMINATION/APPLICATION NOTIFICATIONS

Excellence in Wildlife Conservation

The Excellence in Wildlife Conservation Committee is asking you to help us recognize exceptional wildlife conservation efforts in Texas by submitting nominations for one or more of the following award categories:

Educator of the Year Award

The Educator of the Year Award recognizes wildlife professionals for outstanding achievements in wildlife conservation education. Please submit a 5-point bulleted statement explaining why the nominee is deserving of the award, along with a curriculum vitae of the nominee.

Land Stewardship Award

The Land Stewardship Award recognizes landowners who have been instrumental in the development, application, and promotion of sound wildlife management principles on their land. Please submit a ½ to 1 page letter of nomination explaining why the nominee is deserving of the award.

Outstanding Achievement Award

The Outstanding Achievement Award recognizes wildlife professionals for their outstanding achievements during the course of their involvement with natural resource management and conservation. Please submit a 5-point bulleted statement explaining why the nominee is deserving of the award, along with a curriculum vitae of the nominee (if possible).

All nominations should be submitted to: Steve DeMaso, Wetlands and Aquatics Research Center, 700 Cajundome Blvd., Lafayette, LA 70506; steve_demaso@fws.gov. The deadline for nominations is November 1, 2018.

Student Scholarships

Call for Applications

This is the last call for undergraduate and graduate student scholarship applications for the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society. The deadline for submission is December 15, 2017.

To apply for a scholarship, all students must submit a single pdf with their completed and signed application and transcript (please mark out or remove any personal information such as your social security number and birth date). Graduate students also need to include a letter of recommendation from their major professor/ advisor and a short synopsis of their graduate research project (≤300 words). Please email scholarship applications to Dr. John M. Tomeček of Texas A&M University at tomecek@tamu.edu.

Undergraduate and graduate student scholarship guidelines are located on the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society website, or can be obtained by following the hyperlinks above. To download the scholarship application, please click [here](#) for undergraduate students and [here](#) for graduate students.

NOMINATION/APPLICATION NOTIFICATIONS

Last Call for Honorary Life Member Nominees

Nominations due by November 11th

The Texas Chapter has members who have made outstanding contributions to wildlife conservation. Such individuals deserve recognition.

To be eligible a nominee should have been (1) active for 20 or more years in the wildlife profession in a natural resource agency, academia, or a private organization; 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. (3) Not have won the award in the past.

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 remain confidential, especially from the nominee. If there is no vitae available, patch something together with the help of friends, associates and spouses. From nominations received, the committee can select one or more recipients for the 2019 annual meeting.

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

Send nomination materials to:

Scott Summers—Honorary Life Member Committee Chair: scott.g.summers.civ@mail.mil

Southwest Section Tracks

Autumn Issue 2018

By Fidel Hernández

Southwest Section Representative



Autumn is a wonderful season. It is a time of migration for many wildlife, as well as a time of senescence for many plants. In southern Texas, autumn is a special place to observe bird migration, particularly raptors (Figure 1). American kestrels generally are the first to arrive, first being observed in September. About a month or so later, we begin to observe a greater diversity of migrating raptors headed south, some visiting us here for the winter while others are simply passing through, headed for more distant lands. It is amazing to travel the landscape and see the raptor community change from a suite of resident species to a plethora of visiting migrants. The influx of raptors is so amazing that during one particular day afield, I counted 120 raptors within 14-mile stretch of rangeland.



Figure 1. Autumn is a wonderful season to observe avian migration in southern Texas. The region receives an influx of a visiting migrants that tremendously increase the diversity of species, in particular raptors (Photograph by Fidel Hernández).

Autumn also signifies the season when we gather as a professional group during the annual conference of The Wildlife Society (TWS). Below, I provide a brief update on TWS activities since my last newsletter.

