

The Alaskan Wildlifer

Newsletter of the Alaska Chapter of the Wildlife Society

Fall Issue - September 2016



Message from President Scott Brainerd

As you may recall from my last installment, the annual meeting this year was ‘rescued’ by students, graduate and undergraduate alike. Without their participation, the meeting would not have been nearly as successful. I was impressed by the quality of their presentations and found the youthful enthusiasm contagious. I thought back to when I was a member of the UAF Student Chapter (1976-1981), laconically known at the time as the UAF ‘Hunting Club’. We were a small group, almost entirely male-dominated (mostly scruffy guys with baseball caps and beards). I wouldn’t say that we were ‘low energy’, but activities were pretty limited compared to what I see the Student Chapter is involved in now. Sure we had the game banquet every year, and met once every month or two with an invited speaker. But not much else went on, that I can recall. Although the Alaska Chapter was founded in 1971, I do not remember any undergraduates in the Student Chapter attending annual meetings, although it may have happened.

Scroll forward 40 years, with annual chapter meetings and active student members from the University of Alaska system (Fairbanks, Anchorage, Juneau) and Alaska Pacific University, and things

are quite different than they were back then. Without doing a head count, it is easy to see that there is greater (graduate and undergraduate) student participation. The proportion of young women students is also impressive compared to forty years ago!

The only TWS Student Chapter in Alaska is at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks (UAF), and it is quite an active group. Check out their website here: <https://sites.google.com/site/uafwildlife/home>. They have indicated a real interest in attending and eventually hosting a conclave. Student conclaves are held annually in most of the TWS sections. The TWS website states these events provide “college students with valuable hands-on training in wildlife management and conservation, and networking opportunities with wildlife professionals. Some activities include field trips, workshops (e.g., telemetry, trapping, chemical immobilization, mist-netting), field competitions, local tours, game-calling competitions, quiz bowls, banquets, photography contests, and guest speakers”. More information on conclaves can be found here: <http://wildlife.org/next-generation/annual-conclaves/>.

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President's Message - Continued



Members of the UAF Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society at the 2015 TWS Annual Meeting in Anchorage. From left, back row: Crystal Alexander, Jocelyn Brady, Jessica Herzog, and Haley Heniff. Front row: Elise Stacy, Adam Habernaski, and Karen Biondich.

The Northwest Section of TWS (comprised of state chapters in Alaska, Montana, Idaho, Washington State, and Oregon) has not held a stand-alone annual meeting or student conclave in recent years. However, the Western Section of TWS is quite active and is planning a conclave sometime in 2017 (date and place TBA). In the future, the Northwest Section may hold its own conclave; as President-Elect of the NW section, it is on my agenda to explore this possibility.

For the foreseeable future, Alaskan students will have to set their sights on attending conclaves held by the Western Section. However, I hope that by the time UAF is ready to host its own conclave, it will be a NW Section event. I should mention here that conclaves do not occur at the same time as annual state chapter or section meetings. These are separate events planned and attended by students.

While students in the Lower 48 can pile into a van and drive cross-country to another state to participate in a conclave, this is not practical for our Alaskan contingent. Thus, costs for participating in these events will be substantial for students wishing to attend. Although I expect the UAF Student Chapter will stage fundraising events to offset costs, it is reasonable for the Alaska Chapter to also subsidize student participation, in my view. Insofar as helping to finance conclaves, the national organization provides a \$1,000 grant for each conclave. The Northwest Section may also be able to provide some support for

conclaves, since the membership dues have now been increased from \$10 to \$15, with the intent of increasing activity and engagement with the member chapters.

On that note, I encourage Alaska Chapter members to consider joining the NW Section, as greater membership can enhance its role as a facilitator of interaction between member chapters. Back in the day, the NW Section hosted some pretty awesome regional meetings, including the “Old Growth Symposium” at the Baranof Hotel in Juneau in 1982. A total of 225 professionals attended that meeting, which I remember well as I helped run the slide projector for the 46 oral presentations. As a graduate student at the University of Montana in Missoula, I also attended NW Section meetings in Spokane (1983) and Coos Bay (1986) and presented results from my research on bobcats and lynx at the latter; both were well-attended with good student participation. It is my hope that we



President's Message - Continued

can revive those through increased participation by members of state chapters. Increased membership in the NW Section can also help fund regional initiatives, including conclaves and stand-alone section meetings and symposia.

