

Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society

Excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education



**TEXAS CHAPTER OF
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
EXECUTIVE BOARD**

PRESIDENT, JOHN M. TOMEČEK
 PRES. ELECT, ROMNEY SWANSON
 VICE PRESIDENT, JOHN KINSEY
 SECRETARY, BLAKE GRISHAM
 BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE,
 TY BARTOSKEWITZ

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S NOTE.....1
 ANNUAL MEETING AWARDS..4
 RESEARCH BRIEF.....9
 NEW FROM UT PRESS.....10
 SOUTHWEST SECTION
 TRACKS.....11
 WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
 CAMP.....15

EDITORS, ANDREA WILEY AND
 MAUREEN FRANK

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

by John M. Tomeček

A Message from the President

Fellow Wildlifers:

As I write to you in my first message as your President, I want to begin by thanking each and every one of you for the dedication you show our profession, the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society, and your commitment to improving the stewardship of wildlife in our world. I was truly humbled, standing before you at the annual meeting, and seeing at once both the rich history and promising future of our profession standing together. The annual meeting is a special time for us. We see friends and colleagues that we rarely meet in person. It is a much more important event on another level, however: for a brief few days, the wildlife profession in Texas is physically present, and acts as one body. For our students and young professionals, this is a necessary experience: to see you are part of a larger, rich body. For the rest, it is a place from which we draw strength and refill our stores of hope: to see our profession strong, robust, and active.

I had hoped that my first message would come during “normal times,” when we bustled about the end of academic semesters, conference attendance, spring plantings and prescribed fires, and dreaming of the birding, turkey hunting, and fishing opportunities in our near future. Alas, it seems that COVID19, looming already on the horizon during our annual meeting, had other plans for us. For most all of us, the present pandemic has changed much of the way we work, live, and plan for the future. Research stopped, travel was cancelled, projects ceased. For you students graduating this semester that will

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

not have your normal commencement opportunities, I encourage you to not be discouraged. It is a great sacrifice and service you are making on behalf of your family, friends, and neighbors in order to keep them safe and help stop COVID19 in its tracks. Your fellow wildlifers will celebrate you, now, and in the future. We will tell these stories a hundred years hence. In these times, though much seems uncertain, our commitment to our profession has not and shall not change. Texans do not shirk away in the face of adversity, neither do Wildlifers. We will not only survive, we will thrive.

What this situation does highlight for us, however, is that the work we do is increasingly important in a changing world. Trade in wildlife, which contributed to this pandemic, is not an issue affecting only one small corner of the world, and a few species. It happens everywhere, all the time. The transmission of a novel disease to humans is not just a note found in a scientific journal, but could bring the human world to a halt. With this halt comes the cessation of thousands of conservation projects aimed at aiding wildlife. Humans' interactions with the natural world have shaped our history, and in these times conflicts and damage related to wildlife interactions have seemed only to increase. Thus, the work we do is not merely to a small group of interested stakeholders, but rather to all humankind.

We must also look to the future, and make plans to look forward to. In some much-needed positive news, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act effort is still very much alive and well. HR 3742, which would annually dedicate \$1.3Billion for species of greatest need, would bring more than \$50 million to Texas each year for research, surveys, management, habitat restoration, land acquisition, threat abatement, species recovery, outreach, youth involvement, and increase outdoor recreation. The bill sailed through committee in December with outstanding bipartisan support. A national petition, signed by 2500 organizations, was sent to US House leadership on March 1 asking for a Floor Vote, which was received positively and we anticipate a debate and vote this summer. Until that vote is scheduled, the wildlife community has time to add cosponsors. Right now, Texas is tied for #2 in the country with the most cosponsors, and tied for #1 with the most Republican cosponsors! The goal is 200 cosponsors nationally, and at press time, we had 180 cosponsors. The goal for the next few months is to hyper-focus on "ringing the bell" of getting it passed in the House, then it will move to the US Senate. To get involved, ask your representative to cosponsor HR 3742 ([Who represents me?](#)). Then convince the organizations in your network to join the coalition:

