

Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society

Excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education



Bryan R. Calk

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PRESIDENT'S NOTE

by John M. Tomeček

A Message from the President

My Fellow Wildlifers:

As I write this, Midsummer is upon us once again. Temperatures in Texas are climbing, many of us are engaged in field work, and it seems as though all are wishing for precious rains to come down and cool the landscape we call home. It would almost feel like any other year in Texas, except the reality of the human world in which we live calls us all to adapt, overcome, and support our human family. Wildlifers are not simply a professional group that shares a common occupation, but rather are a family bound by dedication to the mission of conservation. Because we are a family, we must strive to care for one another in whatever way we can.

Highlighting the progression to warmer weather, is the continued rise in cases of COVID-19 in Texas. Many of our members and their families have been affected—and lost loved ones—by this pestilence. We must all steel ourselves for a prolonged battle, and continue to do the right thing to prevent the spread of this disease. My heart goes out to all those affected in all ways. We are fighting a battle, and like those armies of old, we must be sure to look to our left and to our right, and help lift up our comrades

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

struggling against the waves of this disease—physical, emotional, economic, and others—to ensure that we all see one another on the other side. In the world of wondrous technological marvels we have, use all of the tools to prevent unnecessary contact, but also check in on those you know. More than anything, be voices for science, best management practices, and be living examples of this in our local communities. When fighting a silent, prolonged battle against this disease, it is easy for us to become lax, and lose our way. We must be examples to those around us of the value of sound science in management of this disease.

Related to fall-out from COVID-19, I have received many questions about the plans for TCTWS 2021, given the cancellation of TWS 2020 by The Wildlife Society. Of course, we must acknowledge the possibility that we will not be able to meet in person this year. This, however, is not the goal or the hope. TCTWS officers and I are coordinating contingencies, with the strong support of TWS, and will implement whatever measures are necessary to ensure the safety of our membership and their families. Nevertheless, plans are continuing apace for the annual meeting. I ask that we all continue, for now, as though we will see one another in February. Whether in person or electronic, we will have a TCTWS 2021 conference. Plan for this as we would in any year, and look forward to it! As in many things, we must “hold fast” to continue as normal a cycle of life as possible. TCTWS will endure and thrive, no matter what.

Aside from COVID-19, this is a time of change and adaptation for our nation. Doubtless all have taken notice of the outpouring of social action that has followed in the wake of the killing of Mr. George Floyd, himself a TAMU-K alumnus. We are bearing witness to a new wave of awareness and social action over the issue of racial inequality in American society. I have received many emails and phone calls from our membership wanting to know what TCTWS can and will do in this time. As your President, it is my solemn duty to ensure we do respond. As you may know, The Wildlife Society has spoken outwardly for several years now regarding the need to strategically increase the diversity and representation of all groups that comprise our nation with TWS. Just as diversity in the natural world confers resilience and strength in a system, so too does human diversity strengthen our professional family's ability to succeed in the conservation mission. We believe that all who wish to steward the wildlife resources of Texas are equally welcome, and their diversity brings strength. For the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society, which represents the wildlife profession of a vast, diverse state with a rich natural and human history, we must not only speak the words of support, but we must ourselves actively invest time and energy in doing better. Some have criticized groups for saying the right things, but doing nothing. We in Texas are known to judge a person by their deeds, not only their words. Truly, this is a critical part of our culture, and one that crosscuts all groups. So, too, must we now be judged by our deeds. Upon us has now been laid a challenge, and one that we can and will answer. In the coming weeks, TCTWS will look towards active roles that we can take to improve the diversity of our family. This effort will not be a one-time activity, a position statement, or an empty set of statements of support. Rather, it must be a long-term effort, with concrete goals and mile-markers towards progress. It must be one that endures, and adapts with emerging challenges in diversity and inclusion of all those who seek to advance the mission of conservation. No one person can properly direct this effort. It will take a chorus of voices that represent diverse backgrounds and experiences, and can ensure that the path forward

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

s handled appropriately.

Despite the tumultuous times in which we live, we must be sure to celebrate the good news as it happens. The Great American Outdoors Act continues to work its way through the Legislative branch of our government, and with it the hopes of a permanently funded Land and Water Conservation Fund. This would bring sorely needed relief and funding to a national infrastructure that supports wildlife habitat, forests, water, parks, and many other elements of the outdoors. Although the funding apparatus exists, the LCWF monies are too often reappropriated to other ends. With overwhelming support in the U.S. Senate, these funds will now—and forevermore—be assigned to the duties for which the American people originally intended. The bill now goes before the U.S. House of Representatives. As President Trump has indicated he will sign the bill if placed before him, we must all do our part in contacting our Congresspeople to encourage them to support this bill, which has already received strong bipartisan support. In a time of political division, it is refreshing to see that both sides of the aisle can still come together to protect the natural heritage of the American people.

