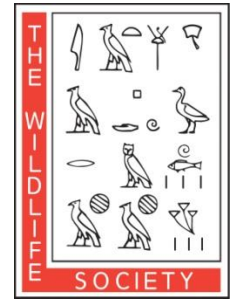


# NEVADA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY



Spring/Summer 2015 Newsletter

## 2015 EXECUTIVE BOARD

### President:

Chris Nicolai  
(775) 861-6333  
chris\_nicolai@fws.gov

### President-Elect:

Kelley Stewart  
(775) 784-4314  
kstewart@cabnr.unr.edu

### Past President:

Ken Mayer  
(775) 741-9942  
ken.e.mayer@gmail.com

### Secretary and Treasurer:

Derek Hall  
(702) 295-0364  
halldb@nv.doe.gov

### Rep. to the Western Section:

Mackenzie Jeffress  
(775) 777-2307  
mrjeffress@ndow.org

### Conservation Affairs Chair:

David Catalano  
(775) 688-1412  
dcatalano@ndow.org

### Newsletter Editor:

Mackenzie Jeffress

## MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CHRIS NICOLAI

I'd like to thank everyone for the opportunity to lead the Nevada Chapter of the Wildlife Society. I'd also like to thank the nearly 100 people who attended the Nevada Chapter Annual meeting back in February with a special thanks to Dan Gibson for organizing all the talks. There was a good mix of professionals, students, and members of the public. The presentations were top notch and highlighted a variety of wildlife and habitat issues across Nevada and beyond.

One of the goals of this organization is to provide mentorship for young wildlife professionals and this was shown with the excellent mix of people attending the 2015 meeting. Being able to interact among generations of upcoming and current professionals highlights that the future is bright for those interested in wildlife and the wildlife profession. As an example of how important the notion of including the general public, the current revision of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) includes a new component in addition to the traditional population and habitat components, which is human dimensions. This new component is attempting to include influences from the general public on how waterfowl populations are managed. On the NAWMP website, there is information regarding goals for increasing hunter participation, increasing the numbers of other conservation partners, and to increase the numbers of the general public who are interested in the conservation of populations and habitats. This sounds extremely difficult; however, I think meetings like the one we held in February are a step in the correct direction. Although many professional talks were presented, we need to continue to reach further than our professional colleagues and to include those outside of the professional arena to appreciate wildlife, their habitats, and the challenges to keep these populations healthy.

Just in the last month, I have had the opportunity to watch some small scale additions to the wildlife profession. I found out that a young Yerington native completed his MS and recently accepted his first job in Canada; I first met him as a student in the junior level wildlife class at UNR.

### Inside this issue:

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| CHAPTER MEETING RECAP .....        | 2 |
| RESEARCH AND MONITORING PROJECTS – |   |
| Spotted Frog Management .....      | 3 |
| Snowstorm Bighorn Sheep Update .   | 6 |
| UPDATE FROM UNR CHAPTER.....       | 4 |
| MEET OUR PRESIDENT - ELECT .....   | 5 |
| ANNOUNCEMENTS AND MEETINGS .....   | 8 |

**AND MUCH MORE!**

Volunteers from the student chapter of the NV Wildlife Society who spent many days volunteering on the local Fallon Wood Duck Project have been sending reference calls my way. The wood duck crew held their 6<sup>th</sup> wood duck event a couple of weeks ago and we had 105 people show up at 5:15 am to band ducks and another 115 showed up for the presentation and fundraiser. By the way, we are always looking for volunteers for the wood duck project on Saturdays from now until late June.



It has been rewarding to see the interest from upcoming students who make the decision to become wildlife professionals, and to see the public get involved when given a chance. I know many of us make these efforts, but I encourage others to give it a try. We need to develop ways to make enjoying wildlife (in many uses) a priority for a larger segment of the population. I think our current Nevada Chapter of the Wildlife Society is moving in that direction. But we can always do more. Perhaps all of us can try harder to bring more people to the BBQ in September or to attend the Nevada meeting next winter. There are a lot of great conservation and management efforts in Nevada, we need to encourage others to come and share these successes.

