



Winter 2015

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NEW MEXICO CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

President's Message—Quentin Hays

Hello New Mexico Wildlifers!

I'd like to begin by thanking everyone who attended the 2015 Joint Annual Meeting of the NM and AZ Chapters of TWS and the NM/AZ Chapter of the American Fisheries Society in Las Cruces in February. The conference was a resounding success, due in no small part to the quality of the student and professional presenters, and to the hard work of all involved in the planning process. In particular, the now past-President of NM TWS, Jimmy Cain, did a tremendous job putting JAM together, and deserves all of our thanks for his hard work.

On that note, we recently received big news from the Parent Society—the 2017 Annual Conference is coming to Albuquerque! Although this has been in the works for some time, and may have been hinted at previously, the contracts have been signed and it is official, New Mexico will once again be hosting the largest annual gathering of wildlife professionals and future-professionals in North America! Some of the old-timers might recall that Albuquerque played host to the very 1st Annual Conference in 1994, and will soon join Portland, Oregon as the only 2-time host cities. This is big news for New Mexico, and for the Southwest in general. The 2017 conference will mark a decade since Tucson hosted the Annual Conference in 2007, and it's going to take a concerted effort from all of our members to make this an enjoyable and successful gathering for everyone who travels to our great state to attend.

I'd also like to follow-up on comments I made during the NM TWS business meeting and later at the banquet during the Joint Annual Meeting in Las Cruces. Specifically, I'd like to issue a challenge to everyone reading this newsletter. Do something! Do something for The Wildlife Society, for the New Mexico Chapter! Write an article for the newsletter and share your work with a larger audience, reach out to a student group and engage future professionals, nominate a valued colleague for the professional award. In short, commit to do more than just what your studies or your current realm of employment might entail. The profession needs it, the resource needs it, and your friends and colleagues here at NM TWS could use the help.

Finally, I do want to also say that I have high hopes for my tenure as President in 2015. I'm working with the board members and the many behind the scenes folks to plan a 1-day New Mexico wildlife conference for this coming fall, which will hopefully help energize our membership for the push toward 2017. I'm also hoping to finally revise our by-laws to make them more effective and appropriate for the times, so be on the lookout for these revisions to be distributed to the membership for approval sometime soon.

Thanks as always for being dedicated to our profession in New Mexico. Please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or to the board with questions, thoughts, ideas, or with concerns. Be sure to put 2017 on your calendar now!

-Quentin

NM-TWS Website: <http://wildlife.org/NM/>

Follow us on Twitter: @NewMexicoTWS

NM TWS Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Wildlife-Society-New-Mexico-Chapter/122478411098284>



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Joint Annual Meeting

The Joint Annual Meeting of the New Mexico and Arizona Chapters of The Wildlife Society and the American Fisheries Society in Las Cruces, NM was a huge success!

Items of note:

- Erin Saunders of Northern Arizona University won the student wildlife presentation competition with Matt Gould of New Mexico State University as the runner up.
- Susan Bard and Sarah Kindschuh were the recipients of the NM TWS Biodiversity Conservation Scholarships.
- Kyle Garrison won the Outstanding Student Award.
- New Mexico State University won the Student Quiz Bowl Competition

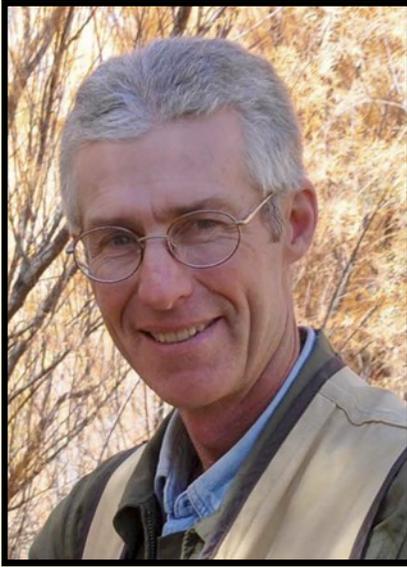


A huge thank you to the judges and workshop leaders: Jim Heffelfinger, Reed Sanderson, Harley Shaw, Matt Wunder, James Dominguez, Shelly Shepherd, Dr. David Daniel, Kerry Mower, Alex Hansell, Brian Anthony, Chuck Hayes, and Leland Pierce!