So how can the Alaska Chapter help our UAF Student Chapter achieve its goal? In addition to Student Chapter fundraising events, the Alaska Chapter may be able to contribute with travel awards for students that wish to attend out-of-state conclaves. In addition, we may also be able to provide a subsidy for an Alaskan student conclave. To be in a position to help students meet their goals, we will need to increase our coffers. During our executive board teleconference in June, we discussed ways to generate chapter revenue. These included both increasing membership and different fundraising initiatives. We could raise funds through auctions, raffles, or selling merchandise. We could also solicit monetary support from businesses or agencies. We may also seek donations of airline tickets from air carriers to facilitate travel of students or speakers. In addition, we may be able to get Alaskan tour operators or sporting goods companies to donate high quality items such as trips, tours, guns, outdoor gear, etc. for raffles or auctions. After the meeting, I polled other state chapters in the NW Section, and their strategies were similar to the ones mentioned. I noted that some student chapters take on jobs as a group, such as doing yard work or clean-up projects, etc. State chapters can match student funding for travel costs to national meetings or conclaves. A multi-pronged effort, where the state and student chapters both seek to raise money, should be encouraged and coordinated.

Many of us have active or retired colleagues that are not presently chapter members. I ask that you all talk to them and encourage them to join us! The larger we are, the stronger we are! I encourage the UAF Student Chapter to continue their efforts for raising revenue to achieve their goals. Our Board will pursue various avenues for funding, including business and agency donations of money and/or auction items. We should

also consider selling merchandise in a cost efficient manner. If you are like me, you enjoy wearing a t-shirt or hat, or drinking from a coffee mug with the TWS Alaska Chapter logo! Hey, we're cool and we like to show it, right?

Please feel free to contact us at twsalaska@gmail.com if you have ideas or suggestions for increasing our coffers so we can encourage and support our Student Chapter. And, if any of you students are interested in forming student chapters at UAA, UAS or Alaska Pacific, please let us know!

Join or renew memberships

New memberships and renewals are available on-line at The Wildlife Society (www.wildlife.org/alaska/). Click on membership to obtain membership forms.

Look for us on Facebook!

You can "like" us on Facebook! On our Facebook page, we are posting information on scientific publications relevant to Alaska's wildlife, announcements of upcoming meetings, and job openings. If you have ideas on how we can most effectively use our Facebook page, contact the Executive Board through the Chapter email: twsalaska@gmail.com



Regional News

Northern

Kerry Nicholson, Northern Representative

Personnel Changes

Kalin Kellie Seaton, Alaska Department of Fish and Game's (ADF&G) Division of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) R3 moose research biologist, left her position with ADF&G in August.

In July, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Wildlife Biologist, **Christopher Harwood**, defended his Master's thesis on the breeding ecology of Whimbrels on Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge.

Southcentral

John Trent, Southcentral Representative

Personnel Changes

Steve Machida, Anchorage Regional Supervisor for the ADF&G Region V, retired at the end of August.

Southeast

Kevin White, Southeast Representative

Personnel Changes

Rod Flynn, Wildlife Research Coordinator for the Southeast Alaska region of the ADF&G, Division of Wildlife Conservation, retired in August 2016 after 34+ years of service. Rod began his career conducting graduate research studying the recently (2015) extinct Sumatran Rhinoceros in Malaysia through the University of Montana and the Peace Corps. Shortly thereafter he started working for ADF&G-DWC in southeast Alaska. Rod initially worked as a wildlife research biologist specializing on marten and brown bear research, Tongass forest policy, and regulatory issues. More recently, he worked in a supervisory capacity and was involved in a variety of different research and policy topics, while continuing to stay actively involved in carnivore research. Rod and his wife, Cathy Connor, will continue to reside in Douglas,



TWS-Alaska Chapter Regions: Northern, Southcentral, and Southeast.

AK when not vacationing with family and friends in, most likely, warmer climates.

Kim Titus, Chief Wildlife Scientist for the ADF&G-DWC will be retiring in September 2016. Kim started his career in Alaska studying raptors in Denali National Park in the late-1980's. In 1989, he began his career with ADF&G-DWC conducting brown bear research on Admiralty and Chichagof islands, and later, goshawk research throughout southeastern Alaska. Such research was focused on acquiring much needed ecological field data for informing Tongass forest policy oriented towards ensuring population viability and conservation. Later in his career, Kim served in a variety of different policy, administrative, and supervisory positions at the regional and statewide level. Most recently, he has been working at the statewide level as a senior scientist – a multi-faceted position that has involved engagement in many different subjects, including serving as the state's representative for international polar bear conservation coordination. Throughout his career Kim has been an active member of The Wildlife Society at both the national and state levels. Kim has also mentored several graduate students working on subjects as diverse as black bears, seabirds, and raptors. Kim and his partner, Deb Rudis, plan to stay in Juneau following retirement, and will likely be found in close proximity to certain undisclosed locations known for good salmon fishing.