-Chris

\*\*\*\*\*

## RECAP: NEVADA CHAPTER SYMPOSIUM AND MEETING



*By: Ken Mayer, Past President, and Dan Gibson, Symposium Coordinator*

On February 11-12<sup>th</sup>, with assistance from the UNR student chapter and Nevada Department of Wildlife, the Nevada Chapter of the Wildlife Society hosted its 2015 symposium and chapter meeting. We had an astoundingly diverse series of presentations, which highlighted some of the great research being done by our chapter members. We had seventeen fantastic presentations, which ranged from advancements in population estimation and genomic analyses to developing habitat suitability models for many of our endemic species. For example, Josh Jahner, from the University of Nevada, Reno, presented novel work that found genetic structure in male sage-grouse at the lek level, which suggested gene flow among nearby leks was more reduced than previously thought. Also, Bryan Hamilton, from Brigham Young University and Great Basin National Park, demonstrated potential pitfalls of pinyon-juniper removal in the Great Basin due to the overwhelming colonization abilities of cheatgrass. Special thanks to all of our presenters - you made the meeting an overwhelming success!



Additionally, we had a total of 53 registrants this year, which was one of the chapter's best attended meetings ever. The chapter was also able to net almost \$2,000 in registration fees and this money will go to support future chapter activities as well as any potential awards/grants.

Overall, the chapter executive board could not have been more pleased with both the quality of the presentations and number of attendees. We would not have done this without the support of our members. Thanks to everyone for making the recent Nevada Chapter meeting an exceptional success, and we'll see you in 2016!





## RESEARCH, MONITORING, & MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

### Columbia Spotted Frog Management in Central Nevada

By Teri Slatauski

The Toiyabe subpopulation of the Columbia spotted frog (*Rana luteiventris*) is located in the Reese River drainage system of the Toiyabe and Shoshone mountain ranges in Central Nevada. The Columbia spotted frog was petitioned in 1993 for listing under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service last determined the Columbia spotted frog warranted but precluded for listing as threatened in 2012. In February 2015, the 10-year revision for the statewide Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Columbia Spotted Frogs in Nevada (CAS) was signed. The CAS is administered by the Columbia Spotted Frog Technical Team (CSFTT), which is a cooperative group comprised of state, federal, and county partners with occasional participation by private and tribal cooperators. This document will be used to guide the management of Columbia spotted frogs in Nevada for the next decade.

The Toiyabe subpopulation is unique from other Columbia spotted frog populations across its range due to its large population size and consistent long-term monitoring of the population. 2015 will mark the eleventh consecutive year of egg mass and passive integrated transponder (PIT) tag mark-recapture surveys on the population. Over the past decade, these mark-recapture efforts have provided information regarding population size, distinguishing characteristics, movement patterns and range, and life span. The installation of two solar, passive PIT tag readers in 2008 has also provided information on seasonal movement patterns. Roughly 7,000 Columbia spotted frogs have been tagged since the onset of monitoring in 2005.

The CSFTT has conducted habitat improvement projects that include the installation of off-channel ponds for breeding and over-wintering, and restoration of incised stream channels. The population was estimated to be around 4,000 in 2013, but ongoing drought has had serious impacts on available habitat in the past four years. The drought has dried up approximately 50% of previously occupied habitat in the study area. The cessation of regular grazing in the area after the U.S. Forest Service acquired Warner Ranch in the mid 1990s has played an integral part in the survival of the Columbia spotted frog population. It has allowed for an increase in water and cover, especially in sedge dominated sites. The sedge



Columbia spotted frog basking in sun  
(T. Slatauski 2014)

now acts as a thermal cover that prevents evaporation and the melting of snow and ice long after it has been gone from the uplands. Rooting depths and the ability of the soils to store water have also increased to benefit Columbia spotted frogs. Without the ponds and the improvement of habitat in the absence of grazing, the impact from the drought on the Toiyabe subpopulation would have been far worse than currently observed.

