

The Wildlife Society

SOUTHEASTERN SECTION



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KATHERINE EDWARDS, EDITOR

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Greetings from West Tennessee,

It's nearing time for me to pass on the President's gavel. With that in mind, I've been speculating on what our Section has achieved during the past couple of years. Among other things, we have helped convert the Proceedings of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Conference into a traditional research journal format, to facilitate recognition of the good peer-reviewed research that has always gone into the proceedings. We have created a Conservation Affairs Committee (CAC) to network with our state chapter CACs, our peer sections, and the parent Society, on conservation and policy issues. We have started the process of converting our historical records into digital format for ease of reference and to save these important documents for posterity. We have a draft Strategic Plan, with your feedback, that my predecessor will be able to craft into a document to steer and motivate our future endeavors. We have continued our traditions of rewarding well-led careers, professional achievements, research, presentations, and student work. We have added a member to The Wildlife Professional's Editorial Review Board, to represent our section's views. We have strengthened our committee structure and our student resources for Conclaves. We have financially supported numerous conferences, workshops, and other professional events and programs that facilitate and empower our members. Although I cannot take credit for most of this work, I am proud of these achievements, and I'm thankful to everyone who helped make them happen.

Among the folks that I'd like to particularly thank are the members of the Executive Board, President-Elect **Mark Smith**, Secretary-Treasurer **Mike Conner**, Southeastern Section Representative **Darren Miller**, and Past-President **David Cobb**. These guys put in a lot more time than most folks realize on behalf of

SE-TWS; I appreciate their wise counsel and their patience with me. I'd also like to thank our newsletter editor and webmaster **Katie Edwards** for her superb work in rounding up such great information, and presenting it so well, time and time again.

In this newsletter, and in an email in the near future, you will see candidate biographies for President-Elect and Secretary-Treasurer. Please be sure to vote! Election results will be announced at our Business Meeting at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 3rd, at the SEAFWA Annual Conference in Asheville, NC.

I'll end with 3 last requests: 1) Please encourage professional membership in the Section! The more we are, the stronger we are, and with strength, we can continue to do great things for our wildlife resources! 2) Please encourage our students to be active - in the Section as a member, at Conclave, at SEAFWA, and as a professional - and encourage our student chapters to compete for the Student Chapter of the Year Award! 3) Finally, please help me welcome **Mark Smith** to the Presidency as our year winds down, and help him by offering your skills and services to the good work of the Southeastern Section.

I hope to see you in Asheville!

Eric Pelren

President, Southeastern Section TWS

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SOUTHEASTERN SECTION REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

Right at 6 years ago, I was elected to serve as the Southeastern Section representative to Council. Although 6 years is a long time, it seems it was just yesterday that I attend my first Council meeting and it is hard to believe that next month will be my last as your representative. Serving on Council has been a remarkably fulfilling experience – there is no doubt I received more from serving on Council than what I individually contributed. It was truly an honor to not only represent the Section but to also interact with TWS leaders and members from all over the country (and Canada too!). Although I leave Council with somewhat of a heavy heart, I am very happy to know that a very capable individual will be taking my place. **Dr. L. Mike Conner** was elected to serve as your next Council representative. I will be working with Mike to bring him up to speed on Council activities and I ask you to join me on congratulating Mike on his election to this office. I know he will do a phenomenal job of representing the Section and keeping TWS on a positive path forward.

The 6 years I served on Council saw a lot of changes within TWS. This includes an incredible amount of staff turn-over, for a variety of reasons, including a new Executive Director, a new Chief Operating Officer, a new Government Affairs Director, and a new Director of Publications. It also included a difficult financial situation that is still being addressed, although things are certainly moving in the right direction. With these changes have come not only challenges, but also opportunities. I believe TWS is evolving as an organization to better serve wildlife professionals and our wildlife resource. Hopefully, you will consider lending some of your time and talents to advancing the mission of TWS.

One of the reasons I ran for Council originally was because I felt TWS was drifting from its core, traditional values. Namely, the critical role hunting and trapping play in conservation of wildlife in North America. Since that time, I feel TWS has in large part embraced this critical value and has done a fantastic job of promoting the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation (The Model). I have had the privilege of highlighting The Model as part of two events. The first was a plenary speaker at the International Wildlife Management Congress in late July in Sapporo, Japan and the second is as Editor of the 11 National Wild Turkey Symposium with The Model as the Symposium theme (<http://www.nwtfarizona.org/11th-national-wild-turkey-symposium.html>). Additionally, I will be participating in an all-day Symposium at the TWS Conference this fall that will be dedicated to exploring The Model. I believe The Model is critical for the future of wildlife conservation in North America (and perhaps elsewhere) so I wanted to briefly share my thoughts on the future of The Model, echoing my comments in Sapporo and in my "Editor Comments" for the Turkey Symposium.

As Past-President of The Wildlife Society **Dr. Wini Kessler** said, The Model is the greatest story never told. But, it is a story that needs to be told, and must be told, for The Model to remain relevant. The Model is not perfect, but principles codified in it have allowed recovery and continued existence of many wildlife populations in North America in spite of enormous pressures to the contrary. The framework of The Model, with the addition of a land ethic and continued, diversified, funding for conservation, can guide us to ensure that future



generations have wildlife resources to see, experience, and cherish. However, for The Model to have an opportunity to exist in the future, it cannot be a theoretical, abstract construct only known and embraced by a few. It must become a deeply important experience for a large portion of the 16 million people that purchase hunting licenses each year and the 71 million people that already express an interest, or attachment, to wildlife. The Model has to become part of society's conservation culture at the individual level. And, people have to connect personally with conservation of wildlife and the need to manage these resources using scientific principles. In North America, this also means citizens taking responsibility for the wildlife resources that they own. We must have the willpower to spread the message of science-based conservation, across organizations, across barriers, and across traditional boundaries. As Shane Mahoney has expounded, this can be accomplished and must be done soon. It is a

task perhaps equal to the monumental effort of early conservationists in North America that planted the seeds of The Model that still flourish today.

To close, I want to thank everyone for their support during my stint on Council. I know I did not make it to every state chapter during my tenure, but I tried to do so. Unfortunately, my day job had to take precedent on some occasions. Although I will no longer be on Council, I intend to stay engaged with TWS and hope to continue to have opportunities to interact with members of the Southeastern Section. From the bottom of my heart and with all sincerity, thank you so much for all you do for our wildlife resources!!

Darren Miller
Southeastern Section Representative to TWS Council



The Miller family. From left to right – Heidi, Hannah, Darren, and Michelle.



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STUDENT AWARDS COMMITTEE

We are looking for volunteers to judge student presentations and posters for the Southeastern Section of TWS at the upcoming 69th Annual SEAFWA Conference, November 1-4, in Asheville, NC. If you know that you will be attending the conference and would be willing to serve as a judge, please contact **Andy Madison** at amadison@uu.edu.

Thank you for your assistance!

Andy Madison, Chair
amadison@uu.edu

FURBEARER RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The SE-TWS Furbearer Resources Committee (FRC) held their annual meeting on May 7, 2015 in Mayflower, AK. This annual meeting is an opportunity for members to identify and address both current and emerging furbearer management issues. This was the first meeting of the FRC since this committee was established as a special permanent committee by the SE-TWS section. The FRC is supporting the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) "Trapping Matters" Workshops, which are being held throughout the United States in 2015 and 2016. These workshops teach professionals about the role of trapping and how to engage with the public and media about trapping's role in wildlife management. These workshops qualify for credit hours towards TWS certification renewal and professional development. An "AFWA Trapping Matters" workshop will be held on Sunday, Nov. 1, 2015 at the SEAFWA Conference in Asheville, NC. A second "AFWA Trapping Matters" workshop will likely be held in the southeastern region in 2016...stay tuned for details on both! The next SE-TWS FRC meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 4-5, 2016 in Georgia. If you are interested in attending, please let me know!

Colleen Olfenbittel, Chair
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JOINT SETWS/SEAFWA WETLANDS WILDLIFE COMMITTEE

Disease Update

According to the July 17, 2015 USGS Wildlife Health Bulletin, the highly pathogenic avian influenza virus (HPAIV) has spread from the Pacific Flyway to the North Central states. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources recently detected HPAI H5 and H5N2 in Canada Geese in suburban Detroit, Michigan and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources recently reported detection of HPAI H5 in a black-capped chickadee in Ramsey County, Minnesota. These recent detections have occurred on the heels of USDA's July 10, 2015 Implementation Plan for HPAI Surveillance in Waterfowl in the US. The USDA will remain in close collaboration with state and tribal fish and wildlife agencies. A procedural manual and decisions on where samples are to be sent will be available to states soon.