All photos by Justin Hebert

NM TWS Wildlife Professional of the Year—Kerry Mower NMDGF



Kerry Mower, 20-year wildlife disease specialist for the Department of Game and Fish, recently was presented with the 2015 Wildlife Professional Award by the New Mexico Chapter of The Wildlife Society. The award is given annually to a wildlife professional for outstanding contributions in their field related to wildlife in New Mexico.

As the department’s wildlife disease specialist, Mower is widely recognized as the go-to guy for wildlife disease issues throughout New Mexico and across the west. His efforts have greatly improved the department’s disease-monitoring of chronic wasting and other diseases. He also leads the department’s efforts to improve techniques involved in wildlife captures and restraint procedures used in projects such as trapping and relocation of bighorn sheep, deer, and pronghorn.

“Kerry is always willing to lend assistance or provide advice on animal handling and drug use during wildlife captures across the state,” Department Director Alexandra Sandoval said. “His dedication to improving wildlife health, maintaining positive relationships with colleagues within and outside of the department, and inspiring the next generation of wildlife biologists makes him an invaluable wildlife biologist.”

Mower, who received his Ph.D. from Ohio State University, goes out of his way to provide hands-on experience to students aspiring to be wildlife professionals. He regularly gives presentations to the New Mexico State University Chapter of The Wildlife Society and interacts with various student groups across the state.

“Kerry is the epitome of a wildlife professional,” Sandoval said.

Migratory Bird Rule Meetings

Public meetings have been scheduled for the following dates and venues specifically to gather information for changes to the Migratory Bird Rule.

- 13 April—Las Cruces NMDGF Office, 7–8:30 pm
- 6 May—Farmington National Guard Armory, 6:30–8:30 pm
- 14 May—Albuquerque NMDGF Office, 7–8:30 pm

Oryx Rule

Changes to the Oryx Rule can be found here: www.wildlife.state.nm.us/download/commission/public-comment/Oryx/Oryx-Rule-Change.pdf and comments can be emailed to DGF.BarbSheep-Oryx-@state.nm.us

Bear/Cougar Rule

The Bear and Cougar Rule is currently open for review. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish website will be updated with information on specific changes as they become available.

NMDGF Mule Deer and Pronghorn Translocations—Ryan Darr and Ryan Walker

For the past several years NMDGF personnel have worked with various private landowners, state agencies, and federal agencies to translocate mule deer and pronghorn around and out of New Mexico to supplement small local populations while alleviating chronic problems in high-density populations.

Mule Deer:

- 2013–110 moved across southwestern NM
- 2014–183 moved across southern NM
- 2015–87 moved across southern and northern NM



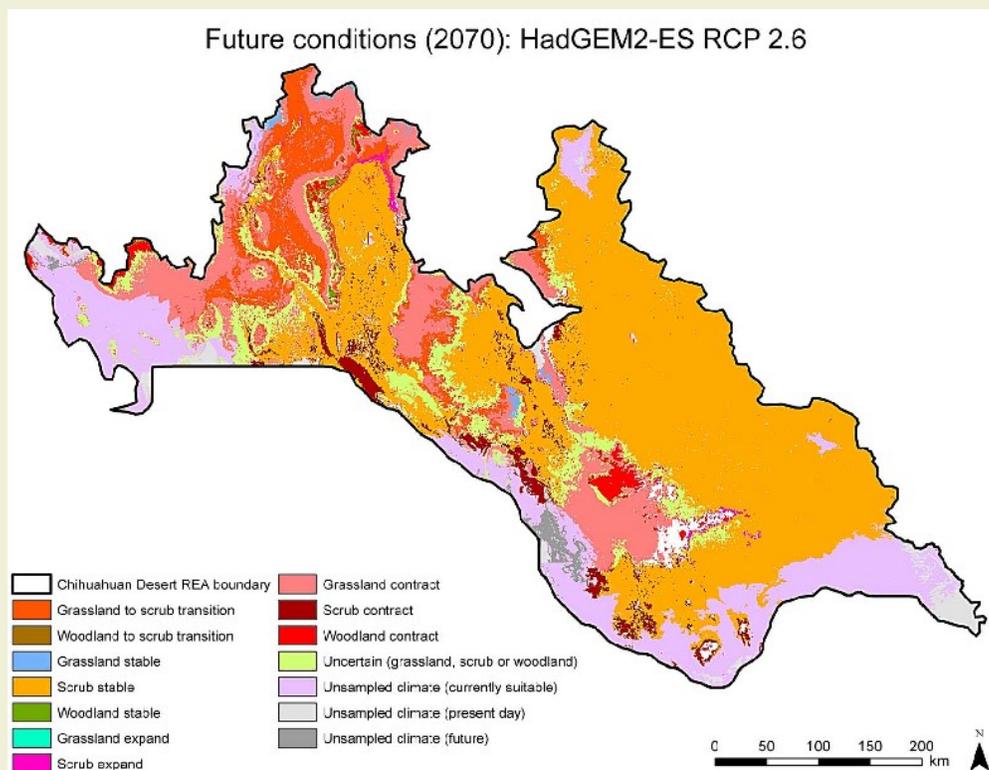
Pronghorn:

