

# Texas Chapter Tails

## of Wildlife and Stewardship



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### President's Note

There's something truly profound about the quiet moments when the world wakes up with you. A sunrise—no matter the time of year—has a way of resetting the mind, of grounding us in the present. With every sunrise, we're reminded that everything begins anew, and there's a calm anticipation in that. For me, one of the most special sunrises happens from the back porch of my grandmother's house, overlooking the Nueces River. As the light breaks over the water and the hilly landscape, the world feels like it's coming to life just for me. It's a feeling that lingers long after the sky brightens: the perspective that the day, and everything in it, holds infinite possibilities. Perhaps it's not the sunrise itself, but the memories of my grandfather tied to that place, the familiarity with the curves of the hills visible from each angle on the porch, the peace of the morning calls of birds – many of which I'm still learning, and the connection to something larger—that make it such a powerful moment.

I hope each of you has taken a moment recently to watch a sunrise, to marvel at the world ahead of you, the place that awakens just for you, and the peace it offers your mind as you reset and ready yourself for the day's challenges.



Sunrise over Montell.  
*Photo provided by MP Meuth*

# President's Note

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## 2025 TCTWS Annual Meeting

We're fast approaching our **2025 TCTWS Annual Meeting**, scheduled for **February 19–21** in Denton, Texas. This year's plenary session, "**Conservation Conflict – Working It Out**," will be a dynamic, 1.5-hour exploration of how collaboration and local partnerships can defuse conflicts before they escalate—covering topics from Endangered Species Management and Chronic Wasting Disease to Mountain Lion Management and Water Rights. **Leo Miranda-Castro** will open the session, and **Neal Wilkins, Johnathan Letz, Greg Simons, and Stacy Steinbach** will share real-world strategies and lessons learned from working with diverse stakeholders. A concluding panel discussion, moderated by **Matt Wagner**, will tie together key insights and chart a path forward for addressing future wildlife and habitat challenges in Texas.

### Why Attend?

Whether you're a student eager to learn new research techniques or a seasoned professional looking to network or discover fresh conservation approaches, this meeting has something for everyone. Registration is now open—visit [this link](#) to secure your spot. We're also offering 11 workshops—the most we've had in recent history—covering hands-on field methods, data analysis, and more. Be sure to book your hotel room soon; the reservation cutoff date is approaching, and limited rooms remain.

### Engaging in the 2025 Legislative Session

Looking beyond the Annual Meeting, TCTWS leaders are actively preparing for the 2025 legislative session. We're collaborating with conservation partners and a lobby team to track wildlife and habitat bills. Our Executive Director, **Matt Wagner**, will lead a strong presence in Austin to ensure our members' interests—and the future of Texas wildlife—stay front and center. Check in on Matt's work in his Conservation Affairs article on page 8.

### Updated Bylaws and Governance

On the home front, we're finalizing updated Bylaws, which will be sent out for membership review and a vote this month. Key revisions include a refreshed vision and mission aligning with the national TWS parent society:

- **Proposed NEW Vision:** Resilient ecosystems where wildlife and people thrive.
- **Proposed NEW Mission:** Empower wildlife professionals to advance conservation through science, community, and professional excellence.

Extensive work was also done in updating the governance of the Chapter throughout the document. We believe these updates reflect our commitment to staying current and proactive in addressing conservation challenges. A big thank you to our Bylaws Task Group – **Jessica Glasscock, Bill Adams** and **Chris Ferrell** for taking on the word-by-word challenge of reviewing and updating our bylaws.

# President's Note

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## Leadership Elections

Please don't forget to cast your vote in our upcoming TCTWS leadership elections—see pages 12-20 for summaries of the candidates. Your participation will help steer our Chapter's future, so be sure to weigh in.

## Closing Thoughts

Serving as your Chapter President this past year has been both a privilege and a learning experience. We hired our fifth Executive Director, Dr. Matt Wagner, updated our Bylaws to align with emerging priorities, refreshed our financial management process (with a Chapter budget now in progress), and extended our 2025 Annual Meeting agenda for a more robust, balanced conference. We've also built new relationships in Austin, connecting with evolving TPWD leadership to ensure the Chapter's voice remains influential in state-level policy. Through it all, I've seen our collective willingness to show up, serve, and guide important discussions on behalf of Texas' wildlife.

Reflecting on Margaret Mead's reminder that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can indeed change the world, I'm proud of how our membership has stepped forward. Your support, volunteer hours, and passion for conservation make all the difference. Thank you for trusting me to help lead this Chapter—it's been a year marked by growth, renewed partnerships, and a stronger vision for what comes next. I look forward to seeing you all in Denton this February as we carry that momentum forward, united by the shared commitment to Texas' remarkable wildlife and the landscapes we're lucky enough to call home.

Warm regards,



Mary Pearl Meuth  
President, Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society



# 2025 Annual Meeting

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Register TODAY!

The **Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society's 2025 Annual Meeting** is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 19th through Friday February 21st 2025** at the **Embassy Suites by Hilton in Denton, Texas**.

The local arrangements committee has been coordinating with the hotel, TCTWS board, and committees to plan the 2025 Annual Meeting. This year's meeting will be held February 19th – 21st at the Embassy Suites in Denton. We are excited about what this year's location will offer our members! The hotel boasts over 57,000 sq. ft. of event space so there will be plenty of room for all our activities. The reservation link for booking your rooms is available and linked below under the group rate tab. Please go ahead and book your room early!

## Hotel Reservations!

### Embassy Suites Hotel Group Rate

[Click here for Embassy Suites Group Rate](#)

Guests can book rooms by calling the hotel directly at (940) 243-3799 and referencing the **Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society – Annual Meeting 2025** or by using the link above.

Rate is \$110/night plus tax.

Self-parking at the hotel is included.

**Cut off date is January 18, 2025. No exceptions.**



## Updated Agenda

The Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society holds its annual meeting each year about the third week of February. The location changes, as we try to move it around so that members in all regions of the state have a chance to attend.

In 2024, a survey was sent to all registrants post-event to inquire about the event timeline and the possibility of extending the conference schedule by half a day to accommodate all the activities hosted at the event. An overwhelming 72% responded in favor of adding a half day to the schedule to allow for more time to participate in technical sessions and membership events. To accommodate this, the Local Arrangements Committee has been working with all committee chairs and members to determine the best flow for this extended three day event. A final agenda plan is outlined on the next page. Please make plans for staying all three days to engage in technical sessions, networking and awards.

