



Excellence in Wildlife Stewardship Through Science and Education

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Weeks of Friday, August 2nd through August 23rd 2013

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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Wildlife-Society-New-Mexico-Chapter/122478411098284>

1. Scientists Identify Key Fungal Species That Help Explain Mysteries of White Nose Syndrome
2. Prairie chicken tracked on 1,165-mile journey in Missouri, Iowa
3. Film Fakery: Does Shark Week Harm Conservation Efforts?
4. DOI Releases 2012 Economic Contributions Report
5. Will US Drones Fight Foreign Poachers?
6. Wildlife Officials Consider Lowering Mountain Lion Quota
7. Time for Plan B as Keystone XL and Northern Gateway pipelines stall
8. Rare bobcat spotted in Cape Cod
9. Letter to Congress Supporting Wildlife and Conservation Grant Programs (respond by Monday September 9th)

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1. Scientists Identify Key Fungal Species That Help Explain Mysteries of White Nose Syndrome

July 25, 2013

U.S. Forest Service researchers have identified what may be a key to unraveling some of the mysteries of White Nose Syndrome: the closest known non-disease causing relatives of the fungus that causes WNS. These fungi, many of them still without formal Latin names, live in bat hibernation sites and even directly on bats, but they do not cause the devastating disease that has killed millions of bats in the eastern United States. Researchers hope to use these fungi to understand why one fungus can be deadly to bats while its close relatives are benign.

The study by Andrew Minnis and Daniel Lindner, both with the U.S. Forest Service's Northern Research Station in Madison, Wis., outlines research on the

evolution of species related to the fungus causing WNS. The study is available online from the journal *Fungal Biology*.

"Identification of the closest known relatives of this fungus makes it possible to move forward with genetic work to examine the molecular toolbox this fungus uses to kill bats," according to Lindner, a research plant pathologist. "Ultimately, we hope to use this information to be able to interrupt the ability of this fungus to cause disease."

The study is an important step toward treating WNS, according to Mylea Bayless, Bat Conservation International's director of conservation programs in the U.S. and Canada. "This research increases our confidence that this disease-causing fungus is, in fact, an invasive species," Bayless said, "Its presence among bats in Europe, where it does not cause mass mortality, could suggest hope for bats suffering from this devastating wildlife disease. Time will tell."

White Nose Syndrome was first observed in 2006 in a cave in Upstate New York. Since then, it has spread to 22 states in the United States and five Canadian provinces and has killed large numbers of hibernating bats, a problem resulting in substantial economic losses. A marked decline in bat populations in the eastern United States was documented in a study published last month in *PLoS One* by Sybill Amelon, a research biologist with the Forest Service in Columbus, Mo., and co-authors Thomas Ingersoll and Brent Sewall. The study found cumulative declines in regional relative abundance by 2011 from peak levels were 71 percent for little brown bats, 34 percent for tricolored bat, 30 percent in the federally-listed endangered Indiana bat, and 31 percent for northern long-eared bats.

In 2009, researchers identified the culprit behind WNS as a member of the genus *Geomyces*, resulting in its name *Geomyces destructans*, or *G. destructans*. Minnis and Lindner generated DNA sequence data and found evidence supporting a shift in the genus to which the fungus belongs, resulting in a new name: *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*, or *P. destructans*.

"This research represents more than just a name change," according to Bayless. "Understanding the evolutionary relationships between this fungus and its cousins in Europe and North America should help us narrow our search for solutions to WNS."

The study is based on a foundation of collaborative research among the U.S. Forest Service, the USGS National Wildlife Health Center, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and is a continuation of pioneering research initiated by Canadian researchers at the University of Alberta and European researchers, including those at the Centraalbureau voor Schimmelcultures in The Netherlands.

"Collaboration is key to responding to problems as devastating as WNS," said Michael T. Rains, director of the Northern Research Station. "We have come a long way since we first encountered WNS, in large part due to the cooperation among government agencies, universities and non-government organizations. For this study in particular, USGS and Fish & Wildlife Service partners played critical roles collecting the fungi used in these studies. Problems this large will not be solved without unprecedented cooperation, and this study is a great example of that."

Article link: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/07/130725202458.htm>

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2. Prairie chicken tracked on 1,165-mile journey in Missouri, Iowa

August 1, 2013 in State

By Bill Graham, MDC media specialist

Kansas City – A female prairie chicken wearing a GPS tracking collar surprised and puzzled biologists this summer by traveling 1,165 miles in big circles in southern Iowa and northern Missouri. The hen labeled Bird No. 112 was trapped in western Nebraska and released on April 4 in Iowa near the Missouri border, north of Bethany, Mo., for a prairie chicken restoration program. Since then, she has avoided fatal dangers such as predators, vehicles, fences and utility lines in a ceaseless journey that has slowed but not stopped.

