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WILDLIFE SOCIETY

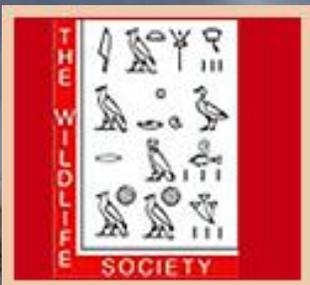
Wyoming Chapter



2013 Spring/Summer Edition Newsletter

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Cover Photo: A ragged bull bison sloughs its coat and grazes lazily after a modest winter near Jackson. M. Gocke.

Background, pp2: Tall forbs dominate a meadow in the upper Green River valley. E. Maichak.

Photos and captions of the eastern snapping turtle (pp6), Great Basin Spadefoot, Great Basin Skink, and Rubber Boa (pp17) courtesy Charlotte Snoberger.

A FEW WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT...



Chocolate chip cookie dough and ice cream, these are two things that in my mind are perfectly suited for one another. Now before you run off to get yourself some ice cream, let me tell you about another combination that I think are perfectly suited for one another: TWS and objective, scientific reviews of wildlife management actions. Not nearly as mouth watering as ice cream (now you may see why I lead with the culinary visual), but the true blending of science and management is what should get every wildlife biologist fired up and peak their excitement and interest.

In the last newsletter, I made a call to the membership to help make the WY-TWS more relevant by getting involved with their chapter and I hope that is resonating with you and you are still considering getting more involved with the chapter. The other side of becoming more relevant within the state and for the members of the WY-TWS is a proactive board that is willing to face challenges and take on difficult tasks. I am pleased to say that the board you have elected is just such a board. You will find in this issue of the newsletter a story about a request made of the WY-TWS to review the science behind sage-grouse winter use near Pinedale. I encourage you to take the time to visit our website and read the report put together by the ad-hoc committee I commissioned and your board approved to tackle this difficult question. This report is a testament to our commitment to sound science and wise management decisions.

Please take a minute to go the website, joomla.wildlife.org/Wyoming/, and look at the report created by your Wildlife Society.



Tony Mong, WY-TWS President

WY TWS BOARD MEETING: SPRING BULLETS



Nichole Cudworth, WGFD Non-Game Biologist & WY TWS Secretary.

The Board met in Rawlins in May. Although we didn't pass any motions (except to adjourn at the end of the day), many important topics were discussed and are listed below. Remember, Board meetings are open to the membership, so feel free to attend and make your voice heard. For complete meeting minutes, please contact Nichole Cudworth at nichole.cudworth@wyo.gov.

- The Fiscal Committee is currently in the process of updating the Chapter's Fiscal Policy and developing a Fiscal Procedures Manual.
- Due to the successful sale of a Commissioner's license, the COWCH Committee is in the process of buying new equipment for recording interviews. If you are interested in conducting an interview, contact Andrea Orabona for more information. Special thanks to Stan Harter for converting all the Chapter's interviews to digital format!
- The Fellowship Committee has selected this year's fellow – Patrick Rodgers. Patrick has a special interest in education and will be exposed to a variety of wildlife careers during the summer. Congratulations Patrick! The Committee will also be discussing how to increase interest in the program.
- Tony Mong and Claresa Zook presented at the Commission Meeting in April. The Commission was very interested to see the impact their licenses are having, and many members expressed interest in continuing to help with the Fellowship Program in the future.
- The Chapter's website has been converted to the new Joomla format, which allows for the Chapter to take over the management of the website. Contact Bryan Bedrosian if you are interested in helping out.
- Only 16 members voted in the poll to revise the Chapter's bylaws; however 50% of the membership must vote in order to complete these revisions. Stay tuned for another invitation to vote in this poll.
- The Board is looking to develop professional training opportunities for the Chapter and increase and diversify membership. We will be contacting you soon for your feedback on these issues!
- The Board assembled an ad hoc committee to review the current scholarship program offered by the Chapter. They are interested in increasing their involvement in selecting quality applicants, potentially through maintaining scholarships or transitioning to a grant program.
- The Board had a number of discussions on recent meetings and information requests. Please contact Nichole if you would like more information on these discussions:
 - Tony provided an update from the Sage-Grouse Winter Range ad hoc committee
 - Martin Grenier provided an update from the 2013 Teaming With Wildlife meeting
 - Tim Vosburgh provided an update on a meeting held by the WGFD on increasing support for this initiative
 - The Board was asked to discuss the potential in providing support for increasing funding for CRP. Although this program does not likely have a major impact in Wyoming, it is likely to affect many other states in the CMPS. The Board decided to follow the Section's lead on this issue.

Nichole Cudworth, WY TWS Secretary

SAGE-GROUSE WINTER CONCENTRATION AREA REPORT FOR PINEDALE AREA COMPLETED BY WY-TWS

The Wyoming Chapter of the Wildlife Society (WYTWS) recently convened a group of wildlife experts with diverse backgrounds and perspectives to evaluate how sage-grouse winter concentration areas are delineated in the Pinedale region.

