

# The Wildlife Society

## SOUTHEASTERN SECTION



MAY 2017 VOLUME 59, NUMBER 2  
KATHERINE EDWARDS, EDITOR

### PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

I hope this message finds each of you well and enjoying the last remnants of spring before we turn things over to summer. We have several updates to run through so here goes! After serving 15 years as Chair of the SETWS Deer Committee, **Steve Demarais** from Mississippi State University handed the reigns over to **Steve Shea** with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Thank you Steve for your leadership on this Committee...and for your willingness to continue serving as a committee member! **Chris Comer** from Stephen F. Austin State University signed on as Assistant Editor for the *Journal of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies* (JSEAFWA). He will be working alongside **W. Mark Ford** of the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Virginia Tech this year and then transitioning to Associate Editor next year. While we're on the topic, you still have until June 15 to submit an abstract for a poster or oral presentation, symposium presentation, or peer-reviewed manuscript for the 71st Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) which will be held October 29-November 1 in Louisville, KY. From the looks of the symposia, it's shaping up to be a great conference. We are also looking for a Chair and four committee members for the Publication Awards Committee. This committee reviews the previous years JSEAFWA articles and selects a recipient for the Best Paper Award. If you are interested, please email me directly. New this year, SEAFWA initiated the Law Enforcement Chiefs College Scholarship with an application deadline of

July 1. Three scholarships of \$1,000 each will be available to students enrolled in wildlife, fisheries, or law enforcement. For more information, please visit <http://www.seafwa.org/> and look under the "Resources" tab's drop down menu. Thanks to **Chuck Elliott** from Eastern Kentucky University for stepping in to serve a 3-year term on the C.W. Watson Award Committee, replacing **Craig Harper** from University of Tennessee-Knoxville. A big "Thanks" to Mississippi State University for hosting a fabulous conclave. With over 100 volunteers helping to host the event, the 388 students and faculty from 24 wildlife programs across the Southeast that attended experienced a first class event. The University of Georgia placed 1st overall followed by North Carolina State University at 2nd and the University of Tennessee-Knoxville in 3rd. **Brett Collier**, Louisiana State University Student Chapter advisor, reports they've been diligently working on putting together the 2018 Southeastern Wildlife Conclave which will be held in Baton Rouge, LA, from March 24-27. Word on the street is you better learn how to eat crawfish

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before attending next year's conclave! As you read this newsletter, please be aware of the opportunities to nominate deserving individuals for awards this year. In particular, the Southeastern Wildlife Management Excellence Award and the C. W. Watson Lifetime Achievement Award are two of the Southeast's most prestigious honors. There are A LOT of outstanding professionals out there who should be recognized for the great

work they do. Please consider taking the time to make a nomination. And finally, pre-registration is now open for The Wildlife Society's 24th Annual Conference will be in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Sept 24-27. Have a safe, productive, and relaxing summer.

**Mark Smith**

***President, Southeastern Section TWS***

## **SOUTHEASTERN SECTION REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT**

Greetings Fellow Wildlifers!

In the past month or so, I have enjoyed hearing turkeys gobble and Bachman's sparrows sing; spring is certainly in full swing. I hope you are all doing well and had a productive first quarter. Earlier in the quarter, I attended The Wildlife Society spring Council in Spokane, Washington. I am proud to report that our membership is growing, and we are up almost 900 members since this time last year! I find it particularly encouraging that 27% of our current membership is made up of students.

There are some key personnel changes that need to be brought to your attention. Executive Director **Ken Williams** is retiring. Ken has worked tirelessly for TWS, and we owe him our thanks and best wishes. **Ed Thompson** will be our new Executive Director. Ed is not new to TWS staff as he has served since 2014 as our Chief Operating Officer. I am confident Ed will be an excellent Executive Director, and I look forward to working with him in his new role.

I had the opportunity to attend the Virginia Chapter Spring meeting. It was a real pleasure being able to meet and visit with other TWS members. While at this meeting, I learned that some members thought the 'Give Back' program provided six months free membership but required the new member to pay for the remaining six months of an annual membership to accept the offer. This is not the case. The Give Back

program allows a member to nominate someone to receive a free six month membership to TWS with no strings attached. Of course, we hope six months of free membership will ultimately result in a life-long TWS member, but there really is NO cost. In other words, this is not a 'half off' offer. I encourage you to take advantage of this program. It is a great way to introduce someone to all of the benefits associated with being a member of TWS.

By the time you read this, deadlines for TWS award nominations will have passed. I hope that we have good representation out of the Southeastern Section. If you would like assistance nominating anyone in 2018, feel free to contact me, and I will do what I can to help.

Remember, the 2017 conference will be held September 23 – 27 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Albuquerque will be an excellent gathering place and I hope to see you there.

I plan on attending a couple of State Chapter meetings this fall with the goal of attending at least one meeting in each state during my time as your Section Rep. In the meantime, I hope that you feel free to contact me with questions or concerns regarding The Wildlife Society. I can be most easily reached by email at [mconner@jonesctr.org](mailto:mconner@jonesctr.org).

**Mike Conner**

***Southeastern Section Representative***

# COMMITTEE REPORTS

## C.W. WATSON AWARD COMMITTEE

### C.W. Watson Award

The C. W. Watson Award Committee is responsible for the annual selection of the recipient of this award. The Committee is composed of a representation of the SEAFWA, the Southeastern Section of The Wildlife Society, and the Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society. Members are appointed by the organizations represented for a three-year term, each member scheduled to serve as Chairman in their third year. Procedures and qualifications for nomination of recipients shall be as prescribed by the previously approved C. W. Watson Award criteria (see SEAFWA.org, Awards and Committees or page 35 of this newsletter). This award shall be presented at the annual conference banquet by the Chairman of the Watson committee. Nominations should be sent to Dr. **Cecil Jennings** ([jennings@uga.edu](mailto:jennings@uga.edu)), Chair of the C.W. Watson Award Committee not later than September 1, 2017.

**SETWS Committee Chair: Chuck Elliott**  
[Charles.Elliott@eku.edu](mailto:Charles.Elliott@eku.edu)

## PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

The SETWS is seeking a Chair and four committee members for the Publication Committee. This committee reviews the previous years JSEAFWA articles and selects a recipient for the Best Paper Award. If you are interested, please contact SE-Section President, Mark Smith, at [mds007@auburn.edu](mailto:mds007@auburn.edu).

## DEER COMMITTEE

### Southeast Deer Study Group Meeting Hosted by Missouri

The 2017 Southeast Deer Study Group was hosted by the Missouri Department of Conservation. Special thanks go to meeting co-chairs **Barbara Keller** (Deer Program Coordinator) and **Charles Anderson** for their leadership in hosting the meeting, which had 298 registrants. **Steve Shea**, Regional Director with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, is now Chairman of the Deer Committee. Dr. **Steve Demarais**, professor at Mississippi State University, was recognized for his 15 years of service as outgoing Chairman. Dr. **Karl V. Miller**, professor at the University of Georgia, received the Career Achievement Award. **Jared Beaver** from Texas A & M University won the outstanding student oral presentation award, while **Daniel Morina** from Mississippi State University won the outstanding student poster presentation award. The 2018 conference will be hosted by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, February 19-21 at the Millennium Maxwell House in Nashville.

Meeting Minutes from the Deer Committee meeting held on February 27, 2017 can be found on page 32 in the Business Section of this newsletter.

**SETWS Committee Chair: Steve Shea**  
[steve.shea@myfwc.com](mailto:steve.shea@myfwc.com)



# COMMITTEE REPORTS

## STUDENT AWARDS COMMITTEE

The SETWS annually presents the Student Chapter of the Year Award to encourage and recognize exceptional achievements by Student Chapters in the Southeastern Section. This award is normally presented at the Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Winning chapters receive a certificate and monetary award. All student chapters in the Southeastern Section are invited to nominate themselves for the award by completing the application form, which can be obtained from the SETWS Awards Committee Chairperson, **Andy Madison** ([amadison@uu.edu](mailto:amadison@uu.edu)). The deadline to submit an application is June 30, 2017.

TWS Student awards will be presented at the upcoming SEAFWA Conference, to be held in Louisville, KY. Eligibility for poster and presentation awards includes students who have graduated within one year prior to the meeting and are presenting on their research conducted as a student. If you have or know of student presenters in the wildlife sessions, please encourage them to participate. In addition to being recognized for their presentation at SEAFWA, the winning student will also be presented an award (a plaque and \$100 for best poster and \$200 for best presentation).