On another front, it is one of the happy tasks of the President of TCTWS to help set the theme and tone for the annual meeting. When one looks in the archives of TCTWS, we have had a great many themes for our annual meetings, making the task of finding a novel theme all the more difficult! In the world in which we presently live, increasing human population, demand for natural resources, and a changing disease landscape present conservation challenges on many fronts, but likely none more so than the management of human-wildlife interactions resulting in damages or disease, often called Human-Wildlife Conflict or Wildlife Damage. Curiously, TCTWS has never dedicated an annual meeting theme to this topic, which is at once one of the oldest aspects of wildlife management on Earth, and also more needful than ever. For many of our young members, this field will be a growth area that will both provide employment opportunity, but also need the engagement of new solutions and novel ideas from generations beginning to take up the mantle of conservation.

My friends, it is a tumultuous year in which we find ourselves, and we must work to keep ourselves, our loved ones, and our neighbors well. We must continue to achieve our conservation goals as best we can, tend to the wounds in our society, and look towards the future of both natural and human systems in our world. I know that our membership is made of strong, resourceful individuals that have already, and will continue to, come together in times of great need. You have my admiration, my support, and my humblest service. Until we see one another again: hold fast, be well, and do good in all things.



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

SOUTHWEST SECTION TRACKS

by Jim Ramakka

By now you all have seen the June 4 announcement that the in-person 2020 Annual Meeting of TWS in Louisville has been suspended and will be replaced by a virtual conference. TWS Council has been monitoring the potential impacts of COVID-19 as they have evolved since our March meeting in Omaha. In that meeting and subsequent conference calls, we asked CEO Ed Thompson and TWS staff to examine potential scenarios including changing dates, downscaling conference size, and cancellation. Based on the resulting projections and our discussions focusing on the health and safety of our members as well as the financial impacts to our Society, Council made the difficult, but necessary, decision to suspend this year's live conference.

Financial impacts of an outright cancellation would have resulted in a financial loss to TWS of approximately \$600,000 primarily due to cancellation penalties, lost vendor and sponsorship revenue, and no income from registration fees. Thanks to a the conservative approach to our finances implemented in the past few years, TWS could absorb that impact, but it would be a significant financial hit to the Council Action Fund as well as the Permanent Reserve Fund and potentially affect funding of discretionary programs. Fortunately, Ed Thompson was able to negotiate a resolution with the conference venue and hotel that avoided cancellation fees and penalties by rescheduling the 2023 Conference to Louisville.

While all of us on Council are disappointed that we can't meet with the membership in person this Fall, we know that TWS Staff will do an excellent job of coordinating a worthwhile virtual experience. Although still under development, that experience will give students and professionals opportunities to share the latest development in the field via technical sessions, workshops, and poster sessions. Information on registration, events, and schedules will be posted at <https://twconference.org/>.

Also, like the rest of the world, we have all have been following the cultural upheaval facing our nation. The Wildlife Society's [June 3 message to the membership](#) reaffirms our commitment to diversity and inclusivity while urging our members to listen, learn more, and do more

SOUTHWEST SECTION TRACKS

to help in the continuing evolution of our organization and the profession as a whole. If you have not yet, please read that message and consider how you can contribute to those efforts to strengthen and diversify the wildlife profession.

As we enter the summer we are in a period of economic and societal uncertainty that I recently heard described as a “lifequake.” Anyone who has survived a major earthquake can relate to that analogy – your life changes in ways you never expected and there is an element of dread as you wonder what the aftershocks might bring. Meanwhile, life and world events continue on around you. The environmental issues we were facing before our present situation still exist. Congress will continue to consider legislation of great import to our natural resources and The Wildlife Society will continue the policy engagement efforts described by TWS President Gary White and Past President Tom Franklin in their Leadership Letter in the May/June 2020 issue of The Wildlife Professional.

While none of us yet know the long term economic and sociopolitical impacts we may face, TWS Council will continue to explore avenues for assisting working professionals, students, and early career professionals in weathering the storm. Our academic colleagues will continue to train the next generation of wildlifers and TWS members in the agencies and private sector will continue to be available to mentor and provide advice.

Finally, take a moment to re-read the inspirational words and advice contained in John Tomeček’s April Newsletter President’s Note. Continue to take care of yourselves, your family, friends, and colleagues, and we will all get through this together. As always, please feel free to contact me with any issues or concerns you like to have brought before Council.



