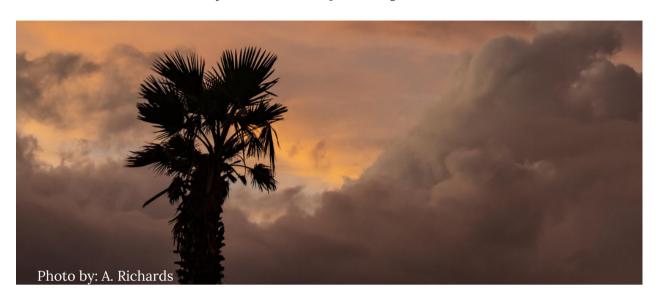
JULY 2022 NO. 214

Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society

Excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education



TEXAS CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY EXECUTIVE BOARD

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President's Note

by John Kinsey

A Message from the President

July already? I feel woefully unprepared to write this note as it seems to me we were just together in Horseshoe Bay last month. However, we are indeed far removed from those cold wet days of February, likely wishing we could have them back. We continue to see new record-breaking high temperatures across much of Texas with most of our State being in moderate to exceptional drought. Two days ago as I first sat down to collect my thoughts around this note, I was sitting outside enjoying an uncharacteristically cool evening following an afternoon thunderstorm. As I sit in the same chair today, a large plume of white smoke in the near distance is a stark reminder of the dangers such a scenario creates and of the long road we have ahead of us. Our wildlife and wildlifers are resilient though, and I have no doubt we will all bounce back.

PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Our Executive Board and Committee Chairs are gearing up to join our wildlife conservation campers at the Big Woods on the Trinity on July 12 for the summer board meeting. I look forward to getting to spend time with the campers and experience as much of the venue as I can squeeze in. I know Bobby Alcorn and his crew have worked hard to put together an exceptional camp experience this year.

Since February, we have kicked off a Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society webinar series. The first two webinars on skill-building and 1-D-1W tax valuation were presented by Masi Mejia and Amanda Gobeli, respectively, and were wildly successful. We have another webinar scheduled for early July which may go live before this newsletter is published but don't worry, you can watch the recordings and register for future webinars on our website at https://tctws.org/webinar/ and I strongly encourage you to do so.

A large portion of your Executive Board was able to meet in person at the Llano River Field Station in early June to have uninterrupted conversations about the current state of our Chapter and to discuss what our future may look like. I feel a lot was accomplished but suffice to say that we are all on the same page with certain measurable objectives to allow us to meet our long-term goals for the Chapter. That level of continuity between three years of current and future Chapter leadership should yield great results over time.

The financial security of the chapter and its various programs was the central theme of this meeting. As such, we have appointed a Financial Advisory Committee made up of three Past Presidents, your current Treasurer, and an external member who retired with 30+ years of experience in financial advising. In the coming months, the Executive Board will be collecting detailed information about the Chapter's recent annual cash flow and our current investments for the committee to review. We have done well financially in recent years, but this is no time for us to be distracted by good when better is within reach. We hope to devise a long-term plan to create financial security for the Chapter and all of its programs in perpetuity.

Before I conclude, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge and congratulate the Texas Tech Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society for being named The Wildlife Society's Student Chapter of the Year. As you look throughout the Society at the competition for this award, you realize what an accomplishment such recognition from The Society truly is. So, congratulations on all of your hard work over the past year. We should all take pride in knowing the student chapter the year, yet again, comes from our State Chapter.

President's Note

I would also like to thank all of our Chapter members for your continuous hard work and dedication to our Chapter and its mission. I am pleased to announce that The Society has recognized that dedication as well and has notified me that the Texas Chapter is The Wildlife Society's 2022 Chapter of the Year. This is a testament to all of your contributions to this Chapter and you should all take ownership and be proud of this recognition. A big thank you to Mikayla Killam for leading the application effort, and to all of those who contributed!

Congratulations to all of you! I take great pride in being part of this Chapter and I hope you do too.