- 2013–169 moved to southern NM
- 2014–201 moved to Arizona and southern NM
- 2015–103 moved to southern NM



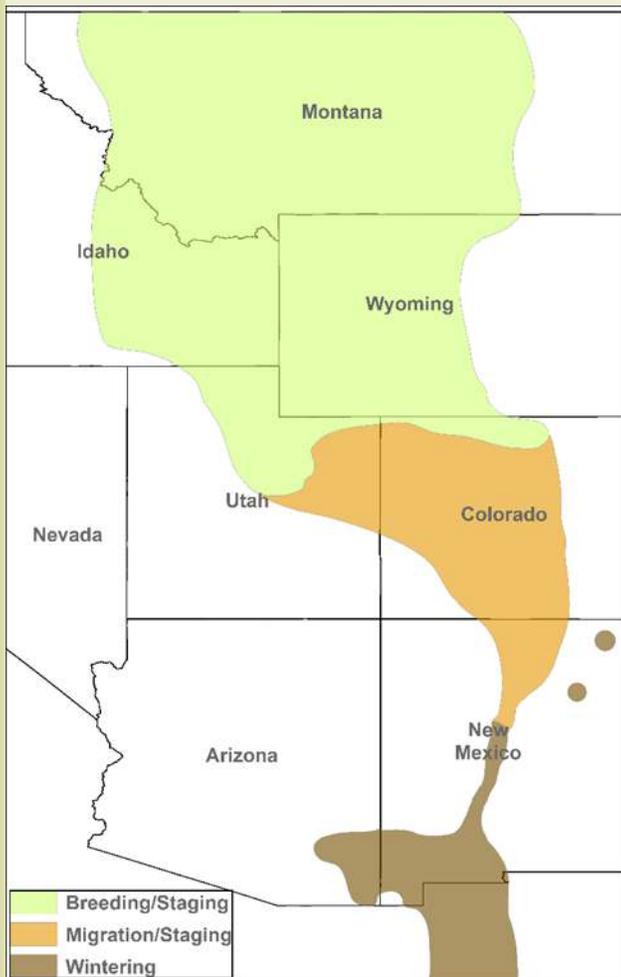
Researching climate change impacts on vegetation in the Chihuahuan Desert at the Center for Applied Spatial Ecology at New Mexico State University—Ginny Seamster

I'm very happy to be starting out 2015 as the new president-elect for the New Mexico Chapter of The Wildlife Society. I wanted to give an update on a short-term project I'm involved in as a post-doctoral research scientist in the Center for Applied Spatial Ecology at New Mexico State University. This project involves answering a few of the many management questions posed by the Bureau of Land Management as part of the Chihuahuan Desert Rapid Ecological Assessment (REA). Researchers at the Jornada Long Term Ecological Research site are heading up the assessment and are in charge of gathering the data and generating the final document. The overarching goal of the REA is to gather as much existing information as possible on questions pertaining to the current status and potential future condition of a number of natural resources, ecosystems, and species of conservation concern within the Chihuahuan Desert. The questions I'm working on relate to the effects of climate change on three broad vegetation types: Chihuahuan Desert grassland, Chihuahuan Desert scrub, and piñon-juniper woodland. I've used scenarios of future climatic conditions from the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report and information on topographic variables (elevation, slope, aspect) to generate preliminary models of suitable environmental conditions for these 3 vegetation types (see figure). These models are limited to the US portion of the Chihuahuan Desert. These initial results indicate that by 2070 there may be large areas where grassland is lost and potentially replaced by scrub vegetation. They also indicate that much of the area where piñon-juniper woodland is currently found is likely to become unsuitable for this vegetation type in future. This is true even under the future climate scenario with the lowest projected greenhouse gas concentrations. I'm in the process of including soil-related variables in the models and revising the final report.



