



The Student Chronicles

Newsletter from the SDWG

December 2013

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Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*) in Tatra National Park, Poland

Photo by: Ashley Gramza

Letter from the Chair

Greetings! I hope everyone had a great Fall semester. It's a great time of year as classes come to a close and we begin our Christmas vacation with family and friends. I would like to formally introduce myself for those who were unable to attend the 20th Annual–The Wildlife Society (TWS) meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin from October 5-10. My name is Andy Little and I'm serving as Chair of the Student Development Working Group. I received my B.S. degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from the Pennsylvania State University in 2006. After graduation, I worked for the Smithsonian Conservation and Research Center as an intern studying white-tailed deer ecology prior to accepting a graduate research assistantship at Mississippi State University (MSU). After completion of my M.S. in December 2011, I accepted a Ph.D. position at the University of Georgia (UGA) studying the spatial ecology of wild turkeys in a longleaf pine-dominated ecosystem. As Chair, my vision for the future of the Student Development Working Group is to maintain current opportunities offered while working with the other officers to develop new and creative ways for you to be fully prepared to step into the workplace.

As the end of another year approaches, the officers and I are hard at work preparing for next

year's meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (October 25-30, 2014...mark your calendars). We are currently evaluating each event we held this past year in Wisconsin to determine where we can improve for next year. In addition, we are considering what other events would be beneficial for you (students) and how you can become more involved in The Wildlife Society at the national-level. To better improve events that we create and/or sponsor, please contact us with your ideas. What would you like to see offered that wasn't offered in the past? How could we improve events held this past year? We want to help you become fully prepared to step into the workplace; therefore, communicating your ideas to us will ensure the success of future events at the annual TWS conference.

Communication...a key to success in many fields of study. George Bernard Shaw said it best: "the single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place." The officers and I have recognized that our message about the importance of becoming involved in the Student Development Working Group (SDWG) has not fully reached everyone. In addition, we want to make sure that you and your peers have at least heard about the SDWG and recognize the

benefits about being involved. As a quick reminder, the Working Group was developed to promote increased student awareness of TWS membership benefits, work to expand knowledge and technical capabilities of student members, and help prepare student members for professional wildlife careers. To ensure we make this happen, we will facilitate networking between you and experienced TWS members by hosting workshops, poster sessions, a mentoring program, student chapter leaders' breakfast, etc. These events are designed to advance your professional skills. Additionally, we always need help planning and organizing these events so if you want to become more involved in the TWS and network with professionals in the field of wildlife management, please do not hesitate to contact us. Again, we are here to serve you. Lastly, to make sure we get our message out this year, we plan to be using email, Facebook, Official Student Communication Network of TWS, and other news mediums to ensure you know what's going on throughout the year.

Thank you very much for your involvement in the Student Development Working Group! Please don't hesitate to contact the other officers or I with questions/comments. We are here to serve you and want to make sure you are well prepared professionally to step out of college into the workplace. Have a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year!
Andy Little, *Chair*

Graduate Funding Opportunities and How to Find Them



Chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*) in Tatra



Bird of Paradise

Photo by: Krysten Zummo

Funding for graduate school and research projects is often a point of stress for undergraduate and graduate students alike. For many, it seems like there is never enough funding to complete the project that you envision or to attend the school of your dreams. Although grant writing is a valuable skill required for any wildlife biologist or academic position, many students approach grant and fellowship writing with great apprehension. This doesn't need to be the case. With some solid advice, and a little practice, you too can write successful and compelling grant and fellowship applications.

Fellowships

Fellowships are often the most lucrative funding source available to undergraduates, graduate students, and post-doctoral researchers. Depending on the fellowship, these usually include salary and tuition. However, they sometimes provide funding for supplies, technicians, and travel costs to a field site or conference.

