



The Wildlife Society Pennsylvania Chapter



Newsletter—Fall 2012

President's Message

In October I was lucky to make it out to Portland for The Wildlife Society Conference. I had braced myself for daily rain during my trip, but to my surprise there were more nice days than wet ones during my pleasant stay. The sky was uncharacteristically clear and blue on the day I left, giving me a view of mountains fascinating enough to let me forget my fear of flying. I marveled at how the Columbia River and its tributaries had held their own as those rugged mountains grew up around them and the way the huge volcanoes like Mt. Hood jutted out of the earth. OK, I admit it—part of me wishes I was a geologist.

But I'm happy to be a wildlife biologist, and not just because it's a pretty cool job. (Even those of you that spend most of your time at a desk have to admit this is still a pretty cool job.) The conference plenary session, celebrating the 75th Anniversary, made me realize how our profession and field has grown and all that has been accomplished. What really struck me at this conference was the interaction between all levels—students, new and experienced professionals, and TWS legends. There I was, a person still sort of new to the wildlife field, meeting President Paul Krausman and Leopold Award Winner Daniel Decker in the elevator and chatting with new President Wini Kessler at the Women of Wildlife Mixer. The support for students was evident in the attendance at the Student-Professional Mixer (including the interest shown to the "Work in Progress" Poster Session) and Quiz Bowl.

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If you've never been to the TWS Conference, I highly recommend it. You'll come back with a renewed enthusiasm for the great work you do. And remember (shameless plug alert!), the conference is right here in Pittsburgh in 2014, so your travel expenses would be minimal.

Ironically, my trip to Portland was dry, but after getting home we had one of the wettest weeks I've ever seen due to that menace—"Superstorm Sandy". Most likely some of you were without power or perhaps experienced flooding. Wherever you were, I hope you and your families stayed warm, dry, and above all safe.

Tammy Colt
PA TWS President

Come into the Fold— PA TWS Google Group

The PA Chapter has a Google Group, our online forum, which we rolled out this past spring. If you missed joining the group the first time around and would like to join now please let us know. You may contact us at our chapter email:

PAChapterTWS@gmail.com

The benefit of Google Groups, as opposed to a normal listserv, is your personal ability to control how you receive the Group's messages. Truthfully who hasn't been overwhelmed and frustrated at one point or another with a listserv overflowing our inbox?

You have options to receive emails from the Group as they come in or choose to have a daily digest, a weekly digest, or no emails at

all sent to you (really). Google Groups is a nice alternative concept that combines the ease of an email listserv along with the discussion format of an online forum, plus added control.

Members can make a post to the Google Group and respond to other posts either by sending a message to the Group's email: twspennsylvania@googlegroups.com or by logging in directly to the Google Groups site online.



2013 Pennsylvania TWS Conference

The Pennsylvania Chapter of The Wildlife Society will be holding its annual meeting March 22-23 at the Ramada Inn, South Atherton St., State College. The conference theme is ***Putting the ACTION in the State Wildlife Action Plan: Moving Pennsylvania Wildlife Conservation Forward.***

This year we are jointly hosting the conference with the Pennsylvania Biological Survey and the Pennsylvania Chapter of the

American Fisheries Society. We are in the planning stages still but events will include technical and plenary sessions, a poster session, and a banquet. Also, a mixer will be held to reconnect with friends and meet new ones. Our annual meeting is a great opportunity for education, discussion, and exchanging ideas. Stay tuned for information coming around the start of the new year.

Make Plans to Join US in State College!!



Call for Papers

2013 Meeting

Pennsylvania Chapter of The Wildlife Society

March 22-23, 2013

Ramada Inn, State College, PA



Credit: Robert Savannah, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Putting the ACTION in the State Wildlife Action Plan: Moving Pennsylvania Wildlife Conservation Forward

INSTRUCTIONS

Abstracts are required for all paper and poster submissions. We invite abstracts on any natural resource topic in Pennsylvania and the surrounding northeast region including flora, fauna, water, soils, techniques, human dimensions, outreach, education, policy, and legal issues. **For 2013, we are specifically interested in projects funded by State Wildlife Grants or projects focused on Wildlife Action Plan species. We would also like to have a students-only paper session.**

All contributed papers (oral presentations) will be allotted 20 minutes; 15 minutes for formal presentation and 5 minutes for question/answer time. Poster authors are required to accompany their poster during the scheduled poster session. Posters will be **no larger than 36" in height by 48" in width (3' X 4')**. You will be given an easel for poster display—**YOU WILL NEED TO BRING YOUR OWN BACKING OR HAVE YOUR POSTER PRINTED ON FOAM BOARD.** NOTE: a tri-fold poster board is acceptable.

Abstracts should be submitted by email attachment in MS Word or rich text (.rtf) format. Abstracts should be typed in 12-pt font with full justification and **no indents, bold, or other special formatting**. Use italics, not underline, for scientific names. Please follow punctuation and formatting guidelines below, exactly.

Submit abstracts to: Samara Trusso satrusso@pa.gov; email subject —“**2013 PATWS abstract**”

******Deadline for abstract submissions is February 15, 2013******

Each abstract submission must contain the following information, in exactly the format below. Also see Example.

Title of presentation
Author(s), affiliation(s), address(es); include zip code(s)
Name of presenter, telephone number, email address; indicate professional or student and whether it's a presentation or poster

Abstract (no more than 250 words) should state what or who you studied; very briefly describe your methods; provide results; and state your conclusion(s). Include scientific names for all species.