Research on the Ecology of the Rocky Mountain Population of Greater Sandhill Cranes Wintering in the Middle Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico—Matt Boggie and Scott Carleton, NMSU

Water scarcity and land conversion in the West has negatively impacted seasonal habitats that migratory birds have come to rely upon to carry out their life histories. Regionally, in the Middle Rio Grande Valley (MRGV) of New Mexico, persistent drought, human-induced changes in hydrology and land use has raised concern that availability of overwinter habitat may be a limiting factor for the Rocky Mountain Population (RMP) of greater sandhill cranes (*Grus canadensis tabida*; hereafter cranes). Over 80% of the 18,000 cranes belonging to the RMP winter in the MRGV and their range spans throughout part of the Intermountain West, Southwest, and several states of Mexico.



The Pacific and Central Flyways and the USFWS Webless Migratory Bird Program have identified priority information needs for the RMP which include (1) refinement and updating of survival estimates to better guide decision making for harvest management, and (2) impacts of changes in land use on the RMP. The USGS Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at New Mexico State University will spearhead the initiative to fill these information gaps. We will investigate the demographics and space use patterns of cranes to infer how survival is influenced by habitat conditions on the wintering grounds and relate the distribution of and temporal variation in resources to movement patterns of cranes to identify ecological factors that may be limiting the population. Furthermore, we will estimate the daily energetic requirements of cranes and true metabolic energy of food resources used by cranes to determine the carrying capacity of the MRGV. Ultimately we will use these data to evaluate how current and future changes in habitat may impact the persistence of the RMP in the MRGV.

Our 1st field season is currently underway and we are capturing cranes and attaching ~30 Platform Transmitter Terminals (PTTs) to cranes belonging to the RMP to address the priority information needs. The PTTs will provide fine scale, highly accurate locational fixes of PTT-tagged cranes throughout their entire range for the next three to five years. In collaboration with

federal and state partners, we will have the opportunity to examine the relationship between demographic performance and the quality of the suite of habitats the RMP uses throughout its entire range to prioritize range-wide strategies for conservation actions.

National Update—Carol Chambers



Big news—The annual TWS conference returns to **Albuquerque 23-27 September 2017**. The first meeting was held in Albuquerque in 1994 and it was a great one. Plan now to attend this one. Albuquerque is a great place for the conference and conference organizers are excited to show you the state. Quentin Hayes (Quentin.Hays@enmu.edu), president of the New Mexico Chapter, has formed an organizing committee to kick off planning.

In general—Finances have been a major focus for TWS this past year and although we are on sound financial footing, we continue to rebuild TWS assets. We are functioning under the new strategic plan and working on increasing membership. TWS website (<http://wildlife.org/>) is dynamic with new articles added weekly on wildlifer events. Our very popular *The Wildlife Professional* will be going from 4 to 6 issues a year starting in 2016. Government Affairs staff researched, wrote, and produced news articles on the website related to wildlife policy and staff activities including bird-focused additions to Policy Brief Series and Energy Fact Sheets. Check out the 11 fact sheets and 10 policy briefs at www.wildlife.org/policy.

Membership—Membership has declined by about 1,000 members over the past 2 years. TWS is working on adding even more value to your membership with the updated website, weekly eWildlifer, and more. Review membership benefits and buy a student a membership; for information about benefits, see <http://wildlife.org/membership-benefits/>. Strong membership supports the changes we want to make at state, section, national, and international levels by supporting (at all levels) things like the Conservation Affairs Network. TWS is also raising funds through The 1,000 Campaign (over \$100,000 to date which helps support TWS initiatives).



Conferences—This is the year of the international meeting so have your passport ready. The 2015 annual conference is in Wininpeg, Manitoba, Canada (17–21 October). The call for contributed papers and posters is on with deadline to submit abstracts by **24 April**. If you are a student and want to present work in progress, deadline for abstracts for Student Research in Progress Posters is **18 June**. Check out conference information at <http://wildlife.org/2015conference/>.

There is another opportunity for international travel to the Fifth International Wildlife Management Congress (<http://iwmc2015.org/>) coming up 26–30 July 2015, in Sapporo, Japan.



5th International Wildlife Management Congress July 26-30, 2015 in Sapporo, Japan

National Update—Carol Chambers

WOW—The Southwest Section helped sponsor 2 events for women at the Joint Annual Meeting of the Arizona and New Mexico Chapters of The Wildlife Society and the Texas Chapter TWS meeting. We are forming a WOW committee to bring connections we started at the annual conferences to local levels. At these events we asked participants what they wanted from a WOW network so send me any thoughts you have regarding the direction WOW should take in future to help you or wildlifers you know. Networking, mentoring, and face-time interactions seem to be important to women at all levels of their careers or training.