Regional News - Continued

Brown bear, bald eagle, and salmon research in Haines

A series of studies on bald eagles and brown bears led by **Rachel Wheat** has wrapped up following Wheat's completion of her PhD at the University of California, Santa Cruz. The research, which focused on examining regional movement of bald eagles in relation to seasonal resource availability and the influences of human activity on foraging activity of brown bears in the Chilkoot Valley was conducted by Wheat and her colleagues from 2012 - 2016. Bald eagles captured during the study on the Chilkat River near Haines traveled as far south as Vancouver Island, BC and as far north as the Peel River, YT. Late winter runs of eulachon on the Skeena and Nass Rivers, spring runs of Pacific herring in Sitka Sound and eulachon in Berners Bay, and autumn runs of coho and chum salmon on the Chilkat River all seem to be disproportionately important to the regional eagle population.



Brown bear and kayakers in Chilkoot Lake near Haines, Alaska. Recent research investigated the effects of human disturbance on brown bear activity patterns in order to inform management and conservation policy.

Brown bears feeding on summer and fall runs of sockeye, pink, and coho salmon in the Chilkoot watershed must contend with wildlife viewers,

photographers, and sport fishers for access to Chilkoot Lake and River.

Wheat's work with motion-detecting trail cameras and genetic analyses suggests a substantial proportion of the bear population in the lower Chilkoot Valley is being displaced from feeding sites during daylight as a result of human activity-- brown bears were almost strictly nocturnal in areas of Chilkoot Lake State Park with high human traffic, with the exception of a few highly habituated individuals-- which could ultimately hinder bears' ability to maintain adequate food intake. Dr. Wheat believes better management and oversight of visitor access to the area is needed to alleviate some of these effects.

Whale of a Feast

An adult humpback whale was found floating dead in Icy Strait on June 26, 2016 and towed to a nearby beach in Glacier Bay National Park (<https://www.nps.gov/glba/learn/news/dead-humpback-whale-found-afloat-near-point-carolus.htm>). Park biologist, **Tania Lewis**, placed a camera near the carcass that collected time-lapse and motion sensor activated images for almost two months. Eagles, ravens, gulls, and wolves have frequented the carcass for the duration of monitoring, but surprisingly no bears have been detected. These results are in stark contrast to observations made on a humpback whale carcass near Scidmore Cut in the west arm of Glacier Bay in the summer of 2010, during which brown bears were detected at the carcass every day for four months (Lewis and Lafferty 2014, *Ursus* 25:8-13). One possible reason is that the current whale carcass is located in an area surrounded by old growth forest with abundant salmon and berry resources, whereas the Scidmore Cut area was recently deglaciated and much of the uplands still covered in ice. It is likely a whale carcass is more important to bears in areas where other food resources are limited. Biologists will continue monitoring to see if black or brown bears eventually show up at the Icy Strait carcass, which is rapidly dwindling as birds and wolves continue to feast.



Fine-scale Habitat Selection by Wolverines on Alaska's North Slope

By Ross Dorendorf

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is leading efforts to assess wolverine habitat selection on the North Slope of Alaska. Director of WCS's Arctic Beringia Program, Dr. Martin Robards, initiated occupancy surveys in 2014 and 2015 in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) to gain perspective on the broad-scale habitat selection of wolverines. 2016 marks the first ground effort to broaden our understanding of the wolverine's fine-scale habitat selection near Umiat.

Fine-scale habitat selection includes where wolverines dig holes in snow for dens, food caches, day beds, etc. This is only the second major study of wolverines on the North Slope in the 35 years since project collaborator, Audrey Magoun, conducted her PhD work near the Utukok River in the late 1970s. The final piece of the project will build from engagement with local partners (e.g., the North Slope Borough) and traditional ecological knowledge for a local perspective on how wolverine distribution and abundance has changed over time.

Wolverines are currently being considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act in the contiguous United States due to climate change. Their habitat has been linked to persistent spring snow cover, but the exact nature of the relationship between animal and environment is uncertain. WCS researchers hope to understand this relationship further by investigating site selection and attributes for denning, caching, and establishing day beds, and discovering to what extent those conditions exist in the NPR-A.



Wolverine emerging from a hole to investigate the trail camera.