Join the [National Coalition, organized by National Wildlife Federation](#)

Join the [Texas Coalition, organized by Texas Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife](#)

But how can we do that? What if we work for an organization that doesn't lobby? There are lots of ways to help. As citizens, we can all call our representatives asking them to cosponsor ([here's a list of representatives that have already cosponsored](#)). We can also talk to our employers about joining the coalition, and we all have a network of conservation organizations that can participate and make their voices heard. Schedule a call with your partners to discuss how this will help their mission. Nonprofit organizations can definitely voice their support without violating tax exempt status ([See this helpful brief](#)). Consider pitching a vision for what \$50 million each year will do for the natural resources of Texas. What is your vision? How would YOU spend \$50 million each year? What would that do for that habitats and species you manage? What "big thing" could we accomplish together with that kind of budget? Who can we recruit to help make this happen?

As we have seen at our Annual Meeting, our group of wildlife professionals in Texas is growing and changing day-by-day. New universities are starting, growing, and evolving their wildlife programs. Our group has expanded well beyond academia and agency, to the ranks of foundations, NGOs, private companies, and more. Our diversity has come a long way, and continues to show strides in improvement.

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

For those of us in the wildlife profession, we must embrace this change, and use it to improve the quality of work we do with a diversity of backgrounds, focus, experience, and goals. In the end, we are all one team working towards a single goal: the sound management of wildlife in Texas.

During these uncharted times, when the basis of what seems normal for us is changing day-by-day, it is important to remind ourselves of the constancy of life. The small things, the hopeful things, and the things to which we're looking forward. More than anything else right now, look to the wellbeing of your family, friends, and neighbors. Reach out to those in need, and find a way of helping your community with your unique talents and skills. Talk with your fellow wildlifers about the good things to come, and plan for our future, rather than focusing on the negativity of the present. A day will come when the present situation is behind us, and we tell stories to future generations of this time. Until that day, stay the course, and keep your chins up, wildlifers of Texas.



kindest Personal Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John M. Tomeček".

John M. Tomeček, Ph.D.
President, Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society

ANNUAL MEETING AWARDS



Outstanding Achievement Award
- Dale Rollins, Amanda Gobeli, Becky Ruzicka, Abigail Holmes, Robert Perez, Jason Hardin, and James Cathey



Honorary Life Membership Award
- Dr. Dale Rollins



Educator of the Year
- Dr. Michael Tewes



1st Place Cottam Award
- Samarth Mathur



2nd Place Cottam Award
- Alexandria DiMaggio



3rd Place Cottam Award
- Jason Lombardi



Outstanding Popular Article
- Randy DeYoung



Outstanding Technical Publication
- Michael Tewes



Outstanding Scientific Article
- Jim Ray

ANNUAL MEETING AWARDS



Student Chapter of the Year
- Stephen F. Austin University



1st Place Plant Individual
- Austin Kelly



1st Place Plant ID Team
- Texas A&M University



NWFT Superfund Scholarship
- Nicole Traub



Colin Caruthers Memorial
Scholarship - Micah Rainey



Charly McTee Memorial
Scholarship - Joseph Richards



Dan Boone Memorial
Scholarship - Amanda Beckman



Carl D. Shoemaker Memorial
Scholarship - Elizabeth Brogan



Sam Beason Memorial
Scholarship - Jacob Locke

ANNUAL MEETING AWARDS



1st Place Quiz Bowl - Stephen F. Austin



1st Place Undergraduate Student Poster - Eamonn Thurmond



1st Place Graduate Student Poster - Megan Granger



Land Stewardship Award - Laborcitas Creek Ranch



Judges Choice Photo, 1st Place Plants, and 1st Place Wildlife Photo - Joseph Richards