Call for Papers cont...

Example Submission, Paper:

White-tailed deer fawn survival in north central Pennsylvania

Justin K. Vreeland and Duane R. Diefenbach, Pennsylvania Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Unit, 113 Merkle Laboratory, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802; and Bret D. Wallingford, Pennsylvania Game Commission, 2001 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17110

Justin K. Vreeland, (814) 865-4511, jkv104@psu.edu; graduate student presentation

Survival rates are unknown for white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) fawns in Pennsylvania. Coyote, bears, bobcats, foxes, and domestic dogs are known sources of predation mortality. Other sources of mortality include starvation, malnutrition, disease, parasites, organ failure, legal harvest, poaching, collisions with vehicles and farm machinery, and accidents. However, in what proportions fawns die from these causes is unknown. We present preliminary results from the 8 months of a two-year study of survival of white-tailed deer fawns. In May-June, we capture 46 neonatal fawns in a forested landscape and 52 neonatal fawns in an agricultural landscape in north central Pennsylvania. Fawns were released with radio transmitters on expandable collars and monitored approximately 1 time per day. Survival rates were greater in the agricultural site (60%) than in the forested site (48%). Leading mortality sources were predation (75% of deaths) in the forested site and natural causes excluding predation (58%) in the agricultural site. Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) and black bears (*Ursus americanus*) killed approximately equal numbers of fawns in the forested site. We will continue to monitor remaining fawns until collar or battery failure or fawn death. We will capture and monitor another 80-100 fawns in 2001. Using a geographic information system, we will assess how landscape features (e.g., habitat type and arrangement, road density) and home-range characteristics (e.g., size, proximity to roads and farms) are related to fawn survival.

****Awards****

Recognition awards for the best student paper and best student poster will be presented during the banquet dinner. To be eligible for this award the student must be enrolled in school or have completed the presented research within the past year, be the lead author, and be the presenter of the paper or poster. Be sure to indicate in the abstract submission that it is a student entry.



This Newsletter is produced on a roughly quarterly basis for members of the Pennsylvania Chapter of The Wildlife Society.

Editor: Jennifer Dzimiel

Send items of interest, comments, announcements, questions, or corrections to Jennifer at: jennifer.dzimiel@aphis.usda.gov.

Subject— "newsletter"

Executive Board News

****PA TWS Seeking Board Member Nominations****

PA TWS is currently taking nominations for Executive Board positions. Position terms of office will begin at our annual meeting in March 2013:

- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Newsletter Editor
- Website Manager
- Northeast Section Representative
- At-Large Members (2 positions)

If you would like to nominate someone, please be sure to discuss it with them first, also you may nominate yourself. Nominees shall submit a short biography for inclusion on the ballot to be distributed to the membership in early 2013. All Board members **MUST** be members in good standing of BOTH the PA TWS Chapter AND the National organization. Nominations should be submitted to Scott Bearer at: sbearer@tnc.org

Nomination Deadline: February 15, 2013

Brief position descriptions are as follows:

- Vice-President (3-year term): serves one year in a supportive role to the President, with primary duties of overseeing facility arrangements for the annual meeting and handling the duties of the President in the President's absence. In year two, the VP becomes the President. The President's main duties are to supervise the officers, appoint committee chairs, represent the chapter, and oversee the planning of the annual meeting. Finally in year three, the position shifts to Past-President,

and is primarily responsible for annual meeting awards.

- Secretary (2-year term): records meeting minutes, chapter correspondence, meeting notices. Oversees balloting process for Executive Board elections.
- Treasurer (2-year term): submits summary financial reports at each annual meeting. Leads fundraising efforts for the annual meeting and oversees the registration process.
- Newsletter Editor (2-year term): receives, compiles, and edits chapter newsletter. Chairs annual meeting program committee.
- Website Manager (2-year term): maintains chapter website by reviewing, editing, and posting pertinent documents and content.
- Northeast Section Rep.(1-year term): represents and serves as liaison to the Northeast Section TWS for the chapter. Moderates a technical paper session at the annual meeting.
- At-Large Board Members (2-year term): provide leadership to the chapter and serve the chapter as directed by the President. Assist the Treasurer with fundraising for the annual meeting, and also assist at the annual meeting as needed.

The strength of our organization is the diverse interests of its members and the leadership provided by the Board. We hope you will consider running for office, or nominating a friend or colleague, so that we can continue to keep our chapter active and influential at the regional and national level.

—Board member duties can be found in the PA TWS by-laws available on our website at: <http://joomla.wildlife.org/pa/>

“What the heck is the [Northeast] Section?”

By Mitschka (“Mitch”) Hartley
President, Northeast Section TWS

Editor’s note: The following article was reprinted with permission from the author and appeared in the Northeast Section of TWS newsletter, Fall 2012 edition.

When my colleague, John McDonald, asked me to consider being an officer of the Northeast Section, my initial response was “Gee, I don’t even know what the Section is!” Since I first joined TWS more than twenty years ago, I have wondered what they were about, and how they differed from Chapters, with which I had been affiliated over the years. John explained to me how the Sections are the “geopolitical” subunits established by TWS back in 1937, to provide regional representation to the governing (now 13-member) council, which includes the national officers. Our Northeast Section was actually the first, established in 1938, some ten years before the first chapter was established (Minnesota, in 1948).