To this end, the Arctic Wolverine Ecology Project's 2016 pilot season has begun to shed light on what snow conditions wolverines prefer. Researchers used snow machines to travel overland from the Dalton Highway to the remote field camp of Umiat, where they spent a month and a half monitoring wooden box traps, hair-snare stations, and backtracking wolverines by snow machine and plane. The wolverines did not go into traps or approach hair-snares initially, but within a couple of weeks three wolverines were successfully trapped and collared. Two more wolverines were collared with assistance by an ADF&G helicopter team, for a total of 5 collared individuals at the end of April.

In addition to collar data, we collected 88 scats for diet analysis and documented over 40 (>1 m deep) holes dug into the snow by wolverines. These holes are crucial for protecting kits, avoiding predators, and escaping extreme weather, which is why WCS researchers are focusing their efforts on finding them. WCS aims to provide managers and policy makers



Wolverine habitat selection - Continued



Local concern for caribou and wolverines underscores the importance of these species as subsistence resources. WCS plans on analyzing scats to determine what proportion of the wolverine's diet is made up of caribou.

For the 2017 season, WCS plans to expand their study area within the NPR-A, collect scats for diet analysis, and continue locating snow-holes that wolverines use for many aspects of their lives on the North Slope.

Partners in the project include the Bureau of Land Management, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, University of Alaska-Fairbanks, North Slope Borough, and Northwest Arctic Borough. This research is part of WCS's Beringia program – a tri-national effort to protect one of the most productive marine areas and landscapes on the planet shared by the U.S., Canada, and Russia. The project is supported by the Wilburforce Foundation and the M. J. Murdock Charitable

Wildlife Conservation Society's Tom Glass holds the first adult male caught in the study area.

with information on fine-scale habitat preferences to ensure wolverines remain abundant on the North Slope. North Slope residents are keen to understand causes for the dramatic decline in caribou on their hunting grounds. The mechanism behind the decline is unknown, and wolverines are known as an ungulate dependent carnivore.

Trust as well as the Northwest Arctic and North Slope Boroughs.

For more information on this and other WCS projects in Alaska, Canada, and Russia, visit the Arctic Beringia Blog at arcticberingia.wordpress.com or <http://www.wcs.org>



Alaskans Celebrating Our Wildlife Conservation Heritage!

By Dick Shideler & K. L. Nicholson

The Wildlife Society has a program called “Celebrating Our Wildlife Conservation Heritage” (COWCH) that archives oral histories of members that have made important contributions to the field. As part of that effort, former AK TWS Chapter President Dick Shideler had the pleasure of interviewing Jack Lentfer, one of the pioneers of polar bear management, at the recent conference of the International Association for Bear Research & Management in Anchorage. Jack was a long-time biologist with Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and initiated much of the early work on research and management of polar bears in Alaska. He was one of the original members of the IUCN Polar Bear Specialist Group, an expert advisor for the 1973 international treaty “Agreement on the Management of Polar Bears,” and a member of the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission. Although he retired from ADF&G in 1982, he has remained involved in wildlife conservation issues.

To see the full Jack Lentfer interview (ca. an hour) [CLICK HERE](#) or visit <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0ByUdUZRZRWHIqi1mV0QzZzIDdFk/view>

We have established a webpage dedicated to Alaska’s COWCH Project with the goal to interview Alaska’s wildlife pioneers. We need your help to do it, if you know any Alaskan wildlife professionals (still in, or outside of Alaska) that would be ideal candidates to interview, or if you are interested in helping conduct interviews, please fill out the short survey at this link [Alaska COWCH Project Nominees](#) or visit <https://docs.google.com/a/fws.gov/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdxY5-P9j0gNrgbOD7InIFNNsTSwqzPH-0zwsIFxY2g7bq00g/viewform>. The survey will help us compile a list of people to focus interviewing efforts. We would greatly appreciate any assistance with conducting the interviews, particularly for those Alaskan pioneers who are no longer in state. If you are interested we will work with you to make the interview a success.



Retired ADF&G polar bear biologist Jack Lentfer conducts a COWCH interview with Dick Shideler.





Alaska Bird CONFERENCE

December 6-8 in Cordova, AK

Registration Now Open

<http://www.alaskabirdconference.org/registration/>

Two Key-Note Speakers

<http://www.alaskabirdconference.org/keynote-speaker/>



Call for abstracts open

<http://www.alaskabirdconference.org/presenters/>

Students invited to apply for travel awards

<http://www.alaskabirdconference.org/student-travel-award>

Seeking nominations for the Pete Isleib Award

<http://www.alaskabirdconference.org/asleib-award-for-avian-conservation/>

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Western Arctic Caribou Herd Update

By Lincoln Parrett

A population survey conducted earlier this summer places the Western Arctic caribou herd (WAH) at 201,000 animals, indicating the herd's recent rate of decline has eased greatly.