The Wildlife Society is a national organization with local representation made up of wildlife professionals who are committed to a world where humans and wildlife co-exist. They work to ensure that wildlife and habitats are conserved through management actions that take into careful consideration relevant scientific information. In March, the Governor's Sage-Grouse Implementation team asked WYTWS to undertake the difficult issue of delineating sage-grouse winter concentration areas and other crucial questions about wintering sage-grouse and their habitat in the Normally Pressured Lance natural gas development project (NPL) in the Pinedale area.

"Most of the focus for sage-grouse and the interactions with oil and gas production has been on the breeding and nesting seasons," said WY-TWS president, Tony Mong. "The discussions of how sage-grouse winter concentration areas play into the whole biology of the birds has only recently occurred. It is an issue that requires careful consideration and a thorough review of the relevant scientific information."

The WYTWS ad hoc committee was comprised of wildlife professionals from state and federal agencies, the private sector, and academia. The committee met April 8 and 9 to review data collected by Pinedale area biologists from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and Bureau of Land Management and discuss the available scientific information related to sage-grouse wintering biology. The committee produced a 20 page report evaluating current techniques used for delineating winter

concentration areas and answered questions about winter sage-grouse habitat, how best to use existing winter sage-grouse data to delineate winter concentration areas, and anthropocentric land use impacts to wintering sage-grouse.

"The collaborative and timely effort of this diverse group of biologists led to a rigorous and objective scientific review of the available data and techniques used to delineate winter concentrations areas for sage-grouse." Said committee chair Dr. Joshua Millspaugh.

In the report, the committee found that current techniques used to delineate winter concentration areas in the NPL could be made more defensible by developing a resource selection function (RSF) model that would use sage-grouse observation data, vegetation and landscape features to create a map of important winter sage-grouse areas. The committee also reported a possible disparity between current winter stipulation structure and the effectiveness of those stipulations to decrease impacts to sage-grouse on winter concentration areas.

"This is the first comprehensive scientific review of protocols and questions associated with sage-grouse winter concentration areas in Wyoming." Mong said. "With the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service petition for listing the sage-grouse as an endangered species in 2015, these objective scientific reviews will help officials make the best decisions anchored by science."

Bob Budd, Chairman of the Governor's Sage-Grouse Implementation Team (SGIT) welcomed the report, saying that it again demonstrated the commitment of the State of Wyoming to using the best available science to address issues facing Sage-grouse.



Tony Mong, WGFD Wildlife Biologist and WY-TWS President.



WY-TWS & SGIT, Continued...

“The encouraging thing about this effort is that it will allow development to take place with full recognition of very important habitats for grouse,” Budd said. “We recognized the need to address these large winter concentration areas, and this will give us the information we need to get that done.”

Paul Ulrich, Project Manager for NPL, and a member of the SGIT agreed. “This will allow us to develop the resource in a manner that clearly gives deference the winter needs of the bird,” he said. “EnCana is committed to working with others to assure we achieve both objectives.” Ulrich also announced that EnCana will pay the full cost of development of the RSF model. “We want to know what is right sooner, rather than later,” he said, “and we are committed to getting this work done correctly.”

The full report can be found on the WYTWS website <http://wildlife.org/wyoming/> and was presented at the May 15 Sage-Grouse Implementation Team meeting in Lander.

T. Mong, WY TWS President-Elect



Typically found in mucky ponds and streams across eastern Wyoming, a young eastern snapping turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*) waits patiently to be released.



Dan Thompson, WGFD Trophy Game Supervisor and WY-TWS Board and Committee Chair.

WY TWS Science Committee: What's Next?

Much like that of an animal in torpor, the Science Committee was not as active as it has been in previous “seasons” (not full torpor but more like that of an ursid perhaps). We did finalize comments on a few relevant proposals and EI-Statements, as well as preparing to review several issues of importance related to sage grouse and concepts related to sage grouse biology and conservation in Wyoming. I am happy with the evolutionary pace of the Science Committee; the dogged persistence of the people in the trenches of the committee are paying off in that other agencies and organizations are recognizing The Wildlife Society and coming to us when it pertains to activities and

actions that may impact Wyoming’s wildlife. That being said we are always interested in increasing the genetic diversity of the Committee so if you as a Society member are interested please forward your contact information my way. One of the reasons this committee has been successful is due to the diverse background of its members allowing us to bring varied perspectives and expertise to the myriad changes occurring within the ecoregions of Wyoming and beyond. Here’s to a great summer ahead of us, a productive field season for those who have been clammed up all winter, and a bountiful neonate/chick/cub/poult/kit/kitten/fledgling rearing season for the feathered and quadripedals out there!

Watch yer top knot...D. Thompson, WY TWS Science Committee Chair & Board Member-At-Large

WY-TWS Welcomes Patrick Rodgers, 2013 Fellowship Recipient

The Wyoming Chapter of The Wildlife Society is excited to introduce its second Fellow, Patrick Rodgers. Originally from Casper, Patrick just completed his junior year in the Department of Zoology and Physiology. By the time he walks across the graduation stage in 2014, he will have earned a Bachelor of Science in Zoology, with a second major in the Honors Program, a minor in Environment and Natural Resources, and a concentration in Ecology. He has a GPA of 3.48. His interest in wildlife began long before he arrived in Laramie. His father is an independent film maker, well known in Wyoming for educational videos about our state's impressive megafauna. An avid sportsman, Patrick also enjoys hiking, camping, biking, and kayaking. In addition, he is a dedicated skier. He serves as the Men's Team Captain on the University of Wyoming's ski team. His years of hard work and training will take him to Italy this December, to represent the United States at the World University Games. This is one guy who doesn't do things halfway!