Clean Water Act

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently announced the new Clean Water Act rule which redefines "Waters of the US." The new rule protects streams and wetlands that are scientifically shown to have the greatest impact on downstream water quality and form the foundation of our nation's water resources. The Clean Water Rule will be effective 60 days after publication in the Federal Register.

Energy Issues

Foundations are to be delivered for 5 turbines offshore of Block Island in Rhode Island, the first wind turbines to be built off of the East Coast. A Research Activities Plan has been submitted for the VA Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy proposed project for two 6 megawatt turbines offshore. An environmental assessment finding of no significant impact is expected for this project. Also, construction is to begin soon near Elizabeth City, North Carolina for the first onshore wind energy complex for that state. From 102 to 150 turbines will be located in an agricultural

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complex, an area used by tundra swans and sometimes by snow geese. Post-construction mortality studies are planned for the project. A good website in general for onshore wind fact sheets and links to new research is that of the American Wind and Wildlife Institute (AWWI.org).

To date, concerns have been noted in the western U.S. related to solar arrays and concentrated solar power towers. As large arrays have been installed in the eastern U.S. and as more are being proposed, wildlife impacts may present themselves. For example, birds can be injured or killed when they fly through the intense energy “halo” above solar power towers and when they collide with structures. A potential concern is that waterbirds, such as ducks, loons, and grebes, will mistake the panel arrays for ponds. There is some evidence for this from other situations (wet roadways), but little information is available.

State Wildlife Grant Funding Support

The President’s FY16 budget requested an increase to \$70 million for State and Tribal Wildlife Grant (SWG) funding compared to \$58.695 million last year. This request included an increase from \$5.487 million in FY15 to \$13 million for FY16 state competitive grants. House and Senate Appropriations Committees recently passed SWG budgets that are less than the President’s budget (\$59.195 and \$60.571 million, respectively), but include smaller amounts for state competitive grants (\$5.987 and \$5.487, respectively). Tribal competitive grants were proposed at a level of \$6 million in FY16, up \$2 million from FY15, but both Appropriations Committees recommended the FY15 level of funding. The House Appropriations Committee also indicated a desire to focus the competitive grants program on species found to be warranted and/or proposed for listing (and encouraged states to do the same with state allocations). The Senate Appropriations Committee did not include this language.

NAWCA Funding

Several bills have been submitted and proposed for legislation including the reauthorization of the North

American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA; H.R. 2346) and reauthorization of Pittman Robertson interest to NAWCA (H.R. 2345 and S. 722). The committee will discuss adopting letters of support for both bills during the upcoming committee meeting.

Programmatic EIS for Incidental Take of Migratory Birds

As some of you may know, the May 2015 Federal Register indicated the FWS’s intent to prepare a programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) to evaluate potential impacts of a proposal to authorize incidental take of migratory birds. The PEIS is primarily focused on hazards to birds associated with industries for which BMPs have been developed or for which risk reduction strategies have been identified. Incidental take might be permitted through general authorizations, individual permits, or Memoranda of Understanding, and the approach might include working with interested industry sectors to develop voluntary guidance.

Comments have been developed and submitted by AFWA and the Atlantic Flyway Council addressing concerns about capacity, lack of information, consideration of geographic factors and protection status, and coordination with states.

Farming on Refuges

In July 2014, the National Wildlife Refuge System adopted a policy to phase out the use of genetically modified crops (GMC) and neonicotinoids for agricultural purposes by January 2016. This is consistent with a court-ordered settlement agreement against the USFWS’s Southeast Region for use of GMC in 2012. The Wetlands Wildlife Committee will consult with the USFWS Refuge System staff, the Pacific, Central, and Mississippi Flyway Technical Sections and other interested parties and discuss this topic further during the upcoming committee meeting.

Steve Rockwood, Chair
Steve.Rockwood@MyFWC.com

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ALABAMA



Alabama Chapter

The Alabama Chapter of The Wildlife Society held a phone conference on July 6, 2015. Various topics were covered, including planning for the 2016 meeting to be held at the Solon Dixon Forestry Education Center in Conecuh National Forest, AL. Dates are TBD.

Shannon Allen, shannon.allen.1@us.af.mil

Alabama DCNR

WLCC wildlife biologist **John Trent** and field technician **Monika Lapinski** just completed a 4-month marshbird monitoring project in the emergent marshes of the lower Mobile-Tensaw River Delta in Baldwin County funded through a Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) grant. The field component of the project entailed performing 4 repeated surveys of 154 points placed along 15 routes targeting Least Bittern, King Rail, Purple Gallinule, and Common Gallinule; all but the latter recognized as either GCN or watchlist species in Alabama's 2015 SWAP. A majority of the points visited were at the same points surveyed during a 2004 coastal marshbird survey enabling for direct data comparisons. In collaboration with **Dr. Scott Rush** and **Dr. John Rodgers** of Mississippi State University, the data will be analyzed in many capacities including delineating species' distributions, determining relative abundances, estimating population densities, and better understanding peak call phenology. Moreover, a remote sensing analysis will be performed using digital imagery from different years to quantify historic patterns of habitat change with developed species habitat models to update predictions of species population trends, which may also help with better understanding potential impacts from sea level rise.



Purple Gallinule responding to call-playback during marshbird survey in the MTRD. Photo by John Trent.

WLCC biologists completed their 10th season of operating a Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) bird banding station on the Wehle Forever Wild Tract. The Wehle MAPS station is part of a continent-wide collaborative (involving 1,200 stations) using a standardized, constant-effort mist-netting protocol to capture and mark resident and migratory landbirds during the breeding season. Project objectives include collecting demographic data such as age, sex, and reproductive status of all captured birds within a selected area. The subsequent recapturing of marked individuals over time provides metrics on productivity, recruitment, and survivorship. Not only does the data collected at Wehle contribute to this program overall, but also provides insight about the population status for a suite of species that breed on the tract including Bachman's Sparrow, a recognized GCN species in Alabama. The MAPS program is administered by the Institute for Bird Populations at Point Reyes Station, CA.



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Three inter-annual returns (showing date of first banding) of male Kentucky Warblers captured at the Wehle MAPS Station in 2015. Photo by John Trent.

WLCC biologists expanded monitoring efforts using radio-telemetry on a translocated population of Gopher Tortoises established on the Wehle Forever Wild Tract. A subset of adult tortoises were captured and outfitted with long-lived radio transmitters in June to track movements for the next few years, depending on battery life. Little is known about the movements of translocated tortoises following site establishment compared to native populations. Such information will also aid in determining habitat use, sociality, and other facets of the tortoises ecology following translocation.



Adult Gopher Tortoise outfitted with long-lived radio transmitter entering burrow on Wehle Tract. Photo by Eric Soehren.

WLCC biologists and wildlife intern **Thomas Rush** continued Eastern Bluebird nest box monitoring on the Wehle Forever Wild Tract. In addition to collecting general breeding data along a 92-nest box trail, all nestlings were banded and marked with a color band (different color each season) for future re-sighting efforts to better understand the population demographics on the tract. In addition, a subset of nestlings were outfitted with radio transmitters for the second season to track fledgling survivorship and movements in two different burn treatments as part of a multi-year research project in collaboration with **Dr. Scott Rush** of Mississippi State University's Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture.

WLCC biologists continued its 7th year of monitoring and managing for a Red-cockaded Woodpecker population on the Forever Wild portion of the Coosa WMA in Coosa County through an awarded ESA Section 6 Grant. Among the actions completed included provisioning new nest inserts, thinning mid-story, relocating Southern Flying Squirrels from active cluster inserts, monitoring nesting activities, capturing and banding unmarked adults, banding nestlings, and confirming fledging success/failure. These activities are performed in partnership with the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, Alabama Power Company, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to benefit the entire Mitchell Lake RCW population.

Eric Soehren, Eric.Soehren@dcnr.alabama.gov



7-day old Red-cockaded Woodpecker nestlings banded on Coosa WMA. Photo by Eric Soehren.

