



**The Mississippi Chapter of The Wildlife Society**  
2015 Annual Meeting  
Mississippi Museum of Natural Science  
Jackson, MS

*Special Thanks to Our 2015 Meeting Sponsors*



Weyerhaeuser





# Mississippi Chapter of The Wildlife Society

2015 Annual Meeting

Museum of Natural Science – Jackson, MS



## *President's Welcome*

On behalf of the executive board of the Mississippi Chapter of The Wildlife Society, welcome to the 2015 meeting. This year our board decided that we would concentrate our keynote address and workshop on an issue that poses challenges and opportunities to our profession: *Preparing Wildlife Professionals for a Changing World*. The wildlife profession is rapidly changing, and so are the stakeholders that we serve. While the traditional, game-animal-focused field biologist niche has become harder to find, the skills and techniques to serve that role are still needed, and the stakeholders that value game animals still pay most of the bills for conservation. Yet increasingly few new graduates have these historically-common skills, largely due to a shift in their own connections to nature.

Policy, communications and interdisciplinary studies are necessarily gaining ground in academia, but at a slower pace than needed to truly prepare the next generation of wildlife professionals for all they must face. Numbers of both stakeholders and managers interested in non-consumptive uses and non-game species are growing. In addition to traditional habitat management, wildlife managers must now deal with increasing numbers of invasive species, blurring lines between wildlife and livestock, dramatically changing demographics of user groups, a decreasing personal understanding of hunting and trapping, urban wildlife interactions, and ever-changing policies enacted by people who seldom understand the ramifications on wildlife and their habitats.

How can we prepare graduates with the tools they need for this changing profession? What skills do employers find lacking? How do current professionals adapt to their changing roles? This year's Mississippi Chapter of The Wildlife Society meeting will focus on trying to address some of these questions.

Andi Cooper

2015 President, Mississippi Chapter of The Wildlife Society

## *Plenary*

### **Conservation Wisdom – Passing It On In a Time of Necessity**

*Dr. Jeanne Jones, Professor, Mississippi State University*

Dr. Jeanne C. Jones is a professor of wildlife science in the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture at Mississippi State University where she has conducted research and taught courses in wildlife conservation, habitat management, and restoration for over 30 years. She is also a Certified Wildlife Biologist and Fellow of The Wildlife Society (TWS), and holds officer positions in TWS working groups.

She has won 9 university, regional, and national awards for excellence in teaching and advising, including the 2009 Outstanding Woman Faculty Award at MSU. Jeanne has been active with TWS and the Southeastern Section of TWS throughout her career and served as secretary-treasurer, president-elect, and president of the Southeastern Section TWS from 2000-2006. She currently serves as national representative and executive board member for organizations such as National Wildlife Federation and Mississippi Wildlife Federation.

Her research interests focus on restoration ecology, site reclamation, restoration and conservation of wetlands, and conservation and restoration of sensitive ecosystems and rare species' habitat. Faunal groups which are foci of her research include tortoises, turtles, anurans, salamanders, and forest-dwelling bats. She has worked extensively with integrated natural resource research and plan development with federal and state agencies, including Department of Defense, USDA Forest Service and Natural Resource Conservation Service, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Mississippi Department of Transportation, and Mississippi Army National Guard. She also authors popular articles on wildlife habitat management and native food plants, and has completed 2 books with co-authors on prairie restoration and wildlife habitat management. Jeanne is also script writer, co-producer, and host for Mississippi's Natural Resource Enterprises and Mississippi Natural Wonders, video and pod cast features. Jeanne is a professional illustrator and has completed illustrations for over 40 research notes, brochures, textbooks, and other publications. She has designed and completed logos for license plate designs for state organizations, and logos and conservation prints for non-governmental organizations and national and international symposia.