The purpose of this summer position is to provide outstanding upper-level undergraduate students/recent graduates with valuable professional experience by improving their understanding of the duties, responsibilities, and expectations within the wildlife/natural resource management field. In his application, Patrick noted that "The Wyoming Chapter of the Wildlife Society fellowship position is an opportunity for me to explore the various paths that a wildlife career has to offer ... This fellowship provides an incredible, unique, and invaluable opportunity that opens the door of possibilities for aspiring wildlife professionals." Until August, you may see Patrick around the state, shadowing TWS members at meetings, researching contentious wildlife issues, or assisting in field work.

One of his references describes Patrick as a "technician who understands wildlife biology, a naturalist who can take the long view, and a student of the human condition, curious about the values that drive wildlife conservation (or don't)." We're looking forward to another summer of rewarding experiences not only for the Fellow but for all the mentors! Please take a moment to not only thank the wildlife professionals volunteering their time as mentors but also to introduce yourself to Patrick. Share with him some of your experiences and any advice you



Patrick Rodgers, UW undergraduate student and recipient of the 2013 WY-TWS Fellowship.

can give. As with last year's Fellow, Claresa Zook, we can expect to hear a presentation of his summer experiences at our next annual meeting and for him to bring awareness about our Chapter's mentoring efforts at a Wyoming Game and Fish Commission meeting.

As the second fellowship experience kicks off, we'd like to send a big thank you to former Commissioner Fred Lindzey, who's donated Commissioner's tag helped support this program!

D. Edmunds, WY-TWS Fellowship Chair



WY-TWS Attends Teaming With Wildlife Fly-In

Teaming With Wildlife (TWW) is a national coalition of more than 6,300 groups working together to prevent wildlife from becoming endangered. Together, they work to support increased funding for wildlife conservation, education, and associated recreation in every state. Each year TWW, which includes state fish and wildlife agencies, wildlife biologists, hunters, anglers, birdwatchers, hikers, nature-based businesses and other conservationists, meet in Washington D.C. to lobby for this important cause. This past March, I had the distinct pleasure of representing our Chapter at this important event, called the fly-in.

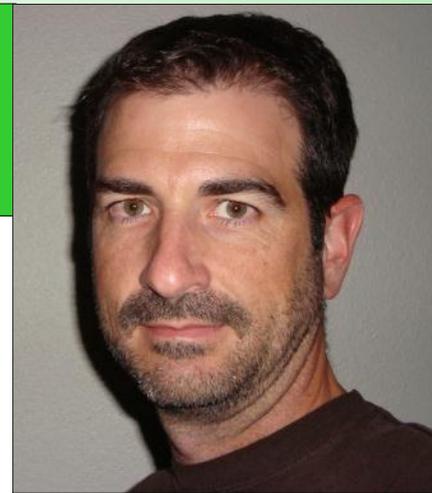


The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program, created in 2000, provides each state and territory with approximately \$1 million annually to develop and implement their congressionally-mandated State Wildlife Action Plans aimed at conserving fish and wildlife that are in decline and may be headed towards federal listing. This federal program is the only one of its kind that provides funding for states and tribal agencies for the conservation of more than 12,000 species of fish and wildlife that are at risk of extinction. However, since 2010, funding for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program has been cut by more than 30 percent. Coupled with the impacts of budget sequestration, further cuts to the program could jeopardize conservation and management of many of the Species of Greatest Conservation Need found throughout Wyoming and the U.S.

In Wyoming, this program is of particular importance because it provides funding for most of the conservation and management activities performed by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's terrestrial and aquatic non-game programs. Notably, the benefits to our state do not end there, millions of dollars have been granted to conservation partners (e.g., The Nature Conservancy, University of Wyoming Fish and Wildlife Cooperative Research Unit, etc.) as we collectively work to benefit these species.

This year, TWW was successful in garnering bi-partisan support for the State and Tribal Grants program, despite a growing pressure to cut non-defense spending. Coalition members worked hard to lobby their congressional representatives, with most of the work occurring after the fly-in. After returning from Washington, I coordinated with Glenn Pauley of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and our Congressional delegates here in Wyoming. In all, more than 130 House Representatives and nearly 40 Senators signed a letter of support for the State and Tribal Grants Program. The letter of support requested that the State and Tribal Grants Program not incur additional cuts and that it be funded to the highest level possible.

As we move forward there will be growing pressure to cut important programs such as these. With TWS support this year, the TWW Coalition helped ensure that the program would continue to support conservation and management activities in Wyoming and other parts of the U.S., at least through 2014.