“The results of this photocensus imply that the population has continued to decline since 2013, albeit at a much reduced rate, which seems to be improving each year” said Caribou Biologist, Lincoln Parrett.

The summer survey supports information gathered earlier by state biologists indicating improved Western Arctic caribou herd calf recruitment and survival. Biologists and hunters at Onion Portage in 2015 observed that caribou were in very good condition compared to prior years with average body condition of adult females characterized as “fat.” Also, calf weights averaged 100 pounds, which is about 11 pounds heavier than the 2008-2014 average and is the highest average calf weight recorded in eight years since the department began collecting calf weights at Onion Portage.

In an aerial photocensus conducted on July 1, biologists used radio-collared animals to locate bands of Western Arctic herd caribou. A DeHavilland Beaver equipped with a Zeiss RMK-A camera, shooting 9 x 9” black and white film, and two smaller camera- equipped planes were employed in the count. The Beaver was used to photograph all groups of caribou greater than 200, while smaller groups were counted from the other planes. Afterward, the photographed caribou were tallied and added to those recorded in smaller groups.

Overwinter calf survival for the 2015 cohort of calves was 82 percent and the spring 2016 recruitment



A caribou from the western Arctic Herd, photo by Jim Dau

survey, with 23 yearlings:100 adults observed, was the highest calf recruitment into the population recorded since 2007. High calf survival rates are being mirrored in the adult female survival rate, which is on track to be among the highest recorded in this herd. Biologists documented near record calf production in 2016.

The July photocensus results come as the Federal Subsistence Board deliberates on a Special Action request by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to reverse the board's April decision to close caribou hunting on federal lands in Game Management Unit 23 to all but federally qualified subsistence users. The closure, which went into effect July 1, 2016, is scheduled to continue through June 30, 2017.

State and federal advisory committees will be meeting this fall prior to January's Board of Game meeting. The Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group – a cooperative body that meets regularly to reach consensus on research, monitoring, regulation, allocation and enforcement, and to support education about the herd – will meet in December to discuss successful ways to keep the herd healthy and thriving. This new information will be essential to discussions



Western Arctic Caribou Herd Update - Continued

about future management of the herd and how the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Cooperative Management Plan will be implemented.

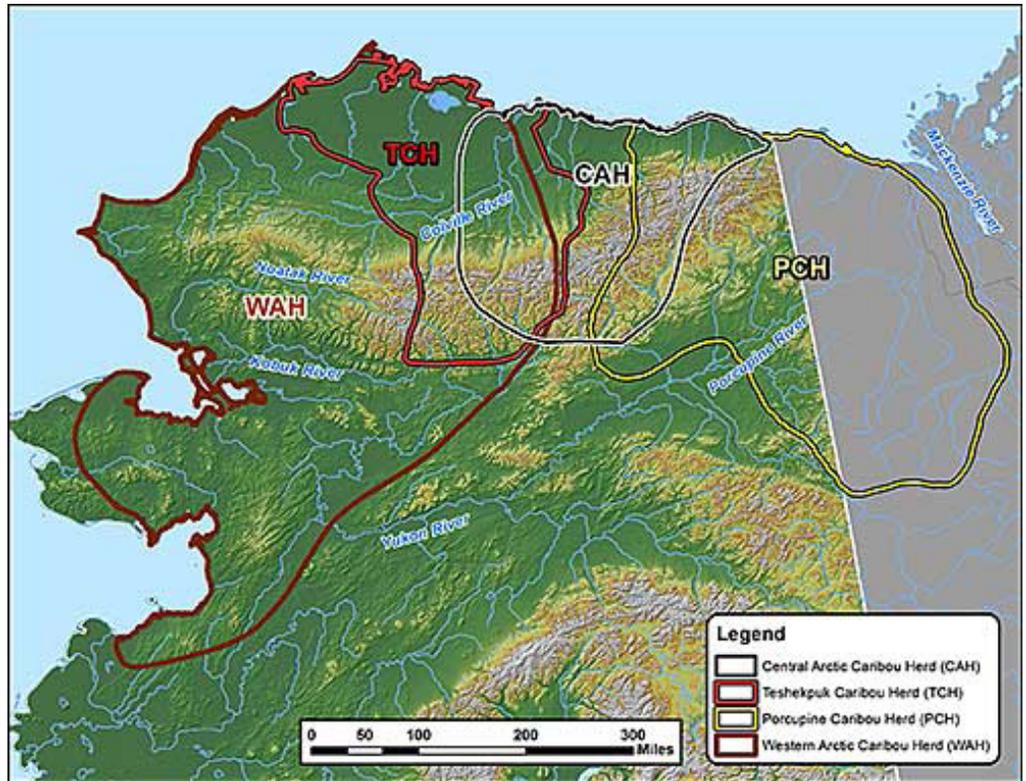
The Western Arctic caribou herd is Alaska's largest caribou herd. The animals roam an area of about 157,000 square miles that includes many landowners and management entities. Caribou availability and abundance has largely shaped the heritage and traditions of Native Alaskans living in some 40 subsistence-based communities region-wide.