# 2025 Annual Meeting - agenda

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## **Day 1 (Wednesday, Feb. 19th)**

ALL DAY - 8am-5pm: Student Poster Set-up; Photo Art Submission; Plant ID Set-up

6:00-9:00 am: Breakfast included with hotel stay

8:00 am-12:00 pm: Workshops

12:00-1:00 pm: Lunch on your own

1:00-3:00 pm: Exec. Board Meeting

3:00 pm: Hotel Check-In

3:00 – 4:30 pm: Plant ID – students

4:30-5:30 pm: Student Poster Competition

5:30-7:00 pm: Evening reception hosted by hotel

6:00-8:00 pm: Plenary & Welcome Dinner

## **Day 2 (Thursday, Feb. 20th)**

8:00 am-5:00 pm: Voting for Photo & Art Open

8:00 am – 5:00 pm: Naturalist Contest

6:00-9:00 am: Breakfast included with hotel stay

7:00-8:00 am: Student Breakfast (provided by hotel)

8:00-10:00 am: Membership Meeting

10:30 am-12:30 pm: Cottam Awards Presentations

12:30-1:30 pm: Past Presidents Luncheon

12:30-1:30 pm: Lunch on your own

1:30-4:30 pm: Technical Sessions (3 Hours x 2-4 rooms)

4:30-5:30 pm: Women of Wildlife Reception

4:30-6:00 pm: Noncompetitive/Professional posters

5:30-7:00 pm: Evening reception hosted by hotel

6:00-8:00 pm: Professional Awards (Dinner provided)

## **Day 3 (Friday Feb. 21st)**

7:00-8:00 am: Fellowship of Christian Conservationists

6:00-9:00 am: Breakfast included with hotel stay

8:00 am-10:00 am: Conservation Affairs

9:00 am-12:00 pm: Technical Sessions (3 Hours x 2-4 rooms)

12:00 pm-1:00 pm: Lunch on your own

12:00 pm-1:00 pm: Student Leadership Lunch

1:00pm: Photo & Art Voting ends

1:00-3:00 pm: Technical Sessions (2 Hours x 2-4 rooms)

2:30-4:00 pm: Exec. Board Meeting (Incoming 2025-2026)

4:00 – 6:00 pm: Quiz Bowl

5:30-7:00 pm: Evening reception hosted by hotel

6:00-9:00 pm: Student & Photo/Art Awards (Dinner provided)

## **Day 4 (Saturday Feb. 22nd)**

6:00-9:00 am: Breakfast included with hotel stay

8:00 -10:00 am: Break down and move out

**Registration is open!**  
**See prices and workshops:**  
**<https://tctws.org/annual-meeting-2/registration/>**

## **Registration Booth Hours**

**Wednesday, Feb. 19th:**

**7 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

**Thursday, Feb. 20th:**

**7 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

**Friday, Feb 21st:**

**8 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

# Editor's Note

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Hi everyone!

Due to the quantity of Committee News, below is an expanded table of contents for this edition. Happy reading, and happy new year!

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## SEEKING Committee Chairs 2025-2026

### **Treasurer**

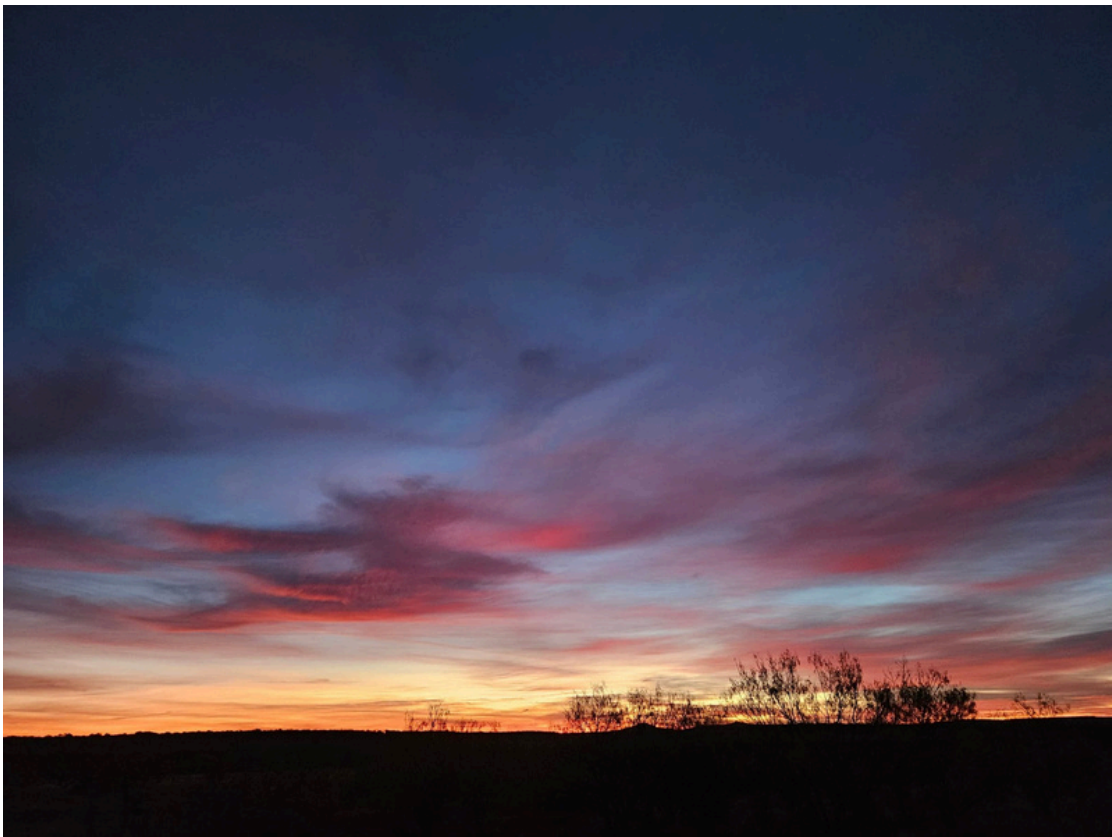
Our current Treasurer has expressed his desire to step down from the position. We are now seeking a successor for this vital Chapter role. The position requires someone who is:

- Highly organized.
- Familiar with QuickBooks Online.
- Possesses a historical understanding of the Chapter's operations.