At my first NE Section meeting, I was not surprised to find out that only a small proportion of TWS members in the northeast are Section members. I had never (or rarely) bothered to join myself, so I suspected that many others had reacted similarly to this familiar situation: while renewing my annual membership, I check boxes for chapter affiliation and publications, then pause to consider the total cost of dues. “I guess that’s enough,” I said, opting to skip the Section box, since I wasn’t sure what it was. It wasn’t that I didn’t care; it was just that my stinginess outweighed my curiosity. After a while, I think I probably figured “Hey, I’ve participated in TWS for this long without being in the Sec-

tion, so why bother now?” Now that I’ve become engaged, I have been asking other members of our Section questions that have long been on my mind. Do TWS members in a chapter really need to join the Section? What does the Section really accomplish? What are Section dues used for? All Section members—not just the President—should be able to answer those questions. I’m certainly no expert, but I will tell you what I have learned so far, and ask and encourage all of you to please provide feedback, so that this can be a dialogue among all potential Section members. Tell me if I got it wrong, or describe how you think it should be.

The Northeast Section has a clear focus and role, which is to: 1) support students and student chapter activities in the northeast region, and 2) provide regional support for TWS activities, including the Annual Conference and regional conferences or workshops for wildlife professionals. Examples of recent expenditures include support for the Northeast Section Field Course in Vermont, scholarships for students to attend the northeast conference, supporting the northeast student conclave, and a modest contribution to the “Women in Wildlife” event at the national meeting. I think supporting students who want to become wildlife professionals is a valuable role for the Section, as that need may not be addressed as evenly or meaningfully by the various chapters. I think the annual student conclave and the Northeast Section field course (now entering its fifth year) are good focal points for reaching a number of students and providing them with a valuable experience. Supporting student attend-

Northeast Section cont...

ance at regional or 2 national meetings is another great opportunity for students to learn about wildlife and our profession, by interacting with wildlife professionals.

Another role of the Section—which is currently being reconsidered and revamped—is for conservation policy advocacy. There are many national or regional issues that affect multiple states, e.g., annual federal budgets for natural resource agencies, and emerging energy issues such as hydraulic fracturing or wind-power development. It may make more sense for the Section to take action on such issues. In some policy debates, especially controversial issues, state chapters may be challenged to engage. For example, if a state government has an obvious position or stake in an issue, and many chapter officers or members are state employees, there may be ethical, political, or practical considerations to the chapter making a policy recommendation. A larger group may be more influential, or it may just be safer for the Section to make a statement that represents the consensus view of wildlife professionals throughout the region.

In the past, the Northeast Section had other roles, such as organizing the wildlife sessions for the Northeast Fish & Wildlife Conference. However, I think our current focus on students and regional wildlife policy is appropriate, realistic (in terms of members' ability to be involved), and provides a clear value to our members and to our profession. I think the Section will be most successful in these roles if it has a level of engagement with all TWS members in the Northeast Region, not just a small minority. Currently, only members who pay Section dues get our newsletter and directly support Section activities. I think we should take a fresh look at the sub-

nit structure of TWS in our region and have some discussions about how we want to engage with other wildlife professionals across the region, whether and how best to focus on and support students, and what the fairest way is to pay for it all.

In other parts of the country, section/chapter interactions have changed recently. I think we should evaluate how well our current structure works, and consider trying something different. For example, we could automatically make all TWS members in the northeast region members of our Section, and eliminate Section dues or reduce them to a nominal amount (e.g., \$1). Doing that would engage a much greater proportion of all potential members. Should we ask chapters in our region to raise dues slightly, and contribute a portion of their budget to the Section, to support specific activities? I think that we should reduce or remove any barriers to having a larger, more robust Section membership, starting with our dues. If most members, especially chapter members, agree on the need for and value of Section activities and expenses, we should decide how much money is needed for those purposes and the most practical way to collect it, from chapters or national. Can we improve on the status quo? I think we can, and I think we will if we can make Section membership more inclusive. I look forward to hearing from many members, including you, as to what you think the Section's role or focus should be, and how (and how much) we should pay for it.

—You may respond to this article by sending comments to our chapter email :

PAChapterTWS@gmail.com

—Also feel free to start a conversation on our Google Groups forum.

PA TWS Member Profile: Rich Fritsky

Editor's note: This article is part of an ongoing series featuring members of the Pennsylvania Chapter of The Wildlife Society. If you would like to share your perspective and put a face to our State's diverse workforce of wildlife professionals, please contact the Newsletter Editor.

What made you decide to get into the wildlife profession?

I've always been drawn to the outdoors and, after working in an office for a number of years, decided I needed a career change. I left a position as a network administrator to become a guide and ski instructor in Colorado. During my three years as a guide in the White River National Forest, I met numerous people working for the US Forest Service. I was not qualified for various positions within USFS, so I chose to return to school for wildlife biology and have followed that path ever since.

What is your educational background?

My undergraduate degree is in Economics from Rutgers. After working a few years, I enrolled at Colorado State University to study Wildlife Biology, and then attended Penn State for my Master's.

Do you have any mentors or anyone that really influenced your career?

Yes, I have several mentors, but I'll focus on 3 standouts that had a hand in shaping my career. Dr. Gary White was the faculty advisor for the TWS student chapter at Colorado State. He encouraged me to captain the quiz bowl team and to apply for a policy internship at TWS headquarters in Bethesda, MD. The TWS Policy Director, Thomas Franklin, took me under his wing and introduced me to the wildlife politics and policy that ultimately drive conservation in the U.S. Dr. Duane Diefen-

bach was my advisor at Penn State. Duane supported my research by giving me the freedom to experiment and sometimes make mistakes. His door was always open for consultation and he even helped in the field. Even now, 5 years later, I continue to rely on him as a resource, most recently by reviewing a manuscript that I co-authored.