Four caribou herds have their calving areas on the North Slope. In addition to the WAH, the area is home to the Teshekpuk Caribou Herd, the Central Arctic Herd, and the Porcupine Caribou Herd.

The Porcupine Caribou Herd was most recently photographed on July 14, 2013. Caribou were widely distributed, with a large number in the Richardson Mountains in Canada, and the remainder in the eastern Brooks Range. The estimate for the Porcupine Caribou Herd was over 197,000, which is the highest ever observed for that herd.

The Teshekpuk Caribou Herd was estimated at approximately 41,500 caribou in 2015. In July 2013, the Central Arctic Herd was estimated at 50,000 caribou. A photocensus was conducted in July 2016 and an estimate will be available by the end of the year.

Caribou herds mix, especially during the fall and winter. Genetic studies show that of the four North



The ranges of northern Alaska Caribou herds, from west to east (into Canada): Western Arctic Herd (WAH), Teshekpuk Caribou Herd (TCH), Central Arctic Herd (CAH), and Porcupine Caribou Herd (PCH).

Slope caribou herds, only the WAH and Porcupine Caribou Herd, the western- and easternmost of the four herds, show genetic differentiation. This is not surprising considering that the ranges of these herds overlap during breeding season, or rut. In recent years the degree of mixing appears to be increasing, and many caribou that are mingled in the winter end up migrating with a different herd in spring. In the summer of 2013, almost 20 percent of the collared Teshekpuk Caribou Herd wintered in parts of the WAH range, and were with the WAH during the WAH photocensus. Similarly, the 70,000 caribou that were counted during the 2013 Central Arctic Herd photocensus included ten Porcupine Caribou Herd collars, which could represent as many as 20,000 caribou.

During the early 2000s, the number of caribou summering on the North Slope peaked at over 700,000 animals, perhaps the highest number since at least the



WAH Update - Continued



Caribou biologist Jim Dau (now retired) and biologist and pilot Tom Seaton plan a flight with the department's beaver to survey the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. Photo by Geoff Carroll.

1970s. At that time, it was relatively rare for caribou to mix or migrate with other herds, either permanently or temporarily. If the large number of caribou in the late 1990s and 2000s had a negative impact on their ranges through overgrazing, caribou may be searching for new areas, increasing the degree of mixing between herds. Perhaps mixing will decrease as herds become smaller, but for now it is an issue that affects estimates of caribou abundance. For more information, contact Lincoln Parrett at (907) 459-7366 or lincoln.parrett@alaska.gov.



Caribou from the western Arctic Herd scattered across the tundra. Aerial photo by Geoff Carroll.

Regional News - Continued

Mountain goat population genetics research

A mountain goat population genetics research project was recently initiated by Aaron Shafer (Trent University) and the ADF&G (Kevin White, Gretchen Roffler, and others). Aaron previously conducted his PhD research on mountain goat genetics in North America, with special emphasis on Alaska. The current project will utilize microsatellite and genomic methods to analyze over 1,500 archived tissue samples collected throughout Alaska since 2005. One goal of the project is to characterize mountain goat population structure throughout Alaska in order to assess how geographic barriers influence gene flow and population isolation.



Male mountain goat near Burnett Mountain on the lower Cleveland Peninsula, near Ketchikan. This photograph was taken while researchers collected mountain goat genetic samples, including from fecal pellets, to understand population structure and gene flow. Cleveland Peninsula mountain goats have particularly large horns, relative to other statewide populations – a characteristic that may have a genetic basis.

Since mountain goats have high site fidelity and very specialized habitat requirements, such research is expected to assist management and conservation by identifying appropriate units of conservation. A long term goal of Aaron Shafer's research program (though not explicitly part of the current project) is to sequence the mountain goat genome; an endeavor that will significantly enhance our capabilities to understand mountain goat population characteristics



In Memoriam - George Curtiss West

By Ellen West

On Aug. 31, 2016, my beloved husband, Dr. George Curtiss West, passed away. He was born in Newton, Massachusetts, on May 13, 1931. He is survived by his wife of 36 years, Ellen L. West.