Columbia spotted frogs have been documented to be exceptionally good at covering ground (especially the females), with the longest recorded straight line distance at 4.6 km (5.5 km if following the drainage). The peak of movement during ice free months has been documented in October, though winter movement patterns are still unknown. The frog pictured left shows that even dense, 6



Columbia spotted frog in dense sedge  
(T. Slatauski 2008)

foot tall sedge is not a barrier to a determined frog. Female and male Columbia spotted frogs of the Toiyabe subpopulation have been measured upwards of 90 and 75 mm snout-to-vent-length, respectively. While an age limit for Columbia spotted frogs in the Toiyabe subpopulation has not been determined, individuals have been documented to live at least nine years.

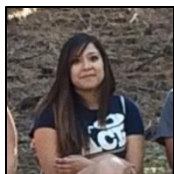
If you are interested in participating in the July mark-recapture survey as a volunteer, please contact Teri Slatauski at the Nevada Department of Wildlife, 775-482-3153 or [tslatauski@ndow.org](mailto:tslatauski@ndow.org).

*Teri is the Tonopah Wildlife Diversity Biologist with the Nevada Department of Wildlife and she is the Department's lead biologist for the Toiyabe subpopulation of the Columbia spotted frog.*



\*\*\*\*\*

## Update from the UNR Student Chapter



**By Esmeralda Aguilar**

From bird-watching excursions to attending The Western Section of the Wildlife Society Annual Conference, the UNR Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society has had a very eventful spring semester. The club put most of its efforts into raising enough money to attend The Wildlife Society Student Western Section Conclave. ***Thanks in part to the generous donation of the Nevada Chapter of The Wildlife Society, the student chapter was able to successfully make its way to the conference held at Texas A&M University in Kingsville.***

In conjunction with the twelve other student chapters in attendance, UNR students were able to learn valuable skills such as radio telemetry, use of blow guns, and archery through workshops. Students were also tested on their knowledge of wildlife trivia, animal identification, and plant identification. Additionally, students were able kayak through the Welder Wildlife Refuge located near the university. Though UNR did not bring home any awards, all the students in attendance felt conclave was a worthwhile experience that helped them sharpen their abilities.

UNR's future endeavors include going out on an excursion to Modoc National Forest, more birding trips, and end-of-the-semester hiking trips. The Modoc trip is possible in part thanks to Mary Flores', a TWS Nevada Chapter member, willingness to take UNR students out and teach them an array of skills. We encourage and welcome other members of the Nevada Chapter to reach out to the club and collaborate on more events!



Photo (left): Club members at the Student Conclave  
Photo (above): Club members after sage grouse surveys (Modoc NF)



## Meet our new President - Elect – Kelley Stewart

Kelley M. Stewart is an Associate Professor of large mammal ecology in the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Science at the University of Nevada Reno. She received her BS at University of California Davis, her MS at Texas A&M University Kingsville and her PhD at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Her research focuses on effects of density dependence, reproduction, and nutritional condition of large mammals on movement patterns, resource selection, population dynamics, and community structure. More recently her research has moved into investigating the links



between nutritional condition, endocrine function, and immune function to population demographics. Kelley teaches courses in wildlife ecology at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. She was named the Teacher of the Year in 2012 by the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology, and Natural Resources at UNR. Kelley has been primary advisor for 12 graduate students working on various aspects of ungulate ecology, 2 undergraduate honors students, and 1 postdoctoral research associate. Kelley's family also are interested in biology, her husband is a wildlife biologist as well and they have two children, who are beginning their careers in wildlife ecology early by helping Kelley with her research, especially by providing photo documentation of data collection in the field.