Here are some lucrative fellowships available in our field:

National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program (NSF-GRFP)

- Fellows benefit from a three-year annual stipend of \$30,000 along with a \$10,500 cost of education allowance for tuition and fees, opportunities for international research and professional development, and the freedom to conduct their own research at any accredited U.S. institution of graduate education they choose.
- You must apply for the funding before you start your second year of graduate education, but you can also ap-

ply before you are officially accepted to a program.

- Applications are due in November of each year.
- NSF provides the contact information for [former fellowship winners](#) at your institution so that you can ask them for advice on how to construct a competitive application.
- The general website for fellowship information is: http://www.nsfgrfp.org/how_to_apply

Environmental Protection Agency Science to Achieve Results Fellowship (EPA-STAR)

- Fellowship provides \$42,000 per year per fellowship. Master's level students may receive support for a maximum of two years for a total of up to \$84,000. Doctoral students may be supported for a maximum of three years for a total of up to \$126,000, usable over a period of five years.
- The general website for fel-



**Red Panda at the Bronx Zoo
Photo by: Krysten Zummo**

lowship information is:

- http://epa.gov/ncer/rfa/2013/2013_star_gradfellow.html
- You can't receive more than one fellowship from the national government. For example, you can't receive both an EPA-STAR and NSF-GRFP fellowship, but you can apply to both.

Grants and Scholarships

Grants and scholarships are a great way to get funding for field technicians, college costs, research supplies, and travel to field sites or conferences. However, each grant has different conditions for funding, so make sure you read the requirements carefully before applying. Although grants are usually smaller than fellowships, apply to as many as possible because a few \$100 or \$1,000 grants really add up. Plus, there are a multitude of organizations ranging from non-profit conservation organizations to college alumni associations that offer small grants and scholarships.

Below is some useful information about where to start your grant search.

- Check local non-profit conservation organization websites. For example, the Audubon Society of Greater Denver offers a \$2,500 dollar research grant for non-game wildlife through the Lois Webster Fund.
- Many college alumni associations offer scholarships and grants.
- Check with your college, university, or department for grants and scholarships they offer. Some university career centers or graduate schools even run grant writing workshops.
- Many professional wildlife and ecology societies offer research grants. For example, the American Society of Mammalogists (ASM) offers a number of Grants-In-Aid for costs associated with graduate research each year as well as other scholarships (listed at: <http://www.mammalsociety.org/applications>).

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Tips and Tricks: How to Write Successful Grants

We all need funding in order to complete our research and unfortunately funding is limited. Due to the limit of available funding, there is certain and unavoidable stress linked to writing and applying for grants. The key to successful grant writing is to recognize what each funding agency is asking for. By knowing some simple tips and tricks, you can tailor your grant applications in a way that will make your application more appealing. Here, we've compiled some of these tips and tricks with you in mind:

Apply early and apply often!

Many organizations provide feedback on grant proposals that weren't funded. They may even give you tips to become more competitive in subsequent funding years. If you do not get funded and the funding agency does not give you feedback, send them an email or call them to ask about why your application wasn't funded. It also never hurts to get involved with the funding organization by volunteering or attending regular meetings.

Emphasize the application and broader impact of your project.

- Include information such as:
- Why should anyone care about your project?
 - What difference do you hope to make?
 - Why do your results matter and how do they further wildlife conservation or your field of research?

Avoid jargon.

You may think everyone in the world knows what an ungulate is, but the truth is many grant reviewers are not wildlife biologists and might not even be

biologists at all. The more a reviewer can understand and relate to your project, the more likely you are to be funded. Consider this as good practice for writing popular scientific articles.

Keep it Simple.

The shorter and more succinct you can make your application, the better. Have a wide variety of people review your paper but remember to keep it simple and to the point. Any excess information may make the reviewer less interested.

Cater your application to the specific grant applied for.

Do not use the same proposal for each application. It is extremely important to modify



Urban mountain lion (Puma concolor) captured with trail Camera in Boulder, CO
Photo by: Ashley Gramza

your application for every separate submission, just like you would a resume. Your project may not be changing, but the specific needs and interests of the funding agencies will change. The most competitive applicants are ones that appeal to the needs of their funding sources.