"We don't really know why," said Jennifer A. Vogel, who has monitored Bird No. 112's travels as a post-doctoral research associate at Iowa State University. "It seems like she was searching for something."

Bird No. 112's travels include: a northerly jaunt in Iowa after her release; a southerly loop into Missouri and then north back into Iowa; a visit to St. Joseph on Missouri's western boundary; a swing east past Kirksville in the state's north central region; a move back to Iowa and then flights past the bridges of Madison County southwest of Des Moines; a second trip to St. Joseph; a second visit to the Trenton, Mo., area; then a slow march back through northwest Missouri into Iowa where on July 29 she was feeding and nesting a couple of counties north of the state line near Kent, Iowa.

"It's neat that she's capable of traveling that far, but we hope all the hens don't do that or we won't get any reproduction," said Len Gilmore, a wildlife management biologist for the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) who studies prairie chickens.

Biologists are not sure if some prairie chickens have always moved these distances, which would boost genetic diversity. Or, hen No. 112 may be looking for other prairie chickens and a landscape more resembling arid western Nebraska. Prairie chickens are endangered in Missouri. They were extirpated from Iowa by 1952 with only re-introduced birds there now in limited numbers.

Slightly more than 100 prairie chickens remain in Missouri where once hundreds of thousands once roamed. Their decline is primarily because less than one percent of the state's native grasslands remain. Most of those birds are in two flocks in west central Missouri. MDC bolstered their numbers and genetic diversity in recent years with birds translocated from Kansas.

The good news is that a flock re-established at the Wah'Kon-Tah Prairie near El Dorado Springs, Mo., is holding steady with 40 to 50 prairie chickens. They had good nesting success this spring, said Tom Thompson, an MDC resource scientist. A couple of Kansas birds released at Wah'Kon-Tah Prairie in 2012 also did some traveling that surprised biologists.

One hen outfitted with a radio transmitter traveled south to Dade County this spring. She joined a male dubbed earlier as "Lonesome Chuck." He was a lone survivor of the species at the prairie on the Wade and June Shelton Memorial Conservation Area. They produced offspring _ 13 eggs hatched _ and the hen is still alive and being tracked by biologists.

Another hen with a transmitter journeyed northwest of El Dorado Springs to a prairie remnant in Bates County and hatched chicks. She was later killed by an undetermined cause. But biologists see it as a positive sign that prairie chickens are not rooted to where they're hatched or released, and that they will travel 30 to 50 miles to seek out remnant prairies or previously used leks, which are spring mating grounds.

"It's encouraging to see that the birds from Wah'Kon-Tah can make it that far," Thompson said.

The perilous, cross-state travel by Bird No. 112 in northwest Missouri is another matter. However, she may not be the only Nebraska-trapped bird roaming a long distance, but rather just the only one that biologists can track cross country. Iowa placed 10 solar-powered GPS satellite transmitters on hens released this spring. Only Bird No. 112 survives, as the others were killed by predators.

Bird No. 112 was among 73 prairie chickens from Nebraska released this spring in the Grand River Grasslands prairie focus area that spans the Iowa and Missouri state line. The 70,000 acre project is a partnership between MDC, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, private landowners and several other public and private conservation partners. Dunn Ranch, owned by The Nature Conservancy of Missouri, was the release point for birds on the Missouri side.

MDC staff attached radio transmitters to 16 hens that were released at Dunn Ranch along with seven males without radio collars. Tracking the hens helps biologists learn what kind of habitat prairie chickens prefer and what they need for nesting and brood rearing success. That information will guide habitat management decisions in the future.

However, the tracking collars used by MDC are not connected to satellites like those used on the hens released in Iowa. Staff must track those birds using antennas at relatively close range or with aircraft flyovers.

Three of the hens with MDC collars nested in the release area and two produced successful hatches. It's positive that some of the Nebraska-trapped birds released this spring joined a handful of prairie chickens that were already using the Dunn Ranch lek, Thompson said.

But 10 hens with radio collars moved out of the area and their fate is unknown, said David Hoover, an MDC wildlife biologist. They may be on a long journey like Bird No. 112, or perhaps a shorter trip, and they hopefully will return. Bird No. 112 has passed south of the Dunn Ranch area twice.