Social Media—The Wildlife Society Southwest Section Chapters Hub has jumped in ‘likes’ from 256 to 349 since December. Check us out at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Wildlife-Society-Southwest-Section-Chapters-Hub/205755042835210>. The TWS Women of Wildlife (WOW) Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/TWS-Women-of-Wildlife/234411723382592>) is now at 981 likes, up from 926 in December. Find the latest news from the TWS office at the TWS Facebook page with currently over 25,000 likes.

Farewell—After almost 6 years on Council, I’ll be stepping down this October and want to thank you for electing me to this position. I’ve learned more than I ever imagined, made more connections than I ever expected, and hope I’ve also been able to benefit the Section as much as being the Rep has benefitted me. I’ve tried to help by starting the biannual newsletter (now on volume 5), develop a Facebook presence, WOW activities, awards, website, and will continue to work for TWS after my position ends. Benefit from being part of TWS by making sure that you are one of the over 9,000 TWS members. Contact me at Carol.Chambers@nau.edu or 928-523-0014 (office) with any comments or questions. And thank you for allowing me to represent you at TWS.



Current and former Southwest (SW) Section leadership at the Texas Chapter TWS meeting. Seated (L-R): Selma Glasscock, Past President SW Section; Mark Wallace, Current President SW Section; Carol Chambers, SW Section Rep to Council. Standing (L-R): Leland Pierce, Nova Silvy, and Louis Harveson, Past Presidents SW Section

National Update—Carol Chambers

More big news—Elections are coming up and you need to vote in a new Southwest Section Rep and Vice President. The Wildlife Society has announced candidates for positions on TWS Council at <http://wildlife.org/meet-the-candidates-tws-2015-elections/>. Our 2 candidates for Southwest Section Rep are Kathy Granillo (NM) and Fidel Hernández (TX). Their biographies are provided below or at the web link above. In addition, you will be voting for TWS Vice President and our candidates include Selma Glasscock, a Southwesterner (TX, Southwest Section Past President, Texas Chapter Past President) and John E. McDonald (former Northeast Section Rep to Council). Make sure to vote when you receive your electronic ballot.



Kathy Granillo—I have lived and worked in the Southwest for about 25 years, and the wild lands and wildlife of this area are near and dear to my heart. The world of wildlife management and research is comprised of a relatively small, close-knit group of very dedicated people. Through my many years of working across the Southwest, and through my involvement in TWS, I have gotten to know many of these people well. They care deeply about wildlife resources. They work long hours. They do good things for wildlife. They need someone who knows the issues in the southwest to speak up at the national level; to be their voice to TWS leadership. They also need to hear back from leadership. I believe I can do this and do it well.

I would focus on better communication between scientists and managers. I have a long-time interest in improving communication between these two groups and I believe that TWS has a large role to play in this endeavor.

Another top issue for me is involving youth and minorities in conservation and science. We need more young people, from diverse backgrounds, to engage in conservation and to pursue careers in wildlife research and management.

An issue that I care deeply about is rapidly accelerating climate change. Anyone who lives in the southwest has seen and felt the changes—hotter and drier, with more intense weather events. I would keep this issue in the limelight while working with national, section and the state chapters.



Fidel Hernandez—Rarely do we appreciate an experience during the present. Appreciation generally occurs many years later, after some time has passed, and we can evaluate life retrospectively. Such was my experience regarding professional service. I have been involved with the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society and our parent society since a student, nearly 20 years ago, and this involvement has continued through my professional career. I have served as Committee Chair of numerous state and national committees and as President and officer for the Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society. The primary impetus for my initial involvement arose as service to my profession. I never realized, however, that in addition to serving our profession there was an added value to professional involvement—leading by example.

As professors or mentors of young professionals, we often encourage their involvement in our profession. We preach on the value and benefits of professional involvement. Being an effective mentor, however, is more than educating. It also is leading by example. Today, I remain active not only for professional service but also to hopefully inspire the young professionals in my sphere of influence to do the same. The growth and prosperity of our profession requires the involvement of all, from the incipient to the seasoned. I value the opportunity to represent our society as the Southwest Section Representative and hope others are inspired to join our effort.