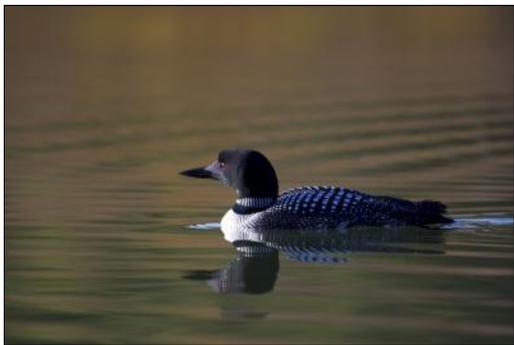
Martin Grenier, WY TWS President-Elect and WGFD Non-Game Mammal Biologist.

M. Grenier, WY-TWS President-Elect

Story Behind the Photo: Of Wolves and Loons

Loons are one of my favorite birds, right there with great gray owls. Loons have such striking plumage and then their call is so eerie, truly unforgettable, once you've heard it. It reminds me of paddling a canoe through a morning fog on the placid waters of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area between Minnesota and Ontario years ago.

Each spring, a handful of common loons come through the Jackson area, and a few of them even stay to nest. I've been fortunate to see a pair of them the past several years at Oxbow Bend in Grand Teton National Park. It's such a thrill, I now look forward to the meeting with great anticipation each spring. I've seen them enough years now that it's become like seeing an old friend. And given the fact that they're a pretty long-lived bird, I feel like I might be seeing the same pair year after year.



Three years ago, they gave me one of my most memorable wildlife viewing experiences ever. I had settled down into the willows, by myself, watching and photographing them on a foggy morning at Oxbow Bend. After about 45 minutes, one let out one of their beautiful, mournful calls and almost immediately another bird called back through the fog from some distance away. They called to each other a second time and then a wolf joined in with its mournful call. I kid you not. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. They carried on for a bit, but when it was over, that was it. They were quiet the rest of the morning, but I knew I had just experienced something I would likely never hear again in my lifetime. Truly awesome.

M. Gocke, WGFD I&E Specialist and WY-TWS Member



The Wyoming Chapter of The Wildlife Society strives to:

- ◆ *Provide an organization of wildlife management professionals from which statements affecting wildlife can be made exclusive of agency limitations.*
- ◆ *Provide for the exchange of ideas and information between wildlife workers without agency consideration.*
- ◆ *To strengthen The Wildlife Society, its objectives and goals.*
- ◆ *To promote and provide for intradisciplinary communication and training to keep abreast of modern needs and technological developments.*
- ◆ *To promote awareness of and continued improvement in wildlife management.*

UW Hosts 49th Western Region Student Conclave

The 49th annual Western Region Student Conclave of the Wildlife Society was held in Laramie, Wyoming, on March 15 – 18, 2013. Ninety seven wildlife students (and 3 advisors) from 12 universities and colleges across the western US attended the conference. They were hosted by 30 University of Wyoming wildlife students. In addition, 11 University of Wyoming graduate students, 7 faculty, 4 staff, 2 biologists of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, and a member of the Wyoming Audubon Society participated in the various activities.

For several schools (Chadron State College, University of Arizona, University of Nebraska Kearny, Laramie County Community College, Washington State University) this was a first or second Conclave. For others it was one of many but a rather long trip (Humboldt State University, New Mexico State University, University of Idaho, University of Nevada Reno, University of Nebraska Lincoln). Laramie County Community College, Utah State University, Colorado State University, and Humboldt State University were accompanied by their advisors.

Most professional activities (presentations, wild-cache, quizbowl) and several socials were held at the Berry Biodiversity Conservation Center. In addition to the auditorium, teaching lab, and conference room, both the teaching collection and vertebrate museum collection were used.



Conclave participants during the mixer at the Berry Center atrium.



Saturday March 16th – Field trips

Necropsy lab (half a day 12:00 – 3:00 PM)

Twenty three participants were introduced to the field of wildlife diseases and forensic investigations. Led by Todd Cornish and his team of pathologists, participants were instructed in proper necropsy protocols, dissected wildlife carcasses, and learned to identify many of the prevalent diseases in Wyoming. This activity was held at the Wyoming State Vet lab in Laramie and was not for the faint of heart.



Dr. Todd Cornish and Conclave participants inspecting a dead mountain lion (top), and Dave Edmunds and Conclave participants inspecting a bighorn sheep (bottom).

2013 Conclave Continued...

Captive coyote handling (half a day - morning)

Twenty one participants in this field trip met with Marjie McGregor at the University of Wyoming Red Buttes Environmental Laboratory. In groups of 3 participants joined Marjie and observed how she sedated a coyote. Together with Liz Flaherty they assisted Marjie in drawing and analyzing blood, measuring morphometrics, and evaluating the condition of each coyote.



Conclave participants carry a sedated coyote to the handling shed.

Photography clinic (half day - afternoon)

Nineteen participants joined Dan Heyward – a renowned nature photographer – on an excursion to the western foothills of the Laramie Range (a mile east of town), where they were instructed on the intricacies of photographing landscapes and wildlife.