"We're still hoping they will show back up and produce broods," Hoover said.

Article link: <http://sedalianewsjournal.com/2013/08/01/prairie-chicken-tracked-on-1165-mile-journey-in-missouri-iowa/>

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3. Film Fakery: Does Shark Week Harm Conservation Efforts?

By John R. Platt | August 5, 2013

Great White Serial Killer. World's Deadliest Sharks. I Escaped Jaws. Sharkpocalypse. These are just a few of the programs airing this week during the Discovery Channel's annual Shark Week and NatGeo Wild's new copycat, Sharkfest. Undoubtedly these programs will attract their usual massive ratings, but they may be guilty of the same kinds of film fakery that plagues many wildlife films, where the images on your screen don't tell a full or even truthful story. In the process, experts warn the films may actually send the wrong conservation message and harm endangered species.

"The term 'fakery' has many nuances to it," says Chris Palmer, founder of the Center for Environmental Filmmaking at American University in Washington, D.C. Palmer shined a light on some of the worst aspects of wildlife filmmaking in his

2010 book and 2013 documentary *Shooting in the Wild*. “Shark Week,” he says, typifies one of the most common aspects of film fakery, where producers create a mistaken impression in the audience’s minds about what goes on in the wild. “With Shark Week, people get to see sharks as being dangerous and man-eating because that’s what gets ratings. The networks are looking for that male demographic, age 21 to 35, so they push sensational shots of sharks chomping down on people.”

Palmer, who has won two Emmy Awards for his own wildlife films, believes that pushing this misinformation—that sharks are nothing but dangerous killing machines—can hurt conservation efforts. “The wrong perception can lead to misperceptions and in the end, I think, hurt public policy toward these animals,” he observes. “One has to wonder how that affects work that goes on at CITES [the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species] and places like that where we try to get international protection for sharks. If the populace is thinking of sharks as dangerous, why would anyone save them? That makes it harder, I think, to do the right thing.”

Real or fake?

Demonizing animals is just one of the many kinds of fakery tainting the wildlife filmmaking industry. Another kind of deception involves manipulating events to get the “right” shots on film. That might include leaving food out for animals, dosing a carcass with candy, drugging animals so they don’t move or pushing them toward the camera. “The worst case is when you put predator and prey together to get photographs,” Palmer says. Although this technique has been employed extensively in the past, he calls it immoral: “You get these dramatic shots, but people don’t see animals as they really are.”

In other cases, what appears to be on camera isn’t completely true even if it may seem to be that way on the surface. Some films claim to follow the story of specific animals, although the footage is of multiple individuals edited together to tell a “real” story. In other films, discordant shots are edited together to depict something that could not be filmed in the wild. Sir David Attenborough’s *Frozen Planet* series infamously mixed footage of polar bears in the wild with sequences shot in a zoo. This created a scandal two years ago when viewers found out, and the Discovery Channel added a disclaimer when it brought the series to the U.S.

A more subtle kind of fakery can occur in the editing stages. Filmmakers might be in the field for months at a time, getting limited shots of their subjects every few weeks. But all too often those short shots can be edited together to make it seem as if they occurred in a very short sequence. “The final film looks like there are a lot of these rare animals,” Palmer says. “People watching it are saying to themselves, ‘Well, golly, what’s the problem? I was just watching this film, and I see hundreds of these chimps or these white-tipped oceanic sharks or whatever,’

and then they don't realize that the film has been put together with very little footage because it's hard to find these animals."

The risk to wildlife

In addition to fakery, Palmer points out that the animals themselves are often endangered by filmmakers. "We get too close, we harass them, we're desperate to get the money shots," he says. "And we go in so close and bother them that some of the animals even get killed." Ethical codes for filmmakers should prevent this from happening, but they lack enforcement. "They set a marker, but if someone breaks them there is no one in the field to say, 'Don't do that,'" Palmer says.

Many filmmakers may find themselves placed under extreme corporate pressure to get dramatic footage of rare and endangered species. Because most crews contain just one or two people and no one is in the field watching, circumstances can lead to cutting corners. "No one's looking at you," Palmer says. "It's very easy to do things that no one would know about." He notes that there aren't any real metrics about this, because people don't admit it, but it happens: "The only time you hear the truth is at 2 A.M. after a few beers."