If you are interested in serving as Treasurer or know of a member who would be an excellent candidate, please email both Mary Pearl ([president@tctws.org](mailto:president@tctws.org)) and Jon ([treasurer@tctws.org](mailto:treasurer@tctws.org)).

### **Information Technology Co-Chair**

Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society is seeking a tech-savvy individual to administer the conference management software, X-CD. This role would require 2-15 hours a month between November and March. No experience with X-CD or conference management software required, training and support will be provided by the board and IT chair Wendy Anderson ([wendy.anderson@tctws.org](mailto:wendy.anderson@tctws.org)).



Dawn breaks over Palo Pinto Mountain State Park  
*Photo provided by A. Hoxie*

## Excellence in Wildlife Committee

Seeking Nominations for Early and Mid-Career Professional Outstanding Achievement  
Deadline - January 31st

### Outstanding Achievement: Early Career Professional

#### Eligibility

- The nominee should be within 1–10 years post terminal degree (Ph.D., M.S., or B.S.).
- Nominee must be a member of Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society.
- Active 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.
- Should have made noteworthy contributions to wildlife conservation or management in Texas appropriate to career timeline.

### Outstanding Achievement: Mid-Career Professional

#### Eligibility

- The nominee should be within 10–20 years post terminal degree (Ph.D., M.S., or B.S.).
- Nominee must be a member of The Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society.
- Active 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.
- Demonstrated significant contributions to the profession and/or wildlife conservation in Texas appropriate to career timeline.

#### Nomination Process

- **Statement of Nomination:** A clear and concise statement justifying the nomination, including the specific nature, time, and place of the nominee's outstanding service and accomplishments. Address such criteria as difficulty, insight, scope, importance, acceptance, application, value, impact, and geographic scope of contributions.
- **Submission of Vitae:** A comprehensive vitae of the nominee is required, including full name, current position, organizational affiliation, contact details, and a detailed history of professional achievements.
- **Letters of Nomination:**
  - For Early Career: At least one letter (and no more than three) of nomination from colleagues, mentors, or associates.
  - For Mid Career: At least two letters (and no more than four) letters of nomination are encouraged to provide a comprehensive view of the nominee's impact appropriate to the current career timeline.
- **Confidentiality:** Nominations should be kept confidential from the nominee. Assistance can be sought from co-workers, friends, and spouses to compile the required information.
- **Submit:** Email Nominations Packet to [Excellence@tctws.org](mailto:Excellence@tctws.org)



## Conservation Affairs

By Matt Wagner, Executive Director

### Texas Chapter Members attend TWS Annual Meeting in Baltimore

Several members including chapter leadership attended the annual TWS meeting in Baltimore, MD, October 19-23. Break out sessions included: better collaboration among sections and chapters, a new Private Lands Working Group, engaging in the policy arena, conservation without conflict, Conservation Affairs Network policy priorities, Farm Bill policy, and many others.

TWS has a list of eleven policy priorities that the Texas Chapters' CAC is commenting on (not in priority order):

- Conservation funding
- Invasive species
- Wildlife health
- Conservation of biodiversity
- Energy development
- Landscape connectivity, wildlife crossings & movement corridors
- Public lands management and conservation
- Climate change
- Scientific integrity & support for wildlife professionals
- Private lands conservation and management
- Science-based policies informing management of wildlife and their habitat

### Chronic Wasting Disease

Texas Chapter President Mary Pearl Meuth provided testimony at the November TPWD commission meeting in Corpus Christi in support of TPWD's efforts to manage CWD using a new approach without CWD Zones, but with visible ID of released breeder deer. There were some last-minute changes to the proposal that have created some confusion and questions about a transparent process. The chapter sent a letter to TPWD in support of the original proposal. The public will have a chance to comment on the final proposal which will be published in the Texas Register for adoption at the next commission meeting, January 22-23, 2025.

### TPWD State Parks add significant acreage to Five State Parks

At the November commission meeting, approximately 7,670 acres was added to Government Canyon, Enchanted Rock, Colorado Bend and Caddo Lake state parks, and a new state park in Uvalde County near Garner State Park.

## Conservation Affairs, cont.

### Legislative Matters

Lobbyists Ms. Carrie Simmons and Ms. Buffy Crownover are assisting the chapter in tracking bills and setting up meetings with key legislators as the session ramps up. There are 32 new members of the Texas House and three new members of the Senate. The first day to file bills was Nov 12 and last day is March 14. The following bills of interest to the chapter have already been filed:

<b>Bill Number</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Related to</b>
HB269	Guillen	Creation of the Institute for CWD Research
HB553	Patterson	Siting of renewable energy facilities
HB1379	Virdell	Limiting game warden access to private property
HB1437	Gonzalez	Creation of a Task Force on Pollinator Health
HB1501	Tinderholt	Seawater desalination
SB97	Hall	Assessment, destruction and release of certain deer
SB98	Hall	Costs associated with the assessment and destruction of certain deer
SB114	Hall	Post mortem testing of deer for CWD

### Texas Renewable Energy Briefing at TPWD Commission Meeting

In November 2023, the Commission requested a white paper on the impacts of renewable energy development on the state's natural resources and public lands. Staff from the Wildlife and State Parks Divisions reviewed current and foundational research findings on solar and wind energy development, focusing on studies directly related to Texas or those with implications for the state's wildlife, public lands, and other natural resource concerns. Laura Zebehazy provided a summary of the development process and key contents of the white paper.

# TCTWS Committee News

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## Conservation Affairs, cont.

### Texas Mountain Lion Management Plan

TPWD is in the beginning stages of drafting a Management Plan for mountain lions. More information will be forthcoming.

### Legislative Priorities for TPWD

Matt Wagner attended two virtual meetings with TPWD leadership regarding their legislative priorities for the upcoming session. One priority is to ensure Fund 9 (hunting and fishing license sales) balances are secure going forward. A license fee increase may be necessary, or a decrease in agency spending. Other priorities are an increase in funding for the Farm and Ranch Conservation Program, and a possible salary increase for employees, among others. For more detail go to:

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/media/FY26-27-TPWD-LAR.pdf>.

