



Texas Chapter Tails

of Wildlife and Stewardship

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President's Note

In the realm of clichés, one might reflect on the irony that "clichés are a dime a dozen". They are often seen as the "low-hanging fruit" of language, used when we lack originality or creativity in our expression. It's worth noting that sometimes clichés exist because they encapsulate wisdom and common experiences. As they say, "there's a grain of truth in every cliché." While clichés can serve a purpose, it's wise to "take them with a grain of salt" and strive for originality and authenticity in communication. However, I have never claimed to be wise; better yet, a plethora of evidence strongly confirms I am, in fact, stupid. Even during a year that feels like I was stuck in a never-ending storm, I can find comfort in the fact that clichés like "this too shall pass" exist, and that even the toughest times eventually give way to brighter days.



Life is better when you're a smiling Texas horned lizard!
Courtesy of S. J. Turner.

"A friend in need is a friend indeed," and in a world with unlimited linguistic options, I choose this cliché above all else. It beautifully illustrates the depth of true friendship and camaraderie. I am stubbornly independent, and the toughest component of my Presidency was constantly reminding myself that genuine friends are there to offer unwavering support when life's storms rage, and that connection is one cliché that never loses its meaning. Even during the toughest of times, the cherished relationships I've been blessed with in this role have brightened my path, days, and provided solace on this journey and opportunity. Thank you, TCTWS members, committee chairs,

President's Note

and board members. Your work ethic, kindness, compassion, and dedication to secure what remains concomitantly provided assurance that, in 2023, I did not live alone in a world of wounds.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," and as your current President, I propose we proactively work to create a similar atmosphere and feelings for all members by attending the 2024 Annual Meeting of The Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society, 21-23 February, in Houston, Texas. The theme, building off my incoming speech, is "Thinking Like a Draba." Again, highlighting my own lack of originality, while embracing the wisdom of Dr. Leopold, the title combines themes presented in "Thinking Like a Mountain" and "A Sand County Almanac": open our minds and be willing to revise perspectives based on best available evidence while allocating our energy to doing our small jobs quickly and well.

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step," and the upcoming meeting is designed to introduce important wildlife and other natural resource topics in Texas to students, provide a refresher for seasoned professionals, and create professional bonds among our members to maximize our collective knowledge, skills, and abilities. The plenary, one workshop, a special panel discussion on field-safety, and a special session on non-game species are centric to the theme, but we have also worked to maintain and include the existing structure, format, and topics from previous meetings. I look forward to seeing each member at the 2024 meeting. Please visit: <https://tctws.org/annual-meeting-2/annual-meeting/> for annual meeting dates, registration link, poster/presentation upload links, and Omni Hotel Group Rate.

"Until I see you there," as the old saying goes, reminds me of the anticipation and promise of future encounters. This expression perfectly captures my sentiment towards the upcoming 2024 Annual Meeting of The Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society. My gratitude towards the membership, the committee chairs, and the board members is profound and heartfelt. Your unwavering commitment and dedication have been the guiding stars in the darkest nights, illuminating the path of our collective journey. The camaraderie and support within this community have been nothing short of extraordinary, and for that, I am eternally thankful.

With Kind Regards,



Blake A. Grisham, Ph.D.
President, Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society



Editor's Note

Hi everyone!

We wish to begin our editor's note with an apology and correction in regards to the October 2023 Newsletter. In the list of contributors to the Wildlife Conservation Camp, three of the names were incorrectly printed: Dr. Bruce Thompson, Dr. Ray Telfair II, and Dr. Matt Wagner. We apologize for the mistake, and are grateful for all of the contributors!

We congratulate Dr. Roel Lopez, Past President and Honorary Life Member, TCTWS, who was awarded the Dallas Safari Club Trailblazer Award. In addition, we congratulate The Texas Brigades, affiliated staff, volunteers, and participants. The program received The Dallas Safari Club Foundation Education Award . Congratulations and a job well done to the award recipients!

We once again have an abundance of news, and are happy to provide an expanded table of contents for this edition. Happy reading, and we look forward to seeing y'all at TCTWS2024!

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TCTWS Committee News

2024 TCTWS Annual Conference

The 2024 TCTWS Annual Conference will be held on February 21-23, 2024 at the Omni Houston. Our conference theme this year is “Thinking Like a Draba”, and will feature presentations from the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute on the 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act and invited experts on Texas’ “lesser known” flora and fauna. In addition, we will host our annual student quiz bowl and plant ID competition, the Cottam Award for graduate research presentations, and a plethora of poster and technical sessions highlighting our members’ great conservation efforts.

Conference registration is now open and will close on January 31, 2024. There will be no on-site registration this year. Student member registration costs \$150 and will increase to \$175 on January 23rd. Regular member registration costs \$300 and will increase to \$325 on January 23rd. Registration provides you with access to the conference plenary sessions, technical and poster sessions, 1 ticket to the president’s reception, 1 ticket to the awards banquet, and a 1-year membership to the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society.