The public's role

The public can have a role in reducing film fakery, whether it's during Shark Week or on another wildlife program. "I would encourage people to be a little skeptical and ask questions," he says. "How did they get that shot? Is the animal being controlled? Did that animal come from a game farm where it was held under inhumane conditions? Especially for endangered species, how was it treated? Did the filmmakers keep their distance so the animal was undisturbed or was the animal harassed and chased down to get good footage?" Asking television networks these questions, he suggests, can lead to change: "All of these networks are sensitive. I think if the public speaks up, they will do a better job."

Although he expresses a lot of criticism for fakery, Palmer does think that wildlife filmmaking can have a very positive effect, even in cases where the narrative plays loose with a few facts to pull at heartstrings. "People who love the film may vote in a positive way for senators and congressmen who will vote in a more sustainable manner," he asserts. "That may be an example where fakery is, if you like, pro-conservation."

Article link: <http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/extinction-countdown/2013/08/05/film-fakery-shark-week/>

4. DOI Releases 2012 Economic Contributions Report

August 06, 2013 By Danica Zupic

On July 29, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) released the fourth installment of its analysis of the economic contributions of the department. The DOI's Office of Policy Analysis estimates that the DOI made \$371 billion in economic contributions through conservation investments and activities, and that it supported 2.3 million jobs during the 2012 fiscal year. The report examined the value added and economic contribution from recreation, conservation, energy, non-fuels minerals, and tribal economies, as well as specific outputs and trends.

The Office of Policy Analysis estimates that 417 million visits were made to DOI-managed lands in 2012, which is the equivalent of an estimated \$24.7 billion of value added, \$45 billion in economic output, and 371,000 jobs supported through various recreational activities.

The 417 million visits included:

- 47 million visits to units of the Fish and Wildlife Service
- 283 million visits to units of the National Park Service
- 59 million visits to Bureau of Land Management lands
- 28 million visits to Bureau of Reclamation lands

Although it is difficult to quantify the conservation and heritage values of these lands to the public, the 161-page report explains its methodology and the analysis used for valuing these important areas, and provides information on other ongoing conservation valuation research. For example, the recreation use values database at Oregon State University contains 352 valuation studies used to estimate recreation use values in the U.S. and Canada from 1958 to 2006. The Harvard Kennedy School of Government and Colorado State University have partnered to conduct a comprehensive economic valuation of the 398-unit National Park Service and its 30 programs. The valuation is expected to be completed in 2015.

Sources: DOI Press Release (July 29, 2013).

Article link: <http://news.wildlife.org/featured/doi-releases-2012-economic-contributions-report/>

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5. Will US Drones Fight Foreign Poachers?

August 8, 2013 Sonia Horon

(WILDLIFE CONSERVATION) President Obama is considering lending U.S. drones to Tanzania in an effort to combat the rapid growth of wildlife poaching. The population of elephants in Tanzania is declining at an alarming rate and wildlife groups estimate ten to twenty-five thousand elephants are killed in Tanzania every year for their ivory tusks. The areas in need of monitoring are too vast for rangers to properly monitor—leaving wildlife at further risk of being killed by greedy poachers. The news comes just weeks after Obama’s executive order to protect wildlife from illegal poaching. Read on to find out how the drones could help during this troublesome time. — Global Animal

Washington Times, Ashish Kumar Sen

Tanzania’s storied wildlife reserves could soon get a watchful, winged inhabitant: U.S. drones.

On his visit to the East African nation last month, President Obama discussed the possibility of using unarmed, unmanned aircraft to help overstretched park rangers combat the growing problem of elephant poaching in Tanzania’s vast wildlife reserves and national parks, Tanzanian Ambassador to the United States Liberata Mulamula told editors and reporters at The Washington Times this week.

Wildlife groups estimate that 10,000 to 25,000 elephants are killed in Tanzania each year for their ivory tusks and the number of elephants in southern Tanzania has fallen by more than half. Much of the ivory is shipped illegally to Asian markets.

“The extent of poaching is very, very, very high,” John Salehe, director of the African Wildlife Foundation’s Maasai Steppe, said in a phone interview from Tanzania.

There has been sharp increase in elephant poaching over the past year, he said.

Tanzanian officials say the area that needs to be monitored is vast with too few rangers.

“There is trafficking, but also there is criminality, so we are fighting both,” said Mrs. Mulamula. “If we can work together, we can put an end to this.”

That is where drones could play a crucial role.

“The American administration is ready to put up funds to help us in areas where we think we can be able to work together and put an end to this trafficking and killings,” Mrs. Mulamula said.

“One area, they said, was training [to] get more rangers. There was even suggestions that the U.S. government can help us with these drones.”