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COVID AND WILDLIFE

Article by Sarah Turner

Howdy y'all! We can all agree that the past few months have been an unprecedented roller coaster of events. From beginning a new decade to the onset of COVID-19 and the nationwide stay-at-home mandates that followed, we have been required to drastically reshape our routines and how we interact with family, friends, and colleagues. While change can be frightening, it can revitalize how we communicate and allow us the chance to prioritize what truly matters in our lives. As the fanatic ecologist I am, the first thing I wanted to know after COVID-19 set in was "when can I get back out into the field" and "how will this affect our natural resources." Luckily, some of us (including myself) are slowly gaining approval to resume field research under guidelines to prevent virus exposure and transmission. Likewise, the longer that we live in this new "normal", we are learning more about how COVID-19 affects humans and other animals alike. I'd like to briefly highlight some COVID-based lessons we've learned over the past few months. All chosen articles were found on the TWS parent society's webpage, with links from other news sources as appropriate.

Aggressive, famished rats roam metropolises amid restaurant shutdowns

<https://wildlife.org/with-restaurants-closed-rats-seek-food-elsewhere/>

Just like we humans miss dining out at our favorite local restaurant (sigh... Koppe Bridge), apparently rodents do as well. A story first covered by the [New York Times](#) warns that since restaurants have shut down or reduced operations, rats and other rodents in highly populated areas are becoming more aggressive towards their own in the search for new food sources. These rats, who have depended on the copious amounts of trash produced by restaurants daily, are now being forced to either travel farther to find food or result to cannibalism. While the article notes that these rats are not becoming more aggressive towards humans, an increase in their presence is worrisome in the sense of the public health concern of disease transmission. The CDC provides the following recommendations to keep your home rodent-free: seal access to buildings, keeping trash in tightly sealed containers, and removing pet food (i.e. bird seed and other foods) from yards and business fronts.

Cats and COVID-19

<https://wildlife.org/cats-can-contract-and-pass-on-novel-coronavirus/>

Cat lovers take notice! A study conducted by scientists at the University of Wisconsin provided evidence that cats can become infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus (the virus that causes COVID-19) and can pass it to other felines (Halfmann et. al 2020). In this study, researchers administered the virus to 3 cats and within 3 days, and all tested positive via nasal swabbing for the virus. The next day, the infected cats were placed separately within enclosures with an uninfected cat, and after 2 days the nasal swab from a single previously uninfected cat showed the

individual was shedding the virus. Important findings from the study were: 1) cats can asymptotically contract and carry the virus and 2) felines may potentially further spread the virus via contact with other felines and humans. I'm happy to report that, according to the article, all cats recovered successfully from the virus.

Other animals and COVID-19

<https://wildlife.org/what-animals-can-catch-the-new-coronavirus/>

To be fair to cats (who did nothing wrong), other animals can contract and carry COVID-19 as well. A news article published in [Nature](#) (1 June 2020) notes that many domesticated animals, including dogs, cats, ferrets, mink, captive held felines, and even rabbits, can be at risk for contracting SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. What does this mean for wildlife species? If the domesticated relatives of canids, felids, and mustelids can contract and carry COVID-19, then there is a possibility of rampant transmission through animal populations if the virus ever becomes successfully introduced to these populations. Another issue at hand is the possibility of multiple host transmission, as witnessed with the 2009 H1N1 virus that passed numerous times between pigs and humans. Additionally, if these viruses remain in animal population, the chances of virus mutation and reintroduction increase greatly. The article recommends monitoring the health of your domestic pets and limiting their exposure to other people and animals outside your household as approaches to mitigate their risk of contracting and carrying COVID-19.

Now to switch gears slightly. It is incredibly too early to understand the effects that COVID-19 will have on wild animal populations. We can, however, highlight the immediate influences we as wildlife professionals are feeling due to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19. The next two articles will highlight different aspects of this.

COVID-19 and state agencies

<https://wildlife.org/will-pandemic-have-lingering-impacts-on-state-agencies/>

As a state employee myself, I've witnessed the immediate effects of COVID-19 on my agency. We were immediately switched to a "work remotely" status, all travel was terminated unless deemed mission critical, and outreach/educational events were switched to online formats almost overnight (the technology of the 21st century is quite astounding). An article by Dana Kobilinsky of The Wildlife Society parent organization highlights the challenges faced by many state natural resource agencies, from an exponential increase in online meetings to the postponement of planned management activities such as prescribed burns. Another impending issue, she notes, is the potential reduction in funding brought about by fewer people partaking in outdoor activities, since many state fish and game agencies are funded via license sales. This has been felt almost immediately

in states such as Washington and Alaska, where public lands were felt almost immediately in states such as Washington and Alaska, where public lands were closed in conjunction with reductions in out-of-state license purchases promulgated by travel limitations. Another looming concern with this decrease in outdoor recreation is a reduction in the amount of funding available for conservation activities, which are funded from federal excise taxes on firearms and ammunition via the Pittman-Robertson Act. While the retailers interviewed in the TWS article noted they have actually experienced increases in firearm and ammunition sales upwards of 700%, it is too early to know the full impact that COVID-19 will have on funding for state agencies and conservation projects. A silver lining in our current situation is that many agencies have embraced steps to increase outdoor participation, making the great outdoors a figurative and literal “refuge” from lockdown. Many states have waived license requirements for a set period of time, extended access to tag acquisition, and opened game species’ seasons early in efforts to allow more people to become involved with nature. The real challenge, however, will be keeping these individuals engaged in outdoor activities when life returns to a pre-COVID state, a mission that Kelly Hepler (President, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies) and other natural resource professional all eagerly await.