Register at this link today!

<https://www.xcdsystem.com/tctws/store/index.cfm?ID=ozT3qpC>

Lodging for the conference is at the Omni Houston. Our group rate is \$122/night plus taxes, and parking is available in the hotel garage at 25% off the normal rate (total of \$19/night). All hotel guests can enjoy complimentary 3 MB Wi-Fi in all guest rooms and complimentary access to the fitness center. The TCTWS hotel block ends on January 22, 2024.

Hotel Information:

Omni Houston

4 Riverway

Houston, Texas 77057

Phone: (713) 871-8181

Book your room at the link below:

<https://www.omnihotels.com/hotels/houston/meetings/tcws-2024-02202024>

Activities

2024 TCTWS Annual Conference Workshops

The workshops listed below are being offered in conjunction with our annual conference. All workshops will be held on Wednesday, February 21, 2024 at the Omni Houston Hotel unless otherwise noted. Please make sure to note any exceptions to location/additional fees within the workshop descriptions. Members can sign up and pay for workshops when registering for the 2024 TCTWS Annual Conference (<https://tctws.org/annual-meeting-2/registration/>).

Nature Reinvented: The Ecological and Cultural Restoration of Houston's Memorial Park

Location: Houston Arboretum (OFFSITE)

Date/Time: Feb. 21, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Number of participants: 30

Cost: \$10

Since 2011, Houston's Memorial Park and embedded Houston Arboretum & Nature Center have been extensively restored to a vibrant mix of prairies, savannas, wetlands, and riparian forests. This has reinvented one of Houston's signature parks and has served as national model for planning, engineering, and ecological restoration. Attendees will visit keystone features in the park including restored ecosystems and visitor's center at the Houston Arboretum and the landmark Memorial Park Land Bridge and Prairie Project and Eastern Glades.

*This workshop and meeting will be hosted at the beautiful Houston Arboretum located approximately 2.2 miles offsite from the TCTWS host hotel. You will be responsible for transportation to and from the workshop. Parking is available at the Arboretum, and carpooling is encouraged and appreciated. Additionally, there will be a \$7 pay-to-park fee when traveling from the arboretum to memorial park.



Activities

2024 TCTWS Annual Conference Workshops

Trapping Matters

Location: Omni Houston

Date/Time: Feb. 21, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Number of participants: 45

Cost: \$5

The topic of regulated trapping can be among the most contentious and least understood subjects within wildlife management programs. Many wildlife professionals are unfamiliar with trapping and may not feel comfortable engaging in trapping-related discussions with their peers and the public because of their lack of knowledge. Yet, it is essential that wildlife professionals understand the diverse ways that trapping provides environmental, wildlife management, social, and economic benefits. This workshop helps participants understand and better communicate the benefits of regulated trapping and the many ways in which it contributes to wildlife management programs. The primary tools and techniques of trapping will be presented with hands-on demonstrations. We will also discuss the development of trapping Best Management Practices (the largest scientific study of trapping ever conducted), review public opinion data, and focus group and human dimensions studies on the topic of trapping. We will also teach effective communication measures to use when discussing this topic among varied audiences. Participants will leave with a basic knowledge of trapping, scientifically sound information on trapping, and be trained in skills that will make them effective communicators on this subject.

Lunch will be provided.



Activities

2024 TCTWS Annual Conference Workshops

Survey123 for Busy Biologists- hosted by TeachMeGIS

Location: Omni Houston

Date/Time: Feb. 21, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Number of participants: 15

Cost: \$5

This workshop will teach attendees the steps to create their own Survey123 forms, collect data on the app, and QA/QC results. Course will consist of lectures and hands-on exercises, including collecting data on the conference grounds. Attendees will be required to bring a laptop and to have a phone with the Survey123 app (free to download) already installed. No software is required, everything we will cover can be done via the ArcGIS Online portal with web maps and online data. TeachMeGIS will provide the required software license and a workbook. All techniques shown will be possible to do under an ArcGIS for Personal Use license or higher. Course is suitable for beginners and up.

The Wildlife Wisdom Exchange Workshop

Location: Omni Houston

Date/Time: Feb. 21, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Number of participants: 20

Cost: \$25

The Wildlife Wisdom Exchange Workshop focuses on fostering collaborative learning and professional development in wildlife management. This workshop uniquely caters to varying expertise levels—professionals, graduate, and undergraduate students—by incorporating individuals from each level into our leadership teams. These leadership teams, comprising five already invited members, have developed lessons that merge practical skills with theoretical knowledge, thereby teaching unique capabilities to workshop participants. As part of the team learning process, participant experiences will also contribute to the group's learned lessons. Finally, the workshop seeks to serve as dynamic platform for networking, skill exchange, and professional growth for 20 audience workshop participants (members of all experience levels can sign up to be a participant). Audience members will not create any lessons but are asked to bring a positive attitude for a great workshop.

