



Texas Chapter Tails

of Wildlife and Stewardship

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Photo by K. Pirkle

President's Note

Greetings all, and Happy Fall! I hope this issue of the newsletter finds you well. By the time our next newsletter comes out in January, you'll have had a chance to register for the annual conference in Waco occurring February 10-12, 2027! Please indicate during the registration process, and email officers@tctws.org, if you need any accessibility services during the conference. Also, the conference hotel room block is open. Check below to reserve your hotel space now! Make sure to check out on the 13th since the meeting runs through the night of the 12th.

Planning is well on the way, and I want to remind everyone that presenter **abstracts will be due by November 15th**. Our goal is to expedite program availability, so please help us accomplish that by being punctual, or early, with your submissions. We'll kick off the conference with a plenary session entitled, "The Economy of Ecology: Incentivizing Products for the Public". Our plenary speakers include: 1) Andy Sansom (former Executive Director of Texas Nature Conservancy, former Executive Director of Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, and Founder/Executive Director of the Meadows Center for Water and the Environment); 2) Edwin Piñero (President of EcoMetrics, LLC.); 3) David Yoskowitz (Director of Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, and former Senior Executive Director of the Harte Research Institute); 4) Hunter Jones (Head of Rancher Sales, Grassroots Carbon); and Gary Price (Landowner, and Producer Circle Co-Chair with Ecosystems Services Market Consortium).

President's Note

Did you know there are ~50 TCTWS members volunteering on committees and in leadership roles to sustain our Chapter's progress? I acknowledge and appreciate all of their efforts and want to highlight some of those roles.

Nolan Talkington served as the 2026 Wildlife Conservation Camp Director, with significant support from Laken Mize. In advance of this year's camp held at Texas Tech University's Three Rivers Ranch in Foard Co., Texas, their team was successful in obtaining a \$7,200 grant from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and a \$5,000 gift card from HEB. All of this supported their camp operations and remaining balances will be available to support next year's camp.



Photo by G. Sanders

Our Conservation Affairs Committee, led by Mary Pearl Meuth and TCTWS Executive Director Matt Wagner, continues vigilance of all things policy-related to conservation. As we enter a new legislative biennium, they successfully negotiated a contract with lobbyists Joseph Park and Mignon McGarry. TCTWS has done this over the last several legislative cycles. These folks will daily monitor impactful conservation bills and ensure we have an audience with legislators.

Among the most logistically robust committees include Awards, Activities, Finance, Local Arrangements, Membership, Program, and Student Activities. While significant effort is ongoing in these committees, most of their effort will be visible at the annual meeting. Michelle Haggerty has faithfully rounded up awards for years and is planning to “retire” from this role after our 2027 conference. Adam Terry and Nick Fisher continue organizing the many pre-conference workshops that are often well attended by our membership. Mikayla Killam and Tamara Wood are straight hustling for raffle items and sponsorships that directly fund and subsidize our meeting. David Riley and Hope Zubek are by now professional local arrangers. They are the hub of the entire up-coming function and they know what they’re doing. Amanda Hackney and Rebekah Rylander constantly wrangle membership data and they’ll be on full-display along with students as you check-in the conference in February. Olivia Gray and Lalo Gonzalez will soon (beginning November 16th) be under pressure to organize and lay-out the conference program so that you’ll sooner than later know what to expect. Finally, as described later in this newsletter, Sarah Lucht and SaraBeth Hill expertly manage the various student-related competitions and volunteer opportunities. You’ll definitely encounter their student volunteers at the meeting, so professionals, please take the time to engage them and thank them for being actively involved in our Chapter.

President's Note

Lastly, I express my sincere gratitude to the members who committed themselves as nominees for the future Executive Board. In preparation for membership voting beginning in January, you can read more about them in their profiles later in this newsletter. Committing to leadership is important to TCTWS and I encourage any of you to visit with me about doing so!

Until next time!


Bill Adams

President, Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society

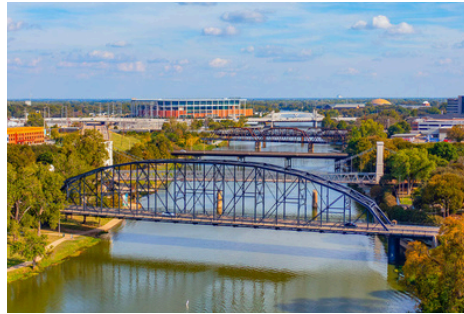


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Annual Meeting of TCTWS 2027

Save the Date & Hotel Group Rates



A note from the Local Arrangements Committee:

Save the Date!

The **Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society's 2027 Annual Meeting** is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 10th – Friday, February 12th** at the **Waco Convention Center in Waco, Texas.**

Hotels for this meeting will be the **Hilton Waco, Courtyard by Marriott Waco, EVEN Hotel and Cambria Hotel**. All hotels are adjacent to the convention center.

Group rates are linked below:

[Click here for Hilton Waco Group Rate](#)
(\$110/night + taxes and fees - book by January 16, 2027)

[Click here for Courtyard by Marriott Waco Group Rate](#)
(\$110/night + taxes and fees - book by January 17, 2027)

The group rate for EVEN Hotel is pending (check [our website](#) for updates).

[Click here for Cambria Hotel Group Rate](#)
(\$110/night + taxes and fees)

Abstract submission is currently open (see pg. 7 for details), and registration is expected to launch this December. The TCTWS Annual Meeting each year offers opportunities to hear from leading experts in the natural resource community, get updates on breaking research from wildlife and conservation students, and meet professionals from across the state.

Sponsors of the Annual Meeting of TCTWS

A special thank you to the donors who make our work possible!

Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society was fortunate enough to have many sponsors at this year's annual meeting. The work the chapter accomplishes throughout the year and at our annual meeting would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors. We want to take a moment to recognize our sponsors who went above and beyond this year.

Gold Sponsors



CONSERVATION
EQUITY MANAGEMENT



TEXAS
FARM CREDIT



Call for 2027 Annual Meeting Sponsorships & Raffle Donations

The Finance Committee is accepting sponsorships and raffle donations for the 2027 Annual Meeting. The [2027 Sponsorship Packet](#) is now live on the website and is designed to be shared far and wide. It highlights basics on the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society such as mission, reach, and community impact. The packet covers the James G. Teer Leadership Institute including the early career professional program and conservation camp, it highlights student participation in our chapter, and covers the policy work we accomplish throughout the year. Our hope is that this document will help potential donors have a better understanding of who we are and what options they have to help support our mission.