John C. Kinsey, CWB® President, Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society john.kinsey@tctws.org

"Every day is a new opportunity. You can build on yesterday's success or put its failures behind and start over again. That's the way life is, with a new game every day, and that's the way baseball is."

-Bob Feller

STUDENT CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT

Texas Tech University Student Chapter

Madelieine Rawlings and Jake Burke, President and Vice President of TTU Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society, 2022-2023

As the world creeps its way back to a normal way of life, here at Texas Tech University we have thrown ourselves back into reality to take all possible opportunities, gain field experience, expand new horizons, and challenge ourselves to fulfill our goals as outstanding and dedicated young professionals. With the excitement of our chapter's members, we have reached new heights in involvement, the Texas Tech Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society had a successful 2021-2022 academic year. This past year has been the busiest, most successful, and awarding year for the Texas Tech Wildlife Society. As a chapter, we have held more events, encouraged involvement in more members than ever, created a bond amongst members that cannot be broken, and have provided more professional opportunities for students than ever before. This is all in dedication to who we as Texas Tech Red Raiders stand for and how we Strive for Honor. As Red Raiders we are striving to better ourselves and our institution with our commitment to our responsibilities today and our promises to make the world a better tomorrow. We are living the values of Texas Tech while continuing to always learn and promote new ideas and opportunities for those yet to come. Our chapter officers dedicated time of their summers, weekends, and days to provide members with professional experience to build their resumes and to give members the networking needed to make connections within the field. Every biweekly meeting hosted a guest speaker from various career paths and individual fields of study such as Texas Game Wardens, Educators, Wildlife Rehabilitators, Wildlife Biologists, Zoo Curators, Ecotoxicologists, and many more. Through the diversity of our speakers, we hope to reach each member individually through their interests and to spark interest in those who are still deciding their path.



Students assisting with a Wild Turkey Capture at the Llano River Field Station.

One of the main priorities of TTU TWS is getting our members hands-on experience with diverse types of wildlife. In October 2021, 23 members assisted the East Foundation and Texas A&M Kingsville with White-tailed deer captures on the El Sauz Ranch near Hebbronville, TX. TTU TWS hosted multiple rocket net trainings and Wild Turkey captures at the Llano River Field Station in Junction, TX. Under the supervision of Dr. Blake Grisham, students from TTU along with other universities from across the state such as Sam Houston State University, Texas A&M, and Tarleton State learned proper rocket netting processes and how to capture, process, and safely release Wild Turkeys. With assistance from Dr. Clint Boal, Assistant Unit Leader for the Texas Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, TTU TWS hosted a three-day mist netting workshop for our members.

STUDENT CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT CONT.

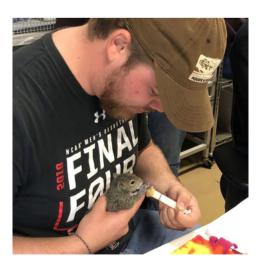
Over the course of three days, Dr. Boal and his team trained 25 members to set up and take down mist nets, band and measure songbirds, and provided tips and tricks to help identify different avifauna while in hand. Many members also had the opportunity to gain valuable field experience volunteering on research projects such as small mammal trapping, setting up artificial housing for Purple Martins, and building nesting boxes for American Kestrels.

Our student chapter recognizes the importance of inclusion, education, and outreach; thus, our chapter ensured the inclusion of our members within the community by gaining involvement with the South Plains Wildlife Rehabilitation Center where our students took part in the intensive care of local wildlife who needed the help that only us as the new generation of wildlife biology can fulfill and maintain. We maintain our public relations with active Instagram account (@ttuwildlifesociety), a Facebook page that shares updates on our chapter and the work of our members, and through our annual newsletter Prairie Ponderings. Along with education, our chapter gave a hand with an event by the name "Scales, Tails, and Trails", a public event that focuses on



Students with Dr. Boal checking mist nets for birds to band.

the education and awareness of wildlife biology amongst the public and youth groups of Lubbock, Texas. At this event, we had many members help with booths identifying various animal tracks, animal species, and natural resource management methods, all with the intention of helping future generations pay attention to the life around us and the significant role we can play in terms of assisting, restoring, and preserving wildlife.