Activities

2024 TCTWS Annual Conference Workshops

Fire for Feathers- The Art of Prescribed Burning for At-Risk Avian Species

Location: Houston Arboretum (OFFSITE)

Date/Time: Feb. 21, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Number of participants: 40

This ½ day workshop will blend available science and management for targeted prescribed fire application for a variety of Texas habitats targeting management for the Aplomado Falcon, Attwater's Prairie Chicken, Eastern Black Rail, Whooping Crane, and Golden-cheeked Warbler. We have a talented line-up of fire and science practitioners who will set your world a-blaze and guide attendees through how to make planning and logistical decisions such as: how to choose areas for application of prescribed fire activity, timing and conditions to apply fire for the most benefit, and what to expect post-fire application.

Following the Rx Fire Workshop, the Texas Prescribed Fire Council (consisting of private landowners, researchers, government and NGO employees, and fire enthusiasts) will be having their annual membership meeting. The meeting will consist of Board Member elections; updates on the various Rx fire E&O efforts, trainings, hurdles/limitations, and success stories in the state; as well as discussions on how the Council can be most additive to the safe and successful implementation of more Rx Fire across our state. No special membership is required to attend this meeting, just a passion and interest in visiting with like-minded individuals working on promoting and increasing the amount of Rx fire across our great state. There will be ample time at the end of the workshop and meeting for attendees to visit with habitat and fire experts, Texas Prescribed Fire Council Members, and land stewardship experts.

Workshop will be from 8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., and the membership meeting from 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.



Activities

2024 TCTWS Annual Conference Workshops

Chronic Wasting Disease Information and Updates

Location: Omni Houston

Date/Time: Feb. 21, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.

Number of participants: 40

Cost: \$5

This workshop is specifically designed for members who do not deal with Chronic Wasting Disease (or CWD) on a regular basis. As biologists, we are often asked about topics that are outside of our area of expertise, so we have developed this workshop to help bridge that gap. During this workshop Alan Cain with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will discuss what causes CWD, current distribution of positive cases in the state of Texas, and current regulations to manage and monitor the disease. Importantly, we will also cover answers to some of the more common questions received and have time for audience questions at the end of the session.

Turning Sound into Discovery

Location: Omni Houston

Date/Time: Feb. 21, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Number of participants: 40

Cost: Free

Biologists all over the world have made the Song Meter platform the standard for bioacoustics recording with over 50,000 recorders deployed in 90 countries. This hands-on workshop will teach participants the features and set up of the Song Meter SM4 and Song Meter Mini recorders to monitor for birds, frogs, and other wildlife. Several case studies will also be presented and discussed. Time permitting, we will also review the free and paid versions of our Kaleidoscope software for efficient analysis of acoustic data. The workshop will be led by staff of Wildlife Acoustics.

Activities

2024 TCTWS Annual Conference Workshops

Wildlife Photography

Location: Omni Houston

Date/Time: Feb. 21, 2024 from 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Number of participants: 40

Cost: \$5

As you progress in your wildlife career, you will witness incredible encounters with wildlife in the field and the essence of wild places. Carrying a camera, documenting your observations, and capturing your story can lead to increased enjoyment and engagement in the wildlife field. Outdoor photography can serve as a vital tool for wildlife communicators and professionals. Wildlife photographers engage in a focused craft and are expected to exercise a level of creativity. In this workshop, Dave and Joseph Richards will discuss the ingredients for composing photography images, how to increase the scientific value of your photographs, and techniques for improving the quality of your images. This course requires no previous experience with photographing wildlife, and all experience levels are encouraged to participate. We hope this course will enhance your skillset and enthusiasm for carrying a camera afield.



TCTWS Committee News

Conservation Affairs

Texas Chapter leadership and members have continued to stay active promoting the mission and position of TCTWS in Austin and with resource leaders. A brief summary of Conservation Affairs' activities is provided below, as well as future dates to look forward to. Current TCTWS positions statements can be found on our website: tctws.org/about-us-2/resolutions. Please reach out to Conservation Affairs Chairs for further information or to get involved. TCTWS members are always encouraged to participate in these activities.

Chronic Wasting Disease

- Joining other wildlife organizations, TCTWS has shared the "Chronic Wasting Disease" StoryMap site as a resource for members and constituents
- November '23 - TCTWS leadership and members gave public testimony in support of TPW Commission proposed actions. Commission did not accept full package and will reconvene on key CWD management principle in 2024 (January or March, TBA).

Mountain Lion Management

- Proposal from task force under review and tentatively scheduled for January TPW Commission Meeting

Upcoming Dates

- January 24-25, Austin – TPW Commission Meeting
- March 27-28, Austin – TPW Commission Meeting

*If you are interested in attending this or any Commission Meeting and/or want to participate, please reach out to [Mary Pearl Meuth](#). This November 1-2 meeting is a major milestone in CWD regulation and disease management.