### Upcoming Meetings:

- January 22-23, Austin - TPW Commission Meeting
- February 18-22, Denton – TCTWS Annual Meeting
- February 26-28, Austin – Texas Land Conservation Conference

\*If you are interested in participating in TCTWS policy discussion activities or attending Commission Meeting(s), legislative hearings or more alongside TCTWS, please reach out to the Conservation Affairs Committee ([conservation.affairs@tctws.org](mailto:conservation.affairs@tctws.org)). Please reach out to Conservation Affairs Chairs for further information or to get involved. TCTWS members are always encouraged to participate in these activities.



Evening at Elephant Mountain WMA  
*Photo provided by A. Taulli*

## Nominations

We are happy to introduce our nominees for our 2025 Vice President, Secretary, and Board Member at Large positions! Candidate bios are published in both the October and January editions of *The Tails* along with highlighting candidates on our social platforms. Our online voting system will go live in early 2025, so please read up on our candidates and vote. Every member's voice matters!

### 2025 Vice President

- Sarah Fritts, Ph.D.
- Maria Florentina Mejia

### 2025 Secretary

- Olivia Gray
- Cody Samek

### 2025 Board Member at Large

- Dale James, Ph.D.
- Daniel Price, CWB®



Cosmo

*Photo provided by I. Szabell*

## Nominations, cont.

### 2025 Vice President Candidate- Sarah Fritts, Ph.D.



Sarah Fritts, a Certified Wildlife Biologist®, Associate Professor, and Director of the Wildlife Ecology Program at Texas State University, has been actively involved in TCTWS since she moved to Texas in 2014. Currently, Sarah serves as the TCTWS Certification Committee Chair. She previously served countless roles for TCTWS and the annual conferences including being a plenary speaker in 2024, serving on the Honorary Life Membership Award Committee, judging Cottom Award abstracts and research posters, and leading workshops that offer certification guidance.

Beyond TCTWS, Sarah has been very involved with TWS since first becoming a member 20 years ago. Sarah is an alumnus of the TWS Leadership Institute (class of 2015), the Southwestern Representative and Co-Chair of the Certification Review Board, and Secretary of the Renewable Energy Working Group (REWG). She has served as the Subchair of the Submitted Poster Abstract Committee, and as a member of the Program Committee, Contributed Papers Subcommittee, Abstract Review Committee, and the Leadership Institute Application Review Committee. She also has been an invited speaker three times for the Women of Wildlife symposium and organized a symposium on renewable energy ecology.

Sarah is a strong advocate of supporting professional development through student chapters. As an undergraduate, she was an active member of the University of Georgia Student Chapter. As a master's student, she served as the graduate representative and the education and outreach coordinator for the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Student Chapter. Presently, she serves as the co-faculty advisor for the Texas State Student Chapter where she promotes hands-on experiences for students,

## Nominations, cont.

### 2025 Vice President Candidate- Sarah Fritts, Ph.D.



*Continued from page 13.*

such as organizing annual duck hunts, participating in deer capture events, and mentoring undergraduates conducting various research projects. She regularly takes students to TCTWS conferences to network, compete in the Quiz Bowl, and present posters.

If elected, Sarah would be excited to learn, leverage, and serve TCTWS while supporting the three pillars of TWS as they apply to TCTWS: Building Community, Supporting Professionals, and Exercising External Influence. She is also excited to be more heavily involved in current Conservation Affairs issues facing our state, fundraising to support our missions, and engaging and supporting our membership.

## Nominations, cont.

### 2025 Vice President Candidate- Maria Florentina Mejia



My name is Maria Florentina Mejia, but everyone knows me as Masi. I serve as Manager of Education Programs at East Foundation. East Foundation's mission is to promote the advancement of land stewardship through ranching, science, and education. I have reached over 42,000 students in the classroom, hosted over 13,000 students on the San Antonio Viejo Ranch, educated over 23,000 students through virtual field lessons, and educated close to 900 teachers through teacher workshops. Additionally, since 2019 I have helped mentor 221 high school students through the Land Stewardship Ambassador program where 69% of alumni continue to provide life updates.

I have been a member of TCTWS since 2009 and attended my first meeting in 2010. I received a B.S. in Environmental Conservation of Natural Resources and an M.S. in Wildlife, Aquatic and Wildlands Science and Management from Texas Tech University. My research focused on what motivations professionals and students had to pursue a career or degree within the field. I am also a current participant of the 5th cohort of The University of Texas – Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs – Women's Campaign School. I have received support from the Jane Nelson Institute for Women's Leadership at Texas Woman's University to participate in this program and I am scheduled for graduation November of 2024. Women's Campaign School empowers women with skills needed to succeed in the political arena. My goal is to use the skills learned within campaign school to further the mission and vision of TCTWS and work towards influencing policy.

My involvement with TCTWS includes being on TTU's Quizbowl Team as an undergraduate

## Nominations, cont.

### 2025 Vice President Candidate- Maria Florentina Mejia



*Continued from page 15.*

student. I have served TCTWS as Secretary and Board Member-at-Large. In 2023, I served as Co-Director of Wildlife Conservation Camp where 23 high school students participated, and I raised over \$12,000 to support Wildlife Conservation Camp.

I am committed to furthering the mission and vision of TCTWS. We are extremely fortunate to have members who are experts in the field, and we need to capitalize on their expertise for the sustained biodiversity within Texas.



## Nominations, cont.

### 2025 Secretary Nominee- Olivia Gray



I am currently the wildlife biologist of Jeff Davis and Reeves counties for Texas Parks and Wildlife in far west Texas. I conduct wildlife surveys of multiple species such as pronghorn, mule deer, quail, dove, and bighorn sheep. As a biologist, I assist landowners in managing habitat by formulating recommendations they can utilize to positively impact multiple wildlife species. Within both counties, I provide guidance on over 900,000 acres of land and work to gain productive relationships with each landowner.

I hold a B.S. in Natural Resources Management from Texas Tech University and am currently working to obtain my M.S. in Range and Wildlife Management from Sul Ross State University. My thesis focus is on potential competitive interactions of non-native aoudad with native desert bighorn sheep and mule deer in the Trans-Pecos.

I serve on the Female Employee R3 Leadership Team representing the Big Bend Region for Texas Parks and Wildlife, with the goal of engaging more women in hunting activities. I have been actively involved in the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society for the past 8 years and currently serve as the Program Committee chair. Additionally, I am a hunters education instructor, a hunt master, and guide for the Texas Youth Hunting Program. I am very passionate about this activity and feel every hunt is a way to empower and educate the next generation to understand ecosystems and the impact of management through conservation.