What is your current position and specialization?

I am a wildlife diversity biologist for the northeast region of the PA Game Commission. As my title implies, I work with a diversity of species and so I have a variety of responsibilities. I primarily work with species of greatest need, but do work on several projects involving game species including aging deer during rifle season, managing a bear check station, banding geese, and surveying waterfowl.

What is the most interesting aspect of your job?



Rich Fritsky banding wood ducks as part of PGC's ongoing waterfowl population monitoring at Decker Pond on State Gamelands 183. Photo credit: Drew Zellner.

Member Profile cont...

I have to keep on my toes because I never know what's going to happen next. For example, I have radio-tracked an Indiana bat from rural landscapes to find myself driving through densely populated suburbs of Pittsburgh. Working with Peregrines has taken me from remote cliffs to the top of the tallest building in Wilkes Barre. Wildlife do not recognize political or economic boundaries and since I go where they go, I have been in many unusual places and have come to know people from a diverse spectrum of occupations and every rung of the economic ladder.

What is the most surprising twist you have experienced in your career?

Three years ago I couldn't spell Marcellus and hadn't a clue that it even existed. Now, this shale formation which contains natural gas has not only impacted wildlife, state gamelands, and my community, but it has altered my job. Now, I am intimately familiar with the hydraulic fracturing (fracking) process and am conducting environmental reviews on pipeline right-of-ways. The Game Commission reviews all permit applications to determine impacts to threatened and en-

dangered species. Since 2009, the number of permit applications has increased tremendously. So I, along with my regional counterparts, review the overflow. These pipelines, waterlines, retention ponds, access roads, and compressor stations are altering habitats at a scale which, if not seen, is hard to imagine.

What advice can you give to new members who are just beginning their wildlife career?

Tag along with wildlife professionals as often as possible. This is a very diverse field and there may be a niche which is your perfect match, but you won't know unless you actually spend time observing wildlife professionals in action. Graduate school is perhaps the best mentoring program there is. The relationship you develop with your advisor will shape your graduate experience even more than the program or institution, so pick a good one. Interview them in person if at all possible and make sure you ask them as many questions as they ask you. Then, talk with his/her advisees. This will give you a comprehensive picture of your life as a graduate student.

Chapter Correspondence

PA TWS official comment letters or letters of support/sign-on letters concerning:

- Pa.B. Doc. No. 12-1555 Actions for Protections for Remaining Populations of Northern Long-Eared Bat, Tri-Colored Bat (Formerly known as Eastern Pipestrelle), and the Little Brown Bat (Sep. 2012)
- Support Funding for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program in FY13 (Sep. 2012)

—Letters can be found on our website under “Correspondence” at:

<http://joomla.wildlife.org/pa>

PA TWS Offers Professional Development Grant

The Pennsylvania State Chapter of The Wildlife Society will award one, \$1000 professional development grant annually beginning in 2013 to a non-student member of PATWS to attend a conference or professional development program.

The Professional Development Grant is intended to provide an opportunity for wildlife professionals to continue their education throughout their career. Those applicants gaining credits to maintain their TWS wildlife biologist certification will be given preference. The grant can be used for registration, travel, lodging, food, supplies, or fees associated with attending a conference or training program.

Minimum Eligibility

The applicant must be a non-student member in good standing of PATWS and have maintained that level of membership for at least the most recent two years. Those applicants gaining credits to maintain their TWS wildlife biologist certification will be given preference. An individual can receive this grant once per five years.

Recipients of the grant must attend the indicated conference or program within 18 months of receiving the grant or forfeit the

grant money. Recipients must write a summary of their experience for an edition of the PA-TWS chapter newsletter.

Applications must include the following items to be considered:

1. **Resume or CV**
2. **Essay:** Explain your grant request. The name, date, and location of the conference or professional development program must be provided, and an agenda included if available. Please note if you will receive TWS certification continuing education credits for attending. The essay should be no more than two pages, double-spaced, 12pt font.

Application materials must be emailed by **February 15th to:** PAChapterTWS@gmail.com

You must include "Professional Development Grant" in the subject line of the email.

All submissions must include a phone number (with area code) for the winner to be notified. Finalists may be interviewed by telephone. The recipient will be notified by March 1 and invited to attend the PA TWS banquet at the annual conference for the formal grant award.

We are on Facebook—LIKE US!

The Pennsylvania Chapter of The Wildlife Society now has a Facebook page. Connect with us. Share with us. To find us on Facebook search:
"PA Chapter -The Wildlife Society"



Student Scholarship Opportunities

****Frank Felbaum Scholarship****

The Pennsylvania Chapter of The Wildlife Society established the Frank Felbaum Scholarship more than a decade ago thanks to the generosity of Frank Felbaum, longtime director of Pennsylvania's Wild Resource Conservation Program and tireless conservationist. The scholarship is a one-time \$500.00 award intended to assist outstanding students who are pursuing a career in the wildlife field.

The scholarship is available to any undergraduate student currently enrolled in a wildlife ecology or related natural resources program at a Pennsylvania college or university, or a Pennsylvania resident currently enrolled in such a program at a college or university outside Pennsylvania. The recipient should have a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 3.2 and have demonstrated an interest and commitment to wildlife through volunteer and/or work experience and extracurricular activities, including membership in conservation/ecology clubs. The scholarship is awarded only once per recipient.