***SETWS Committee Chair: Andy Madison, [amadison@uu.edu](mailto:amadison@uu.edu)***



Bill Buchanan, USFWS



# STATE REPORTS

## ALABAMA



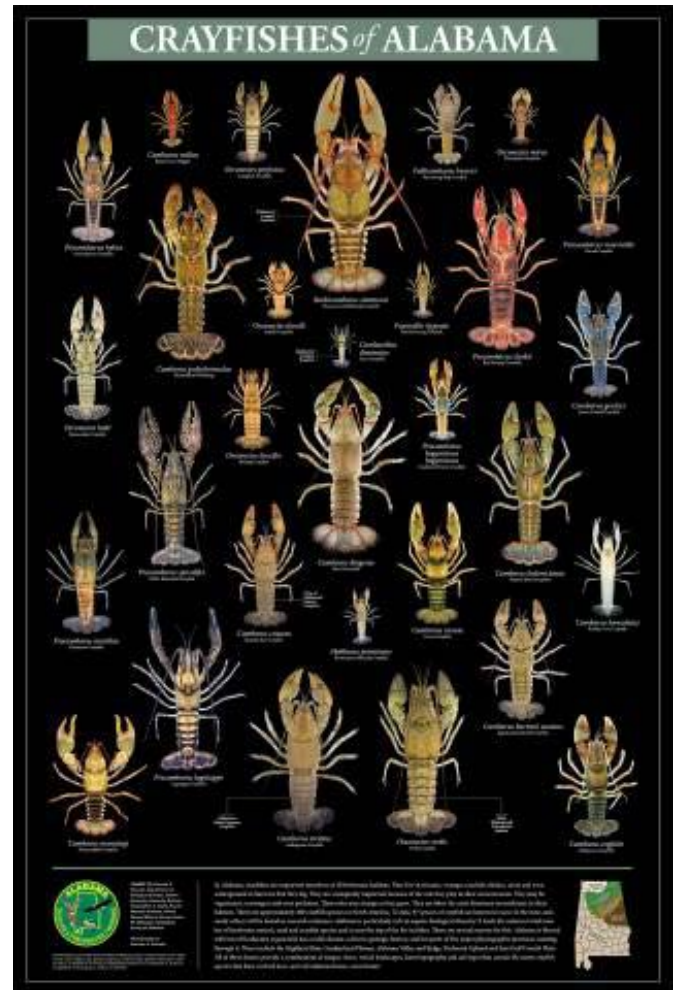
**Alabama Department of  
Conservation and Natural Resources**

### Alabama Crayfish Poster Now Available

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) has recently produced a poster that highlights 30 of the state's 97 species of crayfish. The poster is available to the public for free at any Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division Fisheries Section district office. The poster is also available by mail. To order, send a check for \$3 to cover postage to ADCNR, 64 N. Union St., Suite 106, Montgomery, Ala., 36130. Please make the check out to ADCNR.

As one of the most biologically diverse states in the country, Alabama leads the nation in total number of freshwater fish, mussel, snail, and crayfish species. There are approximately 400 crayfish species in North America. To date, 97 species of crayfish are known to occur in the state. Crayfish thrive in Alabama thanks, in part, to the state's abundant freshwater habitat. They can be found in streams, swamps, roadside ditches, caves and even in underground burrows. Crayfish may be vegetarians, scavengers, predators or serve as food for other animals, making them an important part Alabama's freshwater habitats. Since 2013, surveys of Alabama's waterways have led to the discovery of 14 previously unknown crayfish species.

**Submitted by: Traci Wood**  
**[Traci.Wood@dcnr.alabama.gov](mailto:Traci.Wood@dcnr.alabama.gov)**



Alabama DCNR Crawfish Poster

### Coastal Alabama Bird Banding Project

Birmingham Audubon in collaboration with the Alabama DCNR, Mississippi State University, Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism, the Alabama Historical Commission, and Mobile Bay Audubon Society held the Coastal Alabama Bird Banding Project April 18th through the 22nd at Baldwin County's historic Fort Morgan. The project revived the popular public



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bird banding events originally championed by the late **Bob Sargent** and his wife, **Martha**. This project provides a scientifically invaluable look at spring migrants traveling through the Coastal Alabama section of the Mississippi Flyway on their way to and from their summer breeding grounds. Throughout the week, the public was invited to enjoy unparalleled access both to researchers and to the birds, and were provided opportunities to discuss the science behind the surveys and the important conservation work happening on the Gulf Coast.

**Submitted by: Eric Soehren**  
***Eric.Soehren@dcnr.alabama.gov***

**Brittany Petersen**  
***bpetersen85@gmail.com***

## ARKANSAS



### **Arkansas State University and the Red Wolves for Red Wolves Initiative**

The Student Chapter of the Wildlife and Fisheries Society at Arkansas State University toured the Endangered Wolf Center in Eureka, Missouri in December 2016. Approximately 30 club members and 5 faculty members attended to learn about our mascot, the red wolf. While there, several faculty members and students inquired about assisting in conservation efforts to maintain the population of this critically endangered canid. After inquiring, we learned of potential reintroduction efforts to start a second wild population outside of North Carolina with



**Eric Soehren** talks with the public about the Yellow-billed Cuckoos migration.



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the two potential sites being Mark Twain National Forest in southeastern Missouri, and the Ozark and Ouachita National Forests in Arkansas. Seeing an opportunity to become the first university to assist in the recovery of an endangered species, the club decided to host a screening of the film, *Red Wolf Revival*, as well as a question and answer session with personnel from the EWC for students, faculty, alumni, and the general public. Attending this session was the Red Wolf Regional Recovery Liaison from the USFWS. Noticing public interest, the club and USFWS decided to pursue recovery of the species further and start a conservation based organization, Red Wolves for Red Wolves, modeled off the successful Tigers for Tigers and Tide for Tusks campaigns. We are not only seeking to conserve the species by supporting reintroduction and educational efforts, but are planning on becoming the repository for all red wolf specimens throughout the United States. We aim to preserve and protect the endangered American red wolf through education, curation, and scholarly research. For more information about our initiative, please contact **Chris Thigpen** at [chthigpen@astate.edu](mailto:chthigpen@astate.edu).

**Submitted by: Chris Thigpen**  
[chthigpen@astate.edu](mailto:chthigpen@astate.edu)

## FLORIDA



### New Programs Tackle Burmese Pythons in Florida

Florida wildlife officials have launched a number of new initiatives to tackle the spread of the invasive Burmese python, an introduced species that has been impacting native wildlife in the state for decades.



“We are encouraging the public to assist our efforts in a variety of ways,” said **Carli Segelson**, a habitat and species conservation spokeswoman for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. “Utilizing volunteers and members of the public help us to better target removal efforts, document the spread of the species and develop management strategies.”

The Burmese python (*Python bivittatus*), a large nonvenomous constrictor, is found primarily in the Everglades ecosystem in south Florida. Originally part of the pet trade, the species was introduced into the wild as early as 1979. Biologists believe their numbers increased after 1992’s Hurricane Andrew destroyed a breeding facility, allowing some of the snakes to escape.

The pythons prey on native mammals, birds and reptiles and compete with native species for habitat, leaving the commission to combat growing numbers of pythons in the wild.

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The Python Pickup Program encourages citizens to remove pythons they encounter, submit photos of the snakes and document their locations. Participants are entered into a monthly drawing for prizes — including snake hooks.

Through the Python Removal Contractor Program, the commission has hired 22 experienced snake-catching contractors to remove the pythons from the wild.

The commission also recently issued an executive order that allows the lethal take of Burmese pythons and other nonnative reptiles from 22 different public lands in the state, including wildlife management areas, public small game hunting areas and wildlife and environmental areas.

The goal, Segelson said, “is to help get the public involved and increase the number of pythons removed from public lands.”

An exotic species hotline, website and phone app also allow the public to report pythons and other invasive species they find.

***Published by: The Wildlife Society,  
Dana Koblinsky***



## GEORGIA



### **Reggie Thackston Receives McDonough Award**

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



Reggie Thackston was selected for the prestigious 2016 Jim McDonough Award.



# STATE REPORTS

## Georgia Department of Natural Resources

### Georgia Coyote Challenge

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

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

The coyote (*Canis latrans*) is a non-native predator that can be found in every county in Georgia and has the unique ability to live in a variety of habitats. Trapping and/or hunting are legal and recommended methods for managing coyotes. More information at [www.georgiawildlife.com/hunting/resources/CoyoteChallenge](http://www.georgiawildlife.com/hunting/resources/CoyoteChallenge).



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

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

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



Dave Menke, USFWS

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## Georgians to Benefit from Agency Cooperation

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

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

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

## University of Georgia Student Chapter

This year, the student chapter of TWS at the University of Georgia has participated in multiple community-wide events and TWS specific events. In November 2016, several members traveled to Tifton, Georgia for the annual Georgia Chapter of TWS conference to learn about research being done within the state and network with Georgia wildlife professionals. In October 2016, the chapter volunteered time to participate in a Halloween-themed event at the local nature center to teach children how to identify animal skulls they could find in Georgia and inspire local kids to take an interest in nature. In that same month, a group of chapter members and the quiz bowl team traveled to Raleigh, North Carolina for the 23rd Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society to meet with peers and professionals from all over the country while bringing home the gold in the quiz bowl competition. In February of this year, chapter officers volunteered their time to teach local boy



Georgia DNR and USDA Farm Services Agency sign MOU.

# STATE REPORTS

scouts about wildlife management to help them achieve their wildlife merit badges. Last month, the student chapter traveled to Starkville, Mississippi to compete in the 2017 Southeastern Wildlife Conclave where they placed in multiple

individual competitions and received first place in team competition, quiz bowl, and overall, while mingling with fellow wildlife students from throughout the Southeast.



University of Georgia TWS Conclave Team.

## **71st Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Sunday, October 29 - Wednesday, November 1, 2017 • Louisville, Kentucky**

The annual conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies is a forum for the exchange of ideas and critical information regarding the management and protection of fish and wildlife resources primarily in the southeast. The conference attracts over 500 representatives from state and federal agencies, citizen's organizations, universities, and private wildlife research groups, fisheries and wildlife scientists, agency enforcement personnel, and other natural resource related organizations.