Sponsorships play a vital role in helping us host a successful annual meeting where we share new research, strengthen professional connections, and support members at all stages of their careers. They also allow us to keep the cost of registration down and provide discounted registration to student members. These contributions also enable the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society to remain active in policy discussions that shape wildlife management at both the state and national levels.



This year, we are excited to continue event sponsorships for groups who wish to support the chapter but will not be attending the meeting (and therefore will not need complimentary registrations). The packet also outlines updated sponsorship levels designed to better reflect the structure of our annual meeting and provide more value to our supporters.

Please feel free to share the sponsorship packet with anyone who may be interested in supporting the chapter through sponsorships, exhibits, scholarships, or raffle donations. For questions or suggestions, contact the Finance Committee at finance@tctws.org.

-Finance Committee

TCTWS Committee News

Program: Call for Abstracts



Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society's 2027 Annual Conference

Call for Abstracts

Deadline: November 15, 2026 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time

**Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society's 2026 Annual Conference
February 10-12, 2027**

The Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society will hold its 2027 Annual Conference in Waco, Texas, from February 10-12, 2027. The program committee will begin accepting abstracts for oral presentations and poster presentations beginning October 1st through November 15th. Abstracts meeting criteria related to all aspects of wildlife ecology, management, policy, human dimensions, and conservation are invited.

Oral Presentations will be presented live and in-person at the conference. Each oral presentation will be allotted 15 minutes, which includes 12 minutes for the presentation and three minutes for questions. Oral presentations presenting the results of wildlife field investigations and analyses as well as topic reviews of interest to wildlife students and professionals in Texas are encouraged. **Oral presentations should present results or outcomes.** Abstracts reporting preliminary or no data should be submitted as a poster.

Clarence Cottam Award – Students with excellent completed research are encouraged to submit abstracts for consideration for the Clarence Cottam Award. The Clarence Cottam Award is the most prestigious student award given by the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society to recognize and promote student research excellence in wildlife biology, conservation, and management. Selected participants will have the opportunity to present their research to the entire membership during the annual conference. The winners are recognized for their outstanding research contributions, awarded a scholarship, and become part of the more than 30-year history of the Clarence Cottam Award.

Clarence Cottam Award information continued on next page.

Program: Call for Abstracts, cont.

Eligibility includes students affiliated with a Texas college or university at the time of research or students with a non-Texas based college or university but where fieldwork/research were conducted in Texas. Students who have graduated since the last meeting are also eligible if they are current members of the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society.

Cottam award participants are required to submit two abstracts: one abbreviated and one extended abstract. The submission deadline for abstracts is November 15, 2026. The abbreviated and extended abstracts should follow the same instructions outlined in the general call for abstract submissions. The extended abstract should be less than or equal to 3 pages, and in the style and format of the Journal of Wildlife Management (JWM). Abstracts should include a statement of objectives, brief description of methods, concise presentation of results, and a summary of conclusions and inferences drawn. Do not include tables, appendices, or a literature cited section. Abstract submissions that are not accepted to participate in the Cottam Award presentation session will be considered for oral presentations during the general sessions.

Clarence Cottam Award presentations will be allotted 20 minutes, which includes 15 minutes for the presentation and 5 minutes for questions. Presentations will be judged on originality of topic, scientific procedures, quality of display, accuracy of conclusions, and response to questions from judges. Full Clarence Cottam Award instructions can be found at: <https://tctws.org/student-menu/scholarship-opportunities/clarence-cottam-award/>. Any questions can be submitted to the Cottam Award Chair at cottam.awards@tctws.org.

Poster Presentations – Abstracts for poster presentations may be submitted by students or professionals. Undergraduate, M.S., and Ph.D. students may elect to enter the student poster competition, while professionals and students not wishing to compete may submit under the non-competitive category. Posters in the student competition will be judged on the significance of the research, soundness of scientific procedures, quality of the abstract and display, clarity of results, accuracy of conclusions, and responses to judges' questions. Students with incomplete studies or proposals are welcome to submit posters, but these will not be eligible for competition.

All poster presenters will prepare a printed poster for live, in-person presentations at the conference. In addition, presenters are encouraged to upload a PDF version of their poster for asynchronous viewing through the conference mobile app and website. **The maximum poster size is 4 ft wide × 3 ft tall.**

Program: Call for Abstracts, cont.

Instructions for Submitting Abstracts

The submission site will lead you through the submission steps; guidelines for submissions are summarized below. **The submission deadline is Sunday, November 15, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.** Abstracts that miss this deadline will not be considered. During submission, please indicate your preference for presentation format (i.e., oral or poster presentation) and session (i.e., General Sessions, Clarence Cottam Award, or whether you would like to be included in the judging for the best poster presentation awards). Please note: **only one poster will be judged per student presenter, though students may present more than 1 poster.**

Abstracts should be no longer than 250 words and follow The Journal of Wildlife Management format. Abstracts should be concise and include general problem statement, brief review of methods/experimental design, results, and management implications. For needed statistical significance statements, report P-values only (no need for exact statistical test results). Please follow formatting instructions on abstract submission website. Do not use scientific names on the abstract submission website.

Submit abstracts at: <https://www.xcdsystem.com/tctws/member/index.cfm>

See a sample abstract here: <https://tctws.org/annual-meeting-2/annual-meeting/>

Abstract Evaluation: Abstracts will be evaluated based on technical merit, contribution to scientific knowledge and relevance to the field, creativity and soundness in study design, validity of results and conclusions, and general quality and adherence to formatting guidelines. Because space is limited for both oral and poster presentations, acceptance will be determined by the evaluation of each submitted abstract. In cases where the number of submissions exceeds available slots, not all abstracts may be accepted. Notice of decision will be made on or about January 15, 2027 via email.

Registration: All presenters MUST register and pay the appropriate conference registration fee. Registration information will be posted on TCTWS' conference website, <https://tctws.org/annual-meeting-2/annual-meeting/>. We expect registration to open in December 2026. Early Bird registration is strongly encouraged and will be available through at least January 31st.

Questions? Questions about the conference program and abstracts may be directed to Program Committee at program@tctws.org.