He attended Vermont Academy in Saxtons River, Vermont, for high school and started his college years first at Middlebury, Virginia, finishing with a bachelor's degree in biology in 1953. He received a master of science in zoology from University of Illinois, Champaign Urbana in 1956 and doctorate degree in physiological ecology in 1958. In 1959, he was awarded a postdoctoral research fellowship in the Division of Biosciences at University of Rhode Island, where he taught for three years.

The event that shaped his future was an invitation in 1963 to assist in the formation of the Institute of Arctic Biology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, where he spent 21 years conducting research on cold adaptations of flora and fauna unique to the arctic tundra.

He traveled extensively during his years in research and published many key scientific reports. In the late 1970s, he moved into administration, first as acting director of the Institute of Arctic Biology and acting dean of the College of Biological Sciences. In 1981, he was appointed vice president of academic affairs, at the University of Alaska. In 1984, he was awarded professor of zoophysiology emeritus and retired.

His retirement years were made up of many activities dear to his heart. He and his wife retired to Homer, where, in 1988, he was elected to the Board of Directors of the Homer Society of Natural History, which operates the Pratt Museum.

For the next 10 years, he wore many hats during his volunteer work at the Pratt Museum. In 1996, he and Ellen moved to Green Valley, Arizona. His love of all natural surroundings, his years of avid bird watching and his desire to volunteer in the community led him to the Friends of Madera Canyon. He served with the Friends from 1998 as a board member and too many other functions to mention.

At the same time, he co-founded the Hummingbird Monitoring Network through 2009, having banded more than 14,000 hummingbirds, captured and released in the surrounding area.

He led a full life in research, published a number of books and was widely recognized in the birding community as "the George West." His beautiful artwork and a list of his publications are available on his website, birchsidestudios.com.

He is survived by his wife, Ellen; his four sons, Mark Curtiss, George Randall, Andrew Pendl, and Frederick Worthing; his stepson, Levi S. Nilsson; brother Worthing L. West (Winger); and five grandchildren: Curtiss Allen, Brian Michael, Evan Andrew, Kai Robben, and Mia West.

He focused throughout his life on the need to conserve and preserve our natural habitats. Toward this end, a donation in his name to Friends of Madera Canyon, P.O. Box 1203, Green Valley, AZ 85622, Scholarship Fund, would be greatly appreciated.

Please visit www.legacy.com/obituaries/newsminer to sign an online guest book. - See more at: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/newsminer/obituary.aspx?n=george-west&pid=181392393#sthash.SuSZQOPS.dpuf>



Upcoming Meetings - Mark Your Calendar!

**The Waterbird Society 40th Anniversary Meeting –
New Bern, North Carolina**

September 20-23, 2016

<https://waterbirds.org/annual-meeting/>

**Western Field Ornithologists Annual Conference -
Humboldt County, California**

September 28-October 2, 2016

<https://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/conference.php>

**First International Trout Congress – Bozeman,
Montana**

October 2-6, 2016

<http://troutcongress.org/>

**46th Annual Symposium on Bat Research – San
Antonio, Texas**

October 12-15, 2016

<http://www.cvent.com/events/nasbr2016/event-summary-6fce7b2106d14e00aa14ba72fccbc276.aspx>

**The Wildlife Society Annual Conference – Raleigh,
North Carolina**

October 15-19, 2016

<http://wildlife.org/tws-23rd-annual-conference/>

**Annual Meeting of the Raptor Research
Foundation – Cape May, New Jersey**

October 16-20, 2016

<http://www.raptorresearchfoundation.org/conferences/current-conference>

**First Alaskans Institute Youth and Elders
Conference – Fairbanks, Alaska**

October 17-19, 2016

<http://firstalaskans.org/leadership-development/elders-youth-conference/2016-conference/>

**Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife
Agencies Annual Conference – Baton Rouge, LA**

October 16-19, 2016

<http://www.seafwa.org/conferences/2016/index.html>

**43rd Natural Area Conference – UC Davis, Davis,
California**

October 18-21, 2016

<http://www.cafiresci.org/events-webinars-source/category/43rd-natural-areas-conference-climate-change-adaptation-and-natural-areas-management-turning-words-to-action>