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Alabama Wildlife Federation

The Alabama Wildlife Federation hired **Kyle Marable** as a Resource Stewardship Biologist in October 2014. Kyle has a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Science from Auburn University and a Master of Science in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Mississippi State University. He is responsible for implementing AWF's Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Restoration Project. He also provides stewardship based technical assistance to non-industrial private landowners who want to manage the wildlife and habitat resources on their property. Kyle is excited to work for AWF and provide sustainable resource management to the landowners of Alabama.

Kyle Marable, kmarable@alabamawildlife.org



Kyle Marable, Resource Stewardship Biologist, Alabama Wildlife Federation.

Auburn University

Dr. Will Gulsby joined the wildlife faculty of the School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences in August. Will earned his B.S. in Biology from the University of North Georgia (2008) and M.S. (2010) and Ph.D. (2014) degrees in Forest Resources from the University of Georgia studying white-tailed deer ecology and management. He'll be working on applied habitat management related-research at Auburn.

Mark Smith, mds0007@auburn.edu

ARKANSAS



Arkansas Chapter

A meeting of the Arkansas Wildlife Society Executive Committee was held on June 30, 2015 at the Little Rock Arkansas Game and Fish Commission headquarters in Little Rock. The annual audit of chapter finances was reported as having been successfully completed. The chapter will now be holding a single annual meeting with the intention of making it more of an event. Much of the meeting revolved around this issue. March 3-4, 2016 was selected as the date for the next meeting.

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

David Covington was named the AGFC Wildlife Biologist of the Year and **Craig Davis** was named the AGFC Wildlife Technician of the Year. **Mike Widner**, retired AGFC turkey program coordinator, was recently inducted into the Arkansas Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation Hall of Fame for his work with turkeys in the state. **Hunter Johnson** was hired as the new technician for the Steve N. Wilson Raft Creek WMA. **Paul Dunham** was hired as the new technician for the Ed Gordon Point Remove WMA. **Kiah Gardner**, wildlife technician in AGFC's Region 8, retired in June. **Janet Greenwood**, the AGFC's lead assistant in the Wildlife Management Division headquarters retired in July and **David Long**, AGFC Private Lands Supervisor retired at the end of September. Former Regional Wildlife Supervisor **Mike Coker** passed away on July 2nd.

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Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission

Doug Fletcher, Chief of Stewardship for the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, retired in January. **Brian Mitchell**, formerly of the Arkansas Military Department, succeeded him in this position.

U.S. Forest Service

Dan Brown, field technician with the Ouachita National Forest, received the Shug and Luvois Red-cockaded Woodpecker Conservation (RCW) award at the Arkansas Audubon Society (AAS)/Oklahoma Ornithological Society (OOS) joint spring meeting held in Fort Smith earlier this month. **Bill Holimon**, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission (ANHC) chief of research, who nominated Brown for the award, presented the award to Brown at the meeting.

Arkansas State University

Geoffrey Kevin Payne of Doniphan, Missouri, was named the outstanding graduate in wildlife ecology and management. ASU graduate student **Daniel Istvanko** won the Best Bat Paper Award for his work on evening bats at the Southeastern Bat Diversity Network annual meeting in February.

Arkansas Tech University

Cody Standifer, of Mena, was named the Outstanding Wildlife Student by the College of Natural and Health Sciences for the 2014-2015 Academic Year.

University of Arkansas at Fayetteville

Dr. Doug James recently received the William and Nancy Klamm Service Award from the Wilson Ornithological Society for over 60 years of participation in the society including service as President in 1977 and chairing numerous committees.

University of Arkansas at Monticello

Family, friends and colleagues of the late **Dr. Robert H. Burch**, Jr. have begun a campaign to create a waterfowl research endowment in the University of Arkansas at Monticello Foundation Fund. The fund honors the late Dr. Robert H. Burch, Jr., of Monticello, a dentist, waterfowl enthusiast and avid duck hunter who died January 30, 2015. Funds generated by the endowment will be used for waterfowl research and waterfowl-related academic activities, with first preference given to undergraduate or graduate research.

Blake Sasse, Blake.Sasse@agfc.ar.gov

FLORIDA



NO NEWS REPORTED



USFWS, Donna Dewhurst



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GEORGIA



Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division

Georgia WRD Communication Office Receives Recognition

The Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division Communications office recently received recognition from the Association for Conservation Information, a non-profit association of information and education professionals representing state, federal and Canadian agencies and private conservation organizations.

Three awards were received by two individuals (photo included):

- **Rick Lavender**-3rd place for newsletter publication
- **David Allen**- 1st place in success on a shoe string budget for our Lifetime License Contest and 2nd in online community engagement



ACI Award Winners **Rick Lavender** and **David Allen**.

ACI, organized in 1938, provides forums for agency I&E personnel to exchange ideas, new concept, and to improve skills and craftsmanship. One of the most popular and successful programs is the annual awards contest, through which excellence is recognized in 25 categories. Professionals from both the public and private sector evaluate all entries and offer written, constructive critiques.

Find out more about ACI here:
<http://www.aci-net.org/>

Teamwork Pays Off for Bobwhite Quail Conservation

The National Bobwhite Technical Committee, at their annual conference on August 5, 2015 in Galloway New Jersey, presented a Group Achievement Award and a Legacy Landscape Recognition to Tall Timbers Research Station & Land Conservancy (TTRS) and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division (WRD). These coveted recognitions were presented for collaborative efforts in developing and successfully implementing the the WRD Northern Bobwhite Quail Translocation Policy in focal areas of southwest Georgia and northern Florida, and maintaining over a century of bobwhite conservation.

Development of the current translocation policy guidelines began in 1997, initiated by WRD and with input from TTRS based on research. The policy standards permit the translocation of wild bobwhites from private land with high density populations to lands with newly developed high quality habitat (1,500+ acres) and ongoing management that have low density bobwhite populations. The policy was finalized in 2006, and since that time Georgia has participated in the movement of 1,275 birds to five properties. Through this policy and the efforts of TTRS working with dedicated private landowners, bobwhites have been restored across 18,700 acres.

The Legacy Landscape for quail lies in the Red Hills portion of the Albany/Red Hills region between Thomsville and Tallahassee, while the Albany portion

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is located on the Dougherty Plain in southwest Georgia. This region is a unique, diverse landscape of expansive pine savanna harboring the largest bobwhite population in the southeastern U.S., with populations sustained at high densities across a contiguous managed landscape. More than 700,000 acres are managed across more than 200 properties using frequent prescribed fire to mimic and restore the natural fire history. This is the only region in the Southeast that has consistently applied prescribed fire to the land in natural frequency for over 100 years and it is home to the best quality remnants of old-growth longleaf pine forests. Additionally, the region has nearly a century of bobwhite research which continues today.

For more details on bobwhite research and management, visit the following websites: www.georgiawildlife.com/conservation/quail; www.bringback-bobwhites.org; www.ttrs.org.



Dr. Theron M. Terhune of Tall Timbers Research Station; **Reggie Thackston** of Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division accept the NBTC Award for Group Achievement.

Head-Start Help for Yuchi WMA Gopher Tortoises

Gopher tortoise restoration at Yuchi Wildlife Management Area has a leg up after 153 head-started juvenile tortoises were added to the WMA near Waynesboro in July – the state's largest release ever.

UGA graduate student **Dan Quinn** of the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory helped raise the tortoises, supervised their release into wire-mesh pens and will monitor how they fare after the pens are removed. Eight of 12 tortoises released in 2014, the project's start, survived at least one year. Head-start tortoises receive better food and care, hopefully leading to higher survival rates. At one year, these turtles are the size of 2- to 3-year-olds in the wild and less vulnerable to predators.

The State Wildlife Grants project focused on Georgia's state reptile is designed to:

- Study how effective head-starting is for rebuilding tortoise populations, using eggs collected from stable populations.
- Rebuild Yuchi's population from an estimated 88 gopher tortoises to a minimum of 250 adults, considered a threshold for a long-term, sustainable population.

The study involves UGA's Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, DNR's Nongame Conservation Section, St. Catherine's Island and Reed Bingham State Park.

New Dove Fields Available in Georgia Thanks to VPA Program

Hunting opportunities kick off in a popular way with the beginning of dove hunting season, with opening day scheduled for noon on Sat. Sept. 5.