Call for Proposals: East Foundation Undergraduate Student Workshop at TCTWS Annual Meeting

Purpose

East Foundation and the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society (TCTWS) invite proposals from TCTWS members to develop and deliver an annual undergraduate student workshop at the TCTWS Annual Meeting. The workshop is intended to provide meaningful training, professional development, and networking opportunities that enhance undergraduate student success and preparedness for careers in wildlife, range, conservation, and natural resource professions.

Background

Texas is home to 16 university student chapters of The Wildlife Society. While the TCTWS Annual Meeting provides several excellent student-focused activities, East Foundation seeks to expand opportunities for deeper engagement through a dedicated workshop designed specifically for undergraduate students.

Eligibility

Proposals may be submitted by current TCTWS members, including wildlife professionals, academics, agency personnel, non-governmental organizations, and qualified collaborators. Partnerships among multiple organizations are encouraged.

Workshop Expectations

Proposed workshops should:

- Address skills, knowledge, or professional competencies valuable to undergraduate students.
- Include active learning, hands-on exercises, mentoring, networking, or career development components.
- Be designed as a one-half day to one-day workshop.
- Be feasible for delivery during the TCTWS Annual Meeting.
- Demonstrate measurable outcomes and participant benefits.

Funding Available

East Foundation will consider proposals requesting up to \$5,000. Allowable expenses may include instructional materials, workshop supplies, speaker travel, facility needs, and participant meals or refreshments.

Call for Proposals: East Foundation Student Workshop, cont.

Proposal Format

Maximum length: 3 pages

Narrative (maximum 2 pages):

- Title and lead organizer
- Objectives and anticipated learning outcomes
- Description of workshop activities and instructional approach
- Ideal and maximum participant capacity
- Key partners and their roles
- Expected deliverables and measures of success

Budget (maximum 1 page):

- Itemized budget
- Budget justification

Review Criteria

Criterion:

- Originality and relevance of topic (weight: 25%)
- Workshop design and participant engagement (weight: 25%)
- Likelihood of successful implementation (weight: 20%)
- Qualifications and track record of organizers (weight: 15%)
- Partnerships and collaborative value (weight: 10%)
- Budget appropriateness (weight: 5%)

Timeline

October – Proposal submission deadline and review

November – Notification of award

February – Workshop delivered at the TCTWS Annual Meeting

Reporting Requirements

Selected organizers may be asked to provide a brief post-workshop summary including attendance, participant feedback, accomplishments, and recommendations for future workshops.

Commitment to Student Success

East Foundation and TCTWS are committed to providing high-quality professional development opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds and institutions across Texas.

Submission Information

Please submit proposals to Tyler Campbell at tcampbell@eastfoundation.net

Deadline for submission is Friday, October 30, 2026

Please submit questions to Tyler Campbell at tcampbell@eastfoundation.net

2027 Photo and Art Contest



Photo by Lisanne Petracca



Artwork by Brooklyn Day

Now is a great time to get outdoors, camera in hand, and capture the wildlife, landscapes, and stewardship moments that make the wild and unique places we conserve so special! The Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society's Photo and Art Contest is a chance for members to showcase their creativity and share the beauty of Texas wildlife with fellow chapter members at the 2027 Annual Conference. As you're in the field this fall, don't forget to start collecting your favorite photographs and creating artwork for this year's contest. In this update, the Photo and Art Contest Committee provides a refresher on contest rules, categories, and online submission instructions, so you'll be ready to enter your work. We encourage everyone—from seasoned photographers and artists to those simply enjoying a memorable wildlife encounter—to participate and share what inspires you.

A few important contest rules to keep in mind: All contestants must be members of the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society (TCTWS), and each contestant may submit one entry per photography category. Photography categories include:

- Texas Wildlife (not including captive animals)
- Texas Scenery
- Texas Plants (including fungi and other plant-like organisms)
- Work Related
- Non-Texas Wildlife, Plants, and Scenery
- Wildlife Conservation (which may include captive animals or species of conservation concern)
- Humor
- Remote Camera (not including captive animals)

2027 Photo and Art Contest, cont.

The Art category includes original drawings, paintings, carvings, sculptures, poetry, and other original works, with a limit of five art entries per person. Physical copies of photographs must be between 3" × 5" and 11" × 14", unmatted and unframed; cardboard backing is permitted. Please adhere to these size requirements, as **oversized prints will not be accepted**. An entry fee of \$1 per item will help defray the cost of awards and can be paid online during submission. A comprehensive list of contest rules may be reviewed on the TCTWS website.

For the 2027 hybrid contest, digital submission of photos and artwork will become available on the membership portal starting on Sunday, November 1, 2026. Digital copies of all photographs and artwork must be submitted by 12 PM (noon) on Tuesday, February 9, 2027, the day before the conference. To submit your entries, you will not log in through the TCTWS.org website as in previous years. Instead, log in to your TCTWS membership profile at <https://www.xcdsystem.com/tctws>, select "Photo Contest Entry," and follow the on-screen instructions. Digital copies are required for display at the Awards Banquet; work without a digital submission by the deadline will not be displayed. Contestants must also bring their artwork and physical photo prints to the Photo & Art table between 8 AM and 12 PM (noon) on Wednesday, February 10, 2027, the first day of the conference. If you have questions about submitting your entries, please contact photo.art@tctws.org.

Start gathering your favorite photographs and creating your artwork now—we look forward to seeing your work at the 2027 TCTWS Annual Conference!



Photo by B. Knick (left) and K. Fleming-Patrick (right)

Student Activities

Howdy student chapter members and advisors! The Student Activities committee would like to let you know of some great upcoming opportunities for personal and professional development at the 2027 TCTWS Annual Conference. Please contact us at student.activities@tctws.org with any questions.

Competitive and Non-Competitive Poster Sessions: Every year we host 2 poster sessions where students and professionals may share the great research activities they've been conducting. Undergraduate and graduate students who wish to compete in the competitive session will have their posters evaluated by a panel of judges, and first through third place will be awarded to the top undergraduate and graduate students. It is a great opportunity to network with other students and professionals and showcase your ability to share scientific research to a wide array of audiences. See the "Call for Abstracts" on page 7 in this newsletter for more information.