Applications must include the following items to be considered:

—**Letter of Recommendation:** from a professor, advisor, or someone who can attest to your ability and interest in wildlife/ecology.

—**Transcript:** your most recent transcript (it need not be official) to document program enrollment. Indicate cumulative GPA, if not included on transcript.

—**Essay:** addressing the subject/title: *"Why I Would Like to Pursue a Career in Wildlife Ecology."*

Applicants are strongly encouraged to have a professor or advisor review and edit their application for content and grammar before submitting it. Applications will be judged on the information provided **and** writing quality. **If no applications are judged to be of suitable quality, no scholarship will be awarded.** All submissions must include a phone number (with area code) and e-mail (if available) in order for the winner to be notified. Finalists may be interviewed by telephone. The recipient will be notified by March 1, 2013 and invited to attend the PA TWS banquet at the annual conference on March 22-23, 2013 for the formal scholarship award.

All application materials must be postmarked **by February 15, 2013.**

Submit application materials to:

Virginia Tilden

Penn State University at Fort Indiantown Gap
Environmental Division, Building 11-19
Annville, PA 17003
(717) 861-2449
c-vtilden@pa.gov

If someone you know (including a son or daughter) might qualify for the Felbaum Scholarship, encourage them to apply. Feel free to forward this information to colleagues at your school as well as other colleges or universities. This information can also be found on our website under "grants and scholarships" at <http://joomla.wildlife.org/pa/>

Scholarships cont...

****Northeast Section of TWS Field Course Scholarship****

The Pennsylvania Chapter of The Wildlife Society will be awarding one, \$750 scholarship to an undergraduate student to attend the Northeast Section of TWS Summer Field Course in May 2013: *Field Techniques and Current Topics in Wildlife Biology*. The course is intended to provide students with practical, hands-on training in the tools and techniques of field biology and allow them to apply those skills in a variety of exercises. Students will be instructed by biologists from across the region.

To be eligible for this award you must be an undergraduate student at a Pennsylvania university or college, and must register to attend the Summer Field Course May 19-June 1, 2013. Applicants will be evaluated based on involvement in The Wildlife Society (through student chapters, attending TWS conferences, or related activities that can be documented), academic achievements (with emphasis placed on wildlife-related course work), and potential benefits from attending the camp. Priority will be given to applicants from schools with approved student chapters. If suitable applications are not received from the four student chapters, applications from all other schools will be evaluated.

Recipients of the award must attend the field course in May 2013 or forfeit the scholarship money. The recipient will be notified by March 1, 2013 and invited to attend the PA TWS banquet during the annual conference March 22-23, 2013 for formal recognition. Also, recipients are required to write a summary of their experience at the field course for the PA TWS chapter newsletter.

Applications must include the following items to be considered:

—**Resume:** including education, major, GPA, involvement in TWS, and any related experiences.

—**Transcript:** Official or unofficial.

—**Essay:** limited to **500 words**, answering the question “How will this course benefit you?” Include how this course will fill any gaps you have in your education and how it will help you in achieving your goals in the wildlife profession.

—**TWS information (if applicable):** Does your school have a student chapter of The Wildlife Society? Are you a member? If so, describe your involvement in the chapter. Also, provide contact information for the student chapter faculty advisor so that we may confirm this information. You will not be penalized if your school does not have a student chapter, but students that participate in TWS activities will rank higher.

All application materials must be postmarked **by February 15, 2013.**

Submit application materials to:

Virginia Tilden

Penn State University at Fort Indiantown Gap
Environmental Division, Building 11-19
Annville, PA 17003
(717) 861-2449
c-vtilden@pa.gov

—*Find more information on the Field Course, including a syllabus and registration, by visiting the Northeast Section TWS website at: <http://joomla.wildlife.org/NE/>, on Facebook under “Northeast Section TWS Field Course”, or contact John McDonald at: john_e_mcdonald@fws.gov*

Allegheny Woodrat meets Marcellus Shale

By J. Merlin Benner, President
Wildlife Specialists, LLC

What is the most sensitive animal in Pennsylvania's forests? Which species is a good indicator of forest health? Is there one creature that really requires remoteness and is truly area sensitive? While it is debatable exactly which species could be measurably the best fit, there is no question that the Allegheny Woodrat ranks near the top of the list in all categories. This unique mammal is not only officially listed as Threatened by the Pennsylvania Game Commission, but is also a deep-forest species that inhabits the very areas being dramatically impacted by the current Marcellus Shale gas development – arguably the largest impact on the forests of Pennsylvania in recent history.

The woodrat is a mild, secretive animal found to inhabit extremely rugged, rocky areas of the forest. They are a packrat, and cache a variety of food items throughout the summer for consumption during the winter months. Historically, the American Chestnut was thought to be a huge factor in their success, providing abundant high-quality food. With the widespread demise of the chestnut, they have been forced to survive on other, less ideal food sources, like acorns, soft mast, mushrooms, and leaves. Another factor in their decline is the increase in raccoon populations throughout areas the woodrat calls home. Raccoon densities increase with forest fragmentation and human development of edge habitats. Raccoons carry a parasitic nematode called the Raccoon Roundworm, which is passed through their feces and attacks the central nervous system of the woodrats. This parasite is suspected to be a major factor in the decline of



Wood rat captured in a live trap during trapping and tagging efforts. Photo credit: Wildlife Specialists, LLC.

woodrats. There are other factors as well, but these are some major threats to the ongoing survival of the species.