1st Place Conservation Photo - Kelley Wood



1st Place Humor Photo - Alexander Meza



1st Place Game Camera Photo - Gary Mizer



Peoples Choice, and 1st Place Art - Cameron Martin

ANNUAL MEETING AWARDS

Outstanding Students in Wildlife:

Stephen F. Austin Univ.:
Taylor McDaniel

Texas A&M Univ. - Commerce:
Larissa Rubio

Sul Ross State Univ.:
Daniel Botello

Texas A&M Univ. - Kingsville:
Megan Granger

Tartleton State University:
Elizabeth Brogran

Texas State University:
Elisabeth Harper

Texas A&M University:
Sarah Ardry

Texas Tech University:
Micah Rainey

JTCLI Early Career Professionals



Nicole Alonso-Leach, Ursula Alvarado-Miller, Wendy Anderson,
Kasey Clarke, Mallory Eastland, Tony Henehan, Reuben Gay, Amanda
Gobeli, Lalo Gonzalez, Tiffany Lane, Grant Lawrence, Alison Lund,
Anna Matthews, Heather Sterling

Congratulations
John and good luck in the
coming year.



ANNUAL MEETING AWARDS

The Awards Winners listed below by category.
Congratulations to each winner!

Photo and Art Contest Awards:

Remote Camera

- 1st Gary Mizer
- 2nd Dean Marquardt
- 3rd Dani Miller

Wildlife

- 1st Joseph Richards
- 2nd Gary Mizer
- 3rd Audrey Holstead

Plants

- 1st Joseph Richards
- 2nd Maya Ressler
- 3rd Erin Bittner

Humor

- 1st Alexander Meza
- 2nd Joseph Richards
- 3rd Jamie Cooper

Work Related

- 1st Joseph Richards
- 2nd Maya Ressler
- 3rd Gary Mizer

Wildlife Conservation

- 1st Kelley Wood
- 2nd Joseph Richards
- 3rd David Campbell

Scenery

- 1st Sonia Duran
- 2nd Joseph Richards
- 3rd Romey Swanson

Art

- 1st Cameron Martin
- 2nd Hannah Wright
- 3rd Krysta Demere

People's Choice

Cameron Wright

Judges Choice

Joseph Richards

Plant ID Awards:

Team

- 1st Texas A&M Univ.
- 2nd Texas A&M Kingsville
- 3rd Sul Ross State Univ.

Plant ID Awards Cont.

Individual

- 1st Austin Kelley
- 2nd Kye Johnston
- 3rd Sarah Beall

Open Member Plant ID

- Novice - Austin Kelley
- Professional - Steve Nelle

Quiz Bowl

Stephen F Austin Univ.

Undergraduate Posters

- 1st Eamonn Thurmond
- 2nd Oliva Gray
- 3rd Elizabeth Brogan

Graduate Posters

- 1st Megan Granger
- 2nd Matthew Parker
- 3rd Austin Killam

Student Chapter of the Year

Stephen F. Austin Univ.

Scholarships:

- Charly McTee Memorial Scholarship - Joseph Richards
- Carl D. Shoemaker Memorial Scholarship - Elizabeth Brogan
- Colin Caruthers Memorial Scholarship - Micah Rainey
- Dan Boone Memorial Scholarship - Amanda Beckman
- Sam Beason Memorial Scholarship - Jacob Locke
- NWTF Hunting Heritage Super Fund Scholarship - Nicole Traub

Cottam Awards

- 1st Samarth Mathur
- 2nd Alexandria DiMaggio
- 3rd Jason Lombardi

Publication Awards

Outstanding Electronic Media:

- Shyla Rabe, Keith Pawelek, Forrest Smith, Anthony Falk, Colin Shackelford, John Bow, Sam Lutfy, Tyler Wayland, and Doug Jobs

Publication Awards Cont.