## Nominations, cont.

### 2025 Secretary Nominee- Cody Samek



Cody Samek has been working as a Wildlife Biologist and Intern Manager at MT7 Ranch in Breckenridge, TX, for the past five years. In this role, he has had the opportunity to oversee and teach 46 interns from various schools across Texas and the U.S. Along with managing the daily tasks for interns he helps implement habitat management practices and assists with ranch duties ranging from cattle work to wildlife data collection. His efforts have assisted with MT7 Ranch receiving the 2024 Leopold Conservation Award from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). While managing interns can be challenging at times, Cody finds it fulfilling to see their growth and development into capable wildlife biologists.

Outside of his work at the ranch, Cody remains connected with his alma mater, Tarleton State University, and is involved with the Scholarship Committee for the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society (TCTWS). As Co-Chair of the scholarship committee, he helped increase the number of applications from an average of 10 to over 30. Now serving as Chair, Cody is eager to continue this progress and hopes to expand both the number of applications and the scholarships available to students for this up coming year.

Cody understands the significance of early involvement in the society. The connections, experiences, and relationships gained through participation are invaluable after college, contributing greatly to his growth as a wildlife biologist and manager. He is committed to sharing this knowledge and fostering similar growth with not only his interns at the ranch but with every student across the state. Cody believes that branching out beyond one's university is crucial, whether pursuing a career in the private or public sector. His goal is to bridge the gap between students and professionals, enhancing opportunities for all involved.

## Nominations, cont.

### 2025 Board Member At Large Nominee- Dale James, Ph.D.



Dale James is Chief Executive Officer for the Rob and Bessie Welder Wildlife Foundation in Sinton, TX, where he is responsible for leading the Foundation's staff and volunteers in achieving a mission of cultivating the future of wildlife conservation through programs in conservation research, education, and land management.

Prior to joining the Welder Wildlife Foundation, Dale was employed by Duck Unlimited for 18 years providing conservation services throughout the southeastern U.S. in various roles, including regional biologist, land conservation manager and director of science and planning. His primary conservation focus has been in the areas of wetland and waterfowl conservation, land protection and ecosystem service science.

Dale holds a Ph.D. in Wildlife Science through a joint program between Texas A&M-College Station and Texas A&M-Kingsville, an M.Sc. in Range and Wildlife Management from Texas A&M University-Kingsville, a B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Texas A&M University and is a TWS Certified Wildlife Biologist®. Throughout his career, Dale has had the opportunity to serve in various committee capacities with three Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, the Southeastern Association of Wildlife Agencies, and several state and regional advisory groups. After being away from Texas and the TCTWS for some time, Dale is looking forward to reengaging and helping contribute to the success of TCTWS. He most recently assisted the Clarence Cottam Awards committee in 2024.

Dale lives at the Welder Wildlife Foundation with his wife Michelle.

## Nominations, cont.

### 2025 Board Member At Large Nominee- Daniel Price



Daniel Price is the Pineywoods Ecosystem Project Leader with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in Nacogdoches, Texas. He oversees 8 Wildlife Management Areas and 7 staff, managing roughly 250,000 acres throughout East Texas partnering with multiple different agencies. Daniel is always looking for opportunities for himself and staff to grow professionally, while improving habitats throughout the WMAs to benefit native flora and fauna. The team provides quality hunting opportunities for all hunters and are passionate about educating the public through outreach and research/demonstration.

Prior to this position, Daniel has worked through several different stages of his life both professionally and personally. Growing up on a small farm outside of Ennis, TX where hunting, fishing and roaming the country was common, he knew a career outdoors was necessary. With the help of his horticulture teacher from high school, Daniel applied for and was accepted to Tarleton State University where he received a B.S. Degree in Wildlife Management May of 2009. His passion to lead and be involved with TWS started in college where he held multiple officer positions, ultimately serving as the Tarleton Student Chapter president his senior year. Daniel attended his first Texas Chapter meeting in 2007 and has only missed a couple since. As a professional, he has held numerous committee chair/co-chair positions (finance, student activities, awards, scholarships) and has assisted with numerous committees (student activities, publications, awards, and currently program). In 2018, Daniel participated in the Early Career Professional James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute. Most recently he served one year as the Secretary-Treasurer for the TWS Habitat Restoration and Conservation Working Group and was honored to be guest speaker for the Skill Building Webinar last April. Daniel is a TWS Certified Wildlife Biologist and stays active at the state level, always willing to step in and assist where needed.

## Nominations, cont.

### 2025 Board Member At Large Nominee- Daniel Price



*Continued from page 20.*

Daniel started his career with TPWD as a maintenance park ranger at Huntsville State Park where he is fully convinced the Lord put him there to meet his wife, Chrissy. Cleaning bathrooms and picking up trash in the day use area is not what a degree in Wildlife Management was intended for but it was a place to start. Just shy of a year, Daniel accepted a position as a County Wildlife Biologist, moving to Rusk, TX and started his family. In 2016, he moved to Fort Worth, TX becoming the Natural Resource Manager at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge. This was a great opportunity to grow as a leader preparing him for his current role as Project Leader with TPWD.

Daniel still enjoys being outdoors hunting and fishing as he did as a young man, but now enjoys even more to provide those opportunities to his wife and kids. Daniel and Chrissy have been married for 12 years and have three kids, Willow (11), Wren (9) and Reed (6). He has had the opportunity to enter both his wife and oldest daughter into the Texas Big Game Awards for their First Big Game Harvest and looking forward to when his youngest two harvest their first big game animal. Outside of work, Daniel spends many hours on the ball fields or in the bleachers coaching/watching his girls play softball and his son play baseball and football. Their family vacations typically involve a camping trip or a place to enjoy being outdoors hiking, fishing and quality family time.

## 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 2025, 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 Monday, February 17th, 2025.**
- **To submit entries:**
  - **Go to the TCTWS membership portal (<https://www.xcdsystem.com/tctws>).**  
**\* YOU WILL NOT LOGIN TO THE TCTWS.ORG WEBSITE AS IN YEARS PAST\***
  - **Log-in to your TCTWS membership profile**
  - **Click on “Photo Contest Entry” and follow on-page instructions**
- **You must bring your art submissions and the physical prints of your photo submissions to the Photo & Art table between 8 AM and 1 PM on Wednesday, February 19th, 2025.**

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.