Enter Marcellus Shale gas development. Amidst a ravenous market for energy, the widespread use of horizontal drilling technology and the use of hydraulic fracturing techniques have opened up a modern-day gold rush for natural gas. This development is centered directly over the mountainous forest habitats of Pennsylvania, containing some of the last strongholds for the woodrat. Gas development cuts miles of new pipelines and access roads into the landscape, along with numerous large openings and brings heavy human activity for a period

Woodrats cont...

of time, often within the vicinity of these strongholds. In many cases, the woodrat habitats are very inaccessible, often requiring climbing gear, and adequate surveys have not been conducted to locate the few remaining populations for conservation. The impacts of increased development present a real concern for those responsible for woodrat conservation.

Woodrat conservation in the face of this new development pressure is a multi-tiered effort involving several partners. The Pennsylvania Game Commission, is, the lead agency in woodrat conservation in Pennsylvania. They are responsible for management and conservation of our mammals and birds, and hold the regulatory authority for the species. Other partners include the Natural Heritage Program who maintains the database of known occurrences, landowners like the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources who require additional site protective measures, and private consulting ecologists who con-

duct many of the field surveys and implement management projects. A large partner is, of course, the actual development companies who cooperate with the agencies and fund the conservation activities focused around their project areas.

For most development projects in the vicinity of known active or historic woodrat occurrences, the PGC requires Phase I habitat surveys to ascertain whether or not the project will be within the vicinity of actual habitat. During the surveys, biologists look for woodrat sign, in the form of food caches, latrines, or nests. If woodrat sign is observed, increased conservation measures are employed. Avoidance is the preferred method, which usually takes the form of project relocation away from the sensitive area.

Occasionally, especially where projects are in the proximity of woodrat occurrences, additional conservation actions are implemented. In some cases, new woodrat habitats are created as part of the site retirement plans for the development areas. Plantings are associated with the creation of rocky features to provide food and cover. In other locations, selective tree cuttings are conducted surrounding the habitat areas to improve the productivity of certain forage species, like grape vines, viburnums, and other soft or hard mast producing species. Plantings of native food-producers is another option in combination with the cutting activities. Monitoring of habitat management projects is implemented to ensure that the habitat enhancement goals are met and to assess the response of local woodrat populations.



A newly ear-tagged wood rat pauses long enough for the author to snap a picture after release. Photo credit: Wildlife Specialists, LLC.

The increased activity within the vicinity of woodrat sites has required the creative devel-

Woodrats cont...

opment of some new techniques in both the survey and management of woodrats and their habitats. Some projects like seismic surveys are of such a large scale that traditional ground-based habitat surveys are impractical. In this case, a new technique was developed using a combination of aerial surveys and GIS analysis of high resolution LIDAR topographic contour data to locate areas of rocky outcrops for avoidance. In another situation, use of infrared-triggered trail cameras was used on a trial basis to confirm the presence of woodrats at habitat areas, avoiding the more invasive and expensive use of live-trapping to confirm presence. The habitat management procedures are another new technique being used to conserve this threatened species.

As with any development in natural habitats, there are costs and threats, but there are also a few side benefits of the activity. The most important benefit to woodrat conservation is the result of increased survey activities

- several new active woodrat sites have been discovered which will now be conserved into the future. A second benefit can be the habitat creation activities, which, if properly constructed, should improve the habitat quality in the vicinity of some sensitive sites. Finally, all the activities are increasing the awareness of this special animal among the community, including both the gas development companies and the general public.

We can hope that someday we will be able to address some of the more causative factors in woodrat decline, like restoration of the American Chestnut or ways to deal with the parasite problems. For now, however, we can work to protect those remaining populations we are aware of and search diligently to find other sites for this very sensitive species.

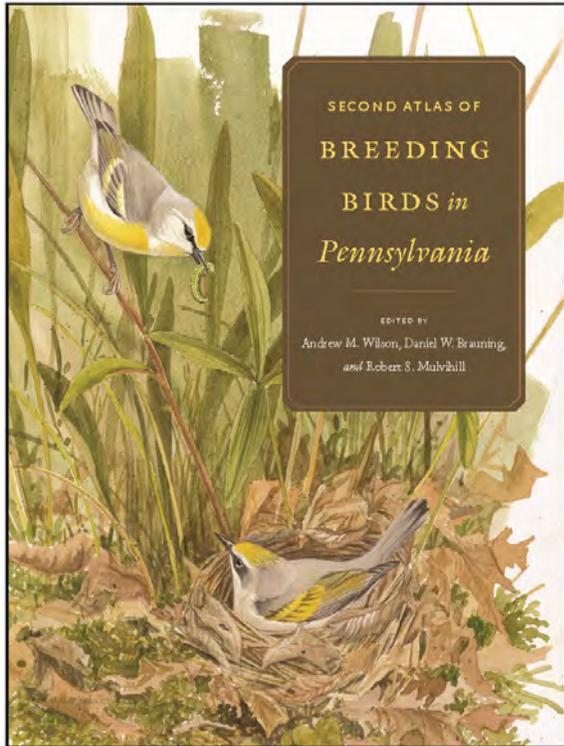
Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in PA– Newly Released

Editor's note: This segment provided by Atlas editors. Atlas editors: Andrew M. Wilson, Daniel W. Brauning, and Robert S. Mulvihill

Twenty years after the first Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania was published, the *Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Pennsylvania* brings our knowledge of the state's bird populations up to date, documenting current distribution, abundance, and changes in status for nearly two-hundred bird species.