Outstanding Popular Article:

- Gael Sanchez, Randy DeYoung, Shawn Gray, Tim Fulbright, Humberto Perotto-Baldivieso, Dave Hewitt, and Louis Harveson

Outstanding Technical

Publication:

Michael Tewes

Outstanding Book:

- Leonard Brennan, Damon Williford, Bart Ballard, William Kuvlesky, Eric Grahmann, and Steve DeMaso

Outstanding Scientific Article:

- Amanda Van Loon, Jim Ray, Anne Savage, James Mejeur, Lauren Moscar, McKenzie Pearson, Myrna Pearman, Glen Hvenegaard, Nanette Mickle, Kelly Applegate, and Kevin Fraser

Educator of The Year

Michael Tewes

Outstanding Achievement

- Dale Rollins, Amanda Gobeli, Becky Ruzicka, Abigail Holmes, Robert Perez, Jason Hardin, and James Cathey

Land Stewardship

Laborcitas Creek Ranch

Honorary Life Membership

Dale Rollins

Predicting and Preventing Ocelot-Vehicle Collisions

by Amanda M. Veals, Texas A&M University - Kingsville

My PhD research under Dr. Michael Tewes is part of a research grant funded by Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) to answer questions related to ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*) ecology and road mortality. Vehicle collisions have been cited as the leading source of mortality for the critically endangered ocelot in south Texas. It is estimated that less than 80 individuals remain in the United States, all concentrated in two isolated breeding populations in southern Texas. The goal of my dissertation research is to help inform the placement of future road crossing structures to help mitigate ocelot-vehicle collisions and increase landscape permeability for this critically endangered species.

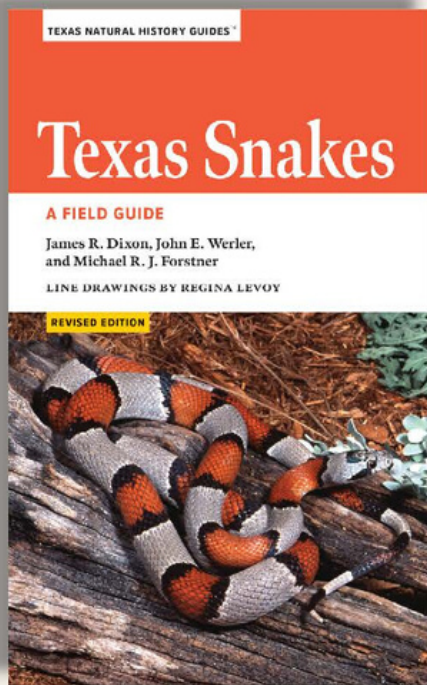
To examine resource selection and landscape connectivity of the ocelot in south Texas, I am leveraging a 35-year telemetry dataset on adult collared ocelots. I am interested in understanding which aspects of woody cover ocelots select and how roads may impact that selection. I am looking at resource selection across multiple spatial and temporal scales to see how selection may change as habitat availability has decreased and barriers to movement have increased on the landscape across those 35 years.

Telemetry data were paired with remotely sensed imagery to assess available habitat relative to the time period when spatial data were collected for each ocelot. This was to make sure what we were considering "available" to an individual was relevant to the time their used points were collected. Preliminary results show that our work supports previous research indicating that ocelots select for large, dense patches of woody cover at the landscape spatial scale. We also found support for our hypothesis that roads have a negative impact on resource selection at this scale.

From our top resource selection model, we were able to determine probability of use across the landscape. Areas with high probability of use corresponded to areas with resources that ocelots selected. We will examine the relationship between probability of use and landscape resistance. Using circuit theory models, we can examine likely pathways of movement across the landscape, identifying areas ocelots will likely cross roads. Moving forward, I will continue to examine resource selection at the within-home range scale and examine functional responses. Functional responses take into account individual heterogeneity in the behavioral response an animal exhibits as a resource changes in availability.

Ocelots are declining rapidly in south Texas, and I hope we can provide meaningful solutions to the problems this species faces.