Mrs. Mulamula said Mr. Obama did not make any commitment to provide drones to Tanzania.

“But this was being said [in the discussions] that this was one of the possibilities,” she added.

However, a senior Obama administration official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, later said the U.S. is not considering providing drones to Tanzania but declined to elaborate on a meeting between Mr. Obama and Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete in Tanzania on July 1.

Right after that meeting, Mr. Obama acknowledged the threat posed by poaching and trafficking of animal parts. Mr. Obama issued an executive order to, in part, help foreign governments tackle the problem.

“[T]his includes additional millions of dollars to help countries across the region build their capacity to meet this challenge, because the entire world has a stake in making sure that we preserve Africa’s beauty for future generations,” Mr. Obama said.

An official of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also will be assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam to support the Tanzanian government’s efforts to develop a wildlife security strategy.

A State Department official, speaking on background, said the United States is “concerned by the growing involvement of transnational organized crime and armed militias in poaching and the illegal wildlife trade.”

“These activities negatively impact economic livelihoods, health, security and the rule of law across the African continent.”

Tanzania is not the only African nation where drones have been considered to combat the menace of poaching.

The Ol Pejeta wildlife conservancy in Kenya has teamed up with Airware, a California-based firm, to build drones to protect endangered wildlife, including the northern white rhino, which is hunted for its horn.

“We see the drone’s uses in three parts: deterrence, observation and tracking,” said Elodie Sampere, a spokeswoman for the OI Pejeta Conservancy in Nanyuki, Kenya.

The drones at OI Pejeta are still in the test phase, but “just the rumor of an eye in the sky and the noise of it flying overhead will serve to deter potential incidents,” Mrs. Sampere said.

The drones also would allow the conservancy to check on the safety of endangered animals and send critical information to rangers about the number of poachers and whether they are armed, she said.

Drones also can track radio-frequency tags on endangered species, allowing rangers to monitor their movements.

OI Pejeta is looking for “a drone designed for conservation and not just an off-the-shelf ex-military solution,” Mrs. Sampere said.

Drones have been used to monitor poachers in other parts of Africa as well, including the Kruger National Park in South Africa.

In December, the World Wildlife Fund received a \$5 million grant from Google to develop technological solutions to combat poaching. The project combines the use of drones with animal-tagging technologies and ranger patrols guided by analytical software. The technology will be tested over the three-year grant period in Africa and Asia.

The illegal trade in ivory and rhino horn is driven by markets in Asia, particularly in China and Japan. Large quantities of ivory originating in Tanzania have been seized in the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

“The challenges are enormous, especially because they have that huge market in Asia,” Mrs. Mulamula said.

Although international trade in ivory is banned, a one-time sale in 2008 perpetuated a legal market for ivory in China and Japan, according to the African Wildlife Foundation.

The Chinese government has not been cooperative in African efforts to reduce the illegal trade in ivory, said Arend de Haas, of the London-based African Conservation Foundation.

“China should increase law enforcement, coordinate with African governments and consider destroying confiscated ivory stocks to show their commitment to combat the ivory trade,” he said.

However, Mrs. Mulamula said the Chinese government is sympathetic to Tanzania's concerns.

Khamis Kagasheki, Tanzania's minister of natural resources and tourism, has been spearheading anti-poaching efforts in his country, but wildlife groups say much more needs to be done.

"The Tanzanian government has not been alert enough [regarding] the rise in elephant poaching in the region and country," Mr. de Haas said.

Tanzanian officials announced in July that more than 1,200 poaching suspects were arrested over a 15-month period that ended in March. It was not clear how many were involved in elephant poaching. Two ivory traders were arrested in July.

Mr. de Haas said official elephant-poaching statistics are lacking.

"Slow political processes and corruption within local security and conservation institutes are major obstacles to quickly implement effective solutions," he said.

Article link: <http://www.globalanimal.org/2013/08/08/will-us-drones-fight-foreign-poachers/104558/>

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6. Wildlife Officials Consider Lowering Mountain Lion Quota

9:50 pm Sun August 11, 2013 By Amy Varland

Mountain lion hunting season began in the Black Hills in the fall of 2005. Wildlife officials say the season was the result of declining deer and elk populations and an increase in the number of lion sightings. Officials took measures to manage the big cat population, but eight years later they say they're making changes.

Since the mountain lion hunting season began harvest number limits, or quotas, have been among the most heated of debates. In a recent unprecedented move Game Fish & Parks officials are proposing to lower harvest limits before this year's lion season gets underway.