This year there are six new dove field properties ready for the public. These properties are privately owned but made available through a U.S. Department of Agriculture program called the Voluntary Public Access (VPA)/Habitat Incentive Program. This program provides grants to states and federally

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recognized Indian tribes that help increase public access to private lands for recreation activities, such as hunting, fishing or hiking.

Hunters interested in knowing what these new fields, as well as Georgia's 40+ public dove fields, look like can check out the dove field forecast. Each year, Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division personnel prepare a dove field forecast for wildlife management areas and some additional fields identifying available crops and anticipates the conditions for opening day. This forecast notes if fields are in excellent, good, fair or poor condition and is now available at www.georgiawildlife.com/DoveForecast.

Where the Rare Things Are: New DNR Portal Maps Species Ranges

A new web portal meshes Georgia Department of Natural Resources data on occurrences and natural communities with interactive mapping to document the in-state ranges of more than 1,250 rare species – all within seconds.

Creator and conservation data manager **Greg Krawkow** of DNR's Nongame Conservation Section calls the portal the most "complex, information-rich range map" he has seen.

Ranges are defined using seven map units such as counties and watersheds. Occurrences are color-coded by when they were documented. Where a species possibly has been extirpated or introduced is shown. The portal also links to species profiles, lists the conservation status and connects to NatureServe overviews of the species. The result for researchers and the simply curious alike is a dynamic view of where a plant or animal has been found in Georgia.

Debuted this spring, the project is based on NatureServe Biotics, the state's most comprehensive database of rare species occurrences and natural communities. And while there are some data gaps,

Nongame Conservation Section Chief **Jon Ambrose** said "we're continually doing surveys and regularly updating the database."

What's in the database, or even what's not, can help target surveys and other conservation projects. The range maps portal placed second in an international map contest at NatureServe's annual conference.

50 Years and Looking Forward: McDuffie Public Fishing Area

In July 1965, just over 50 years ago, former Governor **Carl Sanders** presided over the dedication ceremony for the first ever public fishing area in Georgia. The area, located near Thomson, was named the McDuffie County Public Fishing Area. In those 50 years, this area has seen more than one million fishing trips with over 600,000 fish caught.

McDuffie County PFA, a 570-acre site open Wednesdays through Sundays, includes seven ponds ranging from five to 37 acres, a trophy bass catch and release pond, fish hatchery and an education center. Species available in area lakes include largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish and channel catfish. The area is characterized by majestic longleaf pines and sandy soil, offering a beautiful landscape to enjoy a fun day of fishing.

Now retired Area Superintendent and Hatchery Manager **George Atnip** shares the following memory, "One of my favorite stories that I cherish from my time at the McDuffie PFA is hearing from a long-time kids fishing event participant who consistently brought his children to the events and how being 'hooked on fishing' helped his son make good decisions for the rest of his life. It just reinforced that we were doing something very good for this community."

A special video tribute to McDuffie, including photos past and present and with shared stories contributed by former staff, is available www.youtube.com/georgiawildlife, then select "McDuffie PFA 50th Anniversary."

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Project Maps Manatees in Georgia

Five manatees fitted with satellite transmitters this month are showing the potential of new research aimed at better understanding how these endangered mammals use the murky estuarine waters near Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay and along the rest of Georgia's coast.

Immediately after being tagged in July, some of the manatees stayed in Cumberland Sound, while one swam south to near Mayport, Fla., and another as far north as St. Simons Island.

The manatees, the first tagged in Georgia with GPS tracking devices, mark the start of a multi-year project to document manatee activity near the sub base, map migratory paths and habitat use along the Southeastern coast, and provide baseline data to help assess manatee health. Findings can be used to conserve manatees, which migrate each spring from Florida and face significant risks from boat strikes.

The project is also revealing the public's care and curiosity concerning manatees. Some people who mistakenly thought tagged animals were entangled in crab-pot buoy lines have called DNR. The transmitter, tethered to a belt around the tail, floats at the surface behind each manatee.



Biologists and veterinary staff assess the manatee June 4, 2015. Required credit: Photo by Georgia DNR, taken under USFWS research permit #MA37808A-0.

But the devices do not harm the animal and are designed to break free if entangled, said research scientist **Monica Ross** of Sea to Shore Alliance. Project partners also include Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, DNR, Georgia Aquarium and others.

Power-Line Nest Project Key for Kestrels

A high-powered nest box project in Georgia is helping North America's smallest falcon.

Southeastern American kestrels, a falcon subspecies often called sparrowhawks, declined an estimated 80 percent over the last half of the 20th century. The main culprit is habitat loss, including fewer suitable cavities for nesting.

Georgia's largest breeding population is along a transmission line reaching west from Pierce County, through Tifton to Georgia Power Co.'s Plant Mitchell near Albany. Georgia Southern University research has shown that hollow cross-arms on the power poles provide critical nest sites. Yet those cross-arms are gradually being replaced as they rust with solid ones.

In response, for almost 10 years Georgia Power has put up a nest box each time one of the hollow cross-arms is replaced, said **Jim Candler**, company environmental affairs supervisor. "As these things wear out, we agreed it was important enough for us to figure out how not to eliminate that habitat."

Some 30 boxes have been added. And while nest boxes are more vulnerable to predators than a cross-arm far above the ground, DNR Nongame Conservation Section surveys marked an average 17 percent annual increase in the Tifton line population, and an estimated 302 nesting pairs in 2014.

DNR senior wildlife biologist **Nathan Klaus** wants to apply survey data to fine-tune where kestrel boxes are placed. "Using nest box and helicopter surveys to develop models, we've almost tripled our rate of box use" in Fall Line sandhills populations, Klaus said.

Melissa Cummings, Melissa.Cummings@dnr.ga.gov

STATE REPORTS

USDA APHIS Wildlife Services

USDA APHIS WS is launching an intensive feral swine damage management project in Dooly County, GA. The project is being funded by the WS National Feral Swine Management Program that was initiated in Fiscal Year 2014. The project will attempt to suppress feral swine damage to primarily agricultural resources in the county through various methods including trapping, shooting, and aerial gunning. Damages to crops will be measured throughout the year via an Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) as well as ground surveys. Damage figures will be collected throughout the project to measure trends as control methods are applied. Dooly County was chosen for this project for its strong agricultural base and variety of crops. Nearly half the county is agricultural fields with cotton, peanuts, soybeans, corn, and wheat being produced.

Steven Smith
Steven.h.smith@aphis.usda.gov

KENTUCKY



Kentucky Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Resources

Steve Beam, formerly regional coordinator for the Southeast Wildlife Region, has been appointed the new director of the Wildlife Division. Steve succeeds **Karen Waldrop**, who served as director of the Wildlife Division from 2007 until her appointment to deputy commissioner last year. **Kyle Sams** is the newest deer biologist for the KDFWR. In an attempt to open up more property for elk hunting, the owner or lessee of 100 or more acres in the Commonwealth's 16-county elk zone could, in time, earn an elk permit. In return for enrolling in the new Voucher Cooperator Elk Permit Program, the landowner or lessee would accumulate two points for each bull elk and one for each cow harvested on their property. A voucher elk permit would be issued upon reaching 20 points and would be transferrable and valid for either sex the next season on land they own or lease in the elk

zone. A long term project to assess the impact of high deer density on understory forest response following efforts to improve habitat for grouse and whip-poor-wills has been started at a WMA in central Kentucky. Deer exclusion fencing is being installed at the Clay WMA and long-term monitoring will assess differences in native and invasive species, oak regeneration, and forest understory structure for areas with and without deer.

Chuck Elliott, Charles.Elliott@eku.edu

LOUISIANA



Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Proposed Louisiana Black Bear Delisting

The USFWS proposed on May 20, 2015, delisting of the Louisiana black bear from Endangered Species Act (ESA) protection due to its recovery. Thanks to the efforts of the FWS, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Tennessee, other state and federal organizations, NGO's and private landowners, the species has been increasing in population and number of breeding subpopulations, which were down to only three when it became protected under the ESA in 1992.

According to USFWS Ecological Services biologist **Deborah Fuller**, overall protected black bear habitat has increased about 280%, with breeding ranges increased to over 400% in Louisiana and 500% range wide. Currently, the population of bears distributed throughout the species' range is estimated to be between 500 and 750 individuals.