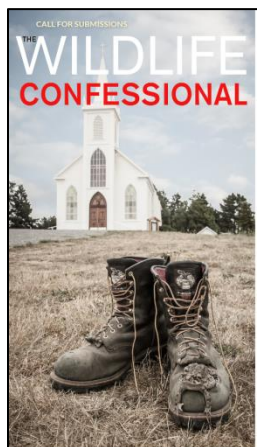
\*\*\*\*\*

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WESTERN SECTION

The Western Section had a very successful conference in January in Santa Rosa where the theme was “Advancing Wildlife Conservation through Integration and Alignment in Planning.” Next year’s Western Section Conference will be in Pomona, CA, and the planning team is already working hard on the details. The theme of the conference will be “Digging into the Roots of Conservation Conflict: Changing the Process of Conservation to Create Sustainable Solutions” and if you have a logo idea, submit it to the design contest. The winner will receive free conference registration and more info can be found at <http://www.tws-west.org/announcements.php>. Furthermore, the 2017 meeting location is still up in the air but I heard Reno and Las Vegas were still in the running. I’ll keep you posted as to what they decide.



There are a few opportunities that the Western Section offers that our members should keep in mind. First, the Western Section offers grant money to members who need assistance with participation in professional meetings, conferences, and workshops and, in addition to this, travel grants may be awarded to a limited number of students. For more details check out: <http://www.tws-west.org/grants.php>.

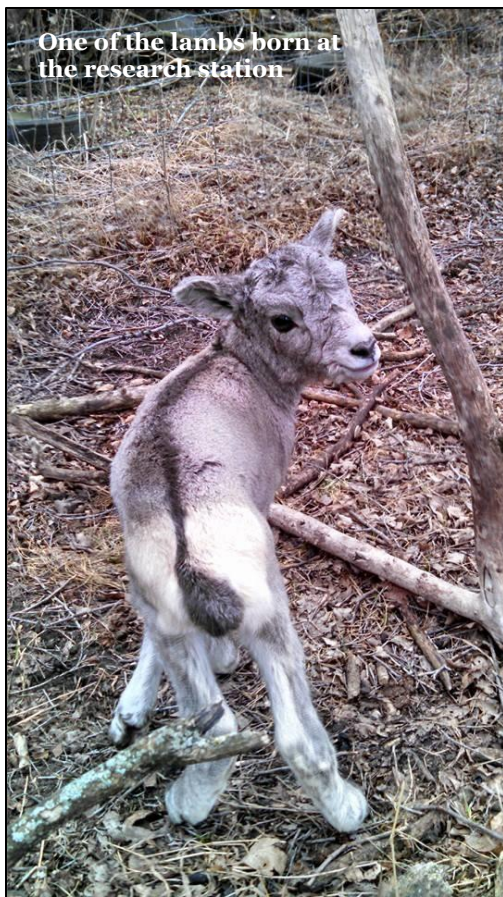


Furthermore, do you have any stories about your adventures, misadventures, revelations, and/or reflections about your experiences as a wildlife professional? If so, you should submit them to the “Wildlife Confessional”. The “Wildlife Confessional” will endeavor to show the humor and poignancy in the day-to-day adventures that sometimes define and enlighten us or that, sometimes, we’d rather forget! Learn more at <http://thewildlifeconfessional.wordpress.com/>. Prefer to keep your writing in the scientific realm? Then please consider submitting your research to *Western Wildlife*, which is an open-access, peer-reviewed journal that publishes original research, reviews, perspectives, and correspondence on the ecology, natural history, management, and conservation biology of animals.

Learn more about the Western Section and its activities at: <http://www.tws-west.org/index.php>

*Submitted by Mackenzie Jeffress, Nevada Chapter Representative to the Western Section*

## RESEARCH, MONITORING, & MANAGEMENT PROJECTS



One of the lambs born at the research station

## Snowstorm Mountains California Bighorn Sheep Update

*By Matthew Jeffress*

The first California bighorn sheep were released in the Snowstorm Range in 1985, below Sawtooth Spring. The release consisted of three ewes, four lambs and two young rams from the East Fork of the Owyhee River in Idaho. Subsequent releases were conducted in 1986, 1988, 1995 and 1999 totaling 55 California bighorn from five sites, including Nevada, Idaho and British Columbia source stock. By late 2010 the population reached an estimated 160 adult bighorn and resulted in 40 rams being harvested over an 18 year period. The success of the Snowstorm bighorn herd can be attributed to the planning and hard work of several Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) biologists, the Bureau of Land Management and numerous local sportsmen's groups, including Nevada Bighorns Unlimited (NBU) Reno and Elko Bighorns.