Hosted by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, the 71st Annual Conference, "Creative Conservation Strategies for 21st Century Challenges" will be held at the Galt House Hotel in the heart of Louisville, Kentucky.



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## Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC) Student Chapter

The ABAC student chapter of TWS sent 16 students as well as three professors to attend this year's 2017 Southeastern Wildlife Conclave hosted at Mississippi State University. The ABAC student chapter placed fourth in the quiz bowl competition and seventh overall in the team competition. Individual ABAC students placed first in both fly casting (**Kyle King**) and orienteering (**Chris Terrazas** and **Jacob Wilson**), second in shotgun (**Will Glisson**), third in lab practical (**Tucker Stonecypher**), fourth in radio telemetry (**Miranda Wilkinson** and **Zach Wood**), and fifth in the obstacle course (**Danielle Clark** and **Parker Gerdes**). As an additional field trip the chapter traveled to the Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee Wildlife Refuge located near MSU.

*Submitted by: Andrew Edelman*  
*aedelman@westga.edu*

## KENTUCKY



### Kentucky Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Resources

The KDFWR has formed a Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) Committee whose aim is to create strategies that enhance the department's R3 efforts and programs. Comprised of representatives from KDFWR's wildlife, law enforcement, public affairs, administrative services and I&E units, the committee will identify and prioritize specific threats to R3 efforts. KDFWR plans to host a statewide R3 Summit, involving other state and federal agencies and conservation and industry organizations, to assist the department in developing a R3 strategic plan for hunting and angling in the Commonwealth.

*Submitted by: Chuck Elliott*  
*Charles.Elliott@eku.edu*



Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College TWS Conclave Team.

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## LOUISIANA



### Louisiana Chapter

The Louisiana Chapter TWS / LAPB has announced the date for their fall symposium, August 10-11, 2017. The symposium will be held on the campus of McNeese State University in Lake Charles, LA.

### Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

January 16, 2017 - State Representative **Jack Montoucet** became Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Montoucet was elected to the House of Representatives in 2008. He is the owner of Jacques' Croc's & Farm Pride Processors, and is a retired fire chief from the Lafayette Fire Department. He has been involved for 30 years in growing and marketing the LDWF's Alligator Farming Program, serving as president of the Louisiana Alligator Association.

Reorganization of the Wildlife Division has placed WMA, Private Lands and Forestry within regional field offices with each reporting to Field Office Managers. Operations Program Managers are **Steve Smith** over the MAV and EGCP Field Offices and **David Hayden** over the WGCP Field Offices.

At its April meeting, the LA Wildlife and Fisheries Commission approved the use of non-toxic shot only when hunting doves on LDWF Wildlife Management Areas and LDWF private lease dove fields.

**Submitted by: Jeff Duguay**  
[jduguay@wlf.la.gov](mailto:jduguay@wlf.la.gov)

### 2018 Southeastern Wildlife Conclave

The 2018 Southeastern Wildlife Conclave will be hosted by the LSU Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society in Baton Rouge, LA, from March 24-27. More information to come in the September newsletter.



Stacy Shelton, USFWS



# STATE REPORTS

## MARYLAND/DELAWARE



### Maryland/Delaware Chapter

#### Spring Meeting April 20-21, 2017

The Maryland-Delaware Chapter had a very successful spring 2017 meeting with over 50 attendees and 3 excellent guest speakers. This meeting's theme was natural resource communications, which included topics ranging from tactical communication, to verbal conflict resolution, and learning how to communicate about wildlife to school children. The meeting was held at the Discovery Nature Center at Deep Creek Lake State Park in Swanton, Maryland. Attendees also participated in two field sessions, using

mist nets and banding songbirds, presented by Dr. **Frank Ammer**, Frostburg State University, and chemical immobilization of wildlife, presented by Dr. **Jennifer Murrow**, University of Maryland-College Park.

Awards were presented to both graduate and undergraduate research poster participants, **Erica Duda** (Frostburg State University) and **Patrick Roden-Reynolds** (University of Maryland) and **Grace Hummel** (University of Maryland), respectively. The Chapter also held a wildlife photography contest, with **Bobby Branham** winning for his photo of a red-spotted newt.

*Submitted by: Jennifer Murrow*  
[wildlife@umd.edu](mailto:wildlife@umd.edu)



Maryland-Delaware Chapter Student Poster Session.



# STATE REPORTS

## MISSISSIPPI

### Mississippi State University

The student chapter of The Wildlife Society at Mississippi State University recently hosted the 2017 Southeastern Wildlife Society Student Conclave in Starkville, MS March 16-19th. Twenty four schools brought a total of 388 participants to compete this year. Overall placements were Georgia 1st, N.C. State 2nd, and UT Knoxville 3rd. Conclave included a keynote lecture from Dr. **Stan Temple** from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Students and advisors enjoyed a number of competitions, professional workshops, educational field trips, and social networking events. We thank everyone that participated and volunteered for making this a great event and look forward to competing next year when LSU is the host.

*Submitted by: Christopher R. Ayers*  
*chris.ayers@msstate.edu*

## NORTH CAROLINA

### North Carolina Chapter

#### Annual Meeting Recap

The theme of the 2017 NCTWS Annual Meeting was "Wildlife Management in North Carolina: Then and Now." We had 93 attendees from 17 different agencies, universities, and organizations participate in the meeting. To kick off the meeting, we had two plenary speakers give presentations on the history of wildlife conservation in the United States and the challenges faced in wildlife conservation in the 21st Century: Dr. **Bob Brown** with the NC Wildlife Federation, and Dr. **David Cobb** with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission.

### Award Winner

**Colleen Olfenbuttel** is the 2017 recipient of the NC Chapter of The Wildlife Society's Award. Colleen dedicated many hours to help make this year's conference the 3rd highest in attendance (1,867). She provided strong leadership to her committee and interacted regularly with TWS Staff, making the 2016 funds the 2nd highest in fundraising for an annual conference ever. Colleen was instrumental in making this conference #1 in the number of exhibitor booths (82), sponsorships, educational sessions (100+), and number of Native American students traveling to the conference. Colleen's dedication, accuracy, guidance, and understanding of wildlife conservation has been invaluable. Her excellent rapport with everyone and attention to detail should not go unnoticed. Colleen's contributions and suggestions are determined to be of the highest quality, significant, and local/regional/national in scope, making her extremely deserving of the NC Chapter of The Wildlife Society's Chapter Award.



**Colleen Olfenbuttel** is presented with the NC Chapter of The Wildlife Society's Award.  
(Photo courtesy: Kelly Douglass)

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## Caterpillar Professional Development

Twelve undergraduate wildlife biology students and three employees with the North Carolina Resource Commission recently took a field trip to the Caterpillar customer and training center in Clayton, N.C., where they toured the facility, learned about the company's environmental initiatives and operated large machinery.

Learning how to use the machinery is important for wildlife professionals, said **Lara Pacifici**, a teaching assistant professor at North Carolina State University who helped put the trip together with the North Carolina Section of TWS' professional development committee.

"If you were trying to restore an area or create certain habitat, you spend a lot of time doing land management and might use heavy machinery to alter the landscape," Pacifici said.

Twenty or 30 years ago, more wildlife biology students came from rural areas, where driving tractors gave them experience with heavy equipment, Pacifici said. As the field changes and more students come from urban areas, trips like this give them experience with equipment they might not get otherwise, she said. It may not make the students experts, Pacifici said, but it will give them a head start and something to add to resumes.

The students moved gravel with an over 20,000-pound small-wheel loader, spread mulch with a compact track loader and played a game of bowling with a backhoe loader. They also learned about Caterpillar's environmental initiatives, including zero-carbon engines, which burn the carbon created and leave it as a power residue in the machines' filters.



A North Carolina State University wildlife biology student operates a small-wheel loader. ©Lara Pacifici

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## COWCH in Action

The Celebrating Our Wildlife Conservation Heritage (COWCH) Committee was hard at work during the 2017 NCTWS Annual Meeting capturing interviews with retirees and seasoned professionals to preserve some of the history and evolution of our profession. They interviewed Dr. **Robert (Bob) Brown**, **Mike Bryant**, **Jon Heisterberg**, Dr. **Eugene (Gene) Hester**, **Tommy Hughes**, Dr. **Garland Pardue**, **Perry Sumner**, and **David Woody**. They captured some great footage, funny stories, and touching moments that will be edited for future viewing by the membership.

*Submitted by: Deanna Noble  
Deanna.Noble@ncwildlife.org*

## OKLAHOMA



NO NEWS REPORTED

## SOUTH CAROLINA



### South Carolina Chapter

Plans are underway for a State Chapter meeting in October 2017 in the Columbia area. There was a strong interest in having more student participation in the second half of the meeting such as having graduate student presentations to give them practice in front of an audience. Various meeting themes have been discussed and information will be forthcoming. A SC Chapter member newsletter is being created by the Board with a first issue expected in May 2017.

## South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

The fungus that causes the devastating bat disease white-nose syndrome (WNS) is now present in four new counties in the state: Greenville, Union, Laurens, and Lancaster. The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) is still waiting on bat swab results from Cherokee and Abbeville Counties.

This year's winner of the Eric Mortensen Memorial Wildlife Technician of the Year award went to **Ken Forrester** of Greer, SC. Forrester, who works in the Jocassee Gorges region, was a first responder along the coast during Hurricane Matthew (2016) and in the Upstate at the Pinnacle Mountain Fire (2016) in northern Pickens County. The fire burned approximately 9,000 acres. Forrester participated in I-26 lane reversals during the hurricane evacuation, brought supplies and equipment to both the coast and mountains during the disasters, and managed fire lines.