Don't ask for the full funding amount if you don't need it.

When making a decision about how to best utilize their resources, funding organizations

sometimes make the decision to fund 2 smaller grants instead of one large one. They may also choose a smaller request when deciding between two equal applicants (although this is not always the case). Look at the organizations past funding choices to see what types of projects they are more likely to support. Whatever amount you request, make sure it is frugal and well justified.

Justify your budget.

Always make sure to properly justify your budget expenses and choose reasonably priced supply options. Exaggerated expenses are easily recognizable and are less likely to be funded.

Collaborate and integrate!

If you can bring in scientists from other disciplines to work on your project, especially the social sciences, do so. Funding agencies love collaborative and interdisciplinary projects (especially ones where other organizations provide matching funds).

Have colleagues edit your applications.

Have friends outside of the wildlife field, advisors, committee members, and colleagues edit your applications. Seek help from scientists who have a successful funding record. Again, the [NSF-GRFP website](#) has a list of students and professors from around the nation (listed by university and department) who are willing to help you with your application.

Written By: Ashley Gramza



Grand Teton National Park

Photo By: Krysten Zummo

“...If you do not get funded and the funding agency does not give you feedback, send them an email...”



Landscape in Tatra National Park, Poland

Photo by: Ashley Gramza



Caterpillar preparing for metamorphosis, Oregon.

Photo by: Krysten Zummo

“If there is one thing that we have learned...it’s that within the wildlife profession, everyone knows everyone.”



**Landscape in Tatra National Park, Poland
Photo by: Ashley Gramza**

It IS Who You Know!

It seems like people are always talking about the importance of networking while looking for a job, but what exactly is networking? How is it done? Does it really make a difference? Networking is defined as creating a group of acquaintances and maintaining that relationship for mutual benefit. Currently, you may be focused on obtaining a job or graduate position. Therefore, forming relationships allows colleagues and potential employers to obtain information on your character, your work ethic, and your passion for wildlife. Networking provides multiple benefits; people in your network alert you to career opportunities. They may also recommend you for a position.

By maintaining relationships, you build a network of individuals with expertise in various aspects of the wildlife field; everyone from the field technicians you work with to your federal agency employer can play a role in your future as a professional. Taking an interest in your relationship with these

people will give you the support necessary to take on any challenge you may face as a wildlife professional.

So where does networking begin? Your state TWS conference? Your professor’s office? A local volunteer event? The quick answer to each question is...yes...and more! There are hundreds of invaluable opportunities for you to network. If you are reading this article, you are already networking by being a member of The Wildlife Society.

When taking advantage of any networking opportunity it is important to be prepared. First, wear appropriate clothes for the event. This may mean business attire when at conferences and meetings or appropriate work clothes while on the job. Always remember to dress to impress! Second: be mentally prepared to talk about your interests. This requires a lot of thought into what truly interests you in the wildlife field. Leading with “I just love (insert favorite flora or fauna)” is not a

very productive way to network. Instead, ask questions about the research related to your interests. By discussing similar interests with professionals they are better able to provide advice and ideas about whom else you should meet. Third, always be professional when talking to other in the field. Most importantly, keep in touch with those contacts as time passes.

Networking is a crucial but difficult skill to master. This field is incredibly small, and networking is the first step in placing yourself in a strong position for your dream job. If there’s one thing we have both learned during our VERY short careers, it’s that within the wildlife profession, everyone knows everyone. Take every opportunity you can to network, whether it’s a volunteer day or an opportunity to talk with professionals. You never know where it can lead you.

Written By: Rob Wingard and Matt Gould

Graduate Funding Opportunities...Continued from Pg. 2

They also have a great resource that provides a list of fellowships and grants offered by other organizations that can be found at: [Mammal Society Grant](#). Many of the links are out-of-date but you can usually find the right link by searching for the grant name.

