4.2 FACT SHEETS

Fact sheets are communication tools used by TWS staff, subunits, and members to educate decision-makers and other stakeholders on wildlife conservation issues - particularly those tied to current policy and/or management debates.

Individual sections, chapters, or working groups can develop their own fact sheets to elaborate on key issues relevant to their specific region or on issues that are not being covered by current TWS fact sheets (available at http://www.wildlife.org/policy).

Guidelines for Developing a Fact Sheet
Consider this outline when creating a fact sheet for your subunit.

1. Outline questions you want answered in the fact sheet, myths you want to dispel, and terms or acronyms you want to define. Decide on title and subheadings.

2. Thoroughly research the topic by consulting relevant peer-reviewed journal articles, current news articles, and laws or legislation pertaining to the topic. Look out for key numbers and dates that you'll want to include (i.e. current funding for the issue).

3. Draft and edit the text before placing onto a fact sheet template. It will be much easier to have the text finalized before moving around pictures and text in a template.

4. Format text and pictures into a fact sheet template. Most topics should cover 1 page back and front. Consider creating a template to use for all of your subunit's fact sheets. Keeping your format consistent among all of your fact sheets can help your subunit create a brand, be more recognizable, and simplify future fact sheet development.

5. Save the fact sheet as a PDF. A PDF is easier to send via email and post on the web.

Items to Include in a Fact Sheet
Make your fact sheet more effective by including these following sections or features:

- *Introductory Section* – overview of the topic; include key numbers or facts that will engage the reader on the topic.
- *Call-out box(es)* – quote, definition, or key question that you want to highlight (e.g. what is the difference between wild and feral horses?).
- *Pictures* – use images without copyright provisions. Government agencies have copyright free photos (e.g. FWS Digital Library).
- *Picture Captions* - Pictures and captions should be able to stand alone. In addition to describing the picture, captions should include a source and a broader message about the fact sheet. Try to connect each caption to the central message of the fact sheet.
- *Literature Cited* – Cite information in the text with footnotes and provide a "Literature Cited" section towards the end of the fact sheet.

Other Items to Consider for your Fact Sheet
- *Graphs or charts* – visual representations of the central message can be effective
- *Timeline* – document the history of the legislation or issue
- *Maps* – display the geographic areas being impacted or included in the issue

Distribution of the Fact Sheet

Fact sheets can be brought to meetings with decision-makers and stakeholders where the issue will be discussed. Fact sheets are an ideal document to leave behind for staff to have on hand (Section 3.2).

You should also make your fact sheet available on your website and distribute to organizations that are involved in the issue. Your members can print and distribute the fact sheets to educate the public on issues that affect wildlife. You should also send the fact sheet to the Government Affairs team at TWS headquarters.