SCDNR and Riverbanks Zoo & Garden are working together to conduct research that will help to protect South Carolina's endangered gopher tortoise. Herpetologists at the zoo are raising nearly 30 tortoise hatchlings that are part of a study being conducted by SCDNR. The eggs, collected from the Aiken Gopher Tortoise Heritage Preserve, hatched at the Savannah River Ecology Lab. They were taken to the zoo back in December, and the tortoises will live at the zoo for the next year until they are ready to be released at the heritage preserve. Once released, SCDNR will track the reptiles' movements and monitor their activity. "Reproduction has been observed on the preserve in the form of hatched nests, but very few hatchling or juvenile tortoises have been witnessed at the site," SCDNR Herpetologist **Will Dillman** stated.



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“By following hatchling and yearling tortoises with radio telemetry, we hope to better understand survival at this location and evaluate the use of waif tortoises as a conservation tool.” [Article originally published by **Kyndel McConchie**, Public Information Director, Office of Media & Outreach, SCDNR.]



Gopher tortoise  
(Credit: Kyndel McConchie, SCDNR)

## Clemson University News

Congratulations to Dr. **Tom O'Halloran** on the paper *Local temperature response to land cover and management change driven by non-radiative processes* being accepted in *Nature Climate Change* (<http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nclimate3250.html>). In the paper, Dr. O'Halloran and colleagues developed a new way to integrate tower observations with remote sensing to quantify the non-albedo ways in which vegetation influences land surface temperature. It's hoped that such global maps can be used to optimize biophysics in addition to carbon when planning land use (afforestation) climate mitigation projects.

The 2017 Palmetto Alligator Research and Management Symposium was held Friday, April 28, 2017 at the Clemson University Baruch Institute of Coastal Ecology and Forest Science in Georgetown, SC. The program included presentations on a variety of topics related to alligator biology and management in the Southeastern US, and additional talks focused on other crocodilians.

The 2016-2017 annual report of the James C. Kennedy Waterfowl and Wetlands Conservation Center will be released in July. In the meantime, please visit their website at [www.clemson.edu/kennedycenter](http://www.clemson.edu/kennedycenter) to see some of the projects they have been doing.

## US Fish and Wildlife Agency News

### Service Biologist of the Year

SCCTWS member **Nancy Jordan** was recently recognized by the US Fish and Wildlife Service Southeast Regional Director as the 2015-2016 Biologist of the Year for extraordinary contributions to the conservation of natural resources in the Southeast Region. Specifically, Nancy was recognized for her on-the-ground management, leadership and project coordination for three red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) translocations in South Carolina and Virginia, initiation and deployment of a multi-year Bachman's sparrow inventory and monitoring project, and developing a partnership with the SC Department of Natural Resources for conservation projects for Pine Barrens treefrogs and Northern Bobwhite Quail.

Southeast Regional Director **Cindy Dohner** recognized the robust partnerships that Nancy has cultivated to accomplish critical work on refuge lands and restoration work on partner lands. The award spans April 2015 through October 2016.

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During that time, Nancy planned and executed the translocation of 26 RCWs to the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia and Donnelly Wildlife Management Area in the SC Lowcountry. This required coordination and leadership of more than 20 biologists representing state, federal, academic, and private entities. These translocations were accomplished while still overseeing the day to day wildlife biology program at Carolina Sandhills National Wildlife Refuge.

Congratulations, Nancy, on your well-deserved recognition!

**Submitted by: Anna H. Smith**  
**smithah@dnr.sc.gov**

## TENNESSEE



### Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

#### **Boone and Crockett World Record Pending for Non-typical Deer Harvested in Sumner County, Tennessee**

A buck harvested in Sumner County during the 2016 muzzleloader season, has completed a step toward becoming a world record for a non-typical deer rack taken with a muzzleloader. Boone and Crockett officials spent several hours scoring the 47-point buck tabbed the "Tennessee Tucker Buck" at the TWRA's Nashville office. Following the Boone and Crockett scoring,



USFWS Service Biologist of the Year recipient, Nancy Jordan. (Credit: USFWS)

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representatives from Safari Club International scored the rack. It was deemed a new world record under the organization's guidelines.

The buck was harvested by 26-year old Gallatin resident **Stephen Tucker**. The deer rack scored 312 3/8 in the Boone and Crockett tabulation. The tabulation was held after 60 days had passed since the original "wet" score indicated that the buck was a potential world record. As it stands, the score will break the previous mark of 307 5/8 set by then 15-year old **Tony Lovsteun** in Albia, Iowa. The criteria includes free roaming and taken by a hunter.

TWRA Executive Director **Ed Carter** was present at the announcement of the pending world record harvest. "I am so proud that a pending world record harvest has come from Tennessee, obviously," Carter said. "Just to know we have an official world record, at least it is pending, in Tennessee means a lot to a lot of people." The certification process will now await another step as a pending world record. Another panel of Boone and Crockett scorers will again take measurements at the awards banquet in 2019.

## Austin Peay State University

APSU TWS is back up and running strong! Our student chapter was restarted the fall semester of 2016 after a few years of inactivity. In our first year, we had three goals: (1) reinstate the chapter, (2) recruit members, and (3) provide wildlife based activities and opportunities. Reinstatement required outlining the goals, objectives and policies of our organization in the form of a constitution which we structured with our new members and was based on the bylaws of The Wildlife Society. This constitution was then submitted to the college for reactivation of the campus organization.

Following reinstatement, we quickly grew to 16 members and maintain an active recruitment program that includes both on-campus and off-campus activities. On campus activities include our regular bi-weekly meetings. At each meeting we were fortunate to schedule some excellent presentations by invited speakers representing agencies like the US Forest Service and USDA Wildlife Services. Other lectures and demonstrations were from our faculty and graduate students on their academic research topics and use of wildlife sampling techniques. In March, our group partnered with APSU's Tri-Beta and AFS and co-hosted a campus-wide event to "clean up the APSU farm." APSU students regularly visit for class field trips or club activities. Finally, in April, our student members were involved in an outreach event where local 5th graders came to hear about STEM-based career possibilities. APSU TWS highlighted many possibilities in the Wildlife Sciences. The month of May promises to be busy with the Dunbar Cave Spring Fling and Bio-Blitz community outreach activities.

In October 2016, our advisor and officers travelled to the national TWS conference in Raleigh, NC where they attended numerous talks, workshops, networking events, meetings, and field trips. At the Tennessee State Chapter meeting, five of our members made the short drive to Paris Landing State Park where one of our graduate student members won Best Student Oral Presentation and our club's contributions of Venison Stew and Italian Deer Sandwiches to the Wild Game Dinner won first place! Two undergraduate and four graduate student members also were able to go to the SE Conclave at Mississippi State and participated in the fullness of high-impact opportunities that it had to offer. The skills and experiences that those members brought back with them have visibly piqued the interest of other new members, and we



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will hopefully have an even stronger presence not only in the SE conclave, but SE-TWS activities in general for the 2017-2018 academic year. We are excited for the next generation and our newly elected officers for 2017-2018. Newly elected officers will be tasked with setting goals for the next school year, and we are excited for building upon successes from 2016-2017.

## Tennessee Tech University

This year has been a very productive year for our chapter. We currently have 61 full-time members, and sometimes even more than that attend our monthly meetings! In the last year we have participated in many activities, from the deer check-in stations to aid stations at marathons. Our most well-attended events, as usual, were the deer check-in stations, at which we had over 20 people volunteer at six different stations across Middle and East Tennessee. Our first event of the year was a canoeing trip down the Caney Fork River. We attempted to hold a squirrel hunt at Standing Stone State Forest, but the event was cancelled due to inclement weather. We also held a fall social gathering to sight in our rifles and muzzleloaders for the coming hunting seasons. After the check-in stations, we held our Fall Formal event, at which we celebrated the end of the semester and said goodbye to our graduating members. In February, approximately 20 chapter members attended a prescribed burn training course at the Tennessee Department of Forestry's training compound in Bell Buckle, where all who attended and passed the exam became certified burn managers. Several chapter members also attended the annual TN-TWS meeting at Paris Landing State Park in March, where hopefully many of us met our future employers. Recently, 19 chapter members and one advisor attended the Southeastern

TWS Student Conclave in Mississippi. Our chapter placed 10th overall, with several podium positions, including photography, archery and turkey calling. Our final events of the year will be our annual Beast Feast, where we plan to enjoy our year's harvests and each other's company, and our Spring Formal, at which we will celebrate the successes of, and say our good-byes to, our graduating seniors.

**Submitted by: Steven Hayslette**  
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## University of Tennessee at Martin

The University of Tennessee at Martin's Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society actively participates in many annual events. The fishing rodeo, cookouts, senior preview days, the state chapter TWS meeting, and conclave are all great examples. To be successful, these various events require time and effort to be put in. If we were to measure these events by the time, blood, sweat, and tears, then there is no doubt that conclave is the most demanding.

As a sophomore, this was my first year participating in conclave. I was intrigued when I found out how much time we designate to training. Starting as early as the fall semester, Dr. **Eric Pelren** held quiz bowl tryouts to see who could duke it out on the buzzers. Shortly after, our conclave chairman **Slate Rider** and his team set up a mini conclave for us to find out what special skills everyone could contribute to make a well-rounded team. After the team was decided on, we spent the spring semester participating in training days for team competition, and sharpening our skills for individual competition.

