

GEORGIA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Winter-Spring 2017

Save the Date

GATWS Annual Meeting
Sept. 7–8, 2017
Alcovy Conservation Ctr.
Covington, GA

Contact Us

<http://wildlife.org/georgia-chapter/>

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President's Message

Since you are reading this you no doubt realize that the GA Chapter of TWS has started a newsletter. This newsletter is due to the dedication of several Executive Committee members, who not only volunteered to steer this new endeavor but are excited about the future prospects of bringing pertinent information to members within our state. However, for this newsletter to grow and be of value, those individuals will need input from members to make it a viable and useful tool for disseminating information.

As we prepare for the 2017 Annual Meeting of the GA Chapter of TWS, I believe we are entering a new era for our chapter. We have an enthusiastic Executive Committee that wants to use input from members to make positive changes to our chapter. For the first time in several years we will have our annual meeting at a location other than UGA or ABAC. This year's meeting will take place on September 7th and 8th at the Georgia Wildlife Federation's facility near Covington, GA. It is just off I-20 east of Atlanta. Check out their website at <http://www.gwf.org/Home.aspx>. We hope by changing the venues we can enhance the overall experience of the meeting and, in the future, increase opportunities for activities outside the meeting itself, such as optional field trips. We want to continue to have meetings on or near those campuses, as well as others in the state, and maintain those relationships, but we also want to broaden the scope of the areas we meet, which will hopefully allow for more individuals to be a part of our meetings by moving them around the state.

There are a couple of other things being discussed that will hopefully enhance future meetings and broaden the networking venue. I have been approached by members of the GA Chapter of the American Fisheries Society regarding the potential for a joint meeting in the future, and I plan to pursue this possibility. Joint meetings with adjacent states are another idea that is being tossed around.

I believe we are on the right track to enhancing the overall experience for members of the GA TWS. We want continued input from the membership, because this is **YOUR** chapter. We as an Executive Committee can plan meetings, work on newsletters, and make decisions to guide the Georgia Chapter into the future, but without your input we will likely fall short of member expectations. Let's work together to improve our chapter!

Daymond Hughes
President, GA Chapter of TWS

Executive Committee Update



GA TWS Executive Committee members (left to right): Jen Howze (Member-at-large), Brent Howze (Treasurer), Andrew Edelman (Secretary), Jason Scott (Past president), Krishna Faw (Policy chair), Sharon Holbrooks (Member-at-large), Tina Johannsen (President elect), and Daymond Hughes (President).

The GA TWS Executive Committee most recently held a meeting on February 3 at the GADNR Rum Creek Nongame Office in Forsyth. The board finalized details for the upcoming annual meeting at Alcovy Conservation Center. New initiatives aimed at improving communication to the chapter and increasing membership recruitment and retention were also discussed. The board is always interested in hearing from members regarding the direction and management of the chapter.

Treasurer's Report:

As of February, we have \$5,981.87 in our chapter account, which is after recent donations of \$1,000 to the Robert J. Warren Graduate Fellowship and \$750 to the ABAC student chapter and \$750 to the UGA student chapter for wildlife conclave support. The Georgia Chapter currently has 130 members and we have recently reserved the Georgia Wildlife Federation facilities in Covington for our annual fall meeting. Registration and dues can be paid via check or Paypal (<http://wildlife.org/georgia-chapter/annual-meeting/>). Looking forward to seeing everyone this year in Covington!

Georgia Chapter of TWS Annual Meeting

September 7–8, 2017 at the Alcovy Conservation Center, Covington

The Georgia Wildlife Federation (GWF) is graciously hosting our annual meeting at their Alcovy Conservation Center (ACC) and we are excited about the amenities this location offers for our group. We want to be responsive to membership desires to see the meeting move around, but we are also sympathetic to the costs in both time and money to attend. The ACC is about 45 minutes south of Athens and a little more convenient to our ABAC crowd than our traditional meeting location at Whitehall Forest in Athens. The other thing we hope folks will take advantage of is the opportunity to camp on the grounds of the ACC. We'll have a cookout Thursday evening at the Tupelo Pavilion, so anyone who wishes to stay the night is welcome to do so. The ACC has many trails and native plant gardens to wander so we can balance inside time gaining knowledge and networking with outside time enjoying some fresh air! There are a couple of hotels at the same exit off Interstate 20 for those who prefer not to "rough it". We hope y'all join us!



Pictured: Alcovy Conservation Center, Covington (left) and the Tupelo Pavilion (right).