Texas Chapter Quiz Bowl: Calling all wildlife nerds! Do you know a lot of wildlife and natural resources knowledge? Do you love playing trivia? Then the Texas Chapter Quiz Bowl is for you! Each university or student chapter may form a 4-person team to compete in the Quiz Bowl competition held every year at the annual conference. PLEASE NOTE: Due to the incredible growth of our TCTWS student chapters, from now on the contest will be limited to a 10 minute/20 question format. To ensure we can fit all the teams in, each round will be given the opportunity to answer 20 questions or play for 10 minutes, whichever comes first. The 5-minute mid round break will still be allowed for any team substitutions. The winner of the final round will earn the title of the Texas Chapter Quiz Bowl champion and will get to showcase the quiz bowl trophy at their university until the next conference (not to mention the great bragging rights that go with it). The rules for the quiz bowl contest will be distributed to student chapters by November 1, 2026.

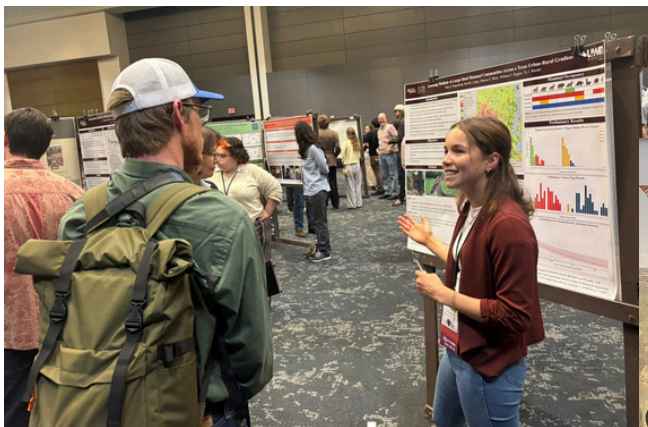
Student Plant ID Competition: Are animals not really your thing? Do you know the characteristics and scientific names of a variety of Texas plants? Then the Student Plant ID Competition may be for you! Each university or student chapter may form up to 3 teams with 3 to 4 people per team, or students may compete individually. Contestants will individually identify 50 Texas plants and will have to correctly write the longevity, family/tribe, genus, specific epithet, and origin of each plant species. Forty-four of the 50 plants will be from a previously distributed list, and 6 will be "wild card plants" that are scored on identifying the correct scientific and common name. The top 3 individuals and top 3 teams will receive an award. The rules and plant list for the competition will be distributed to student chapters by November 1, 2026.

TCTWS Committee News

Student Activities, cont.

Student Chapter of the Year award: All Texas universities with a wildlife program and at least 10 student members of TCTWS are invited to apply for the Student Chapter of the Year Award. This prestigious honor recognizes the student chapter that has made outstanding contributions to their university, TCTWS, and the broader wildlife profession. Interested universities must submit their application packet to the Student Activities committee before **November 30, 2026**, and the winning chapter will be announced at the Student Awards Banquet at the 2027 Annual Meeting. ***PLEASE NOTE: We have updated our application format to align with the parent society's application process.*** Application packets and guidelines will be distributed to student chapters and Texas Universities by October 1, 2026.

Student Volunteer Opportunities: Each conference takes a massive army of volunteers to ensure all activities go smoothly, and our student members answer this call of duty in astounding numbers. Volunteering at the conference can provide an opportunity to meet and interact with Texas Chapter student and professional members and is also a great way to earn service credits for your chapter and your resumé! Volunteer opportunities include assisting at the registration desk, helping with technical sessions and plenary events, set up and break down of conference rooms, promoting raffle items, and much more. The Student Activities committee will reach out to student members who are registered for the annual meeting in February 2027 to seek volunteers, but feel free to contact us if you already know you will be attending and would like to volunteer!



*Students participating in 2026
Annual Meeting activities*



Student Activities, cont.

Professionals!

The Student Activities Committee is requesting your input on the needs and potential expansion of student mentorship opportunities within the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society. We would also like to gauge the level of interest across our professional membership in facilitating these mentoring opportunities. Please take a moment to fill out the survey at this link: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/puugG0Z7PZ>. All feedback is appreciated and will help the committee create more impactful learning opportunities for future conservation professionals. Please feel free to contact the Student Activities Committee at student.activities@tctws.org with any additional comments or suggestions. Thank you to those who have already contributed!

Professional Mentorship Query



Scholarship Application Period for Graduate and Undergraduate Students: October 15 - November 30, 2026



Photo by AFA

Attention graduate and undergraduate students! We are excited to announce that the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society will be accepting scholarship applications from October 15, 2026, through November 30, 2026. Scholarship recipients will be announced at the TCTWS annual meeting in Waco, Texas in February 2027. Applications and guidelines will be available on our website under the *Students* tab. There are several scholarships available which means more opportunities for you to secure financial support for your education! All applications should be sent to dale.james@tctws.org and angie.arredondo@tctws.org. For questions or more information, please email Dr. James or Angie.

Stay tuned for updates and reminders as the application deadline approaches. We look forward to receiving your applications and supporting your academic and professional journeys. APPLY! APPLY! APPLY!



Photo by C. Copher

TCTWS Committee News

Publication Awards

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Don't forget to submit your nominations for The Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society's 2027 Wildlife Publication Awards!

The Society's Wildlife Publication Awards recognize excellence in scientific literature of wildlife biology and management issued within the last three years. The publications selected are characterized by originality of research or thought and a high scholastic standard in the manner of presentation.

Works published in 2024, 2025, and 2026 are eligible in the following categories:

- Books
- Electronic Media (i.e., websites, DVDs, listservs, social media accounts, podcasts, or similar)
- Peer-Reviewed Scientific Articles (journal or peer-reviewed proceedings)
- Popular Article (published in magazines, newspapers, newsletters, or similar)
- Technical Publications (reports, factsheets, or similar)

To nominate a publication, submit:

- 1) A cover letter stating which category the publication is being submitted under.
- 2) Why the publication should be considered for the award.
- 3) A digital pdf or six (6) hard copies.

Categories with ≥ 3 nominations will be considered for an award.

Please send nominations to dan.collins@tctws.org by 5 PM on December 20, 2026.