TWS ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE, AND GENERAL OPERATIONS

Membership. TWS has closed the gap between current membership and the society's goal of 10,000 members! The year-to-date paid member count is 10,187 members, which represents a 4.9% increase compared to last year (August 2017). If members that are enrolled in the Give-Back Program are included (473 members), then the total member count increases to 10,660 members. To help prevent lapses in your TWS membership, make use of the Society's automatic renewal option. TWS' goal is to have most if not all of its members enrolled in this service, which will facilitate the management efficiency of member services. To date, 46% of TWS membership (4,744 members) are taking advantage of the Automatic-Renewal option. Be sure to make use of this convenient service when renewing your membership to avoid membership lapses or breaks in your membership services.

Communications. One of the Society's goals is to increase TWS' visibility with members, organizations, and the public. Thus, TWS has a goal to write 3-4 wildlife.org articles per day and to steadily increase its website visits and social-media audience. TWS staff has written 122 wildlife.org articles as of August 31, which is about on target. Website visits are 112,731 as of August 31 and represents a +28% increase compared to last year (August 2017). TWS' social-medial audience also has increased to 113,665 as of August 31 and represents a 2% increase compared to last year (August 2017). Be sure to visit TWS website or its social media to read the latest articles, posts, and stories.

TWS-SW SECTION NEWS

Finance and Business Relations. The Wildlife Society also continues to make steady gains on providing a sound financial footing for the Society. Part of the TWS strategy for financial security involves a mixture of sound accounting practices, conservative investments, and strong partnerships (Figure 2). Below is a brief summary of some of the major business-relations activities happening in this arena since the beginning of this fiscal year through August 2018.

- Net income from organizations and businesses is \$3K (-\$14K vs budget) through July but \$10K is due to the timing of invoicing vs budgeted month
- Added three new conference exhibitors, two Sponsors and one contributor. Total to date is five advertisers, 41 exhibitors, and 36 sponsors.
- TWS' "Drive for 44" organizational-units campaign has generated 30 donations or commitments for \$9,567.
- Invoiced \$19,950 in advertising and added a new commitment of \$19,250 for 2019 advertising.



Figure 2. Building business partnerships is an important part of TWS' strategic plan. Here, TWS CEO Ed Thompson visits with members of The 1,000, a group of TWS members who donate annually to the Society. (Photograph courtesy of The Wildlife Society).

Government Affairs. The Program of Government Affairs and Partnerships is led by Director Keith Norris. Director Norris and his team are responsible for overseeing TWS' policy activities, providing support to TWS Chapters and Sections on conservation policy issues, strategically expanding TWS' engagement with other organizations, and providing direction to the Society's professional development and certification programs. Below is a brief summary of key TWS Government Affairs activities since the beginning of this fiscal year through August 2018.

- Presented on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and grassroots, professional-society member engagement with the American Fisheries Society (AFS) and the National Wildlife Federation at AFS' annual conference
- Developed and distributed resources for the Conservation Affairs Network in support of action related to the Senate version of Recovering America's Wildlife Act
- Collected member comments on proposed USFWS and NMFS regulatory revisions to the Endangered Species Act to inform TWS' comments
- Evaluated TWS' representation on AFWA committees and submitted nominations for 2018-2019

TWS-SW SECTION NEWS

1ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AND ECOLOGY IN MEXICO

I know I noted this conference in my last newsletter, but I believe it is worth mentioning here again. The first annual conference of wildlife management and ecology in Mexico is being organized. The conference will convene in San Luis Potosi, Mexico on **13–16 November 2018** and is being organized by long-time TWS members, **Dr. Luis Tarango** (Colegio de Postgraduados, San Luis Potosí, México) and **Dr. Raul Valdez** (New Mexico State University), along with a conference committee comprised of Mexican wildlife professionals. Estimated attendance is 350–450 participants and will be comprised of students, professors, researchers, biologists, landowners, and federal agency personnel. It is anticipated that about 20 Mexican universities will be in attendance. This national conference will be the first of its kind in Mexico and is devoted to Mexican wildlife. It is planned to convene annually with subsequent annual conferences being held in different cities of Mexico.