The Online Future of Wildlife Learning

<https://wildlife.org/the-online-future-of-wildlife-learning/>

In another article by Dana Kobilinsky, the current state of wildlife education is evaluated amid COVID-19 imposed alterations. As classes have suddenly and indefinitely been pushed to an online format, Kobilinsky highlights the struggle that many professors are facing in the attempt to provide an all-encompassing educational experience via a computer. While lecture materials can easily be posted and discussed online, professors fear that students will miss out on those pivotal hands-on experiences that further guide their paths through the natural resources field. Two solutions presented in the article were the development of a spring semester course where students are tested for the virus prior to participating, and implementing a program where students contact and work directly with a wildlife professional to gain real-world experience. Educators and students alike are tenacious and remarkably creative, and from what I have seen, can overcome any impediment presented by an alternative class format to continue to provide the best education possible for the next generation of natural resources professionals.

There is no doubt that we are currently living in strange and chaotic times. While COVID-19 will certainly be remembered for many years, the manner in which we choose to respond and support one another through these troubling times will be the true testament of our resiliency and character. It is my wish that

COVID AND WILDLIFE

we use our skills and intellectual abilities to continue: 1) protecting ourselves and our loved ones, 2) providing factual information and developing practical solutions, and 3) helping others in their time of need. We in the natural resources profession are tough nuggets from the get go, and I know the strength and compassion we all hold will allow us to help one another and others through our current reality. With little dedication and hard work (which is nothing new to us), we will come out even stronger and wiser and will be the shining example that Texas and the nation aspire to emulate.

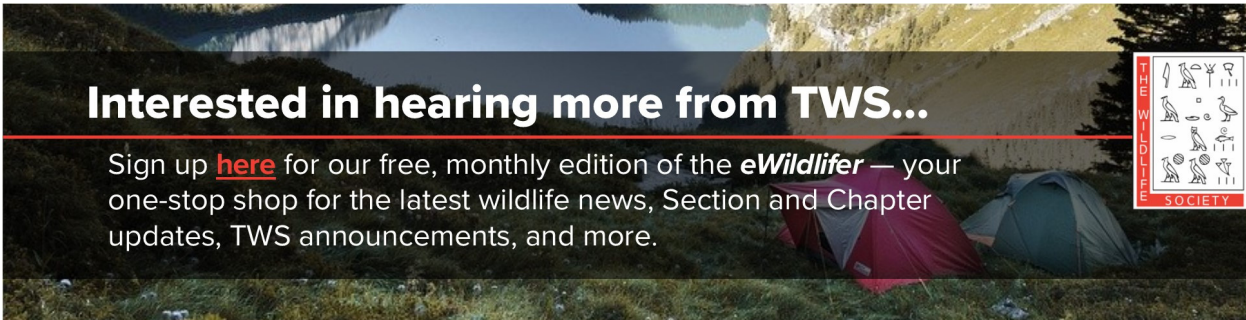
Until we can physically assemble again, please stay safe, strong, and positive. Please take all the necessary precautions to protect yourselves and others. Finally, take this time to count your blessings. Life is precious and unfortunately very short, and you may not get another opportunity to say “I love you” or watch a sunset.

"Till we meet again, keep fighting Wildlifers. I know we will win.

-SJT


Citations:

Halfmann, Peter J. and Hatta, Masato and Chiba, Shiho and Maemura, Tadashi and Fan, Shufang and Takeda, Makoto and Kinoshita, Noriko and Hattori, Shin-ichiro and Sakai-Tagawa, Yuko and Iwatsuki-Horimoto, Kiyoko and Imai, Masaki and Kawaoka, Yoshihiro. 2020. Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in Domestic Cats. *New England Journal of Medicine*. doi: 10.1056/NEJMc2013400



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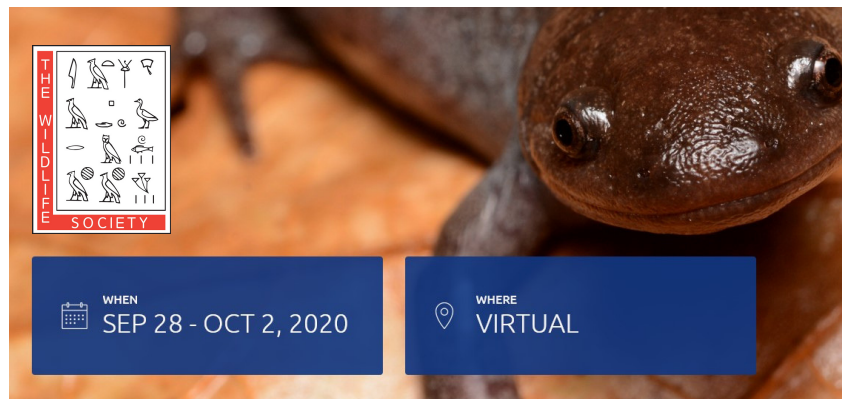
COVID AND WILDLIFE: CONFERENCE IMPACTS