Snow tracking (full day)

Eighteen participants spent the day with John Whiteman learning how to identify animal tracks in snow and how to follow them. During the trip participants encountered the tracks of moose, elk, deer, coyotes, martens, hares, a variety of small mammals, and birds. They also had the good fortune of directly observing a cow moose and her calf.



Snow tracking participants near a moose bedding site.

Wildlife trapping clinic (full day)

Twenty two participants met Tony Mong, regional biologist with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD), at the Tom Thorne and Beth Williams center for wildlife research and management of threatened and endangered species. With help of the facility staff, Tony provided a hands-on clinic in wildlife trapping and chemical immobilization.

Extinct and extant mammals (full day)

Twenty three participants spent the day with Jason Lillegraven (professor emeritus of geology and paleoecology) in Hanna Basin approximately 70 miles northwest of Laramie. Although no one found fossils of early mammals, shark teeth and ribs, pieces of turtle shell and long bones, and a fossilized crocodile scat dating to approximately 60 million years ago were collected. In addition, participants found numerous extant mule deer sheds, observed tracks of elk, deer and coyotes and counted hundreds of pronghorn and mule deer. Prairie dogs, raptors, and migrating song birds abound.

2013 Conclave Continued...

Sunday March 17th – Wild-Cache

The Wild-cache competition, designed to test the participants' skills, was a major success. Teams of 4 – 6 people were given assignments that could be completed within the last two days of Conclave. The assignments included:

- Estimating infestation and mortality rate of lodgepole pines as a result of the eruption of mountain bark beetles. With GPS navigation participants arrived at a forest stand in the Laramie Range where vegetation sampling gear was cached. Once the gear was found team members counted and measured infected trees using a pre-designed activity form.
- Identifying the species and sex of harvested ducks from wings and determining the proportion of marine species in the sample. This activity was conducted in the Berry Center teaching lab.
- Radio-tracking a “missing” animal. After compass direction and distance informations, teams located a telemetry cache. From there they had to find transmitter.
- Determining whether wolves preferentially kill the young and the old. Teams had to age a sample of jaws collected from “wolf-killed” ungulate carcasses teams and determine whether the proportion of old- and young animals was different than expected. As in other assignments a work sheet for data collection was provided.
- Determining the number of extinct pronghorn by visiting the University of Wyoming Geology Museum where some amazing fossils shed light on the evolution of this iconic species. Here too a worksheet helped teams accurately collect the necessary information.
- Connecting the trap with the species to catch. A diversity of traps was offered in conjunction with a list of target species. Using a worksheet each teams had to match the trap with the animals.
- Throughout the competition teams had to keep an eye for wildlife and their signs (tracks, scats, feathers and hair). Using cameras (or phone) and collection bags,

teams documented their wildlife encounters. The highest score (by one of the teams from Humboldt State University) exceeded 100 species!!!

The winning team of the Wild-cache competition was from New Mexico State University, with a team from Humboldt State University in second place and in third a team from Colorado State University.

Sunday March 17th – Presentations and Animal Behavior Night



Teams of students in the process of aging ungulate mandibles at the Berry Center teaching lab as part of the Wild-cache competition.

Following a welcome address by Tony Mong, the President of the Wyoming State Chapter of the Wildlife Society, four oral and four poster student papers were presented. In addition, Dr. Liz Flaherty presented a talk on “Why undergraduate students should engage in research?” and Dr. Merav Ben-David presented “Outdoor research activities enhance student learning – the case of the least chipmunk”.

Ryan Vazquez from Humboldt State University won the best presentation award for his talk “Can exotic mud snails invade low conductivity water?” Daniel Macias from New Mexico State University won the best poster award for “Site occupancy rates for two sympatric snakes”.

The animal behavior night provided great entertainment with University of Idaho winning the best skit and the associated traveling award (a boot on fish).

2013 Conclave Continued...

Monday March 18th – Quizbowl and Banquet

The quizbowl competition, in the form of a double elimination tournament, followed the National rules and regulations. It became quite intense and lasted over 4 hours. The Humboldt State University won first place, the team from New Mexico State came in second, and Utah State University third.

The banquet and award ceremony was held in the Wyoming Union ball room with excellent food from Catering of Laramie. In addition to papers, Wild-cache and Quizbowl awards, winners of the various art competitions (photography, paintings and 3-D art) were recognized. New Mexico State University was received the “Top Performance” award.

Tom Ryder of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and past president of the National Wildlife Society delivered an engaging presentation. He was followed by a pitch from the University of Nebraska Lincoln and Kearny to co-host Conclave 2014.



Students from Utah State University during a skit on the behavioral interactions of a pink flamingo and white pelicans in Salt Lake. Please note the (excellent) use of conclave t-shirts.