University of Georgia Student Chapter

This year, the Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society at the University of Georgia has participated in multiple community-wide events and TWS specific events. In November of 2016, a few of our members traveled to Tifton, Georgia for the annual Georgia Chapter of the Wildlife Society conference to learn about research being done within our state and network with Georgia wildlife professionals. In October of 2016, our chapter volunteered time to participate in a Halloween-themed event at the local nature center to teach children how to identify animal skulls they could find in Georgia and inspire local kids to take an interest in nature. In that same month, a group of our members and our quiz bowl team traveled to Raleigh, North Carolina for the 23rd annual National Wildlife Society conference to meet with peers and professionals from all over the country while bringing home the gold in the quiz bowl competition. In February of this year, a few of our officers volunteered their time to teach local boy scouts about wildlife management to help them achieve their wildlife merit badges. Last month, our chapter traveled to Starkville, Mississippi to compete in the 2017 Southeastern Wildlife Conclave where we placed in multiple individual competitions and received first place in team competition, quiz bowl, and overall, all while mingling with fellow wildlife students from throughout the southeast. This month, we will hold our annual Wild Game Supper where we will cook and serve various game animals to friends and family and share with them the importance of wildlife management.



University of Georgia TWS Conclave Team

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College Student Chapter

This year's 2017 Southeastern Student Conclave was hosted at Mississippi State University (MSU) in Starkville, Mississippi with an attendance of twenty-four student chapters. As for ABAC's student chapter of the wildlife society we had sixteen students as well as three professors attend this year. The event lasted a total of three days with the main events occurring on Friday and Saturday. The primary event that occurs during conclave is quiz bowl which our student chapter participated in and placed fourth overall out of the twenty-four rival student chapters. Our competitors were Erik Sandal, Luther Langley, Tucker Stonecypher and Zachery Wood. The second important event is the team competition which our student chapter placed seventh overall out of twenty-four student chapters. Lastly, individual competitions were varied in results but we placed first in both fly casting (Kyle King) and orienteering (Chris Terrazas and Jacob Wilson), second in shotgun (Will Glisson), third in lab practical (Tucker Stonecypher), fourth in radio telemetry (Miranda Wilkinson and Zach Wood), and fifth in the obstacle course (Danielle Clark and Parker Gerdes). As an additional trip we traveled to the Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee Wildlife Refuge located near MSU. We explored around the green tree reservoirs, the woodpecker trail, and the goose overlook where we observed a bowfin exhibiting parental care! Overall it was a great trip that provided an opportunity for our student chapter to showcase the professional skills that we've developed throughout participation in The Wildlife Society as well as skills that we have learned in the classroom. We would like to take a moment to thank the Georgia Chapter of The Wildlife Society for helping provide the opportunity for this trip to be possible.



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College TWS Conclave Team

Professional Spotlight

Jen Howze, Joseph Jones Ecological Research Center

I knew that I wanted to work at Ichauway (the site of the Joseph Jones Ecological Research Center) after taking the UGA Wildlife Maymester course led by Dr. Warren (UGA) and Dr. Conner (Jones Center) when I was an undergrad back in 2002. That class not only solidified my desire for wildlife research but also provided a stunning example of the longleaf pine ecosystem; a system known to host a high diversity of floral and faunal communities, including many endemic species of conservation concern.

My Ichauway career and first official field job began in the summer of 2003. I was lucky enough to get a position as a seasonal field researcher working for a graduate student conducting a bat ecology study. I still laugh when I think about how “green” I was and so convinced on my first night of mist netting over a pond that I would be eaten by an alligator. After completing that field job in one piece and graduating with my undergrad degree, I took on several more field positions which eventually led to getting into grad school and obtaining an M.S. in wildlife at UGA.

I landed my second and current position at Ichauway in 2007. My overall job duty is to coordinate/manage research activities geared toward the conservation of reptiles and amphibians in the longleaf pine ecosystem. This position is a great mix of field work and time spent in the office where I have the opportunity to analyze data, write manuscripts, and present our research at meetings.

I also spend a great deal of time hiring and supervising seasonal field technicians and wanted to close with the following unsolicited advice to students/recent graduates looking to get their foot in the door in this competitive wildlife field:

- 1) **Work really hard.** In the wildlife field, a good work ethic pays off and solid references are really important in obtaining job positions. The wildlife field is a small world. Do not burn any bridges.
- 2) **Get as much field experience, as possible.** Most graduate students would not turn away free labor. While in school, volunteer on nights, weekends, or during spring break on grad student or other projects. Not only will you gain some insight into the types of jobs that interest you, volunteering may lead to a paid position. Don't wait to graduate before you start trying to gain field experience. Wildlife positions can be pretty competitive. I typically get anywhere from 50-100 applications for one seasonal position.
- 3) **Network.** Attend meetings (like GATWS) to meet professionals who could be potential employers. Don't waste an opportunity to make a good impression, ask questions, and identify potential employers/agencies you may be interested in working with.
- 4) **Take advantage of every opportunity.** Go on field trips to learn about different wildlife techniques, research, management, habitat types, and to meet potential employers. Be active in The Wildlife Society.
- 5) And finally, **develop good relationships with your peers.** You may someday be future collaborators.