Some of the 2026 Publication Award winners

Honorary Life Membership: SEEKING NOMINEES

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

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

To act on a nomination, the Committee needs:

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



*2026 Honorary Life Membership Award:
Donald Charles "Chip" Ruthven III*

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

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

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

Send material to: Justin.Dreibelbis@tctws.org

Excellence in Wildlife Conservation: SEEKING NOMINEES

REMINDER - DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS 10/31/2026

The Excellence in Wildlife Conservation Committee is seeking nominees for the 2027 awards. The Committee will grant the following awards in the 2027 TCTWS banquet: Outstanding Achievement, Early Career Professional, Mid-Career Professional, Educator of the Year, and Land Stewardship. The Committee will continue the policy of seeking and considering nominees submitted from the membership. Certainly, the Texas Chapter is blessed with numerous members who have made outstanding contributions to wildlife conservation on a state, national and/or international scale. These individuals deserve the recognition of their peers for their outstanding long-term service to our shared wildlife resources.

To submit a nomination for one of the following awards, please send the required documents to:

excellence@tctws.org during the application period of July 1st – October 31st.



One of the 2026 award winners: Matador WMA

Early Career Professional award:

- Nominees for this award should be an active natural resource (or related field) professional within 1–10 years out of college who are working full time. They should be actively engaged in the wildlife profession, either in a natural resource agency, academia, or as a private wildlife biologist or consultant, or even as a non-professional activist with significant contributions. The nomination process will entail the submission of a biography of the nominee, a comprehensive vita, letter(s) of nomination, and maintenance of confidentiality throughout the process.

Mid-Career Professional award:

- Nominees for this award should be within 10–20 years out of college who are working full-time and meet the professional activity requirements as the Early Career award. Their contributions should be significant and appropriate to their career timeline. The nomination process is identical to that of the Early Career award, with an emphasis on two letters of nomination to provide a broader perspective on the nominee's impact.

Excellence in Wildlife: SEEKING NOMINEES, cont.

Outstanding Achievement award:

- Nominees for this award should be individuals or teams who have made outstanding contributions to the interests of the Texas Chapter. These contributions might include noteworthy research, development of outstanding outreach programs, or application of conservation principals. Recipients of this award should be current or past members of the Texas Chapter. If the award is given to a group, then the key individual(s) should be members of the Texas Chapter, but it is not necessary for the entire team to be members. The nomination process mirrors that of the above, with a biography of the nominee, a comprehensive vita, and a minimum of two (2) letters of nomination.

Educator of the Year award:

- Nominees should be individuals for excellence in developing and disseminating natural resource information to students, landowners, and others. Examples include, but are not limited to, university professors, extension personnel, and agency personnel. Recipients of this award should be current or past members of the Texas Chapter. To nominate a candidate for the Educator of the Year award, please provide a biography of the nominee, a comprehensive vita, and a minimum of two (2) letters of nomination.

Land Stewardship award:

- This award recognizes landowners who have been instrumental in the development, application, and promotion of sound wildlife management principles on their land. Special consideration is given to those individuals who, through their leadership, have set an example of hard work and dedication to the wildlife resource. Preference will be given to those who are members of the Texas Chapter, but membership in the Texas Chapter is NOT mandatory to receive this award.

All awards will culminate in the selection of recipients by the committee, to be honored at the annual meeting. In order for any given honor to be awarded, there must be at least one submission in the respective category. **If you would like further information for any award or have any questions, please email: excellence@tctws.org**

Executive Director and Conservation Affairs Committee Report

By Matt Wagner, Executive Director, and Mary Pearl Meuth, Past President

New World Screwworm

As of September 22, there have been 50 total confirmed cases of NWS. Twelve Texas counties are involved, all in livestock except for three occurrences in dogs (no reported detections in wildlife thus far). The most recent case occurred on September 17 in a horse in southwestern New Mexico (Grant County). The CAC continues to monitor any new developments regarding NWS. The USDA continues to coordinate the dispersal of about 100 million sterile flies per week, mostly in Texas counties bordering Mexico. The CAC is subscribed to the Texas Agriculture Alert System from the Texas Department of Agriculture, and sent through Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. For the latest developments on NWS, go to the Texas Animal Health website: <https://www.tahc.texas.gov/emergency/nws.html>, USDA NWS website: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/stop-screwworm> or the Screwworm Coalition of Texas website: <https://screwwormtx.org/>

August TPWD Commission Meeting/Public Hearing

Matt Wagner and Mary Pearl Meuth attended the August TPWD commission meeting and Public Hearing. Both gave testimony at the hearing to prevent **border infrastructure construction** in the Big Bend Region. Over 100 people spoke at the hearing with 70% opposed to border wall construction. Wagner also encouraged the commission to continue science based **CWD management** and to make progress on **mountain lion harvest reporting**. At the May commission meeting, Chairman Foster directed ag and landowner organizations to work with TPWD over the next year, to recommend an approach to mountain lion data collection.

CWD Working Group

On June 22, Matt Wagner attended a meeting of the CWD Working Group. Approximately 30 members of the working group discussed alternatives for disposition of positive breeder facilities and initial thoughts on Disease Management Plans. Commissioners Galo and Rowling expressed interest in attending the next meeting of the working group.



Photo by K. Pirkle

Conservation Affairs Committee Report, cont.

Preparations for the 90th Legislative Session

A contract has been signed by lobbyists Joey Park and Mignon McGarry to serve the Texas Chapter during the upcoming session from November 1, 2026 until May 31, 2027. Matt Wagner recorded the proceedings from hearings of the Senate Natural Resource Committee, House Ag and Livestock Committee, and House State Affairs Committees. Hearing topics included **wildfire mitigation strategies, resilience of Texas agriculture, data centers and 765 kv transmission lines**. Wagner submitted written comments in favor of a rural planning process for energy infrastructure development.

USDA Forest Service Proposal to Rescind the Roadless Area Rule

The USDA is proposing to rescind the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which established broad prohibitions on road construction and timber harvesting on National Forest System lands. The intent of this proposed action is to reduce regulatory burden and return decision making for the management of roadless areas to the individual national forest level. The comment period has been extended to October 6, 2026. To comment online go to: <https://www.regulations.gov/commenton/FS-2025-0001-223869>

Upcoming Meetings:

October 13, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership webinar on data centers (noon CT)

October 20-21, Abilene, Texas Section Society for Range Management Annual Meeting

November 1-5, Des Moines Iowa, TWS Annual Conference

November 4-5, Fort Worth, TPWD Commission Meeting

January 12, Austin, 90th Texas Legislature convenes

January 27-28, Austin, TPWD Commission Meeting

February 10-12, Waco, TCTWS Annual Meeting

February 17-19, Austin, 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). TCTWS members are always encouraged to participate in these activities.