By Maureen Frank

Due to the uncertainty cause by COVID-19, many of the conferences wildlife professionals usually attend have been moved to an online format. Two to highlight include Texas Wildlife Association and the national TWS annual meeting.

Registration for the annual Texas Wildlife Association is free and gives participants access to 3 events: the Private Lands Summit, education seminars, and an online auction. The Private Lands Summit will air live on July 8 at 2:00pm and the auction is open for a week, from 8:00am on July 6 until 9:00pm on July 11. The education seminars are already available. For more information, visit www.wildlife2020.com.

Registration for The Wildlife Society's Annual Conference includes most of the material attendees would usually expect, such as plenary and keynote talks, symposia, contributed paper sessions, posters, student research in progress, workshops, working group meetings, and more. TWS members save \$200 on registration, and an additional \$25 if registered by August 15. Access to program content lasts for 6 months, so participants can view materials on their own time. For more information, visit twsconference.org/register.



WILDLIFE CONSERVATION CAMP

By Angie Arredondo

The Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society's Wildlife Conservation Camp has been spreading the importance of land stewardship, and wildlife conservation and management for 26 years. High school students from all over the state and the country are selected to come to camp for one week and be immersed in all things wildlife conservation. From trapping and surveying methods to career talks by professionals, from the smallest of animals to the largest, these campers are going non-stop from the moment their parents drop them off. What's better than coming to camp for a week to learn about wildlife conservation? Well to be taught by the best of course! Campers have the opportunity to work with natural resource professionals and volunteers from all the many career paths this great field has to offer!

This year would have been the 27th year of camp; however, as we all know, many things have had to be put on hold. Due to the current pandemic crisis affecting us globally, it has been decided in the best interest of all those involved to cancel camp for the year 2020.

Don't worry though, there is still a way for you to participate in camp – virtually! On June 1, we began our Virtual Wildlife Conservation Camp. Although it is not an in-person camp, you can still get some great information and resources. These resources were put together by our camp committee and volunteers.



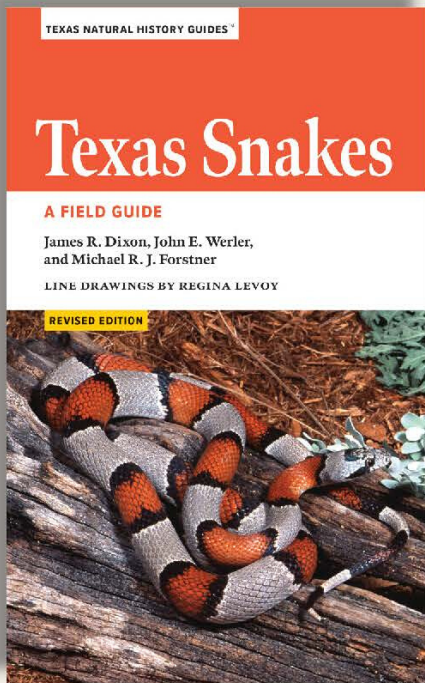
Information is organized beginning with all soils, and we work our way up from there. Viewers can learn about topics like plants, arthropods, mammals, birds, management strategies, conservation giants and heroes, and more! We are putting all of these resources on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/WildlifeConservationCamp/>) every week until July 30, 2020.

We will be back in 2021! Camp will be held on July 11-17, 2021 at the beautiful Rob and Bessie Welder Wildlife Foundation (www.welderwildlife.org), so save the date! The deadline to apply will be May 1, 2021, so there is plenty of time to complete those applications. If you would like to apply as a new camper, returning camper, college mentor, professional mentor, presenter, volunteer, or donate to camp, please feel free to visit our website at www.wildlifecamp.tx.org for more information. You can also contact Angie Arredondo, Wildlife Conservation Camp Director 2021, at wildlifecampdirector@gmail.com with any questions.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION CAMP

Wildlife Conservation Camp has helped to prepare many Natural Resources professionals for 26 years, but camp is about more than that – our main goal is to share the importance of land stewardship and wildlife conservation, no matter your career choice. We hope you will join us next year for the experience of a lifetime at Wildlife Conservation Camp!