Playa Lake Joint Venture Board Approves 2015 ConocoPhillips Grants

Five Funded Projects Support PLJV Habitat and Research Priorities

At the winter meeting in January, the PLJV Management Board approved over \$102,000 in PLJV ConocoPhillips grants in support of 5 conservation projects. These projects will contribute to the conservation of bird habitat in the region through a research study and habitat preservation or restoration efforts:

- **Wintering Sandhill Crane Landscape Use, Texas - \$24,998**
- **Quivira National Wildlife Refuge Wetland Restoration, Kansas - \$25,000**
- **Prescribed Burning for Mountain Plover Habitat, Colorado - \$15,126**
- **Cheyenne Bottoms Preserve Wetland Restoration Project, Kansas - \$25,000**
- **Stinchcomb Wildlife Area Addition, Oklahoma - \$12,481**

“We are quite pleased with both the number and quality of the proposals submitted,” says PLJV Conservation Delivery Leader Christopher Rustay, who manages the grant program. “We received 15 proposals with a total request of more than \$359,000. We only wish we had the funds to support more of these great projects.”

Two Funded Projects Support Lesser Prairie-chicken Conservation

This year, the PLJV Management Board also approved two grants, totaling nearly \$97,000, that support Lesser Prairie-chicken conservation. The additional funds were provided by ConocoPhillips to help implement new and innovative conservation approaches for the species.

“Our goal with this new grant program was to offer support for highly applied Lesser Prairie-chicken research and projects that strengthen the permanent capacity of organizations delivering on-the-ground conservation. There has been a consensus from our partners in state wildlife agencies, federal agencies and NGOs that these grants fill a gap by providing funding for valuable projects that couldn’t be supported by other Lesser Prairie-chicken conservation programs,” says PLJV Deputy Coordinator Bob McCready.

The funded projects will provide needed research on Lesser Prairie-chicken habitat restoration and opportunities for partnership development:

- **Response of Lesser Prairie-chickens to Mesquite Removal and Prescribed Fire, New Mexico - \$46,891**
- **Verifying Ground-based Habitat Quality Monitoring and Micro-Habitat Selection by Lesser Prairie-chickens with Remote Sensing Technology, Kansas - \$50,000**

For more information about the PLJV ConocoPhillips Grant Program or to discuss habitat conservation project ideas, contact Christopher Rustay at 505-243-0737.



Lesser Prairie-chicken
Ryan Walker

IWJV Capacity Grants Program 2015 Request For Proposals (RFP) Now Available

The [Intermountain West Joint Venture \(IWJV\) Capacity Grants Program](#) is intended to build capacity and catalyze partnerships that measurably contribute to the protection, restoration, or enhancement of priority bird habitats to support sustainable populations of birds in the Intermountain West. Successful capacity grants are meant to join conservation partners together—around priority areas, habitats, or bird species—to improve conservation program effectiveness.



<http://iwjv.org/news/capacity-grants-program-2015-request-proposals-available>

To learn more about 2015 Capacity Grants Program, you can tune into the webinar the IWJV is hosting on March 20th.

<http://iwjv.org/news/iwjv-hosting-webinar-about-capacity-grants-program>

NEW MEXICO CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

New Mexico Chapter -
The Wildlife Society
P.O. Box 35936
Albuquerque, NM 87176

NM-TWS is an active affiliate of The Wildlife Society that is dedicated to promoting sound management and conservation of New Mexico's wildlife resources.

Membership is open to all professionals, students, and laypersons interested in wildlife research, management, education, and administration.

Our chapter works to maintain communication among wildlife professionals; encourages communication between those professionals and the general public; supports continuing education through grants, workshops, and regional meetings; encourages student involvement in the wildlife profession; and actively participates in shaping management and conservation policy through letters, public statements, and resolutions.

We're on the Web!

Check out our new website that was created last year. <http://wildlife.org/nm>



Membership Form

<i>First name</i>				
<i>Last name</i>				
<i>Organization</i>				
<i>Address</i>				
<i>City</i>		<i>State</i>		<i>ZIP</i>
<i>Telephone (day)</i>		<i>Fax</i>		
<i>Email</i>				

Please join or update your membership today!

Thank You!

Please complete the membership form and mail it with your \$8 dues to:

**The Wildlife Society
New Mexico Chapter
P.O. Box 35936**

Albuquerque, NM 87176-3593

*For updates to your mailing or email address
please contact Dan Collins, dan_collins@fws.gov*