Natural Resource Professionals Survey

A member of The Wildlife Society, Aaron Haines, is conducting a survey of actively working natural resource professionals to identify what academic content, field techniques and professional skills they find most important when conducting their job. The survey will help guide curriculum development, field training and professional skill preparation for future ecology and wildlife professionals. By taking a few minutes to complete [this survey](#), participants can ensure that students enter the workforce with the competencies, expectations and practical skills needed to succeed.

The survey will be open through the second week of October.

Link to survey: https://millersville.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2gGHVzClyZuLfXo

Link to TWS web article about the survey: <https://wildlife.org/building-the-future-natural-resources-workforce/>



Photos by V. Perez (left) and K. Fleming-Patrick (right)

Nominations

We are pleased to introduce the nominees for our 2027 Vice President, Secretary, and Board Member at Large positions. These individuals have stepped forward in service to the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society, committing their time and talents to help guide and strengthen our membership society. Service is the foundation of our Chapter—our leaders and volunteers alike make it possible for us to carry out our mission.

Candidate bios will be featured in the October and January editions of The Tails and highlighted across our social platforms. **Our online voting system will open in early 2027**, and we encourage every member to learn more about the nominees and cast a ballot.

Your vote is your voice, and together, through service, we shape the future of our Chapter.

Vice President

- Carlos “Lalo” Gonzalez
- Tucker Slack

Secretary

- Sarah Lucht
- Hope Zubek

Board Member at Large

- Cord Eversole
- Mikayla Killam

*in alphabetical order

Nominations

2027 Vice President Candidate - Carlos “Lalo” Gonzalez

Dr. Carlos “Lalo” Gonzalez serves at Sul Ross State University as the Chair of the Department of Natural Sciences and Associate Director of Research for the Borderlands Research Institute. He is also an Associate Professor of Natural Resource Management and the Nau Endowed Professor of Habitat Research and Management. His research focuses on wildlife habitat management, rangeland ecology, and ecological restoration with an emphasis on developing applied solutions for working lands. Lalo earned his B.S. in Wildlife and Range Management from Texas A&M University–Kingsville, his M.S. from Sul Ross State University, and his Ph.D. in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences from Texas A&M University. His current research program supports undergraduate, M.S., and Ph.D. students working on wildlife, rangeland ecology, and habitat restoration projects.



Lalo’s involvement with The Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society began in 2007 as an undergraduate student. In 2027, he will celebrate 20 years of involvement with an organization that has played an important role in his development as a student, researcher, and educator. As a student, he participated in annual meetings through poster presentations, Plant Identification competitions, the Don Pendleton Memorial Scholarship, and the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute. Throughout his professional career, Lalo has remained involved with TCTWS, participating in annual meetings and committees. He currently serves as Program Committee Co-Chair for 2027 and Local Arrangements Chair for the 2028 Annual Meeting. His involvement with TCTWS has come full circle as he now mentors and encourages students to join the same professional society that helped shape his career. He particularly values TCTWS’s role in bringing together students, wildlife professionals, researchers, landowners, and conservation partners and in developing the next generation of wildlife professionals in Texas. After nearly two decades of involvement with TCTWS, Lalo welcomes the opportunity to give back to the Chapter through greater service and leadership and to help ensure it continues to provide future wildlife professionals the same opportunities it provided him.

Nominations

2027 Vice President Candidate - Tucker Slack

I am Tucker Slack, and I serve as a Senior Wildlife Biologist with Plateau Land & Wildlife Management in The Pines & Prairies Region in eastern Texas. My position enables me to meet landowners on their properties and help them develop wildlife management plans focused on the 1-D-1 Open Space Wildlife Management tax valuation. I work throughout the Pineywoods, Upper Coastal Prairies, Post Oak Savanna, and Blackland Prairies Ecoregions. I enjoy the different habitats, meeting people with different perspectives, learning about their connection to the land, and am encouraged by their commitment to land stewardship. I have been in this position since 2018 and have come to realize that I not only have a heart for the wild things and wild spaces of Texas, but I also have a heart for the people of our great State.



Prior to my work with Plateau, I worked for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for more than 12 years, and The US Forest Service in South Carolina for 3 years.

I have been a member of the TCTWS for more than 2 decades, am a Fellow and Former Director of the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute's Early Career Professional Program. My involvement with this Institute has helped me grow both personally and professionally. I have previously served TCTWS in other capacities both formal and informal since my earliest involvement with local arrangements at the 2007 meeting in Beaumont.

I consider myself blessed to be a husband, father, wildlife biologist, and a member of the TCTWS extended family. More recently, I have been actively seeking opportunities to serve in order to give back to an organization that has given me so much, and ensure that we are all learning, growing, and equipping tomorrow's wildlife professionals.

As a longtime CWB® I fully recognize and appreciate the importance of sound science informing management decisions and believe this is exceptionally crucial in a private land state like ours. I have always been impressed with all that TCTWS is able to accomplish and I would be both honored and humbled to serve as your next Vice-President.

Nominations

2027 Secretary Candidate - Sarah Lucht

Howdy Wildlifers!

My name is Sarah Lucht, and I am a research assistant professor with Texas A&M University and Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute. My position allows me the hybrid role of conducting conservation research and management primarily on military installations along with educating future professionals about botany, rangeland management, and sampling methods. I hold a B.S. and M.S. from Texas A&M University in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences and a Ph.D. from the same institution in Ecosystem Science and Management. I'm fortunate to consider conservation my vocation and hobby, as in my free time you can find me outside holding a fishing pole or chasing birds with my husband and 3 dogs.



I strongly believe my involvement in The Wildlife Society has been essential to my personal and professional growth. I was active in the Texas A&M University student chapter during my undergraduate degree, where I served as an officer and was a member of the conclave team. My active involvement with TCTWS began in 2015 when I joined the Student Activities committee, which I have previously chaired and now co-chair. During the past 10 years, I have also served on the Membership, Newsletter, and Communications committees. Likewise, I am currently a member of the 6th cohort of the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute. All the opportunities provided by the student chapter and state chapter began with a peer or mentor saying, "I'm doing this, and you're doing it with me." It is this level of camaraderie and commitment that made me fall in love with TCTWS and its members, and it is my passion to facilitate such opportunities for current and future professionals.