NEW IN THE
TEXAS NATURAL HISTORY GUIDES™



Texas Snakes

A Field Guide

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

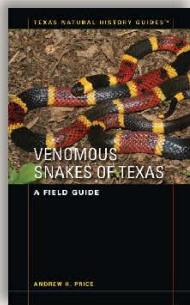
LINE DRAWINGS BY REGINA LEVOY

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.

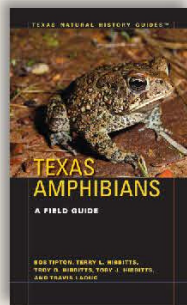
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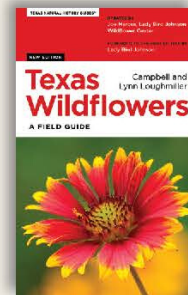
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Venomous Snakes
of Texas



Texas Amphibians



Texas Wildflowers



UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Article provided by Don Steinbach

State Sen. Lois W. Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) received the Distinguished Service Award from the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society on Feb. 14 at the society's 56th annual meeting.

The award was presented to Kolkhorst by the Chapters' Executive Director, and Washington County native, Don Steinbach, for her many years of distinguished service in the Texas Legislature advocating for wildlife which has included leading efforts to preserve private property rights, encourage wildlife conservation, and inspire resource management.

"To be recognized by such a renowned group of wildlife biologists is truly an honor," said Kolkhorst. "Through the years, their input and testimony has been invaluable to lawmakers like me. As Texas continues to grow and different challenges are ever present, advocating for wildlife is extremely important, especially for those of us that grew up with a hunting heritage."

"Don Steinbach is a pioneer in the field of wildlife biology and having him present the award gave it even greater meaning," said Kolkhorst. "Long before people knew anything about wildlife management, he was teaching it at Texas A&M and his works are vastly known and respected."

The Wildlife Society, founded in 1937, is an international, non-profit scientific and educational organization serving and representing wildlife professionals. Their goal is to promote excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education.



Don Steinbach, Executive Director of the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society and Washington County native, presents the Distinguished Service Award to State Sen. Lois W. Kolkhorst.

CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT: STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

By Jake Hill

What is the common name of this species: *Pinus taeda*? That's right, only a Lumberjack would know that one! (Hint: look it up!) However, Lumberjacks are much more than just foresters who know the scientific names of trees but are also wildlife biologists who use science-based sustainable forestry practices to create rich wildlife populations with quality wildlife habitat. This is the essence of the Forest-Wildlife Management degree at the Stephen F. Austin State University Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture. The student members of the SFASU Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society (SFA TWS) embody this mindset and so strive to develop their skills as young wildlife professionals through the SFA TWS, both in and out of the classroom.

The SFA TWS has had a busy, historic, and very successful 2019-2020 school year. The chapter held more events, went to more conferences, hosted more guest speakers, and provided more professional career opportunities for students than ever before, all in the name of fulfilling the chapter's mission of producing wildlife professionals and leaders trained for the field of wildlife management and conservation.

The scope of the chapter's outreach, involvement, and partnerships has grown significantly in the past year and continues to expand. This year, chapter officials endeavored to provide members with valuable experiences and opportunities to give students a well-rounded, broad view of the wildlife profession as well as bricks and mortar for their resumes. Installing water control structures for waterfowl units, assisting with the inaugural eMammal survey hosted by the

Smithsonian Institute, transplanting wetland plants for a wetland restoration project, banding blue wing teal, and even hosting an adult mentored hunt are just a few examples of opportunities for chapter members of SFA TWS. Many members also take part in undergraduate research with the wildlife faculty at SFASU. These studies encompass many different taxa including avian communities, mammals, and herps! Undergraduate research on snake entanglements in erosion control blankets was even recognized as one of



SFA TWS members untangling ducks from a rocket net on a banding trip with the Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries.

STUDENT CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT: SFA TWS

the top ten TWS stories of 2019.

Policy has played a pivotal role in the conservation story of North America's wildlife. SFA TWS realizes this and understands its importance to the education and development of a wildlife professional. In an effort to engage chapter members in wildlife policy and advocacy, the chapter created an Advocacy and Policy Committee. The committee is very active and has been recognized both at the state and national levels for their efforts. Most of the committee's focus has been on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), for which the committee has tailored a very strategic advocacy program. Through the program, the chapter has given presentations to different organizations, designed advocacy videos made accessible to the public, sent letters and made phone calls to congressional Chapter representatives also serve on state and national committees such as the



Participants in the first SFA TWS adult mentored hunt.

TCTWS Conservation Affairs Subcommittee for RAWA and Student Advocates for Natural Resource Legislation (SANRL), a sub-committee of the TWS Student Development Working Group (SDWG). Both committees were co-formed and are co-chaired by student members of the SFA TWS.