Nominations

We are happy to introduce our nominees for our 2024 Vice President, Secretary, and Board Member at Large positions! Our online voting system will go live in early 2024, so please read up on our candidates and vote. Every member's voice matters!

2024 Vice President

- Bill Adams, CWB®
- Stephen L. Webb, Ph.D.

2024 Secretary

- Mikayla Killam
- Anna Mathews

2024 Board Member at Large

- Chris Farrell
- Adam Terry

Nominations

2024 Vice President Candidate- Bill Adams, CWB®



I am the Associate Director of Operations for the Borderlands Research Institute (BRI) at Sul Ross State University. I serve BRI faculty, staff, and students to create operational efficiencies in support of their research, outreach, academic, and administrative efforts. My goal is to grease-the-skids so they can optimize their roles. I have been here since January and am energized by the eagerness of students preparing to professionally engage conservation stewardship.

For 20 years prior to BRI, I worked on Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). I began my career on the Panhandle Plains WMAs and transferred to the Middle Trinity River Ecosystem WMA Project in the Post Oak Savannah Ecoregion. I spent my last 16 years as the project leader for the Pineywoods Ecosystem Project WMAs, where, with partner agencies, our team managed over 260,000 acres of habitat to benefit game and non-game wildlife, demonstrated habitat management techniques to constituents, taught youth and adult hunters how to hunt, and coordinated several wildlife research projects.

I began TCTWS membership as a student in 1998. Beyond giving presentations as a student, I have served on several committees and chaired the Student Chapter of the Year, Activities, Local Arrangements, and Honorary Life Membership committees, but as a student and younger professional, I neglected networking and leadership opportunities due to introversion and selfishness with my time. As I've grown older there is nothing I look more forward to professionally attending each year than our conference. Young people, do not fear getting involved. Old(er) people, show them the way! I look forward to helping in this capacity if I am elected Vice-President of TCTWS.

Nominations

2024 Vice President Candidate- Stephen L. Webb, Ph.D.



Stephen Webb is a research assistant professor in the Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute and the Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management at Texas A&M University. Stephen is a proud, 7th generation Texan who received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK), and Ph.D. from Mississippi State University. His research focuses primarily on the ecology and management of game and large mammal species. He uses advanced and novel tracking and sensor devices to develop behaviorally and spatially explicit models of animal movement, habitat selection, animal interaction, and changes in population demographics. He also teaches a graduate level quantitative ecology class.

Webb is a Certified Wildlife Biologist®, Certified Senior Ecologist, and the current book review editor for the *Journal of Wildlife Management*, and past associate editor for *Rangeland Ecology and Management*. After joining the TAMUK Student Chapter of TWS, where he served as Vice President and President, Stephen immediately joined TWS in 1997 where he has maintained membership ever since. He is a charter member and sustaining donor of The 1,000, and is involved actively in multiple working groups.

Soon thereafter, in 1998, Stephen joined the Texas Chapter of TWS. He has contributed to TCTWS in multiple capacities, having served as chair of the Publication Awards (4x) and Scholarship committees, and member for the Clarence Cottam Awards and Local Arrangements committees. He is proud to have received the Colin Caruthers Memorial and Dallas Ecological Foundation scholarships as an undergraduate, and Lower Colorado River Authority Graduate Research Assistance Grant as a graduate student.

Nominations

2024 Vice President Candidate- Stephen L. Webb, Ph.D.

Stephen is fortunate for all of the opportunities he has received, and for being part of a state chapter that shaped and developed his vision and career in wildlife management. Now, one of his primary goals is to give back in every way he can to the organizations that he knows can benefit the wildlife profession by investing in future generations and those leading, and at the forefront of, our discipline. His commitment to giving back is also evident through his service as co-advisor to the TAMU Student Chapter of TWS, and member of Texas Wildlife Association's Conservation Legacy Advisory Committee.

Nominations

2024 Secretary Nominee- Mikayla Killam



Mikayla (House) Killam is a Wildlife Damage Management Program Specialist for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. In this position, Mikayla's primary responsibilities are managing multiple educational websites, generating educational programs, providing peer training on new content, and developing extension publications. Mikayla has been a Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society member for 10 years. Throughout that time, she has experienced the chapter from the perspective of a student, graduate student, and an early career professional. She has made it a point to be an involved chapter member throughout the various stages of her membership. As a student, Mikayla was a student chapter officer for 3 years and competed on the Texas A&M University quiz bowl team for 4 years. When she became a graduate student, she continued to be involved in the quiz bowl contest working as a score keeper, judge, and student chapter coach over the years. As a professional, Mikayla volunteered to judge posters and tally score totals, she helped with the photo and art contest, and joined the scholarship committee in evaluating applications.