NEW IN THE
TEXAS NATURAL HISTORY GUIDES™



Texas Snakes

A Field Guide

BY JAMES R. DIXON, JOHN E. WERLER,
AND MICHAEL R. J. FORSTNER

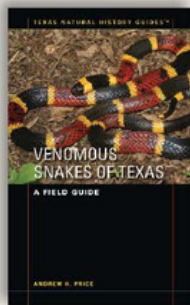
LINE DRAWINGS BY REGINA LEVOY

Featuring updates to the distribution maps, taxonomy, and checklist of Texas snakes, this fully illustrated field guide will help both novices and experts identify and appreciate the wide variety of snakes found in Texas.

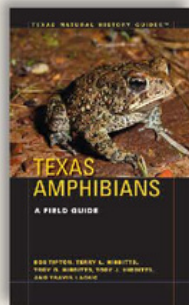
RELEASE DATE | JULY

\$24.95 *paperback*

Of related interest



Venomous Snakes
of Texas



Texas Amphibians



Texas Wildflowers



UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS

SOUTHWEST SECTION TRACKS

by Jim Ramakka

The Wildlife Society Council held its Spring meeting in Omaha, NE on March 8 and 9, just before the start of the 85th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference. The day after the Council meeting ended, I had the opportunity to sit in on an excellent workshop titled “Wildlife Conservation on Private Lands: A National Discussion.” Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Executive Director Carter Smith gave a great lead-in to the topic while introducing the other speakers. Those speakers discussed key issues including:

- The importance of private lands in supporting 75% of the wetlands and a endangered species habitat.
- The need for building relationships and trust between private habitat owners and agency biologists including assisting landowners with existing financial incentives that could be incorporated into their existing business plans.
- The importance of engaging with large, often absentee, landowners.
- The key role private lands play in ecoregional planning for bird conservation.
- The need for universities and agencies to provide students and early career professionals with the cultural and interpersonal communication skills needed to be effective when interacting with private landowners, farmers, ranchers and foresters.

I could personally relate to many of the points raised, especially the last issue. When I was an undergraduate wildlife major many of my classmates and I had been raised on farms and participated with our parents in trying to make a living on the land, but many of today’s students do not fit that profile. Over the years, I found that my early experience made it easier for me to understand and relate to the farmers and ranchers who held lands and vital riparian areas adjacent to the public lands which my agency managed. Effective integrated land management across ownership boundaries entails building trust and cooperation requiring interpersonal communication skills that may not come easily to some people in our traditionally introverted profession.

SOUTHWEST SECTION TRACKS

Understanding the economic drivers of land management, strategies to assist members of the public, and being aware of the frustration and distrust of government programs in some local cultures may seem peripheral to members of the Southwest Section who work on public lands. However, if efforts to conserve and manage our wildlife resources for the long term are to succeed, we need to find ways to partner with all of the players on the land.

Presentations from the workshop will be published and made available in the next couple months. In the interim, I encourage folks to check out a recent copy of The Wildlife Society Bulletin (Vol. 43, Issue 3, September 2019) for a number of papers covering this topic. Likewise, a new book has just been published that should be of interest to those who work directly with private landowners: Saving Species on Private lands – Unlocking Incentives to Conserve Wildlife and Their Habitats by L.E. Baier (published by Rowman & Littlefield, rowman.com).

Council Update

Detailed minutes of the Spring 2020 Wildlife Society Council meeting will be available on the TWS website. Here a few highlights:

- Minutes of the December 9, 2019 Special Meeting of the Council were reviewed and approved.
- CEO Ed Thompson presented an update of FY20 budget and investment fund balances through Dec. 31, 2019. TWS ended the year in a strong financial position. There is a budget surplus as a result of higher than expected attendance at the Reno meeting, actual expenses being lower than expected, several large donations and bequests from members, and good investment performance.
- Volatility in the financial markets in the last month and the potential impact to TWS investments were a topic of considerable discussion. No change to current investment strategy was decided upon at this time. The Permanent Reserve Fund contains enough funding to provide a safety net for 6 months of operations if a worst-case scenario occurs. The potential loss of deposits caused by cancellation of a future meeting due to unusual circumstances such as the current coronavirus situation is a point of concern being monitored by the finance committee.