Finally it came, the week we had all been waiting for. We were finally able to perform and get the butterflies out of our stomachs. I was

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really able to observe and soak in what we were accomplishing. We had achieved something far more valuable than a trophy; we had achieved comradery. Of all the teams down at conclave, we were one of the few to have Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors all represented. If nothing else, that fact can be traced back to Wildlife Society members who love this society and want to get others involved and to students who are getting involved and see how impactful The Wildlife Society can be.

The opportunity this event gives to compete, celebrate, and cheer for made it worth the effort regardless of whether we won or lost. The memories we gained will forever be remembered. I am eager to start preparing for conclave once again. As the senior's graduate and the cycle continues, we will need more students to try out and participate next year. I look forward to seeing YOU at tryouts for Conclave 2018. The best of luck.

**Submitted by: Brandon Weber and Zach Woolworth, [zactwool@ut.utm.edu](mailto:zactwool@ut.utm.edu)**



## VIRGINIA



### Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

#### Spring Turkey Hunters Report Near-Record Harvest

The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries announced a total of 18,860 turkeys harvested in Virginia during the 2017 spring gobbler season. The 2017 harvest was 9% higher than the 2016 harvest. This year's harvest was the third highest harvest in modern times. The record harvest occurred in 2015 where 20,580 birds were taken. The second highest harvest occurred in 2013 (19,265 turkeys). These record, or near-record setting, season harvests support data showing that wild turkey populations are at record levels for modern times. Virginia's wild turkey has increased 2.7% annually over the past 10 years. However, with moderate reproduction over the past 5 years, the turkey population has plateaued near these record levels. Crude population estimates put Virginia's turkey population at a range between 185,000 – 195,000 birds.

Youth and Apprentice hunters took advantage of their Weekend Season and tagged 627 birds, a 5% increase over 2016. Recruiting new hunters is a key expectation noted in our Wild Turkey Management Plan. Growing the Youth and Apprentice Season harvest to a higher level is a positive sign.

Virginia's public lands are an import destination for many resident and non-resident hunters. With 1,664,110 acres of land in Virginia, the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests offer tremendous gobbler hunting opportunities in the Blue Ridge and Alleghany

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Mountains of western Virginia. In 2017, the spring gobbler harvest increased 26% on the George Washington National Forest acreage and 56% on the Jefferson National Forest!

For more information on the spring gobbler harvest summary including numbers for each county, please visit <https://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/turkey/springharvestsummary/>.

## DUCKS UNLIMITED

### Staff Changes

Dr. **Tom Moorman** has moved into the position of Chief Scientist for DU. He now works out of National Headquarters in Memphis, Tenn. Taking over as the Southern Region Director is **Jerry Holden**. Jerry will continue to work out of the Southern Regional Office in Ridgeland, MS. **Mike Carloss** was promoted to Director of Conservation Programs for LA, TX, NM and OK and will remain in the Lafayette, LA field office. **Cassidy Lejeune** was selected to backfill Carloss' position as the Manager of Conservation Programs for South Louisiana and will continue working out of the Lafayette field office.

**Ed Penny** is the new Southern Region Director of Public Policy. A waterfowl biologist and Mississippi native, Ed will work out of DU's Southern Regional Office in Ridgeland, Mississippi, and handle public policy efforts in 13 states. He comes from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, one of DU's strongest and most productive partners. At MDWFP he was most recently responsible for administering the Wildlife Bureau and developing partnerships with state and federal agencies, policymakers, individuals and organizations focused on wildlife conservation issues.

Ed was educated at Mississippi State University, where he obtained a bachelor's and master's degree in wildlife and fisheries science. He has worked for Ducks Unlimited in California and for both the California and Mississippi state wildlife agencies.



Ed Penny is the new DU Southern Region Director of Public Policy.

### Awards

DU presented Wetlands Conservation Achievement Awards at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in March. Among the winners were three individuals from the Southern Region – Louisiana NRCS State Conservationist **Kevin Norton**, Jefferson County Texas Judge **Jeff Branick**, and the late Tennessee outdoor media professional **Wade Bourne**.



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## **Southeast Conservation Unit – AR, AL, FL, GA, North LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA**

### **Wrapping Up MAV Conservation**

The Ark-La-Miss North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant is closed out. The programmatic grant was part of three different standard NAWCA proposals totaling \$6.8 million in match and \$2.9 million in grant dollars to protect, restore and enhance almost 50,000 acres in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi through work on Wetlands America Trust conservation easements and state and federal public lands, including Dagmar, Holland Bottoms, Buckhorn, Black Swamp, Ouachita and Dewey Wills WMAs and the Cache River NWR.

### **Arkansas**

#### **Dry Lake Project Completed**

The USFWS and DU have completed a project to enhance 121 acres on the White River NWR in Arkansas County. Partners built three different impoundments and installed water management infrastructure to provide early flooded habitat and allow later season flooding to overtop the impoundment levees, mimicking the area's natural cycle. Funding came through the USFWS ID/IQ program. Though the specific Dry Lake unit is not open to public hunting, much of the White River NWR is.

### **North Louisiana**

#### **Public Hunting Areas Improved in Louisiana**

DU is working with the LDWF to enhance waterfowl habitat on Pomme De Terre and Boef WMAs in north Louisiana. Pomme De Terre WMA is in Avoyelles Parish, just 13 miles southeast of Marksville. Boef WMA is in Caldwell Parish, about 6 miles east of Columbia. With partial project funding from a NAWCA grant, the two projects will enhance 1,675 acres of public lands open to hunting.

### **Mississippi**

#### **Multiple Public Land Projects Underway**

DU is working with the MDWFP, USFS and USFWS on several wetland restoration and enhancement projects in Mississippi. With support from three different NAWCA grants, DU will restore management capabilities on a green tree reservoir on Delta National Forest, Mahanah WMA and Morgan Brake NWR. Reforestation projects have already been completed on Hillside and St. Catherine Creek NWRs.

### **North Carolina**

#### **Coastal Land Trust Protects the Whole Dam Creek**

Ducks Unlimited and other partners recently helped the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust acquire two tracts totaling 90 acres of truly stunning hardwood forest along Dam Creek, a tributary of the Neuse River in Craven County. The first tract is at the mouth of Dam Creek, where it empties into the Neuse River. The second tract is on the opposite end of Dam Creek, at its headwaters. With these back to back purchases, the Coastal Land Trust expanded its existing Dam Creek Nature Preserve from 38 acres to 120 acres, conserving frontage along nearly all of Dam Creek.

"These new properties are a tremendous addition to the Coastal Land Trust's Dam Creek Preserve, a nature preserve which not only provides some green space near the Carolina Pines and Royal Oaks Subdivisions, but was deemed of conservation importance to the nearby Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, which contributed significant funding. The entire Dam Creek Preserve is a small, but significant ecological gem which hosts rich hardwood forest with rolling topography, an unusual feature for the coast," said **Janice Allen**, deputy director of the Coastal Land Trust.

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The Coastal Land Trust secured grants and funds from several different sources to purchase these two properties, including the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's North American Wetlands Conservation Act program, the U.S. military's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration program, the Fred and Alice Stanback Fund, and the Conservation Trust for NC. Ducks Unlimited developed a grant securing more than \$350,000 for seven acres of this acquisition.

## **Texas Plantation Game Land Grant Approved**

Ducks Unlimited, in partnership with North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC), was recently awarded \$1 million in funding from the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program to restore 251 acres of wetland habitat on Texas Plantation Game Land in Tyrrell County, North Carolina. The Texas Plantation Tract is perpetually protected by a Wetlands America Trust conservation easement and was acquired by NCWRC for creation of the Texas Plantation Game Land in 2015. This grant is the final funding component of the project as it leverages and compliments funding from NCWRC, DU and the North Carolina Attorney General's Environmental Enhancement Grant Program. Ducks Unlimited will implement the project in phases over the next two years, resulting in six managed wetland units providing optimal habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, wading birds and other wetland-dependent wildlife. With more than 50 percent of North Carolina's natural wetlands lost, properly managed wetlands are critical to wildlife. The goal of this project is to restore critical wetland habitat functions and values on Texas Plantation for waterfowl, shorebirds, neotropical migrants and improve water quality for the estuarine system. Simultaneous benefits include enhanced public waterfowl hunting opportunities, particularly for youth.

## **South Carolina**

### **Working to Repair Storm Damage**

Almost a year to the day after suffering historic rainfall and devastating coastal flooding in South Carolina, the state was hit by Hurricane Matthew in October 2016. Matthew caused tremendous damage to managed wetland systems on both public and private lands. Building off a strong partnership with state and federal agencies in the South Carolina Lowcountry, DU staff quickly visited affected sites, assessed damages on coastal impoundments and provided engineering services for repairs. Under our ID/IQ contract with Region 4 of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, DU handled the engineering and construction services to repair a significant breach on the Jacks Creek Impoundment of Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge and repair two major breaches on the Combahee Fields Unit of ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge. When a tidal impoundment is breached, the cost of fixing the breach grows larger each day as the breach expands with water movement from each tide cycle. Being able to quickly contract with DU to fix the breach through ID/IQ enabled the USFWS to prevent further costly damages to the impoundments and get these units back under habitat management regimes. During this catastrophic time, DU also worked with SCDNR under an existing engineering agreement with the state to quickly provide engineering assistance to fix several breaches on coastal impoundments. Even though the damages from Hurricane Matthew were significant, DU and partners were able to utilize existing tools to repair damages and get wetland habitat back into functioning management regimes for the benefit of waterfowl, migratory birds and other wetland-dependent species.