The chapter has also increased its partnerships through collaborations with local conservation organizations. The chapter works closely with the U.S. Forest Service, National Wild Turkey Federation, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Youth Hunting Program, East Texas Safari Club (a chapter of the Dallas Safari Club), Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, East Texas Black Bear Alliance, Texas Alliance for Fish and Wildlife, and Ducks Unlimited. The chapter also works closely with several local landowners.

Other strides that the chapter has taken to provide its members with professional development, among other things, include attending conferences. As is well known, state and national conferences provide excellent opportunities for students to engage with career professionals. This past year the chapter was able to travel to the National TWS conference held in Reno, Nevada, for the first time in 10 years! Last February, like so many other chapters, the SFA TWS traveled to Corpus Christi for the annual

STUDENT CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT: SFA TWS

TCTWS conference where the chapter's quiz bowl team were the Quiz Bowl Champions for a second year in a row while the chapter also received the 2020 TCTWS Student Chapter of The Year award.

Chapter plans for the spring semester of 2020 were capsized, as were most of society's, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Plans to attend the national 2020 TWS conference in Louisville, Kentucky were also cancelled due to the Society's decision to move the conference to a virtual format. Yet, chapter officers continue diligently in their duties scheduling speakers, organizing fundraisers, planning field experiences, etc. in hopes of another successful fall semester. The chapter recently received notification from the TWS headquarters that the SFA TWS was selected to receive The Wildlife Society's 2020 Student Chapter of the Year Award, a first in student chapter history.

"Lumberjacks make great..." is a phrase often used at SFA. Alumni of SFA TWS have proven that Lumberjacks make great wildlife biologists, as well as foresters, conservationists, managers, leaders, etc. The chapter continues in its work and dedication to its students just as it did so many years ago when first starting in 1974, training wildlife leaders of tomorrow...today!

Axe 'Em Jacks!

Jake Hill, President

SFASU Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society



The SFA TWS quiz bowl team poses with the TCTWS Student Quiz Bowl trophy after securing the victory at the 2020 TCTWS Conference.

WILDLIFE SEMI-FILTERED: A TTU-TWS CREATION

By Sophie Morris and Micah Rainey



Wildlife Semi-Filtered started as an idea after Dr. Warren Conway's plenary talk at the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society Conference this February generated favorable feedback from various stakeholders, including students, faculty, administration, and agencies, regarding the work done through The Wildlife Society at Texas Tech (TTU-TWS) over the past 4–5 years. After the conference, TTU-TWS advisors challenged the 2019–2020 officer team to

research how to create an effective wildlife-themed podcast that was specific to TTU-TWS. Price Clayton, the Treasurer of TTU-TWS, laid the foundation for the podcast in late February by creating podcast outlines, setting up podcast accounts, and researching what equipment would be needed to record audio/video. The officer team had the first episode of the podcast planned in March, with the goal of releasing two episodes by the end of the semester as a beta-test for what worked and what did not work. Our plan was to hold the podcast on campus, with a live audience, and have our advisors, Drs. Conway and Grisham as the hosts. However, before we could finalize our plans, the university was shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The podcast was originally structured to allow Dr. Conway and Dr. Grisham to spitball about wildlife topics and issues, or, as Dr. Grisham put it, "Allow two idiots to use their tenure status to chat about wildlife and academia in an honest, fun, and somewhat informative manner." Students that attended the wildlife techniques course at the Llano River Field Station in Junction felt that being able to interact with professionals in a more "casual" setting allowed them to explore wildlife concepts in depth; so the podcast was also designed as a way to bring the techniques course to the public.

After COVID-19 shut down the nation, effectively shutting down all plans, our officer team and Dr. Grisham chose to move forward with the podcast. Dr. Grisham and Micah Rainey, TTU-TWS President, spent quite a bit of time figuring out settings for the stream, how to make it work effectively, and testing Zoom calls as a medium for our guests to speak. We finally set up a Twitch stream account, and after watching numerous YouTube videos on "how to stream live content," we had a preliminary way of holding the podcast virtually.

WILDLIFE SEMI-FILTERED

All of the streams were hosted and mediated by Dr. Grisham, who kept the conversation lively and was able to add a few of his own field experiences. However, we learned that one person hosting the podcast felt more like a lecture or seminar compared to a lively and lighthearted conversation. We then revamped our ideas to include as many guests as possible on the podcast. The topics were both educational and entertaining as the numerous guests provided insights to their career paths and their current research/management activities. Along with their research, the guests were able to throw in stories of their mishaps and participated in a few audience-based games, including the illustrious “Chonk or Not Chonk.” The stream ranged from 20-300 live views, and the YouTube links have all received multiple hits.

While the stream was not originally meant to have a TTU-TWS news component, it came in handy to provide important information to the members of the society by allowing the officers to announce any unfinished business due to the shutdown. The announcements included the announcements of Officer of the Year, Student Member of the year, and the results from the 2020-2021 officer elections. It also allowed members the chance to listen to how professionals in our field got to where they are today like they would have in our bi-weekly meetings. Most importantly, the live stream provided the much-needed feel of community and family during the shutdown.