TTU TWS member, Andrew Dotray, syringe feeding a young squirrel at the South Plains Wildlife Rehabilitation Center

With the arduous work and dedication of our members, this spring we were honored to have accepted the award of Texas Student Chapter of The Year at the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society Annual Meeting. This award not only put the efforts of our chapter and members into words but recognized the level of intensity that our members care for the field of study and gave further proof to the matter of our members hard work and diligence. Our student chapter was established in 1978 to promote professional relationships, career opportunities, and to aid Texas Tech students in the opportunity to succeed in the wildlife field. From then forward, we have only grown, set higher standards, and have given name to the goals that our founders established. This year is the first year for our chapter to have been awarded the Texas Student Chapter of The Year Award and with the acknowledgment of our peers we can certainly attest to the fact that hard work pays off.

STUDENT CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT CONT.

In order to highlight our chapter's contributions to the parent Society and our profession at large, we submitted an application for the National Student Chapter of the Year award in Spring 2022. We were notified in June 2022 that we were selected to receive the distinction as the 2022 National Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society, a honor that would not have been possible without the specialties, interests, and ideas of our individual members. As we look forward to the upcoming year our chapter officers are excited to both celebrate our shared triumphs and further support and encourage our new and returning members. We plan to keep offering the highest quality speakers, trainings, and connections as we continue to uphold the high standards that we have set for ourselves.



TTU Student Chapter members at the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society 2022 Annual Meeting after being awarded Student Chapter of the Year.

FREE FROM BIAS

By: Penny Wilkerson

In science and in life, by any definition, bias leads away from truth. As biologists, we strive to choose samples and survey methods that are free from bias. What is bias? Statisticians have recognized at least five types of statistical bias that scientists must control for and minimize. Sampling bias is one example of influence that selects a sample that does not accurately represent the true population. For field biologists, bias can show up in small ways when we use qualitative metrics instead of measurements. Bias can creep in when estimating deer age from tooth wear, when using judgment scales like bad, fair, good or excellent, and when we don't control for error during surveys or sample selection. Observer bias can also influence survey observations when new spotlight survey volunteers detect spiders, raccoons and even trailer reflectors at 500 yards. The bias to identify everything as a deer can be mitigated by using more experienced biologists to train volunteers to discern between deer and other objects.

Just like sampling bias and observer bias, preconceived information, what we think we know, can shape our conclusions in science and in life. Bias not only occurs in science, but also in human relationships because of what we think we know about people or groups of people and lead to discrimination and prejudice. As scientists we aim to be unbiased, however biased opinions with people are harder to uncover. That is why social scientists have termed these psychological biases as unconscious, hidden, or implicit bias. The National Institute of Health defines unconscious bias as "a form of bias that occurs automatically and unintentionally that nevertheless affects judgements, decisions, and behavior (1)."

Things that seem harmless can actually be driven by unconscious bias. For example, a bias could be: all women have good handwriting and are always organized. By themselves these conclusions seem harmless. The harm comes from assigning all women as data recorders or note takers and not to more arduous field tasks. This is a simplified version of unconscious bias and how it can impact our decisions in the field or the office. Unconscious biases are driven by childhood experiences and learned based on cultural socialization and group attitudes (2.)

The best way to reduce our biases is to first educate ourselves about what bias is and what implicit biases we might have. I challenge you to read as much as you can about implicit bias. Talk to people that you don't know. Engage with colleagues from different agencies or universities and talk about things from a different perspective. Then shift your perspective and imagine what is like to be a biologist whose ability or skill is questioned or criticized because of their social identity. You can even test yourself on what implicit biases you may have with an implicit association test developed by Harvard University (https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/.)

FREE FROM BIAS CONT...

The most important thing to know about bias is that it *can* change. Unconscious thoughts or exclusionary practices can become actions that we are aware of and avoid. Change starts with each one of us.