Hog Removal on Pass-a-Loutre WMA

LDWF, USFWS and LSU worked on a cooperative project removing 145 hogs from a treatment area. Vegetation comparisons between the treatment

STATE REPORTS

and control Hog Removal on Pass-a-Loutre WMA: LDWF, USFWS and LSU worked on a cooperative project removing 145 hogs from a treatment area. Vegetation comparisons between the treatment and control area revealed a 68% reduction in damaged sites, 66% reduction in acres damaged and 35% reduction in the severity of damage in the treatment area. The control area experienced a 67% increase in damaged sites and 20% increase in acres damaged during the study.

Retirements

Fred Kimmel, Education Program Manager, retired after 29 years of service on July 29, 2015.

Jeff Duguay, jduguay@wlf.la.gov

MARYLAND/DELAWARE

NO NEWS REPORTED

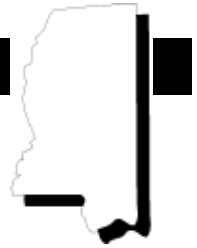


MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Chapter

Annual Meeting

The Mississippi Chapter's Annual Meeting was held September 23-25, 2015 at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science in Jackson, MS. This year's meeting addressed a theme of great importance to all wildlife professionals, 'Preparing Wildlife Professionals for a Changing World.' **Jeanne C. Jones** (Mississippi State University Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture) delivered the keynote address on 'Conservation Wisdom - Passing It On In a Time of Necessity.' A panel discussion that focused on addressing challenges and opportunities in the wildlife profession was led by **Tom Moorman** (Ducks Unlimited), **Ed Penny** (MDWFP), **Jim Miller** (MSU Extension), **Jeanne Jones** (MSU) and **Kris Godwin** (USDA Wildlife Services). **Caleb Hinton** won Best Student Oral Presentation for his talk titled "Estimation of deer damage to soybean production in Mississippi: a spatial and temporal context."



'Preparing Wildlife Professionals for a Changing World' panel discussion.
From left to right: **Jim Miller**, **Jeanne Jones**, **Kris Godwin**, **Ed Penny**, and **Tom Moorman**.

STATE REPORTS

Sam K. Riffell Award for Conservation Excellence

Dr. L. Wes Burger was awarded the first Samuel K. Riffell Award for Conservation Excellence. **Sam K. Riffell** left a strong impression on Mississippi wildlife professionals and public. He was a researcher dedicated to solid statistical design for meaningful research projects aimed at improving people's lives. He was a teacher whose primary focus and passion was students and their success. He often expressed a deep understanding of students as they traversed their undergraduate and graduate studies but also offered sincere kindness and care for their well-being. In memory of Sam, the Mississippi Chapter of The Wildlife Society is pleased to present the Sam K. Riffell Award for Conservation Excellence to Dr. Burger in recognition of his accomplishments in the areas of research, teaching and outreach, and management and restoration.

Mississippi Chapter Opposes Hunting of Deer Over Bait

In late August 2015, the Mississippi Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks proposed a change to regulations in Mississippi that would allow the hunting of deer over bait.

The Mississippi Chapter of The Wildlife Society, along with a coalition of conservation groups, opposed the measure to allow the harvest of wild game over bait which would threaten the overall health of wildlife populations, fair-chase hunting and wildlife conservation in Mississippi.

A joint statement of opposition was sent to the Commission in September and can be found at <http://wildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Baiting-Opposition-Letter-to-Commission-9-14.pdf>.



Congratulations to **Dr. L. Wes Burger, Jr.** (right; pictured with **Mark McConnell**), recipient of the Sam K. Riffell Award for Conservation Excellence at the 2015 annual meeting of the Mississippi Chapter of The Wildlife Society!

STATE REPORTS

Special Interest: Chronic Wasting Disease

Dr. Darren Miller, SE Section TWS Council Representative and **James E. “Jim” Miller**, Professor Emeritus at MSU just recently submitted a co-authored manuscript that provided the Introduction and Opening statements for a special Symposium session held last October at the TWS Annual Conference in Pittsburgh titled: “Ecological, biological, economic, and social issues associated with captive cervids.” This Symposium, aside from the introduction and overview, had 8 invited speakers who discussed the following topics related to captive cervid facilities and the threats as follows: (1) legal and policy issues; (2) wildlife disease risk; (3) implications to the North American Model; (4) current status of captive deer facilities; (4) hunter and non-hunter attitudes toward captive cervids; (6) economic considerations; (7) simulated effects of releasing captive male deer on antler characteristics; and (8) the political and cultural landscape.

Following this Symposium that was very well attended by participants at the Conference, there was significant interest expressed by TWS officials and attendee’s that these presentations should all be published as a special issue of the Wildlife Society Bulletin (WSB). Therefore, all speakers were asked to prepare a paper in the appropriate format and style for publication by TWS. Although we are not sure when this special issue will actually be assembled and available, hopefully, it will be available for access by TWS members by this fall or winter if all authors provide their manuscripts to TWS by or before the deadline.

Unfortunately, as most of us are aware this threat continues to grow, and in Wisconsin where it was first discovered in one county in 2000, it has now been confirmed in at least 17 counties of the state. Unfortunately, as this data indicates, via pathological examinations of dead deer, the confirmation of CWD in captive herds as well as in wild populations continues to increase. For example, recently news releases noted the confirmation of 19 confirmed cases of CWD traced to a single captive facility in Ohio (World Class

Whitetails), and in late June a deer in a captive facility in Medina County was confirmed with CWD stimulating great concern about the threat to both wild and captive cervids in that state. In fact, an August 4 news release titled: “Hunters and Conservationists Unite in Response to Chronic Wasting Disease Finding in Captive Herd,” noted that this confirmation had stimulated a coalition of conservation organizations becoming signatories to a recent resolution initiated by the Texas Wildlife Association. The signatories included; The Texas Wildlife Association, Texas Chapter of TWS, the Boone and Crockett Club, Quality Deer Management Association, Texans for Saving our Hunting Heritage, the National Wild Turkey Federation, Borderlands Research Institute, Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, Texas Rifle Association, and Texas Wildlife and Fisheries Management Council.

Just as an example of the threat this disease poses, it was noted in this news release that Texas Mountain Ranch where a diseased buck was confirmed with CWD in June, 2015 had shipped 825 deer to 147 different properties in the past five years, potentially exposing 66 Texas counties to this deadly disease, and TPWD reported that two additional deer from this captive facility have tested positive for CWD, and have been sent to a national diagnostic laboratory for confirmation.

Mark McConnell, mcconnell0409@gmail.com

NORTH CAROLINA



NO NEWS REPORTED

OKLAHOMA



NO NEWS REPORTED

STATE REPORTS

SOUTH CAROLINA



South Carolina Chapter

What an intense summer!!! I figure everyone is as ready for cooler temperatures as we are.

Featured Project...

This summer, the Palmetto Bluff Conservancy coordinated a very successful Bat Blitz in the area around Beaufort and Bluffton which was sanctioned by the Southeast Bat Diversity Network. Many partners were instrumental in the project's success including sponsors such as Crescent Communities, Reagan Smith Energy Solutions, Lowes, and the SC Department of Natural Resources as well as more than 100 registered volunteers who donated time and equipment. The 15 volunteer teams were able to capture and release 296 individual bats. The most remarkable development of the project was the capture of four northern yellow bats (*Lasiurus intermedius*), a rarely captured and poorly understood species. Along with two of the northern yellow bats, two southeastern bats (*Myotis austroriparius*), another poorly understood species, were fitted with transmitters to track their movements.

On-going Programs...

The SC Wild Hog Task Force just held another well attended workshop for NRCS district conservationists. Plans are in the works to conduct workshops in the midlands and piedmont regions, areas that have not had feral swine historically but are starting to see new populations that are growing.

The SC DNR, with the help of Clemson Extension and the SC Trappers Association, is continuing a series of coyote management workshops across the state with several classes scheduled for this fall. For a list of classes, visit <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/coyote/control.html>.

Notable Developments...