My goal if given the honor to be your secretary is to support the curation and management of accurate meeting and chapter records. Likewise, I will work to support communication and knowledge sharing throughout our membership, across levels of the Society, and with collaborating partners. I am humbled to be nominated for the role of secretary and look forward to continuing my service to the Chapter in any capacity possible.

Nominations

2027 Secretary Candidate - Hope Zubek

Hope Zubek is a Public Lands Biologist with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) where she assists with the management of approximately 180,000 acres of public land in East Texas. This land consists of three wildlife management areas (WMAs), two of which are in partnership with the United States Forest Service (USFS).

Hope holds a B.S. in Forest Wildlife Management from Stephen F. Austin State University where she began her involvement with the Texas Chapter. She continued her involvement as a professional and has served as the Co-Chair/Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee since 2022 where she has helped plan the past four Annual Meetings. She was also selected for 2026-2027 cohort of the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute: Early Career Professional Training.



Hope credits her involvement with the Texas Chapter to be an important part of her professional growth over the years and would be honored to serve the Chapter in the role of Secretary.

In her personal life, her faith and family are incredibly important. She likes to enjoy God's creation as much as possible through all sorts of outdoor recreational activities with her husband and daughter.

Nominations

2027 Board Member at Large Candidate - Cord Eversole

I received my Ph.D. in Wildlife Science from Texas A&M University–Kingsville, where I was a Welder Wildlife Foundation Fellow, and I'm currently an Assistant Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Management in the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture at Stephen F. Austin State University. My teaching and research both focus on wildlife ecology, conservation, and applied management. I am particularly interested in vertebrate biology and ecology (with a strong affinity for reptiles and amphibians), habitat relationships, biodiversity, and wildlife monitoring in Texas and internationally.

I have been a member of the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society since 2010 and I am a past fellow of the Teer Conservation Leadership Institute (2018–2019 cohort). Throughout my career, I have been active in teaching, research, student mentorship, and professional service and have worked with students, universities, state and federal agencies, and various other conservation organizations both in Texas and abroad. Much of my work is centered on training students and helping prepare the next generation of wildlife professionals.



I accepted the nomination for the Board Member at Large position as an opportunity to become more directly involved in serving the Chapter and to help strengthen TCTWS and its role within the wildlife profession in Texas. Having been involved with the Chapter since my time as a student, I value the professional connections and opportunities I've gained through TCTWS, and I hope to better help provide those same opportunities for students and professionals across the state. I hope to bring my unique perspective and views on leadership to the executive board to better serve members and accomplish the mission of the Chapter.

Nominations

2027 Board Member at Large Candidate - Mikayla Killam

Mikayla (House) Killam is a Program Manager for Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute currently specializing in the junction between Department of Defense Natural Resources Management and Endangered Species Recovery. In this position, Mikayla is primarily focused on the recovery and management of the California least tern and works to facilitate the development of plans and partnerships that address the needs of numerous stakeholders across the species' breeding range.

Mikayla has been a member of the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society for 14 years. Throughout that time, she has experienced the chapter from the perspective of a student, graduate student, and an early career professional. As a professional, Mikayla has participated in the student affairs committee as a quiz bowl and poster judge, she has helped with the photo and art contest, and has assisted with scoring student chapter of the year applications and scholarships. Mikayla co-chaired the activities committee for 2 years where she helped to plan and coordinate the pre-conference workshops attended by close to 250 members for both of the most recent Houston meetings. Mikayla served as the Secretary for the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society from 2024-2025. Most recently, Mikayla chaired the Finance Committee for the 2026 meeting. That team was able to set a new fundraising record for the chapter and is serving one more year with Mikayla as a co-Chair.



For the last four years, Mikayla has been lead author responsible for compiling the Chapter of the Year application that our chapter submits to The Wildlife Society annually. Through this responsibility, Mikayla has collaborated with multiple iterations of executive board members, and many committee chairs from multiple presidencies. This responsibility has given Mikayla a unique perspective and understanding of the many different areas where Texas chapter is making an impact. Mikayla believes that these experiences have prepared her to serve as the Board Member at Large for the Chapter where she will be able to continue supporting members and giving back to the society in a meaningful way.

Teer Time

By Sarah J. Lucht

Greetings from the 6th cohort of JGTCLI! Our group is a little over halfway through the year-long program, and it's been quite an adventure thus far. For those who may not know about the James G. Teer Conservation Leadership Institute (JGTCLI), allow me to give a brief overview. Dr. James G. Teer, one of the founding members of TCTWS and our state chapter's first president, was a wildlife biologist and professor who valued both sound science and collaboration to solve complicated conservation issues. Dr. Teer understood our passion for the outdoors doesn't wane throughout our careers, but our ability to be outdoors does due to the increased administrative duties associated with leading a team. He also realized that while traditional conservation programs taught us how to work with wildlife and plants, they often lacked training on how to work with people. JGTCLI was designed to bridge that gap for young professionals as they transition from field-based to management-based roles through a series of in-person trainings and the creation of a cohort project exploring an imminent conservation issue.

Truthfully, I was not sure what to expect going into the institute. Would we all be stranded together in the desert expressing our feelings? Sitting through hours of boring meetings that you didn't gain anything from? Fortunately, neither of the above were true, though we were told on the first day to "get comfortable with being uncomfortable." This experience thus far has taken me through the gamut of emotions from inspired to painfully introspective when my preconceived notions were challenged. Another prominent feeling has been mild aggravation when our meeting agendas have been repeatedly thrown out the window (get comfortable with being uncomfortable, eh?). Throughout the time though, the most intense emotion I've felt is gratitude. I've been provided the opportunity to bond with 11 peers who also want to be effective and empathetic leaders, the mentorship of some of the brightest and selfless individuals in our field, and the tools to become the most authentic version of myself. Don't get me wrong, the JGTCLI journey has not always been smooth or clear. We're a group of 12 distinct personalities with 12 full-time jobs and 12 different life experiences. Think of the last time you were in room with 11 other individuals trying to work on anything. There were likely a few outspoken folks vying their case, some that sat quietly, several who placated the opposing individuals, and one or two people who looked like they wanted to be anywhere else but in the middle of a conflict. From what I've deduced, the biggest hindrance to collaboration isn't what you say but how it is perceived by others. Understanding how different personalities express their ideas and accept feedback, along with understanding your own mechanisms of expression and reaction, is the key to ensuring everyone has equal ownership in a solution. A common adage of one of my mentors is, "The conservation business is the people business," and my experience with JGTCLI has only reinforced that notion.