Two thousand dedicated birdwatchers completed the surveys of birds in the 4,937 blocks across the state during six survey years (2004–2009). The data amassed provides a comprehensive understanding of the distribution of each species and shows in detail the changes in distribution since the first Atlas. Additionally, a highly trained survey crew carried out a rigorous bird count protocol at more than 34,000 locations statewide. These point counts tabulated not just spe-

Breeding Birds cont...



cies, but individual birds, in a manner that enabled for the very first time precise estimates of the actual statewide populations for more than half of the 190 breeding species detected during the atlas. In all, more than 1.5 million sightings were compiled during the second Atlas, providing an unprecedented snapshot of the bird life of Pennsylvania—perhaps even of any comparably sized region in the world.

The data gathered and summarized for the second Atlas was the raw material used by the more than forty contributing authors, each selected to write authoritative species accounts. Each account is illustrated by a stunning photograph, usually taken somewhere within Pennsylvania. Up to three

maps per species show in fine detail the current distribution based on the second Atlas, changes in distribution since the first Atlas and, for more than one hundred species, detailed maps of abundance and a chart showing 40-year population trends.

The introductory chapters describe and discuss recent changes in climate and bird habitats within Pennsylvania and provide other information used by the species account authors to inform their detailed accounts. One such chapter on bird conservation demonstrates why the second Atlas promises to be a vital tool for bird conservationists in Pennsylvania for many years to come. Accounts of past breeding species, and tabular summary of nesting seasons and habitat relations combine to make this the definitive reference a rich source of information on Pennsylvania nesting birds.

—*More information about this book can be found at the Penn State University Press website: <http://www.psupress.org/>*

—*This book can be purchased at 20% off using the discount code SOC-12.*

Student Chapter News

Editor's note: The Student Chapter News section covers what's new with our four PA student chapters (California University of Pennsylvania, Clarion University, Delaware Valley College, and Penn State University.)

****Cal U Wins TWS Student Chapter Top Honors****

Cal U's Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society is privileged to accept the Student Chapter of the Year award. Our chapter consists of a group of very dedicated students that take every opportunity available in order to become successful professionals within the field of wildlife biology. We strive to further our knowledge every day, and we know that other student chapters across the United States and Canada are doing the same. The enthusiasm that emanates from all student chapters is a remarkable thing, and we were honored to be chosen this year out of all the incredible student chapters out there. Our small group of students has accomplished much in the past year, from hosting an unforgettable conclave to throwing our most successful annual game

dinner to date! We have also spent a lot of time volunteering at the nation's largest conservation center, the Wilds in Cumberland, OH.

It is a great thing to know that our hard work and devotion has not gone unnoticed, especially by those who have created so many of these wonderful opportunities for us that have lead us to becoming such a successful student chapter. Furthermore, we would like to thank everyone that has helped us along the way—including our advisor Carol Bocetti of course—from professors to alumni and fellow students. We are especially grateful to the Pennsylvania Chapter, the Northeast Section, and the entire National Organization for the grants we received to host the Northeastern Student Conclave in April. The help we received made this year's conclave an event that we will never forget, and we know the students across the northeast that attended feel the same! Our little student chapter has come a long way, and we will continue to strive for the top.

*Samantha Zelenka
Student Chapter Vice President*



Cal U Chapter members (pictured with their advisor Carol Bocetti, center) at the 2012 Northeast Student Conclave hosted by Cal U.

Student Chapters cont...

—In addition Carol Bocetti, Cal U faculty advisor, was chosen as TWS 2012 Student Chapter Advisor of the Year. Congrats Cal U.

Frank Christopher
Student Chapter President

****Cal U Activities ****

A few weeks into the semester we offered our 4th Annual "Cal U Field Day". This event takes place at Roscoe's Sportsmen's Event (3 miles from campus); students are able to participate in rifle shooting, handguns, archery, and shotguns. This event helps students learn how to safely shoot firearms. It gives potential land managers/biologists a chance to shoot and understand management strategies first hand.

We hosted an Annual Family Field Day in September. We held this event in cooperation with the PA Game Commission. It was held during the "Cal U Family Weekend". We offered various interactive workshops for the public to participate in. Workshops included: bluebird box construction, archery, fishing, small mammal trapping techniques, telemetry, track/scat ID, and we offered some refreshments.

We also had a group of students travel to Cameron County, near Bennezette, to do some Elk watching. It was a Friday, Saturday, Sunday trip and about 25 Cal U students went and stayed at a professor's cabin. Elk were seen bugling multiple times throughout the weekend.

In October we went to "The Wild's National Conservation Training Center" in Cumberland, Ohio. We typically assist them in some tree planting, some seed collecting, and in turn they teach us about restoration ecology examples occurring on their reserve.

****Del Val Activities ****

The Delaware Valley College student chapter certainly has had a very busy semester! We are constantly engaged in on-campus activities, and continue to engage our members in networking opportunities and hands-on experiences within the wildlife field. Also we have a well-used group on Facebook: "Delaware Valley College Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society".

