

# 2016 Annual Meeting Summary

*Bill Vogel*

Could this meeting really have been 30 years in the making? Back in the winter of 1984-85, two young seasonal biologists were sharing a house in St. Charles, Arkansas, with two other seasonal biologists and a permanent field biologist. They were working on a study of hen mallard movements, habitat use, and mortality sources. The study took them from south of New Orleans, north to Missouri, but mostly they covered portions of Louisiana, Mississippi, and especially Arkansas. They often went into the flooded hardwood bottomlands or frozen rice fields looking for a radio transmitter that may be under a foot of ice or maybe 50 feet up in a tree—or in an eagle's nest. Fast-forward to about 2 years ago: Bill Vogel, then president of the Washington Chapter, and Don Kemnar, then president of the Idaho Chapter, were talking on the phone and started thinking about a joint meeting in spring of 2016. Somewhere along the way, we jointly decided to invite the Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology and then of course, Partners for Amphibian and Reptile Conservation. You see, partners are important to pull off such meetings for a variety of reasons and – as expected – this turned out to be the case.

Here are some highlights from our joint meeting, held from February 22 to February 26, 2016, at the Coeur d'Alene Resort on the shores of lovely Lake Coeur d'Alene.

## Symposia

NW PARC's symposium, **Conservation Across Borders**, explored a number of perspectives and case studies pertaining to trans-boundary conservation and restoration mechanisms. Topics included current threats and policies surrounding legal and illegal wildlife trade, the role herpetocultural societies can play in conservation, invasive herpetofauna, and the spread of endemic and exotic pathogens. The keynote speaker was Jamie Reaser, noted author and conservationist, who is currently serving as the executive director of the National Invasive Species Council.

The Idaho Bird Partners for Conservation symposium covered a variety of bird conservation issues, including short-eared owls, window strikes, uncapped pipes, the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, high-elevation birds, and workshops for federal agencies.

## Workshops

### Yellow-billed Cuckoo

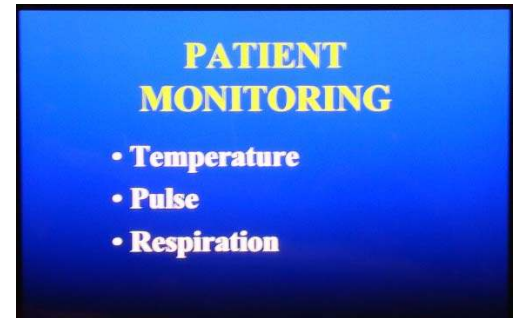
Thanks to Teal Waterstrat and Emily Teachout for organizing this workshop, which was co-sponsored by SNVB and WATWS. The highlight of this workshop was being able to tap into the expertise of Murrelet Halterman, who has had years of experience working with this bird in many parts of its range. The workshop provided information about this rare but widespread bird in the northwestern United States. It covered the cuckoo's distribution, habitat use and identification, presence survey protocols, and research needs. We learned about the birds that may be confused with this long slender bird and some good ways to tell them apart. We learned about cuckoos' dependence on large insects and the prevalence of cicadas, grasshoppers, and large, hairy caterpillars in their diet. They have a short nesting cycle. While they are born naked, the young chicks quickly mature and may be ready to leave the nest within a week of hatching. We also learned that habitat restoration efforts in parts of the Lower Colorado River have been very

successful—so successful that it appears birds that otherwise would have travelled further north to breed are using those areas instead.

## Wildlife Handling and Chemical Immobilization

### ***Who let the dogs out?* and Wildlife Handling and Chemical Immobilization Workshop...what do they have in common?**

TPRs! Temperature, Pulse, and Respiration – if you were in this workshop you would have heard those words many times. You would have learned how to guide an animal's condition and temperature rather than react to it. We talked often about respect and compassion for the animal and how the animal is the most important part of our work. Careful planning can reduce your excitement and that of the animal, increasing the efficacy of the drugs used for immobilization. We learned what a tranquilizer and a sedative really are and how they work with anesthetics and antagonists.



On Thursday and Friday, February 25 and 26, WATWS hosted a 2-day workshop on Wildlife Handling and Chemical Immobilization, taught by Dr. Mark R. Johnson, DVM, founder of Global Wildlife Resources (GWR). It was a slightly condensed version of the 3-day courses he teaches across the country. Dr. Johnson is a dynamic instructor who teaches practical, field-based training to maximize human safety, field success, animal care, and professionalism. He listens well and involves his students and their experiences in the class. He is well known for developing ethical practices and habits in his students. GWR specializes in wildlife capture and handling and has provided training and field assistance for over 20 years. This 2-day course was authorized to provide 12 hours of credit for the TWS Certified Wildlife Biologist Renewal/Professional Development Certificate Program. This workshop can also be applied toward any state or federal certification program.