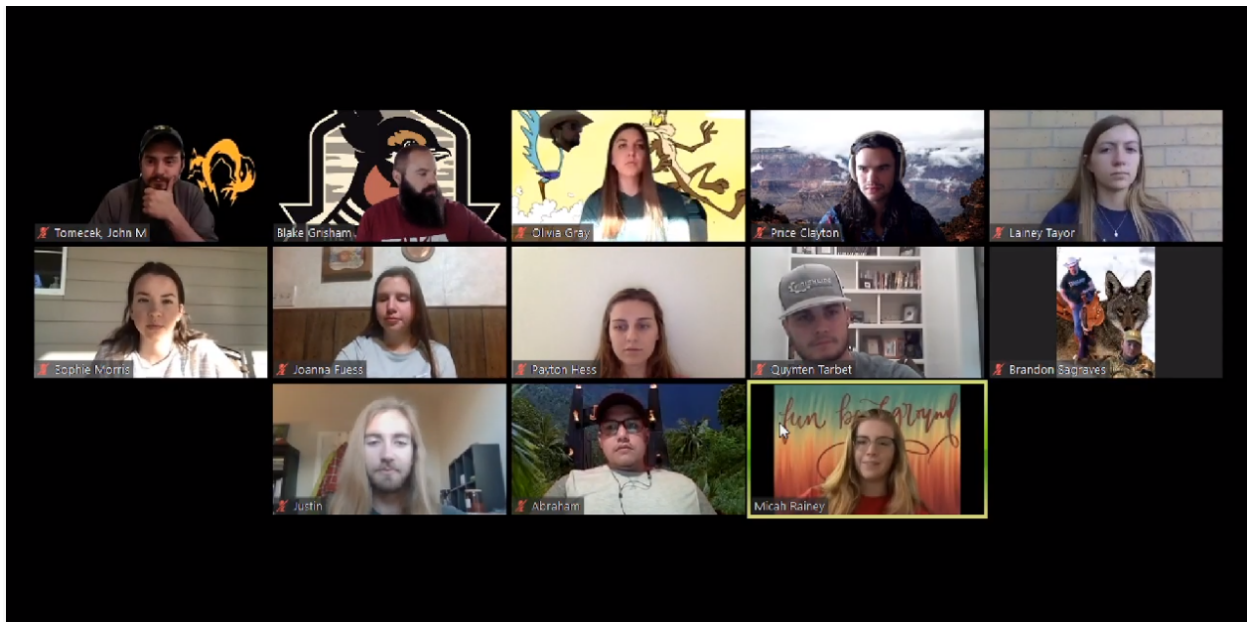
From the start of the shutdown until Mid-May, when Texas reopened, we hosted and recorded 6 live-streamed podcasts, with multiple guests and topics of conversation:

- Episode 1: Dr. Blake Grisham: Podcast Introduction/Test Run
- Ep. 2: TTU-TWS Officers: Introducing the Officer Team
- Ep. 3: Clint Perkins: Spotted Skunk Research
- Ep. 4: Dr. John Tomeček: Mesocarnivore Ecology & TCTWS
- Ep. 5: Tiffany Lane: Florida Wildlife Headlines
- Ep. 6: Dr. Clint Boal, Dr. Tomeček, and Chris Kochanny: Field Misadventures

We ended the live stream on May 14th because Texas reopened, and people were no longer staying home on Friday evenings. But there is good news! We anticipate continuing the stream this upcoming fall semester and will be using all the lessons we learned during our 6-episode run to make it a larger, in-person podcast in the future. Stay tuned for future episodes via our website at www.ttutws.org.

You can watch future streams live on [Twitch](#), and catch up on past streams through [Anchor](#), [YouTube](#), and [Spotify](#)!

WILDLIFE SEMI-FILTERED



A screenshot of TTU students and wildlife professionals interacting during an episode of Wildlife Semi-Filtered.

TCTWS COMMITTEE NEWS

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: Corey Mason at corey@biggame.org with the subject “Nomination for TCTWS Excellence in Wildlife Conservation Award.” The deadline for nominations is November 15, 2020.

PUBLICATION AWARDS - CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

This is the first call for nominations of publications that include a TCTWS member as one of the first three authors and were published within the last 3 years (2018-2020). At least 3 publications within a category must be submitted to offer the award. The deadline for submission is 15 November 2020. 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.
- 2) A digital pdf to the Publication Awards Committee Email, publication.awards@tctws.org, or mail 6 hard copies to:

Stephen Webb: Committee Co-Chair | Noble Research Institute
2510 Sam Noble Pkwy. | Ardmore, OK 73401

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.