Jen (Linehan) Howze is the Herpetology Research Associate at the Joseph Jones Ecological Research Center at Ichauway Plantation in Newton, Georgia.

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Student Spotlight

Kaitlyn Torrey, University of West Georgia

I have been active in The Wildlife Society since my undergrad at the University of Georgia, in Warnell's School of Forestry and Natural Resources. During this time, I found my passion for wildlife conservation and research, which led me to the University of West Georgia to pursue a master's project on endangered bats in Alabama. This past summer, Dr. Andrew Edelman (University of West Georgia), Dr. Joseph Johnson (Ohio University), Jonathan Stober (Talladega National Forest), our amazing technicians, Zachariah Bell, Hannah Gunter, Mattea Lewis, and Cali Wilson, and I worked tirelessly to capture and track northern myotis (*Myotis septentrionalis*) and Indiana myotis (*Myotis sodalis*) at the Talladega National Forest. Our objective was to examine roost site selection and foraging patterns of these two declining species in response to fire-based restoration of longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) forests. We tracked each radio tagged individual daily to determine day roosts and foraging movements. The Southeastern Bat Diversity Network (SBDN) members also provided valuable assistance with capturing endangered bats during the Southeastern Bat Blitz.



Pictured: female northern myotis (*Myotis septentrionalis*) and her pup (left); and female gray myotis (*Myotis grisescens*) (right).

Our preliminary results suggest these endangered bats roosted and foraged in forests with frequent prescribed fire more than expected by availability. Indiana myotis roosted mainly in large pine snags, whereas northern myotis roosted in a wide range of living and dead trees. Other highlights of the summer included the discovery of an extra limit maternity colony of southeastern myotis (*Myotis austroriparius*) and the successful tracking of a gray myotis (*Myotis grisescens*) from its capture site to cave roost (>18 km away). We will continue this research through the summer of 2017 to obtain more data on roost selection and foraging behavior of these endangered bats. I was fortunate to be able to present my research at the 2016 GATWS meeting. I won first place for graduate student poster presentation. As always, going to GATWS meetings allow me to not only share my research, but also learn about other research going on in the state. Additionally, I was able to network with other students and professionals in the wildlife field.



Kaitlyn Torrey is a second year M.S. student in the Department of Biology at the University of West Georgia. She has a B.S in Fisheries and Wildlife from the University of Georgia.

Reggie Thackston Receives McDonough Award



Georgia Chapter member Reggie Thackston was selected for the prestigious 2016 Jim McDonough Award from The Wildlife Society. This award is presented to TWS members that are Certified Wildlife Biologists, members of their respective section and chapter, and have made important contributions to the field. Reggie recently retired after 27 years at the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division of the Department of Natural Resources. Currently, he is working part-time with Tall Timbers Research Station as part of the Carolina Regional Quail Project. Congratulations to Reggie on this outstanding achievement!

Georgia Department of Natural Resources Updates

Georgians to Benefit from Agency Cooperation

In early December, the Directors from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the USDA Farm Services Agency (FSA) met to sign an important Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two agencies that is sure to improve the already strong relationship between the agencies.



This MOU allows biologists with the Georgia DNR to more efficiently assist FSA staff with such initiatives as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This 30-year old program provides rental payments to participating farmers in exchange for removing land of conservation concern from agricultural production.

Highlights for Georgia include CP-36 (CRP Longleaf Pine Initiative) and CP-33 (Habitat buffers for Upland Birds) - both important efforts for creating critical habitat for wildlife.

Georgia Coyote Challenge Begins March 2017; Brings Chance to Win a Lifetime License

In order to encourage the taking of coyotes from March to August, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division is introducing the Georgia Coyote Challenge. Each coyote killed, up to five (5) a month per hunter/trapper, will earn an entry into a monthly drawing for a lifetime license (or equal credit for purchase of hunting/fishing licenses).

“Currently, scientific research suggests that removal of coyotes during the spring and summer is the most advantageous time to reduce the impact of predation on native wildlife,” says Georgia DNR Commissioner Mark Williams. “We want to encourage coyote removal efforts during this critical period.”