In mid-July 2011, NDOW received reports of stray domestic sheep within the permitted trailing route, south of the Snowstorms. Attempts to locate the stray domestic sheep were unsuccessful. In early August, biologist received an alarming report of two unshorn domestic sheep near the headwaters of the

South Fork of the Little Humboldt River on top of the Snowstorms. Again, attempts to locate the domestic sheep were unsuccessful. On August 18, 2011 within the first hour of a six hour Snowstorm CBHS helicopter survey, a deceased bighorn ewe was located in Jakes Creek and minutes later, two unshorn estray domestic sheep were located near an isolated spring in the same drainage. Permission was obtained to dispatch the ewes and biological samples were collected. Over the next four hours, our fears were confirmed; we

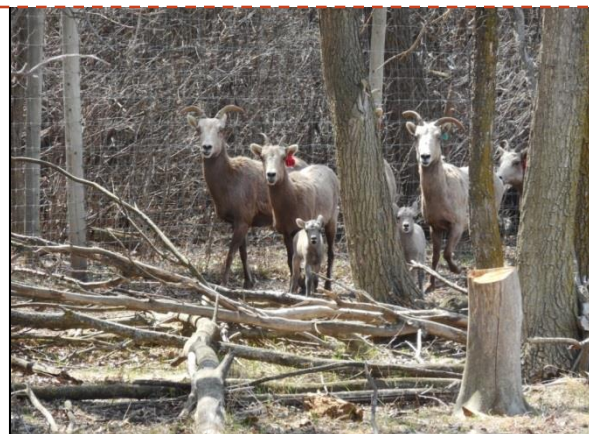
had detected an active bighorn die-off. Through the generous contributions of NBU Reno, Elko Bighorns and Midas NBU, NDOW biologists were able to sample and mark multiple sheep in 2011 and 2012.

As was committed to sportsman's groups in 2011 and 2012, bighorn lamb surveys have continued on the Snowstorm Mountains following the 2011 summer die-off. In May of 2014, a total of 37 adult ewes, two yearling ewes and 24 lambs were observed. By early July the lamb ratio dropped from 65 lambs: 100 ewes to 33 lambs: 100 ewes, with 27 ewes, one yearling ewe and nine lambs observed. The two yearling ewes represent the highest recruitment observed since 2010.

As part of a greater effort to understand dynamics of post die-off survivors and how pathogens within surviving populations affect lamb



Photo (above): Bighorn in the Snowstorm Mountains. Photo (below): Some of the bighorn captured from the Snowstorms and provided to South Dakota State University for disease research.





recruitment, Washington State University, Idaho Department of Fish and Game and South Dakota State University embarked on a study titled “Investigating the role of super-shedders in respiratory disease persistence and transmission in bighorn sheep.” The researchers are going to study bighorn from different herds with different disease profiles and time since initial exposure to pathogens. In early December of last year NDOW gifted ten ewes and one young ram to South Dakota State University. The Snowstorm bighorn provide a unique opportunity in that all marked bighorn have baseline health profiles with several having been sampled twice. These data coupled with lamb counts over the past three years will aid in the study. Field work conducted over the past three years assisted in our selection of ewes for the project, especially in attempting to located non-shedding ewes through the evaluation of sub-herd performance. There are four sub-herds of ewes on the Snowstorms and up to 2014, only one was recruiting lambs; the Owyhee Bluffs. In an effort to target non-shedding ewes, one marked ewe, one unmarked ewe and two yearling ewes were removed from the Owyhee Bluffs for the study. Information acquired from the Super Shedder Project will further our knowledge of disease processes in bighorn sheep and will likely affect post die-off management of bighorn west wide. In addition to removing six marked bighorn for the study, seven unmarked bighorn were collared and released on site and two previously marked bighorn