## Photo/Art Contest, cont.

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](mailto:photo.art@tctws.org) with questions on submitting. If you do not provide digital copies of your submissions by Wednesday, February 19th by 1 pm, 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 can be paid online 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.

An electronic voting platform will be available within the TCTWS 2025 Annual Meeting application from 8 am on Thursday, February 20th until 3 PM on Friday, February 21st.

Instructions to vote are as follows:

- Open "TCTWS 2025 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 touch the image and tap the "Vote For This Photo" button.
- Scroll to the very bottom of the page to go to a different category.
- For the "Best of Show" category, find your favorite entry then make note of the category and last 4 digits of the image name (ex: TCTWS2025-XXXX). You will vote by selecting the image name from a list rather than viewing the image.

You may pick up your entries between 8 AM and 10 AM on Saturday, February 22nd, 2025. The committee is not responsible for photos & art left after the close of the conference.

Winners will be announced during the Awards Banquet on Friday evening, February 21st. Provided there are at least 5 entries in a category, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places will be awarded in each category. If there are < 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.

# TCTWS Committee News

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## Student Affairs

Happy New Year students!

The 2025 TCTWS Annual Meeting is only a few short weeks away! Your Student Activities committee have been diligently working to ensure you have the best conference experience possible, and we look forward to seeing each of you very soon. We would like to remind you of a few upcoming deadlines pertaining to student events at the conference:

- Conference registration is open! The registration price for students is \$250 and gives you access to conference activities and dinner at each night's event. Please make sure you register before **February 1, 2025**, after which point a late fee will be incurred.
- **January 31, 2025** is the deadline to register teams for both quiz bowl and the student plant ID competition. Just as a reminder, all universities in Texas are encouraged to create a team and participate for both events. Individuals may also compete in the plant ID competition without being on a team. Send your team registrations to Dr. Sarah Turner at [sarah.turner@tctws.org](mailto:sarah.turner@tctws.org). For questions on either competition, please do not hesitate to reach out!
- **January 31, 2025** is also the deadline to submit your chapter's application for the Student Chapter of the Year award. Please talk to your chapter advisor for more information and feel free to reach out to us at [student.activities@tctws.org](mailto:student.activities@tctws.org) with any questions! Submit applications to Dr. Heather Mathewson ([mathewson@tarleton.edu](mailto:mathewson@tarleton.edu)) and Dr. Sarah Turner ([sarah.turner@tctws.org](mailto:sarah.turner@tctws.org)).

Please remember this conference is an opportunity for you to learn and grow. Many of the folks you will meet at the conference will soon be your mentors, supervisors, colleagues, and friends. It's our hope that the conference will further ignite your passion for natural resources conservation and maybe will inspire you to get involved with TCTWS even more. If you would like to learn more about giving back to TCTWS, feel free to chat with any of our committee chairs or executive board members at the conference.

We hope to see you soon, and please do not hesitate to reach out with questions!

-Your Student Activities Committee Co-chairs  
Dr. Heather Mathewson ([mathewson@tarleton.edu](mailto:mathewson@tarleton.edu))  
Dr. Sarah Turner ([sarah.turner@tctws.org](mailto:sarah.turner@tctws.org))



# TCTWS Committee News

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## Student Affairs, cont.

### CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!

**Are you attending the TCTWS Annual Meeting in February? Do you want to meet new people and see the meeting from a new perspective? Sign up as a conference volunteer!**

We are requesting the help of student and professional volunteers to ensure the conference runs as smooth as possible! The selfless service of our members has been a cornerstone of what makes our conference the very best and provides a great networking opportunity and a chance to be more involved with TCTWS.

Volunteers will be needed to support a wide array of roles, including:

- registration,
- technical sessions,
- plenary sessions,
- raffle,
- event photography.

Please contact Dr. Sarah Turner ([sarah.turner@tctws.org](mailto:sarah.turner@tctws.org)) or Mary Pearl Meuth ([marypearl.meuth@tctws.org](mailto:marypearl.meuth@tctws.org)) if you are interested in volunteering and what role(s) you would like to assist with. We will also email our student members closer to the conference to solicit volunteers, as this volunteer opportunity looks great on your resumé and on your chapter's Student Chapter of the Year application!

We look forward to seeing y'all in February!



Members of the Sam Houston State University Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society chapter at the 2023 TCTWS meeting.