The goal of the conference is to form an established venue whereby Mexican wildlife professionals can learn, network, and engage professionally. As many of you know, there has been a perennial need in México for wildlife biologists to engage in the exchange of current wildlife-science knowledge not only of México but also North America. Presently, there are no effective means for Mexican professionals to become aware of the vast wildlife conservation efforts in North America or to engage with North American wildlife biologists. Drs. Tarango, Valdez, and the organizing committee wish to address these needs by 1) bringing together wildlife professionals in Mexico, 2) providing a venue for information exchange, professional development, and networking opportunities for Mexican wildlife biologists with peers and North American counterparts, and 3) increasing TWS presence and engagement in Mexico. Along with other Mexican organizations and government agencies, TWS has provided financial support for this conference. The call for abstracts and conference information may be found at the following website (<http://conferenciafaunasilvestre.com/>).



TWS ANNUAL CONFERENCE: CLEVELAND



The 25th Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society is only a few weeks away. If you have not made your travel plans, be sure to do so soon. The annual conference will be held 7–11 October 2018 in Cleveland, Ohio. The welcome reception will be a networking event at Cleveland's iconic Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. The theme for this year's conference is Recognizing and Sustaining Conservation Success. Too often, it seems that wildlife biologists focus their attention solely on wildlife challenges and crises. The plenary this year will highlight our wildlife successes and take time to appreciate and learn from those successes. The conservation success stories that will be highlighted in this year's plenary session document approaches to wildlife conservation that

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involved wildlife conservation that involved the application of science, the building of partnerships, and overcoming of policy struggles. Plenary presentations include:

- **Kirtland's Warblers Sing the Sweet Song of Success! How Collaborative Conservation Can Recover a Conservation-reliant Species** (Dr. Carol Bocetti, Professor, California University of Pennsylvania). Dr. Bocetti received degrees at University of Florida and Ohio State University where she worked with land managers to recover endangered species. She continued this work at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and then at California University of Pennsylvania. She worked for 32 years with the Kirtland's Warbler recovery effort where her contributions were recognized by two national awards from the USDOI Fish and Wildlife Service and the USDA Forest Service. Dr. Bocetti will share her insights about how collaborative conservation was essential to recover and sustain the fully conservation-reliant Kirtland's Warbler.
- **Conservation efforts contributed to an improved IUCN Red List status for snow leopards – so why are we not all happy?** (Tom McCarthy, Executive Director, Snow Leopard Program, PANTHERA, New York). Dr. McCarthy directs Panthera's wide-ranging snow leopard program in central Asia. After his ground-breaking study of the elusive species in Mongolia, he established numerous successful community-based snow leopard conservation projects in China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Pakistan. Such conservation efforts, coupled with better information, recently led to revising the cat's IUCN Red List status from Endangered to Vulnerable, a move not welcomed by all in the snow leopard community.
- **The Return of River Otters in North America** (Ron Andrews, Retired, Iowa Department of Natural Resources). Mr. Andrews retired in 2010 after nearly 45 years with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, where he spearheaded several major research studies. He received his B.S. in fisheries and wildlife biology from Iowa State University and authored several scientific studies. His talk will chronicle the comeback of river otters in North America, a story that can be described as the most successful carnivore restoration effort in the history of conservation and management.



Figure 3. Plenary sessions often contain some of the most engaging presentations. (Photograph courtesy of The Wildlife Society).

Well, that is all for now.

Until next time,

Fidel Hernández

Fidel Hernández, Southwest Section Representative to TWS Council

ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION

TCTWS Annual Meeting

February 20-23, 2019

Preparing Biologists for the 21st Century and Beyond

Activities ranging from paper and poster sessions, workshops and field trips will make the event informative and interesting.

Meeting Location:

LaTorreta Lake Resort and Spa
Montgomery, Texas

Call for Meeting Space

If you plan to have additional meeting space needs please contact Penny Wilkerson by January 15, 2018 with your needs and our local arrangements committee will do our very best to accommodate you and your organization. Please contact Penny via email: penny.wilkerson@tpwd.texas.gov