*Matt is the Area 6 Game Biologist with the Nevada Department of Wildlife out of Elko.*

were recollared with new collars. These individuals will allow NDOW to continue monitoring the Snowstorm herd to assess future performance as it relates to the potential removal of “super-shedders” and time elapsed since the initial die-off. A highlight of the capture was the documentation of the highest winter lamb ratio following the die-off with ten lambs observed for a lamb to ewe ratio of 27:100. Lambs were observed in all four sub-herds. We are hopeful the winter lamb ratio is a sign of recovery, but mindful that Snowstorm bighorn have likely not fully recovered from the 2011 disease event. As was identified early in the project, recruitment values will be collected for the next five years. These data coupled with pathogen samples collected in 2011, 2012 and 2014 will guide future management of the Snowstorm herd.

\*\*\*\*\*

## TREASURER’S REPORT

*By Derek Hall*



Our current Nevada Chapter membership is around 50. We had good attendance at our annual symposium and meeting with 53 people registered to attend. We netted over \$1,900.00 from the meeting. Thanks to everyone who made the meeting such a success. We want to especially thank the UNR Student Chapter for handling registration and other duties in support of our Chapter meeting. We currently have just over \$7,000.00 in our bank account and are doing well financially. We donated \$1,000 to the UNR Student Chapter to help get them to Texas to attend the Student Conclave and \$100.00 to the Western Section for support of their annual meeting.

## WANT TO GET MORE INVOLVED WITH THE NEVADA CHAPTER?

We are in search of members to serve:

- As **Professional Development/Event Chair** (we’d like to fill this vacancy ASAP)
- To help manage the Nevada Chapter website
- As a NV Chapter Facebook page administrator
- As artists for a NV Chapter logo to be used on t-shirts, outreach materials, etc.

If you’re interested in these or other opportunities to serve, contact Chris Nicolai at [chris\\_nicolai@fws.gov](mailto:chris_nicolai@fws.gov).

# WE WANT TO KNOW!

## About members' upcoming news, publications, activities, honors, and awards

We would like to keep our membership aware of colleagues in the news so if you have an in-press article or have received a professional honor or award, tell us about it!

Are you putting together a workshop for colleagues or the public? Share it here!

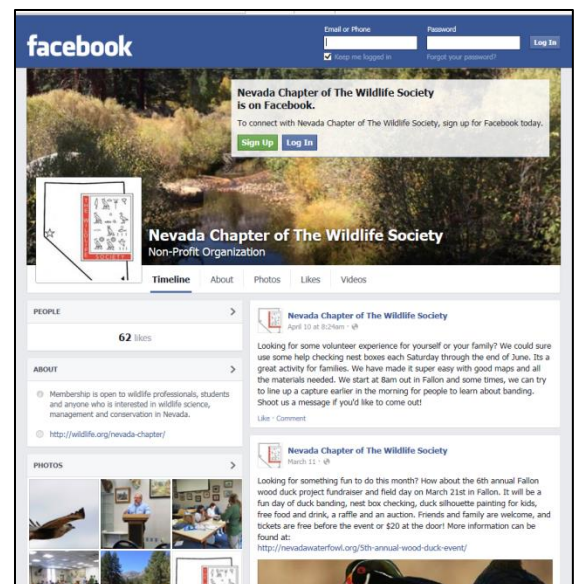
Have an article idea for the newsletter? We are seeking contributions!

Send information for newsletter publication to Mackenzie Jeffress ([mrjeffress@ndow.org](mailto:mrjeffress@ndow.org)).