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## **Tennessee**

### **Ongoing Wetlands Restoration**

Projects on four different public lands will enhance more than 650 acres of waterfowl habitat across Tennessee and provide better hunting opportunities at Tully and Chickamauga WMA. Working with TWRA and USFWS, DU will complete projects at Tully WMA and Busseltown NWR this year. Projects on Chickamauga WMA and Cross Creeks NWR will begin soon.

## **Virginia**

### **Important River Habitat Protected**

The Enviva Forest Conservation Fund (the Fund) announced in February the closing of its first easement purchase from the 2016 grant cycle to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. The land completes permanent protection of The Narrows, an important transit point for fish species that rely on floodplain forest for spawning and nursery habitat. The Crowder and White tract easement was made possible through combined support from the Fund, donated timber value from the owner and a NAWCA grant secured by DU and supported by several partners, including the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.

### **Southwest Conservation Unit – South LA, OK, TX, NM**

## **South Louisiana**

### **Pass-a-Loutre WMA Enhancement Project**

Ducks Unlimited is working to create lush marsh where coastal erosion has turned historic

marsh into open water. Old and new delta splay projects are creating prime waterfowl habitat on Pass-A-Loutre Wildlife Management Area, the oldest WMA in Louisiana.

Located in southern Plaquemines Parish, approximately 80 miles southeast of New Orleans, Pass-A-Loutre WMA encompasses 115,000 acres and is one of the most popular public lands for waterfowl hunting in the state. The WMA winters more than 750,000 waterfowl annually at the mouth of the Mississippi River and the heart of the Mississippi River Delta.

In 1986, the state implemented the Louisiana Crevasse Project by cutting three crevasses – artificial distributary channels used to improve flow of water and sediments – in natural levees on Pass a Loutre WMA. The crevasses were expected to produce land for 10 to 20 years, but are still delivering positive gains and are expected to be land-builders for at least the next decade. To date, the cuts have built 760 acres of marsh at a cost of \$115 per acre, compared to an average cost of \$50,000 an acre for marsh creation using dredged material.

Working with LDWF, Ducks Unlimited completed a new project to modify two existing crevasses and significantly increase water flow, resulting in the creation of even more land. Dredged material from the crevasses was used to create two remote bird nesting islands. Partners included the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the North American Wetlands Conservation Council, Building Conservation Trust and the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority.





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## NAWCA Project Underway - South Louisiana

The Freshwater Bayou North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant provides for the restoration and enhancement of two tracts. The first is the Freshwater Bayou Tract in Vermilion Parish, along the western shoreline of the Freshwater Bayou Navigation Channel. As a result of the navigation channel, the wetland hydrology has been compromised, and the area has suffered shoreline erosion and marsh loss resulting from the constant passage of large sea-going vessels. Restoration work was completed in October and restored the hydrologic integrity of this tract and complimented other efforts to stabilize the shoreline of the navigation channel.

The F.R. Ranch Tract is in Cameron Parish Louisiana, approximately 11 miles west of Hackberry and adjacent to the Sabine National Wildlife Refuge. This tract has suffered primarily from saltwater intrusion. The proposed infrastructure will allow for the management of water and salinity levels in the unit, which will restore desirable plant communities. This portion of the project should be completed in early summer.



This breakwater will stabilize the shoreline along Freshwater Bayou and promote marsh growth.

## Mottled Duck Decision Support Tool – Putting Science into Action on the Gulf Coast

The mottled duck (*Anas fulvigula*) is a year-round resident of coastal marshes and prairies in the Western Gulf of Mexico Coast (WGC). Population surveys indicate the WGC mottled duck population has experienced a long-term, steep decline in Texas, is stable or slightly increasing in Louisiana and is stable to declining across the entire WGC range.

Declining population trends in portions of its range has made the mottled duck a species of concern among state and federal agencies. Because the loss and degradation of nesting and brood-rearing habitats are believed to be largely responsible for historical declines, conservation and management of habitats for mottled ducks is a priority concern for area conservation partners. But do we know where the best habitats for mottled ducks are and where to focus our conservation efforts?

To answer these questions, Ducks Unlimited has collaborated with other Gulf Coast conservation partners, including Texas A&M University – Kingsville, the Gulf Coast Prairie Landscape Conservation Cooperative, and the Gulf Coast Joint Venture (GCJV). Working together, the partnership developed a Decision Support Tool (DST) to help target wetland and grassland conservation efforts to benefit nesting and brood-rearing mottled ducks.

Decision Support Tools are computer-based or graphical systems that aide stakeholders in making efficient and effective decisions. In wildlife conservation, DSTs are used to consolidate available biological and ecological knowledge within a spatial framework to identify areas on the landscape where conservation actions are expected to have the greatest benefit.

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Three output models, or maps, were developed to identify good existing habitat and areas that could benefit most from habitat restoration and enhancement. Each map identifies areas on the Gulf Coast where specific conservation or management activities would be beneficial and ranks them based on their expected relative benefit, or priority. One map depicts priority areas for grassland establishment (nesting habitat). One map depicts priority areas for wetland enhancement (brood-rearing habitat). These two maps are used to target restoration and enhancement activities. The final map depicts and prioritizes areas that currently provide mottled duck habitat. This map can be used to target acquisitions, easements or maintenance activities to protect and maintain existing habitat.

Project partners tested the accuracy of the maps produced from the DST using seven years of mottled duck breeding population survey data. Preliminary results indicate that mottled ducks consistently choose landscapes identified as higher priority nesting habitat by the DST than landscapes around randomly generated points. This means the models work and provide a biologically based framework to guide habitat conservation for mottled ducks throughout the western Gulf Coast.

Ducks Unlimited uses the DST models to support proposals for public funding. By following the rigorous science of the DST, we can focus our conservation efforts where they matter most to mottled ducks. The ability to support funding proposals with information derived from DST outputs

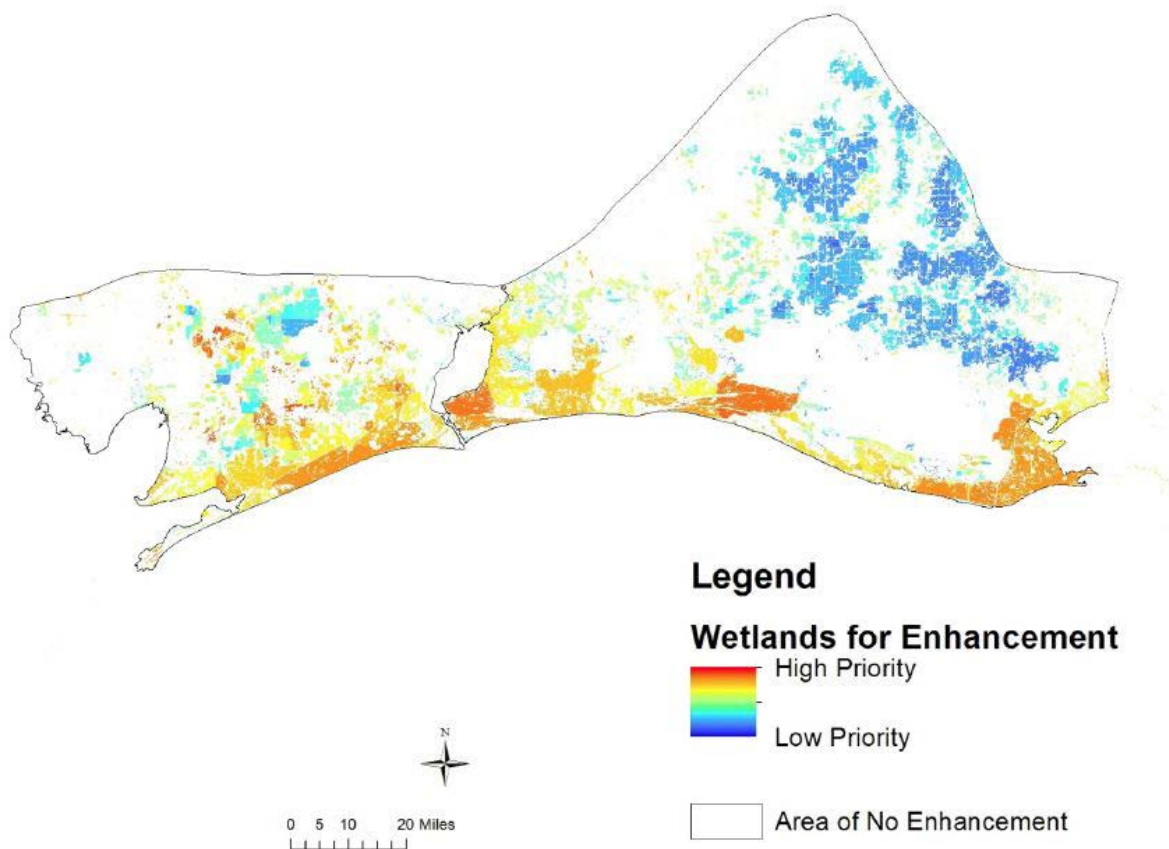


Figure 7: Chenier Plain Initiative Area: Wetland Basins for Freshwater Enhancement

Chenier Plain Decision Support Tool wetlands output for mottled duck conservation.