The Local Committee:

Jacob White – Executive Board Member for Conclave and Wild-cache

Jordan Winter – President and field trips

Jessica Grunow – Vice President and donations

Nicole Meyer – Treasurer and budget

Melissa Richards – Secretary and t-shirts

Ronnie Harned – Executive board member; t-shirt and logo design

Chance Kirkeeng – Webmaster, art competition, and Awards

Shawn Opitz, Ronnie Harned, and Patrick Rodgers – Executive board members and Quizbowl

Kelsey Grinstead – Executive board member and Banquet

Merav Ben-David – Faculty advisor and everything

Would Like to Acknowledge:

Jason Lillegraven, John Whiteman, Marjie McGregor, Liz Flaherty, Todd Cornish, Dave Edmunds, Tony Mong, Dan Hayward, and Sarah Decker – **Field Trips**

Matt Carling, Jake Goheen, James Maley, John Whiteman, Daly Edmunds, Eriek Hansen, and Dan Reimer-Gibson – **Presentations and Quizbowl**

Liz Flaherty, Carolyn Eckrich, Brady Godwin, Jenny Jones, Miranda Talluto, Jason Carlisle – **Wild-cache**

Department of Zoology and Physiology administrative staff: Carol Pribyl, Shawn Sheen, and Sheila Krupp – **Accounting**

The Berry Biodiversity Conservation Center staff: Brenna Marsicek and Dorothy Tuthill – **Building Access and Logistics**

Members of University of Wyoming Student Chapter of the Wildlife Society – **Participation and Logistics**

2013 Conclave Continued...

For Their Generous Contributions We Thank:

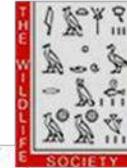
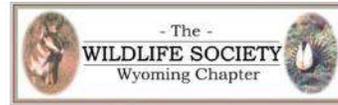
For Their Spectacular Photographs

- Daniel Cox (<http://www.naturalexposures.com/>)
- Joe Riis (<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/explorers/bios/joe-riis/>)
- Jordan Gill (Jordan Gill Photography)

For Other Contributions:

- The Feed Store in Laramie Wyoming
- Second Story Café
- The Central Mountains and Plains section of the Wildlife Society
- Dr. Janet Rachlow (University of Idaho) and her husband Mr. Jim Witham

And....



Nick Scribner, WGFD Aquatic Habitat Biologist and WY-TWS Member

Habitat Funding: How WGFD Puts Your Money to Use

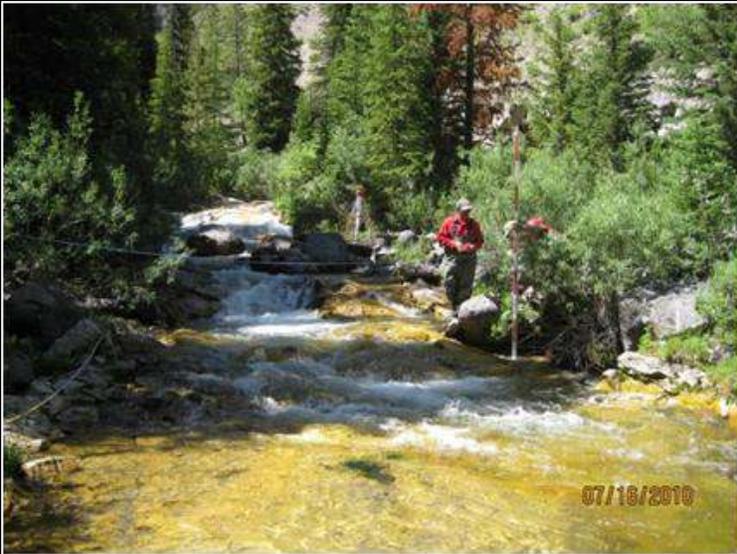
Snow capped mountains, vast vistas, abundant fish and wildlife, and large swaths of public access are a few of the qualities I've come to love about Wyoming since moving here in 2005 to work for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) as a habitat biologist. Over these past eight years of



Education workshops that usually include hands-on activities teach youth and adults about habitat conservation.

work I've learned that habitat is a difficult concept to thoroughly explain and connect to fish and wildlife populations. However, I'll bet that many of us will agree that habitat is the most important factor contributing to the abundance and diversity of wildlife in Wyoming. The WGF commission believed that same statement back in April 1986 when the WGFD Trust Fund (Trust Fund) was established for the purpose of protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat throughout Wyoming.

WGFD Funding Use. Continued...



Data collection provides important details for habitat project planning and assessment of completed projects to improve future treatments.

The Trust Fund was created by transferring \$2.2 million from the general fund of the Game and Fish, which is generated from license sales. Additional monies from conservation stamps, publication sales, donations, and interest accrued on license applications are the only sources used to further build the corpus of the Trust Fund.

Today the Trust Fund is roughly \$25 million and continues to accrue money from conservation stamps and monetary donations. The interest from the Trust Fund has been used annually to fund habitat projects around the state such as prescribed burns, noxious weed treatments, wetland developments, education materials, and fish passage projects to name a few. The Trust Fund itself remains untouched to ensure money is available to fund future habitat projects. This fund drives many of the duties habitat biologists perform for residents of Wyoming. Major aspects of our job include collection and assessment of habitat data and using it to develop projects that improve habitat while also collaborating with federal agencies, nonprofits, and landowners with similar goals. We also evaluate projects after completion, assist with research, and develop partnerships with a multitude of people and organizations. Lastly, we spend a considerable portion of our time writing grants, securing matching funds, and working with project cooperators to make each dollar stretch as far as possible.