**National Park Service – Centennial Science and
Stewardship Symposium - Fairbanks, Alaska**

October 19-20, 2016

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1349/symposium.htm>

**Western Regional Panel on Aquatic Nuisance
Species Annual Meeting – Jackson, Wyoming**

October 19-21, 2016

<https://www.fws.gov/answest/meetings.html>

Alaska Federation of Natives – Fairbanks, Alaska

October 22-22, 2016

www.nativefederation.org/annual-convention

**Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental
Management – Anchorage, Alaska**

October 24-28, 2016

<http://www.atcemak.com/>

**Alaska Invasive Species Workshop – Fairbanks,
Alaska**

October 25-27, 2016

www.alaskainvasives.org

Alaska Bird Conference – Cordova, Alaska

December 6-8, 2016

<http://www.alaskabirdconference.org/registration/>

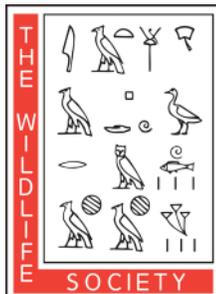


Recent Publications by TWS - AK Chapter Members

Where's the List of Member Publications?

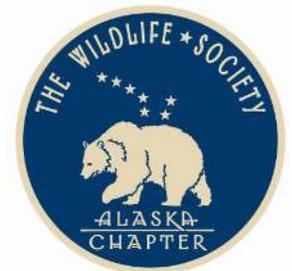
For the past several years I've compiled a list of recent scientific publications by Alaska Chapter members for inclusion in the newsletter. It's been fun and I've really enjoyed reading the diverse work by members. But, it's time to bring it to an end as there's now a better product available. Thanks to Nathan Jones at HDR, the Alaska Wildlife Research Listserv (AWRL) will send you a monthly list of recent scientific publications on Alaska's wildlife. I've subscribed to AWRL for the past several months and have found it timely and complete. It's a great way to keep up on recent publications that are of special interest to Alaskans. So, I encourage you to subscribe to AWRL by contacting nathan.jones@hdrinc.com. Also, if you or your colleagues publish a paper on Alaskan wildlife, please send a copy to Nathan for inclusion in AWRL. Thanks.

Jerry Hupp



ALASKA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

2017 ANNUAL MEETING
UAF Campus, Fairbanks, Alaska
April 4-6, 2017



SPECIAL SESSION SUGGESTIONS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society is beginning to organize events for the 2017 Alaska Chapter meeting to be held in Fairbanks in the spring of 2017 and we need your input! We are seeking ideas and suggestions for special sessions that TWS members would like to see at the upcoming meeting. In addition, if you would like to volunteer during the meeting please let us know. Please contact Nathan Svoboda (nathan.svoboda@alaska.gov) or Scott Brainerd (scott.brainerd@alaska.gov) for volunteer information and/or to submit suggestions for special sessions. Thank you and hope to see you at the meeting!



TWS Alaska Chapter Leadership

Your 2016-2018 Executive Board

President: Scott Brainerd, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, AK 99701, scott.brainerd@alaska.gov, phone (907) 459-7261, fax (907) 687-4527

President-Elect: Nathan Svoboda, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Kodiak Archipelago, nathan.svoboda@alaska.gov phone (907) 486-1863.

Past-President: Grant Hilderbrand, U.S. Geological Survey - Alaska Science Center, 4210 University Drive, Anchorage, AK 99508, ghilderbrand@usgs.gov, phone (907) 786-7076.

Secretary-Treasurer: Matt Sexson, USGS-Alaska Science Center, 4210 University Drive, Anchorage, AK 99508, msexson@usgs.gov, phone (907) 786-7177, fax (907) 786-7021.

Northern Representative: Kerry Nicholson, Alaska Department of Fish and Game - 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701, kerry.nicholson@alaska.gov, phone (907) 328-6117.

Southcentral Representative: John Trent, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Retired, PO Box 932, Kenai, AK 99611, jgtrent@acsalaska.net, phone 907-335-1943

Southeast Representative: Kevin White, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, P.O. Box 110024, Juneau, AK 99811, kevin.white@alaska.gov phone (907) 465-4102.

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Webmaster (non-voting): Dan Thompson, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, dan.thompson2@alaska.gov, phone (907)260-2953.

You can contribute. We need your story ideas. Help keep AK-TWS members connected.

Are you working on an interesting project you'd like to share with other Alaska TWS members? Do you have news to share with colleagues? Please make note of upcoming events, projects, personnel changes, issues, or anything else of interest to other Alaska TWS members, and pass them on to your regional representative for inclusion in our next quarterly newsletter. If you know of something that would make an interesting newsletter article and can't write it up yourself, please contact newsletter editor Kaiti Ott at kaithryn_ott@fws.gov or 907-456-0277.

Help us keep this newsletter interesting and informative!