Teer Time, cont.

Going forward, we have one more in-person meeting prior to the 2027 TCTWS conference where we will present our cohort project. What's the topic you may ask? Conserving our state's surface waters in the face of changing federal regulation. Did you know there's minimal to no state-level directives for protecting development around Texas' ephemeral waterways? That means in the event the formal definition of "Waters of the United States" under the Clean Water Act (aka. protected waters) is further narrowed from its current extremely ambiguous description, millions of acres of wetlands, playas, and river bottoms essential to our state's wildlife that are periodically dry will no longer be protected from possible development. This has widespread implications outside of the wildlife realm, as ephemeral waterways are essential to the production and maintenance of many tangible products (food, water, fiber, etc.) and services we rely on (carbon sequestration, flood control, water purification, and more). You'll have to come see us at the 2027 annual meeting in February 2027 to hear more about our project, but I guarantee it'll cause a big splash!

If you're interested in finding out more about JGTCLI and the program's goals, please reach out to the JGTCLI committee chair (Dr. John Kinsey; early.career.program@tctws.org).



The 6th cohort taking a break at the July meeting to tour the Roger Fawcett Wildlife Management Area

***Panicum virgatum* (switchgrass)**

By Kendall Christensen

Interested in highlighting a favorite TX plant or animal species? Contact newsletter@tctws.org !

Switchgrass is a warm-season, perennial grass that can be found across the plains and prairies of Texas. It is considered one of the Big 4 native grasses for the Northern and Southern Great Plains. It is a highly versatile plant that can grow across multiple soil types, from dry to wet and sandy to clayey.

This grass is identifiable by its blue-green hue during the summer and its red-orange color as it goes dormant. The seedheads often have a purple hue to them, which makes this prairie plant easy to mix up with the invasive species johnsongrass (*Sorghum halepense*); however, switchgrass has a green midrib (where the two sides of the leaf blade come together), whereas johnsongrass has a prominent white midrib. Switchgrass is a large grass growing from 3 to 10 feet tall (92 cm to 304 cm), but its height is not its only growing form; this grass also puts out long, creeping rhizomes, which help it to form clumps or sods.

This bunchgrass has been used for various reasons by many different people. Historically, the Caddo people used switchgrass as a thatch for building houses and for making thick baskets. It is also a desirable species for cattle and cattle ranches because of its high protein and high biomass; oftentimes, this grass will be the first grazed out by cattle. Switchgrass also plays two separate but important roles in more urban zones, where it is used as an ornamental plant that can handle drier seasons and hold onto soil well, and it is also being grown to be used as a biofuel. The amount of biomass that can be grown, without mass inputs, makes it highly desirable for biofuel production.



Photo by James H. Miller

***Panicum virgatum*, cont.**

But switchgrass is not only important for people, it is also a versatile wildlife resource. Switchgrass seeds are consumed by birds and small mammals, and many ground-nesting birds can use this grass for shelter. Deer use switchgrass clumps for fawning cover. Insects use switchgrass as a food source, larval host, and overwintering shelter.



Photo by Jess Matthews - iNaturalist

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Southwest Section Tracks

By Kathy Granillo, Southwest Section Representative

It has been a long, hot summer, hasn't it? Arizona and New Mexico experienced their hottest summers on record. It was the 4th hottest on record for Texas. It is finally cooling down some in New Mexico, where I live, and we finally got some rain. But we did not get rain in July and August, our typical monsoon season, and our rivers and reservoirs are at all time lows. Hundreds of miles of the Rio Grande went dry, and the cottonwoods along the Rio Grande started going dormant in August. Experts suspect many trees will not survive the winter.

These conditions have me musing about resiliency, redundancy and connectivity. And mostly my musings leave me with more questions. Our ecosystems and the wildlife that are part and parcel of these ecosystems are constantly adapting to conditions such as weather, food, shelter, predation, and the actions of humans. We now live in the Anthropocene - the current geological age, viewed as the period during which human activity has been the dominant influence on climate and the environment. How can we humans, particularly us wildlife professionals, best help wildlife to adapt and thrive in these novel environments that we are now creating?

I would argue at least partly through researching what helps a species be resilient and then managing to provide resilient places for them to be. And to provide lots of these places, across the landscape and provide for some connectivity between them. Especially for migratory species. I've been thinking about the migratory songbirds, which are in the peak of fall migration, and the sandhill cranes and the waterfowl that will soon be migrating south and the ones that will be wintering in our states. What places do we have available for them as stopover sites and wintering sites?



Photo by C. Camp

Southwest Section Tracks

Habitat conditions for wintering cranes and waterfowl are horrible in New Mexico, which could have dire implications for these birds. Will these birds seek areas with better conditions? That remains to be seen. Cranes and waterfowl are known to move around if conditions are bad. Maybe they will head over to Texas where there were timely spring rains, and a wet winter is predicted. Although west Texas is in a similar drought as New Mexico, and the birds may head down to Mexico as many of them already do each year. Over the last several decades, researchers have documented Sandhill Cranes regularly wintering in the Mexico states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, Durango, San Luis Potosí, Zacatecas and Guanajuato. Surveys from the late 1950s through the 1990s estimated that over 50,000 cranes winter in Mexico. Are the wetlands they need available?

What about our resident wildlife? Black bears have been making the news in New Mexico, as they roam far afield seeking water and food. New Mexico Department of Wildlife has had to euthanize over 100 bears this summer as they come into conflict with people on their search for food and water. And many are killed by cars and trucks as they traverse the landscape and cross roads. What can we wildlife professionals do to help? At least one thing we can do is to help educate the public both about how to avoid conflicts with wildlife such as bears, and to provide habitat for wildlife. And to advocate for including wildlife in our planning for water resources in our states. I see lots of articles these days about data centers and their demand for water and energy. The public is taking notice and I hope wildlife professionals are, too.

I will close with a reminder that the Annual Conference is being held this year in Des Moines, Iowa, November 1-5, 2026. The 2027 Annual Conference will be in Sacramento, and the 2028 Annual Conference will be in Dallas! If you attend the conference this year, I'll be there, too and look forward to seeing you. Otherwise, I hope to see many of you at the Texas Chapter Annual Conference in February.



Kathy Granillo
TWS Southwest Section
Representative

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 always welcome and should be submitted to the Editor (Emily Blumentritt, 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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