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adds credibility to the proposed efforts and assures potential funders that our conservation programs are truly guided by science and planning.

Once the model was validated, conservation partners on the GCJV brought up their desire to link conservation expenditures with the model – to put their money where the science says will provide the most benefit. As part of our agreement with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Ducks Unlimited ensures that at least \$100,000 of the funding they provide for the Texas Prairie Wetlands Project goes into habitats identified as high priority by the DST. Much of our conservation work along the Gulf Coast contributes to the habitat and population goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan through the GCJV Chenier Plain Initiative Plan and GCJV Mottled Duck Conservation Plan.

“It’s great to see an effort like this where we all, as a partnership, identified the need, took it to fruition, tested the output and are applying it on the ground. We took it all the way from planning to implementation through adaptive management,” said **Cynthia Edwards**, Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy (SECAS) Coordinator and former science coordinator for the Gulf Coast Prairie LCC. “Over time we’ll be able to add more information, like sea level rise, refine the model and improve on application.”

Even conservation partners that don’t focus on mottled ducks have recognized the importance of a broad partnership identifying a science need, putting the science together and putting it into application.

**Submitted by: Andi Cooper**  
[acooper@ducks.org](mailto:acooper@ducks.org)

## Quiz Bowl Registration Now Open – TWS Annual Conference

The 20th Annual Quiz Bowl will take place Monday and Tuesday during the TWS Annual Conference in Albuquerque, NM. As a participant or as a member of the audience, you’ll have fun testing your expertise in wildlife trivia!

The winning team gets its name emblazoned on a plaque that hangs at TWS headquarters and also receives a plaque and an original piece of artwork to display at its school. Will last year’s champion, University of Georgia, defend their title or will a new champion be crowned? Come join us and cheer for your alma mater or your favorite team!

Ready to enter your team? Please send an email to **Michelle Bogardus**, TWS Annual Conference Quiz Bowl Planning Team, at [MichelleDBogardus@gmail.com](mailto:MichelleDBogardus@gmail.com), with the following information:

- Student Chapter or School name
- Name and email address of one team member that will serve as the primary contact

Review the official quiz bowl rules at <http://twconference.org/quizbowl/>.

Deadline for Registration: Sunday, August 6 at 11:59 PM Eastern Time.



## TWS Names Ed Thompson Executive Director and CEO By David Frey

The Wildlife Society has named **Ed Thompson** as its next executive director and chief executive officer. Thompson, who currently serves as chief operating officer of the Society, will take over in the new role on July 1 when current Executive Director **Ken Williams** retires.

“Ed is familiar and experienced with all facets of The Wildlife Society and he sees the importance of our science mission,” said TWS President **Bruce Thompson**. “He has significant background for leading organizations, he’s innovative, he’s technically savvy and he has a can-do spirit. Perhaps most of all, he has a rare ability to plan and prioritize, coupled with the ability to engage our members and partners.” His hiring represents a break from tradition. Thompson will be TWS’s first executive director not to come from a wildlife biology background. His selection follows the model of other organizations, including the National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy, Pheasants Forever, The Audubon Society and Sierra Club, all of which have hired directors for their business experience.

“Ed is neither a scientist nor a biologist, but he is a hell-bent-for-leather manager,” said Williams, who will work alongside him through the transition. “As far as running an organization like ours, he’s as good as it gets.”

Thompson brings more than 20 years of executive experience in membership organizations, including three years as the Society’s COO.

“When I look at how far we’ve come over the past three years, I get very excited about our prospects for the future,” Thompson said.



“My admiration for the wildlife professionals who are out there making a difference every day inspires me to work harder to provide them with even better services and information.”

Former TWS President **Gary Potts**, who led the search committee, praised Thompson for innovations he has brought to the Society as COO, including the Give Back Program, the 1,000 program and improvements to membership outreach and partnerships.

“His knowledge of TWS, fundraising ideas, smart business practices, building partnerships and use of public relations and media outlets project an exciting growth potential for the future of TWS,” Potts said.

“In his new role as CEO, Thompson will continue many of his current responsibilities, allowing the COO position to be eliminated.”

# BUSINESS

“Ken and I have worked together so well, and his leadership has been very helpful to me,” he said. “Together, we’ll make this transition seamless so that our staff, Council and members don’t miss a beat as we continue to build upon our success.”

Thompson was selected from more than 30 candidates as part of a year-long search process. The final five were interviewed by the search committee, which recommended Thompson for the position.

“Ed’s taking this position is the start of a very, very robust future for The Wildlife Society,” Williams said.



## 2016-2017 Southeastern Section Officers

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Ryan Hagerty, USFWS

# BUSINESS

**Deer Committee  
Agenda & Minutes  
Southeast Section of the Wildlife Society  
February 27, 2017**

## Old Business

1. Approval of minutes from 2016 committee meeting
  - Unanimous approval.

## New Business

1. Annual Meetings
  - The Committee discussed the value of using Delaney to aid in event planning for this meeting and agreed to leave it up to the host state to determine their involvement.
  - Contact information for Delaney is:  
Delaney Meeting & Event Planning, 1 Mill St Suite 315, Burlington, VT 05401  
POC Cindy Delaney (802) 865-5202

### 2017 - Missouri – **Barbara Keller**, Hilton Frontenac, St. Louis Feb 27- Mar 1.

- 298 registered
- 60 abstracts submitted, 35 accepted as oral presentations and 18 accepted as posters
- 12 Exhibitors
- Delaney contract included general fee @ 16,000, online reg @ 1,000, abstract software @ 750, site fee @1,300, and coordinator's fee @ 2,000- totaling \$21,050.
- Min of 22K projected to be forwarded to TN

### 2018 - Tennessee – **James Kelly**

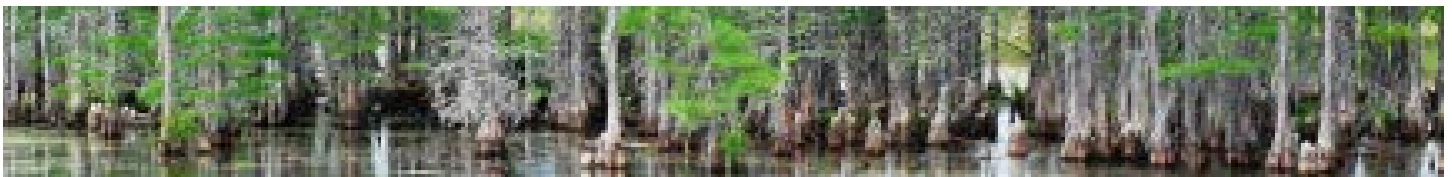
- Nashville
- February 19-21
- Millennium Maxwell House, 2025 Rosa L. Park Boulevard, Nashville, TN 37228
- May use Delaney in some capacity

### 2019 - Kentucky

- Plan to use Delaney
- No other updates

### 2020 - Alabama

- No updates





# BUSINESS

2. Transfer of Chairmanship from **Steve Demarais** to **Steve Shea** and election of new Student Awards Coordinator
  - **Steve Demarais** stepping down as Chairman after 15 years serving in that position
  - Committee showed appreciation by presenting him a plaque at the awards banquet for his service
  - Transfer of Chairmanship will take effect at the termination of this meeting
  - **Steve Shea** stepped down as Student Awards Coordinator after 22 years serving in that position
  - Committee members nominated **Bob Zaiglin** and **Steve Demarais** to serve as the new coordinator
  - **Bob Zaiglin** was elected by the Committee in a close vote to assume that position
3. Use of email list requested by **Dave Hewitt**, CKWRI, for informing our participants about the upcoming International Deer Biology Congress being held in CO during 2018.
  - Unanimous approval to allow email list for this use only.
4. Does the Committee support a permanent Poster Competition? Started in 2010 by MDWFP ad hoc, supported by donations. If so, we need to develop specific poster guidelines; dimensions. Clarify who's in charge; alternative judges proposal.
  - Unanimous approval to make poster session a permanent part of SEDSG Meeting
  - There was lengthy discussion whether to have awards for the poster session and limit the number of posters
  - The committee voted to not limit the number of posters at this time, dedicate a specific portion of the meeting for semi to exclusive poster viewing and have committee members judge and select the top 3 posters during that session
  - Committee requested that the Student Awards Coordinator develop and refine guidelines for both the poster and presentation submission, judging and awards
5. Cervid Working Group Update – **Charlie Killmaster**
  - The 2016 Cervid Working Group meeting was held July 18-21 in West Tyler, Alabama.
  - Dr. **Mark Ruder** was in attendance and provided updates on hemorrhagic disease and chronic wasting disease and facilitated a general discussion on current disease concerns.
  - States having documented CWD provided updates on the current status of surveillance and epidemiology.
  - Crop depredation permit issues were discussed including estimating total kill and conditions under which permits are issued.



# BUSINESS

- The group held a discussion on deer population declines in the Appalachians across numerous states, a tentative meeting was scheduled during SEDSG to discuss research collaboration.
- **Scott Durham** of Louisiana was promoted leaving the co-chair position vacant. Nominations and voting for a new co-chair were held electing Dr. **Jon Shaw** of North Carolina.
- A discussion regarding the development of a resolution on the restoration of Federal CWD funding was favorable, action item included in WRC report.
- A discussion was held regarding a charge for the Furbearer Working Group to increase communication and collaboration on coyote research. Recommendations included in the WRC report.