In recent years, Mikayla has taken on even more responsibility within the chapter by participating in executive board committees. For the last two years, she has been a co-chair of the activities committee. As a co-chair of this committee, she helped to plan and coordinate the pre-conference workshops attended by close to 250 members for the past Houston meeting and for the upcoming Houston meeting. Additionally, for the last two years, Mikayla has been responsible for compiling the Chapter of the Year application that our chapter submits to The Wildlife Society. Through this responsibility, Mikayla has collaborated with all members of the executive board, and many committee chairs from multiple presidencies. Mikayla says that these responsibilities have allowed her to see just how productive and passionate the members of this chapter are, which only makes her more eager to increase her involvement and give back to the organization by acting as an officer.

Nominations

2024 Secretary Nominee- Anna Matthews



I am the Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture Science Coordinator for American Bird Conservancy, where my work involves collaborating across organizations and agencies to perform bird conservation in Texas and Oklahoma. My co-workers range from American Bird Conservancy, Quail Forever, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and many more. I design and implement monitoring programs to assess the effectiveness of our partnership's habitat programs, identify science priorities and decision support tools that help further bird conservation in Texas and Oklahoma, and set bird population and habitat goals for our region. Our bird conservation partnership works at the gap between habitat/conservation delivery and scientific research, giving me the opportunity to dabble in both worlds and identify opportunities to bring these two critical pieces together.

As part of my role, I often work with young professionals and recent graduates via field positions that are part of our monitoring programs and undergraduate research projects. My own experiences as an undergraduate at the University of Minnesota's wildlife program and as a Master's student at Texas State University made it clear to me the importance of dedicated mentors, the critical role that young professionals play in uplifting students, and the value of connections made in places like the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society. As many of us realize, that one graduate student or agency supervisor taking a chance on you and providing that first field job, connecting you with a volunteer experience, or taking the time to provide advice can change the course of your career. Thus, it's part of my mission to not only do my best by the birds that I've dedicated my career to, but to also do my best by the young professionals that come through my door and pay forward the opportunities given to me. This mission was only enforced and strengthened by my experience with the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute, and today I've implemented activities through my work with American Bird Conservancy and through Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society.

Nominations

2024 Secretary Nominee- Anna Matthews

A few of the things I have already been proactive with include setting up “meet-and-greets” for my field crews with professionals who have careers they’re interested in, working on year-long programs with undergraduates on research projects, and co-chairing Texas Chapter’s Webinar Series and designing episodes such as the employer panel held this past spring.

As Secretary of Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society, I hope to continue this work and identify how we as a chapter can continue to serve our students and help them succeed as early professionals. I plan to not only do my utmost best while recording and issuing minutes, but also to use my unique position of bridging the delivery and research worlds to identify how the Texas Chapter can assist with filling the gaps that exist between the information our students learn in class and what they need to be successful in their careers. Wildlife conservation is only possible if we support and uplift the people who make it happen, and I hope that our chapter can continue to be a leader in this aspect. I’m proud of our conservation community and our organization, and I hope that I have the opportunity to serve the society in this role.

Nominations

2024 Board Member At Large Nominee- Chris Farrell



Chris Farrell is a Project Leader for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, overseeing seven wildlife management areas (WMAs) with 10 staff in northeast Texas. Prior to this, he was a WMA biologist on the Old Sabine Bottom and Tawakoni WMAs. He decided he wanted to work for TPWD after interning on a WMA the summer after his freshman year of college. Chris has a passion for the outdoors and conservation with a goal to leave the places he manages in a better state for future generations.

Chris earned his bachelor's degree in wildlife and fisheries management from Texas A&M University, and then his Master's of Science in Forest Resources, with an emphasis in wildlife ecology, from the Warnell School of Forestry at the University of Georgia. Chris studied the effects of biomass harvesting on reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals in Georgia and North Carolina for his research. He has served on several committees in both the Texas Chapter and the national chapter of TWS. He most recently was the program committee co-chair in 2022 and is a TWS Certified Wildlife Biologist®.

Chris lives in east Texas with his wife, Annie, his 2-year-old twin daughters, Eva and Ashlyn, and his yellow lab, Otter. He enjoys experiencing the outdoors with his family and showing his daughters the world around them. Chris's hobbies include smoking meats, hunting, fishing, watching college football, and spending time with his friends and family.

Nominations

2024 Board Member At Large Nominee- Adam Terry



Adam Terry is the Forest Wildlife Biologist and Wildlife Program Manager for the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas (NFGT). On the NFGT, he leads a team of 6 biologists and 8 wildlife technicians. He oversees wildlife management and biological resource issues over 675,000 acres of public land. Adam has extensive expertise in threatened and endangered species, game and non-game species management, habitat restoration, East Texas ecology, forestry, and fire management/ecology. His experience spans wildlife management processes, from project design to implementation to policy issues. During his tenure, the Sam Houston National Forests Red-cockaded woodpecker population reached its property recovery goal of 350 breeding groups and over 100% population increase across the NFGT. He is also responsible for day-to-day operations for a partnership with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) on the state's largest Wildlife Management Area (WMA) program. Previously, he worked in the private sector as a forester, wildlife biologist, and WMA biologist for TPWD.