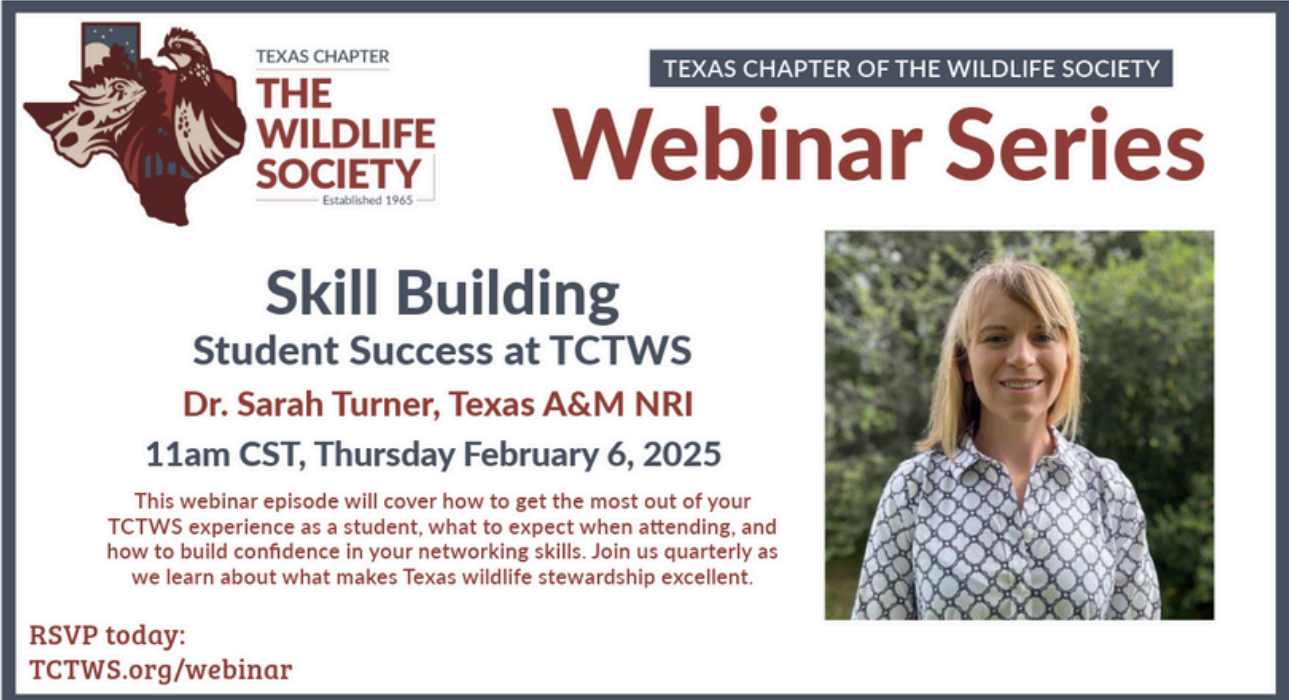
# TCTWS Committee News

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## Webinar

Join us on February 6, 2025 at 11:00 AM CST to hear from Dr. Sarah Turner (Texas A&M NRI and TCTWS Student Activities Committee co-chair) about how to get the most out of your TCTWS experience as a student, what to expect when attending, and how to build confidence in your networking skills.

Register for the upcoming webinar: <https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/56475833-a83b-47fc-97cb-83f9b0ab6d33@6fbab168-e7f4-4b52-a656-2a4ea34b1584/registration>



The graphic is a promotional poster for a webinar. It features the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society logo on the left, which includes a stylized map of Texas with a bird and a mammal. The text 'TEXAS CHAPTER THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY Established 1965' is displayed. On the right, the text 'TEXAS CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY' is in a dark box, followed by 'Webinar Series' in large, bold, red letters. The main title 'Skill Building Student Success at TCTWS' is in bold blue text, followed by 'Dr. Sarah Turner, Texas A&M NRI' in bold red text and '11am CST, Thursday February 6, 2025' in bold black text. A paragraph of text describes the webinar's content. A photo of Dr. Sarah Turner is on the right. At the bottom left, it says 'RSVP today: TCTWS.org/webinar'.

TEXAS CHAPTER  
**THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**  
Established 1965

TEXAS CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

# Webinar Series

## Skill Building Student Success at TCTWS

**Dr. Sarah Turner, Texas A&M NRI**  
**11am CST, Thursday February 6, 2025**

This webinar episode will cover how to get the most out of your TCTWS experience as a student, what to expect when attending, and how to build confidence in your networking skills. Join us quarterly as we learn about what makes Texas wildlife stewardship excellent.

**RSVP today:**  
**TCTWS.org/webinar**

If you are interested in presenting an upcoming webinar, please email the webinar chair at [webinar@tctws.org](mailto:webinar@tctws.org)

## Wildlife Conservation Camp 2024

*By: Kelley Mundy, 2024 Wildlife Conservation Camp Director*

Can you believe we have hosted 30 years of Wildlife Conservation Camp?! Since its beginning in 1993, camp has provided a unique opportunity for high school students to learn about nature, ecology, and wildlife. This year, camp was held at Bamberger Ranch Preserve in Johnson City, Texas. We visited the one and only Bracken Cave Preserve and covered a variety of topics including mist netting (with proper permits), seining, archery, and more. Visit <https://wildlifecamp.tx.org/> for more information!



Pictured are the attendees of Wildlife Conservation Camp 2024.

“My experience at camp was fantastic, and it’s something I’ll never forget. I enjoyed being able to interact with people who shared an interest in working with wildlife. I got to make several friends, all who shared a strong passion for animals and plants. On one of the days, we had gone spotlighting during the nighttime. My team, the Green-winged teals, got on the back of a pickup truck, where we had two spotlights with us. It was an exciting night, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Another day, we went bat watching, where we went to Bracken Cave. The sight of millions of bats flying out was spectacular, and we even got to see birds of prey hunt the bats themselves.

## Wildlife Conservation Camp 2024, cont.

“Now, the one I’m most excited to talk about, the day we went mist-netting. We had set up the mist nets and came back to them about 30 minutes later. Within one of the nets was a white-eyed vireo, identified to be a female. I got to hold the bird and release it, which really made me happy, as I’ve always loved birds. In short, I enjoyed my time at the camp, each day and activity was special. All the friends I made there are lovely people. I can officially say that attending this camp was one of the best experiences in my life!” - Camper Giana Aguilar

“I absolutely loved camp, my favorite part was meeting all the different people and gaining knowledge as to how I can not only better the environment but also in learning how I can further my pursuit in the field of career I want to be in as, I want to be a large animal/exotic vet one day and all of the resources and people that were there for me to talk to and learn from really helped. It was a great experience as I’ve never been to something like this in my life and I would love to go back even if it’s not as a new camper.” - Camper Jaiyah Zeno



Camper Jaiyah Zeno assisting in a prescribed burn demonstration during camp.



Camper Giana Aguilar assisting in mist netting activity, holding a white-eyed vireo.

## Wildlife Conservation Camp 2024, cont.

“Camp was such an awesome experience! I loved getting to be outdoors and learning about wildlife in a way that was fun and hands-on. One of my favorite parts was working with the wildlife professionals—they showed us cool techniques like tracking animals and identifying different species. It really opened my eyes to how important conservation is and how much work goes into protecting the environment. I left camp feeling inspired and excited about possibly working in wildlife conservation in the future.” - Camper Logan Ransleben



Camper Logan Ransleben learning about the North American Model and Aldo Leopold

In case you ever find yourself wondering if working with youth can make a difference, I hope you'll find some inspiration in my story. I attended Wildlife Conservation Camp in 2012 at the Welder Wildlife Foundation as a camper with some reservations about what I planned to do in life (as a high school student...haha). After getting to learn from some of the state's best natural resource professionals and spending a week with hands-on activities, I was hooked. I have returned every year that I could, serving as a returning camper, college mentor, professional mentor, 2023 Co-Director, and finally as the 2024 Camp Director (on my 10th year). Without the support of natural resource professionals as a high schooler, throughout college, and as a professional, I would not be where I am today. Thank you to everyone who has donated in the past and to everyone who supported me last year in hosting the 30th Wildlife Conservation Camp. Here's to the next 30 years of making a difference!