- Many professional organizations offer travel grants for students who are presenting at their conferences. In fact, the TWS Parent organiza-

tion, as well as numerous TWS Working Groups and Chapters, offer a number of travel grants to attend the TWS annual conference each year. Details regarding how to apply for these travel grants are listed at: <http://www.wildlife.org/professional-development/grants>. These grant applications are usually due in June. The most important thing to remember when applying for

grants, fellowships, and scholarships, is that you need to take the initiative to find and apply for them, the grants will not find you. Although many advisors and colleagues are more than happy to edit your applications, it is not their job to search for grant opportunities for you!

Written By: Ashley Gramza

20th Annual Conference Milwaukee, WI: Student Events

Behind the Scenes of Scientific Publication and Critical Review

Workshop

The SDWG sponsored, organized, and moderated a full-day workshop that provided training for graduate students and early career professionals. Instructors for the workshop stressed the importance of the review process, provided guidance on how to become more successful when writing and submitting your own research, and the review process that TWS editors and staff employ for the Journal of Wildlife Management and The Wildlife Society Bulletin. Many thanks to A.J. Kroll, Leonard Brennan, and Allison Cox for instructing the workshop and interacting with participants.

Uncertainty of an Undergrad Discussion Panel

The SDWG organized and moderated a discussion panel for undergraduates who had questions about their career choices. The panel was well attended, with more than 100 attendees during the session. Following the close of the session, discussion continued into the lunch break for more than 20 minutes. All involved viewed this discussion panel as a huge success.

Student Research-In-Progress Poster Session and Awards

Presentation

The SDWG coordinated over

100 student posters during the full-day poster session as well as he judging of 121 student presentations throughout the conference. The winners of the Student Poster session were: PhD: 1st-Alison Paulson, 2nd-Kristina Dunn, 3rd-(tie) Rebecca Kirby and Chris Latimer Masters: 1st-Christopher Bottom, 2nd-Alexander Cohen, 3rd-(tie) John Pokallus and Jeremy Dertien Undergraduate: 1st- Sloan Wiggers, Gillie Croft, and Cady Etheredge, 2nd-Julia Johnson and Rebecca Eckroad, 3rd-Sarah Weiskopf

The best student presentation was awarded to Brian Gerber. Honorable mentions were: Zach Farris, Lillie Langlois, and Krista Lewicki. The best student poster presentation (in the regular poster sessions) was Stephanie Prevost, and receiving honorable mentions were Caitlin Jacobs and Binab Karmacharya.

Student-Professional Mixer

The student-professional mixer was an amazing event with over 700 people in attendance. The mixer was organized by Student Activities Committee chairs Jason Suckow and David Drake of Wisconsin. It featured a "Wisconsin Tailgate" dinner and awarded prizes to students for answering trivia questions. Many TWS award winners were also in attendance, includ-

ing Tony Sinclair, winner of the Aldo Leopold Award, which made for memorable conversations with many students.

Student Chapter Leaders

Breakfast

Almost all student chapters present at the conference were in attendance, and had a great breakfast filled with conversation. Following breakfast, Ben Olsen, President of the Missouri Western State University Student Chapter, presented on the logistics of one of MWSU's volunteer projects. Following Ben's presentation, the group discussed various issues faced by student chapters, with emphasis on recruiting and retaining members, raising money for chapter activities, and general thoughts on how best to lead a student chapter.

We are already making plans for next year's conference and welcome your thoughts about how we can improve the student experience at the conference. What opportunities should be offered again? How can we improve? Let us know on the [OSCN](https://www.wildlifesociety.org/oscns) or email us at students@wildlifesociety.org.

Thank you to all Student Development Working Group members who attended and helped organize all of these great events!

Kent Fricke, *Past-chair*



Kincaid's Lupin in Oregon

Photo By: Krysten Zummo

News From Your Conclaves!