The current per-season lion harvest limit is 100 lions or 70 females – whichever happens first. Wildlife management officials say those numbers may change.

Game Fish & Parks Commission Chairman Susie Knipling says the decision to consider decreasing this season's lion harvest quota to 75 lions, or 50 females

came after much public input, and after Game Fish & Parks biologists made a recommendation to lower limits.

“The data research and the fact that we didn’t reach our quota last year helped us in deciding that we should lower it,” says Knippling.

Knippling says research indicates that the ideal carrying capacity for mountain lions in the Black Hills is between 180 to 185 lions. She says that lion hunting in recent years has helped control the population, but officials say there’s still a need for a lion hunting season.

“We’re trying to get that number down closer to somewhere between 150 and 200 lions is where we’d like to be because when you get over that that’s when problems start and encounters with the lions start,” says Knippling.

Knippling says wildlife managers are getting close to their desired lion population number, so a decrease in harvest limits is warranted.

“They’re actually almost to a manageable place now, and that’s why we’re going to leave it at 75 this year, because of the fact that we’re still trying to lower the population at this point in time,” says Knippling.

Knippling says the issue of lowering harvest quotas is up for public comment.

“Our goal is not to be rid of them. Our goal is to be able to manage them at a quota that’s acceptable to people and that’s what we’re going for,” says Knippling.

This year’s mountain lion hunting season begins December 26th and runs through March 31st.

Article link: <http://listen.sdpb.org/post/wildlife-officials-consider-lowering-mountain-lion-quota>

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7. Time for Plan B as Keystone XL and Northern Gateway pipelines stall

by Chris Sorensen on Wednesday, August 21, 2013 11:59am

Looking at the prospect of an eastern pipeline

On a cold, blustery Sunday in February, tens of thousands of people descended on Washington’s National Mall to protest the proposed TransCanada Corp.’s

\$5.3-billion Keystone XL oil pipeline. They chanted, waved placards and called on U.S. President Barack Obama to kill the project, which, if completed, would pump up to 830,000 barrels a day from Alberta's oil sands to refineries on the U.S. Gulf Coast. Referring to the energy-intensive processes needed to extract gooey oil-sands bitumen, activist and organizer Bill McKibben claimed that approving the 1,200-km pipeline would be tantamount to lighting a massive "carbon bomb."

Few noticed, 48 hours earlier, when another Calgary pipeline company, Enbridge Inc., revealed it also planned to build a new pipeline to deliver nearly as much oil, about 660,000 barrels per day, to the very same U.S. region. Stretching from Patoka, Ill., to St. James, La., the \$3.4-billion Eastern Gulf Crude Access pipeline is a joint venture between Enbridge and Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners that would repurpose 1,100 km of an existing natural-gas line to carry a mix of oil-sands crude and lighter Bakken oil from North Dakota. "The industry believes it's easier to get regulatory approvals by using existing right-of-ways," says Vern Yu, Enbridge's vice-president of business and market development, adding the pipeline will connect to existing cross-border infrastructure.

Not to be outdone, TransCanada is taking a similar approach with its recently unveiled Energy East pipeline, a massive \$12-billion project that would make heavy use of an existing natural-gas main line that runs from Saskatchewan to Ontario. The 4,400-km pipeline would carry 1.1 million barrels a day of crude to refineries in Quebec and New Brunswick, eliminating their need to import more expensive foreign oil. Crude could also be shipped, via ports in Quebec City and Saint John, N.B., to refineries in the U.S., Europe or even China. "It's a bit farther off the east coast than the west coast to get it to Asia," TransCanada CEO Russ Girling said recently. "But it can be competitive in certain circumstances."

With the public spotlight focused on two controversial projects—the Keystone XL and Enbridge's \$5.5-billion Northern Gateway pipeline, which would connect the oil sands to a shipping terminal on the B.C. coast—many assume land-locked oil-sands producers will be forced to dial back plans to boost production to 3.2 million barrels a day by 2020, up from 1.8 million barrels now. But the industry has begun to pivot in the face of opposition—focusing more on expanding and repurposing existing infrastructure, while increasing focus on pipeline politics, as opposed to pure economics, when developing future projects.

The official line on Energy East from TransCanada's Girling is that it's "completely independent" from the fate of Keystone XL, but those who follow the industry argue the dark clouds hanging over other pipeline projects have raised this one's importance. "It's absolutely a Plan B," George Hoberg, a professor at the University of British Columbia (UBC), says of Energy East. "The interest in that project, especially from governments, only increased after Keystone and Northern Gateway ran into trouble."