As members of the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society we can all be committed to overcoming barriers that limit the growth of our membership. Starting small by examining our own beliefs and limitations can make a strong, collective impact that will grow into a wave of change throughout Texas.

References:

- 1. https://diversity.nih.gov/sociocultural-factors/implicit-bias
- 2. https://www.learningforjustice.org/professional-development/test-yourself-for-hidden-bias

JGTCLI Cohort News



James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute Now Accepting Applications!

Deadline to apply November 1, 2022

The James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute is now accepting applications for the 2023-2024 Early Career Professional Program! Developed to ensure a future legacy of well-trained conservation leaders adept at identifying conservation challenges and finding solutions, the JGTCLI is seeking early-career professionals 1 to 10 years out of college who are working full time in a natural resource-related field and have demonstrated leadership potential. Professionals from diverse natural resource fields are welcome to apply. These fields include federal and state natural resource agencies, environmental and conservation organizations, educational institutions, natural resource policy development, private consultants and individuals from other natural resource programs.





Throughout the year-long course of study beginning in February 2023, Institute Fellows will be exposed to different types of leadership styles, conduct personality and personal growth assessments, become familiar with the policy-making process, and will tackle a problem-solving challenge on behalf of the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society related to current statewide conservation issues. Participants will develop lifelong relationships and work both collaboratively and independently to develop and strengthen their communication, conflict and problem solving, and project management skills while impacting real world conservation challenges.

For more information, and to apply, please contact Tucker Slack at tslack@plateauwildlife.com and visit http://tctws.org/conservation-institute-menu/jgtcli-early-career-professional-training/



TCTWS WEBINAR SERIES





TEXAS CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Webinar Series

Partner Highlight

Kaylee French, TNC

11am CST Thursday July 7th, 2022

This webinar episode will highlight Kaylee's work as the West Texas Education and Outreach Coordinator for The Nature Conservancy. Join us quarterly as we learn about what makes Texas wildlife stewardship excellent.



RSVP today: TCTWS.org/webinar

JULY 2022

Botany Briefs

Check out our recurring column, 'Botany Briefs.' Here we will share information about plants that are important to wildlife, whether beneficial or harmful. If you would like to contribute an article, please contact us at newsletter@tctws.org.

Bouteloua curtipendula (Michx.) Torr., Sideoats Grama

By: Sarah Turner

When I think of Texas flora, several iconic species come to mind- Texas sage, pecan trees, bluebonnets, prickly-pear cactus, and of course sideoats grama. Bouteloua curtipendula is a native, perennial, warm season grass growing from 18-42 inches tall found throughout much of the state except for the greater Pineywoods region. This grass can be found in sandy, clayey, or loamy soils and excels in well-drained upland or rocky sites. Blooming can begin as early as May, with seeding starting in June and extending as late as November.

B. curtipendula is most easily identified by its zig-zag central axis full and panicle of multiple SPUBs, or spicate primary unilateral branches, that look like oats hanging off the plant (Photo 1). Each SPUB has 2-8 spikelets, with each having 1 bisexual floret and 1 or 2 sterile and rudimentary florets. Hatch et. al (2016) note that the glumes and lemmas of spikelets are typically purple tinged. Vegetatively, the species has basal and cauline leaves that are wide and flat with few hairs growing from raised bumps (papillas) on the leaf's margin and a membranous-cilliate ligule.

Sideoats grama has been noted as optimal forage for not only livestock, but also for a variety of wildlife species from cervids to granivorous birds. The plant itself can be used for denning and nesting structure by animals and is an ideal native species for conservation and restoration practices. Loflin et al. (2006) note it is also a larval host for the dotted skipper and green skipper butterflies.



Photo 1: Inflorescense of B. curtipendula. Photo by Alden Weatherbie, used with permission from https://www.wildflower.-org/gallery/result.php?id_image=17227



Photo 2: Full plant of B. curtipendula on a rocky outcrop. Photo by Wynn Anderson used with permission from https://www.-wildflower.org/gallery/result.php? id_image=80272

Fun facts:

- 1) B. curtipendula is the state grass of Texas (hint hint, quiz bowl participants).
- 2) There are 3 varieties of B. curtipendula found in the state (caespitosa, curtipendula, and tenuis).