Workshop content included Five-step Preparation for Field Operations; Legal Responsibilities; Professionalism; Drug Delivery Systems; Immobilizing Drugs; Patient Monitoring; Marking; Sampling; Veterinary Emergencies; Euthanasia; and Human Safety.

The 2 days included lecture and discussion, interspersed with videos and hands-on labs each day. A needle and syringe lab taught basic techniques for handling immobilizing drugs, working with syringe poles, and performing IV injections. The needle and syringe lab builds good habits to maximize human safety, animal care, and successful chemical immobilization.



We also had a practice station (simulated mammal leg and vein) where people could practice collecting blood samples. A dart-gun lab on the last afternoon provided opportunities for participants to practice a variety of drug-delivery systems.



We had about 25 students from tribal, state, and federal agencies, as well as universities and private timber companies. The students ranged from novices to biologists that have been capturing and handling animals with chemicals for years. Even the most experienced of these biologists said they learned a lot and were very happy with the class. One of them said, "Thank you very much for the excellent workshop. I learned an amazing amount of good information that I will surely take to heart in my work."



Our chapter contacted Dr. Johnson and asked him to put on this workshop because his classes are so thorough, interactive, and he teaches the most practical and field-based content. With every course Dr. Johnson strives to support and empower each student and professional as well as improve the well-being of each animal handled for wildlife research and management.

Dr. Johnson built his wildlife veterinary practice and reputation on the humane, respectful treatment of animals through countless capture and handling field operations. Among his experiences, he was Project Veterinarian for the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service's reintroduction of gray wolves to Yellowstone National Park, and served as Yellowstone Park's wildlife vet for four years. Dr. Johnson has taught courses for the USFWS National Conservation Training Center, and is an Affiliate Faculty of the University of Montana. In addition to peer-reviewed journal articles and other publication credits, he was the primary author of the official training manual for wildlife chemical immobilization for USDA Wildlife Services.



His company, Global Wildlife Resources (GWR), is dedicated to supporting wildlife professionals with humane capture and handling through training & field assistance. His courses are often profound personal and career experiences for course participants. He is teaching his 3-day chemical immobilization course in Hamilton MT every spring and fall. His 3-day course has hands-on labs every day including labs where the course participants drug goats - which simulate deer.

### Free-ranging dogs

Expanding on his work with wild species, Dr. Johnson became involved in helping feral animals and the human communities in which they exist. There is a great need for training in catching and handling street dogs in a humane and compassionate way throughout the world. In places like India, Asia, and Africa feral dog populations are out of control and rabies is a common risk to children and adults. It is estimated that



there are over 150 human deaths each day due to dog rabies and children are most susceptible. Trap/Neuter/Release with rabies vaccination is an essential tool. But because animal handlers in these regions often lack critical skills and tools, feral dog captures are frequently unsuccessful and unsafe. Harsh dog handling leads to animal suffering, injuries and death, and handlers themselves are physically and emotionally stressed and often bitten. Even in the U.S., training in humane, compassionate, calm and effective dog capture and handling is limited. Therefore, Dr. Johnson now teaches courses and provides field assistance around the

world, from American Indian reservations to locations in the Caribbean and Puerto Rico. After Hurricane Katrina, Dr. Johnson helped with domestic animal rescue in New Orleans, and he traveled to India in collaboration with Vets Beyond Borders and the Animal Welfare Board of India to provide training in the humane capture of feral dogs.

Dr. Mark has been introducing the Y pole, a humane tool for safely handling fearful dogs to the animal welfare community and his goal is to see that every shelter in North America is aware of this essential tool. It is a safe, effective, and caring tool when used with compassionate attitudes. When used as taught by Dr. Johnson, the humane Y pole has the potential to change the dog handling culture within shelters.



The 3-day course on Wildlife Handling and Chemical Immobilization for Wildlife Professionals is presented every spring and fall at Bitterroot College in Hamilton, Montana. Dr. Johnson and GWR are also offering classes in the near future in a variety of locations. Keep checking the website at <http://wildliferesources.com/training-courses/>.

For more information:

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Workshops Sponsored by Other Partners

**Introduction to “R”**—Jon Horne of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game led this workshop. R is an open-source (i.e., free) statistics and graphic software environment that has become the new standard for ecological data analysis. Participants learned the basics of the R language, useful packages for ecological research, and graphics options.

**Terrestrial Mollusks**—Tom Burke, Paul Hendricks, and Mike Lucid provided an introduction to the land snails and slugs of the Pacific Northwest. Topics covered included priority species for survey and monitoring, useful references, land mollusk life histories and habitat associations, where and when to conduct surveys, and suggestions for designing surveys.

**Manuscript Preparation**—Vaughn L. Paragamian conducted a half day workshop geared toward students but open to anyone interested in the ins and outs of publishing their research.