Adam has been a member of TCTWS for 10 years and has served on the Program Committee and as a poster judge. Adam has also been a member and attendee of the national TWS for 10 years. He is a Stephen F. Austin State University graduate with a major in forestry and wildlife and a minor in biology.

A 6th generation Texan, Adam is a TWS Certified Wildlife Biologist® and SAF Certified Forester® currently living in Diboll, Texas with his wife, son, and 1 dog.

Photo/Art Contest

The Photo and Art Committee is responsible for arranging the contest and for soliciting qualified entries for the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society (TCTWS) Annual Meeting. In 2024, the Photo and Art Contest will be conducted in the hybrid format described below.

- **Digital copies (JPEGs, etc.) must be submitted by 12 PM (noon) on Tuesday, February 20th, 2024. The submission link will be sent out in the *January newsletter*.**
- **You must bring your art submissions and the physical prints of your photo submissions to the Photo & Art table between 12 PM (noon) and 5 PM on Wednesday, February 21st, 2024.**

All contestants must be members of the TCTWS (if you have registered for the TCTWS Annual Meeting you are a member). Contestants will be limited to 1 entry per photography category.

Photography categories will be:

- 1) Texas Wildlife (not including captive animals)
- 2) Non-Texas Wildlife, Plants, and Scenery
- 3) Wildlife Conservation (may include captive animal or species of conservation concern)
- 4) Texas Plants (includes plant-like organisms such as fungi)
- 5) Humor
- 6) Texas Scenery
- 7) Work Related
- 8) Remote Camera (not including captive animals)

The Art category may include original drawings, paintings, carvings, sculpture, poetry, etc. Art submissions are limited to 5 entries per person.

Contestants are **required** to submit a digital copy of photographs and/or art via the TCTWS membership portal (<https://www.xcdsystem.com/tctws>) to be used at the Awards Banquet. Email photo.art@tctws.org with questions on submitting. If you do not provide digital copies of your submissions by Tuesday, February 20th, your work will not be displayed at the Awards Banquet.

To help defray the cost of awards, there will be an entry fee of \$1.00 per item, which will be paid at the time of submission.

Photographs should be a standard size (3" x 5" up to 11" x 14"), unmatted, and unframed; however, cardboard backing is permitted.

Photo/Art Contest

An electronic voting platform will be available within the TCTWS 2024 Annual Meeting application from 12 PM (noon) on Wednesday, February 21st until 3 PM on Thursday, February 22nd.

- Open “TCTWS 2024 Annual Meeting” application
- Click “Menu” button in bottom left corner
- Click Rubiks Cube icon labelled “Photo Contest Voting”.
- Select the category of interest.
- To vote on an image, simply click the image and tap the “Vote For This Photo” button.

You may pick up your entries between 7 AM and 10 AM on Friday, February 23rd. The committee is not responsible for photos & art left after the close of the conference.

Winners will be announced during the Awards Banquet on Thursday evening, February 22nd. Provided there are at least 5 entries in a category, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places will be awarded in each category. If there are less than 5 entries in a category, only 1st place will be awarded. There will also be a “Best of Show” award for the most popular entry.

Student Affairs

The Student Affairs Committee would like to provide reminders for the following important student deadlines:

31 January 2024 deadline for:

- 1) Student Chapter of the Year Applications
- 2) Outstanding Wildlife Student Nominations from each university
- 3) Registration of Quiz Bowl teams
- 4) Registration of Plant ID teams

Any questions concerning these items can be directed to **Dr. Heather Mathewson** at mathewson@tarleton.edu.

This deadline also applies to **Student Scholarship applications**. Questions regarding these applications should be directed to Daniel Price and Cody Samek of the Scholarship committee at daniel.price@tctws.org or cody.samek@tctws.org.

Additional information regarding these deadlines has been provided within each student chapter, and the applications can be found on our website.

- Undergraduate Scholarship link: https://tctws.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/TCTWS_UndergraduateApplication_Blank_23-24.docx
- Graduate Scholarship Link: https://tctws.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/TCTWS-Graduate-Application_blank_23-24-002.docx

Student Photographers!

Are you a stellar photographer and want to earn some volunteer hours (and add to your impressive résumé) at the TCTWS annual conference? Volunteer as a student photographer!

We're seeking several student members (undergraduate and graduate) to capture all the great memories from sessions and events at the 2024 meeting. Student photographers will be asked to attend at least 2 sessions and then provide photos to the Student Affairs Committee. Credit will be given with all photo use!

If you're interested, please contact **Dr. Heather Mathewson** at mathewson@tarleton.edu or **Sarah Turner** at sarah.turner@tctws.org with the email title "TCTWS Student Photographer."