At present, most of Alberta's oil flows to the U.S. Midwest, where, earlier this year, the so-called "pipeline crossroads of the world" in Cushing, Okla., was swamped with crude, thanks to a boom in hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," of U.S. shale deposits. With insufficient pipeline capacity to move all that oil to refineries, the spot price for West Texas intermediate (WTI) oil at one point fell nearly \$23 below the more global Brent price. A further discount applied to Western Canada select, which is the grade produced by oil-sands producers—a situation Alberta Premier Alison Redford dubbed a "bitumen bubble."

New U.S. pipeline projects such as Enbridge's Seaway pipeline expansion, between Cushing and Freeport, Texas, have helped to clear the glut—the "spread" between WTI and Brent is now just \$2, although Western Canada select remained about \$16.75 below WTI in the second quarter—but any respite could prove short-lived, as North American production continues to ramp up. "Think of these as energy highways with limited capacity," says Brenda Kenny, the president of the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association. "With Canadian oil production moving up by three million barrels per day over the next 20 years, you're going to need more lanes to move it."

The challenge is figuring out new and inventive ways to shepherd all those new projects through an increasingly complex approval process. "There's a lot more scrutiny on pipeline companies and the projects we're trying to get done," says Enbridge's Yu. "So when we're out talking to customers now, we tell them the timelines necessary to get a project completed today are a lot longer than they were historically"—up to seven years, instead of three to four years previously. But even that might not be enough time. Enbridge's Northern Gateway project was launched in 2006 and is still considered by many analysts to be a long shot. Meanwhile, TransCanada's Keystone XL, first proposed in 2008, dangles in regulatory limbo. Obama's recent remarks to the New York Times about Canada's inaction on climate change suggest he may not approve the project. (Obama killed an earlier version of the Keystone XL in the run-up to the 2012 election amid pressure from the green lobby.) Yu says the reason Enbridge's Eastern Gulf Access pipeline hasn't drawn similar attention is because relatively few permits are required to build it, dramatically limiting the opportunity for public input. "A 100 per cent U.S. project has a much different permitting scope than a cross-border one," he says, adding that Enbridge constantly evaluates its existing network to see where improvements can be made, either by increasing capacity or repurposing under-used lines. Another example is Enbridge's Line 9 reversal and expansion project, which would move Canadian oil eastward from North Westover, Ont., to refineries in Montreal, instead of pumping imported overseas oil west to refineries in Sarnia, Ont.

In an upcoming paper in the journal *Canadian Public Policy*, UBC's Hoberg argues that, in the current environment, the only pipeline projects that stand any chance of succeeding are ones that, like Eastern Gulf Crude Access, minimize "institutional veto points"—any junctures at which government or regulatory

bodies are able to kill a project. A successful pipeline must also do more to match the tradeoff between risks and benefits for local communities along its route. By that measure, he argues TransCanada's proposed Energy East project stands the best chance of success. Much of the pipeline is in the ground through Western Canada and Ontario, leaving most new construction in Quebec and New Brunswick—the same provinces where local refineries will benefit. "You've got the pipeline jobs, construction jobs and then longer-term jobs, since those refineries can access a lower cost of crude," says TransCanada spokesperson Shawn Howard.

By contrast, Hoberg suggests that the most risky projects are Enbridge's Northern Gateway pipeline and Kinder Morgan's \$5.4-billion Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, which would triple the flow of oil-sands crude moving between Edmonton and B.C.'s Lower Mainland to 890,000 barrels per day. Though neither requires the approval of a foreign government, and both are among the shortest in length, they face opposition from B.C. First Nations who have the ability to torpedo a project by tying it up in court. Both pipelines are also seen to pose an outsized risk to B.C.'s lush coastal environment while providing relatively few new jobs in the province, argues Hoberg, who has spoken out against the Northern Gateway project.

It says something about the current political climate surrounding oil-sands development that the industry's most promising pipeline projects are also the longest and most expensive. That may be why Prime Minister Stephen Harper spoke in favour of TransCanada's Energy East plans, saying during a recent visit to the Irving Oil refinery in Saint John that it would boost Canada's "energy security."

But just because Energy East may be more politically palatable doesn't guarantee its success. Quebec Premier Pauline Marois has said she's keeping an open mind about the project, but her province has already taken a hard line against fracking and is still dealing with the fallout of the train explosion in Lac Mégantic. "Quebec's not a province that normally wants to buy into Canadian nation-building ideas," Hoberg says. "It also has a long history, and very intense recent history, of dramatic protests once mobilized."