Literature Cited:

- 1) Loflin, B., Loflin, S., & Hatch, S. L. (2006). Grasses of the Texas Hill country: a field guide (Vol. 40). Texas A&M University Press.
- 2) Hatch, S. L., Umphres, K. C., & Ardoin, A. J. (2016). Field guide to common Texas grasses. Texas A&M University Press.

Botany Briefs

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Cephalanthus occidentalis L. Common Buttonbush

By: Andrea Richards

Though it feels like the Sahara Desert these days in Texas due to droughts and high temperatures, wetland plants are still growing and blooming. Common buttonbush is a wetland shrub found in riparian areas, creeks, marshes, and wet areas across all of Texas.



Photo 1: Full plant of *C. occidental*is. Photo credit: https://www.gardenia.net/plant/cephalanthus-occidentalis

Common buttonbush is a warm-season shrub or small tree belonging to the madder family (Rubiaceae). It can reach up to 15 feet tall at maturity with gray to brown bark breaks into flattened ridges and deep fissures. The branches are low growing to form the dense shrub. Simple ovate or lanceolate shaped leaves with pointed tips grow in an opposite pattern and/or in whorls of three. The most recognizable feature of the buttonbush is the pincushion shaped flower head. Long styles of the flowers give it

this appearance. Common buttonbush blooms in June through September and fruits out in September and October.

C. occidentalis has value to several wildlife species across the state. Waterfowl and shorebirds consume the seeds while white-tailed deer browse the foliage (providing fair browse value). Wood ducks have also been known to utilize the plant's structure to protect their brood nests. Pollinators are attracted to the plant's flowers for the nectar.



Photo 2: Bloom of *C. occidentalis*. Photo credit: Ray Mathews via https://www.wildfl-ower.org/gallery/result.php?id_image-

Fun facts:

- 1) Common buttonbush can be used as an erosion control along shorelines because of its swollen plant base which stabilizes the plant as well as its growth pattern of growing a dense stand.
- 2) The species was used medicinally by Native Americans. The bark can be prepared and used as an anti-inflammation, antidiarrheal agent, skin astringent, and headache reliever. Chewing the bark would help relieve toothaches.

Literature Cited:

- 1. https://plants.usda.gov/DocumentLibrary/plantguide/pdf/pg_ceoc2.pdf
- 2. Range Plants of North Central Texas: A Land User's Guide to Their Identification, Value and Management, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2014. Page 307

SOUTHWEST SECTION TRACKS

by Kathy Granillo

Welcome to the "Dog Days of Summer." It's been a warm spring, warmer than "normal" one could say. Perhaps we should start talking about the "new normal." We are edging closer and closer to average global temperature reaching 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The 1.5 degrees C is what the Paris Climate Change Agreement deems the point at which climate impacts will become increasingly harmful for people and indeed the entire planet. One could argue that we are already seeing harm to people and the planet. But let's go back to the phrase "dog days of summer" – did you ever wonder where it came from? The Farmer's Almanac tells us:

"The phrase is actually a reference to the fact that, during this time, the Sun occupies the same region of the sky as Sirius, the brightest star visible from any part of Earth and part of the constellation Canis Major, the Greater Dog. This is why Sirius is sometimes called the Dog Star.

In the summer, Sirius rises and sets with the Sun. On July 23rd, specifically, it is in conjunction with the Sun, and because the star is so bright, the ancient Romans believed it actually gave off heat and added to the Sun's warmth, accounting for the long stretch of sultry weather. They referred to this time as *diēs caniculārēs*, or "dog days."

Thus, the term Dog Days of Summer came to mean the 20 days before and 20 days after this alignment of Sirius with the Sun—July 3 to August 11 each year."