## Ignite Session

Promoted under the slogan, “Enlighten us, but make it quick,” Ignite is a novel and exciting presentation format. An Ignite presentation is exactly 5 minutes and contains exactly 20 slides. The slides advance automatically after each slide is displayed for 15 seconds. Ignite is also about having fun, and showing that presentations don’t need to be about “death by PowerPoint.” The very first Ignite event took place at a tech community event in Seattle about 10 years ago. Since then, Ignite has become an international phenomenon, with Ignite events in Helsinki, Tunisia, Paris, New York City and more than 350 other locations.

I decided to give it a try – but I cheated because I did not like the Ignite template on the screen. So I just used regular PowerPoint and set the slide to automatically change every 15 seconds. As I practiced, I realized I had slides with more important information that took me longer to cover, and others that I covered in less time. So, what to do? Cheat again! I set the time for each unique slide to match the needed time – they varied from 10 seconds to almost 20. But I was able to give my talk in 4 minute and 27 seconds.

Three things really surprised me:

1. The range of topics was diverse and interesting;
2. The audience turnout was amazing (I honestly anticipated very few people sitting through a session like this);
3. It's very easy to get ahead of schedule. When one speaker was done, we went on to the next without waiting the full five minutes for Q&A; we ended up about 20 minutes ahead of schedule. We will fix #3 in the future.

I think this is a great session for us to try in future years. Limiting a talk to 5 minutes and allowing 5 minutes for Q&A is a great way to fit in a lot of different talks we might otherwise not be able to hear. Also, it is long enough for interested people to be able to catch you in the hallway, continue discussions, and form partnerships. I know, because this happened to me. Consider giving Ignite a try next year!

## Business Meeting

The awards committee (Bill Vogel, Ron Tressler, Wendy Arjo, and Tony Fuchs) announced they have developed a Standard Operating Procedures document for the Executive Board's review. Once approved by the Board, the document should help guide the program in future years.

The workshop committee (same members as the awards committee) discussed a variety of topics that we could pursue in future years and asked for feedback. We also noted that what we can do in terms of organization is heavily dependent on volunteers and partners. Bruce Thompson asked the committee continue to pursue the workshops that they believe will work the best. Bill identified several that we are thinking about including those with potential partners: Switching to non-toxic bullets for big game; Back to basics (capture, handling, telemetry, etc. for various taxa); Pesticides and wildlife resources; Invasive species; Pollinators; Photography; and Alternative energy. Some workshops could be presented this year, while others may be 2 to 3 years out. Some topics are better suited for stand-alone workshops while others could be concurrent with annual meetings. It is important for our members to realize our ability to hold various workshops is highly dependent on someone being willing and able to do the organizational and logistical work. If you have a workshop you would like to help support, please contact Bill Vogel.

## Quiz Bowl

This year's meeting featured a quiz bowl, organized and run by Sara Hansen of WDFW. Two student teams competed, one from the University of Idaho and one from WSU (with the assistance of a ringer from CWU). After several lively rounds of questions that proved to be entertaining and educational for participants and spectators alike, WSU emerged as the champions—earning them the opportunity to go up against a team of wildlife professionals, known as the “old timers.”

Despite my youthful body and appearance, I was forced to join the old timers. We got off to a rough start. When asked whether all leopards, tigers, and lions roar, I confidently answered, “True.” Of course! And jaguars as well. That's why they are in the genus *Panthera* and not *Felis*—because of their hyoid apparatus. Wait—what? *False*? I was mortified. Before I could successfully argue that I was right and that the

definition of “roaring” had changed to exclude clouded and snow leopards, which lack a rough patch in their throat (so they roar more smoothly and quietly), we were on to the next question. I was told I cannot accept being wrong—but as you can see, I have clearly gotten over it. By the way, the thinking has changed since I was in school. Only tigers, lions, leopards, and jaguars have the anatomical structure that enables them to roar. The primary reason for this was formerly assumed to be the incomplete ossification of the hyoid bone. However, new studies show the ability to roar is due to other morphological features, especially of the larynx. The snow leopard and clouded leopard do not roar. Although they have an incomplete ossification of the hyoid bone, they lack the special morphology of the larynx.

Soon after, I felt vindicated. We were asked who are the two scientists credited with the theory of biogeography. Of course, the field was started in the 1960s by the ecologists Robert H. MacArthur and E.O. Wilson who coined the term ‘island biogeography.’ But no matter how many times I and my teammate said “Wilson! Wilson! E.O. Wilson,” our other teammate, a certain state employee who shall remain nameless—he was the one holding the microphone—said, “MacArthur and Pee-wee Herman.”  
*Pee-wee Herman?*

It was so much fun. Before we knew it the game was over. The score was... well, I don’t recall; but I do remember the students repeatedly saying the competition was not fair: “You guys are professionals.” Well for me, it is back to the books because I can’t wait until next year. The only thing harder than waiting till next year is keeping quiet and not blurting out the answers when the teams are competing. If you have never played before, you should consider coming to our next meeting. I understand the Forest Service has issued a challenge to WDFW. Any other takers?