TCTWS Committee News

Webinar

Join us on February 8, 2024 at 11 AM CST to hear from Robert Perez about Migratory Bird Joint Ventures. Robert will be discussing the unique partnerships that Migratory Bird Joint Ventures develop and leverage to do bird conservation across large geographies.



The poster is for a webinar titled "Partnerships" by Robert Perez, presented by the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society. It includes the society's logo, the event title, speaker name, date, time, and a photo of Robert Perez holding a bird. The text describes the webinar's focus on migratory joint ventures and provides an RSVP link.

TEXAS CHAPTER
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
founded 1926

Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society

Webinar Series

Partnerships

Robert Perez, Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture

11am CST Thursday
February 8, 2024

In this TCTWS webinar, Robert Perez will speak with us about migratory joint ventures. Join us quarterly as we learn about what makes Texas wildlife stewardship excellent.

RSVP today:
[TCTWS.org/webinar](https://tctws.org/webinar)

Date: **February 8 at 11 AM Central**

Link to Webinar: <https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/7f5c69b6-9451-4814-a32d-c38da90a9ba1@6fbab168-e7f4-4b52-a656-2a4ea34b1584>

Learn something new at the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society's Webinar series. The quarterly webinar series for the chapter features professionals, research, and initiatives relevant to our chapter. Registration is open to both TCTWS members and nonmembers. The series will follow a quarterly schedule and rotate themes throughout the year, giving listeners a peek into topics such as emerging technologies, career skill-building, partner highlights, and knowledge deep-dives.

Join us quarterly as we learn about what makes Texas wildlife stewardship excellent. Each webinar is hosted virtually through Microsoft Teams and Facebook. Register in advance for each individual webinar at <https://tctws.org/webinar/>.

If you are interested in presenting an upcoming webinar or serving on the webinar committee, please email the webinar chair at webinar@tctws.org.

A note from the President-Elect

Are you interested in serving with Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society?

Committee roles are a great way to get involved, serve your professional organization, and expand your network of wildlife professionals across the state. TCTWS has several committees with varying levels and types of service involved. Student and professional members alike can serve on committees or as the committee chair, so check out all of our committees on our website at <https://tctws.org/about-us-2/committees/>. Reach out to either the committee chairs or incoming President Mary Pearl Meuth (marypearl.meuth@tctws.org) for more information.

Also, TCTWS is seeking a new Treasurer. This board position is a long-term commitment to serve, and experience with TCTWS as either a committee chair or previous board member is highly encouraged. The Treasurer is responsible for all Chapter funds, including the receipt and disbursement of funds. The Treasurer submits a complete financial report at each scheduled meeting of the Executive Board, does the yearly taxes, and generates the financial portion of the annual report to TWS. Before and after the annual meeting, bookkeeping may take 8 hours a week; the rest of the year it averages 1 hour per week. The official mailing address of TCTWS is the Treasurer's address - all mail is received by them.

For more information on this position or to nominate yourself, please contact Mary Pearl Meuth at marypearl.meuth@tctws.org.

Update from the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute – 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act

The James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute's mission is to ensure a future legacy of well-trained conservation leaders by providing professional training in leadership skills and contemporary conservation issues for today's wildlife biologists and conservation professionals. One of the primary goals of the program is to ensure cohort members gain experience and knowledge related to current conservation issues to help them better understand how to successfully manage Texas' wildlife and natural resources throughout their careers. To accomplish this goal, each cohort is tasked with a project related to a current issue or topic applicable to the wildlife field at the time.

This year marked the 50th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act. To commemorate this landmark legislation, the cohort developed, planned, and hosted a national symposium celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the ESA on November 14th, 2023, at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, TX. The symposium was developed to celebrate the ESA's past, present, and future through a private land stewardship lens. Leaders associated with ESA implementation from across the country were invited to attend and participate in four sessions of panel discussions. The final session was moderated and recorded by podcaster Ed Roberson with the Mountain & Prairie Podcast and will be released as a full episode.

Following the symposium, the cohort has been tasked with developing four subsequent manuscripts related to the topics discussed during the symposium. The manuscripts will highlight (1) the past 50 years through an analysis of listings, progress, and key metrics of performance, (2) the role of private land stewardship in ESA performance, (3) innovations in ESA performance, and (4) the future outlook of ESA implementation. These manuscripts will be published as a special edition series in the Wildlife Society Bulletin. Finally, the cohort will present a summary of the symposium and manuscripts at the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society's 2024 Annual Conference in February.

Update from the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute – 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act

Our reflection on the last 50 years has illustrated the durability and flexibility of the ESA to protect both vulnerable species and landscapes. We look forward to taking these lessons learned into the next 50 years of conservation in Texas.



The 2023-2024 JGTCLI cohort and attendees of the 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act Symposium.