## 6. CWD updates - WV, VA, MD, MO, TX, AR

- WV had mandatory check stations in 2 counties to collect samples; 65% compliance. 874 samples tested with 39 positives found in 2016.
- VA had 9 positives found in 2016, but all in core infection area.
- MD 6 deer sampled in Allegany County tested positive for chronic wasting disease. All of the cases were found within the existing Chronic Wasting Disease Management Area. The latest findings bring the number of positive cases in the state to 17 since 2011.
- MO had mandatory check stations opening weekend of gun season in 29 counties of CWD Mgmt Zones; 19,200 deer sampled; 5 positives with 2 outside core areas, 1 in Franklin and Jefferson counties. Since 2011, a total of 11 cases were confirmed in captive deer at the facilities. The total number of free-ranging deer that have tested positive for CWD is 39, with 23 found in Macon County, 10 in Adair, three in Franklin, one in Jefferson, one in Cole, and one in Linn.
- TX had 9,700 samples with 35 positives, 9 from free ranging deer and 26 from breeder pens associated with release sites. First free range positive in a WTD detected in Medina County and for elk in Dallam County (panhandle).
- AR sampled 4,469 deer and 113 elk in 2016 with 212 positives (206 deer/6 elk) all found in 7 counties of northern portion of state. All positives found in the 10-county designated CWD Mgmt Zone.

## 7. Legislative updates`

- MS legislature considering tagging and reporting system

## 8. Student Presentation and Poster Judge Solicitation - **Steve Shea**

- Five student presentation judges volunteered and included; **James Kelly** TN, **Emily Boyd** DE, **Gabe Jenkins** KY, **Bob Zaiglin** TX and **Steve Shea** FL
- Three poster judges volunteered and included; **Matt Knox** VA, **William McKinley** MS and **Jay Cantrell** SC

## 9. Other New Business

- **Steve Shea** discussed an emerging conflict between agriculture and hunting communities in FL in regards to deer depredation permits and asked members to fill out short questionnaire on how states implemented their programs

# NOMINATIONS

## C.W. Watson Award Nomination Format

### I. Background Information

- A. Name
- B. Birthdate
- C. Education
- D. Employment History

### II. Accomplishments – include information upon which the Award should be based.

- A. (1) Problem or program that nominee was involved with.
  - (2) Action nominee took to solve the problem, develop the program and/or capitalize on opportunity.
  - (3) Results (accomplishments) of nominee's actions.

Information should be comprehensive. Include as many problems, programs and/or opportunities addressed by nominee that should be considered during the award review process.

The C.W. Watson Award may be given for accomplishing a single item or a series of different nonrelated items. The award is given to a nominee who has contributed the most to any of the appropriate areas of fish and wildlife conservation. Emphasis is on the contribution, not tenure. Those making nominations are requested to ensure that they explain clearly what was accomplished and how it contributed to fish and wildlife conservation.

The C.W. Watson Award is the most prestigious award given by SEAFWA and is presented to the career individual who, in the opinion of the Award Committee, has made the greatest contribution to wildlife or fish conservation during the previous year or years. Consideration includes research, administration, law enforcement, I&E, wildlife management, fish management, and includes teachers, professionals, and students. This award is presented jointly by the Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society, the Southeastern Section of The Wildlife Society, and the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

C.W. Watson Award nominations should be submitted to chair of the C.W. Watson Award Committee ([http://www.seafwa.org/committees/c\\_w\\_\\_watson\\_award\\_\\_/](http://www.seafwa.org/committees/c_w__watson_award__/)), no later than September 1. The Watson Award is selected by the Committee.

More information on the following SEAFWA Awards can be found at [SEAFWA.org](http://SEAFWA.org):

Wildlife Biologist of the Year  
Fisheries Biologist of the Year  
SEAFWA Law Enforcement Officer of the Year  
State Law Enforcement Officer of the Year  
Diversity Outreach and Education Award  
Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Award



# NOMINATIONS

## 2017 Wildlife Management Excellence Award

Below is the nomination form for the 2017 Wildlife Management Excellence Award (WMEA). Each year during our annual meeting, the Southeastern Section of The Wildlife Society (SETWS) presents the WMEA to recognize excellence in wildlife management activities carried out within the member states of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

Persons making nominations must be current members of the SETWS; however, nominees need not be members. Nominations may include either an individual or group and evaluation of nominees will be based upon a single management achievement, not a "lifetime service" that has been accomplished in the field of wildlife management. Examples of management achievements worthy of the award include activities such as an exceptional break-through in bringing back an endangered species, the rapid (over a few years) development of a management area due to an individual or group effort, a major effort in stopping a particularly environmentally damaging project or an extension education effort that results in substantial and measurable change in private landowner acreage set aside for wildlife use.

Nominations should be submitted following the nomination format (on the next page) and will be reviewed by a five-member committee. The committee is seeking nominations of individuals other groups who have performed "above and beyond" in their nominated category with good quantitative data to support the nomination. The deadline for nominations is **August 1, 2017**. The recipient will be presented with the Wildlife Management Excellence Award at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Section of The Wildlife Society.

Your participation is vital to the awards programs of the SETWS and is greatly appreciated. We all are aware of the multitude of deserving individuals and groups within our essential profession. As such, please take the time to nominate these deserving folks. Thank you for your time and dedication to wildlife conservation.

Sincerely,

Dr. **Christopher S. DePerno**, Chair, Wildlife Management Excellence Award Committee

### SEAFWA Call for Papers

Hosted by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies 71st Annual Conference, "Creative Conservation Strategies for 21st Century Challenges" will be held at the Galt House Hotel in the heart of Louisville, Kentucky.

The Call for Presentations is now open! Anyone interested in submitting an abstract for a peer-reviewed manuscript, oral presentation or poster should submit a proposal online by June 15, 2017. Visit [www.seafwa.org/conference/](http://www.seafwa.org/conference/) for more information.

# NOMINATIONS

## Wildlife Management Excellence Award Nomination Form

I. Date:

II. Nominee contact information:

"Name"  
"Title and Agency"  
"Address"  
"Phone"  
"Email"

III. Nominating contact information:

"Name"  
"Title and Agency"  
"Address"  
"Phone"  
"Email"

IV. Descriptive title of achievement:

V. Quantitative information on the achievement:

Please provide a short description of the nominee's achievement in the following categories where applicable. The information may be attached on additional pages or inserted where appropriate as an electronic file.

1) Conservation and management benefits

- a) Species influenced
- b) Area (acreage) influenced
- c) Regional impacts
- d) Other

2) Educational benefits

- a) Target audiences
- b) Estimated size of audience reached
- c) Other

3) Scientific contributions

- a) Dissemination of information through reports, manuals, publications or other media
- b) Influence on management policies
- c) Other

4) Brief description of economic benefits

VI. Quantitative Information on the Achievement

VII. Narrative Description of the Achievement (1-page)

VIII. Letters of support (2-3)

Please submit nominee(s) by mail or e-mail to **Christopher S. DePerno**, Chair; Wildlife Management Excellence Award; North Carolina State University, Turner House, Box 7646, Raleigh, NC 27695; Tel: (919) 513-7559; Email: [chris\\_deperno@ncsu.edu](mailto:chris_deperno@ncsu.edu)

# MEETINGS OF INTEREST

## JUNE 2017

### **International Urban Wildlife Conference**

June 4-7, 2017  
San Diego, CA  
<http://urban-wildlife.org/>

## OCTOBER 2017

### **71st SEAFWA Conference**

October 29 - November 1, 2017  
Louisville, KY  
<http://www.seafwa.org/conference/>

## JULY 2017

### **American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists Annual Meeting**

July 12-16, 2017  
Austin, TX  
<http://www.asih.org/meetings>

## FEBRUARY 2018

### **41st Southeast Deer Study Group Meeting**

February 19-21, 2018  
Nashville, TN  
<http://www.sedsg.com>

## AUGUST 2017

### **Ecological Society of America Annual Meeting**

August 6-11, 2017  
Portland, OR  
<http://www.esa.org/portland/#.WJCSCD8zWUk>

## MARCH 2018

### **North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference**

March 26-30, 2018  
Norfolk, VA  
<https://wildlifemanagement.institute>

## SEPTEMBER 2017

### **2016 AFWA Annual Meeting**

September 10-13, 2017  
Sandy, UT  
<http://www.afwaannualmeeting.org/>

### **The Wildlife Society 24th Annual Conference**

September 23-27, 2017  
Albuquerque, NM  
<http://wildlife.org/tws-24th-annual-conference/>



Sean Varner, USFWS



# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



## Southeastern Section of The Wildlife Society Membership Application

☐ New      ☐ Renewal      ☐ Change of Address  
\_\_\_\_\_ Number of years (multiple year membership)

(please print)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

For new memberships or renewals, please enclose a check for \$10.00 per year  
(students: \$6.00) payable to Southeastern Section of The Wildlife Society with this application  
and send to:

Dr. Susan Rupp, Secretary-Treasurer  
Enviroscapes Ecological Consulting, LLC  
13117 Bluebird Rd.  
Gravette, AR 72736  
Phone (479) 340-7018  
Email [srupp@enviroscapes.org](mailto:srupp@enviroscapes.org)