

## **2017 WCTWS Joint Winter Meeting Summary**

Submitted by Derek Johnson, President

It seems like it was only a few days ago I was applauding presenters, reveling in spirited competition and listening to stories from afield. What does that sound like? You're right it was only a handful of weeks ago since the annual conference of the Wisconsin Chapter of the Wildlife Society (WCTWS). This year, as many of you know, was jointly held with the Wisconsin chapter of the American Fisheries Society (WIAFS) at the Hilton City Center in Milwaukee. I, along with the WCTWS Board and the WIAFS Board, felt that the conference was a success and we look forward to the scaled up version in January of 2018. With almost 400 total attendees there was no shortage of interdisciplinary comradery.

To begin the festivities, a social and a WIAFS poster session was enjoyed by many. This was also the night that WIAFS hosted the "Name that Roadkill" competition. Unfortunately the WIAFS was able to 'weasel' their way to victory; I think we can give them a pass since I'm sure we would need one if we had to identify mangled members of the Cyprinidae (minnow) family.

Once Wednesday rolled around a plenary session in the morning gave both chapters a peek at the work each discipline is engaged in. Most of the remaining day was filled with many breakout session presentations from students and professionals on various topics. Lunch was an opportunity for students to get to know a wildlife professional during the student-mentor luncheon. Over 25 students participated with more than a dozen mentors.

The early afternoon was when the WCTWS held the annual business meeting. The various topics and discussion during the meeting will be covered in the meeting minutes in this newsletter. I would like to thank everyone who attended the business meeting. It is crucial that the membership be engaged in chapter operations. One major note is the election results, which I'd like to congratulate once again Jeremy Holtz, Kelly VanBeek, Bob Holsman and Kristina Kennedy on their new Executive Board positions. A final highlight of the business meeting was the presentation of the Graduate and Undergraduate Aldo Leopold student scholarships to Genelle Uhrig and Lisa Zoromski, respectively.

A wonderful meal followed with the presentation of the Wisconsin Award to Tom Hauge (Wisconsin DNR) and a Special Service Recognition Award to Lesa Kardash. Both award recipients have shown great dedication to the wildlife profession and the WCTWS. Following the awards a raffle filled with many great prizes was held along with the completion of another successful silent auction.

Bright and early on Thursday was the Student Leadership Breakfast. This annual get-together for the leaders of the Student Chapters and the Executive Board is a great opportunity for each to get to know one another and share ideas for the upcoming year. The Executive Board is thankful for the active Student Chapters and look forward to working with them for many years to come. Later Thursday morning was a great opportunity to hear some more student and professional

presentations. The general session right before noon was our chance to wrap up with the student presenter awards. The judges chose Rachel Konkle as the undergraduate presenter of the year for her presentation titled, “Determining the Temporal Ecology and Predation of Greater Prairie-Chicken Nests.” The graduate presenter of the year was awarded to Emily Iehl for her talk on, “Modeling retention rates of Learn to Hunt participants in Wisconsin.”

Overall the 2017 winter conference of the Wisconsin Chapter of The Wildlife Society was a great success and we want to thank the almost 200 WCTWS attendees. We'd also like to thank the 11 graduate presenters, 10 undergraduate presenters, the Class ACT High School presenters and the 27 professional presenters that made this conference an educational experience. Finally, we'd like to thank all of those who helped plan for and work during the conference. We'll see you at the same place in 2018!