We wasted no time getting started, and in September travelled to Elk County, Pennsylvania to search for the elk in the area. We stayed a whole weekend in cabins at Parker Dam State Park, and were constantly out and about in search of elk! While we were there, we attended a lecture at the Elk County Visitor Center presented by a Game Commission officer who talked about the natural history of elk, as well as how the Game Commission manages the elk herds. After attending the lecture, we met with the current elk technician who taught our group how to use radio telemetry with a very hands-on approach; we were walking around a field searching for four different collars using the radio telemetry equipment! While on this trip, our advisor took the opportunity to teach us how to use bat sonar technology to listen for bats. We also went spotlighting in the evening and saw many different species of wildlife! The entire weekend was a huge success and a truly wonderful experience. All the members who attended cannot wait to return next year.

In October, we travelled to Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, a trip we attend every year. It was a beautiful day for birding, and we saw sever-

Student Chapters cont...

al migrating raptor species. Our members were also able to hike the trails along the mountain, as well as attend a "Raptors Up Close" program. Not only did we have a successful day of birding, we also couldn't pass up the opportunity to stop at Cabela's on the way back to campus!

The last major trip we have attended this semester was to Halifax, PA to volunteer with the Ned Smith Center in their Saw-whet owl banding program. We spent all night with the owl bander on site, who taught us about the program and demonstrated how to band the owls as well as how to attach radio transmitters. We caught a total of 7 owls throughout the night, and helped to band every single one! We also learned basic handling and restraint techniques. This trip was also another success, one we hope to continue in the future.

Lastly, we planned on hosting a Dance-a-thon on campus in an effort to raise money for the PA Nature Conservancy. Teams of dancers are registered to literally dance the night away to raise money. We opened it up to the entire campus, having an open house

for the first half of the night with live music as well as karaoke and other activities. We expected this to be a huge success, but then Hurricane Sandy came our way! We were forced to cancel the event, and unfortunately, we cannot reschedule the full event due to the unavailability of a venue on campus. However, we are not allowing a hurricane to get in the way of our plans and we are now currently working to have a smaller, somewhat different event so that we may still be able to have the fundraiser.

Emily Peters
Student Chapter President

****Penn State Activities****

The Penn State Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society has been very active this fall semester. We have gained many new members and are engaging in many new events this semester, the first of these being the Riparian Buffer Clean-up along Spring Creek. Our club worked with ClearWater Conservancy and the local chapter of Trout Unlimited to care for the trees and shrubs



Penn State Student Chapter meeting. Taking care of business and still having fun.

Student Chapters cont...

planted on this buffer by mulching and freeing protective collars on the growing trees. Our club has also begun a series of environmental education programs in the local State College elementary schools. In late September, we went on a trip to Benezette, Pennsylvania to the Elk Visitor Center and learned about the reintroduction of elk to Pennsylvania. Our club also brought National Geographic's Casey Anderson to Penn State for a presentation about his conservation work focused on helping the public better appreciate wild places and wild animals.

Six of our members just returned from The Wildlife Society's National Conference in Portland, Oregon. We learned so much and gained many new networking opportunities. Just last weekend we hosted our annual Kids Go Wild event to teach local elemen-

tary aged kids about the environment through a series of stations, the event went off without a hitch and was a great success! We are now looking forward to adopting a trail at Shaver's Creek and continuing our elementary school programs as well as beginning planning for Game Dinner in the spring semester!

Cindy Nau
Student Chapter Vice President

Save the Date

**PA Chapter of TWS
Annual Conference**

March 22-23, 2013
Ramada Inn
State College, PA

**69th Northeast Fish and
Wildlife Conference**

April 7-9, 2013
The Saratoga Hilton Hotel
Saratoga Springs, NY



**Northeast Student
Field Course**

May 19-June 1, 2013
Kehoe Conservation Camp
Castleton, VT

**The Wildlife Society
20th Annual Conference**

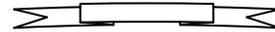
October 4-9, 2013
Delta Center
Milwaukee, WI

Pennsylvania TWS Objectives

1. To develop and promote sound stewardship of wildlife resources and of the environments upon which wildlife and humans depend.
2. To undertake an active role in preventing human-induced environmental degradation.
3. To increase awareness and appreciation of wildlife values.
4. To seek the highest standards in all activities of the wildlife profession.
5. To serve the specialized needs of Pennsylvania in wildlife resource management.

—Who’s Who on the Board—

2012 Executive Board Members
Pennsylvania Chapter of The Wildlife Society



President.....Tammy Colt
Vice-President.....Merlin Benner
Past President.....Virginia Tilden
Secretary.....Scott Bearer
Treasurer.....Emily Just
Northeast Section Representative.....Emily Thomas
Website Manager.....Jeannine Fleegle
Newsletter Editor.....Jennifer Dzimiel
Membership Coordinator.....Wendy Vreeland
At-Large Members... Mario Giazon
Christina Voorhees
Clayton Lutz
Samantha Pedder

PA TWS T-shirts have been to.....

Niagara Falls

Well hey it’s me- Jennifer. This is my 2nd to last newsletter, (so what the heck.) Of course, I remembered to bring my PA TWS t-shirt on vacation. I have to agree with all the guidebooks the American side is nicer, more natural; however, if you want the best panoramic view go to the Canadian side.

Show us where you’ve taken your PA TWS clothing. Send photos to Jennifer Dzimiel, Newsletter Editor, at jennifer.dzimiel@aphis.usda.gov

—To view our clothing online visit <http://joomla.wildlife.org/pa> and click on “Merchandise.”



Jennifer Dzimiel, PA TWS Newsletter editor, at Niagara Falls, on the Canada side.