Visit our website at <http://wildlife.org/nevada-chapter/>



**Check out our new website  
and Facebook Page!**



And “like” our Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Nevada-Chapter-of-The-Wildlife-Society/795814143873233>

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

The Wildlife Society 2015 Annual Conference  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
October 17-21, 2015  
<http://www.twsconference.org/>



2016 Western Section Annual Conference  
Sheraton Fairplex Hotel & Conference Center – Pomona, CA  
January 26-29, 2016  
Conference theme: ***Diggin into the Roots of Conservation Conflict:***  
*Changing the process of conservation to create sustainable solutions*



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Western Field Camp 2015: Field Techniques in Wildlife Studies

BIO 470-471: 4 Quarter Units

Aug 9 - 21 (12 days)

Swanton Pacific Ranch, Santa Cruz County



Field Techniques in Wildlife Studies is an intensive, resident field camp emphasizing wildlife identification and field techniques for vertebrates. Administered by California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo and Western Section of The Wildlife Society, the 4-unit course, held at Cal Poly's scenic Swanton-Pacific Ranch near Santa Cruz, includes hands-on field time, data collection and team projects. Instructors include wildlife professionals from agency, academic, private and non-profit sectors. Informal time with mentor-instructors allows students to discuss career opportunities.

Meals, lodging, and 4-units of academic credit are included in the \$1,610 course fee. Course is limited to 16 participants, with students working in groups of 4-5 to maximize hands-on experiential learning and mentoring. Contact Lead Instructor John Perrine, [jperrine@calpoly.edu](mailto:jperrine@calpoly.edu) with a brief (150-word) paragraph describing your interest in the camp, and a short list of previous coursework or equivalent to meet the prerequisites below. Upon instructor clearance of your pre-requisites, registration is through Cal Poly Extended Education (805) 756-2053.

Participation open to college undergraduates with junior standing or above, graduate students, and professionals who have completed pre-requisite course-work or equivalent: BIO 162 (Intro Organismal Form & Function) or BIO 263 (Intro Ecology and Evolution) or BIO 427 (Wildlife Management) or ASCI 329 (Principles of Range Management).



For More Information, Contact  
Cynthia Perrine,  
[perrine.cynthia@gmail.com](mailto:perrine.cynthia@gmail.com)

**CAL POLY**  
SAN LUIS OBISPO



### ROCKETNET TRAINING CLASS

Announcement as of March 16, 2015

**Date of class:** Sunday, July 19, 2015 (day prior to beginning of July Pacific Flyway Study Committee meeting in Reno, NV)

**Location:** Fallon, NV (1 hour east of Reno)

**Instructor:** Chris Nicolai, USFWS Region 8 migratory bird biologist

**Audience:** FWS employees who use rocketnets anywhere, and State and NGO employees who use rocket nets on FWS lands

**Lodging:** To be determined, likely set up a block of Rooms at Holiday Inn Express with government rate

**Time:** 8am until 6pm with 1 hour lunch

**Details of class:** First part of class will be in a classroom setting using powerpoint presentations to cover rocket net use, as well as explosive storage and transport. Second half of class will be outdoors learning how to properly use rocket nets and air propelled nets. Completion of class will provide rocket net certification for 4 years.

**Materials needed:** Dress appropriately for heat and open sun. Bring beverages and snacks. Lunch is on your own, but travel to restaurants is a possibility.

**Group size:** Limited to first 40 registrants

**Cost:** Free

**How to register:** [chris\\_nicolai@fws.gov](mailto:chris_nicolai@fws.gov)

**Extra activities:** Potential to assist and participate in local banding techniques and bird handling the day prior

*If you'd like to become a member, please use the form below.*

---

**NEVADA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**

**Nevada Chapter  
The Wildlife Society  
Membership Application**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address\*: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*To save cost, most of the Chapter's communication is via email.*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, and Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues: January 1, 2015-December 2015, \$10.00

Please Check: ☐ New ☐ Renewal

Make check(s) payable to: "Nevada Chapter, TWS"

Return to: Derek Hall  
6816 Beach Nest Ave.  
Las Vegas, NV 89130

You may also join online at  
<http://wildlife.org/membership/join>