The Student Wildlife Conclaves are special annual events that allow wildlife students to gain field experiences, meet other students with similar interests, and represent your school in fun and exciting competitions. For those of you who haven't yet

attended a conclave, here is an idea of what types of fun events held this past year:

Southeastern:

Hosted by the North Carolina State University Student Chapter from March 7-10th, the

Southeastern Conclave was attended by 22 schools and nearly 350 students. The Conclave was held at the Hampton Inn Hotel and conference Center in Southern Pines, NC and the Camp Millstone 4-H Center. The weekend's activities in-



Sunrise in the Coast Range Mountains of Oregon

Photo by: Krysten Zummo

**STUDENT
DEVELOPMENT
WORKING GROUP
WEBPAGES**

- [SDWG Website](#)
- [TWS Official Website](#)
- [Official Student Communication Network](#)
- [Facebook](#)

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If you have ideas for future newsletter articles or comments on this newsletter, please e-mail Kent Fricke at Kent-Fricke1@gmail.com.



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News from your Conclaves (Continued from page 5)

cluded a 22 team double-elimination quiz bowl and a 23-station team field competition to test physical, intellectual, and artistic skills and talents. Events included game calling, archery, shotgun, rifle, canoeing, fly-casting, obstacle course, dendrology, orienteering, radio-telemetry, essay, lab practicum, field photography, trail cam photography, digitally enhanced photography, un-manipulated photography, painting, free-form art, and drawing.

Overall, winners of the competitions were student chapters from the University of Georgia, who took first place, the University of Tennessee-Knoxville in second place, and Haywood Community College in third.

Northeast:

The Northeastern Student Conclave was hosted by the University of Connecticut from Friday, April 5th-April 7th. The event was held at the J.N. Webster Scout Reservation. Around 150 students from 13 student chapters were in attendance. Keynote speaker, Robert Borowski spoke on the responsibilities of professionals in the wildlife field, and was followed by a bonfire on the lake.

On Saturday, students and advisors participated in 4 different workshops including avian survey techniques, overlooked biodiversity, and many others. Saturday night, the schools competed in the Quiz Bowl competition where SUNY-ESF taking home the coveted first place white peacock trophy.

Midwest:

The 2013 Midwest Student Conclave was hosted by the Michigan State University Fisheries and Wildlife Club. The event was held from April 12-14, 2013 at Camp Pinewood, Michigan.



Northeastern Conclave: Overlooked Biodiversity



Western Conclave Duck Wing Identification

Western:

The 2013 Western Region Student Conclave was hosted by the University of Wyoming from March 15th-18th. Field trips were held all day Saturday and included: a crash course in necropsy by Dr. Todd Cornish, a captive coyote lab led by Marjie McGregor, wildlife trapping and immobilization with Tony Mong, a photography clinic with renowned na-



Southeastern Conclave: Forest Measurements Workshop

ture photographer Dan Heyward, a snow-tracking course in the Snowy Range with University of Wyoming's Dr. John Whiteman, and paleontology trip in the Hanna Basin led by Jason Lillegraven.

On Sunday, students participated in the Wild-Cache, a multi-discipline competition that included sexing and aging duck wings, surveying lodgepole pine for bark beetle infestation, aging pronghorn and elk mandibles, trap setting, locating hidden VHF transmitter, and a scavenger hunt. For bonus points, each team identified as many species of wildlife as they could throughout the competition, but credit was only given if the team could provide proof in the form of scat, photographs, ect.

In addition, students presented their own work in the form of posters and papers, and participated in a Wildlife Behavior night where humorous skits were performed by each chapter during dinner. Monday's quiz bowl lasted all morning with awards being presented to Humboldt State University for First place in the quiz bowl, New Mexico State University for the best overall performance, Utah State University for the Wild-Cache, Danial Machias from New Mexico State University for best poster presentation, and Ryan Vazquez from Humboldt State University for best paper presentation.

Conclave Reports Submitted by Hosting Schools