Clemson hires two new wildlife researchers. Earlier this summer, Clemson University established the

Kennedy Waterfowl Center thanks to the very generous gift from Mr. James Kennedy of Cox Enterprises, Inc. to establish an endowed chair in waterfowl research and conservation for research in the Atlantic Flyway. Clemson proudly announces the hiring of **Dr. Rick Kaminski** as its coordinator. Dr. Kaminski was the former director of the Kennedy Waterfowl Center at Mississippi State University, which produced well-respected research regarding waterfowl biology in the Mississippi and Central Flyways. Dr. Kaminski and his students have been recognized by TWS for several publication awards. TWS also recognized Rick as a Fellow in 2007 and with the Caesar Kleberg Award of Excellence for applied wildlife research in 2009. Clemson also welcomes the arrival of **Dr. Thomas Rainwater**, an energetic researcher who cut his teeth on crocodilians. Dr. Rainwater fills a needed wildlife research partnership between Clemson University and the Yawkee foundation, which will continue a long legacy established by exceptional researchers such as **Philip Wilkinson** and **Lou Guillette**.

Students on the lookout for spotted skunks and bats. After a 16 year hiatus, spotted skunks were recorded last year on remote cameras in the South Carolina upstate. In response, a team of students led by **Dr. David Jachowski** and funded by a SC DNR grant is systematically monitoring baited camera sites to determine patterns in habitat usage and other behavioral traits of this elusive species. **Ben Neece**, a graduate student under Dr. Jachowski, along with a team of agency representatives, also is coordinating the implementation of the North American Bat Monitoring Program in SC, which involves the placement of acoustic sensors across the state to record bat soundings.



STATE REPORTS

Dates to Remember...

Our annual meeting is just around the corner, October 21st at Hickory Knob State Park, McCormick, SC. Registration is live on our website. We will continue our discussion with much of the exciting developments from the past year with presentations on bats, spotted skunks, quail, mussels, and others.

- 20 Sep – National Hunting and Fishing Day at Duke Energy's "World of Energy" in Seneca, SC
- 23-24 Sep – Prescribed Fire Council Annual Workshop
- 31 Oct – SC Wildlife Federation Scholarship applications are due
- 13 Dec – Carolina Sandhill NWR workday

Ben Powell, bpowel2@clemson.edu

TENNESSEE

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency



Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency private lands biologist **Clint Borum** received the Firebird Award from the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative and National Bobwhite Technical Committee at its 21st Annual meeting in Galloway, New Jersey. Clint was one of the second cohort of winners of this prestigious award that is being given by NBCI/NBTC to recognize important individual and group contributions. Clint is one of 4 private lands biologists working for TWRA to assist USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in the delivery of habitat to agricultural lands. Prior to this position, Clint was the solo private lands biologist on TWRA's Landowner Incentive Program that was funded by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

University of Tennessee - Knoxville

The University of Tennessee Center for Wildlife Health has been engaged in several disease outreach activities. **Drs. Debra Miller** and **Matthew Gray** recently helped launch a new disease reporting web portal called the Global Ranavirus Reporting

System (<https://mantle.io/grrs>). Gray was recently named co-chair of the National Disease Task Team of the Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC, <http://www.parcplace.org/parcplace/resources/disease-task-team.html>). One of the initial tasks of this team has been organizing professionals to develop a National Strategic Plan for the novel pathogen, *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans*. Gray also was lead editor of the first book on ranaviruses published as Open Access by Springer (<http://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-319-13755-1>). Gray co-authored several chapters, and Miller was lead author of a chapter describing the pathology of ranaviruses and diagnostic techniques.

Additional UT Press Releases:

<https://ag.tennessee.edu/news/Pages/NR-2015-08-GRRSrelease.aspx>

<https://ag.tennessee.edu/news/Pages/CG-5-2015.aspx>

<http://tntoday.utk.edu/2015/05/22/professor-publishes-book-emerging-pathogen-ranavirus/>

<https://ag.tennessee.edu/news/Pages/NR-2015-PARCCo-chair.aspx>

Steven Hayslette, shayslette@tntech.edu



Clint Borum (right), TWRA Private Lands Biologist, is presented with the Firebird Award by NBCI/NBTC representative **Roger Applegate** (left).

STATE REPORTS

VIRGINIA



NO NEWS REPORTED

DUCKS UNLIMITED

Staff Changes

Jeff Miller is our new engineering technician at the Charleston, SC field office. Jeff has more than 30 years of experience in heavy construction, including duties as a heavy equipment operator, survey crew chief and construction project manager. We will lean heavily on Jeff's experience, project management skills and construction knowledge to expand our programs in the South Atlantic.

James Callicutt is the new DU Regional Biologist for the Mississippi Alluvial Valley. As of August 3, James is responsible for coordinating the delivery of Farm Bill Programs in the MAV, including ACEP-WRE and assisting with the Rice Stewardship Program as part of a Regional Conservation Partnership Program grant. James will also be responsible for guiding the development, selection, prioritization and delivery of conservation easement projects. James holds a Master of Science degree in Wildlife Science from Mississippi State University and has been employed with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks as a waterfowl biologist since 2011.

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

Arkansas

White River NWR Turner Tract

As part of a recent North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant awarded to the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, DU will work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to restore roughly 90 acres of emergent wetland habitat that

will be managed for waterfowl. The Turner Tract at White River National Wildlife Refuge is a recently acquired agricultural property directly adjacent to the waterfowl hunt area on the South Unit of the refuge. The refuge is using a poorly functioning water control structure only capable of flooding a small portion of the tract. Through the improvement and building of a new levee system and the addition of new water control structures, the FWS will be able to manage almost 90 acres of moist soil and flooded agriculture habitat.

Arkansas/Louisiana

Rice Stewardship Program Growing Strong

Without the managed wetlands associated with rice-lands, we cannot meet the habitat objectives of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan in any of our three highest priority wintering areas. Ducks Unlimited recently added capacity to our Rice Stewardship Program in Arkansas with the part-time hire of retired University of Arkansas Rice Research and Extension professor **Merle Anders**. His 40-plus years of rice agronomy and agriculture expertise will help rice growers maximize the sustainability of their operations and expand our efforts into the Mississippi Alluvial Valley. DU's program to help rice farmers in southwest Louisiana optimize their farms while providing habitat for waterfowl continues to deliver much needed assistance. In addition to more than 100 completed pump efficiency tests, the Rice Stewardship Program staff compiled pump testing data into a summary table that will provide general economic data to producers and extension personnel. We have also partnered with SLEMCO, a local electric company, to waive the surcharges for performing a pump test on an electric well during an "off" month. On average, this partnership can save a producer more than \$400.

Louisiana

Dewey Wills WMA Enhancement

DU and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries partnered to develop a new hunt unit managed for waterfowl in time for the upcoming duck

STATE REPORTS

season. Dewey Wills WMA lies in LaSalle Parish, approximately 20 miles northeast of Alexandria. DU engineers oversaw survey, design and construction management for the project to construct three miles of levees and install six water control structures and other drainage features. The project restored 3,000 acres of forested wetland habitat, increased foraging opportunities for wintering waterfowl and provides new public hunting opportunities. The project is supported by LDWF, Wetlands America Trust, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana, the North American Wetlands Conservation Council, Exxon and DU through contributions from 2014-15 Louisiana Legacy Greenwings and friends of DU sponsor and GoDevil owner **Warren Coco**. When completed, a dedication ceremony will be held to honor Coco and the new Legacy Greenwings.

Mississippi

St. Catherine Creek National Wildlife Refuge

As part of the Mississippi Wetlands Conservation Initiative II NAWCA grant, DU will work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to improve wetland habitat on St. Catherine Creek National Wildlife Refuge south of Natchez, Miss. Construction is planned to begin this summer once the high waters of the Mississippi River recede. This project will replace several

existing water control structures and install new rip-rap spillways to several emergent wetlands to allow for proper water management. As part of this project, we also plan to reforest about 247 acres of bottom-land hardwoods on the Cloverdale Unit this winter. In a separate project, we have a contract with the FWS to survey 495 acres of the Cloverdale Unit to assist refuge staff in their planning and management.

South Carolina

Land Protection Progress

DU's land protection efforts are going strong along the banks of the Combahee River in the ACE Basin. Thanks to grant funding opportunities from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and the South Carolina Conservation Bank, as well as landowners dedicated to conservation, DU is working to place conservation easements on three adjacent properties combining for more than 4,600 acres of critical wetland and upland habitat with 12.1 miles of frontage on the Combahee River and Cuckolds Creek. These tracts, neighboring the ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge, provide a unique opportunity to protect significant riverfront habitat for waterfowl and other wetland dependent species.