While you ponder that, I shall write of something of major importance to wildlife in our country. The House of Representatives passed "Recovering America's Wildlife Act" (H.R. 2773) a few days ago. The House's approval moves the focus for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act to the Senate floor, where it is still awaiting a vote at the time of my writing this article. This Act is incredibly important for wildlife in our country. Specifically:

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act will provide states, territories, and tribes with \$1.39 billion annually to catalyze proactive, on-the-ground, collaborative efforts to restore essential habitat and implement key conservation strategies, as described in each state's Wildlife Action Plan.

- The House bill would provide \$1.39 billion in dedicated annual funding for proactive, collaborative efforts by the states and tribes to recover wildlife species at risk.
- The state agencies have identified 12,000 species of wildlife and plants in need of conservation assistance in their federally approved State Wildlife Action Plans. These plans would guide spending from the bill.
- Tribal Nations would receive \$97.5 million annually to fund proactive wildlife conservation efforts on tens of millions of acres of land.
- At least 15 percent of the resources would be used to recover species listed as threatened or endangered.

SOUTHWEST SECTION TRACKS

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I urge you to pay attention as this bill is considered by the U.S. Senate, and if you feel so inclined, please contact your Senators to voice support for the Bill.

The annual conference of TWS will be here before we know it – hopefully I will see many of you there for this first in-person conference since 2019. There are a record number of submissions for symposia, panel discussions, workshops, posters and presentations. It is shaping up to be one of the best conferences to date. Be sure to register early to get the best rates.

The host location is Spokane, WA. This is a beautiful town located in far eastern Washington, in a region known as the Palouse. Heartland of the Inland Pacific Northwest, the rolling hills of the Palouse are a mystical expanse of stunningly beautiful landscapes of the Washington-Idaho border farming region from the Spokane-Coeur d'Alene Valley south to Walla Walla, and from Lewiston and Clarkston westward to the Tri-Cities.

Another topic I'd like to highlight is disease. Seems appropriate in this era of the pandemic. This year's outbreak of the H5N1 virus has resulted in the deaths of nearly 400,000 wild birds worldwide. It has been detected in at least 41 US States so far. It has been found in over 100 species of wild birds. While it can have huge impacts on the poultry industry, it can also have huge impacts on our wild birds. For example, On Quebec's Magdalen Islands, wildlife officials recently discovered the carcasses of thousands of white gannets that had been wiped out by the flu. Ducks, geese, gulls and swans are thought to be the major carriers of this virus.

This is another reminder of how small our blue planet is and how interconnected our ecosystems are. Please take care of whatever piece of the planet that you can, be safe and be hopeful – if we all work together we can make the world a better

place.

Kathy Granillo Southwest Section Representative kgbirder55@gmail.com

COMMITTEE NEWS

A note from the Local Arrangements Committee:

Save the Date!

Next year's Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society Annual Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 22nd through Friday February 24th 2023 at the Omni Houston Hotel. Make note now of the weekday shifted dates of this coming years conference and plan accordingly. A call for abstracts is expected later this Fall with registration launching in December tentatively. The TCTWS Annual Meeting each year offers opportunities to hear from leading experts in the natural resource community, get updates on breaking research from wildlife and conservation students, and meet professionals from across the state.



COMMITTEE NEWS

Honorary Life Membership Committee Seeking Nominees

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

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

To act on a nomination the Committee needs:

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

Nominations should be kept confidential, especially from the nominee, but you can enlist the assistance of your co-workers. Many people have vitae that they use for various purposes. Surreptitiously obtain one. If there isn't one available, patch something together, with the help of their own websites, social media, friends, associates and spouses. From those nominations that we receive the committee can select one or more recipients to be honored at the annual meeting. Dossiers of people not selected this year will be filed for future consideration. Please take a moment right now and consider who among your coworkers qualifies and deserves this honor? Set some time aside on your calendar to gather the data to support his or her nomination.

Deadline: The last business day of November, but act now!!!

YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO DESERVES TO BE HONORED THIS WAY!!!

Send material to: honorary.life.member@tctws.org

HAPPY TRAILS!

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 Richards and Sarah Turner, newsletter@tctws.org) by the 15th of the preceding month. Change of email address should be submitted online through the Address Change Form.