Over the past five years the Trust Fund has awarded on average \$1 million per year for myriad projects.

Furthermore, every dollar of Trust Fund has been matched with a minimum of \$2.80 to as high as \$16.50 from other sources of funding.

These sources of funding include Federal and State agencies, private landowners, and nonprofit organizations such as Trout Unlimited, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and Ducks Unlimited. Together, these funding sources have contributed almost \$4 million to over \$18 million towards habitat conservation each of the past five years. The majority of that money comes directly back to the local economies of Wyoming because we use local contractors to complete many of these projects. For example, during 2012 over 25 different contractors were used in the Lander Region alone to complete projects that included survey and design work for stream restoration on the Middle Popo Agie River, habitat treatments along the Lander front for mule deer, fish passage and irrigation improvements near Dubois, noxious weed treatments region wide, and several other projects. Expand those numbers statewide to the other seven regions and you're talking a lot of business with numerous contractors.



Prescribed burns are used to improve vegetation communities that will benefit many species of wildlife.

Over the past year you have likely heard and read many things about the current and future financial situation of the WGFD. As many of you know, our department sought additional funding through a license fee increase during the 2013 legislative session that ultimately did not pass. As a result, several cuts were

WGFD Funding Use. Continued...



Fish passage projects improve the fishery and benefit landowners by reducing maintenance and updating irrigation infrastructure.

made to our FY14 budget that runs from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014. One of the significant cuts was a 50% reduction, or approximately \$500,000, in Trust Fund

dollars available for habitat projects. As described earlier, if we account for the matching money from our various partners we have secured for every Trust Fund dollar the past 5 years, this cut represents nearly \$2 million and potentially much more.

Periodically, I hear questions and complaints of why a conservation stamp is needed when you purchase a license. Well, if you have that thought here is another way to think about it next time you buy a conservation stamp. For every conservation stamp bought at \$12.50, we at the WGFD will turn that into a minimum of \$47 dollars of habitat work on the ground to benefit the fish and wildlife you enjoy and may even provide work for your best friend that joins you on your wildlife excursions. We appreciate your support and hope this sheds some light on how WGFD puts your money to use supporting habitat conservation efforts throughout Wyoming.

N. Scribner, WGFD

WGFD Completes First Year of Mountain Goat Captures Near Alpine.

Wildlife managers with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department recently captured four mountain goats in the Snake River Canyon near Alpine in an effort to learn more about their health, reproduction, and seasonal movements. The goats were temporarily tranquilized to collect nasal and tonsil swabs, blood, and fecal samples. The biological samples allow Game and Fish disease specialists to determine the presence of various pathogens including *Mannheimia haemolytica*, which can potentially lead to a pneumonia outbreak.

Three of the goats captured were females and were fitted with GPS collars to track their seasonal movements, reproductive success and survival. Results of diagnostic tests since capture and release indicate that one of the goats is positive for *M. haemolytica*. The goats are part of the Palisades herd which straddles the state line and has shared management with Idaho. Wildlife managers from both states are interested in learning how much interstate travel may be occurring.



Hank Edwards, WGFD Disease Specialist, takes a tonsil sample from an adult female mountain goat near Alpine, WY. Photo, M. Gocke.

The mountain goats, which are not native to Wyoming, were reintroduced to the Snake River Range in Idaho by the Idaho Fish and Game between 1969 and 1971. The goat herd has been increasing in both number and distribution ever since. The herd is managed jointly, with wildlife biologists from both Wyoming Game and Fish and Idaho Fish and Game performing aerial surveys every two years to count the number of goats in their respective states.

Mountain Goat Captures, Continued...

In 1994, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department established a population objective of 50 animals for the Palisades Mountain Goat herd in Wyoming. The initial aerial survey was conducted in 1996 with 24 goats being observed. The most recent aerial survey of the herd was completed in August of 2012, when managers counted a total of 108 mountain goats in Wyoming. With the steady increase of the population since its inception, Wyoming has offered between and four and eight mountain goat hunting permits for this herd since 1999.

Although the Palisades mountain goat herd appears to be doing well by all accounts, Wyoming Game and Fish biologists believe it is imperative to begin collecting baseline information on the overall health of the animals. "To this point, we have known very little about the health of these mountain goats," said Wyoming Game and Fish South Jackson Biologist, Gary Fralick. "We have large-scale population trend data that shows numbers are generally increasing, but we have no idea of their fine-scale movements, habitat selection or what kind of pathogens they may be carrying. It's important we begin



Dr. Terry Kreeger, recently retired WGFD Disease Program Coordinator, helps steady an adult female mountain goat following chemical immobilization near Alpine, WY. Photo, M. Gocke.

to gather this baseline information for future management of the herd."

M. Gocke, WGFD



The Great Basin Spadefoot (*Spea intermontana*) lives in southwestern Wyoming and breeds only when the weather is just right - after very heavy rains. Adults are active for several nights and call very loudly, then bury back underground, where they spend most of their lives.