That hasn't happened yet, but Enbridge's Yu is quick to remind people Northern Gateway seemed promising out of the gate, too. "The amount of opposition we had was initially pretty limited," he says. "Then we filed our regulatory application."

Article link: <http://www2.macleans.ca/2013/08/21/pumped-to-find-another-way/>

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8. Rare bobcat spotted in Cape Cod

August 22 The Associated Press

Wildlife officials confirm that a video shows the animal not seen on the Cape in centuries.

FALMOUTH, Mass. – A bobcat has been spotted on Cape Cod for the first time in centuries, according to state and local wildlife experts who reviewed a video shot by a Falmouth man earlier this month.

Chris LeBoeuf spotted an animal about the size of a small to medium dog when he was returning home at about midnight on Aug. 9. The animal disappeared into the woods when he drove in, but then it came back out, and stood on top of a rock wall about 8 to 10 feet from LeBoeuf's car.

"Very quietly, I pulled out my phone," he said, and made a half-minute video.

When the cat turned to leave, LeBoeuf saw the little tail, and he realized he saw "some sort of exotic cat."

State and local wildlife officials later took a look and confirmed that it was a bobcat, which haven't been seen on Cape Cod since Colonial times.

A black bear caused a stir on the Cape last year before it was captured and relocated to the western part of the state. It was the first time in memory a black bear had been seen in the region.

Jason Zimmer, director of the southeast district of the state fisheries and wildlife division, tells the Cape Cod Times it's unclear how the cat made it across the Cape Cod Canal. It's unlikely it swam across, and more likely that it crossed one of the two bridges from the mainland.

"It's exciting to see wild animals like bears and bobcats returning" Zimmer said.

Since the Aug. 9 video, staff from Falmouth's Marine and Environmental Services placed cameras around LeBoeuf's neighborhood to capture more bobcat video, so far unsuccessfully, said deputy director Chuck Martinsen.

The estimated statewide bobcat population is about 1,200 to 1,300.

Article link: http://www.pressherald.com/news/bobcat-spotted-in-cape-cod-community_2013-08-23.html

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9. Letter to Congress Supporting Wildlife and Conservation Grant Programs

26 August 2013

[Date inserted Here]

The Honorable Jack Reed, Chairman
Senate Interior & Environment Appropriations Subcommittee
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Ranking Member
Senate Interior & Environment Appropriations Subcommittee
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Simpson, Chairman
House Interior & Environment Appropriations Subcommittee
2312 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Jim Moran, Ranking Member
House Interior & Environment Appropriations Subcommittee
2252 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Senators Reed and Murkowski & Congressmen Simpson & Moran:
On behalf of the millions of outdoor recreationists our organizations represent, we wish to express our support for the State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program, North American Wetlands Conservation Fund, Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, Forest Legacy Program and Land and Water Conservation Fund. We are concerned that the House Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee proposed to eliminate funding for these successful and important fish and wildlife conservation programs next fiscal year. Elimination of funding will have significant impacts to collaborative on-the-ground conservation in communities nationwide resulting in more federal endangered species listings, fewer restored wetlands, further imperiled migratory birds, less protection for forests and other key habitats and diminished outdoor recreation opportunities.

We appreciate the need to reduce the size of the federal deficit and the difficult choices that you face. However, these programs are priorities and we believe they have done their fair share to help balance the budget after being cut by more than 25% in the last several years. Continued disproportionate cuts in the

current budget under consideration will further rollback conservation work that serves the national interests of fish and wildlife conservation, creation of non-exportable jobs and delivery of essential services such as clean water and air and storm protection to current and future generations.

Investments in natural resources conservation and outdoor recreation total less than 1% of all discretionary spending, a percentage that has been declining for decades. Grant programs represent an even smaller percentage of this total but are unique in that they leverage hundreds of millions in state, local and private dollars. According to the US Census Bureau, 90 million US residents participate in fish and wildlife recreation, spending over \$150 billion annually. Federal grant programs help ensure these consumers have sustainable fish and wildlife populations to view, hunt and fish.

We strongly encourage you to work in a bipartisan manner to find solutions to the budget problem that do not further harm successful and publicly supported conservation grant programs that help fuel the outdoor recreation economic engine. Thank you for your time & consideration.

Sincerely,

[Organizations inserted here]

To sign on to this letter, send an email with your organization's name and state to twintern@fishwildlife.org by Monday, September 9th.

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