Dewey Wills water control structure before and after – Six new water control structures will improve habitat management in time for the upcoming waterfowl season.

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North Carolina

Private Land Program Continues

Ducks Unlimited recently finalized a new 5-year memorandum of understanding with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) for the North Carolina Partners Project. Projects are assessed annually by the FWS for feasibility, then the partners get together to approve a slate of projects for funding. Funding is a cost share between DU, FWS and NCWRC. DU Manager of Conservation Programs **Jamie Rader** attended the annual meeting to review and approve this year's five new projects on approximately 150 acres. Projects are generally from 5-100 acres in size and address enhancement of private properties. This program provides an excellent funding mechanism to help private property owners who have needs less than would qualify for a small or standard NAWCA grant. Technical assistance and management recommendations are provided by biologists from all three agencies. This program has also been a mechanism to identify larger, NAWCA scale projects and easement potential.

Virginia

Seeking Funding for Land Protection

Virginia has lost more than 42 percent of its historic wetlands and continues to lose thousands of acres each year. To address this loss, DU and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) are working together with The Nature Conservancy, the Wildlife Foundation of Virginia and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect 2,700 wetland acres in New Kent County. Lying in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, the York River Preserve and Ware Creek Preserve tracts are slated for development in the fifth fastest growing county in Virginia. Together, they have five miles of creek frontage

and 719.5 acres of nationally declining wetland types. These wetlands are remarkably free from invasive species or human disturbance, providing a wonderful opportunity to preserve this landscape for wildlife and people. Once acquired, the lands will be turned over to the state and managed as public-access wildlife areas. DU and partners are seeking the remaining funding needed for the \$9.5 million project to protect these lands.

Southwest Conservation Unit—South LA, OK, TX, NM

Louisiana/Texas

DU Secures Gulf Coast Restoration Funding

In May, DU was awarded five North American Wetlands Conservation Act grants to support its restoration efforts along the Gulf Coast. More than \$4.6 million in NAWCA funding will be combined with nearly \$10 million in partner funding to restore more than 21,800 acres in coastal Texas and Louisiana. These projects will provide high quality foraging habitat capable of supporting more than 70,000 ducks throughout the winter. In the five years since the Deepwater Horizon incident that claimed 11 lives and dumped an estimated 3.2 million barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico, Ducks Unlimited has received \$5.35 million in funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation administered Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund for projects to improve migratory bird habitat in coastal Texas and Louisiana. In addition to the NFWF grants, DU received \$3.6 million in Gulf Coast NAWCA grants supported by Gulf Spill funding, including one of the five grants in this latest round of funding. Ducks Unlimited and its conservation partners match every NAWCA dollar at least 1:1, and on average 2:1. Partners include the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Andi Cooper, acooper@ducks.org



NOMINATIONS

Southeastern Section of The Wildlife Society Officer Nominations

Candidates for President Elect

Matt Gray is a professor of wildlife ecology in the Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Matt is a Certified Wildlife Biologist® and has been a member of The Wildlife Society (TWS) for >20 years. He has served TWS in various roles including President of the Tennessee Chapter of TWS, associate editor for the Journal of Wildlife Management, and associate editor of the Journal of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. He is a founding member of the TWS Wetlands Working Group and former interim chair, and was co-chair of the Wetlands Wildlife Committee of the Southeastern Section of TWS. Matt is co-chair of the National Disease Task Team of the Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC), and a former secretary of the Tennessee Herpetological Society. He is a founding member and director of the Global Ranavirus Consortium (GRC). Matt works closely with natural resource organizations in the southeastern USA, leading applied research that helps biologists and landowners manage wetlands for wildlife. Through his role as Associate Director of the UT Center for Wildlife Health Organized Research Unit and leadership positions in the GRC and PARC, Matt helps organize groups of researchers and biologists in responding to emerging infectious diseases in wildlife populations. Matt believes the Southeastern Section of TWS can play an integral role in bridging the gap between research and applied wildlife management and conservation by facilitating opportunities for professional interaction, training, and education. Continuing the legacy of professional excellence in the Southeastern Section of TWS is one of his goals.



Michael Mengak is a professor-wildlife specialist at the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources at the University of Georgia and has been an active member of The Wildlife Society since college with nearly four decades of elected and appointed service to TWS. His outreach activities include training and working with landowners, Georgia Green Industry (landscapers and horticulture) and with county extension staff as well as adult education through Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists (Georgia State Coordinator for the Master Naturalist Program). Mike earned a Bachelor's Degree ('79) in Forestry and Wildlife from Virginia Tech, a Master's Degree ('82) and PhD ('87) in Forest Wildlife from Clemson University. At the national level, Mike currently serves as Past-Chair of the Wildlife Damage Management Working Group. He has also served as a reviewer for the Journal of Wildlife Management and Wildlife Society Bulletin as well as moderator and reviewer for the Annual Conference. At the Southeastern Section level, he has served as editor of the SE Section Newsletter (1991-1993), Jim McDonough Award committee (2003-2004), Audit Committee (2010-2015), Nongame & Endangered Species Committee (1989-1999), Wildlife Technical Paper Award Committee (2004-2011; as chair 2008-2011) and reviewer for the SE Section Wildlife Technical Papers (13 years). At the state and local levels, Mike has served



NOMINATIONS

as President of the Virginia Chapter-TWS and President of the Georgia Chapter-TWS and co-adviser to the University of Georgia Student Chapter. Mike is a Certified Wildlife Biologist®. He is honored to have served TWS in several capacities in the past and will serve with pride and dedication if elected. In the Southeastern Section, he believes we have a long history as an excellent and active unit of TWS and looks forward to serving alongside this excellent team of current officers and continuing the traditions of a strong section built on the dedicated work of previous officers and members.

Candidates for Secretary/Treasurer

Ray Iglay is an applied wildlife research biologist with the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Aquaculture at Mississippi State University (MSU) and Certified Wildlife Biologist®. He received his Master's in Wildlife Science and Ph.D. in Forest Resources from MSU in 2007 and 2010. He's a research generalist with diverse experience from carabid beetles to songbirds and field studies to individual-based modeling. He currently manages a USDA project demonstrating switchgrass as an alternative land cover for airports and serves as a co-principal investigator for projects concerned with the provision of open pine habitat within pine plantations of the southeastern U.S. He has served wildlife professionals as past president of the Mississippi Chapter of The Wildlife Society, past chair of the international Wildlife and Habitat Restoration Working Group, reviewer for 15 journals, and co-advisor for the MSU student chapter of TWS. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his two children and wife in Starkville, MS and managing a small business helping landowners achieve their wildlife management goals and businesses effectively manage their data.



Susan Rupp has been actively engaged in TWS for nearly 20 years. Susan has prior experience as secretary-treasurer of the South Dakota Chapter of TWS (SDTWS) from 2010 – 2012, so she is intimately familiar with the responsibilities of the position for the Southeastern Section of TWS and looks forward to taking those experiences and applying them to her tenure should she be elected. She is currently finishing a term as the secretary of the Renewable Energy Working Group (2013 – 2015) and has served as chair of TWS's Technical Review Committee on the "Effects of Bioenergy Production on Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat" (published in December 2012). She is also a member of both the Spatial Ecology and Telemetry Working Group and College and University Wildlife Education Working Group of TWS. Dr. Rupp was a member of The Wildlife Society's "Leadership Institute" in 2007 and became a fully Certified Wildlife Biologist® in 2008. As a result, she has developed good working relationships with members of TWS Council and the Executive Board and staff. These relationships will benefit the Southeastern Section of TWS should she be elected as secretary-treasurer. Susan is currently the owner and lead consultant for Envirosapes Ecological Consulting, LLC, based in Bella Vista, Arkansas.