The coyote (*Canis latrans*) is a non-native predator that can be found in every county in Georgia and has the unique ability to live in a variety of habitats. Trapping and/or hunting are legal and recommended methods for managing coyotes.

More information at www.georgiawildlife.com/hunting/resources/CoyoteChallenge.

Gov. Deal, DNR Leaders Honor 2016 Forestry for Wildlife Partners

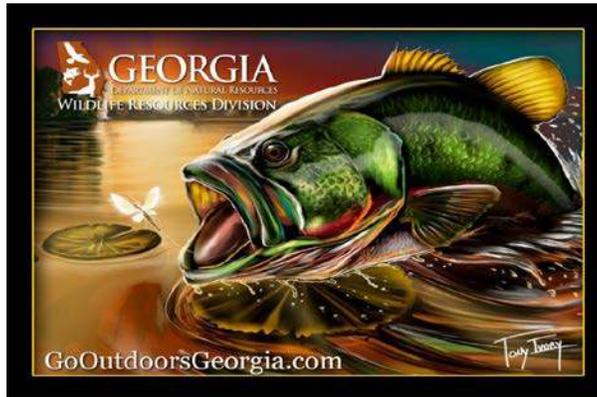
Gov. Nathan Deal recently recognized three corporate forest landowners, Georgia Power, CatchMark Timber Trust and Weyerhaeuser, for their stewardship and land management practices benefiting Georgia's wildlife. These corporations participate in the Forestry for Wildlife Partnership, a program administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division. This voluntary program promotes sustainable forest and wildlife conservation in corporate forestry practices. Partners tailor guidelines to improve management for reforestation, harvesting techniques, recreation, sensitive sites and outreach.

The efforts of Forestry for Wildlife partners have benefited red-cockaded woodpeckers, nesting bald eagle and swallow-tailed kites, isolated wetlands critical to protected reptiles and amphibians, and rare remnant Coosa Valley prairies, home to endangered plants. The partnerships also provide the public with opportunities to enjoy the outdoors through wildlife viewing, hunting and fishing.

Bass Artwork Graces New “Hard Card” for Licenses

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division offers license buyers an opportunity to add a credit card style license, illustrated with a copy of an original painting of a largemouth bass, to their order. This durable card costs \$5, lists each current license, and fits easily in your wallet.

Purchasing the licenses you need is easy: Buy it online (www.gooutdoorsgeorgia.com), at a retail license vendor (list at www.georgiawildlife.com/licenses-permits-passes) or buy it by phone at 1-800-366-2661.



Georgia Fishing Prospects for Rivers and Reservoirs Updated for 2017

If you are searching for current fishing tips for Georgia reservoirs and rivers, look no further than the updated fishing prospects on the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) website. These pages give anglers of all skill levels in-depth information detailing 32 reservoirs and 18 rivers in one convenient location - www.gofishgeorgia.com/fishing/opportunities.

The 2017 reservoir and river fishing prospect guides are compiled by Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division fisheries biologists and are based on sampling efforts, knowledge of past fishing trends, staff fishing experiences and discussions with anglers and marina owners.

Trout Stocking Will Begin Earlier in 2017

The Georgia Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service cooperatively stocked 40,000 trout in Georgia during the week of Mar. 6, giving anglers an early opportunity to harvest some freshly stocked trout in 2017. Regular weekly stockings for the 2017 stocking season are set to begin on Mar. 20, when an additional 70,000 trout will hit the water, with one million fish expected to be stocked before the end of the year.



“With the current spring-like conditions and all trout waters open to fishing year-round, we have decided to stock approximately 40,000 trout two weeks early,” says WRD trout stocking coordinator John Lee Thomson. “Due to the mild winter, we have experienced excellent trout growth in our hatcheries and with the continuing low stream flows, these fish have outgrown the available hatchery space giving us the opportunity to stock a few weeks early this year.” More info on trout fishing at www.georgiawildlife.com/fishing/trout.

Join or Renew Your Membership in Georgia TWS Today!

You can join or renew your membership in the Georgia Chapter of The Wildlife Society online or through the mail. You can renew using a credit card by logging into the national webpage at <https://wildlife.secure.force.com/> or our local webpage at <http://wildlife.org/georgia-chapter/annual-meeting/> (select the dues option).

If you prefer to renew by mail, please send a check to (make check out to Georgia Chapter of TWS):

Brent Howze
GA TWS Treasurer
2024 Newton Rd.
Albany, GA 31701

Membership Dues

\$15 for professionals

\$10 for students