## Wildlife Conservation Camp 2024, cont.



Kelley Mundy and Larry Hysmith who has supported Kelley since she began competing in wildlife competitions at 10 years old and oversaw the camp archery session.



Dr. Megan Clayton and Kelley Mundy. Dr. Clayton attended WCC in 2012 and 2024 as a professional mentor.



Kelley Mundy as a camper in 2012 holding a white-eyed vireo (the same bird captured in 2024 at camp).

# Working Groups

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## Working Groups and You

*By: Alexander Hoxie, Communications Chair of the Habitat Restoration Working Group and master's student at Tarleton State University*

One of the pillars of TWS's new strategic plan is "Building Community". One of the best ways to get involved with the larger TWS community is through joining one of the many working groups. Working groups are forums for TWS members from a variety of backgrounds united by a common interest. No matter what facet of wildlife you are interested or involved in, there is probably a working group for you. Working groups often have opportunities for engagement such as webinars, newsletters, comments on TWS's policy and position statements, and developing workshops and symposia.

Working groups are a good way for undergrads and grad students to begin networking with wildlifera with similar interests from around the world. Many of the working groups are trying to develop a stronger social media presence, which may prove to be a good opportunity for the media savvy to get involved with them. You can join working groups under the "Membership" tab on your TWS dashboard. Most have a \$5 annual membership fee, which allows them to provide travel grants to conferences and fund guest speakers. All student members are automatically members of the Student Development Working Group, which is one of the most active in TWS.



Board members representing the many working groups recently met at the annual conference in Baltimore. We discussed how to recruit new members, engage with our current members, and set the tone for how to build community.

There are over 30 working groups in TWS, including those focused on technology and methods, ecosystems, and advancing the wildlife profession. Of particular interest to Texan wildlifera is a new working group focused on private lands wildlife management. This working group is still in the process of being established, but it will serve as an excellent resource and network for private lands biologists. You can learn more about the different working groups and what they can offer you at [TWS's working group webpage](#). I hope that you will take this opportunity to provide your perspective in advancing our profession.

# Witty Wildlife Words

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## Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*)

By: Emily Blumentritt

The largest shorebird in North America is the long-billed curlew, and it can be found in a variety of habitats across Texas and across the continent.

Many curlews winter along coastlines, including the Texas Gulf Coast, foraging along sandy beaches, wetlands, and fields of short grass from manicured lawns to cattle pastures.

Though most commonly seen along the coast in Texas, curlews are also present in West and North Texas, where they utilize rangelands including prairie dog towns, open grasslands, and arid wetland systems including irrigated agricultural fields. Historically curlews bred in the prairies of the Panhandle, and some curlew activity is still documented in Texas over the summer months.



Long-billed curlews foraging in an agricultural field in Texas.  
Photo provided by Emily Blumentritt.

Curlews use their long and versatile bills to capture a variety of invertebrate prey, including grasshoppers, spiders, worms, and crabs. They are also known to consume the occasional small vertebrate, including reptiles, amphibians, rodents, and the young of other birds.

Male and female curlews look alike, but females typically have longer bills than males. On the breeding grounds, pairs form after a number of elaborate courtship displays including aerial flight displays from the male. Pairs will work together to raise the chicks initially after hatching, but females usually depart early for wintering grounds, leaving the male to look after the chicks until they fledge.

### Literature Cited:

- 1) [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Long-billed\\_Curlew/overview](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Long-billed_Curlew/overview)
- 2) <https://xtbba.tamu.edu/species-accounts/long-billed-curlew/>
- 3) <https://digitalmedia.fws.gov/digital/collection/document/id/1528/>



# Southwest Section Tracks

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*By: Kathy Granillo, Southwest Section Representative*

Greetings from central New Mexico. We had a wonderful rain/snow event a few weeks ago, but nothing since. It is shaping up to be a dry winter. May you stay hydrated, and consider how to help wildlife and their habitats do the same.

I hope that many of you were able to attend the Annual Conference in Baltimore. We had about 1800 attendees, and the usual mix of scientific sessions, plenaries, posters, Working Group meetings, and socials. A highlight for me was the Aldo Leopold Memorial Award presentation by the 2023 winner, Carol Chambers. As most of you know, Carol is a Past President of TWS, past Southwest Representative to Council, and active member of the Arizona Chapter. She gave an inspiring talk about her career path and her legacy. She encouraged everyone to think about what their own legacies are and will be, using the life history of an old-growth (legacy) Ponderosa Pine tree as a metaphor.

As we enter the new calendar year, I encourage you all to give some thought to who else would be a deserving recipient of the Aldo Leopold Memorial Award. As it says [on the Awards website](#):

“The nominee should have a well-established and distinguished career that has been of undoubted significance to the cause of wildlife conservation. The award is only given to an individual, and the nominee must be living. You are encouraged to consider individuals not only from our traditional professional realm, but also those who bring their skills and talents to wildlife conservation from across society and across the world.”

There are also many other TWS awards looking for nominees – please visit the website and learn about these awards and think about who you know who a good nominee would be. Recognizing deserving individuals through an award can only happen if someone takes the time to nominate that person. If you need help writing a nomination, please reach out to your Chapter or Section Boards. Speaking of Chapters and Sections, these groups are also seeking nominees for the awards given at those levels. Please help recognize your fellow biologists.

Another place I recently found a reminder of legacy was in the Wildlife Vocalization by Elise Couillard. She wrote that wildlife leaders “have become...consumed with how wildlife should fit conveniently into the human way of life and less concerned by how human behavior is often negatively impacting every ecosystem on the planet...There is only one world—we share it with everything. The world is not our playground. It’s not our greenspace to trash. It’s not ‘ours’ at all. We are responsible for our behaviors... We should be the leaders in recognizing that reducing our consumption and pollution will not only directly benefit wildlife and wildlands, but it will serve as a powerful catalyst for all humans to follow suit.”

# Southwest Section Tracks

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I look forward to seeing many of you at the JAM or at the Texas Chapter Annual Conference. Registration is open for both of these meetings. Visit their websites for more details. Please feel free to chat with me at these events, or to drop me an email, about any and all things TWS.



Kathy Granillo - TWS  
Southwest Section Representative



The Red-winged Blackbird  
*Photo provided by T. Cosp*

# So long and happy "tails"!

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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 Editor (Emily Blumentritt, [newsletter@tctws.org](mailto: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](http://tctws.org)

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