SOUTHWEST SECTION TRACKS

- The Western Section contacted Council regarding an issue related to the Annual Meeting scheduled for Louisville as well as potential future locations in states which appear to have discriminatory laws or regulations. California and 5 other states ban the use of state funding for employees, including university employees, to travel to such states. TWS President White is working with other members of Council to further clarify TWS anti-discrimination and “All are Welcome” policy in the venue selection process. Conference planning is a 3-year-long process requiring negotiations with hotels and vendors to ensure best available rates to keep registration costs as low as possible. As much as possible, the planning process attempts to consider members concerns. The 2021 TWS Annual Meeting will be held in Baltimore, MD, while 2022 meeting will be in Spokane, WA.
- Developing a structure for applying for Council Action Fund funding was discussed and will undergo further committee review.
- Council members agreed there is a need for increased coordination with the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society. Unless cancelled, Vice President Gordon Batcheller is planning to attend the NAFWS meeting in Miami in May and will explore interest in NAFWS becoming a TWS Conservation Partner.
- A list of outstanding nominations for the TWS Fellows Award and Group Achievement Award was reviewed and voted upon. Results will not be announced to the full membership until the recipients have been contacted.
- CEO Thompson reported on alternatives regarding the present TWS Headquarters building in Bethesda, MD. Leasing different office space closer to Capitol Hill is prohibitively expensive. Retaining the existing office space will be a continuing expense of approximately \$50,000 per year. Sale of the larger portion of the existing office space while retaining a smaller workspace in the building would reduce owners’ association fees considerably and net TWS a profit on the sale. Those funds could then be added to existing accounts or investments. Council authorized TWS staff to continue pursuing formal appraisal and assessment of potential buyer interest.

SOUTHWEST SECTION TRACKS

- After 2 days of discussion and adjustments, the FY21 Operations Plans and Budgets were approved.

As a last note, I serve as the Chair of the Jay N. “Ding” Darling Memorial Award for Wildlife Stewardship Through Art. I want to remind everyone that nominations for the award will close on May 1. Please consider nominating worthy artists or organizations or programs that use art to further wildlife stewardship or education. Full details of the nomination process can be viewed under the “Engage “ tab on the TWS website.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.



Jim Ramakka, CWB@
Southwest Section Representative
j_ramakka@msn.com
(505) 486-2746

2020 WILDLIFE CONSERVATION CAMP



WILDLIFE CONSERVATION CAMP

The Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society's Wildlife Conservation Camp is designed for high school students who have completed the 9th grade or higher. Hands-on, outdoor activities are led by wildlife professionals.

Campers will study:

- ⇒ Wildlife and Plant Identification
- ⇒ Wildlife and Habitat Management Techniques
 - ⇒ Conservation Ethics & Land Stewardship
 - ⇒ Wildlife Trapping and Surveying Techniques
 - ⇒ Predator-prey Dynamics
 - ⇒ Fishing
 - ⇒ Hunter safety
- ⇒ Shooting Sports and so much more!



July 12-18, 2020

Application Deadline:

May 1, 2020

Location:

**Welder Wildlife
Foundation**

For more information, contact: Angie Arredondo at

wildlifecampdirector@gmail.com

www.wildlifecamp.tx.org

This is *your* newsletter.

To submit an article, contact us: newsletter@tctws.org.

Pay dues, read previous newsletters, and find more information online:

tctws.org



Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society Newsletter is published electronically 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 and Maureen Frank, newsletter@tctws.org) by the 15th of the preceding month. Change of email address should be submitted online through the Address Change Form. Membership in the Chapter is \$15/year for students and \$25/year for regular members.