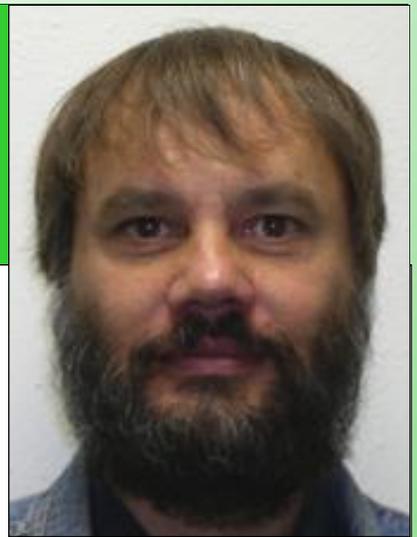


The Great Basin Skink (*Pleistodon skilonianus utahensis*) lives in far Western Wyoming. They spend most of their lives underground, so are difficult to detect.



The Northern Rubber Boa (*Charina bottae*) lives in northeast Wyoming and is very rare and secretive, active mostly at dusk or in the evening.

WY-TWS Nomination Form for Awards and Officers



Frank Blomquist, WY TWS Awards & Nominations Chair and BLM Biologist.

It is not too early to start thinking about deserving nominees for our WY-TWS awards and officer positions. Please take a few minutes and give some thought about those who are working hard for wildlife and should be recognized for their efforts, as well as those who would make strong candidates for board members. Each year at the annual meeting, awards (Professional and Citizen of Year, Lifetime Achievement) are presented to recognize outstanding efforts by individuals in the state to conserve and manage wildlife and wildlife habitat. Successful candidates for officers are also announced at this time, and in autumn 2013, positions available will include President-elect, Secretary, and Board Member At-Large.

To submit a nomination, please fill out the biographical information listed on the form below and write up a short summary of the nominee's accomplishments in the wildlife conservation/management arena. Nominations can be mailed or e-mailed to the following:

WY TWS Awards and Nominations Committee Chair

Frank Blomquist
P.O. Box 1571
Rawlins, WY 82301
307-328-4207
fbloqui@blm.gov

Nominee:

Award (circle one): Professional Citizen Lifetime Achievement

Officer (circle one): President-elect Secretary Board Member At-Large

Address:

Present Position (i.e., Specific Job Title):

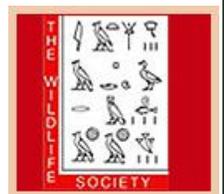
Academic Background:

Professional Background:

Submitted By:

Address:

Phone:



WY TWS Membership Form

Change of Address

New Member

Membership Renewal

NAME _____

AFFILIATION _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

WORK PHONE _____ HOME PHONE _____

- ADDRESS CHANGE** **Dues are \$10.00 per year or \$25.00 for 3 years.**
- E-MAIL ADDRESS CHANGE Make checks payable to: **Wyoming Chapter-TWS**
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I wish to receive the newsletter via E-MAIL or at the physical address listed above

**If you would like to receive your newsletter other than via e-mail or the web page,
please let Therese know.**

**New for 2011! Existing WY TWS members can log in and pay dues
on-line! Check out the WY TWS website at
<http://joomla.wildlife.org/Wyoming/>**

**If you are not an existing WY TWS member and pay dues on-line,
Please also complete and send this form to Therese Hartman**

Therese Hartman P.O. Box 850 Pinedale, WY 82941

Email: Therese.Hartman@wyo.gov

Fax: 307-367-4403

Please support your WY-TWS Chapter by paying your membership dues!

Note from the Editor...

Across most of Wyoming, the browns of winter give way to greens of new vegetation following ample spring snow and rain. With savory new groceries available, wildlife begin to regain much needed resources and revel in song and birth. Once again, a renaissance occurs across the landscape and the annual cycle returns from famine to feast.

For those of us stewarding the magnificent resources around our state, the annual metamorphosis from office chrysalis to field beauty provides copious opportunity to observe and document an unimaginable array of sights and sounds. So as you trapse through the countryside this summer, enjoying all the land has to offer, don't forget your commitment to WY-TWS; snap a picture or scribe a thought. The flora and fauna can't exist without your continued creativity and innovation.

And to encourage and foster creativity and innovation in underground wildlife journalism, the WY-TWS Communications Committee is drafting a new annual award. Currently titled "Best Newsletter Award", our staff wishes to recognize one individual annually who contributes a timely, relevant, influential, and possibly humorous article to the WY-TWS Newsletter. As the award criteria cool and crystalize, we'll continue to update chapter membership on this exciting new opportunity for professionals and students.

E. Maichak

More formally and specifically, we accept appropriate articles and information related to wildlife management and conservation activities in Wyoming from our board, members, governmental agencies, and non-profit organizations. Articles, photos, and other submissions can be sent to:

Eric Maichak Jason Carlisle Lorraine Keith Bryan Bedrosian
ERIC.MAICHAK@WYO.GOV JASON.D.CARLISLE@GMAIL.COM LORRAINE_KEITH@BLM.GOV BRYAN@BERINGIASOUTH.ORG

Newsletter deadlines for 2013:

February 15 (Winter Edition)

May 15 (Spring/Summer Edition)

September 15 (Autumn Edition)

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