NOMINATIONS

Prior to that, she was an Assistant Professor in the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences at South Dakota State University. Her research and consulting work primarily focuses on the use of cellulosic biomass for bioenergy production (including fuel, heat, and biobased products) and the potential effect on wildlife and wildlife habitat. She has held contracts with National Wildlife Federation, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and Louisiana State University since opening her business full-time in 2013. She graduated as a University Honors Scholar from Colorado State University (1994) with a double major in Biology and Wildlife Biology and minor in Spanish. She completed both her Masters (2000) and PhD (2005) degrees in the Department of Range, Wildlife, and Fisheries Management at Texas Tech University. In addition, she has worked for the Colorado Division of Wildlife, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and Los Alamos National Laboratory. In addition, she was one of 8 recipients nationally for the Canon National Park Science Scholars Award in 2002 – a program jointly funded by Canon USA, the National Park Service, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Kelly Douglass currently serves as a Technical Assistance Biologist with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. She has held this position since 2010. She primarily works with private landowners in the Piedmont region of North Carolina to manage their property for various wildlife species. Before transferring into this position in 2010, she worked as Captive Cervid Biologist with the NCWRC for 6 years and was responsible for establishing and coordinating the statewide Captive Cervid Program. She is currently President of the North Carolina Chapter of The Wildlife Society (possibly the youngest in Chapter history), and is also serving on the TWS Arrangements Committee to prepare for and promote the 23rd Annual TWS Conference to be held in Raleigh in October 2016. She is a Certified Wildlife Biologist®, a Certified NC Environmental Educator, and an alumni of the TWS Leadership Institute. Kelly is very active in The Wildlife Society, and has held many leadership roles with the NC Chapter, Southeast Section, and parent society since 2002. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences from NC State University in 2002, and a Master's degree in Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology from NCSU in 2011.



SE-TWS Section Officers would like to extend special thanks to Bruce Leopold and Billy Minser for their hard work in securing candidates for each of these positions.



MEETINGS OF INTEREST

69th Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

Make plans now to join us for the 69th Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies hosted by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission November 1-4, 2015, in Asheville, NC. The theme for the 2015 SEAFWA conference is Conserving Large Landscapes; conference details can be viewed at: <http://www.seafwa.org/conferences/2015/>.

Several exciting symposia are planned in the following areas:

- **Human Dimensions:** This symposium offers insights into the ways human dimensions research can inform management on how to adapt to these social pressures. It will highlight examples of human dimensions research applied to management decisions and facilitate increased interaction among human dimensions researchers and specialists in SEAFWA member states and other conservation related organizations.
- **Large Landscapes and Biodiversity Conservation in the South:** In this symposium, speakers address US Forest Service research studies related to ecosystems that are especially vulnerable to broad scale changes... and implications for fish and wildlife species that depend on them.
- **Identifying state frameworks for large-scale conservation of at-risk species in the Southeast:** The objective of this panel is to seed a broader conversation about the emerging and evolving frameworks that states might employ in the Southeast to achieve large-landscape and species conservation objectives. Speakers on the panel will provide insight into regional and national trends, review the multiple factors that have influenced the design and uptake of different conservation approaches in the past, and identify barriers and opportunities for implementation of new conservation frameworks.
- **Landscape-Scale Wildlife Habitat Conservation and Local Government Land Use Planning:** This symposium will provide case studies and lessons learned to wildlife agencies and professionals so that they may assess the effectiveness of investing in wildlife habitat conservation through local land use planning.
- **Building a Fish Passage Community of Practice through Case Studies and Lessons Learned:** This symposium aims to help develop a fish passage community of practice throughout the Southeast by highlighting successful dam removal projects, identify lessons learned and recommend key factors to minimize the intimidation often encountered around dam removal projects.
- **Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy:** This symposium will present recent progress and identify important next steps for key elements of this conservation adaptation strategy, 1) network of landscapes and seascapes, 2) conservation collaborations, and 3) landscape change information.

The Annual Business Meeting of the Southeastern Section of TWS will be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2015 from 3:00-5:00pm. Election results for incoming officers will be announced during this meeting. All are welcome to attend.

The mountains of western North Carolina will be beautiful this time of year. Please plan to make extra time before or after the conference to enjoy Asheville and the diverse attractions in the surrounding area. We look forward to seeing you in Asheville!

MEETINGS OF INTEREST

Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy

SECAS is bringing the conservation community into the future conservation landscape.

A plan and a map. A plan and a map and money. A plan and a map and money and more people to get the work done. The equation for guiding conservation action is complicated. We don't have enough money and people to accomplish all of our conservation goals. The southeast states are working to develop a conservation adaptation strategy, an ambitious effort that will make conservation in the southeast more comprehensive and strategic.

Given the growing threats and certain landscape changes in the southeast United States, conservation leaders initiated the development of the Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy (SECAS). The SEAFWA Conference 2015 theme, Conserving Large Landscapes, provides a timely opportunity to communicate about the Conservation Adaptation Strategy.

Conference organizers invite TWS members to participate in the SEAFWA SECAS Symposium, scheduled for 8 am to Noon, Wednesday, Nov 4. One of the challenges for communicating SECAS is that a "conservation adaptation strategy" is not familiar territory for most people. Maybe it's another plan. Could it be the mother of all conservation plans in the southeast? Maybe it's a big map. The map to rule all maps? What is the conservation vision for the future? Whose vision?

This symposium will demonstrate that we are already using collaborative conservation blueprints, evaluated by landscape change information, to guide habitat conservation investments. LCCs and their partnership networks, the state fish and wildlife agencies, with participation from federal partners, are describing the interconnected network of landscape and seascapes valuable to fish and wildlife.

How can we design the future conservation landscape in the southeast, a vision for lands and waters capable of sustaining fish and wildlife into the 21st century? For more information about this symposium, check out the conference website at <http://www.seafwa.org/conferences/2015/html/schedule.shtml>, or send a message to **Dennis Figg** at dennis.figg.mccc@gmail.com.



MEETINGS OF INTEREST

AFWA Trapping Matters Workshop

Asheville, NC (during the 2015 SEAFWA conference), Sunday, Nov. 1st, 2015 (9am to 5pm, free registration)

This workshop consists of 3 main sections:

1. Communications Skills:

- The importance of human dimension studies & messages related to regulated trapping.
- How the media works & what they expect of you in an interview situation.
- How you can use media to educate the public & key messages to use with the media about trapping.
- Open dialog & hands-on activities will be used to develop & improve communication skills and make the experiences interactive and of high professional value for attendees.

2. Traps & Trapping Techniques:

- Hands-on demonstrations of trap-types and how they work.

3. Best Management Practices for Trapping & Furbearer Management:

- The research behind humane trapping, and how and why regulated trapping is used in furbearer management and wildlife management in general.

This workshop qualifies for credit hours (Category 1) towards certification renewal & professional development. To register for this workshop, please e-mail Colleen Olfenbuttel (colleen.olfenbuttel@ncwildlife.org). Registration is limited to 45 people.

Supported by: The Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation, the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

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MEETINGS OF INTEREST

OCTOBER

TWS Annual Conference

October 17-21, 2015

Winnipeg, Manitoba

<http://wildlife.org/network/conferences-network/>

NOVEMBER

SEAFWA 2015 Conference

November 1-5, 2015

Renaissance Hotel

Asheville, North Carolina

<http://seafwa.org/conferences/2015/index.html>



JANUARY 2016

Eleventh National Wild Turkey Symposium

January 5-7, 2016

Tucson, AZ

<http://www.nwtfarizona.org/11th-national-wild-turkey-symposium.html>

FEBRUARY 2016

NWTF National Convention & Sport Show

February 11-14, 2016

Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center

Nashville, TN

<http://www.nwtf.org/convention>

FEBRUARY 2016

2016 Southeast Deer Study Group Meeting

February 15-18, 2016

Concord, NC

<http://sedsg.com/index.asp>

21th Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Bat Diversity Network and 26th Colloquium on the Conservation of Mammals in the Southeastern U.S

February 18-19, 2016

Lake Guntersville State Park, AL

<http://sbdn.org/upcoming-meeting/>

2016 SEPARC Annual Meeting

February 18-21, 2016

Camp McDowell, Nauvoo, AL

<http://www.separc.org/home>

JULY 2016

American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists Annual Meeting

July 6-10, 2016

New Orleans, LA

<http://www.asih.org/meetings>

AUGUST 2016

Ecological Society of America Annual Meeting

August 7-12, 2016

Fort Lauderdale, FL

<http://www.esa.org/esa/meetings/annual-meeting/>

SEPTEMBER 2016

2016 AFWA Annual Meeting

September 11-14, 2016

Marriott Philadelphia Downtown

Philadelphia, PA

<http://www.fishwildlife.org/index.php>

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:

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