Southwest Section Tracks

By: Kathy Granillo, Southwest Section Representative

As I write this column, the winter solstice approaches. For us in the northern hemisphere, the winter solstice occurs on December 21 in 2023. The winter solstice is the day with the fewest hours of sunlight throughout the year, making it the “shortest day” of the year. Although the winter solstice means the start of winter, it also means the return of more sunlight. It only gets brighter from here! When we meet in Houston for the Texas Chapter annual meeting in February, it will still be winter, but we will have over 11 hours of sunlight.

More sunlight usually makes me happy, but why am I writing about it in this column? Well, it links to my last article where I wrote about animal migrations and movements. A study tracking vastly diverse species over several years has found that day length is one of the essential factors determining migration in birds. Published in the *Journal of Animal Ecology* in 2021, the study is the first to highlight that daylight availability could be an ultimate cause of the global phenomenon of bird migration that involves billions of birds annually.

This is relevant to our conservation efforts given the rapidly changing world we live in due to accelerating climate change. The study confirmed that migration to regions with longer days is beneficial for birds with highly contrasting life histories. Long days enable higher activity levels, allowing birds to achieve this activity with lower energy expenditure rates.

“This has important implications when exploring animal decision-making,” says Ivan Pokrovsky, first author of the study. “Even in a rapidly changing world, daylength will remain stable.” The finding takes on added relevance for vulnerable ecosystems, such as the Arctic, where the role of day length is high and rapid warming is already affecting terrestrial tundra ecosystems. Many challenges remain for humans and wildlife to cope with the changing world.

In my last column I wrote about roads and wildlife overpasses and underpasses. I closed by asking you (the reader) what else is being done in Texas to make wildlife movements safer. We all know that millions and millions of birds migrate through Texas, and that many of them breed or winter in the state. We don’t think of roads as a cause of mortality to birds, and yet thousands of birds are killed by cars every year. How many of you have been on the Texas Gulf Coast during spring migration and seen the dead warblers and vireos along the coast highways? These birds just flew hundreds of miles and crossed the Gulf only to smack into a car as they barely had enough energy left to find a tree to rest in near the seawall in Galveston, or along the edge of Corpus Christie or South Padre. Or perhaps you’ve seen the red feathers of a squished Cardinal who was flying in low over a road to deliver an insect to their nestlings? But by far, one of the biggest killers of birds is our buildings and their windows, and especially in migration, lighted tall buildings at night. This is particularly true during the fall migration period. Hopefully, you’ve heard of Lights Out Texas. This is an effort

Southwest Section Tracks

By: Kathy Granillo, Southwest Section Representative

started by the Audubon Society to get businesses and homeowners to turn out their lights during peak fall migration. This is an effort anyone can contribute to by how you manage your own lights at home and by working locally to get your town or city to do the same. See the website for more information. <https://tx.audubon.org/urbanconservation/lights-out-texas>

Let's get back to roads – we know they are dangerous to all wildlife that live near them or that cross them. What can we do besides highway crossings to make roads safer for wildlife? One tool we have is Fauna Sensitive Road Design (FSRD). This is a tool for transport policy that acknowledges the negative impacts of roads on wildlife and seeks ways, through modifications to road design, that facilitate the safe and natural movement of wildlife across roads. We also need to consider roads and their placement within the larger landscape. Landscape metrics may assist transport planners to better visualize the environmental impacts of the transport network, develop priorities that inform road function and design, and conservation measures that facilitate wildlife movement. The bigger question is how to get transport planners to think about wildlife, wildlife movement and habitat fragmentation. One way is through specific funding aimed at this topic. I urge you to support passage of a federal highway bill with new innovative provisions to address wildlife corridor/transportation conflicts, as well as encouraging a landscape level approach to transportation planning in general.

Speaking of planning, TWS is deep into crafting our next Strategic Plan. Everyone on Council along with many TWS members from across the continent are assisting. We have three main goals that we are currently fleshing out with objectives and strategies. These goals are building community, supporting professionals, and exercising external influences.

Thanks for all that you do for wildlife and wild places. I hope to see many of you at the Texas Chapter annual meeting in Houston in February.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any concerns or comments or questions about what I've written, about TWS and about TWS Council.



Kathy Granillo - TWS
Southwest Section Representative

Partner's Corner

Does your agency or group have an upcoming event or conference you would like to share with the TCTWS Membership? Take advantage of our "Partner's Corner"!

For a \$50 donation, we will publish your pre-formatted event advertisement in our quarterly newsletter. Every donation goes back to the chapter to support professional development activities for our members. Our newsletters are widely circulated across the TCTWS membership, which includes student members from most Texas universities and multiple other states and professionals across many state, federal, and private organizations.

The deadline for submission in each newsletter is the 15th of the previous month (i.e. the deadline is December 15th for the January edition). Our newsletters are published in January, April, July, and October of each year, and are distributed by the 20th day of each publishing month.

For more information or to submit your event, contact the Newsletter Committee at newsletter@tctws.org!

So long and happy "tails"!

Texas Chapter Tails of Wildlife and Stewardship 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 (Cheyenne Mack 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.



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

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