# Mississippi Chapter of The Wildlife Society

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Thursday September 24



8:00 **Registration Opens** – Coffee/Refreshments (Posters set-up)

9:25 **Welcome and Introduction**

9:30 **Keynote Address**

*Conservation Wisdom – Passing It On In a Time of Necessity*  
Jeanne Jones, Professor, Mississippi State University

10:15 **Break and Meet the Keynote - Question and Answer Session**

10:35 **Mississippi Conservation Organizations Invited Talks**

10:35 *Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks*  
Ed Penny, Director of Conservation Programs

10:50 *USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service*  
Kevin Nelms, Area Wildlife Biologist

11:05 *US Fish and Wildlife Service*  
James Austin, Private Lands Biologist

11:20 *Mississippi Bat Working Group*  
Kathy Shelton, Vice Chair

11:35 **Lunch** – On your own

1:00 **Student/Professional Presentations**

1:00 *Landscape-abundance relationships of eastern wild turkeys in Mississippi*  
Annie Davis, student MSU

1:20 *Understanding wildlife value orientations of Mississippians for more effective and inclusive wildlife conservation*  
Adam T. Rohnke, MSU Extension Service

1:40 *Estimation of deer damage to soybean production in Mississippi: a spatial and temporal context*  
Gathel C. Hinton, student MSU

2:00 *Connecting conservation practitioners to large landscape data through a conservation planning atlas*  
Kristine O. Evans, Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks Landscape Conservation Cooperative

2:20 *Shorebird use of wetlands and aquaculture ponds in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley and Gulf Coast region*  
Justyn R. Foth, student MSU



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

November 1 - 4, 2015 • Asheville, North Carolina  
Conference Theme: *Conserving Large Landscapes*



# Mississippi Chapter of The Wildlife Society

2015 Annual Meeting

Thursday September 24 (continued)



- 2:40 **Break** – Last time to set-up posters
- 3:00 **Workshop**  
*Preparing Wildlife Professionals for a Changing World* – Panel discussion with  
*Tom Moorman* – Ducks Unlimited                      *Ed Penny* – MDWFP  
*Jim Miller* – MSU Extension                              *Jeanne Jones* – MSU Professor  
*Kris Godwin* – USDA Wildlife Services
- 5:00 **Adjourn** (voting closes) – For those that want to, take their cars to the Hilton and ride vans back.
- 5:20 **Vans from Hilton back to Museum for those that want a DD**
- 5:30-8:00 **Social in the Museum Pavilion** – Vans, food and drink provided. *Bring your guitar or other instrument for a jam session!*
- 6:00 **Sam Riffell Award presentation**
- 7:30-8:00 **Vans back to Hilton** (everyone must be gone from Museum property by 8:00)
- 8:00-until **After-Social in the Port Gibson Room – Hilton Jackson** – *Bring guitars for more music.*

## Friday, September 25

- 8:00 **Registration** – Coffee/Refreshments
- 8:15 **Invited Talks**
- 8:15 *Mississippi Museum of Natural Science*  
Matt Roberts, Research Coordinator
- 8:30 *Mississippi Wildlife Federation*  
Brad Young, Executive Director
- 8:45 *Supplemental Feeding and Baiting*  
Jim Miller, MSU Extension Service
- 9:00 **Break and Poster Session** - Presenters must be present from 9:00-9:30 for judging.
- 9:30 **Business Meeting**
- 10:30 **Professional Presentations**
- 10:30 *A case of bats in town*  
Kris Godwin, USDA APHIS Wildlife Services
- 10:50 *A comprehensive assessment of wild hog damage to Mississippi*  
Jessica Tegt, Mississippi State University Extension Service



The Wildlife Society's 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

OCTOBER 17-21, 2015

[www.wildlifesociety.org](http://www.wildlifesociety.org)



# Mississippi Chapter of The Wildlife Society

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Friday September 25 (continued)

11:10 *Connecting the public with ecological science*  
Leslie Burger, Mississippi State University Extension Service



11:30 **Awards and Closing Remarks/ Adjourn**

## *Special Thanks to Our Sponsors!!*

*We truly appreciate the loyal support of our meeting sponsors and those that donated items for the meeting. Please take a moment to thank their representatives during the meeting.*

